

Monitoring and Evaluation  
Report on

**Teenage Parents Support  
Group Pilot  
(without appendices)**

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Park Lane  
Sure Start Local Programme

June 2005

**SureStart**



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## One Page Summary of Report

In 1999 the government's Social Exclusion Unit drew up a ten-year strategy for reducing the rate of teenage conceptions and getting more teenage parents into education, training or employment (Cm 4342, p.8). In Haringey, the local authority and Teaching Primary Care Trust responded to the national strategy by establishing the Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group. The Partnership established a drop-in project at the Park Lane Neighbourhood Resource Centre to better support young parents. Three posts were created to deliver the project: a Project Manager, a Personal Advisor and a Sure Start funded Teenage Support Worker. The Support Worker was appointed in May 2004 and asked to establish a Haringey Teenage Parents Support Group. This report concerns itself with the development of the Support Group pilot programme, which ran from July to September 2004.

Prior to establishing the pilot programme, the Support Worker consulted fourteen teenage parents at a local conference for teenage parents. The consultation findings were used to shape a programme of activities. Sessions on housing, employment and training were planned, reflecting the fact that parents most commonly identified these as support issues. The programme was designed to help Sure Start local programmes achieve national Sure Start objectives.

The programme of ten sessions was provided, as planned, between July and September 2004. In total, twenty-five parents attended one or more session. The average attendance was eight. In early September, the Support Worker collected feedback from seven parents by visiting them at home. The consulted parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the programme's sessions, the venue and the time. Five of the seven parents felt that either they or their children had benefited as a result of attending the Support Group. One participant had started full-time college since attending the Support Group. Three parents felt that the group helped their children socialise. Parents enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people or be with young people, two appreciated the support or advice and one felt the Group was an opportunity to release stress.

The feedback collected by the Support Worker provides an incomplete picture of the opinions of the twenty-five parents who had attended the Support Group. There was a significant and unexplained non-response rate for many of the questions asked of the seven consulted parents. There is no information about the opinions of the eighteen parents who attended the Support Group, but were not visited by the Support Worker. Most importantly, there is a lack of rigorous and precise data on the impact made by Support Group staff on the lives of parents, and in particular, on impacts relating to the objectives of Sure Start and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. The Haringey Partnership Group, Sure Start and the Social Exclusion Unit need rigorous data on parent impact to judge the effectiveness of their planning.

A second Support Group programme was launched in October 2004 and will run until March 2005. No evaluation has been planned for this programme. Stepping Up and Haringey Sure Start Local Programmes should consider planning an evaluation of the second programme and any further programmes.

## **Introduction**

This is a monitoring and evaluation report on the Haringey Sure Start Teenage Parents Support Group pilot programme, which ran between July and September 2004. The report starts by explaining what Sure Start is about, and how it works in Haringey. It then moves on to explain how the Teenage Parents Support Group pilot programme was established in response to central government policy and in keeping with the local Haringey and Enfield strategy on teenage pregnancy. The next section explains how Haringey Sure Start's Teenage Parents Support Worker worked with the Sure Start Local Programme Managers and other colleagues to design a pilot programme for the Teenage Parents' Support Group. In particular, it reports on how the Support Worker consulted parents and acted on the consultation to set up the pilot programme. It also shows how the Support Worker consulted parents after the pilot programme, and used the feedback to plan a second programme, which began in October 2004 and will run until March 2005. Finally this report finishes with a number of recommendations for strengthening the evaluation the Teenage Parents Support Group in the future. In particular, the report recommends that Stepping Up work with Sure Start Local Programmes to plan an evaluation of the outcomes for all the parents who attend the Support Group, and in particular, on outcomes relating to Sure Start/Teenage Pregnancy Strategy objectives.

The Park Lane and High Cross Local Evaluation Officer wrote this report in close consultation with the Haringey Sure Start Teenage Support Worker. Thanks to Marijo Ochoerrarte and Lisa Crawley, from the Park Lane Sure Start team for processing the feedback data and scanning the fliers.

## **Sure Start**

Sure Start is a governmental cross-departmental strategy which aims to improve the life chances of younger children through better co-ordinating early education, childcare, health and family services (Glass, 1999; Sure Start, 2002a). It comprises over 500 local programmes, which were rolled out in six waves by the government's Sure Start Unit between 1999 and 2003. Each programme aims to improve the health and well being of families so children are ready to flourish when they go to school. They do this through delivering community based services in disadvantaged areas. Sure Start local programmes were planned to be time limited, ten year projects, charged with the responsibility for piloting new services that the local authority or health authority did not provide. Local authorities and health authorities are expected to integrate the most effective Sure Start services, practices and learning into their own service delivery. This process of integration is often referred to as mainstreaming. The Sure Start Unit requires Sure Start local programmes to be run by partnerships of statutory organisations, voluntary sector organisations, community groups and parents (Sure Start, 2003b). Park Lane, High Cross and Roundway are three of five Sure Start local programmes located in Haringey. Haringey is a Borough of London located in the north of the capital. Its population is ethnically mixed, mobile and 9% of the population comprises refugees and asylum seekers. Haringey ranks as one of the most deprived boroughs in the country (Haringey TCPT, 2003), with 7.3% of the population unemployed in January 2003. There is an extensive area

