



# **Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton**

## **Evaluation Feedback Report**

### **The Setting up Phase**

**September 2001**

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# 1 Introduction

- This feedback report is aimed at parents and also professionals.
- Its aim is to give an overview of the early stages of Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton, mainly before the Sure Start staff team were employed and began their work.
- We have presented the views of staff and parents on various issues, without judging them. An important part of our job is to sum up what people are saying and doing and feed this back so that staff and parents involved can reflect on this.
- The areas we have looked at are:
  - Ideas about the aims of Sure Start in Ferryhill/Chilton;
  - Early strengths of the programme;
  - Early challenges;
  - Challenges for the future.
- We have also made some comments about how Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton is starting to work within Sure Start principles.
- The report is not intended to be a complete account. A summary of each key area is given, so that important issues are clear and readable.
- We have asked some questions which may help people to think in different ways about what's happening.

## 2 Summary

- "There has been incredible team building, incredible" (Professional).
- "I really like being there at the planning stages" (Parent).
- "What a positive change there has been in these girls..I've seen people come along and they've blossomed under your eyes" (Parent).

Both parents and staff have devoted much time and energy to getting Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton off the ground. There has been a great sense of commitment, pressure, hard work, optimism, as well as frustration, at times, for those involved.



### ***The Aims of Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton (See p.11)***

**Staff** think that key aims for Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton are:

- To use a community development approach which puts local families and their needs at the heart of how Sure Start is organised and delivered.
- To enable parents to make decisions which affect them and their families;

- To improve public health;
- To support families;
- To put children first;
- To provide high quality childcare;
- To provide services which are well linked together to give the best service for families.

**Parents** think that the aims of Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton are:

- To support parents and children;
- To provide high quality childcare.



***Early Strengths of Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton (See p.16)***

**Staff** consulted see the strengths of the programme so far, as:

- The high level of parental involvement;
- Getting two of the Sure Start centres off the ground;
- Getting staff appointed;
- The success of the Nursery Arts Project;

**Parents** we spoke to see the strengths of the programme so far, as:

- The confidence, new skills and better social lives they have gained from being involved with Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton;



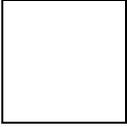
***Challenges in the Setting Up Stage (See p.19)***

**Staff** saw the main challenges in the setting up stage as:

- Heavy workload and not enough time to do it;
- Unavoidable delays in getting things done;
- Making the Sure Start Partnership work;
- Too little time for consultation work with parents;
- Working with parents at Partnership meetings;
- Getting Sure Start centres off the ground;
- Employing staff;
- Not being able to reward parents better for their work with Sure Start;
- Getting a Sure Start database set up.

**Parents** saw the main challenges in the setting up stage as:

- Difficulties in working with professionals at Partnership meetings;
- Delays in the programme getting going;
- Not getting enough recognition, at times, for their work with Sure Start;



### ***Challenges for the Future (See p.25)***

**Staff** see a number of key challenges for the future, including:

- Working closely with existing services and;
- Keeping parental involvement going over time;
- Meeting Sure Start targets;
- Getting all of the new Sure Start Buildings running;
- Linking Sure Start with other government schemes;
- Keeping Sure Start flexible;
- Keeping children at the centre of the programme;
- Getting the Sure Start message across to local people.

**Parents** talked about several issues which are important to them, for the future:

- Parents becoming even more involved in programme decision-making;
- Getting new parents involved;
- Making sure that Sure Start childcare is of a high quality;
- Parents having the chance to think about their involvement, outside the usual meetings;

### 3 What's the Feedback About?

This feedback report explores several issues about the setting up phase of Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton. It's very important to have a record of what happened in the early days of the programme so that people can look back and see how the programme has developed in the ways that it has.

The report is based around what parents and staff in Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton thought and felt about a number of important questions relating to the early days of the programme. As time goes on, we will look at what children think about relevant issues.

Key questions for this first evaluation report were:



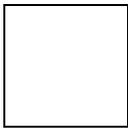
- What is Sure Start about for people in Ferryhill/Chilton and what do they hope the programme will achieve?
- What were the early challenges for the programme?
- What has gone well so far?
- What challenges does the programme face now?
- How are those involved in the programme learning from what has happened so far?

The feedback report will also look at how the programme is starting to work within some of the Sure Start principles.

We hope that the report will help people involved in Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton to think more clearly about what has been happening in the early stages, where the programme is now and where people involved think it needs to go in the future.

