

Sure Start York
Annual Evaluation Report: Year 2

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1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of evaluation activity undertaken during the period January-December 2004, which forms the second year of evaluation for the programme.

The aims of the evaluation for this year were focussed on several key areas:

- Review of the partnership and management of the programme
- Evaluation of the speech and language service offered by the programme
- Examination of the child's perspective on the programme
- Exploring the outcomes and impacts of the programme through conducting individual family case studies

2. Methods

The methods for conducting this research were selected following consultation with the evaluation steering group which includes the programme manager, the project officer, a partner, and parent representative from the partnership board and the main evaluators. This group met bi-monthly during the course of the research and made decisions about the direction of the evaluation. Other Sure Start staff have also attended some meetings to have input into particular aspects of the evaluation.

To meet the aims identified above the following methods were chosen

- Interviews with key partners on the partnership board
- Interviews with Sure Start staff
- Interviews with Parent members of the Partnership Board
- Children's consultation event and collating Children's Stories
- Family case studies
- Evaluation of speech and language provision

The following sections outline each of these methods in turn. The Appendix section of this report includes additional information provided by the programme. Appendix 1 provides data concerning attendance at Sure Start activities, Appendix 2 presents monitoring data and Appendix 3 provides a summary of other evaluation activity undertaken by the programme.

2.1 Interviews with Partners

Interviews with key partners were undertaken in order to establish how effectively the partnership was working together and the reasons for, or barriers to this. It was also felt important to obtain general views of partners on the way the programme was being managed and on how successful the programme was in delivering services.

The interviews asked respondents to discuss the following themes

- The services being delivered by their organisation / the programme generally
- The management of the programme and how effective they considered this to be
- The effectiveness of partnership working and parental involvement in the Partnership board
- Beneficiaries of the programme

Interviews were conducted with the Programme Manager and with 4 members of the Partnership board. Participants for the interviews were selected to ensure a range of agencies were represented. The evaluation steering group decided that it would be appropriate to have interview respondents from within children services, health service, early year's sector and a voluntary agency. QA was presented with a list of all members of the board and then selected a sample to be involved, ensuring the required agencies were represented.

The face to face interviews took place in January 2004.

2.2 Interviews with Staff

In order to further explore how effectively the programme was working, interviews were also undertaken with 5 members of Sure Start staff. Again, the evaluation steering group decided that it would be useful to have interviews with staff from each of the following categories: a support worker, a team leader, a health worker, a development worker and a childcare worker. It was also important to ensure equal involvement of staff from each of the Sure Start areas Foxwood and Clifton. QA was given a list of staff members from which to invite participants. Face to face interviews were conducted during January / February 2004.

These interviews included the following themes

- Role and involvement with Sure Start
- Designing / implementing services / projects
- Mainstreaming
- Management of the programme
- Partnership working
- Programme beneficiaries
- Parental involvement

2.3 Interviews with Parents on the Partnership Board

It was also considered important to assess the views of 5 parents who had been involved in the partnership. The evaluation steering group requested that parents who had recently become involved in the partnership should be asked to participate as well as those who had been involved for a longer period of time. In addition parents from both Foxwood and Clifton areas were invited to participate in the interviews. A list of parent members was sent to QA for the selection of respondents.

Parent interviews considered the themes of:

- Involvement with Sure Start
- Service design and delivery
- Programme management
- Partnership working and parental involvement with this
- Beneficiaries to the service

Face to face interviews were conducted from January to May 2004. All interviews with partners, staff and parents were tape recorded with the permission of respondents and fully transcribed. Analysis was undertaken through a process of reviewing the transcripts and identifying themes and issues.

2.4 A Childs Perspective

It was decided that it would also be important to obtain a child's perspective of the Sure Start programme in order to establish the ways in which involvement with Sure Start impacts upon their lives. This part of the evaluation was completed using two approaches: a consultation event with children and through collecting children's stories.

Children's Consultation Event

The children's consultation event was held on 5th April 2004 at Hobmoor School. The evaluation group planned to obtain children's views of some recent Sure Start activities by asking them to look at photographs of these events. The events chosen were the Sure Start Christmas party (December 2003) and outings to the seaside (Summer 2003). Children of parent board members were invited to attend and older siblings were also invited to obtain the overall family view.

With the help of several members of the Sure Start team, photographs of the events were displayed on large noticeboards set up in the community room. The room also had a table set up with coloured paper and crayons to allow children to make drawings and to stimulate discussion.

A topic guide was prepared to lead the conversations with children and sought to find out how children felt about the events, what they liked and did not like about the events, and any suggestions for improvements in the future.

A total of eighteen children attended the event. Children were divided into 3 groups according to age (2-4 years, 5-11 years and 11+ years) and brought into the community room in small groups of 3, with younger children being accompanied by their mum. The children viewed the photographs alongside Sure Start staff who they knew and who talked with them about the pictures. The QA evaluators made detailed observation notes and recorded the session. Video cameras were set up and a digital audio recorder and digital camera were also used.

Children's Stories

The collection of Children's Stories was considered to be a useful way of obtaining more in-depth, qualitative data about the impact of involvement in Sure Start on children's lives. The evaluation steering group decided that the evaluation would focus on a small number of children and involve Sure Start staff in gathering data to form a narrative of children's progress.

A Children Stories planning group was set up involving staff from each of the Sure Start York patches including team leaders, health visitors, childcare workers and a QA evaluator. The staff identified 8 children aged 3 and over, who were just moving on from the programme as it was felt that this would be a useful way of considering how Sure Start had prepared these children for school. It was decided that the evaluation would involve staff talking with parents, children, professionals, siblings and grandparents, where appropriate, to obtain their views. The aim was to consider the child's overall experience of Sure Start and to identify any changes in the child as a result of their involvement.

Information letters were passed to invited parents together with consent forms. QA prepared short discussion guides for staff to use during these consultations. These guides included the following themes:

- Length of involvement with Sure Start
- Sure Start services used
- Child's view of the activities attended
- Benefits to child of involvement with Sure Start
- Assessment of child's communication skills, confidence, self esteem, social skills and preparation for school

The data was collected by Sure Start staff and passed to QA for analysis. Parents were then presented with a folder for them to keep collating all of the data gathered about their child.

2.5 Family Case Studies

It was decided that detailed qualitative data concerning the impact of Sure Start could also be collected through conducting individual Family Case Studies. In contrast to the Children's Stories, these case studies would include considering the benefit of Sure Start for the whole family and would also be a more long term study, monitoring progress and change over a period of time.

The key themes of the case studies were:

- Examining family involvement with Sure Start
- Exploring how the family has benefited from Sure Start
- Considering how the children have progressed as a result of being involved in Sure Start
- Identifying what the family has achieved as a result of involvement
- Suggesting potential long term benefits of involvement in Sure Start

Again, it was decided that a small number of families would be involved with equal representation from each area within the Sure Start programme. It was agreed that those taking part would each be given a treasure box, a camera and a photo album to record their family's achievements. Initial interviews would be set up with the families and then further visits would be arranged every six months to collect an update on progress, using the photos and items collected in the treasure boxes as a stimulus for discussion.

Information sessions were held at local drop-ins and posters were sent out inviting all Sure Start families to attend a case studies recruitment event on 8th October 2004 in Burton Stone Community Centre. Following this event a total of 6 families agreed to participate, 3 from each area.

For this year's evaluation report the Family Case Studies findings section provides a summary of background information about each family and their involvement with Sure Start so far. However, it is anticipated that two further visits will be made with each family in the next year of evaluation (January 2005 - December 2006) and for several years after that, to track their progress and record their achievements.

2.6 Speech and Language Provision

York currently has a long list of children waiting to be seen by the mainstream speech and language service for specialist therapy. The Sure Start programme is involved in delivering a number of innovative services seeking to improve children's language and communication skills, including piloting a national "Big Wide Talk" initiative.

Discussions between the head of mainstream speech and language services in York and the Sure Start programme during Autumn 2004 led to the development of a new model of service delivery. It was decided that it would be useful to use the speech and language provision offered by Sure Start York to help reduce the number of children on the waiting list for specialist therapy.

The evaluation of this will therefore be completed in two stages; this year and next year (2006). There were five key aims to the evaluation for this year:

1. To evaluate the speech and language provision within Sure Start York
2. To consider the evidence that would be needed to mainstream the Sure Start York speech and language provision
3. To identify any evidence of improved outcomes for children as a result of their involvement with Sure Start York speech and language provision
4. To consider if the provision offers an improved speech and language service for children and families
5. To identify if the provision leads to any reduction in the numbers of children on the waiting list of referrals to mainstream speech and language services

The evaluation was undertaken through a range of methods:

Individual interviews with professionals including the Sure Start York speech and language therapist and also the head of speech therapy services in York. It was felt that these interviews would gather data about current services being provided by Sure Start York and also enable identification of the evidence needed for the mainstreaming of Sure Start provision

Analysis of monitoring data to identify baseline information concerning the numbers of children currently on the waiting list for mainstream speech and language therapy

Children's Case Histories to obtain qualitative data about the benefits and outcomes of the Sure Start speech and language services. The speech and language therapist to conduct short consultation with parents of children who have received input from the speech and language service.

Small Project Evaluations to obtain parents perspectives of the speech and language projects delivered by Sure Start York. Surveys were to be completed by parents attending Small Talk, Big Wide Talk and Sure Start Drop-ins (where they had received some input from the speech and language therapist). Scripts were devised by QA to be distributed at each of the relevant venues, with freepost envelopes provided for parents to return the surveys to QA for analysis

The second stage of the evaluation will be completed next year, to assess the outcomes from the new model of working. Further consideration will be given to the impact of Sure Start interventions on the waiting times for specialist intervention.

3. Executive Summary

- This report presents findings from the second year of evaluation of the Sure Start York programme completed during January - December 2004
- The evaluation includes a review of partnership and management of the programme through interviews with partners, staff and parents on the partnership board
- The child's perspective of Sure Start is also explored through consultation with children and the collation of Children's Stories
- Further qualitative evidence of the outcomes and impacts of the programme are considered through Family Case Studies
- An evaluation is undertaken of the speech and language service offered by the programme

The Partnership and Management review findings were as follows:

- Respondents described the consultation process that had been undertaken to identify the services and projects to be delivered by the programme
- This consultation involved parents and professionals working closely together and is ongoing through the work of the Local Action Groups
- Respondents were able to identify a range of successful services and parental ownership was viewed as an indicator of success
- Lack of community facilities / venues was the main factor limiting service development
- Respondents identified a key benefit of Sure Start as the sense of community now being developed within the area
- Suggestions were made of services that could be usefully mainstreamed in the future e.g. breast feeding support groups and the drop-ins
- The change in management structure with the development of the team leader roles was described

- The team was considered to be working together effectively with genuine collaboration between parents and staff. The mutual respect between parents, partners and staff was an important factor in successful team working
- The Local Action Groups involving parents were viewed as an important part of the management structure
- The good positive working relationships amongst members of the Partnership Board were emphasised
- The Board was seen as operating with a genuine interest in listening to the views of all participants. However, it was suggested that it may be useful for some partners to take a greater share of the responsibility for the work of the board
- The staff investment of time in supporting and encouraging parents to participate fully and influence service delivery was recognised
- It was suggested that it will be important to ensure that divisions do not develop between parents in Clifton and Hobmoor
- The importance of ensuring that services meet the needs of a few particular groups was identified e.g. pregnant women, teenage parents, ethnic minority families and children and parents with disabilities
- The value of establishing a mentoring system to encourage new parents to access services was recognised
- Collating data on the **child's perspective** demonstrated some of the indicators of the benefits and outcomes of involvement with Sure Start
- Parents described how their children had been well prepared for school through the services provided by Sure Start. Participation in new activities and trips had helped children's education and development
- Children had benefited from mixing with other adults and children, had learned to share and had increased in confidence and independence
- Parents also had a greater understanding of their child's development as a result of involvement with Sure Start

- The support offered by Sure Start to children and families was recognised and very much appreciated by parents. Involvement with the programme was felt to have increased friendships between parents and children and contributed to the development of a sense of community which had previously been missing from the area
- **The Family Case Studies data** provides background information about the personal circumstances of each of the 6 families involved. These case studies will be developed in the next year of evaluation as consultation will consider the photographs and treasure box items families have collected over the coming months
- Baseline monitoring data figures describe the current situation concerning mainstream **speech and language** provision in York
- Sure Start York together with the head of speech and language therapy in York have developed a new model of service provision, aiming to decrease the numbers of children on the waiting list for referral to specialist speech and language therapy
- Evaluation next year will assess the extent to which this has been achieved
- The current evaluation included assessment of the Sure Start Big Wide Talk, Small Talk and drop-in services, together with case studies collated by the Sure Start speech therapist
- The small number of survey respondents means that only tentative findings can be described
- Parents benefited from the Sure Start provision through having a greater understanding of the development of their child's communication skills. They also developed a clearer understanding and acceptance of speech therapy as a result of these interventions
- Parents appreciated having a therapist available to chat with informally through home visits and at drop-ins. They spoke of feeling reassured and gaining in confidence after these discussions
- Further evaluation of the speech and language services is required to collect the views of a larger number of service users

4. Key Findings

The section which follows presents the key findings from each stage of the research.

4.1 *Interviews with Partners*

Face to face in-depth interviews were undertaken with the programme manager and with 4 key partners from the partnership board. Partner interviews included representatives from children's services, education and health services and a voluntary agency.

4.1.1 **Service Development**

All but one of those interviewed had been involved from the start of the programme and had some input at the developmental stage. The delivery plan was submitted in March 2002 and approved in December 2002. Several of the partners described the **consultation** that had taken place at this stage. Respondents explained how a team from education, children's services and health had come together to identify the areas of York where it would be appropriate for the programme to be located;

"There were challenges associated with identifying the priority areas and also political challenges associated with identifying which wards the programme would include, which was handled sensitively"

Two respondents described how there were, and sometimes still are, suggestions that other areas of the city (Tang Hall) should be included within the programme. One person described how practice Partnership Board meetings were held at a very early stage which involved parents and professionals and these were felt to be very useful.

The partners were then asked if they were aware of any **problems** at the programme development stage. Only one comment was made about some initial difficulties in obtaining confidential health data required by the Sure Start Unit.

Respondents described how a decision had been made to second staff to the programme as this was felt to be important in enabling a sharing of ideas and ways of working with the wider community. One person explained that there had been a great deal of parental interest in the beginning and the quick improvement in some services had been an important factor in keeping parents involved.

In relation to getting the programme established, the important role of the programme manager was also stressed;

"We are tremendously fortunate to have somebody of Alison's calibre. Not only her skills but her knowledge of the city and her professional relationships across the city were already there"

4.1.2 Service Delivery

Respondents were asked to describe current levels of service provision within the programme and to comment on their involvement with this.

Several of the interviewees described how consultation is continually being undertaken on the content of services to be delivered. The important input of parents to this decision making process, through the **Local Action Groups** was also discussed. The way in which services develop according to the changing needs of the community and the Programme was also described. The Programme Manager explained how the team and the parents are learning together not to raise expectations unrealistically and to be honest with each other about the pace of change;

"Parents are learning to understand more clearly about the complexity of delivering a new service"

All of the partners were able to easily identify examples of **successful projects**¹. Throughout these discussions, it became evident that for most respondents, the amount of parental involvement in running the service was one of the main indicators of success. As one partner stated;

"York has a culture which is particularly exciting to be within. It is recognising that this (parental involvement) is what it is really about, not just ticking boxes, but a real culture of ownership and involvement"

He went on to explain that if this philosophy could be mainstreamed he would see this as a good measure of success.

The Monday Morning Drop-ins were one such example. The popularity of the service amongst parents was noted, but in addition one respondent explained how this project had changed from the stage of being set up, co-ordinated and run by staff to a situation where it is now run and co-ordinated by the parents. He went on to describe the benefits to those involved;

¹ Appendix 1 provides Attendance Data from the months August and October 2004

"There is a real sense of people being empowered to use and develop their existing skills"

Other examples of successful projects were listed including:

- Gatsby Playing with Words Project (now known as the Big Wide Talk project)

"The quality of what is happening for those families and children is amazing"

- Clifton Fathers Group which has, through the skill of the workers

"moved from being a men's group to being a group which men attended with their children"

- Breakfast club
- Breastfeeding support

4.1.3 Benefits of Sure Start

The interview also asked partners to identify the particular benefits arising from the implementation of Sure Start. Responses could be divided onto two main themes: benefits for professional practice and benefits for the community.

One partner explained that they felt Sure Start allowed a **greater freedom** *"to be able to think laterally and to be responsive"*. The involvement of parents was seen as crucial in helping new ways of working to be developed and an example was given of the ways in which parental involvement have led to changes in the delivery of some services (e.g. speech and language therapy). It was seen as important to share these ideas with other mainstream agencies.

One of the partners described the significance of this **parental involvement** for York's status as a Pathfinder Trust. He explained how the Government White Paper raised issues about flexibility of roles, integrated practice and community involvement which Sure Start was already developing. He suggested that;

"The involvement of Sure Start has enabled a more co-ordinated approach to develop which may not have happened otherwise"

Benefits to the **community** were also identified. One respondent explained how Sure Start led to parents being able to have an idea about services that can very

quickly be turned into action. The increasing range of services now available for parents was identified. Several people also mentioned how parents themselves had benefited from involvement with the programme. For example, one parent was described as recording how;

"Sure Start has done for me what anti-depressants never did"

The increase in self confidence and self esteem amongst parents who were involved was also noted. One partner described how two parents had recently gone on to be involved in the Children's Trust Board meeting and she described how;

"They were full members of the meeting, they presented well, their confidence and self-esteem was remarkable and the two mums said prior to Sure Start they wouldn't have had the confidence to do that"

4.1.4 Programme Management

The interview then asked respondents to comment on the management of the programme. The Programme Manager explained how the management structure has evolved as the team has grown and at the time of the interviews (January 2004) one **team leader** had recently been appointed to work in each of the patches. This was seen as being important to help the structure to develop and become stronger. The decision to have a team leader within each area was made to ensure cohesiveness across the whole of the area, as one partner explained;

"[There are two team leaders] so one patch doesn't feel it is being neglected at the expense of another patch and so there is a cohesiveness about Sure Start but individual needs are recognised within the patches"

The management have also recently developed the role of Parent Link Worker which enables Sure Start to keep in contact with those families who are outside of the patches but still want to know about the programme. When asked to explain the management structure, several partners identified the central role of the Local Action Groups, made up of local parents.

The Programme Manager described the programme as being at an interesting stage of development and she suggested that there was always a danger that it could become an *"institutional structure"*. Whilst recognising the need to maintain a secure underpinning, she felt that it was important that the *"innovation and excitement"* should also be maintained.

No particular problems were identified with **communication** within the programme and the issuing of mobile telephones to all staff was seen as important in this

context. However, one partner suggested that it would be important to review the communication process with the development of the new team leader roles to ensure that contact across both patches was maintained.

The programme management was considered to be **effective**. The ways in which the management structure evolves as the programme develops was seen as important. One respondent described how there had been considerable investment in personal and professional development of staff and parents and this was seen as being an effective way of ensuring the management of the programme was maintained in the future.

Once again partners commented on the involvement of parents as being a key factor in making the management effective.

One partner described how the team work together well and are not exclusive to others, which he saw as an indicator of effective working. The extent of genuine **collaboration and multi-agency** working was also praised;

"The York Sure Start team are the most effective multi-disciplinary, multi-agency group of people and the way they work together is remarkable"

The Programme Manager was rated highly by one partner in terms of her management style and her inclusive approach. The interview went on to ask respondents to comment on effective **leadership styles**. The Programme Manager herself explained she felt that being a leader was a skill, but that it evolved from the type of person, their previous experience and their knowledge;

"However, it does not set you up any higher than other team members as other people have different and equally important skills. ... One of the key skills is being able to make people believe that they can do something"

This philosophy was obviously maintained in practice, as other partners commented on the effectiveness of the Programme Manager leadership style. One respondent described her as *"very approachable, very bubbly and open to people to ask questions"*. Another partner commented;

"Alison is always very open to ideas and suggestions and she is a doer, so she is willing to look at things. Her energy is significant and her passion for Sure Start is unquestionable and sustained. She has a genuine passion and belief in Sure Start and the preventative agenda"

The importance of her ability to adopt an **inclusive approach** was also described. She was seen as having a way of making everyone feel their contribution was useful and valuable;

"Alison is facilitative as well as having her own views which she is comfortable to share. She will listen to others and her views are well thought out"

She was described as being very able and very skilled and *"an able communicator who gives a lot of support to her staff."* The ways in which this approach empowered staff was also commented upon.

