



SureStart Thorpe Hamlet  
Norwich

Summary Evaluation Report  
2000 - 2004

Sue Bailey  
Centre for Research on the Child & Family  
University of East Anglia



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## **THE THORPE HAMLET SURESTART PROGRAMME**

### **AN OVERVIEW: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

This report outlines the major achievements of the programme in Thorpe Hamlet during 2000 – 2004. It presents reach statistics, charts the progress towards the targets as identified in the monitoring data, and briefly discusses the surveys, interviews and other forms of evaluation undertaken. Over the period 2000 - 2004, and particularly since the opening of the new building in 2003, there has been continuous expansion, whether measured in new staff posts, increased hours, services offered or parent and child participation. Many of the SureStart targets are being met, and 'reach' statistics at Thorpe Hamlet are good, particularly in relation to other SureStart programmes referenced in the national literature. The Day Nursery is integrated into the SureStart programme, and offers 29 full-time equivalent places. Since children often attend for only some parts of the week in practice some 55 different children gain benefit from this provision (mid 2004 figure).

There are some notable successes in individual parts of the programme; for example a markedly lower percentage of children at age 4 with speech and language delay, significantly improved breast feeding rates, 100% contact with mothers shortly after the birth of their child and the impressive take-up of the education part of the programme. However it would be rather simplistic to merely list the many achievements of the first four years of the Thorpe Hamlet SureStart programme, and it would also be somewhat invidious. Firstly, by citing selective key successes, one runs the risk of excluding, and by default, if unintentionally, undervaluing the achievements of other parts of the programme. More fundamentally, however, success has been very much the product of changes in the way of working, and the collaborative nature of the whole programme. A strong commitment by the team to interagency working has produced good results, which might not have been achieved by the different professionals working in isolation. There has been an underlying ethos of openness and accessibility to both the families, and to team colleagues.

In organisational terms the location of the health visitors, midwife and speech and language therapists in the main building has been key to the programme. Professionals in the team have an additional capacity to see parents, as compared to their old pre-SureStart style of working. They are accessible for parents, are able to offer quicker appointments if follow up work is appropriate, and are available for, and a resource for, team colleagues. The fact that services are delivered on a locality basis enables 100% contact to be made with families in the area and has resulted in good 'reach' and take-up rates for other parts of the programme.

It is instructive to explore one example of the interdependency of the programme. The Education Programme has been a major success, whether measured in terms of reach, attendance, courses offered or qualifications gained. Its achievements, though, are more than this list of targets attained, and its success both contributes to and relies upon other parts of the main SureStart programme. Wider benefits include:

- empowerment of the parents attending
- a building of confidence and self esteem
- an enhancement of job prospects
- a greater engagement with fathers than in other parts of the programme
- the forming of friendships and a degree of strengthening of community ties.

These factors can then positively influence the way parents interact with other parts of the SureStart programme and with the professionals working in the other services. However the Learning Centre could not function as successfully without the nursery and crèche which enable parents to attend. This provision gives the children a wide range of play opportunities and the chance to socialise with their peers, thus contributing to the children's development and well-being.

Parent participation has also been central to the ethos of SureStart generally, and to its successes in Thorpe Hamlet. A feeling of participation in and ownership of the programme has led to good parental representation on the Steering Group, a Parents Group which meets regularly, and the running by parents of parts of the programme. Parents initiated and ran a weekly music session, which was very popular, and also 'Monday Monkeys' mother and baby/toddler group.

### **PROBLEMATIC ISSUES REMAINING:**

The issues listed below tend to have been identified, and regularly discussed, at various points in the period from the programme start in 2000.

- Common, I suspect, to all SureStart programmes there remains a group of 'hard-to-reach' families. In Thorpe Hamlet this group include those for whom English is not their first language, newcomers to the area, those who live farthest away from the Centre, and those who, for whatever reason, do not wish to engage with the programme.
- Working successfully with families individually on an outreach basis continues to pose a challenge, and has resource implications.
- Engaging fathers in significant numbers remains a challenge.
- Space is a constraint, and in some respects the programme has already outgrown the physical capacity of the building, particularly in terms of activities being run at the same time.
- On occasions the number of available crèche places restricts parent participation in activities.
- Families with older children have difficulty attending some activities. Provision for older siblings during the school holidays is a constant issue.
- Whilst inter-agency working is one of the strengths of the programme, it can lead to a number of different professionals working with the same family, and communication between them needs to be good, and exact responsibilities clear.
- On occasions there has been an issue as to which member of the team would be most appropriately assigned to an individual family, and in what circumstances a volunteer worker would be of benefit.

### **CHALLENGES**

- Changes to the programme to encompass the new role as a Children's Centre pose many challenges in terms of organisation and services offered.
- Funding levels in the future are unclear, with local authority rather than central government control.
- Uncertainty itself is challenging.
- Of major concern is how to preserve parent participation and ownership, as central both to the ethos and the day-to-day running of the programme.
- To ensure that any ensuing expansion of geographic boundaries does not lead to a perception of loss of ownership by the parents of 'their' Centre.

### **Programme Development Day – January 2005**

The evaluation report for year 3 of the programme formed part of the agenda for an 'Away Day' attended by all team members, along with three parents and two volunteer workers. The day in general addressed the ethos of SureStart and how the different team members saw their own service fitting into the whole programme. The participants worked in sub-groups to identify what they perceived as the core principles of SureStart.

Whilst the full evaluation reports assist the discussion on the direction that programme development should take, and are important as a way of feeding back to stakeholders and mainstream service providers, the evaluator also thought that a short summary evaluation briefing sheet would be useful. In consultation with the project manager and administrators it was decided that there was a need for a short summary to be freely available, to be distributed both within and outside the programme; to parents, to the agencies involved with the programme, and to local politicians etc.

The initial business plans and application documents for the programme were revisited, and the key areas of concern highlighted by parents noted. This provided a framework to see how far these issues had been addressed and parental aspirations met. A two-side briefing paper was subsequently produced.

## SECTION I

### BACKGROUND

Local evaluation is a key element in the development of Sure Start programmes. As programmes develop their services it is important that robust information is available about what is effective, and what progress is being made in meeting the objectives and targets for SureStart.

Local evaluation focuses on

- Working practices and processes associated with setting up and delivering services
- Progress towards targets and outcomes
- The effectiveness of services in meeting the needs of children and families
- Ascertaining the views of parents in the SureStart area
- Value for money
- And provides a process for incorporating evaluation findings into the on-going development of the programme.

