

ANNUAL FATHERHOOD SURVEY 2016

THE CENTRE FOR
SOCIAL
JUSTICE

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“New fathers are crying out for better social and emotional support in order to be the great fathers they want to be. We need to ensure they get the emotional and practical support they need.

This poll shows that parenting classes are becoming a middle class preserve and that half of low income dads say they are just left to ‘pick up’ parenting by themselves.

Fathers shouldn’t be seen as an optional extra to family life. This poll should set alarm bells ringing in government.”

Baroness Stroud

Director of the Centre for Social Justice

“These findings are extremely concerning and show just how much work there is to be done to promote active fatherhood, especially amongst working class fathers.

Why should it be the blue collar dads that lose out?

The consequences of a father falling out of a child’s life are hugely significant, and any Government that is serious about tackling social mobility and improving the life chances of our children needs to take fatherhood seriously.

For too long our public services have been based on the assumption that men are the breadwinners and women are the homemakers when this simply isn’t the case. We need to see a system offering more support to fathers so that men who are currently struggling to access the services and backing they need are able to play a more supportive role in their child’s life.

Children need their fathers. The Government can put a marker down by appointing a Fatherhood Champion to take urgent action to close the Dad Gap”?

Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP

Chairman of All Party Parliamentary Group on Fatherhood

SUMMARY

In 2014 the Centre for Social Justice published *Fractured Families* which highlighted an alarming trend of fatherlessness across the UK. This worrying trend should concern us all. Dads make a real difference and have an important role to play in any policy agenda to strengthen family life.

- A teenager sitting their GCSEs is more likely to own a smartphone than live with their father.¹
- A million children have no significant contact with their fathers.²

The Centre for Social Justice is issuing a rallying cry to the Prime Minister to make her Government the most father friendly ever and our opinion poll shows there is still a long way to go.

1. Only 57 per cent of 15 year olds are still living with their fathers while 62 per cent own a smartphone. From CSJ *Fully Committed? How a Government could reverse family breakdown* p15;

2. CSJ *Fractured Families*, 2013 p34

THE DAD GAP

This year the Centre for Social Justice has teamed up with public opinion platform, Bheard.com, to conduct a Survey of Fatherhood in the UK. Our exclusive opinion poll conducted by YouGov identifies an alarming “Dad Gap” in the UK:

- Attendance at parenting and antenatal classes is increasingly a middle class preserve; low income fathers are half as likely to go to a parenting and antenatal classes as higher income fathers: **71% vs 31%**.
- The good news for Government is that **87%** of low income fathers found parenting and antenatal classes useful, compared to **65%** of higher income fathers.
- More needs to be done to help fathers before the birth of their first child; **72%** of higher income fathers felt prepared for becoming a father for the first time compared to only **60%** of lower income fathers saying they felt prepared.
- When asked whether there was any information or guidance provided for new fathers **55%** of low income fathers said they were left to “pick it up themselves” vs **29%** of higher income fathers.
- Poorer fathers suffer the effects of ‘digital exclusion’ when it comes to finding information and support online. **45%** of fathers in the top two household income brackets use the internet for information compared to **26%** in the bottom two household income brackets

OTHER OPINION POLL RESULTS

In further evidence that Britain has a long way to go in becoming the most father friendly nation ever, our poll found:

- **47%** of all UK fathers feel their role isn't valued by society and almost half (**46%**) of the lowest income fathers reported a lack of "good" fatherhood role models.
- New fathers are crying out for better social and emotional support rather than being told to "man up". **Nearly 3 out of 5 Dads (57%)** say they felt emotionally unsupported when the first became a father.
- Only **25%** of British Dads feel that there is enough support to help them play a positive role in family life. **78%** of Dads say there is less support available to fathers than for mothers.
- A new breed of "**Google Dads**" is emerging: Our poll uncovers a dramatic rise in the use of the internet as a guide to parenting, with a **fourfold** increase in internet use since the early noughties.
- New Dads now go online for information and advice on being a father. **38%** of fathers of under-fives get their information online, compared to **30%** who got information from parenting classes.