Other partners explained how her philosophy and leadership style had impacted upon the programme as a whole;

'Alison role models the importance of quality, caring relationships in the way she behaves and treats her team . . . it's apparent in how the organisation seems to work'

Whilst praising this leadership style, one partner also described how a measure of the success of the programme would be the way in which it can continue successfully once the Programme Manager is no longer there. He felt that as her approach was centred on empowering others, he was sure this would also be her own indicator of success.

4.1.5 Mainstream Working

Respondents were asked to identify any **conflicts** between mainstream working practices and Sure Start principles. One respondent described how she was aware that there was the potential for conflict as funds for mainstream services may be limited compared to Sure Start funding. The point was made that staff who are seconded to Sure Start and become enthusiastic about the programme sometimes find it difficult when they go back to mainstream colleagues, working in services where morale can be low. It was explained that there may be a willingness amongst mainstream service providers to work in the *"Sure Start way"*, but lack of funds mean that the opportunity is not always there.

Despite these tensions, some respondents were able to identify instances where Sure Start principles were impacting on mainstream services. For example, the consultation that Sure Start had undertaken with parents had led the maternity services to also consult with parents. One of the partners explained how his experiences of working with Sure Start had given him the confidence to involve parents in decision making at partnership level in other organisations he is involved with. He also felt that involvement of the parents in the Partnership had given him

an insight into the ways in which mainstream working practices can sometimes overshadow parents, for example in the ways reports were presented to courts;

"These practices can push people down, we professionalise ourselves, and de-humanize the parents".

4.1.6 Partnership Working

Partners were asked to comment on the extent to which they considered the Partnership Board to be working together effectively. All respondents praised the extent of **successful partnership working**. Respondents explained how there was a genuine interest in sharing and listening to views of all participants and this had been the case from the first meeting of the Board. A couple of partners described how providing food at each meeting helped to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere which helped partners and parents to talk and work effectively together. Once again, the genuine involvement of **parents** within the partnership was mentioned;

"The main thing is that parents are equal partners around that table"

Emphasis was placed on the ways parents were able to make a real, relevant, appropriate, honest contribution to the Partnership meetings and feel confident to be able to do that. The Board was described as a safe environment for parents to participate in

"There is a safety and a respect which is genuine and mutual"

At the time of the interviews a process was being undertaken to appoint an independent chair to the Partnership and this was welcomed by several interviewees.

The programme manager explained that Sure Start York does not have some of the problems experienced by other programmes as it is in a relatively small city with only one programme and people's level of commitment to the partnership board is good. Another partner also mentioned the benefits of partners having already established working relationships through working together in other arenas.

Some suggestions for ways to **improve the effectiveness** of the board were also made. It was suggested that partners from some agencies could perhaps move beyond listening and taking part in the meetings to a greater sharing of responsibility of the work of the board. It was also suggested that the board could work more effectively together developing pro-active suggestions concerning the sharing of information protocol.

Only a few **barriers** to successful partnership working were identified. One respondent suggested that the main barrier was lack of resources and stressed that it was important to recognise that the ability of partners to come to the partnership table with actual resources (in terms of finances, people or time), could be rather limited, even if the enthusiasm was there. However, it was felt that the national children's policy agenda could bring these barriers down. One respondent suggested that with more funds available, they could *"let their imaginations spread even more widely"*.

All participants were able to identify the **benefits** of partnership working. The strengths of multi-agency working were identified;

"The outcomes of multi-agency working are much better as it gives a richness of different perspectives and different perceptions coming together"

"When it [partnership working] happens there is a greater sense of ownership, and when there is ownership there is greater chance of sustaining services"

The ways in which partners can learn from each other and increase their own skill levels were also discussed. One partner suggested that partnership working was key to the preventative agenda where families who may be at risk of developing problems in the future can be identified earlier on and this happens more easily if different agencies are working more closely together.

Partners were then asked to discuss any **changes** they would like to see to the way the partnership operates. Suggestions mainly centred on additional agencies/representatives that could be involved which included: education, Children's Fund, Connexions, parent link worker, Children's Information Service, Playground Action Group and the local business community. One partner suggested that it may be useful to consider changing the format of the partnership meetings so that following the business element of the meeting there was a workshop session for example on teenage pregnancy. It was felt to be useful to enable contributions from different perspectives.

4.1.7 Parental Involvement

Partners were also asked to comment further on the involvement of parents in the board. The programme emphasis on parental involvement had been discussed previously and all respondents felt parents to be very involved. When asked to assess what had enabled parents to become and remain involved, a number of suggestions were made. The Programme Manager explained how she takes responsibility for involving parents and is actively involved in training and supporting

those who take part. She felt that this close involvement on her part led to parental involvement being viewed as important both to parents and to staff. She also felt that staff had worked very hard in this area, encouraging parents to become involved in the Local Action Groups;

"In each patch there a couple of practitioners that are particularly good at enabling parents to move on and become involved"

The amount of time that staff had spent in **supporting parents** was seen as very important by many of the respondents. Examples were also given of practical help like providing taxis and a creche. One partner explained how;

"Right from the beginning of the Programme parents were made to feel as though they had something important to contribute and then it took a great deal of staff time to ensure that they were able to work effectively as part of the partnership"

Respondents were also able to describe the **benefits** of parental involvement. For the programme, the parents brought a better understanding of the *"requirements and aspirations of the community and the reality of people's lives"*. One partner described how several parents had become *"Sure Start champions"* selling the benefits of the programme to the rest of the community. A number of comments were made describing the ways in which the programme had gained from the parental involvement;

"The benefits are immeasurable - it is the perspective that nobody has ever asked before"

"We have been wasting a lot of talent for a lot of years"

"Some of the things that parents have said to inform decisions in the Programme have been more insightful than things I have ever heard really"

In addition, the benefits to the parents themselves were also identified. Partners spoke of the training and development opportunities that were available to parents as well as the obvious growth in their confidence and self esteem. One respondent suggested that parents became more aware of their children's needs and also learned that professionals *"do not always have all of the answers"*.

Conversely, interviewees were asked to consider if there were any **problems** associated with involving parents. One partner described how more parents were now becoming involved in the decision making processes and this led to some of the parents who had been involved right from the start feeling that their influence was

being diluted. She explained how work was being done to explain the importance of a strong parental voice.

Others also explained that it was important to ensure that the parent representatives were able to put their own agenda to one side and to seek the views of a larger group of parents within the community. The issue of representation was also mentioned as one partner regretted the fact that there were not yet any Dads on the board. The time taken to ensure parents are involved was also discussed;

"The disadvantage is that it is time consuming. The time taken could be seen as impacting on the delivery of the programme, but the involvement of parents is part of the delivery of the programme."

The overall perspective was one of genuine interest and commitment to involving parents, as illustrated by the following comment;

"Out of anywhere where I have worked, I would describe the culture of partnership working with parents within York Sure Start as being the most natural and the most helpful"

4.1.8 Service Beneficiaries

Partners described how a wide range of parents were obviously accessing the services provided by the programme².

However, they were also able to identify some **specific groups** where they felt more work needed to be done. In particular, several respondents suggested that there were few ethnic minority families involved in the programme. One partner explained that there was a small Turkish community that were not yet accessing services, and that because the population was small, this was a particular difficulty for York.

Other respondents mentioned that few children with disabilities were currently accessing services. At the time of interviewing, the programme was in the process of appointing a Portage worker to work with a small group of children with specific

² Appendix 2 contains monitoring data demonstrating the reach of the programme from January 2004 (when these interviews were undertaken) to the present day. The Delivery Plan provides data from the January 2001 NYHA GP Registration Database showing that the population aged under 4 across both wards was 598. The reach data shows that in January 2004 a total of 265 children aged under 4 were registered with the programme, representing 44% of the total population of children under 4 in the area.

problems, offering them support at an early stage. The programme has also identified a group of families with parents who have chronic illness / disability who are not yet being reached. They are aware that these parents often have difficulty leaving the home.

Some suggestions were made for ways of **increasing the reach** of the programme. One respondent proposed a "*buddy system*", where parents are taken by a health visitor to their first visit to a service, as a useful way of helping parents to attend. Also, it was suggested that each activity could have one parent acting as a "*meeter and greeter*", with the task of welcoming new parents and explaining the group set up to them.

The Programme Manager described how there are now Health Visitors within the programme who go into the community and identify parents who are not currently registered with Sure Start. In addition, a development day was being held in April 2004 for the Sure Start team and the board focussing on ways to make the equal opportunities policy real in activities and services and it was felt that this would be used to inform work in the future.

4.1.9 Final Comments

At the conclusion to the interview respondents were asked to identify any additional services they would like to see being offered by the programme and to describe the advice they would offer to anyone starting in Sure Start.

In relation to **additional services**, a number of suggestions were made. One partner explained that it would be useful to develop the individual family support services, and that it would be important to ensure that there was not duplication with mainstream services. Mention was also made of the fact that it might be useful to consider expanding current services that were oversubscribed e.g. Monday Morning Drop-ins. Expansion of other services such as the speech and language scheme was also suggested.

When asked for **advice** that would be offered to those newly involved with Sure Start, the respondents overall enthusiasm for the programme was confirmed as the following quotes demonstrate;

"Just do it. Listen a lot and be brave!"

"Jump in - I think Sure Start is brilliant and it's great that it has got so many parents involved. Its also an organization that is about doing rather than just talking - they have actually gone out there and done things that have made a real difference to the community"

"Not to seek to be identified as the expert, but to work to develop a culture of mutual involvement, between professionals and parents within the community"

'Invest a lot of time and energy in recruiting people to work in the project with you because you need people that are bright, open minded, flexible, have got a sense of fun, that aren't 9 to 5 workers'

"Embrace it because it is an exciting project"

4.2 Interviews with Staff

Similarly to the partnership board members, face to face in-depth interviews were undertaken with 5 members of Sure Start staff. Staff interviews included representatives from admin, childcare, health, a team leader and a development worker.

4.2.1 Involvement with Sure Start

The interviewees were asked to describe what they perceived to be the **overall aims** of Sure Start York. Three interviewees said that they felt the aims of the programme were very similar to the overall objectives and targets of Sure Start. Several interviewees also commented that the aims of the programme are to give children the best start before they go to school and make this transition easier. An aim of the programme was also perceived to be to increase the sense of community.

The staff had been working for Sure Start for varying amounts of time, at the time of the interviews (winter 2003) some had been employed since the beginning while others had been employed between 6 months and 1 year. Four interviewees had been working in York prior to the implementation of Sure Start, 3 had been working in similar roles in the same communities.

Interviewees discussed the additional **benefits** that they felt Sure Start had brought to the programme area; some were general while others were more specific. One interviewee felt a considerable benefit to be that Sure Start does not have the stigma that may be attached to Social Services. Other respondents spoke about the friendships that have developed between people that live in the same street but had never spoken to each other before and the confidence that they felt parents had developed.

One interviewee described how parents now seem happier and more confident with the quality of the crèche that is being provided. She illustrated this point with the following comment:

“The parents have said that they feel much more relaxed and happy leaving their children when we’re there”

Another respondent identified the main benefit of the projects that she has been involved in. She described the support that they are able to offer to breast-feeding women through peer support training where mums help each other with breast feeding and will begin to develop a support network.

The interviewees described what they anticipated Sure Start would bring to the programme area in the **future**. One interviewee said that she hoped they would be able to develop more services for families with children with disabilities and special needs. Another commented that she hoped that there would be more services that are specifically for children. While another member of staff hoped that they would be able to make projects become sustainable through mainstreaming or through being run by the parents themselves.

Two interviewees anticipated that the programme would encourage a greater sense of community and that the parents will learn how to empower themselves in their own communities.

The staff were asked if they had been able to meet the aims of their role so far; they described a range of barriers or successes. One interviewee explained that the good induction from her predecessor had helped her to settle into the role and she felt she was now achieving the aims. Another interviewee commented that she feels she is able to meet the aims of the role, but because the role is new she is unsure whether this is happening at the moment.

One staff member described how they have concentrated on older children in the initial part of the programme, although she feels that her role may change in the future as they begin to have more contact with ante-natal women. She also described how some of the more specific aims of her role had been made more difficult because they have been unable to get adequate contacts. Most interviewees felt that their role was 'very' important within the programme. One person felt that the roles were quite blurred and that people do what they need to do so that Sure Start can function as best it can.

All respondents felt that they had a good understanding of the services that Sure Start is providing.

4.2.2 Implementation of services/ projects

The interviewees were asked if they had experienced any day to day problems with the administration of their service/ project.

Two members of staff explained that they had **experienced problems** due to lack of space, 1 member of staff in particular said that finding venues is becoming increasingly difficult - often because the community facilities that they use are booked for other Sure Start services. Two members of staff also said that they had experienced problems because of the competing demands that are placed on their time and the diversity of their role. One respondent described how she is

required to put procedures and policies in place but because of lack of time she has sometimes not been able to sit down after sessions and write these.

Another problem identified was regarding crèche staff. One interviewee explained that in the past they had been unable to run groups because of the lack of crèche staff, while another explained that crèche staff can often be unreliable, but it is difficult to deal with as they are not employed by Sure Start.

One respondent explained that because she had come to Sure Start from a very structured working environment she had experienced problems with her own time management because Sure Start is relatively unstructured. One interviewee explained that because the main Sure Start office is based on the Hobmoor /Foxwood patch a lot of the key personnel for the programme are based there, which can make it more difficult for the team on the Clifton patch to access information (e.g. financial). She commented;

"At times we feel more isolated here"

The most common way that staff **communicate** with the rest of their team was through weekly team meetings. Respondents also described how they communicate with the team in their patch through face to face contact and by telephone. One respondent described how she used email although she explained that not all members of staff had access to a computer.

One interviewee made the point that communication issues are helped because some staff have worked together closely before.

Respondents were asked about any **problems** with service provision. Two members of staff mentioned a drop in for mothers and babies 'Babbling Babies' that had been difficult. One respondent explained that initially they only had one person (not always the same person) coming to each session and that this could have been because the venue was not ideal. She described how when they ran the group just before Christmas at 23 Burton Green about four mums attended and they are really keen to continue it but are now having difficulties finding a venue and staff;

'It's a group we really feel that there is a need for and we want to do but we are having trouble fitting it in anywhere'

Another respondent commented about the same group that it attracted parents with older children and perhaps the venue where it was held was not appropriate. She commented that they would like to run it again at the community centre and make it clearer that it is only available to parents with babies.

The interviewer then asked participants to describe any services/ projects that they felt were **working really well**. Four interviewees explained that they felt that the drop ins had been particularly successful. They were praised for their popularity and one interviewee explained that at the Monday Morning Drop-in there is a crèche, so there are activities for both children and adults. She feels that there are a lot of people there, people are enthusiastic about it and it is nurturing. She also feels that parents have a lot of ownership of these sessions.

The safety equipment schemes and IT courses were also praised. Another respondent commented that the breast feeding peer support training has been very successful, because the eleven women that have done the training have been very empowered by this, although she mentioned that it is still to be seen whether it will be sustained.

Another respondent particularly mentioned the improvement in the quality of the childcare. The Dads project was also identified as being successful because it has gone from strength to strength, and everything about the group has been centred towards children.

4.2.3 Resources

Respondents were asked if they had any difficulties with resources. Some interviewees explained that they had experienced **problems** due to lack of access to a computer or desk. One respondent said that workers would like access to their own landline phone; she commented that she prefers to speak on a land line than a mobile and although they can use the phone in the office at the moment they have to reach across a desk where someone is working.

Three interviews suggested that more crèche workers would be helpful to Sure Start as a whole. As mentioned previously, some respondents also commented that sometimes they can not run a group because there are not enough crèche workers. One respondent made the following comment:

'I think it needs its own childcare team really'

One interviewee said that they would like more space to function more efficiently as they sometimes do not have enough space to hold groups.

All respondents felt that they received adequate funding for the services that they were involved with. They all positively compared the funding that Sure Start gets to the funding that they received in their previous jobs.

4.2.4 Mainstreaming

Respondents were asked if they felt that the work that they do as part of Sure Start has benefited the wider community.

One interviewee felt it to be beneficial that they allow families from outside of the programme area to be involved in the services and projects. She commented that it has a knock on "*feel good factor*". Another respondent explained that they have reached those families that previously would only leave the house to go the shops which has had a beneficial effect.

In terms of preparing children for school, one respondent explained that she felt the "First Steps" programme that prepares families for schools has been beneficial. Another respondent commented that she hoped that if children's behaviour in the community is improved (which is a particular problem in the area) it will be beneficial. She also feels that their job chances will improve although this is still quite a long way off.

Another interviewee explained how they will soon be providing women with access to breast feeding support groups which will benefit the wider community in the future if a culture is developed around breast feeding. Reference was made to the investment that Sure Start has made in the community, although it was suggested that the programme should invest more in the local playgroups.

All respondents felt that there were some Sure Start services that could be rolled out into the mainstream. Specifically, 2 respondents felt that the drop-ins could be rolled out as it is extremely beneficial for parents to go along to one venue and to be able to sit and talk. However, 1 respondent identified a problem with this in ensuring that those that were most in need were the ones that were accessing services.

Another interviewee explained that she feels that breast feeding support groups should be rolled out more widely and is aware that this is already happening in some areas.

One respondent had been undertaking a dual role when she was initially employed by Sure Start, although she was only working for the programme at the time of the interview. She described the difficulties of accommodating the very different working cultures and her sense of being pulled in two different directions at the same time.

Another respondent explained that she still has close contacts with the organisation that she used to work for and that some of her colleagues from there

had found it difficult to understand her role now. She said that they felt that if they had been given more people and more money they could have been doing the things that Sure Start are doing.

4.2.5 Programme Management

The interviewees were asked to describe the management structure of the Sure Start team. It was explained that the Programme Manager '*the strategic key person*' is supported by a team leader for each of the patches; they are also supported by the Project Officer. One interviewee described how the partnership board have responsibility for the overall direction of the programme, and the staff are accountable to them. The Partnership board makes decisions concerning posts and allocation of budget.

Two respondents explained that as the **team leader** posts are fairly new, there are some issues around roles that are currently being developed and resolved. One respondent in particular explained that it is important to avoid duplication - and that re-examining roles is a usual part of an evolving and growing programme.

In terms of whether the management structure is effective, several respondents described the newness of the structure but feel "*on the whole it is*".

Most respondents felt that a **flexible** style of leadership is the most effective. The Programme Manager's style was described by one respondent as being;

"A combination of having the freedom to work in innovative ways but with rock solid support if necessary"

a view which was mirrored by the comments of the other respondents. Comments were made explaining how all staff are **valued** and have **respect** for each other;

"There is a strong Programme Manager who is very able to take things forward at strategic level and who also holds the team together well"

One respondent said that as a team they are all very flexible and that everybody sees what there is to do to and does it to the best of their ability.

Most interviewees indicated that they were required to attend a range of meetings, which most felt generally quite manageable. One member of staff explained that they had been unable to attend the team meeting for a while and she commented that important issues raised at the meetings are generally communicated to her in due course.

Several respondents said that there has been a lot of involvement from **parents** in the management of the programme right from the beginning. Their involvement in the partnership board, management committees and the Local Action Groups was described.

One interviewee discussed the involvement of parents in the Sure Start groups and activities. She gave the example of parents worrying about the lack of presents at the Christmas party;

'They [the parents] had clocked the worries that we would usually be clocking but they had thought of them'

Staff were asked what they felt had enabled parents to participate and stay involved. Several described the ways in which the Programme Manager and the Team Leaders have built up positive relationships with parents, encouraging them to get involved in the partnership. One interviewee made the point that it was the philosophy from the beginning of the programme that involving parents was an essential part of programme development. Other respondents said that it has brought people and staff together and achieved a greater sense of community and ownership of the programme.

4.2.6 Partnership working

Most interviewees said that they had either a full or some understanding of the Partnership Board and some had attended board meetings.

The 4 respondents who felt able to comment on the **effectiveness** of the partnership board said that it worked well together. One interviewee described the partners blending in well together, while another said that she received good feedback through the Local Action Group (LAG) meetings.

