

EVALUATION & RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT *Sure Start Dawlish & Teignmouth*

For year ending
31st December 2003

**Sure Start
Dawlish & Teignmouth
exists to give
children, parents and the community
the opportunities
to realise their dreams**

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Programme Information

This is a 5th Wave programme, approved 1st July 2002.

Brief Description of the Areas

This Sure Start Programme is a two cluster model, meeting a range of challenges in the towns of Dawlish & Teignmouth as well as the more rural area around Dawlish Warren and Cockwood. The towns are separated by the more affluent area of Holcombe. In effect, the programme has three distinct components to it which reflect the particular needs of each area. Dawlish and Teignmouth form part of the coastal strip within the mainly rural district of Teignbridge. Four of the wards within the catchment area rank within the top 22% on the Index of Multiple Deprivation and are clearly the highest areas of deprivation within the district. The total population of the catchment area is 16,758.

Both areas are of a hilly nature which can cause mobility problems for mothers. Public transport is poor and what community resources there are have developed incrementally and without co-ordination.

Both towns have community hospitals where various services, outpatient clinics and minor injury units are offered. However the nearest District General Hospital offering 24-hour emergency response is located in Torquay, 6 miles away. Teignmouth has a complement of four GP surgeries, and Dawlish has one. Each surgery has a primary health care team of GP's, health visitors, district nurses, midwives, practice nurses, school nurses, and community psychiatric nurses who offer a range of health services to both towns.

The nearest Social Services office is located in the market town of Newton Abbot - 9 miles away. Therefore access is limited as users have to travel to access related services.

This situation is also the same for *Job Centre Plus* with services located in Newton Abbot, though support is available for travel and childcare costs.

The Sure Start Local Programme has established links with other initiatives in the area, including the Healthy Living Centre and Children's Fund project in West Teignmouth, and the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative – *Across the Coastline* – that is seeking to impact on regeneration for Teignmouth and Dawlish

Dawlish

365 children under the age of 4

The Sure Start area in Dawlish is based on the old wards of Dawlish Central, the large rural ward in the North East and a small part of Dawlish South West. (Electoral re-organisation in 2003 altered the ward areas for both Dawlish and Teignmouth) The central recreation and shopping area is level and opens onto the sea- front while housing is mainly on the hills which rise from the centre forming a bowl. The geography of the town, allied to the very small buses needed to access all areas, means that parents with buggies find it difficult to get around.

Dawlish is heavily dependent on tourism with its low paid and seasonal employment. Of the 280 VAT registered businesses recorded in March 2000, 235 were in the "Construction and Other" category. All of the businesses fall in the lowest category of 1-49 employees and the majority will employ fewer than 5 people with consequent low wages and turnover.

Within the area there are three Primary Schools, Westcliff Primary, Gatehouse Primary and the small rural Primary School in Cockwood. There are two pre-schools, one full day care nursery and four parent and toddler groups. Childcare is also provided by a network of childminders who have recently been accredited to accept three and four year old funding.

The area has a significant amount of accommodation which is available as low rent winter lets but which has to be vacated ready for summer letting at greatly increased rates. Much of the accommodation in the North East of the catchment area comprises winter holiday lets with a related migration of families. In this area, there are no services for families with young children and there are very limited rural bus services

Teignmouth

325 children under the age of 4

The Sure Start area of Teignmouth comprises the old wards of East and West Teignmouth. West Teignmouth was considered one of the most deprived wards in the South West.

Teignmouth is a coastal town that depends on tourism and the elderly care industry as its main source of employment (80% of all employed in the Teignmouth area). These industries have left an indelible mark on the working population, as both industries are renowned for low training opportunities and low skills requirements. There is little industrially based employment in the area.

The working population shows a disinterest in education; there are low educational achievement levels and high levels of truancy within the education system.

Housing is another major issue. The vast amount of social housing comprises flats or maisonettes which have favoured lone parents. This has led to over 50% of all lone parents in Teignmouth living in West Teignmouth.

The area itself has few facilities and a very limited day time bus service. The outcome of this is that many parents and carers who are allocated housing in the area immediately re- register to get off the estate.

Within the area are two schools: Inverteign Primary School and Our Lady and St Patrick Roman Catholic Primary School. Inverteign has the only LEA nursery in the area and provides 10 sessions a week as part time places for children within the school catchment area. OLSP does have a nursery unit but it is not funded through the LEA and is independently inspected by Ofsted.

