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Interim Report for the Local  
Evaluation carried out on behalf of  
**Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start**

September 2003



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

RBA Research was commissioned by Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start to carry out their local evaluation. This evaluation is needed in order to:-

- Understand how well initiatives and services are performing and what is helping or hindering effectiveness
- Keep track of progress in meeting the national objectives and targets for Sure Start as set out in the delivery plan
- Be responsive and make changes to the programme as a result of evaluation findings
- Provide a framework for feeding into local and Borough-wide forums to sustain the programme and appropriately re-shape delivery
- Ensure that the co-ordination and integration of the Sure Start approach is contained within an emerging Barnsley Family Support Strategy

The evaluation is covering:

- Progress towards objectives and targets set for Sure Start in the PSA/delivery plan
  - Improving social and emotional well-being
  - Improving health
  - Improving children's ability to learn
  - Strengthening families and communities
- A review of the working practices and processes through which Sure Start is being established and delivered
- An assessment of whether the services being provided achieve good value for public money
- An assessment of whether the design and implementation of Sure Start is adhering to Sure Start principles, namely:
  - Co-ordinate, streamline and add value to existing services
  - Involve parents, grandparents and other carers
  - Avoid stigma by ensuring that all local families are able to use Sure Start services
  - Ensure lasting support by linking to services for older children
  - Be culturally appropriate and sensitive to particular needs
  - Promote the participation of all local families in the design and working of the programme

## 1.2 National context – aims and objectives

### 1.2.1 Introduction to Sure Start<sup>1</sup>

The Sure Start Programme emerged following the United Kingdom Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and in particular the review of services for young people.

Conclusions retrieved from this review include:

- The earliest years in life are the most important for child development
- Multiple disadvantages for young children is a severe and growing problem, with such disadvantage greatly enhancing the chances of social exclusion later in life.
- The quality of service provision for young children and their families varies enormously across localities and districts. In particular, services for the under fours were often missed out of Government Schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> Origins of the Sure Start Programme: October 2001

Also, there was no single blueprint for the ideal set of effective early interventions but that it should share the following characteristics:

- Involve parents as well as children
- Avoid labelling “problem families”
- Target multiple factors e.g. not just education or health
- Last long enough to make a real difference
- Based on consultation and involvement of parents and local communities
- Culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of children and parents

The programme proposed was “Sure Start”, involving expenditure of about £200m a year. Sure Start represents a commitment to investing in children long term.

Therefore, the ultimate aim of Sure Start is....

To work with parents to be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children – particularly those who are disadvantaged – so that they can flourish at home and when they get to school, and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young people.

**Objectives**

Currently, there are four main objectives for Sure Start, each with targets, which are being measured through the National evaluation (this local evaluation steers clear of these issues).

1. Improving social and emotional development
2. Improving health
3. Improving children’s ability to learn
4. Strengthening families and communities

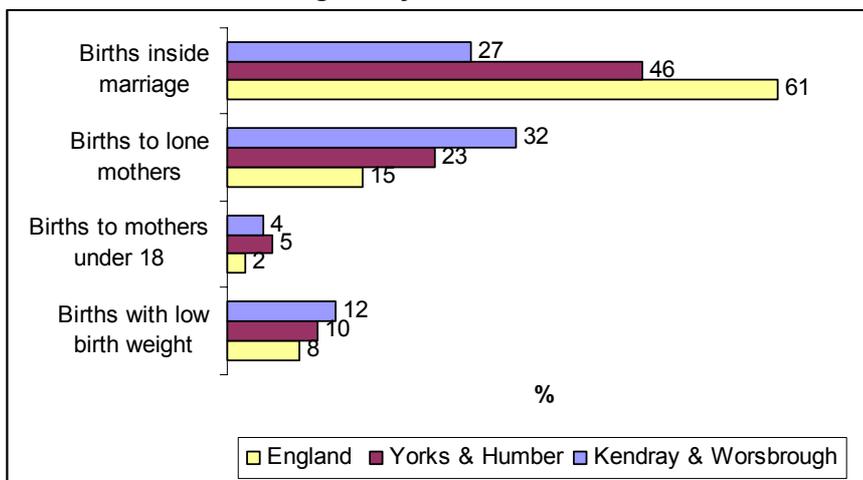
All Sure Start activities and services aim to comply with at least one of these objectives.

**1.2.2 Characteristics of Sure Start local programme areas<sup>2</sup>**

The National Evaluation of Sure Start has examined the demographics of Sure Start areas, comparing areas with the region they are in as well as England as a whole.<sup>3</sup> These comparisons bring interesting results.

The Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start area has a low number of births inside marriage (27%) compared with Sure Start areas in Yorkshire and Humber (46%) and England (61%). Correspondingly, the Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start area has a high number of births to lone mothers (32%) compared with Yorkshire and Humber (23%) and England (15%). (See chart 1.)

**Chart 1: Births in differing family circumstances %**



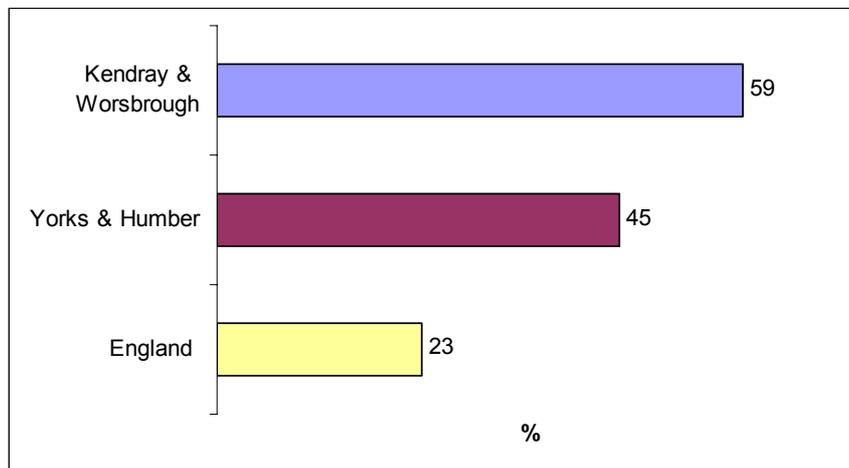
<sup>2</sup> NESS evaluation; July 2003

<sup>3</sup> Yorkshire and Humber average contains the demographics from within Sure Start areas. The figures for England include all areas.

## Economic factors

Chart 2 shows that six in ten children (59%) aged 0 – 3 in the Kendray and Worsbrough area are in workless households, compared with over four in ten in Yorkshire and Humber (45%) and almost a quarter in England (23%). This suggests that Kendray and Worsbrough is operating in one of the more deprived Sure Start areas.

**Chart 2: Children aged 0 – 3 in workless households %**



### 1.3 Local context

Kendray and Worsbrough was the first Sure Start programme to be introduced in Barnsley, with the Programme Manager being appointed in January 2001, and the programme slowly getting up and running later in that year. This was the second wave of Sure Start. Subsequently, four more programmes have been introduced in Barnsley during the following waves. Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start started out as Kendray and Bank End Sure Start, the name change occurring in October 2001 to represent the extended area that the Sure Start programme covered. This expansion was due to the decline in population in the area (and therefore the decline in 0-3 year olds), as the programme was intended to fund 604 children, but the number of eligible children in the catchment area fell to around 350.

Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start<sup>4</sup> have their own local vision.

Sure Start, a great start for Kendray and Worsbrough, where children and parents feel:-

- **happy**
- **healthy**
- **well supported**

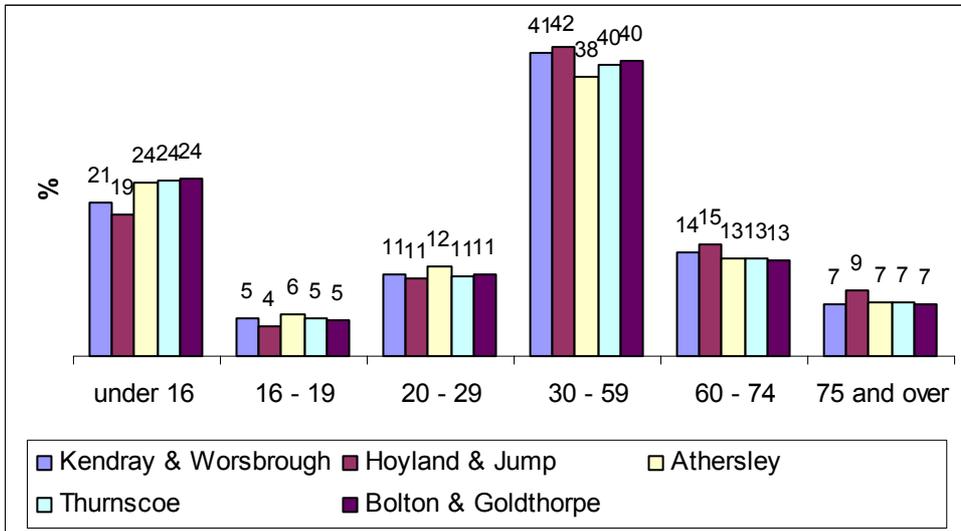
This is a simple, achievable and powerful vision. The obvious focus from this is the importance of outward facing staff to be happy and well supported as positive vibes are likely to be passed on to families surrounding them.

<sup>4</sup> Sure Start Kendray and Bank End Delivery Plan (September 2000)

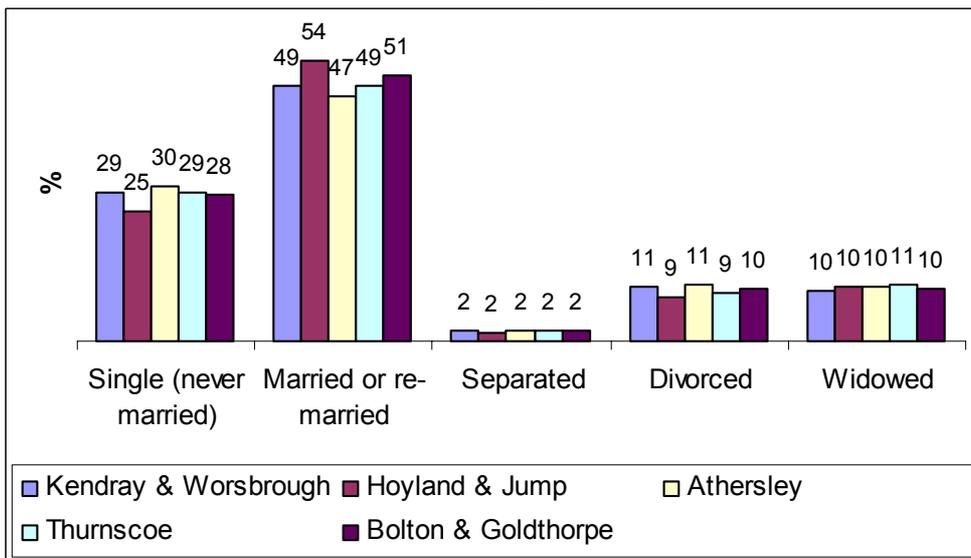
### 1.3.1 Comparisons between the Barnsley Sure Start programmes<sup>5</sup>

The five programmes in Barnsley are all facing similar problems with regard to the context within which they are working. There is evidence that in targeting these areas, Sure Start is appropriately addressing the area's needs.

