



St Anne's, Greenstead & Greenstead Road

# "For Starters"

## Report and Evaluation Year 1

September 2002 – December 2003



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January 2004

## Introduction

The evaluation covers the period from agreement of the programme by Sure Start UK in September 2002 through to December 2003. This extended first year saw the project developing, the Core Team take up their roles, service provision begin and expand with the move into a new building in October 2003.

This is not an evaluation of service provision as we are very much at the start of that process, but more about the involvement of parents, forum members and board members (which includes key stakeholders) and Sure Start team, their roles, expectations and understanding of the project and measure of content with it's evolvement. In essence; are there gaps in understanding, practise or involvement that can be identified at this stage and what are the steps we should take to address any issues that arise.

The development of the programme is also covered considering the processes being established to deliver the programme in line with the Delivery Plan and the requirements of the National Programme.

Throughout this report and evaluation there are images of the people and places which make up the Sure Start area.

The evaluation report will be disseminated appropriately throughout the community, Board and Forum members and to the lead partners and stakeholders.

*Carolyn Webb  
Action Researcher  
Sure Start Colchester*

# Section 1

## Profile of the Area

### Profile

### Start-up meeting



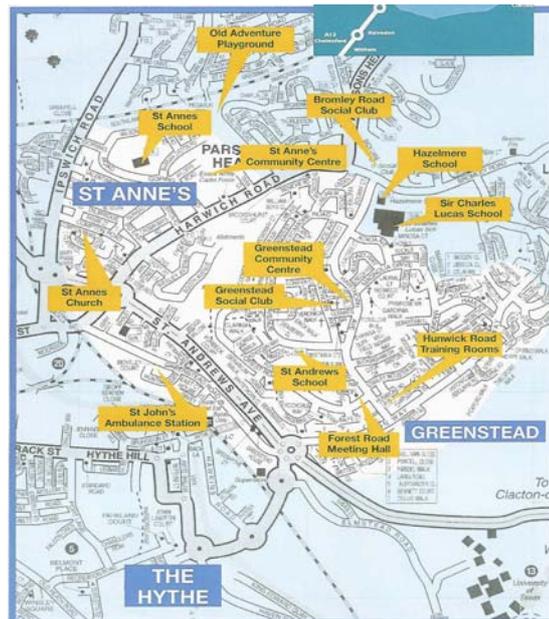
## Section 1

### PROFILE OF THE AREA-----

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Sure Start in Colchester encompasses an area in the North East section of the town namely Greenstead, St Anne's and Greenstead Road approximately 3 miles from the town centre.

It is part of St Andrew's ward and St Anne's ward.



## **The Area**

An estimate of the total population of the Sure Start area based on the 2001 census is 15,600.

The area was defined as the poorest in the Borough using the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Approximately 22% of the population in the area is under 16 years old. The Programme Delivery Plan identifies, from Health records, 655 families with children under 4 years old as resident in the area and 732 children.

**Housing** in the area is mixed with privately owned and rented properties through the council and housing associations. Owner occupied housing in St Anne's is almost double that of Greenstead with 69.1% against 37%. Council rented properties are 39.8% in Greenstead and 16% in St Anne's and renting from Housing association & Registered Social landlord is 8.9% in Greenstead and 4.8% in St Anne's. Private renting totals 24.4% and lone parent households with dependent children in the two wards totals 18.6%.

### **Unemployed**

The 2001 National Statistics show that the numbers of people unemployed are below National figures of 3.4%, in St Anne's - 2.9% and slightly higher in St Andrews 4.0%. Economically inactive students rate at 4.9% in St Anne's and 13.9% in St Andrews. Those looking after home/family are higher than the national average at 6.5%, St Anne's being 7.0% and St Andrews being 8.3%.

### **Students**

St Anne's shows a smaller percentage of the population are full time students, including school children at 5.5% whereas St Andrews records 13.1%.

36.5% of the St Andrews ward population have no qualifications compared with 31.2% of St Anne's. The National figure is 29.1%.

Colchester is a University town and the Essex University campus is situated close to the Sure Start area. Some students with children under 4 are living within the Sure Start area. Contact has been made through the University email system and contact details have been returned on line from 16 families all from ethnic minorities. This enables registration to take place and information to be passed on regarding support and activities and allows the Sure Start team to identify any particular needs of these families.

### **Ethnic groups**

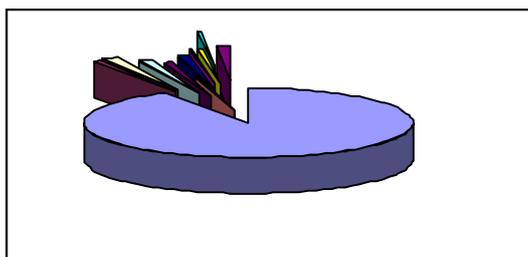
There are small numbers of people from ethnic backgrounds other than white British in the two Sure Start wards and some of the families are now registered with us where we have managed to make contact for example through the University and via a local organisation, TACMEP - Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic partnership.

Ethnic groups in %:-

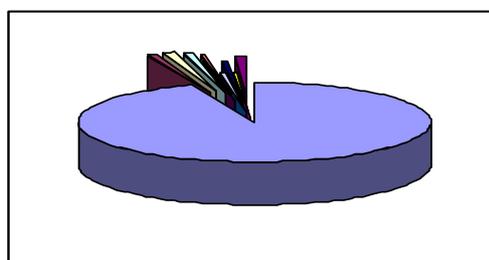
	St Andrew's ward	St Anne's ward
White	94.6	96.2
White Irish	0.8	0.7
Mixed	1.6	1.2
Asian or Asian British	1.4	1.0
Indian	0.3	0.8
Pakistani	0.8	0.1
Bangladeshi	0.1	0.1
Other Asian	0.2	0.4
Black or Black British	1.1	0.6
Caribbean	0.3	0.2
African	0.5	0.2
Other Black	0.3	0.1
Chinese or other Ethnic Group	1.4	1.0

### Ethnicity diagrams

St Andrews



St Anne's



### The Sure Start Area

Sure Start Colchester is comprised of three separate areas with their own identities,

ie: St Anne's, Greenstead and Greenstead Road

The existing facilities in **Greenstead**, the largest and most densely populated part of the Sure Start area comprise:-

- St Edmunds Health Centre and Pharmacy
- Greenstead Library

- Small shopping centre
- Co-op Resource Centre
- The Centurian Hall
- Forest Road meeting room
- Gas Club (Social Club with Bar, meeting room and large Hall)
- 2 Primary schools with Nurseries
- Greenstead Social Club Hall (Playgroup)
- Elim Pentecostal Church Hall
- Sir Charles Lucas school studio room (Parent and Toddler Group)
- Sir Charles Lucas School Curriculum Development Centre
- Greenstead Community Centre (Sure Start office) from October 2003



**St Anne's** estate has limited facilities:

- Community Centre
- St Matthews Church hall (Playgroup)
- Resource Centre (at the Primary school)
- St Anne's Church Hall (Parent and Toddler group)
- Primary school with Nursery
- Community room and Adult Learning centre in the Primary school

**Greenstead Road** is a small part of the Sure Start area with few immediate facilities. It has;

- St John Ambulance building (temporary Sure Start office)



**The extension at St John Ambulance where  
Sure Start developed in 2002/2003**

### **Start Up Meeting**

The first full meeting to discuss a possible Sure Start in the area happened on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2001. There were representatives from 25 local voluntary and statutory organisations with apologies from a further 6 organisations who were interested but not able to attend. The issue of identifying core services plus a variety of additional services was discussed and ways of defining the Sure Start area.

The Guidance was used to consider creating a Sure Start area. This was:-

1. The "poorest" ward in the borough by the index of multiple deprivation
2. The numbers of children under 4: needed to be between 400-800
3. Accessibility of Sure Start Services within "pram pushing" distance.
4. Level of provision already there
5. A "natural" area, recognised by the community.

St Andrews and St Anne's were eventually chosen using these indices. The programme was supported by the Heads of Schools on the Greenstead estate who identified a "well established infrastructure already on Greenstead" able to move forward with the programme.

The programme gained final approval in September 2002 with Ormiston Children and Families Trust as the Lead Body and Colchester Primary Care Trust as the Accountable Body.

## Section 2

### DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME-----

The Lead Partner for Sure Start Colchester is The Ormiston Children and Families Trust and the Accountable body is Colchester Primary Care Trust.

The Sure Start area has historically existed as two quite different communities in St Anne's and Greenstead. A main thrust of the programme is to promote the single community of Sure Start and enable parents to work together to the benefit of the area. The Greenstead area has received funding and services and facilities have benefited in the past. St Anne's has not had the same and now has no services except those which happen at or through the Primary School and has few facilities.

Money has been identified for the development of new buildings in both areas which will offer a base for Sure Start staff to develop activities, meetings, support groups and act as a centre for information and contact.

The delivery plan identifies various needs in the area which contribute to the four main objectives:-

- 1. Improving Social and Emotional Behaviour**
- 2. Improving Health**
- 3. Improving the Ability to Learn**
- 4. Strengthening families and communities.**

A sub-group has been set up for each of the above objectives and regular meetings of each happen every six weeks. Membership includes identified local professionals from statutory and voluntary organisations and parents. The meetings are led by members of the Sure Start Core team.

The terms of reference for each group include ensuring that the programme is developed in line with the national Objective(s), working towards identified targets and priority activities, receiving and considering funding applications, community involvement and monitoring and evaluating the activities previously agreed through the group.

The sub-groups form the main channels through which the programme can be delivered. They offer an opportunity for parents and service providers and the core team to discuss relevant issues and put forward ideas for possible funding. The members are becoming familiar with the opportunities offered for working together towards the targets. Each target has been broken down into identifiable actions.

## The team

The Sure Start team have gradually come into post over the last year. In June 2002 the Action Researcher was based in the Co-op Resource Centre at Greenstead and started talking to the community and other professionals about the needs of the area. The programme was agreed during September and the Programme Manager was appointed during the same month. Temporary premises were found at the St John Ambulance Headquarters in Greenstead Road.

This small room was needed for the expanding team until the new Community Building was built in Greenstead.

Sure Start added to existing funding which enabled an extra floor to be built to accommodate offices and a large family room within the new Greenstead Community Centre.

Two Development Co-ordinators and the Administrator joined the team during January 2003 and were followed by two Family Support Workers after several months. The team was only lacking the Data and Monitoring Officer who came into post in October 2003 working part time. 8 people form this core team. The team left the now very cramped facilities at St John Ambulance, to move in to the new Greenstead Community Centre on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

The Sure Start team is a strength of the programme. It has easily developed into a supportive and friendly team of people from differing backgrounds and experience related to families and children, who enjoy working together to meet the Sure Start targets.



## Roles

### The Core team

The **Programme Manager** is responsible for creating, leading and supporting a partnership of parents and local agencies working with families of children under 4 years in the area to meet the aims of the Sure Start programme.

The **Programme Administrator** is responsible for the efficient running of the Sure Start office and provides secretarial and administrative support.

A **Development Co-ordinator** and **Family Support Worker** work in the Greenstead area contacting families, supporting registering, and ensuring families are kept informed of opportunities to take part in Sure Start activities.

The Greenstead Development Co-ordinator has lead responsibility for the enhancement and development of childcare places in Sure Start. The Family Support Worker has a responsibility for working with families with disabilities or Special needs.

A **Development Co-ordinator** and **Family Support Worker** do the same within the St Anne's area supporting and encouraging families to be part of Sure Start.

The Development Co-ordinator has a lead responsibility for programmes promoting parent involvement and learning and improving access to employment opportunities. The family support worker has a responsibility for developing links with fathers and promoting their involvement in Sure Start.

The **Action Researcher** ensures that programmes are put in place to meet the wishes and choices of families in the area and evaluates the impact of the programme.

The **Data and Monitoring Officer** manages the database and collects regular monitoring data for the programme and Sure Start UK.

### **Other team members**

A Speech and Language therapist and Assistant therapist.

Two Midwives sharing a new midwifery role.

Health Visitor

Good Start Co-ordinator

Librarian

Toy Library manager (Stay and Play sessions)

Dental Surgery Assistant

Home Start Manager

### **Meeting the Targets**

The Sure Start Colchester core team meet regularly once every two weeks.

This team meeting offers the opportunity to consider and discuss all completed activities, those that are planned, issues and developments. The team meet briefly on a Monday morning for a weekly update.

A larger team meeting including all the Service Providers has been established and happens once each quarter year. This enables broader discussions to take place and a sharing of information and good practice.

At present the core team are based together within the same offices.

The team are led by the Programme Manager in updating the programme Action Plan twice yearly. This identifies actions to be taken to meet the targets, who takes the lead on them and a date by which they should be completed.

The Programme has worked towards the Risk Assessment and emerged as medium risk at 6 months. The 12 month risk assessment is to happen shortly led by the Eastern Region team.