There are also two full day care nurseries providing childcare within the area as well as the childminding network. A Neighbourhood Nursery is being developed in Teignmouth West and it is anticipated that it will provide 45 full-time equivalent places daily. Sure Start and the NNI will work closely together to provide good quality, affordable childcare for parents living within the area.

Following recent developments within the wider remit of the National Sure Start Unit, Children Centre services will be established across the area by 2006. This will be a crucial development ensuring a longer term commitment to meeting need through multi-agency teams. Appropriate evaluation of this will be a longer term aim for the programme.

Information on Evaluation Strategy

Evaluation So Far

Limited evaluation has so far been carried out within the programme:

- The Initial Consultation Exercise
- Portage Play-boxes
- User Feedback

Initial Consultation Exercise The only significant evaluation to date was the extensive consultation exercise undertaken as part of establishing the Final Plan for approval. This provided a good picture of parental views of service delivery being available at the time. We were able to elicit the views of over 300 families in the area – a significant reach proportion. Families commented on their particular experiences of services and produced a ‘wish list’ of future services. This has had a profound effect on the shape of the Sure Start programme across Dawlish & Teignmouth:

- A desire for an indoor soft-play space (which will happen at the Neighbourhood Nursery)
- Parents being actively involved in the planning and delivery of services
- A desire to see agencies working closely together to reduce duplication of services

Portage Play-boxes The review of the Portage Play Boxes includes feedback from evaluation undertaken by this service. [Appendix 1](#)

User Feedback A small-scale feedback questionnaire was developed and disseminated at the Annual Partnership Meeting in June. See [Appendix 2](#) for the analysis of this.

As a fifth wave programme, we were allowed to establish a number of ‘early services’. Plans were made to provide:

- Maternity Care Assistant
- Home-Start Services
- Play boxes – co-ordinated by Devon Portage Services

It is intended that the priority for evaluation for the coming year will focus on these early services, with a comprehensive review of all three services carried out. This will include a detailed questionnaire for users of the services. The evaluation will build on the limited reviews so far conducted.

Current Position re Evaluation

- a) An *Evaluation Task Group* is in place to take the planning of the evaluation further. The group comprises member agencies and parents. Its remit is to determine a strategy for evaluation and to explore how it can be effectively integrated into the programme. A budget of £15,000 (*in addition to the salary of the Research and Development Officer*) for this year has been committed to support the evaluation strategy for the programme. The group will also be responsible for determining, with the Research and Evaluation Officer, appropriate approaches for the evaluation of services.
- b) A *Research and Evaluation Officer* post has been appointed in the project. Consideration was given to commissioning a consultancy firm. However it was decided with proposed safeguards (ie links with Dartington Social Research Unit), then it was more appropriate to appoint to a specific post, who would then be more attuned to the programme.

- c) Links with Dartington Social Research Unit have been established. This will include support for the Research and Evaluation Officer as well as appropriate dissemination of research findings and other materials. The Unit will provide appropriate guidance on developing methodologically sound evaluations and developing innovative approaches to involving parents and children and others in the evaluation of services (**Appendix 3**)
- d) Links with Exeter University have been established which will result in regular placements of students undertaking research in early years services.

Future Plans

The move towards becoming a Children Centre - following recent developments within the wider remit of the National Sure Start Unit – will bring the programme into closer contact with a wider range of service commissioners and providers – especially with Devon’s progress towards Children’s Trust status. Inevitably, there will be a closer scrutiny of the work and processes. This is very much welcomed, as we recognise that it is proper that effectiveness of the Sure Start approach be determined. This will be crucial in ensuring the long term commitment to meeting need and endeavouring to ensure that children and families in the area benefit.

A further element to the evaluation of this programme will be a *Cost Benefit Analysis*. This will be completed in the financial year 2004/05

Local Evaluation

The review of the Portage Play Boxes includes feedback from evaluation undertaken by this service.

Appendix 1

Early Services

As part of the delivery of the 'Early Services', evaluation was planned as part of the review mechanism for each of them. Unfortunately, this has been delayed because of difficulties in recruitment and a subsequent delay in the provision of two of these services. The Maternity Care Assistant is the exception to this, who has been in place for a year. An initial review of this service was carried out in December 2003, with the Midwifery Service at South Devon Healthcare Trust. This mainly considered statistical information (number of visits, number of people seen etc), and only minimal feedback from service users - mainly anecdotal reporting.

