



**Circle Sure Start
Local Evaluation**

Final Report

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Executive Summary

What we did

- *Registration:* the 548 households not already registered with Circle Sure Start were contacted and invited to register.
- *Evaluation:* Identifying levels of special and additional needs; assessing the early Circle Sure Start services; exploring the willingness among the local community to take part in Circle Sure Start; and considering how well the partnership worked.

How we did it

- *A postal survey* sent to 710 families. Replies were received from 174. This represents one in four of the total population and includes a representative proportion of the population in terms of ethnicity. It also accounts for 349 children, of whom 231 were aged 0-5.
- *Focus groups* were held with young parents; and with two groups of parents drawn from the survey replies. The topics for the last two groups were 'The Image of Circle Sure Start' and 'Working Parents'.
- *Individual interviews* were held with parents, service providers and Circle Sure Start staff.
- *Documentary evidence* was available from various sources, such as monitoring data, parent evaluation forms and a Pre-School Learning Alliance Evaluation.
- *Observation* of children in Circle Sure Start settings

What we found out

- 85% of respondents in the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with local support for families. Those dissatisfied were less likely to have had contact with Circle Sure Start.

- **Additional and Special Needs:** The survey indicated high levels of additional needs such as feeling down/lacking confidence (44%), problems dealing with children's behaviour (38%), problems feeding children and losing one's temper (21% respectively).

- Parents of children with special needs said they would welcome support with respite care, baby-sitting and children's behaviour from someone who had expertise on children with special needs. They would also like appropriate play activities and help with transport to such activities.

- The parents of children with special needs were more concerned with inadequacy in pre-school provision than their children starting mainstream school. In focus groups parents of children without special needs felt any concerns with their child starting school were located in the poor reputation of local schools rather than in their child.

- A number of parents were informal carers to elderly and/or sick relatives, a further area of potential unmet need.

- **Early services:** Baby Massage, Messy Time, Middletone Music, the Crèche Project, Learning for Life, the Healthy Living Project, Pre-School Alliance, Jig-saw, Young Parents Support Group, Sutton Racial Equality Council (SREC) and Sutton Community Interpreting Service (SCIC) were evaluated. Only some of these services are still operating under Circle Sure Start.

- Parents found the Early Services friendly, approachable and enjoyable. They valued the opportunity to seek advice about their child informally (whereas many felt hostile towards advice when not requested). These services appear to parents as non-stigmatising and positive activities. Baby massage served as a route into Circle Sure Start as well as an enjoyable activity.

- ***Taking part in Circle Sure Start:*** According to the survey forty-nine parents were interested in joining the parents' group; twenty-two to meet and plan Circle Sure Start activities; twenty-one to volunteer; and eleven to befriend a family. There was also considerable interest in receiving accreditation for training or work carried out by parents.

- Those who had not used Circle Sure Start reported this was because the timing was inconvenient (17%), that they were unsure what it offered (22%) or reasons ranging from feeling unable to join in to just not getting round to it.

- Parents who were already involved with Circle Sure Start were enthusiastic and positive about their experience. The concerns raised centred on control: parents favoured a parent-led organisation, although the parents' group has expanded recently as have the number of sub-groups with parental involvement.

- A focus group on the image of Circle Sure Start revealed that amongst those who had not been involved, there was no clear understanding of the purpose of Sure Start. This may give rise to expectations beyond the remit of Sure Start and is an issue that will need to be managed as the partnership expands.

- Fathers, working parents and young parents were identified as groups with special circumstances. Fathers found the female centred nature of Sure Start excluding, while working parents felt excluded as all activities tended to be held when they were at work. Working parents are thus at risk of being isolated in the community. Finally, young parents valued the support they had received from Circle Sure Start as they frequently experienced negative societal attitudes.
- ***Managing Circle Sure Start:*** The partnership is inclusive, democratic and well managed. It has many strengths. One of these is its organisational focus, which facilitates both the Circle Sure Start activities and the monitoring of these activities. The organisational focus will also support the already strong inter-agency collaboration and future work towards the mainstreaming of services. There is great clarity in the leadership with considerable support from a cohesive and committed team. However, the volume of work currently experienced by staff is unlikely to be sustainable over a longer time period and needs reviewing.
- Challenges facing the partnership include the need to monitor the effect of any professionalisation of parents that takes place through the involvement with Circle Sure Start. The rapid expansion of members is changing the culture of Circle Sure Start and may also give rise to tensions among members. A careful monitoring and management of this expansion and any associated expectations is advisable.

Policy suggestions

- Broaden the focus of special to additional needs. Explore definitions of need.
- Note the important role provided by services offered as sources of informal and non-stigmatised advice.

- Explore the accreditation of training and other involvement with Circle Sure Start.
- Note the needs among 'hard-to-reach' groups, for example, language needs among non-English speaking parents.
- Monitor the reach of services across all services
- Consider including the monitoring of children's experiences
- Continue to explore inclusive strategies for supporting working parents and fathers.
- Reflect upon the role of the partnership in managing the organisation, monitoring and parents' expectations of Circle Sure Start

Circle Sure Start Local Evaluation

1. Introduction

1.1 The Sure Start programme is aimed at children aged 0-5, their families and the communities in which they live. Its objective is to enhance the life chances of children in relatively poor communities. Local Sure Start partnerships, such as Circle Sure Start, aim to build on existing service provision for young children and their families, to add value to these services, to develop new services and to encourage greater cooperation and coordination among service providers. The involvement of parents, as users and in the governance of Sure Start programmes, is central. A core objective of the Sure Start programme is the reshaping of services better to meet the needs of young children and their parents.

1.2 Circle Sure Start was established in 2002 and a delivery plan was produced in January 2003. Parents were involved in the development of the partnership through a parents' forum, a shadow management board and through local events and settings. The plan identified the need for a parental involvement worker to support parental participation in the governance of the partnership. Parents were consulted at a parents' event in September 2002, a meeting of the parents' forum in November and through a questionnaire survey. In addition, service providers and professional were consulted as part of the local needs assessment. These consultations raised a number of important issues that were addressed in the delivery plan: the quality and availability of certain play facilities; the continuity in community healthcare and provision of breast-feeding support; support to parents and families, in particular, home visiting; the provision of childcare, especially for those seeking work; and the support to parents with children with special needs. The new services to be commissioned by Circle Sure Start in response to these issues included: a family support service; an information

strategy; an enhanced health visiting service; greater provision of wrap-around childcare; a wider range of play activities; and support for families with children with special needs. As the monitoring of progress of all Sure Start programmes is crucial an evaluation strategy was published in October 2003.

1.3 Against this background, the local evaluation of Circle Sure Start has sought to build on these previous consultations with parents, professionals and key workers in the community. It has aimed to engage with parents with children aged 0-5 in the Circle Sure Start area, in particular, with hard to reach groups; and to encourage their registration with, and participation in, Circle Sure Start. The evaluation sought to identify any special or additional needs, including children with special needs; to evaluate the provision of early services; to consider the extent of parental involvement in the partnership; and to assess the functioning of the partnership itself.

2. What we did and who we spoke to

2.1 Evaluation research is broadly divided into two types: formative and summative.¹ Formative evaluation focuses on the strengths and weakness of a programme. Formative evaluation focuses on process: that is, how well a programme or policy intervention is working. Summative evaluation looks at the overall effectiveness of a programme. The focus of summative evaluation is on outcome: how well a programme or policy-intervention is performing in relation to established targets – usually to aid policy-making on its future. Each type of evaluation draws on different methodologies. Formative evaluations combine quantitative and qualitative methods, but with an emphasis on the latter. Summative evaluation relies more heavily on quantitative methods. The role of the evaluator is also different. With formative evaluation, the researchers interact with programme staff; with summative evaluation the researchers adopt a more independent and detached role.

2.2 The main emphasis here has been on formative evaluation. A formative evaluation considers the strengths and weaknesses of a programme and focuses on the process. In other words, it asks how well the programme is working in order to be able to use this information in further developing its scope and reach. A training workshop was held for Circle Sure Start staff and parents to explain the rationale for the methods used in more detail (see appendix 5).

2.3 There were several key questions that Circle Sure Start sought information on

- the effectiveness of the partnership in supporting the delivery of the programme
- how well the partnership promotes and supports inter-agency working

¹ See Alan Clarke (1999) *Evaluation Research: An Introduction to Principles, Methods and Practice*, London: Sage

- the role and involvement of parents, carers and the community in the governance of the partnership
- how users and providers assessed the early services
- what the levels of special and additional needs are in the local area

2.4 These questions are approached using different research methods. Firstly, a questionnaire postal survey of all families with children aged 0-5 was conducted (see appendix 1 and 2 for the questionnaire and the accompanying letter). The results from the survey provide an overview of the views of parents. In addition, there have been focus groups concentrating on the needs of working parents and teenage mothers as well as a group looking at the local perceptions of Circle Sure Start. Further, interviews were held with parents who take an active part in the management of the programme, parents who have been using the early services and parents who have children with special or additional needs. Data has also been gathered in various settings, such as during a 'Tumble Time' session and a coffee morning held specifically for Tamil families. Finally, there was some observation of children in Circle Sure Start settings by our child observation expert.

2.5 The design of the questionnaire was built around a series of closed and open questions (see appendix 1). Closed questions offer the respondent a menu of possible answers while open questions invite the respondent to provide written answers. Drafts of the questionnaire were circulated widely within the partnership. The questionnaire was piloted among a group of parents taking part in a Circle Sure Start event. Comments from various consultations about the questionnaire were taken on board and the final version included such comments while ensuring it still addressed the aims of evaluating parental involvement and levels of additional needs in the community in the final version.

2.6 The questionnaire consisted largely of closed questions. Such questions provide an insight into general trends in terms of satisfaction with services,

willingness to participate and any additional needs. The limitations of questionnaires are that they rarely capture those defined as 'hard-to-reach', nor do they provide much detail. The survey was therefore supported by information drawn from the focus groups, individual personal and telephone interviews as well as extensive informal contact with parents and carers together with observations made of settings where in depth data on the topics of interest was gathered. A translation sheet with information on how to get help completing the questionnaire was also included in order to reach those with minority ethnic languages (appendix 3).

