In response to the Equal Opportunities Committee request for information on the experiences of single fathers and fathers with shared residence of children, South Lanarkshire Council is able to provide information relating to the provision of services and support groups. As such in this context, the following provides an overview of the initiatives and programmes that are available in the South Lanarkshire area.

With Education resources, staff are successfully engaging men in a wide range of family and adult learning programmes:

**Promoting Roles of Father Figures (PROFF):** This well established father figures group have been successfully secured an 'Awards for All' Lottery bid and are working with CLHSP staff to develop a programme utilising this funding.

These new projects have helped to increase the membership and, with the help of CLHSP workers, the group have attracted several new members from local schools and nurseries.

The importance of the engagement of male carers is promoted across multi-agency partners:

**Making Fathers Figure:**

Making Fathers Figure is a new initiative in South Lanarkshire which is looking to ensure that dads (and family men) are recognised and routinely included by Early Years Service providers. Funded through the Early Years Change Fund, Making Fathers Figure has the ambitious aim of changing the culture within Health, Education, Social Work and the Voluntary sector to ensure that dads are routinely included in all aspects of their child’s development and education.

Taking a three pronged approach, the project has established a steering group of key people who have influence in the various settings and has engaged them in the initial planning process. A consultation event has been held with fathers and the feedback will establish what kind of ‘father friendly’ information and publicity materials dads would like to see available for both staff and families and finally a range of practical initiatives will be tested, evaluated and shared.

In addition to the work focussed on engaging men we have also seen a rise in some areas in the number of fathers and male carers who are engaging in generic school and community based programmes:

**Family Values (Auchinraith):** The family values programme in Auchinraith has attracted a number of father figures. This may be down to the practical activities involved in both the school and home learning activities. The school and CLHSP workers encourage the children to invite their mums and dads to the programme, which has included topics like Pirates, Scotland, Native Americans, Film, etc.

**Nursery Outdoor Programmes (Auchinraith, David Livingstone, Calderside and St Joseph’s):** CLHSP workers have developed programmes which aim to get families to enjoy time together in the outdoors. These programmes have really appealed to fathers. Feedback suggests they enjoy problem solving and physical activities with their children.
Boys Literacy Programme (Auchinraith Primary): This programme was developed in partnership with CLHSP staff, Head Teacher at Auchinraith and Staff at Calderside Academy. The activities have included a range of outdoor activities e.g. problem solving, team building and woodwork. The activities have focused on encouraging the participants (adults and children) to develop communication, team building and problem solving skills which have appealed to father figures.

S1 Family Cookery Programme (Calderside Academy): The cookery programme was developed in partnership with staff from CLHSP and Calderside Academy. We have noticed that more father figures have attended the programme.

S1 Family Cookery Programme (John Ogilvie High School): The cookery programme was developed in partnership with school staff and attracted many father figures (40% of the adults participating in the latest programme were male), feedback from the families was very positive and seems to suggest that they appreciate and value doing practical activities with their children. Although the main focus was cookery, numeracy and literacy skills were embedded in the programme.

Interview Skills Techniques: We attracted several male carers into this programme who are considering applying for work or college.

Gardening Project (Calderside Academy & Auchinraith Nursery): Some dads have been supporting the school to upkeep and further develop an orchard in Calderside Academy and create an outdoor learning garden for the nursery.

Adult Volunteer Programme (Calderside Academy): Father Figures have been supporting activities across the curriculum but there has been a significant increase in areas such as tech/ woodwork and science.

Improving the Outcomes for Children through Engaging Father Figures Inset

Training:

We provide four multi agency training sessions per year which partners across Health, Social Work, Education and the Voluntary sectors can undertake to raise awareness of the positive outcomes for children of engaging fathers at all stages of their child’s development. This includes the development of ‘Father Friendly environments’

In addition publicity materials from Community Learning Home School Partnership replace the term ‘parent/ carers’ with ‘mum, dad and other carer’

Systems in place to ensure that relevant information about parent’s nights, school events and the wider school community are supplied separately (if desired) to the non resident parent;

School websites, school newsletters, parent council meetings (info to parent forum) pupil post, CLHSP website, copies of information emailed/posted/colllected by non-resident parents, articles in local paper/SLC website (events/activities), CLHSP - facebook

Within Housing and Technical Resources priority for housing and access to housing is as follows:

In circumstances where a father and a former partner have a shared responsibility for children, they will be considered for accommodation on the following basis –

Where children are mainly resident with the father, (i.e. for four or more nights a week) or if
block contact arrangements are in place for more than six months of the year, the number of rooms required will be determined by the total number of people within the household (please see the occupancy standard, [Section 4 of Housing Allocation Policy](#), for more information).

