

Brighton & Hove Central Sure Start

SureStart

Evaluation Activity 2003-2004

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Introduction

This report provides a short summary of the evaluation activity undertaken within the Brighton and Hove Sure Start Programme during 2003-2004. Because of the fluid nature of evaluation some projects were initiated earlier than this time period and are now in the process of having recommendations implemented. The status of each project whether “active”, “planned”, “ongoing” etc. is indicated at the beginning of each summary.

Though each individual project summary provides a unique insight into the objectives and achievement of each service it is interesting to draw out some common themes that have emerged during the completion of this analysis. The difficulty presented in assessing the effect of preventative intervention has somewhat been resolved through the adoption of a “before” and “after” methodology which has been used to effect on several occasions in the projects presented here.

The integration of evaluation within service delivery has also become routine with Playlink, the Family Support Work team and the volunteering programme all incorporating evaluation within existing practice and thereby facilitating the process of continuous quality improvement.

Within the Brighton and Hove Programme evaluation has always been closely aligned with performance management and though not directly referenced in this review, existing monitoring and performance systems have aided the development of a quality and learning driven culture within the Programme.

The importance of evidence and aligning the delivery of our services with the needs of our local population is also becoming a dominant agenda within our wider community as expressed by Children’s Commissioner and Position Statements published by the Children’s Trust. Given the increasing importance of the Children’s Trust infrastructure in mainstreaming Sure Start’s principles, the evidence of what works in local service delivery presented here coupled with an extensive body of information detailing the needs of our local community puts the Programme in a strong position with which to shape local provision.

Evaluation Projects

Health Visiting profile of targeted children and Uptake of Sure Start Services – Status – Re-evaluation

The original findings from this project have had a significant effect in re-shaping the types of services provided by the Programme, through the provision of a strong evidence base of need around mental health and social isolation within our local community. The findings of this work led to the following recommendations:

- The value of data resulting from the Health Visiting assessment was recognised with the recommendation that this information source continued to be used as an indicator of community need. In parallel to this work it was recognised that the uptake of the wider suite of services by children on the targeted caseload should continue to be monitored, in order to assess the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the needs of this community.
- Services were to be reconfigured and additional services commissioned to meet the needs of those with mental health problems including: funding of a support a group for women with Post-natal Depression and has also the commissioning of counselling and couple counselling services from local providers.
- A multi-disciplinary group addressing issues around Emotional Well-being was also established.

The primary objective in revisiting this project was to assess whether the issues highlighted in the findings of the original evaluation had been successfully addressed. Data collection systems within the hospital trust have become more sophisticated with additional fields being added to the pre-existing health database enabling the development of a profile of need for each child placed on the targeted caseload. As a consequence of these changes the methodology used in the re-evaluation was slightly different to that used in the initial assessment.

The creation of the new profiling system is its early stages. However, preliminary findings indicate that the needs of our local community, as defined by reason for targeting continue to be:

- Isolation
- Parental mental health
- Parental emotional health
- Medical conditions.

It is essential that this valuable source of information about the problems of our most acutely in need families continues to be reviewed on a regular (annual) basis in order to ensure that the provision of services reflects the issues of greatest concern to our local population. This objective also reflects the principles detailed in the Brighton and Hove Children's Trust Position Statement which states (6th August 2004) "services must be delivered according to needs". The adoption of these principles and the effective implementation of these objectives into working practice as demonstrated here, provides evidence of how this approach to service planning can work in practice.

The second objective of the review was to assess the number of targeted children who had accessed services from the wider Sure Start Programme. Where as previously the notes of all children on the targeted caseload had been screened individually, on review it was decided to focus on those children who did not appear to have been in contact with the Programme's wider suite of services: that is services in addition to those provided by the Health Visitors or Children's Nurse. Findings from the re-evaluation indicated that at 25th May a total of 750 children aged under 4 years were recorded on the Health Visiting caseload. Of these 154 were recorded as targeted (20%). This initial analysis, based on a comparison of two datasets (one derived from the health visiting system and the other the Sure Start Monitoring Database) indicated that 62.34% of targeted children were in contact with the wider Sure Start team. This compares to 45% in the original audit completed in April 2003.

Table 1: Targeted Children – Uptake of Sure Start Services, in addition to those provided by the health visiting team – May 2004

	n	%
No - not in contact with Sure Start	58	37.66
Yes - in contact with Sure Start	96	62.34
Total	154	100

Table 2: Services Used by Children on the Targeted Caseload

	n
Playlink (includes groups)	52
Speech and Language Service	50
Early Childhood Project	26
Family Support Workers	22
Puffin Pre-school	16
BUCFP	11
SEAL	11
Dolphin House	10
Post-natal Group	9
BCDP	8
Community Development	7
Amigos Pre-school	7
Portage	6
Toybox creche	4
Circus Pre-school	2

Children who had not used Sure Start tended to be younger than those who had used our services. Twelve of the 16 children aged under one who had not used Sure Start's services were in fact less than 3 months old.

In order to validate these findings this initial computer based analysis was supplemented with each case where a child had not used Sure Start's services being subject to individual scrutiny by the Health Visiting team. A list of the names of those children who did not appear to be using Sure Start was shown to each Health Visitor to assess the reason for non-uptake.

The findings from this work indicated that the most common reason for a child not appearing to have had contact with Sure Start was that their parent was in fact a user of the Family Support Work Service (n=20). The reason for this anomaly is that activity relating to the Family Support service is recorded against the parent rather than the child, this monitoring problem has since been resolved. An equal proportion of families had declined the services offered to them (n=9), as were in receipt of support from other services, such as social services (n=9). Seven children had been targeted due to medical problems particularly pre-maturity, in these cases most families would only need health visiting support. Six children were no longer targeted and three children had moved. One targeted child was resident abroad for a considerable period. The three remaining children had been somewhat neglected and it is these that probably of greatest concern.

Table 3: Review by Health Visiting Team of Non-users of Sure Start Services

Coding	Total
Using SS	20
Declined	9
Other social support services	9
Medical Reason for targeting	7
No longer targeted	6
Moved	3
Missing	1
Neglected	1
Out of country	1
Under review	1
Grand Total	58

The third recommendation following the original evaluation was the establishment of a multi-disciplinary group to work to improve service provision for those with issues around Emotional Well-being (EWB). This group has been successful in reconfiguring and securing funding for the pre-existing Post-natal Depression Group. As a consequence of this additional support the group the structure of the group has been redesigned and the number of referrals to this service has increased. Two new additional services have also been commissioned: one to provide counselling support and a second to provide couple counselling. A new programme of training for parents entitled “From Partners to Parents” is also planned. Similarly, potential exists for the provision of group support in the form of “Assertiveness and Confidence Building” training.

The EWB group have also significantly improved the recording of post-natal depression and establishing systems for effective measurement of outcomes through the development of a new monitoring sheet and associated database. This has enabled improved tracking of the support provided to those women identified as experiencing PND. Well-being Scores between 26th September 2003 - 14th July 2004 indicate that 13.79% of women were identified as depressed and effectively supported during this period.

