An Evaluation of the
Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service

Bentley Childrens Centre

Written by
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Evaluation of the Family Support Outreach Service – Bentley Childrens Centre

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all individuals that gave their time to contribute to the evaluation. Particular thanks are extended to the finance and monitoring coordinator for her help with the cost benefit analysis.
# Evaluation of the Family Support Outreach Service – Bentley Childrens Centre

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1 Executive Summary

Interview with the centre manager
- The centre manager said that the Family Support Outreach Service was developed because of needs identified by local health visitors and the local community. The service was incorporated into the Sure Start Adwick and Bentley delivery plan.

- The interviewee said that with increased resources and space in the Childrens Centre the family support workers were now able to offer more group activities. She said that in the future she hoped the family support workers would lead on more group parenting projects.

- The centre manager said that the key benefit to families of the service was that it offered them confidence in their roles as parents which would ultimately improve their children’s development.

- Furthermore she said that the service had had further benefits for some families such as helping with housing allocation and identifying development delays in their pre-school children.

- It was stated that difficulties with partnership working had been primarily around overlaps in services and communication. However it was discussed that these were being resolved.

- The centre manager discussed the importance of gaining statistical evidence from social services and health in order to help sustain the service.

Paired interview with family support workers
- The family support workers said that in their role they benefited from having a background in child protection, child development and experience of working with families.

- The workers discussed the usefulness of a recent children protection course they had been on. They also explained they had both just qualified as baby massage instructors which would add depth to their roles.

- They interviewees said that the aims of the Family Support Outreach Service were to ‘break cycles of parenting’ which existed in the area.

- The family support workers said they do not preach to families rather they provide them with information and allow the families to make choices.

- The interviewees said it was important to keep the work they do focused and to ‘turn it around’ as quickly as possible. Although they stated that all families work at their own pace.

- In terms of referrals, the interviewees discussed the importance of referrers being more clear with families about what the Family Support Outreach Service involves.

- They also stated that they sometimes weren’t provided with enough information about families by referrers.
They discussed that families that had self-referred were the easiest families to work with.

It was discussed that more than in other areas families in Highfields had benefited from the service.

They said that the key benefits of the Family Support Outreach Service were that it broke cycles of parenting and this would ultimately lead to better opportunities for children.

It was also identified that family support could have a knock on effect to other families in the community that were not accessing it.

Survey with service users
- Forty-two parents responded to the survey this is 34% of service users.
- Half of the respondents were currently using the service and half were no longer using it.
- The majority had found out about the service from their health visitor, other ways respondents had found out about it were through friends and family, through attending Park Lodge/ the Childrens Centre, school and social services.
- Most respondents were satisfied with the time they had to wait from being told about the service to receiving support.
- Respondents indicated that they had hoped to gain either social and emotional support or advice about specific parenting issues from the Family Support Outreach Service.
- More than half of the respondents said that if the Family Support Outreach Service hadn’t been available they would have asked their health visitor for the support, one third said they would have gone to family or friends, a quarter said they wouldn’t have gone to anyone.
- The greatest proportion of respondents said they had always been able to contact their family support worker when they needed to.
- Almost nine in ten respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the support they had received from their family support worker.
- Over a quarter of respondents had been signposted to childcare providers by the Family Support Outreach Service.
- The majority of respondents (88%) felt they had benefited from using the Family Support Outreach Service.
- The key ways respondents felt they had benefited were through gaining social and emotional support, help to cope with a specific problem or issue, and being helped to access other Sure Start services.
- 83% of respondents felt their child/children had benefited from the Family Support Outreach Service.
- The key ways respondents felt their children had benefited were through being able to access other Sure Start services and through raising their confidence and self-esteem.
Overall, respondents said that the Family Support Outreach Service had given them coping strategies to deal with a specific situation.

More than three-quarters of respondents were aware of Sure Start. The majority had visited either Park Lodge or the Childrens Centre.

Almost half of respondents had attended the Sure Start Family Support Drop-in.

Interviews with key stakeholders

• Four interviews were conducted with representatives from health, social services, a local school and Woodlands Family Centre.

• All interviewees made referrals or managed staff that made referrals to the Family Support Outreach Service.

• All interviewees felt well informed about the aims of the Family Support Outreach Service.

• Overall, most discussed having good communication with the centre manager and the family support team. It was discussed this had improved as the service had established itself and it was felt that it would continue to improve.

• Keeping the referrer informed about the family that they had referred was discussed as being an important part of the relationship.

• Referrals were made to the service in different circumstances for all stakeholders however a key reason for referring was to offer families an additional ‘layer’ of support.

• A key benefit of the service was perceived to be that it helped families to access other services with their children.

• It was discussed that a long term benefit of the service was that through intervention pre-school children’s potential would be enhanced.

• In terms of benefits to themselves the interviewee from health identified that the Family Support Outreach Service had freed up time to develop more specific services for families.

• It was also identified that the Family Support Outreach Service had made professionals more aware of each others roles.

• Interviewees felt it was important that an early intervention service was available in some form. They were unable to make suggestions about how it could be sustained. One interviewee said that if funding was reduced they felt that the Family Support Outreach Service should be the one service that did continue.

Monitoring data and cost-benefit analysis

• Between April 2004 and March 2005, 88 families and 119 children aged 0-5 years have been supported by the Family Support Outreach Service to some degree.

• Fairly equal proportions of families in Bentley, Adwick and Woodlands have accessed the service. Higher proportions of the community in Highfields and Toll bar have accessed it.
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- The key source of referrals was health visitors.
- The unit cost of one home visit through the Family Support Outreach Service was identified as being £78.94.
2 Introduction

This report presents the findings of the evaluation undertaken between March and May 2005 of the Bentley Childrens Centre - Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service.

Consultation was undertaken with users of the service, family support workers and other professionals working in the area. In addition a cost-benefit analysis of the service has been carried out to indicate the cost of delivering the service.

3 Background

3.1 Context – Family Support

Family support issues are key to the work of Local Sure Start Programmes. Furthermore within the ‘core’ offer of Childrens Centres all centres are required to provide family support and outreach for parents¹.

In a report produced by the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) team in 2005², it is recognised that Sure Start demands a consideration of the complex and serious issues which impact on children and their families (e.g. child protection, poor health, social exclusion) and that these issues are often rooted in complex social problems that are themselves often consequences of a lack of supportive networks and or/ organisations.

Therefore, family support practice means providing social support networks for children and their families within a range of formal and informal organisations, thus avoiding social exclusion. It is identified that family support can offer two key types of support: practical support or instrumental support.

Relevant to this project the NESS report identifies that some programmes have adopted home visiting schemes as a means of providing family support, these have either been inherited from other sources, inherited and developed, or have developed as completely new services.

3.2 The Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service

The Adwick and Bentley Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service was a new service, identified as a need within the community at the consultation stage of the programme in 2002 and written into the Sure Start delivery plan.

The delivery plan identified the following organisation of the Family Support Outreach Service:

¹ Sure Start Unit (August 2003) Childrens Centres – developing integrated services for young children and their families – Start up guidance’ http://www.surestart.gov.uk/_doc/P0000457.doc
The Sure Start family support team will be based at the Sure Start new building and be involved in a range of support services to families across the area. This will include:

- Play and Stay sessions at the centre and other sites across the Sure Start area
- Outreach services to vulnerable families especially to children in need
- Support to families who have been referred to Social Services
- Families who have been referred to Social Services for preventative Family Support Outreach Services which they are not in a position to offer
- Crisis intervention and assistance through advocacy and information giving

With the aims of the service being to:

- To reduce the proportion of children aged 0-3 in the Sure Start area who are re-registered within the space of 12 months on the child protection register by 20%.
- All local Sure Start programmes to have agreed and implemented, in a culturally sensitive way, ways of identifying, caring for and supporting mothers with postnatal depression.
- 10% reduction in the Sure Start area aged 0-3 admitted to hospital as an emergency with gastro-enteritis, and respiratory infection, or a severe injury.

The Sure Start Family Support Team was established in 2003 and consisted of three family support workers and a family support manager (also the deputy Sure Start programme manager). The family support workers were based at the temporary Sure Start building (from here referred to as Park Lodge).

In 2005, Adwick and Bentley Sure Start joined with the Bentley NCH Family Centre to become a Childrens Centre. In the Childrens Centre a Family Support Team was formed. The Family Support Team consists of a family support team leader, three family support workers with Sure Start funding that work across the Sure Start Programme area and three part-time family support workers that work in Bentley and Toll Bar with 0-13 year olds (that were previously project workers for the Bentley Family Centre).

