It takes a whole village to raise a child
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Foreword

“The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children - their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialisation, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the family and society into which they are born.”


This report shares what was achieved during this pilot, and offers suggestions as to what needs to be delivered to more effectively meet the needs of those parents, struggling in the most challenging of circumstances, to make a better life for themselves and their families.

Metropolitan Housing Trust’s determination to play a more active part in supporting the needs of its tenants, particularly those parents/carers who are increasingly being forced to raise their children in violent, and isolated localities, and still make family life good, led to the partnership with In-volve, which resulted in the delivery of Parent RAW, an exciting pilot, which was run with parents from the Moorlands Estate and surrounding areas in Brixton.

Viv Ahmun
Chief Officer, In-volve
The Triangle Way Forward programme on the Moorlands Estate in Brixton emerged from a series of meetings between Metropolitan Housing Trust (MHT), the Youth Service, the local police, and other stakeholders. These organisations approached In-volve to develop and deliver a pilot community-based parenting programme around its existing Junior RAW approach.

The context for Triangle Way Forward

Housing regeneration is as much about people as it is buildings. Nearly three decades of development in the field of family support and parenting programmes, primarily in America and Australia, have demonstrated that in order to have healthy communities, we need economically, physically, and emotionally healthy families.

Brixton (and Lambeth in general) faces many challenges in terms of community cohesion and levels of crime, particularly with regard to young people and gang culture. The vacuum which exists between young people in the community and the professionals with whom they are most likely to engage (teachers, youth workers, and other public, and community sector professionals) is increasingly being filled by gangs and violent gang culture.

Gang members are aware of the dissatisfaction among young people, particularly those who have been excluded from the system, and are not actively supported by their parents. These gangs entice young people into gang activity with the promise of the status and the positive recognition they do not believe they can attain by legitimate means from mainstream society.

Parents as leaders

Increasingly, parents are the only people who can fill this vacuum, but some lack the skills to do so. Voluntary parenting programmes, rather than Parenting Orders, are an essential tool for those communities, estates and localities at the greatest risk. The time has come to evolve the Strengthening Families approach, and the Respect Agenda, together with the current emphasis on community cohesion, in order to provide the framework needed for such a shift to take place. Interventions need to adopt a whole community and multifaceted approach in order to be truly effective.

Such programmes need to be presented not as courses for bad or failed parents, but as personal development opportunities for those parents in the most challenging areas, and those most willing to take part and make a difference in their homes, and in their communities.

Emphasis on capacity-building for greater community
cohesion and interdependence is a critically important component of any community-based parenting programme, as is vocational recognition (accreditation for distance travelled). The aim must be for the developmental experience to open up genuine career opportunities for those who take part, and for regeneration initiatives as part of community partnerships to recognise the importance of developing community based leaders in order to achieve successful outcomes in accordance with Local Area Agreements.

Who participated?

Participants were identified through information provided by MHT, the youth service, and links In-volve had already established with local residents, voluntary sector services, and young people in Lambeth. Representatives from In-volve spent time with each parent in their own home, explaining the benefits associated with the programme, and discussing the challenges that exist for residents living on the Moorlands estate.

The parents who eventually participated in the study were minority-ethnic, particularly from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. Parents took part for a variety of reason, the main four are listed below:

- they wanted to improve their relationship and communication with their children and do a better job of parenting
- their children displayed behavioural problems, anti-social behaviour or had committed criminal offences
- they had low self esteem and wanted to develop confidence building skills in order to tackle daily parenting issues with confidence.

The programme content

The course content and delivery took a holistic-psychological approach, based on In-volve’s ID approach. This draws on, and models, various evidence-based international parenting programmes, and uses the Gestalt model as the basis for enabling participants to make an early breakthrough in relation to previously unaddressed experiences. Parents were encouraged to examine their feelings and how their experiences may have shaped their behaviour and their relationships with their children, as well as how they could shape their community environment. The course facilitators used a variety of approaches and materials, drawing on psychological and personal development techniques to explore issues affecting parents’ self-confidence and self-esteem. There were various evaluation points through the programme, including mid and end assessments and weekly evaluation forms.

Of the 13 who took part, nine parents completed the process, and of that group six members are in the process of forming a social enterprise which will continue to do similar work on the Moorlands estate and other estates across Lambeth, with the support of In-Volve.

The way forward

The partnership between In-volve, who delivered the programme, and MHT, who provided resources, assistance in making contact with potential participants, and ongoing support for those parents wishing to develop their competence further, offers best practice for similar interventions on other estates. The Housing Corporation and Metropolitan Housing Trust see this as a powerful, and greatly-needed model that they are eager to share with other housing providers. Likewise, In-volve is keen to run similar pilots on key estates in all of the five Trident boroughs across London, in partnership with the relevant housing associations, and other local partners.

A detailed independent evaluation of the programme forms part of this report, which focuses on the dynamics of the partnership, the lessons learnt from the partnership process, and the feedback from participants. This report demonstrates clearly the potential for community-based development, and what such an approach to parenting programmes offers estates all over London, and indeed, right across the country.

In addition, this report contains a best practice ‘toolkit’ for future programmes, which sets out what should be considered prior to the programme and throughout it. It also includes the full overview of the Parent RAW approach, how to evaluate the success of the programme, and possible funding and partnering opportunities. The end of this report contains appendices, with more detailed ‘context’ information on Local Area Partnerships, parent programme models, and the ‘Neuro map’ used within the programme itself (designed to provide a loose and yet defined theme based context for the process).
the toolkit

Viv Ahmun
Chief Officer, In-volve

Rob Wood
Community Investment Manager, Metropolitan Housing Trust
Housing associations are key organisations for change in a neighbourhood. We are expected to play a key part in providing an environment where people want to live well and thrive. Fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are real threats to this.

MHT’s mission is “Working with residents for better homes and stronger communities”.

We initiated this project because we wanted to make a difference to an area we serve, an area with real problems where residents have lost loved ones through violence on the streets.

Many who will read of our experiences in this project will want to be clear about how to provide similar programmes which have benefit for their communities. We believe they will also gain from our honest appraisal of what worked well – and what didn’t.

The toolkit is a signposting mechanism based on our experience of facilitating the programme. We hope it is of benefit to you.

Our reasons for carrying out this project were:

- As a housing provider we were taking various measures and actions against ASB with some success. However, this was essentially a reactive process - we wanted to be more proactive, and to get to the root causes of problem behaviour.

- We already had well-developed, respected programmes for working with young people (the X-it programme was a particularly successful venture between local police and the local authority youth service, working directly with young people).

- We recognised we needed to work with parents in more effective ways. We wanted to help parents to communicate with us, but more importantly, to play a stronger, more effective part in supporting and guiding young people.

- We wanted to have a more productive relationship with parents where roles and responsibilities were more clearly defined.

- We wanted a self development programme which would help parents be more assertive and knowledgeable about how to effect improvement for their young people and for the rest of the community.

- We had seen the way that improved communication with young people (through programmes like X-it) and helping their self development had meant that some had moved towards being 'change agents' within the community.

- We recognised different groups can have a role in reducing ASB, for example by supplying information or taking action.

- The list of those who can/should contribute to such projects is extensive - we helped many to join an ASB group.
Making it happen

1) Objectives, outputs and outcomes

You should be clear about the following.

The overall aim and objectives of the project.

- We wanted to work with particular residents with known issues.
- We wanted ‘to enable parents to constructively address matters presenting barriers to effective parenting and one of the major outputs of the project will be the development of good practice guidance for others’ (extract from our funding application to the Housing Corporation).

The inputs, or resources, needed and who will contribute what.

- We started with a steering group established from our ASB group.
- We wanted maximum ‘buy in’ from our members who effectively became partners.
- We wanted our steering group to take ownership of the project, forging strong links between the organisations and helping to mobilise continuing support.
- We wanted our steering group to collectively drive the development of learning from the project as it progressed.

The outputs expected.

- Have clarity in what you want to achieve from the project.
- Ensure everyone involved in driving the project agrees with this.

Our expected outputs were:

- to recruit 13 parents, who were also residents on the Moorlands Estate, to participate in the parenting programme
- that parents complete 16 week parenting programme and a three day residential, with a certification/awards ceremony to mark the parents’ successful completion
- to produce a toolkit or guidance pack to support agencies working with parents and children in disadvantaged communities
- to hold a conference to promote and publicise the programme to outside agencies.

The outcomes expected.

- Ensure that those driving the project are clear about the overall outcomes you want to achieve.

Our expected outcomes were:

- to develop a model of good practice in forging effective partnerships between parents, young people and organisations working together to reduce ASB
- to reduce social tensions and problems linked to young people within the community
- an investigation of current legislation on parenting, ASB and social exclusion
- an exploration of challenges faced by young people in the street and living within disadvantaged communities
- to develop an innovative work programme designed to help parents to better communicate with their children
- the production of a toolkit or guidance notes to deliver a clear approach for supporting agencies and parents involved with marginalised and excluded youths.

Timescales for action.

- Ensure you have practical and achievable timeframes.
- Make sure all participants in the project understand and agree them.

Who is responsible?

- Ensure there is a clear lead partner who is prepared to take overall responsibility.
- Assign responsibility for particular aspects areas of work.

2) Care points about the steering group

- Partners may lose connection and interest.
- Distractions for organisations, diversion of key personnel, and conflicting priorities may cause problems.
- Reports from the programme delivery organisation must be informative so that the steering group retains focus.
- There must be clarity on what is required from the delivery agent.
Residents may want better information.

There should be reinforcement of support from the senior management of constituent agencies.

Directing information to key senior personnel in main partner agencies is important to retain support and focus.

3) Details of how progress will be tracked and assessed

- Set clear objectives and put down milestones.
- Set up a good reporting system and ensure this is reviewed.
- Hold regular appraisals of progress.
- Take regular feedback from the programme.
- Support and review the project leadership.
- Ensure the project leaders understand the roles and boundaries of different agencies in areas of operation which may be unfamiliar.
- Ensure good initial understanding of the subject matter.
- Ensure good communication to the wider community and retain their interest.
- A possible constraint is confidentiality. We established protocols for sharing information between participants and members of our group.

4) The programme delivery agency

- The agency should have extensive experience of delivering community-based personal development opportunities.
- They should have an evidence base and be accredited.
- They should have the resources necessary to ensure that only the most compelling practitioners are given the responsibility of leading the programme. Extensive studies have shown that even the most comprehensive programme or initiative will only be as good as the person responsible for leading or delivering it.
- The agency should emphasise capacity building as a significant part of the course.
- It is important to recognise that the delivery agency may not understand the business or ethos of the lead agency and vice versa.

5) Recruiting parents on to the programme

- Those responsible for delivering the programme should be responsible for recruiting the participants.
- Use doorstep promotion, both face to face and through literature.
- Hold public events.
- Enlist local champions from within the community.
- Local agencies should refer possible names to the delivery partner and these should all be followed up with records kept of the responses.
- Allow several months to recruit parents.

The programme

1) Length of the programme

A basic programme should run for 16 weeks, one evening a week. Anything less is unlikely to result in achieving significant and lasting change for those who take part.

2) Overview of In-volve’s Parent RAW programme

(Refer to the full report for more detail)

A Self Assessment Form should be completed at the beginning of each phase in order to mark the distance travelled, and facilitate reflection.

First Phase (no less than four sessions)

- Introduction
- Establish the culture - truth and respect
- Games
- Child development and psychology - seeing the challenges, reading the signs
- Education and how to navigate the system
- Free form association
- Why are you here and what do you want
- Disclosure - sharing your pain and your journey to self-knowledge and self-discipline
- Truth chair
- Public speaking/verbal representation of self
- Filming sessions
- Language (ongoing theme)
• Sessions on abuse - ‘letter from boy’ exercise/rape material/war on women/ pragmatics (what to look for and where to turn)
• Economics and politics
• Trips/breaking bread together

Middle Phase (+/- 6 sessions)
• Self-exploration
• Truth diagram: a road map for change
• Future mapping (ongoing theme)
• NLP and CBT tools, Gestalt exercises to address identified behaviour that individuals highlight (smoking/health/anger, etc.)
• Address varying degrees of success along the way - concept of sabotage
• Introduce hypno concept - the idea of ‘altered state’/the management of state/the recognition that there is ‘stuff below’ the conscious

The Final Phase (+/- 6 sessions)
• Learning the tools
• The ‘doing’
• Hypnotherapy
• NLP and Gestalt - word sound/tone/vibration/pace/rhythm
• Evolving ID, promoting ID, refining ID
• Residential trip

3) Evaluation

Ensure that funds are set aside for an independent evaluator and recruit this evaluator prior to the start of the programme.

