

Annual Evaluation Report Hilldene and Gooshays Sure Start Programme

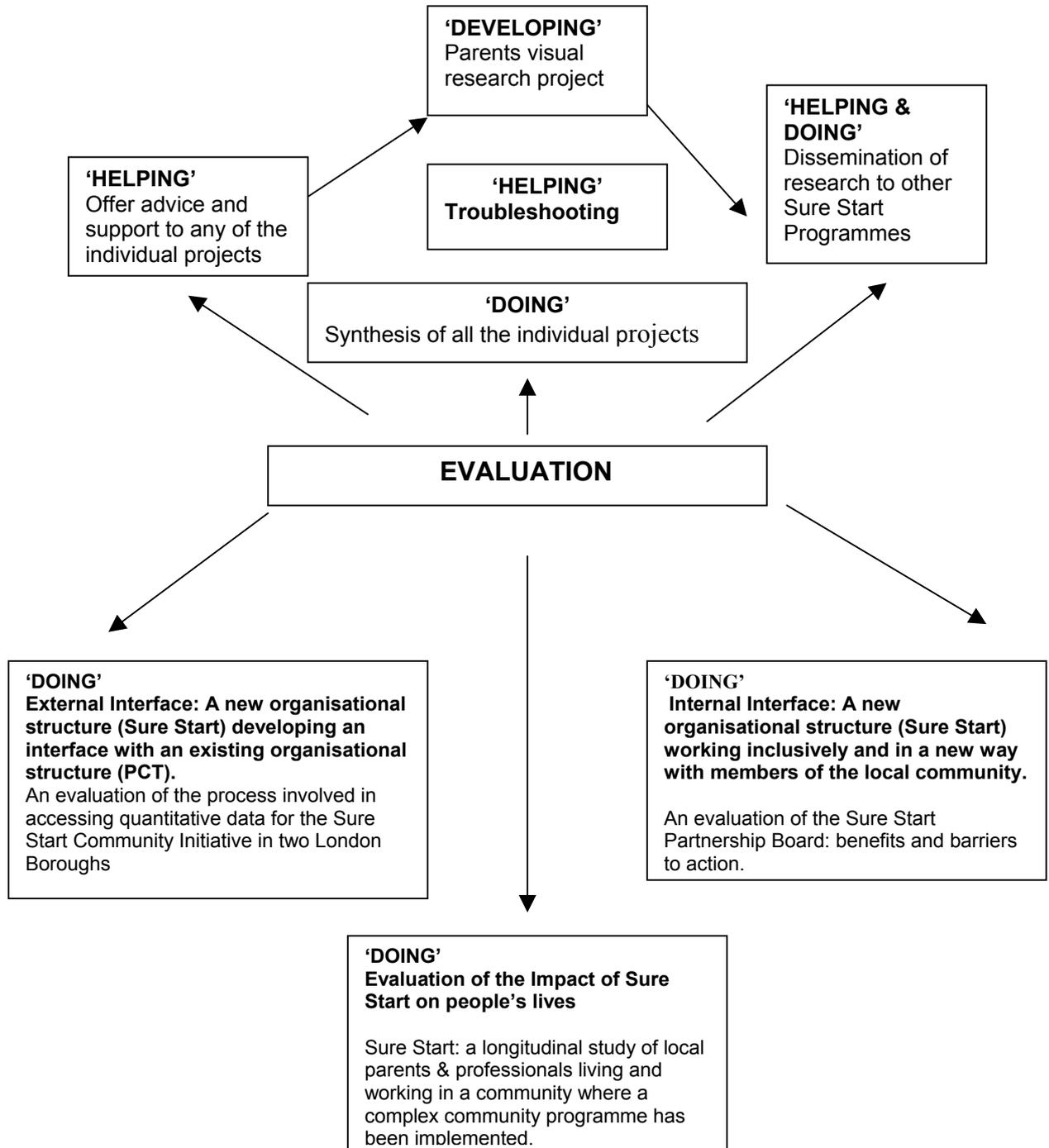
Evaluation of the work of the Hilldene and Gooshays Programme (HGP) began in February 2002. The Programme is therefore entering the third year of the evaluation process. Many progress and evaluation reports have been produced within the two years since commencement. Involvement of the researcher in Hilldene and Gooshays programme is based on three days per week with two days supporting Marks Gate programme. It took three months to achieve ethical approval for this three-year study. Monitoring has been the remit of the programme team to allow the researcher to concentrate on the bigger evaluative themes that generate change outcomes. Reach and monitoring target information is already submitted to the unit on a regular basis from the HGP team. Monitoring information provided by the Sure Start management team will be included as an Appendix to this main report.

