

Engaging Fathers & Male Carers

A year-long campaign 2012-13



Lessons learnt and the continuing challenge

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**



**Celebrating
Fatherhood**

Bath and North East Somerset
Local Safeguarding Children Board

Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign 2012-13

Programme: Concluding event

Thursday 13 June, 9.30am–12.30pm

- 9.00 – 9.30 Registration, tea & coffee
- 9.30 – 9.40 **Welcome**
Cllr. Neil Butters, Chairman, B&NES
Cllr. Dine Romero, Early Years, Children and Youth, B&NES
- 9.40 – 9.55 **The overall success of the campaign**
Sara Willis, B&NES
- 9.55 – 10.15 **Case Study: Fathers' Friday film**
Susan Milner & Rita Chawla-Duggan, Bath University
- 10.15 – 10.30 **Case Study: Play**
Stuart Rouse, Wansdyke Play Association
- 10.30 – 10.45 **Case Study: Children's Centres engaging fathers**
Peter Roberts & Jed Parsons, B&NES
- 10.45 – 11.00 **Case Study: Dads in a child protection setting**
Trina Shane, B&NES
- 11.00 – 11.15 Break, tea & coffee
- 11.15 – 11.30 **Supporting the workforce**
Simon Ratcliff, B&NES
- 11.30 – 12.15 **The main obstacles still facing fathers**
Duncan Fisher OBE
- 12.15 – 12.30 **Legacy: Book Bugs**
Jane Southwell, B&NES
- 12.30 – 12.45 **Close**
Sara Willis, B&NES



Celebrating Fatherhood

Bath and North East Somerset
Local Safeguarding Children Board

Introduction

Welcome to our final formal event marking the year-long campaign to celebrate fatherhood i.e. affirming all those men involved in bringing up our children, whether they be birth father, step father, brother, uncle, grandfather, or any other significant male in a child's life.

This campaign began with one male Assistant Social Worker attending a Local Safeguarding Children Board event in November 2011, wanting to know how the workforce, could support absent fathers in their parenting role. From this event Sara Willis, Service Manager 0-11 Outcomes, pledged to run a year-long campaign to promote the importance of fathers in children's lives.

The Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign was developed in partnership with a small multi-agency working group. The group never suggested that we should restrict our thinking about the male role in children's lives for one year only. Rather, 12 months was seen to be a reasonable period to focus attention on how we could raise the profile of men more in children's lives, based on sound evidence. Our intention was to be inclusive of all men who play a significant role in children's lives: hence the title Celebrating Fatherhood, rather than the working title of "Year of the Father".

The campaign co-ordinated and delivered a number of activities that engaged fathers and male carers, encouraging them to take an active role in their children's lives. The campaign also challenged the workforce to think about their attitudes to involving fathers and male carers better. This campaign was used to stimulate and challenge our perceptions of men's role in childcare and has shown us how valued the fathers and male carers who participated in the many events, feel when their needs are considered in a distinctive way. Comments from the fathers/male carers involved during the year included: *"why haven't you ever done anything like this before?"*; *"it makes such a difference to be asked to something just for me as a Dad"*; *"it's been good having other men here to talk to"*; *"I need to challenge my thinking about how I involve the absent dad more, when I visit the home"*.

The Celebrating Fatherhood concluding event will be held on Thursday 13th June, 9.30 – 12.30pm in Keynsham. The event will celebrate the success of the campaign and the tangible difference we have made in combating the main obstacles fathers and male carers still face. Duncan Fisher OBE (co-founder of the Fatherhood Institute) will deliver the keynote speech.

This booklet has been put together to preserve and share the many joyous moments we have had working with fathers and male carers across the area, as well as providing a useful resource to agencies and staff for the future.

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For a copy of presentations please visit the Celebrating Fatherhood web pages:
www.bathnes.gov.uk/celebratingfatherhood

Case Study: Fathers' Fridays

On 22 June 2012, 13 schools and 11 Children's Centres and early years settings held events for Fathers' Friday, an initiative aimed at strengthening fathers' participation in children's education and development.

Researchers from the University of Bath worked with local schools and families to assess the success of these events in involving fathers (and father-figures) in their children's education and upbringing. The research found that the Fathers' Friday initiative increased paternal involvement in children's education and development and is likely to lead to continued participation in such events in the future.

Key findings of the research

- There is a significant demand for initiatives which promote fathers' involvement in children's education and development. Such involvement is associated with improved social, emotional and educational outcomes for children.
- Staff understood the importance of fathers (and father-figures) in children's education and development. They used Fathers' Fridays to reflect on and discuss with parents how fathers could best be engaged, as well as experimenting with a range of activities.
- Children themselves are often the most important bridge between fathers and school. On Fathers' Friday most settings organised their recruitment and activities

to be led by the children. This kind of communication helped fathers to become familiar with what schools and settings expected from their children.

