SURE START PINEHURST AND PENHILL

EVALUATION OF FATHERS’ DEVELOPMENT WORK

FINAL REPORT

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

- Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill is a third wave programme approved in August 2001, its lead and accountable body is Swindon Primary Care Trust
- There is a core team of 22 staff working from newly refurbished offices in Penhill, North Swindon. The NSPCC manage the Fathers’ Development Work programme under a Service Level Agreement and employed a full-time Development Worker from January 2003. The worker resigned in October 2004 and the work programme has been managed on a temporary basis.
- There are just under 800 children aged four living in about 630 families, 40% of which are single parent families. The population is 10,065 with about 195 births per year. 97% of the local population is White.
- The Fathers programme consisted of a variety of groups and activities. It included a weekly Fathers’ Time group, a monthly Saturdays for Dads group, one-to-one counselling sessions, one-off activities (Legoland trip, BBQ) and time-limited courses (e.g. Eggshells assertiveness course). The Worker also provided support to other Sure Start activities such as Ante-natal classes

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this review was “To evaluate the effectiveness, including the cost effectiveness, of the Fathers Development Worker interventions over the previous 2 year period”.

The objectives were to:
- To conduct a literature search
- To review the service objectives
- To assess service delivery against objectives
- To evaluate the value and outcomes of the service for users including the impact of fathers’ work on:
  - fathers’ self esteem and self confidence
  - fathers’ relationships with children and partners
  - fathers’ social relationships
  - fathers’ parenting skills
  - the involvement of fathers in Sure Start and / or NSPCC services
  - access to services by men who do not normally use services
  - the sensitivity of local services to the needs of fathers
- To assess children’s developmental outcomes in relation to father’s perceptions of service impact
- To report on findings, make recommendations for future service development and disseminate the results.
The four Sure Start objectives were also considered. These are:

- Improving Social and Emotional Development
- Improving Health
- Improving Learning
- Strengthening Families and Communities

And the 5 key outcomes of the Government’s ‘Every Child Matters’ initiative which also used to evaluate the programme:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-being

1.3 Methodology

The following methodology was adopted:

- One-to-one interviews with key Sure Start and NSPCC staff
- The collation, analysis and evaluation of various reports produced by the Fathers’ Development Worker
- A group discussion with 4 members of the Fathers’ Time group
- Individual interviews with 11 fathers who had used the services
- Reviewing the detailed case notes of individual counselling and support sessions with 7 fathers.
- A literature search of work with fathers in other Sure Start programmes

1.4 A summary of key findings

40 fathers and 70 children (plus 4 expected babies) benefited from the programme over the two and a quarter years.

A summary of the key outcomes for fathers, children and partners/wives is as follows:

**Fathers**

- Opportunity to spend time with their children which they otherwise would not have had
- Can get more involved with their children / take responsibility
- Improved parenting skills
- Improving children’s behaviour – setting rules and boundaries
- Understand children more - asking questions about their child’s development and applying the answer
- Developing an understanding and knowledge around purpose of children’s play
• Fathers more able to support partners going to things such as drop-in sessions
• More confidence to ask for things e.g. things to help their partner out with childcare
• Pride in being able to show their families what they have been doing and what they have achieved
• Ante-natal classes providing bonding with the baby before it is born
• Overcoming fear of feeding or changing a new born baby
• Support around breastfeeding
• Making fathers realise how important they are within the family context, and not just as a breadwinner
• Calmer attitudes / anger management
• Encouragement to learn new things and develop new skills
• Meeting new people and making friends
• Socialising and having the chance to relax, which is particularly important for men who are not in paid employment
• Benefit from the experiences of other fathers particularly those with older children
• Emotional support
• Practical help
• Fathers gaining in self-confidence and self-esteem – including confidence to ask professionals for help and advice
• Building trusting relationships with Sure Start / NSPCC workers over time.
• Opportunity to talk about problems, share problems and help others with their problems
• More safety conscious.
• Healthier eating
• More health aware e.g. knowledge of the “5 a Day” promotion
• Greater awareness around the risks of smoking

Children

• Social interaction – especially for pre-playschool children the sessions they attend with their fathers may be the first steps in socialising with other children
• Quality time with the fathers
• See fathers in a different light i.e. outside the domestic setting
• Sensory development – activities that sessions like Fathers’ Time include will improve touch, feel, hearing, taste and smell
• Creative development
• Develop social and communication skills
• Improve speech and language
• Make new friends
• Respect other children
• New activities
• Father involved in care and development – more rounded upbringing
• Brought up in a safer environment
• Reduced risk of abuse or neglect
• Practical support with problems
• Share life experiences with father – can talk to father about anything, for example what is happening at school
• “Being seen to do something with Dad as well as Mum”
• May open up to one parent rather than another if something is worrying them
• Physical development – e.g. learning to ride bikes
• Learning through play – toys / activities were used which had particular learning objectives
• Provides children with routine.

Mothers / Partners
• Peace and quiet
• Gives mums quality time on own.
• Reducing and sharing some of responsibility for childcare
• Help with housework
• Greater family unity and coherence
• Women benefit from events and activities organised by fathers
• Encourages a better family unit
• Gain more confidence
• Can learn new skills as have time and / or look for a job
• Support and encouragement to breastfeed
• Improved relationships with partners.

In addition other childcare professionals changed their attitudes and practices towards fathers as a direct result of their involvement with the programme.

The programme met most of the objectives of its Service Level Agreement, although not all the specific targets.

There is clear evidence which can be corroborated from a number of sources that the programme has had a positive impact on the lives of the fathers it has been involved with. There is evidence that the programme has had both a direct and indirect impact on the lives of the children in these families. There is also evidence that the programme has had both a direct and indirect impact on the lives of the partners and wives of the fathers who attended the programme.

As a result the programme has met the 4 Sure Start objectives and 4 of the 5 outcome objectives of the Every Child Matters initiative.

On a more critical note there were a number of barriers to more men participating in the programme including the association and perception of the NSPCC and the lack of activities for working fathers.
The lack of a full-time Development Worker for the period from October 2004 to March 2005 has had a negative impact on the development of the programme and on keeping its impetus going.

There are also issues around the management and on-going evaluation of the programme between Sure Start and the NSPCC which need to be resolved. Both have different criteria for who they will work with and this has led to a reasonable proportion of the fathers participating in the programme not meeting the Sure Start criteria.

1.5 Cost effectiveness

A number of measures of cost-effectiveness were calculated. These differed depending upon whether all fathers were included or just those who met the Sure Start criteria. An overall programme cost of £59,861 was calculated for the two and a quarter years of the programme.

- The total directly attributable cost per father (based on 40 fathers) is estimated at £1,483
- The average annualised cost per father from January 2003 to March 2005 is £659
- The total directly attributable cost per child (based on 74 children) is estimated at £801
- The average annualised cost per child from January 2003 to March 2005 is £356

Measuring cost-effectiveness for the year 2004 including only fathers who met the Sure Start criteria of household location and age of children the following figures have been calculated (based on 238 contacts with 30 fathers in 2004):

- The estimated cost per contact for fathers meeting Sure Start criteria during 2004 is estimated at £111
- The estimated average cost per father meeting Sure Start criteria during 2004 is estimated at £879
- Assuming the same children:father ratio of 1.85 (based on the whole programme, and including children over 5) the estimated average cost per child meeting the Sure Start criteria during 2004 is estimated at £475.

1.6 Other Sure Start programmes

A small number of evaluation reports of Sure Start programmes who had undertaken work with fathers were reviewed and analysed.

The analysis found that the barriers to participation were similar across the country.
It also found that the key outcomes were similar to those found at Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill

1.7 Recommendations

There is a clear need to have a full-time worker in place as soon as possible.

It is seen as essential that Sure Start and the NSPCC review and agree the parameters and criteria for the Fathers’ Development Work programme.

The planning and evaluation process needs to be reviewed and a more robust approach taken towards both the strategic and operational management of the programme.

Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill should consider targeting specific groups of men rather than trying to be all things to all people. It is also strongly recommended that more emphasis is placed on attracting fathers with families who meet the Sure Start criteria. This will significantly improve the cost-effectiveness of the programme.

More detailed work should be undertaken around the cost-effectiveness of individual elements of the Fathers’ Development Work programme.

1.8 Conclusion

Overall, and despite some of the problems noted in this evaluation, the Fathers’ Development Work programme appears to have been successful in meeting its main objectives of improving the lives and life-chances of fathers and their children.
2 Introduction

Sure Start Pinehurst & Penhill is a third wave Sure Start programme approved in August 2001. The lead accountable body is the Swindon Primary Care Trust. The programme became a Children’s Centre in December 2004.

The local evaluation aims to produce clear evidence of the effectiveness of the Sure Start model of service provision within the local community, in order to contribute towards the multi-agency development of integrated services across Swindon. It aims to provide a clear picture of the outcomes of the work, and identify what is and what is not working effectively in the areas chosen for evaluation.

There are four areas which are being reviewed as part of this evaluation. These are:
- Post-natal depression support outcomes
- The role of the Social Worker and Family Support Staff
- Fathers’ Development Work
- Longitudinal Study

This review evaluates the Fathers’ Development Work.
3 Aims & Objectives

3.1 Aim

To evaluate the effectiveness, including the cost effectiveness, of the Fathers Development Worker interventions over the previous 2 year period.

3.2 Objectives

- To conduct a literature search
- To review the service objectives
- To assess service delivery against objectives
- To evaluate the value and outcomes of the service for users including the impact of fathers’ work on:
  - fathers’ self esteem and self confidence
  - fathers’ relationships with children and partners
  - fathers’ social relationships
  - fathers’ parenting skills
  - the involvement of fathers in Sure Start and / or NSPCC services
  - access to services by men who do not normally use services
  - the sensitivity of local services to the needs of fathers
- To assess children’s developmental outcomes in relation to father’s perceptions of service impact
- To report on findings, make recommendations for future service development and disseminate the results.

3.3 Sure Start and Every Child Matters Objectives

Underpinning this evaluation are the four Sure Start objectives detailed in the Public Service Agreement 2003-06 and the desired outcomes of the 2004 Government Green Paper ‘Every Child Matters’. The Sure Start objectives are:

- Improving Social and Emotional Development
- Improving Health
- Improving Learning
- Strengthening Families and Communities

It has also been suggested by the National Sure Start Evaluation Team that the evaluation assesses the Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill programme against the 5 key outcomes of the Government’s ‘Every Child Matters’ initiative. These are:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-being
4 Background

4.1 Demographics

The community of Pinehurst and Penhill includes part of Pinehurst and Gorsehill ward and Penhill ward in its entirety and is situated to the North of Swindon. The catchment area is contained within 'pram pushing' distance. Penhill is a 1950’s estate whilst Pinehurst was built between the two World Wars. There is a stable core of long established residents, but new families are constantly moving into the area without extended family within the neighbourhood.

There are approximately 800 children under 4 in the Sure Start area of Pinehurst and Penhill. These children live in approximately 630 families, of whom 583 are members of Sure Start and of these approximately 40% are single parent families.

Figures for 2004 from Swindon Borough Council put the total population of the Sure Start area at 10,065, with 195 births in the year 01/04/03 to 31/03/04 (Swindon PCT).

Unemployment is low in Swindon as a whole but just under half of the under 4’s in the Sure Start area live in workless households. There is a small ethnic population, however 97.2% of the total population is white.

4.2 Service Level Agreement

The Fathers’ Development Work is provided by the NSPCC under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA runs until March 2006.

The SLA sets out an agreement to employ a male member of staff, to be known as the Fathers’ Development Worker, to work with local fathers, male carers and fathers-to-be. The Purpose of the services are to:

- increase the level of their involvement in local services for pre-school children and families, and
- to ensure the accessibility of all Sure Start and Family Centre provision to these groups

These are underpinned by the following principles:

- The parties acknowledge the importance of men in the lives of their children and in their healthy physical and emotional development
- The parties recognise that services for young children and their families are often focussed on mothers and their needs and that this sometimes prevents or dissuades men from becoming involved
- It is also recognised that some women and children may have had negative experiences of men in their lives, including experiences of physical violence or other forms of abuse, and that in seeking to ensure
that services are attractive to and therefore inclusive of men, staff need to be sensitive to this fact.

The objectives of the Service will contribute to the achievement of three Sure Start objectives:

- To improve social and emotional development, in particular, by supporting early bonding between parents and their children, helping families to function and by enabling the early identification and support of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- To improve health, in particular, by supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth.
- To strengthen families and communities, in particular, by involving families in building the community’s capacity to sustain the programme and thereby create pathways out of poverty.

The targets set out for January 2003 – March 2004 were as follows:

- Establishment of a task or focus group comprising fathers and staff from NSPCC and Sure Start by March 31 2003
- Production and implementation of a questionnaire for fathers to gather views about services including gaps and needs by June 2003
- Establishment of one new specific service for fathers and children by January 2004
- Increase in the involvement of fathers and fathers-to-be in Family Centre and Sure Start activities by 100% by March 2004
- Evaluation process for work with fathers – designed in liaison with Sure Start Information Officer – to be in place by June 2003.

4.3 Development of the Service

The NSPCC became involved in the Sure Start project because it recognised that men are important in the development of their children, but generally do not use the services available. The NSPCC also recognise that men are the main abusers of children, and part of their mission is to reduce and eliminate child abuse. The main users of the NSPCC services were women and the organisation had a desire to increase the participation of men. The Sure Start Fathers Development Work programme provides an ideal opportunity for the NSPCC to help achieve these aims.

NSPCC employed a full-time Fathers’ Development Worker who was recruited in November 2002 and commenced work in January 2003. The worker resigned from his post in October 2004.

The Fathers’ Development Worker was supported by the Fathers’ Development Worker’s Support Group which has steered the project, designed and helped deliver aspects of the programme, and providing individual support to the Worker.
Subsequent to the resignation of the Fathers’ Development Worker, the NSPCC have allocated one of their Children’s Services Practitioners to run the weekly Fathers’ Time sessions. Other staff, from both NSPCC and Sure Start, manage another monthly activity for fathers. Apart from this there has been little direct work undertaken with the fathers living in the catchment area since the resignation of the Fathers’ Development Worker and a number of the elements of the programme were not functioning during the evaluation period.

During the course of this evaluation NSPCC began the recruitment process for another Fathers’ Development Worker.
5 Methodology

At the time of the evaluation between December 2004 and February 2005, the Fathers’ Development Worker post was vacant. This had both an impact on the methodology for the evaluation and on the availability and comprehensiveness of the information received from both NSPCC and Sure Start.

