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— OF CENTRAL —  
LANCASHIRE



**SURE START GRANGE PARK  
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT  
PART 1: Modified interim report**

**July 2005**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report examines progress during the period June 2003 to April 2004. A final report will be submitted in July 2005.

Local evaluation is considered by Sure Start National to be an important part of any Sure Start programme. The aim is that the evaluation should help programmes to assess how well they are doing, where changes need to be made and how far they are reaching their targets and addressing the needs of local families. The evaluation is also intended to inform the process of mainstreaming and the development of services for young children across the local area. This evaluation report has been produced within the guidelines provided by NESS (the National Evaluation of Sure Start team).

A range of methodologies have been employed in order to gather the data included in this report. They are:

- Quantitative data gathering (activities attendance, M3 data)
- Qualitative written data (minutes of meetings)
- Semi-structured interviews including both open and closed questions

For each set of data, an analysis of the information is presented followed immediately by a summary of the findings and recommendations arising. An overall summary of findings and recommendations is also provided at the end of the report followed finally by an outline of future work to be presented in the final report.

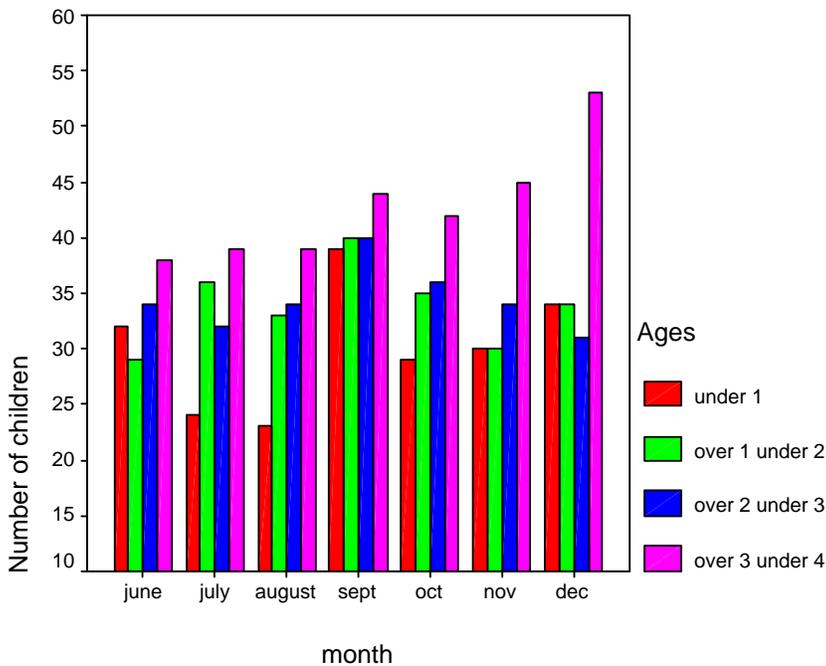
## 2. MONTHLY MONITORING DATA

### 2a. Data Charts

Monthly reach information was collected for June 2003 to December 2003. The forms contained a breadth of information including the number of new and existing children seen (and ages), information on ethnicity and information about the children's parents. This report summarises this information.

#### *Children Seen*

The figure below shows the number of existing children (in each age category) seen from June to December 2003. Overall 951 existing children were seen.



*Figure 1. Number of existing children seen.*

Overall it appears that most children seen fall into the 'over 3 under 4' age category. Most children in this age category were seen in December 2003 (23 children). Children in the 'under 1' age category are seen less often in most months.

The results for newly registered children can be seen below. Overall 146 newly registered children were seen.

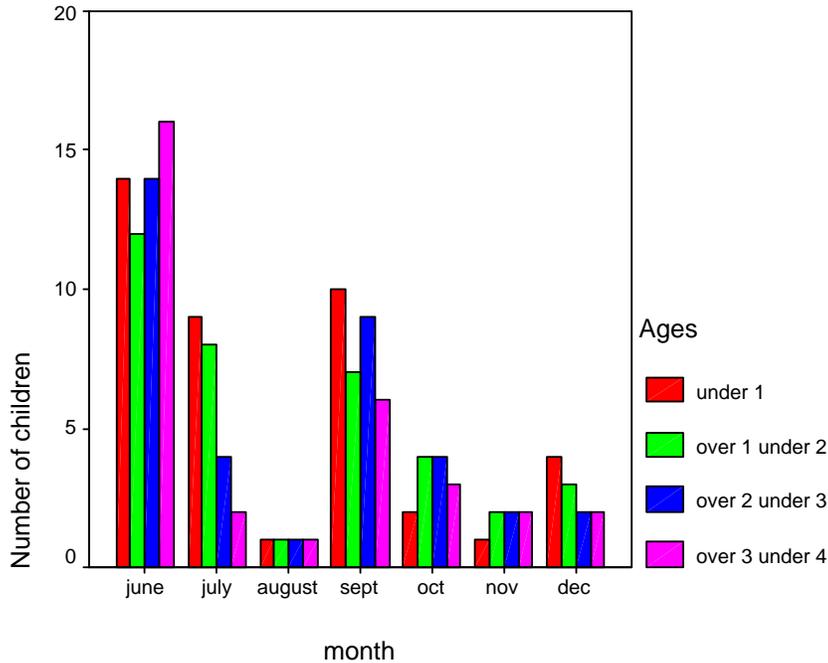


Figure 2. Number of new children seen

More new children, in all age groups were seen in June compared to any other month. July and September also have a number of new registrations in certain age categories. However, there seems to be a large drop in the new number of children seen in August 2003. There are also very few new numbers of children seen in October, November and December.

**Disabled or special needs children**

There were a number of disabled and/or special needs children seen across the months. This information is depicted in the table below.

Table 1. Number of disabled and/or special needs children seen

Number of children	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
<b>Existing</b>	<b>0</b>	2	2	3	3	2	5	<b>17</b>
<b>New</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>

Most months, with the exception of June, saw 2 or more existing disabled / special needs children. Only one new disabled/ special needs child was seen (October 2003).

### Ethnic breakdown

Only 2 existing ethnic minority children were seen from June to December 2003 (0.09%). They were both seen in July 2003. For newly registered children there were no ethnic minority children seen.

### Pregnant women

The figure below shows the number of existing pregnant women seen in each category.

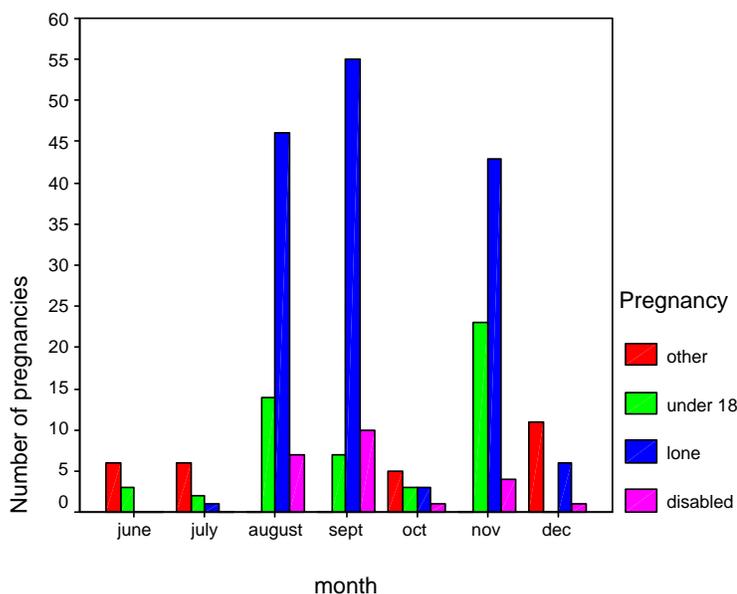


Figure 3. Number of exiting pregnant women seen

It must be noted, firstly, that the midwife was on long term sick leave in October 2003, and, secondly, that the participants could fall into one or more category. For example they could be disabled and a lone pregnant women. Nevertheless, this graph can be used as a guideline. Additionally, women who did not fit into any of the pre-determined categories (i.e., disabled, lone women etc) were placed in a new category called 'other'.

The majority of women fell into the 'lone parent' category. There are peaks in the number of these women seen in August (46), September (55) and November (43 women). In comparison, the number of 'lone parents' seen in the remaining months is very low.

There is also a peak in the number of 'under 18' pregnant women seen in November (23). Some disabled pregnant women are seen in every month apart from June and July.

The number of newly registered pregnant women can be seen in the figure below.

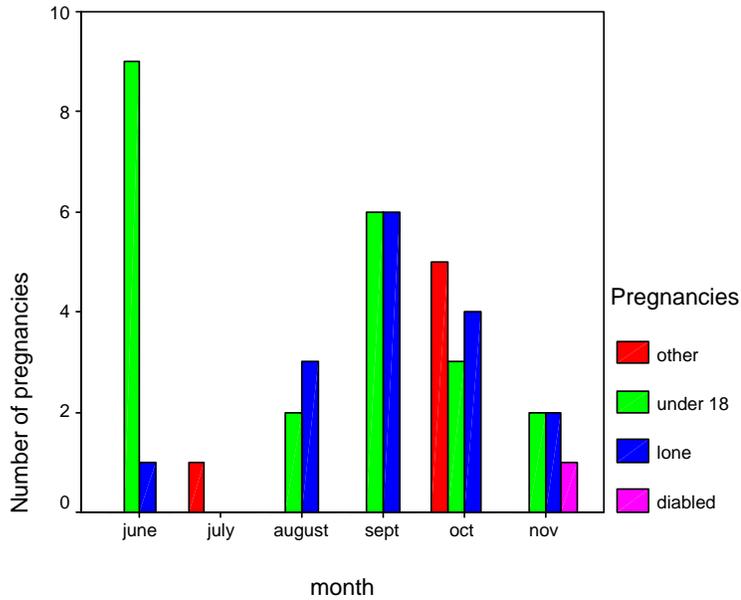


Figure 4: Number of newly registered pregnant women.

The distribution of the data here is quite variable. There is a peak in the number of ‘under 18’ pregnant women seen in June 2003 (9) however this drops to 0 in July. The number of ‘lone women’ seen increases from August and then peaks in September (6). November is the only month in which disabled pregnant women are seen. July has the fewest number of newly registered pregnant women.

**Families seen**

The number of families seen in each month is shown in the figure below.

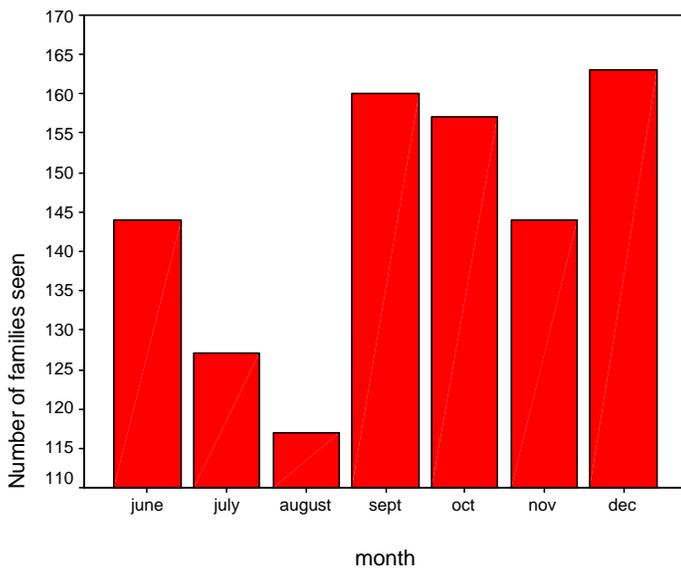


Figure 5: Number of existing families seen

Most families are seen in September (160), October (157) and December (163). From June there is a decrease in the number of families seen with a relative low in August (117 families), which is, of course, the school holiday period.

The number of new families seen is shown below.

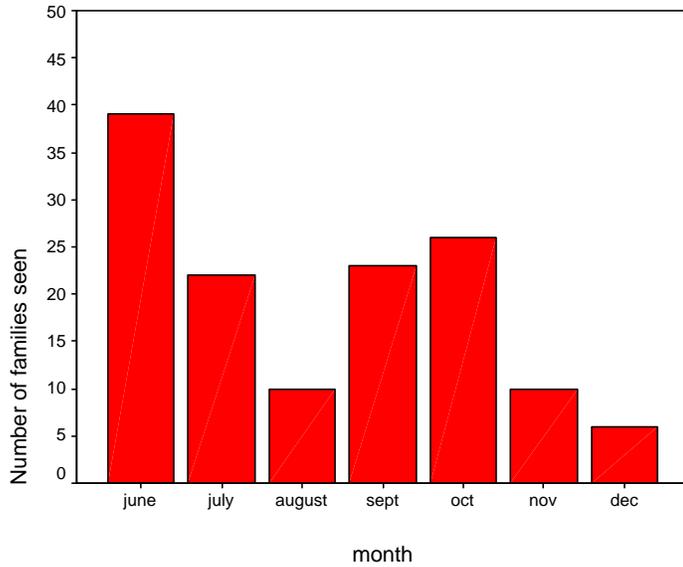


Figure 6: Number of new families seen

Most new families were seen in June (39). The least were seen in August (10) (school holiday period), November (10) and December (6).

**Parents**

Figure 7 depicts the number of existing parents seen in each month.

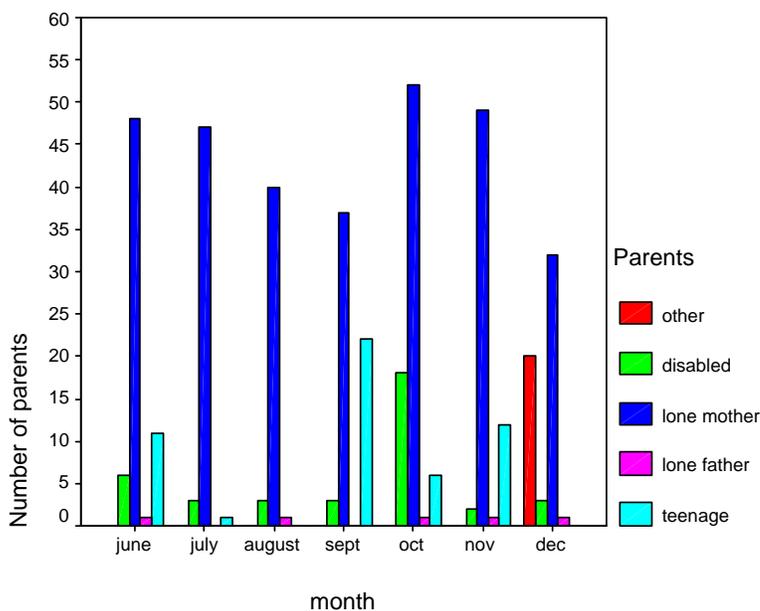


Figure 7: Number of existing parents seen.

Again it must be noted that parents could fit into more than one category (i.e. lone mother and under 18 years). Most of the parents seen fell into the ‘lone mother’ category. The number of these parents peaks in October 2003 (52 parents). There are relatively few ‘lone fathers’ and ‘disabled’ parents seen. There appears to be a huge discrepancy between the number of existing families seen and the number of existing parents seen across this period of time (e.g. December 165 families but only 55 parents). Reasons for this discrepancy are unclear and it is recommended that care is taken in completing future M3 forms in order to ensure accuracy of data.

The number of new parent seen is shown below.

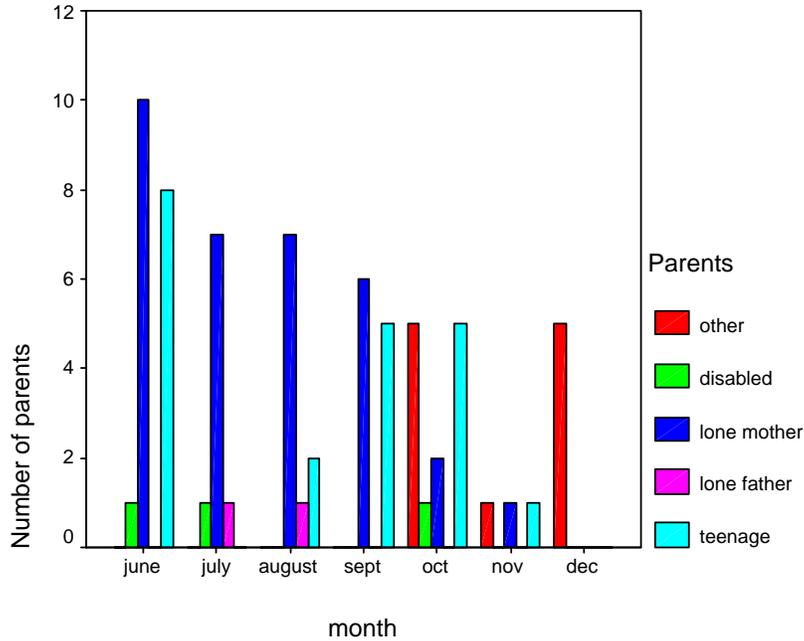


Figure 8: Number of new parents seen

Again, most of the parents seen are ‘lone mothers’ especially in June 2003 (10). There are a number of ‘teenage’ parents seen across the months. However, there are few ‘disabled’ and ‘lone fathers’ seen.

New births / new babies visited

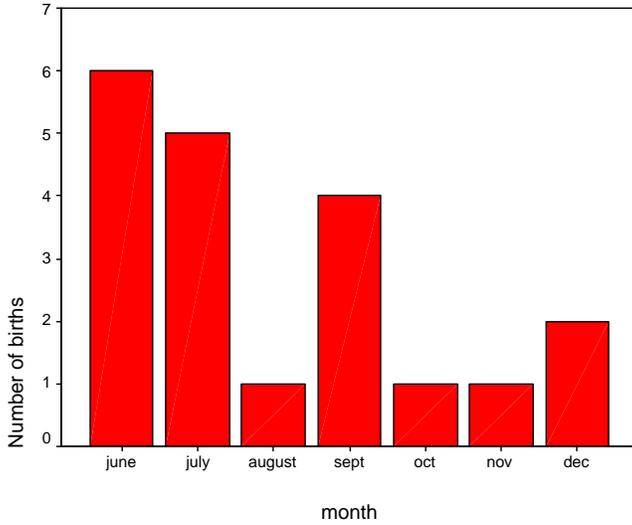


Figure 9. Number of live births.

Figure 9 shows the number of live births across the months. There is a peak in births in June and July and a low in August, October and November.

The final figure shows the number of children who were 2 months at some point (in each month) and of those, how many were visited by a member of the Sure Start team.

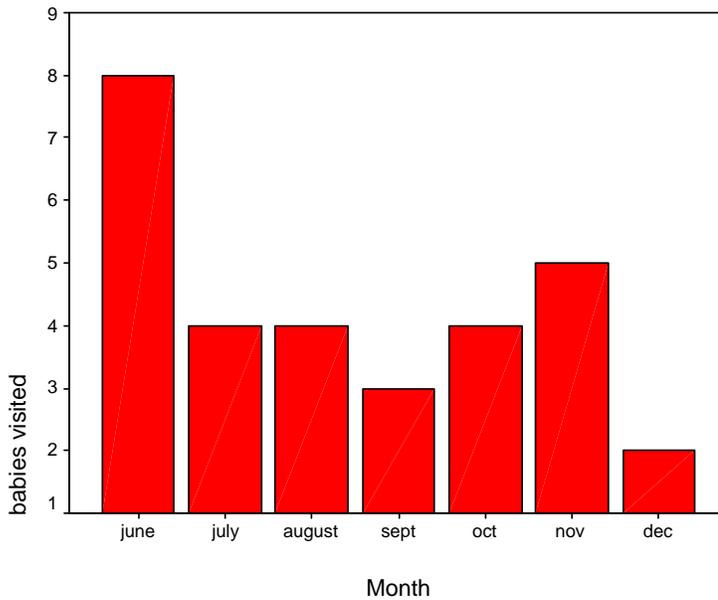


Figure 10: Number of Children under 2 months old who were visited by a member of the Sure Start team.

