
Foreword

In May 2002 an event called "It Can Be Done - a conference on developing work with and support for fathers" took place. This gathering was organised by The Men's Project (within Parents Advice Centre) and The Fathers' Project (within Fás le Chéile - the North Western Health Board's Parenting Education Programme). A report was published in both hard copy and on the Internet - see www.mensproject.org/issues/icbd.html

Feedback from this gathering clearly stressed the need for further opportunities to meet with a diverse range of people who have an interest in work with fathers. Subsequently, an informal meeting was held in October 2003 to see how this idea could be brought forward. All the participants from the "It Can Be Done" conference were invited. A group of seven people met and they decided to form the Dads Express Network. This core group soon expanded to eleven people.

This is a report on an event entitled: "Fathers: The Good, The Bad and The Myths" which was held on Wednesday 21st April 2004 in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh, Co. Tyrone. This event was the first Standing Conference to be organised by Dads Express.

Its aims were to:

1. Help participants to connect with others interested in work with fathers.
2. Begin to explore some of the good, bad and myths about fathers and fatherhood.
3. Identify future issues and foci for Dads Express.

The core planning group was comprised of:

- Jimmy Binns, Man Akin
- Colin Fowler, The Men's Project (Parents Advice Centre)
- Paul Gorman, Foyle Newpin Fathers' Project
- Micheal MacGiolla Easbuig, Springboard, Raphoe
- Trisha McQueen, The Men's Project (Parents Advice Centre)
- Norah Robinson, Dal Riada Rural Sure Start
- Gary Skeffington, YouthAction Northern Ireland
- David Simpson, Freelance worker with fathers
- Noreen Sweeney, Foyle Newpin
- Peter Walker, Springboard, Raphoe
- Fred Williams, Rathcoole Newpin Fathers' Project

We hope you find this report interesting and informative. Further copies are available for free downloading from the Internet at: www.mensproject.org/issues/dexp.html

At the end of this conference, a number volunteers offered to form a new planning group to arrange the next Dads Express event. If you are not already on the Dads Express database - and would like to keep in touch with developments - please send your details to Trisha McQueen in Belfast at Tel: +4428 90 310891 or Email: trisha@mensproject.org

Good luck with being a dad and/or your own work with dads. See you at next year's event!!!

The Planning Group 2003-2004