of deprivation in the east and centre of Haringey, with nine Haringey wards featuring in the 10% most deprived wards in the country (Haringey TPCT, 2003). Haringey has high numbers of children living in poverty with associated health problems (Haringey TPCT, 2002, p.30). The next section details how Haringey Sure Start local programmes have worked with the Haringey local authority and the Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust to develop and contribute to the government's national Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan. Part of this work involved the creation of a Teenage Support Group – which is the primary focus of this report.

## The Government's Strategy on Teenage Pregnancy

In 1999 the government's Social Exclusion Unit drew up a ten-year strategy for reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy in the UK. According to the Social Exclusion Unit, teenage parents are more likely to be trapped in poverty through lack of education, childcare and encouragement. They get little support back into education and employment and little advice on housing and parenting skills (p.62). Statistically, the long-term prospects for teenage parents' children are poorer than average (Cm 4342, p.62). The death rate for the babies of teenage mothers is 60 per cent higher than that of older mothers and the babies of teenage mothers are more likely to have low birth weights, accidents and be admitted to hospital (Cm 4342, p.6).

A government analysis on statistics collected in 1997 showed that in one year there were nearly 90,000 conceptions to teenagers in the UK, around 7,700 to under 16s and 2,200 to under 15s. The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe (Cm 4342, 1999, p.6). The government cites three principal reasons for this:

1. **Low expectations.** Teenage pregnancy is more common amongst young people who have been disadvantaged in childhood and have poor education and employment expectations. Young people who see no prospect of a job see no reason not to get pregnant.
2. **Ignorance.** Young people lack accurate knowledge about contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, what to expect in relationships and what it means to be a parent.
3. **Mixed messages.** One part of the adult world bombards teenagers with sexually explicit messages and an implicit message that sexual activity is the norm. Another part, including many parents and most public institutions, is at best embarrassed and at worst silent, hoping that if sex isn't talked about, it won't happen. The net result is not less sex, but less protected sex. (p.7)

In 1990 the Social Exclusion Unit responded to the high rates of teenage pregnancy by detailing a Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. The strategy was designed to achieve the following targets:

1. Reduce the rate of teenage conceptions, with the specific aim of halving the rate of conceptions among under-18s by 2010.
2. Get more teenage parents into education, training or employment, to reduce their risk of long term social exclusion. (p.8)

The strategy was converted into an action plan. The action plan was divided into four strands:

1. **A national campaign**, to improve understanding and change behaviour.
2. **Joined-up action** with new mechanisms to co-ordinate action at both national and local levels and ensure that the strategy is on track.
3. **Better prevention** of the causes of teenage pregnancy, including better education in and out of school with a new focus on reaching young men, who have often been overlooked in past attempts to tackle the issue.
4. **Better support** for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, with a new focus on returning to education and ensuring that no under 18 parent is put in a lone tenancy.

## **The Local Response: The Enfield and Haringey Teenage Pregnancy & Parenthood Strategy**

The previous section described the government's strategy for tackling teenage pregnancy. The government recognised that it could only achieve its strategy if it was implemented effectively at the local level. For this reason it required each local authority to develop a local strategy. In 2001, Haringey local authority and Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust joined together with their respective authorities in Enfield, to develop the Enfield and Haringey 10-Year Teenage Pregnancy & Parenthood Strategy. The government charged the Enfield and Haringey partnership with the responsibility for:

