

Keeping Fathers in Sight: Norfolk's response to The Myth of Invisible Men

Dr Mark Osborn

Safeguarding Intelligence and Performance Co-Ordinator

NSCP

The Myth of Invisible Men

“Given the complexity, simple solutions are not enough. The challenge for service leaders is to get to grips with the nature of these issues and think through how they can address them holistically. What is required is a significant shift nationally and locally in how services ‘see’ and respond to fathers of babies. This is a prerequisite to securing improvements in the effectiveness of safeguarding practice for babies.”

(The Myth of Invisible Men p.37)

Norfolk's response to The Myth of Invisible Men report

NSCP Partnership Group commitment

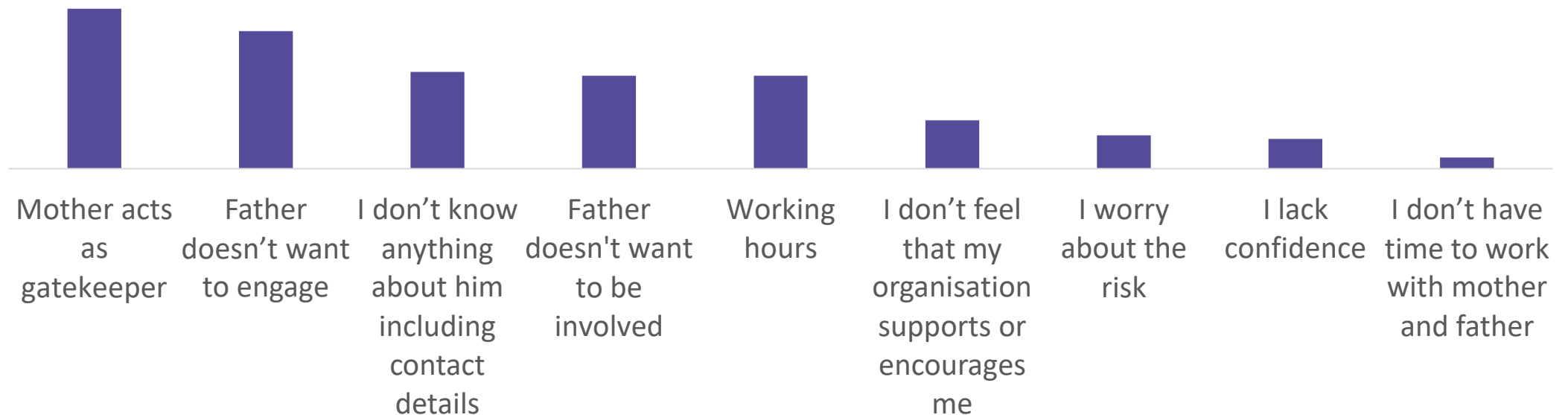
Establish stakeholder groups

Awareness raising amongst the workforce

Survey with staff to explore their perceived barriers to father engagement

Survey with fathers in Norfolk to understand some of their experiences

Barriers identified by practitioners in awareness raising workshops 2022



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Developing and agreeing the Good Practice Guidance to which all organisations would work

Creating a toolkit of resources to support father inclusive practice

Father inclusive practice becomes a workstream within the Strategic Priority of Family and Community Networking

Alignment with Family Hubs

Conference to launch tools and resources

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Training programme

Community of Practice

Listening to young fathers webinar

Good Practice workshops

Establish network of champions

Father inclusive practice champions

Planning sessions with champions

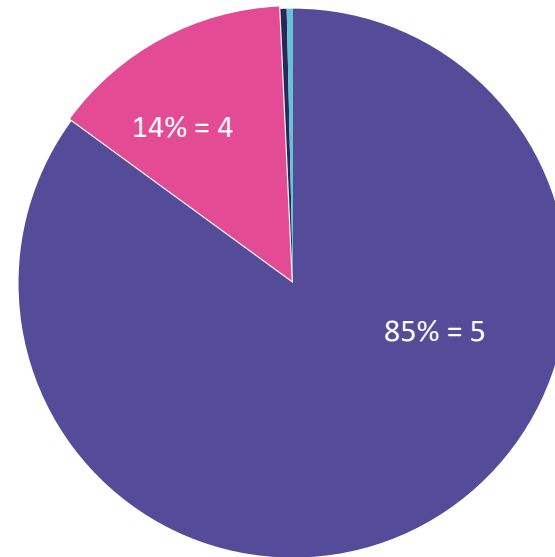
Develop resources for champions

Action plan for champions

Feedback from training

- How useful have you found today's training?

