

Making a difference through your research. Getting started on research impact as an early career researcher.



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November 2022-June 2024 (and beyond) (0.6 FTE)

Mental Health Social Care Research Centre, School for Business and Society, University of York

Overview of presentation

- My ethos and journey into and through academic research
- The Solutions to Perinatal Loneliness Project overview
- What is research impact?
- Thinking about impact as an Early Career Researcher
- **6 Tips for getting started on impact**
- Impact Side-quests: Well-being walks; LGBTQ+ zines; developing an App; ESRC Festival of Social Science

My ethos and research journey

- PhD to first Research Associate Role
- Time in practice
- Return to research with a focus on Applied Research
- Embracing my practitioner/lived-experience
- Prioritising research impact



Overview of research

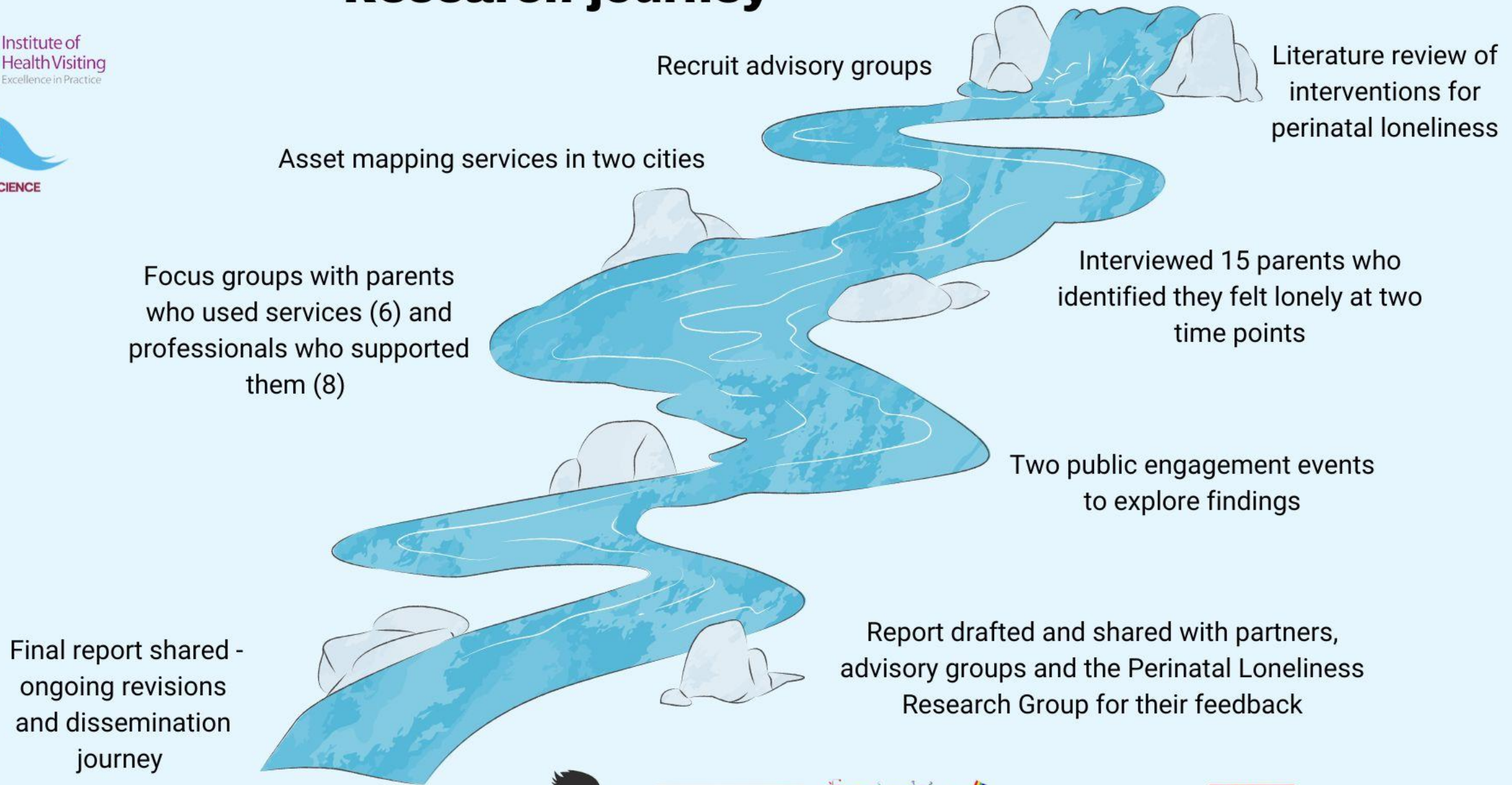


Collaborating Organisations:

