KNOWLE WEST

SureStart

PARENT LINK
SCHEME EVALUATION
REPORT

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Executive Summary

Background to the area.
- Knowle West Sure Start (KWSS) is a second round local programme which started in January 2001. Its lead and accountable body is Bristol City Council.
- There are 12,002 people living in the Sure Start area. The number of 0 - 4 year old children is 1,155, living in 858 households (2001 Census data).
- The population is predominantly white (96.3%), although the minority population is increasing. Lone parents make up 15.3% of the local population (compared to 6.5% nationally), 43% live in rented council houses (13.2% nationally) and 16.3% of households with dependant children have no adults in employment (compared to 4.9% nationally).
- The area is the lowest in Bristol in terms of educational achievement and the 7th lowest in the country (2000 IMD). 52% of the local population aged between 16 and 74 have no qualifications (compared to 26% in Bristol as a whole and 29.1% nationally).
- Anecdotal evidence shows people are not inclined to attend groups, and there are distinct communities in the area arising from the re-housing origins of residents.

The Knowle West Sure Start Parent Link scheme.
The aim of the Parent Link Scheme is to:
- Promote Knowle West Sure Start by reaching out to new families on the estate, and letting them know what’s available,
- Provide focussed support to parents around issues that impact on their own or their family’s well-being, through a home visiting service,
- Publicise KWSS by taking part in community events,
- Link parents to KWSS activities and other sources of support in the area by sharing information, signposting, and helping them get to groups and participate in other aspects of Knowle West Sure Start.

Methodology
- The evaluation specification was for an analysis of 50 closed cases, an analysis of closing evaluation feedback sheets from clients, and a cost analysis of the Parent Link Scheme.
- An agreed method of analysing closed cases was reached by categorising each families’ needs and the objectives set during the case, whether those objectives had been met, and how or why not.
- Closed case clients were asked to indicate if they would not be willing to have their cases examined.
• 50 closed cases and all 52 evaluation sheets were analysed.
• An agreed method of unit costing was reached.

Findings.

Referrals.
• Self referral is the main source of new cases, with 56% of referrals. Those made by Health Visitors were the second main source, with 20%. Referrals came from at least 10 sources.
• The main referral need is ‘isolation and the need to be linked to support’, in 58% of cases. ‘Parents’ emotional or mental well-being’ and ‘managing children’s behaviour’ are the next most common needs at 16% each, and ‘housing issues’ at 12%.

Timescales.
• 61% of cases analysed were open for six months or less. Where the client’s needs were successfully fulfilled, this was achieved within six months in 63% of cases.
• 64% of clients were given Working Agreements within two weeks of referral, and within three weeks in 78% of cases.

Objectives.
• The objectives set at the Working Agreement generally reflected the needs identified at the referral stage. ‘Reduced isolation’ was set as an objective for 60% of clients, ‘improved accommodation’ set for 21%, ‘linking to other agencies’ set for 19%, ‘improved parent/child relationships’ set for 15% and ‘enhanced emotional well being (parents)’ set as an objective for 11%.
• As time elapses through cases, changes in needs may occur and are explored during review sessions. 31% of cases required no review, 49% required one review, and the remaining 20% required two reviews or more.
• Of the 31 clients who had a review, changes in their needs were identified for 13 of them. The main needs identified at review were a need for support in ‘household budget’ in 39% of cases (5 of 13). ‘Practical issues’, ‘housing’ and ‘children’s physical health’ were each identified as a change in needs in 15% of cases.

Success.
• The indicator for successfully achieving objectives was taken from Closing Summary sheets. This indicated that success was achieved fully for 70% of clients (including those clients who moved on), partially for 14%, but not achieved in 16% of cases (8 cases).
• Where success had not been achieved, in seven of the 8 cases it was because the client either didn’t engage to start with, or stopped engaging with the service.
The reasons for closing cases reflect the above success/non-success factors, with 'need fulfilled' for 54% of cases, 'moved away' for 18% of cases and 'client stopped engaging/unable to engage' for 16% of cases.

Objectives.

Objectives can be successfully achieved in one or more ways. The most prominent way of achieving a client's objectives was via 'practical support' - 52% of cases. 'Signposting to other agencies' achieved success in 48% of objectives, and 'signposting to groups including Sure Start groups' in 43% of cases.

The Parent Link Worker acted as an advocate (e.g. phoning Social Services) in 36% of cases, with 'giving support/emotional back up' evident in 24% of cases and 'giving information and advice' in 21% of cases.

The complexity of the cases is perhaps best captured by looking at the groups clients were referred to. 27 clients were referred to Sure Start Groups, whilst 34 clients were signposted/referred to over 30 other agencies. Of these, 12 were referred to at least three agencies, and six to five or more agencies during the course of their case.

Client evaluation.

- 79% (41) of clients who filled in evaluation sheets felt that it was helpful to have a Parent Link Worker visit, with qualifying comments identifying the level of support given by the Parent Link Worker, their approachability, having someone to confide in, and the ability to lift their emotional well-being as being key factors.

- 91% of evaluation sheet respondents felt that things had 'changed' for them because of the Parent Link Worker involvement.

- Of the 91% a number stated that their self esteem/confidence had been enhanced. Of interest is that the need to build confidence was not overtly stated at referral or in the Working Agreement, but seems 'intrinsic' in many cases.

- 98% of evaluation sheet respondents stated that the Parent Link Worker helped them find other things that may have been useful to them.

- Qualitative information shows that the Scheme has had a real and substantial affect on the lives of those involved.

Cost.

- Unit costs have been estimated for participation in the Parent Link Scheme which equates to £1,140 per family. This works out at £52 per contact.

- Some comparative costs from the Personal Social Services Research Unit have been cited as good starting points in achieving consistent unit based costing for the future city wide evaluation of Family Link Work.
Conclusions.

