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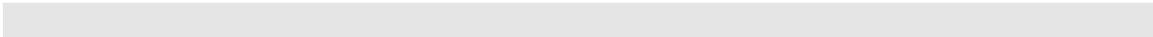
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Annual Evaluation Report 2004

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SureStart4u Annual Evaluation Report 2004

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform the Programme Board, the NESS (National Evaluation of SureStart), SureStart West Midlands regional teams and local stakeholders of the progress SureStart4u has made towards meeting national and local objectives. The report fulfils the NESS requirement for annual evaluation reports and summarises the evaluation activity undertaken within the programme during 2004.

SureStart4u received approval from the SureStart Unit on 30th May 2003 and commenced some early services in January 2003 with the bulk of services starting around September 2003. This report, therefore, focuses on a year in which many of our projects and services had just started to establish themselves operationally. It is based on independent documentary analysis, a large, independent, representative satisfaction survey, internal database records and evidence from internal performance management records.

As a round 6 local programme, in a city with programmes in rounds 1, 3 and 5, SureStart4u was able to draw on the lessons learned, and partnerships forged by the earlier programmes, to rapidly establish a full range of services and community development activity. SureStart4u has, however, developed many unique activities and services and has its own distinctive style, culture and identity. Particular strengths of the programme are its culture of community involvement and volunteering with a significant feeling of ownership among local families. The centre is informal and welcoming and receives numerous unplanned visits from local families and community services, both statutory and voluntary, on a daily basis. Projects are co-located and have developed into a truly integrated team with one corporate identity. Relationships with voluntary and statutory services are very good and SureStart4u has an excellent reputation locally.

Context

SureStart4u's lead accountable body is the City Councils Department of Education and Lifelong learning whose director chaired the Partnership Board throughout most of 2004, until a local parent took on the role on 1st September.

The total population in the area is 15,514 with approximately 600 under 4's in approximately 500 families. There are approximately 160 births per year.

Early consultation findings showed that parents wanted more play, childcare, health-related information and support. Difficulty with travel and access to services were a key area that parents identified. The parents involved in the planning of SureStart activities were enthusiastic to be involved in the delivery of services and not just be recipients.

The national policy change from SureStart to Children's Centres has impacted significantly on the programme and resulted in a redirection of efforts. The Children's Centre capital build and the acquiring of ERDF funding (in an attempt to secure the sustainability of the activities and services, identified by parents and other stakeholders, through the collaborative commissioning process), has taken significant time and energy.

Evaluation Approach

The programme has an evaluation strategy based on three key elements.

1. Specific evaluations commissioned from independent research agencies. The commissioning was coordinated by the SureStart services coordinator.

This year the two evaluations commissioned were:

- A large representative baseline satisfaction survey utilising a robust methodology which delivered a high level of confidence in its findings.
 - A documentary review of the existing data held by the programme including monitoring systems, monitoring data, board and staff meeting minutes and eStart data on referrals and service users. The findings of the satisfaction survey also informed this evaluation.
2. A version of logical frameworks, with an outcomes based approach, developed within a collaborative commissioning context. Logic and results grids are used as a performance management and management information tool.
 3. Utilisation of an eStart internal database providing quantitative monitoring data coupled with analysis of data from external sources such as the NHS.

This evaluation summary draws on these three key elements to provide a synthesis of findings and evidence in relation to reach and progress towards outcomes and targets.

Data Sources

Reflecting the NESS report "*Using Existing Data in SureStart Local Evaluations*" (April 2004) both monitoring and evaluation data have been integrated into this report along with key data sources. These include the Combined Healthcare Information Processing System (CHIPS), the Hospital Information Support System (HISS), the internal monitoring database eStart and quantitative and qualitative information collected by projects through the logical framework/performance management process.

Commissioned Evaluations

Documentary Review

(The following summary has been taken directly from the report.)

M·E·L Research was commissioned by SureStart4u in October 2004 to undertake a short term evaluation of the SureStart4u local programme.

The main sources of documentary evidence reviewed by M·E·L included Board meeting minutes, Performance Management Grids, statistical results and qualitative reports for services between January and September 2004, and E-START data on referrals and reach.

A content analysis of the data was carried out, in order to answer key research questions:

Are the Management Information Systems robust?

How well are the Management Information Systems being implemented?

Will data generated demonstrate achievement of aims and objectives?

How well is SureStart4u performing?

Is there evidence of parental involvement?

