

## Case Study: Father Involvement in Family Support Services

### BACKGROUND

Much current research suggests that the involvement of fathers in children's lives can pay dividends for both families and children, and many children's and family service providers are seeking to establish how they can best engage fathers in health and education services.

Local Authority Children's Services departments and their delivery partners are working hard to gather evidence of 'what works' and 'what doesn't' in relation to family support and to engage with men on an equal footing as parents. M·E·L's Senior Consultants have developed a highly specialised insight and understanding of how services for children and families are delivered; how to design effective parent engagement strategies; and how to work with service providers to help them better understand and deliver the benefits that come from father involvement.



### METHODOLOGY

Desk research – identifying and mapping who's who and who's doing what and where – forms a vital first stage. The second stage is in ensuring that discussions are held with key people in different sectors, and talking with those who commission services and are able to make decisions in respect of purchasing and strategy. A third stage involves identifying gaps in service delivery – fathers are not a homogenous group – and looking at what works well in other areas. A final stage consists of careful analysis of evidence gathered for the study to enable the Team to make actionable recommendations for change.

### OUTCOMES



The approach above has been used successfully by our expert team in a number of areas. Evidence gathered has highlighted the need for a different style of communication with fathers; Children's Centres have re-thought the content of father-only sessions; community-based projects have shared their learning with statutory service providers; Fathers' Forums have been established.

M·E·L's Healthcare Consultancy and Service Development team are well placed to support public and third sector clients, and to help develop partnerships between providers and parents – particularly those who would not usually access support services.

For further information about our work with Children's Services, please contact Jayne Francis @ [jayne.francis@m-e-l.co.uk](mailto:jayne.francis@m-e-l.co.uk) or call 0121 604 4664