

Sure Start Harehills

**Evaluation Report
Year One**

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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

Aims and objectives

Sure Start Harehills was established in 2002 and has been funded for 7-10 years to develop services for families of 500 children aged 0-4 years living in the Harehills area. The programme is being evaluated by the Centre for Health Promotion Research, Leeds Metropolitan University. The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which Sure Start Harehills has achieved its stated objectives and to comment on the approach and style of working. Findings from the evaluation can be used to help planning of future activities as well as meeting the need for local and national accountability. It will therefore:

- assess the extent to which the specific targets set out in the Public Service Agreement have been achieved;
- assess the extent to which the four Sure Start objectives have been achieved:
 - improving social and emotional development;
 - improving health;
 - improving the ability to learn;
 - strengthening families and communities;
- comment specifically on key local objectives:
 - collaborative working with local parents and carers;
 - local partnership working.

The evaluation will try to reflect the particular issues arising at the various stages of programme implementation. For example, in the early stages we will focus on the way activities are being developed as well as identifying any early successes. As the programme matures there can be a gradual transition to assessing the achievement of objectives. In year 3, there is a requirement that we will formally report on progress towards meeting national targets.

Our approach

In carrying out the evaluation we take an inclusive approach to working with families and other stakeholders and subscribe to the key principles listed in Box 1. The evaluation conforms to recognised ethical practice and the principles of the Sure Start programme by ensuring:

- informed consent;
- confidentiality;
- secure information management;
- attention to risk reduction and child protection.

In line with advice received from the regional Sure Start evaluation, the evaluation constitutes an audit of service delivery and formal Research Ethics Committee approval was not required.

Box 1**Key principles guiding the evaluation of Sure Start Harehills:**

- developing a robust, theoretically grounded evaluation design;
- a collaborative approach to working with the Harehills Sure Start team, the Partnership Board and the Parents Forum;
- ensuring maximum efficiency by utilising routinely collected data and putting in place systems to collect any additional data required;
- placing minimal additional demands on the Sure Start team and other service providers by streamlining data collection processes;
- consistency with the local programme's commitment to involving parents and carers;
- meeting the national reporting requirements;
- informing the development of the local programme.

Year 1 of the evaluation (2003/4)

The evaluation team started working on the evaluation in summer 2003.

Activities agreed to be undertaken in Year 1 included:

1. Consultation with key stakeholders to make explicit how Sure Start Harehills is planning to improve services and support for families and to identify key long term, intermediate and short term outcome indicators and also process indicators.
2. Development of a detailed evaluation plan with agreed annual priorities.
3. Work with the Multi-Agency Information Sub-Group to establish what routine data collection systems are in place and setting up supplementary systems as necessary.
4. Development of a strategy for actively involving the local community and particularly community researchers.
5. Find out about the ways of working and the local context through interviews with the following groups
 - Sure Start team;
 - local partners and other agencies;
 - community members.
6. Conduct of a Baseline User Satisfaction Survey.
7. Production of an Annual Progress Report for 2003/4.

This report presents findings from the first year of the evaluation in relation to the above activities and forms the Annual Progress Report 2003/4. **Section 2** reports on the evaluation of the programme development, examining the main themes to emerge from interviews with a range of stakeholders involved in Sure Start Harehills. **Section 3** comments on the development of an evaluation plan and work to refine indicators for the measurement of process and outcomes. It includes recommendations for the local evaluation in Year 2. The conclusion is provided in **Section 4**. The **Baseline User Satisfaction Survey (BUSS)** has been completed and the findings are presented in a separate report. A summary of the findings are contained in Appendix A.

Section 2: EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Representatives of the major stakeholder groups were approached to take part in semi-structured interviews with members of the evaluation team. Interviews were conducted with individuals from the following agencies/groups

- Sure Start Team (x3)
- Early Years Service
- Learning Partnerships
- Resourcing the Community
- East Leeds PCT (Primary Care Trust)
- Speech and Language Therapy Services
- Parents (x3)
- Neighbourhood Renewal Team

A set of core questions was developed - see Appendix B. These provided the framework for the interview. Respondents were free to expand on issues where appropriate and encouraged to introduce additional issues which they felt were important or relevant.

Interviews were tape-recorded if the respondent consented and if not extensive notes were taken. Interviews were then transcribed and themes were identified.

Findings

Views about priorities for families in Harehills

A key issue within Harehills is the scale of need. This includes both the proportion of families requiring support and the level of support needed. In some instances a considerable amount of work is needed to get people to the stage where they are able and willing to accept support. The prevalence of mental health problems was much greater than had been anticipated in the delivery plan. Isolation, low levels of confidence and lack of self esteem were felt to be contributory factors and particularly so for some groups of Asian women.

Specific priorities identified were:

- play
- play areas and the need for open space
- housing needs – particularly in relation to density, multiple occupancy, quality of accommodation and the proportion of privately rented housing (making it difficult to form tenants' associations)
- quality of the environment – litter, dog dirt, needles
- childcare
- nursery education and places

- good health care
- access to employment and training.

Other issues mentioned included parenting skills, education and diet.

People commented on the need for parents to be able to obtain more knowledge about health and how to access services and facilities. The problem of families not accessing mainstream health services was viewed as an important issue to tackle. Information is needed on what is available and people need to be able to 'engage with the system'. There was also recognition of the need for more early years education and for more child care and nursery places.

At a more general level poverty, unemployment and language skills were all identified as factors influencing need, but did not emerge as prominently as the other issues identified above.

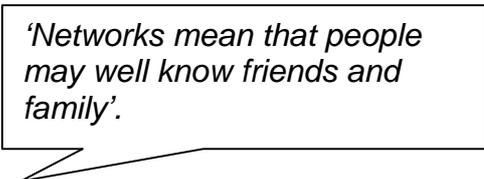
In relation to play, an important distinction was made between the dearth of play facilities within the area and also the need within families to recognise the importance of play and encourage their children to play. Both were felt to require attention.

Contextual factors

A number of specific factors operating within Harehills that have influenced local programme development were identified. Work is starting from a low base level. This goes beyond the existence of multiple deprivation among the community to include the infrastructure to support development. The community lacks resources in the form of buildings or open spaces for events and meetings. This has meant that considerable time and energy has had to be devoted to finding and developing suitable premises. Furthermore, there has been comparatively little community development work in Harehills over the years (in contrast to some neighbouring areas). This may make it more difficult to engage the community and require a considerable amount of groundwork to encourage involvement.