User Feedback

Limited user feedback of the impact of service delivery by this programme was undertaken at the Annual Partnership Meeting in June. Analysis of this is available as **Appendix 2**. The questionnaire is attached as **Appendix 2b**. The dissemination of these findings will occur through the various meetings available, including Parent Forums, Partnership Board and staff meetings. They will also be available via the website. We envisage that they will provide useful information when devising our Annual Business Plan.

Informal anecdotal feedback, through staff and parents, also contributes to intermittent evaluation of the programme's development and direction within the Partnership Board and the programme's Management Team. This has contributed to subtle changes in approach and staff appointments (including the decision to appoint a *Research and Evaluation Officer*). A more detailed exploration of changes is available in the next section.

Evaluation & Programme Development

Whilst acknowledging the limited evaluation conducted to date, we have already begun to respond to feedback received. This includes:

- Development of multi-cultural element to the *Portage Play Boxes*
- Increase in range of toys for the *Portage Play Boxes*
- Development of services in Dawlish Warren (a geographically isolated area of the programme)
- A commitment to the continuation of the Maternity Care Assistant post
- Re-shaping Speech and Language Therapy Services, providing direct support to child care workers
- Increase in Home-Visitors (placed with Health Visitors) to enable targets to be more readily addressed
- Development of a range of Adult Education Courses beyond the original three courses. The agreed courses will develop those parents who studied on this year's courses. Courses will now include:
 - NVQ3 Early Years Childcare
 - Developing Skills in Early Years Practice
 - Kitchen Safety
 - Healthy Eating on a Budget

We are confident that with the changes already coming into effect – appointment of *Research and Evaluation Officer*, linkages with *DSRU - 2004* will see a significant increase in the quality and quantity of evaluations undertaken within this programme.

Appendix 1

Portage Play Boxes - Evaluation/Review

The Portage Play Box service has been in operation since January 2003. In that time

- Two photographic catalogues have been produced to enable booking and viewing the available toys
- Activity ideas cards have been produced to promote inclusive play for all the equipment
- All pre-schools and nurseries in the Sure Start area have been visited at least twice.
- Group activity ideas have been shared with most groups.
- Ongoing support work with two groups has been established.
- Liaison work with Pre School Advisory Teacher, Speech and Language Therapists, area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and Devon Portage Service is ongoing.
- Evaluation sheets were distributed with each box. (See Box)

From these evaluation sheets it has been possible to determine:

- Most used toys within the service
- Least used toys within the service
- Appropriateness or not of some of the toys

There has also been some very useful comments about the service generally:

“Excellent service and we are grateful to Sue” (the project worker)

“Thank you so much for the loan of the toy box. The children loved it and learnt a lot from the different activities.”

“It is nice for the staff to have access to different types of toys.”

“Sue has played a positive role in the pre-school and staff/children have enjoyed her help.”

Portage Play Box Service Evaluation Sheet

As the Portage Play Box Service is a 12 month project I would be grateful if you would take the time to complete this simple evaluation of both the toys and the usefulness of any advice given. This information will enable me to evolve the service so that it meets your needs more fully.

Were any toys particularly useful?

In what way were they useful?

Were any toys NOT useful?

Please give reasons why

Are there any toys you would like more of?

What advice have you found most useful?

Is there anything that you feel you would like to know more about?

Is there anything that would make the service more beneficial for your setting?

Thank You

Sue Lee – Portage Play Box Worker

Appendix 2 User Questionnaires

On the 30th June 2003 the first Annual Partnership Meeting for the programme was held at ‘The Den’, a public recreation area near the sea front in Teignmouth, in conjunction with a fun day, with local schools giving musical performances, as well as a jazz band.

One hundred user opinion questionnaires were handed out, designed to assess what members of the community understood about Sure Start, and also to obtain feedback from parents concerning which Sure Start activities they had already taken part in, and which of the activities planned for the future they would be interested in attending.

Of the hundred questionnaires handed out, thirty-seven were returned. From these it was clear that parents were aware of what Sure Start is, and the purpose of the parents forum, although not all knew what area is included in the local programme, or where the main Sure Start offices are.

Parents did, however, seem enthusiastic, and to be aware of many of the activities, and had either taken part in some or expresses an interest in taking part in forthcoming events and activities.

ANALYSIS BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO SELECTED QUESTIONS IN THE ‘GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS’ USER QUESTIONNAIRE

Q 1	What is Sure Start? Is it....?	
A	A way to make it fair at the beginning of a race	
B	A Government funded programme helping to provide children with the best start in life	100%
C	A race on the beach	
D	Probably a waste of time and money	

It was reassuring that everybody had some rudimentary grasp of what Sure Start is about!

