



Austin/Sunnyhill

**Evaluation Report
2004**

**Compiled by
Brian Crosbie
Evaluation Research Officer**

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Introduction

Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill received recognition as a Sure Start programme in December 2002. It is one of four programmes with Derby city. Demographically, the catchment holds a population of 9941. Within that, the programme reaches out to some 557 children under four and their families. Austin/Sunnyhill can boast of a diversity racial/ethnic and cultural community made up of Indian, African Caribbean, Chinese, Pakistani, African and other groups (from census). The challenge for the programme is to serve these families in ways that respond sensitively to the cultural, religious and ethnic needs of the whole community.

Evaluation in Austin/Sunnyhill

This report represents the evaluation activities accomplished within Sure Start Austin Sunnyhill to date. In September 2003, the programme appointed an internal evaluation officer to work alongside the existing pool of staff. The decision by management to have a full-time officer working 'in the field', in contrast to 'buying in' research from an external institute, comes from the vision to see evaluation as an every day part of the wider programme delivery. With no formal evaluation having taken place within the programme prior to the evaluation officer taking up the post; in the last six month their task has been to initiate an evaluation strategy (appendix A), which will lay the groundwork for the programmes future evaluation activities. As it is still early days in terms of evaluating the programme, as yet, there are no established findings to report. Nevertheless, it is important that the programme reports on the evaluation activities both underway and in planning.

The structure of the report

The report is divided into two thematic areas. The first section uses as a framework the four national Sure Start objectives to discuss to current and planned evaluation involving Sure Start and other agency staff in these areas:

- Improving health
- Strengthening families and communities
- Enhancing the ability to play
- Improving social and emotional development

Importance is placed on describing the research design and choice of methods for each evaluation activity. Following the discussion of the evaluation planning for the core objectives, the report describes the programmes forthcoming user satisfaction survey.

The second section discusses the theme of parents' involvement in evaluation up to this point in the life of the programme. In the short time that the Austin/Sunnyhill programme has deliberated its evaluation strategy, there are achievements to acknowledge, not least in the programme's endeavour to recruit parents onto evaluation activities. The continuing effort to involve local people in evaluation emerges from the programme's overall commitment to the ethos of community capacity building. The mid to long-term implications of this approach to our programme is that parent's meaningful involvement in evaluation will help energise their community. We sincerely hope that as families and communities develop a greater understanding of their position and struggles, this will inform our evaluation. The report will discuss some of the 'distance travelled' in this initiative.

Evaluation development of core services

In the first year of operation, the Austin/Sunnyhill initiated a breadth of core groups and services. Included among these are:

- Play time-parent & toddler group
- Story time Session

- Baby massage
- Cradle club
- Speech & language support
- Home safety scheme
- Together group
- Crèche/child care
- Strengthening families
- Holiday play schemes/ trips
- Child health clinic
- Outreach & family support
- Post natal depression group
- Sure Start health visitor services

This list represents both established groups/services and others still at a developmental stage. Indeed, it is recognised that the majority began before evaluation services were initiated. However, those groups that have early connection with the Austin/Sunnyhill Sure Start were initiated on the strength of a 'parents' needs survey' carried out as part of the programmes earlier development.

The task of the evaluation officer therefore, has been to recognise the division between formative and process evaluation when prioritising the immediate concerns for the programme's overall evaluation. In light of the fact that measurable outcomes are central to Sure Start's evidence of success in interventions with families and communities, it seems reasonable to concentrate effort on gathering baseline data from activities/services still within the pre-implementation stage. At the same time, stakeholders recognise the need for mid point process evaluation in order to clarify the effectiveness or otherwise of established services. The following material describes the work underway to capture information from both formative and process evaluation.

Objective 1: Improving social and emotional development

Postnatal depression group

The postnatal depression group represents a new initiative within the Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill area. Under guidance and support from the evaluation officer, the members of staff responsible for the planning have initiated baseline information gathering:

- Staff have devised a questionnaire (appendix B), distributed among mothers using other Sure Start services in order to gather an estimation of postnatal depression within the community. In addition, the survey also asks if parents would find a support group helpful. It should be noted that the initial returns from the questionnaire were low (N=14), and staff involved were asked to seek a greater level of response.
- A second stage of consultation, which included two focus groups, has been more successful. The groups were invited to consider the format and weekly content of the sessions. From the consultation, the staff members are in the process of devising a ten-week programme.
- It is also planned that for the purpose of measuring outcomes, staff will devise an initial questionnaire for each participant along the lines of the Edinburgh Postnatal depression measure. The same series of questions will be asked at the end of the 10 weeks and a quasi-longitudinal comparison will be made for each member. The evaluation officer will work alongside staff to ensure validity of the measure.
- Along with accurate recording of the sessions by staff, there will be an opportunity for parent members to appraise the service at the end of the ten-week programme.
- It is expected that the programme will roll on and accept new members after the ten-week programme. This will allow scope for the evaluation method to be scrutinised for its effectiveness in measuring outcomes. It is therefore envisaged that the methods adopted will go through stages of development.

Ethical considerations

Delivering services for people with postnatal depression holds ethical implications: not least for the perceived vulnerability of this client group. Foremost will be the consideration of the possible effects of “measuring” the extent of postnatal depression. The evaluation will be aware that the use of objective categories can cause detrimental effect where by individual adopt research constructs as subjective traits. The evaluation will therefore, strive to leave intact the individual’s autonomy. To ensure this, all data gathered from individuals will be kept with the strictest confidence. The findings from the activity will be shared and verified for accurate representation among the group members. These ethical considerations will constitute a standard of practice throughout all evaluation studies within Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill

The Sure Start target for support and care for sufferers of postnatal depression recognises the need for cultural sensitivity. The activity development team have responded to this need by prioritising evidence-based practice within their planning. They have sought advice from specialist practitioners in the field, concerned with provision for Asian women. In addition, the consultative process helped establish the community’s needs in terms of the content of the sessions.