There is a large minority ethnic population and it is therefore important to consider access for those who do not speak English and the issue of interpretation, with associated costs. A key issue is how much money to allocate to translation and interpreting as this has not been factored in to the overall costing. There is also the question of how to balance activity to address needs across all groups including refugees and asylum seekers.

Within the tightly knit networks that exist within the community there is also the important issue of confidentiality:



'Networks mean that people may well know friends and family'.

The development of the Children's Centre is a significant contextual factor, particularly in relation to the Sure Start contribution and the way it positions itself. A further major local development is the Oncology Unit at St James's Hospital which may have some, albeit less direct, impact.

Some tension was commented on between achieving central government targets and local targets. This was felt to restrict the scope of activities.

Changes in mainstream agencies and the fact that PCTs and health visiting teams are under a lot of stress is seen as an influencing factor on the work of Sure Start.

'Sometimes it's hard to get people to take on board what we are doing and to feel like it's theirs as well as ours – it's part of their work as well – we are working with the same community'.

Some facilitating factors were identified. These included the commitment of members of the Partnership Board and also the support of local churches and significantly, the involvement of several parents who are very positive about the programme.

Sure Start staff working and communicating well as a team was identified as a facilitating factor as was the team's wide range of skills and knowledge.

'The fact that we all come from different backgrounds has been really positive – that we all have different skills and different experiences – it has been helpful for the work we do... We seem to have developed quite a few areas of expertise and can help families straight away, without always having to refer to other agencies - we are not having to wait ages in order to help people – we can meet needs fairly quickly'.

Specific factors within Sure Start Harehills

Being funded at the level of half a programme creates a number of tensions. It limits staffing levels even though many of the same functions have to be carried out as in a full programme. However there was one comment that suggested there could be advantages in being a "manageable area". Staff are very stretched and often required to spend time on things that are essential to 'clients' but which do not make best use of their time overall.

The recruitment of volunteers was viewed as a potential way to take over some of these tasks, such as escorting parents to activities.

Lack of time was highlighted as a major issue.

'You don't always have time to reflect on a group afterwards as you're busy doing the next thing...'

The limited resources lead to a number of difficulties in achieving:

- diversity of staff
- optimal skill mix
- balance and breadth of activities
- economy of scale.

For example, the appointment of a Family Support Worker would take some pressure off key workers. The absence of a Deputy makes it difficult for the Programme Manager to delegate some tasks. Links are being developed with Chapeltown Sure Start to share resources.

The view was expressed that it would have been useful to appoint a midwife earlier. Also, attempts to appoint a male inclusion worker were seriously delayed because of incompatible working practices between Sure Start and Social Services as the recruiting agency. This has necessitated a transfer to FSU. The emphasis to date has very much been on mothers. Because of cultural sensitivities about gender, the appointment of a male worker was felt to be essential to involvement of fathers.

Lack of transport (minibus) was also identified as a barrier to more people accessing groups.

Achievements

Development of the programme

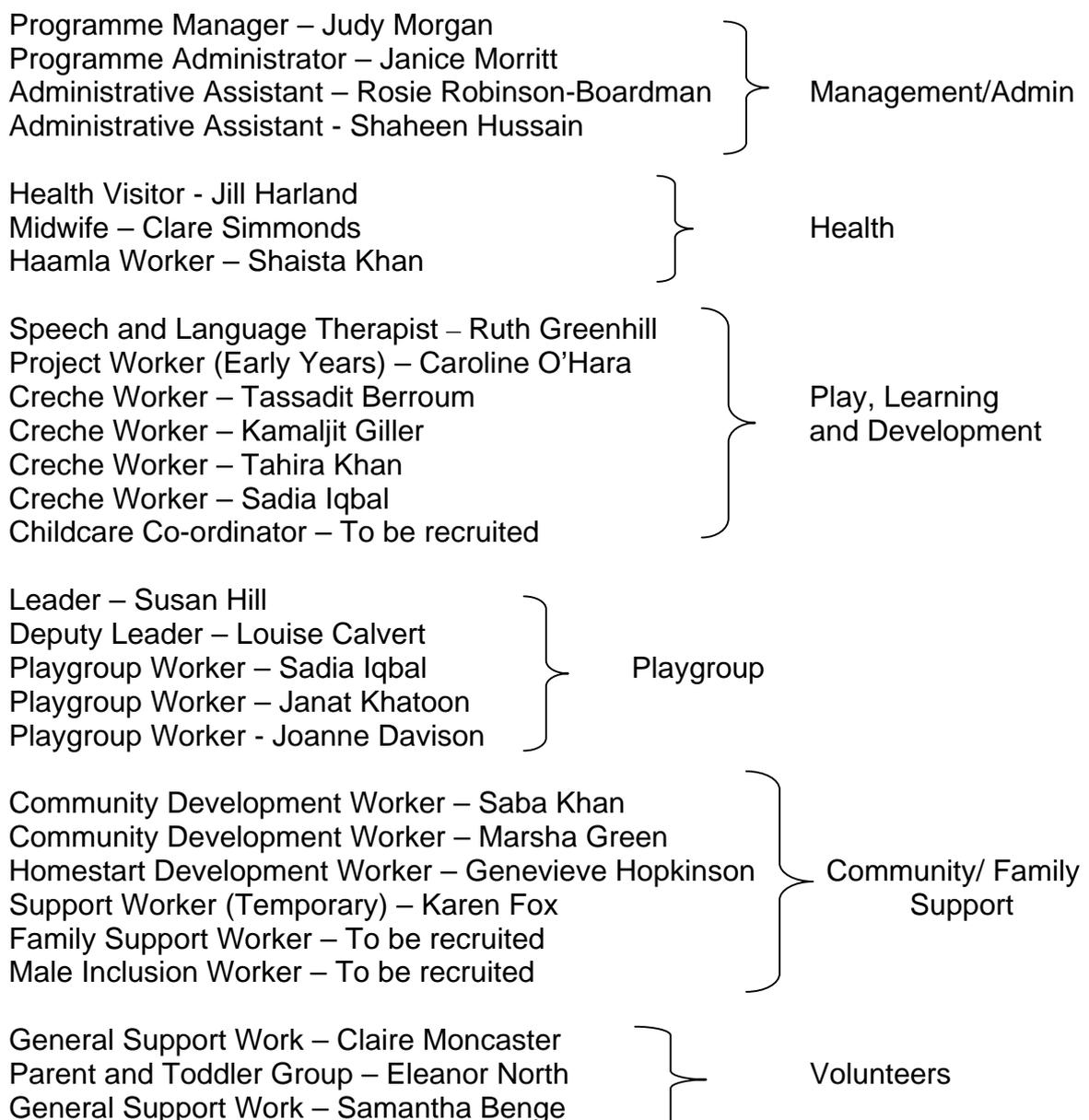
During its first year of operation Sure Start Harehills has recruited and built up a cohesive and highly motivated team. It has obtained and developed premises which will give it a more visible presence within Harehills. As it enters its second year, it has developed a much stronger internal infrastructure to support its operations. The growth of the programme in Year 1 is summarised in Boxes 2 and 3 which provide details of the increase in staffing and Box 4 which lists the specific activities and initiatives that have been set up.

