

Characteristics of Sure Start local programme areas – 2001/2

By Jacqueline Barnes¹, Kate Broomfield¹, Martin Frost², Gillian Harper², Sapna Dave¹, Jacqui Finn¹, Julie Knowles¹, Carol Desousa¹ and the NESS team.

Sure Start local programmes (SSLPs) are a key part of the Government's programme to support children, families and communities through the integration of early education, childcare, health and family support.

This is a summary of the second report from the Local Context Analysis of the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), which focuses on the characteristics of Sure Start local programme areas in Rounds 1 to 4, based on the fiscal year 2001/2.

Key findings

- ▶ There was a significant reduction in the percentage of 0-3 year olds living in 'workless' households in Sure Start local programme areas. This reduction was slightly greater than the change for England.
- ▶ There has been an increase in the number of childcare places between 2000/1 and 2001/2 in SSLP areas.
- ▶ The number of social service activities related to child protection increased substantially in SSLP areas between 2000/1 and 2001/2.
- ▶ Children attending special schools and those with identified Special Educational Needs (SEN) increased in SSLP areas, with the average rates in Sure Start local programme areas more than double the average rates for England.
- ▶ Achievement for schools with pupils resident in SSLP areas in 2001/2 was lower than that in 2000/1 for all indicators except Key Stage 2 Mathematics. There was no comparable drop in England.
- ▶ SSLP residents are living in neighbourhoods that became more dangerous. While rates of burglary from dwellings, vehicle crime, violence against the person and criminal damage all showed a small increase from 2000/1 to 2001/2 in England, the increases were more substantial in SSLP areas for all these crimes.
- ▶ One third of SSLPs have a minority ethnic population of 20% or more. Residents from the Indian subcontinent are the majority ethnic group in 22% of programme areas. Black residents form the majority of the ethnic minority community in 15% of programme areas
- ▶ A much higher proportion of residents in SSLP areas have no qualifications than the national average (41% compared to 29%).

¹ Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues, Birkbeck.

² South East Regional Research Laboratory, Birkbeck.

Background

Sure Start services are delivered through community-based local programmes each containing on average between 400 to 800 children aged under 4 years.

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 will be 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 since 2000/1. This report also presents new information on Sure Start communities using data from the 2001 Census.

This study addresses the following questions:

- ▶ Have SSLP areas changed since 2000/1 and, if so, how do changes in Sure Start local programme areas compare with changes in national figures, or changes in other deprived areas³?
- ▶ Are changes in Sure Start local programmes areas related to the length of time programmes have been operational?

It must be noted, however, that examination of change using only two time points over just one year, may reflect changes due to chance or 'normal' fluctuations that would occur anyway. Once three years' data have been collected the picture will be clearer. In addition, the time period in question (April 2001 to March 2002) is early in the implementation of Sure Start local programmes, when services were only just being fully established in the early Rounds (1 and 2)

and in some cases, in Round 3 and 4 programmes, prior to Sure Start services being put in place.

Methods

A number of indicators were selected to describe Sure Start local programmes areas, grouped according to the following general categories: population and deprivation, employment, child health and development, child welfare, school achievement, local services, local environment, adult health and community disorder. New demographic indicators from the Census 2001 include housing, employment, and ethnicity.

Data have been obtained from a number of sources, through national and local agencies and by observation. Postcodes for each local programme areas were used in order to obtain accurate data for exact local programme areas. Unless otherwise stated data for Sure Start local programmes areas refer to the fiscal year April 2001 to March 2002 and comparisons are made with data from April 2000 to March 2001.

Main findings

Deprivation and poverty

Sure Start local programmes areas continue to experience some of the worst deprivation in England. For 2001/2 the average percentage of 0-3 year olds living in 'workless'⁴ households (dependent on benefits and receiving Income Support) in Sure Start local programmes area were nearly double those for England (43% and 22%). In common with national trends, these proportions have declined a little between 2000/1 and 2001/2.

The average percentage of 0-3 year olds living in households receiving Job Seeker's Allowance decreased in SSLP areas in 2001/2 – more than twice the amount of change overall in England.

The SSLP areas contain a higher proportion of residents experiencing long term unemployment than in England as a whole. For instance, 21%

³ Wards used as the basis for the Census of Population, 2001 were selected as part of the control group if they had a substantial overlap with 1998 IMD wards that fell within the most deprived 20% of wards, and if they did not overlap with any Sure Start local programme areas.