- From closed case evidence it would seem that Parent Link Worker activities reflect the aims and objectives of the Scheme.
- Further, success in promoting the aims and objectives of the Parent Link Scheme (in terms of promoting KWSS, taking part in community activities and linking parents to support groups) is evidenced by the high number of self referrals and the number of agencies and groups referred to.
- The high number of agencies to which people were referred also reflects the complexity of some of the cases dealt with, and the broad base of knowledge of the Parent Link staff.
- The number of self referrals and agencies referring indicates that there is a high degree of trust and confidence in the Scheme in the community and amongst professionals.
- The needs that are identified at Working Agreement and then during reviews (26% of clients needs change) indicate a good understanding by PLWs of the issues affecting people in the area.
- Processes seem to be effective and efficient looking at key indicators such as the length of time between referrals and Working Agreements being made, the number of cases being dealt with within six months, and the high percentage of cases where success has been fully achieved.
- The high quality of the service is reflected in positive feedback from evaluation sheets from clients. The strong relationship between the PLWs and the client is identified as a key factor to success.
- Qualitative information in the evaluation and case studies indicates that the Scheme has a real and substantial affect on those involved.
- A value judgement needs to be made with regard the unit costs of the Scheme compared to other forms of similar intervention, and the potential cost of no intervention at all.
- Clear links can be made between the Parent Link Scheme and the Sure Start and Every Child Matters objectives.
1. Introduction

1.1 Knowle West Sure Start is a second round programme approved in late 2000, and started in January 2001. Local parents and professionals were very active in applying for Sure Start funding, and initially made up the Knowle West Sure Start Partnership Board.

1.2 The lead and accountable body for the programme is Bristol City Council, who volunteered to take this role for a number of reasons. This includes the high incidence of educational deprivation in the area (see below), the increase in commitment to Early Years Education within local government, and the void left by the closure of the local secondary school. The site subsequently became ‘The Park’, a vibrant training and educational centre on which the Knowle West Sure Start offices are situated.

1.3 Knowle West is one of four Sure Start local programmes in Bristol, each of which has a Family Link type service. Two of the other Sure Starts in Bristol have already evaluated Family Link Services. The intention is that the findings of the exercise for Knowle West will be used as part of a city-wide evaluation of Family Link work within the four Sure Start areas across Bristol, to be conducted in 2005/06.

1.4 MRC Ltd. was awarded the contract to evaluate the Parent Link Scheme in Knowle West Sure Start in March 2005.
2. Background

Demographics and Community

2.1 Knowle West is situated on the Southern side of Bristol. Originally it was a large red brick, pre-war estate (the first council housing estate in Bristol), with a post-war addition on the Western fringe. The Knowle West Sure Start area comprises the entire Filwood Ward plus a small part of the Knowle Ward.

2.2 The 2001 census shows there is a total population of 12,002 people in the Knowle West Sure Start area, with an under 0 – 3 year old population of 959, which increases to 1,155 when four year olds are included. This makes up 9.6% of the local population, compared to 5.9% nationally.

2.3 According to the DETR Index of Multiple deprivation (IMD) 2000, the Filwood Ward is ranked the 7th worse ward for educational achievement in the country, and is the worst in Bristol overall. The Filwood and Knowle West wards are ranked as the 2nd and 4th most deprived wards overall in Bristol.

2.4 A MORI survey of the area undertaken on behalf of KWSS in January 2002 indicated that:

- 99% of the population is White British (though the 2001 census indicates 96.3%)
- 34% were less than 25 years old
- 71% had one child under four, 26% had two and 3% had three
- 44% have been living in the area for six years or less
- 10% of parents never read to their children, 58% never take them to the library
- 57% smoke, including 52% in the first three months of pregnancy

Further, 2001 Census data indicates that:

- There are 858 households with dependent children aged 0-4 (18.5% of the population, compared to 11.4% nationally)
- 16.3% of households with dependant children have no working adults, compared to 5.4% in Bristol as a whole and 4.9% nationally
- Lone parents with dependent children make up 15.3% of the local population, compared to 6.5% nationally
- 43% live in rented council houses compared to 13.2% nationally
- 52% of the population aged between 16 and 74 have no qualifications, compared to 29.1% nationally
2.5.1 Anecdotally there are a number of features of Knowle West which influenced the development of the programme. It is said that people don't go to groups - there are deep networks of family and friends, now built on generations, with distinct communities on the estate arising from the re-housing origins of the residents. People living in one area tend not to go to activities or services in other areas.

2.5.2 The challenge for the programme, and particularly the Parent Link Workers, has been to get people going to groups and activities, to attempt to build new social networks, and reduce the feelings of isolation of people who are outside of any network.

The Parent Link Scheme within Knowle West Sure Start

2.6 The Parent Link Scheme is a home visiting support project for families with children under four. It is staffed by four Parent Link Workers who are line-managed by a Community Social Worker. The overall scheme is managed by the Deputy Programme Manager.

2.7 The aim of the Parent Link Scheme is to:
   - Promote Knowle West Sure Start by reaching out to new families on the estate, and letting them know what's available,
   - Provide focussed support to parents around issues that impact on their own or their family's well being through a home visiting service,
   - Publicise KWSS by taking part in community events,
   - Link parents to KWSS activities and other sources of support in the area by sharing information, signposting, and helping them get to groups and participate in other aspects of Knowle West Sure Start.

2.8 Referrals can be made to the scheme by the family themselves, or by a professional, if they feel a particular family may benefit from additional support.

2.9 After referral, cases are set up with a Working Agreement that is reviewed after eight sessions. New objectives may be set or the case closed on review. Referrals typically come from (self referral) families new to the area and feeling isolated, or from the Health Visitor. Some families can be hard to contact to set up the Agreement (even self referrals); sometimes several visits are required before meaningful contact can be made. Once parents feel ready to come off the scheme they are invited to complete an evaluation form, however a large proportion do not do this.
2.10 The service is available to anyone whose child is a full member of Knowle West Sure Start. From February 2001 to October 2003 there were 87 families on the scheme, 53 had been brought to groups and 34 had received individual visits. Between April 2004 and March 2005 89 families were worked with.

**Evaluation Specification**

2.11 The evaluation specification is clear and is split into 3 sections:

*An analysis of a minimum of 50 closed cases*

This forms the main part of the evaluation, involving producing statistical data relating to:

- Where referrals have come from
- The initial reasons for referral
- What objectives were set
- Any changes to those objectives over the course of the case
- Reasons for closing the cases, and whether the objectives were achieved by the time the case was closed
- How the objectives were achieved

**Analysis of closing evaluations**

Involves looking through closing evaluation forms that are completed at the end of the case by parents, aiming to identify any re-occurring success factors or barriers from the parent’s point of view.