Since January 2005, the Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service has operated as an element of the service delivered by the Family Support Team. The majority of referrals to the services are received through health, they also receive some through social services and by self-referral.

When the referral comes in the case is allocated within the Family Support Team, based on the current work load of the family support workers and their areas of experience. When the allocation has been made the family support workers will then visit the family and assess their needs, by talking to them and observing. They will then put together a plan of work with the families to help them with the issues that they are experiencing.

The amount of time that a family support worker works with a family will depend on their level of need. It can vary from a 6-12 week period of crisis support to ongoing support.

In addition to outreach work the family support workers also run drop-in sessions. However, this evaluation primarily addresses the outreach component of the work of the Sure Start family support workers – it is estimated that this is 60% of the work they do per week.
3.3 **Aims and Objectives**

The overall aim of the evaluation was identified as being to explore the options for mainstreaming the Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service.

Within this aim lie the following objectives:

- To examine the impact and outcomes of the Family Support Outreach Service
- To assess the views of service users, service providers and key stakeholders concerning the Family Support Outreach Service
- To conduct a cost benefit analysis of the Family Support Outreach Service

4 **Methodology**

The Family Support Outreach Service has been evaluated using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, it was felt appropriate to use a mixture of methods to gain the views of all stakeholders involved in the Family Support Outreach Service.

- Interview with the Childrens Centre Manager and Family Support Workers
- Survey with users of Family Support Outreach Service
- In-depth case studies with users of the Family Support Outreach Service
- Interviews with professionals working in the area
- Analysis of monitoring data and cost–benefit analysis

**Interview with Childrens Centre Manager**

At the beginning of the evaluation it was considered important to conduct an in-depth face to face interview with the centre manager to gain background information about why and how the Family Support Outreach Service was developed, how the service operates and the perceived success of the service.

The interview lasted approximately 40 minutes, was audio recorded and written-up drawing out key points.

**Paired interview with family support workers**

To gain the views of those involved in delivering the Family Support Outreach Service a paired interview was carried out with two of the three Sure Start family support workers (one family support worker was unavailable for interview during the evaluation period).

The interview asked about the following issues:

- Training and previous experience
- Day to day work
- The referral process
- Take up of the service
- Benefits to users
- Partnership working
The interview lasted one hour and was audio recorded. The interview has been written-up drawing out points of consensus and highlighting where opinions differed.

**Survey with users of the Family Support Outreach Service**

To find out the outcomes of the Family Support Outreach Service for families in the area it was considered important to gain the views of those that have received family support.

As a large number of families in the area have accessed the family support it was considered important to conduct a survey with families that have accessed the service to allow all that had been involved the opportunity to take part. It was decided that a self-completion survey would initially be undertaken and followed up with a telephone survey to those that had not completed a self-completion survey but were willing to take part.

In line with data protection, the Childrens Centre mailed out questionnaires to the 124 families on their database that have received outreach support through the Family Support Service. Respondents were provided with a FREEPOST envelope and asked to return their completed questionnaires to QA. When self-completion questionnaires were returned, the Childrens Centre team phoned those respondents that had not completed a questionnaire and asked if they were happy to be contacted by QA, phone calls were then made by QA to those users of family support willing to be contacted. Users were offered a £10 Tesco voucher as an incentive and thank-you for taking part in the survey. The questionnaire (a copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A) asked respondents about:

- Their awareness of the Family Support Outreach Service
- Reasons for use
- The support they were offered
- Satisfaction with support received
- Benefits of the support for themselves and their children
- Awareness of Sure Start / the Childrens Centre

In total 42 questionnaires were completed, 37 were self-completion and five were completed on the telephone. This gives a 34% response rate.

The questionnaires were analysed using SPSS (a statistical software package).

**Case studies with users of the Family Support Outreach Service**

In addition to the quantitative data generated through the survey it was considered useful to conduct in-depth case studies with parents that had accessed the Family Support Outreach Service to consider the qualitative benefits to families of having received support.

In-depth interviews were conducted with two mothers about their experiences of accessing family support.

**Interviews with professionals working in the area**

As a key aim of the evaluation was to consider possible options for mainstreaming the Family Support Outreach Service it was important to interview professionals working in the area which had involvement with the service. Within these interviews it was also important to address whether professionals feel that themselves and their clients have benefited from the Family Support Outreach Service. The interviews covered the following issues:

- Involvement with Family Support Outreach Service
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- The referral process
- Any difficulties with the referral process
- Short and long term benefits to families of the service
- Benefits to professionals of the service
- Suggestions for mainstreaming/ sustainability of Family Support Outreach Service

 Interviews were either conducted face to face or over the telephone with four professionals working in the area. These were representatives from health, social services, a local primary school and the Woodlands Family Centre.

The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and were audio recorded. The interviews have been written-up drawing out any areas of comparison and noting where differences arose.

**Cost-benefit analysis**

Cost-benefit analysis of the Family Support Outreach Service was undertaken to measure the costs of delivering the service alongside the outputs, benefits and impacts of the service. The cost-benefit analysis was completed following consideration of guidance provided by NESS and evaluators of another Sure Start programme.³

The Childrens Centres’ finance and monitoring coordinator provided QA with information on the costs of delivering the service. Monitoring data was also passed to QA for analysis. Assessment of the impacts and benefits of the service were identified following consideration of the interview data.

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³ Meadows, P. ‘Guidance for Sure Start Local Evaluators and Programme Managers on the Estimation of Cost Effectiveness at a Local Level’ NESS
5 Key Findings

5.1 Interview with the Centre Manager

Development of the Family Support Outreach Service
The centre manager explained that the need for a Family Support Outreach Service was written into Sure Start Adwick and Bentley’s delivery plan, as it was raised during initial consultation with families and health professionals in the area. The community were suggesting that they wanted support when they were experiencing difficulties within their families.

"People were saying that they were wanting support for things that were happening to them in crisis”

Furthermore it was stated that the health team had said that they couldn’t offer the intensity or weekly visiting with families that needed targeted support.

"The health team told me that they couldn’t give families the support that they needed but working with these families was still taking up a lot of their time”

It was discussed that the Family Support Outreach Service has evolved since it was first set up. A key change has been that the Sure Start family support workers have now combined with the project workers that were previously working at Bentley Family Centre to form a larger team, and there is now a dedicated family support team leader.

The centre manager also said that the family support workers are now running more groups and while in the past they could only offer access to limited services. Furthermore now that the programme has grown they are able to refer families into other things that are happening within the Childrens Centre.

The interviewee also said that the family support workers used to have more of a role in information giving about Sure Start but now the parent link workers have taken on this role.

The interviewee was asked how she hoped the service would develop in the future, she stated that she hoped that in the future family support workers would lead on more group parenting projects.

Benefits of the Family Support Outreach Service
The centre manager was asked to identify what she perceived to be the key benefits to families of the Family Support Outreach Service. She stated that ultimately the service increases parent’s confidence as they become more confident in their own roles as parents and thus it improves their children’s development:

"If they pick a number of behaviours that are driving them mad and they get changed through the Family Support Outreach Service, then this gives them confidence and makes them better parents”

More specifically the interviewee also stated that having a family support worker had helped with housing allocation for some families, as housing services recognise that families are being offered support.
She also discussed that through family support they have been able to identify development delays in children younger than school age, which means that children have been able to get help earlier.

"We’ve been able to identify that this child is not developing quite how they should, identify autism or ADHD traits and get help . . . but normally this would not work until they got into school”

She stated that in terms of the long term benefits parents are given the opportunity to be ‘the best parents they can’. It also helps them to break patterns that they might be set in and take control of their lives.

The interviewee said she felt that the Family Support Outreach Service was reaching objectives beyond those that it was designed to meet, as being involved with family support encouraged families to access activities in other parts of the centre.

"Ultimately what they tend to do, is do their programmes of work and alongside that try and get families into other services”

**Partnership working**
As is discussed above the Childrens Centre work closely with other agencies in particular health to deliver the Family Support Outreach Service. It was also discussed that a lot of work is done to signpost families into other agencies for example housing, social services, pre-school inclusion team, schools, childminders etc.

The interviewee was asked if any difficulties had been experienced working with other agencies she said that they had identified overlaps in some of the services being provided by health nursery nurses. However she said that issues of overlap were being addressed and that agencies involved were going to start having multi-disciplinary meetings about families in need. She also explained that they are increasingly having phone conversations with other agencies that are working with a family that were also receiving family support.

**Sustainability**
The centre manager discussed feeling that it would be important to gain statistics from social services about whether fewer families were being put on the child protection register and to find out from health whether they were doing less children in need work, to demonstrate the importance of sustaining the service.
5.2 Interview with Family Support Workers

The family support workers were interviewed to consider whether it was felt the service was working effectively on a day to day basis and the outcomes that they saw in the children and parents that they work with.

