

SureStart

Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone

Three Year Local Evaluation Report 2003-5

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Overview of the Report

This is a report of the findings of the local evaluation of Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone for the period January 2003 to March 2005, the duration of the contract with Nottingham Trent University. Insofar as it reflects the position reached by the programme by March 2005, then it is also an account of its achievements during the first three years of operation since its launch as a Wave 3 programme in 2001.

We have extracted the main conclusions from the entire report and compiled them into an executive summary and list of recommendations at the beginning, because we intend to distribute this separately among readers who may not have the time to wade through a full report. The first three sections of the main report are designed to set the scene for the evaluation. The first presents a brief profile of Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone as an area with distinct geographical, demographic and historical features that have shaped the programme's delivery. The next section deals with the way we have conducted the evaluation in terms of the methods we have used, the steering of the evaluation and the involvement of Sure Start staff. We then move on to outline the range of services that have fallen within the scope of the evaluation.

The following two sections are an account of our findings. The first is structured around the four main Sure Start objectives, drawing evidence from across the evaluation to test how far the programme has met these objectives and the national and local targets that have been used to measure progress. The second gives more detailed accounts of a number of special studies that we undertook, either to explore particular services in greater depth, such as breast feeding, or to provide evidence of the progress of the programme as a whole in, for instance, involving parents and operating as a partnership. An overview of the user satisfaction surveys is included here, although it is also used as a source of evidence for the achievement of targets and objectives. The report finishes by pinpointing a number of significant successes and identifying challenges for the future, before concluding with plans for future evaluation work in 2005-6.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to everyone at Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone who have helped us with the evaluation over a period of more than two years. In particular, we thank Tony Richardson, the Programme Manager, for his continuous support and guidance, as well as the provision of additional resources when they have been needed. We are also grateful to partners and staff members who have regularly attended our 3-monthly Evaluation Reference Group meetings, and have guided the direction of the evaluation, given advice on research design and provided comments on draft reports. Moreover, we would like to thank all Sure Start staff who have evaluated their work and provided evidence to enrich the findings on which this report has depended. Lastly, we thank all the parents and children from the three villages who have patiently filled in questionnaires, attended interviews, contributed to focus groups, etc., without which we would not have had the rich stream of data on which to draw for this report.

1.0 Bilsthorpe, Blidworth, Clipstone and Sure Start

1.1 The origins of Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone

Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone began in 2001 as a Wave 3 programme for which Nottinghamshire County Council Education Department has served as Lead Partner and Accountable Body. The programme was developed through an extensive consultation exercise in which local parents were intimately involved, along with other stakeholders in the delivery of services to young children and their families. The programme has been delivered through a Partnership Board on which a number of key stakeholders have been represented:

Nottinghamshire County Council Education Department
Newark and Sherwood Primary Care Trust
Sherwood Forest Hospitals Trust
Newark and Sherwood District Council
Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services Department
Nottinghamshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Home Start Dukeries
Newark and Sherwood Council for Voluntary Service
APTCOO (A Place To Call Our Own)
Parents from each of the three villages

In addition to the four main objectives set by the Sure Start Unit for all local programmes, Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone has been guided by a vision set out in the *Project Submission* (2001, p.18), which reflects the views of parents.

Improving outcomes for children lies at the centre of what we hope to achieve and we aim to make involvement in Sure Start a positive experience for everyone.

We plan that our programme will last ten years. Over the life of the Sure Start programme, the Partnership's vision is to enable families to increase the sense of control they have in their lives and to work towards the goal of family empowerment.

The Partnership believes this can be achieved by

- Involving mothers, fathers, children, grandparents and carers in shaping and securing a healthier future;
- Providing opportunities for families to participate in training and education, to learn, to play, to socialise and to grow (up) together;
- Strengthening families and communities and networks within them;
- Encouraging families to take responsibility for their health and well-being;
- Ensuring agencies and their workers are able to involve parents in the decision making process;
- Creating a safer environment for families to live in;
- Developing happy, confident families with healthy levels of self-esteem;
- Nurturing a sense of achievement in everyone who participates in Sure Start;
- Ensuring accessibility to affordable services, support and transport;
- Providing support for parents and families, pre-conceptually, ante-natally and post-natally;
- Helping families to manage change;
- Achieving excellence in early years provision;
- Developing services which meet the needs of their users, above those of the agencies who deliver them.

1.2 The local context

Realising this vision has presented the programme managers, staff and parents with challenges that have arisen from the distinctive features of Bilsthorpe,

Blidworth and Clipstone as an area, and some of these characteristics need to be highlighted at the outset. All figures are from either the National Evaluation of Sure Start or National Statistics and relate to 2001. Many will have changed since then, some quite possibly as a result of Sure Start. Local comparisons are with the municipal district of Newark and Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, and national comparisons are with England.

- Some aspects of the area's distinctiveness derive from its rural topography combined with its recent industrial history as a coalfields community. It covers the largest area of any Sure Start programme and has one of the lowest population densities (220/km²). It also combines three hitherto quite separate former mining communities. Many of the other characteristics listed below derive, at least in part, from these distinctions.
- Ethnically, the population is almost entirely white (99%), much more so than both the Sure Start average (83%) and the English average (91%).
- Although the birth rate to mothers under 18 (3.7%) is comparable with other Sure Start areas, as is the proportion of births inside marriage (47%), the proportion of births to lone mothers is lower (18%) than the Sure Start average (25%) and closer to the national norm (14.5%), which is possibly indicative of a more traditional family structure.
- Despite a recent history of high male unemployment following the collapse of the mining industry, current deprivation indicators give a mixed message, with some important differences between the three villages. The proportion of children 0-3 in workless households (27%) is higher than the national average (22%), but much lower than the Sure Start average (43%). Unemployment rates in Blidworth and Clipstone (4.4%) are higher than both local (Newark and Sherwood, 3.1%) and national (England, 3.4%) averages, but the rate for Bilsthorpe (2.9%) is lower. The employment rate for Clipstone appears particularly low (51%) against local and national comparisons (60-61%), but this is less the case for Blidworth (56%) and Bilsthorpe (57%). For the area as a whole, there is a high level of long-term worklessness, 25% having not worked since 1999, compared with a Sure Start average of 21% and a national average of 19%. This may partly arise from all three areas having a rate of permanent sickness or disability that is around double the local and national average (5.5-5.7%), with Clipstone the highest at 11%. Particularly noteworthy for the area as a whole is the proportion of males with a limiting long-term illness, which at 25% is above the Sure Start average (22%) as well as the national average (16%).
- At the 2001 Census, a lower proportion of people in all three villages thought their health was 'good' than did so locally (67%) and nationally (69%), with both Blidworth and Clipstone registering 62%. However, child health indicators once again give mixed messages. The proportion of low birth weight babies (9.6%) is slightly above the Sure Start average, while emergency hospital admissions are well below the Sure Start average for all causes, and even below the national average for gastroenteritis.
- The proportion of children on the Child Protection Register (60/1000) is above the national average (37), but below the Sure Start average (83). The proportion of children looked after (12/1000) is well below the Sure Start average (71).
- With regard to indicators of educational performance, children's performance at Key Stage 1 is comparable with the Sure Start average in English, but

below the Sure Start average in Maths, and well below the national average in both subjects. Moreover, the area has a proportion of adults with no qualifications which is similar to the Sure Start average (41%) and well below the local average (32%) and the national average (30%). Furthermore, the proportion of adults with a degree or higher qualification (9%) is lower than national (20%), local (16%) and Sure Start averages (12%). The figure is particularly low in Clipstone (7%).

- Access to local services does reflect the area's rural isolation to some extent, but this is not the case with all services. Thus the average distance to the nearest Child Clinic is 3.8 km. This figure is less than 4 km in 60% of rural Sure Start areas, but less than 2 km in 95% of urban areas. This relative inaccessibility of local services is compounded in Clipstone by a low rate of car ownership for a rural area, with 30% of households being without a car, compared with 22% locally and 27% nationally. The rate of provision of full day care and sessional day care providers is well below both the national average and the Sure Start average. However, childminders and crèche day care providers seem to be rather more plentiful than the Sure Start average and even the national average in the case of the latter.
- Two other local features were claimed in the *Project Submission*, but we have been unable to substantiate these. Housing estates are believed to be run-down and there is a high rate of certain types of crime, particularly youth crime, reflecting local disaffection and lack of opportunity amongst the young.

In sum, the challenges presented by the area for the development of a Sure Start programme derive from its recent history, its local culture and its geographical character. Each village has within it a small older section of housing which would have made up the original villages. Alongside each older village extensive housing was developed to accommodate the mining workforce. In contemporary times it could be said that the older sections of the villages, as well as housing developments built during the last decade now constitute pockets of relative affluence within the villages. However in each case the housing developed for the mining workforce constitutes the majority of the housing stock within the village. As such these are, in the main, traditional working class communities, with a long heritage in collective self-reliance and community spirit, but with a natural suspicion of outsiders and a limited estimation of formal education. That heritage has suffered from the collapse of the local industrial base in coal mining, giving rise to high male unemployment, substantial long-term ill health among older people and rising disaffection and criminality amongst the young. The rural isolation and separation of the three villages, coupled with poor transport infrastructure, have added to the challenges faced by Sure Start programme managers.

1.3 The policy context

The Sure Start programme was set up in an area in which others were already seeking to tackle some of the problems of the locality, and co-operation with these stakeholders was vital to the programme's effectiveness.

- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership was committed to ensuring the availability of early years education places for all three and four year olds, as well as supporting other new childcare initiatives.
- The Healthy Schools Programme has attracted the enrolment of two local schools.
- The Health Improvement Programme has sought to improve the health and quality of life of people in North Nottinghamshire, with sections of the plan devoted to children and young people. This programme has been linked to a

similar programme covering the Newark and Sherwood area developed by the Newark and Sherwood Health and Social Care Partnership.

- The Newark and Sherwood Partnership had responsibility for leading the development of the Community Plan.
- The Newark and Sherwood Drug Reference Group has sought to tackle drug misuse in the district.
- The North Nottinghamshire Learning Partnership included a plan for the delivery of basic skills, with implications for improving parents' employability.
- Blidworth has received support under SRB5.
- The New Deal Advisor from the Employment Service has had an important role in enhancing parents' employability.

1.4 Premises and operation

The Sure Start programme operates out of three main Sure Start centres, one in each village. All three centres are attached to local schools, enabling greater convenience to carers with older children and demonstrating preparations for possible mainstreaming into Children's Centres at a later stage.

Due to the programme being based in three distinct villages, Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone faced the relatively unique challenge of funding three buildings from a budget of £1,100,000 from the Sure Start Unit. This figure constituted an amount equal to that available to some programmes operating in only one or two different locations. Extra funding of £100,000 was bid for and successfully acquired from The Coalfields Regeneration Trust. Ultimately the buildings have been very capably constructed on a total budget of £1,200,000 with some under-spend likely¹. The programme has managed to maintain low annual running costs, for example average electricity costs of £700 per year between the three centres and average telephone charges per year per centre of £1126.

A Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone consultation strategy group undertook community consultation to give members of each village an opportunity to look at the capital plans and make comments. The events were widely publicised in various community venues and up to seventy individuals received a personal mailshot regarding the consultation. The findings from the consultations were as follows:

- 68% of those consulted in Bilsthorpe demonstrated that they were in favour of proposals
- 64% of those consulted in Blidworth demonstrated that they were in favour of the proposals
- 80% of those consulted in Clipstone demonstrated that they were in favour of proposals

Those consulted offered various suggestions and indications of concern for the plans, several of which informed further planning.

In-depth accounts of the consultations, including feedback from Sure Start staff regarding the plans can be found in 'Community Consultation for Capital Plans' documents for each village available from Tony Richardson. By the end of March 2005, the designated Sure Start centres in Bilsthorpe and Blidworth had opened and the opening of the Clipstone centre was imminent. An account of the impact of the new centres on attendance can be found in Section 7.1 of this report.

¹ A more exact figure cannot be given at the time of writing

2.0 Our Approach to the Evaluation

2.1 The evaluation contract

Evaluation was written into the *Project Plan* (2001, pp.64-5) for Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone from the outset.

The local evaluation will address the following:

- Measures of process, including the success in delivering services, the rate of parent and community involvement in Sure Start. This will also include a qualitative assessment of partnership working.
- Output measures including the numbers using particular services, and assessment of satisfaction rates...
- Outcome measures including achievement against the Sure Start objectives and targets and the extent to which the programme has succeeded in empowering the local community.
- Assessing whether services are offering good value for money.

It was expected that routine monitoring data and user feedback would provide much of the information on which evaluation would be based, supplemented by additional survey work as needed. There was a further intention that Sure Start staff, parents and children would be involved in the evaluation and that a limited number of services would be evaluated in depth.

Staff members from the School of Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University were invited to undertake the local evaluation following a presentation to the Partnership Board in July 2002. Accordingly, Nottinghamshire County Council entered into a Service Level Agreement with Nottingham Trent University in January 2003, which ran until the end of March 2005. It was drawn up by Mr Peter Briggs, the School's Development Manager, and has been managed by Dr Graham Bowpitt, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, in co-operation with Mrs Helen Puntha, his Research Assistant, who has been based at the Sure Start Centre at Gwendoline Grove House in Clipstone throughout the evaluation. Until her retirement in July 2004, Dr Pat Higham, Professor of Social Work and Social Care, acted as consultant to the evaluation and regularly chaired meetings of the Evaluation Reference Group (see below). The SLA has been reviewed at six month intervals at meetings between Dr Bowpitt and Mr Tony Richardson, the Sure Start Programme Manager.

2.2 Principles of the evaluation

During the course of the evaluation, the following principles have evolved to guide it in its progress.

- *Sure Start Principles* - In recognition of the Sure Start Principles, services will be evaluated according to the extent to which they
 - a. Make services readily accessible to all relevant families;
 - b. Acknowledge cultural diversity among Sure Start families and respond appropriately;
 - c. Involve parents and carers in planning and running services;
 - d. Make links with services for older children;
 - e. Achieve better outcomes for children.
- *Sure Start Delivery Plan* - The evaluation will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the Delivery Plan for Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone, its aims and objectives, especially where they relate to local evaluation. Accordingly, the Evaluation Manager will assist Sure Start staff to meet requirements to evaluate their services.

- *'Critical friend' perspective* - The evaluation will adopt a 'critical friend' perspective, seeking not to 'test' services and the people who run them, but to draw out the value of what is being offered. This means that some priority will be given to the dissemination of good practice.
- *Co-operation and inclusiveness* - The evaluation will be undertaken in a spirit of co-operation and inclusiveness and the Evaluation Manager will make every effort to co-operate with all stakeholders, especially the families that use Sure Start services. The Evaluation Reference Group will be important in bringing about inclusiveness. Consultations with parents will be a central part of the evaluation, and the Evaluation Manager will be seeking ways to involve them in the design and conduct of the evaluation. Moreover, the evaluation will value diversity within the local community by developing a partnership approach that engages sensitively with a range of participants from diverse cultures and life experiences.
- *Mainstreaming* - Where appropriate, the evaluation will use evidence to advise the Partnership Board on the appropriate refinement of Sure Start services more effectively to meet targets. It will also make suggestions regarding the mainstreaming of services.
- *Use of data* - The evaluation will make best use of existing data to avoid duplicating effort or over-burdening service providers or users with excessive requests for information. Accordingly, the Programme Manager will make available to the evaluation all data relevant to the delivery of Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone, especially
 - baseline data generated in the preparation of the Delivery Plan,
 - monitoring data supplied to the Sure Start Unit,
 - minutes of relevant meetings, and
 - data generated by Sure Start staff in the evaluation of their services.
- *Partnership and participation* - The evaluation will look at processes as well as outputs and outcomes, seeking to discover how well Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone works as a partnership and how involved service users are in the management and operation of Sure Start.
- *Transparency* - The evaluation will be thoroughly transparent in the way it works, making it clear to those providing evidence what the evidence is being sought for, and providing feedback to contributors, especially parents and carers, on the results of investigations.
- *Ethical approach to research* - All research activities will be conducted according to strict ethical guidelines, especially those specified by the National Evaluators and by the School of Social Science's Research Ethics Policy. In particular, research involving service users will
 - take every step to safeguard their welfare and respect their human rights;
 - be sensitive to their social circumstances, cultural background and special needs;
 - pursue research agendas that take account of their aspirations, insofar as this is consistent with principles of equal opportunities;
 - in no way prejudice their access to services;
 - only take place with their freely given and informed consent and respect their right to decline involvement or withdraw at any stage;
 - preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of research subjects, *with the exception of those situations where possible child protection issues are identified, in which case the guidelines for disclosing this information will*

be as stated in the Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone child protection procedures.

- *Training and Sustainability* - The evaluation will seek to foster an evaluative perspective in the way that all services operate, so that evaluation can continue even after the current programme of evaluation has ended. Accordingly, the Evaluation Manager will arrange for the appropriate training of Sure Start workers and participants in evaluation methods.

2.3 The Evaluation Reference Group

As indicated in the above 'principles', the evaluation has been guided by an Evaluation Reference Group that has met nine times during the operation of the SLA, meeting at roughly three month intervals. The ERG has advised on:

- The overall direction of the evaluation;
- The evaluation tasks to be undertaken;
- The methods of investigation and analysis to be used;
- The timetable for the evaluation;
- Appropriate methods of disseminating the findings.

The Group has operated an open membership, with everyone involved in the delivery of the programme welcome to attend, both partners and service providers. It has been a matter of some disappointment that no parents have been involved in the ERG, although other methods of consulting parents on the design of particular research activities have been found. We have also noted a decline in the regularity with which representatives from partner agencies have been attending at recent meetings. In the light of this, it may be appropriate to consider targeting invitations to future meetings according to the agenda and the importance of topics to particular partners and staff members. It may also be appropriate to contact any individuals who have previously attended for feedback.

2.4 Evaluation milestones

The original SLA established milestones set at suitable intervals by which to assess the progress of the evaluation. These were revised by the ERG as necessary and formed the basis of discussion at the six-monthly SLA meetings. The result has been an evolving chart that summarises the achievements of the evaluation over a period of two and a quarter years.

Task	Date
First meeting of Evaluation Reference Group to agree priorities for the evaluation	14 th January 2003
Papers presented to 2 nd meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of data monitoring • User satisfaction survey conducted in October 2002 • Progress in promoting parental involvement 	10 th April 2003
Progress reports to 3 rd meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data monitoring • Interview programme with past and present parent reps on the Sure Start Board • Study of patterns of parent involvement in other local Sure Start programmes • Developing methods for user satisfaction survey Initial work evaluating progress towards specific targets on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breast feeding, - post-natal depression, - smoking cessation, - language development, - workless households 	9 th July 2003
Progress reports to 4 th meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSLM assessments for 2002-3 • Proposals for a programme of evaluation of services to promote breast feeding • Completion and distribution of user survey questionnaire • Plans to evaluate post-natal depression training and 'Mothers in mind' group • Organising evaluation training workshops for staff • Analysis of interviews with parent reps • Updated analysis of monitoring data 	14 th October 2003
Progress reports to 5 th meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of a postgraduate bursary for Helen to undertake further work on breast feeding • Analysis of user survey questionnaires • Summary of findings from parent rep interviews • Agenda for evaluation workshops 	21 st January 2004
Progress reports to 6 th meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from evaluation training • Summary of user survey findings • More detailed findings from the user survey on breast feeding • Plans for further evaluation work on language development 	28 th April 2004
Progress reports to 7 th meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the experience of parent representatives • More detailed findings from the user survey • SSLM assessments for 2003-4 	14 th July 2004
Progress reports to 8 th meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further evaluation of breast-feeding support based on cost-effectiveness • Audit of staff evaluation activities 	13 th October 2004
Progress reports to 9 th meeting of ERG on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete audit of staff evaluation activities • Conduct 3rd user satisfaction survey 	12 th January 2005
Programme of work to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake evaluation of Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone as a partnership • Complete evaluation of breast-feeding support services • Hold 2nd evaluation training event with emphasis on conducting focus groups and analysing data • Write final evaluation report covering 2002-5 and annual reports for January 2004 and January 2005 	End of March 2005

2.5 Evaluation workshops

In addition to their own work in data gathering, the evaluation team have led two workshops for Sure Start staff, each on two separate occasions. The purpose was to broaden ownership of the evaluation among Sure Start service providers and to expand both the range of activities that fell within the scope of the evaluation, and the volume of data on which the evaluation could draw.

The first workshop, held during January-February 2004, presented an overview of the evaluation process, focusing on asking the right questions, on how to use monitoring data for evaluation and on selecting appropriate data-gathering tools. The following summarises the results from feedback questionnaires distributed to participants.

- Participants generally found the practical exercises in framing evaluation questions to be the most useful aspect of the workshop.
- The area which more respondents felt needed further development was in managing data, i.e. the collecting, analysing and dissemination of data.
- Areas for further training, as highlighted by participants, should be in evaluation design, particularly questionnaire design; data analysis, particularly qualitative data; more examples of good practice; more training on use of the SoftSmart database; and exercises relating evaluation work specifically to Sure Start work.
- Future workshops should be at more convenient times and more time should be dedicated to practical exercises, including brainstorming exercises within the workshop. Smaller group sizes might be beneficial.

The second workshop, held during February-March 2005, was not able to respond to all these comments, but we were able to concentrate on issues of data-handling, and on the use of qualitative methods, and we did make greater use of practical exercises. The workshop concentrated on focus groups, how to set them up and run them and how to analyse the findings. We chose this method partly because service providers spend much of their time running groups with parents, but also because we were able to try out this research tool in the classroom with the participants, recording the operation of the group and analysing the findings. We also spent some time looking at how to analyse and present quantitative findings, such as those that might be gained from a questionnaire. Unfortunately, both the 2005 workshops were sparsely attended, only eight attending in all.

2.6 Evaluation methods

A detailed account of the methods used can be found with the accounts of each of the major studies in this report. The following is a list of all the services and activities that fell within the scope of this evaluation. We begin with an outline of the whole programme evaluations and the in-depth evaluation of breast-feeding promotion services, which were all the work of the evaluation team. There then follows a list of services and activities, which have been included largely because staff members have undertaken evaluations of their work. They are organised around whichever of the four main Sure Start objectives they are most relevant to, with some clearly providing evidence for more than one.

2.6.1 Programme and in-depth evaluations

a) *The use of monitoring data*

Early on in the evaluation, monitoring data were examined for the extent to which they indicated progress towards Sure Start targets. A grid was created (see Appendix 1) as a way of presenting evidence on all PSA and SLA targets, which identified the measures used and what the data

showed, with comments on the validity and reliability of the measures and the availability of the data.

b) User satisfaction survey

The aims were to find out how far parents think general family services have improved and to discover what parents think of Sure Start services. The survey was undertaken twice by the evaluation team in December 2003 and December 2004 by distributing a postal questionnaire to all households in the Sure Start area with children under the age of 4. However, an earlier survey had been undertaken in December 2002 before we began our evaluation, with the findings of which we were able to make some comparisons.

c) The involvement of parent representatives on the Partnership Board

All current and as many past parent representatives as were willing to participate were interviewed to review their experiences and assess the extent to which they were able to make a meaningful contribution to decision making. We also sought to find out how far the process of parent representation contributed to capacity building.

d) The operation of Sure Start as a partnership

All but one members of the Partnership Board were interviewed to find out how well Sure Start worked as a partnership between stakeholders.

e) Buildings evaluation

During the period of the SLA, we witnessed the opening of two new Sure Start centres in the villages of Bilsthorpe and Blidworth, and we examined the effect they had on service utilisation rates.

f) Hard-to-reach strategy

During the summer of 2004, publicity events were organised wherein attempts were made to visit families who had not registered with Sure Start or who had registered but not attended for some time. These efforts were evaluated for their success in improving take-up of services among these families.

g) Breast feeding support services

What is reported here is part of an on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of breast-feeding support services that will continue into 2005-6, and that has involved the use of local areas as controls. At this stage, our evaluation is based on the findings of the user survey, which contained specific questions on breast feeding, and data from the Newark and Sherwood Primary Care Trust on breast feeding rates locally. We have also assessed the cost effectiveness of breast feeding support services.

2.6.2 Evaluation of services and activities

The following tabulates the services and activities that have fallen within the scope of the evaluation.

Social and emotional development	Health	Ability to learn	Strengthening families and communities	Relevant to >1 objective
Mothers in mind; First contact events; Crèche facilities; Baby massage; Family play sessions; Hard-to-reach strategy.	Smoking cessation; Cook and eat sessions; Preventing gastro-enteritis road show; Hygiene; First aid; Breast feeding support.	Listening bag scheme; PEEP; Library work; APTCCO; Crèche facilities; Family play sessions; Toy library; Sure Start Language Measure.	Weight management; Computer course; Jobcentre Plus; Parent reps; Volunteering; Benefits advice; PASS (Parents and Sure Start) magazine.	Home Start; Coffee and chat sessions; Pilot shadowing project; Chance to chat sessions; Telly babies; The Incredible Years; Summer activities.

3.0 Meeting National Objectives and Local Targets

This chapter will use evidence gathered by the local evaluators from Nottingham Trent University and the staff team at Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone to appraise the achievements of the programme during its first three years of operation. The evidence is organised around the four main Sure Start objectives and, as far as possible, PSA and SDA targets, but readers should recognise that all Sure Start services are designed to address the needs of 'the whole family' and cannot be easily compartmentalised into narrow Government targets and objectives. In view of this, there will be a section on 'meeting targets' under each of the four objectives, followed by a presentation of such statistical data as is currently available. There will then follow more detailed evaluations of relevant services and activities. Readers should also acknowledge that this chapter is necessarily selective in the services and activities that fall within its scope and can only cover those that have been the subject of evaluation.

3.1 Improving social and emotional development

... in particular, by supporting early bonding between parents and their children, helping families to function and by enabling the early identification and support of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Meeting targets

PSA target: In fully operational programmes, achieve by 2005-6 a (x) per cent increase in the proportion of babies and young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age.

- The measure to be used for this target will be the aggregate score for the three elements covered by the Foundation Stage Profile. However, these data are not yet available.
- Services that have contributed towards this target have been evaluated below, in particular, the work of the community paediatric assistant, crèche facilities, the Home Start service, the Incredible Years parenting programme and the Small Talk group.

SDA target (1): All local Sure Start programmes to have agreed and implemented, in a culturally sensitive way, ways of caring for and supporting mothers with post-natal disorder.

- Evidence of having achieved this target is derived from the records kept by Sure Start midwives and health visitors. During 2003-4, all 176 mothers with live births were screened for PND. Of these, 18 were identified as suffering from this condition and all received appropriate care.
- The evaluation of the baby massage programme (see below) provides further evidence of having met this target.

SDA target (2): All families with new-born babies in Sure Start local programmes and Children's Centre areas to be visited in the first two months of their baby's life and given information and support about the services and support available to them.

- Evidence of having reached this target can be found from health visitor and programme records and shows that all 176 children born during 2003-4 were visited during the first two months of their lives.

3.1.1 Baby Massage

The following baby massage courses are included in this evaluation:

1. Clipstone Health Centre, 13th May – 10th June, 2003
2. Bilsthorpe Sure Start Centre, 20th February – 19th March, 2004
3. Clipstone Health Centre, 2nd – 30th March, 2004
4. Blidworth Sure Start Centre, 5th May – 9th June, 2004
5. Bilsthorpe Sure Start Centre, 21st June – 19th July, 2004
6. Clipstone Health Centre, 7th September – 5th October 2004

Unfortunately, three different evaluation tools were used, making comparison and aggregation difficult:

- A self-completion questionnaire using mainly closed questions was used with 1, 2, 4 and 5.
- Facilitators' notes have been analysed for 3, 4 and 5.
- A self-completion questionnaire using open questions was used with 6.

The first table compares the results of the first of these tools.

- For Qs 1-5, results were scored as follows: Excellent = 2; Good = 1; Satisfactory = 0; Poor = -1
- For Qs 6-7, results were scored as follows: Greatly = 2; Moderately = 1; Not at all = 0

Course:-	1. (Clipstone)	2. (Bilsthorpe)	4. (Blidworth)	5. (Bilsthorpe)
Respondents	6	5	3	4
1. Course organisation:				
• Pre-course information	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.0
• Course plan	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.0
• Timing (day & time)	1.0	1.2	1.7	1.3
2. Quality of input				
• Clarity of outcomes	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.3
• Variety of activities	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.5
• Encouragement	1.3	2.0	1.7	1.8
• Feedback	1.5	2.0	1.7	2.0
3. Meeting of learning needs	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.5
4. Preparation of course materials	1.0	1.6	2.0	1.8
5. Appropriateness of venue	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
6. Meeting expectations	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.0
7. Gained from the course	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.5
8. As a result of the course				
• Joined another course	1 (17%)	4 (80%)	1 (33%)	0
• More confident ¹	4 (67%)			
9. Used to help learning:				
• Information, advice & guidance	2 (33%)	1 (20%)	1 (33%)	2 (50%)
• Child care	1 (17%)	0	0	0
10. Found out about the course from: ²				
• Word of mouth	3 (50%)	2 (40%)	2 (67%)	0
• Sure Start	2 (33%)	0	2 (67%)	3 (75%)
• Home Start	1 (17%)	0	0	0
• Health visitor	0	1 (20%)	0	0
• Leaflet	0	2 (40%)	1 (33%)	1 (25%)

Course:-	1. (Clipstone)	2. (Bilsthorpe)	4. (Blidworth)	5. (Bilsthorpe)
11. Suggestions for making the course more accessible	Advertise more (2), e.g. newsletter, leaflets. Specific invitation.	Run courses at varied times for people who work and for partners	Advertise more (2), e.g. local paper, Sure Start centre	Run courses at times suitable for partners. Advertise more, e.g. local shops. Sure Start venue makes course accessible
12. Suggestions for new courses	First aid "Resus" Feeding			Smaller classes and more of them

¹ This was only an option offered to respondents at 1.

² Results were hard to interpret, since Home Start, health visitor and leaflets could all have originated in Sure Start.

The second table is an analysis of the notes taken by the facilitator for each mother and baby who attended courses 3, 4 and 5. In cases 4 and 5, these findings serve to corroborate those from the questionnaire.

Course:-	3 (Clipstone)	4 (Blidworth)	5 (Bilsthorpe)
Mothers and babies starting	12 (inc. one father)	7	11
Age range of babies	3-10 months	1.5-8 months	3-6.5 months
Average age of babies	5 months	4 months	4.5 months
Babies with physical problems, e.g. teething, colic	4	4	4
Problems with mother/baby relationships	2	0	1
Evidence of massage helping			
• Coping with physical problems	1	1	3
• Enjoyment	7	2	1
• Responded well	4	3	2
• Relaxation	3	3	3
• Friendships generated	2	0	0
Continuation to the end of the course	9	3	5

In many ways, the third research tool provided the deepest insights into the impact of baby massage on the four mothers who attended.

- 1) Did the course meet your expectations? All 4 agreed, with the following additional comments:
 - It improved the relationship between mother and baby (2)
 - It helped understanding
 - It gave a chance to meet other mums and babies
- 2) What changes would you suggest for future classes?
 - None (3)
 - Other sessions during the year
- 3) What has been the most important experience with your baby since the class?
 - Spending time together (2)
 - Enjoyment for baby (2)
 - Calming effect on mother and baby
 - Communication
- 4) What is your impression of the class?
 - Relaxing (2)
 - Of benefit to mother and baby
 - Warm and friendly

- 5) Did the instructor help you feel comfortable? All agreed, with the following comments:
- Clear explanations
 - Helpful demonstrations
 - Welcoming
 - Warmth
- 6) Where did you hear about the course?
- Sure Start (2)
 - Health visitor
 - Health centre

Comments on findings

Small numbers make generalisations misleading, but some patterns can be discerned.

- These were well-organised classes. All respondents thought organisation was at least 'good' in all respects. The majority of Blidworth attendants thought it was 'excellent'.
- Preparation of course materials were 'good' at all venues and 'excellent' at Blidworth.
- The quality of the input from the facilitator was at least 'good' in all respects and at all venues. The majority of attendants at Blidworth and the first Bilsthorpe course thought the input was 'excellent'. All four attendants at the third Clipstone course endorsed the clarity of the delivery and the warmth of the atmosphere.
- The meeting of learning needs was 'good' at all venues and, on balance, 'excellent' at Blidworth. Moreover, expectations were met 'greatly' by most attendants at Blidworth and both the Bilsthorpe courses. Attendants at the third Clipstone course elaborated with two main benefits: improving the relationship between mother and baby and creating new friendships between families.
- Analysis of facilitators' notes also reveals enjoyment and relaxation for both mother and baby as the most frequent benefits of the classes. Help in coping with physical problems was less evident.
- The new Sure Start Centres at Bilsthorpe and Blidworth got an endorsement by being judged 'excellent' by all attendants in contrast to those at Clipstone who felt the health centre was only 'good'. It will be interesting to see the impact of the new Clipstone Centre when baby massage is held there.
- All attendants gained at least 'moderately' from the courses, and on balance gained 'greatly' at the Blidworth and first Bilsthorpe courses. Attendants at the third Clipstone course listed spending time together and enjoyment for baby as the most positive benefits of the course.
- A minority of attendants have gone on to join other courses.
- Word of mouth and Sure Start advertising seem to be the most effective means by which people got to hear about the course.
- To make the course more accessible, respondents suggested wider advertising and running the course at times more convenient for working partners.
- Where figures were available, only just over half of attendants stayed to the end of the course, with a greater rate of attrition at the Blidworth and second Bilsthorpe courses. It would be worth finding out why parents dropped out.

3.1.2 Community Paediatric Assistant

The work of the Sure Start Community Paediatric Assistant was evaluated between August and November 2004. The CPA completed a feedback questionnaire for 8 clients, stating the issue for which help was requested, the length of intervention and what was achieved. Clients were then invited to give their thoughts.

- Children's ages ranged from 2 to 4.
- 6 of the 8 clients requested help with behaviour management, one asked for help with potty training and the other took part in a development programme.
- Length of intervention ranged from 4 to 14 weeks, with 7.6 weeks being the average.
- With regard to behaviour management,
 - Improvements in behaviour were noted with all 6 children, including improved relations with siblings (3), greater attention span, a willingness to participate in activities, reduced boredom and reduced tantrums.
 - Parents were better able to handle difficult behaviour (e.g. through time out, praising good behaviour) or to participate in activities with children that contributed to their improved behaviour (3 cases).
- The potty training was successful.
- The development programme led to the achievement of educational goals such as colour recognition and practical skills (painting, baking). These were partly achieved through joint activities with the parent.
- Parents' comments
 - Recognised goals achieved (e.g. "X is like a different child; his behaviour is very good and his speech is improving")
 - Acknowledged support for parenting (e.g. "I think the behaviour management course has been a great help and support to both myself and X")

3.1.3 Crèche facilities

Crèche facilities were evaluated from three perspectives.

- 1) Feedback from mothers whose children attended Sure Start crèche whilst they participated in the breastfeeding peer counsellor training between September and December 2004
- 2) OFSTED parent questionnaires - distributed in December 2004 - which sought out parental views on the quality of care provided by the Sure Start crèche and play team and the contact that parents had with the crèche and play workers
- 3) The observations of the OFSTED inspectors themselves, arising from their visit on 24th February 2005

1) *Feedback from peer counsellor training crèche*

3 out of 10 attendees completed feedback forms which were devised and distributed by the Sure Start midwife.

- i) Respondents' ratings of the various aspects of the crèche were as follows
 - All three respondents strongly agreed that they were made aware of the 'ground rules' of the crèche.

- For all other aspects one respondent agreed and two respondents strongly agreed. Other aspects included:

'The pre course information about the crèche was adequate', 'the activities in the crèche were enjoyed by my child', 'I felt comfortable talking to the crèche staff about any issues I had', 'the crèche workers made my child welcome at each session', 'the snack provided was suitable for my child', 'I was informed about any issues concerning my child', 'I would use another crèche run by Sure Start'

ii) Additional comments

- "X really enjoys his time in the crèche. He built some really strong bonds with staff and other children and really loves the toys and attention he receives. Thank you!"
- "Creche was overall very well run. The staff were always very friendly and helpful. X loves it so much I don't know how he's going to cope when the course is over. Well done & a big thanks to all the staff"

In conclusion, parents reported high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of crèche and play sessions. In particular parents strongly agreed that they were made aware of the 'ground rules' of the crèche and emphasised the positive qualities of the individual staff members, such as friendliness and helpfulness.

2) *Feedback from OFSTED questionnaires*

Questionnaires were devised by OFSTED and distributed by crèche workers to regular users of crèche. Participants were selected on the basis that their child had attended two or more crèche sessions and that they were 'likely to give honest answers'. Respondents were given the option of submitting their form to the crèche workers anonymously or returning them by post to OFSTED.

14 respondents completed feedback questionnaires including 5 respondents from Bilsthorpe, 4 from Blidworth and 5 from Clipstone. Data are reported under the assumption that the group is homogeneous and does not require breakdowns by area since childcare provision is very similar in all three areas, with the same staff, activities and resources.

a) Levels of satisfaction with the care provided

- 13 out of 14 respondents reported that they were happy with the care their child received, while one made no response.

Respondents made additional comments regarding particularly positive aspects of care:

- The service offered was "well-organised", with "planned activities" each week and "different activities at every crèche" (2). The staff "look after (the children) really well" and "make a fuss" of the children when they arrive.
- The staff were friendly (4), caring (3), understanding, approachable, enthusiastic, patient, flexible, welcoming.
- The children "enjoy their time", "settle when I leave them" and are "always happy."
- Parents have confidence in the service. They "know that my children will settle when I leave them", "know that the carers look after them really well" and "know that my child is well looked-after in a safe and happy environment"

There were some aspects of care which could be improved:

- More courses - that would mean more time at crèche and play sessions!
 - Make and do activities – pictures and decorations are always a winner.
- b) Levels of satisfaction with information-sharing
- All respondents reported that they were happy with the way that they and the care provider shared information about their child's care and learning, and nobody felt this could be improved.
- c) Dissatisfaction with care provided
- With regard to knowledge of procedures for making complaints, 9 respondents reported that they would know how to make a complaint if they were unhappy with the care provided, one would not know and 4 did not answer this question.

In conclusion,

- Parents reported very high levels of satisfaction with the care received by their children at crèche and play sessions.
- Parents were impressed with the positive qualities of the individual staff members, such as friendliness helpfulness, enthusiasm, patience and attentiveness.
- Parents were very satisfied with the variety of activities provided.
- Parents described a positive care environment of safety, discipline, learning and fun.
- By way of a benchmark one parent noted that she would not leave her child with any care providers other than the Sure Start crèche and play team.

3) Findings of the OFSTED inspectors

On 24th February 2005 OFSTED carried out an inspection of crèche facilities at the three Sure Start sites: Bilsthorpe Sure Start Centre, Blidworth Sure Start Centre and Gwendoline Grove Sure Start site at Clipstone. The crèche facilities are organised to support parents and carers who attend the Sure Start training sessions.

The inspection was carried out 'under the provisions of Part XA of the Children Act 1989, as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000' with the aim of assessing how well the facilities met the National Standards for under Eights Day care and Childminding. The following summary is derived from *OFSTED Day Care Inspection Report of Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone, 2005*

The setting of the crèches

	Bilsthorpe	Blidworth	Clipstone
Date of crèche opening	January 2004	July 2004	February 2002
Number of registered places	20	20	16
Age range of children accepted	6 months – 8 years	6 months – 8 years	6 months – 8 years
Number of children on roll at time of inspection	23	51	38
Staff qualifications	All supervisors hold relevant qualifications for their posts. Other staff have or are working towards relevant qualifications	Refer to notes for Bilsthorpe	Refer to notes for Bilsthorpe
Support for children with special needs	The setting supports children with special needs	Refer to notes for Bilsthorpe	Refer to notes for Bilsthorpe
Facilities	The crèche have access to a main activity room with partitioned areas, kitchenette, quiet room, office and toilets. There is an enclosed outdoor area with grass and safety surfacing.	The crèche have access to a main activity room with partitioned areas, kitchen, quiet rooms, cafeteria/social area, office and toilets. There is an enclosed outdoor area with grass and safety surfacing.	Operation from a designated room. The crèche have access to toilets and an enclosed outdoor area
Sessions available	Sessions run either morning or afternoon within school times. Places are booked in advance.	Refer to notes for Bilsthorpe	Refer to notes for Bilsthorpe

Findings

The report stated that all three crèche facilities provide 'good quality care overall for children'. This is the highest rating that OFSTED awards. In addition the following remarks were made:

- i) What is being done well?
 - o Staff are well qualified and experienced. They are deployed effectively within the crèche and are able to devote their time to caring for and playing with the children
 - o Ample quality toys and equipment are available to meet the needs of all children. Resources are attractive and stimulating, providing appropriate challenge to children to extend their learning.
 - o Snacks provided are nutritious and promote healthy choices. The staff take full account of children's individual dietary needs and encourage children to extend their experience of different foods.
 - o Parents speak highly of the staff and the service offered to their children. The partnership with parents is valued and promoted effectively, through verbal exchanges and written information.

- ii) What needs to be improved?
 - o Record keeping and policies, to ensure all required details are included and are effectively shared with parents

Recommendations

In addition to the above OFSTED recommendation,

- It might be beneficial to re-iterate to parents the complaints procedure since one respondent reported that they would not know how to make a complaint in the event of dissatisfaction with care provided.
- One parent requested that staff continue to provide opportunities for children to make pictures and decorations.

3.1.4 Home Start

The Home Start service pre-dates the arrival of Sure Start, but has been receiving support from Sure Start since its launch. It uses volunteers to provide support to families in their own homes. The service was evaluated in 2003 and 2004.

2003 evaluation

41 children were among the families supported from October 2002 to June 2003. 14 postal questionnaires were distributed in April 2003, of which 9 were returned.

Respondents were asked a number of factual questions about the service

- Sources or referral were more or less evenly distributed between health visitors, midwives and self.
- Duration of help ranged from 1 month to 1 year.
- 7 clients were being visited weekly, 2 twice weekly.
- Respondents listed a total of 14 tasks regularly undertaken by volunteers, of which 6 related to childcare (e.g. feeding and changing babies), 4 involved practical support with household management (e.g. housework, completing forms) and 4 concerned emotional and social support (e.g. discussing worries).

They then gave their general opinion of the service and the volunteers.

- The two general comments about Home Start both endorsed its organisation and efficiency in the use of resources.
- The following summarises the main comments made about the volunteers:
 - Friendly (4)
 - Helpful (5)
 - Understanding/empathetic (2)

Respondents were asked a more detailed question about whether volunteers provided help fully, partly or not at all in relation to a list of issues.

- 6 respondents felt fully helped with regard to 'feeling isolated' and 'their emotional well-being';
- At least 3 respondents felt fully helped in relation to 'coping with several children under 5' (4), 'self-esteem', 'children's physical well-being', 'children's emotional well-being', 'managing children's behaviour' and 'being involved in children's development';
- The only issue where more than one respondent felt they had not been helped at all was 'managing a household budget'.

Parents then made further comments that elaborated on these findings:

- *Feeling isolated:* 8 comments were positive and 1 negative. Volunteers relieved isolation simply by providing company and someone to chat to on a regular basis. One respondent was disappointed that complete respite was not offered.
- *Using other services and facilities in the area:* 5 comments were positive and 1 negative. Volunteers provided information, introduction and even accompaniment to other services, though the negative comment implied some inconsistency in the availability of the third of these services.
- *Parents' emotional health and well-being:* 8 comments were positive and none were negative. Volunteers provided a sympathetic ear with whom problems could be shared in confidence.
- *Parents' self-esteem:* 5 comments were positive and 1 negative. Volunteers praised parents, reassured them they were not alone and helped them think more positively about themselves.

- *Parents' physical health and well-being:* 3 comments were positive and none negative. Volunteers helped parents feel less depressed or were simply there when they were having a hard time.
- *Children's physical and emotional health and well-being:* There were just 4 positive comments. Children looked forward to the volunteers' visits because they made time to play with them.
- *Managing children's behaviour:* 2 comments were positive and the other indifferent. Volunteers were calm and helped to enforce the family rules.
- *Being involved in children's development:* There were just 3 positive comments. Volunteers read to children, play with them and talk to them, and are generally excited about children's development.
- *Stress caused by conflict in the family:* Volunteers provided a listening ear that helped to relieve the stress.
- *The day-to-day running of the house:* Volunteers took control of childcare to enable parents to get things done in the house.
- *Managing a household budget:* The one comment was that not all volunteers brought the subject up.
- *Coping with several children under 5:* In the two positive comments, parents stressed the importance of giving a parent time to devote to other children. However, in one further comment a parent regretted that complete respite was not available.

2004 evaluation

39 families with 58 children were supported between October 2003 and September 2004 when the evaluation was carried out. The survey was undertaken by telephone interview. 23 families were approached, with 15 being successfully interviewed.

Once again, respondents were asked a number of factual questions about the service.

- Of the 23, 8 had been referred by health visitors, with the rest distributed fairly evenly between self-referral, the midwife, other members of the Sure Start team and other health professionals.
- Of the 15 interviewed, 11 respondents were being visited weekly, 3 twice weekly and 1 fortnightly.
- Once again, respondents listed a total of 14 tasks regularly undertaken by volunteers, of which 5 related to childcare (e.g. playing with children and looking after them), 6 involved practical support (e.g. help with shopping, transport) and 3 concerned emotional and social support (e.g. listening, chatting). It is worth noting that the nature of the tasks seems to have changed from 2003, possibly reflecting fewer respondents with small babies.

When asked for general opinions of the service,

- 13 believed Home Start support would have a lasting benefit.
- 6 respondents made positive comments, of whom 2 implied that the service had been indispensable to them. There were no negative comments.

Opinions of volunteers were rather more varied than in 2003, but all positive.

- 9 respondents just used positive adjectives (e.g. great, brilliant, fantastic);
- Others elaborated on benefits derived, e.g. listening ear, life line, restoration of trust.

Respondents were only asked to identify the most valued services volunteers provided:

- An independent friend (13)
- Some to listen (13)
- Support with children (12)
- Practical help (12)
- Getting out (11)
- Making suggestions (10)

This tends to suggest a similar pattern to 2003, with emotional support being the most valued service, although a greater proportion of respondents in 2004 seemed also to value practical help with childcare. However, different research tools were used in the two evaluations, so we must be cautious about comparisons.

The 2004 survey also asked respondents whether they attended any of the groups or activities run by the Home Start Co-ordinator, and what they thought of them.

- 10 of the 15 had attended groups.
- 7 of the 15 had been on outings.
- The groups had been enjoyable to 9 respondents and respondents' children in 8 cases.
- Negative comments related to the inconvenient timing of the groups and the fact that one respondent didn't know anyone.

When asked for suggestions on how Home Start could be improved,

- 2 respondents wanted more time with their volunteers.
- 1 respondent wanted to know where tools could be borrowed.

3.1.5 The Incredible Years Parenting Programme

The Webster-Stratton parenting programme known as 'the Incredible Years' was offered to 17 parents in three groups from Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone. Parents joined for a number of reasons:

- They wanted to learn more about parenting.
- They were concerned that their child might have a behaviour problem.
- They wanted to meet and make friends with other parents.
- Half felt out of control as parents.

77% completed the course, which is high considering the level of commitment needed. Overall, 80% of parents were positive or very positive about the course.

- Hardly anybody identified anything they disliked.
- Some parents liked everything about it.
- Other preferred features were of two kinds:
 - The value of sharing and discussing with parents experiencing similar problems;
 - The quality of the advice and support from the facilitator and other parents.

Other measures used in the evaluation are summarised below.

- One group of 5 parents agreed to record their level of stress before and after the course using the Parental Stress Index and the score dropped from 80.2 to 76.2.
- Another group of 5 parents agreed to record their level of depression before and after the course using Beck's Depression Inventory and the score dropped from 17 to 5.8.

A satisfaction questionnaire taken at the beginning and the end of the course recorded the following results:

- All respondents expected good or very good results by the end of the programme, whereas 40% had neutral expectations at the beginning.
- The proportion of parents who were confident or very confident about being able to manage behaviour at home increased from 40% to 80% by the end of the course.
- Nearly two thirds were confident or very confident about managing future behaviour problems from what they have learnt on the course.
- Regarding using discipline skills, 60% considered this difficult at the start of the course, whereas 80% classed this as easy or very easy by the end.
- Similarly, 60% regarded applying time-out as difficult at the start of the course, whereas 80% felt it was extremely easy by the end.
- Nearly everybody thought the support of the group was very helpful.
- Everybody was satisfied or very satisfied with the group leader's concern for the parents and their problems and with her general helpfulness, and nearly everybody thought the leader's teaching and preparation were at least high.
- Nearly everybody would strongly recommend the programme to others.
- Everybody wanted to keep meeting after the programme had ended.

The success of the programme was further indicated by parents' enthusiasm for a continuous parenting programme in the future.

3.1.6 Small Talk

Aim

- To provide an opportunity for mothers of children <1 to access social contact, peer support and education, in order to improve participants' self-esteem and confidence in parenting.

The group met weekly after a 'well baby' clinic. Following a baseline evaluation at the beginning, progress was evaluated after 17 weeks in October 2004.

Baseline evaluation

This served as a benchmark by which to measure subsequent progress and as a means of identifying group needs and promoting ownership of the group.

11 respondents:

- 9 came alone.
- 8 had attended similar groups before, of which 6 had been to a breast feeding group.
- Main motives were:
 - To meet other mums (10)
 - To gain information and advice (7)
 - To make friends (6)

It was agreed

- To invite speakers once a month on topics identified by the group;
- For a discussion point to be introduced in the intervening weeks by the facilitator or group members.

Interim evaluation

This served as a progress review to find out if the group was meeting people's needs and to assess the future viability and direction of the group.

18 women had accessed the group at some stage during the 17 weeks. Numbers had ranged from 0-11 with the average being 5. Attendances had ranged from 1-12, with the average being 4.

7 respondents to the questionnaire:

- 4 felt the group met their expectations and 6 said it gave them what they wanted. This included
 - Conversation, friendly informality
 - Advice and reassurance; useful tips on key subjects; different speakers on appropriate issues.
- 4 thought the length of the sessions and the venue were satisfactory and 6 thought it was held at the right time.
- 3 would have liked a refreshment facility.
- 4 indicated that they would have preferred the group to be more directed or focused.
- Some indicated that it would be difficult to join a well established group.
- 4 did not want the group to be of limited duration.
- Most wanted the group to continue along similar lines.

It was agreed

- To invite new members.
- To invite speakers more often than monthly.
- To agree topics for discussion in advance to enable people to come prepared to contribute.

Conclusions

- The group is meeting its initial objectives.
- Attendance levels are fairly consistent and sufficient for the group to be viable. However, this derives from the sporadic attendance of a much larger group of members.
- The response to the speakers demonstrates the value of input from other agencies.
- Continued viability depends on influx of new members and varied subject menu.

Postscript

The group came to an end in October 2004, because

- Members returned to work
- Children reached their first birthday
- The birth rate fell reducing the potential pool of recruits
- It was difficult to generate interest.

There are plans to re-launch the group in 2005.

3.2 Improving children's health

... in particular, by supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth.

Meeting targets

PSA target: Achieve by 2004 a 10% reduction in the number of mothers who smoke in pregnancy.

- The evidence that this target has been achieved was provided by the Sure Start midwife. Of 110 women with live births during 2003-4 whose smoking activities were known, 38 (35%) smoked before their pregnancy was confirmed. 31 (28%) continued to smoke during pregnancy, compared with 42 (38%) during 2002-3, a 10% reduction.
- Further evidence of the midwife's work in this area is provided below.