*A cost analysis of the Parent Link Scheme*

Looking at the total cost of the scheme, and the number of families worked with. Where possible, this to be compared to costs of other forms of intervention, along with active solutions.
Sure Start and Every Child Matters Objectives

2.12 Though not explicit in the evaluation specification, underpinning all evaluations are the four Sure Start objectives as put forward under the Public Service Agreement 2003-06, and the desired outcomes of the 2004 Government Green Paper ‘Every Child Matters’.

The four Sure Start objectives are:

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

The Every Child Matters Outcomes are:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-Being
3. Methodology

3.1 The methodology for this evaluation was conditioned by the evaluation specification above, and also discussions with National Evaluation of Sure Start officers. They stressed that evaluations should highlight service outcomes and be backed up by robust data-driven evidence.

3.2 Given the intended cross city Sure Start Family Link Worker evaluation due to be undertaken in 2005/06, the methodologies used in the completed evaluations of Family Support Services in Sure Start Easton and the Family Link Worker service in Sure Start Hartcliffe, Highridge and Withywood, were used to inform the conduct of this evaluation.

3.3 An initial meeting was held between the Knowle West Sure Start Parent Link Scheme Workers, the Community Social Worker, the Finance and Contracts Manager, and the consultant conducting the evaluation to agree on a method of analysing the closed cases. This included:

- A way of categorising different families needs and the objectives set to fulfil these,
- How to identify whether the objectives had been successfully achieved by the time the case was closed,
- A way of categorising how these objectives had been met.

The agreed categories for needs, objectives and ways of achieving them are given at Appendix A.

3.4 Closed case clients were contacted by mail and asked if they would be willing to have their notes examined by an independent researcher. 14 replied that they would not be willing to have their case notes examined and these were excluded from the exercise.

3.5 50 closed cases were chosen at random by the researcher from a total of approximately 140 cases held within the closed case cabinets in the Parent Link Workers’ office.

3.6 The researcher decided whether the objectives had been successfully achieved from the data contained in the closed case files.

3.7 All 52 available closing evaluation forms were analysed with regard identifying success factors or barriers.
3.8 On average each closed case took half an hour to categorise and analyse. Analysis for both the closed cases and evaluation forms was by means of spreadsheet and a survey software package.

3.9 Case studies were used from the ongoing Sure Start Voices project.

3.9 The Parent Link Scheme was costed out by the Finance and Contracts Manager. This included the allocation of both direct and indirect overheads. Comparative costing data was obtained from the Personal Social Services Research Unit.
4. Findings.
   Closed case analysis.

Referral sources.

4.1 The referral source was recorded for 48 of the 50 cases analysed. Self referral was the main referral source with 28 (56%) of referrals. The next main referral source was Health Visitors with 10 (20%) of referrals. Referrals from other sources were widely spread. Referral sources are tabulated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Visitor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Start Midwife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEEP (Connaught)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother and Babies Project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Worker (William Budd)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/not recorded</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for referral.

4.2 Initially a referral sheet is completed by the client; this may be with or without the help of a professional. Following referral a meeting is arranged between the client and the allocated Parent Link Worker at which needs are explored in depth, and a written Working Agreement reached.

4.3 The table below analyses the needs identified at referral (taken from the referral sheets) compared to those explored at the Working Agreement (WA). Note that in many cases there is more than one reason for referral. This shows that, in general, there is a high degree of correlation between the needs identified by the referrer and the needs explored at the Working Agreement, though there are subtle differences which may be important to the subsequent path the case follows. These highlight the advantages in the Parent Link Worker drawing up the Working Agreement with the client, and their expertise in identifying individual needs.
## Referral need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral need</th>
<th>No. at referral</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Explored at WA</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolation and the need to be linked to support</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ emotional or mental well being needs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing children’s behaviour</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing issues</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical issues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self esteem/confidence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to link to outside agencies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s physical health</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household budget</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s emotional health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 It is clear that many cases are complex, with more than one reason for referral, and that these reasons may be interlinked.

4.5 It can be identified that the main area of need lies in clients’ feelings of isolation which may come about for a number of reasons, such as being new to the area, or the need to gain ‘release’ from the household environment. Given that many of the cases are self referrals, this would seem to underline the need for a service such as the Parent Link Scheme based on the anecdotal evidence given in paragraph 2.5, regarding reluctant to attend groups. It also further confirms that the Parent Link Workers’ focus is geared towards the aims and objectives of the service given in paragraph 2.7, particularly promoting Sure Start and other relevant services in the area.

4.6 Parents emotional or mental wellbeing needs are also important, including issues such as depression or an inability to cope. Housing issues may include the need to be re-housed, whilst ‘feeling safe’ may involve problems such as neighbour/partner harassment or anti-social behaviour. ‘Practical issues’ can be wide ranging, from help with applying for tax credits or legal issues to clearing up around the house/garden.

4.7 Of interest is that self esteem/confidence is in many instances intrinsic to other needs, such as isolation, with statements of increased confidence not becoming apparent until later in the process, or via the evaluation sheets completed by parents at the end of the case process.
4.8 This would seem to be consistent in terms of attempting to satisfy the aim of providing focussed support to parents through home visits, given in paragraph 2.7.

Length of cases.

4.9 The length cases were open for is tabulated below. 61% (30) of all cases analysed were open for six months or less. In 17 of these, the case was closed as the client’s needs had been fulfilled. Overall, in successful cases where the client’s needs were fulfilled, 63% were achieved within six months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mths</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Length of time between cases opening and a Working Agreement being reached.

4.10 Clearly it is in the interests of the effective operation of the Parent Link Scheme that clients are seen as soon as possible after the referral has been made. It would seem that, in general, a Working Agreement is reached soon after referral with 28 (64%) of clients being given a Working Agreement within two weeks, and 34 (78%) given a Working Agreement within three weeks. It is necessary to take into account that some clients do not engage, and in a number of instances contact has been attempted but (usually due to client’s lack of availability) has taken time to achieve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objectives set at the Working Agreement.

4.11 As part of the Working Agreement the objectives for the client during the Parent Link Worker’s involvement are set down. In general these reflect the needs of the client shown in paragraph 4.3 above, and would seem to demonstrate that the Parent Link Scheme Workers continue to focus on the aims for which the Scheme was initially set up, and are able to identify the most effective ways of fulfilling needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives set</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced isolation</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved accommodation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking to other agencies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved parent/child relationships</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced emotional well being (parents)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signposting service</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money management</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance emotional well being (children)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel safer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of reviews.

