

fatherhood
INSTITUTE

Invitation

Become an Associate and help us to make change happen

Our vision, our invitation to you

At the Fatherhood Institute we collate the best available evidence about fatherhood, and strive to get it embedded in government policies, family services and employment practice across the UK.



Research suggests that fathers' influence on their children is profound. Even fathers who are 'not known' loom large; and the more involved fathers are in their children's lives, the closer and better their relationship tends to be. Studies also tell us that both mothers and fathers want fathers to play a much more active role than was usual a generation ago.

So we are working to make it easier for mothers and fathers to share caring and earning for their families, through measures such as more father-inclusive maternity services, a fairer system of leave entitlements, public services that systematically engage with men as fathers, and employer-practices that recognise that most men are dads.

Help us to make this change – become an Associate of the Institute. Be part of the energy of this small dynamic organisation.

We have already achieved an incredible amount for a tiny organisation. The potential for what we can do with your help is enormous.

Associates will receive:

- Our commentary on the regular flow of media stories on fatherhood
- Invitation to join our discussions about strategy and as we develop new ideas
- Free invitation to our Annual Fatherhood Lecture



The challenge

The Institute carried out a review of research (*The Costs and Benefits of Active Fatherhood* – on www.fatherhoodinstitute.org).

The final conclusion of this huge piece of work was quoted in a top level Government policy document in 2007, Every Parent Matters:

Fathers matter to children's development. Father-child relationships – be they positive, negative or lacking – have profound and wide ranging impacts on children that last a lifetime, particularly for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Research shows that where fathers have early involvement in a child's life:

- *there is a positive relationship to later educational achievement;*
- *there is an association with good parent-child relationship in adolescence; and*
- *children in separated families are more protected from mental health problems.*

The UK has a particularly poor track record in supporting and protecting children's relationships with their fathers, particularly in disadvantaged families.

- The research on the impact around the birth of the father on the health of mother and baby is definitive. The NHS has no formal procedures for dealing with this fact.
- Fathers are still regularly sent home just after the birth, irrespective of what the mother wants or needs.

- It has been considered irrelevant if unmarried fathers do not sign the birth certificate, despite the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stating every child has the right to know both parents: this may be changing, in part due to our lobbying activities.
- The UK has the biggest difference between paternity leave (2 weeks) and maternity leave (52 weeks) in the world. Not surprisingly, then, the UK is bottom of the league in relation to how much time fathers take off work for their young children.
- The Government's Youth Crime strategy is under heavy criticism for not tackling the causes of youth crime: engaging with fathers and stepfathers would be a really positive strategy – but it almost never happens.
- If a woman walks into a JobCentre to look for a job, they ask if she is a mother. If a man walks in, they don't ask if he is a father, even though his caring responsibilities may actually be quite substantial.
- When parents separate, one parent becomes the "lone parent" with a host of support measures. The other becomes a 'non-parent' in terms of benefits and taxation and there is no support available to him in any other way. In Australia they have a different system – when parents separate there are two lone parents and both get support in the transition to a different kind of parenting.
- The lack of understanding of fatherhood and step-fatherhood in child protection leads to persistent mistakes. Children are at increased risk and some die as a result.

Our work

We are a tiny team of seven people but we work on the inside track and have influence far beyond our size. We are confident when we say to our sponsors that we can produce exceptional results for any investment in our work.

Our CEO serves on five top level policy advisory groups on family and child health policy in the Departments of Children and Health. He meets regularly with Ministers and with members of the Opposition Front Bench.

Some particular policy successes have been:

- The Government's White Paper on Birth Registration was largely based on a detailed set of proposals put forward by the Institute, when no other organization in the UK could provide such detailed advice.
- The Institute substantially revised the Child Health Promotion Programme, which forms the basis for the health checks that midwives and health visitors carry out on children. Good practice now definitively requires engagement with fathers.
- The Institute advised substantially on the Government's flagship Children's Plan, through an expert group chaired by the Minister for Children. The Plan is now very explicit about the need to engage with fathers.
- The Institute was represented on one of the panels for the Conservative Iain Duncan-Smith's Social Justice Review.
- The Institute's CEO was the only person from the parenting sector invited to a seminar on youth crime chaired by the Prime Minister.

- The Institute is the leading provider of training and consultancy to local authorities on including fathers in family services; our small team earns over £200,000 each year in fees. This has not only given workers the skills and confidence to engage with fathers, but has substantially influenced the Government's guidance to Local Authorities and the expectations that Local Authorities have of local service-providers.

We want laws, policies and public services that enable and encourage fathers to invest more in direct care of their children. We want all family and children's services to be "father inclusive" – to support the caring roles of fathers as seriously as they currently support the caring role of mothers, and to support parental cooperation around children.

The Institute also works with employers. It is currently developing an association of international banks and big consultancy companies to develop and promote policies to support fathers in the workplace. BT and Lloyds TSB have been supporting the Institute for years.

We want to see more fathers, including fathers on low incomes, working flexibly and part-time, and taking more leave off for caring.

The Institute needs you!

Become an Associate of the Institute.
Take your place at the forefront of social change.

We will

- email you regularly with news and insights into the latest public debates about fatherhood.
- invite you into discussions about the issues and what we should do about them.
- invite you to our annual lecture.

Your support will enable us to

Develop two new programmes

In schools, to explore with children how and why caring roles are divided differently between fathers and mothers.

On youth crime, to explore ways of tackling the cycle of exclusion and anti-social behaviour that so often passes from father to sons and daughters.

Expand our media work

Our media campaigns are very targeted. Our last campaign was on maternity services. We did not think Government was listening to us so we stated our case in the media. After careful preparation we issued a press release. The results of this were:

- 6 national BBC TV interviews, 27 BBC radio interviews, 7 articles in national papers and dozens in local newspapers and trade press
- Within a week, an invitation to meet the Conservative Front Bench people in children

- Within a month, two Secretaries of State (for Health and for Children) organized a public discussion in Leeds for parents on the subject of men in maternity services - the first time Government had ever initiated a discussion on this matter.
- Within two months, we were asked by civil servants to help them write an internal policy briefing on fathers and maternity services.
- Several journalists phone us every day, on the strength of our exposure in just this one campaign.

Only with more resources can we continue such public promotion – and make a really big difference.

- £220 buys one day of this work
- £1100 buys a week

So please donate and join us to become part of this exciting venture!



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