



## SureStart Capehill & Windmill

### Annual Evaluation Report: 2004

#### Overview

In 2004 the programme has built on the success of previous years and been able to strengthen its image and popularity in the local community.

Attendance at sessions has increased substantially since we have had a full strength Early Years team and the new post of Early Years Coordinator has been filled.

Outreach and Family Support have made substantial efforts in reaching out to the community.

Stronger relations with the community have been forged through the programme's unique Volunteer Scheme and we believe this could lead to sustainable services provided solely by local Parents.

Services such Behaviour Management are beginning to have an impact though the delivery of Health Promotion services have been hindered due to difficulties recruiting.

Partnership working has presented difficulties but a series of service reviews have highlighted issues we will tackle in the New Year.

Overall the programme has progressed from a stage of initiation to one of contagion within the community with many families appreciating the need for SureStart. In turn the management and administration of the programme has moved from the initial planning to the inevitable chaos that then follows to the present greater control of events.

We feel we have a good basis on which to further build for the future.

## About the programme

### History

Sure Start Capehill & Windmill Lane is a Round 3 programme and was established in 2002.

The lead body of the programme is Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's Social Inclusion & Health Department.

### The area covered by the programme

The Capehill & Windmill area is part of the Smethwick town. Smethwick is the most deprived town in Sandwell, which in turn is one of the most deprived English districts outside London. There is strong evidence of intensive poverty resulting from collapsed employment, low wages and high benefit dependency combined with poor local environment.

Capehill & Windmill is part of the Soho / Victoria ward, the poorest ward in Sandwell. The SureStart area is surrounded by a natural boundary, which includes busy roads as well as a dual carriageway, industrial area and a main park.

The area has a population of 784 under 4-year olds (based on latest census information). The total population of the area is approximately 8600.

#### *Ethnic Mix of Population*

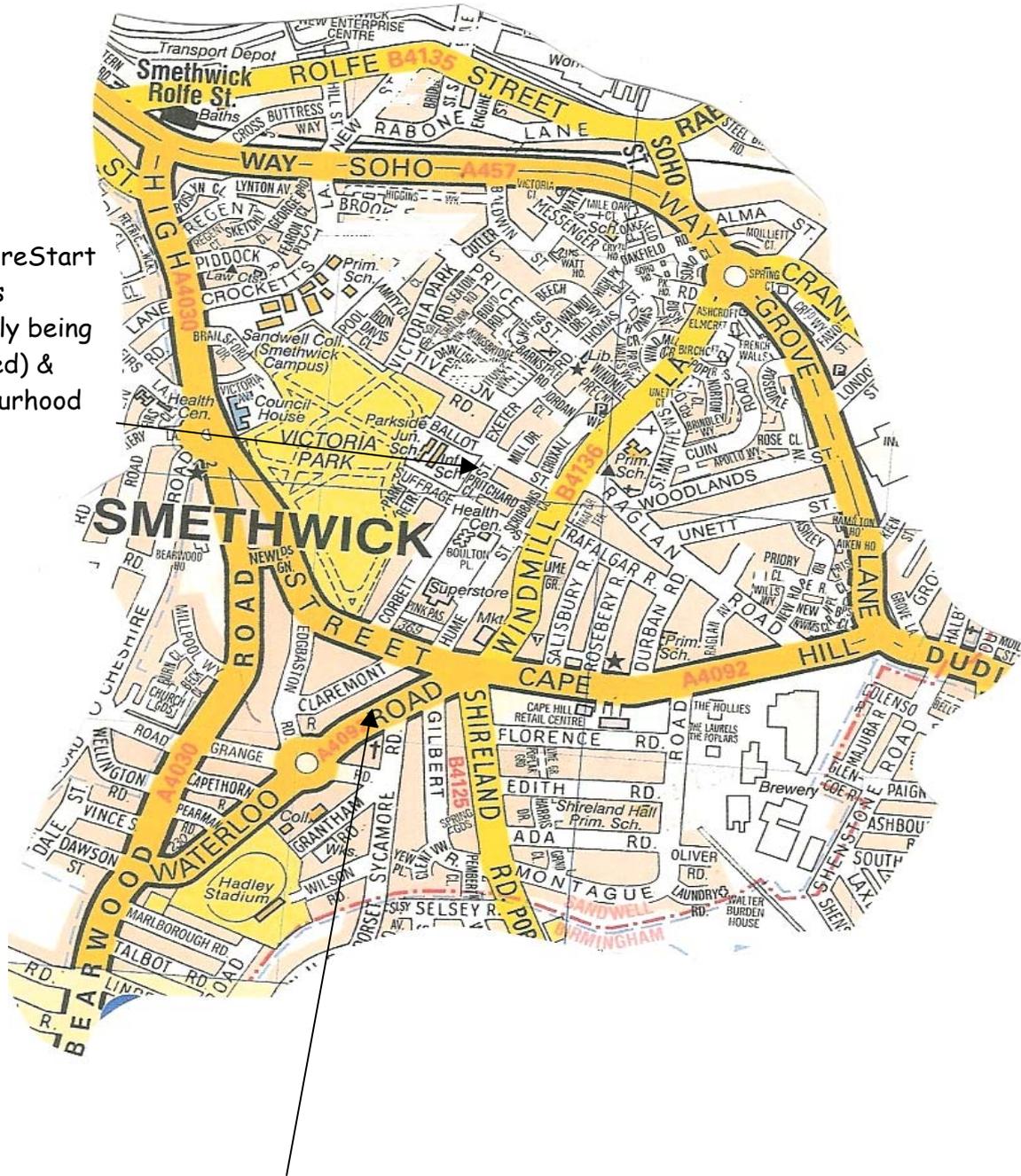
	Soho and Victoria	Sandwell	England
White	41.2	79.7	90.9
of which White Irish	1.6	0.9	1.3
Mixed	5.1	2.1	1.3
Asian or Asian British	37.0	14.0	4.6
Indian	17.5	9.1	2.1
Pakistani	16.6	3.0	1.4
Bangladeshi	1.1	1.2	0.6
Other Asian	1.8	0.7	0.5
Black or Black British	15.7	3.8	2.1
Caribbean	13.0	3.3	1.1
African	1.2	0.2	1.0
Other Black	1.5	0.3	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	0.9	0.4	0.9

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The area also incorporates a significant, transient asylum/refugee community.