The methodology comprised a number of stages:

- One-to-one interviews with key Sure Start and NSPCC staff involved in the management or delivery of the Fathers’ Development Work, including staff who had indirect involvement – see Appendix 1
- The collation, analysis and evaluation of various reports produced by the Fathers’ Development Worker including:
  - An analysis of the report written by the former Development Worker
  - Analysis of questionnaires and surveys undertaken during activities
- A group discussion with 4 members of the Fathers’ Time group, plus the temporary coordinator of the group
- Individual interviews, both one-to-one and telephone interviews, with 11 fathers who had used the Sure Start / NSPCC services
- Reviewing the detailed case notes of the individual counselling and support sessions – 7 of the 8 sets of case notes have been reviewed; the 8th set were not reviewed due to an on-going dispute. These have been made anonymous for reasons of confidentiality.
- A literature search of work with fathers in other Sure Start programmes

Semi-structured questionnaires were developed for both service users and service providers. They were felt to provide the best method of analysing the diverse and disparate elements that made up the Fathers’ Development Programme. They also provide the opportunity to combine quantitative analysis as well as drawing out more qualitative results and outcomes.

It was also felt that with a relatively small number of fathers (40 fathers in total) participating in the Fathers’ Development Programme that a purely quantitative survey would not extract the diversity and ‘richness’ of the outcomes of the programme in a statistically significant manner. These questionnaires are attached in Appendices 2A and 2B.

By undertaking a semi-structured face-to-face methodology the consultation process had elements of an ‘action research’ which is defined by the DfES as a: “systematic enquiry designed to yield practical results capable of improving a specific aspect of practice and made public to enable scrutiny and testing.”

This aspect of service improvement is critical to the objectives of this evaluation. This report includes a number of recommendations for improving the Fathers’ Development Programme in future.
6  The Fathers’ Development Work Programme

The Fathers Development Worker was recruited in November 2002, commenced work in January 2003 and left the programme in October 2004. He was employed by the NSPCC and was based at their North Swindon Family Centre.

6.1 Activities, services and events

The Fathers’ Development Worker initiated and developed a diverse and varied range of services, activities and events which offered a number of choices for fathers who wished to participate in the programme. These can be summarised as follows:

- One-to-one contact with fathers referred by NSPCC / Sure Start colleagues who, it was felt may have wished to access services.
- One-to-one sessions with men providing individual support and counselling sessions on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. These sessions often lasted a number of months. 8 men took part in these sessions.
- Fathers’ Time – a drop-in session every Thursday lunchtime, which has been running since May 2003. The total number of contacts with fathers for the period from May 2003 to October 2004 has been 235 father contacts with a total of 20 fathers. The total number of contacts with children was 287 children contacts with a total of 32 children.
- Saturdays for Dads – a drop-in session held on a monthly basis which has been running from September 2003. In the period September 2003 to October 2004 there were 34 father contacts with 14 fathers and 57 children contacts with 30 children.
- One-off events including:
  - Nursery Rhyme evening which attracted 3 fathers and 6 children.
  - “Father’s Day” morning event in June 2003 including a football skills session.
  - Joining in with two annual “Fun Days” organised by the NSPCC at the North Swindon Family Centre which were aimed at the whole family.
  - Legoland trip in April 2004 which attracted 18 fathers and 35 children.
  - Barbecue at Lydiard Park – originally planned as an event for fathers and children, but extended to include partners as well. It attracted 12 fathers, most with their partners, and 26 children.
- Attending other family-oriented “drop-in” services within both Sure Start and the NSPCC including:
  - “Stay & Play”
  - “Coffee Time”,
  - “Bumps & Babies”
  - “Young Parents”.


Specialist, time-limited groups including:
  o Ante-natal groups – the Development Worker joined Sure Start midwives in delivering 9 ante-natal groups.
  o “Let’s Talk Parenting” group run by the NSPCC.
  o “Eggshells” initiative from May 2004 in conjunction with the WEA – a course on improving assertiveness and self-esteem – 6 men, including 5 fathers, took part.

In total 40 fathers participated in one or more elements of the Fathers Development Work Programme. These fathers had a total of 70 children between them, plus 4 fathers were expecting a baby. The age range of the children is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expecting</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the contact information available, it has not been possible to identify how many of these children have participated in one or more of the programme elements, although circumstantial evidence suggests that it will be the majority.

6.2 Other areas of participation

In addition there were a number of other areas and initiatives in which the Fathers’ Development Worker participated.

These include consultation with fathers and, more generally, men. The consultations took place both formally and informally.

Formally, fathers have been consulted during reviews and evaluations of many of the activities and events listed above – for example, many events were followed up with brief questionnaires. There were also attempts to include them in the ‘Fathers’ Work Planning Group’ and a development planning session was successfully held during a “Fathers’ Time” session.

Informally, the Development Worker listened to the views, opinions and feelings of the men in the various settings and circumstances from the “drop-ins” to the long-term individual counselling and support sessions where there was not necessarily precise outputs or outcomes to be measured.

It is evident that these consultations had a direct and positive impact on the development of the programme. One example of this is the planning of the
Summer Barbecue which was intended to provide an opportunity for fathers to develop their relationships with their children. The initial feedback was that many of the fathers enjoyed doing things as a whole family, and as a result partners were invited.

Another successful output from the programme was that one of the fathers attended the Sure Start Regional Fathers’ Work Conference in Autumn 2003.

6.3 Influence on other services for families

The Fathers’ Development Worker was also involved in working and consulting with other professionals in the area of family support, and particularly Sure Start and NSPCC initiatives in Swindon. In particular he was successful in influencing policies, procedures and practice to become more ‘father aware’ and ‘father friendly’. He had input into consultations about Breast Feeding Policy, Domestic Violence best practice guidelines, and Ante-natal classes.

The Development Worker also became a resource for colleagues wanting to understand issues for fathers, including issues around men who have a record of domestic violence or child abuse. He also became a resource to find out what other services existed for fathers.

The Fathers’ Development Worker designed a training package to raise awareness of the role of fathers for other professionals. The “Father Awareness Development Training” addressed the question of how and why professionals work with fathers, and aims to challenge their own stereotypes and perceptions of how they view men. The training package was used locally with both Sure Start and NSPCC teams, Health Visitors, student nurses and education staff involved in ‘early years’ work.

He was also approached about delivering a ‘fathers’ segment in the basic child protection training by Swindon Social Services Child Protection Team, although this did not happen due to the resignation of the worker.

Nationally the Fathers’ Development Worker established links with Fathers Direct who promote fathers work, and with Working With Men, who run a monthly newsletter about new initiatives for fathers’ work.

The worker was involved in a national Sure Start initiative promoting fathers’ work, including regional and national seminars and a conference. This included regular contact with other Fathers’ Workers in other Sure Start programmes. He also delivered a workshop at the “Fathers as Carers – Risk or Resource” Conference at the NSPCC national training centre in Leicester.
6.4 Conclusion

For the 20 months when a full-time Fathers’ Development Worker was working on the Sure Start programme a large number of initiatives were trialled and adapted to meet the heterogeneous needs of fathers in the Pinehurst and Penhill areas. During this period other Sure Start and NSPCC services and initiatives were also influenced by the role.

It can be concluded that at a practical level the Fathers’ Development Work programme has been successful in establishing a broad and varied programme which appealed to a range of fathers. It has also been successful through its influence on the wider Sure Start and NSPCC programmes in Swindon of creating a more ‘father-aware’ environment.

Since October 2004, there has been a limited amount of work undertaken on the programme. The NSPCC have allocated one worker to organise the weekly Fathers’ Time sessions, and other staff, from both NSPCC and Sure Start, manage the monthly Saturdays for Dads sessions.

Apart from this, there has been little direct work undertaken with the fathers living in the catchment area, nor has there been any pro-active development work aimed at encouraging new fathers into the programme. The development and setting up of new initiatives, which was a key feature of the first 20 months of the programme, has also temporarily ceased. Of particular concern is the cessation of the one-to-one support and counselling sessions which played an important role in providing a regular framework for many men to work through the issues and problems that were affecting their lives and by implication the lives of their families.

There is a sense that much of the positive momentum gained in the early stages of the project has been lost, and significant effort and resources will need to be focussed on re-establishing the programme to its previous levels of success once a new worker is in post.
7 Key Findings

For the purposes of addressing the objectives of the evaluation as detailed in Section 2.2 the findings will be grouped into the following categories:

- Fathers’ Development Work Programme
- Fathers and their families
- Other Sure Start services which had involvement with the Fathers Development Work
- A summary of findings

7.1 Fathers’ Development Work Programme

7.1.1 Evaluation Stages

This section aims to provide a summary of the findings from the evaluation relating to the specific activities. As such it aims to evaluate some of the practical objectives of the programme as detailed in the aims and objectives of the evaluation (see Section 2.2) and the objectives and targets of the Service Level Agreement between Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill and NSPCC (see Section 3.2).

It must be recognised that it is difficult to make any meaningful comparisons between various elements of the programme, for example whether the one day events had more impact than intensive one-to-one sessions or weekly drop-ins.

The evaluation of the Fathers’ Development Work programme included the following stages:

- An analysis of the report written by the former Development Worker
- Analysis of questionnaires and surveys undertaken after activities, events and drop-in sessions
- Interviews with Children’s Service Practitioner (who is temporarily running the Fathers’ Time sessions), the NSPCC Team Leader and other Sure Start staff who have either been directly or indirectly involved with the Fathers’ Development Work programme

7.1.2 Quality of Life

There is a substantial amount of evidence relating to the relative success of the programme, and its impact on the lives of families and children in the report written by the Fathers’ Development Worker at the end of his employment. The report makes the assumption that the quality of a parent’s life will have a direct influence on the quality of life of their children. This evaluation does not seek to either endorse or challenge this assumption.
7.1.3 **On-going evaluation**

The review of the questionnaires and surveys undertaken during the first 20 months of the Fathers’ Development Work programme found that the evaluation and analysis tools used were often poorly designed or inappropriate for the purpose for which they were intended. Where analysis of these evaluations had been undertaken there was little evidence that they had been used to assess the development of the programme in relation to its objectives, or that they had been shared across the management of the programme.

This programme evaluation also found that a number of the individual evaluations of either individual initiatives or on-going work were developed in an ‘ad hoc’ manner or were adopted from other sources. For example, the one-to-one counselling and support sessions used the NSPCC case note templates. There was no section in these forms where specific outcomes relating to the client’s children could be noted.

Another example is the evaluation of the Eggshells programme which asked participants to measure their attitudes on a weekly basis to the course across a large number of adjectives. Many of the adjectives were similar and again little evidence is available about the impact of the course on the participants’ relationship with their families and specifically the impact on their children.

At the time of his departure the Worker was in the early stages of developing and testing a questionnaire measuring the health, social well-being and emotional well-being of fathers. This was one of the targets in the Service Level Agreement (see section 3.2 above).

The view of both the evaluator and the Sure Start Information Officer is that this questionnaire was too complex and unmanageable. It is recommended that any future questionnaire should be redesigned in consultation with the Information Officer.

This report recommends that the Fathers’ Development Work programme should develop evaluation tools for each element of the programme that aim to measure progress against the objectives of the Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill programme, the objectives and targets set out in the Service Level Agreement, as well as national Sure Start objectives, Every Child Matters outcomes and Children’s Centre objectives. These evaluation tools should be developed in full consultation with the Sure Start Information Officer.

The evaluations should be used as part of the regular supervision sessions with the Fathers’ Development Worker and should be shared on a regular basis with key management and members of the Evaluation Group.
7.1.4 One-to-one counselling and support

The Development Worker’s report clearly identifies that some of the individual counselling and support work undertaken as part of the programme had clear and measurable outcomes. These outcomes include helping fathers whose children were on the Child Protection Register or who were at risk of being placed on it through instances of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. Through a range of support measures, including help with parenting skills, discipline and practical assistance some of these children have been taken off the Child Protection Register. This conclusion is supported by a detailed analysis of the case sheets of these sessions undertaken as part of the evaluation (see 6.3 below).

A number of clients who had individual support and counselling sessions over a period of time suffered from physical and/or mental illness. The Development Worker was able to provide both practical help and emotional support in helping them come to terms with their situation. These men, the report states, have found this form of individual and confidential support invaluable, and a number have become involved in other areas of the programme, for example the Fathers’ Time group. The Development Worker has observed that,

“the work can therefore be seen as instrumental in helping them to seek support from, and give support to, their peers”.

The report also highlights that many of the men who received the individual support sessions had,

“not felt ‘heard’ in the past”.

These conclusions are clearly backed up by the findings from other aspect of the evaluation including the Fathers’ Time group discussion (see 6.3 below).

However, it is clearly recognised that intensive one-to-one support is time-consuming, and will be limited to a small number of fathers with diverse and difficult problems. Nevertheless it is apparent that personal contact has been a key success factor in the individual counselling sessions, the drop-in groups and the ‘ad hoc’ activities.

7.1.5 Drop-in sessions

The Development Worker’s report highlights that regular drop-in sessions – the weekly Fathers’ Time and monthly Saturdays for Dads – have had a number of positive outcomes for both the fathers and their children who attend. This in turn has a positive effect on other members of the family and the family unit as a whole.
Many of the fathers have been able to bring along sensitive issues to discuss as well as practical problems to resolve, and has led to both ‘solutions’ for the issues and problems, as well as increasing the social skills and extending the social network of the fathers who attend.

In many cases these sessions provided an opportunity for referring or signposting fathers to other services, groups and courses which will benefit them.

One example was of a father who had experienced domestic violence. The Fathers’ Development Worker had contacted the Housing Department because of problems in their home which the father had not been able to resolve with the Council. The Housing Department found 14 faults with their house.

The worker felt that,

“if the client was a woman, the Housing Department would have acted quicker”.

One outcome that is emerging from the Fathers’ Time group is that a core group of fathers, who regularly attend the group, are beginning to investigate how they can do more for themselves, perhaps by organising and promoting a group or activities themselves. This is currently being supported by the Sure Start Community Development Worker (see section 6.2 below).

Children brought along to these sessions have also enjoyed a number of positive outcomes. There is the opportunity for “quality time” between father and child (which, in some cases, also has a secondary benefit of allowing the mother some time to herself). Fathers are encouraged to play and read with their children, and will learn about the various educational and developmental benefits of different types of play.

7.1.6 Ad hoc activities

In terms of the ‘ad hoc’ or time-limited activities there have been a number of successful initiatives. In particular the “Eggshells” programme aimed at improving self-esteem and assertiveness was seen as having positive outcomes for the participants. Also felt to be successful was the Nursery Rhyme evening which allowed fathers and their children to bond through singing and story-telling.

An analysis of the “Eggshells” programme over its 7 week duration shows positive feedback about its impact on the fathers who attended it (See Appendix 3). Although there are weaknesses in the structure of the methodology by using a series of adjectives such as “positive” and “happy”, rather than looking at more meaningful outputs and outcomes, it clearly demonstrates that the programme had a positive impact and was found to be useful among fathers who attended. In the second set of scaled tables participants generally gave high scores for
“enjoying” the sessions, “help” from the session, and “getting on with other people”. There were slightly lower scores for how much attendees “took part” in the sessions.

Both the major one-off activities – the trip to Legoland and the Lydiard Park Barbecue – were successful in their own right. The Legoland trip provided an opportunity for fathers and children to spend a day together, many for the first time. The Barbecue was also a success in that it evolved from a father and children event to a whole family event after feedback from the fathers on the Legoland trip highlighted that they would like to participate in an event or activity for the whole family (see paragraph below). This clearly demonstrates that the fathers participating in the programme were seeking to benefit their families from their involvement.

