Local Programme Evaluation 2003-2004:

‘An Assessment of the Childcare Needs of Refugee and Asylum Seeking Families in the Larkhall Sure Start Area’

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1. Aim of the local programme evaluation

- To undertake an assessment of the childcare needs and use of local childcare provision by refugee and asylum seeking families.
- The focus of this evaluation is on refugee and asylum seeking families from the Horn of Africa with children aged 0-4.

2. Objective of the local programme evaluation

To undertake a consultation with local parents, professionals, community and childcare organisations.

2.1 How does this local evaluation relate to the evaluation requirements directed by the Sure Start Unit?

There is a Sure Start Unit requirement to evaluate three main issues one of which includes:

- Measuring progress towards Sure Start PSA and SDA targets and objectives and any other locally set targets and objectives in order to address the issue of the short-term impact of the programme and services on children, families and communities, (correspondence from Sure Start Unit).

In relation to this need to focus on targets and objectives, locally set targets and objectives have been set for the local programme which reflect the need to engage with the refugee and asylum seeking community. In addition to this, the reason for the focus of this evaluation is because there is a local awareness particularly within the voluntary sector about the lack of use of existing childcare provision by refugee and asylum seeking families from the Horn of Africa. Therefore, in order to address this, it was decided at a local programme level that it would be valuable to assess the use of local childcare provision, the level of need for childcare and to examine some of the barriers to providing an accessible service to refugee and asylum seeking families.
3. Method

A combination of methods were used to collect the data for this evaluation. The first method that was undertaken were seven informal interviews with professionals working with refugee and asylum seeking families in the Larkhall Sure Start area which were carried out during August to October 2003. These interviews constituted a scoping exercise to gain feedback from local professionals about the value of conducting an evaluation on this topic. All of the professionals consulted were based in a variety of both statutory and voluntary organisations. (See Appendix 2 for a list of organisations with which an interview was undertaken with a representative). These local professionals were recruited by purposively compiling a list to which letters of introduction were then sent explaining the evaluation and the purpose of the interviews. These letters were followed up with telephone calls to then arrange the face-to-face interviews. The aim of these interviews was to explore with professionals if the focus of this evaluation was a relevant issue to address and to provide the opportunity for them to contribute to the scope and remit of the evaluation. The interviews also served to collect information that could be used to provide a contextual background for the childcare needs and wider issues facing refugee and asylum seeking families. A structured set of questions were used in these interviews, (see Appendix 2 for the interview schedule). However, there was scope for any other issues to be raised by the interviewees and discussed further.

Secondly, the method that was used to consult with community and childcare organisations in the Larkhall Sure Start area was a postal questionnaire, which was sent out during March 2004, (see Appendix 2 for the postal questionnaires that were used). The childcare organisations that were sent a questionnaire included nursery schools; private day nurseries; voluntary pre-school provisions; open access play provisions and other statutory early years organisations such as Lambeth EYDCP. The community organisations that were sent a questionnaire differed from the childcare organisations in that they consisted of community centres; a youth centre and voluntary organisations that provide advocacy services to refugees and asylum seekers. Follow up letters and telephone calls were made to ensure that as many questionnaires were returned as possible. (See Appendix 2 for a list of the organisations that were sent a questionnaire).
Thirdly, the method that was used to consult with local parents was a structured questionnaire that was carried out at the Stockwell Refugee Women’s Centre (SRWC), (see Appendix 2 for the parental questionnaire). This centre is accessed by Larkhall Sure Start parents and was seen as an appropriate space in which to access refugee and asylum seeking parents. An opportunistic sampling method was used to recruit the parents in conjunction with the Sure Start Bi-Lingual Advocate who also recruited parents for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was initially piloted with two parents in March 2004. As a result of this exercise the questionnaire was modified to improve it. The remaining questionnaires were completed during July to September 2004. The majority of these questionnaires were carried out face-to-face with an interviewer who completed the parents’ answers on the questionnaire. The remaining questionnaires were self-completed by the parents. Incentives were used throughout the evaluation. Each parent who completed a questionnaire received a ten-pound Body Shop Voucher and an Early Learning toy for each of their children aged under four.

4. Results: consultation with professionals

These interviews were recorded by making written notes. The aim was to ensure that as much of the discussion was noted as possible. As a result of reading through the interview material the main discussion points were focused around three main themes. These were barriers to accessing childcare, overcoming these barriers and wider issues affecting refugee and asylum seeking families. The main discussion points according to these headings are highlighted here.

