

**Sure Start Jolly Giraffe  
User Satisfaction Survey**

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## Executive summary

### Introduction

Sure Start is a government initiative which was introduced in April 1999 with the aim of meeting the needs of families with children aged 0 to 4 years who are living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. Sure Start Jolly Giraffe is one of five Sure Start programmes currently operating in Halton. It is a statutory requirement of the Sure Start Unit that monitoring and evaluation of services is carried out. Sure Start services are also required on an annual basis, to establish the percentage of parents/carers eligible for Sure Start services that are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the different elements of the service. The Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR), University College Chester, was commissioned to carry out a survey of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. In addition, Sure Start Jolly Giraffe wanted to explore how children experienced their services.

### Methods

A survey approach was employed to enable potential service users to report on their experiences and perceptions of the services. Data were collected using postal questionnaires sent to those eligible parents/carers with children aged four and under in the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe area. The questionnaire was devised in collaboration with the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe team and in the light of previous Sure Start parent satisfaction questionnaires developed by the CPHR.

An investigation into children's experience of services was also conducted through observation of sessions provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe. This method was selected because with young children the use of written materials is not possible and the level of language skills, concentration and emotional development would make the use of formal interviews questionable.

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### **Survey findings**

Eight hundred and sixty-nine questionnaires were sent out to 'eligible families' in the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe area. In total, 139 questionnaires were completed (41 postal returns, 98 telephone surveys) giving a response rate of 16%. Ninety six percent (134) of respondents were completed by females, and 32 (23%) of the respondents classified themselves as single parents. Four respondents (3%) reported that they had a disability, whilst seven (5%) reported their child aged under four as having a disability.

All of the respondents lived with or cared for at least one child aged 0 to 4 years old at the time of the survey. Forty-six percent looked after a single child. Ninety-two percent (128 out of 139) of respondents had knowledge of the Sure Start services in the area prior to the survey, although sixty respondents (71%), from the initial 84 responses (the postal returns and first week of telephone surveys), indicated that they required more information on the available services.

Respondents were asked: which of the activities provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe they had used; the frequency of usage; and their level of satisfaction through asking them how helpful services had been.

### **Satisfaction with services**

All eight of the community services were used by at least one respondent, with all services having more respondents using the services on more than one occasion than only once, with one exception. Such a finding indicates that once parents/carers have engaged with a service they are likely to return to the service again.

Satisfaction with individual Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services was high, with all being perceived as 'helpful' or 'very helpful' by the majority of users. The overall

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level of satisfaction with services was correspondingly high amongst the 108 respondents who answered this question. Ninety seven percent (105 people) reported they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the available services. Of these, 64 (59%) of the respondents reported they were 'very satisfied' with the overall services. Only one respondent reported they were dissatisfied, whilst two people (2%) were very dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked to comment on interest in services for those parents aged under 21 years old and Dads and Dads-to-be. Respondents indicated that they thought services would be of benefit to young parents. Whilst there were only three male respondents, all indicated Dads and Dads-to-be services would be of interest. Forty-two percent of female respondents indicated there would be interest in services for Dads and Dads-to-be.

Additional comments made by respondents highlighted intentions of respondents to use Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services in the future; positive experiences of services; suggestions regarding future service delivery; the need for more information regarding Jolly Giraffe services; accessibility of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services and comments regarding negative experiences of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

### **Children's experience of services**

Four different Sure Start Jolly Giraffe sessions were observed. These were Busy Bodies, Dads and Kids Soft Play, Play Days and the Crèche. Overall, children seemed to enjoy the sessions. When activities were more directive, as in Busy Bodies, the children participated throughout and mainly appeared engaged and enthusiastic. In other sessions, which were more child-led, the majority of children appeared confident and relaxed enough to choose activities as they wished.

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## Discussion

The findings from the satisfaction survey have indicated a high overall level of satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. Levels of satisfaction were also found to be high with individual services. Once parents had accessed a service once they were likely to do so again, indicating that individual services could retain users. Observations of children at Sure Start Jolly Giraffe sessions indicated that they were engaged and happy, enjoying the activities presented to them whether they were structured or more informal.

It was evident that fathers/males carers did not often participate in the available services. Evidence from the survey suggests, however, that there may be interest in services specifically targeted at Dads and Dads-to-be. However, the majority of these views came from female respondents, therefore further consultation could be conducted with eligible males using qualitative methods to identify ways in which to encourage and increase male participation.

Parents/carers with two children appeared to be less likely to engage with the available services. Once again, further work could be conducted to establish ways to encourage and help those families with two children to access the available services.

Although there was a high level of awareness of the existing services from respondents, there appeared to be a need to provide more detailed information on the services available. The low response rate (4%) to the initial postal survey may be indicative of the problems in engaging the eligible population with the services provided by the local Sure Start Jolly Giraffe programme. From such a response rate, and the difficulty encountered when conducting telephone surveys, it is evident that there is a need to constantly update records of those who are eligible for Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

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Overall, this study has indicated a high level of satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, but has also indicated some areas where developments may be considered.

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## Chapter 1

### Background

#### 1.1 Introduction and national background

Sure Start is a government initiative which was introduced in April 1999 with the aim of meeting the needs of families with children aged 0 to 4 years who are living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. There are currently 524 Sure Start local programmes in England serving over 300,000 children and their families (The Ness Research Team, 2004), with an estimated budget of over £500 million per year (Glass, 2003). Sure Start local programmes are central to the UK Government's policy for combating the adverse effects of poverty and disadvantage on children and their families (The Ness Research Team, 2004). Reasons behind such initiatives are that those children living in poverty are more likely to:

- do less well at school;
- become involved with the criminal justice system as they approached adolescence;
- become parents as teenagers;
- be unemployed in young adulthood.

The Sure Start programme aims to reach a third of all children aged under four who are living in poverty in England (Kenny, 2002). The programme has four long-term objectives:

- improving social and emotional development;
- improving health;
- improving learning;
- strengthening families and communities.

Sure Start Jolly Giraffe is one of five Sure Start programmes currently operating in Halton. It is a sixth round programme which was established in

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2003, for which the NCH children's charity is the Accountable Body. Sure Start Jolly Giraffe is based at Halton Lodge Children's Centre in Runcorn. However, at the time of commencing the satisfaction survey the Jolly Giraffe team were based in the High Street in Runcorn. Jolly Giraffe covers the WA7 postcode area of Widnes. Mersey, Grange and Halton Lea wards are all within this area and these wards are ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively in an Index of Multiple Deprivation for the 21 wards within Halton. Currently there are 869 'eligible families', that is families caring for at least one child aged 0-4 years and so eligible to receive Sure Start services within the area served by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe.

## **1.2 Local background**

It is a statutory requirement of the Sure Start Unit that monitoring and evaluation of services is carried out. Sure Start services are also required on an annual basis, to establish the percentage of parents/carers eligible for Sure Start services that are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the different elements of the service. The Centre for Public Health Research, University of Chester, was commissioned to carry out a survey of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. In addition, Sure Start Jolly Giraffe wanted to explore how children experienced their services.

This work was undertaken at the beginning of 2005 and was the first research of this kind to be carried out by the CPHR on behalf of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe.

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### 1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of the parent/carer satisfaction survey was:

- to establish levels of satisfaction with services amongst parents and carers of children aged 0-4 years in the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe area during the last year.

The objectives were:

- to explore levels of knowledge about Sure Start;
- to explore the number of users of each service;
- to explore the satisfaction levels of service users, and obtain comments about the services;
- to obtain demographic information about the respondents and their families, including those parents and children with disabilities;
- to inform the future development of services;
- to raise the profile of services;
- to fulfil national requirements for reporting levels of satisfaction with Sure Start services.

The aim of the work with children was:

- to explore how children experienced Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

This report is organized into a number of chapters. Chapter 2 details the study design and methods used. Chapter 3 presents the findings relating to the survey of parent and carer use of and satisfaction with services, and Chapter 4 presents the work with children. Finally, in Chapter 5 there is a discussion of the findings.

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## Chapter 2

### Study design and methodology

#### 2.1 Introduction

In order to investigate users' satisfaction with the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services a survey approach was used. Through such an approach, it was anticipated enough responses would be received to enable reliable conclusions to be drawn about users' views of services. It is accepted that a response rate of 75 percent and over from the eligible study population is considered good (Bowling, 2002) and Ball (2002) suggests that 50% is fine. However, as Roberts, Wilson, Roalfe and Bridge (2004) suggest, surveys conducted in more deprived areas are associated with a lower response rate with postal questionnaires. A free prize draw entry was offered for completed and returned questionnaires in an attempt to increase response rates. The offering of such incentives are recognised techniques to increase response rates (Edwards et al, 2002).

An investigation into children's experience of services was also conducted through observation of sessions provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe. This method was selected because with young children the use of written materials is not possible and the level of language skills, concentration and emotional development would make the use of formal interviews questionable. Indeed Ball (2002) argues that young children are not able to contribute a lot verbally to the evaluation of services, although conclusions can be drawn from observations of their behaviour.

It is important to note that as Sure Start is aimed at providing services for children aged 0 to 4 and their families, children of such a young age are unlikely to have developed a notion of 'satisfaction with services'. Therefore in this context satisfaction is taken to equate with positive emotions, such as

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enjoyment, happiness and whether children were confident to participate in activities.

Approval from the Local Research Ethics Committee and the Primary Care Trust Research Governance Group was obtained before the work commenced.

## **2.2 The survey**

### **2.2.1 Sure Start population**

The target population incorporated all families eligible to use Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. In this instance, the 'eligible families' were those families with children aged 0-4 years living in the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe catchment area. This ensured that it was not only those parents and carers who were registered with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe who received questionnaires or were contacted by letter, but also those parents and carers who were entitled to use the services but did not, and so were not registered.

### **2.2.2 Design of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was devised in collaboration with the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe team and in the light of previous Sure Start parent satisfaction questionnaires developed by the Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR). The following areas were covered:

- demographic information - the number and ages of children in each household; whether the respondent considered themselves to be a single parent; age and gender of the respondent; if the respondent or any of their children under the age of four had a disability;
- awareness of services;
- level of use of services;
- level of satisfaction with individual services;
- overall level of satisfaction;

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Respondents were also invited to make comments regarding Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

### **2.2.3 Survey method**

A two phase approach was used to conduct the survey. Using information obtained from the Child Health Database the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe team were able to produce a mailing list consisting of all the 'eligible families' in their area. The questionnaire packs were distributed to 869 parents and carers by post, addressed to the "Parents of (name of child)". Each pack comprised a questionnaire (Appendix 1), a prize draw leaflet (Appendix 1), a participant information sheet (Appendix 2), and a pre-paid return envelope (for return to the CPHR).