**Chart 3: Resident population by age in each of the Sure Start areas (%)**

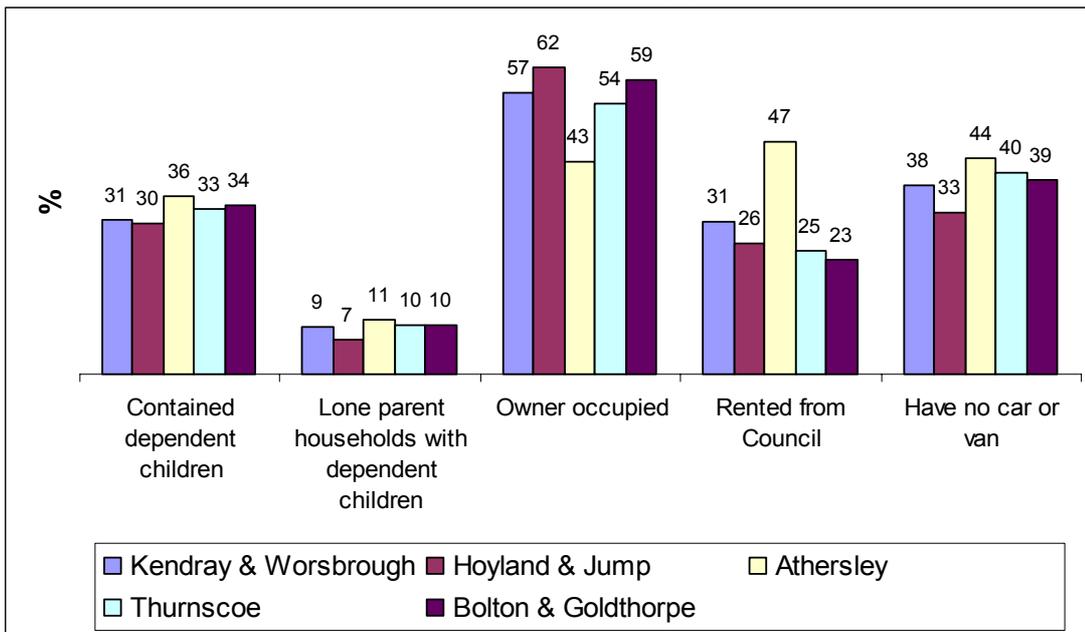


**Chart 4: Marital status of residents (over age 16) in each of the Sure Start areas (%)**



<sup>5</sup> Figures are derived from the 2001 census, available at <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>.  
 The figures for Kendray and Worsbrough includes Ardley, Park and Worsbrough wards  
 Hoyland and Jump includes Hoyland East and Hoyland West  
 Thurnscoe includes Dearne Thurnscoe ward  
 Goldthorpe and Bolton is covered by Dearne South and Dearne Thurnscoe wards

**Chart 5: Households in each of the Sure Start areas (%)**



Hoyland and Jump appears marginally less deprived than the other areas, with more residents owning their own home. Athersley seems more deprived, with a higher percentage renting their house from the council, a higher percentage having no car or van. As can clearly be seen from the local statistics, Kendray and Worsbrough is facing similar social issues to the other Barnsley Sure Start programmes.

## 1.4 Structure

Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start's lead agency and accountable body is Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (Social Services Department).

Partner agencies are funded through Sure Start grant which is administered via the Social Services Department. Workers operating under the Sure Start programme are funded under Sure Start grant and some receive line management and clinical supervision support from the host agency. Partners to the programme comprise of workers from the following agencies:

- Barnsley Social Services Department
- Barnsley District General Hospital NHS Trust
- Barnsley Primary Care Trust
- Sub-committee of the Pre-School Learning Alliance
- Barnsley MBC Education Directorate
- NSPCC Barnsley Schools Service
- Barnsley Development Agency

Staff are employed by different organisations: Barnsley MBC (some are on secondment from a former position with the council), Barnsley Primary Care Trust, Barnsley District General Hospital NHS Trust, NSPCC.

Service level agreements between organisations are in place due to the structure of the programme.

There are 607 eligible children in the Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start area now that the programme has extended to cover a wider area. The catchment area covers the neighbourhoods of Kendray, Stairfoot, Bank End, Worsbrough Dale, Worsbrough Bridge and Ward Green. The size of the area covered makes it difficult to serve all neighbourhoods from one location so outreach activities are important.

The core structure of the programme covers general management, outreach and home visiting, support for families and parents, support for good quality play, learning and childcare, primary and community healthcare including advice about family health and child development, and support for children and parents with special needs, including access to specialised services.

## 2 Findings from Local Evaluation

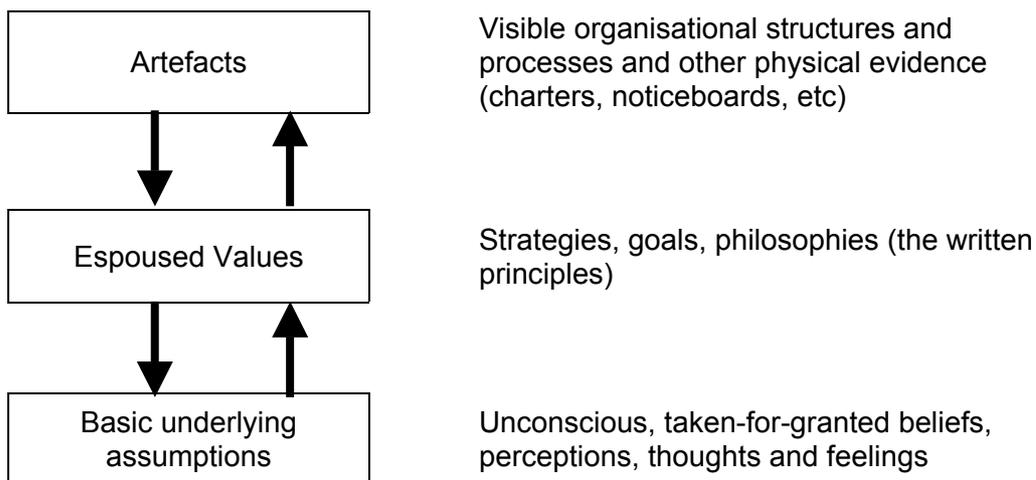
### 2.1 Cultural Audit

#### 2.1.1 Methodology

A cultural audit was undertaken to look at how well Sure Start principles are being implemented at Kendray and Worsbrough. This audit looked at different levels throughout the organisation

#### LEVELS OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

[Source: Schein, E.H., (1985)]



The initial stage involved two members of staff from RBA research spending time at the Management Centre and Community House, to observe and gain an understanding of the top two levels. The second stage comprised of six interviews with staff at a variety of levels and based at varying locations, the Management Centre, Community House, and also staff not based at the Sure Start sites. The interviews were a combination of face to face and telephone. The third stage involved the analysis of information gathered to develop an awareness of the impact of the guiding principles and to identify any mismatches between the stated principles and the current activity at Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start.

#### 2.1.2 Findings

##### *Desired State*

The desired state is derived from Sure Start's mission, as well as Kendray and Worsbrough's principles:

*An environment where families will feel happy, healthy and well supported.*

There is a strong external focus, however it is clear that this will stem from the internal environment.

## Stories

Staff say that, due to the programme being relatively new when they started, there was a lack of history, with only staff at Community House having stories to pass on:

Community House

***“The mini bus broke down on a trip to IKEA [to furnish Community House] and they didn’t get home till midnight”***

There is more familiarity between health staff than between staff coming from other professions as many have worked together before, which seems to have created a greater bond, probably influencing the culture at Community House:

Community House

***“Everyone is caring, they have come from caring roles.....it was easy to fit in”***

It was a greater culture shock for those moving to the management centre ***“I was used to an open-plan office...it’s claustrophobic”***

## Symbols

Management Centre

***Objective driven, with aims and objectives clearly visible on the walls, business - like. Cramped office space, not much sunlight.***

Community House

***There are welcome signs on the office doors, thank you cards on the wall, all creating a warm and friendly atmosphere. Cramped but cosy offices, plants, well used notice board - a mix of formal and informal notices.***

Despite both of the main locations being cramped, they are very different, emphasising their differing focus. The Management Centre focus is getting results and performance management ***“We are governed by figures....target steered”***. This is more difficult for people from the health profession to comprehend as this is different to the way they are used to working.

## Routines and Rituals

Management Centre

Birthdays list: ***“Everybody is on this, but that’s about it for the whole team”***

***“We often don’t leave the office all day....there’s nowhere to go”***

***“We define it as a prison cell....you look out of the office and only see the bank [of grass] outside”***

***“We have Teambuilding days which are great on the day, but there is no follow up. They don’t happen often enough”***

***“More social events would be good for teambuilding”***

Community House

***“We have lunch together most days”***

***“We have a birthday list, share cake”***

***“I would like there to be more planning meetings, they should be longer or more frequent”***

Staff funded under Sure Start but not working from the main centres

***“Putting my Sure Start T-shirt on makes me feel part of the team”***

***“Some health visitors do not feel part of the Sure Start Team as they are not based here”***

Those in the management centre tend to emphasise the need for more social activities across Sure Start.

Staff based in Community House have their own social activities, but say that they would like more work related meetings with the rest of the Sure Start staff, as many feel that there is a lack of understanding of each others' roles. Such meetings would also provide an opportunity to air grievances, ***"They [meetings] stop grievances from getting serious"***.

## Organisation

Management Centre

***"It's like working in a mini when you need the space of an estate car"***

***"It helped to build our little team, but we're separated from the others so it doesn't really count"***

***"There is no direct communication between the groups in Sure Start"***

***"It's really hard to concentrate.... telephones and printers going, people talking"***

Community House

***"I would like a larger room where you don't have to climb over each other"***

***"We're like a playbus.....mobile, out there"***

Staff funded under Sure Start but not working from the main centres

***"We need better management communication"***

***"I feel quite isolated"***

***"I would like to see a better relationship with the outreach team"***

For many office-based staff, the space available in which to work is an issue.

Interestingly, isolation is a two-way issue. Those not working from the Sure Start offices (and in some cases without a permanent base) feel isolated from the rest of the programme. Those in the management centre feel isolated from the 'coal-face' service deliverers and also observe the lack of cohesiveness across the programme.

## Controls

Management Centre

***"We are perceived to be up in this ivory tower and everybody else is out there"***

***"Everyone is viewed as important, there are just tiers of responsibility"***

Community House

***"Everybody is important"***

***"I hope that everybody is treated equally...I believe this is true"***

***"I feel valued by the people I work with"***

Staff funded under Sure Start but not working from the main centres

***"I have two managers with different styles....and I have to please both"***

***"Many don't understand the complexity of each other's roles"***

The isolation of the management centre is picked up again, but the generally positive management is also recognised and valued.

The secondment nature of working with employees sub-contracted from other non-Sure Start bodies does lead to conflict for many staff.

### 2.1.3 Summary

Staff at Sure Start say they are proud to work for Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start, ***“I really feel that we’re breaking down barriers in the community”***. As outward facing staff are so important in giving visitors to Sure Start premises the right impression, the impression is positive, ***“I’m a happy person working in a happy place with happy people and happy parents”***.

However, there are some cracks in the organisation’s structure which are showing through and which may be chipping away at this positivism. The split locations cause a problem for most staff as they feel that this hinders communication and the understanding of other team’s roles. Most feel closeness with the management or the health team rather than Sure Start as a whole, which makes it more difficult for them to strive towards the same goals.

An issue in both locations is space, where for some it helps bonding ***“It has been like musical chairs”***, and for others it causes an annoyance - they find it difficult to concentrate. There is recognition that problems in communication and space may be solved if they are able to relocate into a building for everyone.

Staff not based at the main Kendray and Worsbrough locations feel less part of the team, as they don’t often see other members of staff. They feel that it is difficult working under two managers, as meetings and events often clash and the individual finds it hard to determine where their priorities should lie. More communication between managers (e.g. in arranging training days and teambuilding days on different days of the week) would benefit staff

Some staff favour more meetings as an opportunity for giving clarification and focus.

## **2.2 Staff and Partnership Workshop**

### **2.2.1 Methodology**

RBA organised a workshop in order to listen to the viewpoints of staff involved at various levels of the organisation, and partnership project managers. The workshop was held away from any Sure Start locations at Barnsley Rugby Union Football Club, on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2003.

The workshop was split into two sessions, morning and afternoon, both three hours duration. The morning session was attended by 15 members of staff from Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start (both directly employed and from partnership organisations). The afternoon session was attended by six of the Sure Start staff from the first session, and five managers from the Partnership organisations (fewer than desired).

The structure of the workshop is reflected in the following notes.

### **2.2.2 The Good Things About Working For - or With - Sure Start**

When asked to say what they believe to be the good things about working for, or working alongside, Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start all those participating in the workshops speak positively of their experience.