Effective evaluations of ASB initiatives seek to answer the following questions.

Has change occurred?
• If so, is the project or programme responsible for the changes, or would they have happened anyway?
• If the initiative has several components, have all the components contributed to the changes or have some been effective while others have not had any impact?
• Is the initiative (or elements of it) worth replicating?

In practice this means:
• comparing changes in the project area with trends in the wider area and in a control area with similar characteristics
• documenting individual components in a programme separately to identify which elements have had an impact
• calculating costs and savings arising from the project to assess value for money
• looking at specific local circumstances which may have influenced the outcome of the project and could affect the ease with which the project can be replicated
• helping to clarify what partners are aiming for
• enabling those providing services to be clear about expectations
• providing markers for checking if plans are on track, or need adjusting
• allowing partners, service providers, service users and the wider public to influence priorities and assess achievement.

Possible local partnership and funding routes
• Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
• Local authorities
• RSLs/housing associations - we worked with others in our area
• Police
• Local agencies providing youth services
• Schools and education providers
• Local residents
• Local ASB panels

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPS)

These partnerships have a statutory duty to undertake an audit of crime and disorder, ASB (as well as other behaviour adversely affecting the environment) and misuse of drugs (substance abuse in Wales) in their area every three years. They are required to formulate and implement a strategy for combating crime and disorder, ASB and the misuse of drugs,
etc. They adopt a joint problem-solving approach to tackling these issues.

They are responsible for contributing to Government PSA targets on:

- reducing crime (particularly violent crime)
- reassuring the public, reducing the fear of crime and ASB
- reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs, including substantially increasing the number of drug-misusing offenders entering treatment through the Criminal Justice System
- increasing voluntary and community engagement, especially among those at risk of social exclusion. Other local crime reduction targets are agreed, based on local priorities.

**Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)**

Part of The Shaping Places Agenda, these are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private community and voluntary sectors, allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively.

LSPs are central to the delivery of the New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal National Strategy Action Plan, to which Neighbourhood Renewal Funding is attached. Lack of joint working at local level has been one of the key reasons why there has been little progress in delivering sustainable economic, social and physical regeneration, or improved public services, that meet the needs of local communities. The combination of organisations, and the community, working co-operatively as part of an LSP is intended to have a far greater chance of success.

**Every Child Matters: Change for Children**

This is a new approach to the wellbeing of children and young people from birth to age 19.

The government’s aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing.

Every local authority will be working with its partners, through children’s trusts, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and act on it. They will need to involve children and young people in this process, and when inspectors assess how local areas are doing, they will listen especially to the views of children and young people themselves.

The programme aims to identify at an early stage children and young people at risk of social exclusion, and make sure they receive the help and support they need to achieve their potential.

Parents, carers and families are the most important influence on outcomes for children and young people. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to ensure that support for parents becomes routine, particularly at key points in a child or young person’s life.

The government, in partnership with local areas, is working to make sure parents and families have access to the support that they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive and resilient parenting, from birth right through to the teenage years.

The steps being taken will help to ensure that:

- good quality universal support, in the form of information, advice and signposting to other services, is available to all parents. It is important that support can be accessed in places where parents and carers feel comfortable, such as early years settings, schools, primary healthcare services, and through childcare information services, telephone helplines and the web.
- more specialised targeted support is available at the local level to meet the needs of families and communities facing additional difficulties. Types of support offered could include structured parenting education groups, couple support, home visiting and employment or training advice.
- all schools actively seek to engage parents in children and young people’s education, helping parents to

Report and evaluation of the ground breaking Triangle Way Forward parenting skills project.
understand what they can do at home to work with the school.

- children’s centres and extended schools develop a coherent set of services both to support parents and to involve them properly at all stages of a child’s learning and development.

Aiming high for young people: A ten-year strategy for positive activities

This strategy sets out a series of new commitments to transform opportunities for young people and strengthen the reform of youth support services. It aims to:

- foster a more positive approach to young people across society and in particular within communities
- increase their participation in high quality, positive activities, which build resilience and social and emotional skills
- empower young people to have greater influence over services for them, with parents and communities playing their part.

Within the context of this youth strategy, the London Mayor and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced their intention in September 2007 to work together to deliver a £60 million ‘London Youth Offer’. The £60 million funding package will run over two years from 2008/09 through to the end of 2009/10. The additional £20 million from the Mayor will comprise two main elements:

- a ‘universal’ offer across all London boroughs which will sit alongside the extended Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds and will provide more things to do and places to go for young Londoners
- a second element to be allocated on a more targeted basis for young people at risk of exclusion, building on the approach of Positive Activities for Young People.

As stated in the Aiming High strategy document, providing support for parents is central to any strategy aimed at increasing the quality of life for young people.
The report

Parenting skill is a strong predictor of antisocial behaviour in children (infancy to adolescence); it is a key active ingredient of effective intervention; and parenting as a final ‘common pathway’ appears to mediate between family context and child outcome. The evidence base clearly suggests parents and their parenting skills as a key point for intervention. There are over 100 interventions demonstrating effectiveness of structured, cognitive behaviourally-based interventions for reducing child problem behaviour and improving parenting skill, confidence and mental health.

There is an extraordinarily strong evidence base that these interventions work. They are transferable across a diverse range of service settings and families, and many engage and help very marginalised families. There is good data on 1–2 year follow up, but we need more on long-term outcomes. We should implement more interventions, in accessible settings (‘Sure Start’, neighbourhood nurseries); effectively train more supervision and support of staff and evaluate effectiveness in new settings that are very different, or when taken to scale.

Dr Frances Gardner, Deputy Director: Evidence-Based Social Work, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Effective parenting interventions to prevent violence and problem behaviour (age 3–10)

A programme for parents/carers

The Triangle Way Forward programme emerged from a series of meetings between Metropolitan Housing trust (MHT), the Youth Service, the local police service, and other stakeholders. This resulted in the collective decision to secure the funds needed for an external organisation, In-volve, to develop and deliver a pilot community-based parenting programme based on its junior RAW process.

The feeling was that, while community-based support and development programmes exist to some degree for both young people and those professionals responsible for supporting them, little or nothing existed for their parents/carers. The perception was that existing parent programmes were geared almost exclusively towards those parents with young people already caught up in the criminal justice system, and were not delivered in the community, with community empowerment as the central and salient aim.

The aim was to run a community-based parent/carer-type programme that enabled parents/carers on the Moorlands estate, and other estates in central Brixton, to:

- develop the communication, self and community awareness skills needed to engage effectively with their children, other adults, and people in positions of authority (teachers, police officers, etc.)
- develop the self-confidence needed to begin doing things that inform their development in the career market, and enhance their status as active members of their community (role models and community-based change leaders)
- acquire the skills necessary to contribute to the running of similar programmes with parents and young people on their estates, and in their wider community (child development, group dynamics, etc.).

In recognition of their increasing responsibility to the people who occupy their housing stock, rather than just the bricks and mortar, MHT wanted to pilot something that would enable parents/carers on its estates to play more of a role in making their communities safer and happier places to live.

Funding for the process came from the Housing Corporation, to develop something that would truly engage those families in greatest need on the fringes of mainstream society. Any future funding for similar initiatives would more appropriately be sourced in accordance with Local, and Multi Area Agreements and be supported through local area partnerships, some of which are listed in Appendix 1.
Given the responsibility that housing departments, and a growing number of RSLs, have for some of the most under-supported estates in the country, it makes absolute sense that they should increasingly be at the forefront of initiating the delivery of such projects.

The content of the programme reflected the core principles and themes covered by parenting programmes more generally (see Appendix 2) with one added element - emphasis was placed on training those who took part to be able to play an active supporting role in the delivery of similar programmes in their localities (particularly in relation to recruiting participants, and the delivery of some sessions). The programme was delivered as part of a wider series of programmes aimed at young people and professionals also living and or working in the area, which very much reflected the ‘Strengthening families, Strengthening communities’ model which originated in the USA, although no such community-based approaches are currently being delivered in the UK.

Why was the programme needed?

The locality

The Moorlands estate is situated in Brixton, Lambeth. Lambeth is one of the most densely populated inner London boroughs, with a population of approximately 269,100, and a forecast of 341,000 by 2021. Based on the 2001 Census, 38% of Lambeth’s population is from ethnic minorities. Brixton is the unofficial capital of the Jamaican, British African and Caribbean community of London. In Brixton, Black Caribbeans make up one in five of the population and fewer than half (49%) of Lambeth residents are of White British origin.

The total number of people recorded in 2006/07 as being unemployed in the Lambeth area is 18,690. Of those 2,300 are aged between 16 and 24, and 13,500 are aged between 25 and 49. Lambeth has the largest proportion in the UK of lone-parent families – 48%. This is nearly double the UK average and teenage conception rates in Lambeth are considered to be the highest in England.

Only 37% of householders in Lambeth are owner-occupiers and 20% of households have a gross income of less than £10,000 per annum. The top 10% of the most deprived areas in England in relation to the ‘Crime and Disorder’ rank includes 47% of the London Borough of Lambeth. In fact crime in Lambeth is 55% above the national average for England and Wales. Serious offending by young people in Lambeth is higher still.

There has been a marked increase in violent crime in Lambeth with the use of weapons, particularly guns and knives. Many of these have been attributed to gangs, and since January 2007 an escalation in gun and knife crime has led to the murders of a number of young people under the age of 18. In a recent Lambeth residents’ survey 54% cited ‘crime’ as their number one concern (24% more than the next highest concern).

While it is important to note that communities who live in deprived areas are not all involved in criminal activity, research does indicate that high levels of crime are recorded in areas where housing is poor, educational attainment is below average, where young people have limited access to employment opportunities, and where families and individuals suffer from poor health. The combination of these factors can result in social exclusion and a lack of self-esteem and self worth, which may set a minority of people on a road to criminality and violent crime. This disproportionately affects the rest of that community, and society as a whole.

Over 200 young people visit the Youth Offending Service each week. This context is central to the working environment of the YOS, and critical to how any parent-specific intervention is determined for that service, and for the borough as a whole.

The Brixton Riots: a lasting tone

The Brixton Riots, in the early 1980s, were the first serious riots on mainland Britain in the 20th century, and in many respects the residents, police and other professionals in Lambeth have to function against this legacy of community tension, violence, and general distrust.

Longstanding political grievances against racial oppression, which many African Caribbean perceive as endemic to the British state (particularly within the police), eventually spilled over into violence. The riots left a difficult legacy between the police and young people which is much more palpable here than in other areas.

Brixton is one of the most heavily-policied localities in Europe, yet violent crime remains high, and the community
still cites safety as its greatest concern. In places such as Brixton heavy police enforcement has only resulted in increased violence and community resentment; clearly enforcement, without comparable investment in the socio-economic issues which underpin the problems, wasn’t the answer in 1983, and isn’t the answer now.

There were three fatal shootings in the first three weeks of August 2007 alone. The violence, primarily driven by young males, is exacerbated by the large proportion of single parent families headed by mothers with limited control of their children, and who do not know where to turn for support.

**MHT and the housing sector**

Metropolitan Housing Trust (MHT) was established in the 1950s to provide good quality, affordable housing for immigrants from Jamaica and other British colonies. MHT is organised around three regional offices and manages the Moorlands estate in Brixton as part of its South Thames region.

With the reduction of council housing through right to buy sales, cessation of council house building and stock transfers, registered social landlords are becoming the major social housing provider. As such, there is pressure on them to keep rents affordable, while at the same time responding to the requirement to ensure all housing stock meets the requirements of the Decent Homes standard by 2010.

However, this does not in itself do anything to improve the familial, social and welfare lives of tenants who may still be residing in overcrowded conditions and living in an area that has high levels of poverty, economic decay, crime and a lack of local facilities (particularly for young people).

In 2001 a Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion was formed to identify policies that could promote good community relations between people from different cultural backgrounds. The review team noted that: “Many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives [which] do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges.” The recommendations focused on the need for younger people to participate in local democratic processes and advised multi-agency planning and regeneration with community participation.

