

## SureStart Rood End, Oldbury & Dartmouth Central-Annual Report: 2005

### Overview

This report gives an insight into the work undertaken by Sure Start Rood End, Oldbury & Dartmouth Central over the year 2005- Jan to Dec<sup>1</sup>

In January 2005 the programme became better established, with the majority of services and activities that had been developed in the previous year being up and running. Similarly all key roles were filled and the full staff quota was almost complete with the exception of a Speech and Language specific role, a part time Health Visitor, a part time Midwife, a part time Outreach worker and Children's Centre Co-ordinator. The Children's Centre Co-ordinator role was filled in February 2005. The current paid programme staff quota consists of 3 full time and 13 part time staff (two term time) covering themes including Early Years, Community Involvement, Maternity Support, Outreach, a Psychologist, Monitoring, Administration, Management and Domestic. The programme has been affected by staff shortage in that 2 part time staff have been on long term sick leave, and a further 2 had maternity leave that commenced during the year.

Over 2005 several key services were up and running, as detailed within this report, the main ones being Maternity Support Service, Outreach Service, Welfare Rights Service, Psychology Service, Home Safety Equipment Scheme, parent training sessions and several supported play sessions throughout the Sure Start area.

All of the key partner agencies were established and in their second year, these agencies are; SADWICA Mobile Day Nursery, SACDA (Sandwell African Caribbean Development Association), St Phillips Project, Sandwell Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership, Employment Services, Smethwick & Oldbury PCT, Wednesbury & West Bromwich PCT, Church on the Rock and Bethel Care Centre, St Johns Church, Sandwell Women's Refuge, Tipton Toddlers, Sandwell Refugee & Asylum Seekers Team, Holy Trinity Church and Rood End, Christchurch, Holy Trinity and King George V Schools.

Between 1 January and December 2005, an average of 12.9% of the children in the area use our services per month, and 88% of all children under 4 in the area were registered with the programme, 311 children attended Sure Start activities. This is a slight drop in average reach (13.1% in 2004) but an increase of the total number of children registered on 2004.

Very strong links have been established with the Family Support Unit at Sandwell hospital resulting in the reach to pregnant and new mothers being particularly high since January 2005 at 81.6%, with

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<sup>1</sup> This report covers periods 01 Jan 2005 to 31 December 2005 inclusive. It should be noted that the programme purchased a new database 'Smart Start' in April 2005 and so data relevant to this report relating to contact made with certain programme services is only available for the period April 2005 onwards. Overall reach data however is available for the entire year.

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Maternity Support being able to target antenatal and postnatal mothers in the area via information provided by the Family Support Unit. Similarly a service level agreement held between the programme and the Welfare Rights Unit of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has led to £151,377.56 of benefits being successfully claimed by families in the area (01 April 2005- 9 January 2006), the correct uptake of benefits being regarded as a direct route out of poverty.

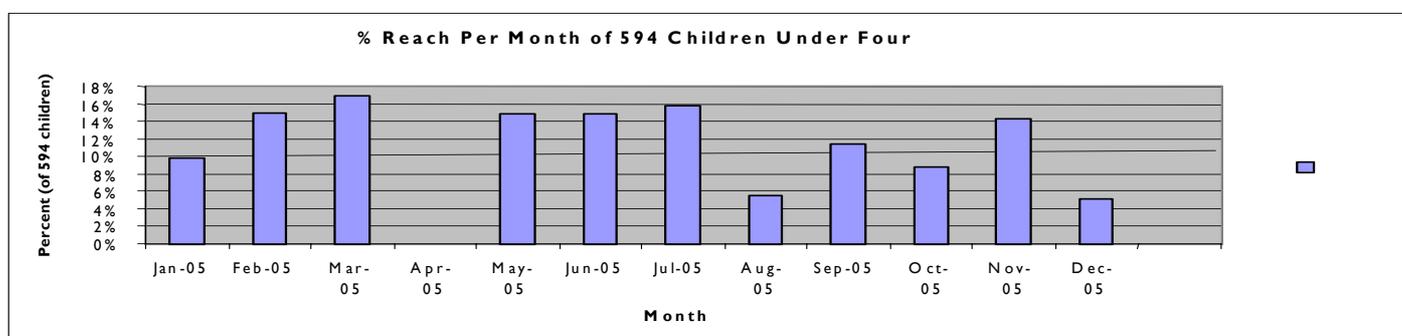
Progress towards the majority of targets is deemed as very good by the programme, particularly as nearly all of the activities that are provided and supported by the programme relate to more than one Sure Start objective, meaning that there are many facets to the progress towards targets such as 'increasing the proportion of babies & young children with normal levels of social and emotional development', as detailed in this report. In some cases it is not possible to track actual progress towards targets in a quantitative manner due to the programme being unable to access data from health and other bodies.

