

strengthening families

Issue 16 Spring 2007

The newsletter of *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities*

SFSC is one of three programmes that the Government has chosen to invest in as part of a national initiative to deliver parenting support to parents of 8-13 years olds at risk of poor outcomes. Here, the Rt. Hon. Beverley Hughes MP, Minister of State for Children and Families writes about the Government's commitment to Parenting initiatives, and one such work programme: the Early Intervention Parenting Pathfinders Initiative...



Pathfinders

Parents and families are the single most important factor in shaping children's development and their social and emotional wellbeing, as research shows us time and time again. We know that positive parenting enhances children's experience of childhood and enables them to reach their full potential: at home, at school and in later life. That's why the Government is committed to ensuring that whatever support parents need is available to them in their local area, for fathers as well as mothers. 75% of parents have told us they need support at some time. Therefore we want to make sure that all parents can access a wider range of support, from easily accessible information and advice, guidance from professionals through Children's Centres and Extended Schools, assistance for parents in choosing schools, and high quality parenting programmes. Every Local Authority has been funded to develop a local strategy for services for parents with a dedicated senior officer to ensure the parenting services are developed in a way that meets local need.

Research has also shown that, weak or harsh parenting is often a key risk factor for anti-social behaviour, as well as underachievement and social or emotional problems in later childhood or adolescence. The Social Exclusion Action Plan and the Respect Action Plan both highlight the need for the development of more effective and holistic approaches to work with parents and families with complex needs to reduce social exclusion and anti social behaviour.

Sometimes poor parenting can have widespread effects, reducing the quality of life, not just of the child and their family, but also of the wider community. This is particularly true when it is combined with other factors such as poverty and social exclusion. To tackle this, the Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinders are testing the practicalities of delivering structured parenting programmes with families of children aged 8-13 years who are considered to be at risk of poor outcomes.

Based in 18 local authorities, the Pathfinders are piloting the delivery of three parenting programmes to the 5% of families that research suggests are most likely to benefit. We know that the three selected programmes - Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities, Triple P and Webster Stratton's Incredible Years - have been shown to be effective within the parameters that they have already been tested; we are now looking to see how they work when delivered on a large scale to people who may already be receiving other forms of support and who are going about their every day lives.

The pathfinders programme will be completed in April 2008, when we will be in a position to evaluate the results and consider how these programmes could be rolled out nationally. We hope that they will form part of the range of services and support for parents that will improve the lives of every child, every family, and every community.



Parenting Pathfinder **York**

The City of York has an active and enthusiastic multi-disciplinary Parenting Strategy Forum, which has been the driving force behind our bid to become an Early Intervention Parenting Pathfinder. The whole initiative will allow us to build on the good work that is already happening in the city and help us to deliver support for parenting in the community, thus allowing parents to build networks of local support beyond the life of the project.

We will be rolling out the exciting *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* programme across the city over the next 12 months to support parents of children and young people in the at risk category.

Our first 24 facilitators, from a range of agencies and organisations, were trained in January and descriptions of the five day course included those on this page.

The best facilitator training I have ever been on

In June a further 24 people will be trained to facilitate the programme and these will include parents who wish to become facilitators and work alongside practitioners.

After Easter we will be running our first six groups for parents in four geographical areas and two groups specifically for parents from the traveller community and for mothers who have fled violence. We will have workshops and taster sessions over the summer holidays alongside children's activities and, in the autumn, hope to be offering the same groups again with the addition of groups in other

areas, including ones for Dads, parents of disabled children, parents from ethnic minority backgrounds and foster carers. Each group will be run by a team of 3 facilitators from a range of professional backgrounds, with parents trained to facilitate alongside them in the later groups.

Life-changing

The Pathfinder has also given us the opportunity to really expand the skills base of workers across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies in York, both through specific facilitator training and a wider programme of skills building throughout the Children and Families and Adult workforces. This aims to raise awareness of the importance of parenting support and how people working with parents can best support them to access appropriate programmes and what support they can continue to offer both during and post the programme. We will also focus on de-stigmatising the need for parenting support, so that more parents feel confident to seek and access the information, support and guidance they need, when they need it. Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities enhances the continuum of support we are developing for parents from pre-conception through to their children reaching adulthood.

Linda Murphy

I could see straight away how much it would benefit the families I work with

Knowing the evaluation base

Increasingly, we are contacted by agencies and facilitators to ask about the evaluation base of *Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities*. As well as this we have a number of new developments related to evaluation to update you on. As a result, we thought we would take the opportunity to revisit information on how we evaluate SFSC and what we know about the impact of the programme on parents.

