



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Nottinghamshire Working with Fathers Strategy



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1. CONTEXT

Why this strategy?

This strategy has been published to help local children and young people's services and other relevant agencies understand and implement our vision for father-inclusive services. It is aimed at commissioners, strategic and operational managers and staff in a very broad range of services including both children and young people's and adult services.

The strategy sets out a framework for working with fathers in Nottinghamshire, and should be read in conjunction with the overall Parenting Support Strategy

A note on language

Throughout this document the term 'father' is used to include biological fathers (whether resident or not) and non-biological fathers and father figures (e.g. adoptive fathers, foster fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, male carers) who are significant in a child or young person's life. This also includes expectant fathers and fathers who do, and do not, have legal Parental Responsibility.

The process to date

Work on developing this strategy was initiated by practitioners from Nottinghamshire Children's Centres who began to meet together with partners in each district to share ideas and develop practice around working with fathers. This network collaborated with Trent University to organise a practitioner event which was attended by 80+ practitioners from partner organisations and was well received by those who attended. Links were established with the Fatherhood Institute as Children's Centre teams began to use their baseline assessment tool to inform and shape their work. A series of training programmes provided by the Teenage Pregnancy service supported the delivery of father-inclusive services on the ground.

In order to progress the work further and to inform a county-wide model for fathers of all children and young people aged 0-19, a second practitioner event was held in 2008 with the support of the Fatherhood Institute. A multi-agency steering group was established including representation from the districts which has continued to oversee this work. Current membership of the steering group can be found in the appendices.



"Our Family Resource Worker, Geoff, helped me and my wife to understand our children's needs more. We now do more activities together as a family and communicate better."

2. VISION

"Perhaps the best thing a dad can do - maybe the best thing I want to do - is to help my children reach their full potential - maybe as a dad I want to reach my full potential. I want to be a great dad and celebrate it."

Source: Anthony Driver, DVD 2009 [Title to be decided], Nottinghamshire County Council.

Our vision is that all Children's Services in Nottinghamshire will enable fathers to participate positively in the lives of their children and young people.

All agencies and individuals in Nottinghamshire working with families need to be father inclusive – which means that they are committed to improving children and young people's welfare by systematically and routinely promoting strong, positive relationships between fathers and children and young people, and supporting consistency in parenting between fathers and mothers, whether living together or not. This is in line with former Children's Minister Beverley Hughes' call for local services to think distinctively about fathers rather than treating them as the 'invisible parent': "Let's make sure we 'think fathers' in every service we deliver and every policy we unveil."

This requires an appropriate range of universal and targeted family services to meet the diverse needs of local families and communities, delivered at the earliest practical point to build opportunity for fathers and their children and young people, and working in partnership with adult services.

All local children and young people's services should draw on the best available research evidence of what is effective at supporting father-child relationships, and therefore will be expected to:

- **Engage systematically with fathers:** all services for families should "engage with both father and mother except where there is a clear risk to the child to do so" [see DCSF's Children's Plan, Box 1.1], and work together to offer fathers an integrated and comprehensive range of services.
- **Be inclusive:** "irrespective of the degree of involvement they have in the care of their children, fathers should be offered routinely the support and opportunities they need to play their parental role effectively". [Every Parent Matters, Para 3.11]. This means that all

services should be accessible to all fathers, whatever their background and family situation.

- **Be responsive:** all services should be sensitive to the individual needs and experiences of different fathers.
- **Be respectful:** all services should value and respect individual fathers' views, beliefs, strengths, knowledge and concerns about their children and young people.
- **Involve fathers as partners** in the design, delivery, evaluation and development of all their services.
- **Support staff to be father inclusive.** All staff will be supported to develop the skills, knowledge and values necessary to work effectively with fathers, through appropriate recruitment, training, information and supervision.
- **Regularly review** how effective all their services are at engaging with and supporting fathers.

This father-inclusive vision should be adopted by all local agencies, following active consultation and discussion with all staff, managers (at all levels), service users, partner agencies and community groups. Once adopted, agencies should ensure that the vision is publicised effectively in all their literature and displayed in all their settings. A lead individual responsible for implementing this vision should be identified in all agencies.

We recognise that this involves a substantial change in what is expected of local service providers. This strategy represents our best aspirations for working with fathers in Nottinghamshire and establishes a framework to support services in working to achieve them.

