

Parental Satisfaction Survey 2004

Report from research
carried out on behalf of

**KENDRAY AND WORSBROUGH
SURE START**

August - September 2004



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

british market research association

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Introduction

Background and objectives

All Sure Start programmes are required to measure satisfaction levels of the parents and carers of 0-4 year olds in their area. In August 2003, RBA research surveyed 107 parents and carers in Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start's (K&WSS) catchment area, the results of which set a baseline. The aim of this project, therefore, is to repeat the 2003 survey to measure change in satisfaction.

The issues covered in the survey include...

- Satisfaction with activities and services for young children
- Awareness of and satisfaction with Kendray and Worsbrough Sure Start (K&WSS)
- Where people look for information about Sure Start services
- Barriers to accessing activities and services

Methodology

RBA carried out interviews with 262 parents and carers of 0-4 year olds and pregnant women eligible for Sure Start services. Experienced interviewers carried these out between 23rd August and 8th September 2004, by door knocking in the specified areas.

Weighting by area (split between Kendray and Worsbrough) has been applied this year as a greater percentage of interviews were conducted in the Kendray area than were last year, and less in the Worsbrough area. Weighting redresses the balance, as in the 2003 survey there were significant differences by area.

The number of interviews achieved produced the following results. Achieving 262 results out of a population of approximately 700, means that the results given are +/-4.8% at the 95% confidence level. This means that if we had interviewed all possible respondents then we can be 95% confident that the result for the same question would be within 4.8% of that achieved.

In some cases, responses to individual questions may not total 100%. This could be due to one or more of the following reasons: respondents may have been able to choose more than one category, percentages are given to the nearest whole number the rounding may not result in a total of 100%, respondents may have opted out of a particular question, resulting in some “no replies” (which are not quoted unless significant).

A full set of responses are included as an appendix to this report.

Main Findings

Satisfaction with services available

Parents and carers were asked their overall opinion on local services for young children (under the age of four). Seven in ten respondents (69%), say they are satisfied, with 33% saying they are *very* satisfied. Over two in ten respondents (22%) are dissatisfied, 10% say they are *very* dissatisfied. Although there has been no change in the percentage of those saying they are satisfied, there has been an increase in those saying they are *very* satisfied (33% compared with 14% overall). Table 1 shows the differences by area over time.

Table 1: Satisfaction with local services for under 4s (by area)

Base: All (various, see table)

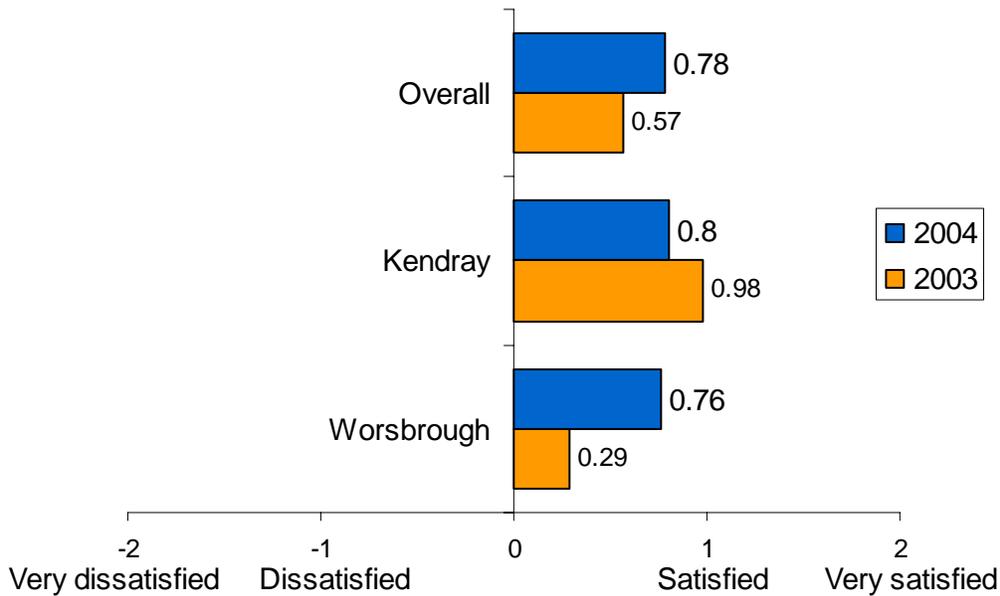
		<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Unable to say</i>	
Overall	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	33	35	12	10	9	%
	2003 (107)	14	54	14	10	7	%
Kendray	2004 (Weighted: 107, unweighted: 124)	27	47	13	6	6	%
	2003 (107)	20	66	7	5	2	%
Worsbrough	2004 (Weighted: 155, unweighted: 138)	38	28	11	12	12	%
	2003 (107)	10	46	19	14	11	%

The differences can be seen more clearly by looking at the mean scores.¹

¹ Two points are awarded for 'very satisfied', 1 point for 'satisfied', -1 point for 'dissatisfied' and -2 points for 'very dissatisfied'. The total score for each area is then divided by the number of parents / carers expressing an opinion (i.e. excluding those saying 'unable to say' and those who didn't give an answer to the question).