Phase two was undertaken in an attempt to increase participation. This involved telephoning those parents who had not returned questionnaires. For those parents whose telephone numbers were not available (n=134) a letter was sent out asking parents if they would be willing to provide their contact details (Appendix 3) so that a questionnaire could be completed over the telephone. A questionnaire was also included with the letter for those parents that preferred to complete the questionnaire at home and send it back. A pre-paid envelope was also included with this letter for the return of the tear off slip.

The following steps were taken in an attempt to increase the response rate further:

- parents and carers could obtain assistance with completing the questionnaire by ringing Sure Start Jolly Giraffe should they so wish;
- the questionnaire was available in large print;
- a pre-paid envelope was included with the questionnaire and the letter;
- those parents and carers who completed the questionnaire and gave their details on the prize draw slip were entered into a free prize draw with

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the first prize of £50 worth of Asda vouchers; second prize of £30 of Iceland vouchers; and third prize of £20 Boots vouchers.

The prize draw leaflet also gave respondents the opportunity to ask for further information about Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services or to request an appointment to see a member of the Sure Start team. On receipt of each completed questionnaire and prize draw leaflet, the leaflet was detached from the questionnaire to ensure that responses could not be identified with specific individuals.

#### **2.2.4 Survey schedule**

Table 2.2.4.1 illustrates the timetable for the distribution and handling of the questionnaires.

**Table 2.2.4.1 Timetable for the administration of the questionnaires**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date carried out</b>
Mailing of questionnaires	27.12.04-02.01.05
Letters sent to eligible registered and non-registered parents for whom no contact number was held	W/C 14.03.05 and 21.03.05
Telephone calls to non-respondents for whom contact details were held	W/C 14.03.05, 21.03.05, 28.03.05 and 2.05.05
Prize draw	April 2005

#### **2.3 Observation of sessions**

Direct observation is a technique whereby the researcher collects data directly from their own observations of participants rather than by an indirect method, such as a questionnaire or test, and is particularly useful for exploring children's behaviour (Rolfe, 2001). It was anticipated that by observing the children and their activities during Sure Start Jolly Giraffe sessions it would be possible to gauge their satisfaction through a range of indicators. Depending upon the aims and content of the observed sessions, indicators included the level of

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engagement with activities, level of enjoyment, learning and development encouraged or achieved, and the amount and quality of interaction with parents, staff, or other children.

Four different Sure Start Jolly Giraffe sessions were observed, selected to illustrate a range of the various activities available. Parents/carers were given a participant information sheet as they arrived at the sessions, either by the researcher or by a member of staff, as appropriate (a copy of the participant information sheet can be found in Appendix 8). If any parent/carer had objected to the presence of the researcher then the observation would not have been carried out. The researcher then observed the session, following an observation schedule (see Appendix 9 for a copy of the observation schedule). Opportunities were also taken to talk with children and their parents/carers informally about their experiences of the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

#### **2.4 Analysis of the data**

All survey data were treated confidentially and were anonymised for the analysis. The analysis was undertaken using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). The prize draw leaflets were returned to Sure Start Jolly Giraffe where the draw was conducted, with the winners being notified by letter.

The data from observation sessions were used to provide a 'thick description' of the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. By observing the behaviour of the children; their interaction with service providers, their parent/carers and each other; and their engagement in activities; it allowed some judgement of their 'satisfaction' with services to be made.

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## Chapter 3

### Survey results

#### 3.1 Introduction

Eight hundred and sixty-nine questionnaires were sent out to 'eligible families' in the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe area. In total, 41 questionnaires were returned in the post (39 in the first wave and 2 in the second wave), a response rate of 5%. Ninety-eight questionnaires were completed over the telephone. This gave a total of 139 completed questionnaires, and an overall response rate of 16%.

In order to undertake telephone questionnaires, the telephone numbers for all those families registered with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe who had not returned their questionnaire were obtained. A total of 737 telephone calls were made. Four hundred and seventy-one calls were successful, that is they were answered by either a person or a machine, allowing participation to be encouraged. However, 266 calls (36%) were unsuccessful, with 147 (55%) of all unsuccessful calls being made to dead telephone lines. Further details about the telephone calls made can be found in Appendix 4.

Not all of the respondents answered all of the questions. The total number of individuals responding to each question regarding frequency of use and level of satisfaction may be found in Appendices 5 and 6 respectively. Figures used in this chapter have been calculated based on the total number of responses for each question. The percentages may not always equal 100 because of rounding. In places, data should be interpreted with care as numbers are small.

The response rate of 16% from the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe survey clearly falls below the threshold suggested by Ball of 50% (2002), and the responses will contain a self selecting bias. However, the results do give some indication of

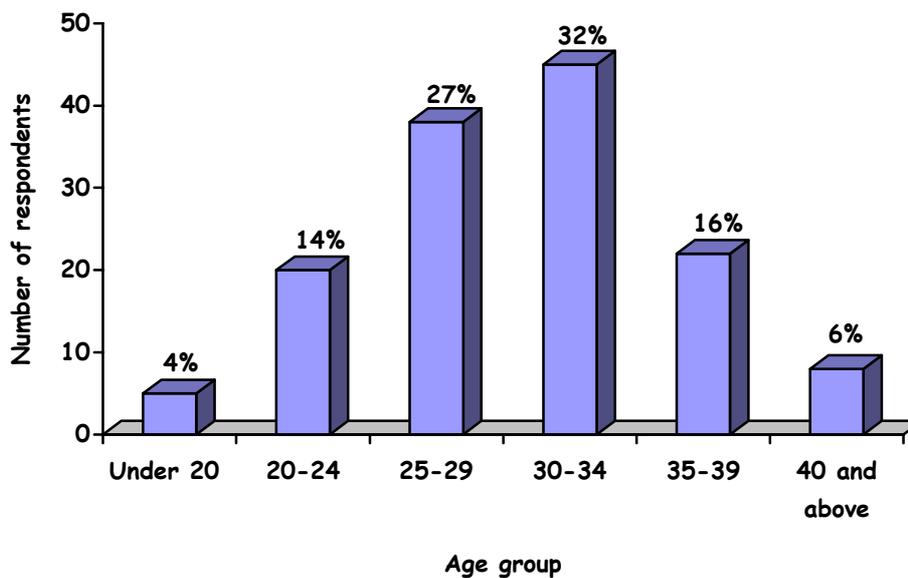
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satisfaction levels amongst service users and highlight areas for future research and development.

### 3.2 Socio-demographic information

Of the 139 questionnaires included in the analysis, 96% (134) were completed by females, and 31 (22%) of the respondents classified themselves as single parents. Four respondents (3%) reported that they had a disability, whilst 7 (5%) reported their child aged 0 - 4 as having a disability. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 67 years old. These have been grouped into categories as shown in Figure 3.2.1. The majority of respondents were aged between 25 - 34 years old.

Figure 3.2.1 Age range of respondents



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### 3.3 The number and ages of children living with respondents

Table 3.3.1 illustrates the number of children respondents cared for.

**Table 3.3.1 Number of children living with respondents**

Number of children	Number of respondents with this number of children	Percentage
1	64	46
2	43	31
3	22	16
4	7	5
5	2	1
6	1	1
Total responses	139	100

All of the respondents lived with or cared for at least one child aged 0 to 4 years old at the time of the survey. Forty-six percent looked after a single child, whilst 31% cared for two. Table 3.3.2 provides details on the ages of children living with or being cared for by respondents.

**Table 3.3.2 Ages of children living with respondents**

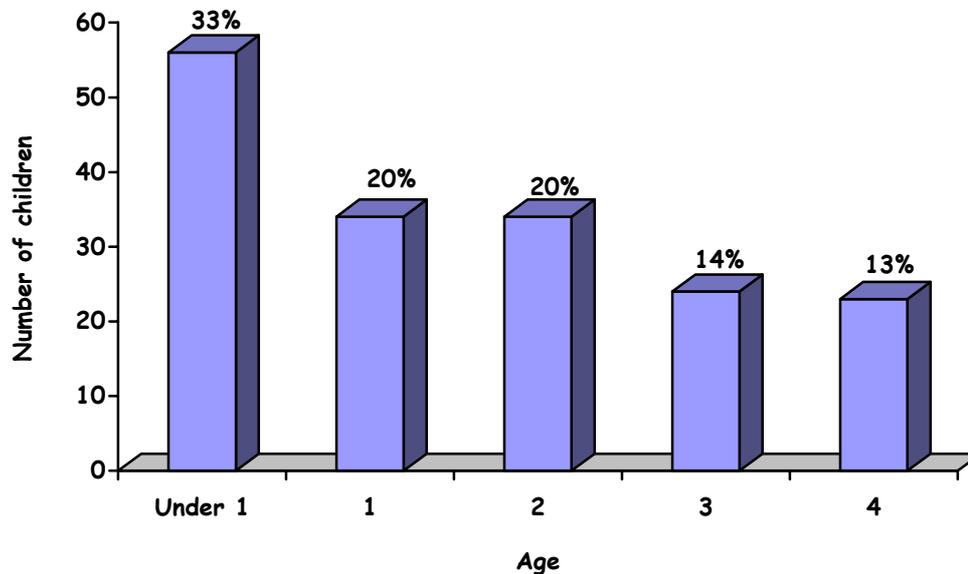
Age range of children (years)	Number of children	Percentage
0-4	171	67
5-9	46	18
10-14	31	12
15 +	9	3
Total	257	100

It can be seen that a total of 257 children were recorded, of whom 171 (67%) were aged four and under, and therefore would have been eligible for Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services during the year.

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The age distribution of those children eligible for Sure Start services (0 - 4 years) are illustrated in Figure 3.3.1.

**Figure 3.3.1 Ages of Children in the Sure Start age bracket**



The majority of children eligible for Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services were aged under two years old.

### **3.4 Knowledge of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe Services**

Of the 139 respondents, 92% (128) had knowledge of the Sure Start services in the area prior to the survey. The prize draw leaflet offered the opportunity for respondents to request further information on Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. Sixty respondents (71%), from the initial 84 responses (the postal returns and first week of telephone surveys), indicated that they required more information on the available services.

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### 3.5 Community services

All of the community services provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe were used by at least one respondent. Figure 3.5.1 illustrates the percentage of respondents who had used each of the community services. These have been ranked in descending order.

