

# Training, Employment and Childcare

## **Training, Employment and Childcare Co-ordinator – Gina Lees**

The TEC Coordinator came into post in April 2003. This post was created specifically to focus on the Sure Start target to reduce the number of households with children under 5 years where the parent(s)/Carer(s) are not in paid employment.

The role was originally divided into 3 distinct areas:-

1. **Training** – to coordinate the training needs of clients. This ranged from sourcing courses in colleges & from private sector to researching, analysing and devising annual training plans to meet the needs of the customer base.

Often individual appointments were made with clients tracking their progress to date and supporting need as required. In the early stages (year 1) this post had a client caseload. It relied on partnership working with colleges and providers to ensure low cost (often free) quality training in response to need. It has been possible on many occasions to gain income from training.

Probably the best example of this was the “Bite size” training which brought in over £4,000.

Possibly the most memorable training event was the Family Theatre workshop week in October 2003 which attracted over 110 attendees. Workshops were many and varied from How to run a Tuck-shop (basic skills maths) to Samba Bands. The event culminated in a Family Performance attended by local partner agencies, contributors, family, friends and community members. **All** adult attendees have since moved on into further training, Higher education, volunteering or employment.



All training sourced and provided by Sure Start is categorised, for reporting purposes, into 5 areas: Leisure/Non-vocational learning, Parenting Skills, Skills for Life/Basic Skills, Employability-enhancing and Vocational Learning.

- 2. Employment** Job-searching, CV writing, Applications, Interview techniques and internet search individual to client need. Also information and advice regarding benefits, tax credits etc. Working with partner agencies such as Jobcentre Plus. Connexions and Youth and Community towards shared targets and promoting usage/signposting. Much work has been carried out planning joint events such as information sessions, recruitment fairs and training. The development of the SLA with Jobcentre plus allows shared information with client and enables progress tracking.

The employment area is probably the hardest single area to monitor as reporting is based purely on client contact information. Employment status recorded on the Sure Point database is immediately out of date.

- 3. Childcare** – to help source childcare options for work and/or training. Local knowledge of availability and shared information with CIS, links with Childminding Network Co-ordinator and JC+ Childcare Partnership manager. Also arranging peripatetic crèches to support any in-house/community training.

The TEC has written quarterly reports in the first year with detailed statistical analysis and explanations of how the role has developed over time and policy/procedures that have been introduced.

### **Role Developments**

The TEC role has developed significantly since its inception. Training has proved a highly successful element of the programme in terms of availability, access and attendance.

Partnership working, in particular with LCC and Accrington & Rossendale College has aided the availability of a low cost, diverse programme of learning for clients, staff, volunteers and childminders.

Prior to the move to the Maden Centre it became apparent that with the nursery opening crèche workers would be without a line manager as their line manager was to manage the nursery function.

It was agreed that given the number and nature of courses and groups being accessed that this line management responsibility best fit with the TECC.

From September 2004, the crèche leaders and pool staff became the responsibility with the TECC role.

The TECC also identified a need for the room booking system in the building given its size and potential hire capacity. Once again with many of the groups being co-ordinated via the TECC due to bookings and/or crèche co-ordination it was agreed that this become part of the TECC team remit.

This included database design, setting costs, purpose for rooms, taking bookings, designing, maintaining, analysing and improving systems, staff training, customer liaison, negotiation and entire responsibility for the co-ordination of the booking function. Co-ordination includes the café, site supervisor, Health & Safety issues, teams and finance for invoicing purposes. This has become a vast part of the role due to the successful use of this popular building. This element of the role is time consuming and being customer-focused, often takes priority ensuring the building functions seamlessly for the end user.

### **Children's Centre Impact**

With the developments of CC's in Rossendale at 3 venues (Maden Centre, Staghills Nursery School and Haslingden Community Link) the TECC role has developed further to offer expertise at those centres requiring this input to meet the CC core offer. Centres are to "buy in" this service along with the crèche function.

This has resulted in the TECC post being upgraded with additional support from a Training and Employment Assistant (18.5hrs), Crèche Co-ordinator (37hrs), and Additional Crèche Leader and the creation of 4 contracted crèche assistants plus the expansion of the crèche pool from approximately April 2005.

Since moving to the new building focus changed to managing crèche functions, room bookings and liaising more with Partner agencies. This change in emphasis reduced rapidly the amount of time available to spend with individual clients on concentrated training/employment issues and focus employment activity functions. Once all staff are in post emphasis will return to this area with the Assistant TEC taking on a caseload.

