

Rickmansworth Children's Centre



Consultation Analysis Report

2010/2011



Sure Start
Children's Centres
Hertfordshire



Listening to Families and Communities

Children's Centre Mission Statement

'Empowering Families'

Our children's centre is committed to supporting and empowering all families with young children, enabling them to access a range of quality services to enhance the wellbeing and safety of every young child in our community.

Report Authors: Debbi Keeley, Children's Centre Manager
Laura Shadbolt, District Partnership Team

Contact details: Rickmansworth Children's Centre
Shepherd's Lane
Mill End
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire WD3 8JJ
Telephone: 01923 772094
Email: admin.rickmansworth@hertschildrenscentres.org.uk
www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/rickmansworth/

Introduction and context

This report presents the results of market research completed by families local to Rickmansworth Children's Centre. The results demonstrate parents and carers views about the children's centre, and what services they want and need to be offered.

The research was conducted by the staff at Rickmansworth Children's Centre and took place over 4 months during the autumn of 2010.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this parent consultation is to help the children's centre understand what parents and carers of children under 5 years old would like to be available in the 3R3 children's centre area and to assist with future plans.

Methodology

The questionnaires were distributed through the local schools, pre-schools and nurseries and to the current children's centre users. Approximately 400 questionnaires were sent out and 96 hard copies were returned; a return rate of approximately 24%. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis was applied to the returned questionnaire responses.

Confidentiality and ethical considerations

The questionnaire cover note explained the purpose of the consultation and that responses were anonymous. However, respondents were invited to provide their contact details on a separate form if they were interested in participating in a parents' forum to investigate suggestions further.

Lower Level Super Output Areas

The children's centre area is made up of 8 Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs). LSOAs are small geographic areas introduced by the Office for National Statistics to record and work with local statistics. Unlike electoral Wards, LSOAs are of consistent size across the country. The LSOAs for area 3R3 are:

E01023836
E01023837
E01023838
E01023847
E01023848
E01023850
E01023852
E01023853

Children's Centre Area 3R3

Rickmansworth Children's Centre is a Phase 2, Type 2 centre which was designated in November 2007 and serves the communities of Maple Cross, Mill End, West Hyde and part of Rickmansworth central. The centre achieved Full Core Offer in February 2010 and is in Mill End, on the site of Shepherd Primary School, which is the Lead Agency. The centre is situated within Three Rivers District, which is one of the counties smallest districts, covering 34 square miles in the south-west of Hertfordshire and is urbanised with industrial, commercial and business activity.

The centre serves a community with a mixed socio-economic background. Registered service users at the centre are predominantly White-British with Asian and mixed-race families being the next largest ethnic group. The general area covered by the children's centre appears to have an overall affluent and professional socio-economic status. However, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD) there were 2 Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that regularly appeared within the 30% most deprived SOAs for either England, East of England or Hertfordshire. These LSOAs are in Maple Cross and Mill End.

One area in Maple Cross featured in almost every domain for deprivation for England, East of England or Hertfordshire. Interestingly, the most recent IDACI (2007) (Income Deprivation Affecting Children) scores available have shown one LSOA in Mill End which was in Hertfordshire's worst 30% has since decreased with six other LSOAs now showing an increase. This indicates that overall, deprivation in area 3R3 actually increased. Although during 2007 the average proportion of children experiencing income deprivation within area 3R3 had increased by 1% to 12.5%, some LSOAs within the area contain families from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds and are at the opposite end of the continuum, leading to stark contrasts between families.

The total population of Children's Centre 3R3 at mid year 2005 was 12,427 of which 2,789 (22.4%) were children under 19 years (Source: ONS Mid Year Population Estimates by LSOA, 2005). In terms of the proportion of children, this placed the Children's Centre area within the bottom 20% in Hertfordshire. During the period October 2009 to September 2010, there were 160 births. Although ranking is not currently available, similar figures during 2008 -2009 placed the Children's Centre area within the third highest 20% in Hertfordshire. Data obtained via Herts Schools Health Information for the period April – September 2009 reported that there were 5 teenage conceptions. This data was collected locally and indicated that area 3R3 had a higher than county average and the report suggested that such areas would benefit from a prevention strategy. In 2009 there were 899 children under five years old living within area 3R3 (2009 ONS MYE) indicating a steady increase. (*All statistics quoted are the most recent available.*)

