

Following Young Fathers: housing trajectories and value of home for young men

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Presentation overview

- Background to Following Young Fathers
- Research methods
- Housing and young fathers
- Case studies
- Families, relationships and housing

Introduction

- Baseline study 2010-2012(www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk)
- ESRC funded FF follow up study (Oct 2012 - Nov 2015)
- Lack of knowledge regarding experiences and support needs of young fathers

Research design

- **QL Methods**
- Addresses *how* and *why* questions; aims to understand *what matters* to people as a precursor to understanding *what works* in policy terms
- **Knowledge to action approach**
- Progress from knowledge transfer, to knowledge exchange to joint knowledge production
- **Secondary data analysis**
- Focus on housing and relationships

Sample

- 32 fathers (aged 16-24)
- Different recruitment routes
- Varied circumstances and backgrounds
- 2-4 waves of interviews and activities

- **Secondary data analysis**
- 3 information rich cases chosen regarding housing and relationships
- Representative of internal diversity

Young fathers

- Defined as under 25 years
- Pregnancies often unplanned but participants largely positive about fatherhood
- *“I love it me... I just enjoy being a dad”* (Darren)
- Modern construct of fatherhood identity is more individualised (Dermott 2009)
- Yet structural constraints may act as a barrier

Housing policy

- *“All benefits to teenage mothers should be made on the condition of them living with their parents or in supervised hostel accommodation... teenagers will be left in no doubt that teenage motherhood will not lead to an automatic right to subsidised housing and other benefits, while the public can be assured that a teenager’s motivations for having a child are not related to housing access” (40 group 2013)*

Housing policy

- Focus is largely on young mothers
- Perception of ‘feckless fathers’ (Wellbank 1997)
- Cross-party consensus to reduce welfare support
- Based on assumption that young parents purposefully conceive to obtain a council house
 - This has been disproved (Cater and Coleman 2006)
- Proposals to cut housing benefits for under-25’s
 - 53% have dependent children (Crisis 2012)

Housing

- Increase in the use of temporary accommodation
- 42,150 households with dependent children in TA (DCLG 2013)
- Independent living and autonomy important for transition to adulthood and identity formation (Mitchell and Green 2002)
- Typical housing trajectory of young parents involves multiple moves (Cooke and Owen 2007)

Troubled pasts

- *“A bit roly poly to be honest. We moved around a lot. I got into a lot of fights. And it’s just bouncing around from house to house and getting in trouble all time” (Darren)*
- *“He’s gonna have a better life than what I did. You always try and make your kids life better than what your life were” (Darren)*
- *“It were kind of hard growing up because I was 5 years old and my mum and dad separated. And they went to court and everything and I had to go live with my dad” (Adam)*

Adam – hostel living

“No [Son] can’t come but if they’re above the age of eighteen then they can come on a Sunday for four hours. And I’ve got to be there at least four nights a week. So I just sit there basically doing nothing for hours on end. I can go out but if I haven’t got money to get to my places I’ve gotta walk it. And if it’s nine, ten miles and it’s this hot it’s not happening”

Darren – housing support

- *“They don’t work with partners, you know, like me and our lass right. They can’t do stuff like that. But like he said what’s not on the books is not on the books if you know what I mean”*
- *“So it made it a lot more easy if you know what I mean to actually, for a first time moving out of my mum’s but to still be living near her mum it made it a bit easier for her”*

Darren – housing stability

- *“I’m one of those people, I’ll still be here in 10 years”*
- *“I don’t like to go like down to her mum’s ‘ouse and have Christmas dinner down there or go down to my mum’s ‘ouse and have Christmas in. I’d still rather ‘ave it at home if you know what I mean. Cause obviously home’s home and family’s family. You know what I mean. Like I try and explain to our lass. I’m like ‘we are our own family’, you know what I mean”*

Adam – hopes for the future

- *“Within the next five years hopefully maybe have my own property that I can have as myself, by myself but still be with [partner] and have a family, like a proper family. Yeah, but not live together. But have a proper family but don’t live together. So I could stay at [Partner]’s three nights a week without having to tell the government I live there. But every single day go to [Partner]’s to see [Son]. To take [Son] to the park... I would want to, to have my own space. But... to be able to stay there as many nights as I can and then go home the rest of the nights and just be able to chill out myself”*

Jimmy

- *“It’s harder for me cause then I’ve got nowhere to go, nowhere to live. And I’m like sponging off people’s mums and that. And then obviously I can’t go and see [partner] can’t bring [son] down to see me. So...it’s just harder on me”*
- *“she’s there for everything, never lets us do owt on us own”*

Families, relationships and home

- Relationships are highly influential on fathers' identities and practices
- *“Despite the falling outs and despite everything that’s happened between us in the past, they’ve helped me a lot” (Adam)*
- Turbulent relationships can affect living arrangements and contact with children
- *“If I’m happy where I live I should be alright” (Darren)*

References

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