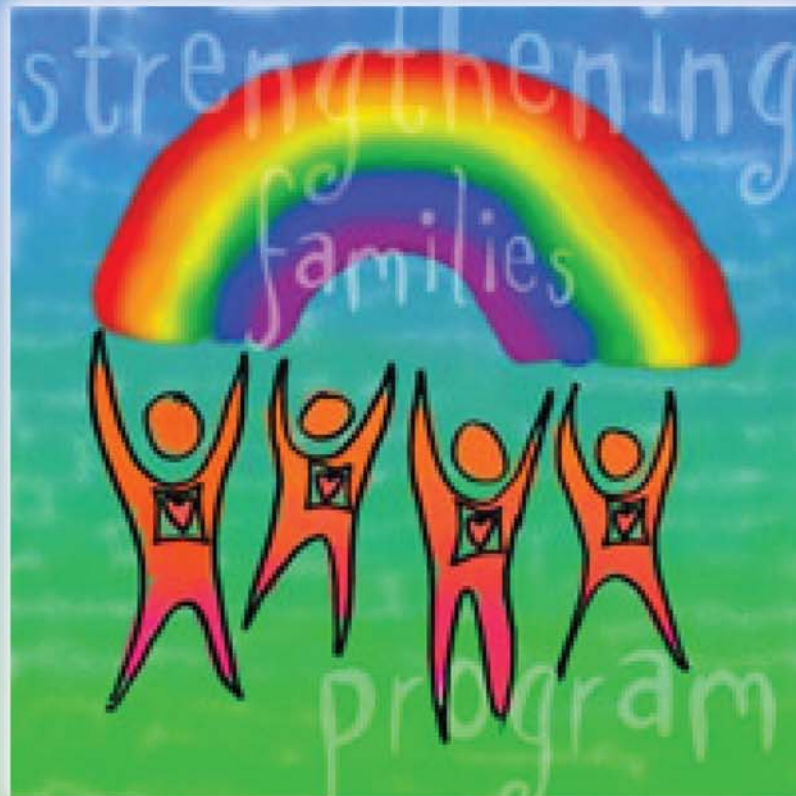


# Evaluation of the Ballyfermot Strengthening Families Programme



**JULY 2010**



# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>General Programme Overview</b>	4
1	Overview of the Strengthening Families Programme	5
1.1	Program Contents	5
1.2	Programme Focus	6
1.3	Incentives	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Bringing Strengthening Families to Ballyfermot</b>	7
<b>3</b>	<b>Researching the Model in the Irish Context</b>	9
	Developing the Template and Timeline	9
3.1	Training	10
3.1	1 Feedback on SF Train the Trainer Programme	10
3.2	Site Visits to Ballymun	11
3.3	Development of an Operational Plan	11
3.4	Development of an Interagency Approach	11
3.5	Selection of Group Leaders	12
3.6	Forming the Team	12
3.7	Challenges in relation to the Group Leaders	13
3.8	Organisational Element	13
3.9	Initial Structures	13
3.10	Timeline	13
<b>4</b>	<b>Ongoing Supports During Programme Delivery Phase</b>	15
4.1	Referral Agents/Key Workers	16
4.2	Role of the site coordinator	17
4.3	Group leaders	17
4.3.1	Core training and background of group leaders	18
4.1.2	Level of support provided to group leaders	18
4.1.3	Role of 'floater' group leader	18
4.2	Planning and debriefing sessions	19
<b>5</b>	<b>Programme Evaluation</b>	20
5.1	Referrals	21
5.2	Selection of families	21
5.3	Families' Initial expectations	22
5.4	Group Leader's Initial Expectations	23
5.5	Effectiveness of Group Leaders	23
5.6	Family Meal	25
5.7	Home Practice	26
5.8	Family Meetings	26
5.9	Childcare	26
5.8	Level of Support	26

<b>6</b>	<b>Belief in the Programme</b>	.27
	Outcomes for Families	.28
6.1	Communication	.29
6.2	Learning How and When to Respond	.30
6.3	Developing Empathy and Understanding	.30
6.4	Bringing Structure into Family Life	.30
6.5	Family Fun and enjoyment	.31
6.8	Developing Friendship	.32
6.9	Families' recommendations	.32
6.10	Suggestions for future courses	.32
<b>7</b>	<b>Added Value from the Programme</b>	
7.1	Benefits to organisations involved	.35
7.2	Benefits to the Group Leaders	.35
7.3	Benefits to other family members	.36
7.4	Successes of the interagency approach	.36
<b>8</b>	<b>Summary Findings:</b>	.39
	Recommendations	.40
	<b>Appendix 1:</b>	.42
	<b>Appendix 2:</b>	.43
	<b>Appendix 3:</b>	.44
	<b>Appendix 4: Financial Report</b>	.45

# 1



## General Programme Overview

# 1 Overview of the Strengthening Families Programme

The Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) is an internationally recognised parenting and family skills initiative for high-risk families. It was developed by Dr. Karol Kumpfer, a Professor of Health Promotion and Education in the University of Utah. Initially, it was designed as a prevention strategy for 6 – 12 year old high risk children of substance abusing parents.

It has now developed as an evidence-based family skills training programme which has been found through research to significantly reduce problem behaviours, delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse in children. It has also been shown to improve the families' social competencies and child's school performance. It reduces the risk of child neglect as parents strengthen the bonds they have with their children and learn more effective parenting skills. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) along with fifteen other independent studies have found positive results in the following key areas:

- Improved parenting knowledge and skills,
- Improved family relationships,
- Improved children's social skills and behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Program Contents

The programme comprises of 14 individual sessions which are held on a weekly bases<sup>2</sup>. The sessions focus on developing both the children's and parent's life skills and learning to put the skills into practice within a safe and supportive environment.

SFP sessions include the critical core components of effective evidence-based parenting programs. There is an emphasise on the parent and child incorporating a practice time in the family sessions to strengthen the learning of positive interactions, communication, and effective and appropriate methods of discipline.

There are three separate sessions which take place on a weekly basis. The first two, parents skill session and children's skill sessions run parallel to each other and cover the following elements:

- Importance of one caring adult
- Opportunities to help others
- Social skills for home and away
- Self-discipline
- Communication of family expectations, including drugs and alcohol
- Parent's help with critical life decisions<sup>3</sup>

The third session is where both groups then come together to take part in the family practice. These sessions allows parents and children time to practice what they learned in the individual groups in experiential exercises. This time allows the group leaders to support and encourage family members to make improvements in parent/child interactions.

During each session skill tips are learnt and each family is requested to set aside some time to undertake home practice assignments in order to put what they have learnt into practice during the week.

<sup>1</sup> Note the programme in Ballyfermot was carried out over 15 weeks to allow for a longer introduction to the programme before the more in-depth sessional work commenced with families.

<sup>2</sup> Note the programme in Ballyfermot was carried out over 15 weeks to allow for a longer introduction to the programme before the more in-depth sessional work commenced with families.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthening Families Programme Resources pack for Ballymun 2009

## 1.2 Programme Focus

The focus of the programme is to build upon the existing strength within the family. This differs from other approaches which focus on what is missing or poorly developed within high risk family groups.

## 1.3 Incentives

The programme has a number of inbuilt incentives to encourage and assist the families to stay engaged and motivated. These include supports to accessing the programme such as transport to and from the programme site as well as childcare arrangements for younger children while the older youths and parents participate in group work.

