

**USING EXISTING DATA IN SURE START LOCAL EVALUATIONS**

**Patrick Myers  
Jacqueline Barnes  
Ian Shemilt**



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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Why evaluate?

All Sure Start programmes are required to conduct a local evaluation of their services as an integral part of programme development and management. Evaluating services from the very beginning of a programme is essential in order to:

- Understand how well services are performing.
- Learn which aspects of services work well and which do not.
- Understand how the processes underpinning service delivery are developing.
- Monitoring progress towards Sure Start targets and objectives.
- Inform the mainstreaming agenda by sharing the outcomes that the programme has achieved.

Evaluation is about measuring the effectiveness of interventions by looking at the factors that have contributed to or stood in the way of such effectiveness. Local Evaluation provides programmes with a mechanism by which they are able to identify themselves and share their achievements with others. It also demonstrates that programmes are reflecting upon their services, monitoring the processes being undertaken in service provision and attempting to measure the impacts and outcomes that services are having upon the lives of children and families in the Sure Start Local Programme locality.

A well-implemented local evaluation can provide the evidence base required to inform the changes that programmes need to make in order to both raise the quality of existing services and identify directions for the planning of new services. Evaluation should not be seen as a discrete, externally imposed task. Evaluation is a vital part of the process of developing the programme and as such it should be recognised as playing a key role in assisting the progress of programme delivery. Effective decision-making relies on timely and appropriate information being made available. Local evaluations, in collaboration with programme consultation mechanisms and monitoring functions, can provide that information. It is also important to recognise that local programme evaluation will rely on multi-method approaches (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) to provide information to stakeholders.

This guidance is designed to help programme managers, programme staff and evaluators to consider ways in which existing data can be used in local evaluations. Existing data provides valuable information to the programme, assisting in the decision making process. They also add context to the work that the programme is undertaking and can be used to assess the impact that Sure Start Local Programme Services are having on their populations.

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The data, by nature, is already 'out there' but some skill is required to locate the most relevant information, and then obtain it. The guidance provides some practical advice on working with partner organisations to access their relevant data and to most effectively use it in local evaluation.

Incorporating existing data into the local evaluation has numerous benefits for the programme and the evaluation. These include:

- Using existing data is less costly than new data collection in terms of resources.
- Using existing data limits the reporting burden placed on project staff, parents and children, reducing the potential for evaluation fatigue.
- Examination of existing data can help identify areas that would benefit from further evaluative study.
- Analysis of existing data to answer evaluation questions can identify gaps in service provision quickly, enabling further evaluation can be conducted.
- Existing data can help validate or challenge evaluation findings generated from primary data collection.

When reading this guidance please be aware that preceding guidance documents have covered issues relating to the use of existing data. For example documents such as Conducting Ethical Research, Involving Parents and carers in evaluation and Evaluating Cost Effectiveness are all pertinent to the issues discussed in this document.

## **2. What constitutes existing data?**

In general terms existing data have been collected by others, often for a purpose unrelated to Sure Start Local Programmes. Of course the programmes do collect a great deal of information that is very relevant, specifically data collected by the programme for monitoring and consultation purposes. Existing data can therefore relate directly to the programme population or can be collected as part of a much wider data collection exercise either on national, local or individual level. Thus, there are two broad categories of existing data:

### **2.1 Existing records collected by Sure Start Local Programmes.**

These include family profiles, reach figures and numbers of children attending a particular activity, the kind of information collected for monitoring purposes.

In addition the programme will also be undertaking evaluations of particular services that may not be part of the main evaluation focus. This may be staff assessing the satisfaction of a workshop or a particular one off event. The range data that is collected by the programme has great utility in informing an audience that is interested in your programme of how things are going.

## 2.2 Existing data such as statistics, surveys and reports completed by outside sources.

Existing data, sometimes known as 'secondary data', come in many forms. For example a wide range of organisations produces statistical reports. Governments both centrally and locally have a requirement for information about the populations they serve. The 2001 Census is typical and available both at the local authority, ward and the much smaller output area level. Strategic Health Authorities (SHA) and Primary Care Trusts (PCT's) and other statutory agencies such as the local authority are also charged with collecting data to assess the health and well being of the people living within an area. Other organisations such as those in the voluntary sector may have conducted local needs assessments or small-scale community consultations. The results of these small-scale pieces of work may have reached some notable conclusions that are of use to a Sure Start local Programme.

Sure Start Local Programmes have all needed to access and use existing data sources in the preparation of their delivery plan and in monitoring the progress their programme is making. Indeed secondary data sources assisted in the definition and selection of a Sure Start Local Programme's target population. The information was also used by programmes to define their local objectives and goals. It makes sense then that this information is included in the process of improving the planning and design of services as well as providing information about how services are being delivered and the activities of staff and the level of child and parental participation in such services.

These two broad categories of existing data will overall include three types of data: aggregate/anonymised, personal and sensitive.

### 1. AGGREGATED AND ANONYMISED DATA

Aggregated Data – This refers to individual data that has been collated into bigger units (such as the SSLP area or a ward), usually in the form of a mean for that unit, in this case a particular area, though it could be for a particular grouping of people (e.g. all patients under 18 on a GP register). This is information from which no individual person can be identified and is outside the Data Protection Act. This type of data can be passed to relevant organisations for

bona fide purposes (“that are in the public interest”). Those who have processed the information may have had individual level information but will not have passed this on. Individual level information may also sometimes be shared once it has been anonymised, removing all identifying information such as name, address, postcode, national health number or a variety of other official identification systems. It can usefully provide information about gender, race, disability and status, which can then be used to examine outcomes in relation to these characteristics about the population of interest.

## 2. PERSONAL DATA

Personal Data – this is information that is specific to an individual (e.g. age, date of birth, gender, qualifications, recorded skills and abilities, educational establishment attending/attended, employment history etc). As such, personal data relates to an individual who is identifiable from the data, or the data in conjunction with other data held or which can be obtained. A reference number is equivalent to personal data if it can be linked with an individual's name elsewhere in an organisation. This has implications for Sure Start databases and the need to obtain consent for information use is of paramount importance. All types of personal data are within the ambit of the Data Protection Act and programmes either independently or through their accountable body/lead agency will need to have complied with the act's requirement to collect, store and subsequently use the information. Personal data cannot be collected and shared unless the client gives consent for this to take place. This is because the information commissioner states that personal data relates to a living individual who can be identified: from those data, or from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or likely to come into the possession of the data controller. It includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller or any other person in respect of the individual.

## 3. SENSITIVE DATA

Sensitive Data is individual level information of both a personal and sensitive nature (e.g. ethnicity, disability, history of abuse, care history, truancy problems, drug abuse, criminal record, financial status etc). Sensitive data should only be collected and shared with the explicit consent of clients, who must be advised of the reason for its collection, the rationale for sharing the data and recipients of the data. Sensitive data are most likely to be used for service provision and will have limited use when informing the evaluation. This might, for example, include notes about clinical counselling sessions to support women experiencing postnatal depression.

From the above it is clear to see that aggregated, anonymised and to a lesser extent personal data are all of relevance to local evaluation.

### The Geography of aggregate data

Data are usually collated with specific geographical areas in mind and these will vary depending on the nature of the organisation that has collated the information. Programmes should be aware of the different types of datasets that are available and to what areas they relate to Sure Start geography, and how best to obtain data specific to the SSLP area. This is important when it comes to discussing the programmes data needs with other agencies.

Unfortunately, UK Geography is far from simple:

- There are many different geographic unit types (administrative, health, electoral, postcode etc) and their boundaries frequently don't align.
- Boundaries keep changing. In some years several hundred electoral wards or divisions are affected, and in the extreme case of 2002 no fewer than 1549 were changed! Other geographies, especially postcodes, are also liable to frequent revision.
- Area names and codes change too. This is complicated by the fact that different government departments have developed different coding systems for administrative geography, on occasions even using slightly different names for the same areas.

A large amount of helpful information is available on the Office for National Statistics website. (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/default.asp>) In particular: The 'Beginners' Guide to UK Geography' is an online resource providing up-to-date information, explanation, maps and listings of all the main geographies used in UK statistical production.

([http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/beginners\\_guide.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/beginners_guide.asp))

It provides information about the different ways that geography is used, giving details (including maps) of ways that the country is divided by different authorities. Separate documents are available covering the following geographies: Administrative (e.g. counties, districts); Postal (e.g. address, post code); Health (e.g. Strategic Health Authority, Primary Care trust); Electoral (e.g. constituency, wards); and Census (e.g. output areas).

Their sizes overlap but Table 1 gives an idea of the largest to the smallest.

Table 1. Largest to smallest geographical divisions

Type of geography	Geographical Area Described
Administrative	England
Administrative	Government Office Region
Administrative	District/Local Authority
Electoral	Electoral Ward

Census	Output area
Postal	Postcode
Postal	Address

In addition a helpful glossary of over 150 geographical terms is provided <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/glossary/default.asp>

Many datasets now allow for extraction of small area statistics based on the postcodes included in that area. Therefore a list of all the current (and previous) postcodes for your programme area is essential. It would also be useful to obtain local maps that allow you to know the extent of overlap with boundaries such as wards, census output areas, and local health authorities. While the match between SSLP areas and wards will not be exact, the wealth of data available at the ward level can be used to approximate the SSLP area.

Postcodes, however, do not take account of administrative boundaries (or any other geography). This 'straddling' of boundaries means that many postcodes can only be assigned to administrative areas on a 'best fit' basis. The result is that addresses lying close to administrative boundaries are sometimes assigned to the wrong area. For small areas such as electoral wards or SSLP areas the resulting statistical errors can sometimes be considerable.

They may also change over time. Royal Mail assigns postcodes to address locations for the sole purpose of providing an efficient mail delivery service, not to assist databases. Postcodes may be discarded, reassigned and reused as a result of demolitions and new building activity.

The Office for National Statistics is encouraging the use of map grid references rather than postcodes. ONS Geography's postcode directories now provide the grid reference of the property closest to the postcode centroid (the geographic centre of the postcode). More data in the future may use this kind of geographical information to accurately describe small areas so it is worth keeping up to date with developments and encouraging organisations in your area to use these methods if possible. For more information see [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/geog\\_ref.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/geog_ref.asp).

