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## BACKGROUND

### Sure Start Torquay and it's area

1.1. The 1998 Deprivation Index showed Torbay Council as one of 100 most deprived local authorities. The Tormohun ward which is partly within Sure Start Torquay's boundaries is one of the most deprived wards in the country with a higher than national average:

- ◆ unemployment level
- ◆ number of households lacking amenities
- ◆ children in low earning households
- ◆ households lacking amenities
- ◆ lack of educational participation of 17 year olds

The Ellacombe and Torwood wards that Sure Start Torquay also serves have a higher than national average:

- ◆ unemployment level
- ◆ number of households lacking amenities
- ◆ children in low earning households<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 gives the demographic profiles of the three wards that Sure Start Torquay covers and compares them with figures for Torquay as a whole.

**Table 1: Demographic profiles for Tormohun, Ellacombe, Torwood and Torquay<sup>2</sup>**

Ward	IMD rank	Resident population	Population under 18 (%)	Population between 18 and 64 (%)	Population aged 65 or over	Ethnic minority population (%)	Single parent families (%)
Tormohun	848	10 935	20.2	62.9	16.9	2.1	8.7
Ellacombe	1 538	7 360	24.2	61.3	14.6	1.5	10.2
Torwood	990	7 622	11.1	56.2	32.7	1.6	3.7
Torquay	n/a	63 998	20.9	58.3	20.8	1.5	3.3

1.2. Below is a list of staff presently employed by Sure Start Torquay:

- ◆ programme manager
- ◆ administrator (part-time)
- ◆ finance officer (part-time)
- ◆ three community development workers
- ◆ link worker for special needs with portage and inclusion
- ◆ childcare co-ordinator
- ◆ play and learning co-ordinator
- ◆ research and evaluation officer (0.5) (REO)
- ◆ crèche supervisor
- ◆ crèche deputy supervisor
- ◆ outreach health lead

In addition the programme has Service Level Agreements (SLA) with

- Relate
- Health visiting service
- Specialist Health Visitor for substance misuse
- A paediatric chiropractor
- Ellacombe Childcare Centre
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Homestart

<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from Research and Intelligence Unit, Torbay Council - Deprivation in Torbay

<sup>2</sup> Research and Intelligence Unit – 2001 census data

- Torbay Library services
- Midwifery
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Devon Childminding Association

### **Capital build projects**

- 1.3. The programme is in the process of purchasing a former nightclub, ZigZags, in Torquay's town centre. It is planned that this will be converted to contain a play café, crèche, consulting room, group rooms, kitchen, office, an internet alcove and childcare for twenty-three children. Extended use of the building is being looked into, with a Scout group already expressing an interest to use the premises during some evenings.

The programme manager has reported "the building works began in July 2004 and progress meetings have taken place with the builders, architect, quantity surveyor, programme manager and NCH surveyor monthly. The main issues have been removal of asbestos and the levelling of the garden which has led to a delay in the date of completion which is now estimated as March 2005." It is now looking unlikely that the garden will be levelled, due to the large cost such a project would entail.

- 1.4. The next project involves attaching a building to the side of a local swimming pool. It is hoped that this will attract funding from Sport England to renovate the pool as well, which will be used by Sure Start Torquay for swim sessions for parents and/or children, aqua-natal classes and aqua-aerobics. This building will provide a crèche, kitchen, group room, consulting room, office, toilet facilities and disabled access.

The programme manager reports that "the plans for this have gone back to the drawing board as estimated costs were £130k overspent. The new plans will go to planning in January 2005 and it is hoped that building work will commence in April 2005 and we hope to be completed by autumn 2005. The main issues around this development are the lease of the council owned land and also the building costs."

### **Evaluation work completed in 2004**

- 1.5. One of the main focuses of evaluation work in this period has been to develop an evaluative culture within the Sure Start Torquay team. This has been a slow process but a valuable one. An evaluation timetable was produced for all services that the programme offers (see Appendix A) and circulated amongst the team. Each team member identified as responsible for the evaluation of a particular service will meet with the REO who aims to offer advice and guidance on how to evaluate the service. The team member would then perform the data collection and the REO would assist, rather than conducting evaluations of all services themselves. There are two main benefits from this approach:

- I. The skill mix of the team will improve. By conducting evaluations of their own services, the team member is developing experience and knowledge in an area that potentially they have never approached in the past.
- II. As the provider or lead of a service will be conducting the evaluation they will be learning more about what they deliver and through the evaluation how best to improve it.

A Best Practice forum was planned for early 2004 to inform all agencies involved what the two local Sure Start programmes have been doing and to look at areas of best practice and learning. This forum is now to become a place to share evaluation updates and research findings. Initially it was planned for the forum to provide guidance on how to work together to meet shared targets and visions. This has now become a separate initiative within the programme where Sure Start Torquay hosts quarterly meetings on a specific theme, sharing practice and information with other agencies. The research and evaluation forum has not gone ahead as planned due to unexpected delays with the progression of the evaluation of the specialist health visitor (SHV) and the MORI report. It is now hoped the forum will go ahead in 2005, post-publication of the MORI report and completion of the SHV evaluation.

- 1.6. This report summarises evaluation reports prepared in the following areas and details how the learning from these evaluations have informed and developed Sure Start Torquay's practice.

The following services have had evaluations completed in 2004:

Ducklings  
Christmas party  
Sound Parenting  
Music, Rhythm and Rhyme  
Rainbow Book Club  
Ellacombe Childcare Centre Holiday Club  
Breaking Free group (Health Visitors)

Research:  
Dads  
MORI  
Staff satisfaction

In addition the following SLAs have been reviewed by a SLA review panel, consisting of members of the management board:

Speech and Language Therapy  
Health visitors  
Relate  
Homestart  
Library services  
Maternity care assistant (MCA)  
Paediatric chiropractor

The findings from these reports will be discussed in summary detail below when this report addresses the targets that Sure Start Torquay works towards.

