



University of
BRISTOL

About being a dad

for dads, by dads





Best things about being a dad

When I saw my child walk for the first time and come to me, I was in tears!

Being there. Every day, all day and all night. I want to be there.

Being called daddy. I felt so proud.

She's my everything.

It was all I ever wanted. It unlocks you.

Meeting up with other parents helps.

It's not about myself. It's about my kids.

When you have a baby, you get involved with professionals who make sure your baby is okay. Sometimes they might be worried about the baby and if you are looking after it properly. Here are some things dads have felt when involved with professionals like health visitors and children's social workers.



Working with professionals - sometimes it's hard

Assessments - I was afraid. I didn't want to mess up.

The GP gave me a leaflet. When I said I couldn't read or write, he just took the leaflet back. He didn't read it to me or tell me what it said!

Health visitors and midwives are there for the baby and mum. Not the dads. They leave us out.

Fathers have more to prove than mums. Especially fathers with a learning disability.

I felt alone and overwhelmed. I needed to speak with another dad.

I felt we were in a goldfish bowl. Always being watched. We were always worried about something going wrong.

Advice when working with professionals

1. **Keep calm. Take an advocate (someone who can help you speak up). Get your voice heard.**
2. **Ask whatever you need to ask.**
3. **Dads need to learn as well as mums.**
4. **Don't back off. They are your child too**
5. **Give your contact details as well as mum's.**
6. **Tell them who your support network is - like advocates, family, friends - people who are super-glued in your corner.**
7. **Talk to other dads.**
8. **Ride the storms. Never give up. Do your best. Don't doubt yourself. Listen.**
9. **If you are asked to go on a parenting course, make sure the parenting course is easy to understand.**
10. **Our final piece of advice - Enjoy being a dad!**



Where to get help and information

Contact your local advocacy organisation for more information and advice.





Written for dads, by dads

Paul, Adrian, Abdul, Nabil,
Shaun, Roy and Phil



University of
BRISTOL

Funded by

NIHR

**School for Social
Care Research**

This document was funded by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research (project number CO88/CM/UBDA-P76). The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR SSCR, NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.