



# Parent know how

working together, supporting families



department for  
**children, schools and families**

A commitment from  
**The Children's Plan**

# Foreword



Our ambition is to make this country the best place in the world for our children to grow up. Achieving this is now our challenge.

Since the Department for Children, Schools and Families was established last year, we have been listening to parents, teachers, professionals and children. It is from their views we developed the Children's Plan, placing families at the centre of a new integrated approach that puts their needs first.

*Parent Know How* embodies our vision to develop new ways of working, with partnerships between public, private and third sector organisations that engage parents and tackle the barriers to the learning, health and happiness of every child.

I am delighted that we can now unveil the range of services to be delivered under the *Parent Know How* programme. With helplines, new media,

print media and online information, this programme seeks to connect with parents across the spectrum and support them as they manage the pressures of modern life.

The concepts outlined in the following pages are the result of that engagement between those at the heart of support and information provision and parents themselves. Our job is to enable that collaboration to maximise its potential and reach all those who seek help.

In doing so, *Parent Know How* can play its part in helping fulfil the aim of supporting and enabling parents as they bring up their children to ensure that no child or young person is left behind.

**The Rt Hon. Ed Balls MP**  
Secretary of State,  
Department for Children,  
Schools and Families

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# Overview

## Parent Know How: working together, supporting families

Research tells us that 70%<sup>1</sup> of parents feel they need advice and support in their parenting role. Yet most are either unaware of the services that already exist or they have difficulty accessing them.

*Parent Know How* aims to make sure that parents can get the help they need, when they need it, whether through existing telephone helplines or through a new generation of services, delivered online and via mobile phones.

Last year the Department for Children, Schools and Families launched the Children's Plan, with the central purpose of making this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. *Parent Know How* is an integral part of that vision.

We want to make sure that everyone in a parenting role – mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with parental responsibility – has the opportunity to access support through the challenges of raising a family, improving the health and happiness of children and young people.

*Parent Know How* is made up of four strands:

- **Telephone helplines** – a proven, popular way to deliver support to parents.
- **The Innovation Fund** – using emerging technology such as web and social media, SMS and instant messaging to reach parents in new ways.
- **Print media** – delivering support and information to parents through syndicated content in newspapers and magazines.
- **Online information** – local and national parenting services on Directgov and through local Family Information Services.

This booklet is about the 18 services provided by the first two – telephone helplines and the Innovation Fund.

Through *Parent Know How*, we are continuing to support existing telephone helplines, and enabling them to expand their capacity so that more parents can get through for help and advice.

The Innovation Fund services are being launched from March to October 2008 and comprise a range of exciting new channels to reach parents with information and support:

web &  
social media

instant  
messaging

<sup>1</sup> Research from NOP/GFK

**Please note:**  
Throughout this booklet, the term 'parent' covers mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with parental responsibility. Please make this clear if you photocopy any of the individual service descriptions to hand out to others.

## helplines

## syndicated content

## sms

**Web and social media** Websites with information about parenting, and sources of support, and social networking sites where people get in touch with others, 'chat' online, and share ideas and information on message boards and blogs (online journals).

**Instant messaging** A form of live 'chat' over the internet between two or more people. Users type their messages and can receive instant replies, much like real-time conversations.

**SMS** Standing for Short Message Service, this allows people to send short text messages over mobile phones, or other mobile devices. Responses can either come from another person, or can be generated by an automatic system.

**Syndicated content** Information and content, for example latest news, articles, video or audio clips, are made available to other websites, to spread the message about parenting support.

By opening up these new channels of communication to parents we can get over the reluctance some groups, such as dads, might feel in making the first approach, make sure services are as easy as possible to contact and use, and reach more families with help.

The Third Sector are vital partners in *Parent Know How*. There are 13 organisations delivering 18 services, providing a wealth of knowledge and experience between them.

Together they will make sure parents have access to: emotional and practical support, including help through the challenges of parenting teenagers; expert knowledge on specialist issues, such as child law, social care, education, mental health and disability; help and advice in managing couple and family relationships; new ways for separated dads to keep in touch with their children, and help and encouragement for all dads to play a positive, active role in their children's lives.

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# Service providers

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The Advisory Centre for Education offers free, independent advice to families on all aspects of state-funded education for children of school age. We provide information and guidance on a full range of education issues, such as school exclusions, admissions and appeals, bullying and complaints.

[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)



Atticmedia is a new media company that specialises in developing engaging and interactive materials that help people learn and develop. We are working with Respect, the national association for those working to promote effective interventions with those responsible for domestic violence.

