

Annual Report

July 2006

Preparing for a big future 2005-2006



Transforming fatherhood, transforming children's lives

Herald House, Lamb's Passage, Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8TQ
tel: 0845 634 1328; email: mail@fathersdirect.com
Registered charity no. 1075104, Company no. 3709549

www.fathersdirect.com

Chair's foreword

Dame Julie Mellor

I am delighted to take the role as chair of Fathers Direct.

I am frequently asked why I, a woman and well known advocate for better protection and support for women, took on the leadership of an organisation about fathers. There are three reasons.

First, the needs of children. The research evidence is unequivocal: fatherhood is an asset to children and they need a society that supports active fatherhood and challenges low expectations of fathers.

Second, gender equality. When I was Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, my son asked me "What are you doing for boys and men?" The needs of women and men are interdependent, and supporting the role of men in caring is the next front line of the struggle for gender equality: Fathers Direct is at a front line of the debate.

Third, I wanted to put my time into something that could really bring about change – and Fathers Direct, with its gifted team, is just such an organisation.

Joining the board are a gifted and powerful group of Trustees which will help guide the organisation through a period of development and growth.

CEO's report

Duncan Fisher

Who we are

Fathers Direct is the national information centre for fatherhood, advocating for greater support for the relationship that children have with their fathers. Ploughing a furrow quite different from fathers' rights organisations, we have eschewed the narrative of fathers' rights as a means of achieving valuable change for children. The issue of fatherhood has emerged as a public issue because of the changing role of women and men in the workplace and within families, and the disconnection this has created between reality and our institutions. We consider the implications of these changing roles for child welfare, gender equality and poverty.

Just after the end of the year covered by this report, the organisation underwent a profound change, with an entirely new Board of Trustees taking over, led by Julie Mellor, former Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission. This change is the first step in a major change in the organisation. This will reflect our lead national role in this field.

Social change and new understanding

Thirty years of research into child development have uncovered

unequivocal evidence that the active and positive involvement of fathers is good for children in terms of their future educational and emotional development. (The best review of the literature, now in its 4th edition, is Lamb, ME (2004) *The Role of the Father in Child Development* (Wiley, NY).

Meanwhile, men's aspirations are changing rapidly: in every social group, men want to be more involved in their children's lives to an unprecedented degree.

Parents are sharing caring and earning roles as never before: more than 50% of mothers of under-fives in two-parent families are employed; fathers' care of infants and young children has risen 8 times over 30 years; fathers of school-age children in dual-earner families undertake more childcare than any other carer (professional or extended family). There is a profound shift from one-parent to two-parent shared care.

Profound and continuing social changes - including low fertility, changes in women's education and expectations, earlier and more frequent separation and divorce, and the restructuring of the labour market - guarantee ongoing change.

Fatherhood arrives in Government policy

Fatherhood is emerging as a key issue in a wide range of areas of

public concern - criminal justice, education, poverty, family separation.

A big step forward during the year has been the strong specifications on engaging with fathers in the Government's guidance for Children's Centres, the early years flagship of the Government. The Minister for Children, Beverley Hughes, has masterminded a systematic attempt to ensure that all policy at the Department for Education & Skills requires engagement with both parents.

Another key development was a meeting of our chair of Trustees with Chancellor Gordon Brown to discuss fatherhood. The direct result of this conversation was the appearance of fatherhood in the terms of reference of the Comprehensive Spending Review to take place in 2006 and 2007.

Meanwhile I continue to serve on the Board of the Equal Opportunities Commission and on various Government advisory groups relating to the National Service Framework for Children, which gives me a good opportunity to influence policy 'from the inside'.

Problems to be addressed

Numerous system failures remain, however, and define the work that Fathers Direct has still to carry out.

Schools: There is no preparation for boys for future caring roles; only girls are offered childcare opportunities by careers advisors (found in an investigation by the Equal Opportunities Commission). Equality policy only looks at changing the education of girls. The growing focus on engaging with parents in children's education is largely overlooking the fact that when most people refer to "parent" they actually only mean the mother..

