

Sure Start Abbey/Bucknall

Annual Evaluation Report January 2005

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform the Programme Board and other stakeholders about progress towards meeting national and local objectives and to comply with the NESS (National Evaluation of Sure Start) requirement for annual evaluation reports.

Sure Start Abbey/Bucknall received approval from SureStart Unit in November 2002. This report focuses on the financial year 2003/4 which is the first full year of operation. The programme has collaborated with the two other Round 5 local programmes to appoint a Senior Evaluation Officer in August 2003 and this post is line managed by the Sure Start Director within the lead accountable body, North Stoke Primary Care Trust. This report is based on documentary analysis, analysis of the programme's internal database records and findings from specific evaluation activities.

SureStart Abbey / Bucknall managed to spend its full budget allocation of SureStart revenue as well as securing additional funding. This is impressive when compared with the NESS findings which show that earlier local programmes in Rounds 1 and 2 took between 24 and 36 months to become fully established, to offer a full range of services and have capital plans in place. The NESS report Early Experiences of implementing SureStart Report 01 June 2002 found that *"the task of setting up a SureStart programme is clearly far more complex and time-consuming one than may have been originally assumed by the policy makers who designed the initiative."* (p.111).

2. Context

The Delivery Plan drew on a range of data including statistics from the 1991 census and qualitative data from community consultations. The 2001 census now provides more recent data. A major factor impacting on the local programme is the national policy change from SureStart to Children's Centres. The evaluation strategy was designed to be flexible and responsive and every effort will be made to ensure that evaluation is relevant to the Children's Centres developments.

3. Evaluation Approach

SureStart Abbey / Bucknall has an evaluation strategy that builds on learning in the local area from the Health Action Zone and adopts a version of logical frameworks. The lead accountable body, North Stoke Primary Care Trust

aims to be a learning organisation¹. The strategy seeks to maximise the use of existing data and to encourage an evaluation culture with the expectation that all SureStart services, including those delivered in-house as well as commissioned services will reflect on their own performance and provide monitoring data to the Programme. A consultant worked with the local programme in the early days on a collaborative commissioning approach and logic and results grids have been used as a performance management and management information tool. This system, implemented in 2003-4, should provide a valuable source of qualitative and quantitative data for the next annual report to be produced after the end of March 2005.

Key texts that have informed the Senior Evaluation officer's approach are Realistic Evaluation by Pawson and Tilley (1997) and Utilization-Focused Evaluation by Patton (1986). NESS findings are also useful in informing the evaluation and the Senior Evaluation Officer will take account of other recent significant research, including the EPPE study². The Senior Evaluation Officer is supported by an academic mentor from Keele University.

The advantage of an internal appointment is the close mutual working between evaluation and programme staff and close working with a range of local stakeholders, including those working on Children's Centres. A potential disadvantage is the lack of critical distance. The Senior Evaluation officer post is shared amongst three programmes and a budget for evaluation was agreed based upon the guidance that programmes should allow between three and five per cent of their revenue budget for evaluation.

4. Research Governance Framework

This framework has become more significant since the evaluation work began. As the lead accountable body for SureStart Abbey / Bucknall is a health organisation, much of the evaluation work falls within the remit of the framework. The Senior Evaluation Officer maintains good links with the Research Governance Manager whose job it is to advise on which pieces of evaluation work require ethical approval from the local Research Ethics Committee.

5. Using Existing Data Sources and Managing Information

The Senior Evaluation officer has spent time with the Programme's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer reconciling postcode lists with key data sources including the Combined Healthcare Information Processing System (CHIPS) and the Hospital Information Support System (HISS). The NESS report Using Existing Data in SureStart Local Evaluations (April 2004) has been useful in drawing attention to the need for integrating monitoring and evaluation. During the early part of 2004 the Programme purchased a new commercial database and this has considerably enhanced the capacity to produce useful

¹ Towards a Learning Organisation Toolkit Garcarez et al 2003 Staffordshire University in partnership with Shropshire and Staffordshire Workforce Development Confederation

² The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project

quantitative monitoring data. An audit of uptake of SureStart Abbey / Bucknall services in 2003-4 (defined by SureStart Unit as “reach”) has recently been completed and this will be presented to the Board following discussion with the Programme Manager.