Timescale

The initial stages of the evaluation are complete. The group is expected to run from the middle of April 2004. At this point baseline measure will be taken using the techniques mentioned above. Outcome evaluation will commence in July 2004.

Objective 2: Improving Health

Child Health clinic

The child health clinic was an early addition to Sure Start services in the area. As well as being a base for parents to seek advice and weigh their baby, Sure Start workers also run

a stay and play session. This allows parents the opportunity to meet other parents as well as for the children to play.

It takes place on Mondays at the local community centre. However, for some time parents who attend have commented on the unsuitability of the environment. With the opening of Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill's dedicated centre expected in May of 2004, and a further satellite unit expected in the south of the catchment, parents are being consulted on the times and provisions in the new buildings.

At this stage in the life of the service, the staff are interested in seeking the views of parents. Firstly, to find out if current session time is suitable to those who attend and whether changing the times would enable other parents to participate. In addition, health staff would like to be more in tune with the health advice that local parents require. Those staff that offer play and stay opportunities, also recognise the need to make changes to the play provisions.

Evaluation strategy

Commenced in late February, staff members, along with evaluation officer, have begun to devise the scope of the evaluation. The three themes, described above will be:

- The times and setting for the child health clinic
- Consultation on appropriate health advice for parents
- Consultation on the content of the play and stay session

To achieve the desired outcomes the following evaluation process has been planned.

- Since December 2003, health staff have distributed a "wish card" setting out possible areas of health advice that could be offered during the clinic. Information was gathered both at Sure Start sessions and on home visits to families. The evaluation officer has inputted this material into a data set. This exercise will continue for another month ending towards the beginning of April.

- The information gathered will be analysed and presented to parents at a focus group in early May 2004. From this group, other information concerning possible times and settings for the new clinic will be asked for. The session will also include seeking information on the content of the play and stay session that runs alongside the clinic.
- The member of staff, under the guidance of the evaluation officer, will ensure that for the purpose of the focus group a representative sample of people are recruited. This will include parents from a wide area of the catchment. Importantly, it is required that the group should correspond to the ethnic and racial mix of the community.
- As an exercise in process evaluation, the data gathered will represent parents' views on the clinic's current provision i.e. what is deemed to give parents and children the greatest satisfaction. The first half of the focus group will be conducted as an initial qualitative discussion. Possible amendment and new provisions drawn up from the discussion will be formulated and put to the group in the second half in the form of a quantitative decision making process. Outcome from the second stage will be considered and implemented when the Sure Start buildings open.

Timescale

- Information from the 'wish cards' has been up and running. Expect to continue until early April 2004.
- With time constraints on staff, the question content of the focus group will be set and structured throughout April (contemporary with the card data analysis).
- Focus group to be conducted in the early part of May2004.
- The new buildings are due to open in May 2004, amendments expected in June 2004.

Objective 3: improving children's ability to learn

The 'Together' parenting programme

The format of the 'Together' parenting programme is peer support for parents facilitated by a member of the portage staff. Devised, by the Sure Start portage team, from established national programmes, the group seeks to inform parents in dealing with difficult behaviour from their children. Through offering up a 'toolkit' of ideas to handle stressful situations, group members are encouraged to develop positive parenting skills.

The programme commenced in November of 2003 and lasted for 7 weeks. Attended by five parents on a weekly basis, a crèche was provided for their children, which ensured that parents were able to participate fully in the sessions free from distraction. Although the programme as it stands has been delivered in a neighbouring Sure Start, it has not previously been evaluated.

Evaluation Strategy

- It was negotiated with parents and staff that the final plenary session would be tape for evaluation purposes.
- The facilitating staff, for that session, had devised a schedule of questions that sought opinions from parents across a number of themes including: venue, available materials/ weekly diary, content of sessions and length of sessions.
- The group was taped and later transcribed.
- The programme developer and evaluation officer have met recently (early March 2004) to discuss the analysis of the data and to draw up a report of the findings.

The purpose of the evaluation is to seek participants' views on the overall structure and content of the 'together' group. Any findings from this exercise will inform further development of the programme.

It should be acknowledged that the efficacy of the intervention was not measured by the positive outcomes reported by parents; however, on early analysis, the transcripts exhibit

evidence of the programme benefiting parents. Nevertheless, due to the small sample, to generalise any perceived positive outcomes would be to go beyond the data.

Timescale

- Meeting set up with 'Together' group facilitator to analysis data.
- Timing of the outcome report and recommendations to be agreed upon with facilitator.

Peer early education partnership

Sure Start national objective 3 outlines the need in Sure Start areas to improve children's ability to learn. To meet national targets, Sure Start Austin Sunnyhill proposes to implement the Peer Early Education Partnership 'PEEP' programme. The PEEP programme, described as 'early learning intervention', has had previous success in raising the life chances of children from birth to four, particularly in educational attainment. Anecdotal evidence cites that teaching staff in reception classes, recognise children who have gone through the peep programme as more able within the class. With this background, it seems appropriate that such a programme should be part of Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill's child development strategy.