Background
Both family support workers interviewed have a background in childcare work in a range of settings; they agreed that to work as a family support worker you need a background of child protection and child development and experience of working with families and being empathic. As members of their team all have different backgrounds and different areas of knowledge the interviewees stated that they felt they complemented each other well.

They spoke about the training that they had been offered, which they discussed had been wide and ongoing. In particular they discussed the usefulness of the protection course as it was used all the time in their job.

“It’s been really helpful for me. It’s given me lots of insights into why we do what we do. We’re here to protect children”

Furthermore they stated that they had both just qualified as baby massage instructors.

Both women felt that writing up reports was one of the more time consuming aspects of the job because it is such detailed work. Although they recognised that it was important that it was done.

Structure of the Family Support Outreach Service
The interviewees were asked to discuss the structure of the Family Support Outreach Service and how moving to the Childrens Centre and combing with the family centre project workers had impacted on their work.

They stated that although there are more family support workers now the interviewees agreed that the team all think along the same lines and so they automatically try to move things in the same direction, which makes their work more effective.

"I think that has helped to gel us all together. We’re very similar people”

They also discussed the positive relationship that they feel they have with project workers at the Woodlands Family Centre.

They discussed that their manager, distributes their cases to them and tries to share out cases so that they have roughly the same workload but that people are dealing with cases where they have relevant expertise where possible.

Day to day work
The family support workers discussed what they perceived to be the aims of the Family Support Outreach Service and overall they felt it was about breaking cycles.

“Changing family cycles is a big issue in this area ... For a lot of my families, that is a big issue – that they didn’t receive a good childhood and it’s hindering the childhood they’re giving their children”
Both women talked about signposting families into other groups and activities and giving children experiences which many wouldn’t otherwise get until they started nursery. For example play opportunities, experience of new toys, and mixing with other children.

“*They’re getting it way, way earlier through us, so by the time they get to nursery they’re so much more socially integrated than they would have been without us*”

One interviewee mentioned the importance of not preaching to the families, but instead providing them with information so that they realise for themselves when something is an issue which needs addressing.

The interviewees discussed that the length of time they will work with a family varies and will very much depend on individual circumstance. One interviewee discussed that they try to *‘turn families around’* as quickly as possible because otherwise there is a danger of becoming stale and giving the impression that the weekly visits are not focused.

Both interviewees said that they ask families what issues they feel they have and then provide them with information or direct them to appropriate organisations if it is not something that the Family Support Outreach Service can deal with. Ultimately they explained that it is about giving families choices.

"*As long as we give them their choices and tell them what’s out there, we’ve done our job . . . ultimately the decision at the end of the day is theirs*”

They discussed encouraging families to access other services when they previously didn’t feel able to, although the time this would take wasn’t always something that they could control.

"*It can take from one to 21 visits to get a family through those doors, and it can take up to three different support workers going out . . . *"

**Take up of family support**

The interviewees were asked about the success of receiving referrals through health.

One interviewee said that in some cases they feel that health visitors didn’t make it clear enough to families the purpose of the Family Support Outreach Service, rather they would sometimes present them as providing fun activities and gloss over the more serious aspects of the service they offer.

"*[They maybe don’t put] enough emphasis on the fact that I’m sending this referral because I have concerns about this . . . *"

However, overall it was discussed that the relationship with health was good and that referrals that came through were increasingly relevant and that the health visitors have a good understanding of the work that the family support workers do.

The workers explained that referrals also come through from doctors, schools and hospitals. However a difficulty identified was that often referrals are sent to the service with insufficient information on them which makes the task of assessment more labour intensive. The interviewees said that they often go back to the referrer and ask for more information before making their initial visit to a family. Furthermore it was discussed that they try to make first visits to families with the referrer.
The Family Support Outreach Service also receives self-referrals from families, it was discussed that self-referrals are much easier cases to work with because they are at a stage where they are asking for help.

The family support workers were asked if they felt the Family Support Outreach Service is reaching the families it needs to reach. It was discussed that the most noticeable improvement had been seen in Highfields where they had worked with a lot of families. It was also discussed that some mums in Highfields have set up their own play sessions with the support of the Family Support Outreach Service.

**Benefits**

The interviewees said that key benefit of the Family Support Outreach Service is that it gives families’ confidence and it breaks cycles of parenting styles which may have developed in the area. Overall they discussed feeling that the benefits were for the children whose lives will be changed through better parenting.

"I think it’s self-confidence . . . they have a chance to see different situations and they get to make their own choices . . . they then feel that it’s them that’s changed their lives for the better – if they’ve made the decision to do it themselves they’re more inclined to carry it on”

Furthermore the interviewees said that families receiving family support can have a knock on effect to other families in the area that may not be receiving family support.

"I just think they’re knowing now what’s appropriate, what’s inappropriate. Not everybody, but if we can educate some they pass it on”

**Partnership working**

The family support workers discussed that they will signpost families to any services which are relevant, for example the Women’s Centre, Home Start and counselling.

No particular difficulties working with other organisations were discussed. Overall, they said that the longer the Family Support Outreach Service was established the better their work and their relationships and understanding with other agencies will be.
5.3 **Survey with users of the Family Support Outreach Service**

The following section presents the findings of the survey undertaken with users of the Family Support Outreach Service.

**Profile of respondents**
In total 42 parents responded to the survey, 40 were female and one was male (one chose not to answer the question). Questionnaires were sent to the 124 families that have used the Family Support Outreach Service since it was set up which gives a credible 34% response rate.

The following table shows the age of respondents; the greatest proportion (45%) were aged 18-25 years while just under a third (31%) were aged 26-35 years. A smaller number of respondents were aged under 18 years (7% - three respondents) and 36-45 years (14% - six respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>26-35 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
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As can be seen in Chart 1 below, the marital status of respondents varied, with 36% reporting they were a single/ lone parent and 31% respectively reporting they were married or living with a partner.

**Chart 1: Marital status**

The following chart indicates the area of residence of respondents, as can be seen the greatest proportion were from the Bentley ward.
In terms of ethnic origin, 40 respondents reported they were White British and one reported they were White and Black Caribbean.

There was an almost even split between respondents that still had a family support worker (50%) and those that did not (48%). One respondent did not respond to this question.

**Awareness of the Family Support Outreach Service**

More than two-thirds of respondents (67%) had found out about the Family Support Outreach Service through their health visitor or midwife, while 7% had found out about it through family and friends and 5% (two respondents) had found out about it through visiting the Sure Start building. Nine respondents (21%) responded to ‘other’ the majority of these responses fell into the available categories although ‘other’ responses included social services (two respondents) and school (one respondent).

To discover the amount of time parents wait from being told/ becoming aware of the Family Support Outreach Service to receiving support respondents were asked how long after they said they would like to use the Family Support Outreach Service did they meet their family support worker. More than three-quarters of respondents (79%) said they had waited 1-2 weeks, while 10% respectively had waited 3-4 weeks and 2 months.
The majority of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied (91%) with the time it had taken and 10% reported being neither satisfied or dissatisfied. No respondents reported being dissatisfied with the time they had had to wait to meet their family support worker.

In an open question the respondents were asked to indicate the support that they hoped to gain from the Family Support Outreach Service. The verbatim comments seem to fall into two key categories; general emotional and social support and help to deal with specific parenting issues. All responses can be found in Appendix B.

- **Social and emotional support**
  'Emotional, befriending’
  'I was looking for encouragement to go to groups and taking part in community activities’
  'I just hope to get support and also some respite, also looking forward to meeting other parents for a chat’
  'Just needed someone to listen to me’
  'Somebody to talk to about my problems and to get guidance and support from’
  'Someone to talk normal to - adult interaction’
  'I just wanted to be able to have confidence to socialise with people again and interact with other- overcome slight depression’

- **Parenting**
  'To help with behavioural problems and concentration, speech problems’
  'To help with child’s behaviour ’
  'Ideas on how to cope with bad behaviour’
  'Hope to cope better with my children and get them a bedtime routine ’
  'How to deal with my son’s behaviour which I received a lot of help and his speech’
  'Behaviour, toilet training’
  'Help with my daughter’s behaviour and how to manage it’
  'Help with children’s behaviour. General parenting skills to deal with son, who I don’t know what to do with’
  'Sterilise bottles and how to bathe’

**Support offered by the Family Support Outreach Service**
The survey aimed to gage the amount of contact the respondents had with their family support worker and how easy they found it to contact them.