THE WAY FORWARD

A Fatherhood Champion in Government to close the “Dad Gap”:

- A senior MP or Member of the House of Lords should be appointed as the first ever **Fatherhood Champion** with the authority to make change happen across Government.
- We are calling on the Prime Minister to close the “Dad Gap” in the UK and appoint a Fatherhood Champion within her Government to make this happen.

A new Fatherhood Champion should be given the full backing of the Prime Minister to:

- Ensure all Government policy is assessed for its impact on fathers, using the Government’s Family Test, especially Dads from poorer backgrounds.
- Encourage UK employers to become ‘father friendly’ and recognise the needs of fathers in the workplace.
- Work with NHS bosses to make sure expectant fathers are helped to play a full role in the maternity and birthing process.
- Promote the important role of fathers in family life by supporting role models and mentoring programmes, shining a spotlight on good practice where this is making a real difference.
- Help the Government to roll out successful parenting programmes aimed at fathers and expectant Dads.

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All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,071 fathers with children aged under 18. Fieldwork was undertaken 17th-24th May 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB fathers of under 18s. YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by their rules.

ABOUT US

THE CENTRE FOR
**SOCIAL
JUSTICE**

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think tank established in 2004 to put social justice at the heart of British politics. In June 2013, the CSJ was awarded UK Social Policy Think Tank of the Year at Prospect magazine's Think Tank Awards.

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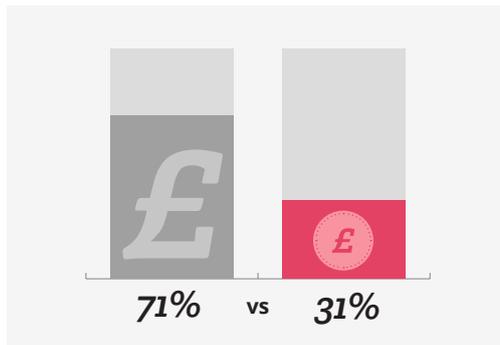
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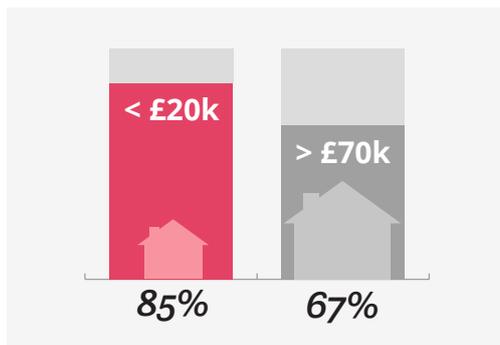
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THE SURVEY IN GRAPHICS

ATTENDING ANTENATAL OR PARENTING CLASSES

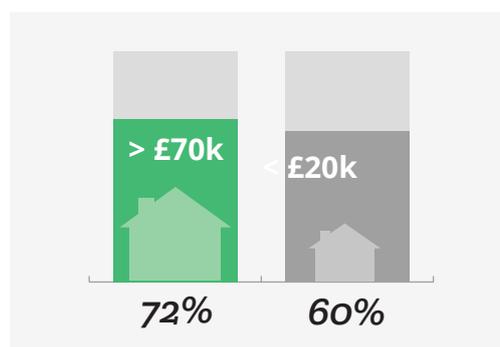


71% of fathers with a household income over £70,000 vs 31% of fathers with a household income under £20,000 attended a parenting or antenatal classes before becoming a father for the first time

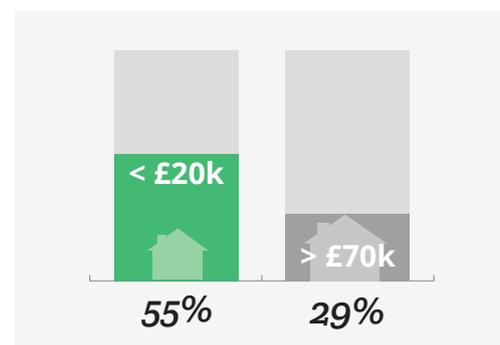


85% of fathers who attended antenatal or parenting classes with a household income below £20,000 said they were "useful" compared to 67% of fathers with a household income over £70,000

