

The British Stammering Association

Parental Awareness Campaign, England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Final Report

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Background to the Campaign

The Parental Awareness Campaign (PAC) is a three year project which has sought to encourage parents, early years workers and health professionals to refer children under five who show early signs of stammering to speech and language therapy.

This early intervention campaign was devised as the follow on to an earlier British Stammering Association project - The Primary Healthcare Workers Project (PHWP, 1995 - 1999). The PHWP sought to challenge a widely prevailing misconception - it is best to 'wait and see' whether a child will grow out of early stammering. Recent research evidence demonstrates that appropriate intervention, offered close to onset, is most effective in preventing the development of persistent stammering. The PHWP proved successful in increasing the number of dysfluency referrals at a younger age, particularly amongst health visitors, in its target areas. Based on recommendations in the PHWP, the current campaign aimed to take the early referral message to a wider audience (including parents directly) and maintain its profile over time.

During the first eighteen months of the campaign the project co-ordinator, Doreen Faisca, consulted with speech and language therapists nation wide before carrying out a pilot phase in five target areas across the UK (Northumbria NHS Trust, Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust (Northern Ireland), Forest Healthcare NHS Trust (London), North West Wales NHS Trust, and Renfrewshire and Inverclyde NHS Trust (Scotland). Ms Faisca oversaw the implementation of the project in these pilot areas in conjunction with a locally based co-ordinator. She then moved on from the campaign and was replaced by two part-time project workers who separately had responsibility for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Judith Patel) and Scotland (Jan Anderson).

Aims of the Parental Awareness Campaign

Given that the mean onset age of stammering is 32.8 months, it should be possible to identify most dysfluent children for therapy before they start school. In line with recommendations made in the PHWP, the aims of the current campaign have been:

- to increase awareness of stammering in pre-school children amongst a wider range of potential referrers i.e. parents, carers, early years workers and health professionals
- to continue to promote early referral of pre-school children who stammer to speech and language therapy
- to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign

Description of the Campaign

The pilot phase

The aims of the pilot phase of the campaign were:

- to identify a range of demographically diverse areas that were willing to participate
- to hold implementation meetings with participating co-ordinators to identify ways of taking the project forward in each area
- to distribute campaign literature i.e. posters and information leaflets to parents and potential referrers with local and BSA contact information
- to co-operate with local therapists to deliver training sessions to health visitors as in the previous project but in addition, to nursery staff and childminders
- to raise awareness of the campaign message in local and specialist media
- to provide limited training to participating speech and language therapists

The main phase of the campaign in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The main phase of the campaign extended the above to ten further Trusts:

Amber Valley Primary Care Trust, Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust, Foyle Health and Social services Trust, North East Wales NHS Trust, Plymouth Primary Care Trust, Salford Primary Care Trust, South Birmingham Primary Care Trust (Saltley and Sparkbrook areas only), South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, South Peterborough Primary Care Trust & Suffolk West Primary Care Trust.

The campaign literature

This comprised a poster 'Stammering. Spot it! Speech therapy is more effective before the age of 5' developed specifically for the campaign, and two leaflets 'Does your young child stammer?' and 'Early intervention prevents stammering - Referral information for professionals'.

As well as mailing leaflets and posters to GPs and health visitors as had been done in the previous project, in order to target parents and early years workers during PAC we also sent leaflets and posters to libraries, community centres, nurseries and playgroups.

Table 1 (appendix 1) shows the number of posters/leaflets distributed in each area during the campaign.

Training sessions

Many of the therapists from the Trusts participating in the campaign delivered training to potential referrers. In the previous project health visitors and GPs were targeted. In addition to this during PAC, training was delivered to early years workers such as nursery and play group staff and child minders. Each participant was given an information pack including information about stammering, guidelines for making a referral and the campaign literature.

Table 2 (appendix 2) shows the number of training packs sent to each Trust during the campaign. In some areas more training was delivered than these figures suggest as therapists made up the packs themselves from the campaign literature and photocopies of the handouts.