### **Outcomes**

The rate of development of the programme is increasing and the team have identified a greater awareness by the local community of Sure Start and how the programme works. At present the systems for information sharing are being established but not always recognised by the wider team and partnership working is developing slowly.



### **Service provision**

Sure Start Colchester have Service Level Agreements with a number of providers.

***[See Chapter 2 -Working in Partnership]***

An evaluation of service provision will be undertaken in spring 2004. The service providers produce registers of contact with families for the project every month and a report every 3 months. ***[See appendix 4]***

The report gives information about:-

- ◆ activities undertaken and families contacted
- ◆ involvement in Sure Start activity days, events, family support sessions
- ◆ description of new initiatives started during the monitoring period
- ◆ participation in sub-groups
- ◆ meeting the requirements of Service Level Agreement
- ◆ identifying the Aims and Objectives which the provision has been working towards

This informs the project of the extent of the activities being undertaken within the community and helps to identify related targets in the Aims and Objectives of the programme. The process is fairly new and some providers are completing their 3<sup>rd</sup> report.

### **Caldicot**

Sure Start Colchester is in contact with the Caldicot Guardian at the Primary Care Trust and the Action Researcher has met to discuss the issues for the programme of addressing the requirements and working within an ethical framework.

The teams' working practice is to ensure that information is kept confidentially and there is a general awareness of the sensitive nature of some of the information that is retained.

### **Issues Arising**

The action list emanating from the recent meeting is being completed and required policies and methods of working are being established.

### **Promotional work**

The team has worked hard to ensure that families are aware of Sure Start and all that the programme offers.

Mail outs ensure that regular information is sent to all registered families and posters around the area highlight forthcoming events.

The staff promote events on an opportunistic basis when meeting parents as a matter of course.

Links are established with the local press and a reporter attends those events which are appropriate. Over the first year of the programme an event was published or reported very frequently, providing raised awareness locally of the programme and highlighting various activities.

There have been interviews with the project Manager on local radio raising awareness of the programme locally.

Information is placed in locally distributed magazines with contact information.

The evaluation of every event enables the Action Researcher to see how families are receiving their information and if the project needs to address changing any of the systems.



The recently printed Sure Start Flyer gives basic information about the programme and contact details and is for all local organisations to distribute as appropriate.

The Newsletter has now moved into it's 5<sup>th</sup> issue and has been mailed to all the Sure Start families regularly, that is every quarter. Research was recently carried out with a group of parents, during a Sure Start event, to evaluate their views of the newsletter. *[See Appendix 2.]*



Newsletter



Brochure



## Recommendations

- Some parents have contributed to the newsletter but the recommendation would be to increase the input from parents where appropriate in response to the recent interviews.
- There is an interest in courses and this could be a regular feature to inform parents.
- The team is in the process of ensuring that included articles are short and that there are plenty of photos making it simpler to look at and this should help to make it accessible to all, including those with low literacy.
- The promotional group could consider the use of pictures to convey information in place of words where appropriate.
- It has been identified from the Service Provider Team meeting that there is a need to share information on a systematic basis about forthcoming events with the wider team, including training opportunities. The Strengthening Families sub-group are in the process of planning a training calendar for this purpose.
- The existing process for sharing information may need strengthening to ensure that all Service Providers receive printed information about events.



## **Database and Registrations**

The programme has bought in a database designed for Sure Start to facilitate keeping family details and accessing query information for monitoring and development. This is managed by the Data and Monitoring Officer on a daily basis.

Registration happens through the whole Sure Start Team, core team and service providers (including other agencies in the area) by using either a contact slip or registration form. Return of a contact slip to the Sure Start office will trigger contact by the core team through telephone appointments. This enables full registration to take place and the newly registered parents to access information about support and activities.

The information is held on the database in line with Data Protection Act. It is password protected and only accessed by the Data and Monitoring Officer.

## **Referrals System**

The team and local professionals have an agreed criteria sheet for identification of the need for support. A referral form is completed, by either the team or other organisation and shared with the appropriate people.

Parents are also able to self refer.

The Sure Start team are able to offer family support as and when identified, and

also signpost people to other agencies where appropriate.

## **Smoking Cessation Programme**

Staff from the Sure Start core team, Dental Practice and Health Visiting team have been trained within the last year to offer smoking cessation advice.

Working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust Smoking Cessation Adviser, opportunities are being offered to parents to access the support service. One to one sessions are now happening on a regular basis at the Greenstead Community Centre. No evaluation has as yet happened as the advisory sessions are newly established.

## **Hard to Reach Strategy**

The "increasing involvement" strategy has been shared with partners at the Service Providers meetings and identifies those groups who are the most difficult for the programme to contact. Enablement may be identified as the key to reaching many of these groups namely,

- lone parents,
- teenage parents,
- fathers,
- black and minority ethnic groups,
- disabled parents and children,
- travelling families,
- refugee/asylum seeking families
- gay/lesbian families.

The summary of the strategy states:-

"all routes will be explored to ensure that individuals are identified and assisted to access Sure Start."

Contact has been made with families through Essex University and many of these are from ethnic minorities.

Sure Start Colchester has membership of TaCMEP; Tendring and Colchester Ethnic Minority Partnership.



### **Work with Fathers**

One of the family support workers is the identified "fathers worker".



She has recently helped to run a series of Saturday morning sessions in partnership with the Ormiston Trust which offered the opportunity to fathers in Sure Start to spend time with their children taking part in games and activities. These were called "Men Behaving Dadly" and were enjoyed by all the 13 families taking part. Some comments from the evaluation sheets:-

" *I enjoyed...spending time with the girls and others*"

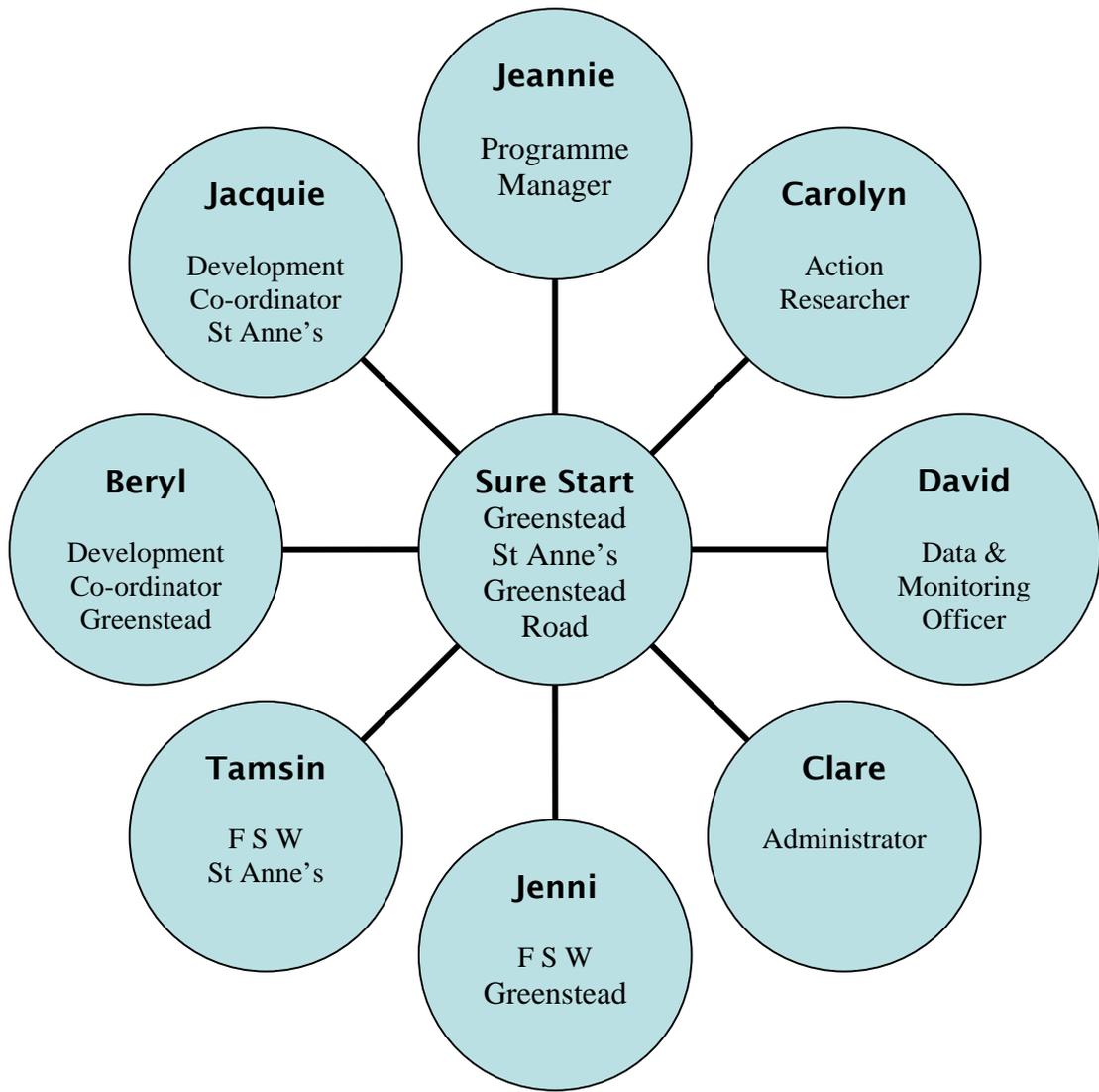
**"it has given me new ideas of things and activities to do with the children"**

**"I have found the project really good and it has given me time away from "home" with the kids"**

**a well tailored, structured course in a relaxed atmosphere...+ bacon butties!!"**

Further activities for fathers and children are planned for the forthcoming year.





**The Sure Start Core Team**

## THE BOARD



11 board members were interviewed individually for the evaluation, using a prepared questionnaire as a start point for discussion. Of the 11 interviewed, 3 were from voluntary organisations, 4 from statutory organisations and 4 were parents - 3 men and 8 women.

The Board consists of 6 Parents and 5 representatives each from statutory and voluntary organisations, a total of 16 voting members. The Programme Manager and Ormiston Consultant are ex-officio members ie. they do not vote. Meetings took place every month during the first year and have now become bi-monthly meetings. In general, members are happy with the style and format of meetings and the evaluation offered an opportunity to look at ways in which it may now improve working practice. The questions used are in *Appendix 4*.

Board members had heard about the programme through various sources including public meetings and local organisations. Several found out about Sure Start when invited to be part of the programme.

Some board members were part of the steering group and some had experience and/or knowledge of other Sure Start programmes.



## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Most of the interviewed Members had some understanding of the National Sure Start Aims and Objectives. One said:

**"I was very excited as I knew the needs of young children. The objectives were very clear."**

Several people displayed some hesitation in confirming that they completely understood the Aims and Objectives which were written for the local

programme during the time of the steering group. Some of the budget figures were still not clear at the time of interview.

## **INDUCTION**

No one received an induction onto the board but information was disseminated through meetings led by the chair. Most interviewees said that an induction would have been useful and some needed more written information particularly around the Aims and Objectives. Knowledge of the programme grew over a period of time. Some of the Board turned up at the first meeting with very little understanding of the programme at all:

**"when I first attended I wondered "why am I here"? (parent member)**

**"induction would have been useful but overlooked because of speed of set up.**

**An induction for new board members now is probably essential"**

Parent Board members identified a lack of knowledge of how a Board meeting worked as an issue, where they had no previous experience. Terms of reference were set up later in the first year.



Several members had visited Clacton Sure Start, however this was at the start of their programme and a visit to an established programme was identified as being more informative. One person had visited Gt Yarmouth and had found this a useful experience giving direction in specific areas of the programme:

**"it would have been nice to discuss problems and how they overcame them"**

**"it would have been useful for the Board as a whole" (to visit an established Sure Start)**

**"I would have gone if it had been offered...gives you ideas...good for future members"**

When considering Sure Start Colchester a member said:

**"it may have been helpful to have spoken more with other board members to firm up on a shared vision. I feel that we still have separate agendas"**

## **THE BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

When considering understanding the board responsibilities and functions, responses differed but some important issues arose. Comments included:-

**"I don't think that I am in touch with the way the programme is developing. I feel that reports are event driven ... no information about individual issues. Need an update on key elements within the plan..... (need to) go back to original objectives at Board meetings".**

**"yes it's always been clear.....very aware that it was to be parent led".**

Initial understanding was limited for some:-

**"not at beginning until constitution was discussed"**

**"it would have been good to have guidance from Ormiston based on existing Sure Starts."**

One person considered that being involved in writing the plan had made the programme clear. They suggested that those who were not party to this did not, perhaps, feel "ownership" of the plan.

There seems to be general understanding of the need to ensure that the programme is parent led. The responsibility of the board was stated as:-

**"supervising the way the Sure Start money is spent"  
"board there to ensure plan and project managed properly".**

An interviewee asked for clarification of the role, rights and responsibilities of a parent board member.