The Local Government White Paper sets out the remit for local government to take up an enhanced role as place shaper and leader of communities. This requires, among other things, localities to have a clear vision for the kind of housing that is appropriate for that area and how it might be delivered. Through stock transfers, that role has, to a greater degree, been shared with other housing providers and housing associations. The role that housing associations play in working with local authorities to deliver on strategic housing policies has increased with the onset of the Decent Homes agenda. As such they have an increasing share of the responsibility to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives that shape communities.

Since the housing provider role holds such great importance in meeting a basic human need - shelter - then the core business of any housing provider must be to ensure the continuous health and welfare of its residents. This role challenges the degree to which social housing providers will meet the deeper needs of their residents, which will enable them to increase their social and economic independence and confidence. This holistic approach leads to the formation and delivery of personal development or parent programmes, employability skills initiatives, and increasing the skills base at the heart of these communities.

In July, the Prime Minister Gordon Brown stated that there would be youth community facilities in every borough. This signifies a growing concern and priority for services that go beyond bricks and mortar and an acknowledgement of the underinvestment in services for young people, who have been often blamed for the social collapse of communities on housing estates. However, the resources are not available. An emphasis on the capacity-building of all parents in the community from within the community will need to be prioritised.

**Tenant empowerment and engagement**

Tenants have a vital role to play in improving housing services. The Audit Commission website includes a number of good practice examples of how various activities have been used to involve tenants in tackling social exclusion.

However it is evident that the overwhelming number of good practice examples on the website focus upon service improvement, delivery and ways of engaging with service users. There are many examples of vertical integration between housing service provider and user, but very few examples of the ways in which social housing landlords are facilitating lateral integration and the exchange between

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2 RSLs account for 48% compared to council-managed stock at 32% and Arms Length Management Organisations holding 20%.
3 Source: Cave, M., Every Tenant Matters, June 2007
4 Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, July 2006
5 Source: London Councils, Community Cohesion and Housing 2007
6 Communities and Local Government, Strong and Prosperous Communities, Local Government White Paper, October 2006
residents. Many examples focus entirely upon the social development, cohesion and personal development of the people that live in a single locality, rather than the ways in which these groups can be empowered to develop a broad leadership base that increases the sense of safety and collective wellbeing.

A community-based parenting programme goes beyond the norm in terms of housing management responsibilities and is an insightful and holistic approach that identifies customer need as well as being an empowering experience for the users that take part. Investment in a lateral tenant to tenant initiative demonstrates a willingness to allow a ‘bottom up’ solution to identifying issues and developing more innovative solutions to resolving and minimising residents’ dependence and helplessness.

In-Volve’s ‘ID approach’

Fifteen years ago, In-Volve began developing, and delivering, what has come to be known as the ‘ID approach’. From its inception the approach focused on the power of positive thinking, speaking and acting. The ID approach does not profess to be unique. In fact it draws on, and models, the evidence-based programmes discussed in more detail in Appendix 2.

The added benefits of the approach are to be found in the emphasis placed on the development of those delivering the programmes (peer involvement underpins all ID interventions, irrespective of the target group), and the emphasis on whole community delivery. In addition, the primary aim is always to leave capacity for the work to continue after In-Volve has left. In the case of the Triangle Way Forward programme In-Volve left a parent-led group in place, able to lead on the commissioning of services in their area, and actively support the recruitment of community members to similar programmes. This group can continue to provide community-based support and ongoing training to others in need as part of the wider Respect and Community Cohesion Agenda.

Primarily a group work-based approach, ID uses the Gestalt model as the basis for enabling participants to make an early breakthrough in relation to previously unaddressed experiences (childhood trauma, etc.). Other cognitive approaches, Rational Emotive Therapy in particular, are used to facilitate a process of self-reflection, reconnection with the emotional self, re-identification with often extremely painful experiences, and the development of detailed and practiced vision plans for ongoing development. The approach does not focus on financial achievement and material gain as the primary indicators of success; on the contrary, the focus is on enabling those who take part to attain inner peace and fulfilment, familial, and community cohesion, and a greater sense of collective responsibility in relation to community safety. Material success is merely a bi-product of that increased self-knowledge, self confidence and community confidence, and ability to communicate effectively with others.

The following quote, from a recent report produced by the Wave Trust, highlights what many in authority have come to accept as fact, but have been slow to respond to in terms of resources made available at the point where they are likely to have greatest impact.

Male aggressive behaviour is highly stable as early as age 2. This is not because of genetic factors, which are weak and only activated by adverse early life experiences, but due to the interplay between the development process of the infant brain and how the infant is treated. The earlier aggression is established, the worse the long-term outcome tends to be.

Compelling evidence of the early age at which the roots of violence are firmly planted comes from the New Zealand Dunedin Study, in which nurses identified an ‘at risk’ group of 3-year-olds on the basis of 90 minutes’ observation. They were tracked and compared with other children of their age.

When these children were 21, 47% of males in the ‘at risk’ group abused their partners (vs. 9.5% of others); two and a half times as many had two or more criminal convictions.

55% of ‘at risk’ offences were violent (vs. 18% for others). ‘At risk’ offences were much more severe, such as robbery, rape and homicide. The nurses were able to predict future criminals 18 years in advance.

Extract from The Wave Report (2005)

Evidence for a close link between spouse abuse and child maltreatment is now well established. It shows that child abuse and neglect occurs in approximately half of those families where violence exists between the parents.

Professor Kevin Browne, Department of Psychology, Birmingham University
While the ID approach remains essentially the same irrespective of the audience (for example, young people, practitioners, gender specific groups), the headline themes often shift in order to ensure the specific requirements of particular groups are effectively met. With parents/carers, for example, In-Volve covers the same themes defined by the Home Office Respect Task Force's Family Intervention Programmes, as well as the generally accepted themes covered by the most extensively evaluated parenting programmes currently available - the Strengthening Families Programme being one such example (covered in more detail in Appendix 2). However, early performance reports on these pilots suggest that their link to criminal justice services and Parent Orders has militated against those parents in greatest need of attending such interventions. That is why In-Volve has developed its approach along the lines of a much more community-based, and partnership-led intervention. This is delivered in much more postcode-related clusters, around the hotspot-based community profiling model used by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

The ID approach seeks out those most adept at managing one to one and group situations, and community healing (community-based change managers). It is possible to create such individuals, alongside those individuals who are naturally gifted and adept at triggering change in others. In-Volve takes these individuals, and nurtures in them a fearlessness that enables them to confront and empower those most distant from happiness, and most resistant to change. In the case of parenting programmes delivered on estates such as Moorlands, these often unhappy and traumatised individuals are also directly responsible for the emotional and physical wellbeing of extremely vulnerable children.

The most effective interventions have been the ones that have placed greatest emphasis on capacity-building. The least successful are the ones that have been least concerned with the ability, competence, and ongoing needs of those who deliver on their behalf, as well as the leadership ability of those parents and practitioners who complete their programmes. The Triangle Way Forward programme was delivered in accordance with the aforementioned objectives, and ongoing emphasis was placed on developing parents who were able go on to be leaders in their community, as well as role models in their homes.

The assertion isn’t that life will be great once one has greater understanding of what and who one is. Rather, the emphasis is on the development of the emotional competence necessary to be able to cope effectively with life’s challenges, without the need for medication, prescribed or otherwise. The truth is that for many, life will never be economically trouble-free, and with that economic restriction will inevitably come less than satisfactory living conditions, and the anti-social behaviour normally to be found in socially and economically deprived areas.

**Parenting programmes - the context**

It is important to recognise that parents/carers (including grandparents) play the primary and key role in providing the love, nurturing, induction, guidance and leadership required by a child. This is always the case, although the form differs between cultures and families. The elements that come together to make up a culture have always included various forms of ritual and rights related to birth, baptism, naming, graduation, marriage, retirement, burial, age, attainment of social status and so on. These ceremonies have developed over time to mark transition or stages of transformation, but they also serve to reinforce the values, norms and beliefs of a culture. Around the world we can still see rituals that assist young people in making the transition from girl/boyhood to woman/manhood. For example, within Jewish communities young people are deemed Bar or Bat Mitzva upon reaching the age of 13 for a boy and 12 for a girl. It is at this stage that they are said to achieve the status of adult and are thereby fully responsible for their actions. The continued interest from black communities in the US and the UK in developing formal processes that initiate young people into adulthood within rights of passage programmes illustrates the importance of communal mechanisms that help to support and bind young people with parents, families and society.

This is even more striking when we consider the notion that rights of passage in one form or another are already very much a part of the experience of young people growing up in the UK. Leaving school, obtaining a driving license, gaining an educational certificate, being able to legally purchase alcohol, and so on, are all seen as markers of a transition. However, when a person becomes a parent, particularly a young parent, the skills required to raise this new member of the community are largely acquired from and governed by the examples of parents, carers, the extended family, peer groups and the social context in which a person lives. Similarly, the lack of skills also stems from the same sources.

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7 The performance of actions or procedures in a set, ordered and ceremonial way Encarta® World English Dictionary
8 Adhering to or consistent with conventional ideas of morality, propriety, or decorum Encarta® World English Dictionary
9 In-Volve currently runs one of the 40 national Family Intervention Programmes (FIP), which is based in Lambeth.
10 Bar Mitzvah: literally ‘son of a commandment’; Bat Mitzvah: literally ‘daughter of a commandment’.
11 e.g. Coie, 1996; Loeber and Farrington, 1998
Over the last 40 years we have witnessed unprecedented changes in the nature of families. An evolving jobs market, women and employment, economic migration, technology, cultural shifts, levels of crime and substance misuse, the internet and evolving perspectives on human development have all impacted upon families and the relationships between their members. Research indicates that the lack of a positive relationship with parents, absent parents, insecure attachments, harsh, inflexible, rigid or inconsistent discipline practices, inadequate supervision, and marital conflict and breakdown, increase the risk of children developing major behavioural and emotional problems. This includes substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and juvenile crime. Coupled with the sheer pace of life, particularly within inner city areas, and the resulting difficulties with developing and maintaining meaningful relationships, this has led to an increasing interest in parenting programmes. In Jamaica, the previous Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller, in her budget debate speech on 1 May 2007, announced the launch of a National Parenting Education Programme. Meanwhile, Parenting South Australia, a government initiative has, since 1996, sought to, “promote the value of parents and the important role of parenting” through the provision of resources, advice, information and programmes. Lastly, the US Department of Education’s nationally-funded Parental Information and Resource Centres (PIRCs) aim to provide a variety of assistance to parents of pre-school to secondary school through partnerships with non government organisations.

Here in the UK, where family dysfunction can cost the taxpayer between £250,000 and £350,000 per family, per year, the Home Office Respect Task Force has been in the process of establishing a network of 53 Family Intervention Programmes (FIPs) nationwide. FIPs aim to establish full co-ordination of multi-levelled parenting provision with a focus on anti-social behaviour, directed by a lead parenting commissioner and guided by an integrated parenting strategy. As stated on the Respect website, 40 areas have signed up to develop and address the following:

- introducing family intervention projects to tackle ‘neighbours from hell’
- developing more parenting classes for parents struggling with troublesome children
- holding ‘face the people’ sessions where the police, local authorities and others are accountable to the local public
- keeping up the relentless action to tackle anti-social behaviour by using the full range of tools and powers available
- using the Respect Housing Standard to prevent and deal with any problems in social housing.

Parenting programmes play a key role in this, with an emphasis on tackling anti-social behaviour. The Respect Action Plan focuses on six areas:

- supporting families
- a new approach to the most challenging families
- improving behaviour and attendance in schools
- activities for children and young people
- strengthening communities
- effective enforcement and community justice.

**Parenting contracts and parenting orders**

As part of the range of tools, Youth Offending Teams and others can work with parents voluntarily, voluntarily with a parenting order or contract, or solely with a parenting order or contract. Parenting contracts and orders have two main elements:

- a parenting programme designed to meet the individual needs of parents, to help them address their child’s misbehaviour
- particular requirements and expectations that parents must meet to develop and maintain control over their child’s behaviour. Here the focus is on factors associated with offending or anti-social behaviour. An example might be making sure their child goes to school every day or remains at home during certain hours.

Ultimately, parenting programmes form a vital addition to the provision that aims to impact upon the lives of those who are already parents as well as those who are soon to be parents. Parenting programmes provide an essential resource for those experiencing specific crime, housing, health or other psycho-social issues within the family, as well as for parents in general. As it is recognised that policy initiatives and changes in this area are extremely fast flowing, we can perhaps expect many changes in the way we address the issue of parenting within the next five to ten years.