Media

Another way of targeting parents was to involve the local media. In several of the participating Trusts articles about stammering were printed in the local newspapers and some of the therapists were interviewed. In some areas articles were sent to the press but unfortunately were not published.

During the time of the campaign stammering featured highly in the media as a result not only of the campaign but also of Gareth Gates, the 'Pop Idol' runner up who stammers.

Speech and Language Therapists' training

During the main phase of the campaign two training courses for speech and language therapists were held. The aim of these courses was to increase the confidence and skills of therapists working with children who stammer. Each course ran for two days plus a follow up day 3 – 5 months later. 15 therapists from Foyle Health and Social Services Trust received training from Louise Wright, specialist speech and language therapist. Approximately 40 therapists from South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust and Plymouth Primary Care Trust received training from Judith Patel, the project co-ordinator and specialist speech and language therapist.

Other awareness raising events

International Stammering Awareness Day 2001

Parents were also targeted in some areas on International Stammering Awareness day. The speech and language therapy departments in Foyle and Salford organised stands promoting awareness of stammering and the importance of early referral to speech and language therapy.

In Foyle the stand was in Foyleside shopping centre and was attended by Bob the Builder (one of the therapists in costume!) to attract the attention of the children. Radio Foyle who interviewed one of the local therapists and the campaign co-ordinator covered this event. This event was also reported in the Trust newsletter to increase awareness of stammering and the campaign amongst Trust staff.

In Salford speech and language therapists spent International Stammering Awareness Day outside two local supermarkets giving out information and advice about stammering.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign

Numbers of referrals:

Each of the participating Trusts provided referral data for the months before the campaign started and the months during the campaign. The numbers of referrals before the campaign were compared with the numbers during the campaign. It was anticipated that there would be an increase in referrals of children under the age of five and less of an increase in school age referrals as a result of the campaign.

Range of referral agents:

It was also of interest to find out which methods of raising awareness were most effective and therefore therapists were asked to record the source of information that prompted each referral and who made the referral.

BSA website:

It was anticipated that the campaign would result in an increase in the number of visits to the BSA website. Numbers were recorded and compared for periods before and during the campaign.

Speech and Language Therapists' training:

Therapists who attended these courses completed forms before and after the training to evaluate their level of knowledge and confidence for managing pre school children who stammer.

Results

Numbers of referrals:

Table 3 (appendix 3) shows the referral numbers for each Trust. It shows numbers of children under five and of school age referred before the campaign (Pre PAC) and during the campaign (Post PAC) and the length of time over which the data was collected. It also shows the percentage change in referral numbers for each Trust and the total change in referral numbers across all Trusts. The results show the following:

Referrals of children under the age of five increased by an average of 52% across all Trusts.

The increase in number of under fives referrals was consistent across all Trusts except Salford Primary Care Trust and Foyle Health and Social Services Trust (see appendix 7 for factors that may have led to the reduction in referrals).

Referrals of school-age children increased by 11%.

NB. Foyle Health and Social Services Trust chose not provide referral data. They reported that the referrals did not reflect the positive impact of the campaign in the area.

Range of referring agents:

Table 4 (appendix 4) shows the range of referring agents and the number of referrals from each, before and during the campaign. The results show the following:

- Under fives referrals increased from all of the targeted groups (GP's, health visitors, early years settings and parents) with a particularly large increase directly from parents.
- Under fives referrals from parents increased by 220% and the percentage of all referrals that came from parents rose from 7% (pre campaign) to 13.7% (post campaign).
- Under fives referrals from GPs increased by 33%.
- Under fives referrals from Health visitors increased by 6%.
- School age referrals from schools increased by 200%.
- School age referrals from GPs decreased by 63%.

BSA website:

The number of visits to the BSA website 'under fives index page' increased significantly during the campaign. For the eight-month period from January 2001 to August 2001, before the campaign started, there were a total of 1,800 visits to this page. For the same eight month period in 2002 during the campaign, there were a total of 3,716 visits, an increase of 106%.