## Map of the SureStart Capehill & Windmill area

NEW SureStart Premises (currently being renovated) & Neighbourhood Nursery



Current SureStart Office

## Where the programme was in January 2004

At the start of the year the programme had just completed its 3-year evaluation and we had only been able to contact approximately 9% of the 784 children in our area.

A succession of staff had moved on which in turn affected our capacity to provide services.

Recruitment of health and social care staff had proved difficult. However, innovative posts, such as Maternity Family Support Workers, were created to ensure effective reach within the community.

The appointment of a borough wide Research Officer who would coordinate data for each programme by supporting monitoring officers demonstrated consistency and expertise in the area of research and evaluation.

The Outreach home visiting team was up to full strength with the recruitment of a full time Outreach Worker and a structured approach to visiting families in the home and at clinics was started in January 2004. Subsequently, stronger links were established with health visitors and referrals began to filter through.

An evaluation of how our 3-year User Satisfaction Survey was conducted, and the main finding was that due to lack of expertise in the field of research, the results appeared to be skewed. This would be borne in mind for future user satisfaction surveys.

## Key events in 2004

The following main events took place over the year:

### Jan

**Puppet Show:** followed by puppet making session

### Feb

**Trip to Hatton Park:** a trip to help families explore the countryside and give children first hand experience of holding and feeding animals.

### Mar

**Trip to Alexandra theatre:** families were taken to watch a children's entertainment event.

**Mothers Day Event:** children made cards and mothers were presented with a small gift.

**Animal Man:** came to session and showed children an array of animals.

**Parent Chair Elections:** a new Parent Chair was elected

### April

**Easter Egg Hunt & Bonnet Competition:** Bonnets were made in Art sessions and children took part with Parents in the Easter Egg Hunt.

**ESOL trip:** Trip for families attending ESOL classes was arranged in order to foster closer links with the local refugee / asylum seeker community.

### May

**Fun Day:** This was held to promote SureStart to new parents. Over 40 parents and children attended and took part in a range of activities such as face painting, biscuit making etc. Refreshments were served and a Clown hired to welcome people into the event.

### June

**Picnic:** a teddy bears picnic was held at the local park.

**Fathers Day:** Fathers and grandfathers were invited to take part in fun activities with their children at the local park.

**Safety Day:** An event run at the local community centre in partnership with the Fire Service to raise the awareness of safety issues. This was also used as an opportunity to enrol people onto First Aid and Food & Hygiene courses.

**Puppet Show:** A very popular event set up to demonstrate to parents fun ideas they can use to play with their children at home.

**Opening of Neighbourhood Nursery:** Parents were invited to take a look around their new neighbourhood nursery.

## July

**Trip to Barry Island:** Three coach loads of families were taken for an outing to the seaside. The larger aim was to promote SureStart to families in the area.

**Music Lady:** Parents requested a fun entertainment session for children. The expectation was only 10 children would show up, as the event was held on a 'quiet day', but we were stunned when over 20 children arrived and enjoyed a great sing-a-long.

## August

**Walsall Arboretum:** a coach trip was laid on for families to see the renowned arboretum in Walsall.

## October

**Black History Month Event:** A Dhol Player and Story Teller were invited and stalls laid out allowing parents to develop an understanding of various cultures. This event was also used as part of Family Learning Week.

**Think Tank:** Over a dozen children were taken to Think Tank in Birmingham, as part of Family Learning Week. The aim was to show parents that learning could be fun.

## November

**'Children in Need' week:** Money was raised through out the week and pyjama party, guess the weight of the cake and other activities were laid on in normal sessions. The week culminated with a

Jumble Sale organised by Parents raising over £40.

## Dec

**Multi Cultural Party:** a children's party celebrating Christmas, Diwali and Eid.

## Activities & services delivered during the year

The major activities and services provided by the programme are listed below.

**Art Session:** weekly sessions encouraging parents and children to use paint, crayons and engage in colouring.

**Baby Club:** an opportunity for parents to play with their children under 1 using age appropriate toys and borrow resources that are helpful in gaining an insight into better parenting.

**Baby Massage:** a session held by a Health Worker informing parents of the benefits of baby massage and showing parents how to massage their baby.

**Back to Work course:** sessions encouraged parents who wished to return to work and prepared them for employment. Topics included job searching, filling application forms, interview technique, advice on benefits versus wages and childcare.

**Basic Interpreting skills:** brief introduction to gaining basic skills in interpreting to support promotion of Sure Start services.

**Children's Library:** a Librarian runs a Library Service in sessions allowing parents to borrow children's books from an easily accessible location.

**ESOL:** whilst the Parents learn English SureStart have provided a crèche service. This session has helped to strengthen links with the local Refugee / Asylum Seeker community.

**Exploring Motherhood:** a series of sessions for mothers experiencing emotional issues whilst making the transition to parenthood.

**Family Support Service:** Family Support Workers to visit New Birth families and provide support to antenatal and postnatal families.

**First Aid Course:** two half a day courses teaching Parents life saving skills and how to deal with first aid in relation to babies and young children.

**Food Hygiene course:** two half a day courses teaching carers about hygiene standards and how to prepare food in a hygienic manner.

**Health Awareness:** a series of parent friendly talks and presentations delivered by local health and care professionals. Topics included breastfeeding, healthy eating, immunisation, handling challenging behaviour, healthy environment, domestic violence and post-natal depression, child protection, safety in the home, smoke free homes, fire prevention, education in the home, and an introduction to 'Birth to 3 Matters' framework.

**Homestart Volunteering training:** a tailor made course to enable parents to support SureStart services in a variety of settings such as stay and play, crèches, outreach work, etc.

**Music Sessions:** a session encouraging parents and children to use music to enhance communication and listening skills.

**Outreach Home visiting:** to register new families and support families encountering difficulties as well as promoting SureStart services.

**Psychology referral:** parents concerned about their child's development or behaviour or having concerns about their own mental health are able to seek help and guidance from the onsite Psychologist.

**Stay & Play sessions:** these are some of the most popular sessions. They are run by Early Years Workers and encourage parents to stay and play with their child. They are delivered from 5 sites in the area, which include Waterloo Road (SureStart Base), Cape Primary School, Shireland Hall School, Ron Davis Community Centre and St Phillips Hall.

