

# National evaluation summary

## Changes in the characteristics of Sure Start Local Programme areas - 2000/2001 to 2002/2003

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### Introduction

Sure Start local programmes (SSLPs) represent a cornerstone of the Government's drive to tackle child poverty and social exclusion. SSLPs are based in areas of disadvantage and aim to improve the health and well being of young children under 4 and their families, so that children have a greater opportunity to flourish when they go to school.

This is a summary of the third report from the Local Context Analysis of the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), which focuses on examining change at the community level in Sure Start local programme areas in Rounds 1 to 4 over a period of two years, between the fiscal years 2000/01 and 2002/03.

### Key findings

- ▶ There are fewer children aged 0 to 3 living in homes dependent of benefits. However this change is not unique to SSLP areas but reflects a change in England as a whole.
- ▶ Replicating changes found in SSLP areas between 2000/01 and 2001/02, there were increases in most aspects of social service activity with families, whereas there was a downward trend in England.
- ▶ Again replicating findings from the previous report, a greater proportion of primary aged children in SSLP areas were identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN), with an overall decrease in England. There was also an increase in the proportion of children aged 4 to 17 in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.
- ▶ In SSLP areas there has been a significant growth between 2000/01 and 2002/03 in full day care and crèche providers and places and in providers of out of school care, with a decrease in sessional day care providers and places.
- ▶ Achievement at age 7 (KS1) in schools serving pupils from SSLP areas is lower in 2002/3 than in 2000/01, reflecting national trends. However achievement at age 11 (KS2) and in GCSE at age 15 shows improvement, more so than in England.
- ▶ The rate of unemployment has dropped more in SSLP areas than in England as a whole. There is particularly high growth of employment in rural SSLP areas.

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## Background

Sure Start services are delivered to children aged 0 to 4 years and their families through community-based local programmes. A comprehensive national evaluation (NESS) is assessing the implementation, impact and cost-effectiveness of Sure Start local programmes in Rounds 1-4. The Local Context Analysis (LCA) module of the national evaluation will describe the local programme areas and document any changes in these communities over six time points. This information is incorporated with other NESS data to find out how the nature of the area influences the effectiveness of Sure Start local programmes to improve the health and well-being of families and young children.

## Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to identify if there have been any changes in SSLP areas between 2000/01 and 2002/03, addressing the following questions:

- Have Sure Start local programme areas changed between the fiscal years 2000/2001 and 2002/2003?
- How do changes in SSLP areas compare to changes in other disadvantaged communities and in England as a whole?
- Is the extent of change similar in each Round and is it related to the length of time since the programme began?<sup>4</sup>

## Methods

Data from a number of national and local sources have been analysed, covering: demography, poverty and worklessness, economic activity and employment, child health, child welfare, school

achievement, local services, adult health and health related behaviour, and community disorder. Sources of data for longitudinal comparison are the same as in previous reports, with the addition of some information from child health systems. Cross-sectional data are derived from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004.

Unless otherwise stated, data for Sure Start local programmes areas refer to the fiscal years April 2002 to March 2003, compared with data from April 2000 to March 2001.

## Main Findings

### Demography

There is no change in the average number of births or the birth rate in SSLP areas, set against a small increase in the overall number of births and birth rate in England. While still almost double the rate for England, the proportion of births to young (under 18 years) mothers has decreased significantly in Rounds 1 to 4 SSLP areas, compared to no change in England and to no change in Round 5 SSLP areas.

There are fewer children aged 0 to 4 years in SSLP areas in 2002/03, representing a smaller percentage of the population than was the case in 2000/01. This mirrors a drop in numbers in this age in England as a whole.

<sup>4</sup>This was based on the official approval date.

**Table 1: Change between 2000/01 and 2002/03 in births and child population for SSLP areas in Rounds 1 to 4 and in England.**

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
Birth rate per 1,000 population	16	6-38	-0.1	12	+0.6
% Births to mothers <18 years	4	0-13	-0.1	2	0
% Population under 4	6	3-13	-0.1	4	-0.1
% Population under 16	24	7-42	-0.7	22	+2.9

Source: ONS 2000, 2002; DWP 2001, 2003

## Poverty and Worklessness

Reflecting a trend in England as a whole, the proportion of young children in Round 1 to 4 SSLP areas in 'workless' households<sup>5</sup> was significantly lower in 2002/3 than it was in 2000/1. The proportion of children aged 4 to 17 in Income Support households is also significantly lower in Round 1 to 4 SSLP areas in 2002/3 than in 2000/1, reflecting a similar trend in England.

The proportion of working age adults in receipt of Income Support increased significantly in SSLP areas over the three years, set against a drop overall in England. There was, however, wide variability between programme areas, some showing a large increase and many showing a decrease, but with most showing no change.