The effectiveness of the structure at partnership board levels was described as benefiting the programme as a whole;

'There seems to be the structure that allows for communication right to the roots of the programme and up to the board, via parents, which is great'

Interviewees felt that the balance of organisations that they were currently involved was about right. They explained that they make efforts to work with people that they want to work with.

In terms of how they work in partnership with other organisations, one interviewee discussed that there may be joint funding bids for some projects. Another

interviewee said that in her role it is important that she maintains strong links with mainstream health services and that there are avenues for two way communication.

With regards to any **problems** that may have occurred, one interviewee felt that there are sometimes misunderstandings by partners about what Sure Start is able to do. She feels that some partners feel that Sure Start can solve more problems than they actually can. However she commented it is up to Sure Start to communicate this to the partners. Similarly another respondent discussed that perceptions of Sure Start from the mainstream can be a barrier because Sure Start are seen as having a lot of money, while other services don't have much. Sure Start workers are also perceived by some services to have more time than they do.

One respondent explained that the hardest part of her job is maintaining links with mainstream services, because in addition to this you also have to step outside of them to create change. Another interviewee felt that arranging meetings with partners can sometimes be difficult; as those at senior level may have a lot of demands on their time.

Another interviewee discussed that finding common ground with other partners is also difficult and time consuming because Sure Start is a different culture. She also explained that difficulties can be experienced when agencies and groups are city wide and she is attending meetings and only representing the Sure Start patches.

In terms of the **benefits** of partnership working, several respondents described the advantages of being able to approach issues from a lot of different angles, one respondent described it as a 3D vision. Another respondent said that it cuts down on the duplication of services. It was also felt that partnership working presents opportunities to gain more information and knowledge and see things from a different angle.

The relationships that the programme has developed with mainstream agencies was discussed, two interviewees felt that they had '*maintained positive relationships*'. One interviewee discussed that there are some tensions with some of mainstream organisations, as people who work outside of Sure Start do not necessarily feel that they always want to celebrate its success.

4.2.7 Service Beneficiaries

The interviewees were asked about the **typical profile** of beneficiaries of their service/ project. Most respondents described them as being young parents that are not working. One respondent said that initially there were more parents with older children attending but increasingly there are parents with very young children

involved. Other groups that participate include older women, parents that have part-time jobs, as well as dads. In addition it was explained that there are a group of families that have second families and there are also grandmothers that attend and grandfathers that come to the Dad's group.

Although these were described as being the groups that they were aiming for, it was recognised that there were groups that they have **not yet been able to reach** although it was acknowledged that the programme was still in its early stages.

Two interviewees felt there was work needed to attract teenage parents; some have been referred but not got involved and they are often transient. Another interviewee explained that they have not reached pregnant mums yet because people aren't registered if they haven't got children. Another interviewee spoke of the difficulties of attracting families from ethnic minority backgrounds because of the small community in York.

One worker commented that Sure Start haven't provided any specific services for families with children with disabilities and special needs or parents with disabilities and special needs. She feels this is an area they need to focus on in the future.

Interviewees were asked if they would like further support to achieve greater reach within the community. One interviewee explained that a member of staff employed specifically to target 'hard to reach' groups would be very beneficial. This person could focus all their time on building relationships with these families, finding out the types of services that they would like and identifying what else could be provided.

Two respondents explained the importance of building and maintaining links with local midwives as they have the initial contact with families. One interviewee felt that they could achieve greater reach if there were 2 midwives in the programme. This interviewee also commented that if they had a list generated of pregnant women they would be able to contact people early in their parenting life, and more ante-natal services could be developed.

In terms of how workers receive beneficiaries to their service or project, word of mouth was commonly mentioned. One interviewee commented;

'Those people that are most likely to continue coming are those people that come by word of mouth'

Others described receiving parents who just walk into services or through outreach workers such as the Family Learning Tutor.

Interviewees explained that the programme does not currently have a policy in place for parents/ children who have a learning difficulty or disability. But several mentioned that they are currently developing one. One interviewee mentioned that they are currently working with portage and another felt that specific needs are met on an individual basis.

Another interviewee discussed that to date when difficulties have arisen with families with disabilities or special needs they have been dealt with on an individual basis.

4.2.8 National Office

The levels of paperwork that respondents are required to undertake by National Office varied according to their job role. While some interviewees described the level of paperwork favourably compared to expectations upon mainstream workers, another worker that was more involved in the administration side of the programme commented that she was surprised by the level of paperwork that is required.

In terms of National Sure Start guidance two respondents explained that they did not receive this themselves, relevant advice was passed onto them by their manager. Two interviewees felt that some targets are difficult to measure or report on such as post-natal depression and smoking reduction rate targets.

Two respondents discussed the involvement that they had had with the regional Sure Start office. They described the team as being helpful and supportive.

One respondent described problems with the Sure Start IT system as there have been difficulties gaining the online access that is required to complete forms, this is seen to be a problem nationally. It was also sometimes difficult to obtain data required for the monitoring forms, particularly as it is required by post code rather than ward level.

All respondents felt aware of the national principles and objectives of Sure Start.

4.2.9 Parental Involvement in Sure Start

As discussed previously, the interviewees feel that parents have had a lot of involvement in the programme. It was felt that the programme had made a tremendous difference to the **personal development** of a group of parents on each patch that have been heavily involved, with the skills that they have learned and the training and support they have been given.

One respondent explained that it was fairly easy to initially involve the more confident parents but other parents are now starting to become more involved.

In terms of the support that has been offered to attract parents to become involved, childcare, food and transport were mentioned. One respondent commented that the one to one support that Sure Start offers is also an attraction;

'There is something about going somewhere and knowing people'

It was felt that a key benefit of involving parents was that the programme is able to ensure that the services developed are those that parents want, without making assumptions, which will hopefully make them more sustainable. One respondent also said that having parents involved helps to develop a greater sense of community.

The interviewees were asked if they felt that there were any **disadvantages** to involving parents; they described how there are sometimes personal disagreements between parents which can cause problems and have to be managed carefully. It was also considered to be important to ensure that confidentiality is maintained in the future;

'Making sure that confidentiality isn't lost somewhere as parents get more involved'

Two respondents also felt that as parents become more powerful it is important to ensure that this power is managed in a sensible way.

There were mixed feelings about how enthusiastic the community has been about Sure Start. While some interviewees felt that they had been very enthusiastic, another interviewee felt they had not been entirely enthusiastic, although she described that many of them are not aware of the programme and what it can offer. One member of staff mentioned that Hugh Bailey (MP) and local councillors have been very supportive of the programme.

4.2.10 Additional Services

To close the interview workers were asked, if there were any **additional services** that they would like to be able provide.

One interviewee explained that she would like to see the development of more services/ groups and that she would like to see more activities that were developed just for the children. She commented that the 'Messy Twos' six week session has been successful and that it would be good to develop something like tumble tots,

because a lot of parents can not afford to go to the existing provision. Another interviewee commented that it would be useful to be able to provide a nursery for the younger children.

One staff member said that she would like to see an increase in the number of activities that parents and children can attend together. Another said that there is scope to provide services around emotional wellbeing and nurturing, relaxation, stress management and personal development although it was felt staff and premises/ spaces are barriers to this at the moment.

One interviewee would like to see the toy library up and running and another said that she would like to run a group about books for children for the local community.³

4.3 Interviews with Parents on the Partnership Board

In addition to the interviews with partners and staff, 5 interviews were also completed with parents who are involved with the Partnership Board of the programme. Sure Start York provided QA with a list of all parent board members and from this potential respondents were selected ensuring representation across both of the geographical areas and also more recent board members as well as those who had been involved for a longer period of time.

4.3.1 Involvement with Sure Start York

The interview began by asking respondents to comment on their involvement with the Sure Start programme. Those interviewed had been involved from times ranging from the initial set up of the programme to the past 2 months. They had become involved through a number of different ways. Two respondents heard about Sure Start when the drop-in they were already attending became incorporated into the programme. Two respondents had been encouraged to take part by local staff: a health visitor and a family education worker. The importance of this personal contact was evident as 1 parent explained how knowing the worker helped her to become involved;

"She asked if I was willing to go to this meeting . . . which I probably wouldn't have done if I hadn't been on those courses and things"

³ Appendix 3 provides summaries of other project evaluations that have been undertaken by staff

The parents also described a number of different **reasons** for wanting to get involved. For one respondent the enthusiasm generated at the first meeting encouraged her to want to become part of the programme;

"I came away [from the first meeting] thinking this would be fantastic to get involved with. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of volunteers and thought "there's no way this isn't going to be a good thing"

Another mum described more personal reasons for her involvement, explaining how;

"I needed to do more than just being a mum and I wanted to put energy into something that was not directly for the kids - although it does involve them as well"

Two other parents also explained that a motivating factor had been the desire to do *"something outside of the house"*. For some, there was also the attraction of being involved in an initiative that was parent led and where they could have some input into developing better services. Mention was also made of the training opportunities that involvement in the programme would bring.

The interviewees were involved in the programme in a number of different ways. Most attended the Local Action Groups as well as being parent representatives and parent board members. One person was involved in the editorial team of the local Sure Start newsletter as well as volunteering at a number of groups; others had involvement with some of the sub groups. One of those interviewed has gone on to take on the role of Parent Link Coordinator, which entails liaising with parents across each of the two geographical patches.

4.3.2 Service Development

The interviewer then asked respondents to describe the development of services within the programme. It began by asking for views on the overall **aims** of the programme. The following comments show how the programme was seen as important for both parents and children;

"Improving facilities for under 5's, which they do achieve. And also more support for parents as well"

"Improving services for children under four including social and emotional development"

"To help under privileged families, with children under 4 years"

"For the under 5's and families, a better start than they normally would have"

"To provide educational experiences for 0-5 year olds in deprived areas"

Respondents were also asked about their knowledge of **services in the area pre-Sure Start**, and to describe any benefits arising from the programme. It was felt that there were few services in the area prior to Sure Start with examples given of a toddler group, a playgroup and a drop-in; however these were seen as unsatisfactory. Parents were easily able to identify the **benefits** that Sure Start had already brought to the area. All described the sense of community that was developing now as both parents and children got to know each other. Several described how as parents they had made many new friends through their involvement with the programme and the benefits for the children were also discussed;

"Sure Start has made a big difference - it has got all the families together with children - and the children have definitely got to know each other. With it being very localised the children move on and go to school together"

"It had brought families together and improved things for them, given them somewhere to take the children out for a change of scenery"

The programme was seen as offering new opportunities to parents and they were now able to access services which had previously been unaffordable.

Only one of the interviewees was able to comment on the developmental stage of the programme. She explained that care was taken to ensure that they did not *"tread on the toes of existing services in the area"* She described how they worked carefully with existing service providers.

4.3.3 Service Design and Delivery

Parents were asked to describe how **decisions** were / are made about which services and projects should be delivered. All commented on the level of consultation that had taken place and the ways in which parents were a central part of this process. One person described the consultation exercise that had taken place where parents and staff identified areas of need and from this the most common requests for provision were noted. One respondent said that workers, parents and existing service providers worked together and wherever possible these existing services were developed.

It was also explained how this consultation is an ongoing process between staff and parents at LAG meetings and the programme was seen as always being willing to try out new ideas. For example, one parent described how her own experiences of

postnatal depression had led to discussions with her health visitor and she is now involved in setting up the post-natal depression support group. One of the main factors limiting service development was seen as the lack of facilities in the York area.

The respondents were able to provide several examples of **successful projects or services**. The drop-in services were mentioned by several people as being successful because of the large number of parents they attracted. In addition the *"really nice relaxed atmosphere"* was praised. One parent commented;

"It is really nice on a Monday morning to put your child in the crèche for an hour and sit back and have your first hot cup of coffee ... you just get a bit of time for yourself"

One other parent also commented on the success of the Dad's group, which she described as helping dads to make friends together which had been a new and beneficial opportunity for them.

Only one person was able to identify a project that had been set up and was no longer running. She described an initiative with childminders which had not continued; explaining that it was difficult as childminders need to *"make a living."*

4.3.4 Programme Management

When asked to comment on the management of the programme, the parents spoke very positively. They all described how they were given information about the team members and their roles and most had an overall view of the way the programme is managed. Comments were also made about the way in which there had been some communication difficulties in the past, but that these were being addressed. **Communication** has sometimes been difficult as the programme covers two distinct geographical locations. Respondents explained how parent representatives from each patch were invited to attend the monthly staff team meetings which gives them a greater understanding of the programme and also keeps them informed of developments. In addition, they described how parents from both patches meet together, which also helps information to be spread around. The real sense of **team working** was described with parents obviously feeling part of the management structure of the programme;

"The people and the attitudes they have make it work well. They seem so open and friendly - they never seem to judge - you can have a bad hair day and no-one is offended. Because they want parents involved - you do feel very equal with the staff and that makes everyone feel very approachable."

The strength of team working was also apparent in the parent's comments concerning the leadership of the programme. When asked to describe the leadership style of the programme, it was noticeable that 4 of the 5 respondents said that there was not any one leader, but rather that the programme was led by a team, which the parents clearly felt part of;

"I've never been of the opinion that it's me and then there's them, you don't feel as if the staff are towering above us"

Parents explained how they were treated as being **equal** to other members of staff. The ability of the programme manager to negotiate this amount of parental involvement was also apparent;

"Alison does not tell everyone what to do - she asks questions like - would you mind, or are you sure you want to. Parents are doing quite a lot really and I think Alison is keen to ensure parents do not feel put on - although we are all doing it because we want to and it is ok to say no"

4.3.5 Partnership Working

The parents went on to talk about their experiences of the partnership board and initially were asked how effectively they thought the board members worked together. Apart from one parent who, at the time of the interview, had recently joined the board and so felt unable to comment, all saw the board as working well together. Although one described how she was initially nervous about attending meetings, she described how she was quickly put at her ease;

'Everyone sits round as an equal and respects everybody else's views'

The issue of **mutual respect** was mentioned by several of the parents and was obviously something the board had been determined to ensure was established and maintained;

"From the beginning they laid some ground rules, that people shouldn't feel silly for not knowing things and professionals shouldn't use jargon"

Relationships between board members had clearly been established and one person explained how board meetings begin with each person introducing themselves and describing their role, which was useful for newer members. As parent representatives all felt that they and other partners had a clear understanding of the parent's role within the partnership.

Although parents described a variety of **meetings** that they were invited to attend, (e.g. board meetings, local action group meetings, parent board members meetings), this was not identified as a problem. Parents explained that they did not feel attendance to be compulsory and that they could ask for help to resolve problems, for example, with childcare or transport. Only one parent described the problems she faced when board meetings were held during school holidays.

The respondents did not consider there to be any barriers to the partnership working successfully, and only one suggested that there may be some divide between Foxwood and Clifton parents, caused by the geographical distance between their locations.

The partnership was described as having "strong parental involvement". One person explained how advertisements for parent board members were always successful in recruiting new parents who welcomed the opportunity to become involved once they see what is happening in the programme. Parents spoke of the many **benefits** of their involvement, describing how there was a real sense of being part of implementing important changes.

"There is a real feeling we are doing something here"

"Satisfaction, seeing things coming from what you have been involved in"

"I have been given the opportunity to develop projects and services and listen to other people's ideas"

They recognised that there was a process of genuine consultation where parents were able to influence services. Personal benefits were also identified as parents described **developing skills** that would help with future job applications; being able to demonstrate to a prospective employer that they could combine childcare with other regular commitments; having somewhere to "*direct my energies*" and "*feeling useful again*" and generally "*feeling good about myself again*".

The few parents who had left the board had mainly done so because they had moved away or because their children had grown older. One parent suggested that people may be put off as the partnership meetings can sometimes be quite "*heavy*". Another parent commented that parental suggestions could perhaps be taken forward more quickly and she felt that ideas sometimes get lost in the management process.

All of the interviewees felt there to be a good mix of parents involved with the board. However, there were conflicting viewpoints when they were asked if they

felt there was anything preventing other parents becoming involved. Three parents suggested that there were no **barriers**, but two felt that there may be small "*cliques*" starting to develop which may prevent new parents fitting in. It was suggested that this may be a particular problem amongst Clifton parents.

One of the newer parents commented that there also seemed to be a division between parents from Clifton and those from Hobmoor / Foxwood. She felt it may be useful if a parent from each patch was able to attend a drop-in session at the other patch, to encourage more joint working.

Parents were then asked to describe any benefits of partnership working. They explained the advantages of hearing differing views;

"Lots of different views means you can see things from different perspectives which works well"

The ways in which partners from different agencies were learning to work together was also seen as beneficial and likely to ensure services were sustained in the future. Parents felt that good links were being established with mainstream agencies, through the partnership and several spoke in particular of the advantages of having a General Practitioner on the board. The involvement of parents was also seen as crucial because;

"At the end of the day we are probably the ones that know our children the best"

They explained that attendance at partnership meetings was good and that there was representation from most appropriate agencies. Only two suggestions for change were made: one parent would like greater involvement with education services and another mentioned that it may be useful to make greater links with Children's Fund and Connexions services. She explained that it would be useful to consider the ways Sure Start can impact on older children as well.

4.3.6 Service Beneficiaries

The parents were asked to describe who they saw as being the main beneficiaries of the Sure Start programme. Most felt there to be a **good mix** of people crossing a wide range of ages including parents and grandparents. One person described how work was currently being done to encourage the small number of ethnic minority families in the catchment area to access services. Mention was also made of the fact that it may be harder for working parents to access services and a recognition that this could only be improved if evening sessions were arranged.

Two of the respondents explained how the geographical boundary of Sure Start sometimes caused difficulties as those who lived just outside of the area were

unable to benefit. One parent explained that she had found this a problem when she was trying to recruit new parents and went into a school which also included parents from outside the area.

A further comment was made about the difficulties new parents may face in attending an activity or service for the first time;

'It is hard to go into somewhere if you don't know anybody'

The role of the parent representatives was seen as being to introduce new parents to other people within the groups. One parent explained that they were in the process of setting up a buddying system, where parent reps would build relationships with new parents;

"... this will help those that just don't want to come because they are scared and want somebody to go with them"

The respondents described how transport and crèche facilities were provided to encourage parents to be able to participate.

The interviewer then asked if parents were aware of any special provision being made to encourage those traditionally defined as "hard to reach" to be able to access services. Parents commented that they were not aware of any particular provision, but they felt that services were accessible to all. Some mentioned that there was speech and language support and also portage available to help families with children with special needs.

Summary of Interview Findings

Developing Services

- Respondents described the consultation that had taken place at the beginning to identify services and projects to be delivered
- This consultation involved parents and professionals working together and was important in establishing parental interest at the outset
- Consultation is continuous and ongoing to determine future direction of the programme
- Consultation with parents/ staff occurs through local action groups

Service Delivery

- Respondents able to identify range of successful services currently being delivered e.g. drop-in sessions and Dads group
- Parental involvement in and ownership of the service was seen as an indicator of success
- Lack of community facilities / venues was the main factor limiting service development. Some staff mentioned that more crèche staff would help services to expand
- Benefits of Sure Start were identified in terms of increasing friendships between both children and parents, encouraging a sense of community as well as increasing confidence of parents. In relation to services, Sure Start has enabled greater flexibility of roles and a more integrated approach to be developed
- Although at an early stage of the programme, several respondents had already begun to consider mainstreaming
- Breast feeding support groups and drop ins were two services identified as ones that could usefully be rolled out further a field
- Examples were given of the ways in which Sure Start ways of working had impacted on mainstream service delivery e.g. maternity services consultation with parents
- Some evidence of tension between mainstream service providers and their well-funded Sure Start colleagues

Management of Sure Start

- Respondents described change in management structure with recent development of team leader roles; the impact of this needs to be reviewed at a later stage
- The management structure was seen as developing and adapting to the changing needs of the programme
- Effectiveness of team working with genuine collaboration between staff and parents identified as an important indicator of success

- Communication was mainly viewed as being effective, despite teams being spread over two sites
- Many respondents described the effectiveness of the leadership style which was seen as being both flexible and inclusive
- The manager was described as being approachable, supportive and a good communicator and facilitator who is able to empower others
- There was considerable evidence of mutual respect between staff, partners and parents and this clearly contributed to the successful team working
- The Local Action groups involving parents were described by many respondents as being an important part of the management structure

Partnership Working

- Majority of respondents emphasised the good positive working relationships amongst members of the Partnership Board
- The existence of pre-established relationships between partners was described as beneficial in enabling this process
- The Board was seen to operate with a philosophy of mutual respect and a genuine interest in listening to the views of all participants.
- The extent of strong parental involvement was described by many and the opportunity for parents to influence service development was recognised and valued
- The investment of time by staff in supporting and encouraging parents to ensure they are able to participate fully was recognised
- Some comments from the parents suggest that it will be important to ensure divisions do not develop between Clifton and Hobmoor parents
- Having ensured that the partnership has established good relationships, it was also noted that that it will be important to ensure partners are able to share responsibility for work.