This report will focus on the work of the wider elements of the evaluation (Houston2003b) that will lead to a synthesis of all research findings including the on-going longitudinal study of parents and professionals involved in Sure Start. This final element (the work of 2004) will be contained in the three-year review document.

The Main Aims of the Local Evaluation Study

1. To provide interim information to all stakeholders on the effectiveness of the change as it is implemented so that rapid response and further change can be put in place to correct or deal with any problems arising.
2. To demonstrate how quality, efficiency and effectiveness has been affected by the change in service provision.
3. To identify from different perspectives the key issues/problems/strengths of this type of community initiative.
4. To provide a clearer understanding of multi-agency and interprofessional working.
5. To inform the development of further Sure Start community initiatives.

**Strategic Plan of a Local Sure Start Evaluation In Two London Boroughs
 Hilldene and Gooshays and Marks Gate 2002-2005 (Figure 1.) (Houston 2003b)**



The aims of Sure Start and the Evaluation Strategy for both Hilldene and Gooshays and Marks Gate Programme have been published as two linked articles (Houston 2003a, Houston 2003b) expressing the focus of the local work in these linked

programmes (NB the evaluator works in both programmes). Academic publication of the timescale and plan of the evaluation strategy has proved to be a useful exercise for all partner members of the collaboration in both Sure Start sites.

A number of reports have already been sent to the Sure Start Regional office in order to update region regularly on the work of the Hilldene and Gooshays Programme (HGP). An overview of this work will be offered here. Direction to the whereabouts in accompanying reports, regarding explicit methodologies used in each case, will also be given.

Realistic Evaluation

Set within a 'realistic evaluation' methodology, the overall aim of the evaluation for HGP was to help the programme to make ongoing positive change.

The evaluation methodology concentrates on four questions based within a realistic evaluation cycle.

1. Does the programme work? [example Sure Start]
2. Who does it work for or not work for?
3. Why does it work or not work?
4. Under what circumstances does it work or not work?

The need for a realistic approach to evaluating programmes has been addressed because such programmes have been deemed to be 'methods driven' in the past solely concentrating on only 'input' and 'output'. When this occurs there is a failure to address the operational factors that either impede or facilitate the programmes effect on the community. The formula proposed in the realistic approach 'outcomes = mechanism + context' based on the four 'realistic evaluation' questions, shows that programmes work, that is, they have successful outcomes, only with the introduction of appropriate ideas and opportunities ('mechanisms') within an appropriate social and cultural setting ('context') (Pawson and Tilley 1997). The final report (3 year review) will discuss this methodology and its application to this Sure Start programme, in depth.

Evaluation in HGP

Mixed methods have been employed to incorporate a number of different aspects studied within this programme. However the focus has been strongly qualitative and many changes have already been implemented through this chosen approach. The role of the evaluator was defined in this programme as: a) to help the practitioners to develop their own skills and voice in respect of evaluating their own work, b) to provide research information on three main aspects highlighted for intensive work over the three-year period. These aspects were: i) the external interface ii) the internal interface iii) the impact study. (see Fig 1. above and also Houston 2003b for further explanation).

The external interface study was submitted as the annual report for 2002, (also submitted to NESS). A small satisfaction study was also completed during 2002. This was kept and used only as an internal report because of the small numbers involved.

Year 2003 was dedicated to research and analysis of partnership working and support of practitioner run evaluation studies.

Completed Evaluation Work Feb 2003-2004

1. Partnership Working in Sure Start: rewards Obstacles and Challenges in Hilldene and Gooshays Programme 2003: An Evaluation Report (Houston 2003)
(report sent L. Vanclay)

This study involved marketing to participants, discussion of the research aims and indepth interview of 33 respondents, and a documentary analysis of 10 sets of Sure Start Board-meeting minutes from June 2001 to December 2002 . A full examination of method and results is included in the report that was circulated widely to Sure Start parents and partner organisations.

Outcome: as a result of this report the programme was able to make dramatic changes to their management organisation with good effect. The willingness of the programme to address change management has subsequently been applauded by partner organisations.