## **SUB-GROUPS**

The programme has a number of sub-groups managing various parts of the programme with a responsibility to the Programme Manager and Board for informing and overseeing the delivery of identified parts of the programme. *See Section 2.* Members of the board were asked about their understanding of these sub-groups and their responsibilities. Some responses:-

**"probably do not have an overview of what is being done... piecemeal decisions being made...board needs to discuss the format of reports".**

**"I can see what they are trying to do.... It would be good to have a brief report from each at board meetings".**

**"if the board could receive details of issues before discussion within sub-group, it would enable greater input and provide an informed base for decisions to be made. The programme managers report is a good example of this being put into practise".**

**" would like more information in a clearer manner"**

**"yes, most of them [understand subgroups?] Feedback from project co-ordinator is sufficient"**

**"I am not involved enough at present. There needs to be greater communication between sub-groups and finance"**

**"may need more structured reports from sub-groups - where are all the resources going?"**

5 people mentioned a need for more information about composition/roles/responsibilities/feedback on activities from the sub-groups. This could be through copies of the minutes, briefings or reports. Some written information about the groups could also be given for ongoing reference. 10 of those interviewed were members of subgroups

## MEETINGS

The Board meetings are an appropriate length and easily accessible according to the interviews, with the proviso that long agendas can take the meetings over the 2 hours and this is then too long. Several people mentioned the diversity of backgrounds of the members and how important it is to get the optimum use of time.

**"there is a shared understanding but how do you tap into the wealth of experience".**

**"we need to focus on the agenda".**

**"impressed by the parents contributions and the effort they put in. They often have important issues to raise".**

Interviewees were asked about receiving sufficient and appropriate information before a meeting. A parent member thought that it was probably too much and not parent friendly. They also felt that they needed clarification of financial spreadsheets,

**"the language is not always understandable and reports are not always clear".**

Although things had not always run smoothly at the start of the programme, reports and minutes are now reaching members in good time, mainly due to the efficiency of the programme Administrator. There are unavoidable issues that can arise without warning. One member mentioned that they are not receiving information from the parents' forums before the board meetings. Where there are financial reports or those with financial implications members would prefer to receive these before meetings for clarity and understanding.

When looking at the processing of information some issues were brought up:-

- ✿ We need an opportunity, either the first 10 minutes of meeting or outside the meeting, to have open discussions about programme issues. [Outside the agenda] This would be an opportunity to talk to the project manager and hear from sub-group members.
- ✿ Clearer accountability now through programme managers report.
- ✿ Optimising time is a most important issue.
- ✿ I feel that the board doesn't make all the most important decisions.
- ✿ Need current information on working towards the Objectives
- ✿ Mix of people on the Board with varying knowledge and own interests.

- ✿ Information feels ad hoc. May need more structured reports from the sub-groups.
- ✿ Where are resources going including Sure Start staffing?
- ✿ What are the key planks of the programme and what progress/lack of progress is being made?
- ✿ Perhaps one or both Development Co-ordinators could attend a board meeting if specific information needs to be given.
- ✿ Being on management board should be given all information. Have not heard about some applications for funding. Some things seem to be approved without reference to the management board.
- ✿ Roles are not well defined
- ✿ Need greater links with the sub-groups
- ✿ Sometimes it feels as if the board are used to ratify previously agreed items (from outside the Board) Issues need to be discussed in full and should always appear on minutes.
- ✿ It is confusing sometimes to know how much I can pass on to the community after a board meeting.
- ✿ I feel that parents are stressed about the amount of input expected as volunteers. Perhaps there could be a support system for these parents.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parents invited on to the board need to have the set up and procedures, roles and responsibilities explained to them in order to enable them to take a full part.
- The Aims and Objectives of the programme need to be considered regularly with reference to the targets set out in the delivery Plan.
- Contact with other Sure Start Programmes and Boards would be informative and supportive particularly for new members.
- The Board could consider issues of contact time for the members outside the board room or meetings.

- The work of the sub-groups needs to be clarified and the board should be informed regularly of progress towards the Objectives.
- Links need to be forged between finance and the sub-groups. Any financial information needs to be disseminated before meetings and clear explanations given during meetings.
- Sure Start Colchester needs a pack and procedures for induction of new Board members.
- Re-assess procedures to ensure that the Board is kept well informed of steps within the programme.
- The board could consider establishing training and support for those parent members who would be interested in taking the role of Chair or Vice -chair in the future.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Although the Sure Start programmes ethos is one of working together in partnership, this can be one of the most difficult areas to establish.



Sure Start Colchester is developing some good partnership working and this has taken the formative year of the project to begin to establish.

The following comments were made by the Sure Start Colchester team when asked what they would consider was "working in partnership".

**"it's about communication"**

**"sharing information"**

**"working towards identified targets"**

**"looking at the National Programme, should Sure Start be initiated without full consultation & awareness raising within existing agencies"**

**"it's enabling people, creating the opportunities to work together"**

**"it's about shared Aims and Objectives .....routes taken may be slightly different"**

**“working as a “big” team”**

**“team working to meet objectives”**

**“working together with other agencies for the benefit of the community”**

**“involves good communication skills & an inclusive approach between agencies”**

As Sure Start Colchester is managed and led by a voluntary organisation rather than the Health Authority there have been issues around Data Protection and sharing the vital information needed to progress with the programme including identifying the Sure Start families in the area. The team have established methods for identifying families but parts of the programme which have needed information from our Health Partners have been difficult to establish. Some of the comments above are related to these issues.

Sharing information with regard to meeting the Aims and Objectives are imbedded in the regular meetings of the sub-groups and the whole team meetings with Service Providers. As the sub-groups have only been established since July/November, meeting once every 6 weeks respectively, there has been no evaluation carried out on these activities. This will happen during the forthcoming year.



### **Existing links and partners are as below.**

Partners on the Sure Start Board include:-

- Parents
- Home Start
- Education - psychologist
- Social Services
- Colchester Library
- Colchester and Tiptree Toy Library

Children's Community Development  
Education - local primary  
Colchester Primary Care Trust  
Pre-school Learning Alliance  
Ormiston Children and Families Trust  
Colchester Borough Council

6 Parent members of the Board are also referred to in *Chapter 4 -Involving Parents in the programme.*

Other Partners include:-

Essex Rivers Healthcare - Midwifery  
Essex Rivers Healthcare - Speech and Language Therapy  
Bromley Road Dental Practice  
Good Start  
Colchester Museums  
Mercury Theatre  
Relate  
St Andrews Nursery & Infant School  
Hazelmere Infant & Nursery school  
St Anne's Primary school

Sure Start Colchester has Service Level Agreements with funded Providers. These are:-

**Bromley Road Dental practice**  
Improving oral and Dental Health in families with children under 4 in the Sure Start area.



**Good Start**  
Enhancing skills and confidence through information, guidance and support on a wide range of issues impacting on families in the Sure Start area.

**Health Visiting**  
Provision of a full time (or equivalent) Health Visitor role to enable expanded services from the Health Visiting team within the Sure Start area .

**Home Start**

1. Development of a new Home Start group
2. Extension of the existing core service supporting families through home visits.

### **Colchester library**

Reading and literacy project: to raise aspirations and attainment and provide opportunities for strengthening pre-school/nursery learning.

### **Midwifery**

Provision of full time (or equivalent) Midwifery role to enable expanded services from the Midwifery team within the Sure Start area.

### **Colchester Museums**

To create three "interactives" for children under 4 years old to encourage creative learning and personal development.

### **Speech and Language**

Provision of a full time Speech and Language therapist and assistant therapist.

### **Stay and Play (Tiptree and Colchester Toy Library)**

Parent and Toddler group in both Greenstead and St Anne's offering support and advice and enabling development of pre-school children.

### **Health Visitor and Midwifery clinic**

Joint clinic to assist with appointments and uptake and to include childcare/playarea.

Other funding proposals (agreed as indicated):-

- ✓ Breast feeding Facilities - create a discreet area for breast feeding mothers to drop in at any time.
- ✓ Mercury Theatre - Drama/arts workshops for young children and their parents
- ✓ Relate - Provision for a course to assist parents with young children, to strengthen their adult couple relationship and improve the quality of relationships within the whole family

- ✓ Information leaflets for parents - through Improving Social and Emotional Development sub-group
- ✓ Extra funding for Stay and Play - through Improving Social and Emotional Development sub-group
- ✓ Breast Feeding café - A drop-in centre for pregnant and breast feeding mothers, it will also offer support and information. - through the Improving Health sub-group
- ✓ Ante-natal envelope for all women in the Sure Start area to provide easy identification and information on appointments and sure start generally. - through the Improving Health sub-group
- ✓ Provision of space within Sure Start rooms for one-to-one Smoking Cessation sessions. - through the Improving Health sub-group
- ✓ Play sacks - play equipment for loan to families - through Improving the Ability to Learn sub-group
- ✓ Parent information Packs - Speech and Language Development from 0-5 - through the Improving the Ability to Learn sub-group
- ✓ Narrative therapy for nurseries - groups to focus on helping children develop skills to tell stories. - through the Improving the Ability to Learn sub-group
- ✓ Parent training Course - supporting childrens' learning and development - Improving the Ability to Learn sub-group
- ✓ Stay and play Christmas party - offering the opportunity for families to relax together. - through Strengthening Families and Communities sub-group
- ✓ Baby talk bags - encouraging inter-action between babies and their carers - through Strengthening Families and Communities sub-group
- ✓ FACE - "Men Behaving Dadly" project encouraging fathers to join in with/access educationally based activities with their children. - through Strengthening Families and Communities sub-group



We are also working with:-

**WEA** - North Anglian Open college network

**Greyfriars** - adult education college

**Signpost** - local project supporting and training people for return to work

**Job Centre Plus** - helping people back into work

**Way to Go** - through the IAG programme (Information, Advice and Guidance)

**Colchester Borough Housing Dept.**

**TaCMEP** - Tendring & Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership

## **MONITORING**

Monitoring returns have been made in a timely way throughout the first year through the monitoring process on-line. However, an issue has arisen with the returning of Form 5b as some of the baseline data has not been made available to the programme due to data Protection issues or no information collected before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003.

The programme has now established systems for monitoring returns. These are reassessed regularly to ensure that Sure Start Colchester can meet the requirements for monitoring information returns to Sure Start UK.

The Data and Monitoring Officer receives information on a monthly basis from all Service Providers with regard to families seen. This keeps the programme informed on which families are using the services and how many contacts are made by each service provider to enable the team to identify early problems with lack of contact and an overview of numbers using Sure Start services. It also facilitates identification of families who are not registered and the contact

slip should then be returned to the team for full registration and a visit to take place.

The Midwives and Health Visitors have monitoring forms to provide specific information relating to targets within the programme. These are returned on a monthly basis. Sensitive information relating to smoking, breast feeding and young mothers is returned as numbers only at present. Midwives return monthly lists of new births to enable the team to visit within the targeted time of two months after birth.

Contact with families varies on the monthly returns from Service Providers. The total returned including contact visits from the core team, for the last quarter of 2003, has been recorded as:

<b>October - 57</b>	<b>This was 14.7% of registered families</b>
<b>November - 106</b>	<b>This was 25.8% of registered families</b> [In addition there were 23 attending training courses and 14 at the opening of the Greenstead Centre]
<b>December - 118</b>	<b>This was 28.2% of registered families</b> [In addition there were 61 families at the Christmas party and 28 attending training courses.]

This shows a gradual increase in take up of service provision and is what could be expected as new opportunities and additional services are promoted.

Smoking baseline data has not been available. Collection of data has now started.

The Sure Start Language Measure information is collected by the development team and recorded on the identified spreadsheet.



### **Recommendations**

- At present Sure Start Colchester does not use a translation service or produce literature in languages other than English. This has been identified as an issue for development and has caused some difficulties when registering families.