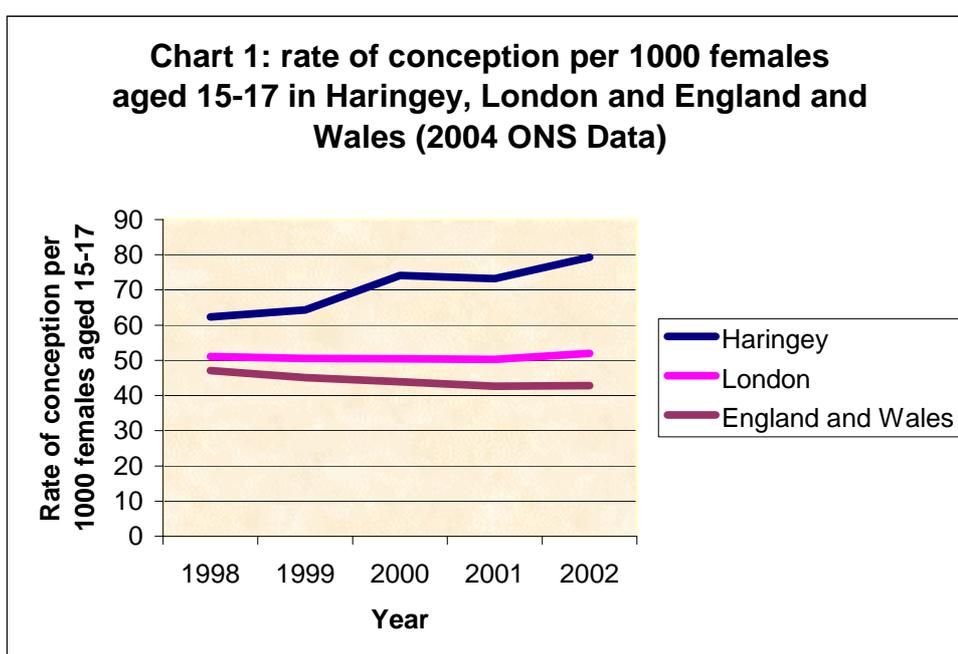
- Reducing the rate of conceptions among under-18 year olds by 55% in Haringey and by 45% in Enfield.
- Achieving a permanent downward trend in conception rates for under-16 year olds.
- Increasing the participation of teenage parents aged 16-19 years in education, training and employment to 60% by 2010, so as to reduce their risk of long-term social exclusion.
- Ensuring that by 2003 all under 18 year old teenage parents who cannot live with their family or partner will have been offered semi-supported housing. (Enfield and Haringey Local Partnership, 2003, p.2)

In Haringey, the local authority and Teaching Primary Care Trust worked with the voluntary sector to establish a Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group. The Partnership Group has developed an action plan to oversee the implementation of the local strategy and monitor progress against local targets. The challenge faced by the Group is considerable given that the rates of conception amongst fifteen to seventeen year-olds are higher for Haringey than for either London or the UK (see Table 1 and Chart 1 below). In contrast to the national trend, Haringey had increasing conception rates between 1998 and 2002, from 62.3 per 1000 15-17 year olds in 1998 to 79.3 in 2002.

**TABLE 1**  
**Number and rate of conceptions and number of conceptions leading to abortion in Haringey amongst females aged 15 to 17**

|             | Number of conceptions in Haringey | Rate per 1000 female population aged 15-17 |        |                   | Number of conceptions leading to abortion in Haringey |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------|-------------------|---|
|             |                                   | Haringey                                   | London | England and Wales |   |
| <b>1998</b> | 227                               | 62.3                                       | 51.1   | 47.1              | Data not available                                    |
| <b>1999</b> | 229                               | 64.3                                       | 50.5   | 45.1              |   |
| <b>2000</b> | 273                               | 74.1                                       | 50.4   | 43.9              | 54  |
| <b>2001</b> | 281                               | 73.2                                       | 50.3   | 42.6              |   |
| <b>2002</b> | 313                               | 79.3                                       | 52.0   | 42.8              |   |

**Chart 1: rate of conception per 1000 females aged 15-17 in Haringey, London and England and Wales (2004 ONS Data)**



As part of its work to better support young parents, the Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group decided to establish a drop-in project at the Park Lane Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Three posts were created to deliver the project. Haringey TCPT created a Project Manager’s post. The Project Manager worked with young parents to come up with the name for the drop-in project, *Stepping Up*. Connexions, a government programme providing confidential advice and information to teenagers, provided a Personal Advisor. The Park Lane, High Cross and Roundway Sure Start local programmes established a Teenage Parents Support Worker post. The Teenage Support Worker was appointed in May 2004. She was asked to do two kinds of work. First, to do one-to-one work with teenage parents. Second, to design a Haringey wide support group for teenage parents with low support needs (e.g. parents who needed help with filling in a form or needed someone to advocate for them) or medium support needs (e.g. parents with housing, asylum or parenting issues)<sup>1</sup>. This evaluation report is concerned with the development of the Teenage Parents Support

<sup>1</sup> In contrast to parents with high support needs, e.g. parents who are misusing drugs, or experiencing domestic violence, or really depressed, or looking to terminate a pregnancy.

Group. The next section explains how the Teenage Parents Support Worker worked with the Sure Start Local Programme Managers and her *Stepping Up* colleagues to design a pilot programme for the Teenage Parents' Support Group.