The staff were asked for feedback about their views and feelings about the work of the programme over this review period, such as 'what went well', and 'what was difficult', done in the form of a team input exercise, their comments are summarised towards the end of this report.

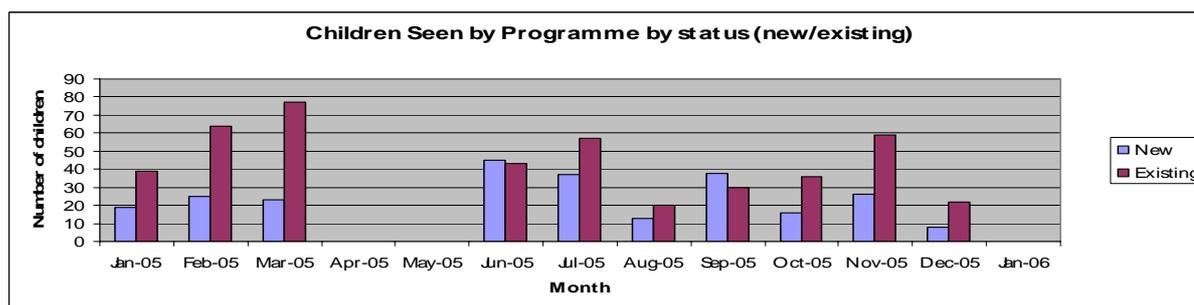
## What we have achieved

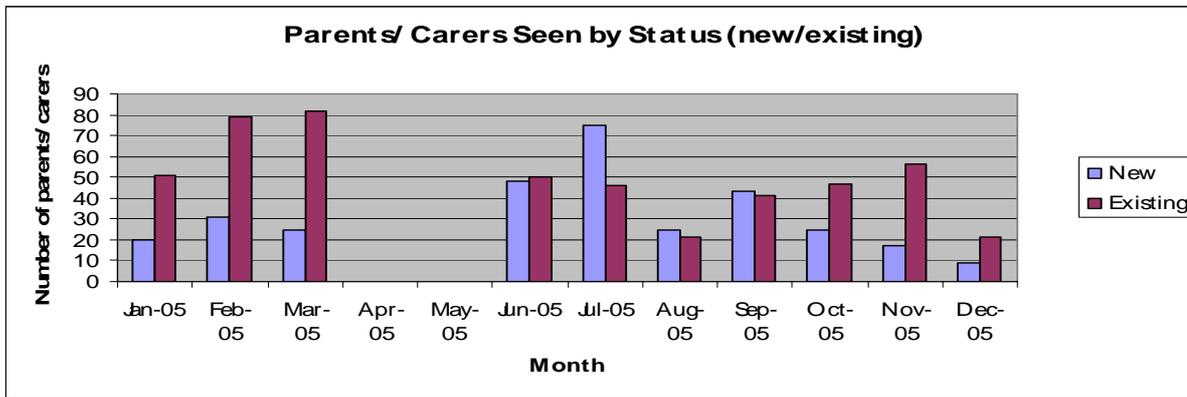
### Who we've reached

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005 there were a total of 484 (**88.8%**) children under four registered with the programme out of 545 that were recorded to be present in the area by SMBC Research Unit in 2001. It is not known if the base number of 545 is accurate as it is based on census data obtained in 2001 and it is known that the area is quite transient.