Staff describe working for Sure Start as a 'new approach' which is challenging and allows them to move away from the bureaucracy that is a key factor within their employing agencies. They say they enjoy the flexibility that comes from being involved in a 'non-mainstream' service. They say they have opportunities to be creative and that this, in turn, gives rise to the ability to 'unlock doors'. They say they are able to take the initiative in a way that is not usually possible and that this leads to a less restrictive way of working and a will to 'make it happen'.

Staff believe that working for Sure Start means they are 'closer to the ground' and more approachable (for local families), which means they have the opportunity to have a greater impact through their work.

Critically, most staff describe having good communications and a good support network, and they also say they have the opportunity to learn new personal skills, which leads to greater personal satisfaction and fulfilment.

It would be unrealistic to assume that all was well across the programme. Partners say they see Sure Start, essentially, as being both a catalyst and a facilitator, directing services to families in need. They describe the programme as working in 'different ways', which challenges some current practices. They say that Sure Start appears to have clarity regarding its key targets and that it is very rewarding to see it happen 'on the ground'. They hail Sure Start's aspiration in empowering parents and believe its longer-term approach to problem-solving to be well founded.

Partners feel that a strength in the Sure Start structure is the representation of other agencies, both in its service delivery and its strategic decision-making, and they suggest this means there are greater possibilities for Sure Start to have access to resources to meet need that has been identified through its work on the ground.

### **2.2.3 Problems Identified**

Staff and partners speak positively of the experience of working with, or alongside, Sure Start, however, it would be unrealistic to assume that 'everything in the garden is rosie!' Staff often speak of 'problems' when, in fact, what they are dealing with is a *symptom* of a greater problem – which creates 'problems' for them in their day-to-day work.

In identifying 'problems', therefore, staff and partner agencies were asked to think beyond the immediate issue identified and explore whether this is the problem itself, or merely a symptom of a problem located elsewhere. In doing this, participants were being encouraged to focus away from some of the day-to-day 'niggles' that can often create great frustration in the working day, and place greater emphasis on the 'bigger picture' regarding Sure Start and how it relates to its staff and its partners.

Many of the problems raised by staff are well known and shared throughout the programme, but some others are less transparent. All staff recognise the problems encountered by lack of space and the frustrations that arise from

the team being split across more than one site; and most share the difficulties of being employed by one agency whilst working in another, which leads to confusion regarding levels of responsibility and delegated authority.

Staff say that despite the 'freedom and creativity' that is experienced from working for Sure Start, working from different agency perspectives can prove restrictive. There are different decision-making/approval processes at play, on a day-to-day basis and the need to share data is ever-present, but seldom realised. This can cause delays in service delivery on the ground, which is difficult for staff to deal with and for 'clients' to understand.

There is a feeling amongst senior staff that planning tends to be 'reactive' rather than 'proactive' and this may be borne from a sense that Sure Start is a 'project' and therefore 'short-term'. Staff also believe that there tends to be a lack of 'ownership' of the programme amongst partner agencies, which exacerbates a perception of a 'short-term' approach and causes difficulty for staff with regard to clinical supervision, in particular, and management supervision, in general. Staff believe that clarity is needed with regard to professional roles and individual expectations.

Other issues that staff raise as 'problems' relate to external factors, such as involving fathers within the programme's activities and also the cultural divide between the two distinct areas that this Sure Start programme covers, i.e. Kendray, on the one hand, and Worsbrough, on the other.

The 'problems' that partners raise stem from a limited understanding of what, exactly, Sure Start is set up to do, and little knowledge of the real impact it is having. What they tend to experience is an expectation that the work Sure Start generates will be 'absorbed' into their normal daily responsibilities, but with no evidence of any benefit that doing so may bring. In short, most partners (not directly involved in the delivery of Sure Start activities) appear to see Sure Start as, at best, an enigma, and at worst, a burden!

As with staff, partners identify the inherent difficulties in trying to 'share' information, despite having a clear understanding of the wisdom of doing so. They highlight the difficulties inherent in the different ways of working within each of the agencies; exacerbated by the need to adhere to different protocols, administrative procedures, timescales etc.

Many of the partner agencies have gone through significant structural change in recent times and this has left some Sure Start staff feeling isolated and, in some cases, unsupported by their employers. The absence of effective clinical supervision is identified as an issue that needs particular attention and this has implications, both for the employing agency and for Sure Start.

Some partners suggest that Sure Start should have an explicit 'exit' strategy. This demonstrates the short-term expectation that some partners have of Sure Start and adds to the sense of lack of 'ownership' described earlier. Partners appear to be almost resisting Sure Start. In some cases they appear not to be embracing the role and purpose of the programme because there is a reservation regarding the longer-term impact on their own services if an expectation of what services Sure Start can provide is built up. Some partners appear to be doing only what they 'have to' to ensure that Sure Start can function, in case they have to absorb all of Sure Start's activities in the future.

Partners say they have little information about what is going on within the programme, other than what is fed back anecdotally through their own staff. They say that this hampers their capacity to fully support the programme and this, in turn, leads to the difficulties that Sure Start staff say they encounter.

Partners also appear to be uninformed regarding some of Sure Start's activity targets, and frustrated about others. In some cases, staff appear to have conflicting expectations placed upon them and several parties can appear to 'squabble' over targets.

Giving staff and partners the opportunity to focus in on the problems proved to be a cathartic exercise and raised several key issues that need to be addressed if Sure Start is to go forward in strength. Given the opportunity, then, to devise potential solutions to the problems identified elicited some very helpful suggestions. All was not 'doom and gloom' at the end of the exercise. Both staff and partners had a great deal to consider as a result of these opportunities and in doing so, have given Sure Start an excellent 'steer' into the future.

#### **2.2.4 Some Ideas for Solutions to the Problems**

Given the opportunity to generate solutions, neither staff nor partners are short of ideas. Having been asked to avoid the natural tendency to generate self-limiting ideas, which come from a perception that 'there's not much

point because nothing will happen'; both groups pooled a range of very positive suggestions and generated lists of ideas that are eminently achievable – where there is a will to do it.

Regarding the 'internal' problems that have been outlined above, staff feel that a major step forward must be for the concerns about management structure and support to be *acknowledged*, both within Sure Start and amongst all (relevant) partners, i.e. those who have staff working in the programme. They feel that this can be achieved through better 'ownership' of the programme at a strategic level, which will permeate through to supporting staff at an operational level.

Some suggest that having staff directly employed by Sure Start could help to resolve the problem of staff feeling unsupported, whilst others believe that permanent funding of their posts within their employing agency would relieve some of the stress caused by uncertainty about longer-term employment. Although staff recognise some of the constraints in both of these suggestions, they feel that the current situation must be tackled because these circumstances can lead to some staff feeling very unsettled – which, in turn, can affect their performance.

Staff are very keen to come together within one building because they believe this may iron out some of the communication problems that exist and will help to build a 'team' identity within the programme. They say they want to streamline many of the protocols and procedures between each service and each employing agency and they would also like to see an end to the current 'service agreements' which lead to a climate of 'working to (preconceived) targets', as opposed to 'meeting identified need in the community'.

The key desire amongst the staff involved in this workshop in achieving the goal of 'strategic ownership', is to raise the profile of the Sure Start programme amongst all partner agencies, as well as stakeholders. They believe that there needs to be more, proactive Public Relations work undertaken, (both internally and externally) in order to tell the 'good news' stories about what Sure Start is achieving. They believe that all relevant managers should be regularly and proactively updated on Sure Start activities and achievements, and that there should be incentives for the key managers to attend the multi-agency forum. It may be some time before robust, quantitative data are available to demonstrate Sure Start's effectiveness and so qualitative data must be used in the interim. In short, everyone involved in Sure Start should be 'spreading the word' – *and be proud to do so!*

Evidence can be gathered locally from Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start, as well as from the other Barnsley programmes. National findings can also be used to ensure the 'wheel is not reinvented'. There is greater strength in numbers and so opportunities for all five programmes to 'speak with one voice' (despite the differences in the way each is constituted) should be maximised. Staff believe an overall co-ordinating post for the three programmes may achieve this.

Partners share most of the suggestions that staff make regarding their desire for improved 'Public Relations', but their motivation is different. Partners want to know what Sure Start is, what it's doing and, critically, what *benefit* they get from all the extra work that has to be 'absorbed' by their own agency because of the Sure Start programme.

They want to see the evidence that Sure Start is 'making a difference' and if the programme can provide this, partners will be more proactively supportive of the aims and objectives of the programme, and of their own staff working within it.

They would like to see uniformity in reporting/collecting data and uniformity of protocols. They suggest that Job Descriptions and Person Specifications could be revised to achieve better clarity of roles and of professional relationships within the programme.

When looking at suggestions to improve external relations and the take-up of Sure Start's services amongst fathers, again, some very positive ideas are put forward and these are listed below:

- Approach Youth Sport Trust for ideas
- Crossover work with sports development workers
- Recruit male staff
- Look at role models, e.g. Dearne Valley Dads
- Services delivery on evenings and weekends, i.e. more access to families
- Work-based training for dads, e.g. DIY, gardening, car maintenance etc
- Marketing, e.g. on the radio with a male voice
- Promote Sure Start at the sports development summer scheme events
- Approach Barnsley football club, e.g. 'play with the players' etc
- Go into 'male territory', e.g. pubs and clubs

Ideas to break down the 'barriers' that stop Kendray and Worsbrough residents from joining together include:

- Merge 'Have a Say' groups together
- 51 Park Road a shop front Sure Start premise
- Volunteers working together
- Kendray neighbourhood management
- Use the minibus to organise trips out together
- Open a new centre at Bank End

### **2.2.5 Summary of the Workshop Findings**

Staff say they like working for Sure Start because, to a degree, it allows them to work in a more creative and proactive way, without being restricted by the 'bureaucracy' of their employing agency. There is, however, a down side to this in the form of the difficulties in identifying relevant line management and decision-making support, as well as confusion with regard to the provision of clinical supervision.

Problems identified that relate to 'internal' factors focus on structure, decision-making routes, mechanisms for delegated authority, location of staff, staff clinical supervision and staff management supervision. Some staff feel very supported and some feel very isolated. In short – there is a complex matrix that needs some clarity. Most of those staff involved in the workshops feel this stems from lack of knowledge, and even awareness, of the role and function of the Sure Start programme amongst key partner agencies.

External factors include challenging the culture that leads to getting fathers' lack of involvement with their children and in the programme. Also, local rivalries between Kendray and Worsbrough need to be overcome because each area has a tendency to feel the programme is intended for the other!

Most of the detailed solutions focus around the perceived need for the Sure Start programme to publicise itself, both internally and externally. It needs to engage in both PR and marketing, 'above the line' and 'below the line'.

Staff talk about the need to share information and have common assessments and protocols. Along with representatives of the partner agencies involved in the workshops, staff feel that if there could be more 'strategic ownership' of the Sure Start programme, 'operational ownership' would follow bringing about a willingness to resolve some of the operational problems that staff currently deal with.

Staff and partners both believe there is a need for 'evidence' to demonstrate Sure Start's effectiveness because this contributes to the programme's capacity to spread 'good news stories'. This will help to promote the work of the programme externally – to ensure its continued success; and internally – to increase the willingness of partner agencies to support, and in turn promote, the work of their own staff who are working as members of the Sure Start team.

## 2.3 Quantitative Survey with Parents and Carers

### 2.3.1 Methodology

Between the 19th and 25th of August 2003, face-to-face interviews were carried out with 107 respondents eligible for Sure Start services. The interviews were carried out by experienced interviewers going door-to-door in the localities of Kendray, Bank End and Worsbrough.

The number of interviews achieved produced the following results. Achieving 107 results out of a population of approximately 700, means that the results given are +/-9% at the 95% confidence level. This means that if we had interviewed all possible respondents then we can be 95% confident that the result for the same question would be within 9% of that achieved.

Sub-group analysis is rarely reported due to the sample sizes involved, however significant differences by area (Kendray against Worsbrough) are included.