Speech and Language Therapists' training:

Feedback from both of the training courses was extremely positive with therapists feeling much more confident and equipped to work with this client group (see appendices 5 & 6 for course feedback reports).

Discussion

Numbers of referrals:

Although therapists made every attempt to be thorough, unfortunately we cannot guarantee 100% accuracy for pre & post campaign data. Many therapists experienced some difficulty in accessing and establishing pre campaign referral figures. In some Trusts these figures had to be taken from the department database which did not always give an accurate diagnosis and some therapists went through past case notes in an attempt to collect this information as accurately as possible.

The post campaign data, which was actually recorded during the campaign, was collected after the therapist had seen the child. This means that only children who were seen by the therapist were included in the post campaign data. Those children who were referred but did not attend the first appointment were therefore not included in the figures. Some children who were referred during the campaign were on a waiting list to be seen when the final data was collected and were therefore not included.

In departments where pre campaign data was taken from the database it is possible therefore that all referrals were included in the pre campaign results and only those actually seen by a therapist were included in the post campaign results.

Despite this the data supplied does show an encouraging overall increase in referrals of children under the age of five during the campaign within the target areas. As anticipated the numbers of referrals of school age children showed only a small increase. As more children were referred during the pre-school years more had already accessed speech and language therapy services by the time they reached school age.

Referring agents:

The increase in referrals of children under five was very positive from all referring agents. It is extremely encouraging that during the campaign referrals from parents of children under five increased so dramatically and that referrals from parents made up a greater proportion of the total number of referrals. Many therapists reported that parents contacted them directly having seen the campaign literature distributed by the project to GP practices and libraries.

A larger increase in referral numbers could have been expected from health visitors. One reason for this may be that some of the participating speech and language therapy departments were involved in the previous BSA project, the Primary Healthcare Workers Project which targeted mainly health visitors and GPs. In addition many of the other departments had already established links with health visitors and were therefore providing them with information about stammering. Some of the local co-ordinators did however report that feedback from health visitors about the information given during

the campaign had been very helpful and therapists were seeing evidence that advice given by the health visitors prior to the referral was more appropriate. It is possible that many of the 'unknown' referrals were from health visitors. There were 709% more under five 'unknown' referrals during the campaign than there were before.

The increase in referrals from GPs was encouraging, as it can be difficult to know how to target them. Arranging training sessions for GPs is difficult and they receive so much literature in the post it is possible that it does not always get seen. In order to address this problem we decided to target Practice Managers in addition to GPs during the campaign. Practice Managers were asked to put posters and leaflets up in their surgery and therefore GPs may have accessed the information in this way. Some of the local co-ordinators for the project did report an increase in referrals from GPs following the mailings.

Although there was only a small overall increase in school age referrals as anticipated, there was actually a considerable increase in referrals of this age group by schools themselves. It is possible that the information provided in early years settings was disseminated to the special needs co-ordinators for schools thereby increasing awareness of stammering and how to refer to speech and language therapy for children of all ages.

During the data collection we attempted to discover what prompted the referrals e.g. parent saw poster/leaflet, health visitor attended training course. Unfortunately however, the information supplied was not sufficient to draw any conclusions as to the most effective methods of raising awareness. Much of the data was returned with this information missing hence the large number of referring agents unknown in the table. The responses on the feedback forms from referring agents who received the training were however very positive and many who were trained reported that they had previously been leaving these children to see if they would grow out of the stammer. They found the training clarified the recommended procedure for referring these children.

BSA website:

The increase in visits to the BSA website indicates that this is now clearly becoming an essential vehicle for disseminating information on the importance of early intervention, to the public, as more people now use this medium for accessing information.

Speech and Language Therapist training:

As awareness increases and in turn the numbers of referrals of pre-school children who stammer, it is essential that speech and language therapy departments are able to offer quality services to this client group.

Pre-course questionnaires completed by speech and language therapists attending the training indicated a lack of confidence and skills for many working with this client group, prior to the training. This feedback reflects the feelings of many non-specialist therapists who work with children who stammer. Many therapists do not receive the necessary training or support to offer a quality service to these children and many departments do not have a therapist who specialises or takes a lead in working in this

field. Unfortunately the quality of the service which these young children receive can depend on the area in which they live.