As can be seen from the graph, a member of the Sure Start team visited all children aged 2 months. There is a peak in visits in June (8 visits) and a low in December (2 visits).

## **2b. Summary and Recommendations**

The M3 data suggest that Sure Start Grange Park have seen very large numbers of families in each month from June to December (ranging from 117 to 163, existing per month). These figures are very promising, although we have some concerns that the figures are not consistent with the parent data (but are more consistent with the child data). It is recommended that data recording systems are carefully checked and monitored.

Very few children seen are classed as ethnic minority and this is likely to be consistent with the ethnic make-up of the local population. A small number of disabled children are seen and it may be useful for Sure Start to examine accessibility of its services with regard to this population.

A fairly large number of pregnant women, especially lone pregnant women, are seen across the months surveyed and this suggests that Sure Start Grange Park are managing to reach a vulnerable group within the local community.

The data also indicate that all new babies (under 2 months) are being visited by the Sure Start health unit which is clearly an example of good practise.

Apart from some concerns regarding the accuracy of some aspects of the M3 data, this data generally provides a positive and promising picture of the work of Sure Start Grange Park.

### 3. ACTIVITIES ATTENDANCE DATA

In this section we have analysed the data provided by Grange Park Sure Start for activities/ services occurring during the months between June 2003 and January 2004. The data provides insights into the types of activities/services, their success and their potential for the future.

Most of the activities were introduced following requests by parents. Some of the activities were intended to run only once (indicated by a \* in the list below). Some were limited as to who could attend (e.g. the 2 year old party) and some were linked to summer or Christmas holidays.

Overall 34 different activities / services were analysed. These are listed below.

1. 2 year old party\*
2. Antenatal/Postnatal Dance
3. Aromatherapy Course and Crèche
4. Basic Skills
5. Belly Dancing
6. Blackpool Zoo
7. Bug Busting Day\*
8. Christmas Arts and Crafts, and Christmas Party\*
9. Community Arts Course and Crèche
10. Confidence and Assertiveness Training
11. Dad's Group
12. DIY
13. Happy Families
14. Health Drop-in
15. Image Course and Image Crèche
16. Relate Listening Skills Course and Crèche
17. Relate Counselling Course
18. Job Centre Plus
19. Keep Fit
20. Making Choices
21. Parent and Baby Group
22. Parent and Toddler Group
23. Parents Focus Group
24. Stanley Park Outing\*
25. Talktime
26. Teddy Bears Picnic\*
27. Teen Parent Group
28. Teenage Parents Cooking Classes
29. Tots Time and Stepping Stones Story
30. Toys- R-Us\*
31. Trip to Wigan\*
32. You Make the Difference
33. Official Launch\*

### **3a: Activities Data**

#### **Activity 1: 2 year old party (May 2003)**

Although only a small number of families – eight - attended this party, it is potentially a useful way of bringing new people into Sure Start. Perhaps it should be an annual event.

#### **Activity 2: Antenatal / Postnatal dance**

*Table 1: Number of families seen in the antenatal / postnatal dance class*

<b>Month and Year</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
January 2003	3
February 2003	2
March 2003	4

This activity was only available for three months. Attendance was low throughout.

#### **Activity 3: Aromatherapy Course and Crèche**

This activity was only available for one month (August 2003) as a summertime activity, when the course attracted 5 attendees (with 9 children in the crèche).

#### **Activity 4: Basic Skills**

9 families enrolled on the basic skills course in September 2003. This is not a Sure Start activity and there are no attendance records after enrolment or figures for completion of the course. It is included because it is an activity involving Sure Start families and is facilitated, though not provided, by Sure Start Grange Park..

#### **Activity 5: Belly dancing**

*Table 2: Number of people attending the belly dancing course*

<b>Month and Year</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
November 2003	5
December 2003	3

This course attracted small numbers, which may be due to the time of year in which it was held. However, the activity is reported to be continuing in November 2004 at another venue - the City Learning Centre, No further attendance figures are available, nor is it known for how long the activity has run during 2004.

#### **Activity 6: Blackpool Zoo**

A trip to Blackpool Zoo, in September 2003, attracted 18 families, suggesting that this might be used in future to attract new people to Sure Start.

### **Activity 7: Bug Busting Day**

25 families attended the Bug Busting Day, which suggests it might be worth considering for the future.

### **Activity 8: Christmas activities: Christmas Arts and Crafts, Christmas Party, and De-stress for Christmas**

53 families attended the December 2002 Christmas party and 91 families attended in December 2003. 10 families attended the Christmas Arts and Crafts in November 2003, but only 4 attended De-stress for Christmas.

These Christmas activities seem to have been variably successful. The Christmas party has nearly doubled in popularity from 2002 to 2003 and is very popular. The Christmas Arts and Crafts course was well attended, but the De-Stress for Christmas was not popular.

### **Activity 9: Community Arts course and crèche**

Only 1 adult and 2 children are shown as having attended the Community Arts course and crèche, which indicates that it was either not a popular activity or people were not aware of its existence. However, this activity is also continuing at the City Learning Centre. No further details are known.

### **Activity 10: Confidence and Assertiveness Training**

This course was attended by 7 families and 5 families in September 2003 and in October 2003 respectively.

### **Activity 11: Dad's Group**

*Table 3: Number of dad's attending the Dad's Group.*

<b>Month and Year</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
October 2003	3
November 2003	4
December 2003	2
January 2003	4

The attendance rates for this activity were poor with a low in December 2003 (2) and a maximum in January and November 2004 (4). The low attendance for this activity does not necessarily mean that the group is not valued by dads or does not have much to offer dads. It may be the case that dads do not know about the group. Awareness raising and publicity may be an important general issue for Sure Start Grange Park (see also Activity 12)

### **Activity 12: DIY**

Although only one family is shown as having attended this course one occasion, the course was originally a City Learning Centre course, which was taken over by Sure Start for a few weeks.

### **Activity 13: Happy families**

5 people attended this activity across the two months it ran (November and December 2003). Although this appears to be a very low number, the families were hand-picked for their suitability for the activity.

**Activity 14: Health Drop-in**

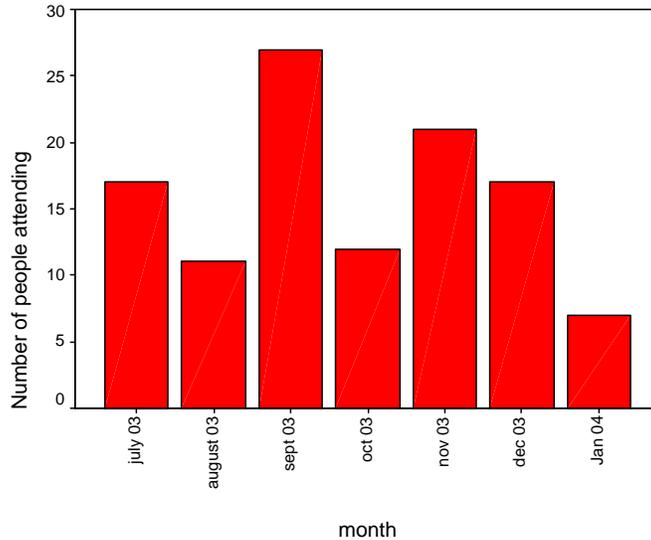


Figure 1. Number of people attending the Health Drop-in

Although this service seems to attract a high number of people overall, its popularity was quite variable. January 2004 saw the smallest number of people attending (6) and there was a peak in September 2003 (27). The relatively large attendance figures for this service suggest that this is addressing the needs of the community more directly than many of the activities listed previously.

**Activity 15: Image Course and Image Crèche**

Table 4: Number of people attending the Image course and the Image crèche.

Month and Year	Number of Attendees: Image Course	Number of Attendees: Image Crèche
February 2003	3	2
March 2003	3	5

3 people attended the Image course in the two months it ran (February and March 2003) 2 and 5 children respectively attended the image crèche. This is another activity with very low attendance.

**Activity 16: Relate- listening Skills Course and Crèche.**

Attendance was very poor, with 2 adults attending the course and one child attending the crèche in each of the two months (February and March 2003). It is not known whether the attendees were the same in each month.

### Activity 17: Relate Counselling

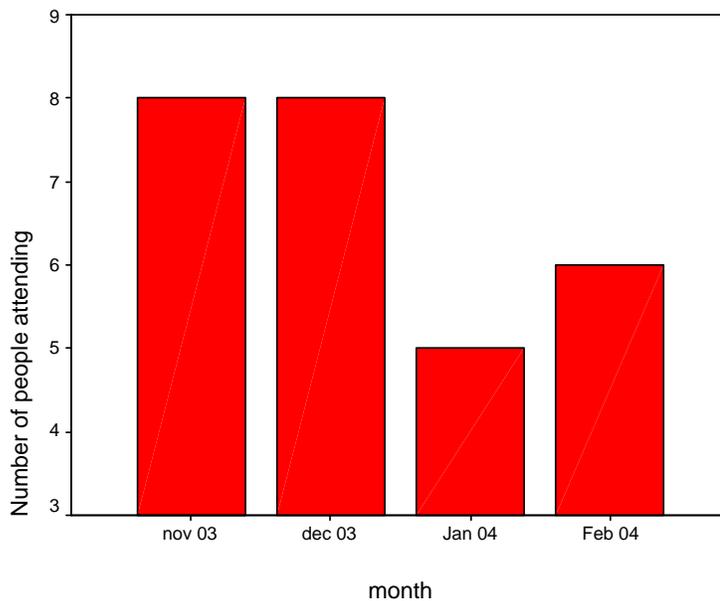


Figure 2. Number of people attending the Relate Counselling.

This service began with 8 people attending, remaining steady in November and December 2003 but declining thereafter. It is notable that, unlike many other activities, there was no decline in the month of December.

### Activity 18: Job Centre Plus

Only 3 people attended Job Centre Plus - another example of an activity with poor attendance.

### Activity 19: Keep Fit.

6 people attended the keep fit class in January 2004. Only 4 people did so in February 2004. Again, this is an activity which is either not addressing the general needs of the community or is suffering due to poor awareness/lack of publicity.

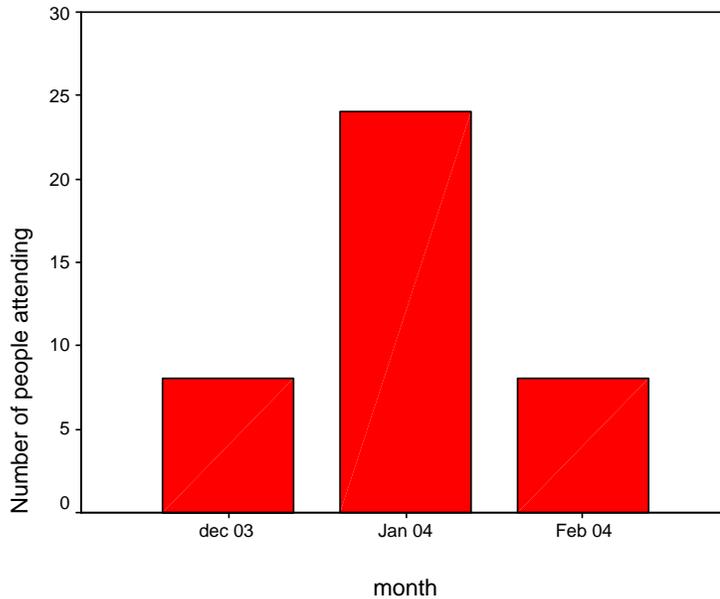
### Activity 20: Making Choices - Training for Childcare Workers

9 people enrolled in September 2003 and 7 attended in the following month. There are no attendance figures thereafter.

### Activity 21: Parent and Baby

20 people attended the Parent and Baby activity in January 2004. Although this decreased in February 2004 to 11 people, the figures are higher than those for most other activities.

### Activity 22: Parent and Toddler Group



*Figure 3: Number of people attending the Parent and Toddler Group.*

Numbers for this activity were low in December 2003 (8). They increased threefold to 24 in January 2004. However, by February 2004 the numbers return to the same low level as December. This often poor and variable attendance at an activity essentially addressing core Sure Start aims raises cause for concern. It is unfortunate that these figures were not available for more months and it would be useful for Sure Start to look closely at the attendance rates for this group if it is continuing. If attendance remains low, it would be helpful to determine why this is.

**Activity 23: Parent Focus Groups**

Only 2 people attended the Parent Focus Group, suggesting that parents are unwilling to participate in focus groups. This is a cause for concern as the views of parents are vital for the success of Sure Start. Perhaps an alternative for gaining parents opinions could be found, or incentives given for taking part. However, it is believed that the group is now well established – with 19 people attending in October 2004.

**Activity 24: Forest Skills Outing**

20 people attended the Forest Skills outing in Stanley Park in August 2003. The outing was extremely well planned and conducted and would have been a fascinating and informative experience for the participants. While there is no direct evidence for this, such outings are potentially a good way to attract new people to Sure Start.

**Activity 25: Talktime**

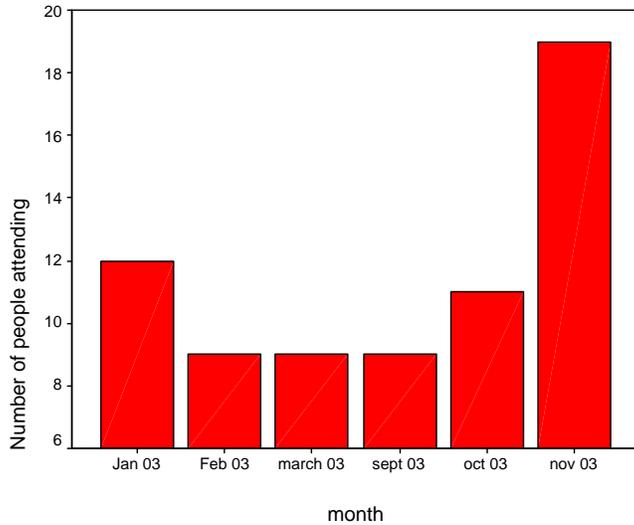


Figure 4: Number of people attending Talktime

This activity seems to have attracted a relatively low number of attendees throughout the months to October 2003, but in November the number of people attending increased to 19. It might be useful to explore reasons underlying this increase, which is good to see.

**Activity 26: Teddy Bears’ Picnic**

9 people attended the Teddy Bears Picnic in August 2003. This is another successful holiday activity, which should be repeated.

**Activity 27: Teen Parent Group**

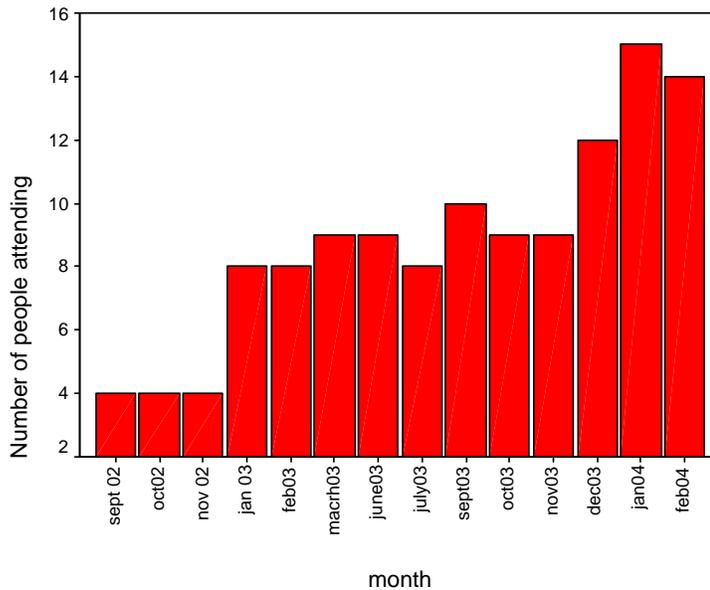


Figure 5: Number of parents attending the Teen Parent Group

This activity has become increasingly well attended. It would be useful for Sure Start to study the reasons underlying its success in attracting a regular and rising attendance. The attendance figure for November 2004 (42) suggests that this has been done.

**Activity 28: Teenage Parents Cooking Class**

This activity was designed to teach the cooking of a Christmas dinner. It attracted 13 attendees and may be worth considering for annual repetition or as a longer course.

**Activity 29: Tots Time and Stepping Stones Story**

Although this activity was not very popular in the initial month it ran (4 people), its popularity increased in December to 9 people. Therefore, it may be worth considering for the future.

**Activity 30: Toys R Us**

This outing to Toys-R-Us in November 2003 was for 4 invited teenage parents.

**Activity 31: Trip to Wigan (Haigh Hall)**

37 people (plus Sure Start staff) attended the trip to Haigh Hall outside Wigan in August 2003. This was clearly a popular trip, which was a collaborative exercise between several Sure Starts in north-west England – organized by Sure Start Ribbleton. It would have been beneficial for people from different Sure Starts to meet and it is to be hoped that similar trips will be organized in future.

**Activity 32: You Make the Difference**

7 people attended this activity. However, figures were only available for 1 month (January 2003), even though the activity is a monthly one.

**Activity 33: Official Launch**

200 people attended the Official Launch in June 2003.

### **3b. Summary and Recommendations**

Before making recommendations, it should be noted firstly that the recommendations are based on the data which has been provided, which may under-represent the activity which actually occurred. Some of the activities were organized through the City Learning Centre, who measured attendance only on the first day of the activity. Some activities were for hand-picked and invited people. Nevertheless, the following points can be made:

- Grange Park Sure Start has offered a wide range of activities and courses across the period covered.
- All activities are based on parent consultation and are well publicized
- some activities are, nevertheless, short-lived and poorly attended.
- Many of the 'one off'/day out activities have been very successful. They are often proposed by staff, who complete a proposal form, undertake a risk assessment and obtain feedback. The paperwork for the Bug Busting activity was shown to the evaluation team as an example of this good practice and both the general approach and the activity itself were regarded as excellent.
- Relatively few of the activities have a sufficiently high attendance rate to suggest that they should be continued (examples are: the Teenage Parents Cooking and the Bug Busting Day).
- A long term activity, which attracts reasonably high numbers, is the Teen Parent Group which began with a low number of attendees. However the attendance increased over time. A possible general strategy for the future could be to continue an activity for a few months to form a clear measure of its popularity.
- Many activities have poor attendance such as the Community Arts Course and the DIY activity. Low attendance figures suggest that activities need to be reviewed and possibly discontinued or modified in some way to make them more appealing.
- Some activities begin with high numbers only to decline dramatically in the following month. Some evaluation of what attendees expected to gain from these activities (or indeed why they chose to attend the first month) could be valuable here.
- Attendance figures alone should not be the only reason for continuing an activity. Even though relatively small numbers of children or adults attend a course they may gain a great deal. Certain activities, such as the popular trips and parties, may provide an access point which enables previous non-attendees to become more involved in Sure Start or helps them to find out more about services that Sure Start can provide.
- These activities for selected and invited families were carefully designed for the participants.
- These activities is regarded as very effective and as having considerable impact

The main recommendations arising from a review of the activities data are for Sure Start:-

- To continue the range of successful activities provided
- To seek to introduce new activities, whenever opportunities arise
- To seek to improve record-keeping of attendance data
- To evaluate activities, wherever possible
- to review, and aim to revitalise, their publicity and awareness raising strategies.
- to identify causes and activities that will help them to move towards specific Sure Start targets
- when a new activity is launched, to actively continue recruitment and publicity for at least the first 2 or 3 weeks of its running.
- to seek parental involvement in any of the above.