#### **New initiatives on the horizon**

- 1.7. This year has seen two new evaluation initiatives proposed and approved by the Sure Start Torquay management board. These are briefly presented below in the hope that appraisals can be reported in future reports.
- 1.8. The first is the opening of Sure Start Torquay's doors to university students. The REO has been trying to form links with the University of Plymouth's social research department in the hope that students can be attracted to complete research within the Sure Start area. The benefits to the programme if this initiative succeeds will be multiple cheap yet professionally supervised pieces of research of university standard. It is also hoped that Masters students would complete their dissertation project in the area, again providing research of an even higher quality for minimal expense. A major bonus is that all research would be cleared by the university's ethical board, ensuring the participants have been duly considered and are safe from harm.
- 1.9. The second initiative arises from the ethical issues inherent in doing research with people. At present there is no formal mechanism by which research done by the programme is ethically monitored. The only body capable is the Local Research Ethics Committee (LREC) that unfortunately is health based and requires the completion of a sometimes inappropriately large and frequently intimidating application form. It is hoped that members of the Sure Start Torquay management board will receive training similar to that of the LREC members and then act in the capacity of a mini-ethics committee for research being completed for the programme. It is hoped that if successful this initiative can be mainstreamed across the region and ensure all services that complete research are able to seek an ethical opinion of their planned work.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 As mentioned above, one of the key activities this year has been to develop an evaluative culture within the team. This has meant adopting a number of methodological approaches so that individual service evaluations could be tailored to the service and the person conducting them. In addition this report is not in a place to comment on all the evaluation work undertaken on behalf of the Sure Start Torquay programme, as some of it was conducted independently by external agencies.
- 2.2. Due to the nature of Sure Start services, work and clientele, a less traditional approach to evaluation has been adopted in many instances. While this may mean the findings are not as conclusive as rigorous research methods would uncover, it has allowed the team to begin to become familiar with evaluation and to at least capture part of the picture.

## 3. OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Public Service Agreement Target

To reduce the proportion of children aged 0-3 years in the 600 Sure Start areas who are re-registered within the space of 12 months on the child protection register by 20 per cent by 2005

One hundred per cent of families with young children to have been contacted by local programmes within the first two months of birth.

### Service Delivery Target

Offer advice and support to those men and women suffering from domestic violence.

Research viability of reducing transience of families in TQ1.

Improve quality of life for parents of children with severe/profound disabilities.

Increase per cent of male carers accessing 0-4 services.

- 3.1. In 2004 two children were re-registered on the Child Protection Register in the Sure Start Torquay area, which is half the number re-registered in 2003<sup>3</sup>. This represents a 50% reduction in the past year, a laudable achievement, but one that cannot be solely attributed to the work of the programme. All the agencies delivering services to families in this area deserve credit for this outcome. A development during 2004 was an agreement between Social Services and one of the programme's community development workers to receive information on all children registered on the CPR. As a result the programme now knows all children that become registered and de-registered and can formulate support plans accordingly. The programme is now working with both families that have had children re-registered this year.
- 3.2. At the start of this year Sure Start Torquay implemented a comprehensive database to monitor activities and registered families. As with all new resources teething problems prevented its immediate, universal use and it has only been in the latter part of the year that it has become widely used. Monitoring figures taken from this database showed that the programme had visited 72% of families in the first two months of their child's birth. However the maternity care assistant (MCA) believes the programme has visited nearly all children within their first two months. This suggests two potential problems:
- i) The monitoring system is inaccurate. This will be followed up with the providers of the database.
  - ii) Those making the visits are not inputting their data onto the monitoring database, which implies a training need.

<sup>3</sup> Annual Evaluation 2003 reported 4 re-registrations in the Sure Start Torquay area during 2003.

Regardless of the root of the issue, action needs to be taken to ensure the programme is meeting this target and the information being returned to the Sure Start unit accurately reflects Sure Start Torquay's activity.

- 3.3. Sure Start Torquay started operating a Domestic Violence Support Line during 2004. In this time it received eight calls. Through this and other referrals, the community development worker has made nineteen visits to nine different families, specifically around domestic violence.

See also the Relate section (4.6) below.

- 3.4. The programme commissioned the social research company MORI to conduct an anonymous survey, investigating general aspects of living and raising a child in the Sure Start area. They identified a number of issues that are available in the full report (a copy of which is available upon request). A summary is included in Appendix A, with an action plan written to clarify how the issues raised are being addressed in Appendix B. The programme will be using this report to work with other providers in the area to help to improve the quality of life for families and thereby reduce transience. The action plan demonstrates how research and evaluation is being used to inform the development and direction of the programme.

The programme is working closely with housing agencies and homelessness unit to develop a programme of support for those families affected by homelessness and particularly those families in bed and breakfast accommodation. Part of the SLA with the Health Visiting service is to develop a course to support families in bed and breakfast accommodation to eat and maintain as healthy a lifestyle as possible in these difficult circumstances. This service will be reviewed in 2005.

- 3.5. The portage and inclusion worker (PIW) is running a special needs support group, conducting portage visits with a family and offering home visits and telephone support to those in need.

Since July 2004 the special needs group has seen eight registered families attend, with an average of a little under three families per session. These sessions include the children, so a separate crèche is not run. This service is being evaluated early 2005, so that report should hold more on the outcomes being achieved by this group and future directions for service development. The group aims to provide emotional and mental support for the families involved in raising a child with special needs, through shared experience and empathy.

The programme has produced criteria<sup>4</sup> for inclusion to the portage and inclusion services which is included in the text box below.

A family with a child under 4 years of age shall be considered needing additional targeted support from the Sure Start portage and inclusion services if he/she:

- i. Is experiencing significant developmental impairment of delays, in one or more of the areas of cognitive development, sensory or physical development, social, behaviour or emotional development; or
- ii. Has a condition which has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay; or
- iii. If the main carers or siblings who have additional needs affect the development of the child or the families access to services

Only one family is receiving portage from Sure Start Torquay. This is due to the special needs support unit at the local hospital employing two new portage workers, effectively mainstreaming the portage service.

During 2004 the PIW made fourteen home visits to nine families experiencing special needs. Additionally there were twenty-seven other significant contacts (e.g. telephone support) with

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<sup>4</sup> This has been based on 'Together from the Start' (2003) DfES

twelve different families (the nine that were visited and an additional three). It is hoped that the aforementioned research with the special needs group will indicate the outcomes being achieved by these two services as well.

Towards the end of 2004, Sure Start Torquay finalised a Special Needs Criteria that would help workers to identify those in need of support and help in the setting up of support plans. It is hoped that a clear system will then allow those with extra need to receive appropriate and timely support. Evaluation of this will be conducted in 2005.