4.12 At the Working Agreement a date and timescale is set for the case to be reviewed. Where clients engaged, in the majority of cases (22 - 49%) only one review was conducted before the case was closed, and no reviews were needed in 14 (31%) of cases. The need for more than two reviews is exceptional with only 3 (6%) of cases requiring three reviews or more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviews</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What may change at review?

4.14 Clearly as time passes, especially in complex cases, clients’ needs will change. These changes are explored at the reviews and new needs and objectives set. The table above shows there were no reviews in 14 cases, whilst reviews were held for 31 clients. Of these, changed or additional needs were identified for 13 clients. These changed/additional needs are tabulated below (note there may have been more than one need per case).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changed need</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household budget</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s physical health</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s emotional mental well being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and drugs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing children’s behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking to other agencies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of interest is that isolation is the most common need identified early in the process (table 4.3) and more practical and financial issues seem to be identified as the process continues.

Were the objectives achieved?

4.15 Clearly measures of success (and to what degree this may be attributable to the Parent Link Worker or client’s self help/emotional or circumstantial change) may be at least partially subjective. The Closing Summary form to which clients are party, however, contains a section ‘Have the aims been achieved?’ This has been used by the researcher as the main indicator of success. Judgements of success may be further informed by the case notes and the evaluation sheet returns from clients. The evaluation sheet analysis section (below) would seem to indicate a high degree of positive feedback for the usefulness of the service.

4.16 Using the above criteria, it has been identified that success has been achieved in 70% of cases (although this does include cases where the family has moved away from the area).
### Success achieved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.17 Where success has only partially been achieved, a reason has been elicited from the Closing Summary sheet. There were a variety of reasons given:

- FLW exhausted support
- No longer wanted groups
- Difficult to engage (eventually moved)
- Solicitor taking over housing appeal
- Moved out of area before objectives completely achieved
- Some repairs outstanding
- Unable to contact parent further

4.18 Where success was not achieved, again reasons have been taken from the Closing Summary sheets. These are listed below, with the predominant reason either being that the parent did not engage, or stopped engaging:

- Unable to make contact
- Client didn't appear to want support
- Difficult to engage
- Stopped engaging with Sure Start
- Need fulfilled on own
- Client not engaging
- Client didn't engage
- Client didn't engage, then moved

### Reasons for closing cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need fulfilled</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved away</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client stopped engaging</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unable to engage with client</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client no longer wanted service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support exhausted</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved into full time employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case taken over by solicitor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How were the objectives met (if met)?**

4.20 In the cases where objectives were successfully achieved, the Parent Link Worker becomes involved in many tasks and may take on a number of different roles which are illustrated by the table below. Giving ‘practical support’ is the most prominent task undertaken by the Parent Link Worker (for 22 cases - 52% of clients). This includes tasks such as taking clients to groups and appointments, helping to complete forms, etc.

4.21 Practical support clearly links to the overall aims of the Parent Link Scheme, in terms of reducing isolation and introducing clients to Sure Start services and other services/agencies in the area.

4.22 The aim of the Parent Link Scheme of offering family support is perhaps reflected in areas such as advocacy, giving emotional support, etc. These tend to be most prominent in the more complex cases (i.e. those with multiple needs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How objectives met</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical support</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signposting to other agencies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signposting to groups incl. Sure Start groups</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy e.g. phoning agencies</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving support/emotional back up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving information and advice</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role modelling/showing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured programme e.g. of parenting skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.23 Although it is helpful for analysis, it is difficult to capture the complexity of some of the cases in simple terms such as ‘signposting’ or ‘advocacy’. The lists below show which Sure Start and ‘other agency’ services clients have been signposted or referred to, or have been contacted by the Parent Link Worker in the role of advocate.
4.24 Each bullet point is an individual client. It can be seen, especially in the
case of other agencies, that individual clients may be signposted/referred
to many services whilst their case is open, and these services may be
very diverse. Parent Link workers referred their clients to over 30 different
services and agencies over the course of one year.

Sure Start services:

- Keep Playing, Chillout
- Chillout
- KEEPS, Fathers Group
- First Aid, Bumps and Babies, Keep Playing, Coping with Kids
- Tea Time Tots, Fathers Group
- Gym Tots, Chillout
- Keep Playing, KEEPS
- Keep Playing, KEEPS, Gardening Club, Chatabout
- Keep Playing
- Keep Playing
- Chillout
- Keep Playing, KEEPS, Fathers Group
- Bumps and Babies
- Chillout
- Keep Playing
- Coping with Kids
- Keep Playing, Chillout
- KEEPS
- Baby Massage
- Bumps and Babies, KEEPS
- Crèche
- Gym Tots, Chillout
- KEEPS
- Bumps and Babies, Fan Club, Chatabout
- Mellow Parenting
- Chillout, Keep Playing, Holiday Activities, Speech Therapist, Mellow,
Parenting, Tea Time Tots
- Bumps and Babies, Chill Out, KEEPS
Other services:

- Housing, Community Education, GP, Housing Benefits
- Health Visitor
- Counsellor, Social Services, Children’s and Adult Mental Health Serv.
- Community Education
- Bristol Churches, Shelter, Housing, Job Centre, KW Playcentre
- Police Domestic Violence, Housing, Counselling, Next Link, DSS
- Housing, Counselling, Education Welfare Office, Fourbridge, YMCA, Connexions, HomeStart, GP
- HomeStart, Counselling, Housing
- Shelter, GP, Social Services, Law Centre, Housing, CAB, DSS
- Early Years Centre
- Health Visitor
- The Park Literacy group, Community Education, Early Years Centre
- William Budd Playgroup
- Early Years Centre
- Health Visitor, Police Domestic Violence, Housing, HomeStart, Counselling, Bristol Debt Advice
- Single Parents Network, CAB, Next Link, Police
- Counsellor
- Knowle West Alcohol and Drugs Services, Housing
- Housing
- Counsellor, Money Adviser at Bristol City Council, Big Brothers and sisters, Bristol City Council Education, Social Services, Positive Futures Project X, Solicitor
- Housing Office, CAB
- Counselling
- Housing
- Housing
- Community Education
- Home Start
- Early Years Centre
- Redcliffe Early Years Centre, Knowle Neighbourhood Nursery
- Housing
- Knowle West Healthy Living Centre, Housing, Ilminster Avenue Nurs.
- Social Services, Counselling
- Social Services
- Social Services, Knowle West Health Association, Hartcliffe Sure Start
Evaluation sheet analysis.