Chart 1: Satisfaction with local services for under 4s (mean scores by area)

Base: All, mean scores derived from those expressing an opinion (various, see above table)



As can be seen in chart 1, the greatest increase in satisfaction has been by those living in Worsbrough, where 38% say they are very satisfied compared with 10% in 2003.

Respondents who are registered with Sure Start are more likely to say they are satisfied with the services available (76% say this), compared with 42% of those who are not registered. Whether or not respondents have accessed a service or activity in the last 12 months seems to make little difference to overall satisfaction with the area.

Just over six in ten parents and carers (63%) agree that over the last 12 months, ‘my child or children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities’, 35% *strongly* agree. One in six parents and carers (16%) disagree with this statement, with 11% saying they *strongly* disagree. Table 2 shows that a greater proportion of parents and carers now say they *strongly* agree with this statement than they did 12 months ago.

Table 2: Agreement with the statement that over the last 12 months, ‘My child / children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities’ (by area)
Base: All with children aged 0 - 4 (various, see table)

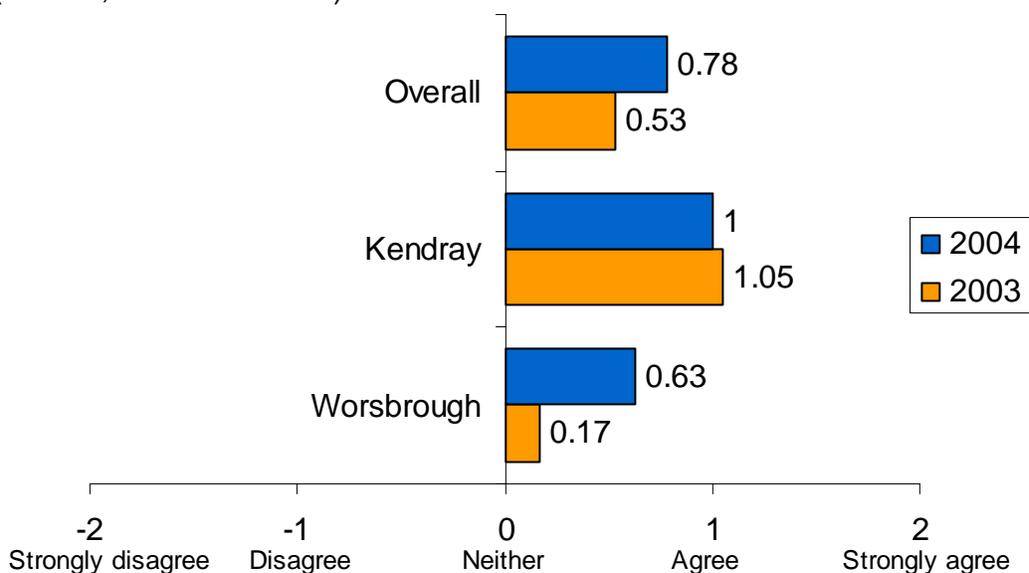
		<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	
Overall	2004 (Weighted: 256, unweighted: 255)	35	28	11	6	11	9	%
	2003 (105)	21	44	9	9	13	5	%
Kendray	2004 (Weighted: 104, unweighted: 121)	33	40	12	6	3	6	%
	2003 (43)	30	51	7	2	5	5	%
Worsbrough	2004 (Weighted: 151, unweighted: 135)	36	20	11	6	16	10	%
	2003 (62)	15	39	10	13	19	5	%

These differences can be seen more clearly by looking at the mean scores² as shown in the following chart.

² Two points are awarded for ‘strongly agree’, 1 point for ‘agree’, 0 points for neither agree nor disagree’, -1 point for ‘disagree’ and -2 points for ‘strongly disagree’. The total score for each area is then divided by the number of parents / carers expressing an opinion (i.e. excluding those saying ‘not applicable’ and those who didn’t give an answer to the question).

Chart 2: Agreement with the statement that over the last 12 months, 'My child / children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities' (mean scores by area)

Base: All with children aged 0 – 4, mean scores derived from those expressing an opinion (various, see above table)



The proportion of parents and carers in Worsbrough who agree with this statement have increased, whereas there has been little change in Kendray. There has not been a particular increase in the services in Worsbrough to instigate this increase in satisfaction, although the opening of 51 Park Road (a shop front premises in Worsbrough) is likely to have raised the profile of K&WSS amongst nearby residents. There has also been a general increase in publicity now that the Publicity Officer has been employed, which Worsbrough residents may have been noticing. Additionally, Worsbrough was incorporated into the Sure Start programme after the initial set up, so it seems that after a slower start, parents and carers are now acknowledging the same benefits as those in Kendray.