## **4. Minutes of Management/Partnership Board Meeting (June 2003 – February 2004)**

### **4a. Composition and Attendance**

Sure Start Grange Park has held separate monthly Management and Partnership Meetings from the beginning. Until the building was completed in Spring 2003, meetings were held at Chepstow Court, which is situated on Grange Park.

*In February 2004 the Management and Partnership groups were merged.*

The **Management Board** was comprised of:

- Assistant Director of Children's Services (Acting Chair)
- NHS Trust – Child and Family Health
- Neighbourhood Manager (Housing)
- Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator
- Head Teacher from local primary school
- Governor from primary school
- Education Psychology
- Parent Representatives (2)
- Homestart representative

In attendance

- Programme Manager
- Administrator
- Finance Officer
- Evaluation Team member

The **Partnership Board** was comprised of:

- Housing Manager (Chair)
- Homestart representative
- Priest from local church
- Police representative
- Housing Association representative
- Head Teachers from local primary school (2)
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Midwife
- Health Visitor
- Educational Psychologist
- Grange Park Youth Worker
- Parent Representatives (9)

In attendance

- Programme Manager
- Administrator
- Evaluation Team member

### Attendance – Management Meetings

	June 03	July 03	Sept. 03	Oct. 03	Nov. 03	Dec. 03	Jan. 04	Total
Parent			✓					1
Comm. Dev. wkr	✓	✓						2
Social services								0
NHS Trust		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5
Housing	✓			✓			✓	3
Teenage Pregnancy			✓	✓			✓	3
Head Teacher								0
School Governor				✓				1
Ed. Psych.	✓				✓	✓	✓	4
Homestart rep.	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	5
College				✓				1
<b>Total attendance</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	

### Attendance – Partnership Meetings

	June 03	July 03	Sept. 03	Oct. 03	Nov. 03	Feb 03 (Amalgamated Group)	Total
Parents	✓ (2)	✓ (1)	✓ (3)	✓ (1)		✓ (4)	4
Housing Assoc.		✓	✓	✓	✓		4
Homestart	✓ (3)	✓	✓		✓	✓ (2)	5
Clergy		✓	✓				2
Community Police							0
Speech and Language							0
Health Visitor		✓					1
Ed. Psych.							0
Schools rep.			✓				1
Housing		✓		✓	✓		3
Social Services						✓	1
City Learning Centre						✓	1
<b>Total attendance</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	

## Attendance

### For the Management Board Meeting:

The attendance figures for both boards are disappointing.

- A Home-start representative attended more than 5 of the 7 meetings
- The average was 2.27 (management board meeting attended) out of 7. Social Services representatives and headteachers did not attend any meetings
- Parent, school governor and college representatives attended one meeting.

### For the Partnership Board Meetings:

- Only 3 representatives attended 4 or more of the 6 meetings
- The average attendance was 1.83 (meetings attended) out of 6
- The community police, Speech and Language and Educational Psychology representatives did not attend any meeting
- The Health Visitor, Schools, Social Services and City Learning Centre representatives attended only one meeting.

### **The conclusions from these figures seem clear. They are that:**

- An absence of continuity of attendance must adversely affect the functioning of both boards.
- Major partners are not making an input at the board level or are doing so very intermittently
- Sure Start Grange Park should review board membership and/or timing of meetings in order to improve attendance.

## 4b. Business and Activities

### A Typical Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Programme Managers Report
5. Publicity and Outreach
6. Finance Report
7. Evaluation Report

Any other business

- **Publicity and promotion** – Two outreach workers distributed information packs to appropriate families in the Grange park area
  - Sure Start Calendar distributed with the Council Tax Forms
  - Sure Start Booklet provided with child's birth certificate
  - Sure Start Year Planner produced for families
  - Posters and information at appropriate points
  - Purchase of display boards
  - Open Day
  - Christmas Market
- **Training and information activities**
  - Training and information Day
  - Benefits Advice day
  - Consultation with families about service provision
  - Child Accident Prevention week

- Newsletter produced
  - Staff Child Protection procedures and policies developed and staff training delivered (July 2003)
  - Jobs Fayre (March 2004)
  - Training sub-group formed
  - Health Roadshow held in March 2004
- **Staffing**
    - Recruitment of Nursery Staff (Spring 2003) Nursery opened in September 2003
    - Subsequent recruitment of Health Visitor, Early Learning in Families Worker, Dad's Worker, Families Development Worker, Receptionist, Creche workers (2) Deputy Programme Manager/Child Care Co-ordinator, Librarian, Outreach Worker,
    - The café supervisor has increased her hours in response to the increased use of the facility.
- **Services and courses**
    - Children's Early Years Centre – providing early education & Child Care facilities
    - Training rooms for adult education and local community based agencies
    - Community Café
    - Health Visitor
    - Midwife
    - Speech and Language Therapist
    - Early Learning with families (ELF worker)
    - Early Years librarian
    - Teenage Pregnancy/Parenting support
    - Health and Dental Health, Healthy Eating and Personal Hygiene promotion
    - Accident prevention – support and advice
    - Childminding network
    - Additional learning resources for children aged 0-5 years
    - Counselling service provided by Relate
    - Support for good quality play, learning and child care
    - Family support coordinator
    - Volunteer service – provided by Homestart
    - Legal advice drop in
    - Welfare Rights/Finance drop ins
    - Dads groups
    - Community events and trips/visits
    - Personal Development sessions – Confidence building, Parenting, Basic Food Hygiene
- **Future Services**
    - Mother and Toddler groups
    - Baby Massage
    - Gardening/growing fruit and vegetable on local allotments
    - DIY information days at B&Q
    - Information Technology courses
    - Keep fit
    - Arts and crafts

The newly amalgamated Partnership Team met on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004. 4 parents attended the meeting and were supported by the community development worker.

At this meeting it was reported that Sure Start Grange Park were working with 260 families and the visiting service was going well.

56 children were attending the nursery and it was suggested that as Social Services fund free nursery places, Sure Start could also fund some free and respite places to perhaps give foster carers a break.

Current Services include:

- ❑ You make the difference course (SLT)
- ❑ Happy Families course – for parents experiencing behaviour management problems
- ❑ Keep Fit (at Christ the King youth centre)
- ❑ Links with the City Learning Centre are being developed to increase the amount of training
- ❑ A Health Roadshow was held on Grange Park estate in March
- ❑ A jobs fair was also held in March

#### **4c. Summary and Recommendations**

Sure Start Grange Park has forged positive relationships with the local community and community and voluntary agencies. The provision of facilities and services has been carefully and successfully negotiated with other providers to ensure effective access by local families.

- *However it is important that Sure Start builds on the current involvement with parents so that they may be part of the decision making process and develop their own skills and potential.*
- *This involvement includes volunteering, membership of the partnership team, providing input to the team through focus groups and user satisfaction and feedback processes.*

## **5. Baseline Survey**

### **5a. Background and Objectives**

Research staff collected baseline data via a parent survey on behalf of Sure Start Grange Park. This was in adherence to national Sure Start guidance to find out the views, experiences and needs of parents with regard to service provision and use. The main aims of the survey were as follows:

- To determine the services used by parents in the Grange Park area and to seek their views of current service provision, including education, social, health and other childcare services.
- To determine whether Sure Start Grange Park is reaching parents, their children and the wider community and is providing services that they are interested in using.
- To assess local service needs and highlight and recommend possible changes which Sure Start Grange Park could make to add value to existing services.
- To provide detailed baseline information allowing for future comparisons (for example, measurement of progression and improvement of service provision).

### **5b. Method of Evaluation**

179 addresses were provided by Sure Start Grange Park of parents living in the area with Sure Start aged children. Those parents were contacted by letter, informing them of the survey and asking if they would like to take part. An incentive was offered to those who responded (entry into a draw for a £25 voucher for Boots). The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative and qualitative information, to gain an understanding of parents' experiences of local services, and whether parents and their children have access to the services they need. It included questions on family details, different service use and views about different aspects of those services, such as the location and cost of different services. Parents were also asked to indicate which services they would use, if they were available nearby, and were given the opportunity to make any comments about the childcare services in the Grange Park area. Due to a low response rate a number of questionnaires were left at the Sure Start centre and given to parents using services. 42 parents or guardians completed the questionnaire altogether. This is a disappointing total number of responses and, although it has been suggested that people in Grange park do not respond to postal questionnaires, it remains unclear why so few addresses were made available for the survey.

Parents were asked if they would be willing to talk further to a member of the evaluation team about their views of childcare services. A further incentive was offered to those who agreed to talk with a member of the team (entry into a draw for a further £25 voucher for Boots). 21 respondents who indicated they would like to take part in a further discussion were invited by letter to attend a meeting in their local area. Crèche facilities were to be made available for those who needed them.

Questionnaire data is reported first followed by a summary of the information arising from focus group discussions.

### **5c. Family Profiles**

#### **1.1 Number of children**

##### *Q1a How many children do you have altogether?*

The 42 parents completing the survey had a total of 104 children. No mothers indicated they were pregnant at the time of data collection (although parents were not directly asked this). 28.6 % had one child, 35.7 % had two children, 14.3% had three children, 7.1 % had four children, 9.5% had five

children and 4.8% had six children. 78.6% of parents responding had one, two or three children. The numbers of children per parent/guardian responding averaged at 2.5 children (mean). This information can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Number of children	Frequency of parents	Percentage of parents
1	12	28.6
2	15	35.7
3	6	14.3
4	3	7.1
5	4	9.5
6	2	4.8
Total	42	100.0

Table 1. Number and percentage of parents/guardian with 1-6 children

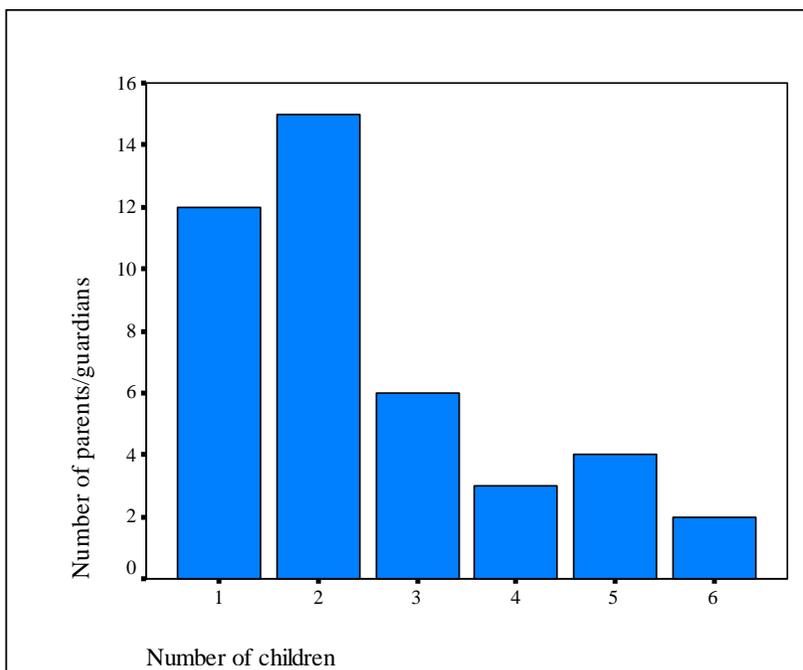


Figure 1: Number of Children per Parent/Guardian.

## **1.2 Age and gender of children**

### *Q1b How old are your children? Are they boys or girls?*

Parents indicated the ages of their children. 31.1 % of children were over 4 years of age and 68.8 % of children were under 4 years of age. Table 2 illustrates the number and percentage of children in each age category

Age of child	Number of children	Percentage of children
Under 1	9	8.7%
Over 1 but under 2	9	8.7%
Over 2 but under 3	15	14.4%
Over 3 but under 4	11	10.6%
Over 4	60	57.7%
Total	104	100.0%

Table 2: Number and Percentage of children in each age category.

47.1% of children were male and 49.0% were female. Three parents who had four children between them did not indicate their children’s gender (3.8%).

**1.3 Relationship of respondent to child**

*Q1c What is your relationship to the children who are under 4 years?*

40 respondents indicated their relationship to the children under 4 years, whilst 2 did not. The majority of responses came from the mothers of the children.

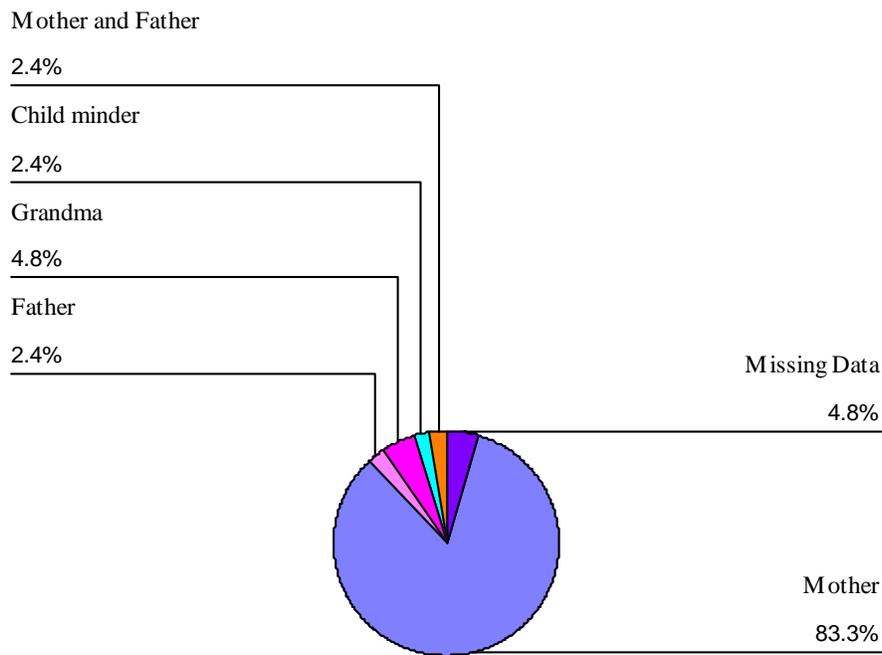


Figure 2. Relationship of respondent to child

**2. Childcare services for children under 4**

**2.1 Breastfeeding**

*Q1d Did you breastfeed any of your children?*

All 42 parents/guardians answered this question. 42.9% (18) reported that their children were breastfed, whilst 57.1% (24) said their children were not breastfed.

*Q1e If yes, how long did you breastfeed for?*

17 respondents answered this question. Their answers were coded into categories. Two parents/guardians gave two responses, one for each of their child. An average was taken in order to allocate them to an appropriate category. The majority of parents/guardians indicated they breastfed between 3-5 weeks.

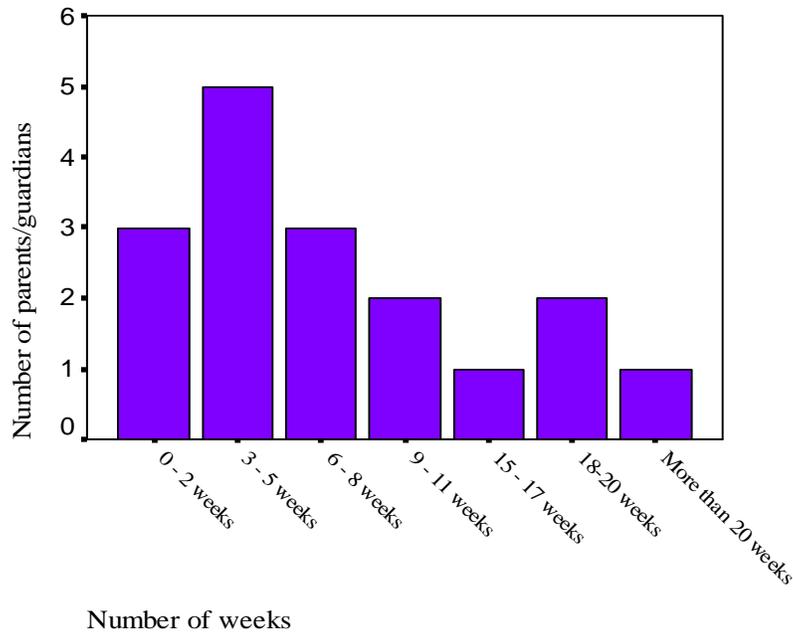


Figure 3. Number of weeks spent breastfeeding

**Q1f. Did you get support for breastfeeding?**

19 parents/guardians answered this question. One parent/guardian who indicated in the previous question that they did not breastfeed felt able to answer this question about support (indicating support was not received). 23 parents/guardians did not respond to this question, probably assuming that it was not relevant because they did not breastfeed.

68.4% of respondents to this question (13) indicated that there was support for breastfeeding, whilst 31.6% of respondents (6) reported that there was no support.

12 parents/guardians indicated where they received the support, some of them giving more than one source. Table 3 shows their responses. It is evident that breastfeeding support was received from a range of sources, but mainly support was received from midwives.

Table 3. Sources of support for breastfeeding (as indicated by respondents)

Source of support	Number of respondents indicating each source of support for breastfeeding
Midwife	6
Community Midwife	1
Health Visitor	3
Doctors	1
Nurses	1
Blackpool Victoria Hospital	2
Connects	1
Videos	1
Family	1
Mother	2
Friends with children	1

**Q1g Did you get any weaning advice or support?**

39 parents answered this question. 71.8% of respondents (28) reported that they did get advice and support for weaning, whilst 28.2% of parents (11) reported that they received no support or advice.

26 parents/guardians indicated where they received the weaning advice and support, some of them giving more than one source. Table 4 shows their responses.

*Table 4. Sources of advice and support for weaning (as indicated by respondents)*

Source of advice and support	Number of respondents indicating each source of advice and support for weaning
Midwife	6
Health Visitor	15
Doctors	1
Health Clinics	1
Baby Clinic (at Doctors Surgery)	2
Blackpool Victoria Hospital	2
Home Start	2
Brochures and magazines	1
Family	1
Mother	1
Friends with children	2

**2:2 Nursery Education**

**Q2a Where do you take your child/ren under 4 and leave them for nursery education?**

38 respondents indicated whether their child/children under 4 receive nursery education or not. 4 respondents did not provide such information. It is assumed that this is because they do not take their child/ren under 4 anywhere for nursery education. 13.2% of respondents (5) who did answer this question said that their child/ren under 4 receive no form of nursery education. 6 parents indicated 2 places they take their child/ren under 4 and leave them for nursery education.

*Table 5. Number of children receiving different types of nursery education*

Where child receives nursery education	Number of children
Toddler Groups	6
Nursery Class (in primary school)	8
Playgroup/pre-school	10
Nowhere	5

Some parents responded ‘other’ and were asked to specify the nursery education received by their child. Table 6 illustrates those responses (as indicated by parents). It is important to remember that indicated ‘others’ do not represent accurate use of the services mentioned. Although some respondents used the categories listed in the questionnaire to indicate the use of different types of nursery education and other respondents used the category ‘other’ the actual services used could be the same. For example, although some parents indicated ‘other’ as the Sure Start nursery, other users of the Sure Start nursery could have used the category ‘playgroup/pre-school’ to indicate their use of the Sure Start nursery.

Table 6: Other places parents leave their children (as indicated by respondents)

Activity	Number of parents attending with their children
Home Start	2
Nursery	1
College nursery	1
Sure Start nursery	3
Sure Start	1

### **2:3 Parent and child activities**

#### *Q2b Where do you go with your child/ren under 4 and stay with them?*

33 of the 42 respondents answered this question. It is assumed that the 9 non-respondents do not take their child/ren under 4 anywhere and stay with them. 6 (18.2%) of those who did respond to this question indicated that they do not go anywhere with their child/ren under 4 and stay with them. Some parents/guardians indicated that they take their child/ren under 4 to more than one activity. Table 7 indicates where parents go with their child/ren under 4 and stay with them. The most commonly used service was that of drop-ins and toddler groups.