6. Partnership Effectiveness

This evaluation was carried out during April 2004 by Health Action Stoke Partnership Working Development Team. The evaluation used the Health Development Agency’s assessment tool and carried out individual interviews with members of the Board. These structured interviews covered the themes of leadership, strategy and learning. A report was presented to the Board. The process contributed to the development of a new partnership tool-kit that has been adapted following the learning from this evaluation and others. (see <http://www.north-staffs-has.co.uk/documents/ayp.pdf>)

7. Progress Towards Objectives

SureStart Abbey/Bucknall achieved a nil risk assessment and it managed to spend its full budget allocation as well as securing additional funding. Capital plans are well underway and the programme is operating from a temporary base pending the move into the Children’s Centre. The programme’s baseline delivery plan listed the following “desired outcomes”

- A safe place for children to play outdoors which is supervised and parents are confident that their children are safe
- A soft indoor play area where children can develop and exercise through play – a “rumble tumble” area
- Childcare facilities that provide educational opportunities which are available throughout the week including Saturdays and holidays
- A family centre which is a contact point for all services and provides an informal atmosphere, possibly with coffee shop, where families can access information on legal issues, housing advice, safety equipment and special needs support and advice
- Language and reading development schemes for children and their parents and links to the toy library scheme
- Supportive places for parents to learn about parenting and develop the skills to develop their child and encourage mother and child bonding
- Mothers who are feeling low and lonely are able to access support so that they do not become isolated or at risk of post-natal depression
- Parents are able to access keep fit classes and health related information and support
- A continual support for the family, especially mother, throughout pregnancy and the birth right through until the child enters school

Analysis of the programmes' plans indicates that progress has been made towards most of these. Challenges remain around provision of childcare on a Saturday, the safe outdoor play space and the soft indoor play area.

In 2003 the Programme won a SureStart national award for the Workstart project. This project leveraged additional funding from JobCentre Plus which was co-financing funding with an element of European Social Fund. The Workstart project spanned the boundaries of SureStart Abbey/Bucknall and a neighbouring programme, SureStart 4U and was aimed at the shared objectives of enhancing the employability of lone parents with children under the age of 16. This project, as well as the Community Development service has contributed to the employability objective. The NESS report 06 Improving the Employability of Parents in SureStart Local Programmes (June 2004) identified different approaches to employability by local programmes and the approach taken by SureStart Abbey / Bucknall appears to fall within the **active** approach.

The Programme has opened a nursery offering part time and full day care funded through the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative.

A large piece of evaluation work was undertaken during Autumn 2004 but is reported here as findings relate to the financial year 2003/4. The evaluation examined the process of completing that M7 Annual Return to SureStart Unit and the quality of the data that was drawn on and reported. Each of the six SureStart local programmes in the City of Stoke-on-Trent contributed their M7 forms and these were analysed in detail. Findings and a summary report have been presented to the City-wide SureStart Sponsor Group. The evaluation found that whilst there is a readily identifiable source of local data to monitor progress against many of the SureStart objectives, others such as the workless households target and improving social and emotional development do not have readily available local data sources. Where data was available for the previous year, 2002-3, this was used to compare 2003-4 data to begin to establish trends. A report highlighting inconsistencies in completion of the report was provided to the Programme Manager and it is expected that there will be further collaboration to monitor against targets and objectives for 2004/5. It cannot be proved conclusively that improvements in the eligible population are due entirely to the effects of the SureStart Local Programme. However, in the context of this being the major new initiative in the area, it seems *likely* that effects can be attributed to SureStart.

The evaluation work on measures and indicators will be useful in contributing to the City-wide work on the outcomes framework for Every Child Matters.

Objective 1) Improving social and emotional development

Originally SureStart Unit monitored local programmes' performance against numbers of re-registrations on the child protection register, support for mothers experiencing post-natal depression and the proportion of babies and young children living in the SureStart area with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age. This monitoring was dropped for Wave 5 programmes but the lack of monitoring against specific measures does not mean that SureStart Abbey / Bucknall is not having an impact on this objective. There are services in place in Abbey / Bucknall that deliver parenting support and advice, outreach home visiting, debt counselling, mental health support and so on. It is expected that all of this will impact in an holistic way on this objective. Anecdotal evidence suggests that SureStart has helped some children get ready for school at a younger age and this could be explored more systematically in further evaluation work. As outlined above, the services are all expected to self-evaluate and report outcomes on a quarterly basis. These outcomes could be included in the programmes' annual report. The programmes' child-care has been registered with Ofsted and the work towards a quality award will take account of children's' social and emotional development.