SDA target (1): Parenting support and information to be available for all parents in Sure Start areas.

- In the sense that information about Sure Start has been provided by health visitors on their initial visits to all new-born babies, this target has been met.
- Moreover, parenting support sessions are run in all three villages.
- Monitoring data reveal that of the 733 children under 4 years old living in the area during 2003-4, 196 (27%) were seen by the Sure Start programme.
- The reports in Section 3.1 on a number of parenting support activities are also relevant to this target.

SDA target (2): All local programmes to give guidance on breast feeding, hygiene and safety.

- Evidence of having met this target comes from a number of sources.
- As a result of guidance provided through the Sure Start midwife, support groups and peer counsellors, where feeding status was known in 2003-4, 56% of new mothers breast-fed at birth, 40% at 6 weeks and 27% at 4 months.
- Readers are directed to Section 8.0 for a special study of breast-feeding support at Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone.
- Sure Start health visitors distribute an information pack on the subject of basic hygiene.
- A means-tested Home Safety Scheme exists. Sure Start members are given the option of free safety fittings and features for the home (e.g. fire guards, stair gates) via Enprove. Smaller safety packs containing socket covers, bath thermometers etc. are available. Information relating to safety is also given to individuals by health visitors.

SDA target (3): 10% reduction in children admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, a lower respiratory infection or a severe injury by 2004.

- This information is collected centrally by the Sure Start Unit and is currently unavailable. However, the means-tested Home Safety Scheme described above is also relevant to the achievement of this target.

3.2.1 Smoking cessation

Background

Some Sure Start local programmes have designated smoking cessation workers. At Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone, the Sure Start midwife is in charge of services and evaluation relating to smoking cessation. The smoking target was not originally part of her SLA; what was included was a target aiming to achieve a 5% reduction in low birth-weight babies. This forms the link with smoking cessation. Babies of mothers who smoke during pregnancy are on average 200g lighter than babies of non-smoking mothers, or 460g lighter if mothers smoke heavily during pregnancy. The midwife works for Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust. At present they have no policy for dealing with smoking specifically during pregnancy.

Smoking-related pregnancy complications

Risks related to smoking during pregnancy, as indicated by various pieces of research, are as follows:

- Definite brain impairment to the child
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Spontaneous abortion
- Premature birth
- Behavioral problems in the child
- Increased possibility of the child becoming involved in criminal activities
- Low birth weight babies

Training

Training was undertaken by the midwife and a Sure Start health visitor on smoking cessation group work with adults. This training did not specifically focus on smoking cessation in pregnancy. It is widely assumed, and has been borne out in practice, that pregnant women will, for whatever reasons (e.g. stigma) not attend smoking cessation sessions, so the focus was of the training was wider. However, on the recommendation of the PCT, a support group for smoking cessation was established. This was a six-session group based on the Maudsley model.

Smoking Cessation Support Group

GPs carried recommended individuals to join the group. 13 attended, of which 8 stopped smoking. Group members ranged in age from 21 to 64, and included both males and females. Only one group member was from a 'Sure Start family', a Blidworth lady with a young baby, although she has since resumed smoking. The GPs are keen for more groups to run.

Since recruitment occurred through the GPs members were not solely Sure Start families. Sure Start has justified the group membership by stating that by encouraging the general population to give up smoking, there will be positive knock-on effects for all the population, e.g. members of the same household, possibly including children.

2 or 3 more six-session groups have been run, along with one-to-one smoking cessation work. However this is attached to the G.P. surgery, not to Sure Start.

Mainstream midwifery

Midwives are in contact with women during their pregnancy and up to a month after the birth of their baby. Limited pre-conceptual care is also given.

Mainstream midwives are involved in smoking cessation in the following ways:

- 1) Pregnant women are asked if they smoke
- 2) Pregnant smokers are asked if they want to give up
- 3) If pregnant smokers want to give up they are referred to 'New Leaf' (tobacco control strategy)

Tests for smoking during pregnancy

Research has shown that women vastly underestimate how much they smoke. There are two ways of determining the amount a person smokes:

- Carbon monoxide readings
- Urinary Tests

Midwives currently use carbon monoxide readings to test how much a woman smokes. Women are asked whether they want a CO reading (to measure both smoking and passive smoking).

The midwife encourages women to talk frankly about their smoking habits by addressing the issue in a non-specific manner, e.g. rather than asking women whether they smoke or not, she asks *all* pregnant women she visits, 'Do you know the effects of smoking on your baby?'

Processes

The midwife carries out a risk assessment on every pregnant woman that she sees (at 16-20 weeks gestation) to discuss topics such as breast-feeding, Sure Start, smoking cessation. Every time she meets with a woman, she documents whether they smoke and how much they smoke, based on the woman's testimony as well as a carbon monoxide reading. She provides literature regarding the effects of smoking and smoking cessation.

When a woman expresses a desire to quit, the midwife returns to visit them within the next week. At this return visit she and the woman work out an action plan, and the woman signs a contract which stipulates that they are committed to smoking cessation. She then agrees to write to the woman's GP to request nicotine replacement therapy for the woman and her partner, where applicable.

The woman receives one-to-one visits for 6 weeks. Currently, the midwife is trying to reduce visits, by asking the women to visit her instead, e.g. through the breast-feeding support group. Attendance of any current smoking cessation groups might also occur at this time. She noted that most pregnant women do want to give up smoking. However, while women may quit smoking during pregnancy, 60-70% will start again after pregnancy.

It is difficult to quantify how many women want to give up, succeed in giving up, and the influence of Sure Start within these processes. The midwife asks women whether they understand the effects of them smoking on their unborn children and provides women with literature. Although this involvement with Sure Start may form part of the pre-contemplation stage for women, it is difficult to quantify.

Audit form

The midwife uses audit forms to collate whether women smoke before pregnancy, at confirmation, whether they are smoking at 6 months gestation, 9 months gestation, delivery, and within 14 days of the birth.

The information collected from the audit forms is post-coded. This form stays with the midwife until the 14 day visit. Statistics are held on a computer at the Kings Mill Hospital. Women living in the Sure Start area are identified with a '1'.

The midwife is not able to visit every pregnant woman in the Sure Start area. The current strategy to close this loop-hole is that mainstream midwives inform her of pregnant smokers, so she can visit these women as a first priority.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine replacement is not generally given to pregnant women, but may be given to the women's partners. Research has shown, however, that without nicotine replacement therapy, people are twice as likely to have a failed attempt. Another strategy is behavioral support (usually in the form of one-to-one support). Using both together – nicotine replacement therapy and behavioral support - increases the likelihood of a successful quitting attempt four-fold.

Literature generally advises that nicotine replacement therapy should not be given during pregnancy. The common rationale behind this is that it is not ethical to *give* nicotine to a pregnant woman, in particular, because it can cause problems for the placenta.

NICE (The National Institute for Clinical Excellence) is currently reviewing all treatments offered by the Health Service. Since 2002 pregnant woman can be prescribed nicotine replacement therapy if they have been advised by a smoking cessation advisor. In fact, GPs were always able to prescribe it, but often chose not to.

If a woman is smoking she is transferring tar, carbon monoxide and about 40 other chemicals, along with nicotine to her baby. This is a reason why many obstetricians hold the view that there is no reason why it should not be prescribed. It should be noted, however, that if a woman is receiving nicotine replacement therapy she should not smoke at the same time.

Short term treatment with NRT usually lasts about 12 weeks. When failure occurs it is usually because the treatment is not of a high enough dosage or frequency.

Community midwives do their own audits on computer, which are probably linked to the evaluation and audit section of the PCT. The Sure Start midwife keeps a spreadsheet (on disc) of every family she visits. Women are referred to her via verbal consent. The families are not always registered; they may be referred to her whilst still unregistered. The weight of each baby is recorded. Currently less than 2.5% of babies she sees are underweight. She also records whether the parents are under 18, whether this is their first baby, whether they are lone parents, and whether they plan to breastfeed or are breastfeeding at 6 weeks and 4 months (breastfeeding group). When have they smoked, have they made a quit attempt, do they smoke now, and does their partner smoke?

She usually sees a woman only once during pregnancy unless they require help giving up smoking or extra support. She does a Sure Start risk assessment on every pregnant woman she visits concerning smoking in pregnancy.

Methods for aiding smoking cessation

There are two methods commonly in use by midwives for helping with smoking cessation:

- 1) The four 'A's – Ask, Advise, Assist, Arrange
- 2) Motivational Interviewing - a tool for assessing the person's level of motivation to quit, using a scale of 1-10.

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is the method of choice for Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone. The theory behind it is that:

Motivation = Importance plus Confidence

This method looks at how important it is that the person quits smoking, and why it might have this level of importance. The best reason for somebody to give up is that they are doing it for themselves. This is most likely to succeed in a successful quit attempt. The midwife asks the person how confident they are that they could give up. If, for example, somebody rates themselves as a 2, why are they not a 1? What would increase their confidence? Tied into this method is the process of attempting to document relevant life events at which point a person may have started, or resumed, smoking. One disadvantage to using this method, as opposed to NRT for example is that withdrawal symptoms are likely to be more severe.

New Leaf

Sure Start are interested in trying to work with 'New Leaf', who are required to collect statistics for the Government. 'New Leaf' collects statistics on a quarterly basis. These statistics include how many people Sure Start is in contact with regarding smoking cessation, whether they have managed to quit, e.g. details of their first, second quit attempts etc.

Recent proposals for mainstreaming

'New Leaf' aims to contact clients after 12 weeks and then 52 weeks in order to review their progress. Sure Start midwives at Ashfield and Ravensdale have been considering the possibility of a hospital policy which would incorporate this, or a similar, process for mainstreaming. Smoking cessation guidelines for midwives have been written, passed by the hospital and circulated in June 2003.

The hospital has also prepared a training package for midwives in Ashfield, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood District. The training runs for 6 sessions. These sessions are funded with PSA funding, secured by the Assistant Director of Public Health, who leads New Leaf for North Nottinghamshire. The training occurs across the Sherwood Forest Trust area. Once midwives are trained they provide detailed information about smoking during pregnancy – i.e. advice about how to stop and referrals for those women who want to stop. Midwives ask women about their smoking habits during every visit throughout the pregnancy (about 10 times during their pregnancy).

Sure Start has agreed to pick up referrals within the Sure Start area (i.e. mainstream midwives will refer women on to the Sure Start midwife, who has an assistant for smoking cessation services). If women are out of the Sure Start area they will be referred to New Leaf. Smoking cessation services are now delivered by the Sure Start Community Assistant – Laura Ward – who was trained in smoking cessation methods in December 2003 and took over delivery of the services from the Sure Start midwife in January 2004.

3.2.2 'Cook and Eat' sessions

Background

Two series of cook and eat sessions were run; one in Bilsthorpe in January 2004 and one in Clipstone in September 2004. Attendees were self-referred. Several attendees went on to attend weight management sessions after having positive experiences in the cook and eat sessions.

The following data was derived from feedback sheets completed by participants:

Increased confidence in cooking as a result of cook and eat sessions

- 6 respondents strongly agreed that the sessions had increased their confidence in cooking
- 2 respondents agreed that the sessions had increased their confidence in cooking
- 1 respondent disagreed that the sessions had increased their confidence in cooking

Respondent comment 1: *Made a big difference in my confidence*

Respondent comment 2: *I cook a lot anyway so I would have a go at any cooking*

Respondent comment 3: *Needed more time to increase confidence*

Increased knowledge of different foods as a result of cook and eat sessions

- 5 respondents strongly agreed that the sessions had increased their knowledge of different foods
- 3 respondents agreed that the sessions had increased their knowledge of different foods
- 1 respondent disagreed that the sessions had increased their knowledge of different foods

Increased knowledge of healthy eating as a result of cook and eat sessions

- 4 respondents strongly agreed that the sessions had increased their knowledge of healthy eating
- 4 respondent agreed that the sessions had increased their knowledge of healthy eating
- 1 respondent disagreed that the sessions had increased their knowledge of healthy eating

Respondent comment 1: *Follow-on to work from weight management course*

Respondent comment 2: *Always try to eat healthy*

Intentions of respondents with regard to future cooking as a result of the course

- Use less processed/ready made foods (x5)
- Experiment more with new recipes (x4)
- More creative ideas / experiment more (x4)
- Encourage children to cook with me and to experiment with different tasks (x2)

- Be more healthy
- More variety for my family
- Take skills learnt to teach others
- Felt more confident regarding talking to others about healthy eating
- Try out recipes learnt – e.g. yoghurt in pudding mix, homemade potato wedges
- Cook a meal at night for family

Anecdotal evidence suggests that parents have fulfilled the intentions that they stated on their feedback forms.

Reasons for attending the course

- Interested in new recipes etc. (x3)
- I like cooking and entertain guests a lot
- Because son has a milk allergy
- To help me cook better meals for the kids
- Sent info and wanted to try
- To support and observe - I've applied for position of community nutrition assistant

Unexpected gains from the course

- Making cakes without food processor, adding yoghurt
- Certainly did not realise before how easy homemade sauces and chicken nuggets were to make (x2)
- How to do proper couscous
- What milk is in and what it is not in!!
- Unexpected gains (unspecified)
- How to conduct food education classes and feel confident with groups

Thoughts on the length of the course

- O.K.
- Not long enough (x6)
- Probably 1-2 more weeks needed

Thoughts on the convenience of course times

- Yes – they were convenient (x6)
- After school drop-off so fine

Suitability of venue

- Venue suitable (x5)
- Kitchen a bit too small (x3)

Additional Comments

- Tried the chick pea curry at home – son said 'don't like that'. He tried a mouthful then said, 'that's what I cook at play group' and promptly cleared his plate. Thanks.
- Thank you!
- Kerry you are very helpful and friendly. Keep up good work!! Thanks for invite (to join the session)
- I came to the Blidworth cook and eat sessions to observe, support and also see what Kerry's job entails

Conclusions

- The group achieved its objectives of increasing confidence in cooking, increasing knowledge of different foods and increasing knowledge of healthy eating. One exception to this was an attendee for whom these were not personal objectives and were thus not achieved. She had come instead to observe and support in preparation for a new post as a community nutrition assistant
- Attendees made gains in several areas as a result of the course. Examples of these include the acquiring of new recipes and the motivation to remain healthy and make healthy meals for their family
- Times were convenient for attendees
- The only shortcomings of the course as stated by attendees, were that the course was not as long as they would have liked and that the kitchen was small

3.2.3 First Aid Training

8 respondents

- The training met the expectations of all 8 participants, exceeding those of one.
- 5 respondents felt the course was of an appropriate length; 3 thought it was too short.
- The only aspect that one respondent would have changed was to introduce practice with bandages.
- Nobody thought the course should be presented differently and one respondent thought it was presented well.
- Everybody would recommend the course to others.
- The evaluator concluded that the course met the objectives of those attending, who all felt it to be valuable.

3.2.4 Weight Management Programme

Two courses were run; one in Bilsthorpe in June 2004 with 4 attendees and one in Clipstone in January 2005 with 3 attendees. Attendees were self-referred.

The following data was derived from feedback sheets completed by participants.

General issues

Venue:

- All 4 attendees at Bilsthorpe thought the venue was excellent
- 1 Clipstone attendee thought the venue was excellent, 1 thought it was good and 1 thought it was O.K.

Since the same aspects were covered in a nearly identical fashion in both areas, all further data have been aggregated.

Knowledge gained in different aspects of weight management

	I LEARNED A LOT	I LEARNED A LITTLE	NOT ANSWERED	TOTALS
Balance of good health	7	0	0	7
Fats	7	0	0	7
Sugar	7	0	0	7
Food choice, overeating coping strategies	7	0	0	7
Physical activity	7	0	0	7
Expectations / Goals	6	1	0	7
Food diary and physical activity log	6	1	0	7
Labelling, salt and sodium conversion	6	1	0	7
Food intake questionnaire	6	0	1	7
Goal setting and record of achievement	5	2	0	7
What to look for in a diet	5	1	1	7
Sources of support	4	3	0	7
Cook and eat session/recipe adaptation	4	3	0	7
Measurements	4	2	1	7
Shopping bag	4	3	0	7
Eating out	4	3	0	7
Stages of change	3	2	2	7
Energy balance	2	5	0	7
Iron and calcium	2	3	2	7
Gym visit or leisure facilities	1	2	4	7
Appraising food diaries	1	5	1	7

General rating of the course:

- 6 respondents thought that the course was generally very good

- 1 respondents thought that the course was generally good

Satisfaction with course:

- All respondents stated that they got what they wanted from the course
- 1 respondent noted that they would have liked more healthy recipes to be included in the course

Physical exercise

All respondents enjoyed the physical component of the course

Respondents experience of the physical activities

	I enjoyed it	It was suitable for me personally	I would like to do more	It will be possible to fit it into my life
Flexi-ball	3	0	0	0
Aerobics	5	2	3	2
Jogging	0	0	0	0

Average frequency of exercise before course:

- 5 respondents did not exercise regularly (i.e. once a week or more on average) before the course
- 2 respondents exercised 1 to 2 times a week on average before the course

Average frequency of exercise after course

- Of the 2 respondents who exercised 1-2 times a week on average prior to the course:
 - 1 respondent exercised the same amount, 1-2 times a week on average, after the course
 - The other respondent did not state how often they exercised after the course
- Of the 5 respondents who did not exercise regularly before the course:
 - 4 respondents participated in physical activity 1 to 2 times a week on average after the course
 - 1 respondent participated in physical activity 2 to 3 times a week on average after the course

Confidence in exercise:

- 3 respondents felt very confident about exercising after the course finished
- 2 respondents felt somewhat confident about exercising after the course finished
- 2 respondents did not state how confident they felt in exercising after the course finished

Continuance of exercise:

- 5 respondents stated that they would definitely continue to exercise after the course
- 1 respondent said that they would possibly continue to exercise after the course
- 1 respondent did not answer the question to say if they would continue to exercise

Inspired by attending the course, the Bilsthorpe parents went on to establish their own community keep-fit class. This group ran successfully for several months; however it is now in danger of folding due to a lack of crèche facilities and a subsequent decline in attendance.

Further possible support from Sure Start to facilitate exercise:

- 6 respondents noted that Sure Start could further support them to exercise by providing a fitness and exercise group
- 3 respondents noted that Sure Start could further support them to exercise by providing facilities and crèche support for exercise
- 2 respondents noted that Sure Start could further support them to exercise by providing a refresher session of the weight management course

Diet

All respondents stated that they enjoyed the food and healthy eating component of the course.

All respondents stated that they have been using the healthy eating information they learned from the course in their everyday life, 5 'very much' and 2 'somewhat'.

6 respondents noted that as a result of them attending the course their family are eating more healthily, and the other respondent's family are thinking of doing so.

Consumption of different food groups as a result of the course

	Respondents' children eating more as a result	Respondents' children eating the same amount as a result	Respondents' children eating less as a result	Not answered
Fruits and vegetables	3	4	0	0
Bread, cereal, rice, pasta	2	5	0	0
Lentils, beans, peas	2	3	0	2
Milk, cheese, yoghurt	0	7	0	0
Tinned/frozen/fresh fish	3	4	0	0
Foods deep-fried/eaten with fat or oil	0	0	7	0
Sweets, chocolate, biscuits, fizzy drinks	0	1	6	0

- 1 respondent reported her children eating the same amount of fruit, vegetables and dairy products because they already ate 5-6 portions of fruit and vegetables and enough dairy products
- 1 respondent reported her children eating the same amount of bread, cereal, rice and pasta because they already ate lots anyway

Frequency of reading food labels prior to the course:

- 3 respondents stated that they seldom read food labels before the course
- 1 respondent stated that they often read food labels before the course
- 1 respondent stated that they sometimes read food labels before the course
- 1 respondent stated that they never read food labels before the course

Frequency of reading food labels after attending the course:

- 6 respondents stated that they often read food labels after attending the course; for 5 respondents this reflected an increase in reading food labels. The respondent who had often read food labels before the course continued to read them often after the course, the course having not affected the frequency of reading.
- 1 respondent – who had seldom read food labels before the course – read them sometimes after the course

All respondents felt confident that they would try to maintain a healthy diet after the course finished, with 5 being very confident and 2 somewhat.

Further possible support from Sure Start to enable attendee and family to eat healthily:

- 3 respondents stated that Sure Start could further support them and their families to eat healthily by providing a weight management refresher session.
- 2 respondents stated that Sure Start could further support them and their families to eat healthily by providing cook and eat sessions
- 1 respondent stated that Sure Start could further support them and their family to eat healthily by providing nutrition information sessions
- 1 respondent noted, in addition, that Sure Start could further support them and their family to eat healthily by providing 'updates and the chance to carry on with the exercise group'

Better general mood as a result of attendance

- 6 respondents stated that they had experienced a better general mood as a result of attending the course
- 1 respondent was not sure whether or not they had experienced a better general mood as a result of attending the course

Additional comments

Attendees made the following additional comments:

- *(The presenter) had an excellent style of presentation. I didn't feel 'silly' and it was a positive way of getting a healthy lifestyle message across. I had thought that my lifestyle was generally healthy but the questionnaire helped me think about choices – I was using the excuse 'I was too busy!!' As a family now there have been some changes*
- *It was better than I expected on the whole – Excellent! Well Done!*
- *Tutors very good. Kept what could have been a boring course very interesting.*
- *Very pleased with the course. Weight loss has been nice.*

Conclusions

Diet:

- All respondents learned a lot about the following aspects of weight management from the course: the balance of good health, fats, sugar, food choice, over-eating coping strategies and physical activity.
- All but one respondent in each case also learnt a lot about the following aspects of weight management: expectations/goals, food diary/physical activity log, labelling, salt and sodium conversion, and food intake questionnaire.
- The majority of respondents ('majority' meaning 5 or 4 out of 7 respondents) had learnt a lot in the following areas: goal-setting/record of

achievement, what to look for in a diet, cook and eat session/recipe adaptation, measures, shopping bag, and eating out.

- With regard to the aspect of states of change, 2 respondents did not answer the question. A majority of those who answered had learned a lot but this was only on the small scale of 3 respondents to 2 who had learnt a little.
- The aspects for which a majority of respondents had learnt a little were the following: energy balance, iron and calcium, gym visit/leisure activities, appraising food diaries. These are therefore aspects which it might be useful to emphasise or cover in more depth next time, particularly appraising food diaries and energy balance for which a large majority (5 out of 7 respondents) had learnt a little.
- All respondents had been using the healthy eating information they learned from the course in their everyday life, with a majority of 5 using it very much.
- All respondents stated that they enjoyed the food and healthy eating component of the course.
- All respondents felt confident that they would try to maintain a healthy diet after the course finished, with a majority of five feeling very confident.

Exercise:

- The most popular form of exercise tried in the course was aerobics with a majority of five saying they enjoyed it and a few respondents stating that it was suitable for them personally, they would like to do more and it would be possible to fit it into their lives. Three respondents enjoyed flexi-ball but no one felt that they would continue it. No respondents enjoyed jogging nor felt that they would continue it.
- The majority of respondents stated that they had not exercised regularly prior to the course. After the course all respondents who had previously not exercised reported that they were now exercising regularly. Of the two respondents who exercised regularly prior to the course one was still exercising the same amount and the other did not answer that question so it is not known.
- A majority of respondents reported that they were either somewhat or very confident about exercising after the course and a majority of five respondents stated that they would definitely continue to exercise after the course. One respondent stated that they would possibly continue.

Effects of the course on the health of attendees' families:

- A majority of six respondents noted that as a result of them attending the course their family are eating more healthily. The remaining respondent noted that as a result of them attending the course their family are thinking of eating more healthily.
- All respondents reported that their children were eating less deep-fried foods eaten with fat or oil as a result of them attending the course. A majority of six respondents also reported that their children were eating less sweets, chocolate, biscuits and fizzy drinks.
- All respondents stated that their children were eating the same amount of milk, cheese and yoghurt as before the course
- Of the remaining food groups, most respondents reported that their children were eating the same amount of each food group as before the course, although a few respondents noted an increase in their children's consumption of the following: fruit and vegetables, bread, cereals, rice and pasta, lentils, beans, peas, tinned, frozen or fresh fish.
- The majority of respondents seldom or never read food labels prior to the course. After the course a majority of six respondents reported often reading them.

Miscellaneous findings:

- A majority of six respondents stated that they had experienced a better general mood as a result of attending the course. The remaining respondent was unsure.
- Respondents gave some additional comments. These mainly communicated that, as a result of the very good presentation methods of the tutor, the course exceeded expectations and one respondent had achieved some weight loss as a result of the course.

Areas for further service development:

- A few respondents stated that Sure Start could further support their continued healthy eating in the following ways: weight management course refresher sessions, cook and eat sessions, nutrition information sessions, updates and the chance to continue with the exercise group. The most popular option was a refresher session of the weight management course.
- Two respondents noted that Sure Start could further support them to exercise by providing a refresher session of the weight management course.
- All but one respondent noted that Sure Start could further support them to exercise by providing a fitness and exercise group.
- Three respondents noted that provision of facilities and crèche support for exercise by Sure Start would support them to continue exercising.

Overall conclusion: respondents were very satisfied with the course and felt that they had got what they wanted out of it. The fact that several attendees from Bilsthorpe went on to establish their own keep-fit group and also referred themselves to attend the weight management course should be viewed as strong evidence of the success of the course in achievement of one of the course's main objectives, that being to promote the maintenance of healthy lifestyles

3.3 Improving children's ability to learn

... in particular by promoting high quality care and education which supports children's development and early education, especially in disadvantaged areas and especially through early identification of and support for children with special needs.

Meeting targets

PSA target: To achieve by 2003-4 a reduction of 5 percentage points in the number of children with speech and language problems requiring specialist intervention by the age of 4.

- These specific data were unavailable at the time of writing.
- Data from the Sure Start Language Measure for 2002-3 and 2003-4 gathered by the Sure Start Speech and Language Therapist indicates the impact of Sure Start on children's speech at age 22-26 months (see Section 3.3.1 below).
- Speech and language therapists have also undertaken training with both staff and parents so that the time they spend with children might also enhance their language skills (see Section 3.3.2 below).

SDA target (1): All children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities, helping progress towards early learning goals when they start school.

- Readers' attention is drawn to the evaluation of crèche facilities (Section 3.1.3 above), the Toy Library (Section 3.3.3 below) and the PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) programme (Section 3.3.4 below).

SDA target (2): Increased use of libraries by families with young children. The local target is an annual 20% increase in children with active membership.

- Of the 733 children under 4 living in Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone in 2004, 256 were active library members (35%). This represents an increase of 175% from the 13% membership in 2002-3.
- Some evaluation has been undertaken of general changes in library usage in the Sure Start area and some more specific initiatives introduced at Blidworth library to encourage take-up by children under 4 (see Section 3.3.5 below).

3.3.1 Sure Start Language Measure Assessments

Methods and analysis

The SSLM that was used in 2002-3 was revised for use in 2003-2004. The revised version is known as the SSLM-R and is a tool for measuring change over time in language skills among children aged 22-26 months.

For an individual child, the SSLM-R shows:

- Ratings for the level of parental concern about language
- Word count score, as an indicator of their overall vocabulary size
- A score for word combinations

(It is important to note that the word list is not meant to record all of the child's possible words.)

Over a group of children, the SSLM shows:

- The percentage of children whose parents have a concern about language
- The average (mean) word count score
- The percentages of children combining words sometimes or often.

(It should be noted that the SSLM is not a 'language screen' for finding 'clinical cases'.)

The sample group who took part in the 2002-2003 survey came from various sources including opportunistic contacts. The desired sample size of 60 was achieved. In the 2003-4 survey a Simple Random Sampling method was employed in order to achieve an overall sample. The following steps were followed:

1. A list of all families with children 0-4 in the area was provided by Newark and Sherwood PCT. This was taken to be a complete sampling frame (assuming it contained all relevant families regardless of whether they were members of Sure Start or not)
2. Each case (family) was given a unique number, starting at 1, e.g:

Joe Bloggs, 9 Church Rd: 1
Mary Jones, 13 Park Drive: 2
etc...

3. The required sample size was selected – 60 – as specified by the Sure Start Unit.
4. 80 numbers were selected from a table of random numbers²
5. The families whose case numbers corresponded to the randomly chosen numbers were selected.
6. These families were contacted and their permission was asked to carry out the assessment.

It should be noted that there were several unsuccessful recruitment attempts. It was therefore necessary to include some opportunistic contacts. The final sample of 51 came from the following sources:

- PCT Data List Random Sample (71% of overall sample)
- Opportunistic Contacts (29% of overall sample)

Due to the random sampling technique employed in the 2003-4 survey, every eligible child in the Sure Start area had an equal chance of taking part in the assessments, regardless of whether they were members of Sure Start. It should be noted however, that since 29% of the sample (i.e. 15 children) were ultimately recruited as opportunistic contacts it cannot be claimed that the end sample was fully representative of the eligible population within the Sure Start area. Similarly it should be noted that the sample of children assessed during the 2002-3 survey was not fully representative of the eligible population within the Sure Start area. Due to the sample techniques employed, not every eligible child in the Sure Start area had an equal chance of taking part in the assessments. The sample also included only Sure Start members.

For each year, for the purpose of analysis, children have been divided into *regular users* and *non-users*. Those defined as 'regular users' are children who were active members of Sure Start in the year preceding the assessment. These

² 80 cases were selected for an overall sample size of 60 in order to compensate for any unsuccessful recruitment attempts

children had all attended 5 Sure Start sessions or more during that year. Those children who were either not members of Sure Start or inactive members (i.e. had joined but not attended any sessions or fewer than 5 sessions) were defined as 'Non-users'.

Word count score

The original SSLM as used in the 2002-3 assessments contained a word list of 100. To ensure an accurate comparison between the two years only the 50 words contained in the SSLM-R were considered as part of the word count score of 2002-3 assessments. All comparisons made with the 2002-3 assessments reflect the re-calculations made to take account of the reduced word list for the SSLM-R.

A 'high word count score' is defined as a child knowing more than 14 words from the SSLM-R list of 50 words. The SSLM-R 2003-4 Data Collection Information Pack maintains that about 25% of children are expected to have word count scores of 14 or less (a 'low word count'). However, children with word count scores of 14 or less are not all in need of speech and language therapy.

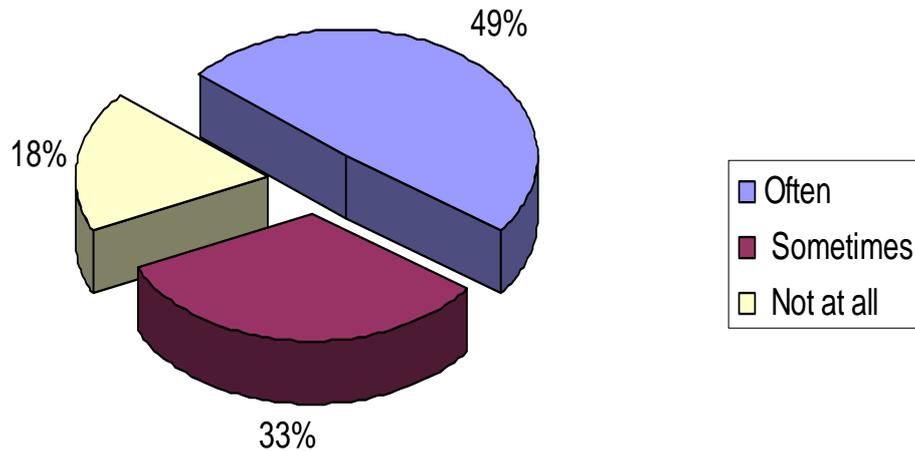
- In 2003-4, **78%** of the children assessed had a high word count score. This is slightly above the expected national result and compares with 73% having a high word count score in 2002-3, which was slightly below the expected national result.
- The mean word count score for the total sample was **24**. This compares to 23 in 2002-3.

Combining words

As defined by the SSLM-R Data Collection Information pack, children who are beginning to combine words, e.g. 'more juice', 'there doggie' or who use learnt phrases can be classified as 'sometimes' putting words together. Children who frequently put words together can be classified as 'often' putting words together. Children who do neither combine words nor use learnt phrases can be classified, in terms of putting words together, as 'not at all'. The occurrence of children putting words together is detailed in the chart below.

In 2002-3 the incidence of children combining words was similar with 50% combining often, 32% combining sometimes and 18% not combining at all.

Chart to show how often children put words together

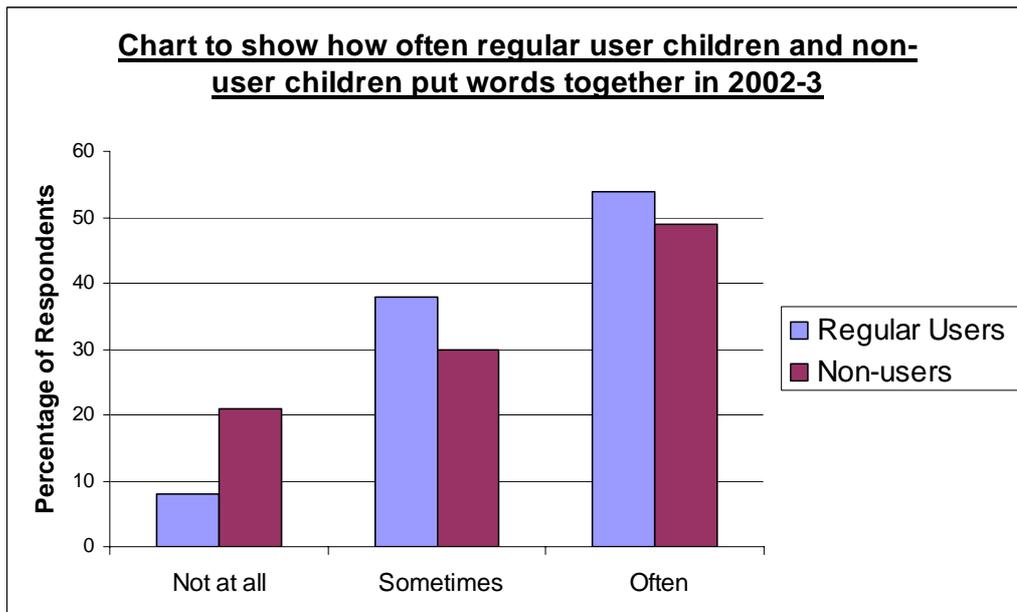


After categorizing children into those who are regular users of Sure Start and those who are not regular users of Sure Start the results are slightly different, however not statistically significant:

2002-3

- 54% of children who were regular users of Sure Start often combined words, compared with 49% of children who were not regular users of Sure Start.
- 38% of children who were regular users of Sure Start sometimes combined words, compared with 30% children who were not regular users of Sure Start.
- 8% of children who were regular users of Sure Start never combined words, whereas 21% of children who were not regular users of Sure Start never combined words.

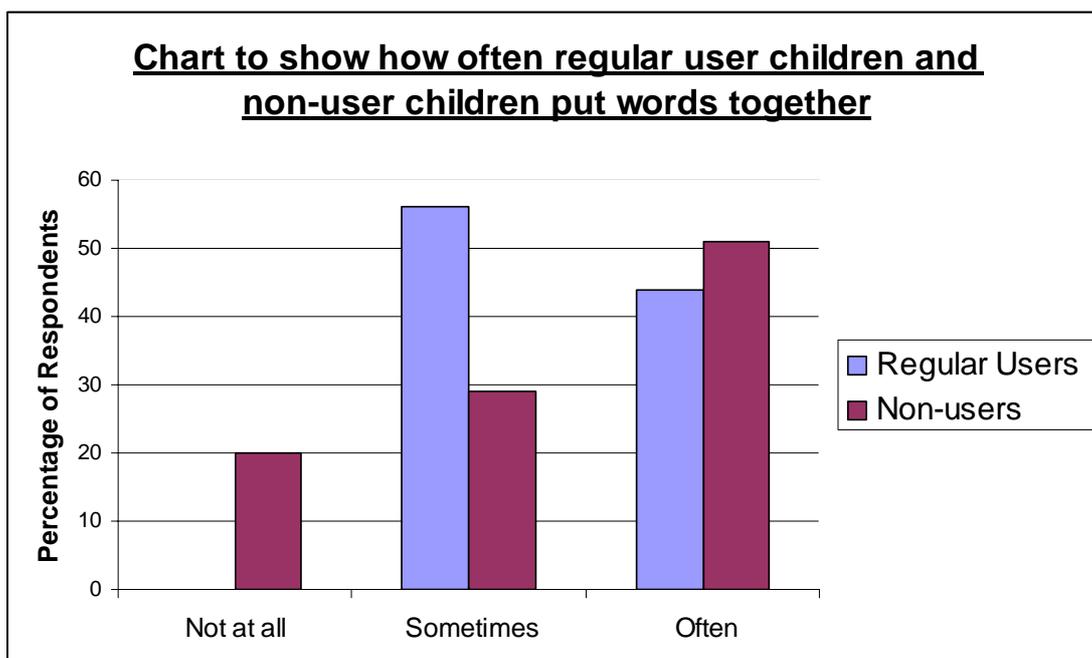
Refer to chart below.



2003-4

- 44% of children who were regular users of Sure Start often combined words, compared with 51% of children who were not regular users of Sure Start.
- 55% of children who were regular users of Sure Start sometimes combined words, compared with 29% children who were not regular users of Sure Start.
- No children who were regular users of Sure Start never combined words, whereas 20% of children who were not regular users of Sure Start never combined words.

Refer to chart below



Levels of concern

- 24% of parents who took part in the 2003-4 assessments were concerned about the speech and language development of their child (compared to 21% in 2002-3).
- Of the 24% of parents who were concerned in 2003-4, 42% of children had a low word score (compared to 8% of children of those with concern in 2002-3).
- 76% of parents who took part in the 2003-4 assessments were not concerned about their child's speech and language development (compared to 79% in 2002-3).
- Of the 76% of parents who were not concerned in 2003-4, 15% of their children had a low word score (which was the same as for the 79% who were not concerned in 2002-3).

Accessing of Sure Start services

Analysis was carried out on data from the SmartStart database relating to service utilization to see whether any conclusions could be drawn with regard to the effect of Sure Start services on the speech and language development of children living in the area.

2002-3

- All of the 51 children (i.e. 100%) were members of Sure Start. In the overall population of families with children 0-4 in the Sure Start area 74% were members of Sure Start in this year. The number of users partaking in the assessments was therefore disproportionately higher than the number of users in the overall population.
- Of the 43 children for whom attendance data was available, 12 had partaken in 5 or more Sure Start activities (not specifically relating to speech and language development) in the 6 months preceding their assessment. For purposes of analysis this group has been labeled 'regular Sure Start users'.
- The group of regular Sure Start users had a mean word count of **27**.
- The group of non-attendees and non-regular attendees had a mean word count of **22**.

2003-4

- 36 out of the 51 children (i.e. 71%) were members of Sure Start. In the overall population of families with children 0-4 in the Sure Start area 81% were members of Sure Start in this year. The number of non users partaking in the assessments was therefore disproportionately higher than the number of non users in the overall population.
- Of the 36 children for whom attendance data was available, 10 had partaken in 5 or more Sure Start activities (not specifically relating to speech and language development) in the 6 months preceding their assessment. For purposes of analysis this group has been labeled 'regular Sure Start users'.
- The group of regular Sure Start users had a mean word count of **28**.

- The group of non-attendees and non-regular attendees had a mean word count of **24**.

After the summary of key findings there are charts to show the relationship between service use and word count scores for each year. For the regular users of Sure Start services in each year a negligible correlation between frequency of service use and word count scores was found.

Summary of key findings

- ❖ **78%** of children assessed in 2003-4 had a high word count score (compared to 73% in 2002-3)³.
- ❖ The mean word count score in 2003-4 was **24** compared with 23 in 2002-3.
- ❖ The mean word count score for regular users of Sure Start was higher than that of non-regular users in both years, although the difference was not statistically significant.
- ❖ In both years, all regular users of Sure Start had begun combining words either sometimes or often.
- ❖ Similar percentages of non-users had not begun to combine words yet in either year (21% in 2002-3 and 20% in 2003-4).
- ❖ In 2002-3 8% of children who were regular users of Sure Start had not begun to combine words whereas in 2003-4 all regular users of Sure Start had begun to combine words.
- ❖ No significant correlation existed between frequency of service use and children's word count scores in either year.

³ Around 75% of children are expected to have a high word count (SSLM-R 2003)

Chart to show the relationship between word count scores and Sure Start usership in 2002-3

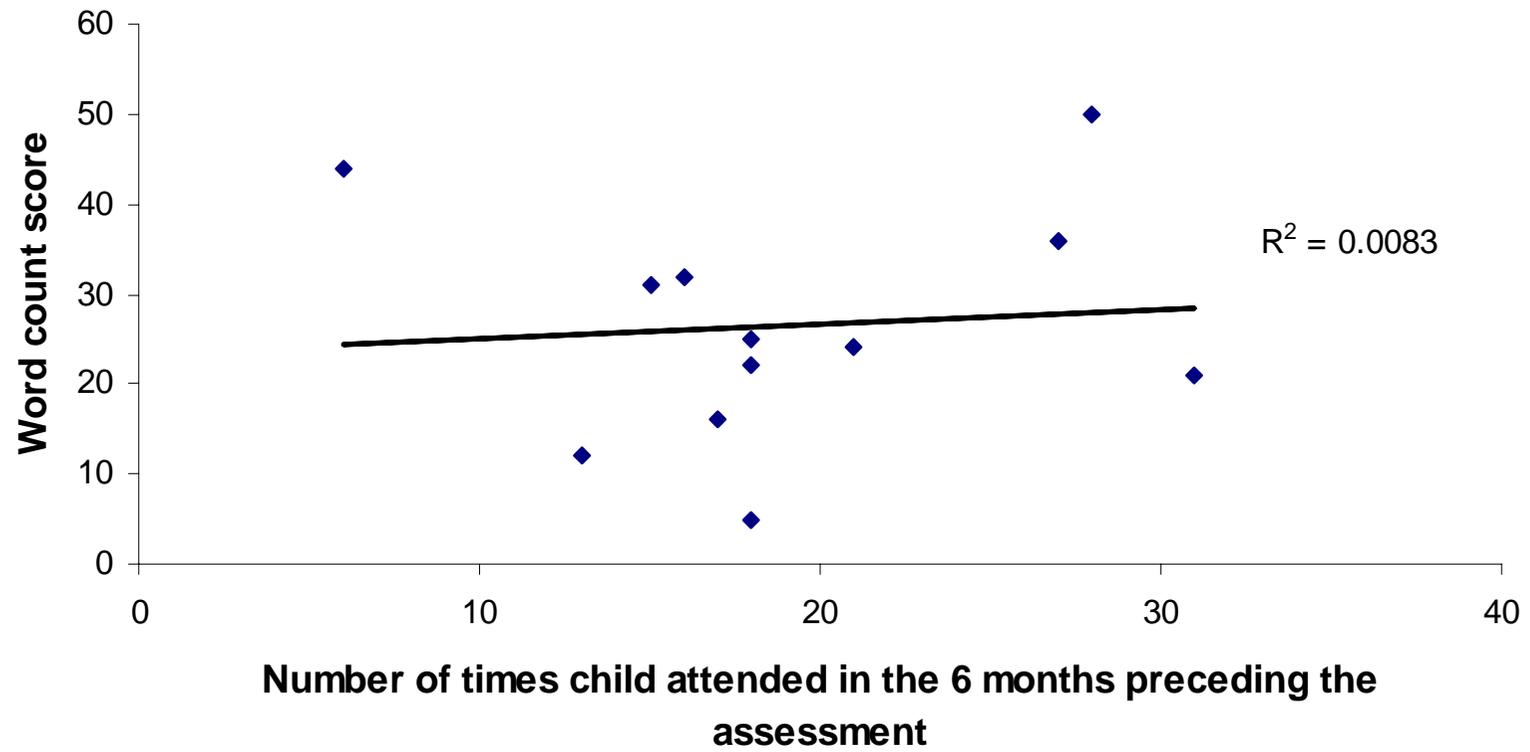
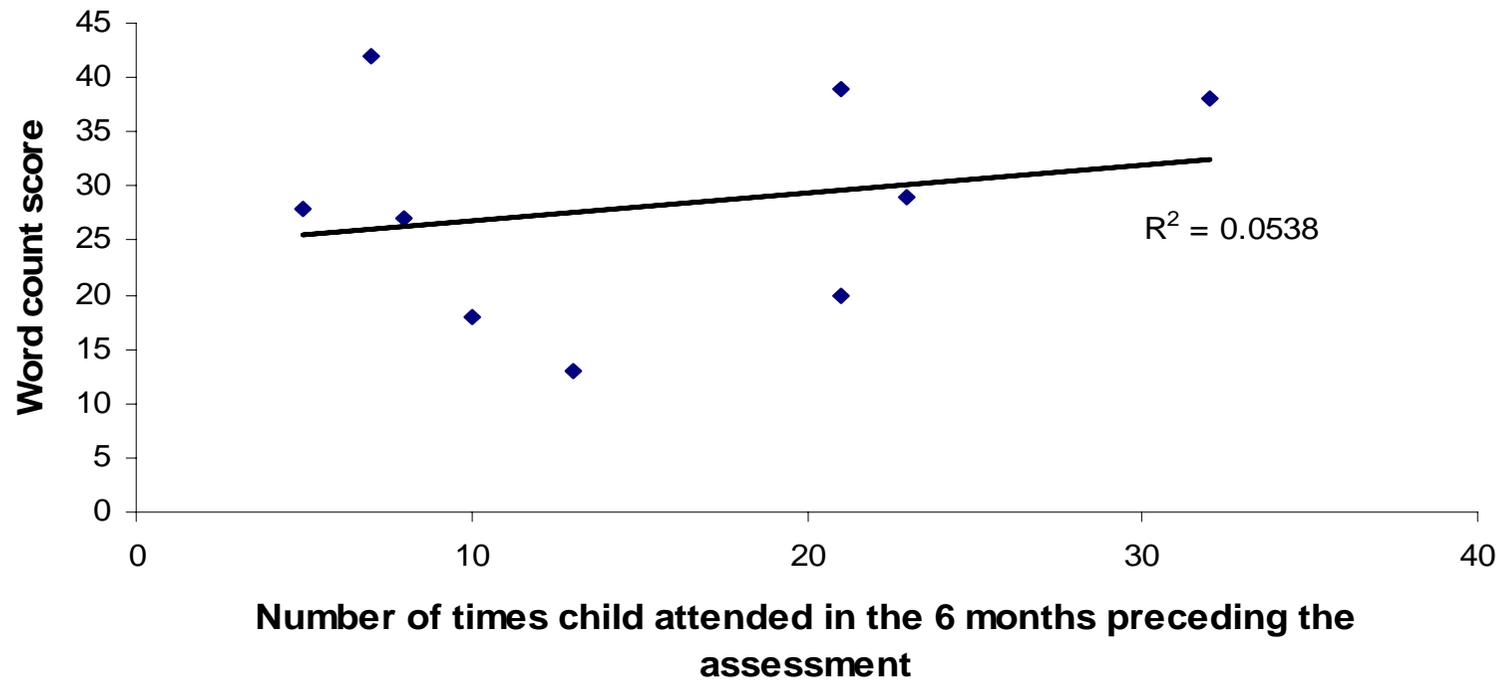


Chart to show the relationship between word count scores and Sure Start usership in 2003-4



*It should be noted that one regularly attending child has been excluded from the chart. The fact that this child had special needs meant it would have been inappropriate for their data to be included within this small sample chart.

3.3.2 Training by Speech and Language Therapists

Sure Start Speech & Language therapists deliver a range of services within the programme including one-to-one and group work with children and their parents and training for other Sure Start staff to enable them to undertake speech and language therapy work with any parents and children with whom they come into contact who might benefit from such input. Below are the evaluations which have been carried out on speech & language therapy training that has been delivered to Sure Start staff and parents.

a) *Working with language delayed children*

A course was put on for staff during March 2003; 5 attended. Attendees found the training to be of a high overall standard (3 rated it as excellent and 2 rated it as very good). All attendees noted that the training had left them feeling ready to start and most (4 out of 5) noted that it had left them feeling happy. The aspects of the course which more than one attendee particularly liked were new information (3), the informality of the course (3) and the information packs (2). One attendee suggested that voluntary sector providers should be included in future training. 2 attendees with specific speech & language concerns had these addressed during the training. The steps that more than one attendee agreed to take after the training included feeding back to colleagues (4) and using symbols and labelling more (2). No attendee noted anything they did not like about the course. Following the course, the therapists agreed

- to provide attendees with further information and training where possible on the topics they wished to know more about;
- to consider including voluntary sector providers in future training;
- to consult with the attendee who highlighted their frustrations at the constraints of nursery time to see how the training might be best incorporated into nursery routines and activities.

b) *Supporting language development in the early years*

A course was put on for staff during June 2003; 2 attendees completed an evaluation form. Both felt that the training was excellent overall, that it was well-presented, that it left them feeling happy and that there was nothing they did not like about it or any suggestions they could make for future planning. As part of the course one attendee had received training on a particular concern that they had. Both attendees highlighted the ways in which they would now utilise the training within their work during sensory sessions and family play sessions, and both highlighted areas of speech and language therapy they would like to know more about, in particular OWL training and the 'Learning language and loving it' programme. As a result, speech and language therapists agreed to pass on information and details of future training on these programmes.

c) *'Signs and symbols' for crèche workers*

A course was offered for crèche workers during March 2004; 11 attendees completed an evaluation form. Attendees found the training to be of a high overall standard with 10 rating it excellent and 1 rating it very good. 10 out of 11 attendees noted that the training left them feeling ready to start. Other feelings highlighted by more than one attendee were happiness (7), excitement (5) and thrill (2). The aspects of the course which more than one attendee particularly liked were learning the signs, information and the fact that the course was enjoyable and hands-on. More than one attendee noted that in future training they would like more signing (5) and a longer duration of time (4). No attendee had particular questions or concerns to be addressed through the training. More

than one attendee noted that they would like to know more about Makaton/signing and the symbols available for different things. More than one attendee noted the following steps as ones they will take after the training: use in crèche (7), use in school (2), use with own children (2). As a result of the course, speech and language therapists agreed

- to consider running longer, possibly more in-depth, training sessions in the future with more signing and possibly more symbols;
- to provide attendees with further information or training, where possible, on the topics they wished to know more about.

d) *'Signs and symbols' for parents*

A similar course was laid on for parents at all three villages. 7 parents at Bilsthorpe completed an evaluation form, 8 at Blidworth and 9 at Clipstone. In each area, attendees were, on average, in strong agreement after the course that using signs with children is useful. Agreement was the least strong in Bilsthorpe (although still strong). However, before the course Bilsthorpe attendees had neither agreed nor disagreed that using signs with children is useful, whereas in Blidworth and Clipstone attendees had a starting point of agreement that using signs with children is useful before the course began. After the course, attendees from all areas were, on average, confident in using signs with children. Before the course attendees were not very confident in Bilsthorpe and fairly confident in both Blidworth and Clipstone. The highest increase in confidence therefore occurred in Bilsthorpe. General comments made by attendees included that the course had been enjoyable and well-run and that signing was easier than they had assumed prior to the course. Some attendees said that they will use some of the signs they learnt during the course in the future and several attendees noted that they would like to learn more about signing. As a result of the courses, speech and language therapists agreed to provide attendees with more information or training, where possible, on the topics attendees wished to know more about.

3.3.3 Toy Library

This is an evaluation of the Dukeries Toy Library in Ollerton from a questionnaire completed in June 2004 when the Toy Library was in its fourth year of operation. This is not a specifically Sure Start facility, being used more widely by families in North Nottinghamshire. However, the evaluation was exclusive to Sure Start families.