2.7 As well as inquiring into the views of the local community, data has been gathered from Circle Sure Start providers. In particular, providers of early services have been interviewed and in many cases visited in their settings. Interviews with the delivery team have also been conducted. Finally, interviews were held with key workers in special and additional needs who work in the London Borough of Sutton.

2.8 The evaluation brief included a request for work to increase the number of families registered with Circle Sure Start. After discussion with the Circle Sure Start delivery team a strategy towards registration was developed. This involved knocking on the doors of all families with children aged 0-5 in the area who were not already registered. Parents and carers were encouraged on the doorstep to register with Circle Sure Start. Those who had the time and were willing had registration forms completed by our researchers. Some parents/carers preferred to take a registration form to complete and return in their own time. Where there was no one answering the door a leaflet with information about the registration and a forthcoming trip was posted through the letterbox (appendix 4). In total 548 households were contacted. Respondents who registered were sent £10 Boots voucher, while those already registered received one once they had replied to the questionnaire.

2.9 A total of 710 questionnaires were sent out of which 174 were returned. This represents a response rate of 25%. What distinguished this study from many others was the fact that we were able to access a list of the entire population of interest via the Circle Sure Start database. This database contains details of all households with children less than 5 years of age living within the Circle Sure Start area. As such, questionnaires were sent to the entire population of 710 households. Such an opportunity is rare in the social sciences, where typically a large amount of effort is expended gathering a sample that is, hopefully, representative of the total population, in which case a response rate of 60% for a small sample would be viewed as satisfactory. Although the response rate in this case was 25% it should be remembered that this accounts for 25% of the *total population*, a much higher proportion than a typical study that conducted a postal questionnaires with a sample (which, for example, might aim for one response in five mailings, but receive one in eight). Moreover, it is not necessarily the proportion of the population that is of importance when assessing the quality of responses. What is of more importance is the *number* of responses. Even then a much larger sample does not necessarily make a much more accurate sample (being a law of diminishing returns). In this case 174 responses, representing one in four of the total population, can be regarded as being satisfactory.

2.10 However, this still leaves the question of how representative the 174 respondents are. Although postal questionnaires have many advantages (for example, cost and convenience) they do pose particular problems. Firstly, they tend to rule out responses from individuals who have literacy problems or whose first language is not English, secondly, there is no interviewer present to help if a respondent finds it difficult to understand the instructions to the questionnaire or a particular question. Thirdly, certain groups might lack sufficient motivation to complete the questionnaire without encouragement from an interviewer (for example full-time workers might find it hard to spare the time). In these cases information can be missing from important groups of people. To avoid overlooking these important sources of data the research team spent

considerable time making contact with such 'hard to reach' groups in the field. It was concluded that the opinion of these respondents did not differ significantly from those who had completed a questionnaire.

2.11 Who were the families that replied to the questionnaires?

- 174 parents filled in the questionnaires, 170 (98%) of these were women
- The families who helped us with the survey had a total of 349 children under 18, of whom 178 (51%) were aged 0-3.
- 40% of families had one child in the household, while 33% had two children, 14% had three children, 9% had four and 3% had five or more children in the household.
- 167 replies (96%) came from the main carer of the children
- 134 (77%) respondents were either married or lived with a partner, while 39 were single, divorced or separated.
- In 109 families (63%) the main carer lived with someone who shared childcare responsibilities, of whom 63 (58%) were husbands, 42 (39%) partners and 6 (6%) grandparents (some had both a partner and a parent helping out)
- The majority of respondents were between twenty-six and thirty-nine years of age although all ages between eighteen and forty-nine were represented (see Table 1 for details)

Table 1**Age?**

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	18-21	9	5.2
	22-25	34	19.7
	26-30	52	30.1
	31-39	69	39.9
	40-49	9	5.2
	Total	173	100.0
Total		174	

- A range of ethnic groups were represented in the survey although the vast majority define themselves as 'White British' (82%) (see Table 2)
- 158 (91%) families had English as their main language
- In the community surveyed there were 10 different languages that featured as the main language in the remaining families (see appendix 5)

Table 2**Ethnicity**

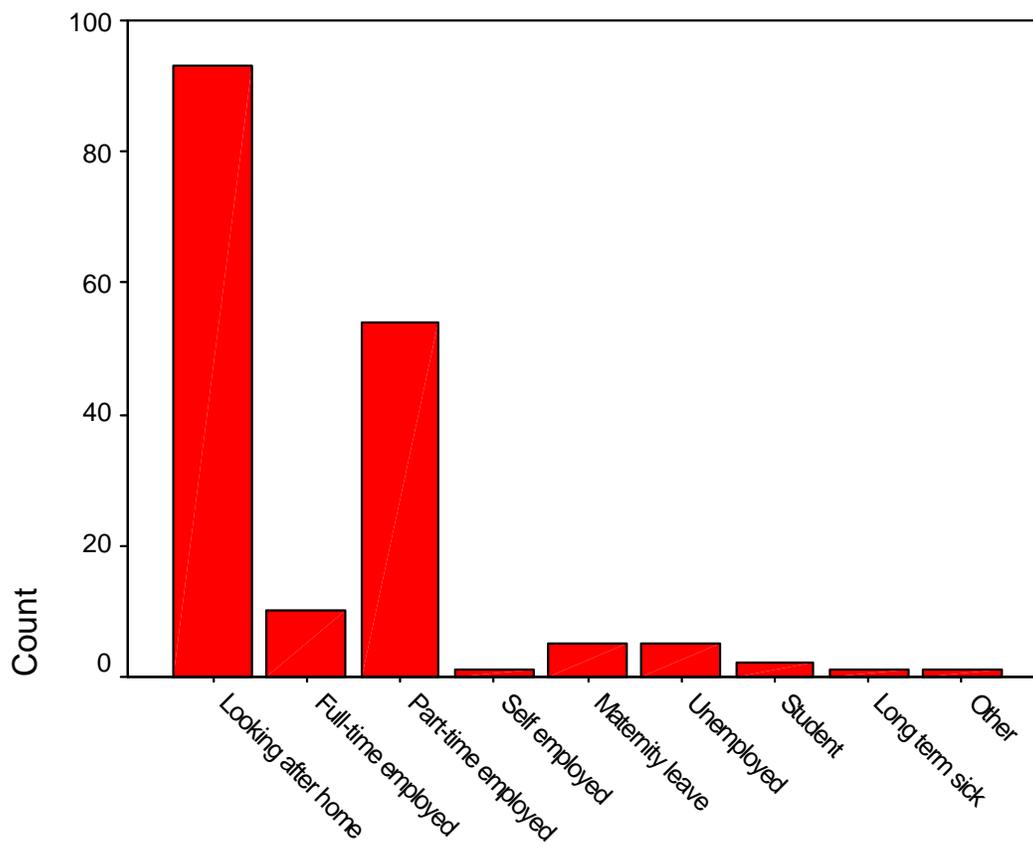
	*Questionnaire	**Wandle Valley	**Sutton
White	86.1	89.4	89.2
of which White Irish	1.7	2.0	2.0
Mixed	2.9	2.5	2.1
Asian or Asian British	3.5	3.7	4.7
Indian	0.6	1.6	2.3
Pakistani	0	0.8	0.7
Bangladeshi	0.6	0.2	0.3
Other Asian	2.3	1.1	1.4
Black or Black British	3.5	3.7	2.6
Caribbean	0.6	1.7	1.1
African	1.7	1.6	1.2
Other Black	1.2	0.4	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	4.1	0.8	1.4

* Source: SRU University of Surrey Roehampton; **Source: 2001 Census, ONS

- When comparing the ethnicities of parents who returned the questionnaire with the ethnic composition of the local community as well as the London Borough of Sutton we feel satisfied that the results are based on a good representation of the ethnic mix in the area.

Table 3

Employment Status

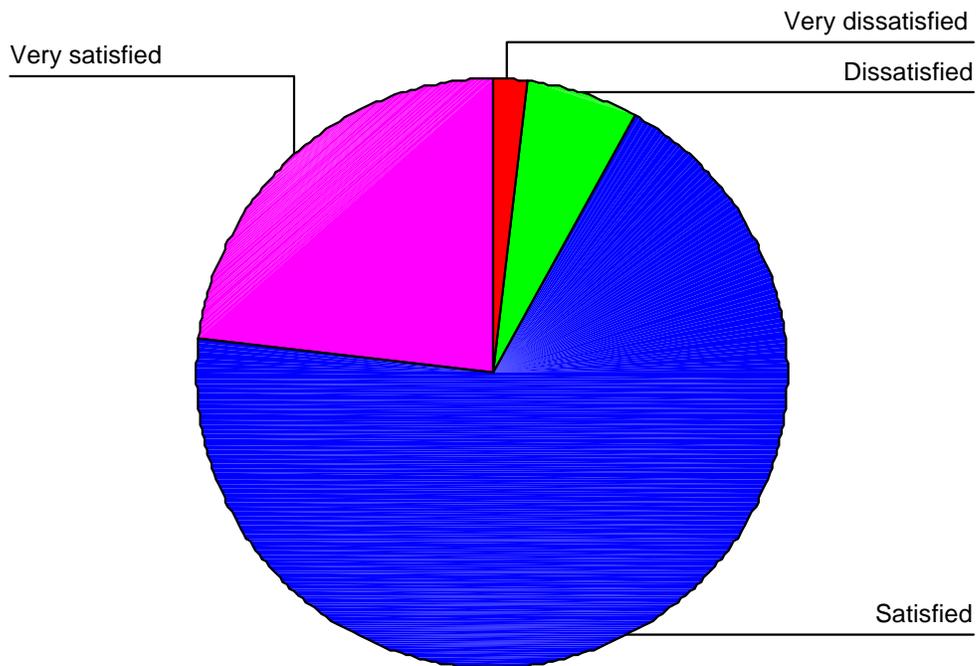


- Table 3 shows that over half (53%) of the replies came from those who were looking after home or family. A third were in part-time employment while only six per cent were in full time employment. There were small numbers of respondents who were on maternity leave, unemployed, students or long-term sick.