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15 [www.respect.gov.uk](http://www.respect.gov.uk)
16 NIACE
Parenting UK defines parenting programmes as any formal interventions designed to support the parent/child relationship. This includes practitioner training. A large number of programmes, sometimes called parenting courses, training, classes or even coaching, have been developed and implemented that fit this definition. Often, the focus is on child behaviour management or change, and conduct issues. This illustrates that the child/young person is identified from the outset as the problem. The Triangle Way Forward programme, while incorporating many of the fundamental principles underpinning child development, goes one step further, by placing the responsibility of raising the child not at the feet of the parent alone, but in the hands of the whole community. This is an approach that is increasingly being represented by government, and has informed the emphasis on delivering the programme in specific localities, postcodes, and social housing estates. The intention is not only to enable the participants to become more competent parents, but also to furnish them with the tools and motivation to become active community citizens.

**Parenting models**

As already stated there are a number of developing and established parenting programmes and models. The most well known models, both nationally and internationally, include the following:

- Triple P (positive parenting programme)
- Incredible Years
- Strengthening Families Programme (SFP).

These are explained in detail in Appendix 2.

These three models have all received international recognition after research into their effectiveness within a variety of contexts. However, the real strength of each of these models, and any other model for that matter, lies in the nature and skills of the practitioner responsible for delivery of the programmes, as it is this that is experienced by the group.

A recent United Nations report states that the UK appears in the bottom third in rankings in five out of six dimensions:

- family and peer relationships
- behaviours and risks
- subjective wellbeing.

Parenting programmes are key to changing this ranking as well as the focused action areas highlighted in the Children’s Act 2004. The important issue for the UK context and the local/regional differences in terms of environment, cultural and racial demographics, economic status, high crime areas, and so on, can one model fit all or is a particular model best suited to a particular context?

**The Triangle Way Forward programme**

The Triangle Way Forward programme was delivered over 16 weeks, with three hour sessions one evening a week. A Self Assessment Form was completed at the beginning of each phase in order to mark the distance travelled, and to facilitate reflection.

The programme comprised the following components.

**First phase (no less than four sessions)**

Introduction to the Parent RAW space

- **Establishing the culture - truth and respect**
  The underlying focus is on pushing for internal honesty within the group, which means confrontation between group members is acceptable within certain parameters. By being honest within the space, a closeness with group members can develop because the general feeling is that everyone is striving to be truthful about what they are feeling within the group at any point in the process.

- **Games**
  These are a feature of the whole process: musical chairs, pass the parcel, and similar childhood games are used to open up the adult mind to the childish sub conscious, in order to accelerate the self disclosure, self learning, and subsequent self development process.

- **Child development and psychology: seeing the challenges, reading the signs**
  In keeping with all parent/personal development

interventions, it is important to know what informs behaviour to be able to change or modify that behaviour. In-Volve argues that if an adult understands the way they think and function, they will be able to apply that understanding to the world around them, which would include their children, people in positions of authority, and the wider community. Current thinking around early childhood trauma, which is being driven by the Wave Trust, is a salient aspect of the learning (early childhood trauma, and its impact on adult and adolescent behaviour, as a form of post traumatic stress disorder).

- **Education and how to navigate the system**
  Very practical guidance on how the education system functions, the role of the parent within it, and guidance around getting the most from the child’s educational experience, dealing with conflict between the child and teachers, and how that can be managed, and defused.

- **Free form association: moving intuitively from subject to subject, establishing the RAW tone and approach**
  Being able to think creatively, letting the subconscious flow in a healthy way, allows for positive visioning. Participants are taught the tools needed to be the inventors of their future, rather than being hostages to their past.

- **Why are you here and what do you want?**
  Exercises and discussion, beginning the process of introspection.

- **Disclosure: sharing your pain and your journey to self-knowledge and self-discipline**
  In-Volve calls the process RAW because participants are actively encouraged to deal with their truths, some of them extremely painful experiences that have never been addressed. It argues that for parents, or any adult, to truly support the young people in their charge, they need to deal with their own issues.

- **Truth Chair**
  The whole process is based on the Gestalt model, which has at its centre the image of the chair. The chair represents truth (confrontation with ourselves and others to achieve understanding and closure). Set within a circle, it also represents the Gestalt principle of perspective - being able to see things from a perspective other than your own is critical to leadership in every part of one’s life.

- **Public speaking/verbal representation of self**
  At the end of the process, all participants are able to speak with confidence in front of audiences of any size. They are able to deliver their truth with clarity and passion.

- **Filming sessions: archive**
  Video diaries are used to record the transition process that each participant experiences. This allows them the opportunity to reflect on their own development and learning.

- **Language (ongoing theme)**
  The NLP approach to indecisive/self-defeating/self-derogatory language and negative visioning. The participants learn to exercise greater control over their thinking (their internal voices) and to say what they mean, decide when they want to say it, and use a tone and form of words likely to bring about the desired outcome.

- **Two sessions on abuse: ‘letter from boy’ exercise/rape material/war on women/pragmatics (what to look and for where to turn)**
  Usually towards the end of the first phase of the 16 week process. Abuse (physical, sexual or psychological) has a lasting impact on the victim, particularly young people. Participants are made aware of the different ways that abuse takes place in the school, home, the community or workplace, and explore the important role that they can play in preventing abuse in their environment.

- **Economics and politics (Bin Laden: friend or foe)**
  It is important to cover global, national, regional and local politics as part of the empowerment and citizenship process. Many people do not understand the political and economic factors informing their day to day challenges.
Trips/breaking bread together
Emphasis is placed on creating, and maintaining, a familial dynamic, which further fosters team spirit, a sense of belonging and a desire to support the whole group’s development/progress.

Middle phase (+/- six sessions)
Self-exploration
In the middle phase much more emphasis is placed on self exploration and the development of communication, confrontation, and emotional management skills through role play, and walking the talk. The facilitator constantly demonstrates best practice by being confrontational, in terms of verbal and non-verbal communication, disclosing intimate things about his or herself, expressing how they are feeling at any given point in the process. It is a compelling motivator that few can resist emulating if the facilitator has gained the respect and the trust of the group.

Truth diagram
The truth diagram acts as the course guide. It is a visual and symbolic representation of what is covered in the process, and acts as a road map for change.

Future mapping (ongoing theme)
All participants end the process with a five-year plan that is alive, as it is being ‘actioned’ while they are taking part in the process.

NLP, CBT and Gestalt tools to address identified behaviour (such as smoking/health/anger, etc.)
All participants focus on identifying their values and beliefs, working out where they came from, and determining which of them they still wish to hold on to.

Addressing varying degrees of success along the way: the concept of sabotage
Many participants will be more comfortable with failure than success. Consequently progress may generate feelings of anxiety, leading to sabotage for some. Preempting these inclinations, and sharing coping strategies, is critical to continued development.

Introducing the ‘hypno’ concept
This introduces the idea of an ‘altered state’, the management of that state, and the recognition that that there is ‘stuff below’ the conscious. At this stage In-Volve begins to share the tools that will enable participants to effectively engage with and facilitate change in others. There is a continuation of the development work on participants’ ability to speak confidently in public, and deal with confrontation.

The final phase (+/- six sessions)
Learning the tools
The final phase takes on the feel of a ‘master class’, with emphasis placed on explaining the exercises that had been used in the previous sessions, and unpacking the different ways they can be used.

The ‘doing’: delivering, driving and creating a bespoke RAW programme to brief
Participants are given the opportunity to put together a three hour session using the material they have acquired over the weeks, and to give a presentation as though they were competing for a contract. This reinforces what they have learnt, gives them an opportunity to see how far they have come as a team, and reinforces the reality that they are now in a position to play much more of a part in determining what happens in their community in terms of commissioning.

Hypnotherapy: managing the mind state
As previously stated, In-Volve focuses on furnishing participants with the tools needed to manage any situation, and code switch in terms of communication style (Transactional Analysis).

NLP and Gestalt: word-sound/tone/vibration/pace/rhythm
This expands on the theoretical principles underpinning the process that participants have experienced, so that they are empowered to adapt and modify the approach to fit with their own particular style.

Evolving ID, promoting ID, refining ID
Time is spent talking about how they will contribute to the development of ID and similar programmes so that others can have the same opportunity to grow (becoming part of a sessional pool, developing community-based initiatives that positively impact their living, working or educational environment).
Who took part?

Participants were identified through intelligence provided by MHT, the youth service, and links In-volve had already established with local residents, voluntary sector services, and young people in Lambeth.

Initially, MHT distributed information about the programme to a list of addresses that had been compiled based on information gathered from a number of sources (the police, community workers, MHT staff, etc.). The intention was to target those who had children at risk of offending or with a history of offending. These parents were informed about the impending programme and its benefits and invited to a launch event, at which they could hear more about the Parent RAW process, and sign up to take part in the Triangle Way Forward programme. While a number of parents did attend the launch event and sign up, it was felt that not decided that in order to meet the participant target of 15, we would need to visit those individuals on the list at their homes, to encourage them to take part in the programme.

After some discussion, it was decided that In-volve representatives, the people who would actually be delivering the programme, would visit potential participants on a Sunday afternoon, when, it was reasoned, people would be in a much more receptive frame of mind. To minimise confusion, and maximise the chance of achieving the desired outcome, letters were sent out in advance, and a team of two people visited the potential participants.

Quality time was spent with each parent in their own home, explaining the personal development benefits associated with the programme, and discussing the challenges that exist for residents living on the Moorlands estate. This approach proved to be much more successful.

As a result, 18 parents expressed an interest in taking part. Many of the parents contacted talked about a lack of motivation and barely enough energy to do the basics. Many stated that they had seen many initiatives come on to the estate over the years and begin to deliver services, only to leave again once the funding ran out, just as residents had begun to benefit from them.

Such remarks gave a good opportunity to explain how this particular programme aimed to grow parents who would not only be effective role models in the home but also ‘change champions’ for the wider community, especially for other parents. The promise of additional training, the potential for additional income generation, and a chance at a career with meaning, was a compelling combination for many.

Ultimately, the programme began with 13 participants, three of whom were unemployed, five in part time, low paid, unskilled jobs (cleaning, etc.), and five in full-time employment. The programme was delivered in a caretaker’s office near the Moorlands estate – a venue used by other community groups on the estate as well as by MHT. It formed the perfect environment for the process and continues to serve as a meeting place for the group to plan its development.

Aside from the usual components to be found in parent programmes (covered in the previous section), Triangle Way Forward also used youth facilitators to give the young persons’ perspective, and invited prominent public servants to share their knowledge with the group. The expertise in key areas determined the choice of speaker (Lee Jasper was chosen because of his grasp of local, national and international politics).

Of the 13 who took part, nine parents eventually completed the 16 week process, and of that group six members are in the process of forming a social enterprise, which will continue to do similar work on the Moorlands estate and other estates across Lambeth, with the support of In-volve, the Metropolitan Police Service, and the local authority. They are involved in delivering similar programmes at an introductory level – three hour intervention/taster sessions, and supporting more experienced practitioners to deliver 16 and 26 week programmes. They have moved on to more advanced training in order to be able to deliver these programmes and other types of accredited programmes in their immediate community 18.

18 Parent RAW uses a Neuro Map, which all practitioners use as their guide for delivering sessions. It has proven to be an extremely popular tool for guiding participants and facilitators through the programmes. See Appendix 3.
Conclusions

The pilot was a success from a number of perspectives. Parents took part in the process and completed it. Much was learnt about the emerging nature of parenting initiatives and how this area of practice can evolve to meet the needs of parents more widely, rather than within the currently restricted, and often stigmatised, context of criminal justice and education.

While it is true to say that our young people, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, cultural orientation or adversity, are finding their way in society and achieving their goals, government, at a central, regional, and local level, has recognised the importance of offering young people quality recreational activities and facilities, and is investing heavily in providing those opportunities and ‘upskilling’ the staff who will take frontline responsibility for these.

The Triangle Way Forward programme has demonstrated that in the most disadvantaged of locations, such as Moorlands, a well-designed and aggressively-promoted intervention can engage, stimulate and motivate parents who were previously disengaged from their children, their neighbours and their wider community, to take up a leadership position both within their home and community.