**Story Session:** children sit around in a circle and are told stories using puppets and other forms of animation. The aim being to get parents and children interested in books from a young age.

**Take a Break:** during these sessions the children are engaged in activities by the Early Years Workers whilst the Carers have a break in another room. These sessions have proven particularly useful to the Community Development Officer as a way of sounding out parent's views in a comfortable, informal setting. The sessions have proven ever more popular with some being run by Parent Volunteers.

**Voluntary Studies course:** this course started in late 2004 and will continue into 2005. Currently 8 Volunteers are undertaking the course.

The table below is an illustration of the range of activities undertaken and the number of children and parents who attended.

SERVICES	Primary objective				Children	Adults
	soc & emotional dev	health	ability to learn	families & communities	Total contacts	Total contacts
Art Activities	X		X	X	143	124
Baby Club	X	X	X	X	142	147
Baby Massage	X	X			3	6
Back to Work Course				X		28
Board Meeting				X	23	17
Board Training				X	8	12
CAB				X	3	22
Child Safety Event		X			16	14
Collection of Goody Bag	X	X			31	27
Community Development Worker		X		X	37	180
ESOL	X		X	X	46	62
ESOL - Trip to Sandwell Valley	X		X	X	3	3
Exploring Motherhood	X	X	X	X	5	2
Family Support Worker	X	X		X	20	20
Father's Day					16	15
First Aid Training		X				7
Fun Day	X	X	X	X	41	35
Health Awareness Training		X			33	40
Job Stop				X	1	36
Keep Fit	X	X		X	40	43
Making Choices Course	X			X	39	47

SERVICES	Primary objective				Children	Adults
	soc & emotional dev	health	ability to learn	families & communities	Total contacts	Total contacts
More Caught than Taught	X			X	93	64
Multi-Cultural Fair					13	12
Multi-Faith Party					22	18
Music Lady	X		X	X	20	14
Neighbourhood Nursery - Sponsored Place	X	X	X	X	129	
Neighbourhood Nursery Open Day				X	21	22
New Registration	X	X	X	X	323	358
Outreach Service	X	X	X	X	559	444
Parents Forum				X	48	38
PND HV	X	X			21	42
Pre-Board Meeting				X	13	10
Psychological Therapy	X	X		X	83	85
Psychology Session	X	X		X	9	6
Puppet Making	X		X	X	23	24
Safety Session	X	X	X	X	30	48
Sandwell Valley	X			X	5	4
Sleep Session	X	X		X	5	5
SSLM			X		60	54
Stay & Play Ron Davies	X		X	X	103	82
Stay & Play Shireland	X		X	X	105	100
Stay & Play Waterloo Road	X		X	X	716	599
Take a Break	X	X	X	X	376	295
Trip - Alexandra Theatre	X			X	43	36
Trip - Barry Island	X			X	40	33

SERVICES	Primary objective				Children	Adults
	soc & emotional dev	health	ability to learn	families & communities	Total contacts	Total contacts
Trip – Library			X		7	7
Trip - Think Tank			X		8	7
Trip - Walsall Arboretum	X			X	17	17
Tumble Tots	X		X	X	101	69
Volunteer Meeting				X	17	35
Volunteer Training	X	X	X	X	22	3
Wacky Warehouse	X			X	28	18

Source : Programme Database

Child attendances at Board Meetings and Courses are at Nursery or Crèche

In some cases approximate figures have been given

## The people who make it work

### The management board

The Management board meets every 8 weeks and consists of 20 voting members.

Members include 8 parents and representatives from;

- 3 local Community Voluntary Organisations
- Sandwell Social Inclusion & Health
- Smethwick Regeneration Partnership
- Smethwick Town Team
- Capehill & Windmill Lane Police
- Sandwell Hospital Midwifery Service
- Health Visitor from Capehill Medical Centre
- Oldbury & Smethwick Primary Care Trust
- Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership
- Local Councillor.

## Key partners

Our key partners are

- Parents
- Sandwell Council Social Inclusion & Health
- Oldbury & Smethwick Primary Care Trust
- Smethwick Town Team
- Smethwick Regeneration Partnership
- Sandwell Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Community Action Programme (CAPS)
- Brushstrokes
- Midwifery Service
- Library Service
- Citizens Advice Bureau

## The staff team

**Programme Manager** - Bhavna Solanki

The programme manager leads the programme and ensures the smooth running of day-to-day activities.

The programme manager is line managed by the Children's Centre Coordinator.

The programme manager reports to the programme partnership board.

**Deputy Managers** - These duties are incorporated into the Early Years Coordinator and Health Coordinator's post.

### Administration

The admin team consists of a Senior Administrator and a Clerical Work. Together they cover reception and deal with all the day-to-day administration duties of the office.

### Monitoring

The Monitoring Officer monitors the programmes outputs and outcomes. The post is currently covered by a temp but will go out for recruitment in early 2005.

### Family Support

Family Support Workers are principally concerned with supporting families with children under the age of 6 months and endeavour to contact all newborn children within 8 weeks of birth.

There are 2 part time Family Support Workers who provide antenatal and post-natal support through an outreach service.

### Outreach Service

The Outreach Team visit families in their home promoting SureStart as well as providing advice and support.

There is currently 1 fulltime Outreach Worker post and a Part time Outreach Worker post (covered by a temp). We hope to have a permanent Part time Outreach Worker in post in the New Year.

### Early Years

There is a team of 4 Fulltime Early Years Workers managed by the Early Years Coordinator.

The Early Years workers run various play and activity sessions at sites around the SureStart area.

### **Laptop Library**

The part time Laptop Librarian encourages families to engage their children in reading and using the Library at a very young age by loaning books to parents at various sessions.

### **Community Development**

The programme has 2 fulltime Community Development Officers who engage the community with SureStart by running various courses, supporting Parents taking steps into employment, facilitating Parents Forums and coordinating the Volunteer Scheme.

### **Midwife**

A Midwife is employed 1-day a week and provides necessary support to pregnant women in their own homes if a complication in pregnancy is detected. The main task of the Midwife is to enable women to breastfeed and monitor breastfeeding on patch. The Midwife will also deliver Best Buddies training and coordinate the Best buddies scheme whilst working alongside the Health Coordinator.

