

EVALUATION REPORT

SURE START BRIDGWATER 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHORS

Lynette Chapman Evaluation Officer
Katherine Williams Evaluation and Data Collection Assistant

The authors would like to thank all parents, children and staff who provided their time and information for the evaluation.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Background	6
Methods	7
Objective 1: Improving Social and Emotional Development	10
Objective 2: Improving Health	13
Objective 3: Improving Children’s Ability to Learn	15
Objective 4: Strengthening Families and Communities	19
Conclusions and Recommendations	22
Appendices	24

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

- 1.1. This report provides feedback on the evaluation activities that have taken place within Sure Start Bridgwater during 2002.

Methods

- 1.2. The evaluation has used a wide range of data collection methods in order to look at the impact of the Sure Start Bridgwater programme. A themed evaluation approach has been taken during 2002. The reasons for moving towards a themed evaluation approach are discussed in the full report.

Objective 1 Improving Social and Emotional Development

- 1.3. Sure Start Bridgwater are achieving the target to care for and support mothers with postnatal depression. This is achieved through the Postnatal Depression Support group, run by the health team.
- 1.4. For the year 2001/2002, Sure Start Bridgwater contacted eighty percent of all babies within two months.
- 1.5. Sure Start Bridgwater have already met the target for reducing child re-registrations on the Child Protection Register.
- 1.6. Bridgwater Childminding Network, the Horticultural Project and the Parent Care Worker service all contribute in a positive way to meeting Objective 1, Improving Social and Emotional Development.

Objective 2 Improving Health

- 1.7. There are difficulties in collecting reliable baseline data with regard to the health indicators. However, there is positive evidence that Sure Start Bridgwater is providing parenting information and support to a large number of parents. In addition, guidance on breast-feeding, hygiene and safety is provided by the Babes R Us group.
- 1.8. The Horticultural Project is also making a positive contribution towards improving health.

Objective 3 Improving Children's Ability to Learn

- 1.9. Qualitative evidence suggests that this part of the programme is strong. Sure Start targets regarding speech and language of young children are shortly to be amended. We will need to use the Sure Start Language Measure as a new baseline against which to measure change.
- 1.10. Work is taking place to develop a Neighbourhood Nursery for the area. This will help to increase the number of good quality play and learning opportunities for children.
- 1.11. The percentage of children with an active library membership has declined.

Objective 4 Strengthening Families and Communities

- 1.12. We are awaiting data from the Sure Start Unit before we can judge how Sure Start Bridgwater is performing with regard to the employment target.
- 1.13. There is much anecdotal evidence that Sure Start Bridgwater has improved services for Sure Start families. This will be formally tested by a Community Survey in 2004.
- 1.14. Sure Start Bridgwater has parental representation on the management group, in line with Sure Start targets.
- 1.15. Sure Start Bridgwater have, in conjunction with Hamp Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), appointed an Employment Worker to help meet the target concerning employment.
- 1.16. There is evidence that the Childminding Network contributes to the sustainability of the programme by providing high quality employment opportunities.
- 1.17. A number of social events have taken place during 2002 (e.g. open day, Christmas party). These contribute towards Objective 4.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1.18. There is much evidence that Sure Start Bridgwater is working creatively and successfully towards achieving the targets set by the Sure Start Unit.
- 1.19. Further consideration needs to be given to how to increase use of libraries by Sure Start families.
- 1.20. Sure Start Bridgwater needs contact with one hundred percent of families with new babies within two months. Although the percentage

of new babies reached has been improving, a small amount of further work would ensure that this target is achieved.

- 1.21. Sure Start Unit is providing some information against which the programme needs to judge progress. The delay in receiving this information has made judgements about progress problematic. Timely data is necessary to judge progress and to see whether the programme needs to adapt or change particular services in order to meet targets set by the unit.

2. BACKGROUND

Introduction to Sure Start Bridgwater

- 2.1. Sure Start Bridgwater covers two areas, namely Hamp and Eastover. Hamp consists mainly of council/housing association housing, whilst Eastover tends to consist of mainly privately owned terraced housing.

