

Supporting Thames Valley Fathers

Report of a Conference
held at Reading Town Hall
on December 6th 2001

July 2002



'Supporting Thames Valley Fathers – Developing Skills, Building Services'

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Introduction

Sue Raikes, Chief Executive,
Thames Valley Partnership

Our interest stems from our work on early year's intervention in a report "Never Too Early" published in March 2001. Our researcher was Mog Ball and she is now part of the national Sure Start evaluation team.

In the eight projects we looked at in Oxford and Slough we found that fathers were very rarely involved or engaged. Parenting programmes are very much geared to mums – and dads are likely to feel uncomfortable, excluded and undervalued. This is not the message we want to give about the role of fathers in society. But to change this requires real commitment and action from a wide range of people working in childcare and with females and children.

We very much hope this unique event is a start. We hope by bringing together policy makers and practitioners we can be taking the first step in developing a regional network for fathers. Clearly there has been a lot of interest with over 50 different organisations attending this event. It is particularly important to have so many representatives from Sure Start – a major opportunity to innovate and create change in some of the most disadvantage communities.

Family Policy and Fathers – The National Picture

Carey Oppenheim
Senior Policy Advisor the Prime Minister
No. 10 Policy Unit

- In 1974 1 in 25 babies were born to unmarried partners who jointly registered the birth. By 1999 – 1 in 3.
- Employment – 7% men worked part time in 2000 compared to 39% of women.
- Male employment rate – 94% to 79% over 40 year period to 1999 compared to rise from 47% to 69% among women.
- Occupational and vertical segregation remain entrenched.
- Dramatic fall in the number of male sole earner families with children from 43% in 1979 to 24% in 1998/99.
- Use of flexible working arrangements – higher among women – but just how few men and women have them.
- 1 in 4 children will experience divorce or separation of their parents before 16th birthday.
- Acrimonious relationship breakdowns linked to poor outcomes for children.
- 1995/96 four-fifths of non-resident fathers had seen child in the last year. Half every week --3% said they never saw their child.
- Key determinants of regular contact: in paid employment, living nearby, having only one child, living in a household with no children.
- Time with children – men reported spending three-quarters of an hour a day caring for and playing with their children – just under half that reported by women.
- Extended Family – men less likely than women to keep in contact with close relatives and contact between mother and her child is generally more frequent than between father and adult child.

Young Disadvantaged Fathers

- Home Office funding for funding for 5 projects – multi-agency
- Teenage Pregnancy Unit focused on young men as well
- Sure Start guidance
- Existing initiatives for young/disadvantaged fathers
- National Families and Parenting Institute mapping exercise

Employment

- 2 weeks paid paternity leave
- Right to request flexible work and duty on employers to give serious consideration
- Parental leave
- Sex discrimination legislation to help fathers secure part-time working
- Recruitment of men to work in public sector (e.g. Childcare)

Parenting Education/Prisons

- Youth Offender Institutions – innovative work with young fathers
- Bounty Guide to Fatherhood (Fathers Direct)
- Citizenship Education (relationship education)
- Health visitor role
- Scottish TV advertising

Relationship Breakdown

- Target to increase contact
- Parental responsibility/rights for unmarried parents who jointly register
- New guidance on contact disputes
- Parentline Plus helpline – working with Child Support Agency
- Shared care in formula for Child Support

Where could we go from here?

1. Data and information
2. Overarching strategy – joined up government (government wide target)
3. Policy development:-
 - New Deals
 - Post divorce/separation support
 - Culture at work to increase flexible work among fathers
 - Tax/benefit policies geared to part-time/flexible work
 - Paternity leave and health
 - Learning from good practice

Best Practice Working with Dads

David Bartlett, Services Manager, Fathers Direct



Supporting Thames Valley Fathers



Developing Father-Friendly Services

- Attitudes and priorities
- Fathers' experiences + needs
- Effective marketing
- Services



Why not work with dads?

- Not motivated
- Not central to children's lives
- Child protection concerns
- Inhibit, scare, assault women
- Hostile, violent to staff
- Unconfident, deskilled staff



Why work with dads?

- Fathers important to children
- Supporting dads can help mothers
- Fathers need support too
- Men have different experiences + viewpoints



Mothers with postnatal depression

Mums: 'dads are main emotional support after birth'
Lewis, C. (2001) What good are dads?

Fathers' looking after older children often crucial
White, D. & Woollett, E. (1991) Father's role in neo-natal period

Mother-father relationship affects mums' coping ability
Berman, P. & Pederson, F. (Eds) (1987) Men's Transition to Parenthood



Breast - feeding

Successful breastfeeding influenced by father's attitude and support
Whelan, A & Lupton, P (1998) Promoting successful breastfeeding among women with a low income



Child Protection

Fathers as abusers

Effectiveness of Perpetrator Programmes

Fathers as protectors

Physical violence to children:

49% by mothers

40% by fathers

5% by stepfathers

3% by stepmothers

NSPCC (2000) *Child Maltreatment in the UK*



Father Involvement

Child development affected by parent's warmth + kindness + consistency more than by gender

Quality more than quantity

Fathers as responsive to young children as mothers

Lewis, C. (2001) What good are dads?



Information about local fathers' lives

Specific events (open days)

Talk to men away from partners + other men

Ask them about own dads, becoming a dad

THEN....



Effective marketing

What's in it for them?

Leaflet aimed at men

Use local media

Use settings men feel comfortable with

Images of famous and 'local' dads

Use 'engaged' dads to attract 'new recruits'



Services – Preparing the Ground

Proactively engage dads

Warm, confident welcome

Father-friendly setting: posters, books, leaflets, magazines, venue

Schedule services when local men can attend

Male staff + volunteers



Service Delivery

Offer mix of services

Social + fun events

Physical + sports activities

Skills-based + practical activities

Work in partnership with dads



First Impressions

dubious
sceptical
uneasy
anxious
bloody terrified



Lasting Impression

best thing they had ever done, both for themselves and their children

IPPR (2000)

PERSPECTIVES ON FATHERHOOD – THE LOCAL PICTURE

The Social Context of Parenting in the Thames Valley

Prof. Kevin Stenson
Social Policy Research Group
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
High Wycombe

'Life is sweet in the Thames Valley' or is it? We cannot neatly confine poverty into defined areas – there are significant pockets of real and severe relative deprivation in parts of the Thames Valley. There is a picture of the English idyll, Inspector Morse and a successful high-tech revolution. However, Roger Graeff has unearthed lots of problems and many in the Thames Valley have not shared in the economic miracle. There has been minimal government help – lots of initiatives carried out on a shoestring which have been unsustainable due to lack of funding and infrastructure.

1) Region of Contrasts: -

- 2.1m population
- English idyll? Urban demographic complexity
- Visible ethnic minorities: - 20% High Wycombe, 10% Reading

2) Neo-Liberal Success Story:-

- Economic restructuring
- Minimal planning and help from EU/ UK Government
- Scant funding for social problems research

3) Costs of Success: -

- Deprivation and inequality amidst affluence - Milton Keynes/Oxfordshire/ Buckinghamshire - Contains 13 wards within 25 most deprived in UK
- Aggregate statistics. Conceal deprivation at enumeration district level
- High property values
- Diminishing social housing stock
- Dual income families
- Poor transport links and strained infrastructure
- Longer commuting time/less time for fathering
- Inward migration: - limited family support networks
- Demographic complexity with waves of immigration
- Fear of crime
- Social conflict between young people
- Over-protection of children
- Retreat from public sphere

4) Family Services vibrant but under-funded and mother oriented

- Need to tailor services recognising class, rural/urban and ethnic variations
- Dilemmas of targeting services – do not neglect affluent dads

Who is a Thames Valley Dad?