4.1 Barriers to Accessing Childcare:

4.1.1 Mirroring of staff and parents in childcare organisations

- If families do not see themselves represented in the staff they may be more unwilling to access services.

- Parents need to know that their children are accessing a safe space. Confidence and trust has to be built up in parents so that they feel secure enough to take their children to nurseries etc.
It has been evidenced that refugee and asylum seeking parents require childcare that is sensitive to their own cultural background and where their first language is also spoken by at least some members of staff. However, this is also described as a barrier to accessing existing childcare services. The parents in this particular study\(^1\) cited here also expressed a desire for early years care to be provided from within and from their own cultural community; to address the lack of trained childminders within refugee communities and the need for flexible care that they could trust from someone within their own community.

4.1.2 Language, culture and lack of information

- Language and culture can act as a barrier to communication.
- There is a lack of information about available childcare provided to families.

Language and literacy exist as major barriers to parents accessing information particularly about local childcare provision. Taped and visual information has been cited as useful tools which can be used by outreach workers to disseminate information about local childcare provision. Where to find appropriate local provision and how to find out about it has been cited as important need for refugee parents.\(^2\)

4.1.3 Finance

- ‘Affordable’ childcare cannot be afforded.

Lack of appropriate information in conjunction with the cost of childcare has been identified as a barrier to refugee families accessing childcare provision.\(^3\)

4.1.4 The concept of childcare and play

- The concept of childcare and play for children may not exist in other cultures.

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\(^1\) The information in this paragraph is drawn from Childcare Needs: among Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the London Borough of Lewisham 2000 London Borough of Lewisham

\(^2\) The information in this paragraph is drawn from Childcare Needs: among Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the London Borough of Lewisham 2000 London Borough of Lewisham

\(^3\) Childcare Needs: among Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the London Borough of Lewisham 2000 London Borough of Lewisham
4.2 Overcoming these barriers:

4.2.1 Increase in uptake of childcare services

- Refugees not accessing childcare services may only be due in part to a lack of a culture of childcare. Refugee families are beginning to see the benefits of childcare provision and want their children to be part of it. They are starting to move away from a culture of not wanting to use childcare provision.

4.2.2 Local level input into childcare development

- There needs to be input and ownership at a local level from parents in developing childcare provision that meet the needs of the community.

4.3 Wider Issues Affecting Refugee and Asylum Seeking Families:

4.3.1 The need for childcare does not exist in a vacuum

- The provision of childcare may be needed in conjunction with ESOL and access to medical care.

Other issues such as accommodation, securing employment and leave to remain are often prioritised above childcare needs. Health needs for example, may also be prioritised above the need for childcare.

This is because there are some health needs that are specific to refugees that do require access to medical care. These include the physical effects of torture; the displacement process and the journey to the UK. This type of trauma can result in mental health issues for refugees. Mental health issues may also arise from experiencing a new culture, possible family separation and the uncertainty of the process of claiming asylum. In addition to this, tuberculosis is an illness which affects refugees particularly in Lambeth and there are also difficulties for refugees in accessing primary health care and mental health services. This evidence illustrates that many refugee families have a wide variety of complex needs of which

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London Borough of Lewisham

5 The information in this paragraph is drawn from Health Inequalities in Lambeth – needs and priorities 2003 Lambeth Primary Care Trust
childcare is one of these and that this should be addressed holistically in relation to and conjunction with the multiple needs of families.

4.3.2 Translation Services

- There is a shortage in translation services in Lambeth.

4.3.3 Trauma experienced by refugees/asylum seekers

- Torture and other forms of trauma experienced are important factors.

There are some refugees who have both experienced and been witness to the torture of others. This can result in both physical and emotional trauma. Therefore their inclination and desire to trust others, including health and other professionals can be severely undermined by these experiences.⁶

4.3.4 Isolation

- Many refugee parents have no extended families and feel isolated.

Women who have lost their partners or husbands in the events leading up to seeking asylum may be left as single parents feeling isolated and with no access to a wider family support network. Even when refugees have not suffered any loss or bereavement, the loss of their home and familiar environment may affect a similar feeling of loss and isolation.⁷

4.3.5 Accessing education

- Education is very important for children in refugee families both from the perspective of professionals and the parents of these children. Refugee families often experience difficulties getting their children into school, which can take up to a year.