3. RATIONALE

- Having an involved father has been found to be associated with children having better peer relationships, fewer behavioural difficulties, and lower likelihood of criminality and drug use later in life
- Good parenting at home and fathers' involvement in schooling has been found to be important for children and young people's educational attainment, particularly for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Children gain from the different qualities which mothers and fathers bring. This is particularly the case for boys: the absence of involved male carers is believed to contribute to levels of disaffection among some adolescent boys.

Source: 21st Century Dad, Equal Opportunities Commission, June 2006

The evidence now shows clearly that fathers are an important influence - which can of course be positive or negative - on children and young people's and mothers' wellbeing¹. It is also clear that the way services engage with fathers impacts on their behaviour, attitudes and confidence as parents: and that in turn affects children and young people, mothers, and fathers themselves. This research base underpins the current strong national policy framework requiring local authorities to adopt a strategic and joined-up approach to engaging with fathers and supporting their relationships with their children and young people.

Fathers influence through:

- their direct relationship with each child or young person;
- the time, money and skills they bring, or do not bring, to the household;
- the support they give, or do not give, to mothers; and their relationship with them;
- their networks of family, friends, colleagues.

Today's fathers do eight times more caretaking of infants and very young children than fathers did 30 years ago (now an average of 2 hours on a weekday in the UK). When both parents work, dads do a third of the parental childcare. Involved, 'good enough' fathering (like 'good enough' mothering) helps children and young people develop better friendships; fewer behavioural problems;

better educational outcomes; greater empathy; higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction; lower criminality and substance abuse; less traditional attitudes to earning and childcare; and greater resilience after parental separation. This is true for resident and non-resident fathers.

Positive fathering benefits mothers too. It is associated with mothers being less stressed and depressed, and bonding better with their children. Conversely, a negative (or lacking) father-child relationship is associated with less positive outcomes in all these areas.

It follows that it is important to identify and engage with all fathers in local families. But it is also true that children and young people in disadvantaged families tend to suffer more than better-supported children and young people from no relationship (or a bad one) with their father; and to benefit more when it is substantial and positive. There is also good evidence that services which engage well with fathers make a substantial difference to outcomes for children and young people, mothers and fathers themselves. When fathers engage with services, they are likely to:

- feel more confident as fathers
- understand more about child development
- spend more time with their children and young people
- be more sensitive and positive with them
- be more supportive of their child or young person's education

For example, delivering a parent education programme to both parents is significantly more effective than delivering it to just one. Both parents' sensitivity towards their child or young person is enhanced when both parents are worked with rather than only one.

Father inclusiveness is also required by the Gender Equality Duty, effective from 6 April 2007. This statutory duty requires all public authorities, including those commissioning parenting services, to have "due regard" to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women². Gender equality does not require men and women to receive the same service - there are circumstances where needs are different. But gender equality does mean that neither women nor men should be excluded from support they need.

What influences whether fathers engage with local children and young people's services?

Like mothers, fathers are particularly open to this at certain life stages, notably in the ante and postnatal period. But fathers at other stages in the family life-cycle also express interest and enthusiasm; e.g. fathers who are addressed in workplace settings, imprisoned fathers, fathers of children and young people with disabilities, young fathers, and fathers of young children.

When engagement with fathers is not successful, it does not follow that fathers do not want a service. There are many possible reasons for their non-engagement, including:

Father-specific factors: their sense of identity as fathers, their knowledge about the importance of their role, their knowledge of local services and beliefs about whether they will be welcoming for fathers, their commitment as a father, their relationship with own father/mother, their mental and physical health, their employment status, involvement in criminality/drugs/alcohol, or domestic violence, etc.

Couple-relationship factors: relationship commitment and cooperation, mutual support, residence/contact arrangements (where parents live apart)

Mother-specific factors: her employment, attitude towards and expectations of the father, support provided to father etc.

Child-factors: attitude towards father, behavioural difficulties, temperament, age, gender, developmental status

Larger contextual factors: how services are delivered (e.g. opening hours, venue, working practices), employment opportunities (including whether long absences from home are required), economic factors, race/ethnicity resources and challenges, cultural expectations and social support.



4. SYSTEMATIC ENGAGEMENT

Systematic engagement with fathers (including expectant fathers) is essential to achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes. Effective pathways for fathers to engage with all family services are therefore a core element of good practice.