3. Circle Sure Start Findings

3.1 The vast majority who were asked in the survey how they rated local services were positive about the help offered to children and their families in the area. 160 of the 174 respondents replied to this question in the survey (see Figure 1). Out of those twenty three per cent were very satisfied, sixty-nine per cent were satisfied while six per cent were dissatisfied and two per cent very dissatisfied. Those who reported being dissatisfied were less likely to have had any contact with Circle Sure Start. The fourteen respondents who did not reply were even less likely to have had such contact. The national Sure Start target for satisfaction is seventy-five per cent so this has already been superseded.

Figure 1



4. Special and Additional Needs

4.1 An important focus of the evaluation was on special and additional needs. In the survey we asked people to indicate whether they had experienced any problems with a wide range of issues seen as common in families with young children. This was to assist with the identification of additional needs. The information from the survey is intended to support the more detailed questions on special and additional needs on the registration forms. Because of the limitations of questionnaires no detailed questions on special needs were included in the survey. We instead chose to focus on easily identifiable and common problems in families with young children that could suggest additional needs. We can then get some idea of the level of additional needs in the area from the survey where people identified they had problems with the following:

➤ Sleepless nights	62%
➤ Feeling down/lacking confidence	44%
➤ My child's behaviour	38%
➤ Balancing the family budget	36%
➤ Finding out about local activities for children	30%
➤ Feeding my child	21%
➤ Losing my temper	21%
➤ Meeting other parents	20%
➤ Finding affordable childcare	18%
➤ Toilet training	17%
➤ Finding work	11%
➤ My child making friends	9%
➤ Breastfeeding	9%
➤ Bedwetting	6%
➤ My child learning to speak	5%
➤ Reading or writing	5%

- Drug or alcohol misuse 2%

4.2 When examining the data further there were some significant differences between groups of parents with regard to the problems they were experiencing.

- Parents who were part of the majority ethnic group (white British) reported more problems with their child's behaviour (46%) than did parents from minority ethnic groups (19%).
- Parents who did not speak English as a main language at home reported losing their temper (55%) more often than parents where the main language spoken was English (22%).
- The English speaking households reported less concern regarding their children learning to speak, although there were very few who expressed such concerns at all.
- Households with *two* children reported more problems with their children's behaviour (57%) than those with an only child (23%) or with three or more children (54%). Parents with two children were also more likely to report losing their temper (36%) than those with any other number of children, regardless of ethnicity (11% one child; 27% three or more children).
- Problems meeting other parents were more common in households where there was only one child (31% against 11%).

4.3 Interviews with Parents of Children with Special Needs

What Parents Would Like To Help Support Their Family:

4.4 Some parents mentioned difficulties in family relationships that they consider to be caused by stress and little time spent together as adult partners; the following services were requested by parents to help relieve these problems:

- Respite care for children
- Babysitting/childminding service (by those with some special needs training).

4.5 These points reflect suggestions already made by parents in the 'Carers Special Grant Funding' report ²; the following ideas for general support for families with children of high level needs were also identified in both this research and the above-mentioned report:

- Workshops/drop-in sessions (including on how to cope with behaviour in children with additional/special needs)
- Transport to activities and workshops (especially for children with mobility difficulties)

4.6 Other Key Suggestions by Parents of Children with Special and Additional Needs:

- Activity sessions for their children (including specialist sensory emphasis and taking account of children attending with limited mobility)
- Swimming sessions with trained teachers to help parents to help their child

4.7 Regarding their child starting school, parents expressed no particular concerns. Key issues for parents centred on a lack of pre-school activities and play equipment for their children. Among parents with children who had no statements of special needs, concerns regarding their children starting school were focused on the perceived poor quality of local schools than any difficulties they identified in their children. None of these parents had actual experience of the school as their children had no siblings already at school. Parents saw there was room for more contact between Sure Start and local schools in order to facilitate access to information about the schools.

4.8 Key worker Suggestions:

- A specialist toy library

² Report: 'Carers Special Grant Funding – 0-5 Year Olds with Special Needs/Disabilities'. Jo Winslow: Contact a Family 020 8404 1971

- The possibility of Circle Sure Start piloting a 'flyer' in conjunction with Contact-a-Family composed of services for families with special and additional needs
- A meeting with Contact-a Family and other interested parties in how to take services for children with special and additional needs forward
- Playground with specialist equipment (inc. ramps, easy to access playthings, secure fencing, etc.). A similar venue recently closed, leaving no provision of this kind in the area.
- Funded indoor activity sessions (soft-toy play, etc...)

4.9 Local service providers with a particular interest in children with special/additional needs made the following comments:

- Parents and health professionals may not establish that a very young child has special/additional needs
- Many parents are reluctant to label their child and therefore resist seeking help
- Expanding the Circle Sure Start boundary may increase number of children with special/additional needs
- Funding for 'Small Steps' programme may provide drop-in workshops and serve as a point for accessing other support

4.10 Discussion

The 'Register for Children and Young People with Disabilities' (August 2003) shows there are six registered children aged 0-4 and twenty-four children on the register aged 5-9 who reside in the Circle Sure Start area³. It may be that there is a greater volume of need overall in 'additional needs' rather than 'special needs'; the former encompassing a greater range of difficulties that may not individually necessitate a specific record being created in a statutory service such as health or social services. Additional needs focus gives rise to difficulties

³ Register for Children and Young People with Disabilities – 7th report. August 2003: London Borough of Sutton, Bowman, A. Accessible on <http://www.registerservices.nhs.uk/reports/suttonchildren.pdf>

regarding what to include and what not to record and clear guidelines would need to be established as to what would warrant inclusion. It may be that policy suggestions concentration on what amounts to 'high level needs' forms a focus for 'special and additional needs' funding.

4.11 In view of parents' reluctance to have their child labelled an 'open' approach providing the opportunity for parents to access specialist services through integrated services may be the way forward. This is being addressed to an extent by the provision of open access activities – music workshops and Baby Massage – where health professionals are 'on-hand' in an informal atmosphere. This also presents the opening for health professionals to spend time with children and their parents - providing the opportunity to explore with parents areas where extra support may be required.

4.12 A key suggestion by parents of children with special/additional needs was for regular activity sessions including specialist toys such as those aimed at sensory awareness and taking account of the possibility of children attending with limited mobility. Key workers pointed out that the closure of an outside play area with specialist equipment such as ramps left no specialist outdoor provision. Whilst there are indoor 'Tumbletime' sessions, these are seen to be too busy, with a very wide age range in the same room, and expensive.

4.13 The Circle Sure Start newsletter may be a method of reaching parents of children with special/additional needs; advertising 'drop-in' sessions where workshops on dealing with children's behaviour/parenting skills can be interspersed with workshops on 'speech and learning', 'preparing for school'; advice on helpful play with children; any subjects that a number of parents request. An area in the Circle Sure Start newsletter may also be designated for helpline telephone numbers. General national numbers such as that for Parentline Plus can be interspersed with specific/targeted services, including: Contact A Family, The Children's Information Centre (which can point parents

toward other services including those for children with special/additional needs such as 'Portage') and SCILL Disability Information (a Sutton based service that can give advice to people with special/additional needs or individuals, organisations and professionals who care for those who do).

4.14 It emerged through interviews with parents that some were also caring for elderly or long-term sick relatives, an additional constraint on parents who are already caring for young children. It may be of benefit to local parents to explore this issue further as informal care is often a 'hidden' demand and research may illuminate ways that Sure Start could help support these parents. This could include provision of information in an accessible format on benefits and support services available to carers of elderly, disabled or long-term ill relatives. This may be particularly important in an area such as Circle Sure Start where many parents of young children are living with, or close to, their own parents.

4.15 Nearly half the respondents to the survey reported feeling down/lacking confidence, something that may indicate an additional need for both parents and children. In focus groups parents raised the difficulties they had had joining in with activities when feeling down. This was especially the case if there were lots of people present; their children are then less likely to be taken to the sessions on offer and lose out on constructive playtimes.

4.16 Policy suggestions:

- Increase support for playgroup/parent-toddler group for children with additional/high level needs
- Explore the possibility of specialist activity sessions for children with additional/high level needs
- Accept parents' reluctance for their child to be labelled
- National Sure Start targets on improving social and emotional development and improving children's ability to learn suggest that work

with families that have additional needs, such as parents lacking confidence and having problems with their children's behaviour, is important

- Establish the level of additional caring responsibilities for sick partners or elderly parents in the local area – this question could be included on registration forms or future evaluations
- Solutions to children not being well prepared to start school that are identified by professionals would be best approached indirectly as parents do not see the problem as located in their child but with the schools in the area
- Explore ways of raising awareness of available services through publicity
- Broaden to more general 'high level needs'

5. Early services

‘Sure Start is friendlier than normal playgroups’

5.1 We asked parents if they had used any of the early services provided by Circle Sure Start and we were interested in how the users had rated these services. These are some of the things the families said in the survey, in interviews, focus groups and informal comments. The service providers’ comments are also included. The information provided in this section could help with considering future service development, especially with regard to supporting additional needs, as well as the mainstreaming of particularly salient and productive activities.

5.2 ‘Baby Massage’

Aims:

- To ensure early bonding/touching, especially for parents with babies that cry a lot/have colic, and for mothers who feel low/overwhelmed by having a baby
- To encourage early verbal/non-verbal communication to encourage later speech
- To promote emotional well-being of parents and babies
- To encourage some extra ante-natal contact for health promotion

‘Baby Massage was really good, more of that – and for older children – would help me to use other Sure Start things’

5.2.1 Replies to the Survey:

- A total of twenty five respondents (14%) had used this service
- All these users had found the ease of contact with the service very good (16) or good (9)
- Twenty four respondents rated the approachability of the staff as very good (20) or good (4).
- The overall rating for baby massage was very good (19) or good (4)

5.2.2 Parents' key messages from interviews and focus groups:

- Friendliness/approachability of staff
- Informal point of contact to ask professionals about any concerns
- Massage helped with calming baby
- Immense support for the aromatherapy session
- Requests for more sessions for babies
- Requests for massage and aromatherapy for slightly older children

5.2.3 Parents expressed no concerns.

5.2.4 Baby Massage self- evaluation forms from parents (year 2003) indicate:

- Unanimous positive response among those who completed a form
- Support for more courses
- Parents reported positively on the attendance of an aromatherapist

5.2.5 Monitoring data from April-June 2003 illuminate the following points:

- Monitoring data is routinely collected
- The ethnicities of parents who attended the sessions in group 2, reflected the ethnic profile of the Sure Start area.
- Constraints on time of service providers
- No babies with special needs

- Early problems with accessing funds, inter-agency co-operation, targeting parents (tends to be already motivated parents who attend)
- Limited resources for advertising

5.2.6 Service provider interviews:

- Emphasise the popularity of the sessions
- Indicate that constraints include lack of time and funds to respond with a wider service
- Acknowledge that it is difficult to report rates of 'special needs' in babies
- Future plans: increased targeting (especially vulnerable clients, those not returning, young parents)

5.2.7 Discussion

Baby massage proved a popular early service and served as a useful setting for parents to seek informal advice from staff. The use of aromatherapy proved especially popular. The service provided a setting very early on in a child's life where support could be sought an informal way, something that could be seen as important in developing confident parenting. Thus baby massage may serve as a non-threatening introduction to Circle Sure Start. Although the staff felt it was difficult to detect any special needs in babies, there is scope for raising awareness among parents of normal developmental milestones. There are concerns that this service may not reach those in most need, such as those who feel unable to go outside of the home.