The importance of education to refugee families is also reflected in those families that are part of recently established communities. It is vital that their children’s future and prospects can be secured and enhanced. Therefore, education is viewed as an important means for surviving and prospering in a new environment.8

4.3.6 Somali community - an oral culture

- The Somali community is an oral society that does not have a culture of reading. Information about childcare provision and other facilities such as this would need to be passed on by word of mouth amongst people that knew each other. In this context, written communication is not an effective method. Phoning people is a more successful way of informing the Somali community about the opportunities and facilities that are available to them in the area.

It has also been evidenced that in terms of breaking down barriers to accessing childcare, refugee families need accessible information on local childcare provision that is available to them and that refugee parents who are users of local community groups also rely heavily on word of mouth for communication. As a result of some refugee parents having literacy issues, it has been suggested that translating information into other language may not suffice and that other more innovative ways of presenting information are required such as taped and visual materials.9

5. Results: consultation with childcare providers

Fourteen postal questionnaires in total were sent to childcare providers in the Larkhall Sure Start area. Ten questionnaires were received back. Therefore the response rate was 71%.

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8 Families in Transition: conflicts and concerns within refugee families 2001 The Evelyn Oldfield Unit
9 The information in this paragraph is drawn from Childcare Needs: among Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the London Borough of Lewisham 2000 London Borough of Lewisham
5.1 Number of parents and children accessing services:

- Total number of refugee and asylum seeking parents accessing the childcare services consulted: 30.
- Total number of children aged 0-4 of refugee and asylum-seeking parents accessing the childcare services consulted: 14.

5.2 Languages spoken by service users:

- 70% of organisations' users speak: French
- 40% of organisations' users speak: Somali
- 30% of organisations' users speak: Spanish; English
- 20% of organisations' users speak: Albanian; Kurdish; Polish; Portuguese
- 10% of organisations' users speak: Lingala
- 1% of organisations’ users speak the following languages:
  Lithuanian; Vietnamese; Punjabi; Urdu; Tigrinya; Nigerian; Hungarian; German; Norwegian; Farsi and Eritrean.

5.3 Services provided by the childcare providers:

- Nursery School: provided by 40% of respondents
- Out of School Club: provided by 30% of respondents
- Day care Nursery: provided by 20% of respondents

The following services were offered by 1% of respondents:

- Toy library; Carer and Toddler Group; Youth Club; Senior Citizens Club; Language Group; Young Parents’ Group; Under 5s Group; Saturday Play Club; Childcare Information on registering a new provision; Family Learning Centre; Breakfast Club and Playgroup.
5.4 Barriers to accessing childcare services:

- 50% of organisations cited: Language
- 30% of organisations cited: Cost
- 40% of organisations cited: Lack of places
- 40% of organisations cited: Information
- 20% of organisations cited: Opening hours
- 1% of organisations cited: Transport

5.5 Percentage of organisations that had recruited childcare workers from a refugee/asylum seeking background:

- Yes 1% (Volunteer from Eurotower)
- No 90%

5.6 Percentage of organisations that had provided specific services for refugees/asylum seekers:

- Yes 0%
- No 100%

5.7 Percentage of organisations that are aware of an unmet childcare need that they are currently unable to meet:

- Yes 60%
- No 20%
- Incomplete Answers 20%

5.8 Further comments made about the services these organisations would like to provide in order to meet this need:

Comments made by Pre-School Playgroups:

- “Wrap around care for 3-5 years from pre-school to nursery and during holiday times. Parents need a place so that children can be escorted from pre-school to nursery school and from nursery to a safe environment until they are able to pick them up.”
Comments made by Voluntary Organisations:

- “Full-time childcare.”

Comments made by Nursery Schools:

- “We would benefit from more help with languages though we do have a policy that multi-language within the setting is a richness.”
- “Parents of children who are offered part-time places in nursery always ask if it is possible to have full-time. Our criteria for Admissions does not allow this in the first two terms.”

Comments made by Childcare Information Services:

- “Middle income: cannot access working families tax credit.”

5.9 Percentage of organisations interested in providing new childcare services:

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5.10 Further comments made about providing new childcare services:

Comments made by Nursery Schools:

- “If we had a parents’ room pre-school children could play together and enable them to learn English.”
- “Crèche for family learning and parent courses.”

Comments made by Pre-school playgroups:

- “We would like to accommodate the parents’ wishes and give children attending morning session lunch then bring them to nursery school.”
5.11 Any other general comments made:

Comments made by Nursery Schools:

- “If you have funding available for a parents' room please let us know how we would apply.”
- “Young refugee parents, particularly women often lack the language to make contact with other parents and local support organisations. Family Learning at Larkhall has helped. Sometimes the lack of crèche facilities has held back their ambition to go on courses for their English, (N.B. Lambeth College).”