All families with new born babies in Sure Start local programmes and Children's Centre areas to be visited in first two months of their babies life and given information about the support and services available to them

Live births in 2003-4	141
Per Cent of families with new babies visited within 2 months Of their babies' birth	22.73%
First time deliveries	67
Live births to mothers under 19 years old	27
First time deliveries to under 19 year olds	22

Objective 2) Improving health

In fully operational programmes achieve by 2005 – 6 percentage point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy

Percent of women smoking during pregnancy Source HISS 2003-4

Number of mums who smoked during pregnancy*	Percentage of mums who smoked during pregnancy♦
67	48%

*Data collated from M7 forms

♦Calculation performed by wave 5 evaluation team using live birth data from HISS (Hospital Information Support System)

HISS data does not ask directly the number of mothers who smoked during pregnancy, it asks

- 1) Did the patient smoke in the 12 months before the start of her pregnancy ?
- 2) Was the patient a smoker at the time of booking?
- 3) Was the patient a smoker at the time of delivery?

Number/percent of mothers smoking at delivery

2002 - 3	2002 - 3	2002 - 3		2003 - 4	2003 - 4	2003 - 4
Number	Percent	Unknown		Number	Percent	Unknown
41	32%	7		38	27%	8

Because of the unknown cases, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about improvements. However, it appears that the programme may be on track to achieve the target. As well as the data from HISS, data is available from, the North Staffordshire-wide Quit smoking cessation service. There is a specific scheme for “Helping pregnant women and partners to quit”.

Quit data for 2003/4

	Quit date set	Quit at 4 weeks	Relapsed	Lost to follow up
pregnant	4	2	2	0
Non-pregnant	2	1	1	0

The pilot cost-effectiveness study of Abbey/Bucknall’s midwifery service will enable further analysis of the links between the mainstream Quit service and the local programme’s work.

Information on guidance on breastfeeding, nutrition, hygiene, and safety available to all families with young children in Sure Start local programme and Children’s Centre areas

The programme provides general information to all families who have registered their details. A Baby café has been established and the programme is working towards the Unicef Baby Friendly award.

The table below shows the number of pregnant women in the programme that breastfed at birth as a percentage of all pregnant women as reported on the M7.

2003 – 4 live births (HISS)	2003-4 number of mums breastfeeding at birth (HISS)	2003-4 percent of mums breastfeeding at birth
143	50	35%

Breastfeeding rates over the two years 2002-3 and 2003-4

2002-3 percent of mums breastfeeding at birth	2003-4 percent of mums breastfeeding at birth	% change in breastfeeding 2002-4
42%	35%	- 7 %

Some caution is advised regarding the reliability of this data. The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health states “*Local professionals believe that part of the reason for [apparent changes] is due to poor methods of data collection. However, at this stage it is not possible to say how much of the reduction is as a result of data collection problems and how much is real.*” (p.38) The pilot study evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the SureStart midwifery service will contribute to further understanding of these issues. Once again, it is expected that the range of activities on offer in the programme will contribute in the medium and longer term to improved health.

Antenatal advice and support available to all pregnant women and their families living in Surestart local programme and childrens centre areas.

Number of pregnant women living in the Abbey Bucknall SureStart area contacted by SSLP in the 12 months ending 31 March 04 **35**

Objective 3: Improving Children’s ability to learn

The six SureStart Local programmes in Stoke-on-Trent agreed to stop administering the nationally devised SureStart Speech and Language Measure. This was because the measure relies on parental reporting and senior speech therapists in the area felt that this did not give an accurate measure and also because local programmes were failing to collect a large enough sample size that could provide meaningful data at the local level. A City-wide Neighbourhood Renewal funded project called Stoke Speaks Out has been established. This builds on much of the learning from SureStart and has achieved a significant media profile as well as interest from SureStart Unit, Number ten, Downing Street and Charles Clarke in his role as Secretary of State for Education. The Senior Evaluation Officer is offering some evaluation support to the City-wide project that has a ring-fenced evaluation budget. The City-wide development of a standardised nursery baseline measure by the Local Education Authority will help considerably with measurement against this target. The Foundation Stage measure is monitored nationally by DfES and discussions are underway locally with the Local Education Authority in the context of Every Child Matters

Objective 4) Strengthening families and communities

Improving the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare.

The Early Years Development Childcare Partnership team at the City Council monitor this data on a continuous basis. The Kingsland neighbourhood nursery is registered to provide 57 daycare places and 24 creche places. It is not yet clear what impact this may have on other local providers. As at September 2004, there were 12 childminders, 2 private nurseries and 4 pre-school playgroups in the Abbey/Bucknall area. The responsibility for monitoring any impact of this on other existing provision in the area will become the duty of the Local Authority with the new legislation associated with the new Children's Centre policy.

All Sure Start local programmes to have representatives on the local programme board

Number of parents on executive management board (1/4/03 – 31/3/04) **7**

The Programme has successfully sustained parental involvement on the board and as some of these parents are participating in the drama evaluation, this will illuminate their experiences.