The identification of potential risk factors for PND ante-natally has also been addressed through the inclusion of a three point questionnaire within the Midwifery Ante-natal records that are used across Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust, which all women are asked to complete on booking. This process is in line with the management guidance from the Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (SIGN 2003) and the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (2004). A booklet addressing issues around post-natal depression is also in the final stages of being designed and will be available Autumn 2004.

Recommendations

The continued need to address issues around emotional well-being has been validated through the findings derived from the recent profiling completed by the Community Health Trust. As a programme we need to make a commitment to

ensure that all families who have concerns around their emotional needs are effectively identified and supported. Mental health issues cover a wide spectrum of issues from families who are isolated as a consequence of their recent arrival in the area to individuals experiencing acute mental distress. Consequently the gamut of support needed to meet these diverse needs extends from the provision of groups which can act as a locus for community engagement to support and referral for those who are acutely ill.

It appears that the initiatives established as a consequence of the original evaluation have been successful with:

- Effective systems of identifying need (health visiting profiling, accurate post-natal depression rates);
- A designated group and specialist support services (PND group, Relate and Rock Clinic Services and associated group initiatives);
- A multi-disciplinary group to direct and lead on this work (Emotional Well-being Group).

In order to maintain the momentum of this work it is essential that these issues become part of our core practice and that a process of continuing quality improvement, with regular review enables these issues to be effectively addressed. Forthcoming work around the subject of mental health will focus on attachment issues, with training being provided to all staff which will enable workers to identify issues and help provide support to families experiencing problems with this issue.

Many of our local community experience problems associated with mental health and emotional well-being. Problems relating to mental health can have significant repercussions across a wide spectrum of life experiences for the family. All aspects of the way that we deliver services to our local community need to support positive mental health and community participation.

Evaluation of the Family Support Worker Service Status -update

This project was undertaken in order to assess the preventative effect of the work of the Family Support Work service operating within the Central Brighton and Hove Sure Start Programme. The project has sought to establish reliable information about the number and type of referrals received by the service, and in particular to capture the complexity of the issues with which clients present. The second objective of this work was to develop a system that effectively recorded clients' expectations of the service on initial contact and satisfaction on closure.

Findings of the initial evaluation provided robust evidence indicating that the Family Support Team were meeting their team objectives and formed an effective part of the multi-disciplinary team that makes up the Central Programme. Close alignment between "front-line" statutory services such as Health Visiting and Midwifery had enabled the team to access referrals effectively for those families most in need of support. Data collection indicated that the service was achieving its initial aims of engaging service users and delivering an individualised high intensity service to families in need. As well as assessing whether the Family Support Work team were working effectively in respect to accessing clients this project also sought to develop clear outcome measures for the team.

This objective led to the development of a system of goal setting. This simple system whereby workers and clients in the initial stages of their contact agree specific goals towards which they will frame future work has successfully enabled this aspect of the service to be measured. As with the reasons for referral to the service the majority of goals are made in relation to housing, accessing services and parenting issues. Of the eighty-one goals clients agreed to pursue sixty-seven (83%) were achieved.

In summary the findings of this evaluation indicate that the Service was fully integrated into the Sure Start multi-disciplinary team and receiving referrals from families within its target client group. Referrals are made to the service for appropriate reasons and clients are effective in achieving their desired outcomes. Finally, 82% of clients felt that things would have been a lot worse than they are now had they not been in contact with the Family Support Service. Thereby validating its role as an effective preventative service.

Implementation of Recommendations

As originally recommended the findings of this work have been disseminated locally through a presentation to the Partnership Board and to other Sure Starts across the Region via a National Evaluation of Sure Start meeting.

Further proposals were made in respect to the integration of evaluation into existing practice. The system of goal setting has been further refined and developed into a “client worker contract”. All members of the Family Support Work team have attended training to aid the facilitation and agreement of goals with clients. The use of client orientated goal setting introduced as a consequence of the evaluation has been a significant change to the way that the team work. This process of integrating measurement within existing practice has also resulted in the modification of the database used during the evaluation. Computer systems are being adapted to record client details and to aid management of service through effective recording of waiting times.

The evaluation methodology used within this project has since proved its worth with the use of the “before” and “after” benchmark approach also being employed within the Early Years Evaluation – see *later*.

Evaluation of the Sure Start New Model of Post-natal Care Status – update

The Model is based on the IMPaCT trial (Implementing Midwifery-led Postnatal Care Trial) and comprises two interconnected elements:

- The use of a 10 point guideline checklist within General Practice at the 6 week post-natal check;
- Use of checklist within Midwifery and Health Visiting Practice
- A designated Post-natal Clinic made up of 3 clinic slots held once a week.

Implementation of Recommendations

In order to implement the recommendations of this work it has been necessary to liaise extensively with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Children’s Commissioner in order to engage these organisations in this process of service

review. Following the recommendations of this work approval was successfully sought from the Professional Education Committee (PEC) of the PCT. Subsequent to this the project team have been successful in having the guidelines posted on the PCT's Intranet and thereby aiding access by General Practice. A pilot of the use of the checklist is planned to take place in September with the findings of this work being fed back to the PEC in order to validate the use of this methodology and thereby extend its use across the wider Brighton and Hove community.

Lengthy negotiations have also been undertaken attempting to secure long term funding for the Post-natal Clinic component of this service. One proposal currently under discussion is the proposed ring-fencing of some activity within the Gynaecology Outpatient service with the intention that this activity and associated funding be used to support the post-natal clinic. Financial contributions have also successfully been accessed from the other Sure Start Programmes local to the Brighton and Hove area (Hollingdean and Newhaven). A multi-disciplinary meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of October 2004.

The checklist is also in the process of being integrated into the latest version of the post-natal notes used within Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust. Similarly, a version of the checklist is also being developed for use by women attending for their post-natal check, the intention being that women will assess their health against the checklist prior to seeing their GP, a process which will both speed-up the time taken to complete the check and ensure a common dialogue between both parties. The findings of this work are due to be published in the "Midwifery Digest" in September 2004.

Founded on a robust evidence base and validated through audits of local need this project has successfully developed a model of effective practice which is already working across the wider Brighton and Hove community, and has thereby laid the foundations for future integration within mainstream service delivery.

Central Sure Start Playlink Service Evaluation – Status - active

As detailed in last years Evaluation Report the Playlink team had piloted several different questionnaire based evaluations with their clients. At present this service is using a "before" and "after" based on work undertaken by child development consultant and published author, Jennie Lindon. However, this version of the questionnaire has proved less successful, with to date only four families having fully completed both the before and after sections of the questionnaire.

The length of the questionnaire and the inclusion of questions that do not directly relate to Playlink's practice have been an obstacle to completion, with both workers and families not sufficiently motivated to complete. More "part twos" are due to be completed by the end of September which will bring the total to approximately 20 completed questionnaires. On the basis of these ongoing difficulties it has been decided to use a modified more simple approach to evaluation which will hopefully be in place by the end of September 2004.