## **Establishing the Teenage Parents' Support Group**

On coming into post in May 2004, the Teenage Support Worker used her first two months to plan a programme of events for the Teenage Parents' Support Group pilot. She used Enfield and Haringey's official approach to working with teenage parents to guide her through this work. That is she aimed to:

- Actively involve young people.
- Develop young person-centred and young person friendly services.
- Adopt a holistic, positive and non-judgemental approach.
- Tackle inequalities through inclusion.
- Work in partnership with other relevant service providers.

(Haringey and Enfield Partnership, 2003, p.3)

To actively involve young people, the worker attended a local conference for teenage parents that had been arranged for June 2004 (see Appendix 1, p.18). The 'Getting it Together' conference was designed to facilitate young parents' access to services and give them a role in shaping new ones. The conference took place at the Park Lane Neighbourhood Resource Centre and was attended by approximately<sup>2</sup> twenty teenage parents, twenty young people and forty-five professionals. During the lunch-break, the Support Worker made an effort to consult parents who lived in or close to the Park Lane, High Cross and Roundway local programme areas. Parents were asked to identify their needs and support issues from a list provided by the worker (see Appendix 2, p.20, for consultation questionnaire).

They were also asked about the best time for the pilot programme drop-ins, what would encourage them to attend the group and what would discourage them from attending the group. The Support Worker received fourteen forms from teenage parents. The feedback from the fourteen parents is detailed in Table 2 below. The most commonly identified support issues were childcare, housing, employment and training. The most commonly identified child-support issues were play opportunities and nutrition. Not all parents returned their forms, some were attending to or feeding their children during the lunch break, and did not have time to fill the form in. Some could not speak or read English. The Teenage Support Worker recognises that ideally, consultation time would have been planned into the conference, rather than being squeezed into the lunch hour. However, it had not been possible to plan consultation into the timetable, because the timetable had been finalised before the Support Worker had identified the need for consultation.

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<sup>2</sup> This figure is based on the Project Manager's recollection. There are no official attendance records.

# TABLE 2 - CONSULTATION FINDINGS

(conducted June 2004 with 14 parents from High Cross, Park Lane and Roundway Local Programme Areas)

| <i>Parents' Support Needs</i> |    | <i>Parents' Support Issues</i> |   | <i>Children's Support Needs</i> |   | <i>Children's Support Issues</i> |   |
|-------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Childcare</b>              | 10 | <b>Relationship problems</b>   | 2 | <i>Play opportunities</i>       | 6 | <i>Speech</i>                    | 3 |
| <b>Housing</b>                | 10 | <b>Registering with a GP</b>   | 1 | <b>Nutrition/healthy eating</b> | 4 | <b>Growth</b>                    | 3 |
| <b>Employment</b>             | 8  | <b>Sexual health issues</b>    | 1 | <b>Behavioural issues</b>       | 1 | <b>Walking</b>                   | 3 |
| <i>Training</i>               | 7  | <b>Seeing a midwife</b>        | 1 |                                 |   | <b>Using a Potty</b>             | 3 |
| <b>Parenting skills</b>       | 4  |                                |   |                                 |   | <b>Play with other children</b>  | 3 |
| <b>Education</b>              | 4  |                                |   |                                 |   | <b>Teeth</b>                     | 2 |
|                               |    |                                |   |                                 |   | <b>Social Skills</b>             | 2 |

| <i>Best Time For Drop-In</i> |   | <b>Information on other services</b>                   |   |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>12pm to 5pm</b>           | 5 | <b>Other Sure Start</b>                                | 2 |
| <b>11pm to 4pm</b>           | 3 | <b>Colleges and Schools</b>                            | 2 |
| <b>10am to 3pm</b>           | 1 | <b>Nurseries and playgroups in the Sure Start area</b> | 2 |
|                              |   | <b>Connexions</b>                                      | 1 |

| <i>What would encourage parents to continue to use the drop-in?</i>   | <i>What would discourage parents from using the drop-in?</i>   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is very interesting and useful and makes a difference in my life in some way.</li> <li>• My child communicating with other kids.</li> <li>• If I get a lot of information and support I will attend.</li> <li>• I want to improve my language. I need transport.</li> <li>• Things for both. Activities for parents. Creative activities, outings like swimming, etc. Childcare, one-to-one support for mental schemes.</li> <li>• I haven't actually being using a drop-in but as long as my child is in safe hands.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is not enough respect and honesty</li> <li>• If I was not gaining anything from the drop-in</li> <li>• Childcare.</li> <li>• Transport - not enough doing and less talking.</li> </ul> |

## The Design of the Teenage Support Group

Having completed the consultation, the Teenage Support Worker worked with the Sure Start Programme Managers to design the Support Group pilot programme. The aims of the programme were to:

- Support local parents to play a part in the local community and develop a sense of ownership and belonging.
- Give local parents opportunities in training and get them back into employment.
- Help parents deal with social issues such as personal and family relationships.
- Improve parents' existing life skills (e.g. budgeting, cooking and coping with stressful situations).
- Improve parents' existing parenting skills (e.g. dealing with children's behaviour, nutrition and play).
- Raise parents' awareness over how existing services work (e.g. housing, benefits and education).