Steve Farrall-Hyder
Assistant Team Manager, Family Support Service
Wokingham District Council

Take a trip to Asda, Tesco, B and Q, garden centres, swimming pools, leisure centres, McDonalds, Reading F.C., Oxford United, and Wycombe Wanderers, to the churches, mosques, and synagogues. Here you will find 'Thames Valley dad'. Young dads, older dads, granddads, being with their children. What is he doing? Shopping, playing, worshipping, feeding the baby, laughing, joking, stressing out, cuddling, directing, comforting, negotiating with mums. These are normal, everyday experiences of fathers in family life.

Diversity

But Thames Valley dads are not an homogenous group. A dad's involvement with his children varies from family to family, even within similar communities or lifestyles. He can be White but with a clear identity as English, Welsh, Irish or Scottish. He may be Polish, or from other parts of Europe; recently arrived, or securely settled. He may be Black or Asian, born in the Thames Valley - or having travelled from the West Indies or the Indian Subcontinent in the 1950s and 1960s to settle here. He may be of dual heritage, from any of these groups. He may be a practising or lapsed Christian, Jew, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist - or none of these.

He may be employed full time, part time, daytime or night time, in shift work with overtime opportunities. He may be professionally qualified, or a director of a high profile national organisation. He may be a skilled or unskilled manual worker, a professional sportsman or actor. He may be out of work, or registered disabled, solvent or hopelessly in debt. When not at work, he may have a number of leisure pursuits; sporty, cerebral, artistic, or off the wall. He may be Jamie Oliver in the kitchen. His accommodation may be settled and permanent, or temporary and unsatisfactory. He may be Bob the Builder around the home, or sometimes more like Laurel and Hardy.

He may be married for the first time and living with his children, he may live in a household that includes several generations. He may be a stepfather, a brand new dad, a divorcee or having just celebrated his golden wedding anniversary. He may be a 'home dad' looking after his children while his partner works to support the family. He may be gay or trans-gendered. He may be a single parent through divorce, separation or having been bereaved. He may be separated or divorced from the mother and be a non-resident dad. He may see his children regularly by agreement, or have contact as directed through the Family Courts. He may have no contact with his children by choice or by court mandate.

His children may not know that he is their father, or may believe another man to be. In the majority of these situations, he will provide varying degrees of love, stability, protection and commitment to his children. In a small number of cases he will neglect and/or hurt and abuse his children. He may be mentally and physically well, or experience depression, heart disease, a physical or learning impairment. He may be addicted to alcohol or drugs, and have no money left for anything else.

Deprived Local Communities

In my time as a social worker in field, residential, and family centres, as a dad and as a resident of the Thames Valley, I have seen men in all these circumstances. Within this wide range of experience, there are reflected the strengths and difficulties of all local social and occupational groups. However, there are also multiple difficulties concentrated in particular areas where the economic boom has failed to make its mark. Endemic problems can be found, such as poor accommodation, health outcomes and educational achievement, intractable family conflict and domestic violence, criminal behaviour and drug and alcohol abuse. There will be patterns of economic inactivity, unstable and temporary employment, teenage pregnancies with little involvement from young fathers. Young men who are prone to depression and illness, not helped by social expectations that constrain them in macho straitjackets, and who have not learned to express feelings or to develop warm relationships with partners, friends and family.

Services for Dads

Statutory services tend to see fathers struggling and under pressure, or where there is conflict with the mothers' needs. Social Services still concentrate on Child Protection as a crisis response to family difficulties. The Probation Service engage with offenders (and a small number of their victims) and the work is largely problem focused. The fathers who come to the attention of the police, probation and the courts are invariably under pressure, and may be separated from their children during periods of incarceration. They may be taking part in a formal, court mandated interventions such as the Anti-Violence Groupwork Programme, or Aggression Replacement Training. In all these contexts, fathers are seen as a risk rather than a resource.

When broader projects (normally based within the Health Service, Family Centres or the voluntary sector) have engaged with violent/abusive men on a voluntary basis, this has aroused suspicion of collusion, particularly when staffed by male workers. Social Services and the Reading Domestic Violence Forum remain concerned about the behaviour of violent men who have not been prosecuted. These are real concerns that need to be worked through by discussion. But these wider services do have much to offer fathers. It is important these groups develop their own character arising from the needs of local fathers. My own vision is the development of self help groups which complement statutory services which fathers can directly access immediately and dip in and out of over time.

Here are some current local services, which have emerged as I prepared this paper. There are good local examples of statutory work, voluntary endeavour and inter-agency working. They are not an exhaustive list, but they are an important contribution to the support needs of local fathers. There are bound to be others, which this conference will identify. In due course, we would like to produce a comprehensive booklet on services for dads in the Thames Valley area.

(i) Reading Family Centre. At one point the only service for Dads was a Mens Group. This operated at a time when no women were in the building, for the men to discuss issues about masculinity, their own experiences of being parented and the feelings this evoked. This helped the men respond better to their own children. While this was supportive for those men, we realised that a number of dads wanted individual counselling, couple counselling or side by side parenting sessions with their children. After discussion within the staff team of 25 with three male workers we agreed to keep Thursday evenings free as a men's place between 6 pm and 8 pm. and then extended to between 4 and 9 pm. It was helpful to maintain two male workers for these services but over time female workers either helped in the programmes or dads chose to work with them. We also developed a home support programme all day on Mondays with a mixed team. This proved helpful in engaging dads with newborn babies and often led to other services of specific interest to that dad. We were able to give information about other services in the community.

(ii) Woodley and Wokingham Family Centres. Here we work holistically with families using the assessment framework. We are careful to plan meetings at times that fathers can attend. Often if you offer evenings then families will make space during the day. Fathers attend the drop in and grandfathers attend the grandparents support group. Family work includes dads in evenings and Saturdays, also couple work is a popular service at present. There are still a number of dads who will not participate because we are a part of social services and perceived as the enemy. We would be interested to hear from Family Centres in the voluntary sector about whether this is also the case for them. It is not impossible to work with these dads but it is an obstacle, which needs thought to overcome. In Woodley we have offered Saturday morning workshops on fatherhood jointly with the local parenting network at the community centre.

(iii) Woodley Baptist Church Centre. A men's breakfast group which operates monthly at different venues on a rota basis.

(iv) Reading Mens support group. Operates at the local mental health centre one evening a month, but arranges social events on top of themed discussions about masculinity, creativity, fatherhood, and coping with life stresses.

(v) Another Reading men's group. Meets weekly on Wednesday evenings and explores the challenges, confusions and joys of being a man today, relating as partners, friends and fathers to sons and daughters.

(vi) Support group for fathers of disabled children in Bracknell. They organise social activities in a pub fortnightly but also have the opportunity to share experiences, helpful ways of coping and parenting tips.

(vii) Two fathers and toddlers groups in Reading. One at Whitley in Cintra Park on Thursday mornings. Also one on Saturday mornings at the warehouse in Cumberland Road.

(viii) Parents and Children Together. Run parents drop-ins and support groups Reading. There are also services at community centres like Stress Busters at Waterloo Meadows.

(ix) SureStart in Whitley. Just launched a parents group, which includes dads of pre-school children.

(x) Youth offending teams and Social Services youth resources. Work with adolescents who often have strained relationships with their families at a time when they need helpful role models to reduce conflict, criminal behaviour, extreme risk taking at a time of transmission to adulthood. All these will limit life chances without support. Group work with boys, girls and mixed groups gives these young people opportunities to development strategies to cope, and safe role models to develop relationships based on mutual trust. Macho culture simply does not work for boys and limits their opportunities to express a range of feelings leaving them vulnerable to mental illness, depression and suicide.

