

**COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY 2004**  
**RESEARCH REPORT PREPARED FOR**  
**SURE START ABINGDON, BRECKON HILL**  
**& ST JOHN'S GATE**

**10 MARCH 2004**

## CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
A1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
A1.1 Background And Objectives .....	1
A1.2 Method And Sample .....	1
A2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	2
B1 SAMPLE PROFILE .....	6
B1.1 Area .....	6
B1.2 Gender .....	6
B1.3 Age .....	7
B1.4 Profile Of The Children .....	7
B1.5 Ethnic Group .....	8
B1.6 Length Of Time Living In The Area.....	9
B1.7 Employment .....	10
B2 USAGE OF FACILITIES .....	11
B2.1 Nursery/Playgroup Usage.....	11
B2.2 Toy Library Usage.....	12
B2.3 Book Library Usage .....	13
B2.4 Reading Activity .....	14
B2.5 Health Centre/Surgery Usage .....	15
B2.6 Primary School Usage .....	16
B3 VIEWS ON THE AREA .....	17
B3.1 Satisfaction With The Area .....	17
B3.2 Satisfaction With Services For Young Children – Specific Services .....	18
B3.3 Satisfaction With Services For Young Children – Overall .....	19
B3.4 Compared To A Year Ago .....	21
B4 AWARENESS AND USAGE OF SURE START.....	23
B4.1 Awareness .....	23
B4.2 Usage And Views.....	25
B4.3 Contact/Information About Sure Start.....	27

## SECTION C - APPENDIX

### Appendix One - The Questionnaire

## A1 INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings of a community satisfaction survey carried out by McCallum Layton on behalf of the Sure Start programme in the Abingdon, Breckon Hill and St John's Gate area of Middlesbrough, in early 2004.

### A1.1 Background And Objectives

An initial baseline measurement of satisfaction with services for young children among local parents is to be collected early on in the operation of each Sure Start programme. A follow-up measurement is then to be collected 3 years later, to track progress. This is a formal local evaluation requirement of the National Sure Start Unit.

The survey objectives are, on the one hand, to collect certain baseline statistics required by the Unit, eg:

- μ Parents' perceptions of the quality of local services for young children
- μ The proportion of parents who report reading to their children regularly

and on the other, to collect information to allow the programme to measure the impact that Sure Start is having in the area.

### A1.2 Method And Sample

The survey was carried out by means of street interviews with parents of under 4's who live in Abingdon, Breckon Hill and St John's Gate. Interviews were conducted by members of McCallum Layton's professional market research fieldforce, in January and February 2004. They were accompanied by interpreters provided by the programme, to ensure that Asian parents not comfortable with English could fully participate in the survey.

Interviewing took place outside nurseries and primary schools, shops, and on the street in between. In total, 122 interviews were achieved; this equates to around 20% of the population of families with under 4's in the area.

The research was introduced as being 'a survey being carried out in the area about services for young children' – no mention of Sure Start was made at the outset, in order that awareness of the programme could be measured during the interview itself. A copy of the questionnaire used can be found in the appendix to this report.

## A2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Summary Of The Key Findings

The survey sample represents an unbiased cross-section of parents of children aged under 4 in Abingdon, Breckon Hill and St John's Gate. Respondents are interviewed at random outside schools, shops, and just walking about in the area. The following two key findings will therefore be particularly useful for the programme:

- μ 97% of parents of under 4's were aware of the Sure Start name
- μ 61% of all parents of under 4's have used or taken part in any Sure Start services/activities

31% of respondents only have children in the age range being targeted by Sure Start. Over two thirds of parents, then, also have older children.

A quarter of respondents, 26%, have been living in the area for less than 2 years. The populations of Breckon Hill and St John's Gate are particularly likely to contain recent arrivals to the area.

Over half of respondents, 57%, have any adult in their household in paid employment. This equates to 56% of the children aged under 4. However, only 28% of the White British respondents' under 4's are living in households where there is an adult in paid employment.

66% of parents are making use of nursery/playgroup facilities. Abingdon, Breckon Hill and the Sure Start Centre nurseries are the ones most commonly used by this sample.

89% said that they read to their under 4's on a regular basis. 43% are making use of book library facilities, most commonly the Sure Start Centre library.

12% use toy library facilities for their under 4's, mostly the Sure Start facility.

The main health centres/GP practices being used by this sample are North Ormesby, Cleveland Health Centre, Newlands and Borough Road, but there are a great many others also being used by respondents.

60% of respondents have any children at primary school, and the two key ones being used are Abingdon and Breckon Hill.

A majority of respondents, 87%, expressed satisfaction with the area in general as a place to bring up children; 13% were dissatisfied. The reasons given by those expressing dissatisfaction generally related to perceptions of drug use, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Concerning local services for young children, 85% expressed satisfaction overall, and 11% were dissatisfied. 36% said that they feel things are better for children in the area now compared to a year ago, and 17% said worse. Those saying things are better often spontaneously cited the existence of Sure Start and/or services and activities set up by the programme as the reason they feel this way. Respondents who have used Sure Start were particularly likely to feel things are better now than they were (47% of users said they feel things are better, compared to 19% of non-users).

Satisfaction levels with specific types of service and facility locally (GP services, nurseries, schools, support services etc) were generally high. The exception was outdoor play areas - 39% expressed dissatisfaction with local provision.

When asked what they would like to see improved in the area, in the context of services and facilities for young children, by far the most common response focused on outdoor play. Other themes concerned providing more for older children (to reduce the impact that anti-social behaviour can have on younger ones) and action to tackle crime. Further specific suggestions were made by one or two respondents each, which the programme may wish to consider.

As noted above, nearly all respondents have now heard of Sure Start. Moreover, when asked what Sure Start is set up to do, most are able to give answers that reflect the true nature and activities of the initiative. It is interesting to note, though, that the way respondents answered this highlights potential benefits to parents as much as, or even more than, to children.

The most common means by which respondents first came to know of Sure Start are word of mouth from another parent, being told by a health visitor or midwife, and via a leaflet through the door. There is a correlation between use of the programme and mentions of having heard about it from another parent.

61% of all respondents have accessed Sure Start services/activities. The proportion is higher among Asian parents (74%) than White British (49%).

When asked what they felt to be the best things about Sure Start, those who have used the service gave a very wide range of answers, often reflecting specific aspects of the programme that they presumably have benefited from personally, rather than more generic responses relating to the initiative itself.

Suggestions made on how the programme could be improved most often related to places available and activity times.

Of those who have not used Sure Start, 56% said that they have been contacted by the programme. If these are added to the proportion who have made use of Sure Start activities and services, then the total respondents that the programme can be said to be in touch with is 81%. Most of the rest have at least seen information about the programme.

Of those who know about Sure Start but have not yet used it, 84% said they may do so in future. Reasons given for not having made use of the programme yet were most commonly to do with not having time, or not feeling the need. There were some further comments here relating to activity timings, though.

### **Conclusions**

The results of this survey, we believe, are positive for the programme. Awareness and understanding of Sure Start in the area are high, the usage level is approaching two thirds and the total contact level over four fifths. The existence of the programme is having a positive impact on local perceptions of services for young children in the area. Feedback from service users is positive.

The results highlight some issues, though, that the programme may wish to consider. In our view, there are two key ones:

The programme appears to have been very successful in engaging Asian parents - 71% of Asian respondents have used Sure Start. The level among White British parents is lower, at 48%. The White British population, it seems, may be more shifting; until multi-agency communication improves, making contact with recent arrivals will present a challenge.

When asked why they have not used Sure Start, many non-users indicate that they either do not have time or do not see a need. No programme is going to achieve 100% take-up, but the challenge is how to engage those parents who perhaps may not see they have an issue bringing up their young children effectively. Users often say they first heard of Sure Start by word of mouth. The programme could perhaps capitalise on this by considering how existing clients could be used to promote the service and engage other parents, whether by means of formal outreach systems or informal 'buddying'.