Box 2 - When the programme became live in February 2003, Sure Start Harehills had the following staff:

Programme Manager - Judy Morgan
 Programme Administrator - Janice Morrith
 Health Visitor - Jill Harland
 Speech & Language Therapist - Ruth Greenhill
 Project Worker (Early Years) - Caroline O'Hara
 Community Development Worker - Marsha Green
 Community Development Worker - Saba Khan

Since then, the staff team has grown.....

Box 3 – The Sure Start Harehills Team – Spring 2004



Box 4 – Sure Start Harehills Activities and Initiatives

Monday – Parent & Toddler Group, Bollywood Dancing & Women Only Exercise

Tuesday – Drop-in (coffee/tea), Breastfeeding Group

Wednesday - Women Only Exercise Classes, Women Only Swimming Sessions, Housing Advice, Toy Library

Thursday – Support Session, Time Out Baby Group, Computer Classes, Women Only Exercise Classes

Friday – Parent & Toddler Group, Ante-Natal Drop-in Group, Swimming Session for Mums and Babies

Drop-In/Playgroup – Open All Week

In terms of balance between the four Sure Start priority areas, it was felt that reasonably equal weight was given to all. If anything, it was the area of worklessness and receipt of benefits that was receiving less attention, but this could be addressed in future now the programme is up and running. The emergent mental health needs also go beyond the objective based on post-natal depression.

Contribution to addressing needs

The local programme is still quite young. However, towards the end of its first year of operation interviewees were able to identify a number of ways in which it is addressing the needs identified. Much of this is achieved through work with individuals, but also through group activities and initiatives (see Box 4). Sure Start Reach data has shown that 220 families have been contacted by the programme. Specific contributions included:

- providing information
- actively engaging parents
- supporting and empowering parents
- providing facilities and places to go - developing groups in response to suggestions from parents
- helping parents learn to communicate well with babies and young children
- developing a voice for problems in the area
- advocacy for Sure Start families.

Sure Start was viewed as being a very positive presence in the area and had the potential to reduce isolation and “make life more bearable”. One parent commenting.....

‘Having somebody there – it’s a reassurance, knowing that they’re there and you can go to them about all sorts of issues’.

The Sure Start creche was viewed as helping to solve some of the problems of child care in the area

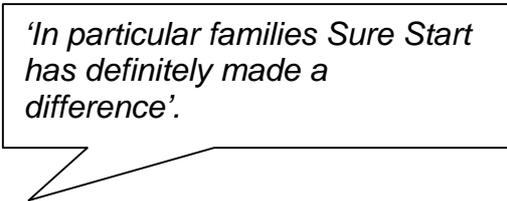
While explicit advocacy work has been undertaken, for example in relation to housing, other aspects of the advocacy role and giving families a voice has been less formal and achieved through:

- representation of the Sure Start team on different groups
- contact with agencies
- having a presence in Harehills.

It was felt that Sure Start Harehills is actively engaging parents and this will be discussed more fully below. As the local programme develops, more explicit attention could be given to developing a strategy for making the voice of Sure Start parents heard and establishing formal mechanisms for feeding their views into decision-making fora.

One of the particular strengths of the Sure Start programme is that it is a very focused, intense resource within the area and as such is able to tailor support to meet need. It is not just another agency operating within the area, but brings agencies and sectors together to bridge any gaps. Sure Start seeks to build strong links with other agencies and raise the profile of Sure Start and of children and families - acting as 'advocates' for families and communicating their experiences and issues.

A further advantage is that it can offer greater flexibility than mainstream services. This applies across the spectrum of activity and the ability to respond to emergent needs, both individual and collective. It was noted particularly in relation to flexibility in the way it can respond to the individual's stage of 'readiness' in being able to access support. Outreach work is a strong element. The one-to-one work brings services to the people and ensures that they get better care. Home visiting gives parents the opportunity to talk about any issues for which they may need support. Support is offered to enable people to attend activities that they see as potentially beneficial. There have been a number of success stories with specific families.



'In particular families Sure Start has definitely made a difference'.

One parent commended the Sure Start programme for the way in which it has reached out to and made a positive impact on the lives of many of the Asian women in the area. She believed that becoming involved in Sure Start activities had helped them become less isolated and that through the programme, many of the women had accessed English language courses giving them opportunities to improve their English language skills.

It was felt that a good balance had been struck between high profile activity and background work which enabled people to develop to a stage at which they are able to take advantage of it.

The groups attending the various activities are generally well integrated.¹ However Asian families are under-represented at the parents and toddler group. It is anticipated that the ante-natal group, breast-feeding support group and baby group, which should pick up all pregnant women, will eventually feed through into the parent and toddler group to redress this. The coffee afternoon and 'pampering sessions' are well attended by Asian women. Offering a variety of different activities will ensure that a range of preferences is catered for.

The presence of Sure Start in Harehills was felt to have stimulated community activity and parents' views informed the development of the Hooner Kelah language classes. It has also raised the profile of work with a health focus in Harehills.

It was noted that Sure Start generally is concerned *with 'pushing out the boundaries and doing things differently'*, but that programmes need to achieve a level of maturity to be able to do that.

Partnership Board

This was felt to work well. Following some initial concerns about equal representation, there is a good balance between representation of the different sectors with an approximately 1/3 split between maintained sector, voluntary sector and parents.