Additional incentives such as phone credits for the children and meat vouchers for adults are provided.<sup>4</sup> Spot prizes are given to one child from each of the groups on a weekly basis as a reward for their participation. Three meal vouchers for €30 each were given out to each family on three occasions during the programme. These support the families to purchase meat for family meals. A family portrait is taken of each family and presented as a gift at the graduation ceremony.

<sup>4</sup> The phone credits are given on a weekly basis for attendance. The meat vouchers were given on three occasions.



# 2



## Bringing Strengthening Families to Ballyfermot



## 2 Background to Strengthening Families in Ballyfermot

In 2009, the Local Drug Task Force sought applications for grants under the Dormant Account Fund.

Prior to the provision of this funding stream, Ballyfermot STAR had undertaken a piece of research into the Impact of drug use on families. The research found that

*In Ballyfermot STAR, the demand for counselling exceeds supply and there is an ongoing challenge is to find sufficient resources to meet the demand. In the area of parenting, most service users experience similar difficulties - of over-disciplining their children on the one hand while nevertheless feeling unable to control them on the other - but these difficulties can be addressed through parenting programmes which have a track record of proven effectiveness<sup>5</sup>. The same applies to relationship skills with one's partner which is a serious issue among participants on the Community Employment programme, particularly in light of the relatively high level of aggression to which children may be exposed, directly or indirectly, in those relationships<sup>6</sup>. The range of needs identified in this study suggests that serious investment is needed in programmes which have a proven track-record of success in meeting needs in these areas. (McKeown & Fitzgerald, 2006: 16).*

From this work and having heard about the SFP success in other drug task force areas, Ballyfermot STAR felt that this programme had a track-record of success and could meet the needs identified in the McKeown report. They developed a proposal and submitted it for consideration to the Task Force. The Ballyfermot STAR proposal was approved by the Task Force and was put forward and successful in its application to Dormant Accounts. A budget was allocated to Ballyfermot STAR for the roll out two Strengthening Families Programmes.

However, simultaneously two other developments were occurring locally in relation to supporting families within the Ballyfermot area.

1. Familiscope had sought funding from the Local Drug Task Force to run a similar programme and they too were successful in receiving some funding.
2. The Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership had been facilitating a family support network within Ballyfermot and was seeking to explore interagency initiatives for working with families in the area to support a more integrated approach.

Given that a number of different agencies within the same area were proposing to run similar programmes targeting families at risk and the growing interest of the agencies engaged with the Family Support Network to move towards a more integrated approach to working, the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership took a lead in bringing the primary agencies involved together. The funding resources of the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership and Ballyfermot STAR were amalgamated in order to run a multi-agency integrated programme for families in the area.

<sup>5</sup> In Ireland, the Parenting Plus programme is widely respected and used (see [www.parentingplus.ie](http://www.parentingplus.ie)). Internationally, The Incredible Years programme (see [www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com)) is highly recommended.

<sup>6</sup> A range of relationship programmes are run in Ireland by ACCORD ([www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie)) and MRCS ([www.mrcs.ie](http://www.mrcs.ie)) to suit both individuals and groups.

# 3



**Researching the Model in the Irish Context**

**Developing the Template and Timeline**

### 3 Training

In early 2009, the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership provided a training budget to fund places on the Strengthening Families train the trainer course for organisations working with young people and families in the Ballyfermot area. These places were open to a wide variety of statutory and community groups working within the area of youth and families. 35 people participated from 15 agencies<sup>7+8</sup>

Although the training was initially aimed at professional staff within the sector, two parents from the local school attended the training programme. Following discussion at the steering group it was agreed that the local parents would not be group leaders as this was a role which required experience in group facilitation.

It was agreed that the proposal to have families involved at steering group level would be reviewed for future programme, in particular families who have themselves completed the course.

#### 3.1.1 Feedback on SF Train the Trainer Programme

All of the group leaders rated the training between good to excellent. However, there was a difference of opinion in relation to the length of the course with some finding it perfect and others feeling it may have been a bit short.

During the training there was a lot of emphasis on the background to the programme which some leaders felt could have been better spent on the practical side of programme delivery.

However, again, others felt the focus on practical side of the training, without a greater knowledge of the actual programme, would have presented some difficulty.

For another trainee the correct balance of both the practical and theoretical was stuck:

*"It not only provided the background and theory behind the programme but more importantly it gave plenty of opportunity for role-play and discussion around the concepts of the programme."*

It was felt that the Strengthening Families trainers were both of a 'high quality'. As one leader put it:

*"Not only did the facilitators of the strengthening families training have great knowledge about the programme content, they also had experience in rolling the programme out, which they shared with everybody. I also found the training very interactive and was given a real feel about how the programme worked."*

### 3.2 Site Visits to Ballymun

The steering committee went on a site visit to Ballymun Local Drug Task Force where the programme had been operating since October 2007. The programme co-ordinator, Clíodhna Mahony, Programme Manager and Tom O'Donnell, the Site Co-ordinator provided a wealth of knowledge and passed on the learning from Ballymun's experience of delivering the programme to date. The sharing of knowledge and resources was found to have been invaluable. The group leaders also visited the Ballymun project prior to commencing the programme in Ballyfermot for further information and advice.

### 3.3 Development of an Operational Plan

In the autumn the site coordinator and community development co-ordinator commenced working on an operational plan. This plan laid out step by step the actions required for the roll out of the programme.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix x for a list of all the agencies that took part in the Strengthening Families Train the Trainer Course.

<sup>8</sup> The manager of Ballyfermot STAR was an early convert to the Strengthening Families Programme. Eight staff from the service had partaken of the training in June 2007.

### 3.4 Development of an Interagency Approach

The delivery of the SFP as an interagency initiative involved ensuring that all agencies had ‘bought into’ the programme.

All agencies were contacted by Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership in relation to the role they would like to play in the roll out of the programme. Some engaged in the training but did not see a further role for their organisation in the referral and/or delivery stage. This was mainly the case with some of the youth services within the area who saw young people rather than the family unit as a whole as their primary focus.

There also was an initial fear expressed that the organisation that held the funding might have total control over the referral into the programme. However, it was agreed that the referral of families would be open to all, with the caveat that if an agency wanted to refer a family onto the programme then they would need to provide a staff member to act as a group leader. In this way it was agreed that the level of resources input would determine the number of referrals that the agency could make to the programme, thus providing benefit in kind to the agencies for resources made available.

Ballyfermot STAR agreed to provide the use of their facilities for the programme as well as the use of their childcare centre to engage younger children who were not participating in the group work. As the programme was running from Ballyfermot STAR, the manager of this service took on the role as Site Co-ordinator. The Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership agreed to act as the Programme Manager as this fitted with their role as an interagency facilitator<sup>9</sup>.

In the early stages, it was noted by both services that the Site Coordinator and the Programme Manager struggled to find a balance between ensuring that the task of delivering the Strengthening Families Programmes was accomplished while at the same time trying to ensure that the interagency process remained intact. This proved particularly difficult in the developmental stages.

### 3.5 Selection of Group Leaders

The selection of strong competent group leaders was felt to have been a key element in the success of the programme.