4.25 All 52 returned evaluation sheets that the scheme has received from clients whose cases have been closed were analysed. Each sheet consists of three simple tick box questions with a space for comments on each. Seven sheets were in an earlier, slightly different (comments) format to the rest, and these are dealt with at the end of this section.

Do you think it was useful to have a Parent Link Worker visit?

4.26 Respondents were asked if they thought it was helpful to have a Parent Link Worker visit. Results are clear, with 91% of respondents feeling that the Parent Link Worker visits were helpful ‘a lot’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.27 Where responses were qualified with a comment, one person who responded ‘a little’ stated that ‘I was helped as much as I could be within the scope that PLW offer. I am now getting help from Next Link, so I don’t need help any more’. There were no qualifying comments from the two respondents who responded ‘not at all’.

Of the 41 clients who replied ‘a lot’, 19 (46%) gave qualifying comments with the emphasis on the support and approachability of the Parent Link Worker, having someone to confide in, and lifting emotional well-being. The full list of comments are listed at Appendix B.

Did your Parent Link Worker help you find things that may be useful to you?

4.28 44 (98%) of respondents to this question believed that this was true, which again would seem to be indicative of the Parent Link Workers fulfilling the Scheme aims.

What changed as a result of the Parent Link Worker visits?

4.29 38 (91%) of respondents who replied to the question felt that things ‘changed’ for them because of their Parent Link Worker visit.
4.30 37 respondents qualified their response with comments, and these are listed at Appendix C. Of interest is the number of statements of increased confidence, which has been noted as perhaps an ‘intrinsic’ need of clients although not overtly stated. Also prevalent are the number of comments with regard introduction to groups, contributing to the aim of relieving isolation.

4.31 Respondents were also asked for any general comments. These are listed below and include the general comments of the seven who completed the slightly different evaluation sheet.

- “More info about groups and trips wanted”
- “I would like to say thank you to (name) and parent link scheme for helping me and (name) through some tough times and am glad to know that I can use it again in the future”
- “Make course long(er)”
- “Having a PLW has helped me with many things, not only with my own problems but how to work around them and find other alternatives to dealing with day to day chores and getting into a routine again, which I’ve started to do. I also know that there are other situations or issues I have I can go to the parent link scheme and ask for more help. Many things have started to change and improving day by day”
- “They were really helpful to me and helped me a lot”
- “(Name) was so helpful, understanding, great with (name) and gave me ideas that I thought on and made me use up. Thank you so much for what you have done to help (name) and myself start our lives again”
- “I was also pleased with how they put you with another link worker if your main link worker was out for any reason so you never felt ignored or pushed aside at all”
- “Helpful to get involved with other agencies” e.g. HomeStart
- “(Name) is a great credit to Sure Start. I’m grateful for the time she spent with me and the children”
4.32 The seven respondents who completed the slightly different evaluation sheets all were clear from the beginning about what the Parent Link Worker Scheme could offer, and all six who responded felt they were respected as an individual by the Parent Link Worker. Only one of five respondents felt that there was anything that could have been done better, and that was to have spent more time with the Parent Link Worker.

4.33 In terms of what respondents found helpful about the Parent Link Worker’s involvement with their family, comments revolved around information on groups and the scheme, and giving emotional support. There was one comment from someone who stated they had no children which might call into question the referral process in this instance. Comments are listed.

- “I found it very helpful that they came to the house and spoke about the playgroups that were closest and most convenient. How you were given a map for other play schemes a little further away. Activities which are being planned, how they would go with you until you felt comfortable with going on your own, and other advice and help they were willing to give”
- “Told me all about the scheme”
- “Nothing because I have not got any kids”
- “Gave us a break. Got (name) out of the house. Helps mix with other children. Pleased to get information about Sure Start”
- “To give me support when most needed”
- “Talking through my problems with (name), especially my worries with (name) and the environment she was being brought up in e.g. the untidy house”

**Staffing and costs.**

4.34 The Parent Link Workers and Community Social Worker are involved with both Welcome visits (undertaken by PLWs to all new KWSS members) and work directly related to the Parent Link Scheme. From April 2004 to March 2005 there were 484 people from 218 families seen at Welcome visits at a total cost (including overheads) of £35,580.

4.35 The main thrust of this exercise, however, is the Parent Link Scheme work with families. From April 2004 to March 2005 Parent Link Scheme Workers worked with 205 people from 89 different families. There was a total of 1,960 contacts with these families, meaning that the average person accessed the scheme 9 times per year.
Total cost for this work was £101,469 and this was split as follows:

- Parent Link Staff (70%) £ 58,085
- Community Social Worker £ 22,345
- Deputy programme manager £ 1,237
- Allocation of running costs £ 18,617
- Resources and promotion £  1,185
- Total £101,469

4.36 In terms of unit costs this equates to:

- Per person worked with £ 495 or
- Per family £1,140 or
- Per contact £  52

4.37 A literature search has found no comparators from other Sure Start evaluations, and finding like-for-like service comparators is very difficult.

4.38 It is known, however, that a recent National Sure Start evaluation estimated the unit cost per family for Social Worker and Family Support at £716 per family.

4.39 The Personal Social Services Research Unit at the University of Kent, funded by the Department of Health, has, over the last 12 years, published ‘Unit Costs of Health and Social Care’. As part of this there is a section on ‘Costs of family support services’.

4.40 The costs relating to Outreach work, for example, show:

- A unit cost for 1 Family Support Worker working on Family Activities with 1 family using community resources of £126 per session, per user (the length of the session being 2.5 hours).
- A unit cost for 2 Family Support Workers working on Family Work with 1 family on issues of sexual abuse of £131 per session, per user (the length of session being 1.5 hours).

4.41 Further, there is a section on children’s social worker costs at 2003/2004 with prices of £21 per hour; £32 per hour of client-related work; £52 per hour’s home visit; £100 per child per week.

4.42 Clearly, no direct comparisons should be attempted from the above figures, however it is recommended that the above sources may be good starting points in achieving consistent unit based costing for the future city-wide evaluation of Family Link Work alluded to in paragraph 1.3.
5. Conclusions.

