

# **Sure Start Kentish Town: Annual Evaluation Report 2003/4**

## **1. Introduction**

Sure Start is a government funded programme set up to achieve significant and lasting improvements to the educational, health and emotional well being of children living in the programme areas. In Kentish Town, two programmes have been set up in 2002 to support families with children under four, managed by a single partnership of parents and local organisations.

The programmes are based in the former Camden wards of Castlehaven, Grafton, Caversham and Gospel Oak - respectively the third, fourth, fifth and sixth most deprived wards in Camden at the time the SSKT Delivery Plan was submitted.

We are working towards the **national Sure Start objectives**:

- Improving social and emotional development
- Improving health
- Improving the ability to learn
- Strengthening families and communities

Our **local aims** are to:

- Co-ordinate services for families with young children aged 0-3 living in the area
- Involve parents in developing the services that they want and need
- Ensure that the services are available and accessible to all parents eligible to receive them, including to vulnerable parents and those who have found it difficult to use services in the past
- Provide a range of services on several sites throughout the area that are accessible on foot to all families
- Ensure that links are made so that services continue after Sure Start money ends and when children reach the age of four and are no longer eligible for Sure Start services

## **2. Evaluation strategy**

SSKT makes up two of Camden's five government-funded programmes. Camden Council has a strong commitment to the Sure Start model and has committed mainstream Council funding to roll out Sure Start into areas not funded through central government. The aim is to ensure every parent-to-be or parent of a child aged 0-3 will be able to gain access to Sure Start services by March 2006.

Camden's Sure Start programmes have adopted a borough-wide evaluation strategy with the aims of:

- 1) **Understand how well services are performing** by evaluating the quality and value for money of the services provided across Camden through Sure Start
- 3) **Keep track of our progress in meeting Sure Start objectives and targets** by assessing the effectiveness of the programme in achieving better outcomes for families

- 3) Ensure that evaluation and routine monitoring activities are **used to inform a process of continuous improvement**
- 4) **Monitor equity of access** to services for families – including our local aim of reaching those families who have found it difficult to use services in the past
- 5) Provide an **evidence base for mainstreaming** of Sure Start services
- 6) Ensure the **effectiveness of Sure Start in rollout-areas** is evaluated (ie. those areas funded by LB Camden, rather than through government funding)
- 7) Ensure that **local parents, partner agencies and staff are central** to the evaluation process and benefit from their involvement in evaluation

### **3. Sure Start Kentish Town Evaluation Projects 2003/4**

The SSKT Partnership Board identified obtaining missing baseline data and a wide range of parents' views as its first priority in terms of evaluation. This was done through the following:

**3.1. BASELINE SURVEY *Every Parent Matters*** – a survey of families and children aged 0-3 years, living in the Castlehaven and Caversham neighbourhoods of Kentish Town, carried out by the Thomas Coram Research Unit. Local parents were trained as interviewers and called door-to-door in the selected neighbourhoods, asking families to complete a comprehensive questionnaire. This collected data on characteristics of the family, benchmarking data regarding health and parenting, services used, satisfaction with services, perceived gaps in services and involvement with Sure Start to date. A summary of the finding is attached at Attachment 1. Methodological information and full findings are set out in the full report at Attachment 2.

Many of the findings echoed the priorities identified by parents and partner agencies at the time of submitting the delivery plan (March 2002). However, the key areas of policy impact of the evaluation and actions taken/ to be taken by the Programme in relation to the report are:

- Further work to ensure every parent-to-be and new parent knows about Sure Start and what it can offer in the KT East programme
- A new Parents' Forum in KT East
- Further work with the health service to identify and support mothers with post-natal depression
- Higher priority for setting up new crèches so that parents can attend training, look for work or just take a short break (this is a big challenge as it requires Ofsted registration and often waits for building work)
- Training for team in breastfeeding support, additional resources to midwifery and a new Baby Cafe
- Increased impetus to get fathers more involved in Sure Start, particularly in planning and running the programme

### **3.2. MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE EVALUATION**

The needs assessment was carried out by the SSKT Clinical Psychologist to refine the mental health objectives and strategies for the area; map current mental health provision in the area; identify barriers to using services and; obtain the views of potential service users and service providers about services

they would like to see introduced in the area. A further objective was to assess how the mental health resource could best be used in terms of consultation and support for SSKT's multi-agency family support team who provide outreach and home visiting in the area. The methodology, full findings and action planned are set out in the report at Attachment 3.