Evaluation Strategy

- The evaluation will encompass both qualitative and quantitative methods. A pre-implementation questionnaire will be devised to capture particular measures. However, the evaluation design recognises that capturing baseline data directly from observing and measuring babies' actions and utterances poses methodological problems. As a solution to this problem, baseline data will be gathered from the primary carers. Instead, the evaluation will measure parents' early intervention; access to educational/ play materials and families television culture.
- A focus group of potential member will be recruited in order to explore possible questions to include in the baseline questionnaire. The purpose of this is to explore

the sensitive area of parent and child interaction, thus avoiding assumptions and irrelevance within the questionnaire.

- As an early learning intervention, the programme would be offered up to children from birth to one and their parents. For the purpose of evaluation, the research intends to revisit those children who participated in PEEP, at aged two and explore their development by means of the *Sure Start Language Measure* (SSLM at age two).
- The evaluation will also recruit a member of the group for the purpose of a case study. The candidate will be chosen for their typicality. As well as periodic in-depth interviews, the participant will be asked to keep a diary in which to record significant events.

Timescale

The planning of the PEEP programme in Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill is still in development. However, further meetings are planned to develop the baseline evaluation. The likely period for the initial evaluation is June/July 2004.

Objective 4: Strengthening families and communities

Strengthening families strengthening communities training

This training programme represents collaborative work between Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill and the Race Equality Unit (REU) in London. In broad terms, the intervention seeks to empower individuals, families and communities by acknowledging that a rediscovery of cultural heritage holds the potential to energize group support. The expected outcomes lead to individuals recognising the potential for better familial relations and community renewal.

Commencing last summer with a training programme attended by staff members and five parents from the Sure Start catchment; the training has just commenced with a new

cohort of parents. Parents who were previously on the training are now in the role of co-facilitators, with staff.

Evaluation Strategy

- As an established training programme, the REU have already initiated an evaluation strategy; facilitators are expected to carry out the evaluation as part of their training. The evaluation comprises of a range of child age group questionnaires completed by participating parents before and after the programme.
- The Sure Start evaluation officer is working with the health worker facilitator to ensure the correct conduct of the evaluation.
- Evaluation officer to consider any further evaluation in terms of Sure Start objectives.

Timescale

- The training has begun as of March 2004.
- The programme lasts for 16 weeks
- Outcome evaluation to be started towards the end of this period

Future evaluation projects

Sure Start Austin/ Sunnyhill is committed to working in partnership with other agencies and organisations. Local initiatives include involvement with library services and the Book Start programme. The partnership run two sessions at the local library: a 'Storytime session' and a 'Cradle Club'. The monthly monitoring returns demonstrate that both groups are well attended and periodic visits to the group by the evaluation officer have indicated that both children and parents/guardians appear to enjoy and take benefit from the facilitators approach. A forthcoming evaluation study will explore the reasons why the sessions are successful. The findings will form recommendations for the purpose of

transplanting this evidence-based practice to other similar groups in other areas of the catchment.

The programme, in partnership with oral health coordinators, is in the process of developing a new health initiative. An initial meeting has been set up to explore possible areas for evaluating this local target.

Sure Start Austin Sunnyhill user satisfaction survey

Introduction

This paper represents the strategic planning of a forthcoming evaluation exercise within the SureStart Austin/Sunnyhill programme. The evaluation will take the form of a user satisfaction survey (appendix C). The exercise, although targeted at a general appraisal of the programme's overall effectiveness, will also focus on specific activities.

Rationale

The central aim of SureStart is to enhance the opportunities of children from 0 to 4 years in the Austin Sunnyhill community. In order to achieve this, activities devised to meet the needs of both children and parents/ guardians must demonstrate their effectiveness in changing the life chances of all those using the services. At the national level, the SureStart unit has developed certain key objectives. At the local programme level these objectives are met within planned activities and groups

SureStart programmes are required to evaluate their services to ensure they are performing in terms of defined aims and objectives. Therefore, an essential part of evaluation is to feed back into the programme in order to maintain and raise the quality of services.

The time scale of the evaluation will expect to take three months, with the commencement of data gathering in February. A finished report with dissemination

activities is planned for April through May. An exact timetable for the survey is contained within the evaluation action plan.

The key to successful survey research is a robust strategy. The following discussion lays out the approach and methodology of Austin/Sunnyhill's user satisfaction survey.

Methodology

Data Gathering

Due to the general quantitative measurements required by Sure Start monitoring, the proposed method of data gathering will be by questionnaire. Given the nature of survey research: that there is an expectation of gathering information from a large sample of the community; a questionnaire is the most appropriate method in terms of time, resources and cost effectiveness. The questionnaire will help explore a number of dimensions to Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill. These include:

- Investigating people's level of satisfaction with existing Sure Start services.
- Defining gaps in the current range of services, expressed through collectively identified needs.
- Examining in a sensitive manner the barriers towards people's participation in the Sure Start programme.

To achieve these objectives the survey will use both formative and process evaluation strategies. Reflecting on the first point above, **process evaluation** will seek to determine if the programme is delivering as intended, the services to the targeted groups. **Formative evaluation** will gather information pertaining to point two above. This should offer up the potential to define baseline data for future groups and services. As with all positive evaluation, the outcomes from the survey will enable staff to reflect on the impact of current services as well as indicate possible future service development and delivery.

Analysis

Historically, surveys have connections with market research. This study is no exception; by its employment, we intend to find out the likes, dislikes and preferences of our user group. Whilst opinion seeking will give the programme insight into its operation, a further purpose of collecting variable data will be to explore theoretically the question of peoples' reluctance to participate in the Sure Start programme.