Table 7 Places that parents go and stay with their children

Activity	Number of parents attending with their children
Drop in/Toddler Group	10
Family Centre	7
Dad's Group	1
Sure Start centre	13

Again, a number of respondents said that they take their child/ren under 4 and stay with them to activities that were not mentioned in the list provided on the questionnaire (indicated as 'other'). Those services are:

- Home Start (7)
- Swimming (1)

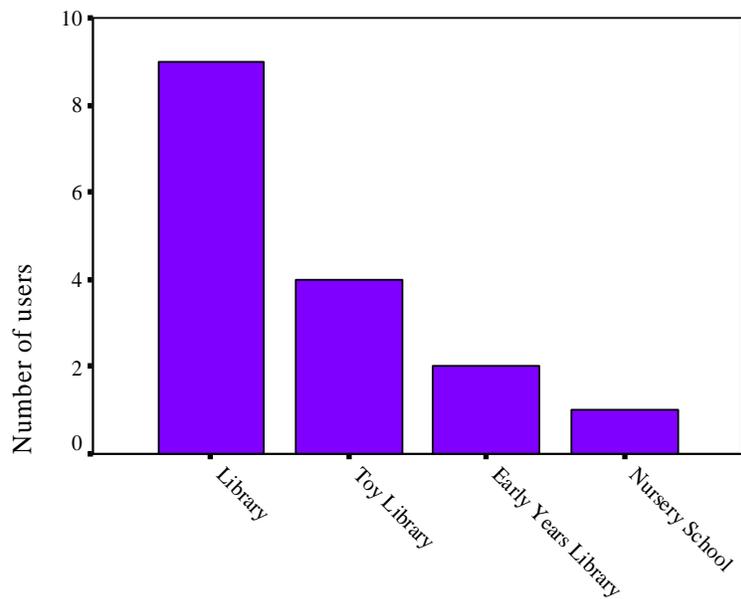
Again, it is important to remember that indicated 'others' do not represent accurate use of the services mentioned. For example, although 7 people indicated their 'other' as 'Home Start' the Family Centre option in the previous question could have been used for indication of use of Home Start.

### **2.4 Borrowing of books and/or toys**

#### *Q2c Do you borrow books and/or toys for your child under 4? If yes, where do you go to borrow the books and/or toys?*

3 parents did not respond to this question. Out of those who did respond, 12 (30.8%) indicated that they borrow books and/or toys for their children under 4; whilst 27 respondents (69.2%) said they do not.

Parents who do borrow books and/or toys were asked to indicate where they borrow them from (see Figure 4). 4 parents gave 2 sources for borrowing books and/or toys. The majority of parents borrow their books and/or toys from the local library.



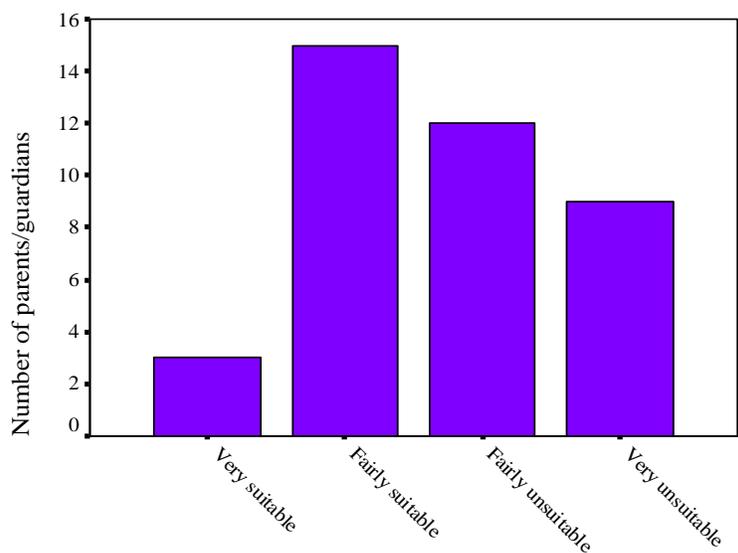
Source for borrowing books and/or toys

Figure 4. Number of parents using different sources for borrowing books and/or toys

**2:5. Playing Outside**

*Q2d How suitable are the outside play areas for your children in the area?*

39 parents responded to this question (3 did not), rating the suitability of the outside play areas in the area as shown in Figure 5. The majority of respondents find the outside play areas ‘fairly suitable’ for their child/ren under 4 (38.5%), although a total of 53.9% of respondents feel that the outside play areas are either ‘fairly unsuitable’ or ‘very unsuitable’ for children under 4.



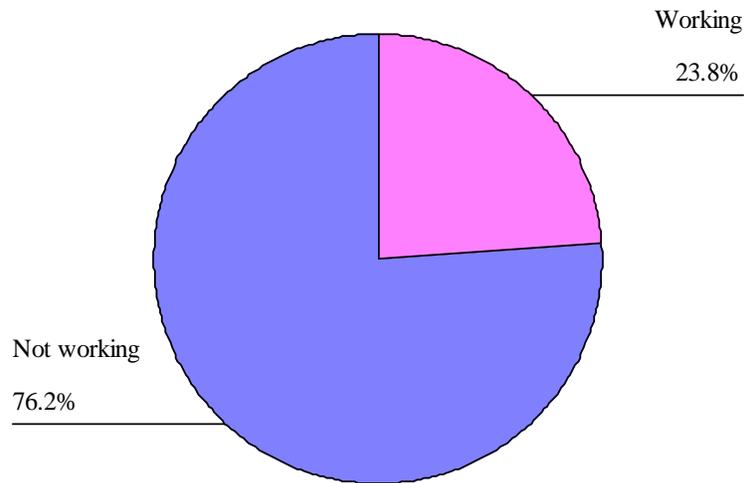
Suitability of outside play areas

Figure 5. Rating of suitability of outside play areas

## **2:6 Employment and education/training**

### *Q3a Do you work?*

23.8% (10) of respondents responded that they do work, whilst 76.2% (32) indicated that they do not. Figure 6 shows this information.



*Figure 6. Employment levels of respondents*

### *Do you go to any kind of education or training?*

Whilst 59.5% (25) of respondents said that they are not taking part in any training or education, 31.0% (13) indicated that they are. Four respondents (9.5%) did not indicate whether they are undertaking any education or training.

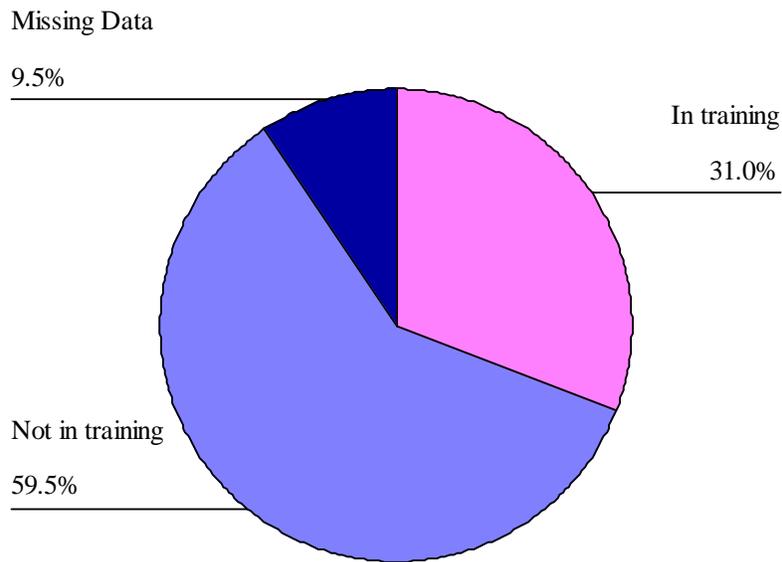


Figure 7. Percentage of respondents undertaking education or training

## **2.7 Childcare whilst working or in education/training**

### *If YES to either, where do you get childcare in order to do these things?*

19 parents indicated where they get childcare in order to go out to work or undertake education or training. Some of the respondents (10) indicated that they use more than one type of childcare, in order to go out to work or education/training. As shown in Table 8 parents rely most on relatives and friends or neighbours, indicating good levels of social support. Nurseries are the next most used type of childcare.

Table 8. Types of childcare used whilst in employment or education

Type of childcare	Number of respondents using each service
Friends or neighbours	2
Nursery	7
Pre-school playgroup	3
Childminder	1
Relatives	7

**Other types of childcare used whilst parents are at work or in education/training include the following:**

- Husband (2)
- Child's Father (1)
- Home Start crèche (1)
- Sure Start (4)

## **2:8 Services used now and in the past**

### *Q3b Which of the following services have you ever used for any of your children now or in the past?*

Table 9 shows the services used by parent/guardians at the time of interview. 26.2% of parents did not indicate any service they are currently using, whilst 73.8% (31) indicated that they are using at least one of the listed services or indicated a service not listed. 19 parents are using at least 2 different services, 10 are using at least 3 different services and 5 respondents are using 4 different services altogether. 4 respondents are using 5 services and 3 responding to using 6 different services. Sure Start Grange Park is the service most currently used, with Home Start indicated as the service receiving the second most use.

*Table 9. Number of parents using different services at time of interview*

<b>Name of Service</b>	<b>Number of parents using the service</b>
Grange Park Sure Start Nursery	<i>15</i>
Christ The King Nursery	<i>1</i>
Christ The King Play Group	<i>2</i>
Boundary School Nursery	<i>7</i>
Parent and Toddler Group- Home Start	<i>9</i>
Family Group- Home Start	<i>11</i>
City Learning Centre	<i>7</i>
Children's/Early Years Centre- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>3</i>
Learning Resources for 0-5 year olds- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>2</i>
Teenage Pregnancy Support- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>1</i>
Parenting support- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>4</i>
Play support- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>-</i>
Learning support- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>-</i>
Child care support- Sure Start Grange Park	<i>1</i>
Counselling Service by RELATE	<i>8</i>

- **One parent indicated using Home Start.**

Table 10 shows the services used by parents in the past. 15 parents indicated they had used at least one of the listed services in the past or indicated a service not listed. 8 parents had used at least 2 services in the past, 5 had used at least 3 different services, 3 indicated at least 4 different services they had used in the past, one respondent indicated use of 5 different services in the past and one indicated use of 6 altogether.

*Table 10. Number of parents using different services in the past*

Name of Service	Number of parents using the service
Grange Park Sure Start Nursery	2
Christ The King Nursery	3
Christ The King Play Group	2
Boundary School Nursery	7
Parent and Toddler Group- Home Start	6
Family Group- Home Start	3
City Learning Centre	1
Children's/Early Years Centre- Sure Start Grange Park	1
Learning Resources for 0-5 year olds- Sure Start Grange Park	2
Teenage Pregnancy Support- Sure Start Grange Park	1
Parenting support- Sure Start Grange Park	2
Play support- Sure Start Grange Park	-
Learning support- Sure Start Grange Park	-
Child care support- Sure Start Grange Park	-
Counselling Service by RELATE	2

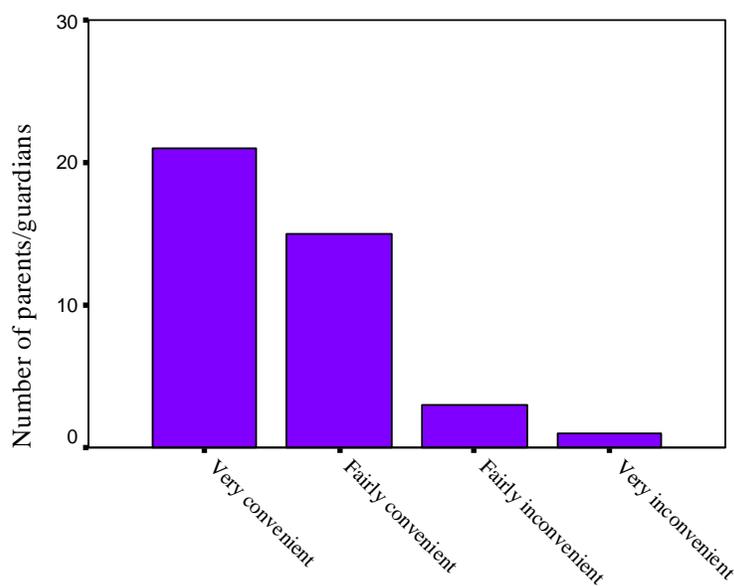
- One parent reported to using a playgroup in the past.

### **3. Satisfaction with services for children under 4**

#### **3.1 Location of services**

##### *Q4a In general, how convenient are the locations of the services you use?*

40 parents rated how convenient they find the locations of services in general. Figure 8 shows that the majority of parents find the locations of services convenient, with 90% (36 respondents) reporting that services are either 'very convenient' or 'fairly convenient', whilst only 10.0% (4 respondents) reported that they find service location 'fairly inconvenient' or 'very inconvenient'.



Convenience of service location

Figure 8. Ratings of service location

Three parents/guardians commented upon the location of services. Two parents/guardians reported that services are close to where they live. One parent reported that when they have to go to the town centre they have to walk because the bus does not have the right space for a pram.

### 3.2 Cost of services

#### Q4b In general, how reasonable is the cost of the services you use?

39 parents rated how reasonable they find the cost of services in general. Figure 9 shows that the vast majority of parents find the cost of services reasonable, with 87.2% (34 respondents) reporting that services are either 'very reasonable' or 'fairly reasonable' in price, whilst only 5.2% (2 respondents) reported that they find the cost of services 'fairly unreasonable' or 'very unreasonable'. Two parents reported they did not know how reasonable the costs of services were.

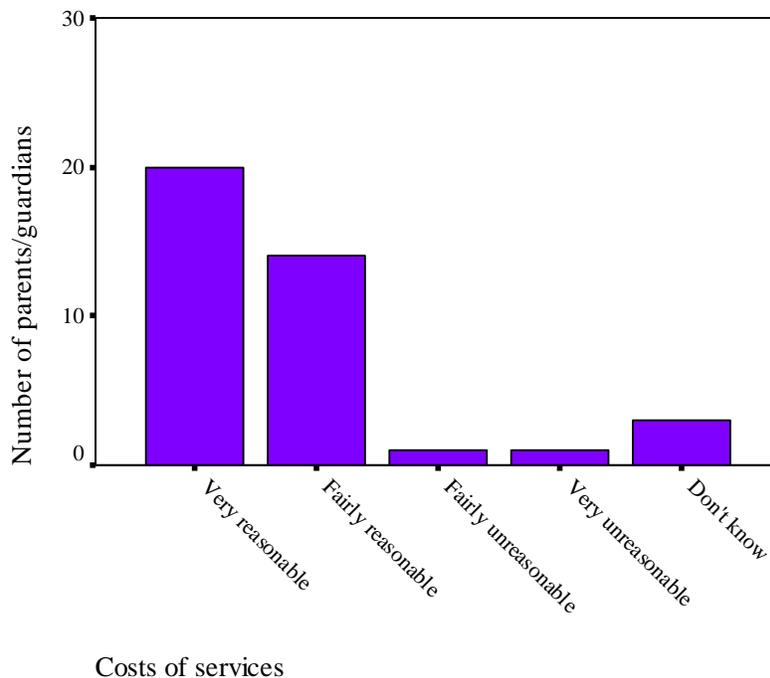


Figure 9. Ratings of cost of services

Parents were given the opportunity to comment upon the cost of services. Three parents explained that they find the services expensive:

- I wish there was a little flexibility with the nursery cost: one session costs £10 and two cost £20.
- It is very expensive for Sure Start.

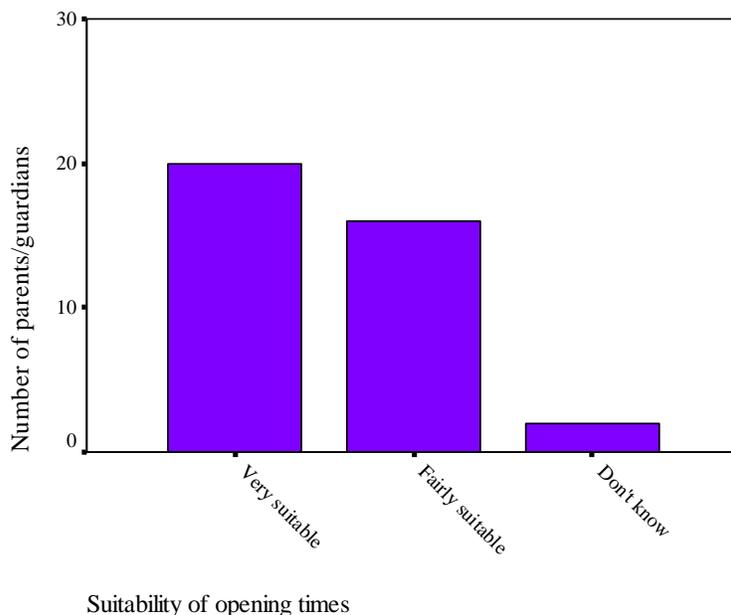
Two other parents commented on the expense of Sure Start but expressed satisfaction with the service received:

- For the kind of care I get from Sure Start for my daughter I would pay more than what they ask.
- Sure Start costs more than expected but my child gets a lot out of it.

### **3.3 Opening times of services**

#### *Q4c In general, how suitable are the opening times of the services you use?*

38 parents rated how suitable they find the opening times of services in general. Figure 10 shows that all parents who know about the opening times of services find them suitable, with 94.7% (36 respondents) reporting that services have either 'very suitable' or 'fairly suitable' opening times. 5.3% (2 respondents) reported that they do not know about the opening times whilst no parents described finding the opening times of services 'fairly unsuitable' or 'very unsuitable'.



*Figure 10. Ratings of opening times of services*

A small number of parents/guardians explained the problems and barriers they face in accessing different childcare services when they are trying to work. Some parents described clashes between work hours and opening hours of childcare services. Comments were also made about opening times of services/sessions not being long enough.

- I work 3pm-11pm and they are not open then.
- Why can't they be open longer? Sometimes my son has to miss out because I have to collect his sister from nursery.

### **3.4 Improvement in the area over the last year**

#### *Q4d In general, to what extent do you think the quality of services providing family support have improved in the last year?*

38 parents/guardians responded to this question. 7.9% (3) of those responding indicated they did not know whether the family support services had improved. The majority of parents/guardians (63.2%) felt that the area had improved a lot with respect to family support services. 23.7% felt it had improved a little, whilst 5.3% felt it had not improved very much. No respondent said the area had not improved at all. Figure 11 reflects their responses.

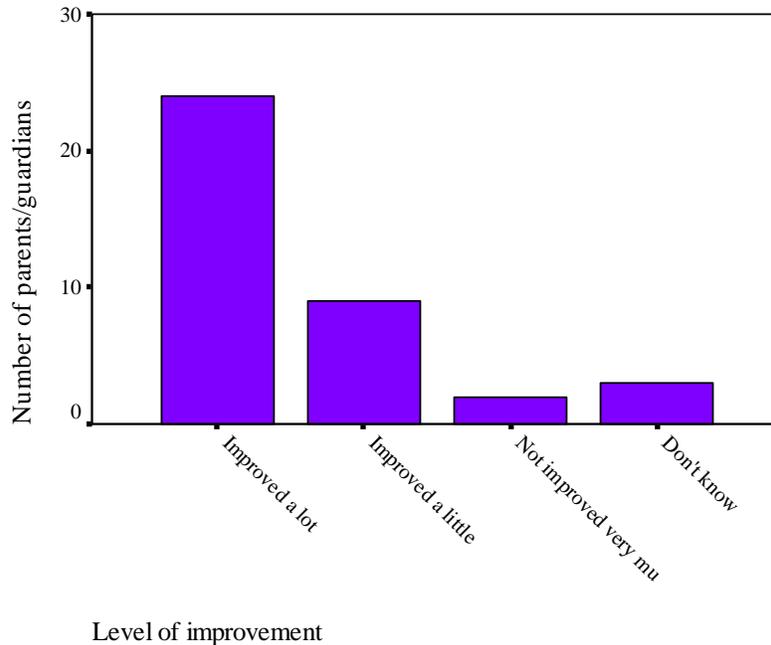


Figure 11. Ratings of improvement of services in the area

Some parents commented upon the level of improvement in family support services over the past year in the Grange Park area. Their comments are as follows:

- In certain ways it has improved a lot, like the counselling, advice and volunteer work, lifts to the hospital etc. Now my children are over 5 I feel there is not enough places on this estate for them.
- You can call in for any help, support and advice.
- I am always being advised about new activities that are being run.
- They have improved a lot since the opening of Sure Start Grange Park.