## **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2002 & DECEMBER 2003**

**2002**

- 12<sup>th</sup> September      **Official opening of Alderton Road playground**
- 14<sup>th</sup> September      **Stand at Greenstead Carnival day**
- 22<sup>nd</sup> November      **Completed delivery of Sure Start Colchester's first newsletter**
- 17<sup>th</sup> December      **Sure Start family Christmas party**



**2003**

- 30<sup>th</sup> January      **Outing for families to "Go Bananas"**
- 7<sup>th</sup> February      **Stay and Play**
- 27<sup>th</sup> February      **Arts and Crafts day for families (Health related)**
- 27<sup>th</sup> February      **Regional Parents Forum, Southend**
- 28<sup>th</sup> February      **"Making Families Count" workshop for families and professionals**

25<sup>th</sup> March **Mercury Theatre Workshop for families**

31<sup>st</sup> March **Mercury Theatre Workshop for families**

7<sup>th</sup> April **Mercury Theatre Workshop for families  
(regular ongoing programme)**

23<sup>rd</sup> April **Make and Play day for families**

16<sup>th</sup> April **Trip to Clacton for families**



6<sup>th</sup> May **First Aid Course**

22<sup>nd</sup> May **Health and Safety \Promotion Day**

13<sup>th</sup> June **Stay and play**

14<sup>th</sup> June **Market day for St Anne's (Architects day)**

16<sup>th</sup> June **St Anne's Signpost outreach drop-in session (1st session)**

18<sup>th</sup> June **St Anne's Health Visitors drop-in session (1<sup>st</sup> session)**

21<sup>st</sup> June **Colchester Childrens' Festival**



26<sup>th</sup> June **Teddy Bears Picnic, Highwoods**

9<sup>th</sup> July **Beach Safety Day, Clacton**

28<sup>th</sup> July **Summer Activities**

30<sup>th</sup> July **Messy Modelling Day**

31<sup>st</sup> July **Book Making Day**

5<sup>th</sup> August **Lets get Creative**

6<sup>th</sup> August **Sticky Kids**

12<sup>th</sup> August **Picnic at Salary Brook**

13<sup>th</sup> August **Clacton day (Beach Hut)**

14<sup>th</sup> August **Paint and Play**

20<sup>th</sup> August **Picnic at Castle Park**



26<sup>th</sup> August **Slip, Slide and Soak**

28<sup>th</sup> August **Messy Modelling day**

2<sup>nd</sup> September **Marsh Farm trip**

3<sup>rd</sup> September **Nursery Times (ongoing nursery rhyme and story sessions)**

11<sup>th</sup> October **Consultation day with Architects in St Anne's**

28<sup>th</sup> October **Autumn Days activity session**



19<sup>th</sup> November

**2 year Birthday Party (with Health Visitors)**

20<sup>th</sup> November

**Official Opening of the Greenstead Community Centre**

12<sup>th</sup> December

**Sure Start families Christmas party**



## Section 3

### CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS

"have your say days"

Evaluation findings 2002

Evaluation findings 2003

Evaluation with PHYS



## Have your say days - July 2002

### Parents consultation on Ante and Post Natal services



Health visiting and Midwifery services surveyed parents using the current Ante and Post Natal services in St Anne's and Greenstead.

Parents were contacted on their visits to two venues in St Anne's and two in Greenstead during toddler playgroups and baby weighing clinics. Health Visitors and Midwives and Sure Start staff were on hand to help with completion of the questionnaires. 66 were completed, 28 from St Anne's and 38 from Greenstead.

The following issues and possible development areas were raised by the responses and were similar from each of the two areas:-

- ✓ The development of a locally based Sure Start midwifery team
- ✓ Increased promotion and uptake of antenatal/parent craft classes
- ✓ Raised awareness and support in promoting breast feeding during pregnancy
- ✓ More help and support in maintaining and continuing breast feeding after birth particularly in the first month
- ✓ Peer support in parenting during pregnancy
- ✓ Consistency of professional advice, particularly in relation to breast feeding
- ✓ A raised profile in the community for Health Visitors offering advice and support in all aspects of family health
- ✓ To engage with the parents who have expressed an interest in knowing more about Sure Start
- ✓ Develop other health related events and invite those parents who expressed an interest in those initiatives

Other issues raised at this time were:-

- ◆ Where to get information/leaflets
- ◆ More visits

- ◆ Pregnancy services available out of the normal working hours including parent craft (so that partners could be included)
- ◆ There was a preference for midwives to run antenatal clinics locally rather than visiting the GP or hospital
- ◆ Mothers wanting to meet other new parents and babies to talk about breastfeeding
- ◆ Some confusion over being offered differing advice
- ◆ Would like to see the Health Visitor at parent/toddler groups



## EVALUATION 2002

### Based on a questionnaire, Parents Forum and opportunistic meetings with families

The questionnaire was used as a means of contacting the families in the Sure Start area. As details of these families were not available to Sure Start other means had to be found, of raising awareness of the project and forming an understanding of the needs within the area.

This first questionnaire to the whole area produced 29 responses from families with children under 4 years old. Some questions were not answered by families and the comments given alongside the individual questions show what expectations they have for future developments of services and facilities. These responses were used to inform the start of the project and helped to focus the initial development of the programme.

Issues raised:-

#### ***Awareness***

58% of people responding had heard about Sure Start, but the Parents Forums had only been heard of by 34%. This was important to the project as the forums had been started soon after the initial meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup> had agreed to tender the "Confirmation of Interest" to Sure Start UK, the first step to set up Sure Start Colchester. The Parent Forums provided a vehicle for parents to talk to each other and the project about the needs in the area and how issues might be addressed. This information has always been fed back to the Board via parents as part of a two way process.

Local Newsletters were the preferred means to receive information. Pre-school groups had been the highest source of information and this remained the second most popular way to receive information.

### *Considering the area*

There was a positive response from 13 people who considered the area "good" for bringing up children, but 13 said that it was poor or very poor. The comments identified a lack of resources and services although there is a variation in the Sure Start area as St Anne's have few resources and no services based in the estate. Greenstead has a Health Centre, Library and Pharmacy and access to some support services at the Co-op resource centre.

### *Services*

13 people were satisfied with the services for children under 4 but 12 were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Comments noted insufficient childcare and pre-school groups particularly during holidays, difficulties in placing children with Special Needs in pre-school groups and problems with finding a place for a three year old due to waiting lists. There were also positive comments about the library, toddler groups and playgroups. This difference can be identified as area related.

### *Facilities*

Although 13 indicated that they were satisfied with existing facilities, 14 were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Comments included concerns about the cleanliness of parks for very young children, the vandalism of older children, the lack of park keepers and lack of play spaces for young children. A few identified that there were plenty of parks and fields. Again this would seem to be area specific.

## **HEALTH**

A variety of Health Services had been accessed by families in this survey and the majority of families had experienced no difficulties. The few comments received indicated some difference in advice given and a time lag in some services.

There was greater response to the question regarding changes to Health Services and these indicated a need for parents to be listened to, reduction in waiting lists, more activities for children in the waiting areas and better access to specialists, Health Visitors and doctors. The issue of services was again referred to in St Anne's.

## PLAY AND LEARNING

Of the people who use Play and Learning Services 16 were satisfied or very satisfied. The comments were very positive indicating a considerable measure of content with existing parent/toddler groups, playgroups and Stay and Play. A parent's comment;

**"toddlers....great way for not only *child* to meet people, but for myself as well"**

On the question of changes to the Play and Learning services the response was negative. Comments included the need for cheaper services, more pre-school learning to give independence to young children and more nurseries, crèches, toddler groups and activities like "Tumble Tots".



### *Childcare services*

Informal childminding (11 responses) is the most used type of childcare in the area closely followed by using a crèche (9 responses). 11 respondents also said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with childcare services. Comments included services at cheaper cost, more crèche facilities, issue of children needing to be potty trained before being allowed to join pre-school groups and quality of care given within existing crèches.

Comments on improvements included the need for a local nursery or kindergarten, more registered childminders especially for children with Special Needs and more childcare available to younger mums.

## **FAMILIES**

Parents had used various services identified in questionnaire. *Appendix 3*. Comments confirmed the lack of knowledge/services in the area. When considering the satisfaction levels the majority of people, 10, answered "Don't know". 6 said satisfied although the comments didn't really back this up. These included comments on inconsistent services and some non-existent services. People suggested changes to services which encompassed more support for families and information on services to be easily accessible. A drop in for private sessions was also identified. See summary of responses *Appendix 1*.

Responses to questions about skills development and learning identified a spectrum of opportunities that parents would like.



## **ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH**

The information gained from this research helped to inform the programme of issues for the Sure Start area and possible start points for development work. Some of the points below were considered immediately and action was begun whereas others were held for future development.

### **Awareness raising**

**Action:** Development of promotional work, awareness campaign, newsletter and leaflets.

This was considered immediately as a priority for the success of Sure Start. Promotional work has been on-going through leaflets, posters, newsletters and the local press and radio who have attended many of the activity days. Much promotional work is undertaken by word of mouth and Sure Start have set up information displays and stands at all appropriate events, for example Greenstead Carnival day and Colchester Childrens Festival.

### **The use and development of resources and facilities**

**Action:** To enable services to be accessible throughout the Sure Start area.

An ongoing and imbedded part of the programme within the development plan.

### **Childcare needs**

**Action:** To research childcare, pre-school and toddler groups both existing and future needs, for future development.

A piece of work undertaken by the Action Researcher within the first months of the programme.

### **Facilities for young children**

**Action:** Consider needs of young children in the area with a view to creating new play spaces.

This had already been considered for first funding and a playground for the under 4 year olds was constructed and opened in St Anne's on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2002.



**The opening of Alderton Road playground**

### **Improvement in access to Health Services**

**Action:** Work in Partnership with parents and colleagues in Health Services.

An ongoing and imbedded part of the programme within the development plan.

### **Play and learning**

**Action:** To support the existing services and identify any gaps in the service.

Taken forward into the programme and issues considered at a later date. Visits to all existing pre-school and parent/toddler provisions undertaken by core team and contact with groups on-going.

### **Childcare Services**

**Action:** Sure Start provide a free crèche for all meetings and where appropriate for activities.

Action taken immediately and all meetings and appropriate activities are provided with a free crèche.

### **Services and facilities used by families**

**Action:** To address the distribution of information. Team to establish procedures and processes for contacting families. The Sure Start remit will cover the establishing of services.

This was discussed and the establishing of a newsletter provided the first opportunity to reach all families in the area. Identified places are used for

displaying posters and the newsletter is sent out every 3 months to all registered families. Flyers with information about activities/training/support groups are mailed out and handed out by the wider team. The processes and procedures were established over a period of time and are constantly reviewed.

### **Development of skills and learning**

**Action:** To enable parents to access training within the area in response to needs.

The programme requirements ensure that this issue is addressed. Part of the programme which was considered later in the start up year. The programme is developing a training programme and has initiated a Training Co-ordinators group. A questionnaire was used in Summer 2003 for parents to return their training needs to Sure Start for assessing courses to be run in the future. *See Appendix 2.*

## **EVALUATION 2003**

### **Interviews conducted between July and September 2003**

31 parents interviewed

Female - 29

Male - 2

St Anne's - 8

Greenstead - 21

Greenstead Rd - 2

Parents were chosen randomly from the database of registered parents at the time of arranging interviews, June 2003. A few further interviews were opportunistic and happened at Sure Start activity days. All were registered parents.

Sure Start Colchester works within three communities although geographically linked. Greenstead has the larger population followed by St Annes and Greenstead Road is very much smaller being on the edge of the Sure Start area and containing a small number of families with children under 4. The population spread is reflected in the number of parents interviewed in the survey. It was good to have two fathers/male carers included in the research and again reflects the fact that most young children are looked after by the mother/female carer who would be most likely to be attending Sure Start activities.

The purpose of the interviews was to consider whether the Programme was reaching families in the following ways and use the ensuing evaluation to inform the programme for the next year. The considered areas were:-

1. Ways of informing families about the programme
2. Understanding of the programme
3. Expectations of the programme
4. Family attendance at meetings or activities
5. Inclusion in programme



1. Families **access information** in different ways and Sure Start Colchester have built the start up of the programme around the ways families told us they needed to receive information. In this survey more families heard about the programme through service providers and friends than from leaflets, in fact by personal contact. Working in area with many people having a low literacy level had been acknowledged by the team when producing any leaflets or disseminating information. The first questionnaire carried out in the Autumn of 2002 had produced a large number of respondents preferring to receive local information by newsletter or leaflet or through pre-school groups.



2. At the start up of Sure Start there was very little **understanding of the programme** and how it would be working with families in the area. The recent survey proved the need for staff working within Sure Start to promote this understanding, as those who had contact through the Core team, Health visitors or Midwives were well informed. A process has been developed to enable the Sure Start team to identify new families to register with the programme. A contact slip giving brief details is signed by the family and forwarded to the Team through services providers. This is then followed up by a phone call arranging a visit, at which the team complete a registration form and give the family support and access information. A parent information pack has been developed and will be ready for distribution in January 2004.

Comments from parents in the survey:-

**"Good for the area...especially for my 3 year old, trips and activities"**

**"Thought it was great...get people involved...not much for under 4's in area.....enables mums to talk to others and make friends"**



3. **Expectations** would seem to be low from the responses given, however perhaps these should be viewed in the knowledge that the area has not seen many services or facilities developed or funded. In particular, the views of the community families have not been sought so that local needs might be addressed as in the Sure Start remit. This initially caused some of the community to treat the Sure Start programme with some scepticism, firstly that anything would

happen to improve the lives of families or secondly that the programme/money would be around for more than a short time.

**"Hope the programme does well and is not here for 2 years and then vanishes!"**

It is perhaps not so likely that parents would consider the wider implications of the work of Sure Start but expectations for their own families have been low.