Therefore, a predetermined framework of analysis will establish the content of the questionnaire. Too often questionnaires appear as a mixed bag of enquires without context or connection. The questions, in this instance, will reflect the analytical approach. Although the overall approach has still to be finalised within the proposed time scale, particular forms of analysis will be included. For example, a straight forward question asking for a score of satisfaction for a service may miss the subtle measure of whether individuals' level of satisfaction increase or decrease with their length of attendance at particular activities. Through fine measures such as this, the survey intends to capture the important distinctions of location, time and staff practice. In order to reach those ends the survey will use three broad question categories:

- **Attributes**- characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity.
- **Behaviour**- i.e. 'how often do you do that?' 'When and where?'
- **Beliefs, opinions, attitudes**- question having this content seek respondents' points of view.

There are a number of robust questionnaires available on the NESS website. Their approach in terms of the questions they asked may prove useful to the Austin/Sunnyhill survey. In addition, the *National Centre for Social Research* at the University of Southampton and Surrey hosts *The Question bank*, a useful resource for examples of good practice. As part of the research strategy, time will be set aside to critically examine their possible relevance to this proposed survey.

Sampling

Austin/Sunnyhill catchment is host to a mix of ethnic communities. The findings from the user satisfaction survey must reflect the opinions of these diverse cultural groups. In order to reflect the range of ethnic groups we will employ quota-sampling techniques. This will ensure that a proportionate number of respondents from each group are approached to reflect the overall satisfaction within the Sure Start community.

To achieve this the research officer along with the data processor will work on harvesting a sample from existing Sure Start records, which contain a breakdown of individuals' ethnic association. The overall sample size should be between 15% and 30% of the target population.

It is important to gather information from families that have, yet, no connection with Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill. Otherwise defined as 'hard to reach groups'; an understanding of their absence from the Sure Start programme will help staff develop strategies that reach out to these particular individuals and families.

The difficult nature of sampling disparate groups will prove challenging to the survey's aim of contacting a representative sample of the whole community. Nevertheless, there are data gathering methods that might best reach marginal groups. For instance, the survey will use snowballing of respondents where appropriate.

The main approach to data gathering will be through postal questionnaires. A covering letter inviting people to participate, and a stamped envelop, will also be included with the survey form. Along with this, there will be the opportunity to fill in questionnaires during programme activities. In addition, where necessary, researchers will courteously approach people in the street.

The covering letter will emphasize the positive benefits to individuals and their families from participation in the survey and the Sure Start programme in general. However, further encouragement to complete and return the questionnaire will come by way of stating that returned forms would be included in a prize draw.

The expectation of any survey is to receive a respectable return of questionnaires. Completed survey forms must reach between 50% and 70% returns in order to claim that the results are reliable. Below this number, findings are not truly representative of the population. To achieve this, besides postal returns, a number of interviewers will be needed to carry out one-to-one interviews. It is expected that Staff will participate in the study, alongside interested parents. All will require basic training in survey interview techniques.

Data management and coding

Austin/Sunnyhill evaluation will at all times adhere to current data protection and confidentiality policies with respect to the following steps:

- Information gleaned from respondents will be accurate and up to date
- Questionnaires will be anonymous and respondents will be informed of confidentiality.
- Hard copies of completed questionnaires will be kept securely until coded and entered into the computer for analysis. Afterward they will be destroyed by appropriate means.

It is expected that analysis will involved a spreadsheet software package. The coding, entering and analysis will be co-temporal with the data gathering.

Dissemination

The findings from the user satisfaction survey will be disseminated to Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill stakeholders through open reports. Correspondingly, there will be a series of open presentations to interested groups. These groups will include parents, management board and Staff from Sure Start and other participating agencies.

Sure Start evaluation hope that individuals and groups with a stake in Sure Start's future will have an active role in both the survey and dissemination. In this way, both giving and receiving knowledge will be a way for all involved to steer forward an agency that promotes and develops quality services.

Parents involvement in evaluating Sure Start

The importance placed on evaluation within the Austin/Sunnyhill programme, as an instrument for change and improvement, indicates its importance in raising community capacity. Therefore, it is fundamental that parents are involved in evaluating the Austin/Sunnyhill programme. This initiative is in line with recommendations from the National Evaluation of Sure Start.

Previous community participation in evaluation has meant by-and-large recording the views and opinions of parents through survey questionnaires and small-scale studies. The Professional response to this information gathering has been to develop services/activities around the believed needs of clients expressed through the research findings. Notwithstanding the importance of these methods in future programme research. We will strive to move the evaluation relationship away from the researcher as knowledgeable professional focusing on the researched parent/child, to one where the community members inform and conduct evaluation on their own terms.

To achieve this shift in research paradigm, Sure Start Austin/ Sunnyhill aims to involve parents in such capacity building activities as prioritising evaluation, research design and interviewing. By acknowledging that parents bring to evaluation local/ cultural knowledge of their community, evaluation becomes more sensitive to the community it serves.

In order to achieve capacity building through participation, we will action the following local initiatives:

- Parents will be offered introductory training in basic research techniques, to include questionnaire design, research ethics, interview techniques and basic data analysis.
- Along with staff, places will be set-aside for parent to take part in participant appraisal training. The skills acquired from the training will further enable parents to critically evaluate the services Sure Start offer.
- After training parents will be involved in particular evaluation activities in their local Sure Start community.

These measures surrounding Austin/Sunnyhill's evaluation strategy represent the initial steps to transfer decision-making powers from professionals to parents.