5.2.8 Policy suggestions:

- Incorporate awareness raising of 'normal' child development
- Recognise and develop the broader supportive role of this service and its potential for the prevention of additional needs.

- Assess to what extent use of this service encourages continued use of Circle Sure Start services
- Assess to what extent targets regarding social and emotional development, health and improving children's ability to learn can be attained through this service
- Consider the reach of this service throughout the community, including home visits

5.3 'Messy Time' Parent-Toddler Group

Aims:

- To provide the opportunity and resources for children to learn through creative play and for parents to take experiences and ideas from the club
- To introduce basic healthy living ideas as education in a fun, informal and factual way

'Messy time is lovely; you can mess about in a way you can't at home. My child has learnt to sit down and do things rather than just run around'

5.3.1 Replies to the Survey:

- A total of twenty respondents told us they had used this service
- The ease of contact was in the main seen as very good (8) or good (9) although a small minority had found this to be poor (1) and very poor (1).
- The approachability of the staff was considered very good (10), good (6), poor (1) and very poor (3)
- The overall rating for 'Messy Time' was very good (9), good (9), poor (1) and very poor (1)

5.3.2 Parents' messages about strengths - from interviews and focus groups:

- Provides freedom for children to play creatively in messy activities
- Children enjoy the sessions
- Children learn from seeing other children play
- A place to meet other parents
- Helps children to learn to concentrate

5.3.3 Parents present at the group expressed no concerns.

5.3.4 Suggestions from parents who did not attend or who had stopped attending:

- A different venue from Riverside Community Centre, due to:
 - issues around public transport access
 - negative perceptions of the area.

5.3.5 Monitoring data from July-Sept 2003⁴ illuminates the following points:

- Activities follow a weekly theme aimed at developing creative imagination, fine motor skills, hand-eye co-ordination and social skills
- 26 families attended at different times, consisting of 33 children; 24 of these families were from the Circle Sure Start area
- Numbers attending were low (usually 6-9 per session)
- More advertising was suggested

5.3.6 At the time of evaluation, attendance was still very low and this may reflect parents' comments in the interviews regarding the venue. Parents interviewed had found out about it through word of mouth thus it may not have been widely known about in the area.

5.3.7 Service provider interviews raised the points:

- running costs are low due to low cost of materials

⁴ Pre-School Learning Alliance Circle Sure Start Early Services Monitoring Report for the Period July-Sept 2003

- children seem to enjoy sessions

5.3.8 Discussion

'Messy time' is a popular service where the children have an opportunity for greater freedom of expression than they could enjoy at home. Parents perceived it as positive as they have a chance to meet other parents, but also to do something together with their child. There are small numbers of parents who did not find this service a positive experience. As this may have put them off returning it would be important to monitor how regularly families use the service and raise questions if many simply attend once. There were also concerns regarding the location of the venue.

5.3.9 Policy suggestions:

- Liase with parents so that the chosen venue can be accepted
- Assess to what extent targets on social and emotional development, children's ability to learn and strengthening families and communities are attained through 'Messy time'.
- Consider the reach of this service

5.4 'Middletone Music'

Aim:

- To encourage speech and language development, communication, socialising, social skills, motor skills, sharing, routine (e.g. putting things away), looking and listening skills

'I was made to feel really welcome'
'I could spend quality time with my child'

5.4.1 Replies to the Survey:

- Fifty four respondents had made use of Middleton Music
- Users had found the ease of contact very good (25), good (26), poor (1) and very poor (2)
- Respondents rated the friendliness and approachability of the staff as very good (34), good (16), poor (1) and very poor (2)
- Overall Middleton Music was seen as very good (31), good (15), poor (5) and very poor (2)

5.4.2 Parents' messages about strengths in interviews and focus groups:

- Friendly
- Staff supportive
- Good for children to play together
- Children learning musical skills
- Informal point of contact to ask professionals about any concerns
- Easy access by public transport
- The two non-Sure Start parents interviewed would be happy to pay if still able to use it

5.4.3 Preferred changes:

- Requests for more sessions and afternoon sessions as current session were too busy
- A different venue or at least two separate sessions
- A wider variety of songs
- Incorporating art activities

5.4.4 Monitoring data from 1 April – 30 June 2003 illuminate the following points:

- Monitoring data is routinely collected
- Number of children registered; 93 Sure Start area residents, 64 non-Sure Start
- Attendance rates per week 25-40

- A small range of ethnicities of parents attended the sessions

5.4.5 Service provider interviews

- Good for reducing parental isolation
- Healthy eating policies incorporated in snacks during breaks
- Some fathers attend
- Welcoming sessions
- Consistent
- Children with suspected difficulties were also invited to attend
- Everyone works together
- 'Teething' difficulties had mainly been overcome
- Parents have access to leaflets/flyers
- Encourages parent-child interaction
- Need to address ways to encourage 'hard to reach' families
- Would like more activities e.g. for children to take home, but no room. This may be rectified since the evaluation by the introduction of a second session and venue

5.4.6 Discussion

The problem with Middleton Music has been its popularity and the extra session created is bound to be welcome. This is another example of a non-stigmatising activity where a range of skills can be promoted enhancing children's development. Such sessions are viewed by parents as opportunities to ask for informal advice. Responding to informal requests in this way may be more conducive than direct instructions about child-rearing. Evidence suggests that parents sometimes view unsought advice with hostility.

5.4.7 Policy suggestions:

- Consider to what extent the sessions would appear welcoming for 'hard-to-reach' families
- Explore whether children share the view of their parents regarding variety of songs
- Assess the extent to which this service has an impact on targets on improving children's ability to learn

5.5 'Crèche Project'

Aim:

- To make available a pool of crèche workers with a target of 40% to be drawn from the Sure Start area. To meet this aim jobs were advertised locally.

5.5.1 Replies to the Survey:

- The crèche facilities had been used by twenty-seven respondents.
- The ease of contact was seen as either very good (13) or good (14)
- The approachability of the staff was rated as very good (17) or good (8)
- The crèche facilities were rated overall as very good (17) or good (8)

5.5.2 Parents' messages about strengths:

- Support for having crèche workers at venues present 'for a break'
- Reports of a sense of trust in crèche workers who are 'from Sure Start'
- Workers being approachable and someone 'to talk to'

5.5.3 Parents raised no concerns.

5.5.4 Service provider interviews raised the following points:

- Only rarely could hours not be filled with crèche workers
- An extra post of project co-ordinator had been created from Sure Start funding

- The service is adaptable – posts are filled quickly, play staff are flexible in hours worked, play equipment can be taken on location
- The offices had changed venue due to expansion of the service
- Playworkers are from diverse ethnic origins and age groups
- There were no male workers at the time of evaluation
- Many service users (people whose children are in crèches attended by the project workers) are Sure Start area parents
- An Excellence Award had been granted by the London Borough of Sutton
- There is a good relationship with the Sure Start management
- There is good communication with Circle Sure Start – meetings are quite regular and views are shared

5.5.5 At the time of evaluation monitoring data shows:

- The service was part funded by Circle Sure Start
- 4 of the 14 play workers were from the Circle Sure Start area, 1 more was due to start the following week.

5.5.6 Discussion

The crèche system appears to provide a positive service for parents, one that they trust and that therefore makes them feel able to leave their children for a little while whether to just have a rest from child care or to join in some activity or training. The role of the crèche worker as informal support and sounding board on children's behaviour and development should not be underestimated. The positive working relationship with the Circle Sure Start delivery team is important for the crèche workers. Further, it is likely to have an impact on the general atmosphere in the crèche for both children and parents.

5.5.7 Policy Suggestions:

- Continue to maintain good working relationships between Sure Start team and crèche workers

- Acknowledge and develop the crèche workers' role in issues of family support and children's behaviour and development – especially the identification of additional needs
- Assess the role of crèche workers in monitoring targets on improving social and emotional development as well as children's ability to learn

5.6 Observations of children's perceptions of Circle Sure Start activities

5.6.1 Observing children in various Circle Sure Start settings has provided some insight into the levels of engagement, enjoyment, etc., the children seemed to be experiencing.

In the sessions observed there appeared to be good interaction between not only the children, but also between parent and child.

One parent pointed out,
"we both look forward to our weekly sessions together here".

5.6.2 Generally, children appeared to be stimulated by the activities, many making creative use of equipment, etc., that was available to them. They engaged in imaginative play and experimented with play materials that they may not have had access to in the home. As one parent commented,

“he gets very excited when he realises we’re coming here – I think it’s partly because he gets to use different things to what we have at home”.

Overall, the children observed, appeared content in their surroundings and happy if not excited about their participation in the various activities.

5.6.3 Policy suggestions for future monitoring of children

To assist in future monitoring, Circle Sure Start might consider:

- Regular observations of children being carried out - in the sessions provided by Circle Sure Start - by skilled practitioners who are knowledgeable in the field of child development.
- Finding out from parents and Sure Start workers, how they perceive (their) children’s involvement, enjoyment, etc., of the activities children use.
- Asking, where appropriate, children themselves what they like most/least about the activities, possibly introducing for example, picture-drawing, allowing children to express themselves on paper.
- Obtaining feedback and advice from schools’ reception classes concerning Circle Sure Start children’s integration/interaction with others, their use of equipment, etc.
- Reflect upon what constitutes ‘disability’.