Beneficiaries of Sure Start

- Staff, partners and parents all felt there to be a good range of people currently benefiting from Sure Start services
- The diversity of beneficiaries in terms of age, from young parents to grandparents was described
- Respondent identified a few particular groups that they felt were not yet accessing services including pregnant women, ethnic minority families, working parents, and parents and children with disabilities
- However, at the time of the interviews (January 2004) this issue was being addressed, with some new services being developed
- The value of establishing a buddy or mentoring system to encourage new parents to access the services was recognised

4.4 A Child's Perspective

In addition to the views of the adults presented so far, the evaluation group also wanted to consider the children's experiences of Sure Start.

The children's perspective was collated through two approaches. Firstly a consultation event with children was held and this was followed by the collecting of Children's Stories.

4.4.1 Consultation Event

Children were invited to attend an event at Hobmoor School where photographs of previous Sure Start events were displayed. The children were invited to view these photographs in small groups together with Sure Start staff who had been involved in the events.



Children's Consultation: Viewing Seaside Pictures



Children's Consultation Event: Christmas Party Photographs

The aim of the session was to collect data about children's views of the events and to allow them to describe what they liked / didn't like and to make any suggestions for future improvement. Staff sat with the children to discuss the photographs.

A large amount of data was collected through the use of observation notes, video and digital pictures and digital audio recording. In addition, the children were invited to make drawings of any of the events. At the end of the afternoon a debriefing session was held with the staff to gather their views on the event.

The findings presented below were collated following a thorough review of all the data collected.

Consultation findings

Group 1, 3 children aged under 4

Girl aged 2 Very interested in seaside photographs. Pointing at individual people and naming them. Spent a long time looking at all photos with interest together with worker. Worker asking questions about the day - gave yes / no responses.
Child drew picture of seaside

Girl aged 3 Very reluctant at first, came in to room with mum. Began discussing Christmas party with mum and spent some time looking at photos. When looking at the seaside photos she said there was "water" and a "sand pit". Said it was "like Majorca" she said that they got to the seaside there by a plane and her mum explained this was how they would be getting to Majorca when they go on holiday shortly.
"XXX came with me".

Worker asked question "Did you like the water?" She replied "It was good" "I were walking in it" "I got swimming things on" "The sun was in my eyes"
"Making sandcastles - sometimes I like building them"
Found a photo of someone's brother "splashing" "the water were cold"
She spent some time looking at the photos with her mum and the worker and then asked to go back into the other room.

Boy aged 3 Came into room with mum. Willing to engage a little. Spotted photo of mum. Found photos of self and friends - pointing to photos with mum - not talking. Pointed to photo and said "seagull". Held on to mum. Took individual photos off of the board to share with mum. He said he was "dancing" in the photo. Reluctant to engage with worker and look at photos, spent time climbing on his mum. Became distracted by objects around the room and then wanted to leave the room to go back to his grandma.

Group 2, 3 children aged under 3

Two brothers aged 2 Children looked together with mum at photos and found pictures of "daddy and mummy" in both seaside and Christmas photos. Looked at pictures of Xmas tree. Children asked if they remembered this and they repeated word "tree".

Mum tried to encourage boys to engage with photos, she pointed out people they might know. They enjoyed finding pictures of themselves and their dad. They found a toy on a shelf and became distracted with this.

Boy aged 2 Difficult to gain his attention looked at seaside photos. Kept running off to try and climb on the settee. Not very happy and did not want to be involved, mum took him out of the room.

Children found toys on shelves around room and were distracted.

Group 3, 4 children aged under 4

Girl aged 3, girl aged 3, girl aged 2, boy aged 2

Children enjoyed picking out people that they knew and one child found her own buggy. *"my mummy has got glasses"*

Children looked at the Christmas party pictures and talked about *"making hats"*

Worker who had been at the event asked child if she remembered what her daddy had found in the sea. They talked about finding a crab. All children enjoyed looking at the photos with the workers.

Worker asked the child if she remembered *"crunching her toes up in the sand"*. Two of the children sat for a long time talking with worker and sharing photos. One child then wanted to draw a picture of the seaside with worker. She sat quietly drawing for a while and then pointed at objects on the picture *'that is the sea and that is a sandcastle'*



The Seaside

"I want to go when I bit bigger" boy aged 2

All of the children enjoyed sticking / unsticking the photos from the board.

Group 4, 3 children aged 5 - 8

Girl aged 5 Began by looking at seaside pictures - *"building sandcastles"*

Xmas photos - *"I think we were playing musical statues"* *"My mum put face paint on my nose because she wanted me to be like Rudolph"* *"I didn't like the pudding - I tried it but I didn't like it"* *"I made a crown but I didn't want to wear it- it kept falling off my head"*

She went on to draw picture of the seaside - while drawing she described that she remembered having a drink in her picnic but she could not remember what she had to eat.

Boy aged 7 Looked at both sets of pictures. Xmas party *"I remember making hats"* When prompted by the worker he said that *"he liked both days"*. If the event was held again he *"would like to do dancing"* *"would like to go to Scarborough"*

He told the worker that if they did it next year he would like to not stay on the beach all day and for food at the party he would like *"beans and sausages"*

Older boy (left the room after 2 minutes)

Group 5, 3 children aged 5 - 8

Boy aged 6 Chose seaside photos

"would like to go there again" remembered playing in sand and sea. "it was cold" Remembered getting there by coach. "my mum was complaining that it was too windy" "I wasn't allowed to go in the sea because my mum didn't want me to get my trousers wet" "I didn't go near the rocks because I didn't want to fall and hurt my knee - I only had short trousers"

Xmas party - Found people he knew in the pictures. "don't know if I went to the party - I can't remember much of it" "Am I in any of these ones"

He was then asked by the worker about the other Sure Start events he had been to and spoke very excitedly, for a long time about the Dads breakfast. "Dad made me this T-shirt" "We play there and have bacon sandwich, toast and cereal. Last time we went my sister had 2 or 3 weetabix" "it's on Saturday - the first Saturday" He said he would like it to be on every Saturday. He spoke at great length to the worker describing the breakfast and what he does there. He said that having breakfast at the dads club is his favourite Sure Start thing. He was able to name many of the other children and the Sure Start workers at the Dads breakfast

Drew a picture of the breakfast with Dads.



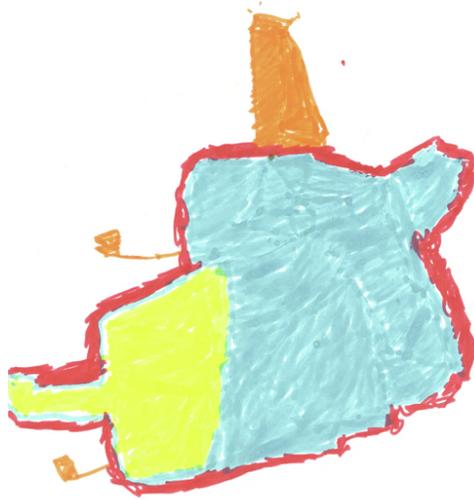
The Dad's Breakfast

Boy aged 5

Chose seaside photos. Liked best "burying my head and my body with sand" "it felt warm" "we got there on a coach" "I liked going in the sea"

Xmas party - "you get presents" could not find photo of self

Drew a picture of a sandcastle and told worker he made one at the seaside, on his own - without anyone helping him. He said that he went to the seaside with his mum and dad



The Seaside

Girl aged 8 Interested in photos. Remembered details of the day. *"remember laying in the sea" "mummy covered up in sand"*

When asked by the worker if there was anything she would like to be different on the trip this year - she said she liked it as it was and wanted to go to the same place.

Xmas party - couldn't see any people she knew - would like the same things next time

Drew a picture of the seaside - described how she had made a sandcastle at the seaside with her younger brother. She said that at 5 o'clock the sea came in and knocked the sandcastle down.

All of the children sat individually with a worker to discuss the photos

Group 6, 2 children

Girl aged 13 She explained when she returned from the trip to the seaside, she drew pictures of it with her siblings.

Girl aged 10

The girls together discussed the seaside photos with a worker and spoke about their memories of the day. They described a rock pool they remembered. They also described

the food they had eaten on the day. When asked if they would like to do anything differently next time, they said they would like to go swimming in a pool (suggested Water world) rather than the sea, as it was too salty in the sea. They also suggested that they would prefer to go Scarborough next time, "*because it s bigger and there are more things to do*"

The worker then looked at the Christmas photos with the girls. They suggested that they would like to have different food next time. They also said that they would like to help make Christmas decorations for the hall and had ideas about how they would like to help decorate the Xmas tree.

Further examples of the children's drawings and photos of the events can be found in Appendix 5.

Summary of the Consultation Findings

- There was a general feeling that children had enjoyed the events that they had attended
- Children were looking for people they know which demonstrates a sense of community that was not there before Sure Start
- Children have increased their knowledge of other Sure Start children
- Children worked together to find photos of each other and workers were able to comment on the advances in speech development made by one child
- Children were drawn more to look at the seaside pictures, perhaps as this was a more significant event for them
- Most children talked about the content of the photos rather than memory of the event itself
- However, some children were more able to relate to event; for example one child described having bare feet in the sand, she took her shoe off and was able to relate the picture to how it felt to have bare feet in the sand.
- The older children told the worker that they would like more involvement with the party next year, for example through making decorations
- Older children definitely remembered the events and gave details of what happened

Reflections on the Consultation

- A very time consuming, but enjoyable process
- It would have been helpful to have used more recent events to help children remembering
- It is important that children are included in the photographs they are viewing

- It might be useful to consult with children in a 1:1 setting, as they do become distracted by other children

4.4.2 Children's Stories

Children's perspectives of Sure Start were also examined through the collecting of individual narratives of children's participation in the programme.

The Children's Stories were collected by Sure Start workers. A total of 7 children were involved with 4 from Clifton and 3 from Foxwood / Hobmoor. Using topic guides prepared by QA, data was collected on videos, audio-recordings, photographs, drawings and writings during October / November 2004. Sure Start staff spoke with children, parents, grandparents and professionals involved with each of the children. A vast amount of data was collected for each child. Analysis was undertaken through a process of reviewing the documentation and identifying key themes and issues. Only a small amount of the detailed data that was collected can be presented in this report. However, each child was given a folder collating all their information for them to keep and the Sure Start programme was also given the data for each child, to be archived and kept as reference for the future.

The identities of the children and families in these stories have not been changed at the request of those involved.

Adam's Story

Adam is a three and a half year old boy, with 2 teenage sisters. He came to Clifton with his mum and sisters when he was 2 days old and started attending drop-in sessions with his mum when he was just over 1 year old.

Adam's View

Adam talked to a Sure Start worker about a drawing he was doing and described some of the people he was drawing, his friends, He said that he likes to play with trains, do colouring and make masks at the Sure Start sessions. He also talked about snack time and enjoying "*apricots and crackers best*", but went on to say that he "*doesn't like apples with green skins, I like apples with red skins. I like blackcurrant and apple juice, and orange juice and water and milk*".



Adam sharing the play dough

Adam looked at the photographs with his mum and said that it was snack time at the Play House and pointed out his friends. He spoke about "*sharing the play dough*" and described the "*lady who talked to me*".

His favourite food is sausages, so he drew a picture of sausages for all his Sure Start friends to share.



Adam's Picture of Sausages

Adam's Mum's View

*"You can see the difference with children **socially** (because of Sure Start). They are more used to mixing with other children. Even for those children who do not have big families at home - they are more used to being with other children once they have been involved with Sure Start. It is excellent for that. It also mixes children and parents - so children are used to mixing with other adults. They see*

their own mums with other children and they are also used to being with other adults.

*There is a **homely atmosphere** in Sure Start activities - and the children get used to being in somewhere that is still a homely atmosphere but it is a step away from home and a step nearer to being in school. The children do learn things as well. For example Adam has learned about **sharing toys** with other children - before coming here he was with me 24 hours a day. They also learn things like sitting down at the table together for **snack time** - they all sit down at the table and I had never got him to do that at home before. You see them sitting together and eating together and learning to share.*

*It prepares them for **school** - they get to know other children - but also they are used to mixing with other adults - because they have had that with Sure Start. Whereas children that have not had that - you can see the mums are really worried about them and if they will settle. So both the children and the parents are benefiting from Sure Start. Children like Adam that have got Sure Start behind them - they hardly say goodbye on the first day at school they are through that door and in.*

*I think it also provides a **community feeling** for parents that are involved in Sure Start. We get to know lots of other local people. All the Sure Start events like the Big Breakfast the Harvest Festival and the Xmas things - all of these bring all the community together - that is what had been lost in the last few years. Think how many, many years ago people all knew their neighbours, a lot of that has been lost - people don't feel that they belong the same as they used to years ago. This now is an area where people do make you feel like you **belong**. It's excellent.*

When you sit down and start to think about all of the things you get out of Sure Start and your children get out of it - mixing with other children, learning to handle life, getting on with each other and learning to care for each other - all this before they start school. I think Sure Start provides from a very early age that sense of belonging - very stable - like a big family. This provides a very strong basis for every child whatever their background is. I think it is what they call it - a Sure Start in life. It should be available everywhere. "

Adam's Gran's View

"Without Sure Start I hate to think of their life with only an 86 year old grandma and 1 uncle working away from York. Their family is the mums, dads, children and staff who have made them feel they belong. Adam was a very timid little boy

before Sure Start activities, now he has lots of little friends, mixes well and is learning songs and stories."

Sure Start Worker's View

"Sometimes Adam comes to the Dads and Kids Breakfast drop-in on a Saturday morning with a friend's dad. His mum has asked if he can come as he has an entirely female immediate family. His mum feels that these sessions give him an opportunity to be part of the men's world and to learn to trust and mix with men and feel at ease in their company.

Adam knows that he goes to school in the afternoons because he wears a uniform. The staff at school are called "teachers". He plays in the morning at Sure Start and the staff are called "the ladies". Adam knows that all the Sure Start drop-ins and trips are part of the same thing because it is the same "ladies" there. So his idea of Sure Start as an organisation is based on the staff he has got to know."

Nursery Staff View

"Since starting nursery in September, Adam has grown in self confidence and self esteem. He approaches familiar adults with ease, and is friendly towards his peers. He is able to share and wait his turn for a favourite toy. Adam has a good vocabulary and is able to share information. He enjoys stories and listens well. He has a good memory and is able to retell familiar stories. He enjoys singing and dancing games."

Ben's Story

Ben is 3 years 4 months old and lives with his mum. He has an eleven year old brother who is at a residential school. Ben regularly attends the Kingswater drop-in sessions with his mum and also goes to the Monday Morning sessions, but less frequently. Ben and his mum and brother have been on several Sure Start outings and Feasts and also attended the Making a Difference course in preparation for him starting school.

Ben's View

A Sure Start worker took a video of Ben at one of the Sure Start Drop-ins and Ben and his mum were also given a camera to record the session.

The video shows a busy drop-in session with several children absorbed in playing on a mat with cars and a train set. Mums and Dads are sitting on chairs around the edge of the mat and at a table. Ben begins by playing with the train set on the mat and then finds a book which he chooses to share with Jo, the Sure Start speech and language worker. He sits with her for several minutes and goes through the book describing to her the tractors, lorries, bulldozers etc that are pictured in it. He then goes to sit at the food table with his mum. The table has bowls containing different types of foods for the children to try. Ben chooses several different types, after asking his mum what some of them are. He then goes back to the play mat with Holly and several other children, although playing individually, he does help Holly by finding some more train track to give her. He then becomes absorbed in his own game, pushing a toy train around the floor. Ben and Holly are given the cameras again and spend some time happily taking photos of each other and other people in the room. The session ends with some foam play. Children sit around a table and foam is squirted on to the table for them to play with. They all play very excitedly. Ben rubs foam into his hair and his face and climbs up onto the table to "swim" through the foam. Ben is smiling and laughing and enjoying himself with all of the other children and their parents who are standing around them.



Ben playing with the train-set



Ben playing with the foam

Ben's Mum's View

Ben's mum talked to a Sure Start worker about Ben's experiences of Sure Start. She explained how Ben liked the messy play activities like glue and painting. She talked about how useful it had been for Ben to learn to play with children of all ages at the Kingswater Drop -in. She went on to describe how Ben does not like to join in with the singing at the drop-in, although he does like to choose a song and sit with the group; however, he does sing the songs when he is at home.

She also talked about how involvement with Sure Start had helped to prepare Ben for school. *"I though it was a good idea them having snack time, as it is preparing them for school. I know it is only one hour and 45 minutes a week, but it still gives them that start of a routine if they don't have that routine at home."* She also

described how Ben had become more used to mixing with other adults, through attending Sure Start sessions *"When he first went he was really shy and he hung around me - but not for too long, Then there were certain adults that he liked - but now he is fine with all of them because he has been going for so long - I think it is nice for them to have other faces apart from their own parents and their immediate family."*

She described Sure Start as *"brilliant"*

Holly's Story

Holly, aged 3 years and 4 months, is the youngest girl in the family. She has 2 older sisters, aged thirteen and twenty-one and 2 brothers aged sixteen and eighteen. She and her mum attend the Kingswater Drop-in regularly with Ben and his mum. She has also been on Sure Start trips and completed the Making a Difference course to prepare for school.

Holly's View

Holly was also at the drop-in session that was videoed by the Sure Start worker. Holly sits at the table and also enjoys trying the different foods available in the bowls. She is eating whilst watching Ben and the other children. She then plays on the mat with the train track for a while alongside several other children and plays by herself on the xylophone. Her mum gives her a camera and she smiles and laughs as she takes photos firstly of her mum and then of others as well. She also enjoys the foam play at the session, although she plays more gently, slowly touching and rubbing the foam around the table.

Holly's Mum's View

Holly's mum wrote an account of Holly's time at Sure Start.

"Sure Start helped Holly learn how to share as at home she didn't have to share her things and she was only used to sharing with Ben. Holly wasn't used to being around so many people / children but after a couple of weeks she was fine. She would tell her brothers and sisters that she was going to "school." She really enjoyed it when we went to the farm. She fed the lambs. She took lots of photos and still looks at them now and tells everybody about it. She really enjoyed feeding all the different animals. If I was to ask Holly what she liked about "school" she would say singing incy wincy spider and play dough.

Since Holly has been involved with Sure Start I would say that she can share with other children. She's not so much as "herself -me" any more. She'll go off and play on her own without me. She's more independent and doing things on her own now without mum.

To me the benefit from attending Sure Start is it learns them how to mix with other children, play together and gives them a little independence at trying new things, a place they learn and is safe for them. It gives parents time to meet other parents and talk and gets both parents and children out of the house for a couple of hours. Since attending Sure Start with Holly she's more confident, more relaxed at the things she does and it was the best thing I could have done for her and myself,"



Holly Singing



Holly at the farm feeding the animals

Holly's Grandma's View

"When I told Holly that we was going to a farm all she went on about was a donkey and people kept saying to her that there wasn't a donkey at the farm. So when she saw that there was, her face was a picture and we could do nothing but laugh."

Keeva's Story

Keeva is aged 4 years and 8 months and lives at home with her mother and 2 year old sister.