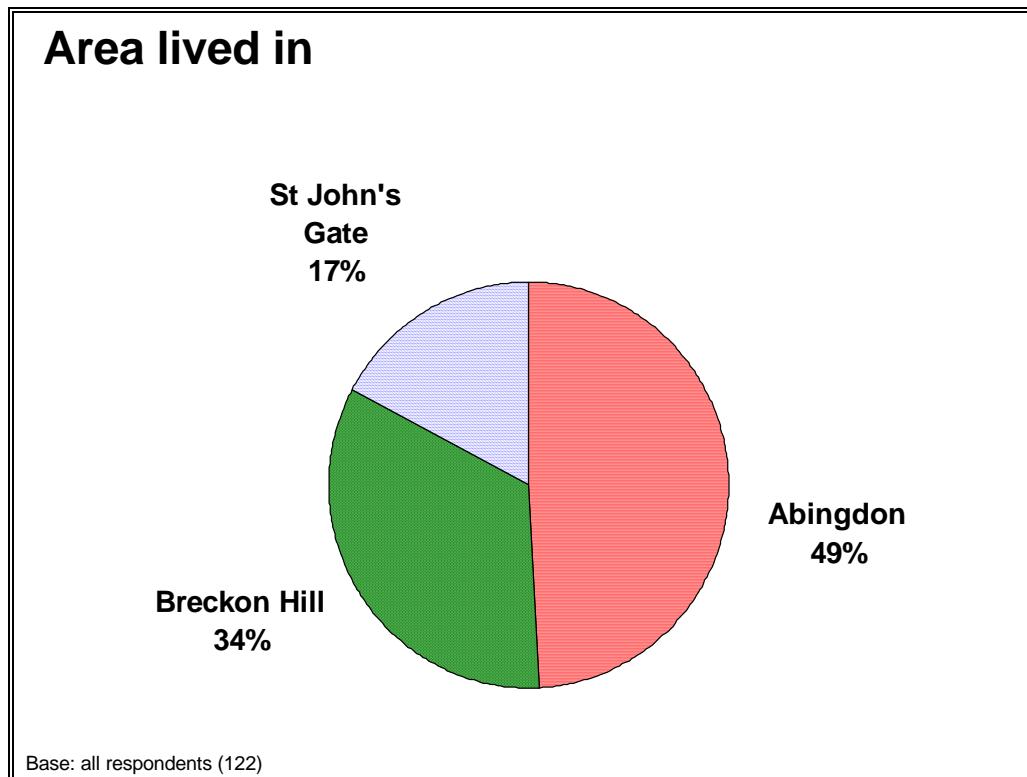
On top of these over-arching issues, the survey findings raise certain specific points that the programme may wish to address, for example:

- μ How to improve outdoor play facilities. A new playground is under construction in Abingdon – should other sites be developed and/or improved elsewhere?
- μ How might the use of the toy library be increased?
- μ If there is any suspicion that the reported extent of parents reading to their children is exaggerated, how could the use of books be encouraged (at least respondents appear aware that reading to their children is desirable!)
- μ Only around a quarter of White British children are living in households where there is any adult in paid employment. Can the programme impact on this?
- μ The only real theme coming through from respondents as to how the programme could be improved concerns activity timings. Can anything be done to extend provision beyond existing timetables?
- μ Respondents often relate the aims and strengths of Sure Start to parents as much as to children. This could be made use of in 'marketing' the programme – emphasising the potential benefits to them as adults could draw people in who may perhaps otherwise not be attracted to make use of what is on offer.

## B1 SAMPLE PROFILE

### B1.1 Area

The breakdown of the survey sample across the 3 areas covered by the Sure Start programme was, as planned, broadly in proportion to the breakdown of the population:

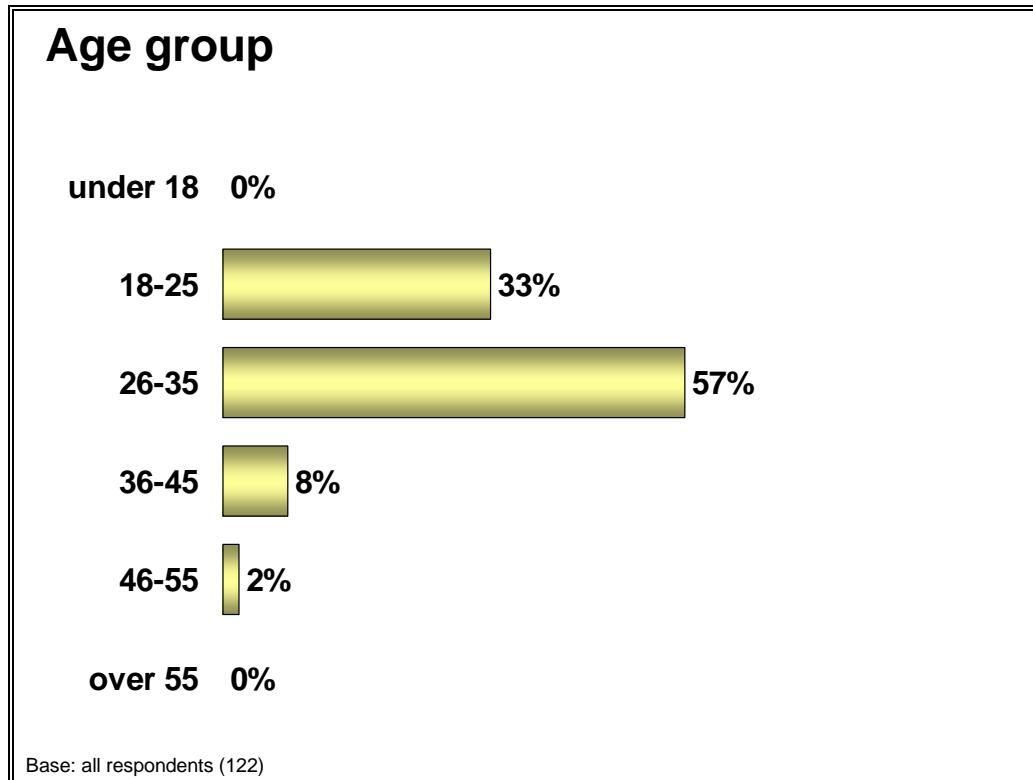


### B1.2 Gender

The majority of respondents taking part in this survey (107 out of the total 122) were female, but 12% were a male parent, guardian or carer.

### B1.3 Age

Most respondents (90%) were aged between 18 and 35, although 10% were older than this. None were younger.



While bases are small and the difference would not be statistically significant, it may correspond with the programme's knowledge of the area that the profile of survey respondents who live in St John's Gate was slightly younger than elsewhere – over half of St John's Gate residents (52%) were aged 18-25.