Comments made by Open Access Outside Provision:

- “Suggestions for how to reach asylum seeking families and refugee families and appropriate ways of making service accessible would be useful.”

6. Results: consultation with community organisations

Five postal questionnaires in total were sent to community organisations in the Larkhall Sure Start area. Two questionnaires were received back. Therefore the response rate was 40%. However, one of the organisations that returned a questionnaire was unable to access the information required for the questionnaire, except to be able to provide information about the services provided. As a result, point 6.1 refers to both organisations. Points 6.2 - 6.6 refer to one organisation.

6.1 Services provided by both organisations:

- Sewing Classes; ESOL classes and coffee mornings.
- Services run by Larkhall Sure Start; after school club; ESOL classes; computer classes; job search and CV service; karate classes and hall for hire.

6.2 Number of parents accessing service:

- Total numbers of refugee parents accessing organisation: 10-12.
- Total number of asylum seeking parents accessing organisation: 5-8.
Main languages spoken by users accessing the organisation: Amharic; Tigrinya; Arabic and English.

6.3 Childcare help needed by service users:
- Pre-school playgroup; drop in crèche; part-time nursery class.

6.4 Areas where users live:
- Stockwell Sure Start area.
- Larkhall Sure Start area.
- Urban II area.

Note on areas where users live: Urban II
Urban II is a regeneration community initiative funded by the European Union’s European Regional Development Fund, (ERDF). The aim of it is to support innovative strategies to regenerate urban areas. The Urban II programme is geographically specific. The programme for London covers parts of two wards in the London Borough of Lambeth – Stockwell and Larkhall.

6.5 Main barriers to accessing childcare for current users:
- Cost; language; lack of places.

6.6 Interest in providing new childcare provision:
- A crèche provision for non-English speakers.

7. Results: consultation with parents
In total twenty-one women who were parents of children aged 0-4 were surveyed at the SRWC. The original target was to complete thirty questionnaires, however, due to time constraints this was modified to twenty.
7.1 Background Information

7.1.1 First languages of parents (see Appendix 1, Figure 1):

- 66% speak Tigrinya
- 19% speak Somali
- 10% speak Amharic
- 10% incomplete answers

7.1.2 Percentage of parents who speak an additional language at home with their children:

- 62% of parents speak an additional language.
- 29% of parents do not speak an additional language.
- 9% incomplete answers.

7.1.3 Additional languages spoken (see Appendix 1, Figure 2):

- 57% of parents have English as an additional language.
- 10% of parents have Tigrinya as an additional language.
- 5% of parents have Amharic as an additional language.
- 5% of parents have Saho as an additional language.
- 23% without additional language or answers unknown.

Note on in which countries the above languages are spoken:

Tigrinya is one of the main languages spoken in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Saho is also spoken in Eritrea. Amharic is also one of the main languages spoken in Ethiopia. Somali is the official language of Somalia.

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10 The total percentage for first languages spoken is 105% because two parents marked both Amharic and Tigrinya as their first language.
7.1.4 Ethnicity of parents (see Appendix 1, Figure 3):
- 61% Eritrean
- 19% Somali
- 10% Ethiopian
- 10% incomplete answers

7.1.5 Number of children aged 0-4 per family:
- 38% of parents have two children under four.
- 62% of parents have one child under four.

7.1.6 Diagnosed disability or SEN of children aged 0-4 (see Appendix 1, Figure 4):
- 85% of parents had no child with a diagnosed disability or SEN.
- 5% of parents had children with a diagnosed disability or SEN.
- The diagnosed disability or SEN for the 5% of parents was specified as global developmental delay.

7.1.7 Employment Status:
- 100% of parents were unemployed and in receipt of benefits.

7.1.8 Household Composition (see Appendix 1, Figure 5):
- 66% were lone parents living with their children with no other adult in their household.
- 19% were living with their partner or spouse and their children.
- 5% were living with their children and other adults(s) in their household.
- 10% incomplete answers.

7.1.9 Employment status of other adults in household:
- 76% of women have no second adult in their household.
- 14% of women have a second adult in their household who is working full-time.
5% of women have a second adult in their household who is working part-time and studying full-time.
5% unknown.

