



**Hollinwood**

**Sure Start Hollinwood**  
**Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy Update**

March 2002

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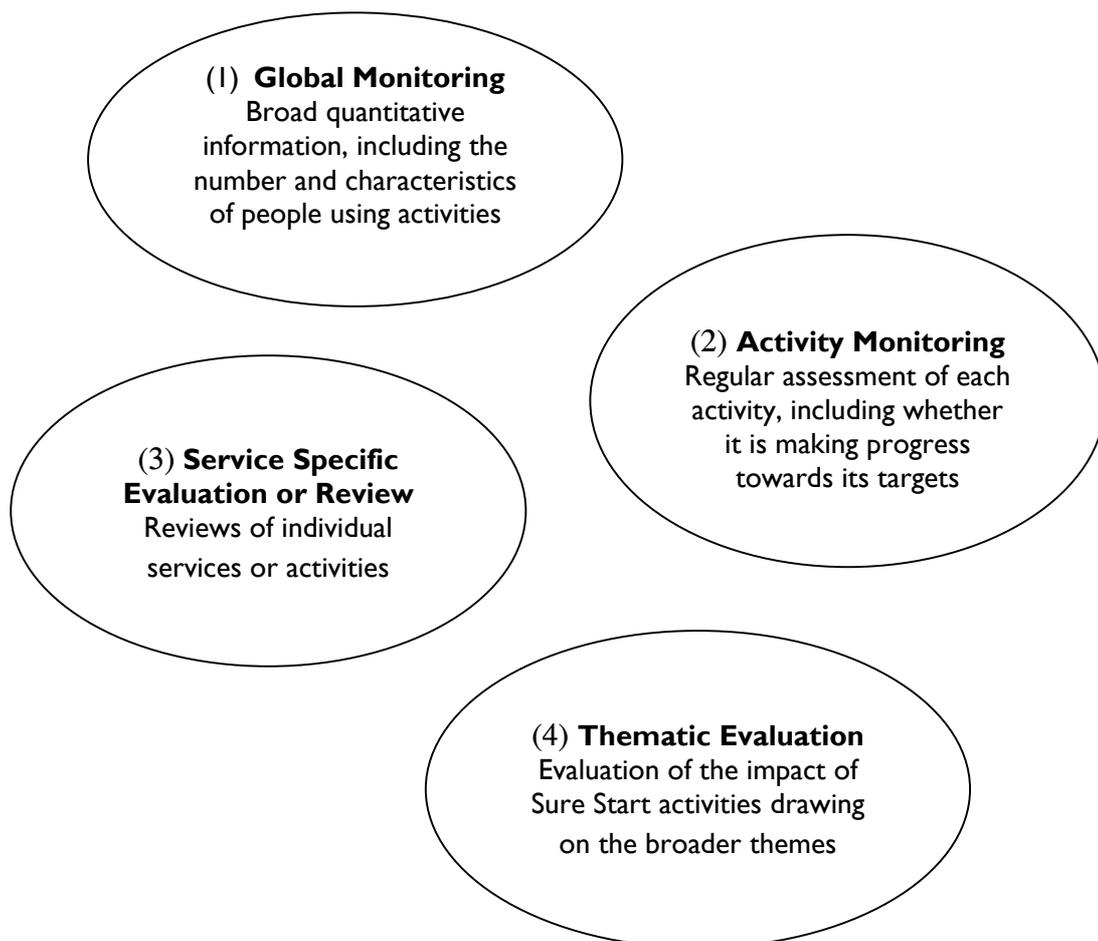
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## Introduction

This document presents the monitoring and evaluation strategy as updated by Sure Start Hollinwood in March 2002. The local evaluation is guided both by the needs of Sure Start Hollinwood and those of the Sure Start Unit. For both agencies, the evaluation needs to achieve the following:

- ❑ Assess how well activities are performing
- ❑ Review working practices and processes for the delivery of activities
- ❑ Look at the outcomes for children and families
- ❑ Assess whether activities are providing value for money
- ❑ Act as a basis for learning and inform the planning of new developments
- ❑ Assess the impact of Sure Start as a whole
- ❑ Share good practice with other Sure Start projects
- ❑ Feed into National Evaluation that is looking at the medium and long term impacts of Sure Start.