### **Psychology Service**

A part time Child Psychologist supports parents and children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The Psychologist also runs sessions on Child Development and advising mothers on how to deal with the emotional difficulties faced during motherhood.

### **Advice Worker**

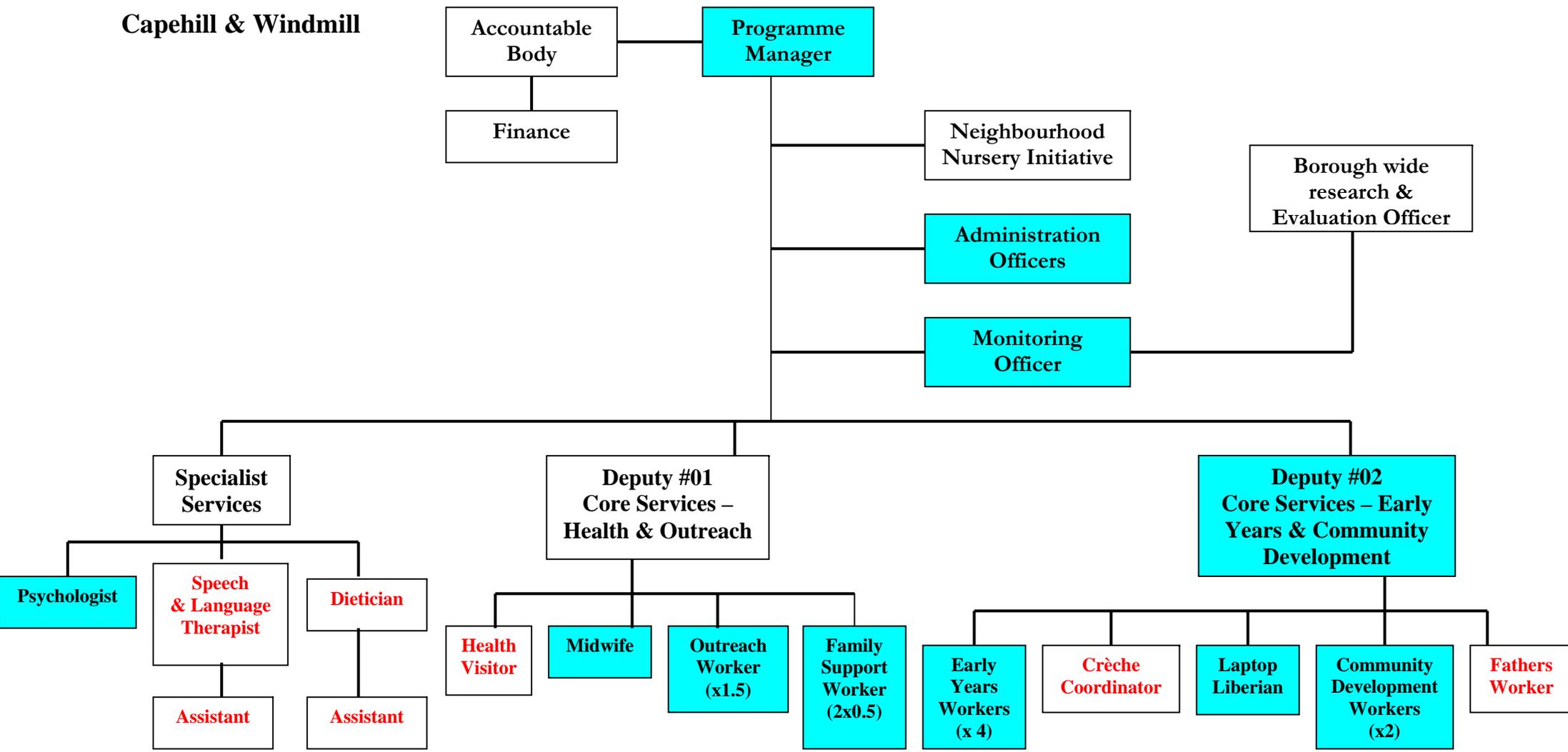
Employed for 11 hours per week the Advice Worker provides support to families enquiring about Benefits, debt and immigration at drop-in surgeries and in the family's own home.

### **Health Coordinator (post is vacant)**

This post has been created to replace the previous health visitor's post. The Health Coordinator will coordinate the delivery of health services for parents to be and parents within the Sure Start programme and provide line management of delegated staff.

### **Health Support workers (posts are vacant)**

These posts are newly created to ensure that health promotion of nutrition, smoking and safety related to children will be undertaken at a community level.



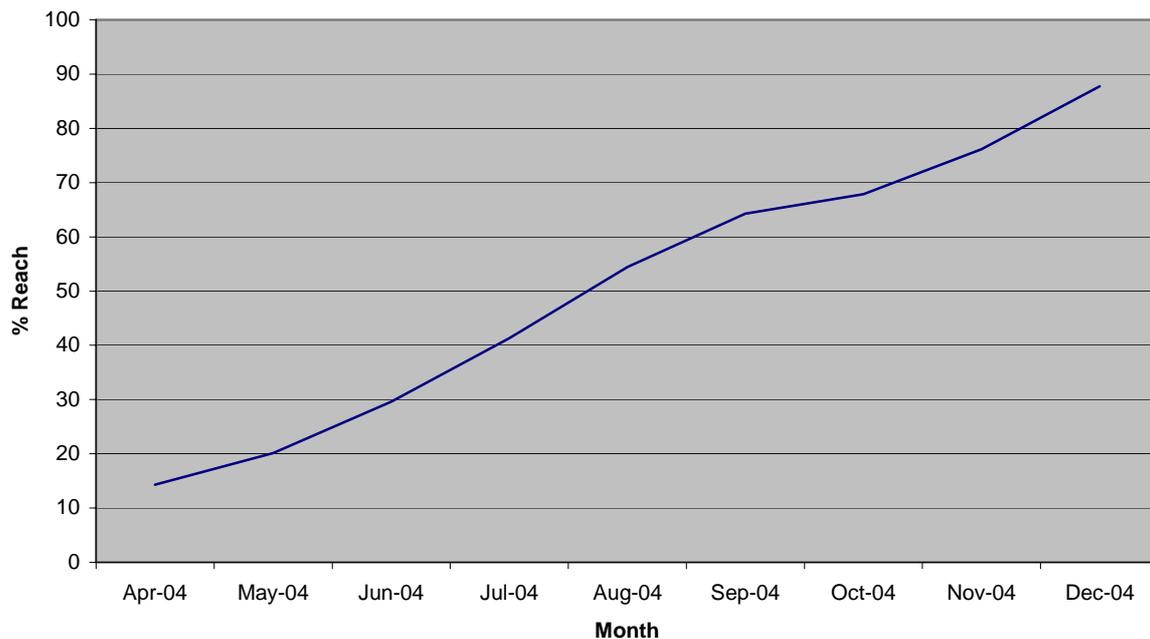
Posts in Red are presently vacant or newly created and awaiting recruitment

## What we have achieved

### Who we've reached

Since April 2004 the programme has been in contact with over 80% of its under 4-year-old population.