Again, those parents and carers who are registered with Sure Start are likely to be more positive, saying that they agree that their children have access to good quality play and learning opportunities (68% compared with 55% of those who are not registered).

To look in more depth at individual services, we asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with particular services. Table 3 shows that satisfaction is highest with parents' health (80% satisfied), followed by child's health (78% satisfied).

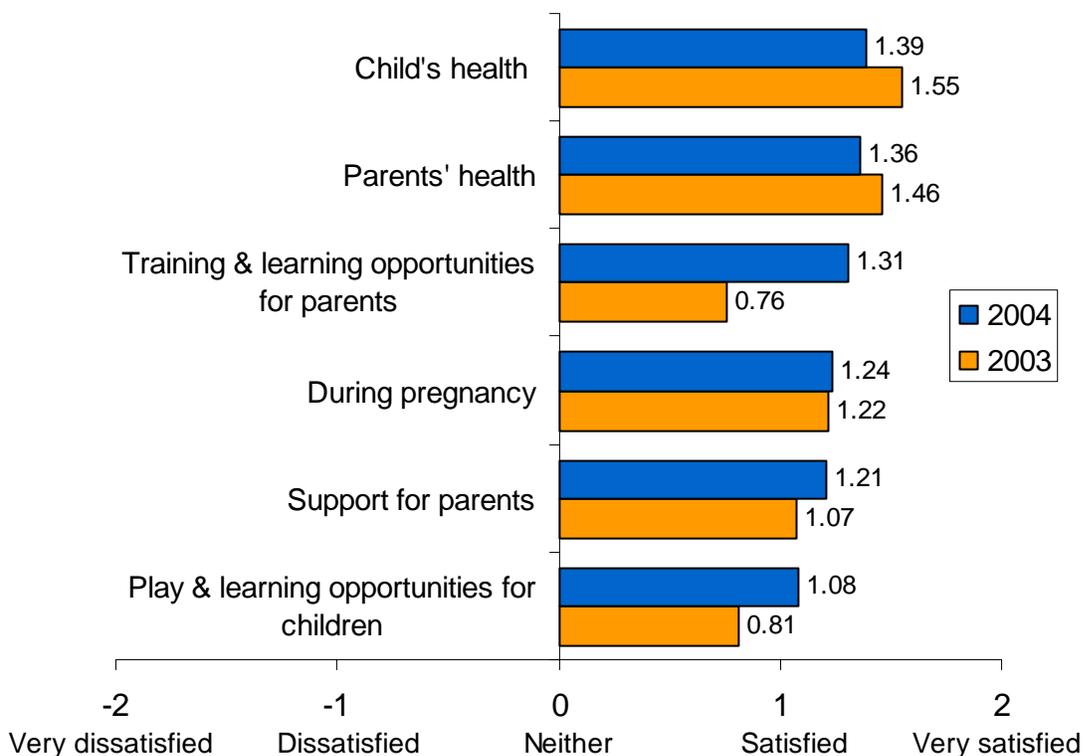
Table 3: Satisfaction with support available in the Kendray and Worsbrough area
Base: All (see table)

		<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Fairly satisfied</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Fairly dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	<i>Don't know /N/A</i>	
Child's health	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	63	15	9	3	4	5	%
	2003 (107)	59	32	2	1	1	6	%
Parents' health	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	59	21	12	1	3	4	%
	2003 (107)	56	30	7	1	1	5	%
During pregnancy	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	48	20	8	2	6	15	%
	2003 (107)	43	32	7	1	5	11	%
Support for parents	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	49	25	12	2	4	6	%
	2003 (107)	40	30	11	3	6	10	%
Play & learning opportunities for children	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	47	22	9	7	6	10	%
	2003 (107)	38	27	8	11	8	7	%
Training & learning opportunities for parents	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	50	24	7	3	3	13	%
	2003 (107)	27	31	14	11	4	13	%

Changes can be more clearly seen by applying a mean score³.

Chart 3: Satisfaction with support available in the Kendray and Worsbrough area (mean scores)

Base: All, mean score derived from those expressing an opinion (various, see above table)



There has been a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who say that they are satisfied with the training and learning opportunities for parents, 73% up from 58% in 2003. The most significant change has been the proportion of parents and carers in Worsbrough saying that they are satisfied, which is 75% compared with 46% in 2003. This enforces the consistent pattern in the 2004 survey, where parents and carers in Worsbrough are more satisfied now than a year ago.

There is also a positive shift with regard to the play and learning opportunities for children, which can mainly be attributed to the increase in those saying they are very satisfied with this service, with 47% of respondents now saying this.

³ Two points are awarded for 'very satisfied', 1 point for 'satisfied', 0 points for 'neither', -1 point for 'dissatisfied' and -2 points for 'very dissatisfied'. The total score for each area is then divided by the number of parents / carers expressing an opinion (i.e. excluding those saying 'don't know' or not giving a reply).