Average score
4.8

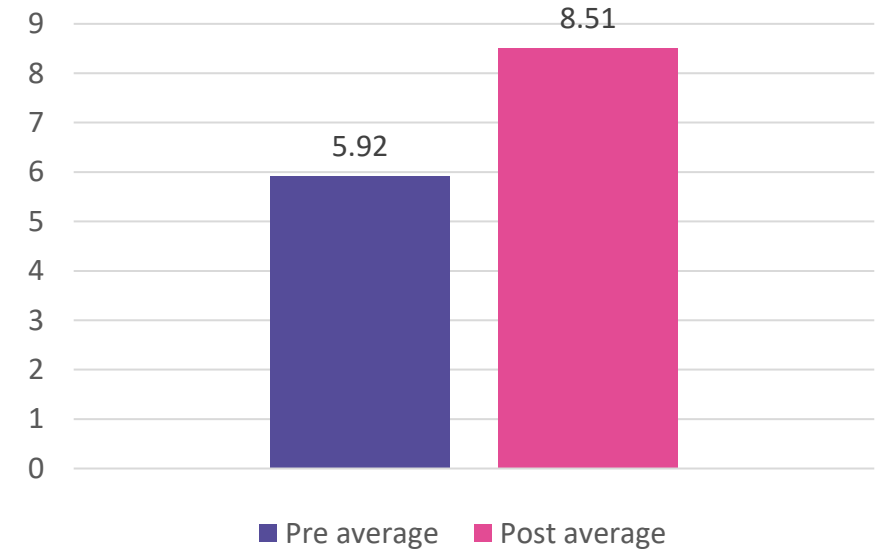
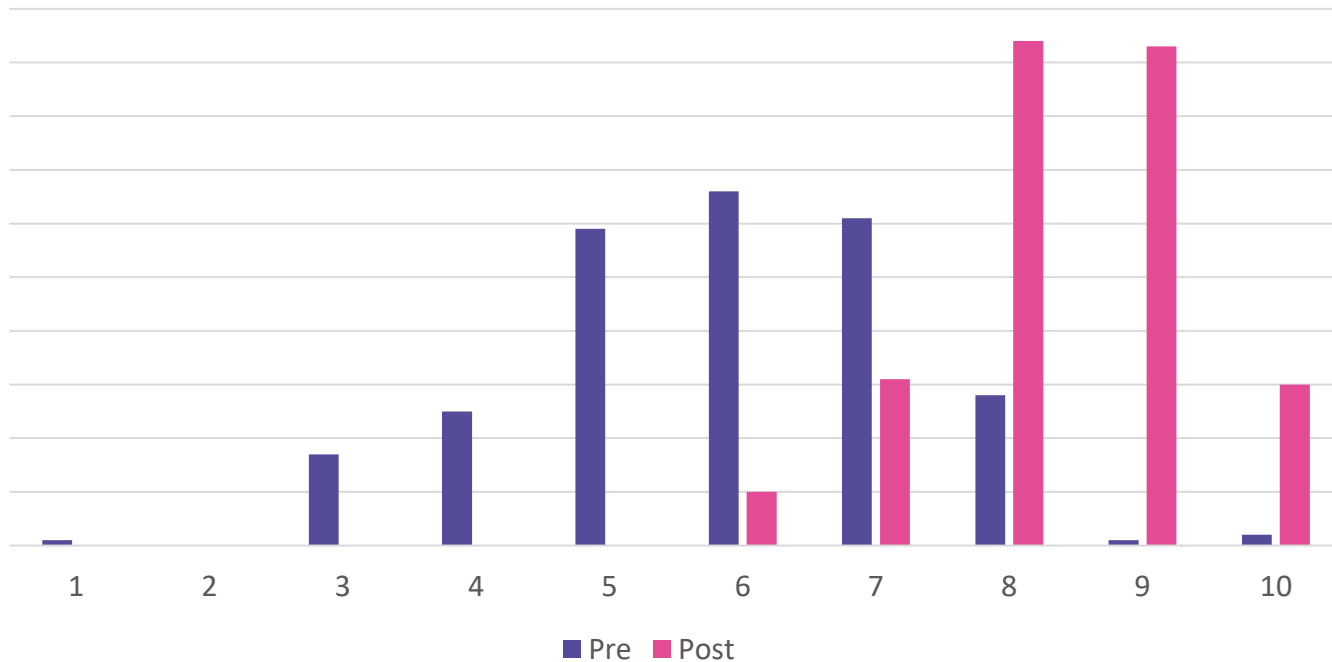