2. Partnership Working Follow-up report

Sure Start: Making the Changes: Acknowledging the Rewards, Obstacles and Challenges in Hilldenen and Gooshays Programme 2003
(Houston, Broad, Woodhull, Manley, Ewenson 2003)
(report sent L. Vanclay)

This short review document considered the research report (Partnership Report 1.) recommendations and highlighted the changes that had been put into place as a result of the initial report. The Follow-up report was a collaboration of Sure Start team members and parents involved in Sure Start management.

3. Working with practitioners and parents in Sure Start

a) The Sure Start Visual Project in HGP (renamed by parents) The Connectedness Project

Disposable cameras were given out to members of the local Sure Start Parents Forum. The remit given to parents was to take photographs of family life, addressing what they felt was important to them and their family in the local community. The cost of developing the photos was borne by the local programme. The number of photos returned was 192 (from eight films).

Getting involved in research

A group of parents were involved in the research process and the visual images were treated in the same manner as interview text, they were coded, sorted, categorised and discussed by the parents and from this process, over a long period of time, (the research group met monthly) it emerged that there were two issues of importance. a) *homelessness and the conditions for children in the local homeless accommodation*
b) *stress* experienced by local parents.

The photographs clearly demonstrated that there were serious unmet health needs associated with homeless accommodation locally.

The follow-up discussion of the findings (that reached outwards) from the research group, subsequently involved the Homelessness Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Treasury.

The photographs were a powerful and graphic example of the unsafe environment in which women, and children lived.

Research Outcomes

The research process had demonstrated a high level of unmet need in two local hostels. There was inadequate and unsafe cooking facilities, lack of refrigeration, restricted clothes washing and drying facilities and lack of storage for personal belongings. Families shared bathing facilities with 40 other residents; they lived in a noisy and often fearful environment where harassment and menace was the currency of life.

As a result of the research and throughout 2003 research team members were invited to give presentations through their link to Sure Start. These included:

- Bermondsey Street: the CPHVA Special Interest Group for Health and Homelessness
- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: The Homelessness Directorate
- Harrogate: The CPHVA Annual Conference
- The Treasury Seminar on Child Poverty, Homelessness and Open Spaces hosted by the Homelessness Directorate and organised by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

b) Planning and evaluating a partnership event of child-focused activities for Sure Start (Hughes T, Houston AM 2003)

A short report, practitioner led, demonstrating the stages involved in planning and evaluating a series of child-focused Sure Start events, run with partner agencies, over the period of one week.

Outcomes: evaluated by the practitioner, parental response showed that it was an extremely positively received programme of events. The evaluation exercise highlighted among other factors, the need to involve parents of children with special needs in the programme planning.
(report sent L. Vanclay)

c) Working Together in Sure Start (Hughes T, and Houston AM)

Article submitted to Nursery World based on the above report.

d) Counting the cost of childcare: supporting educational training for parents in one Sure Start programme, 2003: the experience of crèche provision

(Houston AM and Fordham J). (report sent L. Vanclay)

This report deals with:

- Comparative evaluation in childcare provision using a costing model and demonstrates the development of a unit cost per child for care
- Issues of maternal employment and financial government support
- Problems and surprises in unravelling the cost of service and the difficulties in 'monetising' benefit for families
- Explanation of future Sure Start plans based on the results of the 'costings' developed in this exercise

Outcomes: As a result of this evaluation report and recommendations the Sure Start Board were offered a clear picture of the exact cost of different crèche

supported elements related to education and training within the programme. This assisted the decision-making process of board members to commit to increased funding for the enlargement of the crèche facility.

e) Havering Crossroads the Link to Sure Start: An Evaluation Report (Houston, Lockey and Broad 2004)

Crossroads is a service designed to care for carers. It aims to promote, offer, support and deliver high quality services for carers and people with care needs.

This report was developed from Crossroads practitioners evaluating their own work with their Sure Start clients. Alongside this an element of cost-effectiveness was added as a positive evaluation tool in the review process. The costs and the comments, in table and narrative format, in this review covered a six month period. They included the difference in cost between parents caring for their child at home and some measure of the institutional care costs. The comparison addressed the difference between a private nursing agency that offered a good standard of respite care for special needs children and the Crossroads service. The result of this demonstrated that Crossroads was able to use their Sure Start project funding in a very cost-effective way and the comments from the families demonstrated that the clients valued the service that they received. The extra resource for some families has been the difference of being enabled to continue looking after their children at home.