⁴ Children aged 0-3 years in households where adults are receiving Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS), Incapacity benefit (IB) or Severe Disability Allowance (SDA).

of residents in SSLP areas had their last employment between 1996 and 1999 compared with 19% nationally. There was a correspondingly smaller proportion of SSLP area residents experiencing short-term (within 2001 only) unemployment.

Population

The average annual number of live births in 2001 within SSLP areas is marginally lower than in 2000 (183 down from 185). The average birth-rate in SSLPs has risen slightly while the figure for England remains unchanged (15.6 up from 15.0 per 1,000 population; England 11.5 per 1,000).

There is a slight drop in the relatively large proportions of under 4s in SSLP areas (to 13.1 per 100 households) compared to no change in England (10.5 per 100 households).

SSLP areas have on average a slightly lower proportion of residents aged 60 or more compared to England (18% and 21% respectively).

The rate of births to lone mothers⁵ (25%) and to mothers under 18 years (4%) remained stable in SSLP areas and higher than England, whilst the number of births inside marriage in SSLP areas fell slightly in both SSLP areas and in England (see Table 2).

Table 1: Poverty and worklessness in SSLP areas Rounds 1 to 4 and England and change between 2000/1 and 2001/2

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
% 0-3 year olds in workless households	43	13-78	-1.2	22	-0.9
% 0-3 year olds in households receiving Income Support	39	10-74	-0.2	20	-0.4
% 0-3 year olds in households receiving Job Seeker's Allowance	5	1-17	-0.4	2	-0.2

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2001, 2002; Census 2001

Table 2: Births in SSLP areas Rounds 1 to 4 and England and change between 2000 and 2001

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
Birth rate per 1,000 population	16	7-46	+0.6	12	+0.6
% Births to mothers < 18 years	4	0-17	-0.1	2	0
% Births to lone mothers	25	0-62	+0.1	15	+0.3
% births inside marriage	45	14-97	-0.7	60	+1.5

Source: ONS 2000, 2001

⁵ Births outside marriage, sole and joint registration, parents have different addresses.

The availability of Census 2001 provided more recent information on population details and in particular the ethnic composition of Sure Start local programme areas. The new figures show that ethnic communities are more strongly represented in Sure Start local programme areas than was previously apparent (see Figure 1).

The ethnic minority population is 10% or more in 38% of SSLP areas and 20% or more in almost one third (32%). Ethnic minorities make up 40% or more of the population in almost one in five (18%) SSLP areas.

In almost one quarter of SSLP areas (22%) at least 10% of the residents are from the Indian subcontinent.

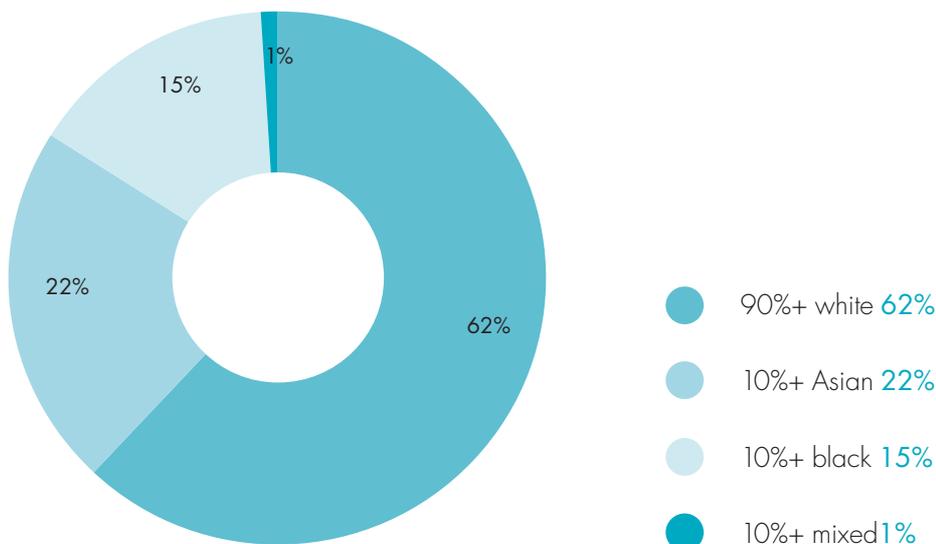
In 15% of areas, at least 10% of the residents are black.

Employment

The proportion of residents in SSLP areas with higher managerial or professional occupations is about half the national average (males 6% in SSLP areas, 13% nationally; females 3% in SSLP areas, nationally 5%).