### ***Feedback and Collaboration***

This first evaluation feedback is an important stage in the collaboration between the Ferryhill/Chilton programme and the evaluation team. Collaboration is a two way process and we are keen to get as many responses to this report as possible, from those involved. This will help us to target our evaluation more effectively in the future. Some ways of giving us your views about the report are given listed at the end (see page 35).



## **4 What is the Feedback Based On?**

Information for this report has been gathered from a number of places within the Ferryhill/Chilton Sure Start programme:

- Informal discussions with the programme manager (x3);
- Management Group meetings (x3);
- Partnership meetings (x2);
- Parents' meetings (all mothers) (x4);
- Interviews (x4);
- Communication meeting (x1);
- County Sure Start meetings (x2);

- Programme Managers' meetings (x5);
- A range of documents from Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton: the Delivery Plan; parent newsletters; training schedules for staff; on-going information about targets and general programme progress.



## **5 The Aims of Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton**

### ***5.1 Background***

A large programme like Sure Start is bound to be about different things for different people. The Government has set out its aims for the programme nationally. These relate to improvements in the health and well-being of families and children to age four, so children are ready to flourish when they go to school.

Although there are guidelines for what each Sure Start programme should aim to do, the government does not expect all programmes to reach the goals in the same way because each has to respond to what's happening in its own local area. Therefore, each Sure Start programme will have slightly different aims and will work in different ways to achieve them.

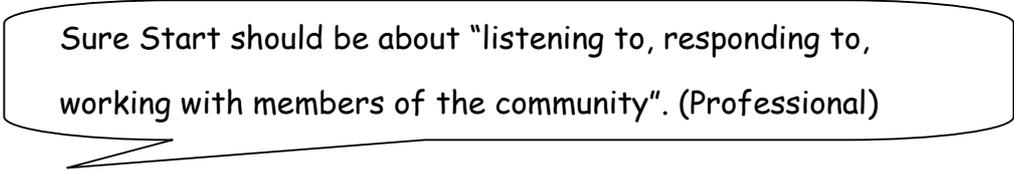
Within each programme, staff, parents and children will have their own way of looking at things because they are looking at Sure Start from different points of view. The government hopes that this range of views will be a major strength of the scheme.

It's very important that all of these views are known at the start, so that they can be taken account of. People's views may change as time goes on, as the programme moves forward. We will be able to look at these changes and what they might mean, in later feedback reports.

## ***5.2 What Staff Think***

Staff talked about their ideas about Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton in both interviews and meetings. Sometimes, individuals emphasised slightly different parts of the programme. This is not surprising, since professionals come from a variety of backgrounds and have different work experiences. Here are some of the main points they told us about.

### **A Community Development Approach**



Sure Start should be about "listening to, responding to, working with members of the community". (Professional)

- There is a very strong feeling in Ferryhill/Chilton that the programme should take a community development approach to delivering Sure Start.
- This approach aims to build on the existing strengths of the local community and enable them to begin to take a lead in working through issues, over time.

Staff say that a community development approach should:

- Ensure that Sure Start leads to longer term benefits;
- Help to support parents in making decisions which affect them and their families;

- Enable parents to become involved in delivering some Sure Start services themselves;
- Help other local parents to get involved.

### **Changing Existing Services**

- Staff in the Ferryhill/Cilton programme believe strongly that Sure Start must be "mainstreamed".
- This means that the programme must try to enable services, such as Social Services, to work in Sure Start ways.

### **Sure Start as a Public Health Project**

- There is also a view that Sure Start is mainly a public health project, where one of the most important aims is to improve the general health of families.

### **Family Support: Children First**

- To work successfully with children, staff said it was vital to work closely with families.
- Therefore, parent learning across health issues and child development must be important goals for Sure Start.
- Having said this, it is vital that children remain at the heart of the programme.

### **High Quality Childcare**

- Staff emphasised that childcare and education within Sure Start must be of a very high quality.

### **Linking up Services for Families**

- Staff believe that Sure Start is about linking together what all of the different mainstream agencies can do for children and families.
- It is about looking at children's whole lives that is looking at children within their playgroups, families and communities.

### ***5.3 What Parents Think***

Parents we spoke to talked about what they thought Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton should be about:

#### **Support for Parents and Children**

- Parents consulted were very enthusiastic about what Sure Start can offer local families in terms of services and support for parents and children. One parents said: "If children are happy, parents are happy".
- There was a view that Sure Start is about helping families to do their job properly.