The Race Equality Foundation is committed to ensuring the delivery of the *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* Parent Programme to the highest standards.

To this end we have established a Quality Assurance system. This consists of:

- *The completion and collection of a number of forms by facilitators which we use to monitor the programmes and to provide evaluation data; and*
- *Up to three monitoring sessions per programme, including one visit carried out by Race Equality Foundation*

Paper evaluation

We collect data through the following :

- *programme registration form*
- *parent registration forms*
- *pre-test questionnaires*
- *post test questionnaire*
- *class summary report*

These are used to produce an annual report on the delivery of SFSC. This report covers all programmes delivered in that year. Custom produced reports on programmes delivered by particular agencies are available by commission from Race Equality Foundation.

Race Equality Foundation Monitoring

Facilitators must submit the programme evaluation data (registration forms, pre and post questionnaires and class summary form) for each programme they run. Facilitators are reminded in advance for this paperwork, and part of the purpose of the monitoring calls and visit is to ensure that all forms are being completed at the correct time.

In terms of the monitoring, contact will be made up to three times during the lifetime of a programme. Usually this is via telephone contact, however all first time facilitators will receive a programme visit.

The visits are not designed to police the programme and should not be seen as an inspection, but are more diagnostic in their approach. The aim is to support facilitators in the preparation and delivery of a programme, and provide facilitators with the opportunity to raise issues and find ways of resolving them. Essentially the three visits will look at (a) preparation; (b) performance; and (c) programme review.

Feedback will be provided to facilitators. This feedback is informal and takes the form of a discussion with the visiting officer. This will usually take place at the end of the visit and is an opportunity for you to raise any issues that you want Race Equality Foundation to advise you on.

The arrangements for monitoring each programme will be made when you register a SFSC programme with us.

SFSC Facilitator training

In addition, an evaluation report is produced for all SFSC trainings. The commissioning agency receives a copy of this report.

What is the evidence base for SFSC?



While it is true that we do not have any studies based on randomised controlled trials, there is evaluative evidence for SFSC.

- *there is now a series of studies available for the programme from the USA. We have a number of these in the office and we encourage those who are interested to come and look at them.*
- *there is a recently published article in a refereed American journal: Farber, M Maharaj, R in Research on Social Work Practice, Vol 15, No 6, Nov 2005, 501-515 (which can be sent electronically if requested).*

It is valid for us to use the evidence from American studies for two reasons. First, SFSC and Strengthening Multi-ethnic Families are the same programme, but for some changes in language. Second the vast majority of the evidence base used by programmes such as Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton) is also of American origin. [This is not just our view, but also that of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Policy Research Bureau.]

We also have evaluative evidence from England.

- *A report is available on programmes delivered in 2000-2001 (based on the paper data collected for all programmes), and one is prepared for 2002-2003. In addition evaluation reports are available for a series of programmes delivered through Coram Strengthening Families project in Tower Hamlets, and a series of programme delivered by Holloway Parents Centre. All of which are available to view in the office.*
- *In addition, work has begun by an independent research agency (Research Plus+) on all 2004-2005 data. This evaluation is being funded by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and is currently in draft form and will be available in summary form for distribution shortly.*
- *Furthermore, the video diaries project was another attempt to collect evidence on the impact of the programme. While the video diaries approach has limitations, it is also an important tool in getting a different perspective (that of parents over time, reported on as they participated in programmes) on the value of the programme. The completed DVD is available now.*



The classes were excellent. The facilitators ensured that everyone was included. They listened to, respected and valued each person.

The sessions were always varied, pacy and interesting. I would recommend this class for every parent.

Some messages from evaluating SFSC

I think this course was really important in my life. I just wish I could have this kind of help for some more time because changes are slow and parents keep having doubts and challenges

It should also be recognised that the SFSC programme fits well with the model for effective programmes suggested by the NICE evaluation on effective programmes for children with clinically identifiable conduct disorders. The summary of this report is available from the NICE website.

SFSC is also one of the three programme that is part of the DfES Early Intervention Pathfinder Project. SFSC has been identified by DfES as having a solid evidence base.

Also, a PhD studentship attached to the Open University has been established. This will enable a study of the longer-term impact of the programme to take place by following-up some of the parents who have already completed the programme. It is unlikely that any evidence from this will be available for three years, but it will be a valuable source on the impact of the programme when complete.