A much higher proportion of residents in SSLP areas have no qualifications than the national average (41% compared to 29%). While in England one in five adults aged 16-74 has a degree or higher qualification, the rate is 12% in SSLP areas.

Figure 1: Ethnic population of Round 1 to 4 Sure Start local programmes areas.



Source: Census 2001

Child health

On average, 9% of births in Sure Start local programme areas for 2001 were of low weight (<2500g), which represented no change from 2000 compared with an increase in the number of low weight babies for England. The reduction in the percentage of both neonatal⁶ and infant⁷ mortalities in SSLP areas since 2000 was less than for England (see Table 3).

The average rates of emergency hospitalisations of young children for gastroenteritis, lower respiratory infection or severe injury continue

to be higher in SSLP areas than in England. The rate for gastroenteritis has risen significantly in England and to a lesser extent in SSLP areas (see Table 4). Hospitalisations for lower respiratory infections were slightly higher in 2001/2 both in SSLP areas and in England while the rates of emergency hospitalisations for severe injury dropped slightly for both (see Table 4).

In SSLP areas, the proportion of primary age school children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements⁸ increased to an average of

Table 3: Infant health in SSLP areas Rounds 1 to 4 and England and change from 2000 to 2001

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
% Births <2500 grams	9	3-19	0	8	+0.1
Neonatal mortality (per 1,000 births)	5	0-18	-0.1	4	-0.4
Infant mortality (per 1,000 births)	7	0-26	-0.1	5	-0.6

Source: ONS 2000, 2001

Table 4: Rates of emergency hospitalisations of 0-3 year olds in SSLP areas Rounds 1 to 4 and England and change from 2000/1 to 2001/2

Per 1,000 0-3 year olds	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
Gastroenteritis	14	0-74	+0.7	8	+1.0
Lower respiratory infection	25	3-79	+0.3	15	+0.2
Severe injury	15	0-53	-0.6	8	-0.4

Source: HES, 2001, 2002; Department for Work and Pensions, 2001, 2002

⁶ Still births and deaths during the first week.

⁷ Deaths during the first year.

⁸ Level 5 in the revised categorisation.

1 in 5 primary age school children whilst the proportion of all school age children attending special schools increased to 1 in 50. Comparatively, these figures fell slightly for England in 2001/2 (see Table 5).

The average proportion of 4-17 year olds receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA)⁹ in Sure Start local programme areas increased significantly from 3.2% to 3.4 % in 2000/1 whilst, again, the proportion slightly decreased for England from 2.6% to 2.5%.

Child welfare

Compared with 2000/1, the rates of reported cases for all indicators related to child protection, except referrals¹⁰ increased in SSLP areas for 2001/2 (see Table 6). In particular there was a large increase in the rate of Section 47 enquiries¹¹ with, on average, 160 cases per 10,000 under 5 years olds compared to a rate of 124 per 10,000 the previous year. There are no comparable England data for under 5's but the national rate for under 18's fell from 76 to 67 per 10,000.

Table 5: Special needs in SSLP areas in Rounds 1 to 4 and England and change from 2000/1 to 2001/2

	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
% primary age children with SEN	21	0-41	+1.1	1.6	-0.1
% school age children attending special schools	2.0	0-5	+0.4	1.1	-0.1
% children aged 4-17 receiving DLA	3.4	1-10	+0.2	2.5	-0.1

Source: Department for Education and Skills, 2001; National Pupil Database, 2002; Department for Work and Pensions, 2001, 2002

Table 6: Child welfare indicators for under 5 year olds in SSLP areas Rounds 1 to 4 and England and change from 2000/1 to 2001/2

Per 1,000 under 5 year olds	Sure Start local programme areas			England	
	Average	Range	Change from 2000/1	Average	Change from 2000/1
Referrals (n=162)	890	0-2871	+3.95	n/a	
Section 47 enquiries (n=128)	160	0-1105	+35.5	n/a	
No. on Child Protection Register (n=164)	83	0-536	+7.8	37	-1.6
No. of registrations during the year (n=166)	97	0-527	+15.6	43	+1.7
No. of looked after children (n=171)	71	0-249	+5.8	n/a	

Source: Social Services departments, 2000/1, 2001/2

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

¹⁰ A referral is defined (in line with CPR3 guidelines) as a request or services to be provided by the social services department. This is in respect of a case of a child not previously known to social services or where the case was open but is now closed. Referrals refer to individual children, not to family groups.