The Development Worker’s report highlighted the fact that the fathers he worked with had expressed strong desires to be involved with their families. One survey undertaken with fathers on the trip to Legoland in April 2004 looked at what activities they would be interested in participating in. Interestingly the results showed fathers were generally more interested in things which related to their families, rather than the “traditional” male activities around sport and leisure. Of particular note was that:

- 93% of fathers were interested in family activities,
- 63% were interested in understanding their child’s behaviour,
- 50% were interested in managing stress,
- 44% were interested in building positive relationships.

The full results are shown in Appendix 4.

### 7.1.7 Barriers to participation

Of the 344 fathers who were on the Sure Start contact list when the Development Worker resigned at the end of 2004, only 11.6% (40 fathers) have accessed any of the services or activities of the Fathers’ Development Work programme.

The Development Worker’s report highlights a key weakness for the programme, in that most of the fathers participating in the groups and activities are not working. It acknowledges that it has been difficult to attract a wider group of fathers to participate, particularly those who are working. This assertion was supported during the interview with the Children’s Services Practitioner and the Nursery Nurse who helped run the Fathers’ Time sessions for 18 months.

One reason for this relatively poor response is that parents, and particularly men, find it there is a stigma associated with being associated with the NSPCC. The staff coordinating the Fathers’ Development Work programme are employed by the NSPCC through their Service Level Agreement with Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill, and much of the work is undertaken at the NSPCC North Swindon.
Family Centre or at the NSPCC room in the Pinehurst People’s Centre. Indeed, the consultant evaluating this work asked at the People’s Centre to be directed to the Sure Start Fathers’ Group, only to be told Sure Start had moved out and that the only men’s group meeting at that time was an NSPCC meeting. Much of the promotional material has the NSPCC logo prominently displayed and the identity badges of the workers are NSPCC badges rather than Sure Start. It was also felt that the NSPCC’s advertising campaign reinforced the already negative perception of the organisation as somewhere where parents would not voluntarily go unless their children had been abused.

Other NSPCC staff members, other Sure Start professionals and a number of the fathers interviewed have also expressed concern about the association of the programme with the NSPCC (see 7.2 and 7.5 below).

It is also interesting to note that the “Play Start Service Review - April 2003” (University of Bath in Swindon) looked at the barriers for the take up of the service. The views of users, providers and referrers all cited the stigma attached to the NSPCC and the lack of awareness of the work of the organisation as a barrier to increased involvement of parents in the Play Start programme.

A final barrier was felt to be that many fathers would have to justify to their partners where they were going, and why they were going to a fathers’ activity. Perhaps there needs to be more work with mothers around the benefits of fathers becoming more involved in childcare and about learning about it at groups such as Sure Start. It was stated that women’s perceptions of men attending drop-ins is bad, and the example was given of a father made to feel very unwelcome at a ‘Coffee and Play’ group.

Both the Sure Start Deputy Manager and a Nursery Nurse separately mentioned that they had met a father who used to attend the Fathers’ Time group, but did not attend currently because there was no male worker (it is unclear whether it was the same father referred to by both staff members). This is an issue which Sure Start and NSPCC should consider when recruiting the next worker.

7.1.8 Programme development opportunities

The Children’s Services Practitioner had asked the fathers attending the weekly Fathers’ Time group what sort of activities they wanted to do. The response was they wanted to do practical things which would improve their skills and knowledge as both adults and as parents. First Aid, parenting skills, life skills and form filling were all mentioned as activities they would like to pursue.

There was also perceived to be a gap around parenting for older children between 5 and 10. The fathers felt that boys in particular need their fathers more at this age. The comment was also made that fathers can struggle when their children start going to school.
In terms of earlier work, the positive outcomes of both the Eggshells course and Legoland trips were cited as initiatives which fathers constantly referring back to. In particular, the Eggshells course was seen to have led to fathers handling things differently, looking at things in a different light, and above all increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem. There was also praise for the “Play to Learn” course, a practical hands-on parenting course which 3 fathers had undertaken and which 3 others wished to do. “Play to Learn” is another Sure Start service which is being managed by the NSPCC under a separate Service Level Agreement.

7.1.9 A strategic management perspective of the Fathers’ Development Work programme

At a more strategic level the views were sought from the Team Manager of the NSPCC’s North Swindon Family Centre who is responsible for managing the Service Level Agreement.

He felt that one of the major outcomes of the programme was a significant increase in the number of men using both NSPCC and Sure Start services. Other outcomes include the programme providing meaningful support to individual fathers, for example around their own personal well-being, around challenging some behaviour and attitudes, and around their relationships with their children and their partners or mothers of their children. Fathers have also had the opportunity to develop supportive networks where the men support each other. Other positive outcomes are the opportunity for fathers to spend quality time with their children, to play with them and to learn about the different aspects of play that will help their children’s education and social development. Another outcome has been increased involvement of fathers in other aspects of NSPCC’s work – for example, the Toy Library (funded by Sure Start) is managed by members of the local community and has appointed a male Chair. The NSPCC are also considering having a separate space for fathers in the newly extended North Swindon Family Centre.

There was also a strong feeling that the attitudes and perceptions of mothers towards the involvement of fathers had improved since the programme began. This was evidenced by conversations the Team Manager had with mothers attending other services at the North Swindon Family Centre.

For the NSPCC there are a number of potential positive outcomes from being involved in the programme. The most immediate outcomes are that the service may reduce and help prevent abuse of children. Other positive outcomes are that the programme provides an opportunity for the NSPCC to access the views of fathers about the services it provides, and provides benefits to local staff at both the NSPCC and Sure Start through the input of the Fathers’ Development
Worker into the adaptation of policies and procedures to make them more ‘father-aware’. There are also benefits through training opportunities.

The Fathers Development Work programme in Pinehurst and Penhill has had interest shown by other Sure Start and NSPCC projects. It has also had the benefit of presenting at a national conference.

Currently there are no fathers on the management committee of the Sure Start programme, nor on any of the sub-committees, but there is a strong commitment to having one on the management committee. Again this is a positive step.

However, the first two years of operation have highlighted a number of issues which have affected the overall impact of the programme and the outputs and outcomes which were aimed for. Key to this is the nature of the role of Fathers Development Worker. Initially the post was hard to recruit for. Having just one person in post leaves the programme vulnerable should that person be absent or leave, as has happened. The role itself is felt to be very complex, particularly in its early development days when a number of initiatives were trialled. There is a need to balance different aspects of the role, all of which need different skills, knowledge and experience. For example, there is a strategic aspect to the development of the service; a need to network effectively with both other services for families and with the families themselves; a need to provide intensive support to individuals on a day-to-day basis; and a need to plan and organise events and activities. It is also felt that it will be difficult for one person to change both attitudes and structures around increasing fathers’ involvement with their families, for example, the way many services are set up. The question was raised as to whether the Fathers Development Worker post was partly symbolic, and that it was only a partial answer to a much more complex set of issues.

Again the issue was raised of whether the image and perception of the NSPCC is a barrier to increasing and improving the involvement of fathers in the development and care of their children and in their role within the wide family.

7.1.10 A summary of benefits and outcomes

The outcomes of the Fathers’ Development Work programme as perceived by the Fathers’ Development Worker in his report, the Children’s Services Practitioner who temporary coordinated the Fathers’ Time sessions, and the NSPCC Team Manager can be summarised as follows:

**Fathers**
- Improved parenting skills
- Calmer attitudes
- Understand children more
- Improving children’s behaviour – setting rules and boundaries
Fathers more able to support partners going to things such as drop-in sessions.
More confidence to ask for things e.g. things to help their partner out with childcare.
Pride in being able to show their families what they have been doing and what they have achieved.
Ante-natal classes providing bonding with the baby before it is born.
Overcoming fear of feeding or changing a new born baby.
Making fathers realise how important they are within the family context, and not just as a breadwinner.

**Children**
- Social interaction – especially for pre-playschool children the sessions they attend with their fathers may be the first steps in socialising with other children.
- Respect other children
- Quality time with the fathers
- See fathers in a different light i.e. outside the domestic setting
- Sensory development – activities that sessions like Fathers’ Time include will improve touch, feel, hearing, taste and smell.
- Creative development

**Mothers / Partners**
- Peace and quiet
- Reducing and sharing some of responsibility for childcare
- Help with housework
- More positive relationship with partner
- Greater family unity and coherence
- Women benefit from events and activities organised by fathers

### 7.2 Fathers and their families – Group Discussion

#### 7.2.1 Introduction

The outline questionnaire for the group discussion is shown in Appendices 2A. The questionnaire was used as a guideline for gathering both quantitative, and perhaps more importantly from an evidence-based evaluation perspective, qualitative findings through exploring initial responses in some detail.

The group discussion was held during a regular Fathers’ Time session on Thursday 13 January 2005 at the NSPCC room in the Pinehurst People’s Centre.

Four fathers were present, including one baby, and another child arrived after school. Also in attendance was the NSPCC Children’s Services Practitioner who
was temporarily running the Fathers’ Time sessions and two Sure Start childminders.

Of the four fathers in the group only one met the strict Sure Start criteria. Two fathers had children over the age of 5, and another lived in a neighbouring area to Pinehurst and Penhill. An analysis of the addresses of previous attendees at the Fathers’ Time group indicate that the situation at the time of the evaluation is unique. It also raises an issue highlighted elsewhere in this report (see 6.1.8 above for example) of a lack of support for children over the age of 5 and their families. However, the remit of the NSPCC is wider than that of Sure Start in both terms of geographical coverage in North Swindon and also in terms of the age ranges of children it deals with.

Before the group discussion there was a brief discussion around the problems with the organisation of the Saturdays for Dads and the poor communication around the change in venue. This had obviously caused problems for a couple of the fathers and they felt they had wasted time turning up at a venue which was closed. This is a clear example of the need for the full-time Fathers’ Development Worker to coordinate activities and take overall responsibility for the programme.

### 7.2.2 Reasons for attending

When asked what had encouraged the fathers to attend Fathers’ Time there were a number of reasons given. These included:

- “Word-of-mouth”
- “Having a bad patch with one of the kids”
- “To meet other fathers and have a general chat”
- “Introduced by the Fathers’ Development Worker”
- “Suggested to by other fathers”

One single parent became involved because he needed support in bringing up his children single-handedly.

However, the fathers mentioned the stigma of the association with the NSPCC,

- “If you attend the NSPCC people think you are beating your kids up”

One father said he would not have attended the Thursday group had it not been for the encouragement of an NSPCC Play Start worker.

The fathers themselves felt they had a key role in generating interest for the group from other fathers. This is a positive development from the group and is something that could easily be built upon.
The other key outcome is that the fathers are trying to set up their own group for fathers which will be complementary to the existing groups, and is being supported by Sure Start’s Community Development Worker.

The fathers had tried to introduce the Fathers’ Group to a women’s group but had received “dirty looks” from the women and felt that the women had “an issue” with the idea of men forming such a group. The links to the NSPCC were also raised by the women.

7.2.3 Services, groups and activities

The group was asked which services, groups and activities they had used, and what they thought of them.

The members of the group had in general participated in a number of elements of the Fathers’ Development Work Programme, and indeed in other Sure Start and NSPCC activities, over a number of months. This therefore makes this group a valid source of information and opinion on the effectiveness of the entire Fathers’ Development Work Programme.

In terms of activities and events that the fathers had enjoyed most the barbecue at Lydiard Park, the Fathers’ Time sessions, and the Legoland trip were mentioned by all members of the group. The barbecue was perceived as being particularly satisfying and enjoyable because the fathers had organised it themselves, and because it became a family event with partners as well as children being invited.

The reasons given for why they have enjoyed these groups, events and activities are effectively evidence of outcomes of the programme. These are:

- fathers have the opportunity to spend time with their children which they otherwise would not have had,
- can get more involved with their children,
- opportunities for the children to mix socially,
- free time away from their partners,
- the opportunity to talk about problems, share problems and help others with their problems,
- the encouragement to learn new things, for example IT,
- meeting new people and making friends,
- socialising and having the chance to relax, which is particularly important for men who are not in paid employment,
- benefit from the experiences of other fathers particularly those with older children,
- overcoming shyness and improving confidence.
They felt the group acted as a support group which could provide both emotional and practical help – specific mention was made of the Fathers’ Development Worker contacting the council about some long-standing problems faced by one of the fathers.

One member of the group had received one-to-one counselling and support from the Fathers’ Development Worker, and he had found that particularly helpful in resolving a difficult family situation. He was very open in the discussion about his own circumstances which he felt should be more widely appreciated and acknowledged by childcare professionals. He wanted his story to “be heard”:

The children of this father had been placed on the Child Protection Register and there were a large number of professionals supporting his partner, and he initially felt intimidated and suspicious of them. He was clear that the support he had received both from the Fathers’ Development Worker and from the other members of the group had provided him with the confidence to engage with these professionals, and not feel threatened. There was a very strong feeling that there was very little support for men in difficult and sensitive situations, apart from the Fathers Development Work programme.

A number of key outcomes emanate from this example. Firstly the children were removed from the Child Protection Register, secondly both parents were provided with both practical help and support around developing their parenting skills, and thirdly the father was helped to develop the self-confidence to engage with the childcare professionals proactively, rather than being passive. He stated,

“My kids were on the Children at Risk register…most of the professionals focus on the mother and children…Sure Start gave me the confidence to engage [with the childcare professionals]. Generally there is no support for men”

There were mixed responses as to the usefulness and benefit of the programme in terms of improving parenting skills. Three members of the group felt they had improved their parenting skills through attending the Fathers’ Time group (and other Sure Start / NSPCC activities). One member felt he had not improved his parenting skills but had benefited from the group in his own personal development (this father had a number of children above the age of 5).

One father, who was a single parent, felt the group provided him with the opportunity to talk about the issues and problems he faced with his growing daughters aged 7 and 9, which he would otherwise not have had help with. Both the worker and other group members provided support and help for this father. The outcomes for this father in this instance was he became aware of the physical and emotional development issues his daughters were going through,
and was provided with both practical help and guidance on how to manage these changes.

Even within the group there were aspects of paternalistic support between the members where experienced fathers with older children were providing support and advice to more inexperienced fathers with young babies or children. One of the experienced fathers said,

“We are the Daddies of the group”.

In answer to the questions about which activities they had found least enjoyable and least useful, none of the fathers mentioned anything. This demonstrates the high regard with which they hold all elements of the programme.

### 7.2.4 Critical Success Factors and future development

The group believed that the key to the success of the programme was having a “champion”, having consistency and regularity – they want “another Edd [Fathers’ Development Worker] or a full time Claire [Children’s Services Practitioner]”.

They felt this encourages the establishment of relationships within the group and with the professional workers coordinating the group. This in turn both encourages them and gives them confidence to “open up”. They all respected the “confidentiality” of the group and felt able to discuss sensitive issues openly.