Monitoring and evaluation activity within Sure Start Hollinwood can be divided into 4 broad categories:



The local evaluation will be co-ordinated by Sure Start's part-time Research Worker and reviewed by the Research Steering Group. The Research Steering Group plays an important role in this respect by ensuring that:

- The responsibility for each piece of evaluation is clearly specified
- Local people are involved in different aspects of the work wherever possible
- The research questions are appropriate and realistic
- The methods used are reliable and varied
- The necessary information is being collected
- Evaluation and research is time-tabled to avoid community and worker fatigue
- Everyone involved in the evaluation receives appropriate feedback
- The findings of each piece of evaluative work are shared, locally and nationally, as appropriate

The process of evaluation, however, is a part of the work of everyone who is working towards delivering Sure Start in Hollinwood: it also involves local parents, children and other members of the community.

Updating reports on the evaluation are presented to the Sure Start Hollinwood Partnership Board and form part of the annual report to the Sure Start Unit. As it is an audit and evaluation exercise, the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy does not require approval from the Oldham NHS research Ethics Committee.

This document will now describe the 4 areas of monitoring and evaluation in more detail. It will briefly highlight the output and impact of completed and ongoing work and name current and future work: an outline timetable for monitoring and evaluation projects from April to September 2002 is also included.

# I. Global Monitoring

The Sure Start monitoring information falls into two categories:

Firstly, there is information about the number and characteristics of people using activities that will form the basis of the Sure Start evaluation. This information is gathered together at intervals to produce activity profiles and used during the course of thematic or activity specific evaluations.

Sure Start Hollinwood have developed a system that allows the project to know which activities are being accessed by which families. These 'Individual Sure Start Records' collect information relating to each child and their family (date of birth, ethnicity, family composition, any special needs and their use of Sure Start services) that is stored on a database. This system also produces the numerical information required for the completion of the monthly return for the Sure Start Unit and allows the project to compile monthly feedback and 6 monthly quantitative profiles for use within Sure Start Hollinwood.

The second set of data allows the project to monitor its progress towards national and local performance targets. This information is currently collected on an annual basis.

Work Undertaken	Output	Impact
<b>* Ongoing Work</b>		
Registration of children and families (March 2001 - )	Ongoing registration and de-registration  Information on database	Availability of accurate information about the number of children and families who are using services Database of names and addresses so families can be sent relevant information about the project
Monthly Sure Start return (Sept 1999 - )	12 returns per year	Increasingly automated system has reduced workload Knowledge about numbers of children and families using services Has encouraged the development of the database and monitoring systems

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Local profile (Dec 2001 - )	Report  Summary  Action Plan	Increased depth of knowledge about numbers of children and families using services and patterns of use Raises issues about data collection and service provision which can be addressed
Monthly feedback (Jan 2002 - )	12 information sheets per year	Regular and relevant information about activity levels for partnership board and management team
Information required for national and local targets (1999 - )	1 annual return	Development and implementation of local systems to collect the data Increased depth of knowledge about the Sure Start area Activities geared towards clear targets

## 2. Activity Monitoring

Systems have been established to ensure that there is regular qualitative assessment of whether each activity is making progress towards the targets presented in the Delivery Plan. Each quarter, the Senior Practitioners say whether each target has been achieved, partially achieved or not achieved in their respective service area and give reasons if the target has not been met: this information is sent to the Sure Start Unit. The quarterly returns are monitored by the Sure Start Project Manager and progress reports presented to the Sure Start Partnership Board.

The monitoring and evaluation of individual activities is also achieved through the completion of a return at the end of each session. These forms are:

- Used by staff for planning and reviewing the activities that they run
- Collected to provide the information on who attends each session for the database (Global monitoring)
- Used to provide qualitative information for service reviews (Service Specific Evaluation or Review)

The Activity Planning/Progress Sheets are completed before an activity is instigated. Ongoing reference to the Activity Planner provides an outline that will enable work teams to review the progress of a particular activity towards its stated objectives.