#### **High Quality Childcare**

- Parents commented on the importance of good quality childcare.



## ***5.4 Talking Points***

### **Connecting ideas**

Understandably, parents and staff sometimes emphasised different aspects of Sure Start. Parents frequently talked about the direct benefits of Sure Start to themselves and their children. Staff, on the other hand, were also aware of other issues, such as:

- Sure Start as a community development project;
- The need for Sure Start to work well with other agencies and change the way they work, over time.

Below, we ask questions which may help staff and parents to think further about these different ways of looking at Sure Start.



### **Sure Start as a Community Development Project**

- What do parents understand by the term "community development programme", as it applies to Sure Start?
- What implications does it have for them?

### **"Mainstreaming" Sure Start**

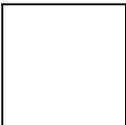
- What, exactly, do professionals mean by the term "mainstreaming"?

- How much do parents know and understand about the aim of "mainstreaming" Sure Start?
- Could parents be involved in helping mainstreaming to happen?
- How could they be enabled to take part?
- What might be the advantages of their involvement?

### **Monitoring Quality**

One important issue that was raised by both parents and staff was the need for high quality childcare and education within Sure Start.

- 
- How will the programme monitor the quality of its childcare?



## **6 Early Strengths of Sure Start**

### **Ferryhill/Chilton**

Despite the many challenges there have been, staff and parents feel that much was achieved during the early stages of the programme.

## ***6.1 What Staff Think***

### **Parental Involvement**

- Staff feel that the level of parental involvement has been a particular strength of the programme.
- They feel that a group of local parents has become fully committed to Sure Start and has also developed into an "empowered and assertive group", which can and does make its views known.

### **Team Building**

- Staff feel that a good team is being created in Ferryhill/Chilton, which includes both parents and professionals.

### **Getting Buildings Started**

- Staff consulted were very pleased with the progress of two of the three Sure Start centres at Ferryhill Station and Chilton Community College.
- The Ferryhill Station venue opened in July.

### **Getting Staff Appointed**

- There was great satisfaction that the programme has now successfully appointed all of its staff.

### **Nursery Arts Project**

- Staff have been extremely pleased with the high quality of the recently completed Nursery Arts project, delivered by "Cap à Pie". An extensive report detailing project objectives and workshop plans was presented to the executive partnership in March.

## **6.2 What Parents Think**

Parents consulted were extremely enthusiastic about what they, themselves, have gained from their work with Sure Start.

### **Increased Self Confidence**

All parents reported feeling more confident because of what they had done and learnt with the programme. Examples of their comments are:

- "I'm proud of myself";
- Another parent said she felt "better about herself";
- One parent talked about losing her confidence when she left work to have children. She feels she has "got this confidence back tenfold" through her involvement in Sure Start;
- One parent spoke generally about the change in the group of parents over the last year: "What a positive change there has been in these girls..I've seen people come along and they've blossomed under your eyes".

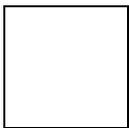
### **Learning New Skills**

- Parents talked a lot about the many new skills they had learnt through the Ferryhill/Chilton Sure Start.
- Parents involved in interviewing were especially pleased with this part of their involvement.
- Parents had learned much about going to meetings. They now feel more confident about giving their views and understand much more about how services and meetings work.

- Parents felt they had learned how to speak in front of other people in meetings. One parent said that she thought she could now "speak at any conference in any county, with conviction".

### **Better Social Lives**

- Parents said that Sure Start had "got them out of the house and helped them meet lots of other people."
- Sure Start had given them the chance to do many different types of activity and had provided childcare while they did them.



## **7 Challenges in the Setting up Stage**

Setting up any new scheme is often a difficult and time consuming task and this has certainly been the case with Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton. It's not surprising, given the scale and newness of what had to be done in Sure Start, that there have been a number of problems and frustrations involved in setting up the programme. Some of these have been worked through, while others will take longer to overcome.

### ***7.1 What Staff Think***

Staff talked about a number of difficulties in the early days.

### **Making the Sure Start Partnership Work**

- It is not surprising that staff reported initial problems when professionals from different mainstream agencies began to work together on the Sure Start partnership. There were a number of reasons for this:
  - Staff from the different agencies were not always used to working together;
  - Different agencies had their own priorities and their own ways of doing things;
  - There was little time for staff to learn how to work together because deadlines for getting the delivery plan in were so tight.