At this moment, work is already underway to achieve these long-term aims:

- An evaluation steering group has been set up as a sub committee of the management board. Members include professional workers and parents. The group have agreed to meet four times a year. Their task will be to scrutinise areas of methodology; act as a forum to discuss possible ethical implications of proposed evaluation. In addition, the group will deliberate produced reports giving guidance of the accuracy of findings.
- Related to the evaluation strategy, the programme has found it necessary to re-draft the complaints, compliments and suggestions policy: making it relevant to local concerns. Parents have been invited to participate in this exercise.
- With the forthcoming user satisfaction survey, the evaluation officer has recommended that parents be involved in carrying out interviews. As a first stage in parents' participation in evaluation, they will be given basic training in interview techniques. The evaluation officer will be in immediate proximity of the parent interviewers. Following health and safety guidelines, lone working will be postponed until further training is given.

Appendix A

EVALUATION STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation will be an essential process within the delivery of Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill (SSAS). Evaluation will enable us to learn from firm evidence what works well for children and their families and what does not work well. We will also be able to assess whether or not our services provide value for money.

For the success of any Sure Start programme Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill recognises that evaluation needs to become an integral part of the ongoing development and delivery of the programme. This will not only enable us to measure the performance of the programme against national targets, but equally it will enable us to maintain and raise the quality of services. The evaluation process will also inform the programme in its planning of new developments ensuring these are based on the needs of the community.

It is essential that evaluation measures for the programmes performance against national targets, it is also equally important that we assess these in line with the key principles of Sure Start:

- co-ordinate, streamline and add value to existing services
- involve parents, grandparents and other carers
- avoid stigma by ensuring that all local families are able to use Sure Start services
- ensure lasting support by linking services for older children
- be culturally appropriate and sensitive to particular needs
- promote the partnership of all local families in the design and working of the programme

Local evaluation will play a crucial role in the dissemination of learning and evidence based practice. This will not only be beneficial to the programme but of equal benefit to partner agencies in their role of providing services to children and their families.

The Sure Start Unit Guidance suggests that local evaluation should cover:

1. the effectiveness of partnership with other agencies/organisations

2. whether management structures support Sure Start objectives and principles
3. the role and involvement of parents and the wider community
4. whether professionals from the different agencies work well together
5. how individual services are delivered and the quality of services
6. value for money of key services

MONITORING

Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill will develop a robust monitoring system. This will be essential to the effective undertaking of monitoring within the programme. Monitoring will provide the basis of good evaluation.

The collection of data will provide the programme manager and management board with information to manage the programme effectively.

Local data collection will enable us for example to monitor the accessibility of our services to hard to reach groups as well as provide a basis on which to make our decisions about the future of the programme.

A Data Processor/Administration Assistant has been appointed with the responsibility of collecting data. As part of this role the Data Processor/Administration Assistant will be responsible for submitting data to the Sure Start unit, this will provide accountability to the Government on how funding is being spent as well as indicate how the programme is achieving national targets.

Systems for the collection of data within the programme will enable us to monitor:

- the take up of services
- service user satisfaction
- ethnic identity

As a programme we will ensure that:

- we have a database system that will provide us with a robust system for the collection of data
- data is regularly monitored by the programme manager and will be presented at each Management Board Meeting
- baseline data will be reviewed against current statistics at regular intervals through the life of the programme

- all partner agencies providing a service will have a set pro-forma as part of their service level agreement for the collection of data and will provide information at the agreed interval as indicated in the service level agreement
- the monitoring system will also include audits and returns for the Sure Start Unit

EVALUATION SYSTEM

Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill will establish a robust evaluation system so that we can:

- understand how well our services are performing
- measure progress in meeting the objectives and targets of Sure Start
- act on evaluation funding and make changes to the programme
- assist with the reshaping and mainstreaming of services
- review working practices and process by which the plan is being delivered
- assess whether the services delivered are achieving best value
- see if the evaluation will determine if the Sure Start principles of adding value to existing services is being achieved
- see the level of participation of parents, carers and grandparents and the impact on the design and delivery of services
- ensure linkage to other initiatives
- assess how well we are promoting diversity

TYPES OF EVALUATION WE WILL UNDERTAKE

EVALUATION PROCESSES

1. Before a service is implemented an initial evaluation will be undertaken.

As part of this process, we will ensure there is documented evidence of baseline data or a needs assessment survey.

At this stage the focus of evaluation will be:

- Who the service is being targeted at?
- What are the most relevant services for meeting the needs of different groups in the local population?

- What is the most effective process for setting up effective local services?
2. A second stage evaluation will be undertaken to establish who has accessed the service and whether it has reached the targeted group, to justify continued and possible increased finances.

Evaluation at this stage may focus on:

- Are we reaching the right people?
 - Are our systems working adequately?
 - Are the services of a high standard?
 - Are we adequately implementing the Sure Start values?
 - Are the management arrangements appropriate?
3. A third stage evaluation will be undertaken at the phase of a programme's development. This will enable us to see how the programme is delivering.

Some of the questions we will ask are:

- Which of our services are best used by Sure Start families and why?
 - Do professionals think that Sure Start has impacted on their work and in what ways?
 - How successful has the involvement been of parents in the planning and delivery of services?
 - Do services match the needs initially identified at the stage of the delivery plan being established?
 - Is the relationship between Sure Start and other initiatives beneficial or problematic and why?
4. The fourth phase of the programme and service development we will focus on demonstrating effectiveness through quantitative outcome evaluation.