As can be seen in the chart below, the greatest proportion of respondents stated that their family support worker visited them weekly (37%) while one in five (21%) reported that they were visited fortnightly, a smaller number (14%) reported that their family support worker visited them more than once a week.
Most respondents (55%) reported that the frequency of visits had been decided by both themselves and their family support worker, while 19% said it was decided by their family support worker and 12% said it was decided by themselves.

Just over three-quarters of respondents (76%) felt that their family support worker visited them frequently enough, while 10% said they did not visit frequently enough and 7% were unsure.

The parents were then asked how they contact their family support worker, the majority (71%) said that they phone the centre and 10% report that they contact their family support worker on their mobile phone.

Just over one in ten respondents (12% - five respondents) said that they hadn’t always been able to contact their family support worker when they’ve needed to.

Difficulties encountered were stated by three respondents:

‘Only when she was off sick and then someone helped’
‘Support worker on holiday didn’t let me know’
‘Was not always available, but that was just her doing her job’

Overall, respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the support they had received from their family support worker. As Chart 5 illustrates 86% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied, 2 respondents (5%) were very dissatisfied and no respondents were dissatisfied.
Chart 5: How satisfied are you with the support you have received from your family support worker?

The survey sought to establish what other support networks the parents had available to them. Thus, respondents were asked if the Family Support Outreach Service had not been running who they would have gone to for the support they received from the service. As can be seen in the chart below over half of the respondents (55%) reported that they would have gone to their health visitor or midwife, a third (33%) said they would have gone to family and friends, a quarter of respondents said that they would not have gone to anyone (26%) and 12% reported that they would have gone to a social worker. Responses to other included ‘don’t know’ and ‘GP’.

Chart 6: If the family support service had not been running who would you have gone to for this support?

Respondents were asked if their family support worker had told them about any other services that could offer them support. Just over a quarter of respondents (26%) said they had been told about childcare providers, and 14% respectively had been told about speech and language therapy and housing and benefit advice, 10% had been linked to schools, 7% had been linked to social services and one respondent (2%) stated that they had been linked to the pre-school inclusion team.
Chart 7: Has the family support service linked you with any of the following services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare providers</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and language therapy</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits advice</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school inclusion team</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to ‘other’ are given below:

‘A holiday with my children, via a charity’
‘Activity groups’
‘The community centre’

Benefits of the Family Support Outreach Service
To consider the outcomes of the Family Support Outreach Service respondents were asked whether they felt they had benefited from using the service, 88% (37 respondents) reported that they had benefited and 7% (3 respondents) said they had not, the remaining respondents did not respond to this question.

Two respondents that felt they had not benefited were currently using the service while one was not.

The parents that said they had benefited were then asked how they felt they had benefited from the service, the key benefit appears to be social and emotional support (33%), 29% reported having been helped to cope with a specific problem/issue and more than one in five said they had been helped to access Sure Start services⁴.

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⁴ Please note an error with the questionnaire has meant some respondents were not given the opportunity to respond to this question, thus percentages are lower than would be expected.
Chart 8: How do you feel you have benefited from the Family Support Service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General emotional/social support</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped to cope with a specific problem</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped to access Sure Start services</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved relationship with child/children</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General support in the home</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about other services in the area</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to ‘other’ were:

‘Coping with my children’s needs’
‘Improved relationship with my wife’
‘Midwife for smoking managed to stop, Sure Start worker rang her for me’
‘Watched son whilst I am shopping’

In addition respondents were asked if they felt their child/children had benefited from the Family Support Outreach Service, 83% said that it had, while 12%(5 respondents) reported that it had not.

Further analysis indicates that two respondents that felt it had not benefited their children were currently using the services while three were not.

The key way respondents felt their children had benefited was through helping them to access other Sure Start services (40%), more than one third (36%) also said that that it had improved their children’s confidence and self-esteem and a third respectively stated that it had helped them to deal with a specific problem and had improved their child/children’s behaviour.
Chart 9: How do you feel your children have benefited from the Family Support Service?

- Helped to access Sure Start services: 40
- Increased confidence and self-esteem: 36
- Help to cope with a specific problem: 33
- Improved behaviour: 33
- Information about other services in the area: 31
- Improved speech: 19
- Other: 7

Responses to 'other' included:

'Bonding with other children’
'Helped child mix with other children’
'It helps my child to meet other children to play with and even play with more toys than what he has’
'My whole family feels better with the help from Sure Start’
'Plays with other children, he loves it at baby groups’

In an open question respondents were asked if they felt family support had benefited their family in any other ways. Responses generally referred to the fact that they had been offered coping strategies to deal with a specific situation. For example (a full list of responses can be found in Appendix B):

'Feel confident in myself, have used techniques that the family support worker has given’
'Helped cope with having my first baby prematurely, I realised I wasn't the only one’
'Made us realise we have to get a professional health person to see our daughter to help us’
'My family’s health was in a very poor state of depression, Sure Start helped us to get a house which is bigger and cleaner’
'We are a lot more patient with his behaviour and discipline him appropriately’

Sure Start
Respondents were asked about their general awareness of Sure Start. As the chart below indicates the majority (79%) had found out about Sure Start through their health visitor or midwife
More than four in five respondents (86%) said that their family support worker had given them information about Sure Start.

In terms of whether they had accessed the Sure Start venues, 69% said that they had visited the Childrens Centre and 76% said they had visited Park Lodge.

Respondents were asked about specific Sure Start groups/activities they had used. As Chart 11 shows, almost half of the respondents (48%) had attended the Family Support Drop-in, 29% had attended a parenting group, 26% had attended the swimming group, 24% had attended training courses and 5% (2 respondents) had attended the SNAPS group.

In a final question respondents were asked if they had any other comments they would like to make about the Family Support Outreach Service. Responses varied, although the majority were positive (a full list can be found in Appendix B) some examples are given below:

'I think that without the help I received, I wouldn't be as happy and settled as I am now'
‘They make you feel at ease so you don’t feel like you’re the only parent who has problems’
‘Yes, I found it helped me to make new friends’
‘Everything is going fine, [my family support worker] has been great, I needed coaxing to go to groups, she sat with me at a group until I settled-lovely’
5.4 Case studies of users of the Family Support Outreach Service

This section details the stories of two mothers that have used the Family Support Outreach Service. Each case study presents why they came to be involved with the service and how they feel their children and themselves have benefited from their involvement with family support. Please note the names of respondents and their children have been changed to maintain their anonymity.

Case Study One

Background
Kelly is married with three children aged 18 months, 3 years and 6 years, she is expecting her fourth child. Her oldest child has special needs. She is the primary carer for her children as her husband works long hours. In terms of support networks available to her she explained that she has family living close by but does not see them. She also said that she does not have any friends or any one that she can go to if she needs support, this is something which she would like. She said:

"I’d like a friend, so if there was something up I could just call and talk to them”

The interviewee said that she lacks confidence and is very quiet, this is something which she feels has limited her opportunities in life. She said she doesn’t want her children to be like her and thus always tries to offer them opportunities to mix with other children and adults.

"I want them to come on I don’t want them to be like me, I want them to go out there and be able to make loads of friends”

Involvement with family support
Kelly said that she could not remember how she first came to be involved with the Family Support Outreach Service; she said that when she was attending a Sure Start group at Park Lodge she may have asked about it. She said it was probably about 18 months ago. She said that she got involved with family support to offer her children opportunities, she sees family support as being mainly for her children and not for herself, she felt that the fact it had helped her to access other services which her children could attend was a key reason for involvement.

"It’s good thing for kids because they learn and it helps them to mix . . . because if they just sit at home playing they’re not going to come out of there selves if someone comes to the door they’ll be shy as ought”

Kelly was very positive about her family support worker, saying that she was someone that she felt comfortable talking to. Furthermore she described how her family support worker had accompanied her to hospital appointments and helped her to fill out a form to enable her to gain disability allowance for her oldest child.

"She’s nice and she’s really helped me a lot”
Kelly explained that when she first became involved with family support her family support worker had been to her house but more recently she has met her at the Childrens Centre.

In terms of whether her family support worker had told her about any other services the interviewee said that she had told her about a confidence building course at the women’s centre, although she had not continued to attend this.

The interviewee said that she found her family support worker and staff at the Childrens Centre really helpful.

"If you’ve got a problem you can phone them and go and see them they’ll help you”

**Benefits of family support**

Kelly discussed the benefits of using the Family Support Outreach Service and attending groups at the Childrens Centre ‘They’ve come on ever so well’. She discussed how she had seen her 3 year old develop at groups he had attended. She explained that he had gained in confidence and enjoyed playing with toys at the groups, in particular she explained that he liked looking at books.

