

7. Local support for fathers and further resources

- ❑ There are a number of local and national resources for fathers and partners.
- ❑ **We have specially trained Dad Champions which can be accessed via family hub.**
- ❑ [DadPad](#) (an essential guide for new dads) and [DigiDad](#) (online e-learning platform) – For more information go to [Dads and Male Carers' Zone \(family hub website\)](#)
- ❑ Fatherhood Institute: [Engaging with men in social care: a good practice guide](#)
- ❑ Community care: [Engaging fathers](#) & [Working with fathers: key advice from research](#)
- ❑ Research in Practice: [Working with fathers](#)
- ❑ NCASP Guidance: [Engaging with Fathers, Male Partners or Carers](#)

6. Fathers mental health

- ❑ In recent years, the importance of fathers mental health has been recognised as being as important as the mental health of mothers.
- ❑ First time fathers are particularly vulnerable to depression and 1 in 10 dads to be will become depressed in their partners pregnancy.
- ❑ Practitioners should take time to stop and ask dads how they are doing. Ask how they are getting on, and how they are coping... Often these questions are saved for mams.

5. Hidden Men

- ❑ Previous research by the [NSPCC](#) has identified two categories of unknown males*. (1) *Those who posed a risk to the child* and (2) *those who were capable of protecting the child*.
- ❑ However.. men can be both, and an approach that is characterised by support and challenge - listening, and holding to account, is required.
- ❑ Professionals should open conversations about parental relationships, failure to do so could possibly overlook any potential risk.
- ❑ Similarly, failing to identify or engage fathers ignores their importance in a child's emotional and psychological development.

* Unknown males (also consider female partners) can be fathers or step fathers; partners or ex-partners; grandfathers, uncles, other relatives, or family acquaintances

1. Background

- ❑ Gaps in working with fathers have been identified at both a local and national level.
- ❑ The [Triennial Analysis for Serious Case Reviews \(2014-2017\)](#) highlights a failure to identify significant figures within families.
- ❑ Men in particular are often invisible or absent in assessments by professionals and as a result, very little information was known about them.
- ❑ Fathers are much more than a biological person and there needs to be a multi-agency approach to better understanding this, what we mean by **absent fathers** and how this might be recorded consistently across all agency's records.

2. Identifying Fathers

- ❑ Engaging with a fathers requires knowing information about him.
- ❑ Whilst this is relatively straight forward for parents that are cohabitating, it can be more complex when parents are separated.
- ❑ Every effort should be made to engage fathers when it comes to their children.
- ❑ Research recommends being explicit with the child's mother about the importance of speaking to the father (while also ensuring that she would not be put at risk).

3. Engaging Fathers

- ❑ Engaging fathers has the potential to benefit the entire family.
- ❑ All agencies working should consider the role of fathers both in assessments and when providing services.
- ❑ A range of barriers can exist to engaging fathers in practice such as the design of services, stereotypes related to the role of fathers and a lack of training to work well with fathers.
- ❑ It is important practitioners consider adjusting the delivery of service provision to ensure fathers have a reasonable opportunity to engage with services for their children.

4. Effective approaches to engage fathers

Professionals are likely to be successful in engaging fathers when:

- ❑ Their engagement is presented from the start as expected and important.
- ❑ Forms requiring information from 'parents' are designed with an assumption that the father's views are required and not just those of "the parent".
- ❑ Fathers needs (including their mental health), are routinely assessed.
- ❑ Professionals regard any interventions as being as much for fathers as for mothers.
- ❑ Fathers who do not participate are followed up.
- ❑ A mothers ambivalence or resistance is taken seriously.