Some of the questions we will ask are:

- Are we meeting our objectives?
- Why are some users dropping out of our services whilst others are taking advantage of them?

5. In the fifth phase of evaluation the programme will monitor the impact of services. Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill will measure its progress towards the objectives and targets set for Sure Start in the Public Service and Service Level Agreements (PSA/SDA). This will form a large part of the information needed to assess the short-term impact of Sure Start at local level.

Evaluation questions we will ask are:

- Are parents attending parenting groups using less physical discipline?
- Has the local rate of breast-feeding increased?
- Are all women identified as depressed receiving some service?
- Has the local rate of emergency hospital admissions for severe accidents been reduced over the past three years?
- Are services more integrated, based on the needs of children and families locally?
- Has Sure Start had an impact on the way that services are provided?

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

The programme manager will have ultimate responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. A monitoring and evaluation officer will commence post in September 2003 and will have the responsibility of working alongside the programme manager to implement the evaluation strategy.

Task group

SureStart Austin/ Sunnyhill will establish an evaluation task group. The task group will come from members from the wider management board, including representatives from the voluntary and statutory sector, community and parents. It is envisaged that the group would involve itself in deliberating evaluation priorities within the programme, using research findings to develop strategies and processes to inform evidence based practice. The evaluation Officer's role will be to disseminate information and findings into the task group. From time to time, there may arise ethical matters pertaining to a particular piece of evaluation. In this context, the task group may be called upon to act as a local ethics committee (National evaluation of Sure Start, 2002).

Consent Forms

Consent forms have been devised within the programme for the recording of family details. This information will only be used for the purpose of monitoring the level of engagement from the community. All parents and carers will be advised of the purpose of information being kept and their rights under the Data Protection Act.

A protocol for the sharing of information will be developed with the involvement of parents to ensure these will be acceptable amongst local people.

Ethical Issues

To ensure our monitoring and evaluation systems meet legislative requirements, all staff involved with data collection will be made aware of their responsibilities in terms of the Data Protection Act. Training will be set up to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities.

Good practice guidelines and standards for the collection of data and information sharing will also be established to ensure the programme is undertaking good practice.

In terms of ongoing evaluation, It is recognised that seeking participant's formal consent can never be a once and for all measure, and that ethical research should endeavour to seek consent at all stages of the evaluation process, particularly when new forms of data are being collected.

At any stage participants can withdraw from evaluation without prejudice to their commitment to any other involvement in Sure Start activities and groups

To ensure that Sure Start Austin/ Sunnyhill meet ethical standards all evaluation practices will be based upon informed consent. Therefore, when stakeholders are asked to participate in research, a clear and understandable statement of the purpose of evaluation will be made available.

The issue of harm in the context of evaluation research is a complex issue (NESS 2002). By recognising that less than sensitive questioning can cause harm through embarrassment and humiliation, importance will be placed on the cultural sensitivity of questionnaire and interview design.

Research predominately focuses on the ethical treatment of stakeholder at the point of data collection. It is important to recognise however, that misrepresentation of stakeholders can occur at the stage of dissemination. Efforts will be made to ensure that evaluation reports reflect the felt issues of those who took part in the evaluation. This will be achieved through briefing participants on findings, and appropriate dissemination exercises.

Service Level Agreements

Service level agreements with partner agencies will be set up and specify the outputs and outcomes expected as well as monitoring requirements.

Participation of Parents, Carers and the Wider Community

Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill will be committed to the participation of parents, carers and the community. As part of this commitment we will empower parents and carers to become active participants in all evaluation processes. We will work with parents and offer training to enable parents and other members of the community to collect information, facilitate interviews and group discussions as well as support local people with completing questionnaires.

Reshaping and Mainstreaming of Services

We will use what we have learnt from evaluation to inform the reshaping and mainstreaming of Sure Start services when funding has ended. It is essential therefore that evaluation findings are disseminated to partner agencies and are contributing to policy setting.

Although the programme will employ a monitoring and evaluation officer, it is envisaged that we will also buy-in expert advice or research time from local educational institutions or consultants.

Ownership of Evaluation

As a programme we will create a culture, which accepts and values evaluation as an integral and routine part of our work. As part of our evaluation strategy training will be provided for all Sure Start workers and partner agencies as a

EVALUATION UNDERTAKEN BY SURE START AUSTIN/SUNNYHILL

principles

The programme has undertaken to seek the views and opinions of parents and carers in response to some of the services currently being offered.

‘Playtime’ Parent and Toddler Group

A process of evaluation was undertaken in February 2003. The purpose of the evaluation was to establish whether or not the group was meeting its aim and objectives.

The method of evaluation incorporated group discussion with parents. An action plan for the operation of the group was established as parents and staff identified areas where the group could make improvements.

Holiday Activities

Various activities and outings were organised during summer and autumn 2002. Parents and carers were sent a questionnaire to share feedback on the activities. Feedback from parents and carers was extremely encouraging. However, we have used the comments from parents and carers to try and improve how we plan and organise the activities in the future, i.e. ensuring parents and carers are informed of the programme well in advance so that parents have sufficient time to plan in particular from transport.

Mo Monkey and Musical Movers

This group provided interactive action songs. A taster session was undertaken. The focus of the evaluation was to establish the views of parents with a view to further sessions taking place.

Evaluation to be undertaken in the future

User satisfaction

a questionnaire will be sent out to parents and carers on the database. The purpose will be to gauge parent's and carer's views and satisfaction with the services provided by Sure Start.