In terms of future activities the group felt setting up their own club, which would be complementary to the Fathers’ Time group, was a priority. This was being supported by Sure Start’s Community Development Worker. They also wanted to make the Fathers’ Time group more structured, attract more fathers and mix more with their children, for example by helping them with their homework. They were also trying to organise a night-out to publicise the group and get more fathers involved, and were considering setting up a darts team. This is a significant outcome for the fathers, and clearly demonstrates the development of their confidence and planning skills, as well as their sense of social and community responsibility. These outcomes meet the Sure Start aim of “Strengthening Families and Communities” and the Every Child Matters aim to “Make a Positive Contribution”.

### 7.2.5 Other Sure Start / NSPCC groups

They felt they had been welcomed by both Sure Start and NSPCC staff – one quote was “Claire [Children’s Services Practitioner] is one of us” – which is positive. However, they felt that groups with predominantly mothers attending were not welcoming to fathers and they were made to feel uncomfortable – specific mention was made of the “Talk and Toys” and “Mother & Toddler”
7.2.6 Response from other fathers

The group was asked how other fathers had responded when they were told about the Fathers’ Time and the other activities. Many of the responses were predictable such as lack of time, thinking groups like this are for women, and also the perception of the NSPCC. They also stated that the men they had spoken to felt that if they came to these groups they would be constantly watched, and also that childrearing is for mothers. They felt strongly that word-of-mouth was key to the future success and development of the programme.

7.2.7 Childcare responsibility

When asked about their thoughts on childcare being the responsibility of the mother there was unanimous disagreement. There was a general feeling that this was not the case these days and that sometimes fathers were more capable than mothers in bringing up children. They felt that it was more a case of sharing of responsibilities now, including tasks such as housework.

“Sometimes it is better that fathers bring the children up”

“Things have changed over our generation”.

The group generally felt that their image of fatherhood, which appeared to be very positive and participative, had not changed since attending the group.

7.2.8 Benefits and outcomes for children

All four members of the discussion group felt that their children had benefited from their participation and involvement.

Their children look forward to coming to the Thursday group, and to other activities and events. The fathers said their children looked forward to meeting the staff, and that the staff got involved with the children in activities such as painting and playing games such as football.

There is the opportunity for the children to mix and interact with other children in a more relaxed environment than school. Children of different ages can enjoy themselves with each other, which all the fathers felt was positive.

7.2.9 Benefits and outcomes for mothers, partners and families
The group felt their partners also look forward to the fathers attending such groups and activities as it gives them some peace and quiet, a break from their partners and children.

The Fathers' Time group is also an acceptable place to go – the men can be trusted going out without the fear that they are going to the pub. One father commented that it,

“Stopped nagging”.

The fathers felt that if their partner attended one of the other Sure Start activities, their attendance at the Fathers' Time group enabled them to get advice and support as well as the mother. They felt this gave a balance and enabled the family to have a more comprehensive picture of how to act on the advice and support given to them.

7.2.10 A summary of benefits and outcomes

Overall attending the Fathers’ Time group and other activities had had a very positive impact on all the fathers present.

The general feeling was that these developing relationships between the fathers and also with the staff had improved the confidence of the men attending the group and it had given them the confidence to ask for help and support, when previously they would not have done. One father who had joined the group and suffered from shyness summarised his feelings:

“Lots of people have said to me how much I’ve changed”.

The practical help and support provided by the staff was also acknowledged as important, for example resolving the housing repairs problem of one of the men had a knock-on benefit for the whole family.

Fathers

- the opportunity to spend time with their children which they otherwise would not have had,
- can get more involved with their children,
- the opportunity to talk about problems, share problems and help others with their problems,
- the encouragement to learn new things, for example IT,
- meeting new people and making friends,
- socialising and having the chance to relax, which is particularly important for men who are not in paid employment,
- benefit from the experiences of other fathers particularly those with older children,
- overcoming shyness and improving confidence.
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- emotional support
- practical help

Children
- opportunities for the children to mix socially,
- make new friends
- new activities
- father involved in care and development – more rounded upbringing
- brought up in a safer environment
- reduced risk of abuse or neglect
- practical support with problems

Mothers / Partners
- free time away from their partners and children
- shared child care and development responsibilities

7.3 Fathers and their families - Individual support and counselling sessions

7.3.1 Introduction

One of the main elements of the Fathers’ Development Work programme was the individual one-to-one support and counselling sessions. The Worker undertook these sessions with 8 fathers. As part of the evaluation the case notes for 7 of the clients were analysed. The notes for the eighth client were unavailable due to an on-going dispute.

The evaluation and reporting of these cases has been made anonymous for reasons of confidentiality. One of the indirect outcomes of this review is that the process of trying to access the case files highlighted that the NSPCC had no agreed protocol or policy regarding access to such information for purposes such as evaluations.

In general these one-to-one sessions happened on a weekly or bi-monthly basis and often over a period of many months. The sessions took place over a period ranging from 2 months to 18 months with the average being 10 months.

The case files for 4 of the 7 clients were closed in October 2004 due to the departure of the Fathers’ Development Worker. There is a clear implication that some of these cases would still be open and active if a full-time worker were in post. It is therefore likely that some of the outcomes highlighted in these cases may be intermediate outcomes rather than final outcomes.

The clients all had diverse issues and problems, but common themes were long-term illness or disability, and neglect of their children.
7.3.2 Individual Case Studies

Client A was referred to the Fathers’ Development Worker by Social Services. He had been placed on a Community Rehabilitation Order for a year for neglect of his children, was a Schedule One offender. A key issue for this father is that there were no boundaries with his children and one child had injured themselves in a preventable accident. The Fathers’ Development Worker met with the father over a 2 month period and provided support around parenting, and the father attended one of the groups for fathers.

In a final follow-up meeting the case notes highlighted the following outcomes. The children were interacting well with the parents, the father has learnt to have more boundaries with the children and to be more attentive of the needs of the children, and the parents felt they did not want more support although they were made aware of where they could get help.

The Fathers’ Development Worker summarised in his notes that he no longer has concerns about the children, and that the father had benefited from improved parenting skills.

Client B was seen on a weekly basis by the Fathers’ Development Worker over a period of 12 months. The client had recently become physically disabled and had a partner and 3 children, 1 of whom was a step-child. There had been a number of requests for support for the father from a number of sources including the Sure Start Family Support Worker, the partner and the father himself. Four sets of agreements were made between the Fathers’ Development Worker and the client. Some of the objectives set out in these agreements include the client seeking to recognise himself as both a father and a man; about his relationship with his partner, children and step-child; about his role as a parent (how to set and enforce boundaries and how to discipline); about his position and ‘role’ within the family; about dealing with the physical and emotional consequences of being disabled and being able to express his frustrations and feelings with the situation.

The outcomes being worked towards included the client being able to feel assured of himself and his emotions, and being able to express them; the client being able to recognise he can support himself; and that he can have a measure of control over his life.

The client struggled to engage with all the children, and his disability has an impact on his partner who is carer for both him and the children. The disability is having an impact on their relationship, and has led to him being unable to work,
which in turn has led him into depression which has fluctuated during the course of the year.

Both the client and his partner have engaged with a number of Sure Start activities including the Fathers’ Development Work, Family Support services, Health Visitor and Social Worker. The father had also attended the Fathers’ Time sessions and the Play Start course.

The case was closed due to the departure of the Fathers’ Development Worker, but the case notes highlight a series of outcomes, a number of which should be assumed to be intermediate outcomes. These outcomes include the client feeling more positive about the children’s behaviour and his improved parenting skills; becoming more assertive; practical support such as signposting to the Expert Patient Scheme, referrals for adult care and respite support, and support for one child to attend nursery and sleep counselling for another; increased confidence around handling his disability and around his self-development and self-esteem, for example through becoming involved in the community; and the counselling sessions enabled him to express things which he could not express to friends and family.

Overall the support provided by the worker had a positive impact on Client B’s relationship with his family. The case notes state:

“[Client B] was very clear he valued my support. He said that he ‘trusts me’ with things he cannot trust his close family with”.

The entire family had benefited from a range of services provided by Sure Start including practical support from the Social Worker and Family Support Worker. The mother had also had support from Sure Start around her husband’s disability and about the consequences for the family. Initially there had been no support for the client, until the Fathers’ Development Worker became involved after requests from Sure Start workers, the client’s wife and the client himself. The holistic approach which provides a range of practical and emotional support for all members of the family faced with severe hardship clearly had a positive outcome in this case and should be used as a model for future support of families.

**Client C** had support and counselling for 6 months ending when the Development Worker left. The client had a wife, who was pregnant, and one step-daughter who was in foster care as the parents found the child’s behaviour difficult to cope with, and who had suffered unexplained injuries. Social Services were involved with the family and the client had been referred to the Fathers’ Development Worker by the Sure Start Nursery Nurse. In the case notes the worker wrote:
“Client expressed desire to talk to a male worker about past difficulties as female workers have not understood his issues”.

The objectives of the support sessions were to address the anxieties the client had about various aspects of his life; about the worry around how he has been affected by his own parenting; about how he has been affected by how past relationships have turned out; and concern about the harm which happened to his step-daughter. Overall there was a concern how these anxieties would impact on his ability to be a good father, and the client wanted to work on them before the new baby was born. He also wanted his step-daughter to be returned from care.

There was limited success in terms of outcomes in this case. The client attended 9 sessions but struggled to find direction or make progress. The situation was made more difficult by a disagreement between the family and Social Services about the child in care. The new baby was also taken into care. The stress of the situation led to a domestic violence incident.

The client was very focussed on blaming others for the family problems, particularly Social Services. He even felt the Development Worker was “jumping ship” on him by leaving his post.

The Development Worker felt the client did not take responsibility for his own actions, and tried to focus sessions on the needs of the children, rather than the client blaming other parties for their problems. However there was felt to be some benefit for the client of talking to a man.

The Development Worker was a member of the Core Group meeting and Child Protection Conference on this case. There may have been some conflict of interest for the Development Worker between his role as a counsellor for the client and the overriding responsibility towards the safety and protection of the children.

It is difficult to predict whether there would have been some positive outcomes in this particular case had the sessions not been stopped due to the departure of the Development Worker.

**Client D** was provided support for 6 months, but the sessions were stopped because the client was not engaging in the work. The client had a wife and young child, but was frustrated by that a child from an earlier relationship was being brought up without his guidance. He had been accused of harming his eldest child, but had been acquitted, and had lost custody of the child. The client had been referred by another part of Sure Start, but had also requested individual support after attending one of the fathers groups. It is noted that prior to the Development Worker taking on the case, Social Services had not been in a position to offer the client any counselling.
The wife of the client had mental health problems and the younger child was placed on the Child Protection Register. After a Core Assessment and monitoring by Social Services and Sure Start the child was removed from the register at the Child Protection Conference.

The aims of the counselling sessions were to address the client’s anger management and also his attitude to women, who he perceived to emotionally blackmail men. The client also had issues with Social Services who he felt had done nothing except take his child away.

Again, as with client C, the case notes suggest that there were few positive outcomes with client D as he cancelled a lot of appointments, and this is the reason that the case was closed.

**Client E** self-referred himself to the Fathers’ Development Worker, and had one-to-one sessions over a 10 month period. The client was concerned about his relationship with his wife and also with his 4 children, and particularly the 2 who were step-children, one of whom had Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

After the first 6 sessions the client felt that they had been of value, and requested further sessions to further explore issues, especially around dealing with the child with ADHD, and how to establish appropriate boundaries. The father also had problems with anger management, which related to his own abuse as a child, and which influenced his own attitude to disciplining his children.

The case notes highlight a number of positive outcomes from the counselling and support sessions. These include the client feeling less “humiliated” by his wife, and that they act more uniformly as a couple when disciplining their children. The client had also tried to get an understanding of the abuse his wife had suffered in an earlier relationship, and had participated in some of her counselling sessions. This is led to an improvement in the couple’s relationship, and an improvement in the parenting of their children. He had also begun to learn to stay in control and manage his anger rather than become physically and verbally violent.

The case was closed by agreement, and can be viewed as a successful intervention by the Fathers’ Development Worker.

**Client F** saw the Fathers’ Development Worker over a period of 16 months which included 5 separate plans. The client was referred by the Health Visitor as he had a history of illness and his partner had also had a history of illness leading to strains in the family relationship. The couple had four young children, including one step-child who was the natural child of the mother.
The client had issues around his ‘position’ in the relationship with his partner and his step-child, and how this may affect his relationship with the other 3 children. He had issues about how illness played a role in his life and how it made him feel. He wanted to build on the positive aspects he has recognised in himself and develop his ability to express himself more confidently and openly.

The plans were working towards a number of outcomes which included the client being able to feel assured of himself and his emotions and have the confidence to express them, being able to recognise that he can support himself, recognising that he has control over his life, how his illness affects his role as a father, a man, a ‘provider’ and a partner, and how others see his illness.

The case notes highlight the rise and fall in the client’s confidence and self-esteem during the course of the sessions, often in direct correlation to the level of the symptoms of his illness.

The family were also receiving other support from Sure Start from the Health Visitor and Social Worker, which included direct support for the mother, including practical help and support with feeding the baby.

The work undertaken by the Fathers’ Development Worker with Client F had a number of positive outcomes. It improved his relationship with both his step-child and his partner, and particularly improved his ability to deal with some of the behavioural issues presented by his step-child. He became more open about talking about the problematic relationship between his partner and step-child. He was able to undertake more of the childcare responsibilities when his health was good, and this had a positive impact on his relationship with his partner.

The client felt that without the support sessions he would have suffered deep depression and not left the house, and that the sessions help him deal with his illness and the anxieties he feels about it. It is also recorded that he feels more ‘open’ and is more able to see things in a positive light.

In the case notes the father had expressed after the first year of support sessions that,

“he didn’t know how he would manage without the service”.

The Development Worker also noted several positive changes in relation to the client’s children, for example, the children were brought along to the Fathers’ Time group.

The sessions were closed as the Development Worker and the client concluded that the work had ended.
Client G referred himself to the Fathers’ Development Worker initially around problems in his relationship with his partner, although this widened considerably during the course of the sessions. Support and counselling sessions lasted for around 15 months and ended when the Fathers’ Development Worker resigned.

Client G and his partner had 2 children both of whom had been placed on the Child Protection Register for physical abuse and neglect. The client’s partner has a disability and the client was effectively the main carer for his partner and 2 children, despite his own lack of parenting skills due to his upbringing.

The Fathers’ Development Worker provided support and advocacy for client G leading up to the Child Protection Conference when discussing the case of his children. He also provided support to the father as the main carer in the family. The father had felt patronised and disempowered in the past by professionals for the way he cared for his family.

The case notes highlight the aim of the sessions as helping the father to communicate his feelings more confidently to the professionals involved in the Child Protection Conference. The objective was to help the father to feel ‘worked with’ by the professionals rather than ‘worked on’.