"When [my child] first went to the playgroup he was shy, but now when you take him to playgroup he starts running around with all this energy . . . he likes playing with the books and telling you what the things are in the books”

She also said that her 18 month old enjoyed messy play at the activities they attended.

"[My child] likes to paint and get messy . . . you have a paper and paint stand and he’ll be over there and grab them”

She discussed through the Family Support Outreach Service and through attending the Family Support Drop-in and other activities at the centre, she had been encouraged to play with the children and do more activities at home.

**Sure Start and the Childrens Centre**

Kelly explained that most days she would attend activities at the Childrens Centre, including swimming, Tumble Tots, the Family Support Drop-in and the Family Support Crèche, she has also attended training courses. She said that her family support worker was good at telling her about activities that were taking place.

"When there’s something going on she will let me know”

Overall, she said that she felt the Family Support Outreach Service and Sure Start had been really good for her family and said she couldn’t imagine what her life would be like without it.

"Sure Start is brilliant without Sure Start I’d be at home every day bored with the kids”
Case Study Two

Background
Sarah is married and has two children aged 2.5 years and 7 years. She explained that she had family living in the Doncaster area but until very recently they had tended to only offer support with her older child. She said she has a few friends in the area and since her daughter started school she has met more friends that she knew from when she was at school.

Involvement with family support
Sarah has been involved with the Family Support Outreach Service twice. She explained the first time she was involved was about two years ago when Sure Start was still getting started. She explained that following the birth of her second child she had been ill and experienced post-natal depression, she said that she hadn’t found it as easy to bond with her second child as her first.

"I never thought it would be this hard to bring kids up, I never thought it would be like this . . . I just couldn’t cope with them anymore, it felt like a big chore, I’d get up in the morning and it was the same thing I just didn’t want to do this anymore”

She described a specific incident ‘a breakdown’ in which she got to the stage where she needed help. She said that she phoned her health visitor.

"[I called] my health visitor, I didn’t know who else to phone”

She said that her health visitor at that point had told her about Sure Start and the Family Support Outreach Service.

She explained her first family support worker was "very friendly, she’d come in and have a chat about the problems I was having“and visited about once a fortnight and encouraged her to go to the family support drop-in.

"She’d say if you don’t want to come in on your own I’ll meet you outside , because of the problems I was having I didn’t want to be in a room full of strangers they always made you feel comfortable while you were there”

She explained that at this point her family support worker had worked with her for about 4 months and then stopped coming. Sarah said that when she was no longer in contact with her family support worker she stopped attending groups and lost contact with Sure Start until the Childrens Centre opened.

"When she stopped coming I didn’t go”

Sarah said that when the Childrens Centre opened she came to look out of curiosity, she explained at this point she was feeling depressed and asked a worker in the centre for help with her older daughters behaviour.

“T just asked, I suffer from post-natal depression it got to the point where it was getting me down and I just asked if I could have any help”

She described the second involvement she had with Family Support Outreach Service very positively suggesting that her family support worker had put together a programme
of work which they had worked towards\textsuperscript{5}. She explained when she got family support for her older daughter it was around giving her daughter routines. She also explained that her family support worker had helped her to access the centre again.

"We went through different things every week, the last thing we concentrated on was cleaning her teeth"

She said it seemed a lot easier writing down her daughters skills and behaviours in a structured way.

"From doing the list, I found out more things that we could do"

**Benefits of family support**

Sarah said that the first time she had been involved with the service the main benefit had been that she had been encouraged to attend the Family Support Drop-in for a short time, as at this time her youngest child was a baby and her other daughter was at school.

She felt the support that she had gained the second time she had been involved with family support had been more beneficial to both her children and herself.

Sarah said that she felt the key benefits of the involvement to herself were that she had become a better parent, she explained that she was being more confident with her daughter.

"I'm more in control now rather than her taking over"

For her older daughter she explained that she had been helped to attend an afterschool club at the Children Centre which had increased her confidence. Furthermore her behaviour had improved and she was more likely to think about her actions.

"She knows now when she has done wrong, with me being more stern and confident towards her"

She explained that her younger daughter had a place in the Family Support Creche, though which her speech had improved.

"Her speech has come on more, instead of pointing she will ask"

Overall Sarah said that the support had helped her to understand her children more and she felt that it had improved relationships at home.

"There is no more shouting and screaming, it's reasoning . . . it's not a chore anymore, I have fun with them, I've bonded with them more"

**Sure Start and the Childrens Centre**

Sarah explained that whereas she hadn’t had much involvement with Sure Start when it was based at Park Lodge, now it was a Childrens Centre she was accessing a lot of services. She discussed the benefits of her 7 year old and her 2.5 year old being able to access services from the same centre.

\textsuperscript{5} It is worth noting that the support Sarah gained the second time was not through the Sure Start family support workers, so is not directly relevant to the evaluation, but because she felt it has had a knock on effect to her 2.5 year old and herself it is worth discussing here.
"It got my [7 year old] daughter in after school clubs and the playschemes in the holidays so it was there for my other daughter as well - not just my youngest”

She discussed that her younger daughter attended the Family Support Crèche weekly, she would also sometimes attend the Family Support Drop-in and that she had place in the Little Whispers Nursery one afternoon a week.

5.5 Interviews with Key Stakeholders

Interviews were conducted with four individuals that have had involvement with the Family Support Outreach Service from health, social services, a local school and the Woodlands Family Centre.

Involvement with the Family Support Outreach Service

All interviewees are able to refer or signpost families onto the Family Support Outreach Service, or manage workers that do. The interviewee from the family centre also manages a team of project workers in Woodlands that offer family support.

All the interviewees said that they had been informed about the Family Support Outreach Service through dedicated meetings with the centre manager these meetings were ongoing for most interviewees. One interviewee said that family support workers had attended meetings that they were holding to inform them about any changes to the service.

The referral process

The respondents were asked about the referral process; the respondents differed in the number of referrals that they had made.

Each interviewee explained in what circumstance referrals would be made to the Family Support Outreach Service. The interviewee from health explained that when working with a family health visitors would identify the type of support that families need and if it was felt that family support was what was needed it was discussed that the health visitors refer to the Family Support Outreach Service. The interviewee from social services explained that families would be referred to the Family Support Outreach if it was felt that they didn’t need contact with social services but if it was felt gaining support would be beneficial to the families. Both these respondents discussed that prior to the Family Support Outreach Service being established they were very aware that this type of preventative support was needed but they didn’t have the time/capacity to offer it.

The interviewee from the local school explained that it would be suggested to families that they access family support if they were aware of issues in the family that it could help with. The interviewee from Woodlands Family Centre explained that they would refer to the Family Support Outreach Service to help families access the extended services that the Childrens Centre offer for example the Safety Equipment Scheme.

Interviewees were asked if they had experienced any difficulties referring into the Family Support Outreach Service. Only one interviewee was able to discuss difficulties stating that initially lack of understanding about each others roles had caused a difficulty. It was also discussed that some people had felt that there wasn’t enough feedback about the work that was being done with families once they were referred. However, it was discussed that this appeared to have settled down. This interviewee stated:
"We have tried to set up mechanisms where if a family support worker becomes involved then you set dates to look at forward planning about where they’re at, what input there’s been and how it’s worked”

The interviewee from the family centre discussed some initial difficulties that occurred because the family centre and Sure Start were both offering family support. For example referrals were being made to both agencies; however it was discussed that they were in the process of resolving these issues now.

"... often there would be a referral to Sure Start and a referral to the family centre and we could find ourselves working with the same family ... however we had a shortage of health visitors, shortage of social workers, so in some respects the driver is getting someone to deliver the work”

**Benefits to families**

Interviewees were asked what they felt are the key benefits to families of using the Family Support Outreach Service.

Two interviewees discussed feeling that a key benefit was the access it offers families to other services that are provided at Bentley Childrens Centre. The interviewee from social services said that intervention through the family support service can be made at a stage before social services are needed.

"They’re very experienced in working with families with under 5’s and can do a range of direct work ... to assist the process of trying to improve the circumstances, they are also very good at assisting people to access other services”

Two interviewees discussed the long-terms benefits of accessing the Family Support Outreach Service stating that it will give children confidence through being able to access a wider range of services and that the input pre-school will enhance their potential.

**Benefits to professionals**

The interviewees from health and social services discussed feeling that having a Family Support Outreach Service had freed up their time to concentrate on specific work while family support could offer the social and emotional support and support with particular issues which could take time.