Bookstart project (story time sessions, cradle club and delivery of book packs)

Both groups are extremely popular within the programme of activities offered to children, parents and carers. We would like to focus some evaluation on the successes of both groups but equally monitor and evaluate some of the outcomes in terms of increased library use and the impact on children's development.

Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

A research and evaluation project is to be undertaken to identify the particular needs of Black and Minority Ethnic families with children under 4 living in the Sure Start catchment area in terms of addressing issues of access of services and meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic families.

The project focus will aim to address:

- identification of the specific black and minority ethnic groups in the area
- access to Sure Start services+
- participation of parents and carers in the programme
- development of an anti-racist approach to delivering Sure Start

Appendix B



We are thinking of starting a Post Natal Depression Support Group (PND). This would be a weekly group, with a creche, for mums who have Post Natal Depression or are pregnant and have Post Natal Depression previously.

1. Have you had, or do you have Post Natal Depression? (low mood)

Yes ?

No ?

2. Do you think a PND Support Group would be a good idea?

Yes ?

No ?

3. If you have or have had PND, would you be interested in helping us to set up a support group?

Yes ?

No ?

4. Where do you think a good venue for the group would be?

.....

At what time?.....

5. Any comments?

If yes, please note comments here:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Contact telephone number:



Making life better for children, parents
and communities by bringing together:
▶ early education
▶ childcare
▶ health and family support

Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill user Satisfaction Survey

Sure Start Austin/Sunnyhill would like you to take part in this survey. For over a year we have been running services and groups for children aged four and under, and their parents. Our aim is to offer a high level of service. For that to happen we need your opinion on how Sure Start is doing. The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes. Please fill in the form as accurately and as truthfully as you can. We handle all questionnaires in the strictest confidence; no names will be matched to responses. As an incentive, all completed questionnaires will enter into a prize draw. Your name will be taken at the end of the survey and removed from the form before the answers are analysed.

Q1. Could I just check your street name to see that you live in the Sure Start catchment area?

If out of catchment
thank person for
their time, but no
further information
will be taken

Q2. Are you the main carer for any Children aged 4 and under?

(Please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2 pregnant or planning pregnancy



Q3. How many children do you have?

(please tick one box)

1 2 3 4 other

Q4. Do any of your children aged four and under have a disability or additional need?

(please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2 don't know 3

Q5. Do you feel well informed about what is happening in your area for parents and young children?

(please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2 don't know

Q6. Do you know about the Sure Start programme?

(please tick all relevant boxes)

If Yes 1



How did you get information about Sure Start?

- At the library
- School/ community centre
- Mail shot leaflets
- Refugee/asylum seeker centre
- Through friends
- Media (e.g. radio)
- At the housing office
- Sure Start event/ worker
- From my health visitor
- Other (please state)

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

If No 2 don't know 3



How would you like to get Sure Start information?

- At the library
- church/ place of worship
- Mail Shot leaflets
- GP surgery/ health clinic
- At the housing office
- Health visitor
- At Sure Start events
- Don't need information
- Other (please state)

	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9

Q7. To help you access Sure Start groups and services, in what language would you like to see Sure Start information.

Somali		1	Turkish		8
French		2	Bengali		9
Polish		3	Albanian		10
English		4	Arabic		11
Gujurati		5	Farsi		12
Punjabi		6	Hindi		13
Spanish		7	Portuguese		14

Q8. have you used Sure Start services or groups?

(please tick box)

Yes 1
↓

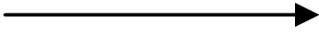
Which services/ Groups have you used?

No 2 Not sure 3
↓ ↙

Why is this?

Play time-parent & toddler group	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	No need for services/groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Indian cooking (healthy eating)	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Do not meet cultural/religious needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Story time Session	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	It's just for mothers/women	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Crèche/child care	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	Children how over 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Child health clinic	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	I work during the day	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
Cradle club	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	They may cost money	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
Refugee support group	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Lack of transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
Baby massage	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Don't want to be involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
Holiday play schemes/ trips	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	Lack of child care	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
Parents' action group	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	Need some encouragement	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Outreach & family support	<input type="checkbox"/>	11	Didn't know they were on	<input type="checkbox"/>	11
Speech & language support	<input type="checkbox"/>	12	No people from my background	<input type="checkbox"/>	12
Child protection training	<input type="checkbox"/>	13	Bad experience in the past	<input type="checkbox"/>	13
Toy library	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	14
Together group	<input type="checkbox"/>	15			
Music movers	<input type="checkbox"/>	16			
Strengthening families	<input type="checkbox"/>	17			
Training for parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	18			
Advocacy advice/ info	<input type="checkbox"/>	19			
Portage services	<input type="checkbox"/>	20			
Home safety scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	21			

Refer to service/group sheet for individual appraisal

N.B.  Use other sheet

The following questions ask for your opinion on the Sure Start services you have used.

Q9. Do you use other childcare services in the area (e.g. Ace, private nursery, child minders)?

(Please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2



If yes, please tell us what they are.

HEALTH

Q10. Thinking back, what health services have you used for your child in the last year?

(please tick relevant boxes)

- Health visitor 1
- Dentist 2
- Midwife 3
- Hearing specialist 4
- Speech therapist 5
- G.P. 6
- Vision screening 7
- Hospital emergency ward 8

Q11. Have you had any difficulties using health services for your family?

(Please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2



Q12. If yes, please let us know about them

Q13. Please tell us how satisfied you are with health services in the area.