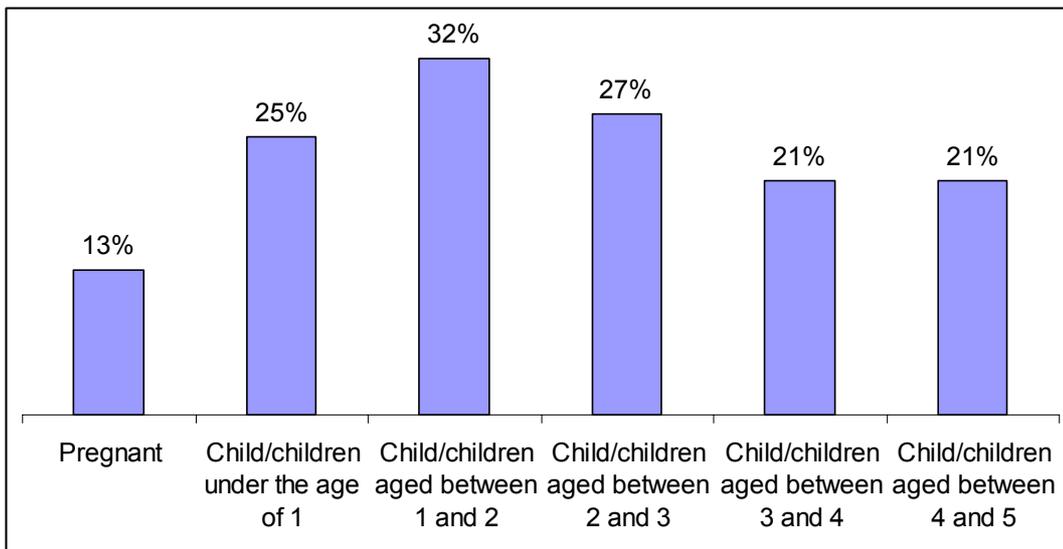
In some cases, responses to individual questions may not total 100%. This could be due to one or more of the following reasons: respondents may have been able to choose more than one category, percentages are given to the nearest whole number the rounding may not result in a total of 100%, respondents may have opted out of a particular question, resulting in some "no replies" (which are not quoted unless significant).

A full set of responses are included as an appendix to this report.

### 2.3.2 Profile of Respondents

Nine out of ten respondents interviewed (93%) describe themselves as parents/guardians, with a further one in twenty (5%) identifying themselves as grandparents. One in eight (13%) of those interviewed were pregnant at the time of the interview.

**Profile of respondents chart 1:  
Which of the categories on this card apply to you?  
(Base = all respondents, 107)**



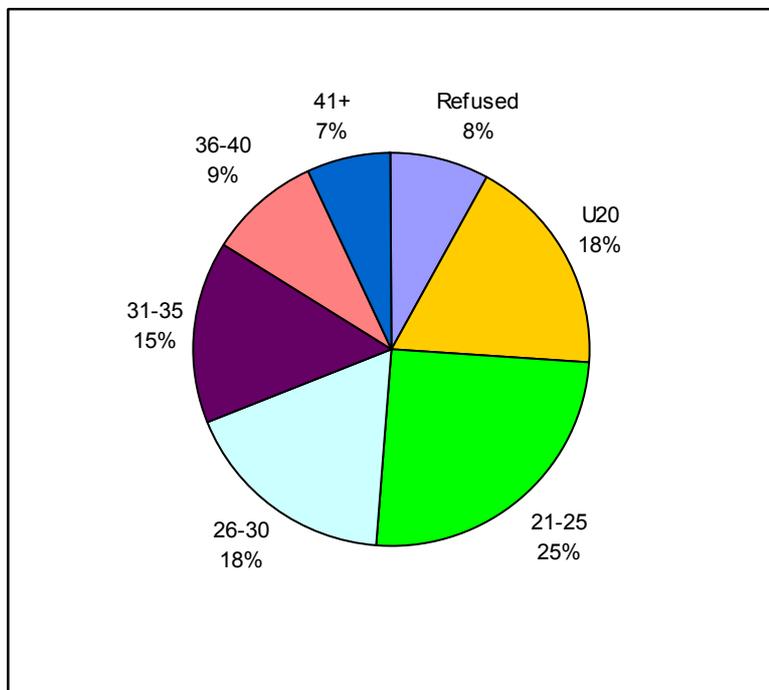
Although children aged over 4 do not currently qualify for Sure Start activities, parents/carers of those aged between 4 and 5 were interviewed as their child would have been eligible for Sure Start services within the last twelve months.

Over one third of the sample (34%) fit more than one of the above categories.

Four out of ten of those interviewed (41%) reside in Kendray, with the remainder (59%) resident in Worsbrough. This approximates to the breakdown of eligible households within the two wards.

The age profile of those interviewed is as shown in the following chart:

**Profile of respondents chart 2:  
What was your age on your last birthday?  
(Base = all respondents, 107)**



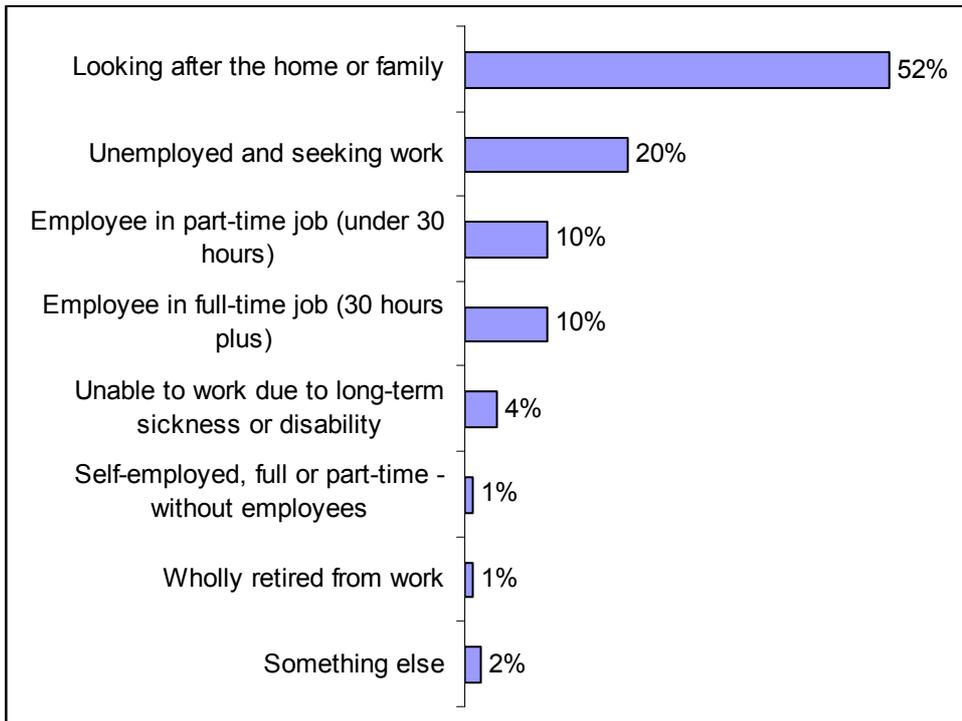
Almost half of those interviewed (48%) say the child/children they are responsible for are being brought up in single-parent households.

Six out of ten of the sample (60%) are responsible for only one child aged under 4 (for half of these people, this is their only child). Half of those interviewed (48%) are also responsible for children above the age of four.

One in five of the parents/carers interviewed (19%) say they have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity. All but one of those interviewed class themselves as white British.

Over half of the sample (52%) look after the home or family full-time and one in five (21%) are in employment (full-time, part-time or self-employed). A more detailed breakdown can be seen in the following chart:

**Profile of respondents chart 3:  
Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?  
(Base = all respondents, 107)**



Almost all of those interviewed had heard of Sure Start prior to the interview taking place (97% say they had).

**2.3.3 Services**

Parents/carers were asked to say how satisfied/dissatisfied they are with various elements of provision for under 4's in the area with the following results:

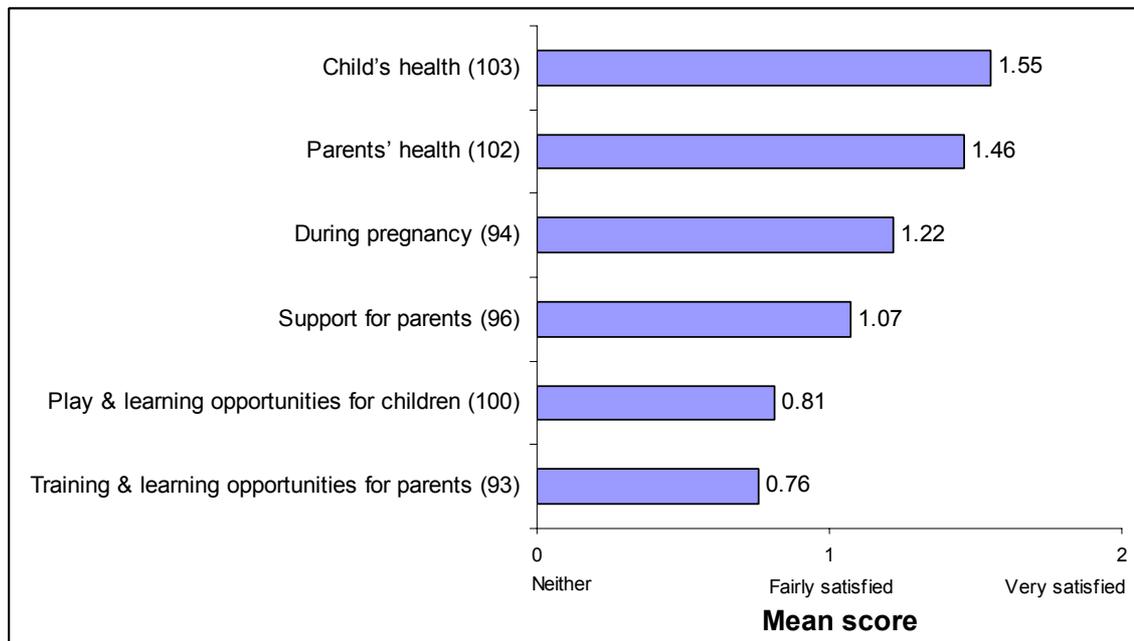
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	
Child's health	59	32	2	1	1	%
Parents' health	56	30	7	1	1	%
During pregnancy	43	32	7	1	5	%
Support for parents	40	30	11	3	6	%
Play & learning opportunities for children	38	27	8	11	8	%
Training & learning opportunities for parents	27	31	14	11	4	%

By applying a straightforward scoring system<sup>6</sup>, we can derive mean scores giving us an indication of the relative strength of each service area:

**Services chart 1:**

**For each of the following areas, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the support available in the Kendray and Worsbrough area?**

**(Base = all respondents, mean score derived from those expressing an opinion)**



It is clear that there are high levels of satisfaction with regards to what is seen as being health provision. Nine out of ten parents/carers (91%) are satisfied with the support available in relation to child health and almost as many (86%) are satisfied with the support for the health of parents.

Three quarters of parents/carers (75%) are satisfied with support available during pregnancy (although one in twenty, 5%, say they are very dissatisfied).

Although none of the service areas merits an overall negative mean score, the areas where there is markedly less satisfaction are “play and learning opportunities for children” and “training and learning opportunities for parents”.