To help us understand parents' and carers' view on how services have changed over the last year we asked how the provision of services for the under 4s has changed. Four in ten (41%) say they have seen an *improvement* in the provision of services for children under the age of four in the last 12 months. Just over a third of parents and carers (36%) have seen *no change* (just 7% say that services have got *worse*). This is positive news for K&WSS, as a proportion of parents and carers who have had the provisions by Sure Start for several years now are still saying that they have noticed an improvement in the last year, showing that year on year improvement is being recognised. Table 4 shows that parents and carers see changes in the last year are similar to the changes the previous year.

Table 4: Change in the provision of services for under 4s in the last 12 months (by area)

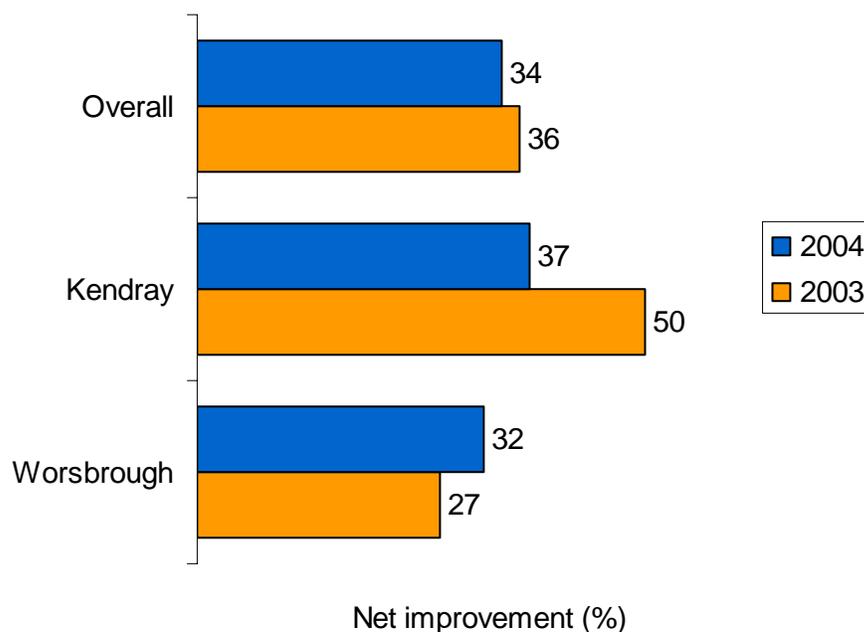
Base: All (various, see table)

		<i>Improved</i>	<i>Stayed the same</i>	<i>Got worse</i>	<i>Unable to say / DK</i>	
Overall	2004 (Weighted: 261, unweighted: 262)	41	36	7	16	%
	2003 (107)	40	37	4	19	%
Kendray	2004 (Weighted: 107, unweighted: 124)	44	34	6	17	%
	2003 (44)	52	36	2	9	%
Worsbrough	2004 (Weighted: 155, unweighted: 138)	39	38	7	15	%
	2003 (63)	32	38	5	25	%

If we calculate net improvement (those saying 'improved' minus those saying 'got worse') we see the following:

Chart 4: Change in the provision of services for under 4s in the last 12 months (net improvement by area)

Base: All (various, see previous table)



In Kendray, the degree of improvement seems to be slowing down, so parents and carers have not seen as much improvement this year as they had in the previous year. However there is some evidence that improvement is still speeding up for Worsbrough respondents, more of whom noticed an improvement in the last 12 months than did so the previous year.