(Please tick one box)

Very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied very unsatisfied
 1 2 3 4

Q14. Thinking of your own child(rens) health needs, what help would you like health services to provide in this area that is not already there?

PLAY AND LEARNING

Q15. What opportunities for play and learning do you and your Child(ren) use? (Other than Sure Start)

(Please tick one box)

- Parent and toddler Groups 1
- Soft play 2
- Swimming pools 3
- Playgroups 4
- Summer play Scheme 5
- Play parks 6
- Organised day trips 7
- Others 8 (please state below)

Q16. What would be the main reason for not using the services listed above.? (e.g. if you feel that the cost of swimming is too expensive then you would score around four and five)

(Please circle number in order of importance 1 low 5 high)

- Too expensive 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
- Too far from home 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
- Do not meet cultural/religious needs 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
- Lack of time 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
- Can't find the energy 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
- Area too unsafe 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5
- Poor service 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

Q17. Are you a member of the local library?

(please tick relevant box)

Yes 1 No 2

Are any of your children library members?

Yes 1 No 2

Q18. Thinking of your own child (ren's) play and learning needs, how satisfied are you with children's opportunity to play in this area?

(Please tick one box)

Very satisfied	satisfied	unsatisfied	very unsatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4

Q19. Thinking of your own child(ren's) play and learning needs, what would you like to see in the area for children?

(Please state)

CONSIDERING YOUR COMMUNITY

Q20. How long have you lived in this area?

(Please tick one box)

Under 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	6 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
1 to 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	over 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 3		

Q21. Do you have support from a religious/ ethnic community?

(e.g. local Church community, Pakistan Cultural Association)

Yes 1 No 2

Q22. Do you have close family in the area?

(Please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2

Q23. Do you feel you have enough support from family and friends?

(Please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2



Q24. Do you use family members e.g. grand parents, aunts and uncles for childcare?

(Please tick one box)

Very Occasionally 1

Often 2

Once a week 3

For work 4

Never 5

Q25. Who are you most likely to ask for help in the following situations?

(please tick relevant boxes)

	GP/doctor	Health visitor	Family	Friends	Sure Start staff	Other (Please state)
If you are worried about your child's health?						
For advice about being a parent?						

Q26. How would you describe this area as a place to bring up children aged four and under?

(please tick one box)

Very good 1 good 2 poor 3 very poor 4

Q27. In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your quality of life at the moment?

Very satisfied	
Fairly satisfied	
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	
Fairly dissatisfied	
Very dissatisfied	
Declined	

Q28. In a few words try to explain how you feel about this area.

(please state)

Q32. Would you say that Sure Start groups and services have made a difference to your child(ren's) life?

Yes, (please tick the statements you agree with below)



- Made new friends
 - Enjoys coming to groups
 - More confident with others
 - Better health
 - Improved behaviour
 - More stimulated
 - Learning has improved
 - Speech has improved
 - Other: (please state)
-

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	7
<input type="checkbox"/>	8
<input type="checkbox"/>	9

No, (please tick the statements you agree with below)



- Was OK before
 - Not enough stimulation
 - Behaviour has got worse
 - Learning has slowed
 - Speech has deteriorate
 - Other: (please state)
-

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	6

Q33. Do you think that Sure Start has made a difference to your life?

Yes, (please tick the statements you agree with below)



- Made new friends
 - Gained more confidence
 - Learned new skills
 - Opportunities to train
 - Gained parenting skills
 - Less stressed
 - Get on better with my child
 - More involved with community
 - Other (please state)
-

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	7
<input type="checkbox"/>	8
<input type="checkbox"/>	9

No, (please tick the statements you agree with below)



- was okay before
 - More stressed now
 - Find Sure Start too demanding
 - Nothing much has changed
 - Other (please state)
-

<input type="checkbox"/>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5

Q34. Overall, how satisfied are you of the Sure Start services/groups you have used?

(please tick one box)

- very satisfied
 satisfied
 dissatisfied
 very dissatisfied
 don't know
- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5

Q35. would you like to make more use of Sure Start groups or services?

(please tick one box)

Yes 1 No 2 Don't know 3



Q36. What would help? you to make more use of Sure Start?

- Services/ group available in the evenings 1
- Services/ groups available at weekends 2
- More groups for fathers and children 3
- More choices of groups 4
- Transport to groups 5

NOW, HERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU.

Q37. Are you?

(Please tick one box)

Male 1 Female 2

Q38. Are you?

(Please tick one box)

Married 1 lone parent 2 living with partner 3

Q39. Is your age?

(Please tick one box)

Under 20 1 20 to 30 2 over 30 3

Q40. What languages do you speak at home?

(Please tick relevant box)

Somali		1	Turkish		8
French		2	Bengali		9
Polish		3	Albanian		10
English		4	Arabic		11
Gujurati		5	Farsi		12
Punjabi		6	Hindi		13
Spanish		7	Portuguese		14

Q41. we'd like to know your ethnic identity:

(Please tick one box)

White		Black		Asian or Asian British		Chinese or other ethnic group		Mixed	
British (1)		Black Caribbean (4)		Indian (7)		Chinese (11)		White and Black Caribbean (13)	
Irish (2)		Black African (5)		Pakistani (8)		Other ethnic (please state) (12)		White and black African (14)	
Other (please state) (3)		Black other (please state) (6)		Bangladeshi (9)				White and Asian (15)	
				Asian other (please state) (10)				Mixed other (please state) (16)	

Thank you for taking part in this survey. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If you wish to take part in the prize draw, please give your name and address below. This information will be removed from the survey before anyone sees your responses.