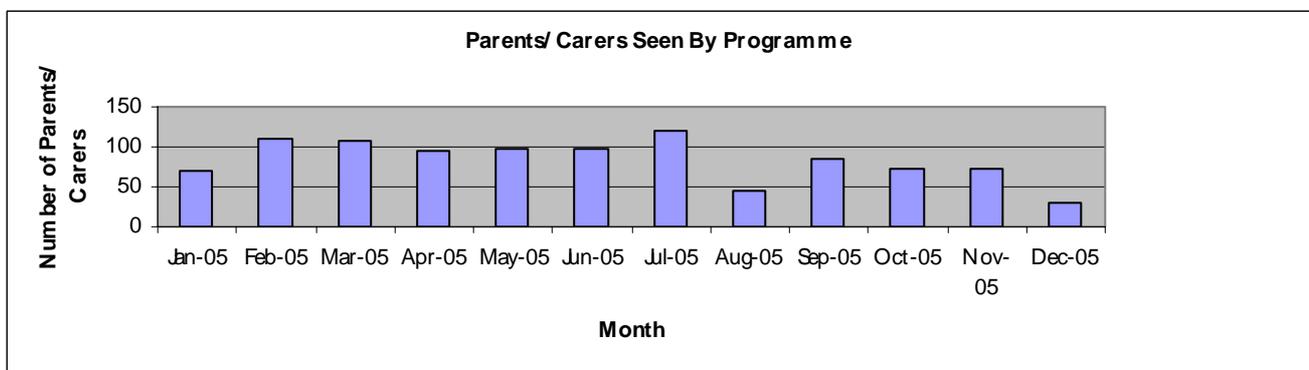


Due to the implementation of the new database in April 2005 and problems encountered therein, there is a lack of reach data for that month. Similarly for May 2005 no distinction between 'new' or 'existing' child members was able to be recorded. The programme has been running since 2003 and so, as expected, is still registering new families.





Reach data for August and December is considerably lower as these are times when the schools are closed and so play settings are also closed due to historical low numbers. Also, staff annual leave (and statutory closure during the Christmas period) usually takes place during these times meaning that reach for home visiting as well as setting attendance is usually low.



There were several annual or one-off events that ran on months during 2005 that have improved upon regular reach. These included the *Parents Party* in February, *Pamper Day* in March, *Father's Event* in June and *Annual Summer Trip* in July, all of these annual events were well attended by families.

Sessions in August, the main summer holiday month were less well attended as parents often also have to care for their older children and so tend to opt for activities which cater for children of all ages. This excludes many of our regular play sessions which are closed over the school summer holidays. A play scheme was provided during August 2005 at St Johns and Holy Trinity churches which both catered for older children, however there were limited places available.

It is worth noting that there are a significant number of **relative carers** among the Asian community across the Sure Start area, resulting in a relatively high number of additional carers.

### The number of children accessing activities at each age

Age of child	Number of children accessing activities
0	228
1	166
2	191
3	123
4	56

There is a maintained number of new children who the programme reaches each month. These are largely new born children who are visited by the Maternity Support team and thus register with the programme hence fluctuations tend to show just as they do in the number of births from month to month.

The majority of families in the area are accessing 2 activities with the programme over the year. As expected there are less families that access more activities over the year, but evidence shows that children under 18 months generally do not access play & stay sessions, but instead access Maternity Support and Outreach services.

### Progress against objectives:

#### Improving social & emotional development

- To increase the proportion of babies & young children with normal levels of personal, social & emotional development for their age
- To visit 100% of new parents within 2 months of birth
- To provide parenting support & information for all parents

The **Psychology Service** provided by the programme consists of a CAMHS Psychologist who is available at the programme for families that require psychological support where **personal, social and emotional development** may otherwise not be normal. Monitoring data for the whole of 2005 is not available for the Psychology service however it is known that 33 individuals have benefited from the Psychology Support Service; at least 9 of these have been children under four. The team psychologist also provides training and support to Outreach & Maternity Support staff, and a fortnightly care pathway consultation session is held.