All organisations and individuals (with the exception of the parents from a local school) were invited to express their interest in taking part in the delivery of the programme.

Specific criteria were drawn up for the role. This included the following elements:

1. Must have a prior qualification in the social care area.
2. Must have experience of working with groups.
3. Must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

The community development coordinator met with and/or spoke on the phone to all those who put their name forward as a potential group leader. She outlined the role and responsibilities along with the level of commitment required and the criteria for selection. Each person was asked to reconsider their application on the basis of this information.

By the time of selection, all the applications that remained active met the above criteria. The number of potential group leaders matched the requirements for the course delivery hence all those proposed with the exception of the parents from the local school was selected. The school noted its disappointment with the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership as it had felt that the inclusion of parents would have led to ‘true parent/partnership’ involvement.

<sup>9</sup> A table outlining the role of all organisations is contained in the appendix.

### 3.6 Forming the Team

The Group Leaders were supported by the Site Coordinator to develop as a team. Time and resources were allocated by all organisations and individuals involved in delivering the course to prepare the content and develop as a team for six weeks prior to the commencement of the programme.

The preparation work involved getting to know each other and the skills and expertise each was bringing to the team, respecting each other as professionals and role playing the sessions. This was seen as key to the successful formation of the team.

Although the skill learning within each session was seen as important the team was conscious to ensure that the participants would have fun as they developed the skills from the programme.

The passion and the commitment that each member brought encouraged the other members of the team to stay motivated and true to the programme.

### 3.7 Challenges in relation to the Group Leaders

A few days prior to the programme commencing one of the Group Leaders had to withdraw from delivering the course. They were replaced by an experienced youth worker from the Base Youth Service.

### 3.8 Organisational Element

There is a very heavy organisational element to the delivery of the programme. A key element was ensuring that all organisations and group leaders had the same understanding of the programme approach, aims and objectives.

As an interagency piece this presented some issues due to the culture, ethos and model of service provision within different agencies. For example, some organisations found that coming from a more therapy model of service there was some adjustment required to focus on delivering a more skill based programme.

### 3.9 Initial Structures

Initially it was envisaged that the steering group would be very large, incorporating all agencies with an interest in the area. However, agreement was reached to establish a tighter group which could provide oversight and steering to those delivering the programme on the ground.

At the time it was hoped to have more involvement from both the Probation Service and Youth Services within the area. However, due to the time commitment required and tightening resources within agencies this was not possible for the initial programme. However, when one of the group leaders was unable to participate at the last minute the Base youth service did become involved and volunteered one of their youth workers as a Group Leader.

### 3.10 Timeline

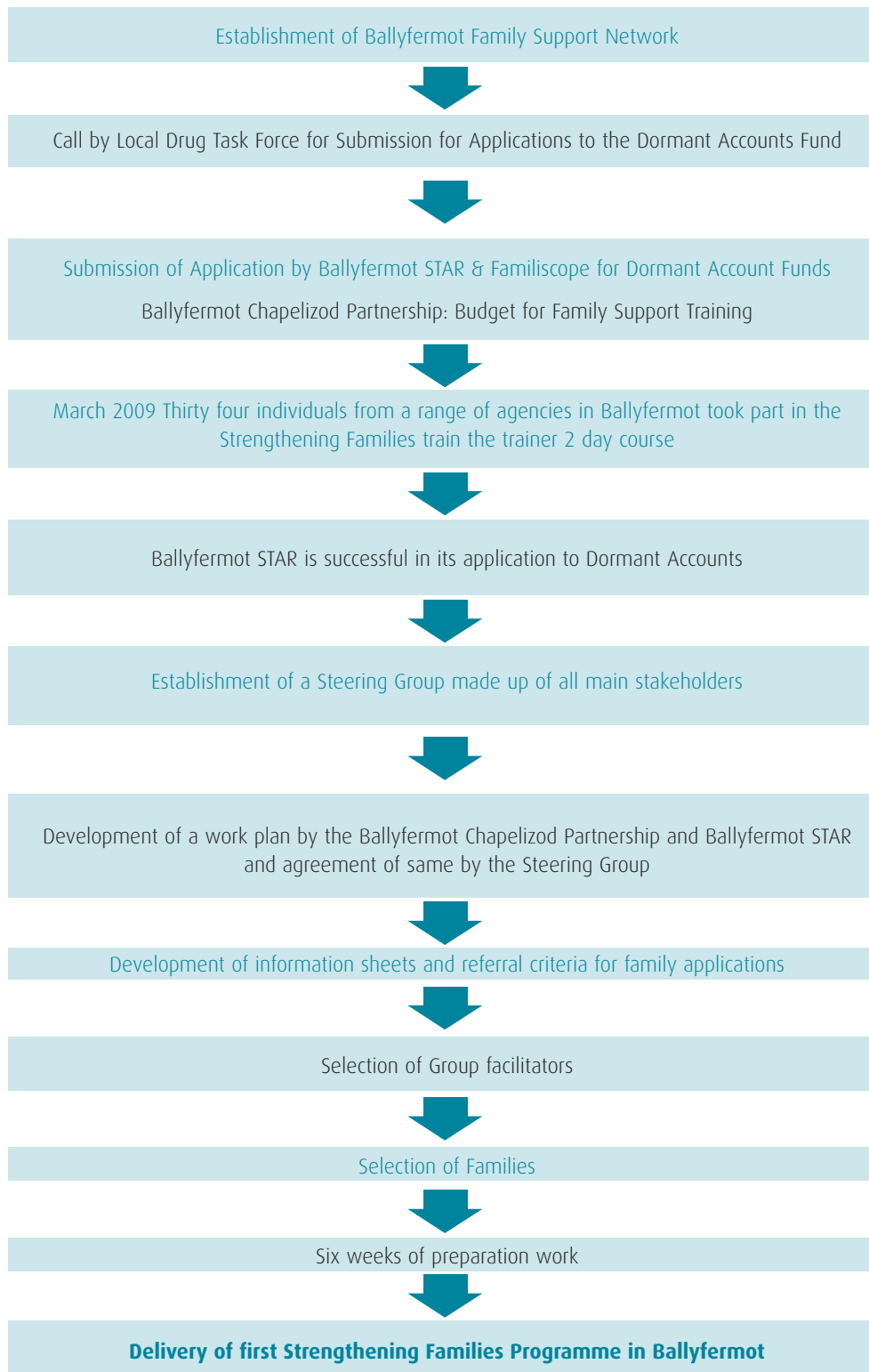
By December 2009, the following key elements had been agreed:

- The structures to oversee the interagency approach were agreed.
- The group leaders were selected.
- Leaflets had been circulated to the agencies seeking referrals.
- It was agreed that Ballyfermot STAR would host the initiative.
- It was agreed that the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership would lead out on the process of interagency working and chair the steering group meetings as the Programme Manager.

*In Ireland, the Parenting Plus programme is widely respected and used (see [www.parentingplus.ie](http://www.parentingplus.ie)). Internationally, The Incredible Years programme (see [www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com)) is highly recommended. A range of relationship programmes are run in Ireland by ACCORD ([www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie)) and MRCS ([www.mrcs.ie](http://www.mrcs.ie)) to suit both individuals and groups.*

- A briefing was held with all interested agencies to remind them of the programme context.
- A copy of the referral form was distributed to all and the selection process was agreed.

