

# Looking out for dad: case study

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Name Chris  
Age 30  
Child(ren) One child, aged two  
Location Oxfordshire  
Job Part-time employed as an occupational therapist

## What was your experience of antenatal care?

Largely good, however during a few appointments I was never spoken to directly and the midwife did not introduce herself to me. My wife is anxious, and so I had done a lot of research and was managing the appointments, getting things ready for her as much as possible, so I found this lack of acknowledgement quite frustrating.

## What was your experience of postnatal care?

We never saw the same midwife twice. The first midwife did not engage with me when I was clearly struggling and having very paranoid thoughts. My wife had been sleeping through the nights to recover from a c-section whilst I had been bottle feeding and sleeping in a room with my baby and working from home during the day where possible to help manage my daughter. The midwife consistently checked my wife was okay but did not do the same with me, even though we were both caring for our child.

## What could the health services have done differently to better support you in your transition to fatherhood?

In the antenatal sessions simply introducing themselves to me and asking about my relationship with my wife would have made me feel more involved. After our child was born, asking about my mental health would have been helpful and referring me for support as needed.

## What difference might this have made to you personally?

I have ADHD and was managing unmedicated. After my daughter was born, I was very miserable and struggled with work for the next two years. I then went from 37 hours compressed to 21 hours at work, took a

demotion, and had to pay privately to sort my mental health out and achieve some balance with my new role as a parent. I expect this would not have been required if immediately after she was born, I was signposted to support.



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"Men often don't actively seek out support, and as gender roles are changing so is the burden of childcare. Ensuring men receive adequate ante- and postnatal care would support the family as a whole, and enable men to be more actively involved in supporting their children whilst maintaining their health and wellbeing"