19 questionnaires were returned. One respondent no longer uses Sure Start as her children go to nursery. Of those who do,

- 78% said the day on which the Library was held suited them. Of those for whom the day was unsuitable, one was working full-time, another preferred Mondays or Wednesdays and another Mondays or Fridays.
- 78% said the Library's opening time suited them. Of those for whom it didn't, one found lunch times difficult, another preferred 2.00-3.00 and another wanted 4.00-8.00 because of work commitments.
- 94% were happy with the location. The only parent who wasn't, felt it was restrictive with a toddler in tow.
- 94% felt the 25p/toy charge was OK, with only one respondent considering it expensive. However, one satisfied respondent thought the charge should be discretionary.
- 15 answered the question about when they last used the Toy Library. Answers varied enormously.
 - 2 had used it less than a week ago;
 - 4 had used it a week to a month ago;
 - 4 had used it a month to a year ago;
 - 5 had used it a year or more ago.
- 39% said they used the Toy Library regularly. Of those who didn't, one goes regularly to Sure Start play sessions where she gets the best of both worlds, another used it regularly until she started working full time and the child of another had reached 4 years of age.

The following suggestions were made for how the Toy Library could be improved:

- More outdoor toys
- More 'little tykes' toys (2)
- Fewer wooden toys
- "Change toys available more frequently"
- "Maybe working parents need a late slot, like Mansfield Play Forum, Weds. 4.00 – 8.00 p.m."

A number of respondents made further comments.

- "(I) always worried about losing pieces to games or anything getting broken."
- "I never have enough time in the day to do what I would like to do as I work most mornings and come and start working."
- "The service you provide is excellent for families who can access your service; working parents and children of those families who aren't in the village in the day time miss out."
- "Lovely idea, just not sure it works for us"

3.3.4 PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership)

The Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) was set up to support parents and carers in their role as children's first and most important educators. PEEP offers ideas and activities to support children's learning in everyday situations for use at home and in group settings. Training on the PEEP methods of service delivery was undertaken by various staff from Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone including the childcare development worker, family workers, the senior family worker and speech and language therapists. The training enabled staff to run their own sessions, using ideas and materials from PEEP, in the three villages for a range of age groups. Sessions run for 10 week programmes. Each session has a theme, such as 'Making books', and is structured around songs, a talk time, an activity, a story, and book and toy lending.

Various evaluations have been carried out on PEEP, as detailed below.

Pilot Programme: Bilsthorpe, November 2002 – February 2003

The pilot programme took place at Bilsthorpe library and was evaluated through verbal feedback from parents and staff. The childcare development worker, family workers and speech and language therapists were all involved in both planning and delivering the sessions, with the library development worker and health visitors also joining in the delivery.

The Sure Start team decided that Bilsthorpe would be the first area to pilot the PEEP programme. The reason was because at the time Bilsthorpe did not have as many Sure Start services in comparison to the other two areas, Blidworth and Clipstone. Also, by providing PEEP in this area, Sure Start would be able to meet meet new parents and encourage parents to find out more about Sure Start. It was also decided that three members of staff would attend each session so that everyone got a chance to be involved in PEEP. It was decided that the Bilsthorpe family worker would attend every session because she knew the families.

PEEP was promoted throughout the Bilsthorpe area through services such as the family play sessions and the breastfeeding support group. The Bilsthorpe health visitor also promoted PEEP to parents attending baby clinic, and encouraged them to attend.

7 mothers and their children attended the pilot group. Parents were very positive. They and their children had enjoyed the activities, such as making shakers. One parent commented that she liked the singing part of the sessions and it did not make her feel silly and she felt the sessions were relaxed. The parents were happy with the venue; they thought the library was big and had plenty of room. A couple of parents commented that they would be interested in attending future group sessions for children under 18 months. A couple of parents mentioned that it was nice to get out of the house and meet and speak to other people who were in a similar position to themselves.

The staff who participated in the pilot programme made both valuable and helpful comments about each session that they attended. It had been mentioned that there was no need for 3 members of staff to attend each session, as the PEEP group did not have many families attending (maximum of 3 at any one time). It had been identified that only 2 staff members had PEEP training. It was therefore considered that it would be beneficial for staff to undertake a PEEP training course beforehand to extend their knowledge and understanding of PEEP. Staff commented that it was hard at times to deliver the PEEP programme in Bilsthorpe as there was a lack of continuity with the parents and staff. There were not the

same parents each week or the same staff, with the exception of the Bilsthorpe family worker. As a result it became difficult at times to discuss the previous week's activities and how the parents had got on at home with activities, song tapes and books, or to discuss what they had learnt about their child's understanding of sight, sound, touch and smell. It was also felt that the PEEP sessions were too spread out. The sessions started in early November and ended in early February with a 2 week gap in December. It would have been better if there had not been a gap between sessions as parents often forgot or were uncertain when the group was running.

Overall staff felt that PEEP is needed in the three areas and that Bilsthorpe had been a valuable learning experience. Also, the venue was good as it meant that Sure Start staff came into contact with parents and carers who were attending baby clinic, which was also held at the library at the same time. Staff then had the opportunity to talk to new parents and promote Sure Start services including PEEP. It was decided that having at least one identified staff member per programme of PEEP would make for better continuity of service.

The PEEP programme for 3 year olds, January-March 2004

By way of evaluating the PEEP programme, each of the 6 parents who had participated in the programme were asked to complete feedback forms after the final session. Staff completed a separate evaluation form after each session. The findings from this evaluation are detailed below

Parent feedback

Parents were asked to place a tick by 1 of 3 given symbols to indicate how they felt about PEEP (i.e. positive, negative or neither positive nor negative):

- 5 parents ticked the smiley face to indicate satisfaction with the sessions. 1 parent did not tick any symbol.

Parents were then given a list of session activities and asked to place a tick by any they had enjoyed and a cross by any they had not enjoyed. The results are detailed in the table below.

	Songs	Talk Time	Activity	Story	Book and Toy Lending	Other Activity
Number of parents who enjoyed the activity	6	5	6	6	6	1*
Number of parents who did not enjoy the activity	0	1	0	0	0	0

* This parent noted that she had enjoyed meeting other mums and watching the children enjoy themselves

Parents offered the following comments about the sessions:

- *The sessions were very good. It was nice to be able to get involved. The twins look forward to me staying (at the nursery for the PEEP session) and loved the session.*
- *We enjoyed every minute of our sessions. It was very interesting.*

- *They were a good time to spend with your child to get to know them better and to see what they're like in an environment where they're doing activities with their teacher.*
- *I have really enjoyed watching my children do their 'tasks' and mixing with the other children.*
- *The thing I enjoyed the most was watching the children working as a group when doing their activities. Personally, for my child, I feel working in a small group has been really rewarding and beneficial.*
- *Gave extra ideas of things to do at home to help children develop.*

All parents felt that the sessions had helped them find out more about how children learn.

- *It was nice to see them learning and playing together.*
- *The sessions helped how we can learn and children learn about things.*
- *I feel it has helped me to understand better about how children learn.*
- *Definitely (it has helped me find out more about how children learn) even with simple activities they do every day.*

All parents felt that the sessions had given them ideas about how to help their children learn through every day activities. Below are the comments made:

- *We do a lot more songs and make a lot of activities in the house enjoyable.*
- *Sessions have helped us with some ideas for our child and they learn to do something different each day activities.*
- *We have tended to carry on doing some of the activities at home.*
- *It makes you think about simple everyday things that are just routine.*
- *It's made me realise the things I do automatically without thinking help them to learn so you can encourage them that little bit further.*

Staff evaluation

After each PEEP session staff completed an evaluation form detailing how the different aspects of each session had gone, i.e. *talking time, singing time, story time and activity time*. Significant points from the evaluation were:

- The childrens activity where envelopes were cut for seeds was a difficult activity to manage and needs 2 workers in future⁴
- The book 'Count on Goz' was difficult to follow and should not be used in future⁵
- 'Owl babies' worked successfully in a large format⁶
- The book 'It's the bear' was lengthy. A possible future alternative would be 'This is the bear and the picnic lunch'⁷
- 'Children's play patterns' was a difficult focus to understand⁸ Future suggestion: charts with headings and examples
- 'Making spiders' was a successful activity but required a lot of adult input

The following activities were particularly successful:

- 'Making books' (04/02/04)
- 'Sheep and bags of wool' (11/02/04)
- 'Making souvenir books' (10/03/04)
- 'Making sandwiches for indoor picnic' (10/03/04)

⁴ 28/01/04

⁵ 11/02/04

⁶ 25/02/04

⁷ 10/03/04

⁸ 24/03/04

PEEP for Babies, Clipstone, 21st Jan – 25th March 2003

The PEEP programme for babies was evaluated in the same way as the PEEP programme for 3 year olds, i.e. using a questionnaire which was distributed to all parents who had attended. The questionnaire was designed to measure parental satisfaction with and enjoyment of the sessions. The questionnaire also asked whether parents felt that the programme had achieved its objectives of helping parents to find out more about how children learn and ideas for helping children learn through everyday activities

Parents

- Over the duration of the course a total of 13 parents and 15 children attended.
- 8 parents completed evaluation forms.
- Positive feedback was received from the parents
- All aspects of the sessions were popular

Parents were asked which parts of the PEEP sessions they liked.

	Songs	Talk Time	Activity	Story	Book and Toy Lending
Number of parents who enjoyed the activity	7	6	5	6	6
Number of parents who did not enjoy the activity	1	2	3	2	2

One parent commented that an aspect of the sessions which she enjoyed was 'meeting other mums and babies'.

Parents were asked whether sessions helped them find out more about how babies learn.

- 6 out of 8 respondents felt that the sessions helped them find out more about how babies learn.
- 1 parent commented that the sessions had not helped with this, but that the handouts had.
- 1 parent commented that they had only just started attending and so could not comment

Parents made the following comments regarding the PEEP sessions:

- *I've really enjoyed coming to PEEP sessions and talking to other mums. It gets me out of the house.*
- *Brilliant. Nice to talk to other mums.*
- *I liked coming to the sessions. My baby learnt a lot.*

Suggestions for future Sessions on basis of feedback:

- Longer sessions
- Cooler room
- More structured sessions to learn more about babies' development

PEEP for Babies, Blidworth, 29th April – 16th July 2003

The second PEEP for babies programme was evaluated in the same way as the previous PEEP programme for babies and the PEEP programme for 3 year olds, i.e. using a questionnaire which was distributed to all parents who had attended. The questionnaire was designed to measure parental satisfaction with and enjoyment of the sessions. The questionnaire also asked whether parents felt that the programme had achieved its objectives of helping parents to find out more about how children learn and ideas for helping children learn through everyday activities

Parents

- 8 parents completed evaluation forms.
- Positive feedback was received from the parents
- All aspects of the sessions were popular

Parents were asked which parts of the PEEP sessions they liked.

	Songs	Talk Time	Activity	Story	Book and Toy Lending
Number of parents who enjoyed the activity	8	8	8	8	8
Number of parents who did not enjoy the activity	0	0	0	0	0

Did sessions help parents find out more about how babies learn?

- All parents felt that the sessions helped them find out more about how babies learn.
- 1 parent commented that the handouts were very informative
- 1 parent commented that they had learnt that children enjoy being read to, 'therefore I feel that they learn through books'
- 1 parent commented that the leaflets (folders) are very helpful because parents can always go back to them later

Suggestions for future Sessions on basis of feedback

- Later afternoon
- More sessions, more time to try and test things
- The sessions would be better in the morning

PEEP for 3 year olds, July 2004

Parents

- 4 parents completed evaluation forms.
- All aspects of the sessions (i.e. songs, talk time, activity, story, book and toy lending) were considered both enjoyable and useful
- 3 parents felt that PEEP had increased their confidence in helping their child to learn (the fourth parent did not answer this question)

Parents noted the frequency with which they did the following activities with their child

	Never	Once a month	Once a week	Once every few days	Once every day	More than once every day
Singing	0	0	0	1	1	2
Sharing books	0	0	0	2	0	2
Playing Games	0	0	0	1	2	1
Making things	0	0	1	2	0	1
Talking about numbers / Number Games	0	0	1	0	1	2
Talking about shapes / Shape games	0	0	1	2	0	1
Everyday Learning, e.g. involving your child in planning a shopping trip	0	0	4	0	0	0

- 3 parents felt that they did these activities the same amount after going to PEEP
- 1 parent felt that they did these activities more often after going to PEEP

Parents noted the following ways in which they will continue with learning activities with their child after the group has ended:

- *Singing songs (x2 respondents)*
- *Counting*
- *Making things*
- *Letting the child have more input*
- *More activities*
- *Going out together*
- *Playing*
- *Talking to child*

1 parent made the following additional comment:

I feel that going to PEEP has helped my child increase their confidence in trying new things and more confident with group activities.

3.3.5 Library Use in the Sure Start Area

Background

Sure Start library services were first introduced at Blidworth, which was therefore selected as the first area to have its Sure Start library services evaluated. Services include one-off events such as 'meet-the-author' sessions, where children's authors attend a session to read from their own work, and also weekly 'Toddler Time' library sessions, which include songs, craft activities and the opportunity for parents to spend time looking at books with their children and borrow them to take home. The Sure Start library services at Blidworth were evaluated in July 2003 by means of a questionnaire which was distributed to all 50 parents who had attended previous sessions at the library and/or had participated in the Collector Scheme (a scheme where children receive stamps each time they take out a book and then a free book or cuddly toy when they have a certain number of stamps). 17 questionnaires (i.e. 34%) were returned and response to the services was very positive overall. Services at Bilsthorpe and Clipstone have not yet been evaluated.

Findings

Age of child

Under 1	One	Two	Three	Four
3	3	9	2	3

Events attended since November 2002 (the beginning of Sure Start library services)

	Poor	OK	Good	Very Good
Bear Hunt and Teddy Bears Picnic (Jan 2003)				7
Author Visit – Baby Goz (Mar 2003)				6
Elmer Time (May 2003)				2
Toddler Time session (every Friday)	1 (Overcrowded)		2	11

Additional Comments about events attended:

- *Toddler Time – Very enjoyable*
- *I feel that events organised at the library are a great way of introducing books to children at a young age*
- *It's a great way to meet other mums and also the children have a great time getting to know each other too*
- *Really fun and friendly*
- *The toddler sessions allow the children to look through books at their leisure and play. You don't have to worry about them being really quiet. It makes it more fun for them.*
- *Excellent facilities, friendly caring staff*
- *Baby Goz – event was excellent with a good mix of activities*
- *Baby Goz – great! Still read Goz*

- *Bear Hunt and Picnic – my child enjoyed hunting for her teddy bear and the advice on healthy eating and the picnic lunch was fantastic*
- *Bear Hunt and Picnic – Very good fun!*

General comments:

- *The events are run very well and my daughter enjoys them.*
- *Child and adult thoroughly enjoyed them*

Collector Card Scheme

16 children had joined the scheme. 1 child had not. Parents made the following comments regarding the scheme:

- *Very good scheme (x2)*
- *The reward gifts are always good quality. A great way of encouraging people to use the library*
- *It's a good incentive scheme to get me and my little ones to the library!*
- *I think it's a very good idea and it encourages parents and children to use the library more*
- *The scheme encourages and rewards reading for young children and parents*
- *Great incentive for children and adults to be choosing and sharing books and being rewarded at the end with a toy*
- *This scheme is brilliant and encourages reading*
- *We have now completed the two collector cards, Daisy Duck and Little Tiger. My son loved picking a book from the library which he was able to keep*
- *It would be good if there was a wider selection of books to choose from, and if there was another book rather than a toy at the end. Still a very good scheme and all for free, wow!*

Use of the library before events began in November 2002

- 10 parents used the library before November 2002
- 6 parents did not use the library before November 2002
- 1 parent did not answer this question

Use of the library now

- All parents now use the library

Thoughts on the library

	Poor	OK	Good	Very Good
Under 5s Corner		1	2	12
Book Stock	1 (see second additional comment below))		2	12

Additional comments regarding the library

- *Staff are very welcoming (x4)*
- *My daughter is beginning to read – poor selection of first reading books*
- *Good little library*
- *Library is always clean and tidy*
- *Books in good condition*
- *More opening times (i.e. open till 12:30 to visit after morning nursery)*

Blidworth Issue Figures: Junior Fiction and Non Fiction

The figures in the table below were provided to the programme by Blidworth library, who attribute much of the rise in the borrowing of junior fiction and non-fiction to the effect of Sure Start services.

Month	APR 00 – MAR 01	APR 01 – MAR 02	APR 02 – MAR 03	APR 03 – MAR 04
Apr	662	549	425	652
May	616	578	568	639
Jun	597	635	494	702
Jul	546	543	390	742
Aug	532	590	663	745
Sep	638	634	513	666
Oct	617	758	663	998
Nov	612	607	794	
Dec	322	327	402	
Jan	646	145	776	
Feb	584	426	736	
Mar	723	437	836	
TOTALS	7095	6229	7260	8688 (Nov 02 – Oct 03)

*figures from the last full year of data available are highlighted in red

Library usership figures in the Sure Start BBC Area

The table below documents a data monitoring exercise which was carried out for three successive years. At the time of the first two exercises (September 2002 and March 2003), the libraries did not store data relating to borrowing or attendance. As such it was decided that a snap-shot data monitoring exercise would be the best way to capture borrowing patterns for comparison. Data was captured over a month-long period during September 2002, March 2003 and July 2004.

Chart of active users* aged 4 and under using libraries in Sure Start area

Library	Number of active users as Sep 2002	Number of active users March 2003	Number of active users July 2004
Bilsthorpe	16	19 (19% increase from Sep 02)	78 (311% increase from Mar 03)
Blidworth	23	51 (122% increase from Sep 02)	134 (163% increase from Mar 03)
Clipstone	15	23 (53% increase from Sep 02)	44 (91% increase from Mar 03)
Total	54	93 (72% increase from Sep 02)	256 (175% increase from Mar 03)

*'Active user' is any individual who has used the library one or more times in the past year

3.4 Strengthening families and communities

... by encouraging all providers of children's services to take a wider view of their role in the community and, in particular in disadvantaged areas, by involving families in building capacity in the community and creating pathways out of poverty.

Meeting targets

PSA target: reduce the number of children living in households where no-one is working by at least 12% by 2004 (with a local annual milestone of 5%).

- In 2001/2 the percentage of children 0-3 in workless households was 26.85%. This was a 3.77% reduction on the 2000/1 figure (Data source: Local Context Analysis Data, National Evaluation of Sure Start). More recent figures were not available at the time of writing.
- Sure Start are investigating the feasibility of a pilot work-shadowing project in Clipstone.
- The feasibility of starting a Job Club is being explored. This would be with the aim of illustrating to parents that they are better off working.
- Parents are made aware of IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) services through various Sure Start sessions.
- Sure Start continues to provide and develop family learning programmes, e.g. PEEP, and to bring all parental requests for training courses to the Objective 4 meetings (i.e. 'Strengthening families and communities' sub-group).

SDA target (1): 75% of families reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support (with a local annual milestone of 50%).

- See Section 4.0 below for evidence of having met this target from the user satisfaction surveys.
- Sure Start is committed to responding to all suggestions and comments made by parents within 20 days.
- The Sure Start Community Development Worker continues to encourage and support local community groups to access the Sure Start 'community chest' fund.
- Sure Start continues to develop objective 4 reference group and 2 sub groups encouraging a broad range of attendance from all sectors including parents.
- Sure Start continues to develop community infrastructure to provide opportunities for involvement and capacity building.

SDA target (2): All Sure Start programmes to have parent representation on the local programme board.

- Of the 18 members of the Partnership Board in 2003-4, 8 (44%) were parent representatives, compared with 6 (33%) in 2002-3.
- See Section 5.0 below for a study of the developing experience of parents on the Partnership Board.
- Weekly coffee and chat sessions are provided to give parents the opportunity to comment on services

SDA target (3): All Sure Start programmes to have developed local targets for ensuring links between the local Sure Start partnership and Employment Service Jobcentres

- Links with employment services have been established through the 'Increasing Employability Strategy Group' and the 'Community

Involvement Task Group' and through the work of the Sure Start community development worker.

- Welfare rights advice is provided through Nottinghamshire Unemployed Workers Centre.
- Sure Start centres are utilised by Newark and Sherwood College and West Notts. College.
- Section 3.4.1 below presents an evaluation of two courses designed to introduce parents to using computers, with relevance to employability.

SDA target (4): All Sure Start programmes to work closely with their local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) to help close the gap between the availability of accessible childcare in Sure Start areas and other areas.

- The programme continues to work closely with EYDCP, a representative of whom chaired the capital plans group.
- Information about childminder start-up grants is distributed in the area.
- Targets have been set regarding childminding development and wrap-around of pre-school care although the nature of these targets is not known.
- See Section 3.1.3 above for an evaluation of crèche facilities.
- Blidworth and Clipstone both have day nurseries. 10 nursery places have been made available at White Post Farm nursery, Farnsfield, exclusively for Bilsthorpe families. Promotional work is to be undertaken in Bilsthorpe to publicise the nursery places.
- Sure Start are looking to provide a 'Pathway to childcare' course through West Notts College to try and generate interest in childcare as a career.

Readers are also directed to Sections 3.1.4 – 3.1.6 above for evaluations of the Home Start, Incredible Years and Small Talk activities, which are all relevant to Objective 4, especially strengthening families. Section 3.4.2 is an evaluation of one further activity that relates more to the strengthening communities element of this Objective.

3.4.1 Computer Courses

Blidworth

This course was run by the Sure Start library development worker and was evaluated by use of questionnaires which were distributed to attendees to see whether the course had achieved its objectives of increasing attendees' knowledge and confidence about computing.

- Course ran at Blidworth between April and May 2004
- 6 attendees completed evaluation forms
- 5 attendees strongly agreed and 1 attendee agreed that the course increased their confidence in using computers.
- 3 attendees strongly agreed and 3 attendees agreed that the course increased their knowledge of computers.
- 3 attendees strongly agreed and 3 attendees agreed that the course was taught well
- 4 attendees strongly agreed and 1 attendee agreed that the course will help them in future work. 1 attendee did not comment.
- Attendees stated the following as things they would do with their acquired computer skills: use computer regularly (x4), help my children with the computer, e.g. their homework (x2), write a CV (x1), start to use the computer at home (x1), find a job when I return to work (x1)
- Attendees gave the following reasons for why they decided to attend the course: because I couldn't even turn a computer on (x1), to learn (x1), I needed to learn basic skills to feel more confident to use home PC (x1), I had no IT skills (x1), what little skills I had were learnt such a long time ago (x1)
- Attendees noted the following as things they had learned from the course which they had not expected to learn: everything (x2), using a scanner and camera (x2), a lot – I knew absolutely nothing about computers before (x1)
- 2 Attendees felt that the course was not long enough, although no suggestions were given as to what a better length of time would be. Another 2 attendees felt that the duration was appropriate commenting, 'probably just right for a beginner's course' and 'just enough to get a taster'
- 5 Attendees felt that the times of the course were convenient. 1 attendee did not comment. One attendee commented, 'very well suited around school hours and crèche very good'

Attendees made the following comments regarding the course:

- *I will definitely use the skills learnt for home computer use*
- *It has given me confidence to use a computer*
- *Never been interested in computers so it has given me some knowledge*
- *I've definitely got the computer bug*
- *Couldn't ask for better*
- *Most jobs require basic computer skills so should help*
- *I hope it will help me in future work*
- *I have really enjoyed this course. I have done things that I thought I never would. Thanks to everyone*
- *I have thoroughly enjoyed the course; the two hours on a Thursday have gone extremely quickly*
- *I feel I have learnt a great deal in such a short time. I am sure that the whole group has benefited. Nina the trainer has been very helpful and has*

made it a lot of fun, thank you for all your help. Thank you also to Debbie and Sharon from the library who also helped us all.

Clipstone

This course was the same as that run in Blidworth and again was evaluated by use of questionnaires which were distributed to attendees to see whether the course had achieved its objectives of increasing attendees' knowledge and confidence about computing.

- Course ran at Clipstone between October and November 2003
- 4 attendees completed evaluation forms
- All attendees strongly agreed that the course increased their confidence in using computers.
- 3 attendees strongly agreed and 1 attendee agreed that the course increased their knowledge of computers.
- All attendees strongly agreed that the course was taught well
- 2 attendees strongly agreed and 2 attendees agreed that the course will help them in future work.
- Attendees stated the following as things they would do with their acquired computer skills: produce a CV (x3), enrol in a computer course and learn more (x2), go to college (x1), do party invitations (x1), start my own business (x1), do more word processing and clip art (x1)
- Attendees gave the following reasons for why they decided to attend the course: 'needed to know the basics so it was just right for me', 'to be confident on a computer without asking my husband', 'because I didn't know anything about computers', 'need help to use a computer'
- Attendees noted the following as things they had learned from the course which they had not expected to learn: all of it (x1), how to download photos (x1), how much a computer can save and store – I can see now why it is so many people's lifeline (x1)
- All attendees felt that the course was not long enough, although no suggestions were given as to what a better length of time would be
- All attendees felt that the times of the course were convenient. One attendee commented, 'Times were perfect as I have a child in nursery and they didn't affect him in any way'
- All attendees felt that the venue (Clipstone Library) was suitable. Comments were 'very suitable, I felt relaxed', 'the library was very comfortable and a friendly atmosphere' and 'brilliant'

Attendees made the following comments regarding the course:

- *Each week I wanted to learn more and more, I was totally hooked*
- *Now I don't have to ask how to use, or what to do, on a computer*
- *Didn't realise how much a computer can make your life so much easier*
- *I found we covered quite a few topics*
- *Hopefully provide a stepping stone into future employment*
- *I found the course really educational and would recommend it to anyone. I've learnt so much about different issues and aspects of a computer. Hopefully my learning will continue for future reference*
- *I would really like to thank all the people involved in the computer course. They have really helped me to be more confident*

3.4.2 Summer Activities 2004

Summary

- All the events were well thought of by parents from all three villages, with no overall negative opinions of any.
- Of those who completed questionnaires the most highly rated event was the trip to Marketon Park, while the least highly rated was 'Monster massive'.
- The greatest value of the activities was the opportunity they provided for children to mix with each other, but this was closely followed by opportunities for parents to meet each other, for children to play and learn and for families to spend time together.
- Gaining new ideas about what to do at home was the least significant benefit of the summer programme.
- The activities were generally suitable for Sure Start children, with the exception of 'Monster massive' and 'Dragonfly puppets', which were felt to be more suitable for older children.
- Only about half the parents were motivated to attend events just because their friends were going.
- Most thought the fun days were brilliant, but some wished the sessions could have been longer, and would have liked more activities for very young children.
- The older children enjoyed 'Monster massive', but younger children found the event frightening and couldn't participate.
- Everybody enjoyed the trips, but there is some indication that some parents might have been deterred from the Twin Lakes visit by the cost.
- Parents particularly welcomed repeating activities in different weeks or in different Sure Start venues; this undoubtedly increased participation.
- For future programmes, parents wanted the 'fun day' events to last longer and they wanted more outdoor activities, especially forest walking. Parents also mentioned swimming and a visit to Sundown Pets Corner.

Introduction

The following is an evaluation of the variety of events and activities that made up the Summer Programme at Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone during summer 2004. It included a programme of activities that took place on four of the days of the Summer Half-term Holiday, together with other one-off trips and activities during the long summer holiday.

Activities were planned almost exclusively by Sure Start staff, including family workers, the library development worker and the community nutrition assistant. However, parents were involved in deciding the venue of the trips. Parents put forward suggestions for locations, while family workers researched these ideas in terms of distance, cost to parents, risk assessments etc. and produced a list of feasible locations and their costs, which parents were then asked to vote on. Sure Start covered the cost of transportation by bus to and from each location.

Attendance figures for the events were as follows (in order of best to least attended):

Activity	Bilsthorpe Attendance	Blidworth Attendance	Clipstone Attendance	TOTAL Attendance
Family play sessions (incl. messy play, play with paint and outdoor fun)	108 children (44 families)	121 children (51 families)	102 children (42 families)	331 children (137 families)
Fun Days	64 children (26 families)	65 children (26 families)	33 children (13 families)	162 children (65 families)
Markeaton Park	No breakdown available	No breakdown available	No breakdown available	82 children (30 families)
Monster Massive	31 children (11 families)	27 children (10 families)	22 children (9 families)	80 children (30 families)
Twin Lakes	Not applicable	26 children (10 families)	50 children (18 families)	76 children (28 families)
Puppet Show	21 children (8 families)	27 children (10 families)	17 children (6 families)	65 children (24 families)
Twycross Zoo	No breakdown available	No breakdown available	No breakdown available	46 children (18 families)
Fun with food	Not available	18 children (7 families)	20 children (7 families)	38 children (14 families)
Teddy Bears Picnic	No breakdown available	No breakdown available	No breakdown available	24 children (10 families)
TOTALS	224 children (89 families)	284 children (114 families)	244 children (95 families)	752 children (298 families)

Parents' views of the activities and events

The summer activities programme was evaluated by means of a self-completion questionnaire that asked parents to give an overall opinion of each of the events, and to indicate their level of agreement with a number of statements worded to provide evidence of their impact on issues relevant to Sure Start objectives. Parents were then asked to say what they thought of the variety of activities on offer, and were invited to make suggestions for a future summer programme. The questionnaires were distributed at play sessions and through the post. Response rates were quite low with parents from the three villages responding to the questionnaire in the following numbers:

Bilsthorpe 6
Blidworth 7
Clipstone 10

Respondents were asked to give their opinion of the activities according to the scale: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = OK; 4 = good; 5 = very good

The following table gives average scores for each activity for respondents from each village, with number of participants in brackets.

	Bilsthorpe	Blidworth	Clipstone
Fun with food	4.0 (1)	5.0 (2)	5.0 (1)
Monster massive	3.6 (5)	3.4 (5)	5.0 (4)
Outdoor fun	4.0 (5)	4.8 (5)	4.0 (6)
Teddy Bear's picnic	4.8 (4)	4.5 ¹ (6)	4.2 (5)
Dragonfly puppets	4.3 (4)	3.3 (4)	3.8 (4)
Trip to Marketon Park	5.0 (5)	5.0 (2)	5.0 (5)
Play with paint	4.0 (4)	4.2 (6)	4.8 (4)
Messy play	4.0 ² (4)	(0)	5.0 (1)
Fun day	5.0 (5)	4.3 ³ (6)	5.0 (4)
Summer trip: Twycross	5.0 (2)	(0)	4.0 (1)
Summer trip: Twin Lakes	(0)	5.0 ⁴ (3)	4.7 (6)

¹ Included 5 'very good'

² One parent commented 'marvellous'

³ Included 4 'very good'

⁴ One parent commented 'too expensive'

Further comments:

- Overall attendance was low from Clipstone families who completed questionnaires, with at least half the respondents attending only four of the 11 events.
- The most poorly attended event by those who completed questionnaires was the trip to Twycross Zoo (13%).
- The most popular event in terms of attendance of those who completed questionnaires was 'Outdoor fun' (70%), followed by the 'Teddy Bear's picnic' and the 'Fun day' (65%) and 'Monster massive' and 'Play with paint' (61%).
- If we dismiss those events attended by very few families, the most popular event in terms of parent opinion was the trip to Marketon Park, which all 12 parents thought was 'very good', followed by the 'Fun day', which all but two of the 15 parents thought was 'very good'.
- The most poorly rated event was 'Monster massive', though even here opinion was divided, with Clipstone parents considering it 'very good'.
- Family workers acknowledge that families who attended at Clipstone got much more involved with the activities compared to Bilsthorpe and Blidworth. It is unclear whether the greater involvement of Clipstone families was a reflection of their higher opinion of the activities or whether their higher opinion was a result of their greater involvement in the activities.

Impact of the summer programme on families

Activities were grouped into three clusters and parents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements about each cluster of activities. Parents were also asked to specify in which of the activities they had participated, but very few did, so the findings below can only indicate the impact of each cluster in general terms; they cannot be used as evidence of the impact of particular events or activities.

The clusters were as follows:

A Fun with food; Outdoor fun; Play with paint; Messy play

B Monster massive; Dragonfly puppets

C Teddy Bear's picnic; Trip to Marketon Park; summer trip to Twycross;
Summer trip to Twin Lakes

Not all respondents attended all events in each cluster; the following results may not therefore be entirely accurate for each individual event.

Degrees of agreement have been scored as follows:

Strongly agree = +2 Disagree = -1
 Agree = +1 Strongly disagree = -2

	Bilsthorpe			Blidworth			Clipstone			Average
	A	B	C ⁵	A ¹	B ¹	C ¹	A ³	B ³	C ⁶	
It was an opportunity to spend time together as a family	+0.7	+0.7	+2.0	+1.2	0 ⁴	+1.5	+1.5	+1.3	+1.9	1.20
It was an opportunity for children to mix with other children	+1.5	+1.3	+1.8	+1.5	+1.0	+1.7	+1.8	+1.8	+1.6	1.56
It was an opportunity to meet with other parents	+1.0	+0.8	+1.6	+1.5	+1.0	+1.5	+1.7	+1.7	+1.6	1.38
It was an opportunity for children to play and learn	+1.8	+1.3	+1.2	+1.5	+0.3	+1.5	+1.8	+1.7	+1.7	1.42
I wanted to go because friends were attending	- 0.3	- 0.3	+0.6	+0.2	0	+0.8	0	- 0.8	+0.1	0.03
It was suitable for children under 4 years old	+0.8	+0.3	+1.6	+0.3 ²	- 0.2 ²	+1.2	+1.7	+1.5	+1.6	0.98
It was suitable for children over 4 years old	+1.0	+0.8	+1.5	+1.0	+0.7	+1.5	+1.8	+1.7	+1.7	1.30
I gained some ideas for activities to do at home	+0.5	+0.7	+0.6	+0.7	- 0.2	+0.5	+1.2	+1.2	- 0.1	0.57
My child enjoyed it	+1.5	+0.8 ²	+1.8	+1.2	+0.5	+1.5	+1.8	+1.7	+1.8	1.40
I enjoyed it	+1.3	+1.2	+1.8	+1.2	0 ⁴	+1.2	+1.7	+1.7	+1.8	1.32
It was something I wouldn't normally do	+0.3	+0.7	+0.6	+0.7	+0.7	+0.3	+0.3	+1.2	- 0.3 ²	0.50
Average (excluding 5 th statement) ⁷	1.04	0.86	1.45	1.08	0.38	1.24	1.53	1.55	1.33	

¹ Only 6 of the 7 Blidworth respondents participated in this group of activities.

² Parents' views varied widely from strong agreement to strong disagreement.

³ Only 6 of the 10 Clipstone respondents participated in this group of activities.

⁴ Most respondents disagreed with this statement.

⁵ Only 5 of the 6 Bilsthorpe respondents participated in this group of activities.

⁶ 9 of the 10 Clipstone respondents participated in this group of activities.

⁷ The statement about friends attending says nothing about the value of the service.

Further comments on the figures:

- All activities were valued by all villages; there were no overall negative scores, even though families disagreed with individual statements.
- Overall, Group C activities (trips and events) scored best, though this was not a view shared by Clipstone families.
- There were widely differing views between the villages about the more experimental Group B activities, with Clipstone families rating them best of all, and Blidworth families judging them worst of all. The Blidworth rating was brought down by parents who questioned the suitability of the activities for small children and felt the activities were not transferable to the domestic setting⁹. Some parents (possibly not those who completed questionnaires) have since reported to staff however that they have reproduced certain activities at home with success.
- The best feature of the activities overall was that they provided an opportunity for children to mix with other children, with a majority of parents strongly agreeing with this statement.
- Parents felt quite strongly that the activities provided other opportunities; in particular, meeting with other parents, children playing and learning and spending time together as a family, though the Blidworth parents felt that the third of these did not happen in relation to the Group B activities.

⁹ It should be noted that for certain activities such as the trip to Markeaton park it was not intended that such activities would or could be reproduced at home.

- There were mixed views about the suitability of the activities, with parents feeling that they were more suitable for older children than for children of Sure Start age. This was particularly true of the Group B activities.
- On the whole, both children and parents found the activities very enjoyable. Once again, the only exception was the Blidworth parents who did not enjoy the Group B activities.
- The generally positive view of this summer programme was more muted when it came to the domestic transferability of the activities, with only a bare majority of parents gaining ideas for activities to do at home, or feeling that they were doing things that they wouldn't normally do.
- Barely half the parents were motivated to take part because their friends did so, and this was a particularly unimportant motive when it came to the Group B activities.

Parents were invited to make further comments on each group of activities.

Group A

- Offering a reason why these activities did not give her ideas of what to do at home, one Bilsthorpe parent commented, "It's nice to do these activities away from home; the children enjoy it lot's more!"
- A Blidworth parent "really enjoyed (the activities), but not enough time". This comment was endorsed by a Blidworth parent who also felt there was "not enough time in sessions; they should be longer as there isn't a lot of time."
- Another Blidworth parent regretted "not any activities for under-18 months". This view was shared by a further Blidworth parent who felt there was "not a lot for my one-year-old who wanted to do everything my 4-year-old was doing".
- A Clipstone parent offered an all-round endorsement: "We enjoyed it; it was brilliant."
- Another Clipstone parent expressed a general regret at not being able to attend. "Unfortunately, I couldn't attend due to being at work and ... I can't afford not to work! I do sometimes attend Sure Start when I can and I think it is great! The staff are really friendly and the activities and toys are brilliant. My son always enjoys himself and it's great for learning. I only wish I could attend more."

Group B

- On the dragonfly puppets, one Bilsthorpe parent commented, "Even though we enjoyed the puppets, they were old fashioned for the under-4s, I thought", while another was "not sure about grandchildren helping out".
- Regarding 'monster massive', one Blidworth parent explained, "The activities we did before were good, but when the monster came out, my children were very afraid and sat on my knee the whole time. But my eldest boy who is 8 years old joined in and enjoyed it, but my younger children didn't at all." This view was echoed by another who felt it was "not good for under-18 months, and more children were frightened than joined in".
- A Blidworth parent made a further general comment that "I had to hold my one-year-old all the time as he kept trying to get everything he couldn't have"¹⁰.
- However, Clipstone families had a rather different experience: "We enjoyed the monster massive and dragonfly puppets as well; it was great fun." Again, "It was one of the best days yet; I really enjoyed it and my child talked about

¹⁰ It should be noted that these activities were specifically designed to appeal to older as well as Sure Start aged children in response to requests from attendees of 2003 summer activities who commented that attendance would be higher in 2004 if there were activities to interest older children as well as younger since activities take place in school holidays

it for days." This was echoed by a third, who thought the day was "really good fun".

Group C

- On the Teddy Bear's Picnic, one Bilsthorpe parent suggested the organisers "could have had a parade of teddy bears at (the) picnic (and) made more of actual bears being there, like finding eggs at Rufford, finding bears". Overall, however, a Blidworth parent felt "it was fantastic for all ages!"
- Commenting on several of the events, one Bilsthorpe parent declared "it was great to get out in the fresh air and the weather was pleasant every time!" Referring to an unspecified event, a Clipstone parent had a "fantastic day: both children and I really enjoyed it". Again, having been on two of the trips, a further Clipstone family "enjoyed both ... They were great cheap days out and (we) wished we had done more." Another also "enjoyed the summer trips and our children enjoyed every bit of it".
- However, a Blidworth parent "didn't attend Twin Lakes because I thought it was far too expensive for me and my children". A Clipstone family partly echoed this: "It was a very good day. It costed a little bit more than we would pay, but once you were inside you did not need to spend much."¹¹ Another Clipstone family "really enjoyed the day (at the Twin Lakes) and are very grateful for Sure Start giving us the opportunity to go."

Variety of activities

Parents were then asked about the fun days and whether there was enough or too much variety in the activities on offer.

There were a number of general endorsements.

- "There was just the right amount; any more and it might have been too much." (Bilsthorpe parent)
- "I think there were lots of different activities: plenty to do." (Bilsthorpe parent)
- "I felt that what Sure Start laid on was excellent." (Blidworth parent)
- "I thought there was a brilliant amount of activities for all the children and they really enjoyed it." (Blidworth parent)

Others endorsed particular events ...

- "The pirate party was fantastic: great ideas. (Child) was a little overwhelmed at the start, then eventually enjoyed it. He couldn't stop telling his dad all about it. He really enjoyed Sparkle who did magic. I also quite enjoyed it." (Clipstone parent)

While others gave reasons why they felt the programme was well organised:

- The "choice (was) excellent. (I) liked (the) idea of splitting things across weeks and centres, so if (you were) on holiday one week, (you) could still catch the activity." (Bilsthorpe parent)
- "The variety of activities was good; if there was something you missed, you could go to the other centres." (Clipstone parent)

Some parents expressed a few misgivings, such as the sessions not lasting long enough ...

- "I would have liked more different activities (lasting) longer." (Blidworth parent)

¹¹ It should be noted that the location of trips was decided through a majority voting system and parents were given details of costs before voting. The final trips might not have been the most affordable or preferred option for some parents but it was felt that this was the fairest system of decision-making

- "The activities were fine; the only fault ... is that the school holiday play sessions are not long enough." (Blidworth parent)
- ... or the events being unsuitable for young children ...
- "Some of the activities weren't suitable for kids under 4 and not a lot for under-18 months at all." (Blidworth parent)
 - "It was fine for older kids but not for younger ones that want to do it all and can't." (Blidworth parent)
- ... or there were safety concerns.
- "Teddy Bear's picnic: felt a bit unsafe with (child) just walking; could not let him run around on his own." (Clipstone)

Future activities

Parents were finally asked to make suggestions for future holiday activities

- 1) At Sure Start Centres. Suggestions varied ...
 - i) From the general ...
 - Longer sessions (x2)
 - More outdoor activities (x2)
 - More soft play
 - ii) To the particular ...
 - Fancy dress fun
 - Children to take part in creating one large painting/picture
 - Baking and making coloured sand bottles, with salt and chalk
 - iii) From the summer ideas ...
 - Treasure hunt
 - Mini-sports day
 - Dancing (x2), e.g. 'Shorts 'n Shades' disco in the summer
 - iv) To the not-so-summery ideas
 - We need a Santa and Mrs Claus to come for a Christmas Party, with the staff and parents dressing up as well, as either elves or reindeers
 - Writing letter to Santa, cutting pictures from catalogues
 - Christmas carol singing
- 2) Within the local area. Suggestions varied ...
 - i) From activities ...
 - Woodland walks (x6), e.g. Sherwood Forest (x2), Sherwood Pines (x3), "reindeer footprint walk"; "Go for walks collecting leaves, pine cones etc., and the following week making cards and pictures"
 - Swimming (x3), e.g. 'Mums and Tots' at Rainworth baths on Thursday lunchtime; "organised swimming sessions"
 - Bike rides
 - Strawberry picking
 - Teddy Bear's picnic up at the Meadows Park
 - ii) To places ...
 - Wickstead Park, Kettering
 - Sundown Pet's Corner, Retford (x2)
 - Whitepost Farm Park
 - Trip to rare breeds park
 - The Deep, Hull

Recommendations for future Summer Activity Programmes

In response to the feedback given by 2004 attendees Sure Start staff are planning to implement the following for the 2005 Summer Activity Programme:

- The possibility of longer sessions will be explored, although staffing commitments will have to be considered. Crèche support is limited to two hour slots excluding preparation and time for clearing activities away afterwards. The possibility of using parent volunteers will be explored. This would ensure a larger pool of helpers and would possibly mean that sessions could be longer as help could be rotated.
- Sure Start will repeat the voting procedure used to decide the location of the summer trip in 2004 in order to ensure fairness of decision-making. The locations suggested by 2004 attendees will be included. In addition staff will introduce an option of paying in instalments to ease the cost commitments for the trip.
- To try and encourage greater feedback, comments cards will be distributed on the day of each event in 2005 and will be collected back once completed. Such comments cards will be piloted during the half-term programme of activities in May (which will include outdoor fun, planting, a trip and library activities)
- At future events staff will encourage parents to get more involved in the activities, both in terms of leading and participating in activities. Methods of encouragement will include placing chairs next to activity tables rather than elsewhere around the room to help parents get more actively involved, giving parents more verbal encouragement to get involved in activities and giving parents more opportunities to get involved in running different activities. It is hoped that this will improve enjoyment and satisfaction for all in attendance.

4.0 The User Satisfaction Surveys

4.1 Setting up the surveys

This section should be seen as part of an on-going programme of user evaluation at Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone.

- A baseline self-completion survey was devised by the then Sure Start Community Involvement Worker and admin staff in October 2002
- In December 2003 Nottingham Trent devised, distributed and analysed a second, more in-depth self-completion survey
- An amended version of this survey was distributed in December 2004 and will be distributed once more in December 2005

Guided by the Evaluation Reference Group, the Nottingham Trent surveys have sought to gauge

- Progress towards the SDA target of an increase in the proportion of families with young children reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of family support services
- Satisfaction with local facilities generally
- Satisfaction with Sure Start services
- Reasons why some families do not access Sure Start
- Factors that would encourage increased use of Sure Start
- Differences Sure Start has made to children and carers
- Levels of community involvement arising from Sure Start
- Differences in the way certain groups experience Sure Start, e.g. specific age groups, ethnic minorities, lone parents etc.
- Patterns of infant feeding methods in the area (i.e. breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, mixed)

All surveys were distributed by mail as it was decided that a postal survey would be the best way to reach everybody within the locality. Entry into a prize draw was offered to each respondent by way of an incentive. The prizes consisted of 3 sets of £25 shopping vouchers for a shop of the winners' choice (1 set for each village).

The surveys have used slightly different sampling procedures.

- The 2002 survey was distributed to 270 Sure Start users
- The 2003 survey was distributed by Newark and Sherwood PCT to every known family with one or more children under four years of age in the Sure Start locality.
- The 2004 survey was distributed by Sure Start Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone, again to all known families in the Sure Start area, using a data list supplied by Newark and Sherwood PCT

In addition to being amenable to in-depth quantitative analysis, it was vital that the survey questionnaire was user-friendly. We tried to make the survey user-friendly by:

- Using neutral language that did not presume that the questionnaire would be completed by a carer who was the mother of a Sure Start child, e.g.
 - Was the mother of the child you are caring for ever breastfed?
- Use of pictures/symbols to make the questionnaire accessible to people with limited literacy skills, e.g.
 - How have you found parenting support services?



Parenting Support

1

2

3

4

5

Don't
know

Not
used

Not
heard of

4.2 The 2002 baseline survey

We have treated the 2002 survey as a baseline. These were some of the main findings.

- 100 out of 270 surveys were returned
- Response Rates were as follows: Bilsthorpe 40% response; Clipstone 36% response; Blidworth 33% response.
- The best used service was the Newsletter (57%), followed by drop-in sessions (42%) and Health Visitor services (38%), with the smoking cessation group least used (4%).
- All respondents rated Sure Start services to be at least 'good', with 36% regarding them as 'excellent'.
- 57% of respondents considered services for children to be 'poor' or 'very poor' before the arrival of Sure Start.
- All respondents felt that services had improved since the arrival of Sure Start with 61% believing they had improved 'very much'.
- 23% of respondents gave reasons for not using Sure Start services, of which 17% claimed they were 'too busy'.

We learnt a number of lessons from this first survey

- Response rates were enhanced by piloting the questionnaire among parents, and taking account of their comments and advice.
- The survey was designed to test satisfaction with general family support services and not specific Sure Start provision. A full examination of the latter would have made the questionnaire too long.
- The survey was useful in picking up patterns of service utilisation by particular families.
- However, some responses were known to give an incomplete record of service utilisation, possibly because questions were not properly understood.
- Data from the survey might have been enriched by the use of a few open-ended questions inviting respondents to give comments in their own words.
- In order to encourage a higher response rate, respondents' names were entered into a competition. In hindsight, this may have biased responses by deluding people into believing that their chances of success may be influenced by the opinions expressed as prize draw slips were returned still attached to the survey with no guarantee given by the distributors that the slips would be removed before surveys were examined
- At the time of reporting it was noted as important that any future survey clearly distinguish opinions about service improvement from views about the specific impact of Sure Start.