Keeva has been attending the Play Time sessions and the Monday Drop-ins. She has also been on most of the Sure Start trips and to nearly every Clifton Feast. She has also started attending the Dads and Kids breakfast with her dad. She started school September 2004

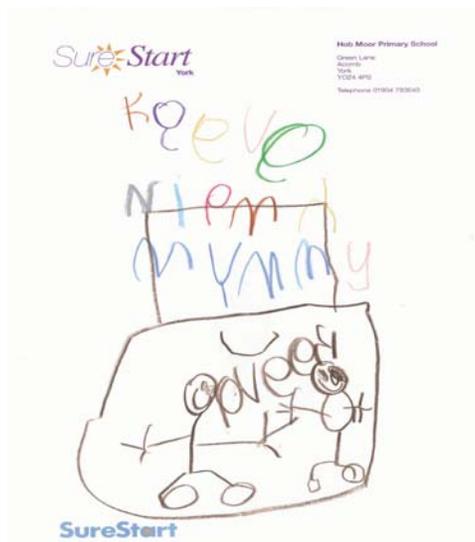
Keeva's View

Keeva looked through some photo's she had taken of Sure Start activities and her friends. She described some toys she had played with at Playtime *"This spider is my favourite toy at playtime. I used to play with it when I was little."* She talked about the Dad's breakfast and explained how much she enjoyed it *"I like going to play with all the other children at the Dad's breakfast. Danny is my Dad's friend he likes the Dad's group because he can eat lots of bacon sandwiches. My Daddy helps Alison in the kitchen. There is a stair gate so children can't go in the kitchen and*

get hurt. I used to go to the nursery with Megan, but I go to a different school now. I enjoy playing with Megan at the Dad's breakfast."



Keeva at the Dad's Breakfast



Ann and Keeva at crèche

Keeva's Mums View

Keeva's mum spoke to one of the Sure Start workers about her experiences of Sure Start, she began by describing the things Keeva had enjoyed about the activities and trips she had been involved with.

"She likes playing in the sand pit. She likes playing outside - when we first started going to the Sure Start session, we didn't have a garden at home and so she really liked that when we were there. She likes going to the Dad's breakfast - and she

really likes it that her dad can go with her, she likes spending time with her dad- although he spends time sitting and eating the bacon sandwiches!

Also been on trips and this has given us the opportunity to go on things that we wouldn't have been able to afford to otherwise. She really liked going to the seaside. It is great that there are things going on during the summer holidays when everything else is closed - otherwise it would be easy to loose contact with people.

I think Sure Start has been good for her - she does get bored quite easily and so Sure Start has given me the opportunity of somewhere to take her. I knew that if there were any problems there was someone there that I could go and speak to. It has also given her the opportunity to do things like play with sand and water - that I wouldn't let her do at home.

I think being at Sure Start has given her the opportunity to mix with other children and that has helped to bring her on more than if she was just at home all day. She settled into school really quickly and I think going to the different Sure Start groups helped her to get used to being with different children and so helped her to settle more quickly. She has got lots of friends.

For me it has been great to know that there is always somewhere there if you have a problem or anything. You can go to talk to someone at Sure Start and not have to make an appointment like you would with the Health Visitor or something - you can go back a couple of days later and talk to them some more about it as well. For me it has been support and having somewhere to go, meeting other people, other parents who are in similar situations and knowing that you are not on your own really.

There has been more information and support available with my youngest child now that Sure Start is here. There is more opportunities for me to do things now. I can take Keeva to school and go off and do courses and things - I am also used to doing things without my children - which is maybe different for other mums who have not been used to leaving their children."

Emily's Story

Emily is aged 3 years and 7 months old. She has 2 older brothers, one aged 7 years and one aged 9 years. The family have been involved with Sure Start since Easter 2003, when Emily was 1 year and eleven months old.

Emily's Mum, Jenny, found out about Sure Start from Homestart. Where she then went to the Foxwood drop-in and registered with the programme.

Emily attends Sure Start activities on a weekly basis; Jenny and Emily attend the Foxwood Drop-in on a Monday or a Wednesday, they sometimes attend both. Jenny is also a parent representative and Emily attends a crèche at the Parent Rep or the Local Action group meetings once a week.

Emily will be starting to go to nursery for half a day a week in January 2005.

Emily's View

Emily was shown photographs of Sure Start activities that she had attended and discussion was prompted around them.

Emily calls the Foxwood drop-in '*toddlers*' she doesn't know what Sure Start is apart from its where her Mummy goes and she doesn't.

The drop-in provides a snack; Emily said that her favourite snack is oranges and strawberries. Emily said that her favourite song at singing time is '*flying saucer*'.

Emily is able to recognise a lot of children and adults on the photographs that she is shown of Sure Start activities that she has attended. When she was asked if she liked one of the workers who was on the photos she said that she did and that she liked doing 'trains' with him.

Emily's Mum's View

Jenny feels that Emily enjoys going to Sure Start activities because she is able to choose which activity she wants to do. She also feels that Emily is independent of her now at the drop-ins. Jenny said that Emily likes having the routine of attending Sure Start activities where she is familiar with other children, parents and workers and confident with them.

Jenny said that she knows Emily is having a good time at a Sure Start activity when she doesn't want to go home. After the activity she knows when Emily is happy because she skips home and tells her brothers about what she has been doing, such as baking buns or showing them the pictures that she has drawn.

Jenny explained that sometimes at the weekend Emily will ask if she is going to 'toddlers' or 'crèche' as it is what she wants to do.

Jenny explained that Emily talks about her experiences of Sure Start activities and connects places with Sure Start activities that she attends. For example when she passes a local pub she connects it with where she caught a coach to a Sure Start trip to the seaside. She also connects coaches that she sees with the trip to the seaside.



Emily at a drop in

Jenny said that the only Sure Start activity that Emily has not liked is the first Hobmoor Drop-in that she attended, because it was busy. Jenny said that Emily clung to her at this session.

Jenny explained that now the reverse is true, Emily likes going to the drop-in to see all her friends, she's never nervous about going to the drop-in or the crèche even if she has not been for a while and the only thing that Emily doesn't like is that it's not every day.

Jenny said that she had noticed a number of changes in Emily since they have been involved with Sure Start. Jenny feels that Emily's confidence has "*gone through the roof*". She has also noticed that she is more independent, can go to the toilet by herself and make her own decisions.

She has a lot of people that she says are her friends and is happy to go to other parents and adults. She also helps her brothers and children because she has seen people helping each other at Sure Start activities.

Jenny discussed how she knew that Sure Start had benefited Emily. She explained the difference between her sons, who hadn't experienced Sure Start and Emily who had. She commented that Emily is more assertive. She was also more prepared for play group '*there were no tears*' which Jenny feels has been through Emily attending the Sure Start crèche. Jenny had also known the playgroup leader through Sure Start which had helped her to settle in.

Jenny explained that Emily has tried healthy snacks that she wouldn't have tried otherwise; Jenny said that she wouldn't have thought to give Emily raw carrot but now she comes and asks for it.

Jenny also said '*everyday . . . I see how she can express herself clearly and confidently*'.

Jenny feels that Sure Start will definitely have an impact on the way that Emily adapts to going to school. She feels that she will be able to cope with the new children because she has attended crèches with different children. She has become more used to a routine and will be able to adapt to the school routine more easily and engage with adults more easily. She feels that the Sure Start crèche has offered Emily opportunities which playgroup alone would not have.

Harry's Story

Harry is 4 years and 4 months old. He has two younger siblings Callum aged 3 years and Reann aged 1 year.

Harry's Mum, Sharon, found out about Sure Start in May/June 2003, when a friend dropped her a note about the child consultation group. Sharon was pregnant with Reann at the time and Harry was 2 years and 10 months old. They went along to the group and found out about the Big Wide Talk project (previously playing with words).

Harry and his family have attended a range of Sure Start activities including: Gateway drop-in; Big Wide Talk; Children's consultation group; Local Action Group crèche; Make the Difference pre-nursery group; Self-confidence group; Arts and crafts to share with younger children; Lotherton Hall Trip; Sponsored Toddle

Harry currently attends half days at nursery school and will start full time in January 2005. He is the youngest child in his cohort.

Harry's View

Harry was shown photographs of some of the Sure Start activities that he had attended and discussion was prompted around them.

Harry had been on a trip to Brimham Rocks (a man made rock formation in North Yorkshire) with the Big Wide Talk Project. He pointed out "*Craig is my best friend*" and the climbing instructor at Brimham Rocks "*The boy helped me that was the best part*".



Harry and the climbing instructor at Brimham Rocks

He also pointed out some aspects of the lunch "*There's my Bob the Builder pack up*" and "*There's the Smarties tube*".

Looking at photographs of the children's consultation group, Harry pointed out people "*There's Robert*" and "*There's Mummy looking at me*". Also laughing at pictures of the parachute that was there on the day "*I went under there*". He also said "*There's the snack*".

Similarly looking at photographs of the Sponsored Toddle Harry pointed out himself "*There's me and my jumper*", "*I played in that park*" and "*Mummy was bending down*".

Harry's Mum's View

Sharon said that prior to her involvement with Sure Start they only went to the park occasionally and *"life was boring"*. She feels that through her involvement with Sure Start she has enjoyed being a mother more.

Sharon said that Harry loved playing in the Sure Start crèche, and that he made lots of new friends and he enjoys making people laugh. She also said that he gets upset if he cannot go to an activity.

She said that since he has been involved with Sure Start he has become more confident and often likes to be in charge of a situation. His concentration is also very good.

Sharon discussed Harry's involvement with the 'Big Wide Talk' project. They have been involved with the group since summer 2003. The children and parents in the group have developed close friendships, and there is a real mix of families that attend. The group has had the opportunity to try some different and unique experiences together.

Sharon explained that a favourite activity for Harry was when the group went climbing to Brimham Rocks. She said that Harry loved the climbing and wanted to bring a rock home for his bedroom. She also said that Harry and Callum still talk about the climbing experience and would often hear them talking about it after they had gone to bed. She also explained that Harry loves torches which have been used a lot in the 'Big Wide Talk' project.

Sharon feels that attending the project has enabled her to listen much more to Harry and his brother and sister *'Now I listen much more and we have to have massive conversations about everything'*.

Sharon also discussed Harry's involvement with the 'Make the Difference' group, which is a group about preparing for nursery. She explained that it was easy for Harry to start nursery, even though he was the youngest in the group. She commented *'It was easy because he knew everyone before he started and he knew the layout'*. Sharon said that the teacher had told her that she relies on Harry a lot. Sharon also feels that Harry's Maths and English are very good.

Sharon's husband took a day off his seven day a week job, to take Harry and Callum on the Sure Start trip to Lotherton Hall. Sharon explained that he was amazed at how people greeted him and the boys. He told Sharon what a special day it had been for him, and Sharon says that Harry and Callum still regularly talk about when Daddy came with them to the park.

Sure Start Worker's View

The following is an extract from 'Giving your child a voice - having fun with play'. It refers to Harry the first time he was involved in a Sure Start activity.

"Over the six week period children became keener to join in with the group and once he even sat down during tidy up time as he knew what was coming. We saw a big difference in this particular child [Harry]. At first he refused to join the group, the next week he hid behind his mum and then following that he sat on his mum's knee and finally he sat with other children, away from his mum. This shows that his confidence within a group situation grew and it encouraged him to become more independent. He also began to choose songs, which he did not do at first"

The worker also commented *'since this his confidence has grown even more and we would not recognise him as the same child'*.

Nursery Teacher's View

The nursery teacher presented a written account of Harry's progress

"I have known Harry for about eighteen months as his nursery teacher. During that time, I have noticed that he is: More self confident in every way. More grown up in the way he communicates with adults. Developing better language skills. More able to concentrate for longer periods. More willing to listen and learn."

Jamie's Story

Jamie is 3 years and 7 months old. He has a younger sister, Megan Leigh, aged 2 years and 5 months.

Jamie's mum, Susan, first heard about Sure Start through her Health Visitor just after Megan Leigh was born. Jamie started attending 'Big Wide Talk' (formerly Playing with Words), when he was 1 year and 6 months old.

The family have attended the following Sure Start activities: Big Wide Talk; Fun for the 2 year olds; Local parent group crèches; Computer course crèche; Gateway drop-in and Oaklands playgroup.

Jamie has been attending the school nursery each morning since September 2004.

Jamie's View

Jamie was shown a photo graph album of the Playing with Words group during a school nursery session.



Jamie and friends

The worker who was consulting with him explained that he was more interested in playing with his friends. The worker observed:

'What was obvious was that Jamie has many friends - some of which were happy to look at the photos with me and delight in looking at what Jamie was doing in the photos! These were his friends from his playing with words group and I felt a real sense of deep friendship among them.'

Jamie's Mum's View

Susan said that Jamie likes 'messy play' and he talks about these activities the most. She says that Jamie is very friendly and likes to help others.

Jamie attended a playgroup for half a day a week until he started nursery. Susan said he settled in well and enjoyed this.

When asked what Sure Start had done for the family Susan said that she would not have gone out of the house at all with the children if Sure Start had not provided any opportunities.

Sure Start Worker's View

Jamie and Susan attended a 5 week Make the Difference course for families whose children are starting nursery the following term. Susan has asked the worker if she could help her deliver subsequent courses to parents.

The worker explained that Jamie started nursery happily. At first he did not like going home from nursery but now he is used to the routine. The nursery teacher thinks that Jamie is delightful and is often telling Susan this fact.

Jamie had his third birthday in the Sure Start playroom at Susan's request. Susan made a cake and decorated it with writing icing which was the first time she had done this for Jamie.

Playing with Words Worker's View

These are some extracts taken from the early days of the Playing with Words project when Jamie first joined the weekly group.

"When Jamie first started at the group it was as if he did not know how to play. He had no speech and raced around the playroom tipping things out. He was excited and challenged by the climbing frame and was keen to master its dimensions on two legs. What was also noticeable was Jamie's delight in other children. From an early age he was obviously pleased when he began to recognise 'friends' coming through the playroom door each week. This is very significant when one thinks that his mum would not have taken him anywhere without Sure Start

Susan stayed every week with her children in the crèche whilst the other parents left them to participate in the adult meeting. Suddenly Susan said she would join the adults and leave the children in the crèche; five months building up trust."

Nursery Worker's View

The nursery teacher presented a written account of Jamie's progress

"I have known Jamie for about 5 months as his nursery teacher. During that time I have noticed: Increased self confidence. Greater willingness to communicate with adults. Increased ability to be co-operative and do the right thing, make the right choices. Greater use of initiative. Increased self confidence. Development in thinking skills and problem solving skills.

These individual stories provide detailed qualitative data about the impact of each child's involvement with Sure Start. Whilst not wanting to make comparisons between the children, it is useful to consider how many of the comments and benefits can be shown to link with some of the Sure Start aims and objectives.

- **Improving Learning**

In many of these stories there are examples of the ways in which children have benefited from the early education and childcare provided by Sure Start. Several parents comment on the ways that children have been well prepared for school. There are also many examples of children having the opportunity to take part in new experiences through activities and trips which will have inevitably helped speech and language development.

- **Improved Social and Emotional Development**

Several parents and workers describe the ways in which the children have developed through involvement with Sure Start. Descriptions are given of children learning to mix with other children and adults, learning to share, becoming more confident and independent. Parents have also spoken about the ways they too have learned and understood more about their child's development.

- **Strengthening Families and Communities**

The ways in which Sure Start has offered support to all of these children and their families is very clear from the stories. Several parents have commented on how much they have valued the support of other parents as well as from the Sure Start staff. It is also clear that Sure Start has helped in developing a sense of community in an area where this had been lost. The friendships that have developed between children and parents have been described. These themes of community and friendship were also evident in the findings from the consulting with children event described earlier.

It is obviously difficult to conclude that the benefits and outcomes that are described in these stories have happened as a direct result of involvement with Sure Start. We do not know how these children would have developed if they had not been involved with the programme, and also we do not know about the many other influences that will have been present in their lives.

However, what is clear from these accounts is that both parents and children have greatly enjoyed the involvement they have had with Sure Start. Many comments have been made to suggest that the stories of both children and parents would have been very different without this involvement.

4.5 Family Case Studies

The Family Case Studies involved consultation with 6 families. As described in the methods section of this report, this is intended to be a long term element of the evaluation. The families involved will be consulted throughout the coming years to develop a greater understanding of the long term impact and benefits of Sure Start. Cameras and treasure boxes have been provided for the families to record their achievements and these will be used to stimulate discussions over the coming months.

For the present evaluation an initial interview was conducted with the mum in each family to obtain background information. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Further details from each of these interviews can be found in Appendix 4. However, the following provides summaries of the background information for each family and current levels of involvement with Sure Start. The names of the children and their families have been changed at the request of those involved.

Amy's Family

Gemma aged 2 and Ryan aged 4

Gemma, Ryan, Amy and her partner live together in Clifton

Amy, Gemma and Ryan attend the Monday Morning group at Burton Stone Community Centre and the Play Time drop-in

Amy is a parent representative

Amy is currently doing some training courses and would like a part-time job when the children start school

Ryan is currently on the waiting list to see a speech and language therapist and will start school nursery in January 2005

Helen's Family

Helen, her husband and 1 year old Tom live in Clifton

Moved to York in December 2003

Helen currently attends the Monday Morning Group at Burton Stone Community Centre and Babbling Babies

Helen previously attended the Breast Feeding Group at Clifton Health Centre

Lisa's Family

Lisa, her husband and their daughter, 16 month year old Charlotte live in Foxwood

Lisa has extended family living in the area

She currently attends Monday Morning drop-in at Foxwood, Small Talk and an Arts and Craft course at the Gateway Centre

Lisa is a parent rep for Foxwood

Lisa would like to do Family Learning courses in the future in Maths and English and is planning to return to work after her 2 year career break

Nina's Family

Nina lives with her partner and her twenty month and fifteen year old daughters and her seventeen year old son, in Foxwood.

She has lived in York for 9 years

Nina attends the Monday and Wednesday drop-ins at Foxwood and the Arts and Craft course.

Ruth's Family

Ruth lives with her husband and 1 year old son Ellis in Foxwood

They moved to York in Summer 2003

Ruth attends the Monday and Wednesday drop-in sessions at Foxwood, the Arts and crafts course and the under 25's group

Ruth has recently completed the course to become a registered childminder

Donna's Family

Nick aged 4 years 11 months, Sam aged 3 and Rob aged 1 year 10 months.

Donna lives with her husband and children in Clifton, having lived previously in other areas of York and other parts of the country.

Nick and Sam attend the school nursery

The family has been involved with a number of Sure Start services: Kingswater Drop-in, Clifton Monday Morning Drop-in, Big Wide Talk, Starting Nursery Course and Wednesday Dad's Group

Donna has recently started part time evening work

Donna emphasised how much she valued the general support of workers and parents involved in Sure Start

These summaries provide background to each family which will be explored further in future years with the planned consultations at 6 monthly intervals.

4.6 Speech and Language Provision

The final part of the evaluation for this year was an examination of the speech and language provision in York.

The evaluation of the speech and language service began with interviews with the Sure Start York speech and language therapist (Jo Bishop) and the head of speech therapy services in York. These interviews were important to provide context to the evaluation of the services and to identify the perspective of the mainstream service providers. Sure Start York had also begun to develop a new model for delivering speech and language services during Autumn 2004. It was important to understand the aims and operation of this in order to evaluate the service.

Mainstream Speech and Language Provision

From the interviews with the Sure Start speech therapist and the head of speech therapy in York, information was collated about the current mainstream provision in York. There are eleven full time equivalent speech therapists in paediatrics within York at the present time. Both respondents identified the main **problem with the mainstream provision** being the number of children who are currently having to wait between six and twelve months to receive specialist speech and language therapy. They described how this can be a particular problem for parents in the Sure Start area, who may need to be persuaded to agree to a referral in the first instance. In addition, there can sometimes be a problem with parents **failing to attend** appointments, which has an obvious impact on the efficiency of the service;

"Parents fail to attend, often because they are not sure of the value of the therapy or do not recognise the need in their child"

In addition, it was recognised that the mainstream provision can be **inflexible** and appointment times offered may not be convenient for parents.

Other drawbacks of the mainstream provision were also identified. It was suggested that the way of working can also put pressure onto the therapist, as a great deal of information needs to be obtained from parents in a short period of time in the clinic setting, an environment in which parents can already be anxious. The other difficulty is that it can be a more **medically based service** where the family is not seen as a whole.

"You [the therapist] are perceived in the expert role as if you know how to do it and they [the parent's] don't know how to do it. It suggests that there is something wrong and you will fix it."

Despite these difficulties, the respondents described the value of mainstream provision for some children. It was suggested that there are **benefits** to seeing an individual therapist for a child with specific language impairment. Also, there can be advantages for a therapist based in a clinic who has all resources to hand.

