

## **Sure Start Hyndburn - Accrington South**

### **Annual Evaluation Report March 2005**

#### **Introduction**

The development of the Programme's evaluation approach has run parallel with its sister programme, Sure Start Hyndburn - Church and West Accrington.

The Accrington South programme has had to work round the challenge of the lack of provision from which to deliver services and activities which in turn meant that there was a lack of centre based provision at January to 2004 from which to deliver services.

The Accrington South programme has developed steadily and with learning from the Church & West Accrington programme emphasis has been placed on:

- ❖ The completion of the capital programme in order to facilitate local community based services and activities.
- ❖ Development of outreach services and support.
- ❖ Development of joined working with local nursery schools.

Two of the three capital projects are nearing completion with the third planned for completion at the end of 2005.

The Accrington South programme is now set to build on early activities and learning and is gathering pace to full service delivery.

All core team members have monitoring and evaluation within their job descriptions, and much work has been undertaken to develop a culture of continual learning and evaluation. Sure Start Hyndburn has developed a working tool for the purposes of monitoring and evaluating every individual activity and service, and the core team has established wider processes to undertake evaluation.

The Board therefore invited a consultant to facilitate the consolidation of all this work and learning and, following consultation, to complete the formalisation of a Sure Start Hyndburn Evaluation Framework.

In December, 2004, the Board approved this overall framework.

This establishes clear accountabilities, with specific delegations of functions, respectively, to the Sure Start Hyndburn Manager, and to the Performance Monitoring Group. It clarifies how stakeholders should be involved in the

evaluation process; how evaluation should be conducted; and how consultation and publication should take place.

The Board has committed itself to the production of an annual evaluation report and associated summaries, and to a three-yearly report which focuses particularly on the achievements and progress of the programme, in terms of the impact and outcomes of key services.

It has charged its Performance Monitoring Group with the regular oversight of the programme's evaluation and of all arrangements for external evaluation, and the Sure Start Hyndburn Manager, with the production of an annual report on the application of the evaluation framework, confirming that all aspects are in place and in operation.

### **Evaluation During the Past Year**

During the past year, all activities developed by the programme have been continuously evaluated within a firm, supervision schedule for all individual core team members. All core team members are encouraged to see themselves as evaluators and have kept evaluation records at the end of every session. These focus on any lessons with regard to empowerment, accessibility, service delivery and contribution to learning. They have been based on attendance records, behaviour observation and on the casual or structured views of parents. Systematic supervision by senior activity coordinators harnesses and develops these evaluation records.

In **play and learning activities**, much of the early evaluation has concerned service delivery in the various community venues which this programme uses. The security and accessibility of resources have been problematic and lessons have been learnt regarding separate storage and maintenance. Awareness and accessibility have been issues for parents, particularly amongst the Asian community, where word-of-mouth has proved the most powerful medium.

The family drop-in sessions at Fairfield Nursery School have been appreciated by the parents for their flexibility and variety of levels of **family support**. Whilst the children and some of their parents can be actively engaged in cooperative learning activities, other parents can be supporting each other and/or learning about behaviour management from an educational psychologist. Parents have commented how the sessions have pointed them towards information they needed, regarding childcare and smoke detectors, for example. The sessions have also allowed parents to access additional, temporary home-based family support, on their own terms.

The programme's **health-related activities** have already changed significantly as a result of perceived parental preferences. Low attendance levels have led to a move away from traditional, and drop-in, ante-natal clinic sessions to more

successful sessions focusing on the well-being of mothers-to-be in the form of pamper and yoga sessions. Midwives are now involved in developing further new services and resources.

Evaluation of the 8-12 ante-natal midwife visit concluded that parents had found it difficult to digest service information and specific literature given at this stage. It was resolved to place greater emphasis on the 28-32 week visit.

It has become increasingly apparent that parents from this area have become aware of, and used, health-related activities being run at the Park Child and Family Centre in Sure Start Church and West Accrington. Despite the greater distance and the fact that some of the services are available more locally, they value the accessibility and diversity of services being delivered there – including smoking cessation, pamper sessions and baby massage. This insight will require further evaluation as more facilities develop locally.

### **Future Developments in Evaluation**

Harnessing all work undertaken to date, the establishment of the core team and the model of shared learning, Sure Start Hyndburn's evaluation will now move into a new stage of development.

The relatively informal, but structured, mode of evaluation will now be supplemented by systematic meetings between the Sure Start Hyndburn Manager and the relevant senior Activity Coordinators, where all relevant monitoring information and details of relevant milestones will be made available by the programme monitoring officer. This should encourage the widest possible discussion and evaluation.

Up to this point, **community service satisfaction surveys** have been limited in nature and restricted to specific activities. During the coming year, there will be a full community service satisfaction survey which will provide baseline, comparative information for future parallel surveys. All respondents will be either parents/ carers of at least one child aged 0-3 years 11 months, or expecting to become a parent within the next six months. The survey will involve questionnaires delivered by trained staff. This will be externally co-ordinated and evaluated. The process will be subject to competitive tender.

April 2006 will see the establishment of a fully coordinated development plan for all Sure Start Hyndburn activity to March 2007 this will be a working document for both the Board and core team and will link clearly to our evaluation strategy.

Annual development plans will be a continual process and support the strategic development of Sure Start Hyndburn.

### **Focused Evaluation Work for the Coming Year**

There will be an additional specific focus for evaluation work in Sure Start Accrington South in this coming year.

It will relate to the accelerated development of buildings and services for this programme during the year. An externally coordinated and evaluated study will critically review the general process of generating public awareness and engagement in the use of these facilities – with particular reference to ethnic minority communities.

It will involve questionnaires administered by trained staff, supplemented by data interpretation undertaken, and focus groups led, by the co-ordinator. The process will be subject to competitive tender.

### **The Oversight of, and Response to, the Focused Evaluation Work**

The conduct of all pieces of evaluation will be subject to regular scrutiny by the Performance Monitoring Group.

Each final evaluation report will be subject to consultation, as outlined in the Board's framework, and the Sure Start Hyndburn Manager will subsequently produce a report for the Board, outlining the implications of the research, and any measures that s/he recommends to the Board in the light of it.

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