

Practice Guide

Family Help & Children's Social Care

Family Help - Father Inclusive Practice, Halton

Background, purpose and rationale

We know that fathers play a vital role in the well-being and development of children, contributing to emotional stability, social skills, and academic success. Yet, there is clear evidence that the present support environment in the UK engages fathers ineffectively, in a broader context where there are very significant hurdles to the development and delivery of service assistance that is father-inclusive.

Embedding father-inclusive practice ensures that fathers feel valued and supported to engage fully in their children's lives. It challenges traditional stereotypes, breaks down barriers to participation, and creates a welcoming environment where fathers feel seen and heard

What we did to improve children and families' experiences

A core principle underpinning our approach is the agreement to promote recognition of fathers as essential caregivers. We have secured strong leadership commitment and ensured development of policies, and a strategy, to support father-inclusive practice.

We have listened to fathers' views and reviewed and amended service design and delivery as a result - enhancing service accessibility and engagement of fathers, including by introducing Digital Interventions through the Family Hub Online Platform.

To support implementation, we have invested in the workforce and sought to foster community partnerships to encourage father-friendly environments. This has been delivered through a variety of mechanisms, first hosting and delivering a professionals' conference; and through providing training on father-inclusive practices, to help ensure staff and volunteers understand the importance of engaging fathers in child development.

The embedding and sustainability of the work is further enabled through the creation of a network of Fatherhood Champions and keen attention to aspects such as adopting Father-Inclusive Language & illustrations, alongside creating welcoming physical environments that support and include fathers.

What was the impact?

The impact of the father-inclusive practice approach has led to some key changes in our service delivery including

- Ensuring evidence-based parenting programmes are offered out of hours
- During initial contact an offer is made to fathers to attend all parenting programmes
- Introduction of a male-only Gateway Programme for male victims of Domestic Abuse
- Ongoing commitment to fathers' voice with a father being part of interview panel for Dad Matters Co-ordinator post

We have gathered significant qualitative feedback to demonstrate the impact this has had for practitioners and those delivering services:

"Learning about how male hormones have a huge impact on how he feels/behaves during pregnancy and the first 2 years is something I never realised before and something I think is extremely important for parents to know. This means I can help educate the men I encounter."

"I have updated the dads' section on www.Calmyourmind.co.uk and am looking to make specific marketing material such as posters and business cards that highlight what I have learned."

"I have learned that many systems do not accommodate the dad's information such as contact details – only mums. Knowing this means I can help raise this awareness and lobby for change."

"Having a staff member who is a Fatherhood Champion has definitely helped us to consider dads at all points and adapt our practice to support this. It has helped improve practitioner confidence across the team to engage with dads."

Resources

[Father Inclusive Presentation](#)

Fatherhood Institute – www.fatherhoodinstitute.org

Father Inclusion Hub – www.fatherinclusion.org

Find out more

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