

FATHERHOOD INSTITUTE

Annual report

2022-23



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Welcome from our CEOs



Adrienne Burgess



Kathy Jones

For the 605,000+ babies born in 2022, their relationship with their fathers will have a critical impact on their outcomes. From early language acquisition, their adjustment to the social world and their educational experiences, to how they contend with adversity or disadvantage and the quality and stability of their adult relationships.

Despite a growing body of evidence about fathers' impacts, archaic mainstream narratives about gender roles continue to inform the design of our parenting leave system, and the public services which disproportionately focus on mothers when delivering education, health, social care to children. Fathers are still assumed to be breadwinning to have little or no stake in caregiving, and support around this.

The pandemic gave fathers a unique opportunity to provide more care. As society adjusts to a post-Covid world, fathers continue to have to carve out time from their busy working lives if they want to be close to and involved with their children. Our influential work to make fatherhood more visible and create the conditions in which it is possible for dads to share work and care remains crucial.

The work of our research team, undertaking thematic evidence reviews, influencing the design of major longitudinal cohort studies, creating original new categories/terminologies of/for father, to accurately capture their impact, underpins all that we do. This informs the design of new training packages for perinatal, early-years, education, and social care workforces, and we have been testing some of our innovative interventions through RCTs, and creating new professional resources.

Exciting new evidence has emerged from our portfolio of projects this year. We hope you'll enjoy reading more in this report. Looking ahead we'll continue to tell the story of UK fatherhood, and build on our campaigning work so that future fathers can inhabit their fatherhood fully in systems that acknowledge and value their critical contribution.

Kathy & Adrienne

About us

The Fatherhood Institute is a UK charity working to build a society that values, prepares, and supports men as involved fathers and caregivers.

Why we exist

Research, family policy and services in the UK are built on the assumption that mothers are/ should be responsible for looking after children. This leads to fathers being excluded and marginalised from key evidence, policy and support. We want to change that.

Our vision is of a society that:

- Gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their father and any father-figures;
- Supports both mothers and fathers as earners and caregivers;
- Prepares boys and girls for a future shared role in caring for children.

What we do

Our work centres on developing father-inclusive research, policy and practice. We:

- Collate, publish, and mobilise research on fathers and their impacts on children, mothers and wider society
- Identify, develop, and evaluate approaches to engaging with fathers in health, education and family services
- Inject research evidence on fathers, fatherhood and co-parenting into national debates about parenting and parental roles
- Lobby for changes in law, policy and practice to dismantle barriers to UK fathers' care of infants and children
- Provide information to help UK mothers and fathers balance their 'cash and care' responsibilities and co-operate as a 'parenting team'
- Are the leading provider in the UK of training, consultancy and resources to support father-inclusive practice.

Who we work with

Our stakeholders include government, NHS and local authorities, family service providers and organisations, universities, NGOs, employers – as well as fathers and the people who love them.

Find out more on our [website](#).

Our people

Staff team

Joint CEO & Head of Research – Adrienne Burgess

Adrienne leads our research strategy, directing and contributing to our research projects. As joint Chief Exec, she also makes key decisions on the running of the organisation. Adrienne was a co-founder of the FI (formerly known as Fathers Direct) in 1999. Prior to that, she worked as a journalist specialising in interpreting academic research for popular audiences. Adrienne was also an actress working in theatre, television, film, and on radio.

Joint CEO & Head of Strategy - Kathy Jones

Kathy has strategic oversight of numerous of our projects which deliver research, systems change processes, and CPD and testing programmes for fathers and/or families in health, education, and social care across the UK and internationally. Kathy joined FI in 2004 - before that, she worked in community development. She is a qualified art psychotherapist and was awarded an MA in psychoanalytic approaches to consultation and the organisation (Tavistock) in 2005.

Head of Impact & Communications - Dr Jeremy Davies

Jeremy leads our communications and policy influencing work; contributes to research; leads impact partnerships with universities and other partners; develops evidence-based resources for specialist and lay audiences; writes funding bids; and is our main press contact. He joined the FI in 2006. Jeremy, an ex-journalist, has a Masters in Research and completed a PhD about gay fathers' paternal experiences and practices.

Head of Training - Jeszemma Howl

Jeszemma develops, designs and coordinates our training, parenting programmes, and consultancy services. Jeszemma is a Churchill Fellow, completing her travelling fellowship in Trinidad and the USA on engaging fathers in breastfeeding support. Prior to joining us in 2007, Jeszemma supported fathers and families in early years and safeguarding services.