For parents, the evaluations show:

- *Increase in positive communication/discipline techniques*
- *Decrease in negative communication/discipline techniques*
- *Increase the amount of time parents discussed drugs/gangs, sexual responsibility*
- *Enhanced ability to manage child behaviour*
- *Enhanced parent's anger management and problem solving skills*
- *An impact on child self esteem. Self discipline, problem solving*
- *Increase in family activities*
- *Improved parent relationships*
- *Increase in community involvement (with schools, community groups and faith groups).*

77%

77 per cent of parents said they would like to continue to meet

100%

100 per cent of parents said they would recommend this programme to other parents



Making the programme more accessible a partnership project in Leeds

One of the Parenting Fund grants that Race Equality Foundation holds is to work in partnership with CHANGE (an organisation promoting equal rights of learning disabled people) to adapt the SFSC programme materials for use with parents with learning disabilities.

Race Equality Foundation received funding in the Autumn 2006 to begin a two year project to make the *Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities* Parenting Programme accessible for Parents with Learning Disabilities. An illustrator has been appointed to work with the two project workers to adapt the materials using easy words and pictures. The project will work closely with parents with learning disabilities to review the materials and provide feedback, the programme will be piloted with a group of parents and will be facilitated by a parent with learning disabilities also. The materials should be ready for wider use in the summer 2008.

The project team consists of two project workers, Beverley West and Helen Atanda, the illustrator Dan and a Volunteer called Agnes. All the workers are based in the CHANGE office in Leeds.

To date the response has been very positive, organisations working with parents with learning disabilities have been contacted and Beverley has spent a number of months sending out information and telling people about the project. Feedback from this information phase and from programme monitoring nationally tells us that there is a great demand for an accessible version of this programme for parents with learning disabilities and for other parents who may be learning English or have limited literacy skills.

If you would like any more information about the project or would like us to visit a group of parents with learning disabilities please contact Beverley or Helen on 0113 243 0202 or email beverley@racefound.org.uk or helen@racefound.org.uk

SFSC in Birmingham

In the Autumn, Race Equality Foundation secured a Parenting Fund Grant to expand its regional work supporting the voluntary sector to increase its capacity to deliver the SFSC programme. The grant for Birmingham provides training and support to the voluntary and community sector working with BME families and focuses particularly on better engagement of fathers. Initially Cassius and Vanessa Francis took this work forward and this role has now been taken on by Assata Owens.

In Birmingham the SFSC project has a specific brief to improve the quality and increase the quantity of support available to black and minority ethnic parents, with a particular emphasis on how organisations can effectively engage fathers.

The first five day facilitators training took place in the heart of Birmingham, November 2006. There were 24 delegates from a range of community and faith projects that completed the facilitators training. Organisations included Family Welfare Association, Spurgeons Childcare, The Muatha Trust, WAITS and a number of church groups. The programme was so popular there was a waiting list of other individuals that were keen to access this training.



Agencies and individuals are now being supported to set up and deliver their programmes and the appointment of Assata Owens will facilitate this. Assata will work closely with those already trained whilst also recruiting new organisations to sign up to this project. It is anticipated that new programmes will begin in April and September, and another facilitator training will take place in May 2007.

Assata is asking that people contact her if you are
 ¥ interested in being trained as a SFSC facilitator
 ¥ previously trained as a facilitator and now want to run the programme in Birmingham
 ¥ interested in attending events on effectively engaging with BME fathers
 Please contact Assata on 0121 452 1977.

I attended the Strengthening Families — Strengthening Communities Parenting Programme facilitator course in November 2006. I found this a life changing experience. The training was facilitated and delivered excellently. The subjects covered were thought provoking and at times sensitive, but I found the more honest I was with myself, the more I would get from the course.

After completing the course this increased my desire to work with families and communities and I feel equipped with the tools I need to deliver the course. I would strongly recommend this course to anyone who feels they can make a difference.

Veronica Turner

SFSC in the East Midlands

Norean Yasin, Programme Officer for the East Midlands, provides an update on the Parenting Fund work taking place in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

The Race Equality Foundation has secured funding to provide training to the Voluntary Sector in delivering the *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* Programme to black and minority ethnic communities throughout the East Midlands; focusing specifically on Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

Norean Yasin is the newly appointed Regional Parent Programme Officer for this work. She will support the rolling out of the facilitator training across the East Midlands and provide advice and support on the delivery of SFSC programmes to facilitators and agencies in the region.

