

Sure Start Report 1

Name of scheme: Fishwick and St. Matthews, Preston. Lancashire.
Wave 4 Programme

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Contact name and number: Jane Lloyd,
Programme Manager,
184 New Hall Lane,
Preston.
PR1 4DX.

Tel: 01772 663130
Fax: 01772 704905

Evaluation carried out by: Dr. Cheryl Simmill-Binning
Applied Social Science,
Cartmel College,
Lancaster University.
LA1 4YL.

Tel: 01524 594126
01524 65201

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Introduction

The evaluation of the Fishwick and St. Matthews Sure Start programme

Fishwick and St. Matthews' Sure Start was initiated in October 2001 and is a Wave 4 programme. Preston Council for Voluntary Services is the lead organisation and Lancashire County Council the accountable body. Today the programme has 20 members of staff. This report is intended to give users, potential users, members of the partnership boards and staff at Fishwick and St. Matthews Sure Start an outline of events that have taken place at the programme over the last 12 months. A copy of the report will be sent to the national evaluators, NESS.

Although Fishwick and St. Matthews Sure Start programme was initiated over two years ago it has not undergone an external local evaluation to date. The recently appointed evaluation team from Lancaster University are awaiting full ethical clearance from the South Ribble and Chorley Medical Ethics Committee, the Governance Unit at the Primary Care Trust and the Research and Development Unit at the local Acute NHS Trust. Until these have been obtained the evaluators are unable to interview anyone who is registered with the NHS. However, for this report, the National Evaluators of the Sure Start programme gave special dispensation to interview the programme manager. Other sources of information accessed for this report include: the programme's Delivery Plan; minutes of the Management Board meetings; business plans related to future developments at the programme; reports of events by members of staff at the Sure Start; evaluation material that has been drawn together by members of staff and users. These documents give a picture of events at Fishwick and St. Matthews over the last 12 months. The report will not comment upon day-to-day monitoring data which is submitted to the National Sure Start Unit on a monthly or quarterly basis. It is intended that once ethical clearance has been obtained, a second report be produced looking at the history of the programme from its inception to present day through the experiences of users, board members and staff.

This report is intended to give users, potential users, members of partnership boards and staff at Fishwick and St. Matthews Sure Start an outline of events that have taken place at the programme over the last 12 months. A copy of the report will be submitted to the national evaluators (NESS) based at Birkbeck College, London.

Types and sources of information – evaluation and monitoring

Sure Start programmes are required to collate two types of core data: aggregate monitoring data; information on individual aspects of the programme.

Definitions of monitoring and evaluation

'These terms are often used interchangeably, but although they may overlap it is useful to make clear a difference of emphasis:

- *monitoring refers to the regular collection of basic statistical information about a programme, such as the number of referrals, starts and completions, attendance and programme integrity checks. Targets can be set on this basis, e.g. number of referrals, successful completion rate. It allows routine reporting which can raise questions if targets are not being met.*

- *evaluation is the more in-depth process of looking at whether a programme is achieving its objectives. This may involve collecting new data as well as analysing existing monitoring data. Evaluation should provide explanations and answer questions and not just raise them. Because of the work involved, evaluation reports are usually produced as one-offs rather than routinely.'*

(Taken from Simon Merrington's book, 'A guide to setting up and evaluating programmes for young offenders.' ISTD. 1998. ISBN 0 901541 555 9.)

Monitoring data

Monitoring data is intended to give an overall picture of the National Sure Start programme and as such is regularly collated and submitted as aggregate data to central government. It records:

- the numbers of people who are potential programme users living in the area;
- how many people attend each group;
- basic first contact information.

This type of data is collated regularly by the programme administrator and looked at by staff as part of monitoring the progression of the scheme.

Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthews has in the past experienced some problems with the submission of monitoring data that are currently being addressed.

To a degree monitoring information is useful both at a local and a national level. Nationally it should give an idea of what is happening at every Sure Start across the country. At a local level certain trends relating to how many people are using the service could inform staff about to the most popular parts of the service they are providing.

However, although this kind of information has its uses it is not without its problems. Certain types of data can only be collected once users give their permission in accordance with the Data Protection Act and thus this level of data can only be collated once users have signed the relevant forms. Other situations that limit the usefulness of data collection are inherent in the type of data the programmes are required to collate. The best example of this is the issue of 'Programme Reach'.

