## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book 1: Becoming a Young Dad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conception and Contraception</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Out the News</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion or Not?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the Pregnancy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Birth</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Life Changes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Routine</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worries and Fears</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatherhood Joys</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Study and Research Team</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This booklet is a collection of personal experiences and genuine quotes from a group of 31 young dads who took part in a research study called Following Young Fathers over a 2-4 year period at the University of Leeds. It acts as a fun, informative and accessible resource for a range of practitioners who wish to discuss complex and sometimes sensitive issues concerning early fatherhood.

“Becoming a Young Dad” is the first of three volumes and reveals the reflections of young fathers from the time before they were expecting a baby, up until just after the birth. This is a period of significant change and upheaval and we hear just how prepared these young men were for the birth of their child and the parental responsibilities thereafter.

The compilation of all three booklets offers a holistic picture of young fatherhood from the moment of the conception onwards, but each of the three volumes can also be used as a resource on their own depending on the young man’s context. We have included selected interview quotes from professionals who also took part in this study to share their experience of working with young fathers and young people.

The booklets demonstrate the young fathers’ commitment to their children and desire to ‘be there’, helping to challenge the negative stereotypes of young fathers which are often seen in today’s society. This resource is suitable for children of all ages, and may also be of benefit to the families and friends of young fathers to help them understand the day to day experiences and expectations of young fatherhood.

The research team would like to extend their thanks to all the young fathers who contributed to the study, and also to the practitioners who helped in the research. Thanks also go to the ESRC for funding this project (ESRC grant number ES J022993/1). The Following Young Fathers Team (Carmen, Bren, Laura and Linzi)
SEX EDUCATION

“Our sex education teacher he was proper cush, he was funny and it was never a boring lesson. He’d always turn it into something fun”

Callum (Aged 19)

“The teacher made it funny and they were the parts you remember. So you have to make parts that are more important a bit more interesting, they will stick in your head a lot longer...But the teacher was serious as well”

Simon (Aged 16)

“All they do is stick a video tape in and go ‘watch that there’”

Darren (Aged 21)

“They didn’t teach us nowt about babies in school. They just taught us about sex”

Adam (Aged 16)
CONCEPTION AND CONTRACEPTION

“We used a condom at the point of conception but I don’t think we knew or realised that it’d split”

Dominic (Aged 18)

“Most boys are just like, concerned about sex and don’t really think about the outcomes of sex. When the outcome happens [and there is a baby] some of them just run away, out of fear really”

Trevor (Aged 15)

“I think she was on the injection but I weren’t sure, I didn’t ask her, I weren’t sure, we didn’t use condoms so…”

Adam (Aged 16)

“Yeah I knew everything [where to get condoms] but I didn’t bother. I couldn’t be bothered. I just wanted to go out all the time. I didn’t want to waste my time going all the way to the sexual health clinic”

Jimmy (Aged 16)

“Often it’s the girl that goes off to the family planning clinic or the youth clinic. And if the guy does go along, not all clinics are as friendly as they could be... So many boys now have had an absence of quality sex and relationship education”

Director, Big Talk Education (Sex and Relationship Education)
“I found out that she was pregnant and... I just kind of freaked out for a bit... cut myself off from the world... I was terrified to be honest”

**Ben (Aged 20)**

“My mum she was disappointed in me, it’s not the fact that I did it that disappoints her. It’s the fact that I’m so young. But if I take responsibility for what I’ve done then that’ll be okay”

**Trevor (Aged 15)**

“Accidents happen... We didn’t have our own place, no job, no income or anything. Really rock bottom”

**Peter (Aged 17)**

“I’d rather have my kids young. I’ve got my little family now. I don’t need to mess about in the future trying to conceive and all that lot. And I’m going to be able to watch them grow old and have their own kids”

**Callum (Aged 19)**
“She said to me, if I do get pregnant, I’m getting rid of it. But then when she got pregnant, she didn’t want to get rid of it. That’s because her mum said that if she gets rid of it she’s like killing something”

Jimmy (Aged 16)

“I said, you know what, whatever you want, it’s your body”

Dominic (Aged 18)

“We were both stuck in between decisions and we both came to the assumption that we’re going to keep the baby”

Trevor (Aged 15)

“She told me she had spoken to some of her friends that had abortions and all the others said that they regretted it, like having the abortion”

Orlando (Aged 24)
DURING THE PREGNANCY

“It's just that challenge of growing up, manning up, knowing that you've got a kid coming on the way”

Senwe (Aged 16)

“When my girlfriend saw the midwife I could hear my baby's heart beat or at night time I was listening to her belly. I'm listening how she's moving. And I can feel that she's kicking and things like that. It was just like, 'wow, that's my child in there and she's moving and healthy and everything'. I just couldn't wait to meet her”

Marcel (Aged 24)

“I've been to the scans and antenatal classes, all the doctor's appointments that she had...I didn't want her to feel like just 'cause we're single like I can't come and help her”

Orlando (Aged 24)

“We've discussed the birth plan together. Sometimes quite late in the evening when I've been tired and not really wanted to, but it goes through her mind a lot. And it's sometimes hard to know what to do to...I comfort her in preparation cause she's a bit scared about whether they're going to do a caesarean or an assisted birth, all these things worry her...I mean, I'm happy to support her in what she wants”

Martin (Aged 23)