(xi) After care mentoring schemes. An acknowledgement that social services need to support young people who were in care through their early adulthood. Many social services departments have developed mentoring schemes. In Wokingham this is part of the role of the Children's Rights officer. Mentoring develops a role, which used to be undertaken by apprenticeships where established workers took new workers under their wing learning the trade and expectations of behaviour.

(xii) Youth and community projects. Local centres are a rich resource of activities, advice, and skills development projects with computers and video equipment. Locally there is a youth forum with an elected shadow cabinet. There are also confidential counselling services for young people in Reading at No. 5 and at Wokingham ARC. ARC have also developed a mentoring scheme of 16 - 18 year olds supporting younger children at local schools in areas such as bullying. Reading Refocus are a mentoring scheme which provides support for young black men in prison.

(xiii) Health-based projects. Community midwives have been running a parenting group for young fathers on remand at Reading for the last four years. There is certainly a growing interest by health visitors involving dads in the under fives. Health professionals are also involved with social services, education and their own GPs in multi-agency teams such as the local teenage pregnancy initiative which needs to look at work with young men as well as women.

Priorities for Change?

Services for, and initiatives aimed at, fathers have developed in a piecemeal fashion, and there is a need for a multi-agency strategy in order to offer an integrated response to fathers and therefore their families; and for detailed assessment of the particular roles and needs of Thames Valley dads. My own priorities would be:

1. More work on understanding the real roles fathers have and helping dads believe their importance in their child's future development whether they are living with them or not. For involved dads that means celebrating what they do and encouraging more. For struggling dads that means encouraging what they can do and identifying other male role models to help alongside. The Courts need to take onboard dads as a resource in contact and residence decisions. For uninvolved dads, services need to understand if there are possibilities for fuller involvement. Grandfathers and uncles may also be well placed to be involved in the upbringing of children.
2. Encouraging dads positive involvement in the early years has a major impact on sustained, positive life chances for children. This includes a focus on co-operative non-violent relationships between parents, and helping dads believe their importance in their child's future development whether they are living with them or not. Sure Start areas have the opportunity to develop this work - but needs to go far wider.
3. Social Services need to continue developing ways of engaging dads in child protection. To see dads as a resource where possible. Family group conferencing in Reading has considerable potential as an approach but needs to sustain dads' involvement. Multi-agency working is crucial and more likely to identify long-lasting preventative services from both the voluntary and public sectors.
4. Identify what works with fathers who are violent and abusive to minimise longer-term harm to their own families and others they may form. For those who are prosecuted that will be supervised by probation. There is little on offer for those who are unlikely to be prosecuted. Reading Safer Families together with probation expertise published a proposal in June 2001 for developing an anti-violence project in the area.
5. On a national level we need policies that will encourage shorter and/or more flexible working hours, and the development of positive male role models in advertising, the media and public life rooted in what dads do. My message to Gordon Brown is to think about the budget.

Valuing Minority Ethnic Communities

Melvyn Davis

There is a need to recognise that minority ethnic groups are not homogenous, not a tangible group. We need to communicate in a tangible way if we are to value people and talk to individuals to find out 'their' particular needs. If we do not value and respect differences we will not engage or value minority groups.

Black communities are becoming more fragmented and extended families are breaking up and many are very isolated. Ethnic groups are also becoming more and more complex in their make-up. There is a need therefore to provide support and initiatives that create new and vibrant communities and develop 'extended-family type' supports.

If we want to recruit black minorities and engage with them there is a need to build partnerships with existing groups – black churches/faith groups – and take our services there to them.

In order to feel valued and have a place in society as much time, money, resources and high-profile services need to be provided for black and ethnic minorities.

Health Visitor Support for Fathers

Linda Price

As a health visitor I have set up and facilitated dad support groups for fathers of new babies. It is clear that fathers' needs are not being met – fathers often work a long way from home, commute etc and have no social networks. Not all change is positive when a couple have a baby.

The groups were set up to explore some of the difficult issues, changing relationships etc. New dads evenings were held in a local pub, local support network was developed and they retired to the bar afterwards! The fathers wanted increased unstructured talking time and valued each others support. The group ran over seven weekly evening sessions and encouraged supportive friendships.

Focussing on Children

Mog Ball

The rationale for focussing on improved provision of services for fathers must still be the needs of children and improving life-chances for them. The current situation of 1 in 4 children living on below half the national wage is unacceptable - in the 'affluent' Thames Valley there are still real pockets of child poverty and deprivation.

While developing services for fathers will lead to more positive outcomes in terms of their relationships with their children, we must not forget that work in the early years field has been pioneered by women and continuing recognition needs to be given to that fact. Most carers and teachers particularly in the early years and primary schools are women and encouragement needs therefore to be given to achieving a more balanced mix of staffing and recruitment in this area.

Lessons Learned from Work with Socially Excluded Fathers in the United States

Nigel Vann
National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and
Community Leadership, Washington DC

Some of the major lessons learned over the last 25 years in the U.S. are:

- The fathers of children on welfare share similar characteristics to the mothers of those children - they are likely to have dropped out of school and are unlikely to have job skills that allow them to obtain "living wage" jobs. Low-income men face the same barriers to full-time, stable employment, as do low-income women. In fact, African-American men may face more barriers than their female counterparts (some studies have shown that employers prefer to hire African-American women rather than African-American men). Social welfare policy that ignores this will not be effective.
- There is a difference between "dead beat" dads (who have the money to pay child support, but choose not to) and "dead broke" dads (who simply don't have the money to pay their child support bill - and who need help to get in a position to do so).
- Most fathers are involved in the lives of their children during the first 2-3 years of their child's life, but the majority of unmarried fathers become less involved as their children get older - and this can have negative consequences for their children. The reasons for this lessening involvement is likely to be a complicated mix of personal, community, societal and public policy issues.
- Fledgling program efforts have shown that we can begin to turn this around; some private funders have acknowledged this, and been key supporters of the development of a new family support field; public policy makers and funders are gradually starting to pay heed.
- Fathers will come to a program that provides them assistance with parenting and employment issues, but it may take a while to "get them in the door" - and they won't stay unless there is something real and meaningful for them. Offers of employment assistance are often the best recruitment "carrots," but caring staff and peer support activities are more likely to be what keeps them involved in a program. Many of the men may not have experienced warm, loving relationships with their own fathers; by providing love and nurturance to fathers, programs can help prepare men to provide more loving, supportive environments for their children.
- Staff of programs that provide family services do not always readily accept the need to provide services to fathers, particularly in cases where staff members may have had negative experiences with the men in their lives. It is important to provide opportunities for all agency staff to process their feelings towards men and fathers so that there is more acceptance of the importance of this work

- It is also important that staff working directly with fathers have regular staff development opportunities and that they receive ongoing support to help them be consistent role models for the fathers they are working with.
- Most fatherhood programs will need a legal assistance component. Fathers will likely need advice and assistance with child support issues; if mediation with the mother is unsuccessful, they may need help to ensure regular visitation or custody; they may well have other legal issues - drivers licenses revoked for minor traffic offences, impact on employment options of prison record, etc.
- Programs working with fathers, funders, and policy makers must be realistic about the life-situation of many low-income men. They often don't have enough money because there aren't enough jobs that pay a living wage in their communities. Although there may be a lot of jobs advertised in the local paper, they are jobs that many men either can't get to because of lack of adequate private or public transportation; they lack the required work or education experience; or prospective employers don't want to hire them because they distrust inner-city, minority men.
- To strengthen families, and improve the life chances of children, requires supportive services for both parents.
- To reach and unite families, child support enforcement agencies need to be based more positively in the community, developing in to "community satellites" from which staff can offer information and assistance to both custodial and non-custodial parents.
- In order to provide young fathers with services to help them and their families, it is important to:
 - understand who they are and what their world is like;
 - engage them in designing services to help them;
 - hire staff who have the ability to give their clients hope, and the skills and connections to help them make and achieve goals; and
 - provide staff with the support they need to get the job done.
- A successful program needs:
 - strong leadership
 - solid community partnerships
 - the support of staff throughout the agency
 - quality, committed staff to work with the fathers
 - ongoing staff development
 - consistent funding
 - a clear statement of goals and expected outcomes
 - a comprehensive service strategy
 - good documentation of services and activities.