The review clearly indicated that SureStart4u has a robust and reliable monitoring system. This uses both statistical and qualitative data collected on a quarterly basis for each service. Data is recorded in a consistent format, and held electronically and in hard copy. This system allows for services to be monitored closely and for under-performing services to be identified at an early stage. This has been a success as we can see that some projects have already been decommissioned. The monitoring system allows for continual evaluation.

The monitoring system is not static and allows SureStart4u to be flexible in its approach to measuring the success of services. The evidence shows that amendments have been made to project targets and plans, indicating that SureStart4u can adapt to meet changing needs. Despite this flexibility, there are tight controls over the system ensuring that it remains robust.

Whilst SureStart4u has an excellent monitoring system, the evaluation revealed that there are areas for improvements in the manner in which the system is used. In short the systems are only ever as effective as the way in which they are used by those providing data. Indeed just 3 of the 21 projects monitored have all the statistical and qualitative results which we would expect. SureStart4u's monitoring system is greatly reliant on staff, parents, providers and outside agencies recording information. This has contributed to a number of unpopulated targets which limits Sure Start's ability to identify problems with a service at an early stage.

The targets set for each SureStart4u project were found to be consistent with the project aims. The majority of targets are measurable and generate meaningful data. Despite this, some targets set by SureStart4u do not appear to be of help in measuring progress of individual projects. Some targets are difficult to measure and highly subjective, whilst others appear unrealistic. Certain targets would also expect to see change over several years. Whilst important, these are not suitable for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of a project in the short term. SureStart4u needs to ensure that all targets are 'SMART' indicators. This is particularly important for those projects which have a number of unmeasured targets.

Comparisons of SureStart4u's monitoring systems with other Sure Start Programmes are difficult to make as this information is not provided by NESS. We can only compare the systems with experiences of other documentary evaluations of Sure Start programmes completed by M·E·L. On this basis, we can state that SureStart4u has the most advanced system for monitoring and data management, and that systems overall are working well.

Documentary evidence was used to assess management structures in place at SureStart4u. This provides a very positive reflection on management arrangements. The Partnership Board demonstrates strong leadership, chaired by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning who will be instrumental in future mainstreaming of services. The structures and terms of reference of the Board have been well conceived, and so the Board is able to retain a strategic focus. In terms of membership, all key statutory agencies are represented.

At this stage, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of services using documentary evidence. At such an early point in the programme, projects are still establishing themselves, which may

account for the often mixed results seen. Despite this, there have been a number of successes so far. The Community Development project has been vital in ensuring that parents have a real stake in decision-making through representation on the Board. Other projects, such as Play and Rhyme have clearly had a positive impact on local families. The most that can be inferred from the evidence at present is that those services which are performing well and meeting targets are having a positive impact on the families that they serve. It is, however, very early in the life of the programme to be able to draw meaningful conclusions about the success of individual services. The real results will be revealed over the next 12 months.

A copy of the full report is available at
<http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk/documents/findings/930.pdf>

User Satisfaction Consultation

M·E·L Research was commissioned by SureStart4u in October 2004 to undertake a user satisfaction consultation with parents and carers of young children within the programme area (as required by the Sure Start Unit).

The objectives of the consultation were to measure uptake of and satisfaction with local services (including SureStart4u services), and the extent to which these meet the needs of local parents. A questionnaire was designed in consultation with SureStart4u which aimed to answer these key questions, and identify areas for future service improvement. Questions in relation to attitudes to safety and the children's centre development were a significant feature of the survey.

A total of 250 face to face interviews were completed with parents and carers of children under the age of 5 living in the programme area. In order to access the views of a range of parents across the area, sampling quotas were agreed with SureStart4u. Of the 250 interviews, 30% were carried out with 'non-registered' families and 70% with registered families. The families were randomly selected from a total population of 550 families resulting in the sample being representative of the community e.g. in terms of its ethnic diversity etc. There were 31 male carers surveyed.

The results indicate that awareness of SureStart4u is extremely high. At 98%, awareness of SureStart4u amongst respondents is excellent for any Sure Start Local Programme, particularly a sixth wave one. Parents and carers have been made aware of SureStart4u in a number of ways; however, it is clear that local professionals such as Health Visitors and Midwives have had a vital part to play in this dissemination. Good links with these health professionals were also highlighted in the review of documentary evidence. These good links are a vital part of maximising involvement of the local community in any Sure Start local programme.