The levels at which the evaluation can operate include:

- Portfolio: the quality and contribution across the range of activities and services
- Programme: an in depth look at specific activities in the programme
- Policy: the selection, cost and management of activities / programmes.

Alongside the local evaluation process, the entire SureStart programme is being evaluated at the national level, where an appropriate methodology to ascertain the long-term impact on children and families is being developed. Questions as to how the national programme is being implemented are also being addressed, along with the economic cost, and benefit, of the initiative as a whole.

Whilst some SureStart programmes have opted to employ their own evaluator in-house who undertakes both the monitoring and evaluation roles, Thorpe Hamlet SureStart chose to utilize an outside, independent evaluator, and contracted with the School of Social Work and Psychosocial Sciences at the University of East Anglia to fulfill this remit. Over the four year period of the evaluation the research has been conducted in turn by Dr. Terri van Leeson, Dr. Pippa Belderson and Sue Bailey, under the direction of Professor June Thoburn.

The School of Social Work and Psychosocial Sciences at UEA has produced four reports to date, and the purpose of this additional Summary Report is to identify the main findings from these reports, and to draw together the key messages and discussion points, with the aim of assisting the Programme team, steering group and parents in their decision-making as to the direction in which the programme will be developed further.

The four reports have different emphases. The initial report for 2001 concentrated on the start-up processes, the team structure and relationships within the team, and the partnerships with external agencies. The second annual report (2002) sought parents' views, both from interview and questionnaires, on SureStart provision in particular and the Thorpe Hamlet area in general. An interim report, in May 2003, on the ESF-funded

(European Social Fund) Education Programme, delivered at the Learning Centre, looked at the courses on offer, take-up rates and students' views on the courses and what they had achieved by undertaking them. The third annual report, for 2003, looked at the range and take up of services following the opening of the purpose built new premises, and included a closer look at a subset of work undertaken, particularly those services which were in part offered on an outreach basis, and involved one-to-one working.

A subsequent part of this Summary Report (Section VII) outlines the additional evaluation work undertaken since the third annual report was completed.

This Summary Report also incorporates the monitoring data which is collected and collated by the administrative staff, and this is included in Section II. There are two main types of information that each individual SureStart Programme is required to collect, namely:

- Progress in reaching all children under 4 and their families in the SureStart area
- Progress against SureStart's objectives and targets – which are nationally set.

Data from the commencement of Surestart services to parents in November 2000 until the end of 2004 is shown below in Table 1 and Figure 1. Statistics for each target subsumed within the four main SureStart objectives are given in the subsequent tables, with the figures for 2000 – 2001 providing the baseline against which any improvements can be measured.

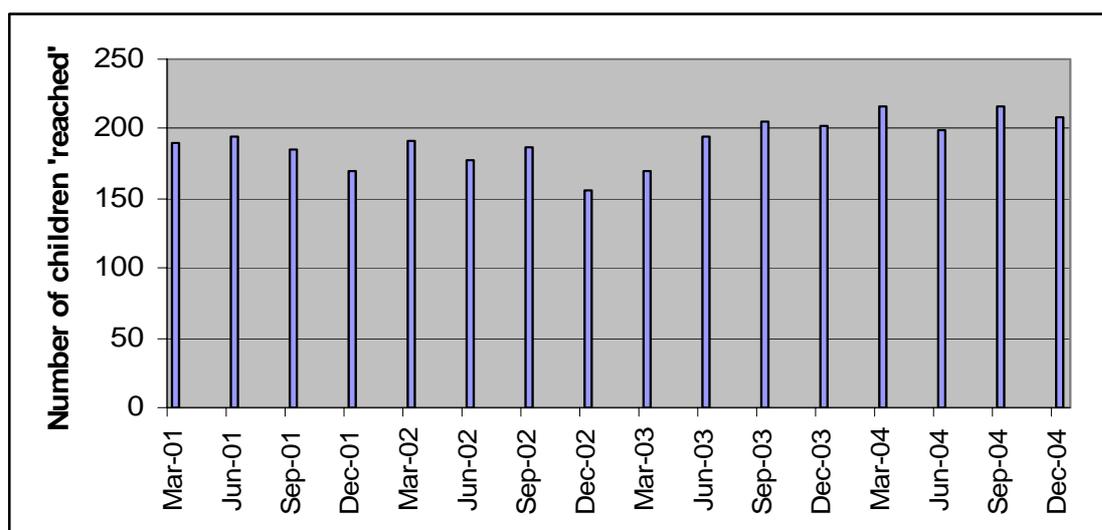
## SECTION II

### MONITORING INFORMATION AND PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGETS

**Table 1 'Reach statistics': Number of different children seen by SureStart each month (including children in crèche and nursery)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January		172	180	175	203
February		182	182	181	201
March		190	191	170	216
April		198	195	183	202
May		203	192	204	196
June		195	178	194	199
July		184	185	184	197
August		143	170	167	189
September		185	187	206	216
October	143	206	182	203	200
November	195	197	161	193	224
December	138	170	156	202	209
Monthly average over the year	159	185	180	189	204
Average % increase in attendance over previous year	n/a	16%	- 2.7%	5%	8%

**Figure 1 Reach statistics (at three monthly intervals) 2001 - 2004**



Numbers attending have risen gradually, with the average monthly attendance during 2004 of 204 being 8% up on the 2003 average of 189. Since the opening of the Wolfe Road building in May 2003, 'reach' has exceeded 200 children in twelve of the twenty months.

**OBJECTIVE;  
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Target 1 Re-registrations: to maintain zero re-registration on the CP register	0	0	0	0
Target 2 % of mothers identified as having PND in the first 12 months % receiving appropriate care	21.3% 96%	10% 91%	10% 100%	9% 91%
Target 3 % of families with young children contacted within 2 months of birth by a member of the SureStart programme	100%  (number of families with new babies = 106)	99%  (number of families with new babies = 112)	100%  (number of families with new babies = 102)	100%  (number of families with new babies = 119)

**OBJECTIVE;  
IMPROVING HEALTH**

	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Target 1 Smoking in pregnancy: % of women smoking during pregnancy  change from previous year	20% (n = 106)	20.7% (n = 111)	15.7% (n = 102)	21.9% (n=114)
		0.7 % point increase	4.3 % point reduction	6.2% point increase
Target 2 To offer parenting support and information to all parents of 0-3 year olds in SureStart area	100% contact	100% contact	100% contact	100% contact
Target 3 Breastfeeding % breastfeeding at birth % breastfeeding % breastfeeding	60% 42% (10 days) 18% (3 months)	72% 59% (10 days) 43% (3 months)	61% 40% (6 weeks) 28% (4 months)	77% 64% (6 weeks) 42% (4 months)
Target 4 Number of children admitted to hospital with specific conditions		17	8	13