[www.atticmedia.com](http://www.atticmedia.com) [www.respect.uk.net](http://www.respect.uk.net)



Contact a Family is the only UK-wide charity providing advice, information and support to the parents of all disabled children, no matter what their disability or health condition. We also help parents to get in contact with other families.

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)



Family Matters Institute is a Christian-based educational charity specialising in research and training to strengthen marriage and family life. We are working with Eastside Young Leaders Academy and Luton Young Leaders Academy, who develop leadership skills in boys of African or Caribbean backgrounds, and The Orangee Ltd, a business seeking to stimulate brilliance in people and organisations.

[www.familymatters.org.uk](http://www.familymatters.org.uk) [www.eyla.org.uk](http://www.eyla.org.uk)  
[www.theorangee.com](http://www.theorangee.com)



Family Rights Group provides specialist advice to families who are raising children involved with, or who need social care services. We promote policies and practices that help children to live safely and securely within their families.

[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)



Netmums, as a social network, is the biggest source of support and advice for mums in the UK. Uniquely, it is locally based, connecting parents with each other and with services within their local area. We are working with the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association (part of Unite).

[www.netmums.com](http://www.netmums.com) [www.amicus-cphva.org](http://www.amicus-cphva.org)



One Parent Families|Gingerbread is a national centre of expertise on lone parent family life. We provide a range of services, including the Lone Parent Helpline, membership schemes, resources for professionals, campaigning work, and learning, training and employability programmes.

[www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk](http://www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk)



Parentline Plus is the biggest independent provider of parenting support in the country. We understand family life can be challenging and difficult: our strength is offering parent-to-parent support to work through problems and find practical solutions. We are here for all parents, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, via our free, confidential Parentline, website and email support service.

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)  
[www.gotateenager.org.uk](http://www.gotateenager.org.uk)



Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) is a nationwide network of one parent families and organisations representing many different backgrounds and cultures. We aim to empower families living in poverty and isolation, to improve their lives and life chances.

[www.singleparents.org.uk](http://www.singleparents.org.uk)  
[www.onespace.org.uk](http://www.onespace.org.uk)



Building relationships  
strengthening families

Established over 30 years ago, One Plus One is the UK's leading relationship research organisation and has trained over 3,500 practitioners. We investigate what makes relationships work – or fall apart – and make the findings accessible to everyone interested in strengthening couple and family life.

[www.oneplusone.org.uk](http://www.oneplusone.org.uk)



Relate is the UK's largest provider of relationship counselling, offering workshops, mediation, consultations and support face-to-face, by phone and online. Our primary aim is to strengthen and maintain family relationships. We are working with schools and in Sure Start and Children's Centres.

[www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)



The Children's Legal Centre is the leader in the field of legal representation for children. As well as our advice line, we offer legal advice and undertake casework in education, child and family law. We also provide consultancy and training services, and publish legal guides.

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)



YoungMinds is the UK's only national charity committed to improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all children and young people. We promote children's good mental health by providing advice for families, training for front-line practitioners and through our campaigning.

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

## Contact

helpline@cafamily.org.uk  
www.cafamily.org.uk

**contact** a family  
for families with disabled children

Our helpline is a 'one-stop shop' for parents of disabled children whenever they need answers.

Helpline  
0808 808 3555  
or Textphone  
0808 808 3556  
Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm  
& Mon 5.30 - 7.30pm

# Contact a Family Helpline

## Helpline

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide advice, information and support via our helpline to parents of all disabled children, whatever their disability or health condition.
- We aim to provide a very wide range of general and specialist information, covering medical conditions, services and rights.
- Our service targets all parents of disabled children, including those with extremely rare medical conditions.

“ I have received more information about my child's condition from Contact a Family in the past week than from anyone else in the last 15 years. ”



### How it works

The Contact a Family freephone helpline offers advice and information on any aspect of caring for a disabled child. We cover all disabilities, including the rarest conditions.

Parents who call us need information on what benefits or tax credits to claim, advice about assessments or statements of special educational needs, or may be trying to find information about their child's condition.

Our Parent Advisers help with these and many other queries, or sometimes just provide a listening ear. We can provide medical information about a particular diagnosis; give detailed advice about schooling, benefits and services and offer the details of organisations or support groups that parents may find it useful to contact. We also support parents through the shock of diagnosis and put parents in touch with others caring for a child with a rare disorder, combating the loneliness and isolation they often experience.