Involvement of local parents and carers in SureStart4u is also notably high. Roughly two thirds of respondents believed themselves to be a registered parent, with almost half of respondents having used a Sure Start service at the time of interview. This is particularly encouraging in light of the relatively short time in which SureStart4u services have been in operation. Involvement with SureStart4u was found to be far higher in Bentilee than 'Non-Bentilee' areas, both in terms of awareness and use of the programme, as well as rates of registration. Parent and carers in full time work and fathers were less likely than average to be involved in the programme.

Reflecting the high levels of involvement in SureStart4u as service users, parents and carers consulted were very satisfied with SureStart4u's service provision. Almost 100% of respondents were satisfied with their experiences of Sure Start service use. This factor is obviously instrumental in promoting such high levels of involvement, and is an excellent reflection on standards of service provided by SureStart4u, its staff and partner agencies. Few respondents were able to suggest any additional services which SureStart4u could provide, explaining, 'it covers everything'

The perceptions of local parent and carers consulted via the baseline indicate that the programme is performing very well, meeting the needs of local people and having a positive impact on the lives of local families.

A copy of the full report is available at
<http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk/documents/findings/931.pdf>

Progress Towards Objectives

Early consultation findings showed that parents wanted more play, childcare and health-related information and support. Difficulty with travel and access to services were a key area that parents identified. Some of these issues are beginning to be addressed by the programme however the satisfaction survey reflects that the families' perceptions remain the same in a number of key areas.

The User Satisfaction Survey Consultation suggests that unreliable public transport and poorly maintained parks and play areas remain a priority issue for parents. Net satisfaction with Public Transport was less than 10% and Parks and outdoor play areas only 20% (Figure 17 pg19 User Satisfaction Consultation).

Stay and play groups now operate successfully in the area and this is reflected in the survey: The survey indicates an extremely high level of net satisfaction, among users, with Indoor play areas (100%), Pre school play groups (100%) and Parent and Toddler Groups (95%). Over 50% of the sample had used indoor play areas in the previous 12 months and approximately 35% had used Parent and Toddler Groups. The potential popularity of a Wacky Warehouse style indoor play facility was, however, highlighted with almost 100% of respondents willing to pay to use this proposed Children's Centre facility.

Childcare remains a key barrier preventing carers from accessing opportunities for paid work.

The User Satisfaction Consultation indicates a significant level of dissatisfaction with local public transport services, with 10% of respondents being dissatisfied, (net satisfaction 5%). Net satisfaction with the Midwifery service was high (100%), however, as was net satisfaction with Health Visitors (97%) and Dentists (93%).

Overall satisfaction with services in the SureStart4u area is positive with a net rating of +80. (User Satisfaction Consultation 2004 pg 20)

Uptake of SureStart4u and Its Services.

Despite our programme being still in its infancy we are very proud of the levels of awareness, uptake and satisfaction with our services as demonstrated by the MEL User Satisfaction Consultation (USC), MEL' s Documentary review and internal eStart data. The findings related to awareness, uptake and satisfaction are summarised in the table below.

Indicator	Source	Percentage of Families
Awareness of SureStart4u	MEL USC	98%
Membership of SureStart4u	eStart and CHIPS	70%
Uptake of SureStart4u services	MEL USC	47%
Net satisfaction with SureStart4u Services	MEL USC	97%

“It is clear that SureStart4u is able to involve high numbers of parents and carers as service users. Of the 456 families which had used SureStart4u services up to November 2004, 57% had used service 11 times or more. Indeed, almost a third (32%) had used SureStart4u services on more than 25 occasions. It appears that once parents have used a SureStart4u service, they are highly likely to become regular, repeat users.”

MEL Documentary Review pg 21 (2004)

Reach data for the year has been generated by our internal eStart data base.

Number of children seen in last year (2004)	Total Number of children seen
Total (Source eStart)	460
No of births (Source CHIPS)	661
Percentage of children seen	70%

Objective 1 – Improving Social and Emotional Development

PSA3 In operational programmes, an increase in the proportion of babies and young children aged 1-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age

Although there is no specific monitoring of this objective and the national measure is in its developmental stage SureStart4u is confident that, through its comprehensive range of services, it is impacting in a positive holistic way on this objective. This assumption is supported by evidence from the two MEL evaluations undertaken this year and the evidence gathered through the Logic and Results performance management process.

