

Annual Evaluation Report Marks Gate Sure Start Programme

Evaluation of the work of the Marks Gate Programme (MGP) began in April 2002. The Programme is therefore entering the third year of the evaluation process. This programme experienced a 6-month delay because of the departure of Programme Manager at a crucial early stage in its' development. Progress and evaluation reports have been produced for the programme and for the Sure Start Unit since commencement. Involvement of the researcher in MGP is based on two days per week with three days supporting Hilldene and Gooshays Programme. It took three months to achieve ethical approval for this three-year study across both Programme sites.

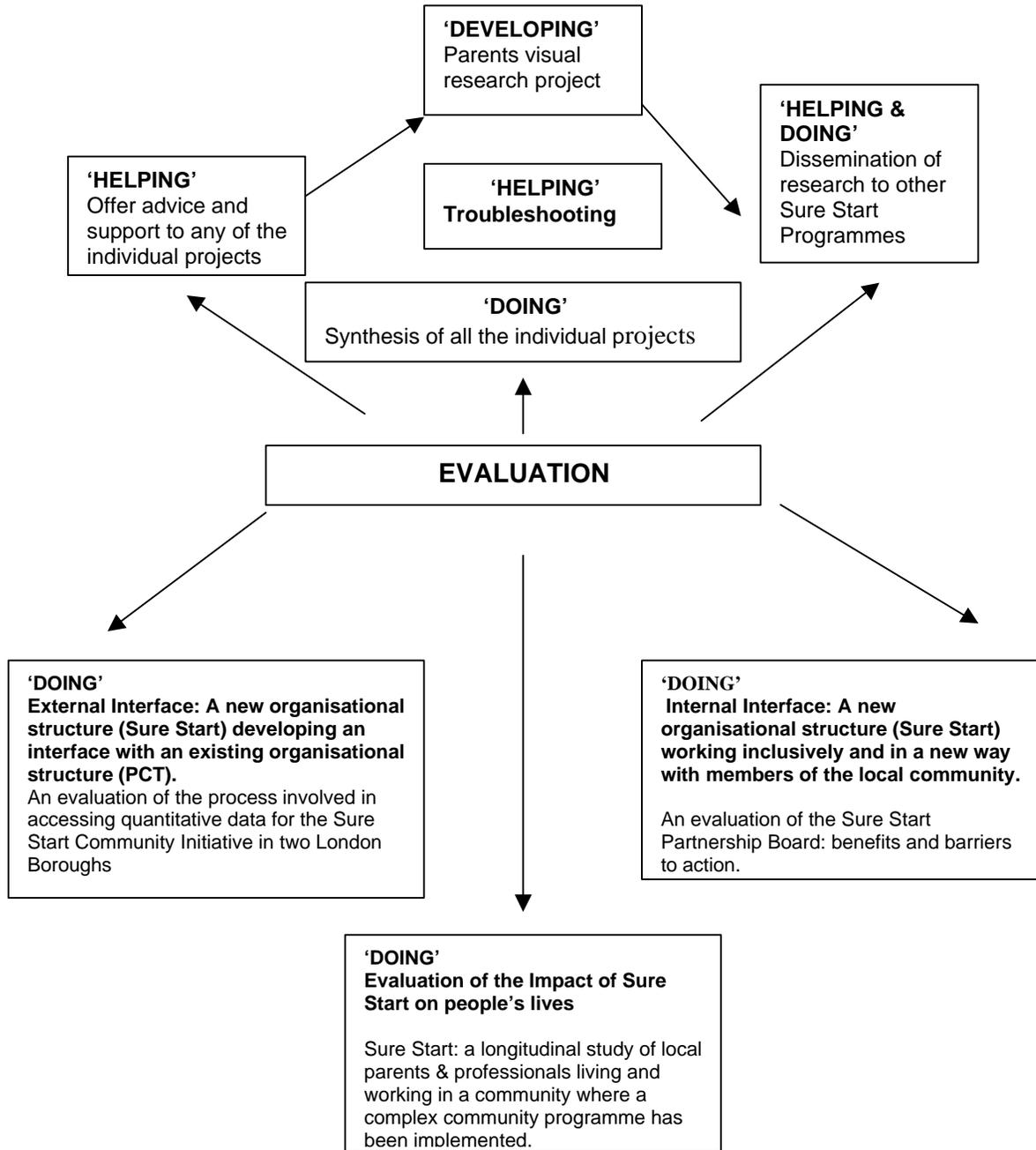
Monitoring has been the remit of the programme team using the 'eStart' data collection system. The use of the technology based system by the team allowed the researcher to concentrate on the bigger evaluative themes that generated change outcomes for the programme. Reach and monitoring target information is already submitted to the unit on a regular basis from the MGP team. Monitoring information provided by the Sure Start management team (MGP) will be included as an Appendix to this main report.

The main body of this report will therefore 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. The final element of the three year study (the ongoing 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 Marks Gate and Hilldene and Gooshays Programmes 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 Marks Gate Programme (MGP). 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 MGP was to assist 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 MGP

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: Communication Expectation and Challenge in Sure Start Marks Gate 2003: An Evaluation Report (Houston 2003) *(please see report enclosed)*

This study involved marketing to participants, discussion of the research aims and indepth interview of 13 respondents. Five parents and eight professionals agreed to participate in the research study. Alongside this a documentary analysis of 14 sets of Sure Start Board-Meeting minutes from June 2001-June 2003 was carried out. A full examination of method and results is included in the accompanying report which was circulated widely to Sure Start parents and partner organisations.