BECOMING A DAD FOR THE FIRST TIME

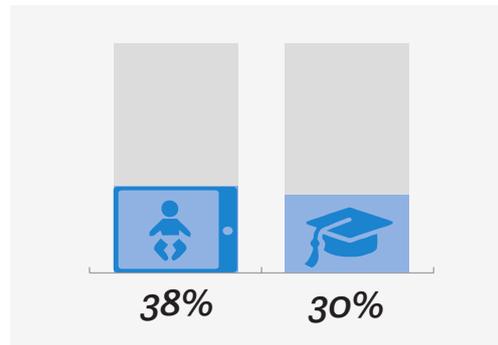


72% of fathers with a household income over £70,000 vs 60% of fathers with a household income under £20,000 felt prepared to be a first time father.

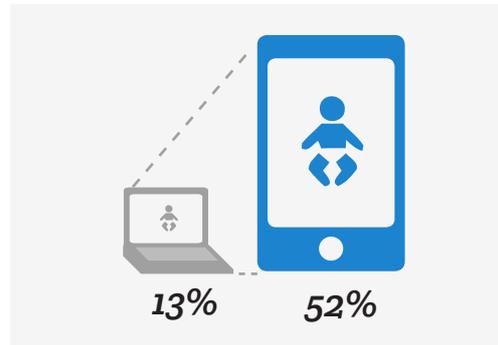


55% of fathers with household incomes under £20,000 said they didn't approach anyone at all and were left to "pick it up" by themselves compared to 29% of fathers from households with an income over £70,000

THE EMERGENCE OF GOOGLE DADS

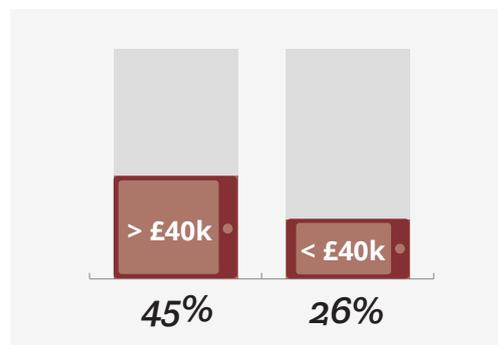


New Dads go online for information and advice on being a father: 38% of fathers of under-fives get their information online, compared to 30% of the same fathers who got their information from parenting classes.



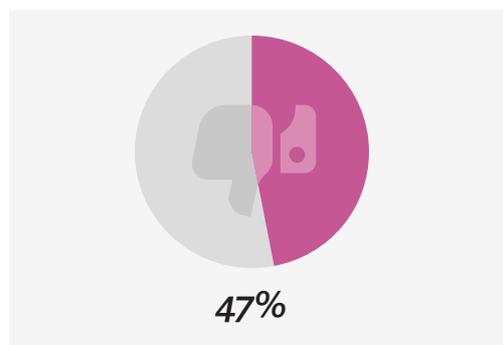
A fourfold increase in internet use since the early noughties, 13% of fathers with children over the age of 18 used the internet for information and guidance when they first became a father compared to 52% of fathers with children under five.

A FATHERHOOD DIGITAL DIVIDE



45% of fathers from households with an income over £40,000 use the internet for information compared to 26% of fathers from households with an income under £40,000

PERCEPTIONS OF FATHERHOOD



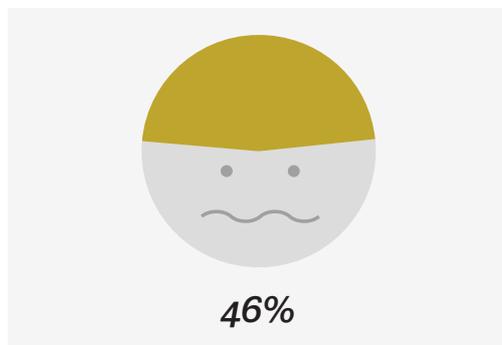
47% of all UK fathers feel their role isn't valued by society

