



One minute guide

Caring Dads

No. 104, August 2021

What is Caring Dads?

Caring Dads deliver focused interventions for men aimed at reducing abusive and harmful behaviours towards children and women. The service also contributes to training and development of the wider workforce. Caring Dads deliver three main intervention programmes:

- The Caring Dads Programme
- The Journey Project
- +1

There is also Stop Gap Support –a short term intervention.

What is the Caring Dads Programme?

The Caring Dads Programme is a structured, multi-agency approach to addressing men's abusive behaviours within families. It is based on a model developed in Canada, and has been adopted in numerous countries across the globe. The intervention helps men to examine and address their behaviour and improve their relationships with their children. This evidence based programme is informed by research which indicates that men are more likely to engage with services to address their behaviour if they think it will benefit their relationship with their children.

Who does the programme work with and what does it involve?

In Leeds, the Caring Dads programme works with men who: have been abusive to their partners and/ or children; have at least weekly contact with a child, in a parental role; accept that they have behaved abusively towards their partner and/ or children; and have some motivation to change their behaviour. The programme does not work with men who have a history of sexual offending against children or vulnerable adults, and/ or those whose alcohol or substance misuse is likely to prevent their full attendance and engagement.

There is a fathers' group which is delivered over 17 weeks that focuses on developing trust with the men, increasing their awareness of abusive behaviours and the consequences whilst helping them to take responsibility for their actions. Men are encouraged to think about their childhood experiences, consider how they want their children to feel and what they need to do to make their children feel safe and happy. The group also looks at how the men behave towards their partners and ex-partners, the impact of their abusive behaviours and strategies for managing their own frustrations. Models and strategies used include child centred parenting, [cognitive behavioural therapy](#), and goal-centred and [solution-focused](#) approaches.

All female partners of the men assessed for the programme are offered support by Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS) whilst intervention for children is considered with the referrer on a needs led case by case basis. The programme uses a case holder system, where the referrer receives and can disseminate feedback from mothers, partners, ex-partners and children as appropriate. It is vital that during the 17 weeks, men's behaviours are effectively monitored and the emotional wellbeing of mothers and children is prioritised.

What do the other intervention programmes cover?

The Journey Project - The Journey Project is a 6 session intervention for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic fathers. Through one to one sessions men explore their family relationships in the context of their use of abusive behaviours. Work on culture and identity underpin the work to develop a deeper understanding, assisting men to reflect and rebuild family relationships.

+1 - This is a 6 week group work programme for men aged 16 – 24 that focuses on healthy relationships. Young men attend these sessions and participate in work specifically focused towards intimate partner relationships. In the sessions men are encouraged to reflect on their role as partners and consider how they could improve their relationships whilst also discussing what behaviours can be harmful. Throughout the programme participants take part in exercises and discussions on relevant issues including masculinity, trust and communication.

Stop Gap Support - Stop Gap Support is a short intervention that has been developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Men are supported in exploring their use of harmful behaviours by an allocated worker. Over the course of 6 sessions the work will cover relevant topics including empathy, appreciation for harm caused, whilst promoting the use of safer behaviours.

Who delivers Caring Dads work?

The core team are supported by practitioners from a range of other local organisations, including the Children's Social Work Service and the Probation Service. These practitioners have a range of experience in working with men and women on parenting and domestic violence, and are carefully selected through an assessment centre that tests their expertise and engagement skills.

Where do the referrals come from?

The majority of referrals come from colleagues in the Children's Social Work Service though the team takes referrals from any organisation that is willing to oversee the involvement of the family for at least the length of the intervention.

Further information and key contacts

To find out more about Caring Dads in Leeds, and to discuss possible referrals, you can ring the team on tel: 0113 378 1610, or email caringdadsinfo@leeds.gov.uk.

For further information about the development of Caring Dads in Canada, visit www.Caringdads.org