- 2.2. The work of Sure Start Bridgwater includes a wide range of different services. The base for Sure Start Bridgwater is on the edge of the Hamp estate where a large number of staff are based. In addition, there are a large number of centres and building across the Sure Start area from which workers outreach, in order to reach their client group.

3. METHODS

The Evaluation Approach

- 3.1 The evaluation of Sure Start Bridgwater is carried out by the Community Evaluation Unit based within Dorset and Somerset NHS. The evaluation is based on the ‘action research’ model, ensuring that the evaluation focuses on the needs of the programme and provides useful and usable information to develop and inform the activities of Sure Start Bridgwater.
- 3.2 The evaluation of Sure Start Bridgwater has used a wide range of different sources of material and evaluation methods in order to collect and analyse the impact of Sure Start Bridgwater. Both quantitative and qualitative information is used to inform the evaluation and planning of Sure Start Bridgwater.
- 3.3 This report brings together the evaluation work that has been undertaken to date with regard to the Sure Start Bridgwater programme. The box below illustrates the evaluation work that has been carried out during 2002.

Evaluation Activities

- Childminding Network Interview and Questionnaire Study
- Horticultural Project Observation Study
- Speech and Language Rapid Review
- Documenting evidence with regard to the children’s play park
- Advice and analysis of Health Visitor questionnaires
- Advice in drafting questionnaires for the Sure Start Midwife
- Documenting activities such as the open day and the Christmas party.
- Analysing information from the Sure Start database.
- Collecting evaluation evidence through the Service Level Agreement Reviews

- 3.4 The approach and evaluation methods taken to date have varied according to need within the programme. The evaluation has moved through a number of stages in order to support the development of the programme.

Establishing Baseline Information

- 3.5 This stage concentrated on ensuring that appropriate baseline data was in place so that it would be possible to measure change at a later date. In particular, baseline data was collected through use of a Community Questionnaire, which was sent to all households in the Sure Start area.
- 3.6 The Community Questionnaire will be repeated in 2004 so that we can assess whether there has been any change in the local area on a number of important issues.

Establishing and Specifying Needs

- 3.7 At this stage, work was undertaken to provide the programme with details about the needs of local residents. Although needs had been identified for the Sure Start action plan, a questionnaire study was used to collect more specific detail from residents about childcare and community facilities. The results provided important information to enable appropriate use to be made of a local community centre.
- 3.8 During 2002, a questionnaire study was carried out to assess the demand for childcare in response to the opportunity to bid for a Neighbourhood Nursery (NN) in the local area. This study provided evidence that there was a demand for flexible childcare. The findings of this study were used to help plan the forthcoming Neighbourhood Nursery.

Developing Services

- 3.9 This stage involved looking at and reviewing current services. During 2001, the evaluation looked at the work of the Library Service and Home-Start. During 2002, a review was undertaken of the Speech and Language service. This review considered the views of users of the service, nursery and pre school staff in contact with the Speech and Language service. Evaluation findings are used to feed into the planning and shaping of the programme.

Themed Evaluation

- 3.10 It was necessary to move towards a themed evaluation approach. This approach started during 2002. This approach was required in order to take a wider strategic perspective to evaluating the Sure Start programme. In addition, the evaluation necessarily has limited resources. Up to this point, evaluation work had concentrated on collecting and providing information to help develop the programme.

- 3.11 Another reason for moving towards a themed evaluation approach was due to the complexity of the programme. Within the programme, there are a large number of providers from different organisational backgrounds working towards the common Sure Start objectives as listed in the box below.

Sure Start Objectives

Objective 1: Improving Social and Emotional Development

Objective 2: Improving Health

Objective 3: Improving Children's Ability to Learn

Objective 4: Strengthening Families and Communities

The Sure Start Unit ask programmes to measure their performance against two types of indicators. The first is known as a Public Service Agreement. In addition, the Sure Start Unit specify targets, known as Service Delivery Targets. These are concerned with measuring the way in which services are delivered.