Services impacting directly on children's social and emotional development are as follows:

- 8 SureStart4u supported Stay and Play Sessions each week.
- Ofsted registered Crèche and full day-care provision.
- First Steps Psychological services including “Tommy Walks Tall” Bullying Prevention Programme, Triple P, Baby Massage, and individual Family Therapy.
- Mum2Mum breastfeeding support.
- Antenatal advice and support delivered by our SureStart4u Midwife in addition to the normal midwifery service.
- Family Support services.
- Ballet and Tap Dancing Classes for 2 ½ to 5 year olds.
- Trips, Fundays and parties.

Many other SureStart4u services have an indirect effect on children's social and emotional development as they support and empower parents e.g. CAB, MIND Counselling, Volunteering, training, Domestic Violence Cross Cutting Team.

Specific data generated through the Logic and Results Performance Management Process which provide evidence of directly improving Social and Emotional Development are as follows:

Result	Achievement	LOCALTARGET
Children will have fewer conduct and emotional difficulties as a result of parents developing skills through attending Triple P Services	55	20
Children will have improved behavioural and emotional outcomes through one to one clinical work	22	10
Parents will have less mental distress, be more self confident, less stressed, cope with parenting and enjoy more aspects of being a parent	69	10
Families will have strengthened bonds with their infants through baby massage	28	2

SDA10 All families with new born babies in SureStart local programme and Children's Centre areas to be visited in first 2 months of their babies' life and given information about the services and support available to them

As a wave six programme we are continuing to develop and improve our systems in relation to outreach and visiting the families of new babies. We have excellent relationships with the 27 health visitors who operate in our area all of which inform parents of SureStart4u and the services we offer when they do the initial birth visits. This is reflected in our 98% awareness among eligible families. The Health Visitors Visit 100% of new births, the standard for which is they must be visited between the 10th and 14th post natal day. We contact the Health Visitors prior to making post natal contact with the families to make sure there isn't a reason why we should not do so. We aim to visit between 3 weeks and 8 weeks post- nately and families that decline our visits are increasingly few and far between. Our visit includes an explanation of services on offer locally, both SureStart and non SureStart, offer of membership (if the family are not already members), support to access services and a "Welcome Pack" of appropriate gifts and information. A standard has been set for this visit to ensure that it is a quality contact, no matter who delivers it. We find now that the majority of families have joined before the visit via antenatal midwifery contacts (and we are getting an increasing number of pregnant women and teenagers in the early months of pregnancy arriving at our offices requesting to join).

Indicator	Number and Percentage	Source
Live Births in 2004	165	CHIPS (Combined Healthcare Information Processing System)
Under 2 months visited Jan-Mar	27%	eStart M7
Under 2 months visited Apr-Jun	66%	eStart M7
Under 2 months visited Jul-Sep	69%	eStart M7
Under 2 months visited Oct-Dec	76%	eStart M7
Total under 2 Months visited	61%	eStart M7

Objective 2 – Improving Health

PSA4 In operational programmes, a 6 percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy

SDA11 Information and guidance on breastfeeding, nutrition, hygiene and safety available to all families with young children in SureStart local programme and children's Centre areas

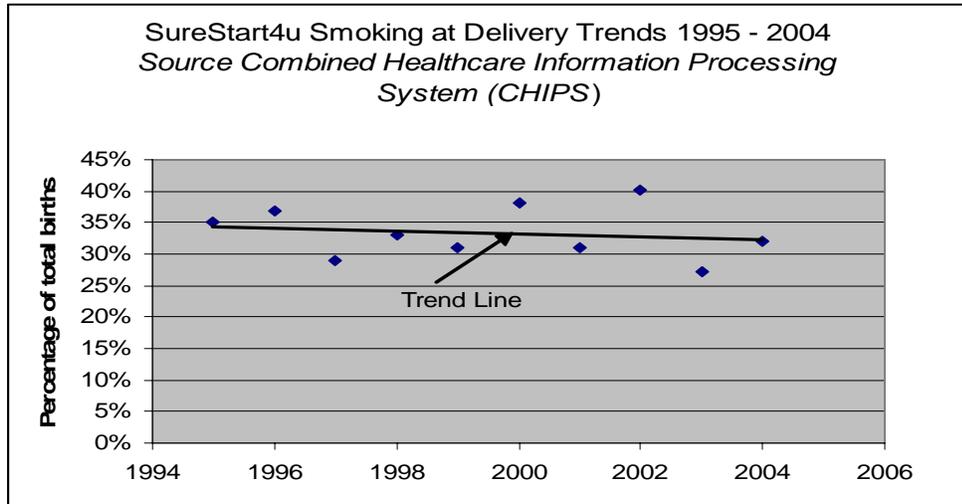
SDA12 Reduce by 10 percent the number of children aged 0 -4 living in SureStart local programme and Children's Centre areas admitted to hospital with gastro-enteritis, a lower respiratory infection or a severe injury