### **TIMELINE FOR THE DELIVERY OF STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAMME IN BALLYFERMOT**





# 4



## Ongoing Supports During Programme Delivery Phase



## 4.1 Referral Agents/Key Workers

The role of the referral agent/key worker is to support the family they have referred throughout the process of Strengthening Families.

The Strengthening Families Programme offers a learning of skills rather than a therapeutic intervention and/or a key working support structure. As such, it was seen as vitally important that the referral agent would continue to provide a key working support to the families that they referred onto the programme.

All of the referring agents were provided with information leaflets in relation to the programme. A number of them also noted further discussions with the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership in relation to the actual programme content.

### Feedback from Key workers

Although the level of support required by families from their key workers did not necessary change while they were engaged on the programme, a number of key workers did notice some significant changes in relation to the confidence and parenting abilities of the family members they supported.

The following is an overview of some of these changes:

*"The families I referred both have high needs of support and so this continued as the programme progressed. However, they seemed to be more confident and able to deal with parenting issues as the course moved into the final stages and the supports in place began to make more of an impact on their day to day lives."*

*"The family needed a little support in relation to being more disciplined as opposed to punishing her daughter."*

*"I noticed they were calmer and better able to cope with everyday issues that were coming up for them."*

*"Better communication – setting boundaries for their children – openness to talk about issues."*

*"The children's behaviour in school was less problematic although there are still difficulties. The mother realised that she was no longer willing to put up with treatment that hitherto she had always accepted."*

*"The children were more settled at times – more engagement with the school for one family. The other family would (already) have had good engagement with us."*

## 4.2 Role of the site coordinator

The primary function of the Site Coordinator is to ensure that the Strengthening Families Programme is delivered and implemented to the guidelines and standards set by the SFP originators. This is carried out in collaboration with the Programme Manager of Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership.

The site coordinator is responsible for the smooth running of the programme. This includes the following elements:

- Ensuring that all group leaders are available and prepared for the session
- Ensuring that all families are supported to attend, arranging taxis if required
- Ensuring that the food is of a high quality and prepared in time for the family meal
- Ensuring that the rooms are set up and adequate for the facilitation and group work
- Ensuring that the childcare services is set up and adequate
- Facilitating the de-briefing sessions
- Manage difficult situations in the event of anyone arriving under influence to request they leave and return the following week.

The site coordinator was present at all fifteen sessions of SFP.

The support offered by the site coordinator to the group leaders during this programme came in for particular praise.

*“Our site co-ordinator was always at hand and ensured that everything was ok for me.”*

*“While delivering the program the site coordinator was always available to talk to in case any issue or query would arise. If I had a problem it would be dealt with straight away.”*

*“Without the commitment from Ballyfermot STAR it would not have been as successful as it was.”*

The organisation of transport and childcare was particularly appreciated and noted by the families.

*“They took the stress out of coming, transport was great, not have to worry about how to get here, the childcare, where would you get it?”*

## 4.3 Group leaders

The group leaders played a central role in ensuring the successful delivery of the programme. Each of the leaders brought a different skill and experience to the team.

### 4.3.1 Core training and background of group leaders

The core training and background that the group leaders brought to the programme was very relevant and beneficial to the role they took on as facilitators to the groups. The following is an overview of the experiences and qualifications that they held:

- Registered Psychologist, former social worker in addiction and mental health.
- Registered Family Therapist, 3rd level tutor in education & former secondary school teacher.
- Experience of working with individuals with substance abuse problems & currently completed thesis for a BA in Applied Addiction Studies.
- Experience in Child Development and Care.
- Facilitator training, worked in the community sector for 6 years & voluntary work with youth clubs and children in a family refuge.
- BA in Social Care, MA in Drama-therapy, Dip in Speech and Drama teaching, certified incredible year’s parent group leader and experience in facilitation.
- Degree in Social Care, Diploma in Drug and Alcohol Studies, experience of working with young people and families.
- Community development, adult and community education, guidance and counselling.
- Addiction Counselling and experience in Family Support.

The majority also had strong facilitation skills prior to taking on the role of group leader.

### 4.1.2 Level of support provided to group leaders

The group leaders as a whole felt supported in their role on this programme. The support they received came from each other, from the site coordinator as well as from their own organisation. As one leader put it:

*“There was support within the programme planning and de-briefing sessions, as well as an opportunity to discuss*

issues with the site co-ordinator. My own Board of Management are interested in the programme and so are available to discuss issues as they related to our organisations participation. As a project manager I have external support and I availed of this to discuss issues relating to SFP.”

### 4.1.3 Role of ‘floater’ group leader

Initially there were two floaters allocated to work alongside the group leaders. In the young peoples group the floater shared the delivery of the programme. In the parents sessions the floater felt a little ‘surplus to requirements’ especially at the beginning when there was no small group work to be done within the sessions.

However, having a floater within the team did create a sense of support for the other group leaders as one leader put it:

*“Knowing that there was a floater who could support a young person if they wished to leave a particular session was good for me.”*

This was also noted in the focus group held with the Group Leaders in respect of the floater attached to the parents groups.

## 4.2 Planning and debriefing sessions

The time and resources that were allocated to the planning sessions were reported as good to excellent. Leaders commented upon the ‘problem solving’ approach and ability to work through difficulties. An example of the value placed upon the planning is outlined below.

*“The planning sessions were really good. It was good that as a group we spent about 6 weeks before the programme – forming group cohesiveness, and going over the programme. Also on the day of the programme we met and discussed issues and prepared for that day’s programme. All of this was time well spent and it really contributed to the smooth running and success of the group.”*

Although the leaders rated the debriefing within the good to excellent mark there were difference expressed in relation to the adequacy of the time given to these sessions. Although some leaders found the time allocated to be appropriate others expressed a feeling that it could get a bit rushed. A suggestion was made that the group should meet the following day if required. An example of the views expressed in relation to the de-briefing sessions is presented below.

*“I feel that enough time was allocated for the planning session and everybody’s thoughts and opinions were highly regarded. In relation to the debriefing session given the time of night that the sessions ended everybody was tired hence at times it could be a bit rushed.”*

*“I felt that it was important to meet immediately after the families went home and de-brief. I felt that it helped to leave whatever came up there in the workplace and not to bring it home with me. Having said that, I think that it might have been better if we also had a meeting (say the next day) for an hour and go over some of the issues that arose during the programme. I feel that at times – not enough time was given to some of the issues and they were not explored to my satisfaction.”*

*“I felt the planning sessions and debriefing sessions were organised extremely well giving everyone a chance to air their views. There was a lot of problem solving and we worked through any challenges we had as a team.”*

# 5



## Programme Evaluation

### Referrals Initial Expectations

## 5.1 Referrals

In the autumn, flyers were designed to promote the programme. These were distributed to all of the agencies who engaged in the training programme. It was agreed that if an agency would like to refer families onto the programme they had to be prepared to commit a staff resource to the delivery of the programme.

The referrals into the programme came from a variety of sources. Some families were informed about the programme through their local school and child crèche; others were referred through their counsellors and/or community drug project.

Referrals from the school were discussed firstly by the school care team. Families were chosen on the basis that they needed support as their children had shown emotional issues/poor attendance and sometime aggressive behaviour in school and towards their parents.