Effective engagement with fathers depends on identifying both the bridges and barriers to them getting involved in your services. If you are not currently in contact with many fathers, this does not mean that they are not interested. They may be unaware of your services, or think they are aimed at mothers, or do not understand why getting involved might benefit their children and young people. You need to overcome these barriers, and construct effective 'bridges' to all fathers.

1. Referrals and Record-keeping

Service providers cannot systematically engage with fathers unless they have their contact details. All children and young people's services should routinely and systematically seek to record information about fathers in all the families they come into contact with – through referral, self-referral or outreach – unless to do so would involve a clear risk to the child or person or other family members. This applies to all fathers, whether or not the father is currently resident or in contact with his child or young person, whether or not they have Parental Responsibility, and whether or not the father is believed to be a risk to the child or young person or mother.

In Nottinghamshire:

- All referral and registration forms should provide spaces for the name, and contact details of the 'mother', the 'father', and other key carers.
- These forms should also contain spaces to record other relevant information about fathers (as well as mothers).
- All staff with responsibility for filling in these forms should ensure that they routinely seek to gather and record information about fathers.
- Staff working with young people will routinely ask young men if they are a parent or have parenting responsibilities
- When an agency receives a referral that does not contain information about the birth father and key father figures, this should be routinely questioned with the referring agency to acquire the information (if known), or to agree which agency will gather the information.
- The use of both registration and referral forms should be monitored by all agencies to ensure that this information is being gathered effectively.

For more information on how to develop a father inclusive approach to referrals and record keeping, please consult the Practice Guidance associated with this strategy

2. Signposting and 'Consent to Contact'

All family services should actively encourage signposting of fathers from other local agencies (including both adult and children and young people's services) that men are in contact with: eg from antenatal services, schools, Connexions, homelessness projects / hostels, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, GPs, local employers, etc. Adult services should themselves already be taking account of the needs of their service users as fathers (and mothers) when delivering services and assessing needs³.

In Nottinghamshire:

All family services should develop their own 'Consent to Contact' form, and encourage other local agencies to use it routinely as part of their signposting procedures for fathers, especially those in vulnerable families.

3. Publicity, Outreach and Home Visiting

Fathers tend to be much less well informed about local family services than mothers, and assume that they are 'not for them'. All workers/volunteers in family services should take responsibility for routinely telling fathers what you offer, and encouraging them to attend your services. They should also encourage mothers to invite fathers to engage with your services.

In Nottinghamshire:

- All literature about services should directly address and appeal to men.
- All leaflets/newsletters about services for families should include male images and the word 'dad' or 'father', emphasise why fathers are important and that they are welcome.
- All workers/volunteers in family services, and other local agencies in contact with men, should have access to a good supply of leaflets about all local services, and routinely give them to all fathers and mothers they are in contact with.
- All home visiting services should be organised to be accessible to fathers, and used routinely to engage with them.
- At home visits, workers should proactively engage with fathers who are present, explaining that the service is for them as well as the mother.
- If the father is not present the worker should discuss with the mother how to arrange future visits to encourage him to be present.
- These home visiting services should also routinely seek to engage with non-resident fathers.

5. INCLUSIVE, RESPONSIVE, RESPECTFUL SERVICES

Local children and young people's services should systematically take account of local fathers' specific needs and concerns. They should routinely offer fathers the support and opportunities they need to play their parental role effectively - whatever their circumstances and the degree of involvement they currently have in their children and young people's lives.

They should also recognise that mothers and mothers-to-be are strong influences on children and young people's relationships with their fathers, and routinely engage with them on fatherhood issues.

1. Core features

Services should attempt to engage with all fathers in families they are in contact with, and not see their engagement with fathers as problem-focused. This includes both resident and non-resident fathers, and those with or without Parental Responsibility.

In Nottinghamshire all services should:

- respond to individual fathers' complex and changing needs
- involve a mixture of universal and male-targeted services to meet fathers' different needs, circumstances and preferences
- be developed with different types of fathers in mind in order to engage effectively with fathers' diversity
- aim both to promote positive parenting by men, and to reduce men's risk to mothers and children and young people
- be as positive and non-stigmatising as possible
- have an active partnership with local fathers. This means involving fathers throughout in the design and delivery of all services.