#### **4. Health Services**

##### **4.1 Registration with a GP service**

###### *Q5a Are you registered with a GP/doctor?*

42 parents responded to this question and 100 % said that they are registered with a GP/doctor.

##### **4:2 Location of GP service**

###### *Q5b Is the GP/Doctor/Health Centre within pram-pushing distance?*

All parents/guardians responded to this question. 83.3% of respondents (35) indicated that the GP/Doctor/Health Centre is within pram-pushing distance, whereas 16.7% (7) said that it is not. Judgments about what distance is a 'walking distance' may vary greatly between parents.

##### **4.3 Toys and Books in GP/Doctor's waiting areas**

###### *Q5c Are there any toys or books for child/ren to use in the GP waiting area?*

42 parents responded to this question. 81.0% (34) reported that there are books and toys in the waiting areas of GP services, whilst 19.0% (8) said there are no books or toys for their child/ren to use in the GP waiting area.

#### **4:4 Support and advice sought when child is ill**

##### *Q5d Who are you most likely to ask for advice if your child under 4 is ill?*

Only one parent/guardian did not respond to this question. Some parents wanted to specify more than one person for whom they would approach if their child is ill, whereas others indicated who they are *most* likely to ask for advice. Table 11 illustrates parents' responses. 33 respondents indicated a second source of advice for when their child is ill, 18 specified three people they would seek advice from when their child is ill, 6 indicated four sources of advice and 2 parents indicated five sources of advice for when their child is unwell. Overall, 63.4% of parents indicated their GP/Doctor as someone they would ask for advice if their child under 4 is ill, with 51.2% indicating their health visitor as a source of advice.

*Table 11. Number of parents reporting use of each source of advice when their child under 4 is ill*

<b>Source of advice</b>	<b>Number of parents indicating who they would approach for advice</b>
<b>GP/Doctor</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>NHS Direct</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Health Visitor</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Sure Start Health Visitor</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Sure Start Midwife</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sure Start Speech and Language Therapist</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hospital</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Friends or neighbours</b>	<b>4</b>

Two parents indicated Home Start as one of their sources of support and advice for when their child under 4 is ill. Another said they refer to books or the internet.

#### **4.5 Support and advice sought when child is not sleeping/eating.**

##### *Q5e Who are you most likely to ask for advice if your child under 4 is not sleeping or eating or has other behavioural difficulties?*

41 parents/guardians indicated who they would ask for advice if their child under 4 is not sleeping or eating (one did not). Again, some parents wanted to specify more than one person for whom they would approach if their child is not sleeping, whereas others indicated who they are *most* likely to ask for advice. 30 respondents indicated a second source of advice for when their child is not sleeping or eating, 14 specified three people they would seek advice from when their child is not sleeping or eating, 6 parents indicated a fourth source of advice and 2 indicated a fifth. Only one parent/guardian indicated 6 sources of support and advice. Table 12 illustrates parents' responses. It can be seen that 58.5% of parents indicated their health visitor to be a source of advice if their child under 4 has behavioural difficulties, but family and GPs are another major source of advice.

Table 12. Number of parents reporting use of each source of advice when their child under 4 is not sleeping or eating

Source of advice	Number of parents indicating who they would approach for advice
Community Support Worker	2
GP/Doctor	18
Health Visitor	24
Sure Start Health Visitor	15
Sure Start Midwife	1
Sure Start Speech and Language Therapist	4
Hospital Outpatients	2
Family	16
Friends or neighbours	7

Other sources of support and advice, as indicated by respondents, are as follows:

- Early Learning with Families (ELF) worker (1)
- Home Start (3)
- Paediatrician at hospital (1)

#### **4.6 Special Tests**

*Q5f. Do you have to take your child under 4 anywhere for special tests or treatment?*

*Q5g. If Yes, what kind of special health service do you use for you child under 4?*

*Q5h. Where do you get this special health service for your child under 4?*

41 parents responded to this question (one did not). 26.8% of respondents (11) indicated that their child/ren under 4 have special tests of some kind. Table 13 shows the kind of special health service used by parents. Some parents use more than one special health service for their child under 4. 5 parents use two different special health services for their child under 4, 2 parents use three different services and one parent/guardian uses four different special health services. The majority of children aged under 4 undergoing special tests or treatments are seen by a Speech and Language Therapist.

Table 13. Type of special health services used by parents

Type of special health service	Number of parents using each service
Speech and Language Therapy	8
Hospital Consultant	4
Paediatrician	1
Child Psychology	1
Development Centre (Blenheim House)	4

Parents were also asked to specify where they received the special health service. Table 14 illustrates their responses. The majority of parents receive the special health service either at the hospital or the development centre.

Table 14. Where parents receive the special health service

Place where special health service received	Number of parents receiving special health service
Hospital	5
Sure Start Grange Park	1
Clinic	1
Development Centre (Blenheim House)	4
School nursery	1
Home	1

#### **4.7 Dental Care**

##### *Q5j Where do you get your child under 4's teeth seen to?*

40 parents/guardians responded to this question (2 did not). Of these responding parents 67.5% (27 respondents) said they take their child/ren under 4 to the dentist. Only 5.0% (2 respondents) said their child/ren under 4 sees the school dentist. One parent indicated that, in addition to using the dentist, they also use the emergency dentist.

27.5 % (11) said they do not take their child/ren under 4 anywhere for dental care, but 5.0% of those indicated this to be because their child is too young. It may be that other parents, who indicated 'nowhere', do not take their child/ren under 4 anywhere for dental care because they are too young, but did not specify this.

#### **4.8 Smoking Behaviours**

##### *Q5k Do you smoke? Does your partner smoke?*

40 parents/guardians responded to the first of these questions (2 did not). 32 respondents indicated whether their partner smokes or not. In some cases non-response could be because respondents do not have a partner, but in other cases it could be that they simply chose not to respond to the question.

55.0% of those respondents (22) answering the first question indicated that they do smoke, whilst 45.0% of respondents (18) indicated they do not smoke.

43.8% of respondents (14) indicated that their partners smoke, whilst 56.3% (18) of partners were reported as being non-smokers.

### **5. Satisfaction with Health Services**

#### **5.1 Satisfaction with location of health services**

##### *Q6a How convenient do you find the location of the health services you use?*

Parents were asked to rate how convenient they find the locations of different health services. Some parent did not provide ratings of convenience for all the services. Table 15 shows the percentage (and number) of parents who gave different ratings of convenience of different health services. The majority of parents find the location of their health services either 'very convenient' or 'fairly convenient' (over 80% in each case).

Table 15. Percentage (and number) of parents/guardians giving different ratings of convenience

Level of convenience	GP	Health Centre	Hospital	Specialist Services	Sure Start Grange Park
Very convenient	63.4% (26)	63.2% (24)	62.5% (25)	90% (9)	81.1% (30)
Fairly convenient	24.4% (10)	23.7% (9)	32.5% (13)	10% (1)	13.5% (5)
Fairly inconvenient	7.3% (3)	7.9% (3)	-	-	2.7% (1)
Very inconvenient	4.9% (2)	5.3% (2)	5% (2)	-	2.7% (1)
Total to respond (out of 42)	41	38	40	10	37

### **5:2 Suitability of opening times of health services**

#### *Q6c How suitable are the opening times of the health services you use?*

Parents were asked to rate how suitable they find the opening times of different health services. Table 16 shows the percentage (and number) of parents who gave different ratings of suitability of the opening times of different health services. The majority of parents rated the opening times of their health services either 'very suitable' or 'fairly suitable' (over 80% in each case).

Table 16. Percentage (and number) of parents giving different ratings of convenience

Level of suitability	GP	Health Centre	Hospital	Specialist Services	Sure Start Grange Park
Very Suitable	52.5% (21)	47.1% (16)	85% (34)	70% (7)	78.8% (26)
Fairly suitable	45% (18)	38.2% (13)	12.5% (5)	30% (3)	21.2% (7)
Fairly unsuitable	-	5.9% (2)	2.5% (1)	-	-

<b>Very unsuitable</b>	<b>2.5% (1)</b>	<b>5.9% (2)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2.9% (1)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total to respond (out of 42)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>

## **6. Main Support**

### **6.1 Sources of support**

#### *Q7a Could you say who gives you most support (both practical and emotional) with your children?*

33 parents indicated who gives them most support with their children. As with other questions, some parents wanted to specify more than one person who provides them with both practical and emotional support with their children, whereas others indicated who gives them the *most* support. Table 17 illustrates parents' responses. 26 respondents indicated a second source of support, 16 specified three people who provide them with the most support and 9 respondents specified four people who provide them with the most support. 5 respondents indicated five sources of support and one respondent indicated six sources of support. A large number of respondents indicated the child's mother/father (24) and their friends (15) as the person who gives them most support with their children, suggesting good levels of social support.

*Table 17. Number of parents reporting different sources of support*

<b>Source of support</b>	<b>Number of parents indicating who they receive the most support from</b>
<b>Child's Mother/Father</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Partner who is not child's parent</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Own Mother</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Own Father</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Partner's Father</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Partner's Mother</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Friends</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Neighbours</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>No-one</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Community Support Worker</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ELF workers (Early Learning for Families)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Health Visitor</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Sure Start Health Visitor</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sure Start Midwife</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Sure Start Nursery Nurse</b>	<b>5</b>

**Parents who responded ‘other’ were asked to specify the support received most with their children. Their responses were as follows:**

- Home Start, with one member of staff named by 2 parents as providing them with the most support (7).
- Sure Start Teenage Support Worker (1).
- Grandparents (1).
- Sister (1).
- Other relatives (1).

## **7. Services Wanted**

### **7.1 Services that would be used if available nearby**

*Q8a Which of the following services, that you do not use already, do you think you would use, if it were available nearby?*

A total of 40 respondents indicated a range of services they would use if available nearby (2 did not). Table 18 illustrates parents’ responses. This information can also be seen in Figure 12.

*Table 18. Percentage (and no.) of parents indicating possible use of different services*

Type of service	Percentage (and number) of parents indicating which services they would use
<b>Advice and Information (in your own language)</b>	
An information service to tell you about all the services available in your area	32.5% (13)
An information service to tell you about welfare benefits	37.5% (15)
Advice on housing issues	22.5% (9)
Legal Advice	35.0% (14)
An advice service to give you help with difficulties in bringing up children such as not sleeping or eating	37.5% (15)
Outreach and visiting to bring information and advice to you in your own home	25.0% (10)
Groups on parenting or child development	27.5% (11)
Accident Prevention	25.0% (10)
<b>Childcare &amp; Services for Children</b>	
A day nursery for children under five, open from 8am to 6pm.	35.0% (14)
A playgroup, where you could regularly leave your children aged two and a half to four for 2 ½ hours in the morning or afternoon.	35.0% (14)
A crèche where you could leave your child for up to 3 hours when you wanted.	50.0% (20)
A drop-in where you would stay with your child, there would be play equipment and staff to organise activities for children and you would both meet other parents and children	40.0% (16)
Toy library	25.0% (10)
A safe clean play area on your estate	77.5% (31)
Loan of safety equipment	30.0% (12)
Mobile library	12.5% (5)
<b>Health</b>	
A dentist who specialises in children	60.0% (24)
Saturday morning GP services	57.5% (23)
Saturday morning family planning clinics	25.0% (10)
Saturday morning baby/immunisation clinics	27.5% (11)

Well women clinics run by women	47.5% (19)
Well man clinics	12.5% (5)
Clinics to help give up smoking	20.0% (8)
The same midwives to see you before and after the baby is born	35.0% (14)
More local services for children with special needs	20.0% (8)
<b>Training</b>	
Confidence Building	30.0% (12)
Parenting Skills	27.5% (11)
Basic Food Hygiene	22.5% (9)

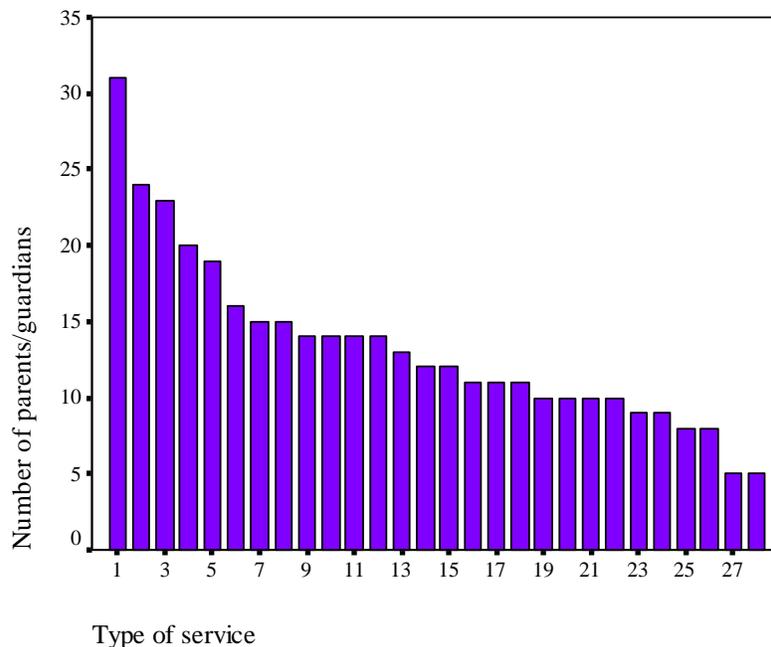


Figure 12. Number of parents indicating different services they would use if available

**Key:**

<b>1</b> A safe clean play area on your estate	<b>15</b> Confidence Building (training)
<b>2</b> A dentist who specialises in children	<b>16</b> Groups on parenting or child development
<b>3</b> Saturday morning GP services	<b>17</b> Saturday morning baby/immunisation clinics
<b>4</b> A crèche where you could leave your child for up to 3 hours when you wanted	<b>18</b> Parenting Skills (training)
<b>5</b> Well women clinics run by women	<b>19</b> Outreach and visiting to bring information and advice to you in your own home
<b>6</b> A drop-in where you would stay with your child, there would be play equipment and staff to organise activities for children and you would both meet other parents and children	<b>20</b> Accident Prevention
<b>7</b> An information service to tell you about welfare benefits	<b>21</b> Toy library
<b>8</b> An advice service to give help with difficulties in bringing up children such as not sleeping or eating	<b>22</b> Saturday morning family planning clinics
<b>9</b> Legal Advice	<b>23</b> Advice on housing issues
<b>10</b> A day nursery for children under five, open from 8am to 6pm	<b>24</b> Basic Food Hygiene (training)
<b>11</b> A playgroup, where you could regularly leave your children aged two and a half to four for 2 ½ hours in	<b>25</b> Clinics to help give up smoking

	the morning or afternoon.		
<b>12</b>	The same midwives to see you before and after the baby is born	<b>26</b>	More local services for children with special needs
<b>13</b>	An information service to tell you about all the services available in your area	<b>27</b>	Mobile library
<b>14</b>	Loan of safety equipment	<b>28</b>	Well man clinics

**Some services appear to be needed by parents in Grange Park area more than others: for example:**

1. 77.5% of responding parents indicated a need for a safe clean play area on their estates.
  - a. *A Grange Park Strategy sub-group has now been set up to look at this issue*
2. 60.0% of responding parents indicated they would use a dentist who specialises in children, if available nearby.
3. 57.5% of respondents indicated they would like a Saturday morning GP service.
4. 50.0% of responding parents indicated they would like a crèche, where they can leave their child for up to 3 hours when they wanted to.
  - a. *It should be noted that Sure Start targets are aimed at improving the quality of interaction between parents and their children. While crèche facilities are provided where possible to enable parents to participate in training etc, it may not be appropriate or possible to provide these facilities to simply allow free time for parents.*
5. 47.5% of respondents indicated they would use a well women clinic run by women if it was available nearby.

**Parents who responded ‘any other service’ were asked to specify the services they would use if available nearby. Their responses were as follows:**

- First Aid course for children (1).
- More training courses that are at an advanced level (1).
- Free bus passes for single parents with disabilities, i.e. epilepsy (1).
- Practical groups involving family therapists (1).
- Support Groups for parents with children with special needs (1).

**7.2 Three most important services to parents**

*Q8b Of the services you’ve mentioned, which three would be most important to you?*

A total of 32 respondents chose three of the services they had indicated in the last question as the most important to them. Table 19 illustrates parents’ responses. This information can also be seen in Figure 13.

Table 19. Percentage (and number) of parents indicating different services they would use if available nearby

Type of service	Percentage (and number) of parents indicating which services they would use
<b>Advice and Information (in your own language)</b>	
An information service to tell you about all the services available in your area	9.4% (3)
An information service to tell you about welfare benefits	3.1% (1)
Advice on housing issues	3.1% (1)
Legal Advice	9.4% (3)
An advice service to give you help with difficulties in bringing up children such as not sleeping or eating	15.6% (5)
Outreach and visiting to bring information and advice to you in your own home	0.0% (0)
Groups on parenting or child development	3.1% (1)
Accident Prevention	0.0% (0)
<b>Childcare &amp; Services for Children</b>	
A day nursery for children under five, open from 8am to 6pm.	12.5% (4)
A playgroup, where you could regularly leave your children aged two and a half to four for 2 ½ hours in the morning or afternoon.	12.5% (4)
A crèche where you could leave your child for up to 3 hours when you wanted.	25.0% (8)
A drop-in where you would stay with your child, there would be play equipment and staff to organise activities for children and you would both meet other parents and children	6.3% (2)
Toy library	3.1% (1)
A safe clean play area on your estate	46.9% (15)
Loan of safety equipment	9.4% (3)
Mobile library	0.0% (0)
<b>Health</b>	
A dentist who specialises in children	25.0% (8)
Saturday morning GP services	21.9% (7)
Saturday morning family planning clinics	6.3% (2)
Saturday morning baby/immunisation clinics	9.4% (3)
Well women clinics run by women	18.8% (6)
Well man clinics	0.0% (0)
Clinics to help give up smoking	0.0% (0)
The same midwives to see you before and after the baby is born	6.3% (2)
More local services for children with special needs	6.3% (2)
<b>Training</b>	
Confidence Building	0.0% (0)
Parenting Skills	9.4% (3)
Basic Food Hygiene	3.1% (1)

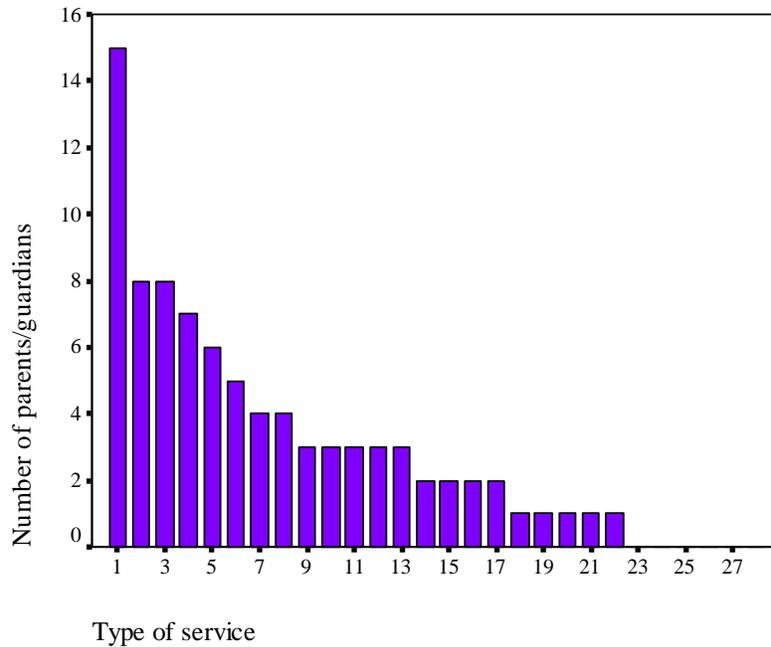


Figure 13. Number of parents indicating different services they would use if available

**Key:**

<b>1</b> A safe clean play area on your estate	<b>15</b> Saturday morning family planning clinics
<b>2</b> A crèche where you could leave your child for up to 3 hours when you wanted	<b>16</b> The same midwives to see you before and after the baby is born
<b>3</b> A dentist who specialises in children	<b>17</b> More local services for children with special needs
<b>4</b> Saturday morning GP services	<b>18</b> An information service to tell you about welfare benefits
<b>5</b> Well women clinics run by women	<b>19</b> Advice on housing issues
<b>6</b> An advice service to give help with difficulties in bringing up children such as not sleeping or eating	<b>20</b> Groups on parenting or child development
<b>7</b> A day nursery for children under five, open from 8am to 6pm	<b>21</b> Toy library
<b>8</b> A playgroup, where you could regularly leave your children aged two and a half to four for 2 ½ hours in the morning or afternoon.	<b>22</b> Basic Food Hygiene (training)
<b>9</b> An information service to tell you about all the services available in your area	<b>23</b> Outreach and visiting to bring information and advice to you in your own home
<b>10</b> Legal Advice	<b>24</b> Accident Prevention
<b>11</b> Loan of safety equipment	<b>25</b> Mobile library
<b>12</b> Saturday morning baby/immunisation clinics	<b>26</b> Well man clinics
<b>13</b> Parenting Skills (training)	<b>27</b> Clinics to help give up smoking
<b>14</b> A drop-in where you would stay with your child, there would be play equipment and staff to organise activities for children and you would both meet other parents and children	<b>28</b> Confidence Building (training)

**When respondents indicated the three services that are most important to them the same services still appear to be needed the most:**

1. 46.9% of responding parents indicated a safe clean play area on their estates, as one of their three most important services.
- 2 and 3.  
The second and third most popular services were those of a dentist who specialises in children (25.0%) and a crèche, where they can leave their child for up to 3 hours when they want to (25.0%).

