

Mind in Croydon Family Navigator Service

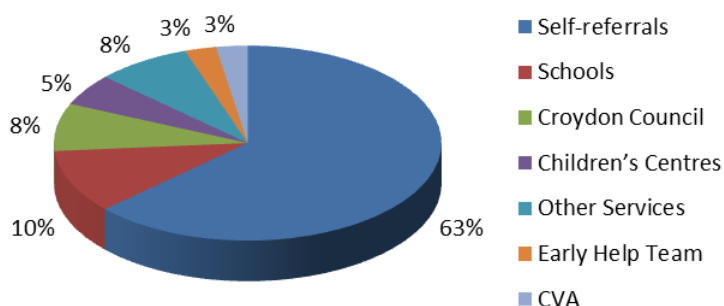
October 2012 to March 2015

The Family Navigator service was part of Croydon Family Power (CFP). CFP was funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led by Croydon Voluntary Action in Partnership with Croydon Council.

The Family Navigators worked in six organisations in Croydon helping families to navigate the maze of local services and find out which would be the most appropriate to the parent. The organisations were: Mind in Croydon, Croydon Homestart, Croydon Mencap, Disability Croydon, Croydon Drop in and Off the Record.

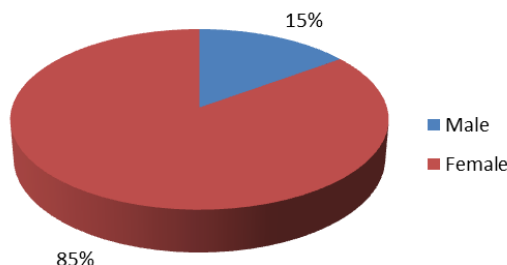
During the lifespan of the project there were **38** beneficiaries.

Referral Source



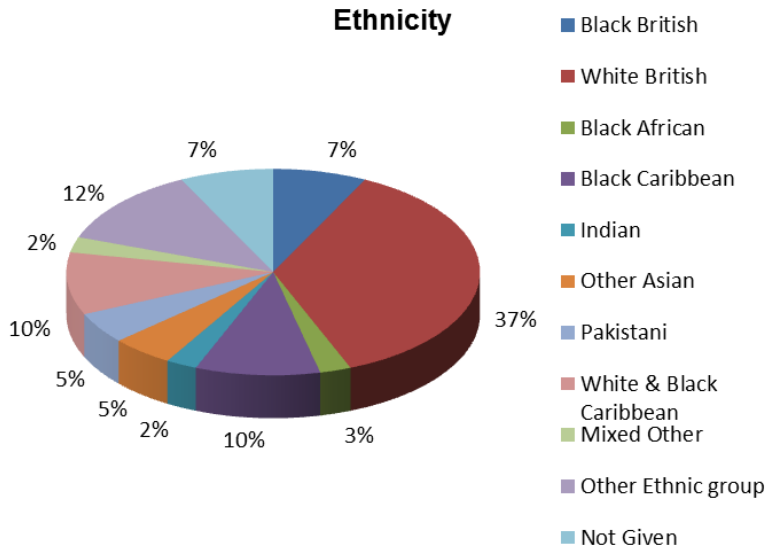
Parents were able to contact the service in an accessible way. Referrals could be made via email, text, telephone and face to face. Through postcards, leaflets, posters and awareness workshops the service was promoted across the borough of Croydon. The highest proportion being of referrals were self referrals 63%.

Gender



Females in a parental role continue to make up a higher proportion of those accessing the service. This is not unusual, given that this gender group is reflective of our target audience, Female (85%) and Male (15%).

Ethnicity



A higher percentage of individuals accessing the service came from BME communities (63% in comparison to White British 37%).



Issues covered:

- Education
- Employment
- Parenting
- Carer support
- Debt/ Finance
- Housing
- Family Relationships
- Mental Health and Physical health

Parents presented with a broad range of issues that were multiple and complex. The vital part of the Family Navigators role was to support families to identify and prioritise those issues.

Feedback on Outcomes Star

“The Outcomes Star was particularly useful when meeting with Families, especially during initial sessions, as it provided structure for our conversations and therefore allowed me to facilitate thorough and productive sessions. The Star helped keep conversations focused and allowed me to support families to set clear aims and objectives for the work.”

Family Navigator.

“When I circle the number that I chose, they reflect exactly how I feel or think where I am at this point of my life. These are related to my circumstances that I have no control over it. My sessions with the Family Navigator in some other ways, made me realise where I was going wrong, thinking wrong or see a different point of a situation. The Family Navigator helped me to relax and think calmly.

Parent

Care & Support Brokerage Service (Pay-As-You-Go)

To ensure families could participate fully in activities, they could access a menu of services through the Family Navigator to meet specific care and support needs. Examples are below:

- School Uniform
- Sensory Vest for Autistic Child
- Grief Encounter Book
- School Books
- Child Care
- Counselling Sessions
- Towards Exercise equipment for Children
- Chair for child to sit at table to eat and do homework
- Educational resources- study guides
- Electronic keyboard for music study at home

“My Daughter was so happy with her weighted jacket, she said ‘it makes my shoulders and back feel supported, and that I can stand up straight’ She felt so comfortable she did not want to take it off”.



What has worked well ?

The consortia gave the potential to reach out to a wider sector of the borough, develop the collaborative working relationship between 6 organisations and raise the profile of the service.

“We have come on leaps & bounds as a family with your help, we could not have done such positive things without the guidance from the service”

Parent

What has been challenging ?

The six partnership organisations that came together as a consortium alongside the ABCD project were complex. Both these projects were managed under the umbrella of Croydon Family Power.

We established that there is a need for a Family Navigator service. Projects of this nature can take several years to grow and reach their potential. Two and a half years did not provide enough time for the project to fully become established within the local framework. A consortium of this many members (where each agency has a member of staff working 14 hours) creates certain challenges in terms of communication and joint working.

What could have been done differently ?

The referral criteria needed to be less restrictive in order to avoid the exclusion of some families. The age criteria of the oldest child in the family could have been expanded to secondary school age upwards.

A database that was bespoke and responsive to the needs of the Family Navigator Service would have been helpful. Recording relevant data in relation to enquiries coming into the service such as one off contacts and ineligible referrals based on qualifying age(s) of child(ren) would have provided us with the information needed to evidence and substantiate the case for a relaxation in referral criteria based on age.

This report was put together by Emma Turner - Business Development & Service Delivery Manager and Nichola Harris - Advocacy Service Manager



Appendix

CASE STUDY

A parent identified they were struggling with their son's behaviour. They stated that they were feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. Issues were: debt, access to counselling and emotional support for both themselves and their 10 year old son.

The Family Navigator (FN) facilitated a space where the parent could express themselves and talk openly about their issues. Through a Mind Mapping exercise they were able to identify the parent's priority needs.

"The Family Navigator Service made me realise why I need the counselling sessions and that was definitely the right decision. It was a really good transition for me. You can't see all of that in the Star Chart."

Parent

Mind Mapping in action