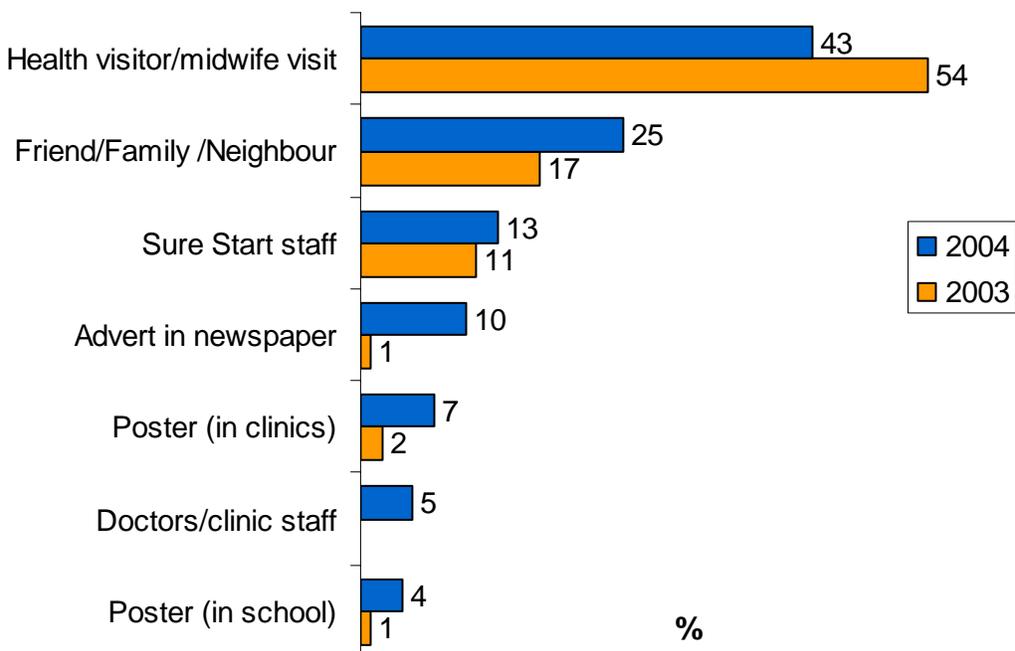
Awareness of Sure Start

To find out the level of awareness of the Sure Start programme, we asked parents and carers if they had heard of Sure Start before the interview. Almost all (98%) said yes, so just 2% of respondents had not heard of Sure Start. In 2003 a similarly high proportion (97%) had heard of Sure Start.

Parents and carers who have heard of Sure Start were asked how they *first* heard of the programme. As shown in chart 5, over four in ten (43%) say they first heard through a health visitor or midwife visit, which shows how important it is that information is given through these channels.

Chart 5: How respondents first heard of Sure Start

Base: All those who have heard of Sure Start (2004: Weighted: 257, unweighted: 258, 2003: 104)



For those who are not registered with Sure Start, a greater proportion first heard of Sure Start through a friend / neighbour or family (39%) followed by Sure Start staff (16%) and advert in newspaper (14%). There seems to be a need for an increase in the formal methods of communication with those who are not registered to ensure they receive any available information.

There has been a noticeable increase in those mentioning 'advert in newspaper' as the source of their first hearing of Sure Start, which can partly be attributed to the work of the newly appointed Information Officer, and therefore the regular press releases being sent out which are being noticed by respondents.

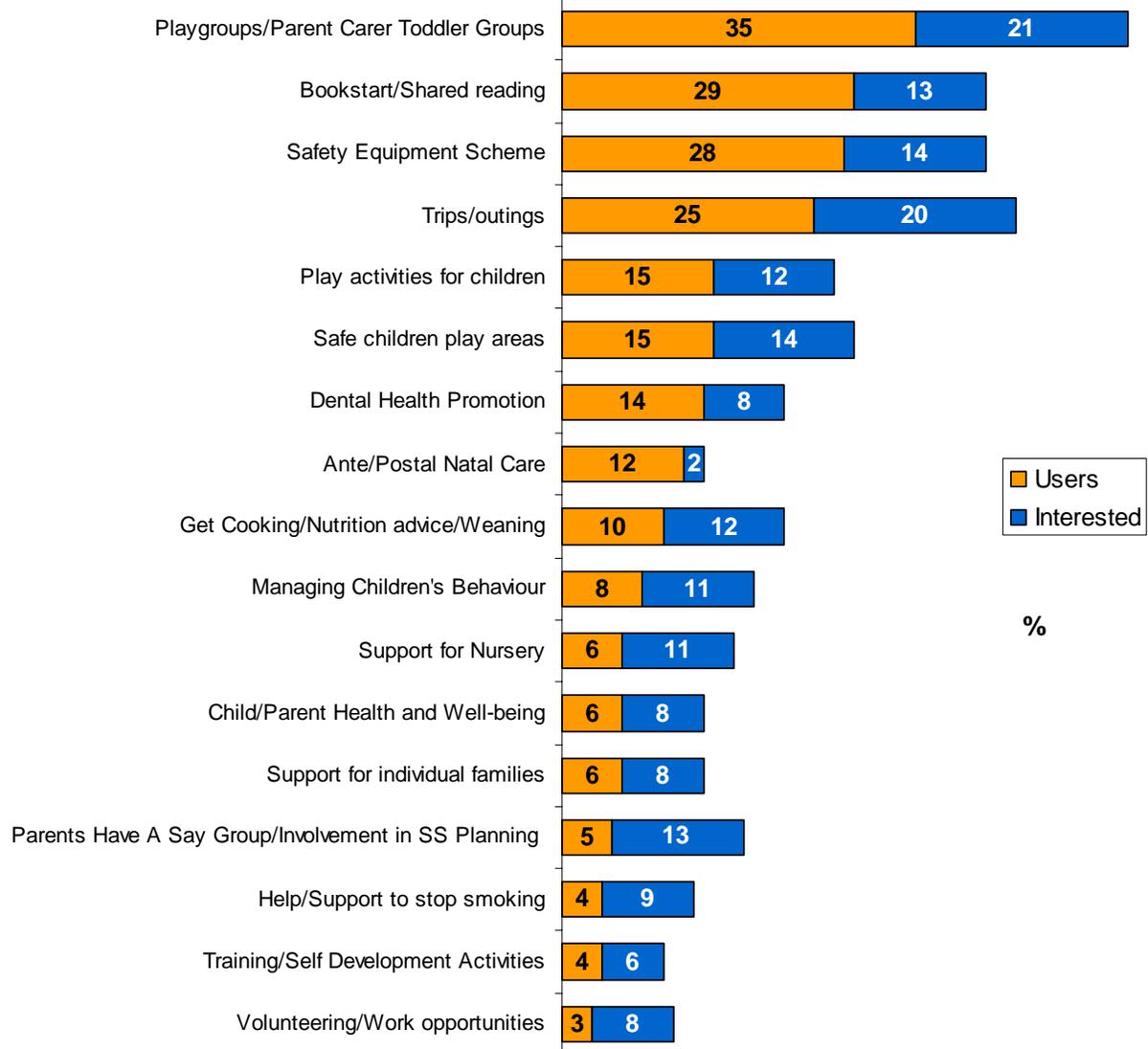
Awareness, use and interest in Sure Start services