### **3. Locating the existing data?**

#### **3.1 Data held by the Programme**

Two broad categories of existing data have been identified. Firstly information held by your programme. This is an important source of information. As such it should be incorporated in your evaluation outputs. The great benefit is that programmes already have access to the data and the process of consent should have been applied at the point of registration of parents and children. Good practice in assessing the programmes productivity will have encouraged the development of methods for recording attendance at Sure Start activities, a profile of the range of services being accessed by particular families and the



number of families able to benefit from the services being provided. This information provides a wealth of detail about what the programme is doing, how those whom the programme is targeting are receiving it and in conjunction with other evaluative outputs what is being achieved. The programme holds a wealth of existing data, usually supported by a data management system. Thus these systems can be important sources of information for evaluation if designed carefully (for example one needs to include families even when their child reaches 4 years, for possible follow-up). Details of these systems and their potential for flexibility can be found in appendix 1. Even at the most rudimentary level some analysis of routinely collected data can be undertaken and included in an evaluation output such as reports or summaries Table 2 illustrates some of the data that may be available from your monitoring sources and which programmes should consider including in any evaluation.

Table 2. Existing Data: Sure Start Local Programmes examples

Source	Type of Data	Possible Questions
Database	Reach	How many families is the programme in contact with?
Database	Service Take up	How many families are regularly using particular services?
Database	Family Profiles & Composition	How many lone parents are in your programme area?
Database	How many families from the programme population are attending a particular service? Is the service being delivered in an equitable way?	Are all parents who want to attend a service able to?
Database	Are there pockets of the population who do not attend particular services/events?	Are there areas where parents are not attending? Could it be that access is a problem? Does the programme need to reshape some service provision?
Database	How well is the programme moving towards the targets set out in the PSA and SDA targets? (This data is sometimes collected and held on the SSLP database)	How well is the programme moving towards achieving the targets?

The use of data relating to the productivity of the programme provides a

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good illustration of the benefits of establishing a close interaction between existing data, local evaluation and effective service delivery. Monitoring data can be foundational to the local evaluation process, representing the bottom layer on which other layers of evaluation can be built.

It must be noted that the quality and accuracy of the data collected by programmes relies on ensuring that staff involved understand the importance of monitoring information. It is necessary to get all those involved, be they midwife, health visitor, crèche workers or parent volunteers on board from the outset, involving them throughout the data management progress. Empowering both service and programme based staff by helping them to recognise the benefits of their data collection is vital. Securing the commitment of staff to these processes is likely to require both training and consultation. It entails being specific about the data which staff are required to collect and about how and why it will be relevant to developing better services. It is important that they are aware that monitoring data is not just about reporting to others in terms of returns and filling in forms. It is part of the programmes commitment to measure itself against certain criteria, ensures services are provided on a needs led basis and that access to services is equitable and fair.

### **3.2 Data Held by other Agencies**

The second category is information that is held by other agencies. Table 3 identifies some of the sources for this information. The organisations involved in your programme as partner or lead agencies, including health, education and social services, and other local agencies such as police, all have established systems with which to store both personal and aggregated data. As such these partner agencies represent a key source of existing data for monitoring and local evaluation purposes. Table 3 also makes some suggestions of the types of questions the data may be useful in addressing.

Systems will of course vary in both their complexity and the ease with which the information can be extracted. Some systems allow the data to be interrogated to a high level of detail. For example systems held by health agencies such as maternity and child health systems will often, not always, be searchable by postcode, facilitating a good match with Sure Start programme areas. For other agencies this level of data management is not possible and often the data will only match to the level of electoral wards. Where this is the case use can still be made of such data even when Sure Start local programmes boundaries do not match exact ward boundaries. Ward level data that does not completely match the SSLP's boundaries should not be dismissed as it still allows useful estimates to be made of the characteristics of the programmes population. These data will still be appropriate for service planning and providing contextual information for the local evaluation.

Table 3. Existing Data. External/Partner Agencies examples

<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Type of Data</b>	<b>Possible Questions and Uses</b>
Population Data Age Gender Ethnicity	ONS LA	Local birth rates Local counts of people on the electoral register Numbers attending schools	Updating Start Point Data. Demographic comparisons. What is the ethnic mix of the area? Are numbers of school age children rising?
Mental Illness Post natal Depression Self Harm	PCT PH	Prevalence rates	Useful for needs assessment and time comparisons in Sure Start areas. Outcome Evaluation.
Physical Disability	LA	Child Care Annual Audit	Progress against targets and needs assessment for example around child disability.
Health Survey of England	ONS	General Health Status for LA	This details self-reported morbidity. It is available at the former HA level and can answer many contextual questions about the health of the local population.
Asthma	PCT TRUST PH	Prevalence Rates	
Dental Health Decayed, Missing, Filled	PH	Rates	Is the programmes dental health project making an impact?
Breast Feeding % Fed at 6 weeks/6 months	PCT TRUST PH	Rates of Breast-feeding	Is the programmes breast-feeding support working? Compare rates in

			your wards with county or PCT averages?
Smoking Prevalence	PCT TRUST PH	Rates of smoking ante and post natal	How well is the smoking cessation programme working? Compare rates in your wards with county or PCT averages?
Teenage pregnancies	PCT PH	Numbers of young mothers	Do we need to provide particular services focused on young mothers?
Statements of Special Need	LA	Number of children in area with statements	Progress toward improvements in availability of services
Lone Parents Claiming Council Tax Benefit	LA	Numbers of lone parents in area	Are we tailoring services to meet this section of our programme population?
Claimants of Council Tax Benefit with dependent children	LA		Are we tailoring services to meet this section of our programme population?
Education GCSE, SAT'S Numeracy and Literacy	LA BSA	Levels of attainment Numbers with lower levels of ability	Progress towards targets. Should we be working with education to provide basic skills training?
Housing Tenure Overcrowding Satisfaction with area	ONS CENSUS LA/HA	% Residents satisfied with environment and housing	Is Sure Start changing people's satisfaction with where they live compared to previous measures?
Crime Domestic Violence Racial Crime Household	Police LA	Crime Statistics	Contextual Information

Burglary Violent Crime			
Childcare Provision Maintained, Private, Voluntary	Ofsted Collection accessed via Children's Information Service at LA	Childcare Penetration Rates	Is there more that the programme can do to address any deficits in childcare places?

Source: Adapted from Hooper & Longworth (2002) Health Impact Assessment Workbook

Key:	BSA	Basic Skills Agency
	HA	Housing Association
	LA	Local Authority
	ONS	Office of National Statistics
	PCT	Primary Care Trust
	PH	Public Health Organisation (The arrangements for this can vary from area to area)
	TRUST	Other NHS Trust

### 3.3 Publicly available archives

In addition to data that can be provided through partner organisations publicly available archived data can also provide valuable background information about the characteristics of the programme. These data sources are often searchable to varying levels of geographical detail - by postcode, electoral ward, by local authority or by health authority area.

The data can be used to illustrate the wider picture creating opportunities to assess how the programme area is doing in comparison to other areas. This data is available on a wide range of subjects including population, crime, health and housing. The introduction of output area data from the 2001 National Census makes an important contribution to the pool of existing data with utility for Sure Start Local Programme. Table 4 provides examples of data available on the Neighbourhood Statistics website (<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>).

Table 4. Examples of data available on the Neighbourhood Statistics website

Area of Focus	Source	Type of Data
Ethnicity	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Ethnic Group 2001
Lone Parents	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Number of Lone Parent Households with dependent children

Age Structure	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Number of children under 4
Economic Deprivation	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Child Benefit Claimants Family Credit Claimant Working Families Tax Credit claimants
Health and Care	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Households with limiting long term illness and dependent children 2001 General Health Status
Housing	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Household Composition 2001
Work	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Occupation groups by gender 2001
Economic Activity	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Economic Activity by gender 2001
Community Well-being	ONS/Neighbourhood Statistics	Migration 2001

The above illustrates the wide range of secondary data available. Many of the sources highlighted are accessible through the internet. Appendix 3 lists some other sources of data that may be appropriate for programme use in evaluation and service planning.

### 3.4 Other locally held data

Other sources of locally generated data and information may also be available. Other area based initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management Initiatives, Education Action Zones and Market Towns Initiative etc. may be working within a defined geographical area or with a defined target population and may have undertaken some form of data collection. This may relate directly to children and families or it may provide useful contextual information about the communities in which programmes operate. For example the Children's Fund in the programmes area may have undertaken consultation with children and families. The results and conclusions of such outputs may provide the opportunity to reflect on programme outcomes for children who may well have been through the Sure Start experience.

Local Authorities also from time to time undertake specific data collection, for example a crime audit or a consultation in respect of council services. This information can be a valuable source of contextual data that can be used in evaluation and needs assessment.

Local Authorities are also good sources of access to the smaller area data. By using Geographical Information Systems (GIS), a resource that may be available from the programmes local authority partner it will be possible to

overlay output area data to Sure Start Local Programme boundaries. GIS can be thought of as a high tech equivalent of the map. GIS provides a useful facility whereby it is possible to extract different sets of information from a map and use these as required. Maps cease to be static but instead become more flexible and can be stored on a computer where analysis using modelling techniques can more easily take place. GIS mapping is a technical process and programmes will often need to seek assistance in using this and ascertaining the best way to use such a technique.

Evaluators need to ensure that they are aware of the data sources nationally, regionally and locally. This section has highlighted some of the potential sources of existing data. This is by no means exhaustive and the data availability will vary from area to area.

### **3.5 Limitations Of Existing Data**

It is important to recognise that data sources can have limitations and it is necessary to ask certain questions about the existing data to be used. It is also important to view existing data critically so that some assessment of the reliability, validity and ethics of the existing data can be undertaken. Payne (1999) has reported a range of appropriate questions to consider when thinking about using existing data

#### **Possible Data Limitations**

##### **Geographical**

What geographical area is covered, and how is that area subdivided?

Have the boundaries changed? (This is important if you are examining progress against various time points of data collection). Electoral wards are subject to frequent changes.

