

Rotherham District  
Sure Start Maltby

DeVeloping Dads (DVD)  
Spotlight Evaluation

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## Introduction

Sure Start Maltby is a third wave programme, and as such has been up and running for the last two years. Whilst Sure Start has an established presence in the Maltby community, the service is still evolving to meet new government strategies, in particular the development of Children's Centres. In light of this, Sure Start Maltby is currently waiting for the completion of their new Sure Start Centre in the summer 2005, which will impact significantly on service provision for all Sure Start services, through providing accessible venue space, co-locating services and increasing the project presence.

For 2003/4 Sure Start Maltby commissioned Cordis Bright Consulting to conduct its annual evaluation. The parameters of the evaluation included the assessment of three services funded by the programme. These 'spotlighted' services are:

- The support group for parents of children who need additional care
- The STEPs project (Support, Therapy, Education and Prevention mental health programme)
- The DeVeloping Dads project

Whilst the nature and structure of the three projects is distinct, the evaluation for each of the three projects has shared objectives, and these have been examined across 6 key dimensions.

- ❑ **Strategic Dimension:** The extent to which they support the achievement of Sure Start objectives and key principles
- ❑ **Operational Dimension:** Efficacy of operational processes and procedures, including extent of partnership working with external agencies
- ❑ **Implementation Dimension:** Overall quality of services; including the extent to which services meet user needs and expectations
- ❑ **Unit-Cost analysis:** including bench-mark costs
- ❑ **Future Strategy and Planning:** strategic analysis of exit strategies and opportunities for mainstreaming of projects
- ❑ **Cost-benefit Analysis:** Overall conclusions, identification of best-practice, value-for-money by taking into account qualitative context and long-term outcomes

This report focuses on the service evaluation of the DeVeloping Dads (DVD) project, and was conducted between February and September 2004.

## Methodology

To gain an understanding of the service on the six key dimensions, the evaluation necessitates a number of levels of analysis. These include background and desk-top research, qualitative and quantitative analysis of data. Interviews have been conducted at all levels of engagement; with service users, and the service co-ordinator. This multi-level approach ensures feedback is obtained from people engaged at all levels of service provision and use. A variety of consultation methodologies have been employed.

- ❑ **Interviews with Service Leader:** Two hour semi-structured interview with the YMCA worker who leads the project.
- ❑ **User views:** 131 parents were surveyed as part of the overall community survey (see Programme Evaluation Report 2003/4) 4 of the respondents to that survey were users or partners who had accessed the service.
- ❑ **Unit cost analysis:** This was undertaken by using the basic unit cost model which deduces what the average cost of a contact is by reference to the total Sure Start contribution, using data from 2003/4 and the total grant made available in 2003/04. Various bench-marking costs are provided to enable comparison of unit costs for the purposes of assessing cost effectiveness.

## Service Profile

Sure Start Maltby funds the YMCA who leads the project in the Maltby Sure Start area for two days a week. The worker is line managed through the YMCA. The service comprises four elements:

1. Activities for fathers, fathers and children and couples
2. Educational sessions for Year 10 pupils (Game of 2 Halves)
3. Promotion of volunteering among fathers
4. Home visits to fathers

## Objectives

The over-arching objective of the DVD project is to get fathers involved in the Sure Start programme to:

1. Support their children's development
2. Strengthen families
3. Strengthen communities

## Targets

There are no project specific targets for this service.

## Format

It is a cross borough programme (Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham) with a varying menu of funding in each area. The service is aimed particularly at fathers aged 16-25 but it does not matter whether their child is under four.

Activities are held very other Friday evening and have included:

- Chill-out night
- All you can eat
- Ten pin bowling
- Go-karting
- Couple's night
- Chat sessions/drop-in
- Football club outings
- Ante-natal sessions for dads only
- Cross cultural evening

Game of 2 Halves (Go2h) at Maltby Comprehensive comprises:

- Educational sessions aimed at Year 10.
- Go2h is a parenting training course/information aimed primarily at young men but delivered to boys and girls (can be adapted for use with girls).
- Go2h has also been rolled out with Youth Referral Units, homeless groups and youth clubs.
- Estimated that programme has reached approx. 300 young people in Maltby Comp.
- The course is adapted for use at the Comp. – school chooses what aspects of course it wants to focus on.

Volunteering within Sure Start is promoted at all activities.

Home visits

- To families to discuss parental responsibilities
- Give advice and information about guardianship for non-biological fathers

## User Profile

The project gets about 6 fathers and children turning up regularly to the Friday evening activities but has up to 15 families at some of the couples evenings and outings. Home visits are about 1 a week and the Go2h project is delivered to a class of 30 at a time.

## Costs

The total cost to Sure Start Maltby of this service is £15,149 p.a.

## Strategic Dimension

The strategic dimension of the evaluation provides an analysis of the extent to which the project objectives and outcomes work towards achieving Sure Start objectives and key principles. The services objectives are strongly aligned with all four Sure Start objectives, and the impacts of the service stretch across all four objectives.