Q 2	What geographical area does this local programme cover?	
A	The whole of Devon	
B	The whole of Teignbridge	8%
C	Clearly designated parts of Dawlish and Teignmouth	92%
D	Only the town council wards of West Teignmouth	

Whilst acknowledging that some people may not have understood the restrictions on Sure Start service delivery – ie postcode related – clearly the vast majority are aware of the focussed nature of the programme.

Q 5	What is the parent forum? Is it....?	
A	A special room for those with children	2%
B	A regular meeting for parents to influence how the programme develops	98%
C	All talk and no action	
D	Somewhere to dump the kids and chill out	

Overwhelmingly, it seems, those who answered the questionnaire have an understanding of the potential for the Parent Forums. Efforts are being made by the programme to develop the effectiveness of these important groups, with an event scheduled for early February 2004.

Q 7	Where are the main Sure Start offices?	
A	Dawlish Hospital	8%
B	Teignmouth Day Hospital	54%
C	Kingsway Meadow Community Centre, Teignmouth	38%
D	Broadmeadow Sports Centre	2%
E	Dawlish Library	2%

On the face of it, it would seem that there is some confusion over where Sure Start is! However, when it is known that the offices were originally at Kingsway and that services are regularly delivered from the other venues (and more besides those mentioned), the slight confusion may be understandable. Nevertheless, there is a message here that suggests we need to ensure that parents and others know how to contact us.

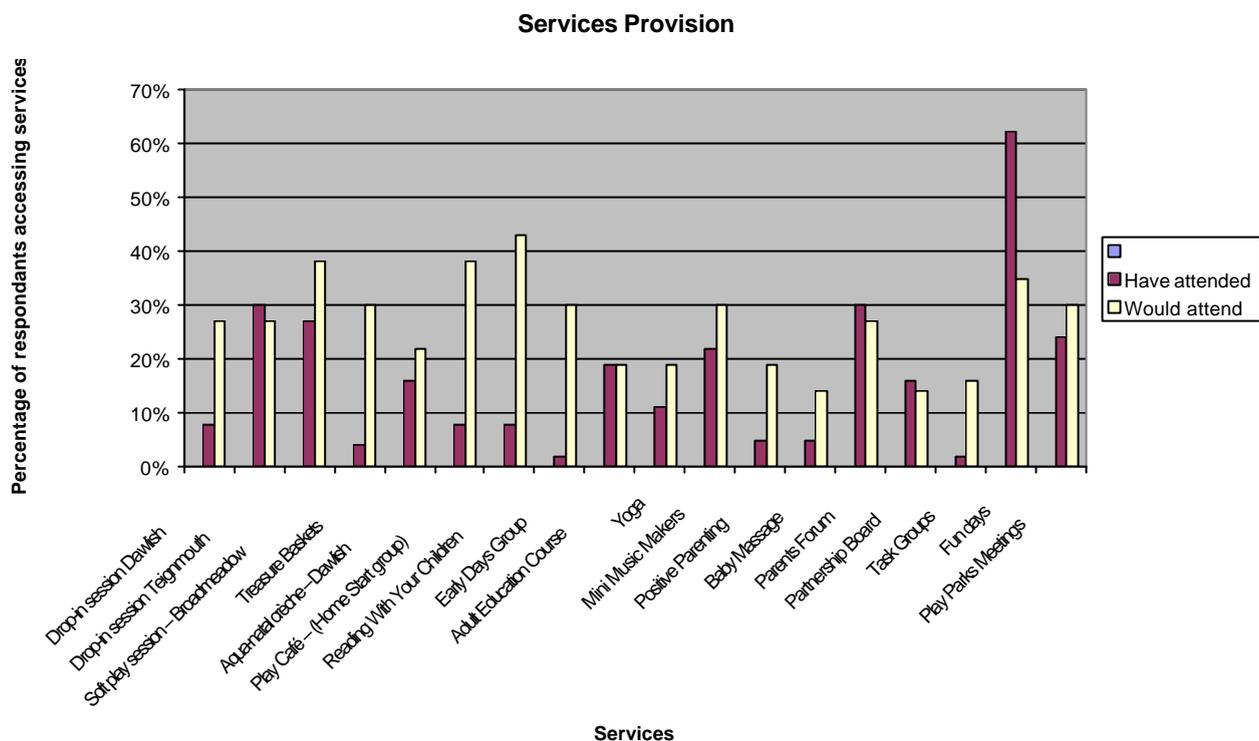
Q 8	What are 'Treasure Baskets'? Are they...?	
A	Boxes used by pirates	
B	A nice wicker storage box for jewellery	
C	An opportunity for young babies to explore and experience everyday objects on their own – no interference from adults allowed!	81%
D	Unexpected things in unexpected places	2%

Even though only 4% of those who responded had attended a Treasure Basket session (as evidenced by the answer to Q11) many people seem to have some understanding of what this particular service is offering children.