From a list of activities that Sure Start has had a hand in organising, over nine in ten respondents (94%) say they are aware of at least one.

Chart 6 shows that parents and carers are most likely to be *users* of playgroups or parent / carer toddler groups, Bookstart / shared reading, and the safety equipment scheme.

Chart 6: Interest and usage of Sure Start services and activities

Base: All (weighted: 262, unweighted: 261)



Six in ten (62%) have used at least one of the schemes listed. Playgroups and parent / carer toddler groups are used more than any other, and also have the most interest, with 57% saying they either use this service or are interested in it.

It is helpful to compare the proportion of respondents who are interested in each activity or service with the proportion who are actually using the service or activity. These are shown in the following table.

Table 5: Proportion of parents and carers who use each service or activity out of all those who say they are interested

Base: All (weighted: 262, unweighted: 261)

<i>Service or activity</i>	<i>%⁴</i>
Ante/Postal Natal Care	92
Bookstart/Shared reading	69
Safety Equipment Scheme	68
Dental Health Promotion	64
Playgroups/Parent Carer Toddler Groups	61
Trips/outings	56
Play activities for children	54
Safe children play areas	52
Get Cooking/Nutrition advice/Weaning	45
Support for individual families	43
Child/Parent Health and Well-being	43
Managing Children's Behaviour	42
Training/Self Development Activities	40
Support for Nursery	35
Help/Support to stop smoking	31
Parents Have A Say Group/Involvement in SS Planning	28
Volunteering/Work opportunities	25

Ante/Post natal services are being most utilised by those who are interested in using the service. Only a quarter of those who are interested in the volunteering / work opportunities (25%) are actually using this service, and three in ten parents and carers who are interested in the Have a Say Group or the Sure Start Planning (28%) are taking part. It would be useful to explore what the barriers are to accessing these particular activities are, which could be looked at in the forthcoming service evaluations.

⁴ Percentage of parents using a service as a proportion of those interested in / using the service

Satisfaction with SS services

Respondents who have used Sure Start activities or services were asked how satisfied they are with what is provided. Overall, there is an extremely high level of satisfaction reported, with 93% saying they are satisfied (compared with 96% in 2003), and 74% are very satisfied, compared with 63% in 2003. As in the 2003 survey, just 1% say they are dissatisfied.

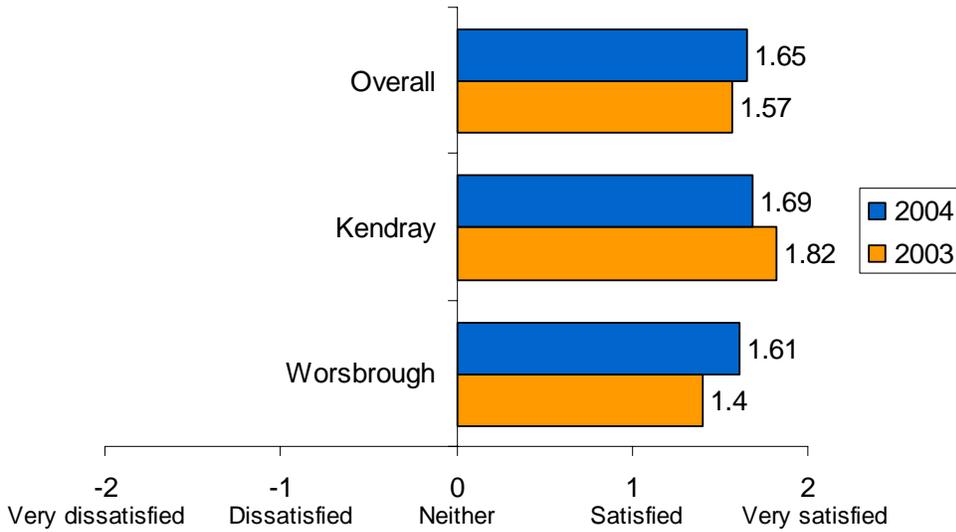
Table 6: Satisfaction with the activities or schemes provided by Sure Start (by area)
Base: Users of Sure Start Services (various, see table)

		<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	
Overall	2004 (Weighted: 185, unweighted: 189)	74	19	6	0	1	%
	2003 (84)	63	33	2	0	1	%
Kendray	2004 (Weighted: 88, unweighted: 102)	75	18	7	0	0	%
	2003 (34)	82	18	0	0	0	%
Worsbrough	2004 (Weighted: 97, unweighted: 87)	72	21	5	0	2	%
	2003 (50)	50	44	4	0	2	%

When we apply mean scores⁵ we can see that this high level of satisfaction is both across Kendray and Worsbrough. This is shown in the following chart.