The aims of the programme supported the five Sure Start objectives. By aiming to get parents into employment, support parents to play a part in the community, improve parents' life skills and enable them to deal with social issues, the Support Group was supporting Sure Start Objective 5, 'strengthening families and communities'. By improving parents parenting skills, it was supporting Sure Start Objective 2, and in particular 'supporting the development of good relationships between parents and children'.

The pilot programme was planned to run for ten weekly sessions starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July and finishing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. The consultation findings were used to shape the programme of activities (see Table 3 on next page for full programme). Sessions on housing, employment and training were planned, reflecting the fact that parents most commonly identified these as support need and issues. A session on midwifery, which had been requested by Programme Managers, was not included on the basis that it was not a priority identified by parents. Other sessions on first aid for infants and toddlers, parenting skills and a trip out to the seaside were also included<sup>3</sup>. Many of the workshops supported Sure Start Objectives. For example, the workshop on 'Hands on Play' showed parents new ways of playing with their children, supporting Sure Start Objective 4 'improving children's ability to learn'. Two workshops were held to teach parents First Aid skills, supporting Sure Start Objective 3 'supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth'. The Support Group was located in the Aspire Base at Kenneth Robbins House in the Park Lane Sure Start local programme area. The Aspire Base is a Council owned facility for young people equipped with computers, a kitchen area and a 'games room'.

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<sup>3</sup> The reason for providing a trip to the seaside was to give parents an idea of cheap activities they could do with their children – some parents had never been to the seaside before.

**Table 3: The Teenage Support Group Pilot Programme**

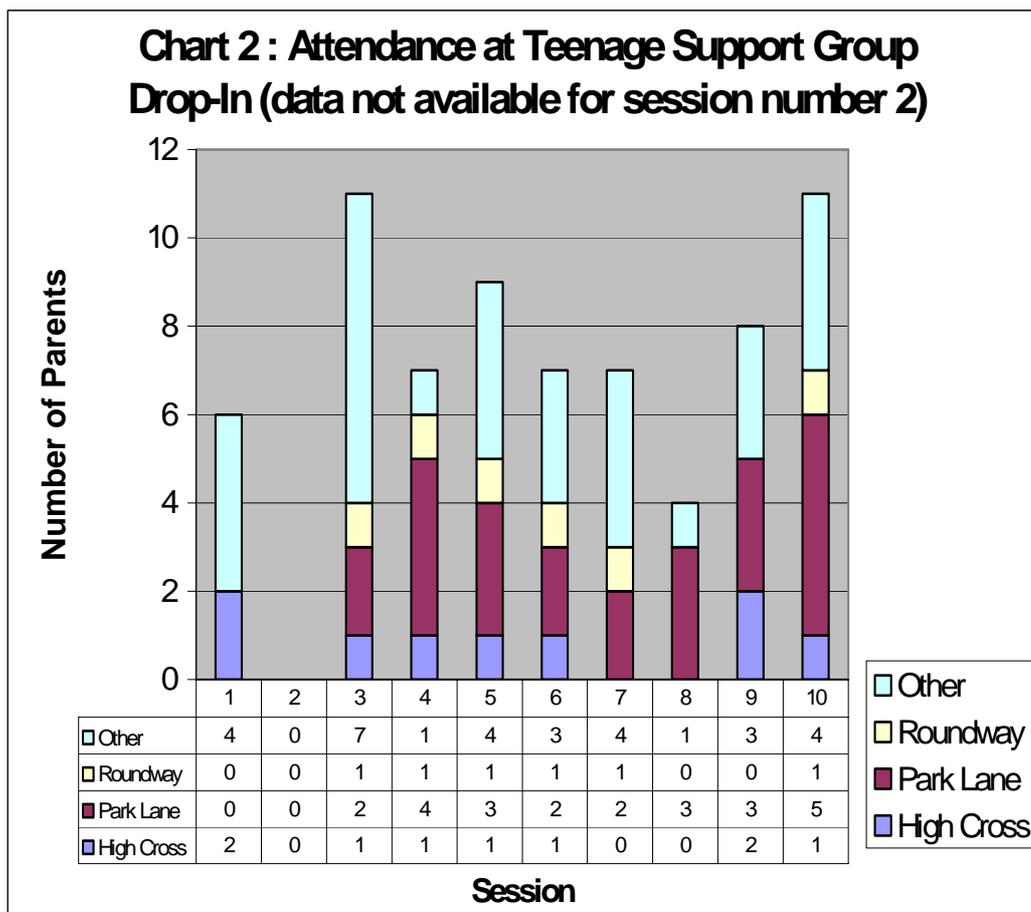
| <b>Date of Session</b>    | <i>Theme</i>                    | <b>Number of Attendees</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> July      | Introduction                    | 6                          |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> July      | Reed Employment Day             | Data not available         |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> July     | Hands on Play                   | 11                         |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> July     | Problem Solving                 | 7                          |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> July     | Housing Session                 | 9                          |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> August    | 1 <sup>st</sup> Aid (session 1) | 7                          |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> August   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Aid (session 2) | 7                          |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> August   | Trip to seaside                 | 4                          |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> August   | Bar-b-que                       | 8                          |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> September | Media Workshop                  | 11                         |