5.7 ‘Learning for Life’ – Middleton Circle Library (Bookstart +)

5.7.1 Service provider interviews:

- Indicate that attendance is good amongst ‘hard to reach’ families
- Suggest that more ‘Outreach’ days would promote the library, encouraging families to join

- Emphasise how well-received the 'Bookstart +' packs have been, upon Sure Start families joining library
- Recognise difficulties associated with distributing 'Bookstart +' packs only to families according to their Circle Sure Start post codes

5.7.2 'Bookstart +' consists of a bag containing a variety of different learning sources for young children. These include: 'number' wall posters; hard-covered board story-book for younger age bracket children and 'paper' pages story-book for older children, each with colourful illustrations; sketch pad and crayons. Also included is a list of recommended books for children of different ages, and information about the library and activities taking place there.

5.7.3 Monitoring data from 'Bookstart +'

Monitoring data illuminate the following points:

- 140 Bookstart + packs have been distributed to Circle Sure Start families over the last yea. A 35% increase of under 5s joining the library has been recorded.
- Families' use of the library's services and facilities has increased.
- Comparatively very few 'Bookstart +' packs have gone to (a) children of young parents (16 -24 year olds) and (b) minority ethnic families.
- None of the 'Bookstart +' families consider either themselves or their child/ren to have a 'disability'.

5.7.4 Policy suggestions drawn from 'Bookstart +':

- Continue to monitor reach of this service
- Assess the impact of 'Outreach' days
- Useful to monitor continued use of library services
- Consider the impact of this service in relation to targets on improving children's ability to learn

- Consider the role of this service in alerting parents to different learning styles among children with a view to help parents in their support of children's learning

5.8 'The Healthy Living Project' (The Lunch Group)

Encourages health eating in families, eating together, positive play experience with children, children's development of social skills, and parents learning new skills such as meal preparation.

5.8.1 Service provider interview

- All parents who attend the lunch group and are eligible have now joined Sure Start
- Attendance numbers have risen and there is no longer sufficient room at venue for everyone to eat together
- Good, healthy eating for children; experimenting with different food types
- Good network of support services available to service
- Groups using service the least are minority ethnic⁵ and young parent families

5.8.2 Discussion

In an era where increased obesity among children is a prominent concern guiding children and their parents in strategies for healthy eating is a positive initiative. The survey data indicates that food is a topic that can be fraught with tension. Nearly a quarter of parents reported problems with feeding their child. There is also a tendency for parents who report such problems also to identify difficulties with children's behaviour. Although this is shown as a trend in the data it is not a statistically significant relationship.

5.8.3 Policy suggestions:

⁵ In a survey for Lavender Sure Start it was found that minority ethnic families felt they were eating healthily and were confident in their ability to cook such foods. Roehampton Social Research Unit (2003) *Sure Start Lavender: Final Report on Public consultation with Parents and Carers*

- Consider the possibility of linking with healthy eating projects in local schools
- Assess this service in relation to targets on improving health
- Consider to what extent reported problems with behaviour is associated with eating

5.9 'Pre-School Learning Alliance'

Aim: to assess and raise the profile of parent toddler groups.

5.9.1 Service provider interviews

- Suggest that low numbers of attendance in parent-toddler groups is likely in part due to children starting pre-school at an earlier age; also that several different groups operate on the same day
- Emphasise success in identifying issues e.g., difficulties in staffing groups
- Recognise increase in numbers of mothers involved in activities, e.g., more attend parent group
- Identify problem concerning lack of Sure Start funded working hours allocated to the early service

5.9.2 Policy suggestion:

- Consider the role of pre-school activities in supporting children to prepare for school

5.10. 'Jigsaw'

5.10.1 The Sure Start funded project ceased operation at the end of July 2003. This was due to insufficient numbers of families, which is considered likely to be because of the geographical boundaries of Circle Sure Start. It might also be related to the problem of identifying special needs in very young children. The following comments were made about the service whilst it was running:

- Relationships with Circle Sure Start staff were good
- The project highlighted lack of information available to families, especially those experiencing difficulties with children from birth

5.10.2 Monitoring data illuminate the following points:

- Project reached 'hard to reach' groups, including minority ethnic families and families with additional needs
- Positive feedback about the sessions from parents/carers

5.11 'Young Parents Support Group'

"It's good to be able to mix with other young mums, we share the same interests and we can help each other with problems. Also the children get used to mixing with each other."

5.11.1 The focus group raised the following points from parents:

- Considerable support for a separate group for young parents
- Parents highly valued the support gained from staff at the group
- Positive responses to the lunches provided
- Appreciation of the gym for their use
- Presence of crèche staff highly valued
- Parents felt listened to
- Popularity of the parent-led approach
- All interviewees had heard about the group by word of mouth (friend/health visitor)

5.11.2 Parents raised no concerns

5.11.3 Service Provider Interview:

Whilst acknowledging that limited allocated working hours make it difficult to respond with a wider service, key suggestions include:

- AQA accreditation for parents
- Home visits/outreach for young parents
- Plans for the future include a focus on involving dads
- Any plans will be what the parents want support to develop

5.11.4 What Young Parents would like from Circle Sure Start:

- More sessions and for longer
- Make the space bigger by removing the pool tables
- More advertising of the group and other activities using leaflets and the local newspaper
- Certificated training such as that offered by 'Millennium Volunteers'
- Drop-in/workshops on healthy eating for children and advice on feeding young children
- Workshops/drop-in sessions on advice for dealing with children's behaviour, with different ages of children being the focus in different sessions.
- Exercise classes with a crèche
- Yoga for parents and children together
- A Circle Sure Start 'swap shop' for children's clothes and equipment⁶
- Two parents expressed a willingness to attend secondary schools and talk about being a young parent. This could be supported further.
- Support for their partners to set up a fathers' group

⁶ This is now being developed in the Circle Sure Start Welcome Centre

5.11.5 Discussion

From the young parents' focus group it emerged that those present had attended other Sure Start activities including Baby Massage, Middleton Music and Messy Time, showing a network structure to Circle Sure Start provision that helped parents to 'feed through' from one service to another. The group provides a good lunch for parents and children. It also caters for the need of young parents to have the time and space to be young adults or teenagers whilst the children are looked after. Many parents were aware of negative images in society of young parents - mums in particular – and the sanctuary this group offers.

'It's because we're young mums... I felt on my own, out of place... they [older mums in other groups] looked down their nose'

'Here I don't feel ashamed'

5.11.6 Many of the young mums interviewed are working part-time, one is studying and one hopes to study. An employability worker attends once a month. In total four of the young mums who attend the group are studying. It may be of help in reaching more young parents for the group to be publicised more in a visual way, through videos and talks, although this raises difficulties in attracting non-Sure Start area residents. Health visitors have made efforts to involve young mums, and building on this targeted approach by health visitors and parental involvement officers/family support workers may attract more young parents – interviews showed that many did not want to go to new places alone. The negative attitudes they felt from other parents in society toward young mums creates an obstacle to them attending a new group. Perception of negative

attitudes emerged again when a drop-in session was held at the group on 'self-esteem', and one parent commented:

'There ain't nothing wrong with my self-esteem.'

5.11.7 However, there was considerable support from parents at the group for 'practical' workshops, parenting advice and exercise classes. It emerged in interviews that many young parents do not own cars; location and transport should be a consideration in any Circle Sure Start activities aimed at involving young parents.

5.11.8 Policy suggestions:

- Assess the reach of a targeted approach to recruiting young mums
- Recognise the barriers among this group to using services but encourage their integration
- Build on the potential for enhancing their involvement in Circle Sure Start as well as involving young dads
- Explore accreditation for training or volunteer work

5.12 'Sutton Racial Equality Council' (SREC)

5.12.1 Project funded as a Circle Sure Start Early Service with the following aim:

- For SREC to 'enhance the standard Sure Start information pack with specific and relevant information targeting black and minority ethnic families'. It was decided that this should be launched at a multi-cultural food lunch event.

5.12.2 Service provider interviews include the following comments:

- Assurances that SREC has completed an A5 directory as detailed above, including having mapped relevant services in the London Borough of Sutton
- Only some parts had been translated; there have been difficulties with translation
- The directory was unavailable to show to the researcher on request
- The directory will be launched during 'Refugee Week': 14th-18th June
- SREC had purchased dual language videos, paid for with Circle Sure Start funding for translation. Videos include issues concerning healthy eating in pregnancy, going for a cervical smear test, and child development.
- Constraints on staffing levels and the additional obligation of the Community Interpreting Service have created time difficulties

5.12.3 Monitoring data include:

- Analysis of expenditure Jan-March 2003.
- Analysis of expenditure Apr-Jun 2003.
- Photocopies: 11 minority ethnic recipes (in English language); printouts of local services.

5.12.4 Policy suggestions:

- Consider how the information gathered will be kept updated
- Consider how accessible this information is to relevant families e.g. advertise its existence in the Sure Start Welcome Centre, relevant web-pages etc.

5.13 '*Sutton Community Interpreting Service*' (SCIS)

5.13.1 This service was incorporated into the Sutton Racial Equality Council after the project manager of SCIS left post. The project is currently incomplete.

5.13.2 Aim

- 'To identify who and where black and minority ethnic families are living in the Circle Sure Start area and identify community translation and interpreting requirements through collection of data and outreach work.'

5.13.3 Documentary evidence includes:

- Three page draft report (A4)
- Short data collection form (it appears no data collection has occurred)
- 2 invoices (to SREC) for interpreters

5.13.4 SREC has elected to continue with this project as it has taken over the Community Interpreting Service.

5.13.5 Discussion

There is a relatively small proportion of the Circle Sure Start population who are not English speakers. However, for that minority the interpreting service is likely to be of importance. This was witnessed in a coffee morning organised by Circle Sure Start with Tamil families where information regarding the services on offer was communicated via interpreters. The need for English classes with a crèche for babies under the age of one was identified. In the survey it was noted that parents who did not use English as a main language at home were more likely to report losing their temper and competence in English may thus be an important issue.

