

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**Leeds Dads charity shortlisted in the National Diversity Awards  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday 15 September 2023 is a very special day for Leeds Dads.

Out of 90,000 nominees, charitable organisation Leeds Dads - which supports dads to engage with their pre school children - has been shortlisted in the National Diversity Awards!

Leeds Dads is amongst eight organisations vying for the Community Organisation Award in the Gender category. This award applauds groups, charities and voluntary organisations that have made an outstanding contribution to their local community, or nationwide, with diversity as their core focus.

**Leeds Dads founder Errol Murray said:**

"Over 100 dads join our free SoftPlay, Breakfast Clubs, MeetUps, Walks and Forest Schools every month, and bring their pre-school kids with them. We base ourselves in geographic areas of poverty or those lacking in resources, to make our services accessible to those most in need. Over 7000 people follow us on social media, with a more personal group of 400 dads in our private Facebook Group and 174 in our WhatsApp Group. We host weekly Evening Sessions where up to 50 Dads can openly discuss challenging, difficult or sensitive topics without judgement. Leeds Dads is in direct contact with over 500 dads every month, with high numbers of dads seeking help in terms of family support, child development information, and their personal wellbeing."

The concept for the National Diversity Awards arose when The Diversity Group identified an urgent need for more positive role models to be actively promoted, with the aim to empower and inspire the wide breadth of diverse communities across the UK.

**Clare Balding CBE, The National Diversity Awards 2023 Host said:**

"I'm so looking forward to hosting these awards and giving everyone the chance to celebrate the substantial achievements of our fabulously diverse community across a whole range of industries, businesses and charities. It's an important spotlight on those who make the world a better place for the full rainbow of society."

Leeds Dads is a voluntary charitable organisation that brings together a diverse community of fathers for social interaction and support. We are here to support and inspire Dads in taking an active positive parenting role, so that they can have a positive impact in engaging and strengthening their family unit. Our vision is a city of confident and caring Dads who are actively involved as parents,

building successful relationships with their children and partners. Leeds Dads feel they have met many of our ambitions including:

- Focusing our services in geographic areas of poverty and need
- Being endorsed by HRH the Princess of Wales. When we met her in Leeds City Market she described our work as: "...really extraordinary."
- Generating more health awareness of dads through Rethink Men - an activity day bringing partner groups together to offer ideas supporting the wellbeing of dads in Leeds.
- Increasing our monthly playgroups to become a service of weekly Dads Breakfast Clubs, Dads and Kids MeetUps, SoftPlay sessions, and Dads and Kids Walks
- Hosting Dadstastic Day - the biggest free family Father's Day party in England, attracting 2500 mums, dads, grandparents, carers, oh and kids
- Creating a collaborative network of groups supporting dads in Leeds
- Hosting Dads Nights Out for dads who may be too shy to socialise
- Being honoured by presenting four workshops explaining our practices to family support workers at the 24th Fathers and Families Conference in Los Angeles, USA
- Contacting new dads as soon as they join NHS Leeds Maternity Service courses for new parents via a video of our dads talking about the challenges of being a new dad, and how they've addressed them.
- Keeping all of our core activities free of charge

Leeds Dads partners include institutions like Leeds City Council, NHS Leeds, Childrens Services and organisations that support family wellbeing in Leeds. We liaise with them so they can recognise how modern dads wants to be involved, and feel supported in engaging with the development of their child - a perspective to which these organisations are now aligning.

Although we have sadly lost three dads who took their lives, others have told us how as a group we have helped them overcome thoughts of suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, isolation and despair.

Hundreds of supporters have voted for Leeds Dads to win the NDA. These quotes have made it clear how essential the group is for the dads who are supported by their activities:

"I've been a part of Leeds Dads since before COVID-19. It has done wonders for me and my kids"

"Supporting Men in playing their part in parenting is vital for healthy children, adults, relationships and the wider community."

"My son and his three young children go every weekend and have a fantastic time, it's a way to get dad's chatting while giving kids new friends to play with , my daughter in law also appreciates the break she gets from being such a busy full time mum, so it's a win win the whole house benefits"

"Leeds dads has really given me a community and connection. It has also provided me with a special place to be build the bond with my son. We go as often as we can. The walks are great but it's the soft play where I get better time with my son and chat more with the dads. I like how there is no judgement on how you're parenting, chances are another dad has also forgotten something too. Definitely gets my vote."

"Amazing service to dad's remembering that they need care also"

"Leeds Dads have supported me during hard times and is truly inclusive"

"Leeds Dads helped me hugely when I separated from my ex wife and had events that both myself and my 3 children thoroughly enjoyed being part of"

"LD reaches so many Dads. And in turn touching the lives of so many children. I have been to and supported lots of great events and the level of diversity is unparalleled"

**Errol Murray said:**

"We aim to win this award because literally no one else is working to support dads into fatherhood like we do."

Winners will be announced at the National Diversity Awards on Friday, September 15th 2023 at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral.

For more information on Leeds Dads visit [leedsdads.org](https://leedsdads.org) or connect on Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram or LinkedIn via @leedsdads

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