**5 parents indicated the ‘other services’ they specified in the previous question as most important to them, when reducing their options to three services. Those responses are as follows:**

- First Aid course for children (1)
- More training courses that are at an advanced level (1)
- Free bus passes for single parents with disabilities, i.e. epilepsy (1)
- Practical groups involving family therapists (1)
- Support Groups for parents with children with special needs (1)

*Note: Since conducting this survey, many of the services listed as needed or wanted have been provided by Sure Start.*

## **8. Main themes drawn from general comments**

Parents were given the opportunity to make any comments about child care services in the Grange Park area. Some main themes have been drawn from their comments.

### **8.1 The Area**

Some comments, requests and suggestions were made about the area of Grange Park in general:

- I have only lived on the estate for 8 1/2 months- I am appalled by the rubbish, broken glass, dog excrement that surrounds it. Even the park is not safe as it has no proper gates to shut out dogs and in the past it has been covered in rubbish.
- Can we have more bins?
- More street lighting.
- It would be nice to have somewhere clean/safe for children to play but the problem is the older children/teenagers that take over. Unsupervised older kids cause a real problem in the street, especially in the parks where they form packs.
- A clean up service for dog muck, i.e. people on community service should pick up all the dog excrement and convert their time into weight (call it operation weigh and pay).
- Please can we have a safe park for our children, with signs up saying NO DOGS to enter the playing area?
- I think that the new houses on Chepstow and shops and flats on Easington will make the area look a lot more respectable but there is a lot more room for improvement.
- Grange Park has not got the playing facilities due to vandalism and there is nowhere safe without finding drugs.

### **8.2 General lack of services and service needs**

When given the opportunity to add any general comments some parents described a general lack of services and expressed different childcare needs. Some parents described specific services they feel are lacking in the area or commented upon the exclusivity of certain services. Their comments were as follows:

- I would like to see more help and support for children over the age of 5, as well as family support for families with disabled children.
- The children with special needs who feel left out because of their special needs or medical conditions like ADHD, Autism and Tourettes.
- It's alright to do things for the under 5's, what about the children over 5, like teenagers who have nowhere to go and nothing to do.
- The local playgroup only admits 'over 3's'.
- Playgroups around here do not take children until they are 3 and are potty trained. Anywhere that does take younger children charges and it can be expensive.
- Waiting lists usually mean that they are nearer 4 before they start.
- Dance classes for parents and children, e.g. salsa.
- Maybe a chess group for older children so that younger ones can play while mums spend time with other mums (maybe Christmas shopping).

*Note: A Grange Park Strategy sub-group has been established to address issues of this type.*

### **8.3 Advertising**

Some parents/guardians made comments reflecting a lack of advertising of childcare services:

- I remember at the beginning of the year being advised about what would be on offer around the estate but there hasn't been a lot of feedback.
- I am interested in adult education in the evenings or afternoons, but unsure of where to start looking.

### **8.4 Access to town and supermarkets**

Two parents commented upon the difficulty of accessing supermarkets or the town centre:

- A local supermarket or free bus passes.
- It would be great to have a bus that you can just wheel your pram onto. There are a lot of mothers who need to get to town and have to walk because of the buses.

### **10.4 Health Services**

A number of parents made comments about health visiting services and GP services. Those comments were as follows:

- My health visitor does not have the time.
- The doctor at Grange Park is bad. I have never heard anyone say a good word about him. Need new or alternative doctors and soon.
- The number of toys or books in the G.P waiting area is 'very inadequate'.

### **10.5 Sure Start and Home Start**

There were also some general comments made about Sure Start, which were positive. Some of the comments are as follows:

- Sure Start workers have been a great source of help, giving very good advice.
- I think the new Sure Start Grange Park is brilliant. The cafe does nice food and you can get practically any help and advice from them.
- The Sure Start nursery nurse is 'excellent'.
- The Sure Start Nursery is great, my child loves it there and her language skills have improved considerably in 2-3 months.
- Home Start is brilliant, really helped me with my post-natal depression.
- Love the Sure Start building and play area.
- I think Home Start and Sure Start are very helpful people who help you with your children and for good advice.

## **6. Parents' Focus Group** (21<sup>st</sup> January 2004)

### **1. Introduction**

The focus group meeting started at 2pm on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004 at Sure Start Grange Park. Staff at the programme had spoken to a number of parents coming into the Sure Start building informing them about the focus group meeting and explaining the purpose of the meeting. Crèche facilities were to be made available for those who needed them. About fifteen parents had agreed to attend. However, only two parents attended thus, the comments reported here must be interpreted with care and can not be used to draw general conclusions about Sure Start. Joanne Lyndhurst, Sure Start Community Support Worker, Terri Williams and Anna Caudwell, members of the evaluation team, were also in attendance. To begin with everyone introduced themselves to the group.

Terri proceeded to explain the purpose of the evaluation, that of measuring the effectiveness of Sure Start Grange Park and the impact it is having on children, parents and the local community.

Notes were taken throughout the focus group.

### **2. What do you think Sure Start is for?**

The parents were initially asked what they thought Sure Start is for. One of the parents said Sure Start is for helping families on the estate that need help. It was agreed that Sure Start also enables easy access to childcare services.

### **3. What are the important issues for you, what needs to be made better?**

When asked this question, the parents initially described how there was nothing for children before Sure Start, but that there are still main areas for improvement. Three main issues emerged from this discussion:

- **Lack of services, particularly for older children**  
One issue was raised that although there are more services for younger children, older children are still not catered for and there is little for older children to do, particularly at night. Scenes were described of ten-year olds drinking and smoking outside the local shops late at night. Swings are to be put in the park but this was felt to be a waste of time as young people on the estate vandalise any park facilities and are generally intimidating.
- **No policing**  
There was recognition that recurrent problems of vandalism and theft would be reduced if community police were on the estate during the evenings. It is felt that police presence is low and almost non-existent after 6pm in the evening. Parents felt that since the promotion of their local community police officer, who was described as 'very community orientated', crime and anti-social behaviour has become much worse and police are generally non-responsive.
- **Local GP**  
Issues were raised about support received from a local GP. One parent described the GP as non-responsive and often late.

### **4. Sure Start Objectives**

Terri explained the four main objectives of Sure Start, in terms of the main areas of problems for people living in under-resourced areas. Each objective was raised for discussion individually.

- **Improving social and emotional development**
  - The group discussed the meaning of this objective and how improving the social and emotional development of both children and their parents would impact the community.
  - There was a general feeling that, by having respect for our children and ourselves and developing social skills, the community would be a better place to live in.

- It was also agreed that emotional development involves the development of children's ability to express themselves and also involves helping them learn to be at ease with themselves, saying what they think and feel.
- **Strengthening Families and Communities**
  - Terri described how one way to strengthen families and improve the community is by developing a range of activities. One parent described how they feel that it is difficult to get anything going in the local area, that there is always a major set back. It was felt that, when the previous community police officer was around, the development of community activities was easier because he was monitoring the area and would drop-in at activities to see how the children were.
  - It was also agreed that families having the confidence to speak out and feeling proud of their community would strengthen the community.
- **Improving the ability to learn**
  - There was a discussion about Sure Start learning and development facilities being for the benefit of every child under 4, not just for children with specific problems. An example was used of the Speech and Language Therapist, who works with all children under 4 to develop their language skills.
- **Improving Health**
  - There was discussion around the meaning of this objective and areas of health that could be improved.
  - It was agreed that, if you have a healthy society, then money could be spent in other areas.

Terri then asked the parents how they feel Sure Start can achieve each of these four objectives. Again, each objective was discussed in turn.

- **Improving social and emotional development**
  - It was agreed that by having appropriate local facilities and services social and emotional development of both children and their parents could be improved.
  - There is a need for more courses for parents. Those suggested were First Aid, managing children's behavior, confidence building and Basic Skills in Math's and English. It was felt that through education and training parents could not only benefit themselves but could pass down skills and knowledge to their children.
- **Strengthening Families and Communities**
  - Terri suggested that one way to strengthen families is to teach parents how to play with their children. One parent had attended the 'Happy Families' course and reported finding it really useful. The idea of Sure Start passing on skills to parents was discussed and one idea was put forward about parents occasionally going into nursery to play alongside their children.
  - Whilst discussing how local families and the community as a whole can be strengthened a number of needs were identified:
    1. There was an expressed need for services for older children.
    2. It is strongly felt that there is a need for a community police officer regularly patrolling the estate. It was recognized that this person must be someone the people on the estate can trust and turn to.
    3. A need was also expressed for a community GP.
    4. It was agreed that communities are strengthened by social activities, such as Fun Days and a Christmas market. It was suggested that community activists could facilitate the development of such activities.
    5. A need was identified for more parents to be involved at an organizational and practical level.
    6. An issue was raised about the stigma associated with living on the estate of Grange Park. One parent felt that it affected her job opportunities. There is a need to work at changing people's attitudes towards the estate.

- **Improving the ability to learn**
  - Again, it was felt that providing courses for parents is important.
  - It was also agreed that making an early start on children's learning is important and services provided by Sure Start, such as the Speech and Language service, can improve early development.
  
- **Improving Health**
  - one parent felt that a health drop-in would be useful, where appointments are not needed. It was felt that this would increase accessibility of primary health services.
  - The group agreed that health promotion is important. Healthy eating was recognised as important, although it was also noted that catering for all family members with differing demands could make it difficult.

### **5. Do you have any ideas about what you would like to see in your Sure Start?**

The parents were asked to say what they would like to see in Sure Start Grange Park.

- A key issue for parents was that there is a lack of services for older children on the estate.
- The recent loss of a scout meeting place was discussed and ideas about possible future sources of funding were briefly considered.
- It was agreed that involvement of different generations of families would be beneficial.

The importance of parental input and involvement was discussed. It was highlighted that this can be done by parents being members of the Management/Partnership Board and by being active members of the Parents Group.

### **6. Perceived Problems with Sure Start**

Parents were invited to comment upon any aspect of Sure Start. One parent described how the Sure Start café needs extra staff for when the current member of staff is absent. It was noted that volunteers have been trained by Sure Start but their skills are not being utilized. A need was identified for motivating and placing volunteers.

### **7. Any further comments**

- A concern was raised about needles lying around the estate. One parent felt that although the presence of needles is reported the authorities responsible for picking up needles are slow to respond.
- There was a discussion about use of services provided by Home Start and the benefits of families supporting each other were discussed.
- One parent felt that there are never any fathers at certain groups, but it was recognized that a number of dads do attend the Dad's Group.

Terri and Anna thanked everyone for attending and participating in what was a very useful discussion. It is hoped that other parents will take part in further discussions with evaluation team members in the near future. Present parents were invited to attend any further meetings occurring over the next few months.

## **6b. Parents Focus Group (1<sup>st</sup> March 2004)**

### **Introductions**

The focus group meeting started at 10am on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004 at Sure Start Grange Park. A number of parents had previously completed the baseline questionnaire as part of the evaluation. Twenty-one parents indicated they would be willing to talk to the team further about their experiences of childcare in their local area. Parents were offered a further incentive (entry into a raffle for £25 for Morrison's) to take part in this discussion. Those parents were contacted by either phone or letter. Eleven parents said they were available on 1<sup>st</sup> March to attend a meeting and childcare was arranged for those who indicated a need. However, only three parents attended the focus group meeting, thus, again, the following comments must be interpreted with caution. Terri Williams and Anna Caudwell, members of the evaluation team, were also in attendance.

The purpose of the evaluation was that of finding out about parents and guardians views about childcare services in the local area.

Notes were taken throughout the focus group.

### **What are the important issues for you, what needs to be made better?**

It was agreed by parents that the area had improved but they felt improvements in the area still need to be made. A number of issues were raised by parents during this discussion:

- **Nursery expenses**  
One of the first issues raised by parents at the meeting was the expense of nursery education for their young children. The daily cost of leaving their child/ren at Sure Start Grange Park nursery and other nurseries is deemed by parents to be too much. They felt that, after paying the nursery fees, rent/mortgage and other living costs, there is little money left for anything else. Parents expressed that they had expected the Sure Start nursery to be less expensive. It was agreed that there is little incentive to return to work, when nursery fees are so high. A need for cheaper nursery care was expressed. *(Sure Start management note that, while this is an understandable wish on the part of parents, existing constraints suggest that cheaper nursery care is simple not possible.)*
- **Supermarkets**  
A concern was raised about a lack of a supermarket in the local area and that the local supermarket is very expensive and lacks variety. Parents reported that it costs £3 to travel to their nearest supermarket on the bus. The difficulties of taking children to the supermarket, getting the pram/buggy on and off the bus and the amount that can be carried whilst traveling this way were discussed. One parent explained that the cost of getting a taxi to and from the supermarket is £7 and it is felt that this money could be better spent elsewhere. Parents described how internet shopping is not possible without a credit card and/or good credit ratings. A need was strongly indicated for a bus that could take parents directly from Grange Park to the supermarket and back again. Parents felt it would be useful for their children to be looked after whilst they go to the supermarket, whether that is by an outside nursery (for example Sure Start) or a crèche based at the supermarket. *(Note that, although these parents were clearly not aware of it, there is a supermarket bus provided by Sure Start.)*
- **Cleanliness of Grange Park**  
A health issue was raised by parents concerning the amount of dog mess and rubbish on the streets of Grange Park. It was suggested by one parent that people on community service could clean up the streets of rubbish and dog mess to combat this issue. It was also suggested that Sure Start could organize nature walks to educate and raise interest in children about the environment.
- **Health and Safety Issues**  
Parents also expressed a concern about the possibility of people living on the estate who are on the pedophile register and felt they should have access to information of that kind.

One parent also expressed concern about traffic on the estate and felt that many children do not look before they cross the road. She suggested that the alleys behind people's houses should be closed off so that cars cannot drive down them.

A concern was also raised about needles being found on the estate. *(Note: Sure Start management have provided assurance that pedophiles are not housed on the estate.)*

### **What do you think Sure Start is for?**

The parents were initially asked what they thought Sure Start is for. One of the parents said Sure Start is a place where they can get advice about benefits, health issues and legal advice. Parents described that it is helpful to be able to receive the appropriate advice. It was agreed that it is easy to find someone to talk to at Sure Start because they have specific times allocated for different professionals and advisors. Parents did however agree that they do not really know what Sure Start is trying to do.

### **Sure Start Objectives**

The group spent some time discussing the four main objectives of Sure Start. The following issues and suggestions relating to the different objectives were raised.

- **Improving social and emotional development**
  - The group discussed the target of the 'reduction of children at risk'. Parents indicated they feel safe and their children feel safe whilst at Sure Start Grange Park. A discussion followed about the unwillingness and difficulties for parents to come forward and talk about problems in the home. One parent explained they had waited around eight months for an appointment with the 'Relate' counselors at Sure Start (linking in with the target 'access to counseling and advocacy services'). A need was highlighted by the parents for more counselors. Counselors were also described as a useful source for mothers experiencing post natal depression.
    - *(Note: Sure Start management have provided assurance that counselors are provided and are easy to access – there is no waiting list.)*
  - The importance of parental involvement was discussed in relation to the target 'an increase in social awareness and local pride'. It was noted that by having more involvement parents could have more of a say in service delivery and develop pride in their area and achievements. It was also noted that parents would feel more confident to approach the council, for example, to discuss their needs and concerns.
  - Peer group support was discussed and parents did express the usefulness of having family groups where parents could come and talk to other parents, although a concern was expressed about the amount of gossip that would be generated by such a group. It was felt that parents would need the support from Sure Start to set up a group of this kind.
  - The group acknowledged the benefits of teaching parents how to play and interact with children and one parent described how it would help with the child's 'social interaction'.
- **Strengthening Families and Communities**
  - One parent felt that Sure Start should organize more outings for parents and children at weekends and after-school.
  - It was noted that Grange Park do not have a bingo event and that this would be a useful way of getting a variety of people from different generations together in a social environment.
  - The parents explained that some parents are scared of losing their benefits if they return to work and not being able to afford to pay for as much as when not working.
  - The usefulness of a local 'Thrifty Shop' on the estate was discussed; where parents on the estate could take school uniforms their children have grown out of, for example. The possibilities of a parent or a number of parents setting that up with the right support were discussed.
  - Parents also expressed a need for a curfew at night on Grange Start, which they feel would reduce juvenile nuisance and drug problems on the estate.