Supporting Socially Excluded Fathers

Professor Bill Jordan
Department of Social Work, Exeter University

I aim to reflect on the very helpful summary of lessons from the USA that Nigel Vann has given us, from three perspectives:

- (i) The nature of social exclusion in the UK, and how it has affected the identities of men and women in excluded communities; the networks through which they survive and resist exclusion, and how this has influenced their practices of partnership and parenting;
- (ii) The programmes through which the UK government has tackled exclusion, and why they fail to involve men as fathers; how professional assumptions about improving the life chances of children in deprived neighbourhoods, often reinforce rather than challenge the exclusion of men;
- (iii) The implications for practice with socially excluded fathers, accepting most of what Nigel Vann has said, but drawing attention to some of the missing elements.

1. The nature of exclusion and identities. What happened in the years after 1979 was that, at the same time as opportunities for less-skilled manual work for men were shrinking, more skilled and more successful households were moving out of less-favoured districts. The whole public infrastructure – schools, health services, social care – was redesigned, so as to encourage households to vote with their feet, by moving to areas with better amenities and public services. This meant that the districts with the worst housing, environmental and recreational facilities came to have concentrations of residents with the lowest incomes and the most problems and needs of all kinds.

These communities adapted to their situation in important ways. Research (including my own) shows that women formed networks of mutual informal support over child care, support for people with disabilities, and wider community issues. I am not saying that this was something new – it was part of the lives of poor communities before – but these networks were coping with far more serious concentrations of problems, and with far fewer material resources, without the leadership of more able people, who had moved elsewhere. Men's networks were concerned with informal economic activity that filled the vacuum left when employment went away. That activity involved everything from undeclared casual work, through drug dealing and other rackets, to more serious violence and crime. I don't mean that these were the only kinds of male networks, or that all men were involved in them. Our research showed that there was also a pattern of men involved in working very long hours in low-paid jobs, with strong and mutually supportive partnerships, over childcare and other issues. There were also male networks around sport and leisure activities that drew in both employed and non-employed men. My point is that economic factors increased reliance on informal (often illegal) activity and networks, and that this is part of what we mean by exclusion. So women's identities came to be defined by networks around children, care and community activism, and men's around survival in a tough, competitive and sometimes cut-throat world of the shadow economy. I'm not sure whether this applies as strongly to Asian as to white and black men, and perhaps you may be able to tell me your ideas and experiences about this.

The main point I want to make is that it is not simply that men distance themselves from child care and the role of father. The way that networks operate largely excludes men from these roles. It requires very strong partnership and secure identity to be able to overcome these processes. The identities of men and women are formed and reinforced by their experiences in networks, which sustain and support them, give them their status and place in the world. For men in particular, the identities that are available to mainstream fathers, and that are conveyed in media images, and through schooling and even training, are simply not accessible to them. They are not able to earn and provide for their families as their parents' generation of less skilled workers did. They are often angry about it, and express this in terms of traditional 'family values', and even antifeminist rhetoric. This is especially difficult in the case of non-resident fathers, who are more prone to depression, ill-health, bad housing and deprivation generally.

2. UK government programmes on social exclusion. The New Labour government was very much influenced by the policies of the Clinton administration in the USA. These focused on getting excluded people back into employment, bearing down on crime and the informal economy, and improving the life-chances of children from deprived neighbourhoods. In the UK, by far the most public money has been spent on employment-related programmes, and on improving incentives for formal employment. As in the USA, women have benefited from these at least as much as men. It could be argued, for example, that Working Families Tax Credit and Child Care Credits give women a better option for lone parenthood than previously, whereas for men the Child Support Agency creates a kind of child support trap, that reinforces the old poverty and unemployment traps as a disincentive to employment and increased earning. What are the implications of this for services trying to support fathers' relationships with children? Obviously the most important is to focus work on trying to reduce the risks of relationship breakdown between parents. But if it has occurred, fathers need help to negotiate the child support system without too much conflict, and help with some of the things that stop them keeping in contact with their children, like the costs of travelling for visits, which are not allowable for child support purposes.

For practitioners in the field of child development, early year's education, and family support generally, the obvious focus for their work has been mothers. The emphasis in the new initiatives, such as Sure Start and now the Children's Fund, has been on partnership with local people, and with informal community groups and local activist, survivor and support organisations. Women have usually been the core memberships of such groups, which draw on informal networks and kinship systems. And many of these women may have had bad experiences with men, and so feel ambivalent or hostile about men getting involved in schemes like Surestart, or in some cases even in their children's lives. This raises the possibility that workers need skills in reaching fathers without losing mothers or in coping with the cultural conflicts and resentments that are around in poor communities.

In addition, the professional assumptions and cultures of such occupational groups as social workers, health visitors and nursery nurses have orientated them towards mothers rather than fathers. This is quite understandable, as it went with the grain of the cultures of those communities themselves. It was far easier to engage with female networks and groups as partners, and to mesh with their practices, than to challenge the exclusion of men. In any case, fathers were often engaged with the employment-orientated services, on education or training courses, or in programmes relating to criminality, drug use,

alcohol, violence or whatever. Ultimately they were involved only when issues of child protection arose, and then often not very well or helpfully.

At the policy level, this is changing, but rather slowly. The guidance literature for the Children's Fund, for example, emphasises the necessity to identify aspects of professional cultures that exclude. The guidance for the new Assessment Framework for Children in Need specifically addresses issues of furthering, the father's role and the wider male as well as female community networks. So how can practitioners shift in these directions?

3. Practice with excluded fathers. I suppose the fundamental point I want to make is that, in providing services about fathering, practitioners are not linking into a central aspect of men's identities as members of networks and communities, in the same sense as they are when they provide services for women as mothers. It requires more thought and effort to engage with fathers over their roles, and services have come to be organised around aspects of women's roles and identities, often without any conscious intention – and this makes the task of engaging fathers harder. This has implications at the level of the most basic values and methods of practice. We all subscribe to the notion that acceptance and positive regard are necessary conditions for any successful human service work, but there is no easy structural or activity-related guarantee that fathers will experience such acceptance in family support services. Hence the real dilemmas about how to set them up in such a way as to include rather than exclude, and value rather than reject fathers.

I do think that it is a real challenge and problem for the agencies that try to support families to value men as men, when the processes of social exclusion have stripped them of everything but a rather deviant, marginal, shadowy position in society. But I think the need for this, and in a sense the opportunity, is all the greater, because the other services are focused on fairly instrumental aspects of their social roles. The best in the employment services and the criminal corrections service may indeed still be able to give men a sense of being valued in their own right, and as people; but that is not really the way they are being driven by policy. Employment services are assessed by results (job placements), and criminal justice services increasingly focus on offending behaviour and its correction. There is very much a space for work that values and supports men. Work that values men and their role, as fathers will help these agencies meet their goals too. Fatherhood can help men regain a sense of purpose when they are supported to engage and encouraged to value their contribution.

The only bit of Nigel Vann's approach I slightly disagree with – at least in the UK context – is the idea that employment assistance is the best route into involvement, engagement and commitment with men. My line on this is that we are drifting into policies that force men and women from poor, excluded communities to travel long distances, or live away from home, to work in rich districts, as menials, domestics, servants, or whatever. More energy should be going into community development, in the sense of activities that improve the quality of life of these poor districts, by involving both men and women in improving their infrastructures, facilities and amenities. This would start to break down the divisions between men's and women's activities and networks. Maybe also employment services should look at the family implications of their services – for example they could encourage fathers to work locally. This would not be a soft policy; it will save the state money in the long run by strengthening family life (to put it another way, it would take a broader view of men's potential social capital).