5.13.6 Policy suggestions

- Consider facilitating the teaching of English as an additional language
- Consider how accessible information on Circle Sure Start services and activities are to non-English speakers

6. Taking Part in Sure Start

6.1 Involving parents in the governance of Sure Start is crucial to its success. Circle Sure Start has been successful in getting parents to take part and there is considerable interest in doing so among those parents who have so far not already been involved. The parents were asked to comment on their current involvement as well as their interest in becoming involved in the future.

6.2 Survey responses:

- Nineteen respondents were already involved
- Twenty-two parents said they wanted to meet and plan Circle Sure Start activities
- Forty-nine parents indicated they wanted to join the Parents' Group
- Twenty-one parents were willing to volunteer to help with Circle Cure Start activities
- Eleven parents indicated they would like to befriend a family
- Two parents were interested in joining the management board
- Seventeen respondents ticked 'other' (see appendix 7 for details)

6.3 There were ninety one parents (52%) who had not yet used any Circle Sure Start services. They were asked to indicate why this was the case and below are the reasons they gave:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| ➤ I've never heard of Sure Start | 2% |
| ➤ I was unsure what Sure Start offered | 22% |
| ➤ Sure Start services are not available at a time convenient to me | 17% |
| ➤ I prefer to rely on my family and my friends to help with my children | 5% |
| ➤ I live too far away | 1% |

- I have no need for Sure Start 2%
- Other⁷ 20%

6.4 Further details on those who had not used Sure Start services:

- Working parents were less likely to have been able to use Circle Sure Start services, mainly due to their timing. It comes as no surprise that working parents were less likely already to be involved in Circle Sure Start.
- Parents with two children were less likely to want to join the parents' group than those with one or three or more children.
- Parents who were under the age of thirty were more likely to want to join the parents' group.
- Parents over the age of thirty were more likely to express an interest in befriending a family.

6.5 Interviews

Relationships between parents in the community and Circle Sure Start staff and management appear to be good. There were numerous suggestions on how to enhance relations between Circle Sure Start and local families.

Parents suggestions include:

- A larger venue for 'drop-in' with a bigger crèche area
- Certificated training for volunteer parents.
- Accredited short courses - especially parenting skills in dealing with child behaviour
- Information packs including a clear list of activities for young children, including parent-toddler groups, distributed by health visitors
- Information on activities to be sent earlier

⁷ 'Other' includes comments to do with registration, working parents, being fully occupied anyway but also parents who feel anxious meeting people and those with children who have special needs (see appendix 6 for full details).

6.6 'Parents' Group'

6.6.1 Replies to the Survey:

- Thirty-four respondents had been to the Parents' Group.
- The ease of contact was seen as very good (16), good (17) and very poor (1)
- The friendliness and approachability in the Parents' Group was seen as very good (24), good (6) and very poor (1)
- The Parents' Group was given an overall rating of very good (23) and good (8)

6.6.2 Interviews

Parents' Messages –

- Involved parents are enthusiastic.
- Sub-groups are a welcome and successful addition
- Effective at 'reach' due to Circle Sure Start workers out in the community

6.6.3 Parents' Concerns:

- Has become more of a 'parent-toddler' group (children used to be in a crèche)
- Perception that the group is increasingly aimed at people experiencing difficulties
- Recently, loss of a parent-led approach to dealing with children's behaviour whilst at the group
- Some parents 'take control'
- Overcrowding at previous venue and concerns about location of new venue

- Regret that booking required for 'consultation meetings' and concerns that few would turn up if booking a place on a different day becomes necessary

6.6.4 Parents' suggestions:

- Return to a more parent-led approach
- A change of venue from Riverside Community Centre
- Return to use of a separate crèche whilst parents are at the group
- Less direction from professionals in dealing with their children (especially when children are crying)
- If crèche workers are to be providing a role model of 'positive parenting', then these workers should be given more help to do this pro-actively
- Promotion of the Parents' Group in the Circle Sure Start newsletter

6.6.5 Monitoring data:

- The average attendance rate is 15 parents
- There are parents from a small range of ethnic communities; this is broadly representative of the area's population profile

6.7 Involving fathers/male carers:

To address low levels of male participation in Circle Sure Start a Parental Involvement Officer has recently attended a training course run by Fathers Direct, with a view to setting up a fathers' consultation group. The Young Parents Support Group has held an evening session to involve fathers and is planning further activities.

6.7.1 The 'work-themed' focus group and the focus group exploring the Image of Sure Start also pointed to important issues around male participation:

- Times of Sure Start activities make it difficult

- Perception of Sure Start being aimed at mothers. It is important to consider that this is in a context of common cultural attitudes that childcare, especially that of very young children, is the remit of women.
- Considerable support for male involvement was expressed by female participants
- The one male participant present suggested outdoor family activities and expressed interest in a fathers group

6.8 Involving Working Parents

The 'work-themed' focus group raised the following key issues:

- Timing of Sure Start activities problematic
- Problems with accessing information on activities that are advertised through other Circle Sure Start groups
- Support for evening workshops/courses
- Interest in weekend activities
- Working mothers find it hard to get to know other mothers
- Shift-working fathers with time off during the week reluctant to attend activities since they appear addressed to mothers

6.9 Young Parents' Focus Group

The focus group raised the following points from young parents:

- Many were acutely aware of 'negative images' of young parents in society in general
- Evidence of young parents' use of other Circle Sure Start services and activities
- For two parents - the perception of Sure Start being for 'single mums'

6.10 Discussion

The involvement in Circle Sure Start has had a positive beginning. In the evaluation a number of points arise that could support further development particularly with regard to information about available services and by

considering the needs of working parents, fathers and young parents. Further, due to difficulties of attending activities for young children especially in holidays, parents with children of different ages sometimes reported difficulties.

6.11 Numerous parents use informal sources of information, which are often linked to settings such as parent toddler groups. There seems to be a shortfall generally in the borough in the formal provision of easily accessible information, particularly for families with young children or parents with special or additional needs. Information on local services for children is available to the local community but parents often say that they are not sure what is 'out there' or it arrived too late for them to arrange to go. Bearing in mind what Circle Sure Start can and cannot do, it may be possible to explore small, incremental changes - for example, sending information on events earlier; requesting that Circle Sure Start is easy to find in the alphabetical directory on the London Borough of Sutton website and that all links to necessary pages are operating and up-to-date, including those aimed at children and parents with special and additional needs.

6.12 Efforts have already been made to respond to the 'Circle Sure Start Report of Family Support Project'⁸ in plans to increase the Parents' Group sessions to three times a week. Parents who are members of the Parents' Group have appreciated the input they have been able to make to Circle Sure Start. However, some now feel that they are not able to be as active in shaping Circle Sure Start as they were in the past. There are also concerns regarding the location of the venue and sharing the venue with the children as this appears more like a mother and toddler group than a parents' group.

6.13 The issue of overcrowding at the Parents' Group has been rectified by the change of venue to Riverside. However, a number of parents, who either object to the location, issues around public transport, or the size of the venue, have not welcomed this change. Circle Sure Start has addressed these concerns and is in

⁸ 'Circle Sure Start - Report of Family Support Project'. Theresa Cameron, Katy Stokes and Deana Walsh. April 2004

the process of arranging for the number of Parents' Group sessions each week to be increased, and for the inclusion of other venues. To an extent, difficulties concerning overcrowding and the change of venue has been product of the success of the group. As detailed above, Circle Sure Start is addressing these issues, and with a return to a more parent-led approach may continue to harness the success the group originally enjoyed.

6.14 To address national objectives for fathers' participation a Parental Involvement Officer has attended a Fathers Direct training course with the aim of involving fathers in Circle Sure Start. The Young Parents Support Group held a fathers evening and some fathers have expressed an interest in expanding this further. It is hoped that this will encourage fathers into other Sure Start services and activities.

6.15 Many parents expressed a need for a centre to cater regularly for children of various ages simultaneously so that older children can accompany the family and be involved in age appropriate activities in the same venue. This holistic approach to service provision would require a large venue and significant planning but a 'pilot' in a site such as the Sutton Arena could be explored.

6.16 Accredited, certificated training for parents who volunteer with Circle Sure Start may help to develop parental involvement and empowerment, and simultaneously increase staffing levels.

6.17 Accredited courses in parenting skills training may facilitate parents' empowerment and transition into further study or work. These courses are run by various organisations, including Parentline Plus, which runs free, short courses in local venues with Open College credits available.

6.18 Publicising a number such as the free Parentline Plus helpline for parents may help to fill gaps in 'out-of-hours' contact for parents who feel they need to

'chat' with someone or who have concerns about general child behaviour or family life.

6.19 Policy suggestions:

- Continue to explore ways to make information for families easier to 'find'
- Progress with a rolling registration process
- Raise Circle Sure Start presence in primary schools (e.g. stalls, presentations, videos)
- Explore visual representations of information (video/DVD)
- Research parents views on an ongoing basis on a small scale (e.g. informal focus groups)
- Explore further how to reach more fathers/male carers and young parents.
- Ensure information about events is sent early and that working parents are kept informed about services
- Publicise an existing free helpline number for parents
- Accredited, certificated training for volunteers
- Accredited courses in parenting skills training
- Consider the scope for accreditation of training received or tasks carried out within or on behalf of the Parents' Group and in the Welcome Centre
- Consider the parental involvement in Circle Sure Start against targets for strengthening families and communities
- Build upon the willingness to take part e.g. parents as 'befrienders' of new parents and consider the inclusion of working parents
- Consider the role of the Parents' Group as the active membership expands and its position with regard to the governance of Circle Sure Start
- Consider the impact membership of the Parents' Group can have both on social inclusion and on future employability of members

- Assess the role of the parents' group in relation to targets for strengthening families and communities

7. Partnership working

7.1 The research brief included an evaluation of partnership and inter-agency working. Partnership working is at the heart of provision of services by Circle Sure Start. Partnership working is not merely the developing of constructive and effective links with local health professionals, parents, nurseries or community support groups but the co-ordination of service provision within Sure Start.

7.2 Circle Sure Start is characterised by an emphasis on establishing procedures, policies and systems for working. This process is clearly focused upon the targets Sure Start is aimed at, a clarity that is shared by the partnership delivery team. There is a sense that guided by an analytical and reflective leadership, a strong organisation is being created where individuals within it are well supported. Furthermore, a supportive team, backed by a clear framework, gives confidence to the direction and delivery of services while responding to parents' needs and requests.