**Cumulative Percentage Reach of Children**

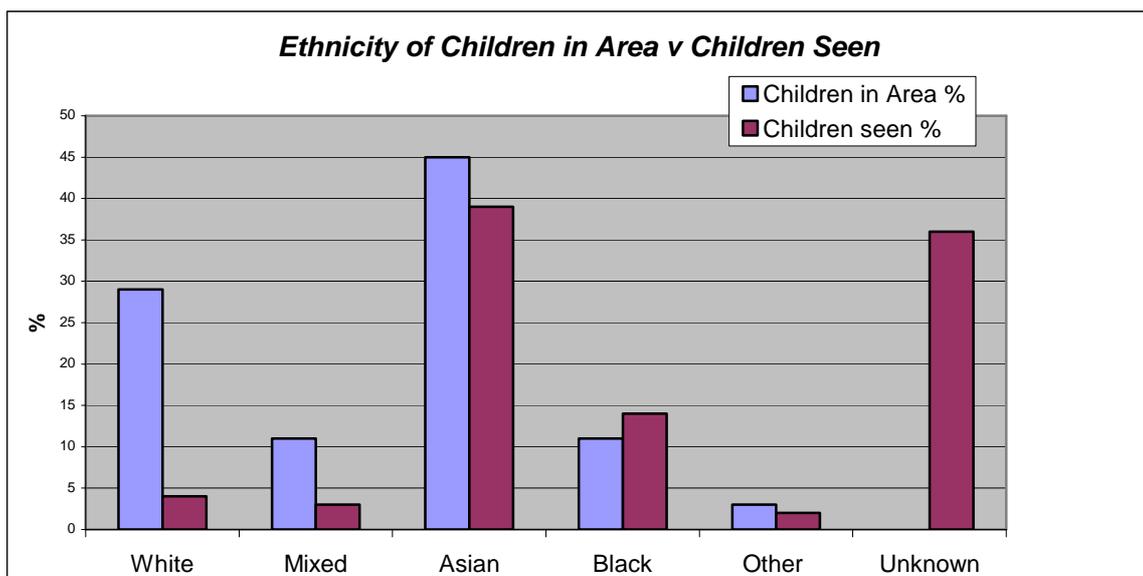


Source : Programme database

A significant amount of effort has been directed at reaching out to families;

- The Outreach Service initiated a door-to-door cold calling strategy. This helped register more families and make registered families aware of the service they could access. The result has been an increase in the number of attendees to Stay & Play sessions.
- Families who were registered by Outreach Workers were asked to collect their Goody Bag from the SureStart base. On collection they were shown around the building so that they could see SureStart in action.

- Families in particular streets were invited to specific activities / sessions with the intention that they would feel more comfortable seeing a familiar neighbourly face .
- We also looked into whether families where a carer worked were disadvantaged in using SureStart services. Based on telephone questioning of a sample of parents we found the majority would like to see some facilities offered at times more convenient to them. As a result we will be offering services out of normal hours in the New Year.



source : Census 2001

We currently have registered a significant number of children with unknown ethnic origin. This was because previous registration forms were filled by parents who occasionally failed to complete the ethnic monitoring section of the form. Furthermore, the form was unable to capture the ethnic origin of more than one member of the family. This matter has now been rectified by the introduction of a new registration form, which has the scope to record ethnic origin more clearly as well as pick up additional information on breastfeeding and smoking.

As further illustrated by the above chart, a significant number of Asian children were seen. This is in part due to the location of the SureStart premises, where a large number of sessions are held, being located in an area predominately populated by Asian families. We believe that the small number of White children seen may be due to the fact that the SureStart premises are based at one extreme of the area and are only accessible to much of the White community by crossing a busy 5 way traffic intersection.

We hope to resolve these discrepancies with our move in 2005 to the new office at Corbett Street next to a school and at the heart of the SureStart area.

## Progress against objectives

The table below illustrates our perceptions of progress towards each target.

Target		Status
Social & emotional development		On Track
Two month visit		On Track
Parenting info & support available for all parents		On Track
Smoking in pregnancy		Serious Concerns
Breastfeeding		Too Early to Rate
Accident & emergency admissions		On Track
Antenatal support		Some Concerns
Speech & Language development		On Track
Play & learning opportunities		On Track
Library use		On Track
Workless households		On Track
Improving services for families		On Track
Parents on the board		On Track
Links with jobcentres / training providers		Too Early to Rate
Childcare		On Track

## Improving social & emotional development

To increase the proportion of babies & young children with normal levels of personal, social & emotional development for their age

We feel we are **on track** with this target and have continued to hold a variety of activities in working towards this target. These have included...

- Take a Break sessions : parents meet and chat with other parents whilst children are engaged in play in the crèche run by Early Years Workers. Parents have found these sessions useful in helping break the mother child bond and prepare for the ultimate separation that begins with the start of nursery.

Early Years Workers have stated that there has been a significant visual improvement in children's behaviour during sessions and Parents have commented that their child is "less clingy and socialises better with other children" as a result of Stay & Play sessions and particularly Take a Break sessions.

- More Is Caught Than Taught sessions : a professional trainer held a series of classes over several weeks teaching parents about child behaviour and self-empowerment. Parents who participated in the course stated that they felt more confident in dealing with their child's behaviour and more empowered to take control of their own life in relation to education, skills training and career planning.
- Exploring Motherhood sessions : these were run by the Psychology service, which gave mothers an insight into how to deal with the emotional difficulties associated with a newborn child.