Prisons: Sophisticated approaches have been developed in working with fathers in prison - having children has been found to be a powerful motivator for change. But the overall problems in the prison service mean these are not fully used. Meanwhile, facilities for the 125,000 children with fathers in prison to visit their fathers are generally appalling and there is no statutory requirement on prisons to support the ongoing child-father relationship where this is appropriate for the children. When men are released there are no programmes to support their re-integration into their role as father. The parental status of young men registering in community-based Youth Offending Teams is not even recorded.

Maternity services: Maternity services widely fail to provide adequate support and information to fathers in the transition to parenthood and in

enabling men to be supportive of mother and baby. Research at Bristol University, backed up by our own pilot project with young black fathers in South London, shows that young men in particular feel excluded by maternity services, which in turn interpret the young men's distance as an abandonment of the mother and baby.

Preschool family services: These services are targeted at supporting mothers and the vast majority of these institutions are unable to engage with and support the needs of the fathers who do one third of the parental care of this age-group, when mothers work; nor do these services recognise the considerable caring work undertaken by many fathers in disadvantaged communities where there is high unemployment.

Workplace and leave entitlements: Workplace culture still considers caring to be the responsibility of women, which in large measure accounts for the discrimination and disadvantage that women often experience in the workplace when they become mothers. The inequitable system of leave entitlements in the UK reinforces this segregation. Successful statutory leave policies in other countries to support sharing of caring roles are resisted in this country.

Support to separated families:

The problems faced by non-resident fathers in relation to schools, prisons, maternity services, pre-school services and the workplace are all magnified compared to fathers in intact families. Services to support non-resident parents are critically under-resourced across the board, built on the false assumption that non-resident parents are not involved in the lives of their children. Financial support for separated families envisages the resident parent as responsible for care and the non-resident parent as involved only in a financial capacity. Low income non-resident parents, even if they do participate in caring for their children, have no access to appropriate housing or any allowance to support the cost of their caring - they are invisible to the state as parents, defined as 'non-parents'.

Domestic violence: Whilst awareness about domestic violence and action to tackle it are rising rapidly, with huge benefits for victims and for society as a whole, there remains an almost complete dearth of programmes to enable violent parents to address their own behaviour and take steps to stop their violence for the sake of their children and partners.

Family courts: In the context of all the limitations in support for fatherhood listed above, when relationships break down and the care of children is in dispute,

huge differences between parents emerge in relation to children. Normally mothers find themselves "in possession of" the children and fathers who want to be involved have to earn and justify their position. This accounts for the demands of fathers' rights groups to be considered equally with women when shared care arrangements are being negotiated.

The response of Fathers Direct

In response to these deficits, Fathers Direct promotes change in policy and practice to support the role of men in caring for children. We are a resource for Government, employers, service providers and families as they adapt to these changing social roles of men and women.

During the year we pursued two broad strategies. We have sought to **set the agenda** by raising public awareness on the basis of research into the needs of children and proposing changes to law and policy. At the same time we have sought to **develop the capacity of services to change**, by providing them with training, advice and practical information.

Our finances

The gross incoming resources for the year amounted to £697k of which £505k had to be used on

restricted projects. General reserves were increased by £62k to £6k.

Fathers Direct is working towards a reserves policy of £50k. But rapid growth is still requiring constant investment, and this takes priority over a reserves policy. We are grateful to Venturesome for providing a loan of £40,000 to act as development capital in place of reserves for the time being.

We wish to thank our funders for their support:

- Tudor Trust
- Big Lottery Fund
- Baring Foundation
- Lloyds TSB
- Department for Education and Skills, including Parenting Fund, Strengthening Families Grant
- Department for Health, Section 64 grant
- Barrow Cadbury Trust
- Children in Wales
- Children in Scotland

The Trustees maintain proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enables the Trustees to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The Trustees take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In preparing the financial statements in this Report, the Trustees have followed best practice and:

- selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis.

Risk management

A key task of the new Board of Trustees will be to develop a new business plan with a significant diversification of funding sources, so as not to be overly dependent on any one source of income.