5.1 One of the challenges for Knowle West Sure Start was to build new networks and encourage attendance at groups in the area. This needed to cut across the distinct communities which have arisen from the re-housing origins of residents, to reduce feelings of isolation in the area. This allows parents/carers the opportunity to help themselves. The list of internal and external groups and services referred, and the attendance statistics produced by KWSS, indicate that this has been done successfully.

5.2 The main aims of the Parent Link Scheme perhaps reflect this in terms of the emphasis on promoting Knowle West Sure Start and other services by reaching out to families (often those who are most at need), taking part in community activities and linking parents to support sources and groups. The emotional well being of parents is also acknowledged in terms of offering support via home visiting.

5.3 It is clear from the referral needs, Working Agreements, case objectives and Closing Summaries that the focus of Parent Link Worker activities reflect and meet these aims.

5.4 Success in promoting Knowle West Sure Start as a whole and the Parent Link Scheme in particular is seen in the high percentage (56%) of self referrals to the Parent Link Scheme. Taking into account the traditional reluctance towards groups and services in the area, this indicates that parents have confidence that the Scheme will be of benefit to them, and that the staff are approachable and trustworthy.

5.5 Referrals have also come from at least 10 other sources, indicating that the Scheme is well-known and valued in the community.

5.6 The complexity of some of the cases is perhaps reflected in the range and high number of agencies and groups to which clients are referred, 17 Sure Start groups and over 30 external agencies and services. It also demonstrates the knowledge of the Parent Link Workers and their ability to analyse their clients’ needs and suggest an appropriate course of action. This is backed up by the 70% success rate in cases.

“(PLW) helped me move home and find groups for (child) to enjoy”.

26
5.7 The range of needs of the families involved, and the way that they can evolve as the case progresses (26% of client’s needs changed during the case), suggests that the PLWs have developed a good understanding of the issues facing their clients in the Knowle West area. It also indicates that they have a broad base of expertise in these areas. This is further supported by the range of support given to clients (table 4.22).

“She’s helped us out with ringing Care Direct to try to hurry up our assessment. She also helped us when we had an emergency with the bailiffs at the door, and she postponed them for a week until we made an arrangement to….pay our bill off at £15 per week”.

“(PLW) has helped us have a better relationship with Social Services”.

5.8 Processes seem to be effective and efficient in terms of elements such as the length of time between referral and Working Agreements being reached, the number of cases dealt with within six months (60%), and the high percentage of cases where success has been fully achieved.

5.9 The quality of the service is reflected in the very positive feedback from evaluation sheets from clients, which again seem to reflect an alignment between the service the Scheme offers and its aims.

“Thank you, you’ve helped me get out there and face my problems”.

“I felt it was very helpful because if you needed support or someone to talk to (PLW) was always there for me”.

5.10 The strong relationship that builds up between the PLW and their client is apparent throughout the evaluation. There seems to be a strong degree of trust in the PLW from the client, and this seems to be a key factor to the success of the case and the client’s ability to take control of their situations.

“(PLW) came and got to know me first, before suggesting any groups. This was important for me because it takes me some time before I trust people, because of my experiences”.

“My PLW also tells me about things that she thinks look good for me. She has been really good understanding about my mental health problems”.

“Felt like someone to talk to that understood me”.
Qualitative evidence shows that the Parent Link Scheme has a real and substantial affect on the lives of those involved which would not have happened otherwise.

“She supported me by coming with me to Chillout until I got my confidence up and could carry on going by myself. To be honest if it wasn’t for her going with me I don’t know if I would have gone”.

“We’ve noticed a big difference in our daughter’s development and know what to look for now”.

“Whole life changed and helped me to move on. Relationship between myself and my family has improved 100%”.

Clearly it is important to apply a value judgement to the unit cost of the Scheme. However, this is very difficult due to the lack of information available from other sources. Analysis from KWSS shows that the total average cost of working with a family on the Parent Link Scheme is £1,140.

The only potentially suitable comparator available is the unit costs from the University of Kent: 1 Family Support Worker working with 1 family costs £126 per session. This compares to £52 per session for the Parent Link Scheme. A basis for formulating future comparative costs has been identified.

Links can clearly be made between the work of the Parent Link Scheme and the Sure Start Objectives, especially in terms of Improving Social and Emotional Development and Strengthening Families and Communities.

The Scheme works towards the Every Child Matters Objectives. In particular Enjoy and Achieve (in terms of supporting parents and carers in helping children to enjoy and achieve, via groups and services) and Making a Positive Contribution (children are helped to develop socially and emotionally, particularly through support to parents in difficult situations). The Scheme also helps work towards the Be Healthy objective, and Stay Safe (providing children with a safe environment).
APPENDIX A

CATEGORISATION OF FAMILY NEEDS, CASE OBJECTIVES AND HOW OBJECTIVES MET (IF MET).

Family needs
a) Isolation (link to other support)
b) Parents emotional/mental health issues
c) Children's emotional health/wellbeing
d) Practical issues e.g. garden
e) Conflict in the family
f) Violence
g) Alcohol and Drugs
h) Household budget
i) Housing
j) Parents self esteem/confidence
k) Parents physical health
l) Children’s physical health
m) Managing children's behaviour/parenting skills
n) Linking to other agencies/professional support e.g. doctor
o) Feeling safe

What objectives were set
a) Reduced isolation (linking to other support)
b) Signposting service
c) Linking to other agencies/professional support
d) Enhanced emotional wellbeing
e) Practical issues sorted
f) Feel safer
g) Reduce negative consequences of drugs and alcohol
h) Money management
i) Improved accommodation
j) Identify/support physical health needs
k) Improved parent/child relationship
l) Increased confidence
If objectives met, how

a) Giving information and advice
b) Giving support/emotional back up / reassurance / reminders about appointments
c) Practical support e.g. taking to appointments
d) Crisis support
e) Signposting to other agencies/networking
f) Advocacy e.g. phoning Social Services on behalf of clients
g) Structured programme of e.g. parenting skills
h) Mediation
i) Role modelling/showing
j) Assessing need
k) Signposting to groups, including Sure Start
APPENDIX B

EVALUATION SHEETS COMMENTS

Do you think it was helpful to have a parent link worker visit?