##### **Timeliness**

How old is the information? Is it up to date? (The current 2001 Census is quite new but in 5 years time the information will be out of date).

Have there been any changes in the definitions that have been used?

##### **Completeness**

Is the information complete?

What information might be missing?

Is the pattern of missing information random, or systematic?

##### **Sources and Methods**

What organisation has collected and processed the information? (Do they have the necessary skills? Is there any danger of bias?)

What methods have been used to collect and analyse the data? Are they reliable, valid and appropriate?

Asking these questions will enable some judgment about the quality of the data available to me made. Data quality has been usefully summed up as CARAT:

Complete and Consistent (Reliable)  
Accurate  
Relevant and Valid  
Accessible  
Timely

#### 4. Gaining Access To Existing Data

##### 4.1 Ethical concerns

In general agencies are likely to have fewer concerns about sharing aggregated than about sharing personal data. Aggregated information, which does not identify individuals, is not covered by confidentiality and data protection legislation, provided that the number of individuals represented within the aggregated set of data is not so small as to make the identification of particular individuals possible.

In order to access personal data it will be necessary to convey the programmes professionalism in dealing with data. It will also rely on the programmes monitoring officer and evaluators being conversant with all aspects of the Data Protection Act as it applies to the programme. Those who share data with the programme will need to be convinced that appropriate safeguards are in place and that the data they provide will be managed correctly.

Sure Start local programmes are required to meet the standards laid out in the *Data Protection Act 1998*. These can be summarised as 8 principles of data protection:

1. Data must be processed fairly and lawfully
2. Processed with a specific purpose in mind
3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. Accurate and up to date
5. Not kept for longer than is necessary
6. Processed in accordance with the rights of the subjects
7. Protected by appropriate security
8. Not transferred outside the EEA without adequate protection

Further information can be found on the Information Commissioner's website [www.dataprotection.gov.uk](http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk)



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It is for the programme to ensure compliance with the above and to convey to partners the programmes ability to manage data in accordance with the act.

#### 4.2 Technical considerations

The most important part of overcoming technical difficulties encountered when gaining access is to meet with partner organisations data managers. When thinking about how to manage the sharing of existing aggregated and personal data held by partners and other local agencies it is useful to consider the following prior to meeting with colleagues:

- Identify at an early stage what aggregated and personal data the programme requires for monitoring and evaluation purposes. It is important therefore to formulate evaluation questions where the use of existing data is anticipated early on.
- Identify the possible sources, such as those highlighted in table 3 for obtaining the data. This will directly relate to the evaluation question you have posed.
- Make contact with the data manager of the relevant information. This is an important step. Those with the data you wish to share will need to be assured that the programme is serious about data protection. A face-to-face visit is preferable to telephone contact. If you are asking for information from people you do not know, getting to know these individuals early can be beneficial and establishing a good rapport will be important. This will assist in the on going process of data sharing.
- Establish an information sharing protocol. This document sets out the arrangements for data sharing. It details the purpose for which the data is required, how the data will be held and who will have access to the data. An example is included in appendix 2. An Information Sharing Protocol not only is best practice but will also convey to partner agencies how professional the programme is in dealing with information. It is important to include details of how often the programme requires data. For example details of new births, pregnancy and GP registrations of children under 4 moving into the area will be required monthly whereas smoking data may only be required quarterly.

If appropriate, join with other programmes in your area to minimise the burden on other agencies for information. Partner agencies will have many demands on them and anything that can be done to reduce the demands on data managers will be seen in a positive way. It is worthwhile pooling resources to enable the central collection of existing data across programmes. This is likely to avoid several evaluators or monitoring officers requesting the same piece of information from the same contact within the same agency. Some ways in

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which programmes or groups of programmes can minimise the burden to other agencies are listed here:

- Sometimes it is worthwhile to obtain samples of the data formats and definitions to see what information may be available. It is at this point that note of the timeliness of the data and the geographical areas that apply to each piece of information should be made.
- Make it easy for the partner agency by supplying them with a list of postcodes if possible in a spreadsheet, possibly with the headings already in for the data you need. This again minimises the burden on partner agencies and creates the right ethos and data sharing etiquette.
- A nominated contact, usually the monitoring officer in collaboration with the evaluator, should have the overall responsibility as core contact for liaising with partner agencies.

Data sharing is a process that relies on professional relationships. It is worthwhile noting that data sharing is two way. The programme will hold much information in terms of reach and needs that are useful for other service providers. Sure Start local programmes should also be asking data managers from other organisations what data might be useful to them.

## **5. Making Use of Existing Data**

### **5.1 Types of evaluation questions to ask**

Having located and accessed the data, the next stage is to put it to use. As programmes develop it is necessary to reflect upon resources dedicated to different parts of the programme, record programme activities using inputs (such as staff and money) and report on the direct products of programme activities. At its very basic level this means modification of the programme plan to meet the communities needs.

When new data becomes available it can be used to modify existing services or in some cases identify the need for new ones. For example it may be that a programme wishes to provide a service to families with developmentally or physically challenged children. Using the existing data held by the local social services department will go some way to identifying the actual level of need and providing some detail of the resources that are likely to be needed to provide a service. It may be that the programme will undertake some further monitoring and evaluative work. This evaluative work will also rely on the existing data to assess participation in such a new service and thereafter cost effectiveness will be conducted to confirm value for money.

The above is a good example of how existing data can be used to begin to refine a programme's activity based on need. The records kept by the programme on the characteristics of participants, how the services are

provided, the time different teams spend working with each family and the way they feel about the local programme are the foundation of much evaluative work as illustrated in figure 1. The use to which they are put is determined by how an evaluation question is framed.

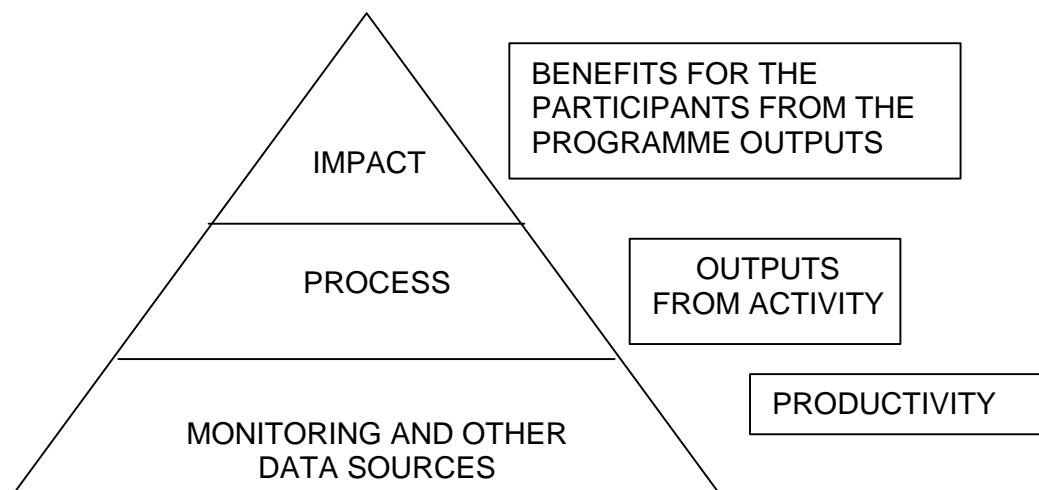


Figure 1. The relationship between the various layers in evaluation

In addition to the above it is worthwhile keeping in mind the different strategies that an evaluation may have. Formative and process evaluation will use existing data for a different purpose than outcome data. The table below details some of the use that data may have depending upon the type of evaluation that is being undertaken.

Evaluation Type	Potential Data	Example Data Use
Formative and Process Evaluation that provides information for programme development	Internally generated data Compare activity attendance rates	Has the capital build programme resulted in higher levels of attendance than compared with previous venues?
Outcome or Impact Evaluation that provides insight into programme achievements and effectiveness	Internally and externally generated data e.g. parental engagement with oral health programme and data from health regarding extractions	Has there been a decrease in the number of tooth extractions in children under 4 in the Sure Start area that may be attributed to the SSLP Oral Health Programme?

Different research and evaluation questions respond to different layers and types of evaluation. Each relies upon the other to build up a complete picture of the programme activity. Reporting the impacts of services without some reference to the productivity means that programmes may miss out on opportunities to convey real features of the programmes effectiveness.

## 5.2 Using reach and productivity data in evaluation

A great deal of effort and resource within local programmes is exerted in collecting reliable and timely data about the characteristics of the programme population and the number of families being reached. Incorporating these data within the evaluation report provides readers of the report with information about the productivity of the programme. This is of particular importance when the evaluation comes to look at cost effectiveness across different programme activity areas. Often the data are collected with the view that the information is needed elsewhere. Yet the most useful place for its use is within the programme itself. If a local programme is looking to evaluate a particular service, a description of those who participate, how many have benefited from that service, the amount of material that has been distributed all convey the direct outputs of a particular service and should be recorded.

Different types of evaluation questions can be answered by including existing data that the programme has collected over time. These include:

- Counting
  - How often does each family registered with the programme use a particular service?
  - How many different families use a service?
  - How many parents/children use more than one service?
  - What combinations of services are most popular with families?
  - Which are the most popular services?
- Profiling
  - Which families are using the service in terms of age, gender, socio-economic status, marital status and ethnic origin?
  - Which families are not reached? For example, is the library based 'Story Time For Toddlers' reaching those mothers who work? Is the fathers group denying access to some Dads because it meets during the day?
  - What percentage of the ethnic population in the SSLP geographical area engages with the programme?
- Tracking
  - What happens to families after they have used a service? For example how has a confidence-building course moved participants towards work or training?
  - Do parents involved in a service change their behaviour? For example does participation in a literacy project 'Give Babies Books' result in a greater likelihood that parents will read with their children when they are aged 3? By accessing information on attendance, evaluators are able to develop a sampling strategy that may answer this important research question. Without reliable monitoring data the sampling could

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not be undertaken and this important area might not be investigated.