The helpline has access to interpreters in over 100 languages via Language Line. We can also provide advice on specialist areas such as calculating tax credits and resolving immigration issues.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Contact</b>   |  |
| <a href="mailto:advice@frg.org.uk">advice@frg.org.uk</a><br><a href="http://www.frg.org.uk">www.frg.org.uk</a> |   |

**Our confidential telephone advice service supports parents and other family members whose children are involved with, or need, social care services.**



## Family Rights Group Advice Service

### Helpline

#### Our aims and targets

- We provide advice to mothers, fathers and other family members whose children are in need, subject to child protection enquiries or in care.
- We advise relatives including grandparents who are raising or want to care for children who cannot live at home.
- Our service is a source of specialist information about families' legal rights and what they can expect of the social care system.
- Our service is confidential and independent.

“ 83% of callers felt the service they received from local authority social care improved as a result of our advice. ”


(Independent evaluation)

#### How it works

Many parents and carers need help to negotiate the maze of local authority children's services and to understand their rights. Through our free advice line we offer confidential, independent, legal and practical advice to parents and other family members.

Our experienced advisers are experts in the field of children's services and in the law. They help families to engage in a better working partnership with the local authority, to get the best outcome for their children, and help them to challenge poor practice, when necessary.

The issues that we inform parents and carers about are wide ranging. They include local authority support services for children in need, child protection procedures, permanency planning including special guardianship, family and friends care, maintaining contact with looked after children, and adoption. We also advise people when they have a right to make a statutory complaint about local authority services. The service has access to Language Line for asylum-seeking families.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Contact</b>                               |  |
| enquiries@ace-ed.org.uk<br>www.ace-ed.org.uk |   |

**We provide the information, support and legal advice that parents need to help their children at school, particularly when there are problems.**



## Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Advice Line

## Helpline

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide parents and carers with free advice on all aspects of state-funded education.
- Our advice line covers children of compulsory school age (5-16).
- We aim to support callers to take practical steps to resolve problems with their child's schooling.
- Our overarching aim is to equip parents with the knowledge and understanding they need to get the best for their child in education.

“ It was really nice to be able to talk to someone who could give me unbiased information and was totally committed to helping. ”

### How it works

We provide free, independent and legally accurate advice on education via our advice line, helping parents to support their children's education. We give advice across the whole range of education issues: school exclusions, special educational needs, school admission and choice, bullying, attendance issues and disputes or discrimination.

We are more than a listening ear; we offer clear advice on the law and parents' rights, outline their options, signpost them to lawyers when necessary and talk them through the practical steps they can take to improve their situation.

Calls take on average 30 minutes, reflecting the complexity of the issues we help parents and carers with. This allows us to dig a little deeper to discover the root cause of a problem, and suggest solutions based on our years of experience. Our advisers help parents find a way forward and work with schools to get a positive result for their child.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Contact</b>   | One parent families<br><b>GINGERBREAD</b><br><small>making change happen</small> |
| <a href="mailto:info@oneparentfamilies.org.uk">info@oneparentfamilies.org.uk</a><br><a href="http://www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk">www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk</a> |  |

Almost two million families in the UK are headed by a lone parent. The Lone Parent Helpline offers them dedicated help and expert advice on the issues that matter to them, when they need it.



# Lone Parent Helpline

## Helpline

### Our aims and targets

- To offer information and help that lone parents can trust and to provide follow-up support and advice to those who need it.
- To act as a centre of expertise, raise awareness and change attitudes.
- To work closely with other key parenting organisations to provide more holistic and practical services for families.

### How it works

The demands of parenting can weigh heavily on lone parents, who not only have to provide financially for children and do the hard work of raising them alone, but also frequently face negative stereotyping from society.

The Lone Parent Helpline is a freephone confidential service, offering help and advice on a wide range of issues: benefits and tax credits, education and training, returning to work, childcare, and many others. Some callers will need only information, or a referral to another organisation. Others will want longer telephone sessions with one of our advice staff, who can spend time working through more complex matters: the urgent housing, money and contact issues that can arise in the wake of relationship breakdown, for instance, or help in working out their finances and paying for childcare if they take up work or training.

Lone parents, like all parents, want the best for their children. Finding a helpline that understands their particular needs, and responds to them in a non-judgmental way, can help them achieve that.



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Contact</b>                                  |  |
| clc@essex.ac.uk<br>www.childrenslegalcentre.com |   |

The Child Law Advice Line ensures that children, parents, carers and professionals can get accurate information on child law and access the support and services to which they are entitled.



# Child Law Advice Line

## Helpline

### Our aims and targets

- Our helpline provides free information and advice to children, parents, carers and professionals on all issues of child law.
- We aim to help the public understand the facts about children's rights and the law.
- We take particular care to target vulnerable children and families, for example children with special educational needs, who are being bullied or with mental health problems, and families involved in the care system.