**"Thought it would be social, meeting others, sharing experiences"**

**"No expectations, anything welcome....things happen for other age groups but this is for toddlers"**

**"No expectations, thought it was about coffee mornings and toddler groups"**

Several of the parents identified Home Visits as something that they would like to see happening. A separate piece of research has been undertaken (*See Appendix 2*) by the Action Researcher. Breast feeding support and Parenting skills were identified as areas for development and some personal development courses. Childcare and more pre-school settings were asked for plus more trips out.



**4** 65% of the parents in the survey had not **attended a meeting** within the programme. 5% had taken part in one or more of the parents' forums. Parents have a vital part to play in forming and informing the Sure Start programme and it is therefore essential that they are included in the process. There have been 6 parents on the Sure Start Board since its inception and this has met the needs of the programme to have input into the management of Sure Start from the community. They have also formed a link between the board and the parents' forums for channelling of information.

Parents are also members of sub-groups *See section 4 - Involving Parents.*



**5** 16 of those interviewed answered yes to this question and when asked why, said that they received **regular information**. However, there were various issues raised about inclusion, one being the need to address support for families with children with Special Needs. Several parents would like to attend Sure Start events and meetings but felt shy of attending in case they would not know anyone. These people also value the opportunity to get to know the Family

Support workers so that there would be a friendly face present. Some have problems receiving their post and said that they feel left out of the programme when the ¼ ly newsletter does not arrive.

When parents attend events run by Sure Start they feel very positive about them:-

**"it's social nobody gets left out"**

Some of the parents interviewed hadn't joined in the activities yet as they perceived the programme as aiming at toddlers:-

**"good for baby when older"**

**"hoping for a mother and baby group"**

**"sounded good from the baby's point of view for the future....activities to be involved in"**

A number of the mothers with young babies would come to Sure Start family days but needed to know that they would be welcome. The team now provides a play corner for very young children and has been pleased to see the parents bringing their babies along and chatting to others.



## **Recommendations**

- Parents now prefer to hear about activities through contact with friends, family and local professionals.(contrary to the findings from the questionnaire 2002) All registered families receive regular information through the post. Parents may find it easier to receive information via pre-school leaders where that is appropriate. Information freely available throughout the Greenstead Community Centre may also encourage use of Sure Start activities. All service providers need regular information to update families with whom they come into contact.
- Knowledge about the Sure Start Programme varied and Parents who had been registered through the Core team, Midwives or Health Visitors had a greater understanding. All Service Providers should have sufficient information to explain the programme to new Parents at first contact. It is also a requirement of Caldicot that parents should understand and be

given written information about what and why they are signing up to the programme.

- The Parent Information pack has now been prepared and will be a good information tool.
- Parental involvement in the programme is difficult to obtain. The issue of showing parents that they are valued for their input by offering a "reward" should be put into practice as soon as possible especially as the same small group are the regular volunteers at present.
- Issues of each newsletter should be freely available in the Community Centre and pre-school settings so that issues of non-delivery by post can be corrected as parents value this contact with the programme.
- The programme is now aware and addressing issues of ensuring that parents with small babies feel included at all events and activities.

## EVALUATION WITH PHYS AS A FOCUS GROUP

### 9 parents present ( 7 mothers 2 fathers)

#### *Question 1 - what is the purpose of PHYS*

For parents to have their say

Agendas are put forward for us to talk about and feedback to the board

People put their views forward

For people from the community to talk about things

#### *Question 2 - Have you received induction information or sufficient information for belonging to this group*

There is no induction pack

It would be useful to have information for parents to know what they can do

Like to know what opportunities there are for parents who are on this group

One member is now a school governor

Like to know about becoming chair or minute taking and what parents can then get out of it

More about working together to get things done

Parents can get their views and opinions across

Involvement in the group has enabled one parent to move on and get a job

Leaflet explaining what individuals can get out of it

People naming what Sure Start has done for them would be good

How do we move on from PHYS to sub-groups and being a board member

*Question 3 - Do you have an understanding of the Board and sub-groups (and channelling of information)*

Not really

I have heard of the sub-groups

There is not enough information about the board and sub-groups

A diagram (flow chart) would really help to know who everyone is and who they are responsible to

Flow chart of Board and Sub-groups

Named people who are involved

Written information would help me

Information could be passed on to Service Providers to pass on to parents

Post can often be binned (*without being read!*)

*Question 4 - Do you feel valued by Sure Start - could this be improved*

It could be improved

We don't get enough info

Issue of decisions being made by the parents forum in the past which have gone forward to the board but then not been taken up. We have had no feedback why things have not been acted upon and that makes us feel not valued.

*Is this a communication issue?*

YES



## Recommendations

The parents interviewed were aware of the opportunities offered by the group to discuss and raise issues but no one spoke of identifying issues for funding which could be presented to the Board.

The only comments referring to the board were reactive rather than pro-active.

- The PHYS members need to be encouraged to address the opportunities offered for identifying issues within the area for possible funding.

- The Sure Start team is addressing methods to encourage new members of the PHYS group and will be starting a reward scheme to benefit volunteers. This will need to be promoted strongly.
- The terms of reference need to be revisited when these new members join.
- Information from the board needs to filter through so that PHYS members can be aware of what is happening in the programme.



## Section 4

### **INVOLVING PARENTS IN THE PROGRAMME** **(And Involvement in working groups)**

#### **The Parents Forum - PHYS**



## Section 4

### **INVOLVING PARENTS IN THE PROGRAMME**



- Parents have been encouraged and enabled to be involved in the processes of Sure Start Colchester from the start. That is from the moment the programme was planned and before it received official agreement.
- Ormiston Children and Families Trust's first step was to form a Strategy Group/Executive Group and alongside that the formation of Parents Forums in both St Anne's and Greenstead.
- The programme has raised awareness within the community from the start with regard to the importance of parents not only voicing their views on the needs of families in the area but also being involved in decision making. The forums were in existence in the early part of 2002 but the programme wasn't finally agreed until September of the same year.
- Involvement of parents is highly important and imbedded in the Programme. The small group of parents initially involved were well motivated and met within their own area forums plus the Joint Forum. This was a formative time for Sure Start Colchester and their input was valued but because the programme was not established, parents have said that they were unsure of their role. There was an extended period of time leading up to agreement of the programme and some of the initial impetus was lost through having a lack of focus to the meetings and no identified funding for improvement to the services for the parents to consider. The time lag was unexpected and the unfortunate effect on the members of the forums may have been part of the reason that some parents failed to continue with the groups.
- However, it was good for the programme to have input from this group of parents and the processing of information between the board and parents forums was established. The parents who were involved from this early stage have a greater understanding of the programme and helped to form the start of Sure Start Colchester and the now established PHYS group.
- Parents have been included in the short listing process and interviewing of staff from September 2002. Parents were invited to become members of the board and 6 have been voting members since the start up. Their contribution to board meetings is valued both for the personal contributions and feedback of the views of the community via the parents PHYS group.



- Several parents have been very involved with the Promotion/media group since August 2002. This group discusses the method of promoting and publicising Sure Start, oversees the editing and printing of the quarterly Newsletter and most recently a Sure Start flyer. Parents and core team make up the membership of this group.
- The sub-groups offer another opportunity for parents to be involved in the strategic development and be part of the process of identifying where the programme can fund and/or support initiatives. The meetings happen between 1.30 and 3.00pm to finish in time for school collection and the format is straightforward to enable parents to take part and submit ideas for discussion and/or funding.
- Parents regularly help with mail outs and list of possible volunteers is held by Sure start.
- Parents views are sought regularly through evaluation and research by the Action Researcher. A simple one page evaluation is asked of each family attending an event which informs the project of the following:-
  - How they received information about the event
  - Was the cost right
  - Did the activity meet expectations
  - What did the children enjoy most about the day
  - Was the venue suitable
  - Was the venue easy to get to
  - Comments on venue
  - Could enjoyment of the day have been improved

This gives some valuable information to the team to enable planning of the next event to address any particular issues - a process of continual improvement.

- There would seem to be a natural reticence to being involved in many of the meetings because they are time consuming and childcare is an issue. Parents have asked for payment of their time given in this manner. The team have looked at practice within other programmes and decided that an incentive could be offered in the form of a reward card. **In the Future** parents could receive a signed stamp on a personal reward card for attending meetings or supporting the programme in an identified way. It is hoped that this would encourage more parents to be involved in a practical way. The "rewards" could be offered as opportunities for beauty treatment/outings/sessions at leisure centre or other. Free childcare is always offered for Sure Start meetings and activities.



### **Recommendations**

- That the team follows up on the idea that the *Greenstead Community* centre offers an ideal opportunity for meeting and talking to parents on an opportunistic basis and the team will be encouraging people as appropriate to become more involved with Sure Start.
- To provide an opportunity for parents to become involved with the evaluation at the end of year two by supporting the Action Researcher.
- To establish a reward system for parents giving voluntary time to the programme.

### **THE PARENTS FORUM**

The Parents Forums were formed at the inception of the project in 2002. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this evaluation, parents have a vital part to play and the forums have offered that opportunity. The forums give parents the chance to discuss the local agenda and issues for families in the area with others and form a link between the Sure Start Board and the Community.



Until September 2003 there were separate forums running in St Anne's and Greenstead with a joint meeting happening monthly. This was found to be rather demanding requiring attendance twice a month from the parents. From September the forums were revamped and one joint meeting now takes place monthly alternately placed in St Anne's and Greenstead. It has also been renamed by the parents who felt that "Forum" was too formal as a name and is now known as the **PHYS** group - **Parents Have Your Say**. Free play sessions are run alongside these meetings with the purpose of enabling parents to meet together and take part in the PHYS group when they want to.

The parents attendance at the forums has fluctuated over the first year of the programme. The average for the Greenstead Forum was 4, St Anne's was 3 and the joint forum was 5. Various awareness raising promotional measures have been used including the free play session already mentioned, pieces in the Sure Start newsletter, posters, flyers and personal invitations. Finding members of the group is proving to be difficult and other strategies are now being considered to raise attendance numbers.



# APPENDIX 1

## Summary of responses to evaluation 2002

## Summary of responses to evaluation 2003

### THE FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE - 2002

It was a priority at the start of the project to understand what people in the area thought about existing services and where changes were needed. A questionnaire was used to establish baseline data on local issues for parents. As the program has experienced problems with accessing any information on families in the Sure Start area, the questionnaire was inserted in the first Sure Start newsletter and posted through every door in the whole of the Greenstead, St Anne's and Greenstead Road area., approximately 5000 copies. This procedure was used as an awareness raising initiative for the start of the programme.

29 questionnaires were completed by families with children under 4 years old living in the Sure Start area. They had 43 children in the 0-3 year age group at the time of responding. All had their children living with them.

*See Appendix 3 for questionnaire*

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

NB: Some questions were multi-choice so responses do not correlate with number of returned forms. Some questions were not answered.

#### Awareness

Aware of Sure Start in the area	Yes – 17	No – 12
Heard of Sure Start Parents Forums	Yes – 10	No – 18
Feel well informed about what is happening in the area	Yes – 11	No – 15

5. How do you get/like to get your information?

Source	Get information	Like to get information
Local newsletters	8	20
Leaflets	7	10
Notice boards	2	8
Pre-school groups	9	13
Thro'local health services	1	8
Library	2	6
Resource centres	1	3
Other		Posted home

#### Considering the Area

6. Place to bring up children?

Very good	0
Good	13
Poor	7

Very poor	6
Don't know	3



Some comments;

there's not enough for the children  
 i have four children from 2 to 13 yrs and there is nothing for the older children  
 not a lot of places to take them ...parks, but too many older kids...glass and graffiti  
 just moved to area ..seems ok  
 not many resources on estate (*St Anne's*)...dr, chemists  
 ...people have tried to improve area...parks, gardens...teenagers hanging around,  
 smashing glass...graffiti...foul language...led to shabby looking areas  
 i have lived in St Anne's for 23 years...forgotten estate...no services...no one cares  
 rough  
 not a lot in the area for parents and children  
 good for resources  
 not enough play areas for infants  
 like the library and pre-school, nice playgrounds  
 would like to see them (*play areas*) supervised by qualified people  
 not enough services for young children with special needs  
 parks are not very clean...mother/toddler (sic) groups good

#### 7. Satisfaction with services in the area for children under 4 years

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	13
Dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	3
Don't know	3



Some comments;

not enough childcare.....playschool provision.....help with special needs  
 wide selection of playgroups  
 not a lot for young children  
 very hard to place eldest child ...special needs...still in nappies  
 do not know of much that is going on  
 not much available.... (*only*) playgroup....holiday events  
 what services!  
 library excellent always new books....toddler groups....swimming lessons...health  
 visitors informative  
 found it hard to find place for my 3 year old....waiting lists  
 if it wasn't for parent & toddler groups I'd be going up the wall!

