

Involving fathers in Primary Birth Visit, Lincolnshire, UK

To test the impact of taking a father-inclusive approach, two health visitors in Grantham conducted a comparative study in which one continued to use the standard letter about the primary birth visit, while the other used a new father-inclusive version (below).

With the standard letter 3 out of 15 Dads attended, while with the father-inclusive letter 11/16 dads attended.

The health visitor has reported how useful she found it to be able to talk to dads about their role and responsibilities, and encourage them to attend the first development check. They were able to get a much clearer picture of family dynamics, and if necessary set up early support and intervention.

The original decision to use 'parent' (not mother and father) reflected concerns that single parents would feel stigmatised. This doesn't seem to be the case: single parents who attended were quite happy to explain why a Dad was not present.

Dear new Mum & Dad,

Congratulations on the safe arrival of your baby.

As your Health Visitor, I will take over your care from your midwife. I would like to arrange an appointment to see you both at your home to review baby's progress and explain my role.

In order to have an appointment that is convenient for you both, could I ask you to contact me on the above telephone number to arrange a time/date before your baby reaches two weeks of age.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes,

Health Visitor

Source: Fatherhood Institute - Guide to developing a father-inclusive workforce Report - UK