Internally, financial risks were managed by the authorisation of a Trustee of every payment above £10k. Detailed activity and financial reports were submitted to funders in relation to every grant and donation, so that every project is clearly ring-fenced in the accounts. Procedures are reviewed annually to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

Auditors

Elliott Bunker were re-appointed as the charitable company's auditors during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

In-house

The Trustees

During the year the Trustees were:

Dame Julie Mellor (Chair), former Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, now Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers

Melvyn Davies, Project Manager of CoramBoys2MEN

Professor Michael Lamb, Dept of Social & Developmental Psychology, Cambridge University; world's leading expert on the role of fathers in child development

Ben Rose, Solicitor in Hickman and Rose; Trustee of Youth at Risk

Carolyn Unsted, Principal School Improvement Officer, Lewisham Council

Lisa Harker, Independent consultant, Trustee of the Daycare Trust

Dr Bronwen Cohen OBE, Chief Executive of Children in Scotland

The team

David Bartlett, Services: Leading our work with family and children's services – training, consultancy and information.

Tom Beardshaw, Networks: Manager of www.fathersdirect.com. Organised our annual conference. Developing our work with employers.

Adrienne Burgess, Policy & Research: Managing the use of evidence to develop our policy. Writing and training work for public services.

Duncan Fisher, CEO: Leading the business development of Fathers Direct and leading the policy work.

Kathy Jones, Training: Training, consultancy and local project management work.

Jack O'Sullivan, Communications: Editor, *FatherWork* magazine. Managing media work.

Liz Rand, Marketing: Joined during the year to focus on outreach to core markets.

A networked organisation

All staff work from home - Tom Beardshaw and Duncan Fisher in Wales, David Bartlett in Yorkshire, Jack O'Sullivan in Oxfordshire, Adrienne Burgess in London and Kathy Jones and Liz Rand in Northampton. This contributes to extremely low overheads and allows all members of staff maximum opportunity to work and at the same time be available to their families. The geographical coverage of the staff has also led to the extension of project activities across the country, for example, initiatives in both Wales and Yorkshire. Administration is contracted to Standby Secretarial Services, based very near the home of Duncan Fisher in Wales.

Child and Family Services

Fathers Direct's work with family and children services received a huge boost with the arrival of Beverley Hughes as Minister for Children. She is highly committed to ensuring that services for which the Department for Education & Skills is responsible all engage systematically with both parents. The first manifestation of this was strong specifications in the Children's Centre Guidance and a new engagement with turning policy into practice at the Department.

In this context, Fathers Direct, with funding primarily from the Department for Education and Skills Family Support Grant, continued to provide practical tools for individual services to change, and also – in the form of a Fatherhood Quality Mark – developed a tool to make good practice universal over the next decade.



What exists currently as isolated islands of excellence,

must become common practice in engaging with all key carers of children in family services.

Working with Fathers Guide

Produced the previous year, the Working with Fathers Guide remains the core publication of Fathers Direct, outlining six steps



by which a family service can mainstream engagement with both mothers and fathers in its work.

Monthly email service



Fathers Direct produces a monthly email bulletin, distributed to 4000 workers and managers in services.

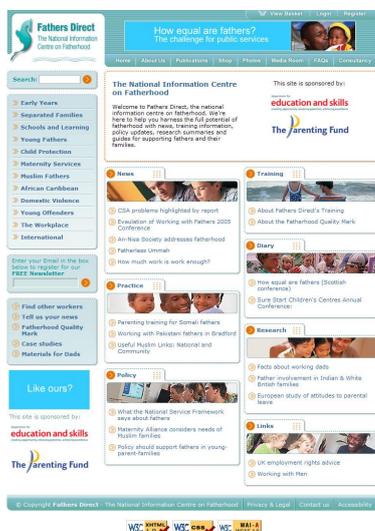
FatherWork magazine



Fathers Direct produced three editions of FatherWork magazine during the year, the best produced and edited magazine in the family sector, aimed not only to inform but to communicate that working with fathers is no longer an optional side issue. Each edition is mailed to 1500 people.

**On-line resource library
www.fathersdirect.com**

With the grant from the Parenting Fund at the Department for Education & Skills, we were finally able to rebuild our website from scratch, presenting a much more robust service to family and children's services, with a sophisticated database of material easily accessible to the team to update and manage on a daily basis. The website received 100,000 page downloads per month.



Training and consultancy

Training and consultancy work continues to expand rapidly:

nine public training courses and 58 consultancy contracts totalling £65,000 with family services for advice, speaking and in-house training courses.

We have diversified our training portfolio, with specialist courses on black and minority ethnic families, separated fathers, and violent fathers. We have introduced accredited training courses (NVQ level 3) and ran these for the first time.