Trustees

Chair – Jack O’Sullivan

Jack is a father and stepfather for three young people. A co-founder of the FI, he wrote 'He's Having a Baby – the BBC Guide to Fatherhood' and launch-edited 'Dad', Britain's first consumer magazine for fathers. He currently develops thinktanks in research institutions.

Trustee - Dr Shaddai Tembo

Shaddai is a lecturer in early childhood studies (UK and China) at Bath Spa University, an associate lecturer at the Open University and an independent speaker, trainer and consultant.

Trustee - Will McDonald

Will, a freelance sustainability consultant, previously ran the Group Sustainability and Public Policy teams at Aviva, as a job share with another dad (earning a place in the Timewise 2018 Power part-time list). Will has also worked in Government, including as a Special Adviser to Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP.

Trustee - Yusuf Chadun

Yusuf is a father of three. To help new working parents, he started a flexible nursery with co-working space. He's a primary school Governor, Chair of a charity helping young people with education and employment; and works for an NGO helping UK start-ups grow.

Our work

Over the next pages, we share some details about what we did in 2022-23. For more recent updates, explore our [website](#).

The PIECE (Paternal Involvement and its Effects on Children's Education) study



We were co-investigators on the PIECE study, led by Dr Helen Norman, Associate Professor at Leeds University Business School and funded by the Economic & Social Research Council. This study undertook the first longitudinal analysis in England to explore the relationship between fathers' childcare involvement and their children's attainment at primary school. Its findings offer crucial evidence to help us advocate for better engagement with fathers by schools and early years providers.

Consulting with dads and educators

Part of our contribution to the study was the *PIECE Talks*: two online discussion events with parents and education practitioners, which we ran in May 2022 - to help build understanding of how fathers support their children's learning, and the help fathers want and receive.

We held the events online (using Zoom), and the information participants shared fed anonymously into the resources we went on to develop for education settings and families.

“Even when we specifically asked the school to contact me first, they still went ahead and contacted my wife.”

We already knew, from existing research, that parents’ early childcare involvement is important for children’s development – but much of this evidence was based on research conducted with mothers or ‘parents’ (meaning, mostly mothers, and not differentiated by gender).

In the **Fathers’** event, we spoke to fathers who had at least one child under the age of 12, and who were from a diversity of backgrounds (including, but not limited to, biological/non-biological parents, those in two parent or single parent families, parents that live with their children full or part-time, or not at all).

We shared some key findings of a survey we had conducted earlier in the year, in which 250 fathers shared their experiences of supporting their children’s learning and dealing with early years settings and primary schools. Our discussions explored how fathers approach supporting their children’s learning, and the ways schools, nurseries and other family services might engage most effectively with fathers – including those whose working hours make physical attendance in settings difficult, and those don’t live with their children full-time.

In the **Professionals** event, we spoke to practitioners with a role in parental engagement, education leaders, and representatives from organisations and projects using technology to support parent-school relationships – to hear their ideas and perspectives.

The final PIECE report (co-authored by Dr Helen Norman and our Head of Impact & Communications, Dr Jeremy Davies) and resources for education settings and families are now available [online](#).

Transition to Parenthood in SMEs

This three-year study, which is led by a team at Middlesex University Business School – and again, funded by ESRC, with the Fatherhood Institute as Co-investigator – kicked off in October 2022.

The project, funded under the ESRC’s Transforming Working Lives programme, aims to examine how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) manage their businesses and staffing when employees become parents. Evidence suggests SMEs lag behind in recognising the challenges parents face and implementing ‘family-friendly’ work options.

Our role on the project is to embed father-inclusion in the study's design and delivery. In the early stages of the project we helped draft interview schedules and topic guides that address key issues likely to face men becoming fathers while working for small employers.

We've also contributed to participant recruitment – by including calls-to-participate in our newsletters and on social media.

The ISAFE RCT

ISAFE

Improving Safeguarding
through Audited
Father Engagement

ISAFE is an online learning package we developed with support from CASCADE (the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre, based at Cardiff University), to improve engagement with fathers and father-figures, by local authority children's social work departments.

Thanks to funding from Foundations, we're delivering ISAFE to social workers in seven English local authorities as part of a randomised controlled trial, with Ipsos as independent evaluator.

The aim of ISAFE is to address services' failure to routinely and systematically engage, assess, support and challenge men in families – which has been highlighted repeatedly over several decades, in inquiries into cases where children have died or been seriously injured.