"Prior to Sure Start [social services] would have picked up the family support package if we could ... but actually what was happening was we weren’t able to pick up at family support stage and we were having to pick up at crisis, which now we are hopefully avoiding”

"It’s the right person for the job, it releases the health visitor to work with the more complex families”

Overall, it was discussed that having another layer of support that could be used to offer support to families was beneficial, furthermore it was beneficial that family support did not have a stigma attached to it. It was also discussed that having a Family Support Outreach Service made professionals more aware of each other and each others roles.

Respondents were also asked specifically whether they felt the Family Support Outreach Service had alleviated the pressure on health visitors. The interviewee from health stated that this has happened she discussed that health visitors have been able to spend more time working with child protection and children in need cases. Furthermore she discussed
that having a Family Support Outreach Service has meant that health have been able to
develop other services such as the community clinics and their involvement in the home
safety scheme and baby massage.

"It's allowed greater depth to the service health visitors were giving"

Two other respondents were also able to comment on the effect that the Family Support
Outreach Service had had on health. The interviewee from the family centre said that she
felt that health had benefited from the service particularly in Highfields. Furthermore, she
stated that the family centre no longer receive as many referrals from health visitors.

"[It's been beneficial to health visitors] particularly in Highfields, health visitors have been
the main professionals working in that village and they would refer to the family centre . . .
. it has alleviated the stress on health visitors”

The interviewee from social services said that she was aware that health accessed the
Family Support Outreach Service extensively and that when referrals were made to social
services by health it was usually the case that the family support team were already
working with those families.

"When we do get referrals from health professionals the family has usually had some
input from the family support team . . . but their needs are such that they need
something further”

Improvements to the Family Support Outreach Service
Two respondents suggested ways in which the Family Support Outreach Service could be
improved.

One suggested it was important that if any group work was being done to complement
the outreach element, it was important that it was done in the community rather than
just from the centre in Bentley.

"They need to work more in the communities, but it is finding bases within those
communities from which they can operate”

The other discussed feeling it was important that the family support team were focused
and could stick to set pieces of work with families.

Mainstreaming
Respondents found it difficult to comment on how the Family Support Outreach Service
could be sustained once Sure Start funding comes to an end. Although all felt that it was
important that an early intervention service was available in some form.

"We can see the benefits of early intervention . . . I would like to think that an early
intervention service would be in place”

One interviewee discussed feeling that of the services that Sure Start had provided the
Family Support Outreach Service was the most crucial and that this was the service that
should continue if funding was reduced.

"They've had good funding and good support . . . within that family support is the bread
and butter, that is why it will and should continue”
5.6 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Family Support Outreach Service

This part of the evaluation was undertaken through considering the costs of delivering the Family Support Outreach Service and the outputs that are delivered for these costs. This data was then used to determine the cost per visit.

Costs per visit were calculated for the period April 2004 – March 2005. Although the family support workers do run weekly play sessions, these were not included in the costing exercise as the focus was solely on the outreach element of the Family Support Outreach Service.

The process of calculating the costs per visit will be outlined below, although it is important to note that there are a number of additional factors that need to be taken into account when considering the unit costing analysis. These will be explained at appropriate points during the analysis.

5.6.1 Monitoring Data Analysis

Bentley Childrens Centre’s finance and monitoring coordinator provided QA with monitoring data for the Family Support Outreach Service covering the time period April 2004 – March 2005.

Overall, 88 families and 119 children aged 0-5 years have been supported through the project in some way during this time period. Health data provided to Sure Start Adwick and Bentley in 2004 reported that there were 1017 families within the programme area with children aged 0-4 years, which suggest in 2004-2005 the Family Support Outreach Service has reached 7% of families living in the area over the year.

It is of course important to note that since 2004 Sure Start/ Bentley Childrens Centre has incorporated children aged 0-5 years and thus the numbers of families living in the area is only an approximate figure. Thus, the number of families with children aged 0-5 years that service has reached will be slightly lower than 7%.

Area of residence

Monitoring data was provided which indicated the area of residence of users of the Family Support Outreach Service. As can be seen in the chart below the greatest proportion of users of the service lived in Bentley.
Chart 12: Area of residence of users of the Family Support Service - April 04 - March 05

The following table shows the number of users of the Family Support Outreach Service proportionate to the number of families residing in that area with children aged 0-4 years.

As can be seen, while fairly equal proportions of families have been reached in Bentley, Woodlands and Adwick much greater proportions have been reached in Highfields and Toll Bar, being particularly notable in Toll Bar where 64% of families have been reached.

Table 2: Proportionate numbers of families accessing the Family Support Outreach Service by area of residence – April 04 – March 05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of residence</th>
<th>Number of families living in area with children aged 0-4 years</th>
<th>Number of users of the Family Support Outreach Service</th>
<th>Proportion of families that have accessed the Family Support Outreach Service %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bentley</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlands</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adwick</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highfields</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll Bar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of referral
Chart 13 shows the channels through which families have come to use the Family Support Outreach Service. As can be seen in the chart below the overwhelming majority of referrals have come through health visitors.
Chart 13: Sources of referrals to the Family Support Service- April 04 - March 11

Data was also provided which indicated the number of families using family support that were accessing other services in the Children Centre, 57 families were currently accessing other services while 31 were not.

5.6.2 Costings

The costs for providing the service were supplied by Bentley Childrens Centre’s finance and monitoring coordinator. The costs include the salary costs of the staff delivering the service (the family support workers and the family support manager) and the resources that are involved in providing the service. The total cost for delivering the family support outreach service between April 2004 – March 2005 was £46,413.94. This cost incorporates the elements which have been identified in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Costs of the Family Support Outreach Service April 2004 -March 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Cost of time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Worker One</td>
<td>£9,942.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Worker Two</td>
<td>£9,942.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Worker Three</td>
<td>£9,651.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Manager</td>
<td>£9,104.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Staff Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>£38,640.47</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel expenses</td>
<td>£1,867.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>£4,181.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and stationary</td>
<td>£1,724.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Resources Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>£7,773.47</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£46,413.94</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bentley Childrens Centre Finance Information 2004-2005

**Staff costs** for the **family support workers** were calculated by multiplying their hourly wage by the number of hours it is estimated that they spend on outreach and home visiting per week (20 hours per week). The cost of the **family support manager** was calculated by multiplying their hourly wage by the number of hours it was identified that they spent on outreach and home visiting and managing Sure Start family support.
workers (12.33 hours per week). These weekly costs were multiplied by 52 to calculate the cost for the year.

It is noted that a new family support manager has been in post since January 2005 and prior to this the centre manager and deputy programme manager have managed the team of Sure Start family support workers. Thus it is noted that throughout the year costs of managing the workers will have changed. Although, as costs have been calculated using the salary of the ‘new’ family support manager which is now in post salary costs used here should be representative of future staffing costs.

**Resources costs** (Resources which were identified as being used to deliver the home visiting and outreach service) for the year were provided by the finance and monitoring coordinator. These costs included **travel expenses** (mileage costs), **equipment** (activity equipment, CD Rom and marketing and communications cost), and **administration and stationary** (photocopying, stationary, telephone and landline and use of the mobile telephone).

**Cost per home visit**
It was felt that the most appropriate unit cost to calculate would be the cost per home visit, as this would provide a mark against which the service could be compared with similar services.

In order to calculate the cost per visit it was important to establish the number of home visits which the family support workers deliver per month. During the period April 2004 – March 2005 the family support workers kept personal records of the number of visits made but were not required to supply this data to the programme. Thus, for this piece of work the family support workers were asked to look back through their records and provide the number of visits made in one month (January 2005) through which an approximation over the year could be calculated\(^6\). Overall the three family support workers between them had made 49 visits during January 2005 and this was multiplied by 12 to gain the number for the year. Although an estimation, the family support workers felt that the number of visits made in January was fairly representative of the year.

The cost per home visit was calculated using the method in the table below.

**Table 4: Cost per family support home visit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total cost for the 12 month period</td>
<td>£46,413.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per month (£46,413.94 divided by 12)</td>
<td>£3,867.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of visits per month</td>
<td>49 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per visit (cost per month divided by number of visits per month)</td>
<td>£78.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calculation shows that the cost of each home visit made by a family support worker is £78.94.

\(^6\) Please note since March 2005 a new monitoring procedures means that records of number of visits are being recorded.
Evaluation of the Family Support Outreach Service – Bentley Childrens Centre

It is difficult to assess the relevance of this figure without making comparison to another service, and then it is important to ensure that the unit cost is calculated using a similar formula. A report by the Personal and Social Services Research Unit at the University of Kent in 2004 has considered the costs of delivering Family Support Outreach Services\(^7\). A table in the report details the costs of delivering family support work across statutory and voluntary sectors both outreach and centre based. The report indicates that the cost of delivering

Early years and educational intervention through outreach work could range from £21-£151. This figure is in line with the cost calculated for the Bentley Children Centre Sure Start Family Support Outreach Service.

