

JUNE 2010

## WESTMINSTER DEBATE FOR FATHERS

Pioneering debate for single fathers in Britain to create dialog with government on support

This year, [Dads House](#)<sup>1</sup> and [Only Dads](#),<sup>2</sup> organisations offering single fathers ground breaking support are teaming up with [Researching Reform](#)<sup>3</sup>, a project founded by Natasha Phillips to highlight family policy problems, to host a debate in The Houses of Parliament on Tuesday 15 June, to address the ongoing concerns surrounding single fathers post divorce, separation and bereavement.

To date green papers, such as Support For All, have failed to address the grave issues facing fathers and current policies continue to neglect their needs. Single fathers and their children can feel very much alone at a time in their lives when they really need support. Current research suggests that there are at least 238,000<sup>4</sup> children living with their fathers. The fact that there remains a huge gap in relation to widely available information in this area is testament to the pressing need to highlight these issues.

The panel members for this debate are: Lord Listowel<sup>5</sup>, with over ten years experience working with children and families, John Hemming MP<sup>6</sup>, founder of Justice for Families, Rob Williams<sup>7</sup> CEO of the Fatherhood Institute, a think tank for policies on fathers, Bob Greig<sup>8</sup>, founder of Only Dads and a single father himself and William McGranaghan<sup>9</sup>, founder of Dads House and also a single father.

Lord Listowel feels strongly about the issues: "I've worked with young men who have grown up without contact with their father and I feel passionately that contact should be made possible wherever it serves the interest of the child. With ten years experience in parliament I feel confident that the best approach is to apply pressure on government to build capacity in the family courts. As such I am most grateful to be part of this important debate."

### **For further information please contact:**

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### **Notes to Editors:**

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<sup>1</sup>Dads House is a registered charity which actively offers single fathers support, from life coaching, to cooking classes and football nights. Dads House also hopes to be able to offer single fathers accommodation, which is a much needed service.

<sup>2</sup> Only Dads is an organisation which also provides support for single fathers and offers advice from debt management to parenting know how.

<sup>3</sup> Researching Reform is a project founded by Natasha Phillips, after she went through the family courts herself. She has written a manual on what it is really like going through the courts and the Westminster Debate Series are also part of her project, in which she hopes to create useful dialog between families and government.

<sup>4</sup> Office of National Statistics: Family Structure and Family Formation

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<sup>5</sup> Lord Listowel is a passionate advocate of children's rights, working with the young and under-privileged. He is currently Treasurer of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children, Group Vice-Chair Associate Parliamentary Group for Children and Young People In and Leaving Care, Treasurer All Party Parliamentary Group for Parents and Families, Secretary All Party Parliamentary Group for Adoption and Fostering. He is also a trustee of TACT, a charity providing families for children in care, and of the Michael Sieff Foundation, a child welfare charity. He is a patron of The Who Cares? Trust and VOICE, a children's advocacy charity.

<sup>6</sup> John Hemming MP is a Member of Parliament for Birmingham Yardley and founder of Justice for Families, an organisation dedicated towards helping families who feel they have been unjustly treated by the family justice system.

<sup>7</sup> Rob Williams is the CEO of the Fatherhood Institute, which collates and publishes international research on fathers, fatherhood and different approaches to engaging with fathers by public services and employers and helps shape national and local policies to ensure a father-inclusive approach to family policy

<sup>8</sup> Bob Greig is the founder of Only Dads and is a single father himself. Bob has been featured in the national press for his work.

<sup>9</sup> William McGranaghan is the founder of Dads House and is also a single father. Billy is often cited in the media for his thoughts on issues surrounding single dads and is currently endorsing the soon to be released and critically acclaimed film The Road.