

# “Power to the dads”

Mixed Methods Exploration of Dads’ Voice, Participation,  
Understanding of Children’s Rights and Support.

## Executive summary

The research explored dads' perceptions of being heard, their involvement in decision-making, understanding of children’s rights, and the support they receive as fathers.

The research tells us:

- Dads want to be heard, valued and involved, but social expectations and limited awareness still create barriers.
- Many dads are unaware of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and their important role in upholding children’s rights.
- Stereotypes that place mothers as primary caregivers make it harder for dads to seek support or be included.
- There remains a stigma around men asking for help or showing vulnerability.
- Dads want equal recognition from professionals and partners in decisions about their children.

## Policy and Practice recommendations

- Increase paternity leave, to allow dads more time to bond with their baby.
- Ensure strategies and structures are in place to involve and support dads from the moment their fatherhood journey start.
- Offer more targeted support to gather and include dads' voices in Welsh Government consultations and wider.
- Coproduce parenting resources with dads for dads, to ensure key messages are shared effectively and inclusively.
- Provide training and guidance for professionals working with families on effective ways to involve/include dads as equal caregivers.
- Improve support for families on how to communicate and make decision together.
- Provide more dad-friendly groups and classes, which offer a safe space to build skills and confidence on *‘how to be a good dad’*.
- Promote positive images of dads.
- Continue to fund organisations like Children in Wales to provide clear resources and messages to dads on how they can support their children’s rights.

## About the research:

This research was carried out in 2024-2025 by the University of South Wales and in partnership with [Children in Wales](#) (CiW) and [Parents Connect Wales](#) (PCW).

97 dads took part, capturing the experience of over 200 children. The dads involved completed an online survey, which consisted of close and open-ended questions

The research tells us:

### **Dads feel overlooked:**

- 21% of dads felt their voices are not being heard, particularly in separated or blended families.
- Many reported being overlooked by professionals especially in schools and healthcare settings, where mothers are often seen as the main point of contact.
- Some felt blamed for relationship breakdowns and described a lack of organisations advocating for dads.

### **More needs to be done to involve dads in decision-making:**

- 74% felt involved in decision making affecting their children.
- 60% believed more could be done to involve dads in key decisions for example in health education
- 45% felt their voices still aren't properly heard.

### **Dads have an important role in supporting children's rights:**

- 55% of dads said they understood children's rights, but 52% had never heard of the UNCRC.
- Dads who were familiar with the UNCRC tended to be more engaged in their children's wellbeing.
- Most believed they could support their children's best interests (92%), speak up for them (82%) and defend their rights (80%) when needed.

### **More specific support is needed for dads:**

- Over a third (35%) had received no official support, relying mainly on partners, family, or friends.
- Many wanted safe, non-judgmental spaces to talk openly and build confidence, especially single dads.
- Some doubted that support groups would work due to stigma, time pressures, or discomfort with talking openly.
- Others called for systematic changes such as better legal support, fairer paternity leave, and stronger public recognition of fathers.

# Contact

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