PERCEPTIONS OF FATHERHOOD (CONTINUED)



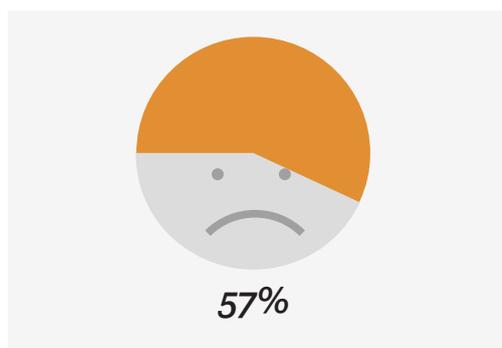
56% of fathers from with household incomes over £70,000 said their community valued their role compared to 40% of fathers from households with income under £20,000

A LACK OF “GOOD” ROLE MODELS

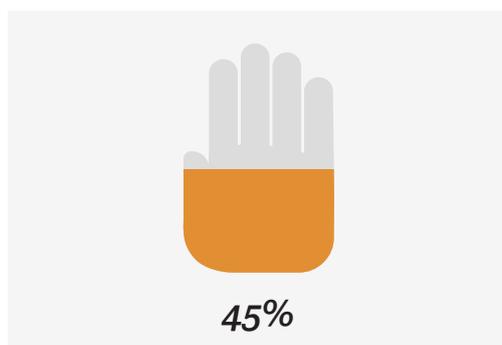


46% of fathers from households with an income under £20,000 said there were “not many good role models for being a dad”.

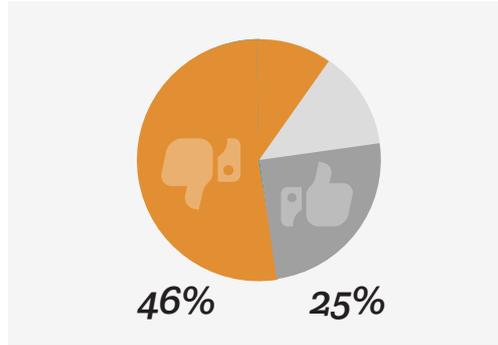
SUPPORT FOR FATHERS



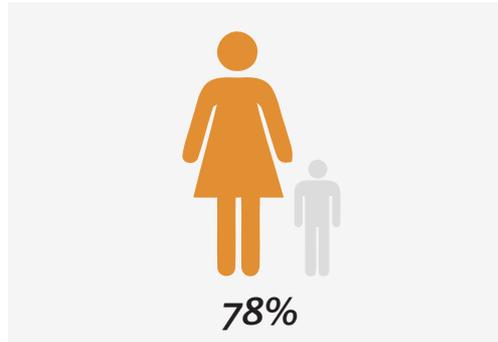
57% of all UK fathers said there was not much or no emotional support on becoming a father



45% of all UK fathers said there was not much or no practical support on becoming a father.

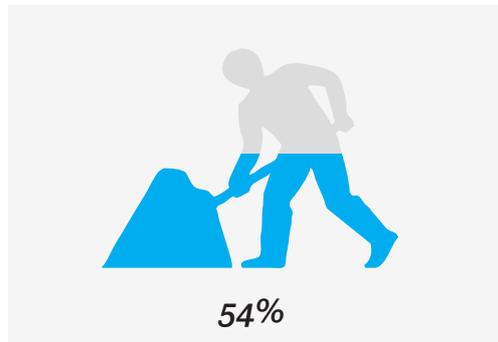


only 25% of all UK fathers feel there is "enough support and help available" compared to 46% who feel there is "not enough support and help available"



78% of all UK fathers feel less support is available for fathers than for mothers

BEING A FATHER IS GETTING HARDER



54% of all UK fathers think it is difficult to be a father these days.