SDA13 Ante-natal advice and support available to all pregnant women and their families living in SureStart local programme and Children's Centre areas

Levels of awareness and uptake of SureStart4u antenatal and Midwifery services is very positive. 57% Aware of our Midwifery service, 37% had used the service and 87% of users gave it a three star rating (1 star – not satisfied, 2 star – fairly satisfied, 3 star - Very Satisfied). 41% were aware of our Mum2Mum breastfeeding service 12% had used it and 76% of users gave it a three star rating.

Smoking

An analysis of maternal smoking at delivery trends shows a 3% decline in the percentage of mothers who smoke, at delivery, over the previous 9 years [see graph below]. The percentage each year demonstrates that the decline is not a steady one but has marked peaks and troughs. A sensible conclusion that may be drawn from this is that judgments cannot be made in relation to the effectiveness of the Midwifery Smoking Cessation service over a one or two year period but over a much longer period. It should be noted that the North Staffordshire Quit Smoking Service has been operating since 1999 but our own local antenatal service has only been operating since 2004.



Percentage of women smoking during pregnancy 2004

No of births	Number of mums who smoked during pregnancy	Source	Percentage of mums who smoked during pregnancy
165	78	University Hospital of North Staffordshire	47.27%

Number/percent of mothers Smoking at delivery

No of births	No of Mums who smoked at delivery	Source	Percentage of Mums who smoked at delivery
165	58	University Hospital of North Staffordshire	35.15%

HISS data does not directly record the number of mothers who smoked during pregnancy, it asks:

1. Did the patient smoke in the 12 months before the start of her pregnancy?
2. Was the patient a smoker at the time of booking?
3. Was the patient a smoker at the time of delivery?

University Hospital of North Staffordshire do not have accurate reliable data prior to 2004 therefore no inferences can be drawn as to any impact the service has had on smoking among pregnant women in the area other than the number of women and their partners who have quit due to the scheme, of their own accord, or using alternative support or intervention.

As well as the data from HISS, data is available from the North Staffordshire-wide Quit smoking service. There is a specific scheme for "Helping Pregnant Women and Partners to Quit" in the SureStart4u area. The following table indicates its activity in 2004.

2004 – SureStart4u service	Quit date set	Quit at 4 weeks	Relapsed	Lost to Follow Up
Pregnant	13	8	5	0
Non-Pregnant	6	2	4	0

Breastfeeding

The SureStart4u programme provides a specific project to increase breastfeeding rates with a designated midwife working 15 hours per week. A Baby Café has been established in the area. Three SureStart4u Mums have been trained as peer supporters and two peer supporters are active in the area. Staff and Volunteers have been trained in Breastfeeding awareness.

The following table represents the results generated by the twelve months of the SureStart4u breastfeeding project operation. The baseline data was obtained from HISS (Hospital) and CHIPS (Health Visitors) which has been found to be unreliable. The breastfeeding midwife has now developed a method of checking the HISS and CHIPS data using women's self report and her own observations during visits, to produce more accurate and reliable data. Data is not available for Jan-Mar 04 so the period from 1.4.04 to 31.3.05 has been used.

Baseline data 1st April 2002 – 31st Mar 2003

No Of Live births 159		
<i>Indicator</i>	<i>No of women</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Breastfeeding at birth	47	29.6%
Breastfeeding at 6 weeks	15	9.4%
Breastfeeding at 3 month	7	4.4%

SureStart4u data 1st April 2003 – 31st Mar 2004

no of live births 165			
<i>Indicator</i>	<i>No of women</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percentage increase</i>
Breastfeeding at birth	62	37.5%	7.9%
Breastfeeding at 6 weeks	23	13.9%	4.5%
Breastfeeding at 4 months	13	7.8%	4.4%

Safety

Baseline data has been obtained, in relation to safety, through the satisfaction survey. This data related to attitudes to home safety, safety equipment in use and barriers to the use of safety equipment. Section 2.6 relates to safety and can be found on page 22 of the User Satisfaction Consultation. <http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk/documents/findings/931.pdf>

42 families have engaged with our safety project and have received advice and safety gates, fire guards and anti scald bath plugs via the Home Equipment Low Purchase Scheme [H.E.L.P.S.]. We also distribute choke testers to member families and we are developing training on home safety to be delivered by volunteers. The safety project has been a collaborative project, with local partners such as Housing providers and Health Visitors and continues to develop. We do have some baseline Accident and Emergency attendance figures for the financial year 2003/4, unfortunately the University Hospital of North Staffordshire are unable to provide us with this years figure until after June 2005.