In the case of the Moorlands experience, the group went on to form a social enterprise. While we are not advocating that this be the outcome of every intervention, we do believe that it is possible to leave a lasting legacy in the wake of any well-delivered personal development intervention aimed at parents and carers, particularly in those areas where the need is greatest.
Recommendations

The Respect Agenda Family Intervention Programmes need to be modified in order to avoid the stigmatisation of those who are encouraged to take part as a result of their children’s criminal activities. Parenting programmes need to be rebranded as personal development opportunities aimed at parents who want to develop their skills.

The Housing Corporation, GLA (in the case of London), and Cabinet Office need to recognise the importance of engaging communities in the places they live, as highlighted in so many current government strategy and policy documents. They should further develop this community-based parent support model by running a longitudinal pilot across a number of key localities (key hotspots in Trident boroughs would be one possible way of taking this forward). Such an approach would link into the Shaping Places Agenda, and would require registered social landlords, the police, local government representatives, and other providers, to be actively involved in the development and support of delivery. In addition to the imparting of parenting skills, equal emphasis would be placed on providing the leadership skills required to ensure such provision is delivered to local communities by those from the communities.

This approach needs to become a central aspect of the work taken forward by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, and Children’s Trusts. Central to the principles of the programme is the active involvement of young people in the sessions.

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evaluation report

Dr. Tracey Reynolds

Families and Social Capital Research Group
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1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation aims
The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the effectiveness of the Triangle Way Forward parenting programme, in the context of Metropolitan Housing Trust (MHT) achieving its project aims of supporting parents and agencies working with young people.

- It explores programme content and delivery, how it was quality assured and how effectiveness was evaluated.
- It examines a range of factors, including the wider social and political context to parenting programmes, and parents’ behaviour and relationships with their children.
- It acknowledges the parents’ commitment and achievements throughout the programme.
- It provides a series of recommendations based on the lessons learnt from the pilot programme, with a view to developing future parenting programmes.

1.2. Methodology
The evaluation was undertaken in three phases.

- **Phase 1**: semi-structured interviews with a sample of parents on the parenting programme, to establish their perceived success of the programme in changing parental behaviour, relationships with children and the impact on their children. These interviews sought to empower parents in providing feedback and evaluation of service delivery through an independent evaluation.
- **Phase 2**: semi-structured interviews with project managers at MHT and programme facilitators to review programme process, outcome and delivery.
- **Phase 3**: desk-top analysis of the data provided by the project team to track, record, collate and analyse the range of information provided by the programme.

1.3. Programme objective
A key programme objective involved MHT and local partner agencies supporting the parents on the estate whose children demonstrated anti-social behaviour. A programme of deliverable outcomes was developed by MHT in which to achieve this objective.

- Recruitment of 13 parents, who were also residents on the Moorlands estate, to participate in the parenting programme.
- Completion by the parents of a 16 week parenting programme and a three day residential.

- A certification/awards ceremony to mark the parents’ successful completion.
- Production of a ‘toolkit’ or guidance pack to support agencies working with parents and children in disadvantaged communities.
- A conference to promote and publicise the programme to outside agencies.

2. Background
In recent times there has been a strong emphasis on the role parents play in influencing the behaviour of their children. Much of the focus has emphasised how ‘poor parenting’, and parents’ lack of confidence to guide their children in a positive manner, increases the risk of young people’s involvement in anti-social behaviour and criminal activities, and the need to provide parental support. For the most part, much of this concern has been directed towards parents living in disadvantaged communities facing high incidences of socio-economic deprivation.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 stressed the importance for parental responsibility for their children’s behaviour and early intervention into families for young people deemed ‘at risk’. This legislation provided LEAs with the power to impose parental orders and contracts, compelling parents of young offenders to attend parenting programmes. The Respect Action Plan launched in January 2006 signalled a new emphasis on poor parenting and the home and family life as a key site for Government intervention in its drive to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Plan presented a broader approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. It focused not just on punitive measures and enforcement, but on understanding the root causes of anti-social behaviour, defined primarily as poor parenting, and providing parents with the support that they need.

Some LEAs and related agencies also introduced voluntary parenting programmes for parents whose children’s behaviour was a cause of concern within the local community. The introduction of parenting programmes throughout the UK emerged as a way to support positive approaches to parenting, improve parenting skills and strengthen family relationships, therefore reducing the risk of poor behaviour.

It is within this context of voluntary participation for parents that MHT proposed a parenting programme for tenants living in one of its housing estates in Brixton, south London. The Triangle Way Forward Parenting Project, funded by MHT and the Housing Corporation, emerged out of concerns about anti-social behaviour by young people on the Moorlands Estate, SW9.
3. Monitoring and evaluation of Triangle Way Forward

3.1. Programme context
During 2006 and 2007 a series of meetings were held with MHT and key partner agencies working on the Moorlands Estate to decide how best to deliver a programme of work to address mounting concerns about anti-social behaviour on the estate. Representatives came from London Borough of Lambeth housing, MHT, Guinness Trust, Metropolitan Police, Lambeth Youth and Play, Youth Inclusion Project, and Hill Mead Primary School.

The programme aimed to support parents in dealing with their children’s challenging behaviour. It was agreed that this could be best achieved by identifying models of good practice, which encouraged parents to accept responsibility for their children.

A primary outcome of these series of initial meetings was that funding was approved to appoint an external organisation, In-Volve, with previous experience of working with young people and parents. In-Volve was recruited to run a 16 week parenting programme for parents living on the estate, whose children were known to behave in an anti-social manner. Parent RAW, under the auspices of the Triangle Way Forward Project, commenced in February 2007, after a series of consultation meetings and the official programme launch in November 2006.

3.2. Project aims and outcomes
The Triangle Way Forward Project aimed to:

• develop a model of good practice in forging effective partnerships between parents, young people and organisations working together to reduce anti-social behaviour
• reduce social tensions and problems linked to young people within the community
• investigate current legislation on parenting, anti-social behaviour and social exclusion
• explore challenges faced by young people in the street and living within disadvantaged communities
• develop an innovative work programme designed to help parents better communicate with their children
• produce a ‘toolkit’ or guidance notes to deliver a clear approach supporting agencies and parents involved with marginalised and excluded youths.

A framework was established by MHT to monitor the course using the following methods.

• A Steering Committee was set up to discuss the work of Parent RAW. This committee was made up of representatives from MHT and related partner agencies. Interestingly, no residents or resident groups remained as members of this committee throughout the programme duration. One resident initially started out as a committee member, but she later dropped out, for reasons unknown.
• The Community Initiatives Officer at MHT was given the responsibility of project-managing the programme. The main duties of this role involved liaising with course facilitators to oversee the day-to-day running of the programme.
• In-Volve was recruited to run the 16 week parenting programme. In-Volve has over 20 years’ experience of working with parents and young people at grass roots level through its Youth and Parent RAW programmes.
• Data provided by the course facilitators and Community Initiatives Officer, in the form of written updates and progress reports, were collected and circulated to the steering committee.
• Course facilitators attended steering meetings to provide a verbal update and progress.
• There was external evaluation of the programme by an independent agency.
• A communication and dissemination strategy was established to market and promote the project.

The Communications Team at MHT worked with the steering committee and In-Volve in the promotion and marketing of the event; and to develop a communications strategy. This strategy focus was on promoting and marketing the project through a series of events, flyers, posters and media/press coverage. Press releases about the project would be issued to media outlets at timely intervals and where they fed into relevant news stories (such as an increase in incidences of youth violence and anti-social behaviour).

3.3. Programme deliverables
A programme of deliverable outcomes was developed by MHT in which to achieve the project aims.

• Recruitment of 13 parents, who were residents on the Moorlands estate, to participate in the parenting programme.
• Completion by the parents of a 16 week parenting
programme, a three day residential and certification/awards ceremony to mark the parents’ successful completion.

- Production of a ‘toolkit’ or guidance pack to support agencies working with parents and children in disadvantaged communities.
- A conference to promote and publicise the programme to outside agencies.

3.4. The parents
The parents participating in the study were directly representative of the residents living on the estate. For example, 75% of residents are Black African-Caribbean with high benefit dependency and low numbers in full time and part time work. The parents who took part in the course reflected this demographic in that all the parents were minority-ethnic, particularly from African-Caribbean backgrounds.

There are four main types of parents who participated in the parenting programme:
- parents who wanted to improve their relationship and communication with their children and do a ‘good enough’ job of parenting
- parents whose children displayed behavioural problems, anti-social behaviour or had committed criminal offences
- parents with self-esteem issues who wanted to develop confidence-building skills in order to raise their self-esteem
- parents who had an interest in training in and facilitating a parenting programme at a later stage.

3.5. Key findings
1. It is evident that clear structures and systems were put in place by MHT to monitor and evaluate the parenting programme and ensure quality assurance. However, some of the monitoring procedures were not stringently followed through because of the limited data made available to the project manager and steering committee.

2. The steering committee comprised MHT representatives and partner agencies working on the Moorlands Estate. However, one main weakness was that no residents or resident groups remained on the steering committee throughout the programme duration. The one resident committee member who later dropped out was never replaced. Greater resident participation in the monitoring and planning of the programme through committee membership would have achieved multiple benefits. Firstly, it would have ensured greater transparency with the residents about the programme. Secondly, it could have led to their assistance in targeting and recruiting parents with ‘problem children’ from the estate onto the programme. Thirdly, their representation on the committee fed into, and would have provided further evidence of, MHT commitment to empowering and supporting parents.

3. The programme was offered to parents on an open access basis and achieved through ‘word of mouth’, via the efforts of MHT and the programme facilitators in ‘door knocking’ to recruit parents and using a ‘snowballing’ approach. Most programmes are primarily for parents and families who are referred by social services and health agencies. Voluntary attendance on to the programme removed for parents the stigma and negative connotations usually attached to parenting programmes. The open access programme demonstrated MHT commitment to establishing better communication and co-operation between its tenants and the housing trust. It also demonstrated evidence that MHT sought to deliver a programme in a style which is responsive and appropriate to parents’ individual needs.

4. All of the parents who participated in the programme came from African-Caribbean backgrounds. This was a key strength and unique ‘selling point’ of the project because evidence suggests that BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) are a ‘hard to reach group’ in terms of their access and participation in non-compulsory ordered parenting programmes. Consequently BAME concerns and issues are often excluded from, and marginal to, debates focusing on parenting children with anti-social behaviour (Ghate and Hazel, 2002). The Triangle Way Forward programme has responded to national and policy concerns that parenting programmes should address the needs of black and minority ethnic families which have tended to be neglected. The ethnic composition of the parents participating in the programme meant that the facilitator could focus in detail on parenting issues that are specific (although not exclusive) to black communities such as, for example, black parents’ response to black-on-black youth violence and
concerns about the rising gun culture within black communities.

5. MHT selected an appropriate organisation to run the parenting programme and successfully achieve the project outcomes. In-Volve currently has 21 services across the country, including a number of contracts with youth offending services within the London Borough of Lambeth. Therefore the RAW brand is well-established within the borough. The facilitators demonstrated good prior experience and expertise in working with parents and young people. The team consisted of highly-motivated individuals who are highly-qualified and trained practitioners and senior managers.

6. The Communications Team at MHT worked with the steering committee and In-Volve to develop a clear communications strategy that focused on promoting and marketing the programme. A communication plan was drawn up and despite being agreed by delivery agents it was not adhered too. Therefore, the evaluation of data collected indicates that the dissemination plan did not fully achieve its objectives. There was some publicity around the launch of the parenting programme and there was media coverage of this in a couple of specialist publications. Further publicity has been planned to publicise the conference to be held in November 2007 for agencies working with parents. These examples aside it is clear that the project did not make full use of existing resources to promote the programme or tap into and capitalise on current and timely news stories that could have engaged with parenting dialogue occurring at a national and policy level. Missed opportunities to promote the work of the project occurred when there have been frequent news stories in recent months concerning the issue of parental responsibility for youth crime. For example, in August 2007 Nelson Mandela’s highly publicised visit to London also saw him addressing the issue of parenting and better role models within the black community. These debates would have been an ideal platform for MHT to issue press releases to highlight the programme’s work in supporting parents in the community and contribute to the discussion.

4. Programme content

4.1. Course content

The evaluation shows that a holistic-psychological approach underpinned the course content and delivery. The course content emphasised the parents’ understanding in terms of:

- the ‘self’ and the formation of self-identity
- how their own childhood and own experiences of being parents influenced their parenting practices today and their relationships with their children
- how parenting is impacted by the local environment and their role in shaping the environment through active engagement with community resources.