#### Tracking Parents Achievements Using Programme Data

It has already been stated that SSLP should be collecting data on who attends the activities. Providing consent has been gained at registration it may be possible to track activities attended and to assess the 'distance travelled' by parents from their first contact with the programme. For example as a result of volunteering have any parents progressed to undertaking any of the training available with the programme? Data collected from attendance at various programme activities will give a profile of certain members of the SSLP. Indeed it may be worthwhile undertaking a case study, particularly if the process of engagement with Sure Start services has resulted in work. The case study could incorporate a description of the individual's personal 'journey' supported with some qualitative data around the impact of such an experience. Some Sure Start Programmes have successfully seen parents travel from confidence building classes, through volunteering and onwards into childcare training.

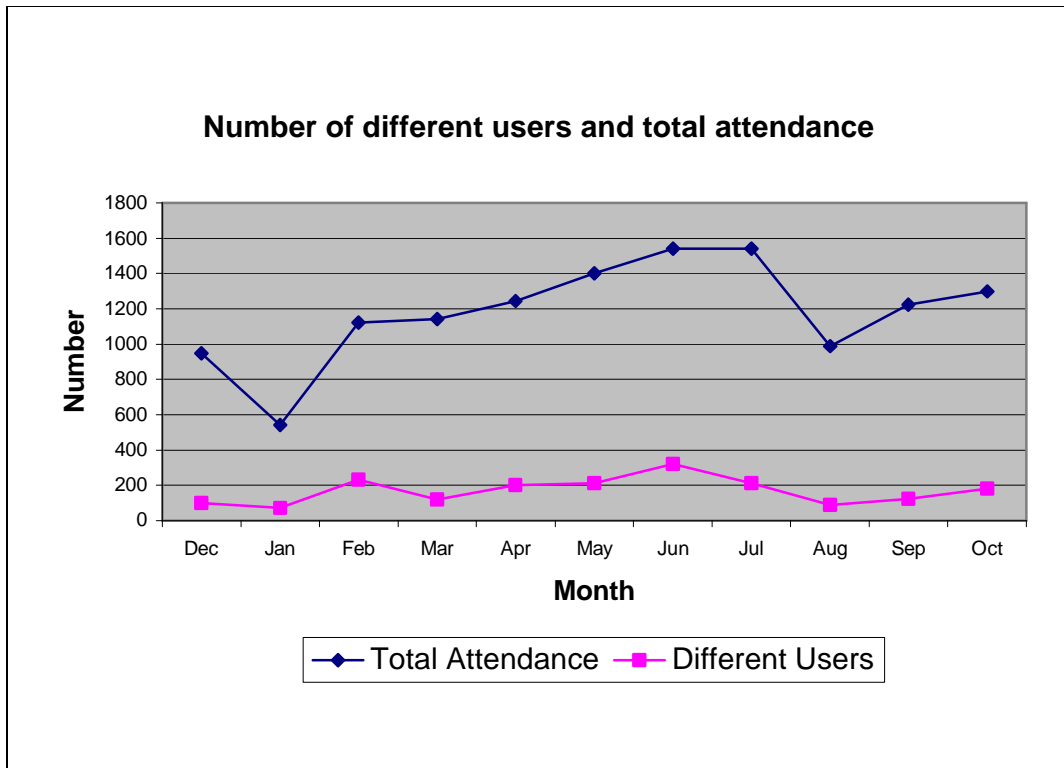
#### Who uses the services?

Additional analysis of existing programme held data could provide genuine insight into the children and families using the services provided. One programme wanted to see if local opinion was right in that people in the Sure Start area 'don't do groups'.

The programme analysed data by looking at the total attendance and how many of those who participated were new or different. By examining this distribution the programme discovered that there was a small number of members who use services on a regular basis and account for a very high percentage of overall service usage. In fact out of 28 services provided by the programme analysis showed that 3% of users accounted for 37% for all attendance at groups.

The programme is now asking questions such as: Are those who attend groups those most in need? The characteristics often attributed to the hard to reach, for example unlikely to come to groups, may require the programme to focus the provision of services in a slightly different way. The programme may also conclude that once new members have gone to groups or activities a few times they become regular participants.

**Figure 2. Number of new attendees at Sure Start Local Programme Activities**



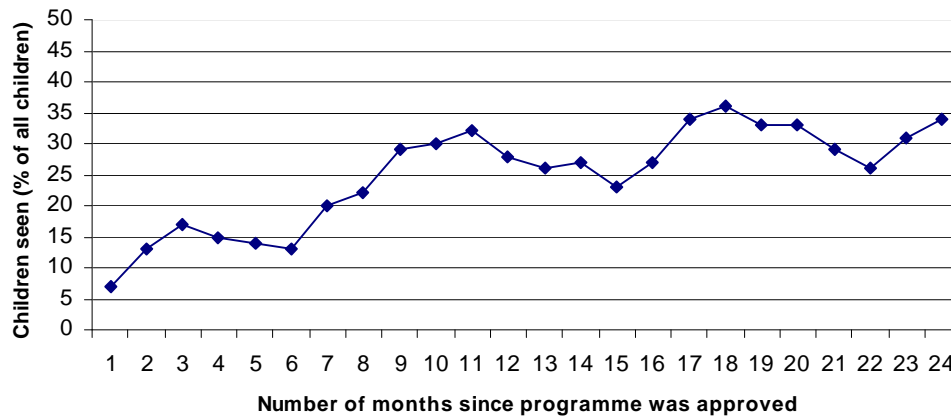
Displaying data in a graphic form such as in the example in figure 2 above is a very useful way of illustrating the information routinely collected within a Sure Start programme. In this way different items of data can be 'pieced together' in order to help answer the kinds of questions a Sure Start programme may ask in order to help reflect on its progress and plan effective services.

Visual displays such as graphs, bar charts or pie charts help to reveal any patterns or trends that appear in data in a very clear way.

Figure 3 is a graph displaying a series of monthly data on the number of 0-4 (i.e. up to their 4th birthday) year-old children (or their parents, or their families) having a significant uptake of Sure Start services as a proportion of all 0-4 year-old children within a programme area. The individual items of data, which have been 'pieced together' to form Figure 3, are:

- Number of 0-4 year-old children living within the programme area.
- Number of 0-4 year-old children (or their parents or their families) having a significant uptake of Sure Start services (e.g. a home visit or a centre based activity) each month since the programme was approved.

**Figure 3. Eligible children seen as a percentage of the population in the Sure Start Programme Area**



- Each data point on figure 2 displays a percentage calculated by dividing each monthly figure for number of 0-4 year-old children (or their parents or their families) having a significant uptake of Sure Start services by the total number of 0-4 year-old children living within the programme area.
- Each percentage has been plotted on the vertical axis of the graph ('Children seen') against the relevant month on the horizontal axis of the graph ('Number of months since programme was approved').
- Next, the data points have been joined together using a series of straight lines to create a trend line which allows the reader to see how the 'reach' of the programme has progressed over the time since it began.

Sure Start St Ann's went one stage further and compared the children up to 4 who were accessing services with those of other programmes in the same round and within the region as a whole (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4 Percentage of all Children Accessing Programme Services**

<b><u>% of all children accessing programmes (Mar 2003)</u></b>						
	% of < 2 months	% of 0-1	% of 1-2	% of 2-3	% of 3-4	% of all < 4
SSSA	100	46	25	17	12	38
East mid SS	100	31	21	20	28	44
Wave 2 SS	76	28	22	25	25	25

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### Presenting information on graphs

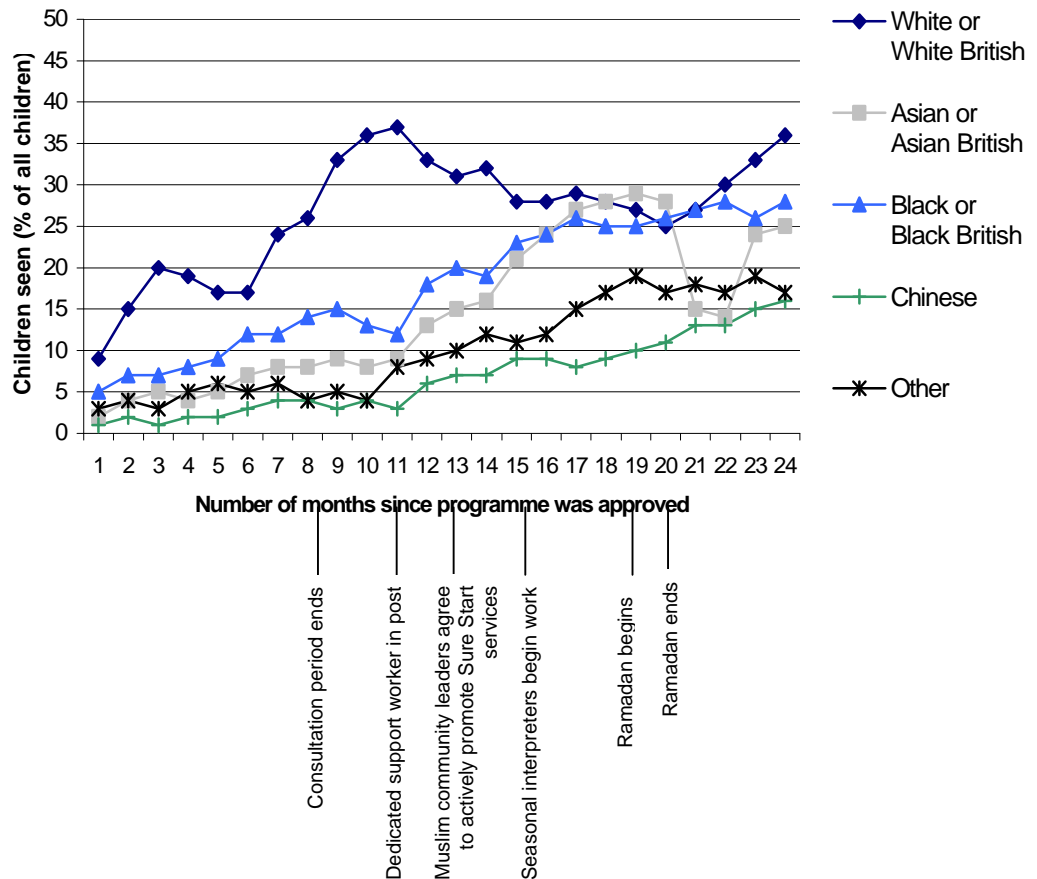
Figure 5 again uses all of the same data items that were 'pieced together' to form Figure 3, but additionally breaks down the 'number of children having a significant uptake of services' by ethnicity. Also, key dates have been superimposed onto the graph to create a time-line against which to assess the impact of the innovations introduced. To be really meaningful this data should be presented as the % of different ethnic groups seen as a proportion of the total numbers in that particular ethnic group rather than overall numbers of children.