Number of families with children under 4 saying that they are satisfied with local services for young children (1/4/03 – 31/3/04)

A parent satisfaction survey was carried out during one week in July 2003. Fifty two people completed questionnaires. 83 % had heard of Sure Start Abbey Bucknall, 65 % (total 38) had used Sure Start Abbey Bucknall services and 69 % would like to make more use of these. Most people had found out about SureStart Abbey Bucknall from friends, G.P.s and health visitors. Of those using the services, 75% (28) gave services a top star rating (three out of a possible three stars) and 84 % (32) reported that Sure Start services had made a difference to their lives. The most used service was the crèche and this was rated highly. Respondents gave play areas and parks in the area a low star rating, and the survey indicates that they may be using them less now than in the past. Of families surveyed, 69% would like to make more use of Sure Start Abbey Bucknall and 93 % would recommend it to their friends. Suggestions made by Sure Start parents include extending the hours of the crèche, more support with toilet training and behaviour problems, more leisure and relaxation activities and weekend opening. Findings were presented to the Board and a summary of findings was circulated to the SureStart Sponsors Group. A full report is available at <http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk/documents/finidings/119.pdf>

7. Work in progress

Ante-natal cost-effectiveness pilot study

The midwifery service is being evaluated and an approach to cost-effectiveness will be piloted.

Audit of reach

This is being carried out to analyse statistics on the number of families who are in regular contact with the programme.

Home visiting service

This evaluation will require ethical approval and an external researcher will be appointed to carry out the evaluation of the home visiting service across the three wave five programmes.

Training for Parents

Some staff visited the centre at Penn Green to learn about parent evaluators and a course has been devised by a local university. The Start-Up project will explore these training opportunities including accredited OCN courses.

Start-Up

A rapid desk-top Health Impact Assessment has been commissioned. Further evaluation will be commissioned to inform the forward strategy of this City-wide project. The project has its own budget for evaluation.

Participatory Drama Evaluation

This evaluation is being carried out in partnership with a group of parents, a local theatre company and the Community Development Officer. The aim is to dramatize these parents' SureStart experience, and invite key stakeholders and decision makers to a performance.

9. Professional Development

The Senior Evaluation Officer completed a Certificate in Research Methods course and attended a course on participatory approaches to evaluation. She is involved in setting up a midlands network of the UK Evaluation Society and attends a Stoke-on-Trent evaluation network. There are good links with the NESS regional co-ordinator and the Senior Evaluation Officer delivered a presentation on ethical issues at a NESS workshop.

10. Summary

2003-4 was the first full year of operation for SureStart Abbey / Bucknall. The Programme quickly got established and managed to recruit staff and commission services, spending the full allocation of revenue budget. Capital plans are well underway. This is a very early stage for the Programme to be expecting to find a significant impact and effects on the local community but

baselines are in place for some of the targets and data sources have been identified for others.

In addition to the modest service specific evaluations, the evaluation activity in 2003-4 concentrated on supporting the establishment of management information systems to support routine data collection and analysis. The performance management and database systems are now embedded and this should enable the evaluation to move away from monitoring to focus on evaluation work that will be useful to the emerging Children's Centres. The recruitment of a full time Evaluation Assistant in 2004 has added capacity to the team.

Glossary of terms

AUDIT	A systematic check
BASELINE	Recording of the situation at the start of the piece of work
COTERMINOUS	having a common boundary
DATA	Information that is collected to show what has been achieved
EMPLOYABILITY	Employability is a term used to describe the ability of someone to get or to keep a job
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund that is available to selected areas
EVALUATION	
	Summative evaluation judges the effectiveness of a programme carried out after the programme has been completed
	Formative evaluation focuses on ongoing improvement of programmes
HOLISTIC	Considered as a whole, e.g. not just seeing someone as a smoker or a breast feeder but seeing them as a whole person
INDICATORS	A way of measuring what has been achieved
LOGIC AND RESULTS GRIDS	
	Devised by MWB Consultancy for understanding how projects are working.
M7 FORM	Form completed in September 2004 to report progress in 2003-4 to SureStart Unit
MONITORING	The systematic collection and recording of information to help an organisation know how it is doing
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Government money that is allocated to 88 local authorities in the UK

OUTCOMES (OR IMPACT)

Outcomes are changes that indicate whether an organisation has made progress towards achieving its aims and to what extent its interventions are making a difference

OUTPUT

Real things that have been achieved by the work eg. Advice services provided, crèche facilities organised etc.

QUANTITATIVE

Approach to collecting information that uses numbers numerical

QUALITATIVE

Non-numerical information – includes feelings and understandings.