The facilitators demonstrated that the programme used a variety of methods, approaches and materials, drawing eclectically on a number of psychological and personal development techniques, to explore issues affecting parents’ self-confidence. Other elements also covered in the programme included issues such as:

- raising self-belief and self-esteem
- understanding change, e.g. puberty, stretching the comfort zone
- goals, e.g. breaking down individual goals into realistic segments
- affirmations
- motivations to become ‘good’ parents
- how human mind works – the function of the mind, the conscious, and the subconscious mind
- ‘community parenting’ and participation, e.g. awareness of issues affecting children and young people within the community and parental engagement with them.

The facilitators stressed that the programme would be process-driven with a focus on personal development. Evidence-based evaluating and monitoring of the parents’ progress on the programme was achieved through the partners completing:

- mid assessment, e.g. the distance travelled by parents in terms of achievement and motivation from the start the course
- end assessment, e.g. did the parents achieve the aims outlined at the beginning of the course? A review process of the course and the processes and skills required by the parents for self-development and improved parenting relationships with their children
- a five-year plan, e.g. plans for personal development
at a micro and macro level by detailing key dates, and recognising the challenges faced in achieving plans

- scripts, e.g. personal testimonies based on future visioning techniques
- weekly evaluation forms on the course content.

**4.2. Facilitators’ views on programme outcome**

Based on the facilitators’ perspective the programme produced the following outcomes.

- A final report outlining what was delivered and a sample package of training exercises, that people with experience of running parenting programmes and who have been through the extensive training programme can deliver.
- Guidance and support for individuals who want to further develop their training. For example, some parents who completed the 16 week programme were encouraged to ‘shadow’ facilitators running other courses and do a 60 minute introduction with other parents who were interested in doing a similar programme. In this way they shared their personal experience of completing the programme and their personal development.
- Added value for parents, as parents are motivated to become involved and have purchase within their community. This is achieved through parental engagement and participation by parents in commissioning services within their locality. At a national policy level, this directly relates and feeds into the Government initiative promoting social enterprise schemes within local communities.

**4.3. Truth Chair**

One particularly inspirational and highly effective method was the ‘Truth Chair’, where invited guest speakers openly discussed their experiences without fear of judgement. Although the facilitator provided some background notes of these sessions they were largely confidential to protect the anonymity of the speakers and to encourage the parents and participants to discuss their issues openly in a safe and comfortable environment.

During the sessions the parents were encouraged to question the speakers. Discussions about particular issues raised by the speakers then followed. The Truth Chair taught parents about different ‘truths’. As parents their beliefs or their perceptions may differ to their ‘truths’. Young peoples’ ‘truth’ also differed to their parents’ truths. People all attach different meanings and understandings to their experiences and the world they live in. The aim of the Truth Chair was to foster better understanding between parents and young people.

**4.4. Approaches underpinning the course**

It was evident that the course content was based on two adapted theoretical approaches, both of which originated in the USA.

**Webster- Stratton model**

This uses a variety of approaches to help parents deal with problem behaviour such as group discussion, role play, games, videos and guest speakers.

**Strengthening families, Strengthening communities**

This provides parents with the strategies, skill, techniques and information to enhance parenting ability, teach parenting skills that encourage high self-esteem and social competence, affirm, validate and celebrate cultural differences in parenting and draw on the richness of cultural diversity.

Both programmes are focused and collaborative, and promote social support as well as community engagement and school/youth agencies involvement. These evidence-based approaches work well with parents and children living in disadvantaged communities. Attendance levels by parents for programmes utilising these approaches are usually good. The high attendance and low drop-out rates of the parents who participated in the Triangle Way Forward parenting programme certainly supports working with these evidence-based approaches.

**4.5. Key findings**

1. The facilitators adopted a holistic, organic and eclectic approach to the parenting programme. The key themes were on self understanding and confidence-building; assisting the parents in understanding their own and their children’s behaviour largely using behaviourist and psychological techniques while concurrently improving relationships and communication within the family. Most of the course content and style of programme delivery was based on facilitated discussions with parents, drawing on each other for support and the development of strategies. This encouraged the facilitators to take advantage of additional training opportunities, such as looking at attachment issues, neuro-linguistic programming, and
solution-focused brief therapy. The support systems which parents developed were important outcomes of the programme. The skills and experience of the course facilitators was successful in maintaining the interest of the parents.

2. The programme content developed and adapted two approaches, both of which originated in the USA: the ‘Webster-Stratton’ model and the ‘Strengthening families, Strengthening communities’ model. However there is no systematic framework for programme provision. The result is that there are currently no set standards for parent educators or facilitators. Each develops course programme or content according to their own particular ethos or based on their prior experience in other youth or educational services. Consequently little evidence is available about the facilitators’ competencies in determining the outcome of particular programmes, other than that based on the parents’ feedback.

3. The course content was presented in a theme-based or topic-based manner. The psychological and experimental approaches - integral features of the facilitators’ style of programme delivery - meant that the weekly sessions did not follow a structured format, with a clear course content or online. The main strength of the unstructured content is that it allowed the sessions to be ‘organic’ with the parents setting the agenda in terms of the themes and issues they would like to address that week. Parents felt empowered to draw on their own experiences to support each other and to develop and practice new skills. A weakness was that the sessions lacked coherent structure which, in turn, would lead to a systematic model of programme delivery that could be developed into a ‘toolkit’ or guidance notes, and further utilised and implemented by other agencies supporting parents and children.

4. The progress reports to the steering committee by the course facilitator depended on self reporting from parents and session leaders. The limited data made available from each session meant that during the monitoring and evaluation stages by the steering committee and external evaluator, it was difficult to compare the effectiveness of different methods and approaches with each other. However, there is evidence that the facilitators undertook systematic evaluation of the programme through the parents’ completion of evaluation questionnaires in the final sessions. These provided positive indications that the programme outcomes were achieved.

5. There was poor communication and understanding between the steering committee and facilitators from the project outset in terms of the programme delivery and the project outcomes. In part this was caused by the generalised structure of the research design in the original research proposal. A benefit of this generalised structure is that it provided the facilitators with the scope and flexibility to run and develop the parenting programme according to their own remit and organisational ethos. However, a weakness with this approach is that it left many issues open to interpretation. MHT maintains the stance that prior to the programme running it was made clear to the delivery agents what outcomes were expected from the project. In contrast, In-Volve had a different expectation about the programme outcomes.

6. The research rationale underpinning the research design highlighted the importance of developing skills and strategies to support parents in their parenting skills and practices. Also, supporting parents in achieving better understanding with regards to their relationship with their children. However, both agencies had different interpretations as to how best to achieve this aim. This fundamental issue was never clearly resolved. MHT’s focus was on supporting other agencies working with parents running similar programmes through the production of a “toolkit” or guidance notes. The facilitator’s (In-Volve’s) focus was on empowering parents themselves who had completed the course to take this forward within their community. In-Volve also focused on developing ways in which the group of students could establish themselves into social enterprises and undertake further training and development which would then feed back into the local community. Both agencies were starting from diametrically opposed positions which can be best summarised as follows: empowering agencies to support and work with parents (MHT’s position), versus empowering parents to ‘community parent’ their own localities (In-Volve’s position). The result was that these agencies were sometimes working at cross-purposes and tensions developed between them in terms of these differing expectations.
5. Parents’ view of the programme

This section explores the impact of the programme on the parents and their families. It highlights some of the key issues which emerged in the interviews on which the findings are based, and provides examples of the parents’ perceptions of the impact of the programmes on their personal identity, parenting and family relationships.

5.1. The parents

One aim of the project was to recruit parents from the estate whose children were known in the area to display anti-social behaviour. From the onset the landlords and course facilitators worked hard to target these parents by using a range of methods, including advertising the project through ‘word of mouth’ and door-to-door leafleting on the estate. Parents with ‘problem’ children were also directly approached to participate in the project. However in the first instance it was difficult to attract these parents on to the programme. The difficulties in recruiting parents mirror a number of studies, which also highlight that many parenting programmes do not reach those parents in greatest need (Smith and Pugh, 2006).

To counter this problem and ensure that the pilot programme could be adequately trialled within the timeframe, it was decided to shift the focus towards recruiting parents who lived within the local area, had direct experience of anti-social behaviour by young people living in the neighbourhood and, importantly, were keen to participate in the course regardless of whether their own children were themselves involved anti-social behaviour.

In total 13 parents were registered and selected to trial the parenting programme. Nine parents completed the 16 week course. All of the parents had children who were of adolescent age or ‘young adults’ (i.e. 16-25 years old). The parents were recruited from the local estate and surrounding areas using a ‘snowballing’ method.

Their motivations for doing the course varied but they can be broadly summarised as follows.

- The parents lived on the Moorlands estate or within the surrounding neighbourhoods and had first experience of anti-social behaviour by young people living in the area.
- The parents had their own personal issues and parenting difficulties and they required help, support and guidance.
- The parents were keen to establish their own parenting groups and required further information and training to be able to facilitate parenting programmes.
- The parents wanted solutions to particular concerns affecting black young people within black communities, such as increasing incidences of black-on-black youth crime, educational failure, gun culture and the social and emotional problems that resulted for black youths as a result of poor self-esteem and self-respect.

5.2. Parents’ expectations

The majority of parents had positive expectations about the programme and were looking forward to doing the course. Overall they were looking for the programme to offer them support in their daily interactions with their children. They wanted to gain an understanding how their own experiences of being parented impacted on their relationships with their children, to increase their confidence, to improve their communication with their children, and to gain an understanding of the issues affecting black children and young people in the wider community at large. The following quotation by one of the parents who completed the programme provides some indication of this.

“I came into this programme with something in my heart that says that in this country, we’re raising potentially the most influential black children or ethnic minority children anywhere in the world! The war that’s going on out there is affecting the black community or the ethnic minority community. It’s our young men of whom something like 60 per cent is falling in schools. They’re filling up the prisons and the mental hospitals.

“The programme is about getting parents to explore themselves, initially; who they are; their likes and dislikes; their admissions. It’s designed also to help them as parents to address their own demons and then identify what’s going on or what could be going on with the children. It attempts to get people to recognise what the outside world for the youngsters is really about. Some have been abused as children, some have almost killed. These are the modern day harsh realities of life, plus the lack of leadership in black community, the lack of proper parenting.

“The children are there sometimes crying for certain forms of attention and because the parents are wrapped up in their own personal little world, they don’t see it… We know from
the media that kids are dropping [dying] off left, right and centre and half the time it is about parenting and I’d go as far as to say the village mentality. There’s a saying: ‘It takes a whole village to raise a child’, so sometimes, things are going on and people are just standing there who can actually stop it but choose not to, and so it escalates.”

5.3. Parents’ reflections and experiences

The parents described some of the methods involved in the programme and the system of evaluation that was used to enable them to provide feedback to the facilitators on course content and their own personal development.

“We did get notes handed out, bits of theory, and analysis… all sorts of stuff. Most of the time [in class] it was about sitting in a group, having stuff put to us for us to explore both internally and externally as a group. There’s always a space for one of us to share. I’d say it’s been healthy, and well-managed. He [facilitator] got us doing statements. The statements are examples individually of what makes us who we are, where we’re hoping to go and in some cases what we expect to do with some of the knowledge gained.”

“Thirty per cent of the course is the tools and the bits of documentation that we’ve picked up, bits of knowledge and understanding that has been put to us. Seventy per cent of it is us and our commitment to the programme and we have to be committed to it for it to work. I think [facilitators] are really right when they kept reiterating that if the commitment is there, the commitment will carry us through.”

The parents were able to identify some of the main issues affecting families living in poverty and secondly, how the programme and training could benefit the wider community as well as dealing with their own parenting issues.

“It is a very rough estate with lots of poor people living in it so there are lots of problems here, people here have lots of problems. At the same time, it’s a community… so it’s a poor black community. We have young people roaming around, I’m talking young people nine, ten years old who have no structure to their day, it sounds like babies because of their age, but if you knew what they were doing you’d be gobsmacked! I do have an issue with the lack of social places for children to go, there’s no summer scheme. Social services are non-effective here because they’re scared of most of the parents, yeah.”