Work Undertaken	Output	Impact
<b>* Ongoing Work</b>		
Activity planning/ progress sheet for each new activity (1999 - )	1 return for each new activity or activity development	New activities are considered in relation to Sure Start objectives Aims and objectives that are set for each activity can be used during service specific evaluation Financial information is used in budget planning and as a basis for monitoring
Monitoring and evaluation sheet for each activity (March 2000 - )	1 return per activity	Collects monitoring information that is entered onto the database at the end of the month Encourages staff to evaluate an activity on a regular basis Provides information which can be used as a starting point for service specific evaluations

Quarterly Sure Start return (Dec 1999 - )	4 returns	Clear structure for monitoring activity against targets with an outline produced in advance for Sure Start managers
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### 3. Service Specific Evaluation or Review

Whilst much of the Sure Start evaluation is moving away from looking at individual services or areas of activities in an isolated way, there are times when an evaluation or review of a particular activity is required. Service specific evaluations or reviews may be commissioned because the activity is at a particular stage in its development and needs to be assessed before further decisions are made or because specific issues that require investigation have been identified.

Activities or services to be targeted for a 'service review' will be identified by the Management Group and/or the Partnership Board.

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>* Completed work</b>		
Review of sessional day care (Sept 2000)	Report Summary	Informed the development of the full time service which was established in March 2001
Credit union development update (Nov 2000)	Report	Clarification of current position in relation to the targets in the Sure Start delivery plan Fed into consideration of future role in credit union development in Oldham
Health visitor and women with postnatal depression (Oct 2000)	Report Summary	Feedback to the Health Visitor Development Group Information helped secure funding to train 16 health visitors across the town in baby massage
What activities do parents want? (Jan 2001)	Report Summary	Feedback to the Health Visitor Development Group and Mental Health Facilitator for the Primary Care Group Sure Start Hollinwood have developed services that women expressed an interest in attending
Home safety equipment survey (April 2001)	Report	Contributed to the development of the home safety equipment scheme, now part of baby bulk buy Broader impact limited by the small number of responses

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Family Cookery Group evaluation (July 2001)	Report Summary	Changes made to the next family cookery groups that ran in 2001, especially in relation to health and hygiene and developing a wider range of recipes Contact with Life Long Learning about a second stage course Weaning is now successfully moved to become part of postnatal support group
Blue Planet Aquarium trip (Aug 2001)	Feedback Sheet Verbal discussions	Feedback to the body who gave the grant for the trip Trip was the start of a relationship with another community group – evaluation informed discussions about future work
Collier Hill Tenants Hall Survey (Sept 2001)	Report	Interviews raised local awareness of the hall and activities that could be provided Tenants Association used the research as a basis for prioritising improvements (fencing, painting and play area have been completed)
<b>* Ongoing Work</b>		
Quiz staff survey	Summary following each QUIZ	Channel for staff feedback about Sure Start services and working within Sure Start Hollinwood and feedback on the QUIZ meeting
<b>* Current Work</b>		
Music for Toddlers (Feb 2002 - )		
<b>* Planned Work</b>		
PACT group evaluation (2002)		
Farm Road Parent & Toddlers Group (2002)		

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Other service/activity reviews still to be specified		

## 4. Thematic Evaluation

Thematic evaluations address issues that are central to the Sure Start programme: there are many themes that could be investigated, including the following:

### SUSTAINABILITY

- ❑ Sustaining activities (contrasting provision which existed before and new provision under Sure Start)
- ❑ Sustaining activities (case study of differing activities such as parents and toddlers group, bulk buy or home equipment)
- ❑ The use of the 4 local support centres