Box 5 - The Partnership Board consists of:

Six Parents

Voluntary Sector - Representatives from:

- Home Start Leeds
- Resourcing the Community
- East Leeds Family Learning Unit

Statutory Sector - Representatives from:

- Early Years Development Childcare Partnership
- East Leeds PCT
- Social Services
- Speech & Language Therapy Services

Sure Start Harehills

- Programme Manager

¹ A complete set of attendance figures were not available due to the database still being refined.

In terms of function, Board members felt that the Board was working effectively and efficiently and there had been active involvement in making key decisions at the outset. It now seems to have moved into a phase of predominantly reporting back and information sharing, although it was anticipated that decision-making would assume more prominence in future.

In some instances, issues discussed do not fall within the decision-making remit of the Board and this responsibility lies elsewhere. Mechanisms could be established for channelling the views of parents to these bodies. The visit from a Councillor to the Parents Forum, for example, was very well received.

At the operational level, many decisions are, of necessity, taken by the Programme Manager within the overall strategic direction of the programme. Reporting back to the Partnership Board provides some support

Relationships among the Board members were felt to be good. The comment was made that there are some powerful voices on the Board and while they offer a great deal in terms of knowledge and experience, some of their concerns are at the more general service provider level and with the wider government agenda rather than being focused on issues more specific to Harehills. However, as parents are becoming more vocal, the Harehills dimension is coming more to the forefront – perhaps indicative of a good mix of perspectives on the Board.

It was felt that there was a conscious effort to involve parents in discussion and debate. Parental attendance is good, which is indicative of their commitment and sense of involvement. Parents say they feel comfortable in meetings and able to speak out. Fellow board members were viewed as friendly.



'It was very friendly, very welcoming, very straightforward'
(Parent remembering first experience of Partnership Board meetings)

One parent commenting on how nervous she had felt the first time she attended, spoke of how the Programme Manager had helped her feel at ease. She had been reassured that the Programme Manager would be available after meetings to answer any questions. Conscious efforts have made to involve parents and parents felt encouraged to participate. It was noted that as their experience as Board members has increased they have become more vocal and have contributed more spontaneously, more frequently and more confidently.

One parent describing her experiences said....

'Before the first meeting, I really was worried as I had been out of that type of environment for so long – those feelings all went and I definitely feel more confident now and able to contribute'.

Parents were felt to have made a valuable contribution. Their contribution is respected and parents themselves are aware of this and feel that through the Partnership Board they are given a voice. However it was felt that there was scope to further develop parents' input to the Board. Parents feel that they are listened to and what they say has an influence.

'I never leave a meeting thinking that there was little point in me going or feeling that I was not part of it'.

Parents spoke of the positive benefits and impact on their lives of being part of the Partnership Board. Benefits included gaining knowledge of what is going on in the area and details of future plans. A more personal impact cited was the way in which involvement had the potential to raise self-esteem, boost confidence and provide a sense of having a role to play.

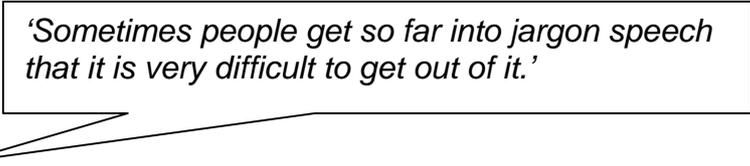
'I do feel that I have got a lot out of it. It has boosted my confidence – bringing ideas to the Board that are acted upon....I now feel much more settled in Leeds and that has definitely got a lot to do with Sure Start'.

One parent spoke of how her involvement in the Partnership Board and with Sure Start in general and the positive changes which the programme had helped bring about in Harehills had convinced her to stay in the area with her child instead of relocating.

'I became involved because I wanted to bring the voice of the parent to the Partnership Board. I wanted to change things in the area. When I first had my child I considered moving so that my child would be in a better catchment area for schools. Then I thought 'why not stay and try to help change things' and we are doing... You have to see results and we have done – it's just a case of carrying it on'.

Another indicator of success is that two of the parents have just started working for Sure Start.

Language and the use of jargon can cause difficulties for all Board members. The presence of parents on the Board was thought to be a good influence for all because it acted as a reminder to speak a common language understood by everyone. However, parents were still aware of the use of jargon.



'Sometimes people get so far into jargon speech that it is very difficult to get out of it.'

One parent voiced the concern that some members of the Partnership Board regularly missed meetings, meaning that in some cases, important issues can not be fully discussed or important decisions made. While appreciating the heavy work commitments, it was suggested that in such cases a colleague should attend the meeting in their place.

The Programme Manager set up pre-meetings with parents to go through the issues that would arise at the meeting. These initially lasted for 30 minutes and were held immediately prior to the Partnership Board meeting. They have now been moved to an earlier day. This has been found to be more satisfactory and has allowed more time (1 hour) and more in-depth discussion. This is again indicative of the flexible approach adopted by the programme.

In terms of their role, parents largely speak for themselves as opposed to representing parents as a group. However, they have also taken issues to the Parents Forum for wider consultation and reported back. There can be difficulties when parents' views are in conflict with political directives. This is managed in two main ways: acting as an advocate for the parents' position or taking their views forward while at the same time being entirely open and honest about the likelihood of success.

Involvement of Parents

The involvement of parents in the Partnership Board has been discussed above.

The establishment of the Parents Forum has brought in people who perhaps wouldn't traditionally go to meetings. Other events have also been used as an opportunity to gauge parents' views. Early attendance at the Parents Forum was good, but then dropped off. It has now transferred to the coffee afternoon and attendance is picking up. Some of the ideas generated at the Parents Forum have come to fruition – for example the Baby Group. One parent commented on the need for Sure Start to find ways to attract more parent involvement.

Parents' views are held to be a key factor in guiding decisions, but this raises the question of how representative the views obtained are in relation to Harehills as a whole. Good attempts have been made to achieve this using the Parents Forum and other events, but there will inevitably be groups which are hard to reach. Representation across the various ethnic groups is felt to be good, however there is some under-representation among white socially excluded groups. Broadening inclusion will clearly take time.