- The initiative strengthened pre-existing relationships with fathers, involved fathers who had not previously been in contact with schools, and increased the range of involvement from fathers and wider family.
- The fathers and children all gave positive assessments of the Fathers' Friday initiative, saw beneficial outcomes from it, and expressed a desire for such activities to continue in the future.
- Fathers' Friday can create a behavioural norm of participation which is likely to lead men to take part in future activities.
- Fathers often do not have the strong networks with each other and with childcare and educational settings that mothers have, and this can inhibit paternal involvement. On Fathers' Friday men were able to create and build on such networks, although further work and events are needed in order to maintain them.
- Fathers still face challenges, particularly from employment and unfamiliarity with schools and childcare settings, which limit their involvement in children's education.
- Engagement needs to be cultivated and supported, and will require a variety of approaches and events.

Susan Milner

Reader in European Studies at the University of Bath



I conducted research comparing how and to what extent fathers accessed work-life balance policies in work organizations in France and the UK with Professor Abigail Gregory (University of Salford). Through this I became interested in researching fathers who might be seen as 'pioneers' in formally adapting their working patterns to take a greater role in childcare, although a key finding was that fathers also adapt their working patterns in less formal ways (for example by adjusting start times to 'do the school run'). The research also confirmed a high demand for further statutory support for paternity and parental leave, which has emerged in national surveys.

More recently, in 2012, I have worked with Dr Rita Chawla-Duggan in the Education department at the University of Bath to evaluate the Fathers' Friday initiative which was part of B&NES' year of Celebrating Fatherhood. They produced a report and a film (based on Fathers' Friday 2012 at Moorlands school federation) which are both accessible from: <http://www.fathersfridayresearch.wordpress.com>

Rita Chawla-Duggan

Lecturer in Education at the University of Bath



I am a Lecturer in Early Childhood in the Department of Education at the University of Bath. I have taught in preparatory, primary and middle schools and was trained as an educational ethnographer. My research interests are child poverty and educational quality, the social influences on children's learning, especially fathering, and the study of early years' education. I have conducted research with children in England, Japan and India, and I have recently worked on quality early years care and education in Ghana and India.

My interest in fathering began through my experience of evaluating a local Sure Start programme in England and I subsequently carried out research on father involvement in Sure Start and on father groups. In 2012, I worked with Dr Susan Milner in evaluating the impact of the local authority initiative Fathers' Friday which involved the production of a film about the event. I am currently interested in researching the ways fathers support their young children as learners in the home learning environment.



National recognition

B&NES makes it national! Our work with the Fathers Friday initiative and Bath University during 2012, has now been written up as a case study.

Here is the link to the full report: www.daycaretrust.org.uk/data/files/Projects/Volunteering/Bath_and_North_East_Somerset_final.pdf

Further information

Fathers' Friday web pages: www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/childcare-early-years-play/celebrating-fatherhood/father

Fathers' Friday film: www.bath.ac.uk/play/video/1348496400

Fathers' Friday Research: www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/bnes_report_bath_uni_final.pdf

Case Study: Play

Play memories – a great starting point for support work with fathers

Stuart works as Family Play Inclusion Worker for Wansdyke Play Association. His role is to support families of children who may have barriers in accessing play owing to disabilities or social, emotional or physical reasons. Stuart works in a flexible way to support children to enjoy play experiences helping to build their self confidence with lots of outdoor play including den building, camp fires, exploring local parks and natural spaces. This work enables Stuart to build trust with families and good relationships with parents. Indeed a lot of his work is as much with the parents as it is with the children themselves. He will be speaking at the final event about a successful project where play was central to developing a strong and positive relationship between a father and son.

Stuart Rouse

Family Play Inclusion Worker for Wansdyke Play Association



I have been working for the last 10 years with children and young people in B&NES. As a qualified play worker and youth worker I have been involved in one to one support for children with complex needs and setting up and running projects from play schemes and youth clubs to open access provision. My work has been predominantly with children who are socially isolated or disabled.

With this back ground and experience as a play worker I have dived into my current role as Family Play Inclusion Worker for Wansdyke Play Association, supporting families through play.

Case Study: Children's Centres engaging fathers

Peter and Jed talk about their experiences in engaging fathers in a Children's Centre setting. Peter runs a monthly Dads' Stay and Play in Bath East at Weston Children's Centre, enticing dads in with bacon butties! The group is run by Peter and supported by Children's Centre staff and male volunteers. The group provides a safe environment for dads to meet other dads as well as providing lots of fun activities for the children. Jed has set up a walk, talk and explore group where he encourages fathers to come along and actively participate with their children. Both Peter and Jed use their groups for engaging fathers, consulting with

dads on the best ways to engage other dads. Plans for the future include a dad's pack, recruitment of male volunteers for the Children's Centre, more events targeted at engaging male carers through mums!

Jed Parsons

Coordinator, Paulton Children's Centre

One of my key responsibilities is father involvement as we understand the enormous importance they make on children's lives. We have been working hard to ensure our centres are father inclusive whilst valuing and supporting men in their role as fathers, by actively encouraging their participation in programmes and ensuring they are appropriately and equally considered in all aspects of service delivery. The Somer Valley cluster has seen significant increases in fathers being involved in services and we hope to see this continue long into the future.