Programme reach is the term used to refer to the number of families that a Sure Start programme works with. Monitoring data collated by the programme administrator notes how many families have been reached each month but the definition of the number of people contacted by the Sure Start may well vary between programmes from a telephone call to a face-to-face meeting. A second problem noted by some programme managers relates to the system for recording contacts. This does not allow for the counting of contacts with anyone other than the parent of a child. Contacts with grandparents, carers, childminders formal or informal foster parents are therefore not counted. This situation may well have an important influence on the data.

Another problem is inherent in the way that data is collected. The present system of collection requires that a record be kept of how many contacts have been made with

children and not how many children have been contacted. In simple terms this means the scheme is recording each *contact* not each *child* and so the programme does not know if one child has been contacted 100 times or if 100 individual children have been contacted once. Thus, in effect, the Sure Start programme can not know how many out of the potential number of children in their area have made contact with the programme because of the mismatch between the question and the data collection system.

After the collation of quantitative data there remain a number of aspects of the programme that remain invisible to the monitoring process. For example, it does not tell us much about the quality of the contact between users and programme, simply that a contact has been made. Each contact is registered individually but it is unlikely that the data will reveal, in its present form, if the person involved in the contact was a repeat user or a new visitor to the programme. It also will not tell us if there is continuity of contact between the programme and its users. To answer this kind of question there is a need for qualitative information.

Qualitative information on individual aspects of the programme

Qualitative information offers an in-depth insight into the individual aspects of a programme. The emphasis of the evaluation will be on the qualitative aspect of the programme and its individual components. Although this too will involve some quantitative data it will be different from that produced for submission to the National Sure Start Unit as it will focus on local, individual events rather than the wider national picture.

To date some small scale evaluations have taken place within the programme but not enough to call a full evaluation. It is intended that, once ethical clearance has been achieved, the evaluators move forward with their intended plan of action (see below).

Parallel to the local evaluation is the national evaluation of the Sure Start programme carried out by NESS.

Baseline data, evaluation activities and information presently available

Because of problems faced by the scheme in its early days a substantial baseline of data has not been established. Baseline data usually tells us the basic facts about a local population for example the number of people who smoke or how long they have lived in the area. Although some of the more general information can be collated from public records much of the required detailed information can not. For example, the National Census could tell us how many people lived in the area, but it could not tell us how many residents take exercise on a regular basis. The purpose of a baseline is to have a statistical profile against which Sure Start can measure any change in the health and habits of the local population over the duration of the programme.

It is commonly noted that even with a quality baseline it is challenging to be able to attribute any changes in a given population solely to the intervention of one programme. Nevertheless, it is a tool commonly used in the evaluation of some types of programme. However, it is not possible at this late stage to establish a baseline because of the changes that may well have taken place since the arrival of Sure Start to the area. Therefore, the best that can be done is for the evaluators with the users and staff to look closely at the data that was recorded at the start of the programme, at what is taking place

now and ask if the present delivery of services is the most effective way of achieving the Sure Start objectives. It is the intention of the evaluators to start this process once the history and present position of the Sure Start has been recorded in the initial two reports.

National objectives and local projects

All of the local projects were designed to address the national targets. Over time several of these targets have shifted or have been replaced, amended or deleted from the programme by central government. At present the core national targets are:

Objective 1: Improving Social and Emotional Development.

Objective 2: Improving health.

Objective 3: Improving the ability to learn.

Objective 4: Strengthening families and communities.

Objective 5: Improving the ability, accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare.

Specific schemes within Sure Start are related to particular national targets. For example, the proposed services to be operated in partnership with SAHARA, a local organisation set up to meet the needs of ethnic minority women and to demonstrate capacity building within the local community whilst addressing several of the national objectives set out by Sure Start.

Future evaluation reports will be able to offer an analysis of the individual schemes and their effectiveness. The present information is drawn from: the initial delivery plan, presentations to executive board members and users and evaluation carried out by members of staff on specific schemes and projects.

Sure Start services

The list below is a review of delivery plan services and a note of their relevance to the national objectives.