### **Getting Other Agencies Involved**

- There was significant disappointment that some mainstream agencies, such as Social Services, had not become involved with Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton.
- These agencies had not seemed to understand what Sure Start was about and how it would affect what they did. One professional said "the penny hasn't dropped yet".

### **Too little Time for Consulting with Parents**

- Some staff felt that there was too little time for working with local families during the consultation stage.
- There was particular concern that only a few parents from the Chilton area became involved, in the early stages.

### **Working with Parents**

- There were early problems for professionals working with parents, within the various Sure Start meetings.
- Professionals found it hard to avoid using 'jargon' terms which sometimes parents could not understand.
- The time, place and lack of childcare sometimes made it difficult for parents to attend meetings.

### **Recognition for Parents' Work**

- Staff regretted that the programme could not reward parents better for the huge amounts of work they had done for Sure Start, over a long period of time.

### **Time and Workload Issues**

- Much time-consuming and complicated work had to be done in the early stages of the programme, when there were few paid Sure Start staff to do it.
- Staff from mainstream services had to work on Sure Start, as well as doing their other work. This was extremely difficult at times.

### **Time Delays**

- Staff were frustrated by how long it took to get Sure Start off the ground.
- For example, work on the Sure Start centres was delayed because of the need to go through various processes, such as tendering for architects and builders.
- There were delays in getting jobs advertised.

- The Sure Start Unit was sometimes slow in giving decisions, so holding up work in the programme.

### **Employing Staff**

- There were early difficulties in working out who would employ Sure Start staff.
- Some agencies did not want to employ them because they were worried about having to pay for them after Sure Start funding had run out.
- Sometimes terms and conditions for staff presented problems. For example, Health Services pay nursery nurses less than Social Services do.
- Once it was decided who would employ staff, there were then problems in getting the right staff for some jobs.

### ***7.2 What Parents Think***

Parents who spoke to us, talked about some of the same early difficulties as staff and some different ones.

#### **Working with Professionals**

- Parents said that meetings with professionals were difficult for them, at first. Professionals had often used words and terms which they could not understand.
- Parents felt "intimidated" in early meetings and found it very hard to say what they thought.

### **Recognition for Parents' Work**

- While parents were extremely enthusiastic about their involvement in Sure Start, they would have liked more "recognition" for what they had done, at times.
- One parent said that "volunteering does not put bread on the table", for example.

### **Time Delays**

- Parents consulted, felt frustrated about how long it took for things to happen in the programme, at the beginning.
- They said that this made it difficult for them to get other local parents involved.

### **Financial Cost of Involvement in Sure Start**

While parents talked about the many benefits of being involved with Sure Start, there were also some financial costs to them:

- They needed smart clothes for interviewing Sure Start staff;
- They sometimes had to use their own telephones for Sure Start business.

## **8 Learning Through the Setting up Stage**

It is clear that much learning and development has already taken place in the Ferryhill/Chilton programme. Some important areas of learning are listed below:

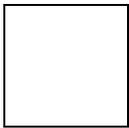
### **Agencies Working Together**

- Staff from different agencies are starting to work better together on the partnership, as they begin to see each others' points of view. For example, they are beginning to share information more freely.
- Some staff feel that as time goes on, professionals are beginning to move outside their own agency's ways of seeing issues, although this is an on-going process.

### **Parents and Professionals Working Together**

- Staff believed that both professionals and parents have made progress in the area of working together. This has happened for a number of reasons:
  - Parent representative meetings were set up so that parents could discuss issues before formal partnership meetings;
  - Professionals on the partnership have become more aware of the need to avoid using "jargon" terms or to explain such terms when they do use them;
  - Parents have begun to understand more of the professional language.
- Parents felt that meetings with professionals had become "100% better" for a number of reasons:
  - Some parents thought that the team building day had helped them to talk to professionals more easily;
  - Using first names in meetings has helped;
  - Parents, themselves, have learnt a lot and this helped them feel more confident in meetings;

- Professionals are now listening to them more and so parents feel "less intimidated".
- Having said all of this, parents said that there is still some "doubting yourself". One parent commented that it is still difficult to speak up in meetings - "Shall I say it and will people think it's stupid?"
- Another parent commented that sometimes professionals still "can't understand our language".