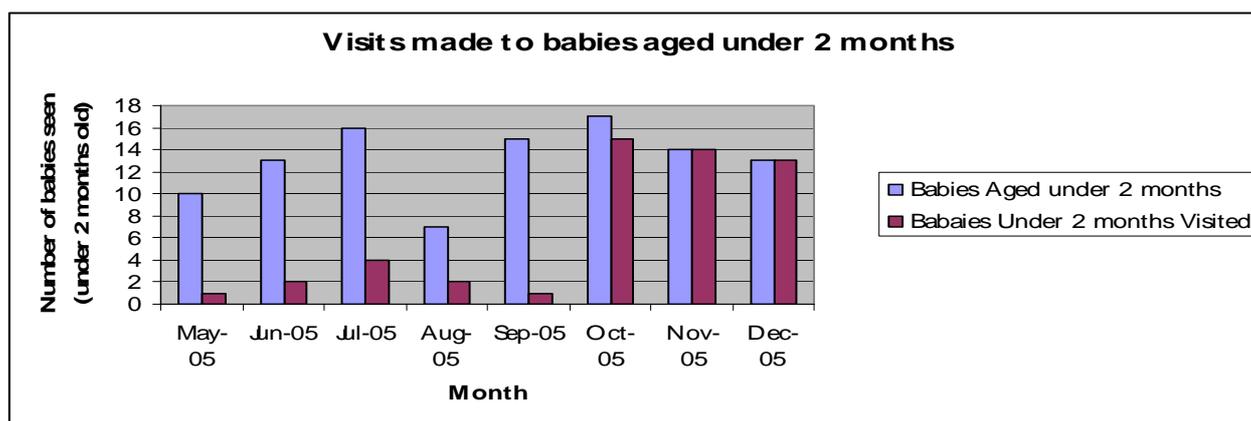
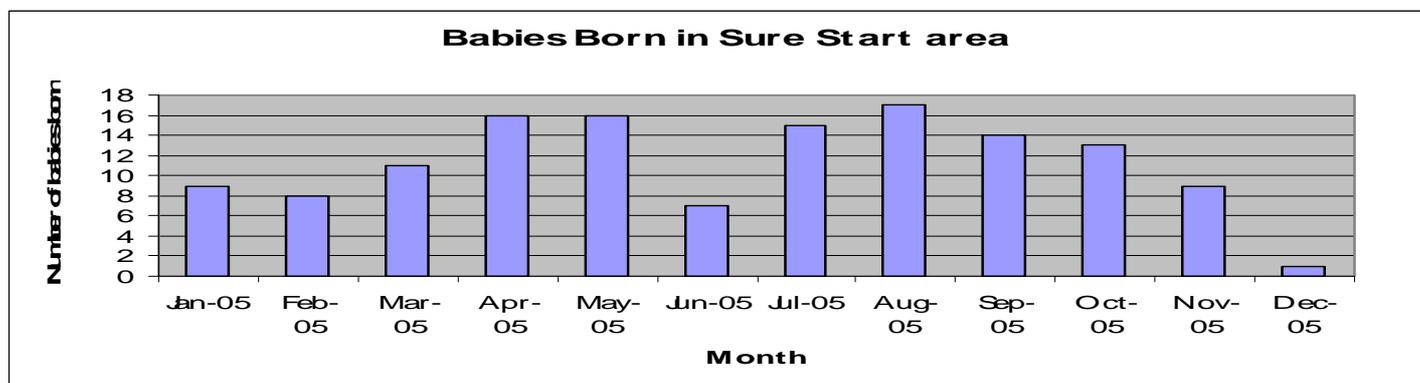
**Outreach Support** also provides non-specialist family support which helps progress towards ensuring that children attain **normal levels of development** by assisting families with various aspects of parenting, health, education and care issues. At least 22 families and at least 22 children have used the Outreach Service in 2005.