**Figure 3.5.1 Number of respondents using each community service**

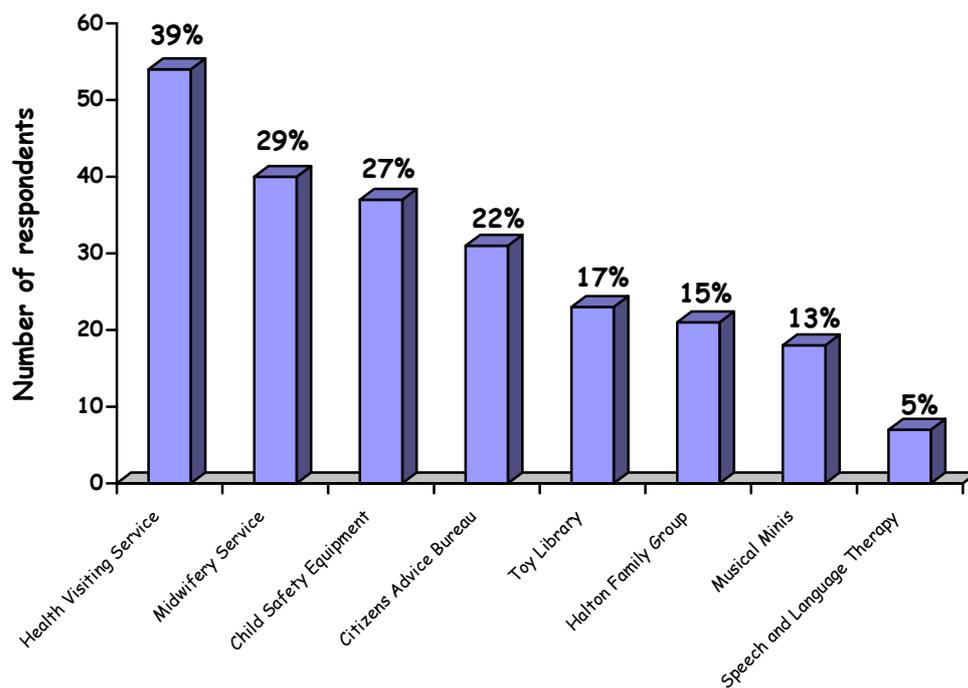
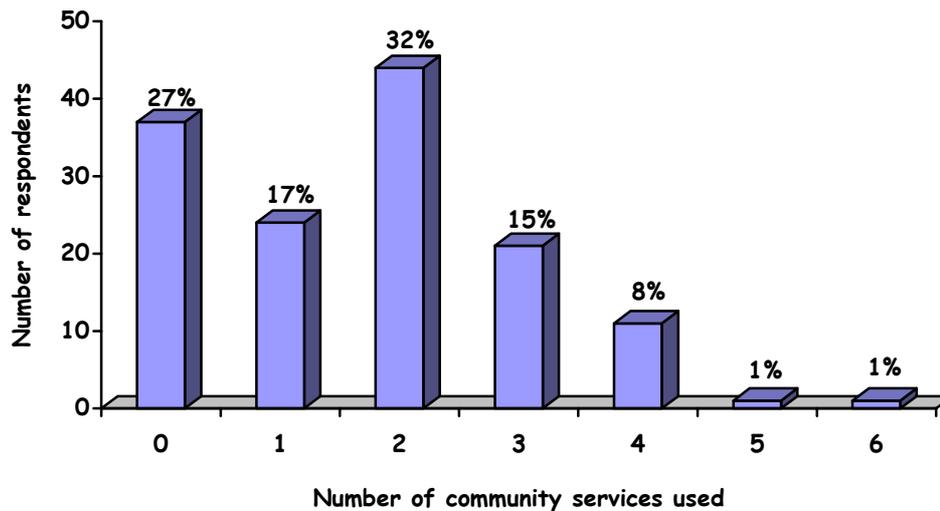


Figure 3.5.2 shows the number of different community services used by each of the respondents. It can be seen that 37 individuals had not accessed any community services.

**Figure 3.5.2 The total number of community services used by the respondents**



### 3.5.1 Disability and service use

Table 3.5.1.1 displays the number of services used by those four respondents who identified themselves as having a disability, compared to those who did not. The percentages displayed are for each category. For example 2 of the 4 respondents who had a disability stated that they used between one and three services, which equals 50%.

**Table 3.5.1.1 Parent/carer with a disability and the number of services Used**

Parent/carer with disability	Number of services used						Total No. of service users
	None		1-3		4-6		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	0	0	2	50	2	50	4
No	37	27	87	64	11	8	135

It can be seen from the results in table 3.5.1.1 that none of those parents who identified themselves as disabled failed to access Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

Table 3.5.1.2 displays the number of services used by those seven respondents who identified a child they care for as disabled, compared to those who did not. The percentages displayed are for each category. For example 2 of the 7 respondents indicated their child had a disability had accessed no services, which equals 29%.

**Table 3.5.1.2 Child with a disability and the number of services used**

Child with disability	Number of services used						Total No. of service users
	None		1-3		4-6		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Yes</b>	2	29	3	43	2	29	7
<b>No</b>	35	27	86	65	11	8	132

It can be seen from the results in Table 3.5.1.2 that equal proportions of disabled children compared to non-disabled children failed to access Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, whilst a larger proportion of disabled children accessed a greater number of services.

### **3.5.2 Single parent status and service use**

Table 3.5.2.1 displays the number of services used by those 31 respondents who classified themselves as single parents, compared to those who did not. The category 'other' could include those respondents who categorised themselves as two parent families, co-habiting, carers and grandparents. The percentages displayed are for each category. For example, 10 of the 31 respondents who stated they were single parents did not use any services, which equals 32%.

**Table 3.5.2.1 Single parent status and number of services used**

Family status	Number of services used						Total No. of service users
	None		1-3		4-6		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Single parent	10	32	19	61	2	6	31
Other	27	25	70	65	11	10	108

There are similar proportions of single parents and non single parents who have used 1 to 3 services. However, single parents were more likely to use no services at all.

### 3.5.3 The number of children respondents have in their house and service use

Table 3.5.3.1 displays the number of services used in relation to the number of children in respondents' households. The percentages displayed in Table 3.5.3.1 are calculated from the total number of respondents with each number of children. For example 16 of the 64 parents/carers who stated that they had one child used no service, which equals 25%.

**Table 3.5.3.1 Number of children in respondents' households and number of services used**

Number of Children	Number of services used						Total No. of service users
	None		1-3		4-6		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	16	25	42	66	6	9	64
2	16	37	26	60	1	2	43
3	4	18	15	68	3	14	22
4+	1	10	6	60	3	30	10

There are similar proportions of families using between one and three services. However, there appears to be a higher proportion of families with one and two children not using any Sure Start services.

### 3.5.4 Age of respondents and services use

Table 3.5.4.1 displays the number of services used by respondents in relation to their age.

**Table 3.5.4.1 The number of services used by each of the age groups**

Age	Number of services used						Total No. of service users
	None		1-3		4-6		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Under 20	2	40	3	60	0	0	5
20-24	6	30	13	65	1	5	20
25-29	11	29	25	66	2	5	38
30-34	10	22	28	62	7	16	45
35-39	6	27	14	64	2	9	22
40 and above	1	13	6	75	1	13	8

It can be seen from Table 3.5.4.1 that those respondents using greater number of services came from the older age groups. It would appear that those respondents under the age of 25 are using fewer Sure Start services.

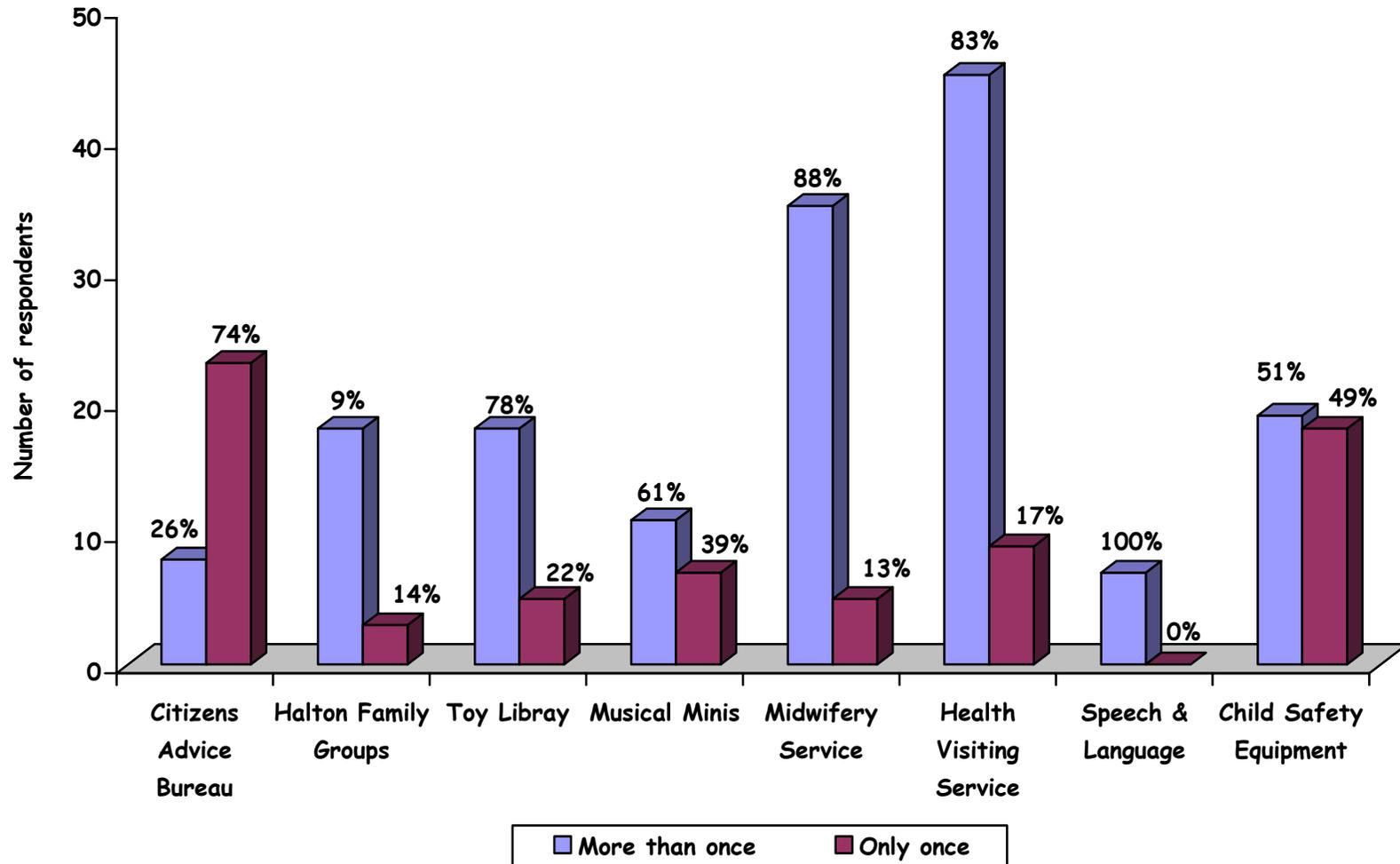
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### **3.6 Use of and satisfaction with community services**

Eight community services were offered to parents and carers in the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe area. Figure 3.6.1 show the number of respondents who had used Sure Start Jolly Giraffe community services once and more than once.