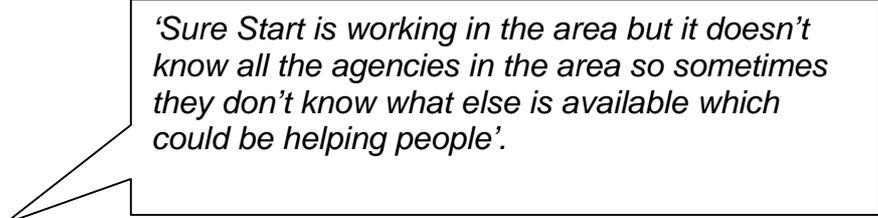
A further issue concerns achieving a balance between genuine consultation involving discussion of all the options and raising false expectations when some options are not feasible because of decisions taken by other bodies.

The Programme Manager has been very involved in running the Parents Forum – essentially to ensure that it gets up and running. The longer term plan is to take more of a back seat. Similarly the intention is that the various groups become self-run on a voluntary basis. The exercise class, for example, operates on this basis. Three people are currently going through the volunteer training course run by Homestart – two of these are from the Harehills area.

Overall increasing attendance at the various groups is indicative of success in engaging parents (although the Sure Start team do recognise that they aren't reaching all parents). This success also needs to be interpreted in the context of a cultural background in which it may not be the norm for women to go out freely without permission.

Partnership working / Complementing the work of other agencies

There was a general view that partnerships are working well with those agencies involved with Sure Start. Good links have been established with Homestart, the Acute Trust, Resourcing the Community, FSU etc. The link with Resourcing the Community was felt to be particularly strong through the role of the two community development workers. Sure Start Harehills has begun to make contact with more local groups and agencies. There is now a better awareness of what was available locally and a willingness to complement existing services and initiatives. One comment was that it is difficult to be sure that all relevant agencies in the locality have been mapped and a comprehensive view of opportunities obtained. At this stage Sure Start is probably not fully embedded at the strategic level, but this will develop as the programme matures.



'Sure Start is working in the area but it doesn't know all the agencies in the area so sometimes they don't know what else is available which could be helping people'.

Sure Start Harehills is involved with the St James's Partnership and the Integrated Children's Centre. There was early agreement that Sure Start

Harehills would take the lead on the Children's Centre, but this now appears to have passed to the Early Years Partnership.

Clearly there is commitment to developing good working partnerships. Opportunities for expanding partnerships to include schools and Neighbourhood Renewal have been identified – currently there is no representation of these groups on the Partnership Board, nor reciprocal membership of Sure Start on equivalent bodies. The need to extend and develop strong links with local education providers was seen as important. There have been some recent moves to work with Harehills Primary School to run parenting classes for pre-school children. Sure Start has linked with Hovingham Primary School to run the Gatsby project on supporting parents in early learning. Contact has been made with those primary schools that have nurseries to discuss the development of the playgroup and provide reassurance that this is not in competition, but complementary to other provision. One comment was made on the importance of increasing links with those organisations and professionals delivering the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum.

At the operational level, strong links were identified with statutory and voluntary services particularly in relation to mental health. Work with the local authority on environmental issues was also commented on. There was acknowledgment that Sure Start does not have the capacity to do it all. Because Sure Start has limited funds, it has to work with other agencies to achieve its goals. Unlike mainstream services Sure Start was seen as providing a holistic service. The danger of other services pulling out when Sure Start is involved or knowing that Sure Start will pick up the problem was recognised. Notwithstanding this, there was a very clear view that the purpose of Sure Start is to *'fill the gaps between services not the gaps within services'*. Sure Start would like improved links and systems through which the health needs and gaps which they identify can be communicated to other agencies and accepted as part of their agenda, not just part of the Sure Start agenda. Additionally, Sure Start would like mainstream agencies to attend activities, experience and learn from the work that the programme is doing, and subsequently replicate good practice outside of the Sure Start boundaries.

Boundaries were acknowledged as a potential issue. Different geographic boundaries between Neighbourhood Renewal, Sure Start and PCTs were noted but not identified as a major barrier. There is some concern however about the Sure Start area boundaries resulting in some families receiving support and others, with equal need, living in the next street who are not. There is very real anxiety about turning people away and possibly alienating people. The Sure Start Harehills programme takes as flexible a view as possible in relation to boundary issues. People outside the area are able to attend Sure Start events/ activities even though they cannot be registered and receive link visits. The toy library, for example, is used by people outside the area. Sure Start Harehills has made links with Sure Start Chapeltown.

Some activities, based in the Roundhay Road area, such as the breastfeeding support group, have been jointly run.

Specific recommendations emerging from the interviews

All those interviewed were asked to consider what one action they would like to see take place in Year 2 of the programme. The following recommendations were made:

- More staff and less pressure
- An away day for the Sure Start team to consolidate plans
- Expand on what the programme is good at
- Designated Sure Start building so that parents can call in (which has since been opened)
- Have a real presence in the area (will be helped by the new building)
- More parents on the Partnership Board
- Coaching a parent to become Deputy Chair of the Partnership Board
- Need to involve more parents in objective groups
- Have the objective group meetings at regular times so that attendance is easier
- Need to engage more with fathers – finding out what they need and showing them that Sure Start can be something for them. This may be helped by the planned appointment of a male worker, as presently the team consists entirely of females
- Provide help, advice and adequate childcare to parents trying to find work, thus enabling parents to be better able to provide for their children
- Prioritise opportunities for skills training for parents
- Improve links with education

The Baseline User Satisfaction Survey also identified a number of issues for further consideration and these should also be referred to.

Section 3: EVALUATION PLAN

Development of a local evaluation plan

The focus of the evaluation in Year One has been on assessing and commenting on the development of the programme and the establishment of partnerships essential to delivering targets. In addition, a Baseline User Satisfaction Survey (BUSS) was conducted in Autumn 2003 (See Appendix A for a summary of findings). Some preliminary consultation has taken place with Sure Start Harehills around the development of an evaluation plan which would meet national reporting requirements and provide feedback to the local programme. A detailed plan is presented at the end of this report with proposed priorities, key measures, intermediate indicators, data collection systems, and identification of areas of responsibility (Appendix C). The evaluation plan has been drawn up from the local Delivery Plan (2002) but also cross referenced to national Public Service Agreement and Service Delivery Agreement targets. While some monitoring systems are already up and running, there are areas where more work needs to be done to ensure that reliable and useful information is collected through the course of the programme. Inevitably this will require liaison with other services at local and city level. Unfortunately in the first year of the evaluation, we were not able to work with the Multi-Agency Information Sub-Group as it is currently not active. However, we would recommend that next year it be convened so that responsibility can be assigned for the various data collection requirements.

Recommend: Multi-Agency Information Sub-Group is convened to finalise evaluation plan, identify gaps in data sources and agree responsibility for data collection.

Evaluation priorities

The evaluation will be comprehensive and data will be collected in relation to all four Sure Start objectives and the relevant targets and milestones. Once monitoring systems are in place, it will be useful to focus on some areas in more depth in Year 2 of the evaluation. This will provide greater insight into **how** Sure Start is meeting parents' and children's needs in Harehills and identify some of the factors influencing the achievement of objectives. The BUSS and initial round of interviews with stakeholders helped identify priority areas for the evaluation. These include:

- the development of play areas (outside and inside) and opportunities for learning about play;
- the role of Sure Start in relation to development of employment and training opportunities and how these match with parents' needs and aspirations.

Recommend: Priority areas for more in-depth research are agreed with the Programme Manager and Sure Start Partnership Board.

Consultation and collaborative working

In the first year of the evaluation members of the evaluation team have familiarised themselves with Harehills and some of the organisations working with Sure Start and also met parents at the Partnership Board and in different activities. Some parents were invited to assist with the BUSs but declined for different reasons. Consistent with the emphasis on participation in Sure Start, the evaluation team would like to explore the potential for further involvement of parents and carers in the evaluation. Sure Start Harehills already plans to conduct a Participatory Appraisal in 2004/5 and the proposed evaluation plan (Appendix C) identifies a number of potential areas where parents could be involved in assessing whether targets and milestones have been met (e.g. baby friendly areas). Consideration needs to be given as to how the evaluation team could best support the participatory appraisal.

Recommend: Parental involvement in the evaluation is encouraged initially through the participatory appraisal. One or more parents are invited to join the Information Sub-Group.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The Sure Start Harehills programme has made considerable progress during its first year despite having to contend with a number of negative contextual factors. These include the fact that there has been relatively little community development work in the area to generate a tradition of involvement in community activity. At a more practical level it has also had to contend with inadequate premises located outside the catchment area. The team has recently moved into its new premises in a more central location in April 2004. This move will give the programme increased visibility and prominence in the area. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the programme has established a high profile in the area and has built up solid links and relationships with parents.

Being funded as half a programme creates some difficulty in that many of the same management functions as in a full programme still have to be undertaken. Furthermore it limits staff numbers and the diversity of staff who can be employed, potentially hampering the breadth of the programme's development. Despite this, a good team has been established and recent appointments have extended the capacity of the programme and broadened the expertise, knowledge and experience on which it can draw. This increasingly diverse staffing has strengthened and enriched the programme but it is recognised that existing staff are still stretched and more staff are needed to relieve this pressure. Two parents have recently been employed by the programme as administrative assistants. The team works well together and has made significant progress. Opportunities for parents to attend activities and groups now exist, countering the distinct lack of such outlets prior to the programme's establishment. Advice and support is available to families and through avenues such as the Parents Forum. The team is endeavouring to empower parents and give them a voice, whilst taking every opportunity to raise the profile of their needs on a wider scale. The programme has achieved a good balance between high profile work and more basic groundwork. The team is particularly sensitive to the needs of parents and provides support to enable them to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the programme.

Relationships within the Partnership Board are good and members are committed to the Sure Start cause. Effective partnerships have been formed with local agencies and services and these links strengthen the work of the programme. Partnerships with Neighbourhood Renewal, education and adult education now need to be rolled out more strategically and stronger links built with those delivering early years education in the area. In addition it may be useful to map the full extent of what is available in Harehills to support families with young children and to consider how Sure Start could best complement and work with those local groups and organisations. Relationships with neighbouring Sure Start programmes are good and shared activities have been successfully established. It would be useful to develop these links further in order to use resources to maximum effect and to achieve economy of scale.

The programme could consider developing a strategy for devolving greater responsibility to parents as the programme matures - seeking ways to more fully involve them in the running of the programme. This could include, for example, training a parent to become Deputy Chair.

Overall, the substantial groundwork achieved in its first year puts Sure Start Harehills in a sound position for the next stage of its development.

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Baseline User Satisfaction Survey

Although the views and experiences of only sixty six parents and carers were gained, the results of the Baseline User Satisfaction Survey do provide a clear indication of what parents feel it is like to be a resident of Harehills for families of children under 5 years old. Below is a summary of some of the principal findings and some key issues for further consideration.

Places to play

Having easy access to suitable places to play is fundamental to the development and happiness of a child.

- Most parents believe Harehills lacks places/groups where they can take their child to play or meet other children.
- While 75% stated that they were 'satisfied' (or 'very satisfied') with the type of places available, when asked specifically about outdoor play areas, 57% of parents were 'dissatisfied'/'very dissatisfied'.
- Twenty nine parents (46%) take their children to local play areas/playgrounds on a 'regular' basis (more than once a week, once a week, a few times a month).
- Many parents felt discouraged from taking their child to the local play areas/playgrounds due to concerns about safety of equipment and its surrounding environment, the play area/playground being dirty, fears about crime and vandalism and the play area being dominated by older children. Evidence of drug taking was highlighted by several parents as turning play areas/playgrounds into no-go areas.

Key issues for further consideration

- Provision of more places/groups to which parents/carers can take their children.
- Ensuring parents/carers know about the places/groups that do exist.
- Efforts to clean up the local play areas/playgrounds, making them more 'useable' for young families. Perhaps local people could be encouraged to be involved in the 'clean up' or could have a say in how the play areas/playgrounds should be improved.
- Consultation with local police to try to reduce problems of drug taking / vandalism.

Childcare

Some 43 parents (68%) use childcare on a regular basis.

- Thirty one parents (72%) stated that a principal reason for using childcare was 'To help my child develop' or 'To give my child the opportunity to play with other children' (or both).
- For 15 parents (35%), a main reason for using childcare was 'To allow me to work' or 'To allow me to attend adult education or training courses' (or both).
- Many of the parents not using regular childcare gave reasons such as childcare being too expensive or that there were no places, suggesting

that they may consider using childcare if it were more accessible and met their needs.

Key issues for further consideration

- Provision of more childcare places at reasonable cost and at appropriate times to meet the needs of families.

Health Services

Easy access to good quality health services is often of upmost importance to families with children under five years.

- Family doctors and health visitors are the people to whom parents would most likely turn for advice about their child's health.
- The significant role of family members and friends/neighbours was highlighted, with many parents stating that they would turn to these sources for advice about their child's health.
- The majority of parents (85%) find it easy to get help from their doctor or medical centre when their child is ill. Nobody stated that it is 'very difficult' or that they 'can't get help at all'.
- The majority of parents (two thirds) felt that they had the right amount of contact with their health visitor. However, a sizeable minority (one fifth) felt that they had insufficient contact with their health visitor.
- The vast majority of parents (53 of the 59 answering) were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the support which their health visitor had given them (42% being very satisfied).
- Fifty one parents (88%) were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with local health services provided in Harehills (over a fifth) said they were 'very satisfied').

Key issues for further consideration

- Greater provision of information and advice in community languages.
- Less waiting time for Doctor appointments.
- Developing an improved relationship with health visitors for those dissatisfied with the support they receive. Greater negotiation with clients over level of support needed from health visitors.
- More local drop-in centres.

Support for parents

- A majority of parents (71%) viewed opportunities in Harehills for meeting other parents of young children as either 'good' or 'quite good'.
- Thirty nine parents had attended at least one group (mostly Sure Start) within the last six months.
- Twenty parents had attended two or more groups within the last six months.

- Within the last six months, the two best attended Sure Start groups were the parent and toddler group (25 parents) (42%) and the toy library (18 parents) (31%)
(these figures are possibly influenced by location of questionnaire completion).
- Health visitors and GPs are the people to whom parents would most likely turn for help and advice if they had worries about their child's behaviour or development – 45 (76%) and 36 (61%) respectively.
- As with worries about their child's health, the important role of family members and friends/neighbours was underlined, with many parents stating that they would turn to these sources for help and advice about their child's behaviour or development – 29 (49%) and 17(29%) respectively.
- When parents have needed to seek help or advice about family problems, most have turned to either family members or their health visitor (23 and 21 respectively). Several parents had also sought the views of friends or neighbours and GP (15 and 12 respectively).

Key issues for further consideration

- Ensuring that all families of children under 4 years old are aware of groups/activities available and where they can go for help, advice and support.
- Utilisation of peer support networks for enhancing support and advice available for parents.

Living in Harehills

- Some 66% of parents are satisfied with Harehills as a place to bring up young children compared to 34% who are dissatisfied.
- Parents' **best** things about living in Harehills included Sure Start Harehills and the groups which it runs, the multicultural setting, the 'friendly' 'safe' environment and good shopping facilities.
- Parents' **worst** things about living in Harehills included issues of crime, juvenile delinquency, drug misuse, lack of clean parks and general environmental concerns such as litter.

Key issues for further consideration

- Consultation with local police over issues of crime, juvenile delinquency, drug misuse.
- Efforts to improve the standard and cleanliness of parks and local environment.
- Establishing a sense of 'ownership' for the state of public areas.

Work and educational opportunities

- Almost a quarter of the parents were in paid employment (3 full-time and 9 part-time).
- Seventeen parents (a third of the individuals who responded) said they 'do not do paid work but would like to'.
- The main barriers to work were childcare issues and language difficulties.

- Parents were split fairly evenly between those describing the availability of suitable opportunities for work in or near Harehills as 'poor' - twenty seven parents (56%) (including one describing them as 'very poor') compared to twenty one parents (44%) viewing availability of suitable opportunities as 'good' (including 4 perceiving them as 'very good').
- There were also very similar figures for parents who felt 'quite well informed' and 'very well informed' about education/training opportunities available in Harehills (29)(49%) and parents who felt 'not very well informed' or 'did not know of any' (30)(51%).
- Thirty two parents (64%) stated that they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with education and training opportunities available to them in Harehills compared to eighteen parents (36%) who were either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.
- Twenty two parents had attended adult education or training courses in Harehills.

Key issues for further consideration

- Greater provision of low cost, appropriate childcare, enabling many parents/carers to work.
- Easy access to low cost English tuition to address language barriers.
- Provision of support and advice to parents/carers seeking employment.
- Provision of accessible information about education/training opportunities available in Harehills.
- Consultation with parents/carers to find out the education/training opportunities that they would like provided in Harehills.

Parents' awareness of Sure Start Harehills

- Of the fifty parents who said they had heard about Sure Start, thirty eight parents (76%) felt that they and/or their child had benefited from Sure Start.
- The ways in which parents stated they had benefited from Sure Start can be grouped under the following headings:
 - Providing opportunities to meet and socialise with other parents and children
 - Providing children with opportunities to play with other children
 - Preventing isolation/boredom
 - Providing things to do and places to go
 - Providing routine to the week
 - Providing practical help and information
 - Encouraging people to become more involved in their community
 - Aiding child and parent development
- The ways in which parents thought they or their child might benefit from Sure Start in the future can be grouped under the following headings:
 - Providing opportunities for meeting new people, social development and increasing involvement in the community, aiding child development

- Providing things to do
- Providing practical help and information
- Providing childcare facilities enabling parents to participate in activities/employment/courses

Special needs/disabilities

- Four of the five parents caring for children with special needs/disabilities felt dissatisfied with the services in Harehills to support their children.
- Delays in obtaining help were highlighted.
- Parents expressed a need for improved services and facilities and more groups for children and parents with special needs/disabilities.

Key issues for further consideration

- Improving services for children and parents with special needs/disabilities.
- Provision of more facilities accessible to children and parents with special needs/disabilities.

Appendix B: Sure Start Harehills interview schedule

(The questions in italics were only asked to parents)

1. What involvement do you have with Sure Start?
 - How long involved?

Meeting parents needs – the Sure Start contribution

2. What do you perceive to be the priority needs for families of children under 4 living in Harehills?
3. In what ways is Sure Start Harehills contributing to meeting the needs of families of children under 4 living in Harehills?
 - Contextual factors influencing development of work?
 - Facilitating factors and barriers to success?
 - In short time running - any particular achievements you have observed?

Complementing the work of other agencies

4. How do you see Sure Start Harehills complementing the work of other agencies in area?
 - Has there been an attempt to make links with other agencies?
5. How does the work of Sure Start combine with and complement the work of you/your organisation?
 - boundaries – geographical and boundaries of remit – any issues?
 - Any added value?

