



## **West Marsh & Yarborough Sure Start Local Evaluation Report January 2004**

### **Evaluation Strategy**

For Sara Ellison, York University

The evaluation of the programme is divided into three areas.

#### **1) National Evaluation**

The national evaluation is organised into five areas:

- Implementation evaluation
- Impact evaluation
- Cost effectiveness
- Local contact analysis
- Support to programmes with local evaluation

#### **Impact on West Marsh & Yarborough Sure Start**

The national evaluation will affect us in the following ways:

- We will be part of a national survey undertaken by evaluators
- We could be chosen as one of the programmes who will take part in an in depth study
- Children in our area could be those whose outcomes are studied over a number of years. Families would need to agree with this.

#### **2) Local Sure Start Evaluation**

The programme has joined with other local programmes in North East and North Lincolnshire to commission external evaluation.

Communities Count have been commissioned to complete a rolling programme of evaluation. This currently consists of:

- To assist in data collection and compliance with the monitoring requirements of the Sure Start Unit.
- To assist in the cost effectiveness analysis of the programmes activities.
- To evaluate parental involvement on Management Boards and the running of local programmes generally.

Contact Louise Garnett on Brigg 01652 600101

Hull University have been commissioned to conduct an evaluation over a two year period. This piece of work will focus on midwifery and health visiting

services, mapping the various models of staff structure and service delivery across the programme and user and professional views on changing services.

Contact Anne Stimpson Hull University 01482 466695

Both projects will be monitored by a steering group of parents and workers.

The programme will encourage other local based research, e.g. higher education students, to use our facilities as a basis for their work.

This year a registered parent studying for a BA in Social Science is using the Sure Start community in West Marsh to ascertain if the programme has an impact on raising the aspirations of parents for themselves and their children.

Contact via the programme.

### **Programme Based Evaluation**

There will be a rolling programme of evaluation by programme staff.

As the programme grows so too will the level and sophistication of the evaluation.

The programme will evaluate:

- its outputs and reach
- processes, how things work
- short term outcomes, i.e. results

This year every service within the programme has identified a small area of their practice to evaluate.

Tools will be developed, evaluation undertaken and results written up. This will form the foundation of the knowledge and expertise required to build evaluation into everyday practice.

### **Progress on Evaluation Strategy**

External evaluation – Communities Count are continuing their work on parental involvement in decision making. The first report focused on the three most established programmes in the area and was published in October 2003. This report highlighted cross cutting themes which have been considered by this programme – see Externally Commissioned Evaluation for detail.

The programme is directly involved in the next phase of the Communities Count evaluation, focussing on parents groups and parents who become volunteers or workers within West Marsh & Yarborough Sure Start. A report on these findings will be published in 2004.

The research commissioned from Hull University School of Nursing is in its initial stages. This will focus on the delivery of community child and maternal health services. Ethical approval for this piece of work has been obtained and parents from the programme are involved in shaping the evaluation.

Internal evaluation has begun with some progress made on the areas for study previously identified by the different service groups. Staff confidence about conducting internal evaluation is low and more training is needed. This will hopefully be delivered in the next three months.

### **Externally Commissioned Evaluation**

- In January 2003 programme name Sure Start commissioned an evaluation of parental involvement in programme decision making. This was agreed and funded jointly with four other programmes in the northern Lincolnshire area. The research includes programmes at waves 1 to 5, with a view to comparing and contrasting ways of best practice in involving parents in different contexts. The research is being steered by a group of parents and parent participation workers from each programme and undertaken by a contracted researcher, with their support. Parents have been involved in the research from formulating the research proposal to finalising the results. The researcher meets bi monthly with programme managers to feed back on preliminary findings.
- The first report 'What Works in Involving Parents in Decision Making' was published in October 2003.
- The report evaluated parental involvement in the decision making in Sure Start by looking at parental involvement on Management Boards and in Parent Groups in three of the programmes; Nunsthorpe & Bradley Park, Scunthorpe Old Town and East Marsh. A series of cross cutting themes were identified and recommendations were offered to improve and sustain the level and quality of parental involvement in Sure Start.
- The research will be completed in January 2005.

The report identified some of the relative strengths and weaknesses of parental involvement in the programmes and suggested that the Parents Groups and parent membership on the management board can be an effective means of involving parents in the decision making in Sure Start. The research found evidence that parents can and do influence the decision making in Sure Start.

The report offered recommendations for improving the level and quality of parental involvement in Sure Start.