When viewing the unit cost of a home visit it is also important to take into consideration a number of additional factors.

*Benefits of family support* have been identified in the parent consultation section above. Parents have indicated that they feel they and their children have benefited from the service and that they have been encouraged to access other services which will have long term effects on their children’s development. These factors need to be considered when assessing costs of the service.

*The move from Sure Start to a Childrens Centre* has had an impact on the way in which the family support is managed and the additional support which can be offered to families through the service. Costs may reduce in the future because of the additional resources which are available in the Childrens Centre for delivering family support intervention.

*Equipment costs* were included in the cost of delivering the service however, it is important to note that not all families will have been in receipt of the equipment which is delivered to some families through the service (e.g. safety equipment).

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7 Personal and Social Service Research Unit (2004) Unit Costs of Health Social Care 2004
http://www.pssru.ac.uk/uc/uc2004.htm
6 Conclusions

This section brings together the findings of the evaluation and considers the impacts and outcomes of the service and the sustainability of the project.

Impact and outcomes for professionals

In order to deliver the Family Support Outreach Service and ensure relevant referrals are made to allow families to be supported, strong links have been established with health and other partnership organisations.

The survey findings and monitoring data suggest that most respondents had found out about the service through health visitors which shows the extent to which it is being used by health visitors. Furthermore all the key stakeholders stated that they had regular communication with the centre manager and/ or the family support workers and were fully aware of the aims of the service. Family support workers discussed having good relationships with health and that referrals were increasingly relevant. Because it is a new service it would be expected that it would take time to develop communication and ensure that all parties are happy with the referral process. Thus, the fact that the centre manager and the family support team are constantly working with partnership agencies to develop ways of improving the relationships is a positive finding.

Although there is no statistical data available regarding the extent to which health are feeling less pressure to deliver social and emotional support to families. The representative from health interviewed (a senior manager) said she had seen the benefits and stated that health visitors had been allowed more time to do other work with families through having the Family Support Outreach Service in place. Furthermore other professionals were able to see the extent to which the service was being used by health. The fact that the majority of users said that if family support hadn’t been available that they would have gone to their health visitor also shows the benefit of the service to health visitors.

Qualitative evidence provided by social services also suggested that families have benefited from the service and that the Family Support Outreach Service is being used by social services to provide support to families, if they do not feel their intervention is necessary.

Impact and outcomes for children and parents

Users of the Family Support Outreach Service said that the key benefits to themselves were gaining emotional and social support, being helped to cope with a specific problem and being helped to access Children’s Centre/ Sure Start services. A particularly strong benefit to emerge was the extent to which through outreach families have been encouraged to access other services at the Childrens Centre such as the Family Support Drop-in. Furthermore, users of the outreach service said that the key benefit to their children was that they had been able to access other services.

That the Family Support Outreach Service was helping families to develop the confidence to access other services was also clearly identified by professionals as a strength of the service. Furthermore, the opportunities that these other services would offer the children for learning and social and emotional development was discussed.
In terms of other benefits to their children respondents said that through their involvement with the Family Support Outreach Service they had seen **improvements in their children’s behaviour** and that it had **increased their child’s confidence and self esteem**. The small number of case studies ‘capture’ the impact that family support is having on families lives.

Families in **Highfields and Toll Bar** were recognised by family support workers and professionals as having received the greatest benefits from family support and this is reflected in the monitoring data provided.

The programme manager said that **development delay** had been identified early through the Family Support Outreach Service and actions were able to put in place. One survey respondent stated that they had been linked with the pre-school inclusion team through the service and two said they had been encouraged to attend the SNAPS group (a group for parents with children with disabilities and special needs), which is evidence of this work.

**Mainstreaming options**

Although professionals identified that the Family Support Outreach Service was an important service, since it had benefited themselves and the families that they work with, none were able to provide suggestions for how it could be sustained in the future.

The unit cost of delivering a home visit was in-line with what would be expected. The impacts of the service in terms of the time which health visitors have been allowed to develop other services, the benefits to social services and the benefits to families should be taken into account when considering the unit cost.
Appendix A

Family Support Service Questionnaire - Self completion survey

We are currently undertaking an evaluation of the Sure Start Adwick and Bentley Family Support Service. The aim of the evaluation is to find out how well the Family Support Service works and the impact that it has had on families in the area.

It would be much appreciated if you could take some time to complete the following questionnaire and return it in the freepost envelope provided by Friday May 13th. All your comments will be anonymous and we will send you a £10 Tesco voucher as a token of our appreciation of the time taken.

If you have any questions about this evaluation please contact Katherine Taylor at QA Research on FREEPHONE 0800 980 3400.

Awareness of Family Support Service

1. How did you find out about the Sure Start Family Support Service? 
(Please tick one only)

- Midwife / health visitor □ 1
- Sure Start Centre □ 2
- Friend / family member □ 3
- Other □ 4 please state ...........................................

2. Approximately, how long after you said you would like to use the Family Support Service did you meet your family support worker? 
(Please tick one only)

- 1 - 2 weeks □ 1
- 3- 4 weeks □ 2
- 1 month □ 3
- 2 months □ 4
- More than 2 months □ 5
3 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the time it took to meet your family support worker for the first time?

- Very satisfied ☐1
- Satisfied ☐2
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ☐3
- Dissatisfied ☐4
- Very dissatisfied ☐5

4 Do you currently have a family support worker?

- Yes ☐1
- No ☐2

5 How long have you had a family support worker/ did you have a family support worker for?

- Less than 1 month ☐1
- 1 - 2 months ☐2
- 3 - 6 months ☐3
- 7 months - 1 year ☐4
- More than 1 year ☐5

6 Please could you describe the type of support you were hoping to gain from the family support service?

Support offered by the Family Support Service

7 How often does/ did your family support worker visit you?

- More than once a week ☐1
- Once a week ☐2
- Fortnightly ☐3
- Monthly ☐4
- Other ☐5 please state .............................................
8 Who decided how often your family support worker would visit you?

- Your family support worker □ 1
- You □ 2
- You and your family support worker □ 3
- Other □ 4 please state ..................

9 Does/ did your family support worker visit you often enough?

- Yes □ 1
- No □ 2
- Unsure □ 3

10 How do/ did you contact your family support worker?

- Phone Sure Start centre □ 1
- Mobile phone □ 2
- Other □ 3 please state ..................

11 Have you always been able to contact your family support worker when you’ve needed to?

- Yes □ 1
- No □ 2
- Unsure □ 3

If No, please could you describe the difficulties you have experienced contacting your family support worker?

12 Overall, how satisfied are you with the support you have received from your family support worker?

- Very satisfied □ 1
- Satisfied □ 2
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied □ 3
- Dissatisfied □ 4
- Very dissatisfied □ 5
13 Thinking about the support you have received from your family support worker, if the family support service had not been running, who would you have gone to for this support? (Please tick all that apply)

Health visitor/ midwife □1
Family/ friends □2
Social worker □3
No one □4
Other □5 please state ...................................................

14 Has the family support service linked you to any other services which have offered you support? (Please tick all that apply)

Benefits advice □1
Childcare providers □2
Housing □3
Pre-school inclusion team □4
Schools □5
Social services □6
Speech and language therapy □7
Other □8 please state ...................................................
None □9

Benefits of the family support service

15 Do you feel that you have benefited from the Family Support Service?

Yes □1 (Please go to question 17)
No □2 (continue)

16 How do you feel you have benefited from the Family Support Service? (Please tick all that apply)

General emotional / social support □1
Given general support in the home □2
Given information about other services in the area □3
Helped to access Sure Start services □4
Help to cope with a specific problem (e.g. post natal depression) □5
Improved relationship with child/ children □6
Other □7

If other please state ...........................................................................................................................................
17 Do you feel that your child / children have benefited from the family support service?

Yes □1  (Continue)
No □2  (Please go to question 19)

18 How do you feel that your child / children has benefited from the Family Support Service? (Please tick all that apply)

- Improved behaviour □1
- Increased confidence and self-esteem □2
- Improved speech □3
- Given information about other services in the area for them □4
- Helped to access Sure Start services □5
- Help to cope with a specific problem □6
- Other □7

If other please state ............................................................................................................................................

19 Has the service benefited your family in any other ways?

Sure Start

20 How did you first find out about Sure Start?
(Please tick one only)

- Midwife/ health visitor □1
- Family Support Worker □2
- Other Sure Start worker □3
- Leaflet/ poster □4
- Friend/ family □5
- Other □6 please state ...........................................