“Parent RAW gave us the opportunity to learn life coaching skills and NLP - Neuro Linguistic Programming -so a combination of the life coaching and the Neuro Linguistic Programming. So to me, who has some counselling experience already, I could see where it was different from the usual psychodynamic family therapy-type roles, and I can see where it can be effective within these communities. It’s not a long time - it’s a 12 week course - at the end of the 12 week course you are able to see what your goals are and how to get them. Ultimately, that’s what we’d like now to pass on to other parents.”

Some parents expressed the viewpoint that many of the problems in the community were a result of a lack of ‘good parenting’. Therefore, when young people got into trouble or involved in crime, it was important to look into the family dynamics.

“A lot of the underlying problems that are being looked at based on the causes, the symptoms. So this boy shot that boy - oh dear, oh dear, oh dear… what are we going to do? When the real question is who’s his mum? Who’s his dad? What’s the family relationship? Yeah, so just reframing how we look at our own problems, that’s something we looked at a lot in the group.”

Such a viewpoint supports Respect Action Plan’s agenda which highlights that tackling anti-social behaviour lies in understanding the root causes of anti-social behaviour, defined primarily as poor parenting.

However, the parents also recognised that black families are faced with particular issues that encompass poverty, racism and marginalisation. During the interviews the parents identified that one of the benefits of having an all black group was that it encouraged the parents to relax and talk about issues around slavery and oppression and their own experiences in parenting in a white society, which they otherwise may not have been comfortable discussing with white parents who may also face issues of parenting ‘problem children’.

“Black parents face particular issues of racism, oppression, discrimination, marginalisation, kids aren’t able to progress how they’re supposed to progress. Yeah, there are specific issues to black families, but there are also poverty issues for white families, marginalisation for white families as well, but ours is encompassed by racism, oppression and discrimination and prejudice.”
The issue of cultural legacy and cultural transmission of parenting was also discussed in the programme. Many black parents learnt their parenting styles from their own experiences of being parented. Therefore, during the sessions thinking was developed around understanding how this issue impacts on young black people in this society, as the following quotation indicates.

“So it’s a parenting programme based on shifting peoples’ paradigm really. Many black parents have a tendency to talk down to children, and there is very little communication apart from that. Many of these parenting styles have been passed down to parents. So we’re looking at those issues and whether to take on all those parenting styles from our culture or to be a little bit more discriminate about which parenting styles you actually pick up. What [facilitator] has given us is not a model of parenting but a model of thinking which has helped us all, me included, in terms of developing that relationship with my own children.”

All of the parents said that their expectations were met through the programme and that it had been successful in improving their relationship with their children. One parent provides an example of how doing the course has improved her parenting skills.

“The thing about it is I listen to my children more! Sometimes you’re just so tired and my daughter she talks a lot, and you know, she just goes on and on and on! But now I’m listening coz I wanna know everything that’s going on with her! And that’s what it’s actually taught me, to listen more, you understand? I think a lot of parents out there are not listening. So if we can support the parents with listening more to their children, they might solve half the problems that are going on with their children.”

In addition to providing parenting support the programme also enabled the participants to develop transferable skills which they could use in other areas of life. A number of parents expressed a desire to undertake further training to run their own parenting programmes as a result of the confidence-building and other skills they learnt on the programme.

“[Facilitator] is quite astute in that manner really, in terms of picking up nuances, issues around what we think of each other, most importantly how we think about ourselves, all those kind of skills. So it’s a good programme, neatly put together, you know what I mean? You can take it and use it in a hundred different arenas. The idea of parenting we use this to talk about opening communications, talk about attitudes, talk about listening skills, to know that if you scream at a child, how much are they hearing? Actually they’re not hearing any of it coz as soon as you get to a certain octave, they just shut down and you’re just talking to yourself. So those kinds of skills I think are absolutely invaluable in life and you can use these in other aspects of your life.”

From the parents’ perspective there were a number of benefits which they achieved by doing the parenting programme, in terms of their own personal development and
the skills they gained to support their parenting and their relationships with their children.

- The therapeutic effect of the course content and the structure of the course delivery encouraged the parents to reflect and openly discuss their own issues and experiences.
- The focus on personal development taught the parents important life skills which they intend to utilise in their parenting and wider life.
- The programme raised the parents’ awareness of how they could become better community members. It emphasised ‘community parenting’ and encouraged parents to actively engage with community projects and shared community responsibility for young people, to combat and reduce instances of anti-social behaviour in the local neighbourhood.
- The programme was parent driven – the parents set their own agenda and the course was delivered in an accessible and approachable manner.

5.4. Key findings

1. The facilitators were highly praised for their work with the parents. The teaching team were recognised for teaching in a dynamic manner, being highly motivated, and demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of working with parents and young people in black or marginalised communities. The facilitators were able to demonstrate empathy and understanding to the parents and the particular issues black parents faced in supporting their children. Furthermore the programme focused on the wider issues of personal development and community engagement.

2. None of the parents who completed the programme identified any problems or weaknesses with the facilitators or the programme itself, in terms of course content or course delivery.

3. In almost all cases parents reported an improvement in the relationships with their children and family interactions as a result of completing the programme.

4. The organic and parent-led approach was highlighted as a particular strength of the programme because it enabled and empowered the parents to set their own agenda in terms of how they wanted the session to progress. The parents were keen that the sessions were not academic-based or operated in a formal learning manner. As a result the sessions were more informal and operated along the lines of a ‘talking shop’ where people could come along and share their thoughts of the week, or their responses to particular issues raised in the previous sessions or based on their own parenting experiences. The fact that all the parents were black provided a ‘safe’ environment in which to discuss wider issues of race, racism and oppression.

5. The parents commented that they were introduced to wider reading on parenting and self development by the facilitators, which taught them coping mechanisms to manage life and parenting. Identity packs were given to parents at the start of the programme. Within this pack were evaluation forms which they completed after each session. This encompassed a weekly self-evaluation of what they had learnt in the session and their reflections of their own personal development. However, the external evaluation could not validate these claims as these packs were not made available to the steering committee or evaluator during the programme’s duration.

6. Findings and recommendations

6.1. Main findings

Based on the evaluation it is possible to conclude these main findings.

1. On the whole, the trial parenting programme was a success and serves a good basis in which to develop future programmes. In almost all cases parents reported an improvement in the relationships with their children and family interactions as a result of completing the programme. It is strongly recommended that MHT continues to work with its tenants to establish further programmes.

2. Its key successes were that the parenting programme operated as a voluntary basis within the community, thus reducing for parents the negative stigma usually attached to compulsory programmes. This demonstrates MHT’s commitment to working with the community and its residents. The parents who completed the programme were representative of their
neighbourhood and community. All of the parents were African-Caribbean and this group has been singled out in policy debates as notoriously difficult to access and to recruit on to parenting programmes.

3. The facilitators adopted a holistic, organic and eclectic approach to the parenting programme. The course content, style of delivery and dynamism of the programme facilitators were singled out for praise by all of the parents completing the programme. The organic and parent-led approach was highlighted as a particular strength because it enabled and empowered the parents to set their own agenda in terms of how they wanted the sessions to progress.

4. Key themes addressed were on self understanding and confidence-building, helping the parents to understand their own and their children’s behaviour largely using behaviourist and psychological techniques, while concurrently improving relationships and communication within the family.

5. From the programme onset, clear structures, systems and dissemination strategies were put in place by MHT to monitor and evaluate the parenting programme and ensure quality assurance. However these were not stringently followed through or adhered to.

6. There was poor communication and understanding between the steering committee and programme facilitators from the project outset in terms of programme delivery and project outcomes. This matter was never clearly resolved. In part, this was caused by the generalised structure of the research design in the original research proposal. In addition, both agencies had different interpretations as to how best achieve the aim of empowering parents. MHT’s focus was on supporting other agencies, working with parents running similar programmes through the production of a ‘toolkit’ or guidance notes. In-Volve’s focus was on empowering parents to establish themselves as social enterprises, and undertake further training and development which would then feed back into the local community. The result was differing expectations concerning programme outcomes.

7. One main area of weakness was that no residents or resident groups remained on the steering committee. The one resident member who stopped attending the committee meetings was never replaced. Greater resident participation in the monitoring and planning of the programme through committee membership would have achieved multiple benefits – firstly, greater transparency with the residents about the programme; secondly, their assistance in targeting and recruiting parents with ‘problem children’ from the estate on to the programme; and thirdly, providing further evidence of MHT’s commitment to empowering and supporting parents.

6.2. Key recommendations

This parenting programme provides one way in which support for parents can be offered. The evaluation concludes that the following recommendations need to underpin any further work proposed by MHT to support parents and agencies working with families within local communities.

1. There is a clearly identified need for MHT to further develop the work of this trial parenting programme. However additional funding and resources are needed to run similar programmes with other parents/tenants living in its housing stock in south London. A named person or post should be given the responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of parenting programmes. They should check that appropriate systems are in place to ensure provision is of a high quality.

2. If the programme is going to continue MHT might consider having a key contact within schools with responsibility for parenting issues. This could help parents, MHT and the schools to work more closely together with families deemed at risk of anti-social behaviour.

3. More strategies are required to recruit parents on to the parenting programmes. MHT may be able to utilise the commitment, enthusiasm and experience of those parents who have already completed the programme to recruit their friends and neighbours. This could be an important vehicle through which to engage specific groups of parents whose children are defined as most ‘at risk’ and causing problems in the neighbourhood. It is usually those parents who are most in need who are the most reluctant to attend parenting programmes, and MHT needs to work harder to attract these parents. It may also be beneficial to hold such programmes in schools, also ensuring better communications between parents and the school. The school could then closely monitor the impact of the programme on children’s behaviour.
4. Greater emphasis is needed on engaging with residents to improve their involvement and participation. This could be achieved through the involvement of more residents, or representatives of the residents’ associations, in the steering committee.

5. Programmes should continue to develop and deliver in a style which is responsive and appropriate to parents’ individuals needs. They should promote parental self confidence, understanding and communication rather than a ‘one size fits all’ model of parenthood.

6. Opportunities for follow up activities need to be made available. Further training and professional development opportunities should be provided to parents who are interested in facilitating parenting programmes. This could provide an effective means of expanding provision. If this is through self-support groups, appropriate venues need to be made available in the neighbourhood or housing estates, and consideration given to the provision of crèche facilities.

7. Further attention should be paid to identifying parental support during the different stages of child development (i.e. early childhood, adolescent and young adulthood) and in relation to changing family patterns and circumstances.

8. On a broader level, there is a need to adopt common standards for parenting programmes so that this can be utilised by other agencies with an interest in running similar classes to support parents and families. There should be a clear course content, outline and structure, so that modules can be taken by staff already engaged in working with parents. Currently provision is too ad-hoc, and the lack of a national framework means that parenting programmes are too varied.

References


Smith, C and Pugh, G (2006), Learning to be a parent: a survey of group-based parenting programmes, Family Policy Studies Centre for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation
appendix
Appendix 1

Local Area Partnerships

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPS)
These partnerships have a statutory duty to undertake an audit of crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour (as well as other behaviour adversely affecting the environment) and misuse of drugs (substance abuse in Wales) in their area every three years. They are required to formulate and implement a strategy for combating crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and the misuse of drugs, etc. They adopt a joint problem-solving approach to tackling these issues.

They are responsible for contributing to government PSA targets on:

- reducing crime
- reassuring the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs, including substantially increasing the number of drug misusing offenders entering treatment through the Criminal Justice System
- increasing voluntary and community engagement, especially among those at risk of social exclusion. Other local crime reduction targets are agreed, based on local priorities.

Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the wellbeing of children and young people from birth to age 19.

The government’s aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing.

Every local authority will be working with its partners, through Children’s Trusts, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and act on it. They will need to involve children and young people in this process, and when inspectors assess how local areas are doing, they will listen especially to the views of children and young people themselves.

The programme aims to identify at an early stage children and young people at risk of social exclusion, and make sure they receive the help and support they need to achieve their potential.

Parents, carers and families are the most important influence on outcomes for children and young people. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to ensure that support for parents becomes routine, particularly at key points in a child or young person’s life.

The government, in partnership with local areas, is working to make sure parents and families have access to the support that they need, when they need it, so that all children can benefit from confident, positive and resilient parenting, from birth right through to the teenage years. The steps being taken will help to ensure:

- that good quality universal support, in the form of information, advice and signposting to other services, is available to all parents. It is important that support can be accessed in places where parents and carers feel comfortable, such as early years settings, schools, primary healthcare services, and through childcare information, services, telephone helplines and the web.