- All of the services were used by at least one respondent (see Appendix 5).
- The service reported to be used by the largest proportion of respondents was the Health Visiting Service. 83% of those who accessed the service had done so on more than one occasion.
- The Midwifery Service was the service with the second highest proportion of respondents having used it, 88% of those who had accessed the service had done so more than once.

Figure 3.6.1 Use of community services

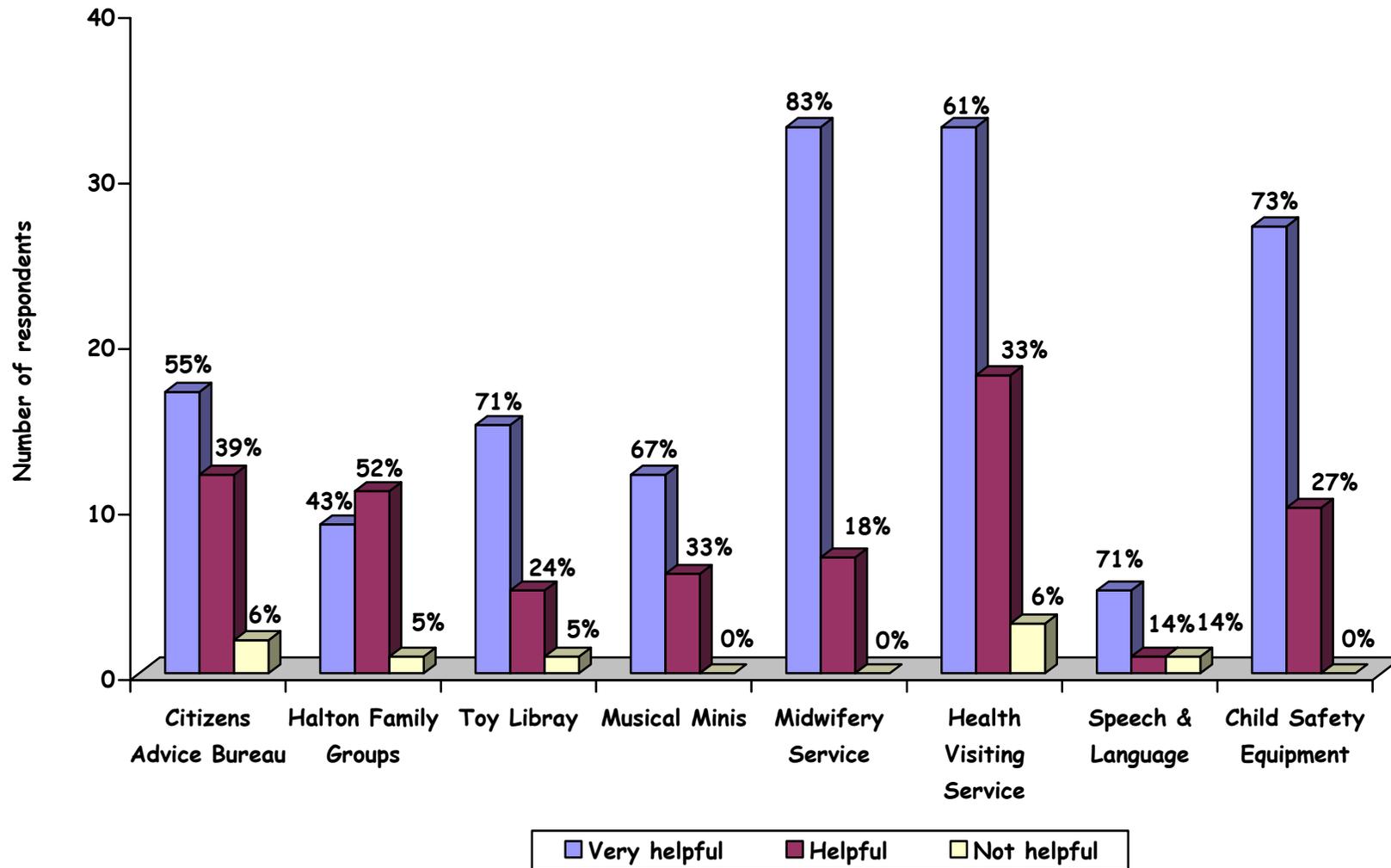


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Figure 3.6.2 illustrates how helpful respondents perceived the community services to be.

- All of the services were perceived as being 'helpful' or 'very helpful' by the majority of users (see Appendix 6).
- Levels of satisfaction with all community services were high, with Musical Minis, Midwifery Service and Child Safety Equipment reported as being either 'helpful' or 'very helpful' by all respondents.
- Only Halton Family Groups was reported as being more 'helpful' than 'very helpful' by those respondents who had accessed the service.

Figure 3.6.2 How helpful were the community services?

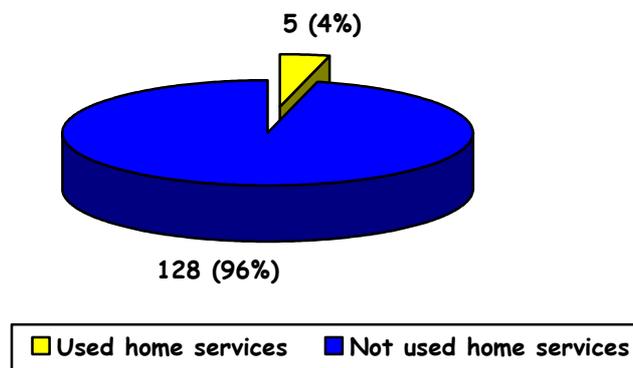


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### 3.7 Use and helpfulness of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services at home

Parents/carers were asked if they had any Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services at home and how helpful they found them. The number of respondents who used home services are presented in Figure 3.7.1

**Figure 3.7.1 Use of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services at home**



Of those respondents who had used home services, four indicated the service was 'very helpful'. One person failed to indicate how helpful they considered services at home.

### 3.8 Activities/services for parents under the age of 21

This question was not applicable to many of the parents/carers, with just 8 respondents under the age of 21. Of those 8 respondents, 75% (6 out of 8) indicated that they would be interested in such services. Table 3.8.1 displays the respondents' interest in services specifically for those aged under 21 years old.

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**Table 3.8.1 Interest in services for under 21's**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No comment</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Baby Massage</b>	5	63	0	0	3	38
<b>Ante-natal Support</b>	3	38	1	13	4	50
<b>Benefit Advice</b>	4	50	2	25	2	25
<b>Relaxation and Pampering</b>	5	63	0	0	3	38

It can be seen from Table 3.8.1 that the majority of respondents who chose to respond to questions regarding services for those parents aged under 21 indicated they would be interested. Such a result is highlighted by one respondent who commented:

*'There are a number of young mums out there who do not have the confidence to sit down and talk with older women. Such services would provide a chance for those who find themselves in similar situations to come together and share their experiences.'*

An additional 11 out of the 131 respondents who were aged 21 and over indicated that they thought there would be interest in services for those aged under 21 years old.

### **3.9 Activities/support for Dads and Dads-to-be**

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in activities/support for Dads and Dads-to-be. Only three respondents to the survey were male. However, all three males indicated they would be interested in services for Dads and Dads-to-be. Of those female respondents, 41% indicated Dads and Dads-to-be would be interested in these services, whilst 48% stated they would not be interested. The remaining 11% failed to respond to the question. Many of the parents who completed the questionnaires over the telephone stated that their partner/husband worked full-time and did not have the time to attend such groups. One parent commented:

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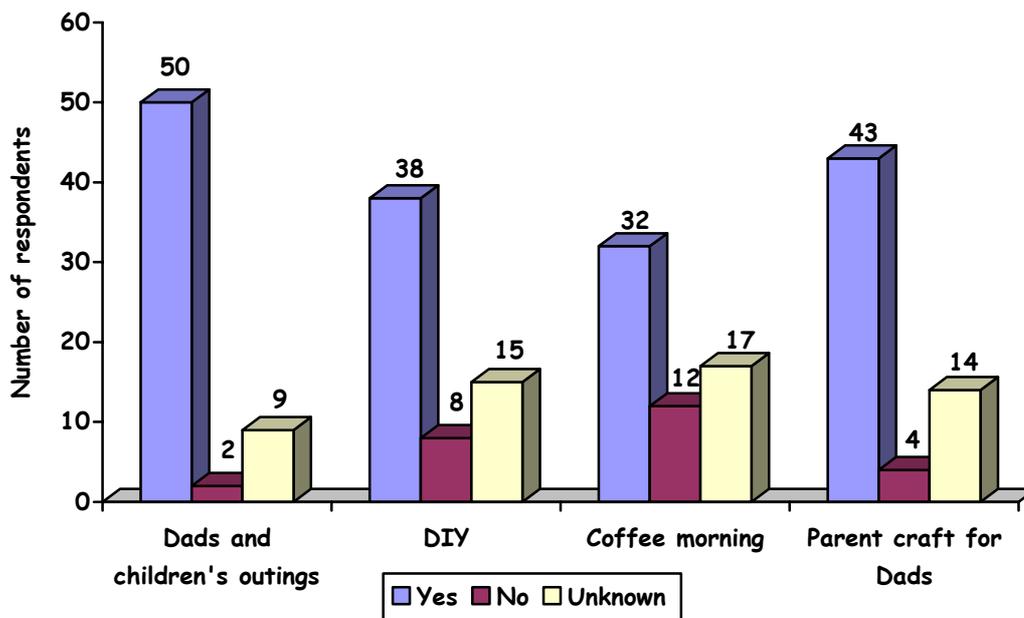
*'(His) Dad works quite long hours. Send some information though and we will have a look. The DIY sounds quite interesting.'* (43).