### **Staff Training**

With many new staff in post, a core function of the role has been to ensure a quality, consistent induction process to the programme. Much time has been spent writing, designing, amending, delivering and evaluating this new programme which has proved very effective. It has also been a useful tool as evidence towards the NVQ 4 in Co-ordination of Learning and Development and the Lancaster University Certificate in the Management of Learning and Development achieved by the TECC in the past 9months. This course has focused on process and aided efficiency and effectiveness in the training arm of the organisation. The effective installation of a new training database will

ensure accurate recording of all training for the client group, staff, volunteers and childminders. It will record Individual Action Plans for individuals and give statistical evidence reports.

### **Investors in People**

Following Investors in People Advisor training, the TECC is co-ordinating work towards the IIP standard delivering briefing sessions, gathering evidence and undertaking GAP analysis for achievement within the next 18months. Working towards the standard is evidence of the organisations commitment to it's investment in peoples personal development and is another area which has developed in the role. Staff training, sourcing, planning and undertaking training needs analysis for the entire organisation is a large part of the role and this will roll out to other children's centres.

### **Representation at Meetings**

The TECC represents Sure Start at the following groups/meetings:

- Local Strategic Partnership Lifelong Learning Theme group
- Rossendale Adult Learning Forum (RALF)
- Local area network (LAN)
- Lancashire Training for Managers Consultative Group
- Jobcentre Plus Communication meetings – Partner Agencies
- Connexions updates – partnership work
- The Sure Start Human Resources Sub Committee
- The Sure Start Health & Safety Focus Group
- The Sure Start Young Parents Focus Group
- Children's Centre Facilitator Meetings
- The Bacup Adult Learning Forum (now RALF)

### **Statistical data for period April 2003-April 2005**

#### **Training Courses**

Number of Courses run directly through Sure Start: 135

Number of Attendances: 1,634

#### **Employment**

Approximate Number of individuals known to have gained employment: 25

### **Childcare/Creches (from Sept 2004 – March 2005)**

Crèches provided: 316  
Attendance: 1050  
Number of families attending: 111  
Number of children attending: 132

### **Room bookings/use of building (from August 2004- April 2005)**

Number of Customers using building: 176  
Internal Customers/Groups: 92  
External customers/Groups: 84  
Number of bookings: 930  
Internal Bookings: 515  
External bookings: 415

### **Case study**

I met “A” at the young parents group, a young parent with ambition and skills who needed guidance and information regarding opportunities, childcare and mostly time to explore possible avenues to take.

She was keen to do some training and was unclear which direction to take in terms of employment/career. We met on several occasions at the group and individually to discuss options for setting up a business, volunteering and various areas of interest for work such as Family Work, Health & Safety officers amongst others.

As part of the opportunities A talked with several partner agencies; Youth and Community being the base support in the Young parents group, Business link advisors, Sure Start staff, Jobcentre plus and Accrington and Rossendale College Advice and Guidance.

Together we looked at internet job/career search, planned future training and aided with application techniques. Along the way, I also helped her partner with job applications and interviews in partnership with Jobcentre plus where he was successful in gaining initially a temporary post and then a permanent post with transport to and from the workplace included in the package. I also advised regarding Childcare opportunities and tax credit information and Better off calculations.

Over time the young parent was able to gain skills locally, free of charge with childcare support in place and achieved the following qualifications/skills:

Basic Food Hygiene, Make a book-use a book, First Aid, Tai Chi, Microwave cooking/Cooking on a Budget, Computers – publicity, Home Safety visit, Sure Start Arts Project.

In June 2004 A gained employment as a Part time Community Café Assistant but still continued pursuing training and career opportunities whilst developing in this role. Attending courses such as Drugs Awareness and enquired about the possibility of registering as a volunteer with the programme.

In May 2005 A was successful in gaining a progressive post as Volunteer & Health Link Co-ordinators assistant a role which will work across the 3 Children's Centres.

## Service user Feedback

The following is an extract from a letter written to us by two volunteers following their involvement in the Theatre Workshops. Others are comments made about being involved in Sure Start activities and how that leads on to getting involved in more learning opportunities.

*“ During all the workshops it was evident that people were having fun and this showed on their faces and actions. You created for the people of Bacup and Stacksteads something which is extraordinary. You brought out the creative streak...you allowed them to shine and that is good” ( Volunteer – now employed locally)*

*“ I think the scheme is brilliant, not just for kids but for the adults. It has been great and I hope there are more events for adults and children”( Parent- this parent has since joined a Basic Skills “Brush up your Maths” Course with Sure Start)*

*“Me and my family have had a really good week, if anything was ever on again for children and parents to get involved in I would definitely do it” (Parent- This parent has since gone on to join a Basic Skills maths course with Sure Start)*

*“ I've learned a lot and really enjoyed doing something different” ( Parent- this parent is now taking a First Aid Course at the local college)*

*“ A card to say a big thank you for all the advice and opportunities you have given me. I have now been offered places at 2 universities to start a Diploma in Nursing. ( Parent- started with Sure Start Ducklings Scheme, did a Foundation Childcare Course and now moving into Further Education)*

# Our Stories of Sure Start

## THREE FAMILIES' JOURNEY

Rather than churn out endless tables and graphs of statistics of attendances at sessions within Sure Start we decided it would be much more meaningful to look at what impact attending those sessions had had on parents and children.