### B1.4 Profile Of The Children

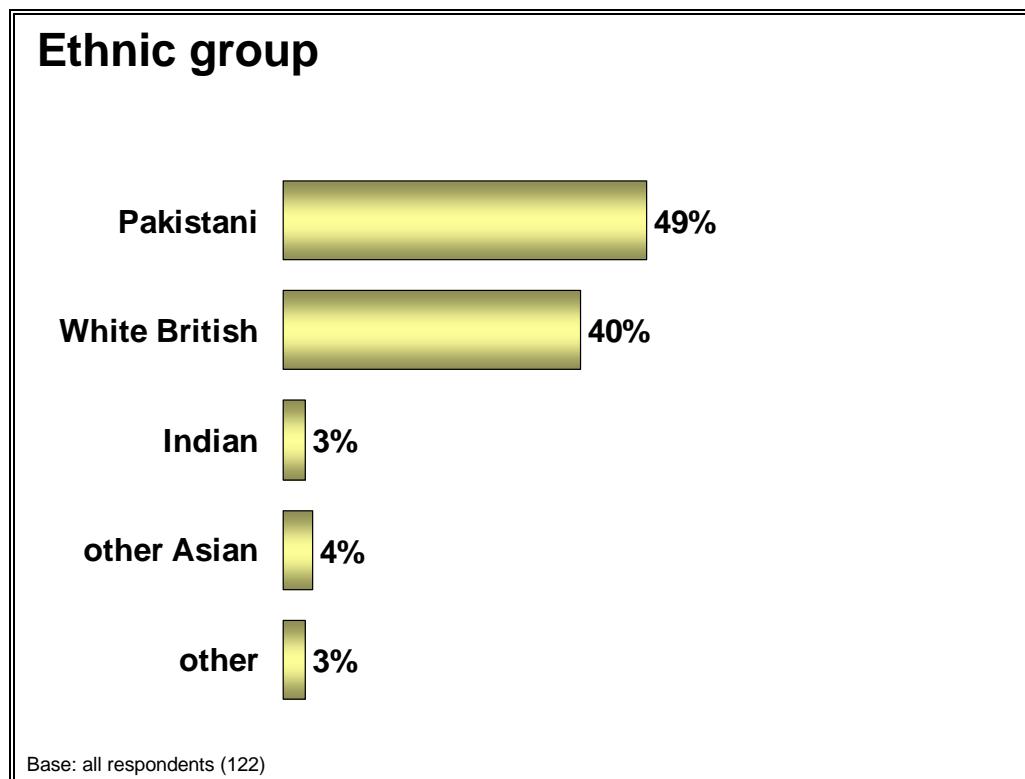
Respondents were asked for the age(s) of all their children.

In total, these 122 respondents have 309 children (mean average 2.5 each). They have a total of 136 children aged under 4 (mean average 1.1 each).

31% of the sample only have children in the target age range for Sure Start (under 4). However, 69% also have older children - 60% have any 4-7's, 34% have any 8-11's, and 12% have any secondary school age children. 2% have any children aged over 18.

### B1.5 Ethnic Group

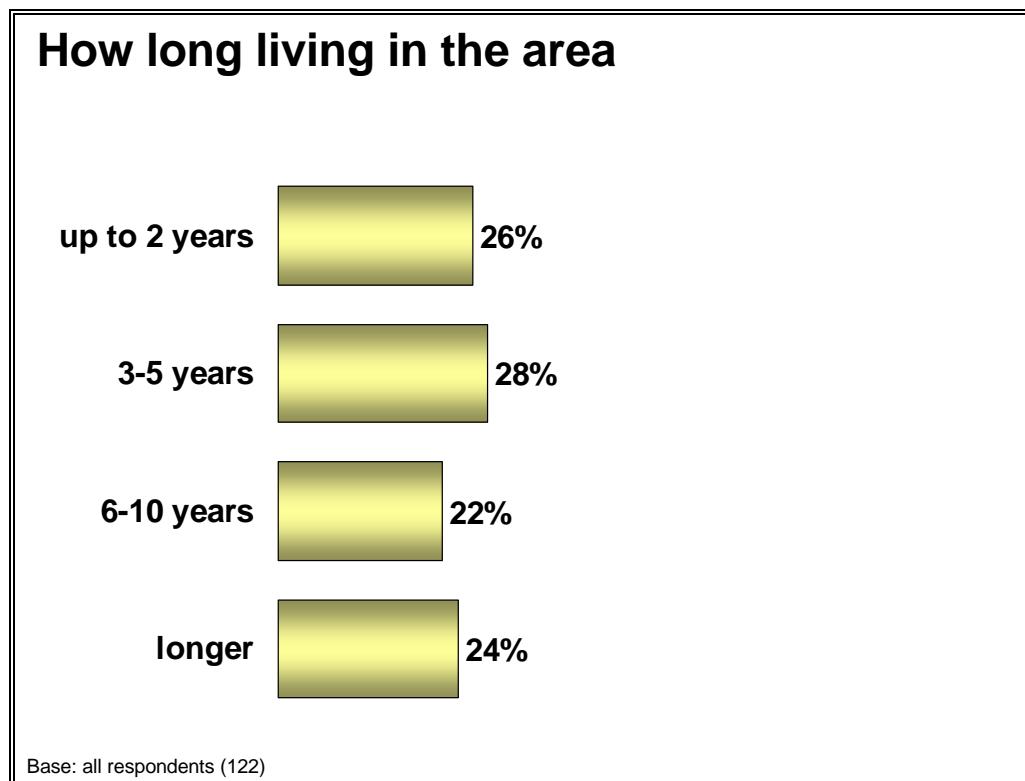
Respondents were asked what ethnic group they would consider themselves to belong to:



The Abingdon residents in the survey sample were predominantly Asian (83%) and St John's Gate predominantly White British (90%). In Breckon Hill, the sample was fairly evenly divided between these two groups (49% White British, 46% Asian).

## B1.6 Length Of Time Living In The Area

All respondents were asked how long they have been living in this area of Middlesbrough:

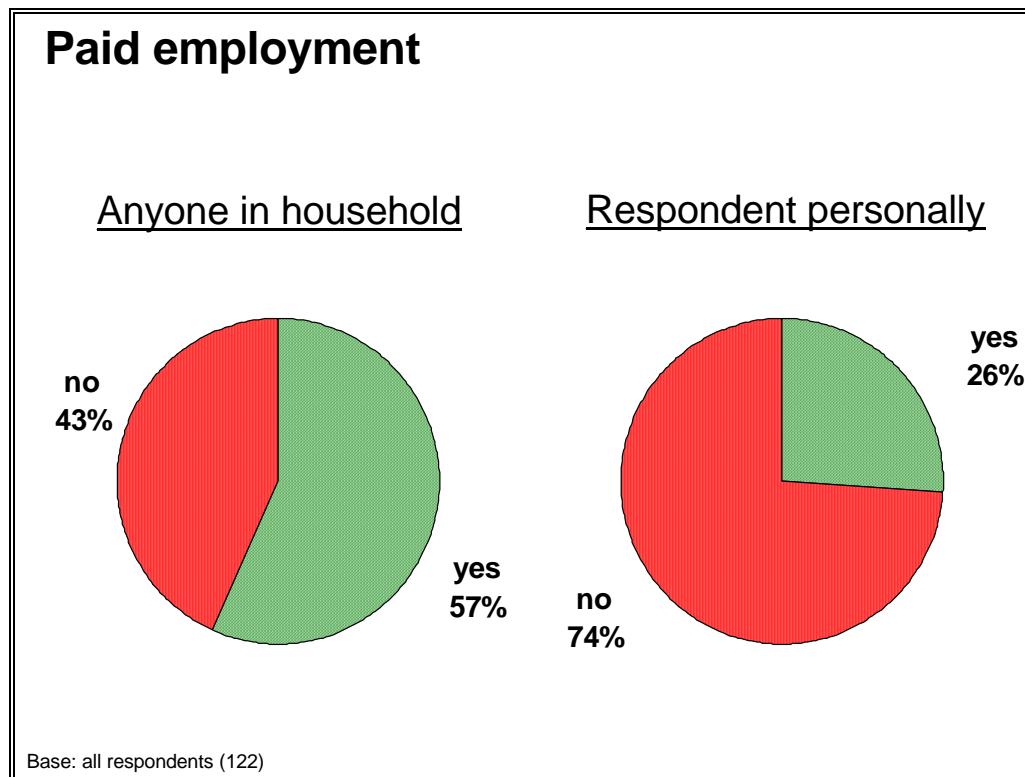


Only around a quarter have lived in the area for longer than 10 years. A similar proportion have moved in quite recently, in the last 2 years.

The most recent arrivals are most likely to be White British (42% of whom have moved into the area within the last 2 years, compared to 14% of Asian respondents), and younger (28% of those aged up to 35 have moved in within the last 2 years, compared to 8% of the older respondents). Linked with ethnic group, the newer arrivals are more likely to be living in Breckon Hill (where 34% of respondents have only been living for less than 2 years) and St John's Gate (43%) than in Abingdon (15%).