University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, University of Manchester, University of Oxford, University of Lincoln

Institute of Health Visiting, Fatherhood Institute, Dad Matters, Maternal Mental Health Alliance, Bourne This Way, Proud2bParents, National Childcare Trust, Mental Health Foundation, McPin Foundation
Heeley Development Trust, Zest Community Development Trust, Blaze Trails

Research journey



Outputs from research

- 4 reports/documents published on Figshare (Open research repository)
- An animated film
- Created a research network, wrote a group paper, and organised two Annual Perinatal Loneliness Conferences
- Designed and piloted a perinatal well-being walking group in Sheffield
- Developed An LGBTQ+ zine
- Two ESRC Festival of Social Science events
- Supported the father-inclusion in Family Hub conference (Uni of Lincoln)
- Two funded research proposals (NIHR RPSC and NIHR 3 Schools Follow on)
- A six-month secondment to the Yorkshire and Humber ARC
- Three academic papers (1 accepted, 1 under review, 1 being edited).

What is research impact?

...using your research's insights or methodologies to make a difference to the world. It is defined as *'a demonstrable effect, change or benefit beyond academia'*



Taken from: University of Stirling Impact Team

What is research impact? And what is realistic for early career researchers/you?

- This is the start of your story
- What is realistic for your field
- What is realistic for your time
- Think small and achievable



My goals were to:

- Produce lots of engaging outputs for different audiences (parents, health professionals, service leaders, commissioners)
- Build an online profile to share my work widely online and in talks and seminars
- Increased awareness of perinatal loneliness and different types of loneliness as a public health issue in the perinatal period
- Start to influence small changes to services and health care professionals' practice
- Perhaps influence policy if the opportunity can be created



1. Start early and think about:

- What impacts are **feasible** for your project and at this **early stage** of your career?
- Who do you need on board to help you?
- What training/skills do you need?
- What can you be doing as you go along in your research project?
- **What can you be recording/tracking/measuring?**
- How can you leave space for unanticipated outcomes/impacts?
- What outputs and dissemination methods could you use at the end?

2. Ask for feedback, record and track everything (Forms/Hive/Pure/etc)



- Project Overview
- People
- Organisations
- Research Outputs
- Project Evidence Vault



Feedback at ESRC events

Description



Email to ESRC summarising feedback

...

Description

Some of the general comments were: "great to h...

Added

16/08/2024



Father-inclusion and the Family Hubs: 'what works'...

Source

www.eventbrite.co.uk

Added

16/08/2024



Tackling parental loneliness in the first 1001 days...

Source

www.eventbrite.co.uk

Added

16/08/2024


Useful tools for tracking your work

- Figshare
- YouTube
- Altmetric trackers on journals
- Googling yourself and your work (*cringe* but useful)
- Register on google scholar
- Website visits/tools

3: Make/commission attractive and easy read outputs

Solutions to perinatal loneliness

Ruth Naughton-Doe
Mental Health Social Care Research Centre
School for Business & Society
University of York




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MANIFESTO

FATHER INCLUSION & THE FAMILY HUBS

What works in engaging Dads?



FOLLOWING YOUNG FATHERS FURTHER

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Parinatal Loneliness Project

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Yorkshire and Humber

THINK DADS

SSBC small steps big changes CityCare

Live event scribing by LOUISE FRENCH
www.louisefrench.co.uk

Tolerance & acceptance of children and families

- Recognise that children belong in public spaces as much as adults.
- Support and educate wider-society to help babies, children and their families feel welcome in social spaces.