- 3.6. A piece of research was completed during this year, exploring what Sure Start Torquay could do to encourage male carers to attend services and what barriers they perceived at present. The findings from this report and the recommendations made will be informing service and practice development in 2005 and is available upon request or from the National Evaluation of Sure Start website ([www.ness.bbk.ac.uk](http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk)). The main findings from the report were that a number of fathers find play and parenting groups quite 'cliquey'; large groups of mothers can often make them feel unwelcome. Timing was another major issue with one making the comment **"working full time – no time to attend anything."** Two items that the programme is going to work on is the fathers request for more variety – **"I would be more likely to attend if the groups were not the usual 'sit in a room around the kids'"** – and to provide extra, more personal support aimed at fathers – **"There appears to be a lot of help for mums...but very little for dads. I have had stress and know several dads who have but have received no support from...agencies. We seem forgotten."**

#### 4. OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVING HEALTH

##### Public Service Agreement Target

Achieve by 2005 in the Sure Start area a ten per cent reduction in the number of women who smoke in pregnancy.

##### Service Delivery Target

Parenting support and information available for all parents in the Sure Start area.

All local programmes give guidance on breast feeding, hygiene and safety.

Ten per cent reduction in the Sure Start area aged 0-3 admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, respiratory infection or a severe injury in 2005.

##### Locally monitored targets

To extend the use of ante-natal education to those who would not normally attend.

To promote and provide for family mental health.

To develop programmes to reduce substance abuse and support families.

To increase the opportunities for play and physical activity for children and parents.

To ensure all professionals and associated workers in the Sure Start area are fully aware and competent in working with and developing relationships with families from diverse cultures and those with disabilities.

- 4.1. During 2004 there were 166 mothers whose smoking status was known. Of these 51 smoked during their pregnancy and 15 gave up at some point prior to or during their pregnancy. This amounts to a 22% reduction in mothers that have smoked, exceeding the Sure Start target. Future reports will be able to use these figures for comparative purposes.

- 4.2. According to the programme's monitoring database, at the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 there were 784 carers registered, 680 children from 455 different families. During the course of 2004 the programme had significant contact with 413 parents and 394 children from 339 families. This means that support and information from direct contact with the programme was available to 75% of registered families. What this does not encompass is mailings sent to every family on the database. While they may not access a Sure Start service it is feasible that they will access another agency's service due to a mailing the programme may have sent them.
- 4.3. The following figures are for the period January 2004 – November 2004. There were 154 mothers breastfeeding at birth, 62 after six weeks and 24 after four months. Again this is the first time the programme has collected this information and future reports will use these figures for comparative purposes.
- 4.4. The programme only started receiving A&E admission data in April, so the figures presented here are not for the full year. During this period the local A&E departments saw 50 incidents of severe injury, 11 of gastro-enteritis and 32 respiratory infections amongst children in the Sure Start Torquay area, under the age of four. Although the target is to reduce admissions resulting from emergency treatment, for the sake of evaluation treatment at A&E is being used as an indicator, i.e. reduce the number of people needing to be seen in A&E and the number of admissions will also fall as a result.

As this is the first year these figures have been available, they will be used for comparative purposes in 2005's annual report.

- 4.5. The service Level agreement with the midwifery service provides enhanced one to one ante-natal education to those families who would not normally access ante-natal education. This is delivered by a Maternity Care Assistant but has recently been increased to include a child development worker within the Sure Start team. As many families as possible have contact with the MCA in the antenatal period and Sure Start offers support to any families who need additional support.

Sure Start Torquay has been without a midwife for the last 6 months and are hoping that once a midwife is in post that an antenatal education programme will be developed for second-time parents and any other specific groups not accessing the current provision in region.

- 4.6. Sure Start Torquay has instigated a number of parenting programmes for differing levels of need. Evaluations of the services are planned for the following year and a brief description of each service is included here.
- Webster-Stratton – a widely used programme that helps parents look at relationships within their families and gives them problem solving techniques to provide a calmer more ordered home environment where there is appropriate guidance and boundaries in place. This programme has been widely researched and evaluated and there are a number of reports showing its success available. During 2004 this service saw three carers and five children.
  - Positive Parenting is a Family Caring Trust (FCT) programme. This provides a universal approach to helping parents learn skills that will give them coping strategies to help deal with situations with their children that cause them stress, understand why children do what they do, analyse their own behaviour as well as their children's and replace negative interactions with positive ones. During 2004 this service saw nineteen carers and twenty-one children.
  - Being Assertive (another FCT programme) helps parents build their self-esteem, enable them to question and confront structures that oppress them and deny them their rights and be able to put across their feelings and views in an appropriate manner. The Leader's handbook for this course says the programme will "enable small groups of parents to come together and support each other as they learn a variety of assertive skills and apply them to their own situations." During 2004 this service saw three carers and four children.

In addition to these parenting programmes, Sure Start Torquay also offers a special needs support group (see 3.5.) and their home visiting service.

#### Relate

In a recent review of their service, Relate (whom the programme has an SLA with), showed that during the period of April – December 2004 they had seen:

- At drop-in sessions: 31 new contacts (of which three were male) and 182 ongoing clients
- For formal counselling: 17 clients (six of which were couples) and offered 68 sessions with a non-attendance of 29%.

Sure Start parents presented with the following diverse problems: communication difficulties, separation/divorce, alcohol abuse, work problems, bereavement, young children, domestic violence, sexual problems and unemployment.

To support work with Sure Start families, a specialist supervision group has been established for all counsellors working within Sure Start programmes in South Devon. This is in addition to their regular personal supervision and provides an opportunity for them to share and learn from their experiences.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this learning and their progress Relate are developing a family counselling service that will help families work through difficulties in a mutually beneficial way. Future evaluation work should address the outcomes families have experienced as a result of the service they have received from Relate.

#### Breaking free group

With funding from the programme the local health visitors are presently running a 'Breaking Free' group which is based on a well-established and proven course for treating postnatal depression. They completed an evaluation of their activities early in 2004 with the following results:

- All women that attended the group reported non-clinical levels of post-natal depression and anxiety by the completion of the course.
- 60% of the attendees that completed the course reported an increase in their self-esteem score of at least eight points on Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. Those that experienced a reduction had started with very high self-esteem and the health visitors felt that the reduction was merely an effect of testing, not a reduction in their self-esteem as a result of attending the group.