Via our database we randomly chose 3 families who had been involved in the programme from early days. The parents were contacted and asked if they would like to take part in a discussion about their experiences of being involved in a Sure Start local programme. They were given the options of a face to face discussion, a questionnaire; write their own account or a telephone interview. All chose the face to face method.

As with all adult activities the provision of a crèche was paramount in the success of the parent's interviews but we also needed to observe the children to assess how they felt too. This meant the crèche staff and other staff observations were also important as often they see changes in children that parents miss as they are with them all the time.

### **Natalie and Victoria's Story** *Registered 1/11/03*

"I first became aware of Sure Start from my After Care Workers. I thought it was for deprived people and wasn't really sure what it was all about. I met someone called Sue from Sure Start who talked to me about volunteering which led to becoming involved in being a Childminder. It all took off from there.

I was told about "Ducklings" which was a time for me to be together with my daughter at the swimming baths. I am a single parent with no transport and did not feel confident enough to go at first but with the help of Sure Start, transport was provided and I was encouraged to take part. We loved it, and I could feel myself and my daughter becoming more outgoing and confident at each session ( **they attended 9 times** )

The next thing we took part in was "Stay and Play" ( **attended 16 times** ) where we could mix with other families and talk about things and play at the same time and we also took part in craft sessions and playgroup.

I had no idea where to start in becoming a childminder but with Sure Start's support I became registered and began to care for other people's children. I took part in " Educational Things" and believe if it had not been for Sure Start my child and I would have been anti social recluses. I am now employed by Sure Start to transport children between local Nursery Schools and the Sure Start Day Nursery and I see my child going to Nursery as a confident happy child. ( the changes in both Natalie and Victoria have been observed by staff also)

I have seen Sure Start change from nothing to this and if I could describe Bacup and Stacksteads Sure Start in 5 words it would be GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT."

**Gillian, Kieron and Chanelle's Story** *Registered 01/07/02 and 10/08/03*

“ I first became aware of Sure Start at my G.P.'s Well I say aware but I didn't really know what it was. My midwife registered me and told me about a Fun Day I could go to with my child but I could not walk through that door on my own not knowing anyone so I still didn't really have a clue about Sure Start.

It began to change when I became involved in the Young Parents' Group when it all began to be explained to me and I realised it was for me and my child.

**(27 attendances )**

Since Sure Start moved into the Maden Centre I have seen more and more things for me and my family to do. I think this is because of the promotional things they do.

I would not have become involved in anything if it had not been for Sure Start. I have been to lots of groups which has given me the confidence to apply for jobs I would not have considered in the past. I thought I could only do shop work or jobs like that. I used to see jobs in the paper and think I would love to do that but would never apply because I did not think I would get an interview. I now have the confidence to apply for jobs and have just been successful in gaining a post as Assistant Volunteer Network Coordinator.

I think Sure Start could not provide anymore than they are. It is more than anyone could expect. So much goes on it is unbelievable.

My children now have more to do and the Nursery has done wonders for them. Their language has improved and they are more confident.

If I could sum up Sure Start in 5 words they would be - WOW LIFE SAVING RELAXED WONDERFUL.”

**Tina, Gwilym, Ieuan and Seren's Story** *Registered 1/4/02, 6/12/03*

“ I first became aware of Sure Start in the embryonic stages way back in January 2002. I think it was mentioned by my Midwife and my Health Visitor. I hadn't really heard of it before. I thought it would be a really good way to get to know other local people and the first session I attended was baby massage when my son Ieuan was 5 weeks old. **( 50 attendances with both children )**

I feel Sure Start has become more accessible since it moved into the Maden Centre; it was spread out all over the place before. I am not sure the people who really need Sure Start's support are using the services still but I do tell people about things they can become involved in.

If my family had not become involved in Sure Start we would still have done the things we do but alone. Due to Sure Start we have become involved with the local community and shared ideas and knowledge. I am a volunteer peer counsellor for Breastmates. **( 13 sessions )**

I think both our children have benefited from being involved in Sure Start especially the Nursery and the crèches **( 67 attendances )** which are really good. The crèche facilities have meant I can take part in activities whilst my children are being cared for. They have made friends and are more sociable and confident. It is the best start for them.”