In response to this, and as a way of making the services/groups more accessible to those parents who worked, one parent suggested the possibility of providing groups that were outside of working hours.

*'Activities at weekends or out of working hours would be very helpful.'* (20).

When given a selection of possible sessions for Dads and Dads-to-be the three male respondents all implied they would be interested in the services suggested. Only one male respondent failed to answer with regards to the suggestion of a coffee morning for Dads and Dads-to-be. When examining the responses to include female respondents, a mixed view was gained from those who thought Dads services would be of interest. The results of all the respondents' views on the services can be seen in Figure 3.9.1.

**Figure 3.9.1 Interest in services for Dads and Dads-to-be**



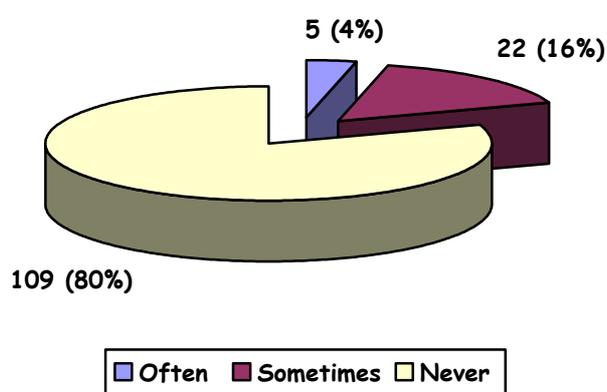
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It can be seen from Figure 3.9.1 that respondents were positive about all services for Dads and Dads-to-be. However there was a mixed response regarding the suggestion of a coffee morning.

### 3.10 Service user-initiated contact by telephone or drop-in

Parents/carers were asked whether they had phoned or dropped in to see the Jolly Giraffe team for a chat or advice. The number of respondents who initiated contact by phone or drop in can be seen in Figure 3.10.1. Eighty percent (106 out of 136) indicated they had had not initiated contact with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe through either telephone or drop-in. Only 4% (5 people) reported often initiating contact through telephone calls or dropping into the centre.

**Figure 3.10.1** Number of parents/carers initiating contact by telephone or drop-in



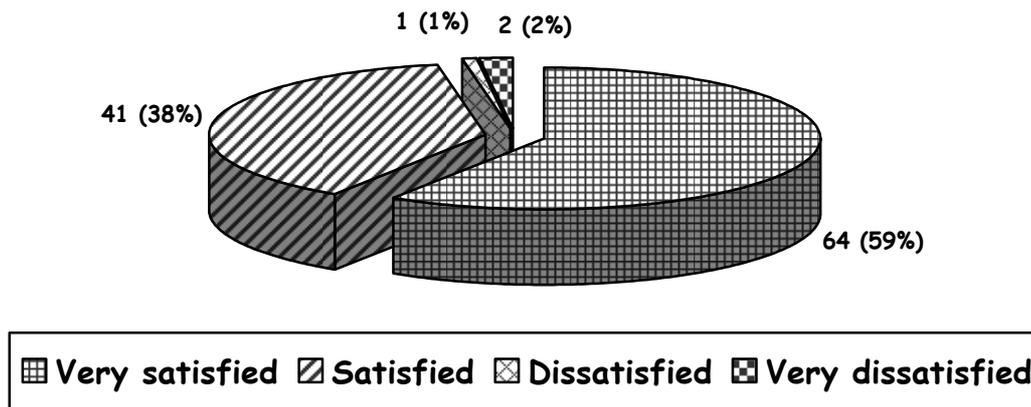
### 3.11 Overall satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services

Figure 3.11.1 summarizes the overall level of satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. The overall level of satisfaction was high amongst the 108 respondents who answered the question. Ninety seven percent (105 people) reported they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the available services. Of these, 64 (59%) of the respondents reported they were 'very satisfied' with the overall services. Only one respondent reported they were dissatisfied, whilst two people (2%) were very dissatisfied. Thirty-four

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respondents (24%) did not answer the question. Of those parents/carers who completed the questionnaires over the telephone, when asked their levels of overall satisfaction those who had not used any services or had only just started to use services felt unable to comment.

**Figure 3.11.1 Overall satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe service**



### 3.12 Further comments from respondents

In total, 53% of respondents (73 people) made additional comments regarding Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. Ninety-one comments were made overall. A complete list of all the comments made can be found in Appendix 7. Seven key themes emerged from these comments:

- comments regarding positive experiences of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services (19 comments);
- suggestions regarding future service delivery (15 comments);
- messages of thanks for Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services (5 comments);
- comments regarding intentions of respondents to use Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services in the future (4 comments);
- comments regarding the need for more information about Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services (27 comments);
- comments regarding difficulty with attending sessions (4 comments);

- 
- comments regarding negative experiences of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services (12 comments).

### **3.12.1 Comments regarding positive experiences**

Nineteen (26%) respondents made positive comments regarding the experiences which they had had. Twenty-seven (37%) respondents made general comments regarding their satisfaction with the services as the following comment illustrates:

*'I think that Sure Start teams are an advantage in the communities they cover. Although I don't really access them, I have spoken to the teams over the telephone and always found them helpful, courteous and friendly.'* (14).

Further comments of this nature support the satisfaction demonstrated within the survey for the services provided.

### **3.12.2 Comments regarding future service delivery**

Fifteen (21%) respondents who made additional comments did so about how they would like the service to be developed. One area highlighted by five respondents was that some services were only offered until the child was six months old i.e. Baby massage and Pamper sessions, and that more needed to be provided for those with older babies and children. The following comment illustrates this point:

*'More and more activities are being limited to families with babies under 6 months but why are extra activities not planned to compensate for families who do not fit this criteria.'* (22).

This point was expanded upon by another respondent who commented:

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*'After having my son I started going to Sure Start groups - Baby Massage and Pamper group. I was very self-conscious at first as I was meeting new people. The groups were helpful as they got me out of the house. I was devastated to find out that they have now decided to only offer these groups to Mums with babies who are 6 months and under as it means I can no longer go, especially after persevering and getting to know all the other Mums in the group. Sure Start have not offered any alternative groups to all the Mums who can no longer go to these two groups. The whole thing is depressing.'* (26).

A further development suggested was the introduction of more mums and tots groups. Two respondents commented that some classes could also be offered at alternative times, as the following comment illustrates:

*'To be honest with you I take my little boy to school in the morning which is when most of the sessions seem to be. If there's anything on in the afternoon though I'd go to that.'* (94).

In addition to these suggestions regarding future service delivery, four (5%) comments were made regarding the timing of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services and how attending was made difficult with clashes with work commitments. It was commented:

*'Working full-time I don't really have much time to use the services. Information on the toy library would be good.'* (49).

### **3.12.3 Messages of thanks and praise**

Nine (12%) respondents used the additional space provided to express sentiments of thanks towards the staff for the services they had received. As one respondent commented:

*'I am [child] grandma so I don't use all the services on offer but the ones I take [child] to 'Toy Library' and 'Musical Minis' I find them to be excellent. [Child] loves to go the staff are lovely. Thank you.'* (38).

Another respondent stated:

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*'[I] always find [the] staff very helpful and friendly.'* (34).

#### **3.12.4 Comments regarding future intention to use Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services**

Four (5%) comments were made by respondents who intended to make greater use of services in the future. One respondent stated:

*'I went to a fun day and it was absolutely brilliant and I am hoping to start more soon.'* (135).

#### **3.12.5 Comments regarding the need for more information on Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services**

Twenty-seven (37%) respondents made comments regarding the need for more information and the need for Sure Start Jolly Giraffe to publicise their services more actively. One respondent stated:

*'I would like information to come through the door often so I know what's on offer. I've heard about Sure Start but I don't know where it is.'* (36).

A number of respondents commented that they were not aware of the full range of services provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe. One individual commented:

*'I have been to mums and tots and was given no information about any of the other services. I feel I don't get enough information about what is going on.'* (132).

#### **3.12.6 Comments regarding negative experiences of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services**

Twelve (16%) of the comments made by respondents related to negative experiences when using or attempting to use Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, illustrated by the following comment:

*'The Sure Start service is very much geared to at home mums not those who go out to work.'* (129).

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Comments were also made regarding respondents' lack of knowledge as to their entitlement to use Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. One respondent commented:

*'Never thought I was in a Sure Start area - as I was told when I moved to Runcorn I couldn't access the services. However, we have collected stickers for the library. Shame Sure Start doesn't help those of us in full-time employment who just tip over the 'poverty' line who could really use some support and friendship. Poverty isn't just about money. I feel very poor without friends' support. Just to know you're not alone.'* (21).

Two comments were also made regarding the approach of Sure Start staff when working with Sure Start members, as the following comment illustrates.

*'I go [to the] parents group and nothing the parents suggest is taken on board as if the parents don't matter. I find [Sure Start staff member] patronising assuming all parents are thick and on income support.'* (32).

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## Chapter 4

### Children's experience of services

#### 4.1 Introduction

Four different Sure Start Jolly Giraffe sessions were observed. These were Busy Bodies, Dads and Kids Soft Play, Play Days and the Crèche. The findings from these observations are presented below.

#### 4.2 Busy Bodies

Busy Bodies is a music and dance session for children aged between two and four years old and their parents/carers. It is held on Tuesdays between 1.30 and 2.30pm, at Halton Lodge Children's Centre. The class is led by a dance teacher. On the day of the visit the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe Play Worker was also present for most of the session. The session was held in an empty room with space for children to move around safely.

As the session began, only two children, accompanied by the same parent/carer, had arrived. The dance teacher played some music on the tape recorder. During the session the music was varied and included Disney songs, pop music and nursery rhymes. The dance teacher began by moving to the music and asking the children if they could do the same as her. The children appeared to be fully engaged in the activity as they watched carefully and copied the movements of the dance teacher each time and followed her instructions such as stretching up as if trying to touch the ceiling. They seemed to really enjoy the activities as they were both smiling and laughing during each exercise.

About five minutes into the session two more children arrived with their parents/carers. The dance teacher invited them to join in but one child was sleeping in his pushchair while the other appeared reluctant to join in. The play worker and the child's parent/carer encouraged her to join in but she shook her

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head and stood back against the wall. A few minutes later the child in the pushchair woke up. His parent/carer took him to join the group and the children and adults made a circle in the centre of the room. The dance teacher led an activity of marching to the music, firstly marching in and out of the circle, and then marching around the circle. The dance teacher gave lots of encouragement and also praised the children after each activity, making comments such as, "Well done everyone. We had some really good leaders for our circle dance." Children were also encouraged by their parents/carers who told them that they were doing well. Only one child was still reluctant to join in, standing still and staring at the floor. The dance teacher and play worker continued to invite the child to join in on regular occasions.