Other agencies used criteria around difficulties with parenting, parents that have identified that their teenagers have challenging behaviour, and the need for relationship building between parent and child.

It was felt that in future programmes more time should be allocated to the sourcing of referrals. However, agencies felt they would be in more of a position to promote the programme based upon the success of the pilot.

## 5.2 Selection of families

Initially the steering group had planning on targeting the first programme at families who were not in chaos. However, as the number of families that agreed to participate was lower than the maximum number for the course so all families that indicated an interest were invited to participate.

The selection of families for this particular programme was reported to have 'worked like a dream'. A selection panel was established to consider the referrals. The families who were referred were met by the selection panel. They explained the programme and also outlined the commitment and the level of support that would be required and provided. Eleven families were met. All of these families commenced the programme and ten completed the programme and graduated. This represents a very high retention rate on the programme and is a reflection of the skill and dedication to all those involved in delivering the course.

The families felt that the referral and initial meeting were handled well. The level of information given was found to have been good and appropriate to needs<sup>10</sup>. The families were told immediately that they had been accepted onto the programme.

<sup>10</sup> In some instances, parents had literacy issues and the information was provided verbally rather than in writing.

The following table presents a breakdown of the families that commenced the programme.

**Table: Breakdown of Family Composition**

Family No.	Parents Attending	Young People Attending	Children accessing childcare
1	2	1 x 14 year old	1 x 19 month old
2	1	1 x 12 year old 1 x 14 year old 1 x 16 year old 1 x 17 year old	
3	1*	1 x 15 year old	1 x 2 year old 1 x 4 year old
4	2	1 x 15 year old	
5	2**	1 x 14 year old	
6	1	1 x 12 year old 1 x 15 year old 1 x 17 year old	
7	1	1 x 13 year old	1 x 4 year old 1 x 6 year old
8	1	11 year old	1 x 3 year old 1 x 10 year old
9	1	1 x 11 year old 1 x 14 year old	1 x 2 year old
10	1	1 x 12 year old 1 x 13 year old 1 x 17 year old	1 x 2 year old 1 x 10 year old
11	1	1 x 13 year old 1 x 15 year old	
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 parents</b>	<b>20 young people</b>	<b>10 children</b>

\* This family did not complete the programme

\*\* These were grandparents

### 5.3 Families' Initial expectations

All families felt the actually programme was very different to what they initially expected. There was a sense of fear and nervousness within the families prior to engaging with the programme. Examples of some of their feelings and concerns are captured below:

*"We were not given too much information and initially had some concerns because they thought a stranger would be coming to our house to mind the kids while they were on the course. We were delighted when they realised that the childcare facility was on site and that it is such as pleasant space." (Parent)*

*"We contacted Ballyfermot STAR and found out a bit but we still had no real idea of what it was going to be like." (Parent)*

*"At first I thought it was a bit American and it took a little bit to get to know others but then it was grand." (Young Person)*

*"It was a bit strange at first, being open about yourself in front of other people but after a while we seen that all of the others were in the same boat as us or even worse so it got easier as time went on." (Parent)*

*"Most of the families concerns were around what they would be asked in a group, would it be too personal. We reassured them that it wasn't that type of group" (Key worker)*

One young person described how he had jumped out of his mother's car on the way to the first night as he had not wished to be there. Now, he is glad that he did participate and has seen a big change in himself, his mother and in his family as a whole.

## 5.4 Group Leader's Initial Expectations

Prior to commencing the programme the Group Leaders had some concerns in relation to the fact that the programme is very much a skills based approach as opposed to having a more traditional therapy based focus.

The programme was viewed as very prescriptive and this, coupled with the Americanism, meant that some leaders were initially anxious about how families attending from Ballyfermot in Ireland would relate to it.

### What helped?

#### ***Preparation, preparation and more preparation!***

The group leaders met as a group to prepare for six sessions prior to commencing the delivery of the course. Having this time to develop as a team and to familiarise themselves with the course content and agree upon the delivery helped to alleviate some of the earlier concerns.

The group leaders felt that being true to the programme even when there were initial doubts as to how it would go helped to strengthen their own belief in the process. That said it did not prevent them for adapting the programme where they felt necessary to fit the setting. An example of this is the splitting of the first session into two evenings to allow for a longer induction for families to relax and not be overpowered by the work involved in the programme.

## 5.5 Effectiveness of Group Leaders

A strong bond has developed amongst the group leaders. There was agreement that each member of the team brought a different area of competence to the table. The Group Leaders were comfortable with each other and felt that the high level of respect they had for each other enhanced their ability to work effectively together as a team. The team was open to accepting new members to the extent that a new member who had not been on the training felt fully accepted and respected when she joined the team during the second session.

Members of the team felt very supported by each other. There was a sense that all had something important to contribute and there was a sense that everyone's views and opinions were listened to.

The team brought a great diversity of skills and knowledge to the table from their different experiences of working with young people, adults and family groups. The atmosphere when working as part of the group leader's team was expressed as pleasant, helpful to each other and welcoming.

There was a very high level of commitment to the programme by all of the group leaders.

The feedback in relation to the leaders was very positive from 100% of the families that participated. An overview of some of their comments is provided below:

*"The group leaders were very good to us and seemed very well trained for the job, they were all very kind people." (Young Person)*

*"The group leaders were very good and always helpful. The whole thing was handled well with a great feeling of respect and value all the time." (Parent)*

*"The group leaders were top class and we could not say enough about them. The whole lot was very well done and we always had a bit of a laugh even during the serious bits, we managed it somehow." (Parent)*

*"The group leaders were really great and very dedicated; they really knew what they were on about. There were one or two things that we needed to discuss as the weeks went on and we were supported all the way." (Parent)*

On one or two occasions some families noticed that the leaders did not seem as familiar with the content and referred more to the notes. Although this did not take from the group sessions or from the positive relationship they developed with the leaders, the families felt it resulted in the leaders appearing a bit uncomfortable with the delivery of that element of the programme.

### Group Work

Families felt they benefited greatly from the work within the group, using it as a sounding board to share their experiences and learn from the experiences of others.

*"The group work was very good, to be able to listen and share, it put things into perspective. I found it very good support, I used it as a sounding board, like being able to say 'this happen and this is what I did'" (Parent)*

*"The first session I was like this (head down and silent) the second one I was able to talk and after that I couldn't stop talking. The people were very nice; it was good to get to know them. It was great to meet different people in the group with different points of view." (Parent)*

*"I liked the workshops and the dinner best." (Young Person)*

*"I thought the family warm ups were good because it meant that everyone got involved. Sometimes you're in a group and one person does all the talking or someone doesn't say anything, by going around the group this meant everyone got to take part and contribute". (Parent)*

However, in one family session, a parent reported that a note her child had written in the teen group session was read out. Her daughter had been of the understanding that this would be kept confidential between herself and her mother and was upset that it was going to be disclosed publicly. Her daughter took her note back but did not come back to any further sessions.

## 5.6 Family Meal

Although a bit strange at first for some of the families, all of the families had come to enjoy the family meal. The quality of the food was praised by the vast majority of families. With all except one family describing the standard as excellent. Six of the families would change very little in respect of the menu and four families would like a greater choice for children. The following is an overview of their views in relation to the family meal time.