A little
I was helped as much as I could be within the scope that PLW offer. I am now getting help from Next Link, so I don't need help any more.

A lot
I've found it very helpful and supportive
(Name) you are the best. We are very grateful for all your help. We will miss you and the kids will thank you
(name) has been very friendly and very helpful and very supportive to us all
Thank you, you've helped me get out there and face my problems.
She made me feel as if I could tell her anything
(Name) was very helpful and supportive, especially helping me with my emotional problems. She helped me extremely well
Being a foreigner and having just moved to this country it was important for me to know somebody from the local community
(Name) was extremely approachable and down to earth. She was very kind and thoughtful towards me and my children. She often telephoned me without being asked especially when I needed help
(Name) introduced me and (name) to (name) who helps with his speech
I was very depressed and (name) helped me see that she was there to help and make things bearable again
Helpful to have a PLW tell you what's going on
I felt it was very helpful because if you needed support or someone to talk to (name) was always there for me and (name)
(Name) helped me to move forward and focus on new things, to feel more positive.
When I moved to the area I was very depressed and it helped me so much to have someone to talk to and not be judged
It helped tremendously because I didn't know what I was doing sometimes and didn't know how I was getting through the day sometimes
They were very helpful
I have found the parent link excellent. It's been a real support and I will miss (name) a lot
I started to feel happier I had someone to talk to
She helped me sort a lot of problems which I felt too big for just myself
APPENDIX C

EVALUATION SHEETS COMMENTS

What changed as a result of the Parent Link Worker visits?

New start, change to daily life, personal enjoyment, meeting new people.
I am now attending mellow parenting and my parenting skills are getting better.
Started lots of courses, got lots more confidence and lots more independent.
We have started to go to the group. I would never have gone to any of them and
dad going to group as well.
(Name) managed to get us to groups and she was a very good listener. (Name)
ever pressured us to go to groups, she reassured us.
She made me more confident in myself by helping me joining groups. My
children are more happy cause we’re going to groups.
I can now tell people
It’s changed because I was helped to keep appointments and things were
changing for the better at first, but due to personal issues things have gone down
hill.
Felt like someone to talk to that understood me and I had the support I needed
from (name).
Now I have a reference point in the community for any need or advice.
I was happier and I felt I had someone to turn to in a crisis.
Contacted housing and occupied children whilst I attempted my housework.
We were able to go to groups and activities with (name). We would not have
gone out without (name) because we didn't have any confidence. Also practical
help. (Name) has helped us to have a better relationship with Social Services.
(Name) has enjoyed contact with other fathers. (Name) has benefited from
contact with other children at various groups.
(Name) has helped my family and I be successfully re-housed to another part of
Bristol.
With (name) weekly visits she made me giggle and was brilliant with (name) and
brought him books to read which he enjoyed. (Name) and my bond has been
resealed and we are a happy family once again and I'm not so depressed.
Great help with support in going to activities.
Confidence, someone to talk to, help.
Helped me move home and find groups for (name) to enjoy.
Whole life changed and helped me to move. Relationship between my family and
me has improved 100%.
My financial needs, being able to sort out my money problems.
It was nice to have someone to talk to and lots of help. Very grateful to you.
I started going to play groups which I never would of without SS, they really helped and supported me
I found out about things ELC playgroups and other things available to me and (name) as if I wasn't seeing (name) I would not have known about and I've got us out a lot more
I was attending more appointments and being more active
My life changed for the better. (Name) was able to help me find my inner self and now I am back at work and happy, and to (name) I will always be grateful
I never had a breakdown
Because it has solved my homeless situation and now I have a house for me and my family. Also my benefits have changed. The PLW really helped me to achieve a lot
I feel more confident within myself and have got more organised with many things at home and playgroups with the children. I've also been able to talk about certain (things) that have needed to be addressed
Re-housed me
I have regained confidence in myself. I feel happier
It helped me a lot. I went out more because I went to some of the play groups and (name) had children his own age to play with
Feel a lot better in myself
It helped me get a new computer and that if I ever need anything (name) was always there to help me out
Help
She helped me in so many different ways to keep me going and to do what's right for (name) and myself
Just having her to talk to. She gave me different ways to understand things and different methods to try
APPENDIX D.

Sure Start Voices: Jim and Debra.

Jim and Debra are both in their 20’s and live at home with their 15 month old daughter Kelly.

“We first heard of Sure Start through our Health Visitor, who told us about it and felt that it might be good because Debra was suffering from post natal depression at the time and wasn’t going out much. I am quite shy and don’t mix much either, so we were getting on each others nerves a bit, being around all day. We felt it would be a good idea to help Debra get out of the house, and felt anything which could help with her depression would be a good idea”.

“Our Health Visitor referred us for a Parent Link Worker, and before she came we were a bit nervous and on edge about meeting a new person, and not sure what it would be like, but the PLW and her boss (Community Social Worker) came round and put us at ease. She is really good at talking, she loves Kelly and is a good laugh as well. She’s helped us out with ringing Care Direct to try to hurry up our assessment. She also helped us when we had an emergency with the bailiffs at the door, and she postponed them for a week, until we had made an arrangement with Bristol City Council to pay our council tax bill off at £15 a week”.

“Our PLW suggested which groups we could go to and she coaxed us along to groups - she went with Debra about 4 or 5 times until she got used to it. Debra has been going to bumps and babies since then – regularly every week except when our daughter has been ill. Through bumps and babies we got to know the Midwife who is really helpful and always around for support and advice, and we started going to the baby massage group as well”.

“Because of Debra’s disability she finds it difficult to carry Kelly, and when we went to try out Gymtots our PLW was really helpful in helping to lift her up to the apparatus”.

“When Debra had a miscarriage she was worried about going back to Bumps and Babies, feeling that someone might say something insensitive, so she talked to our PLW about it, and stayed away for a few weeks. She had a word with the staff, and that made it easier for Debra to go back again”.

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“We’ve never had a bad experience of Sure Start, and it was great that even though our PLW had stopped visiting, she still came round when we had a crisis about Debra’s miscarriage. She also went out of her way to chat to us last week in the street, even though she’s stopped working with us. We’ve now been passed us on to HomeStart, and we have a new volunteer who we met last week for the first time”.