Peter Roberts

Coordinator, Weston Children's Centre

I have always enjoyed working with children and young people in the voluntary sector and have been doing various groups and activities since I was 18. An opportunity arose to work for a community arts project on an estate just outside Birmingham, with primary school aged children. The opportunity to have a career working with children and their families was something I would never have thought about when I left school (a number of years ago). Although a lot of my work is administration and management, I still run the monthly Dads' Stay and Play and occasionally assist with some of the other groups within the Bath East Centres. As a male in a female dominated profession I think it's important to be able to stay involved in the work with families. I have had some great times with my own two children as they have been growing up and the Celebrating Fatherhood campaign has shown that having male role models is important to children, and sometimes those men may be childcare workers as well as family members.



Case Study: Dads in a child protection setting

The 'K' Family

The 'K' Family were referred to the Social Care team as the dad expressed concerns that mum was neglecting the girls and the girls were fearful of Mum's new partner. A domestic incident to which police were called led to dad taking the girls to his parents' home and refusing to allow them to return to their mothers care. Social care work helped dad to plan and take over care of the girls when he had secured appropriate housing.

The outcome of social care intervention showed that both girls reported being very happy in dad's care. Dad's care of the girls was deemed to be very good. The relationship between dad and the girls was extremely positive and supportive. Their school reports showed that both girls appear very happy and settled in school and the girls no longer come to the attention of senior staff.

This case challenges the stereotype that assumes the mother is the best main carer.

Trina Shane

Service Manager, Safeguarding Outcomes, B&NES Children Services

I have been a third tier manager for 15 years with a focus on child protection. I am currently responsible for the front of house services: including, assessment, safeguarding, children in need, child protection conference process, children in care, and children on the edge of care. This involves about 25 qualified social workers, 12 family support practitioners, contact officers and administrative staff. I chair a number of initiatives including the interface panels for families with additional needs. I am responsible for a number of projects and service delivery models including: Keepsafe – a model for working with children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour. The New Way Service, working with parents who engage in domestic abuse. Community Based Assessments – multi-agency intensive parenting assessments. Stepping Stones – a project working with parental mental illness.



Dads' Stories

Rick Knight

"Having moved to Bath almost ten years ago, I found an engineering job in Bristol, which I commuted to every day. I was very content during the majority of my eight years there; designing drainage and roads for many projects in and around our area; probably the closest being the new Tesco store in Keynsham. Towards the end I knew my enthusiasm for the job had gone. Due to the recession, our company was having to cost-cut, wages decreased. The cost of me getting to work made it almost not worth it. I knew in my heart that I had to leave.

"My son was six months old at the time, we decided that my wife would go back to her teaching job two days a week and I would become his sole-carer during that time. Towards the end of my civil engineering career, I looked into becoming a teacher. I enquired about volunteering at Southdown Junior School. I really enjoyed my two days a week for a term there; learning how children learn, both academically and behaviourally and how to overcome their weaknesses.

"I didn't, though, like the fact that the class sizes were so



large. Quite often a child would want to show the teacher something they had done at home or tell them about what they had done at the weekend. The teacher simply didn't have time; it is this that convinced me that teaching wasn't for me. I wanted to work with a smaller group of children and feel that I was making a difference to each child.

"I started looking after my son full-time from January 2012; slightly worried about what I was going to do with him every day. We have no family and few friends that live close so I

looked into local toddler groups. Going to a toddler group for the first time must be quite nerve-racking for anyone but especially a chap. I was lucky that people were so welcoming; I now attend a group every day and find myself enjoying it as much as my son!

"It was through going to these groups that I noticed that children were interested in me being there; coming up to me and wanting to play with me. I became friends with one of the childminders at the group and then, as if a light-bulb turned on above my head, I realised what I had wanted to do with my life!"

Jim Phillips

Jim Phillips has two daughters - Mali, who is eight months and Mair who is two. He lives in Weston in Bath with his wife Rachel and is a regular user of the local Children's Centre.

"I run my own business and my wife works as a nurse at the RUH, so our family time is very precious. My wife is the primary carer during the week so at the weekend I like to spend time with the girls on my own, to give Rachel a bit of a break.

"I bring Mair to the Dads' Stay and Play session at Weston Children's Centre every month. It's great to have somewhere to go together where there's a lot to do, we both really enjoy it.

"It's a good way to meet other dads too - it's very social



and I've made some good friends. There can be up to 20 dads and their children there, and it's very different from usual family stay and play sessions. Somehow there's just a different atmosphere with just the dads here, it's a bit more laid back!

"Spending time playing with my daughters is so important. As well as going to the Children's Centre we also go to the park and I take them swimming - it's good to be together to develop that bond.

"I think the Celebrating Fatherhood campaign is a really good way of recognising fathers and how important they are to their children's lives."

Jim Phillips has been the "father" representative on the Celebrating Fatherhood Working Group and helped keep our feet on the ground.

Kurt Knight

The family were referred to social care as there was concern around domestic abuse, substance misuse and criminal behaviours, all of which were having a negative impact upon their children.