Services should pay particular attention to designing services relevant to:

Fathers who may be at risk of poor outcomes, or whose children or young people may be at risk of poor outcomes; including disabled fathers, fathers with disabled children, teenage fathers, fathers from black and minority ethnic communities, fathers with children from black and minority ethnic communities, fathers who are asylum seekers, separated fathers, fathers who have

mental health or substance misuse problems, fathers who use violence in their families or in the community, fathers who have been in prison or are known to be engaged in criminal activity, fathers who live in poverty or in workless households.

Fathers at key transition points; including pregnancy and birth, children and young people starting/changing school or becoming teenagers, teenagers becoming parents, parental separation, becoming a step-father, changing/losing employment, resettlement into the community after a significant absence, e.g. from prison, the armed forces.

For more information on the core approaches required in the main service sectors, please consult the Practice Guidance associated with this strategy.

2. Service Settings

All agencies should ensure that the settings in which they deliver services do not alienate fathers:

In all Nottinghamshire service settings:

- décor should not be clearly 'feminine' in style
- baby-changing facilities should be easily accessible for dads, and signposted in such a way that they know they're allowed to use them
- there should be a male toilet marked (or if there is only one, it should be clearly marked for use by both sexes)
- positive images of fathers and children and young people should be clearly displayed, as well as reading materials that take male needs and interests into account
- male-friendly toys should be available; e.g. construction toys, a mini football table
- consideration should be given to providing a specific dad-identified space where fathers can congregate.

It will often make sense to deliver some services aimed at fathers in other local venues that men may feel more comfortable in; e.g. sports facilities and swimming pools, playgrounds and parks, community centres, youth clubs etc. Outdoor events and trips away can also help get round the issue of creating male inclusive settings, and be a great source of fun and togetherness.

Where possible, services should engage local fathers in designing and building the physical spaces used to offer services. Services should encourage local dads, mums and children and young people to help adapt settings, including providing photos of dads with children and young people.

3. When to organise men-only services

Children and young people's services should generally be designed to be equally welcoming, accessible and relevant to both fathers and mothers. Some separate services for fathers should also be available, but it is not practical or effective to set up substantial parallel services for men and women. Moreover, there are many benefits to both sexes using at least some services in common. Where fathers use services (as equal partners, not as "visitors") alongside women, this helps local communities and families to see fathers as central in their children and young people's lives. In fact, services just for fathers are unlikely to succeed unless other agencies and services are also engaging with fathers, and working with other family members on the issue of fatherhood.

Where venues are used mainly by female service users, and staffed mainly by women, it can be appropriate to deliver some services for fathers only. Many dads feel 'out of place' and 'on show' when they attend family services mostly used by women, or simply feel that the service is not really for them. Some fathers do not feel confident as parents, and think that looking after children – especially younger ones - is in some way 'women's business'. These men often feel more comfortable attending group or one-to-one services specifically for dads, run by staff who are particularly comfortable and skilled at engaging with men.

Some mothers and staff may feel uncomfortable about services for fathers only and perceive them as being exclusive. However many services offer activities for certain groups for reasons to do with empowerment and building their confidence and skills. Father-only services can be offered on a similar basis to enable fathers to resource themselves to resource their child or young person.

Fathers may use father-only services for a variety of reasons:

- for contact time
- because the interaction between them and their child

or young person is different to when the mother is also present

- it enhances bonding
- they enjoy a different style of play or activity
- their time with their child or young person is more protected and there are less interruptions
- they enjoy male support
- they feel more confident

These father-only services should also form an important 'bridge' to other local services (through referrals and signposting, and through staff in all relevant services attending the father-only service periodically). Separate time-zones for fathers can also help when women from some cultural groups cannot attend if male non-relatives are present or when mothers need a women-only space to feel safe and supported.

Ongoing fathers groups work very well for some men, and should be available to new and existing service users. Fathers' groups work best if the worker gives the fathers a strong sense of ownership and acts as a facilitator, not an expert. More intensive groups are unlikely to attract large numbers of fathers, but are an important support for some fathers.

Case Study 1: Inclusion Support Service Autism Team

The Dads' Forum was set up in October 2006 by a small group of dads. The dads wanted to create a group which would enable them to share knowledge, experiences and information and they wanted to be able to meet socially. The group has been steadily growing in numbers so a planning / review meeting was held. The report includes everyone's views.

What has been useful about the group.

