



Daughters of Fortune:

Researching and sharing experiences of learning disability and parenthood

A Question of Leadership
13th September 2018



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Who are the research team?

Who are we?

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The research team:

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Background

What do we know already about experiences of parents with learning disabilities?

- More people with learning disabilities are becoming parents, though we still don't know how many in the UK^{2, 3}
- There are still gaps in the research⁴
- Parents with learning disabilities still face lots of challenges to their role as parents and are more likely to have children removed from their care⁶
- There is good practice guidance^{3,8}, but it's not always followed by services

Background

Research and people with learning disabilities

- Historically, research has excluded people with learning disabilities⁹
- This is changing and there is a focus now on **inclusive research**
- But – how much are people with learning disabilities really **in control** of research about their lives?

Background: *Inclusive Research and people with learning disabilities*

Walmsley and colleagues (2018)¹⁰ have given us a new definition for **inclusive research** which says it should:

- Contribute to **social change**
- Be based on **issues important to people with learning disabilities**, and **use their experience** to inform how research is done and how it can be useful
- Focus on **what added value** people with learning disabilities bring to the research

How did
Mind the Gap
become interested in
a project about
learning disabled
parenthood?



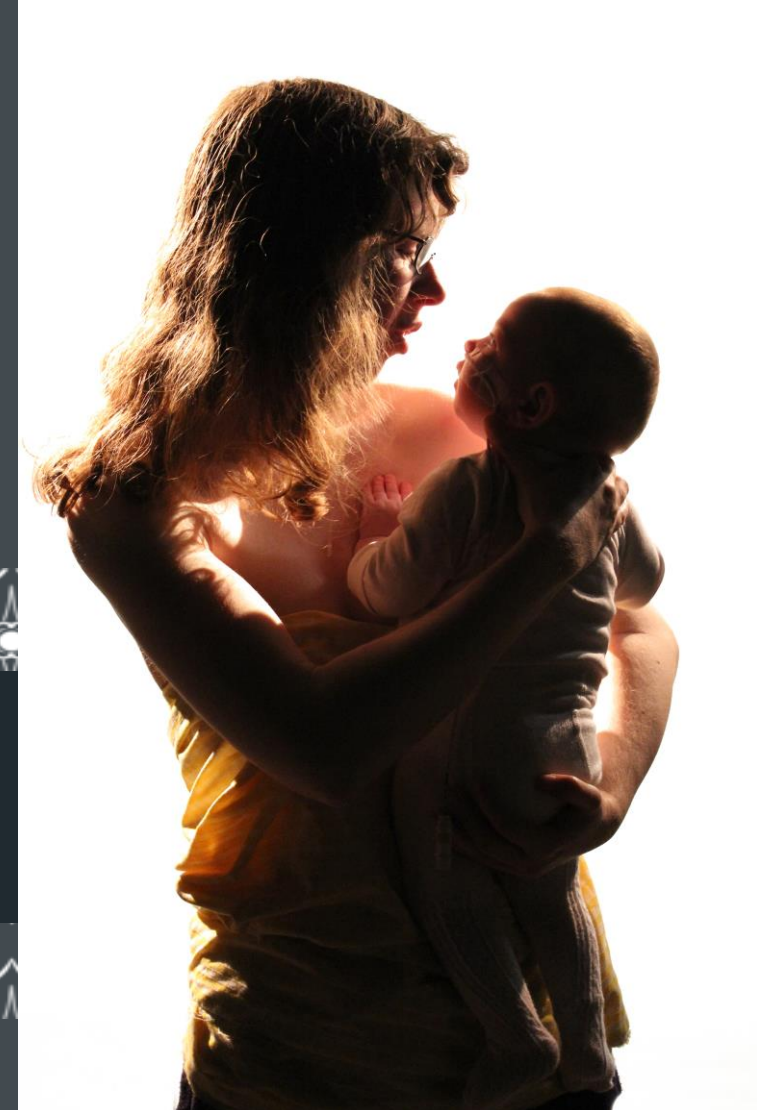
Pippa's story



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*Research into
learning disabled
parenthood, led by
people with learning
disabilities*

How did we do it?



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Research Findings:
What have the stories shared told us so far?

Key Research Findings

- Parents felt that others, like professionals, assumed from the beginning that people with learning disabilities couldn't be good parents.

"They say learning disability can't look after a child and they just assume straight away that you can't look after your child."

- Parents felt like they had to prove themselves.

"Because I'd changed it all around... And I proved I could do it."

Key Research Findings:

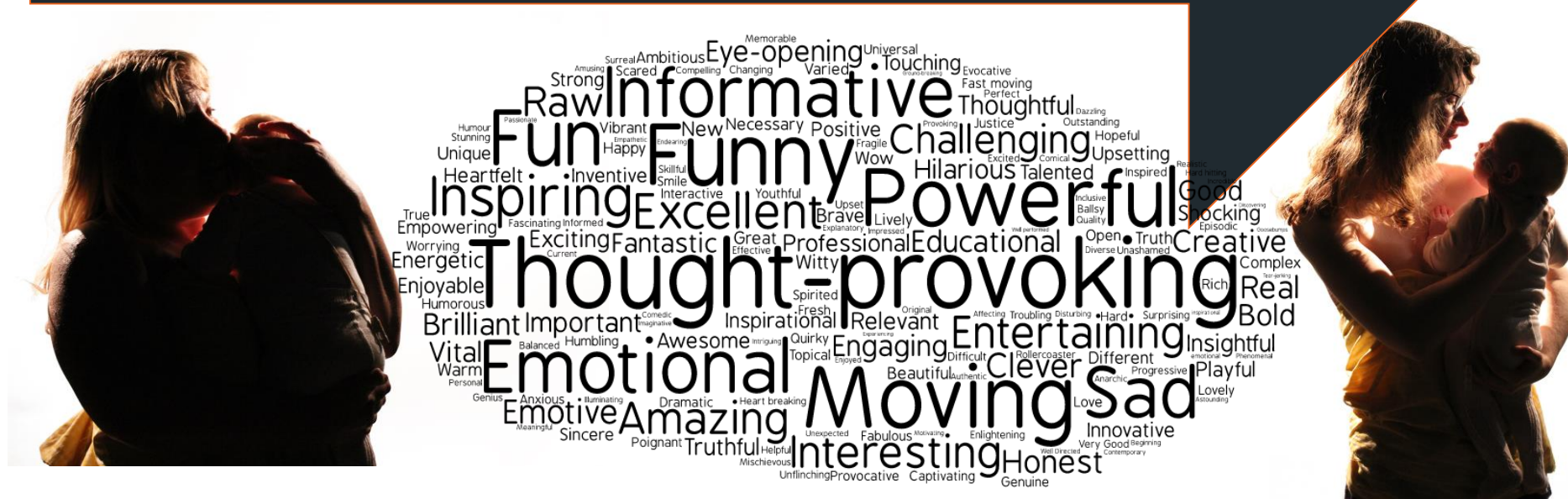
- Because of this pressure to prove themselves, parents felt like they needed to be even better than parents without learning disabilities.

“Because there are a lot of people that don’t have a learning disability that are really naff parents and they don’t have to go through all the social services.”

- Parents talked about feeling like they were treated differently than others without learning disabilities.

“They always look at us we’re like different... they’re just too eager to take the child away. You’ve failed, in their eyes you’re always a failure and that is wrong.”

Outputs and Next Steps...



Questions...
for you...



Thank you for listening

If you would like a copy
of the research report
or have any other
questions – we'd love to
hear from you!



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