Chart 7: Satisfaction with the activities or schemes provided by Sure Start (mean scores by area)

Base: Users of Sure Start services (see previous chart)

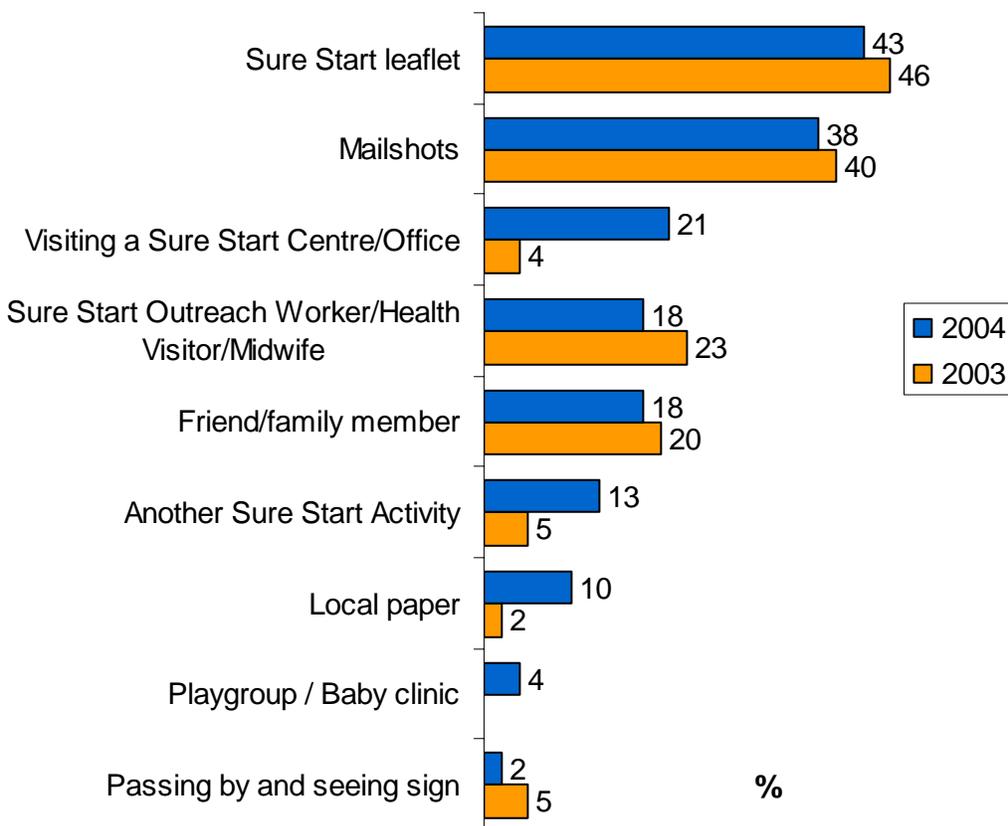


The programme should take pride in this remarkable set of ratings.

⁵ Two points are awarded for 'very satisfied, 1 point for 'satisfied', 0 points for 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', -1 point for 'dissatisfied' and -2 points for 'very dissatisfied'. The total score for each area is then divided by the number of parents / carers expressing an opinion (i.e. excluding those not replying to the question).

Respondents were asked how they usually find out about Sure Start services and activities. Chart 8 shows that Sure Start users usually find out about activities from the Sure Start leaflet or mailshots (71% said either of these), followed by visiting a Sure Start office (21%).

Chart 8: Where respondents find out about Sure Start services and activities
 Base: Users of Sure Start services (2004: Weighted: 185, unweighted: 189, 2003: 84)



There is little in how people get information about Sure Start by the area in which they live.

Barriers and suggested improvements

Respondents were asked if there is anything else that Sure Start should be doing, and only a quarter (26%) could think of anything that needs improving. Of those that mention an improvement, six in ten (59%) say that more play areas are needed, 13% say more advertising / raise profile, 11% want better communication and for Sure Start to be friendlier and 10% say safer play areas, which are the same issues mentioned in the 2003 survey.⁶

Almost six in ten parents and carers (57%) say there is nothing that puts them off, or prevents them using the activities offered by Sure Start. A greater proportion of respondents in 2003 (68%), said that nothing would prevent them from using the activities offered by Sure Start. The proportion of respondents in Kendray who say that nothing would prevent them as decreased to 58% (from 77% in 2003). The reasons given include that the venues are too difficult to get to, they don't have enough time or the activities are at inconvenient times and they don't have anyone to go to the activities with.⁷

⁶ Base numbers were too low in the 2003 survey to create a code frame.