With a grant from the Parenting Fund, we were able to expand this work into the voluntary sector, focusing on three sectors: Muslim families (in

What did trainees learn?

“We need to develop a Fatherwork Strategy group for the local area.”

“Some very practical tips for engaging men, and exciting ideas for service development.”

“It was very interesting to meet and hear the Panel of Fathers. Their ability to put across their needs was excellent and has really made me think of how I ‘hear’ fathers in the future.”

partnership with An-Nisa Society), African- Caribbean families (in partnership with Babyfather Alliance at Barnardos) and families with drug and alcohol problems.

About 1100 people participated in our courses.

National conference, Working with Fathers



On 5 April 2005, Fathers Direct its second national conference on fatherhood in Europe, again with 950 practitioners from a wide range of family and children's services. The success of the event lay in the fact that it targeted the everyday needs of practitioners working at the grass roots. The centrepiece was 16 forums each lasting 3 hours – young fathers, early years, maternity, workplace, education, Islam, BME, child protection, prisons, separated families, mental health, parent education and support, domestic violence, youth justice and sports.

The forums were all run in associations with lead organisations in the sector – over 40 partnerships in all, displaying the wide range of fields in which fatherhood is emerging as an issue, driven by social change.

Children were present at the event again, this time through a performance of children and their fathers from Coopers Lane Primary School in South London.

Fathers Direct would like to thank the funders of this major event:

- BT, the lead sponsor
- The Parenting Fund at the Department for Education & Skills, for providing 120 free places for those unable to afford the conference fee
- *Community Care* magazine, which promoted the conference for free.

The feedback on this conference was even more positive than the year before: 87% of 497 completers of evaluation forms rating the event as “excellent” or “very good”. At the conference we launched the research of the National Family and Parenting Institute on engaging with fathers in schools, and made this the key public theme of the conference. The conference had a strong religious theme in 2005, with forums on Christianity and Islam, and the leader of the Sikh Community, Indarjit Singh speaking.

Message from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the April 2005 Working with Fathers Conference.

"Children need an environment of stability and faithfulness if they are to grow into healthy adults, equipped and able to

take their place in our society. It is therefore good to know that fathers have become increasingly involved in caring for their children and in providing this all-important stability.

Conferences like this one play a vital role in helping all of us who seek to support family life to consider the implications of this change for the ways in which we think about families, parenting and child care. I hope that the specialist forum on "Fatherhood and the Christian Faith" will provide new insights into how churches can most effectively work in support of fathers and their children.

I hope that all delegates have the opportunity to be challenged and to share new perspectives with each other, and I congratulate Fathers Direct on continuing to affirm and uphold the importance of fathers in family life."

Wales and Scotland

During the year we continued two partnerships: with Children in Wales to create the Fatherhood Wales Working Group, and with Children in Scotland. Both partnerships involve the employment of project workers who receive ongoing support from the Fathers Direct team.

Research into the needs of separated parents

Fathers Direct broke into mainstream charitable funding for the first time by winning a £270,000 Big Lottery Grant to carry out research into the needs of separated parents. This research will be contracted in its entirety to the Policy Research Bureau during the following three years.

Specialist services

With funding from the Tudor Trust, Fathers Direct has been developing specialist work within two sectors. A new dialogue with domestic violence programmes was developed, and the first joint training session on fatherhood and violence was run. A high level working group of clinical psychologists was created to write a practice briefing on fatherhood during the following year.

Policy work

A big step forward during the year has been the strong specifications on engaging with fathers in the Government's guidance for Children's Centres, the early years flagship of the Government. The Minister for Children, Beverley Hughes, has masterminded a systematic attempt to ensure that all policy at the Department for Education & Skills requires engagement with both parents.

Another key development was a meeting of our chair of Trustees with Chancellor Gordon Brown to discuss fatherhood. The direct result of this conversation was the appearance of fatherhood in the terms of reference of the Comprehensive Spending Review to take place in 2006 and 2007.

But the Government still lacks a coherent approach to the social change that is taking place in women's and men's roles; it continues within the one-parent care paradigm where only women have caring responsibilities, and where equality for women can be achieved without reference to the caring role of men.