Analysis of Findings

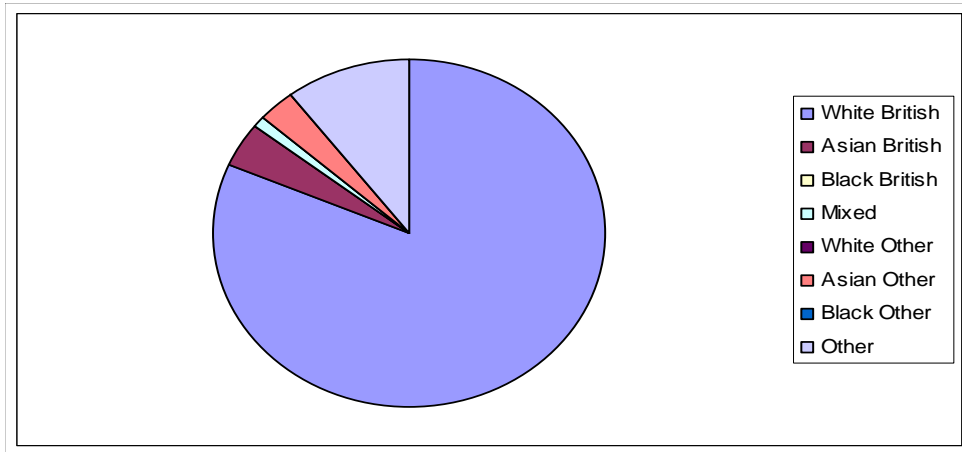
In the previous parent consultation that was conducted in the summer of 2007, it was apparent that not many families were familiar with the concept of a Sure Start children's centre and to begin with, not many had heard of Rickmansworth children's centre. Therefore when collating the results from the 2010 parent consultation, it was reassuring to see that 92.7% of respondents *had* heard of Rickmansworth children's centre prior to completing this questionnaire.

Household

The results indicated that the majority of households consisted of mother, father and children. 13.5% were lone parents, and 5.2% of households had grandparents living with them.

82.2% of the families were White British, 4.1% were Asian British, and 10.4% were mainly from a variety of European origins including; Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Hungary and India, Australia and Arabia.

Chart 1: Actual percentages of ethnicity



Smoking

23.9% of parents stated that they do smoke.

Concerns about their child

Of those parents/carers that responded, 31% had, at some stage had some concerns about their child. These concerns included:

- Speech and Listening (16.6%)
- Behaviour and Eating (14.5%)

Several parents commented that they were concerned with their children over eating and not doing enough physical activity. In comparison with the previous consultation that took place in the summer of 2007, similarly, 45% of parents and carers were concerned with their child's eating, speech and listening. This is a key target area both locally and nationally which the children's centre is aware of and is targeting and developing services to address and support these concerns.

Those parents or carers that had speech and language or healthy lifestyle concerns found the following useful:

- Health Visitor (10.4%)
- Speech Therapist (9.3%)
- Chatterbox tots group (4.1%)
- Dual Language (1%)

- Teacher and Nursery Nurse (4.1%)
- Midwife (1%)

Parenting

Only 18.75% of parents/carers that responded had been to any parenting groups. Those that had attended any parenting sessions did so at the following venues:

- Rickmansworth children's centre
- Westfield children's centre
- Kings Langley Secondary School
- Watford

Common sessions that parents found helpful were; 123 Magic, NCT and Positive Parenting.

Families were asked to comment on a number of services that the children's centre currently offers, and how useful they find these services. The results demonstrate that families find parenting support groups most beneficial.

Table 1: Popularity of services currently offered at the Children's Centre

Answer Options	Essential	Quite Useful	% who would find it essential or useful	Not Relevant
Parenting Support Groups	18	45	60.48%	39
Home visits from the Centres team	8	24	30.72%	60
Help to meet and access other services/professionals	15	44	37.44%	35
Support for lone parents, young parents	8	23	29.76%	69
Access to 1-2-1 confidential support	8	34	40.32%	48
Numeracy	10	32	40.32%	59
Literacy	8	19	25.92%	71
Child Development	16	50	63.36%	33
Understanding your child's behaviour	24	47	68.16%	25
IT Skills	9	30	37.44%	57
Benefits Advice	9	29	36.48%	61
Returning to work/study	13	31	42.24%	41

Services for Families

Overall satisfaction with local services for children in the community was high with 85.4% of families satisfied with what is currently offered.