The next activity involved using scarves to move to the music. Each child chose a scarf from the dance teacher who then demonstrated some movements to try, such as throwing the scarf in the air and catching it on her head. Children then worked with their parents/carers for a few minutes while the dance teacher went around the group making encouraging comments and giving praise. During this activity the child who had been reluctant to join in began to play with the scarf along with her parent/carer. She began to smile as she tried the different activities.

The next activity involved everyone in the group making a circle by holding the end of a scarf in each hand while people on each side held the opposite ends of the scarves. The dance teacher then led everyone to move in and out, changing the size of the circle, and then to hold the scarves up high and then low down. Children who may not have been able to understand the verbal instructions were able to watch and copy the movements other people were making. Most children followed each activity, their smiles and laughter indicated that they were enjoying them. They also appeared to like the praise from their parents/carers and the staff involved. After each activity the dance teacher said "Well done"

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and everyone clapped. The children seemed excited, jumping up and down on the spot between activities.

This was followed by the dance teacher asking everyone to pretend they were washing a car in the middle of the circle. She encouraged everyone to try different movements to the music such as reaching to clean the windows of the car. By this point one of the children began to run about the room instead of joining in. He was brought back to the group by the play worker who encouraged him in a friendly manner to continue to take part.

The Busy Bodies session ended with everyone sitting in a circle and doing some stretches. The dance teacher then reviewed what had been done during the session by listing the different activities.

As the children and their parents/carers left the room they were encouraged to come to future sessions by the staff who told them they hoped to see them again next week. Numbers of people attending the Busy Bodies session had been higher in previous weeks and there was space for some more families to attend.

On the whole, the children present seemed to enjoy the session. Two of the children appeared to particularly enjoy the activities, watching the dance teacher closely and copying all the movements carefully, and smiling when praised for their achievements. Indeed, one parent/carer commented that her child had attended a previous session and had been looking forward to today's session since last time, telling people that she was going to "her dance class".

### **4.3 Dads and Kids Soft Play**

The Dads and Kids Soft Play session is held on Thursdays between 9.30 and 11.30am, at Halton Lodge Children's Centre. It is run by the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe Community Worker, with the aim of involving dads in playing with their

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children. In this case 'Dads' refers to anybody who is a father figure to a child and therefore could include stepfathers, granddads, uncles or male carers. The visit took place on the second week of the Dads and Kids Soft Play session. The first week it was held nobody attended the session. As a result, the community worker decided to open up the session to all parents/carers, not just Dads. On the day of the visit the session was attended by six children and four parents/carers. One of the parents/carers was a granddad attending with his grandchild. The other three were female parents/carers.

The Dads and Kids Soft Play session was held in a large room. At one end of the room was a padded soft play area. The padding against the wall was six foot high, and was decorated with pictures of animals. Some games were in built with Velcro pieces for children to detach and move around. The floor area was also padded and various soft play toys were available. They included a set of steps, a slope with a rope attached that children could use to pull themselves up, and giant Lego pieces. The area was brightly coloured and the equipment looked in very good condition, being quite new. The other half of the room contained a child sized table and chairs with pictures set out and pens to colour them in with. There was a play mat on the floor and a box of toys to use with it. In one corner of the room was a tape recorder. Music was played throughout the session and consisted of various children's songs.

The children chose their activities. Initially most children went to the soft play area and their parents/carers followed them. Some parents/carers actively joined in play with their child while others stood back and watched. The children seemed very excited in the soft play area, as evidenced by their laughter, giggles and behaviour as they jumped around. The older children were very active, using the equipment to climb up, jump from and slide down. The younger children were also able to use the equipment, as supported by their parents/carers they crawled about and slid down the slope.

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Some children then moved away from the soft play area and went to the table to colour pictures or to the play mat to play with toy cars. Children and their parents/carers sat and coloured pictures together. Some older children chatted together as they coloured. Some parents/carers also talked together as they watched over their children. The community worker shared time between speaking to parents/carers and playing with children in the soft play area.

During the session the children continued to choose their activities, moving freely between the different areas. The younger children continued to be supported closely by their parents/carers who joined in with the activities the children chose. The older children who were more independent played alone or with other children but often called out to their parents/carers to watch something they were doing, such as jumping from or sliding down the soft play equipment. One child played alone, building castle with the giant Lego pieces. He was encouraged by different adults in this creative play as they asked him if he was going to have a window, where he would have the doors and so on.

Half way through the session there was a break for snacks. Children and their parents/carers moved next door to the cafeteria area. A large table had been arranged for everyone to sit at. High chairs and booster seats were available for the younger children. The community worker brought the snacks to the table, helped by some parents/carers. Melon, strawberries, brown toast and white toast were all available. The children seemed to enjoy the snacks as they all had something to eat and sat quietly seeming to concentrate on their food. Juice was available in plastic cups for the children while parents/carers were offered tea or coffee.

Once the children had finished eating, everyone moved back into the other room. Activities continued as before with children moving between the soft play area, the colouring area and the play mat. One child danced to the music in the

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corner of the room, encouraged by her parent/carer. She seemed to really enjoy the music and dancing as she smiled and giggled as she spun around energetically.

At the end of the session the parents/carers helped to tidy up, putting the equipment together and encouraging their children to help. Feedback sheets about the session that were completed by parents/carers indicated that they thought the children had enjoyed the session. Comments included the following:

*'Children really enjoyed themselves. Great group.'*

*'All the children enjoyed the group, and the snack was brilliant too.'*

*'Nice to see a mixed snack - fruit and toast for the picky eaters.'*

*'Brilliant, waited ages for something like this, great!'*

Children's behaviour and demeanour during the session also indicated that they enjoyed it. It was a fun session and children seemed to enjoy the chance to play actively on the soft play equipment. Having other activities available meant that children could choose to take breaks from the more active play and offered variety. Children did indeed choose to move between the different activities. The children also seemed to enjoy opportunities to play either alone, or with their parent/carer or with other children.

The original aim of involving Dads in playing with their children has proved difficult to meet and as a result the session was opened to all parents/carers. The Community Worker expressed a determination to continue to consult with Dads to find out what type of services they would like. A newsletter to promote fathers' involvement, entitled 'The Goodfather', has been sent to all registered families. Plans for a gardening project, or trips organised for Dads and their

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children, which previously proved popular, are being considered as ways of engaging Dads in Sure Start Jolly Giraffe activities.

#### **4.4 Play Days**

Play Days is a group for parents and carers and their babies and young children. It is held on Fridays between 1 and 2.45pm, at Halton Lodge Children's Centre. The session is usually run by the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe Play Worker, but on the day of the observation it was run by a Speech and Language Therapy Assistant, and a Pre-School Learning Alliance Nursery Nurse. A total of twelve children and nine parents/carers attended the session. Children ranged from young babies to pre-schoolers.

Parents/carers were asked to sign in as they arrived at the session. Then the children were free to choose what they would like to do. There was a wide choice of activities and resources available. Play Days was held in a large room which had been arranged into different areas that the children could choose to go to. There was an area used for babies which was carpeted and contained baby mats and baby seats, with a long mirror positioned at babies' eye level. There were sensory toys available to stimulate babies. On the other side of a low wall there were two cots available in case babies needed to have a sleep. Next to the baby area there was a reading area with lots of books to choose from and some cushions for children to sit on. The next area contained two tables with table top activities set out. On one table jig-saws were available while the other was being used as an arts and craft table. There were paper ducks along with glue and feathers for children to decorate them with. On the floor there were two play mats. One was equipped with cars while the other had a farm and farmyard animals to play with. A blackboard with chalk and sponges was positioned nearby. At the other end of the room were a sand trough and a water trough, with the sand trough available for children on that particular day. Next to this was a child sized kitchen with a play oven, washing machine, sink, drawers and a vacuum

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cleaner. There was also a kitchen table and chairs complete with a range of plastic food for children to play with. Children's imaginative play was further encouraged by a rail full of dressing up clothes. Finally, there was a large outside space with a tarmaced area and a grass verge. There were lots of tricycles for children to ride on. Overall, the area was very well equipped, with a wide range of resources for children to choose from and space for them to move around safely. A bathroom with children's toilets and sinks was situated within the room. The door leading out of the main room was opened by a button which was out of the reach of small children.

The Play Days session was child led with children choosing their activities and parents/carers following. For the first part of the session many of the children went outside to play on the bikes or the grass. Children particularly seemed to enjoy the bikes, as several children opted to ride on them, smiling and laughing with their parents/carers as they did so. One parent/carer commented that it was the first time her child had been on a bike and that she enjoyed it very much. Another parent/carer said that her child likes attending the sessions because he enjoys the space and being able to roam about.

As the session progressed the children tended to go back inside the room. Here too the activities were very much child led with children choosing what they would like to do and for how long. Several parents/carers commented that their children enjoy the sessions because there are lots of activities for children to do and lots of toys for them to play with. On the whole children did not spend long on particular activities, preferring instead to move on to something else. Some parents/carers followed their children and shared in their activities, talking to their children about what they were doing. For example, one child went over to the kitchen play area and made an imaginary cup of tea and pretended to cook dinner for her parent/carer. The child appeared to be very engaged in her imaginary play with her parent/carer as the game lasted for

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several minutes with the child setting the table and then pretending to cook dinner at the play oven before serving it up. In other cases children played alone for a while, confident to wander about and choose activities without their parents/carers.

The atmosphere was very relaxed with parents having the opportunity to chat to each other. Parents/carers tended also to look out for the other children, comforting them if they became upset. On a couple of occasions children became upset when they wanted to play with a toy another child was using, or if another child took a toy away from them. This was resolved by parents or by members of staff who explained the need to take turns and share equipment with other children. This was highlighted as a benefit of the session by several parents/carers who commented that it allowed their child to become used to playing with other children and also helped them learn to share things. One parent/carer commented that there are no other children at home and so the sessions allow her child to get used to being around other children even though he has not yet reached the stage of playing with them. Another parent/carer commented that she had noticed her child increasing in confidence through attending the sessions.

The members of staff moved around the group spending some time engaging children in imaginative play, for example in playing with the toy farm. However, this was not directive as again children moved to and from the activities as they wished. Staff members also spent some time talking to parents/carers.