7.1.10 Immigration status of parents (see Appendix 1, Figure 6):
- 51% British Citizens
- 14% Refugees
- 5% Asylum Seekers
- 10% Granted ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain)
- 5% Granted ELR (Exceptional Leave to Remain)
- 10% Incomplete answers
- 5% Other status. This was specified as Leave to Remain.

7.1.11 Length of residence in the UK:
The average length of residence of parents in the UK was eight years.

7.1.12 Residence in relation to the Larkhall Sure Start area (see Appendix 1, Figure 7):
- 53% of families reside in the Larkhall Sure Start area.
- 14% of families reside in the Stockwell Sure Start area.
- 14% of families reside in the Urban II area.
- 5% of families reside outside of these three areas.
- 14% incomplete answers.

7.1.13 Length of residence at present address:
The average length of residence at parents' present address was four years.

7.2 Use of local childcare services by parents:
7.2.1 Springfield Community Flat Crèche (see Appendix 1, Figure 8):
- 5% use regularly
- 5% use occasionally
- 90% never use
Comments made by parents about using Springfield Community Flat Crèche:

- ‘I did use it regularly in the past for my son. Now I have other children and I can’t leave them.’
- ‘I went once, but now I am pregnant the crèche is too far away. I would like to take my son there.’

Reasons for non-use:

- Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.2.2 Springfield Community Flat Parent and Toddler Group (see Appendix 1, Figure 9):

- 5% use regularly
- 5% use occasionally
- 90% never use

Comments made by parents about using Springfield Community Flat Parent and Toddler Group:

- ‘Found out about the group through word of mouth.’

Reasons for non-use:

- ‘The time 1-3pm is bad. My other child is sleeping then.’
- Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.2.3 St. John’s Church Community Hall (see Appendix 1, Figure 10):

- 0% use regularly
- 14% use occasionally
- 86% never use

Comments made by parents about using St. John’s Church Community Hall:

- ‘I use the speech and language therapy for my son and to play with other children.’
‘I was attending the playgroup on a Tuesday but because of the clash with the sewing class - stopped.’

‘Used to go to parent and toddler group, but it’s at the same time as the sewing class.’

Reasons for non-use:

‘Was invited by Sure Start staff but did not go.’

‘Would like to go. I received a letter to go, but my children were sick on that day.’

Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.2.4 Patmore Community Co-operative Parent and Toddler Group:

0% use regularly

0% use occasionally

100% never use

Reasons for non-use:

Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.2.5 CLUFO - Clapham and Larkhall Under Fives Organisation:

0% use regularly

0% use occasionally

95% never use

5% incomplete answers

Comments made by parents about using CLUFO:

‘My daughter used to go there.

‘My two children used to go there.’

‘My son/daughter will be starting there.’
Reason for non-use:
- ‘Because used to use Springfield crèche. £15 per week for CLUFO is too expensive.’

7.2.6 Larkhall Park 1 O’ Clock Club (see Appendix 1, Figure 11):
- 19% use regularly
- 33% use occasionally
- 48% never use

Comments made by parents about using Larkhall Park 1 O’ Clock Club:
- ‘Because I would like my son/daughter to learn how to share things and to play with other children.’
- ‘It’s the nearest place. In the summer time with the sun they really enjoy it.’
- ‘For the children and myself to meet others.’
- ‘For the children to play with other children and learn.’
- ‘It’s near home. There are toys to play with. I used to go with my son.’
- ‘The children enjoy the painting and colouring.’
- ‘I spend the holiday time there socialising.’
- ‘Went with friend.’
- ‘The children can play, draw. It’s good for the kids - good for me.’

Reasons for non-use:
- Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.2.7 Stockwell Community Resource Centre (see Appendix 1, Figure 12):
- 52% use regularly
- 24% use occasionally
- 19% never use
- 5% incomplete answers
Comments made by parents about using the Stockwell Community Resource Centre:

- ‘SALT course.’
- ‘Parenting course.’
- ‘Used to go to the crèche in 2001 three times a week.’
- ‘I regularly go and see what’s going on.’
- ‘Computer course in the evenings.’
- ‘Went on 18th July for festival funday.’
- Crèche for SRWC and ESOL class.’
- ‘There are groups you can go along to with your children.’
- ‘Breakfast club. My son/daughter refuses to eat. We go so that he/she can see others eating and to meet other parents from other cultures.’
- ‘Breakfast club; sewing class crèche; crèche for Wednesday’s gym class.’