As a result of the Communities Count report this programmes Management Board decided that a welcome pack for board members should be developed. This will be complete and operational by the time of the AGM in May 2004.

To improve communication between the Management Board and subgroups an Information Pathway has been developed – **see attached**.

Management Board members are to receive a name badge to avoid the need for formal introductions.

Another cross cutting research study has been jointly commissioned from Hull University, School of nursing and Health Studies. This is describing and comparing different approaches to the delivery of community child and

maternal health services in each of the seven programme areas in Northern Lincolnshire including waves 1 to 6. The research is due to be completed in July 2005. The first report is due out in December 2003.

The timescale for this piece of research has been delayed because of problems gaining ethics committee approval. As this was resolved the researcher was redeployed to another piece of work and has only just been replaced. The programme has identified parents who wish to be involved in the steering of this piece of research.

### **Internal Evaluation**

Note here the findings and what changes you intend to make to address any weaknesses or problem areas identified by the findings of any internal evaluation.

- Staff Evaluation of services. Note here any service evaluations that the staff carry out, how they evaluate the service and how findings are implemented in improve services and help develop the programme.

Note here the findings and what changes you intend to make to address any weaknesses or problem areas identified by the findings.

### **Community Development Coordinator**

Community Development Coordinator to evaluate whether the information given to the residents of the Women's Refuge is useful and appropriate. It has not been possible to progress this piece of work. Initially information was sent to the Refuge Manger and it is unclear as to whether this was actually disseminated to residents. Investigation indicated problems in the Refuge's understanding of the role and purpose of a Sure Start local programme and consequently effort has been placed on establishing a firm and more productive relationship between the agencies.

### **Play Team**

The play team has completed an initial evaluation on Jack-in-the-Box, which is a physical activities programme designed to encourage all areas of a child's development and parent/child interactions.

This activity takes place in school premises and was their preferred Sure Start/school joint venture from a range of options.

The methodology employed was questionnaires and semi structured interviews conducted by staff, parents and volunteers. Feedback was also sought from the Jack-in-the-box leaders.

The results of the evaluation were that parent/carers experienced high levels of satisfaction with staff and venue and felt that the activity achieved its stated objectives. One area for improvement highlighted was the length of the session and based on user feedback this has now been extended by 10 minutes.

The Children's Information Service officer has conducted an evaluation of the programmes publicity group.

The aim of the group is to identify and organise effective publicity and information about the programme and its services. The evaluation focussed on the functioning of the group. The methodology employed was a questionnaire given to the parents who make up the publicity group by the Children's Information Service officer.

The conclusion of this piece of work was that all the parents enjoyed the group and all felt that it met its aims, with 14% feeling this very definitely.

The evaluation also identified that the group being led by the Children's Service Information Officer had raised the profile of this service. 72% of respondents stated they were now more likely to use their service and 14% said they would promote its use to others.

The food workers have conducted an initial evaluation of their 'Great Cooking, Small Budget' course.

This is a 10 week course is aimed at:

- improving knowledge of healthy eating
- improving confidence in the kitchen
- providing information for cooking on a budget
- enabling parents and children to try new foods
- providing an opportunity for family meal time
- increasing awareness of food hygiene
- providing a social environment for parents

Questions concerned how parents had heard about the course and their thoughts about:

- the leader
- the venue
- course times
- recipes/information

The evaluation also asked for their course impact on:

- changes in family meals
- confidence of parents in relation to cooking

The methodology employed was flip chart and post it notes available to participants during each of the 10 week session. The conclusion of this evaluation was that the anticipated course outcomes were achieved.

Modifications for the future included:

- more effective advertising to recruit 'hard to reach families'
- to survey parents before and after attending the course for better assessment of impact
- the use of semi structured interviews by parent volunteers to allow more detailed responses

The Homestart Coordinator has conducted an evaluation of the service with the aim of

- identifying whether the service has made a difference to families

- ask referrers if they feel homestart has made a difference to families

Questionnaires were sent to all families accessing this service between April 2003 to December 2003.

Of the family questionnaires only 12% were completed and returned. All of those families had been in receipt of support for a period of between 6-12 months and of those 50% were very satisfied, 50% were satisfied. From the referring agencies 60% of questionnaires were returned, 66% of respondents were very satisfied with the service, 33% were satisfied. 66% of respondents felt that the service had produced positive change in families and 33% felt unable to comment.

### **Summary**

Staff are finding it difficult to incorporate evaluation into their day to day work but with encouragement and further training these initial surveys will be developed and extended throughout the next year.