It can be seen from Figure 4 that marked increases in the uptake of Sure Start services amongst children of minority ethnicity coincided with the appointment of a dedicated support worker and that this growth was sustained following the implementation of interpreting facilities.

- At the same time, the rate of uptake of services amongst white communities remained stable between fifteen and eighteen months following approval of the programme.
- However, it is also apparent that the increase in uptake of services amongst ethnic communities began prior to fifteen months following approval – in fact immediately following the consultation period.
- This may suggest that the consultation exercise was itself instrumental in producing a greater awareness and subsequently use of Sure Start services amongst the ethnic communities.
- It is also noticeable that a sharp increase in uptake of services amongst the Asian community followed an agreement with local Muslim leaders that they would actively encourage the publicising of Sure Start services through religious venues. It is equally noticeable that a sharp drop-off in uptake of services amongst Asian children coincided with the month of Ramadan, although levels of uptake remained higher than during the period prior to the consultation process.

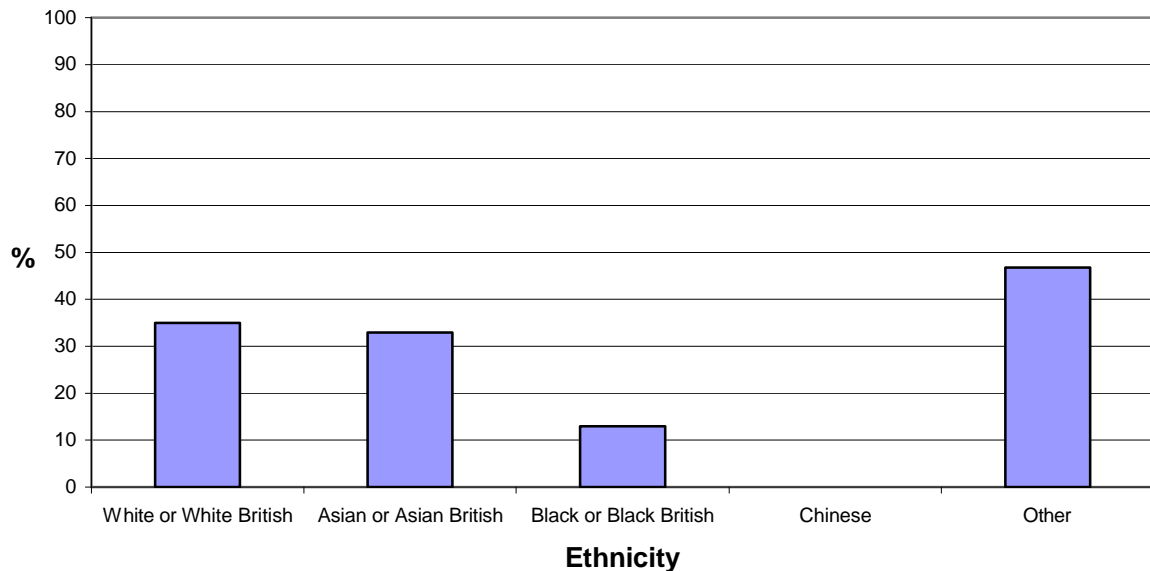


**Figure 4. Children seen as a percentage of the child population in the Sure Start Programme Area by ethnicity**



Overall, a great deal of important management information is evident using the visual form of a relatively simple graph. Displaying data in this way has produced some convincing supporting evidence in favour of both the hypothesis and also in relation to the effectiveness of the interventions implemented to encourage the uptake of services amongst ethnic minority children and their families.

However it is important not just to know about the ethnic mix accessing SSLP services but what percentage the totals as a proportion of the ethnic population in a Sure Start area are. This can be presented as a bar chart produced using the existing data relating to the ethnicity within the programme population. This enables the programme to calculate a percentage of those eligible by ethnicity actually attending.

**Figure 5. Percentage of total ethnic population seen in month**

The graph illustrates the following reach percentages:

White or White British	35
Asian or Asian British	33
Black or Black British	13
Chinese	0
Other	47

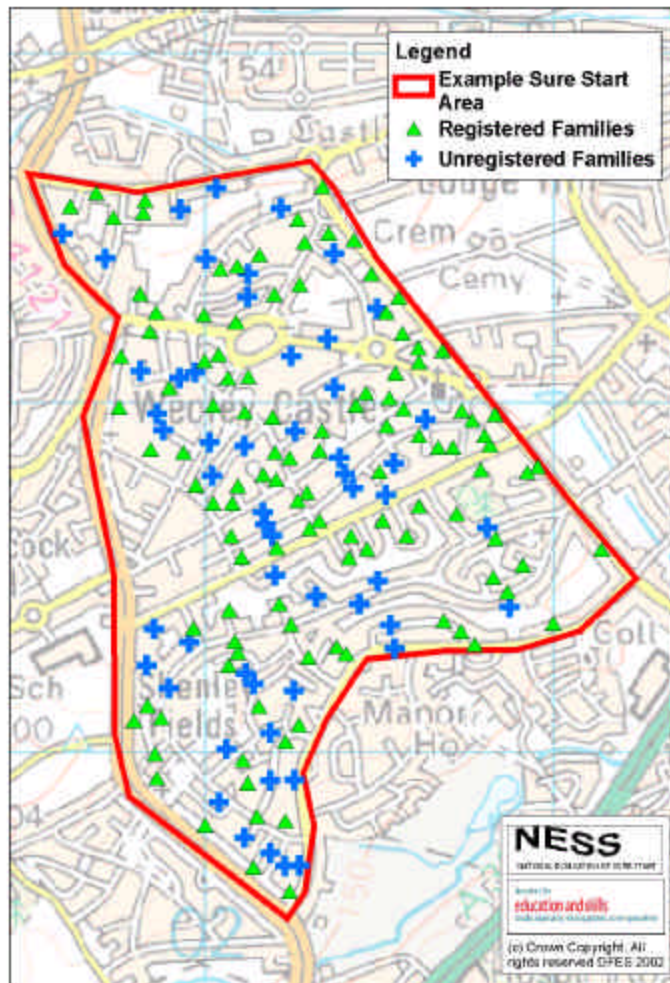
Figure 4 is informative from the point of view that it reveals that effort still needs to be made in reaching the various populations that make up a programme's ethnic profile. Programmes routinely collect data relating to ethnicity and some estimation of the population can be made from the ethnicity statistics from the 2001 Census.

## 5.2 Using maps to Display Reach Data

So far in this section, we have looked at using visual display via the example of reach and attendance data graph format. Using creative ways of displaying other forms of data can increase the impact of existing data for particular audiences. For example plotting on a map where the families live in the programme area is a useful way of displaying the dispersion of families within the locality. Using one colour to identify the location of families, then changing the colour once the family have become members of the programme may give some graphic detail of where those families who are not engaging with the programme are located. Questions can then be asked about the reasons for

such disengagement such as distance from the Sure Start building. Figure 5 provides an illustration of a map for this purpose, detailing stage one, i.e. the plotting of families with children under 4.

Figure 5. Map of SSLP target population



The use of graphics enables programmes and evaluations to summarise information and one good graphic can have much more impact than many words. The few illustrations provided here are just scratching the surface of various ways in which data can be displayed. Creative data displays increase the accessibility of evaluation findings to a wider audience and draw people's attention to things that they otherwise miss by not reading the text in some reports.

Much has been said in this guidance about the use of existing data in evaluation and programme development. Careful thought about how the data is displayed will ensure the successful transmission of relevant information. Think of alternatives and maximise the impact that data will

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have on your audiences. If it is something that you feel it worthwhile sharing, do all you can to make sure it is seen.

### **Using Existing Data to measure progress towards Sure Start National and Local Targets**

As well as using the data from other agencies to develop needs led services some data are particularly suitable for measuring progress towards Sure Start targets. At the national level data for the PSA/SDA will be used by the Sure Start Unit to collate targets for 2004-2006. It remains important that programmes assess and measure the effectiveness of programme activity at the local level by assessing the progress they are making towards their targets. There will be a need for example to ensure that progress is made towards the health targets of smoking in pregnancy and breastfeeding rates and duration. These data can be sourced through various health agencies and will depend on local circumstances. Health agencies are charged with collecting key data around the target areas included in Sure Start Local Programmes SDA's. Working with the information provided by professionals in health enables programmes to gain regular updated information on changes that occur over time in smoking cessation rates etc. Programmes therefore are able to monitor the impact of their programme outputs by examining changes recorded in the secondary data. When this data is coupled with other evaluation methods a complete picture of the quality of the programmes outputs and impacts can be made and reported.

#### **Successful Smoking Interventions?**

Data collected by health services colleagues about smoking cessation rates can be of great use to the programme. Smoking in Pregnancy rates can be compared by the programme area to cessation rates across a PCT. This may give an assessment of the additionality that the Sure Start initiatives may be having on the rates with SSLP target population. This data can be accessed across time to see if any differentials between PCT wide data and Sure Start area data can be detected. Further sub analysis could be undertaken by the programme to examine the profile of those attended Smoking Cessation activities in the programme, comparing rates, estimating, and extrapolating the effects to a wider population.

Examples from Sure Start Cannock Chase in the West Midlands and Westminster, Church Street in London illustrate the benefit of integrating existing data and evaluation to inform the re-shaping of services.