4.3 Characteristics of respondents from the 2003 and 2004 surveys

Findings from the two surveys distributed by Nottingham Trent University are compared with each other in order to assess trends across the two years

Response rates were as follows

2003

	USERS (as a percentage of overall sample)	NON USERS (as a percentage of overall sample)	TOTALS
Numbers distributed	460 (74%)	163 (26%)	623
Numbers returned	108 (73%)	40 (27%)	148 (24%)

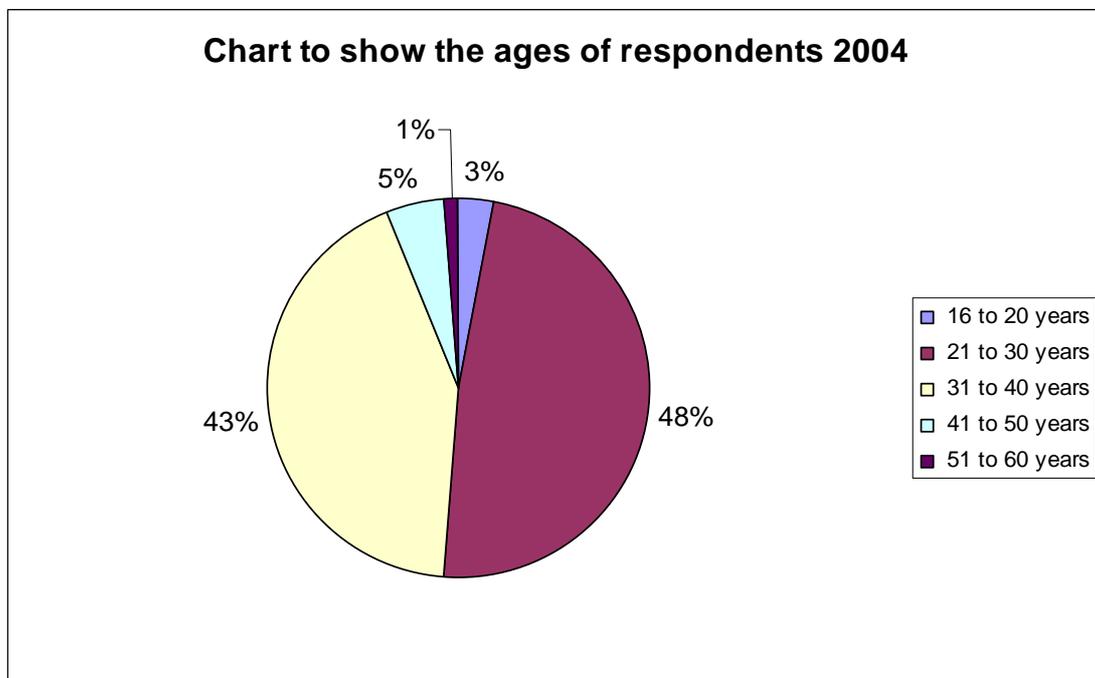
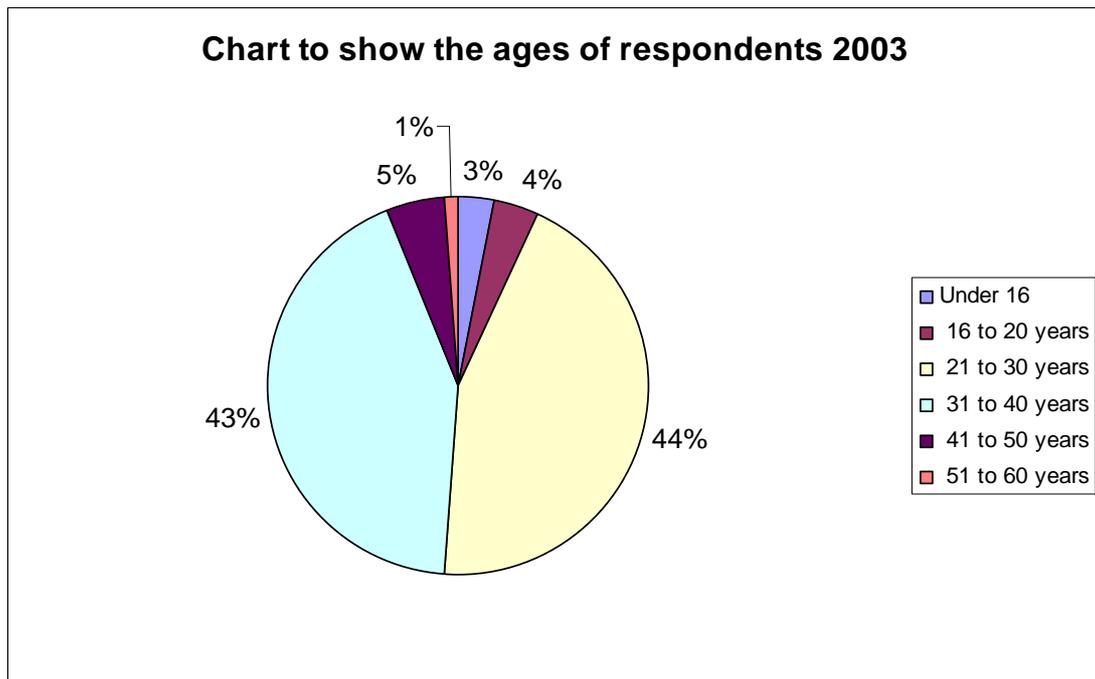
2004

	USERS (as a percentage of overall sample)	NON USERS (as a percentage of overall sample)	TOTALS
Numbers distributed	469 (81%)	108 (19%)	577
Numbers returned	109 (83%)	23 (17%)	132 (23%)

As can be seen from the tables relating to response rates,

- Distribution numbers were smaller in 2004 owing to more accurate data on families being available.
- The proportion of non users in the total population was much lower in 2004 (19% compared to 26% the previous year) owing to increasing numbers of families signing up to Sure Start
- Similar overall response rates were achieved each year (24% and 23% in 2003 and 2004 respectively)
- Each year the proportions of users and non users who returned their surveys was similar to the proportion of users and non users to whom surveys were distributed. This was important, particularly in the case of response by non users in gaining as representative a response as possible

The ages of respondents and their children



*There were no respondents aged between 16 and 20 years in 2004

Chart to show the ages of respondents' children 2003

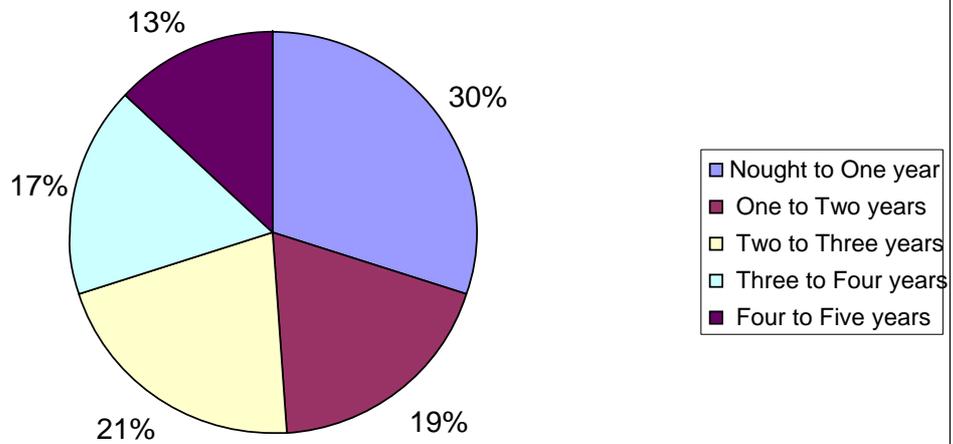
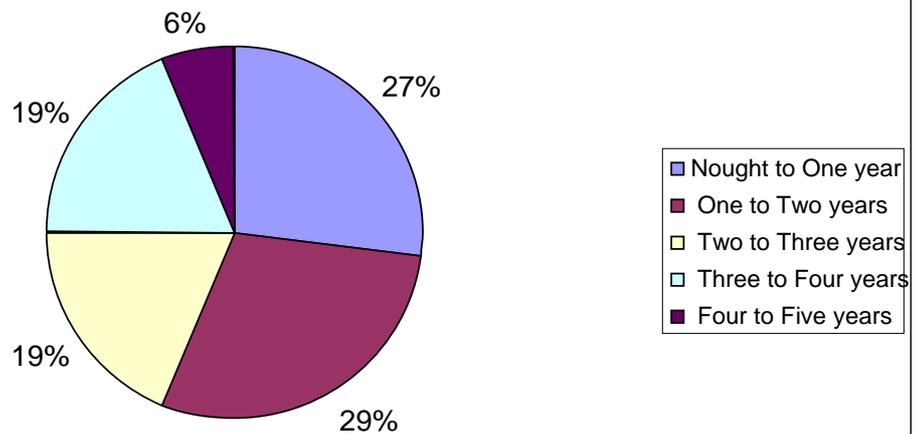


Chart to show the ages of respondents' children 2004



*32 respondents in 2004 were also caring for one or more children over 5 years old. Comparable data is not available for 2003

Members of respondents' households

Chart to show other adults living in the households of respondents 2003

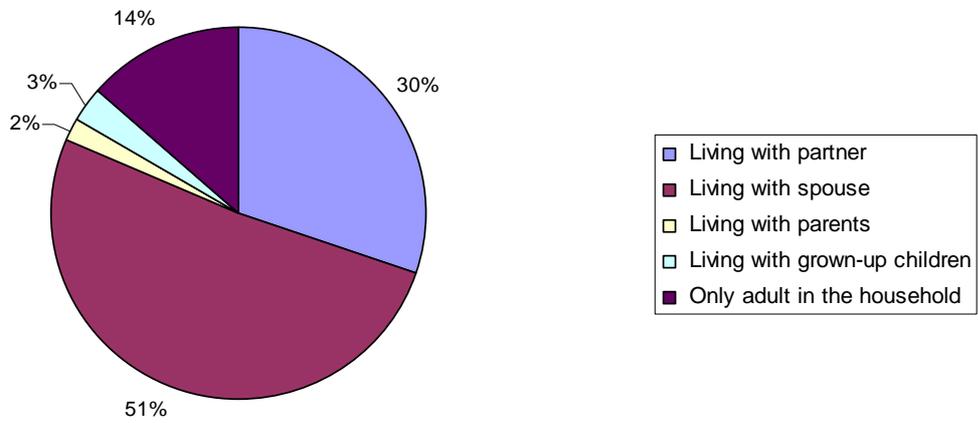
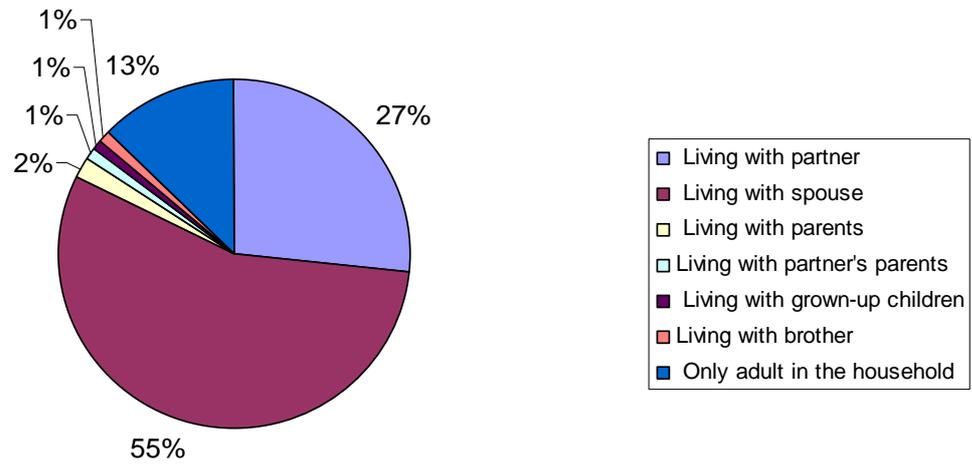
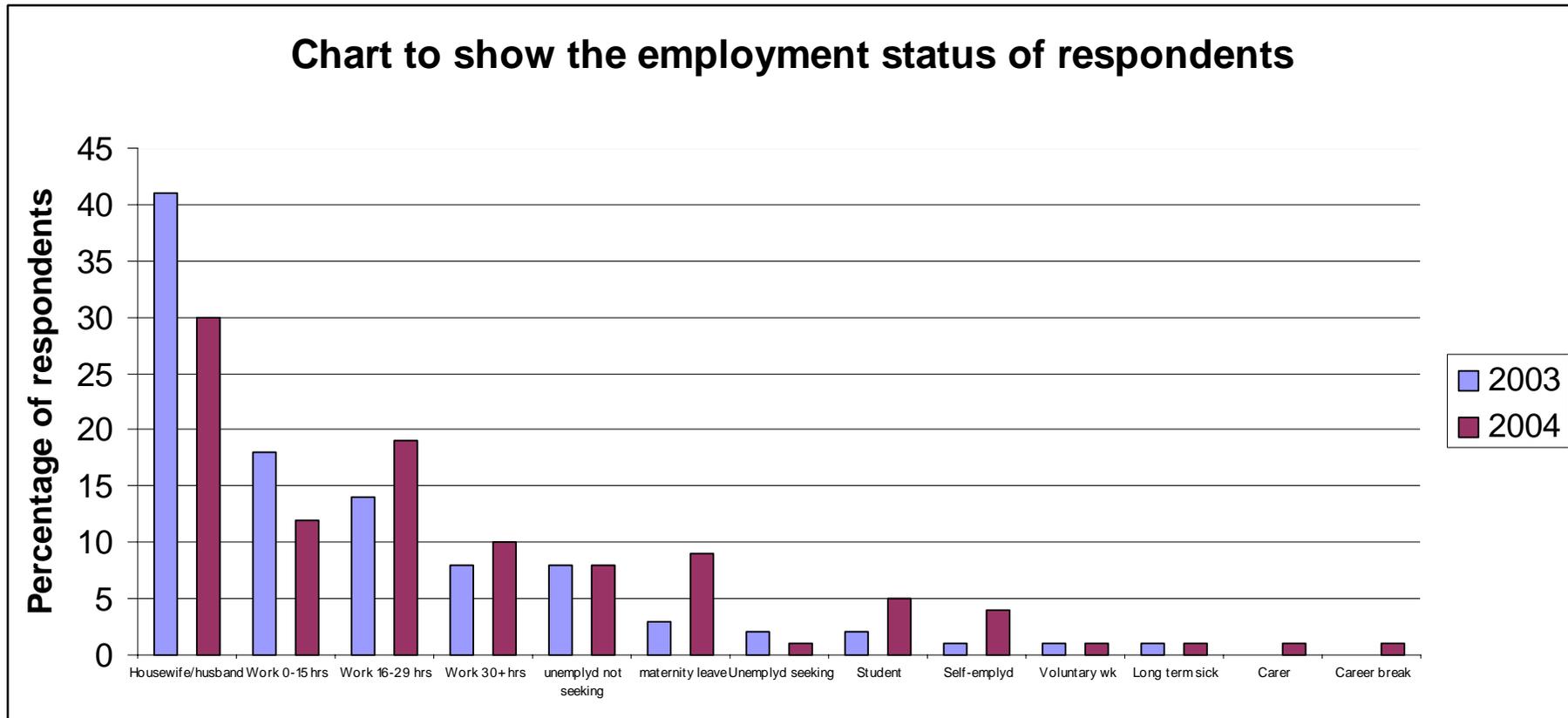


Chart to show other adults living in the households of respondents 2004

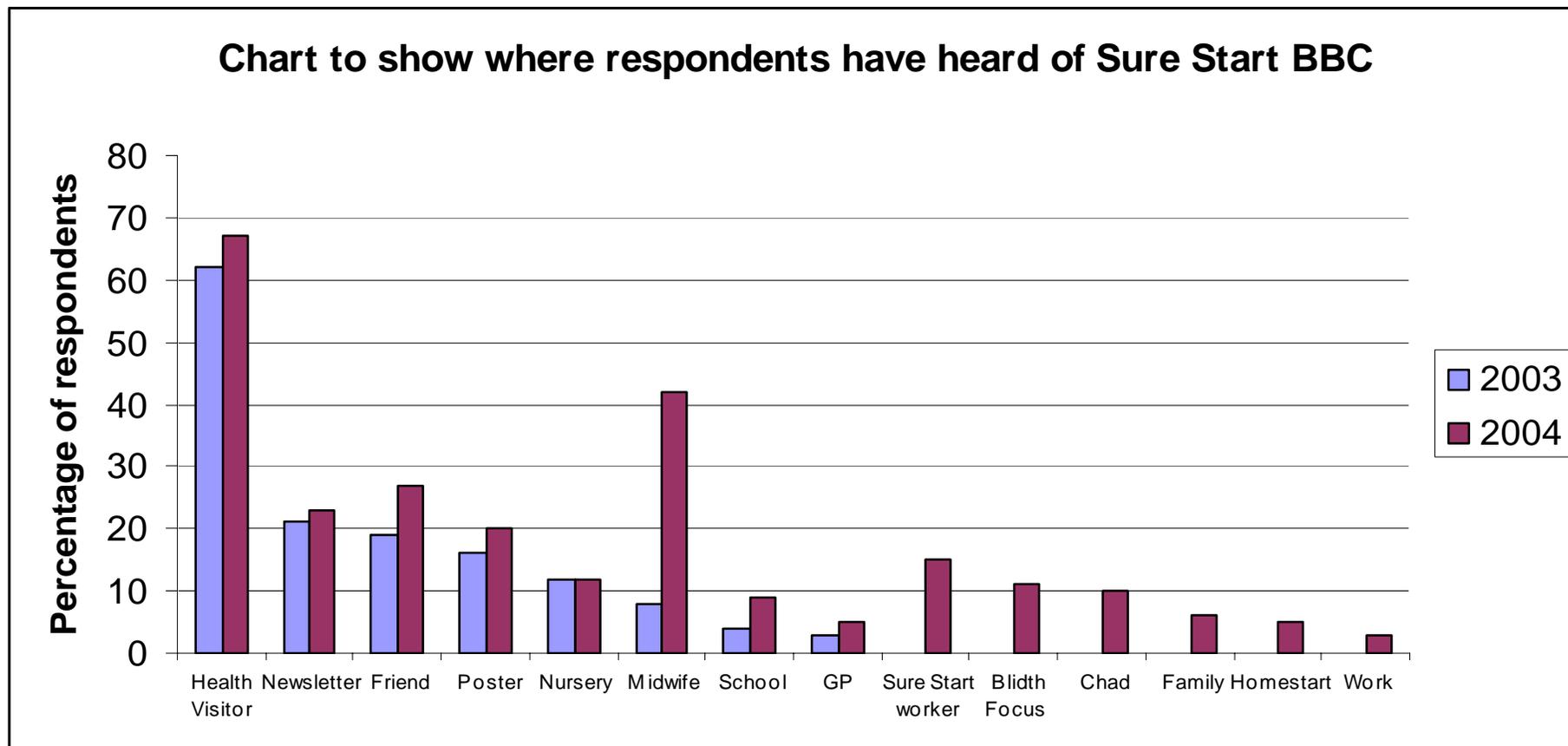


Employment status



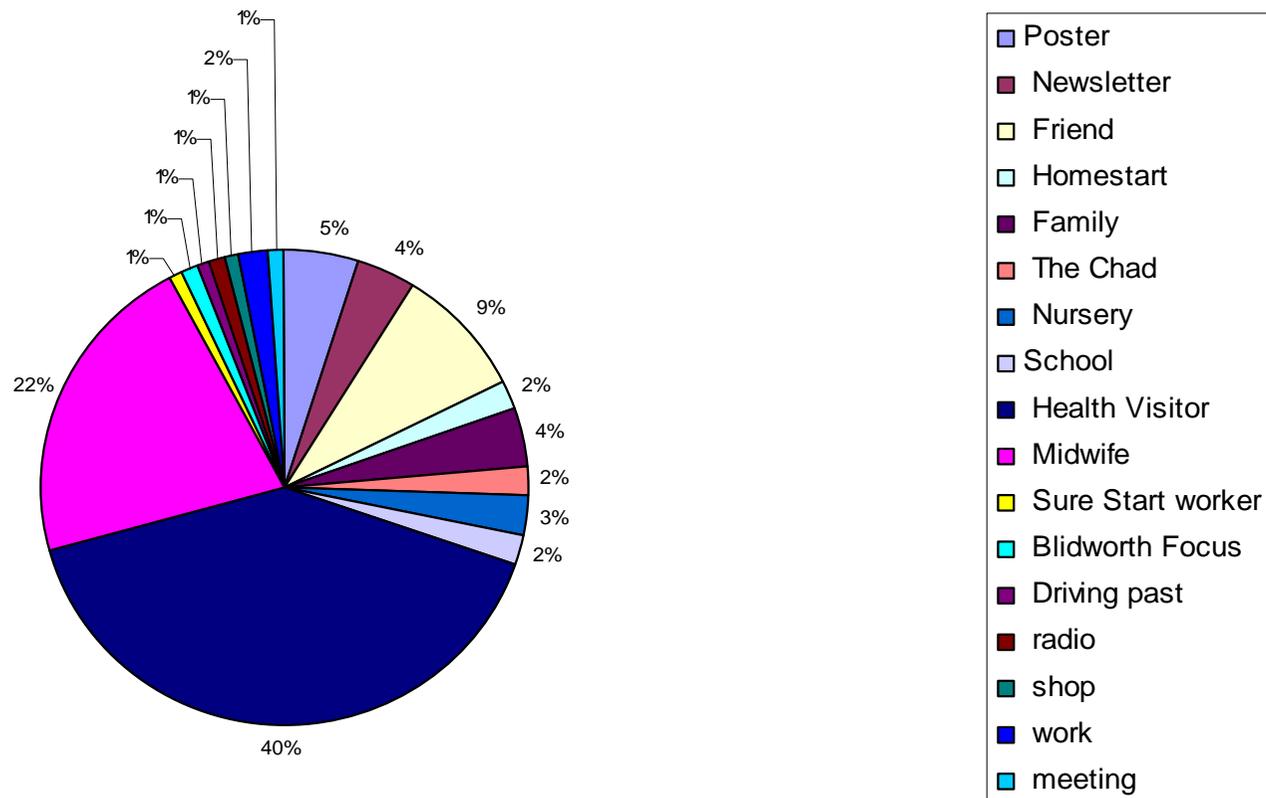
- The suggested trend (were it to continue) is of more carers working and working longer hours as well as more carers being self-employed and more carers being students.
- In 2003 44% of respondents were working. In 2004 54% of respondents were working. This strongly suggests that the target of reducing the number of children living in workless households by 5% during the year 2003-2004 was met within the Sure Start BBC area. There is evidence that this target was particularly well-achieved amongst lone parents of whom 20% (4 out of 20) were working in 2003 compared with 47% (8 out of 17) in 2004.

4.4 First contact with Sure Start



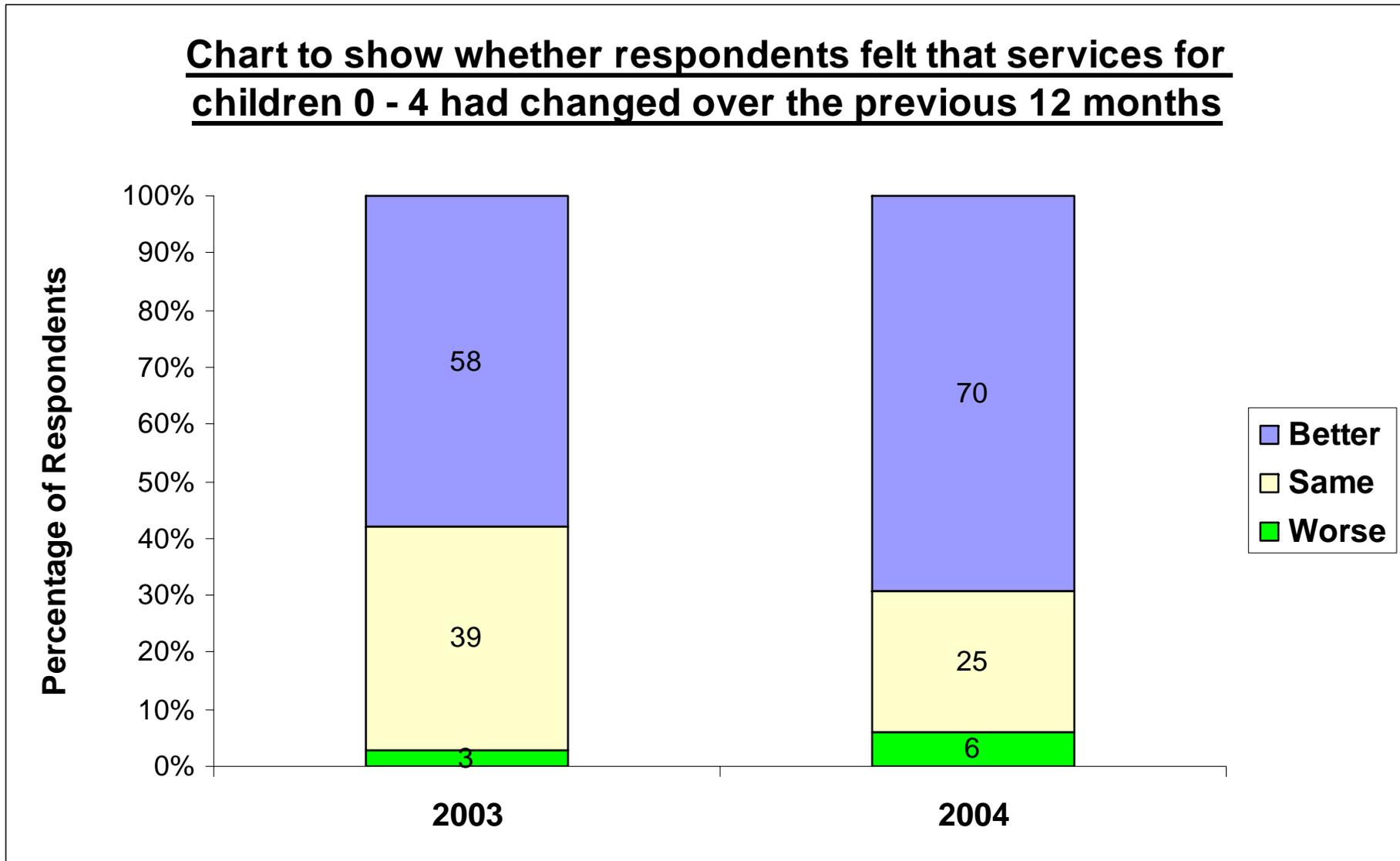
- In 2004 a higher percentage of respondents had heard about Sure Start from all the sources listed in the 2003 survey with the exception of nursery from which an equal percentage of 2003 and 2004 respondents had heard about Sure Start. Midwife was not listed as a source in the 2003 survey but some respondents did cite their midwife as a publicity source in the 2003 survey. The final six sources listed on the chart were added in 2004 so cannot reasonably be compared with 2003.

**Chart to show where respondents first heard of Sure Start
2004**



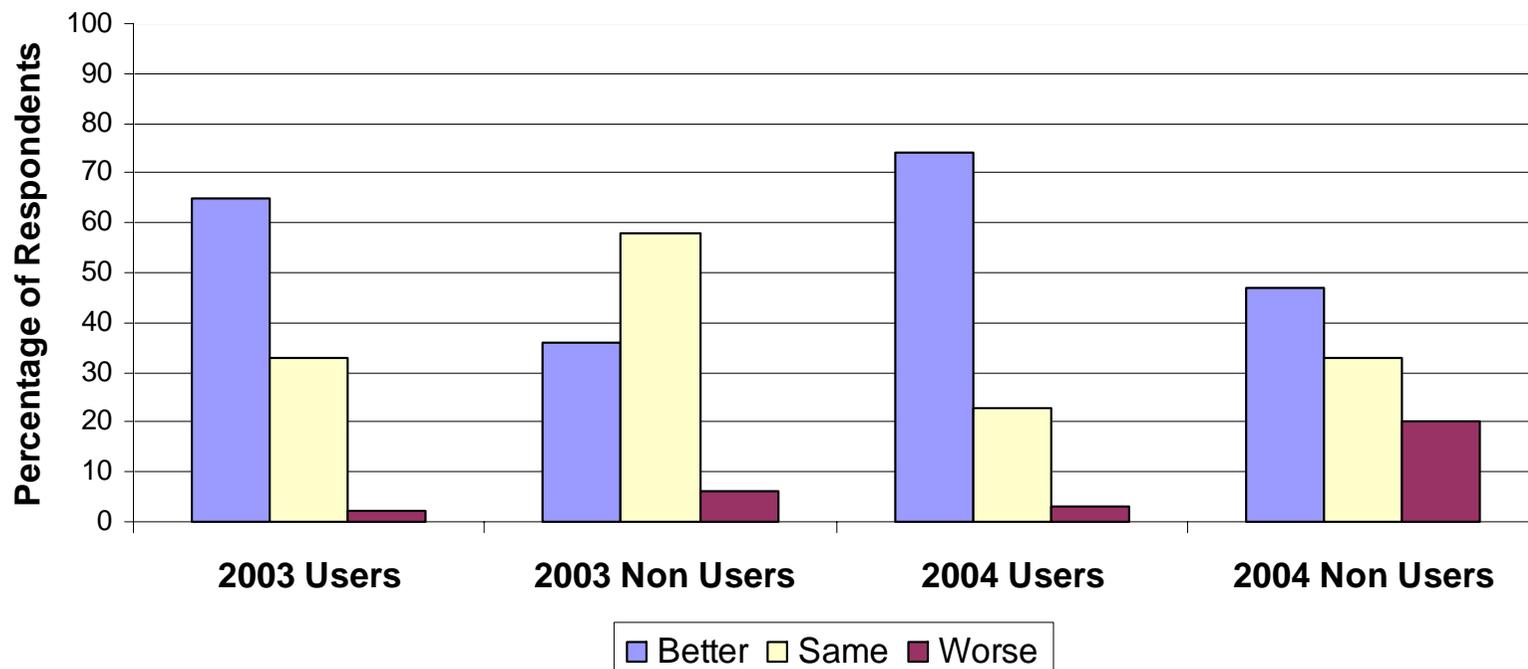
- It should be noted that a lot of data is missing for this topic. 23% of respondents did not answer this question or answered it incorrectly

4.5 Evidence of improvements in services



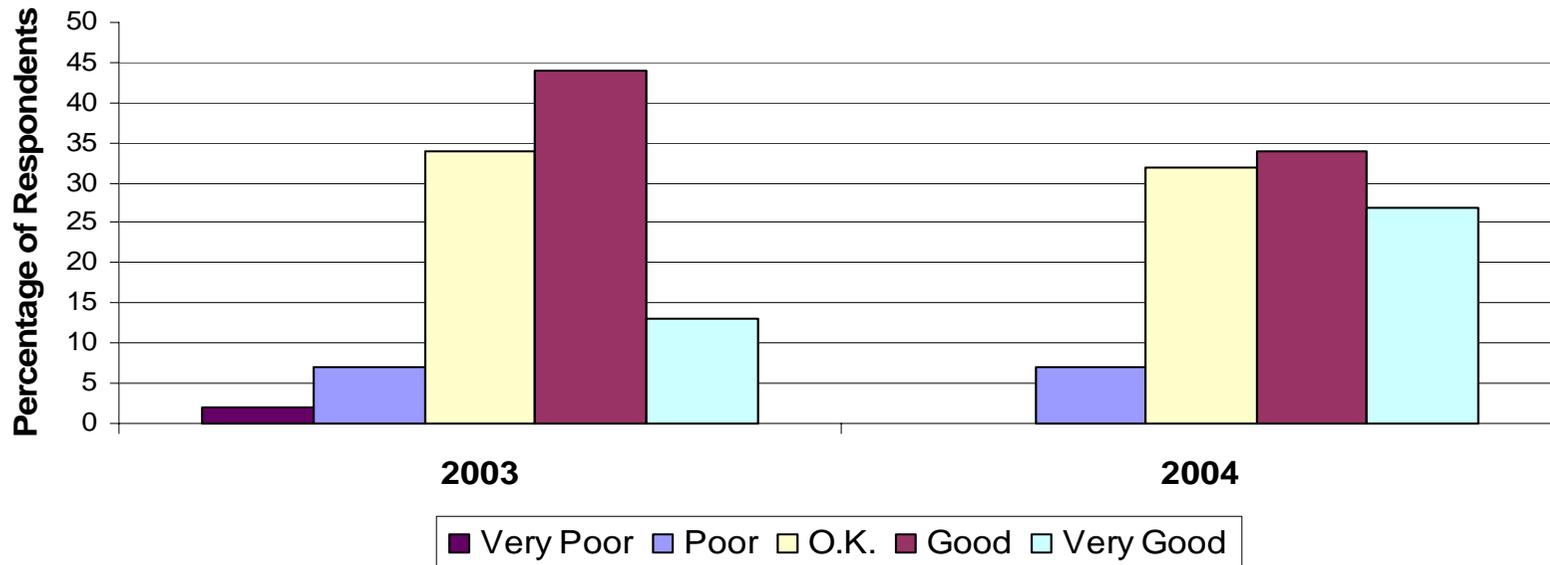
- The majority of respondents each year felt that services had improved (58% and 70% in 2003 and 2004 respectively)
- When compared to the 2003 survey the 2004 survey revealed a greater percentage of people feeling that services had improved but also a higher percentage feeling that services had worsened

Chart to show whether respondents felt the quality of local services for children 0-4 had altered over the previous 12 months



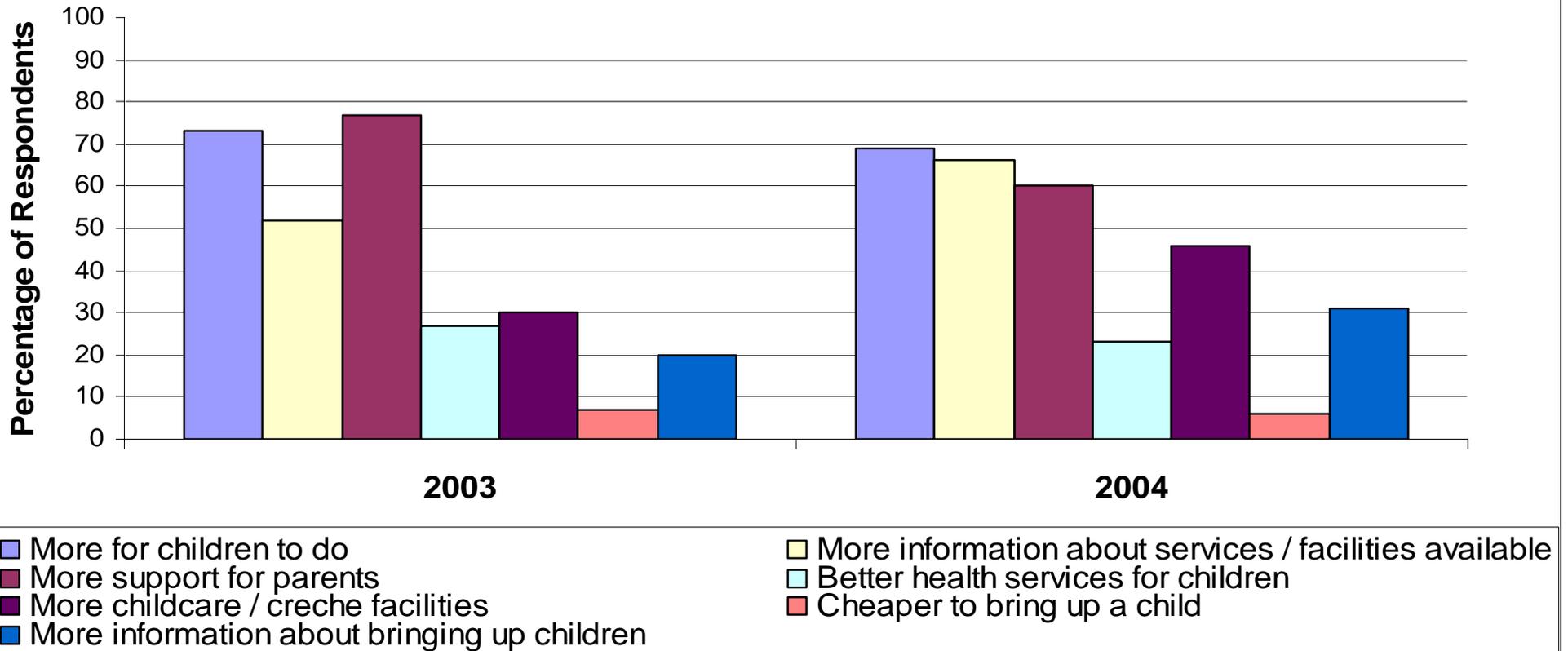
- The highest percentage of respondents feeling that services had improved was found amongst 2004 users of Sure Start (74% of 2004 users stated this)
- The highest percentage of respondents feeling that services had worsened was found amongst 2004 non users of Sure Start (20% of 2004 non users)
- The highest percentage of respondents feeling that services had stayed the same was found amongst 2003 non users of Sure Start (58% of 2003 non users)

Chart to show respondents' general ratings of local services for children 0-4



- Each year the majority of respondents rated local services as good or very good (57% and 61% in 2003 and 2004 respectively)
- In 2004 a higher percentage of respondents rated services as very good compared to the previous year (27% compared with 13% in 2003)

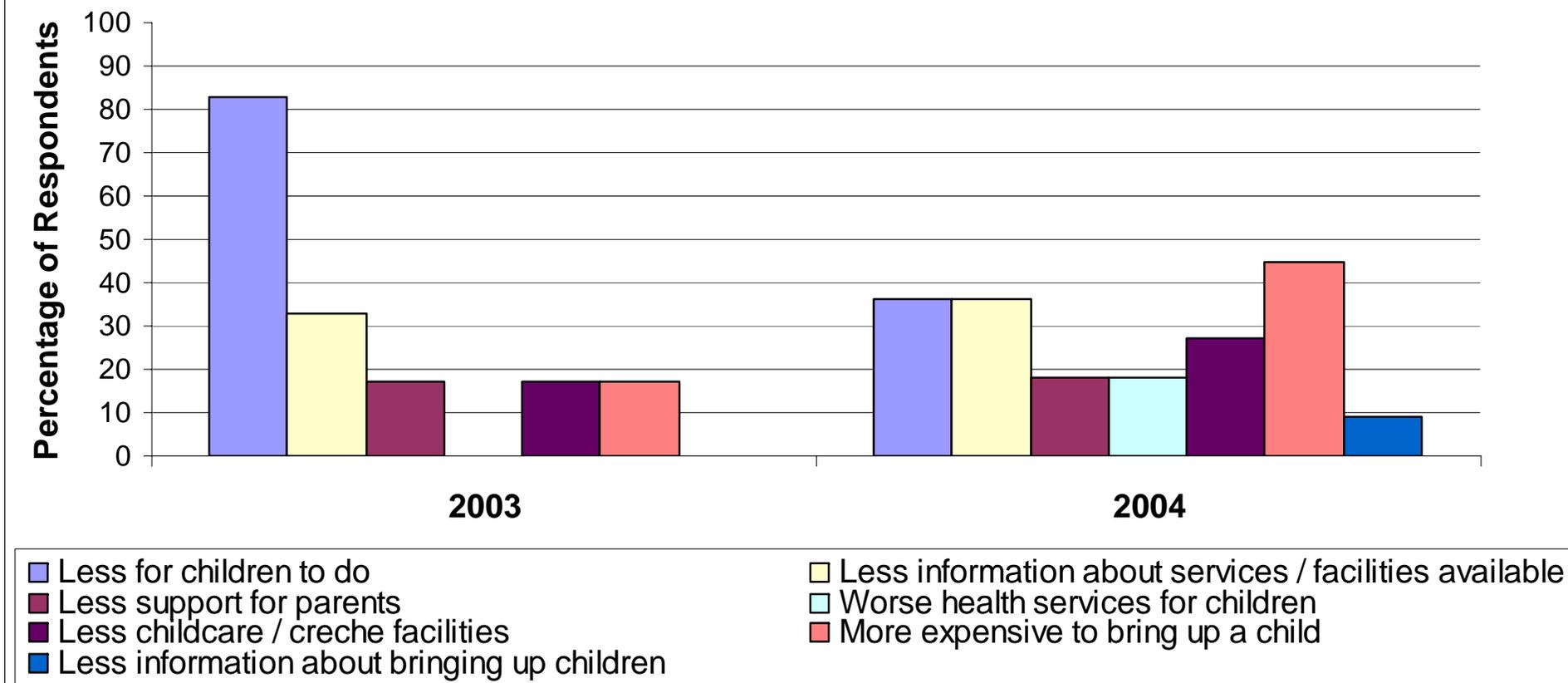
Chart to show how local services / facilities for children 0-4 improved in the 12 months preceding the survey



Respondents added the following comments relating to services improving over the previous 12 months:

- *'Support with breastfeeding'*
- *More things for children to do 'Because there was nothing until Sure Start came along*
- *Better, more enjoyable play group + toddler sessions*
- *'Sure Start' (As a reason why services have got better)*
- *'Sure Start (As a reason why services have got better) – nothing else in the village'*

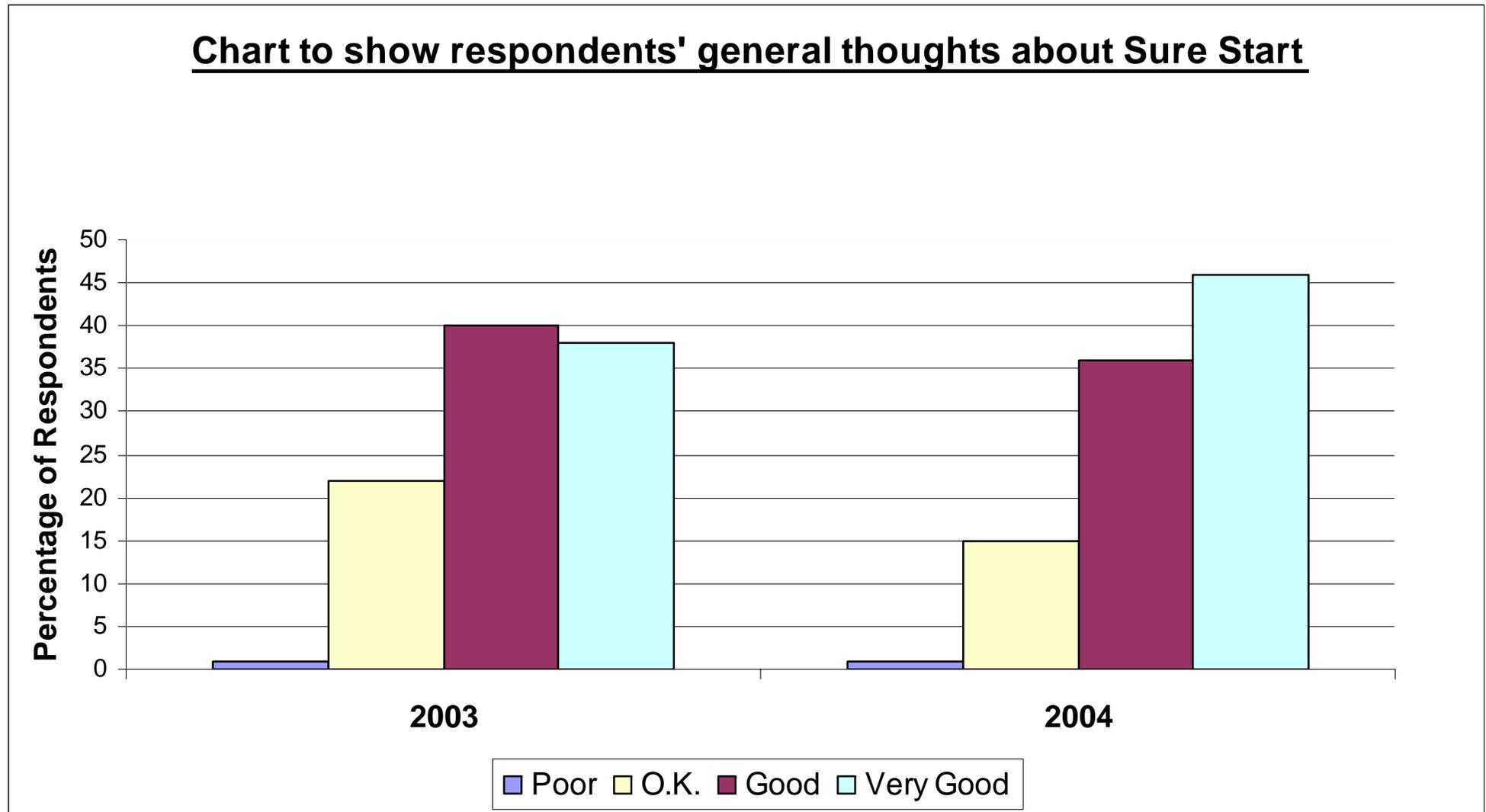
Chart to show how local services / facilities for children 0-4 worsened in the 12 months preceding the survey



Respondents added the following comments relating to services worsening over the previous 12 months:

- (they have) ... *closed the local playgroup*
- *It's not the parents / children that are deprived it's the village that's deprived of things for kids to do, especially those aged 4+*

4.6 Users' views about Sure Start and its services



- The highest percentage of respondents rating Sure Start as very good occurred in 2004 with 46% compared to 38% in 2003.
- No respondents in either year rated Sure Start as very poor

Chart to show how respondents rated services and facilities 2003

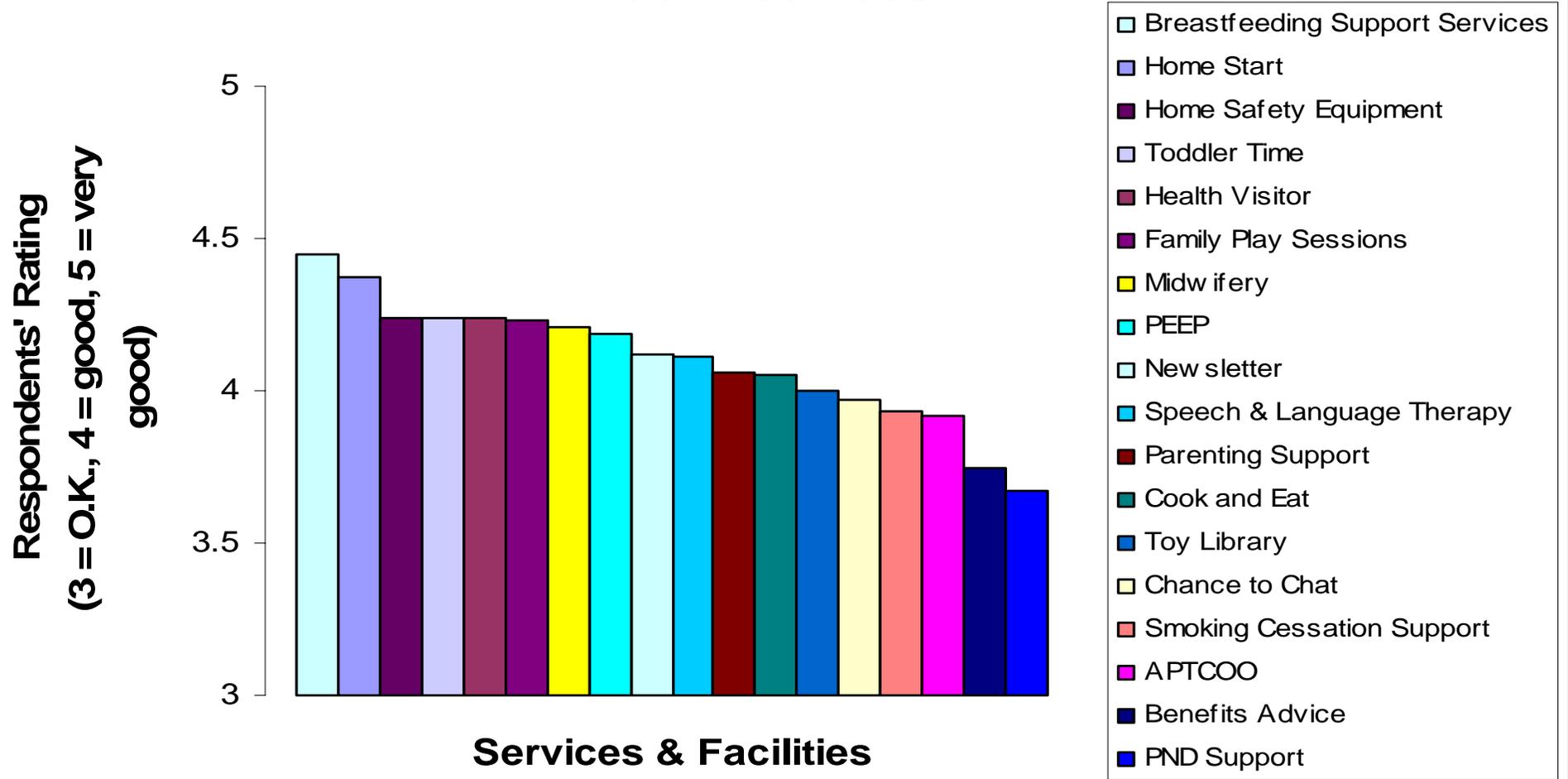
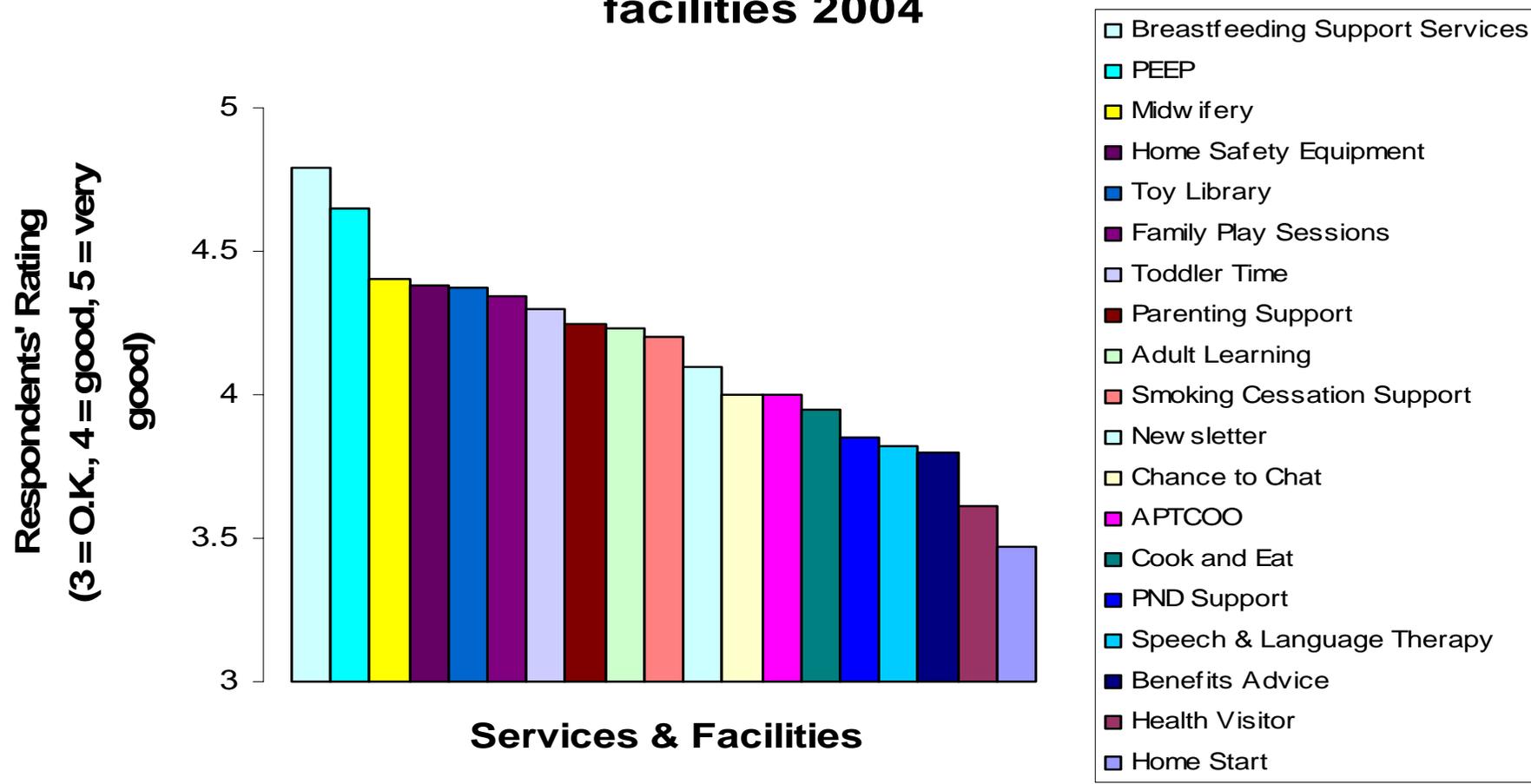
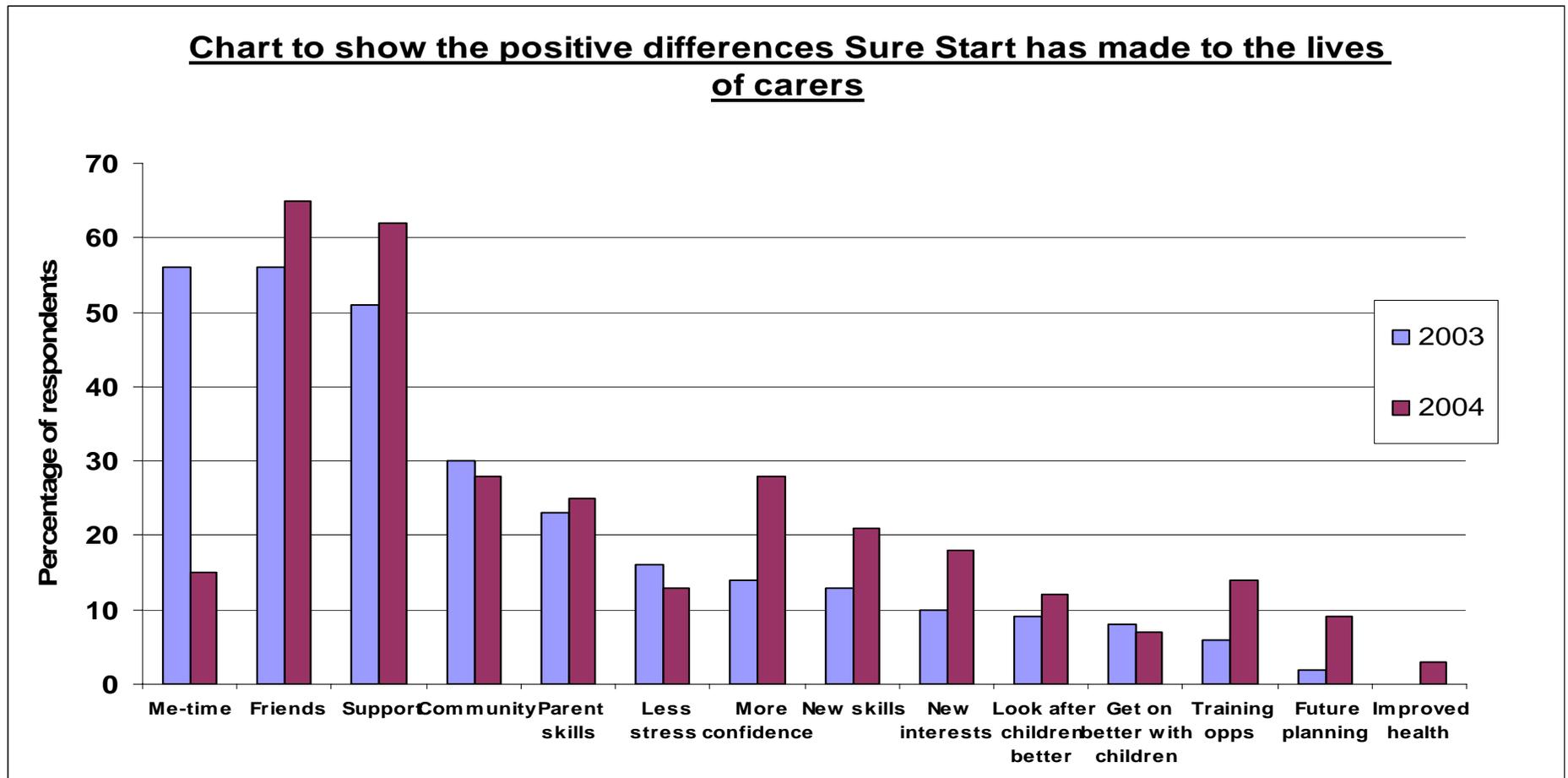


Chart to show how respondents rated services and facilities 2004



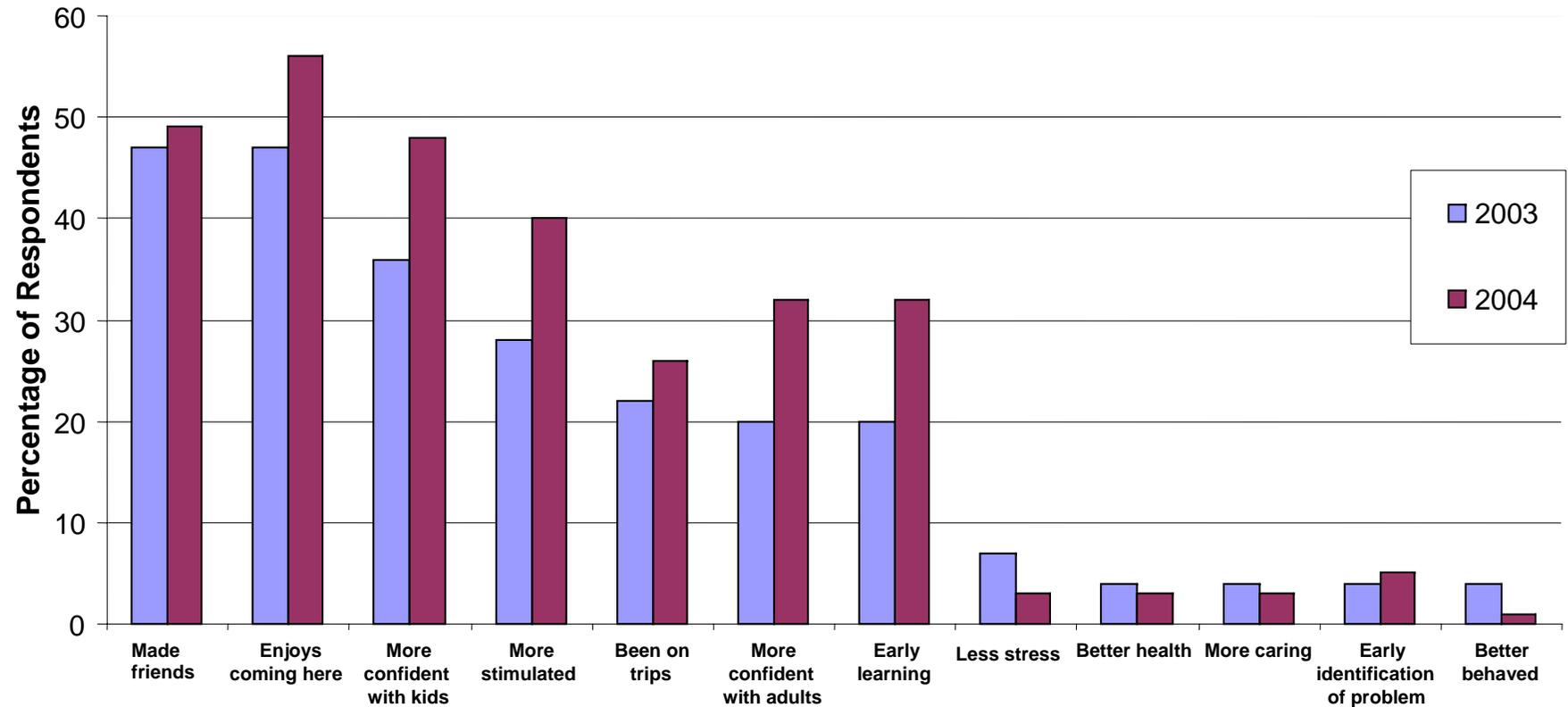
- The most highly rated service in both years was breast-feeding support.
- The following services were rated good or better by the majority of respondents in both years: breast-feeding support; home safety equipment; toddler time; family play sessions; midwifery; PEEP; the newsletter; parenting support; the toy library.
- Some services showed a dramatic improvement in users' estimation between 2003 and 2004: breast-feeding support and PEEP are now judged 'very good' by a majority of users; the toy library moved from 13th to 5th out of the 18 services.
- On the other hand, some services declined significantly in users' estimation, from 'good' to 'OK' in the view of most respondents: home start declined from 2nd to 18th; health visitor services declined from 5th to 17th.
- No services were rated as poor or very poor in either year.