### B1.7 Employment

All respondents were asked if there are any adult(s) in their household in paid employment, and if so, whether they personally are in paid employment:

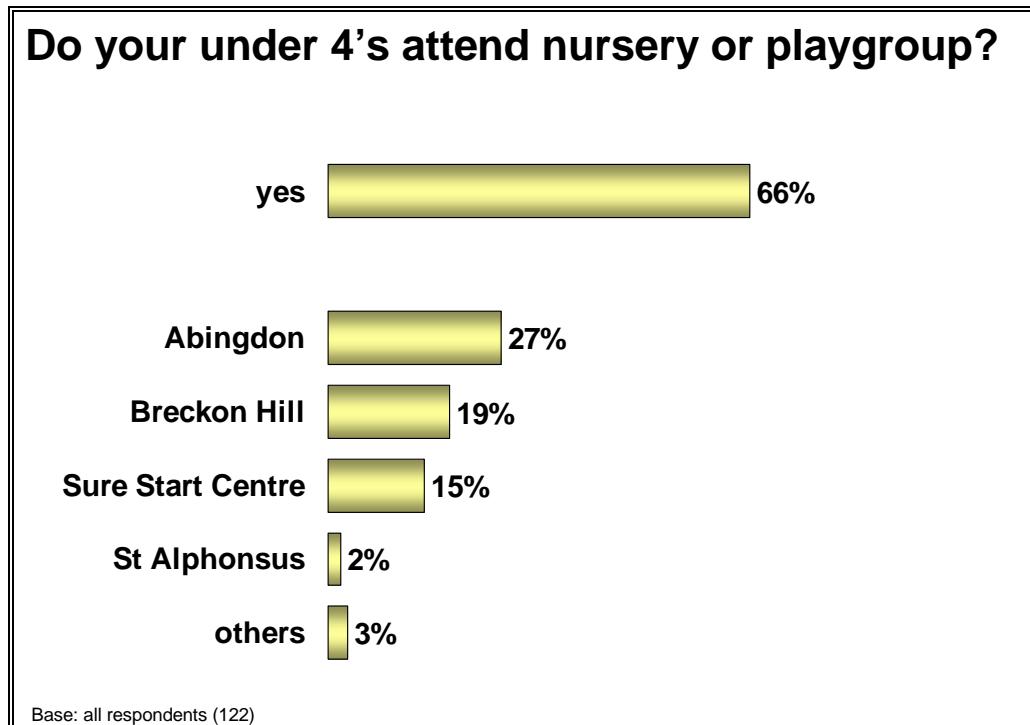


57% of respondents, and 56% of the 136 children under 4 that are looked after by this sample, are in households where there is at least one adult in paid employment. The difference between the Asian and White British households here is very noticeable – among Asians, 80% of children under 4 represented here are in a household with anyone working compared to just 28% of the White British young children.

## B2 USAGE OF FACILITIES

### B2.1 Nursery/Playgroup Usage

Two thirds of respondents said that their under 4's attend nursery or playgroup.

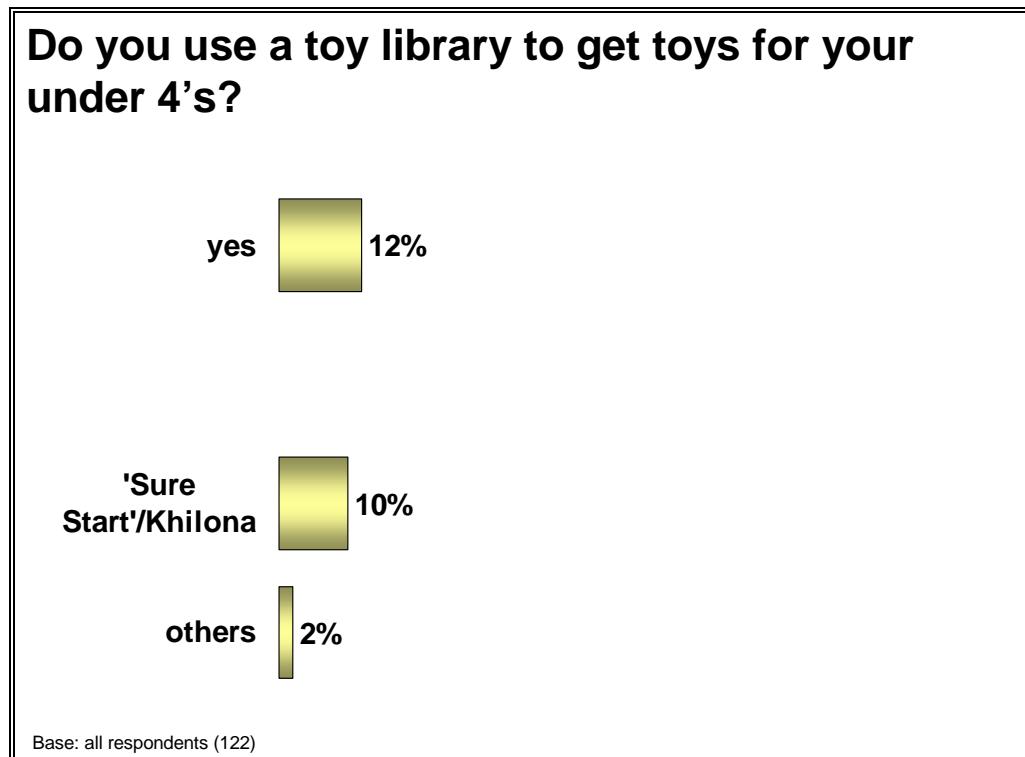


The main facilities being used are Abingdon and Breckon Hill nurseries and the Playgroup Network at the Sure Start Centre. Two respondents mentioned St Alphonsus, and one each named Grangetown, St James, St Josephs and a university nursery.

Nursery/playgroup usage is rather lower in Breckon Hill (54%) than elsewhere (70% in Abingdon and 76% in St John's Gate). It is also lower among White British respondents (56%) than Asian (71%), and lower among older parents (54% among the over 35's, compared to 73% among those aged up to 25).

## B2.2 Toy Library Usage

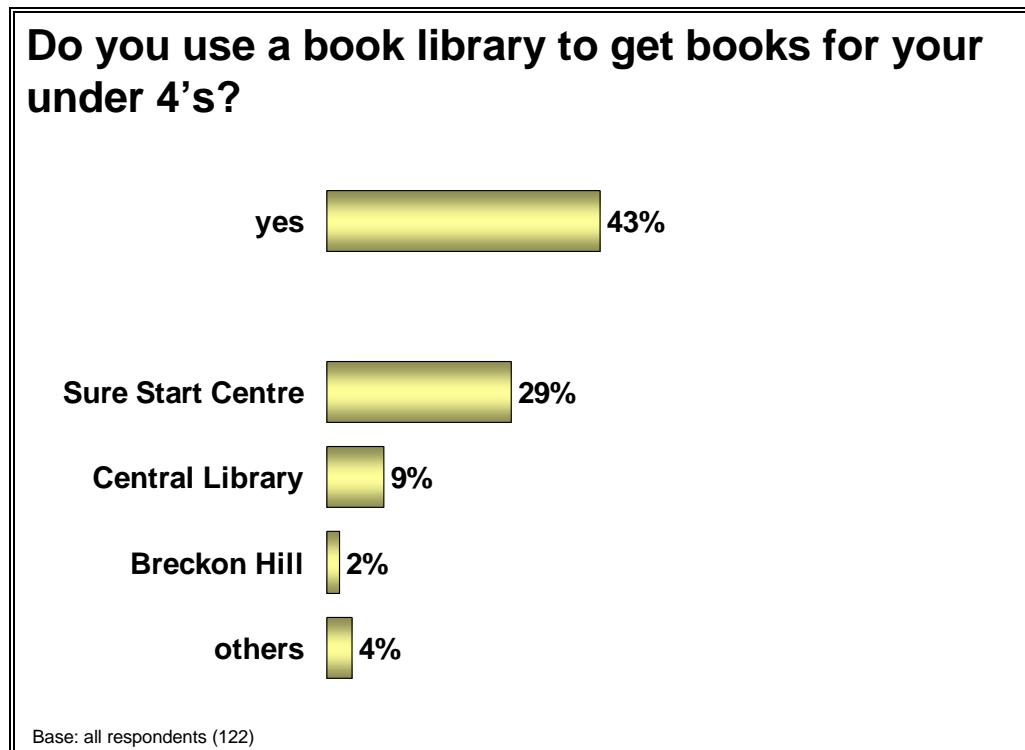
A little over one in 10 use any toy library facilities, to get toys for their under 4's:



Nearly all of these use the Sure Start toy library, most referring to it as Sure Start rather than Khilona. Other toy libraries mentioned by one respondent each were Middlesbrough, Breckon Hill and Easterside.