All **play and stay sessions** delivered by the programme follow the Birth to Three Curriculum which incorporates activities to help children under four to attain **normal levels of all types of development**. 311 children have attended sessions at the programme. The programme supports 12 weekly play & stay sessions covering locations across the Sure Start area, including a Fathers Play & Stay at the programme premises, 3 school locations, 2 libraries and the remainder at other community buildings.

It was identified that there was no real provision of **parenting information** in the Rood End area for carers that did not have English as a first language, and so intended information was not being understood. Programme information leaflets are available in Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Bengali. Feedback from a local community representative identified that non-English speaking carers did not feel able to access **play services** in the area due to the language barrier. There is a large Pakistani-Muslim community in the area and so the **Shahili Women's Group** was developed and supported by the programme to explore parenting issues and undertake **training** including **ESOL** which is delivered at St John's Church and is attended by 11 carers. In the West Bromwich area another **ESOL course** is run in conjunction with the programme which has been attended by 13 carers over 2005.

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In 2005 there were 136 births in the Sure Start area, and 111 (88%) *new mothers* were visited by a *Maternity Support Worker* before their baby reached **2 months old**. Information has been provided to all new mothers even if a meeting with Maternity Support was declined. The programme does not currently collect data about the number of new fathers that are visited by the programme, however as the programme has a *father's worker*, there are plans to see how new fathers could be engaged with the *father's worker during early postnatal visits*. There has been a closer working relationship between Health Visitors and Maternity Support staff on patch, with key workers providing crèche and information to parents at local baby clinics.



During a recent evaluation exercise it was discovered that little or no record was being made on the database of postnatal visits being made to babies under 2 months, only contact with mothers was being recorded, hence the low 2 month visit record up until October 2005 when correct records started to be kept.

All *events and sessions* held by the programme at all locations seek to ensure that *parenting support* is readily available to parents as the variety of staff are able to deliver advice and support in their specialist area. *Parenting information* is made available to all new registrants and to all parents that attend annual events in the form of leaflets and data about services that are on offer. Similarly key agencies such as Child Information Service, Fire Service, Health and Employment Organisations as well as various other family support services participate and attend programme events (such as the annual Pampers Day and Fathers Day events) to ensure that *parenting support and information* is made available to carers.

## Improving health

- 6 percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy
- Information & guidance on breastfeeding available to all families
- 10% reduction in children admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, respiratory infection or a severe injury
- Antenatal advice, support & information available to all pregnant women & their families

As previously mentioned, there have been 136 births in the Sure Start area over 2005, 44 women were seen antenatally by Maternity Support workers, and 111 seen post-natally between April and December 2005. Of those 5 mothers were recorded to have been smoking at the time of becoming pregnant. Maternity Support workers are trained to provide **smoking cessation advice** and it is known that at least 1 of those mothers gave up smoking at least whilst pregnant.

All mothers seen by Maternity Support, who are trained in breastfeeding practices are given **guidance and support on breastfeeding** as a matter of course, similarly antenatal advice is provided to these mothers. Of the mothers seen post-natally by the programme 64 were **breastfeeding** their babies **at birth**. Advice delivered also covers **bottle and dummy safety** which in turn helps to prevent cases of **gastroenteritis**, as well as advising parents about the dangers of **passive smoking** which helps to prevent cases of **lower respiratory infection** amongst children. Awareness sessions have been held at play sessions concerning oral health, healthy eating, and home safety.

