

FYFF



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@FollowingYFF



Following Young Fathers
Further

Following Young Fathers Further

Project Update

I start this update almost unable to believe that another three months has passed since the last newsletter was published! This takes us 6 months into the FYFF study already. The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown policy impacted us just 3 months after the study commenced and has certainly created some challenges, both for the project and the team personally. Since lockdown was imposed, we began to reflect on lots of important, and ethically driven questions, including whether and how we should continue our research at a time of global crisis. We consider it important to capture the impacts of this unfolding crisis on the lives of young fathers and those that support them. Not only has the lockdown impacted on how we do our research, but we know that it has also impacted on family lives and personal relationships in disproportionate ways. Our project partners, organisations that work with young fathers, have also necessarily had to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing policy landscape.

As I note in a recent [blog](#), we are of the view that we have an ethical responsibility to preserve, rather than silence, the voices of those who are marginalised. We therefore submitted an ethical amendment to conduct our research remotely, both with organisations who support young fathers and with young fathers themselves. We consulted with our participants about how best to conduct the research with them and are now officially in the field conducting the first wave of interviews focusing on the impacts of the pandemic.

Since March we have also pursued new opportunities for the study as well. We have welcomed new partners, the [North East Young Dads and Lads](#) project and have expanded the research team. We are delighted to be working with Dr Michael Richardson at Newcastle University. Plans are still underway to deliver the Young Dads Collective work in Grimsby and we have also continued to work closely with our academic partners in Sweden to plan the first wave of interviews there.

It is not yet clear what the next three months will bring but as a team we remain committed to working passionately and collaboratively in a direction that develops a more compassionate and parent centred environment that supports the lives of young people.

Dr Anna Tarrant, Study Director



FYFF News!

Anna, Laura and Linzi have had an article published in [Discover Society](#) magazine, discussing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young fathers and their families.

To view this article, [click here](#).

The FYFF Team and Megan Jarvie at Coram Family and Childcare collaborated on a blog together, which has been published by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR). In this blog, the team discuss the effects of covid-19 on the family relationships of young fathers. [Click here](#) to view.

To increase awareness of the project and accessibility for participants, we have expanded our social media presence by creating Facebook and Instagram profiles. We have also created a video-formatted version of our participant information documents.

To see our Participant Information Video, [click here](#).

We would like to invite you to join the FYFF Network, which aims to establish an interdisciplinary and cross sector mix of researchers, policy makers and practitioners with an interest in young fatherhood.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Following Young Fathers Further

Re-accessing Participants:

reflections by research fellow Linzi

Strand 1 of the research is all about re-accessing young fathers who had previously taken part in the Following Young Fathers study at Leeds (2012-15). We have been able to re-access 10 young men and have conducted 5 of these interviews so far. Re-access has been relatively straight forward thanks our on-going collegiality with gatekeepers and in turn the strength of relationships that they have with the young fathers they used to support. While these young men were no longer receiving support, and hadn't for some time, their support workers kept in touch with them. The young men were keen to take part in the study and were positive about their previous research involvement.

The interviews so far have been fascinating. Some young men have had positive experiences during the pandemic; with time off work and school they have enjoyed being with their children more often. Other fathers have had their contact time with their children limited due to social distancing measures. It has been a strange experience conducting the interviews over the telephone and not seeing participants in person. We miss the body language, social cues and context that we would ordinarily utilise in face-to-face interviews. To help participants feel a little more comfortable with us, we have shared personal biographies and photos on social media and created video information sheets. One of our participants commented on the positives of telephone interviews as he managed his anxiety by busying himself with some painting while we talked. Nevertheless, we are looking forward to hopefully seeing our participants in person for the next wave of interviews.



Tales from the Field:

reflections by research fellow Laura

Beginning fieldwork during a pandemic has certainly been interesting, as well as a valuable learning experience. Initially as a team we were concerned about how we could proceed, given that we originally planned to do face-to-face interviews. In the early days, we thought through the potential of creating additional stress for already vulnerable individuals by engaging them in data generation. We were also unsure how appropriate remote methods may be. As the lockdown extended, our consensus was that capturing what was going on in the context of Covid-19 was important, as long as we did so in a sensitive way. Our thinking was further cemented by our new collaborative work with a Nuffield funded study led by Dr Ruth Patrick concerning the impact of Covid-19 on low income families.

My role in the project is to work on strand 2, which involves working with organisations and young dads in Grimsby (Lincolnshire). In response to the changes we decided to extend our first wave of interviews to include professionals and practitioners from organisations who support young fathers before proceeding to interview young fathers themselves. So far I have spoken to 12 individuals meaning FYFF is officially in the field for the first time and conducting wave 1!

These interviews seek to illicit views about the impact of covid-19 on organisations, and professional observations about the impact on young people, families, and young fathers in particular. These interviews have taken place via video-calling platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Overall, this seems to have worked well – participants have indicated that most of their meetings at work have moved to such formats too, so they convey a sense that this is just part of a 'new normal'. The interviews have been fascinating in terms of providing 'on the ground' insight and have highlighted some of the key issues young fathers are facing in light of the pandemic. In particular, they are observing that a number of young fathers are struggling to maintain relationships and contact with children, something which is negatively impacting their mental wellbeing.

The next step is to access interested young fathers who want to speak with us. We are also consulting with these organisations to work out appropriate feedback mechanisms to ensure that our findings and analyses can be fed back in a timely fashion.