- Meeting other dads, sharing information and support.
- Listening to other dads' experiences
- The bowling nights have been a great laugh – the only time over the last few years I have been able to do something like that.
- Finding out more through people that have been / are in a similar position to me.

- Being kept in touch with courses events and speakers.
- The group makes me get out.
- Really good having some fun time away from the family.
- The group is needed.
- The meetings in the pub have been great.
- Chatting to other dads and the information on the internet.

Kieran Lee

Case Study 2: Ladybrook Children's Centre

Over a period of time we realised that groups at the Children's Centre were seldom accessed by fathers. Ideally, we would have asked dads why they didn't use our services, but it was very difficult to find dads to talk to, so we developed a strategy to try to make the Children's Centre more appealing to them. We:

- reviewed the images on display in the centre and included more positive images of dads.
- included information for and images of dads in our literature including our newsletter.
- made reference to Dads and Family frequently in groups
- looked for specific ideas which might prove attractive to dads
- offered targeted group activities for dads on a regular basis.

The first four were straightforward, the activities were less so. We were conscious that we wanted these to be a pathway into participation in Family Matters for fathers and other male carers and not to evolve separately to the existing provision. At the same time they would need to be gender specific initially, since the input we had been able to obtain suggested that it was very difficult for a man to walk into a group of women and they did not always feel welcome.

We set up five weekend sessions which were targeted at men, called them the Dad's Group and scheduled them

for Saturday mornings. Activities like visits to the fire station and local football team were arranged. These were successful but demanding in terms of staff time and not inclusive.

Dads attending the sessions remarked that it would be nice to have a family event. This gave us the opportunity to move things forward and three family sessions were arranged during which we worked hard to promote the whole programme at the Centre. Individual events for Dads have continued, mostly arranged with the Parent's Forum.

For us working with Dad's groups has:

- provided an opportunity to integrate dads into other centre activities
- offered a forum in which specific issues can be aired which may not surface in a mixed group
- provided opportunities for dads to find out that the centre is not just a place for mums
- given dads the confidence to feel part of the centre
- been a place where dads, many of whom appeared quite socially isolated, could make friends
- given dads a chance to experience and learn from a high quality play and learning experience with their children
- provided some dads with a route to other organisations and services available to them.

Noel Proud – Community Involvement Coordinator

6. SUPPORTING STAFF TO BE FATHER INCLUSIVE

All services should develop their workforce to be confident and skilled at engaging with fathers. Recruitment, induction, training and supervision should be used systematically to strengthen their knowledge, skills and attitudes in supporting father-child relationships.

The key qualities staff need in order to engage well with dads are largely the same as they need for any direct work with families (good interpersonal skills, empathy, commitment etc.), but many workers display such qualities more readily with female service users. This can be due to lack of awareness about how important fathers are to their children and young people (and how they impact on mothers too), lack of clarity that it is a core part of their role to engage with and support fathers, or inexperience or negative experiences with men.

Family services need to ensure that all their staff have clear guidelines about their role in engaging with and supporting fathers, and are informed about why fathers are important to children and young people. Of course individual staff roles and responsibilities with fathers will vary and more complex issues should be addressed by more experienced workers. The key is to work well together as a team. Services can support each other by working in partnership; for example, a children's centre working with a male community development worker to run sessions and offer support.

Do workers engaging with men have to be male?

No. Women can work very successfully with fathers. Most dads say skills and attitudes matter most, and some even prefer a female worker. But male workers can 'model' caring for children and young people as a male activity, bring a male perspective to service provision and help male service users feel 'at home'. Male workers and volunteers should be people local fathers can identify with, or accept as their advocate. Male and female workers working co-operatively can also be powerful role models for male and female service users.

Recruitment and Job Descriptions

Recruitment practices can be used to embed the expectation that all members of the workforce will engage with fathers as well as mothers.

In Nottinghamshire:

- All job descriptions and job adverts should be reviewed to ensure that they refer to 'mothers' and 'fathers' (not parents) and explicitly state that these roles involve engaging with and supporting fathers.
- Person specifications should all reflect the qualities needed to support father-child relationships effectively; understanding and valuing the role fathers play in their children's lives and being committed to supporting father-child relationships.
- Where there is a specialist fatherhood worker, services should define their specific responsibilities carefully including how their role integrates with and is supported by colleagues' roles.

Supervision, Training and On-the-job Support

All workers should be given opportunities to build their skills and confidence at engaging with fathers.