Make visible the challenge of pregnancy and parenting

- Feeding/sleeping/baby care.
- Parents' Time poverty.
- Highlight the need for support.
- Baby-care education.



Families feel comfortable in indoor social spaces

- Areas for children to play.
- Breastfeeding supported everywhere.
- Areas for feeding and breastfeeding.
- Highchairs available.
- Toilets with baby-changing facilities in men and women's toilets.

Outdoor spaces designed with families in mind

- Benches to rest and feed.
- Safe and accessible paths and roads.
- Parks and pop-up parks for play.
- Public toilets with baby-changing facilities in men and women's toilets.



Solutions to Perinatal Loneliness: A Family Friendly Society

Improved public transport

- Free travel for families.
- Adequate room for prams on buses and trains.
- Improved bus/train routes.



Value and support parents through policies

- Parenting is a valued contribution to society.
- Better parental leave for all parents/supporters.
- High quality and affordable/free childcare.
- Flexible working.
- Adequate and ample health and care services.



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For more information: perinatal-loneliness.com

4. Share through social media / online presence (again start early)

- LinkedIn (individual page)
- Bluesky (individual and project pages)
- YouTube (project page)
- Instagram (project page)
- Tiktok (project page)
- X
- A website <https://perinatal-loneliness.com/>
- Build a brand

Parents and parenting **'It felt shameful': the profound loneliness of modern motherhood**



Lucy Jones
Wed 21 Aug 2024 10.00 BST

[Share](#) 226



BEYOND BABY BLUES
DR LYNSEY MCALPINE & DR CHRISSEY JAYARAJAH

EPISODE 8:
LONELINESS
GUEST: DR KATHERINE ADLINGTON

Listen on  Apple Podcasts  Listen on Spotify

5. In person events/talks/conferences

It's hard to find the time to ensure that I'm creating an inclusive service, so having the information shared in the presentation in such a concise, digestible manner is really helpful and has inspired me to make a few changes going forwards. (Talk at a local service)

I was struck by what you reported from LGBTQ+ parents looking for reassurance that they would be welcome at events and activities in advance of deciding to go. We've reflected on this at work and would like to communicate our LGBTQ+ friendliness more visibly. (Conference presentation)

Perinatal loneliness conference (160 people) – cumulation of all the networking!

Tackling Parental Loneliness in the first 1001 DAYS

Aims

- Share latest research
- Move research into practice
- Build collaborations

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research
+ ARC
 with Lizzie Taylor Buck
 Arc 2 - starts March 2026!

Dr Ruth Naughton Doe

Up to **20%** of women develop a mental health problem during pregnancy or year 1 of birth.

Types of Loneliness

- Emotional** (Who can I open up to??)
- Social** (I feel in a different time zone...)
- Existential** (Who am I without work + my old routine?)

Calls for more support

What can we do?

Spoke to **100** parents + mapped assets in **2** cities

RISK FACTORS

- Being neurodivergent
- Poverty
- Finding it hard to ask for help
- Being a refugee

list is long...

WARNING
 Trying to win this prize may harm your mental health.

PERFECT PARENT trophy

What would help?

- more tolerance for children in public.
- make visible the challenges
- improve transport
- inclusive language
- opportunities for adult social connection

Postcode lottery... You win!

Access the **FULL REPORT**

www.perinatal-loneliness.com

6. Impact side quests!

- Embrace opportunities to experiment/pilot ideas
- Find small pots of funding
- Work with a team and find networks
- Small pots of funding go a long way





Well-being walks in partnership with Blaze Trails and Light Peer Support

BLAZE TRAILS

- Funding from Alpkit to run a group
- Funding from internal impact fund
- Designed and piloted well-being walks intervention
- Evaluated the follow-on project
- Further funded project exploring walking groups for perinatal Muslim women

Impacts: new service provision, staff training, health & well-being outcomes

Light Peer Support receive funding from Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park's 'Legacy Fund'