Example 1.  
Cannock Chase

Existing Data to Frame the Evaluation Question

The monitoring and evaluation team working with Sure Start Cannock Chase conducted a review of secondary data supplied by the local PCT. Their question was 'Are Dental Checks being taken up in the programme area? Their analysis indicated that, within the programme area, the rate of uptake of six-monthly dental checks for 0-4 year olds was low compared to the county average

Service Delivery

The programme decided to address this low uptake by funding a new dental programme that would equip a temporary surgery in a location judged to be easily accessible to the target group of families. This was based on the underlying assumption being that poor access to dental services was the main reason for the relative lack of uptake. A dentist would be made available to provide consultation and advice to parents four mornings per month.

Evaluation using existing data supplemented with qualitative methods.

The new evaluation question was then, 'has the change in service provision led to improved uptake?' Further analysis of monitoring data revealed that uptake of six-monthly dental checks had remained at a similarly low level over the period following implementation of the new dental programme.

A series of short opportunistic qualitative interviews with the target group of parents revealed that the initial assumption about poor access was mistaken. It emerged that in the main, parents were not taking children for checks due to widely held and deeply embedded perceptions, which related to parents own memory of dental checks during childhood. Parents reported that going to the dentist (the experience of being of being in a surgery) was likely to be a stressful and intimidating environment for their children and represented 'something to be avoided unless absolutely necessary'.

Service Delivery

In order to address this issues in the delivery of the services, resources were made available to provide dental screening through regular visits by the dentists to local playgroups, aiming to offer the same consultation and advice but in a much less institutional setting.

Evaluation

The next evaluation question which will again be answerable using existing

service uptake data, will be 'Has the second service change led to increased up take?'

This process of service delivery started with the examination of existing data from a partner organisation. The data highlighted an area that the programme thought it could impact upon. Evaluation of the service implementation refined and refocused the way the dental programme was being delivered, demonstrating the very close synergy between evaluation, service planning and delivery and the assessment of impacts.

Example 2.  
Westminster, Church Street

This programme undertook a retrospective analysis of existing data concerning the caseload at the local health centre for Speech and Language services. This analysis was for the period prior to the establishment of the SSLP and revealed poor uptake of service with frequent non-attendance for previously made appointments. The evaluation also examined the demographic characteristics of families taking up the Speech and Language services, the waiting time and the take up rate. A new speech and language service was implemented once Sure Start had become established. This included telephone contact and making full use of interpreter services to make the first appointment. Service users could meet the therapists in their own homes or at the clinic should they wish. Case records were examined again and demographic characteristics of families were again studied, take up rate, referral source and number of contacts with each referral. The evaluation revealed that this new method of service delivery improved the uptake of services.

The development of innovative services often relies on access to existing data to illuminate what has happened in the past. Evaluation then can examine changes that may result from the introduction of a new service and try to measure the short-term impact of such changes

### Using Library Statistics

Library Services are often involved in Sure Start programmes featuring heavily in the objective area of improving the ability to learn. Regular reporting of library registrations and borrowing gives programmes an indication of how they are moving towards increasing the number of children accessing the library and becoming regular borrowers.

For example, does holding other groups in the library facility encourage more people to join the library and become regular users and borrowers?

Do bringing books to borrow into the crèche environments impact upon

borrowing patterns for the target population?

Does linking the library service with the toy library service increase borrowing rates?

Using data from the library service over time, supported by qualitative data collected by the evaluation will provide an assessment of how services are impacting upon a target area.

#### Gaining contextual information from existing data

The Census of Population 2001 is now available and the programmes, through their local authority partners, may already have had access to this data. This census is a significant resource of existing data relevant to Sure Start local evaluation, not least since some data has been made available for small output areas, which are areas around 20 times smaller than wards (approximately 150 households) and so likely to be a better match for SS areas.

Examples of data items that will be available include:

- age by gender and resident type, (including 0-4 years),
- age of family reference person
- number and age of dependent children by family type and gender and
- age by economic activity.

Of course Census data are only available every ten years and as such can become dated very quickly. However this is the first time that small area outputs have been available. There are wide ranges of variables that can be cross-tabulated to reveal some interesting information about these small areas in the SSLP area.

It is also possible to see how particular areas differ from others. This can be particularly useful in identifying pockets of disadvantage and this may be pertinent with the way SSLP will need to work with children's centres to support the types of services that Sure Start delivers so well. The data will also allow further analyses of the programmes population. Below is an example of how you might use the data available from this source.

#### Example

Sure Start Sedgemoor, Bridgwater

Sure Start Bridgwater has started to examine their programme area by census output areas in detail. For example they have already identified one output area in their programme boundary with a high ratio of lone parents. It was also noted that the output area data from the census also reported low

levels of educational attainment. The programme is considering ways in which this information can result in some targeted services being offered in this area. It may be that publicity about the new neighbourhood nursery to facilitate access to training or college could be undertaken, or the programme supports basic skills courses provided by the local authority.

The information will lead to closer working with other agencies to address what the existing data has revealed. This process will also inform the evaluation strategy that will run in tandem with the implementation of any new service. The evaluation then can truly focus on short-term impacts that materially affect the quality of life for those living in a Sure Start Local Programme area.

Using approaches such as those detailed in previous examples, it is possible to report on the results of participation for various people, be that as a case study or perhaps a cohort study. Additionally existing data sources such as those held by the local authority, basic skills agency and statistics from the Department for Work and Pensions about lone parents may complete the picture of how such targeted services are making an impact.

The census information can also update start point data that was used in the original delivery plans and subsequent baseline surveys. This in itself can demonstrate the changes that have occurred in a particular area since the 1991 census. For example many programmes would have used ethnicity data from the 1991 census in their delivery plan. Updating this data from the 2001 census will provide much more relevant and useful data for the purposes of service planning for programmes that started between 2000 and 2004. The census also provides an up to date resource of what is happening in the programme locality adding a further mechanism whereby existing time relevant data can be used to inform the decision making process of the programme.

The Census is the only survey that captures benchmark information for all people and households in the country. Although there have been some problems with under-counting and a recorded 94% response rate, it is the most complete source of the number of adults and children in the country, and as such can be used for current (2001) denominators.

It uniquely asks questions on a variety of topics including demography, health, housing, employment and transport. These are disseminated as single and cross-referenced variables to provide a wealth of detailed information on people and their circumstances that is vital for policy and research.

This dissemination down to the small area level – the output area which consists of approximately 125 households and a degree of homogeneity and offers a smaller flexible building block to allocate Census data to Area-Based Initiatives.



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Statutory and Voluntary Agencies are also able to supply data that can add to the contextual picture of the Sure Start Area. For example local Housing Associations and other social landlords regularly undertake surveys of their tenants. Using the National Housing Federations STATUS Survey the outputs usually include a profile of tenants by household composition, gender, ethnicity and income sources. Additionally information about satisfaction with the area in which they live is generally included. Many measures may act as good proxies for adding contextual information of what is happening in your Sure Start Local Programme area. For example lack of migration from the area may be associated with satisfaction with the services that are now available from Sure Start, particularly in the SSLP target age groups. This data can be used to add to the profile that the census data has informed.

Local Authorities also undertake a range of survey and consultations that can add to the contextual information about the SSLP area. For example Crime Audits are regularly undertaken which will include information about the Sure Start Local Programme area. Other community surveys will also be conducted from time to time.

Colleagues in health also involve themselves in conducting surveys both as part of a national programme and also as part of their own consultative processes. Again discussions with the health representatives on your partnership board will prove useful.

#### Health Equity Audits

Health Equity Audits have to undertaken by PCT's. These audits reflect the intention to deliver appropriate service to those who need it most. Health Equity Audits are used to consider the health needs of a particular group, taking into account one dimension of inequality, for example age, disability, geography and ethnicity. The reasons why these audits are useful to the programme and in particular evaluation are that the completion of an equity profile relies on baseline data collation and analysis. It is likely that Sure Start programmes will feature in such audits. They will become a useful tool in gaining some objective assessment of how the programme is providing services that are based on need. The results of such audits will be available from PCT partners.

The audits can also be used to provide information on need. For example East Region Public Health Observatory in conjunction with the teenage pregnancy coordinators completed an East of England profile of teenage conception rates and child poverty.

Wards that were ranked according to child poverty compared the relative rates of teenage conception for those under 16. The most deprived wards showed a teenage conception rate of more than 6 times that of the least deprived. As such this data reveals a health inequality and could provide SSLP's with a reason to reflect upon the services they are targeting to teenage mothers and evaluate them.

Health Equity Audits will also regularly monitor the progress in overcoming these inequalities.

Using existing data and the data routinely collected by the programme is part of the evaluative process. The data can readily inform the productivity of the programme and its progress towards targets and objectives. However sometimes data derived from other sources will be required for an effective interpretation of how the programme is functioning. A programme became concerned that on the face of it the Occupational Therapist Service they had commissioned was not very productive, based on the monthly contact returns. However further investigation revealed that the worker was offering intensive support to two families with complex needs and the benefits received by the family were impressive. Qualitative evaluation further endorsed the true value of what had been achieved. It is worth just keeping in mind that one still needs to ask critical questions of monitoring and existing data. The numbers sometimes only tell part of the story.

## 6. Further Support.

The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) team provides help and advice to programmes on carrying out their local evaluations. This includes a NESS Regional Support Officer (RSO) assigned to each region. Your RSO will be able to provide advice and information on a range of issues covered in this report, including methodologies, data collection and analysis, report writing, dissemination and the use of evaluation findings. The list of RSOs is included in appendix 4 for your information.

Accompanying this guidance will be a workshop programme that will examine the issues raised in this document and provide further training on incorporating existing data in SSLP's local evaluation. The dates of those workshops in your region will be conveyed to you, as workshops are organised.

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*Appendix 1***Sure Start specific data management systems**

There are many Sure Start data management systems to choose from. Programmes need to reflect the data requirement needs for both monitoring and evaluation. This means that when deciding upon a system the programme should consider:

- Programme Management Needs
- Service Delivery
- Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements

Systems will need to offer flexibility in order ensure the information and data analysis needs of the programme are met. It is always worthwhile talking to other programmes and see how they feel about the software they are using.