The project has got off to an excellent start with a recent facilitator training in Leicester attended by 24 individuals from statutory and voluntary sector agencies, a training in Nottingham attended by another 24 individuals from a range of settings, and plans to train a further 24 facilitators over the next month. This will result in an expansion in the use of the programme within the East Midlands. The popularity and impact of the programme is reflected by the demand across the region where requests have come from both the Voluntary Sector and Statutory Agencies too.

Norean is also supporting the Leicester EIP Pathfinders work taking place, by working together with the Centre for Fun and Families to support facilitators and programmes. To date 12 individuals have been trained for this with another 12 coming on board in April. The Pathfinders have already registered a number of programmes for delivery over the coming months.

For further information on the Facilitators Training and delivery of programmes please contact Norean Yasin at email: norean@racefound.org.uk; mobile: 07809197563; office: (0115) 9420553

Training News

Developing confident, competent and capable facilitators

Several training courses and support meetings are planned over the next six months which will help SFSC facilitators to explore the programme and develop their skills further. Below is a list of what is happening over the next few months:

Peer Support Group meetings

North West (Manchester)

Dates to be confirmed
Contact Amina Lone on 0161 839 9799

London and South East (London)

Dates to be confirmed
Contact Janette Bryan on 0207 619 6220

South west region

Dates to be confirmed
Contact Annie Oliver on 0117 9514231

West Yorkshire

Dates to be confirmed
Contact Beverley West on 0113 243 0202

East Midlands

2nd May 2007
Contact Norean Yasin on 0115 942 0553



START: A Young People's Programme

This is a two day facilitator training course for SFSC facilitators who wish to deliver the START programme for young people. This programme is based on the principles of the SFSC parent programme, and is structured to be run as a stand alone programme or alongside a programme with parents. It aims to reduce risk taking behaviour and raise self esteem.

Croydon April 26th and 27th
Further training will take place in **Manchester** in the Autumn. Further information is available from Amina Lone 0161 839 9799

Delivering SFSC

A one day course aimed at facilitators who have just completed training or are about to start their first SFSC programme and want to think through some of the issues associated with this. This is a training course that agencies commission. Training dates are:

East Midlands May 16th 2007
Birmingham June 6th 2007
Manchester June 28th 2007
Please contact Leandra for further information.
0207 619 6226

Working with black and minority ethnic fathers

This is a new course open to SFSC facilitators and others interested in working with BME fathers. It is currently under development and will be delivered later this year in **Birmingham**. Further information is available from Assata on 0121 452 1977.

CONFERENCE 2007

Please remember to put the conference date in your diary and notify parents who have been, or who are currently, participants in SFSC programmes. Conference flyers and booking forms will be going out shortly. Free places will be available for parents and a cr che will be provided. Further information is available from Leandra on 020 7619 6226.

SFSC five day facilitator training

This is the facilitator training course run over five days, delivered by Marilyn Steele. Training dates are:

London	April 16-20, 2007
Leicester	April 23-27, 2007
Haringey	April 30-May 4th 2007
Birmingham	May 14-18, 2007
Battersea	May 14-18, 2007
Haringey	May 21-25, 2007
Hertfordshire	June 4-8, 2007
Bristol	June 11-15 2007
Northwest	June 11-15 2007
York	June 25-29, 2007
Tower Hamlets	July 2-6, 2007
Lewisham	July 2-6, 2007
Tower Hamlets	September 10-14 2007
London	September 17-21 2007
Brent	September 24-28 2007
Tower Hamlets	November 12-16 2007
London	November 19-23 2007

Introducing the **START** programme in Manchester and Liverpool

Amina Lone, Parent Programme Officer in the North West, explains the ongoing work taking place in Manchester and Liverpool.

Following on from Round One of the Parenting Fund, the Race Equality Foundation successfully secured funding in Round Two, to continue to build up parenting support in the North West. The first phase of the work involved establishing a base in the North West which has now firmly been put in place. Good relationships have been built with Manchester City Council, the voluntary, statutory and faith sectors in Manchester as well as with the regional offices of national agencies such as Barnardos and DePaul Trust. We are engaging in partnership work and are constantly striving to improve the standards in parenting support so families can benefit.

The second phase of the work in the North West involves continuing to provide intensive support to groups that are new to the provision of parenting support or to working with SFSC: providing training around groupwork, co-facilitation, and recruitment and retention of parents, so SFSC facilitators can keep their facilitation skills sharp; and building up a local infrastructure with the establishment of regional peer support groups.