⁷ Base numbers are too low for meaningful comparison.

Profile of respondents

Gender

	2003 %	2004 %	+/-
Man	11	7	-4
Woman	89	93	+4

Age

	2003 %	2004 %	+/-
Under 20	12	10	-2
20-24	28	19	-9
25-29	18	26	+8
30-34	14	26	+12
35-39	13	10	-3
40 and over	7	10	+3
No reply	8	0	-8

What respondents are doing at present

	2003 %	2004 %	+/-
Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus)	10	6	-4
Employee in part-time job (under 30 hours)	10	15	+5
Self-employed, full or part-time - with employees	0	0	0
Self-employed, full or part-time - without employees	1	0	-1
On a Government supported training programme (e.g. Modern Apprenticeship/National Traineeship/Training)	0	1	+1
Full-time education at school, college or university	0	2	+2
Unemployed and seeking work	20	4	-16
Unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability	4	4	0
Wholly retired from work	1	3	+2
Looking after the home or family	52	65	+13
Other	2	0	-2
No reply	0	*	0

Relation to 0- 4 year child

	2003 %	2004 %	+/-
Parent / Legal Guardian	93	93	0
Grandparent	5	6	+1
Other family member (16+) responsible for caring for the child	1	*	-1
Family friend responsible for caring for the child	1	1	0
Carer	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
No reply	0	0	0

Ethnicity

	2003 %	2004 %	+/-
White - British	99	97	-2
White - Irish	0	0	0
Other White background	0	*	0
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	0	*	0
Mixed - White & Black African	0	0	0
Mixed - White & Asian	0	0	0
Other Mixed background	0	*	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British - African	1	*	-1
Other Black or Black British background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British	0	0	0
Chinese	0	1	+1
Refused	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	1	+1
No reply	0	0	0

Summary

- Parents and carers report continuous improvement in the provision of services for under 4s in the area over the past year, with 41% saying they have noticed an improvement, which follows the 40% of respondents in 2003 reporting an improvement. This shows that parents and carers are continuing to recognise the improvements in the area.
- One third of respondents (33%) now say that they are very satisfied with the services available for young children under the age of 4, which is fantastic news, as only 14% said this in 2003. Overall satisfaction, though (fairly and very satisfied combined), has not changed.
- Three in ten parents and carers (63%) agree that over the last 12 months, their child/children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities, which matches the opinion in 2003 (65% agreed with this statement).
- Out of the services that K&WSS provide, parents and carers are most likely to be satisfied with the provision for 'Parent's health' (80% are satisfied), followed by 'Child's health' (78%). An important change is the increase in those saying they are satisfied with the training and learning opportunities for parents (73% up from 58% in 2003).
- The high level of awareness of Sure Start is continuing, with almost all (98%) saying they had heard of Sure Start before the interview, following a 97% awareness in 2003.
- As in 2003, respondents are most likely to say they first heard of Sure Start through their health visitor or midwife, followed by their family, friend or neighbour. There has been an increase in those mentioning adverts in the newspaper.
- Seven in ten parents and carers (71%) have used at least one of Sure Start's activities and services, with parent and toddler groups being used more than any other.
- There is high satisfaction with Sure Start services, with 93% of respondents who have used a service or activity in the last year saying they are satisfied.

- Seven in ten respondents (71%) usually hear about Sure Start services and activities through either mailshots or Sure Start leaflets.
- There is a lower proportion of respondents who now say there are no barriers to them accessing service (57% say there are no barriers compared with 68% in 2003), so K&WSS needs to look into reducing these. Barriers mentioned include the venues being difficult to get to, time (inconvenient session times and lack of time generally).

Recommendations

- Look into converting those who are **interested** in joining an activity, to being **users** of the activity (particularly Volunteering / Training opportunities, Have a Say Group. Support to stop smoking). It may be that parents and carers feel daunted by these sessions, so K&WSS need to try to reduce the barriers to joining these activities.
- As there has been a shift from those who are *fairly* satisfied to those who are *very* satisfied, it is important now to communicate with those who are less satisfied to ensure that a split in the community does not occur. K&WSS could make more of an emphasis encouraging those who haven't registered yet, as there may be a feeling that the information they are receiving is for those who are already involved rather than themselves
- Mailshots and leaflets are an important source of information to find out what activities and services are being provided, so this needs to continue. This method may also be used to encourage parents and carers to register with Sure Start. As most parents and carers hear about Sure Start through their Health Visitor or Midwife, what encourages participation as the child gets older? This method may address that.

Caroline Hughes

Tim Neal

RBA Research

6th October 2004