**E-START**

<b>Software</b>	Microsoft Access 2000 or later
<b>Hardware</b>	Standalone PC or networked PCS and Hand held PCs
<b>Language</b>	Visual Basic
<b>Database design</b>	Relational
<b>Price</b>	A number of integrated products are available as part of the product range including handheld computers. The price for the database only is £3250 site licence including user testing, initial training and training manual. There is an annual maintenance charge of £690. Upgrades are free. Full solution (to use hand holds) is £5480, maintenance £1310. All prices plus vat.
<b>Support</b>	Telephone support
<b>Backups</b>	Programme responsibility
<b>Security levels</b>	Hierarchy from view only to full administrator rights
Information held	
• Details of children	Yes
• Details of households	Yes
• Activities	Yes
• Local milestones	Yes
• SDA and PSA targets	Yes
• Sure Start objectives	No
• Attendance register	Yes
• Audit trail of status history	Yes
• Children marked as dead	Yes
<b>Merging of duplicate records</b>	Yes
<b>Financial facilities</b>	No

<b>Reports</b>	Wide range including M3 monthly return
<b>Tracking activities</b>	Yes.
<b>Mail outs (templates)</b>	Mail merge capability
<b>Electronic returns</b>	Yes
<b>Audit trail of status history</b>	Yes
<b>Contact</b>	CPFR Solutions
<b>Contact telephone</b>	0870 740 1315
<b>Contact email</b>	<a href="mailto:mail@cpfrs.com">mail@cpfrs.com</a>
<b>Contact web site</b>	<a href="http://www.cpfrs.com">www.cpfrs.com</a>

*Miscellaneous:* Allows information to be held on non-Sure Start children. Breadth of functionality including post code look up software.

## JNA CONSULTING LTD

<b>Software</b>	Database is SQL Server
<b>Hardware</b>	Equipment neutral as this system is web-based. The system is also browser neutral.
<b>Language</b>	ASP
<b>Database design</b>	Relational
<b>Price</b>	£6,500 site licence. Site includes all agencies involved in Sure Start in the area and all users in those agencies. £3,500/year for hosting, support and all developments/upgrades.
<b>Support</b>	Telephone support 8:30 am – 5:30 pm. Support includes new feature requests.
<b>Backups</b>	Centralised data storage; backups included in support
<b>Security levels</b>	Tiered security model with different privileges at user, project and function level. Token based authentication available on request,

### Information held

• Details of children	Yes
• Details of households	Yes
• Activities	Yes
• Local milestones	Yes
• SDA and PSA targets	Yes
• Sure Start objectives	Yes
• Attendance register	Yes
• Audit trail of status history	Yes
• Children marked as dead	Yes
<b>Merging of duplicate records</b>	Yes
<b>Financial facilities</b>	Yes. Comprehensive financial facilities including actual/ planned income for each project within the programme and financial

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<b>Reports</b>	reports for Sure Start Unit.
<b>Tracking activities</b>	Wide range including M3 monthly return
	Yes. Including linking activities to milestones, targets, and objectives
<b>Mail outs (templates)</b>	Yes
<b>Electronic returns</b>	CSV and XML download
<b>Audit trail of status history</b>	Yes
<b>Contact</b>	Barry Nicola
<b>Contact telephone</b>	01865 305000
<b>Contact email</b>	<a href="mailto:bnicola@jnaconsulting.com">bnicola@jnaconsulting.com</a>
<b>Contact web site</b>	<a href="http://www.jnaconsulting.com">www.jnaconsulting.com</a>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Allows information to be held on non-Sure Start children. Breadth of functionality allows you to create and maintain your own public facing web site.

## MCA

<b>Software</b>	Microsoft Access 97/2000 or XP
<b>Hardware</b>	Standalone PC or networked PCS
<b>Language</b>	Visual Basic for Application
<b>Database design</b>	Relational
<b>Price</b>	£5,000 site licence
	£1,100 per year maintenance and upgrades
<b>Support</b>	First 3 months free telephone and email support with optional yearly maintenance which includes telephone and email support plus membership of user group.
<b>Backups</b>	Programme responsibility to back up daily
<b>Security levels</b>	Access Password Security
Information held	
• Details of children	Yes
• Details of households	Yes
• Activities	Yes
• Local milestones	No
• SDA and PSA targets	No
• Sure Start objectives	Yes
• Attendance register	Yes
• Audit trail of status history	Yes
• Children marked as dead	Yes
<b>Merging of duplicate records</b>	Yes
<b>Financial facilities</b>	Limited
<b>Reports</b>	Wide range including M3 monthly return
<b>Mail outs/templates</b>	Yes. Wide range
<b>Electronic returns</b>	Under development
<b>Contact</b>	Phil Meggs

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<b>Contact telephone</b>	020 8826 0044
<b>Contact email</b>	<a href="mailto:phil@m-c-a.co.uk">phil@m-c-a.co.uk</a>
<b>Contact web site</b>	<a href="http://www.m-c-a.co.uk">www.m-c-a.co.uk</a>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Also holds other data areas including details of service providers, partners and stakeholders, enquiry logging, monitoring and other sure start programmes. System currently used by 23 Sure Start programme details provided upon request

### SMARTSTART (SOFT SMART)

<b>Software</b>	Microsoft Access
<b>Hardware</b>	Standalone PC or networked PCS
<b>Language</b>	Visual Basic
<b>Database design</b>	Relational
<b>Price</b>	A number of integrated products are available as part of the product range including barcode reader hardware and handheld computers. The price for the database only is £1975 site licence including Installation, initial training, user manual and free upgrades to new versions. There is a £495 per year fee for support.
<b>Support</b>	Telephone support, email support and use of a dedicated website to provide support and downloadable upgrades, user forum and frequently asked questions.
<b>User Forums</b>	User meetings held across the country, incorporating a training review, sharing of best practice and provide users with a platform to discuss and influence future product developments.
<b>Backups</b>	Sure Start programme responsible for backing up data
<b>Security levels</b>	2 levels; only the administrator has access to report, mail merge and systems administration facilities

#### Information held

• Details of children	Yes
• Details of households	Yes
• Activities	Yes
• Personal relationships	Yes
• Local milestones	Yes
• SDA and PSA targets	Yes
• Sure Start objectives	Yes
• Attendance register	Yes
• Audit trail of status history	No
• Children marked as dead	Yes
<b>Merging of duplicate records</b>	Yes

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<b>Financial facilities</b>	No
<b>Reports</b>	M3 monthly return, Graphs and charts, PSA/SDA Target reviews. Flexible report building utilities.
<b>Mail outs/templates</b>	Yes
<b>Electronic returns</b>	M3, others under development
<b>Contact</b>	Paul Richards
<b>Contact telephone</b>	01323 419682
<b>Contact email</b>	<a href="mailto:info@softsmart.co.uk">info@softsmart.co.uk</a>
<b>Contact web site</b>	<a href="http://www.softsmart.co.uk">www.softsmart.co.uk</a>

### SOUTH COAST SURE START SYSTEMS

<b>Software</b>	Microsoft Access
<b>Hardware</b>	Standalone PC or networked PCS
<b>Language</b>	Visual Basic
<b>Database design</b>	Relational
<b>Price</b>	£2000 site licence (£1800 from 01/04/03). Upgrades cost £200 - £350.
<b>Support</b>	£40.00 per hour. Notification and implementation of any free upgrades, installation and training, telephone support
<b>Security levels</b>	No
Information held	
• Details of children	Yes
• Details of households	Yes
• Activities	Yes
• Personal relationships	Yes parent-child only
• Local milestones	No
• SDA and PSA targets	No
• Sure Start objectives	No
• Attendance register	Yes
• Audit trail of status history	No
• Children marked as dead	No
<b>Merging of duplicate records</b>	Yes
<b>Financial facilities</b>	No
<b>Reports</b>	Range, including M1 and M3 monitoring returns
<b>Mail outs/templates</b>	Yes, basic
<b>Electronic returns</b>	To be developed
<b>Backups</b>	Programme responsibility
<b>Contact</b>	Daren Headley
<b>Contact telephone</b>	01273 389521 07801 553019
<b>Contact email</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@itswebmagic.co.uk">enquiries@itswebmagic.co.uk</a>
<b>Contact web site</b>	<a href="http://www.itswebmagic.co.uk/database/">www.itswebmagic.co.uk/database/</a>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Also holds postcodes, Sure Start

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staff details

## 6. Other systems:

### **Durham County Council SureStart Database**

Contact Craig Hopkins on 0191 383 3801 or e-mail

[Craig.Hopkins@durham.gov.uk](mailto:Craig.Hopkins@durham.gov.uk)

Surepoint

Contact Pete Buckley at PACSis on 01482 609071 or e-mail

[peteb@pacsis.co.uk](mailto:peteb@pacsis.co.uk) or visit [www.pacsis.co.uk](http://www.pacsis.co.uk)

### **Sure Start Coningham**

Contact John Prentice, who is involved in the evaluation of Sure Start Coningham in the London Region [john.prentice@nch.org.uk](mailto:john.prentice@nch.org.uk). This database forces evaluation at each appropriate stage of service delivery, matches services to Sure Start objectives and targets and provides a simple means by which to assess the reach of each service. It is capable of generating a 'to do' checklist to help manage service delivery and the evaluation process or a series of attendance registers to record use of services by individual children and families. It prompts the user to input questions which can generate user satisfaction surveys to a standardised format where required. Whilst this database is at a relatively early stage of development, discussion with any programmes with an interest in systems that can help to manage the local evaluation process is welcomed.



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## **Appendix 2. An example of an Inter Agency Protocol**

This is an example of an inter agency protocol. It provides illustrations of what you might want to include in such an agreement. This document seeks to set out some necessary principles to underpin the collection of data and dissemination of information so that all involved may work in an open, co-operative and professional manner.

### **1. Background**

Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) have been established in order to promote physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children so that they can flourish at home and when they get to school. This is achieved by offering:

- Outreach & home visiting
- Support for families and parents
- Access to good quality play, learning and childcare experience for children
- Primary care and health, including advice about child health and development
- Support for Children and families with special needs, including access to specialised services

Sure Start is a collaborative enterprise with partners from statutory,, voluntary and community agencies coming together to achieve the objectives set out above. In conjunction with this is the fact that Sure Start is contributing to partner organisations work in meeting specific targets as laid down in various frameworks. Much of Sure Starts work features the wider public health agenda in promoting better outcomes for parents and children in those areas of greatest challenge and need.