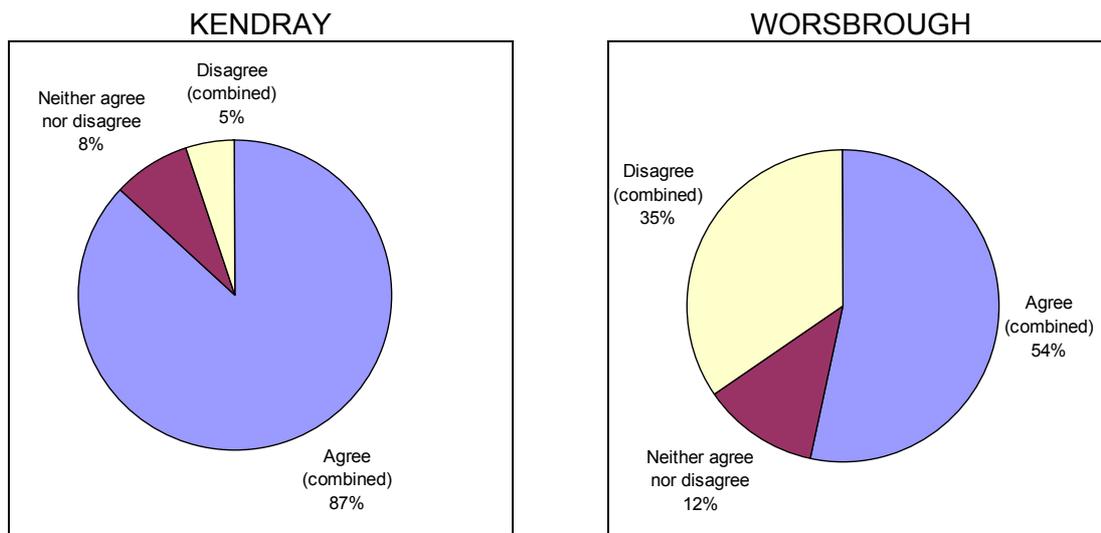
<sup>6</sup> Two points are awarded for “very satisfied”, 1 point for “fairly satisfied”, 0 points for “neither”, -1 points for “fairly dissatisfied” and -2 points for “very dissatisfied”. The total score for each service area is then divided by the number of parents/carers expressing an opinion (figure shown in brackets in the chart).

Two out of three parents/carers (65%) say they are satisfied with play and learning opportunities for children, however one in five (20%) are likely to say they are dissatisfied. Parents/carers in Worsbrough are four times more likely to say they are dissatisfied with this provision, compared with those living in Kendray (29% of parents/carers in Worsbrough say either fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, compared with only 7% of those in Kendray). This finding is echoed by the results from the question asking parents/carers to reflect on how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement “My child/children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities”. Overall seven out of ten parents/carers with children aged from two up to five years old (68%) agree with this statement, but by area there is considerable difference:

**Services chart 2:**

**Thinking about the last 12 months, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statement "My child/children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities"?**

**(Base = parents/carers with children aged 2-5 years, Kendray = 39, Worsbrough = 52)**



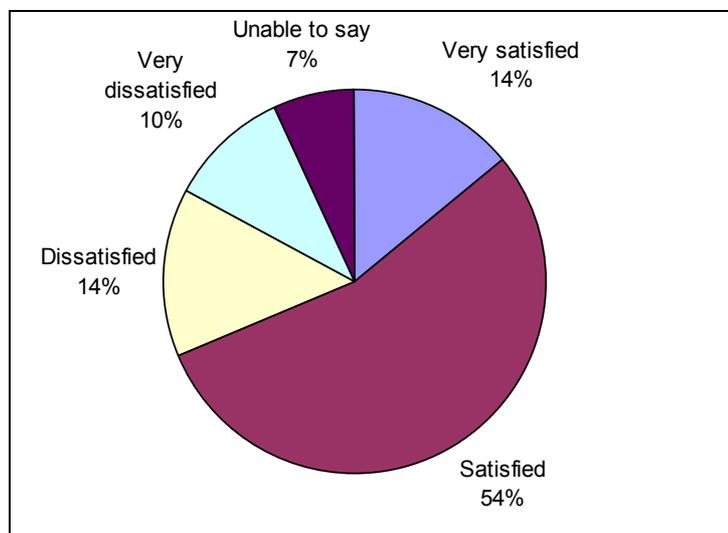
There is a marked difference by area when considering training and learning opportunities for parents. Overall, six out of ten parents/carers say they are satisfied with this provision (and 15% say dissatisfied). In Kendray, three quarters of parents/carers are satisfied, however in Worsbrough it is less than half (46%).

Parents/carers were asked for an overall opinion on local services for young children (under the age of 4). Seven out of ten (68%) say they are either satisfied or very satisfied (three-quarters of those who feel able to express an opinion).

**Services chart 3:**

**Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with local services for young children (under the age of 4)?**

**(Base = all respondents, 107)**



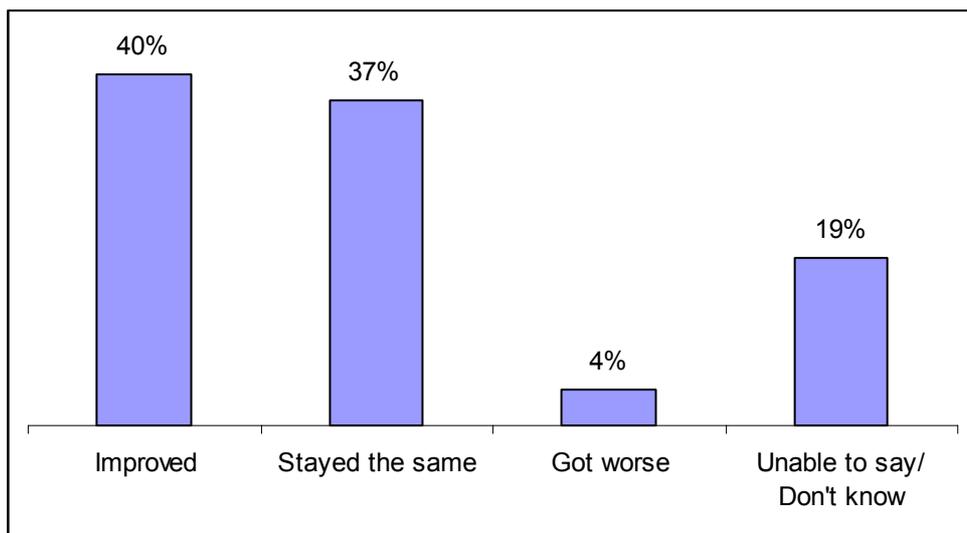
Asked how services provided locally had changed in the last 12 months, four out of ten parents/carers (40%) report that they have improved. Examples of the improvements include the increase in number of play groups, and the introduction of day trips. Sure Start's contribution is mentioned unprompted by over four out of ten (44%) of those who recognise an improvement.

A similar percentage (37%) say services have stayed the same. Only one in twenty-five (4%) say services have got worse.

**Services chart 4:**

**Over the last 12 months, would you say the services provided locally for children under the age of 4 have improved, got worse or stayed the same?**

**(Base = all respondents, 107)**



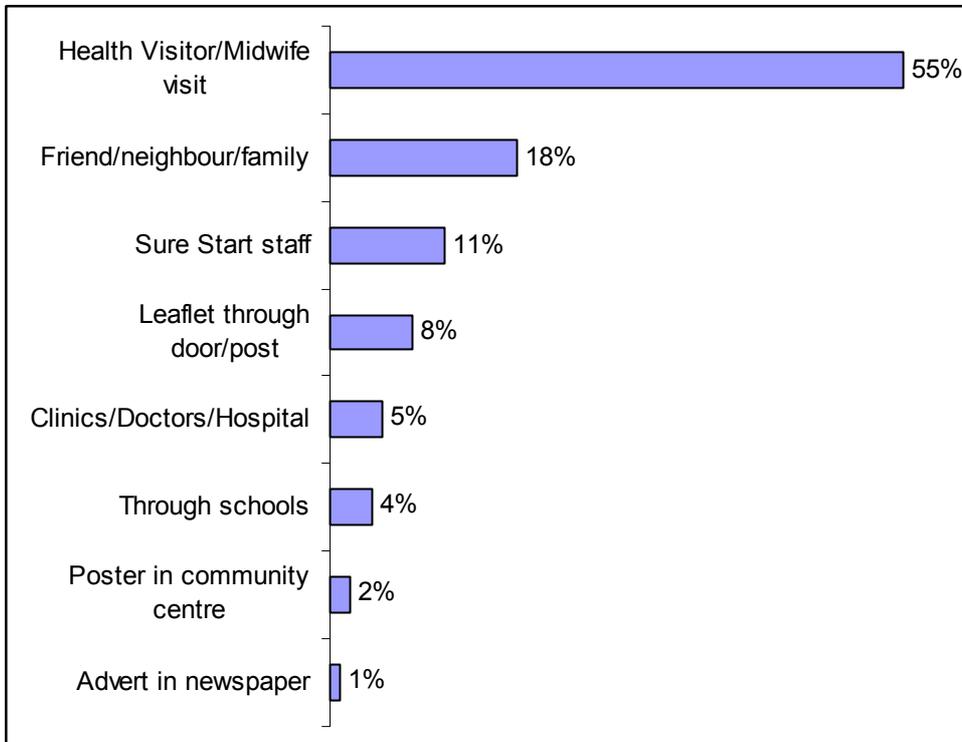
### 2.3.4 Sure Start

As previously reported, almost all parents/carers are aware of Sure Start. The most popular ways in which they recall first hearing about Sure Start are shown in the following chart:

#### Sure Start chart 1:

#### How did you first hear about Sure Start?

(Base = respondents who had heard of Sure Start prior to interview, 104)



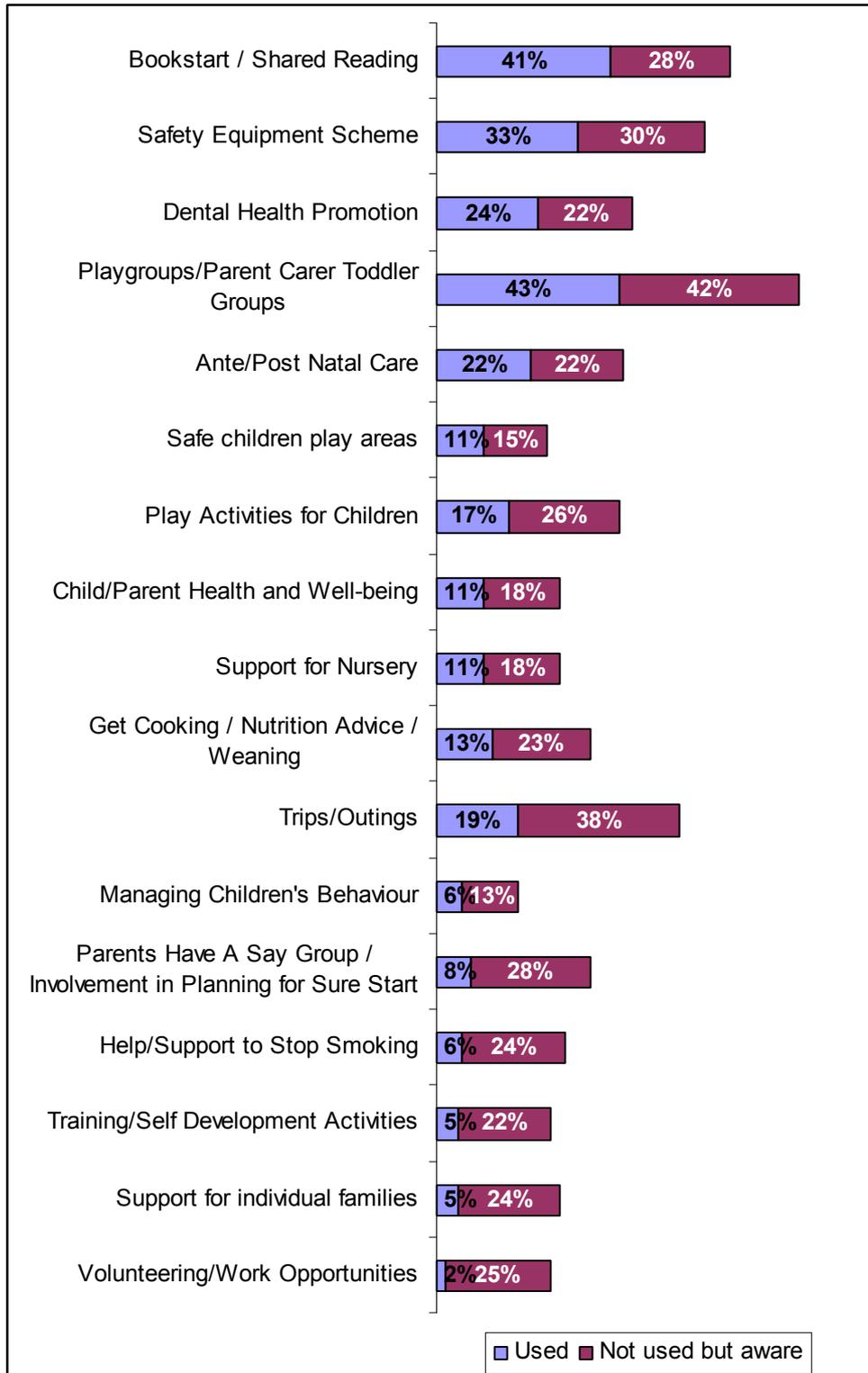
Seven out of ten parents/carers who had heard of Sure Start have registered with the organisation, and over eight out of ten of those (86%) have used at least one of the services offered by Sure Start.