As a result of these outcomes for the mothers attending, Sure Start Torquay has continued to fund the service.

- 4.7. At present the programme has a service level agreement with a specialist health visitor for substance misuse. This role is undergoing a major evaluation with the aim of having it mainstreamed. The evaluation will be completed in 2005 and will therefore be included in 2005's annual report.

During 2004 a review of the Sound Parenting support service for parents dealing with substance misuse, certain issues were identified. Firstly, evaluation needed to be built into the process of running the group as to date it has been lacking. Secondly, the service needs to continue (else there would be an even bigger gap in an area that is already lacking services) but changes need to be made for it to be effective. For a summary of the report please see Appendix D. These findings are being used to help a planning sub-group finalise how the service will be delivered in 2005.

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from Relate South Devon's report for Sure Start Torquay. Copy available upon request.

See also the Relate section (4.6) above.

- 4.8. This year has seen a plethora of opportunities for play and physical activity in the Sure Start Torquay area. Stay and Play has been the most widely attended with the sessions seeing 87 different families in 2004. From these 87 families, the sessions have seen 190 different individuals consisting of 87 carers and 103 children. Due to overwhelming demand and in a bid to attract more people, Sure Start Torquay has needed to expand this service to two sessions per week and are looking to increase this further still. Below a description of the service is included from the programme's Play and Learning Co-ordinator.

The Stay and Play sessions offer a safe, secure and stimulating environment for all Sure Start parents and children under four.

The sessions aim to promote each child's social, physical, intellectual, communication and emotional development. Appropriate activities and equipment are available to help children learn through exploratory play and parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by interaction and participation.

Other organisations, such as Relate, CAB, Bridge into Learning, Road Safety, Devon Fire & Rescue and Five-a-Day (promoting healthy eating) have attended the sessions to raise awareness and to offer information and support.

Stay and Play sessions always finish with a music, rhythm and rhyme session with lots of action, fun and laughter for parents and children alike.

Evaluation completed on one of the Sure Start Torquay services (Ducklings) this year has found that it has increased the levels of activity amongst those parents that have accessed it. One parent even noted that attendance at Ducklings **"tires them [children] out so I get a peaceful afternoon!"** Additionally the report also uncovered areas for possible service development to be carried out in 2005 that will offer further opportunities for physical activity.

- 4.9. At present a training strategy is being produced, both for the team and their delivery partners as to training needs and requirements. It is hoped that when this is completed everybody involved in Sure Start will increase their skills and competence in working with and developing relationships with families from diverse cultures and those with disabilities. Future reports will include an evaluation of the training strategy.

#### Ellacombe Childcare Centre – Holiday Club

This service is one that Sure Start Torquay have commissioned via a service level agreement. In a recent evaluation, they found there were many small outcomes resulting from the service:

"The range of outcomes for an individual family is as varied as the reasons for referral: some parents/carers find time away helps them to approach problems more calmly; some children gain a little self esteem as they normally receive very little adult contact, or praise; being able to play and make new friends is invaluable to some; we can also help a mum bond with a new baby by looking after the other children; one mum was able to receive counselling for her depression whilst her daughter was with us; one family was able to visit daily their daughter in hospital more easily because the older child was with us all day."

The service itself impacts on many targets. There is the parenting support and information, but additionally it is providing opportunities for quality play, learning opportunities and physical activity. A full copy of the report is available from Sure Start Torquay.

## 5. OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO LEARN

### Public Service Agreement Target

Achieve by 2005 in the Sure Start area a reduction of 5% points in the number of people with speech and language problems requiring specialist interventions.

### Service Delivery Target

All children in Sure Start area to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities helping towards early learning goals when they get to school.

Increase the use of libraries by parents with young children in Sure Start area.

### Public Service Agreement Target

Achieve by 2005 in the Sure Start area a reduction of 5% points in the number of people with speech and language problems requiring specialist interventions.

### Service Delivery Target

All children in Sure Start area to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities helping towards early learning goals when they get to school.

Increase the use of libraries by parents with young children in Sure Start area.

- 5.1. Sure Start Torquay has a service level agreement with the Speech and Language therapists (SALTs) to deliver:

- 1) home visits to families that have not attended clinic appointments;
- 2) training in early identification of speech and language delays to the programme's workers
- 3) eight month targeted visit to those families identified by health visitors as showing increased risk factors for Speech and Language delay

According to the monitoring figures returned to the programme, SALTs have home visited a total of five different families. Additionally three children have been involved in the early language programme that they run.

The training started in late 2004 and was delivered to eight workers from nurseries in the area. Their course evaluations returned either good or excellent comments for the following aspects of the training:

- Success in meeting the aims of the event.
- Range of approaches used by presenter
- Usefulness of the materials if supplied
- Venue standard, i.e. room, food, etc
- Overall evaluation of the event

This is a very promising initial report and it would appear that the course is being well received. In addition a selection of the comments made by participants is included below:

**“Found this course very rewarding, has made me very aware and more able in my setting.”**

**“It is interesting to see and hear how other establishments provision varies.”**

**“Well worth doing the course.”**

- 5.2. At present Sure Start Torquay is commissioning three activities that directly contribute to early learning goals - Bookstart Plus, Music, Rhythm & Rhyme and Rainbow Book Club. Information on these services is included in the target below.

In addition to the library services Sure Start Torquay provides many other play and learning opportunities such as:

- Baby club
- Baby massage
- Dads Club
- Stay and Play (which was discussed in more detail above.)

All of these services have evaluations planned for 2005, so more reporting on outcomes and learning will be possible in the Annual Evaluation Report for 2005.