### INVOLVEMENT (PARENTS, CHILDREN, AGENCIES)

- ❑ Building links with specialist services
- ❑ Collecting the views of children involved in activities
- ❑ Coverage of Sure Start (knowledge and use of activities by the whole community)
- ❑ Interagency working (working across traditional professional boundaries)
- ❑ Involving younger parents (under 25 year olds)
- ❑ Involving fathers
- ❑ Parental involvement in different capacities (as users, workers, volunteers, in management)
- ❑ Partner agencies learning from the Sure Start experience
- ❑ Working with older children

### LEARNING FROM INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

- ❑ Addressing the wider social, economic and environmental context
- ❑ Combining universal and intensive services for children in need
- ❑ Courses and informal groups as settings for support and activities
- ❑ Maximising children's development and attitudes to learning
- ❑ One to one support for families
- ❑ Planning and providing activities to meet individual needs
- ❑ Providing support in a range of setting (home, local centres, clinic, schools etc)
- ❑ Responding to additional needs expressed by individuals in the community
- ❑ Supporting and enabling parents to ensure good health and social development
- ❑ The implementation and use of Family Wise
- ❑ Transition into school

It would not be possible for one Sure Start project to evaluate its provision against all of these themes and so priorities have to be identified. Within Sure Start Hollinwood, a number of 'thematic' pieces of work have been completed (encompassing the involvement of parents and children, learning from innovative practice), but others have yet to be defined.

Once an evaluative theme has been identified by the Management Group and/or the Partnership Board, time is spent in drawing together the specific research questions to be addressed. It would not be possible to look at every aspect of a theme during the course of one evaluation and is important the key questions are identified and understood. The people involved in defining the research questions will vary depending on nature of the theme and the activity or activities involved.

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b>* Completed Work</b>		
Parental Involvement (June 2001)	Report  Summary  Action Plan	Further research with under-represented groups (fathers, families from ethnic minority groups, young mums)  Specific action plans developed around participation of local parents, the Parents in Partnership Group and communication within Sure Start Hollinwood
Implementing Familywise (April 2001)	Report  Summary  Presentation	Raised awareness of issues which had resulted in limited use of the package  Working group established to address issues and develop staff confidence in the package
Building a local research resource (April 2001)	Report  Information sharing with another organisation	Increased understanding of the investment needed to develop a local resource  Shared learning with CAG consultants who were working with SRB in the area
Providing stimulating and enjoyable play in sessional day care (March 2002)	Report  Summary  Action Plan	Demonstrated positive experience for the children attending  Learning for sessional day care service staff  Specific action plans developed around keyworking, children who wander and speech and language

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Involving fathers (Jan 2002)	Report	Foundation for further development of work with fathers
Encouraging families from ethnic minorities to access Sure Start services (March 2002)	Report	Foundation for further development of work with families from ethnic minorities
<b>* Current Work</b>		
One to one support for families		
<b>Planned Work</b>		
Involving younger mums		
Sustainability		
Interagency working		

## Strategic Work

This is an additional category of work that has been added to the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy in March 2002. It is designed to include the additional tasks which fall broadly under the heading of monitoring and evaluation but also have a wider function within the project.

Work Undertaken	Output	Impact
<b>* Completed</b>		
Barnardos research day (Sept 2001)		Developing guidelines for research with children
University of York course – Doing Research with Children (Jan – March 2001)		Developing and consolidating research skills for the benefit of the project
<b>* Ongoing</b>		
Research Steering Group (2001 - )	4 meetings	Drawing upon the knowledge of other research professionals and practitioners to enhance monitoring and evaluation within the project Sharing information with wider audience, providing an opportunity for them to discuss work and ask questions
Sure Start Partnership Board (previously Management Board and Implementation Group) (2000 - )	Progress report	Sharing information with wider audience, providing an opportunity for them to discuss work and ask questions
Monitoring and evaluation strategy (March 2000 - )	Report with 6 monthly update Summary Presentation to Parents in Partnership group Staff induction	Clear presentation of aims and timetable for people within the project – parents, staff, managers, partnership board Structure for regular updates Strategy has been easy to share with outside agencies including Sure Start Unit, national evaluation, other Sure Start projects, academics etc – currently preparing to use it as the foundation of a conference workshop on project evaluation