7.3 Setting up such systems and expanding both services and membership requires hard work, something the delivery team envisage will ease off. There is a sense that the current pace of development is not sustainable in the long run without further support.

7.4 The way services have been shaped by the partnership indicates that parents are integral to the decision making process. Parents' preference for services to be delivered by lay rather than professional workers, where professional experts have an indirect rather than a direct role, has been incorporated. It will be important to monitor whether this form of delivery is successful in achieving its aims and to assess its acceptability by users. Valuable lessons may be drawn in preparation for 'mainstreaming' of services, for example, with regard to their effectiveness, efficiency and acceptability.

7.5 Parents are actively involved in the governance of Circle Sure Start. In addition to the Management Board and the Parents' Group, there are a number of sub-groups with parental input: the Capital sub-group (1 parent), the Monitoring sub-group (2 parents), the Special Needs sub-group (2 parents), the Activities and Outings sub-group (6 parents) and the Newsletter sub-group (3 parents). The last two sub-groups are largely parent led.

7.6 Parent governance of Sure Start results in parents going through a process of professionalisation. This is positive both in building up capacities in the local community and in the way it enhances individual competencies and future prospects. However, as the membership of Circle Sure Start increases issues of legitimate representation may arise. In other words, to what extent are the parents who contribute to the governance of the partnership viewed as representative of and by the local parents.

7.7 Government directed targets for Sure Start define 'needs' in a very specific way. The role of the partnership is to match these with locally defined needs. Circle Sure Start is actively consulting the local community and responding imaginatively to a variety of suggestions and initiatives. As the expansion of the membership put a strain on the resources available the relationship between Circle Sure Start and the community will need careful consideration so central directives can continue to be negotiated in a way that remains acceptable to local parents. Particular consideration may have to be given to the role and support of those workers who are in closest day-to-day contact with parents.

7.8 Circle Sure Start has also been successful in inter-agency working. It emerged from the local authority with which it retains strong links. Thus the culture of the Local Authority in question is compatible with Sure Start in that it places an emphasis on consultation and partnership. By employing a health visitor the link with the local Primary Care Trust has been formalised, facilitating communication regarding new families, contact with other health professionals

and improvements to the organisation of professionals involved with Circle Sure Start families. Similarly, relations with voluntary organisations appear good and this is important to permit the capitalising on available opportunities. For example, Circle Sure Start has accessed the European funded 'Adding Value Through Partnerships' that has enabled expanding the range of services offered to the local community. Contacts with organisations that deliver services are formalised in service level agreements where regular reviews are required. Nevertheless, the requirements to collect monitoring data in order to satisfy National Sure Start may raise issues as data gathering in the various organisations may not be directed by similar demands and criteria.

7.9 The comments made by Circle Sure Start staff on working relations with parents are confirmed in interviews with parents from the Management Board and the Parents' Group. The parents feel that they are listened to as well as receiving good support and clear information. They also feel they are fairly represented on the Management Board and appreciate the diverse range of professionals represented there. The parents are impressed by the commitment shown by Circle Sure Start staff.

'Circle Sure Start staff work so hard; the parent involvement officers can't really do any more than they already do'
' Everything is absolutely accessible'

7.10 There are some concerns regarding the 'professionalisation' that is taking place among the parents. Parents felt that the Parents' Group has changed from a support network to a more professionally led organisation, for example. Further, it is felt that there is considerable responsibility involved in being part of

the Management Board whilst not being particularly trained. There is also some sense that a number of professionals are 'wary' of parents running the Parents' Group without any training. Professionals would welcome some accredited training therefore. Parents would welcome accreditation in order to 'have something to show' to future potential employers.

7.11 Policy suggestions:

- Consider and monitor the impact upon relations between parents and Circle Sure Start as lay workers are professionalised
- Consider the impact of increase in members on Circle Sure Start staff and long term members
- Consider how to manage the expectations of Circle Sure Start among local families, especially in view of the increase in membership
- Continue to nurture inter-agency links in view of both present and future service provision
- Reflect upon the monitoring data required in order to 'mainstream' popular and effective services

8. Summary of Policy Suggestions

Special and additional needs

- Increase support for playgroup/parent-toddler group for children with additional/high level needs
- Explore the possibility of specialist activity sessions for children with additional/high level needs
- Accept parents' reluctance for their child to be labelled
- National Sure Start targets on improving social and emotional development and improving children's ability to learn suggest that work with families that have additional needs, such as parents lacking confidence and having problems with their children's behaviour, is important
- Establish the level of additional caring responsibilities for sick partners or elderly parents in the local area – this question could be included on registration forms or future evaluations
- Solutions to children not being well prepared to start school that are identified by professionals would be best approached indirectly as parents do not see the problem as located in their child but with the schools in the area
- Explore ways of raising awareness of available services through publicity
- Broaden to more general 'high level needs'

Baby Massage

- Incorporate awareness raising of 'normal' child development
- Recognise and develop the broader supportive role of this service and its potential for the prevention of additional needs
- Assess to what extent targets regarding social and emotional development, health and improving children's ability to learn can be attained through this service
- Consider the reach of this service throughout the community

'Messy Time':

- Liase with parents so that the chosen venue can be accepted
- Assess to what extent targets on social and emotional development, children's ability to learn and strengthening families and communities are attained through 'Messy time'.
- Consider the reach of this service

'Middletone Music':

- Consider to what extent the sessions would appear welcoming for 'hard-to-reach' families
- Explore whether children share the view of their parents regarding lack of variety of songs
- Assess the extent to which this service has an impact on targets on improving children's ability to learn

'Crèche Project':

- Continue to maintain good working relationships between Sure Start team and crèche workers
- Acknowledge and develop the crèche workers' role in issues of family support and children's behaviour and development – especially the identification of additional needs
- Assess the role of crèche workers in monitoring targets on improving social and emotional development as well as children's ability to learn

'Learning for Life'

- Important to monitor reach of this service
- Assess the impact of 'Outreach' days
- Useful to monitor continued use of library services

- Consider the impact of this service in relation to targets on improving children's ability to learn
- Consider the role of this service in alerting parents to different learning styles among children with a view to help parents in their support of children's learning

The Healthy Eating Project:

- Consider the possibility of linking with healthy eating projects in local schools
- Assess this service in relation to targets on improving health
- Consider to what extent reported problems with behaviour is associated with eating

Pre-School Learning Alliance:

- Consider the role of pre-school activities in supporting children to prepare for school

Young Parents' group:

- Assess the reach of a targeted approach to recruiting young parents
- Recognise the barriers among this group to using services but encourage their integration
- Build on the potential for enhancing their involvement in Circle Sure Start as well as involving young dads
- Explore accreditation for training or volunteer work

SREC:

- Consider how the information gathered will be kept up-to-date
- Consider how accessible this information is to relevant families e.g. advertise its existence in the Sure Start Welcome Centre, relevant web pages etc.

SCIC:

- Consider facilitating the teaching of English as an additional language
- Consider how accessible information on Circle Sure Start services and activities are to non-English speakers

'Taking Part in Sure Start':

- Continue to explore ways to make information for families easier to 'find'
- Progress with a rolling registration process
- Raise Circle Sure Start presence in primary schools (e.g. stalls, presentations, videos)
- Explore visual representations of information (video/DVD)
- Research parents views on an ongoing basis on a small scale (e.g. informal focus groups)
- Explore further how to reach more fathers/male carers and young parents.
- Ensure information about events is sent early and that working parents are kept informed about services
- Publicise an existing free helpline number for parents
- Accredited, certificated training for volunteers
- Accredited courses in parenting skills training
- Consider the scope for accreditation of training received or tasks carried out within or on behalf of the Parents' Group and the Welcome Centre
- Consider the parental involvement in Circle Sure Start against targets for strengthening families and communities
- Build upon the willingness to take part e.g. parents as 'befrienders' of new parents and consider the inclusion of working parents

- Consider the role of the Parents' Group as the active membership expands and its position with regard to the governance of Circle Sure Start
- Consider the impact membership of the Parents' Group can have both on social inclusion and on future employability of members
- Assess the role of the parents' group in relation to targets for strengthening families and communities

Partnership working:

- Consider and monitor the impact upon relations between parents and Circle Sure Start as lay workers are professionalised
- Consider the impact of increase in members on Circle Sure Start staff and long-term members
- Consider how to manage the expectations of Circle Sure Start among local families, especially in view of the increase in membership
- Continue to nurture inter-agency links in view of both present and future service provision
- Reflect upon the monitoring data required in order to 'mainstream' popular and effective services

SureStart



Community Survey

Please answer all the questions you can

1. Have you had any problems with:

- Sleepless nights*
- Feeding your child*
- Feeling down/lacking confidence*
- Your children's behaviour*
- Reading or writing*
- Finding affordable childcare*
- Losing your temper*
- Breastfeeding*
- Bedwetting*
- Toilet training*
- Meeting other parents*
- Your child making friends*
- Learning to speak*
- Balancing the family budget*

- Finding out about local activities for children
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Finding work

2. We want to know what you think about Circles Sure Start services. If you have not used any services please tick here and go to question 3.

Baby Massage	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Not used</i>
<i>Ease of contact</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Friendliness/approachability of staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Overall how do you rate the service?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Messy Time Group	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Not used</i>
<i>Ease of contact</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Friendliness/approachability of staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Overall how do you rate the service?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sure Start Crèche Facilities	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Not used</i>
<i>Ease of contact</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Friendliness/approachability of staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Overall how do you rate the service?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Parents' Group	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Not used</i>
<i>Ease of contact</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Friendliness/approachability of staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Overall how do you rate the service?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Middletone Music	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Not used</i>
<i>Ease of contact</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Friendliness/approachability of staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<i>Overall how do you rate the service?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please go to question 4

3. **If you have not used any Circle Sure Start services we would like to know why. Below is a list of possible reasons. Please tick those that apply. If there are any other reasons not listed please add them in the 'other' option.**

I've never heard of Sure Start

I was unsure what Sure Start offered

Sure Start services are not available at a time convenient to me

I prefer to rely on my family and my friends to help with my children

I live too far away

I have no need for Sure Start

Other (please specify)

4. **Overall, how satisfied are you with the help that is offered to children and their families in your local area?**

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very satisfied

Taking Part in Circle Sure Start

5. **Circle Sure Start is run by parents for parents. Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities?**

Meeting to plan Circle Sure Start activities

Joining the parent's group

Volunteering to help with Circle Sure Start activities

Befriending a family

Joining the management board

I am already involved

Other (please specify)

6. **Is there any one thing which would help you be involved in Circle Sure Start?**

7. **Have we missed anything that is important to you and your family? Please tell us**

8. **What do you think Sure Start does?**

9. **What do you think that Sure Start is supposed to do?**

10. **What information would you like to receive about Sure Start and the services it offers?**

11. **How would you like to receive it?**

- Newsletter/Leaflet*
- Website*
- Email*
- SMS text message*
- Video/DVD*
- Newspaper*
- Notice on bulletin board*

Personal details

All of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for statistical purposes.

