



All Party Parliamentary Group for Parents and Families

The Changing Role of Fathers

Tuesday 3rd March 2015 14:30 – 16:30

Committee Room 4A

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Ross Matthewman

Ellen Broome

Stephen Dunmore

Krys Pinches

Warren Borg

Duncan Lugton

Bishop Paul Butler

Lord Christopher

Northbourne

Earl Francis Listowel

Baroness Elspeth Howe

Mike Thornton

Baroness Hilary Armstrong

Baroness May Blood

Lord Andrew Phillips

Lizzie Poulton

Matt Jones

Tina Miller

Sybil Qasir

Ben Cox

Siobhan Bryant

Anooshah Farakish

Holly Conroy

Jen Metcalfe

Judith Longstreth

Dr Alice Haynes

Noel Janis-Norton

Rosalie Ward

Caroline Julian

Judy Corlyon

Dr Jonathan Evans

Iryna Culpin

Carmel Blackie

Alison Addy

Pete Paterson

Amy Skipp

Suzanne Beckley

Professor Brenda Almond

Paul Williams

Ruth Sutherland

Ed Rennie

Emma Willars

Charlotte Fairclough

Mary Crowley

Lambert Allman

David Grafton

Rebecca Asher

Suzanne Foster

Ian Twinn

Joanna Apps

Professor Margaret O'Brien

Alvin Carpio

Minutes

Welcome and introductions from the Co – Chair, The Bishop of Durham

Jonathan Rallings, Assistant Director of Strategy at Barnardos

- Findings from a report exploring the issues faced by young fathers from two years ago.
- Parenting advice must be tailored towards men specifically and the need for this to be incorporated in to the training and development of midwives.
- The need for schools to help teenage dads.
- Housing prioritised for mothers and babies. Fathers also need a fair opportunity to be supported.
- Greater need for public services to do more to support dads and the need for a cultural shift.

Lucy O'Sullivan, Head of Policy and Research at Relate

- Discussion of 'The way we are now' report and the state of relationships in the UK.
- The help seeking behaviour of men means that they are less likely to seek help, women are more likely to be the instigators, whilst men try to solve the problem on their own.
- Public services are geared towards supporting women and are both feminine in nature and staffing.

Adrienne Burgess, Joint CEO of the Fatherhood Institute

- Question posed whether the role of fathers had changed with there being huge diversity across the globe in the role of fathers.
- Fathers suffering from "role strain" concerned about how engaged they are with their children.
- Some concern from mothers about becoming more and more involved and treading on their toes.
- Cultural issues which undermine the role of fathers such as television commercials which are sexist against dads.
- Expressed support for the original government proposal for shared parental leave based on Swedish model which was defeated by interest groups.
- Criticism of '1001 Day Report' for only mentioning fathers twice

Representatives from the Young Dads Council

- Greater engagement needed between father and support services.
- The absence of a 'fatherhood' practitioner and the lack of information about services available to young dads.
- The need for services to be orientated toward fathers and examples of practical difficulties fathers face.
- Social workers target support towards mothers whilst fathers seen as risk to families.
- Embarrassment among young fathers due to perceived expectation of the father as the breadwinner and authority figure.
- Need for fatherhood practitioners and positive role models.

Ross Jones, Policy and Communications Manager at Families Need Fathers

- Issue of schools lack of interaction with estranged fathers, cut out of loop as no longer seen as primary carer.
- The important role schools can play in terms of information and extracurricular activities.
- Parenting engagement strategies.

Open Q&A session, led by the Bishop of Durham, with questions from the floor to speakers. The following points were made during the discussion:

- The link between single parent fatherhood and depravation.
- Difficulties for young men from poor backgrounds
- Deeply ingrained views amongst social services of men as a threat rather than a resource.
- The need for more men in family support roles and as support workers in early years.

Thank you and conclusion from the Bishop of Durham