**Table 2: Change between 2000/01 and 2002/03 in poverty and worklessness for SSLP areas in Rounds 1 to 4 and in England.**

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
% 0-3 year olds in workless households	44	12-81	-0.7	23	-0.6
% 0-3 year olds in households receiving Income Support	39	10-73	0	20	-0.4
% working age adults receiving Income Support	16	4-36	+0.3	7	-0.2

Source: Department of Works and Pensions, 2001, 2003

## Employment and economic activity

While the proportion of adults receiving Job Seeker's Allowance and the proportion of children living in households receiving this benefit remain substantially above the national average, the rate of decline in both of these proportions between 2000/1 and 2002/3 was higher than the rate of national decline.

While the rate of employment remains below the national average, the rate of overall employment growth for Round 1 to 4 programme areas is above the national average. Growth appears to be stronger within and around rural programmes. However, no statistically significant changes were found between 2000 and 2002, largely because of the considerable variation in rates of change between individual SSLP programme areas.

<sup>5</sup> Households dependent on means-tested benefits.

Whether SSLPs are classified as urban or rural, by Round or by region the share of local employment in manufacturing fell by about two percentage points between 2000 and 2002. This is slightly higher than the rate of loss in England as a whole but is similar to the rate of loss on the group of non-Sure Start relatively deprived wards.

## Child health

The average birthweight for all births in SSLP areas is lower than for England. There was a slight decrease between 2000 and 2002 in the average birthweight for all births recorded for children living in SSLP, consistent with a similar decrease in birthweight in England as a whole. The rate of low birth weight infants did not change significantly, in SSLP areas or in England.

There was no significant change in either neonatal<sup>6</sup> or infant<sup>7</sup> mortalities in SSLP areas since 2000/01 (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Change in infant health between 2000/01 to 2002/03 for SSLP areas in Rounds 1 to 4 in England.**

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
% Births <2500 grams	9	2-19	+ 0.2	8	-
Neonatal mortality (per 1,000 births)	5	0-17	+0.2	4	- 0.4
Infant mortality (per 1,000 births)	7	0-24	+ 0.1	5	- 0.6

Source: ONS 2000, 2002

For all immunisations recommended to be completed within the first 4 months of life, there was a significant increase between 2000 and 2002 in the percentage of immunisations recorded as

completed by the 1st and 2nd birthdays for SSLP areas, with no comparable change in the percentage of children immunised by their 1st birthday for England as a whole, and a drop in the MMR immunisation given in the 2nd year. However these results must be treated with caution as they only refer to a small proportion (27%) of SSLP areas.

Information on infant feeding was available from Child Health systems for only 30 SSLP areas, but in those areas the rate of breast-feeding had risen significantly, from 30% in 2000/01 to 38% in 2002/03. This is, however, still markedly below the rate in England (71%). Change in England cannot be determined because national figures are not available annually.

The average rate of emergency hospitalisations of young children (aged 0 to 3 years) for gastroenteritis was significantly higher in SSLP areas in 2002/03 than in 2000/01, with a similar increase in England (see Table 4). Emergency hospitalisations for lower respiratory infections and for severe injury have not changed significantly, either in SSLP areas or in England as a whole.

**Table 4: Change in rates of emergency hospitalisations of 0-3 year olds between 2000/01 to 2002/03 in SSLP areas in Rounds 1 to 4 and in England.**

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Per 1,000 0-3 year olds	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average
Gastroenteritis	15	0-79	+ 2.4	11	+ 2.0
Lower respiratory infection	23	2-67	- 0.8	18	+ 2.3
Severe injury	15	0-47	- 0.7	11	0.1

Source: HES, 2001, 2003, Department of Works and Pensions, 2001, 2003

The proportion of primary age school children with

<sup>6</sup> Still births and deaths during the first week.

<sup>7</sup> Deaths during the first year.

<sup>8</sup> Level 5 in the revised categorisation for 'Statemented' special educational needs.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) at levels 1-4 and level 5<sup>8</sup> increased in SSLP areas between 2000/01 and 2002/03, as did the proportion of school age children attending special schools. Comparatively, the value of both these indicators fell slightly in England (see Table 5).

The average proportion of 4-17 year olds receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA)<sup>9</sup> in Sure Start local programmes areas increased significantly, compared with a smaller increase in England. There was no change in the proportion of children aged 3 receiving DLA.

**Table 5: Change in special educational needs and disability between 2000/01 and 2002/03 in SSLP areas in Rounds 1 to 4 and in England.**

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
% primary age children with SEN – Level 5	2.8	0-10	+ 1.2	1.6	-0.1
% school age children special schools	4	0-13	- 0.1	2	0
% children aged 4-17 receiving	3.7	1-11	+ 0.5	2.7	+ 0.1

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2001, National Pupil Database, 2003; Department of Works and Pensions, 2001, 2003

## Child Welfare

Referral rates of under 16s to Social Services in 2002/03 were slightly higher than in 2000/01 (see Table 6) and almost twice the rate for England. Set against reductions overall in England, there were significant increases in the rate of Section 47 enquiries<sup>10</sup> in SSLP areas and the proportion of the population that were 'looked

after', both of which showed more increase when the SSLP had been in operation for a longer period of time. The rate of new registrations rose, though not significantly. However the extent of change was again greater for programmes that had been operating for longer.