Mid way through the session, the Sure Start workers gathered all the children together to sit around the table for a snack. Parents/carers stayed close by and passed food to their children. Children were offered cheese sandwiches, crackers, toast, and a range of fruit including tomato, kiwi, orange and apple. Each child was given juice to drink, in appropriate plastic cups with lids. As

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children finished their snacks they moved away from the table and returned to play, again choosing the activities for themselves.

A toy library is operated from the Play Days session, with parents/carers being offered the chance to borrow any of the toys available. Toys are signed out and borrowed for one week. During the session one of the Sure Start workers approached each of the parents/carers to ask whether they would like to use the toy library. On this occasion none of the parents/carers wished to use the facility.

Towards the end of the session, the Sure Start workers collected the bikes together outside, encouraging children to help. The toys and activities inside the room were then put away by the Sure Start workers, with some children helping to put away whatever they were playing with. Children were given the duck pictures they had completed during the session to take home with them. Parents/carers and their children left the session gradually. The last child to leave was very reluctant to go and began to cry. The child was comforted by her parent/carer and the Sure Start workers who told the child she could return the following week.

Overall children did seem to enjoy the session. Indeed, one parent/carer commented that her child had asked earlier that day if he could "come to his club". Another parent/carer commented that when the sessions end her child never wants to leave. During the session the children seemed relaxed and happy to wander about choosing activities as they wished. There was a range of appropriate activities and resources available for children to choose from. Children also seemed to enjoy the opportunity to play with other children, or if they had not yet reached that developmental stage, seemed to enjoy being around other children.

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#### 4.5 The Crèche

The crèche is held at Halton Lodge Children's Centre on Monday and Wednesday mornings. It is free for parents/carers who are attending training courses or Sure Start Jolly Giraffe groups. On the day of the observation, children attended the crèche while their parents/carers attended the Coffee Morning. The Coffee Morning is held on Mondays between 9.30 and 11.30am, also at Halton Lodge Children's Centre. The crèche is run by the Crèche Supervisor and two assistants. All three are qualified Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) nursery nurses. It is held in the room that Play Days takes place in. The resources, room layout and equipment available were therefore the same as described in the observation of the Play Days session.

As children arrived at the crèche with their parents/carers, the parents/carers signed in and then left the children while they went to attend the Coffee Morning. A total of eight children attended the crèche. While some children said goodbye to their parents/carers and then went straight off to play, other children became distressed and began to cry once they realised their parent/carer had left the room. These children were soon comforted by the crèche workers who reassured them that their parents/carers had just gone for a cup of tea and would be back shortly.

Children were free to choose the activities they wished and to move between activities as they liked. Two of the crèche workers positioned themselves at specific activities, while the third moved around the whole area, talking to different children. For example, one crèche worker sat at a table with jig-saws laid out. Some children approached the table and joined in with playing with the jig-saw puzzles. Individual children were also invited to join the crèche workers with their activities. Sometimes children did and at other times they chose not to. In these circumstances children were not directed to participate but were allowed to go to other activities as they wished. However, the crèche workers

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did ensure they supervised what was happening with all of the children and intervened as necessary. For instance, three children were playing with toy farm animals on the play mat. When the children began to squabble over the toys, a crèche worker encouraged them to take turns and not to snatch the toys from each other.

Many of the children seemed engaged in imaginative play, either alone, with other children, or with a crèche worker. For example one child seemed absorbed in his play when looking after a toy animal using a play vet's equipment set. He spent about five minutes looking at the toy dog, examining it with the stethoscope, giving it injections, and then putting it into the carrying case and walking around the room with it. Another child played alone with some plastic animals. He seemed very engaged in his play as he focussed on his game for half an hour, moving the toy animals around the worktop where he was playing. At times during this play a crèche worker approached the child and talked with him about the different animals. The child was also invited to join in with other activities with crèche workers, such as doing jig-saws but he remained engrossed in his own play for the extended period of time. The crèche workers also encouraged imaginative play. At one point a crèche worker and three children were in the play kitchen area. The children all participated in pretending to make dinner at the oven and serving it up at the table. All the children seemed to enjoy the game as they remained focussed on it, actively participating for fifteen minutes. Overall, during this session children tended to focus more on their play than in other observed sessions as they stayed engaged on the same tasks for longer periods.

Mid way through the session it was snack time. The children were gathered at a table and were each given a plastic plate and cup. The atmosphere was calm and relaxed as crèche workers chatted with children and older children talked to each other. As the snacks were offered to the children, the crèche workers

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reinforced the social skills of turn taking and saying please and thank you, as the food was offered to each child in turn. Rice cakes and crackers were available to eat and children were offered milk or water to drink.

Following snack time children returned to play. One crèche worker brought out some musical instruments and encouraged children to come and try them. However, again children were not directed to join in if they chose not to. Another crèche worker set out an activity at one of the tables, with pictures of ducks and glue and feathers to be used to decorate them. Again children either approached the table and joined in or were invited individually to do a picture. The crèche worker talked with the children as they completed their pictures and made encouraging remarks such as, "That's beautiful!"

One child seemed unhappy about being at the crèche and wanted to remain in his pushchair. At several points during the session he was encouraged out of the pushchair but began to cry and scream. Several times he did engage in activities, such as colouring in pictures with a crèche worker but each time went back to his pushchair.

Three children played together in the sand tray. They were joined by a crèche worker who added some water to the sand. The children seemed to enjoy this play as they remained at the sand tray playing with the different toys there for about ten minutes. They were also joined by another child who approached the sand tray saying, "I want to play." Children were encouraged to socialise when opportunities arose. For example when one child was watching what another child was doing, the crèche worker asked the child who was playing if the other child could come and play with him. He responded by holding out the toy to the other child.

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At 11.30am, the parents/carers returned from the Coffee Morning to collect their children and greeted them with hugs and kisses. The crèche workers handed out the duck pictures completed by the children for them to take home. The children and their parents/carers then left, waving goodbye to the crèche workers.

Most children seemed to enjoy the session. When asked what they had liked, children responded with the following comments:

*'Like the tigers, the baby tigers.'*

*'Playing with (crèche worker's name).'*

*'Play, playing with the animals.'*

*'My dinner.'*

Activities were child led with the crèche workers taking opportunities to encourage social skills, speech and imaginative play where possible. Children were offered a lot of adult attention. There was a mix of children playing alone, playing alongside each other, and playing with the crèche workers, either individually or in groups. Children seemed on the whole to be very engaged in what they were doing, often staying focused on the same activity for extended periods of time.

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## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### 5.1. Introduction

This 'satisfaction' study provides an insight into the use of, and satisfaction with, *Sure Start Jolly Giraffe* services, from the perspective of both parents/carers and children. Using the *Child Health Database* as a sampling frame helped to ensure that those eligible families who were not registered with *Sure Start Jolly Giraffe* were also included in the survey element of the study.

The overall response rate to the survey of 16% is low and needs to be considered when examining the results, as the responses will contain a self selecting bias and for some questions the numbers concerned are very small. However, the results do give some indication of satisfaction levels amongst service users and highlight areas for future research and development. When attempting to undertake telephone interviews, 147 calls were made to dead lines, wrong numbers or duplicated numbers, indicating that the records of *Sure Start Jolly Giraffe* members may not be up to date. Such a result may indicate that some individuals did not receive their postal questionnaire which may help to explain the low response rate. Potential inaccuracies with the information held regarding registered families have been highlighted, which may be an issue which *Sure Start Jolly Giraffe* wants to follow up.

Despite these limitations to the study, the survey has accessed a sample of eligible families who are both registered and not registered with *Sure Start Jolly Giraffe*, and the anonymous nature of the questionnaire may have encouraged individuals to give their opinions honestly. In addition, four different *Sure Start Jolly Giraffe* sessions were successfully observed.

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## 5.2 User characteristics

The majority of respondents to the survey were female (96%) with 23% classifying themselves as single parents. Such results could indicate that the majority of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe users are female. However, this conclusion should be made with caution due to the self-selected nature of respondents, in that male users may have decided not to participate in the survey. Nevertheless, it is likely that the majority of services users are female and these findings do highlight the problems faced by the Sure Start programme with engaging fathers/male carers. Four respondents (3%) reported that they had a disability, whilst seven (5%) reported their child aged 4 and under as having a disability. The effect upon service usage of disability will be examined further within the section on use of services.

The results of the survey highlight that the majority of respondents were aged over 25 years. It could be of benefit to establish if the age of the respondents reflects the age range of the registered population. This would give more information about how accurately the results could be generalised to the whole eligible population.

## 5.3 Awareness of services

Awareness of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe was high amongst respondents with 92% (128 out of 139) stating they knew about the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services in their area. However this still leaves eight percent of respondents who were unaware of the local services provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe. In addition to the lack of awareness amongst some respondents, 27 of the 73 respondents who made additional comments felt they needed more information on the services available.

Due to the fact that Sure Start Jolly Giraffe regularly sends out information on the services available in the form of a newsletter to registered families it may

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be surprising that so many respondents felt the need for further information. It may be worth Sure Start Jolly Giraffe considering alternative or additional methods of distributing information to promote forthcoming events and services. The need for more up-to-date information was highlighted by respondents who felt they received the information too late, especially when required to book places for activities.

Some respondents felt the need for more information regarding services available for children over the age of six months who were no longer eligible to attend certain activities, e.g. Pamper sessions. This was an area of concern as parents/carers indicated they felt they were unaware of the options available to them that would allow them to continue to socially interact with people in similar situations once they were no longer permitted to attend classes such as Baby massage and Pamper sessions.

#### **5.4 Use of services**

All eight of the community services were used by at least one respondent, with all services having more respondents using the services on more than one occasion than only once, with one exception. Such a finding indicates that once parents/carers have engaged with a service they are likely to return to the service again, thus Sure Start Jolly Giraffe can retain users. The Citizens Advice Bureau was the service that did not have people using the service on more than one occasion, but this could be due to the nature of the service. However, from the results it was evident that 27% of respondents had not accessed a single service. This highlights the need to inform eligible parents/carers of the available services and also the importance of the initial contact.

The Health Visiting Service was used by the highest number of respondents, followed by the Midwifery Service and Child Safety Equipment. Speech and

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Language had the lowest number of respondents using the service. However, this is a specialised service that would not be required by all parents/carers. Other services with relatively low number of respondents included Musical Minis, Halton Family Groups and Toy Library. Further investigation could be beneficial to establish the awareness levels about such services and any reasons behind low usage.