- 5.3. Sure Start Torquay, through a SLA with the library service, has completed a large quantity of work towards this target. In May 2004 the library service produced a report detailing their progress. Since July 2002 the family link librarian (a Sure Start Torquay funded post) had seen 1 105 children within Torquay central library as well as community venues. At present the library service provides three services with the express intention of increasing library membership and usage (Bookstart Plus, Music, Rhythm and Rhyme, Rainbow Book Club), as well as having them as secondary considerations in other services. Evaluation of Bookstart Plus is planned for 2005, as the service started in Autumn 2004. Music, Rhythm and Rhyme (MRR) and Rainbow Book Club have had evaluation reports completed and found that the two services have enabled families to join and become active members<sup>6</sup> of the library. Figures obtained for Rainbow Book Club have shown 22 children and 11 parents from 19 different families have become active members. The Music, Rhythm and Rhyme evaluation found that 42% of children attending had become members of the library (with a further 5% stating their intention to do so). 69% borrow books to share with their child and 95% of parents have learnt new songs that they sing with their child at home. The library found that there had been a 10% increase in active membership amongst those aged 0-3 and a 42% increase in the loan of picture books. As a result of this work and consultation with the parents the following changes have been made within Torquay's library service:

- The provision of extra baby changing facilities
- Toys for babies have been purchased
- Extra titles aimed at children under four years have been purchased
- Additional services outside the main library have been developed
- All fines for overdue children's books have been removed

Below are just some of the comments parents have made about the family link librarian and the services she provides:

**“Belinda has a natural talent for entertaining children and making learning fun for them. We go to several playgroups with song sessions, but it is ‘Belinda’s songs’ that my children remember.”**

**“It’s a great way for children and mums to socialise.”**

**“There must be something so incredibly reassuring for a baby to be held and rocked in his mother’s arms whilst she sings to him. ...once I had found my voice I was singing to [child] everywhere.”**

**“In addition to these sessions [child] and I were actively encouraged to join the library and I now regularly hire books and CDs.”**

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<sup>6</sup> Active members are defined as ... by the Library Service.

## 6. OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

### Public Service Agreement Target

Reduce by 12 per cent the number of children aged 0-3 in Sure Start areas living in households where no-one is working.

All local Sure Start programmes to have parent representation on local programme boards.

All Sure Start programmes to develop a local target to ensure links between the local Sure Start partnership and Employment Service Job Centres

All Sure Start programmes to work with their EYDCP to help close the gap between availability of accessible childcare for 0-3 year olds in the Sure Start area and other areas.

### Service Delivery Target

75 per cent of families reporting personal evidence in the quality of services providing family support.

### Locally monitored target

Improved involvement of fathers in the Sure Start project.

- 6.1. Early November 2004 a service level agreement with the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) became active. CAB has agreed to offer advice both at Sure Start services and from their office on a range of financial, training and employment issues. A CAB representative now visits Stay and Play sessions and gives one-to-one advice as well as arranging, longer more in-depth appointments in a private room at the programme's offices. During the last two months of the year he saw carers from ten families, consisting of three fathers and nine mothers. As this is such a new service, no evaluation work has been conducted at this stage and these figures are included for descriptive purposes and future comparisons.
- 6.2. At present the Sure Start Torquay management board consists of nine parents and fifteen service providers. This is in comparison with last year's count of nine parents and seventeen providers. Although the providers' participation has reduced, the board has now registered its first father. On average, 5 parents and 11 service providers attend (figures taken from attendance at 2004 management board meetings). In addition, during 2004 the acting chair of the management board was a parent.
- 6.3. The programme is continuing to build and develop a relationship with Jobcentre Plus and Sure Start Torquay staff regularly refer families to the service.
- 6.4. Sure Start Torquay formed a SLA with the Devon Childminding Association (DCMA) to recruit further childminders in the local programme's area. During 2004 the DCMA recruited a further six childminders to work in Sure Start Torquay's area. Contact figures are not available for the number of families that have benefited from an increase in the available childminders and should be looked at as an evaluation need of DCMA for future funding.
- 6.5. Recently MORI completed a baseline survey of parents' opinions of service in the area. A summary has been attached in Appendix B of the main figures from the report, which is now being used to inform service development. Future parents' satisfaction surveys will be compared with these results to track the number of parents reporting personal evidence of the quality of services in the area.

- 6.6. As mentioned above a piece of research investigating the needs of male carers and their perceived barriers to attending services has been conducted. This in itself has helped involve fathers more in the Sure Start project as the recommendations made for service development in 2005 are based on their responses.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1. This following section has been prepared jointly with the Programme Manager, so that the learning from the year's evaluation work may realistically inform future development.

- 7.2. From the MORI report it is clear that parents want better and more abundant play facilities. The purpose built building that Sure Start Torquay has commissioned will aim to make services more accessible and user-friendly. A number of parents have been consulted in the design for this building and it is with their invaluable help and guidance that work on this project is progressing.

Furthermore two satellite buildings within the Sure Start area will enable more families to access services, especially as the programme moves towards becoming a Children's Centre in 2005.

- 7.3. The shared agencies meeting will continue to allow all involved in delivering children's service in the area to share information and best practice. In addition the research and evaluation forum will aid agencies with evaluation ideas and tools, while informing them of the research and evaluation work being conducted within the area.
- 7.4. Sure Start Torquay will continue to evaluate its own services as well as their commissioned services throughout 2005, for inclusion in the Annual Evaluation Report 2005, as per the agreed evaluation timetable.
- 7.5. Family support will be developed and increased to try to reduce the children registered or re-registered on the Child Protection Register during 2005 or anytime in the future.
- 7.6. The figures for the Domestic Violence service has shown that it is responding to a need in the area. This service will continue to be developed and expanded, so that all families experiencing domestic violence are aware of what is available and how to access help.
- 7.7. The Business Plan for 2005 will incorporate those actions identified as needed from the MORI report.
- 7.8. Following the ratification of the programme's Special Needs Criteria by the management board, families will be more readily identifiable and therefore access to support will be increased and improved.
- 7.9. The present gap that the programme is experiencing due to the lack of a midwife will be filled.
- 7.10. To support the statutory services in discussing the future of the SHV role once the evaluation has been completed.
- 7.11. At present the Speech and Language therapists are receiving funding to deliver training in early identification of speech and language problems. The course that they provided in 2004 had a very successful return of course evaluation sheets which bodes well for the training to continue. It is recommended though, that some follow up evaluation is performed to see if workers are still implementing their learning from the course and how practice has changed as a result of the provision of this training. This should give a clearer picture of the benefits being seen as a result of the training and better inform any decision on continued funding.
- 7.12. The training strategy for Children's Centre (Torquay South) will be completed and shared with all other agencies delivering children's services in the region.

- 7.13. The programme needs to continue to develop links with Jobcentre Plus and DCMA and this will be a focus for 2005.
- 7.14. Resolve all issues around the programme's monitoring system to ensure the figures returned to the central unit accurately reflect Sure Start Torquay's activities.

