

# Early Support Service

Julie Gillespie

Early Support Worker, VI HSP

Sandy Breit, Laura MacMillan,

Zeffie Poulakis, Carolyn Armstrong



# VI HSP – Early Support Service



- Background
- Evaluation
- Recommendations



# Established in September 2010 to complement the VI HSP Screening Program



## Purpose

To provide support and information to families

- whose child is referred for further hearing testing following a refer result at the time of the hearing screen
- at the time their child is diagnosed with a hearing loss
- where needed in engaging with Early Intervention before the child is 6 months old

## Aims

- Provide independent, unbiased, family centred and child focussed support and assistance
- Facilitate the family's understanding of information
- Assist parents to be informed of all options and supports
- Make informed and timely decisions that meet the needs of the family and provide for optimum communication outcomes for their child

# State wide Service



- Early Support Workers are employed by the Royal Children's Hospital
- Integrated into VI HSP
- Located at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, East Melbourne
- Early Support Worker for each VI HSP cluster (February 2012)
- Each cluster has metropolitan and rural screening sites
- Interpreter service used as requested by the family



Central and  
Western

Southern



# Multi-Disciplinary Approach



Ongoing communication with services and agencies is a vital component of the Early Support Service.





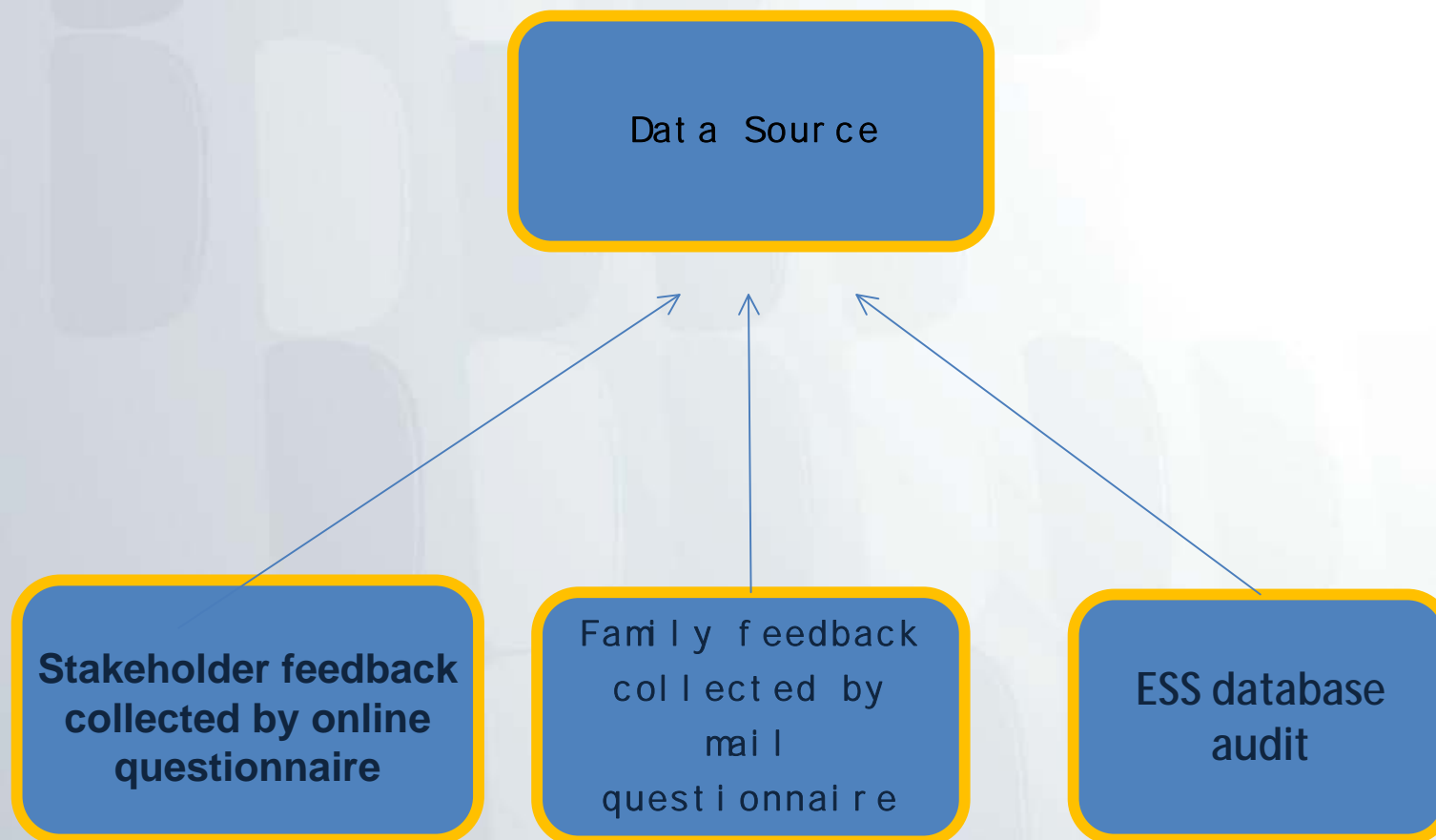
# Evaluation

- September 2010 – August 2011

Independent evaluation was carried out to assess the performance of the service in the first year of operation

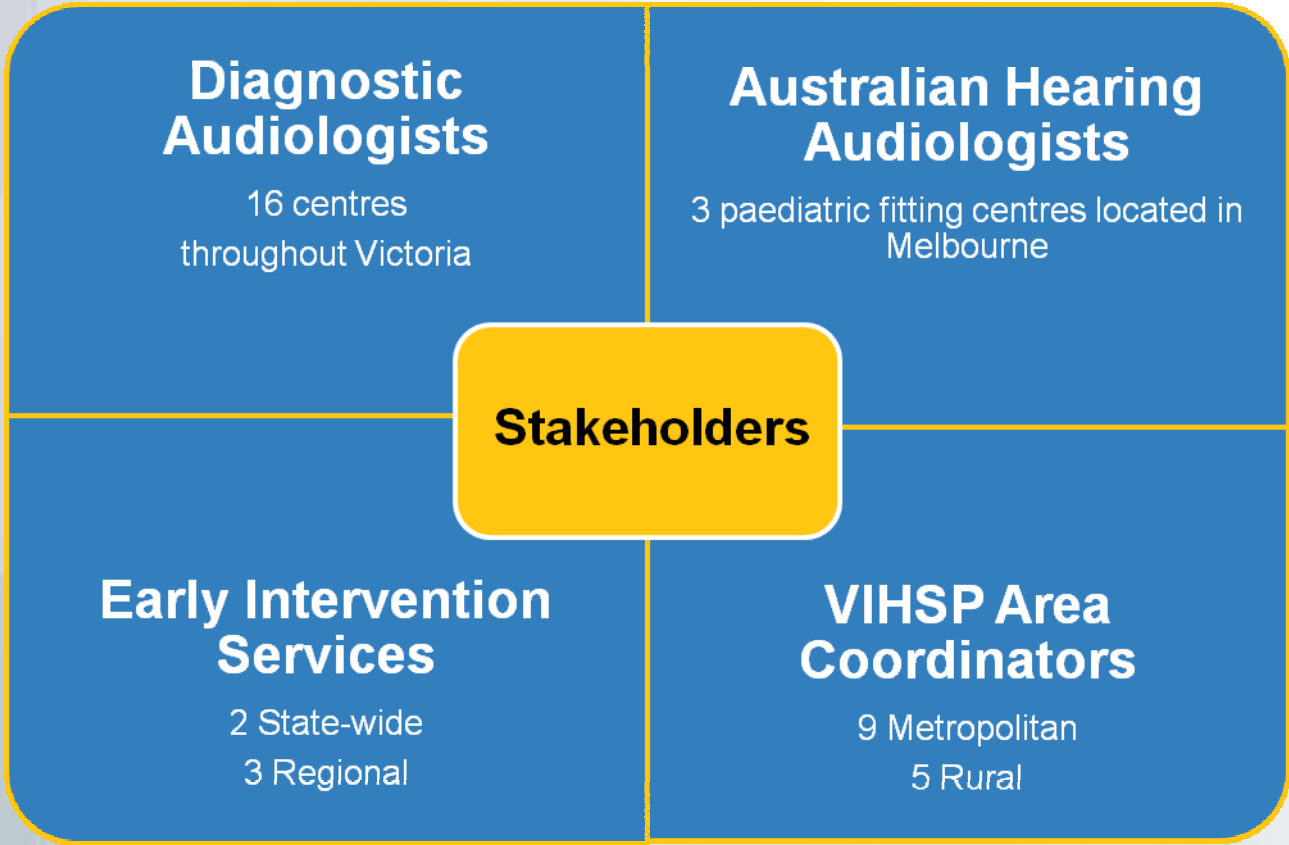
- Assessment of the service was based upon benchmarks performance and feedback from relevant stakeholders and families in contact with the service
- Research assistant – Laura MacMillan  
Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- Discussion Paper prepared by
  - Dr Zeffie Poulakis Co-director VIHSP
  - Laura MacMillan





