



Barnardo's

LONDON EAST and SOUTH EAST (England)

GIVING CHILDREN BACK THEIR FUTURE

AKWAABA CENTRE

Annual Report 2005-06

Barnardo's Vision

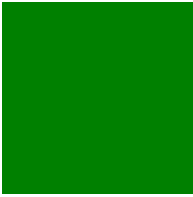
Is that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination.

Our Purpose

Is to help the most vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfil their potential

During 2005-06 Barnardo's ran 80 services in the London, East and South East England providing support to children of all ages within their families and communities.

More information can be obtained from the Regional Office on 0208 551 0011.



Overview



Yasmin Nariman
(Children Services Manager)

A major achievement for the service has been the Highscope Quality Assurance Accreditation. This validates and recognises the high standard of curriculum delivery and is a very prestigious nationally recognised award.

Our day care service worked with 33 children aged two to four years old, all of whom were either “in need” according to the Children Act 2004, or had specific additional needs.

Our Vietnamese Family Support worker supported 63 families over the past year in a variety of ways depending on individual needs as well as via group work. for instance advocacy interpreting, translating,, welfare benefits advice and two parenting courses.

Our Parent Education classes and Parent groups worked with 52 parents over the past year. Parent groups varied from Positive Parenting Programme, Health Education sessions for new parents, education courses on Sexual Health and Relationships and Nutrition Advice Sessions as well as ESOL classes and Literacy classes.



Children have a right to *a positive family life*

What we did

Promoting positive experiences of family life is a huge focus at Akwaaba. Parents are encouraged to spend time with their child at the centre and also attend parenting groups and workshops to increase their knowledge and understanding of how they can promote their child's development and develop their parenting skills.

Regular events and celebrations are organised at the centre as well as fun and educational outings which are family events, attended by on average 95% of our parents who accompany their children to share the experience.

Parents are invited to attend regular meetings to discuss their child's progress and development. We work in partnership with parents to agree ways in which we can both use specific planned activities to support their child's learning and development. To promote children's experiences of a positive family life the following events and outings were organised by the centre and attended by parents and their children.

- Carnival celebration, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Full Moon Festival, Vietnamese New Year, Diwali, Eid.
- Outings to the Discovery Centre, London Aquarium, Boat trip along the Thames

Positive experiences of family life was also promoted via the various parent education classes as these undoubtedly increase parents' skills, knowledge and experience, making them more confident, which in turn benefits their parenting.

Family support services provided at the centre help to address specific issues faced by parents which helps to encourage experiences of a positive family life.

What difference did we make?

Service User feedback:

“I enjoyed the visit, he loved all the activities, in fact he did not want to leave. It was well organised” (DC, parents) - 14.11.05

“It was a fun filled trip and we had a brilliant day together”. (TW, parent) - 13.11.05

“I felt the time was too early to prepare my child and get ready, next time it would be better to have a later start” (EJ, parent) - 13.11.05

“We loved the outing, hope to do it again soon, we have lots of lovely memories” (JB, Parent) - 15.11.05

Following the day trip to the Aquarium, children were regularly heard talking about the day's events to staff, each other and their parents. Large pictorial displays featuring the children and their parents reflect the concrete experience of the outing. The children relate to this by recalling the many positive experiences of the day shared with their parents.

Parents are supported on an individual basis with their specific needs. For example O, a young single parent aged 22 years, with two children under the age of 3 years. O was tragically assaulted last summer with acid thrown over her face and upper body. As a result she was hugely traumatised, requiring intensive ongoing surgery to the severe burns she suffered. R, her young 2 year old child, witnessed the assault and was in shock with the trauma. Our student social worker T supported O on an individual basis, making a priority referral for her younger child to be allocated a nursery placement. Also via accessing appropriate resources from Social Services, especially the Family Support and Intervention team, who agreed to provide transport costs for mini cabs for O to transport her children to their nurseries and for her to attend her many weekly hospital appointments and operations as and when needed. T offered O support via weekly meetings and made referrals for her to access other resources to enable her to cope and manage to care for her young children successfully, in spite of her tragic assault. O is currently being supported with counselling sessions.