Programme Activity	Progression Level	Sure Start Objectives			
		1	2	3	4
Booklet about Sure Start	<i>Completed.</i>	y	y	-	y
Additional ante/post natal support	<i>Midwivest in post.</i>	y	y	-	-
Support for mothers with PDN	<i>No. Midwives and Health Visitors. Yes. Holistic therapy sessions. Yes. Baby group.</i>	y	y	-	-
Breast feeding service	<i>Commencing Jan 2004</i>	y	y	-	-
Asian Health Visitor	<i>No. unable to appoint any Health Visitors.</i>	y	y	-	-

Programme Activity	Progression Level	Sure Start Objectives			
		1	2	3	4
Positive parenting sessions	<i>Under redevelopment - feedback from parents stated course not relevant to needs.</i>	y	y	-	-
Drop in sessions at shop	<i>Initiated slots for professionals. This stopped due to illness. Presently always a person on site to deal with enquiries, give advice and able to refer on to relevant others.</i>	y	y	y	y
Support for teenage mothers	<i>Yes.</i>	y	y	-	y
Managing children's behaviour	<i>In process of development. Some aspects being delivered - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator providing 1 to 1 support. Social Worker post taking over assessment tasks and putting packages of care together.</i>	y	y	y	-
Allotment and nutrition	<i>Local community garden but the Service Level Agreement with regards to the park ranger is considered unsatisfactory and is currently under review. Match funding the post with the city council is a future probability.</i>	-	y	-	y
First aid, accident prevention	<i>Yes.</i>	-	y	-	-
Speech and language therapy	<i>Yes. Therapist visiting local nurseries, running training for parents, staff, child care providers in the area with the intention of skill sharing.</i>	y	y	y	-
Library facilities	<i>Yes – story sacks. Re-recruiting librarian. Purchased books and library software. Awaiting visits from mobile van – no library in the immediate area – to encourage registration.</i>	-	-	y	y
Crèche facilities	<i>Yes</i>	-	-	y	y
Play areas and local parks	<i>On hold. Some improvement in local park through park ranger. City Council reviewing all their play areas advised Sure Start not to fund any developments at present. Completed – Sure Start redevelopment of local primary school playgrounds.</i>	-	y	y	y

Programme Activity	Progression Level	Sure Start Objectives			
		1	2	3	4
Smoking cessation	Yes.	-	y	-	-
Encouraging volunteers and training.	<i>A training and volunteer structure is in the process of being developed, i.e. baseline requirements, progression routes and pathways into employment.</i>	y	y	y	y
Families in crisis	<i>Yes. Presently recruiting Family Support Workers.</i>	y	y	y	y
Link worker (language other than English)	<i>Yes. Working in partnership with other agencies. Also in-house have speakers of – Punjabi, Gujarat, Urdu.</i>	y	y	y	y
Counselling service at the Drop-In centre	<i>Yes. Well used. Also funding two local ethnic minority women to take the diploma in counselling course (2 years). As placement working with Sure Start followed by 12 month free work for the programme.</i>	-	-	y	y
Advice on benefits, jobs Alcohol and substance abuse At Drop In centre	<i>Yes. Can access specific advisors.</i>	y	y	-	y
Childminder Network	<i>Yes. Giving support to childminders in the area. Aim to recruit more childminders.</i>	-	-	y	y
Training courses for parents	<i>Yes. Need for more focus – under review.</i>	y	y	y	y
Family support workers	<i>Undergoing recruitment.</i>	y	y	y	y
Community activities	<i>Yes.</i>	-	-	-	y
Community garden	<i>Yes.</i>	-	-	-	y
Supporting fathers who have Weekend access	<i>No. Possibly a development in future.</i>	-	-	-	y
Access to adult education	<i>Yes. Needs organising and clarification to aid progression.</i>	-	y	-	y

All of the above schemes and projects are under constant review by users and members of staff.

Working with people in communities

Job centre plus – in the past there was a regular drop-in facility at the Sure Start but this was not well used possibly because people were concerned that it may in some way relate to their benefit situation. In the future the Sure Start is looking to use the New Deal initiative who may deliver training to one Sure Start worker who could enable people to develop C.V.s etc.

Reaching the community

Links with other local Sure Start programmes – the Preston Parents Network

The Preston Parents' Network was formed by parents from several Sure Starts in the Preston area. It is said to be the intention of the Network to gain a 'real, effective voice' for parents in preparation for the arrival of Children's Trusts (programme manager comments).