Physical Activity

11 children regularly attended the weekly Ballet and Tap class and progressed with in the National Association of Teachers of Dancing syllabus. Parents reported, through written feedback forms, the following outcomes for their children from this activity:

- More balance / coordination (10 children)
- More/ different imaginative play (8 children)
- More confidence (8 children)
- More physically active (4 children)
- Better listening skills (1 child)

Objective 3 – Improving Children’s Ability to Learn

PSA2A In operational programmes, an increase in the proportion of children having normal levels of communication, language and literacy at the end of the foundation stage.

PSA2B In operational programmes, an increase in the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at age 2 years

The User Satisfaction Survey indicates that 30% of families had used the toy library and Bookshare service in the previous 12 months and 20% of families had received the Play and Rhyme home visiting service. Both of these projects have been designed specifically to develop children’s communication, language and literacy skills and support and enable parents to engage in activities, with their children, to enhance these aspects of development.

92% of families, who had used the service, awarded the Toy library/Bookshare a 3 star rating and 86% awarded Play and Rhyme Home Visits a three star rating.

35% of families had used the Stay and Play (mother and toddler type groups) in the previous 12 months and 79% of users awarded them a 3 star rating.

SureStart4u also provides a speech and language service, delivered by a speech therapist and a speech therapy technical instructor. 22% of families had used this service in the previous 12 months and 96% of families gave this a three star rating.

Uptake and Satisfaction with SureStart4u Services which have a direct effect on PSA2a and PSA2b

Activity	percentage uptake	percentage 3 star rating awarded

Toy Library/Bookshare	30%	92%
Play and Rhyme Home Visits	20%	86%
Stay and Play Groups	35%	79%
Speech and Language Therapy	22%	96%

Objective 4 – Strengthening Families and Communities

Achieve by 2005-06 a 12 percent reduction in the proportion of 0-3year old children living in households where no one is working.

SDA14 In operational programmes, an increase in the proportion of families, with young children aged 0 -4, reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of family support services. Measure – Number of families with young children under 4 saying that they are satisfied with local services for young children.

All SureStart Local programmes to have parent’s representatives on the local programme board.

All Sure Start local programmes to have established effective links with Jobcentre Plus, local training providers and further education institutions.

All Sure Start Local programmes to work with their EYCS to help close the gap between the availability of accessible childcare for 0-3 years old in Sure Start area and other areas

Both the Satisfaction Consultation and the Documentary review provide evidence of strengthening families and communities in the SureStart4u area. The measures below indicate a high level of satisfaction with local services for young children but it is particularly interesting to note the fact that families registered with SureStart4u were more likely to be ‘very satisfied’ with local provision.

The results were positive, with a net rating of +80. Twenty seven percent of respondents were ‘very satisfied’ with local services (n=66). However, a total of 10% (n=25) respondents living in Bentilee were most likely to be dissatisfied with services (this applied to 12% (n=22) of Bentilee residents, compared to 5% (n=3) in the non-Bentilee area).

Families registered with SureStart4u were [also] more likely to be ‘very satisfied’ with local provision (30%, n=47, compared to 22%, n=19 for non registered).

(MEL User Satisfaction Consultation pg 19)

Another interesting finding from the User Satisfaction Consultation was the perception, among local families that SureStart4u had made a difference to their lives:

*Has SureStart4u made a difference to your life? Parents and carers who had used a SureStart4u service were asked whether they believed that SureStart4u had made a difference to their life. The results are positive and give encouragement to the programme in these early stages of operation. Almost 60% (n=103) of these respondents agreed that SureStart4u **had** made a difference to their or their family's life. Parents and carers in the non-Bentilee areas were most likely to agree with this (74% (n=17) compared to 57% (n=86) in Bentilee).*

(MEL User Satisfaction Consultation pg 19)

The levels of Community involvement in the delivery and development of the programme were identified by MEL research Ltd to have both positive elements and areas for development. The following quotes summarise MEL's findings

A key factor in the success of any programme is its ability to engage community members at all levels. At SureStart4u, parents have been engaged at a high level in the programme. However, this involvement is limited to a highly committed core of parents and carers. Other projects are struggling to get parents involved in service provision. Initially, targets should be reduced to a more attainable level, and raised as parents gain the confidence and support to become involved. However, parents may simply not wish to be involved in such an intensive way.