In Nottinghamshire:

- All supervision sessions in family services should routinely address engagement and non-engagement with fathers through the use of clear 'prompt' questions.
- There should be ongoing whole team training about different aspects of father inclusive services, where possible on a multi-agency basis.
- Training should include building skills and knowledge, as well as personal reflection to explore staff attitudes to engaging with fathers

7. REVIEWING FATHER INCLUSIVENESS

Compliance with the Gender Equality Duty requires gathering information on how services impact on women and men respectively and consulting with women and men who use services in ways they find accessible.

Monitoring and evaluation of all family services needs to provide data on both outputs (processes) and outcomes (impact) in relation to engagement with fathers. This is essential to the development and delivery of services that are effective at supporting father-child relationships.

Key outputs (processes) to measure are:

- **Local needs assessment:** does the service establish the needs and interests of different groupings of local fathers and their children and young people?
- **User involvement:** to what extent have specific groupings of fathers been involved in designing the service?
- **Information:** to what extent does information for service users and referral agencies specify that the service is for fathers as well as for mothers?
- **Policy statements:** to what extent do the policies, mission and objectives of the agency reflect an explicit and clear determination to engage with fathers?
- **Materials:** to what extent have any materials used by the service been checked for their relevance to fathers and evaluated by male service users?
- **Referrals and signposting:** to what extent do referrals and signposting forms contain contact information and other relevant information about fathers?
- **Referral criteria:** to what extent do referrals take into account the needs of the whole family in deciding whether to make or accept a referral?
- **Assessment:** to what extent are agencies assessing the needs of fathers once a referral has been made?
- **Contact:** To what extent have fathers accessed services?
- **Service design:** Are services available at times and in places that fathers can access and feel welcome? Has the need for any dedicated service for fathers been assessed?
- **Interventions:** to what extent do services working with

fathers, mothers, children and young people and the wider family focus on the need to strengthen a positive father-child relationship?

- **User feedback:** are the views of different types of fathers about the services gathered? Are children and young people / mothers / other family members encouraged to express their views about the ways in which services include fathers?
- **Engagement with other agencies:** to what extent are local service providers referring on to a wide range of agencies?
- **Staff attitudes and behaviour:** are there positive staff attitudes towards engaging proactively with fathers?
- **Staff recruitment, training, support, supervision and appraisal:** to what extent does staff recruitment specify that staff need to have the skills to work with fathers? Is there specific training around engaging with fathers available for all staff? Has consideration been given to proactively recruiting male staff? Is the issue of engagement with fathers routinely addressed in staff supervision and appraisal? Do staff feel their needs in terms of safety, out of hours working etc. are being addressed?

The outcomes or impact of father-inclusive services should be assessed both in terms of the impact on fathers themselves, the impact on mothers and/or other carers and the impact on children and young people.

Key outcomes (impact) to measure for fathers are:

- **Knowledge and understanding:** to what extent have fathers increased their knowledge and understanding of child development and other relevant issues?
- **Self-efficacy:** do fathers feel more confident and more competent to undertake their parenting role?
- **Satisfaction:** do fathers feel more satisfied with the father-child relationship and with their relationship with their child or young person's mother and other family members?
- **Behaviour:** Have fathers changed their behaviour in relation to themselves; e.g. stopping smoking, or in relation to their child or young person; e.g. increase in positive activities?

The provision of father-inclusive services will also impact on many National Indicators in relation to adults. For example;

- NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering
- NI 9 Use of public libraries
- NI 32 Repeat incidents of domestic violence
- NI 119 Self-reported measure of people's overall health and well-being
- NI 151 Overall employment rate

Working with colleagues from other services to develop standard methods of data collection that take into account an individual's parenting status may help to assess the impact of father-inclusive service provision in the future.

Many of the outcome measures above can also be used to examine the impact of father-inclusive services on mothers and/or other carers. For example; do mothers feel more confident in undertaking their parenting role when there is a supportive and engaged father involved with their child?

There are also a number of National Indicators relating specifically to mothers where the provision of father-inclusive services may have an impact. For example;

- NI 53 Prevalence of breast-feeding at 6-8 weeks from birth
- NI 126 Early access for women to maternity services

Key outcomes to measure for children and young people should be contained within the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and the impact of father-inclusive services on these outcomes should form part of the performance management framework for the CYPP.