Potential for future impact

Feeding into Blaze Trails vision for the future

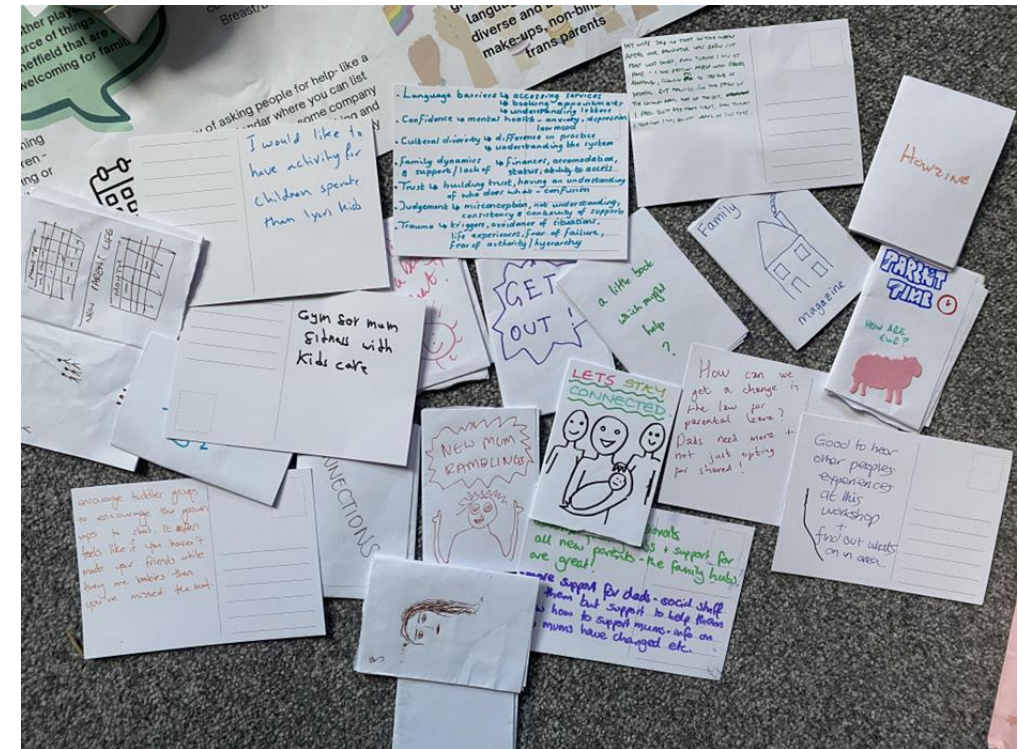
Improving EDI

Supporting future partnerships



ESRC Festival of Social Science

Opportunities to get feedback/share findings/run events



Buggyfit for Muslim women

Impact:

- Local service providers educated about needs of Muslim women
- Potentially a new service
- Lianna linked in with local services
- Health & Wellbeing impacts for the attendees



Free postnatal exercise classes for Muslim women

Sign up now for a six week block of Buggyfit sessions starting in September

Location in Sharrow
Thursdays at 12:30-13:30
September 12th until October 17th



Please email, text or call Lianna for more information and to sign up!
liannabell@yahoo.co.uk
07990 627 065

buggyfit[™]



To take part you must be 6 weeks postnatal and have been cleared fit for exercise after birth.

LGBTQ+ Digital Zine Project



- Co-produced: what shall we do?
- Funding from ESRC FoSS



TUESDAY 9TH JULY
19:30-20:30

LGBTQ+ parent & carer
Online Zine Workshop

QUEER JOY, HOPE AND LOVE

JOIN US TO CREATE A DIGITAL ZINE
EXPLORING QUEER JOY, HOPE AND LOVE IN
LGBTQ+ PARENTING

A ZINE IS A SELF-PUBLISHED MAGAZINE WITH
A TWIST, MADE UP OF WORDS AND IMAGES

PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PAID £20

FOLLOW THE LINK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
OR CONTACT M.RILEY@MMU.AC.UK

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/queer-joy-hope-and-love-zine-workshop-for-lgbtq-parents-and-carers-tickets-923964822657?aff=oddtcreator>



An illustrated tribute to my pregnancy wardrobe

By Shay



As a masc-leaning non-binary person, finding gender-affirming clothes to wear while pregnant was a challenge, but I was pleased with the small pregnancy wardrobe I painstakingly curated. Turns out the baggy shirts and t-shirts I normally wear (aka 'dysphoria shirts') are also excellent pregnancy wear, and one particular stripy 'maternity' top that was 100% cotton was my MVP - sensory heaven!