Similarly, if the father and a former partner have equal residence rights, they will both qualify for property on the basis that the children are resident on a full-time basis.

**In circumstances where a father have overnight contact with children** – Fathers will be considered for accommodation which provides one bedroom more than is required (by your permanent household) unless this would result in statutory overcrowding as defined by sections 135-137 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. In certain specific circumstances, the Area Services Manager may exercise discretion in determining the size of accommodation required.

**In circumstances where the residence and contact arrangements have been made formally through the court or a lawyer**: If there is a formal agreement in place, copies of the court agreement or a lawyer’s letter should accompany the housing application. Where there is no formal agreement, fathers will be required to provide details of the arrangement, and a letter of confirmation, from either the former partner or another acceptable source.

In addition, it is worth noting that South Lanarkshire Council’s housing allocation policy does not make any distinctions between gender and accessing housing where children are concerned.

In some cases, due to the under-occupancy housing benefit regulations – there may be circumstances where a housing benefit eligible father (and the rest of the household) falls foul of these rules and they could be subject to a reduction in their housing benefit. This is because the DWP under occupancy size criteria differs than that of the South Lanarkshire Council’s common housing register’s ([HomeFinder](#)) occupancy standard which is used to determine the number of rooms a household requires. However, we actively work to ensure that these situations are minimised.

Within Regeneration services the ‘Making it Work South Lanarkshire’ (MIWSL) is a BIG Lottery Targeted investment programme worth £1.25m over 3 years for South Lanarkshire. The aim will be to support Lone Parents (LP) to make measurable progress towards and into employment. MIWSL is a partnership programme and includes South Lanarkshire Council and number of local voluntary sector partners with Routes to Work South being the Lead organisation.

**MIWSL will support 420 LP over three years move closer to employment through the provision of long term intensive and bespoke interventions and support with 128 supported to move into employment.**

**Targeted Group:**

The MIWSL programme will be delivered across the 4 locality areas but will aim to priorities Lone parents:

- who have multiple and complex needs
- who’s youngest child is 3-5 years old
- who live in the top 15% most deprived datazones in South Lanarkshire
Support offered:

**MIWSL will facilitate access to and / or deliver a range of services to LP’s dependent on their circumstances including:**

- **Key Worker Intensive Support** - LP will have access to a key worker who will provide individual bespoke support.

- **Childcare Assistance** - LP will be assisted to access suitable childcare.

- **Plan for Work** - LP will be supported to develop interview skills, work experience through volunteering / work placements and access to local jobs.

- **Provision of Training** - LP will be given the chance to take part in personal development to gain confidence, new skills and qualifications.

- **Health & Happiness Support** - LP will be given support to maintain positive mental and physical health.

- **Financial Advice and Support** - LP will be supported to gain skills to manage debt and budget income.

- **Peer Support** - Localised peer support groups will allow LP to draw strength from each other in their journey towards employment.

Within Social Work Resources the Burnbank Family Centre are about to start the Mellow Dads programme which is a 14 week intensive programme working with dads. This had been identified as a gap in the service as there is currently no provision for dads. The programme will hopefully achieve better outcomes for children and build on the relationship between father and child. This is also part of what has been identified through Early Years Collaborative where we are looking at producing Dad Cards with information such as New Baby, Money Matters, First Time Dads etc. As part of the Project Making Fathers Figure (EYC) we are looking at engaging Dads at all stages of their child’s development from pre-birth to 5 years.

Although we have not answered the specific questions in your questionnaire, we hope that this information is of some use, and look forward to seeing the outcome of the consultation.

Paul Manning
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South Lanarkshire Council
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