- A need for police presence was identified. It was noted that there were plans for building a small police base, but parents felt this would just get vandalized.
- **Improving the ability to learn**
  - The usefulness of attending courses was discussed. One parent said they had done a confidence building course and although they found it to be ‘really good’ they did not feel they had ‘used it much’. Another parent described how many courses provided are not accredited and employers therefore are not aware of them. In addition to this, parents said they would be happy to come along to available courses if childcare was provided by Sure Start at no cost. One parent did say that the Job Centre had paid for her children’s nursery care whilst she attended a course, which she had really appreciated.
  - Parents asked the members of the team what The Learning Centre on Grange Park is for. There was a discussion around the facilities available in the centre. Parents said they hadn’t used the facilities but had heard about them by word-of-mouth.
  - Parents expressed a need for more flexible opening hours at nurseries and described the difficulties of balancing nursery care and work hours.
- **Improving Health**
  - A concern was raised by parents about a lack of pelican crossings on the estate. It is felt that this would benefit all children not just the younger ones.
  - The importance of educating parents and children about healthy diets was discussed. One parent described a large number of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and felt the additives in children’s foods do not help. The idea of holding groups where staff made food with parents and children was proposed by one parent. It was also agreed by the parents that Sure Start could sell ready-made healthy meals that parents could buy for their children when they cannot cook for them.
  - A concern was raised about the use of Ritalin and it was felt there should be more support for behavioral problems in local schools.
  - The lack of availability of emergency contraception at the local Health Centre was acknowledged.
  - Parents said they were satisfied with the local GP and the Health Visitor was said to be ‘very good’. Although they described feeling distrusting of Social Services due to their reputation, they felt their own experiences of Social Services had been positive.
  - One parent also commented that fire alarms, although free, are not fitted into the home by the fire brigade and are therefore often sold. (*Note: Sure Start management report that they do work with the fire brigade and that alarms are both provided and fitted.*)

**Do you have any ideas about what you would like to see in your Sure Start?**

The attending parents were asked to say what they would like to see in Sure Start Grange Park.

- The importance of parental input and involvement was discussed. Parents described feeling that Sure Start Grange Park did not want their help. One parent, who had attended partnership board meetings in the past, described feeling that a lot of what was discussed at meetings was not clearly explained and thus could not be followed.
- Parents felt there was a need sometimes for services to go to parents’ homes to provide advice and support.
- Parents expressed a need for before school and after-school clubs for their children.

**Negative perceptions of Sure Start**

- Parents were invited to comment upon any aspect of Sure Start. Parents agreed that most people on the estate do not really know why the Sure Start building is there and see it as just a nursery and a café.
- Parents described feeling that Sure Start has ‘closed doors’ to them and that it is okay to use the services but not to be involved in the planning or management of services. They described how they do not feel encouraged to become volunteers and expressed a wish to be given training for volunteering. An idea was put forward by one parent about the possibility of holding a ‘Recruitment Day’ by Sure Start for volunteers, where people who attended would

be told about all the volunteering opportunities. It was also acknowledged that people generally do not want to work for nothing and parents felt a small incentive, perhaps food shopping vouchers, would be the key to attracting volunteers.

### **Any further comments**

It was also acknowledged by the attending parents that they find they have little time left in a day, once they have done the shopping and other daily routines, to go to any Sure Start activities.

## **6c. Conclusions and Recommendations Arising from the Focus Groups and Baseline Survey.**

The information obtained generally indicates a high level of satisfaction, but also indicates local service needs and highlights possible changes and additions that could be made by Sure Start Grange Park to add value to existing services and improve the service provision for families.

A number of conclusions have been drawn from the information received and recommendations made in relation to the four Sure Start target themes.

### **1. Improving social and emotional development**

- The waiting list for counsellors at Sure Start was raised in the focus group (linking in with the target 'access to counseling and advocacy services'). A need was highlighted by just one of the parents for more counselors. *(However, Sure Start Grange Park have provided assurance that there is adequate provision of counselors at present and that there is no waiting list).*
- A need was identified in relation to the target of 'an increase in social awareness and local pride'. An idea was proposed in the focus group for Sure Start to organise nature walks to encourage children and parents to value and respect their communities. *Sure Start could consider the options for supporting/funding a parent to organise such walks.*
- Also in relation to the above target, parents/guardians expressed concerns about the level of cleanliness of the streets and parks as a result of a lack of social pride. *Sure Start should consider how they can work to raise social awareness and pride.*
- *The possibilities of a parent or a number of parents setting up a thrift shop with the right support could be considered.*
- A need for police presence was identified in the focus group. *Sure Start should consider how they can work more closely with the police.*

### **2. Strengthening families and communities**

- A large proportion of those who completed the baseline survey were not in employment. Issues around finance were raised during the focus group discussion and parents felt that returning to work or undertaking training was not an option whilst childcare remained so expensive. *(While more affordable child care is clearly desirable, constraints beyond the control of Sure Start make this impossible.)*
- In addition to this, *Sure Start should consider extending the training options (including the possibilities of vocational training) taking into account childcare and perhaps a small incentive to encourage attendance by parents.* The opportunities to spend time and socialise with other adults at training sessions and learn new skills at the same time could be emphasised whilst advertising such training.
- A large proportion of children were reported as receiving childcare and/or attending activities with their parents/guardians. A small number of parents did express concerns about clashes between work hours and opening hours of childcare services,

expressing wishes for services to be open longer and at different times. During the focus group discussion parents expressed a need for breakfast and after school clubs. *Sure Start should consider the possibilities for providing/supporting more services before and after school and over the weekend period.*

- *occasional weekend outings organised by Sure Start or by parents supported by Sure Start may help to strengthen families and communities and encourage different generations of families to become involved.*
- A need for services for older children in an attempt to reduce juvenile delinquency was identified. *The options for running youth clubs and other activities for older children should be considered by Sure Start in an attempt to reduce juvenile nuisance.* Local parents/guardians may be keen to run a group themselves, with the support and funding from Sure Start. Of course, it must be acknowledged that youth work is not encompassed within the targets of Sure Starts programmes, nevertheless, Sure Start Grange Park do some work in this area..
- During the focus group discussion parents described feeling that Sure Start did not want their help or involvement. In relation to the target 'parental involvement in service planning and management' *Sure Start Grange Park should work to actively encourage people to volunteer and involve those volunteers in a range of different activities including service planning and management activities.* A recruitment day and incentives for volunteering were suggested by parents in the focus group.

### **3. Improving the ability to learn**

- With 69.2% of parents indicating they do not borrow books and/or toys for their children, *Sure Start may want to consider how they can increase the use of libraries by parents and children.*
- The need for an increase in the number of playgroups and activities for under 3 year olds was felt by some parents. *Consideration may be needed about whether more services for the under 3's should be provided.*

### **4. Improving health**

- A number of parents raised a concern about a lack of suitable outside play areas, with parents expressing a need for a safe and secure space for young children to play. When asked to choose three services parents/guardians most needed, 46.9% indicated a need for a safe, clean play area on the estate. *The possibilities of providing a safe and secure outdoor play area for young children should be considered. It may be that Sure Start and local parents could work together to clean and maintain current play areas (e.g. cleaning up the dog mess), which would help to strengthen the local community and lead to an increase in local pride.*
- With 57.1% of respondents reporting they did not breastfeed and 31.6% indicating no support was received for breastfeeding, *it is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park increase levels of support perhaps through health visitors (whom many parents/guardians identified as a common source of support).*
- 55.0% of respondents reported they smoked and 43.8% reported their partner smoked. *Thought should be given as to how Sure Start can work to reduce the number of parents smoking.*
- When asked to choose three services as most important to them 25.0% indicated a need for a dentist who specialises in children. *Consideration should be given to how Sure Start can meet its target of reducing tooth decay in under 4 year olds.* A need for an increase in the provision of dentist services is evident, particularly one specialising in children.
- During the focus group discussion one parent commented that fire alarms, although free, are not fitted into the home by the fire brigade and are therefore often sold. *Sure*

*Start should consider the possibilities of working with the fire brigade to ensure that, where possible, fire alarms are fitted.*

- *It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park actively advertises more often and works to raise awareness of who can benefit from the programme, and other services (for example, The Learning Centre), resulting in families feeling well-informed about service provision. Some parents were not clear about the aims of Sure Start in their local area.*
- *It is also recommended that Sure Start Grange Park recognises the value and benefit of consulting parents and families about service provision and needs to inform the development of services.*

## **7. STAFF INTERVIEWS**

### **GRANGE PARK SURE START STAFF INTERVIEWS FEBRUARY 2004**

#### **7a. Introduction**

Staff members of Grange Park Sure Start were asked to take part in interviews from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2004. 36 staff were interviewed after giving signed permission. They were reassured that the interview was confidential and that the final report would perhaps include quotations, but that no names would be attached to any information.

The purpose of the interviews was to:

- gain an understanding of staff roles and positions in Sure Start Grange Park.
- obtain views on future development.
- find how staff feel they can contribute to the programme.
- explore what opportunities or difficulties they envisage might arise in the future.

#### **7b. Method and Results**

The questionnaire was divided into six sections, as follows:

- A. Roles (Questions 1-20)
- B. Communication (Questions 21-28)
- C. Processes of service delivery (Questions 29-34)
- D. Service integration (Question 35)
- E. Health, safety and security (Questions 36-37)
- F. Partnership arrangements and sustainability (Questions 38-44)

#### **SECTION A. Roles**

Questions 1-4 asked about roles, understanding of responsibilities, contact with parents and any duality in the daily tasks.

##### **1.) Roles:**

All staff members had a clear understanding of their role and the duties allied to that role. The majority of staff had a high level of contact with parents, either through the child care services, information advice and support services or through the various groups and courses provided. Some staff who were not involved with 'hands on' services still made efforts to interact with parents through the café. This contact with local parents was regarded by staff as one of the most satisfying aspects of their Sure Start role.

##### **2.) Integrated Services:**

Most staff were employed or seconded by employers other than the Sure Start, as follows:

- 10 members of staff were employed directly by Sure Start.
- 6 members of staff were employed by Home Start but with 5 staff contracted to Sure Start.
- 5 members of staff were seconded by generic agencies.
- 15 members of staff were employed by Blackpool Borough Council with Sure Start being responsible for overall management responsibilities.

Generally, additional comments were positive in relation to Sure Start and also its relationship with other services. Some of those comments included:

- "The relationship between Sure Start and the seconded organisation works really well".

- “The services involved complement each other”.
- “There is more flexibility and accessibility with Sure Start”.
- “The resources available make all the difference”.

**3.) Boundaries – Is there any overlap between your role and the roles of others?**

27 of the 36 staff interviewed reported that there was overlap in their role, whilst 9 staff members reported that there was no overlap in their role. For the majority of staff overlapping of roles/tasks was seen as a beneficial situation for using any additional skills and the opportunity to learn new ones. However, some staff did see areas of conflict in this situation, e.g. with staff being paid unequally for doing the same tasks. One or two members of staff expressed the need for some role clarification - saying that it was not always clear who should be doing what.

**4.) Are there any tasks or duties you do which you feel should not be part of your job?**

- 20 staff responded - No
- 8 staff said that they did carry out tasks which they felt were not part of their job
- 8 staff said that they did carry out tasks which, although not part of their job, gave more scope and interest to the work. This also reinforced the ethos of working as a team.

Overall, the majority of staff reported that they do not carry out tasks or duties which they feel they shouldn't be or that they do but they felt the extra tasks and duties added value to their role. However, 8 members of staff did report to having to carry out tasks and duties that are not part of their role. This mirrors some of the responses provided in the previous question referring to a need for role clarification.

**5.) How many hours a week do you work?**

The majority of staff worked full-time. The breakdown of those working full or part-time was as follows:

- 28 staff worked full-time
- 8 worked part-time

Time off in lieu is granted for staff working more than their contracted time. 6 members of staff reported that they worked 3 –9 hours over their contracted time.

**6.) How far do you travel to work?**

All members of staff lived in the local area:

- 11 staff live locally i.e. 10 minutes or less by foot
- 22 staff live 20 minutes or less away by car
- 3 staff live 35 minutes away by bus.

**7.) How/why did you come to work here?**

- 14 staff responded that they liked the concept/ethos of Sure Start especially working with families and the community.
- 4 members of staff stated that they saw Sure Start as an opportunity to develop a career structure.

Other reasons for working at Sure Start were:

- An interest in working with children
- More ‘hands on’ work

- The strengths of preventative work
- Needed a challenge
- A good opportunity for staff living in the community

Although a variety of responses were provided about how and why different members of staff had come to work at Sure Start, the overwhelming majority saw Sure Start as a way of supporting local people to help them.

**8.) In general, how satisfied/dissatisfied are you with your post in Sure Start Grange Park?**

The majority of staff members (26) were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their post in Sure Start. A good proportion of staff members (10) were either 'not sure' how satisfied they were or felt 'fairly dissatisfied'. No one reported to being 'very unsatisfied'. Their responses were as follows:

- 17 staff were very satisfied
- 9 staff were fairly satisfied
- 7 staff were not sure
- 3 staff were fairly dissatisfied

**9.) In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the terms and conditions of your post in Sure Start?**

The majority of staff members (32) were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the terms and conditions of their post. A small proportion of staff members (4) were either 'not sure' how satisfied they were or felt 'fairly dissatisfied'. No one reported to being 'very unsatisfied'. Their responses were as follows:

- 20 staff were very satisfied
- 12 staff were fairly satisfied
- 3 staff were not sure
- 1 person was fairly dissatisfied

**10.) Do you feel that you have enough time in your post to carry out the duties that are expected of you?**

More than half the members of staff said they either do not have enough time to carry out all the duties expected of them or they were not sure. Responses were as follows:

- 16 staff said yes
- 16 staff said no
- 4 staff said they were not sure

**10.) Is Sure Start a supportive place to work?**

Only one member of staff felt unsure, no one responded that Sure Start is not a supportive place to work, meaning 35 indicated that it was a supportive place to work.

**11.) Is Sure Start a friendly place to work?**

Again, only one member of staff were not sure about whether Sure Start is a friendly place to work. No one responded that Sure Start is not a friendly place to work. Responses were as follows:

- 33 staff said yes
- 1 person was not sure

**13.) Do you think that Sure Start Grange Park has clear aims and objectives?**

Only one member of staff felt unsure about whether Sure Start Grange Park has clear aims and objectives. No one responded that they do not have clear aims and objectives. Responses were as follows:

- 35 staff said yes
- 1 person was not sure

**14.) Do you understand how your role fits in with the overall aims and objectives of Sure Start Grange Park?**

Only one member of staff felt unsure about how their role fits in with the overall aims and objectives. No one responded that they do not have clear aims and objectives. Responses were as follows:

- 33 staff said yes
- 3 were not sure

**15.) Are you actively seeking new employment?**

Although a large proportion (26) indicated they were not seeking other employment at the time of interviewing, a good proportion (10) either indicated they were looking for other work and or were not sure. Responses were as follows:

- 26 staff said no
- 9 staff said yes
- 1 person was not sure

**16.) How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following:**

The majority of staff were satisfied with their salary, the amount of annual leave received and the flexibility of working hours. With respect to how satisfied members of staff were with their own level of involvement in decision making within Sure Start, 29.7% were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

25.7% were either 'not sure' or dissatisfied with the opportunity for professional development, with 11.4% being 'very dissatisfied'. 23.4% were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the security of their employment. In addition to this, although the majority of staff members were satisfied with the general guidance and managerial direction within Sure Start Grange Park, 26.4% were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the general guidance and managerial direction.

*Table 1. Satisfaction ratings given by staff on a number of areas relating to Sure Start work*

	Very satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Not sure	Fairly dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Salary	34%	57%	2.8%	5.7%	-
Amount of Annual Leave	60%	25.7%	5.7%	5.7%	2.8%
Flexibility of working hours	57%	31.4%	2.8%	2.8%	5.7%
Your own level of input into decision making within Sure Start	38%	32%	5.8%	21%	2.9%
Opportunity for professional development	60%	14.3%	5.7%	8.6%	11.4%
Security of employment	52.9%	23.5%	17.6%	2.9%	2.9%
General Guidance and managerial direction	38.2%	35.3%	2.9%	14.7%	8.8%

**17.) What are the best things about working for Sure Start Grange Park?**

A range of responses were given. The categories reported in order of popularity are:

- Working with families and building up relationships
- Working with a multi-agency team
- Friendly, supportive environment
- Making a difference
- Training opportunities
- Resources
- Job satisfaction
- Focused and clear objectives
- Café
- Accessibility
- The range of services available
- Flexibility
- Level of staff commitment
- Benefits to the community
- Pay
- Everything!

**18.) What are the strengths of Sure Start?**

Again, a range of responses were given. The categories reported in order of popularity are:

- Multi-agency approach
- Accessible and friendly
- Café – a meeting point
- The personal touch
- Resources
- Local services for local staff, seeing families develop
- Communication and involvement with local staff
- Seeing families grow and develop
- The staff
- Innovative ideas
- Good programme manager
- Layout of building

- Family Support
- Don't know

**19.) What could be improved about Sure Start?**

The following list details staff members' responses:

- Communication
- Early Days, doing well, it will evolve and develop
- Increased family support services
- More men becoming involved with Sure Start
- Extended opening hours for the café
- Shorter Team meetings
- Increased community development activity
- Reducing stigma on Grange Park
- Increased awareness of Sure Start to local people
- Cleaner for the nursery
- Team building
- Longer opening hours
- No comment
- Nothing – everything is good

## B. Communication

Questions 20-26 asked staff about the processes and quality of communication involved in their work, using open-ended questions.

### **20.) How do you communicate with:**

#### **a. Generic services (If your work is allied to a key agency)?**

(This question does not apply to those staff who are employed directly by Sure Start.)

There were examples where liaison with generic agencies resulted in the building of good relationships which, in turn led to raised levels of awareness and information about Sure Start. For those members of staff allied to generic agencies the level of communication with those agencies was effective overall. Staff attend generic service team meetings and supervision and appraisal sessions. Daily contact was via phone and e-mail. Also contact on an ad hoc basis seemed to work well. Again, such levels of communication and contact result in improved partnership working.

#### **b. Staff within Sure Start Grange Park?**

Team meetings are the main channel of communication for staff working at Sure Start Grange Park. However some staff members are not able to attend, either because of their work or because they are part time and therefore not available at the time the meeting takes place. Other means of day to day communication were felt to be acceptable e.g. face to face, phone, e-mail, log/message books (although the latter does depend very much on ensuring that the messages/information are recorded). Those working in the upstairs office felt that the open plan layout facilitated good communication. It was generally felt that staff were accessible to each other. However, there was a certain amount of concern that those members of staff not privy to the office were not informed effectively.

#### **c. The community at large?**

A range of processes for communication with the community were described and those were as follows:

**Via the nursery** - Nursery staff have daily contact with parents when children are dropped off and picked up. This provides opportunities to discuss the child's activities/progress and for both sides to raise issues or concerns.

**Via Family Support** – Home visits, access by telephone or appointment, outdoors in the locality, referral meetings, outreach, etc.

**Via Advice and Support** – Drop-ins, groups, visits, special days and events, schools etc.

**Via the community** - Setting up groups, providing courses, outings,

**Via the café** - All staff members felt the café to be a very effective way of meeting with and talking to parents.

Also leaflets, posters, use of the media and newsletters were reported as being ongoing methods of communication.

### **21.) Do you have a line manager?**

31 members of staff said they did have a line manager, whilst 3 members of staff said they did not. One member of staff were not sure whether they had a line manager and another indicated this question as not applicable to them.

The majority of staff (64.5%) had an internal line manager, whilst 29% had an external line manager. A small number of staff reported to having both.

This information can be seen below:

- 20 staff have an internal line manager
- 9 staff have an external line manager
- 2 staff had a mixture of internal/external line management

20 staff said that they reported daily to their line-manager as and when required. It was felt that they were readily available when called upon.

**With regard to supervision:**

11 staff said that they received regular supervision, with 5 of those staff members receiving supervision from external agencies. 25 staff said that they either did not receive regular supervision or were awaiting the development of a supervision structure.