### B2.3 Book Library Usage

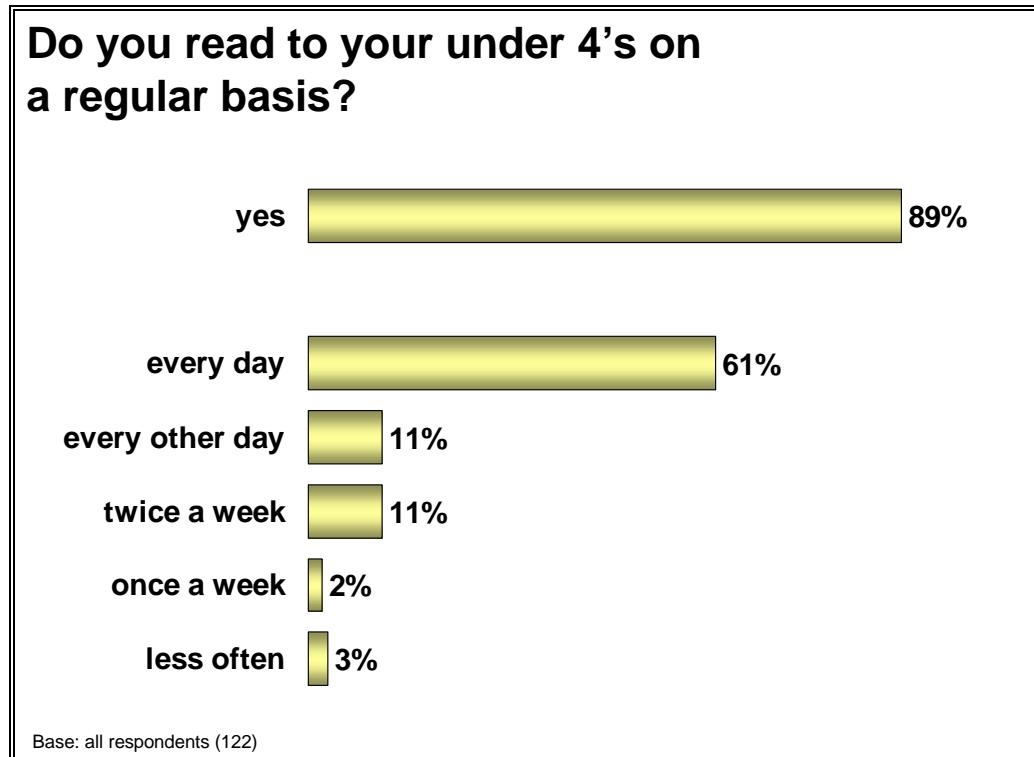
Around two in 5 use any book library facilities to get books for their under 4's:



The main library being used is that at the Sure Start Centre. As well as the Central Library and Breckon Hill, referred to by 9% and 2% respectively, other facilities were mentioned by one respondent each – Eston, Redcar, Easterside, St Alphonsus and Berwick Hills.

#### B2.4 Reading Activity

Respondents were asked if they, or their partner if applicable, read to their under 4(s) on a regular basis, and if so, how often:



Around 9 in 10 said that they do, and a majority of these gave a frequency of every day.

## B2.5 Health Centre/Surgery Usage

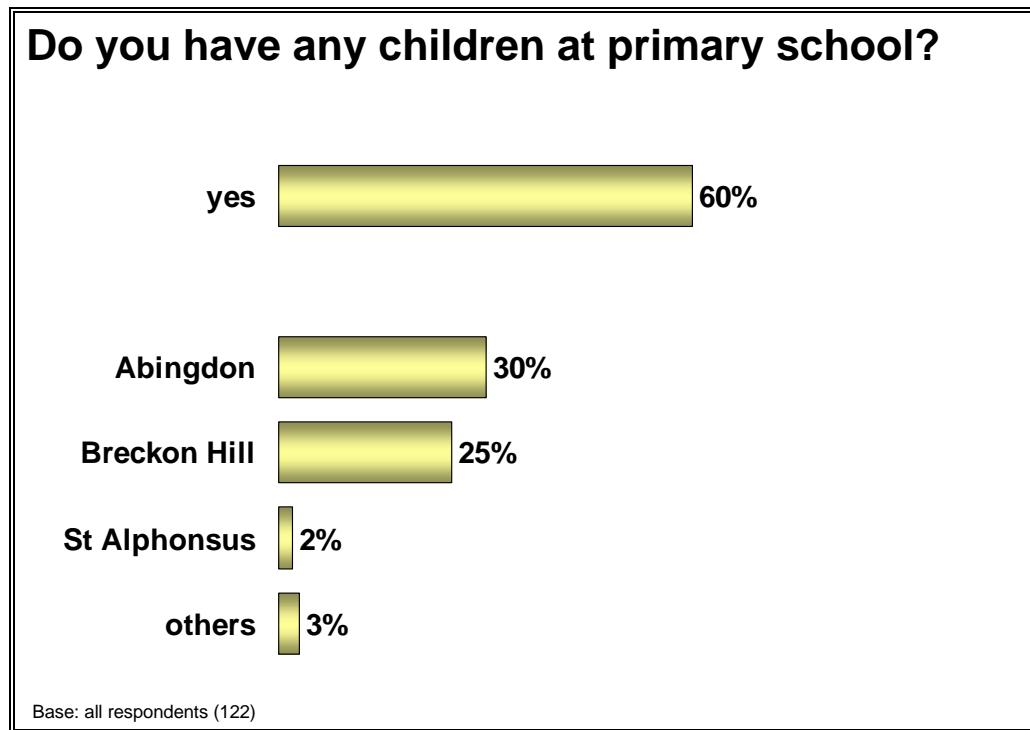
Respondents were asked which GP practice or Health Centre they use:



There was a very wide spread of answers to this question. North Ormesby, Cleveland, Newlands and Borough Road are clearly key practices for the programme area, but residents are making use of many other primary care facilities as well.

**B2.6 Primary School Usage**

Respondents were then asked if they have any children at primary school, and if so, which one:

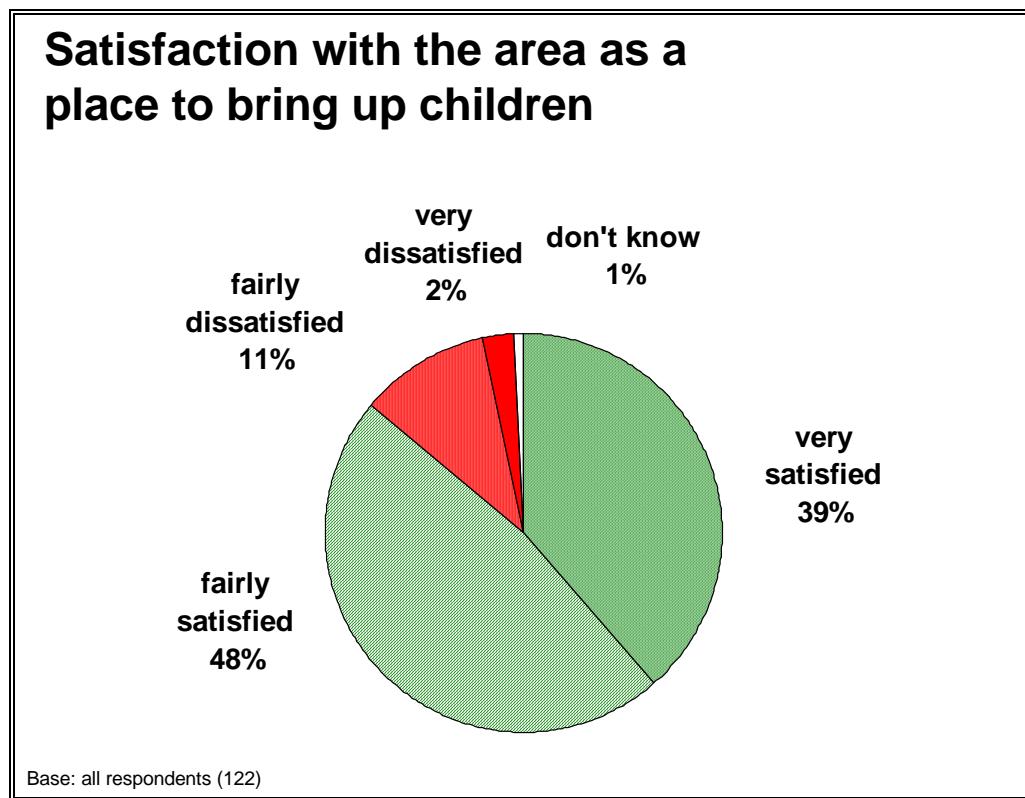


Abingdon and Breckon Hill are the key schools mentioned by these respondents.

### B3 VIEWS ON THE AREA

#### B3.1 Satisfaction With The Area

All respondents were asked how satisfied they are with the area, as a place to bring up their children.

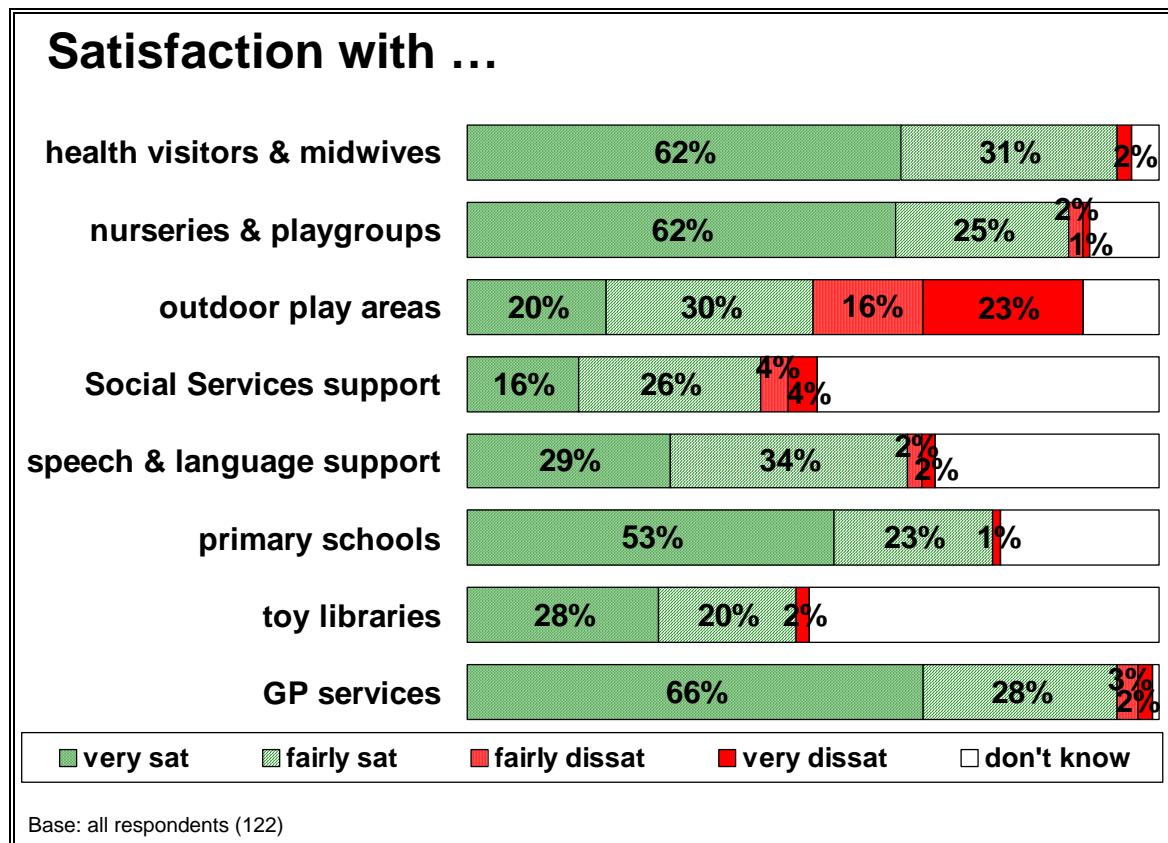


The balance of response to this was positive. However, 13% indicated they are dissatisfied with the area, and they were then asked why (the figures shown are the number of respondents making each type of comment):

<i>Base: dissatisfied with area</i>	<b>(16)</b>
	No.
Drugs	8
Bullying	3
Robbery/theft	3
Streets untidy	3
No parks/play areas	2
The area itself	2
Too much traffic	2
Not a safe area to live	1
Prostitutes	1
Standard of education	1
Standard of the houses	1
Sure Start too far away	1

### B3.2 Satisfaction With Services For Young Children – Specific Services

Respondents were then read a number of types of facility and service, and asked for each one, how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with what is available for young children in this area:



While some respondents could not comment on some of the services, the bulk of the answers given were positive.

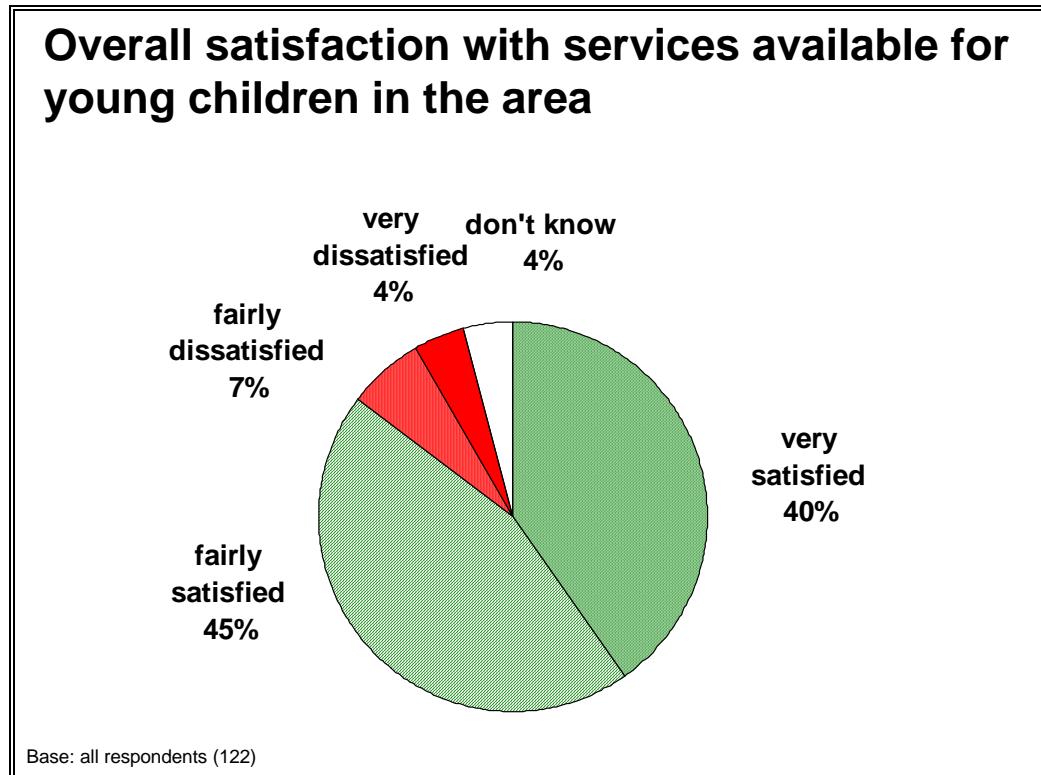
The exception to this pattern concerns outdoor play areas, where over a third of all respondents said they are dissatisfied. Satisfaction on this score was particularly low in St John's Gate, where 71% were dissatisfied.

