

LOCAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Aims

The local community context analysis provides the backdrop for Sure Start and documents change over time in the nature of the Sure Start communities. It will address the following core questions:

1. Has Sure Start reached those it was intended for, i.e. the poorest children and families?
2. What is the relationship between Sure Start neighbourhoods and national or other disadvantaged area benchmarks?
3. Are there differences between Sure Start local programme areas?
4. How can the multiple indicators used to characterize the programme areas be grouped to form area typologies or profiles?
5. Do community profiles and comparisons change over time?
6. Can changes be related to variable implementation of Sure Start and to the impact on children and families?

Types of data

1. Existing administrative databases

The local context analysis generate most of the area-specific information by applying the specific area definitions and digitized boundaries of each Sure Start Programme to a variety of local and national databases.

2. Observations

Observations of a community can measure neighbourhood units considerably smaller than those described by administrative data, allowing for more flexibility and precision in defining a neighbourhood or community. Interviewers conducting the Impact Evaluation interviews complete a short observation schedule after each interview and a sample of more detailed observations annually in each area involved in the impact study.

Domains covered

Demographics

Deprivation

Economic profile

Crime and disorder

Adult health

Child health and development

School readiness and achievement
Child Welfare
Provision of local services
Access to services for 0-3 year olds and their families

Data by source

Data will, in most cases, be expressed according to the population of the local Sure Start Programme areas.

1. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000 and 2004 provide a way to relate conditions in Sure Start areas to other disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In particular information on the local concentration of poverty is examined in wards with and without a Sure Start Local Programme.
2. The 1991 and 2001 census tabulations are particularly useful in establishing household/family structures, resident's occupational structure, ethnic composition, local living conditions, demographic profiles and estimates of the flux of migration passing through the areas.
3. In conjunction with Sure Start's contract with the DWP to provide information on children in workless households, additional data are obtained regarding adults receiving a number of benefits that indicate disabling physical or mental health problems.
4. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provide data to the National Evaluation of Sure Start from two separate sources of data. The first source of data will be birth and death registrations, made by members of the public to Registrars of Births and Deaths, collected by ONS. The second source of data will be local child health systems. The data extract from Child Health Systems will include socio –demographic details of the mother, perinatal data items, measures of disability and associated conditions at around age two. The data items to be included are not routinely available on a national basis and have involved extensive validation of the accuracy.
5. Data are requested annually from the Hospital Episodes Statistics (Department of Health) concerning emergency hospitalizations of 0-3 year olds for specified illnesses.
6. Using the NOMIS data, employment levels are measured for full time and part time employment for males and for females and will be classified by the nine broad industry groups of the 1992 Standard Industrial Classification. With respect to employment and unemployment the programme areas themselves are generally too small to be regarded as local labour markets but in many cases the Travel to Work Areas in which they are contained are likely to be too large to represent realistically the range of jobs being accessed by local residents.

7. With the knowledge that crime data are not uniformly available, the following information are sought: rate of burglary and car theft; rate of drug arrests; rate of violent crime; rate of juvenile contact with police.

8. Information from the DfES National Pupil database and other records held by the DfES at the school level : achievement test scores; detention and exclusion rates; unauthorised absence rates; children statemented with special needs; participation of young people in full or part-time education and post-16 training.

9. Local Social Services are asked to provide information on numbers of children on the at-risk register and re-referrals to the at-risk register among residents of the Sure Start programme areas.

10. Data about services are obtained from Ofsted, from websites and from national lists.

11. The impact evaluation interviews include questions about perceptions of crime and danger in neighbourhoods.

12. Observations of communities are conducted after each impact study interview and in a sample of streets in each impact area.