A key area of development is the rolling out of the START young people's programme. This is a programme that can be used with young people, ages 10-18, in as many varied ways that SFSC is used. The ethos of START is the same as SFSC and the aims of the programme are to raise self-esteem, self confidence and self-discipline in young people as well as equipping them with solution building and positive social skills. The programme is 12 weeks in length with a 2 hour classroom based session which is followed with an hour's activity where the young people can put some of their skills into practice. The programme has been successfully run in Manchester and London with the young people taking part in activities as diverse as photography, making a music cd and basketball training. The START programme can be used with young people independently or run alongside the SFSC parent programme.

The next SFSC training in Manchester is taking place in early summer. Start training is rolling out throughout the year. *If you would like details of any of the above, please contact Amina Lone, 0161 839 9799 or email me amina@racefound.org.uk.*

SFSC Team Profile

Leandra Box is the SFSC Programme Manager. She joined the REU in 1996 as part of the research team to carry out a study of the use of family centres by black communities. She has worked and written extensively around black and minority ethnic families, including adapting the Strengthening programme for use in the UK. More recently she has been supporting the development and delivery of a Strengthening Families Young People's Programme.

Janette Bryan is an SFSC Parent Programme Officer and has been delivering this programme to parents since 2000. In addition to running parent groups, Janette supports facilitators and agencies in the delivery of SFSC, organises regular facilitators training and oversees the registration of programmes and the collection of evaluation data.

Amina Lone is the Parent Programme Officer based in the North West. She has been a SFSC facilitator for a number of years and has also delivered training for SFSC facilitators. In addition to running parent groups, Amina supports and monitors facilitators and agencies in the delivery of SFSC, focusing on expanding the programme's use in the North West region.

Beverley Thompson is the Parenting Programme Officer based at CHANGE in Leeds. She has been a SFSC Facilitator for the last 6 years and also delivers training to Facilitators. Beverley supports and monitors groups and facilitators in delivering SFSC, and also runs regional peer support sessions. At the moment Beverley is working as part of a team on adapting the Parenting Manual into easy words and pictures for use with Parents with Learning Disabilities.

Helen Atanda is a newly appointed Parent Programme Officer based at CHANGE in Leeds and working with Beverley and Dan. Helen is a parent with learning difficulties and is working to make the SFSC programme more accessible to other parents with learning difficulties.

Assata Owens is the SFSC Parent Programme Officer based in Birmingham. She facilitates, supports and monitors the delivery of the programme. Currently, an area of focus is on developing and embedding support for fathers.

Norean Yasin is the Parent Programme Officer in the East Midlands. Norean is based in Nottingham but works across the region providing support to facilitators and agencies delivering the programme.



About the Race Equality Foundation

The Race Equality Foundation (formerly the REU) is the leading national agency working to develop appropriate social care services to Britain's black and minority ethnic communities. The Foundation does this through training, consultancy, research, publications, workshops and conferences. The Foundation has published reports and good practice guides on subjects such as user involvement, child protection, social work and social work education, and ethnic record keeping and monitoring.



Support, supervision and evaluating the programme

In order to receive certification as an official *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* Parent Programme Facilitator, you must implement the curriculum, and administer the programme evaluation. Facilitators must continue to submit this information for each programme that they run. (See below).

		Data Required
Pre-course	Course registered with Race Equality Foundation	at least 3 weeks before start date
Session 1-3	Initial support visit or phone call by the Race Equality Foundation	(a) Parent Registration Form to be completed by Facilitator (b) Pre-Parent Questionnaire
Session 6-8	Mid programme observation visit of group in action (Mandatory for first course run)	Observation checklist (Race Equality Foundation)
Session 10-12	End of programme support visit or phone call	(a) Parent Post Questionnaire (b) Facilitators Class Summary
Post Course	Certificate Ceremony	Participants and facilitator Certificates (Race Equality Foundation)

The fifth annual conference of
Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities
inclusive parent programme

doing my **best**



TEAR OUT AND KEEP!



10th July 2007

The Institute of Education **London**



A unique opportunity to access information, hear about new developments and exchange ideas about best practice in parenting

The conference will focus on how we support parenting across all communities to help raise happy and successful children who are safe and are able to make the most of their opportunities

Contact Leandra on 020 7619 6220 or Leandra@racefound.org.uk or visit our website www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk