

**Sure Start Oswestry  
Local Programme  
and  
Children's Centre**

**3 Year Evaluation Report**



## Introduction

Sure Start local programmes work closely with the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), and a 3 Year Evaluation report is requested by NESS at the end of the third full year of operation, together with Annual Evaluation Plans at the beginning of each year of operation.

This 3 year Evaluation Report offers a summary of evaluations undertaken by the programme to date, together with outline evidence to support the findings. A full copy of each item of Evaluation included is available from Sure Start Oswestry on request. Progress made towards integrated partnership working and mainstreaming of services is also included.

## Local Context

Oswestry is a market town, situated on the Welsh border. Two of the wards within Oswestry Borough (Victoria and Gatacre) fall within the top 20% of the most deprived wards in England. The percentage of low income families in Oswestry is higher than the UK average, and approximately 15% of the population is claiming benefits. It is estimated that there are approximately 12,400 children living in child poverty in Shropshire County. The highest proportion of children living in poverty within Shropshire is Oswestry, at 31% of children.

Sure Start Oswestry is a Wave 3 programme, and one of only a few rural programmes in the country. Approval for the programme was granted in July 2001, and core staff team recruited in February 2002. Being a rural programme has presented interesting challenges, not least how best to deliver services in 2 catchment areas within the town centre and 4 in outlying villages.

The local programme had initially thought that one 'central' facility or Family Centre would have served the needs of the community, but this decision was later overturned with the involvement of parents and carers. A decision to build five Family Centres was subsequently agreed by the Management Board. They were planned for the outlying villages of St Martin's, Weston Rhyn and Gobowen, with town centre facilities at Middleton Road and Woodside, linked to a Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. In Whittington services are facilitated in partnership with the Whittington Under 5's group at the Community Centre. Four of the five new centres were operational by October 2002, with the last one opening in September 2003. The centres are of a demountable structure due to the limited capacity provided by the Capital Budget.

The Church Street office base provides additional town centre services: an information point, occasional crèche facilities, breastfeeding zone and baby changing facilities, and a toy library.

Other challenges facing the programme include:

- Practicalities of staffing multiple settings
- Geography – distance between 'local' venues
- 15% of population registered with Welsh GP's, not known to LP due to lack of data sharing protocol with Welsh Health Board

- Transport – activities offered on rotation across each setting
- Maximising usage of Family Centres
- Partnership working – attractive if in one centre, but in 7?
- Administration of a large scale rural programme
- Mainstreaming debate – slower due to ‘attractiveness’ of numbers of facilities and diversity of communities
- Budget capacity:
  - Capital – number of facilities
  - Revenue – staff needed to facilitate services & associated commissioned projects

In June 2003, the government announced the next phase of its strategy to deliver better outcomes for children. The Education and Skills Secretary, Charles Clarke and Children’s Minister, Margaret Hodge set out their vision to establish a Children’s Centre to serve every community. Early designation was awarded to 32 childcare settings nationally, and Sure Start Oswestry was successful in being one of them. By 2006 it is hoped that there will be a Children’s Centre in each of the 20% most disadvantaged wards in the country.

The core offer for Children’s Centres is:

- Early Education integrated with childcare
- Health
- Family Support
- Support into Employment

In Oswestry, a full day care setting is being built in the grounds of a primary school in the town centre, and this will form the main hub of the Children’s Centre. The existing Family Centres (which also have capacity for Full Daycare), the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and partnership working with Whittington Under 5’s Group in the local community centre, will act as satellites to the Oswestry Children’s Centre base.

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## **Governance and Management of the Programme**

The Lead and Accountable Body for Sure Start programmes in Shropshire is the Children and Young People’s Services Directorate in Shropshire County Council. There is an emerging partnership with the Primary Care Trust in preparation for the Children’s Trust and Children’s Centre agendas, and strategic partnerships have been developed with a number of organisations and agencies working with children and families.

A recent re-structure of the County Council has placed the Sure Start Oswestry Local Programmes and Children’s Centres in the ‘Multi Agency and Prevention’ team within the Children and Young People’s Services Directorate. This supports a key objective of the programme – namely ‘reduction in re-registrations on the Child

Protection register', and recognises the success of the integrated approach and strong strategic partnerships established by the Programme.

The Programme was represented on the Identification, Referral and Tracking (IRT) trailblazer working group (now Information Sharing and Assessment, ISA), further recognition of the input Sure Start local programmes can have in supporting better outcomes for children.

In an introduction to the Sure Start Oswestry Business Plan 2004 to 2006, Liz Nicholson, Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services, said: "...The Local Programme is demonstrating the benefits of integrating: early education with childcare, health, family support and support into employment. The Programme's delivery supports the County Council's priorities. The partnership with Shropshire County Primary Care Trust in developing Shropshire Children's Centres represents strategic planning at a local level." Julie Grant, Chief Executive of Shropshire County Primary Care Trust said: "...The Programme's delivery also supports the PCT in working towards one of the NHS national priorities of improving services and outcomes in life chances for children." A copy of the Sure Start Oswestry Business Plan Summary can be downloaded from:

[www.shropshire.gov.uk/surestartoswestry.nsf](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/surestartoswestry.nsf)

The Local Programme Management Board is responsible for the day to day management and strategic direction of the local programme and plans to extend its' membership to support the development of the Children's Centre in Oswestry. It is anticipated that a representative will join the Children's Centre Steering Group together with the Programme Managers of each Sure Start Local Programme and the Head of Early Years and Childcare for the county.

The Management Board comprises an equal and healthy mix of parents, carers and representatives from a number of the key organisations and agencies working with children and families. To date, 19 parents have participated on the Management Board, with two parents having acted as Chair of the Management Board since 2001.

Parents/carers on the Board represent each of the distinct communities that make up the Sure Start catchment area. They also participate on Interview Panels for the programme. In addition, Parent Panels are held in each of the Sure Start Family Centres and feed into the Management Board, and 132 parents/carers have had input on these panels to date. The Programme has devised a 'communication board' and 'suggestion scheme' in each centre to facilitate open access to issues discussed by the Management Board. These tools also facilitate the feedback of ideas and concerns to staff members of Sure Start Oswestry. The Programme Manager also attends Parent Panels periodically.

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## **Evaluation Strategy and Process**

In the Introduction section of this report, the involvement of parents/carers in the decision to revise the capital plans of the Programme and provide multiple family centres instead of the planned 'one-stop shop' signalled to the programme that parents/carers were going to be fully involved in Sure Start Oswestry!

Recognising the importance of public participation is central to the Government's drive to modernise public services, as set out in the White Paper 'Modernising Government'. It sees public participation as a way of achieving a 'shift of power and influence away from bureau-professionals and front-line staff towards citizens and service-users.

Shropshire County Council is committed to extending its consultation beyond statutory requirements. It wants to ensure that residents of Shropshire, service users and all other interested parties have the opportunity to be involved in the planning, prioritising and monitoring of county council services, and that they inform the council services.

The over arching Evaluation Strategy for the programme was written in October 2002. The core staff team were determined that evaluation should not be seen as an onerous task performed merely to support the requirements of the Sure Start Unit, rather that it should support the ongoing development of services and activities, and also support the sustainability discussions with partners. As a result, Evaluation has become an integral part of the programme rather than a periodic activity, and forms part of the ethos adopted by the whole programme team and partners.

An internal Evaluation Planning Group has been established, with group members representing all areas of the programme and partners. The group meets approximately every 6 weeks to discuss ongoing evaluation and to plan future evaluation activity and submissions to support the 'Evidence Library' requirements of the programme, the Sure Start Unit (SSU) and the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS). Whilst the core group members will remain the same, the Terms of Reference agreed by the group acknowledged that other members of the team would be invited to participate in the group as and when required

Evaluation templates have been designed to facilitate report writing and the linking of all reports and evidence to the 5 outcomes from 'Every Child Matters' together with Sure Start PSA and SDA targets. (see Appendix 1).

Data spreadsheets were created to make data analysis of the Incredible Years parenting programme easier than it initially appeared! Both of these initiatives have empowered staff to draft their own reports and input their own data rather than reliance on one member of the staff team to undertake this initial analysis activity. As a result, staff members have greater ownership of the evaluation of the services they are involved in, and the evaluation process is more sustainable too, without the more customary reliance on one member of a team to 'do the evaluation'.

The Evaluation Officer works with group leaders when Evaluation is being planned to determine the most appropriate method of evaluation and assist with the design of questionnaires as appropriate

Most specialist groups, commissioned services and core programme activities have been evaluated over the past 3 years by team members and partners. Whilst formal reports have not been drafted for all evaluation activities due to challenges discussed in the following section, the results have been used to inform development of services and activities offered to children and families across the programme, all of which are fed into the Management Board for consideration.

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## **Challenges to Service Delivery and Evaluation**

One of the key challenges of delivering Sure Start services in a rural area is delivery across multiple settings – a point acknowledged in “Delivering Services to Children and Families in Rural Areas” – The Early Lessons of Sure Start (The Countryside Agency, 2003). Sure Start Oswestry was included in this report as a case study. The numbers of families able to access groups and services is constrained due to the size of the demountable buildings commissioned for family centres located adjacent to the primary schools in the village and town centre settings.

Transport was identified as a key barrier to service access in the pre-Delivery Plan consultation undertaken in 2001, but provision of a ‘buggy bus’ by the local programme to facilitate access to town centre services did not receive tremendous support from families in outlying villages. The decision by the Management Board to change the capital plans to allow for service delivery points in all areas rather than one large facility in the town centre has, therefore, proved to be the correct one since families prefer to access services in their own communities.

Groups and services are, therefore, rotated around the centres in order to enable and encourage take up by families in the 7 distinct communities making up the profile of Sure Start service users in Oswestry.

Many resulting evaluation activities, therefore, involve small numbers of participants, and contributors could potentially be identifiable in a report from a single group. Results are, therefore, retained for consolidation with results from identical groups running in other centres on a rotational basis in order for findings to be robust and more easily anonymised.

Due to the logistics of rotating delivery around the centres, some services have yet to be offered in some centres, and full evaluation results are therefore still awaited.

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## **Overview of Evaluation 2001 to 2004**

Parental involvement has been key to the development of services in Oswestry, from the pre-Delivery Plan consultation in 2001 to date.

Key findings of the pre-Delivery Plan consultation were that families wanted:

- colourful family centres where there would be plenty of activities on offer for parents and children to enjoy together.

- specific activities for male carers to participate in with their children/the children in their care, and
- parents did not wish to travel too far to access the proposed services ('pram pushing' distance was a phrase used!)

All of the above concerns were addressed:

- Parents/carers were invited to get involved with a designer to come up with colour and furniture schemes for each of the family centres and for the 'Drop-In' centre in the town centre
- A monthly Breakfast Club for male carers and their children was established and runs on Saturday mornings
- Family Centres were established in 2 town centre areas and 3 outlying villages, with services in the fourth outlying village being offered in the local Community Centre, in partnership with the local Under Five's group.

....all of this before an Evaluation Strategy had even been established!

In 2001, there were 525 families with children under 4 living in the 5 catchment areas, equating to 626 children aged under 4. These numbers have remained similar year on year, but with early designation as a Children's Centre granted in 2003, services were extended to include children aged 4 years, bringing the total number of children in the catchment areas to 800 (667 families).

Parent/carer and child participation in activities, groups and services is obviously a key objective of the programme, and since March 2002 when the core team came into post and service delivery really began, the programme has achieved an average monthly reach of **36%** of children in the catchment area, compared to both a regional and national average of **23%**. Membership of the programme is also high with 75% of families in the area registered with the programme at any one time. Cumulative reach to end 2004 was 82% based on contacts with families with children aged under 4 on a rolling basis since the programme began.

A selection of evaluation findings from the programme over the first 3 years:

- **93% increase in library membership of under 4's** between December 2002 and December 2003. A Library Officer was recruited on secondment from the Library service to support the target of increased library membership. A few of the activities undertaken by the programme to achieve this result were: £1,000 invested in library stock, Outreach library service launched enabling families to join the library at the Family Centres, series of library promotions held and 5 rhyme/story sacks were commissioned from a local Arts project.
- **Portage Service** - commissioned service from Home-Start, with 3 Home-start workers trained to deliver the service. **100%** of parents of children with disabilities supported by the service reported increased confidence in helping their child to develop. Respondents were also impressed by the 'joined-up' working by staff from Home-Start and Sure Start, the Speech and Language Therapist and Nursery staff.

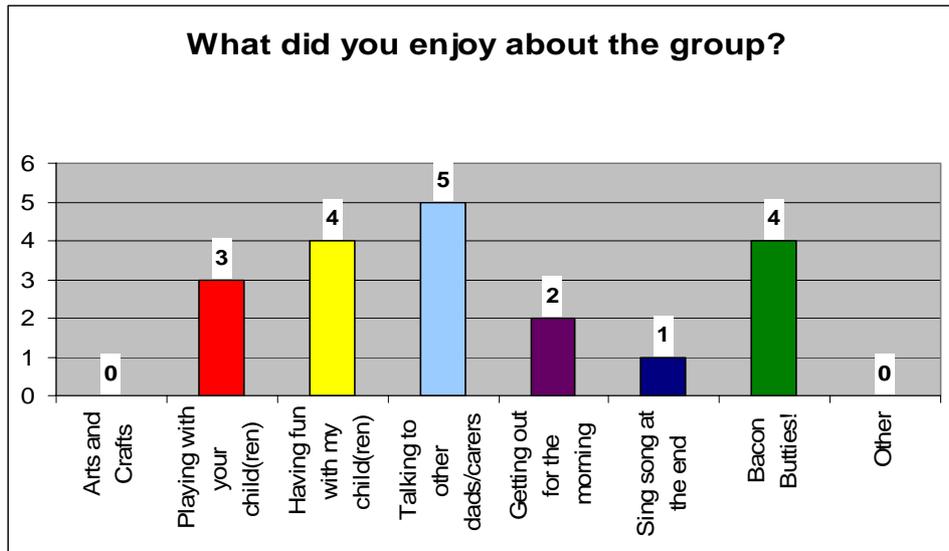
- **Bounce and Rhyme Group - Pilot group supporting Speech and Language** development ran in June/July 2003 and all 11 participants had enjoyed the group. Most had seen a positive change in their child's development as a result of the groups and all parents/carers had benefited in multiple ways as a result of attending the group. Two sub groups were organised:
  1. **Baby Bounce and Rhyme**  
for 0 -18 month olds at 10.00 am followed by snack time/coffee break – finishing at 10.45 am
  2. **Toddler Bounce and Rhyme**  
For 18mth – 3 year olds at 11.00am followed by snack time/coffee break – finishing at 11.45am.

The reasons for splitting the group into two were:

- Subtle differences in messages which need promoting depending upon the child's age. For example, that babies need shorter, less complex songs and more repetition; and that associated actions need to be simpler for babies to reflect the more immature development of a baby's motor skills.
- Safety issues - a group combining babies and toddlers might result in babies being harmed accidentally, and/or parents/carers of babies and toddlers may feel unable to relax.
- Some concern that parent/carers with younger babies had few facilities of their own in Sure Start Oswestry at the time.
- The grouping of parents/carers with others having children of a similar age offered a more relevant and useful support group for those parents/carers.
- Parents who brought 2 children to the session, one for each age group, were able to give each child some valuable quality time whilst the other child was looked after in the crèche.

As a result of comments made by parents/carers, the following are just a few of the changes made to the group for future cohorts:

- Alternating day as well as family centre might mean that different people could attend
  - More new rhymes
  - I would like it to become a permanent fixture because all the children enjoy singing in a group, something which doesn't happen at play sessions because the toys distract them
  - A regular weekly session would be better
- **Male Carers Breakfast Club** - Evaluation of participants showed how valued the Saturday morning sessions were for male carers to spend quality time with their children. 100% reported improved relationship with their child – they felt closer. Only 1 respondent was accessing other Sure Start groups but all partners of respondents were making further use of the Family Centres. The graph below shows responses to one of the questions in the evaluation of the group.

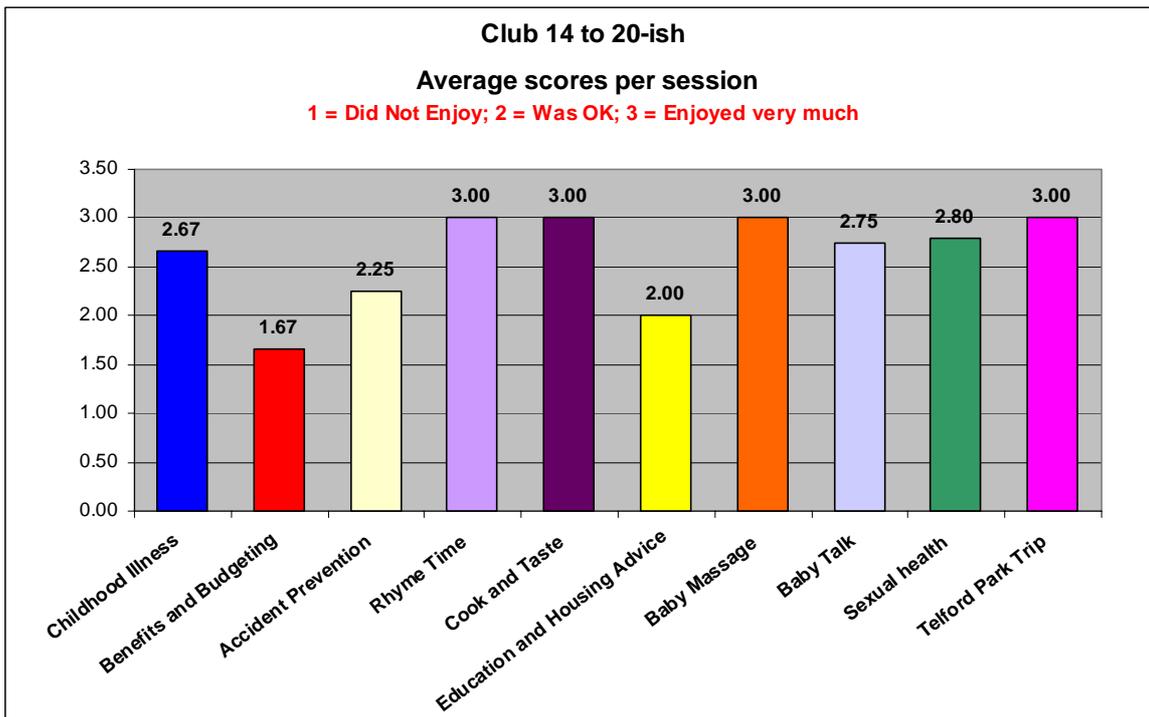


- **Sure Start Crèche Service** – December 2003 saw the 200<sup>th</sup> crèche offered to enable parents/carers access specialist groups. Evaluation undertaken and **100%** of respondents were happy with the crèche service and had been comfortable leaving their child(ren) with crèche staff.
- **Incredible Years Parenting Course** – 10 cohorts ran between 2002 and 2004 with an average of 7 parents/carers on each course. 2 of the cohorts were run for childminders. The crèche facility was greatly appreciated by all parents/carers attending the course. 100% of participants over the 7 groups improved their Appropriate Parenting Scores over the 12 week course with an average 26% improvement rate. The Incredible Years Centre at Bangor University states that any improvement over 30% is considered to be clinically significant, and of the 38 participants for whom full results are available, 19 (50%) achieved a significant improvement in their parenting scores. Average overall scores for all cohorts showed a 26% improvement.
- **Home Visiting/Family Support Service** – Survey sent to 35 families in July 2003, a year after Family Support programme began. Only 8 families responded but they had been offered support on a variety of topics and were happy with the support they had received. Since 2002, 303 families have benefited from receiving home support from qualified Family Support Workers.
- **Healthy Packed Lunch Project** – In October 2004, a week long campaign was held in all Family Centres to offer advice on how to make packed lunches healthy. The main aims were:
  - to achieve awareness of what a healthy lunch comprises
  - to promote the Balance of Good Health and 5-a-Day
  - to demonstrate to parents that their children will eat healthy food if it is offered to them, even if they may have refused items before.

Healthy snacks are always offered at snack times in the Sure Start centres, but during this week, balanced healthy lunchboxes were prepared and free lunchboxes (with the contents!) were given to all children and families taking part. Feedback from parents was positive, with all participants having

gained some new ideas. 17% of participants felt more advice could have been offered on dairy products and catering for special diets – e.g. diabetes. The handouts which were available to take home were very well received, - parents said it was something they would use at home, all of which supports the Shropshire County PCT ‘Healthy Eating and Active for Life’ strategy, in which Sure Start Oswestry features

- **Club 14 to 20-ish** – Young parent’s Group. Pilot group with 5 parents attending, all of whom valued the friendships formed in the group and planned to continue meeting outside of the group. The 10-week course offered advice and support on a range of topics, and a Day Trip for the final session.



- **User Satisfaction Survey** – October 2003.
  - 75% of respondents thought that services in area had improved since Sure Start came along
  - 74% rated Stay and Play sessions as ‘Excellent, 26% ‘Good’
  - 25% had made use of the Safety Equipment purchase scheme
  - 77% had accessed the Start Smiling dental project
  - Healthy Snacks and Healthy Eating projects had been well received by over 75% of respondents
  - Quite a high percentage of respondents (20%) were not accessing services and programme will need to focus on this in the future

## Sustainability and Partnership Working

Although Sure Start is a targeted initiative, the Government aims to make it a universal service. By working within tight geographical boundaries, Sure Start local programmes have been able to pilot and trial new approaches, and establish innovative partnerships and 'joined up' services for families across multi-disciplinary teams.

This section looks at the progress made to date towards sustaining and integrating services. Examples of pilot Sure Start activities adopted as mainstream services are identified in this section. Also highlighted are future plans for other services to provide long term sustainability.

### • Improving Health

#### Key PSA/SDA targets:

- PSA 3** Achieve by 2005-06 an increase in the proportion of babies and young children under 5 living in Sure Start areas with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age.
- SDA 10** All families with newborn babies living in the Sure Start area to have been visited by local programmes within the first two months of their child's life.
- SDA** Parenting support and information available for all parents of young children in Sure Start areas.
- PSA 4** Achieve by 2005-06 a 6 percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue smoking during pregnancy.
- SDA 11** Information and guidance on breast feeding, nutrition, hygiene and safety available to all families with young children in Sure Start areas.
- SDA 12** Reduce by 10% the number of children aged 0-4 living in the Sure Start area admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, a lower respiratory infection or a severe injury.
- SDA 13** Ante-natal advice, support and information available to all pregnant woman and their families living in the Sure Start areas.
- Local SDA** Improve oral health in children under 5 living in the Sure Start catchment area

### • Post-Natal Depression (PND)

At the PND partnership steering group meeting in March 2004 it was agreed that the 'Beat the Blues' group would be mainstreamed from April 2004, jointly funded and co-ordinated by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Adult Mental Health Services. Senior managers from these partner agencies gave their commitment to provide staffing for the next two years (until March 2006) to enable the group to continue quarterly, alternating between Whitchurch and Oswestry, offering 2 groups per year in each locality. Additional costs will include crèche provision, and funding for a venue for the group in the Whitchurch. Whitchurch is outside of the Sure Start

Oswestry catchment area, therefore this brings the additional outcome of added value and extended provision. One of the Sure Start Oswestry Family Centres will be used for the Oswestry groups until end March 2006. Sure Start representatives will join the PND partnership steering group twice a year for planning of groups.

- **Health Promotion**

The local programme has joint-funded a Health Improvement Specialist post with Shropshire County PCT from October 2003 until March 2006.

By 2006, the Health Improvement Specialist projects will have been evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children, and it is an aspiration that by 2006 this post will be absorbed within the PCT county wide service for health promotion. Accident Prevention and Help2Quit will also continue as mainstream services.

- **Dental Service**

This project was a local Service Delivery Agreement target (SDA). It involved a survey of children under four living in the Sure Start Oswestry catchment area. The target was to reduce those children's scores of decayed, missing or filled teeth (DMFT) from 1.94 to 1.54. The aims were for 100% of parents registered with Sure Start to receive dental health promotion and to increase the number of children under four registered with a dentist. The project is now mainstreamed within the PCT oral health 'Start Smiling and Keep Smiling' project

- **Strengthening Families and Communities**

**Partnership working focused on training and employment.**

**Key PSA targets:**

**SDA 15** All Sure Start Local Programmes and Children's Centres to have effective links with Jobcentre Plus, local training providers and further/higher education institutions.

Sure Start Oswestry is actively engaged in helping parents and carers into employment. 3 parents are now employed as crèche workers by the programme, 15 parents are actively engaged as volunteers with the programme – participating in Board meetings, the evaluation of the programme and in parents meetings - and a group of parents recently ran a Creative Arts session in one of the Family Centres, demonstrating their creative skills to other parents.

The Local Programme and Children's Centre further assists parents/carers wishing to access training and learning opportunities by offering a mobile crèche service for children whilst parents/carers are learning in an adjacent area, and to date, **114** families out of **525** families with children under 4 in the area have made use of this service (**22%**).

- **Job Centre Plus secondment**

The Oswestry Area Children's Centre negotiated a joint funded 2 year secondment for an "Into Employment Advisor" from Job Centre Plus (JCP).

The post holder, who commenced in April 2004, works across the county offering advice sessions, information on local training and employment and "better off" calculations. The post holder also has a networking and developmental role within the Children's Centre and JCP, identifying gaps in provision, linking with local training organisations and developing joint marketing and publicity material. The post is joint funded by JCP and Shropshire County Council Children's Centres in Shropshire for the first 2 years, for the pilot phase. Beyond this, if monitoring and evaluation is supportive, it is intended that the post could be sustained by JCP.

Over the past 18 months, partnerships and relationships have been developing between various agencies working in the local Sure Start Oswestry area. This has laid firm foundations for future secondment plans. Sure Start Oswestry co-ordinated many of the initial meetings with the local Information Advice and Guidance Partnership, the Business Development Manager from JCP and the Economic Development Manager from the Borough Council who links in with the Local Strategic Partnership.

Amongst these key partners, a gap was identified in the area to join up services and focus specifically on training and employment. It was felt that there was a wealth of agencies from large training providers to small voluntary organisations, all independently offering a range of services and support, including IT courses, childcare, funding for transport and basic skills support.

Following a series of initial meetings, Sure Start initiated the development of a local Training and Employment Forum. Members includes all agencies with a responsibility or interest in training and employment and associated childcare providers. The core aims are to provide an opportunity for agencies to network and to undertake joint surveys and mapping exercises of the area. The Forum links into the Local Community Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Forum meets 3 times a year and all partners have already benefited from information to support their own areas of work - from finding out about a scheme offering free computers for adults completing Learn Direct courses, to linking into a local project to identify and refer basic skills needs. Partners have started on a joint mapping exercise to audit services on offer in the area. They are also planning a joint survey to identify barriers to work and training in the area, looking specifically at basic skills and childcare needs. At each meeting a practical exercise is undertaken, and there is plenty of opportunity for networking over lunch.

Through these networks, Sure Start has new partners working with families in the Sure Start Family Centres. Learn Direct and the local College are providing taster sessions and longer courses from Sure Start centres, and the local Information Advice and Guidance Partnership are providing personal careers interviews for parents where required.

The formal JCP secondment commenced in April 2004. Due to local developments, however, a Lone Parent Advisor from Job Centre Plus was released for 1 day per week from January 2004, to undertake outreach work in the Family Centres in

preparation for the formal secondment post. “We see this as a pathfinder role before the formal secondment” said local JCP manager, Roger Smith “Its been invaluable in terms of staff getting to understand different organisations and having the opportunity to do outreach work in support of joint targets”.

- **Library Service**

**Key SDA Target:**

**SDA 9** To increase the use of libraries by families with young children aged 0-5

A part time Library Officer has been seconded from the library service to Sure Start Oswestry since September 2002. The post has helped to link initiatives between Sure Start and the Library service. As a result, the Library service has absorbed some activities, evidenced by the Sure Start Library Officer, into the main library services. The post has also had an impact on changing cultural barriers for families within library settings.

A monthly story time and rhyme group had been held in the local library by an Early Years Development worker. This activity has now been developed as a mainstream library service and is delivered by the Children’s Librarian.

The Sure Start Library Officer has participated in a county wide group charged with developing ‘family friendly’ policies across the county. As a result, the library has installed toilet facilities, children’s tickets have been launched, and a Baby Book Crawl initiative has begun. Baby Book Crawl, promoted by the Book Trust, aims to encourage active use of the library. Children collect stamps or stickers each time they visit the library and after 6 visits receive a special certificate. This scheme was initially piloted by the Sure Start library officer with a small group of families, and is now an initiative on offer in all local libraries.

Over the last 18 months, the library service has also developed a young parents group within its main services, and the Children’s Librarian also links with the Sure Start family centres.

- **Childminding Developments**

**Key SDA Targets:**

**SDA 2** All SureStart programmes to work with their EYDCP to help close the gap between the availability of accessible childcare for 0-3 years old in SureStart area and other areas”

Strengthening families and communities. In particular, by involving families in building the community’s capacity to sustain the programme and thereby create pathways out of poverty.

A Childminding Development Worker is employed within the Sure Start Oswestry team. The key responsibilities of the post are to recruit and support new childminders, develop the quality of childminding and co-ordinate the local cluster of the countywide Childminding Network. Since the programme began, the number of

Registered Childminders in and around Oswestry has increased from **39 to 73** – an increase of 87%.

The post has been informally seconded to the Early Years and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) to work alongside the Childminding Development Workers in the rest of the county. This ensures that the service is delivered consistently throughout the county. The Sure Start post offers additional support and resources in the Sure Start catchment areas, and can also signpost to universal early years services in the county.

The Sure Start post also acts as a pathfinder for new initiatives and, if successful, these initiatives are rolled out countywide. One example is the development of a 12 week Behaviour Management Course for Childminders in the Sure Start area together with monthly training sessions for Childminders in the evening.

The aim is for both of these initiatives to be included in future EYDCP training and development programmes.

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## Summary

On-going evaluation of services and activities provided by the Sure Start Oswestry Local Programme and Children's Centre (SSOLP) is essential to the programme of sustainability linked to working with partners, in order to provide them with hard evidence of not only qualitative but also quantitative evidence of what works and who it works for.

Evaluation is not seen as an add on task by the staff team from SSOLP, more an intrinsic element of the roles people have in ensuring that we provide what is required by the local families accessing our services. It is seen as an essential element in discussions with partners and local service providers in order to disseminate best practice and achieve sustainability of services not only within the Sure Start catchment areas but in a wider geographical context too.

The partnership working already established by the programme with local service providers is anticipated to escalate over the coming years, in particular with the forthcoming Children's Centre development and links with the Extended Schools agenda.

We are determined that the Sure Start Oswestry Local Programme and Children's should not merely be seen as a short-term funded project, but a way of working adopted by other agencies in a multi-agency environment, to best support children in order to assure them of the best start in life and to support their families to achieve stronger and healthier communities.

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# Appendix One – Evidence Library/Best Practice Template



INSERT PARTNER  
LOGO  
IF APPROPRIATE

**Sure Start Oswestry  
Local Programme and Children's Centre**

**TITLE OF EVIDENCE LIBRARY TITLE, BEST  
PRACTICE ARTICLE, PROJECT or CASE STUDY**

**Supporting**

**PSA/SDA TARGET(S)**

**(Identify which PSA/SDA targets activity or case study links to)**

**and supports EVERY CHILD MATTERS outcome(s):**

**(remove ticks as appropriate)**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>BE HEALTHY</b>                   | ✓ |
| <b>STAY SAFE</b>                    | ✓ |
| <b>ENJOY AND ACHIEVE</b>            | ✓ |
| <b>MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b> | ✓ |
| <b>ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING</b>  | ✓ |

**INTRODUCTION** – A little 'generic' text about Sure Start Oswestry (e.g. Wave 3, Rural Programme, delivering from 8 settings, etc.) - suggest one paragraph only (say 60 – 80 words max)

## **PROJECT or CASE STUDY INTRODUCTION**

Talk about the reasons for the Project being commissioned or undertaken –  
AIMS and OBJECTIVES.

Give a little background information, with data where available, on the start point when SSO began and how the project links to PSA and/or SDA targets, and also the Every Child Matters Outcome(s) it links to – (include BH1, SS1, SS2, etc. – see list of outcome codes), as appropriate, to indicate which sub-sections of the 5 key outcomes the project specifically relates to.

Give an indication of the number of parents/carers and children who actively engaged in the project/commissioned service/case study. Talk about any challenges met whilst the project was undertaken and how these were met.

Highlight any key achievements as a result of the project having been undertaken and include any evaluation findings from the project, with updated data post project, if available – i.e. compare with start point if available, or give improvements known of via the project evaluation.

It is sometimes clearer to show statistics and data in a table or graph format; involve Monitoring and Evaluation Officer as appropriate.

Write a little about 'the way forward'. Talk about how project/service is, or will be joint-funded or sustained, if this has been discussed, and how this has been or will be achieved. Identify which partners are involved in delivering service to achieve the sustainability we desire.

**When complete, pass to your Line Manager who will identify any other information required to complete the article and liaise with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for completion and dissemination as appropriate**