7.2.8 LAMSOM - Lambeth Somali Community Association (see Appendix 1, Figure 13):

- 10% use regularly
- 14% use occasionally
- 66% never use
- 10% incomplete answers

Comments made by parents about using LAMSOM:

- ‘Advice - immigration; education; benefits; everything.’
- ‘To find information; help with housing and bills.’

Reasons for non-use:

- ‘Because it’s for Somalis.’
- Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.
7.2.9 Stockwell Refugee Women’s Centre (see Appendix 1, Figure 14):

- 62% use regularly
- 24% use occasionally
- 14% first use of centre at time of consultation

Comments made by parents about using the Stockwell Refugee Women’s Centre:

- ‘Part of the management committee.’
- ‘For the sewing classes.’
- ‘To be part of the community. I love it.’
- ‘Coffee morning.’
- ‘Occasional meeting.’
- To meet people from the same country. To do traditional activities.’
- ‘Used to come before the drop-in because LAMSOM had the sewing machines. Interested in the next sewing class.’

7.2.10 Yvonne Carr Centre:

- 0% use regularly
- 0% use occasionally
- 100% never use

Reason for non-use:

- Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.2.11 Oasis:

- 0% use regularly
- 0% use occasionally
- 100% never use

Reason for non-use:

- ‘Think it’s for older children? Over 5s?’
- Organisation was unknown to the remaining parents who participated in the questionnaire.

7.3 Percentage of parents who would like to attend the groups listed above (see Appendix 1, Figure 15):

- 62% would like to attend.
- 10% would not like to attend.
- 28% incomplete answers.

7.3.1 Further comments made about the support or information required to do this:

- ‘Financial support needed.’
- ‘Would go if I knew more about it and could talk to someone there in the same language.’
- ‘Would like more information to attend.’
- ‘Would like to attend these - no support required.’
- ‘Can only attend places that are close by.’
- ‘Would like more information about CLUFO and St.John’s.’
- ‘Would like to go to playgroup.’
- ‘Need more information about their facilities and location.’

Additional comments made:

- ‘Information and help needed to find nursery for son.’
- ‘Haven’t got time to go. Different courses during the week. Children to look after and housework to do at home.’

7.3.2 Parents’ use of childminders (see Appendix 1, Figure 16):

- 95% of parents do not use a childminder.
- 5% of parents do use a childminder.
- Of the 5% of parents who do use a childminder, they are unregistered.
7.3.3 Percentage of parents attending alternative childcare groups and organisations in the local area (see Appendix 1, Figure 17):

- 33% of parents attend alternative organisations.
- 53% of parents do not attend alternative organisations.
- 14% incomplete answers.

7.3.4 List of other organisations attended by parents:

- South Lambeth Road Library
- Kennington Lane Library
- St. Stephen’s Church (play group)
- Vauxhall Park 1 O’Clock Club
- Sure Start Stockwell and Larkhall Breakfast Club
- Clapham Common 1 O’Clock Club
- Slade Garden’s 1 O’Clock Cub for Sure Start picnic
- Sure Start Stockwell Parent and Toddler Group at Lambeth Women’s Project

7.3.5 Returning to employment and/or study (see Appendix 1, Figure 18):

- 67% of parents said they intend to return to work or study and would need childcare support to do so.
- 10% of parents said they do not intend to return to work or study.
- 23% incomplete answers.

7.3.6 Further comments made about this:

- ‘I intend to study and yes, I need childcare please.’
- ‘Need childcare for ESOL class.’
- ‘Yes. Would need childcare support to return to work.’
- ‘Need childcare support to go back to studying.’
- ‘Would like to do childcare course.’
- ‘Maybe need childcare support for child that isn’t at nursery yet.’
- ‘Crèche support would be nice at the moment to return to studying. But if not, will wait until they are school age.’
• ‘Would like to work in childcare setting so that child can be looked after in same place.’
• ‘Would like a childminder. It would be useful to get a job/study.’
• ‘Day nursery.’
• ‘Crèche or day nursery during day time.’

7.3.7 Percentage of parents with previous experience of working in a childcare setting (see Appendix 1, Figure 19):
• 5% have previous experience.
• 81% have no previous experience.
• 14% incomplete answers.
• Of the 5% this was specified as having a work placement in a nursery.

7.3.8 Percentage of parents who would like to work in a childcare setting (see Appendix 1, Figure 20):
• 57% of parents said yes.
• 5% of parents said no.
• 38% incomplete answers.