The family engaged with social care staff and other professionals, and acknowledged that their behaviour was having a negative impact on their children. In retrospect, Kurt says he was "in a different place" a year ago and does not want to go back there. Both Kurt and his partner say that they and the children are much happier now and they want to continue making positive changes to their lives.

Kurt is now employed and has passed his plumbing course at college. Kurt said: "My life was going nowhere, I thought I'd always be unemployed, but becoming a father



changed everything, I had to take responsibility. I now have a better life and I'm a role-model for my children."

The Headteacher reports that Kurt's daughter today is a different girl. She is still wary of new people in the school but is a much more confident child who is now achieving her academic milestones. Overall, the school feels that the family have made some very positive changes.

Social care has now closed the case and the family are now engaging with universal and targeted services in their area, reaping the rewards of the changes they have made, and are very unlikely to revert back to their previous situation.

Kurt said, "I'm really happy. People are proud of me and there's no better feeling."

Agencies' work with fathers

First Steps Children's Centre

Fathers and male carers were consulted about ways they could get involved with First Steps and this resulted in the development of a sensory garden in a disused area. A team of willing and able dads came and got stuck in to this project to great effect.

Following on from this we started a monthly dads' group looking to support dads who care for or only have time with their children at weekends. Many dads have joined our groups for story times and activities. We feel very fortunate to be engaging with so many men through our First Steps services and have enjoyed being part of the campaign.



Chew Valley Children's Centre

At Chew Valley Children's Centre we have a lively and popular Saturday Dads' Group for families living within the Chew Valley area. It is regularly very well-attended with up to 18 dads coming with their children, who range in age from new-borns up to 11 years old. The group provides an opportunity for dads to spend quality time with their children and also meet up with other dads to socialise. At each session the dads also get the chance to enjoy a bacon roll and a chat while the children have a healthy snack together. The dads are keen to get involved with all the variety of messy play activities offered, including cooking, water play, sand and painting, as well as sessions in the woods at the back of the Children's Centre.

Family Nurse Partnership

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) works intensively with young parents starting in early pregnancy through to when their child is two. The voluntary programme recognises the important role that fathers have and that supportive dads have a direct impact on the emotional wellbeing of both mother and baby. Evidence from programme research shows a high and sustained involvement with fathers in a variety of situations. Fathers have an influence in improving maternal health, child development and parenting behaviours. The desire to do their best acts as a motivator to achieve positive outcomes for both them and their children. Early results within the UK show increased self-esteem, higher aspirations for the future and clients who are more likely to return to education or employment; this is backed up locally where FNP has been launched this March.



Library Service

Bath and North East Somerset Library Service has been pleased to be involved in the Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign and remains committed to providing an inclusive family friendly service. Keynsham Library now runs storytimes on Saturday mornings to encourage working dads to attend with their children. Events celebrating National Bookstart Week last June, which highlights the national bookgifting programme Bookstart, were linked to Fathers' Day and the Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign, with dads and male carers in particular being encouraged to attend. Bath Library hosted an exhibition in March of photographs of local fathers and male carers with their children. Our under 8s team have worked with Children's Services to launch Book Bugs, an exciting project linking male volunteers with boys in early years settings to promote the love of reading.

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Bath Area Play Project

Throughout the Celebrating Fatherhood campaign, Bath Area Play Project have continued working with families and children and see every day the need for and importance of positive male role models in children's lives. Working within the family partnership model has allowed our work with fathers and their families to be based on their strengths; recognise and respect the individual and their experiences and work at their own pace to support and include fathers and male carers to enjoy and embrace the challenges of parenting.

Playwork has been a fantastic way to support and build a relationship with male carers, through group work and individual support. Raising awareness of the importance of play has enabled and



encouraged fathers and males carers to get involved with their children's play and receive support for the specific challenges fathers face as male role models and as parents. We felt it is important to note that not all children have male role models in their lives, but play opportunities should be open to all. The Celebrating Fatherhood campaign, for us, has been about removing the barriers that fathers and male carers face in participating in child and family centred play opportunities.

I hope that the Celebrating Fatherhood year has shown us that we cannot make assumptions about fathers and male carers, and that instead we should celebrate diversity through service delivery which centres on individuals' needs.

Southside father's support

Our two Fathers' Support workers, John and Geoff, supported by two male volunteers, are trained and supervised to provide truly effective emotional and practical support to male carers in families where there are multiple and complex difficulties such as substance abuse, mental ill health and domestic abuse. Our workers offer one to one support and assist male carers to access our Community Hub groups, our walking group Band of Dads and the Blue Hand group which is a support group for men based at Southdown school. In addition John is a substance abuse specialist



relationship between father and child. Geoff also offers considerable experience of setting up and running groups for male carers gained during his many years working for Barnardo's.

and Geoff provides one-to-one bespoke parenting support based on the Incredible Years programme that focuses on strengthening the

Sirona Health Visiting programme

Twenty-two staff in Health Visiting teams were invited to a one-off training day in November focusing on fathers' inclusion and relevant issues relating to fathers of young children and family men.



