



A signpost pointing 'this way', 'that way' and 'the other way' with the sky in the background. (Royalty-free stock photo ID 581985622)

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## **NCC Conversations: Parenthood and the journey there**

Last year, as part of our Inclusion and Diversity programme, we launched NCC Conversations, a framework that helps us to drive dialogue on a number of important topics that our colleagues care about.

Each month our Steering Committees take a deeper look into one of our four focus areas - Gender, LGBTQIA+, Race & Ethnicity and Neurodiversity - inviting colleagues across the Group to participate in a whole host of activities from panel discussions, workshops, podcasts and blogs.

This month, we turned our attention to parenthood and the journey there, exploring the many different things that this means to individuals across the Group.

Articles, panel discussions and podcasts included focuses on fatherhood in the 21st Century, miscarriage, fertility, infertility and the challenges of pregnancy on women's bodies, fostering and also children's thoughts on what their parents actually do for work!

Natasha Gardner, the chair of our Gender Steering Committee shares her thoughts on why it's important to talk about these topics with colleagues.

“Parenthood can come in all shapes and sizes. Not every journey to parenthood is the same and not every journey ends up in becoming a parent.

With NCC Conversations we wanted to cover a wide variety of topics and perspectives so that everyone can find something to relate to, think about or take away.

The most fascinating and interesting thing for me this month has been discovering more about what parenthood means to different colleagues across the Group and also giving them the opportunity to share thoughts, opinions and feelings in a safe space, whether that be talking about being raised by grandparents, growing families through fostering, combining work with being a parent, being childless by choice or the loneliness that can come with fatherhood.”

Here are just a few examples from colleagues around the Group sharing what parenthood means to them, what conversations it can bring about and the many ways in which it can manifest itself.

### **Parenthood – compromise and considerations**

In a recent podcast, Alice and Helen-Rose explored the considerations and compromises women face when thinking about starting a family, alongside the pressure put on them to begin a family even if they are childless by choice.

Helen-Rose shared “I've definitely felt the urge to caveat with people that I'm

not trying to start a family any time soon, and I feel like I have to say that in certain situations – it could be at work in various points, or it could also be with family or friends. I'm forever telling my parents off about expecting grandchildren anytime soon. It definitely feels like women need to compromise on career progression or starting a family... but men can have both and that needs to change.”

Alice adds: “What frustrates me the most is that males aren't asked such questions. I certainly would think that if a male went to an interview they wouldn't be asked about their parental status or 'hobbies outside of work' because it is assumed that it's not a relevant question for males. And that's the frustrating thing.”

### **Inspired by my granddaughter**

Watching her granddaughter grow and thinking about the world that she will grow into, has made Yvonne more conscious about the future she wants to help create for her.

“My granddaughter is making me think differently about the world we live in and what I can do now to make sure she has all the opportunities in life.

I don't want her to go through what I did. I don't want her to be told she's bossy, I want her to be told she's bold and one thing is for sure - in 20 years' time, I want her to say that she's proud of me, proud of the differences I've made and the opportunities she has because I challenged the status quo.”

### **Fatherhood – where's the community?**

In an article looking at fatherhood and how it is viewed and valued in society, Matthew shared his experiences after having twins and how the support networks and societal connections open to mothers are not there for fathers in the same way.

Matthew shares his thoughts on becoming a new father: “Fatherhood has been surprisingly lonely, far more that I would have expected, ... there seems to be many potential reasons for this but I believe a big one is that while communities focus on motherhood, dads are rarely beneficiaries of the same kind of focus. Fathers rarely coalesce around childrearing as a form of social

identity beyond maybe coaching sports teams and, even then, only in a manner limited to the activity at hand.

“The trends I’m seeing tell me that modern fatherhood is far more isolating, confusing, and stressful than I think it’s ever been. We appear to be experiencing the growing pains of a changing societal notion of masculinity and fatherhood. The old ways of connecting are no longer but we have not yet found our footing in the new ways that necessitate leaning in and being more vulnerable with each other in genuine and supportive ways.”

### **Becoming a foster parent**

This month, Greg took the time to record a podcast about his life as a foster parent. He gave a great insight into his experience and how after already having one biological daughter, he knew he wanted to grow his family but without having more children of his own – that’s when he decided to find out more about fostering.

“Family doesn’t always mean someone who lives with you for the rest of their life or even until adulthood, it’s more of a chosen relationship, it’s about emotion and the way you care for one another - and while living arrangements change, the relationship doesn’t.”

### **Permission to play again**

When asked what parenthood has given her, Rebecca states that it is the ‘permission to play again’ that stands out for her.

“Far too often, advice for new parents is littered with negativity, a grimace and ‘you better get your sleep in now’ kind of advice. I think it can be really scary to go into parenthood with that kind of outlook. Sure, you’re not ever going to build up enough shut eye to make up for the sleep deprivation but very rarely do people focus on the playful side of being a parent and what that can actually do for your own mental health and wellbeing.

“It is so easy to get swept away with life and work and forget about play in its purest form, especially when everything is so hectic. So for me, a great part of being a parent is being given the chance to embrace your playful side - whether that’s tapping into something you used to really enjoy as a child

yourself, exploring a child's passion through their eyes or just letting go a little at the park – it certainly helps to clear my mind!”

We want NCC Group to be an environment where all colleagues feel psychologically, emotionally and physically safe to be authentic, representative of the diversity of the world they live in, share their personal experiences and have equal opportunity to achieve.

Through our NCC Conversations series we are opening up the dialogue and putting colleagues at the heart of our conversations and actions.

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## **About NCC Group**

NCC Group exists to make the world safer and more secure.

As global experts in cyber security and risk mitigation, NCC Group is trusted by over 14,000 customers to protect their most critical assets from the ever-changing threat landscape.

With the company's knowledge, experience, and investment in research and innovation, it is best placed to help organisations assess, develop and manage their cyber resilience posture.

With circa 2,000 colleagues in 12 countries, NCC Group has a significant market presence in North America, Europe and the UK, and a rapidly growing footprint in Asia Pacific with offices in Australia, Japan and Singapore.

## Contacts



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