In addition to this quite formal approach to evaluation the Playlink service have also periodically held "Play and Say Sessions" which involves the use of informal

methodologies to access users perception of the Playlink Group service. In this way it has been possible for Playlink to adopt a rolling programme of consultation with their service users which has helped shaped the group component of the Playlink service.

The Playlink manager, within her role as liaison worker with the pre-school has made an active contribution to the design of the Early Years Evaluation which will be used to assess preparation for school readiness within the Sure Start Pre-Schools – see below.

Community Consultations

An acknowledged weakness within the Brighton and Hove Sure Start programme has been the lack of user participation/consultation evaluation. Guidance at the time of the Programme's inception in 1999 did not include as systematic process of baseline community evaluation. In order to address this deficit it was decided to embark on a series of consultation initiatives during 2003-2004. Over the past twelve months three separate initiatives have helped to address this issue with somewhat mixed results. These initiatives were:

- the recruitment of a Parent Participation worker;
- secondly through the joint funding with our Partners in the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme of consultation within the Tarner Area within the Sure Start boundary. This funding paid for the training of volunteers in Participatory Appraisal techniques which would then be used to consult with local residents around a variety of topics including early years services;
- a Community Consultation Questionnaire.

It was hoped that through the use of different evaluation and consultation techniques presented that this would act as a catalyst for increased service user participation and improved community engagement with the programme.

Community Consultation: Focused Outreach and Engagement Work and Participatory Appraisal Status – Finished

As detailed earlier the Sure Start Programme has been a partner in funding work undertaken by the independent research organisation Development Focus in training parents and local residents from the Tarner area in conducting Participatory Appraisal research within their local community. This work was undertaken to assess the needs of the local community in respect to developing the work of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

This work is of value to the Programme in two ways: the researchers were specifically asked to consult with the local community in respect of their experience of using early years services, and secondly the wider findings of this work are of particular value given the Programme's proposed move to a new Children's Centre located within the Tarner area.

Several key themes emerged from this research in particular the linkage between issues affecting community safety, children and services for young people. These generic issues could potentially affect our experience of operating from the new

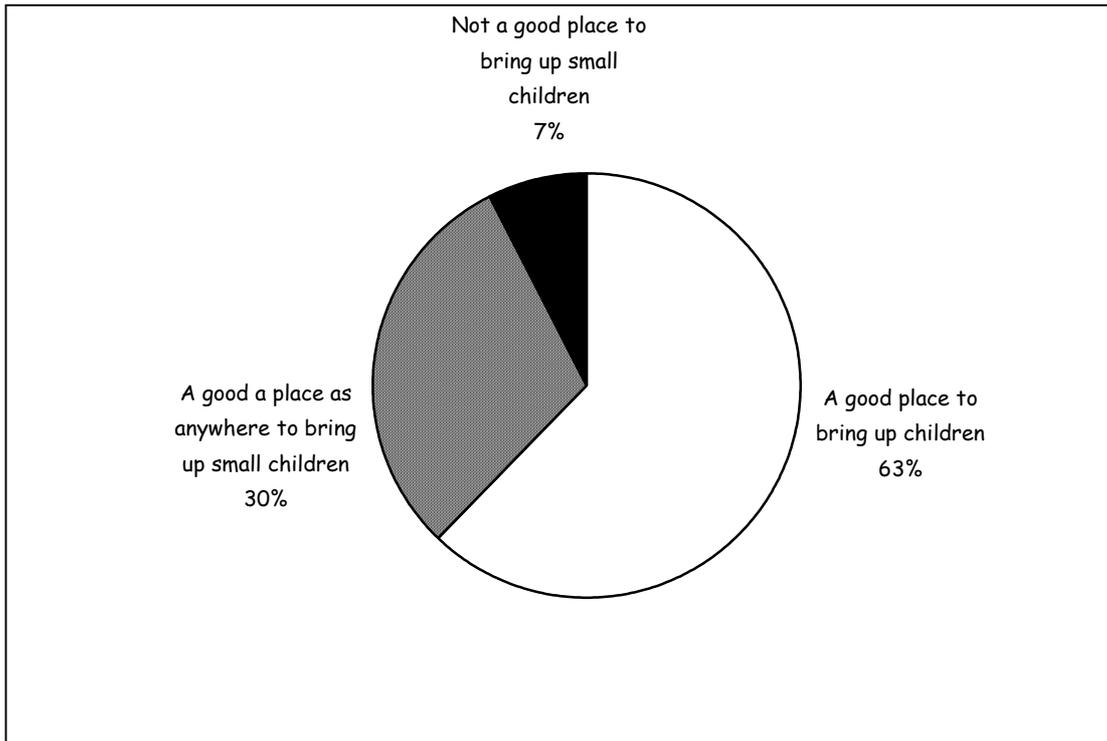
Morley Street Centre, it is therefore essential that we are aware of these issues and seek ways of pre-empting problems. Common themes that emerged from this work included housing, racism, health, education and the environment. Anti-social behaviour was identified as a key concern with issues around substance misuse, drug dealing, “mouthy drinkers”, racism and racial abuse, homophobic behaviour, attacks, fighting, bullying, vandalism, theft/robbery and violence cited as problematic. In addition to identifying problems within the local community this work also sought to find ways of addressing and resolving these problems. In respect of anti-social behaviour these included: appropriate housing, employment, training, improved community policing, community events, cracking down on drug dealers, improved information for young people about drugs, improved street lighting and places for young people to meet. Environmental issues were also highlighted a being of concern with improved street cleaning, traffic calming , safer roads for children, green spaces for children to play and more recycling.

In particular respect of issues relating to children and young people the findings of this research highlighted the need to adopt a co-ordinated approach to service delivery. Parents also voiced the need for more activities for toddlers and after school groups. The issues of better educational standards within local schools was also raised as a concern. As detailed above parents expressed the need for more green spaces for their children to play as well as organised holiday activities. Interestingly, there were fewer demands for activities for children aged under five compared with older children. The link between anti-social behaviour and a lack of provision for older children was recognised. In order for Morley Street to operate as a locus of community cohesion it will be necessary to recognise the needs of older children living in the area local to Morley Street.

Of particular concern to the Programme were comments made in respect to the Puffin pre-school. Comments indicating that the pre-school was not managed locally and not used by local children thereby causing friction within the local community. Concerns were also expressed in respect to the use of the Millwood centre (where Puffin is located) and it’s under use as a resource. Irrespective of the accuracy of these views, this was the perception amongst those consulted. Subsequent to these findings a new manager has since been appointed to the centre. Though these issues are in many ways particular to the concerns of one community about a particular resource, it is possible to learn from this experience in order to prevent a repetition of these problems when Sure Start relocates to the new Children’s Centre. Potential exists to address some of the issues highlighted in respect to anti-social behaviour by extending the role of the Children’s Centre to act as a hub for the delivery of services to older children. The detailed findings and recommendations of this work offer a structure for the delivery of such services.