The programme operates a **Home safety Equipment Scheme** where families in receipt of benefits are provided with free home safety equipment, and other families can purchase equipment at a subsidised cost. A full evaluation of **Health and Safety work** at the programme is underway, which includes a detailed analysis of progress towards each aspect of the health target (**accidents, cases of lower respiratory infection and gastro-enteritis**). In brief it is apparent that there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of all of the above occurrences in the Sure Start area, however it is difficult to obtain specific and reliable health data to substantiate this perceived positive trend, 137 families in the area have used the **safety equipment scheme** and there were 2 reported cases of **lower respiratory infection** and 2 cases of **gastroenteritis** in the area between April and July 2005 compared to 12 and 15 cases respectively for the entire year (April- March) when the programme first started in 2003.

## Improving children's ability to learn

- Increase the proportion of children with normal speech & language development at age 2 and the proportion with a normal level of communication, language & literacy at end of foundation stage
- All children have access to good quality play & learning opportunities, helping progress toward early learning goals when they get to school
- Increase the use of libraries by parents with young children

The **Birth to Three Foundation curriculum** that is followed at **play sessions** helps to ensure that local children attain **normal levels of speech and language and literacy development at age 2**. There were

64 children under 3 years old that attended play sessions over 2005. Three *Play sessions are held at local libraries* to encourage library use, 21 children from within the area have attended these sessions over the last year. This relatively low number is thought to be due to the location of each of the 3 local libraries which fall on the boundary of the area and tend to attract families from further afield.

The programme also restarted it's *Toy Library* in July allowing families to borrow toys from home providing a range of educational toys and games. 14 children used the Toy Library in 2005, 13 of whom were under 1 and the other was under 2.

There are less well established links with the *Speech and Language Therapy Service* across the entire borough which has meant that progress towards speech and language targets may not be as optimal as could be if specific and specialist support were available. Consequently the programme has not made any referrals to the service in the last year, where speech and language concerns are identified, children are referred to their Health Visitor.

### Strengthening families & communities

- Reduce the number of families living in a house where no-one is working by 12%
- 75% of families report personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support
- To have parent representation on the board
- Ensure effective links with Job Centres
- To increase the availability of accessible childcare

To *reduce workless households* the programme works in partnership with the council *Welfare Rights Advice Service*, in buying the time of a *Welfare Rights officer* for exclusive use by families in the programme area for 2 days a week. A total of **£151,377.56** in benefits was gained between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2006 via the service, with a further **£51,111.63** being claimed in backdated benefits.

#### Welfare Rights Service Activity

<i>Clients Seen</i>	<b>161</b>
<i>Cases Closed</i>	<b>48</b>
<i>Unable to contact</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Already receiving</i>	<b>17</b>
<i>Full entitlement</i>	

Links with job centres is another area deemed to help carers back into work, the programme currently has links with Job Centre Plus which entails the programme inviting Job Centre plus to annual family events held by the programme to make them accessible to local families.

The programmes *Volunteer Co-ordinator* manages the *Volunteer service*. Carers can undertake the *Volunteer Training Programme* with a view to securing Volunteering experience with the programme, and subsequently gain *work skills* which can be transferred to the work sector, helping to gain *paid employment*. During 2005 4 volunteers from within the Sure Start area completed the training and induction scheme, and they have all actively volunteered at the programme through various activities including Play & Stay sessions. During 2005 1 volunteer has secured paid employment as a Learning Support Assistant, and 3 have secured paid sessional work as play workers.

### **Breakdown of volunteer hours worked at programme**

In the sample month of June Volunteers who are mothers of children under 4 living in the Sure Start area contributed 21 hours of volunteer service at the programme, 1 of those hours was for admin work, the rest was play support.

In the same sample month volunteers from outside of the area, who may or may not have children under 4 contributed 32 hours of volunteer service to the programme.

On average ***53 hours per month are contributed to the programme by volunteers.***

The Volunteer Service is due to be evaluated in 2006.

Over 2005 there were 8 parents who sat on the *Management Board*, broken down to 7 mothers and 1 father this is an improvement on last years numbers where there were approximately 5 parents who attended board meetings, but were not regular attendees.