7.3.9 Further comments made about this:
• ‘Lambeth College and Springfield offer training courses. Once I have my child - will look for course.’
• ‘Would like to work with children. I stopped my previous course because of the children. Would like to carry on.’
• ‘Would be interested but not sure how to go about it.’
• ‘Yes, to have a job.’
• ‘Yes. But need childcare support to do the course.’
• ‘Would like to find a childminding course.’
8. Conclusion: summary of main points

8.1 Consultation with professionals

The first point that arose out of the consultation with local professionals was that there are barriers to accessing childcare for refugee and asylum seeking families. These barriers included:

- Staff not mirroring the ethnicity or cultural background of families
- The need for confidence and trust to be built up between parents, staff and childcare organisations
- The high costs of childcare
- The lack of information provided to parents about local childcare facilities
- Language and cultural differences
- The possibility that the concept of childcare and play for children may be unfamiliar amongst parents from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The consultation with professionals also highlighted that there are many other wide-ranging issues affecting refugee and asylum seeking families. These include:

- A lack of translation services in Lambeth
- The experience of isolation
- Difficulties in accessing education for children
- Many refugees and asylum seekers have experienced severe forms of trauma

All these factors highlight the multiple needs facing refuge and asylum seeking families. It illustrates that the need for childcare cannot be thought about in isolation, but only in conjunction with the wider issues facing these families.

However, it was also suggested during the consultation, that in terms of overcoming these barriers to accessing childcare a shift is occurring in that refugee families are starting to move away from a culture of not wanting to use childcare provision. In terms of developing childcare provision that meets the needs of refugee and asylum seeking families it was also
highlighted that local input and ownership is needed from the community, if it is to meet their needs.

8.2 Consultation with childcare providers

A wide variety of childcare services were provided in total by the organisations that returned a completed questionnaire. These included:

- Nursery schools
- Out of school clubs
- Day care nurseries
- A toy library
- Carer and toddler group
- Language group
- Young parents’ group
- Under 5s group
- Saturday play club
- Family learning centre
- Breakfast club and playgroup

The three languages that were cited most frequently as being spoken by the users of these services were:

- French
- Somali
- Spanish

One childcare provider had recruited a childcare worker from a refugee and asylum seeking background.

- However, it is important to note that no childcare organisation had provided any specific services for refugees or asylum seekers.
The three factors that were cited most frequently as a barrier to accessing childcare were:

- Language
- Cost
- Lack of places
- Lack of information

Comments about providing new childcare services that were relevant to the refugee and asylum seeking community included:

- ‘The need for a parents’ room where pre-school children could play together to learn English,’ (Nursery School).

Other relevant general comments included:

- ‘Crèche facilities are needed for English courses at FE colleges in order to increase uptake of these courses by parents who want to learn English,’ (Nursery School).
- ‘The need for suggestions on how to reach refugee and asylum seeking families and to make their service more accessible to these families,’ (Open Access Outdoor Provision).

8.3 Consultation with community organisations

A wide variety of services were provided by the two organisations that returned a completed questionnaire. These included:

- Sewing classes
- ESOL classes
- Coffee mornings
- Hosting services provided by Larkhall Sure Start
- After school club
- Computer classes
- Job search and CV service
- Karate classes and hall for hire

As the remainder of the information requested on the questionnaire was only provided by one organisation, no general comments can be made about the information received. However, in terms of individual comments that were made, the main barriers to accessing childcare for the organisation's current users were cited as:

- Cost
- Language
- Lack of places

These correlate with the factors cited by childcare providers. The specific childcare help that was needed by their current users included:

- A pre-school playgroup
- Drop in crèche
- Part-time nursery class
- Comments that were made about providing a new childcare provision included a crèche provision for non-English speakers.

8.4 Consultation with parents

8.4.1 Ethnicity/Language
61% of parents surveyed were Eritrean and 66% of parents spoke Tigrinya as their first language.

8.4.2 Household composition/Employment
66% of parents were lone parents living with their children and no other adult in their household. 100% of parents were unemployed and in receipt of benefits.
8.4.3 Immigration Status/Length of residence in local area
51% of parents were settler women with British Citizenship. The average length of residence in the local area was four years.

8.4.4 Number of children aged 0-4 per family/Disability and SEN
62% of women had one child under four, whilst 38% of parents had two children under four. 85% of parents had no child with a diagnosed disability or special educational need.