**22.) How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the level of support from your line manager/supervision with regard to your work?**

Although the majority of staff members reported to being satisfied with the level of support received from line managers or supervisors with regard to work, 44.4% said they were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the support received. Details of their responses are as follows:

- Very satisfied 9
- Fairly satisfied 11
- Not sure 8
- Fairly dissatisfied 4
- Very dissatisfied 4

**23.) Who do you share information with on a regular basis?**

The majority of respondents cited their colleagues as the staff with whom they share information on a regular basis. They all agreed that the open plan office or rooms were an advantage in communication processes. Other methods of sharing information:

- The team
- Programme Manager, deputy
- Line manager
- Generic agencies
- Referral meetings
- Parents

**24.) How are you informed about the processes and operations (how things work or are planned) within Sure Start Grange Park?**

Team meetings and word of mouth were reported most as the means to which staff members are informed about the processes and operations within Sure Start Grange Park:

- 16 respondents were informed through Team Meetings
- 7 respondents were informed through word of mouth

8 respondents felt that they were not informed. The remaining 5 respondents cited the regional Sure Start unit, posters and the staff notice board as sources of information about the processes and operations of the organisation.

**25.) In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level and processes of communication within Sure Start Grange Park?**

63.9% of staff members reported to being satisfied with the level and processes of communication within Sure Start Grange Park, whilst 36.1% of staff members said they were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with level and processes of communication. A breakdown of their satisfaction ratings are as follows:

- Very satisfied 10
- Fairly satisfied 13
- Not sure 2
- Fairly dissatisfied 5
- Very dissatisfied 6

**26.) Are there ways to update or develop your skills, for example by getting relevant training?**

Responses to this question were as follows:

- Yes 25
- No 11

The majority of staff reported that there were plenty of training opportunities and that the courses and the experience gained in a multi-agency team were very good. Several staff had felt sufficiently motivated to seek further training and courses on their own initiative. It was reported that the Programme Manager informed staff about training events. However, more than one person felt that there were very few or no training opportunities, and that they were not informed about training. They felt that the system was not equitable.

## C: Processes of Service Delivery

This section is about the processes of service delivery within Sure Start Grange Park.

### **27.) If you are involved in the referral system, how is your service accessed and referrals assessed?**

Publicity, promotion and awareness-raising are the basis of accessing services. In the first stages of Sure Start's life, the outreach workers visited homes with information packs and explained about the services available, and how to access them. The various agencies use the database either from Child Health or Housing to ensure new babies or new families to the area are contacted and informed. Referrals are therefore made through the various outreach workers and are then presented at referral meetings. Assessment then takes place and external or internal referrals are made. Other referral processes are through word of mouth, drop-ins, visiting groups either internal to Sure Start or externally in the community. There is an awareness of the importance of building up relationships with parents. There appears to be a good relationship between generic and Sure Start services, which enables appropriate referrals and access to services.

### **28.) How are follow up appointments offered?**

18 respondents were not involved with follow up appointments. Follow up appointments were actioned mostly according to the need of the family and were negotiated with that family. If the referral is health orientated then usually the initial referral will be followed by a phone call and then a letter. Monitoring then takes place. In the nursery, reassessment takes place after the settling in period.

- A need was expressed for definite policies and procedures for follow up appointments.
- A need was also expressed to extend the Family Support Service.

### **29.) How much chance is there for opportunistic care?**

12 replied either 'no' or 'not applicable'. The remainder said that there were good, very good, or excellent chances of opportunistic care.

The main comments made were about having access to the multi-agency team available for a range of services, skills and support for families.

### **30.) How is your service organised? What directs or determines the strategies used for your service?**

*Table 2. Staff responses about how services are organised and what directs or determines the strategies used.*

Category	Number
Self	8
Departmental Manager	6
Sure Start Objectives	6
Total	20

- More than one person commented that there was no formal planning in place.
- The consensus was that the needs of families and the Sure Start targets should be 'knitted' together thus providing the building blocks of service provision and development.

- The importance of a comprehensive short, medium and long term planning strategy was stated many times in the interviews, with input from all stakeholders.
- The need for ongoing development and monitoring was emphasised.

**31.) Do you feel that you experience ongoing professional and personal development?**

A range of responses were given to this question. They were as follows:

- 19 respondents felt that the opportunities for their development were very good
- 7 respondents felt that there were no opportunities or that they had gone as far as they could and had now reached a plateau
- 7 felt that they had answered the question earlier (re: opportunities for training Q.28)
- 1 felt that they gained experience on their own initiative
- 2 felt that there was no structure or guidance

### D: Service Integration

**32.) With regard to multi-agency working within Sure Start, do you think the agencies work easily and effectively together?**

25 respondents felt that the multi-agency team worked very well together, it was very effective and parents were fortunate to have access to such a service. Comments included:

- “ Accessible”
- “So good having these services based at Sure Start”
- “Health courses running well, the team are approachable”
- “Such a good service for parents to have access to”
- “The team are so helpful”
- “Very strong team, all equal, mutual respect”
- “Good communication, joined up working”
- “Everyone has clear defined roles”

Many of the respondents stated that there were no problems in the team. However, a number of concerns were voiced, including:

- Issues to do with information and the Data Protection Act.
- Generic policies and procedures which may provide barriers to multi-agency working
- Some respondents saying that they did not know enough about the role of the team to comment
- More than one respondent feeling that there was a upstairs/downstairs divide
- Hard to reach families needing a different level of support
- Some respondents feeling that they had no idea of the role of the Multi-agency Team and would like to know more.

## E: Health, Safety and Security

### **33.) How is the safety and security of yourself, your colleagues and the services users within Sure Start Grange Park maintained? Can you examples?**

All staff felt safe and secure in the building and felt that on the whole, Health and Safety policies and procedures were good.

### **34.) Do you have any concerns about any aspect of health and safety at Sure Start Grange Park?**

11 staff did not have any concerns about any aspect of health and safety. However, issues were raised by more than one person about:

- The car park areas being unlit (however it was remarked that this issue was being addressed)
- Being in the building alone either first thing in the morning or locking up late at night – particularly in the winter. (*Reassurances have been given by Sure Start management that this does not/will not happen.*)
- The need for more fire drills, the worry about screens on the windows in the event of a fire and the procedures if a fire breaks out in the stair well.
- If a person is alone in the reception area, the need for a panic button and also, if someone is not to gain admission, the reason should be made known.
- All staff members visiting homes should have access to a mobile phone. (*Apparently all staff do have access to mobile phones and this may be more a lack of awareness*)
- Consideration given to sending appointments to families by post if there is a literacy problem.
- There were several comments with regard to policies in the nursery:
  - Nappy changing area - the need for a security policy whereby the door of the changing area is open, the possible need for a camera or more than one colleague being present during the procedure.
  - The need for a specific nappy changing ‘board/mat’.
  - A policy on how to deal with children who come to the nursery with an infection which could be passed on. (*Apparently there is a policy and, again, this seems to be lack of awareness.*)
  - Concerns were expressed about the relationship between the kitchen and the nursery i.e. staff who were involved with nappy changing not entering the kitchen etc.
  - Doors to the various rooms in the nursery should be kept locked; this would also prevent fingers being trapped.
  - More rigorous procedures with regard to milk preparation.
  - The outside area could be bigger so that children can let off steam.
  - The sand in the pit is dirty and should be kept covered: also, cat faeces are found in the area every day.

## **F: Partnership arrangements/sustainability**

### **35.) To what extent do you think the management/partnership board is effective?**

27 staff did not know about the Partnership Board and were not sure of its remit. Comments from the remaining 9 staff included:

- "the Partnership Board is still developing"
- "It must be effective – things are running well"
- "Attendance can be poor"
- "Objectives of the group need to be clarified"
- "It is very effective and a good forum to bring issues to"
- "Parents need to be involved to a greater extent"

### **36.) Could the Partnership Board operate in a better way?**

Only 11 staff felt qualified to answer this question, while 9 staff felt that they would like to know what happens at the Partnership Board meeting either through feedback, or a news-sheet. This would be particularly useful in learning about feedback from parents. Other comments included:

- "There should be more parents involved".
- "The role of the generic agencies should be as advisors to the Partnership Board".
- "Attendance at the Partnership Board meetings could be improved".

### **37.) To what extent do you feel that Sure Start Grange Park is meeting its aims and objectives?**

All staff said that Sure Start Grange Park was meeting its aims and objectives. They felt that Sure Start was doing very well indeed especially given the short time since it began operating. Other comments included:

- "The need to connect with more hard to reach families who really would benefit from access to the services".
- "The need of unemployed families to access the nursery".

### **38.) To what extent do you feel that Sure Start Grange Park will be able to meet its aims and objectives in the future?**

Everyone felt that Sure Start Grange Park will be able to meet its aims and objectives in the future. However, many staff felt that Sure Start would need to be flexible and adaptable to carry on. Also, there was concern about the effect Children's Centres would have on the organisation i.e. would all the emphasis be on education for children and not on developing childcare and supporting empowering and parents.

### **39.) How far can you contribute to ensuring that your service achieves sustainability?**

Only 3 staff responded that they did not think they could contribute to ensuring sustainability of the organisation. The vast majority felt that to continue to provide a high quality service, to be innovative, to keep staff motivated and to constantly measure and evaluate the service would ensure sustainability. Other priorities included:

- Constant marketing and publicity.
- Staff available to ensure parents and children had access to Sure Start.
- The use of volunteers.
- Development of community enterprises.
- Funding information and advice.

#### **40.) What is your vision for the future of Sure Start?**

Comments from **all** interviewees are represented by the following:

- Self sufficient.
- A full nursery/a brilliant nursery.
- Parents taking some of the roles.
- Seeing the effect of Sure Start on children, parents and the community e.g. increased confidence, employment, and involvement.
- A greater level of access by the community.
- Good quality care leading to a better quality of life.
- Greater flexibility i.e. opening hours, age ranges etc.
- A happy place.
- Grange Park is the place to be!

#### **41.) What challenges do you think Sure Start Grange Park will face in the future?**

Challenges identified by staff were:

- Funding difficulties           11
- Stigma                               9
- Nursery not full                 7

Other challenges identified by staff were:

- Maintaining a good relationship with the community.
- Having the right team for the job with high morale.
- Retaining staff.
- Development of a Children's Centre to fit in with Sure Start's aims and objectives.

The interviewees were then asked if they had any further comments to make before the interview closed.

- Several staff expressed the need for a volunteer strategy, which would ensure local involvement and increase staffs level of skill.
- Sure Start is well managed.
- Its good to see parents involved.
- The nursery is excellent and provides support for children and their Parents.
- Sure Start has excellent resources and facilities.
- I really enjoy being part of the team; there is a lot of job satisfaction.
- Sure Start provides early intervention which is a really good initiative.
- I have seen a difference in staff already.
- Sure Start is an asset to the community.
- I love the job; I have never heard anyone say anything negative.
- There is a need for more team building.
- The relationship between Home Start and Sure Start may need greater clarification for the future.
- Staff need to be more informed with regard to Child Protection issues.
- Communication in the Sure Start building needs to be improved.
- Thought parents would have been involved to a greater degree.

## **7c. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The following conclusions and recommendations have been made from the information received during the staff interviews.

- Nearly all staff felt that Sure Start Grange Park is a supportive and friendly place to work. Overlap in roles was regarded by most staff members as adding value and interest to their work.
- The majority of staff thought that Sure Start Grange Park has clear aims and objectives and saw how their role fits into the overall aims and objectives.
- Although most staff were generally satisfied with their post in Sure Start, almost a third of staff interviewed indicated they were either 'not sure' how they felt about their post within Sure Start Grange Park or that they were 'fairly dissatisfied' with their post.
- In addition to this, 9 staff indicated they were seeking other employment and another staff member was not sure whether they were going to look elsewhere for employment.
- Some staff felt they were doing duties and tasks that are not part of their role.
- It was noted by a number of staff members that people are paid differently for essentially doing the same jobs.
- More than half the members of staff said they either do not have enough time to carry out all the duties expected of them or they were not sure whether they had enough time.
- The majority of staff were satisfied with their salary, the amount of annual leave received and the flexibility of working hours.
  - *Clarification is needed as to whether the reason so many staff are seeking alternative employment and are dissatisfied with their post is a result of people looking for promotion or because they feel unsupported and over-worked. It is recommended that Sure Start review staffing levels, looking at pressures on current employees.*
  - *It is recommended that Sure Start work to identify individual staff members' needs and requirements (including regularly monitoring levels of satisfaction) in respect to their Sure Start work to ultimately increase levels of satisfaction with roles.*
  - *At the time of interviewing 16 staff members were either not sure or dissatisfied with the level of support received from their line manager/supervisor. It is essential that regular one-to-one supervision is established for all members of staff, to allow for discussion of personal and professional goals and issues around Sure Start work. Areas of conflict such as pay discrepancies between staff needs to be openly addressed. There is a need for some clarification of roles, specifically about who should be doing what. Retention of staff is crucial in providing consistent services to families.*

### **The Sure Start Team**

- Some staff described not knowing what the role of the multi-agency team is.

*Thought should be given to how staff can be informed about the roles within the team and the overall role and aims of the multi-agency team.*

### **Communication and level of input into decision making**

- Team meetings were seen as the main and effective channel of communication for people working at Sure Start Grange Park. 8 staff members however felt they were not being informed about processes and operations within Sure Start Grange Park and 13 people were either 'not sure' or 'dissatisfied' with the levels and processes of communication. There is an element of an "upstairs/downstairs" culture.
- With respect to how satisfied members of staff were with their own level of input into decision making within Sure Start, 29.7% were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.
- In addition to this, a concern was raised about communicating with the community via letters. It was felt this was a problem for those with literacy difficulties.
  - *It is recommended that procedures be put in place for informing those who do not attend team meetings (either because they work part-time or for other reasons) about information discussed. It is also recommended that members of nursery staff take turns to attend the team meetings.*
  - *A conscious effort should also be made by all staff to pass on information to those not working in the office.*
  - *It is recommended that if someone from the public is not to gain admission to the Sure Start building members of staff should be aware of the reasons for their refusal.*
  - *These changes should lead to a feeling of increased involvement in decision making processes and increased inclusion generally for all staff. If there is cohesion and synergy within the staff team, this will surely send clear messages to the local community.*
  - *Consideration should also be given to alternative methods of communication with members of the community.*

### **Professional Development**

- Although the majority of staff members felt there were opportunities for training, others described not being informed about training. In addition to this, 25.7% were either 'not sure' or dissatisfied with the opportunity for professional development, with 11.4% being 'very dissatisfied'.

*It is recommended that Sure Start works to address the professional development and training needs of all staff. Supervision may be the opportune place to discuss such individual training and development needs.*

### **Guidance and managerial direction**

- In addition to this, although the majority of staff members were satisfied with the general guidance and managerial direction within Sure Start Grange Park, 26.4% were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the general guidance and managerial direction.
- *It is recommended that Sure Start considers how guidance and managerial direction could be improved.*

### **Service planning**

An issue was raised about a lack of formal planning in the delivery of services and a need was identified for processes of monitoring and ongoing development to be in place.

- *A need for more formal planning around the organisation and direction of services, through consultation with and input from all staff members was identified. Monitoring and development should be emphasised to ensure quality, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of services. A need was expressed for definite policies and procedures for follow up appointments. (Sure Start management have assured us that there are policies and procedures in place, thus, this point seems to reflect a lack of awareness and suggest a need for improved communication rather than for specific new policies.)*

### **Security of employment**

- 23.4% were either 'not sure', 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the security of their employment.
- *It is recommended that staff are informed about possible future developments within Sure Start, for example the development of Children's Centres, so they feel more knowledgeable and secure.*

### **Volunteers**

Many staff described a need for a volunteer strategy.

- *It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park develop recruitment strategies for volunteers and actively works to increase the involvement of members of the local community. Incentives could be offered to attend appropriate training (such as a free lunch and childcare).*

### **Services**

A number of improvements were suggested by staff, which could be considered by Sure Start Grange Park:

- Increased family support services
- Increased community development activity
- More men involved
- Reducing stigma of Grange Park
- Increased awareness of Sure Start
- Extended opening hours
- Shorter team meetings
- Team building
- Cleaner for the nursery

### **Liaising with other services**

- Good liaison was evident with generic agencies and good partnership working.
- *It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park continually strives to maintain good working partnerships with generic agencies to provide an integrated and seamless service to the public.*

### **Health and Safety issues**

Generally staff felt safe and secure although certain issues were raised.

- *Staff should not be in the building alone at night or first thing in the morning and the car park should be lit. (We have since been reassured that this does not/will not happen)*
- *The possibility of having a panic button in reception should be considered. (There is a panic button and, again, this seems to reflect lack of awareness and suggests a need for improved communication)*
- *Mobiles and personal alarms should be considered for those doing home visits alone. (This appears to be another case of lack of awareness and, again suggests a need for improved communication.)*
- *There is a need for all staff to be acquainted with Health & Safety policies and procedures and to know who their Health & Safety representative(s) are.*

### **Health and Safety issues within the nursery**

A number of health and safety concerns were raised with regard to the nursery, for example a need for security procedures around staff being left alone with children whilst changing nappies, health procedures for children who are unwell and unclean play areas.

- *These issues should be individually addressed and a number of clear policies and guidelines be put into place.*

### **Partnership Board**

The majority of staff interviewed were unsure of the remit of the partnership board.

- *Consideration should be given as to how to address this lack of awareness. A need was also identified for clarification of the objectives of the group and poor attendance should be monitored and addressed.*

### **Advertising and awareness raising**

- *There is a need for ongoing publicity and marketing of Sure Start and the Nursery, as the local community is constantly changing and evolving.*

## 8. OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the report, a variety of recommendations have been made. They can be broken down into three sections. These are

1. Recommendations of benefit to Sure Start.
2. Recommendations of benefit the community
3. Recommendations of benefit to Staff.

### **Recommendations of benefit to Sure Start.**

- To review, and aim to revitalise, their publicity and awareness raising strategies.
- To identify causes and activities that will help them to move towards specific Sure Start targets (*Now addressed*)
- To seek more parental involvement.
- It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park continually strives to maintain good working partnerships with generic agencies to provide an integrated and seamless service to the public.
- Sure Start should consider extending the training options (including the possibilities of vocational training) taking into account childcare and perhaps a small incentive to encourage attendance by parents.
- The majority of staff interviewed were unsure of the remit of the partnership board. This lack of awareness. A need was also identified for clarification of the objectives of the group and poor attendance should be monitored and addressed.
- It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park develop recruitment strategies for volunteers and actively works to increase the involvement of members of the local community. Incentives could be offered to attend appropriate training (such as a free lunch and childcare). (*Now addressed*)

### **Recommendations of benefit to the Community**

- Sure Start should consider the possibilities of providing more affordable childcare. The possibilities for providing/supporting more services before and after school and over the weekend period is also worth considering
- Occasional weekend outings organised by Sure Start or by parents supported by Sure Start may help to strengthen families and communities and encourage different generations of families to become involved.
- Sure Start may want to consider how they can increase the use of libraries by parents and children. (*Now addressed*)
- The possibilities of providing a safe and secure outdoor play area for young children should be considered. (*Now addressed*)
- It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park increase levels of support perhaps through health visitors (whom many parents/guardians identified as a common source of support).

### **Recommendations of benefit to Staff:**

- Nearly all staff felt that Sure Start Grange Park is a supportive and friendly place to work. Overlap in roles was regarded by most staff members as adding value and interest to their work.
- Clarification is needed as to whether the reason so many staff are seeking alternative employment. It is recommended that Sure Start review staffing levels, looking at pressures on current employees.
- It is recommended that Sure Start work to identify individual staff members' needs and requirements (including regularly monitoring levels of satisfaction) in respect to their Sure Start work to ultimately increase levels of satisfaction with roles. .
- Communication between staff members and other members of the community needs to be improved. Sure Start may wish to consider implementing a new communication network
- It is recommended that Sure Start Grange Park develop recruitment strategies for volunteers and actively works to increase the involvement of members of the local community. Incentives could be offered to attend appropriate training (such as a free lunch and childcare). *(Now addressed)*
- There is a need for all staff to be acquainted with Health & Safety policies and procedures and to know who their Health & Safety representative(s) are. The safety of staff should be made a priority, with the possibility of introducing panic buttons and mobile phones for those working alone. *(Now addressed)*