



Life in 'The Roundway'

**Parents and Carers Share Their Experiences of
Raising Children in North Tottenham**

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
	1.1 Understanding families' needs through a survey	4
	1.2 Method	5
	1.3 Findings	6
2	Survey Population	7
3	Demographic Characteristics of Families	8
	3.1 Age of parents and carers	9
	3.2 Ethnicity	10
	3.3 Languages spoken	11
	3.4 Family structure	11
4	Income	13
	4.1 Weekly household income	13
	4.2 Source of income	13
5	Employment	
	5.1 Household employment	15
	5.2 Employment and ethnicity	15
	5.3 Parents in paid employment	16
	5.4 Work and government tax credits	17
	5.5 Working mothers	17
	5.7 Childcare and employment	18
	5.8 Desire for work	18
6	Training	19
7	Health	20
	7.1 Children's health	20
	7.2 Mothers' health	20
	7.3 Mothers' health and ethnicity	20
	7.4 Smoking	22
	7.5 Smoking and ethnicity	22
	7.6 Breastfeeding	23
	7.7 Breastfeeding and age	23
	7.8 Length of time spent breastfeeding	23
	7.9 Access to an interpreter at health centres	24
8	Childcare and Educational Services for Mothers and Children	25
	8.1 Drop-ins and family centres	25
	8.2 Nursery centres and educational services	26

8.4	Parents' overall satisfaction with early learning services	27
8.5	Creche use & childminders	27
8.6	Childcare for leisure	28
8.7	Library use	28
9	Parks in The Roundway	29
9.1	Outdoor play spaces	29
9.2	Family satisfaction with park facilities	29
10	Understanding the Needs of Families Living in The Roundway	32
11	Sure Start and The Roundway	34
12	Concluding Remarks	35
12.1	Summary of key findings	35
12.2	Next steps	37
13	References	38

1 Introduction

1.1 Understanding families' needs through a satisfaction survey

The Roundway Sure Start programme is now in the process of developing services for all families with young children. These services include drop-ins, training courses and community outreach for ethnic groups where English is not the first language. Before the programme prioritises funding for these services, it is crucial that they consult parents and carers to ensure that provision is needed and effective. In order to do this, the programme must establish a 'start-point' understanding of the perceptions of families living in the area.

Guidance from the National Sure Start Unit recommends that start-point information be "reliable and detailed."¹ Not only must it provide solid information for service development, this baseline must enable the programme to monitor its progress towards the three-year Service Delivery Agreement Target that states that "75% of families report an improvement in the quality of services providing family support." A parents' satisfaction survey conducted with at least 30% of the families living within the area's boundaries is one of the best sources of this baseline information.

Programmes also need to demonstrate that they understand their community in terms of "what is effective, for whom, in what circumstances and why."² If done in a rigorous manner, information gained through a user satisfaction survey can provide a solid evidence base for designing, implementing and delivering services. It can also improve each programme's understanding of what is not known, therefore providing greater insight into where further evaluation is needed.

Given the requirements outlined above, this research was commissioned to accomplish the following:

- provide a detailed understanding of the community through demographic data
- find out what families think of the services they use
- reach parents who are difficult to reach through conventional means, such as the telephone or post
- involve parents in conducting the survey, to insure that more families are included
- publicise Sure Start, both in terms of its ethos and its services

¹ *Sure Start (2002). Sixth Wave Guidance.*

² *Sure Start (2002). Sixth Wave Guidance*

- develop a method of using consultation that will inform Partnership Board decisions on the design and delivery of services.

Information collected through this survey includes:

- demographic characteristics of the families living in the area, including employment status, ethnicity and number of children per household
- current service use
- current satisfaction with these services
- new services identified through family need
- start-point information on smoking and breastfeeding
- families' knowledge of Sure Start and their willingness to participate in the local programme's management.

1.2 Method

There are a variety of ways to conduct a parent satisfaction survey, but the Sure Start National Unit strongly recommends that parent volunteers from the local area be involved in this work. In addition, the Unit suggests that this work be done face-to-face, through door knocking and recruitment at community venues. Through such an exercise, the programme can obtain the views of local parents, while at the same time inform families about Sure Start services. In the words of Sure Start guidance "parents may respond best, especially at the outset, to people who they already know and trust."³

For these reasons, The Roundway Partnership Board commissioned Dr. Kirsten Asmussen, a research fellow from the University of Surrey, to oversee the survey and to train parent volunteers from the area to conduct it. Parents were invited to participate in three 2.5-hour workshops that covered the basics of market research in a community setting. The Open College Network recently approved this programme for accreditation and the details of it (including the recruitment of participants and survey administration) will be provided in a separate report.

Six mothers living in the area participated in the training workshops where they learned how to conduct a 91-item market research questionnaire. The survey considers families' views in the areas of education, childcare, recreation, work, training and health. It also includes a section that covers

³ *Sure Start (2002). Sixth Wave Guidance.*

demographic information, including the parents' age, ethnicity, and income. A copy of this questionnaire can be made available upon request.

One hundred and seventy-two parents participated in the survey over a nine week period in Spring 2004. The parent interviewers represented a number of minority ethnic groups, which allowed the survey to be conducted in several languages including Arabic, French, Punjabi, Urdu and Slovakian. Additional support was provided to help interviewers conduct the survey in Turkish and Somali.

1.3 Findings

The results of the survey are presented in the main body of this report. It is believed that the sample is representative of the area's general population, and the data is rigorous enough for planning purposes. It is also believed that this information provides the programme with a concrete understanding of the needs and priorities that Roundway families have for their community.

These findings show that The Roundway is a highly ethnically diverse community. Unfortunately, it is also a very poor community. Government benefits are the primary source of income for over half of the families, and single parents manage 38% of the households. Despite these challenges, parents living in this community have well-articulated priorities for their children. In particular, increased subsidised day-nursery availability and improved park facilities are especially important to these families. Improvements made in these areas are likely to enhance the daily lives of young children and parents living in The Roundway and increase parents' satisfaction. This report highlights where additional improvements can be made and concludes with recommendations for taking these findings forward.

2 Survey Population

In total, 172 families with children under the age of four living within The Roundway catchment boundaries participated in the survey. According to figures provided by the RICHS system in the Haringey Primary Care Trust (PCT), there are approximately 900 children living in this area. The PCT system also reports a ratio of 1.71 children under four per family. Dividing 900 children by this number suggests that there are 526 families with under-fours living in the area. The National Sure Start Unit recommends that programmes reach 30% of their population through a user satisfaction survey. This survey reached 172 families or 33% of the area's population with under-fours, thus surpassing the goal set by the National Unit.

Of these respondents, 159 were parents. Seven of these were fathers and 152 were mothers. Five childminders, five grandparents, two aunts, one au-pair and one friend were also present during the interviews.

Figure 1 provides a full map of The Roundway that shows the distribution of survey participants across the region.

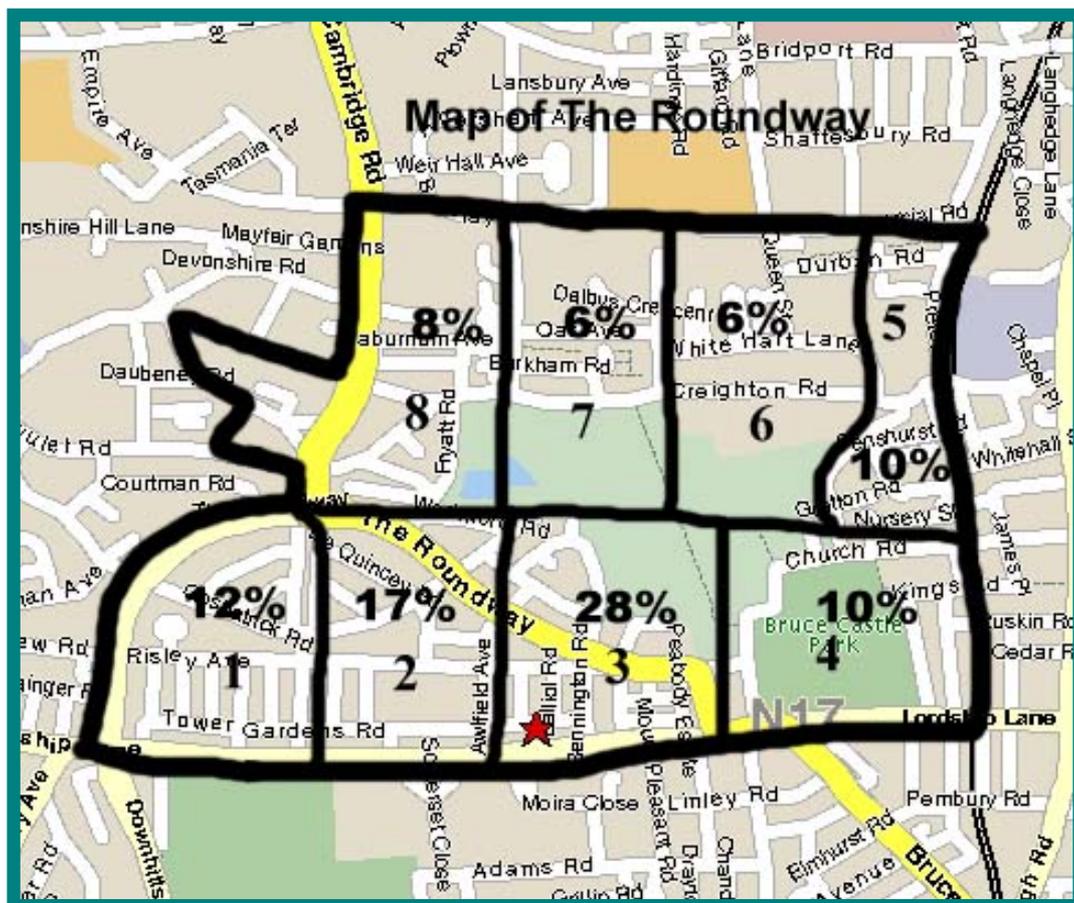


Figure 1 Geographic summary of the distribution of survey participants based on their address

The area is divided into eight zones and the percentage of participants from each zone is provided.

This summary shows that a high number of respondents (28%) live in the south-central region of the area. This is where the Peabody Estate is, a residential zone consisting of 200 properties that are especially well suited to families raising young children. While it is likely that this area is more densely populated with under-fours, it is not possible to fully verify this finding without comparing it with other demographic data.

