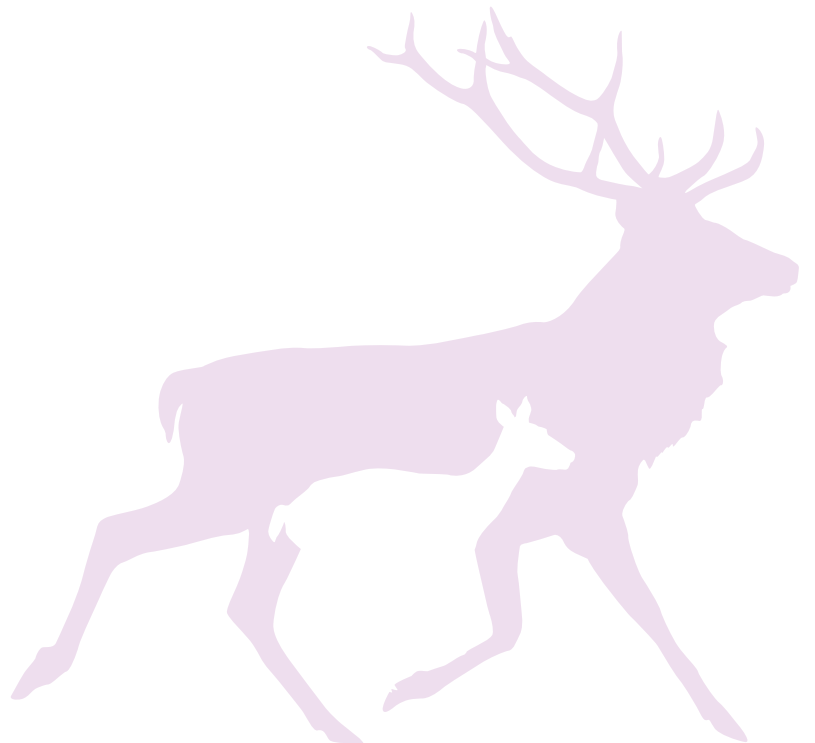




# YEAR OF THE DAD



## WEST LoTHIAN DADS2B



## WEST LOTHIAN DADS2B

**Dads2b** supports expectant dads in West Lothian to become the best fathers they can be, through a free hands-on ante-natal course.

*“The course makes an enormous difference. At the end of each course, the fathers tell us how much more confident they feel, how they are more excited about the birth of their child and how they feel much better prepared to support their partners.”*

Parent Education Co-ordinator, NHS Lothian

## AIMS

**Dads2b (West Lothian)** aims to increase the skills and confidence of fathers-to-be so they can support their partners through childbirth and go on to care for their new-born babies. The course supports fathers through their transition to parenthood in the knowledge that active fatherhood is essential for the long-term emotional wellbeing of their children.

Initially, this project targeted young and vulnerable fathers, but due to its success, the course is now open to all expectant fathers in West Lothian regardless of their background or employment status.

The course provides a mix of peer support alongside the advice of professionals in a non-threatening environment so expectant fathers can get fully involved with the birth of their child and develop the skills to care for their babies as they grow into confident young children.

## THE PEOPLE: THE PROJECT

*“Don’t miss it, every dad should go.”* Participating father

Dads2b is a free 4-week antenatal course for men in West Lothian to help new fathers become actively engaged in caring for their babies. The course is held throughout the year at St John’s hospital in Livingston and is open to any expectant father. The course covers the practical skills needed for looking after a new-born baby as well as advice to help fathers meet their children’s emotional needs.

The course covers the following key areas:

- Labour and birth
- Baby care
- Feeding
- Post-natal depression
- Baby Brain Development
- Dads experiences

There is an overall facilitator for each group, with input from a midwife, an early years development worker and visiting dads who talk about their experiences of labour, birth and parenting. Throughout the course there is an emphasis on mental health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on raising awareness around post-natal depression.



Dads2B is facilitated by Andie Hewitt (Parent Education Co-ordinator, NHS Lothian) and Stephen Gorman (Early Years Development Worker, West Lothian Council - Sure Start) and is run as a partnership between NHS Lothian, Surestart in West Lothian and West Lothian Council.

## THE DIFFERENCE

*"I have learnt a lot of things my wife didn't know, good for my confidence. Made me feel more of an equal partner and encouraged me to read further and discuss more with my wife"*

*"The course changed how I was a dad. We did baby massage and saw a day old baby bathed. I was also given advice to make bathing my job so it gave me purpose."*

### Participating Dads

The success of Dad2b speaks for itself. Demand for the course in West Lothian remains extremely high with many referrals coming through word of mouth. With courses now regularly oversubscribed, the facilitators have had to move Dads2B to a larger venue within St John's.

In their feedback, participants who complete the course consistently talk about feeling more confident, being better equipped and being more excited about facing the challenge of fatherhood.

Since the course launched in 2004, over 1,500 fathers have attended the course, with an average of 12-15 fathers attending any one course.

The course has been so successful that a resource was developed in partnership with the National Childbirth Trust, Children in Scotland and Father's Network Scotland.

*Dads2b resource: a resource for professionals providing antenatal education and support to fathers*

Published in 2011, with support from the Scottish Government, the resource is freely available from Fathers Network Scotland's website so that antenatal educators and community education professionals across Scotland can apply the learnings of Dads2B in their own areas.


There are now plans to expand Dads2b into the City of Edinburgh in partnership with Dads Rock as well as into East Lothian. In addition, the course facilitators are planning to spread advice and tips from Dads2b to a wider audience using social media platforms.

### Find out more:


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