The Network has restarted after a break of some months with a training event hosted by the Sure Start at Fishwick and St. Matthews. The Network is developing an agenda looking at joint activities and events including training for parents and working together on a joint presentation of Sure Start in the city, i.e. the float for the Caribbean Carnival on June 20th 2004.

Training

Staff members have several specialist training courses available to them to aid their development.

In the long term it is hoped that sessional workers from the local community can be employed to aid them in building up a C.V. and eventually to undertake professional qualifications.

Several parents and members of staff have undergone child protection training in the Sure Start delivered by the Community Social Worker and developed by the worker with an outside consultant. So far this has been delivered to levels one, two and three. It is intended that this is delivered on a rolling programme across all the local Sure Starts to standardise delivery and maintain an experienced trainer. Parents who have been on the course can help to facilitate its delivery in the future and eventually to deliver parts of it themselves with support from the Community Social Worker.

Local college – there is a concern not to replicate the previous experiences of SRB funded programmes where colleges have offered courses in the area until the funding stopped and then withdraw. The long term implications of this are questionable in terms of skills building with local people. In contrast Sure Start wished to build on the capacity of people to deliver courses themselves.

Concurrent with this training is the National Evaluation of Sure Start training available to any member of Sure Start including the local evaluators.

Staff recruitment and retention

Long term absence of the programme manager, because of a broken leg, and the presence a temporary manager resulted in a delay to staff recruitment last year. Since the manager's return in July 2003 this process has moved forward slowly. During interviews with the programme manager it appeared that recruitment of professional staff has proved difficult because of the relatively short term contract that the programme can offer in comparison to mainstream, statutory services like health and education. Uncertainty about the future of the programme as a whole would appear to be a factor that is also causing some concern among staff and these are issues that will be looked at in more depth in the second local report.

Today Fishwick and St. Matthews has 20 full and part-time members of staff:

Programme manager
Deputy Manager and Health Team Leader
Community Development Leader
Education Team Leader
Finance Officer
Smoking Cessation Officer
Speech and Language Therapist
Speech and Language Assistant
Midwife
Nursery Nurses x 3
Administrative Assistant
Receptionist
Cleaner
Community Development Worker
Park Ranger
Community Social Worker

A number of these posts have only recently been filled.

Unfilled posts are:

Health Visitor
SENCO (recruitment in process)
Library Assistant (recruitment in process)
Family Support Worker x 2

As with other Sure Starts in the area, there is a fragile balance between recruiting the staff that the scheme needs and finding the right accommodation for them (see below).

The present arrangement for Health Visitors attached to the scheme has proved too problematic to sustain and renegotiation between the programme and the local health team leader are currently underway.

One of the problems faced by the Programme Manager is that of office accommodation now that the Sure Start Team is coming up to full strength (see below – 'Venues, buildings and accommodation'.)

Developments planned for the future

It is felt by the programme manager that some of the staff at the Sure Start will be able to develop their expertise in specific areas and, in the future, offer a specialist resource for all Sure Starts in the area. A good example of this is the post of Community Social Worker at Fishwick and St. Matthews. With a background in social work it would be possible for the practitioner to put together packages of support relevant to the needs of individual clients before handing them over to local Family Support Workers who would be able to follow the packages through. The social worker could then take on an advisory and supervisory role in the management of each package.

The issue of recruitment and staffing will be more closely examined in a future report.

Venues, buildings and accommodation

At the present time Sure Start operates in a variety of venues around the Fishwick and St. Matthews area including:

- The Sure Start Drop-In Centre and central operational base at 184 New Hall Lane, Preston. The programme has recently leased the adjoining property 186 for a two year period, this will allow the programme to extend services and accommodate the growing staff team prior to the completion of capital programme.
- Acregate Lane Mission – presently hired for various serves and training programmes but it is hoped to increase the usage of the building to put on courses and various playgroups.
- Preston YMCA – used for Executive Board meetings because of shortage of space at the main administrative centre.
- Farringdon Park community centre – group events.
- Callon House – office space for the community development team.
- James Street Nursery – this establishment is owned by Social Services and was closed in August of last year. The Sure Start programme has made arrangements to lease the property from Social Services for a 6 month period from 15th March 2004. This venue will provide full day care for 14 children and training and meeting rooms for the parents.
- Off site storage space – because of the limited space at the main administrative centre.