- 3.12 To assess the extent to which Sure Start Bridgwater is meeting its objectives, we consider performance against the core indicators¹ for each objective. We also draw on evidence collected throughout the year from in depth evaluations with different services within the programme.
- 3.13 Further detail regarding the results of individual evaluations carried out through the year can be found by referring to the summaries at the end of the report, or to the individual evaluation reports.

¹ A critique of the wider Sure Start indicators has been undertaken and is presented at Appendix 3.

4 OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In particular, by supporting early bonding between parents and their children, helping families to function and by enabling the early identification and support of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Public Service Agreement Target

To reduce the proportion of children aged 0-3 years in the 500 Sure Start areas who are re-registered within the space of 12 months on the child protection register by 20 per cent by 2004.

Service Delivery Target

All local Sure Start programmes to have agreed and implemented, in a culturally sensitive way, ways of caring for and supporting mothers with post-natal depression

One hundred per cent of families with young children to have been contacted by local programmes within the first two months of birth.

- 4.1 Sure Start Bridgwater has already met the Public Service Agreement target for 2004. There has been a one hundred percent reduction in the proportion of children re-registered within the space of 12 months on the child protection register. Six children were re-registered on the child protection register during 1999/2000. There were no children re-registered on the child protection register during 2001/2002.
- 4.2 Sure Start Bridgwater is running a Postnatal Depression Support group. This meets the Service Delivery Target which states that all Sure Start programmes should implement culturally sensitive ways of caring for and supporting mothers with post-natal depression. One mother attending the Postnatal Depression group notes, *"I have found the group to be very helpful. It's nice to know there are other people that feel the same."* Other mothers attending the group felt that it was beneficial to meet others who had similar experiences of postnatal depression so that they could exchange coping strategies and gain support from others in the group. *"(It's) good to talk to other people in the same situation and see how they cope."*
- 4.3 All families with new babies are identified by the Sure Start Midwife and subsequently contacted by the First Contact visitors. Sure Start Bridgwater does not consistently contact one hundred per cent of all babies within two months of birth at present. For 2001-2002, Sure Start Bridgwater contacted eighty per cent of babies within two months of birth.

- 4.4 The evaluation has also compiled further important evidence about how Sure Start Bridgwater is helping to meet Objective 1. This is discussed below.

Bridgwater Childminding Network

- 4.5 The evaluation study of the Childminding Network showed that it has an important role to play in helping Sure Start Bridgwater to improve the social and emotional development of children.
- 4.6 Childminders within the Network look after small groups of children. This allows close relationships to form between childminders and the children, and helps with the early identification of social and emotional developmental problems.
- 4.7 Childminders within the Network offer parents emotional and practical support. This helps families to function, a key aim of Objective 1.

“(Parents) think that by paying you your childminder’s fee they have bought a best friend and you hear all their ailments, all their problems, all their troubles...you do find yourself being a support...”

“(When) Tim started into school she (the child’s mother) was worried that he wouldn't stay and I was able to say to her...how do you feel about taking his Thomas the Tank Engine bag with him, so he has got something familiar...it was a useful way to start the process of detaching him...in the first year that he was at school it was a bit of a struggle for him but it worked and she was able to call on me.”*

- 4.8 Many of the childminders support families and children by helping to identify potential developmental problems and issues at an early stage. They spoke of a number of examples of how they were able to recognise possible difficulties amongst the children in their care.

“Carl went through a stage when he first started doing (writing) his name... instead of having Carl he was C-A-L-R and I wonder if he had been in a nursery situation how early that would have been picked up...”

“I was concerned about little Sophie at one point because she was letting Sarah talk for her. She hardly used to speak at all... I just started saying to Sarah then, no let Sophie tell me. and she maybe was a little slow in her speech, but there is

* Names of parents and children have been changed or anonymised.

nothing wrong with her, at two and a half she was yapping away”

Horticultural Project

- 4.9 There is evidence to suggest that the Horticultural Project helps Sure Start Bridgwater to meet Objective 1. In particular, children are taught particular social skills about sharing and taking turns. Children are taught to share equipment and resources in the sessions, and to work together in order to complete particular tasks. For example, when making soup, different children carry out different tasks to make the soup.
- 4.10 At particular times, children are given opportunities to run around freely as part of the project. The children appear to relax and let off steam to a greater extent than when they are in a more formal classroom environment. In addition, being able to explore and share new experiences together creates social bonds between the children, for example, by showing one another plants, and exploring areas such as the den together.
- 4.11 At times, the Horticultural Worker was able to give more attention to those children who may have greater social and emotional needs. The project is flexible and able to accommodate different children’s needs.