## **9 Challenges for the Future**

### ***9.1 What Staff Think***

Understandably, staff consulted believe that the programme faces a number of challenges in the future.

#### **Working Closely with Mainstream Services**

- Staff do not want Sure Start to be "just another government initiative which comes in, does a bit and goes again".
- To avoid this, the programme must collaborate closely with mainstream agencies that work with families with young children.
- Therefore, a key question for staff is: how can Sure Start and mainstream agencies move forward together to ensure that all services best meet the needs of children and families, in the future?

### **Keeping Parents involved over Time**

- Staff have been delighted by parental involvement so far but there is concern about how parents will continue to be involved over time.
- Parents who are now involved will become less so, as their children go on to school.
- This means that new parents must keep becoming involved, all of the time.

### **Meeting the Targets**

- Staff felt that meeting all of the programme's targets over time, will be a big challenge.

### **Getting Sure Start Centres Finished**

- Staff feel that getting all of the Sure Start centres up and running is an important challenge.

### **Linking Sure Start to Other Government Scheme**

- Staff feel it's important to find ways of linking Sure Start to other Government schemes, such as Neighbourhood Nurseries.

### **Keeping Sure Start Flexible**

- Some staff emphasised that Sure Start must remain flexible in the future.
- Family needs may change over time and the programme must be able to change to meet those needs. For example, if parents who do not work now, gain skills through training and later want to work, there may be a need for more than crèches or sessional work.

### **Children First**

- Keeping children at the very centre of Sure Start was identified as a vital issue for the programme.

### **Getting the Sure Start Message Across**

- It is clear that some local people do not yet understand what Sure Start is about and this has caused significant difficulties for the programme on occasions.
- For example, the Dean Bank development of a Sure Start centre and flats for teenage parents has been badly affected by local misunderstandings about the aims of Sure Start.

### ***9.2 What Parents Think***

As expected, parents had some different views on what they would like to see happen in the future in Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton. This is what the Government hoped and expected would happen because getting parents' particular views of situations is necessary for the success of Sure Start, overall.

During a group discussion with a member of the research team, parents spoke at length about their Sure Start experiences and talked about issues around their future involvement.

### **Involvement in Decision-Making**

- Parents enjoyed going to meetings and taking part in decision-making. However, they felt that meetings could still be improved to include them more.

- For example, parents thought that sometimes there was not enough time for them to read through papers handed out at Partnership meetings. This made it difficult for them to come to any real decisions.
- They need time to go through papers and time to discuss issues properly, before being asked to make a decision.
- Several parents also wondered if professionals discussed some issues before meetings, so that they were more ready to take decisions than parents were.
- The majority of parents at the discussion group thought that some parental representation on the Management Group would give parents more access to decision-making.

### **The Chance to Think Things Over**

- Parents said they had found it very useful talking to the researcher for Sure Start because it gave them the chance to talk things through, with someone outside the programme.
- The discussion had helped them to bring lots of issues into the open, for the first time.
- Parents thought it would be useful if they could have more discussions like this, at times, in the future.

### **Making Yourself Heard**

- Parents said it was sometimes difficult to get their views across at parent meetings. One parent said "you say things louder and then you just give up".
- Parents agreed that they should try to listen to each other more.

- One parent suggested that they could go around the group and give each person the chance to give their opinion, as the researcher in the discussion group was doing.

### **Getting New Parents Involved**

- Parents commented on a few occasions about the difficulty of getting new parents involved at the decision-making level of Sure Start. New parents seem happy to attend fun days but did not want to get more involved than that.
- Sure Start parents thought that possible other parents may not have the time to become more involved because of work commitments, perhaps.



## **9.3 Talking Points**

We have suggested some questions below which may help Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton think about two of the key challenges identified above: the future involvement of parents and keeping the partnership going.



### **Future Parental Involvement**

- How much are parents actively involved in individual decision-making that goes on in individual meetings?

- To what extent and in what ways are parents' views explicitly sought during meetings? Is this monitored on an ongoing basis?
- Do parents need time to discuss what they feel about their actual involvement in decision-making?
- Could the meetings be run in different ways to facilitate greater active parental involvement? For example, could small groups be used so that parents might feel more confident about expressing their views?
- What background knowledge is needed by parents to participate actively in discussions? Is this taken account of during the planning or the running of meetings?
- How will parents be recruited to the management aspect of the programme in the future?