### **Capital investment**

The *Children's Centre at Moat Farm School* site and the refurbishment of the *Greenwood Office location* for the Children's Centre are the Capital investment projects that have taken place in 2005. The cost of the Children's Centre is £1,100,000 and the refurbishment of the Greenwood Avenue site is £80,000. The Moat Farm site is due to be complete by August 2006 and the Greenwood refurbishment is due to be complete my March 2006.

### **What we are particularly proud of**

Practicing flexible and committed partnership working, and consequently being able to offer range of services across several locations.

Domestic violence work undertaken, including theatre show dealing with Domestic Violence issues in Asian Community.

Being seen as adaptive and responsive by local health professionals.

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The steering group that has developed from the Shahali Group at St Johns Church has attracted funding from the Town Team and St Phillips has received funding from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to expand it's play area to accommodate older children. Both partner agencies report that without Sure Start they would not have sought funding or undertaken the projects.

### The things that have been difficult

Obtaining *data* has proved to be a problem for the programme- particularly accurate and relevant health data, such as *smoking and breastfeeding baseline and progress data, accident and accident and emergency admission data*, details of the *true number of children in the area*, and *library use data*. Consequently much of the baseline data for progress to be plotted is not available to facilitate analysis. In the case of *health data*, although some data is available it is either not collected in a way that is useful to the programme, or has only been collected routinely by health visitors via the red book recording since September 2005. Accurate detail of the number of children in the area has been awaited from CHS since the end of 2004.

Working around staff shortage has meant that certain planned activities and services have had to be postponed, or operated from fewer locations than initially intended.

### Key challenges for the year ahead

The transition to become a *Children's Centre* and moving to new administrative location.

### The Way Forward

*Baby clubs*- Working with health visitors to deliver 2 baby clubs in the area (Rood End and West Bromwich) where mums can engage in mother and baby activities such as baby massage and breastfeeding support sessions. This is delayed until the Greenwood Avenue site is completed.

*Father's worker* to attend *postnatal visits* with *Maternity Support workers* to engage new fathers.

*Routine 3 and 6 month postnatal visits* and *evening maternity support visits* are planned from Jan. 2006 to ensure that new mothers are seen at different intervals where needs may change, and to engage working expectant mothers.

*Consultation exercise with local expectant fathers* to develop strategy for addressing their needs.

*4 additional Fathers play & stay sessions* to be developed over the 4 distinct regions in the Sure Start area (Moat Farm School, Greenwood avenue, Alfred Gunn House, African Caribbean Resource Centre, and St Johns Church).

*Regular baby clinics* at Greenwood Avenue and Moat Farm School.

*1 Weeks Play scheme in each region.*

User Satisfaction Survey- to be undertaken by Central Research Officer.

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## Appendix A - Evaluation Summary

### Evaluation activities undertaken during 2005

<b>School Ready Child</b>	To share with Sure Start Rood End, Oldbury & Dartmouth Central and local schools the views of what a "School Ready / Nursery Ready Child" should look like with the intention of informing the local programme of what preparation they can do to help a child be prepared for school	Rabinder Singh	Sept 05
<b>Impact of Health &amp; Safety work at Sure Start</b>	Impact evaluation of health & safety work towards health targets and analysis of impact of Home safety Scheme.	Valencia Wroblewski	Work in progress
<b>ESOL evaluation</b>	The impact of running the ESOL course for Sure start carers- Input, output and outcomes.	Valencia Wroblewski	Jan 2005
<b>Progress towards Targets – Management Board presentation and handout.</b>	A look into progress and work towards sure Start targets	Valencia Wroblewski / Rabinder Singh	Jan 2005
<b>Early Years</b>	Impact evaluation of Early Years Stay & Play sessions.	Rabinder Singh	Work in progress

Copies of evaluation reports available upon request - please contact the programme on 0121 552 9248 or see the NESS website.

### Evaluation activities planned for 2006

- 1) Volunteer Service Evaluation
  - 2) Shahaili Women's Group Outcomes Evaluation
  - 3) User satisfaction Survey
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