Early Support Workers were also consulted

# Stakeholders





# Families referred to the service between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011

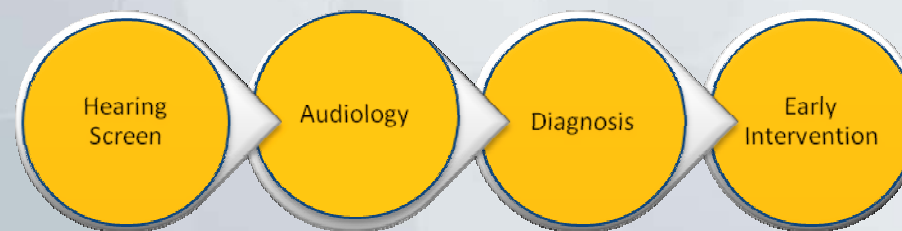


274 families  
referred

134 families invited to take  
part

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
All families whose child was referred to the service and later diagnosed with any type of abnormal	Families who declined to be contacted by the ESS at time of referral
Half of the families (66) whose child was later diagnosed with normal hearing	Families who required an interpreter (number)
	families contacted by a regional pilot

Families described the role the Early Support Service played in navigating the following pathway



# Database Audit

- Child and Family details
- Screening and birth hospitals
- Audiology centre
- Date and type of diagnosis
- Date of hearing aid fitting
- Attendance at ENT appointment
- Enrolment into Early Intervention



**Referral Details**

Family ID: 2362

**Child**

Last Name: [ ] First Name: [ ] Status: [ ] Deceased: [ ]

Screening History: [ ] US: [ ] UK: [ ]

Birth Site: [ ] US: [ ] UK: [ ]

Region: [ ]

Single/Twin: [ ] Gender: [ ] DOB: [ ]

Audiologist: [ ] Language: [ ]

Diagnosis: [ ]

Diagnostic Category: [ ] Permanent: [ ]

Date of Diagnosis: [ ] Date of Results Received: [ ]

Contacted within 2 days of Referral: [ ]

Contacted within 2 days of Diagnosis: [ ]

**PRIMARY CAREGIVER**

First Name: [ ] Last Name: [ ] Home Phone: [ ]

Address: [ ] Work Phone: [ ]

Suburb, State, PCODE: [ ] Email: [ ]

Relationship to child: [ ]

**Secondary Carer**

First Name: [ ] Last Name: [ ] Home Phone: [ ]

Address: [ ] Work Phone: [ ]

Suburb, State, PCODE: [ ] Email: [ ]

Relationship to child: [ ]

Date of Hearing Aid Fitting: [ ]

Date Commenced at: [ ]

Agency: [ ]

Status History: [ ]

Status: [ ] Date Status Changed: [ ]

## Timing of ESS family contact

- at the time of a referral result
- after diagnosis

## Record contacts

- Type
- Length
- Frequency

## Interpreter requirements

**Referral Details**

Family ID: 2402

**Events**

ADD New Events here, then press TAB

Date	Time	Staff Member	Action	Outcome	Duration	Travel	People	Interpreter	Notes
05/04/2013	14:42 PM	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	0:00	0:00	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
20/09/2011	14:42 PM	Jaime Gillespie	Phone Call To Service	Contact Made	0:00	0:00	[ ]	[ ]	MC
10/09/2011	11:00 AM	Jaime Gillespie	Attendance At Austro	Contact Made	1:00	1:00	[ ]	[ ]	MC
10/09/2011	10:00 AM	Jaime Gillespie	Home Visit	Contact Made	1:30	2:00	[ ]	[ ]	MC
02/09/2011	14:48 PM	Jaime Gillespie	Phone Call to Austro	Contact Made	0:00	0:00	[ ]	[ ]	MC
29/04/2011	14:37 PM	Jaime Gillespie	Phone Call to Family	Contact Made	0:00	0:00	[ ]	[ ]	MC

