

MARGATE CO-DESIGN WORKSHOPS

Report for families and partners: **Sharing what we heard and saw**

This report presents findings from what we saw and heard from families and professionals who attended the co-design workshops. It looks at the richness of workshop discussions and how the aims of the workshops were met. The report covers the strengths, gaps and lessons from the workshops that will help to shape co-design work in the future.

Margate Early Learning Community work

The Margate Early Learning Community was established in 2018, with an aim to bring together local community partners and families to work towards shared goals around reducing the Early Learning Gap. The focus of our work is supporting families with children aged 0-5, through projects that address needs around parent skills/knowledge, reduced parental stress, promoting play inside and outside of the home, early childhood mental health and access to support.

Co-design workshops

Save the Children UK works with local partners and families to come up with projects to meet the specific needs of families in Margate, valuing the knowledge of the local community. We aim to include families in the design of projects, to ensure they fit the needs of the families who will be accessing them.

Save the Children UK held a series of three co-design workshops with parents/carers, to identify the challenges faced by families with children aged 0-5 in Margate and come up with ideas/solutions to tackle these needs. These workshops were held for 2 hours a day, over three days between 3rd and 16th of March, bringing together twenty-four parents/carers and practitioners from Margate.

The workshops were structured around smaller, facilitated breakout group sessions and presentations to allow all participants to be more involved in practical discussions. Professionals who participated in workshops 1 and 3 assisted in unpacking issues around service delivery gaps and potential solutions identified by families.

“It was interesting, and it was great for parents to give their views on what they were struggling with... it was kind of what I'm experiencing myself.....and the potential that actual change would happen in the community”

“Having a voice” “Hearing different families and professional ideas.”

“I wish there could have been more parents for diversity... I have no problem with inviting a friend and trying to bring along more families ...I am looking forward to what comes of it [the co-design work] next.”

“I think these ideas could go out to others with guided questions for further input, which again may save time later”

“Having more parent input would have been helpful to understand their concerns and needs, but difficult as some didn't attend, but hopefully can gain more feedback at session for parents.”

Feedback from workshop participants – parents, carers, and professionals

WHAT YOU SHARED WITH US

Useful and beneficial:

Participants saw great value in engaging as families and, together with professionals, the opportunity to share experiences, to learn from one another, and the chance to look at different ideas.

Information sharing:

Sharing information with families and professionals about the co-design process and its purpose including information about Save the Children's work through the Margate Early Learning Community made it easier for them to participate in the workshops.

Sufficiency of workshops:

The workshops in themselves may not have been enough for fully exploring the challenges and coming up with spot on solutions/ideas. For instance it was not possible to dive deeper to understand root causes to the challenges identified.

Relevance of ideas:

Rising themes from ideas proposed were seen as a 'good fit' needing further development. Specifically, how can we organise all the information about family support in an easy to access way? How can we create a space for parents/carers to get advice on everyday parenting experiences, e.g. eating, sleeping, behaviour, health? How can we make sure there are safe outdoor play spaces for children and families?

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

Relooking at how co-design work is promoted and organised is an important step in increasing participation of families and their local settings in crafting solutions to tackle challenges they face.

Making co-design workshops more accessible to different ethnic groups. This involves making co-designing more appealing and inclusive for all families as they are the ones that we really want to reach.

Creating opportunities for wider community consultation to involve more families and their local settings. This will help to ensure that more family voices are heard when identifying challenges as well as coming up with solutions.

Building trusted relationships between Save the Children and families and their services is important in improving the co-design process. Save the Children as a trusted partner can continue to promote delivery of better services for families.

Promoting co-design as a locally led process can help encourage local partners or services to involve families when coming up with projects or services. This can help make services more accessible to families.

Key lessons mentioned are drawn from the feedback gained from all participants and what we saw during the codesign workshops. There will be on-going learning as Save the Children-led co-design work progresses to remain applicable to the different contexts or areas of our work.

Families and professionals' involvement in the co-design workshops created an opportunity for participants to learn and share ideas. In turn Save the Children gained understanding from leading and facilitating the workshops by gathering useful information that enriches our way of thinking.

It was clear that being able to problem solve and finding common ground within and between participants led to an improved co-design experience. At the core of being able to problem solve is encouraging open communication and reassuring affected families of our committed to making services more accessible.

HOW WE ARE USING THE LESSONS

To conclude, this series of initial co-design workshops were successful in achieving our objective of enabling local families and partners to identify the needs of the local community and to a limited extent, design interventions. Possible solutions or ideas identified during the workshops have been grouped into themes for further development into practical interventions. Although feedback was positive, there was also a recognition that we had a limited number of parents/carers engaging in the sessions, particularly from marginalised groups. We are taking this learning forward, to consider how we may involve a more diverse group of families in future workshops in Margate and other areas.

"I wonder if more facilitated time with parents to really dig down into this would be a useful next step..." "I think maybe a bit longer time wise as there is so much to talk about."

"I think it was very good, ensuring parents could bring their children along was very helpful to them."

"Sessions worked well and good use of breakout rooms to enable discussions and gain feedback from all participants..."

"Encourage someone to attend from the local schools and advertise more so more people are aware of it [co-design workshops]."

Feedback from workshop participants – parents, carers, and professionals

Thank you to everyone who took the time to tell us their views.

For more information on Save the Children's work in the UK, visit www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/uk-work