Parent Care Worker Service

- 4.12 The case study below gives an example of how this service helps the Sure Start programme to meet Objective 1, by helping families to function, supporting early bonding, and helping to reduce re-registrations on the Child Protection Register.

Family A

This family started working with the Parent Care Worker service during March 2000 (pre Sure Start), and was supported on a long-term basis. Two children had been removed from the home and a full Parent Assessment was requested as a four month old remained in the home. The Parent Care Worker worked with the family on a twice-weekly basis providing sessions both at a family centre and in the family home. Throughout the sessions, ideas and support were provided to both enhance the skills the parents already had, and encourage areas where the Dad in particular was less confident. He had openly admitted that he felt unable to ‘play’ with his daughter as he didn’t know how to.

The progress made by the family, later led to the child being de-registered in August 2001.

5 OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVING HEALTH

In particular, by supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth.

Public Service Agreement Target

To achieve by 2004 in the 500 Sure Start areas, a 10 per cent reduction in mothers who smoke in pregnancy.

Service Delivery Target

Parenting support and information to be available for all parents in Sure Start areas.

All local programmes to give guidance on breast feeding, hygiene and safety.

A 10 per cent reduction in children in the Sure Start area aged 0–3 admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, a respiratory infection or a severe injury.

- 5.1 Prior to the start of the Sure Start Bridgwater programme, data about smoking in pregnancy has not been routinely collected by health professionals. This has made it difficult to collect reliable and valid baseline information against which we can make judgements about this target. In response to the request of both the Sure Start programmes and other information needs, this data should now be routinely recorded by health professionals.
- 5.2 Sure Start Bridgwater as part of its services, ensures that support and information is available to parents.
- 5.3 Through the work of the health team, guidance is given on breast-feeding, hygiene and safety. The group, Pregnancy Pals, has been well received by those that attend, and mothers who attend feel well supported by the group and that they have increased their knowledge about infant health and safety.
- 5.4 The Sure Start Unit inform us that they will shortly be providing Sure Start programmes with data regarding hospital admissions. Only when this data is received can Sure Start programmes judge the effectiveness of work towards this target and subsequently whether they need to focus resources in a different way.
- 5.5 Further evidence from the evaluation about how Sure Start Bridgwater is helping to improve health is discussed below.

Horticultural Project

- 5.6 The Horticultural Project helps to improve health through direct involvement with the children. Children are able to be physically active whilst learning, which is likely to benefit their health. Children are encouraged to become familiar with the outdoors in a fun way.
- 5.7 Children are introduced to new types of fruit and vegetables in a non-threatening way through the project. Children were likely to try fruit and vegetables if others had tried and enjoyed it. Hopefully, this will encourage the children to have a positive attitude to fruit and vegetables at home.



Babes R Us

- 5.8 Babes R Us are a group that has been set up to provide advice and support to parents. This group helps Sure Start Bridgwater to meet Objective 2. Parents have been asked for feedback about the sessions and there are many positive comments about the group. Parents noted some of the best things about the group:

“Practical advice and relative matters, babies of similar ages able to share experiences.”

“Lots of different toys. Good time of day. Friendly. Interesting talks. Knowledgeable helpers. Very relaxed atmosphere.”

“Meeting other mums. Lots of information about children and babies i.e. weaning etc. Informal & friendly.”

“Everyone is so friendly and easy to talk to.”

6 OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVING CHILDREN'S ABILITY TO LEARN

In particular, by encouraging high quality learning environments and childcare that promote early learning, provide stimulating and enjoyable play, improve language skills and ensure early identification and support of children with special needs.