A number of positive outcomes were noted. The father worked hard to improve his relationships with the professionals involved in the Child Protection Conference, and particularly with the Social Workers involved in the case. The relationship between the father and the Social Workers became more stable and inclusive. The Fathers’ Development Worker also provided support to the father around housekeeping within the home, which led to improved conditions within the home. For example, support was given around developing a routine around the house, and around improving the personal hygiene of the children. The Fathers’ Development Worker also provided support around child development, and the father worked hard to increase the stimulation of the children. The father has gained a better understanding of what he can now reasonably expect from the children given their ages; he learnt to recognise that the children need to do activities which will stretch their intellects. He learnt that each child needs their ‘special’ time with their parents so they can feel emotionally needed and attached to them.

The notes point out that the father worked hard at managing the children’s behaviour, had taken on various suggestions of techniques for dealing with poor behaviour, and had developed an understanding of why children behave the way they do. For example, the father stopped physically chastising his children when they had done something wrong.

The client started attending the Fathers’ time group, and sometimes brought his children along, which increased their stimulation. The client also benefited from
the support provided by other members of the group. He was also considering attending a course on self-esteem and assertiveness.

The client acknowledged that having his 2 children on the Child Protection Register has had positive effects on the family, through the resources received from external bodies such as Sure Start. He no longer saw registration as a barrier to his parenting or a direct reflection of his ability to parent.

A key outcome is that the father now “feels heard”. The work undertaken by the father, with the help and support of the Development Worker, led the children to be taken off the Child Protection Register – the most positive outcome of all. The family now use a range of services provided by Sure Start and other partner organisations.

7.3.3 A summary of outcomes from the one-to-one sessions

The table below contains a summary of the outcomes of the 7 one-to-one counselling and support sessions.

The nature of the counselling and the structure of the case notes in this instance make the extraction of outcomes a fairly arbitrary exercise. It is suggested that the format of the case notes for future one-to-one counselling sessions is reviewed with the aim of including a specific section on evaluating outcomes at both an intermediate and final level.

The table below is based on the evidence from the 7 case studies analysed above. In some cases clients either already used or were referred to other services and activities run by Sure Start or the NSPCC – the outcomes from these secondary activities have not been included, but it is assumed that these other activities had an impact on the outcomes listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved parenting skills</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved boundaries with children</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved discipline of children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased childcare responsibilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Child Protection Register</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with ADHD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical support for children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical help &amp; support for family</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family support e.g. Sure Start services</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved family relationships</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel more positive / less depressed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence / self esteem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved relationship with partner</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More assertive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No identifiable outcome</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4 Individual interviews

7.4.1 Introduction

From the database of 40 fathers, a total of 11 interviews took place with individual fathers either by telephone (8) or face-to-face (3).

Of the other fathers either there was no contact telephone number, there was no answer to the telephone call, the number was not recognised or the wrong number was on the database. This would appear to be a result of not having a full-time worker in post for a number of months.

The questionnaire used is to be found in Appendix 2B. Because of the diverse range of activities of the Fathers’ Development Work programme, and because the database of contacts suggested that there was a wide range or usage both in terms of services used and frequency of use, it was felt to be appropriate to adopt a semi-structured approach to the interviews. This approach would provide both qualitative information around the impact of the programme on people’s lives, and also basic quantitative data.

7.4.2 Attendance

Of the 11 responses 3 fathers were still using the services of the Fathers’ Development Work programme, 6 were no longer using the services, and 1 father no longer used the services for fathers but sometimes went to the ‘Talk and Toys’ group and some of the NSPCC drop-ins. 1 respondent, who had been a high user of various elements of the programme, had been asked not to attend the Fathers’ Time group because “I am separated and not looking after my kids at the moment”

The main reasons given for no longer attending were (some respondents gave more than one reason):

- work commitments (5 mentions), especially the issues around shift work,
- illness (2 mentions),
- ‘personal problems’ (1 mention)
- children now attending school (1 mention).

Some of the comments made by the respondents include:

“I’m not using them because I’m not too well”
“It just kind of phased out…I had an accident and am now spending time at home”
“Too busy to do anything else”
“We have a busy life and we both work. Most things are in the day, but we would go to things in the evenings or at weekends”
“Not doing specific fathers activities because of shifts and overtime”
“Used to go to Saturday groups. No longer can because of shift work.
Wished I could have done more but doesn’t fit in with when I work.”

In terms of the usage, both in number and frequency, of the different services and activities, there was a diverse range from one father who had attended one activity to fathers who had taken part in a whole range of activities over a long period.

It is important to note that a number of the fathers questioned did not differentiate between individual activities or elements of the Fathers’ Development Work programme, or between other services provided by Sure Start and NSPCC. A number were vague about the length of time that they were involved in the programme, and others who had not been involved for some time were sometimes imprecise in their answers. Some of the respondents had to be prompted in their answers and the results should be seen as indicative of the experiences of the group rather than representative, and any conclusions drawn should be viewed similarly.

Activities / sessions attended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity / session</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ Time</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays for Dads</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legoland</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBQ</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggshells</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of fathers in the survey had also attended other Sure Start or NSPCC activities. Again it is likely that the responses are not totally comprehensive or representative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity / session</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk and Toys</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Parent Group</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Course</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play to Learn</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiny Tumblers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC Drop-ins</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where these were dominated by women, comments were made that it would help if the atmosphere was more welcoming to fathers.
Two respondents also mentioned getting help from other Sure Start professionals.

Five respondents mentioned that their partner was involved in other Sure Start activities, and four mentioned that their children were involved in Sure Start activities.

In terms of the length of time the fathers had been involved with the Fathers’ programme there was a wide range of responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of involvement – approximate</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 months or more</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5 times</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those with a longer involvement had generally been involved in more than one element of the programme.

A number of sources were identified from where respondent fathers had heard of the Fathers’ Development Work programme. A number of fathers found out about the programme from friends particularly those who attended the Fathers’ Time group. Others found out about it from their wives or partners who were using other Sure Start or NSPCC services, for example one father had found out from his wife’s Health Visitor. One respondent had been given details of the programme while attending Marlborough House (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) with their son who was being treated for Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Another father lived by the Sure Start buildings and went to see what was happening when it opened. One responded to a visit by the Sure Start Nursery Nurse who helped with the Fathers’ Time group. The Fathers’ Development Worker had introduced himself to one father when the father was attending the NSPCC’s North Swindon Family Centre with his wife.

Factors that encouraged fathers to participate in the programme were varied and diverse. The following comments were noted:

“Something for them [children] to do…getting out of Pinehurst” – father who had only attended the Legoland trip.
“Gave me something to do with my children” – former regular user
“Wife heard about them.” – low user
“Friendly, helps you out” – regular user
“It’s hard to find services for older kids…need help dealing with children, especially younger ones with behavioural problems” – regular user and father of 6
“To meet other dads and see how they look after their kids, and how to deal with the ‘terrible twos’” – former regular user
“Good to get out and not spend a lot of money” – father who attended Legoland trip and BBQ
“Didn’t want to do it initially, but the Family Support Worker encouraged me” – former regular user
“Nice for me to spend time with the kids without the wife...can do what the dad wants to do” – former user of Saturday group

In terms of the activities which were enjoyed most the Legoland trip was mentioned as a highlight by those fathers who had gone on it. Others mentioned the one-to-one counselling and support sessions and the Fathers’ Time group on Thursdays.

Some of the comments made included:

“Brilliant day out and it was free. The kids loved it and this made me happy” – low user referring to Legoland trip
“Found the one-to ones most useful. I could talk about my illness and disability openly” – former regular user
“Fathers’ Group Thursdays – meeting other fathers. Took the kids – they loved it meeting other children” – former regular user
“Legoland trip was wicked – the kids loved it” - father who had only attended the Legoland trip
“Legoland – good place to go considering age range of kids from 3 to 14 – there was something to do for each of the age groups” – former regular user
“Eggshells – have done a follow up course on Coping with Stress at Penhill Learning and going to do Anger Management” – former regular user
“Fathers Group, it was good to interact with other fathers” – former regular user
“One-to-one as it got me to talk and open up when it was all bottled up” – former regular user
“Little one loved it [at Fathers Time]” – former regular user

7.4.3 Benefits and outcomes for fathers

All the fathers interviewed were very positive in their overall opinion of the Fathers Development Work programme, both for themselves and their children, partners or wives and as a whole family. Fathers who had used or participated in more than one element of the programme were particularly positive in their responses. As one former regular user said:

“Can’t praise Sure Start enough for what they have done to us. They’ve really helped us as a family. They are more like friends than workers”.
There were no negative comments made about the programme at all. Only one father, who had attended activities on 4 or 5 occasions, felt he had not specifically benefited as a man or a father from the programme. However, he felt his children, partner and family had benefited from his attendance, and overall he was very pleased with the programme.

Fathers’ responses about how they felt the programme had affected them varied from the practical to the emotional, and a number gave specific examples. It is therefore difficult to quantify the benefits in any meaningful and useful way. The list below gives a representative view of the benefits and outcomes for fathers:

- Friendly and sociable
- Enables the father to get out
- Meeting other fathers
- Having people to talk to
- Mutual support from other fathers
- Encouraged to talk about own problems
- Help with practical problems
- Help with parenting skills
- On-going learning about parenting skills
- Communicate with children more effectively
- Help and support with children’s behavioural problems
- Time to be with the children
- Helped relationship and bonding between father and children
- Helped family relationships
- Helped reinforce perceptions of fatherhood
- Improve self-confidence and self-esteem
- Reducing stress
- Empowerment
- Support and advocacy in difficult situations
- Getting information

A number of fathers provided examples of how their involvement in elements of the Fathers’ Development Programme had a real impact on their daily lives.

One father gave the example how the programme had given him the confidence to stand up for being a father. He had been at Ipswich station with his children and one wanted changing. The only changing facilities were in the women’s toilets. He asked the station staff to close the women’s toilet whilst he changed his baby.

Another father had a son with ADHD, and his response to his son’s behaviour was sometimes unpredictable. Attending the Saturdays for Dads group for 6 months gave the father the opportunity to talk to other fathers and receive tips
from other fathers on how to respond to difficult behavioural situations. As a result father and son became less confrontational and family life calmed down.

The Children’s Services Practitioner had provided support to one father who had concerns about his daughter’s development at nursery school. The worker had told the father he could raise his concerns with the headmistress, which he did not realise he could do. He felt empowered as a result of this support, and was now campaigning to set up an After School Club. He would not have done this without the support of the Fathers’ Group.

Others had been helped directly with contacting the council around repairs to the house, and understanding and completing forms. This had been especially beneficial to one respondent who could not read or write.

A number of fathers had also attended other courses and activities, including Sure Start and NSPCC activities, as a result of their experiences with the Fathers’ programme.

Others had the following to say how the programme had affected them and their behaviour:

“Changed the way I said things to the children – less threatening more encouraging.”

“Kids come to me more! It helped me feel much more of a father. Previously I was happy to be more distant.”

“Good to interact with other fathers [at Fathers Time]. If I needed help I was signposted to the right connections.”

“Watching kid enjoy themselves made me feel better…Made me realise I was better off without the mother.”

“It gave me time to be with my son without having to be in control.”

“Gave me better parenting skills – getting the kids to do what you want them to do.”

“They [other fathers] can tell me what to expect next [regarding development of 2 young children].”

“Given me more self-esteem and helped dealing with children, especially younger ones with behavioural problems. There’s always someone you can talk to”

“Showed you a different way, a different approach [to bringing children up].”

“Good source of information and good source of moral support.”

“There seems to be an attitude among a lot of single mums that men are evil bastards. It was nice to meet other dads who spend time with their kids”.


7.4.4 Benefits and outcomes for children

All 11 respondents were universally positive in their answers around how their children had benefited either directly or indirectly from the Fathers Development Work programme.

Again the responses ranged from the practical to the emotional. The list below gives a representative view of the benefits and outcomes for the children as perceived by their fathers:

- Meet and socialise with other children
- Something to do
- Get involved in new activities and groups
- Access to toys, games etc.
- Playing with fathers
- Improved confidence
- Improved communication and social skills
- Improved behaviour
- Become more independent
- Improved educational attendance and attainment
- Helped with development – do different things to school
- Benefited from father’s improved parenting skills
- Help with development problems e.g. speech, sleep disorders

The following examples demonstrate some of the varied benefits to children:

A father with two daughters stated that his daughters enjoyed coming to Fathers’ groups because they can play with toys, do colouring, read books and mix with other families. The eldest daughter now attends weekly sessions at the NSPCC, and the youngest is involved in the Thursday Fun Group. He says that attending the Fathers’ Group and other Sure Start activities has helped him more fully understand the importance of education for his daughters. He said, “It’s helping them at school and helped them with attendance. I don’t want my girls to miss any classes”.

One respondent had two young children. The Sure Start Nursery Nurse was helping both his daughter, who had speech difficulties, with speech exercises and his son, who had problems sleeping. The father was also encouraged to help his daughter sing to develop her speech and extend her vocabulary, and to ask his daughter to explain in more detail about what she had been doing at school. The father noted the improvement in his daughter’s speech and in his confidence.
Another father mentioned how happy his children had been at the BBQ, how they had enjoyed running around and playing football with the fathers.

The fathers had the following to say about how the programme had affected their children:

“It gives the kids something to do; stops them getting bored” – regular user
“Learnt more educational way of interacting with daughters. Previously I just used to get the toys out. Now I do it more educationally – counting with toys, drawing and basic writing” – regular user
“My son [with ADHD] wasn’t making friends in school. At Sure Start he was able to socialise and make friends” – former user
“Good thing to help them get on in nursery” – former user
“It improved their social skills – the second youngest used to be quite a loner and now is more outgoing” – former user
“Helps them interact with other kids. The more time spent playing with other kids the better for school as they are more used to being around kids. Seen benefit in our daughter who is getting on fine at school” – former user.
“Eldest was shy and very vulnerable and it’s improved her interpersonal skills. Second eldest has made new friends and even went potholing [with After School Club]” – former user

7.4.5 Benefits and outcomes for mothers, partners and families

The 9 fathers who had partners or wives were almost unanimous in their unprompted response to the benefits for their partners and the mother of their children of attending the Fathers' Development programme. The main unprompted answer was that it gives her time and the following quotes are typical responses:

“Gives her a bit of peace”
“Gives them a break from the kids for a couple of hours”
“Time apart was positive – it was good when we got back together”
“Less stressed”
“She needs time on her own as she’s with them 24/7”
“Had some mornings off, some time for herself, she can go out with friends”

Other responses included one from a father whose son had ADHD. He felt the Fathers Development programme had helped him understand and cope more effectively with his son's behaviour and as a result home life in general had calmed down, the family was more relaxed and acted more like a family unit.

“We can have a game with the family without getting the pieces all over the floor”.
Another father felt the Legoland trip had encouraged him to do more with his family, including more trips away

“[Legoland trip] encouraged family to go away more often to places like Cornwall. We started doing things together as a family which we’d never really done before.”

One father felt that the practical and emotional support provided by the programme had helped him to get back with his wife after they had temporarily separated,

“She was glad I had someone to talk to”.