**OBJECTIVE;  
IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO LEARN**

	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Target 1 Speech and language: % of children with speech and language development delay  change from previous year	8.4%	7.9% at age 4  0.5 point reduction	5.4% at age 4  2.5 point reduction	2.2% at age 4  3.2 point reduction
Target 2 Good quality play and learning opportunities:	Play Worker appointed Jan. 2001. Play sessions amongst the earliest SureStart provision. Toy Library scheme. Purpose-built Centre (opened in 2003) has both indoor and outdoor play space, and together with the crèche and nursery they provide a variety of play opportunities. Saturday morning themed play sessions introduced 2003. Art, music and gym/movement sessions offered. Play sessions involve the parents, and offer new ideas for types of play and activities which can be enjoyed at home.			
Target 3 Libraries: % children with active membership of library	39% subset of children	No library data. 5% increase in book loan at drop-in	27.15% (full library service data)	Data not available

**OBJECTIVE;  
STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004
Target 1 Reduction in % of children in households with no-one is working	47% 1997 - City Council		33%	
Target 2 Accessible childcare: Childcare places – full-time equivalents	unavailable	15 childminding	29 f.t.e. nursery places 36 childminding	29 f.t.e. nursery places 48 childminding
Target 3 Parental satisfaction		Extensive parent survey and 23 interviews conducted	Parents' views on education programme obtained	Good feedback from survey on baby club, holiday trips & play sessions
Target 4 Parent representation: No. of parents on Board	5	6	10	12
Target 5 Links with Jobcentres		Developing links	Extensive links: e.g. 'warm phone' internet link 'lone parent advisor'	Similar links as in previous year

## OTHER PROGRAMME STATISTICS

**Table 2** Number of births per year

Year	Number of births
2000	53
2001	116
2002	103
2003	107
2004	121
Total	500

Note: information for the year 2000 is from June of that year

**Table 3** Number of mothers in each age band (age at childbirth)

Age	2001	2002	2003	2004	2001-2004
19 and below	8	8	9	8	33 (8%)
Age 20-24	18	17	25	27	87 (21%)
Age 25-29	39	22	28	33	122 (30%)
Age 30-34	32	28	20	30	110 (27%)
Age 35-39	10	13	11	20	54 (13%)
Age 40 and above	2	3			5 (1%)
Average age of mothers	28	29	27	28	28
Total number of mothers giving birth	109	91	93	118	411 (100%)

(this table excludes those mothers for whom no age was given – thus the number of births is less than in the overall figures in Table 1 above)

Only 8% of births are to teenage mothers.

The most frequent (modal) age for first time mothers was 27 years, and for second births was 28 years.

## **SECTION III**

### **FIRST YEAR REPORT**

The first year report covered the background to the setting up of the SureStart programme nationally, and the selection of the Thorpe Hamlet area in particular, noting the aims of the programme in increasing the readiness of children to take advantage of school, and to assist their parents to become discriminating users of education, health and social services so that they demand the best for their children.

Nationally the SureStart programme was a central plank of the Government's anti-poverty strategy and its key objectives were couched in terms of improving children's social, emotional and educational development, improving both the child's and maternal health, and in strengthening the community.

The evaluation looked at the process by which the Thorpe Hamlet programme was established and the negotiation around the delivery plan, through to the initial staff appointments, and the launch of services to parents with a fun day in August 2000. Twenty parents attending this launch day were interviewed, and subsequently an evaluation feedback form designed and given out to all of the funded projects, and 27 forms were returned. In addition, the views of staff and attenders at the Drop-in were sought, and observations made of the activities, the numbers attending and the enjoyment the children and their parents were experiencing.

Messages from the early evaluation exercises:

- Mothers found it very isolating at time being at home with a baby / young child
- Before the opening of SureStart there had been few activities for young children
- Most parents had first heard of SureStart through their health visitor
- Parents at these early events were unsure of what SureStart was about, and what it could or could not provide
- The launch Fun Day was popular
- The idea of the Drop-in was popular, and for some parents it helped to overcome the difficulty of meeting other parents
- The ability to see a health visitor without making an appointment was popular
- There were negative comments on the delay in starting up services
- Eligibility criteria were criticised

The programme had achieved good reach statistics, although access from the different geographic areas within Thorpe Hamlet varied.

## SECTION IV

### SECOND YEAR REPORT

The second year's report concentrated on ascertaining parents' views, and involved 23 in-depth interviews, and questionnaires to all 330 families in the area who had a pre-school child or children. Interviewees were asked for their views on the local area, the experience of bring up children in the area, services for pre-school children, and use of and views of SureStart services. Methodologically it was important to talk to parents who, for whatever reason, did not use the SureStart facilities, in addition to those who were enthusiastic and frequent users. A purposive sample was therefore sought, using a sampling model and terminology developed by Gibbons et al (1992)<sup>1</sup>, which reflected the following categories of users:

- Members – highly involved parents, who attend frequently and provide an input into service provision and planning
- Consumers – irregular and selective users of programmes and services
- Clients – families who accessed a service following a referral from a SureStart professional or an outside body, but who would probably not have done so otherwise

Additionally interviews were sought with

- Non-registered families
- Families for whom English was a second language.

The questionnaire sought parental views on the facilities and services for pre-school children, changes in these services since the establishment of SureStart, awareness and use of particular SureStart services, the information available about SureStart, and basic socio-demographic information on the families responding. A response rate of 36% (120 responses from the 330 questionnaires delivered) was achieved.

#### Positive findings

Positive findings from both the interviews with and questionnaires from parents, and also from interviews with staff members were:

- i) SureStart staff were viewed as accessible, approachable and enthusiastic.
- ii) Staff members felt they worked together well as an integrated team. In particular the location of the health visitors within the Centre was judged to be a key advantage, particularly as they are offering a universal service. Parents appreciated the easy access to the midwife and health visitors, and their availability at the end of the phone. The local Head Teacher had previously dealt with 15 different GP surgeries and felt that the new health visitor arrangements were pivotal.
- iii) Flourishing parental involvement and representation – two of the most popular services, the music group and the baby club, were instigated by parents.
- iv) SureStart had established good links with the two first schools in the area; and 82% of parents interviewed said that the schools were of good quality.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Children Act 1989 and family support: principles into practice.* Ed. Jane Gibbons. London: HMSO (1992)

- v) 90% of respondents were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with facilities and services for pre-school children.
- vi) 78% of respondents felt that services for pre-school children had improved since SureStart had been established, and 22% felt that they were 'about the same'. No-one felt that services had got worse in that time period. Nearly three-quarters of respondent thought that play facilities, support and advice to parents, and training and learning opportunities for parents had improved with the advent of SureStart, and a half thought that health services and child care services had improved (with the other half not registering any change either way in these services).
- vii) Improved play and learning facilities, and the opportunity to play with other children, were appreciated by a high percentage of the respondents.
- viii) The volunteer visiting service was greatly appreciated by the eight survey respondents who had been allocated a visitor.
- ix) Mothers mentioned that they had met new people and had gained confidence from attending, or becoming involved in, SureStart activities.
- x) There was a high level of satisfaction with information received from a number of sources e.g. SureStart leaflets, displays and newsletters. However, despite the publicity, some services were not well known about, particularly if they took place away from the main SureStart building.