Children have a right to *make a positive contribution*

What we did

Akwaaba consistently delivers the Highscope curriculum, the 33 year longitudinal research on which has proved that children who experience two years of Highscope curriculum are more likely to stay on in further education, more likely to be employed, more likely to get married and less likely to have criminal record. Consequently the experiences our children gain are the foundation for future success.

Children are supported via the Highscope curriculum to engage in decision making via making choices every day, and via developing positive relationships with an awareness of the need to consider others' feelings. Our service users are hugely diverse from a variety of countries and cultures with different religions, language and history. As a result our children have the benefit of experiencing the richness of diversity as the centre consistently celebrates and promotes difference via our resources and our positive interactions. Children are consistently valued and quickly develop self confidence as the curriculum is completely child centred.

Parents are supported and encouraged to promote positive behaviour in their children via parenting programmes and workshops as well as individual meetings, all of which help develop their awareness, knowledge and parenting skills.

What difference did we make?

The Highscope curriculum promotes and encourages decision making, as a result all our children are helped to develop socially and emotionally which is evident in everyday events. For example if a child is hurt, other children always come to assist and take care of the hurt child with the support of the staff member.

Specific stories and regular discussions with the children focus on expressing feelings and ways in which these can hurt others. This empowers the children to speak up and “use their words” to express themselves if they are unhappy or have any concerns. Consequently children are more confident with a raised self esteem.

(LH, parent) - “My child talks more now and tells me what he has done during the day and what he has eaten which he loves at nursery!”

(JW, parent) – “My daughter has learnt so much and is even making jokes, it makes me happy.”

“I love to grow seeds and then carrot comes, but only if it gets water to drink.”. (JC, child aged Four and half years)



Children have a right to *Stay safe*

What we did

Safeguarding our children is a major priority. Staff practice is reflective of this as any signs or symptoms of possible safeguarding issues are quickly and professionally dealt with. Barnardo's Safeguarding policy is practised daily. Referrals are made as appropriate.

The Kidscape programme "Keeping Safe" is delivered annually for the children, which helps to empower them with simple ways in which they can help to protect themselves to stay safe.

The environment at the centre has been risk assessed in order to ensure the children's safety at all times. Risk assessments are carried out for all activities to ensure the safety of our children.

Child safety and child protection workshops have been delivered for parents. These were facilitated by local Health Visitors and our Family Support Worker. These have raised parents' awareness and knowledge of how they can keep their children safe.

Specific resources are used to develop children's awareness of issues of safety via stories and regular discussions to build on existing knowledge and stretch their development.

Staff receive regular training and support on safeguarding which they actively put into practice via day to day service delivery.

The staff team received a whole day's Child Protection training to update their knowledge, skills and awareness. Staff also benefited from accessing Lewisham's multi-agency Child Protection training.

What difference did we make?

Akwaaba's links with other local professionals such as the Family Support and Intervention team have improved as we are working together much more than in the past. This has had positive outcomes for the children as parents have received much needed support, which has directly impacted on ensuring the safety of their children and preventing further pressure on the parent. This ultimately prevented possible, but highly likely, child protection referrals being made.

S a single mother of five children, suffered a mini stroke immediately after birth of her last children which has left her with continuous heart problems. This has resulted in her needing regular medical treatment. Consequently, care of her children became a concern, two of whom attend our nursery. Social Services (social workers) arranged for an escort to bring the children and collect them from nursery everyday. This has meant consistency for the children and peace of mind and less pressure for S, who was unable to bring her children to nursery due to her deteriorating health conditions.

S shared that having her "children safe at nursery for seven hours each day means I have less to worry about ... less stress".

Parents workshops focus on developing Parenting skills many of which are aimed at ensuring their children's safety, both within the home and while they are out. For example raising awareness of who they leave their children with and how they are supervised in their absence, understanding how to listen to children and hear what they say and using appropriate methods of discipline that does not involve corporal punishment, these are a few ways in which parents are supported to keep their children safe.



Children have a right to *social & economic wellbeing*

What we did

All children receive high quality nursery education via the Highscope curriculum. Their physical, emotional, social and intellectual development is consistently promoted to ensure that they are stretched and challenged and encouraged to progress. The aim of this is to prepare children to have the necessary skills and knowledge when they leave us to start school. The Curriculum focuses on active learning with the aim that this trait will stay with the children and inspire them to continue learning.