Feedback from training

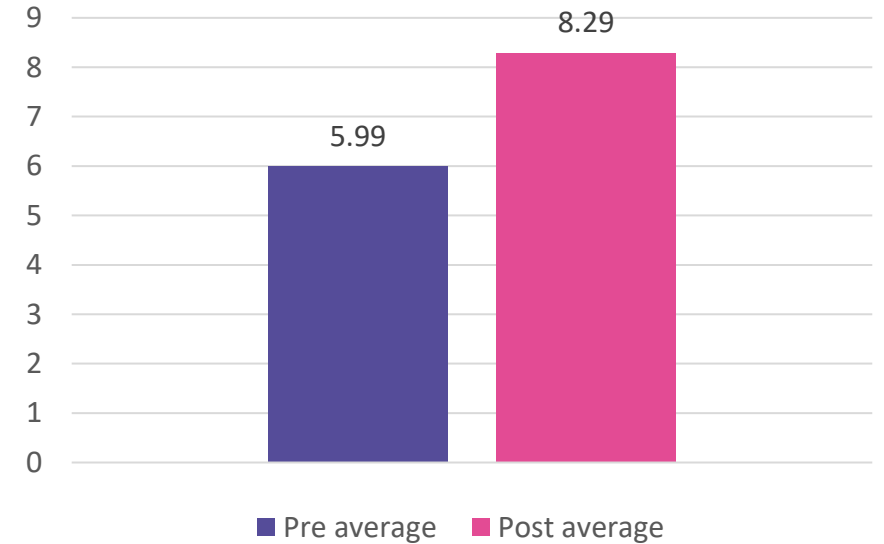
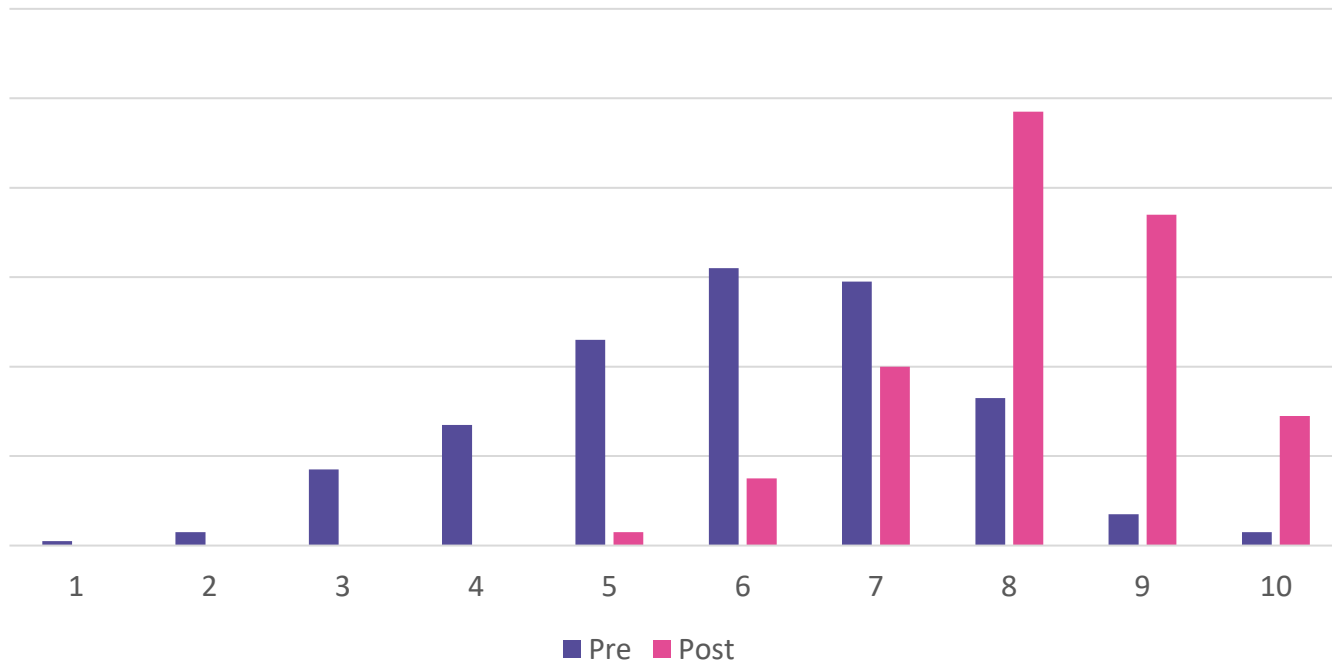
- 473 staff trained
- 3 did not note any increase in their confidence
- “Do you think that your work with fathers has changed since you attended the Start for Life father inclusive practice training?”