4.7 The difference Sure Start has made



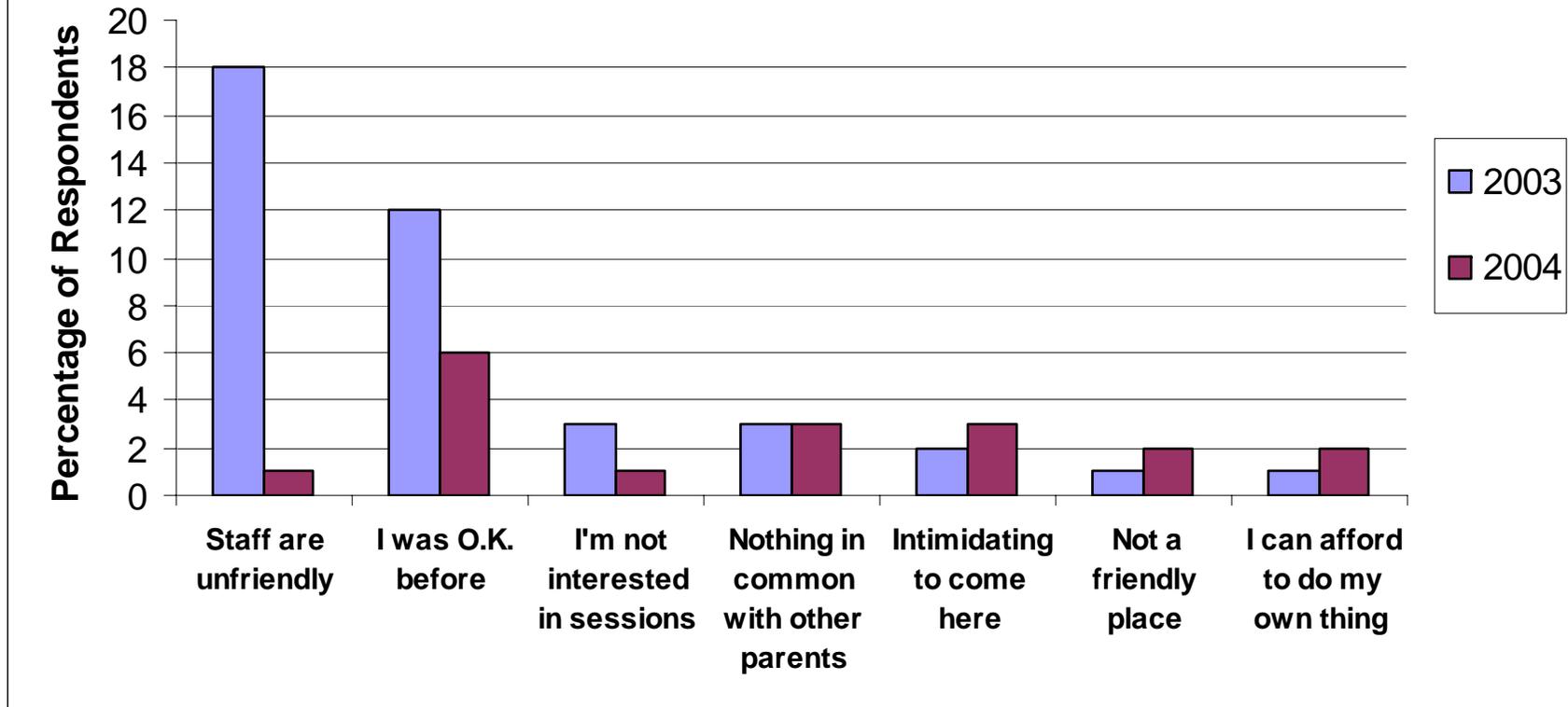
- The greatest difference between the 2 years is a massive decrease in respondents reporting that Sure Start has made a difference by providing them with more 'me-time' (56% and 15% in 2003 and 2004 respectively).
- Significant increases for 2004 include higher percentages of respondents reporting that Sure Start has made a difference in the following areas: more confidence, future planning, training opportunities, friends, support, new skills, new interests, improved health (0% of respondents stating this in 2003 compared with 3% in 2004)
- Decreases for 2004 include less respondents stating that they are more involved with their community, have less stress and get on better with their child / children

Chart to show the positive differences Sure Start has made to the lives of children



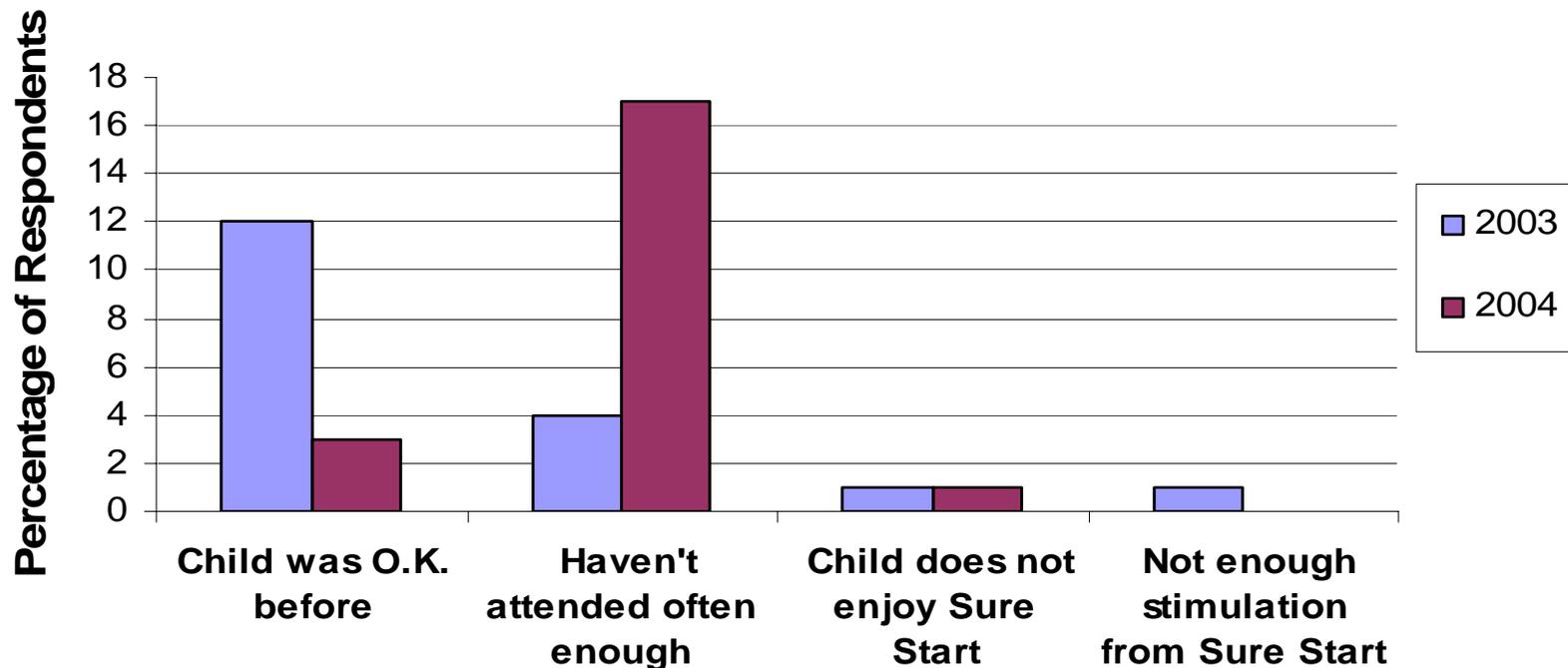
- Significant increases for 2004 include more respondents reporting that their child is more confident with other children and adults, more stimulated and has made a start on early learning
- Some decreases for 2004 include less respondents reporting that their child has less stress, better health, is more caring and is better behaved

Chart to show how Sure Start has not made a difference to the lives of carers



- The most significant result is a massive decrease in the number of respondents stating that staff are unfriendly (18% and 1% in 2003 and 2004 respectively)
- 2004 also showed a significant decrease in respondents stating that Sure Start has not made a difference to them because they were OK before (12% and 6% in 2003 and 2004 respectively)

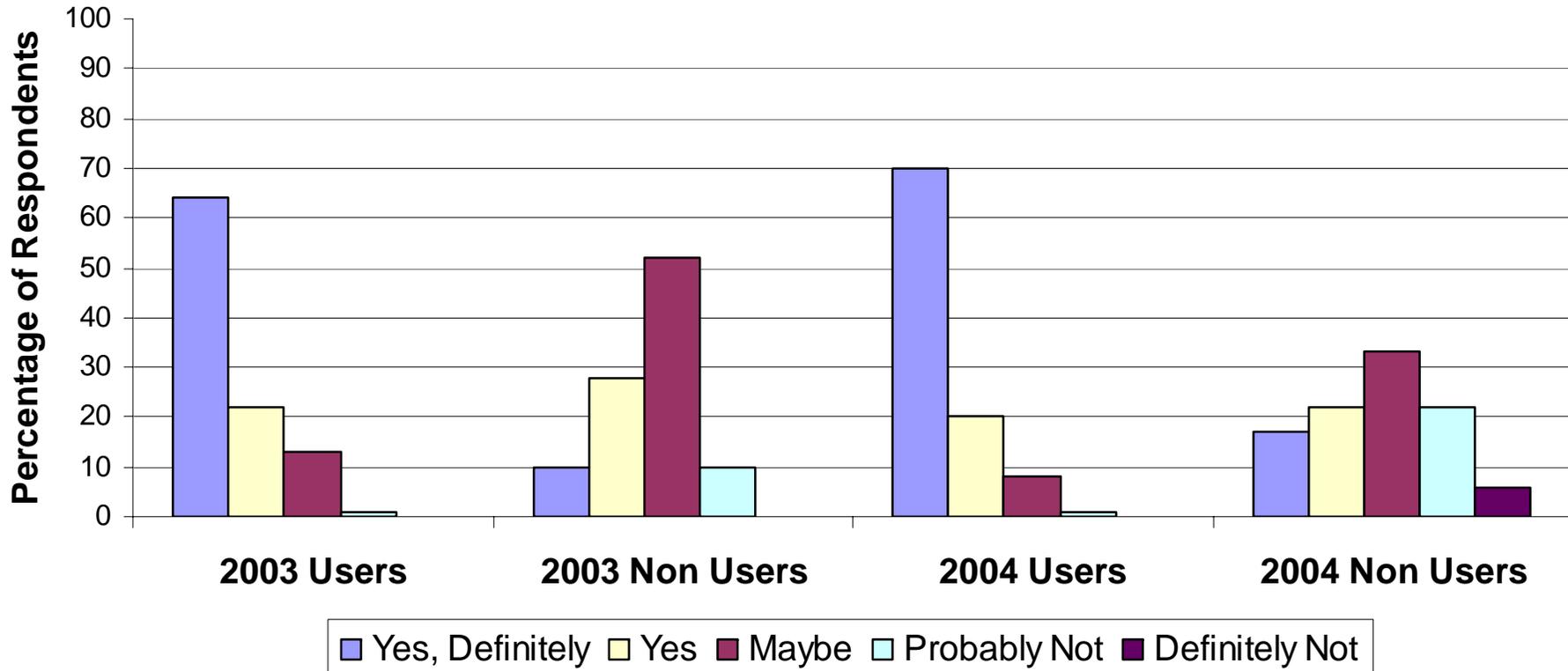
Chart to show how Sure Start has not made a difference to children



- The 2003 survey revealed significantly more respondents stating that Sure Start had not made a difference to their child because their child was OK before (12% compared to 3% in 2004)
- The 2004 survey revealed significantly more respondents stating that Sure Start had not made a difference to their child because they have not attended often enough (17% compared to 4% in 2003)
- The findings suggest a shift in attitude where respondents are more likely to feel that if Sure Start is not making a difference to the life of their child it is not necessarily because Sure Start *could not* be effective for their child (indicated by 'Child was OK before') but simply because their child has not received enough exposure to Sure Start for any positive effects to be noticeable

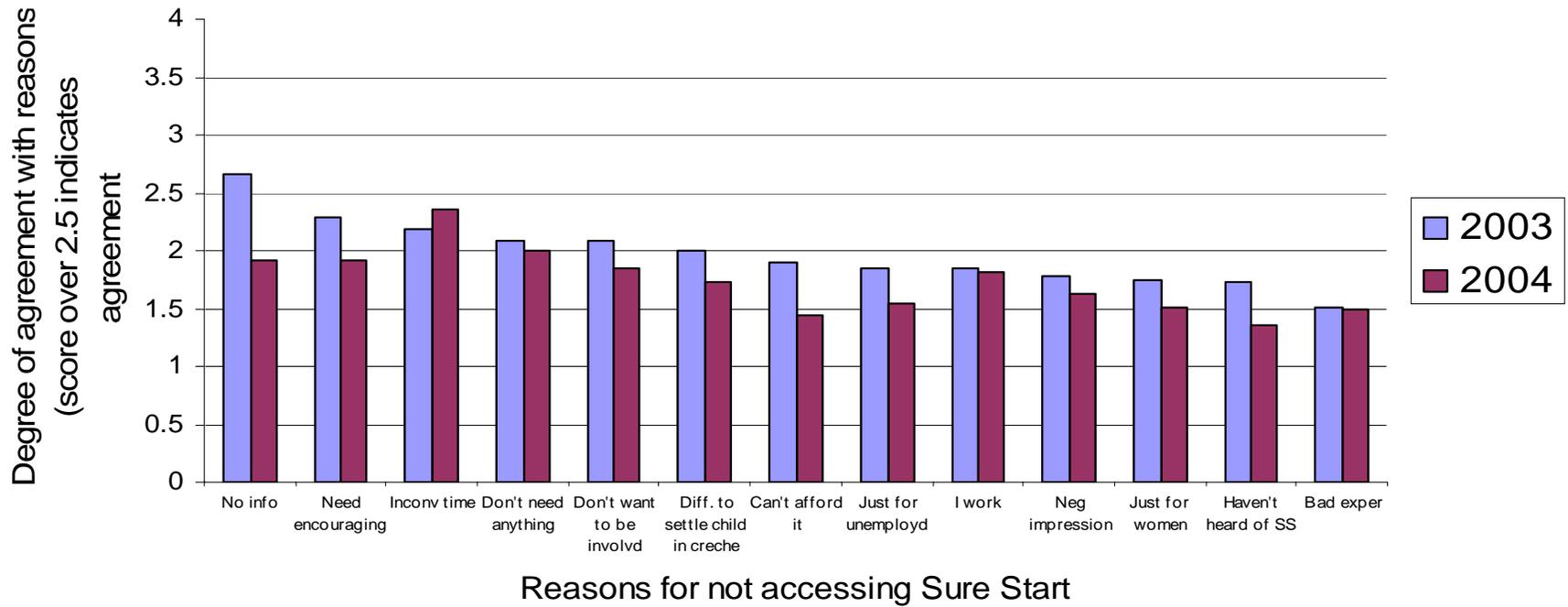
4.8 Promoting take-up of Sure Start services

Chart to show whether respondents would recommend Sure Start to friends with children 0-4



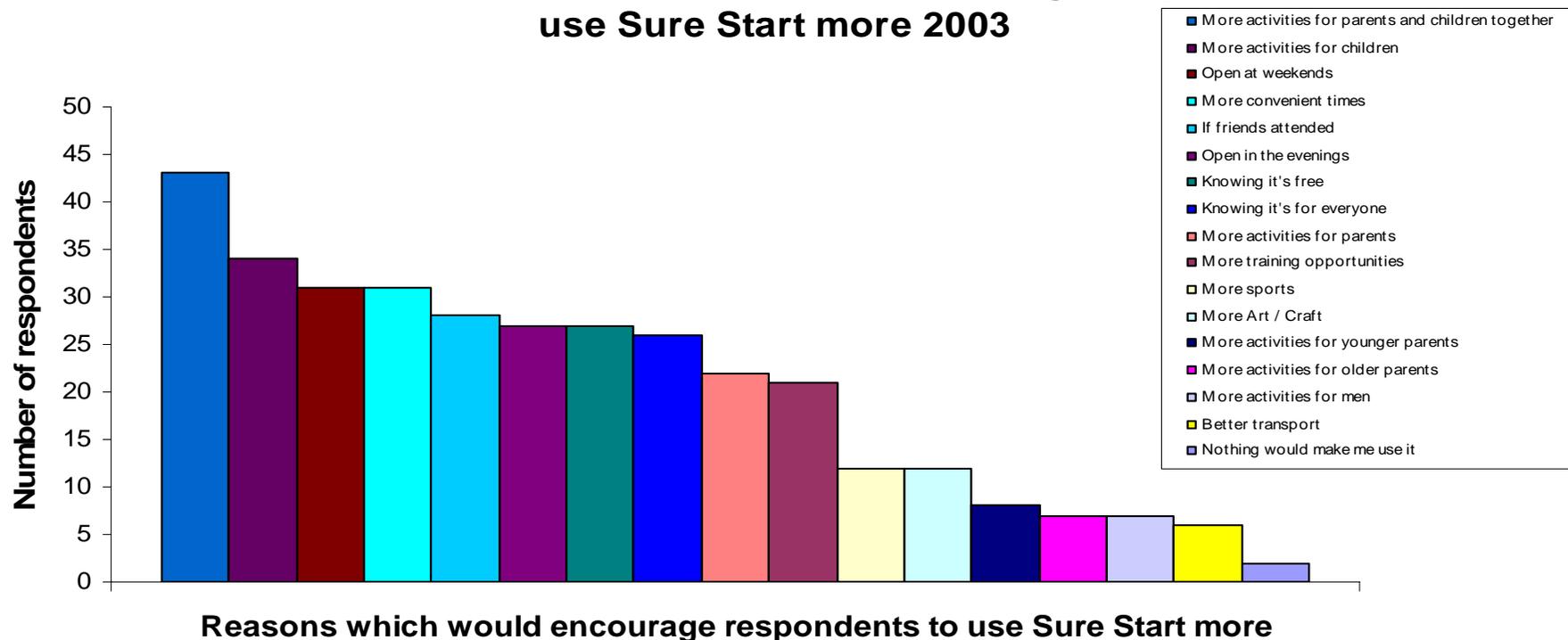
- 2003 and 2004 users displayed similar overall percentages of likelihood that they would or would not recommend Sure Start (86% and 90% in 2003 and 2004 respectively)
- 70% of 2004 users would definitely recommend Sure Start to friends. This was the highest percentage of any group
- 2004 non users were the only group who stated that they would definitely not recommend Sure Start, with 6% stating that they would definitely not

Chart to show the extent to which people agree with reasons for not attending Sure Start BBC



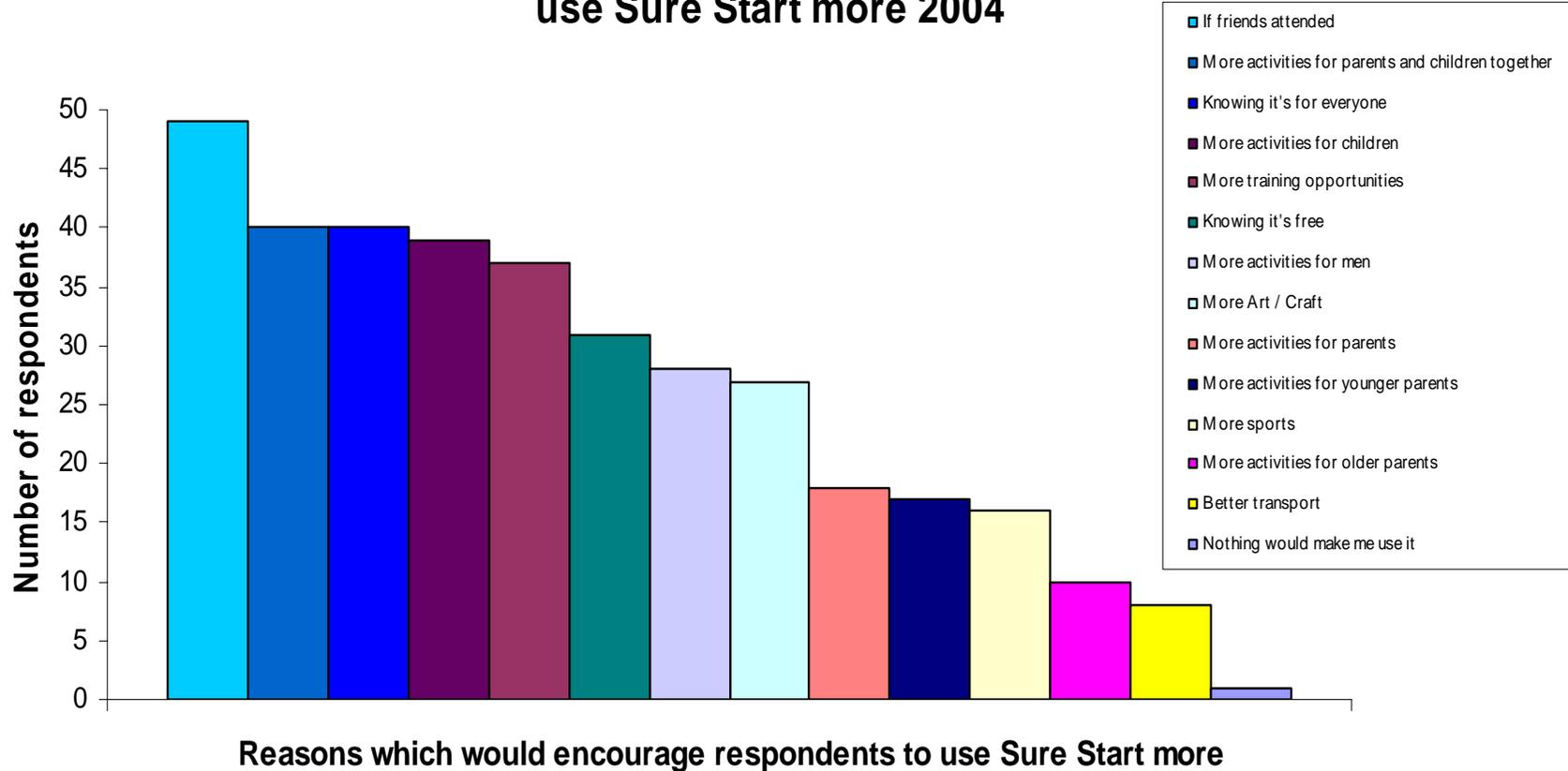
- 2003 respondents had a higher degree of agreement with reasons for not attending Sure Start with the exception of the reason of 'inconvenient times' for which 2004 respondents had a lesser degree of disagreement that this was a reason why they did not attend. Only one reason was truly agreed with however, and that was 'lack of information' which 2003 respondents generally regarded as a reason why they did not attend Sure Start.

Chart to show the factors which would encourage respondents to use Sure Start more 2003



The two years reveal similar influential factors for increased attendance (see 2004 chart overleaf). The factor cited by the largest number of respondents as one that would encourage them to use Sure Start more was more activities for parents and children together (43 respondents cited this as an influential factor). This was followed by more activities for children. Opening times were also of significance with a number of respondents stating that more convenient opening times, such as weekends and evenings would encourage them to use Sure Start more. Opening times were included separately in 2004 and were again cited as influential though to far fewer respondents, for example 6 respondents noted that evening opening might encourage them to access more compared to 27 respondents in 2003.

Chart to show the factors which would encourage respondents to use Sure Start more 2004



4.9 Achievement of the SDA Target

The annual surveys were partly devised in order to discern the level of achievement of the following SDA target:

An increase in the proportion of families with young children reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of family support services

	2003	2004
Percentage of respondents reporting an improvement in local services	58%	70%
Percentage of respondents rating local services as good or very good	57%	61%
Percentage of users rating Sure Start as good or very good	78%	82%
Percentage of users rating Sure Start as very good	38%	46%

4.10 Future Focus Groups

Surveys included a slip for respondents to complete their name and contact details if they were interested in taking part in focus groups to further discuss Sure Start and the findings of the surveys. All families in the Sure Start area – regardless of Sure Start membership and usership – have been given the opportunity to participate. It is hoped that the focus groups will provide more detailed qualitative data relating to the findings in terms of participants' opinions of the reasons for trends over time and further explanatory detail of why certain responses and ratings might have been given. Participants will also be asked to share, more generally, their experiences of and opinions of Sure Start. The following numbers have expressed an interest in taking part:

Bilsthorpe: 4
Blidworth: 13
Clipstone: 10

Focus Groups will be conducted in June and July 2005. A complete and detailed report on the user surveys and related focus groups will be made available in autumn 2005.

5.0 The Involvement of Parent Representatives on the Partnership Board

5.1 Background and methods

As part of a wider evaluation of community involvement within the Sure Start programme, the Nottingham Trent University evaluation team conducted a series of interviews with parent representatives. The objective of conducting the interviews was to record the experiences of the parent representatives and from this to make recommendations for future planning with regard to the involvement of parents in Sure Start, particularly concerning parental representation on the Sure Start Partnership Board.

All ten former and four current (2003) parent representatives were approached and asked if they would like to take part in an interview. Eight parent representatives agreed to be interviewed. This number included four past representatives and all four current representatives. Of the remaining six former representatives two gave specific reasons why they did not want to be involved. One had no positive comments to make about Sure Start and would not feel comfortable being interviewed and having to relay entirely negative comments. The other could not spare the time to be interviewed.

Interviews took place between July and September 2003. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour and took place at the homes of the representatives. Two interview schedules were created (see Appendix 2), one for former representatives and one for current representatives. Each interview was based loosely around the corresponding schedule of questions whilst giving the interviewees the opportunity to raise additional subject matter.

The interviews were transcribed between September and October 2003. Copies of the interview transcripts were sent out to the parent representatives together with forms for parents to return saying whether they felt the interviews had been recorded accurately or not. Transcripts were agreed by all the parent representatives who had taken part as being accurate records.

5.2 Demographic information

- All parent representatives interviewed were female¹².
- The ages of the representatives ranged between 25 and 39.
- Two of the former representatives were working at the time of the interview. However, none of the present representatives were in employment, although three expressed an interest in returning to work in the near future¹³. All but two representatives had worked in the past, in a range of occupations including work in the civil service, factory work, retail work, dental nursing, waitressing, horse-riding instruction, the NHS, cleaning, and leisure and tourism.
- All parent representatives had completed GCE 'O' levels, two had completed 'A' levels and two had done Youth Training. Other training and qualifications which individual representatives had undertaken included City & Guilds floristry, management training, health and hygiene certification, NVQ in

¹² No fathers volunteered as parent representatives at Sure Start BBC until 2004

¹³ Two of the current representatives have now resigned as a result of taking up employment and further study.

childcare, HNC and HND in public administration, postgraduate diploma in management studies, GNVQ in leisure and tourism and business administration.

- Two parent representatives had lived in their particular village all their lives. Others had lived in their village for between 6 and 13 years.
- Former reps had been reps for between two and 18 months. The four current reps had been reps for between four months and seven months.

5.3 Becoming a parent rep

Parents became involved in the following ways:

- Through the Sure Start Training & Development worker
- Through the Mother and Toddler group (Bilsthorpe)
- Through former parent reps
- Through answering an advert for Sure Start
- Friend's encouragement
- Putting self forward
- Parents meetings

One rep felt that a reason why more volunteers did not come forward from Bilsthorpe at the time of the first set of reps was that Sure Start mainly targeted the Mother and Toddler group, which meant that:

- (a) Few people heard about the opportunity; and
- (b) Volunteers from the Mother and Toddler group ended up having to leave the group because it was not possible to divide time (and in some cases loyalties) between the two.

The original plan was for parent reps to be voted in; however there were too few volunteers for this to be necessary.

A lot of parents would sit there and say, 'I don't like how it's being done' but unless you're there doing it and opening your mouth you can't expect anybody to take notice

Reps generally expressed the view above and gave various other reasons as to their motivations for becoming representatives. These included:

- The opportunity for a new experience
- 'Something to do'
- To gain more confidence generally
- To gain more confidence in public speaking
- The experience of sitting on a board
- The experience of selecting and recruiting new staff
- To gain new skills for CV
- To gain more knowledge about the work of Sure Start
- To get more involved in the Sure Start programme
- To help other parents (generally)
- Wanting to be more 'proactive'
- 'Having a say'
- Helping other parents to 'have a say'
- Feeling that the beliefs and values of Sure Start were worthwhile
- To gain experience relevant to career – generally
- To gain experience relevant to career – within Sure Start specifically

- To gain information and responses to parents' requests from Sure Start and the Partnership Board

5.4 Expectations

Reps generally commented that they had no idea what being a parent rep would be like, "I didn't really expect anything; it was just a way of me putting my opinions across". Once they had volunteered, however, reps generally found that expectations both from Sure Start and other parents were higher than they could have imagined. Reps commented that what was expected of them, in terms of time and effort turned out to be excessive.

Before volunteering, parents were generally unsure of what Sure Start would expect from them as reps, other than generally gathering the views of parents. One rep commented that it would be helpful if reps were told at the first meeting what was expected of them in terms of roles and responsibilities. Most reps commented that Sure Start expected too much of the parent reps, for example expecting there to be a rep present at every Sure Start event.

Reps described the expectations of other parents as unrealistically high in terms of what reps were able to achieve and how much influence they had at Sure Start. One parent commented:

I find that some parents want more than we can give. They think we can magic a wand and Sure Start'll give them a million pounds

The relationship between the expectations of parents and their subsequent general impressions of Sure Start were articulated by one rep, who noted that,

We weren't able to fulfill everyone's expectations and I think it drove quite a lot of people away from the programme

Several reps noted this association as having occurred both in a general sense over time, as certain parental expectations were not met, and also at specific times, such as the planning of a family disco in which the parent reps were directly involved, and which did not come to fruition. One rep recognized that they probably needed more support in the planning of the event.

This rep went on to make the following comment,

... If someone's having to wait 6 months down the line before they see anything happening on one of their interests, they quickly become disillusioned with it. I think when you're involved in bureaucracy you realise that it can lengthen things, but if you're actually in a community hoping for something to happen today, having to wait for a long period of time for it to happen is hard.

One rep commented that other parents seemed to understand that the sole function of the reps was simply to get what they wanted. She gave the example of parents being given free t-shirts and jumpers by Sure Start. Parents then asked the rep to ask Sure Start for shorts as well. It was felt that this was unreasonable of the parents.

5.5 Roles and Responsibilities

... It's a lot of hard work for someone to take on.

The above comment illustrates the general view of how all the reps interviewed felt about their role as a parent rep. At the same time it was felt that roles and responsibilities were not made clear to reps or to other parents. One rep noted that she had assumed being a rep would simply mean attending board meetings, but the level of commitment required was over and above what she expected. Another rep commented that Sure Start had tried to clarify roles to parent reps, but that the jargon used (particularly in written documents) meant that explanations were still not always clear.

Most of the reps explained their role as being to represent their own and others' views with a view to having some influence over the programme. One rep explained,

... It (being a rep) was my way of getting my opinions across. They're not always going to be obviously took but at least I'd got my say.

However, one rep had a different understanding of the role of the rep

All we are is the middle person to get back to the board and nothing else.

She went on to say about parent reps,

They're there to pass things on; ... they've got no responsibility, no authority to change everything

Some reps expressed an understanding of the limitations of their role and Sure Start generally in terms of Sure Start having to adhere to Government targets and requirements,

It's quite a difficult role as a parent rep, ... because Sure Start, in a way, are tied with what's required from the Government

Several reps noted how they had become 'part of the machinery' once they volunteered as a rep. One rep described the role as a difficult and bureaucratic one,

... You can lose touch with the reality of the programme by getting embroiled with the processes

Several reps noted that other parents did not always understand the role of the reps and their limits in the same way as the reps themselves, with one rep describing how parents only approached her when they wanted her to act as a go-between between themselves and Sure Start at times when they felt that Sure Start staff were not responding to their needs. An example of this would be the process of establishing a crèche for the breast-feeding groups. The rep noted that parents had felt that Sure Start was being 'awkward' and unresponsive to parents' requests and so the parents asked a parent rep to make further enquiries. Parents felt satisfied with the response which they received from Sure Start through the parent rep and which they perceived as more reasonable than the response Sure Start had given in the first instance.

Reps from Bilsthorpe generally felt that they had less of a role than reps from the other two villages. One former Bilsthorpe rep felt once the Sure Start centre opened people might become more involved in Sure Start as users, and possibly as volunteers. Similarly one rep felt that while there was already a role for parent reps in Bilsthorpe they were not currently able to fulfill this role for lack of a suitable forum to meet with other parents.

5.6 Time commitment

*Sure Start needs to look at the hours and time (expected of the parent reps).
Sure Start staff are paid for doing the same sort of thing.*

Parent reps generally described the time commitments involved in being a rep as excessive, particularly in light of the post being a voluntary one. One parent acknowledged that one reason for this might be that, whereas staff assured the reps that they only need commit as much time as they deemed appropriate, reps felt pressurised to agree to requests made from staff. It might be added that, because of the low numbers of parent reps, inevitably the time expected from each individual rep is high. One rep noted that, as a rep, you would need to devote a lot of time to Sure Start in order for your contribution to be effective in terms of having an influence over the programme. This notion begs the question, however, of whether more influence could be achieved with less time commitment.

One rep felt that one day a week or every few weeks doing Sure Start work would be acceptable and noted,

... My first concern is my daughter and if it doesn't suit her lifestyle it won't suit mine because I don't want to be working two days a week and then putting her into crèches for the other three days ...

Another rep described this attempt at balancing time spent with children and volunteering as a rep as a 'Catch-22 situation'. This rep commented that reps themselves have families, this being the reason why they became involved in Sure Start in the first place; henceforth, they have other commitments outside of Sure Start and cannot always be expected to fulfil the wishes of Sure Start.

One current rep found she was accessing Sure Start less as a result of being a rep. Other reps were accessing the same as before. There was a general acknowledgement of the difficulty of fitting Sure Start responsibilities around other responsibilities.

One rep commented that being a representative meant that sessions were no longer as enjoyable because too much was happening outside of it for the rep to concentrate. Another rep commented that sessions were less enjoyable now because the reps were there to do a job, i.e. talking to parents about Sure Start.

All but one rep said that afternoons would be best, whereas meetings tended to be in mornings.

5.7 Publicity

The theme of publicity ran through several of the interviews. This was a subject raised by the parents themselves rather than a theme from the interview schedule. This incorporated both the publicity of the parent representatives and the methods employed by Sure Start to publicise itself and its services more generally.

Reps felt that many parents did not know who the reps were and how they could be contacted. Several reps noted how publicising the reps in the newsletter was a good idea, to let other parents know not only who they were but also what their role was and what sort of things they were capable of achieving for parents. Moreover, because of having older children, one rep felt, "I don't feel I'm very well known as a parent rep".

Reps also felt that Sure Start advertising for volunteers such as parent reps could be better, "I think it could be sold more positively in what you as a parent rep would get out of it", such as opening doors to training. At present publicity for parent reps tends to come across as what you can do for Sure Start rather than the other way round. Moreover, "there's a high expectation of parents to go out and be visual", which was not necessarily realistic.

Regarding Sure Start publicity more generally, one rep stated bad publicity as the only criticism of Sure Start but felt that now the midwives were involved publicity might be better

Even just one person can affect Sure Start's reputation. That person can tell 20 people. It's only when they tell a rep that Sure Start takes it seriously and does something about it, and that doesn't always happen. Like with the nursery. It might be the school's fault, but the parents don't care. When people¹⁴ get defensive it makes things worse. It doesn't help

They need to do something to get everyone interested, like the open day.

5.8 Support and training

All the representatives interviewed commented that support from Sure Start had been forthcoming and reliable. Parents acknowledged the Training and Development Worker as having been an excellent source of support, for example, in helping reps to prepare for Board meetings and identifying specific areas where individual reps needed to do more work. Several parents also commented that they felt comfortable to approach any member of the Sure Start team for support in relation to their duties as parent reps.

(She) is fantastic with the support, she's there every step...and I know if I get stuck with anything I can pick the phone up and ring anybody who's a member of Sure Start to talk to.

Some reps told of how they received support from other parents, although one commented that this support was not necessarily unconditional.

There'll be so much support for you (from other parents) if they're getting everything they want

It was noted that support from Sure Start staff and Board members has improved over time. Reps also commented that they felt extra support was there as and when they needed it.

I think on paper Sure Start has done what they're expected to for the reps. They have a support worker, they're welcoming, they try and make the meeting times convenient, but there is an issue with accepting criticism ...

All parents interviewed had found the training to be worthwhile and felt that having ongoing training would be beneficial. Some commented that there had not been enough training. The current reps were therefore disappointed that funding had been withdrawn for training. The parents had begun to work with the Training and Development Worker to identify the areas in which they felt that they needed more training. One parent commented that she would have been,

¹⁴ The example the rep gave was of board members becoming defensive when the issue of nursery closure was raised at a meeting

“more than capable of doing the training that we needed”. Training was to enable reps to see how to cope with certain situations and not take things personally.

Parents did note that training had added extra time to their Sure Start commitments, but all considered that the benefits of training were worth the extra time commitment.

Training alongside professional board members was felt to be worthwhile.

It helped to dispel the ‘them and us’ kind of thing; we worked in quite small groups so you felt close to the people you’d spent more time with and we got to know the types of jobs they were doing.

However, it was equally useful for reps to train on their own to resolve their own difficulties. But they needed more training on dealing with the public as well as on skills for Board meetings.

5.9 Relationships with other community groups

One rep described her relationship with a local playgroup and noted how gaining the trust of parents to voice their concerns and opinions about Sure Start was a gradual process. She gave this description of attending the playgroup:

When I walked in the first time I was like (gasp) ... I don’t want to do this, but I go up week-to-week now and it’s getting easier. They’re now talking to me of what they want ... because I felt like they saw me as somebody from Sure Start rather than a parent

The same rep commented that the group thought Sure Start was trying to take over their playgroup, but that over time the rep managed to explain that this is not what Sure Start has in mind. This was an experience noted by other reps – that of parents viewing reps as ‘part of the machinery’ rather than as an equal to whom they could talk.

One rep noted how certain other local groups have disbanded.

When Sure Start started providing an alternative free, high quality forum for play I think it caused some of the other groups to condense the days ... I did feel that was not really good because I think when Sure Start actually moves out of the area, ... there may not be a network of things in place, because Sure Start’s overtaken it and improved on it and I’m not sure that it’s sustainable really

5.10 Experience on the Partnership Board

All reps found pre-board meetings helpful. Reps noted the importance of the board meetings in order to share information but they noted some obstacles. Reps did not feel that the board was a comfortable place to discuss opinions or concerns. If something needed to be raised, reps would raise it. However, the formal atmosphere made it less easy for reps to propose anything,

It just reminds me of when you’re at work and you’re with the manager and you daren’t say anything in case he doesn’t like what you’ve said.

The above quotation displays a prevailing view among the reps of parent board members as being less than equal participants. Reps also commented on the expected level of attendance:

I don't think that the parent reps should have to be there all the time; ... it depends on what's happening ...

This rep made the point that being a rep is not a paid job so reps should not be expected to attend every time in the way a professional Board member is expected to attend.

If there's nothing where we need to make a vote I think we should have a choice not to go, or perhaps one of us out of the four goes and take it in turns ...

When reps were asked about their influence within the Board, they all understood this in negative terms, stating how they were aware they could all vote against something and because of their numbers it would not go through. No reps considered the positive connotations of collective influence, such as being able to raise an issue of importance to parents collectively.

Reps considered that a maximum of two hours was an acceptable length for a meeting.

Reps felt that expectations were high from the outset, with little time for reps to get used to their roles. It was felt that a longer and more thorough introduction period would be helpful.

Taking minutes, being the chair, putting items on the agenda: these things are good to do, but it takes time. It's off-putting when you're asked to do these things straight away.

They'll try and throw these big words at you and they think we're a bit dim.

Other reps seemed to misunderstand their role and that of the Partnership Board.

Because of the organisation that they are, they've got to have Board meetings.

Because of the law, the parent reps have got to be there at the meeting.

I wouldn't like to think I'd got to run the responsibility of the play session, because if something went wrong would I know how to deal with it?

Two reps noted that meetings could benefit from being less formal, perhaps by changing the venue to a more relaxed setting. "As long as the formalities are there and it's done properly, I don't think it matters; ... It just seems a bit stuffy; ... it's like sitting there with all the teachers looking at you." However, another rep felt that this might mean issues got side-tracked and trivialized.

No parent expressed an overwhelmingly positive view of their involvement with the Partnership Board. Comments ranged from very negative – "We just had to go to make the numbers up" - to vaguely positive – "I think a lot of people tried very hard to make sure that we were very involved in negotiations". The general view of the reps towards the Partnership Board was a negative one. The only difference of opinion was over whether or not Board members had *tried* to make the experience more positive for the reps. However, even when it was felt they had, reps considered that the efforts had failed.

I know that Sure Start have a plan, so a lot of it is around adhering to that plan.

Sometimes they (professional Board members) can speak down to you as if you don't know.

It doesn't seem as if anything really necessary is discussed.

Lots of literature to read

They do take parents views and things very seriously.

Parents should be able to attend as and when the meetings were relevant to them.

Mountains of paperwork

When specifically asked for the worst aspects of being a Board rep, parents listed

- Board meetings, especially the first meeting;
- The 'bureaucracy', for instance, "just feeling that you were part of a bureaucracy that was steam-rolling ahead and you were quite tokenistic in the process";
- Feeling as though little had been achieved;
- Getting hassle from other parents, for instance, "I'm normally pretty level-headed but it (hassle from other parents) did get on top of me after a bit".

Reps gave various solutions to some of the problems:

- Reps need more explanation before, during and after the meetings.
- "You need quite a lot of parents in attendance for them to have any marked impression on how the programme develops"
- It should be easier for an interested parent to attend a Board meeting¹⁵
- It could be possible to vote by proxy
- "It's probably worth finding out why people didn't attend the Board meetings on a regular basis to find out why parents' involvement was not as good as it should be"

5.11 The contribution of parent reps to Board meetings

One rep was asked whether parent reps have much influence at Board meetings. The response was, "We've been told we have". Every rep described their involvement on the Board as being problematic and futile in varying degrees. Several reps expressed the following view as regards involvement on the Board.

I just don't think the parent reps really needed to be there at all.

One rep expressed great disillusionment.

They (the professional Board members) made the decisions whatever. If you'd have said, 'No, I don't agree with that', no-one would have heard you, no. You were only there to make up numbers for the Board meeting, definitely.

¹⁵ One rep noted that it had taken 3 months before they could take an interested parent to a board meeting because of a bureaucratic process involving the gaining of permission from the other board members

Views were put across but they weren't listened to.

One view expressed by several reps was that meetings were not a comfortable place because professional Board members were viewed as superior.

I didn't feel that we had an awful lot of power but maybe it was just the time that we were up really.

Some reps acknowledged the efforts of professional Board members to help parents' understanding. However it was generally felt that this was not enough.

We were helped to understand some of the more complex issues, so that we felt we could input to them ... but I do feel that ... it was very tokenistic on the Board really.

Most reps stated that over time they felt more involved in meetings and more able to contribute to them, although the question of how much influence they had on the development of the programme remained unclear.

Odd people did speak but it would take time. It's not that easy when you don't know the people you're talking to. They (the professional Board members) did explain things though.

Reps tended to describe power or influence as an 'us and them' situation. One rep said that they did not know how much influence they had as parent reps. However, they noted how they had power when they voted together. It was notable that this was how the reps interpreted 'power'. They did not view themselves as having power individually, only as a group, and they viewed any power they had in relative terms to the professional Board members' collective power.

One rep noted that as a rep they personally did not want to have too much influence at Sure Start. "All we are is the middle person to get back to the Board and nothing else." However, other reps did not share this view and described an imbalance of power in favour of the professional Board members.

You've got to have a strong sense of what you want to do.

5.12 Influence on decision-making

Reps were divided on the subject of who was making decisions at Sure Start. Some felt that they had a minor or non-existent role in the decision-making process. Some reps felt as if they were ignored when it came to decision-making. When asked about the influence of the reps on decision-making one rep responded,

... They didn't really ask us.

Another rep felt that although they were involved in decision-making, their involvement was relatively limited when compared with the professional Board members.

We made decisions but some of them we couldn't understand anyway.

One rep speculated on the ambiguity of the decision-making process.

I think most of it's done behind closed doors anyway, which I don't think is a problem.

Using the example of the decision as to the destination of the Summer Trip, she commented,

Somebody's had that final decision, and it probably is (the Sure Start Manager) who's had the final decision.

This perceived lack of democracy was not viewed as problematic by the rep since they believed that reps should not get, or be expected to get, too involved in decision-making.

I don't think the parent reps should get too involved in the major, major decisions

In fact two reps gave the impression of believing that the Sure Start Manager had the final say on most, if not all, issues. One rep gave the example of devising a job description of roles and responsibilities for the parent reps as a group. The rep supposed this would go to the manager for consideration and notably not to the partnership Board or to other parents. Another rep noted on the subject of the reps influence on decision-making,

I think the Sure Start Manager had a very clear idea on how he wanted things to go

Reps emphasised the function of the Board as a decision-making body particularly in the area of finance. One rep noted, "I think they're trying to please everybody". The reason the rep gave for this view was that, if reps were too involved, they would have too much responsibility.

We're not trained to take that responsibility ... (The Sure Start Manager) and all the other directors, or programme managers, whatever, have been to college or whatever and they've got the qualifications to do that, and to do it efficiently, whereas at the end of the day we're just parents ... I wouldn't like to think I'd got to make that decision because there's always the possibility of comeback.