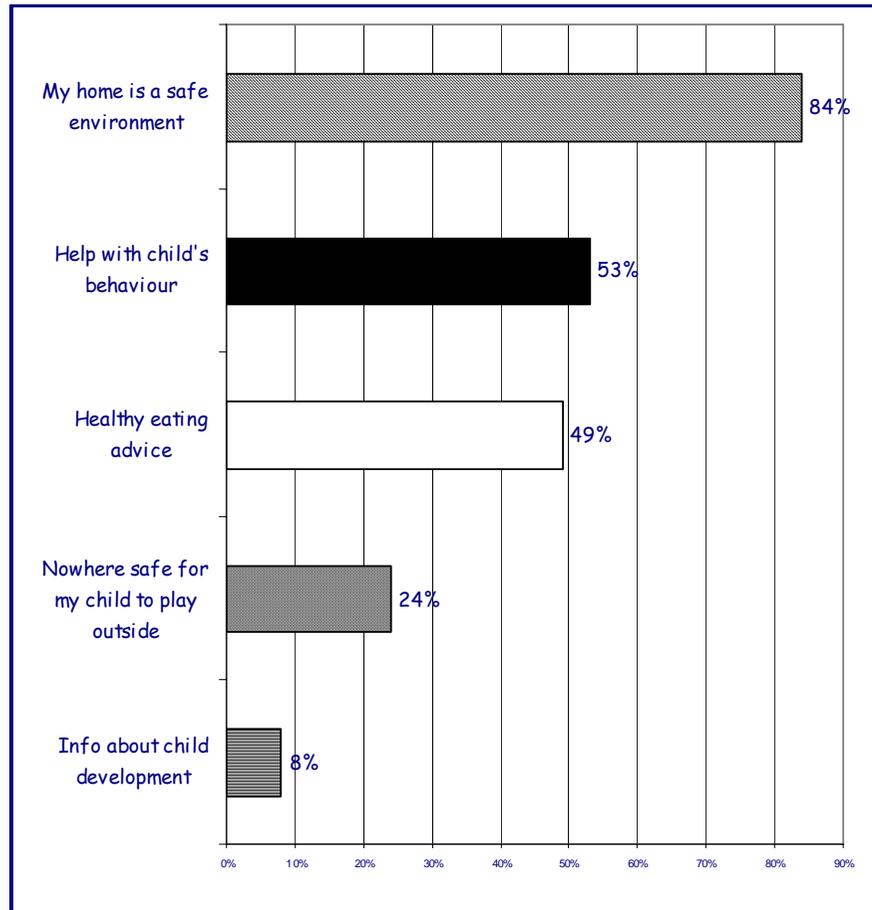
Community Consultation Questionnaire – status finished

In November 2003 Brighton and Hove Central Sure Start set about the largest consultation that it has undertaken to date. All households (n=747) with children aged under 5 years living within our local community were sent a questionnaire asking about their experiences of living and bringing up children in Brighton and Hove. In total 211 (response rate 28%) returned their questionnaires. A summary of responses to the questions we posed is presented here.



Healthy Living

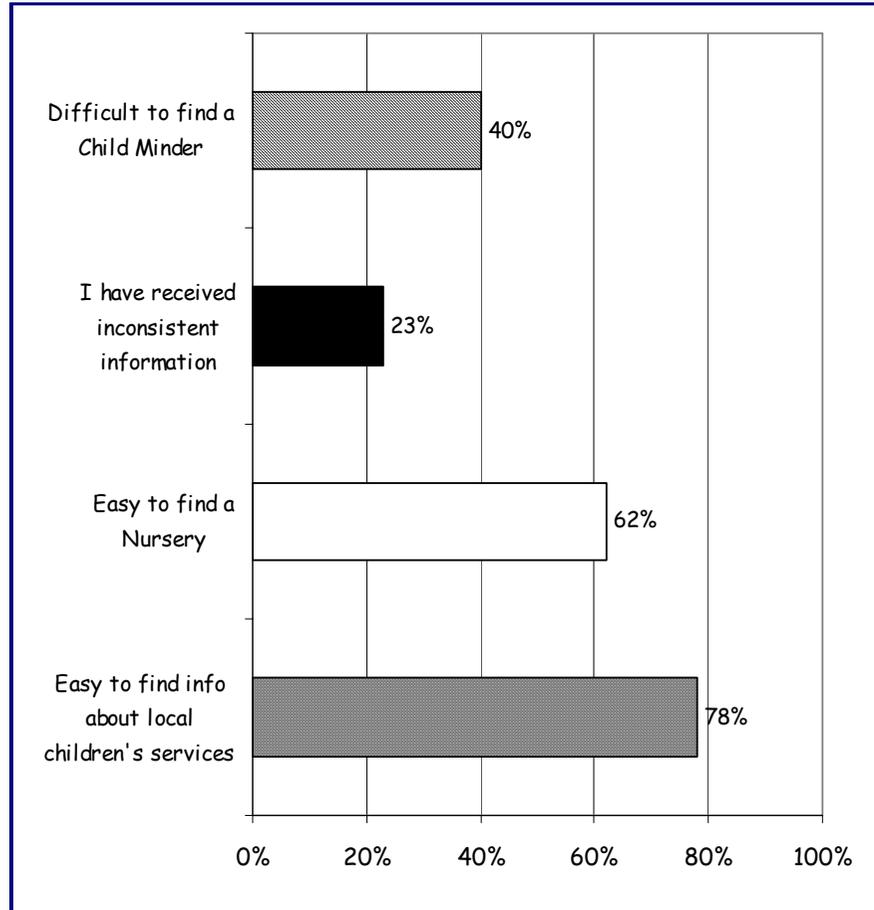
Parents/carers who responded positively to statements:



Proposed Service Activity at the New Centre	(n)	%
First aid courses about babies and children	174	82
Alternative therapies such as homeopathy	130	62
Baby clinics run by Health Visitors	112	53
Post-natal clinics run by Midwives	94	44
Emotional support to help you cope with post-natal depression	74	35
Ante-natal clinics run by Midwives	72	34
Breastfeeding support	69	33
Advice about giving up smoking	38	18

Children's services

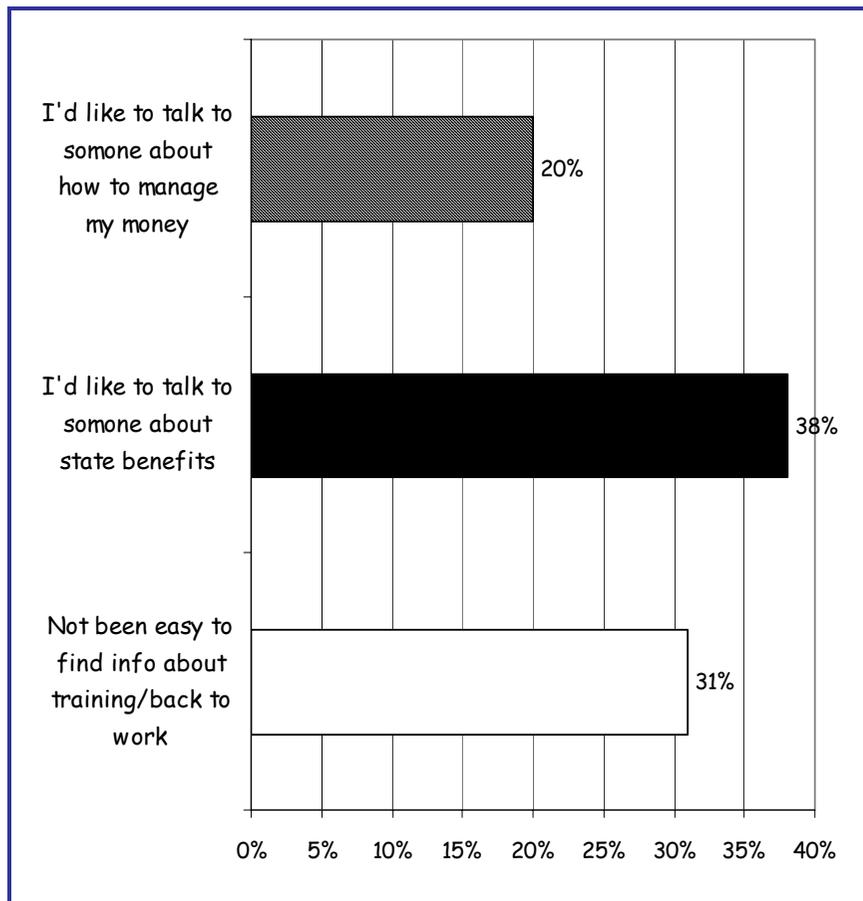
Parents/carers who responded positively to statements:



Proposed Service Activity at the New Centre	(n)	%
A soft play area for children	176	87
Children's music and dance groups	173	85
An outside play area	161	79
A "swap shop" for children's toys & clothes	152	75
Group play sessions for babies and children aged under 4 & their carers	149	73
A group for older children - aged 18 mths -5yrs	142	70
Advice and information and about child minders & nurseries	137	67
Help in developing your child's speech & language	107	53

Training, back to work, benefits and housing

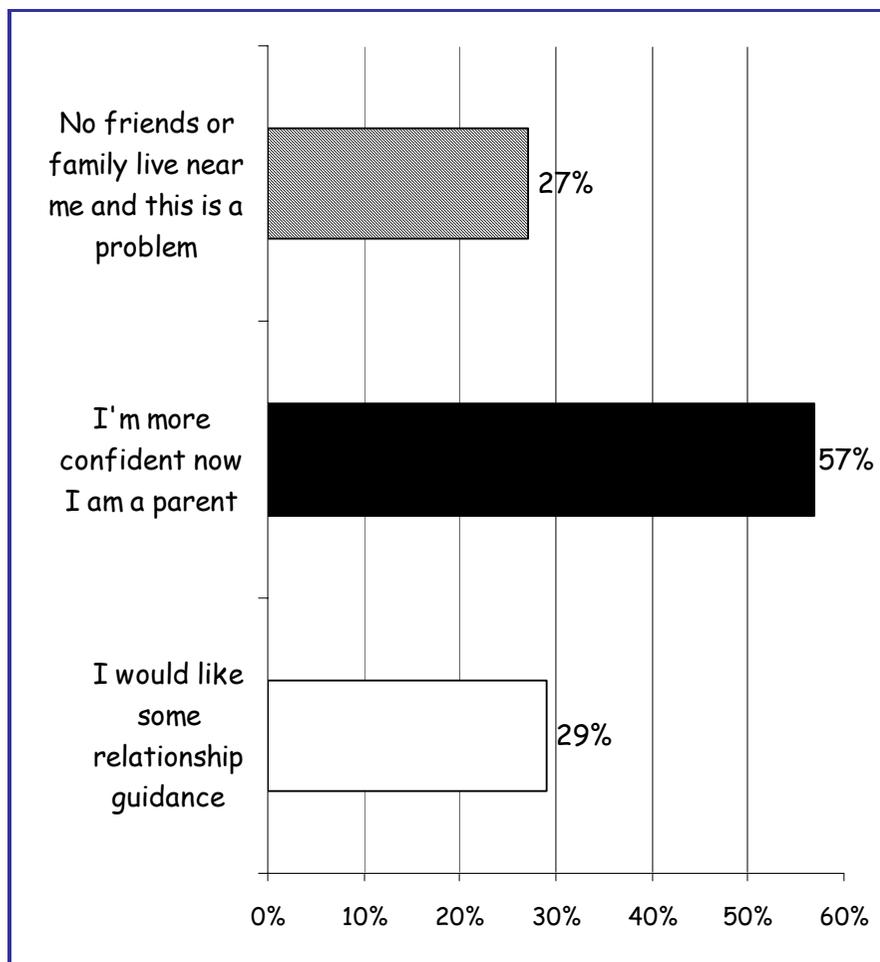
Parents/carers who responded positively to statements:



Proposed Service Activity at the New Centre	(n)	%
Information about welfare and state benefits	91	45
IT/Computer courses for adults	90	44
Advice on further education, training and getting back to work	79	39
Becoming a volunteer working within the programme	59	29
Advice about housing	57	28
Access to the Internet	56	28
Money management & advice	43	21
English and maths classes for adults	36	18

Services for Parents

Parents/carers who responded positively to statements:



Proposed Service Activity at the New Centre	(n)	%
Advice on preparing your child for school	107	53
Groups specifically for parents of young babies	76	37
Support & advice about parenting	71	35
Out reach services	62	31
Groups for men	51	25
One-to-one problem solving	51	25
Groups for lone parents	46	23
Relationship guidance	39	19
Service/ groups for young parents	37	18
A quiet room	33	16
Visits from a volunteer parent	24	12
A mediation service	23	11
Support for domestic violence & substance misuse	18	8

: Recreation and personal development

Proposed Service Activity at the New Centre	(n)	%
Keep fit/yoga/dance classes	160	79
A community cafe	139	68
Craft & art activities	132	65
Relaxation & stress management	107	53
Advice on how to cook on a budget	75	37
An allotment/garden project	74	36
Training in self confidence & assertiveness	58	29

In addition to providing extensive quantitative data in respect of perceived need and service requirements, this work also elicited extensive qualitative data in respect of respondents experiences of living in the centre of Brighton and Hove. Comments were made in respect to specific changes to existing services including when groups are held, the need for additional child care/nursery places, more playgroup type services and the need for more parental support.

Recommendations

These findings in themselves have provided a positive endorsement of the model of service delivery which will be used when the Programme moves to Morley Street, with a wide variety of services both universal and specialist being delivered under one roof. The findings of this work will form an important component within the needs assessment which will be used to shape the re-commissioning of services which will take place subsequent to our move to the Children's Centre. A supplementary question within the questionnaire asked respondents if they wished to participate in any further consultation subsequent to the questionnaire. In total ninety respondents indicated that they would like to participate in further consultation. Further consultation has subsequently taken place in the form of focus group and outreach work as detailed below – see *Consultation with Parents & Carers about the Fabric of the new Morley Street Children's Centre*

Community Consultation: Consultation with Parents & Carers about the Fabric of the new Morley Street Children's Centre – status implementing recommendations

In order to build on the positive endorsement of the proposed Children's Centre evidenced in the questionnaire two consultation focus groups were held during February 2004. This work formed one of the principal tasks undertaken by the Parent Participation Worker during the early months of her appointment. A total of 14 adults and 10 children attended these events. The first focus group was held during the week and the second on a Saturday. Given that on both occasions a crèche was provided and the events had been widely publicised attendance levels were disappointing especially given that initially ninety respondents had indicated that they wished to participate in future consultation there therefore appears to be a low level of engagement with consultation amongst our local community – see *evaluation of the community development service below*.

In order to supplement the findings of this work further the Programme's Evaluation Officer and Parent Participation Worker carried out a series of outreach visits to existing Sure Start services in order to access parents views about the new Children's Centre and in particular the internal fabric and design of the new building. The use of direct outreach contact proved successful and the findings gleaned in this way supplemented those derived from the focus groups to produce a clear identity for the new Centre.

Several key themes emerged from the consultation process in particular the value placed on community art and the need to recognise ecological issues within the Centre. Potential exists to build upon this enthusiasm in the form of a Community Arts Group and by extension a Community Ecology/Gardening Group. Suggestions from parents about how community art might be incorporated into the Centre included:

- Community art on the walls of the café;
- Making mobiles to hang in the crèche, children's soft play and reading area and quiet room;
- Have a mural comprising the words "welcome" and "play" written in different languages on the wall of the crèche;
- A changing exhibition of pictures in the reception area;
- A height chart in the reception area;
- Footsteps on the floor of the reception area;
- Silhouettes of children and adults on the wall of the reception area;
- Framed children's drawings on the walls of the clinic/consulting rooms;
- Illustrations of stars, moon and birds in the children's space/soft play/reading area.

Potential also exists for the community art project to make some of the soft furnishings for the centre including the cushions mentioned by parents for the reception area and curtains for the clinic/consulting rooms. The community art project might also like to think of ways of painting designs onto the front of the reception desk and the community café servery. In a similar vein the art project might like to think about ways of brightening up the outdoor play space – perhaps by painting some plant pots.

Many parents wanted to see plants in the new centre, again this might be an area that the Community Arts Project or Gardening/Ecology Project might want to consider developing. Similarly, parents interested in ecology and re-cycling might want to consider ways in which second hand furniture might be used within the centre, particularly in the café area, were participants were keen to see wooden tables and chairs, which could be sourced from second hand shops and renovated.

As a consequence of these findings the Programme's Community Development Worker has been successful in securing funding for the commissioning of a series of Community Art Taster days with the objective of supporting parents in designing and creating art projects which can be used within the new Centre. A preliminary finding from the holding of the Art Taster Sessions has however indicated low response and uptake to this initiative with only 4 parents attending the first session- despite it being widely promoted.

Census 2001 - Status - finished

Data gleaned through the Census provides the most accurate and comprehensive profile of our local population available. This project has involved information specifically for the Sure Start area being compiled through the amalgamation of Output Area data. However, most datasets are only available for all households

living within our community and not specifically households with children aged under 4 years.

Key findings from the Census have revealed that though the number of children in the Sure Start area as compared with the rest of Brighton and Hove is proportionately fewer, the number of lone parent household containing children aged under 16 is significantly higher, with this household structure making up 40% of the total. Families living in the Sure Start area are twice as likely to rent their home when compared with the rest of Brighton and Hove. Families living in the Sure Start area are less likely to have central heating or have sole use of a bath or shower. The Sure Start area is also one of the most ethnically diverse areas of the City. This finding is further validated through our own Registration Database Records and also when compared with data gleaned through school records both of which validate this finding. Analysis of activity recorded with the Registration Database has also highlighted the high levels of transiency amongst our population with 20% of households who used our services during 2003 having moved out of the area during that period.

Findings derived from the Census in addition to those accessed from other sources will provide a strong evidence base upon which to found future commissioning decisions within the Sure Start area.

Early Years Evaluation - Status – active

The Brighton and Hove programme provides a comprehensive range of early years services and in particular the provision of 30 places within 4 pre-school settings. The core Sure Start team also includes a speech and language therapist and a play service. In addition to the provision of designated pre-school places a wide range of additional services are also provided by our commissioned services. These include a Portage service, a service for children attending pre-school who are speakers of a language other than English and a play service. The objective of all these services is to aid child development and thereby aid school readiness, by providing appropriate services as early as possible in order to have a strong preventative effect. The Early Years evaluation seeks to measure the effect of these interventions on child development, and establish a model of Evaluation that has the potential to be “mainstreamed” to the wider Brighton and Hove Community.

In line with the objective of improving social and emotional development and the PSA target: “to increase the proportion of children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development” – based on the Foundation Stage, it was decided to develop an assessment which would capture the preliminary skills needed in order to achieve success on school entry. The principal objective of this work is to ensure that all children attending a Sure Start pre-school are “school ready” (or comparable depending on Special Educational Needs). The objective of this work is not directly to assess change, though this is an indirect effect of the evaluation, but to assess attainment against a benchmark of the skills needed for success on school entry. The assessment tool used in the evaluation does not therefore include any factors to

accommodate developmental change between the initial and subsequent assessment.

After extensive consultation with early years practitioners from within our own Programme and drawing on the expertise of the Early Years Consultants working within the Children Families and Schools Directorate a non-participant observation style assessment was developed which will be used to assess children on initial entry to the pre-school and then again at the end of the school year. The questionnaire is an amalgam of the core skills derived from the “Birth to Three Matters”: a strong child, a skilful communicator, a competent learner and a healthy child with the Foundation Profile’s thematic assessment which reviews: dispositions and attitudes, social development, emotional development, language for communication and thinking, linking sounds and letters, reading and writing. The development of the questionnaire was an exhaustive process necessitating extensive discussion and re-drafting in order to achieve the final version.

Following the initial baseline assessment a “strengths and developments sheet” based on the findings of the baseline observation will be used with each individual child to develop those areas indicated as in need of additional support. This aspect of the evaluation will be further supported through the use of a credit card sized “top tips card” which will be given to the parent of each child providing ideas of ways to boost development in addition to resources derived from the Playlink service: play idea cards etc. Each pre-school will be provided with an “evaluation pack”- containing copies of the assessment for each child, publicity material including posters and stickers, supporting resources including the “top tips” cards and Playlink ideas cards and a record sheet.