Overall, awareness of, take-up of, and interest in, the range of Sure Start activities or schemes is shown in the following chart:

**Sure Start chart 2:**

**As far as you know, which of the activities or schemes on this list are available in Kendray or Worsbrough? Have you used or been involved in any of these activities or schemes?**

**(Base = all respondents, 107)**



Bookstart and the shared reading programme can be viewed as a success: seven out of ten parents/carers (69%) are aware of the service; six out of ten parents/carers who are aware of the service have made use of it.

The following services have been used by approximately half of those parents/carers aware of the initiative:

- The safety equipment scheme (almost two thirds of all parent/carers have heard of this scheme and 52% have used or been involved with it)
- The dental health promotion programme (less than half of all parents/carers are aware of this, but it is used by 52% of those who are)
- Playgroups and parent/carer toddler groups (this has the highest awareness rating and the highest use rating but is still only 51% of those parents/carers aware of the initiatives)
- Ante/post natal care (less than half of all parents/carers are aware of activities or schemes addressing this, and it is used by 50% of those who are)

At the other end of the scale, only approximately one in five parents/carers who are aware of the following services have made use of them:

- The parents' Have-A-Say group and other opportunities for involvement in the planning for Sure Start (over a third of all parents/carers are aware of the opportunities to get involved, and only 22% of those who are aware have taken up the opportunity)
- Help/support to stop smoking (three out of ten parents/carers are aware of the support available and one in five of those aware have taken up the help)
- Training and self-development activities (just over a quarter of all parents/carers are aware of the opportunities, but only 19% have been involved)
- Support for individual families (three in ten parents/carers are aware of the help on offer with 17% of them having made use of the support)

The service area with one of the lowest awareness ratings (27%) and *the* lowest use ratio is that offering voluntary and work opportunities (only 7% of those aware of the service have used it).

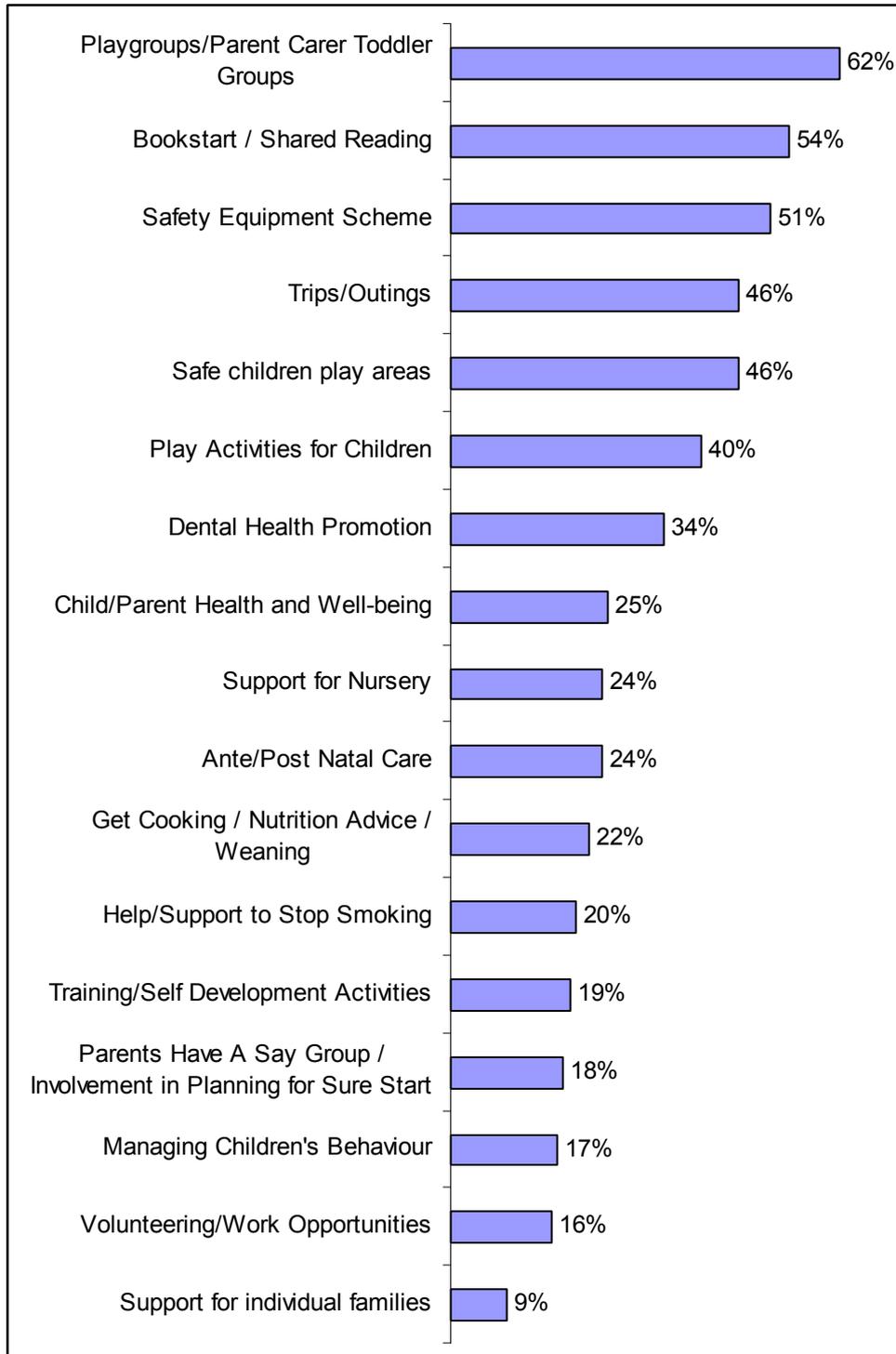
Overall, eight out of ten parents/carers (79%) say they have used at least one service.

Combining the numbers of parents/carers who either currently use or are interested in each service (making the assumption that those currently using would remain interested) produces the results shown in the following chart:

**Sure Start chart 3:**

**Have you used or been involved in any of these activities or schemes? Would you be interested in using any of these activities or schemes?**

**(Base = all respondents, 107)**



The services with the greatest future demand (each aspect being indicated by at least four out of ten parents/carers) are

- Play groups and parent/carer/toddler groups (62%)
- “Bookstart” and shared reading opportunities (54%)
- the safety equipment scheme (51%)
- trips and outings (46%)
- safe play areas for children (46%)
- play activities for children (40%)

The activity where there is the biggest divide between those who have previously made use and those who are interested is the safe children play areas. Nearly half of all parents/carers (46%) say they have used or would be interested in using such areas, but only 11% say they have actually used them in the past. This could be due to the lack of such play areas – later on provision and improvement of these areas is singled out as something else Sure Start should be doing.

There is another big gap between use/interest and actual use in trips and outings, but this may be down to the fact that opportunities to go on this year’s large-scale annual trips had not yet presented themselves.

One in eleven parents/carers (9%) say they have not used nor are they interested in any activities or schemes.

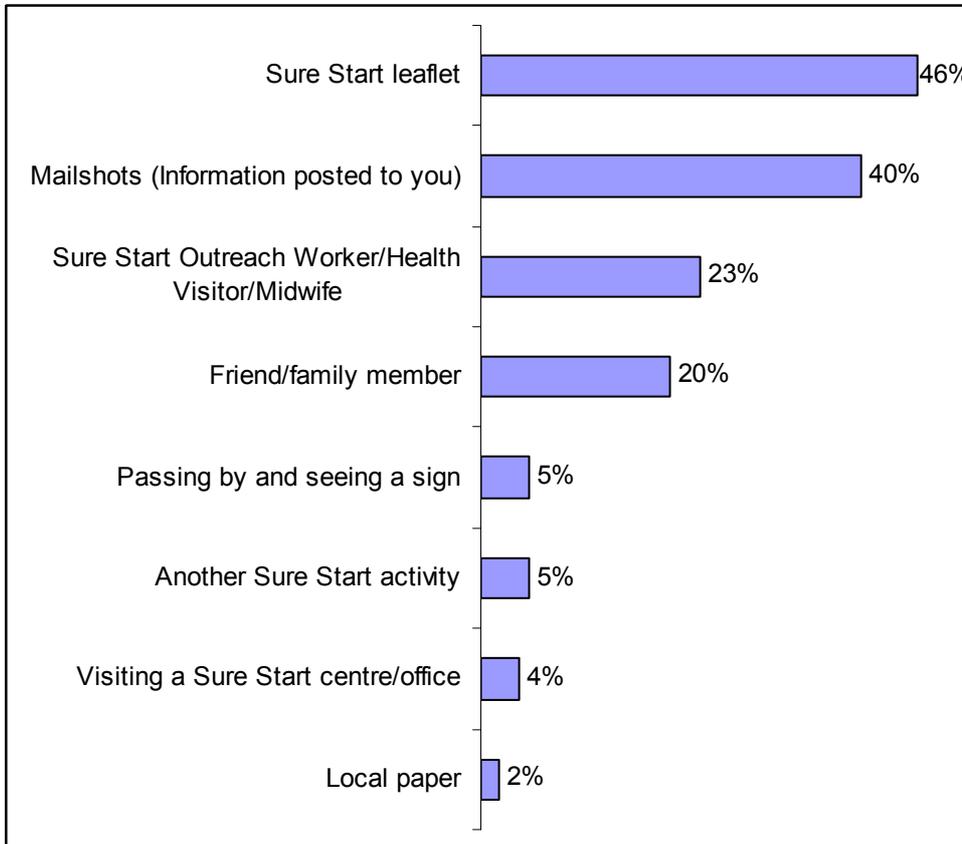
Of those parents/carers who had used a Sure Start activity, more than nine out of ten (96%) say they are satisfied with the provision (63% say very satisfied, 33% say fairly satisfied).

Users of Sure Start services say they usually find out about and get information about the activities and schemes from the sources shown in the following chart:

**Sure Start chart 4:**

**Where do you usually find out about and get information about the activities or schemes provided by Sure Start?**

**(Base = users of any Sure Start service, 84)**



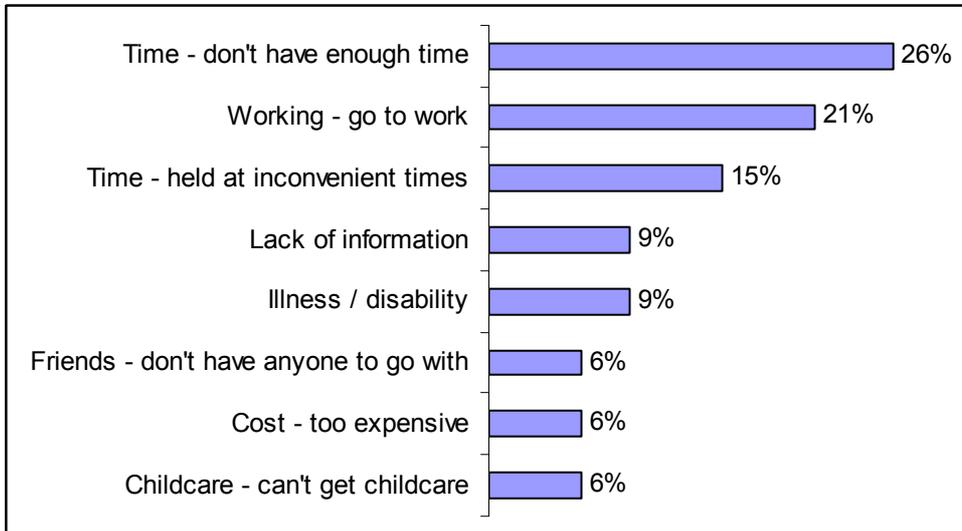
It is clear that the main source of information is material generated directly by Sure Start.