## **The Group in Practice**

The Support Group pilot programme of ten sessions was provided, as planned, between July and September. Each session ran between twelve thirty and four thirty every Thursday and operated on a drop-in basis, so parents could arrive and leave as they wished. Whilst the Teenage Support Group Worker had the overall co-ordinating role for the pilot programme, all three members of the Stepping Up team helped to run the group, and a number of professionals were bought in to deliver the different sessions. The table below shows the date, theme and number of parents attending for each session. Attendance data is available for nine of the ten sessions. The average attendance at the nine sessions was eight, with the majority of parents coming from the Park Lane area or outside of the three local programme areas (see Chart 2 on next page for breakdown of attendees at each session by programme area). In total, twenty-five different parents attended one or more session, seven of these parents from Park Lane, three from High Cross, one from Roundway and fourteen from outside the local programme areas.

## **Parent Feedback**

In early September the Teenage Parent Support Worker drew up a parent feedback form to find out what parents thought of the Support Group pilot (see Appendix 3, p.23, for a copy of the feedback form). She planned to get parents' feedback by visiting them at home. Not having the time to visit all the parents, she tended to visit those parents who lived nearest to the Park Lane Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Feedback forms were collated from seven parents in total of which five were from the High Cross, Park Lane and Roundway local programme areas. The purpose of the feedback form was to find out if parents were generally satisfied with what the support group was offering.



Parents were asked to rate each of the ten pilot programme sessions from one to five. Five was considered very good and one was considered to be very poor. All the workshops received an average rating of 4.6 or above. Parents also expressed satisfaction with the venue and the time of the drop-in. When asked if they or their children had benefited from the session, five of the seven parents felt they had benefited and five said their children had benefited. One participant noted that since attending the Support Group she had started college full-time. Three parents felt that the group helped their children socialise. Parents enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people or be with young people, two appreciated the support or advice and one felt the Group was an opportunity to release stress.

Whilst the feedback received from parents suggests that those who filled in the form had enjoyed the workshops, Table 4 shows that there was a significant non-response rate to some of the questions. It is not clear why so many parents failed to respond to certain questions. Was it because they hadn't attended the session, because they didn't like the session or because they couldn't be bothered to respond? More significantly, the Support Worker elicited the views of only a third of the parents attending the Support Group. What did the remaining two-thirds think? In summary, the feedback provides an incomplete picture of what attending parents thought of the Support Group.

# TABLE 4: EVALUATION FEEDBACK

(conducted September 2004 with 7 parents, 5 of which were from High Cross, Park Lane and Roundway Local Programme Areas)