Appendix 1

The Fatherhood Institute

The Institute (charity reg. no. 1075104) is the UK's fatherhood think-tank, whose vision is for a society that gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their father and any father-figures; supports both mothers and fathers as earners and carers; and prepares boys and girls for a future shared role in caring for children.

The Institute:

- collates and publishes international research on fathers, fatherhood and different approaches to engaging with fathers by public services and employers;
- helps shape national and local policies to ensure a father-inclusive approach to family policy;
- injects research evidence on fathers and fatherhood into national debates about parenting and parental roles;
- lobbies for changes in law, policy and practice to dismantle barriers to fathers' care of infants and children;
- is the UK's leading provider of training, consultancy and publications on father-inclusive practice, for public and third sector agencies and employers;

The Fatherhood Institute is available to help you meet the challenges and make the most of the opportunities presented by father inclusiveness. It offers a variety of consultancy and training options, and a range of publications, more details on which can be found on their website:

- **strategic training and consultancy:**
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=0&cID=687>
- **practitioner training:**
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=0&cID=686>
- **workers' helpline:**
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=0&cID=320>
- **publications:**
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=0&fID=4>

You can also contact them on 0845 634 1328, or at enquiries@fatherhoodinstitute.org.

Appendix 2

What the gender equality duty means for family services

The Gender Equality Duty (Equality Act 2006), effective from 6 April 2007, requires all public authorities, including those commissioning parenting services, to have “due regard” to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. Official guidance to the Duty is available at <http://www.eoc.org.uk/default.aspx?page=19951>.

“Promoting” means being active and not passive: the statutory equality body and inspectorates will look for action and positive change as evidence of compliance. “Having due regard” means prioritising attention in proportion to its relevance. Supporting both mothers and fathers in caring for children is relevant to gender equality: The lack of sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men (women do more) is the single biggest driver of the pay gap, according to analysis by the Equal Opportunities Commission. Supporting fathers to take on more of the responsibility for caring for children, therefore, is a key contribution to gender equality.

Some men, particularly if they are very young, black, separated, mentally ill or from socially excluded families, experience real exclusion from family services – and the detriment to them, their partners and their children is significant.

Children who experience diverse male and female role models in their lives will have wider horizons and opportunities as they grew up.

Gender equality does not require men and women to receive the same service – there are circumstances where needs are different. But gender equality does mean that neither women nor men should be excluded from support they need. The Gender Equality Duty requires public authorities “proactively to address the individual needs of women and men in all their functions” (official guidance).

Under the law, local authorities need to publish an overall scheme and action plan for promoting gender equality, covering all areas where gender equality issues are deemed to be relevant.

More particularly, at the point of commissioning parenting services, a gender impact assessment is required, assessing the differential impact of the service

on women and men. This will assess if there is evidence of different needs between women and men and whether both women and men’s needs are being met. It will also look at the gender norms and stereotypes that are being assumed. (The Equal Opportunities Commission is soon to publish specific guidance on impact assessment.)

Compliance with the Duty includes gathering information on how services impact on women and men respectively and consulting with women and men who use services, in ways they find accessible. The compliance of local authorities with the Duty in parenting services will be actively monitored, along with compliance in other sectors.

For more about the Gender Equality Duty go to:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/introduction-to-the-public-sector-duties/gender-equality-duty/>

Appendix 3

Parental Responsibility

What is it?

Parental Responsibility (PR) is a legal status an adult can hold in relation to a child, which gives that adult the legal authority to make decisions about important aspects of the child's life. These can include their name, school, religious upbringing and place of residence. Having PR does not, in itself, entitle a parent to live with or see their child; but a father who has it may be regarded more favourably by a Court, if this issue comes to it.

Who has it?

All married parents of both sexes have PR automatically, as do all adoptive parents and all mothers. An unmarried father doesn't unless:

- His name is placed on the birth certificate either at initial registration or at re-registration later - as long as this happened after 1 December 2003. This requires the mother's agreement.
- Both parents have signed a Parental Responsibility Agreement (PRA). This is done by agreement with the mother.
- He has obtained a Parental Responsibility Order (PRO) from his local County Court. The Court can order this without the mother's agreement.

Since 93% of fathers now sign their children's birth certificates, most fathers of younger children now have PR. Grandparents, step-parents, same-sex partners and other people with day to day care of a child can also be awarded PR. This does not take away PR from either parent.