Parents and carers were asked if there is anything else Sure Start should be doing. The majority say that there is nothing else and that they recognise the good work already being done, but amongst the suggestions are providing safe play areas and improving the parks, providing more creche and play groups (both to support working parents but also as an opportunity for networking with other child carers), requests for similar services for the over-5s, and more publicity and information on what is available (including promotion of those services aimed directly at parents).

Finally, parents/carers were asked if there is anything that puts them off or prevents them from using the activities offered by Sure Start. Almost seven out of ten parents/carers (68%) say there are no barriers. For the remainder, the main barriers are shown in the following chart:

**Sure Start chart 5:**

**Is there anything that puts you off or prevents you from using the activities offered by Sure Start?  
(Base = those identifying a barrier, 34)**



Time is the major barrier to take up of services. Half of those parents/carers who identified a barrier (50%) mention that either the times are inconvenient, they don't have enough time, or they cannot partake because their time is taken up with their work (21% of the parents/carers are in employment and 48% have other children of school age).

Although not statistically significant, it may be worth noting that one of the five men interviewed mentioned that the lack of other men participating put him off attending groups.

As a final reflection on the response to Sure Start (and even allowing for the impact of the incentive offered), it is extremely encouraging that three quarters of all respondents (75%) would be interested in taking part in discussion groups to explore further the current impact of Sure Start and any opportunities for improvements.

## **2.4 Cost-Effectiveness (Part 1 – Priorities)**

### **2.4.1 Background and Methodology**

In 2002/2003, K&W SS had a budget of £694,150 and spent £543,472. In 2003/2004 the total budget amounts to £727,070. The breakdown of these budgets is carefully apportioned against the various service areas and monitored by the Finance and Performance Officer.

The question was posed, given Sure Start's four key objectives, how do K&W SS feel the budget should be split (taking into account any local perspectives)?

The question was asked of three K&W SS committees: the partnership group (made up of the Programme Manager, representatives from partnership bodies and local parents), the evaluation sub-group (the group charged with monitoring the programme's progress, made up of the Programme Manager, the Finance and Performance Officer, the Project Midwife, a representative from Barnsley PCT and a Senior Researcher), and the planning group (made up of service deliverers). The Programme Manager was the only participant common to all three groups.

Because the funding is broken down by service area, it was then necessary to reach agreement how each budgeted service area contributed to each objective. Consensus was again reached.

### **2.4.2 Desired State and Allocation across Services**

Each group reached a consensus on the ideal budget split across the four objectives, with the following findings:

OBJECTIVE	PARTNERSHIP GROUP	EVALUATION SUB-GROUP	PLANNING GROUP
Improving social and emotional well being	35%	25%	18%
Improving health	25%	35%	32%
Improving children's ability to learn	25%	25%	32%
Strengthening families and communities	15%	15%	18%

Although there is universal agreement that each objective impacts upon the others, some patterns are clear when it comes to considering the Kendray and Worsbrough project.

The area of greatest consensus is in considering "strengthening families and communities". All three groups apportion less than 20% of the total budget to this area.

"Improving children's ability to learn" is allocated between one quarter and one third of the budget (a maximum variation of just 7%).

There is a range of 10% for "improving health" from 25% to 35%. The average is 31%.

The biggest difference of opinion comes in considering "improving social and emotional well being". The budget allocated by one group is nearly twice that allocated by another. Some further debate would be desirable to see if

the programme as a whole can reach a consensus on this matter. The average is 26% but the swing is +/- 9 percentage points.

Consensus was again reached on how the individual services contributed to the four objectives, with the following averaged results (figures are %):

	Improving social and emotional well being	Improving health	Improving children's ability to learn	Strengthening families and communities
<b>CORE ACTIVITIES</b>				
Health Visiting Development Worker	30	40	13	17
Sure Start Outreach Team	33	13	40	13
NSPCC Nursery Based Worker	40	10	37	13
Child Care Team	7	3	67	23
Family Literacy / "Bookstart"	10	3	67	20
Pre-School Learning Alliance / "Totally Toddlers"	13	7	60	20
Parents & child library resources	7	7	66	20
Community Dental Service	13	63	17	7
Sure Start nutritionist / "Get Cooking"	30	50	13	7
Sure Start Project Midwife	40	47	0	13
Local Dental Practice	0	90	10	0
Smoking Cessation	7	80	7	7
Speech & Language Therapy	20	7	67	7
Community Involvement Worker / "Have a Say"	20	10	17	53
<b>ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>				
Small grants to groups	10	0	50	40
Mini bus	30	20	20	30
Outdoor play area	20	20	40	20
Main Sure Start Centre	20	20	20	40
Substance misuse initiatives	20	40	0	40
Parents' employability projects	20	10	10	60

An interesting observation is that very few services are not seen as contributing to all four objectives.

### 2.4.3 Actual Division across Budgets and Actual Spend

With this latter division applied to the budgets/actual spend, we see the following distribution:

OBJECTIVE	2002/2003 BUDGET	2002/2003 ACTUAL SPEND	2003/2004 BUDGET
Improving social and emotional well being	23	23	22
Improving health	25	23	25
Improving children's ability to learn	30	33	31
Strengthening families and communities	22	20	22

There is consistency in both budgeting and spending but let us consider how this compares with the desired state defined earlier.

### 2.4.4 Desired State versus Actual

**Improving social and emotional well being:** this is the objective that splits opinion between the three groups. The "real" figure is around 23% which is within 3% of the average of the desired state figures, however, as the range runs from 18% to 35% there is likely to be some debate as to whether this is a "comfortable" situation.

**Improving health:** the average desired state figure is 31% and only one matches the actual state figure of approximately 25%. This indicates that agreement could be reached to increase spending in direct relation to this objective.

**Improving children's ability to learn:** there is a leaning in the actual budgets/spend to favour this objective (it is gaining approximately 31% of budgets and actual spend). This matches one group's expectations but is more than desired for two of the groups (who favour 25%). This implies there could be a reduction in spending in direct relation to this objective.

**Strengthening families and communities:** the desired state amount of spending on this objective is between 15% and 18%. The unanimity of opinion implies agreement would be possible on bringing down the actual spend/budget on this objective from its current 21% figure, although it should be noted that it receives the smallest allocation in both desired and real states.

### **3. Problems Identified**

#### **3.1 National Challenges<sup>7</sup>**

Nationally, there is strong evidence that good progress is being made in Sure Start programmes, however, there are still many challenges:

- Joining up and working in partnership with other agencies and providers
- Working in multi disciplinary teams – new to many professionals
- Operating in complex areas with other initiatives

More difficult challenges

- Ensuring the main statutory agencies are represented in every programme
- Getting local evaluations started
- Facilitating greater involvement of the private sector
- Initiating systems for monitoring the ethnic composition of parents and members of the community involved in management
- Achieving a higher level of involvement of fathers in management activities.

Many of these challenges are specific to Kendray and Worsbrough, and have been identified through the various activities.

#### **3.2 The issues at Kendray and Worsbrough**

Through all of the research to date, it is possible to identify areas of concern. These breakdown into three broad areas: those arising from (and with the power to be addressed by) the programme itself (internal); those arising from working with the partner agencies (change in which the programme can only aspire to influence); and those arising from the nature of the situation Sure Start is trying to tackle (external).

##### **3.2.1 Internal issues**

###### *Focus*

The National Sure Start guidelines provide an umbrella structure and focus for Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start, however, the translation down to service delivery level needs more emphasis. The evidence for this manifests itself in various ways: disagreement over the interpretation of the four main objectives (the initial cost effectiveness exercise); questioning over how the bigger picture comes together through all the individual parts of the Kendray and Worsbrough programme (the cultural audit); no clarity of expectations and priorities for some individuals (the workshop and the cultural audit).

This may seem to conflict slightly with the positive working patterns (flexibility, new non-mainstream approach) and the sense amongst service deliverers that the programme is being successful with the people who count – parents and carers.

Clarity and depth of focus could be sought without compromising the benefits.

One area in which there is agreement (from the initial cost effectiveness exercise) is the relative importance of tackling the objective “strengthening families and communities”. One measurable target that defines this objective is the reduction in the number of children living in workless households. There is potential conflict between the agreed relative importance (it was decided that this objective merited between 15 and 18% of the total budget) and the fact that Kendray and Worsbrough has one of the highest rates of children aged 0-3 living in workless households. However, this can only be judged in the context of what other Sure Start programmes are doing and the importance they place on objective four. Also worth noting is the relative low level of satisfaction for “training and learning opportunities for parents” amongst parents and carers.

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<sup>7</sup> Early Experiences of Implementing Sure Start - June 2002 Jane Tunstill, Debra Allnock, Pamela Meadows, Alice McLeod

There was some disagreement between Sure Staff stakeholders on the emphasis that should be placed on the objective “improving children’s ability to learn”. There is evidence that the money actually spent addressing this objective is greater than any other objective (just over 30%), and arguably even more should be spent as “play and learning opportunities for children” scores a relatively low satisfaction rating amongst parents. The sentiment is expressed particularly strongly by parents in Worsbrough.

#### *Location*

Many of the problems raised by staff are well known and shared throughout the programme, but some others are less transparent. All staff recognise the problems encountered by lack of space and the frustrations that arise from the team being split across more than one site.

These issues were particularly prominent in the staff interviews, where staff feel they are part of the individual team they work in (Management Team, Outreach Team etc) rather than the Sure Start team.

***“I’m not sure if the team culture is there in it’s widest sense....mainly due to that we are all split up and segregated into boxes”.***

Most feel they are part of a tight knit team, although cross team communication is hindered:

***“It helped to build our team but we’re separated from the others”  
“There is no direct communication between the groups in Sure Start”***

Another symptom of this segregation is the lack of understanding of each other’s roles, as the Management Team feel they may be perceived by other teams as being different to themselves, being ***“up in an ivory tower, with everyone else out there”***, so this does not help to build relationships.

Another issue is the lack of space in both the main Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start bases (Community House, and the Business Centre). Some are positive about this situation as it made it easier to get to know each other when they started ***“It helped us jam together”***, so ***“it’s only a problem if you make it one”***.

Others find it constricting:

***“It’s a nightmare...it’s really hard to concentrate, telephones going, printers going, people talking”***

***“Trying to work in a mini when we need the space of an estate car”***

***“There is no privacy.... sometimes there is no time to think”***

This is particularly true in the Management Centre:

***“I often don’t leave the office all day...there’s nowhere to go”***

***“We define it as a prison cell....you look out of the office and only see the bank [of grass] outside”***

Some say that resolving this issue alone would make them happier in their jobs, ***“I would be happier with a bigger building.....would be less of a wall between operational staff and management”***.

#### *Structure*

Many of the staff working within Sure Start share the difficulties of being employed by one agency whilst working in another, which leads to confusion regarding levels of responsibility and delegated authority. Staff who do not work for Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start full time, and who are not based in this area, feel the most isolated.

There are issues when Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start meetings or events clash with those at the member of staff’s main base, which often leaves them in a difficult position. They worry that it looks to other Sure Start staff that they are not committed to Sure Start, when really they have little choice. This may be a management issue: ***“managers don’t realise the trouble it causes”***. Managers need to be aware of the trouble this causes, and have a greater understanding of their roles, so it is not up to the individual to have to decide where their responsibilities should lie.

Staff say that the 'freedom and creativity' that comes from working with Sure Start is challenged by having to marry it in with the practices of their usual work situation. There are different decision-making/approval processes at play, and the need to share data is ever-present, but seldom realised.

#### *Short-term Perceptions and Reactive planning*

There is a feeling amongst senior staff that planning tends to be 'reactive' rather than 'proactive' and this may be borne from a sense that Sure Start is a 'project' and therefore 'short-term'.