12. **Are you ...**
Male
Female
13. **What is your age?**
Under 18
18 to 21
22 to 25
26 to 30
31 to 39
40 to 49
50 and above
14. **Which of the following census categories best describes your ethnicity?**
White British
Irish
Any other white background
White and black Caribbean
White and black African
White and Asian
Any other mixed background
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Any other Asian background
Caribbean
African
Any other black background
Chinese
Other
15. **Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?**
Looking after home or family
Full-time employed
Part-time employed
Self employed
Maternity leave
Unemployed
Retired
Student
Long term sick
Caring for sick /elderly relative
Other (please specify)
16. **What is the main language spoken in the home?**

17. **What are the ages of your children?**

- 1st child
- 2nd child
- 3rd child
- 4th child
- 5th child
- 6th child

18. **Are you the main carer of the child/ren?**

Yes

No – if no, please state your relationship to the child/ren

--

19. **Which of the following best describes you**

Single

Married

Separated/divorced

Living with partner

Widow /Widower

20. **Is there anyone else living in your household who helps share childcare responsibilities?**

No

Yes

Please state their relation to you, e.g. husband, partner, parent etc.

--

Appendix 2



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SOCIAL SCIENCES & COMPUTING
SOCIAL SCIENCES

HEAD OF SCHOOL:
Professor Yvonne Guerrier BA, MA PhD

University of Surrey Roehampton
Southlands College
80 Roehampton Lane
London SW15 5SL

Tel: 020 8392 3000 (switchboard)
Tel: 020 8392 (direct dial)
Fax: 020 8392 3518

11th February 2004

Dear Parent or Carer,

Circle Sure Start Community Survey

We need your ideas! Sure Start is funded by the Government to support families with young children. Circle Sure Start is working in your local area. We want to know how to make it work better for you and give you a £10 voucher into the bargain!

How to get your £10 voucher

- Fill in the questionnaire and send it back to us in the envelope provided

AND

- If you are not already registered with Circle Sure Start, come to one of the free events (see flyer) where you can register. Being a member means that your family can take part in Circle Sure Start activities.

The information you give us about yourself and your family will be kept confidential. Your name, address and telephone number cannot be matched to your answers. If you have any questions please get in touch.

Thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

Ulla Gustafsson
020 8392 3603

Jo Sibthorpe
020 8392 3806

Appendix 3

If you would like more information in your own language,
please contact us at the address shown in the bottom box.

Albanian	Nese deshironi me shume informacion ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi te na kontaktoni ne adresen e dhene ne kutine me poshte.
Arabic	إذا أردت معلومات إضافية بلغتك الأصلية الرجاء الاتصال بنا في العنوان المدون ضمن الإطار أدناه.
Bengali	যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় লেখা আরও তথ্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, ওনার বক্ সে আমাদের ঠিকানা রয়েছে।
Chinese	如果你需要用中文印成的資料， 請按低端方格內提供的地址與我們聯系。
French	Pour tout renseignement complémentaire dans votre propre langue, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse figurant dans l'encadré du bas.
Gujarati	જો તમને તમારી પોતાની ભાષામાં વધારે માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને નીચે અંતમાં આપેલા ખાનામાં દર્શાવેલા સરનામે અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.
Punjabi	ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।
Serb-Croat	Ako želite više informacija na svom jeziku, obratite nam se na adresu koja se nalazi u kvadratu na dnu strane.
Somali	Hadii aad u baahan tahay faahfaahin intaa kabadan oo ku soobsan afkaaka hooyo ama Af Somali fadlan lana soo xiira cinwaanka hoos ku qoran.
Spanish	Si usted desea mas informacion en su propia lengua, por favor contactenos en la direccion al pie del formato.
Tamil	உங்கள் மொழியில் மேலதிக தகவலைப் பெற விரும்பினால், அடியிலுள்ள பெட்டிக்குள் தரப்பட்டுள்ள விவரத்தில் எம்முடன் தொடர்பு கொள்ளுங்கள்.
Urdu	اگر آپ اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہم سے اس پتے پر رابطہ قائم کریں جو کہ نیچے کے کس میں درج ہے۔

Circle Sure Start
204 Thornton Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 1NF
Telephone 020 8404 1978

Appendix 4



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SOCIAL SCIENCES & COMPUTING
SOCIAL SCIENCES

HEAD OF SCHOOL:
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Southlands College
80 Roehampton Lane
London SW15 5SL

Tel: 020 8392 3000 (switchboard)
Tel: 020 8392 (direct dial)
Fax: 020 8392 3518

Dear Parent/Carer

We recently sent you a questionnaire and an invitation to register with Circle Sure Start. So far we have not heard from you. We were offering a £10 BOOTS voucher in return for your help. The offer still stands. To get your £10 BOOTS voucher and to take advantage of the services and activities on offer for local families with young children you simply need to register.

The new Circle Sure Start Welcome Centre will open on 23 March at 404 Green Wrythe Lane. You can register there on 23, 24, 25 and 26 March between 10am – 2pm. All families registered with Circle Sure Start will be able to attend the next free event to **Drusilla’s Zoo** on Tuesday 6th April (subject to availability). We will also be making home visits to register families with young children in the Circle Sure Start area.

Circle Sure Start is there for you and your family. Once you have registered it is up to you how much or how little you get involved.

If you do not wish to register please return the slip below.

Yours faithfully

Ulla Gustafsson

Jo Sibthorpe

.....

I do not wish to register with Circle Sure Start

Name:.....

Address:.....

Circle Surestart Evaluation

Training day 5 February 2004

9.45	Coffee
10.00	Welcome and Introduction
10.05	What is evaluation and why is it important for Sure Start?
	Types of evaluation
	Evaluation methods
10.30	Break
10.40	Planning and doing evaluation
	Involving parents
	Risk Assessment
11.00	Break
11.10	Workshop – Evaluating Sure Start Services
11.55	Report back
12.00	Close

Appendix 6

Main languages spoken at home in non-English speaking households⁹

Balouchi

Bengali

Creole

Croatian

Favsi (2)

Filipino

Gujerati

Plus Fre

Portugese (3)

Russian

Spanish

⁹ Unless otherwise indicated the number of households using this language is one

Appendix 7

Below is a list of explanations given for choosing the option 'other' in response to the following question:

'If you have not used any Circle Sure Start services we would like to know why. Below is a list of possible reasons. Please tick those that apply. If there are any other reasons not listed please add them in the 'other' option.'

- I am not sure if I was registered
- Not yet registered
- Work
- Before I knew about it I had got involved in a lot of things already so find it hard to fit it in as well
- Some activities collide with parent and toddler groups which I attend
- Still got to get my card
- Felt that Sure Start is for deprived families and as a homeowner with my husband employed and myself in part time employment do not feel I fit into this category
- It was sometimes difficult to attend wasn't well for a while and 4 year old started nursery and the walking to and fro wore me out
- My first child is nearly 4 and my second is a baby so too young at the moment
- Finding time, I work full time, often long days
- Child autistic, health problems with husband
- Didn't know about all services, only ones health visitor told me about
- I suffer with depression and find it hard to mix with other people
- I have not had the chance to register as I have only recently moved into the area, but will be registering very soon.
- Was not aware until recently that I could involve my older children
- I get very scared about meeting new people and don't like going to places on my own
- My son is registered disabled and I have many appointments with him
- Not aware of all facilities and location

- I just forget the days and times
- Unaware of mother and toddler days and times. My son too old for baby massage, locations do not appeal to me – ‘Durand Close’
- I have not gotten round to attending any
- It’s finding time to get involved with the services
- It starts too early for me at 10.00. With a baby at 11 weeks old have to plan around that. Hopefully will use in the summer
- Haven’t needed them as have a hectic schedule already. Went to Xmas party and all the kids thoroughly enjoyed it, very special
- Lack of time
- I would have difficulty going to ‘messy time’ as I have a baby of 6 months and a child of 18 months. I don’t believe there is enough ‘help’ at hand for mothers with more than one child.
- Enjoy Sure Start but my friend cannot come to some groups and lives in the same road as me, but doesn’t come into area
- Child attends nursery every morning
- Haven’t felt up to it lately
- Not long joined – and baby has been ill
- Sometimes cannot use it as have childminding friends whose mum have not registered their child
- Doesn’t seem to cater for working parents at all
- I have only just joined
- I work in afternoon and my daughter is at nursery
- I don’t have a lot of time
- Not got around to using the services

Appendix 8

Taking part in Circle Sure Start – detailed answers for respondents who ticked ‘other’ in response to the following question:

‘Circle Sure Start is run by parents for parents. Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities?’

- Helping with things to be posted or leaflets to be delivered
- No none
- Not at the moment
- No thank you
- If suitable times – once offered to help teach new mums how to prepare fresh puree for weaning – as many assume too difficult (to health visitor). Willing to help. Trained chef and advance food hygiene.
- I work three days a week now, and this is something I really would not have time for
- N/A
- I am unable to help as I am home-schooling my daughter
- I can’t speak English properly
- Not available due to family commitment
- I’d like to but I don’t have the time
- No time
- I have just applied for pre school leader job for Sure Start, I am NVQ3
- I work, sorry
- As I said before I work full time and am a single parent
- Finding time, I work full time, often long days
- Would like to but going back to work and don’t think I will be able to manage volunteering. Sorry!!