What difference does PR make?

Although day-to-day, a father's PR status tends to make little difference, fathers without PR can't authorize medical treatment for their children, see their medical records, manage any money they've inherited, or prevent their adoption or change of surname or removal abroad. A father's lack of PR can also:

- undermine the family's sense of his commitment (dad feeling less involved, mum less secure and more responsible);

- undermine his involvement in his children's lives where this is most at risk - eg when the parents separate;
- make it less likely that agencies concerned with his children's welfare will engage with him as a risk or as a resource for them;
- mean he must obtain PR through the courts to be able to take care of his children officially, if their mother dies or leaves. Except in the relatively small number of cases where the father's involvement is very harmful, it is generally positive for children and their parents if fathers acquire PR early on, preferably at the birth.

The Role of Family Services

Many parents don't understand what PR means, and wrongly assume that a father has it. So it's important to discuss and explain it (signposting to good legal advice if necessary), and encourage their consideration of the father acquiring it - remembering that it is the mother's decision, unless the father applies to a court. This process also encourages parents to reflect on their expectations of the father's role. Both mothers and fathers may have concerns about the dad getting PR. Mothers may worry it will mean loss of control, and should be able to discuss their anxieties with you (you may learn lots about the family in the process). Legally, his having PR doesn't affect her right to make day-to-day decisions and doesn't mean he can override her wishes. Where they can't agree on major issues, then they would need to go to court - which is also likely to happen if he doesn't have PR.

Fathers' anxieties may include the fear that seeking PR might:

- harm their children: in an unstable situation, will asking for PR make things worse?
- harm the mother: if she's on benefits, will his getting PR reduce her access to them? (The answer to this is no).
- harm themselves: will he have to pay (more) child support? Or will that contact with 'the law' expose him to deportation, prosecution etc.?

Why family services need to know who has PR

You need to know who has PR:

- to identify who is legally responsible for children registered with you;
- to clarify whether you need to address the issues about PR explored above
- to be clear whether you have a legal right or duty to provide information to the father (eg if anyone else with PR tries to tell you not to)
- because discussion of PR can help you identify whether a man is a biological father or a father-figure, and find out more about his role in the family.

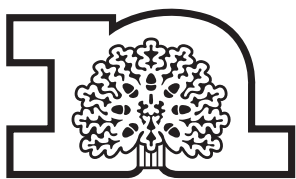
Although provision of information to fathers about their children can be affected by their PR status in certain limited situations (e.g as we've already mentioned, a father without PR has no legal right to see their child's medical records), PR isn't the be-all and end-all. For example, DfES Guidance makes clear that all parents (with or without PR) have a right to participate in decisions about their child's education, including being treated equally concerning access to information (pupil reports, parents' evenings etc), unless there is a court order limiting this right. In general, however, whether a father has PR should make little or no difference to the services you offer him. Your agency should offer all fathers the support and opportunities they need to play their parental role effectively – irrespective of their PR status and the degree of involvement they currently have in the care of their children.



Appendix 4

Working with Fathers Strategy Group

Name	District/Organisation
Ty Yousaf	Social Care
Naran Rathod	Inclusion Support Service
Adisa Djan	Connexions
Claire Allison	NHS Nottinghamshire County
Jenny Spencer/Rick Scott	Youth Offending Service
Paul Goodman	Extended Services
Linda Mottishaw	Specialist Family Support
Nicola Hughes	Family Information Service
Nicola Turner	Integrated Services Team
Jude Burgess	Nottinghamshire Children's Centre
Wayne Stevenson	Teenage Pregnancy
Wendy Evans	Parentline plus
Sue Fenton	Homestart
Sally Moorcroft / Tracy Mullaney	NAVO
Alison Sisson	ACLS
Natasha Mellors	Integrated Services Team
Tony Stevens	Education Welfare Service
Rhonda Schofield-Teal / Dawn Webb	Family Intervention Project
Jane Goreweda/Michelle Squires	Ashfield
Sally Penn	Bassetlaw
Jo Voce/Yvonne Hayden	Broxtowe
Neelum Ahmad/ Denis Tully	Gedling
Noel Proud/Marion Kavanagh	Mansfield
Brian Matthews/Diane Tinklin/Jan Derbyshire	Newark & Sherwood
Peter Cook/Susan Hillier	Rushcliffe



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