Where fathers responded to the question about the differences they have noticed in the families it was clear that some fathers answered with the question not just about their own experiences of the Fathers Development programme, but also their partners’ and children’s experiences from other Sure Start services the family had used.

One father summarised the general opinions expressed by fathers,

“We’ve had nothing but good experiences, good advice and practical help”

7.4.6 Attitudes to childcare and fatherhood

All the fathers who responded to the question about who should have responsibility for childcare in the family answered that it should be a shared responsibility.

A majority of fathers also felt that their experiences of Sure Start services had changed their image of fatherhood, even as one father answered, “Only a little”.

Others summarised their thoughts,

“It’s improved the way I think about the children – makes me stop and think.”

“My image of my role as a father has been confirmed – there is still a role for a traditional middle-of-the-road father”.

Only 2 fathers said it had not changed their image of fatherhood.
7.5 The views of childcare professionals and the impact on their roles

7.5.1 Introduction

Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 2C for questionnaire) were held to get corroborative evidence from third parties about the impact of the Fathers’ Development Work programme on fathers and their families, and to find out whether the programme had had any impact on the work and attitudes of the professionals themselves. The interviews were held with the following Sure Start and NSPCC staff:

- Sure Start’s Community Development Worker,
- 2 Sure Start Nursery Nurses (one of whom had helped run the Fathers’ Time group for 18 months and who had resigned her post in 2004)
- 2 Sure Start Midwives.
- NSPCC Children’s Services Practitioner, who has temporarily managed the Fathers’ Time sessions (see also section 7.1),

These professionals had been involved with the Fathers’ Development Work in a number of ways including attending the regular Fathers’ Time and Saturday for Dads groups, helping on the Legoland trip or running the Ante-natal classes.

7.5.2 Impact on fathers, fathers-to-be and families

The Fathers’ Development Worker’s report lists a number of areas where he believed he had made a positive impact on the lives of fathers and their families. It was felt to be important to get a professional third party view of these impacts.

The Midwives felt that having a male presence at the Ante-natal classes provided significant benefits to couples attending the class especially around issues such as the benefit of joint parenting. At a practical level one outcome was the increased awareness among expectant parents of changes in legislation, and specifically around paternity leave. The interviews with the Sure Start Midwives corroborated the evidence detailed in the Fathers Development Worker report (see 6.3 above) which also highlighted these outcomes.

Another area where the Fathers’ Development Worker had a beneficial outcome was in encouraging fathers-to-be from broken relationships to become interested and involved in their new baby. He also gave the Midwives confidence to approach single mothers about why they should consider having the father’s involvement in bringing up the child, and what role the absent father could play in the future development of the child. Previously the Midwives would not have approached this topic with a single mother. He was instrumental in adding a box on the membership form about sending a membership form to fathers not living...
with the mother and child. Essentially the Fathers' Development Worker was the promoter and advocate of the philosophy that ‘the father has to be considered’.

One example given by the Midwives was a visit to an expectant mother. On the Midwife’s first visit the father-to-be sat in a separate room. He was persuaded to come to the Ante-natal group where he was supported by the Fathers’ Development Worker. He then came with his partner to all the subsequent classes.

Sure Start staff gave also provided an example of the work of the Fathers’ Development Worker which had an impact on other family members:

The Fathers' Development Worker had worked with one family where the mother had a learning disability. The Development worker had encouraged and supported her to give a talk about her disability and how it made her feel to an audience of over 150 people. This was a major achievement for someone with such a disability and who was also very shy. It clearly demonstrates the positive effect on an individual’s confidence once they are given appropriate support. It also shows the impact of the work outside the core area.

One of the most promising outcomes of the whole programme is that the Fathers’ Time group which meets on a Thursday want to establish their own group which they want to run themselves. This would be in addition to the Thursday group and would be seen as complementary. Even at its ‘conceptual’ stage this is a very positive outcome for a group of men, most of whom are either not working, have some form of disability or are full-time carers. It clearly meets a number of outcomes on the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework, especially the “Make a Positive Contribution” outcome which includes the following aims: “Engage in decision-making and support the community and environment”, “Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges” and “Develop enterprising behaviour”. Such initiatives will clearly have a positive knock-on effect on their children and the wider family.

One of the Nursery Nurses commented on the differences between the Fathers’ Time group and the Talk and Toys group which was attended predominately by women,

“The Dad’s group ran so much more smoothly than the Talk and Toys group. The dads mucked in – playing with the kids, clearing up, cooking etc., whereas the women would just sit and chat”.

It was hoped to increase the number of fathers attending the Parent-Talk forum which meets to decide what they would like to see in the Sure Start programme and to use this forum to look at new ideas for involving fathers.
Amongst new ideas for increasing the number of fathers involved was setting up an early evening club for fathers and children, which could be based around homework.

It was also noted that a number of fathers attended groups or activities which were not organised as part of the Fathers’ Development Work. Among these is a weekly physical activity group for children where parents take their children round the different pieces of equipment and activity stations which encourage interaction between parent and child. Four fathers had attended over the 2 year period the course had been running. Also five fathers have attended drop-in sessions organised by the Nursery Nurse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of positive change include the successful Christmas Party that the fathers put on for their children, including preparing a buffet. The view of the Sure Start staff was that the fathers would not have done this a year earlier and in doing so had gained a number of new skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BBQ also gave fathers responsibility, for example planning the event, buying food, organising activities and doing basic risk assessments.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other examples of positive outcomes include one father who was very quiet and shy participating in the “Eggshells” course around assertiveness. One of the Sure Start staff commented how talkative he became having done the course. Other fathers were helped to develop skills to improve their children’s behaviour; and a couple of fathers undertook a cooking course. One father regularly asked the advice of the workers about how he could provide support to his wife who was suffering from Post Natal Depression.

The Sure Start and NSPCC staff were also keen to stress the importance of their work with fathers was to provide information, advice and signposting. The female staff also spent a lot of time providing support and advice to fathers who were experiencing relationship problems.

In general this group of professionals felt that the Fathers’ Development Work programme had been a success, and they had seen a number of positive outcomes for the fathers, their children and their families as a whole. The only resistance among the fathers was around smoking despite receiving talks on the health effects of smoking and on oral health.

7.5.3 Impact on Sure Start and NSPCC staff and operations

In terms of the influence of the Fathers’ Development Work programme on other services and initiatives being run by both Sure Start and NSPCC, the Development Worker’s report highlights a number of areas where a more ‘father aware’ approach has been successfully implemented after his involvement.
These include changed practices and increased awareness of the role of the father in Ante-natal classes run by Sure Start and input into the consultation on breast-feeding policy initiated by Sure Start midwives.

The Fathers’ Development Worker also had a significant impact on the work of other professionals. Perhaps the best example of this is the impact on the Ante-natal classes set up by the Midwives. This programme was set up to prepare people for childbirth and parenthood. The Fathers’ Development Worker got involved with the group in order to make contact with fathers and also to make them feel comfortable in a primarily women-oriented environment. The Midwives felt that it made their job easier to invite a couple of parents-to-be to the classes, by telling them there was a Fathers’ Development Worker present at the sessions.

The Midwives have confirmed that the Fathers’ Development Worker was influential in changing how the group functioned, for example through the use of appropriate language, ensuring the male perspective was fundamental throughout all aspects of the class, and by supporting fathers-to-be who attended, especially those who were nervous of attending. He brought in posters of fathers playing with children which provided an important balance to the usual images in the classes. He developed a leaflet to encourage fathers-to-be to attend the Ante-natal classes, as well as putting a number of questions about men and fathers into a quiz which was part of the programme. Also important was that he told the class attendees about recent legislative changes around paternity leave. He also added to the dynamics of the group by acting as a facilitator. The Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill Ante-natal classes were the only such group in Swindon with a Fathers’ Worker.

As noted in 7.5.2 above the Development Worker also gave the Midwives confidence to approach single mothers about why they should consider having the father’s involvement in bringing up the child, and what role the absent father could play in the future development of the child.

He also contributed to the development of a breast-feeding policy. A key factor around the proportion of mothers who breast-feed is the support and encouragement of their partners – this can be best achieved through the fathers-to-be having a greater understanding of the benefits of breast-feeding. He also brought in ideas around how fathers can get involved when the baby is born, for example understanding why a baby starts crying and what to do.

As a result of the influence of the Fathers’ Development Worker the Midwives invite both parents-to-be. Previously they would send invitations to “Mandy and partner”; now they include both parents’ names e.g. “Mandy and Paul”. At the first Ante-natal class after the Fathers’ Development Worker left there were 8 men attending. The Midwives felt there was a different atmosphere at the class,
and missed his involvement as another body running the session, as a man providing support to the fathers-to-be, and as a facilitator of the group.

As they acknowledged themselves, Midwives tend to be very much focussed on the mother. However their involvement with the Fathers’ Development Worker has changed their behaviour and attitudes, and they now always remember to get a male perspective. This is a key outcome.

An analysis of the evaluation sheets from two series of Ante-natal classes highlighted some interesting comments and feedback. Two of the sessions were very ‘mum’ orientated and really only included men from the perspective of what they can do to help and make things easier. The evaluation forms commented that although this seemed an imbalance this is what all the men seemed to want. The Midwife running these classes wrote

“I would particularly like to see the inclusion of an opportunity for the fathers to be able to express their feelings in their own right, not about how they should respond to how mum was”.

At other sessions the issue of paternity rights was raised, and particularly the problem of paternal leave and the need to take holiday for Ante-natal classes and when the baby is born. At one session there was a question about the parental rights of fathers who were not married and whether they would be able to sign for emergency treatment for their child if their partner was incapacitated. It is clear that there is poor knowledge about the rights and responsibilities of fathers in some families. In the second series of classes the groups were split into two along gender lines for a quiz which included some extra questions about the role of fathers. This was felt to work well. At both series of classes attendees had ticked the box that they “liked to hear other men’s thoughts”.

Working with fathers has also had a positive impact on the Children’s Services Practitioner. She stated that the work had changed her perspective on the role of the father within the family, and the way she looked at her job as a Children’s Service Practitioner with the NSPCC. This changed perspective enabled her to identify a problem in one family she was working with around the bonding of the father and one of the children, which she felt she wouldn’t necessarily have picked up previously. She has also become more aware of the how little support there is for fathers.

Similarly the Nursery Nurses felt their involvement with the Fathers’ Development Work programme had had a positive effect on the way they perceived their work. As one commented,

“I now think about the family as a whole, not just the mother’s opinion. I’ve been made more aware on home visits to include the father in
discussions. It’s made me more confident talking to dads, more aware they are there and do play a big part.”

One member of staff highlighted possible conflicts of interest for the Development Worker. For example, the worker was bound by NSPCC policies and procedures which were not necessarily consistent with those of Sure Start. The example was given of NSPCC staff not being allowed to take photographs on the Legoland trip. Another example is the remit of the NSPCC which aims to work with children up to 11 (Sure Start works up to 5) and the wider geographical area covered by NSPCC (Sure Start covers Pinehurst and Penhill only). The worker was also based at the NSPCC’s North Swindon Family Centre, and was therefore seen as NSPCC worker. He also took part in twice weekly NSPCC drop-in sessions which were perceived to take time away from developing the Sure Start programme.

There were also criticisms made about the planning and evaluation process. It was felt that there was little supervision of the process, that evaluations were not checked or discussed, and that the evaluation process should have been more focussed and transparent. It was felt that the planning and evaluation process fell in the gap between the NSPCC and Sure Start. As one member of staff commented,

“It was not clear who [the Fathers’ Development Worker] was meant to be doing what for!”

### 7.5.4 A summary of benefits and outcomes as seen by childcare professionals

Overall these fellow Sure Start / NSPCC colleagues summarised the outcomes they had experienced with the fathers and their families as follows:

**Fathers**
- Fathers gaining in self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Increased confidence to ask e.g. asking professionals for help and advice.
- Taking responsibility for their children
- Developing new skills.
- Building trusting relationships with Sure Start / NSPCC workers over time.
- Fathers being open about their own problems and difficulties e.g. two fathers admitted they could not read or write, and were now being supported to seek help.
- More safety conscious.
- Healthier eating.
- More health aware e.g. knowledge of the “5 a Day” promotion.
- Greater awareness around the risks of smoking.
- Look forward to attending the groups.
- Improved social skills.
• Improved parenting skills and knowledge.
• Asking questions about their child’s development – seen applying the answer.
• Developing an understanding and knowledge around purpose of children’s play
• More friends – gets rid of isolation.

Children
• Children get to know their fathers / carers better.
• Quality time with fathers.
• Share life experiences with father – can talk to father about anything, for example what is happening at school.
• “Being seen to do something with Dad as well as Mum”.
• May open up to one parent rather than another if something is worrying them.
• Develop social and communication skills
• Improve speech and language
• Physical development – e.g. learning to ride bikes
• Learning through play – toys / activities were used which had particular learning objectives
• Provides children with routine

Mothers / Partners
• Gives mums quality time on own.
• Encourages a better family unit.
• Gain more confidence.
• Can learn new skills as have time and / or look for a job
• Support and encouragement to breastfeed.
• Improved relationships with partners
• Shared responsibility

On the negative side the Sure Start and NSPCC staff felt that the programme has not really engaged effectively with working fathers. The other key issue raised is the stigma associated with the NSPCC, which a number felt was a barrier to increased participation among fathers.
8 Cost effectiveness and value for money

The National Evaluation of Sure Start provides a tool to analyse the cost-effectiveness of a Sure Start programme. This is contained in a lengthy document titled “Guidance for Sure Start Local Evaluators and Programme Managers on the Estimation of Cost-Effectiveness at a local level” by Pamela Meadows.

The cost-effectiveness of the Fathers’ Development Work will have been adversely affected by the initial establishment of the programme, the on-going development of the programme, and finding out what activities and services fathers want. Over time several Sure Start and NSPCC staff members have been involved in delivering, supporting or managing aspects of the Fathers’ Development Work programme, which will have an impact on the cost-effectiveness. It will also be adversely affected by not having a full-time Development Worker in post since October 2004, which will mean that no new fathers will have participated, and which will therefore have the effect of increasing the average cost.

One of the main issues to consider is the diverse and varied nature of the Fathers’ Development Work programme. Unlike other services provided by Sure Start which have relatively discrete boundaries, the Fathers’ programme ranged from a one day activity such as the Legoland trip to intensive bi-weekly one-to-one support and counselling sessions over a significant period of months.

Also the level of involvement of fathers in various aspects of the programme varied massively. One father interviewed had only been on the Legoland trip, whilst others had been regular attendees at the weekly Fathers’ Time and monthly Saturdays for Dads groups, had benefited from one-to-one counselling and support sessions, participated in courses such as the Eggshells course, as well as enjoying the one-off events such as the Legoland trip and BBQ.

It is difficult to quantify the impact of the changed attitudes towards fathers in other agencies and in other areas of the Sure Start programme. It is also difficult to analyse the cost-effectiveness of the involvement that the Fathers’ Development Worker had with the Ante-natal groups.