“ Helped a lot purely because I know where I stand about the legal ins and outs. ”  
 Child caller, aged 12


### How it works

The Child Law Advice Line provides free legal advice and information on all aspects of law and policy affecting children.

Most of our calls are from parents who are unsure about issues to do with parental responsibility, contact between a child and separated parent or a residence issue. Other issues that come up frequently are adoption, children in the looked after system, crime, children's schooling and child employment.

Our expert advisers give callers the facts about the law, make sure they know children's rights and offer advice on the best course of action. We also refer people to our website, where they will find answers to the most frequently asked questions, such as leaving children 'home alone', and downloadable factsheets on a range of legal issues.

We refer any urgent cases, such as homeless young people, to one of our lawyers in the Children's Legal Centre to provide legal representation. The helpline has access to interpreters in over 100 languages via Language Line.

|  |   |
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| <b>Contact</b>   |  |
| <a href="http://www.youngminds.co.uk">www.youngminds.co.uk</a> |   |

**Any parent who is worried about their child's mental health can call our helpline for information and advice. We will help parents negotiate services and explore how a young person's difficulties might be managed in the longer term.**



## YoungMinds Parents' Information Service Helpline

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide advice through our helpline to anyone who has concerns about a child or young person's mental health or emotional wellbeing.
- Our overarching aim is to promote the good mental health of children and young people.
- We help parents manage the situation, understand mental health services and achieve better outcomes for their child.
- Our aim is to listen and support parents in the best way we can.

### How it works

Parents and carers who contact the Parents' Information Service often say they're feeling isolated, unsupported and confused. They have a wide range of concerns about their children, from challenging behaviour to bereavement, depression, eating disorders, self-harming and serious diagnosable mental health difficulties.

We explore callers' concerns and help them find a way forward. Our advisers can send out a wide range of information about mental health, and details about relevant services. The service is free and is for anyone concerned about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

The needs of most callers are met by the helpline. But some parents and carers who are coping with particularly complex situations need more time and expertise. For these callers, we offer a telephone consultation with a qualified mental health practitioner. The team of professional advisers includes psychologists, social workers, family therapists, nurses, teachers and psychiatrists.

Advisers normally offer a one-off consultation lasting up to 50 minutes. The aim is to help the caller find ways of managing their child's difficulties and to help them become more confident in approaching services that can help.



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Contact</b>   |  <b>Parentlineplus</b><br><small>because instructions aren't included</small><br><b>0808 800 2222</b><br><small>www.parentlineplus.org.uk</small> |
| <a href="http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk">www.parentlineplus.org.uk</a> |  |

Parents and carers often need a listening ear and help through the problem they are facing. Parentline gives immediate help from a volunteer parent support worker 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



# Parentline

## Helpline

### Our aims and targets

- Parentline is for anyone who parents – not just mums and dads, but relatives, friends and foster carers. Our strength is that we offer generalist support: we are here for everybody.
- By offering a listening ear, we aim to ease the isolation and loneliness parents can feel and relieve the pressure of parenting.
- We are independent and objective, which means we can give balanced help, support and information.
- We don't judge and we all have parenting experience ourselves.
- We encourage parents to call before a problem turns into a crisis.

“ Tonight I spoke to Parentline. I was upset, confused and at a loss about what to do with my daughter. By the end of the conversation the call taker had me focused, positive and I had a plan. ”

### How it works

Parenting problems can arise any time of the day or night, and we are here, at the end of a telephone line, to help. All our call takers have parenting experience, and offer confidential information and all-important emotional support. Calls are free.

There are 24 million people in the UK who parent, including grandparents, step-parents friends and carers. Parentline is for them all. We offer them round-the-clock support on a wide range of issues, from problems coping with babies and toddlers, to teenage issues such as anti-social or risky behaviour, as well as bullying, discipline and the impact of divorce.

Callers can talk through how to deal with a particular problem, get tips and strategies, or simply let off steam. If necessary, we can give further help in the form of a weekly call from a support worker, or refer them to another organisation that can give more specialist help.

You don't have to be at your wits' end to call; in fact we positively encourage parents to contact us before they reach crisis point. In an evaluation carried out by Thomas Coram Research Unit, eight out of ten callers reported their situation had improved as a result of calling Parentline.