This issue was highlighted in our [evidence reviews](#) for the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2021) and [The Myth of Invisible Men](#), its influential report published later the same year – and in the Government's [response](#).

Our approach is to address both individual social workers' practice, and the systems that surround them - helping children's social work departments better identify and work systematically with men in families, thus preventing harm to children, and increasing the chances of children staying in the care of family members, where this is safe.

The ISAFE package includes:

- Training for social workers, to help them engage effectively with

men in families, and building their skills and confidence in supporting and challenging fathers

- Training for quality assurance staff, in how to monitor social workers' father-engagement routinely and systematically (using a father-inclusion audit tool)
- Training for fatherhood champions to help them lead and support their colleagues to do the best possible job of engaging with fathers
- Webinars for senior leaders, to help them push through changes in policies and systems that will make father-engagement part of LAs' routine, everyday work

Between October 2022 and March 2023 we created the intervention, working closely with our partners and an expert advisory group. We developed training content for social workers, quality assurance staff and team leaders, including a password-protected website featuring evidence reviews, practice guides and videos and audio recordings co-created with fathers from North East Young Dads and Lads and Future Men.

We also wrote an intervention protocol; agreed data sharing agreements and memoranda of understanding with four of our participating local authorities; organised multiple training sessions, to take place in 2023-24; and provided support to Ipsos in their development and administration of pre-and post-intervention evaluation measures.

Contemporary Fathers in the UK

We continued work on our series of [evidence reviews](#) funded by Nuffield Foundation. During 2022-23 we were focused on the sixth set of reviews, *The kids are alright: Adolescents and their fathers in the UK* – published in December 2023/January 2024.

Early Life Birth Cohort Study

We continued our work as Co-Investigators on the feasibility study for a proposed new Early Life Birth Cohort Study at UCL - ensuring new fathers are engaged from the start, including those not co-resident with their baby's mother.



Engaging Dads



We partnered with the Royal College of Midwives to publish a new toolkit for maternity professionals, designed to support midwives to build deeper, more systematic, effective engagement with fathers and other non-birthing parents.

During the summer of 2022 we ran an online consultation event to inform some of the toolkit content – focusing on engaging with Global Majority fathers. The event was well-attended, and featured guest speakers Elliott Rae, founder of Music Football Fatherhood, Owen Thomas, fatherhood programme lead at Future Men, and Sandra Igwe, CEO of The Motherhood Group, who advocates for black maternal health.

We created a range of content for the [toolkit](#), including evidence summaries, a father-inclusive perinatal pathway, practical tips for father-inclusive practice, guidance on supporting diverse fathers, and a series of ten podcasts, featuring interviews with key voices on fathers' impact and experiences in the perinatal period – including anthropologist and fatherhood expert Dr Anna Machin, sociologists Dr Paul Hodgkinson and Dr Ranjana Das, midwives Dr Debbie Garrod and Lisa Common, and Kieran Anders, operations manager at Dad Matters in Greater Manchester.

Father-inclusive training and consultancy

We provided a wide range of training and consultancy commissioned by local authorities and other partner organisations – drawing from an evolving portfolio of courses and webinars.

We trained more than 1,000 practitioners in 2022-23, based in 16 local authorities across England and Wales - including practitioners from early years, health visiting, Family Hubs, maternity services, family support and early help, schools, and social work.

**1,000+ family
practitioners trained
in 16 local authorities**



If each engaged more effectively with 50 fathers, that's 50,000+ families receiving better support

Key areas of focus included training for managers and practitioners in local authorities, safeguarding partnerships and health services, focused on father-inclusive approaches to reducing parental conflict; and courses and webinars to disseminate and support reflection around the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's Myth of Invisible Men report (2021), and our evidence reviews that underpinned it.

We also provided Fatherhood Champions, FRED (Fathers Reading Every Day) and Becoming Dad training, to enable practitioners to develop ongoing father-inclusive practice in their localities.

We also completed and published a [summary](#) about our MITEY collaboration with Kids Planet - funded by Greater Manchester Combined Authority as a Removing Barriers to Apprenticeships pilot programme.

'Honestly, I can't praise you highly enough and the work that you are doing, you've definitely given me the dad bug and I will be passing it on to other schools now! It's contagious you know!'