The post-course questionnaires completed by the therapists indicated a significant increase in confidence and skills as a result of the training, highlighting the benefits such training can have. However in order to gain optimum benefit from training there needs to be commitment from the department to develop a quality service, which adopts models of good practice and a clear structure. Identified therapists can then take more responsibility for developing and keeping up to date with the latest research into stammering intervention and support networks for less experienced therapists can be established.

Subjective feedback from local co-ordinating therapists:

Many of the therapists who co-ordinated the campaign locally commented on the impact it had in their area (see Appendix 7). This feedback highlights positive consequences of the campaign, which are not shown in the referral information.

Conclusion

The results indicate that methods of raising awareness carried out in the campaign have been effective. They highlight the importance of being proactive in raising awareness in order to ensure that children who stammer receive the necessary intervention at the most crucial age. Promoting awareness of early referral for young children who stammer needs to be ongoing to ensure that the increase in referrals is maintained. Feedback from the speech and language therapist training courses indicates however that many therapists do not feel confident or adequately skilled in working in this field. If referrals are to be encouraged, speech and language therapy services need to be developed to meet the needs of this client group.

The subjective feedback from all those involved in the campaign was extremely positive. In addition, it is highly likely that there have been many more ways in which the campaign has positively impacted on the lives of individuals who stammer that we will not find out about, as they are not measurable.

Recommendations

Raising awareness of early referral of young children who stammer is effective and should be ongoing. Speech and language therapists report that their referral figures drop after a while and they therefore approach the BSA for extra leaflets.

Speech and language therapy departments need to address the issue of therapists' lack of confidence and skills by reviewing their models of practice and service delivery to this client group.

Thanks

Many thanks go to the funders of this campaign, especially The Department of Health and Henry Smith's Charity. We could not have done this work without the encouragement and the support of all the speech and language therapists in each of the participating Trusts – many thanks for all their hard work and dedication to the campaign.

Judith Patel

Table 1**Appendix 1****Number of leaflets and posters distributed in each area during the campaign**

Trust Name	Leaflets	Posters
Amber Valley Primary Care Trust	1,756	527
Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust	1,775	714
Foyle Health & Social Services Trust	429	394
North East Wales NHS Trust	1,500	386
Plymouth Primary Care Trust	4,683	1,671
Salford Primary Care Trust	1,876	659
South Birmingham Primary CareTrust	480	140
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	2,854	1,203
South Peterborough Primary Care Trust	1,618	441
Suffolk West Primary Care Trust	1,915	771
	15,355	5,665

Table 2
Number of training packs sent to each Trust during the campaign

Appendix 2

Trust Name	HV	EY	Leaflets	Posters
Amber Valley Primary Care Trust	125	85	1050	170
Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust	50	1	255	102
Foyle and Social Services Trust	30		150	60
North East Wales NHS Trust	1	196	985	394
Plymouth Primary Care Trust	25	91	580	232
Salford Primary Care Trust	1	13	70	28
South Birmingham Primary Care Trust	1	141	710	284
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	60	50	550	220
South Peterborough Primary Care Trust	60	80	540	280
Suffolk West Primary Care Trust	1	1	10	4
Totals	229	573	3,850	1,604
Total Training Packs	802			
Total Leaflets			3,850	
Total Posters				1,604

Mummy leaflets distribution as at 31/10/02

Trust Name	GP's	HV's	EY Workers	Libraries	Com. Centres	Other	Total
N.E. Wales	970			100	145		1,215
	285						285
Foyle	290		139				429
							-
Derbyshire	426			200	180	600	1,406
	350						350
S. Devon	1,085	200	645	190	25	40	2,185
	235						235
Follow up GP	434						434
Plymouth	1,245	250	1,250	400	81	310	3,536
	400						400
Follow up GP	747						747
Salford	895		250	70	70	50	1,335
	295						295
Follow up GP	246						246
Mid Anglia	800		100	240	85		1,225
follow up	495						495
	195						195
Birmingham	120		110	25	25	100	380
	100						100
Oxford	630		660	225	110	150	1,775
							-
Peterborough	243		905	100	80	100	1,428
	190						190
	10,676	450	4,059	1,550	801	1,350	18,886