Public Service Agreement Target

To achieve by 2004 for children aged 0-3 in the 500 Sure Start areas, a reduction of five percentage points in the number of children with speech and language problems requiring specialist intervention by the age of 4.

Service Delivery Target

All children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities, helping progress to early learning goals when they get to school.

Increase the use of libraries by parents with young children in the Sure Start area.

- 6.1 The PSA target relating to speech and language is shortly to be changed by the Sure Start Unit, and will be necessary to measure any change using the Sure Start Language Measure (SSLM) as a baseline. We can only use the SSLM to judge whether change has taken place, once data collection has taken place in subsequent years.
- 6.2 The Childcare Needs survey showed that there is still demand, particularly in the Eastover area, for good quality, flexible childcare. Access to good quality play and learning opportunities is underway with the development of the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. In addition, good quality play and learning opportunities are provided by different groups provided by Sure Start Bridgwater, and the programme funds additional childcare places at Bridgwater College, which is designated an Early Excellence Centre.
- 6.3 In order to increase the number of Sure Start families making use of library facilities, a Sure Start mobile library service serves the local Sure Start area. In addition, sessions are held at the local library to encourage parents to visit with their children.
- 6.4 During 2000-2001, 643 children aged 0-3 lived in the Sure Start area. Of this number 432 were active library members, indicating that 67.2% of all Sure Start children were active library members. During 2001-2002, 846 children aged 0-3 lived in the Sure Start area. Figures show that 390 were active library members, giving a lower percentage of

library membership at 46.1%. This indicates that there has been a 21.1% decrease in the percentage of Sure Start children holding active library membership.

- 6.5 These figures are based upon data provided by Sure Start Bridgwater and the Library Service. There appears to have been a large increase in the number of 0-3 year olds living in the Sure Start Bridgwater area. The accuracy of the data regarding active library membership is dependent on the population data being correct. Nationally, library membership is declining.

Speech and Language Review

- 6.6 The Speech and Language service is part of Sure Start Bridgwater's work towards Objective 3. A review of the service from the perspective of staff and users was carried out. This provided ideas about how the service could be further developed and showed that parents were pleased with the support they had received. This had helped their children with their speech and language, which is likely to improve their ability to learn.

Parent: "He's just starting to speak really well now and he is really pleased with himself, like he'll say "I said that right" and he'll be really proud...that is through Sure Start...it has taught me how to teach him just by going (to the sessions)...and it's worked, I mean he is brilliant now."

- 6.7 Work has taken place with staff in nursery settings around spotting speech and language problems. Staff vary in their confidence to identify speech and language problems, and further training will be arranged where necessary. However, the capacity of nursery staff to spot speech and language problems and then to be able to refer them to an appropriate service is seen as valuable by nursery staff.

"We talk through observations and this helps staff realise what it is they are looking for, which signs to spot."

"There is a quick turnaround between a problem being spotted and a child being assessed."

- 6.8 The support provided by the Speech and Language Service is additional to that which nursery settings could usually expect, and in this way it can be expected to have a positive impact on children's ability to learn.

Childminding Network

- 6.9 Childminders within the Network feel that by caring for small groups of children they are able to give individual attention to the children in their care. With the support offered by the Network, childminders felt they are able to identify and deal with learning and development problems promptly.

“Paul, the first child I had, I couldn't get him to do any messy play. I couldn't even get him to chalk on the board, but the more I sat down and did things...he would gradually come up more and more to do it. And then I would say would anybody fancy doing some painting and it got to the stage where Paul was the first one at the table, but it took a time to.”

- 6.10 The Network is a resource for training and play ideas for childminders. This helps to improve children’s ability to learn, as it provides childminders with the necessary skills, ideas and equipment for stimulating and enjoyable play.
- 6.11 Childminders within the Bridgwater Childminding Network are able to make use of professionals working within the Sure Start team in order to resolve issues that may impact on a child’s ability to learn.