“If Sure Start wasn’t here it would make a huge, huge difference; we would probably not go out anywhere except maybe to the park or shopping, and would end up driving each other mad. It’s helped give our daughter a good start socially and she’s much more confident in the group – she used to just sit on Debra’s lap. She laughs and screams when they sing at groups and she tries to sing and clap at home; she does the actions as well. She loves her stories as well. It’s something which Jim never had as a child as he grew up in a small village and didn’t really have contact with other children until he went to school. We’ve noticed a big difference in our daughter’s development and know what to look for now”.

“Debra feels much more confident in herself, although starting a new group is always difficult and the same nerves kick in each time. She is managing her depression with medication and with going out to groups. She used to find it difficult to go out because of her disability, and has found it really good meeting someone else with medical problems, so now they help each other, and know they’re not alone. She has made new friends and talks to lots of other mums now”.

“Since being involved in Sure Start, I have started to think about my future, and about setting up a business from home fixing computers. It’s been really nice for me to have a break each week, and I think that when I go to the dads group again it will give Debra a break as well. We would recommend Sure Stat to anyone”.
APPENDIX E.

Sure Start Voices: Sharon.

Sharon and her husband live with their two children aged 4 and 2. Sharon’s parents also live with them. Sharon’s husband works full time and she combines part time work with looking after her children.

“I first heard about Sure Start when I had just had my second daughter. I was suffering a bit from Post Natal Depression, worrying about the responsibility of caring for two young children, being tied to the house and having to cope with all the changes in routines, etc. My health visitor told me about Sure Start and referred me for a Parent Link Worker. She supported me by coming with me to Chillout until I got my confidence up and could carry on going by myself. To be honest if it wasn’t for her going with me I don’t know if I would have gone”.

“I didn’t really know what to expect, I had been to another parent and toddler group once before but it was really horrible because the parents who were there had got to know each other over a long time and had their own group already. I felt like an outsider and people didn’t really speak to me. I had that in the back of my mind, and hoped that Sure Start wouldn’t be cliquey like that, but it wasn’t – it was totally the opposite. Both staff and other parents made an effort to talk to me, and because I got chatting to other parents I got to know about the other groups”.

“I started going to the KEEP 1’s group, and got really interested in going to a group regularly with my daughter. I’ve since moved up through the 2’s group and on to the 3’s group with her, and I’ve done the training to become a paid KEEP assistant. I’ve done other training as well, in Makaton and Child Protection and did a level 2 in Childcare course, which I finished this year, and passed my exam. I’m just waiting for my certificates. I’ve also done my OCN level 1 and 2 – in ‘your child and preschool’ which I don’t think I would have done if it wasn’t for Sure Start – I would probably just have let my life go by, sort of thing”.

“Last year I had a bit of depression because I had a lot going on at home, and I found out I could have another Parent Link Worker, which I didn’t realise before would be possible. It was good for me that I helped myself and filled out my own referral form: it’s like I’ve moved on and can see if I’ve got a problem and ask for help with it. So a new Parent Link Worker started visiting, and she got me to have counselling sessions with Womankind at the Healthy Living Centre, which went on for a year and helped a lot. Another thing that she introduced me to was these relaxation therapies at the Healthy Living Centre”.

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"Before I came to Sure Start I was feeling depressed, and I didn't know some
days how I was going to go on from one hour to the next. I almost felt choked by
the responsibility of having to look after my two small children, and the lack of
control over things. But now I've got myself motivated to do things for myself and
my life's branched out a bit. I've done loads of things I wouldn't have done
otherwise. Sure Start has given me a lot of support when I'm pulling my hair out
to know how to manage the children. I know that I can still pop in, even though I
haven't got a Parent Link Worker any more, and get advice about things”.

“If Sure Start wasn't here, I would now have the confidence to go and find
something else to do in its place, which is a major change and a major
achievement for me".
Sure Start Voices: Mary.

Mary moved to Knowle West last year and is living with her 14 month old daughter, who she cares for full time. She separated from her husband a few months ago.

“I found out about Sure Start when I was living in Hartcliffe with my husband and expecting my daughter. My Health Visitor told me about it and referred me to a Family Link Worker to help me because of my mental health problems. She was brilliant. When I moved to Knowle West, it was because I had just got to the top of the Housing Priority list and had come up for allocation for a house. By this time my husband had left me, so I moved on my own”.

“My old Parent Link Worker arranged for a Housing Support Officer to help me with the move, and also arranged for a referral to the Parent Link Scheme at Knowle West Sure Start. That was brilliant because (the KWSS Parent Link Worker) came round and started visiting before the Housing Support Officer stopped visiting. Also, the Hartcliffe Parent Link Worker carried on ringing me – it was nice that she made sure I was settled and that the support was there when I needed it”.

“The KWSS Parent Link Worker came and got to know me first, before suggesting any groups. This was important for me because it takes me some time before I trust people, because of my experiences. She was really helpful taking me to groups, because I get really tired. I started going to Bumps and Babies, and have now moved up to the 1’s group which I will be doing next term. I found that when I went to the first session last week, I actually knew everyone in the room; some of them from Bumps and Babies, and one from Mellow Parenting. It helps because the children are all the same age”.

“My Parent Link Worker also tells me about things that she thinks look good for me as well. She has been really good understanding about my mental health problems and is going to arrange for one of the staff to buddy up with me on a trip to make sure I don’t overdo it on the day. She thinks that I should speak to a doctor about my health, but I haven’t got there yet: she just gives me advice and doesn’t force me to do anything”.

“The Parent Link Worker has also been really good at helping me with my post. Sometimes I ring her just for a chat, or if I get really stressed out she will come
and help me with sorting things out. She’s been really good at motivating me to do things”.

“I think that without Sure Start I would have found it really difficult and would have become really isolated. I think I would have taken a few steps back, and I’m always worried that I might have a ‘shut down’. Then I would have needed the support of the Crisis team for my mental health, and I don’t know what would happen with my daughter if things get really bad. We’re trying to prevent her going into respite care or foster care, and so far we’re doing really good – it’s been a lifeline”.

“My daughter is now doing well and is learning to interact with other kids. I have got a lot more confidence about being a mum and I allow her to do a lot more than I probably would have allowed her to do and not get too stressed out about it”.

“I would definitely recommend Sure Start to everyone. I think I can describe it as encouraging and inclusive. Some people think that it is just for people who need help, but it’s not – it’s for everyone. I wouldn’t do without it!”.