| THEME OF WORKSHOP   | Number of parents giving mark out of 5 for workshop |   |   |   |   | DIDN'T ANSWER             | AVERAGE SCORE  | Suggested themes for future work shops<br>(number of parents who suggested theme in brackets)  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|--|--|
|   | 5   | 4   | 3 | 2   | 1 |                           |  |  |
| <i>Introduction</i>   | 3   |   |   |   |   | 4                         | 5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing (1)</li> <li>Grants for parents (1)</li> <li>Hands on play (2)</li> <li>More toys and activities for children (1)</li> <li>Learn how to talk to my child and teach him some words, he doesn't say any thing for his age. (1)</li> <li>Messy play (1)</li> <li>Bring some clowns &amp; face painting for children (1)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reed Employment Day</b>  | 1   | 1   |   |   |   | 5                         | 4.5  |  |
| <b>Hands on Play</b>  | 4   | 1   |   |   |   | 2                         | 4.8  |  |
| <b>Problem Solving</b>  | 3   | 2   | 1 |   |   | 1                         | 4.4  |  |
| <b>Housing Session</b>  | 5   |   |   |   |   | 2                         | 5  |  |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Aid (session 1)</b>   | 4   |   | 1 |   |   | 2                         | 4.6  |  |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Aid (session 2)</b>   | 7   |   |   |   |   | 0                         | 5  |  |
| <b>Trip to seaside</b>  | 3   |   |   |   |   | 4                         | 5  |  |
| <b>Bar-b-que</b>  | 5   |   |   |   |   | 2                         | 5  |  |
| <b>Media workshop</b>   | 4   |   |   |   |   | 3                         | 5  |  |
| <b>Venue</b>  |   | <b>Time of Drop-in</b>  |   | <b>Did parent benefit?</b>  |   | <b>Did child benefit?</b> |  |  |
| Liked venue   | 3   | Good time   | 7 | Yes   | 5 | Yes                       | 5  |  |
| Venue OK  | 4   | Bad time  | 0 | No response   | 2 | No response               | 2  |  |
| Did not like it   | 0   |   |   |   |   |                           |  |  |
| <b>How did parents benefit?</b>   |   | <b>How did child benefit?</b>   |   | <b>How can we make the group more enjoyable for children?</b>   |   |                           | <b>How could we ensure your attendance at the group?</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives parent something constructive to do (1).</li> <li>Since coming I have started college full-time (1).</li> <li>Parents have fun and learn new things (1).</li> <li>Increased confidence (1).</li> </ul> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because child feels comfortable and doesn't cry (1).</li> <li>Group helps child learn /socialise (3).</li> </ul> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face painting (1).</li> <li>Fun/new activities (2).</li> <li>The food should be more for the babies (1).</li> <li>Paper shouldn't be put in the food (1).</li> <li>Put toys in the Resource Room (1).</li> </ul> |   |                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do more trips and activities (1).</li> <li>Make sure there is something new to do each week (1).</li> <li>Nothing, pay us? (1).</li> <li>Change the start time to between 1.30 and 2.30 (1).</li> </ul> |  |

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this report is to monitor and evaluate the establishment and development of the Haringey Sure Start Teenage Parents Support Group. The report started with a review of the national and local policy on teenage pregnancy. It described the government's 1999 Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, which aimed to reduce the rate of teenage conceptions, enable more teenage parents to access education, training and employment, and reduce isolation amongst teenage parents. Haringey's response to the national strategy included the establishment of the Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group and the decision to run a drop-in project, *Stepping Up*, to better support young parents.

The report then moved on to explain how one member of Stepping Up, the Teenage Support Worker, worked with Sure Start local programmes and Stepping Up colleagues to establish a Haringey Support Group for teenage parents with low and medium support needs. The Support Worker, adopting the approach taken by Enfield and Haringey to working with young people, consulted fourteen teenage parents, and used their feedback to design the format and content of the Support Group pilot programme. The Support Group ran, as planned, for ten weeks between July and September. The average attendance at the nine sessions was eight, with twenty-five different parents attending one or more session. After the pilot programme had finished, the Support Worker gathered feedback from seven of the twenty-five attending parents. Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the pilot. However there was a significant non-response rate for some of the questions. It is possible that parents did not respond to a question because they did not want to say bad things about the Support Worker or the Stepping Up project. In future, any parent feedback exercise should seek to ensure that parents answer all questions and are asked to give reasons for why they didn't respond to certain questions. Whilst the Support Worker elicited the views of seven parents, we have no opinions from the remaining eighteen parents who also attended. It may be that the Support Worker collected feedback from parents who had attended more often, and who had therefore felt more positive about the project. In future, the Stepping Up project will need to ensure that feedback comes from a higher proportion of parents and from parents who attended only a few sessions, as well as parents who attended many.

This report has shown that the parent feedback questionnaire used by the Support Worker allowed parents to express their general sense of satisfaction with the Support Group, as well as what they liked and what they didn't like about the group. It has also shown that the themes of the Support Group workshops supported Sure Start objectives. However, the data collected from parents does not allow for a judgement to be made on the Group's overall outcomes (i.e. the impacts of the service on parents' lives), and in particular, on outcomes that relate to Sure Start objectives. At the very best, some of the parents' feedback suggests that the Support Group *may* have impacted on parents' lives. For example one participant said 'since coming I have started college full-time', which suggests that the Support Group *may* have helped the parent into education, which would meet Sure Start objective 5 (see right and below). However, more evidence is needed on if and how Support Group staff supported and enabled this parent to make a move into full-time education. Three parents felt that the group helped their children socialise. The Support Group *may*

have promoted social well being and met Sure Start objective 2 (see next page, right), but more evidence is needed on how the Group helped children socialise, and what the children were like before they attended the Group compared with what they were like afterwards. When asked what they enjoyed, parents said the opportunity to meet new people or be with young people, two mentioned the support or advice and one noted the opportunity to release stress. This means that the Support Group *may* have reduced isolation amongst parents and families, and met Sure Start objective 5 (see right), but more evidence is needed on whether parents felt isolated before attending the Group, and what Support Group staff did to help parents feel less isolated.