Q 11	Which services, events or meetings have you/ would you attend?	
Services, Events, Meetings etc	Have attended	Would attend
Drop-in session Dawlish	8%	27%
Drop-in session Teignmouth	30%	27%
Soft play session – Broadmeadow	27%	38%
Treasure Baskets	4%	30%
Aqua-natal crèche – Dawlish	16%	22%
Play Café – (Home Start group)	8%	38%
Reading With Your Children	8%	43%
Early Days Group	2%	30%
Adult Education Course	19%	19%

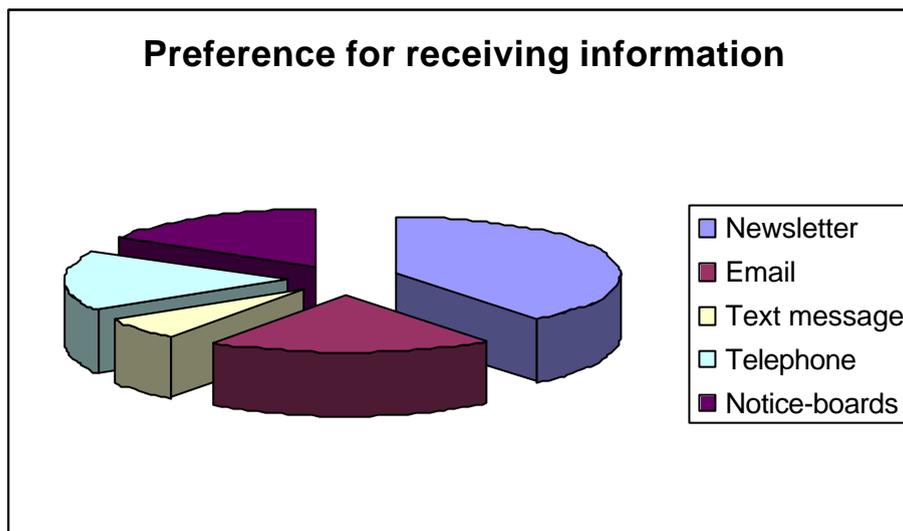
Yoga	11%	19%
Mini Music Makers	22%	30%
Positive Parenting	5%	19%
Baby Massage	5%	14%
Parents Forum	30%	27%
Partnership Board	16%	14%
Task Groups	2%	16%
Fun days	62%	35%
Play Parks Meetings	24%	30%

Please see graph below



This is an important graph in allowing us to develop a picture not only of current service usage, but also in helping us to understand potential future use of services. This can also be used as a rudimentary measure of the success of the programme, in that future evaluation should easily be able to compare any current usage figures against these early figures. We are confident that we will see growth in the number of attendees at our services.

Q 12		How would you like to receive information about Sure Start?
A	Newsletter	51%
B	Email	27%
C	Text message	8%
D	Telephone	22%
E	Notice-boards	22%



As a result of the responses to this question we have set up:

Regular text messaging service to inform parents of events, meetings etc

There is a task group producing publicity and newsletters

A 'telephone tree network' has been established to cascade information etc

Many parents have provided us with e-mail addresses

Notice-boards have been placed in the community and made available to many providers

Comments made by User Questionnaire participants

Participants were also invited to complete the questionnaire with any additional comments they would like to make. The comments received were all positive, and some useful suggestions were made which have been noted below.

"A great Day (Please can we have more)"

'Look forward to shopper's crèche.

Information on how to access available money for pre-school settings needs to be more widely accessible its very difficult to know what's available regarding funding for certain groups.'

'Outdoor events, like this, for the local community and tourists are a great idea.'

'My children are aged 7 and 10 but I am still very interested in the services that Sure Start provide and have future plans for. I have recently joined the play Park initiative for improving play facilities in 'The Den' and will work to help get funding for this project'.

'Congratulations!'

'As a childminder I been issued with a notice-board and have literature posted to me. Many thanks.'

'Is there a Teignmouth and Dawlish Sure Start website?' *

(*There now is a Dawlish and Teignmouth Sure Start website: www.surestartdt.org.uk.)