The questionnaire was piloted during the Summer term 2004 within each pre-school. The findings of the pilot indicated that staff were very enthusiastic about this work as it provided a simple and effective way of assessing the needs of each child and thereby aided the structuring of the support they provided. The full evaluation is due to commence in the Autumn term 2004 and findings will be available by the following Summer 2005.

Evaluation of the Community Development Programme – active

As detailed throughout this report the Sure Start area bears all the classic characteristics of an urban centre with little coherent sense of community, with few places for neighbourly interaction and high levels of transience. The highly polarised nature of the city also acts to deter community cohesion with more affluent households not wishing to participate in Sure Start activities as they feel that they do not need them, favouring instead to pay for early years provision, and families in greater need existing in a state of crisis which inhibits community engagement.

Working within this context the evaluation of the Community Development Service has two objectives: firstly, to identify pathways into the community development services in terms of how and who uses these services and the effects of this contact in terms of self development, life experience, wider use of local community resources, movement into volunteering (community

participation/ capacity building/social cohesion), transfer into education, training and employment. Secondly the objective of this project is to identify and profile those who come into contact with the Community Development service to assess whether these are representative of all sectors of our community.

A wide range of methodologies will be used in this evaluation in order to capture the multi-faceted nature of community development. These will include performance analysis based on activity and cost effectiveness, client profiling and case studies in order to assess the impact of contact with the service on individual clients. Other models of service delivery and relationship with the volunteering programme will also be reviewed. This extensive review will hopefully aid the reconfiguration of the community development service thereby aiding user engagement with the delivery of the programme and capacity building within the community. The lack of community cohesion within our locality has been identified as problematic – particularly in respect to the mainstreaming of some services – particularly the development of self organising groups.

Performance analysis has already begun and more detailed one-to-one work with existing and previous users of the service are due to commence in the Autumn 2004.

Community Parents Evaluation – status - finished

This evaluation was completed during the 2002-2003 financial period and is included here in order to provide a complete picture of all evaluation activity to date. The Community Parents Programme came out of the work of the mental health team within Brighton and Hove Health Promotion Department. The service comprised a co-ordinator based within the Sure Start team and a team of trained volunteers who offered monthly semi-structured home visits. The service aimed to visit from an early stage and to aid families to cope well from the start and to ensure that problems are “nipped in the bud” before they become entrenched and difficult to resolve later on. The overall principle of the programme is empowerment; parents were not instructed but encouraged to use their own ideas, skills and abilities in their parenting role.

The findings of this evaluation indicated that few difficulties have been encountered in finding, recruiting and retaining enough suitable volunteers. A great success of the programme was that a significant proportion of volunteers have progressed from the programme to gain employment or moved on to further education. The programme has proved its worth on many counts, not least the evident expression of needs and satisfaction amongst Parents and Community Parents alike. Participating families in particular valued the fact that the volunteers had “been there” themselves and were prepared to talk about it.

The impression was gained that when feeling isolated parents cannot have enough support. Interviews with Community Parents and families visited give pointers as to the uniqueness and benefits of the role of Community Parent within the “family support framework” being somewhere in the middle of what might be called the continuum of support – between on the one hand the formal (e.g. Health Visitor) and on the other the informal (family). Another finding of the evaluation was stressed the part played by efficient training, group support and project leadership. Time was taken in the early development phase in recognition of the importance of setting up a programme that was rooted in sound professional practice. Problems were however experienced in respect of the programme’s ability to access families and to become integral to the Sure Start team. This manifested itself in the form of low levels of referral and funding for this service ended in March 2003.

Recommendations

The findings of this evaluation aided the realignment of this service which over the following months developed into a broader Volunteering Programme- see below.

Clients Perspective on the Health Visiting Service – status finished

During the Autumn of 2003 our local Community Health Trust distributed a questionnaire to all households in the Brighton and Hove area in receipt of their Health Visiting service. This is a valuable source of information about a service which makes a significant contribution to the Sure Start Programme. Through negotiation with the Clinical Audit Team within the Trust it was possible to access data for households which approximate to the Sure Start area based on the first 4 digits of the family’s postcode.

All the findings detailed in this document need to be viewed along side those for this project as a whole. However, some differences do exist in the responses given by those families living in the Sure Start area as compared with the wider community. In summary these centre around the following areas:

Demographic information

- The incidence of households made up of a single child is higher in the Sure Start area.
- The proportion of families speaking languages other than, or in addition to English was slightly higher for the Sure Start area at 16.5% compared with 15.6% for the wider Brighton and Hove Communities.

Positive Findings

- Fifty-five percent of respondents from the Sure Start area indicated that their Health Visitor had helped to build their confidence as a parent as compared to fifty-percent from the wider community.
- Positively, sixty percent of respondents felt that their Health Visitor had helped them to understand their baby's needs as compared with fifty-three percent for Brighton and Hove.
- Slightly more respondents from the Sure Start area found their Health Visitor easy to talk to when compared with the figure for Brighton and Hove.
- A slightly higher proportion of babies from within the Sure Start area were breastfed when compared with the wider population.

Negative Findings

- Replies from the Sure Start area indicated lower levels of information and support around: care of babies teeth; starting solids; immunisations; nurseries; childminders; protecting your baby from abuse; groups for your baby; clinics and sleep. However, when this information was provided a higher proportion of Sure Start respondents felt that the information had been useful.
- Sure Start respondents indicated that they had had less frequent contact with their Health Visitor at clinics than the wider population. This is not surprising as clinics are less frequently used in the Sure Start area as compared with the rest of the city.
- A lower proportion of replies received from the Sure Start area indicated that a Health Visitor had carried out developmental checks than the wider community.
- A slightly lower proportion of respondents from the Sure Start area indicated that they would contact a health visitor if they had concerns about their child's hearing . But positively for the Sure Start area in respect of speech and sight a high proportion of responses would contact their health visitor about these topics.
- Respondents from the Sure Start area indicated that they had received less information about housing, home safety, general health advice, family planning, sexual health, domestic violence, groups for parents, family's diet and health, the effects of smoking and effects of alcohol than the wider Brighton and Hove community. However, Sure Start respondents indicated

- that they had received more information about benefits and post-natal depression than the wider community.
- A higher proportion of respondents from the Sure Start area felt that they had been given contradictory information by their Health Visitor than for the wider Brighton and Hove population.

Though of value to the Sure Start programme this work has had greater impact on the formulation of the Children's Strategy currently being devised by the Children's Commissioner. The findings from this work will be used as evidence for the restructuring of the health visiting service, with proposals currently in place to move away from one-to-one support for all families to more clinic and group working for those with generic needs, thereby potentially releasing Health Visiting time to work with those in greatest need. The findings of this work and the subsequent recommendations indicating a shift toward greater group work have been embraced by the Sure Start Health Visiting team, and it is hoped to develop services in line with this model over the following months, and in particular when the Programme moves to Morley Street.