14 replied “No”

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much did you know about working with fathers before and after the training?



On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident were you about working with fathers before and after the training?



Feedback from the training

- Should be mandatory
- Great course which has been needed for a long time but now needs to put in practice across the board
- Great training. think should be taken on more by midwifery as extremely helpful and relevant
- Really complex and fascinating morning, would welcome more training for early years on this, practitioners in nurseries would welcome this in my experience. Thanks
- Training was brilliant! I liked how the slides were simple to understand but it was so interesting. Lots of audience participation with lots of different experiences in the room. Really enjoyed it. Thank you

Feedback from the training

- Thoroughly enjoyed the training and it felt very tailored to perinatal mental health which made it very relevant. I would highly recommend this to all staff and colleagues in all services and look forward to sharing my learnings.
- Thanks a very thought provoking day, very engaging and concrete ideas to take forward to improve the way we engage and work with dads
- Will look out both the above toolkit and guidance and check. Excellent training. Challenged prejudices and preconceptions from the outset. Has given me cause to reflect on how I interact with Dads and how I might improve that through increased awareness. Thank you.

Feedback and the need for change

- This was a brilliant session and I think it's perfect for getting the ball rolling with how we engage fathers in our roles.
- We get told to take on this piece of work and it isn't until you come to this session that you understand why it is so important and how we can do it
- I have a better understanding of why as a service we're making these changes.
- Superb morning really thought proving and would like to see changes within our own organisation from the training. Thank you for a fantastic insight
- Will be highlighting to the wider team the importance of improving our engagement with fathers

Feedback

- I found the session really a useful space to reflect upon and challenge my own unconscious bias when working with fathers
- Really informative and will change the way I engage with fathers and absent fathers/ father figure roles
- Really excellent training, some subtle changes we can make in our practice
- Very good training which has left me feeling motivated to try and change my practice
- Changed how I will tackle with conversations with fathers and how to include them more in conversations about their children
- Great session thank you! I will be using the knowledge in case supervision with our team to challenge practice and find ways to engage with dads.
- Very interesting and informative. Has me thinking of new ways to involve my teenage fathers more! Thank you

Feedback

- Very informative, opened my mind to lots of things I hadn't thought of
- It was great training to build confidence in my practice. Examples of what to say, stories shared, context given, safe space to talk openly, when and where etc., toolkit - I have written LOADS!!
- Fantastic training, really interesting and informative. Could happily listen to Mark talking all day. Some really simple things we can all do to engage fathers more in our support for children and families. Thank you!
- I want to know more. Fabulous. Thank you
- I have been able to engage with the fathers more effectively in child protection and feel more confident to be open and honest and to include them
Training well worth while!

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Childrens Services

- Feedback suggested a sense that this work is starting to have a positive impact, but this is the beginning and as an organisation we have a way to go to ensure that family networking and father inclusive practice becomes 'business as usual'. Clear expectations from senior leadership, and managers driving the practice through supervision were noted as being helpful going forward

Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

- Continue to embed father inclusive practice within the culture of our organisation, and in our discussions with other organisations, such that father engagement is routinely considered by all staff within their scope of practice.
- Ensure that Father Inclusive Practice is referenced in every relevant policy and contract.

MTM Youth Services

- We have encouraged workers to be curious about fathers, and have introduced a specific question around fathers / parents who are at different addresses in our new Registration Form (pilot scheme).

James Paget University Hospital

- Absent parents are discussed in mandatory safeguarding training. Staff are reminded and encouraged to be professionally curious when being told one parent is not involved or does not see the child.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

- Maternity services offer a 16-week mother only appointment, but they also offer a father's appointment around the same time where they discuss domestic abuse and the father's mental health. Fathers are offered to come to all other appointments and scans throughout the pregnancy and are allowed to stay on the post-natal ward after the birth to discharge.

ECCH

- Basic good practice such as ensuring that father's details are recorded on the child's health record
- Staff reflected on the impact their own interactions have on father's engagement and discussed that father's might feel sidelined by health services that are not sensitive in their engagement with fathers.

Cambridge Community Services (CCS)

- CCS leadership have continued to work with practitioners to support them to record fathers details and access their records with consent. Although there has been an increase in this practice there is always room for improvement especially across our specialist services.
- Antenatal contact letters have been changed to explicitly invite fathers into the contact
- Fathers landing page on the Just One Norfolk website which was developed with a group of Norfolk fathers.

Norfolk Community Health and Care

- Fathers Implementation plan developed, using the good practice guide. Implementation plan in process of being reviewed by clinical leads, with the aim to disseminate to clinicians across the organisation.
- Next steps will include auditing the implementation plan which include quality standards and identifying areas of good practice and areas for improvement. Update following meeting with clinical leads.