Partnership Board

6. How long have you been involved on the Partnership Board?
7. *How did you become involved / what were your main reasons for getting involved?*
8. What did you expect to bring to the partnership? What did you expect to get out of involvement with the Partnership Board?
 - Are your expectations being met?
9. *What was it like to start with? What is it like now? Do you feel comfortable at meetings? If not, why not? What would help? Do you feel able to speak at meetings? If you feel more comfortable now than in the past, what helped?*
10. *Do you feel that you are listened to and that what you say has an influence?*
11. *What do you think stops other parents from getting involved on the Partnership Board?*
 - *Personal reasons or due to the Partnership Board being daunting?*

12. Have any problems/difficulties arisen in the Partnership Board – if so, how have they been successfully resolved?
- How important is the Partnership Board in terms of decision making?

Inter-agency working

13. How would you describe the contribution of the Sure Start team to partnership and interagency working?
- Is there anything that you feel could improve the partnership working?

Voice and parental involvement

14. Do you feel that Sure Start has contributed to giving parents of children under 4 a voice?
- How?
 - If not – why not?
 - Role on board?
15. What do you think is the main thing that Sure Start Harehills should give attention to over the next year?

Any other comments?

Appendix C: Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Improving social and emotional development				
Main measure	Intermediate indicators	Source of data	Who collects?	Comments
% of mothers experiencing PND in 1st year of babies' life [SDA]		?HV records	?HV's	Need to establish a baseline. Will it rise or fall?
	% of mothers contacted by HV % of mothers offered Edinburgh Scale assessment	HV records	HV's	
	Good links established with Home Start Local volunteers working with Home Start	Interviews Documentary analysis	Evaluation team	
	Postnatal Support groups established and successfully maintained	Interviews with parents and professionals	Evaluation team	
100% parents contacted by Sure Start in 2/12 from birth [SDA]		Reach data	Sure Start Team	? is this contacted by HV
	Information about Sure Start given to parents	Reach data	Sure Start Team	
	Increased awareness of Sure Start	BUSS	Evaluation team	
% increase in children 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development [PSA]				* national target ? not in local plan ? collection by LAs.
Decrease in no. of children on child protection register in 12month period [PSA]		Child protection register	? Social services	This objective has since changed
	Good links established with range of relevant agencies (police, DAT, etc). Key worker post established and working in partnership	Interviews	Evaluation team	

OBJECTIVE 2: Improving health				
Main measure	Intermediate indicators	Source of data	Who collects?	Comments
Decrease in no. of women who smoke in pregnancy (proportion of those not giving up) [PSA]		Tracker cards in midwives notes		Local baseline data needs to be collected - Smoking cessation group looking at this
	Development of 1:1 service with midwife Good links established with smoking cessation service and GP practices	Interviews with Sure Start staff and other health professionals	Evaluation team	
Parenting support and information given on breastfeeding, safety nutrition etc.:% of children 0-3 seen by Sure Start [SDA]		Reach data	Sure Start Team	
	Establishment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fun events and sessions • baby massage • advice/drop in centre Activities reflect parents' expressed needs	Reach data on sessions BUSS Interviews/focus groups with parents and professionals	Sure Start Team Evaluation team	
% mothers breastfeeding at birth, 6/52 and 4/12 [SDA]		HV records	HV	
	Culturally appropriate breastfeeding support available Haamla worker appointed	Interviews with Sure Start staff and other health professionals Interviews with parents	Evaluation team	
	Baby friendly areas in local business Sure Start buildings have pleasant area for feeding	Observation	?local parents with Evaluation team	
Numbers admitted to hospital as result of gastro-enteritis, injury, respiratory infections [SDA]		Medical records Hospital statistics	?	

OBJECTIVE 3: Improving the ability to learn				
Main measure	Intermediate indicators	Source of data	Who collects?	Comments
% of children under 4 with speech and language delay [PSA]		S&L service	S&L service	
	Appointment of nursery workers and S&L Therapist	Documentary evidence	Sure Start Team	
% increase in children 0-5 with normal levels of communication, language and literacy by foundation stage [PSA]		? Education	? Education	* national target ? not in local plan???
	Number of children assessed in line with early years action	? Education	? Education	
All children to have access to quality play and learning opportunities [SDA]		Participatory mapping of play/learning opps. BUSS	Parents & Evaluation team	
	Successful establishment of new resources: eg. Toy library; playgroup	Documentary evidence	Sure Start Team	
	Parents aware of new and existing opportunities Parents using and satisfied with new and existing opportunities	BUSS Participatory mapping of play/learning opps	Evaluation team Sure Start team	
	Capital Development (of ICC)	Documentary evidence	Sure Start Team	

% of children under 4 who are active member of library[SDA]		Library membership	???	Need to establish baseline
	Good links established with library service, Education and Sure Start Book bag scheme established	Interviews Documentary evidence	Evaluation team	
	Parents aware of library facilities	BUSS???		

OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthening families and children				
Main measure	Intermediate indicators	Source of data	Who collects?	Comments
% of children in households where no-one is working [PSA]		SS Unit	SS Unit	
	Good links established with range of education and training agencies	Interviews ????	Evaluation team	
	Increase numbers of parents in training			
	Parents can get advice on Working Family Tax credits Awareness of child minding (for providers and users)	???		Potential to some more detailed research on local child care issues
	Some parents taking on voluntary work with Sure Start	Documentary evidence	Sure Start Team	
75 % of parents satisfied with local services providing family support [SDA]		BUSS Participatory mapping	Evaluation team Parents & Evaluation team	
	Parents aware of services in area	BUSS	Evaluation Team	
	Provision and use of crèche services	Documentary evidence Reach data	Sure Start Team	
	Good relationships with professionals and parents Sure Start news letter established	Interviews with parents and professionals	Evaluation team	
	Links established with Home Start scheme	Interviews	Evaluation team	
Parents represented on programme boards [SDA]		Interviews with board members	Evaluation team	
	Parent reps supported. Access to training programmes for parents reps	Interviews with board members	Evaluation team	
	Regular parent network meetings held	Observation	Evaluation team	

Link with Employment service [SDA]				Local target to be set
	Develop link with Employment Service re; child minding Links with local employers	Interviews	Evaluation team	
Number of child care places for 0-3 year olds [PSA]		On M2 form		Not collected separately by local SS
	Representation on Sure Start strategy group	Documentary evidence	Sure Start Team	