It should also be noted that there is a sharp geographic north/south divide in the area, due to the large cemetery in its centre. The percentages of the families interviewed show that those living north of the cemetery comprise only 30% of our sample. This discrepancy occurred despite co-ordinated efforts to canvass this area, especially the neighbourhood surrounding the Selby Centre and the Weymark Estate (Zones 6 & 7). Without detailed information from the PCT or the census, it is difficult to verify whether this is an accurate representation of the geographic distribution of families with young children. Because of this, the report will draw attention to differences between the northern and southern population if they exist.

2 Demographic Characteristics of Families

3.1 Age of Parents and Carers

Table 3.1 provides the distribution of the parents and carers' age across the northern and southern regions of the area.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Parents and Carers' Age Across Geographic Regions				
Age Range	Southern	Northern	Total	% Total
20 & Under	2	1	3	1.7
21 – 30	39	24	63	37
31 – 40	65	26	91	53
41 – 50	9	4	13	7.6
51 – 60	0	1	1	.6
Missing		1	1	.6
Total	115	57	172	100%
% Total	67%	33%	100%	

This distribution shows that 90% of all parents and carers were between the ages of 21 and 40, with over 50% being between 31 and 40. When dividing the area into its northern and southern regions, we see that caregivers tended to be older in the southern region. Forty-four percent of all respondents in the northern region were 30 or under, as opposed to 36% of those in the southern region. Three teenage mothers participated in the study.

3.2 Ethnicity

Table 3.2 shows the ethnic breakdown of the respondents along with census data for the White Hart Lane and Northumberland Park wards.⁴ This table shows ethnic distribution of respondents participating in this study is very similar to the profile reported by the Northumberland Park ward (on the eastern side of the area), showing higher percentages of people of Black African origin.

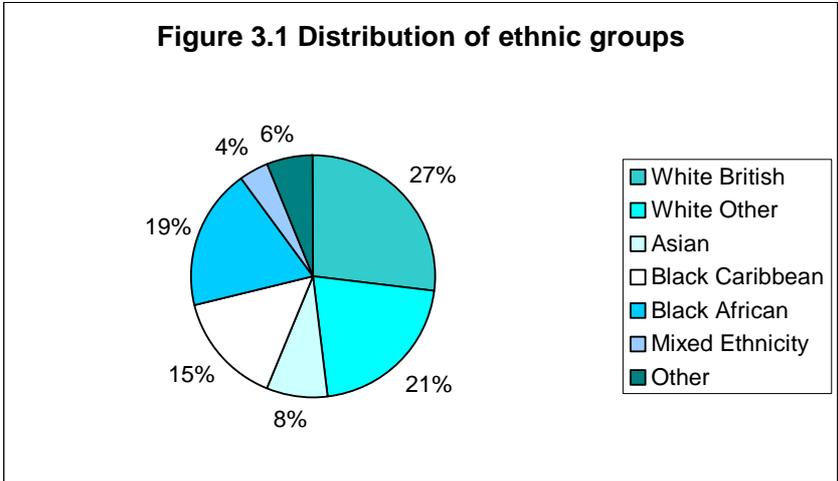
Data available from the census does not break down the 'White' category into British and White Other. However, parents responding to this survey were asked to make this distinction and it is noteworthy that families falling into the 'British' category make up only 27% of The Roundway sample. A further 21% of the white population represent various other non-British cultures, including people of Turkish, Kosovan, Czech and Slovakian origins.

⁴ Source: 2001 Census, Online Neighbourhood Statistics

Table 3.2 Distribution of ethnic groups (in percent) for this sample in comparison with census data provided for White Hard Lane and Northumberland Park Wards			
Ethnic Group	Survey Sample	White Hart Lane	Northumberland Park
White	48	60	48
British	27	*	*
Irish	3.5	4.1	3.7
White other	21	*	*
Asian	8.1	5.7	6.3
Indian	1.7	2.0	2.2
Bangladeshi	3.5	1.3	1.0
Pakistani	1.7	.8	1.1
Other	1.7	1.6	.6
Black	36	26	38
Caribbean	15	12	18
African	19	12	17
Other	2	2.1	2.5
Chinese or other	0	2.9	3.0
Mixed	3.5	*	*
White & Black	1.7	*	*
White & Asian	.6	*	*
Other mixed	1.2	*	*
Missing	1.2	*	*

*Data not available from the census

The distribution of ethnic groups reported here remains consistent across the geographic zones and age categories. Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of the seven primary ethnic groups represented in this sample. For the sake of simplicity, analyses presented in this report involving ethnicity will focus primarily on the top four groups, since the number of subjects within the smaller ethnic groups is not sufficient to make proper comparisons.



3.3 Languages spoken

Fifty-four percent of the sample reported that English was their first language. Forty-eight percent reported that they spoke a language other than English at home. Table 3.3 provides the frequency and percentages of the languages spoken in the area. From this, it can be seen that 28 languages were represented in this sample, thus underscoring the high level of cultural diversity in The Roundway. The Turkish culture had the highest representation, followed by those who spoke Somali, Arabic and Bengali. Twenty-six percent of the remaining population spoke an additional 24 languages.

Table 3.3 Distribution of languages spoken in the region		
Language	Frequency	Percent
English only	89	52
Turkish	13	7.6
Somali	10	5.8
Arabic	8	4.7
Bengali	7	4.1
French	5	2.9
Russian/Polish	4	2.3
TWI/Ghana	4	2.3
Spanish	3	1.7
Abanian	3	1.7
Punjabi	3	1.7
Czech	2	1.2
Urdu	2	1.2
Portuguese	2	1.2
Lugandan	2	1.2
Swahili/Kiswahili	2	1.2
Slovakian	1	.6
Italian	1	.6
Serbian	1	.6
German	1	.6
Kurdish	1	.6
Hindi	1	.6
Pakistani	1	.6
Nigerian	1	.6
Tagalog	1	.6
Tamil	1	.6
Visayan	1	.6
Yoruba	1	.6
Missing	1	.6

3.4 Family structure

Sixty-two percent of the parents said that they raised their child with a partner. This figure includes five percent who reported the presence of additional

adults residing in their household. Three carers stated that they were grandparents with sole responsibility for a child. The remaining 38% of the population reported they were lone parents, although four percent of this group reported living with other adults in the household. This figure is slightly lower than what is provided by the census.

Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of two-parent and lone parent households across the geographic zones. This shows a much higher percentage of two-parent households in the western zones, particularly in Zones 1, 2 and 8. The highest percentage of lone parent households is in Zone 7, although this figure should be interpreted with caution, since only 10 families were interviewed in this area.

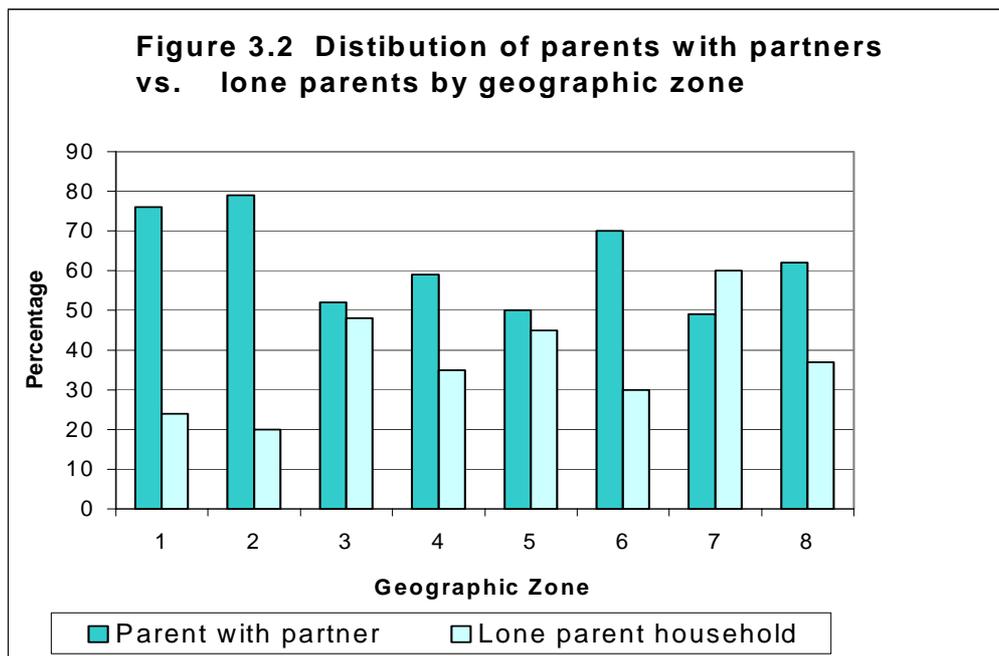
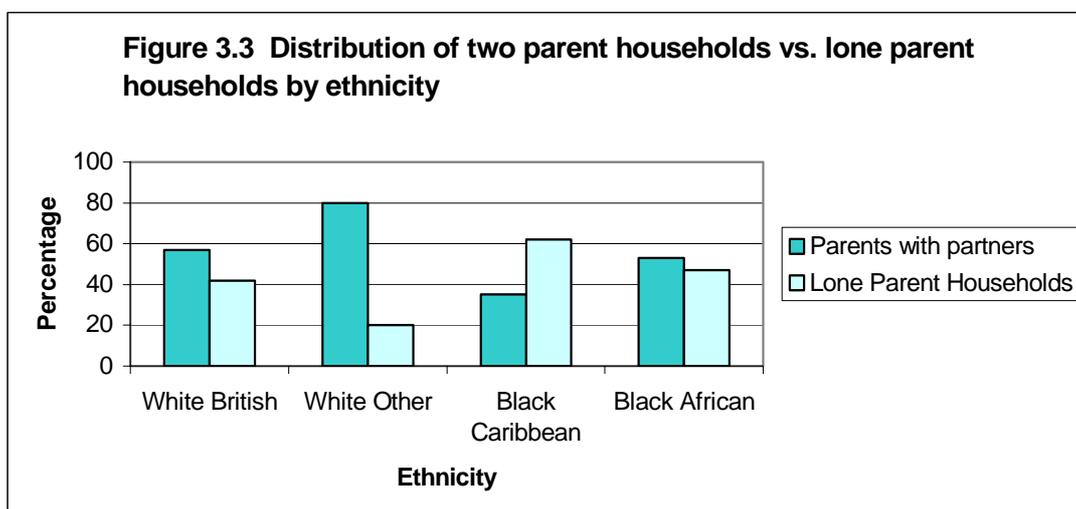


Figure 3.3 provides the distribution of two parent families versus lone parent households for the four highest represented ethnic groups. This distribution suggests that Black Caribbean and African parents are more likely to report raising their children independently.