Working parents and those seeking work are offered childcare for a longer day to help meet their needs. Parents are supported to be economically active via helping them develop their skills and knowledge in order to increase confidence and make them more marketable and ready for employment. English language classes are provided twice weekly for our parents and those in the community as well as Literacy classes.

Jobcentre Plus's monthly visits inform parents of the benefits of training and employment and parents are then individually supported according to their needs.

Welfare Benefits Advise is available for parents, especially those seeking employment as they may be eligible for "return to work" incentives.

What difference did we make?

The longitudinal research on Highscope found that children who experience two years of the Highscope Curriculum are more likely to stay on for further and/or higher education, more likely to be employed, less likely to have a criminal record and more likely to be married. Based on this research, Akwaaba is committed to delivering the Highscope curriculum to the highest standard possible as we want our children to have the best outcomes for their future.

Parents are supported and encouraged to develop skills and knowledge with the aim of accessing training or employment. Several parents have embarked on this while their child has been at Akwaaba.

(JW, Mother) – “Now that L is at nursery, I can start going to college and learn the n get the qualifications I need”.

“I never had the confidence to go to college but as the English classes are at the nursery, I come to them” (HL, Mother).

When N aged two years started nursery, L a young single mother was asked how she planned to spend her days, she said she “didn’t know” as she “hadn’t thought about it”, when encouraged to think about it, she said she would “love to be a nurse” L was supported to find out about the Access to Nursing course, then encouraged to apply for the one year course, which she was successful at. L is now about to start to train as a nurse.

G, a young single mother whose two year old son D had additional needs, was keen to develop herself once D had settled into the nursery. G was supported to find suitable voluntary work in an administrative job which was her interest. G excelled at her voluntary position and after three months was offered part-time paid employment.



Children have a right to *enjoy & achieve*

What we did

Akwaaba delivers very high quality Early Years provision that prepares children for school and helps them meet early learning goals. The Highscope curriculum is used to support every child achieve their potential with the focus always on stretching development.

All children who have additional needs which currently amounts to 60% have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This aims to stretch their development via clearly identified goals and targets. Parents are encouraged and supported to spend a few minutes each day working on the identified targets in order that the child gets a consistent message and extra support to achieve growth in their development. IEPs are reviewed by the key worker and parent every eight weeks and new targets are set as appropriate.

The childcare staff received a variety of training over the past year, for example on The Birth to Three Matters, Highscope curriculum, Attachment theory, Outcomes Framework/Every Child Matters, Ofsted requirements linked to the National Day Care Standards, Common Assessment Framework, Working with Hidden Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Training and several other courses accessed via the Local Authority's training programme.

Each child has a six monthly Action Plan report which is focussed on identifying progress and making plans for the next six months based on the child's developmental needs. This is generally a six month plan to stretch development based on the child's needs and interests. During the meeting with the parents, discussion addresses how their input is vital in ensuring effective development, as their level of interest and time invested in supporting their child to learn is crucial.

Parenting Programmes and Parents Workshops are geared at increasing parents knowledge and involvement in their child's development and learning.

What difference did we make?

Akwaaba recently received the Highscope Quality Assurance Accreditation. This was following inspection where all aspects of curriculum delivery were observed in practice by the external assessor. This highlights that staff are child focussed and receptive to meeting the needs of individual children and that the education provision is of an extremely high standard.

Children clearly enjoy coming to the centre every day as their comments to their parents illustrate. J, aged two and half years, told his mother JW that “I want to go to nursery”, but it was a Saturday, so JW had to explain that the nursery was closed on Saturdays and Sundays. JW then had to bring her son J, to nursery to show him that it was not open! JW shared that her son absolutely loved coming to nursery and had learnt a great deal over the past six months especially in terms of his behaviour. JW commented on how much easier it was for her at home in terms of managing her son’s behaviour, which was very challenging in the past. JW felt that the techniques and strategies gained from her individual sessions with staff at the centre has helped to improve her parenting skills and her relationship with her son.

RK, mother of MK, commented on the growth and progress that her son, who has additional needs, had made over the last year. RK’s elder daughter KK had recently left the centre to start school. RK shared that her daughter’s school had asked her which nursery KK had attended prior to starting school as her level of knowledge, language development and behaviour was very advanced for her age. RK felt that this was as a direct result of the two and a half years that KK had attended the nursery at Akwaaba.