One focus for community development could be better facilities for men to be active with their children, to do the things that men do well (both physical and technical) and that children enjoy. It is difficult for family support agencies to muster the resources for these approaches, but they could be accomplished in partnership with other agencies, including those orientated towards employment and training. My impression was that this kind of thing was done better in Australia – but even in Scotland and Northern Ireland than in England.

Finally, there are a whole range of particular services, many of which Nigel Vann has mentioned. Non-custodial fathers are often at a real loss about how to be relevant and effective people in their children's lives. It is difficult enough to be a father, but much more difficult when one no longer has the structures and props of the home environment, the children's toys and friends, to shape one's interactions with them. Why does so little support go into providing comfortable, well-appointed and stimulating environments for contact, on help in sustaining fathers when they have their children for weekends or holidays? Such inputs would be investments, if they could help fathers build up confidence in themselves, as still important in their children's lives.

Similarly, it is extraordinary how little is done to mediate between parents in relationships that are becoming conflictful, either before or after separation. Research shows that the agreed need for such mediation is the one least likely to trigger an actual service in a child protection investigation. Yet this is also the kind of work for which social workers are best trained, and profess to be keenest on doing. It must mean that this needs to be prioritised and supported better, both in public services, and in specialist family support agencies. This raises a fundamental question about the purposes of family support work, and all the services I have been discussing. Are they really there to combat social exclusion and oppression, or are they simply trying to support women and children within traditional gendered understandings about parenting? I have argued that the social exclusion of men as fathers is less obvious and accessible, but urgently in need of energy and attention.

WORKSHOPS

Working with Dads in Sure Start

Mog Ball and Rob Elkin

This workshop was centred around themes and issues contributed by the participants at the start of the workshop and were as follows:

- The role and place of grandparents
- The role of men in Sure Start – Sure Start, Oxford (Rosehill and Littlemore) has a dedicated fathers worker
- The problem of recruiting men to services
- Men not wanting to be involved in existing services, but the recipients of 'new mens' services
- Services as social control as opposed to services of social support
- Networking to gain insight into helping so as to meet 'targets' in Sure Start areas i.e. the impact of the bias of targeting
- Management of Sure Start? Do they have to be 'managers'?
- The struggle for Sure Start is to know if services are being used or not
- What are the barriers to men in Sure Start?
- PEEP – aims to raise the educational standards of children by working well with parents. However; fathers' participation is low. It was recognised that fathers were discriminated against e.g. only mothers named on the form. Personal safety considerations of women meant that men were seen as a problem
- Culture clash between established services for families that corresponded to traditional sex role differentiation and new ones less gender specific
- Health visiting and men. Should men be involved in the service? How much and for how long? Very important when it came to parenting programmes
- The Sure Start father present stated that he used Sure Start to give his children a better start in life. He added that men will only join if they want to and staff must welcome men and 'be happy to meet people'!
- Examples of male involvement referred to during the workshop all centred on practical activities e.g. IT, photography – is this the most acceptable way for men to get involved?

Supporting Fathers in Prison

Albert Ford and Lee Talmage

Albert Ford runs 'Man Enough', a parenting programme for adult prisoners at Bullingdon Prison. It is a structured 10 week programme (Family Caring Trust programme) and involves listening, discussions surrounding family life and focuses on children and the prisoners' behaviour towards their children and what motivates this behaviour. Participants go home with a plan. They focus on why they offend and their behaviour outside prison. Bullingdon also runs a six week social and life course, which deals with, such issues as health.

Lee Talmage is a midwife running parenting sessions at Reading YO1 remand prisoners. She started by meeting young mothers in the visitors lounge – many of whom were deprived and in need of support. After building up trust with the mothers, young men were targeted to come to the sessions. Lee now runs 4 sessions (2 hours long) once a week. Using videos and playing games help to run these informal sessions- dads learn to bath and play with a baby. They're also given family planning, STD and HIV advise. There are also discussions about the role of a father and good and bad points about their own upbringing. At the end of the course the fathers are given a certificate. The course has received positive feedback from the young fathers.

Family visits are being set up in some prisons to enable fathers to play/read with their children etc Only some prisoners eligible – not dangerous or sex offenders. Parenting sessions for all prisoners will become compulsory in the next year. After courses further help may be available through the Samaritans, counselling etc

Safe Ground is an organisation for prisoners run by ex-prisoners. They run a programme called 'Family Man' which uses peer education, role play and presentation to re-evaluate prisoners' family roles and responsibilities whilst finding practical ways to apply course skills to sustain ties with family members. Family Man is an accredited course consisting of 3 units of 5 days and covering the following topics:

- Changing nature of families over time
- Different roles within families
- Causes and effects of problems in family life
- Personal responsibilities within the family
- Changing needs of family members
- Strategies for future direction and personal development as a member of a family

" Prison can frequently damage family relationships. But I have been convinced from talking to prisoners who have participated in Family Man that it can be a time for serious reflection about these relationships and can stimulate them to make a determined effort to improve these relationships, not only while they are in custody but on release"

Martin Narey, Director General HMPrison Service

Young People's Attitudes to Fatherhood

Steve Farrall-Hyder and Liam Duffy

Our main premise in the workshop was that the attitudes of young people to fatherhood are largely developed from our own family experience.

- That both boys and girls benefit from 'involved dads' who have co-operative relationships with their mother whether or not they are living with them.
- That boys need positive role models to learn how to be men and therefore fathers.
- This is particularly important from the age of six years old when masculinity kicks in and is largely defined by being different to mothers. Although fatherhood begins at conception.
- Positive role models are also important outside of the family in sports, music, TV, film and media and can influence attitudes to fatherhood e.g. David Beckham.

In our first exercise we asked the group of adults to think about and draw something we valued about our own fathers or father figures. This exercise brings up the whole range of experiences from positive to negative, which also informs our beliefs and attitudes toward fathers or being a father.

Our second exercise looked at the influence of the press and media in presentation of fatherhood to young people and adults alike. Two groups produced six positive images each of dads from a range of newspapers, magazines, figures and their creative imagination.

The groups used a Polaroid camera and had a lot of fun with a rule that one picture had to include all of the adults. The process involved both groups identifying negatives in the materials and discussing which ones are positive before presenting the pictures.

In our work with young people we find colleges, video, quizzes, music, drama and cartoon strips all helpful in encouraging their participation.

Useful information try: www.young-voice.org for Can-do girls, Can-do boys and Leading Lads.

Fathers in Family Centres

John Rivers

Problem of access for men to family centres – the system often conspires against them.

Following are some of the issues:

- Large numbers of female staff, few male workers in 'caring' role
- 'male unfriendly' attitudes from staff and female users
- the one men's group isolated
- referrals forms didn't ask for fathers name – assessment framework should have fathers details also
- venues sometimes 'unfriendly' – fathers find it difficult to attend social services premises but seem to find health service venue more acceptable
- Joseph Rowntree Research 'Men in Family Centres' identified following issues:
- activities seem to engage men more than 'chatting'
- men that used the centres best had been offered other services previously at the centre

John Rivers described a Mens Group he had run at a Family Centre as follows:

The meetings had no specific agenda and were run for six weeks before a one-week break when the group would restart with or without new members. Found that what worked best were meetings out of hours, not dominated by women, looking at issues of masculinity, bereavement and loss and issues to do with their own parents. Dads find it difficult to network and chat.

Centres also need to portray positive images of men – on notice boards etc. Family centres seem to value women as women but not men as men – beginning to value them as dads but not as men in their own right. Childcare arrangements also need to be put in place to support men in their activities with their children.