- that more specialised targeted support is available at the local level to meet the needs of families and communities facing additional difficulties. Types of support offered could include structured parenting education groups, couple’s support, home visiting and employment or training advice.

- that all schools actively seek to engage parents in children and young people’s education, helping parents to understand what they can do at home to work with the school.

- that children’s centres and extended schools develop a coherent set of services to support parents and to involve them properly at all stages of a child’s learning and development.
Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs): part of the Shaping Places Agenda

LSPs are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together, at a local level, the different parts of the public, private community and voluntary sectors, allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively. LSPs are central to the delivery of the new Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal – National Strategy Action Plan, to which Neighbourhood Renewal Funding is attached. Lack of joint working at local level has been one of the key reasons why there has been little progress in delivering sustainable economic, social and physical regeneration, or improved public services, that meet the needs of local communities. The combination of organisations, and the community, working co-operatively as part of an LSP, is intended to have a far greater chance of success.

Appendix 2

Parenting programme models

Triple P

Triple P, or Positive Parenting Program, is the primary focus of the Parenting and Family Support Centre (PFSC), established in 1996 as a specialist family intervention research and training facility, and based within the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland, Australia. Triple P is the brainchild of Professor Matt Sanders who, more than 20 years ago in Australia, witnessed a tantrum from a child aimed towards his parent. The child’s behaviour led to depression and disputes between the parents and the situation appeared to be set for ongoing deterioration. The lack of information and resources available for this family and others like them led to the development of Triple P, which is now backed by over 25 years of clinical, worldwide research and evaluation 19.

Triple P was developed to provide parents with the necessary skills for managing child behavioural problems. The programme seeks to enhance the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents, helping them to deal with family dysfunction and child-focused conduct issues.

One of the defining factors of the Triple P programme is that it is a multi-level model that addresses, in the main, severe behavioural and emotional problems in pre-adolescent children. The programme aims to enhance the capacity and internal/external resources of parents. In relation to children it seeks to promote social, emotional and developmental as well as promote safe and positive family environments.

This multi-level model incorporates five levels of intervention that increase in intensity and focus:

- **Level 1 (universal Triple P)**
  Targets all parents. Information and problem-solving for low level behaviour problems.

- **Level 2 (selective Triple P)**
  Specific advice for parents with particular concerns about their child’s behaviour or development.

- **Level 3 (primary care Triple P)**
  Brief therapy to assist parents in managing a specific child behaviour. For parents requiring active skills training.

- **Level 4 (standard Triple P)**
  For parents of children with more severe behavioural problems. Intensive programme focusing on skills to address a broad range of target behaviours.

- **Level 5 (enhanced Triple P)**
  As Level 4 but including home visits targeting parents with concurrent child behavioural problems and family dysfunction.

The group programmes are small, typically consisting of 10–12 participants, and are facilitated by Triple P accredited practitioners. This accreditation process and the growing number of accredited practitioners, especially in Australia, has helped to establish the Triple P model.

Across all five levels families are able to access consultations, advice and intensive family coaching. The group work takes place once a week for two hours over four weeks. This is followed by three 15–30 minute telephone discussions once a week, for three weeks. A final group session then looks at progress to date and for the future. In total this process lasts eight weeks. Seminars are also provided for parents lasting approximately 90 minutes. These are classed as Level 1 provision so that parents can access them whether they are on a programme or not.

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**Triple P Self Help**

Triple P Self Help is informed by the Every Parent's Self Help Workbook and has been developed for those parents who, for various reasons, prefer to bring about change without practitioner assistance. This is a step by step 10 week programme of reading and guidance for practical application. As part of this a video/DVD called The Power of Positive Parenting is also available.

Triple P has gained interest from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), Salford City Council, Health Improvement Agency Scotland (NHS) and a number of others. The PFSC in Australia states that research has shown that Triple P has: "Proven cultural acceptability following successful implementation within various cultural groups, including Indigenous Australian, African-American, German, Swiss, Austrian, Turkish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Arabic, Maori and other Polynesians." Although much of the research stems from outside the UK, there have been several large effectiveness evaluations in the UK. These projects include: Greater Glasgow Health Board (Starting Well); Westcliffe Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent (Children’s Fund); Salford (University of Manchester); Hillingdon (NHS).

**The Incredible Years**

Incredible Years refers to a comprehensive set of curricula based on child developmental theory and comprises linked training programmes for parents, teachers and children. The programmes also include school consultations and social skills training, problem solving and anger management groups for children. It is designed to meet the needs of young children (4–8 years) and aims to promote social competence and prevent, reduce, and treat aggression and related conduct problems. The model views the interconnection of child, family and school as the central factors in the development of conduct problem.

Professor Carolyn Webster-Stratton at the University of Washington, Seattle, developed the model. In 1982 she set up the Parenting Clinic at the University, which has helped over 1,000 families of children with conduct problems through the Incredible Years Programmes. The approach has an emphasis on simplicity and fun using problem-solving puppets and diversionary names for group sessions - i.e. ‘Dinosaur School’ - in order to remove any stigma. Webster-Stratton spent many years in Africa and her approach appears to hark back to this period in her life where symbolism and storytelling are very much part of the culture. The model has two long term goals:

- to develop comprehensive treatment programmes for young children who exhibit early stage conduct problems
- to develop cost-effective, community-based universal prevention programs for use by all families and teachers in order to prevent conduct problems, substance misuse and violence from developing in the first place.

There are three levels of parent programme: Basic, Advance and Academic. These levels seek to strengthen parenting competencies such as monitoring, positive discipline and confidence, as well as fostering parental involvement in children’s school experiences. The aim is to start while the child is young in order to promote their academic and social competencies and reduce the risk of conduct problems. Each programme incorporates parent manuals and self-study video learning tools that can be used in 12-14 week, two hour group sessions. Reminders and prompts in the form of fridge magnets, developmental posters and other items assist parents to integrate their learning into the changing culture of the home.

**Programme overview**

The Basic programme focuses on developing and strengthening parental skills related to early childhood (2–7 years). The components of this are:

- play
- praise and rewards
- effective limit setting and dealing with non-compliance
- handling misbehaviour, time out, and preventive approaches.

For 5–12-year-olds, there is an emphasis on strategies such as logical consequences, monitoring, problem-solving with children, and family problem solving.

- how to support your child’s education
- promoting positive behaviors
- reducing inappropriate behaviors.

The Advance programme focuses on parents’ interpersonal issues, such as effective communication and problem-solving skills, support and anger management. The programme consists of the following components:

- how to communicate effectively with adults and children
- problem solving for parents-adults and family problem solving

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20 Triple-P Positive Parenting Program, Submission for Technology Appraisal by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Social Care Institute for Excellence
• teaching children to problem solve.
• The Academic programme enables parents and others to train as mentors, trainers and/or group leaders.

Children’s programme
The Children’s programme has two main aspects. Firstly, a resource pack consisting of videos/DVDs, books, cue cards and other resources can be used with small groups of children, ideally in conjunction with the parenting provision. Secondly, a classroom programme, again with a full resource pack, focuses on friendships, rules, feelings, communication and achieving.

Teacher’s programme
There are two programmes for teachers: the Teacher Classroom Management Program and the Dina Dinosaur Classroom Curriculum.

Teacher Classroom Management Program
This programme seeks to strengthen classroom management strategies, school readiness, promoting positive behaviour and reducing classroom aggression and non co-operation with peers and teachers. Fostering joint working between teachers and parents to promote consistency from home to school also figures strongly in this. Other elements include motivating children through incentives and the importance of teacher attention, encouragement and praise.

Dina Dinosaur Classroom Curriculum (4-8 years)
This comprises 60 lesson plans and seeks to improve peer relationships and reduce aggression at home and school. It can be delivered within the classroom two to three times a week in 15–20 minute ‘circle time discussions’, followed by small group practice activities. A striking aspect to The Incredible Years series is the shear size and diversity of the curriculum resources. This extensive range comes as no surprise as the model developer has had no shortage of research grants and support for this respected model.

Research and evaluation
The Incredible Years series has been researched using randomised controlled group research studies which have demonstrated positive results that have been replicated by independent researchers. The parenting programmes are recommended by the American Psychological Association Task Force and acknowledged as meeting the stringent Chambless criteria. The model as a whole has also been selected by the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as an ‘exemplary’ best practice programme and as a ‘Blueprints’ programme.

Incredible Years is seen as a ‘model’ programme by the Centre for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and recommended by the American Psychological Division 12 Task force as a “well-established treatment for children with conduct problems”.

Strengthening Families
‘Strengthening Families’ is a phrase often used within the UK and other countries. Within some contexts it is not a parenting programme model but a way in which multiple agencies, both statutory and the third sector, work together to cater for the needs of families. For example, in New Zealand Strengthening Families refers to.

 “… a cross-sectoral, whole-of-government initiative, which uses a structured process of government agencies and community organisations working together to improve outcomes for vulnerable families. Both government and non-government/community organisations participate in Strengthening Families.

This has led some practitioners to state that Strengthening Families is not a programme model. However, this is not the case. The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is an internationally recognised parenting and family-strengthening programme for high-risk families. This training programme, based on cognitive skills for parents, was developed by Dr Karol L Kumpfer and associates at the University of Utah in 1982 with research funding from NIDA. Although originally developed for children of substance abusers, SFP is effective and widely used with non-substance abusing parents in many settings: schools, churches, mental health centres, housing projects, homeless shelters, recreation centres, family centres, and drug courts. SFP has been modified for African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and American Indian families, rural families, and families with early teens.

The programme
SFP is a 14-session (two hours per session) family skills training programme designed to increase parent/child capacity and reduce risk factors for substance abuse, depression, violence and aggression, anti-social behaviour and school drop out/exclusion rates in high-risk, 6-12 year old children and their parents. A key feature of the programme is that parents and young people participate both separately and together. This enables all involved to share the experience, learning and change process together.

21 Criteria for empirically evaluating psychological treatments
22 National Institute on Drug Abuse
The SFP curriculum has three courses:

- Parent Skills Training
- Children's Skills Training
- Family Life Skills Training.

Each session is facilitated by two leaders who separate the parents and children for the first hour. Techniques are used that assist parents in bringing out the desired behaviours in children. These are based on rewards, clear communication, effective discipline, problem-solving and limit-setting. Meanwhile, children learn effective communication, understanding feelings, coping with anger and criticism, stress management, social skills, problem-solving, resisting peer pressure, consequences and compliance with parental rules.

The facilitators bring the parents and children together for the second hour where structured family activities, therapeutic child play, family meetings, communication skills, effective discipline, reinforcing positive behaviours in each other and jointly planning family activities are practised. A stick and carrot approach is used for both parents and children by providing incentives for attendance, positive participation and homework completion. Barriers to attendance are all reduced by the provision of family meals before each session, transportation and childcare. Booster sessions and parent-run family support groups for SFP graduates are also encouraged. These aspects to the SFP foster a communal feeling to the process and encourage aspirations in parents to take their learning to other families, thus broadening the network.

**Diverse ethnic populations**

Variations of the original programme have been developed for African-American children and parents: The Strengthening Black Families Programme. This was developed and found effective for rural African-American families in mental health and drug treatment in the South. The Safe Haven Programme is the SFP-modified process for inner city drug users developed by the Salvation Army Harbortlight staff and the Detroit City Department of Health. The positive results of this work can be found in the International Journal of Addictions and the Journal of Substance Use and Abuse (Aktan, Kumpfer, and Turner).

Similar work has been conducted in Hawaii with the Strengthening Hawaii's Families Programme. This programme includes ten sessions on family values followed by ten sessions of the original SFP programme modified to fit the culture in Hawaii.

**Research and evaluation**

SFP has been found to reduce problem behaviours, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in children. SFP has also been found to increase social competencies and school performance. The mistreatment of children has also been shown to decrease with the increase of parenting skills by those that participate in the programme.

SFP has been approved for replication with US federal and state funds by:

- The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
- The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)
- The US Department of Education (USDOE)
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

In 2006 research was conducted in Barnsley (UK) on an SFP 10-14 project with very favourable results (Coombes, L., Allen, D., Marsh, M. and Foxcroft, D). This and many other research projects are assisting SFP in building its evidence base in the UK.

**Appendix 3**

Report and evaluation of the ground breaking Triangle Way Forward parenting skills project.