## Contact

[www.gotateenager.org.uk](http://www.gotateenager.org.uk)



**Gotateenager.org.uk provides a social networking site for parents of teenagers that recreates online the supportive 'school gate' community that parents really miss when their children go from primary to secondary school.**

Launches September 2008

# Got a teenager?

## Web & social media

### Our aims and targets

- Our innovative new website is aimed at parents of teenagers who really value parent-to-parent support, including the many parents of teens who take part in our online community.
- We aim to help parents by supporting them through the journey of bringing up teens, providing informal support, information and tools as well as signposting to other helpful organisations.
- We also plan to explore new channels: enabling parents to access multimedia content including interactive learning via computer, mobile phone and Web TV shows.
- Launching in September 2008, our new online service will be parent-led, focusing on the issues that parents of teenagers already talk to us about.



### How it works


Parents of primary school children enjoy a network of support and friendship that is lost when their children make the often tricky transition to secondary school. Gotateenager.org.uk fills that gap by creating an online community for parents of teenagers.

Features will include: e-learning modules – courses that parents complete online – including getting on with your teenager and dealing with drug and alcohol use; an online comic and a teen speak 'jargon buster'. Parents will also be able to access information and support via our confidential email support service, as well as message boards, blogs and Q&As.

Our social networking site will enable parents of teenagers to share experiences, swap ideas and support one another through their challenges and successes.

Parents who visit the site can access a menu of key topics including bullying, health and wellbeing and risky behaviours to get more information and tips.

The social networking is a key element and runs throughout the site, encouraging parents to interact, share tips and strategies and gain confidence to tackle issues.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Contact</b>   |  |
| <a href="http://www.singleparents.org.uk">www.singleparents.org.uk</a><br><a href="http://www.onespace.org.uk">www.onespace.org.uk</a> |   |

**Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) is a nationwide network of one parent families and organisations representing many different backgrounds and cultures.**

Launched May 2008

# One Space

## Web & social media

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to extend the reach of our support services to many more single parents through a new social networking website.
- Our online groups will open up new opportunities to isolated parents who cannot get to support groups in the 'real world'.
- Parents will be able to communicate with trained professionals and with one another via message boards, gaining confidence to parent alone successfully.
- We aim to create a community environment online, in which parents feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

“Playing all the different roles, you are responsible for everything. You are just wearing so many different hats all at one time.”  
 Single parent in SPAN research with Lincoln University

### How it works

Parents logging on to our website will find a new social networking area, rich in multimedia content such as videos, podcasts and blogs (online diaries), offering a highly engaging way of providing support and information to lone parents.

Parents will be encouraged to join new online groups that include parenting on your own, parenting after divorce and separation and parenting teenage children on your own. Each of these will be led by facilitators experienced in parenting support.

Our facilitators will appear in a video clip, introducing a theme, such as setting boundaries or family rules, and opening up a discussion. Parents will be encouraged to take part via live chats and online message boards, to contribute their experiences, problems and views, and receive information and support. Or they can browse the many resources such as articles on different aspects of parenting, links to specialist agencies, news items and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to find the support they need. An added feature of the site – UK Advice Finder – will enable them to locate further support in their local area as well as other national family support services.

## Contact

info@cafamily.org.uk  
www.cafamily.org.uk

**contact** a family  
for families with disabled children

**We will help and encourage parents and carers of disabled children to use the web and social networking sites to get information and advice that supports them to look after their child.**

Launched May 2008

# Contact a Family Online

## Web & social media

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to encourage more families who care for a disabled child to access information and support online.
- By taking our information and services to the sites parents already use, we are extending vital information and opportunities for practical and emotional peer support to more parents.

#### Fact:

Every 25 minutes across the UK, a child is diagnosed with a severe disability.


### How it works

When a child is diagnosed with a disability, information about their child's condition and contact with other families are essential. We are helping parents to use existing social networking sites to get in touch, providing new video and audio clips for those sites and developing our own website in exciting and imaginative ways.

We are expanding and improving our website to include 'ask an expert' sessions, parents' own stories in the form of blogs (online journals), message boards and chat rooms so parents can communicate online, and news updates emailed direct on any developments that might affect them.

We will also provide videos and audio clips of parents' first-hand experiences to existing social networking sites. We are establishing a virtual advice centre on the Second Life social networking site. Visitors to the site will be able to enter the office in the form of their avatar (online character) and have live chats with our advice worker, who will be available on the site at least one day a week.