*"It was great to sit down and have dinner together. The food is great, we wouldn't change a thing." (Young Person)*

*"It was great for structure, sitting down at meal time took a bit of getting used to, but after the first week or two it was grand. I learned to relax a bit and not be worried about elbows on the table and everyone sitting up at the table." (Parent)*

*"I loved it but the kids would like more child friendly food – kids don't really like it." (Parent)*

*"There were potatoes with everything; they should have some potatoes free dishes." (Young Person)*

*"It was so nice not to have to cook for one night. We loved all the food. All the dishes were great, especially the deserts." (Parent)*

*"I'd like more child friendly food, pizza chicken nuggets and chips. Things that the kids would eat. If the kids don't eat you need to get them something when you go home and it's very late for them then." (Parent)*

*"We have home dinners a lot so its was like having another Sunday dinner every Tuesday. I do not want to see another pea or carrot for a while." (Parent)*

*"I would have liked a greater choice of vegetables and some different choices like chicken wrap." (Young Person)*



As one organisation put it:

*"It was an amazing thing to see that just sitting down to have a family meal together is such an unusual thing for some families in Ireland today".*

## 5.7 Home Practice

On the whole parents found the home practice very useful. It gave them a chance to practice out the skills they learnt during the week and feedback to the group at the next session.

It was noted by both the group leaders and two of the families that the length of daily practice time expected was not realistic for families with a large number of children. It was agreed by the group leaders to allow some flexibility regarding the prescribed half an hour home practice per day per child for large families.

## 5.8 Family Meetings

A number of families commented on the structure that the family meetings had brought to their lives. This time set aside for the family was seen as a valuable tool to plan the week which led to less stress and more support being offered within the family.

Families found innovated times and places to hold these meetings, including on one occasion, in the car wash!

## 5.9 Childcare

The standard and quality of the childcare provision was commented upon by most of the families. All of those accessing the service felt the standard was excellent with great attention paid to detail.

*"The childcare was really brilliant, even when we pass during the day now my child wants to come in and play. (Parent)*

*"I really liked the playing with my friends" (Child)*

In a few cases, although the families felt the childcare provision was excellent they did not feel it was suitably for young people who were near in age to those attending the programme and much older than the other in the childcare area. These young people, they felt, were under stimulated and the parents would recommend that more age appropriate activities be developed in future programmes.

*"The childcare was brilliant for the younger ones but it needs to be age appropriate. They should bring some of the kids out of the baby room for the family stuff." (Parent)*

## 5.8 Level of Support

All of the families felt that the level of support was excellent. None of the families felt that they required additional support from the programme. The support offered was described as 'pure brilliant'

*"The support is great. It's been brilliant. I really enjoyed it." (Parent)*

The feedback from keyworkers in relation to the level of support provided by the programme to families was also very positive. Some organisations reported added benefits from the enhanced support they provided to families prior to and during their engagement with the programme.

### Belief in the Programme

There was a very strong belief in the programme which was shared by the group leaders and the steering group members. It was felt that the programme could and would develop new skills within the families that engaged.

The group leaders talked about 'the beauty of the programme' and 'the magic of the programme'. As they put it:

*"Watching the programme develop and the skills enhanced on a week to week basis was great."*

*"There was great expectations for the programme to deliver. Because of its success in Ballymun it was felt that it would be a great programme for Ballyfermot."*

# 6



## Outcomes for Families

## Outcomes for Families

The outcomes that families gained from engagement on the programme were significant. All of the families that graduated felt that they had benefited greatly and that it had been a very worthwhile experience for them as individuals as well as for their family as a whole.

As baseline data was not taken from the families at the commencement of the course it was not possible to benchmark their behaviours and attitudes pre and post course. However, this evaluation captures the qualitative responses from families through semi-structured interviews conducted towards the end of the programme.

### 6.1 Communication

100% of families felt that the communication within the family had improved significantly. Each family interviewed expressed the enhanced communication as one of the key benefits they had gained from their participation on the programme.

*"It was a great programme, and there is a huge difference in the communications in the family now, we know how to have more time for each other and how to listen better. I wish I had known this stuff years ago. I think it's about more understanding really." (Parent)*

*"Communication, learnt to listen and learnt to understand where each of us was coming from. I am able to give clear instructions now and to explain why I am asking them do something. So instead of saying just 'do something, now I'd say 'please could you ... because .." (Parent)*

*"Definitely communicate better. We don't argue anymore and we get on way better (Young Person)*

*"We could never agree (with mum) now it's easier for us to talk to each other. We now get on well, it's made a big difference, and we've learnt how to talk to each other." (Young Person)*

Another parent described how now he can 'talk on a one-to-one with his children for the first time ever'. Prior to commencing the course he found it difficult to relate with his children or to see them as individual people with whom he could develop a relationship.

The changes that he made include 'I now listen more; I have more rules but am able to talk to my children. I don't shout my head off (anymore).

This enhanced communication within the families was noted by the families themselves, the group facilitators, the site coordinator and the key workers.

### 6.2 Learning How and When to Respond

A number of parents noted that they have learnt to walk away if they need to rather than 'losing the head' or responding in a negative way to 'the small stuff'.

*"Now I listen more and I ignore some attention seeking behaviour." (Parent)*

*"I liked everything in it. I never did anything like this in my life before. My children can come to me now without shouting, and I'm not shouting back. They don't give me cheek anymore." (Parent)*

*"Families gained – improved relationships in families and also age appropriate consequences for the teenagers, so as to avoid power struggles." (Key worker)*

*"I did notice that they were calmer and better able to cope with everyday issues that were coming up for them." (Key worker)*

The idea of introducing rewards for good behaviour was found to be extremely beneficial. Some parents reported that it was only now that realised the value of simple rewards such as saying 'thank you' and letting their children know they appreciate them worked well.

### 6.3 Developing Empathy and Understanding

*A key skill that families felt had developed was that of empathy for each other and learning how to understand each others perspective.*

*"A really good experience for us, we have worked through a lot of stuff and are still working on things but we have both learned to look at things from the others point of view." (Parent)*

*"We are now better equipped to look at different points of view and opinions and avoid the type of conflict which would happen in the past." (Parent)*

*"We learnt how to respect each other." (Young Person)*

*"The best bit was to learn how we all have different views on things and that the kids have opinions too. To understand where they are coming from and for them to understand a bit of where we are coming from too." (Parent)*

### 6.4 Bringing Structure into Family Life

The development of a structure and a routine was felt to a positive outcome from the programme. This structure is often lost when a family member is addicted. The holding of a family meeting during the week was felt to have set the course for the week ahead.

### 6.5 Family Fun and enjoyment

A number of families commented on how they have come to realise that they can have fun together and begun to set aside more and more time for each other. One mother commented on how she now plays games with her children and makes sure to give them individual time with her. 'We play games now and they love it, hide and seek and that'. A father noted that he was delighted to now bring his children to their GAA and swimming practice. Brothers and sisters reported that they now 'got along together' and 'liked each other more'. As one set of siblings put it: 'we even hang out together now and we would have never done that before'.

### 6.6 Enhancing Skills through the Top Tips

The families reported that they benefited greatly from the tips that were given each week. Taking these tips home and putting them into practice has changed how they relate and interact within their families.

