

Sure Start Pallister Park, Berwick Hills and Park End **Annual Evaluation Report January 2004**

Background

This programme received approval in July 2002 (round 5). Teesside University were contracted to undertake an initial 6 months formative evaluation study, producing a final report with recommendations in July 03.

All members of the Sure Start team participate in evaluation activities in order to nurture a reflective, informed approach to developing new areas of work. The programme manager submitted the first evaluation strategy to NESS in May 2003. Significant progress and milestones are reported to the Management Board in order to assess key decision on future direction.

The strategy is reviewed in July of each year, at the natural anniversary of another years practise. This report summarises progress on activities detailed in the May evaluation strategy.

Local Evaluation

Teesside University recommendations ascertained that any meaningful evaluation would necessitate a longitudinal study over a minimum of 2 years. Proposed costs for this work required a revised budget, £20,000 per annum is now allocated to evaluation for the forthcoming 2 years. The university Community Evaluation Team began work in August 03 with a schedule to produce a further interim year 2 report (July 04) and a final year 3 report (July 05), to comply with Ness requirements for evaluation. Dave Sillence continues to work with the programme as our designated researcher.

The strategy for year 2 is now in place and currently involves work with parents implementing a process to establish 'What are we doing and how well are we doing it'. The programme team engaged 10 parents who were interested in contributing to the evaluation process, 5 of whom are active Management Board members.

Initial meetings defined the method of information gathering, a questionnaire to support taped interviews was felt to be the most appropriate method. A series of training sessions helped prepare parents in research methods, interviewing skills, ethics and potential dilemmas. The sessions also gave the opportunity for parents to shape and define the content of the questionnaire. 6 parents have continued with the process, each conducting self-arranged interviews with parents attending Sure Start activities during January 04. The data is in the process of being transcribed for analysis, and the researcher will arrange further interviews with parents during February, if additional data is needed.

It is intended that secondary analysis of contact monitoring data, collated monthly by the sure start team, will also be undertaken. A report of findings and recommendations is expected in June, it is envisaged that the process of parents participation will also be appraised.

User Satisfaction Survey

The opportunity for a base-line user satisfaction survey was not available for this programme. The team undertook fieldwork to conduct a survey in local community, health and public venues in August 03, using a questionnaire adapted from a model posted to the NESS web-site by Battersea Sure Start. This was felt appropriate to the stage of service development as the questionnaire requested information regarding parent's opinions about local services and their perceived needs for family support. 84 parents completed the questionnaire, 49 of whom stating they had had no

previous contact with Sure Start and 31 who had accessed services. Middlesbrough Borough Council Education data team analysed completed questionnaires using SPSS. Respondents were asked the question.

If you were to give a star rating to services for parents and young children locally would they get?

	1 star	*	unsatisfactory	10
	2 stars	**	average	14
	3 stars	***	good	26
	4 stars	****	Very good	15
			No response	13

Feedback from the Ness team has indicated that the results will not meet the requirements for a comparative User Satisfaction Survey in year 3. An area of concern is the relatively small % of respondents (Parents of 14% of the children living in the area), may not provide a representative sample for a repeat study. Responses may also have been affected by inclusion of needs based and knowledge of Sure Start questions. Further advice is needed on the way to progress this work.

Evaluation of Service Delivery.

A system is in place to inform Management Board of parent participation rates and the range of service delivery, with reports provided at each meeting. The programme team continue to record contacts across the programme, for collation on the Smart Start database.

A training need has been identified for the whole team in order to widen our knowledge of suitable methods for evaluation of parent activities. This area of work is at risk of becoming stale due to reliance on a limited variety of tools for gaining parents views, and fear that the process becomes repetitive for parents. However team members strive to review the impact of services and value for parents. Recent and ongoing evaluations include:

- Uptake of 'Free Access Leisure Card'.
- Benefits and outcomes for parents attending the 10 week 'Feel Good Club' programme.
- Parents views of a 6 week 'Preparation for nursery' course.
- Evaluation of the work of the Speech and Language team.
- Evaluation of a 'New Mums' group by the Clinical Psychologist.
- Feedback from parents participating in a volunteers training programme.

The Sure Start Playbus team are currently piloting methods to involve children in evaluating their use of playgroup on the playbus. Areas for study are: likes and dislikes of snacks and drinks, preferred toys and equipment, songs to share feelings.

Cost Effectiveness Study.

The programme Finance Officer is seeking advice for an appropriate method for establishing a unit cost formula and procedures/data needed to undertake this study. Financial transactions will be credited to specific areas of work in order to prepare for a cost effectiveness study in year 3.