Several parents echo the above example as this is very common feedback received from the majority of parents in relation to the service they receive for their children.

Another comment regularly received from parents is “I don’t worry about my child because I know that he/she is happy and safe and enjoying themselves.”

Parents who have attended any of the Parenting courses vary in feedback for example:

“We learnt lots from each other (parents) that was good, because we shared our experience.” (TW, mother).

“The course was interesting because I had never thought of many of the things we talked about. It helped me to try to do things differently.” (AT, mother)

“The course was good, I learnt new ways to have fun with my child. I also realised that I was a good parent, which was nice.” (LW, mother)

“The training was great. I know now many ways in which I can help my child learn more just by talking to him about different things.” (JC, mother)



Children have a right to *be healthy*

What we did

The service sought the advice of a nutritionist during the past year in evaluating and reviewing the nutritional value of the meals we provide for the children. The nutritionist also facilitated workshops for parents to promote knowledge, understanding and awareness of healthy snacks and simple meals that they could prepare for their children while at home.

The staff team worked with the children to promote an understanding and awareness of healthy eating and how to be healthy, in basic terms i.e. with exercise, sleep and the foods they eat. This was achieved via appropriate discussions, stories and inviting people from the community to speak with our children. For example, the Community Dental Nurse visited as the Tooth Fairy to convey the important message of looking after our teeth.

Healthy eating habits are encouraged and promoted by following the Department of Health guidelines. A variety of fresh fruit is on offer every day and this has helped children develop their interest taste and their knowledge of different fruit and be able to identify their favourite.

In order to minimise environmental health risks the staff team all received training on Health and Hygiene and Safe Food Handling. Also all our food is purchased and supplied by reputable companies, to ensure the best possible quality.

Physical health is also promoted via making maximum possible use of our outside garden area which is set up similarly to the indoor environment in line with the designated Highscope curriculum's key experiences.

Physical exercise is encouraged on a daily basis, especially in view of the fact that the majority of our children live in flats and as such have limited access to safe outdoor play space.

Children's mental health is promoted by ensuring that positive working relationships are built up between the staff and children. This contributes to making the children feel safe while at nursery. Regular discussions about feelings and sharing of family experiences over the weekend and the evenings have created an environment where children can safely express themselves whether feeling happy or sad.

Mental and emotional health has also been promoted by Judy Hunter, Child and Family Therapist, who worked on Early Intervention Mental Health assessments of children and their parents and early promotion of positive mental health and emotional well-being. Judy also facilitated training on Attachment theory to promote staff awareness and knowledge.

Parentcraft classes held at Akwaaba run by the midwives serve to ensure the health and well being of the youngest of babies, pre birth and after delivery.

What difference did we make?

As a result of the nutritionist's feedback our meals have been adapted to reflect her recommendations. Consequently the children are receiving a much healthier diet.

Parents have made changes at home to incorporate the advice of the nutritionist, having attended her workshops. Children's comments to each other are a clear indicator of their increased knowledge as highlighted by these anecdotal notes:

"Kiwi's are good for you, have some." J aged 4 years

"Pasta is good for my teeth, but not sweets. Pasta makes me grow like Spiderman!" F aged 4 years.

"I like brushing my teeth, cause it makes them shine bright." S aged 4 years.

The outdoor environment is hugely utilised and enjoyed as illustrated by one of our young service user: "I want to be outside all day to play and eat." R aged three years.

Parents having attended the Speakeasy course facilitated by the Family Planning Association wrote about what they had learnt on their evaluation forms: "now I feel confident to talk to my children about sex." T, mother. "I learnt about sexually transmitted infections which I didn't realise before." R, mother. "People felt free to talk about personal things which are considered rude or unacceptable to talk about in public. It gave me ideas of how I can talk to my children about it." S, mother.

Service users attending the Parentcraft classes felt that "having the classes in the evening is very beneficial to the working pregnant mothers who are unable to attend during the day due to work commitments." Also "many of us prefer the evening classes because our partners are able to attend with us and Akwaaba is more central than Lewisham Hospital."



Influencing

Akwaaba continues to happily welcome and host visits from a range of outside agencies as well as working with Barnardo's Marketing and Communications and fundraising departments.

Tristan Childs from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs organised a very successful Team Challenge day during which 17 of his colleagues spent the day at Akwaaba laying a new lawn and painting our offices.