### **Problematic areas or issues**

The questionnaires and interviews indicated some aspects of the programme which were problematic, or which did not work so well:

- i) Difficulties in integrating SureStart staff members not based within the project building.
- ii) Difficulties inherent in the initial premises (both size and its out of the way location), and the delay in moving into larger premises.
- iii) Some feeling that the catchment area for this SureStart programme should have been larger initially, since typically a catchment area will cover about 750 children under four.
- iv) Tight geographic boundaries meant that friends and relatives just outside the area could not attend sessions.
- v) Having older children, who were beyond the SureStart age, prevented some mothers from attending activities.
- vi) There was some perception that SureStart was purely health-related, and that unless a mother attended the drop-in she would be unaware of the wide range of services actually on offer.
- vii) Some respondents perceived that services were aimed at new mothers with a baby under one year old, and particularly first-time and young mothers, or at families who had difficulty in coping.
- viii) Older mothers (defined as over 30 years of age) were both less aware of the services on offer, and less likely to use them.
- ix) Some mothers felt intimidated at the thought of attending group activities, or had felt unwelcome when they tried an activity. Whilst some individuals can be helped to overcome these barriers and welcoming strategies have been developed, appropriate outreach services in the home need to be developed for those who choose not to attend at the Centre.

- x) There was some unmet need for more support within the home, for example from mothers suffering from post-natal depression, who did not wish to go to group or social activities at the SureStart building.
- xi) Some parents would have appreciated advice about benefits and managing debt, and whilst some staff tried to provide this information this was not their specialism.
- xii) Better facilities for the under-4s had highlighted the poor provision for older children and teenagers.
- xiii) Difficulty in engaging fathers (this was prior to the employment of a Fathers Worker).

### **Views of the area**

Parents' views were sought about the wider community, in addition to their perceptions of the SureStart programme. Four out of every five respondents thought that the schools were good, however the standard of housing in the area was often regarded as poor, with less than half saying that housing was of good quality.

There was, though, a strong sense of community (69% agreeing with this comment), and nearly 90% knew and had contact with neighbours, whilst just over half had close relatives living nearby. Two-thirds of those interviewed felt that Thorpe Hamlet was a safe community. However sub-areas within the Programme area were deemed less pleasant and safe, and to have deteriorated since some of the parents had themselves been children on the same estate. Cited problems included vandalism, joy-riding, drugs, violence, bullying, unsafe play area, and anti-social and threatening behaviour.

### **Summary**

2002 was a busy and productive year for Thorpe Hamlet SureStart, with strong support from local agencies and parents. SureStart continued its record of being in contact with a high proportion of local families with young children, and was reaching on average 180 children per month. The range of activities offered by the Programme increased, and the survey indicated that knowledge about SureStart was widespread among local families, and that there was a high level of satisfaction with the services provided whether within the families' own homes or at the Drop-in Centre.

## **SECTION V**

### **EDUCATION REPORT**

#### **MAY 2003**

A mid-term evaluation of the Education Development Programme which ran for two years from January 2002 to the end of December 2003, with a grant from the European Social Fund (ESF). The programme consisting of various courses aims to put adults in a better position to gain employment and to reduce the level of unemployment within Thorpe Hamlet.

The Education Development Worker (EDW) was interviewed in-depth, all course materials were collated, sessions in three different courses observed, and students views sought on various courses. The report found that:

- Good progress was made in setting up the programme and attracting a large number of students.
- The location and timing of courses were generally approved of by those attending, with no travel costs and times convenient for collecting children from school. However a Saturday class and an evening course did not attract sufficient interest to run.
- Initially the facilities for the IT courses were not adequate, but this will be overcome with the opening of the Learning Centre.
- Crèche facilities were critical in allowing parents to attend, with continuity of the crèche staff deemed to be very important. Parents had differing views as to whether they liked their children being in the same building and able to see them, or separate and less likely to cause a distraction to either the child or parent.
- Course structure, the quality of the tuition and informal support from other students were all positively commented on.
- Programme information was distributed at the main SureStart Drop-in Centre, via letters home with children from school, and informally by word of mouth. Recommendation from other students was considered by students to be the best endorsement, although some students felt that there needed to be more information about what the course content was.

#### **Outcomes**

Cumulative numbers of those attending courses consistently reached the ESF targets during 2002 and early 2003. On average 29 new students enrolled during each of the five quarters from January 2002 to the end of March 2003, so that by this end date the number of cumulative starters was 145, fully meeting the ESF target figure of 140. The EDW felt that in the first year they had tapped the backlog of people who were the most engaged and enthusiastic, and that in the second year they were making real progress in involving 'harder to reach' groups.

Students felt that their confidence had been boosted, and the Education Development Worker perceived this effect in the students who attended. One student mentioned the presentation in the English GCSE course which whilst daunting had given her confidence when she had successfully presented. Others valued the confidence gained from the cookery course.

Many students were motivated to embark on further courses; this was particularly true of those attending the IT course. 'Getting out of the house' and meeting others were also positive outcomes, particularly for the longer 30-week courses which allowed time for students to establish friendships.

Students interviewed were expecting that their new qualifications would improve their job prospects, and for some their expectations had been raised by the programme. Those not immediately hoping to return to work still recognised that "It'll help just having it on your CV".

### **Barriers to the programme**

In the interviews various potential barriers to participating were mentioned including work and family commitments, ill health of the student or more frequently the student's child(ren), lack of confidence, negative associations from school-days, and financial constraints (lack of computer at home for the advanced IT course).

All the students observed and interviewed were women, and at the time of the report only a few men had attended any of the courses. However some of the mothers indicated that the all-female nature of the courses had been a positive factor.