Further, no records are kept for the number of staff who provided support – for example on the Saturdays for Dads group and at some of the Fathers’ Time groups there were childminders in attendance. At some sessions there would be other professionals dropping in to see the fathers.

It has also been difficult to analyse the overall attendances or participation of fathers during each year of the programme.
This costing exercise therefore confines itself to costs related directly to the Fathers Development Work programme from its inception in January 2003 to March 2005.

It must also be noted that the figures relate to fathers recorded by the Fathers’ Development Worker. A number of these do not fulfil the Sure Start criteria either because they live outside the Sure Start area or because their children are older than the 0-5 age range specified by Sure Start.

Sure Start contracted the NSPCC to employ a Development Worker to provide services and support to fathers-to-be and fathers of children under 4 in the Sure Start area under a Service Level Agreement. The amounts payable for the period January 2003 to March 2005 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>£6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>£26,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>£27,595*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£59,861</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - Sure Start has not paid the NSPCC since the Development Worker left in October 2004. £16,097 (equivalent of 7 months) has therefore been included in the calculation below for 2004/05.

Although not explicit in this Service Level Agreement it is assumed that the salary, pension and Employers National Insurance contributions for the postholder are included in this amount. The management of the postholder and related overhead costs are both provided and funded by the NSPCC. A notional 10% of the Development Worker’s salary has been allocated for the support provided by NSPCC, as it has not been possible to get accurate figures for this. This has been calculated for the period January 2003 to March 2005, as the NSPCC have continued to provide management support to the programme, despite the vacancy for a Development Worker.

A Nursery Nurse helped the Fathers’ Time group for approximately 18 months. Her salary was £18,142.96 including pension and Employers National Insurance, and additional training and travel costs amount to approximately £700 per annum. For this exercise 10% of her weekly hours of 37.5 hours have been allocated to working on the Fathers’ Time group including 2 hours per week for the actual group, and additional time for travel, planning and preparation, completing evaluation forms and administration. For the 18 month period of working her total costs came to £2,826.44.

Since the resignation of the original Nursery Nurse another Sure Start Nursery Nurse has provided occasional support to the group over the 6 months from
October 2004 to March 2005. A notional sum of £500.00 has been included for this.

Other Nursery Nurses have provided support to the monthly Saturdays for Dads group over the 2 year period. 4 hours per month have been allocated based on the payscale in the paragraph above. This equates to £942.00

With regard to both direct and indirect overheads, Sure Start employs 22 core staff and these have been apportioned at 10% x 1:22 for the Nursery Nurse visits.

Costs have therefore been calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost/Organisation</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Annual Cost</th>
<th>Directly attributed for project duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staffing costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>1 f/t. Development Worker</td>
<td>£27,000</td>
<td>£48,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Start</td>
<td>0.1 f.t.e. Nursery Nurse – 18 months – Fathers Time</td>
<td>£18,843</td>
<td>£2,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursery Nurse – occasional – Fathers Time – 6 months</td>
<td>£18,843</td>
<td>£500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursery Nurse – Saturdays for Dads – 2 years</td>
<td>£18,843</td>
<td>£942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sure Start support staff for Legoland and BBQ – approx 4 staff days at £75.00 per day</td>
<td></td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overheads</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Start Direct *</td>
<td>Maintenance, cleaning, admin, services etc.</td>
<td>£43,200</td>
<td>£393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>Management &amp; overheads (notional 10% of worker’s salary)</td>
<td>£2,700</td>
<td>£5,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£59,310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Maintenance, repairs, water & sewage, electricity, gas, security, recruitment, audit fee, cleaning, telephone, stationery, consumables, rates
Given the complicating factors above, the following unit costing can only be approximate. Furthermore, no template unit costing exercises have been uncovered in literature searches involving evaluation reports on Fathers Development services in other Sure Start local programmes on the National Evaluation of Sure Start website.

**Total Fathers’ Development Work programme**

This includes all fathers and children participating in the programme, whether or not they met the Sure Start criteria of household location and age of children.

The *average annual* directly attributable cost from January 2003 to March 2005 for the Fathers’ Development Work programme is estimated at £26,360.

The total directly attributable cost per father (based on 40 fathers) is estimated at £1,483.

The average annualised cost per father from January 2003 to March 2005 is £659.

The total directly attributable cost per child (based on 74 children) is estimated at £801.

The average annualised cost per child from January 2003 to March 2005 is £356.

**Fathers’ Development Work programme meeting Sure Start criteria**

Sure Start monitoring figures for the calendar year 2004 show that there were 222 contacts with a total of 27 fathers for the fathers groups. Additionally there were 16 fathers who attended Activity Days, such as the Legoland trip, which are reported separately in the Monitoring Report, of which 3 fathers did not attend other groups. There are therefore a total of 238 contacts with 30 fathers in 2004.

These figures exclude fathers who do not meet the Sure Start criteria either by reason of their household location or the ages of their children [Source: Sure Start Pinehurst & Penhill – Monitoring Report 2004 – (April 2005)]

The estimated cost *per contact* for fathers meeting Sure Start criteria during 2004 is estimated at £111.

The estimated average cost *per father* meeting Sure Start criteria during 2004 is estimated at £879.

Assuming the same children:father ratio of 1.85 (based on the whole programme, and including children over 5) the estimated average cost per child meeting the Sure Start criteria during 2004 is estimated at £475.
These figures would be significantly lower, representing greater cost-effectiveness, had a greater proportion of the fathers participating in the programme met the strict Sure Start criteria.

The figures would also have been different had a Development Worker been in post throughout the evaluation period. Had this been the case the actual costs would have been higher, but on the other hand there would have been more fathers and children engaging and participating in the programme.

It is recommended that more detailed work is undertaken around the cost-effectiveness of individual elements of the Fathers’ Development Work programme.

It is also recommended that more detailed work is undertaken into the actual annual cost per father and per child. This will require a more rigorous and consistent approach to recording attendances and other relevant information than was previously the case. It is seen as essential that Sure Start and the NSPCC review and agree the parameters and criteria for the programme.
9 Other Sure Start programmes

A review of the National Evaluation of Sure Start website only identified a small number of Sure Start programmes which had undertaken work with fathers, and who had published their evaluation of the their work.

9.1 Sure Start Bramley – Leeds (March 2003)

This evaluation report included a section on work with fathers. However, on reading the report it became clear that the evaluation only included a briefing paper they had commissioned from the University of Huddersfield entitled “What works with fathers?” (B. Featherstone). The briefing paper surveyed and reviewed the available literature and research papers on work with fathers and concentrated on 4 groups of fathers:

- First time fathers
- Teenage fathers
- Fathers and domestic violence
- Partners of those with Post Natal Depression

One conclusion from the review was that the most effective group work should target men with specific needs, such as young fathers and separated fathers. The literature review demonstrated that there is still limited evidence on ‘what works’ with specific groups of fathers. However the review highlighted a number of themes that are common to successful projects with men. These are:

- Projects were very clear or became very clear about their purpose
- Fathers were reached when a multi-faceted targeting approach was used.
- The projects ‘liked fathers’ and communicated that to both fathers and other agencies and were positive about the contribution fathers could make.
- Projects recognised that recruitment of fathers took time and needed to be sustained
- They understood what motivated fathers to get involved
- There were identifiable skills and attitudes common to project workers - these included knowledge of fathers and fathering but not necessarily that the worker was a male
- There was a recognition that fathers were also men and programmes and recruitment strategies were adapted to take this into account

It concluded that there was most potential for developing a programme with fathers who had partners with PND. It also concluded that there was an opportunity to develop a programme aimed at first time fathers, but that there would be more obstacles developing a programme for teenage fathers or fathers where domestic violence was an issue.
9.2  The Spa Spiders Sure Start - Doncaster (February 2004)

This report is a research project in response to difficulties the programme was experiencing in engaging men and a desire to locate any future initiatives within a context suitable for the local community. The principle aim of the research was to seek ways to engage men.

The research highlighted the following barriers to involvement:
- practical problems in accessing Sure Start
- work commitments
- fathers get more interested in children as they get older
- Sure Start seen as a facility for women
- difficulties in building Sure Start into the male role
- traditional view of gender roles – father as the provider
- not a “man” thing to do
- anxiety related to being with children and paedophilia
- concerns in society about paedophiles
- fathers policing their own behaviour with regard to their own and other children

The report noted that both men and women need time off from parenting.

It also highlighted the importance of family and community life in a former mining town. The loss of the pit had dissipated the community spirit and engendered mistrust in government and its interference in family life, particularly among men. Changes in family life meant that grandparents played an important role in many families for childcare.

Professionals in the area identified two separate cultures in the local community, that of women and that of men:
The men’s culture was based upon:
- male as provider
- drugs and drink culture of young men
- a reluctance on men’s behalf to have physical contact with children

The women’s culture was based on:
- extended families leading to a culture where men are excluded from child rearing
- having babies and engaging in childcare activities with your peer group

A summary of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this research suggests that:
- Older people report that changes have already taken place in this respect and that men have made changes in response to the wider social and economic changes in the area.
Whilst women of child bearing area may be negative in their assessment of men generally and their partners, in particular there was also a recognition that they underestimate their men.

Children tend to have a higher opinion of the ability of men to care for and enjoy the company of children than women do.

Men themselves think that they are capable of looking after children and being involved in child related activities, but are prevented from doing so by work.

Women think that men should be encouraged to use Sure Start and admire the men who do use it.

The report concludes that it is not impossible to engage with men and under certain circumstances men are more likely to be involved. These circumstances are:

- when they are told to by their partners
- when the activities is family oriented
- when it involves older children
- when it involves something they enjoy – football
- when it is in the evenings or at weekends
- when other men are involved

9.3 North Leyton Sure Start, - London (April 2004)

This report looked at why men are hard to reach and identified a number of barriers:

**Socio-economic factors**, such as wage levels or childcare costs. This was a major factor for most of the parents we spoke to, with fathers working long hours or shifts. (Statistics show that British fathers work longer hours than fathers anywhere else in Europe)

**Cultural attitudes**, including in the culture in general, the local culture of the area, or the different cultural backgrounds local fathers come from. A typical attitude is that childcare is the mother’s responsibility and the father won’t get involved

**Particular family circumstances**, like a painful separation or difficult work/care balance, or the role of the extended family. These are largely beyond the power of Sure Start to change in the short term, although a long-term shift can be brought about by promoting positive images of involved fatherhood and providing spaces and opportunities that help individual families overcome the structural constraints they operate within.

**The attitudes of caring professionals**, e.g. excessive suspicion around child protection issues, or patronising approaches to men’s awareness of their children’s health.

**The delivery of Sure Start projects and activities**, e.g. very feminine spaces, or opening times.
The report asserts that it is important to acknowledge that you can’t just draw members of “hard to reach” communities into the orbit of Sure Start and then expect them to just start engaging with general Sure Start provision. An intermediate stage is required, building relationships and trust. After initial activities had drawn men in there was no planning or structure around follow-up activities.

The report cites the work of the organization Working With Men, who are experienced in such work, use the concept of “edges of familiarity” to describe this. This is the idea of providing something that men are used to, but building in elements that go beyond this, and so on.

The reports summarises its recommendations as follows:

- Targeted activities for particular groups of fathers within the area and for fathers in general.
- Possible activities could include quiz nights, walks, football activities, cricket activities, pool or darts tournaments and barbeques.
- A mix of men-only, father-and-child and whole family events. It was felt that some fathers of younger children are intimidated about taking out their children, and they might prefer whole family events. On the other hand, it is important to create spaces and times for men to be together to support each other's needs.
- Going through mothers would be key to promoting these activities.
- One suggestion would be parent-only events, organised by parents. This would require some training in event organising, which would help out of work parents become more employable.
- It is important that these activities build in a follow-up programme, with fun activities being followed up by more directly Sure Start relevant work, such as father-and-child reading programmes or health promotion work.
- Targeted services for particular groups of fathers within the area and for fathers in general. Key services would include advice sessions, focusing on separated fathers’ legal positions, working family tax credits and paternity leave.
- Piloting extensions of existing activities/services outside the school day, for example piloting the extension of a small number of existing services and activities in the evenings and weekends, e.g. a Thursday evening health visitor clinic
- Promoting father friendly culture within the programme and its partners - it is important to formalise a father-friendly policy.
- Workshops for staff and service providers, or even training from experienced bodies like DIY Dads or Fathers Direct, are suggested.
- A suggestion for local dads to be trained by such bodies to act as trainers to train local professionals.
- Initiating a borough-wide Male Inclusion Strategy. Sure Start could build on the work it has already done to take the lead in initiating a borough-wide Male Inclusion Strategy.
This would work best in partnership with Primary Schools as well as the Sure Starts, and target not just the fathers of under-5s but a larger age range (e.g. up to the end of Primary School).

The strategy might include breakfast clubs for fathers at primary schools, services targeting non-resident fathers, courses in fathering, and introducing fathering awareness education at secondary schools and youth clubs.


The key findings from this report produced by National Evaluation of Sure Start are as follows:

- Most Sure Start programmes reported low levels of father involvement. Where fathers took part it was most likely to be in outdoor, fun-type activities. However, many fathers do have ‘arm’s length’ contact with programmes through their partners.

- Fathers are inclined to attend activities designed specifically for them. Events for fathers and children can be a stepping stone into other Sure Start activities and services, including whole family activities.

- Fathers felt welcomed at Sure Start services, although being in a minority among mothers could be daunting. Mothers supported the idea of fathers using Sure Start services, and of male staff working in them.

- Fathers continued to come to Sure Start when they had seen a positive benefit to themselves or their children from a service.

- Where programmes had high levels of father involvement, they had decided early in the planning stages of the programme that fathers would be central to their work.

- In such programmes there was an attempt to spread commitment to fathers to every aspect of the programme and to everyone involved. There was a joined-up approach to involving fathers.

- An important encouragement for fathers was the presence of a staff member dedicated to involving them. Such workers have help Sure Start programmes discover and respond to issues that affect fathers e.g. concerns about child development or anger management.

The findings from the evaluation of the Fathers’ Development Work programme in Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill are consistent with the above conclusions.
10 Recommendations

There is a clear need to have a full-time worker in place. There is already insufficient support and representation for fathers in other service areas dealing with family matters, and there needs to be an advocate to increase the awareness of the fundamental importance of the role that fathers play. It is felt that the lack of a full-time worker from October 2004 has meant that much of the impetus of the programme has been lost, and some of it will be difficult to regain.

It is seen as essential that Sure Start and the NSPCC review and agree the parameters and criteria for the Fathers’ Development Work programme. It is clear that there is confusion, and even a ‘conflict of interest’ between the aims and objectives, and the policies and procedures of both organisations. There is clear evidence that significant resources have gone into encouraging the participation of fathers who do not meet the Sure Start criteria because of where they live or the age of their children. If there is a tacit agreement to provide services to families who do not strictly meet the Sure Start criteria this needs to be communicated more effectively throughout both organisations.