Our children are now 9, 6 and 3.

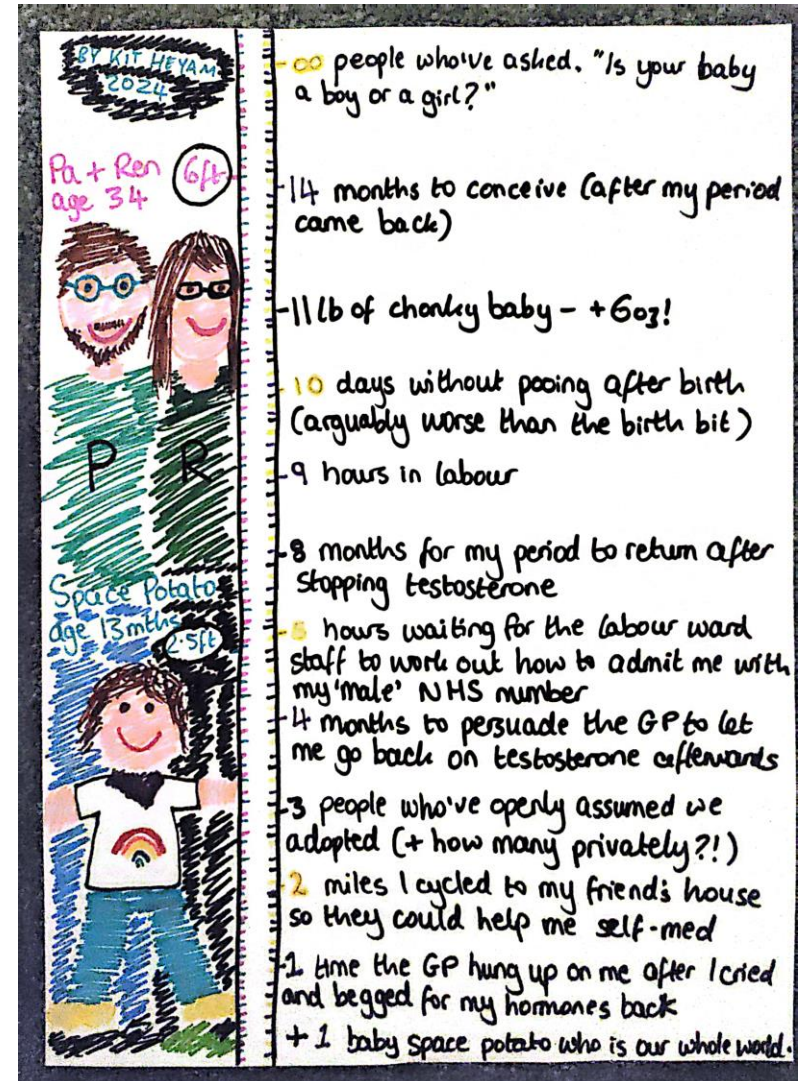
They are amazing and call me 'Roo-Roo' which I love as it acknowledges that I carried them

My husband has been wonderful and so supportive throughout everything.

We will renew our vows one day.

I am so proud to be a queer, trans, pansexual parent, raising an amazing family.