¹¹ Section 47 enquiries are enquiries conducted under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to ascertain whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and to enable the local authority social services department to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

School achievement

Educational achievement at Key Stage 1¹² writing and mathematics and Key Stage 2¹³ English and science was significantly lower in 2001/2 than in 2000/1 in schools serving SSLP area pupils. Generally there was no change or a smaller drop in England. For example, the average percentage of pupils at KS1 achieving at least level 2 in mathematics dropped from 86% to 82% in schools serving pupils from an SSLP area, compared to a drop from 91% to 90% in England. Similarly the percentage achieving at least level 2 in English dropped from 78% to 77%, with no change in England (86%).

At KS2 the percentage achieving level 4 or more in English in schools serving SSLP area pupils dropped significantly from 65% to 63% with England remaining stable at 75%. The percent achieving level 4 or more in science dropped significantly from 81% to 79%, while in England there was a drop from 87% to 86%.

The percentage of young people obtaining five or more GCSEs¹⁴ grade A*-C changed only marginally in schools with pupils from Sure Start local programmes areas, remaining substantially lower than the rate for England (37%) whilst in England there was a slight increase from 50% to 53%.

Childcare

There is a large amount of variance between SSLP areas in terms of both the proportion of childcare providers and the number of childcare places in the area but rates of provision are lower than national rates¹⁵.

There has been a significant increase in all types of child care provider and the number of places between 2000/1 and 2001/2 in SSLP areas.

For instance the number of childminders per 10,000 0-7 year olds has risen on average from 72 to 83. Crèche places have risen from 5.5 to 6.7 per 10,000 0 to 7 year olds. The number of sessional day care providers per 10,000 0-7 year olds has risen from 12.9 to 14.0. This rise was greater in areas where the SSLP had been in operation for longer.

Local environment

The SSLP areas have more council rented and other social housing and fewer owner occupied homes. Specifically, almost one third (29%) of households are council rented in SSLP areas, compared to 22% in other deprived wards and 13% across England. With an average rate of 48%, 20% fewer houses are owner occupied in SSLP areas compared to England. The rate is 11% lower than that for other deprived wards without a SSLP.

In SSLP areas there is more over-crowding (over 1.5 persons per room) than other deprived wards without SSLPs and England, which have similar rates (SSLP areas 1.3%, non SSLP deprived wards 0.6%, England 0.6%).

Community disorder

Crime rates in Sure Start local programmes areas remained higher than rates for England and have increased between 2000/1 and 2001/2¹⁶.

For most of the indicators reported, the changes in crime rates were greater than those for England. For example, there was a significant increase in the number of reported incidents of violence against individuals from 14 to 17 and an increase in criminal damage from 29 to 32 per 1,000 population in SSLP areas. The increase for England were from 11 to 12 for violence against the person and from 19 to 21 for criminal damage.

¹² Standardised tests taken at seven years.

¹³ Standardised tests taken at eleven years.

¹⁴ General Certificate of Secondary Education standardised examinations taken at 16 years.

¹⁵ National data were only available for 2003, therefore are not directly comparable with the SSLP data for 2000/1 and 2001/2.

¹⁶ Burglary dwelling, Burglary other, Vehicle crime, Violence against the person, Criminal damage, Drug offences.

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Conclusion

Having re-iterated the need for caution in interpreting change based on two time points, and noting that many SSLPs had not been in place for long, some of the changes identified suggest encouraging trends. For example, increases in social services activity and the identification of more children who have Special Educational Needs may be associated with closer collaboration between agencies working with under fives and their families, more outreach services and greater use of screening measures to identify problems and then help families access support.

Other changes are less positive in terms of SSLP areas. Rates of school achievement appear to be dropping in schools serving pupils living in SSLP areas and levels of crime have risen. Thus the context in which the programmes are operating is one that requires greater input of services, to support schools and teachers, and other services supporting these communities.

The new Census has provided a more up to date picture of the SSLP area populations. There is more cultural diversity than was previously apparent, and this will be relevant to service planning and delivery.

These early indications of change and how communities may be linked to the presence of a Sure Start local programme will be investigated further in future reports.

Further information

Further copies of this summary are available from

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NG15 0DJ; Tel 0845 6022260;
Email: dfes@prologistics.co.uk

Quote reference NESS/SF/2004/005

Copies of the full report of 'Characteristics of Sure Start local programme areas – 2001/2' is available on the Sure Start website (www.surestart.gov.uk) or from the above address. Quote ref NESS/FR/2004/005

Further information about National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) can be found at www.ness.bbk.ac.uk

Further information about local Sure Start local programmes can be found at www.surestart.gov.uk