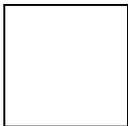
## **10 Working Within Sure Start Principles**

The government expects every programme to work from a shared set of key principles. Sure Start services must:

- Co-ordinate, streamline and add value to existing services in the Sure Start area;
- Involve parents, grandparents and other carers in ways that build on their existing strengths;
- Avoid stigma by ensuring that all local families are able to use Sure Start services;
- Ensure lasting support by linking Sure Start 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.

It is too soon to comment in any depth on how the Ferryhill/Chilton programme is working towards the Sure Start principles but some early comments can be made in three areas.



### ***10.1 Co-ordinate, Streamline and add Value to Existing Services***

The Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton programme is very much aware of the need to establish effective working relationships with mainstream services such as Health, Social work and Education, as well as with other initiatives such as Neighbourhood Nurseries.

As is to be expected with new ways of working, there have been some early complications in setting up smooth ways of working with other mainstream services.

Programme staff are working through these difficulties, by setting up a number of ways in which the programme can communicate effectively with mainstream agencies:

- Mainstream health visitors, midwives, librarians and job centre staff meet regularly with the Sure Start team at a "Communications" meeting.
- At this meeting, both sets of staff update each other about what's happening in the programme and outside and explore ideas about Sure Start activities and approaches.
- Initial feedback suggests that these meetings are beginning to set up good working relationships between Sure Start and mainstream staff.
- Sure Start family workers are working closely with health visitors, to deliver services.
- The Ferryhill/Chilton programme is working closely with other local programmes on general strategy for ensuring that Sure Start works effectively with mainstream agencies on a Countywide basis;

The evaluation team will support the programme in reviewing its approaches to working with other agencies in a systematic and organised way. Further discussion on this important subject is to be found in the "Shared Learning Feedback Report".



### ***10.2 Involving Parents, Grandparents and Carers in Ways that Build on their Existing Strengths***

Parents in Ferryhill/Chilton have taken part in Sure Start in a number of ways, so far. Many parents have attended fun days and some have attended

family learning groups. Several parents have been much more closely involved in the programme, participating in a wide range of activities:

- **Attending meetings**, such as parent network meetings; parent representative meetings; partnership and regional network meetings, as well as regional and national conferences.
- **Training** in various areas, including: interviewing; childcare; team building; parenting and a range of craft skills;
- **Shortlisting and interviewing** all Sure Start staff;
- The organisation and running of **trips and fun days**;
- **The choosing of equipment** for Sure Start home safety packs;
- **Visits** to other Sure Start programmes;

#### *Grandparents*

- The programme has begun to think about how best to involve grandparents and what might stop them getting involved.
- Several grandparents have been on Sure Start trips.

#### *Carers*

- Again, the programme has begun to think about the involvement of carers in the programme.
- There has been carer involvement at the decision-making level of the programme for over a year.

### ***10.3 Ensure Lasting Support by Linking Sure Start to Services for Older Children***

Two of the Sure Start buildings are based in school settings to support the

development of smooth links between nursery and school experiences and learning.

## **11 Learning from the Sure Start Experience**

Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton is already developing its own structure and ways of doing things. We must continue to collect views and information about this and feed it back to the programme.

We hope that this feedback report will help Sure Start staff and parents to think about what has been learnt so far and the evaluation will continue to support learning through future feedback and discussion.

## **12 How is the Programme Monitoring its Progress?**

- Ferryhill/Chilton Sure Start has co-funded the development of a Sure Start database.
- The database is to be installed shortly. It is hoped that a training course will be available to teach staff how to use it effectively.
- This database produces all the necessary information for Sure Start unit monitoring forms.
- The programme manager will produce a monthly report for the Management Group, detailing progress. The precise format and content of this report was not finalised at the time of writing this feedback report.

- Members of the Sure Start team will also be producing progress reports in due course. These reports will support the monthly programme manager's report, as appropriate.



## **13 Responding to the Evaluation Feedback Report**

### **Possible Areas for Comment**

It is vital that we get as many responses as possible, to this first feedback report because this will help us to target our evaluation more effectively in the future. Possible questions to help you to think about your views are:

- Does the feedback accurately sum up what the setting up period was like at Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton? If not, why not and what is missing?
- Is the feedback easy to understand and clear to read? If not, how could it have been clearer?
- What was the most useful section of the feedback? Why?

### **Ways of Responding to the Evaluation Feedback**

There are a number of ways in which you can tell us what you think about this feedback by:

- Giving your views at the usual programme meetings, that is at the Management Group, Parent Representative meetings or Partnership meetings.