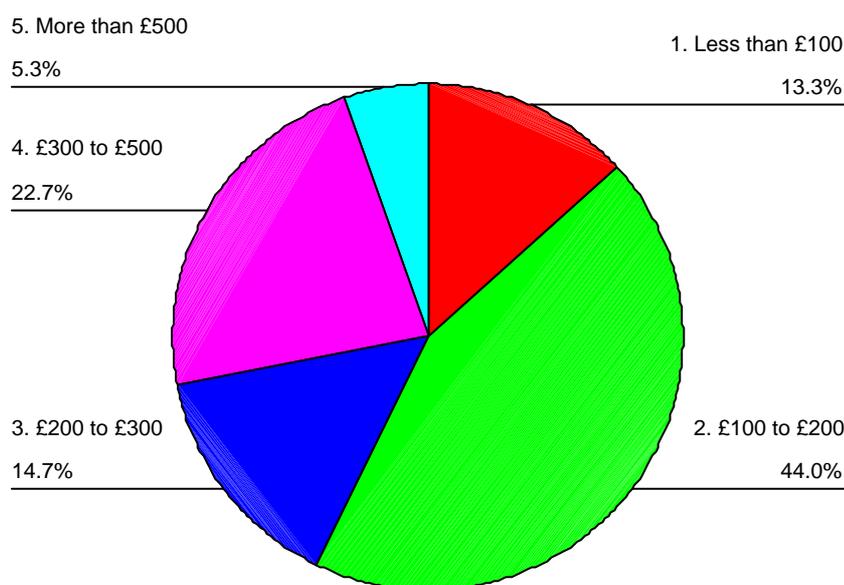
4 Income

4.1 Weekly household income

Only 74 (42%) of the families provided the details of their weekly household income. Four did not answer this question, and an additional 54% said that they did not know. Clearly, this is a sensitive issue and analyses considering the demographics of those stating 'they did not know' did not reveal any common characteristics for this group. ***Given the high amount of missing information, the data gathered from this question should be interpreted with caution, as it is highly likely that it is not fully representative of all of the families participating in the survey.***

Figure 4.1 provides the distribution of weekly income for the families who responded to this question.

Figure 4.1 Distribution of weekly income



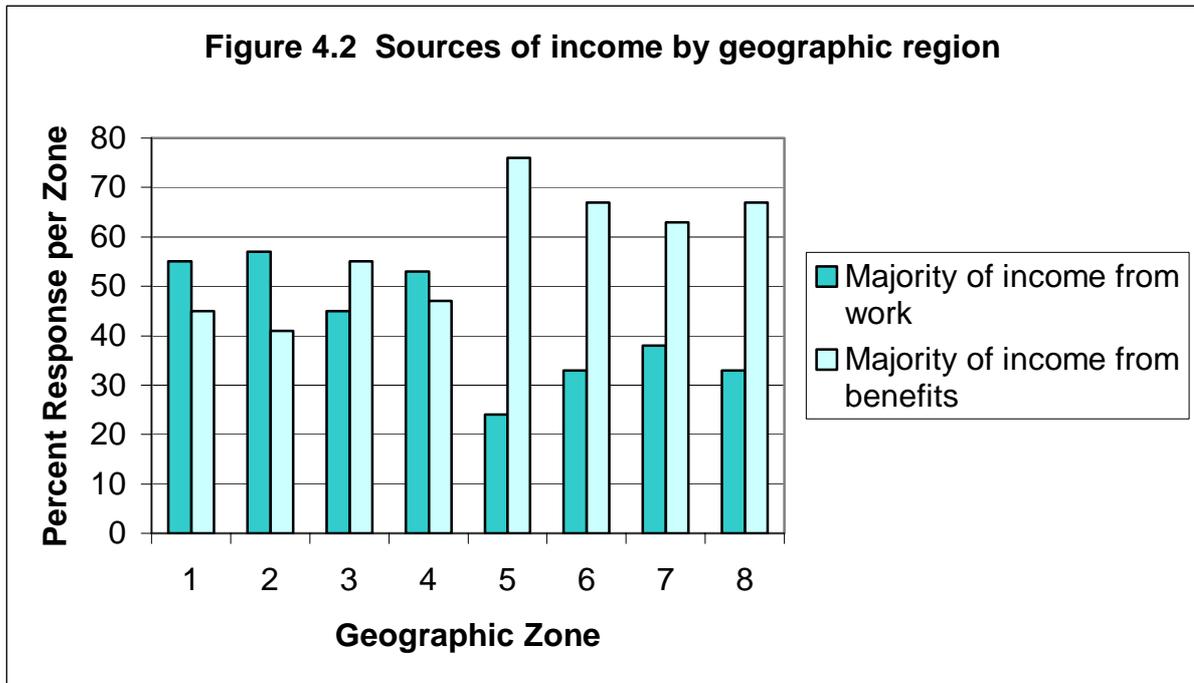
Of those who answered this question, 33 (57% of those who answered the question and 19% of the entire sample) stated that they had a weekly household income of less than £200. The demographic distribution of these individuals (ethnicity, age and geographic zone) is similar to that of the general population.

4.2 Source of income

Because less than half of the families gave their income details, it is believed that household income is better understood through consideration of the

respondents' sources of income. One hundred and sixty-five respondents provided these details. Forty-four percent reported that the majority of their income came from paid work and 52% said that it came mostly from benefits.

Figure 4.2 provides the distribution of families' responses to this question by geographic zone.



This graph suggests that benefits are the primary source of income for significantly more families living in the northern region of the area than those living in the southern.

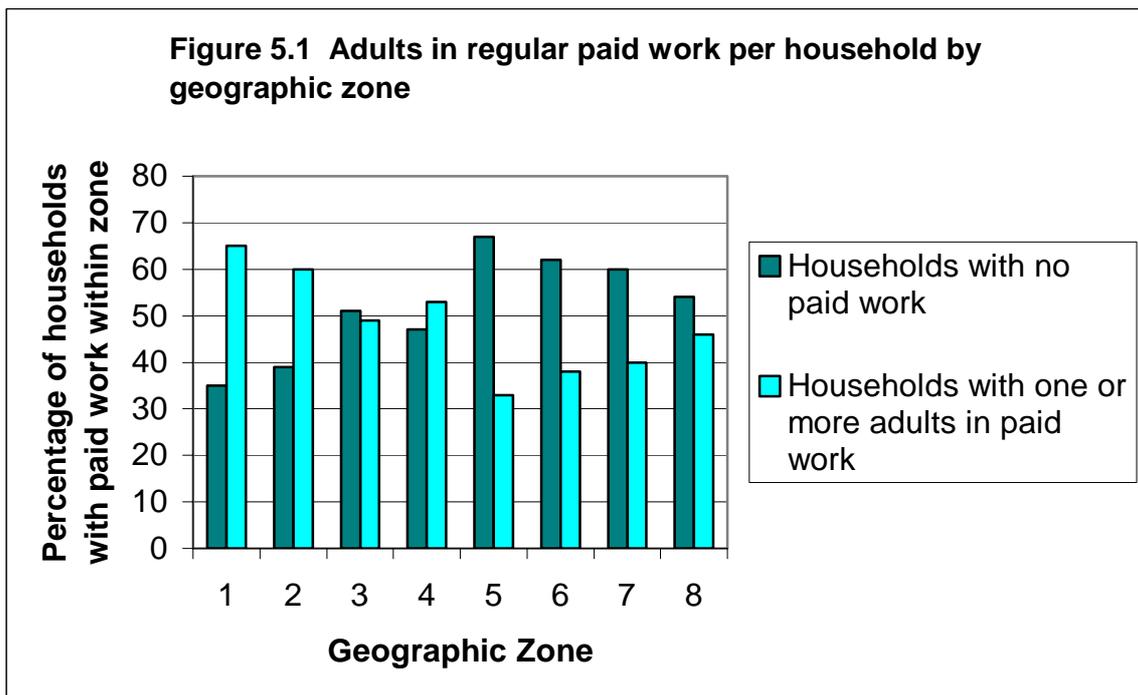
The ratio of work versus benefits observed for the entire sample (44% work, 52% benefits) is similar across the four primary ethnic groups represented in this sample, with the exception of the Black African community. For this group, 34% of the families reported work as their primary source of income, with 66% stating that they received the majority of their earnings from benefits.

When source of income was broken down by family status, the vast majority of lone parent households (87%) reported that benefits were their main source of income. Only eight lone parents said that they supported their family through a job. This is a sharp contrast to duo-parent households, where 67% reported that their primary earnings came from work.

5 Employment

5.1 Household employment

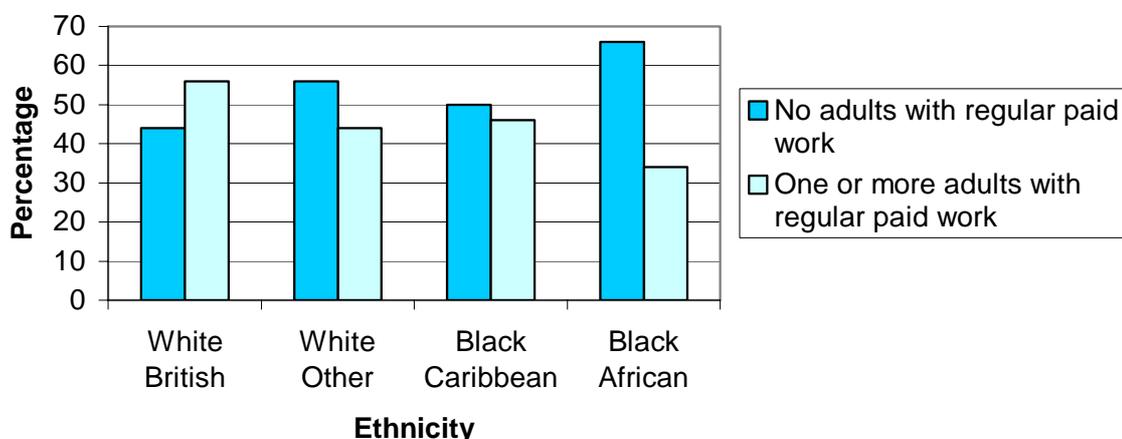
Forty-seven percent of the respondents reported that no one in their family had a regular paying job. Figure 5.1 provides information on household employment per geographic zone. This suggests that a greater percentage of families in the southern zones have one or more adults working. The findings for Zones 6 and 7 should be interpreted with caution, however, as there were only eight families reporting this information in Zone 6 and ten families in Zone 7.