## To visit 100% of new parents within 2 months of birth

Although we are not seeing a 100% of new parents within two months we have made significant progress and feel we are **on track** with this target.

- A borough wide evaluation of this target has shown we have progressed from visiting only 35% of newborn babies within 2 months to over 63% (*comparison figures for April 03 to March 04 v April 04 to Sept 04*).
- With the recruitment of 2 Family Support Workers we are moving rapidly towards visiting all newborn babies within 2 months of birth. Presently, the key hindrance to this target has been that some families have not kept appointments with Family Support Workers despite appointment letters being sent before each visit. In a study of visits undertaken in November just over 50% of

households kept their appointment. We will be rolling out a new strategy, which will allow Family Support Workers to put an information pack through the letterbox and thereby demonstrate to families what the Family Support Service has to offer.

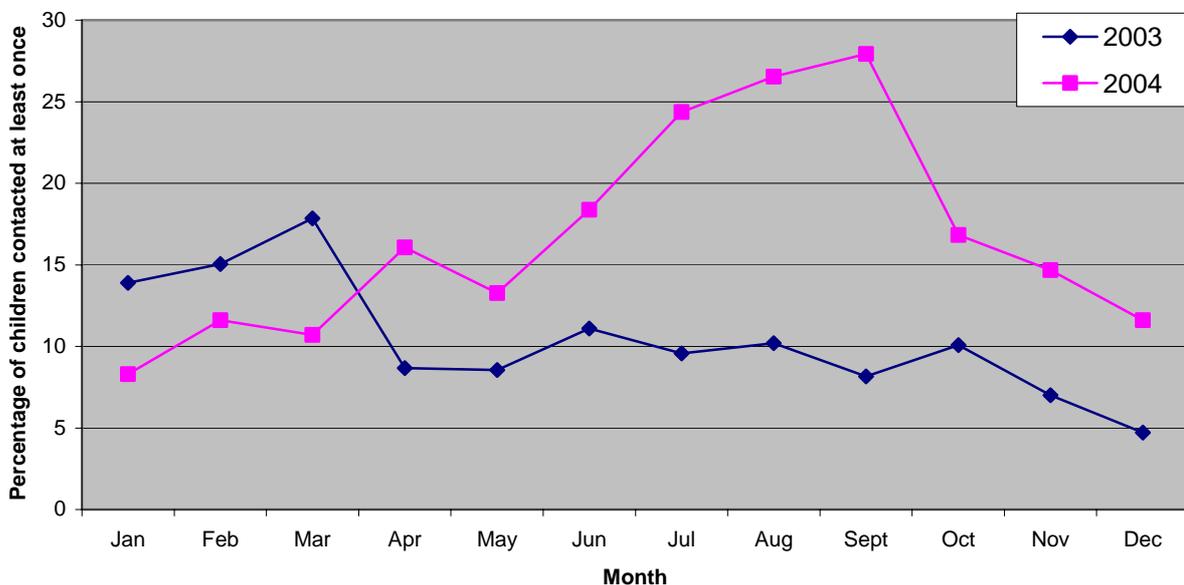
- Given the ethnic diversity of the area, language has also proven to be a barrier on visits.
- The programme has also offered activities focused at parents with babies such as Baby Club and Baby Massage.

### To provide parenting support & information for all parents

The programme feels it is **on track** with this target given the increase in its Reach over the year. (Reach is a measure of the percentage of children we have been able to contact at least once as a percentage of 783 children in the area).

- The programme has steadily increased its reach and aims to maintain a target of approximately 25% per month.

*A Comparison of Monthly Reach 2003 v 2004*



Source: SureStart Capehill & Windmill Database

Note: The dip in reach over September and October 2004 is due to the annual leave of the Outreach Worker for 3 weeks. The dip in reach from September onwards in both years is seasonal due to the loss of 4 year olds to Primary School and the reluctance of other parents to come to sessions due to cold weather and shorter days.

- As mentioned earlier, the Outreach Service has initiated a strategy of door-to-door cold calling to inform local parents of SureStart and attended local clinics to register families. This has begun to pay dividends as demonstrated by the increase in reach.
- The Cumulative reach since April 2004 is over 80%. Therefore, we have already surpassed the target reach of 80% to be attained by March 2005.

## Improving health

### 6-percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy

Though we have no benchmark data to work against we have **serious concerns** about this target because there is currently no onsite Smoking Cessation Service and the programme can only distribute literature to those concerned.

- The SureStart Midwife is making referrals to the Smoking Cessation Service in West Bromwich and is to be trained in providing a more immediate service in the future (i.e. Midwife to distribute nicotine patches).
- We have also begun collecting information regarding smoking when families are registered.

However, we believe that there is likely to be relatively fewer smoking in pregnancy cases due to the cultural stigma of smoking by the significant ethnic minority community in the area.

### Information & guidance on breastfeeding

It is too **early to rate** performance towards this target as Family Support Workers are presently being trained to encourage mothers to breastfeed and we hope to start a "Best Buddies" scheme in the New Year that will train Parent Volunteers in how to encourage mothers to breast-feed. The programme intends to evaluate the "Best Buddies" scheme when it is rolled out in March 2005.

Presently Family Support Workers and Outreach Workers distribute literature in relation to breastfeeding.

Although our records show that over 50% of mothers breastfeed at birth we suspect that this drops very quickly and though the midwife tries to keep track of mothers breastfeeding at 6 weeks and 17 weeks this proves to be an arduous task given that the Midwife only works one day a week. Work is being undertaken on a borough wide basis to rectify this through changes in the Sandwell Child Health Surveillance System. It is hoped this will be implemented sometime in 2005.

The fact that many of the mothers in our area also give birth at City Hospital (outside of Sandwell) makes data collection all the more difficult.

## 10% reduction in children admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, respiratory infection or a severe injury

Though this is a difficult target to measure due to the problems in getting hold of benchmark data we do feel we are **on track** with this target due to the following activities undertaken over the year.

- The programme has run 2 Food & Hygiene courses, a Health Awareness course and several First Aid courses. This continues on a rolling basis.

An evaluation of the Health Awareness course was completed and changes have been made to its delivery.