NSFT include film

- https://youtu.be/bVw2pYcqn6g?si=bDzUm2kdkPRa_hlz

South Norfolk and Broadland District Council

- Key members of staff are to be trained in Father inclusive practice. These officers will then form an internal working group to create an action plan for the implementation of father inclusive practice.

Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

- Father inclusive practice will be considered within our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- Identify if father inclusive practice is considered by housing providers (Freebridge, Clarion etc.). If it is not, then consider how/if we can influence this

Gt Yarmouth Borough Council

We have already started integrating Father Inclusive Practice into our organisational processes. Specifically, we discuss and incorporate this practice during case reviews and supervision sessions.

Identified two Father Inclusive Practice advocates who are committed to undergoing Champion Training as soon as it becomes available. Our plan is to expand this initiative by providing internal updates through Designated Safeguarding Officers and Champions and encouraging other staff members to become Father Inclusive Practice Champions. We aim to further develop our approach by incorporating father-inclusive principles into our training and communication strategies.

Our case worker 'script' has been designed to foster open discussions with fathers and reduce potential conflict in conversations, supporting a more inclusive environment. In the year ahead, GYBC is committed to embedding Father Inclusive Practice by focusing on culture change and staff development. We are reviewing our 'RMM' triage forms to better capture information on the involvement of fathers and father figures.

Ormiston

- We appointed our Head of Quality and Governance as a Fathers Inclusive Champion earlier this year. The role was established to identify and overcome barriers to father-inclusive practices and to foster positive change within the organisation.
- We decided to broaden the scope of the Fathers Inclusive Champion role. This expansion will maximise its potential and enhance the overall impact of our father-inclusive approach.
- Publish a written statement committing to fathers inclusive practice, and provide good practice guidance to staff when working with estranged families, fathers and parental conflict.

The Benjamin Foundation

- Within our Early Years service, the Service Manager has written a co-parenting policy, and the staff use Toolkits - Talking to Fathers and Father figures, Fathers and outcomes for children and Keeping Fathers in Sight to help with improving their practice.
- Services within TBF use a Geno Gram / Circles of Support to map out with a young person, who is important to them, who is in their network / life and how they are supported by them. This also enables us to capture who we cannot talk to and identify those family relationships that have broken down and how we can work on family reunification.

Early Childhood and Family Service

- Systems have been developed to ensure that the wider natural network is explored at point of assessment, review and closure.
- Father inclusive training- workers have gained a greater understanding and awareness of collaborating with fathers.
- Online parenting courses have seen an increase in the numbers of fathers attending
- ECFS ensure at point of triage fathers/ coparents are included in the initial discussion
- Absent parents are discussed at supervision
- Dads matters courses are cofacilitated with ECFS staff and these are delivered from ECFS bases.
- Positive imagery within the service of different family dynamics including male carers
- Regular reviews that show EHAPs are exploring the wider network and fathers/ coparents included when they are not within the home
- There has been an increase in male carers/ coparents accessing ECFS services

YMCA

- We learned that small adjustments in program design and communication can significantly increase father engagement. Providing dedicated spaces and resources for fathers helped them feel more included and valued, breaking down barriers that may have previously prevented their participation. Additionally, we recognised the importance of intentional messaging in outreach materials, which plays a critical role in normalising and encouraging father involvement
- This father-inclusive approach has strengthened our organisation's ability to support entire families by creating a space where fathers feel recognised, welcomed, and encouraged to engage. Through these efforts, we have embedded a father-friendly ethos across our practices, ensuring that father involvement is a core part of our work with families.

Indicators of change

Online parenting courses have seen an increase in the numbers of fathers attending (ECFS)

As part of the online delivery, we are already supporting more fathers due to our availability in the evening for them to attend. (Childrens Services)

We are seeing more fathers attend development reviews which is positive. (CCS)

Gypsy fathers are becoming more engaging with our service after lots of trust building. (CCS)

We are also finding fathers and grandfathers enjoy coming along to bounce and rhyme sessions with numbers steadily increasing. (Library service)

Indicators of change

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I'm wondering if you can point me in a helpful direction for sharing our men's support offer at TimeNorfolk. We have seen a steady increase in male referrals which is excellent.

I manage the family information team for NCC. We have started to notice a real increase in male followers of our Facebook page

We are seeing increased numbers of Dads attending our evening online parenting groups (Childrens Services)

Making change happen

- What will you take away from today?
- What are your next actions?
- Who will you share this with?

Thank You