5.2 Employment and ethnicity

Figure 5.2 gives the breakdown of household employment across the four primary ethnic groups observed in this sample. These findings suggest that White British families reported the highest rate of family members with regular paid jobs (56%) and Black African reported the lowest (34%).

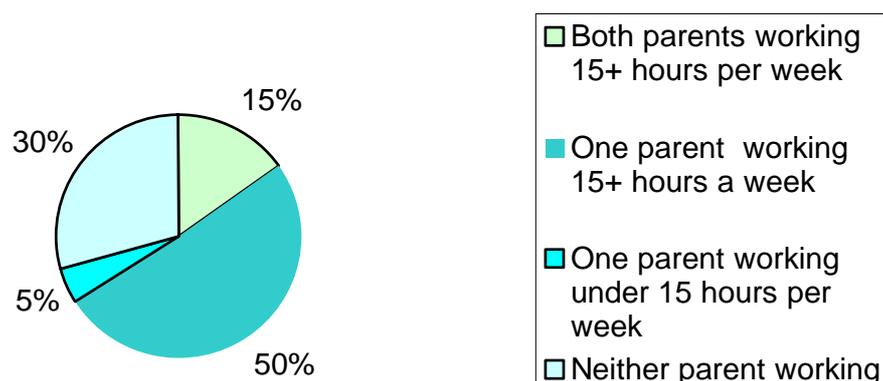
Figure 5.2 Parents with regular paid jobs by ethnicity



5.3 Parents in paid employment

There were 105 duo-parent families who provided information on their employment status. Figure 5.3 provides the breakdown of employment in these households. Thirty percent of these families reported that neither parent worked. Only three women with unemployed spouses reported that they were working. Two of these women worked full-time and one worked less than 15 hours.

Figure 5.3 Parents in paid employment in duo-parent households



When employment was considered in lone parent households, nine respondents (14%) reported having a regular job. Only one of these individuals said that she knew her income and it was less than £200 per week.

5.4 Work and government tax credits

The survey considered whether families were taking advantage of their tax credits and 161 families responded to this question. Most families reported that they had heard about at least one of these credits, but 15 parents said that they had not heard of any them.

Working Families' Tax Credit. The first government benefit considered was the Working Families' Tax Credit that is available for families on low income with dependent children. Only families with at least one member in employment for over 16 hours a week can apply for this. In this sample, 35 individuals (20%) reported to have applied for it, all of who had met the criteria in terms of working hours. Forty-one families (27%) stated that they had not heard of it. At least eleven of these individuals had one family member who worked over 16 hours per week and therefore may have qualified for this benefit. When considering this category by ethnicity, White non-British parents were the least likely to have heard of it (42% of the group).

Childcare Tax Credit. The second government benefit considered was the Childcare Tax Credit. Families needing help with childcare costs can apply for this credit. One-third of this sample stated that they applied for it. Eleven percent said that it was not applicable and 26% said that they had never heard of it. An additional quarter stated that they had heard of it, but had not applied. In terms of ethnicity, once again, White non-British families were the least likely to have heard of it, with 47% stating that they did not know what it was.

New Deal for Lone Parents. As the title implies, this benefit is available to lone parents in households with dependent children. Sixty-six percent of the families stated that it did not apply to them. This number (113) includes sixteen lone parents. In fact, only four lone parents reported having applied for this benefit. Twenty lone parents had said that they had never heard of it, and sixteen said that they had heard of it, but had not applied.

5.5 Working mothers

One hundred and sixty-two mothers provided information about their employment. Eighty-one percent (132) stated that they did not work. According to these figures, less than 20% of the mothers in this sample worked, although this figure may be somewhat low, since working mothers may have been more difficult to reach through the survey. Of the 30 who stated that they worked, 19 reported that they worked over 16 hours per week and only eight said that they worked full time.

One-third of all women with jobs said that their childcare needs affected their working hours. Three women said that school hours influenced when they could work, whereas others stated that they chose to work at home so they could be available for their child. As one mother explained her reasons for working from home, "I realise now that I must put my kids first. I accept that I cannot develop a career while they are young."

5.6 Childcare and employment

Twenty-six mothers reported using childcare, since four were able to care for their children as they worked from home. Half of these individuals relied on relatives. The majority of this support came from spouses (12 out of 13), but mothers also relied on grand parents (8), aunts (1) and older siblings (1). Only ten working mothers in this survey used organised childcare. Six used a childminder, four had a space in a full day nursery and three had help from a friend or neighbour.

5.7 Desire for work

Of the 132 mothers who did not work, 70% said that they would like to have a paid job. This same group stated that their reasons for not working were linked to childcare responsibilities. Five percent of these mothers said that they would like to start work immediately, and 73% said they would like to do so within the next five years. Approximately one fifth were not sure when they wanted to return to work. Seventy-three percent of those who wanted work said they would prefer a part-time job.

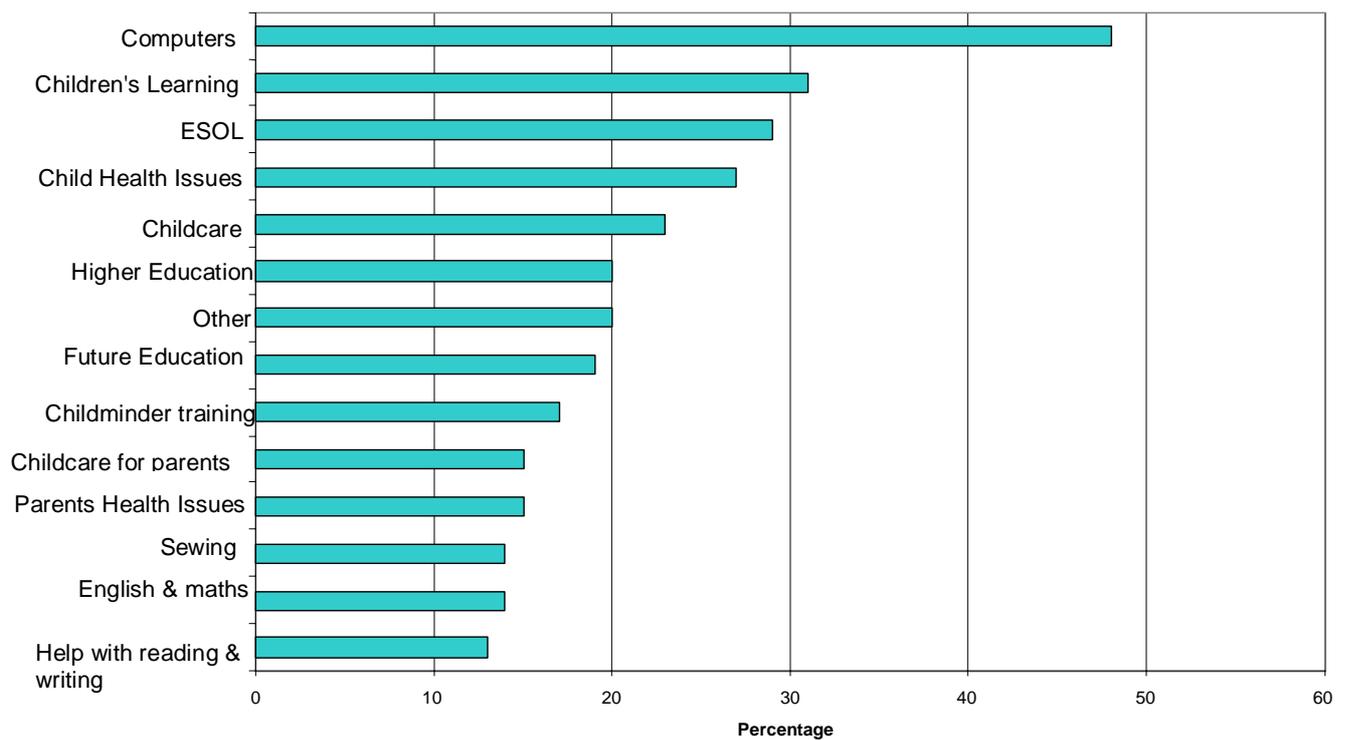
Not all parents were sure about what they wanted to do. Five said that they would do anything that came along, but the rest listed specific jobs. The most popular choice was employment in childcare, with 18 mothers stating that they would like to work as a childminder, a nursery nurse or in a creche.

6 Training

One hundred and sixty parents responded to the question of whether they would like additional training. This number includes 33 mothers who were already pursuing training. Figure 6.1 summarises the parents' choices when they were asked to choose from a list. Please note that total percentages will be over 100 because parents could select more than one option.

This figure shows that computer skills was by far the favourite option at 48%. This was followed by courses in supporting children's learning (31%), ESOL courses (29%) and Child Health Issues (27%). Childcare training for employment was chosen by 23% of the parents. The rest of the course options were fairly evenly distributed at 20% or lower. Parents also made a number of interesting suggestions in the 'Other' category, including hairdressing and first aid.

Figure 6.1 Parents choices for training options



7 Health

7.1 Children's Health

Ninety-seven percent of the families reported that their child under four was registered GP. Families were also asked to state whether any child under four required special health tests or treatment. Nine families (5%) said yes. Four said that their children required speech and language therapy, one said that they went to a hospital consultant for hearing problems, one said that their child received support for sensory integration/ADHD issues. Two said that they received extensive medical support for a child with cerebral palsy.

