

Sure Start Higham Hill

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Sure Start Higham was setup in 2002 the catchment area covers little more than one ward of the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) in North East London. It is ranked amongst the poorest 10% of wards in England.

Following consultation with families in the Higham Hill area the Delivery Plan was written with these key aims to:

1. Increase access to high quality play activities
2. Increase childcare facilities
3. Offer specialist advice services
4. Increase access to health services
5. Improve existing services to be more child friendly
6. Provide effective communication and information for parents to access facilities effectively
7. Breaking down the language barrier
8. Strengthening families and communities
9. Targeting hard to reach communities

2.2 Evaluation Strategy

Evaluation is an important aspect of the work of Sure Start Higham Hill over the period 2003-2004 Sure Start Higham Hill evaluations have concentrated on:

- Ensuring quality: Looking at the service we offer and asking are they good quality? Do they meet our targets?
- How to reach all parents: Looking at the needs and experiences of parents within the sure start Higham Hill catchments area who are not accessing services and how we can best meet their needs.
- Consulting parents: Obtaining their views about the services and their suggestions for improvements.
- Understanding our area: Getting a picture of the area we work in and the type of families that live here.

2.3 Format of this report

This report summarises the evaluation activity of Sure Start Higham Hill (SSHH) during the period up to August 2004 It is divided into four sections namely:

- Statistical monitoring: Details of statistical monitoring, which has impacted on SSHH e.g. Childcare audit.
- Local Evaluation: Details of the local evaluation that all Sure Starts are required to conduct.
- Evaluation of services: Evaluations of specific services provided by SSHH - Are parents happy with the services? What improvements have they suggested?
This section also includes some results from the user satisfaction survey which looks a parents overall views Sure Start Higham Hill.
- Future developments: Evaluation plans for the period 2004-2005

Where relevant, details are given of the aims, method, findings, and any action as a result of the evaluation.

2. STATISICAL MONITORING

2.1 Childcare Audit

The childcare audit provides LBWF with Baseline information about each of the wards within the area. The audit give useful demographic information about the ward, parents views and identifies the rank of need (high, medium, low) for increased childcare places.

Method:

Data was gathered from a variety of sources namely:

- **2001 Census:** for population/ demographic information.
- **Childcare Audit Questionnaire:** for information from registered childcare providers 82% of questionnaires were completed and returned. This survey was conducted.
(This survey was conducted during the period October 2003 – January 2004)
- **Childcare Audit Mapping exercise:** The outcomes from a public consultation to inform and update on the patterns of childcare places created during 2003/2004 and to consult on where childcare gaps existed and to identify where new childcare places should be created during 2004-2006.
(This consultation took place in February 2004)
- **Ofsted and EduAction:** for Data about early education places.
- **Parents Survey:** From parents who visited the Children's Information Service (CIS) 1708 survey were sent response is low 247 were completed and returned.
(This survey was conducted during the period January 2003 – December 2003)

Key Findings:

Higham Hill ward has 304 childcare places and 130 sessional places giving a total of 434 places, we have 2657 children aged 0-14, (of which 854 are aged 0-4) and the ratio of childcare places available to children who may need them is 1:6. Higham hill is identified as an area with high priority need for increased childcare places.

Impact on Sure Start Higham Hill:

Childcare provision is limited, but what is available is well utilised but over subscribed, often by users outside the area.

2.2 Local Reach figures

These figures detail existing and new children and their parent/carers seen in a given month by the programme.

- **New contacts** refer to children or their parent/carer whom are using services for the first time.
- **Existing contacts** refers to children or their parent/carers who have used Sure Start Higham Hill services once or more times

Method:

Contact is recorded manually through attendance registers collected at all Sure Start Higham Hill events and regular activities these are inputted onto the Sure Start Connect Database which generates the report on details of children and parent/carers entered onto the system and contacts logged against them.

Key Findings:

Demonstrates that parents are accessing Sure Start services these figures however do not give any indication of parents views about the services and how they feel the services is benefiting them.