### **2. Purpose of the protocol**

To define parameters for the sharing of information, which relates to named individuals, the purposes for holding personal data, how those data should be held and who should have access. It also seeks to establish a partnership in terms of access to aggregated data that will facilitate programmes planning and delivering their services and monitoring progress towards the targets laid down by central government.

### **3. Introduction**

A range of partners collects and holds data that are relevant for the performance management of SSLP. Sure Start local programmes are required to conduct local evaluation into how well the services they are providing are meeting the needs of the families it serves. To that end data are often required to assess the impacts that the programme is

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having in its geographical locality, For example data are required at regular intervals on:

Childcare Facilities  
Childcare Places  
Changes in Unemployment rates in SSLP Areas  
Speech and Language Development  
Breast Feeding Patterns  
Smoking in households before and after birth  
Library Usage Statistics

There are instances where named data are required:

In order for SSLP to meet the requirement of offering services to pregnant and new mothers there is a data requirement for names and addresses of women, who are pregnant, newborn children, families with children under 4, resident and moving into SSLP areas.

#### **4. Data collection process**

SSLP recognise that a range of agencies collect routinely the data that can support SSLP in assessing progress to targets and ensuring that all parents are offered access to the core services detailed above. Whilst SSLP has set up systems for monitoring some of their activity there remains a significant need to work with partners to share information.

#### **5. Data sharing principles**

The data to be shared divides into the following:

##### **5.1 Aggregated Data to assist Strategic Planning and Reporting**

Consideration will need to be made of the following point:

- Aggregated data required from partner or organisations
- Authority/purpose(s) for acquiring each set of data
- Aggregated data to be produced
- Purposes for which the data will be used
- Data recipients – details of organisations or individuals who will have access to or receive information
- How data can be accessed and shared by partner organisations subscribing to this protocol, including details of any proposed embargo or proposed specific restrictions on use

##### **5.2 Personal Data**

It is anticipated that the organisations subscribing to this

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Protocol will need to agree a minimum of personal data to be shared – see 7.

### 5.3 Sensitive Data

Sensitive data can only be collected and shared, in accordance with the legal requirements detailed in Appendix 1 of this protocol. Sensitive data held on the database should be shared only between those professionals directly supporting the client. Sensitive data should be held on the organisation's individual database except in the event of client referral to another organisation. Data on ethnicity and special needs (Disability Discrimination Act codes) is categorised as sensitive data. The use of this data on individuals is restricted to the following reasons:

- To monitor any patterns of disadvantage or discrimination that correlate to membership of a particular group.

This type of data is not required by the Sure Start Local Programmes at the present moment.

## 6. Data Exchange

It is intended to establish an Information Calendar detailing the information that is required on a quarterly basis. Partners will be asked to run queries based upon postcode areas of the SSLP. The intention is that data is shared electronically between SSLP through one nominated Information Officer, who is conversant with the protocol and the parameters under which the data can be used.

## 7. Data Requirements & Controls

This is an illustration of what might be included in this section. It mostly focuses on health related requirements. It is important to include the frequency that the data is required. This should be sufficient for the programmes monitoring needs but not too frequent as to become a burden to the agency providing such information

<b>Data Requirement</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Breast Feeding Rates	SSLP Performance Monitoring	Health Informatics Service/PCT	Quarterly
Smoking in Pregnancy and	Monitoring Requirement by	Health Informatics	Quarterly

Postnatal Rates	Sure Start Unit and programme assessment of impact of services	Service	
Unemployment Rates	SSLP Performance Monitoring	Job Centre Plus	Quarterly

Controls:

Data held on one PC per programme under control of Information Officer. Data Password protected. All paper copies held under lock and key.

***Personal Data required for all Sure Start Local Programmes***

<b>Data Requirement</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
New Pregnant Mothers in SSLP areas	Service delivery Monitoring	Health Informatics Service	Monthly
New births and children under 4 in SSLP areas	Service delivery Monitoring	Health Informatics Service	Monthly

Controls:

Data held on one PC per programme under control of Information Officer. Data Password protected. All paper copies held under lock and key. Contact with parents and parents to be will be conducted within the policy of SSLP, adopted from Home Starts criteria.

**8. Data protection, confidentiality and good practice**

Responsibilities under data protection legislation are emphasized and the expectations that all partners adhere to the act and discharge their responsibilities in a proper and professional manner.

**9. Monitoring and evaluation**

The contents of this agreement should be subject to an annual review. Each participant is responsible for ensuring internal procedures are established and monitored to ensure compliance with the terms of the protocol.

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**APPENDIX to the information Protocol. It may be useful in order to convey professionalism and an awareness of current definitions to include a description of data types as an appendix to the Inter Agency Data Sharing Protocol.**

### **AGGREGATED AND ANONYMISED DATA**

Information from which no individual person can be identified is outside the Data Protection Act and may be passed to relevant organisations for bona fide purposes (“that are in the public interest”). In most cases this information will be in aggregate form and those processing such information will need to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. Individual level information may also be anonymised by the removal of all identifying information. Information is still identifiable if it contains unique numbers or other keys that allow it to be separately merged with identifying information (e.g. names) or where identifying information can be looked up. Statistical information on volumes of clients by gender, race, disability and status can therefore, be shared by the organisation identified in this protocol.

### **PERSONAL DATA**

Personal data relates to an individual who is identifiable from that data or that data in conjunction with other data held by or is likely to obtain by the Data Controller. A reference number is personal data if it can be linked with an individual’s name elsewhere in an organisation. It includes any expression or opinion about the individual and indication of the intention of the Data Controller or any other person in respect of the individual. All types of personal data are within the ambit of the Data Protection Act. Personal data can be collected and shared unless the client indicates that they do not wish this to happen.

### **SENSITIVE DATA**

Partnerships will wish to be aware that in some cases simply the name and address of a young person as having a characteristic that is included within the definition of sensitive personal information. For the purpose of this Protocol with regard to shared data, sensitive data will only be collected and shared with the explicit consent of clients who must be advised of the reason for its collection, rationale for sharing of the data and recipients of the data.



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 Appendix 3

## Useful Websites and References

**Sure Start**

*National Evaluation of Sure Start* [www.ness.bbk.ac.uk](http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk)  
*Sure Start* [www.surestart.gov.uk/home.cfm](http://www.surestart.gov.uk/home.cfm)

**Data Protection, confidentiality and data sharing**

*LREC Documentation* [www.corec.org.uk](http://www.corec.org.uk)  
*Code of Practice for NHS staff* [www.doh.gov.uk/planning2003-2006/index.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/planning2003-2006/index.htm)  
*Confidentiality* [www.doh.gov.uk/ipu/confiden](http://www.doh.gov.uk/ipu/confiden)  
*Data Protection Act 1998* [www.dataprotection.gov.uk](http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk)  
*Data Protection Act 1998*  
[www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm](http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm)  
*Data Protection registration* [www.dpr.gov.uk/](http://www.dpr.gov.uk/)

**Area-based initiatives**

*Children's Fund* [www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/childrensfund/index.cfm](http://www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/childrensfund/index.cfm)  
*Connexions* [www.connexions.gov.uk/](http://www.connexions.gov.uk/)  
*Early Excellence Centres* [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)  
*Education Action Zone* [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eaz/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eaz/)  
*Health Action Zone* [www.haznet.org.uk/](http://www.haznet.org.uk/)  
*Healthy Living Centres* [www.doh.gov.uk/hlc/index.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/hlc/index.htm)  
*Neighbourhood Renewal Fund* [www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/nrfund.asp](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/nrfund.asp)  
*New Deal for Communities* [www.ndfc.co.uk/](http://www.ndfc.co.uk/)  
*Single Regeneration Budget*  
[www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/programmes/srb/index.htm](http://www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/programmes/srb/index.htm)

**Publicly available statistics**

*2001 Census*  
[www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp)  
*Department of Health* <http://www.doh.gov.uk/public/stats1.htm>  
*DfES* <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics/>  
*Indices of Multiple Deprivation*  
[www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/home.asp)  
*Neighbourhood Statistics* [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)  
*Office of National Statistics* [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)  
*Ofsted* [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
*UK Data Archive* [www.data-archive.ac.uk/](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/)

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## Appendix 3

### Support for Local Evaluation Contact List

National Evaluation of Sure Start  
Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues  
Birkbeck, University of London,  
7 Bedford Square,  
London. WC1 3RA  
telephone: 020 7079 0823 fax: 020 7323 4738

Professor Jacqueline Barnes, Director - Support for Local Programmes  
Tel: 020 7079 0837  
Mobile: 07855 308311  
Email: jacqueline.barnes@bbk.ac.uk

Patrick Myers, National Co-ordinator (South) and Regional Support (South West)  
Tel: 020 7079 0849  
Mobile: 07813 887038  
Email: p.myers@bbk.ac.uk

Jane Stuart, National Co-ordinator (North) and Regional Support (North West & East Midlands)  
Tel: 01539 620882  
Mobile: 07855 309187  
Email: j.stuart@bbk.ac.uk

Clare Dixon, Regional Officer - North West  
Tel: 01524 593565  
Mobile: 0781 3887042  
Email: c.dixon4@lancaster.ac.uk

Sarah Ellison, Regional Officer - Yorkshire & the Humber  
Tel: 01904 433499  
Mobile: 07813 886941  
Email: se11@york.ac.uk

Louise Harrington, Regional Officer - London  
Tel: 020 7079 0848  
Mobile: 07814 935382  
Email: l.harrington@bbk.ac.uk

Paula Latham, Regional Officer - West Midlands and South West  
Mobile: 07813 887039  
Email: p.latham@keele.ac.uk

Nigel Lloyd, Regional Officer - East of England and South East  
Tel: 020 7079 0847  
Mobile: 07989 540482  
Email: n.lloyd@bbk.ac.uk

Pam Smythe, Regional Officer – East Midlands  
Tel:  
Mobile: 07968 511336  
Email: p.smythe@bbk.ac.uk

Trish Van der Velde, Regional Officer - North East  
Mobile: 07811 360117  
Email: p.van-der-velde@bbk.ac.uk