Poster Distribution as at 31/10/02

Trust Name	GP's	HV's	EY Workers	Libraries	Com. Centres	Other	Total
N.E. Wales	194			20	58		272
	114						114
Foyle	116		278				394
							-
Derbyshire	142			10	60	215	427
	100						100
S.Devon	434	200	228	18	10	2	892
	94						94
follow up GP	217						217
Plymouth	498	100	500	20	18	126	1,262
	160						160
follow up GP	249						249
Salford	358		45	28	28		459
	118						118
follow up GP	82						82
Mid Anglia	320		30	144	34		528
	78						78
follow up GP	165						165
Birmingham	36		44	10	10		100
	40						40
Oxford	180		300	90	44	100	714
							-
Peterborough	162		112	9	32	50	365
	76						76
	3,933	300	1,537	349	294	493	6,906

Table 3**Appendix 3**

TRUST	Period	under-fives		% change under -fives	school-age		% change school-age
		Pre PAC	Post PAC		Pre PAC	Post PAC	
Amber Valley Primary Care Trust	12 months	93	101	9%	52	37	-29%
Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust	8 months	4	30	650%	30	42	40%
North East Wales NHS Trust	12 months	23	43	87%	6	4	-33%
Plymouth Primary Care Trust	11 months	16	45	181%	5	6	20%
Salford Primary Care Trust	10 months	27	21	-22%	not available	not available	
South Birmingham Primary Care Trust	6 months	3	6	100%	2	9	350%
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	11 months	35	53	51%	9	12	33%
South Peterborough Primary Care Trust	12 months	24	41	78%	10	15	55%
Suffolk West Primary Care Trust	7 months	4	9	125%	0	2	200%
		<u>229</u>	<u>349</u>	<u>52%</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>11%</u>
Foyle Health & Social Services Trust		no data	no data	-	no data	no data	-

Changes in the number of referrals from the different referral agents

Referring Agents	Under fives		% Change	School Age		% Change
	Pre PAC	Post PAC		Pre PAC	Post PAC	
GP's	12	16	33%	16	6	-63%
HV's	150	160	6%	10	4	-60%
Parents	15	48	220%	8	9	13%
School	3	3	0%	11	33	200%
Nursery	15	22	47%	0	0	0%
Therapists	1	2	100%	1	4	300%
CMOs	1	2	100%	2	0	-100%
Paediatric Consultant	4	3	-25%	1	2	100%
Others	2	4	100%	1	6	500%
unknown	11	89	709%	64	63	-2%

Working with Pre-school Children who Stammer

Appendix 5

Plymouth Primary Care Trust & South Devon Healthcare Trust
at South Devon Professional Centre

11-12th December 2001 & 6th March 2002
9.30am-4.30pm

Report prepared by: Judith Patel, BSA Parental Campaign Co-ordinator and Course Tutor.

Evaluation Report

This course was run for Speech and Language Therapists who are not specialists in stammering and who work in the above Trusts. Approximately 40 therapists attended the course.

Aims of the course:

- To address the concerns that therapists have when working with pre-school children who stammer.
- To increase therapists' confidence and enthusiasm for working with this client group.
- To provide them with a framework for assessment and therapy.
- To provide them with a resource pack to be kept in their clinic.
- To address service delivery issues.
- To develop an increased quality of service to children who stammer within each Trust.

Outline of the course:

The course was delivered over three days, the third one being a follow-up day to evaluate progress and set long term aims.

Findings from the pre-course questionnaire:

At the beginning of the course therapists completed a questionnaire in small groups. The aim of the questionnaire was to establish their expectations for the course and their concerns and confidence level for working with pre-school children who stammer. Confidence was measured on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being no confidence.