The EDW was working with the Fathers Development Worker to address the potential educational and job guidance needs of men in the Thorpe Hamlet area. It was recognised from adult education generally that men tend to view courses as instrumental in improving their career and are less likely to view education courses as a social event. A survey of twenty three fathers in Autumn 2002 had indicated interest in computing/web page creation and digital photography, and to a lesser extent woodworking and driving theory.

## UPDATE TO EDUCATION REPORT

### SURESTART EXTRA 2 01.01.04 onwards

With the move of the main programme to the purpose-built premises in Wolfe Road, the building in St. Leonards Road was converted into a Learning Centre, with full IT facilities, and was opened in September 2003. Crèche places, to support the parents taking courses, were made available at the main building.

A successful bid was made to the ESF for continuing funding for the education programme, and consequently SureStart Extra 2 is running for two years from January 2004 until December 2005. The 2-year target of beneficiaries is 250 adult learners, to include parents of older children, and some parents from neighbouring wards.

Since many courses continued from Sure Start Extra 1, a number of students were already in place at the commencement of the second education programme, and recruitment of new learners has also been successful. Cumulative numbers of learners, along with the target number set are given below. Numbers can be seen to be significantly above the targets set.

Quarter	Number of starters in the quarter	Cumulative number of starters	Target number
Jan – March 2004	117	117	80
April – June 2004	64	181	100
July – September 2004	27	208	125
October – December 2004	34	242	160

Most courses planned do attract viable numbers and therefore take place. Computing courses, of which there are a variety at different levels, attract the most students overall, with first aid, food hygiene and health and safety also popular. Literacy and numeracy courses, along with maths GCSE are also offered. 88 learners (79 females; 9 males) gained qualifications, or units from qualifications, during 2004.

Close links have been established with the Jobcentre Plus, with a New Deal Adviser attending the Learning Centre once a month to advise lone parents, and with a 'warm phone' and internet link in place.

The Education Programme is engaged in on-going evaluation as part of the requirement for its continued ESF funding. The evaluation encompasses both 'hard data' on outcomes for those courses which lead to qualifications, and 'soft outcome' data, which is particularly useful where 'results' are difficult to quantify. A schedule has been developed to capture the students' initial perception of their own strengths, their self esteem, their attitudes to learning, and their aims re learning and work. The same schedule is completed at a later date for comparison to this baseline data, in order to gauge the 'distance travelled' by those who have attended.

Funding after 2005 remains a fundamental concern, since the project will not be eligible for further ESF monies. Other potential sources might pose restrictions on the courses which can be offered, or the way the programme can develop.

## SECTION VI

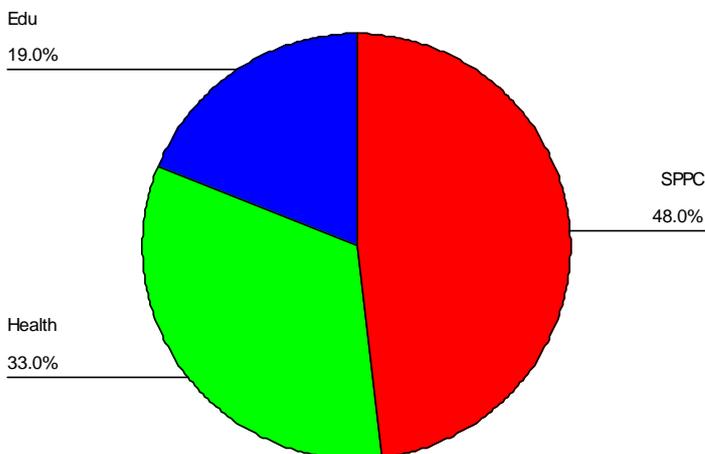
### THIRD YEAR REPORT

During the third year the main event in the programme's development was the opening of the new building in Wolfe Road in May 2003 by the Education Secretary, Charles Clarke, who is also one of the two MPs for Norwich. The purpose-built SureStart building has allowed an expansion both in staffing and in the activities offered by the Thorpe Hamlet SureStart, and also includes day-care nursery provision. The former premises in St. Leonards Road have been transformed into the Education Programme Centre, and their provision has also expanded.

The third year's report mapped the continuing and new services offered by SureStart Thorpe Hamlet. Documentary materials and monitoring data were regularly provided by the SureStart management team, allowing for some basic statistical analysis and pictorial representation of the information gathered.

Hours worked were summed across all staff who worked directly in delivering services to children and families (thus omitting the administrative team whose role supports all the practitioners, and also the crèche workers who enable parents to attend activities). Nearly half of total staff hours were in 'support, preventative, play and community work', whilst a third were in health support and services, and nearly a fifth in education provision.

**Figure 2 Total staff hours – percentage distribution by broad category of activity**



SPPC = Support, preventative, play and community work    Edu = education

In addition data for the month of November 2003 was looked at in greater details, with November being chosen as it contained no school holiday days, and the weather had caused no major problems for attendance. Timetabled regular activities were analysed to gauge the breadth or diversity of services on offer, the take-up of services as reflected in attendance numbers, and the mix of services with regard to whether they primarily are aimed at the mum-to-be, the new mum, parents of older babies and children, the new baby or the older child. The primary aim of the activity as between

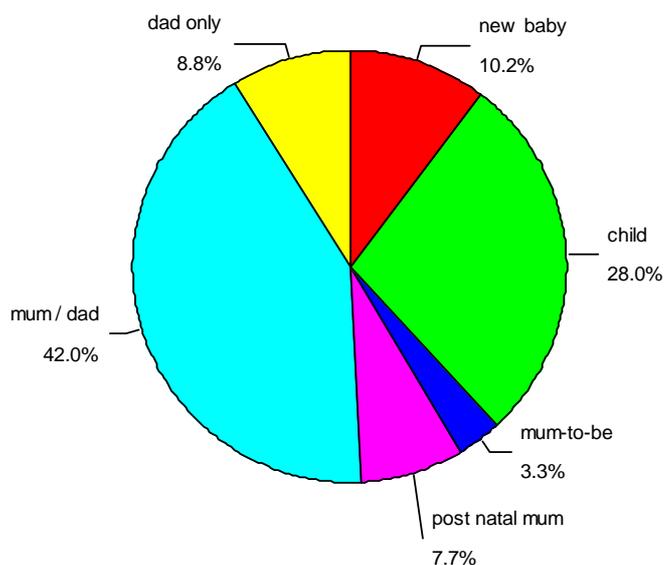
health (child or maternal), education, socialising for the child, or socialising for the parent was also distinguished, and the characteristics of parents and children accessing the programme were mapped.