The negative comments on local services included:

"Park facilities poor and outdated, not enough for children to do, lack of swimming pools".

Of those that responded, 63.5% of families had heard of the Toy Library, only 5.2% use it on a regular basis and 36.4% had never used it.

Below is a list of services that parents/carers suggested they would find useful:

- Drop off services for women who have had C sections (1%)
- Baby Clinic (4.1%)
- Fitness classes where children can come along (3.1%)
- Parenting (with crèche facilities and evening sessions) (12.5%)
- ICT (5.2%)
- Smoking Cessation (2%)
- Maths / English (6.25%)
- Ante-natal (13.5%)
- Health Visitor (11.45%)
- Post-natal (1%)
- Holiday Playscheme (1%)
- Support in returning to work (1%)
- Help for parents who have adopted children (1%)
- Meet local childminders (1%)
- Midwives (1%)
- More classes for babies / toddlers (1%)
- First Aid for babies (2%)
- School Admissions Information (1%)
- Language course (1%)
- Workshop in weaning / sleeping (1%)

People also commented that parenting courses need to be advertised more widely and that they would like more events where parents can enjoy being with their children. Parents would like more personal attention, rather than questionnaires to see how they are feeling. Support on how to choose a nursery or childminder was also requested.

Children's centre

A positive 92.7% of parents had heard about Rickmansworth children's centre prior to completing the questionnaire.

We asked which of the following would encourage the families to use the Children's Centre, here are the results:

Helpful and welcoming staff	(78%)
An informal and relaxed atmosphere	(73.9%)
Information about support available	(73.9%)
Low cost services	(72.9%)
Being easy to access with pram / buggy / car seat	(59%)
Being able to find the centre easily	(56.25%)
Availability of car park	(56.25%)
Assistance in accessing the services if needed	(47.91%)
Easily accessible by public transport	(32.2%)

Below are the responses to what families who have visited the centre felt were the best things about the children's centre:

Table 2: Which of the following do you like best about the children's centre?

Answer Options	Response Percentage
Parking always available	(2%)
Friendly and helpful staff	(31%)
Clean and modern facilities	(7%)
Meeting other mums	(6.25%)
Good location	(6.25%)
Great variety of good courses	(17.7%)
Wealth of local information	(8.3%)
Free Sessions	(5.2%)

Suggestions of improvements that could be made to the children's centre included:

- ✚ First Aid for babies course
- ✚ More visitors / talks
- ✚ More outdoor space
- ✚ Evening sessions
- ✚ Bigger children's centre
- ✚ More mums and tots groups
- ✚ Car parking increase
- ✚ Child development courses
- ✚ Parenting skills – increase courses
- ✚ Children's musical activities
- ✚ More Saturday courses
- ✚ Less formal
- ✚ More information on what is on offer
- ✚ A mailing list
- ✚ More courses (general)
- ✚ More leaflet drops
- ✚ Dimmer lighting
- ✚ Staff available at all times

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results demonstrated that respondents are keen to access the children's centre if they are not doing so already. Those who have previously accessed services were clearly positive about what is currently on offer, and enjoy being around the friendly and helpful children's centre staff.

Services on offer for families had a positive response, with a large percentage happy with what is currently available. The most popular services offered by the children's centre were parenting support sessions. There was indication that high proportions of respondents are not currently accessing these services, but potentially would do in the future. The toy library for example had a particularly low number of users with only 5.2% of families using it on a regular basis. Suggestions of future services

included; more parenting classes which include crèche facilities for children, increased access to Health Visitors and more ante-natal support, all of the above were of high importance to families. The results also indicate that families require continued support around their child's eating and speech and language.

Recommendations:

From the results of the research we can form some recommendations and future actions.

- It was requested by a small number of participants that services were promoted more widely, as it was suggested that a number of families had not heard of some services on offer.
- A large number of parents/carers requested more sessions with crèche facilities available, as this would encourage parents to attend more adult learning and parenting activities.
- If possible, due to issues with eating habits and lack of exercise, an increase in parent and child outdoor activities during the warmer months

The children's centre continues to monitor the views and opinions of families accessing services in order to further develop provision in response to need. If you would like any further information or have any comments please contact Debbi Keeley (details at the beginning of the report).