| SURE START OBJECTIVES |  |
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| 1.                    | <b>Improve the availability, accessibility, affordability, and quality of childcare</b>  |
| 2.                    | <b>Improve social and emotional development</b><br>In particular, by supporting the development of good relationships between parents and children, enabling early identification of difficulties, helping families to function effectively and promoting social and emotional well-being.   |
| 3.                    | <b>Improve health</b><br>In particular, by supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth.  |
| 4.                    | <b>Improve children's ability to learn</b><br>In particular, by encouraging high quality environments and childcare that promote early learning, provide stimulating and enjoyable play, improve language skills and ensure early identification and support of children with special needs. |
| 5.                    | <b>Strengthen families and communities</b><br>In particular, by involving families in building the community's capacity to sustain the programme and thereby create pathways out of poverty.   |

The Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group and the government's Social Exclusion Unit need rigorous local evaluation data to judge the effectiveness of their strategies and planning. In a discussion with the Evaluation Officer, the Teenage Support Worker reported that the Support Group has increased breast-feeding rates amongst young parents, supported parents into employment and training, resolved parents' housing and benefits problems, resolved domestic relationship problems and helped parents access counselling services. It is important that Stepping Up provides hard evidence on these outcomes and then feeds that information back to the Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group and government. In future, Stepping Up could work with Haringey Sure Start Local Programmes to plan an evaluation of parent outcomes. The most appropriate method would be to fill in a Sure Start Local Programmes Project Form. The Form would enable Stepping Up to identify the key outcomes and outputs for the Group, and then identify measurable targets, qualitative and quantitative, for each outcome and output. Having identified its targets, Stepping Up could then identify the data collection methods to be used for assessing the effectiveness of the Group in meeting its targets. If this planning is completed before the service is delivered, as it should be, then the data collection activity can be planned into the ongoing delivery of the service. Stepping Up and Haringey Sure Start Local Programmes might also consider the *combined impact* of the Support Group and Stepping Up's one-to-one work with teenage parents. The Teenage Support Worker feels that Stepping Up often impacts on individual parents' lives through a combination of group work and one-to-one work rather than through just one or the other. For example, a parent may raise one issue in the Support Group, which is then dealt with in a one-to-one setting.

With the Support Group pilot programme having finished in early September, the Sure Start Local Programme Managers asked the Teenage Support Worker to restart the group in October. The worker established a twenty-five session, six month programme running from the end of September to the end of March 2005. The feedback from parents on the pilot programme was used to design the second

programme. For example, the organisers decided to scrap plans to change the venue, after parents had expressed satisfaction with the existing venue. The organisers also integrated accredited workshops into the second programme on the basis that parents had expressed satisfaction with the learning session. Unfortunately, no parent feedback or evaluation activity has been planned for this second programme. This is largely because the Teenage Support Worker was due to go on maternity leave in February, and she did not have the time nor the capacity to plan and complete an evaluation by this date. Stepping Up may wish to consider with Sure Start local programmes an evaluation of this second programme. At the time of writing it is not clear whether the Stepping Up team and Sure Start local programmes are going to continue with a third programme after March 2005. If they are, they may want to use the Sure Start Local Programmes Project Form to develop an evaluation plan for this programme. They would need to identify who is responsible for developing the programme after March 2005, when they are going to fill in a Project Form for, and who will support them.

#### *Park Lane and High Cross Sure Start Programme Managers' Response*

This report was presented at the High Cross Sure Start Local Programme Team Meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2005. In this meeting, the Teenage Support Worker informed the group that she was going on maternity leave. She also told the group that the Early Years Worker for the Park Lane Sure Start Local Programme would be working with the Stepping up Project Manager to continue the Support Group. The High Cross Programme Manager concluded that there was a need to take this evaluation report to the Haringey Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Group, and to ask them to involve the Early Years Support Worker and Project Manager in an evaluation of the third programme in supporting teenage parents. The High Cross Deputy Programme Manager noted a relatively low attendance of High Cross parents at the programme pilot. She recommended that Stepping Up and Sure Start look at establishing a drop-in in the High Cross programme area.

The report was also taken to the Park Lane Sure Start Local Programme Team Meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2005. The Park Lane Programme Manager agreed to set up a meeting with the Stepping Up Project Manager, the Park Lane Sure Start Early Years Worker and the Evaluation Officer to discuss

- 1) Collecting outcomes data for the Support Group Pilot.
- 2) Evaluating the second programme.
- 3) Filling in a Project Form, to prepare a prospective evaluation for the third programme.

At the time of writing, June 2005, no evaluation of the second programme has taken place. Instead, given the existing work commitments of the Evaluation Officer, the Park Lane Programme Manager has decided to wait for the Teenage Parent Support Worker to return to work (September 2005), before commencing an evaluation of the third programme.

## References

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