**Breadth and diversity of services**

The new SureStart building, and the increase in staff time, had allowed for new activities to be developed. These included leisure opportunities and courses for fathers, a ‘tea-time’/early evening baby clinic to suit the needs of working parents, and the establishment of a breastfeeding group. It also allowed the baby clinic, which previously had been located in other venues, to be incorporated into the provision at Wolfe Road. Developments being planned included a breakfast club, assistance with after school arrangements at the neighbouring first/middle schools, and a parent/infant attachment programme which would provide mothers with a video record of their interaction with their babies, and lead to a dialogue about parenting models, emphasizing the strengths and skills the mothers already possess, whilst offering a chance to talk through any concerns or problems – on the part of either the mother or any of the SureStart team.

The total weekly hours offered in November at the various sessional activities was analysed as to the main recipient of the service, with the researcher assigning each activity to a recipient. The following pattern emerged:

**Figure 3 Pie-chart of time-tabled activities by recipient group**



**Take up of services**

204 individual children were seen by the SureStart team in November 2004. This is a 27% increase on the number seen in November 2002, which had been 161. The best attended organised sessions were the music group with 14 parents on average each week, and the play session on Tuesdays, with 13 parents on average.

**Frequency of attendance**

Some children / parents attended organised sessions more frequently than others, and this raised a question as to whether there was a core of families who were the main attendees and, if so, did it matter? Attendance sheets for the main activities were analysed for the month of November, and out of a total of 107 families analysed, forty

only attended the once (37%), whilst 13 (12%) attended on five or more occasions, with a maximum of nine visits. The most frequent attendees tended to have both a baby and an older child and therefore took part in activities across the children's age ranges.

### **Diversity of attendance**

It is important that the SureStart programme caters for the possibly differing needs of different groups of mothers and children.

The most frequently attended activities, namely the play sessions, the music group and Saturday Club were looked at in more detail, with the 'diversity' of those attending during the month of November 2003 being approached from a number of perspectives.

- a) Age of child: activities were attended by babies and children with a wide age range, from one month to nearly four years.
- b) Gender of child: there was no significant difference in the number of boys or girls attending activities, except in the music group which had far fewer boys.
- c) Gender of parent: overwhelmingly it was mothers, rather than fathers, who attended with their children.
- d) 'Established' or 'new' participants: in the month under review only one new user attended any of the play or music sessions.

Other questions which were not addressed in this part of the third year report were:

- e) Age of parent: are the needs of older mothers or young teenage mothers met?
- f) Geography: In which neighbourhood of the SureStart area do the families live and is distance a factor in preventing mothers attending regularly? A geographic analysis was undertaken subsequently in 2004 by the administrative staff and is referred to on pages 21-22 of this report.
- g) Ethnicity: the evaluation report for 2002 conducted interviews with mothers of minority ethnic origin. Since this group of families is numerically small, there is a danger of identification of individual parents.

### **Outreach work**

Following on from issues raised by the second year report, the report in the third year considered in more detail a subset of SureStart services, particularly when work was being undertaken on a one-to-one basis with mothers, or outreach services were being delivered in the families' own homes. Interviews were conducted with the senior project worker, the two project workers, the fathers' worker and the volunteer co-ordinator.

The balance between group work and individual work, and between services provided at the SureStart premises and in the family's own home was sought. Issues arose around how to determine which member of the team would be most appropriately assigned to an individual family, and in what circumstances a volunteer worker would be of benefit. Channels of communication between different members of the Surestart team working with the same family need to be clear.

Key questions remain as to whether there is any potential to offer more services on an outreach basis, and how to reach and engage those families currently not accessing the SureStart programme. There were also questions as to what the fathers' worker remit should cover. Should sporting and outdoor events be viewed as obviously his domain, and is there a danger that any man entering the SureStart premises would be seen as his responsibility. How do all SureStart staff ensure that they deliver father friendly services?

## SECTION VII

### ADDITIONAL EVALUATION WORK DURING 2004

#### A) Post Natal Depression Scores

New mothers are assessed eight weeks after giving birth to see if they have any indication of post natal depression, and could benefit from support or intervention. The Health Visitors suggested that the scores on the Edinburgh Post-natal Depression Scale (EPNS) could be looked at for the programme as a whole, and going back in time to births from June 2000 onwards. The Scale consists of ten self-completed questions, each scored between 0 (no problem) and 3 (of great concern to the mother). The total score thus has a logical range of between 0 and 30. The borderline score for vulnerability to post-natal depression is 12 or 13. Data was available for 363 mothers.

Four hypotheses were tested to ascertain if there was any relationship between scores and a) the age of the mother b) whether the baby were the first, second, third or subsequent birth c) if depression scores were higher in the winter months and lastly d) whether average scores had improved since SureStart had been in existence.

#### Age of mother

In general the age of the mother was not related to whether or not she scored highly (indicating that intervention was appropriate). Whilst the youngest group, aged 19 or below, are more likely to score somewhat higher the finding is not statistically significant.

#### Birth Order

Whilst there was no significant difference in the average EPNS score as between first and second time mothers, third time mothers were more likely to have higher scores. Nearly a quarter of third time mothers scored 12 or above, indicating that support or intervention could be appropriate. This result was statistically significant.

#### Winter vs. summer babies

There were marked differences in the average EPNS score between months. Whilst 25% of mothers of December-born babies scored 12 or above, only 7% of the mothers of March and May born babies scored that highly. Dividing all births somewhat crudely into 'winter-time' or 'British summer time' births, mothers of 'winter' babies were significantly (statistically) more likely to score highly, indicating that further support or intervention could be helpful.

#### EPNS scores over time

Apart from rather higher scores in the initial months of the SureStart Programme in the second half of 2000, the average score of all mothers has remained nearly constant at 6.9 (out of a possible total of 30) from 2001 to the end of 2004. The existence of Surestart has not appeared to lead to a reduction in the percentage of mothers experiencing some signs of post-natal depression. One would expect, though, that whilst incidence may not have declined, the ability of the SureStart team to be aware of mothers who might be vulnerable to post-natal depression, and to offer timely support, will have increased.

#### B) Child development assessment scores

It was hoped to do some analysis on the aggregate scores from the 'schedule of growing skills' child development assessment, conducted at 24 months. However the

form used by the project workers / health visitors has been changed, and the data is not now comparable with earlier returns. As the form now used by the PCT is not a standardised schedule, a comparison between the cohort of SureStart children and the 'average' two-year old nationally cannot be made.