Horticultural Project

- 6.12 The Horticultural Project helps to improve children’s ability to learn through a hands on, fun way of learning. One task such as planting can introduce touch, texture, smell, description, and counting. The hands on element of the project help to reinforce the learning process. Children are encouraged to make links between different objects, and remember back to previous sessions, in order to see how a plant has changed. Children can learn by seeing change, rather than simply being told that something happens.
- 6.13 The style of learning appears to captivate young children and keep them motivated. The project is able to provide a flexible and supportive way of learning, and a range of different learning abilities can be catered for. The Horticultural Project allows children to follow their own interest when learning. This keeps them interested, motivated and eager to learn.

Play Park Equipment

- 6.14 A project was set up by the Parent’s Network to extend and improve the current play facilities at Cranleigh Gardens in Bridgwater.

- 6.15 A series of photographs were taken before and after the work had taken place in Cranleigh Gardens to illustrate the changes in the play area as a result of the work of the parents network.

Before play park improvements



After play park improvements



7 OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

In particular, by involving families in building the community's capacity to sustain the programme and thereby create pathways out of poverty.

Public Service Agreement Target

By 2004 to reduce by at least 12 per cent the number of 0-3 year old children in Sure Start areas living in households where no one is working.

Service Delivery Target

Seventy five per cent of families reporting personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support.

All Sure Start programmes to have parent representation on the local programme board.

All Sure Start programmes to have developed local targets for ensuring links between the local Sure Start partnership and Employment Service Job Centres.

All Sure Start programmes to work with their EYDCP to help close the gap between the availability of accessible childcare for 0-3 year olds in Sure Start areas and other areas.

- 7.1 Sure Start Bridgwater is currently awaiting data about the percentage of children living in households where no one is working. Once this data is received from the Sure Start Unit, the programme will be able to judge how well it is meeting this target.
- 7.2 Anecdotal evidence from parents suggests that they are happy and have seen improvements in local services for children and families. This will be more formally tested in early 2004 when we will carry out a second Community Survey to measure change that has taken place in the Sure Start Bridgwater area.
- 7.3 Parental representation on the programme board has been in place since the start of Sure Start Bridgwater.
- 7.4 Targets have been developed to ensure links between Sure Start Bridgwater and the Employment Service, through the post of Employment Worker, a shared post with a local SRB scheme.
- 7.5 Much proactive work has taken place to identify and close the childcare gap. Needs assessment work has taken place in the form of a

Childcare Needs survey. The results of this survey have been used to allow parental needs to shape a new Neighbourhood Nursery for the area.

Childminding Network

- 7.6 Many childminders within the Bridgwater Childminding Network see childminding as a long-term career choice. This means that the Childminding Network is a sustainable resource, as the training and support offered to childminders will continue to benefit Sure Start families over the longer term.
- 7.7 The work of the Network helps to strengthen families and communities. Opportunities are provided through the Network for childminders to meet and discuss issues. This helps to reduce feelings of isolation, encourage sharing of information and create a sense of ownership of the Network by childminders. In addition, the social support and practical advice that is shared between childminders in the Network is also another sustainable feature of the Network.
- 7.8 The Network has helped childminders to combine employment with staying at home with their children. This contributes towards helping to reduce the number of households where no one is working.

Sure Start Open Day

- 7.9 A Sure Start open day was held during July 2002 to launch the newly refurbished Sure Start House. The evaluation team collected documentary evidence in the form of comments from people who attended on the day, and photos of the activities taking place. The day provided an opportunity for residents from the local community to meet and take part in fun activities, helping to provide an opportunity to work towards strengthening families and communities.



“Always a privilege to visit Sure Start – hard working, dedicated staff who always put the needs of children and family first.”

“Lovely day, nice to see around the garden and the activities were very good.”

“Been absolutely marvellous, kids enjoying themselves. Having problems getting them out! Mums can relax.”