97% of those giving an answer concerning nurseries/playgroups said they are satisfied. Looking at the response according to whether they use a nursery/playgroup or not, the only respondents to express dissatisfaction are three who do not currently use such a service. Of the 33 users of the Abingdon nursery, 85% said they are very satisfied; the equivalent figures for Breckon Hill and the Sure Start Centre were 74% and 67% respectively.

Similarly, the one respondent to express dissatisfaction with the local primary schools does not have a child at primary school currently. Of the 30 Breckon Hill school parents, 83% said they are very satisfied, and the equivalent result among the 36 Abingdon parents was 64%.

### B3.3 Satisfaction With Services For Young Children – Overall

When asked how satisfied they are overall with services available for young children in this area, respondents answered as follows:



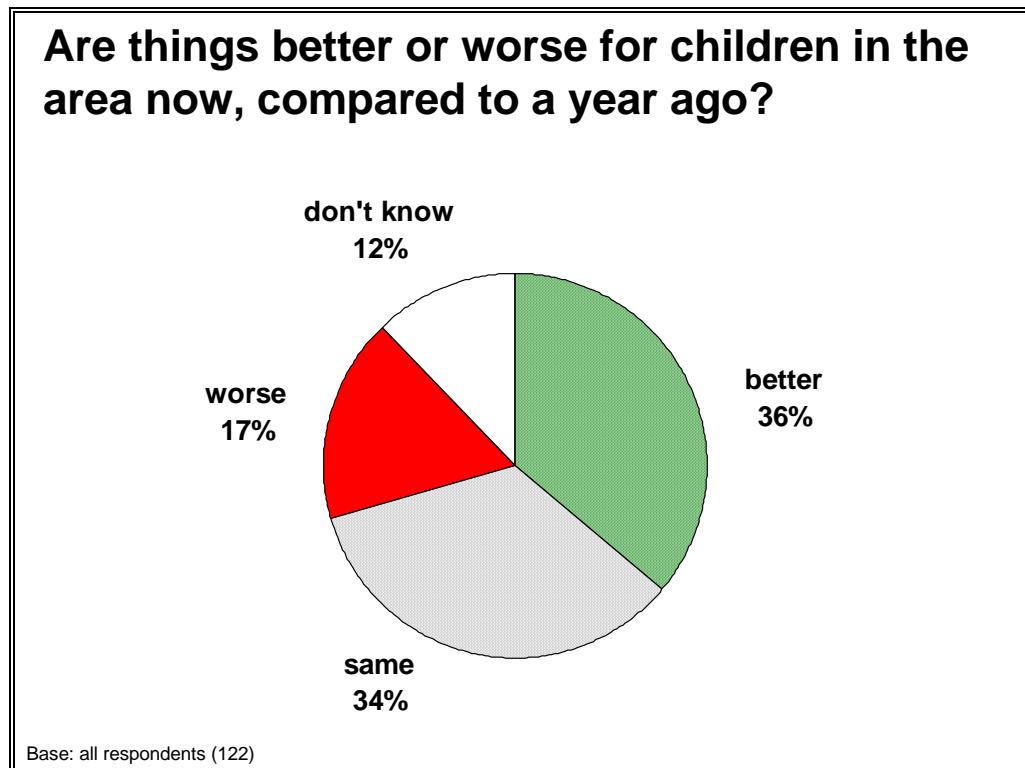
85% reported satisfaction overall with services for young children locally. 11% were dissatisfied.

All respondents were then asked what they would like to see improved, if anything. The full range of answers given is shown in the following table (the figures are percentages):

<i>Base: all respondents</i>	(122)
	%
Any improvements suggested	61
<u>Improvements</u>	
Nothing/don't know	39
More outdoor play areas	32
More nurseries/nursery places	5
More activities/trips	5
Clean up streets/play areas	5
Older kids not hanging around where younger ones play	4
Youth clubs for older children	3
The area to be made safer	3
Drugs off the streets	2
Police/wardens on the streets	2
Improve doctors' service/improve appointment system	2
Respite care	2
Build car parking areas	2
Help to learn English	2
More support groups	2
Make the roads safer	2
Tackle vandalism/crime	2
Community centres to be open later	1
Bigger houses (4+ bedrooms)	1
More council houses available	1
Cater for all groups, not just Asian	1
Library toys to be clean when you borrow them	1
Blinds to be put up on gym windows	1
Playgroup nearby	1
Free services from Sure Start	1
More Sure Start	1
Something for children with behavioural problems	1
School bus service	1
Things for children to do	1
To be able to find out more about playgroups	1

### B3.4 Compared To A Year Ago

All respondents were then asked if they thought things are any better or worse for young children in the area now, compared to a year ago:



Over a third thought things are getting better, twice as many as thought things are worse now than they were.

Most upbeat were the Abingdon residents, where 43% said things are better than a year ago.

Those saying they felt things are either better or worse were asked in what way. Those who thought 'better' made the following comments (figures are the number of respondents making each comment):

<i>Base: things better now</i>	<b>(44)</b>
	No.
Sure Start's involvement	19
More things to do	13
More/better nurseries/playgroups	6
Courses/classes available	4
Toy libraries	4
New play area	3
Creche facilities	2
Area has been tidied up	1
Fewer drug users around	1
Gym tots	1
Less noise in the street	1
More support from schools	1
New health centre	1
New sports complex	1
New/more choices/opportunities	1
Roads are safer	1
Slightly safer area	1
There's everything here	1
Weening group	1
Don't know	3

Many respondents spontaneously referred to Sure Start by name in this context, and others to activities run or funded by the programme.

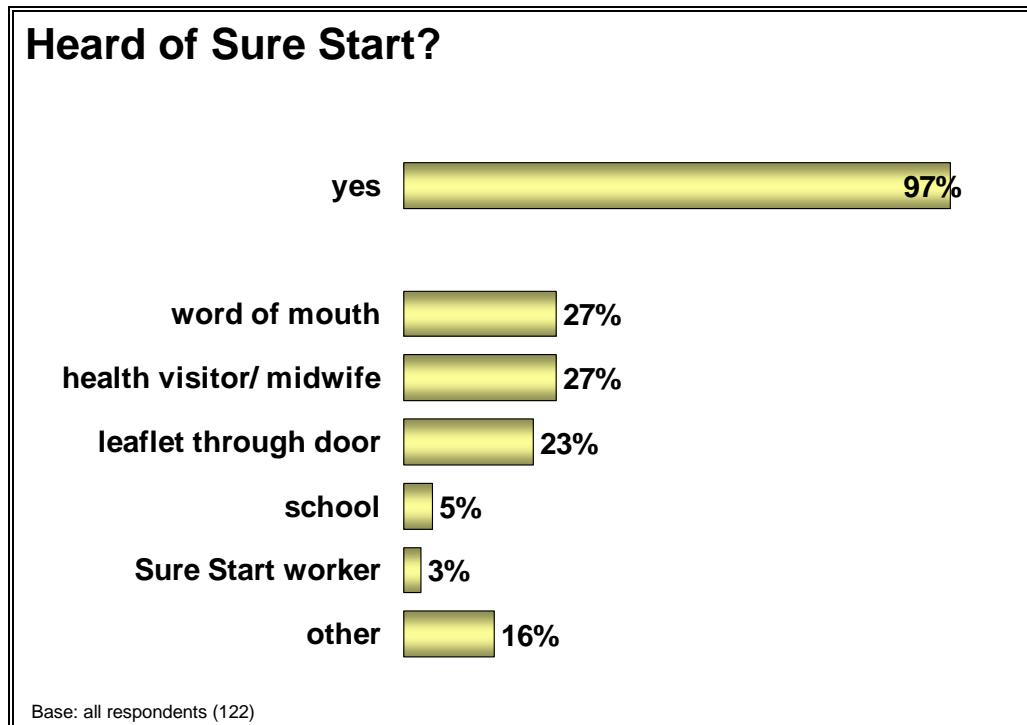
The 21 respondents who said they thought things are worse now gave the following reasons for their view (the figures are again numbers of respondents):

<i>Base: things worse now</i>	<b>(21)</b>
	No.
Drugs	9
Crime generally	5
Just don't like the area	4
More noise	4
Vandalism	4
Gang anti-social behaviour	3
Bullying	2
Burglaries	2
Fighting in the streets	1

## B4 AWARENESS AND USAGE OF SURE START

### B4.1 Awareness

All respondents were asked if they had heard of Sure Start, and if so, where they had first heard of it from:



Nearly all have heard of the initiative. The most common means by which they became aware were word of mouth from another parent, being told about it by a health visitor or midwife, or having had a leaflet through the door.