Support for Separating and Distant Fathers

Annette Mountford and Rosalind Hanbury, Family Links and Janette Cooper

The session began with introductions of the participants.

Jan started by describing her work with Reading Safer Families. Reading Safer Families is a therapeutic/counselling service focusing on reducing Domestic Violence.

Jan drew a genogram of a family characterised by divorce/separation and then re-constituted. It was clear that separation and remarriage causes significant difficulties in identifying family responsibilities especially in relation to the care of children. Relationships can become very complex, especially for grandparents.

Fathers tend to see family issues within a legal framework. Legal process however makes relations more, rather than less rigid. Contact with children would be supervised by the courts. This makes parenting even more difficult.

Mens' grief reaction to family break-up is underestimated and minimised. Moreover men talked about it in specific ways. Unusually as a "problem". Thereafter the story gets "fixed" and endlessly repeated.

Annette then took the discussion on to work in schools and the Nurturing Network. As an exercise the participants were asked to "wink at one another". This was described as a good example of how schools can encourage and practice "inclusively", even with shy children.

Annette then took the concept of relationship building a stage further by using first one then two balls being thrown to one another with the thrower saying their name. After catching both balls the participant can sit down.

The idea of "team" parenting was then introduced to describe the idea of both parents caring for children.

The "Boundary" paper was then distributed. It shows four types of parental boundary setting. Constricted with the child given little opportunity to control their own actions. Inconsistent, when boundaries were unequal/inconsistent. Absent, where boundaries were never set, and lastly "Clear and Consistent" when boundaries were known and allowed freedom of expression and movement within set boundaries.

Participants were asked to consider the impact of the different types of boundary on their own behaviour and attitudes.

Valuing Fathers in African- Caribbean Communities

Melvyn Davis, Coram Family

Melvyn manages the boys2MEN Project for Coram Family – this works with young black care-leavers – many of whom have not known their own fathers. This can lead to a cycle of 'absent fathers causing absent fathers'.

Issues for young black men:

- There needs to be greater understanding of needs of black fathers
- Understanding about how fathers support mothers in different cultures
- There are complex mixed-parentage issues
- We need to recruit fathers – go out and find them in the churches, the barbers shops – need to be seriously participatory, get alongside and blend in
- Honesty is needed – there are certain things that divide us in society – but these are the same things that can unite
- Policies and procedures are great but it is people that matter
- There is an absence of role models
- Services need to be flexible to meet wide-range of needs of men in general – the problem of reaching fathers is not necessarily about race and cultural identity
- Men put up barriers – often have had very hard experiences and there are issues of anger management
- Need to find imaginative ways to reach young men and fathers - music, the Arts
- There is a powerful bond between father and son and often huge problems if it is absent or dysfunctional – modelling is crucial. We tend to have all-female carers – teachers, social workers etc.
- On issues of culture and identity we tend to compartmentalise and pigeon-hole – the fastest growing numbers in care are mixed-race children who get racial prejudice from both sides

Relationships are fraught with personal issues and it is hard to get involved – but big shifts come when the child is put at the centre. 'Team' parenting to include the extended family using family group conferences can bring about a collective and effective community response. The child has a right to a mother and a father – lets shine a light on the role of the father.

" I would hope that we would be able to instil pride in our children so that they learn not to apologise for being black as if God made a mistake. They need to know that they are beautiful and precious and not go around as if they should not be there."

Archbishop Tutu

Integrating Fathers into Mainstream Family Support Services

Roger Olley

Fathers Plus commenced in October 1997 covering principally Tyne and Wear, although the project incorporates a wider area with contacts from other regions.

The project aim is:

"To ensure that the role of the father is valued, supported and included in all approaches to work with children and families".

The project objectives are:

- To develop, deliver and share with others practical approaches to parent support for fathers.
- To co-ordinate the North East Forum (the network of colleagues committed to working with fathers) as a means of continually improving practice.
- To ensure that the role of father is considered and included whenever services for children and families are being planned.

Core Values

Celebration – Of the skills and love that fathers bring to caring for their children.

Understanding – That the father's role is of real importance in the nurturing of the child.

Inclusion – Respect and value for all forms of fathering, welcoming its diversity and learning from its richness.

Fathers Plus supports workers trying to work inclusively with fathers in Health, Education, Social Services and the Voluntary Sector through organising the meetings of the North East Forum of Fathers Group workers. We also provide advice, information and support to colleagues in response to requests that are received from across the region and wider, on a regular basis.

Considerations when developing 'father' programmes

- What are the aims of the programme – what is it setting out to do?
- What is its theoretical base – behavioural, eclectic, social learning?
- What are the underpinning principles of your programme?
- Who is the programme targeting – all dads, new dads, granddads, male carers?
- How will the programme be delivered – talks, groups, one to one?
- Does the programme reflect a starting point for learning that is appropriate to your target group?
- Are the materials you are going to use appropriate to your target group – images, language, style?

- Does the content of your programme cover themes appropriate to your target group?
- Does the programme 'fit' or reflect organisational/strategic thinking – present activity, other Sure Start users, behaviour support plan etc.
- What leadership/facilitation style is needed for best effect – do you need male workers?
- What costs will be incurred developing the programme – where will the funding come from?
- What resources will be needed to deliver the programme – people, venues, equipment, posters, crèche and crèche workers?
- How will the programme be administered – arranging venues, materials production, transport etc?
- How will the programme be evaluated and who will do it?
- How will you 'harvest' your target group?

APPENDICES

Biographies

Carey Oppenheim

Carey Oppenheim works in the Prime Minister's Policy Directorate as a Senior Policy Advisor. Her main task is to provide the Prime Minister with advice and support on a wide range of issues including: social security, poverty, equality and childcare. She worked previously at the Institute for Public Policy Research (a centre-left think tank) as Research Director, at South Bank University as a senior lecturer in social policy and for several years at the Child Poverty Action Group.

She has published widely in the field of social policy; recent publications include *An Inclusive Society, strategies for tackling poverty* (IPPR, 1998), *Welfare in Working Order* with James McCormick (IPPR, 1998) and *Poverty the Facts* (CPAG, 1996).

She studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at St Anne's College, Oxford University and undertook a MSc at the London School of Economics in social policy and planning. Carey lives in London with her partner and two children.

Bill Jordan

Professor working at Exeter and Huddersfield Universities. Has been a social worker for twenty years.

Nigel Vann

Mr Vann, a British citizen who has lived in the US since 1979, has fourteen years experience as manager, technical assistance provider, monitor and consultant to a variety of projects for fathers in the United States, England and Australia. He has managed Maryland's Absent parents Employment Programme; monitored and provided technical assistance to sites in the Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project, a six-site national US project; led the development of a Baltimore Regional Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families and worked as a consultant on a number of other fatherhood projects. Since December 1996, as a founding staff member of NPCL, Mr Vann has played an integral role in working with community based organisations and public agencies to encourage the development of more father-friendly policies and services for fathers and fragile families. His responsibilities include providing and co-ordination customised training for staff of family-serving agencies, co-ordination follow-up with workshop participants, providing technical assistance as appropriate, managing the San Francisco Bay Area Partners for Fragile Families project. Acting as NPCL's partnership liaison with the National Head Start Association to assist in the development of more Head Start services for fathers, leading NPCL's international development work and in general, encouraging partnership development between community based organisations, public agencies (particularly child support enforcement) and Non-Governmental Organisations.

Mog Ball

Mog Ball is a freelance writer and social researcher who has written over 50 reports and books about social programmes, including "Education for A Change" (Penguin), "Valuation in the Voluntary Sector" (Home Office) and "Funding Refuge Services" Women's Aid Federation (England). A recent study of early interventions was published by the Thames Valley Partnership. Mog Ball has been an adviser to many new Sure Start programmes. She is one of the team of researchers who are carrying out the national evaluation of Sure Start and is a Fellow of Birkbeck College, University of London.