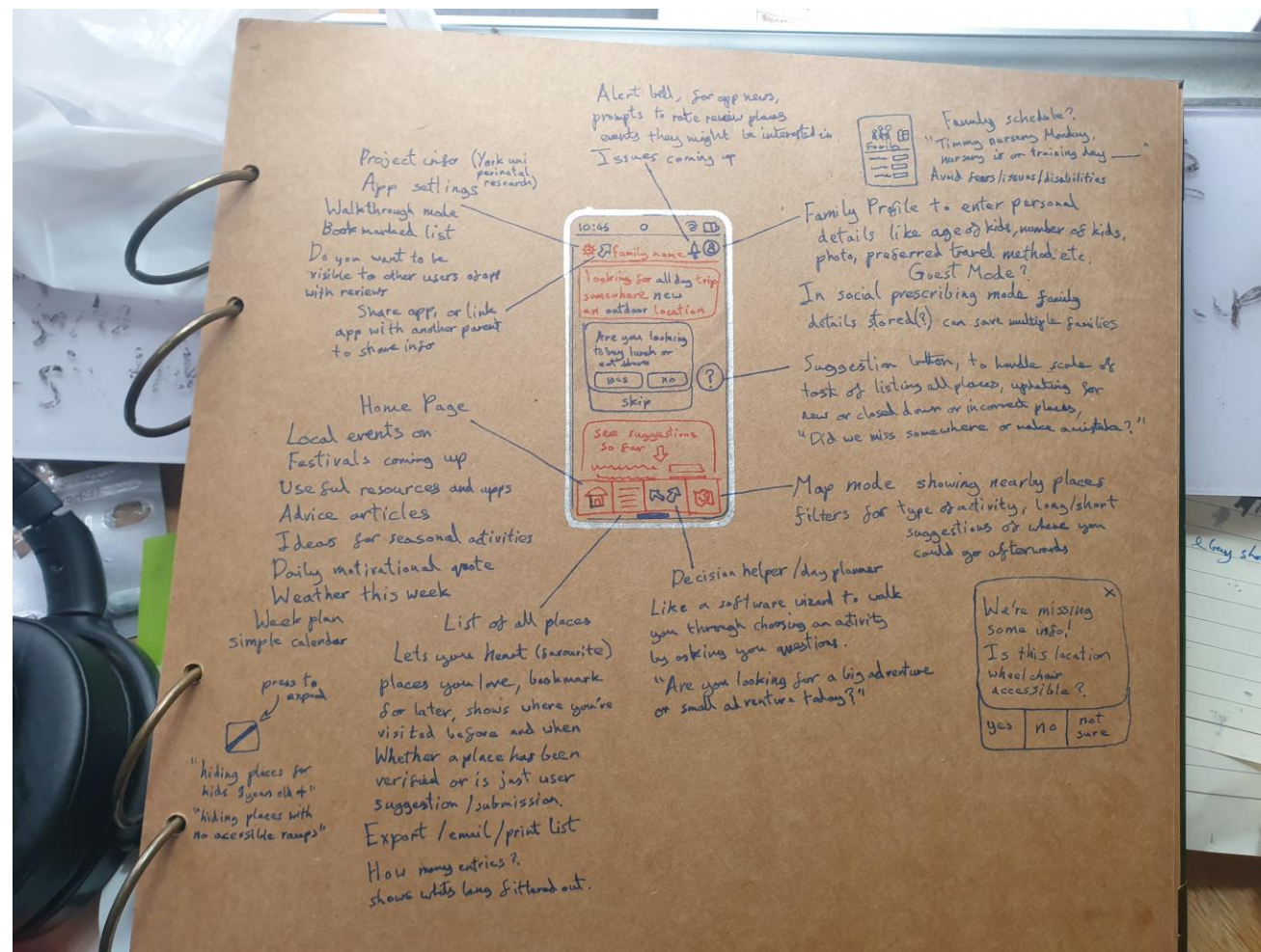
You are not alone



Impacts

I read it from cover to cover immediately and felt the solidarity welling up in me as I read other people's stories. I really appreciated seeing the callout for this zine and being able to make my contribution, as I still find there's relatively little space within my queer communities where parenthood and the complicated feelings it brings are centred: most queer people we know don't have or want children, so our baby is more of a cute curiosity than the centre of our world. I also found it validating to have an 'official' space, which I knew would be read by others, where I could share the difficulties and microaggressions that being a trans parent brings. So thank you for creating this!

Designing an App for local parents to find services (parent-led)



Look after yourself!

- Get a mentor (NIHR/GROW Programme)
- Career coaching
- Don't over commit
- Go where the energy is and be willing to drop the side quests!



For more information & references

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[@ruthndwrites.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/ruthndwrites.bsky.social)

www.perinatal-loneliness.com