Monitoring data provided by the head of speech and language therapy demonstrates the extent of the problem concerning waiting list for intervention in York

Time Period	Jan 2004 - Jan 2005
Number of children in Sure Start area referred for speech and language therapy	44
Number of these children who have been offered an initial appointment	8
Number of these children who failed to attend for an initial appointment	2
Number of children who were discharged after the initial appointment	2

Sure Start Speech and Language Provision

Respondents described the current speech and language services being offered by Sure Start York. The specific **aim** of the provision was defined as reducing the number of children referred to mainstream speech and language therapy by 5% and to help children to reach a better standard by the time they reach nursery.

"In nursery [...] the teachers are being faced with 3 and 4 year olds who are talking at the level of an 18 month to 2 year [old], this is what's happening at the moment and they're finding it very hard to cope with, [...]. So that is what Sure Start does, try to get these children into a better shape for nursery"

The Sure Start provision therefore **aims** to increase children's confidence and self-esteem and to give them good play and language skills. These can include basic communication skills such as good listening, turn taking and maintaining eye contact while talking. It was also explained how much of the work is **preventative** and seeks to move away from the medical approach described earlier. Instead the aim is to encourage parents to understand the importance of providing a language rich environment for their children and to move away from the idea that something is wrong or missing.

The Sure Start provision is delivered through a number of key services including Big Wide Talk, Small Talk, and Drop -ins (discussed further below) as well as Babbling Babies and Making a Difference activities. But many of the other services that the children access will have an element of speech therapy as all of

the Sure Start workers are aware of the need to work on developing the children's communication skills. The Sure Start therapist is also currently delivering training to Sure Start workers.

The main **advantage** over a clinic based service is that the therapist works more informally with the families, chatting with them at Sure Start settings or sometimes in their own homes. This has the advantage of improving overall language awareness in the population, which will eventually reduce the number of children requiring specialist intervention. In addition, the upskilling of staff members will eventually have a long term impact on the number of referrals. Once parents have had the informal input from the Sure Start therapist, they may then feel more confident about accessing mainstream services.

Each respondent felt that the main **disadvantage** of the Sure Start provision is that it is can be a very slow and intensive way of working with a small number of families.

Proposed New Model of Speech and Language Provision

Sure Start York decided that action needed to be taken to reduce the number of children currently on the **waiting list** for mainstream speech and language therapy. Working with the head of speech and language in York, a new process was introduced in Autumn 2004 for Sure Start children who are referred to mainstream therapy. Once referred, they will be informed about the different Sure Start groups that are available and will be contacted by the Sure Start speech therapist, who will arrange to meet them. She will identify which groups may be appropriate for them and it is then planned that the children will be re-assessed after nine months to see if specialist therapy is still required.

It is hoped that this will reduce the number of children on the waiting list who have delayed speech and language as these could be addressed in the Sure Start provision. Therefore specialist intervention could be reserved for children with specific impairment. It is anticipated that further evaluation of this new model will be undertaken in the following year (2005), when the impact on those involved can be measured.

In the meantime, assessment was undertaken this year of the benefits of Sure Start speech and language provision looking at 3 specific services: Big Wide Talk; Small Talk and Drop-ins as well as collating data from individual case studies. Evaluation was completed during October / November 2004.

Big Wide Talk Evaluation

The Big Wide Talk is part of a national project that aims to improve communication skills amongst children. It aims to enable parents to influence the services available to their children and to help them spend more time with their young children.

"Big Wide Talk works where people live, provoking talk between children, parents and services in locally specific research partnerships."⁴

It has been run in three groups across the City: Clifton, Hobmoor and Tang Hall. Each weekly session involves presenting children with a stimulating environment, which aims to provoke talk and shared experiences amongst parents, children and practitioners. The project itself is subject to ongoing national evaluation; however, for the purposes of the Sure Start York evaluation, a small scale, stand alone piece of evaluation was undertaken. The aim of this was to identify the benefits of involvement with Big Wide Talk for parents and children.

Summary of Big Wide Talk Evaluation Findings

Evaluation of this service was completed through self completion surveys distributed via Jo Bishop (Sure Start speech and language therapist) to parents who had attended the groups. Parents were given freepost envelopes to return completed surveys anonymously to QA.

A total of 8 surveys were distributed and unfortunately only 4 were returned. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions from such a small number of responses, however the findings do provide some indication of the benefits parents and children have gained from attending the group.

There were 2 first time mums who replied to the survey and the others had more than one child. The ages of their children ranged from twelve to nineteen months.

Parents had been attending the group for between 2 - 10 months.

Parents were asked how they had first become **aware** of the Big Wide Talk group. A range of responses were given including through invitation or through other Sure Start activities such as First Steps and Babbling Babies. Reasons for joining the group were because it sounded interesting and exciting and because it provided an opportunity for their child to play with other children.

⁴ See Big Wide Talk website for further information
<http://www.playingwithwords.org/index.html>

Respondent's **expectations** of the group were as follows:

"Learning more about my children"

"A chance to get out with my son to meet others"

"To meet other mums and do new things with my son"

"An understanding of my children growing up and what they learn and how they develop"

And all felt that these expectations had been met and described themselves as **"very satisfied"** with the group overall.

When asked to describe the **best aspect of the group**, one parent described how she had *"learned more about her children and how they interact with others"*. The advantage of being able to try new activities that might not be available at home (such as messy play) and learning about the child's speech were also discussed. Only one person was able to identify a problem with the group and she mentioned the difficulty of not being able to hear properly in the sports hall.

Parents were clearly able to identify the ways in which they themselves had **benefited** from the group;

"We are more relaxed about mess as a family and we seem closer together. We all 'play' a lot more and as adults we watch and listen to the children more"

"I get to see how my son reacts to the activities learning his likes and dislikes more and I have met new people"

"I think I've learned to speak out more"

"I understand my children more"

Parents also described the **benefits** their children had gained;

"The children have close friends from the group and are more adventurous- especially the messy play"

"He gets to play with kids his age and do things he doesn't do at home"

"He is more able to interact better with other children"

"They are more relaxed around other people"

Parents also provided general comments about the Sure Start York speech and language service;

"It has been wonderful having access to a speech and language therapist at the Big Wide Talk sessions. We are able to ask about worries with the children, for example when our daughter was regressing and making baby babbles even though she is 2 years old- copying her brother"

"I have learnt that listening to my son is just as important as talking "at" him to help him communicate"

Small Talk Evaluation

This project is a group that ran for a period of 6 months for mums with babies aged from 9-12 months. The group met once per month and the group aims to cover developmental changes in the child and communication skills in babies. The group aims to raise parental awareness about the ways to encourage speech and language in their babies.

Summary of Small Talk Evaluation Findings

Evaluation of this survey was again undertaken through self completion surveys distributed by Jo, with freepost envelopes provided for anonymous returns. The response rate was again disappointing with only 3 returns from the 8 surveys distributed.

Responses came from 2 first time mums, and one mum with 3 children.

One parent had been informed about the group through her health visitor and the others received invitations to attend sent through the post.

Parent's **reasons** for becoming involved were either to get out of the house, to do something different or to meet new people. When asked what they **expected** to gain from attending the group, parents described hoping to meet new people and for their children to make new friends. All felt that these expectations had been met and were again **very satisfied** with the group;

Parents commented that the **best aspects** of the group were *"children mixing"*, *"speaking to other parents with small children"* and *"gaining ideas of how to interact with children on a fun level"*

The only suggestion for **improvement** was that the group could be held more regularly, maybe twice per month.

Respondents also felt that they had **benefited** from attending Small Talk, not only by meeting new people, but one mum also commented;

"It was the first mum and baby group I have been to and it increased my confidence so I now go to lots of other groups"

The benefits to the children of increasing confidence and mixing and playing with others were also noted.

General comments about Sure Start speech and language provision also demonstrates their satisfaction with the service;

"The 'Small Talk' group was a great experience and more people should try things like this, it is fantastic"

"I think more people should become involved with groups like this"

Drop-in Evaluation

The Sure Start speech therapist is also available for parents to meet informally at some of the Sure Start Drop-in sessions. These sessions are run twice a week in both Clifton and Hobmoor and all parents are able to attend with their children.

This provides an opportunity for parents to ask questions about speech and language development generally and also about specialist speech therapy intervention. This provision can be useful for raising parental awareness and understanding about communication.

Summary of Drop-in Evaluation Findings

The Sure Start speech therapist distributed self completion surveys to parents who she had supported at the drop-in sessions. Freepost envelopes were again provided and 7 out of 8 surveys were returned.

Survey responses were received from 3 first time mums, 2 mums with 2 children and 2 who had 3 children.

Two of the parents described being referred to a **mainstream** speech and language therapy service. One felt that she had received enough information at this referral stage and understood what therapy would entail; she has just had the first consultation. The other mum felt she was not given enough information when her son was referred and particularly needed more detail about dyslexia. He is still waiting to see a therapist.

All parents spoke very **positively** of the input they had received from talking to the Sure Start therapist at the drop-in;

"Being able to talk about your worries and know someone is able to help"

"Jo is always happy to give advice - and I have become more confident"

"Following our conversations (with Jo) I felt more confident about knowing how to help my child, .I know he is ok!"

"Jo is always on hand if you have a query. I think the service provided is very beneficial"

"I had never come across any information on how to help develop your child's speech or letter sounds until I spoke to Jo, who gave me simple and easy ways to encourage my child"

The comments clearly show how parents were reassured by these conversations and also the value of the informal nature of the setting.

Case Studies

In addition to the evaluation of individual services, it was decided that it would be useful to collect more detailed qualitative data from a small number of families. Jo Bishop agreed to complete case studies with three families who had had extensive involvement with the Sure Start speech and language service.

Case Study 1

Jack is from a family of 4 children with ages ranging from 2 to 6 years. He was referred to mainstream speech and language therapy by a Sure Start worker as he had unclear speech. However, he had to wait for 1 year before having an initial assessment and is shortly beginning therapy. Although his mum was happy for him to be referred for help, she was not given any information about what this would entail and was unclear about why she needed to wait for so long.

Whilst waiting for his mainstream assessment, Jack did have input from the Sure Start speech and language service, through home visits from the therapist. His mum explained how useful this had been as she was offered advice about how best to help him and she felt that Jack had enjoyed the sessions as well. She described how much he had benefited from this intervention.

Case Study 2

A family of 4 children where the older daughter 8 year old Helen and 3 year old twins, Carly and Mark had all been referred for speech and language therapy.

Helen had been referred by her Health Visitor when she was 3 years old and had to wait 3 months for her first appointment. Although recognising that she needed help, Helen's mum explained that she was upset and disappointed when her daughter was referred. She was not given any information about what the therapy would involve and had no idea how to help her daughter at home. Helen had regular therapy for one year. Helen's mum was pregnant during some of this time so she found attending clinics difficult and explained that home visits would have been useful. She also commented that she did not feel the therapy had been helpful.

Three months ago, the twins were referred for therapy by the Sure Start worker as they both have unclear vocabulary. This time, their mum was given more information about the process of referral and welcomed the fact that specialist help would be available. The input of Jo, the Sure Start speech therapist was obvious as the mum spoke about how useful she had found the home visits. She explained how Jo had played games with the children which *"helped them to understand words."* She described how the home visits had helped the children to feel more confident with Jo and also how being in their own environment had made the sessions more beneficial for them. She was able to identify real progress in the language development of both of the twins.

Case Study 3

Ben, a 3 year old boy with 1 older sister. Ben's mum described the intensive support she and Ben had received from the Sure Start speech therapist. She described how she recognised that Ben needed help because of his very limited language and went on to describe how much she valued the input from Jo through home visits and the drop-in sessions. She described the many games that had been used with Ben to help stimulate his communication skills. She explained how much enjoyment and encouragement she and her son had received from these sessions;

"It has made a huge difference to my son's ability to express himself"

She went on to praise the informality of the drop in sessions, where the children could be seen in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere;

"The children could play openly without feeling they were being watched or assessed"

Her final comments about the service summarise its value;

"I feel that without this service, my son would not be at the stage he is now and I would be a very anxious mother! This service, I feel plays an important role in our community."

Summary of Speech and Language Evaluation Findings

- The baseline figures from the monitoring data describe the current situation concerning waiting lists for mainstream provision in York
- Comparison will be made against these figures next year allowing any changes to be noted
- The new model of speech and language provision developed by Sure Start York aims to decrease the numbers of children on the waiting list for referral to specialist speech and language therapy
- The small number of responses from users of the Sure Start Big Wide Talk, Small Talk and Drop-in services make it difficult to present clear and robust findings
- However, respondents were able to identify the benefits they had received from using the Sure Start speech and language provision
- Parents described how they now have a clearer understanding of their child's progression and speech and language development
- The social benefits to both children and parents of attending the groups were also evident
- Parents described the benefits of having a speech and language therapist available to chat with informally, through home visits and at the drop-ins
- It was also clear that parents were reassured and more confident as a result of involvement with the services
- Finally, many parents had a greater understanding and acceptance of speech therapy as a result of the Sure Start interventions
- Further evaluation is required to collect the views of a larger number of parents concerning the Sure Start speech and language services

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This evaluation has demonstrated the many areas in which Sure Start York is working successfully and the benefits, impacts and outcomes that are already being identified for the parents and children within the community.

The interviews with partners, staff and parents have demonstrated a number of key themes. There has been considerable **praise** for the effectiveness of the programme so far. It is clear that there is **strong partnership** working amongst the majority of those partners, parents and staff members involved with the programme. A recurring theme throughout the report has been the very real sense of parental engagement, participation and ownership of the programme and many of the services that are being delivered.

The Programme Manager, staff and partners have obviously invested a great deal of time to enable this parent participation to be so successful, and the benefits to all involved are evident. Many of the participants in the evaluation spoke of the mutual respect between all members of the Partnership Board, and the range of ways in which parents were contributing to the programme development were very clear.

Having established these good working relationships, it was however suggested that it may be useful for some partners to now move beyond attending meetings to taking a greater share of the responsibility for the work of the board.

The evaluation has also led to a number of small areas of **concern** to be identified. Although some staff described the period of adjustment needed when taking up their new role within Sure Start; some concerns were also expressed about the difficulties of balancing the many competing demands on staff time due to the diverse nature of the roles. Although consultation for this evaluation involved only a small number of staff, this may be an area the programme would like to consider further in the future. Whilst emphasising the value of multi-agency working, some staff identified potential tensions with mainstream service providers due to the different ways of working and the additional funding in Sure Start.

The evaluation was undertaken during a period of transition for the programme as new **team leaders** were appointed just before the consultation with staff and partners. Several of the respondents suggested that it would be important to review the impact of these new roles to ensure the effective management structure is maintained. Monitoring this is also important in the light of the small number of comments that were made about **potential tensions** and cliques

developing between parents in Clifton and Hobmoor. It will be important to ensure that the programme maintains a strong sense of cohesion and unity as it grows in the future.

The **barriers** placed on the delivery of services due to the lack of appropriate venues was also mentioned. Difficulties were also described due to the lack of crèche staff.

Several participants described the extent to which a diverse range of families are currently **accessing services**. However, it would be useful to explore this in further through the analysis of monitoring data in the evaluation next year. There was some recognition that additional attention may need to be given to the needs of particular groups, to ensure they are able to access services. The groups identified were; teenage parents, pregnant mums, ethnic minority families and children / parents with disabilities.

All aspects of the evaluation have provided evidence of the way that Sure Start is working to increase a **sense of community** within the local area. Several interviews with parents and staff make reference to this. The development of new friendships amongst children as well as parents was clear also from the consultation with children, the Children's Stories and the speech and language service evaluation. Indeed, amongst parent using the services that were evaluated, the need to make new friends was one of the key factors motivating people to become involved with the service.

Evidence of more specific **benefits** of Sure Start can be found from the Children's Stories and the speech and language evaluation. Parents clearly explained how Sure Start had helped prepare the children for school, how they had noted improvements in their children's confidence and independence. They described how the children had learned to mix with others adults and children and spoke of the friendships they and their children had made through Sure Start. Parents welcomed the opportunity to be involved in activities and trips that they would not otherwise have accessed and talked about how they now had a greater understanding of their child's development.

Evaluation of the speech and language provision has also highlighted how much parents appreciated the informal, welcoming nature of these services. Parents explained how this had helped them to understand more about speech and language therapy and the development of their child's language and communication skills. It is anticipated that further evidence of the impacts and outcomes of involvement with Sure Start will be gathered through the collection of Family Case Studies data in the next year of evaluation.

5.2 Recommendations

The programme has obviously made great progress in empowering parents to be involved at all levels. It will be important to ensure that this is sustained as the next cohort of parents become eligible to be involved

It may be useful to review the development of the team leader role to ensure that it has had a positive effect on the programme management structures. It may also be useful to consider ways in which both patches within the programme can be linked together to minimise any future tensions and divisions.

Further consideration could be given to the issue of diverse staff roles and workloads. It may be that wider consultation is required to determine if this is a common area of concern amongst staff.

Analysis of monitoring data could be undertaken to provide a clearer understanding of the reach of the programme. It may be useful to consider reach, uptake of services and frequency of use to enable any gaps in provision to be identified.

Analysis of monitoring data may also provide evidence of the extent to which particular groups identified during the evaluation (teenage parents, pregnant mums, ethnic minority families and children / parents with disabilities) are accessing services.

Consideration could be given to the suggestions for future service development mentioned in the report; activities just for children such as tumble tots; activities for parents and children together; services to support emotional well being and nurturing such as stress management, relaxation and personal development; toy library and books for children.

Further evaluation is required of the speech and language provision to review the introduction of the new model of service delivery. It will be important to ensure more consultation is undertaken with a greater number of services users and it will be useful to review monitoring data on waiting lists for, and numbers of referrals to specialist speech and language therapy.

The evaluation next year should include a repeat user satisfaction survey, to track progress against the initial consultation in 2002. This survey could also include a review of particular services. The Family Case Studies evaluation will also be ongoing throughout the next year of evaluation.

The programme may also want to undertake evaluation next year to consider progress towards achieving specific Sure Start targets.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 : Attendance Data

Appendix 2 : Monitoring Data

Appendix 3: Project evaluation summaries

Appendix 4 : Family Case Studies Data

Appendix 5 : Children's consultation event photographs and drawings

Appendix 1: Attendance Data

ATTENDANCE AT ACTIVITIES: JUNE 2004

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NO. OF ATTENDANCES	NO. OF SESSIONS THIS MONTH
Acomb Lag	Local Action Group	18	1
Ante-natal Group - Foxwood	Support and advice group for expectant Mums	5	2
Babbling Babies	A new sessions for Mums and babies under 1yr	14	3
Big Wide Talk - Acomb	Giving parents the opportunity to observe children in varying play situations	66	3
Big Wide Talk - Clifton	Giving parents the opportunity to observe children in varying play situations	92	5
Breastfeeding Peer Support Group	Peer Supporters' Group - The Coconut Club - Monthly meeting	12	1
Clifton Feast	Summer Feast, Burton Stone Community Centre 21/6/04	82	1
Clifton Lag	Local Action Group	19	1
Clifton Trip	Monk Park Farm 14/6/04	64	1
Craft Group - Hob Moor	Small workshop.	48	4
Dads' and Kids' Breakfast	A monthly chance for Dads and kids to have breakfast and lots of fun	19	1
Early Start - Acomb	Short course	10	2
Family Learning/Fun with Family Cooking	Cookery sessions (small groups) at The Gateway Centre	24	2
First Steps - Clifton	A gentle introduction to Sure Start for new parents in Clifton	9	1
Foxwood Dads' Group	A series of IT courses for Dads in Acomb Area, with food & chat	8	4
Foxwood Drop In - Monday	Drop-in at Foxwood Community Centre - fun, food and play.	95	4
Foxwood Drop In - Wednesday	Drop-in at Foxwood Community Centre - fun, food and play.	68	3 + 2 Trips - see Foxwood Trips
Foxwood Trip	Lotherton Hall 2/6/04	55	1

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Foxwood Trip	Monk Park Farm 9/6/04	34	1
Gateway Drop In	A Multi-Agency run Drop in at the Gateway Centre, with activities, fun and snacks	31	4
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NO. OF ATTENDANCES	NO. OF SESSIONS THIS MONTH
Kingswater Drop In	Play time, healthy snack and organised activities for children.	96	4
Make the Difference - Acomb	Pre-Nursery sessions for children and parents in Acomb, to make the transition to school easier	49	3
Make the Difference - Clifton	Pre-Nursery sessions for children and parents in Clifton, to make the transition to school easier	70	4
Monday Mornings	Drop-in at Burton Stone Community Centre. Free crèche for children and activities for adults available e.g. cooking or glass painting	89	3 + Trip - see Clifton Trips + Feast - see Clifton Feast
Paint & Pizza	A Dads' group with a family/child centred ethos and social element	39	5
Parent Board Members & Reps Meetings	Training and development sessions	25	1
Playtime	At Clifton Family Centre. Parent and toddler group suitable from newborn. Children can play, do arts and crafts and sing	68	4
Post Natal Depression Consultation Group	Monthly consultation meeting	4	1
Post Natal Group - Acomb	Support and advice for new Mums	36	5
Railway Museum Play	Short course (6 weeks) at Railway Museum	36	2
Time & Space in Pregnancy	Ante-natal group - Clifton.	12	4
Under 25's - Acomb	Support to young parents.	16	3
York Breastfeeding Mums	Support and advice for breastfeeding Mums in Acomb	29	5

N.B. Not all family learning activities are included in our statistics at present due to different methods of recording.