**C) Geographic breakdown of service users**

During 2004 work was done by one of the programme administrators on where in the SureStart area the users of various parts of the SureStart Programme live. Eight different sub-areas are identified within the Programme's boundaries, reflecting differences in the type of housing, and the commercial rather than residential nature of some parts of Thorpe Hamlet.

The number of children under four in each area is given below, along with the percentage they represent out of the total of 424 registered children in the Programme. The final three columns indicate the percentage of those attending play sessions, baby club, or education courses who come from each of the geographic areas. Data relates to the period July – September 2004.

**Table 4 Geographic breakdown of those attending various SureStart activities**

Area	Number of children under 4 in geographic area	Percentage distribution of 424 children between geographic areas	Children attending play sessions by geographic area	41 Baby club attendances by geographic area	50 Families involved in education programme by geographic area
		%	%	%	%
A	76	18	23	19	10
B	58	14	11	12	16
C	128	30	24	10	50
D	53	12	19	32	16
E	37	9	11	17	0
F	39	9	10	10	2
G	25	6	1	0	2
H	8	2	1	0	4
All	424	100%	100%	100%	100%

Boxes highlighted in green indicate that a significantly higher percentage of attendances are from the geographic area in question, than might have been expected given the children living in that area. Thus only 12% of the 424 children live in area D, but 32% of the babies at baby club come from that area. Similarly 50 % of adult learners come from area C (where 30% of the children live). Indeed area C is interesting since there is a smaller percentage of children at baby club, and to a lesser extent at play sessions, than would be expected given the proportion of children in that area. Areas with smaller than expected attendances are highlighted in red.

Summary:

**High** adult education attendance; **lower** than expected child attendance:

**Area C** (mainly local-authority built housing, some in private ownership. The most economically deprived area in Thorpe Hamlet. Convenient for SureStart building)

**Low** adult education attendance; **higher** than expected child attendance:

**Area E** (Privately owned housing in 'leafy' area. Most affluent looking)

**High** adult education attendance; considerably **higher** than expected child attendance:

**Area D** (older terraced properties plus local authority flats. Contains both the Learning Centre and the SureStart building)

**Low** adult education attendance; child attendance at **expected** level

**Area A** (mostly local authority built housing, some now in private ownership)

**Area F** (contains railway station, football ground and older terraced housing. Not primarily a residential area)

**Low** adult education attendance; **lower** than expected child attendance

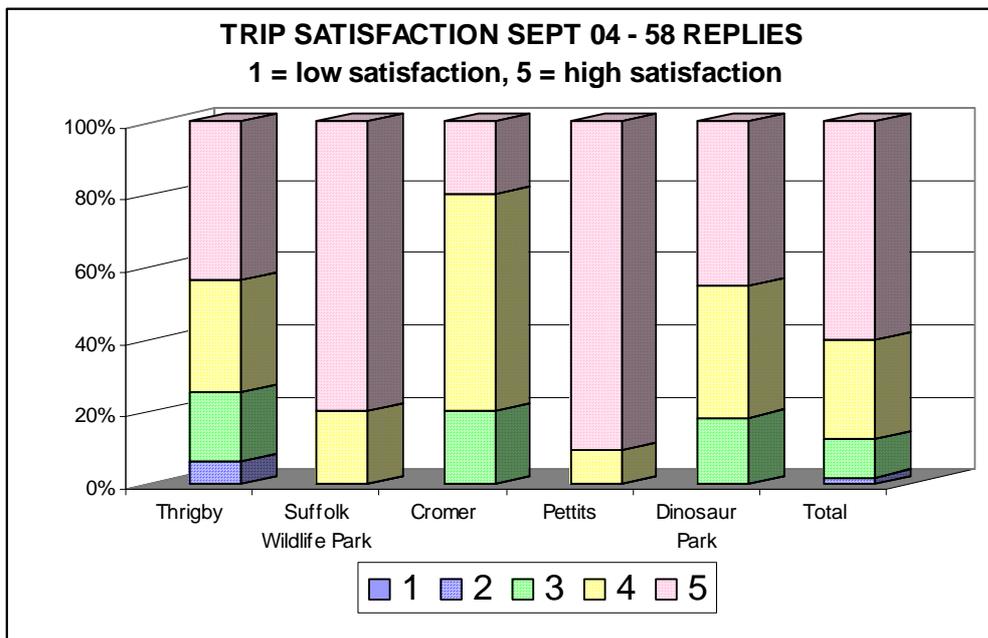
**Area G** (isolated pocket of housing association rented property located in a fairly affluent area. Only 25 children in total in this small area, so care should be taken in drawing conclusions from such small numbers)

**Area B** attendances are as might be expected for both adults and children. **Area H** is currently too small for any analysis.

#### D) Evaluation of summer outings during the 2004 school holidays

Approximately 80 different families went on at least one of the eight organised SureStart trips in the 2004 school summer holidays. Parents were asked to fill in a questionnaire about the outings, with 58 being returned, which were then analysed by one of the programme administrators. Three destinations were visited twice (Thrigby Wildlife Gardens, Suffolk Wildlife Park and the Dinosaur Park). Attendance had ranged between 11 and 20 families, with an average of 15 families taking part.

**Figure 4 Parental Satisfaction with Summer 2004 outings**



Overall parents were enthusiastic about the outings. The apparent lower degree of satisfaction with the Cromer trip was due to the outing being considered too short. The weather also influenced how much the parents had enjoyed particular trips. There was some dissatisfaction with the coach arrangements as regards space and seat belts.

#### **E) Evaluation of baby club and play sessions - autumn 2004**

In October 2004 questionnaires were given to parents attending baby club and play sessions, with 58 responses being received. This evaluation was carried out by one of the programme administrators. 42 out of the 46 respondents (91%) who answered that question, felt welcome at the sessions. The main benefits the respondents perceived were:

- Company both for the parent and the child
- The many activities on offer
- The variety of toys
- The opportunity for types of play (particularly messy!) not available in the home

There was feedback on activities that parents would like, for example cooking, music, dance and gym, and on which days and times were the more convenient.