21 Has your family support worker given you information about Sure Start services?

Yes □1
No □2
22 Have you visited the Bentley Children's Centre on the Avenue, Bentley?
Yes ☐1  No ☐2

23 Did you ever visit the Sure Start Building, Park Lodge Bentley?
Yes ☐1  No ☐2  Unsure ☐3

24 Have you used any of the following Sure Start services? 
(Tick all that apply)
Family Support Drop in ☐1  Parenting group ☐2
Swimming group ☐3  Training Courses ☐4
SNAPS group ☐5

25 Are there any other comments that you would like to make about the Family Support Service?

Profile

26 Are you:
Female ☐1  Male ☐2

27 How many children do you have aged 0-16 years?
One ☐1  Two ☐2  Three ☐3
Four ☐4  Five ☐5  More than five ☐6
28 How many children do you have aged 0-4 years?

- One □ 1
- Two □ 2
- Three □ 3
- Four □ 4
- Five □ 5
- More than five □ 6

29 How old are you?

- Under 18 years □ 1
- 18 - 25 years □ 2
- 26 - 35 years □ 3
- 36 - 45 years □ 4
- 46 - 55 years □ 5
- 56 years or over □ 6

30 Which area do you live in?

- Bentley North and Central □ 1
- Woodlands □ 2
- Highfields □ 3
- Adwick le Street □ 4
- Toll Bar □ 5
- Other □ 5 please state ........................................

31 What is your marital status?

- Married □ 1
- Living with a partner □ 2
- Single parent □ 3
- Other □ 4 please state ........................................

32 What is your ethnic origin?

- White

- British □ 1
- Irish □ 2
- Any other white background □ 3

- Mixed
**White and Black Caribbean** □4
**White and Black African** □5
**White and Asian** □6
**Any other mixed background** □7

**Asian or Asian British**

**Indian** □8
**Pakistani** □9
**Bangladeshi** □10
**Any other Asian background** □11

**Black or Black British**

**Caribbean** □12
**African** □13
**Any other black background** □14

**Chinese or other ethnic group**

**Chinese** □15
**Any other** □16

Thank you for your time – your comments are greatly appreciated.

If you would like to receive a £10 Tesco voucher, please complete the following contact details. This information will be stored separately from your responses to the survey and will not be used for any other purposes.

**Name**

**Address and postcode**
Appendix B

Sure Start Adwick and Bentley – Family Support Service Questionnaire

Q1. Other - please state

All options and also advertisements
Daughter using family support crèche
Family centre
Health visitor
Health visitor and friend
Midwife / Health visitor and Social Worker
School
Social Services
Social worker
Support worker

Q6. Please could you describe the type of support you were hoping to gain from the family support service?

A place for my daughter to go so I could catch up with my housework
Advice, help with meeting other people and bonding with my son
At the time I wasn't hoping I was just grateful of what help I got-thank you
Behaviour, toilet training
Confidence with looking after my child safety tips etc
Emotional, befriending
Encouragement to go to groups, general talking. Taking part in community activities pop in for coffee and a chat
Friendly face
Friendly service is helping me cope and manage my 3 children in which I get now
General advice
Help and advice, support, a professional other than a G.P.
Help to discipline my daughter better and budgeting
Help with children's behaviour. General parenting skills to deal with son, who I don't know what to do with.
Help with my children's behaviour, help with my problems I have had
Help with my daughter's behaviour and how to manage it.
Help with parenting and cooking. To gain support we weren't getting from our family
Hope to cope better with my children and get them a bedtime routine
How to deal with my son's behaviour which I received a lot of help and his speech
I am getting support from my family support worker
I do not have a family support worker
I expected them to boost my confidence as it was my first child and had PND and they helped a lot
I found it really easy having a family support worker telling me how my children can do different things
I just hope to get support and also some respite, also looking forward to meeting other parents for a chat
I just wanted to be able to have confidence to socialise with people again and interact with other-overcome slight depression
I was hoping for more support with my two daughters and I have got it
Ideas on how to cope with bad behaviour
Just needed someone to listen to me
My family have had a lot of stress regarding council matters, Sure Start. Took a large % of the stress away
Needed help to cope with having a premature baby - I didn't have any family around to help.
Personal support
Simple help but they were very supportive  
Somebody to talk to about my problems and to get guidance and support from  
Someone to talk normal to- adult interaction  
Sterilise bottles and how to bathe  
Support with the children allowing myself an hour or so to catch up on chores and other things  
To help with behavioural problems and concentration, speech problems  
To help with child's behaviour  
To understand children's behaviour.  
What I was hoping to gain and gain it because she was so friendly and kind

Q7. Other - please state

As and when necessary  
Did not use service  
Every week  
Never- saw her at Sure Start  
Never now  
None  
Or when required  
Picks me up for baby group, she would visit more if I needed her to  
She doesn't any more  
Used to once a week but I no longer need her  
When I was available

Q8. Other - please state

Every week  
Never-given as an option  
No one

Q10. Other - please state

Go in the building  
Go in the centre  
Health visitor  
Mobile phone  
Mobile phone  
Mobile phone  
My referral letter from school initially  
No  
None  
Social worker

Q11. Please could you describe the difficulties you have experienced contacting your family support worker?

If the support worker was busy, she always phoned  
Not 100% sure I had one  
Only when she was off sick and then someone helped  
Support worker on holiday didn't let me know  
Was not always available, but that was just her doing her job

Q13. Other - please state

Don't know
Evaluation of the Family Support Outreach Service – Bentley Childrens Centre

DWC
GP
Health Visitor
Possibly doctor
Yes

Q14. Other - please state

A holiday with my children, via a charity
Activity groups
Childcare and speech and language therapy
The Community Centre

Q16. Other - please state

Coping with my children needs
Improved relationship with my wife.
Midwife for smoking-managed to stop, Sure Start worker rang her for me
Most of them
None
Watch x whilst I’m shopping

Q18. Other - please state

Bonding with other children
Helped child mix with other children
It helps my child to meet other children to play with and even play with more toys than what he has
My whole family feels better with the help from Sure Start
Plays with other children, he loves it at baby groups

Q19. Has the service benefited your family in any other ways?

A lot calmer, less stressful
Feel confident in myself, have used techniques that family support worker has given
Gets it out a lot more
Helped cope with having my first baby prematurely. I realised that I wasn't the only one.
It’s helped me get out and about and the transport is really beneficial.
Made us realise we have to get a professional health person to see our daughter, to help us
My family's health was in very poor state of depression, Sure Start helped us get a house which is bigger and clean
No
No
No
None
Not at all
Not at all only by talking to me
Out the house, meet people, geared of loading
Someone I can talk to for advice, reassurance
Training
Yes- relieved pressure within the family
Yes-helping the children with their problems
Yes because I know there is always someone to turn to to put my mind at rest
Yes it has helped me to look after my child more confidently
Yes my other child is now benefiting from Sure Start facilities
Yes our family is a lot happier
Yes we are a lot more patient with his behaviour and discipline him appropriately
Yes, helped to make friends for me and my 2 yr old son

Q20. Other - please state

Family centre
Family support worker
Friend /family
Friend/family
Housing support worker
Midwife / health visitor and open day
Other sure Start worker
Saw building
Social worker

Q25. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about the family support service?

I find the Sure Start building difficult and time consuming to get to. I doubt anyone without transport would bother. The building is too small and the use it has is confusing
A well worth service which has certainly helped my family
Always used Highfields and on occasions have been to Woodlands
Don't close it down - my child is like a changed person.
Everything is going fine, X has been great. I needed coaxing to go to groups; she sat with me at a group until I settled-lovely
I asked for help as I was stuck with my grandchildren, until I got them in school, they helped as they said they would
I think it is a great place for kids and parents
I think it is a very useful service which will benefit many
I think that without the help I received, I wouldn't be as happy and settled as I am now
It's a helpful service, giving support and care to those who need it and is very well done; staff are very helpful, supportive and friendly
It's a really good thing and it's really helped me out - I'm chuffed to bits with it.
X has been a great help when I needed her
Keep up the good work
Mary is my home start worker and I wouldn't be able to do the things I do without her help
My support worker betrayed my trust and I feel unable to access baby group due to this
No
No
No, everything is fine for me
None
None
None
None other than time doesn't seem long enough with people who want to help
They are all great and deserve a pat on the back although due to my depression I could have benefited from a little more help
They make you feel at ease so you don't feel like you're the only parent who has problem children.
They should help family through difficult times
Very friendly and make you welcome
Yes I found that it helped me to make new friends