Those who had heard of the programme were asked what they thought Sure Start is set up to do (the figures are percentages):

<i>Base: heard of Sure Start</i>	(118)
	%
Any answer given	95
Don't know	5
<b><u>What is Sure Start set up to do ?</u></b>	
Helping families	33
Providing courses/classes	30
Providing support/advice	19
Running nurseries/playgroups	17
Giving everyone something to do	15
Help people learn	11
Organise activities/trips	9
Help parents get more involved	5
Giving parents a break	4
Helps people find employment	3
Providing opportunities for young children to play/meet	3
Providing opportunities to help adults interact	3
Toy libraries	3
Baby clinic	2
Getting people together	2
Giving children a better start in life	2
Helping children develop	2
Improving childcare service	2
All sorts of things	1
Baby massage	1
Cheaper baby equipment	1
Health visitors	1
Improving children's interaction	1
More facilities	1
Social workers	1

## B4.2 Usage And Views

Those who had heard of Sure Start were then asked whether they have used any of the services or taken part in any activities provided by Sure Start in this area. 64% of them said that they have, which equates to 61% of all respondents. Usage was higher among residents of Abingdon (68%) and St John's Gate (67%) than Breckon Hill (49%). 74% of Asian respondents said they have used Sure Start, compared to just 49% of White British.

Users were asked what they think are the best things about Sure Start (the figures are percentages):

<i>Base: used</i>	(75)
	%
Any aspects mentioned	93
Don't know	7
<u>Best things about Sure Start:</u>	
Everything	19
The courses/classes	19
The staff – friendly/supportive	15
Get to meet other people	11
The playgroups/nurseries	11
The range of activities	9
Library	8
Creches	5
More things for kids to do	5
Things for parents to do	5
Help and advice given	4
Their facilities	4
Trips during school holidays	4
Allows parents to have a break	3
Health visitors	3
It's local	3
The toys	3
Baby clinic	1
Eating group	1
Fun with food	1
Gym tots	1
It's fun	1
New foods	1
New mums' group	1
Opportunities	1
Parties for the children	1
Play areas	1
Social Services	1
The information they give	1
Toddlers' group	1

Again those who have used Sure Start services were asked if they thought there is anything that could be improved about Sure Start and what it does (figures are percentages).

<i>Base: used</i>	(75)
	%
Any improvement mentioned	24
None needed	72
Don't know	4
<u>What could be improved:</u>	
More courses/classes	4
Do more for older children/raise age limit	3
More crèche/playgroup places	3
More in evenings/on weekends	3
A café area	1
Cater for all religions	1
Courses/classes should be free	1
Evening baby-sitting service	1
More activities in the holidays	1
More information on what Sure Start can offer	1
Send parents information on trips	1
Should be able to stay with children for a while at playgroup	1
Should have membership cards	1
Staff to be more friendly	1
Waiting lists are too long	1

There is some correlation between use of Sure Start and take-up of other services. 80% of users' children attend nursery/playgroup, compared to 43% of non-users, and 52% of users use book libraries to get books for their under 4's, compared to 28% of non-users.

47% of users think things are better for children in the area now than they were a year ago, compared to 19% of non-users.

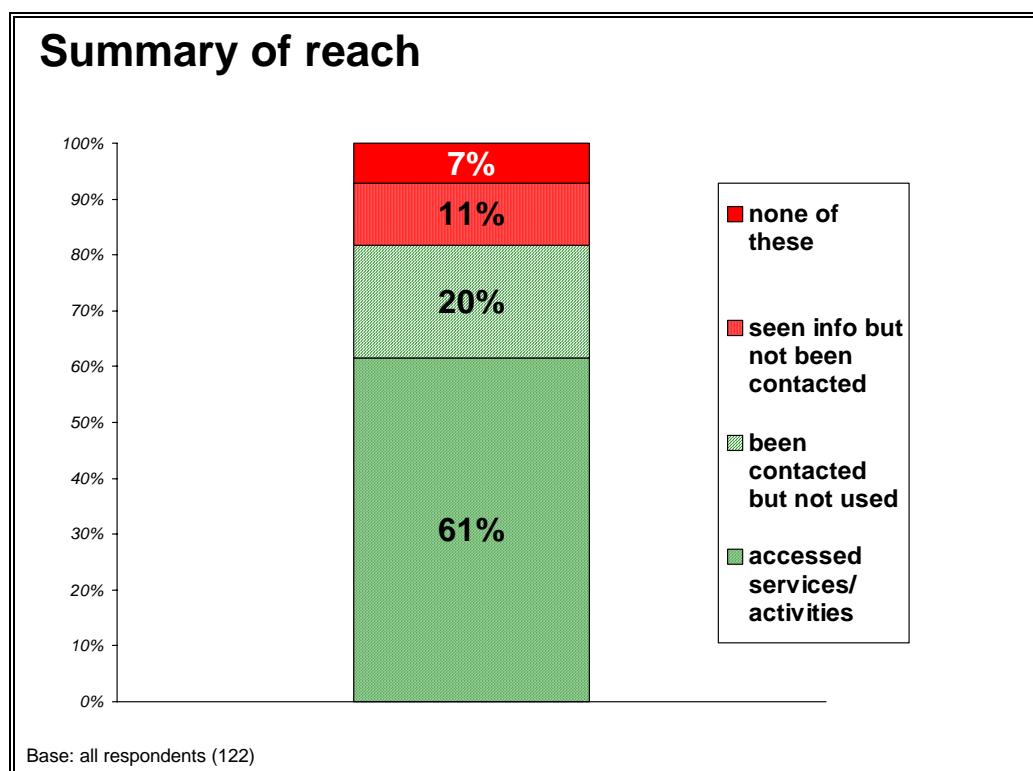
Users are more likely than non-users to say they first heard about Sure Start from another parent (37% and 12% respectively).

### B4.3 Contact/Information About Sure Start

Those respondents who had heard of Sure Start but have not used any services/activities, were asked whether anyone has contacted them to tell them about what services and groups are available from Sure Start. 56% of these said they have been contacted.

They were also asked if they have seen any leaflets or other information about what Sure Start does, and the majority of these, 86%, said that they have.

The chart below, then, summarises the extent of the programme's reach so far:



Respondents who have had any information about Sure Start but not (yet) accessed any service (this equates to 31% of all respondents) were asked why not (the figures are numbers of respondents):

<i>Base: had contact/info but not used</i>	<b>(38)</b>
No.	
Any reason given	29
<u>Why not accessed Sure Start:</u>	
Not enough time	10
Don't need it/not interested	5
Waiting to start	4
Children are at school	2
Don't cater for my children	2
Don't know much about it	2
Intend to	2
Times are not suitable	2
Child won't let me leave him/her	1
Don't understand days/times on leaflet	1
Not open weekends	1
Only just moved here	1
Too tired	1

By far the most common reasons given relate to a lack of time, and a lack of interest or perceived need. Across the total sample, the people who said this equate to 12% of all respondents.

When asked if they might use Sure Start services/activities in future, 84% of non-users said they might. 5% said not, and 11% could not say.