It is the aim of Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthews to use the present infrastructure available in the area and improve and increase the services available at each location. An example of this is the work with the local primary school where Sure Start has funded improvements in the playgrounds, adding lighting and new equipment, and also given advice on finding further funding and new partners to create new services such as after school activities and holiday clubs.

Staff accommodation

Accommodation problems were identified early in the history of the programme. It has also been decided that the community development team should relocate to a building at the heart of the community area, even though this is splitting the team. It is acknowledged that there could be risks associated with this.

In the future

Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthews is using its capital on developing facilities on sites already known to local people. The centre of administration and main shop front contact point at present is the Drop-In on New Hall Lane, a facility that is likely to be expanded with the purchase of the next door property. A second site to be developed by Sure Start is 48-54 Fishwick Parade. For the last 10 years this building has been the base for a local community group SAHARA that was established to provide services for Asian and ethnic families. It is intended to base a child care facility at 48-45 Fishwick Parade alongside current and proposed services for example:

- childcare training courses;
- student placements;
- adult literacy courses;
- childminder support;
- story sessions for local children and families;
- a toy and educational packs lending library;
- speech and language sessions;
- speech and language courses for local providers and parents;
- counselling services;
- behaviour management;
- support and stimulation for children with special educational needs;
- health services;
- homework clubs;
- after schools clubs;
- holiday clubs;
- family learning;
- basic skills;
- progression route to employment.

It is intended that this building will be developed as the core resource for the planned Children's Centre. The Sure Start business plan for the Fishwick Parade development notes that the services extended through the partnership between SAHARA and Sure Start in this building will, '...serve as a main hub in the community to deliver a wide range of specialist services, in partnership with other organisations like CAMHS, social work services, holistic therapy, postnatal, antenatal and breast feeding support groups, young mums and dads' groups, smoking cessation services, homework and holiday clubs, local providers of advisory services such as drug and alcohol services, C.A.B. etc.' (Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthew's Business Plan – 48-54 Fishwick Parade, Purchase and Development. Page 8).

The provision of extended school services and learning through play is being achieved in partnership with local primary schools and attached nurseries, examples of such provision are:

All the local nurseries in the area have been provided with additional learning and play resources via Sure Start's child care fund.

Development of holiday clubs at St. Matthews school.

Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthews is working with all five local primary schools to develop extended services.

Evaluation programme

As noted at the start of this report, the evaluation team at Lancaster University are awaiting ethical clearance from several ethical committees covering the Sure Start location. Once this clearance has been gained work will commence on producing a complimentary report to the present one, noting the qualitative evidence relating to the early years of the Fishwick and St. Matthews Sure Start. It is intended that this report will look at: the development of the management board and of Parent Power; at the views of users, staff and of other stakeholders; at engaging the hardest to reach in the local communities; working in partnership with outside agencies.

Once the preliminary reports are complete the process will be moved forward into issues around enabling parents and staff to carry out certain aspects of evaluation with the help and guidance of the evaluation team. Other aspects of the evaluation will be continued by the team themselves. It is intended that this joint approach will enter into the spirit of Sure Start by entering into a capacity building process with local people and professional practitioners.

Timetable – milestones etc.

Certain milestones have not been achieved over the last 12 months mainly because of the problems associated with staff absence and problems associated with the recruitment of staff.

Challenges and changes in the future

Children's Centre

It is intended that Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthews will become a Children's Centre using 48-54 Fishwick Parade. The full implications of this are still under consideration at the programme.

Finding further funding

The Sure Start manager is aware of the need to draw in more funding of the programme and its projects and therefore is in touch with partnership agencies to access their expertise in applying for a variety of funding, including ERDF, for the programme with the intention of building on those services they already offer and possibly creating new provision.

Information sharing across partnership agencies

Sure Start Fishwick and St. Matthews are experiencing major and fundamental problems around information sharing across the various partnership agencies. This has been an ongoing problem since the inception of the programme. There appears to be a lack of appropriate protocols between health services and the Sure Start scheme and this has resulted in fundamental information about live births and young children and babies moving into the area not being made available to the programme. Although these issues are currently being discussed the effects of this lack of information sharing may have a profound impact upon the operation of the programme. These issues will be investigated further in the next report.

Thanks – Many thanks to parents, members of Sure Start staff and the Sure Start manager for the information to produce this report.

Appendix

Milestones for year 2003
Management Board updates
Event evaluation reports