To encourage parents to use these new communications channels, we are producing friendly 'how to' guides and funding a worker to train parent groups in using new media.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Contact</b>   | <br>Building relationships<br>strengthening families |
| <a href="http://thecoupleconnection.net">thecoupleconnection.net</a><br><a href="http://www.oneplusone.org.uk">www.oneplusone.org.uk</a> |   |

**A positive relationship between parents is key to improving outcomes for children. This self-help website provides information and resources to parents who want to change their relationship for the better.**

Launches August 2008

# thecoupleconnection.net

## Web & social media

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide a website where parents can find out how to manage their relationship positively.
- Our website is for all parents, but we will aim to reach fathers and parents of disabled children.
- Our key objectives are to provide interesting, engaging and accessible information that helps parents to strengthen and maintain their relationship.
- Everything on the site will be presented in a highly accessible and engaging way that parents can absorb easily.

“ Help for the couple relationship is a crucial strand of parenting support, but is often overlooked. This new site will give parents a private online space in which to develop and strengthen their relationships. ”

Penny Mansfield, Director One Plus One

### How it works

One Plus One has more than 30 years' experience of turning research into practice. We investigate what makes relationships work – or fall apart – and make the findings accessible to everyone interested in strengthening and supporting couple and family relationships. We are now using the evidence to create an innovative service for parents; a new website where couples can discover for themselves how to improve the way they manage their relationship.

The site is designed to help couples work through changes in their relationship together. It combines resources that can be tailored to personal circumstances with regularly updated self-assessment tools, blogs and forums. The aim is to build a strong parent community enabling parents to help each other.

Forums will be contributed to by trained relationship experts. By making all these resources easily accessible on one website, parental relationship problems can be addressed early – when motivation is high – and help can be most effective.

Features on the new site will include 'couple spaces' with interactive diaries, to encourage partners to keep in touch with each other's issues and feelings, and maintain closeness through the day-to-day challenges of parenting.

## Contact

[www.dads-space.com](http://www.dads-space.com)  
[www.atticmedia.com](http://www.atticmedia.com)



**Dads' Space is a social networking website where fathers who are separated from their children can build and enhance their relationship by staying in contact and interacting online.**

Launched June 2008

# Dads' Space

## Social media

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide a safe, fun and engaging space online where separated fathers can stay in touch with their children.
- The service is for all fathers, but particularly those who don't live with their children, either through divorce or separation.
- We aim to minimise the negative effects on children and isolation from their fathers, particularly when there has been an acrimonious separation, by putting them quickly back in touch online.

### How it works

Dads' Space is an online community space designed to bring together separated fathers with their children, allow them to keep in contact and encourage them to make the most of their time together.

New media company Atticmedia are working with Respect, a third sector organisation that engages men to prevent domestic violence, to develop a safe online environment for children and their dads. We will involve the child's mother throughout, from the creation of the online space through to moderating the contact as it progresses.

The website will encourage dads and their children to have fun, play games, share photos and learn. Security is a priority and there will be three levels of access: supported, supervised and indirect, depending on the family circumstances.

In the content space, dads and children can play online games and activities together. A profile page will allow them to post and share photos, videos and messages. There will also be supportive materials and resources to help dads and children deal with the separation and to build fathers' confidence in parenting. We will post birthday reminders and provide tips, ideas and downloadable activity sheets to help dads and children make the most of their next visit.



## Contact

family@familymatters.org.uk  
www.dadtalk.co.uk



**We will promote fatherhood in all its aspects on our social networking website [dadtalk.co.uk](http://dadtalk.co.uk) where fathers can share ideas, find information and learn about parenting.**

Launched June 2008

# DadTalk

## Social media

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to create a new online community of fathers; a source of support, information and ideas.
- DadTalk is for all fathers, but we will target in particular fathers from African and Caribbean communities and fathers of teenagers.
- By getting dads to communicate with one another online and providing learning opportunities, we aim to raise the aspirations and improve their confidence to achieve more in their relationships with their children.
- We aim to reach more fathers through the innovative use of social media, to champion and promote fatherhood through the web.



### How it works


Our social networking site is a new resource for fathers to learn how to strengthen, improve and expand their roles. DadTalk aims to get dads communicating with one another, and gives them new opportunities to learn from one another, from experts and from trained moderators.

DadTalk features:

- A forum where fathers can talk to and support each other, and reflect on the nitty gritty issues of being a dad
- Video and podcasts of interviews with experts and fathers in society, which can be downloaded onto MP3 players and mobile phones
- Information, articles, frequently asked questions and real-life stories
- Signposting to all things 'dad' on the web

The information and articles will seek to stimulate debate among dads in the forums. Trained moderators will be active on the forums, contributing to discussions and signposting within the site and to others.

We are working with Eastside Young Leaders Academy and The Orangee to create DadTalk. We will let dads know that they matter, stimulate honest discussion and challenge fathers to play a greater role in family life and in the lives of their children.