The rep was concerned that in the event of something going wrong the reps would have responsibility. "I wouldn't want the responsibility and everybody else's children on my conscience".

5.13 Obstacles to Involvement

Parents highlighted several obstacles to their involvement; transport and childcare were particular obstacles for Bilsthorpe and Blidworth parents.

Nearly all parents interviewed commented that the issues discussed at board meetings were often of little relevance, or seeming relevance to themselves and their role as parent representatives. A specific example which two reps noted was a Board meeting where time was spent discussing insurance. This issue was perceived as being of little or no relevance to the reps themselves. One rep commented that meetings were more useful when concerned with the communities themselves, for example when parent reps were given information about community events that they could then feed back to parents.

Some reps noted that the language used at meetings was unhelpful to their understanding of the topics being discussed. Use of jargon, for example, hindered some reps' ability to understand certain discussions which would have been more clearly received in plainer English. This was almost enough to put some reps off attending meetings in spite of their commitment to being reps.

Sometimes I think they (Board meetings) are a waste of time to go to because they're talking about things that we really just don't understand or it's all proper jargon talk and everyone knows what they're going on about instead of plain English to us.

Reps felt that the agenda was helpful in setting every item out to be worked through. Moreover, they felt that their confidence in meetings increased as time elapsed. It was notable that reps who expressed no increase in confidence had spent the least amount of time as a rep and also expressed the notion that they did not feel that they were personally suited to being a rep. Reps felt that it was also important to back each other up in the meetings.

You'll find that they (professional Board members) will try and throw these big words at us and they think we're a bit dim, and if you've got someone to back you up you feel braver of going in and arguing your point out.

Former parent representatives commented that previously childcare provision for Board meetings had been problematic. They felt uneasy at having their children cared for in a building outside of where the meeting was taking place, i.e. 'Vicar Water' day nursery. It would appear that such problems have since been rectified by the appointment of the crèche workers and play workers. One rep commented,

Since they've employed the crèche workers, I think it's brill now.

There was a feeling that extra crèche time before the beginning of Board meetings would be helpful in order to go over minutes and the agenda in case of any misunderstandings. At the time of the interviews, reps had to drop their children off at crèche just as the meeting was starting, leaving no time for discussion or clarification.

5.14 General Views on Sure Start

Throughout the interviews the reps expressed general views about Sure Start on various topics and issues.

I really think that Sure Start is a really good organisation and I believe in what it stands for.

There were a number of comments about local attitudes.

There weren't a lot bothered here at all, was there? They don't want the hassle.

People round this area; they want everything for nothing ...

They (the parents) are the first ones to say, 'Well, I don't like that'. But they won't stand up and, sort of, be counted ...

There's a lot of parents from the village that don't work, that could make time, but they just can't be bothered to make time.

The village (Bilsthorpe) and Sure Start want different things. Sure Start came into the village assuming the village wanted what Sure Start had to offer ... maybe they should have adapted what they were offering a bit.

I think Sure Start overall's been brilliant for the village, definitely

I think that people are accepting now that SureStart's got something to offer and it doesn't want anything in return

They (Sure Start) do a lot for the children and I think a lot of parents expect too much. It's a case of well, it's Government; they can pay (e.g. parents asking for clothes), which is the wrong attitude I think ...

I think the attitude with this village is well, it's here, it's there to supply us a service ... the village wants anything for nothing. (This rep suggested that parents were often not willing to compromise and meet Sure Start half way, e.g. in paying for things.)

One parent noted the difference in response to Sure Start from the three villages noting that, "in Blidworth and Clipstone it's like a really welcome thing ... but no one seems to be bothered with it round here (in Bilsthorpe)".

No one's taken any interest from the beginning and they're still not interested now.

They (Sure Start staff) think because we live in Bilsthorpe we just give (feed) them (our children) crap.

*It's (Sure Start) taken over **our** nursery.*

It's teenagers that need things round here.

Some reps described the value of the social aspect of Sure Start,

I like to have me cup of tea and me chat, and that's all it is. I go for the chat.

I think it's been good for the area for them (Sure Start) to come in. It's got a lot of parents out of the house and mixing.

Other reps described a wider value of Sure Start having a positive influence on people's lives.

Giving kids a good future, helping children out of poverty and helping them lead more fulfilled lives

Several reps noted that, whatever the value and purpose of Sure Start, there have been some obstacles in the delivery of these aims.

You try to get people to change their lives in a positive way, but they try to put middle class values on working class families. That's what they're trying to do and maybe it can't work really. People are free not to choose though.

At the time I did wonder if Sure Start was reaching the people it was aimed for.

If I had a baby now it would probably help me a lot because I haven't got my mum here so I haven't really got any family.

5.15 Communication and information-sharing

Several reps noted the importance of information-sharing so that other parents keep informed about happenings at Sure Start. One rep noted the association between parents being ill-informed and parents feeling anger towards Sure Start. The rep noted that anger directed at Sure Start had arisen on occasions, e.g. the closing of the Blidworth nursery, because parents were not kept informed. This rep commented that parents should be kept better informed, both directly through Sure Start and also by keeping the parent reps better informed to tell parents.

It's not nice when parents are asking you questions that you can't really answer.

Another rep noted how, even when well-informed, she felt under pressure not to keep other parents informed.

I found it (Sure Start) a bit secretive in a way ... I felt like I wasn't being as open with the parents as I should really be.

One rep noted how some parents could not, or did not want to, view situations from two sides (i.e. their own and Sure Start)

If there's a problem they (parents) are quick to jump on it, but they're not quick to say, well I'll try and help sort something out and it just boils down to they can't be bothered to help and they just want everything for nothing.

One rep noted how anger intended for Sure Start was often directed at reps,

If they've got anything against Sure Start they just take it out on you.

Several reps noted how bad feeling directed at Sure Start was often vented at reps by parents. One example of this was the closing of the Blidworth nursery. A rep commented,

I felt like a couple (of parents) have took it out on me like it's all my fault.

Another rep expressed the view that when reps were facing hostility from parents directed at Sure Start, Sure Start should then intervene. The rep commented that this did not always happen and the reps would get caught in the middle of disputes between Sure Start and parents.

If it's a view that parents have got, it's up to Sure Start to put that right. If they're not bothered then fair enough, let the parents think badly of them but it's no good shooting the messenger is it?

One rep felt that Sure Start could investigate grievances more thoroughly. She noted that, while Sure Start staff and Board members generally welcomed constructive criticism from parents via the reps, on occasion, Sure Start Board members' response to grievances had been,

Well, that's not our fault and you can't blame us.

The rep noted that rather than being defensive, Sure Start needed to question how they could make the parents (as well as the reps) know that it wasn't their fault and ensure that such a thing didn't happen again.

One rep felt that one reason reps were not able to fulfil their role of sharing information was due to their problematic involvement on the Partnership Board.

I don't think a lot of parents actually got to feed back to the board as much as they would have liked ... Nobody was listening to them putting their views across. We were just there, basically, to show our faces

One rep noted how other parents sometimes feel unable to approach Sure Start themselves or feel that if they do it won't yield results. However, reps are viewed as useful go-betweens in this sense and are viewed as being able to achieve results, e.g. parents' wish to have a crèche for older children at the breastfeeding group.

Sometimes you became the brunt of people's anger. If they knew you were a representative of Sure Start, if they had any issues, they'd come and get it off their chest with you.

The trouble is created for reps by inefficient information-sharing, i.e. being caught in the cross-fire between parents and Sure Start was one reason why reps chose to resign. One rep noted how another rep,

... has a lot of hassle at a time when she's reviewing whether or not she carries it on anyway...

One rep felt that since the Training and Development Worker left the reps were not being kept well-informed about Sure Start happenings.

5.16 The benefits of being a Rep

One rep noted how the experience of being a rep had given her the confidence to return to college. She also noted that if college work became too much she might have to resign.

Some of the benefits of being a representative as stipulated by the reps were:

- Learning more about the principles behind Sure Start
- Learning more about the operation of Sure Start BBC
- Learning more about the operation of the Board
- Learning more about the targets
- Being part of the interviewing and recruitment process
- Seeing things being implemented, e.g. toy library
- Being involved with the Community Chest and, "actually seeing the cash going out into the community"
- Getting back into the 'work frame of mind' after a career break
- Being able to do something for the community

Much value was placed on being able to identify parents' needs and based on that, achieving things for parents, such as getting Bilsthorpe sessions moved from the village hall to the St. Johns Centre and asking for aprons in smaller sizes for the play sessions. One parent commented however that achievements could not happen frequently because "there wasn't enough going on".

A few reps commented that they felt they had gained nothing personally although it was felt that others might gain something and should be encouraged to try. One rep commented on how her feelings that the reps were not achieving very much had led to a sense of disillusionment. "Personally, I don't think we achieved that much".

Another rep noted the importance of evaluation in gaining parents views, such as the evaluation of the Twycross Zoo trip.

5.17 Volunteering, staying or resigning

Reps generally felt that other parents would either want to be reps too or not want to be reps and there was little Sure Start could do except advertise and make their expectations clear.

Interviewees were asked why they thought few parents were volunteering as parent reps. The following reasons were suggested:

- Poor publicity of volunteering opportunities
- Lack of understanding about the role of reps
- Perceived expectations from Sure Start too high (e.g. level of commitment, time)
- Lack of confidence
- Some parents 'can't be bothered'
- Lack of incentive (e.g. monetary, interest, perceived personal gains)

One rep suggested that parents would be more likely to become reps if they were paid. She also felt that Sure Start had done all they could to encourage people to get involved. Another noted that parents will stay on if they feel that what they are doing is making a difference and that people are listening to them and implementing their suggestions. One rep felt that the best way Sure Start could encourage reps to stay on longer was to keep them informed about happenings so they could keep parents up-to-date. She noted that Sure Start took care of travel expenses and creche for the reps.

One rep expressed the general view that,

to encourage them to stay they should put less stress on the parents

Another rep noted that parents might not want to become reps because they viewed such a role as futile although the rep acknowledged that this view was changing.

They didn't want to be involved and they saw Sure Start as a programme that was going to do things to them rather than involve them, but I've been at a few events recently and I do see more people engaging with Sure Start now.

One parent resigned to go back to work, saying,

It was an interesting challenging time, but not always the happiest of times.

Another offered a general reflection of the dynamics of the three communities.

Although we were from different communities we all had the same issues I suppose because we wanted to improve the communities in similar ways. There was that feeling of separation rather than coming together as a whole, but I think people (the reps) built up trust and really got to know each other.

Some reps described having been given negative impressions from former reps about what the experience would be like. Current reps felt, however, that the Partnership Board had learned from previous experiences with reps and the situation had clearly improved. One current rep reflected on her own experience

compared to that of a previous rep. "It's changed now; they (the Partnership Board) seem to listen to you more than when they (the previous reps) were doing it. They seem to be with the parents." The same rep noted that she felt current reps had more support and that the Board members and Sure Start staff as a whole were being more 'careful' this time and that Board members were trying to help reps feel more relaxed. Parents' volunteering as reps was unsuccessful to start with for a number of reasons however the general impression is that issues were addressed and that there now exists a more consistent group of reps who are having a more positive experience as reps than their former counterparts.

6.0 The Operation of Sure Start as a Partnership

6.1 Aims and methods

Interviews were conducted with key professionals from the Partnership Board including professional partners, as well as the Programme Manager and the Community Development Worker. The objective of conducting the interviews was to record the experiences of the partners on the Board at that point in time and from those accounts determine the value added by partnership working with a view to making any necessary recommendations for future planning around partnership working.

All eight current partners were approached and asked if they would like to take part in an interview. Seven partners agreed to be interviewed. The remaining partner did not respond to the invitation.

Interviews took place between January and March 2005. The interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 1 hour and took place at the various Sure Start centres or at the work bases of the partners. Each interview was based loosely around a schedule of questions whilst giving the interviewees the opportunity to raise additional subject matter.

The interviews were transcribed during March 2005. Copies of the interview transcripts were sent out to the partners together with validation forms for them to return saying whether they felt the interviews had been recorded accurately or not. Transcripts were agreed by all the partners who had taken part as being accurate records.

6.2 Benefits of partnership

Interviewees listed the following as benefits of partnership working: maximising of resources (particularly money, expertise and personnel); avoidance of service duplication; opportunities for joined-up working; raised awareness of their own and other agencies' services and identification of gaps in services; providing a central point to work from; picking up families who might otherwise have slipped through the net; opportunities to experiment with services; networking opportunities; sharing good practice; improved data sharing; and enabling partners to focus on the outcomes of their service, because they are linked to Sure Start outcomes.

The following are areas of benefit which interviewees particularly elaborated on.

i) New ways of working

Several interviewees noted the benefit of partnership working in enabling partners to try out new ways of working. One voluntary sector partner acknowledged that initially there had been some fear that such organisations as their own might be "left behind or not valued". Another interviewee commented, "Sure Start has given us that ability to look at working differently and how those services can be delivered differently and given us the ability to do that safely because things that haven't worked we've been able to withdraw from". Others emphasised the benefits of partnership working in enabling a joined-up approach to work and improved outcomes as a result. "It is about making the jigsaw fit so that the local community get the best available services that we can offer them".

ii) Improved data

One interviewee acknowledged the following benefit with regard to data:

One positive that it has done for us is made us realise that the amount of audit and evaluation, the figures that we were collecting were nowhere near adequate to what we should be collecting and ... Sure Start arriving made us look at it and sort it to the best of our ability without the IT services because otherwise I think we would still have been plodding on.

6.3 Obstacles to partnership

Interviewees listed the following as obstacles to partnership working: lack of knowledge of other agencies, particularly the statutory sector lacking knowledge of voluntary sector agencies; lack of a common agenda; lack of joined-up thinking by government; lack of resources generally, especially money and personnel; personnel with limited outlook; lack of time (Sure Start is an add-on for most partners); lack of commitment and waning interest by individuals, with some pursuing their own agenda; lack of flexibility from some agencies, for instance, because of commitments elsewhere such as to their own agency; misalignment between Sure Start targets and those of their own agency; problematic middle management; time needed to get used to partnership working; agencies unwilling to relinquish responsibility or leadership role; geographical complications arising from the Sure Start programme covering three areas; personality clashes; lack of purpose or vision; turnover of staff and parent reps; data-sharing problems; competing not complementing each other in terms of service delivery; agencies being inward-looking; the time taken to build trust; and the struggle to keep up with the pace of change.

In addition to the obstacles listed above, interviewees expanded on particular obstacles to partnership working.

i) Lack of understanding

Although some interviewees noted improved understanding between agencies as a benefit of partnership working, there were also several interviewees who felt that a lack of understanding between agencies was an *obstacle* to partnership working. One interviewee felt however that although this was an obstacle it was much less an issue than it had been before Sure Start. "I am sure that it (understanding between agencies) is one hundred times better than what it was pre-Sure Start. They (agencies) would have had no understanding of what other agencies did".

ii) Lack of flexibility

One interviewee noted that a lack of flexibility could be an obstacle if agencies could not or would not be flexible in the tasks they undertook as part of the partnership, noting that if one agency "...just turn round and say well, no, we can not consider that because that is not what we are about, then straight away that whole issue goes down the pan". The implication of this statement is that agencies should be prepared to take on some tasks that do not link directly to their usual responsibilities in order to benefit the partnership as a whole. However, other interviewees made suggestions that this was not always possible.

iii) Lack of commitment

On the subject of commitment one interviewee noted, "...every agency is doing what they have to do and no more. They do not necessarily go that extra mile.

Other partnerships are the same; it is not just Sure Start". The comments of another interviewee illuminate a reason for this. "I guess, if you're committed to it you find a little bit of capacity. If you're not quite so committed it's more difficult to find that capacity".

Linked to that another interviewee commented, "If you can't be really clear about what difference you're going to make as part of that group you're not going to be there because you've got ten other things to be doing, so I think that is a fundamental obstacle to partnership working".

Some interviewees disputed the claims of others that partnership working had resulted in joined-up thinking and joined-up solutions to problems. They stated instead that certain (unspecified) partners are less committed than others and this has been problematic for the Board and Sure Start more generally. One interviewee remarked, "if they (partners) are not involved or do not view it (Sure Start) as important, then it has a knock-on effect for everyone else".

iv) Misalignment of targets

Linked to the obstacle of lack of commitment several interviewees noted that misalignment of targets could be a discouragement to the full involvement or commitment of certain agencies. "I suppose it's difficult for some of the organisations to see how their involvement (in Sure Start) will actually deliver what their organisation needs to deliver". One interviewee elaborated on this viewpoint by saying that the fact that targets of certain partners are more closely aligned to Sure Start targets than others necessarily results in greater commitment from those partners than from those for whom targets are less in tune with Sure Start targets.

This viewpoint was supported by comments from other interviewees including the following:

I don't think we've ever come across any situation where it's never been appropriate for our two organisations to work together and maybe that is because our aims fit in quite clearly with the aims of Sure Start under the objectives that they have.

v) Apathy or waning interest

One interviewee commented that a 'slow-burn' obstacle for the partnership is that of apathy or waning interest over time:

When things are settling down ... people take their foot off the gas a little bit ... I think in the long run it probably is an obstacle because you've got to keep at something like this in order to keep developing. If you take your eye off it for too long you can go back to the day job. You suddenly find you've forgotten why it was you were round the table in the first place and other priorities get in the way.

vi) Inability or lack of willingness to devolve power

Several interviewees noted that unwillingness on behalf of certain agencies to devolve power was an obstacle to partnership working. This point was elaborated by one interviewee:

Some of the large statutory organisations that have historically held power have had to devolve that power to partnership boards such as Sure Start which, in fact, makes it a little bit more risky because where power would have previously been maintained by the larger organisations they've had to be

more inclusive with some of the smaller organisations, and particularly around the management of money and finance and that kind of stuff.

6.4 Understanding of Sure Start's purpose

- 4 interviewees felt that other agencies did not share their understanding of the aims and purpose of Sure Start
- 3 interviewees felt that other agencies did share their understanding of the aims and purpose of Sure Start
- 2 interviewees did not know whether or not other agencies shared their understanding of the aims and purpose of Sure Start. One of these added, "I would hope that my views are not out of kilter with everybody else's but I don't know that".

i) Explanations for lack of shared purpose

One interviewee who stated that there was not a shared sense of purpose felt that this was due to the failure of some agencies to recognise the value of the less target-driven outcomes of Sure Start intervention:

It is not the families that have got real in-depth problems a lot of the time. It's just your general day-in-day-out mum and dad with their children ... but I think that is under-estimated ... All those families have had much better support in the early years and who's to say what difference that's going to make. It might not make any difference in the long term, in the educational attainment, but for the people that are living at the time in those areas it is making a big difference.

Another interviewee felt that board meetings were somewhat removed from the reality of the programme and that this resulted in a lack of shared purpose in terms of the outcomes expected of Sure Start:

I wonder how many of the board members actually know what Sure Start is about on the ground and what it's like. Have they ever been to a play session? Have they ever seen a child's face when it's playing? They'll turn round and say 'Well that is not my job' but I find it difficult to think that they can actually take on that role of champion for Sure Start without having seen that because that is what it is about. It is about the kids, and seeing them come on, and the parents and the laughing ... That is Sure Start! It seems very cold sometimes when you are sitting there in a room. No children. It's completely removed from what I see as Sure Start.

A further interviewee stated that, "I think there are board members who are all for their service and what they can get out of it and perhaps do not look at it in the same way as us". Another interviewee offered a partial explanation for this by stating that this lack of shared purpose was partly the fault of the Government for pressurising people to work in partnership when they are not necessarily committed to doing so.

Two interviewees noted that a possible solution to people pursuing their own agendas (by will or necessity) was to ensure that targets in the business plan tie in with as many organisations as possible, noting that,

If they can see that the outcome on the Sure Start agenda is helping them with their own then they'll do it! Or: if they can see that there's a cost benefit, from doing it this way, to their own agency then they'll do it!

ii) Explanations for sense of shared purpose

One interviewee, who felt that partners did generally share a sense of purpose made the following comment:

I think that we have got more in common together than we have things that divide us about Sure Start, because there is enough written and spoken about what the principles and objectives are. If you had a real objection to that you would not be sitting round the board table in the first place.

6.5 Functions of the Board

Interviewees listed the following as functions of the board: overseeing the delivery plan (including initial activation of the delivery plan and identification of a lead agency and accountable body); delivery of targets; financial accountability for the programme; provision of direction for the programme; decision-making; policy-making; receiving feed back from the reference groups; sharing of good practice; consultation with parents; overall management and governance of the programme; strategic planning; overall responsibility; ensuring that parents are involved in the programme; acting as a sounding board for ideas; information sharing; checking quality and monitoring performance; supporting parent reps and the programme manager.

6.6 Structural issues relating to the partnership

One interviewee noted of Sure Start generally, "Each bit works well (i.e. the board, the parents, the staff) but there does not seem to be much of a link between them". The same interviewee felt that it would be beneficial to have more networking between the parents, the staff and the board members, perhaps in the form of one annual networking event "...so that we are 'Team Sure Start' together and not just the parents, board and staff". A few interviewees noted that there tended to be a problem with middle management, "because it's hard to manage at that level". One interviewee suggested that more joined-up working between different local Sure Starts would be beneficial to enable more county-wide activity and planning or even to help with practical issues such as transport

Possibilities for altering the structure of the board if desirable were noted by one interviewee, who commented:

The chairing role can be taken by any member of the partnership board and now that the programme has moved on there is no reason at all why it could not be a parent or anyone else. I think in the first instances while we were all trying to make sure everything was tidy then there was a feeling that the accountable and lead body should chair it. I do not think that is necessary any longer.

6.7 Importance of inter-agency working

There was a general feeling that the Sure Start partnership is worth more than the sum of its parts in terms of the impacts of the programme on the local community, which it is felt might not have been so effective had each agency provided their services in isolation.

Interviewees considered inter-agency working to be crucial to the efficacy of Sure Start. When asked their opinion as to the level of importance of inter-agency working to the programme most interviewees responded with a very firm answer that they considered it to be "crucial" or "vital". One interviewee felt that as a subject for discussion the theme was somewhat redundant since Sure Start is already a partnership and will continue to operate as one.

6.8 Formation of inter-agency links

- Four interviewees felt that links at managerial level and operational level were equally important “neither works without the other”
- One interviewee felt that the most important links were at the top
- Three interviewees felt that the most important links were at the bottom

Explanations were given as to why links at one or the other level might be more important:

- *I think without the important links being formed at a managerial level then the operational links would not have been made, and the reason I say that is that organisations needed some kind of idea of what the expectations were of them at a managerial level before they could provide service at an operational level.*
- *I think you can have good relationships at the front end and poor relationships at the board level and it still not influence service.*

A few interviewees commented that whilst links at both levels are important, the *best* links tend to be made at the bottom since operational staff are, in some ways, better-placed to link together and indeed do link well together within the Sure Start programme.

6.9 Role of different agencies

Interviewees described a range of agency roles at various levels and areas of the programme. One partner felt that their agency did not have a definite role within Sure Start outside of their own involvement on the board. Roles of the agencies were defined as such:

- to increase capacity and involvement of the local community
- to increase capacity and involvement of the voluntary sector
- to provide evidence for mainstreaming
- to link between Sure Start and schools
- to provide a service
- to act as an advisory body within a field of expertise
- to encourage good practice with regard to clientele

6.10 Role of different individuals

Interviewees described a range of individual roles again at various levels and areas of the programme. One interviewee commented, “it (my involvement with Sure Start) is a natural link with the work that I do for the rest of the week”. Another interviewee noted that becoming a board member had widened both their role and their perspective to a more global one. One individual commented that they do not have a specific role since no specific service exists for them to link into. The same interviewee stated that, “On the board I probably feel more marginal than I ought”.

Interviewees described their various roles as individuals as follows:

- to act as a link between the voluntary sector, the statutory sector and the community
- to support operational staff
- to support parents
- to support the vision, e.g. by doing things in new ways
- to identify gaps in services
- to provide a link between Sure Start and schools
- to provide training and support for Sure Start
- to support the partnership

- to act in the interests of your agency
- to facilitate

6.11 Data-sharing

i) Willingness to share data

All respondents noted a general willingness among partners to share data, although one interviewee felt that some agencies have been more willing to share than others. A second interviewee felt that, as the accountable body, Education were probably the most willing to share data. Interviewees noted that the data shared tends to be general data, rather than specific information about individual families. One interviewee commented, "It is not that kind of initiative where it is compulsory for everybody to share information about all our families. At the moment that isn't the case".

ii) Competence in sharing data

One interviewee noted the competence of Sure Start BBC in collecting data and several interviewees noted the competence of Sure Start BBC in sharing data with its partners. One interviewee felt that data was shared much better between Sure Start and their agency than between their agency and any other agency and gave an explanation: "it is the dogmatic approach that the Programme Manager has taken to it (data-sharing) and that is why it is so good." She elaborated on this approach,

He has a clause written on his membership form that says 'I will share this information with all the partners that work with us' ... and rightly or wrongly, I do not know, he has decided that that will make it all right for him.

Two Health Service representatives noted the shortcomings of their own agencies in data collection and one commented, "that is something that, as an agency, we really do need to get on top of in order to be a better member of the partnership, a more effective member".

Two interviewees raised concerns that Social Services did not appear to get involved in data-sharing with other agencies. The answers given by the Social Services partner provided some insight into this with the representative noting that they had never been asked for any data and adding that, "I am not sure which data I would have that they would want in Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone but there is no reason why I would not let them have it ..."

iii) Protocol for data-sharing

One respondent noted a general shared understanding of a data-sharing protocol in terms of confidentiality and professionalism. However several interviewees acknowledged that data-sharing has been problematic for the following reasons:

- Partners do not understand data-sharing protocol and the protocol itself is changing too fast for some to keep up with
- Partners can be precious about their data
- Some partners' information systems are incompatible with each other or else the systems are inadequate, e.g. data input behind schedule, some vital data not collected.

One interviewee noted that for the first two years of the programme, data-sharing was very problematic for the programme as, "...people were very cautious about sharing data and breaching the Data Protection Act..." Another interviewee commented, "We have had to jump through all sorts of hoops as a partnership".

After the Government released some guidance through Cauldecott however, the situation improved and partners began to share data more, which was particularly crucial for the programme in terms of data on families in the Sure Start area which was thereafter provided – and continues to be provided – by the PCT.

The issue still seems unclear however, with one interviewee commenting, "...the Data Protection Act makes it very unclear as to exactly what information you can share with whom and, if you have to have permission from parents then in what form that permission needs to be..." Similarly several interviewees noted a general lack of knowledge about who kept what data but that this was an obstacle that was easily overcome with communication and a willingness to share.

iv) Future of data-sharing

Several interviewees made the comment that they were hopeful that data-sharing would become less problematic with the introduction of the common assessment framework.

6.12 Effects of partnership working on the ethos of partners' own agencies

Four interviewees noted that working with Sure Start had not had any effect on their own agency. One interviewee noted that her agency seemed to view her involvement in Sure Start as purely an individual contribution and that this meant that their agency was missing out by not getting as actively involved as they could be. Another interviewee had found that the ethos of Sure Start and her own agency had remained so distinctly separate that working together had been extremely problematic at times as a result.

One interviewee noted how working with Sure Start had enabled their own agency to re-examine their roles and consequently re-structure work to utilise personnel in the best way.

Several interviewees noted that Sure Start had given their agency the opportunity to experiment with new and different ways of working.

Two interviewees – both from the voluntary sector – highlighted the benefit of gaining increased opportunities to work in partnership and to learn more about other agencies. These are benefits which it is thought would not necessarily have been the case had Sure Start not been established. "It's brought us into contact with more, as I say, statutory services that we wouldn't have ordinarily been in contact with." The same two interviewees felt that their agency had probably influenced the ethos of Sure Start as well as the other way round. One commented, "We're giving added value to the Sure Start project by being part of it".

On a similar theme some partners also commented that working within a partnership has helped them to gain a more global perspective of things. "It hasn't been necessary, always, to look at the broader picture to a great extent and I think working with Sure Start has helped us to do that and will help us to move forward in the next decade."

6.13 Links between agencies

One interviewee noted the distinctiveness of Sure Start in enabling links to be forged between agencies. "... It is unique, isn't it, in terms of having so many different agencies and organisations brought together in one place."

Interviewees were divided on the subject of whether links between agencies would or should survive Sure Start. One interviewee offered an explanation as to the difference of the opinion:

There are newer members to the board that perhaps do not realise the value of the links and the information-sharing and the good practice-sharing whereas those who have done it a bit longer are well aware of that and I think actually work at keeping the links going and the information going both ways and the good practice-sharing.

Whilst this explanation may have held true for some partners it was disputed by one interviewee for whom inter-agency links pre-dated Sure Start but who felt that relationships would not survive thereafter, one reason being that their organisation would not have a role in mainstreaming so there would seem to be no real need for the relationships to survive.

i) Reasons for continuance of links

Three interviewees felt that links would definitely continue and listed the following reasons why:

- *There's been so much good work done there that we would want to keep those links.*
- *The links are still not strong and they are there still to be made stronger and to be developed. (Two interviewees made this comment.)*
- *They (the links) have got to survive Sure Start. I think that children's centres don't signal in any way an end to local governance. I think what children's centres signal is that the Government has recognised that local governance and partnerships such as ours are very effective, and particularly the role of parents on those partnerships boards is very effective.*

ii) Reasons for non-continuance of links

Two interviewees noted that relationships had existed before Sure Start. One of these interviewees commented that relationships had not been particularly strengthened as a result of Sure Start.

One interviewee felt that links would survive only *if* people are committed to the ethos of Sure Start and take on, "...this 'champion of Sure Start' kind of role". The same interviewee noted that people who have not been committed are unlikely to continue the links.

iii) Links with Social Services

A few interviewees expressed concerns that links between Social Services and the different agencies were particularly weak. The Social Services representative responded to this through some comments in their interview wherein they noted that they had not been asked for any additional input in terms of personnel in the programme. This might go some way to explaining why links between Sure Start and Social Services appear weak, since other agencies might have more than one person to link in with the programme and might do that at an operational as well as at a board level whereas the link with Social Services is principally through one

person whose involvement is chiefly as a partner on the board but for whom no service level agreement exists. That is not to make the recommendation that more Social Services personnel should be introduced, but to highlight the practical limitations of the Social Services role within the programme.

As another interviewee stated more generally, "...to some extent it has been easier for people with service level agreements to gain an understanding of what Sure Start does than it has for Sure Start to always be fully aware of what the partners do so that could have been an obstacle; it is something we have all worked on but it could have been an obstacle".

6.14 Primary accountability

The majority of interviewees felt that they were primarily accountable to their own agency but were also accountable to Sure Start. One interviewee felt that they were primarily accountable to Sure Start and one interviewee felt that they were accountable to both Sure Start and their own agency equally. The general opinion was summed up by one interviewee who noted that their primary accountability was to their own agency, "... but when I sit on the board and make decisions those decisions that time is definitely Sure Start". Interviewees generally felt that being accountable to both was not problematic day-to-day but hypothetically could be an issue if a conflict of interests arose.

One interviewee commented, "They (agencies) have to be able to fit in to other partnerships and structures ... not necessarily representing the views of their own agency". However, other interviewees did not necessarily agree with this comment wholeheartedly. "We would put our own objectives first but if we are going to work successfully in partnership we have to be accountable and fulfil Sure Start's objectives which are within the service level agreement".

Two interviewees noted the importance of support for fellow board members so that they can continue their commitment to Sure Start. "It's no good sending somebody off to be shot down in flames by their own agency." The interviewee noted that if partners are well-supported by other board members the result is better outcomes for the programme since those partners are then more likely to gain support and permission from their own agencies to get involved in pieces of work that might go beyond their individual or agency remit *if* they can illustrate to their own agencies that they have the support of the rest of the Sure Start Board in the sense of, 'Well; if we do this then Education (for example) have said that they will put this into it...'

6.15 Role of the parents

i) Definition of roles

The subject of the role of parent reps was a divisive one. Some interviewees felt that everything is as it should be in terms of the role of the parent reps whereas other interviewees felt that reps could be further supported in their role:

I don't think the role has been as successful as it might be and it might look a bit tokenistic ... You somehow feel they are on the outside rather than the centre as they should be. I think the role might need re-defining really.

Two interviewees were of this opinion. The second person commented,

I am not sure whether they have felt that they are there to represent themselves as a parent or to represent parents of the community and I think it would be one of the things that we need to get better is supporting parents to define that role.

A further interviewee felt however that further work in terms of trying to accommodate the reps would be unnecessary:

The parents are quite happy to be equal partners in this and work with everybody and I think that nettle needs to be grasped.... People might be kind of, feeling like they still perhaps have to tip-toe round them...

Several interviewees stated that they felt the role of the parents was equal to any other board member but with the following additional roles:

- To have an awareness of local needs and wants
- To feed back on reception of services by the local people.

One interviewee felt that parents might not want too much responsibility an opinion echoed by one parent rep but refuted by several other reps in earlier interviews¹⁶.

The following comment by one interviewee sums up the general view of the interviewees regarding the role of parents on the board: "the bringing of information of what the community wants and the taking back of what the agencies are trying to provide and then that working together to meet the gap, to fill the jigsaw".

ii) Contribution of parents to the board

One interviewee noted that some parents have acknowledged that they, *... found it difficult to relate what was happening at the board meeting with what was happening at the sessions because at the board meeting there is actually no, or very little, mention of what Sure Start is about. It's about the business plan or it's about what's happening at John T. Rice or it's about various problems that come up, which is right and proper, but there doesn't seem to be any through-flow up and down because the objective reference groups take on that role.*

Another interviewee noted that there were sometimes tensions between what parents wanted and what Sure Start was able to provide them with.

A further interviewee who felt that reps would benefit from further support in their role commented, "Some of the parents obviously have done a lot of homework... but some don't actually have an input at all and just sit there..."

Another interviewee expressed a similar statement but had interpreted the contribution of the parents in a different way:

They are not always the most vocal people on the board but actually leadership can sometimes be done from behind. You don't need to be in front to lead and I think having parents, who really are in touch with what's happening in their own communities, on the board means that in some discreet way, perhaps a bit more subtle than being chair of the board, they are actually able to lead the services in a very positive way.

Other interviewees had quite a different opinion however which can be summarised with the following comment by one interviewee:

The board meetings that I've been to, the parents have always been well-represented and they've always contributed in those sessions and they come across as being confident people that know what they're talking about...

¹⁶ See Section 5.0 of this report

iii) Benefits of parental involvement on the board

Several interviewees noted that the contribution of parent reps to the board and the programme as a whole is vital. One interviewee commented, "...if there's no ownership by parents it (Sure Start) will just fold".

Another interviewee commented:

I think it (parental involvement) enhances the functioning of the board and ultimately it should have a really positive effect on the services that are delivered because they are the people who can tell us which services are needed.

The same interviewee noted one benefit of having reps as being the immediacy with which partners could gain parental feedback on ideas and services:

Agencies like my own, under normal circumstances often go through questionnaires and user participation surveys to get those kinds of answers. The joy of having parents on the board is that they can say it when they come to the next meeting and that it's not just done over a long period of time through a survey which is then evaluated and everything else.

Another interviewee commented, "We are dealing with those peoples' lives not our own and it is services for them, it is their lives we are affecting, hopefully improving, so they should have a say. And it is government policy they should have a say."

iv) Improvement of parental involvement over time

Several interviewees commented that the experiences of, and the contributions made by, parent reps has improved over time. One interviewee noted, "We have got good parent support, representation on the board, and that's a completely different picture now than what it was two years ago". Another interviewee commented, "I think they've achieved a lot this year and I think it is more than just consultation and bringing to. They're part of the whole developmental process now which is great."

One interviewee noted one possible reason why parental involvement on the board was not as successful initially. "Firstly it was difficult to support the parents because there was not enough meat on the bones really (services were not yet running) ... and I thought the parents at times found the pace of that frustrating."

v) Possible explanation for differences of opinion regarding parent Board members

It should be noted that differences in opinion regarding the role and contributions of the parent reps might be due to some professional Board members having been absent at key events where the defining of the reps' role took place. The professional members who felt most confident about the contributions of the current reps were among those who were present at the Board meeting on 22nd September 2004 where parent reps shared a document they had produced with the Community Development Worker, which clarified their role and remit and which was passed by the Board at the meeting.

Similarly, one professional member who highlighted concerns regarding the need to re-define the role and support the reps further was among those absent at the Board meeting and both that individual and the other professional member who highlighted concerns were absent at the event on 13th December 2004, which was held to launch the new roles and remit.

Absence at these events might explain why some Board members were concerned that reps were not receiving enough support, and felt that the role still required defining. This was how the original group of parent reps generally described their own experiences as reps in interviews in 2003, whereas other Board members described the role of the reps as very active and noted that things had moved on since the original group of reps. This was the opinion of more recently appointed parent reps in the parent rep interviews.

6.16 Mainstreaming

- One interviewee noted that it would not be possible for their organisation to mainstream any services although it had never been the plan that they would be involved.
- Several interviewees noted that lots of services currently being provided by their agency are already being or will be mainstreamed.
- One interviewee noted that some of the services currently provided by their agency will be mainstreamed but not necessarily by their agency.

Several interviewees noted that one challenge for mainstreaming is that the cash and resources present within the partnership of Sure Start will no longer be there and there is a danger that agencies may have to revert to providing only their core services again but at the same time they will be under pressure to continue providing those services they have been providing with Sure Start. One interviewee commented, "What we will not have are the additional hours but what we will have is the way we deliver the services that have changed and they will continue to change and grow in line with what we have learnt in Sure Start".

One interviewee made the following comment regarding the involvement of their agency in mainstreaming, "... We are going to ensure that we are part of local planning groups and regional forums and things like that so that we're part of the planning for the future and make sure we don't get left behind!"

On a similar theme another interviewee noted that, with the advent of children's centres, questions of mainstreaming are not so much about individual agencies but they are about a wider vision which will still be a partnership vision. Linked to this is the view of another interviewee:

What is missing at the moment is vision to bring that strategic picture together and I think it will take an awful lot of good leadership over the next couple of years to bring that bigger picture together on behalf of the Sure Start local programme.

6.17 Challenges

Interviewees raised the issue of certain themes as being key challenges for the partnership

i) Gaps between theory and practice

One interviewee noted the existence of some problematic gaps between what Sure Start and the wider area could deliver. For example training on various health issues might be given, such as raising awareness of postnatal depression, but the wider infrastructure of the mental health services were unable to cope with the extra cases put forward as a result of raised awareness. In other areas, such as smoking cessation this was not a problem as the funding and services are there to cope with extra cases and have been designed as such.

ii) Geographical bias in service provision

One interviewee described the existence of a 'postcode lottery' as a result of Sure Start and how this can be problematic both in terms of dealing with service users who may be dissatisfied at receiving fewer services than Sure Start families and in managing staff who may be dissatisfied at being provided with less sophisticated resources and training than staff in the Sure Start area. The interviewee was hopeful however that this imbalance would be rectified over time: "... Obviously it's got to start somewhere and the more and more that it rolls out and as children's centres get up and running and they're more widespread then that should get rid of that problem..."

iii) Tensions between the voluntary and statutory sectors

Several interviewees acknowledged existing tensions between voluntary and statutory sector agencies. Some interviewees felt that these tensions are still present but that increased understanding of each other through working in the Sure Start partnership has led to a lessening of these tensions:

...As a voluntary sector organisation we were quite good at working with other voluntary sector organisations because we saw the value of it, whereas I think sometimes the statutory services get a bit precious about things and don't want to share information and Sure Start has helped us to do that. I think the statutory services have seen that the voluntary sectors are not just do-gooders sat in the corner; they actually have a valid point and can respond to their requests.

Discussion which took place in some interviews regarding tensions between the voluntary and statutory sectors did not in fact suggest either sector to be a homogeneous group, for example, although two out of three voluntary sector interviewees felt that there was a lack of knowledge on behalf of statutory agencies as to the role, operations and ethos of the voluntary sector. The third voluntary sector partner, when asked whether they felt that other agencies shared their sense of Sure Start's purpose, replied: "I think agencies do, *certainly* the statutory ones, and I think the voluntary ones who are part of it do..."

This evidence seems to suggest either that the two sectors could never accurately have been described as completely separate and homogeneous groups or, perhaps more likely, that working with Sure Start has indeed lessened previous tensions and divides over time.

iv) Differing expectations

Different expectations were noted by one interviewee as being a challenge:

In the early days of the partnership of Sure Start there were moments of conflict over those sort of issues (different expectations) but they are never a conflict situation now, so anything like that has been resolved during the period of time that we've all worked together and that's how it should develop, that sort of confidence with each other to resolve things not have conflict over them.

v) Decision-making protocol

One member of the board stated that working in partnership had felt somewhat contrived at times for the following reason:

... The partnership would have been more challenged had the programme hit any major trouble. I think we've been a fairly, a relatively trouble-free programme... We've taken well-prepared agendas to the partnership for often

what is felt to be rubber-stamping but I think that's testament to the hard work of the partners, the workers and the management team in the programme, that it is a relatively, and I do emphasises that word, a relatively trouble-free programme.

This would seem to tie in with the statement of another interviewee who noted: "I think a lot of the decisions around this partnership have been made outside of the board before they come here for whatever reason."

The interviewee who made this comment did not voice any objection to this set up but merely described it. The interviewee's comment and tone echoes the statement of a parent rep during an interview in 2003¹⁷ "I think most of it (decision-making) is done behind closed doors anyway, which I don't think is a problem".

The Programme Manager noted that the board had not needed to pick up as many problems (as distinguished from issues more generally) as some other programmes because, "...simply we've had a fairly stable management team within the programme who've sorted many of those problems out before they've ever got to the partnership table". This was seen as a way of protecting the board from having to deal with these problems. The Programme Manager noted, however, that a downside to this is that, "...it creates a partnership which has to do less and simply having to do less creates a situation whereby there is less opportunity for them to develop as a partnership so where it's good on the one hand it's bad on the other".

In the case of the parent reps two reps gave the impression of believing that the Programme Manager had the final say on most, if not all, issues. One rep gave the example of devising a job description of roles and responsibilities for the reps. The rep described how this would go to the Programme Manager and notably not to the Partnership Board or to other parents.

The reason why parent reps did not view this perceived lack of democracy was that they believed that reps should not get, or be expected to get, too involved in decision-making. In the case of the professional partners, although two interviewees acknowledged that some decisions were seemingly being taken outside the board that could have been taken inside the board, they did not seem to object to this, but it is nevertheless an issue which might benefit from clarification.

6.18 Recommendations

- Board to re-examine and clarify the role of the parent reps for the benefit of Board members who may have missed out on discussions of the 'role and remit of the parent representatives' document
- Board to clarify what issues partners would like to / should decide at the board and what decisions can / should be decided outside the board, for example by Sure Start management.
- Board to raise their individual awareness of the types of support other board members may need, for example in terms of personnel to get pieces of work off the ground

¹⁷ See Section 5.0 of this report.

- Board to consider further networking opportunities (e.g. annually) for Board members, possibly together with operational staff and parents to enable greater understanding and stronger links between agencies
- Board to clarify data-sharing protocol so that different agencies understand what information (e.g. stats, information on individual families) is available from where, and how or whether board members might obtain it
- Board to clarify person specifications for chairing so that those Board members with an interest and relevant specifications are given an opportunity to volunteer as Board Chairperson

7.0 Other Whole Programme Evaluations

There were two other pieces of evaluation that we have undertaken that have implications for the entire Sure Start programme and do not fit easily under any one or more of the Sure Start objectives.

7.1 Use of buildings

In Section 1.4, we gave an account of the consultation process that led to the acceptance of plans for designated Sure Start centres in all three villages. During 2003 and 2004, those plans came to fruition in Bilsthorpe and Blidworth: the Bilsthorpe centre opened on 28th November 2003 and the Blidworth centre opened on 12th March 2004. The Clipstone centre is due to open in April 2005. What follows are some figures indicating the impact of the opening of the centres on attendance in those villages, which can be seen more clearly in the graphs at the end of this report. Population statistics of families with children 0-4 in the area were derived from PCT data, and those of member families came from the SmartStart database.

Annual Use August 2003 - July 2004

Bilsthorpe attendances: 3538 (equivalent to 23 attendances per family per year or 29 attendances per member family per year)

Blidworth attendances: 3819 (equivalent to 19 attendances per family per year or 26 attendances per member family per year)

Clipstone attendances: 4442 (equivalent to 16 attendances per family per year or 23 attendances per member family per year)

Quarterly Use

August 2003 – October 2003

Bilsthorpe attendances: 754 (equivalent to 5 attendances per family per quarter or 6 attendances per member family per quarter)

Blidworth attendances: 723 (equivalent to 4 attendances per family per quarter or 5 attendances per member family per quarter)

Clipstone attendances: 927 (equivalent to 3 attendances per family per quarter or 5 attendances per member family per quarter)

November 2003 – January 2004

Bilsthorpe attendances: 732 (equivalent to 6 attendances per family per quarter or 6 attendances per member family per quarter)

Blidworth attendances: 715 (equivalent to 4 attendances per family per quarter or 5 attendances per member family per quarter)

Clipstone attendances: 1037 (equivalent to 4 attendances per family per quarter or 5 attendances per member family per quarter)

February 2004 – April 2004

Bilsthorpe attendances: 929 (equivalent to 6 attendances per family per quarter or 8 attendances per member family per quarter)

Blidworth attendances: 1025 (equivalent to 5 attendances per family per quarter or 7 attendances per member family per quarter)

Clipstone attendances: 1206 (equivalent to 4 attendances per family per quarter or 6 attendances per member family per quarter)

May 2004 – July 2004

Bilsthorpe attendances: 1123 (equivalent to 7 attendances per family per quarter or 9 attendances per member family per quarter)

Blidworth attendances: 1356 (equivalent to 7 attendances per family per quarter or 9 attendances per member family per quarter)

Clipstone attendances: 1272 (equivalent to 5 attendances per family per quarter or 7 attendances per member family per quarter)

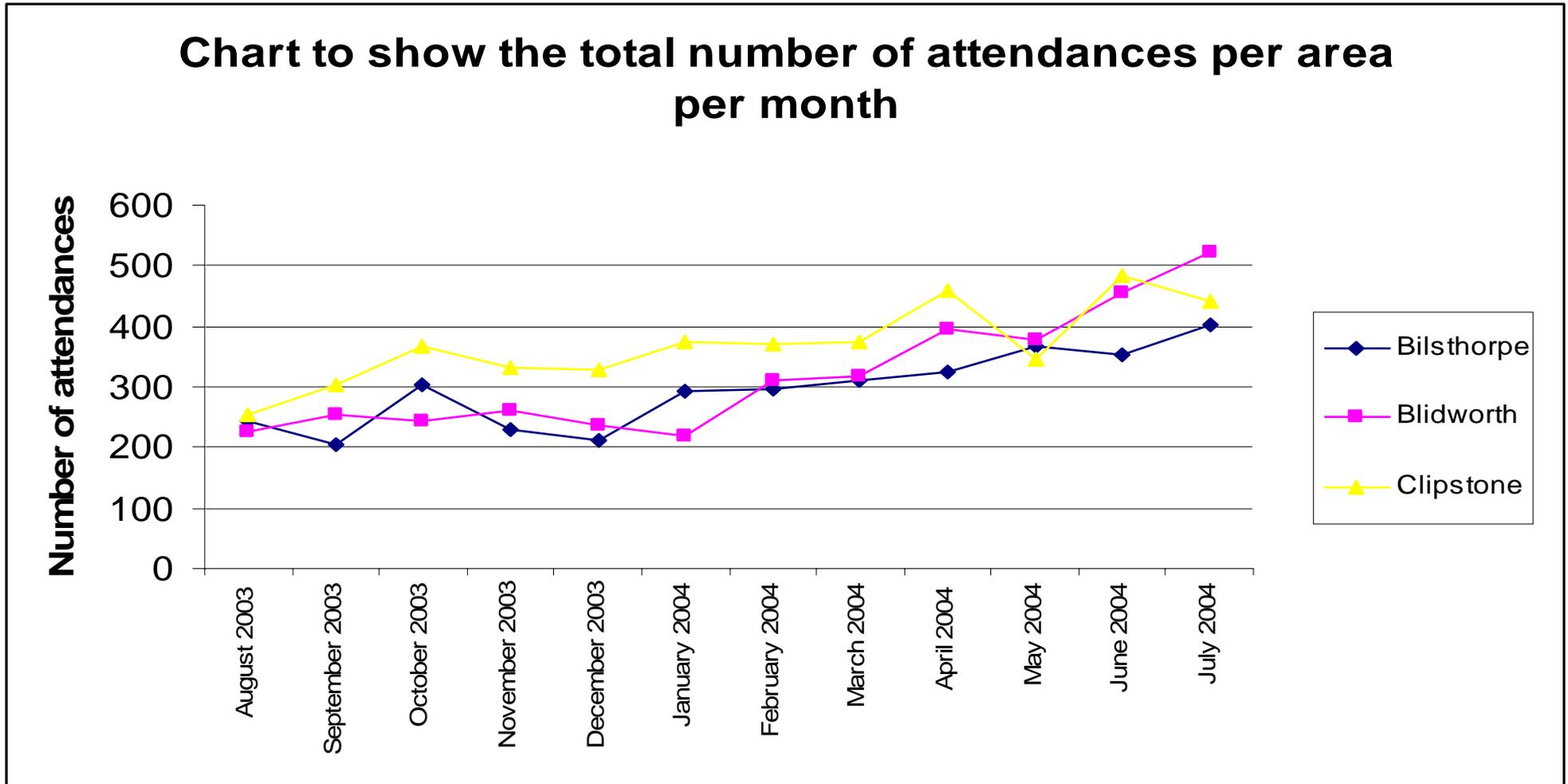
Conclusions

- Attendance at all three centres continues to increase
- Bilsthorpe was the best attended location in terms of equivalent attendance per family ratios until the final quarter when Bilsthorpe and Blidworth had equal attendance ratios
- Attendance at Blidworth rose sharply in the third and fourth quarters
- The opening of new centres had a significant impact on the level of attendance by families who were members of the Sure Start programme.