3. LOCAL EVALUATION

3.1 Summary

The Sure Start Higham Hill Local Evaluation sought to find out more about families currently not accessing services provided by Sure Start Higham Hill to enable the Sure Start programme to better meet the needs of these families. This evaluation was commissioned to an independent evaluator. The key requirements of the evaluation were to:

- Provide a summary of current UK research into providing services and barriers to service take up for hard-to-reach groups particularly teen parents, gypsies and travellers, and for families where English is an additional language.
- Examine the extent to which such groups are involved with their children in the services provided by Sure Start Higham Hill
- An identification of barriers to take up of services for the hard-to-reach groups
- Suggest ideas for changing the Sure Start Higham Hill service delivery to involve these groups more effectively.

3.2 Method

It was anticipated that it would be difficult to reach the parents in these groups so the evaluators used “snowballing”, method. This two-step process involved:

- Asking service providers to introduce us to hard-to-reach parents who were already using Sure Start services. As service providers would be able to identify some of the hard-to-reach parents who were accessing Sure Start services and that we would be able to interview a sample of them.
- Interviewing these parents and offering them an incentive (a £10 voucher) to introduce us to hard-to-reach parents who were not Sure Start users. As the parents who were using services would be able to introduce us to others who were not.

Interviews were also conducted with five service providers who could give us useful information about the specified groups, and to interview some key Sure Start staff. Finally an open seminar was held in which service providers, Sure Start staff and parents were invited so as to explore ideas for involving hard-to-reach groups more effectively.

It was firstly anticipated that the interview would be conducted with nine service users and 15 non-users, a total of 24 parents with children under four years of age. However, the service providers found it difficult to identify users from the hard-to-reach groups.

The evaluators spent twice as long searching for contacts than they had originally planned and although a number of interviews were achieved by the evaluators making contacts via visiting the different services, unfortunately, they were still unable to complete the suggested quota of interviews with parents.

3.3 findings

1. Two of the hard to reach groups, teenage parents and travellers with children under four years of age, do not exist in numbers sufficient to make ward level services viable.
2. The third group, parents who speak no or little English, exist in much greater numbers although reliable estimates have not been established. This group consist mainly of black Africans, Asians and eastern Europeans. The needs of these parents are complex and varied.
3. Sure Start Higham Hill is not yet reaching any parents in numbers sufficient to make any overall impact in the area.

4. The teenage parents we interviewed have plenty of family support and a good social life. This is not the case with all single parents but where their needs are mainly educational and vocational they are best met by the borough-wide Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Service.
5. There are large variations within these groups as well as between them. Some of those who speak little or no English also come from cultural traditions that tie them to the domestic sphere.
6. For the parents who have mastered English well, being constantly in demand to act as interpreters can feel like a burden.
7. Those parents who speak enough English to access services may still find themselves isolated within a group because they do not have the confidence to approach other parents.

Barriers to accessing services

8. The reception at the Sure Start Higham Hill office is unpredictable, depending upon who is around. There is also evidence of patchy customer care in the Sure Start services and of some unnecessarily officious and bureaucratic practices.
9. The language and style of promotional literature has not been tailored to communicate effectively with a diverse population of parents.
10. Rumours about differences on the Partnership Board appear to be impacting negatively on the reputation of Sure Start in the community.

3.4 Recommendations

It was recommended that Sure Start Higham Hill should:

- Liaise with the borough's Teenage Pregnancy Integration Officer and ensure that teenage parents are referred appropriately. Identify teenage parents over school-age and the truly isolated teenage parents and provide some in depth personal support.
- Liaise with the Travellers Education Service to encourage referral of travellers who might need specific support. Emphasise inclusion by sending out the right messages and encouraging service providers to do the same.
- Consider how the Health Team might obtain better data on parents who are isolated because they do not speak English adequately.
- Consider taking English lessons into the home in order to teach a group of families together.
- Resist using other parents as ad hoc interpreters and go-betweens, without their specific agreement. Even then, those parents should be given proper support for the role.
- Make sure that service providers are vigilant, friendly and supportive to parents who lack confidence e.g. by introducing them to other parents, by facilitating relationships and by responding appropriately to any language difficulties.
- Review the language and style of all promotional materials
- Open up the window of the Sure Start premises by removing all but the key messages and latest information and review and re-arrange them weekly to present a new and fresh appearance.
- Train all staff in customer care skills and make quality of customer care a condition of grants to service providers.
- Deal promptly with any partnership problems on the Board and consider the use of an experienced external facilitator to help focus Board energies on vision and strategy.