8.4.5 Use of local childcare provision
The following organisations had a of 5% of parents who regularly use their provision:

- **Springfield Community Flat Crèche:** regularly used by 5% of parents.
- **Springfield Community Flat Parent/Toddler Group:** regularly used by 5% of parents.
- **LAMSOM:** regularly used by 10% of parents.
- **Larkhall Park 1 O’ Clock Club:** regularly used by 19% of parents.
- **Stockwell Community Resource Centre:** regularly used by 52% of parents.
- **SRWC:** regularly used by 62% of parents.

The following organisations had no parents regularly using their provision:
- **St. John’s Church Community Hall**
- **CLUFO**
- **Patmore**
- **Yvonne Carr Centre**

8.4.6 Use of alternative childcare provision

- 33% of parents also attend alternative childcare groups and organisations in the local area.
- However, 62% of parents also expressed an interest in attending the organisations they were asked about in the questionnaire that were currently unknown to them.
The support that was specified in order to attend these organisations included:

- Financial support (although not all the organisations listed are fee-paying).
- Information about their facilities and location.

However, two other individual points were raised by parents, which included:

- Only being able to attend those organisations that were situated close to home.
- Being able to speak to someone else there who also spoke the same language as themselves.

Therefore, these are two important factors to take into consideration when thinking about strategies for increasing the uptake of particular services by parents with a refugee and asylum seeking background, or for planning new services.

8.4.7 Working in a childcare setting

- 81% of parents had no previous experience of working in a childcare setting.
- 57% of parents expressed an interest in working in a childcare setting.

8.4.8 Returning to work/study

- 67% of parents said they intend to return to work or study and would need childcare support to do so.

Further comments that were made about the childcare support required to return to work or study included:

- Crèche, day nursery or childminding support.
- Working in the same childcare setting or provision that their child could also attend.
8.5 Limitations of this evaluation: learning points

8.5.1 Sample

The sample of parents surveyed as part of the consultation are not representative of either those parents of the SRWC or of those within the Larkhall Sure Start area. This is because the parents surveyed were taken from an opportunistic sample and were not randomly selected. It is not possible to generalise about the answers provided by the parents and apply these to a wider number of refugee and asylum seeking families. Therefore, the results of the consultation with parents do have to stay localised to those twenty-one parents at the SRWC. It is also important to acknowledge that those parents who were surveyed were restricted to those engaged with and attended the centre. This is because there were benefits of being able to directly access a centre such as the SRWC which is a provision for refugee, asylum seekers and settler women particularly from the Horn of Africa. Accessing a large group of women that already feel safe in a space in which they use in order to meet and socialise facilitated the process of carrying out the questionnaires. It is also of value to acknowledge that a further evaluation of this subject would benefit from eliciting the views of more isolated parents or of those who choose not to engage with the centre or Sure Start services. This would require an alternative sampling strategy and method of recruiting parents to the one that was planned and used for this current evaluation.

8.5.2 Method

The evaluation could have further benefited from a combination of methods being used for the consultation with parents. For example, focus groups could be used to further explore in more detail the responses gained from the questionnaire particularly around the use of local childcare provision; the desire to work in a childcare setting and returning to work and/or study to enable further strategic thinking about how to progress these issues and provide for the needs expressed.

Note on parental questionnaire

With regard towards the questioning of parents’ level of attendance at local childcare groups the phrase ‘regularly use’ (see Appendix 2, page 11), encompasses a range of meanings in relation to parents’ level of attendance. For example, once a week, twice a week or more
often. This is an area that could benefit from a further clarification either through discussion in
the use of focus groups or as part of a further evaluation on this subject.

8.5.3 Literacy and Language

The questionnaires were carried out predominantly in English with ad hoc questions
translated at the time of interview when required by other women who were present at the
drop-in/coffee morning. This did, however, raise issues of communication and understanding
between the parent and the interviewer. As a result of this, not all of the issues raised by the
questions that were asked of parents may have been fully understood. This may also have
affected the quality and length of the qualitative answers given to open questions, because
English was a second language for all the parents surveyed. This was compounded by
literacy issues for parents that self-completed a questionnaire as some of these self-
completed questionnaires had incomplete answers.

Note on Current Events

Although this evaluation has produced some valuable material, it is important to highlight the
recent developments in terms of local childcare provision that have occurred separately to the
evaluation. For example, in terms of new childcare provision there is now a Sure Start drop-in
crèche at the SCRC, and there are crèche facilities for the SRWC. The SRWC is also now a
fully constituted organisation with an active management committee that is seeking
fundraising to deliver training and childcare provision for the centre.
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