Policy work

We published and disseminated three new analyses of data relating to our 'fathers and work' policy workstream:

Daddy Leave [working paper](#) and accompanying [video](#) – calling for a clear distinction between 'health and safety' and 'caregiving' leaves in UK parenting leave policy. We presented this at the first International Conference on Policies and Parental Support, at York St John University (August 2022).

Paternity leave employer [league table](#), in partnership with Koru Kids (October 2022)

Closing the Gap [Report](#), [Tables](#), and accompanying [blog](#) (December 2022)

We also continued to track official statistics on **gender diversity in the early years workforce** via our MITEY [blogs](#) (November 2022)

Our evidence reviews about **non-accidental injury to infants by fathers** for the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel continued to generate impact throughout 2022, including via a Kings College London [report](#) and [webinar](#); a [review](#) by NSPCC (Sept 2022); a [call for practice](#) in need of evidence issued by the What Works in Children’s Social Care (July 2022), and a Foundations [research summary](#).

External communications

More men want to be stay-at-home dads and better fathers. Why won’t politicians help them?

Jeremy Davies



Data shows that many are ready to change their own lives and ultimately society. They just need policies to speed that process



Our research reviews and opinion pieces were published in several national newspapers. These included the Christmas Day [lead story](#) in The Guardian, and subsequent [op-ed](#). This story was also picked up by the Times, Telegraph, Independent, Daily Mail and Daily Express. *See page 14 below for some selected quotes from fathers who contributed to comments sections on these articles.*

We published two podcast series: [Daddy Leave Diaries](#) – following a father’s experience of taking

paternity and shared parental leave in his baby’s first year; and [Engaging Dads](#) – a series that formed part of our joint toolkit with the Royal College of Midwives.

We continued to build our subscriber database and social media followings during 2022-23, as part of our strategy to widen our reach within both professional and lay audiences.

We sent out seven e-newsletters to our subscriber database (3k active subscribers) and posted regularly on our growing social media platforms on X/Twitter (currently 10.3k followers) and Facebook (3.5k followers), LinkedIn (2k followers) and Instagram (1.3k followers).

Quotes from stay-at-home dads

"I have been the male "homemaker", as it appears on forms, for years. It is a lonely furrow to plough. I am most self-conscious at parties when the other "blokes" are talking about their jobs. I don't quite fit in their camp, nor am I one of the mums. The children have benefited from having a dad on hand and I am glad to have the bond with them. I wouldn't do things differently but I look forward to more of us so I can be part of a bigger thing."

"When I looked after my daughter on my own from aged 9 upwards I applied to the local GP and sought to move her notes across from her prior surgery. After 3 weeks of nothing, one of the secretaries rang up to see what the hold-up was, she made the call and then put the phone down and apologised to me. I asked why and she explained that the local NHS records department hadn't signed off the transfer because they assumed I was a problem father or divorcee trying to move records for nefarious reasons. Good job there was nothing majorly wrong with my daughter."

"When my first sprog came along in 96 and then another in 98 my then partner had a career and I didn't. So I was a stay at home dad. I could have done with more support, but I enjoyed the experience a lot. Though not always at the time. What really hurt was the refusal of employers to take seriously the years I had been my children's primary care giver. When I explained the gap on my CV, they tended to smile and say "unemployed then! Ha!". I hope things have changed?"

FATHERHOOD INSTITUTE

Summarised financial statements

Income and Expenditure Account, year ended 31 March 2023

| | | 2023 | | | 2022 |
|---|------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Note | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | Total funds £ | Total funds £ |
| Income & endowments | | | | | |
| Donations & legacies | 5 | 62 | 23,224 | 23,286 | 102,202 |
| Charitable activities | 6 | 174,889 | 211,540 | 386,429 | 98,590 |
| Investment income | 7 | 468 | - | 468 | 11 |
| Total income | | 175,419 | 234,764 | 410,183 | 200,803 |
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Expenditure on charitable activities | 8, 9 | 201,298 | 67,984 | 269,282 | 188,311 |
| Total expenditure | | 201,298 | 67,984 | 269,282 | 188,311 |
| Net income & net movement in funds | | (25,879) | 166,780 | 140,901 | 12,492 |
| Reconciliation of funds | | | | | |
| Total funds brought forward | | 106,774 | 6,585 | 113,359 | 100,867 |
| Total funds carried forward | | 80,895 | 173,365 | 254,260 | 113,359 |

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year¹. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

¹ For full breakdown and financial notes on the Financial Statement please refer to the [Charities Commission](#).