- Contacting the evaluation team directly, by writing to Carol Potter at The Centre for Applied Social Studies, 15 Old Elvet, The University of Durham, Durham DH1 3HL. Her e-mail address is C.A.Potter@durham.ac.uk. If you would rather speak to Carol, you can ring on 0191 374 4752.

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

## **14 Moving On**

- The next evaluation feedback report will move on to explore issues to do with what Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton is doing in the local community and how well it is doing it.
- Future reports will look at areas which parents and professionals decide they want us to look at in more depth. We will be helping them to choose these areas soon.
- We will continue to report back on how the programme is working within the Sure Start principles.

**We look forward to working with Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton in the future.**

## **15 Appendix**

### **Summary of Feedback on the “*The Setting up Stage*” Report**

The feedback outlined below was gained from:

- A parents' feedback meeting which seven parents attended
- Discussion at two meetings of the Management Group

#### ***Summary of Parents' Feedback on the Evaluation Report***

##### **Overview**

Parents at the meeting were generally pleased with the report and thought it gave an accurate picture of the setting up phase.

##### **The Report Lay-out**

- All the parents at the meeting found the report very clear and easy-to-read.

##### **Report Content**

- Parents thought that the report contained a lot of very useful information.
- One parent said it gave a good idea of what had been going on in the programme and so would be useful for new parents to read.
- Some ideas in the report were new to parents in terms of Sure Start, such as “mainstreaming”, for example.

## **General Comments**

- One parent commented on the difference between what staff and parents talked about. She thought that parents talked about what they gained from being involved in Sure Start, while staff had talked about getting the programme going and working to Sure Start principles.
- Some parents read the sections about what parents had said and felt uneasy because it sounded like parents were being quite "selfish".
- They thought that "having a better social life" did not sound as important as the things that professionals had talked about. One parent said that having better social lives was a very important goal for parents and that they needed to talk about things like that.
- This led to a long discussion about how and why parent and staff views about Sure Start might be different.
- Some parents felt that professionals and parents were bound to have different views of Sure Start. Parents rightly wanted things for their families.
- After the talk, parents agreed that they should feel they have a right to talk about what was important to them personally.

## **Ongoing Issues**

- During the session, parents commented that some of the issues in the report still had not been worked out. For example, parents still felt that they should be represented on the *Management Group*.
- They also thought that although communication between professionals and parents had improved, improvements could still be made.

- Parents commented that it was very useful to be able to talk to somebody outside the programme about their views on parental involvement.

## ***What Staff Thought***

### **Overview**

Staff felt that the report was an accurate reflection of the setting up stage of the programme. They thought it raised some very relevant and important issues and questions.

### **Format**

- They found the report extremely easy to read and commented that it was very accessible and appropriate to a wide audience range.

### **The importance of parents' views**

- Staff were pleased to see extensive reporting of parent views in the report. They felt it essential to carry on collecting information on parents' opinions, as well as on how the programme is meeting its targets because from a community development point of view, parents' views are vital.

### **Similarities and difference: Staff and parents' views**

- Staff talked about the similarities between the parents' and staff's comments in the report. For example, one staff member felt that the report "captured the flavour of the anxieties felt by both parents and staff" very well.

### **Community development**

- Staff agreed that one of the hardest parts of running the Ferryhill/Chilton programme is to deliver services using a 'community development' stance. It was very important that the programme continued to listen to parents.
- Staff agreed that the use of a community development approach and the need to meet government targets created a tension for Sure Start Ferryhill/Chilton.

### **Parental involvement**

- Staff felt that questions and issues raised in this section of the report were relevant and important. For example, it was agreed that the issue of parental representation on the Management Group was something the programme should discuss further.

### **Ways of working**

- The report prompted some discussion on Sure Start ways of working. It was felt that it would take time for many staff to change their professional practice, particularly medically trained staff.
- There was discussion about community development approaches to smoking cessation and promoting breastfeeding. Staff felt it was important not to alienate people through these initiatives, by making them feel guilty about smoking or bottle-feeding, for example.

### ***Implications of the Report For the Programme***

- It was felt that the report raised many important issues which needed further discussion.

- A review day was suggested as a way of enabling staff and parents to step back and review key aspects of the ways in which the programme is working.
- Specifically, the review day should focus on the community development approach of the programme, parental involvement and the way that the programme is managed.