Liam Duffy

Liam Duffy is a qualified teacher who was involved in community projects such as the action van in Reading. He has been a project worker for seven years and has worked with individuals, boys groups, mixed groups and parenting groups, particularly with special needs on the autistic spectrum. He also worked with boys who sexually abuse using behavioural programmes. He also uses a range of brief therapy techniques.

Steve Farrall-Hyder

Steve Farrall-Hyder is the manager of Woodley Family Centre and works for social services at Wokingham District Council. He has worked as a social worker in childcare since 1984 in residential, field and family centres. He has run fathers support groups at Reading Family Centre as well as family support services. He is currently running a boys group for 12 year olds. He has also been involved in a men's mental health support group since 1999 now based at Resource in Reading.

Annette Mountford

Annette Mountford, RGN/HV, Director of Family Links. Health visitor for 15 years. Introduced nurturing programme to UK in 1992. Co-founder of Family Links, which works with teachers, families and inter-agency professionals. She also sits on Government advisory bodies.

Rosalind Hanbury

Assistant Director of Family Links. Counsellor specialising in stress management and co-founder of Family Links.

Roger Olley

Roger Olley is the project manager for Fathers Plus which is a project of Children North East. His work involves managing a team of "dads workers" who work into six Sure Starts and the development of other Father work in areas such as prisons, family centres, youth offending teams, health teams and contact and mediation services.

He is a health visitor by trade and has worked in a variety of health and social settings over the past twenty-five years.

He has a particular interest in the development and delivery of parenting work and was responsible for developing multi-agency working, on the topic of parenting in North Tyneside.

Tom Beardshaw

Originally from Hampshire, Tom left for London in 1987 and emerged three years later with a degree in Anthropology from LSE. He then spent a year in South Africa working at a rural school and with rural land rights and development organisations before returning to the UK to work in policy and research for an international development organisation.

After several complicated years that saw him move all over the UK, he ended up in Cardiff, where he met his wife Andrea, and started working for Care for the Family, where he became Head of Research. While at Care for the Family, he headed up the development of Dads and Lads project in partnership with YMCA and edited the acclaimed "DAD" magazine parenting course for fathers of teenagers.

Tom joined Fathers Direct in the spring of 2000 and immediately set about creating www.fathersdirect.com. He has also been busy working to persuade the Government of the wisdom of introducing paternity leave for new fathers and working to improve the treatment of fathers in ante-natal services. He is also developing work to improve awareness of fathers in the workplace.

Linda Price

Linda has been a health visitor for three years. She is employed by Reading Primary Care Trust and works with a semi-rural community on the west side of Reading. Prior to health visiting Linda worked for many years as a midwife. The Health visiting experience of Linda and her colleagues suggested that the needs of many new fathers in the local community were not being met sufficiently. They therefore introduced a dad's evening for local new fathers. They hoped to develop a group within which the role, responsibilities and expectations of fathers in today's society could be explored. Preparing new fathers for their parental responsibilities traditionally has been a difficult task for health visitors. Attempts were made to overcome identified barriers, however the success of the initiative has been limited.

David Bartlett

David Bartlett worked as a social worker in both the statutory and voluntary sectors from 1987 until 2000, specialising in family support work (particularly with fathers and their children, lone parent families, young people leaving care and families living with HIV/AIDS). In 1997, he founded and managed NEWPIN's Fathers Centre in London, a groundbreaking community based service for dads and their families offering support and parenting groups, advice and counselling, drop-in sessions, befriending etc.

In 1999, David helped organise Developing Effective Services for Fathers, the first national conference on fatherhood in England, attended by 200 people. Since then he has organised an innovative regional conference in Suffolk, leading on to the development of a regional network of agencies working with dads. In 2001, he has developed two more national conferences: 'Lads to Dads – Sharing Experiences' (with NCB); and one on fathers and child protection (with NSPCC). In recent years, he has given many presentations on fatherhood in the US and UK.

David is now Services Manager at 'Fathers Direct' and manages Fathers Direct's national support network for everyone working with dads. He organises conferences and seminars, offers training courses, seminars and consultancy on effective working with fathers and father figures. David lives in Yorkshire with his partner and two children, a daughter aged 5 and a son aged 2.

Melvyn Davies

Melvyn Davies is Deputy Head of Coram Family Leaving Care Services. With over 16 years of youth and social work experience behind him, Melvyn still retains a fresh and creative approach to the challenges faced by service providers in meeting the complex needs of service users. In recent years Melvyn has focused his innovative approach to developing services for boys, young men and fathers, particularly those from Black ethnic minorities.

In 1999, Melvyn founded the boys2MEN Project, a group work programme for young black men in care aged 14 to 18, which is now being developed with a number of London boroughs. Designed as a modern day rites-of-passage, the boys2MEN Project incorporates "Music Arts & Life Experience" (M.A.L.E.) into a unique group work programme, specifically tailored to meet the needs of hard to reach communities.

As a trainer, consultant and practitioner Melvyn regularly runs workshops in addition to developing new projects specifically geared to addressing the diverse needs faced by marginalised and disaffected groups within society.

Kevin Stenson

Kevin Stenson is Professor of Social Policy and Criminology, and Director of the Social Policy Research Group at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College. In addition to contributing to criminological theory and theories of liberal governance, his empirical research interests have included social work practice, the social organisation and control of youth, community policing and safety, social deprivation and regeneration strategies, inter-ethnic conflict, parent support programmes and early years crime prevention strategies. Recent publications include (edited with Robert R. Sullivan) *Crime Risk, and Justice, the politics of crime control in liberal democracies*. Willan.

Lee Talmage

I am a full time community midwife based in West Reading. I have been a midwife for over 20 years. A colleague and I started the parenting classes at the Reading Remand Centre in September 1997, and since then we have improved our resources and getting very positive feedback from the boys and people who have heard about us. I believe we are the only midwives that run parenting classes in prison in this country.

Media Coverage Report

December 2001

“Supporting Thames Valley Fathers” Reading Conference 6th December 2001, run by Thames Valley Partnership and Fathers Direct and supported by Lloyds TSB Foundation.

- We achieved coverage throughout the day from one of the six radio stations covering the Thames Valley.
- We achieved coverage in lunchtime, early evening and late evening news broadcasts of the two main regional TV broadcasters: BBC South and ITV Central.
- We supplied the case studies used by each of the television broadcasters.
- We supplied case studies to BBC Radio Oxford and to Fox FM.
- Both organisers of the conference – Thames Valley Partnership and Fathers Direct – appeared in the TV broadcasts and were mentioned on all the radio reports.

Broadcast Media

Television

Central ITV News

12.30: Lunchtime: Jack O’Sullivan in studio, case study of Peter Smith and his daughter.

5.45pm: Evening: Shots from conference, interview Sue Raikes, Chief Executive of Thames Valley Partnership, interview with Albert Ford of Man Enough and a local dad, Jack O’Sullivan in studio.

10.30pm: Repeat, without Jack O’Sullivan in studio.

BBC South

Lunchtime: Shots from conference. Interview with Sue Raikes and David Bartlett (Fathers Direct); case study Peter Charles-Jones and son Huw getting ready for work.