## **8. FUTURE EVALUATION PLANS**

- 8.1. The evaluation of the Specialist Health Visitor will be completed by Spring 2005. The research proposal has undergone a rigorous ethical process. There are now the necessary controls in place and the proposal will be considered again by the LREC, with work looking to proceed on this evaluation in the early part of 2005. The evaluation has evolved and will hopefully include the support of health visitors and potentially social workers in building a picture of the effectiveness of the Specialist Health Visitor.
- 8.2. In 2004 a report on Homestart was published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. While the evidence appears to show that Homestart's work does not achieve any outcomes the programme feels the work they do is invaluable. As a result an evaluation of the services delivered in the two Sure Start areas within Torbay by Homestart on the local programmes' behalf will be evaluated in 2005, before a decision is made around continued funding and its implications for Children's Centres. The evaluation will be looking into the work completed with complex cases, an area that Homestart within Torbay has found themselves increasingly working in.
- 8.3. Towards the end of 2004 a small exploratory piece of research was conducted in Sure Start Paignton with young parents. A number of potential issues were uncovered but due to the limited number of participants cannot be fairly included here. However these issues will be the subject of a larger scale piece of research across both areas to be completed in 2005.
- 8.4. The evaluation timetable discussed previously will continue to be followed.

**APPENDIX A**

**Audit timetable**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date started</b>	<b>Date for audit</b>
Portage service	Sue	01/04	01/05
Parents Action Group	Jane	10/03	02/05
Special needs group	Sue	07/04	02/05
2 year birthday party	Noreen	03/04	03/05
Treasure Baskets	Jill	05/04	03/05
Baby massage	Midwife/MCA	02/04	03/05
Stay & Play	Jill	04/04	03/05
Home safety checks	Noreen	08/04	03/05
Safety pack	Noreen	08/04	03/05
First visit standard	Julia		04/05
Crèche	Andrea	10/03	04/05
Webster Stratton	Noreen	01/05	04/05
Dad's Club	Jane	11/03	04/05
Book Start	Jill	01/03	05/05
Homestart	Barry	-	05/05
Positive Parenting	Noreen	04/04	05/05
Beach Hut	Jan	07/03	08/05
Antenatal classes	Midwife		TBA
Teenage mum's group	Midwife		TBA
Breast feeding café	Midwife		TBA
MCA	Shirley		06/05
Relate			01/05
SALT			01/05

DCMA			04/05
Devon Fire Brigade	Julia		02/06
Chiropractor	Julia		10/05
Health visiting	Julia		06/05
Volunteer training course	Wendy		02/05
Welcome pack	Jane/Jill		09/05
Implementation of Birth to 3 Matters	Jill		03/06
CAB	Julia		05/05
ECCC	Julia		02/05
Training Programme for Parent Reps	Julia		08/05

## APPENDIX B

### Summary of the MORI report for Sure Start Torquay

#### Background

- 15% of parents are aged under 25.
- 20% households are lone parent households.
- 59% of the families in Torquay have lived in the area for less than five years.
- Of the 40% of Torquay families that rent their homes, they are more likely to do so a private landlord from as opposed to the council or a housing association.

#### **Quality of life/attitudes to the area**

- 63% of parents rate the area as a good one to bring children up in.
- The three improvements parents would most like to see to improve their lives are:
  - i. Reduced crime/improved community safety – 32% (Torquay)
  - ii. More/better/affordable childcare – 24% (both)
  - iii. Better housing – 19% (both)
- The improvements parents would most like to see to improve their children's lives are:
  - i. More opportunities to play outside – 43% (Torquay)
  - ii. Reduced crime/improved community safety – 24% (both)
  - iii. Better/more play facilities – 22% (both)
  - iv. More opportunities to play with young children – 21% (both) (33% of single parent households chose this)

#### Users of health services

- 84% of parents are satisfied with general health services in the area.
- The following percentages relate to the number of families accessing that service in the past 12 months:
  - i. GP – 97%
  - ii. Dentist – 61%
  - iii. Community nursery nurse/health visitor – 59%
  - iv. Midwife – 38%
  - v. Advice about baby/child health – 36%
  - vi. A&E – 36%
- There is considerable difference between access across areas. The following compares the access of Torquay to Paignton:
  - i. A&E – 44% to 28%
  - ii. Advice and support on breastfeeding – 21% to 12%
  - iii. Advice on healthy pregnancy – 20% to 12%
  - iv. Advice on contraception/unplanned pregnancy – 21% to 10%
  - v. Counselling/support for mothers with post natal depression – 9 to 3%
- Dental services have the greatest unmet need with 11% (19% amongst full time workers) wishing to use the dentist more frequently.
- For any of the specific services asked about few users express much dissatisfaction apart from with dental services, where 7% of users say they are fairly or very dissatisfied (and only 54% say they are very satisfied). The main reasons for dissatisfaction are:
  - i. Lack of availability - 65%
  - ii. Lack of choice - 41%

- iii. Too expensive - 35%

#### Childcare, play and learning services

- 55% of parents are satisfied with existing childcare services in their area; 13% are dissatisfied.
- Only 41% of parents in Torquay are satisfied with play and learning services in their area; 12% (overall) are dissatisfied.
- The childcare, play and learning service most used by parents are:
  - i. Parks/play areas – 73%
  - ii. Libraries – 46%
  - iii. Sports/leisure facilities – 44%
  - iv. Mother/toddler groups – 41%
- Younger parents (<25) are less likely to access the services, especially parks/play areas, libraries and nursery school/classes.
- 15% of full time working parents have used *none* of these services, compared with 5% of other parents.
- Satisfaction with these services is generally high with parks/play areas the notable exception. In Torquay only 52% are satisfied and 38% are dissatisfied with these areas, which are the most used of all the childcare, play and learning services.
- The main problems reported on these services are:
  - i. Expense – 30% (40% in single parent households)
  - ii. Lack of choice – 23%
  - iii. Lack of availability – 21%
  - iv. Lack of information/publicity – 19%

#### Parent support services

- The vast majority of parents generally did not give an opinion on how they rate or how easy they think it is to use three of the key support services: social services, advice on benefits/money, and support services for parents.
- Satisfaction outweighs dissatisfaction with users of the service (although figures aren't as high as they are for health).
- 75% of users of benefits/money say they are satisfied (19% dissatisfied).
- Only 31% of users in Torquay are satisfied with parent support services (8% across both areas dissatisfied). Again it is the minority (31%) in Torquay that feel it is easy to contact these support services.
- The main problems for support services are:
  - i. Lack of information– 20% (40% in single parent households)
  - ii. Lack of publicity– 20%
  - iii. Lack of availability – 17%
  - iv. Poor public transport – 14%
  - v. In Torquay 13% identified improving the amount of choice as a needed development
- 63% of parents say they have not used *any* parent support service in the past 12 months.