*"It's given us tools for life." (Parent)*

*"What we found important was developing the skills and tools. How to manage our emotions, if frustrated to bite our tongue, greater understanding." (Parent)*

*"We've learnt how to use it (tips) at home with the family, but also at school and with friends" (Young Person)*

*"We have gotten a lifetime of learning from the past few weeks. We're still working on it but we're getting there." (Parent)*

*"Sometimes reminders or tips from the course just pop into our head." (Young Person)*

### 6.7 Enhanced Confidence

Parents spoke of the renewed confidence they felt as parents as well as a new confidence they had developed in themselves. This has led to a number of them enrolling in other courses.

*"I felt the power was slipping before, now I feel it is back." (Parent)*

*"I even felt confident to look at doing other courses and I've started looking to see what else is out there" (Parent)*

*"I never would have done a course and now I'm doing another one on gardening" (Parent)*

## 6.8 Developing Friendship

All of the families felt welcomed on the programme and relaxed with each other as the course progressed. A great rapport developed amongst the families whereby they clubbed together to purchase a present for a mother who had just had a new baby. A number of both parents and children noted the friendships that they had made with other families which they felt would last outside of the programme.

*"We were given the opportunity to meet and mix with other families that we might have thought were different to us but once you get to know people you realise that we are all just the same with the same joys and the same problems no matter what your culture or background is." (Parent)*

*"I made friends, some great friends just from being here". (Parent)*

*"I have new friends now." (Young Person)*

## 6.9 Families' recommendations

100% of the families would strongly recommend the programme to other families. A number of families have already recommended the programme.

*"We would definitely recommend the course to other families in fact we already have and have two people who want to put their names now for the next course." (Parent)*

*"I found it excellent, recommend it 100%, Delighted to have done it, I even have one friend who wants to do it". (Young Person)*

*"We would definitely recommend it. Everyone should do. We'd even like to do it all over again." (Young Person & Parent)*

## 6.10 Suggestions for future courses

The vast majority of families would not change a thing in relation to the course and its delivery.

*"Absolutely nothing to add is coming to mind. Wouldn't take anything away from it either." (Parent)*

In relation to suggestions for future course. A number of different families made recommendations on what they felt might enhance the programme.

*"No more cabbage!" (Young Person)*

*"There could be more real life examples. Some of them, you'd know they came from a book, like the drugs one and not from real life" (Young Person)*

*"The group leaders told some of the children that they didn't need to come if they didn't want to come. I would recommend that this is done for the older group but it is not age or maturity appropriate for the some of younger kids." (Parent)*

*"The rewards for kids were a nice touch. Ideas for other rewards like the spot prizes would be tickets for the cinema or bowling or something." (Parent)*

*"Maybe change the start time; I do extra school so I'm not home until a quarter to five, so it's a bit of a rush to get here." (Young Person)*

*"There should be a person to do games and things for older children in the childcare area." (Parent)*

*"We should get out of the room (group work room) for a while and have it somewhere else". (Young Person)*

# 7



## Added Value from the Programme

## 7.1 Benefits to organisations involved

It was felt that there were a number of positive spin off's for the organisations involved in relation to the release of their staff for the delivery of this programme. The agencies themselves felt that the work of the strengthening families programme on the whole complimented the core work of their organisation.

The involvement of the HSE was particularly noted as a positive. As one respondent put it:

*"Often with community initiatives it is hard to get the statutory services to commit their involvement. This meant a lot to the other agencies and boosted the credibility of the programme".*

It was reported that agencies made 'huge gains' in terms of their working effectively with other organisations.

An overview of some of their comments is set out below:

*"This project has been a success and we feel we had a part to play in that success".*

*"(We have) learnt skills and knowledge that can be used with clients, sharing of resources and experiences outside of those of our own organisation, got to know staff from other organisations, shared first hand their methods of working/ethos both with colleagues and clients."*

*"Staff time given over the SFP has to be seen as ultimate benefit to clients, as there is an increased opportunities to have a family referred onto the programme".*

## 7.2 Benefits to the Group Leaders

The benefits obtained by those involved in delivering the programme were two fold. Firstly, they reported benefiting from watching the transformation in the families and young people who engaged with the programme and secondly, they benefited themselves both in the development of their skills and in the creation of professional networks and friendships.

*"Working with the young peoples group was an unexpected pleasure. The improvement I saw in some of the participants was very rewarding."*

*"Given that this was my first experience of group facilitation I have gained new skills and confidence. Working with the family as a whole rather than an individual member (for me it would be children) was a fantastic experience and has given me a lot of faith in how programmes like SFP can make a big difference in peoples lives."*

*"I think I benefitted greatly from this programme. I feel that I have gained additional skills in delivery of programmes as I often had to adopt different leadership skills and pitch the content at different levels for example young people and family sessions."*

*"Aside from establishing good links with the various agencies involved in the programme I also gained new skills, new outlooks and perspectives from the working relationships with various professionals from different agencies."*

*"Observing colleagues at work gave a different slant on how to approach issues with clients."*

## 7.3 Benefits to other family members

Parents reported that they have noticed changes in their daughter who does not attend due to the change they have made in how they relate to her. She's not so demanding anymore, she even cleans up her room, she apologises.

### Effects on others within the community

One family noted how others in the neighbourhood have noticed a difference and asked for some tips with the result that now some neighbours are now using the tips from strengthening families within their own homes.

## 7.4 Successes of the interagency approach

The majority of agencies felt that the project was successful as an interagency initiative. A number of the agencies involved have already begun to plan other interagency work together. As one agency reported:

*“The families who were referred to the programme from Ballyfermot STAR have gained from their engagement. The working relationship with the other agencies involved has been developed. This will lead to greater joined up work in the future. Ballyfermot STAR staff team are arranging to meet the with the staff team of the Daughters of Charity with the idea of developing better more joined up working relationships. Ballyfermot STAR is making a presentation to the local Social Work Team. This will promote greater working relationship with the HSE and Ballyfermot STAR. There will be a smoother referral process to and from services with a clearer understanding of what work each agency will be responsible for.”*

It was felt that the role of the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Community Development Coordinator and Ballyfermot STAR Manager were central to the development of an interagency approach. In relation to what worked best in relation to the interagency element of the programme one organisation noted:

*“The role of Sunniva and Freda – they were brilliant and worked consistency and diligently – they ensured the programme kept progressing.”*

It was suggested by another respondent that in future more time needs to be spent discussing and developing operational policies rather than letting those of the lead agency prevail.





# 8



## Summary Findings and Recommendations

## Summary Findings:

It is our view that the Strengthening Families Programme in Ballyfermot is a model of best practice in terms of engaging and supporting families to develop and build upon existing interpersonal, life and parenting skills.

The programme had a high retention and completion rate in comparison to other similar programmes which have been run in Ireland<sup>11</sup>. It was a testament to the organisers and group leaders that one lady attended the week after giving birth as she did not wish to miss out on any learning!

In total, eleven families were recruited and commenced the programme. These families were made up of fourteen parents, twenty young people and ten children.

Of these:

Half of the families attended 100% of the sessions.

Three families attended 93% of the sessions, missing only one evening.

One family attended 86% of sessions, missing two evenings.

One family attended 57% of the sessions and

One family attended only two sessions and did not complete the programme.

Ten of the eleven families completed and graduated from the programme after the fifteen weeks.

100% of the families that graduated reported that they had benefited from their participation and engagement with the programme and would recommend it to others.