Outcomes: this evaluation highlighted the benefit to families of the Sure Start Crossroads partnership and also the ongoing work that needs to be done between Crossroads and Social services, both services have many clients in common. *(In Press)*

f) Developing further the work of the Sure Start Language Measure

Work with practitioners has led to submission of an academic article on the Sure Start Language Measure and how it has informed practice and led to a new referral system that improves client access to services.

g) In Progress: Evaluation of the Sure Start Midwifery Service

There was a commitment in HGP to presenting research and evaluation findings throughout the year (see Table 1.).

Table 1.
Conference Presentations 2003

Date	Conference	Presenter	Venue
07.11.02	The Marks Gate Satisfaction Snapshot: A Project for Sure Start	Houston A.M Rudge J	Harrogate
18.03.03	United Kingdom Public Health Association (UKPHA) Topic: 1. <i>Management of Public Health Data for Sure Start</i> 2. <i>Evaluating a Complex Community Initiative</i>	Houston A.M	Cardiff
08.09.03	Up Front Community Practitioners & Health Visitors Association (CPHVA) London Region Topic: <i>Living with Sure Start: The Sure Start Speech and Language Measure</i>	Houston A.M	London
08.10.03	Barking and Dagenham and Havering local Health visitors conference Topic: <i>Developing multi-disciplinary working: The Sure Start Speech and Language Measure</i>	Houston A.M Turner E Mears P	Chigwell
16.10.03	Annual Community Practitioners & Health Visitors Association Conference (CPHVA) Topic: 1) <i>Sure Start and the impact on Homelessness: the example of Hilldene & Gooshays Programme in the London Borough of Havering</i> 2.) The Connectedness Project (Poster Presentation)	Houston A.M Dawes B McGrath L	Harrogate

Conclusion

It has been a positive decision to address evaluation in this programme in a strategic way and to separate the evaluation role from the monitoring aspects. In the early days, just as there was apathy about Sure Start from community parents it was also difficult to generate interest in evaluation. Practitioners had a poor understanding of evaluation and their own role within the programme as evaluators of their own work. As the enclosed documentation has demonstrated the practitioners have developed enormously in this regard and many are now self-assured in how to evaluate their own projects in the programme. Most project members now understand and respect the ideal of change, based on reflection and evaluation of the service offered. A positive spin-off from this educational process has been the impact on partner organisations who have also learned how to evaluate and seek to apply the ideals of evaluation within their own organisation. For example Crossroads, as a direct result of their evaluation experience in the 0-4 age-group, will be turning their attention next year to evaluating their services for clients with dementia.

Alongside the important element of intensive support for practitioners has been the lone work carried out by the researcher. Each year of the three year study has been dedicated to one major piece of important Sure Start research on a topic organised and evaluated solely by the researcher. It is important to note here that this report is an annual review of work carried out over three days per week dedicated to HGP and therefore output expressly addressing outcome and positive change would have been seriously diminished if the researcher had to undertake responsibility for the monitoring aspects as well. The core Sure Start team in HGP currently manages ably all the Sure Start Unit monitoring exercises.

At this time all the aims of the evaluation study, stated earlier, have been met. Additionally a major ingredient in this evaluation has been the importance of constant feedback to partners, parents and practitioners within the programme of all research findings, and also all evaluation report recommendations. In HGP there was a management commitment that no report was to be considered a dead document with unimplemented recommendations.

Reports were written in an academic frame appropriately referenced. But they were delivered in as non 'research speak' fashion as possible. Local parents have sought out the researcher to say how pleased they were to read the reports and also to feel that they understood the messages contained within. Funding was found within the programme, to produce polished final report documents that could be widely circulated (see enclosed documents).

In HGP there was also a commitment to speak about the developing evidence base to a wide audience: partner organisations, local parents, local professionals. The researcher and Sure Start practitioners spoke to many audiences throughout the year. Table 1. includes only a few of the most important presentations offered on the topic of Sure Start during 2003 from both Marks Gate and Hilldene and Gooshays practitioners.

Entering the final year it is the role of the researcher to draw all the elements together and present the synthesis and meaning of all the disparate parts of the evaluation programme. The 'impact longitudinal study' carried out over two years and the midwifery study carried out over one year are both drawing to a close and will form part of the final report. This will be presented at the turn of this year, drawing to a close (in early 2005) the third year of the evaluation study.