<b>Work Undertaken</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Links with national evaluation (July 2001 - )	Conference  Meetings	Increased understanding of the national evaluation within the project Point of contact for the national evaluation Possibility of sharing good practice with other Sure Start projects
Sure Start in Oldham (Nov 2001 - )	Issues Report  Data collection system	Consistency of information between the 4 Sure Start areas More efficient system for providers and Sure Start projects
Sure Start IT system (Jan 2002 - )	Implementation of Sure Start system	Automation of collection of data for returns
<b>* Current Work</b>		
Preparation for local Sure Start conference (March 2002 - )		

## Timetable

The first timetable for monitoring and evaluation activities covered the 18 months from January 2001 to June 2002. It has since been felt that a shorter timetable is more appropriate so this one covers the period until the next review of the strategy in September 2002.

There have been a number of changes to the timetable during 2001-2002. The main reasons are as follows:

- Additional work, including new information required for the delivery plan, has arisen
- To allow more time following the completion of the report for action planning
- To allow time for pieces of research which arise out of action plans

The timetable shows all elements of monitoring and evaluation strategy. It aims to be realistic in setting out the total number of pieces of work to be undertaken and in the number which will be ongoing at any one time. The timing of individual pieces of work is dependent upon what is appropriate for the particular service or theme - the planning of the evaluation, however, may start earlier than the slot identified on the timetable.

The timetable is monitored by the Research Steering Group: this group also discuss the details of one piece of work which will commence during the 3 months that follow each meeting.

## TIMETABLE FOR APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2002

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Update timetable Evaluation progress report			Update timetable Evaluation progress report		
Sure Start Partnership Board Research Steering Group			Sure Start Partnership Board Research Steering Group		
Sure Start Returns M3 M4 Sure Start IT system	Sure Start Return M3	Sure Start Return M3	Sure Start Returns M3 M4	Sure Start Return M3	Sure Start Returns M3 M5
Monthly feedback Local Profile 2	Monthly feedback	Monthly feedback	Monthly feedback	Monthly feedback	Monthly feedback
Monitoring and evaluation by staff and managers responsible for individual activities using the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Sheet Activity planning sheets for new activities					
Conference preparation			9 <sup>th</sup> JULY - CONFERENCE		
Service specific evaluation PACT					
Thematic evaluation One to one work - Support and Advice Service					
Service specific evaluation Farm Road Parent and Toddler Group					
<i>Action planning</i> Ethnic minorities, work with fathers, sessional day care, music for toddlers					
<i>Thematic evaluation</i> Involving Parents - Younger Mums (with West Pennine Housing Association)					

## Conclusion

The four elements that comprise the local monitoring and evaluation strategy for Sure Start Hollinwood are outlined in this document. The combination of monitoring and evaluation ranges **from** the collection and collation of quantitative data on the take-up of activities **to** detailed qualitative evaluation which aims to draw out specific learning in relation to the national and local Sure Start objectives.

Much of the subject matter has been defined in outline but there is still a necessary element of flexibility in the areas of activity to be examined and there are a number of vacant slots where additional work can be undertaken.

The delivery of the monitoring and evaluation strategy is an inclusive process that will, at differing levels, involve all staff and managers within the Sure Start Hollinwood project. Local parents and children will also be involved in monitoring and evaluation in various capacities and at different points during the period covered by the Strategy.

The focus of the monitoring and evaluation to be undertaken is to provide knowledge about and develop activities within Sure Start Hollinwood. The appropriate distribution of the findings of work undertaken as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy will be dependent upon its nature and content: distribution will be considered by the Research Steering Group and confirmed by the Management Implementation Group if necessary. Liaison with other Sure Start projects and the national evaluation will take place in order to share knowledge and develop the local evaluation strategy.

Feedback on both the Strategy and the way that the information collected for monitoring and evaluation has been used has been positive: the same Strategy and similar methods will therefore be used for 2002-2003.