We are in the fortunate position to have this offered to us by the Fatherhood Institute which is working with the University of Worcester on a research project training staff in Health Visiting teams nationally. This is great news for us as it fits well with our priorities in the new Health Visitor Implementation Plan and current changes

in the services including being selected for the Family Nurse Partnership and working towards the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation.

Health Visitors will be asked to complete a local evaluation and we will be very interested in the responses. Several Health Visitors who attended the multi-agency workshops earlier in the year have identified new ways of including fathers and ensuring that this is part of everyday practice.

Increased training opportunities of this kind can only be beneficial in raising awareness of the issues and giving practitioners more confidence with the fathers and partners they meet, to the ultimate benefit of the children and families involved.

Photo exhibition celebrates fatherhood

The Celebrating Fatherhood 2013 Photographic Exhibition showing a collection of images of local fathers/male carers and their children depicting their special relationship and how they enjoy their time together was a roaring success. Over 6,800 people visited Bath Central Library during the week of the exhibition. Articles were published in the Bath Chronicle and Somerset Guardian and one of the fathers was interviewed on Radio Bristol.

The Celebrating Fatherhood Photographic exhibition is a collection of images of local fathers and male carers with their children, taken at local groups around Bath &

North East Somerset. The images depict their special relationship and how they enjoy their time together and each tells its own story. This exhibition presents the work of five aspiring photographers studying at Bath Spa University who were given the opportunity to showcase their skills. It features images chosen for the way they capture the essence of enjoyment and affection that children receive from spending time with their fathers and male carers.

*Curated by: Marc Le Galle
Photographers: Oliver Merchant, Saskia Rumbelow,
Amea Hole, James Callison, Matt Dear*





CELEBRATING FATHERHOOD

March 2012

Sensory garden

Local dads helped staff at Moorlands Children's Centre to create a sensory garden for the children.



July 2012

Stay & Play Chew Valley CC

This group meets on the third Saturday of each month and is an opportunity for dads to spend quality time with their children and also meet up with other dads to socialise.



April 2012

Play walk

An opportunity for dads to chat with other dads whilst playing and enjoying the towpath walk.



August 2012

Stay & Play Keynsham CC

The Dads' Group at Keynsham Children's Centre provides the opportunity for dads to spend some quality time with their children playing outside of the home.



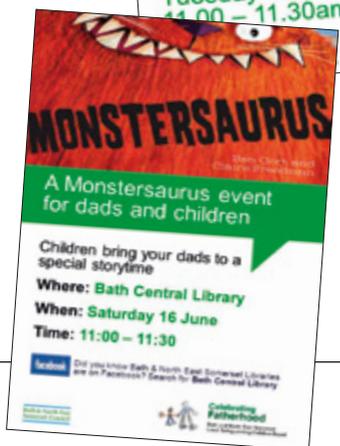
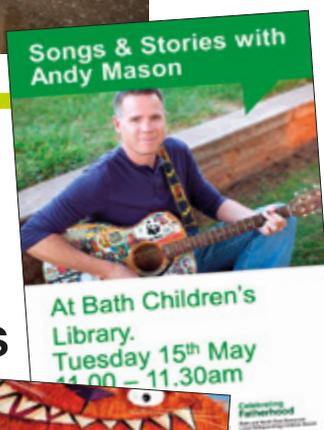
May 2012

Andy Mason

June 2012

Monstersaurus

Singing and story events organised by B&NES Libraries service.



September 2012

Keep calm: dads and fire

Dads and their children lit a fire with flint and steel, made an effective cooking fire and cooked a simple and healthy meal.



CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

October 2012

Muddy play

Fathers and their children were plastered in mud during this fun outdoor school activity!



January 2013

Walk, Talk & Explore, Radstock CC

A superb morning of adventure, investigation, and creativity exploring the natural environment using our imaginations.



November 2012

Stay & Play Weston CC

Over the year 30 dads have attended Saturday sessions. 10-12 dads regularly bring their children along and use the centre's facilities.



February 2013

Balance Bike

A session on how to ditch the stabilisers and get even the youngest children enjoying riding a bike.



December 2013

Stay & Play First Steps CC

The Family Service team run a Saturday stay and play group just for fathers who read stories at story time.



March 2013

Photographic exhibition

A collection of images of local fathers and male carers with their children, taken at local groups around Bath & North East Somerset.



Men in the children's workforce

There are 245 males working directly with children under 11 years in the B&NES local authority out of a workforce of 3,674, representing 6.6%. This includes staff from primary schools, nurseries, pre-schools, children's centres and childminders. Spread the word – we need more men to join the workforce!

Jamie Hall, Assistant Social Worker for B&NES

"I work directly with children and families, sometimes from pre-birth and up to the age of 17. My work is about addressing their un-met needs - it's complex and varied work and depends very much on what the child and family's needs are.

"It may be children who may have emotional, developmental or behavioural problems or parents who are struggling to manage their children. Sometimes there is more of a focus on working with their parents around positive parenting techniques.

"We need more positive male role models in the profession. We've been used to seeing women as the primary child carers but things are changing, there are a lot more fathers taking on the lead parenting role these days for many reasons. Men must be confident in their abilities as fathers and proud of their role."