“I just go round there and make sure she's alright...And we do talk daily, always, like every two hours. I'm texting her, giving her a ring, asking her, 'are you alright, you know, how is everything. What are you doing', so yeah. Well she's carrying a precious load, she's pregnant and she's carrying my kids. So that kind of connects us. Although we're not together...she's carrying my kids so there is that bond. And she's bonded to me and my family”

Iman (Aged 16)

“During the pregnancy, services are provided to the woman and so it can sometimes feel to men as though they are an add-on or an addition”

Family Nurse
THE BIRTH

“I didn’t feel like sleeping at all. I didn’t feel like eating until she was born. Just wanted to be there, just beside, watching her, seeing that she’s alright and everything... When the moment happened, when she was born at half past four, it was just some different feeling, really nice feeling. I was just so happy”

Marcel (Aged 24)

“I had a tear in my eye, it was just like the biggest joy I’ve ever had in my life”

Callum (Aged 19)

“I got a weak stomach for things like that, so as I saw the head coming I turned my head away. It kind of scared me as well, just seeing all that blood. It was just mind blowing to be honest”

Orlando (Aged 24)

“For nine months you just get so used to that scenario. You never think eventually it’s got to come out and then when it actually started happening, I just had this death grip on the chair and I just, I just couldn’t move. I think it was the fact that it was finally happening and I just didn’t know what to do. I was totally out of my element”

Tommy (Aged 24)

“You see some individual hospitals, or individual midwifery teams who’ve really taken the needs of young fathers on board, but, you know, if we’d looked nationally then they’re few and far between”

Connexions Young Parent Specialist
HOW LIFE CHANGES

“One of the best moments of my life [but] it hits you like a ton of bricks when they are born and you realise that it’s not about you anymore. I actually need to grow up; I’ve got a responsibility now”

Trevor (Aged 15)

“For the first three or four weeks...I was getting about five hours sleep”

Martin (Aged 23)

“(What is expected of young fathers) They’re having to grow up really quickly, and it’s an awful lot for us to ask”

Children’s Centre Assistant Manager

“When he was first born, I didn’t really know what I was doing, I didn’t know my son. I mean, to be honest I didn’t even know if he was my son or not”

Adam (Aged 16)
DAILY ROUTINE

"When you have a kid…there’s nothing to do apart from wait till the next feed and then wait to look after him...All your time and all your effort has to be on the kid”

Cade (Aged 21)

"I feed her, change her, get her ready for bed and stuff, get her to sleep”

Jakie (Aged 23)

"It’s hard to put clothes on as well cause he’s so small and I don’t want to hurt his tiny little hands or anything”

Jed (Aged 16)

But when you’ve got somebody you can’t just think about yourself, it’s never about yourself no more. Before you even buy yourself anything like you’ve got to think first, ‘has my son got food, has he got this, has he got that, do you know what I mean?”

Orlando (Aged 24)

“She’ll just be screaming, won’t entertain her food. And she won’t settle and she won’t sleep ...You just can’t console her. It’s heartbreaking really cause you know something is up but you don’t know if she is in pain, just upset or tired”

Peter (Aged 17)
WORRIES AND FEARS

“I want this, I want that. But then I’ve got to think ‘right let’s be realistic. How are you going to get that?’

Iman (Aged 16)

“You want to be a dad that someone looks up to you and aspires to”

Zane (Aged 18)

“Oh man, you know, I’ve lost my whole childhood. I’ve lost everything. I’ve lost my friends, and that’s hard”

Cade (Aged 21)

“If I get badly hurt or something happens to me, who’s going to be there for him?”

Jed (Aged 16)

“Imagine if something happened to our daughter while it were just me and her. I’d never be able to forgive myself and I’d never be forgiven by any of her family or mine. Do you know what I mean? That’s why I don’t like having her by myself. I wouldn’t be able to live with myself if I let something happen to her”

Jax (Aged 18)

“Young parents have a much higher risk of bringing up their family in poverty”

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse

Family Nurse
FATHERHOOD JOYS

“It’s like the best times when you do something for them and they’ll just turn around and go ‘oh thank you daddy, I love you’”

Darren (Aged 21)

“It’s one thing that you can’t measure. You can’t measure the happiness that you get from having kids”

Kevin (Aged 24)

“It’s like the best bond you can have. It’s just that love, you just think you can’t beat that, you really can’t. It gives me butterflies”

Orlando (Aged 24)

“It’s one thing that you can’t measure. You can’t measure the happiness that you get from having kids”

Kevin (Aged 24)

“I think everybody loves their kids equally when they’re born. But it’s more about what’s going on in your life that affects your ability to parent”

Young Fathers’ Nurse

“Once he was born, nothing else mattered”

Jason (Aged 22)
ABOUT THE STUDY AND RESEARCH TEAM

These findings were produced as part of the Following Young Fathers study, which was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (grant no. ES J022993/1). The original baseline study was conducted between 2010 and 2012. The follow up study was conducted between 2012 and 2015. Further details of the research can be found on the project website www.followingfathers.leeds.ac.uk/her.

Interviews were conducted by Carmen Lau Clayton (young fathers), Laura Davies (practitioners) and Linzi Ladlow (sub-sample of custodial young fathers).

We would like to thank all the young fathers and practitioners who took part in this study; our practitioner partners John May and Lynnette Smith (Big Talk Education); our illustrator R.M.F. Clayton and formatter Jamie Knipe; and lastly the ESRC for funding the project.

The Following Young Fathers research team: Carmen Lau Clayton, Bren Neale, Laura Davies, Linzi Ladlow and Ruth Patrick.