As a result the next course will be run in partnership with BrushStrokes (a local Community Organisation) and efforts have been made to use this as an opportunity to recruit members of the Asylum Seeker / Refugee community on to the course. In a questionnaire of parents who attended the first course particular praise was made regarding the Behaviour Management module that was delivered.

- The programme also runs a very popular Home Safety Equipment Scheme, distributing stair gates and fireguards at heavily subsidised prices. Parents are shown a video on "Safety in the Home" before being issued with the equipment. Since January 2004 over 50 Safety Sessions have been held.
- Family Support Workers advise mothers on how to sterilise bottles and the Outreach service provide newly registered families with smoke alarms with their goody bags.

We are also liaising with the Council on an initiative of issuing free car seats in 2005.

## Antenatal advice, support & information available to all pregnant women & their families.

The programme has some concerns regarding work towards this target as from June till November 2004 the programme was only able to provide postnatal support due to the lack of staff.

However, since December the programme has recruited another part time Family Support Worker and will be putting in place an Antenatal Support strategy.

Nevertheless, there has been a significant improvement on this target from 6% (April 03 to Mar 04) to 53% (April 04 to Sept 04) of pregnant women seen.

## Improving children's ability to learn

Increase the proportion of children with normal speech & language development at age 2 and the proportion with a normal level of communication, language & literacy at end of foundation stage

We believe we are **on track** in relation to work on this target because;

- The programme is well underway to completing the Speech & Language Measure for 2004 /05 (over 50 surveys have been undertaken) and will be in a position to look at the results after March 2005.
- Staff attended the Hanen Training Course, aimed at showing how to teach parents to encourage speech and development in their child. Early Years Workers will be running training programmes for Parents based on the Hanen model from January 2005.

All children have access to good quality play & learning opportunities, helping progress toward early learning goals when they get to school

With the recruitment of an Early Years Coordinator in June and a complete new Early Years team by the summer a significant amount of work as been done in improving play sessions which lead us to conclude we are **on track** with this target.

- Sessions have been made more structured and play activities have incorporated movement, singing and story telling. As a result the Early Years Team have stated that they have seen a visual improvement in the behaviour of children who attend sessions.
- Stay & Play sessions have proven incredibly popular with an average of 60 attendees a month, and a peak of 100 attendees in one month, at the Waterloo Road sessions. At times staff have had to turn away parents because the play area as been full to capacity.
- Some of the Art sessions were run by Playtrain, an independent company, who incorporated music and dance into the sessions. These sessions received a very warm response from the parents and children with attendances of over 15 children.
- The programme has also arranged educational trips to Hatton Country Park and the Think Tank (see above : Key Events 2004) in working towards learning goals.

## Increase the use of libraries by parents with young children

The programme was without a Laptop Librarian for much of the year. A Librarian has now been recruited and the service is up and running and, as demonstrated by the figures below, proven very popular which leads us to believe we are **on track** with this target .

### *Use of Laptop Library Service at SureStart Capehill & Windmill*

	Library sessions	New Members	Book Issues
<b>Sept</b>	11	20	50
<b>Oct</b>	21	10	100
<b>Nov</b>	26	30	200

Source : Smethwick Library

The service not only issues books but also toys and videos.

A visit to the Library was also organised. Parents and children set off from the SureStart base and walked down to the library where they were met by a Library Link Worker and a Story Teller.

Furthermore, the programme gives free books when it conducts its Speech & Language Measure and the Early Years team have run Story Sessions in order to encourage parents to use books with their children.

## Strengthening families & communities

### Reduce the number of families living in a house where no one is working by 12%

This is another target we have found difficult to measure due to lack of benchmark data. However, we do feel we are on **track** with this target. The activities undertaken towards this target are ;

- setup JobPoint allowing parents to access vacancies from SureStart premises.
- run a series of 'Back to Work' courses at which the Inland Revenue gave a talk on "Benefits v Salary", parents were made aware of our JobPoint facility and sessions were run by Black Country Advice & Guidance around careers, jobs and training.
- continued on the success of the Volunteer Scheme, which has proven to be a stepping-stone for parents looking to enter the job market, training or further education.

Parents are also given the incentive of being offered free nursery places at the Neighbourhood Nursery whilst undertaking training.

We have also recently employed the services of an Advice Worker through the Citizens Advice Bureau to allow families to undergo a benefits assessment and help them apply for benefits and understand the financial impact of returning to work.

### 75% of families report personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support

This target is assessed on the results from a User Satisfaction survey conducted by Parent Volunteers and coordinated by a Community Development Officer.

The programme completed its User Satisfaction Survey in 2003 and 3-year Evaluation at the end of 2003.

One of the findings of the User Satisfaction Survey was that parents requested a range of additional services. Those requested most frequently were provision of IT facilities/ training, welfare support, help with form filling and help for people whose first language is not English.

In response to this in 2004 we introduced a Computer Café run from a satellite centre (this was later wound up due to issues with the partner organisation beyond our control) and have gone from using the services of an onsite Citizens Advice Bureau worker for a half a day to employing the services of a Welfare Adviser for 2 days a week.

Furthermore, a review of how the User Satisfaction Survey was conducted was completed and the report produced in Jan 2004. The key findings from it were ;

- that the sample of Users questioned was not representative enough.
- though Users generally seem satisfied with the services provided to them Satisfaction might not offer a very reliable indicator of how effectively the needs of the local community are being met, given that we don't know how high their expectations are.

These are considerations we will take on board when carrying out any future widespread consultations.

We have also acted on one of the principal findings of the 3-year Evaluation, which was an improvement in monitoring. Over 2004 we purchased a new database and we believe this alone has made a 2% - 3% difference in the recording of our Reach figure. We have also put in place evaluation tools that have assisted in the recording of events, service reviews and work in relation to progress against targets.

### To have parent representation on the board

The programme is **on track** with this target having 8 parents on the Programme Board and a Parents Forum that feeds comments to the Board.

### Ensure effective links with Job Centres

We have made contact with the Jobcentre this year and some partnership working has commences. At the moment we believe it is too **early to rate** progress on this target.

- During the year we set up a JobPoint. This was evaluated in December and we currently await the findings.
- The New Deal Lone Parents Adviser gave presentations on Lone Parent Work & Benefit to parents.