#### **Information about services**

- 53% of parents in Torquay feel they know not very much or nothing at all about local services.
- Paignton parents have more contact with organisations generally but the following figures are responses from both areas. The most common way that parents currently find out about services are:

- i. Other parents/word of mouth – 49%
  - ii. Sure Start – 46%
  - iii. Health visitor – 39%
  - iv. Doctor's surgeries/clinics – 25%
- Other parents/word of mouth and Sure Start are also the seen as the ways parents would prefer to find out about services, followed by leaflets through the door (27%) and health visitors (24%).

#### **Employment, training and finance**

- 51% of the main carers in Torquay are working (the majority of who are part-time). Among partners 85% are employed (81% in full-time employment).
- 3% are unemployed and 6% are at home not seeking work.
- 20% of households have no-one working and these are disproportionately single parent households (64%) or where the main carer is under 25 (37%).
- Of those not working 65% say they *would not* like a regular, paid job at present. Among those who would the main reasons given for not finding work are:
  - i. Childcare (not available/suitable/affordable) and too busy looking after children – 50%
  - ii. Better of not working/on benefits – 16%
- 20% (32% of parents under 25) have had contact with the Employment Service or Jobcentre in the last 12 months. 77% say they were satisfied with the service provided.
- 98% of parents receive child benefit. In Torquay:
  - i. 87% receive a benefit other than child benefit.
  - ii. 51% receive Working Families Tax Credit.
  - iii. 32% receive Children's Tax Credit.
- The average weekly household income among households with young children is £329 (which is around two-thirds the national average).

#### **Health and child development**

- 36% of parents and 39% of their parents have smoked at least one cigarette per day in the week preceding the survey, which is slightly higher than the national average.
- 26% of main carers say they smoked during pregnancy with 16% still smoking at the time of birth.
- 22% of respondents report that the child's mother has suffered from post natal depression at some point. (Note that this is a self-report and not a diagnosis).
- Birth weights:
  - i. 8% of babies born were in the defined low birth weight category (<2.5kg)
  - ii. 18% between 2.5 and 3kg.
  - iii. 36% between 3 and 3.5 kg.
  - iv. 11% over 4kg.
- 66% of parents say their child was breast fed with 54% saying the child was still being breast fed at 4 months.

#### **Involvement in Sure Start**

- 64% of parents in the Sure Start Torquay area would like to become involved in Sure Start in some way.

**APPENDIX C**

<b>IDENTIFIED NEED</b>	<b>SERVICES PLANNED</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE</b>
<p><b>Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transience researched and strategy formulated</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish links with Homeless Persons Unit – DSS to other agencies working with harassment families</li> <li>• Disseminate MORI findings</li> <li>• Representation on Housing Allocation Board</li> <li>• Research Advocacy Services for homeless/transient families</li> <li>• Evaluate research and plan next step</li> </ul>		
<p>Quality of life/attitudes to the area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Reduced crime/improved community safety</li> <li>v. More/better/affordable childcare</li> <li>vi. Better housing</li> <li>vii. More opportunities to play outside</li> <li>viii. More opportunities to play with young children</li> </ul> <p><b>Childcare, play and learning services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 41% of parents in Torquay are satisfied with play and learning services in their area; 12% (overall) are dissatisfied.</li> <li>• Younger parents (&lt;25) are less likely to access the services, especially parks/play areas, libraries and nursery school/classes.</li> <li>• Satisfaction with these services is generally high with parks/play areas the notable exception. In Torquay only 52% are satisfied and 38% are dissatisfied with these areas, which are the most used of all the childcare, play and learning services.</li> </ul> <p>The main problems are expense – (40% in single parent households), lack of choice, lack of availability and lack of information/publicity</p>	<p><b>Improving the Ability to Learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play &amp; Learning Co-ordinator to undertake Birth to Three Matters training, cascade to Sure Start staff and to local childcare providers</li> <li>• Consult with parents in conjunction with Groundwork Trust to identify most appropriate park to refurbish</li> <li>• To develop a Stay &amp; Play session</li> <li>• To establish a Sure Start representative on the Torbay Council Play Strategy Committee</li> <li>• To identify the need for additional holiday play schemes and if required develop additional scheme/s</li> <li>• To develop a Stay &amp; Play session</li> <li>• Take up of indoor and outdoor play and learning opportunities by Sure Start families to be 50%</li> <li>• Play &amp; learning resource packs to be developed, using Birth to Three Matters framework</li> <li>• Stay &amp; Play sessions to be running on a weekly basis. Parents using Birth to Three Matters resource packs.</li> <li>• To develop strategy in 2005 to help reduce crime and promote community safety, be more involved in housing issues and include younger parents under 25 in activities.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Health services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dental services have the greatest unmet need. Due to lack of availability, lack of choice, too expensive.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dental service Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dental service to be available at stay and plays for advice on oral health and accessibility to dental care</li> </ul>		

IDENTIFIED NEED	SERVICES PLANNED	LEAD	REVIEW DATE
<p><b>Parent support services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main problems for support services are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Lack of information– 20% (40% in single parent households)</li> <li>ii. Lack of publicity</li> <li>iii. Lack of availability</li> <li>iv. Poor public transport</li> <li>v. In Torquay 13% identified improving the amount of choice as a needed development</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Information about services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53% of parents in Torquay feel they know not very much or nothing at all about local services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parenting support and information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop links with other agencies to promote Sure Start Marketing Strategy</li> <li>• Promote availabilities of information within all SS groups</li> <li>• Continue health visits to support hard to reach families</li> <li>• Review mailing list</li> <li>• Increase amount of information available</li> <li>• Develop leaflets etc re advertising</li> <li>• Continue home visiting</li> <li>• Develop positive parenting and challenging behaviour groups</li> <li>• Involve parents in facilitating of groups</li> <li>• Baby massage groups and 1:1 sessions</li> <li>• Sound parenting groups</li> <li>• Evaluate groups and information</li> <li>• To become involved in public transport issues across the bay.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Employment, training and finance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of those not working 65% say they would not like a regular, paid job at present. Among those who would the main reasons given for not finding work are:</li> <li>• Childcare (not available/suitable/affordable) and too busy looking after children – 50%</li> <li>• Better of not working/on benefits – 16%</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengthening families and children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas of need from MORI research. Establish baseline figures for unemployment levels</li> <li>• Either a specialist worker in place or have an SLA in place with the employment service</li> <li>• Plan to address target is formed</li> <li>• Net worker has plan in place and progress is being made</li> <li>• Worker is accessing groups within the community and home visiting hard to reach families</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul>		