8. Satisfaction with facilities in the area for children under 4 years

Very satisfied	0
Satisfied	13
Dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	2



Some comments;

parks not clean enough for little ones  
 graffiti and vandalism not repaired  
 hardly any baby swings and small apparatus....all for older children  
 plenty of parks and fields for them to go to  
 big kids destroy them  
 not a lot in the area  
 parks are great but always dirty, vandalised or have kids smoking or being abusive  
 playgrounds unkept  
 there seems enough for children during the week if they are too young for nursery  
 one small playground/park for whole estate!

HEALTH

9. Health services used within last 12months by families

Clinic	19
Dentist	13
Doctors	14
Health Visitors	8
Hospital/childrens ward	2
Opticians	3
Paediatrician	1
Midwifery	1
Child & family consultation services	1

10. Experienced difficulties in using Health Services?

No – 23

Yes – 4

Comments: Differing advice

Time taken for referrals and on the waiting list

2yr assessment over 6 months late

11. What changes to Health Services would you like to see?



Comments;

listen to parents more

more activities in waiting area

reduce waiting lists

make it easier to access specialists ....occupational therapists

health Visitors to be around more when you need them

all treatment rooms to be on ground floor (disability & pushchair issues)  
 better access to doctors and repeat prescriptions  
 midwife to see you through pregnancy, labour and post natal care  
 more localised services in St Anne's  
 no clinic, no doctors, no dentist, no clinic – in fact no services in St Anne's ....need  
 clinic, midwives, Health Visitors.

**PLAY AND LEARNING**

12. Currently using play and learning services

Toddler group	9
Playgroup	8
Crèche	1
Nursery	1
Stay and Play	5
Pre-school	1
Not using	9
Not answered	2

13. Satisfaction with Play and Learning services

Very Satisfied	8
Satisfied	8
Dissatisfied	2
Don't know	3
Not answered	8



Some comments;

group leader very good...make bread and cakes.....safe and well planned  
 well thought out and run  
 very friendly..lots to do  
 ....give a lot of help also with parents  
 good playgroup (*Stay and Play*)...lot of activities..children amused...safe and  
 happy...staff friendly and make you welcome  
 they teach the children things they need to know  
 nice atmosphere for children to mix  
 need more playgroup places on Greenstead  
 toddlers...great way not only for *child* to meet people, but for myself as well

14. What changes would you like to see to Play and Learning services?

No response – 10      Don't use them – 4



Some comments;

more toddler groups  
 cheaper services...parent/toddler good.....stay open during holidays  
 need more pre-schools where parents can leave their children....give independence  
 before being left at school  
 more activities like Jo Jingles, Tumble Tots, pre-school gymnastics, trampolining  
 more like Friday group (*Stay and Play*)  
 nurseries  
 more crèche facilities

15. What Childcare services have or are you using?

Registered childminder	3
Informal childminder	11
Private nursery	2
Creche	9

16. Satisfaction with Childcare services

Very satisfied	5
Satisfied	6
Dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	2
Don't know	6



Some comments;

need nurseries for the under4's  
 more crèche facilities  
 (*Creche workers*) tend to be in groups rather than watching the children  
 not enough childcare.....more crèche facilities  
 services should be offered at cheaper cost and during the holidays  
 very dissatisfied ....children have to be potty trained .....some don't take to it very well  
 I enjoy bringing my son the Stay and Play...I know he is happy and doing the activities

17. What improvements would you like to see made to Childcare services?

all 3 year olds should be able to get a place in a pre-school as they need it before starting school  
 (*Ratio should be*) 1 adult per 4 children...find people that parents are happy to leave their children with.  
 a local nursery or kindergarten  
 to be able to take children in nappies  
 more for younger mums and babies  
 more registered childminders especially if willing to take special needs children

**FAMILIES**

18. Services used that support parents during last 12 months

Parenting classes	1
Health visitor	3
Social Services	4
Good Start	1
Health Service	1
Nursery Nurse	1

Ante-natal classes	1
Parent and Toddler	1
Not applicable	1



Some comments;

waiting for parenting classes, don't know of any more  
not aware of any in my area  
what services are there to support parents?

19. Satisfaction with services that support parents.

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	6
Dissatisfied	3
Very dissatisfied	4
Don't know	10



Some comments;

it is very hard to get hold of anyone unless you go to the doctors  
had support but would like there to be more  
health visitor very helpful  
no services!  
not very consistent  
health visitors not around when you need them

20. What changes to services that support parents would you like to see?

more help for more than one child  
breastfeeding *and* parenting support  
more of them , more advertising of services  
help with transport  
more support for children with behaviour problems  
somewhere you can just drop in , in private

21. What opportunities for skills development and learning would you like to be offered?



computer training  
get into childcare  
assertiveness classes... to get back to work

basic skills  
access courses to help.....to have another shot!  
secretarial skills  
it, cooking, childcare skills  
health courses...first aid, aromatherapy, reflexology,  
english , maths, gcse courses  
counselling skills  
more easily accessible, local  
midwifery

21. Is there anything else that would improve the area for you personally?



Some comments;

more police to patrol Greenstead...not well lit...vandalism  
nature walks, indoor play area  
baby massage, nail technicians, aerobics  
longer book start sessions at library  
council should *ensure* ...not allow gardens and houses to become run  
down...dumped cars..litter  
better response form police when called  
more lighting, easier bus routes to and from hospital, walk on buses.

### EVALUATION INTERVIEWS - 2003

Completed during July – September

For questions used during interview sessions see Appendix 3.

**31 parents interviewed**

**Female – 29**

**Male – 2**

**St Anne's – 8**

**Greenstead – 21**

**Greenstead Rd - 2**

#### **1 How did you first hear about Sure Start?**

HV – 7

Friends – 5

MW – 4

SS Core Team – 5

Pre – school group - 2

Home Start – 1

Leaflet drop – 2

Good Start – 4

Stay and Play – 1

#### **2 What was your first contact with Sure Start?**

None yet – 10

Activity day St Anne's – 3

Stay and Play – 3

Core team at office – 2

Outing to marsh farm – 1

Good Start - 1

Library reading sessions – 1  
Make and Play day – 1  
Water activity day at gas Club – 2  
Clacton Beach safety day – 2  
Go bananas trip – 1  
Clinic at Greenstead  
SS Trip – 1  
Parent Forum – 2

### 3 Did anyone explain Sure Start to you?

HV – 4  
Yes – 6  
MW – 3  
A little – 1  
No – 7  
Received letters only – 1  
Stay and Play 1  
Core team – 6  
Good Start – 1  
Parent/Toddler grp – 1

### 4 Did you understand what Sure Start was about?

No, now explained - 2  
Not entirely - 7  
Yes – 18  
Thought it was just child groups and social contact  
Yes support for parents/activities  
Yes thought it a good idea but too late for us (child nearly 4)

### 5 What were your initial feelings about SS

Really good. Opportunity to get out  
Good . Gives people more information and support  
Good idea. Pity that there isn't more for older children  
Good  
It was recommended to me.  
Good idea. – 4  
Yes it seemed alright  
Want to really get into it now baby is 5 months  
Nothing really  
Good for the area. Especially good for 3 year old, trips and activities  
At the time it provided an opportunity to get out of the house  
Bit disappointed that it is not for children over 4. Have a child with Special Needs who is aged 6  
Not really sure that it was for me. Realised that it benefits all children in the area  
It's really good mixing with other children and doing things they may not do at home.  
Very good idea. Nothing for children to do. Expensive to take them out.  
Great! It's something for the kids  
Unsure  
Thought it was great, get people involved, Not much for under 4's in area at present, Enabled mums to talk to others and make friends.  
Baby was small, 5yr old too old. Thought it would be good for baby when a little older. SS is a good thing for the area generally.  
Good for Greenstead and St Anne's, wasn't sure about St Andrew's Avenue.  
Very good idea. More involvement for parents and children. Activities and support missing in past.  
Didn't really know anything  
Good idea especially on this estate  
Felt that it was for the family  
No problem, a good thing  
Thought that it was for her (*daughter*) was not sure what would be offered

## 6 What expectations did you have

None – 13

Would like the area to be improved

Thought it would be social, meeting others , sharing experiences

Hoping for mother and baby group

Thought it would be good for 2yr old to interact with others

Good for baby when older

Since son has been out meeting other children he has calmed down

Not at beginning . help all mother, single, lonely etc. Helps socially and as a foster parent

Carry on activities, opportunities for both mums and children to socialise

Hope the project does well and it's not here for 2yrs and then vanishes

No expectations , anything was welcome. Things happen for other age groups but this is for toddlers

I want to use SS as a chance to meet others with children of the same age

I didn't know what to expect. It's new parents in the area

No expectations, thought it was about coffee mornings and toddler groups

Opportunity to socialise. Originally thought it was to enable young families to get out

Sounded good from the baby's point of view for the future. Activities to be involved in.

## 7 Have these been met?

Activity/events/interacting through the SS days. Children also learn.

Yes when family events happen. More parents need to attend forums to reach families who are hard to reach.

Yes, hoping there will be more this summer

Happy now that she knows she can come with the baby. Believed activities were aimed at toddlers upwards. Has concerns about being with a group she doesn't know.

## 8 Have you attended any meetings/where and what were they/

No – 20

Wanted to attend St Anne's meeting. Will be attending in the future

Yes parents' forum. Had something to say but someone else brought it up.

No only just heard about them but interested

Yes joint parents forum and board meetings

Parents forums at Gas Club. Would like to attend but clashes with work as it is always the same day

Parents forum

Several parents forums

No haven't heard about them

## 9. Have you attended any activities?

No – 9

Yes – 2

Attended Clacton Beach Day. Yes enjoyed it but will be better when son has calmed down

Yes, most of them so far, good fun!

Yes, happy and friendly atmosphere

Yes I enjoyed them

Yes all been very successful and enjoyable

## 10. Have you and do you receive info about Sure Start?

Yes flyers – 14

Yes Newsletters – 16

No not receiving postal problem!

Yes - 1

Yes by post – 10

Not yet

New parent – 2

## 11. How would you like to see the project moving forward?

Home support lots of mothers can't get out. Emotional support, many don't have families around.

Training – work related [no qualifications]

Access to Health Visitors [to be made easier]

Since changing [health area] my details haven't been passed on and no-one has seen me.

Would like more info about activities for under 2's.

Pre-school nursery type provision. 2 ½ yr old Hyper-active so needs some time at pre-school

Improve behaviour of children in area.

Childcare

Would like trips to help with learning [zoo, animal parks etc]

Support/training for parents to interact with school children/homework

Personal development courses to prepare for return to work

More groups set up for the younger age group. Playgroups, social groups

Home support for families who find it hard to mix or ask for support

Courses for childcare/others

Good that Sure Start are working at the school

Home support would be good

Activities/ home support /training/ personal development

Enjoyed a training course at Signpost, would like more. Days out, sports

Breast feeding support. Issues of coping with children – eating, sleeping

More childcare, baby sitting [maybe a circle] home support, good to have a friendly face to talk to. Training maybe for childcare.

To be able to take up training and have a crèche in the same building. Would like personal contact with development staff

## 12. Do you feel included in Sure Start. How can this be improved/

Yes [because I get information] – 16

Not at present, not getting right info.

Will be coming in the future

Yes, great job, wouldn't be able to do this [*activity day interview*] if it wasn't for Sure Start

Yes it's social nobody feels left out

If I no longer have pre-school children I would like to help out at activities

Yes this has been a nice morning [*activity day*]

No not at present

Outside at present. It has been a personal choice

Feel shy in case I don't know anyone. Talking to someone before hand would make it easier (FSW for example)

Felt left out when newsletters didn't arrive

Yes, would like to see SS workers more often

Personal contact from someone would help me know what activities were suitable. Not receiving newsletters

## APPENDIX 2

### Home visits research summary

#### Training opportunities requirements research

#### Comments on Newsletter

##### Analysis of Home Visits Research

17 families were asked the questions below regarding the issue of Home visits. Further responses from other families were given as part of the Evaluation questionnaire.

##### **OVERVIEW**

Several of the parents surveyed were young parents at home with a baby (8 babies under 6 months old). They identified the need for a person to talk to and offer support especially for information. This was needed to enable them to take their babies along to activity sessions to which they were unsure about being welcomed. Two references were made to support being needed for mothers with depression or post natal depression. Several identified the need for some emotional support when at home with a baby particularly those who find it hard to mix and do not have the support of a family.

Parents were asked:-

1. What are your feelings about Home visits?
2. Which Services have visited?
3. Are there any missing Services which you would value contact from?
4. What are the ages of your children under 4 years?