(SureStart4u Local Evaluation Documentary Review- pg II)

NB MEL did not document the fact that approximately 30 volunteers were active within the programme at that time as SureStart4u did not provide them with documentary evidence of this and we did not commission them to interview project workers.

Despite some problems in involvement in service delivery, it is clear that SureStart4u is able to involve high numbers of parents as service users. Once parents have used a SureStart4u service, they are likely to become regular, repeat users. This is an excellent reflection on the quality of provision and an encouraging statistic for SureStart4u.

(SureStart4u Local Evaluation Documentary Review- pg II)

The number of parent representatives on the programme board in 2004 was 8. This represents 50% of the board membership

It is notable how many parents and carers have been recruited to and retained on the Partnership Board. At least 5 parent representatives regularly attend meetings, with 7 present at the meeting held on 14th September. These members are confident and highly active within this setting. Indeed, two parent representative share Vice Chair status as part of the Board. This must be seen as a positive reflection on the support provided by SureStart4u to local parents and carers. Another positive finding is that male carers are well represented on the Partnership Board. This is widely felt to be a facilitating factor for the involvement of fathers in Sure Start Local Programmes generally.

(SureStart4u Local Evaluation Documentary Review- pg19)

As previously stated we feel that a particular strength of the programme is its culture of community involvement and volunteering with a significant feeling of ownership among local families. The evidence of this is, at present, only anecdotal but it is intended that this feature of the programme is one of the subjects of our 2005 evaluation.

Family Support Services.

SureStart4u provides a specific Family Link/Support service for our families. The User Satisfaction Consultation indicated that 49% of families surveyed were aware of the service 18% had used the service and 85% gave it a three star rating (very satisfied). Specific outcomes from the service during 2004 have been recorded using the logic and results framework and are detailed in the table below:

Outcome/result	No of families achieved	Local Target	Percent of Target achieved
Families will perceive that they have been supported through a particular issue in their lives and as a result have achieved a satisfactory outcome.	31	35	89%
Families, who would not have otherwise, have done so, or would have done so with great difficulty, will have used a particular voluntary of statutory service.	45	35	100%
Families will perceive themselves to be less isolated and will have developed informal support/friendship networks.	27	35	77%
Parents, including fathers will actively participate in play sessions and other SureStart4u events with their children as a result of family support intervention.	27	35	77%

The extent of childcare expanded during 2004 to support a range of service provision:

- Training
- Volunteering
- Respite (as part of a package of family support)
- Parent/carer representation at meetings and consultation.
- Appointments with services in and outside of SureStart4u

The service achieved OFSTED approval for the two different venues offered during 2004.

With EYDCP, we worked to extend the crèche offer to provide full day care and have planned 60 full day care places in the children's centre. Additional support was offered to other local day care settings, including a £4,000 investment accommodating the Bentilee U5 Preschool playgroup.

Links with Jobcentre plus

European Social Fund and Regeneration Zone funding was secured for Workstart, a project led by Jobcentre Plus. This ended in May 2004. A Neighborhood Renewal funded project "Startup" commenced in May 2004 taking over from the previous project "Workstart". Both Workstart and Startup's primary functions are to enable local residents to move closer to the job market.

Summary

An outline of the services and the significant findings of our evaluation activity for 2004 has been presented in this report, however, it is hoped that this report will encourage readers to follow the links to the full reports of our independent evaluations carried out by MEL Research Ltd. The work related to our management arrangements; community engagement and performance management will be of particular interest to other programs.

Our evaluation strategy for 2005 with attempt to focus on the impact of our services locally, in order to influence the continuation of our innovative practice within Stoke-on-Trent's developing Children's Centers. Specific services that we intend to evaluate include:

- Mum2mum breastfeeding.
 - Volunteering and "Points4u"
 - Health Promotion including safety
 - The Play and Rhyme and Time to talk (Speech Therapy) Partnership
 - Steps to excellence for personal success [S.T.E.P.S.] training.
-