Maternity. The CEO of Fathers Direct serves on the Department of Health Maternity Services Implementation Advisory Group, overseeing change in maternity policy. During the year, a briefing for maternity services was drafted as part of the Section 64 funded project, outlining what good practice looks like in relation to engaging with fathers in maternity services. Maternity policy lags behind policy for early years services.

Separated families. Having stayed clear of separated family issues for five years, Fathers Direct engaged for the first time. Fathers Direct obtained a £270,000 grant from the Big Lottery Fund to conduct

research on the needs of non-resident parents, work contracted out to the Policy Research Bureau.

The Barrow Cadbury Trust gave Fathers Direct a small grant to develop thinking on how the benefits system renders separated parents invisible to any kind of support in caring for children.

Fathers Direct has focussed on communicating experience with working with separated families from abroad, where much more progress has been made than in the UK, which has severe difficulties with handling the issue of separated families.

The Media

Fathers Direct has had to create for itself a new narrative about fatherhood that is about children and cooperation with women. It has become a trusted source of information within the media – a very valuable and carefully crafted resource - though it has not been able to compete with Fathers 4 Justice in mainstream public consciousness. Its national conferences were covered by all the major newspapers and news stations, and its Fathers Day project with school children, *Message to Dad* also attracted considerable interest. In 2005 about 500 media articles referred to the organisation. Adequate resources for this work have never been available to the organisation, so all this has been achieved around the edges.

Information for Fathers

Fathers Direct produced the DAD Pack, with funding from the Department for Education & Skills and from the Department of Health, a resource for family services to give to fathers. 7000 copies of this were sold in the first month. The Department of Health funding was for specialist materials for new fathers from two minority ethnic communities (African-Caribbean and Muslim).

But the organisation has reached the conclusion that currently there simply is not sufficient commitment on the part of Government or any other funder to provide a universal source of information to fathers. The only source of funding to create a major and sustainable service is commercial, and so a decision was taken by the organisation to create a commercial joint venture to take DAD forward.

This work will start in the following financial year.

Accounts

Our accounts are currently being audited in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies, by Elliott Bunker, Chartered Accountants, 30 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 5EG.

Profit and loss account, for period ended 31 March 2006

	2006		2005	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Grants and donations				
- Bernard van Leer			11,619	
- Sony				
- Lloyds TSB	25,000		10,000	
- BT	20,000			
- DfES PICE			10,330	
- DfES TPU			5,000	
- DfES/DH Section 64	30,000		35,700	
- DfES Parenting Fund	204,800		102,400	
- DFES SFG	70,000		53,750	
- DfES other	131,250			
- Children in Wales	2,650		2,650	
- Tudor Trust	30,000		40,000	
- Barrow Cadbury Trust			5,000	
- Joseph Rowntree F'n			500	
- Children in Scotland	1,000		1,000	
- Lisbet Rausing Trust			<u>25,000</u>	
- Baring Foundation	13,200			
- Community Dev't Fund	5,000			
- Other	740			
- Big Lottery Fund	<u>45,450</u>			
		579,090		302,949
Publication sales & advertising		32,106		30,846
Event fees and consultancy		91,402		222,965
Other		784		
Bank interest		<u>710</u>		<u>672</u>
		<u>704,092</u>		<u>557,432</u>
Expenses				
Staff costs	217,730		211,555	
Overheads & project costs	159,918		145,334	
Consultancy	2,000			
Publications	10,928		27,230	
Conference & training	<u>266,573</u>		<u>151,256</u>	
		<u>657,149</u>		<u>535,375</u>
Net surplus for the year		<u>46,943</u>		<u>22,057</u>

Balance sheet, as at 31 March 2006

	2006		2005	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets		0		725
Current assets				
Debtors	49,468		116,250	
Cash at bank & in hand	<u>144,525</u>		<u>33,565</u>	
	193,993		149,815	
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	<u>(96,287)</u>		<u>(89,777)</u>	
Net current assets		<u>97,706</u>		<u>60,038</u>
Total assets less current liabilities				
		97,706		60,763
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than a year		<u>(20,000)</u>		<u>(30,000)</u>
Net assets				
		<u>77,706</u>		<u>30,763</u>
Unrestricted funds		65,271		(55,918)
Restricted funds		<u>12,435</u>		<u>86,681</u>
Total funds				
		<u>77,706</u>		<u>30,763</u>