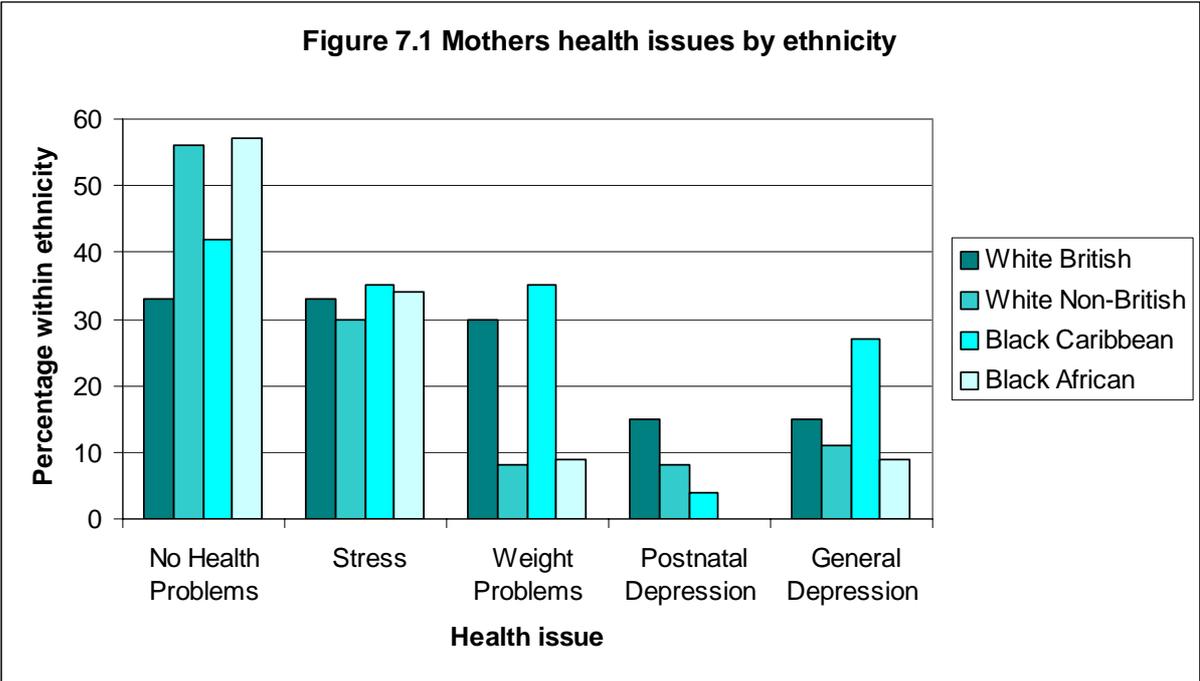
7.2 Mothers' health

One hundred and sixty-four mothers provided information about their health. Ninety-three (57%) of these mothers said that they had at least one health problem since having children. Table 7.1 provides a summary of health problems mothers reported since the birth of their first child. Percentages will be greater than 100 since the mothers could provide more than one answer.

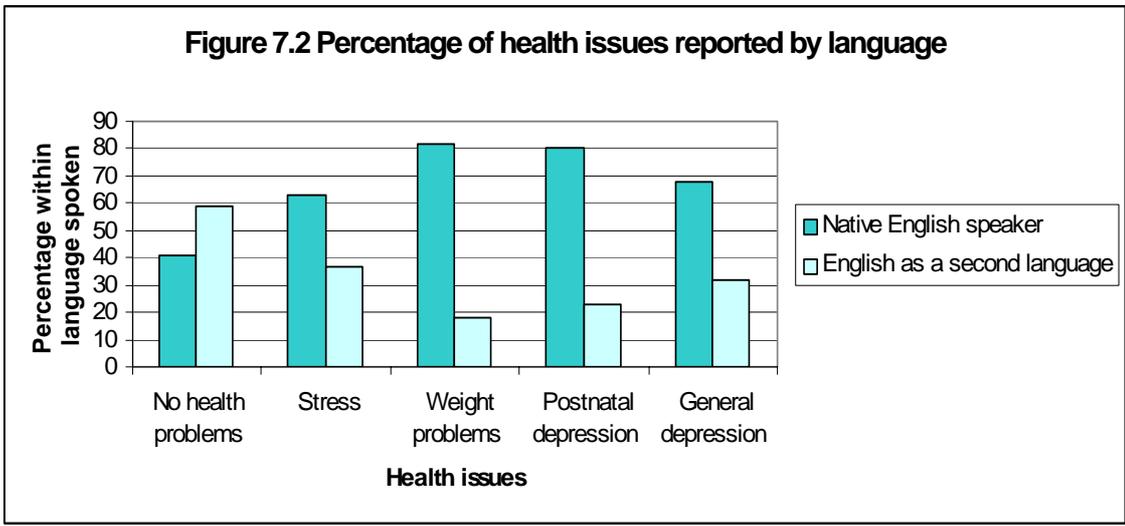
Health condition	Frequency	Percent
No health problems	90	55
Stress	55	34
Weight problems	37	23
General Depression	22	13
Post natal depression	13	8
Other	5	3

7.3 Mother's health and ethnicity

Figure 7.1 considers health conditions by ethnic group. These findings suggest differences between these groups in the rate they report health problems. British mothers were more likely, in general, to report the existence of a health problem. In addition, there were more reported cases of postnatal depression among British women than in any other ethnic group (there were no Black African women reporting problems in this category). Black Caribbean mothers, however, were more likely to report having general depression. Approximately one-third of the mothers in each ethnic group reported that they suffered from stress. White-British and Black Caribbean women also were more likely to report that they had weight problems. Interestingly, Black African mothers were less likely to seek help for these problems. Of the 18 Black African women reporting health problems, only one said that she sought help, and this was to ask for advice on weight loss and depression from her aunt.



In order to understand how these ethnic differences might be related to language, comparisons were made between whether or not the respondent spoke English as the first language. Figure 7.2 provides the percentage of health issues reported by language spoken (English/not English). This comparison suggests that mothers who spoke English as their first language were more likely to report a health issue across all categories. The difference between the two groups was particularly strong in the categories of weight problems and postnatal depression. This suggests that mothers who are culturally British are more likely to report health problems. Further investigation into this issue may provide some valuable insight into differences in how ethnic groups utilise health services and medical advice.



7.4 Smoking

One hundred and sixty-nine of the respondents provided information about their smoking habits. Thirty-one percent of the participants (54) were presently smoking. Of the remaining 69%, 10 (6%) said that they had smoked in the last year, seven said that they had been a non-smoker for over five years, and the remaining 57% said that they had never smoked.

Fifty-one of the 54 smokers were mothers. This places the rate of smoking for mothers at 31% for the entire sample. This rate is higher than the national average reported for women of 26%.⁵

Of the 54 mothers who smoked, 18 (35%) reported smoking throughout their pregnancy. Two said they did not know if they did or not during this time and five did not answer the question. The national rate of smoking during pregnancy is 26% of women in lower socio-economic groups.⁶ The rate of 11 - 15% observed in this sample is slightly lower. While 26 (51%) reported giving up smoking during pregnancy, only three were able to give it up permanently.

7.5 Smoking and ethnicity

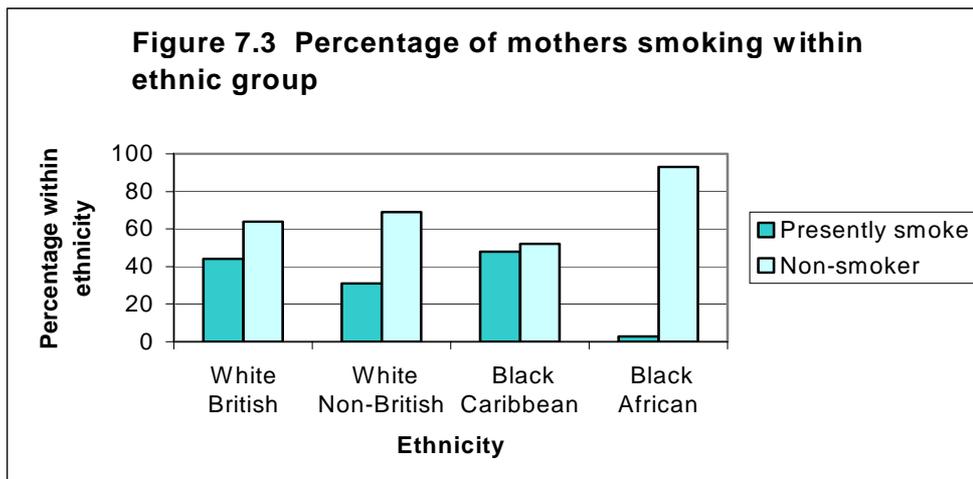


Figure 7.3 provides the ratio of smokers to non-smokers by ethnicity, and there are clear ethnic differences. This incidence of smoking is the highest amongst Black Caribbean women at 48%. Forty-one percent of all White British mothers reported smoking, as opposed to 31% of White non-British mothers. Smoking was very low (3%) among Black African women, thus bringing the rate for the entire sample down to 31%. While this rate (31%) is identical to what is reported nationally for women from lower socio-economic groups,⁷ the rates that are observed in this sample for White British (41%) and Black Caribbean mothers (48%) are particularly high.

⁵ Source: London Health Observatory 2004

⁶ Source: Infant feeding 2000: a summary report. The Department of Health.

⁷ Source: London Health Observatory 2004

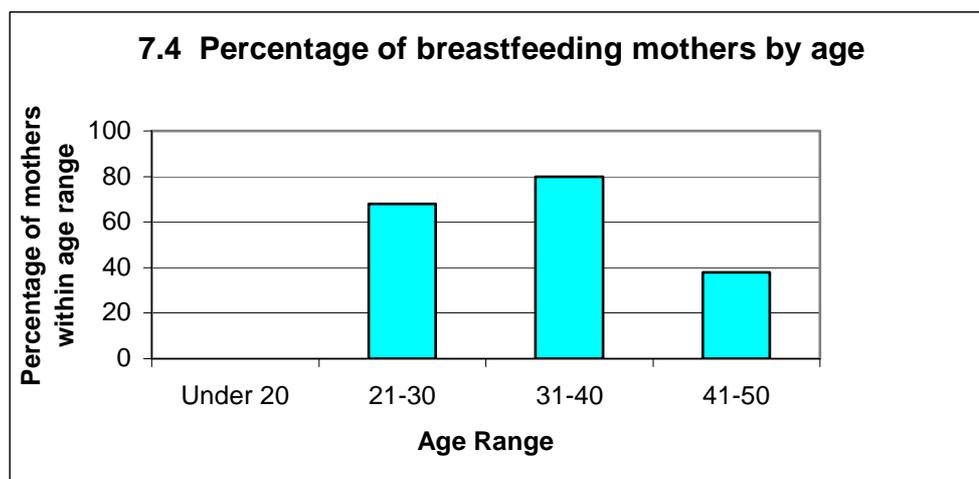
7.6 Breastfeeding

Sixty-three percent of the mothers said that they breastfed their child. This rate remains the same for all ethnic groups observed in this sample, except for Black African mothers and Asian mothers. Ninety-three percent of Black African mothers breastfed their babies, as did 100% of all Asian (Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian) women. There were no significant differences in the rates of breastfeeding between lone mothers and mothers with partners.

These figures are somewhat lower than the national average of 69% recorded for the UK in 2000.⁸ However, the rate of 63% observed in this sample is higher than the nationally recorded rate of 57% for lower socio-economic groups. In addition, this rate is higher than what has been observed for lone mothers in disadvantaged communities that reports breast feeding at 54%.