- Most therapists rated themselves below 5 with many rating 2's and 3's for their confidence.
- 2 therapists who had more experience working with pre-school children who stammer rated themselves at 9.

Findings from questionnaire completed after day 2:

After the second day of the course, each therapist completed a questionnaire to give feedback about the training and also their level of confidence having received this training. The feedback about the content of the training was used to plan the follow-up day.

- Most therapists rated themselves above 5 for confidence with many rating 7's and 8's.
- Two rated themselves at 5, two at 4 and one at 3.
- Those with lower ratings did comment that they had even lower ratings prior to the course.

Follow-up day:

At the start of the follow-up day each therapist completed a questionnaire to assess their progress since the previous training days. The content of the follow-up day was then based upon this feedback and the feedback given at the end of the previous 2 days.

Findings from pre-follow up day questionnaire:

- Most therapists rated themselves at 5 and above.
- Five therapists rated themselves at below 5.

During the day it became clear that all therapists had made excellent progress and now had higher expectations of themselves and wanted the skills to manage more challenging cases. This was addressed during the follow-up day.

Resource pack:

All therapists commented on how useful the resource pack had been and how this has helped them to feel more confident.

Service delivery issues:

During the follow-up day the specialist therapists in each Trust had the opportunity to address service delivery issues. By the end of the day they had established new protocols for the department for working with this client group.

Report dated 22nd March 2002

Foyle NHS
Altnagevin Area Hospital
1-2 November 2001, and 22 March 2002

Report prepared by: Judith Patel, BSA Parental Awareness Campaign Co-ordinator

Evaluation Report

This course was run for Speech and Language Therapists who are not specialists in stammering and who work in Foyle Health and Social Services Trusts. 15 therapists attended the course.

Aims of the course:

- To address the concerns that therapists have when working with children and adolescents who stammer.
- To increase therapists' confidence and enthusiasm for working with this client group.
- To provide an update on current research and trends in therapy.
- To provide a framework for assessment and therapy.
- To address service delivery issues.
- To develop an increased quality of service to children who stammer within the Trust.

Outline of the course:

The course was delivered over three days, the third one being a follow-up day to evaluate progress and set long term aims.

Findings from questionnaire completed after day 2:

After the second day of the course, each therapist completed a questionnaire to give feedback about the training. Therapists were asked to rate aspects of the training on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being excellent. Feedback was extremely positive with all responses being 4 or 5. Many therapists commented on how much more confident and enthusiastic they felt as a result of the training.

Follow-up day:

Feedback was again extremely positive with therapists rating most aspects of the course as 5 with the occasional 4.

Feedback from Foyle Trust Speech and Language Therapy Manager:

Mrs Joan Skeffington (Speech and Language Therapy Manager) has written to express her appreciation to the BSA and the course funders. She writes:
'Feedback from staff has been extremely positive and every person who attended the training were very loud and fulsome in their praise of this training. In fact, so enthusing and invigorating was Mrs Wright's presentation that she has engendered a massive interest in this area of work.....I would like to say a sincere thanks to the funders and would like our thanks to be extended to them.'

Report dated 24th April 2002

Feedback from the local co-ordinators in the participating Trusts

Amber Valley Primary Care Trust:

There was only a small increase in referrals for pre-school children in this area despite the considerable numbers of leaflets and posters distributed and training delivered. The local co-ordinator reported that this is likely to be due to the fact that this Trust were previously involved in the BSA's primary healthcare workers project and 'stammering has remained high profile'. There was also a small decrease in referrals of school age children. This is possibly a result of children now being referred closer to the onset of the stammer.

Cherwell Vale Primary Care Trust:

The local co-ordinator for the campaign in this area reported 'a really good response to the Campaign... The literature elicited a large number of queries and referrals from parents, health visitors and playgroup and nursery teachers ...'. She also commented that 'the information packs were well written and attractively presented' and 'we have benefited from the support we have had from the BSA.'

Partly as a result of an increase in early referrals, the department has arranged a course to train more local speech and language therapists in the necessary skills to fulfil the needs of young children who stammer in Oxfordshire.