Tristan has gone on to do a sponsored run to raise money for Barnardo's and is keen to develop his interest in the organisation via volunteering and fundraising as a result of his visits to Akwaaba.

Working in partnership with local organisations has had much influence on the local community and the Local Borough. For example Parent education being delivered via tutors from Community Education Lewisham, ESOL classes and literacy classes are hugely successful. Weekly ESOL classes are generally attended by 22 parents.

Family Planning Association delivered the Speakeasy programme and the Peer Educators training which promoted awareness and knowledge of Sexual Health and Relationships. Considering the borough has one of the highest statistics for HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies this programme will be offered twice a year to help influence and educate parents in ways that they can address these issues.

Parenting programmes are regularly delivered to support and develop parenting skills. These are facilitated by local health visitors who are trained in specific delivery. Highscope Parenting Programmes, mainly Caring Start and Growing Together are delivered by the Assistant Children Services Manager, Margaret Hussain.

Health visitors' workshops on Child Safety, Breast Feeding, Nutrition and Immunisations again promote parent education.

Vietnamese Family Support Worker, Kim Anh Tran, delivers parent groups which include Child Protection and Child Safety as well as promoting Health and Emotional well being.

All of the Parenting programmes and workshops are accessible to both our adult service users and to parents in the community. Consequently we are influencing many parents within the local community.



Participation

In line with the Highscope curriculum children are asked daily about how they would like to spend their time, what they “plan” to do and what they would like while at nursery. The children are direct about their view, YN aged 4years “I like playing... not tidying up!”. Another said “I love rice and chicken and riding the bikes in the garden” – JW aged 3 years.

Engaging with parents is another of the primary functions. Parents are met with individually every six months to discuss their child’s progress and prior to this a parent feedback/consultation form is completed with the child’s key worker which asks for their thoughts and ideas on the current service and suggestions on how we could improve any aspects. Quarterly Parent/Carer/Staff meetings are held to consult adult service users about the services they receive and ask for ideas, suggestions and thoughts of how new services can be developed and existing services improved.

Parents are individually encouraged to share their feedback on an adhoc way as well, when asked about their interests and this then develops into discussing their needs.

Services are provided on a ‘needs led’ basis. For example at the last Parent/Carer/Staff meeting, a parent requested information on attending a group that would “help me to manage my son’s behaviour and help him learn”. This was discussed and she was directed to the next Caring Start Parents group at Akwaaba.

Parents are regularly consulted and services are matched to their interests and needs. For instance a parent was keen for support in helping her to give up smoking, once a few others committed to the group this was organised at the centre and facilitated by a health professional. Although had there been no others interested, the individual parent would have been signposted to access the appropriate support.

Family support and Parent education are delivered in line with the needs of service users. This is evident in the take-up of these services and the number of participants.

We have recently invited the Voice Participation service to work with us in developing our skills in involving our very young service users, aged 2 to 4 and a half years to participate in or actively influence any future recruitment of staff.



People

Our Greatest Resource

The past year has been a particularly successful one as we have had a stable staff team, This has ultimately enabled the childcare team to work well together and consistently deliver the Highscope curriculum to a very high standard which as led to achieving the Highscope Quality Assurance Accreditation. The team are dedicated, motivated and enthusiastic about service delivery.

The staff team were delighted to receive the “Team of the Year Award” at the recent Barnardo’s Recognition Event. This has helped recognise and value their achievements and hard work over the past year.

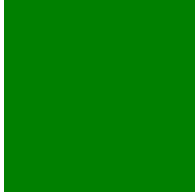
The staff team have continued to benefit from excellent training opportunities which in turn have improved and developed service delivery. To support staff, promote productivity and well being, regular subsidised monthly massage sessions are offered to the team. This is hugely valued by staff members as it works as a very effective method of stress relief.

Akwaaba had five successful childcare students and three social work student placements all of whom gained from the learning experience as well as made positive contributions to our service delivery.

Margaret Hussain, ACSM, SENCO, High/Scope Accredited Trainer felt that “ This has been another busy year for the staff team at Akwaaba. Earlier this year the centre was awarded the High/Scope Quality Assurance certificate in recognition of the quality of the care and education the children who attend the centre receive. This award was achieved through the hard work and dedication of the staff team and is a fitting acknowledgement.