7.7 Breastfeeding and age

Figure 7.4 provides the rate of breastfeeding by age group. This suggests that older mothers are more likely to breastfeed their babies, a finding similar to what has been observed nationally. Note that no teenage mothers breastfed their babies.



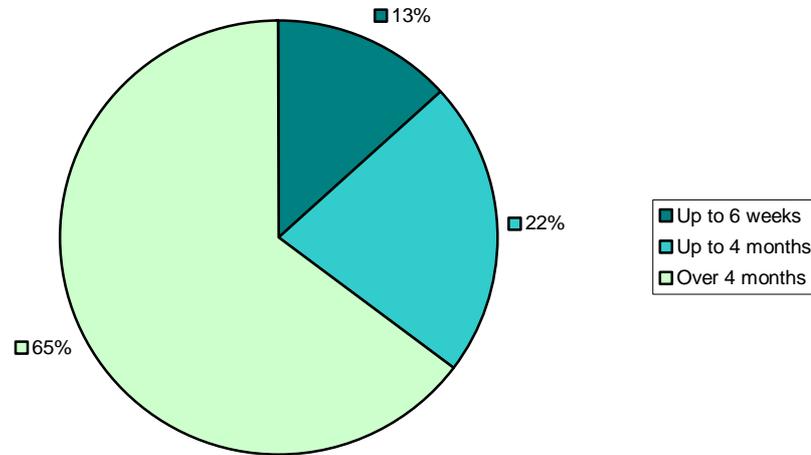
7.8 Length of time spent breastfeeding

Figure 7.5 looks at how long mothers breastfed, showing that 65% of the mothers breastfed their children for four months or longer. This means that 44% of the entire sample breastfed for over four months. This also suggests a drop out rate of 35% which is lower than the national rate of 44%.

For mothers who breastfed for longer than four months, the length of time ranged from five months to three years, with an average length of 11 months. The most frequent length of time (mode) was six months.

⁸ Source: *Infant feeding 2000: a summary report. The Department of Health.*

7.5 Length of time spent by mothers breastfeeding

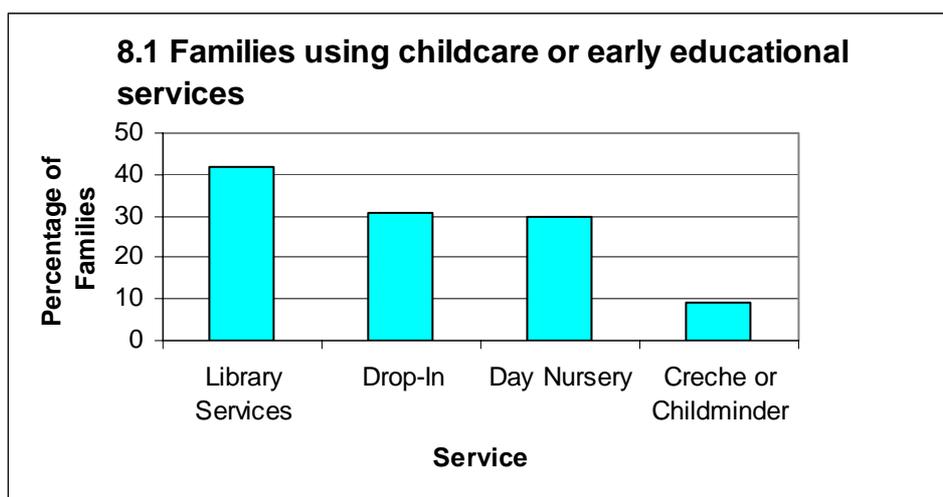


7.9 Access to an interpreter at health centres and hospitals

Twenty-six parents said that they needed the help of an interpreter when at the GP or hospital. Fourteen said that they never had difficulties accessing one, but 12 said that they occasionally had problems. Four of these individuals were Turkish, three were Somali, two were Spanish, one was Albanian, one was Italian and one needed Arabic translation.

8 Childcare and Educational Services for Mothers and Children

This section considers parents' use and satisfaction with the childcare and educational services available within The Roundway catchment. Figure 8.1 provides an overview of the families using childcare and early learning services in the area.



When considering educational and play services, 59% (101) of the parents said that their child either attended a drop-in, nursery or childcare service. Forty percent reported that they did not take their children under four anywhere.

8.1 Drop-ins and family centres

Parents and carers were asked whether they took their children between 0 and 3 to any childcare or educational services and stayed with them. The majority of parents (62%) did not take their children under four to any services where they could stay with them. Table 8.1 provides a summary of the responses.

Table 8.1 Services for children where parents and carers stay with them		
Service	Frequency	Percent
Drop-in	54	31
Family Centre	2	1
Other	10	6
Nowhere	106	62
Total	172	100

Services listed for the 'other' category included play-groups that childminders attended, children's libraries (out of area), the Play Station at Wood Green, the Tottenham Sports Centre and Sure Start sponsored activities (other than drop-ins) in other areas. None of these services were within The Roundway catchment boundaries.

Less than one-third of the parents attended a drop-in. Only two of these were within The Roundway boundaries: Pembury House and Rowland Hill. Nine parents (5%) attended Pembury House and five (3%) went to Rowland Hill. The remaining 40 parents were willing to travel outside of the area for drop-ins, especially those sponsored by the Noel Park and West Green and Chestnuts Sure Start programmes.

8.2 Nursery centres and educational services

Table 8.2 provides an overview of children attending Roundway nursery services where parents can leave them. Forty-eight of these children (28%) are attending a service.

Table 8.2 Attendance at nursery centres and educational services		
Service	Frequency	Percent
Half-day nursery	12	7
Full day nursery care	7	4
Nursery care in primary school	13	8
Playgroup/preschool	5	3
Other	11	6
Nowhere	121	70
Total	169	98*

*Total is under 100% due to missing responses

The 121 respondents who said that they took their children nowhere represented 44 children who were two years and 21 children who were three years, suggesting that there are 65 children in this population who could benefit from nursery care are not receiving it.

When parents were asked why their child did not attend a nursery, 70% said that their child was too young. Because of this, the analysis was redone for families with three-year-olds. Ten of these parents still felt that their child was too young and eight provided 'other' as an answer, although the specific reason for 'other' was not given.

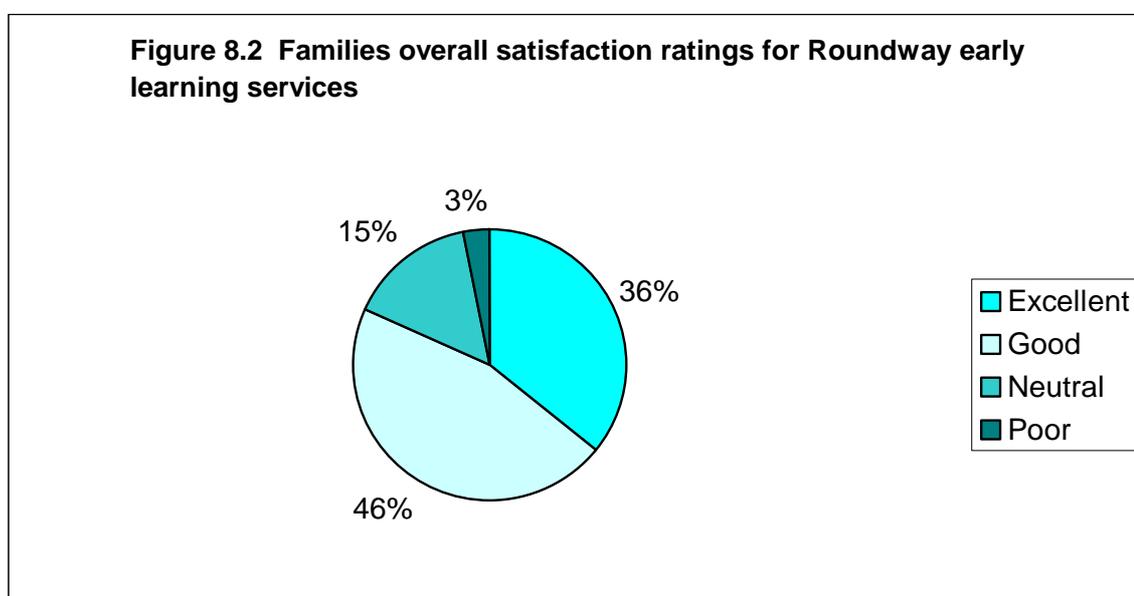
Forty-five parents provided information about where their child or children attended nursery. Because it is not possible to verify when two or more siblings attended the same school, it is likely that these figures represent more than 45 children. The schools and the approximate rates of attendance are provided in Table 8.3. These numbers may include the five who reported attending the Rowland Hill drop-in, but who may also have older children

attending the nursery. Unfortunately, parents who chose 'other' meant schools outside of the area, but did not say where.

Table 8.3 Nursery schools attended		
Service	Frequency	Percent
Rowland Hill Centre for Childhood	17	38
Risley Avenue Nursery	13	29
Lancasterian	6	13
Devonshire Hill School	1	2
Other	8	18
Total	45	100

8.3 Parents' overall satisfaction with early learning services

By combining all of the ratings across the seven categories for the drop-ins and day nurseries, an overall level of satisfaction can be calculated. These results are provided in Figure 8.2. Clearly, Roundway families are fairly satisfied with their nursery schools and it will not be possible to improve these scores by 75% in three years time. A significant percentage of the children are not attending nursery or any educational service, however. Therefore, improvement in nursery provision should also be understood in terms of an increase in the percentage of families with young children using a nursery or a drop-in, rather than an increase in satisfaction with the services that already exist.



8.4 Creche use & childminders

Very few parents left their under-four child in a creche. Only four said they used the creche at the Selby Centre, and one used the Middlesex University Creche. Parents' satisfaction with the Selby Centre was fairly positive, as the service received the following mean scores: convenience of location (4.2),

repair and cleanliness of building (3.75), opening times (3.25), learning and play opportunities (4), convenience of location (4.25), outdoor play spaces (4).

Very few parents used childminders. Eleven reported using childminders, nine of whom were registered with the council.

8.5 Childcare for leisure

Parents were not asked to say whether they used any childcare services for leisure. However, they did list the relatives that they used. Forty-five percent of the respondents said that they relied on their partner. An additional 23% were able to use a grandparent, 12% used uncles and aunts and five percent said that an older brother or sister was available to help out. Forty-five percent said that they did not use any childcare for leisure. When this percentage was considered by ethnic group, British mothers were more likely to leave their child with a relative (70%) in comparison to 47% of the White Non-British population, 58% of the Black Caribbean mothers and 53% of Black African mothers. Lone parents were not less likely to rely on relatives than parents with partners – as approximately 50% of both groups reported using relatives when they went out for leisure.