- All of the families reported enhanced communication skills.
- All of parents reported enhanced parenting ability.
- The majority of the young people felt that their overall relationship with their parents had improved.
- All of the young people felt that there was less conflict within the home.
- The majority of parents and young people felt that they had developed more understanding and respect for each other.

The skill, expertise, respect and professionalism brought to the programme by the Group Leaders was acknowledged by the young people, parents, key workers and the organisations involved. The role they played was central to the overall success of this pilot.

The management and organisation that went into the delivery of all aspects of the programme was exceptional and this was attributed to the site coordinator.

Aside from the positive outcomes for the families involved in the programme, a number of added value aspects were identified. These included the impact the programme had on other family members and neighbours, the up-skilling and enhanced networking amongst group leaders, the breaking down of cultural barriers amongst the families involved and the networking and enhanced interagency activity within the key organisations.

<sup>11</sup> The Midlands 2009 programme had ten families commencing and seven completing. Ballymun 2008 had recruited ten families, nine commenced the programme and eight completed the programme.

## Recommendations

### Family Referrals

- Rec 1 Ensure adequate time for the referral process.
- Rec 2 Consider involving a family member that has completed the programme in the initial meeting with potential families and/or on the first night of the next course in order to give the new families a greater understanding of the programme.<sup>12</sup>

### Group Leaders

- Rec 3 Develop protocols on boundaries so that there is a clear distinction between the role of the group leaders as facilitators of the group sessions and the key workers within the referring agencies.
- Rec 4 Recruit a substitute group leader in case they are required.
- Rec 5 Review the role of the floater so that all have a clearer understanding of the rationale behind the role.

### Steering Group

- Rec 6 Ensure that all referring organisations are represented on the steering group.
- Rec 7 Consider the inclusion of a graduate family member on the steering group.

### Programme

- Rec 8 Continue to deliver as a fifteen week programme and review after the next run<sup>13</sup>.
- Rec 9 Continue to incorporate flexibility in relation to some flexibility regarding the prescribed half an hour home practice per day per child for large families.
- Rec 10 Internally review the case examples provided in the workbook to ensure they are as realistic as possible.
- Rec 11 Consider developing literacy friendly tip cards with illustrations to support families who require literacy support.
- Rec 12 Consider developing a SFP recipes booklet.

### Childcare

- Rec 13 Develop more age appropriate activities for the older children who are not ready to engage on the more formal programme.

### Menu Options

- Rec 14 On some nights include a children's style menu such as homemade pizza & homemade chips.

### Evaluation

- Rec 15 Develop an initial assessment form to capture baseline data which can be compared and contrasted at the end of the programme as part of a more formal evaluation.
- Rec 16 Incorporate a reflection and planning time for agencies at the end of the programme.

<sup>12</sup> This should also reduce the level of concern that families expressed in relation to the group work being too personal.

<sup>13</sup> Although a recommendation came from the group leaders to bring the young people into the programme for an additional session first to allow them to bond we would recommend that further thought is given to this on the basis that a number of young people fought (one even jumped out of a car) to avoid coming to the first session and only came because they had to engage as a family unit.

## Appendix 1:

Details of Steering Group Membership and List of Group Facilitators and Key Workers.

### Steering Group Membership:

The members of the steering group were:

- Freda Keeshan & Jane Rooney, Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership1 (Chair)
- Sunniva Finlay, Ballyfermot STAR
- Siobhan O'Reilly, Familiscope
- Michelle Reade, HSE SW Dept
- Dolores O'Neill, BSII
- Frank Gilligan, Ballyfermot DTF
- Cariosa Walsh, DOC Cherry Orchard Family Centre
- Catherine Ashe, Candle Community Trust

### Group Leaders

The members of the group leader's team were:

- Sunniva Finlay, Ballyfermot STAR; Site Co-ordinator (Chair)
- Jane Rooney, Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership
- Jim Loughran, DOC Cherry Orchard Family Centre; co-facilitating parents group
- Kathleen Cronin, Ballyfermot STAR; co-facilitating parents group
- Tommy Gilson, Ballyfermot STAR; co-facilitating teen's group
- Anna Milleri, Candle Community Trust; co-facilitating teen's group
- Lyndsay Holmes, The Base Youth Service
- Michelle Reade, HSE SW Dept; initially a floater
- Dolores O'Neill, BSII; floater
- Emma Edgeworth, Ballyfermot STAR

### Key Workers

The key workers were as follows:

- William Monks, DOC Cherry Orchard Family Centre
- Mairead White, DOC Cherry Orchard Family Centre
- Rachel Millar, DOC Cherry Orchard Family Centre
- Marion Connell, DOC Cherry Orchard Family Centre
- Larry O Gorman, St. Dominic's School
- Kathy Bradley, Visiting Teacher for Travellers with the Department of Education and Science
- Sr. Liz Smyth, St. Dominic's School
- Kathleen Cronin, Ballyfermot STAR

<sup>11</sup> The Midlands 2009 programme had ten families commencing and seven completing. Ballymun 2008 had recruited ten families, nine commenced the programme and eight completed the programme.

## Appendix 2:

Organisational Input

See table attached.

<sup>12</sup> This should also reduce the level of concern that families expressed in relation to the group work being too personal.

<sup>13</sup> Although a recommendation came from the group leaders to bring the young people into the programme for an additional session first to allow them to bond we would recommend that further thought is given to this on the basis that a number of young people fought (one even jumped out of a car) to avoid coming to the first session and only came because they had to engage as a family unit.

## Appendix 3:

Organisational & Participants who completed the Strengthening Families Group Leader Training

Organisation	Participant No.
Cherry Orchard DOC Family Centre	2
HSE Family Support Service	3
BSII	2
The Base TPSP	3
Barnardos	3
Ballyfermot Star	4
Familiscope	5
ABLE	1
St. Dominics	2
Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership	2
Candle	2
Cherry Orchard Integrated Youth Service	2
Advance	1
HSE / Health Centre	2
Fussion CPL	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

<sup>11</sup> The Midlands 2009 programme had ten families commencing and seven completing. Ballymun 2008 had recruited ten families, nine commenced the programme and eight completed the programme.

## Appendix 4: Financial Report

### Ballyfermot Strengthening Families Programme 2010

The financial elements of the program were not included within the remit and scope of this evaluation.

The accounts for the program are available through Ballyfermot Star who operate in an open and transparent manner and maintain annually audited accounts.

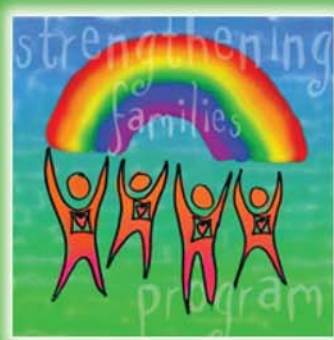
Ballyfermot Star also report directly to Pobal for all financial allocations and expenditure in relation to this project.

<sup>12</sup> This should also reduce the level of concern that families expressed in relation to the group work being too personal.

<sup>13</sup> Although a recommendation came from the group leaders to bring the young people into the programme for an additional session first to allow them to bond we would recommend that further thought is given to this on the basis that a number of young people fought (one even jumped out of a car) to avoid coming to the first session and only came because they had to engage as a family unit.



**Notes:**



Evaluation of the Ballyfermot  
Strengthening Families Programme