Planned and Ongoing Evaluations

Evaluation of the Sure Start Volunteering Programme

This is the first year that the Volunteering Programme has been in operation. Given that this service is in its infancy the evaluation components within this service are strongly linked to performance, with emphasis on the need to evidence effectiveness in respect to the number of volunteers taking part in the programme, the number of contacts that the volunteers themselves have had with other parents and children and also the outcome for the volunteers themselves in respect to their personal capacity. All of these elements have been incorporated into the existing monitoring and management processes within the service and preliminary findings will be available by Spring 2005 at which point the programme will have been running a year.

Fathers' Information Needs and Support for Birthing Partners Status - active

The need to work more closely with Fathers has been acknowledged by the Programme during this year. An ongoing evaluation looking at the information needs of prospective fathers during the ante-natal period has continued. Information about the information needs of this community of users is gleaned through the use of a questionnaire distributed with the booklet "Preparing for birth: Fathers". This study aims to illicit the views of fathers in respect of the existing written material used within this group, and establish other sources of information used by fathers in respect of pregnancy and parenting. The findings of this work will aid the development of further resources specifically designed for the needs of fathers.

The Sure Start ante-natal clinic is one of the services most frequently accessed by male carers/fathers. Building on the successful engagement of males during the ante-natal period a series of taster sessions called "One for the Dads" designed to aid birthing partners was held during the Summer period. Unfortunately uptake from parents within the Sure Start area was low with only 4 of the 12 couples who came along to the "One for the Dads" session came from the Sure Start area. Additionally only one of the male partners from the group of Sure Start parents who attended this session had not been in contact with our services before. The programme continues to strive to work with Fathers and male carers and is continuing to seek ways of engaging this community.

Comment cards Status - active

Given that the Brighton and Hove Programme does not operate out of a community base, one of the principal mechanisms used to share information with our local community has been through the distribution of regular quarterly mail-outs in the form of a Directory of Services. The Directory also includes a tear-off "comment card" at the end of this booklet which prompts parents/carers to comment on our services. Since the introduction of this system in Spring 2003 a total of nine comment cards have been returned completed. Given the low number of responses and following the redesign of the Directory of Services in March 2004 into a 6 monthly programme leaflet designed around the theme of a calendar – called a "Wall-Diary", it was decided to change the tear off card to include the option of responding to a variety of volunteering and community development initiatives as well as providing space with which to comment on service issues. In this modified format the new response card appears to have been successful in aiding parent involvement, though to date (August 2004) only one comment has been received. As an informal cost effective way of accessing the views of our community the card has proved successful.

Training in Evaluation Skills for Sure Start Workers

The need for training and practical support for front line staff in evaluation skills was recognised in the initial Evaluation Strategy. Though a half day evaluation session was planned to take place in September 2002 only one worker indicated an interest in this initiative.

One of the agreed objectives for the Programme's Support services team over the next year is to develop a portfolio of core skills which each member of staff will be expected to hold. It is hoped that evaluation could be included within this portfolio.

Evaluation projects undertaken within the programme by teams on an autonomous basis by individual core and commissioned services.

The Sure Start Programme maintains a record of all evaluation and associated activity on a computer based database. The information recorded on this system provides a comprehensive overview of both work undertaken within the core Sure Start team and our commissioned services. A complete report of all the activity recorded on this system is reproduced in appendix I.

Date Started:	Service:	Project Title:	Stage of Project:	Objectives:	Methodology:	Recommendations:
02/05/2003	Quality, Monitoring and Contracts	Community Evaluation Questionnaire	Finished	Parents experiences of living in the Sure Start area and expectations of the new Morley St Family Centre Sure Start Base	Questionnaire and follow-up focus group work	Findings will feed into re-commissioning and re-design of Morley Street Children's Centre.
01/11/2003	Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project	Case studies of clients who have used the BUCFP services	Finished	Examples of how the BUCFP has helped families in receipt of the Temporary Housing Service.	Case studies.	
01/05/2003	Friends Centre ESOL	Learning outcomes for the Sure Start programme in respect of future commissioning of ESOL/Health services.	Finished	To assess the cost effectiveness and special features of the language and health course run by the Friends Centre during 2002-2003	Cost effectiveness assessment, review of practice and achievements, outcome measures including number of individuals moving into employment and on to further training.	Intensity of contact with students and in particular the advocacy role adopted by the Project Development Worker, intimate non-threatening environment provided by the centre, provision of a creche - key factors in success. Confidence of clients increased

Date Started:	Service:	Project Title:	Stage of Project:	Objectives:	Methodology:	Recommendations:
01/07/2003	YAC Primary School Evaluation Sheet	Pre/post counselling - evaluation of counselling	Finished	Example of a counselling evaluation tool	Questionnaire using scales.	
16/07/2003	Early Years - Portage, SEAL, SALT & Playlin, SEAL	Sure Start Early Years Evaluation	Planning	Evaluation of the preventative impact of Sure Start early years services.	Use of "before and after" intervention assessment in order to gauge change. Ideally using validated tools. Also hoping to develop some form of common assessment - though this may not be practicable.	
01/07/2003	Midwifery	Evaluation of fathers satisfaction with the new "Fathers: Pregnancy Book" and also other information sources used.	Active	To assess whether the "Fathers: Pregnancy Book" is meeting fathers information needs and if not what other information and sources of information they would like to access.	Questionnaire distributed at the Sure Start Pregnancy Group	

Date Started:	Service:	Project Title:	Stage of Project:	Objectives:	Methodology:	Recommendations:
01/04/2003	Health Visting and Family Support Workers	Emotional Well-being Project Team	Active	To develop an integrated approach to the identification, assessment and care of women with PND.	Project team are using the data pulled from the health visiting case note review and on going monitoring of PND.	
01/07/2003	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund - Tarner	Participatory Appraisal - Community Reasearch Consultation	Active	Community consultation within the Tarner Area. Joint funding from Children's Fund, NRF and Sure Start	Community Researchers trained - then conduct PA based consultation with local commuinty around key issues pertient to funders - and local community..	
01/09/2003	Tarnerland NRF	Tarner Community Researchers - Neighbourhood Renewal Participatory Appraisal	Draft	Train local community in participatory appraisal techneques and conduct research with the local community about their needs and concerns.	Participatory appraisal	

Date Started:	Service:	Project Title:	Stage of Project:	Objectives:	Methodology:	Recommendations:
01/01/2004	Brighton and Hove Churches	"Being There" Church Community Action Survey 2003: Brunswick , Regency and Seven Dials	Finished	Review of community church based activities in Brighton and Hove.	Mapping exercise.	
01/03/2004	Community Development	Evaluation of the Community Development Service	Planned	To assess the impact of the CDteam within the Sure Start Programme, in respect of performance, number of clients in contact, who is in contact with the service, impact in respect of individual experience, and the wider community.	Qualitative and quantitative analysis.	