6.30pm: Repeat

10.30pm: Repeat

Radio

BBC Radio Oxford (Jack O’Sullivan)

BBC Radio Berkshire (Jack O’Sullivan)

Fox FM (Jack O’Sullivan, Sue Raikes, Peter Burton, John Rivers)

Classic Gold (Jack O’Sullivan)

Kick FM (Jack O’Sullivan)

210 FM (Jack O’Sullivan)

Print Media

Awaiting results from Romeike, our media monitoring service

Delegates List

Forename	Surname	Contact Position	Organisation Name
Linda	Ball	Manager	Slough Family Centre
Mog	Ball	Researcher	
Beverley	Barrett	Head Sure Start Family Centre	Sure Start Family Centre
David	Bartlett	Services Manager	Fathers Direct
Margaret	Biddlecombe		Witney Families Together
Lynne	Bowen	Nursery Co-ordinator	Ace Centre Nursery School
Tom	Bradshaw	Campaigns	Fathers Direct
Roger	Bruton	Social Worker	Wokingham District Council
Emma	Burleigh	Research Assistant	YWCA
Peter	Burton		Reading Men's Group
Sarah	Carter	HIV/Sexual Health Specialist	Buckinghamshire Health Authority
Christine	Cavanagh	Midwife	Sure Start
Debbie	Coles	Secretary	Thames Valley Partnership
Janette	Cooper	Family Therapist	Reading Safer Families
Brian	Davenport	Community Worker	Sure Start Millmead
Melvyn	Davis	Deputy Head	Coram Family Leaving Care Services
Tony	de St Aubin	Consultant for Safer Ground	
David	Dight	Nursery Support Teacher	PEEP
Liam	Duffy	Project Worker	
Robert	Elkin	Family Centre Worker	Sure Start Family Centre
Steve	Farrall-Hyder	Assistant Team Manager	Family Support Service
Ruth	Fawcett	Chair of Wokingham EYDCP	C/o Earley Years & Childcare
Peter	Field	Social Worker	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Duncan	Fisher	Strategy & Finance	Fathers Direct
Dianne	Fletcher	Programme Manager	Sure Start
Albert	Ford		"Man Enough"
Sam	Gee	Secretary	Thames Valley Partnership
Rosalind	Hanbury	Assistant Director	Family Links
Sam	Harper	Senior Outreach Officer	Wokingham Community Services
Sarah	Haynes	Project Worker	Sure Start
Ginnie	Herbert	Project Worker	NCH Didcot Family Centre
Danuta	Hinde	Family Liaison Officer	HMP & YOI Ashfield
Wendy	Jones	Office Manager	Fathers Direct
Bill	Jordan	Professor	Exeter & Huddersfield Universities
Angus	Kirk-McClew	Project Worker	NCH/Sure Start
Ivana	Klimes	Director	Family Nurturing Network
Catherine	Lacey	Home/School Link Worker	The Children's Society
Rebekah	Little		Diocese of Oxford
Richard	Lowis	Community Co-ordinator	Sure Start
Deidre	MacFarlane	Community Co-ordinator	PEEP
Lee	Mackinder		
Janice	Martin	Midwife	Reading Remand Centre
Carole	Mockford	Research Officer	Health Services Research Unit
Siri	Moorby	Press Officer	Thames Valley Partnership
Annette	Mountford	Director	Family Links

Barbara	Munday	Family Centre Co-ordinator	Ace Centre
Jack	O'Sullivan	Communications	Fathers Direct
Roger	Olley		Fathers Plus
Carey	Oppenheim	Senior Policy Advisor	No.10 Policy Unit
Shirley	Parket	Programme Director	Family Nurturing Network
Kathy	Peto	Parent Education Officer	Oxfordshire LEA
Sue	Pollock	Lecturer of Social Work	School for Policy Studies
Linda	Price	Health Visitor	Reading PCT
Rosy	Prue	Arts Development Officer	Thames Valley Partnership
Sue	Raikes	Chief Executive	Thames Valley Partnership
Frances	Rehal	Director	Sure Start Millmead
John	Rivers	Family Worker	
Romona	Rose	Office Assistant	Fathers Direct
Deborah	Rosenblatt		University of Reading
Jo	Saunders	Social Responsibility Officer	Diocese of Oxford
Simon	Shaw	Social Work Assistant	Reading Family Centre
Richard	Shircore	Community Safety Director	Thames Valley Partnership
Kevin	Stenson	Director	The Social Policy Research Group
Hiedi	Stephenson		Wokingham District Council
Jean	Stogdon	Co-Chair	Grandparents Plus
Lee	Talmage	Midwife	Reading YOI
Matthew	Tooke		Home Office Family Policy Unit
Patsy	Townsend	Community Safety Director	Thames Valley Partnership
Barbara	Treen	Community Safety Director	Thames Valley Partnership
Lynne	Tyler	Social Work Assistant	Reading Family Centre
Nigel	Vann	Director of Partnership	NPCL
Gillian	Warland	Parent Education Development Officer	Oxfordshire LEA
Denise	Waugh	Midwife	Reading Remand Centre
Howard	Weller	Father	Sure Start Oxford
Simon	Windisch		Home Dad
Marianne	Wolf-McGowan	Senior Programme Co-ordinator	Family Nurturing Network
Sandra	Woodward	Area Manager (Bracknell)	Parents and Children Together

Services for Fathers and Male Carers in the Thames Valley

Steve Farrall-Hyder

I have started to compile a list and aim to produce a booklet from the conference using the knowledge of all delegates.

Children's Information Services

	Reading and Wokingham	01189 509499
	Bracknell	08000 281827
	West Berkshire	08003 289148
	Windsor and Maidenhead	01753 869100
(i)	Reading Family Centre, North Street Manager: Jean Adams Services accessed via area team	01189 015320
(ii)	Woodley Family Centre Contact: Steve Farrall-Hyder	01189 690624
	Wokingham Family Centre Contact: Sue Hughes Part of the Family Support Services via local area teams	01189 775611
(iii)	Woodley Baptist church Centre, Hurricane Way, Woodley For details of Community Development Scheme and initiatives Contact: Jeremy Sharpe	01189 69956
(iv)	Reading Mens Support Group At 'Resource' 209-211 Kings Road, Reading Contact: Steve Farrall-Hyder or Mike Franklin	01189 690624 07713 283916
(v)	Reading Mens Group Wednesdays Church St., Reading 7.30-9.30 p.m. Contact: Peter Burton	01189 264371
(vi)	Konnections Mens Support Group Children with special needs and disability Contact: Andy Pounce via	01344 862699
(vii)	Dads and Toddlers Group at the Cintra Park Pavilion, Cintra Park Avenue, Whitley, Reading Contact:	01189 547275

	Mostly Dads and Toddlers Group. The Warehouse, 1a Cumberland Rd., Cemetery Junction, Reading Contact: Fiona	01189 760374
(viii)	Parents and Children Together Groups in Berks/Bucks/Oxon Head Office: 7 Southern Court, South Street, Reading	01189 387600
	'Stressbusters', Waterloo Meadow Children's Centre, 200 Elgar Road, Reading	01189 750819
(ix)	Surestart, Whitley, 17 Newcastle Road, Whitley Contact: Steve Green	01189 874639
(x)	Reading and Wokingham Youth Offending Teams, Crown House, Reading Contact: Phil Hutchins	01189 390420
	August House, 6 Brownlow Road, Reading Contact: Poppy	01190 015324
	Wokingham Youth Resources, 6 Langborough Road, Wokingham Contact: Gabby Watts	01189 793008
(xi)	Wokingham Scheme Mentoring Looked After Clubs Contact: Chris Ames	01189 690624
(xii)	Reading No. 5 Youth Counselling Contact:	01189 015668
	Wokingham ARC Youth Counselling Contact: Paul Cassidy	01189 776710
	Reading Refocus Mentoring Black Offenders Contact:	01189 509945
(xiii)	Young Dads on Remand Groups by Community Midwives Contact: Lee Talmage	01189 875111
	Local Teenage Pregnancy Initiative Wokingham, Reading, West Berkshire areas Co-ordinator: Bridget Deppe	01189 877289