1. The majority of the responses to this brief survey were very positive. 2 parents stated that they did not need visits. One was unable to say either way. 4 parents would like to receive visits but had not experienced any. The comments below are listed under positive and negative:-

##### **a) Positive**

- Good thing, gives progress reports for those at home
- Supportive x 2
- Home Support is brilliant
- Welcomed
- Would like it very much

- Helpful
- *I would find it* very helpful. When baby was born had PND and asked for Home Support (the Health Visitors) from the Doctor. It has not happened.
- Good thing for parents at home especially for first time mothers.
- It's a good thing. Supportive without pressure. It can be intimidating (*asking for help*).
- Supportive and useful. Can see children in the home environment
- Would value home visit
- Lots of mothers can't get out *Home visits* give emotional support – many don't have families around.
- Offers support for families who find it hard to mix or ask for support.
- Home support would be good x 2
- Would be good to have a friendly face to talk to
- Would like some personal contact with SS development staff

**b) Negative**

- Do not need them
- Not needed, the Sure Start newsletter does it all

2. 10 families had been visited by Health Visitors.  
2 families had a Home Start visit  
3 families had Social Services visits  
3 families had a Sure Start visit  
1 family were having regular visits from the physiotherapist  
4 families could identify no visits having taken place.
  
3. 6 families stated that they could identify no missing home visiting services. Others gave the following responses when asked what services might be missing out of their choice for Home Visits:-  
Friendly support enabling them to meet other young mums  
Support for anyone with depression or feeling isolated  
Lone parents with small children need support

More information about things that are going on  
Support and guidance when children very young  
Would like Sure Start to visit (x2) to talk about joining social activities  
Support in coping with a family, support during pregnancy

4. The children varied between 3 months and 3 ½ years. There was no apparent correlation between age of children and need for Home Visits.

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO TRAINING FOR PARENTS**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2003**

**Note:- Numbers reflect the ticked boxes not number of respondents where questions are multi-choice. Not all questions were answered by each respondent**

**1. Do you have any skills/qualifications at present?**

ECDL  
CRECHE COURSE, COMPUTER SKILLS, SIGN LANGUAGE  
NVQ 2-BUSINESS ADMIN & IT. GCSE'S  
BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS, HGV 3  
NNEB  
GCSE'S  
NVQ 2 – CHILDCARE  
GCSE'S  
ASSOCIATION OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS  
GCSE & CSE  
NVQ 2 – BUSINESS ADMIN  
BHSAI (RIDING INSTRUCTOR), RDA (DISABLED RIDING),RSA1 & 2  
GCSE'S  
GCSE'S  
FINACIAL PLANNING CERT.1 & 2, CSE'S  
IT, ACCESS COURSE FOR FE  
CLAIT COURSE, FOOD HYGIENE  
NNEB (1983), NUMERACY LEVEL 1  
NVQ 2 – BUSINESS ADMIN, INTEG. BUS.STUDIES/TECHNOLOGY  
NVQ 1 – CHILDCARE, NVQ 3 RETAIL ADMIN \* MANAGEMENT, NVQ CUSTOMER SKILLS  
OCN FLORISTRY  
RSA STAGE 1 & 2, IT  
GNVQ'S, MANUAL HANDLING COURSE  
BSc MECHANICAL ENG.  
CSA – SAFETY MANAGEMENT, GCSE'S, FIRST AID,  
NVQ 3 CUSTOMER SERVICE  
ADMIN. IT, RETAIL, CUSTOMER SERVICE  
CSE'S, MANAGEMENT & ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS  
GCSE'S, NVQ 2 BUSINESS ADMIN, SHORTHAND DIPLOMA  
GCSE'S, 2x EXAMS TOWARDS BANKING DEGREE  
RJ Dip. (RETAIL JEWELLERS DIPLOMA) GCSE'S  
NVQ 2 CARE  
NVQ'S 1, 2 & 3 IN RETAIL AND CUSTOMER SERVICE  
BA Hons BUSINESS STUDIES

2. **Would you like to:**

<u>Improve your skills</u>	17
<u>Learn new skills</u>	39
<u>Do courses for pleasure</u>	26
<u>Gain a qualification</u>	38

**3. Would you like to do:**

Full time course/training	3
Part time course/training	42
A short course	36

**4. Are you working at present?**

Yes	11
No	39

**If yes , do you work**

FT	1
PT	11
Shift Work	

**5. If working what do you do?**

Play leader for crèche  
 Hotel assistant  
 Call centre  
 Project worker  
 Supervisor in shop  
 Shop assistant  
 Shopwork, factory work  
 Furniture administrator/supervisor  
 Team manager/boots chemists  
 Customer service/sales rep  
 Bank clerk  
 Pawnbroker/jeweller

**6. If you are not working, would you like to re-train to return to work?**

Yes	27
No	10

**7. Would you prefer to do your training:**

between 9.15am and 2.45pm (school day)	34
between 9.00am and 5.00pm (working day)	6
in the evening	24

**8. Would you need assistance with childcare?**

Yes	39
No	9

**Would you need assistance with transport?**

Yes	14
No	36

**Have you any comments you wish to share with us?**

Only need transport if out of Greenstead  
 I would love to do AAT but can't afford it and don't think there is any childcare  
 Like to do a computer course  
 Would like to get a qualification to work as a nurse  
 Interested in a child psychology course

Pregnant at moment but would like to do a course to return to work  
Anger management course  
Support group with ADHD children  
Skills for parents  
Healthy life style courses  
Family first aid  
Keep fit  
Introductory courses for crèche assistants  
BIT courses for pleasure  
Skills for community groups  
All crèche workers should be police checked  
Caring for the elderly  
Great idea for parents to help with returning to work  
Part time course in Childcare  
Complementary therapies

### **COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 12 TH 2003**

- ✿ I always read the newsletter, it's useful, information is about right.
- ✿ Newsletter is good and is about right. Would like some information from other parents.
- ✿ Newsletter is good and covers most things. Articles by other parents could be included. It's easy to read and the information is about right.
- ✿ Newsletter quite good. Would be nice to see a page of comments from other parents and some parenting advice. It's easy to read.
- ✿ Newsletter is very good and gives information about activities. I like the look of it.
- ✿ The newsletter lets me know what is going on and I use it as a source of local information. Easily recognised, easy to read and it looks fine.
- ✿ Newsletter is OK. Photo's on the front help to identify it easily. Quite happy with it.
- ✿ Newsletter is good and clearly laid out. Very easy to read, clear on the front, articles not too long. Like to have short pieces and details of courses available.
- ✿ Newsletter good and easy to read. Can't think of any changes.

- ✿ Newsletter has more than enough articles. Would be easier for me if there were more pictures and fewer words. Very interested in courses and would like information about them perhaps in the newsletter.



## APPENDIX 3 Questionnaire 2002

### Questions for parents, forum members and Board 2003

#### DATA FROM THE Sure Start QUESTIONNAIRE

*Q1* - 29 questionnaires were completed from families with children under 4 years old  
They had 43 children aged 0-3 years at the time between them.

*Q2 – Do your children currently live with you?*  
Yes – 29

*Q3 – Have you been aware of Sure Start starting in the area?*  
Yes – 17                      No – 12

*Q4 – Have you heard about the Sure Start parents forum?*  
Yes – 10                      No – 18

*Q5 – Do you feel well informed about what is happening in your area?*  
Yes – 11                      No – 15                      no response in box – 3

#### *How do you get your information?*

Local newsletters	8
Leaflets	7
Notice boards	2
Pre-school groups	9
Thro' local health services	1
Library	2
Co-op/St Anne's resource centre	1
Other	

#### *How would you like to get your information?*

Local newsletters	20
Leaflets	10
Notice boards	8
Pre-school groups	13
Thro' local health services	8
Library	6
Co-op/St Anne's resource centre	3
Other	

*Things posted home*  
*Email*

#### CONSIDERING YOUR AREA

*Q6 – How would you describe this area as a place to bring up children under 4 years?*

V good –  
Good – 13  
Poor – 7  
V poor – 6  
Don't know – 3

Comments:-

- There is plenty really for the under 4's, it's the older children. I have four children aged from 2yrs up to 13yrs and there is nothing really for the older children.
- There is not enough for the children and there is a lot of rubbish and graffiti
- Not a lot of places to take them. Parks , but too many older kids, glass and graffiti. Buses very hard with 2 children. Can't get bigger pram on bus. No direct route to hospital. I live in a flat with no outdoor area.
- Where we live is OK but some areas are bad.
- Just moved to this area , it seems OK.
- We have lived here for the last 8 years and have brought up 2 other children here with no problems
- Not very many resources on estate eg. Drs, chemists
- I do fell that people have tried to improve the area with nice parks and small gardens filled with roses Unfortunately the No. of teenagers hanging around smashing glass bottles and putting graffiti on the various walls has led to some rather shabby looking areas and their language can be foul.
- There are not enough facilities ie Health centre
- I have lived in St Anne's for 23 years. It is a forgotten estate where there are no services and nobody seems to care.
- Comfortable because I've always lived around here
- Rough
- There is not a lot in the area that I am aware of for mums/parents and children
- Good for resources
- This area has not enough play areas for infants. The play areas we have are vandalised
- Like library and pre-school, nice playgrounds
- There's quite a bit to do ie mothers and toddlers , pre-schools, play parks
- Quite rough
- Would like to see supervised by qualified people more
- Not enough services for young children with special needs
- Nothing for him to do
- The parks are not very clean but the mother 7 toddler groups are good and schools are not too bad

***Q7 – How satisfied are you with the services in the area for children under 4?***

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	13
Dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	3
Don't know	3

Comments:-

- Not enough childcare
- Not enough playschool provision not enough help with special needs
- I have a wide selection of playgroups and such
- Not a lot for children of young age
- There could be more
- Facilities (*dissatisfied*)
- There's lots for them to do to keep them happy
- Very hard to place my eldest child because of his special needs and because he is still in nappies
- Do not know of much that is going on

- There is not much available besides a play-group - and events only during the holidays
- What services
- There's not enough
- The library is excellent, new books are always available. Various toddler groups to go to, swimming lessons from the age of three. Excellent. Health Visitors informative
- The few playgroups I attend are run well and well thought out
- Playgroups are good and Health centre is good
- There seems to be quite a lot to do for children
- Due to limited places for pre-schools I found it really hard to find a place for my nearly three yr old who needs it. (Due to waiting lists)
- If it wasn't for SCL parent and toddler groups I'd be going up the wall. More in afternoon would be good
- Once again you should really be thinking about the older children

***Q8 – How satisfied are you with facilities in the area for children under 4?  
(for example – playgrounds)***

Very satisfied	
Satisfied	13
Dissatisfied	9
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	2

**Comments:-**

- Parks are not clean enough for little ones
- Playgrounds are not suitable as older children wreck them
- Graffiti and vandalism in playparks not repaired
- I have a number of parks around my area
- There are hardly any baby swings and small apparatus, it's all for the older children
- Plenty of parks and fields for them to go
- Big kids destroy them
- There is not a lot in the area
- The parks are great but are always dirty, vandalised or have kids smoking or being abusive in them
- Playground is unkept
- The parks are good, brightly coloured and often wood chip often raked (it is very annoying that the teenagers keep hooking the swings over the top of the frame)
- Satisfied although it would help if older children had somewhere
- There is one small playground/park for the whole estate
- Could be more use of existing closed play facilities such as the Adventure playground
- Small park just around corner is adequate
- There seems enough for children during the week if they are too young for nursery
- They are always vandalised by older kids so you find glass bottles and worse in or around them
- There is enough on the estate to go to
- Could have more parks

**HEALTH**

**Q9 – Which Health Services have you used for your children under 4 and other immediate family members in the last year?**

Clinic		19
Dentist	13	
Doctors	14	
Health visitors	8	
Hospital/childrens ward	2	
Opticians	3	
Paediatrician	1	
Midwife	1	
Child and family consultation services	1	

**Q10 – Have you experienced any difficulties in using Health Services for your family?**

No	23	
Yes	4	
Yes	-	Differing advice Time taken for referrals and on waiting list 2yr assessment over 6 months late

**Q11 – What changes to Health Services for you and your family would you like to see?**

- Listen to parents more
- More activities in waiting areas
- Reduce waiting lists
- Make it easier to access specialists ie:occupational therapists
- Health visitors to be around a lot more when you need them
- All treatment rooms to be on the ground floor (disability and pushchair issues)
- Better access to doctors and repeat prescriptions
- Midwife to see you through pregnancy, labour and post natal care
- More localised services in St Anne's
- No clinic, no doctors, no dentist, no clinic – in fact no services in St Annes'. Need clinic, midwives, Health Visitors.

