



An Evaluation Of The Neath Port Talbot Parenting Matters Service Work In Progress

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Start Date: July 2004

Background Information

Commissioned by: Parenting Matters Service

Background of Service

According to the 2002-2003 Annual report the service states its overriding aim in the Project is to “build on families’ strengths to improve children’s lives.”

The project provides three main services for parents:

- a) Parenting Courses for parents whose children exhibit behavioural difficulties at home, in school or in the wider community. These courses are open to all parents in Neath Port Talbot who have a child aged between 4 and 14 years. Two courses are run every school term – one for pre-teenagers and one for parents of teenagers. These courses run for eight weeks and based on a problem-solving approach through an NCH course entitled “Handling Children’s Behaviour”. It allows parents to listen to other parents with similar problems and to try out aspects of positive parenting in between the course sessions.
- b) An individual 1:1 home visiting programme that uses Cognitive Behaviour Therapy as its main philosophy. This involves defining the unwanted behaviour, deciding on the wanted behaviour and then using charts and rewards to produce changes. This method is well researched and has been proven to work with adults as well as children and young people. This service involves not only the parents but also the children who often understand the principles extremely well. The weekly home visits are reinforced by weekly phone contact from the project staff members.

- c) The third service is Family Group Meetings. A co-ordinator helps families organise a meeting when they are experiencing serious difficulties with their children. For example, a child might be excluded from school or about to become looked after by the local Authority. The meetings are held in a venue decided by the family and at a time convenient to them. After the professionals talk to the family members about their concerns and the resources they can offer, they withdraw from the meeting. The family then work out a plan in their own private time to address the concerns that the professionals are expressing. Because the family “own” their plan, there is strong research evidence to show that family members are more likely to implement the agreed tasks.

Objectives of the work

This evaluation will focus on the first aim (a) evaluating the group work element of the service. It will examine the impact of the parenting course upon parents and their children. It will also provide some evidence regarding the longer term effects of attending a parenting course.

Methodology

- Baseline information will be taken by Parenting Matters staff in the form of a Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (parent/carer version) at the point of attending their initial group. A second SDQ will be completed, as procedure, at the end of the sessions.
- Barnardo’s Research and Development staff will carry out focus groups with parents during the summer. Parents will have all completed at least one parenting course. The length of time since completion will vary amongst parents. The focus groups will examine issues of accessing the service, the content of the course and the perceived effects of the course.
- A third SDQ will be carried out by parents when attending a focus group to establish if there have been any changes in the time post course.
- A final report will be completed by November 2004.

For further information about this piece of research please contact Vikki Bulter (Policy and Research Officer) or Rachel Dowling (Research Assistant)

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