ATTENDANCE AT ACTIVITIES: AUGUST 04

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NO. OF ATTENDANCES	NO. OF SESSIONS THIS MONTH
Big Wide Talk - Acomb	Giving parents the opportunity to observe children in varying play situations	55	3
Clifton Backies	Holiday Activity on Clifton Backies	6	1
Clifton Trips	2 Summer Trips for Clifton Families - Scarborough and Filey	130	2
First Contact	First contact with families at Registration	63	N/A
Foxwood Trips	2 Summer Trips for Foxwood Families - Bridlington & Filey	104	2
Gateway Drop In	A Multi-Agency run Drop in at the Gateway Centre, with activities, fun and snacks	7	1
Joint Patch Picnic	Joint Patch event at York RL Grounds	65	1
Messy Play	Holiday Activity at Burton Stone Community Centre	30	1
Picnic in the Park	Holiday Activity at Homestead Park	16	2
Playtime	At Clifton Family Centre. Parent and toddler group suitable from newborn. Children can play, do arts and crafts and sing	100	4
Photography & Video Workshop	Workshop for Parent Reps and Parent Board Members	25	1
Post Natal Group - Acomb	Support and advice for new Mums	9	1
Under 25's - Acomb	Support to young parents.	4	2
Visit	Home visit to family	29	N/A

N.B. Not all family learning activities are included in our statistics at present due to different methods of recording.

ATTENDANCE AT ACTIVITIES: OCTOBER 2004

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NO. OF ATTENDANCES	NO. OF SESSIONS THIS MONTH
Acomb LAG	Local Action Group	16	1
Ante-natal Group - Foxwood	Support and advice group for expectant Mums	12	3
Babbling Babies	A new sessions for Mums and babies under 1yr	24	3
Big Wide Talk - Acomb	Giving parents the opportunity to observe children in varying play situations	42	2
Big Wide Talk - Clifton	Giving parents the opportunity to observe children in varying play situations	54	3
Clifton LAG	Local Action Group	17	1
Craft Group - Hob Moor	Small workshop.	53	3
Dads' and Kids' Breakfast	A monthly chance for Dads and kids to have breakfast and lots of fun	20	1
Family Learning/Fun with Family Cooking	Cookery sessions (small groups) at The Gateway Centre	62	4
First Steps - Clifton	A gentle introduction to Sure Start for new parents in Clifton	16	2
Foxwood Drop In - Monday	Drop-In at Foxwood Community Centre - fun, food and play.	80	3
Foxwood Drop In - Wednesday	Drop-In at Foxwood Community Centre - fun, food and play.	75	3
Gateway Drop In	A Multi-Agency run Drop-In at the Gateway Centre, with activities, fun and snacks	38	3
Kingswater Drop In	Play time, healthy snack and organised activities for children.	54	2
Monday Mornings	Drop-In at Burton Stone Community Centre. Free crèche for children and activities for adults available e.g. cooking or glass painting	129 Including Big Breakfast	4
Paint & Pizza	A Dads' group with a family/child	32	4

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	centred ethos and social element		
Playtime	At Clifton Family Centre. Parent and toddler group suitable from newborn. Children can play, do arts and crafts and sing	73	4
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL NO. OF ATTENDANCES	NO. OF SESSIONS THIS MONTH
Post-natal Group	Support and advice for new Mums	16	4
Self Esteem Group	Small, multi-agency group of parents working on 'how to build a more confident me'	20	2
Time & Space in Pregnancy	Ante-natal group - Clifton	2	1
Under 25's - Acomb	Support to young parents	12	2
York Breastfeeding Mums	Support and advice for breastfeeding Mums in Acomb	16	4

N.B. Not all Family Learning activities are included in our statistics at present due to different methods of recording.

Appendix 2 : Monitoring Data

REACH REPORT MARCH 2004

Month	Total number of families registered	Families seen (Existing)	Families seen (New)	Total families seen	Families seen as % of total registered
January 04	246	109	31	140	57%
February 04	264	133	33	166	63%
March 04	293	155	40	195	67%

Month	Children registered (under 4)	Children seen (Existing)	Children seen (New)	Total children seen	Children seen with disabilities/ special needs	Children seen as % of total under 4s registered
January 04	265	107	26	133	6	50%
February 04	291	129	34	163	9	56%
March 04	325	154	49	203	8	62%

Children seen by age range

Month	Under 1	Over 1 but under 2	Over 2 but under 3	Over 3 but under 4	Total
January 04	32	39	44	18	133
February 04	40	40	54	29	163
March 04	53	45	60	45	203

Month	Pregnant women seen	Live births	Babies under 2 months registered	Babies under 2 months seen
January 04	8	4	9	3
February 04	9	5	16	6
March 04	9	2	19	10

REACH REPORT April 2004

Month	Total number of families registered	Families seen (Existing)	Families seen (New)	Total families seen	Families seen as % of total registered
February 04	264	133	33	166	63%
March 04	293	155	40	195	67%
April 04	306	125	15	145	47%

Month	Children registered (under 4)	Children seen (Existing)	Children seen (New)	Total children seen	Children seen with disabilities/special needs	Children seen as % of total under 4s registered
February 04	291	129	34	163	9	56%
March 04	325	154	49	203	8	62%
April 04	342	129	20	149	6	46%

Children seen by age range

Month	Under 1	Over 1 but under 2	Over 2 but under 3	Over 3 but under 4	Total
February 04	40	40	54	29	163
March 04	53	45	60	45	203
April 04	35	33	49	32	149

Month	Pregnant women seen	Live births	Babies under 2 months registered	Babies under 2 months seen
February 04	9	5	16	6
March 04	9	2	19	10
April 04	8	4	11	9

REACH REPORT August 2004

Month	Total number of families registered	Families seen (Existing)	Families seen (New)	Total families seen	Families seen as % of total registered
APRIL 04	306	125	15	145	47%
MAY 04	317	145	15	163	51%
JUNE 04	329	98	12	110	33%

Month	Children registered (under 4)	Children seen (Existing)		Children seen (New)		Total children seen	Children seen with disabilities/special needs	Children seen as % of total under 4s registered
		No.	%	No.	%			
APRIL 04	342	129	38%	20	6%	149	6	44%
MAY 04	359	129	36%	19	5%	148	6	41%
JUNE 04	377	149	40%	16	4	165	12	44%

Children seen by age range					
Month	Under 1	Over 1 but under 2	Over 2 but under 3	Over 3 but under 4	Total
APRIL 04	35	33	49	32	149
MAY 04	34	37	56	26	153
JUNE 04	34	42	54	35	165

Month	Pregnant women seen	Live births	Babies under 2 months registered	Babies under 2 months seen
APRIL 04	8	5	16	6
MAY 04	6	1	12	8
JUNE 04	7	0	11	7

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REACH REPORT August 2004

Month	Total number of families registered	Families seen (Existing)	Families seen (New)	Total families seen	Families seen as % of total registered
JUNE 04	329	98	12	110	33%
JULY 04	342	95	11	106	31%
AUGUST 04	360	65	18	83	24%

Month	Parents registered	Parents seen (Existing)		Parents seen (New)		Total Parents seen	Parents seen with disabilities/special needs	Parents seen as % of total registered
		No.	%	No.	%			
JUNE 04	535	163	30%	25	5%	188	7	35%
JULY 04	551	158	28%	23	4%	181	7	33%
AUGUST 04	574	125	22%	28	5%	153	7	27%

Month	Children registered (under 4)	Children seen (Existing)		Children seen (New)		Total children seen	Children seen with disabilities/special needs	Children seen as % of total under 4s registered
		No.	%	No.	%			
JUNE 04	377	149	40%	16	4	165	12	44%
JULY 04	390	146	37%	14	4	160	12	41%
AUGUST 04	401	102	25%	20	5	122	17	30%

Children seen by age range					
Month	Under 1	Over 1 but under 2	Over 2 but under 3	Over 3 but under 4	Total
JUNE 04	34	42	54	35	165
JULY 04	31	41	43	45	160
AUGUST 04	29	31	33	29	122

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Month	Pregnant women seen	Live births	Babies under 2 months registered	Babies under 2 months seen
JUNE 04	7	0	11	7
JULY 04	5	3	16	8
AUGUST 04	5	1	6	4

Appendix 3 : Project Evaluation Summaries

Early In-House Evaluations of Sure Start York Activities October/ November 2004

Activity: Babbling Babies	Lead Worker: Lynda Widdison	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a relatively new group and people regularly move on. This term the focus has been on building the group up again. • Verbal evaluation with last terms parents. • Activities are planned as a group and there is discussion about how they went. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone enjoys the small quiet group for the babies and that has continued. • Moving on to other groups is an issue that has been raised. It will require nurturing people through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning to do termly evaluations of what people like/ don't like about the group and what they would like for the following term. • Exit evaluations planned for when people move on.

Activity: Big Breakfast	Lead Worker: Alison Jones	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed at Local Action Groups. • Included in Monday Mornings evaluation the following week. • Discussed in staff patch meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of food offered has been extended. • No ride-on toys allowed in hall during Big Breakfast. • Layout of room altered to make bigger identified space for children's activity. • Parents running session themselves when no staff available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be discussed at LAGs in December and parents want to run their own Big Breakfast sessions. • Patch meeting to discuss possibility of making sure more groups are invited rather than the usual Monday Morning group.

Activity: Big Wide Talk	Lead Worker: Lynda Widdison	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of a larger project evaluated separately. Parents can also influence the activities of this particular group. Activities are evaluated using "splats" which are provided by the project. Parents and all workers are involved in the discussions when these are completed. Children's views and reactions are at the centre of the approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group is constantly planning, observing, reflecting and reviewing what they are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going - as described.

Activity: Craft Group	Lead Worker: Claire Morton	Location: Hob Moor/ Foxwood
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents continually evaluate the group and discuss what they want to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was decided that an adult worker was needed for this group. Workers assist with the acquisition of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the children's group through questionnaires and consulting with children.

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Activity: Dad's Group	Lead Worker: Norman Lynch	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from users - verbal and questionnaire • Staff debriefs • Consultation with Fathers not attending to determine reasons • Networking with Sure Starts in other areas • Supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service met the need of those fathers defined as "hard to reach" yet the limitations of space within the venue did not allow for the service to be too widely publicised resulting in fewer attendees than staff would have liked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written report in progress. To be based on client feedback and staff experience.

Activity: Dad's and Kids Breakfast	Lead Worker: Alison Jones	Location: Clifton (Monthly Sats.)
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group started as a pilot. Evaluated after first four sessions to see if they wanted to continue. • Dads are frequently asked informally if they would like changes and what they do/ don't like. • Staff debrief after each session. • Discuss at Dads Workers Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sausage sandwiches as well as bacon. • Small chunks of cheese, small sausage, chopped bacon for smallest children. Jam and butter on the table so children can attempt to do their own. • One room set aside for eating - laid out as café - no food taken elsewhere. • Activities planned for each session open to Dads outside Sure Start age and area (Clifton Family Centre). • "We have been unable to respond to the every week request!" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dads want to write up story of Paint n Pizza group and see Dads Breakfast as part of that. • Review with Dads Workers Forum in January 2005 as part of study of projects working with Dads and as part of move to collaborate with mainstream services (possibly Children's Services) that more Dads can be included/ reach.

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Activity: Feasts, Trips, Summer Activities, etc.	Lead Worker: Alison Jones	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each project/ activity is evaluated by staff at the patch meeting following the activity. • "What did you like/ not like" sheets are available at all groups. People asked for their views on the day. • Discussed at LAGs - reports from staff and parents. • Attendance lists are studied to identify take up (new families attending, numbers of Dads involved etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasts - a lot of consultation about the menu choice. • Trips - following LAG discussion 2 seaside trips organised summer 2004 rather than one inland. • Messy Play - more of these sessions planned. • Summer programme planned to include events enjoyed the previous year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January LAG - Christmas programme be discussed to see if plans have met expectations.

Activity: First Steps	Lead Worker: Joan Fernandez	Location: Hob Moor/ Foxwood
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following discussion with colleagues the time has been used infrequently but significantly to allow new users to Sure Start to meet with one or two workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have looked at managing the time differently. • To make the room available to other users but for First Steps to take priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be agreed.

Activity: First Steps	Lead Worker: Linda Boddy	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation by workers weekly following each session. • Evaluations by parents verbally weekly and in writing towards the end of the set of sessions attended. • End of term collective reflection and re focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with a small group has been a positive experience. • In a nurturing environment relationships have been built with families who have expressed their needs in response to life events such as bereavement, financial difficulties, depression, housing, relationships, loneliness and isolation, nutrition, crime, drugs and alcohol. • Change of time. Need to clarify start and finish times as families would wait to catch staff when others had left. • To continue to offer this group to parents regardless of the age of their children. • Parental evaluation was they had made friends and moved on to other activities; one parent went back to work. Families left and walked home together. • Mainstream Health Visitor involved, values this as a positive experience for families. • Ann and Sid working and bringing new skills and enthusiasm. • Would like more workers to be involved in the sessions. • Need to discuss some new ideas and hope to continue to offer a venue for new people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue as described. • Early days for this session which as it offered to a group of parents regardless of their child's age changes frequently needs are addressed.

York Sure Start Annual Evaluation Report - Year 2

Activity: Foxwood Monday Morning Drop-in	Lead Worker: Joan Fernandez	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers attending collated. Meetings with parent representatives to discuss progress. Talking with those who attend the sessions. Staff discussion at the end of drop-ins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents became involved in planning activities. Discussions around what was needed at each Local Action Group. Introduction of parent representatives at the drop-in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to meet with parent representatives. Talk to parents.
Activity: Foxwood Wednesday Morning Drop-In	Lead Worker: Claire Morton	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An issue came up about planning the day and that we needed different things. We now have regular planning meetings with a group of parents to plan the play within the drop-in. This is working really well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like to do some consulting with children about the drop-in. Planning to consult with parents about rules within the drop-in.
Activity: Gateway Drop-in	Lead Worker: Irene Mason	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at how we evaluate and how we involve parents in the process. Parents want to do this termly. Multi-agency staff meet monthly and plan and review past activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have agreed next meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be agreed.

York Sure Start Annual Evaluation Report - Year 2

Activity: Kingswater Drop-in	Lead Worker: Sid	Location: Kingswater Centre
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff evaluation of sessions including activities provided, food provided, health promotion/ education and general feelings about the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 September 2004 onwards - redesign of drop-in to incorporate lunch, play experiences and access to health/ promotional advice. Changes quite new but initial verbal responses to food, play etc are extremely positive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to ask the parents and children to evaluate changes - good things, not so good etc.

Activity: Making A Difference	Lead Worker: Joan Fernandez	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of numbers attending. Discussion with groups at the end of each course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course content changed to reflect parent feedback from previous groups. Group wanted to carry on meeting. Craft group set up initially with Bright Ideas funding. Parents interested in starting a coffee morning. Working more with nursery teachers. The pre-nursery children are managed in school rather than in the Sure Start crèche. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will continue to collate attendance details. Continue to seek opinions from those attending the course.

York Sure Start Annual Evaluation Report - Year 2

Activity: Making A Difference	Lead Worker: Linda Boddy	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation by workers weekly following the sessions. • Parental evaluation weekly and at the end of the sessions (5 or 6 weeks) in writing with support. • Feedback from nursery/ school every week. • Evaluation report was presented to the school at the end of term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with nursery staff, health visitors and school nursery nurse take place every term to discuss any concerns about the children. • Assessment of each child prior to commencing nursery. Referrals made as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue as described.

Activity: Monday Mornings	Lead Worker: Alison Jones	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each session is evaluated by parents with their parent representatives deciding whether or not to fill in an evaluation sheet. • Each session debriefed by staff attending. • Reports made to LAG about activity each month and parents write a piece for newsletter for each publication. • Staff discuss sessions at Patch Meetings and Team Update meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have decided to be more involved in planning activities for each term and have begun to consult more with each other. They are becoming more directly involved in arranging visits and craft activities. • The children's group is no longer seen as a crèche but as a group in its own right "Magic Mondays" with its own specially planned timetable of activities. • 4 Volunteer roles were identified and descriptions have been written. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review as part of 'Healthy Eating' course which has run as part of this activity. • Parent representatives hope to get next term's activities drafted out so they can be discussed before the end of term. • Staff are planning to look at how new families are encouraged to attend and how they are welcomed into the group.

York Sure Start Annual Evaluation Report - Year 2

Activity: Paint N Pizza	Lead Worker: Sid	Location: BSCC
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad's evaluation was undertaken after the group was set up in March 2003 (Questionnaire). 2004 - Checking out sessions to assess format and changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad's wanted the group to continue (it was originally planned for six weeks). Now the group is over a year old, Dad's requested format to stay DIY based and include computer access. Support aspect has developed with Dad's seeking, giving advice, support, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2005 - Dad's Paint N Pizza to be undertaken by Dad's with our support Final format to be decided but it could consist of using video/ audio interview including the groups history, what it is like to be part of Paint N Pizza and Dad's stories.
Activity: Playtime Drop-in	Lead Worker: Ann Walker	Location: BSCC
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sure Start Worker and the Family Centre Worker discuss how the session has gone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes revisit the rules of playtime with parents and ask them for their ideas. Sometimes this may effect the way the session is run. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be agreed.
Activity: National Railway Museum	Lead Worker: Irene Mason	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with NRM staff after initial sessions and evaluated activities so far taking into account feedback from parents. Parents completed evaluation sheets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusted activities to take into account feedback from parents and children's desires. Findings fed back to NRM and changes were made for remaining sessions. All evaluations were positive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be agreed.

Activity: Self-Esteem Group	Lead Worker: Jackie Walker	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1 - Individual evaluations were completed by each participant and the information fed into a whole detailed evaluation completed by the Family Centre Worker and Jackie. • Group 2 - now running. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome was very positive on many levels and it was agreed that the group would be repeated at least twice a year term time only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An evaluation is planned for every group.
Activity: Time and Space in Pregnancy	Lead Worker: Linda Boddy	Location: Clifton
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly evaluation by workers following the sessions. • Evaluation by parents verbally each week and in writing towards the end of the set of sessions attended. Parents commented on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the best things about being pregnant? ○ What are the worst things? ○ What makes it easier? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed time of session thought to be a good move by parents and workers. • Mainstream services have a greater ownership of the session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue as described.

Activity: Time and Space in Pregnancy	Lead Worker: Joan Fernandez	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular supervision groups with Practitioners working in Time and Space. Try to offer parents what they request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced numbers of staff when attendances were low so as not to intimidate people. Learning to listen more to what parents really want. Trying to find better ways of identifying clients who could attend. Clients want to continue meeting after birth. Looking at how this could be facilitated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will evaluate benefits of group with those who have attended. Review numbers attending. Follow up after birth of babies.

Activity: Trips	Lead Worker: Jackie Walker	Location: Various
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A general evaluation took place after each trip, taken from verbal comments made. Informal recording has been made including quotes from parents but no formal questionnaire or comments have been recorded. A Bright Ideas trip was evaluated and recorded separately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal evaluations were positive with requests to do more frequent similar trips in the school holidays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More formal evaluations need to be planned in the future after each trip.