IDENTIFIED NEED	SERVICES PLANNED	LEAD	REVIEW DATE
<p>Health and child development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>36% of parents and 39% of their parents have smoked at least one cigarette per day in the week preceding the survey, which is slightly higher than the national average.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>smoke in pregnancy</b></li> <li>Identify need for smoking cessation training for Sure Start staff and other agencies to raise awareness</li> <li>Network with life skills co-ordinator</li> <li>Review collated figures of Sure Start smoking mothers</li> <li>Identify need for basic smoking cessation training</li> <li>Implement basic training</li> <li>Refer to specialist services</li> <li>Establish ongoing support with buddying system by trained parents and raising awareness with families</li> <li>Review progress</li> </ul>		
<p><b><u>Involvement in Sure Start</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>64% of parents in the Sure Start Torquay area would like to become involved in Sure Start in some way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of parent representative's places taken up</li> <li>Ensure there is a clear process to 'feed' parents from the Parent Action Group onto the Board</li> <li>Develop induction process for new parent board members</li> <li>Deliver a training programme to ensure all parent reps are supported and develop appropriate skills</li> <li>Review membership and adjust support and development work as appropriate</li> </ul>		

## APPENDIX D

### Sound Parenting evaluation summary

#### Introduction

- Sound Parenting is a group for children and their families and addresses the specific issues of parental substance misuse upon the child.
- The group was created following a study day that explored the impact of parental substance misuse on the child. It became very apparent through inter-agency discussions that there was a clear unmet need as there were no services in Torbay specifically focused on families with young children.
- The Sound Parenting group also offers a training opportunity for qualified staff to work in a multi-skilled, multi-disciplinary group and fulfils certain core competencies of a student Social Worker's training.

#### Aim of the evaluation

- The original aim of the group was to facilitate a safe place for families affected by substance misuse and/or domestic abuse and for them to:
  - 1) be less isolated
  - 2) feel more empowered
  - 3) involve other community services
  - 4) identify appropriate coping strategies
  - 5) build communication skills within the family
  - 6) improve positive mental health and self esteem
  - 7) feel valued and listened to
- This evaluation looks at the initial aims and underpinning theories of the group and asks should the group continue, if so does it need to be changed or if not what the issues were and what the alternatives would be.

#### Methodology

- Feedback for this evaluation was taken from child, parent, initial referrer and group facilitators. The children were informally interviewed by a member of staff from the group. The parents that completed the course, each referrer that referred a client to the group and each member of staff that helped facilitate the group were asked to fill in a questionnaire.

#### Results

- Five questionnaires were sent out to parents, three were returned. These three identified meeting new people and friends (both for themselves and their children) and being appreciated as part of a group as the things they most enjoyed. However not all the feedback was positive and one mother felt that she felt more tired at the end of the course than she did when she started.
- Six questionnaires were sent out to referrers to Sound Parenting, four were returned. The main reasons for referring families to the Sound Parenting group were:
  - for families to enhance their parenting skills
  - to receive individual support with an emphasis on managing substance misuse
  - to build a family's self-esteem so that they can attend more interventions

A delay in the commencement of the group, Social Services' database, paperwork and forms and geographical location were identified as difficulties making referrals to the group.

Development of new skills, an increase in confidence as well as friendships and group support and an increase in access to services were identified as positive outcomes from the group.

However, one family was put off attending further groups (of any sort) and another group ended in just two families attending, one of whom was intimidated by the other. Finally, two respondents identified a gap in further support once the group has ended.

- Ten questionnaires were sent out to staff facilitating Sound Parenting, three were returned. This is a major issue as feedback has not been obtained from the vast majority of those facilitating these groups. Evaluation and support for families when the course had finished were identified by all three as issues.
- Results for only one child interview were used as many were too young to offer feedback.

### Conclusions

- Success for this client group is difficult to define. When considering what outcomes the service has, care needs to be taken that sights are not set too high; engagement with services is a successful outcome for this client group.
- If the group is to continue there needs to be a clearer and expected process for evaluation. The evaluation to date has been lacking and needs to be built into the delivery of the service to ensure it is operating as effectively as possible.
- Levels of staffing were an issue depending on attendance of families. The staff to client ratio fluctuated from two members of staff to every one client to one member of staff for every five clients. This has obvious ramifications for risk assessing the course and suggests two main points:
  - 1) More effort needs to be made to ensure families are attending consistently.
  - 2) A more dynamic approach to the staffing needs to be adopted such as creating a rota of staff members so that in the event a session is over-staffed, there is pre-agreed process for which members of staff can leave that still ensures the key competencies of the group are not diluted.
- Clarification is needed around what each member of staff is there to do and what each is capable of doing. A more structured approach to each person's responsibilities within the group would ensure that there is no confusion over who is doing what and hopefully resolve some of the problems with preparation time. A clear commitment for what they are providing to the group is needed from each agency/organization to ensure there is no confusion around who is attending and for what reasons they are attending.
- The representation from different agencies needs to reflect the clients that will be attending. So for example if no Sure Start Torquay families are attending a course, they should not be expected to contribute staff for that course. Services such as this need to be mainstreamed and therefore cannot rely on the support of Sure Start programmes to provide staffing.
- Case studies from the group show it has made a positive difference to many families and their functioning.
- The group is a clear example of the strategy proposed by Hidden Harm: *"reducing the harm to children as a result of parental drug use should be a main objective of the UK's drug strategy."*
- The Sound Parenting program is an example of collaborative working looking specifically at the needs of children. It has received positive feedback from the client group and has been staffed by professionals from Health and Social Services as well as other agencies in the non-statutory sector.
- Discontinuing the service would create an even bigger gap in services for those families that have issues of substance misuse but to continue effectively changes need to be made.