Again, many of the findings echoed the priorities identified by parents and partner agencies at the time of submitting the delivery plan (March 2002). However, the policy implications drawn from the needs assessment are:

- Clearer information regarding services and closer liaison between services needed
- Insufficient training, support & consultation at present
- Need for a direct clinical community based accessible service for children and families
- Closer joint work with health visiting in terms of developing protocols around screening and support for women at risk of Post Natal Depression, including support & treatment groups
- Evidence-based parent training programmes for parents of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Urgent need to develop culturally sensitive services, particularly with biggest minority ethnic communities in the area - Bengali and Somali families
- Concrete plans needed to engage and support a range of 'hard-to-reach' families

The action agreed by the Partnership Board to address these issues is set out in the full report at Attachment 3.

### **4.3. DROP-IN REVIEW**

This review was carried out by SSKT Programme Staff to inform the development of a baseline service specification for any Sure Start commissioned drop-in service.

Methodology: The review was carried out by utilising existing routine monitoring information (monthly service providers reports on activity and reach; quarterly service reviews) and through parent satisfaction surveys and interviews with drop-in managers and staff, and link workers from the Sure Start local programme.

The policy implications were reported to the Board (see attachment 4) and will be implemented during 2004/5 with the prime focus being on an agreed detailed service specification, an outreach programme and regular network meeting to share good practice.

### **3.4. FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE REVIEW**

A review of family support and home visiting work has begun in four of Camden's five Sure Start programmes: Euston, Kilburn Priory, Kentish Town (East and West). King's Cross is not part of the review as it is at an earlier stage of development (round 6). The review is being carried out by an experienced independent consultant with the aim of analysing the nature of family support work undertaken by the programmes and assessing the quality of the work

being carried out with families. The methodology is a review of file documents, with supplementary semi-structured interviews with staff as and when required.

Planning for this audit began in March 2004 and it is being carried between May and December 2004. Full details will be provided in 2004/5 Annual Evaluation Report.

#### **4. Ethics**

The programme complies with the accountable body's (Camden Council) guidelines regarding evaluation, consultation and involvement. Employees seconded from other agencies who are involved in evaluation will ensure compliance with the procedures of their home agency. Parental consent and involvement is paramount in terms of evaluation, as in all aspects of the programme's work.

#### **5. Dissemination and action**

Each project has been reported and discussed fully at the Partnership Board.

The main evaluation project – *Every Parent Matters* – was the focus of a Stakeholders' Meeting in December 2003 – attended by parents, staff and partner agencies. The full report and copies of the summary have been circulated to all stakeholders with a letter drawing partner agencies' attention to the need to review the document in relation to their own agencies priorities. The summary has been produced in an attractive and accessible format and widely circulated in the area. It is available on request in a range of community languages and formats.

All projects described above have been reported to the Partnership Board and to Parent Forums.

#### **6. Evaluation plan for 2004/5**

1. Complete Family Support Review (Kentish Town, Kilburn Priory, Euston).
2. Public Health Assistant evaluation (Kentish Town, Kilburn Priory).
3. Develop an Action Research project with Community Health Services – how can Sure Start and Community Health teams work effectively together to provide a streamlined service to local families – “patient's journey” model. (Kentish town, Gospel Oak and Kentish Town Primary Care Teams). Project development 2004/5. Project to take place 2004/6.