8.6 Library use

Forty-two percent of the parents reported checking out books for their children under four. Seventeen percent said that they checked out audio tapes, 23% said that they checked out videos and 23% said that they checked out toys. There were no differences in borrowing behaviour between parents who spoke English as their first language and those who did not.

Fifty-two parents (30%) said that their child was a member of a library. Sixteen said that they belonged to Wood Green Library, eight said that they attended Coombecraft, eight went to Marcus Garvey, two went to Tottenham Green, three borrowed books from their child's school and three utilised the Sure Start Toy Bus. None of these services are within The Roundway boundaries.

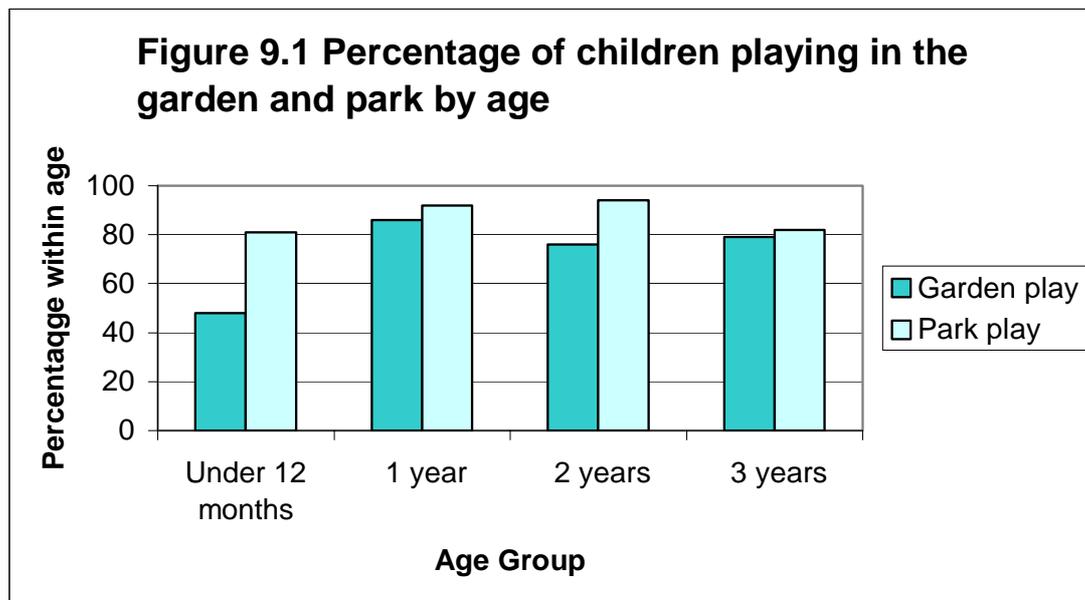
Of those who did not have a child who belonged to a library (120), 66% said that their child was too young. This was perhaps not a good question, as many parents added that they borrowed books for their children in their own name. Other reasons for not belonging to a library included not being able to understand the language (5 respondents), not knowing about any (5), difficult to get to (5), inconvenient opening times (4), conflicted with work (2), preferred to do other things (8), and 'other' (18). The reasons most often provided for 'other' included already having enough books or the ability to borrow books from the child's school.

9 Parks in The Roundway

9.1 Outdoor play spaces

When parents were asked where their children played, 87% said they played in the park and 72% said that they played in the garden (parents could list more than one venue). These figures reflect the fact that most of the terraced houses have small gardens and Bruce Castle Park is convenient for many families living in the area. Other play venues mentioned by parents include the playground (11%), a housing estate (3%), the balcony (2%) and nowhere (4%). When asked to provide reasons why their child played nowhere, most parents said that their child was too little, but two said that the lack of toilet facilities in the park kept them from going.

Figure 9.1 provides a summary of where play takes place by children's age (percentages equal more than 100, since more than one response was possible).



This figure shows that outdoor play increases until children are two, and then stabilises. In addition, the difference between garden play and park play is greater for children under 12 months. This finding suggests that very young children depend more on park facilities (especially swings) for their play opportunities.

9.2 Family satisfaction with park facilities in The Roundway

There are two large parks within The Roundway boundaries: Bruce Castle Park and Tower Gardens Park. The Bruce Castle Park is a large green space on the south east side of the catchment. Bruce Castle Museum is the focal point, but it also contains large open green spaces, lawn bowling facilities and a playground with a paddling pool. Tower Gardens Park is on the south-west

side of the catchment. It is much smaller than Bruce Castle, containing only a playground and a recreation hut.

Families were asked to provide their opinion about these two facilities with regard to their convenience, repair and cleanliness, and safety. Twenty-three families (13%) said that they never used Bruce Castle Park and so they could not comment. Sixty-five percent of the families said that they never went to Tower Gardens Park. Nineteen families (11%) said that they used neither. Twelve of these families lived on the north side of the catchment (Zones 6, 7 and 8) and therefore had no close access to these facilities.

Table 9.1 provides a summary of families' satisfaction for both of these parks. One hundred and forty-eight families gave their opinion on Bruce Castle Park, and 59 provided ratings for Tower Gardens Park.

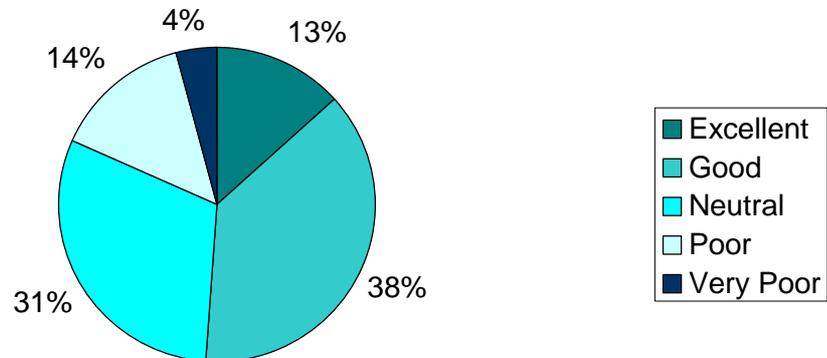
Table 9.1 Parents' satisfaction ratings for Bruce Castle Park and Tower Gardens Park				
	Bruce Castle Park (n = 148)		Tower Gardens Park (n = 59)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Convenience of Location	4.18*		4.17*	
Excellent (5)	49	33	24	41
Good (4)	81	55	24	41
Neutral (3)	14	10	8	14
Poor (2)	3	2	3	5
Very Poor (1)	1	.7	0	0
Repair and cleanliness of facilities	3.17*		3.15*	
Excellent	3	2	3	5
Good	49	33	22	37
Neutral	63	43	19	32
Poor	29	20	11	19
Very Poor	2	1.4	1	7
Safety and Security	2.94*		2.85*	
Excellent	2	1.4	1	2
Good	38	26	17	29
Neutral	65	44	18	31
Poor	31	21	13	22
Very Poor	10	7	9	15

*Average score for the category

These findings suggest that families are somewhat unhappy with the repair and cleanliness of the facilities of both parks, as well as safety and security.

Figure 9.2 summarises the overall parent satisfaction ratings across all categories, suggesting that there is significant room for improvement.

Figure 9.2 Families overall satisfaction with park services



Parents provided a number of specific suggestions for ways in which the parks could be improved. These fell into thirteen separate categories and are listed in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2 Parents' suggestions for park improvements	
Suggestions	No.
Better toilet facilities with a space for changing babies	33
Better equipment for children under five (some mentioned a soft tarmac and wooden equipment specifically)	25
Dogs should not be allowed in parks	15
Fun activities for children, especially during holidays	15
Separate area for babies with swings	13
Better security	12
Paddling pool at Bruce Castle should be fenced off	9
Older children should be kept separate from younger ones	8
Parks should have a café	8
Parks need a visible warden	7
A soft play room (like at Wood Green)	5
Parks should be cleaner	5
More Benches	4
Better lighting	4
Park should be locked at night	3

Clearly toilets and better equipment for children under five would be greatly appreciated.

10 Understanding the Needs of Roundway Families

Parents were asked to look at a list of services that they do not already use to select options for new services. Parents could choose more than one service and their choices are listed on Table 10.1.

Table 10.1 Services that parents do not already use that they would like to see in The Roundway community			
	No	%	Rank
Day nursery (subsidised) for children under 5, open 8 am to 6 pm	84	49	1
A safe, clean outdoor play on your estate or within pram pushing distance	85	49	2
Playgroup for children aged 2 – 4, a.m. or p.m.	70	41	3
Toy library	64	37	
Drop-in to stay with child and meet other parents	62	36	4
Creche to leave child for up to 4 hours	54	31	5
Loan of child safety equipment for home	19	11	
None of these	12	7	
Other	6	4	

These choices suggest that improved outdoor facilities and a subsidised day nursery (with flexible opening times) are the most wanted services in the area. Families who chose the 'other' options did not always say what they wanted, but one parent suggested a soft room in Bruce Castle Park, and another requested childminding courses.

To understand these choices further, parents were asked to pick which service was the most important to them. The number under 'Rank' provides the order of the choices (1 = highest choice). A day nursery was the number one option, very closely followed by better outdoor play areas, each respectively getting 26% and 24% of the vote. A playgroup came in third (13%) followed by a drop-in (12%) and creche services (9%). The rest of the services received less than 10% of the vote collectively. Please note that while 64% of the parents said that they would use a toy library if it were available, less than 5% ranked it as a priority.