### To increase the availability of accessible childcare

We believe we are **on track** with this target with the opening of the Neighbourhood Nursery this year. It has proven to be a tremendous success with demand outstripping supply for fee-paying places.

Twenty-two discounted places are offered to parents and 8 free places are utilised by the SureStart programme for respite care and referrals.

A criterion has been developed to utilise the 8 free places negotiated with the nursery and referral and use is picking up.

***Nursery free places (full time equivalent places) from Sept to Dec 2004***

	September	October	November	December
Used	98	84	92	38
Possible	160	160	160	136
Unused	62	76	68	98

We have been concerned about the large number of unused places. One of the barriers encountered has been that Health Visitors are slow to refer families to Sure Start for additional support. A meeting to discuss this was held in December and there should be a marked improvement in the use of nursery places. The other barrier is the number of age related places negotiated where often referrals of children do not fit neatly into the negotiated arrangement of places.

## Capital investment

The capital development site for Sure Start Smethwick is Cape Hill and Windmill Lane is the Old Corbett Street infant school site. The project has been developed in several phases.

- Phase 1** - Neighbourhood nursery ( 50 place day nursery)
- Phase 2** - Sure Start Centre (office, play room, kitchen and toilets)
- Phase 2a** - Reception area, office, counselling room
- Phase 3** - Hall and large classroom

**Phase 1** is complete and the nursery is working to maximum capacity offering 22 discounted rate places and 8 free places (referral via Sure Start) to families living in the Sure Start area.

**Phase 2** is due to be completed in March 2005 however access will be limited to only one part of the building. We have encountered a delay in gaining access to the reception area, large classroom and hall due to the school's delay in vacating these parts of the building. (The school is developing its own new site to accommodate their move and has encountered delays in their capital project. This has had a knock on effect on us.)

**Phase 2a** will be complete around November 2005.

**Phase 3** cannot be refurbished due to lack of funding.

Funding has been sought from Neighbourhood renewal funds to support phase 2 . However our application was unsuccessful on the basis that the project had already started and could not be counted as a stand-alone project. Further funding avenues were sought and smaller amounts were secured. Harborne Parish Lands Church Charity granted £10,000 toward supporting the Milk prep area in the nursery and some costs towards phase 2.

Funding for phase 3 is still being sought. The estimate cost for refurbishment of phase 3 is around £300,000 for the Hall to become a community facility with its own kitchen and toilets and the large classroom to become offices and training room.

## What we are particularly proud of

In another busy year we have been particularly proud that;

- The programme has increased its reach within the community and continued on the success of its established services.

(e.g. attendances at Stay & Play sessions have increased. The SureStart 'brand' has become more widely understood, in an area that has a recorded history of low uptake of services, through the hard work of our Outreach and Family Support Service).

- The programme has established a successful Volunteer programme where parents' confidence and skills have been developed and allowed some to gain employment and take up further study.

Presently, 6 parents are in part-time employment and 6 are studying at the local college.

13 parents are actively volunteering within the programme on a regular weekly basis.

- Despite staffing shortages and being housed in temporary premises we have managed to maintain the smooth running of the programme.
- We have been able to provide play facilities in an area that had very little for children under 4.
- With a fully staffed Early Years team in place, play sessions have become very popular with parents being turned away from some sessions due to overcrowding.
- This year saw the introduction of various Monitoring and Evaluation tools that have begun to pay dividends. Staff have begun to document the planning of events and the after event reviews.

A system whereby progress against targets is monitored quarterly has been rolled out in anticipation of the reporting that will be required with the introduction of Children's Centres in 2005.

## The things that have been difficult

Some of the key difficulties this year have been ;

- The programme has faced difficulties in working towards its targets and goals due to problems recruiting professional staff. This has proven to be a major problem due to the national shortage of Health & Care professionals. Coupled with the fact that a significant number of staff moved on or went on maternity leave meant that on occasions services were unable to run.
- The time taken for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks to come through has also hindered how quickly we have been able to get people into post.
- It has been difficult to assess progress in certain areas due to the lack of adequate data that is being supplied by outside organisations (e.g. on breastfeeding and smoking).
- The programme has also had to deal with a very transient population, which has meant resources have been expended pursuing families who have moved out of area.
- The ethnic diversity of the population and the fact that English is not the first language of a significant proportion of the population has proven to be a challenge, but we have gone some way to resolving this by successfully using Parent Volunteers to translate.

## Key challenges for the year ahead

The biggest challenge in the coming year will be the transformation from SureStart to Children's Centre and our move to the new building in Corbett Street.

The transformation to Children's Centres will involve adapting to shared / pooled budgets to deliver services in an extended area.

Centralised, shared services are inevitable and these plans will have a knock on effect on some of the support services that Parents receive. Smaller budgets will mean that serious thought will be needed in ensuring quality assurance and added value in services is sustained whilst working with limited resources.

An ongoing challenge to work in partnership with a host of agencies will remain part of the identity of the nature of work we are undertaking.

## The Way Forward

We are planning a range of services and activities in the New Year to build on the work done this year. Some of these are listed below;

- Acting upon parents' suggestions and request, the programme applied for OFSTEAD approval and registration in November 2004 to offer PlayGroup sessions for children aged 2 and over. The PlayGroup is due to open in March 2005.
- Working parents would like an evening session and this has been planned to start in February 2005.
- Best Buddies initiative aimed at supporting and encouraging breastfeeding will be rolled out in unisome with other SureStarts in the New Year.
- More courses for Volunteers.
- Hanen training sessions to teach Parents how to encourage speech and development with their child to begin in January 2005.
- Volunteer of the Month award to be setup.
- Wacky Warehouse type ball pool session to be held locally called PITSTOP.
- Creation and recruitment of Health Support Worker to implement an under 4s Health Promotion Programme in the Sure Start/Children Centre area.

## Appendix A – Evaluation Summary

### Evaluation activities undertaken during 2004

The following evaluations took place over 2004.

- 1) Volunteer Scheme
- 2) JobPoint
- 3) Health Awareness Training
- 4) Cross programme evaluation has been undertaken in the following areas:

Psychology - partnership working

2-month birth visit

Hanon training for Sure Start staff

Copies of evaluation reports available upon request - please contact the programme on 0121 555 6756.

### Evaluation activities planned for 2005

- 1) Playgroup
- 2) Hanon Training
- 3) Best Buddies