## **PLAY AND LEARNING**

**Q12 – Are you currently using any Play and Learning Services for children under 4 years?  
(For example – a playgroup)**

Toddler group – 9
Playgroup - 8
No – 8
Not answered – 2
Creche – 1
Nursery – 1
Don't know of any
Stay and Play – 5
Pre-school – 1

**Q13 - How satisfied are you with Play and Learning Services in the area?**

Not answered – 8  
Satisfied - 8  
Very satisfied – 8  
Dissatisfied – 2  
Don't know - 3

Comments:-

- The group leader is very good. The children make bread and cakes as well as painting and drawing. It is safe and well planned.
- Well thought out and run
- Very friendly, lots to do.
- They give a lot for the children to do and give a lot of help also with parents
- Because it is a very good playgroup (Stay and Play) they do a lot of activities to keep the children amused and to keep them safe and happy. The staff who help are lovely, friendly and make you feel welcome.
- They teach the children things they need to know.
- Nice atmosphere for children to mix with other children
- Need more playschool places on Greenstead
- *Playgroup* close, open regular (sic)
- Lots of playthings and the people are nice
- Toddlers is a great way, not only for *child* to meet people, but for myself as well

***Q14 – What changes would you like to see to the Play and Learning Services for children under 4 years?***

No response – 10  
Don't use them - 4

- More Toddler groups
- None x 2
- Services offered cheaper. Parent and toddler good because not that expensive. Stay open during holidays
- Don't know
- Need more pre-schools where parents can leave their child to give independence before left at school
- I would love to see more activities such as Jo Jingles/Tumble Tots/pre-school gymnastics/trampolining etc
- More groups like the one on Friday (Stay and Play – CAW)
- More of them
- Nurseries
- More crèche facilities
- Cheaper prices
- Cheaper play and learning
- There are not enough Toddler groups on Greenstead

***Q15 – What Childcare Services are you using or have used for your children aged under 4 years?***

Registered childminder - 3  
Informal childminder (friend or relative) - 11  
Private nursery - 2  
Creche (for example: Stay and Play) – 9

The remainder made no response or stated N/A. A few chose several types of childcare used.

Comments:-

- I find that if you have a groups

***Q.16- How satisfied are you with Childcare services for under 4 year olds in the area***

Very satisfied	5
Satisfied	6
Dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	2
Don't know	6

Comments:

- If you have a group of people looking after children they tend to be in the group rather than watching (*the children*)
- Need nurseries for the under 4's
- More crèche facilities
- Not enough childcare
- Services should be offered at cheaper costs and during the holidays
- *My* childminder is excellent
- I only use my family as childminder and that's not often
- There should be more childcare places x2
- *V dissatisfied* because they have to be potty trained before the children can go and some children like my own don't take to the potty very well
- *Satisfied* because I enjoy bringing my son to Stay and Play because I know he is happy playing there and doing the activities
- *V satisfied* because my sister looks after her and I trust her.

The remainder of the questionnaires were from people who do not use any form of childcare.

***Q.17- What improvements would you like to see made to Childcare Services in the area?***

Don't use them – 1  
Don't know - 1

- Really you should have 1 adult per 4 children. Also find people that parents are happy to leave their children with. A crèche that parents can have a look around and feel safe to leave their little ones. I have lived in Greenstead for 32 years and I would not feel safe to leave *child* with just anyone.

- All 3 yr olds to be able to get a place in a pre-school as they need it before starting school
- A local nursery or kindergarten
- People need to be made more aware
- To be able to take children in nappies
- More things for younger mums and babies
- More registered childminders especially if willing to take special needs children
- Cheaper and more childcare

The remainder of the questionnaires had no response to this question

### **FAMILIES**

***Q.18- What services that support parents are you or have you used during the last 12 months? (for example parenting classes)***

Not applicable – 1  
 Parenting classes – 1  
 Health Visitor – 3  
 Social Services – 4  
 Good Start – 1  
 Health Service – 1  
 Nursery Nurse – 1  
 Ante-natal classes – 1  
 Parent and toddler - 1

Comments:-

- Waiting for parenting classes don't know of any more
- I am not aware of any in my area
- Again I must say what services are there to support parents?

The remainder gave no response to this question

***Q.19- How satisfied are you with services that support parents in the area?***

V satisfied – 1  
 Satisfied – 6  
 Dissatisfied – 3  
 V dissatisfied – 4  
 Don't know - 10

Comments:-

- It is very hard to get hold of anyone unless you go to the doctors
- I have had support but feel that there should be more
- My Health Visitor has been very helpful
- No services
- Not very consistent
- The Health Visitor is brilliant
- On hand, most times very soon (*health visitor - CAW*)
- Health Visitors are never around when you need them

***Q.20 - What changes to services that support parents would you like to see in the area?***

- More support
- None

- More help for more than one child
- Breastfeeding support, Parenting support
- More of them, more advertising of services
- Help with transport. Recycling (in top floor flat)
- I feel that there should be more support for children with behaviour problems
- Somewhere you can just drop in , in private

***Q.21 - What opportunities for skills development and learning would you like to be offered? (For example: basic skills, IT computer training)***

Comments:-

- Before you offer any you should get the childcare sorted
- Computer training x 2 , so I could improve my career
- How to get into childcare
- Assertiveness classes to help mothers who have been mothers for 13 years to cope with trying to get back into work
- Basic skills
- Access courses to help those not educated enough: to have another shot!
- Secretarial skills
- IT, cooking, childcare skills
- IT training
- Health courses ie: first aid, Aromatherapy, reflexology, health and beauty, basic skills
- English, maths, GCSE courses
- Counselling courses more local to me
- More easily accessible, more local, maybe a local college (less travelling)
- Midwifery, how to do training

***Q.21 – Is there anything else that would improve the area for you personally?***

- More police to patrol Greenstead especially around the shop areas and not very well lit areas, and vandalism to bus shelters
- Quieter!
- Nature walks, indoor play area ie like Go bananas, kids education area
- Aromatherapy, baby massage, nail technicians, Aerobics
- The council should make sure that people who live in St Anne’s area do not allow their gardens and outside of the houses to become run down, dumped cars, overgrown, litter everywhere.
- Longer Book Start sessions at the library
- No x 2
- More police in area. Better response when you ring them. Cars dumped and broken into. People drive around recklessly with no driving license.
- More lighting, more police, easier bus routes to and from hospital, walk on buses

## **SERVICE PROVIDERS QUARTERLY REPORT**

**Name of Service Provider**

.....

**Date of Report** .....

**Identified Reporting  
Quarter**

**January – March**

**April – June**

**July – September**

**October – December**

**Description of Activities and number of Families Contacted**

**Describe your involvement during this quarter in Sure Start activity sessions/family days/support groups etc**

**Description of new initiatives started by your Service in this quarter**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the upper half of the page. It is intended for the user to provide a description of their participation in Sure Start Sub-groups.

**Describe your participation in Sure Start Sub-groups during this quarter**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the middle section of the page. It is intended for the user to provide a detailed description of how they are meeting the requirements within their Service Level Agreement.

**Description of how you are meeting the requirements within your Service Level Agreement**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the upper half of the page. It is intended for a user to provide input or a response.

**Please specify which of the Aims and Objectives from the Delivery Plan you have been working towards this quarter**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for a user to provide input or a response.

Name (optional):  
\_\_\_\_\_Sure Start event: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
\_\_\_\_\_

We hope you have enjoyed this Sure Start activity today. To help us to plan future events we would value your comments below:

**1. How did you hear about this event?**

- By post [ ]
- Through Sure Start team [ ]
- From a poster / flyer [ ]
- From playgroup / parent toddler group [ ]
- Personal contact [ ]
- Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Was the cost set at the right level?**

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]
- It was free [ ]

**3. Did the activity meet your expectations?**

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

**4. What did your children enjoy most about today?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**5. Was the venue: suitable**

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

**6. Was the venue: easy to get to?**

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

Please comment \_\_\_\_\_ Please comment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**7. Could your enjoyment of today have been improved?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sure Start event:

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of event:

\_\_\_\_\_

**The event**

How was the event promoted?	
How well was it attended?	
Were the activities correct and suitable for the age of the children?	
Were there enough staff present?	

**Transport**

	Yes	No	Comment
Was equipment transported?			
Were there enough staff to do this?			

**Administration**

	Yes	No	Comment
Were the attendance and non /photographic consent forms completed?			
Were the family evaluation forms completed?			
Was a risk assessment completed?			
Did the activity meet the criteria of the Delivery Plan and if so which criteria?			

**General**

Could the event / activity have been improved?	
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Any other comments:	
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## OVERVIEW

Sure Start Colchester has had a good first year, building the programme from a very small base in Greenstead Road and culminating with a move into the new Community Centre in Greenstead. The team of one has increased to eight and awareness of Sure Start within the community has grown as the programme's presence has been established.

Despite problems accessing any information about families in the area due to Data Protection issues, the programme has now established contact through registering approximately 2/3 rds of the estimated 655 families in the area with children under 4 years old. This has been achieved by being pro-active throughout the area and having a visible presence at appropriate times and places.

Sure Start have established a good working relationship with professionals in the area and have eight funded Service Providers and funded programmes and events happening regularly.

A procedure for Monitoring has been set up and Evaluation is now imbedded into the programme.



Information reaches parents in various ways and in a manner identified by them as most accessible.

Since moving into the new community centre Sure Start is placed central to the area and is able to offer easy contact to families as well as use of the premises for extended activities.

The Sure Start team feel very positive about the programme which is developing well and working towards meeting the identified targets.

Some issues which have arisen from this Evaluation are noted as:-

- ✓ **Parents have identified a need for appreciation of their volunteering and support within**



the programme whether helping within the office, attending meetings or supporting the PHYS group.

- ✓ Systems for sharing information at all levels of the programme need to be re-assessed.
- ✓ The Board has identified a need for them to have a more "hands on" approach by building a clearer vision and understanding of where the programme is at present and future development.
- ✓ The "hard to reach" part of the programme now needs some assessment and plans and procedures put in place for contacting these families.
- ✓ The Sure Start programme has now reached a time when membership of various groups will be changing through natural movement in and out of the programme. The establishment of Induction procedures are therefore a priority.

### **ACTION RESEARCH/EVALUATION**

The role of Action Researcher is one of evaluator and researcher. Liaison with Service providers and development of systems for gathering qualitative data and base line data, is identified within the Delivery plan, part of the annual targets and milestones, and is also part of the role.

Annex 6 of "Planning and Delivering Sure Start" states-

*Local programmes need to evaluate what they are doing so they can:*

- ◆ Understand how well their services are performing
- ◆ Keep track of progress in meeting the objectives and targets for Sure Start
- ◆ Make changes to their programme as a result of evaluation findings

Action Research is a supportive process which enables the Sure Start team to review processes, activities and events on a regular basis in a constructive manner.

At the start of the programme several stages could be identified as milestones for evaluation. Review of services, support programme and consultation with



users requires regular evaluation and a planned strategy.

A strategy to produce **regular evaluations** by imbedding them within the programme has now been established and provides immediate feedback on the events and activities.

A simple one page evaluation sheet is used at the end of each activity and parents are now familiar with this process. *[See appendix 4]* By producing an amalgamated evaluation from these returns each time, the team can assess any particular issues which might cause changes to future planned events. This evaluation is filed in an appropriate folder with all other relevant information in date order. The process enables any of the team to access the information when planning a similar event.

**Individual evaluations** may be carried out for some activities particularly where they have been identified for separate funding. These evaluations are accomplished in the same way as regular evaluations, by asking participants to complete a sheet of simple questions but they are tailored to that particular activity. Families are always asked whether they would like to complete the sheet themselves or prefer to have the questions read to them for completion by the evaluator. Personal evaluation in this manner allows Action Research to take place through conversation and opportunistic questioning.

The Action Researcher role also encompasses individual pieces of research. These can be identified directly from issues arising from the Delivery Plan, through team meetings or by members of the Sure Start Colchester team. They also arise from parents issues and comments. For example, within this evaluation *[See appendix 2]* there is a record of comments in relation to assessing the first 4 issues of the newsletter, asked for by team members and parents on the promotion group.

Some research had been undertaken in the past within the Sure Start area by others but it was necessary to establish a start point for the programme to work towards improving services and facilities. Some priority could then also be

given to the development work. This was the **First questionnaire and Evaluation [See appendix 3]**, which took place in 2002 and is given in detail within this evaluation. A **second questionnaire and Evaluation [See appendix 3]** was used at the end of 2003 as a review of the start up year and is again reproduced within this report.

Baseline data has also been gathered during the first months of the programme and this needs to be reviewed annually as forming part of the evaluation of the change of services within the area, for example childcare which includes pre-school, playgroups and childminders.



Regular meetings between Midwives, Health Visitors and the Action Researcher have produced procedures for gathering monitoring information. Since joining the team this has included the Data and Monitoring Officer.

All Service Providers return quarterly reports using a pro-forma sheet **[See appendix 4]** The information collected from these reports informs the Programme Manager and the Action Researcher on a regular basis and will form part of the evaluation of Service Provision to take place during March/April 2004.

The role of Action Researcher is one of support, analysis and feedback - a role within the programme whilst looking from outside the programme. This seems contradictory but works well enabling analysis to be undertaken with an understanding of how, why and what, through being part of the programme. Regular contact between the Action Researcher and parents helps in the process of gathering information and feedback as the families in the area prefer to know who they are talking to and increases acceptance of the regular evaluation process.

*Carolyn Webb*  
Action Researcher

## **Time Line**

**2002**

**First Questionnaire**  
**Second Questionnaire**  
**Evaluations of regular monthly activities**  
**Research – home visits, newsletter, PND support system**  
**Confirmation of baseline data**