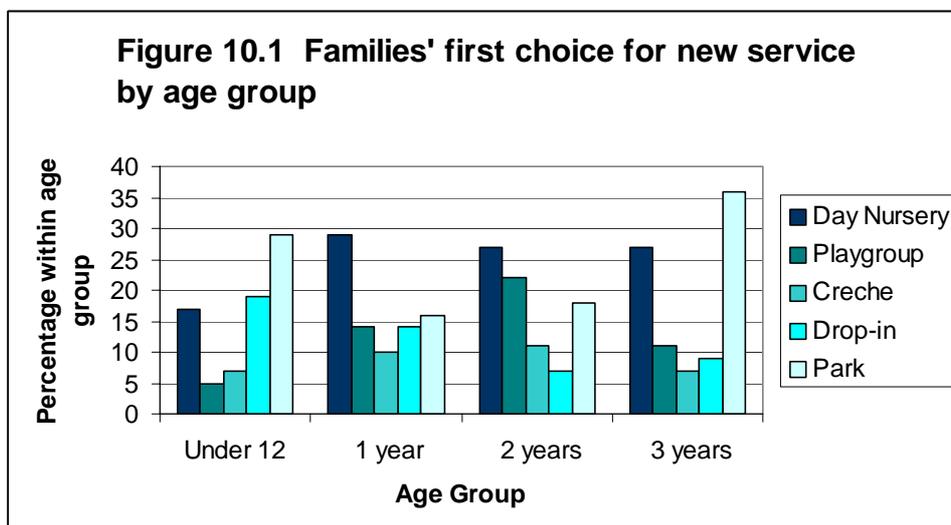
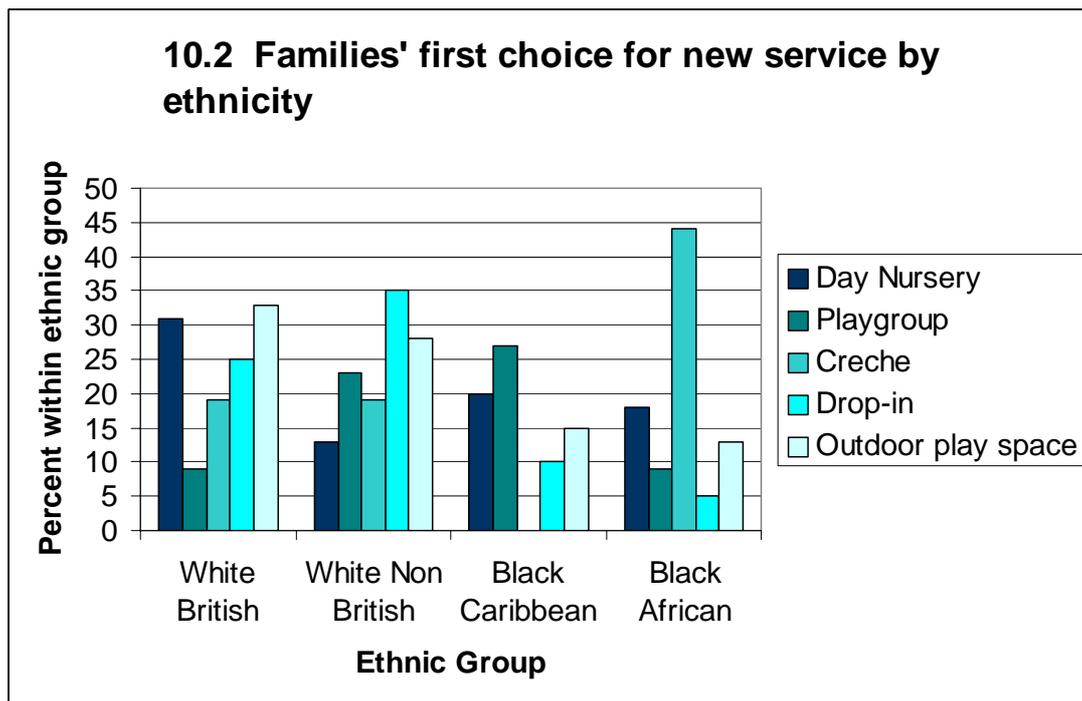


Figure 10.1 considers whether parents' choices were related to the child's age. This comparison suggests that a clean and safe outdoor space is especially important to parents with babies and three-year olds. Nursery provision and children's groups are more important for families of children age one and two.

Parents' first choice for a new service also appeared to be related to their ethnic affiliation. Table 10.2 provides a summary of families' choice across the four primary ethnic groups observed in this sample.



This information suggests that The Roundway may want to tailor services towards the needs of specific age and ethnic groups. For example, park improvements targeted towards babies appear to be especially needed as do playgroups for two-year-olds. When considering the ethnic data, day nurseries and better outdoor spaces appear to be more important to White British parents. This may be because families were asked to choose from services they were not currently using, and findings reported previously show that White mothers were already accessing playgroups and drop-ins. However, drop-ins were still important for mothers in both white groups when compared to the choices of black women.

Black African women appeared less interested in improved outdoor play spaces and more interested in creche facilities. Interestingly however, no Black Caribbean parent selected creche facilities as their first choice for a new service. Comparisons were also made between the first choice of parents living with partners and lone parents, but no distinctive differences were found.

11 Sure Start and The Roundway

This section considers what families living in the area already know about Sure Start and their interest in further involvement. Families were asked whether they heard of the programme, whether they would like more information about it, and whether they would be willing to volunteer their time in managing the programme or running services.

Seventy percent of this sample (121), families said that they had already heard about Sure Start before the time of the survey. This means that the survey reached 51 new families who were not aware of the initiative and its potential benefit for their family. Sixty-five percent of the families also said that they would like more information about the programme, although 20% said that they did not want any more information and 14% were not sure.

Over half of the sample (54%) said that they did not want to volunteer their time in the planning or delivery of the programme. However, 35% were already members and 30% (which includes some of those who are already members) said that they wanted to become more involved through volunteer work.

12 Concluding remarks

12.1 Summary of key findings

These survey results provide The Roundway Sure Start programme with a detailed understanding of the needs and desires of families raising young children in the area. They portray a community of individuals with diverse backgrounds who nevertheless have very similar wants when it comes to the well-being of their children. From this information, several key messages emerge that shed insight into where Sure Start can add value to the lives of these individuals as the programme develops.

Clearly, these results are biased towards mothers living in the area, as perhaps they should be, given that they often have the most information regarding the health and activities of their children. In other respects, however, this sample is fairly representative of the entire population, as the findings are consistent with ward data provided by the census. The programme may also want to consider whether these results provide an accurate geographic representation of the area, since significantly more parents from the southern regions participated in the study than did families living in the northern zones. The programme may also want to plan additional consultations to better understand the needs and perceptions of fathers.

There is extreme ethnic diversity in the area. Approximately half The Roundway's families do not speak English as a first language and these individuals do not represent any one cohesive cultural group. After English, Turkish was the most commonly spoken language, but this was only for 8% of the sample. Over one quarter of respondents spoke 24 different languages representing many nations in Africa and Eastern Europe. The programme will need to consider carefully how services can be implemented so that all of these cultures have equal access to them.

These findings also underscore the fact that this is a disadvantaged area. Lone parent households make up 38% of the sample, and 52% of all families earn most of their income through benefits. In addition, many of these families are not fully aware of all of their benefit entitlements. The programme may want to consider strategies for informing these individuals, especially single parents.

Most of the mothers (70%) appear eager to work and many would like additional training. The ability for mothers to participate in work and training is related to the availability of childcare in the area, and this is very low. Only five mothers reported using a creche and eleven use a childminder. The programme may want to take these findings forward in considering the childcare needs of those who work.

By and large, the families represented in this sample are healthy, with over half reporting no health problems. Significant percentages said that they suffered from stress and weight loss, however, and there were differences between ethnic groups as to how these problems were reported. The

programme may want investigate how different cultures access and utilise the health services in the area to better understand any inequalities. The programme may also want to consider options for helping parents cope with stress and weight loss issues.

The levels of smoking observed in this study are similar to those reported nationally for disadvantaged communities (31%). However, this rate is particularly high for Black Caribbean (48%) and White British mothers (41%), but relatively low for Black African women (3%). The programme may want to consider smoking cessation strategies specifically targeted at White British and Black Caribbean mothers in order to bring down the overall rate.

Breast feeding rates are slightly below the national average, but above the rates reported for disadvantaged communities. Nevertheless, the programme may want to consider ways of increasing these numbers to be consistent with the Department of Health's goal of a one-percent increase per year, along with increases in mother's who breastfeed for six months or longer.

Almost all of the families reported that they were registered with a GP (97%), and the majority consulted their GP first when a medical problem arose. Some families reported difficulties with finding translation support, however, so the programme may want to consider how this service can be enhanced.

Parents who had children in nursery appeared very satisfied with this service, with 82% reporting that they were good to excellent. The primary problem with the schools is that there simply are not enough spaces. Forty percent of the parents surveyed reported that they were not taking their children to any service, and 19% of these children were over three years of age. In addition, day nursery provision was the number one choice of parents for additional services. This suggests an urgent need for nurseries in the area, and the programme may want to consider making this its top priority.

The parents' second choice for new provision was improved outdoor play spaces. The programme already has plans underway for a new playground north of the cemetery and it is clear that this facility will be very welcome. However, this provision may not be sufficient for meeting the need identified through this survey. Over 60% of all children under four play in Bruce Castle and Tower Gardens Park, and the area families would like to see significant improvements in their security and the quality of the equipment. In particular, families would like to see toilet facilities in Bruce Castle Park and an allocated play space for children under five in both parks that is well supervised.

The Roundway is fortunate to already have a dedicated group of parents willing to volunteer for future projects and activities. It is recommended that the programme make the most of this opportunity in a way that is of equal benefit for the parents as it is for the programme.

12.2 Next Steps

The findings from this survey provide the programme with a detailed understanding of the needs and desires of families living in the catchment. The programme is now in the position to act on these findings by providing services targeted toward meeting these identified needs.

The first step in this process is to share this information with community stakeholders who are in the position to take it forward. These individuals include programme staff, the Members of the Partnership Board and parents participating in the Parents' Forum. These stakeholders should also include decision-makers from the Haringey council and the Primary Care Trust.

The programme may also want to consider how this information will be disseminated to the wider community, including the parents who participated in the survey. Providing this information to Roundway residents will send the message that the programme cares about its families' opinions. All too often, individuals participate in a survey, but never find out how the information is used. The programme should take steps to insure that this does not happen through a communication strategy that demonstrates how parents' needs have been considered and acted upon.

Part of this strategy might involve implementing a few 'quick wins.' Toilets in Bruce Castle Park and information on tax benefits might be two areas where the programme could act quickly and demonstrate that they care about their families' opinions.

In addition, the programme should consider how this information could be used to develop an ongoing consultation strategy. For example, the results from this survey suggest that the needs of families living in the northeast corner may be under represented, and this area may contain some families who are the most disadvantaged. The findings reported in this study can be used to inform future evaluations with this part of the population, as well as additional consultations with residents who may be harder to reach.

Finally, it is hoped that the results of this survey will provide the basis for future programme work, both in terms of service design and delivery. At the very least, this data should be used to help the Partnership Board prioritise needs and allocate funding. If used effectively, these findings can constitute a meeting point for stakeholders from all over the community to come together and consider what is best for its youngest children. With this additional area-wide support, it is believed that Sure Start Roundway has real potential to improve the lives of families and young children living within its boundaries.

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