



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



Press release

Date: 19 February 2018

New Digital Parent Support Service launched to help parents and carers with the challenges of family life

Most families face challenges at some time and may need help and advice. Being a parent or carer to a child or young person can often be difficult without readily available emotional support and guidance. Many parents feel confused by the information that is available or struggle to access services close to home. This is why the charity Family Action is launching a new National Digital Parent Support Service (DPSS) to provide practical and emotional support to parents and the carers of children and young people with the issues and challenges which impact on their family's day to day living.

Enabled and part-funded by The Second Half Fund, from Innovation Foundation Nesta and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the DPSS offers advice and support accessed by a free phone helpline, using a special text messaging service or by email. Parents and callers will be offered support appropriate to their needs. The Service is facilitated by specially trained volunteers, and is available from 6pm – 10pm Monday to Friday and from 10am – 1pm Saturday and Sunday.

The areas of support may include, but are not limited to parenting, hardship, isolation, relationship breakdown, immigration, education, disability and additional needs. The aim of the service is to:

- Improve confidence for parents in their parenting ability
- Increase parents' ability to manage children's behaviour
- Improve emotional and mental wellbeing of parents
- Enable parents to have a greater sense of support and a reduced sense of isolation
- Increase parental ability to manage practical and emotional issues
- Increase parental knowledge of where to access targeted support

David Holmes CBE, Chief Executive, Family Action said

"As a father myself, I know that parents and carers sometimes need practical support and advice or maybe just someone to talk to who understands and can give you a bit of a boost in confidence. From challenges such as getting your child into a night-time routine to more long-term complex issues; Family Action's confidential Digital Parent Support Service is a free, easily accessible way for parents and carers to get practical help and support. We hope it will make a big difference and remind parents and carers that they are not alone."

Carrie Deacon, Head of Social Action Innovation, Nesta said

"With our partners at DCMS, we are excited by the potential of the new Digital Support Service from Family Action. We hope that this not only provides more responsive and flexible ways for parents to get support across the country in ways that suit them, but also enables volunteers, particularly those aged 50+, to have flexible and impactful ways to share their time and talents around their busy lives"

ENDS

About the Digital Parent Support Service:

www.family-action.org.uk/dpss

The Digital Parent Support Service tackles issues faced by families in a new and innovative way by using a network of 'virtual' volunteers from across the country to support parents and carers of children and young people through telephone calls, email and text message.

The service aims to:

- Help parents and carers manage the challenges of parenthood via telephone, text message and email
- Provide longer term, regular one-to-one befriending support to parents feeling isolated
- Help parents with practical information, guidance and support
- Provide emotional and listening support to help parents and carers
- Help parents and carers understand and access relevant services and information

How it works

Our new Digital Parent Support Service uses a team of trained volunteers with knowledge and experience of managing the challenges of parenthood to support parents and carers 'virtually' by telephone, text message and email. The service works with four types of volunteers, each providing specific aspects of support or expertise.

Parent Helpline Volunteer – the first point of contact for parents and carers accessing the service, providing a range of immediate support as well as linking callers to our volunteer virtual befrienders, counsellors and experts.

Virtual Parent Befriender – providing up to 10 one to one virtual weekly support sessions to parents and carers, focusing on practical parenting information, listening and emotional support.

Virtual Expert – providing our virtual befrienders and parent helpline volunteers with information they need from their experience and knowledge in key areas such as health, education, housing, social care, legal etc. to be able to help parents more effectively.

Virtual Counsellor – Providing 6-8 sessions of counselling and more in depth support to parents and carers referred to them by other service volunteers. All our counsellors are qualified to level 3 or above and are members of an accredited body.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities with the DPSS, please visit

www.family-action.org.uk/volunteer/ .

We especially welcome volunteers who are 50+ years old

How to access the service

Accessing our free Digital Parent Support service couldn't be easier. Any parent or carer from anywhere in the UK can get in touch with the service via telephone, text message or email using the below details.

Telephone: 0808 802 0222

Text message: 07537 404 282

Email: NDPSS@family-action.org.uk



About the Second Half Fund

Family Action is one of 13 organisations selected to take part in the [Second Half Fund](#), from innovation foundation Nesta and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The fund supports the growth of innovations that mobilise the time and talents of people aged 50+ to help others, alongside public services.

The projects funded will be recruiting volunteers into a wide variety of roles to grow their successful models and support more people across the country; from grandparents who act as a primary daytime carer to an under five year old, to teaching older people how to avoid and manage falls through innovative dance classes.

The Second Half Fund sits alongside a number of funds aiming to mobilise the time and talents of people aged 50+ to meet specific social challenges. These include the Join In Stay In and Get More Give More funds. More details of these and their grantees are available at www.nesta.org.uk.