References

Houston AM. (2003a) Sure Start: A Complex Community Initiative. *Community Practitioner* 76,7: 50-53

Houston AM. (2003b) Sure Start: The example of one approach to evaluation. *Community Practitioner* 76,8: 294-298)

Houston AM. 2003 Partnership Working in Sure Start: Rewards Obstacles and Challenges. Sure Start: St Georges Centre, Chippenham Rd. Harold Hill: London.

Pawson R, Tilley N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation.*, London: Sage Publications

Houston AM, Broad P, Woodhull D, Manley J, Ewenson M, (2003) Sure Start: Making the changes: Acknowledging the Rewards, Obstacles and Challenges in Hilldene and Gooshays programme 2003 A follow up report Sure Start: St Georges Centre, Chippenham Rd. Harold Hill: London.

Appendix 1. Monitoring Information

In HGP target monitoring and research evaluation have been treated as distinctly separate elements. On the basis of regular delivery of monitoring information to the Sure Start Unit and feedback regarding the information provided, the HGP is able to average a creditable 30% or over in reach information per month to the Sure Start families in the programme. Work is currently being undertaken by the programme to make sure that every registered family is contacted at least once annually to meet the 100% annual contact target. Current quarterly milestone targets over the past year have all been achieved.

This appendix is a selection of the monitoring information requested by NESS and SSU. The information included here covers ethnicity, evaluation, staff numbers, publicising Sure Start, voluntary work involvement, and use of premises.

Table 1. Local population by ethnic category

Parents Please indicate the number of parents in each ethnic category across the grid	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or other ethnic group
Number of parents	98.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%	0.1%

Table 2. Evaluation

Progress of Evaluation in HGP	2003
Progress reports to programme staff	√
Progress reports to Parents	√
Progress reports to Partnership	√
Reports on findings from part/ all of evaluation	√
Annual reports (may include future proposals and/ or preliminary findings)	√

Table 3. Staff Employment

	Number of staff employed on a full-time basis)	Number of staff employed on a part-time basis	Number of sessional staff	Total number of staff
TOTAL number of full time, part time and sessional staff	19	14.5	4	37.5
How many paid staff are members of the local community (i.e. those living within the Sure Start community)? (include all members of the local community whether they are parent members or not)	0	0	1	1
How many paid staff are involved in co-ordination and management aspects of Sure Start - partnership/ management board co-ordinating parent forums, recruitment process, co-ordinating staff	5	0	0	5
How many paid staff are employed to deliver services to families (i.e. exclude administrative and volunteer positions from this figure)?	14	14.5	3	31.5

Table 4 Publicising Sure Start HGP

Door-to-door leafleting	√
Written publicity in public places (e.g. grocery stores, local shops)	√
Home visiting by a Sure Start worker	√
Home visiting by a Health Visitor/ Midwife	√
Coverage in the local press (including advertising)	√
Local radio	
Information sessions for professional referrers	√
Public meetings	√
Social events (parties, barbeques)	√
Regular stall in public places	√
Distributing Sure Start merchandise (t-shirts, balloons)	√
Parent networking	√
Voluntary organisations and parent support groups	√
Child development centre	√
GP surgeries	√
Libraries	√
Newsletters	√
Survey of parents	√
Through Other professional(s)	√
Written publicity in female-dominated venues	√

(e.g. hairdressers)	
Written publicity in male-dominated venues (e.g. football matches, pubs)	
Translated publicity in ethnic venues (if relevant for your catchments area)	
Publicity in religious venues	√
Internet/ email	√

Table 5. Voluntary contribution in HGP

Number of individuals who contribute in any way to the programme on a voluntary basis	25
How many of these are parents from the Sure Start area with children under 4?	20
How many of these are parents from the Sure Start area with children over 4?	0
How many are 'other people' in the community (i.e. non-parent community members) from the Sure Start area	0
How many are other people from outside the Sure Start area (this can include parents and others)	5
Approximately how many hours per month are being contributed by these people?	60

Table 6. Buildings

How many buildings, IN TOTAL, are used for the delivery of Sure Start services? (please include any buildings which house Sure Start management and administration)	7
How many buildings are used for Sure Start alone?	1
How many buildings are shared with other services?	6