Ed Leigh-Wood, Swainswick Explorers owner, near Bath

"We look after up to 12 children from 5 to 15. Our passion is the outdoors and we encourage children to explore the local landscape and countryside," says Ed. "Walking and playing outside are so important to children. We all need to be playful – it helps us to have enquiring minds, look at how things work and gain new skills.

"Yes, there are a lot more women working in childcare but it really shouldn't put men off," he says. "It can be a great advantage in this type of work, especially when working with children who might not have many men in their lives. It's very rewarding work. It's a good lifestyle and very flexible – it really is a privilege to look after other people's children and help educate them in a small way."

Andrew Good, Senior Early Years Practitioner for Somer Valley Children's Centres.

"As a male within Children's Centre Services it is all too common to run sessions where only female carers attend with their children. However, recently we have had an increase in fathers attending through promotion of our 'Dads' group'. Dads attending a group puts a whole new perspective on the play that happens and children thrive on this different dimension. Fathers and male carers inject a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm giving children license to explore and take controlled risks which is of great benefit for their development."

"Many dads I have spoken to find it challenging attending groups which are female dominated as they feel they are being judged. I agree with them, they are being watched but only because of the fun they are having with their children. I also remind the dads that the quality time they are spending together is hugely beneficial towards their child's development and learning. The main message

from me is to remember that children learn through play and play is what we dads are pretty good at!"

Bertie Goffe, Deputy Manager, Children & Families Assessment & Intervention Team

"It's interesting to be asked what it's like being a male worker in large social care department. Obviously we're in a minority as men, and there are also more men in higher positions and these are things that are often talked about as differences. What I appreciate and enjoy most is the atmosphere and insight that is created by having largely female colleagues. Having more women around means there is more emotional intelligence about!"

"I think it is the combination of my workplace having both more women and being a social care setting that makes it a more positive place to be. Because, for the majority of the people who chose to do this kind of work it is a conscious and positive choice to be involved with people who are marginalised and struggling in our world. The kinds of people who choose these jobs are, in my experience, often people who value a real connection with others, take time to listen when you need it, understand what we all need as humans to thrive and be happy and enjoy promoting these values. So when you have experienced a positive social care workplace, why work anywhere else?"

Rod Dixon – Children Missing Education Officer

"As a Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO), my main role is to work in collaboration with colleagues and teams within Children's Services and with other agencies such as the Police and voluntary organisations, to identify children and young people within the Local Authority who are missing or at risk of missing education and intervene to ensure provision is made for them. I support and assist families and their children in the event of poor school attendance or school exclusion, and seek to rebuild or strengthen the links between the family and school to support reintegration and a return to education.

"The majority of my work is with families who live in socially challenging environments and nine times out of ten; I am working directly with mothers who are either single parents or the main carer in the household. However many of the issues that I deal with on a daily basis are often related to the influence of a father's behaviour on their children and the role that they play (or do not play), within the family.

"I feel that men should be proportionately represented in the children's workforce because many of the children and mothers that I work with, have only had negative experiences with the men in their lives and it is important for them to see that men can be supportive, empathetic and act as positive male role models."

Supporting the children's workforce

Engaging the workforce with fathers

A failure to know about men has been a feature in many serious case reviews where information about men was not passed on or pursued by caseworkers. Workers tended to focus on mothers, who were often seen as the primary carers, and little was known about fathers or other men in the household, their relationships with the mother and the extent to which they were involved with the children. Low levels of engagement are also reported in relation to men who pose a risk to children.

In Baynes & Holland's (2010) English study over a third of fathers had no contact with a social worker prior to the first child protection meeting. In Roskill's (2011) file audit of cases involving domestically violent men, the father was neither seen nor contacted by phone in 32% of the core assessments studied. It is also the case that practitioners know very little about, or do not always engage with birth fathers that are not living with their children, or are not visibly present at home visits.

This pattern reflects the wider problem of the lack of information about, and lack of engagement with, men in child health and welfare more broadly. Fathers can have a significant, positive impact on their children's outcomes. For example, research shows that children with highly involved fathers do better at school and are more empathic in the way that they behave. More and more fathers want to be involved in their children's upbringing even if they are no longer living with the children and their mother. However, many fathers find this difficult and feel they are not recognised or encouraged to get involved by schools or health services. Services and workers can still be very mother-focused and fathers can, often inadvertently, be made to feel unwelcome, uncomfortable or excluded.

Engagement and workforce development

The workforce needs to be confident and skilled at engaging with fathers: recruitment, induction, training and supervision processes should be used to strengthen knowledge, skills and attitudes in supporting father-child relationships. The key qualities staff need in order to engage well with fathers and significant males in a child's life are largely the same as they need for any direct work with families (good interpersonal skills, empathy, commitment etc.), but research finds that 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), the 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.

All workers should therefore be given opportunities to build their skills and confidence at engaging with fathers and male carers. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as supervision sessions that routinely address issues of engagement and non-engagement with fathers and on-going training events on different aspects of father inclusive services.