Foyle Health and Social Services Trust:

The local co-ordinator reported that the referral data showed a decrease rather than an increase. 'This was certainly not the result we expected. Since the campaign we in the service have had very positive feedback from the majority of our professional colleagues in health and education.' Therapists also 'feel much more confident ... in treating children with fluency problems' as a result of the training.

Training was provided for early years workers, GPs, health visitors and school nurses. Feedback was extremely positive. The GP training proved to be particularly productive. It resulted in an increase in referrals and 'two of the GPs themselves being dads of young pre-schoolers subsequently referred their own children the speech and language therapy'.

North East Wales NHS Trust:

Feedback from the local co-ordinator was very positive both during and after the campaign. In North East Wales all of the parents of pre-school children who stammer are offered a workshop for advice and to discuss strategies to help their child. The specialist in stammering in the area reports referrals have gone up so much that they have had to increase the number of workshops they offer from 2 or 3, to 4 or 5 times a year, in order to meet the demand. She reports that they have fewer parents than previously who do not attend which indicates that referrers are emphasising the importance of early intervention. She has also noticed that those parents who have attended the workshops feel more equipped to deal with the issue and when they are offered therapy less sessions are required.

Plymouth Primary Care Trust:

Reported benefits of the Parental Awareness Campaign included:

- increased referrals 'in many cases closer to onset than was typical before'
- increased awareness as seen by the referral data 'and through verbal feedback/anecdotal evidence'
- shorter waiting times – regular 'drop-in' clinics enable children to be seen within a week or two of parents seeing the posters
- increased confidence in therapists as a result of the training
- resource packs for working with young dysfluent children in every community clinic
- service policy has been clarified 'as a direct result of the involvement with the campaign'

Salford Primary Care Trust:

The data collected in Salford suggested that referrals had gone down during the campaign. The co-ordinator gave feedback, which may account for this reduction in numbers:

- A number of therapists were on maternity leave during the campaign. This resulted in longer waiting lists and therefore there may have been more children referred who had not yet been seen.
- The department had several locum therapists covering clinics where therapists were absent. It is possible that they did not consistently complete the forms, which were used to collate the referral information, resulting in children not being included in the results.
- As there are many other government projects ongoing in the Salford area, those referring agents who were targeted may have not had the time or resources to commit to PAC as in other areas i.e. leaflets and posters sent may not have been displayed. The co-ordinator reported that there was poor take-up for the training they offered to referring agents.

South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust:

Reported benefits of the training for speech and language therapists included:

- increased confidence in therapists ability to advise and treat this client group
- clear pathways to follow including when to refer to the specialist
- resource packs for working with young dysfluent children in every community clinic
- induction in use of resource pack for new therapists in the department
- update of leaflets and advice sheets used by the department

South Peterborough Primary Care Trust:

According to the local co-ordinator, the increase in referrals in this area is a realistic reflection of the impact of the campaign. She reports that referring agents are much more aware of the importance of early referral and appropriate advice. Prior to the campaign several parents reported having been given inappropriate advice by other professionals e.g. tell the child to slow down, wait to see if they grow out of it. Since the campaign this has occurred much less frequently.

The campaign also prompted the department to re-evaluate the way in which they deliver services to children who stammer in order to ensure that they offer a quality service. As a result they have set up parent groups which aim to provide advice and support to parents. As a result the list of children waiting to see the specialist has reduced due to the fact that these groups are meeting the needs of many of the referrals.

South Birmingham Primary Care Trust:

Only two small areas of this Trust were targeted for the campaign. Staff vacancies led to difficulties in implementing the campaign to the extent that the local co-ordinators would have liked. They did however identify many benefits of participating in the project including:

- focusing on the issue of stammering in the area
- team meetings to share information with therapists who do not specialise in stammering
- receiving referrals from parents who saw the campaign poster in a clinic waiting room

Suffolk West Primary Care Trust:

Staff vacancies during the campaign led to difficulties in providing training to referrers in this Trust. However referral figures did increase and the local co-ordinator reported an increase in referrals from GPs after the GP mailing.