Issues were raised around the sessions being too crowded and about mothers needing to supervise their own children appropriately, and this had led to some mothers deciding not to attend the sessions.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **METHODOLOGY**

A mixed methodological framework has been used in the evaluation of the SureStart Thorpe Hamlet programme since 2000. This has encompassed both quantitative data and qualitative data. Data collection methods have included:

#### **Collation of relevant documentary materials**

Data was regularly provided by the SureStart management team, and requests for specific information met. Information which fed into the evaluation included:

- Monitoring Forms (M7, M5, M4)
- Monthly Reach figures from October 2000 – December 2004
- Annual Accounts
- Draft Budgets
- Thorpe Hamlet SureStart Newsletter
- Education Development Worker's reports to Steering Group meetings
- Other reports submitted to Steering Group Meetings

#### **Attendance at meetings**

- The UEA evaluators have regularly attended Steering Group meetings.
- On occasions the evaluator has attended the Parents Group or Team Meeting.
- The evaluator has also attended staff Development Days, some of which have specifically addressed programme evaluation.

#### **Observation**

Over the period 2001-2004 there has been observation of:

- Regular programmed sessions and courses
- Special events; for example Christmas party, Programme birthday events, the art exhibition in 2004
- Visits undertaken by the health visitors and speech and language therapists.

#### **Interviews**

- One-to one semi-structured interviews with staff and steering group members in late 2001.
- In-depth interviews with 23 parents living in the Thorpe Hamlet Programme area, conducted during January to June 2002. The interview sample included non-registered families, families for whom English was a second language, families who had been referred to a service provided by Sure Start, families who selectively accessed parts of the programme as 'customers', and families who were highly involved in the programme and who provided an input to service planning and provision.
- During 2003-2004 a further round of staff interviews were conducted, specifically with those members of the team who engage in one-to-one work with parents, and deliver outreach services in the families' own homes. The following SureStart team members were interviewed:
  - Father's Worker
  - Project Workers
  - Senior Project Worker
  - Volunteer Co-ordinator

### **Parent Survey Questionnaire**

In the summer of 2002 a postal questionnaire was sent to all 330 families containing pre-school children living in the Thorpe Hamlet area, including 29 families who were unregistered with SureStart. The questionnaire consisted of a series of tick-box questions, many of which were based on a Likert scale, composed of five mutually exclusive categories, ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement, with a central neutral category. Respondents could also elaborate on any points if they so wished.

120 responses were received, representing a response rate of 36%. 97% of the responses were from women.

### **User satisfaction surveys of specific parts of the programme**

In addition to the main parent survey, smaller user satisfaction surveys have been conducted at various points into individual services or activities e.g. baby club and play sessions, and the outings organised during the school summer holidays. These have been undertaken by members of the SureStart team, and not the external evaluator from UEA.

### **In-depth analysis of one month's attendance figures at SureStart Activities**

Service provision during a sample month was analysed, with November 2003 being chosen as representative. That month contained no school holidays, and no disruption to the pattern of service provision or attendance due to bad weather. Data was collected on the number of sessions offered, numbers of parents and children attending, the frequency with which any one family attended during the sample month, and the ages of the children. The primary aim of the activity as between health (child or maternal), education, socialising for the child, or socialising for the parent was also distinguished.

### **Analysis of data already collected by the Programme for clinical (rather than evaluation) purposes**

The evaluator was asked by the Health Visitors to look at the Edinburgh Post-natal Depression Scale scores, which result from an assessment eight weeks after the birth of their child. Data for 479 mothers was collected for the period June 2000 to September 2004 inclusive. Of this group of mothers 28 had transferred out of the SureStart area between the birth of their child and the time the test was due. Scores were available for 363 of the remaining 451 mothers; lack of English being the main reason for the non-completion of the self-completed questionnaire. Various hypotheses were tested to determine if vulnerability to post natal depression might be linked to maternal age, time of year of childbirth or whether the baby is a first, second, third or subsequent baby. Appropriate statistical significance testing was carried out.

The evaluator also collected the aggregate scores from the 'schedule of growing skills' child development assessment, which was conducted at twenty four months. However the form used by the project workers / health visitors was changed, so data is not now comparable. The previous form was a standardised assessment schedule, allowing comparison of the development in nine different 'skill areas' of the SureStart cohort of two-year olds with the scores expected from the 'average' two year old in the country.

### **Statistical Analysis of quantitative data**

Simple statistical analysis was undertaken to interpret the information gathered from various of the above sources, with appropriate graphical representation of the data. SPSS (a social sciences statistical computer programme) was used for the analysis.

### **Evaluation of Education Development Programme**

The Education Development Worker conducts her own on-going evaluation of the Education Programme, as required by the funding body for this part of the SureStart programme.

### **Annual Team Development Day - January 2005**

This development day spent time considering the achievements of, and the ethos underlying, the Thorpe Hamlet SureStart programme. The afternoon was devoted to a consideration of the evaluation of the programme for 2003, with small-group discussion of various parts of the evaluation report, pertinent to different sections of the programme and the staff.

Attached as Appendix B is a document which was handed out to all those who attended this development 'away day'. It was formulated as a guide to assist those present in thinking about their own particular parts of the programme. It suggested the varying types of questions the team should be asking.

## **TYPES OF EVALUATION:**

## **APPENDIX B**

Process:	How ?
Outputs:	What services, activities, how often, how many participants?
Outcomes:	What difference does the programme make ?
Consumer Satisfaction:	What is liked / disliked and why ?
Cost effectiveness:	Good use of resources ?

### **Process:**

- Working practices
- Joint working
- Management structures

### **Outputs:**

- Total 'reach' of the SureStart programme
- Range or 'breadth' of services provided
- Awareness as to whether all the child / family's needs are being met
- Balance between health / social / support / educational / fun activities
- Balance between services for the mum-to-be, mother, new baby or older toddler
- Number of hours, sessions etc.
- 'Depth' of services provided – numbers attending organised session
- Frequency with which individual families attend

### **Outcomes:**

- To see whether an activity or service has made a difference one needs 'before' and 'after' evidence
- The monitoring returns provide some evidence as to the programme's impact
- Some objectives look at rates at two different points in time; for example smoking in pregnancy or breastfeeding. However the cohort of pregnant mothers in 2001 is a different cohort of women than those pregnant in 2003 or 2004.
- Other outcomes may reflect a change for an **individual** child or family following an input from the HV, a project worker or a speech and language therapist.
- It may be difficult to measure whether there has been an improvement
- Often difficult to say that any improvement is the result of the service or intervention. The situation may just have got better over time.

### **Consumer satisfaction:**

- Maybe the easiest aspect to evaluate; tendency for some evaluations to be only user satisfaction.
- A challenge is to include the views of infrequent users and non-users
- Ensure that parents views are then taken account of – not just a token exercise
- Ways and means for parents to make their views known, formally and informally

### **Cost Effectiveness:**

- What resources do different parts of the Programme take
- Would any of these resources be better used in an alternative service or activity
- How does the Programme prioritise between competing uses of resources?