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Contact</b>  |  netmums.com |
| www.netmums.com |   |

**Netmums Parent Supporters is a new service, run with the help of Unite/CPHVA (association for health visitors), bringing expert help to mums who need it through the Netmums website.**

Launched April 2008

## Netmums Parent Supporters

### Social media

#### Our aims and targets

- We aim to add a layer of expert help to our established community of parents, who support one another.
- We aim to make sure that mums who need help with problems, including serious issues, can contact a professional directly online and be helped to access local services when needed.
- Our new service is for all mums, including mums of disabled children and teenagers.
- Parents will be able to get the expert help they need in a highly accessible way through the site.

#### How it works

Netmums is already a thriving online community, with over 400,000 members, and 600,000 visitors to the site each month.

The Coffee House is a moderated online forum where mothers discuss a whole range of issues and support each other. The new service means we will also have experts on hand to offer practical and emotional support for those who need it.

The professional team contribute to discussions happening online, or mums can ask them a question directly. Our Parent Supporters will offer extra help to anyone they think needs it through private online messages or conversations.

Our health visitors will help with issues to do with looking after children, relationships and postnatal illness. Our expert from the Advisory Centre on Education can help with any questions about schools, including bullying, special needs or admissions. For parents looking after a disabled or special needs child, an adviser from Contact a Family can help with the practical and emotional issues, including legal rights and finance. Women's Aid will help women who are suffering emotional or physical abuse. Parents of teenagers can get advice on the numerous challenges and issues they face. An expert from One Plus One will offer advice on managing relationships.

## Contact

[www.relateforparents.org.uk](http://www.relateforparents.org.uk)

**relate**  
the relationship people

**We are creating a new online instant messaging service, so that parents, and particularly fathers, can engage easily with our free relationship support services.**

Launches July 2008

# Live Talk

## Instant messaging

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide immediate, therapeutically-informed advice and support to parents in distress, particularly fathers.
- Parents who log on can have a live conversation with a Relate consultant in an online chat room.
- We aim to create an easy route for parents to break the ice in talking about their problems and seeking outside help.
- By providing new communications channels that suit their temperament and their needs, we aim to encourage more fathers to contact Relate.

### How it works

Half of our clients are fathers, but it is still mainly women who make the first contact with Relate's services. By providing a new instant messaging service, we hope more fathers will feel able to make the first move to seek support and relationship guidance.

Parents can log on, via our website, to an online chat room, where they will have a one-to-one conversation with a Relate Response Consultant. They will first ask a few 'tick-box' questions on screen so our consultant can see what the parent is concerned about. They can then start to 'chat' online.

The service offers the advantage of being able to talk to a real person, without the potential barrier of having to make an appointment. All of our online consultants have received therapeutic training, and will respond to problems in adult relationships, which have a huge impact on family life, or the parent's relationship with a child.

We expect online chats to last 15-25 minutes, and we will signpost parents who need further guidance to other resources before they log off. The service will be the first port of call for parents who prefer the relative anonymity of the web over a telephone call, and will provide an accessible service for people who find it easier to be open about their problems without face or voice contact.



## Contact

[www.atticmedia.com](http://www.atticmedia.com)



**Dads' Team will go to the websites fathers already use to provide content and promote resources that boost their skills and their confidence in their role as a father.**

Launches August 2008

# Dads' Team

## Syndicated content

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to target fathers by going through the websites they already use, such as football and newspaper websites.
- We will build partnerships with these websites and provide videos and games that deliver helpful parenting information to fathers.
- We aim to promote the status of fatherhood, through engaging and accessible content and games, talking the language of our audience.
- Fathers taking part will join a bigger Dads' Team league, building the online community of fathers.

### How it works

Fathers are less likely than mums to ask for help with parenting. Dads' Team breaks down this initial reluctance by taking web-based videos and games to them.


New media company Atticmedia are working with Respect, a third sector organisation that engages men to prevent domestic violence, to develop Dads' Team. We will strike up partnerships with websites fathers already use regularly, to provide high quality, engaging and free content. The information, news, games and activities we offer will all positively promote men's role as fathers, and help improve their involvement with their children.

We will promote positive messages through games, which build up a large community of Dads' Teams, each playing against each other. The games will be fun and have a 'viral' element to them, encouraging dads to send them on to friends.

We will make sure that the games and free content we provide will be highly accessible, for example videos of celebrities, such as football players, talking positively about fatherhood in interesting and unexpected ways, and meet the needs of fathers from different cultural backgrounds.