Simon Ratcliff

Training and Development Manager for B&NES



Simon is responsible for providing learning opportunities that support the aims of the Children & Young People's Plan and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The training offer promotes multi- and inter-agency working across the Children's Workforce through a programme of courses that develop a shared and common core of skills and knowledge on a range of topics which include child development, participation, equalities and child protection. For more information visit: www.bathnes.gov.uk/childrensworkforcetraining

Celebrating Fatherhood workshops

In Bath & North East Somerset there have been a number of workshops which have provided workers with an opportunity to explore issues from the father's perspective and more are planned.

1. Working with fathers

The first of the Celebrating Fatherhood workshops aimed at educating the workforce on the importance of the role fathers/male carers play in their children's lives was held in May and conducted by Jeszemma Garratt from the Fatherhood Institute.

2. Engaging fathers in play

This workshop was led by Michael Follett, an independent trainer who has extensive play work experience. This workshop aimed to give an understanding of playwork and to create an understanding of the father's experience.

3. Men, masculinity and messiness

This workshop was led by Daryl Dugdale, Teaching Fellow at the University of Bristol and addressed the strengths and challenges of engaging with fathers in the child protection context.

4. Working with fathers and domestic violence

This workshop considered how to engage fathers in our work to address issues of domestic abuse and the effect of this on children. It focused on how to include and motivate fathers, what has worked well and some of the difficulties encountered.

5. Open Space workshop

Facilitated by Liz Martins, this male only workshop gave the children's workforce participants an opportunity to explore together how male practitioners in children's services can make their full contribution in a workforce largely made up of female staff, and how male practitioners can support 'fatherhood' in their work.

Research on the family roles of fathers

Working With Fathers: An overview of the research

This study is a review of the research from 2000 to 2010 about the barriers to better father engagement, as well as the very limited evidence on what works with maltreating fathers. Little is known about what works in engaging men, but there are some promising indicators from family support and child protection practice contexts.

www.reconstruct.co.uk/docs/research/200_Working_w_Fathers_Oct2012.pdf

Understanding Fatherhood

This research focuses on the claims made by social commentators over several years. It suggests that men's involvement in family life is changing, even intensifying, alongside other pressures that either push men away from their children or towards greater involvement in family life. In this report, a summary of current thinking about the nature of contemporary fatherhood is given.

www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/understanding-fatherhood.pdf

Dads caring for disabled children

Scope shares an eye-opening new survey of UK dad carers which provides a dramatic insight into their experiences of looking after disabled children. It illustrates how fathers aren't getting the support they need and are left feeling marginalised.

www.scope.org.uk/news/fathers-survey

Fathers fear the social stigma of working part-time

The report, 'Rise of the part-time dads', revealed that 57% of respondents who currently work full-time would like to reduce their hours, but the findings also suggest that they are apprehensive about how they will be perceived by society.

www.mmtracka.co.uk/1/link.php?M=4886079&N=9443&L=11848&F=H

Get Dads reading

Booktrust has launched a new campaign to encourage dads in Britain to read more with their children. Research shows that in most families it's mums who do the majority of reading with children, but we want dads to have the chance to enjoy time reading with their children too. Only one in eight dads takes the lead with reading to their children. 25% of fathers blame working late for not reading to their children.

www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/children/get-dads-reading/
www.booktrust.org.uk/news-blogs-and-press/news/185/

Dads and male carers are important

A survey of 2,000 British parents which looked at the role of dads found its importance in their children's upbringing and the positive self perception of dads as a role model for their children:

- 73.3 per cent of parents said dads were very or extremely important to their child's development
- 87.17 per cent of dads interviewed felt they were a good role model for their children and the majority (74 per cent) of parents thought dads were equally important to their sons as well as daughters.

The research revealed that when it came to the level of involvement in their child's upbringing dads still feel marginalised. Nearly 20 per cent (19.62) of dads feel left out of their child's upbringing whilst 62 per cent of parents thought dads could be more involved with their children.

When it came to which parent children enjoy spending more time with, the research showed that, whilst kids may be spending less time with their dad, they enjoy the time with dad and want more time with them:

- The majority of parents 32.85 per cent said their child spends between two and four hours a day with their dad.
- 70.54 per cent of respondents thought children spend the most time with mum.
- 37.10 per cent of respondents believed their children enjoy spending more time with their mum whilst 34 per cent felt their child enjoyed spending more time with their dad.

Source: *Parenting UK*, December 2010. More research can be found on the B&NES Celebrating Fatherhood web pages



The main obstacles still facing fathers

Duncan Fisher OBE will be speaking at the closing event and will examine what happens to family dynamics in many families after a baby is born - why fathers tend to feel displaced and mothers feel overwhelmed with responsibilities and why the majority of parental relationships deteriorate after a baby is born. At the moment he is particularly thinking about how stories of motherhood and fatherhood - which exist in the culture around us, but also deep inside ourselves - drive our feelings, which often overpower our rational responses and make us feel like failures. Duncan will look at how parenting programmes that engage with mums and dads and carers together, and help them work as a team around the baby, work better than engaging with them separately.