Activity: Under 25s With Under 2s	Lead Worker: Claire Morton	Location: Foxwood/ Hob Moor
What evaluation has been undertaken?	How did the service respond to the outcomes?	What evaluation is planned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group is quite new and staff are constantly evaluating what is happening with the parents with regard to times and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parents wanted to go swimming so a swimming session was arranged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More evaluation with the parents as the group grows.

Appendix 4: Family Case Studies Data

Amy's Family

Profile information

Amy is 23 years old and has been living in Clifton almost two years since February 2003. Previously she had lived in Acomb all her life. Her children are 2 years (Amy) and 4 years (Ryan).

Special needs

Ryan has a speech delay, recognised by the school when he was 3.5yrs. He has been on a waiting list to see a speech therapist for three months but has been told that there is a 12 month waiting list.

Amy discussed that herself and her husband have been helping Ryan at home by getting him to read and articulate his words. Amy discussed that Penny Casson has also recommended that Ryan goes to a craft group on Thursday mornings.

Family Support

Amy's family don't live in York. She said that her mum visits once a week and she feels that she would help if she needed it.

She said that her husband helps with the children but he works six days a week.

Childcare

Ryan will be starting nursery in January 2005.

She also described that they use the crèche at Sure Start activities that they attend. She commented that Amy doesn't like being in the crèche by herself but they will encourage her to do this when Ryan starts nursery.

Training

Amy described that she is hoping to get a part-time job when both children are at school, so she is trying to go on lots of course to get qualifications. She is currently doing the ECDL with future prospects.

Also, on Thursday she is doing a 'clay, play and learn' course which is supposed to help with Ryan's speech - however she commented that she was not sure what the benefits of this were yet as Ryan and Amy were both in a crèche. She is also doing a course at the National Railway Museum which is facilitated by Sure Start.

She commented that every six months she receives a leaflet about courses from Sure Start. Penny Cason also lets her know if there are any courses which she feels will be relevant.

Awareness of Sure Start

Amy first became aware of Sure Start when she lived in Acomb she had been told about the drop-in by her health visitor. She said it took her a while to go as Ryan had colic and cried a lot, so when he was eight months she took him to the Foxwood drop-in and her friend went with her.

When she moved to Clifton, Penny had told her about Monday morning at the community centre and since then she has become much more involved with Sure Start.

She has now been involved with Sure Start for over two years.

Use of Sure Start services and benefits

Monday morning drop-in

Amy described that she goes to the drop-in to catch up with people, because it is the first day of the week, it is a chance to have a rest and time to herself while the children are in the crèche. She is also now a parent rep and attends because of this.

She likes going to the drop-in because it is a chance to catch up with friends and see what is going on with Sure Start. She feels the benefits are that her children can interact with other children and that they have time away from her. It also gives her time to herself.

Play time

Amy attends Play time because it is a chance to meet with friends and get out of the house. This is particularly beneficial in winter because the children can't play in the garden.

She likes going because she can see her friends and the children can see their friends. Another benefit is that it runs in the holidays when a lot of other activities don't.

Parent Rep (Monday morning drop-in)

Amy has been a parent rep for a few weeks. She was asked to be a rep by the previous rep that was stepping down because her children are going to school. The previous rep told her that everything she was doing Amy was doing anyway.

All the reps from both patches meet monthly and this is an opportunity to get everyone together and catch up. She feels it will be beneficial to help her gain confidence in meeting with people she doesn't know.

Other services

Amy said that the only groups/ activities that she attends with the children other than Sure Start are courses that are run by family learning

Impact on community

Amy feels that Sure Start has impacted on the community a lot; she said that every group that she goes to is associated with Sure Start.

Ante-natal and post-natal support

Amy discussed that when she was pregnant with Ryan she was working and did not have a lot of support.

She discussed that her health visitor in Acomb had been very supportive and that she had wanted to keep her same health visitor in Acomb when she moved. The health visitor had given her a lot of support to help with Ryan.

She commented that she had had very little support in Clifton and hadn't had any contact with her health visitor - she said she would have liked a bit more support as she had only just moved to the area.

Any other comments

Amy feels that Sure Start has helped her a lot. It has really helped her to meet people when she was new to the area. She discussed it has helped her make friends but it has also helped her children make friends - she feels without Sure Start they would have gone to nursery not knowing anyone and without having so many opportunities to play.

She also discussed difficulties she was facing because Ryan was waking up 8 times every night.

Helen's Family

Profile information

Helen moved to Clifton in December 2003. Prior to this she had lived in Scotland all her life. They moved to York because of her husband's job. She was pregnant when she moved to York.

She explained that she really likes the area that she lives in because it is within walking distance of the city centre. Her son Tom is six months old. She would like to have more children.

Family Support

All of Helen's family live in Scotland and her husbands' are spread around the country. Her husband works full-time but helps with the care of Tom.

Childcare

She doesn't use any other childcare - if Helen does go out her husband baby sits. She explained that if they go out to restaurants they take Tom with them.

Training

She is not currently doing any training and isn't interested in undertaking any in the near future.

Awareness of Sure Start

Helen first found out about Sure Start when she was pregnant as her mid-wife told her about the breastfeeding group at Clifton Health Centre which was on every Thursday morning. She has known about Sure Start for one year.

Use of Sure Start services and benefits

Clifton Drop-in

Helen said that she attends the group because it is for all different ages and the older children take an interest in Tom as he is only little.

She also discussed that they do group activities. For example they are going to be making a Christmas cakes.

She explained that she hadn't used the crèche yet, but she might soon: *'It will give him a chance to be away from me for a bit and for me to be away from him'*.

Babbling Babes

'It is good that there is a group for just under ones' She also explained that it is a small group and the leader gets them involved and *'we speak as a group about what we are going to do in the future'*.

She feels the benefits are meeting other mums and children in the area.

'He loves other children, they lie on the floor together and they hold hands'

He enjoys playing with the different toys and it gives Helen an idea about toys she could buy for Tom.

Breast feeding group

Because she wanted to breast feed it was to pick up tips and the ability to borrow books and videos and it was an opportunity to meet other people that were pregnant or had young children.

'I met up with another mum through that and I still see her and her little girl regularly'

It was useful to find out about breast feeding *'Because my mum didn't breast feed she didn't have that much to tell me about it'*.

She said that it was also useful to find out about other peoples experiences.

Impact on community

She feels that it does because it is a way of meeting other people in the community.

Ante-natal and post-natal support

Helen and her husband went to antenatal classes at the local hospital. She explained the groups were too big and were not very sociable; they also went on for too long. She felt the information could have been consolidated into a shorter time period.

She also made visits to see the mid-wife. She said that she didn't get any support from family and friends but said that she had had an easy pregnancy.

She said that the support from the midwives was good. She explained that Tom lost more of his body weight than was usual because he wasn't feeding properly, but she was determined that she wanted to breast feed and mid-wife gave her advice which helped.

Any other comments

Helen visits family in Scotland every 6 weeks and also spends time in Spain where they own a house.

Lisa's family

Profile information

Lisa has lived in the Foxwood area for past five years and she has lived in the York area since she was 15. She moved into Foxwood when first married. She had some reservations as she had heard bad things about the area but she described it as "*very quiet and there is not trouble*"

She has one daughter Charlotte aged 16 months

Family Support

Lisa's parents and parents in law live locally. But her parents both work full-time and her husband's family live just outside York and her mother in law does not drive - so they are all limited in the amount of help they can give with childcare. They both do occasional babysitting

Lisa's husband also helps.

Childcare

She has used the crèche at the Arts and Craft project held at Gateway and organised by Family Learning since September. She has also used the crèche while she attends the Foxwood LAG meeting at Hobmoor, which she joined recently. She has also been using the playgroup at the Foxwood drop-in on a Monday and Wednesday.

Training

She has considered completing an English course with Family Learning, but has not set this up as yet as she has recently started being a parent rep for Foxwood. She would also like to consider doing more Family Learning courses in the future for example Maths.

Prior to having Charlotte she worked as a receptionist full-time and she is on a 2 year career break and may go back to this later

Awareness of Sure Start

Lisa's health visitor told her about Sure Start on a home visit when she was pregnant. She told her about the Foxwood and Gateway Drop-ins. But she was very nervous about going on her own for the first time and so when Charlotte was 11 months old her health visitor went with her to Foxwood. On this first visit she found everyone to be very friendly and she was introduced to all the other mums and after that she found it easy to go back on her own.

She has been involved with Sure Start for 5 months.

Use of Sure Start services and benefits

Small Talk

Lisa out about Small Talk from a leaflet through the door, a small group of six people meet monthly. She went to get ideas about learning through play, things they could do at home and ideas for speech and language development. She felt she had benefited from talking to other mums and sharing ideas she also felt that Charlotte had benefited because she enjoyed being there

Foxwood Drop in

She had found out about it from her Health visitor. She went along to meet other mums and get out of the house. She likes going because everyone is so friendly and the children can do messy play and things they cannot always do at home. In terms of benefits she felt that Charlotte has become much more sociable and more confident since going and Lisa has met lots of new people. She also described how she had PND after the birth of her baby and going to the drop in has helped her with this "more than any tablets"

Arts and Crafts

She went to find out ideas for things to do with younger children and for ideas. She also felt it was useful because it was free and it was an opportunity for her to be able to do something on her own, and arts and crafts is something she has always enjoyed. Benefits - she has gained lots of new ideas and Charlotte has had the opportunity to go into the crèche which she had not done before. Although she sometimes was upset at first - she has got used to going now and really enjoys it.

Other Services

She has used Acomb library - which she joined before Charlotte was born and now uses regularly with Charlotte. Also uses Edmund Wilson Swimming Baths - goes with another mum to use the Toddler pool

Impact on community

She feels it has definitely had an impact as she has got to know so many new people now.

Ante-natal and post-natal support

Towards the end of her pregnancy she had to visit the hospital very frequently which involved two bus journeys and was very difficult. She did have a supportive midwife but her family were all working and so not able to be of practical help. She

would have liked to have the midwife come to visit her at home to save such frequent trips to the hospital

She had PND after her baby was born. She did get good support and advice from her midwife initially but she said the GP was not very supportive beyond prescribing medication - he did not offer her any explanations of what she was feeling. She started attending a PND support group at Hob Moor which was very good - but only 2 parents turned up and so it was not run any more - she thought this would have been very useful- a CPN was there to offer help and support. She explained that it is easy to not tell the truth when responding to the Edinburgh postnatal depression scale

Any other comments

Lisa said that Sure Start is a very positive experience - it is the best thing we have done. It has helped us to meet different people and to get support. It is good because there is always someone to talk to and someone to give you a break. It would be really good for people who do not have any support at home"

.....
Nina's family

Profile

Nina has lived in Foxwood between 8 and 9 in years. She was originally from Whitby, but came to York with her ex husband's job. None of her family lives in the area.

She described the area as 'rough' as they usually put people with drug dependency in the flats.

She has three children Kelly who is 20 months. She also has a son aged 17 and a daughter aged 15, that live with her

Family support

Nina said that her family don't live locally but are there if she needs them. Her husband also lives with them.

Childcare

Nina said that Kelly attends a crèche where she is doing an art course on Thursday morning.

Training

She is currently doing a children's art course - where they are doing a variety of activities. She explained that she had found out about the course through Sure Start. She explained that Sure Start do quite a few courses.

She explained that she would be interested in doing more courses if there was one of interest, but she is not interested in doing maths related courses.

She would be interested in doing an arts course for adults.

Awareness of Sure Start

Nina first became aware of Sure Start through her health visitor - the health visitor told her that there was a group that met on Monday and Wednesday. She explained that she went for Kelly to socialise.

'I didn't want to go I went because of Kelly and my other children being older, they need to learn to mix'

She explained that she didn't have any company apart from her children.

'I'm not into mixing really, but I done it, I've got to know people and I'm alright'

She explained that she had been involved with Sure Start for about 6 months.

Use of Sure Start services and benefits

Monday/ Wednesday playgroup at Foxwood community centre

She said that she goes to the group 'To go and mix'. Furthermore, *"it gets you out of the house and it is nice for Kelly to play."*

Arts and crafts course

She decided to do it because she likes learning about art.

Impact on community

She doesn't feel that Sure Start has had an impact on the wider community.

Ante-natal and Post-natal support

Nina explained that the health visitor came around once near the end of her pregnancy to say she would be coming round regularly when Kelly was born.

She explained that the health visitor was really nice and would be there if she needed her.

The MW came around a couple of times when she was first born.

When Kelly was first born she had cried a lot and when the health visitor came round she was often still not dressed. *'I coped you know, but just didn't get things done in the house that was all.'*

Ruth's family

Profile

Ruth has lived in York since March 2004, she previously lived in Heworth. Moved to York from Lancaster in the summer 2003 because of husbands' job.

She was pregnant when she moved to York. She commented that it helped being pregnant when she moved to York as it offered more opportunities to meet people. *'I'm finding it a little hard now being away from my family and not having as much support as I would have if I was still in Lancaster.'*

She has one son Ellis aged 1 year

Family Support

Her family don't live locally but visit once a week, she said sometimes she will have things to do on that day so her parents will look after Ellis all day. She also explained that they tried to visit Lancaster as often as they could.

Her husband helps when he is not at work. He goes away for a week at a time about once a month. She commented that it is harder when this happens as she has to do all the childcare herself.

Childcare

No but she explained that on Thursday I do an arts and crafts course and there is a crèche in the next room.'

Training

Ruth explained that she did an Arts and Crafts course on Thursday afternoons. She discussed that the benefits of the course were meeting other people and having time to herself *'having time to myself, otherwise I wouldn't really get much time and it's nice that Ellis's in the crèche next door'*. She discussed the difference it had made to her work when she had not been able to attend.

'I missed it last week and having a week off from it really made a difference to my week, so I'm looking forward to it this week'

She also discussed that she had done childminding course recently and is now a registered childminder. She discussed that word of mouth was the best way of receiving children to care for *'but while it's slow it's difficult to get word of mouth'*.

She discussed that being a childminder was a good way to be able to earn money and stay at home.

'I always wanted to be a stay at home mum with Ellis, but we also needed some more money coming in so it was the ideal career'

Awareness of Sure Start

Ruth found out about Sure Start through her health visitor, who told her about the Acomb postnatal group. She explained that she started going to that when Ellis was two months old. She explained that through the postnatal group she found out about the under 25's group.

She explained that she wanted to go to the postnatal group to meet people because she didn't have many and friends in the area - *'It was a way of meeting people and making friends and getting out of the house'*.

She has been involved with Sure Start for about 10 months.

Use of Sure Start services and benefits

Foxwood Drop in

She explained that she attends the drop-in *'To get out of the house, meet people and for Ellis to socialise'*

She also discussed when she is childminding it helps that the children can get out of the house, run around and play on the bikes.

She liked the fact that Ellis can meet new children, play with them and learn to be sociable. She felt that the snack is brilliant and very healthy. She also discussed that Ellis sat at the table, where he can interact. .

Under 25's

Ruth said that at this group it was nice to meet people of a similar age. Although she explained when she used to go there was sometimes only herself and one other person at the sessions. But she had been more recently and it seemed quite busy.

She explained that it is in a nice room where there are nice toys for the children to play with, friendly staff and healthy snacks. *'Take the opportunity to talk to an adult sometimes you don't feel you get to talk to an adult during the day'*

Postnatal group

She said that it was nice that all the babies were the same age and mums wanted advice about the same things.

She also explained that her mum was able to come with her because it was the day that she visited.

Other services

She explained that she occasionally visits Acomb Library which has a good selection of books.

Post-natal and Ante-natal support

She was six months pregnant when she moved to York. She started attending ante-natal classes. The only one that was available was Friday lunchtime because she had just moved to the area - thus she didn't find this very helpful because her husband couldn't attend.

Donna's family

Profile

Donna has lived in Clifton for two years, but previously lived in Tang Hall. She has lived in various areas of York and in other parts of the country.

She has three boys Nick aged 4 years 11 months, Sam aged 3 years and Rob aged 1 year and 10 months.

Special needs

Donna explained that a health visitor had felt at one point that Sam might have dyspraxia, but she explained that since he has been going to nursery he seems to have improved a lot. She is still waiting for more information about this.

Family support

Donna does not have support from her family. She has had a difficult home life for one reason and another. She said that the friends she has made through Sure Start and some of the Sure Start workers are *'my own little support network'*.

Donna explained that her husband cares for the boys when she is at work.

Childcare

Both Nick and Sam attend the school nursery.

Training

Donna explained that she had started attending a first aid course, which she had wanted to attend because the boys were accident prone, and she was unsure what to do when they hurt themselves. However she stopped attending the course because the boys were unwell - so she didn't manage to finish the course.

Donna has recently started working at a local shop she works 2 nights a week and does 15/ 18 hours. While she is at work her husband looks after the boys. She has only been back at work for 7 weeks and finds it difficult fitting working around everything else - but she does it because she wants to.

Awareness of Sure Start

Donna first found out about Sure Start through her health visitor after Rob was born. She said that when she found out about it she couldn't wait to go. She had spent a lot of time alone in the house with Nick and Sam when they were young and she was eager for all the boys and herself to socialise.

'I was so eager because it had just been me and the boys alone in the house for 2 years'

She also explained that Nick was about to start nursery at this time but she had felt it would be a great opportunity for him to mix with other children before he started nursery. She feels it did help him with this.

Donna has been involved with Sure Start for two years.

Use of Sure Start services and benefits

Donna has used a range of Sure Start services but explained that more than the services it is the general support that the workers and the other Sure Start parents have offered that have helped her the most. She said that without the support of Sure Start she doesn't know where she would be.

She said that she is aware Sure Start funding will end, but doesn't want this to be the case as she would like it to be there for her grandchildren.

Donna does not attend some of these services as regularly as she has in the past because she is working now and has other appointments.

Kingswater Drop in

She feels that the Drop in is a friendly and welcoming environment. Where *"it is nice to be out of the house and meeting with people."*

Furthermore she said that other parents can offer advice as much as the staff as they have all been in different situations and had different experiences.

She feels that both she and the boys' confidence have grown through attending the session and she really feels that the boys have developed friendships they will have for a long time.

She is also a parent rep for the Drop in

Big Wide Talk

Donna attended Big Wide Talk from January 2004 to July 2004

She initially started going to the Big Wide Talk for Rob but felt that the others had really benefited from it and enjoyed it.

She said that it offered the boys the opportunity to do 'messy' activities that they wouldn't be able to do at home such as playing in a bath of beans.

She feels that this is one of the best activities that they have been involved in.

Clifton Monday Morning Drop in

The interviewee appreciated the opportunity to go to the drop on Monday mornings where she can have time to herself if the boys are in the crèche. She commented that going to Drop in helped her get through the rest of the week.

There are also activities on offer that she wouldn't have done otherwise e.g. growing tomatoes and making stained glass windows, which you can get involved in if you want to but there is no pressure to do so.

Starting Nursery Course

The interviewee had attended the starting nursery course with Sam, which she felt had been very beneficial. She compared it positively to the half hour session she had when Nick was starting nursery.

She explained that they had been given a bag with a lot of information from Sure Start, a lot of which had given ideas about activities to do with the boys.

They had also met the nursery staff which she felt had been beneficial for Sam, as she feels he may not have been so happy going to nursery otherwise. She explained

that the Sure Start speech and language worker had told them that coordination has a lot to do with speech - they had done coordination activities such as standing on one leg to try and improve Sam's coordination. She discussed that she enjoyed helping the boys learn through play which is something that they have done a lot.

Wednesday Dads Group

She also discussed that her husband had been to the Wednesday Dads group. Where he had made friends and come to see the male Sure Start worker as a friend. She felt that it had been very beneficial for him as he didn't have many close friends. He had also made chairs and toy boxes for the boys.

Impact on community

Donna said that Sure Start has really helped to build a sense of community. She feels that people look out for each others children on the street whereas they wouldn't have done this before, she said she feels safer.

She also discussed that at Sure Start events there is a shared sense of responsibility for each others children.

Ante-natal and post-natal support

Donna explained that she had had a lot of support from health visitors both in Tang Hall and in Clifton. She explained that the doctor at the health centre had been very supportive

Any other comments

Donna discussed that when she had experienced difficulties Sure Start workers and friends she had met through Sure Start were the first people to offer support. She explained that Sure Start workers had sat with her in meetings she had had with other professionals which had been very much appreciated.

She also feels that her sons have benefited significantly from the Sure Start activities that they have been to and have really gained confidence.



Viewing the Seaside Pictures



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Drawing the Seaside



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