Staff also believe that there tends to be a lack of 'ownership' of the programme amongst partner agencies, which exacerbates this 'short-term' approach and causes difficulty for staff with regard to clinical supervision, in particular, and management supervision, in general. Staff believe that clarity is needed with regard to professional roles and individual expectations.

### **3.2.2 Partners**

A key feature of a Sure Start programme is the establishment of partnership among agencies that traditionally have worked mostly independently, so it is crucial that any problems are highlighted.

A key problem is the scale and scope of each individual Sure Start programme in the context of the usually wider remit of the partnership body. Partners are not aware of the philosophies driving the Sure Start initiative and measure benefit in terms of hard statistics.

Sure Start's perspective on the difficulties sharing information across organisations is echoed by the partners. The frustrations of trying to reconcile the different protocols and administrative procedures are felt on both sides.

Some Sure Start funded staff working within partner organisations are feeling isolated due to reorganisation. It is difficult for them to identify whom to turn to for guidance and supervision. This isolation and / or lack of clarity has led to some Sure Start partner staff failing to fully embrace the Sure Start initiative. There is concern over personal job security due to not being able to see how the current arrangements will develop in the future.

In general managers within partner organisations are feeling uninformed about both Sure Start's detailed intentions and quantifiable achievements.

### **3.2.3 External issues**

#### *Parental involvement*

The awareness of Sure Start amongst parents and carers in the Kendray and Worsbrough area is extremely high (97% of the random sample interviewed for the satisfaction survey were aware of Sure Start), and the majority have taken part in at least one activity organised by Sure Start. There are also high levels of satisfaction with the services being provided in the area.

The majority of parents and carers are initially hearing about Sure Start through the Health Visitors and midwife visits. Leaflets and information packs are the most successful methods for getting further information, although word of mouth (formal and informal) are also successful.

For some, time is a barrier to taking up the services on offer.

Staff also think that potential users are put off because they perceive the Sure Start initiative as short-term. However, there is a sign of this attitude changing: **"people are starting to believe that Sure Start will be around for longer"** (cultural audit).

Recognised nationally as one of the more difficult challenges facing all Sure Starts (identified in the National evaluation of Sure Start in September 2001<sup>8</sup>), is the issue of involving fathers within the programme's activities. In 2001, when Kendray and Bank End Sure Start (as it was then) was compared to others, it received only a minimum

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<sup>8</sup> Early experiences of implementing Sure Start: June 2002

score,<sup>9</sup> along with 36% of other programmes. Two years on, staff and parents are still singling this out as an issue that needs to be addressed.

#### *Kendray and Worsbrough divide*

Sure Start staff recognise that there is a cultural divide between the two distinct areas that the Kendray and Worsbrough programme covers. The problem has been getting families to feel comfortable attending Sure Start activities that are not in their immediate area.

There is also evidence of varying degrees of satisfaction between those parents and carers in Kendray and those in Worsbrough.

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<sup>9</sup> Minimum score indicates that the SS programme highlights groups or projects for fathers as a main component of the Support to Parents and Families core service area. Ideally, Sure Starts would be making special provisions for fathers, target outreach for fathers, target publication/materials for fathers, and fathers would be represented on the management board.

## 4. Ways Forward

Sure Start stakeholders (parents/carers, service deliverers, managers and partners) are not short of ideas on how to tackle some of these issues. The Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start team have already tried various initiatives with other ideas in the pipeline. Further examples can be drawn from other programmes.

### 4.1 Internal

#### *Focus*

Coming through both the cultural audit and the workshop is the requirement for more meetings. This need not be interpreted as a request for additional meetings, but maybe an overhaul of the current meeting structure.

There were positive responses to the workshop as an opportunity for “bigger picture” thinking and as an opportunity to talk with other staff across the spectrum of the Sure Start activities.

Staff involved in the interviews want more team building days, as these are deemed useful in helping staff to get to know each other, **“they saw the real me”**. Many believe that they are not held often enough, or there is no follow up, so any relationship building on the day is quickly lost, so more thought into this activity is needed.

Already this process is underway, with the Programme Manager exploring the options.

#### *Structure*

As expressed through the workshop, Staff feel that a major step forward must be for the concerns about management structure and support to be *acknowledged*, both within Sure Start and amongst all (relevant) partners. Better ‘ownership’ of the programme at a strategic level, which will permeate through to supporting staff at an operational level.

Some suggest that having staff directly employed by Sure Start could help to resolve the problem of staff feeling unsupported, whilst others believe that permanent funding of their posts within their employing agency would relieve some of the stress caused by uncertainty about longer-term employment. Although staff recognise some of the constraints in both of these suggestions, they feel that the current situation must be tackled because these circumstances can lead to some staff feeling very unsettled – which, in turn, can affect their performance.

Staff say they want to streamline many of the protocols and procedures between each service and each employing agency and they would also like to see an end to the current ‘service agreements’ which lead to a climate of ‘working to (preconceived) targets’, as opposed to ‘meeting identified need in the community’. Currently there is consideration being given to creating performance management sub-group within Sure Start (possibly by expanding the remit of a current group). Heads of Service amongst the partner agencies could be invited to attend, but to encourage this it is recognised that the agenda must be seen as being relevant to those heads (i.e. not focussing on internal issues). This could be tackled by extending invitations only on those occasions where their input is really required (i.e. not as an ongoing commitment).

#### *Location*

The creation of a Sure Start Children’s Centre at Bank End (a multi-agency venue for children up to the age of five, that would provide a new centralised base for Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start) is seen as a very positive step forward on the road to ironing out internal issues over communication and isolation, and will help to build a ‘team’ identity within the programme.

Architects have been commissioned to provide final plans for the building. Regrettably the whole process is a lengthy one, the difficulties including the time taken to reach agreement (the original remit for the building has expanded since first conceived), the tendering processes involved and the learning curve involved for Sure Start in making a project of this nature happen.

## 4.2 Partners

In order to achieve strategic ownership of the Sure Start programme amongst all partner agencies, the workshop attendees came up with the following suggestions:

- more, proactive Public Relations work (both internally and externally) in order to tell the 'good news' stories about what Sure Start is achieving (likely to be qualitative data rather than quantitative)
- all relevant managers should be regularly and proactively updated on Sure Start activities and achievements
- there should be incentives for the key managers to attend the multi-agency forum

An 'Information Officer' is being sought for Kendray and Worsbrough, whose remit would be to generate information and publicity about the Sure Start programme, using the resources and systems available with the lead body's communications team. It is suggested that evidence can be gathered locally from Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start, as well as from the other Barnsley programmes. National findings can also be used to ensure the 'wheel is not reinvented'. Promotion would be taking part within the wider community, but opportunities would also be sought to feed news and articles into partnership bodies' internal newsletters and other circulations.

There is greater strength in numbers and so opportunities for all five local programmes to 'speak with one voice' (despite the differences in the way each is constituted) should be maximised. Staff believe an overall co-ordinating post for the five programmes may achieve this. At present, key managers from all five programmes meet as part of the Barnsley Sure Start Forum. Different members of the forum represent Sure Start on different local strategic committees. These present the opportunity to provide the united Sure Start voice.

Partners share most of the suggestions that staff make regarding their desire for improved 'Public Relations', but their motivation is different. Partners want to know what Sure Start is, what it's doing and, critically, what *benefit* they get from all the extra work that has to be 'absorbed' by their own agency because of the Sure Start programme.

They want to see the evidence that Sure Start is 'making a difference' and if the programme can provide this, partners will be more proactively supportive of the aims and objectives of the programme, and of their own staff working within it.

They would like to see uniformity in reporting/collecting data and uniformity of protocols. They suggest that Job Descriptions and Person Specifications could be revised to achieve better clarity of roles and of professional relationships within the programme.

The issue of clarity and security for some Sure Start partner staff could be addressed with the formation of formal mainstreaming initiatives. The wording used by some is an 'exit strategy'. This terminology is a telling indication of how some partner workers view the Sure Start initiative and it is recommended that this terminology be avoided in the planning of initiatives.

Partners also suggest that Sure Start should give evidence of its success and that the programme's targets should reflect identified need. Sure Start needs to be 'bullish' about its achievements and point out how the work carried out by the programme, can and will have a positive impact on partners' services, in the longer-term and so it is worth putting the investment in now. Every opportunity needs to be sought to put Sure Start 'on the agenda' and if Sure Start, itself, doesn't do this – no-one else will.

## 4.3 External

### *Parental involvement*

The Sure Start programme has two successful "Have-A-Say" groups involving parents. Refresher recruitment needs to be considered now though, as some of these parents joined at the launch of the programme and their children are nearing the end of Sure Start eligibility.

Promotion of Sure Start is key to parental participation. Direct mails are seen as the most successful way of promoting events. Newsletters have been tried by the programme but were judged as unsuccessful in relation to the amount of effort needed to produce them. The new position of information and publicity officer will be expected to formulate a strategy for publicity, and to involve parents in the production of press releases and newsletters.

The very visible “shop-front” site at 51 Park Road (a main shopping street site) is seen as having massive promotional benefits.

Evaluation of whatever strategy is employed to promote Sure Start in the community should be undertaken, in order to justify further effort and expenditure. This could be done by point-of-contact measures (e.g. asking people when they make use of a service).

The programme is offering volunteering, training and participative opportunities aimed directly at parents. These include:

- shadowing a member of the Sure Start team
- offering support at different activities
- training parents to carry out evaluation of the programme
- confidence building courses, access to learning courses, basic skill courses, accredited training courses
- book writing and illustrating courses

When looking at suggestions to improve the take-up of Sure Start’s services amongst fathers, again, some very positive ideas are put forward and these are listed below:

- Approach Youth Sport Trust for ideas
- Crossover work with sports development workers
- Recruit male staff: **“If it’s offered by a bloke, then more blokes might take it up”**
- Look at role models, e.g. Dearne Valley Dads (contact has already been made)
- Services delivery on evenings and weekends, i.e. more access to families
- Work-based training for dads, e.g. DIY, gardening, car maintenance etc
- Marketing, e.g. on the radio with a male voice
- Promote Sure Start at the sports development summer scheme events
- Approach Barnsley football club, e.g. ‘play with the players’ etc
- Go into ‘male territory’, e.g. pubs and clubs
- Ensuring the children’s centre is attractive to fathers (possibly used as a venue for the services and training detailed above)

Fathers Direct <sup>10</sup> is launching a new range of services for Sure Start programmes seeking to work with fathers. Services include consultancy to help develop strategies, training for staff and resources for fathers. The Fathers Direct team, led by David Bartlett, a pioneer of services for fathers in the UK, is providing these services in response to a surge in demand from Sure Start programmes, which are seeing the importance of fathers for child well being. The services can be tailor made to fit in with local needs and circumstances, to ensure that Sure Starts get the best possible start to their work with fathers. This type of encouragement is positive and could be a valuable asset to Sure Start programmes who are struggling to involve fathers in activities.

#### *Kendray and Worsbrough Divide*

Staff suggested ideas to break down the ‘barriers’ that stop Kendray and Worsbrough residents from joining together include:

- Merge the two area ‘Have a Say’ groups together
- The shopping street venue 51 Park Rd should help with ‘shared identity’
- Volunteers working together
- Further links with Kendray Neighbourhood Management
- Use the minibus to organise trips out together
- Opening the Children’s Centre at Bank End

The programme has established links with the Kendray Neighbourhood Management team and are establishing some joint approaches to supporting families.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fathersdirect.com/fatherwork/news/Default.asp?page=news&sub=0&id=455>

## **5. Interim Summary**

What is clear so far in the evaluation is the dedication and commitment at all levels of the programme to make Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start a success. The key barriers in allowing that ongoing success are clearly identified and there are plenty of possible solutions for a way forward.

The next stage of the evaluation is to identify the successes and areas for improvement in the eyes of the parents and carers, to drill down and look at some of the individual services and to establish the cost versus effectiveness of the individual services.

***Caroline Hughes  
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***12<sup>th</sup> September 2003***