8 SURE START BRIDGWATER CONTACT FIGURES

- 8.1 Sure Start Unit requires each member of staff to record their contact with Sure Start parents and children on a monthly basis. Contact data for 2002 for each service is provided at Appendix 4. It is useful to consider this data, to gain a wider perspective about the number of parents and children the programme is able to reach.
- 8.2 There are a number of incomplete records. It is important to collect continual data to establish a full and accurate picture of Sure Start contacts.
- 8.3 We have provided a visual breakdown of the activity of each project at Appendix 4 for discussion purposes. We are not aiming to compare the productivity of different workers through these graphs, as different services vary in their target numbers. We have commented on the graphs where appropriate.
- 8.4 During 2001, Sure Start Bridgwater made a total of 4827 contacts with children. 21.8% (1052) were new contacts for Sure Start Bridgwater. This data is based on the number of contacts with children made by Sure Start services. These numbers refer to the total number of contacts made with children, not the actual number of children reached.
- 8.5 In comparison, during 2002, Sure Start Bridgwater made 4313 contacts with children. 19.7% (848) were new contacts for the programme.
- 8.6 It is important to bear in mind that there may be differences in interpretation of the term 'contact'. If this is the case, further guidance may need to be provided about what counts as a contact. It is also important to consider that staff may work different hours, and the nature of their work may vary in terms of the number of people that they contact.

9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 There is much qualitative evidence that Sure Start Bridgwater is working creatively and successfully towards achieving the targets set by the Sure Start Unit. Many of the quantitative measures are long-term targets, and it is likely that these measures will provide further evidence over time.
- 9.2 Sure Start Unit is providing some information against which the programme needs to judge progress. The delay in receiving this information has made some judgements about progress problematic. Timely data is necessary to judge progress and to see whether the programme needs to adapt or change particular services in order to meet targets set by the unit.

Objective 1 Improving Social and Emotional Development

- 9.3 Sure Start Bridgwater are achieving the target to care for and support mothers with postnatal depression. This is achieved through the Postnatal Depression support group, run by the health team.
- 9.4 The evaluation work for 2002, found that further work needs to take place to ensure that Sure Start Bridgwater contacts all babies within two months, in line with Sure Start targets. The percentage of new babies contacted within two months has been increasing, but a small amount of further work would ensure that this target is achieved.
- 9.5 Sure Start Bridgwater have already met the target for reducing child re-registrations on the Child Protection Register.
- 9.6 Bridgwater Childminding Network, the Horticultural Project and the Parent Care Worker service are important resources for Sure Start Bridgwater. They all contribute in a positive way to meeting Objective 1, Improving Social and Emotional Development.

Objective 2 Improving Health

- 9.7 There are difficulties in collecting reliable baseline data with regard to the health indicators. Particular data have not always been collected consistently by health professionals and other data we are awaiting from the Sure Start Unit. This makes quantitative judgements about the impact of the programme on health difficult.
- 9.8 There is positive evidence that Sure Start Bridgwater is providing parenting information and support to a large number of parents. In

addition, guidance on breast-feeding, hygiene and safety is provided by the Babes R Us group.

- 9.9 The Horticultural Project is also making a positive contribution towards improving health.

Objective 3 Improving Children's Ability to Learn

- 9.10 Qualitative evidence suggests that this part of the programme is very strong. Sure Start targets regarding speech and language of young children is shortly to be amended, and it will be necessary to use the Sure Start Language Measure as a new baseline against which to measure change.
- 9.11 Work is taking place to develop a Neighbourhood Nursery for the area. This will help to increase the number of good quality play and learning opportunities for children.
- 9.12 The percentage of children with an active library membership has declined. Further consideration needs to be given about how Sure Start Bridgwater can work towards increasing the use of libraries by Sure Start families.

Objective 4 Strengthening Families and Communities

- 9.13 We are awaiting data from the Sure Start Unit, before we can measure change about how Sure Start Bridgwater is performing with regard to workless households.
- 9.14 There is much anecdotal evidence that Sure Start Bridgwater has improved services for Sure Start families. This will be formally tested by a Community Survey in 2004.
- 9.15 Sure Start Bridgwater has parental representation on the management group, in line with Sure Start targets.
- 9.16 Sure Start Bridgwater have in conjunction with Hamp SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) employed an Employment Worker to help reach the target concerning workless households.
- 9.17 There is evidence that the Childminding Network contributes to the sustainability of the programme by providing high quality employment opportunities.