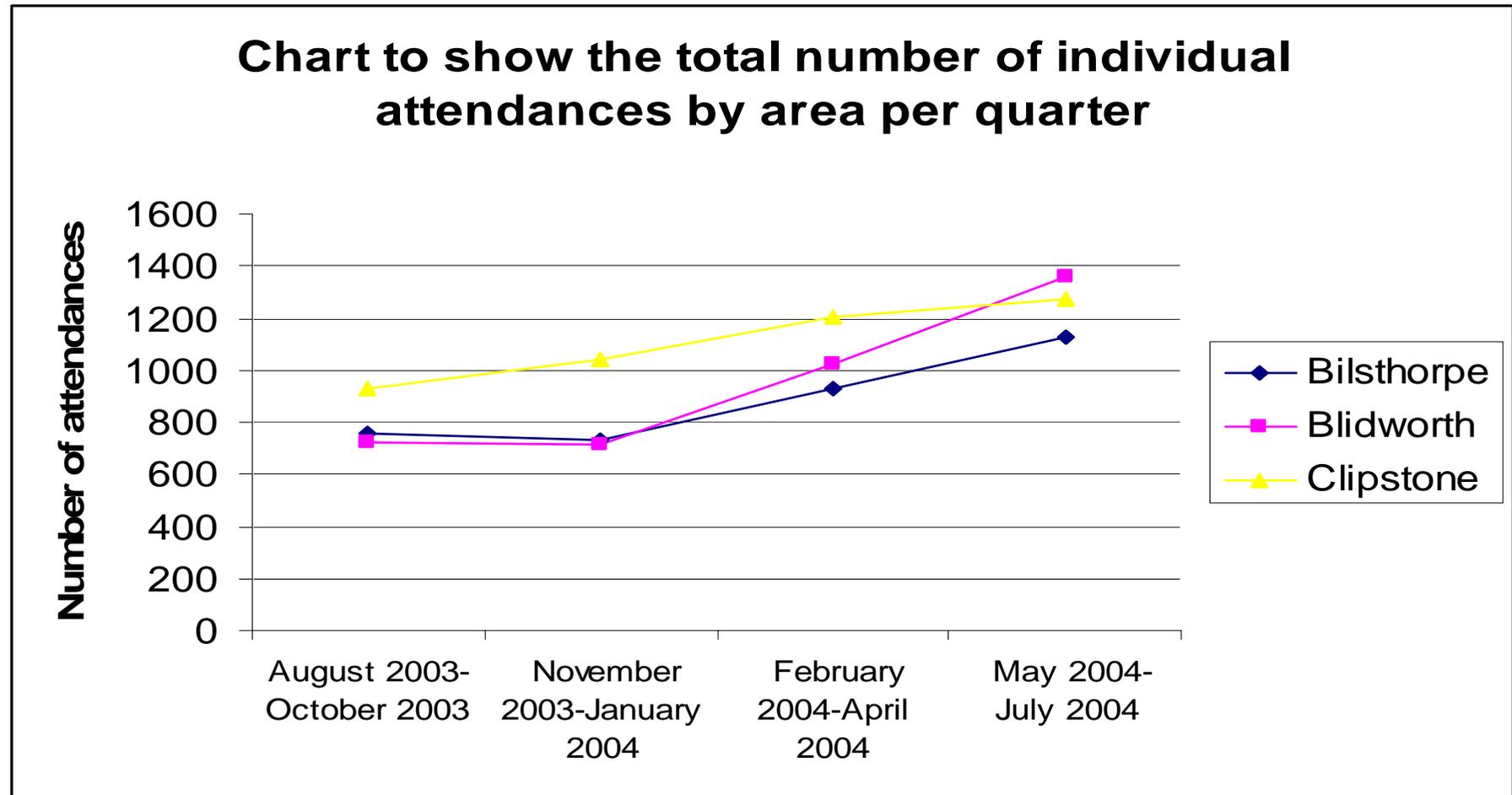
Future work

- Attendance levels will continue to be monitored and further analysis will be conducted after the opening of the Clipstone centre in April 2005

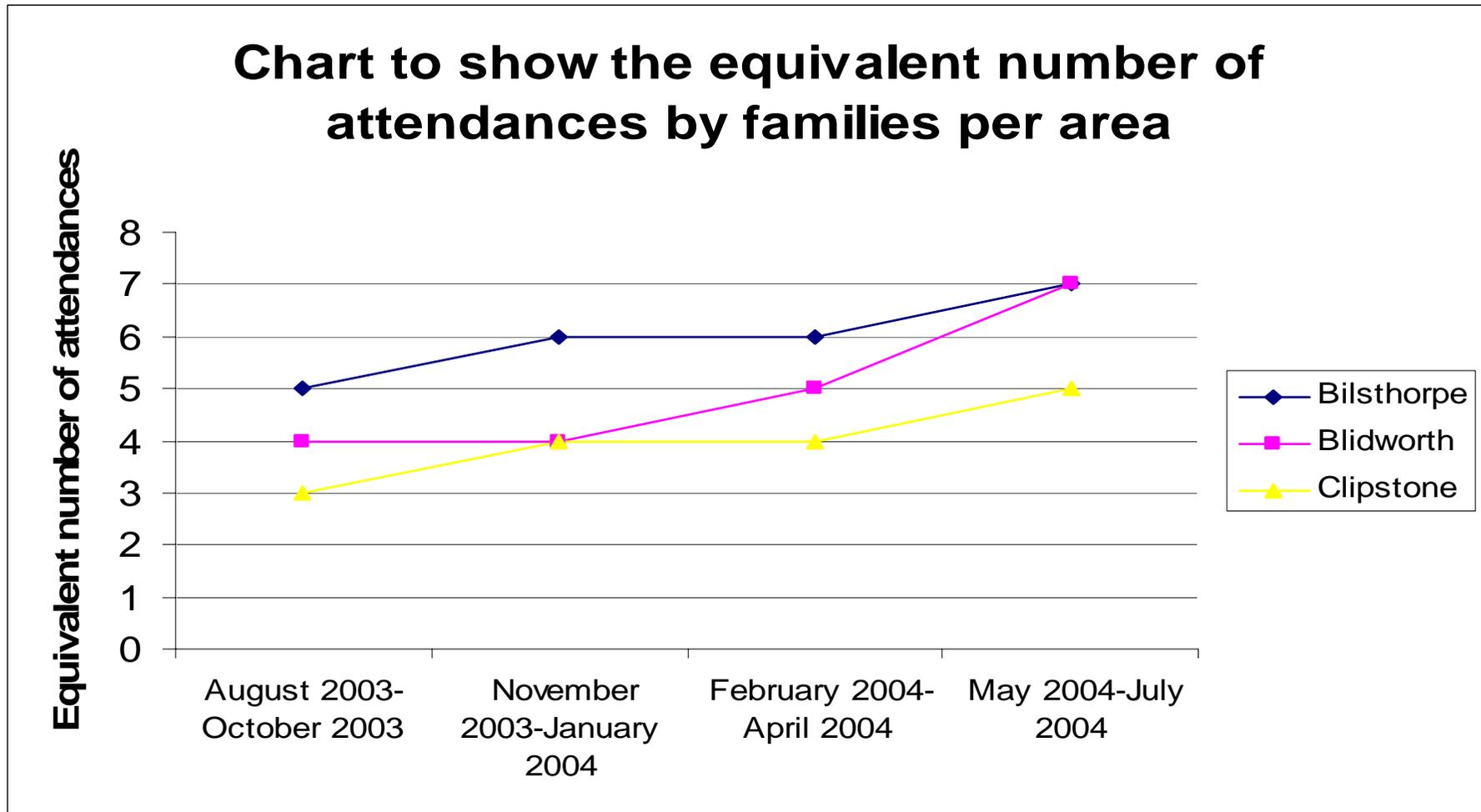
Total number of attendances per month



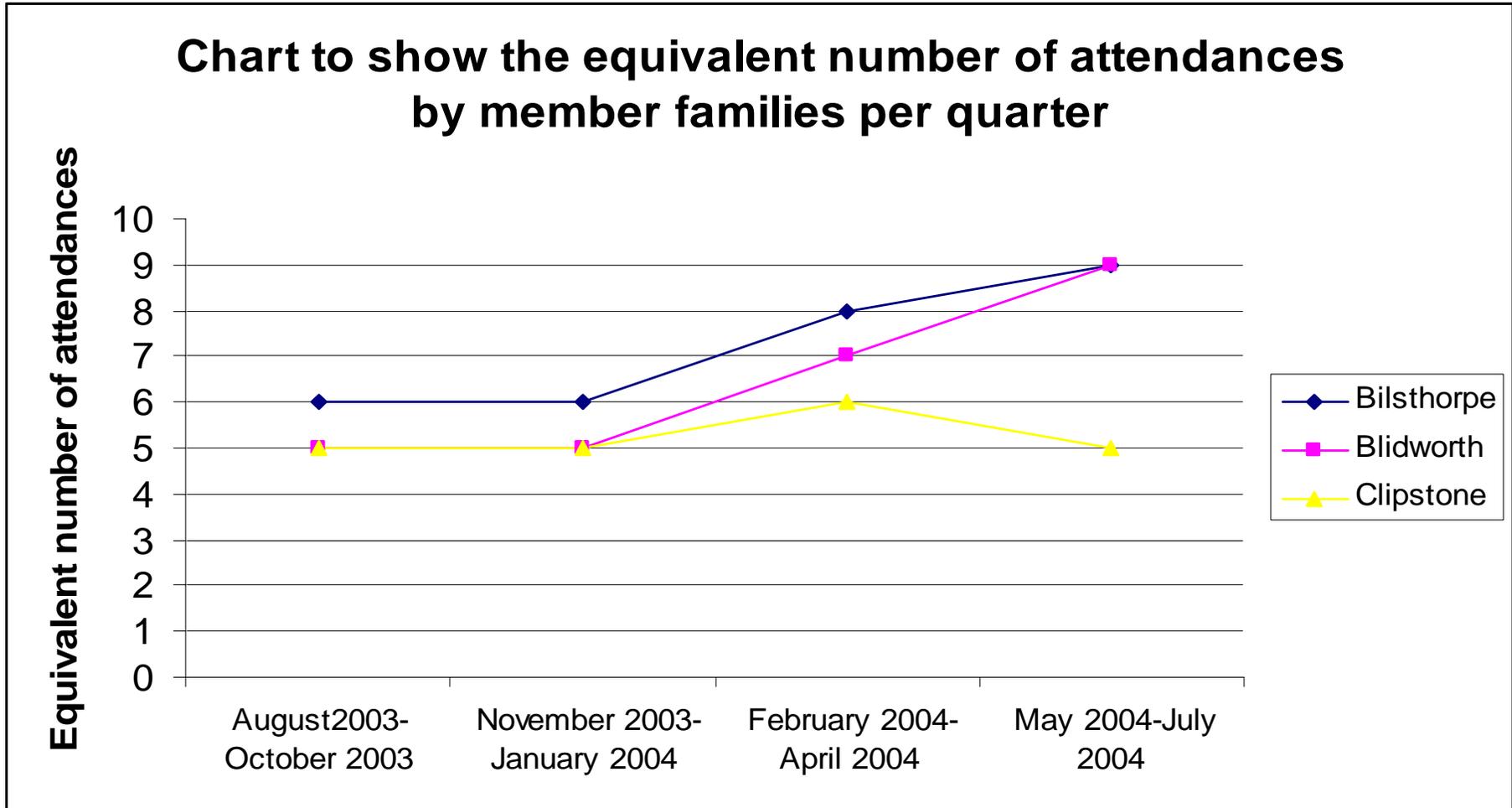
Total number of attendances per quarter



Equivalent number of attendances per family



Equivalent number of attendances per member family



7.2 The Hard-to-Reach Strategy

Background

A hard-to-reach strategy group named the 'attendance group' was formed at Sure Start BBC in the spring of 2004 to come up with solutions for raising membership and attendance levels at Sure Start, particularly for those considered 'hard-to-reach' so that more families might get to hear about and benefit from the services on offer at Sure Start. It was decided that a door-knocking event would take place at each village, which would involve staff knocking on the doors of people who were not registered with the programme or who had not attended in the last two months or more prior to the event. This was based on the model of the 'zone attack' which was devised and carried out by Sure Start Ravensdale with great success. The information regarding families who had not yet registered was provided by Newark and Sherwood PCT. The SoftSmart database provided data on which families had not attended in the last two months. Events were carried out in the three villages between May and September¹⁸

Objectives

The objectives of the event, as defined by team members during a team meeting¹⁹ were as follows:

- To reach people whom the programme might not normally reach because of publicity methods or perceptions and experiences of the programme
- To find out the reasons why people are not accessing Sure Start
- To raise awareness of the programme and its services
- To 'put a face' to the Sure Start name and make it more personal
- To dispel any negative perceptions relating to Social Services
- To help parents understand that Sure Start is for everyone
- To break down barriers
- To 'break the ice', i.e. to enable parents to talk to team members and put faces to names etc.
- To publicise services available
- To publicise services which might be missed using the more usual publicity routes (e.g. school, doctor)
- To test the effectiveness of this kind of promotion, i.e. door-knocking

Evaluation of the first contact event

Team members expressed a need to evaluate the event and its outcomes in order to test the effectiveness of the exercise and to learn lessons for future promotion activities. A focus group was held with staff after the first event, which took place at Bilsthorpe, to see whether staff felt that objectives had been achieved. Staff generally felt positive about the event and felt that it had achieved the objectives as best it could. These were the main discussion points from the focus group.

Regarding the receptiveness of families to the event,

- Families were friendly and receptive to the activity
- Goodie bags worked well as they helped to facilitate the ice-breaking process and constituted a thank-you for the parents' time

Regarding operational issues,

¹⁸ The Clipstone event took place over two days after bad weather halted the first event

¹⁹ Sure Start BBC Team Meeting 22/04/04

- Working in pairs was considered to be very successful because partners could support each other and what one partner forgot to say the other could contribute.
- One staff member noted that she and her partner felt cautious when they arrived at a house which had a notice asking visitors to use the back door. Another felt that '*...you have to make a judgement call...and if you feel that you're putting yourself at risk or in danger then walk away...*'
- Interestingly, no parent asked where Sure Start had acquired his or her name and details.
- Some parents had not visited the new building and were encouraged by (enthusiastic!) staff to do so.
- The *central meeting point* was considered successful. It was both useful and reassuring always to know the whereabouts of the car.

Two unexpected occurrences that staff noted were that

- Some general members of the public (e.g. senior citizens) enquired as to what staff were doing.
- One father asked whether Sure Start helped with childcare. He was given appropriate contact details.

Recommendations, which were implemented in subsequent First Contact events

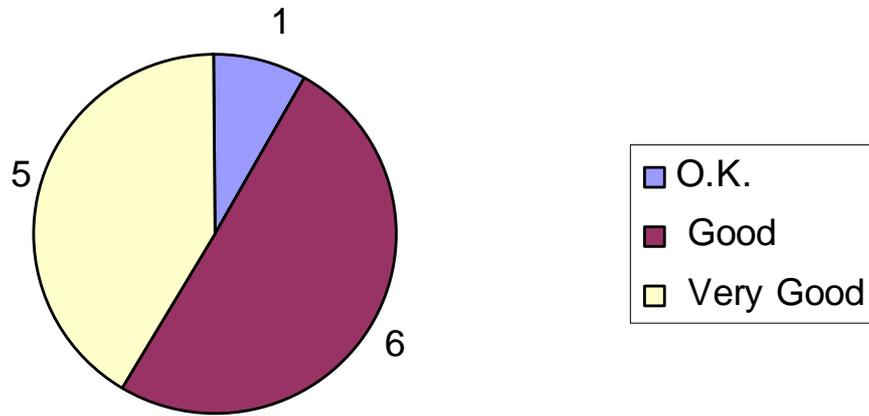
- A new calling-card could be devised for people who have already registered but haven't accessed Sure Start for a while.
- Refreshments provision for next time: it would be better to take drinks and snacks out with us so we don't get caught out.
- Having a central meeting point, i.e. the car being stationary rather than moving was useful and should be repeated.
- Care should be taken to ensure that walkie-talkies are fully charged and staff know how to use them.²⁰

Staff opinions of the event

Staff were asked to rate the event, with 1 for very poor through to 5 for very good. Below is a chart to show how staff found the event:

²⁰ At the Bilsthorpe event walkie-talkies could not be used because one walkie-talkie had not been properly charged. They were fully charged the next time!

Chart to show how staff rated the first contact event



Visitation and expressions of interest in Sure Start on the day

Below is a chart to illustrate the outcomes of the events in terms of numbers of families visited, numbers of registrations and families who stated that they were not interested in getting involved with Sure Start

	Total Number of children	Number of HOUSEHOLDS visited	Number who were in	Number who were out	Number who were specifically not interested	Number who registered on the day
Unregistered	85	34	10	24	0	6
Registered	108	62	30	32	2	N/A
TOTAL	193	96	40	56	2	6

Staff failed to get round all families because of time constraints, operational difficulties such as small numbers of staff in attendance or because it was known that certain families were not interested.

Total Group

- 50% of children were visited. Of these:
 - 42% of children were at home
 - 58% of children were not at home

Unregistered Children

- 40% of the unregistered children were visited. Of these:
 - 29% were at home
 - 71% were not at home

- 6 out of 10 unregistered children who were at home registered on the day
- 3 registered after the event

Registered Children

- 57% of the registered children were visited. Of these:
 - 48% were at home
 - 52% were not at home
 - 23 out of 62 registered children who were visited are now accessing again

Distribution of Information and Goody Bags

- 40 goody bags were given out at the events
- (approximately) 30 newsletters were given out
- 56 'you were out' leaflets were put through the letterboxes of families who were out

Registration

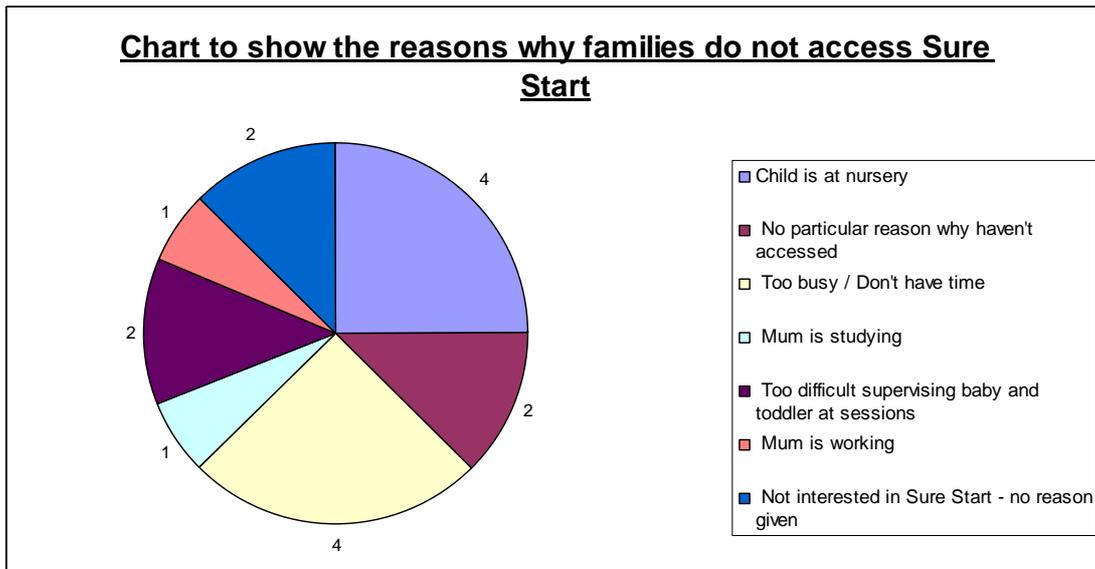
Below is a table detailing registration numbers from the day and afterwards. It is clear to see that the events made an impact even for families who were not home on the day, but especially for those who were at home to talk face-to-face with staff

	Registered on the day	Registered after – at home on day	Registered after – not at home on day	TOTAL
Bilsthorpe	1	0	0	1
Blidworth	3	1	1	5
Clipstone	2	0	1	3
TOTAL	6	1	2	9

Attendance figures

Reasons why families hadn't attended:

Most families did not offer any specific reasons as to why they do not access Sure Start, however a few families volunteered explanations as can be seen in the following chart:



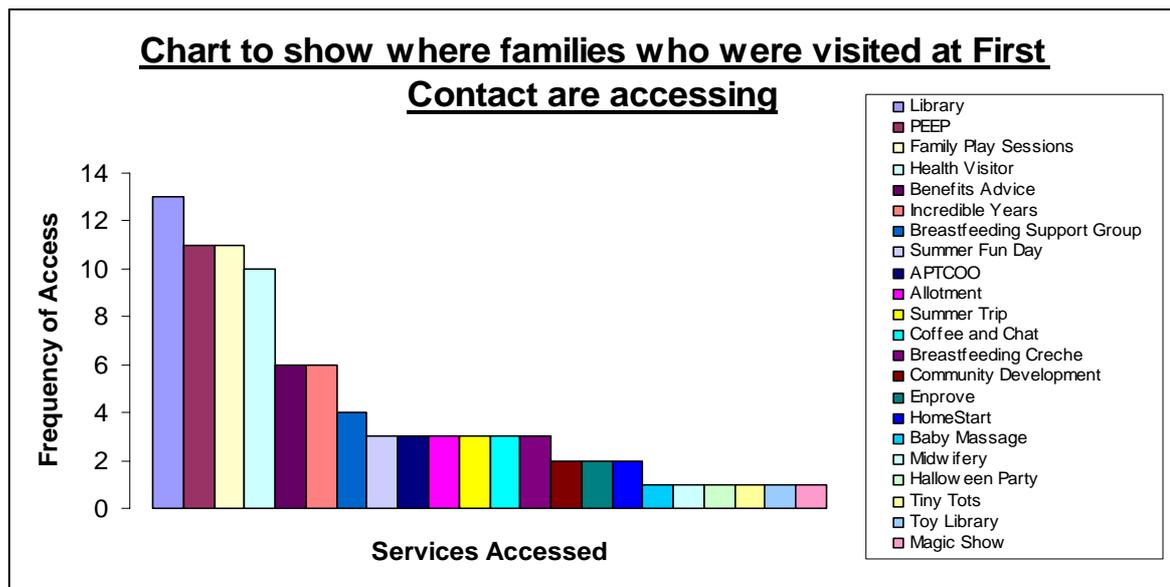
Several families expressed an interest in joining Sure Start or accessing more often, for example:

- One mother noted that she found supervising a baby and toddler too difficult during sessions but plans to attend more now that her older child is at nursery.
- One mother seemed encouraged to learn that older children are welcome to attend holiday activities and said she planned to attend in the summer now she knew that she could bring her older children along as well

Below is a table to show patterns of attendance since the event for the 96 households who were visited, 25 of whom have been attending since the event:

	Attending – at home on day	Attending – not at home on day	TOTAL
Bilsthorpe	6 (out of 16)	4 (out of 16)	10
Blidworth	2 (out of 8)	3 (out of 19)	5
Clipstone	8 (out of 16)	2 (out of 21)	10
TOTAL	16 (out of 40)	9 (out of 56)	25 (out of 96)

The chart below shows where the 25 children who registered or began accessing again have been attending



The table below details the number of times each service has been accessed, e.g. Health Visiting has been accessed 10 times which includes accesses by 7 different people (in the case of health visiting 6 people accessed once and 2 people accessed twice). From the chart we can see that some services tend to be accessed only once, or a few times (e.g. allotment) and others more regularly over a period of time (e.g. family play sessions, library). This reflects the different services provided by Sure as one-off or occasional events.

Name of Service	Numbers of Families visited at first contact who have been attending	Numbers of accesses
Health Visitor	7	10
PEEP	5	11
Family Play Sessions	4	11
Library services	4	13
Summer Fun Day	3	3
APTCCO	3	3
Allotment	3	3
Summer Trip	3	3
Benefits Advice	3	6
Breastfeeding support group	3	4
Community Development	2	2
Incredible Years	1	6
Coffee and chat	1	3
Baby massage	1	1
Midwifery	1	1
Halloween party	1	1
Tiny Tots	1	1
Breastfeeding group creche	1	3
Toy Library	1	1
Enprove	1	2
HomeStart	1	2
Magic Show	1	1
TOTALS	51	91

The figures in the table above go some way to illustrating the success of the First Contact events, with 22 services having been accessed, and a total of 91 accesses having been made in the months since the events.

Case studies

Below are two case studies exemplifying the success of the event.

1) A Bilsthorpe family was out on the day of the event but received the information leaflet regarding the event through the door. Their two-year-old child had attended fairly regularly for the first year of life, but not accessed at all for 11 months prior to the First Contact event. In the 5 months following the event, this child has been accessing frequently again, on average twice a month including play sessions, the toy library, the fun day and the summer trip.

2) A Bilsthorpe family was at home on the day of the event. Their 11-month-old baby had been registered since birth but had only accessed once. In the 5 months following the event, this family has accessed 20 times including regular attendances at family play sessions, coffee and chat and 'the Incredible Years', plus benefits advice, PEEP, health visiting and the summer trip.

Attendance statistics

- 25 out of 96 families visited are now regularly attending again
- 9 out of 34 unregistered families were subsequently registered
- 7 out of the 10 unregistered families who were at home when the event took place registered with the programme
- 2 out of the 24 unregistered families who were not at home when the event took place registered with the programme
- Of the 9 people who registered 2 have begun attending (1 at APTCOO, 1 at the allotment). The other 7 have not begun attending yet.

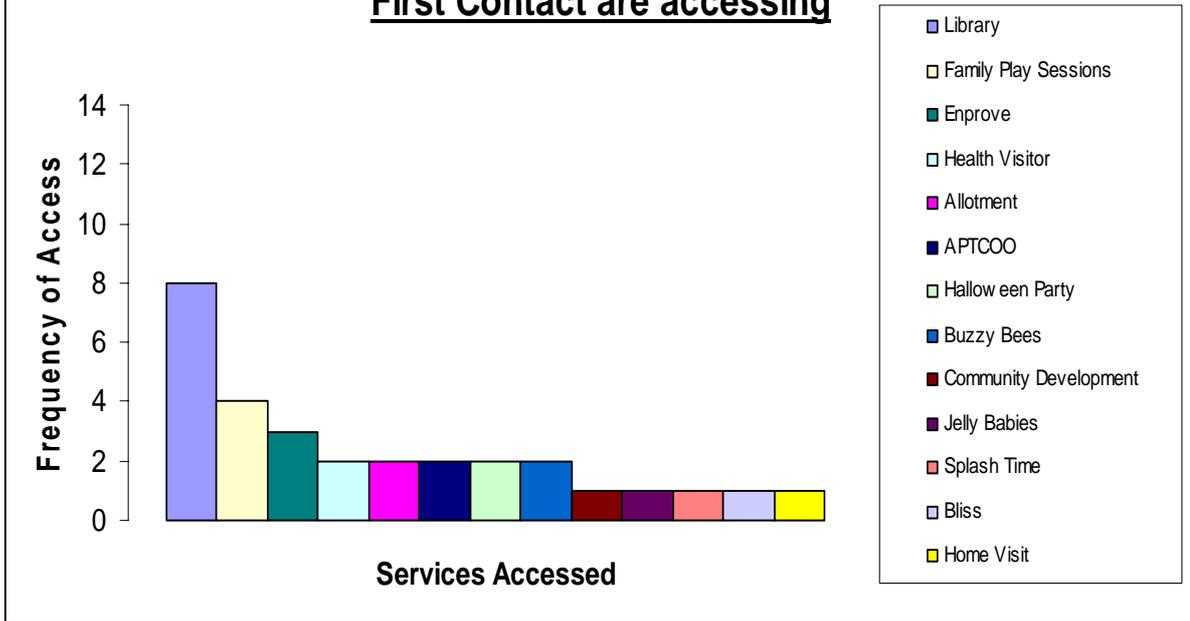
Registration and attendance by families not visited on the Sure Start promotion days

In order to verify whether families had registered or begun accessing again as a direct result of First Contact or whether they would have behaved in the same way without the intervention of the events, data on those 97 families who were not visited on the days but were either not registered or had not accessed for two months or more was examined. This group inadvertently became a control group.

15 out of the 97 families have accessed since the event. 6 out of the 51 unregistered have now registered. 4 of these have now started attending.

Below is a chart to show where they have attended:

Chart to show where families who were not visited at First Contact are accessing



Name of Service	Numbers of Families not visited at first contact who have been attending	Numbers of accesses
Health Visitor	4	2
Enprove	2	3
Family Play Sessions	3	4
Library services	4	8
APTCOO	2	2
Allotment	2	2
Halloween party	2	2
Community Development	1	1
Jelly Babies	1	1
Splash Time	1	1
Buzzy Bees	1	2
Bliss	1	1
Home Visit	1	1
TOTALS	25 (This refers to 15 families – some have accessed more than one service)	30

Out of those families who were not visited at the events, 13 services have been accessed with a total of 30 accesses of services having been made.

Comparison of services access by those who were visited and those who were not visited

Services accessed both by families visited and families not visited include:

Library services (being the most accessed service by both groups), Enprove, family play sessions, APTCOO, allotment, community development and home visits. These services include regular sessions, targeted support and targeted one-off events to which families will have received personal invitations.

Some services have only been accessed by families who were visited: Benefits advice, PEEP, Breastfeeding support group, summer fun day, Home Start, magic show, incredible years, coffee and chat, baby massage, midwifery, Tiny Tots. These services include one-off events to which families may or may not have received personal invitations, regular sessions and targeted programmes of support.

Some services have only been accessed by families who were not visited: Splash time, buzzy bees, Bliss and jelly babies. These four services consist of one one-off event to which the (already registered) family will have received an invitation, one regular group not administered by Sure Start, one targeted programme of support and one regular Sure Start session.

The value of one-off events for attracting people into the programme

- 5 out of the 13 services accessed by families who were not visited were one-off events which will have been publicised to the families by personal invitation by post (e.g. Halloween party) or face-to-face invitation (e.g. Community Development Worker). Families who were not visited did not attend one-off events to which they had not received invitations.
- 4 out of 22 services accessed by families who were at home were one-off events. 2 out of the 4 were events to which families did not receive personal invitations.
- This supports the notion that invitations for one-off events work as well, if not better than the 'face-to-face' approach of the First Contact Event for those who access less frequently, since a higher proportion of the events attended by people who had not received the 'face-to-face' approach were one-off events. At the same time there is also within this the suggestion that such individuals might access a wider range of services as well as one-off events if they receive 'face-to-face' interaction since those who did attend a wide range of regular services as well as one-off events. Also within this is the possibility that less regular attendees prefer to attend one-off events and would be less interested in attending more regular events.

Achievement of objectives

Below is a table listing the original objectives (as presented on pages 1 and 2) and comments relating to the achievements of these objectives:

Objective	Achievement status	Comment
<i>To reach people whom the programme might not normally reach because of publicity methods or perceptions and experiences of the programme</i>	Partially achieved	Due to SoftSmart data and the provision by the PCT of the list of non-users, it was possible to reach all people not normally reached by the programme; however this did not happen due to logistical problems. Only half of these people were visited and within this number 57% of registered families were visited compared with 40% of unregistered families.
<i>To find out the reasons why people are not accessing Sure Start</i>	Partially achieved	Only 16 out of 40 families who were at home on the day volunteered reasons as to why they had not been attending.
<i>To raise awareness of the programme and its services</i>	Partially achieved (outcomes good)	It can not be said that this was fully achieved since only 50% of relevant families were visited. However, all families visited received information and subsequent patterns of frequent and wide-ranging access suggest that the events were effective in raising awareness.
<i>To 'put a face' to the Sure Start name and make it more personal</i>	Partially achieved (outcomes good)	It cannot be said that this was fully achieved since only 50% of relevant families were visited. However, by the nature of the event this objective was achieved and judging by the subsequent pattern of frequent and wide-ranging access of families who were at home when visited compared to families who were out, the 'face-to-face' aspect appears to have been a successful one.
<i>To dispel any negative perceptions related to Social Services</i>	Neither evaluated nor achieved	Achievement of this objective is implied through the nature and success of the event. However, this objective was given only scant attention both at the planning and delivery stage.
<i>To help parents understand that Sure Start is for everyone</i>	Partially achieved	Achievement of this objective is implied through the nature and success of the event, although it was not specifically evaluated.
<i>To break down barriers</i>	Partially achieved	Achievement of this objective is implied through the nature and success of the event particularly in terms of subsequent patterns of increased access, although this objective was not specifically evaluated.
<i>To 'break the ice', i.e. so parents talk to team members, put faces to names etc.</i>	Partially achieved	It cannot be said that this was fully achieved since only 50% of relevant families were visited. However, subsequent patterns of registration of families who were at home when visited compared to families who were out suggest that this objective was partially achieved.
<i>To publicise services available</i>	Partially achieved (outcomes good)	It can not be said that this was fully achieved since only 50% of relevant families were visited. However, all families visited received information and subsequent patterns of frequent and particularly wide-ranging access suggest that the events were effective in publicising services available.
<i>To publicise services which might be missed using the more usual publicity routes (e.g. school, doctor)</i>	Partially achieved	Patterns of subsequent access of those families who were visited compared with those who were not show that several services have been accessed by those who were at home which have not been accessed by those who were out.
<i>To test the effectiveness of this kind of promotion, i.e. door-knocking</i>	Achieved	Outcomes have been generally positive in most areas

Conclusions

- The event achieved objectives insofar as previously unregistered children registered and registered children who had not attended for a while began attending again.
- The face-to-face aspect of the event seemed to work particularly well, since higher proportions of children who were at home on the day than those who were not either registered if they were unregistered or began accessing again if they were registered²¹. This statement is true of all areas, but more so for Blidworth and Clipstone.
- Those families who were visited and therefore got to experience the event in some capacity, whether they were at home on the day or not, have since been accessing a greater number of services and more frequently than those families who had no experience of the promotion²².
- The event worked 'best' on people who were registered but had not accessed for a while; this is the group who began accessing more often than any other. This would seem to make them the 'less hard to reach group' although, by the nature of the event, that is the desired outcome and if we compare their proportional attendance to that of people who were registered but were not visited, the event does seem to be effective in terms of reaching at least some of the 'hard-to-reach' members²³.
- The event was not effective on people who had not yet registered. After the event, higher proportions of people who were unregistered and unvisited were accessing compared to those unregistered who had been visited.

Recommendations

- The figures suggest that in future events of this nature it would be most beneficial to concentrate on those families already registered but not attending since these are the most responsive group.
- People who were not visited at 'First Contact' responded well to invitations (5 out of 13 services they accessed were one-off events compared to 4 out of 22 services attended by those who were visited). This suggests that targeted invitations to services might be an effective (and less laborious) method of encouraging less regular attendees to attend. Otherwise it may signify that some people prefer to, or are only able to, attend *ad hoc* one-off events.
- In future events it might be beneficial for staff to ensure that they enquire as to why individual families have not been attending.
- In future events staff may wish to give more attention to the objective of dispelling negative perceptions of Social Services if this remains an objective. However, staff did not knowingly encounter any such perceptions this time since the subject was not raised by either staff or parents.

²¹ 16 out of 40 who were at home now attending regularly compared to 9 out of 56 who were not at home now attending regularly

²² 25 out of 96 visited now attending again compared to 15 out of 97

²³ Unregistered & unvisited – 4 out of 51 accessing (8%), Registered & unvisited – 11 out of 46 accessing (24%), Unregistered & visited - 2 out of 34 accessing (6%), Registered & visited – 23 out of 62 accessing (37%)

Appendix: Breakdown by area

Bilsthorpe

	Total Number of children	Number of children visited	Number who were in	Number who were out	Number who were specifically not interested	Number who registered on the day
Unregistered	14	5	2	3	0	1
Registered	29	27	14	13	1	N/A
TOTAL	43	32	16	16	1	1

Total Group

- 74% of children were visited
- 50% of children were at home
- 50% of children were not at home

Unregistered Children

- 36% of the unregistered children were visited
- 40% were at home
- 60% were not at home
- 1 out of 2 unregistered children who were at home registered on the day
- No children registered after the event

Registered Children

- 93% of the registered children were visited
- 52% were at home
- 48% were not at home
- 37% of registered children are now accessing again

Blidworth

	Total number of children	Number of children visited	Number who were in	Number who were out	Number who were specifically not interested	Number who registered on the day
Unregistered	24	16	5	11	0	3
Registered	23	11	3	8	0	N/A
TOTAL	47	27	8	19	0	3

Total Group

- 57% of children were visited
- 30% of children were at home
- 70% of children were not at home

Unregistered Children

- 67% of the unregistered children were visited
- 31% were at home
- 69% were not at home
- 3 out of 5 unregistered children who were at home registered on the day

- 2 registered after the event (1 of whom was at home and one who was not at home during the event)

Registered Children

- 48% of the registered children were visited
- 27% were at home
- 73% were not at home
- 36% of registered children are now accessing again

Clipstone

	Total number of children	Number of children visited	Number who were in	Number who were out	Number who were specifically not interested	Number who registered on the day
Unregistered	47	13	3	10	0	2
Registered	56	24	13	11	1	N/A
TOTAL	103	37	16	21	1	2

Total Group

- 36% of children were visited
- 43% of children were at home
- 57% of children were not at home

Unregistered Children

- 28% of the unregistered children were visited
- 23% were at home
- 77% were not at home
- 2 out of 3 unregistered children who were at home registered on the day
- 1 registered after the event

Registered Children

- 43% of the registered children were visited
- 54% were at home
- 46% were not at home
- 29% of registered children are now accessing again

8.0 A Special Study into Breast Feeding Support Services

In addition to the mainstream support that mothers received from Sure Start midwives, there have been three further elements to breast feeding support services at Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone:

- An incentive scheme involving women being 'rewarded' periodically with breast-feeding aids for continuing to breast feed their babies;
- Breast-feeding support groups in each of the villages;
- A peer counsellor scheme by which mothers are encouraged through contact with mothers trained in La Lèche methods.

At the request of the Sure Start Partnership Board, a special study is being undertaken into the effectiveness of breast-feeding support services. Anecdotal evidence indicates that these have been popular with parents and successful, not only in increasing the level and duration of breast-feeding, but also in contributing to wider Sure Start objectives. Moreover, feedback was requested from the Newark and Sherwood Primary Care Trust, who funded the breast feeding incentive scheme for a while.

There are three parts to the evaluation:

- An in-depth analysis of the user survey findings from 2003 and 2004;
- A cost-benefit analysis of all three elements of the service;
- A comparative study between the Sure Start area and other areas, especially Newark and Ollerton, using focus groups to determine whether one of the services has been more effective than the others.

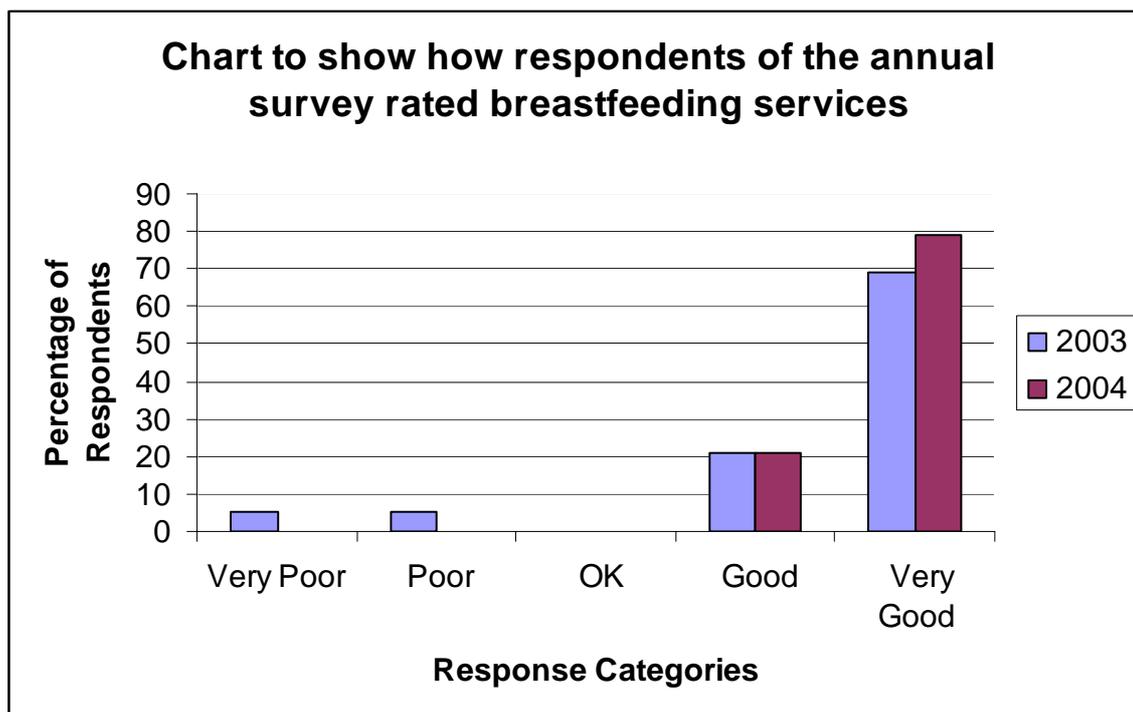
Sections 8.1 and 8.2 include accounts of the first two parts; the third is not yet completed.

8.1 Breastfeeding evaluation based on data from the Annual Survey

Respondents of the annual survey were asked several questions regarding infant feeding methods and the breastfeeding support services offered by Sure Start.

Respondents' ratings of breastfeeding support services

In both years breastfeeding support services were given the highest rating out of all Sure Start services available. Below is a chart providing annual breakdowns of respondents' opinions of the services:



As can be seen in the chart respondents' ratings of breastfeeding support services were higher in 2004, indicating continuous improvement of services. Once a value is placed to the response categories given it can be said that the mean average scores awarded to the services were 4.45 and 4.79 for 2003 and 2004 respectively, i.e. nearer 4, or 'good' in 2003 and nearer 5, or 'very good' in 2004.

Despite the absence of allocated space for comments within the 2003 user survey four respondents also made general comments relating to breastfeeding support services:

- One respondent acknowledged Sure Start breastfeeding support services as a significant factor in local services having improved more generally.
- Respondents noted that Sure Start had made a difference to their life by providing support through breastfeeding advice.
- One respondent commented that they had bottle-fed their first two children but, with support from Sure Start, had breast-fed their third child.
- Another respondent commented that they had only been to the breastfeeding support group so far, but was very impressed with the support available.

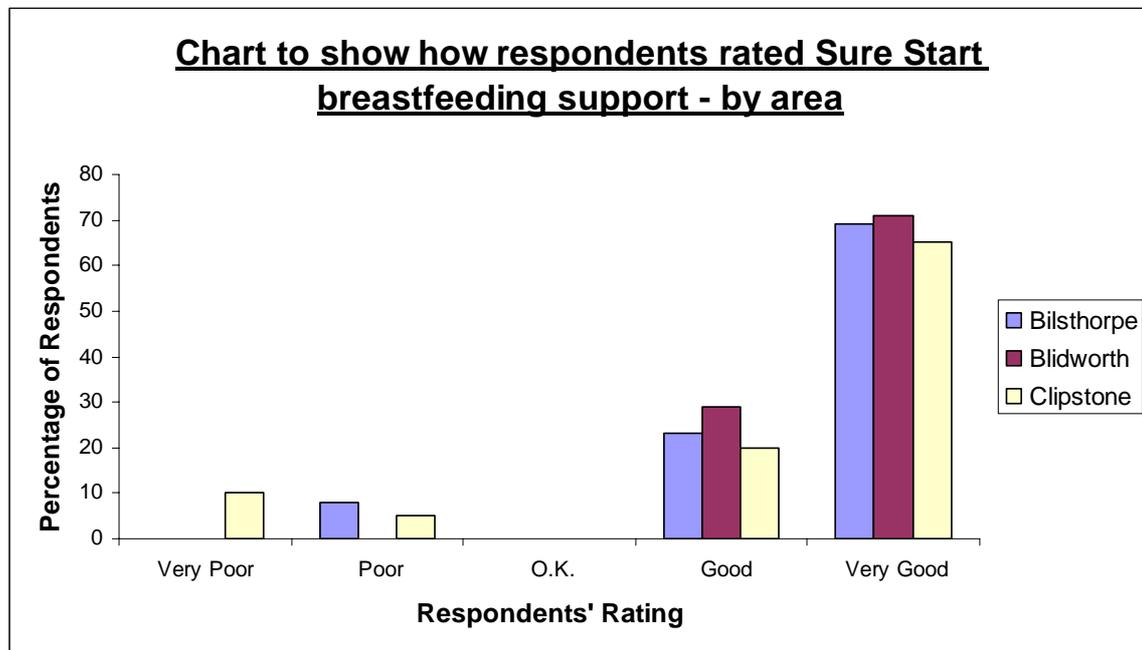
In 2004 some comments were also made:

- When asked about the various Sure Start services, one respondent commented that she found the breastfeeding group to be 'excellent'.
- Two respondents identified the Sure Start midwife as being influential in their decision to breastfeed their child.
- One respondent commented that she would have given up breastfeeding if she had not had the support of the Sure Start group.
- One respondent emphasised the incentive scheme as an influential factor in her decision to breastfeed her children.
- One parent commented on the validity and inclusiveness of the group enquiring why Sure Start does not provide any bottle-feeding groups, only breastfeeding groups.

Breakdown of respondents' ratings by area

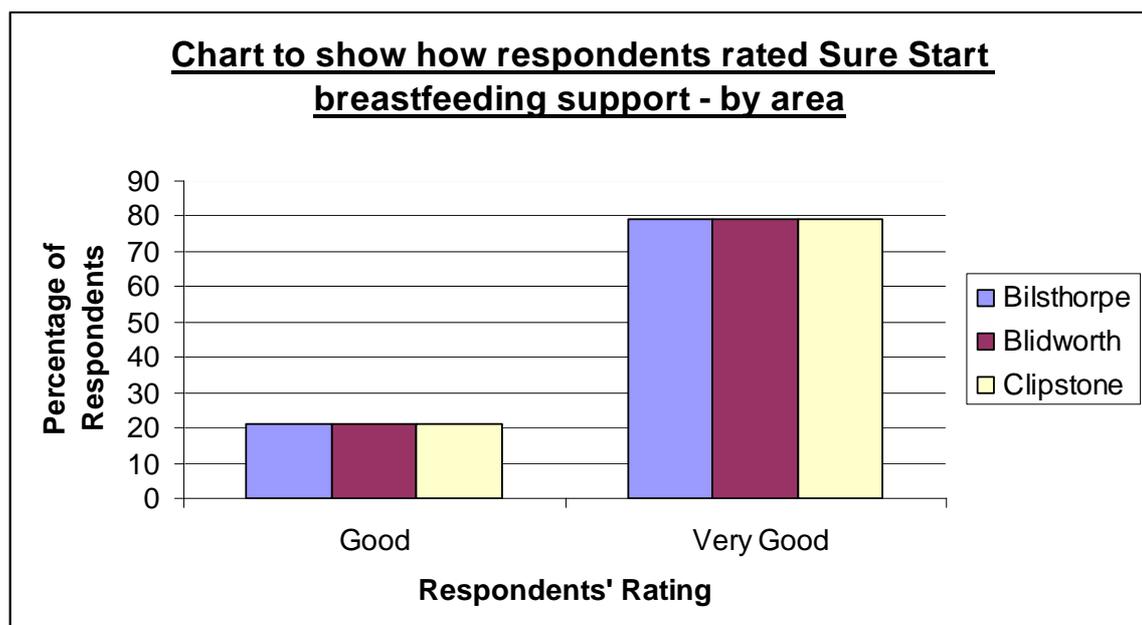
In 2003 some variance was found across the three areas in terms of how respondents rated breastfeeding support services as can be seen below:

2003



In 2004 somewhat remarkably the same percentages of respondents in each area rated services as good or very good. This indicates equality in the services delivered in the three areas

2004



Breastfeeding rates

The survey asked whether respondents had ever breastfed (one or more times). These were the results:

- In 2003 58% of respondents had breastfed. This was less than the national average of 69%²⁴
- In 2004 73% of respondents had breastfed. This was well above than the national average.

Eligibility for milk tokens

Each survey asked questions regarding eligibility for milk tokens. Different questions were asked each year however, as the second survey took into account the fact that feeding methods could vary within a family.

In 2003 respondents were asked whether they were entitled to milk tokens:

- 24% of respondents were entitled to milk tokens;
- 37% of women entitled to milk tokens have breastfed. This can be compared to 57% of women from social class V breastfeeding in the UK as a whole (Infant Feeding Survey, 2000).

Below is a table comparing breastfeeding status with eligibility for milk tokens.

	Entitled to Milk Tokens	Not entitled to Milk Tokens
Have Breastfed	37%	61%
Have not Breastfed	63%	39%
Total	100%	100%

In 2004 respondents were asked whether, if they bottle-fed one or more of their children they used milk tokens:

- 22% had used milk tokens;
- 24% had not used milk tokens;
- 54% said this did not apply to them.

The figures suggest that in 2004 fewer respondents were entitled to milk tokens, although, because the question asked about take-up rather than eligibility the figures of entitlement to milk tokens whilst breastfeeding are not known.

Breastfeeding experience of mother as an influential factor

Research has shown that women who were breastfed as infants are more likely to breastfeed their own children. The survey found that:

- 35% of respondents had been breastfed as infants;
- 57% of respondents had not been breastfed;
- 8% of respondents did not know whether they had been breastfed or not.

The figures showed the same trend as previous research:

- 81% of respondents who had been breastfed went on to breastfeed their children
- 66% of respondents who had not been breastfed went on to breastfeed their children

²⁴ Percentage of women having breastfed initially in the UK generally: Infant Feeding Survey 2000).

The figures seem to be borne out by another statistic, that 43% of those respondents who had been breastfed went on to *only* breastfeed their child (rather than mixed bottle and breastfeeding) whereas 36% of respondents who were not breastfed went on to *only* breastfed their child.

Age groups

Respondents under age 20:

- In 2003 4 out of the 10 respondents under 16 or aged 16 – 20 had breastfed. In 2004 2 out of the 4 respondents aged 16-20 had breastfed²⁵. These figures can be compared to 46% of teenage mothers breastfeeding in the UK as a whole.

Respondents aged 21 or over:

- In 2003 54% of respondents aged 21 - 30 years had breastfed compared with 66% in 2004.
- 66% of respondents aged 31 - 40 years in 2003 had breastfed. This compares to 78% of women over 30 breastfeeding in the UK as a whole. In 2004 the figure was well over the national average with 85% of 31 – 40 year olds having breastfed.
- 4 out of 7 respondents aged 41-50 years in 2004 had breastfed compared with 3 out of 5 aged 41-50 years in 2003.
- Neither of the 2 respondents from 2003 and 1 respondent from 2004 aged 51 – 60 years had breastfed.

Children born after the advent of Sure Start breastfeeding services

We looked at whether respondents with children born before the advent of Sure Start breastfeeding services (i.e. before 2002) had breastfed their children or not.

2003

Only 15 respondents could be analysed as they solely had children over 3 years of age. 43 other respondents had children over 3; however they had also had children under 3 so their responses were not useful in this sense.

Out of the 15 relevant respondents 8 had breastfed and 7 had not breastfed. No conclusions regarding the effect of Sure Start on breastfeeding rates could be drawn from this as the sample size was too small.