This review also highlighted some areas of weakness in the planning and evaluation process. It was felt that there was room for improvement in the management and coordination of the process, that evaluations were not checked or discussed, and that the evaluation process should have been more focussed and transparent. It was felt that the planning and evaluation process fell in the gap between the NSPCC and Sure Start. This has lead to weaknesses in the strategic management of the programme, which was expressed by some members of staff. This needs to be reviewed and a more robust approach taken towards both the strategic and operational management of the programme.

Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill should consider targeting specific groups of men rather than trying to be all things to all people. It is also strongly recommended that more emphasis is placed on attracting fathers with families who meet the Sure Start criteria. This will significantly improve the cost-effectiveness of the programme.

This report recommends that the Fathers’ Development Work programme should develop evaluation tools for each element of the programme that aim to measure progress against the objectives of the Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill programme, the objectives and targets set out in the Service Level Agreement, as well as national Sure Start objectives and Every Child Matters outcomes. These evaluation tools should be developed in full consultation with the Sure Start Information Officer. The evaluations should be used as part of the regular planning sessions with the Fathers’ Development Worker and should be shared on a regular basis with key management and members of the Evaluation Group.
Sure Start and partner agencies should establish agreed protocols or policies regarding access to information, such as case notes of individual counselling sessions, for purposes such as evaluations.

It is suggested that the format of the case notes for future one-to-one counselling sessions is reviewed with the aim of including a specific section on evaluating outcomes at both an intermediate and final level.

This evaluation report recommends that more detailed work is undertaken around the cost-effectiveness of individual elements of the Fathers’ Development Work programme, so that elements can be analysed and compared.

It is also recommended that more detailed work is undertaken into the actual annual cost per father and per child. This will require a more rigorous and consistent approach to recording attendances and other relevant information than was previously the case.
11 Summary and Conclusions

11.1 Introduction

This evaluation has reviewed the diverse and varied Fathers’ Development Work programme from a number of different perspectives. It acknowledges that much of the work of the programme was developmental and therefore likely to be difficult to analyse and evaluate in any robust and representative manner.

However, the evaluation has identified evidence from a number of sources, most of which can be corroborated by other elements of the evaluation process, which clearly demonstrate that the programme has been largely successful in improving the lives of fathers, their children and their wives or partners.

11.2 A summary of key outcomes

Some of the key outcomes for fathers, their children and the wives and partners are as follows:

Fathers
- Opportunity to spend time with their children which they otherwise would not have had
- Can get more involved with their children / take responsibility
- Improved parenting skills
- Improving children’s behaviour – setting rules and boundaries
- Understand children more - asking questions about their child’s development and applying the answer
- Developing an understanding and knowledge around purpose of children’s play
- Fathers more able to support partners going to things such as drop-in sessions
- More confidence to ask for things e.g. things to help their partner out with childcare
- Pride in being able to show their families what they have been doing and what they have achieved
- Ante-natal classes providing bonding with the baby before it is born
- Overcoming fear of feeding or changing a new born baby
- Support around breastfeeding
- Making fathers realise how important they are within the family context, and not just as a breadwinner
- Calmer attitudes / anger management
- Encouragement to learn new things and develop new skills
- Meeting new people and making friends
- Socialising and having the chance to relax, which is particularly important for men who are not in paid employment
• Benefit from the experiences of other fathers particularly those with older children
• Emotional support
• Practical help
• Fathers gaining in self-confidence and self-esteem – including confidence to ask professionals for help and advice
• Building trusting relationships with Sure Start / NSPCC workers over time.
• Opportunity to talk about problems, share problems and help others with their problems
• More safety conscious.
• Healthier eating
• More health aware e.g. knowledge of the “5 a Day” promotion
• Greater awareness around the risks of smoking

Children
• Social interaction – especially for pre-play school children the sessions they attend with their fathers may be the first steps in socialising with other children
• Quality time with the fathers
• See fathers in a different light i.e. outside the domestic setting
• Sensory development – activities that sessions like Fathers’ Time include will improve touch, feel, hearing, taste and smell
• Creative development
• Develop social and communication skills
• Improve speech and language
• Make new friends
• Respect other children
• New activities
• Father involved in care and development – more rounded upbringing
• Brought up in a safer environment
• Reduced risk of abuse or neglect
• Practical support with problems
• Share life experiences with father – can talk to father about anything, for example what is happening at school
• “Being seen to do something with Dad as well as Mum”
• May open up to one parent rather than another if something is worrying them
• Physical development – e.g. learning to ride bikes
• Learning through play – toys / activities were used which had particular learning objectives
• Provides children with routine.

Mothers / Partners
• Peace and quiet
• Gives mums quality time on own.
Reducing and sharing some of responsibility for childcare
Help with housework
Greater family unity and coherence
Women benefit from events and activities organised by fathers
Encourages a better family unit
Gain more confidence
Can learn new skills as have time and/or look for a job
Support and encouragement to breastfeed
Improved relationships with partners.

11.3 Meeting Sure Start and Every Child Matters objectives

It is evident from the findings of the evaluation that the Fathers’ Development Work programme in Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill is meeting the four key Sure Start objectives which are:

- Improving Social and Emotional Development
- Improving Health
- Improving Learning
- Strengthening Families and Communities

There is also strong evidence from this evaluation that the programme meets the first 4 of the 5 key outcomes of the Government’s ‘Every Child Matters’ initiative, which are:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-being

There is some evidence that the programme is encouraging some fathers to achieve ‘economic well-being’ through introducing them to new skills and activities and developing existing skills.

11.4 Meeting the objectives and targets in the Service Level Agreement

The evaluation has also found significant evidence that the Fathers' programme is meeting the purposes of the Service Level Agreement between Sure Start and NSPCC which are to

- increase the level of their involvement in local services for pre-school children and families, and
- to ensure the accessibility of all Sure Start and Family Centre provision to these groups
The SLA outlines the objectives of the Service to contribute to the achievement of three Sure Start objectives:

- To improve social and emotional development, in particular, by supporting early bonding between parents and their children, helping families to function and by enabling the early identification and support of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- To improve health, in particular, by supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth.
- To strengthen families and communities, in particular, by involving families in building the community’s capacity to sustain the programme and thereby create pathways out of poverty.

As stated above there is clear evidence that the programme has achieved these objectives, and the evaluation has found evidence that the programme has achieved positive outcomes of the fourth Sure Start objective which is ‘Improving Learning’, for example through fathers helping their children to read and use toys in an educational manner.

There is evidence that the programme has met most of the specific targets set out in the SLA for the period January 2003 – March 2004. These were:

- Establishment of a task or focus group comprising fathers and staff from NSPCC and Sure Start by March 31 2003
- Production and implementation of a questionnaire for fathers to gather views about services including gaps and needs by June 2003
- Establishment of one new specific service for fathers and children by January 2004
- Increase in the involvement of fathers and fathers-to-be in Family Centre and Sure Start activities by 100% by March 2004
- Evaluation process for work with fathers – designed in liaison with Sure Start Information Officer – to be in place by June 2003.

A Support Group was established, although initially this did not have any fathers participating despite a strong commitment to the principle. More recently there has been a meeting with members of the Fathers’ Time group around developing and promoting the group and other elements of the programme. It is intended that this approach will continue.

There have been a number of questionnaires produced during the first 2 years of the programme. However, as with the on-going evaluation process this has been done in an ‘ad hoc’ manner and with little strategic overview or communication between NSPCC and Sure Start. There are a number of recommendations in section 10 regarding the management of the programme and the importance of using on-going evaluation to manage the programme at both a strategic and operational level.
There is clear evidence that a number of new services have been developed for fathers – Fathers’ Time, Saturdays for Dads, one-to-one counselling and support sessions, one-off activities, involvement with Ante-natal classes are all examples.

There is also evidence that there has been an increase of over 100% in the involvement of fathers and fathers-to-be in the programme. Anecdotal evidence estimates that there were approximately 5 fathers engaged with Sure Start before the establishment of the Fathers’ Development Programme.

11.5 A final conclusion

Overall, and despite some of the problems noted in this evaluation, the Fathers’ Development Work programme appears to have been successful in meeting its main objectives of improving the lives and life-chances of fathers and their children.
References


“Service Agreement between Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill and NSPCC for the provision of development work with fathers, other male carers and fathers-to-be” – Sure Start, January 2003

“Sure Start Pinehurst and Penhill, Swindon - The Play Start Service Review” - University of Bath in Swindon, April 2003


“Guidance for Sure Start Local Evaluators and Programme Managers on the Estimation of Cost-Effectiveness at a local level” - Pamela Meadows, National Institute of Economic and Social Research


“Engaging Fathers – Spa Spiders report” – Arc, February 2004

“Involving Fathers – North Leyton Sure Start Local Evaluation 2004” - Centre for Urban and Community Research, April 2004
Appendix 2A – Questionnaire – Fathers’ Group Focus Group

SURE START PINEHURST & PENHILL

OUTLINE QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP WITH THE FATHERS’ GROUP

What initially encouraged you to become involved in the Fathers’ Group?

What activities / events have you most enjoyed (e.g. 121 sessions, group activities, days out, weekly meetings, monthly meetings)?

Why have you enjoyed them (socialising, meeting other fathers, peace)?

Which activities / events have you found most useful as a father?

Why have you found them useful?

Which activities have you found least enjoyable?

Which activities have you found least useful as a father?

Are the days and times of meetings appropriate? (Explore issues around work / worklessness)

What other activities would you like to see?

What are your thoughts about how you have been accepted and welcomed by Sure Start / NSPCC staff and volunteers?

What are your thoughts about how you have been accepted and welcomed by mothers participating in Sure Start / NSPCC activities?

Have you participated in any activities / events which have predominantly been full of mothers? If “Yes” what are your thoughts and feelings?

How have other fathers / men responded when you have told them about the Fathers Group / Sure Start / NSPCC?

What do you think about childcare being the responsibility of the mother?

How have you benefited as a man from participating?

How have you benefited as a father / parent from participating?

Has your image of fatherhood changed as a result of the group?
How have your children benefited from your participation?

How have your wife / partner / mother of your children benefited?

Any other comments on the Fathers’ Group, Sure Start or NSPCC?
Appendix 2B – Questionnaire – Individual interviews

SURE START PINEHURST & PENHILL

TELEPHONE / FACE-TO FACE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FATHERS

Family Information

Name:

Name of partner:

Names and ages of children:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Are you still using Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services?

If you have stopped using Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services, why have you done so?

Which services have you used, how often and for how long?

What activities / events have you most enjoyed (e.g. 121 sessions, group activities, days out, weekly meetings, monthly meetings) and why (socialising, meeting other fathers, peace)?

How did you hear about Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services (e.g. advertising, home visits, Health Visitors, friends)?

What factors have encouraged you to use Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services?

What differences have you noticed or perceived in your children since you started using Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services (e.g. education and learning, health, social and emotional well-being)? – Differentiate between children 0-4, and 5+
What differences have you noticed or perceived in yourself as a man and a father since you started using Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services (e.g. parenting skills, confidence)?

What differences have you noticed or perceived in your partner since you started using Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services (e.g. parenting skills)?

What differences have you noticed or perceived in your whole family since you started using Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services (e.g. act more like a family, new friends, involvement in the community)?

Which parent should take responsibility for childcare?

Has your image of fatherhood changed as a result of Sure Start / NSPCC / Fathers Group services?

Have you any other comments or questions you would like to make?
Appendix 2C – Questionnaire – Staff / Providers

SURE START PINEHURST & PENHILL

OUTLINE QUESTIONS FOR PROVIDERS / STAFF

What has been your involvement in work with Fathers – how long and in what capacity?

What activities have you been involved with?

Which activities / events have you found most useful for fathers and why?

Which activities have you found least useful for fathers and why?

What other activities would you like to see developed for fathers?

What benefits have you seen to fathers as a result of participating in the programme?

What benefits have you seen for children as a result of fathers participating in the programme?

What benefits have you seen for the wives / partners / mothers of the children of fathers who have participated in the programme?

What benefits have you seen for the wider family as a result of fathers participating in the programme?

What benefits have you seen in your own work as a result of the Fathers Development Programme?

What barriers are there to the involvement of other fathers in the programme?

What opportunities and barriers are there to fathers participating in wider Sure Start activities?

Any monitoring or evaluation of activities / the programme?

Overall view of the programme’s strengths and weaknesses – what has made it successful or unsuccessful – does it meet its objectives

How do you think that the programme can develop and improve to be more effective?

Any other comments on the Fathers’ Group, Sure Start or NSPCC?
Appendix 3 - Evaluation of the “Eggshells” programme

Summary evaluation of the “Eggshells” programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% saying sessions were</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Week 7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O.K</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
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<td>100.00%</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
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<td>40.00%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
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<td>62.50%</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
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<td>60.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
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<td>100.00%</td>
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<td>62.50%</td>
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<td>9</td>
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Note: This table has been extracted directly from the evaluation done by the Fathers’ Development Worker. It is assumed that where no percentages have been input that the answer was 0%.

In the table below there is an a scale of 1-10
Appendix 3 - Summary evaluation of the “Eggshells” programme – cont’d

Comments from WEA Evaluation Forms

The participants made the following comments during the final evaluation of the course.

*I’ve learnt how to deal with situations more assertively.

*I’ve had lots of support from the group.

*I’ve been able to talk in the group.

*I’ve learnt new techniques for dealing with things.

*I’ve spent time evaluating ‘how’ I am.

*I can speak to authority now.

*I’ve learnt to help others in the group.

*I’m working towards new goals.

*I’ve grown in confidence.

*I feel I can stand up for what’s right.

*I need help in my life.

*I can accept compliments now.

At the end of the course when talking about other ‘learning’ that they might like to have, most of the men responded that they would like:-

Courses about child development.

Courses about anger management.

Courses about child behaviour management techniques.
(Assertive parenting – not smacking)

At the end of the course the joint co –facilitators agreed that:
Working with two parallel gender groups had been a success. (Although we also recognised that work that had been done in the large group had also been valuable.)

Participants had mainly seemed to (and had spoken out loud about) benefiting from the course.

We wondered if there could have been more of an emphasis on self esteem (as opposed to assertiveness)

Felt that it would have helped the facilitation of the group if there had been time allowed for weekly staff feedback and/or adjustments to course.

Were pleased with our working relationship but recognised it could have been improved with further work on co-working arrangements.

Felt the course would have been improved by larger numbers attending.
### Appendix 3 - Summary evaluation of the “Eggshells” programme – cont’d

#### How much did you enjoy the session?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Did not / Not at all</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A lot</th>
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<td>Week 1</td>
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#### How much did you take part in the session?

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<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A lot</th>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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#### How much help do you think you got from the session?

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<th>A lot</th>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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#### How well did you get on with the other people at the session?

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<th></th>
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<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A lot</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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Appendix 4 - Legoland Survey

Q. What kind of things would you like to do, or think other dads might be interested in?

Total Sample = 16 fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Positive Relationships</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing your child's behaviour</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping cool / managing stress</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ante-natal sessions</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays for Dads</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hints &amp; Tips for New Dads</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snooker</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIY</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Football Team</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Outings</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darts</td>
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<td>Bowling</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cycle Maintenance</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watersports</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Learning</td>
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</table>