We will all work hard to maintain and improve the standards achieved over the coming year. The celebration day was a great success with the Owl demonstration, the Police Horses, and the children’s entertainer. Many people involved in Children Services in Lewisham attended as did the parent / carers and senior managers from Barnardo’s Children’s Services and staff from other Barnardo’s projects.

Part of my role at the centre is to undertake support training for parent / carers and later this year will be running two workshops based on the High/Scope Caring Start and Growing Together models.”



Money

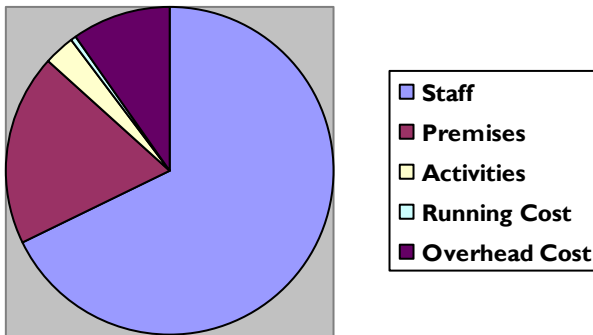
Where it comes from

Akwaaba has a Service Level Agreement with the London Borough of Lewisham which funds 55% (£254,101) of the Early Years Service that relates to 23 “children in need” placements. Barnardo’s voluntary funds amount to 45% which amounts to (£204,770) annually.

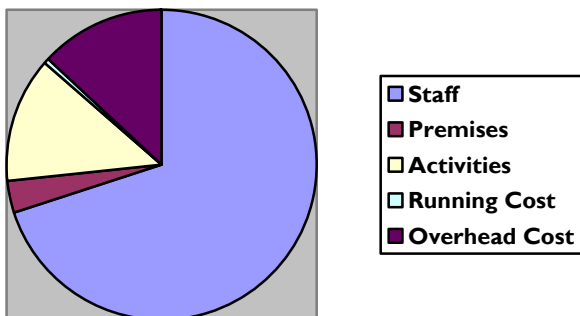
We had a three year Service Level Agreement with Sure Start which ended in March 2006. However we have a few remaining children for which funding is currently winding down. This amounted to £70, 025 annually.

How was it spent?

Local Authority Partnership Budget



Evelyn Sure Start Partnership Budget





Summary of Plans for Next Year

It is hoped that the Barnardo's Policy Research Unit (PRU) will be in the position to embark on a piece of research on the children receiving a service at Akwaaba. This will ideally be Outcomes based and will help to evidence the effectiveness and value of our service.

Services at Akwaaba will continue to be developed in line with the needs of service users. The Local Authority is gradually developing the Commissioning of services. Akwaaba is keen to work with the Local Authority to address gaps in services and explore how we can work together to help support children and families most in need via helping the Local Authority meet their targets.

Akwaaba is planning to develop working in partnership with local organisations such as Lewisham's Teenage Pregnancy Unit to provide services for Young Fathers in the borough.

Akwaaba plans to continue to maintain a stable and consistent staff team which is key to delivering high quality service. In line with this staff will continue to be valued and supported to develop both professional and personally to ensure that they are rewarded and satisfied by their role and job. Maintaining staff motivation is crucial in providing the excellent standards currently delivered on a daily basis.

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Email: yasminnariman@barnardos.org.uk
- ❖ Margaret Hussain – Assistant Children's Services Manager, SENCO,
Endorsed Highscope Trainer.
- ❖ Faustina Ogoe-Anderson – Children Service Administrator
- ❖ Kim Anh Tran – Vietnamese Family Support Worker

Currently working in partnership with:

- ❖ LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
EARLY YEARS DEPARTMENT - Penny Arlett and Gillian Lincoln
- ❖ Sure Start: Evelyn Ward: Programme Manager - Shirley McKlow
- ❖ CAMHS: Child and Family Therapist: - Judy Hunter
- ❖ PCT Midwives: Parentcraft classes - Nancy Chidawa
- ❖ Community Education Lewisham: ESOL & Literacy classes - Caron Scott-Nadal
- ❖ Health Visitors Team - Elaine Vassell
- ❖ Lewisham Early Years Special Educational Needs Team - Rosemary May
- ❖ Family Planning Association - Vivienne Quant