

## **Strengthening partnerships and confidence: Drew Tyler's Fatherhood Champions journey**

Drew Tyler is a Programme Manager at Arsenal FC, working within Arsenal in the Community, part of The Arsenal Foundation. His role focuses on delivering programmes that support children, young people and families in north London.

A core focus of his work is engaging parents, particularly fathers, through sport-based and community initiatives. Ensuring that fathers feel welcomed, understood and actively included in family services is critical to achieving better outcomes for children.

It was in this context that Drew completed the Fatherhood Champions training delivered by the Fatherhood Institute.

### **Building a father-inclusive lense**

At the outset of his Fatherhood Champions journey, Drew was keen to better understand how family hubs operate locally and how community organisations like Arsenal fit within that system. Like many professionals working across sectors, he recognised that services can sometimes default to engaging mothers, with fathers unintentionally overlooked.

The Fatherhood Champions programme provided both insight and challenge. It highlighted the importance of viewing fathers as equal partners in parenting and encouraged participants to reflect on how their own practice might unintentionally exclude or under-engage them.

For Drew, this strengthened his awareness of how father-inclusive practice applies within Arsenal in the Community's programmes. It reinforced the need to think deliberately about how fathers are invited in, how communications are framed, and how sessions are structured to ensure men feel welcome and valued.

By understanding how local authority services are working to embed father-inclusive approaches within family hubs, Drew is now better positioned to align Arsenal's programmes with that borough-wide ambition.

### **Confidence to advocate for fathers**

One of the most significant impacts of the Fatherhood Champions programme has been the confidence it has given Drew to advocate more actively for fathers within partnership spaces.

Following the training, he was invited to take part in a roundtable discussion focused on father inclusion. That continued engagement reinforced that his perspective was valued in shaping how services evolve.

“I’m very grateful to have done the course and to be involved,” he said. “I’m grateful that you invited me to the round table and that you’re keeping me connected.”

That sense of inclusion has strengthened his confidence to raise questions about father engagement in wider professional conversations. He now feels more assured in highlighting the importance of engaging dads, sharing examples of what works in community settings, and contributing to discussions about how services can become more accessible and welcoming to men.

The Fatherhood Champions programme has not only increased his knowledge; it has amplified his professional voice on the issue of father inclusion.

### **Strengthening partnerships to better support dads**

A key outcome of the Fatherhood Champions programme for Drew has been a deeper, more strategic connection with local authority colleagues and partners around the shared goal of strengthening services for fathers.

Through the training, he gained clearer visibility of how family support services are structured within the borough and how father-inclusive practice is being embedded across teams. This has made it easier to align Arsenal in the Community’s work with local authority priorities.

In practical terms, this means Drew can ensure that Arsenal’s programmes are not operating in isolation, but are contributing to a coordinated, borough-wide effort to engage fathers more effectively. Whether through targeted sessions, inclusive communications or partnership referrals, the focus on dads is now more deliberate.

By approaching partnership engagement with a clearer understanding of father-inclusive principles, Drew is helping ensure that community-based provision complements statutory services and strengthens the overall offer to families.

## **Lasting impact on practice and outcomes**

For Drew, the Fatherhood Champions programme has sharpened his understanding of father-inclusive practice and strengthened his confidence to advocate for dads within his organisation and across partnerships.

For Arsenal in the Community, this means having a Programme Manager who is actively considering how programmes engage fathers, how barriers can be reduced, and how communications can signal that dads are welcome and important.

For the wider system, it means having a community-based leader aligned with the borough's ambition to strengthen services for fathers.

Drew's journey demonstrates that when professionals are equipped with the tools, insight and confidence to prioritise father engagement, the impact extends beyond individual programmes. It contributes to a more inclusive system, where fathers are visible, valued and supported to play an active role in their children's lives.

You can find out more about our Fatherhood Champions programme and our broader training offer [here](#).