Duncan Fisher OBE

Duncan Fisher has worked in the child and family sector since 1996. His mission is to promote support for families that includes fathers and supports parental teamwork. He co-founded the Fatherhood Institute and www.Dad.info and wrote the book about parenting dynamics, *Baby's Here! Who Does What?* Duncan is a social entrepreneur, specialising in start-ups. His current projects are creating Kids in the Middle, a new on-line support service for children in separated families funded entirely by teenagers; Maternity Assist, a family inclusive digital extension to maternity care at Liverpool Women's Hospital; MumsandDadsNet.com, a new social network for mothers and fathers; and the Child & Family Blog, a tool to communicate child and family research into the media, with Cambridge and Princeton Universities.



A legacy – Book Bugs project

One of the projects we hope will grow and develop beyond this campaign is Book Bugs which links male volunteers with primary schools and nurseries to encourage and help 3-5 year-old boys enjoy books and reading. We have recruited 8 male volunteers in the Paulton and Radstock area for our pilot. These volunteers are undergoing a number of training sessions to prepare them for engaging boys in books. The pilot aims to make a difference to the boys reading levels which research shows is lagging behind the girls levels.



Jane Southwell

Early Years Consultant

Jane is an experienced early years teacher, who joined B&NES in 2007. Her work concentrates on supporting the quality of early years practice, with a particular focus on communication, language and literacy development. Jane has worked with colleagues in the Early Years team and the Library Service to develop the pilot Book Bugs project, which aims to link male volunteers with reception classes and nurseries to help boys develop a lasting love of books and reading.



KEY MESSAGES TO:

Fathers and male carers:

- Play a vital part in the life of your child/ children, research says you do make a difference.
- Read to your child/children daily as it will make a difference.
- Read our new leaflet *Information for Fathers: Where to get help*.

The workforce:

- Be inclusive of fathers/male carers in your role and service.
- Include fathers/male carers in meetings and in correspondence.
- Don't ignore fathers/male carers even if they are not present in the home.

Celebrating Fatherhood outcomes

	2011/12	2012/13	Improvement
Number of fathers and male carers reached by campaign	0	1642	↑
Number of fathers using services in Children's Centres	1666	3772	↑
Dual heritage fathers involvement in services	283	475	↑
Fathers enjoying their children's learning (Fathers' Friday)	200	1122	↑
Per cent of fathers involved in parenting programmes (Incredible Years, Strengthening Families & Strengthening Communities)	24%	26%	↑
Number of fathers involved in parenting programmes (Incredible Years, Strengthening Families & Strengthening Communities)	16	19	↑
Number of fathers using Parent Support Advisers through targeted schools	Not in post	36	↑
Per cent of fathers attending Special Educational Needs statementing meetings	2%	25%	↑
Per cent of fathers attending Child Protection conferences	37%	42%	↑
Number of expectant fathers present at the antenatal visits by Family Nurse Partnership	Not in post	59%	↑
Number of events delivered for fathers/male carers	5	79	↑
Number of training courses with father's focus delivered to professionals	0	6	↑
Workers attending training programmes with a focus on fathers	0	101	↑
Number of media coverage with fathers as the focus	0	19	↑

USEFUL LINKS & CONTACTS

B&NES Celebrating Fatherhood:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/celebratingfatherhood

Fatherhood Institute: www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

Dads Info: www.dad.info

Fathers Plus: www.fathersplus.org

Dads' Space: www.dads-space.com

Dad Talk: www.dadtalk.co.uk

Dads UK: www.dads-uk.co.uk

Gingerbread: www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk

Contact a family: www.cafamily.org.uk

Kids and Dads: www.kidsanddads.org.uk

BBC parenting: www.bbc.co.uk/parenting

The Celebrating Fatherhood team

Sara Willis

Service Manager 0-11 Outcomes

Sara's role is to lead and manage the 0-11 Outcomes Service in the provision of early prevention services for children in the early years and primary school sectors.

Sara takes a strategic view and then works with her Senior Management Team to ensure an early offer is in place to deliver services to those families most in need. Sara has been the driving force behind the Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign on behalf of the LSCB and the Council and has encouraged multi-agency buy-in for this campaign.



Andrew Sandles

Office Manager 0-11 Outcomes

Andrew is an accomplished project manager, versatile and experienced, with a track record in managing people and projects, producing accurate and timely management information reports to managers at all levels. Andrew has co-ordinated the Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign and been the glue that has held it all together. Andrew's role has been varied from producing the monthly e-bulletins, putting together the photographic exhibition, collecting the data from various sources, organising the final celebration event and putting together this booklet!



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Published in June 2013 as part of the Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign of Bath and North East Somerset Council

Bath and North East Somerset Council's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was established in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006. The purpose of the LSCB is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset. The LSCB brings together key local agencies working with children and families, ensuring that policies, procedures and services are effective in supporting children and families in need, in order to prevent significant harm.

For further information on the Celebrating Fatherhood Campaign email andrew_sandles@bathnes.gov.uk or visit our webpages www.bathnes.gov.uk/celebratingfatherhood