**To Do**

Action Needed	Staff Member	Notes	Due	Date Due	Time	Outcome	Duration	Travel	People	Interpreter	Done
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	0:00	0:00	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]





# Feedback

- Feedback from the stakeholders and families was largely positive
- Provided a unique and detailed view of the necessity of such a service, as well as how the service can be improved.
- Performance of service should be commended with many families expressing their gratitude for the support and information provided

## Recommendations

- Working with diagnostic audiology centres
- Preparing families for audiology
- Ongoing Support for families





# 1. Working with Diagnostic Audiology Centres

- ESS operational guidelines require audiologists to provide results of hearing tests within 1 business day of an appointment, to ensure families are provided with prompt support
- Of the 18 audiologists who responded to the survey 12 confirmed the time frame was reasonable.

## Recommendations

- Reporting time frame for audiologists to remain one business day.
- Confirm with audiologists the detail required for reporting to ESS
  - Clarification has been provided
- Negotiate with individual audiologists re obstacles around the time frame
  - Ongoing liaison with diagnostic centres had been put in place



# 2. Preparing families for audiology



1. Comprehensive call script to guide calls to families

A script was written prior to commencement of the service.

This was reviewed and refined as the service progressed

2. Short checklist to ensure essential information is discussed with all families

This was discussed prior to commencement

Reviewed - contact record sheet amended to provide prompts for workers

INITIAL CONTACT RECORD		
Child's surname	DOB	
Child's first name	ES Worker: Julie Gillespie	
Call 1 Date:	Left message	Contact made
Call 2 Date:	Left message	Contact made
Call 3 Date:	Left message	Contact made
Refer letter 1 Date:	Refer letter 2 Date:	
<b>Points to cover in the initial phone call</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Date Of Audiology Appointment</li><li>• Length of Appointment</li><li>• Feeding and settling baby</li><li>• Is someone attending with mother</li><li>• ESS-NHS contact details</li><li>• Calling back after audiology appointment</li></ul>		
PARENT QUERIES AND QUESTIONS		
Hearing Screen		
Audiology		
Other		
Action		
Normal Hearing - Date of follow up Call		
Comments		



# 3. Ongoing Support for Families



- Internal review of the pathway and timeline from hearing diagnosis through to EI enrolment
- Provide support to all families whose child is diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss
- Frequency, duration and type of contact to be negotiated with each family

Evaluation reinforced our thoughts and confirmed that we were on the right path



## A. Internal review of the pathway and timeline from hearing diagnosis through to EI enrolment



I DEAL - by 6 months of age - Readiness Factors

- definitive diagnosis
- time to process information and the time to believe
- many appointments - process information sequentially
- time to decide which EI feels right
- what will EI do for my baby?
- Understanding that EI will lead to better outcomes for their child

**I don't believe my child is deaf**

**Contacted EI Service within week of diagnosis**



B. Provide support to all families whose child is diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss



### **Moderate – profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss**

- Phone calls
- Home visits
- Information Pack
- Attending agency visits e.g. diagnostic audiology, AH, EI
- Hospital appointments e.g. ENT, CIC
- Liaising with other services e.g. MCHN, Centrelink, other social services

### **Mild sensorineural hearing loss**

### **Unilateral hearing loss**

### **Bilateral conductive hearing loss**

- a home visit
- phone support
- ascertain and affirm information provided by audiologist
- information
  - Australian Hearing fact sheets
  - Aussie Deaf Kids

C. Frequency of contact varies - guided by the family





# Feedback

- Many families expressed their gratitude for the support and information provided



*“Everyone has been wonderful. I’m so glad that everything is okay but I know if we had of got bad news, it would have been easier to take because we knew there was lots of support.”*

*“I am not crying because I am sad, but I am crying because of all the support that I am getting.”*

*“Thankyou so much for your phone call. It’s been a shock but we feel very supported.”*

*“Thankyou for your visit. It was really helpful. Helped us to understand exactly what was happening.”*