2004

The majority of respondents with more than one child used the same feeding method for all children. Below are the findings for those respondents who used a different feeding method for different children:

Of respondents with children born after Sure Start breastfeeding support services began,

- One switched from breast to mixed
- Two switched from mixed to breast
- One switched from mixed to bottle
- One switched from bottle to mixed

Of respondents with one or more children born before and one or more born after Sure Start breastfeeding support services began,

²⁵ There were no respondents under 16 years of age in 2004

- Three switched from bottle to breast
- One switched from bottle to mixed
- Two switched from mixed to breast
- Two switched from mixed to bottle
- Four switched from breast to bottle

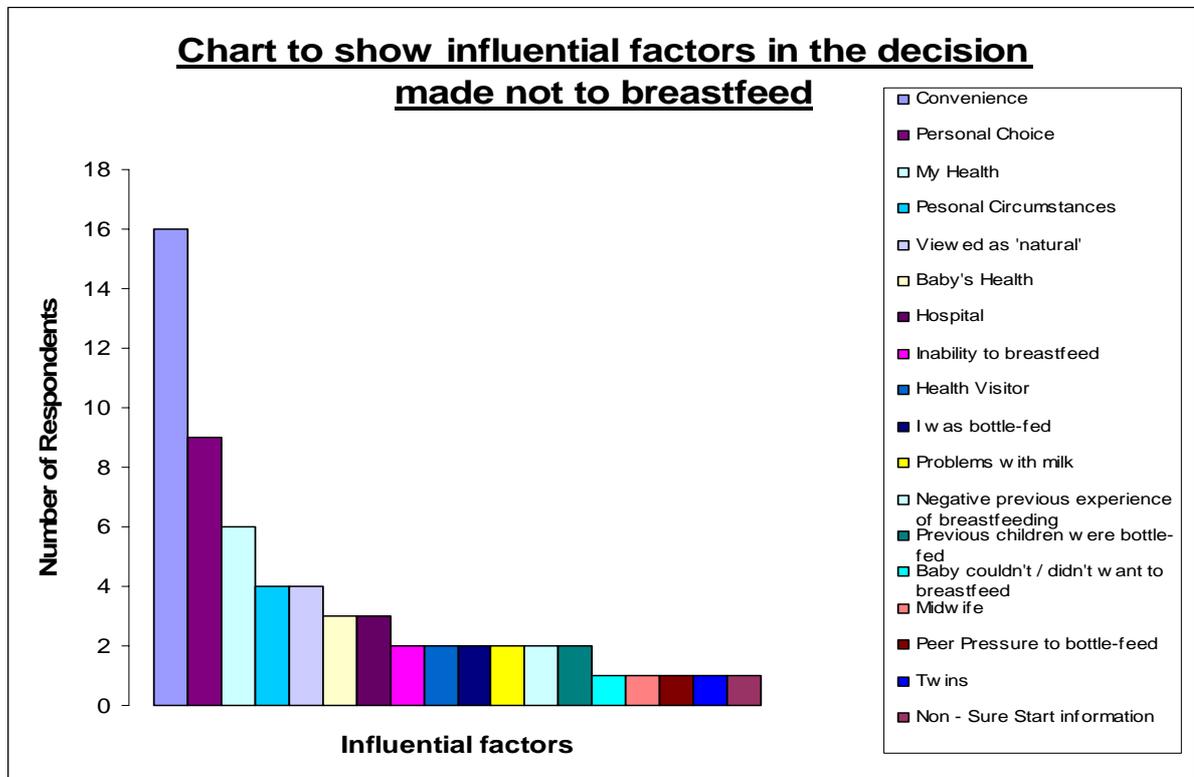
One respondent switched from mixed to only breast for 2 subsequent children but did not state the ages of her children

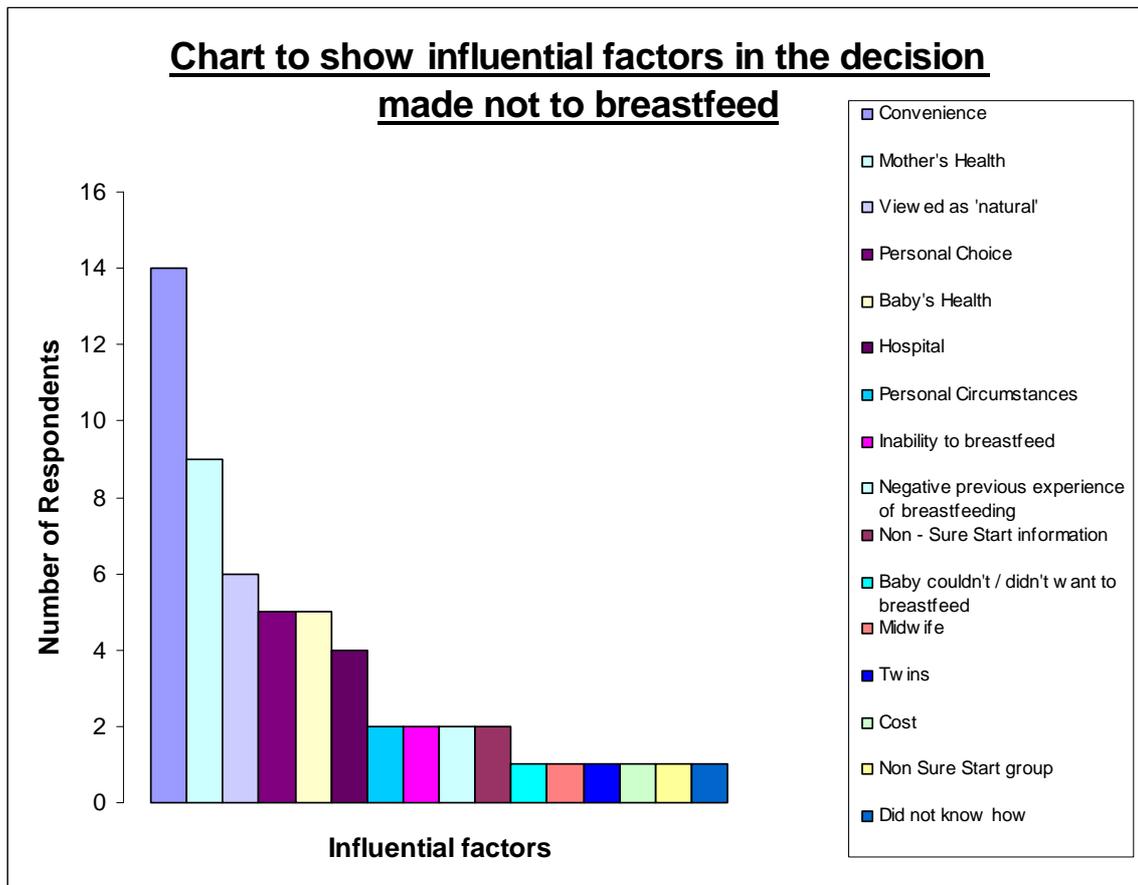
As with 2003, the findings relate to a small sample and do not suggest a strong Sure Start influence over feeding decisions.

Influential factors in the decision made to bottle-feed

The following charts illustrate the influential factors involved in the decision made to bottle-feed as asked by the survey:

2003





3 respondents in 2003 noted specific health complications as significant factors in their decision not to breastfeed, namely having pre-eclampsia and Caesarean sections.

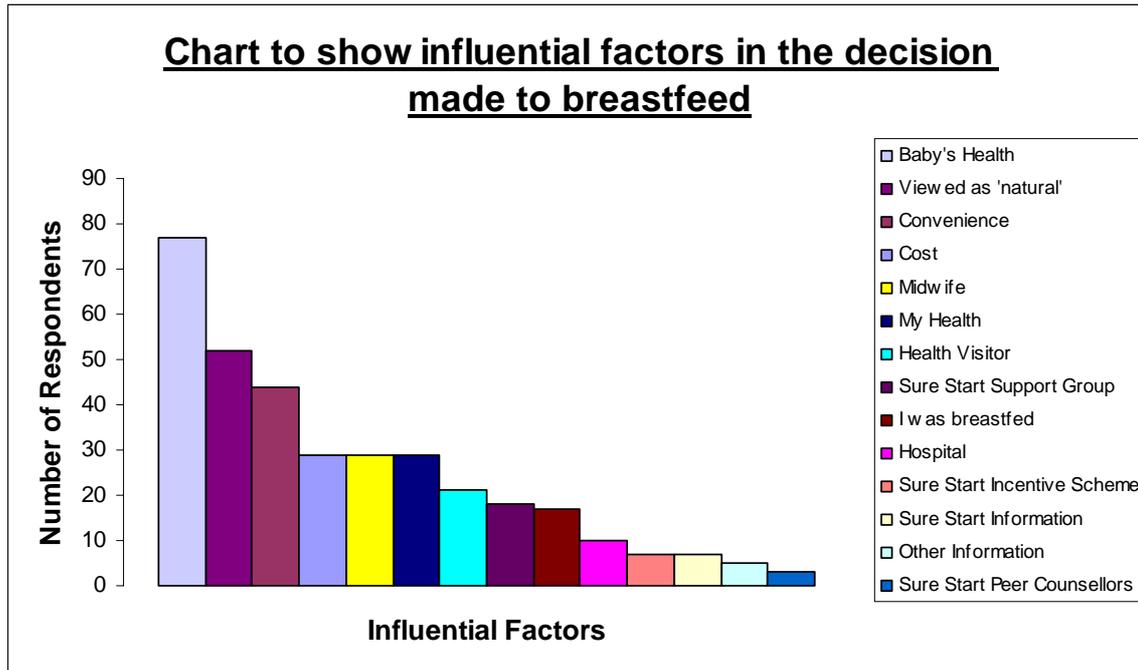
The personal circumstances noted in both years as influential factors were: being a single parent; not being able to manage; being too young and embarrassed; finding it difficult to breastfeed with an older child of 16 months.

The charts reveal similar influential factors, with convenience being the most frequently cited in both. 'Mother's health' was also frequently cited. Personal choice and personal circumstances were less frequently cited in 2004, and non-Sure Start information, such as that provided by community midwives and hospitals, was more frequently cited.

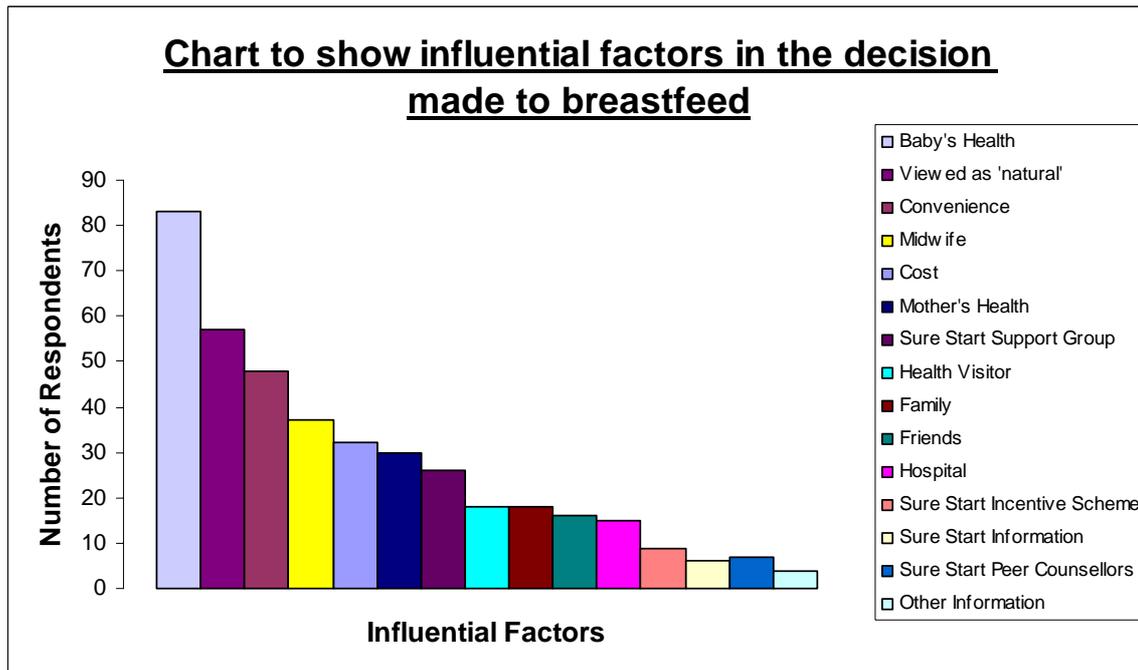
Influential factors in the decision made to breastfeed

The following charts illustrate the influential factors involved in the decision made to breastfeed as asked by the survey:

2003



2004



The charts reveal similar influential factors each year - the data may refer to the same respondents and the same children in some cases - with baby's health being the most frequently cited influential factor and others frequently cited being the view of breastfeeding as 'natural' and the factor of convenience. In 2004 a higher number of respondents noted the following as influential in the decision made to breastfeed: midwife, Sure Start support group, and Sure Start peer counsellors. In addition, the categories of 'family' and 'friends' were added, and a number of respondents felt that these were influential factors.

General comments relating to breastfeeding services

The sole negative comment received in the 2003 survey was that the 09:30 start of the Blidworth breastfeeding support group was too early in the morning for some new mothers.

In 2004 one respondent who had been unable to breastfeed noted that although this was an influential factor this was not 'a choice'. Another respondent in 2004 commented that parents seem to be judged by those around them on the feeding decisions they make, particularly those parents who have chosen to, or had to bottle-feed:

- *Mothers who bottle-feed are not thick or stupid and certainly do not have two heads! My child had to be bottle-fed due to health problems but because of the bottle I've been made to feel inadequate and embarrassed when feeding my baby!!*

Other comments relating more directly to the support services are listed below:

- *I found breastfeeding very hard at the start but had a lot of support, which was invaluable, from the midwife & Sure Start*
- *Been able to carry on breastfeeding*
- *Have found this an excellent support. I would have 'bowed' to peer pressure to go to the bottle! Have carried on to breastfeed with advice from midwife, Health Visitor and counsellors*
- *Breastfeeding support group not set up when I was breastfeeding but I think it is a very good idea and would use it in the future.*
- *Incentives really helped to acknowledge the effort I made!*
- *Currently support from Sure Start is helping me continue with breastfeeding*
- *I have been doing a breastfeeding peer counsellors course and a few of us said we wished there had been a similar sort of course available antenatally. Maybe a condensed schedule could be drawn up & run periodically through the year. That would be very helpful.*

8.2 Measuring the cost-effectiveness of breast feeding support services

Prologue

Previous research has shown that long term multifaceted interventions are the most effective way of increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates.²⁶ In the light of this, it can be assumed that the higher breastfeeding rates in the Sure Start area compared with neighbouring areas is a result of the multifaceted intervention provided by Sure Start consisting of a breastfeeding support group, an incentive scheme and a peer counsellor scheme. It should not be assumed that breastfeeding rates in the Sure Start area would be as high with just one or two of the services being delivered.

The value of each individual service will be assessed in the third part of the evaluation via focus groups with parents. The rationale behind setting up the groups is to try and determine the influence of each service on breastfeeding rates. For the purpose of the cost effectiveness exercise however, the three support services are assessed as an integral body of services assuming a cumulative effect on breastfeeding rates.

Previous research has shown that breastfeeding rates vary according to the following factors:

- Social class
- Age of the mother
- Level of education
- Use of breastfeeding support services

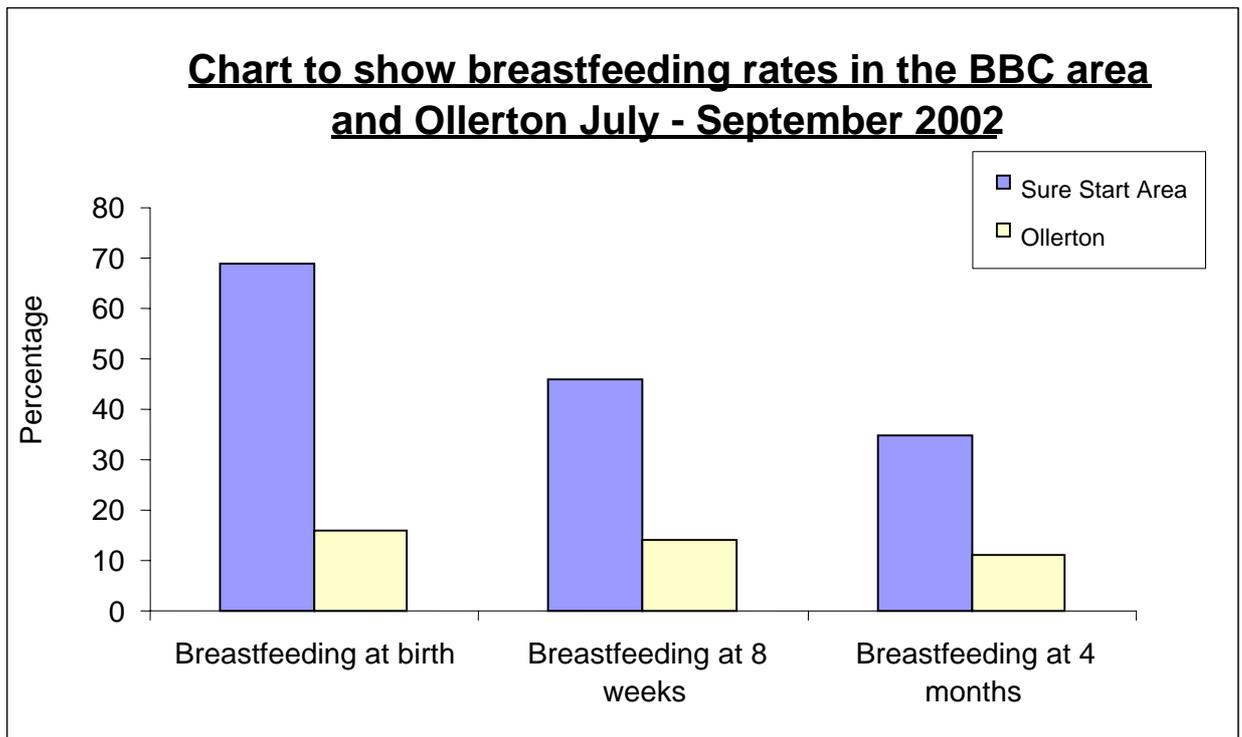
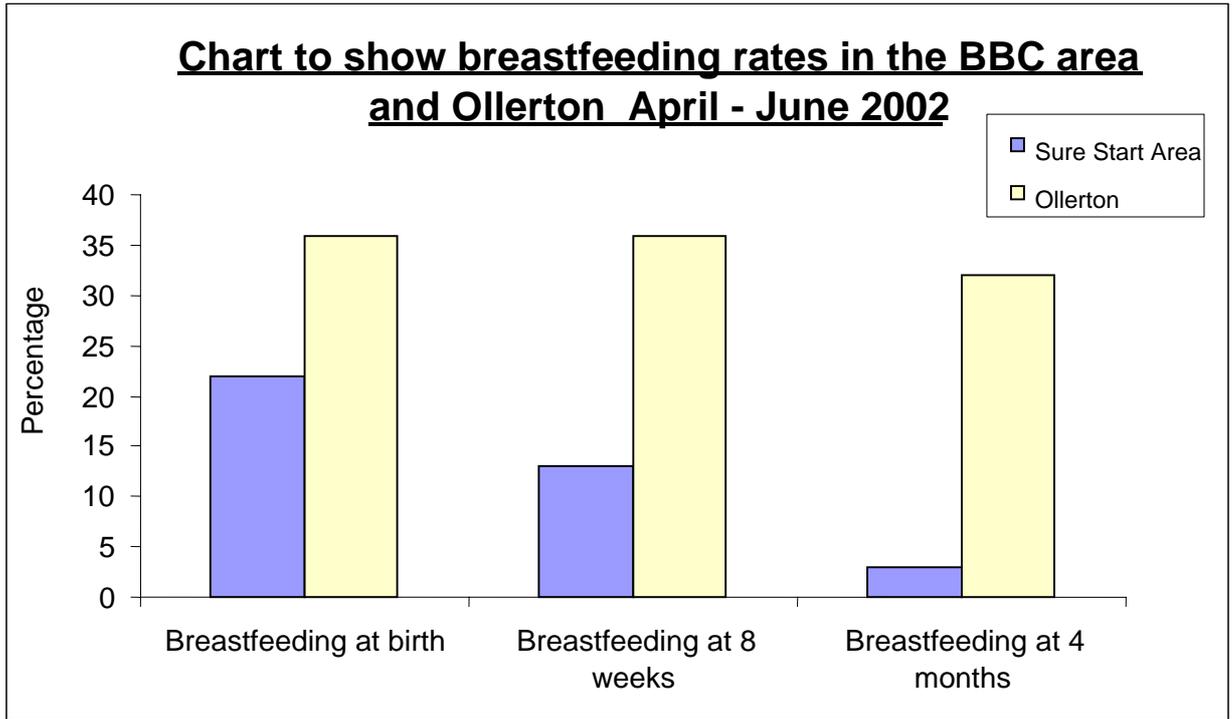
In view of this research, Ollerton was selected as an area for comparison with the Sure Start area for the following reasons:

- Ollerton is an area with no additional breastfeeding support services other than the standard midwife and health visitor support offered nationwide;
- Ollerton shares many socio-demographic similarities with the Sure Start area such as low levels of education and high levels of deprivation, these being strongly related to the afore-mentioned factors which have shown a correlation with breastfeeding rates.

Overleaf are tables illustrating a rise in breastfeeding rates in the Sure Start area after breastfeeding support services were introduced in the quarter July – September 2002.²⁷

²⁶ Couto de Oliveira 2001; Fairbank et al 2000.

²⁷ It should be noted that in terms of actual figures Ollerton is a much smaller area so data is more spurious, with the breastfeeding status of each woman having a greater effect on the overall rates than in the larger BBC area.

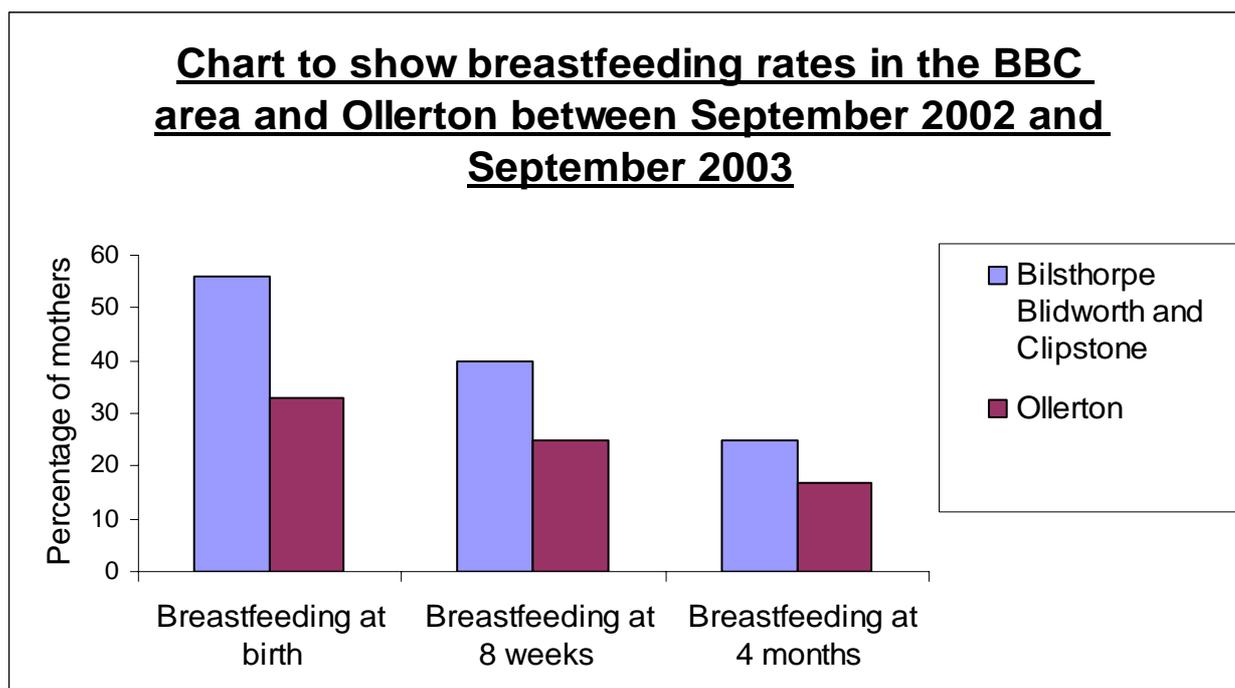


Throughout the subsequent year the pattern of higher breastfeeding rates in the Sure Start area continued with the exception of the quarter April to June 2003, wherein Ollerton achieved a higher rate for breastfeeding at 4 months, the rates at this stage being 26% and 16% respectively. The pattern of higher rates in the

Sure Start area resumes after this quarter however, and continues to the present.²⁸

One reason suggested by Sure Start staff and parents for the 'lull' in breastfeeding in the Sure Start area in the afore-mentioned quarter is that parents were dissatisfied with the Sure Start venues at this time and so attendance fell. However, this issue was then resolved, explaining the resuming of the higher breastfeeding rates, but this theory has not been tested.

More recently available annual breastfeeding figures are detailed in the chart below:



Costs for Sure Start support services

Below are costs for each aspect of breastfeeding support available in the BBC area. Although these are quoted to the denomination of pence, in some cases they are approximations albeit the most accurate possible with the data available.

- Breastfeeding Support Group with integrated Peer Counsellor Scheme: **£6824.77 per year²⁹**

(includes crèche provision; La Leche licence; course materials and refreshments costs)

- Incentive Scheme: **£4553.58 per year³⁰**

²⁸ Complete comparative data is available until September 2003.

²⁹ This figure excludes the costs of professional involvement (472 hours at £15.50 an hour & 300 hours at £7.00 an hour) and building costs estimated at £1053.38 treating them as potentially absorbed costs. Also excluded is a one-off cost of £1168.86 (met by the PCT not Sure Start) which was spent on training the Sure Start Midwife and Health Visitor to provide training for the peer counsellors.

³⁰ This figure excludes the cost of professional involvement (104 hours at £7.00 an hour) treating it as a potentially absorbed cost.

(includes stock)

Total annual costs for breastfeeding services are: **£11,378.35**

Cost in relation to presumed savings made by Newark and Sherwood PCT

Attempts have been made to calculate the worth of the Sure Start support services in the form of a cost-benefit analysis.

- The difference between breastfeeding at birth for Ollerton and Bilsthorpe, Blidworth and Clipstone is 23%³¹ for the most recent year for which data are available (September 2002 - September 2003)
- Sure Start has therefore incurred the following costs for each percentage point increase in breastfeeding at birth:

£494.71 (i.e. £11,378.35 divided by 23)

- In an average health district the saving made by each percentage point increase in breastfeeding is £4000. This figure refers to savings due to decreased in-patient stays for breastfed babies.³² (There has been no attempt to compute other savings, such as reduced GP consultations.)
- Births in the Sure Start area account for 15.55% of total births in the Newark and Sherwood District.³³
- For each percentage point increase in breastfeeding in the Sure Start area, £622 is therefore saved (i.e. 15.55% of £4000).
- It could be argued that the saving made to the Newark and Sherwood PCT as a result of the provision of breastfeeding support services in the Sure Start area is:

£14,306 (i.e. £622 times 23)

- It has cost Sure Start BBC **£11,378.35** to achieve the 23% increase in breastfeeding, and the subsequent saving to Newark and Sherwood PCT.
- Once total costs are offset by savings to the PCT and assuming that professional involvement and building costs have been absorbed in a mainstream setting, there has been no extra cost for increased breastfeeding rates. In fact, the investment in breastfeeding support has resulted in a net saving of **£2927.65** (i.e. £14,306 - £11,378.35).

Projected costs after reductions

There are areas in which money could be saved; both for Sure Start in their delivery of the services and for subsequent organisations wishing to mainstream the services, e.g. Newark and Sherwood PCT.

Areas of possible further savings

³¹ 33% and 56% respectively.

³² Department of Health publication, *Breastfeeding: Good Practice Guidance to the NHS*, 1995.

³³ Based on the figures of 177 BBC births (2002) and 1138 Newark and Sherwood births (1998) (accessed at www.statistics.gov.uk). A figure for 2002-3 could not be found.

- By reducing the number of incentives offered within the incentive scheme, particularly those not directly related to breastfeeding (nappies) and less popular items (breast shells), and with the current level of 36% of new mothers accessing the service, the total cost of the incentive scheme could be reduced to:

£2372.58 per year

- By abandoning the La Lêche programme in favour of training devised by Sure Start or community midwives. It is estimated that training would take an extra 36 staff hours (18 for health visitor and 18 for midwife) to devise, and it is assumed that this cost could be absorbed. It is also assumed that course materials would cost the same, £500/year. By removing the annual cost of the La Lêche license, the cost of the peer counsellor scheme would be reduced to:

£5808.10 per year³⁴

These savings indicate new annual total costs of **£8180.68** representing savings of £3197.67 per year.

Possible abandonment of crèche provision for mainstream services

Crèche and play provision is an integral feature of Sure Start breastfeeding groups, contributing to early learning objectives, and possibly having a positive effect on attendance levels at the breastfeeding group, thus an indirect effect on breastfeeding rates. For non-Sure Start breastfeeding support services without crèche provision, e.g. support groups similar to the Newark breastfeeding support group, which is not run by Sure Start and does not have a crèche, a further saving of £4130 could be expected. This would bring estimated total costs of non-Sure Start support provision including support group, incentive scheme and peer counsellor scheme to the following amount:

Total cost of non-crèched services: **£4050.68** (i.e. £8180.68 minus £4130)³⁵.

If we consider this amount against the estimated saving to the PCT of £14,306 this represents an extra saving of approximately £3418.44 in each area of breastfeeding support provision (i.e. [£14,306 minus £4050.68] divided by 3).

Projected costs of mainstreaming

There are approximately 25 areas in the Newark and Sherwood district of a similar size to each of the 3 Sure Start areas. The total cost of providing breastfeeding support services of a similar model to the Sure Start area but without the crèche provision in all of these areas, assuming professional involvement and building costs could be absorbed, would be: **£33,755.67** (i.e. [4050.68 divided by 3] times 25).

Once these costs are off-set against presumed savings on in-patient stays of £4768.67 in each area (i.e. £14,306 divided by 3) as a result of increased breastfeeding rates there are no extra costs. Instead there are total savings of **£85,461.08** (i.e. £119,216.75 [25 times £4768.67] minus £33,755.67) or **£3418.44 in each area.**

³⁴ This figure could be reduced for subsequent years once training had been devised.

³⁵ This figure could be lower if crèche is a determining factor of the success of the provision

Additional savings

The total costs included within this cost effectiveness exercise do not consider additional savings such as NHS spending on additional healthcare over a lifetime for individuals who were not breastfed and are therefore more likely to require medical assistance or the cost of providing formula milk on the milk token scheme, nor the cost of absenteeism from work by carers of babies who are not breastfed taking extra dependent leave from work to care for babies compared to parents of children who are breastfed.

Several pieces of cost-benefit analysis have been conducted on different breastfeeding support interventions and reached similar conclusions with consideration to additional savings. Pugh et al, for example, concluded that peer counsellor support increased breastfeeding duration rates and that the intervention cost per mother was partially offset by cost savings on formula milk and health care with the potential to reduce total costs including the cost of support³⁶

When we consider that the cost of feeding one baby with formula milk costs £350, then any outlay costs in terms of the provision of breastfeeding support - in this case £33,755.67 across the Newark and Sherwood district - are justified considering the potential benefits to health and the potential savings in money spent on healthcare and formula milk.

Future research

- Evaluation to determine the comparative value of each aspect of breastfeeding support services, to be conducted through focus groups with parents living in the Sure Start area.
- Evaluation of breastfeeding cessation and continuation rates³⁷. This will also be explored via the focus groups with parents living in the Sure Start area.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH., 1995. **Breastfeeding: Good Practice Guidance to the NHS**. Accessed at: <URL: www.dh.gov.uk >

FAIRBANK., et al., 2000. A systematic review to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to promote the initiation of breastfeeding. **Health Technology Assessment** (online), 4 (25). Accessed at: <URL: www.ncchta.org.uk >

³⁶ Pugh et al 2002

³⁷ Although a higher percentage of women breastfed at birth, 8 weeks and 4 months in the Sure Start area the percentage of women stopping breastfeeding at each stage is also higher. Since all three aspects of the support group are designed to encourage an increase in breastfeeding duration it is important to investigate this point.

MCLEOD, D., PULLON, S., COOKSON, T., 2002. Factors influencing continuation of breastfeeding in a cohort of women. **Journal of Human Lactation**. 18 (4), 335 – 343.

PUGH, L.C., et al., 2002. Breastfeeding duration, costs and benefits of a support program for low-income breastfeeding women. **Birth**. 29 (2), 95 – 100.

Appendix 1: Summary of Monitoring Data 2002-3

Objective 1: Improving Social and Emotional Development

Improving social and emotional development in particular, by supporting early bonding between parents and their children, helping families to function and by enabling the early identification and support of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA 3 In fully operational programmes, achieve by 2005-06 a (x) per cent increase in the proportion of babies and young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age</p>	<p>The aggregate score for the 3 elements of personal, social and emotional development covered by the <i>Foundation Stage Profile</i> (FSP) which together form an early learning goal</p>	<p>FSP data for 2002-03 still to be released (end of 2003-04)</p>	<p>Target level to be set by end of 2003-04 when the first data from the Foundation Stage Profile becomes available. Target level will be set so that it aims to narrow gap between children in the areas targeted by the programmes and the population generally</p> <p>All relevant staff to be trained in Early Learning Goals and measuring them</p> <p>Joint reference group continuing to work on objectives 1 and 3, with over-arching early development brief</p>
<p><u>SDA Target (1)</u> All local Sure Start programmes to have agreed and implemented, in a culturally sensitive way, ways of caring for and supporting mothers with post-natal disorder.</p>	<p>Figures from the 'motherhood and mental health team' on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of mothers screened for PND; • Proportion of mothers identified with PND in 1st 12 months of baby's life; • Proportion of mothers with PND receiving appropriate care. 	<p>Baseline data for 1999-2000 indicate 100% of mothers screened, and this has been maintained. No figures appear to be available for the other measures.</p>	<p>A Motherhood and Mental Health practitioner has been recruited and is running training sessions for staff to raise awareness of PND and referral processes. Training sessions will be continually evaluated.</p> <p>Active PND support group in Clipstone (BLISS)</p>
<p><u>SDA Target (10)</u> All families with new born babies in Sure Start Local Programmes and Children's Centre areas to be visited in first two months of their babies' life and given information and support about the services and support available to them.</p>	<p>Sure Start Programme records and Mansfield Primary Care Trust database for Sure Start area</p>	<p>This target appears to have been achieved. 125 out of 125 families with a child who reached the age of 2 months within the year were contacted within the first 2 months of their child's life</p>	<p>Information regarding Sure Start services is provided to families by their health visitor at the obligatory visit the Health Visitor makes to families on the 11th day after their child's birth. If the family consents they will then receive a home visit by a Sure Start family worker within the next four months. They will receive another home visit 18 months thereafter.</p>

Objective 2: Improving Children's Health

By improving awareness of healthy living amongst children and their service providers and, in particular in disadvantaged areas by helping parents to support their children's, healthy development before and after birth.

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA Target 4 In fully operational programmes achieve by 2005-06 a 6 percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy</p>	<p>1) Sherwood Forest Hospitals Trust smoking audit.</p> <p>2) Sure Start data monitoring (midwife)</p>	<p>1) 31% of mothers smoke during pregnancy.</p> <p>2) Between October and December 2002, 2 out of the 15 expectant mothers who smoked, as seen by the Sure Start midwife, stopped smoking – a reduction of 13%.</p>	<p>1) It is not clear whether this figure applies just to the Sure Start area, or the entire locality covered by the Trust. Neither are we sure when the audit was carried out. In any case, it needs to be repeated annually to provide a useful measure.</p> <p>2) At present data is only available for the months April to December 2002 and this does not include every mother within the Sure Start area.</p>
<p>SDA Target (11) Parenting support and information to be available for all parents in Sure Start areas.</p>	<p>The proportion of children aged 0-3 living in the Sure Start area seen by the Sure Start programme in the last 12 months, based on Sure Start records.</p>	<p>Monitoring records claim that this target has been achieved.</p>	<p>A parenting support worker has been recruited. Parent support sessions are being run.</p> <p>Parenting support is given generally within sessions. It is also given by the Sure Start Health Visitors. Male primary carers have been targeted, however take-up has been negligible. (There is only 1 male primary carer in the Sure Start area).</p> <p>Monitoring processes may need to be reviewed with regard to non-users and non-members of Sure Start.</p>
<p>SDA Target (2) Information and guidance on breast feeding, nutrition, hygiene and safety available to all families with young children in Sure Start local programme and Children's Centre areas.</p>	<p>It is not clear what measures would be appropriate to this target.</p>	<p>This appears to have been achieved in relation to all three.</p>	<p>1) A breast-feeding support group run and administered by the SureStart midwife is active in each village. Peer counsellors and Health Visitors attend when other commitments allow.</p> <p>2) Sure Start Health Visitors distribute an information pack on the subject of basic hygiene.</p> <p>3) A means-tested Home Safety Scheme has been established. Sure Start members are given the option of free safety fittings and features for the home (e.g. fire guards, stair gates) via the Ollerton Women's Centre and Enprove. Smaller safety packs containing socket covers, bath thermometers etc. are available. Information relating to safety seems to be given on an individual basis through Health Visitors.</p>
<p>SDA Target (13) <i>Reduce by 10 percent the number of children aged 0-4 living in Sure Start local programme and Children's Centre areas admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, a lower respiratory infection or a severe injury</i></p>	<p>Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust</p>	<p>There have been no admissions for 2000-1 or 2001-2 for these reasons, so in effect there has been no meaningful target to achieve.</p>	<p>Services relevant to this target are the use of home safety equipment, the work of health visitors and family workers to promote programmes of hygiene to prevent minor illnesses, smoking cessation work and the breast-feeding groups. An audit of A & E admissions is currently underway at local PCTs.</p>

Objective 3: Improving Learning

In particular by promoting high quality care and education which supports children's development and early education, especially in disadvantaged areas and especially through early identification of and support for children with special needs

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA Target In fully operational programmes, achieve by 2005-06 a (x) per cent increase in the proportion of children having normal levels of communication, language and literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage and an increase in the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at age 2 years</p>	<p>Measure 1: Foundation Stage Profile Data Measure 2: Proportion of children with normal speech and language development at age two (indicated by high word count score). (Source of Data: Sure Start Speech and Language Therapists)</p>	<p>Target level for part a) to be set by end of 2003-04 when first Foundation Stage Profile data available. Target level for part b) to be set by mid 2003 when further analysis of first application of Sure Start Speech and Language Measure for 2 year olds available.</p> <p>Target levels will be set so they aim to narrow gap between children in areas targeted by SSEYCU programmes and children generally.</p> <p>There can be no conclusion of whether this target has been achieved until start-point data are available.</p> <p>Measure 1: Data yet to be released</p> <p>Measure 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children with a high word count score in 2002-3: 73% (slightly below the expected national result of 75%) 	<p>All children in the Sure Start area have been screened for assessment at optimum period of 7-9 months through the WILSTARR project. The programme comments, 'SSLM progressing well. Awaiting final start point data'.</p> <p>SureStart services relating to speech & language development include family play sessions, advisory visits, home visits, PEEP (rotational basis to target different age groups).</p> <p>SSLM assessments are carried out collaboratively within the Sure Start team.</p> <p>Training will be given to Sure Start team, professionals and parents</p>
<p><u>SDA Target (1)</u> All children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities, helping progress towards early learning goals when they get to school</p>	<p>Session attendance records</p>	<p>Target appears to have been achieved. 100% of children have access to play and learning opportunities. Parents' knowledge and appreciation of play is enhanced through their involvement in drop-in sessions. Adults working directly with young children are offered training opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Greater emphasis of appreciation of play is planned through a programme of group activities, e.g. PEEP, Baby Talk, Behaviour Management Programme, SEN Training planned, EYDCP Training, PEEP Speech & Language High Stop Training, Learning Outcomes Training.</p> <p>A key point is how access is measured.</p> <p>Effective ways of monitoring children's play and learning progression need to be put in place, perhaps through evaluation of individual services</p>
<p><u>SDA Target (2)</u> Increased use of libraries by parents with young children in Sure Start areas.</p>	<p>Membership counts were carried out in all Sure Start libraries at the start of the project and repeated in March 03</p>	<p>Since no particular target is specified, the fact that library membership amongst children generally has increased by 72% for 0-4s, would suggest this target has been successfully achieved.</p>	<p>These figures tell us nothing about library use (as opposed to mere membership). In this way it may be an under-statement of progress made by Sure Start BBC.</p>

Objective 4: Strengthening Families and Communities

By encouraging all providers of children's services to take a wider view of their role in the community and, in particular in disadvantaged areas, by involving families in building capacity in the community and creating pathways out of poverty.

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA Target In fully operational programmes, to achieve by 2005-06 a 12 per cent reduction in the proportion of young children living in households where no one is working</p>	DWP	<p>% of children 0-3 in workless households in Nov 2002: 31%</p> <p>Data is unavailable for later years. It is therefore not possible to state the level of achievement towards target</p>	<p>An employability and training reference group develops strategies for achieving the target.</p> <p>Sure Start has created various training and employment opportunities for local people, e.g. crèche work.</p>
<p>SDA Target (1) Seventy five per cent of families reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support.</p>	User satisfaction survey	<p>The results of an initial survey undertaken with the target population suggest that this target has been achieved. 61% of families reported that services had improved very much since Sure Start began.</p> <p>A further 30% of families reported that they had identified some improvements.</p>	<p>Further survey work needs to be undertaken to ascertain the views of non-members, and to use non-users of Sure Start services as a control group.</p>
<p>SDA Target (2) All Sure Start programmes to have parent representation on the local programme board.</p>	Sure Start BBC	<p>There is current parental representation on the board (6 out of 18 members, i.e. 33%, are parents). Target therefore appears to have been met.</p>	
<p>SDA Target (3) All Sure Start programmes to have developed local targets for ensuring links between the local Sure Start partnership and Employment Service Jobcentres.</p>	Sure Start BBC	<p>The Reference Group for Objective Four has been split into two separate groups – one for Community Development, one for Employability and Training. The Employability and Training group is currently investigating ways to improve employability.</p>	
<p>SDA Target (4) All Sure Start programmes to work closely with their local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYCDP) to help close the gap between the availability of accessible childcare for 0-3 year olds in Sure Start areas and other areas.</p>	CIS (Children's Information Service)	<p>All Sure Start BBC workers are inducted into EYDCP</p>	<p>41 new local nursery places have been created through the neighbourhood nursery scheme</p>

Appendix 2: Summary of Data Monitoring 2003-4

Objective 1: Improving Social and Emotional Development

Improving social and emotional development in particular, by supporting early bonding between parents and their children, helping families to function and by enabling the early identification and support of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA 3 In fully operational programmes, achieve by 2005-06 a (x) per cent increase in the proportion of babies and young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age</p>	<p>The aggregate score for the 3 elements of personal, social and emotional development covered by the <i>Foundation Stage Profile</i> (FSP) which together form an early learning goal</p>	<p>FSP Data for 2002-3 and 2003-4 has not yet been acquired.</p>	<p>It is unknown whether target level was set at the end of 2003-04 as planned (i.e. target level to narrow gap between children in the areas targeted by the programmes and the population generally)</p> <p>It is not know whether all relevant staff have been trained in Early Learning Goals and the measurement of them as planned</p> <p>Joint reference group continuing to work on objectives 1 and 3, with over-arching early development brief</p>
<p><u>SDA Target (1)</u> All local Sure Start programmes to have agreed and implemented, in a culturally sensitive way, ways of caring for and supporting mothers with post-natal disorder.</p>	<p>Figures from the Sure Start BBC Health Visitor and Sure Start BBC midwife</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of mothers screened for PNI: 100% (i.e. 176 out of 176 mothers with a live birth 2003-4) • Proportion of mothers identified with PNI in first 12 months of baby's life: 10% (18 out of 176 mothers) • Proportion of mothers with PNI receiving appropriate care: 100% (18 out of 18 identified) <p>Target appears to be achieved.</p>	<p>Sure Start staff have received training on identifying and referring cases of PNI.</p> <p>BLISS support group for PNI sufferers has finished.</p> <p>Data on referral rates to be obtained from the Motherhood and Mental Health Team in order to assess any effects of Sure Start intervention</p>
<p><u>SDA Target (10)</u> All families with new born babies in Sure Start Local Programmes and Children's Centre areas to be visited in first two months of their babies' life and given information and support about the services and support available to them.</p>	<p>Sure Start BBC Health Visitor and Programme records</p>	<p>This target appears to have been achieved. 176 out of 176 families with a child who reached the age of 2 months within the year were contacted within the first 2 months of their child's life</p>	<p>Information regarding Sure Start services is provided to families by their health visitor at the obligatory visit the Health Visitor makes to families on the 11th day after their child's birth. If the family consents they will then receive a home visit by a Sure Start family worker within the next four months. They will receive another home visit 18 months thereafter. These are therefore figures of true contact (rather than postal contact etc.)</p>

Objective 2: Improving Children's Health

By improving awareness of healthy living amongst children and their service providers and, in particular in disadvantaged areas by helping parents to support their children's, healthy development before and after birth.

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA Target 4 Achieve by 2004 a 10% reduction in the number of mothers who smoke in pregnancy</p>	Sure Start BBC midwife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of women who had a live birth whose smoking status during pregnancy is known: 110 • No. of women who smoked before their pregnancy was confirmed: 38 (i.e. 35%) • No. of women who continued to smoke during pregnancy: 31 (compared with 42 women in 2002-3) • Percentage of women who smoke during pregnancy: 28% (compared with 38% in 2002-3) • Percentage of women who resumed smoking after their baby's birth: Not available <p>Target appears to have been achieved with a 10% reduction recorded</p>	
<p>SDA Target (11) Parenting support and information to be available for all parents in Sure Start areas.</p>	The proportion of children aged 0-3 living in the Sure Start area seen by the Sure Start programme in the last 12 months, based on Nottinghamshire county council data and Sure Start BBC programme records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 4 living in the Sure Start area: 733 • No. of children seen by the Sure Start BBC programme 2003-4: 196 (27%) <p>Data relating to information distributed is not known.</p>	<p>Parenting support sessions have been run in all three villages.</p> <p>Parenting support is given generally within sessions. It is also given by the Sure Start Health Visitors. Male primary carers have been targeted, however take-up has been negligible. (There is only 1 male primary carer in the Sure Start area).</p> <p>Monitoring processes may need to be reviewed with regard to non-users and non-members of Sure Start.</p>
<p>SDA Target (2) All local programmes to give guidance on breast feeding, hygiene and safety</p>	Sure Start Midwife (breastfeeding stats)	<p>Where feeding status is known:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56% of mothers breastfeeding at birth • 40% of mothers breastfeeding at 6 weeks • 27% of mothers breastfeeding at 4 months <p>Sure Start Health Visitors distribute an information pack on the subject of basic hygiene.</p> <p>A means-tested Home Safety Scheme exists. Sure Start members are given the option of free safety fittings and features for the home (e.g. fire guards, stair gates) via Enprove. Smaller safety packs containing socket covers, bath thermometers etc. are available. Information relating to safety is also given to individuals by Health Visitors.</p> <p>Target appears to be achieved</p>	<p>A breast-feeding support group run and administered by the SureStart midwife, community assistant and peer counsellors is active in each village. Health Visitors attend when other commitments allow.</p>
<p>SDA Target (13) 10% reduction in children admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, a lower respiratory infection or a severe injury by 2004</p>	Newark & Sherwood PCT	<p>This information is collected centrally by the Sure Start Unit and is currently unavailable. It is therefore not possible to state level of achievement towards target</p>	<p>A means-tested Home Safety Scheme exists. Sure Start members are given the option of free safety fittings and features for the home (e.g. fire guards, stair gates) via Enprove. Smaller safety packs containing socket covers, bath thermometers etc. are available. Information relating to safety is also given to individuals by Health Visitors</p>

Objective 3: Improving Learning

In particular by promoting high quality care and education which supports children's development and early education, especially in disadvantaged areas and especially through early identification of and support for children with special needs

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA Target To achieve by 2003-4 a reduction of 5 percentage points in the number of children with speech and language problems requiring specialist intervention by the age of 4 (3% reduction within the year 2003-4)</p>	<p>Sure Start BBC speech & language therapist + Nottinghamshire County Council + Newark & Sherwood PCT</p> <p>Source of additional data (see comments column): SSLM Assessments 2003-4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children aged 4 living in the Sure Start BBC area 2003-4: 576 Children aged 4 with speech and language development delay: Unknown Percentage of children with normal speech and language development at age 4: Unknown <p>Data is unavailable. It is therefore not possible to state level of achievement towards target</p>	<p>Additional Data relating to speech & language therapy: Percentage of children with a high word count score at age 2 in 2003-4: 78% (above the expected national result of 75% and above 2002-3 result which was 73%)</p> <p>SureStart services relating to speech & language development include family play sessions, advisory visits, home visits, PEEP (rotational basis to target different age groups).</p>
<p>SDA Target (1) All children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities, helping progress towards early learning goals when they get to school</p>	<p>Sure Start BBC – M5</p> <p>OFSTED Inspection Report Feb 2005</p>	<p>M5 form states that, 'Target maintained and quality of provision will be developed'</p> <p>OFSTED Inspection Report states that, 'all three crèche facilities provide 'good quality care overall for children'. This is the highest rating that OFSTED awards.</p> <p>No. of registered places at time of OFSTED Report: 20 at Bilsthorpe, 20 at Blidworth, 16 at Clipstone.</p> <p>No. of children on roll at time of inspection: 23 at Bilsthorpe, 51 at Blidworth, 38 at Clipstone.</p>	<p>Crèche provision continues to be developed through employment of session play and crèche workers.</p>
<p>SDA Target (2) Increased use of libraries by families with young children</p> <p>Annual milestone: 20% of children with active membership</p>	<p>Sure Start library worker</p>	<p>All children living in the Sure Start BBC area: 576 Number of children who are active members of a library: 256 Percentage of children who are active members of a library: 44% in July 2004 (compared with 9% in Sep 02 and 16% in Mar 03)</p> <p>Target appears to have been achieved with an increase of 275% from Mar 03 to July 04. There is some inequality between increases in membership in each area between Mar 03 and July 04:</p> <p>Bils: 19 to 78, representing an increase of 311% and a final active membership of 50% of the population</p> <p>Blid: 51 to 134, representing an increase of 163% and a final active membership of 79% of the population</p> <p>Clip: 23 to 44, representing an increase of 91% and a final active population membership of 18%</p>	<p>Sure Start BBC are no longer required to submit this information to the Sure Start Unit</p>

Objective 4: Strengthening Families and Communities

By encouraging all providers of children's services to take a wider view of their role in the community and, in particular in disadvantaged areas, by involving families in building capacity in the community and creating pathways out of poverty.

TARGET	DATA SOURCE	ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGET	COMMENTS
<p>PSA Target Reduce the number of children living in households where no one is working by at least 12% by 2004</p> <p>Annual milestone: 5% reduction in children living in workless households</p>	DWP	<p>% of children 0-3 in workless households in Nov 2002: 31%</p> <p>Data is unavailable for later years. It is therefore not possible to state the level of achievement towards target</p>	<p>An employability and training reference group develops strategies for achieving the target.</p> <p>Sure Start has created various training and employment opportunities for local people, e.g. crèche work.</p>
<p>SDA Target (1) Seventy five per cent of families reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support.</p> <p>Annual Milestone: 50% of families report improvement</p>	Sure Start BBC Evaluation Officer - User satisfaction survey 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of parents rating local services as good or very good: 57% Percentage of parents reporting an annual improvement in local services: 58% Percentage of users rating Sure Start services as good or very good: 78% 	
<p>SDA Target (2) All Sure Start programmes to have parent representation on the local programme board.</p>	Sure Start BBC – M5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of members on Partnership board: 18 (same as 2002-3) Number of parent members on Partnership board: 8 (compared to 6 in 2002-3) Proportionate number of parent reps to total board members: 44% (compared to 33% in 2002-3) <p>Target has been achieved</p>	
<p>SDA Target (3) All Sure Start programmes to have developed local targets for ensuring links between the local Sure Start partnership and Employment Service Jobcentres.</p>	Sure Start BBC – M5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links with employment services established through increasing employability strategy group and community involvement task group. Provision of welfare rights advice through Nottinghamshire Unemployed Workers Centre 	
<p>SDA Target (4) All Sure Start programmes to work closely with their local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYCDP) to help close the gap between the availability of accessible childcare in Sure Start areas and other areas.</p>	CIS (Children's Information Service)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme continues to work closely with EYDCP. Information about childminder start up grants is distributed in the area. Targets have been set regarding childminding development and wrap-around of pre-school care although the nature of these targets is not known <p>Target appears to have been met.</p>	

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