**Table 6: Change in child welfare indicators between 2000/01 and 2002/03 for under 16 year olds in SSLP areas Rounds 1 to 4 and England.**

Per 1,000 0-3 year olds	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
Referrals	839	41-2957	+ 50.0	472	n/a
Section 47 enquiries	120	0-611	+ 38.9	54	22.1
On Child Protection Register	54	0-218	+ 0.6	22	- 3.3
Registrations during the year	60	0-210	+ 5.7	25	- 0.6
No. of looked after children	104	0-597	+ 24.3	50	- 5.5

Source: Social Services departments, 2000/1, 2002/3

## School Achievement

Educational achievement at Key Stage 1<sup>11</sup> writing and mathematics was significantly lower in 2002/03 in schools serving SSLP area pupils, dropping by 2.9% to 69% for English and by 4.5% to 76% for mathematics, although these indicators also dropped in England, by 5% and 1% respectively. Achievement at Key Stage 2<sup>12</sup> was significantly higher for mathematics, up 3.4% to 63%, with a smaller rise of 2% in England. The percentage of young people obtaining five or more GCSEs<sup>13</sup> grade A\*-C was significantly higher in schools with pupils from Sure Start local

<sup>9</sup> Paid to anyone aged 3 years or over that has severe difficulty walking, or aged 5 years or over and need help getting around.

<sup>10</sup> Section 47 enquiries ascertain whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

<sup>11</sup> Standardised tests taken at seven years.

<sup>12</sup> Standardised tests taken at eleven years.

<sup>13</sup> General Certificate of Secondary Education standardised examinations taken at 16 years.

programmes areas, up 6.4% to 41%, compared to a slight increase in England, up 2.9% to 53%. Child benefits paid to youngsters at 17 indicated that more were staying on in school in SSLP areas, but there was also an increase in England.

## Childcare

There has been a significant increase in SSLP areas in the numbers of full day care providers, out of school care, crèches and crèche places for 0 to 7 year olds, and a significant reduction in the number of sessional day care providers and sessional day care places.

For instance the number of childminders per 10,000 0-7 year olds has risen on average from 71 to 74; the number of full day care providers has risen from 12.5 to 13.6 and crèche places have risen from 5.5 to 7.0 per 10,000 0 to 7 year olds. The number of sessional day care providers per 10,000 0-7 year olds has fallen from 12.8 to 11.3 while the number of sessional day care places has fallen from 29.7 to 25.4 per 1,000 0-7 year olds in SSLP areas.

It is not possible to compare these reductions to England since data are not available, and some changes in SSLP areas may be related to changes in the Ofsted data recording systems over the years in question.

## Adult health

There was an increase in SSLP areas in the proportion of the adult population receiving benefits related to disability or long term care, compared to a smaller increase in England as a whole. There was an overall increase in adults in receipt of Severe Disability Allowance (SDA) or Incapacity Benefit (IB) from 2000/1 to 2002/3.

## Community disorder

There have been significant increases in crimes involving violence against the person and drug offences in SSLP areas in the time between 2000/1 and 2002/3. These have also increased in England as a whole, the rise being greater in England than in SSLP areas, particularly for drug offences.

Permanent exclusions from secondary schools have dropped in SSLP areas compared to no change in England, but unauthorised absences have risen, again compared to no change in England.

## Conclusion

Increases in social services activity and identification of more children who have Special Educational Needs were noted in the first examination of change in SSLP areas, based on comparing 2000/01 with 2001/02 and these findings are both replicated in this report, comparing 2000/01 with 2002/03. In subsequent analyses, including data from four years, the examination of significant underlying trends will be undertaken but these early results suggest that the direction of change is consistent. Thus far only increases in social service activity is clearly related to the time that the SSLP has been in operation, but the changes which have been identified might be associated with closer collaboration between agencies, more outreach services and greater use of screening measures to identify problems and then help families access support.

Further analysis in later years will be designed to explore these and subsequent changes, ideally incorporating more detailed information about programme activity beyond the months that they been in operation. However, we still lack complete coverage of all SSLP areas for some data sources, and in particular Child Health systems, which may contain informational

essential to understanding the impact on communities of SSLPs, such as maternal smoking and infant feeding. We will continue to strive for complete data collection so that change at the community level can be examined thoroughly.

### Further information

Further copies of this summary are available from:

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Copies of the full report of 'Changes in the characteristics of Sure Start local programme areas in Rounds 1 to 4 between 2000/01 and 2002/03' is available on the Sure Start website [www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk) or from the above address.

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