All Dads' Team content will be branded within the website fathers are on, making it easy and intuitive to use. In this way, we aim to build an online community of dads within local regions and right across the country.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Contact</b>                               |  |
| enquiries@ace-ed.org.uk<br>www.ace-ed.org.uk |   |

Parents can now get education advice sent direct to their mobile phones with Ask ACE, our new text message service that offers high quality, accurate and effective legal advice. Text keyword or ASKACE to 68808.

Launched March 2008

# Ask ACE

SMS

## Our aims and targets

- We aim to open up education advice to more parents and carers via our new text messaging service.
- We aim to deliver fast, easily accessible information to support families concerned about an education issue and empower them to take action on behalf of their child.
- The new service is for all parents, but targeted particularly at parents of teenagers and those who do not have web access or prefer not to use it.

## How it works

Parents who are worried about any aspect of their child's education can get speedy advice via their mobile phone. Users text a keyword, such as 'bullying' or 'exclusion' to our free text number. They will get a quick response with some basic guidance and options to get further help:

- simple first steps they can take
- an invitation to expand their query
- links to the ACE website for those with web access via their mobile phone
- request a free booklet.

We will develop the service later to provide advice as a podcast or voice message. The service will be run by advisers in our contact centre during office hours, so parents can have a text 'conversation' if they want to ask follow up questions. By providing an instantaneous, convenient response service, we hope to reach parents who may be reluctant or simply don't have the time to call our helpline.

We launched Ask ACE in March 2008 and the service offers advice to parents and carers on all educational issues that affect children of compulsory school age in state-funded education. This includes special educational needs, exclusions, school admissions appeals and bullying.

See website for a full list of keywords.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Contact</b>   |  |
| <a href="http://www.relateforparents.org.uk">www.relateforparents.org.uk</a> |   |

**Parents who need a fast response on a relationship issue can now send Relate a text message with their problem, and they will receive a speedy reply from a consultant trained in relationship support.**

Launches July 2008

# Relate SMS Service

## SMS

### Our aims and targets

- We aim to provide immediate, therapeutically-informed advice to parents in distress, particularly fathers, via their mobile phones.
- Parents can text a free message and get a fast reply from a Relate Response consultant.
- We aim to make it as easy as possible for parents to benefit from our services.
- We aim to encourage more fathers to contact Relate by providing new communications channels that suit their temperament and their needs.

### How it works

Our SMS service is designed to make Relate's counselling and support for family relationships highly accessible and immediate. Users of the service are encouraged to text us with any query or problem. This could be an emotional issue 'My daughter says she hates me – what can I do?' or factual 'Do you do young people's counselling in Liverpool?'

One of our Relate Response Consultants will send a quick reply to the parent's mobile phone. There is no limit to the number of texts a parent can send, but we expect the average exchange to be 16 text messages.

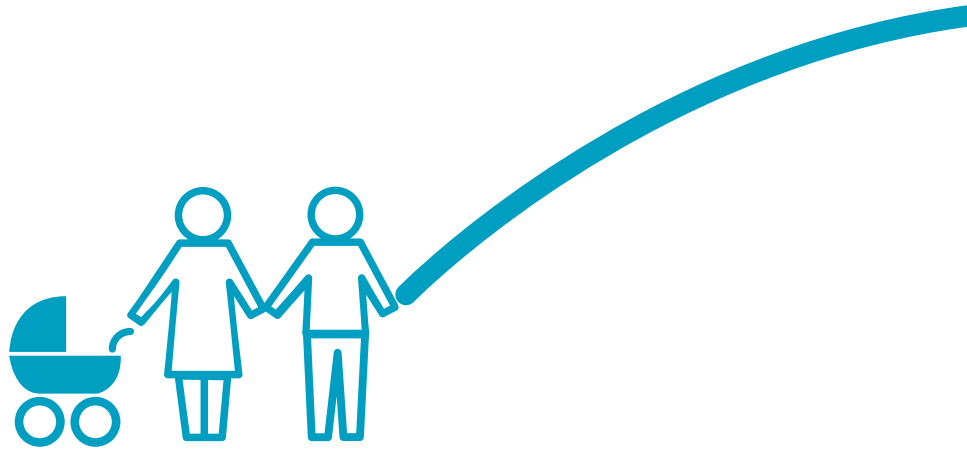
All of our consultants have received therapeutic training, and will provide immediate advice on family and relationship issues, from help to defuse a row, to support in a crisis, such as discovering an affair. The service aims to meet the needs of anyone who wants to make a quick and discreet enquiry about a problem they are having with their partner or children.

The consultants working on the text service are based in our existing contact centre, making it as effective as a telephone call to Relate. They will respond with instant tips and strategies to help the parent address the problem they are facing.









**Parent know how  
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