3.5 Dissemination and Impact

Findings were presented to Partnership Board members and Sure Start Staff at an open seminar. At the subsequent partnership Board meeting an agreement was made to implement the recommendations made in the report, the impact of this will be looked at at a later date.

4. EVALUATION OF SERVICES:

4.1 Health:

The Sure Start Higham Hill Health Team consists of 4 health visitors, a speech and language therapist and nursery nurse they are responsible for meeting the Sure Start aims of: Improving social and emotional development, improving health and strengthening families and communities. Through meeting the below Sure Start SDA targets of:

- Contacting 100% of families within 2 months of childbirth
- Reducing the proportion of children aged 0-3 who are re-registered on the child protection register
- Improve breastfeeding uptake and continuation
- Reducing hospital attendances for accidents and infections

They have also established a wide range of both universal and targeted courses, classes, clinics and workshops to meet the health and parenting needs of Sure Start Higham Hill Parents.

The table 1 (below) summarises details of the health team service evaluations of the various services during the period to August 2004.

Table 1: Health team Evaluations

Service and description	Evaluation Method	Responses	Action
Baby Clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service.	Due to large numbers of attendees a bigger venue required.
First Aid Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service.	No action required
Smoking Cessation Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service.	No action required
Speech & Language Drop in Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service.	No action required
Weaning from Milk Solids Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service. However some groups do not attend	Rotate to other venues with ting the Higham hill Area to encourage attendance of hard to reach groups

Life With Baby Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service.	A focus for fathers. To encourage more fathers to attend.
Life Saver Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are happy with the service.	No action required

4.2 Outreach:

The outreach team cover the following Sure Start targets: strengthening families and communities and improving the ability to learn. They seek to ensure maximum parental participation and consultation in Sure Start Higham Hill activities, develop new services, and support the Parent Forum. Details of evaluations of their services are provided below.

Table 2: Outreach Team Evaluations

Service and description	Method	Responses	Action
Summer Activities Family Outings and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are very with the service however older children attending some sessions causes	No action required
0-4 Child Activities based on the Foundation Stage Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are very with the service	No action required
ESOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Parents are very with the service	No action required
Employment Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback Questionnaire completed by parents accessing the service ▪ Facilitator recommendations 	Low numbers of parents attending this service	Better promotion

4.3 Satisfaction survey:

Additional to these evaluations a user satisfaction survey was conducted 88 parents the questionnaire is attached as appendix 1. Details of this survey is presented in table 3 (overleaf).

Table 3: User satisfaction survey

Service and description	Method	Responses	Action
Service Satisfaction Telephone Survey	Telephone survey of parents selected at random from the Sure Start Connect connect database 88 parents completed the survey.	50% of the sample were satisfied with service offered. 2 % of sample were unsatisfied. 47% did not respond to the question.	Further analysis is required of the survey.

5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

5.1 Future Developments

Table 4: Future Developments

<i>Reach Figures</i>	We continue to collect these figures They are an important indicator of who is using Sure Start services and which parents groups are not accessing services.	Ongoing
<i>User Satisfaction Survey</i>	Further analysis of this data to be conducted. To continue to ask Sure Start Higham Hill parents for their views about Sure Start Higham Hill as a whole and their views about how the service benefits them	Dec 2004 Annually
<i>Local Evaluation</i>	The topic for this will be decided at the Partnership Board in the 4 th quarter. Additionally, from the period 2005/2006 they will be a combined evaluation of all the 4 Sure Starts in the Waltham Forest.	Dec 2004 2005/2006
<i>Evaluation of Services</i>	Will continue to evaluate the views of service users and also providers	Ongoing
<i>Progress against recommendations from Hard to Reach groups evaluation</i>	To all the recommendations and reporting to Partnership Board impact.	August 2005
<i>Training</i>	Will identify the training needs of providers and Sure Start staff.	Ongoing