Outcome: as a result of this report the programme was able to make positive change to their management organisation with good effect.

The willingness of the programme to address change management has subsequently been applauded by all partner organisations.

(please see report enclosed)

2. Working with parents and practitioners in Marks Gate Sure Start Programme

a) The Picture Speak Group (PSG)

The aims of the Picture Speak Group (PSG)

1. To allow Sure Start parents who did not have English as a first language to become involved in talking
 - i) through an interpreter
 - ii) using visual mediumabout their life in the community in Marks Gate
2. To encourage parents who did not have English as a first language to engage in a Sure Start project
3. To encourage through involvement in the group increased visitation to the Sure Start Centre

Methods

Disposable cameras were given out to members of the local Sure Start Parents Forum. The remit given to parents was to take photographs of their new life in Marks Gate, 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.

Table 3. Community attendance at PSG

Meetings	Numbers Attended	Numbers Invited
PHASE 1		
Marketing Groups		
18 th February 2003 am	3	7
18 th February 2003 pm	7	10
24 th March 2003	3	5

Total	13	22
PHASE 2		
Discussion Groups		
12 th May 2003	2	5
21 st July 2003	3	4
20 th August 2003	2	6
21 st February 2004	1	3
Totals	8	18

Method

Ethical approval was sought as part of the wider Realistic Evaluation study taking place in the Sure Start area and all participants signed a consent form of their willingness to join in after the marketing meetings explaining what the aims of the project were.

Of the many parents invited to the marketing meetings only 10 became finally involved. Ultimately 10 disposable cameras were returned for development of prints and on CD. This produced 240 prints each for assessment by the parents, the researcher and the community development practitioner.

Group Analysis

'Group' analysis sessions were held where group members looked at the pictures and discussed what they thought the photographs were about. Each photographer highlighted her own thoughts and feelings about her own work and what the photos symbolised about community living in Marks Gate. Then the group added their ideas to what the photos meant to them.

This was a voluntary group but once the parents became involved they were enthusiastic about the photos that they submitted. The range of photos included, Sure Start events, child and family, housing, environment, hobbies, educational events and study, scenic views of the area, how families spend their leisure time and photos taken outwith the Marks Gate area.

Results

Work is ongoing finalising the results of this study. The final report is expected in April 2004.

Interim Research Outcomes

The research process has demonstrated unmet need in the ethnic population in Marks Gate. This is linked to English as a second language. The programme will be offered recommendations from this report written by the researcher and the interpreter involved in the Picture Speak Group.

b) Women's Voices and the Trouble with Access to Health Care

This report came about through the persistence of local women who were angered at the inequality of service provision regarding well baby clinic access in Marks Gate. The women approached the researcher and requested help to raise the issue locally regarding the closure of services. A focus group was convened and a verbatim record was collected of the issues thoughts and feelings of the women regarding access to health care. This data was then coded and categorised using a computer analysis package. The issues were then highlighted in the report for the women to take with them to their meetings with higher statutory authority figures. The report is small and based on only one focus group however the issue is big and the report has given the women power and authority to drive the issue forward in a meaningful way in order to retain services for their area. As a result of the women's desire to see equality of service provision for children locally, positive change is now being addressed by a

process of dialogue between statutory agencies and the women of Marks Gate.
(please see report included)

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) 3) Developing a physical exercise strategy as part of an early intervention programme for Coronary Heart Disease in Sure Start Marks Gate	Houston A.M Dawes B McGrath L Sure Start Team Houston A.M Terry J.	Harrogate
13.01.04	Sure Start Targets, Monitoring and Research Outcomes Keynote speaker health visitor conference	Houston A.M	Greenwich

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, the PSG project is a good example of this. Most project members now understand and respect the ideal of change, based on reflection and evaluation of the service offered.

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 two days per week dedicated to MGP 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 MGP currently manage ably all the Sure Start Unit target and monitoring requirements.

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. Feedback meetings have been important in developing the evaluation process in MGP. There has also been dedicated management commitment that no report was to be considered a dead

document with unimplemented recommendations. To that end recommendations have been swiftly implemented to the benefit of the programme. Research reports have been 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 (on both research sites) 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 MGP 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.

**Appendix 1.
 Monitoring Information**

This 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, Sure Start buildings, and reach information.

Table 1. Local population by ethnic category

<u>Parents</u> 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					

Table 2. Evaluation

Progress of Evaluation in HGP	2003
Progress reports to programme staff	v
Progress reports to Parents	v
Progress reports to Partnership	v
Reports on findings from part/ all of evaluation	v
Annual reports (may include future	

proposals and/ or preliminary findings)	v
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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				
<p>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)</p> <p>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</p> <p>How many paid staff are employed to deliver services to families (i.e. exclude administrative and volunteer positions from this figure)?</p>				

Table 4 Publicising Sure Start HGP

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

Written publicity in female-dominated venues (e.g. hairdressers)	v
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	v
Internet/ email	v

Table 5. Voluntary contribution in HGP

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

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)	
How many buildings are used for Sure Start alone?	
How many buildings are shared with other services?	

Table 7. Reach Figures