



BigLife
Families
impact report
April 2012 - March 2013

introduction

BigLifeFamilies supports parents and children to achieve their full potential by delivering high quality, welcoming and accessible services including children's centres, family support and childcare.





volunteers

Volunteers play a big part in the services that BigLife**Families** provide. Providing voluntary opportunities is an important part of what we do and of helping parents regain control of their lives and re-build their self-confidence and self-esteem before going back into the workplace.

More than **68** volunteers were supported by BigLife**Families** between April 2012 and March 2013, and of those, at least **22** went into further training and employment.

“It was not long since I moved to England. My husband had a job in Stockton on Tees and I had to follow him. I left my full time job teaching, my home and my family, and I took my children and came here. I was really frightened and alone and became depressed staying in the house, knowing nobody and having no activities for the children.

*One day a neighbour gave me a flyer about some courses in a local children’s centre and I discovered BigLife**Families**. I found such nice and friendly faces here. I enrolled on the volunteer course and I will never forget it because I became a different person because of the course. I am now settling in to my new country, I have met new friends and developed confidence whilst gaining skills to work as a volunteer in the centre – helping with administration and training.*

*Now I have some job interviews and I hope soon I’ll have a job. Now I feel part of this big family, BigLife**Families**.”* Rodica – BigLife**Families** Volunteer



children's centres

Between April 2012 and March 2013, BigLife**Families** ran three Children's Centres – two in Stockton-on-Tees and one in Longsight, Manchester. Each of the Children's Centres offer a range of services to local families including parenting classes, outreach, support groups, family services and training and volunteering opportunities.

1,147 families accessed our centres or used our services and we worked with over 2,437 children.



“The Shapla group in Longsight Children’s Centre took part in training for level 1 Qualification in Food and Special Diets. The course highlighted the issues around food and its use for lifting up moods, obesity, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, allergies, budgeting, reading labels, and healthier cooking methods. Many of the people on the course were already cooks but they didn’t know about the effects of salt, sugar and fats if they were used in abundance. All 17 members of the group sat and passed the final exam and many lost weight while taking part in the course.

Following this, the same parents started doing level 2 recognised qualifications with food workers in nutrition and health. The course was much more in depth and included sessions on the Eat Well Plate, Food Groups, Nutrients, vitamin D, and designing meals for different age groups and people with different nutritional needs. We had trips to the local supermarkets and compared the products in terms of health benefits and hidden dangers like salt and sugar. All the 17 attendees sat the examination and again all gained the qualification.

We are now well fed. Two of the women who took part in this course have set up their own catering businesses locally. Other members have succeeded in further training, volunteering and employment.” Longsight Children’s Centre worker





the star & freddy nats children's centres

Between April 2012 and March 2013:

377 children accessed the centres and **510** children accessed stay and play sessions. **568** Families accessed the centres. **17%** of children seen were from BME families. **11%** of families were lone parents. **24** Teenage parents accessed services at the centres. **123** fathers used Stockton Children's Centres.

Some of the services and courses the centres ran included stay and play, debt management sessions, young parents group, parenting classes, groups for asylum seekers and refugees, adult learning courses and volunteering opportunities.

“My son has emotional difficulties and it’s really hard to cuddle him and show him affection. I found this really affected my confidence as a parent. I heard about the Parenting Programme in Stockton and was referred onto the course. It ran for 10 weeks and two hours a week and it helped me to understand how my own feelings and emotions affect the way I am as a parent, and it’s taught me loads of brilliant ways to care for my child. Now I can actually cuddle my child, something I never thought would be possible. I’ve got the confidence now that I can deal with his feelings as well as my own.”



longsight children's centre

1550 children used Longsight Children's Centre between April 2012 and March 2013.

574 families accessed the centre.

40% of parents and children accessing are Pakistani and **12%** Bangladeshi.

194 fathers used the centre.

Some of the services and courses Longsight Children's Centre ran included stay and play, school readiness, family learning, Shapla group for South Asian women, IT classes, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, activities for babies/ children with special educational needs, antenatal and postnatal services and volunteering opportunities.

family support services

We provide family support services in Manchester, Trafford and Knowlsey, supporting families with children from 0-19 years of age who are struggling to cope. The range of help we provide includes support around domestic abuse, mental well being, debt advice support, help to access school, parenting, and confidence and self esteem building.

Between April 2012 and March 2013, we worked with **611** families.

More than **84** dads used our services and **63** asylum seekers and refugees.

At least **24** children had a reduction in their protection plans after their parents engaged with our services.

We also supported:

20 Parents with special educational needs.

75 children with special educational needs.

123 young parents (under 25).

267 lone parents.

“I’m 18 years old and live alone with my two children. Before coming to BigLifeFamilies I was struggling to manage the daily routine for my children such as getting the children up dressed and ready for nursery and I was finding managing their behaviour difficult. I also had built up some debt and I found budgeting difficult.

I enrolled on the parents’ survival course and then the BigLifeFamilies worker helped me put into practice what I’d learnt on the course. She also came with me and my children to stay and play sessions, and helped me sort out my children’s sleep routines and get my home life in order. She also helped me organise my money and helped me budget so I could pay my debts and support my family – I was even able to buy my son new toys after using the budget plan.

My children now sleep much better and they are able to get the children up on time to attend the nursery. I’ve started to play more with my children and my home is clean and clutter free. I now feel like my children are going to get a good start in life.”





childcare

Last year, BigLife**Families** ran a day nursery based at Longsight Children's Centre and mobile crèches across the Manchester area. It also offered training placements to local people, supporting them to complete their NVQ in childcare.

67 children accessed the day care nursery.

43 accessed the free 2 year Pre School funding places.

60 crèches were delivered.

1193 children accessed our services.

12 members of staff successfully gained qualifications through Aisha Childcare.



*“I recently took part in the **BigLifeFamilies** Volunteering Programme and it has changed my life!*

*I completed the volunteers induction programme and when my CRB came through I was delighted. I chose to volunteer in the crèche as I had always dreamt of working with children I just didn't know how! With the support from the **BigLifeFamilies** worker I enrolled at the local college and embarked on a level 2 in childcare. I thrived on my new learning experience and I couldn't believe it when **BigLifeFamilies** supported me with a placement opportunity.*

My confidence, knowledge, learning and skills continues to grow, I have recently completed my Level 2 and have progressed onto a Level 3 Diploma in childcare. I have also applied for an job vacancy and am now thirsty for learning and progression.

*I am so grateful to the **BigLifeFamilies** and all the staff for their support – they have encouraged me to chase my dream.”* BigLifeFamilies crèche worker





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