

“Why are you not at work Daddy?”

I must admit, this was a sore one and a real blow to my self-esteem. As someone who was used to getting up every morning to go to work, when this was taken away, it knocked my confidence. For the last 12 years, I had been able to bring in an income to our house, and with a wife and two young children to support, I really felt the pressure. The beauty of young children is that they say what they think and their innocence is wonderful and to be embraced. But I did struggle to come up with a suitable answer to this very simple question posed by my 5 year old son.

Many children across Aberdeen are getting used to new family dynamics. Parents who used to be working are now at home. Dad's who worked on offshore rotas, are now spending prolonged periods at home. Conversely, some children who were used to seeing their Dad every night, are now getting used to him working away through the week and only seeing him at the weekend. There is a whole range of changing family dynamics across Aberdeen as a result of the downturn in the jobs market, and it is important to look out for everyone that is affected, especially children.

Children are also being affected in other ways. Perhaps they have been moved out of nursery into a new environment as a result of the changing family situation? Or maybe they have even been taken out of school and are faced with the prospect of leaving friends and a stable environment to something new and different, either in the UK or overseas? In my case, we moved my daughter out of private nursery into the local pre-school nursery and as a Dad, I was concerned about how she would adapt to this change and how we would make our new childcare arrangements work if (and when) I secured a new job.

Every parent wants the best for their child and juggling the demands of providing for them, through working, whilst also minimising any disruption or change to their routine, can be very difficult. It can be stressful, as you can feel the weight of the world on your shoulders as you try to make things work. But **You're Not Alone**.

- **DWP** – Find out what you may be entitled to by contacting the Department of Work and Pensions.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about>
- **Access to Leisure** - Making sport, leisure and childcare services available to everyone is at the core of the Access to Leisure scheme which is available to residents of Aberdeen City that meet certain conditions. <http://www.accordaberdeen.co.uk/accesstoleisure/accesstoleisure.aspx>
- **Free School Meals**
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/schoolmeals/>
- **Counselling Organisations**
<http://www.thespark.org.uk/>
<http://cairnscounselling.org.uk/about>

As part of the **You're Not Alone** project, an event has been organised for 16th May from 5.30pm – 7.00pm at the Central Library. This will provide an opportunity for anyone looking for some assistance to come together and find out more about the range of support that is available. Please get in touch if you are interested in finding out more.