The key objective impacted upon by the DVD project is *Objective 4: Strengthening Families and Communities* by encouraging fathers to be more involved in their children's lives from a very young age and therefore provide good male role models particularly for boys.

This in turn impacts positively on *Objective One: Improving social and emotional development* and *Objective 3: Improving learning* and also on *Objective Two: Improving health*.

## Operational Dimension

This dimension examines the efficacy of operational processes and procedures, including extent of partnership working with external agencies.

### Organisational structure and management

The DVD is managed within the YMCA service.

### Integration with other service providers

There is little formal integration between the generic family support work and that which is offered by DVD. Co-location with the rest of the Sure Start team allows for some degree of informal communication, although this does not necessarily ensure effective information sharing and linked service development particularly as the main hours of work for the project are at times when the rest of the team is not working.

There has been some integration with the work of midwifery in setting up an ante-natal session for fathers only as the midwifery service provided an ante-natal session in the evenings for women and couples anyway. However, there has been no integration with Health Visiting or any of the other in house or commissioned services within the Sure Start programme.

The Go2h project has been well integrated within the work of Maltby Comprehensive school and the programme has been adapted in consultation with teachers to better suit the needs of pupils there.

The worker leading on DVD has summarised the negatives of integration with Sure Start and other providers as:

- Biggest problem was in being only worker working outside 9-5 hrs.
- Sure Start Maltby is female dominated.
- Lack of male friendly literature
- No fathers on interview panels (need to hold interviews at times men can make i.e. outside normal work hrs)
- No fathers on Management Board (need to have meetings at times outside 9-5)
- Sure Start want Dads with kids but need to engage men first without children and then get them to bring along kids
- Female staff not allowed to work alone evenings and weekends but seen as ok for male worker
- Dads work still not part of mainstream Sure Start services
- Only Dads worker ever asked to work evenings and Saturdays. Need to spread over all staff.
- 9-5 working excludes working mums as well
- Premises not ideal
- Worker felt isolated and did not feel that other workers promoted his work
- Tried some joint working with family link worker but she was not used to working with dads.
- Whole organisation needs to look at training (YMCA could deliver) needs around working with dads. (YMCA could deliver)

## Implementation Dimension

This dimension of the evaluation assesses the overall quality of services; including the extent to which services meet user needs and expectations

### Profile of service-awareness

All users had only heard about the project through other people rather than through any form of advertising and this was predominantly from other parents rather than workers.

### Quality of service provision

Overall, the service provided was perceived by service users to be of good quality and much more appropriate than the mainstream Sure Start services where fathers felt “*uncomfortable*”.

## Unit–Cost analysis

The unit-cost analysis is based on average or approximate data due to the high degree of flexibility of working practice across this service. The unit-cost analysis does not include on-costs, such as administration expenditure, capital costs etc. or any allowance for the childcare support.

The worker supports up to 5 families per week making the unit cost of support to each family, assuming the service runs for 40 weeks a year, £75.74

## Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis has been conducted to:-

- Another Sure Start programme offering a service to fathers
- Generic Outreach Family Support Work (*Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2003 D.o.H.*)

**Table 1: Comparative costs of group service provision for Fathers**

Service provided	DVD	Sure Start A	Outreach Family Support Worker
Average cost per family per week	£75.74	£62.19	£23.50

## Future Strategy and Planning

The board needs to look at the whole thrust of its work with fathers and take account of the fact that it is not unusual for project like this to take two years to get off the ground. It also needs to recognise that fathers need to be engaged first as men before engagement as Dads and that service will take a long time to establish.

It may be that single gender work needs to be complemented by females and would be better done as a Parent Involvement Worker with emphasis on work with dads rather than single gender worker.

It is also evident that the project needs more programme support – longer hours, weekend working, more male staff, more awareness by staff of issues for Dads to make the whole programme more dad/working parent friendly.

Parents have also said they would like to see workers bringing their children to events and activities so could see them as parents too. The cultural diversity session with Caribbean food went very well and parents asked for others. This would be a good way of including the few ethnic minority families in Maltby.

The Peer education project run by YMCA did not have youth from Maltby as peer educators but children from Maltby comp did get involved in promotion of Go2h so there is scope for further development there and the Go2h work could link in with the Baby Doll project.

It may be that Dads work would be better pooled across all three Rotherham programmes to get increased numbers however that would involve looking at the transport issues involved. The worker did try unsuccessfully to set up forum for dads work within Sure Starts in Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster and has done joint events with other programmes – Go karting with Dennaby and Conisborough and Golthorpe. Currently there are three workers from YMCA to cover all Sure Starts in Doncaster/Rotherham.

With the new worker at Maltby in post since April spending two days in Maltby and two days with Bassetlaw Sure Start this is an ideal time to make changes.

## Cost Benefit Analysis

Currently the project does not represent value for money but could do if some of the changes suggested above were implemented. These changes would be beneficial not only in increasing the reach and impact of Sure Start Maltby with fathers but also more widely with working parents and other hard to reach groups.