Respondent characteristics were examined to establish any affects on service usage. Those parents/carers with two children appeared least likely to engage with any of the services. From comments made through telephone interviews some parents/carers found it difficult with two young children to find a routine to allow them to attend Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. In addition, the point was made by a number of respondents with more than one child that they could not easily access services as they would need child care for an older child. For those parents/carers with older children the extension of the crèche service currently held on Monday and Wednesday mornings in conjunction with training courses and some Jolly Giraffe services may encourage parents/carers to access Sure Start services.

The results of the survey indicate that service use was not affected by the disability of a parent/carer, although caution is needed as numbers were very small. All of the parents/carers who stated they had a disability had accessed at least one Sure Start service, with 50% (2) respondents having accessed four services. However, 29% (2) of respondents who stated their child had a disability had not accessed any services. Despite the numbers in the survey being very small it may be worthy of further investigation to establish the reasons why respondents who had disabled children had not accessed any services. Further investigation, including qualitative research, could help identify anything that could encourage parents/carers of disabled children to access the available services. When examining those respondents who classified themselves

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as single parents, a higher proportion were found to use no services compared to non-single parents. Therefore, it may be beneficial to investigate further the reasons why single parents are perhaps less likely to engage in services.

### **5.5 Satisfaction with services**

The overall satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services was high, with 97% of respondents (105 out of 108 respondents who answered the question) stating they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the services. Whilst levels of satisfaction are encouraging, the results should be examined with caution, as this is only the view of 108 people from an eligible population of 869 families. It must also be noted that 31 respondents failed to answer the question on satisfaction levels. From telephone interviews, it was established that those people who had not used or had only just begun using Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services felt they were not able to answer questions regarding levels of satisfaction.

When examining the individual services the majority of respondents reported the services they had accessed as 'very helpful'. Once again, such findings indicate that the delivery of services is satisfactory. Furthermore, those children observed appeared to be generally 'satisfied' with the services they participated in. The sessions were all well set out and equipped. Children seemed to be engaged with and to enjoy the sessions. When activities were more directive, as in *Busy Bodies*, the children participated throughout and mainly appeared engaged and enthusiastic. In other sessions, which were more child-led, the majority of children appeared confident and relaxed enough to choose activities as they wished. There were a range of activities and resources for children to select from which seemed ample as children were fully occupied. Most sessions provided the chance for children to spend some quality time with their parent/carer. Different children also appeared to enjoy different opportunities for being around other children, either at the level of just

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watching others, playing alongside them, or playing with them. In addition, for parents the sessions offered a chance to meet with and talk to other parents, and appeared to engender a sense of 'community', for example, parents would interact with children other than their own whilst joining in activities.

While it is problematic to present an account of children's satisfaction with services, due to the age of the children involved, as discussed earlier, hopefully this has provided an insight into children's experiences of Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, by describing their activities and behaviour at various sessions. The majority of the children appeared to be happy and content for the majority of the time, as evidence by their engagement with activities and expressions of pleasure such as smiling and laughing.

In the survey, Halton Family Groups was the only service not to have more people reporting the service as 'very helpful', whilst one respondent felt this service was 'not helpful'. The Citizens Advice Bureau (2 respondents), Toy Library (1 respondent), Health Visiting Service (3 respondents) and Speech and Language (1 respondent) all had comments of 'not helpful'. However, in each case it is important to recognise this was only a small percentage of those who reported accessing the service. It may, however, be useful to establish why such exceptions have occurred, using qualitative research with clients, in order to inform future service development.

## **5.6 Future development**

Respondents were asked to comment on their interest in services for those parents aged under 21 years old and for Dads and Dads-to-be. Whilst the majority of respondents did not answer the question regarding services for parents aged under 21 years old, those who felt they were able to comment indicated they thought services would be of benefit to young parents. Particularly, it was suggested that young mothers may find it very beneficial to

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meet and talk to other young mothers. Therefore, this may be an idea that Jolly Giraffe wishes to pursue.

Despite a low representation of males, all three male respondents to the survey indicated they would be interested in services for Dads and Dads-to-be. Of female respondents, 41% indicated Dads and Dads-to-be would be interested in these services, whilst 48% stated they would not be interested. From telephone interviews, the majority of females found it difficult to answer the question, but in general felt it would be a worthwhile service. Many of the female respondents commented that their partners worked full time and would find it difficult to attend sessions as they are usually held during the day. Other respondents felt males would not attend sessions as they would feel uneasy or would just not be keen on attending.

When observing the Dads and Kids Soft Play, the session had been opened up to all Jolly Giraffe members due to the fact no Dads attended the session in the first week. Only one male participated in the second week's session, which was observed as part of this satisfaction survey. Such a response is disappointing considering the emphasis placed on promoting fathers' involvement with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services through the newsletter.

From the selection of suggested services in the survey none of the male respondents rejected any of the suggestions. However, a mixed view was gained from female respondents, with the suggestion of a coffee morning being deemed the least likely service to be accessed by males. Therefore, if Jolly Giraffe is to introduce services targeting Dads and Dads-to-be it might be best starting with activities such as Dads and children's outings or parent craft for Dads, which appeared the most popular of the suggested sessions. However, further consultation would be recommended with fathers' before developing services for Dads and Dads-to-be.

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## 5.7 Conclusions

The findings from the satisfaction survey have indicated a high overall level of satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services. Levels of satisfaction were also found to be high with individual services. Once parents had accessed a service once they were likely to do so again, indicating that individual services could retain users. Observations of children at Sure Start Jolly Giraffe sessions indicated that they were engaged and happy, enjoying the activities presented to them whether they were structured or more informal.

It was evident that fathers/males carers did not often participate in the available services. Evidence from the survey suggests, however, that there may be interest in services specifically targeted at Dads and Dads-to-be. However, the majority of these views came from female respondents, therefore further consultation could be conducted with eligible males using qualitative methods to identify ways in which to encourage and increase male participation.

Parents/carers with two children appeared to be less likely to engage with the available services. Once again, further work could be conducted to establish ways to encourage and help those families with two children to access the available services.

The low response rate (4%) to the initial postal survey may be indicative of the problems in engaging the eligible population with the services provided by the local Sure Start Jolly Giraffe programme. From such a response rate, and the difficulty encountered when conducting telephone surveys, it is evident that there is a need to constantly update records of those who are eligible for Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services.

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Overall, this study has indicated a high level of satisfaction with Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, but has also indicated some areas where developments may be considered.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **The questionnaire and prize draw leaflet**

The questionnaire was provided in a booklet format, whilst the detachable prize draw entry form was in a folded leaflet format.



## Questionnaire

All your answers are confidential. Your name and address are only on the prize draw leaflet. When received, the prize draw entry is separated from this questionnaire.

About you and your family

1. Do you care for, or have any children living with you?

Yes  No

If yes, what is their age?

1<sup>st</sup> Child .....years      2<sup>nd</sup> Child .....years

3<sup>rd</sup> Child ..... years      4<sup>th</sup> Child .....years

If no, please do not complete the questionnaire and return everything in the envelope provided. Thank you.

2. Are you a single parent?

Yes  No

3. Are you

Male  Female

4. How old were you, on your last birthday? ..... years

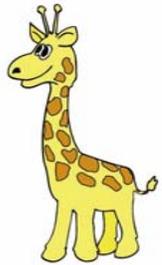
5. Do you have a disability?

Yes  No

6. Do any of your children who are under the age of 4 have a disability?

Yes  No

Thank you for your help.



Jolly Giraffe

SureStart

7. Did you know that there are Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services in this area?

Yes  No

If yes, please go to question 8.

If no, and you would like to know more about these services, tick the box on the prize draw leaflet and we will send you information.

8. Sure Start Services

Sure Start provides many services. Please look through them and say if you have used them, and if you did, were they helpful or useful. Please tick the boxes and make any comments in the space provided in question 14.

Support for Families

CAB



Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

Halton Family Groups



Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

Do you phone, or drop in to see the team, for a chat, or advice?

often  sometimes  never

13. Thinking about ALL the services that you, or your children, have used, how satisfied are you....

very satisfied  satisfied

dissatisfied  very dissatisfied

14. Please use this space if there is anything else you would like to say about Sure Start Jolly Giraffe

**11. Would you be interested in activities/support for parents under the age of 21 years?**

Yes  No

Please tick those activities that you would be interested in:

Baby massage Yes  No

Ante-natal support Yes  No

Benefit advice Yes  No

Relaxation/pamper groups Yes  No

**Please comment upon any other activities you think would be helpful?**

**Comments...**

**Early Learning**

**Toy Library** 

Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

**Musical Minis** 

Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

**Childcare/Parenting**

**Midwifery Service** 

Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

Health Visiting Service



Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

Speech & Language



Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

Kids Activities/Safety

Child Safety Equipment (HELPS)



Have you used this .....more than once  only once  never

Was it .....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

9. Have you ever had any Sure Start services at home?

Yes  No

If yes, was it?.....very helpful  helpful  not helpful

If no, please go to question 10.

10. Would you be interested in activities/support for dads and dads-to-be?

Yes  No

Please tick those activities that you would be interested in:

Dads and children's outings Yes  No

DIY Yes  No

Coffee morning Yes  No

Parentcraft for Dads Yes  No

Please comment upon any other activities you feel may be helpful?

Comments...

Empty text box for comments.

# Have they got it right?

If you have used any of the services, they want to know what you think.....

.....tell them and you'll be entered into a .....

## FREE PRIZE DRAW

With 3 prizes to be won

(3 prizes to be won by 3 separate individuals. Please see over for prize details).

### To enter

Complete the attached questionnaire **NOW** telling us how you and your family feel about Sure Start services.

Fill in your name and address in the box below

**By 28th January 2005** Put the

questionnaire and this prize draw leaflet in the envelope provided and:

Send it all back (no stamp needed)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

I'd like to know about Sure Start.  
Please...

Post me information  
Arrange for me to see someone

### If you need.....

- Help to fill in the questionnaire
- A large print copy
- Or have any questions at all

### Then.....

Either ring the Sure Start office on 01928 573 107

Or you can contact:

Rebecca Manning at the Centre for Public Health Research on 01244 375 444 extension 2027 for further information.

All the replies to the questionnaire are confidential

Your name and address will only be used for the prize draw

Closing date for entries is Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January

All the replies to the questionnaire are **confidential**

- Your name and address will only be used for the prize draw
- Closing date for entries is **Friday 28th January 2005**
- The prize draw will take place on **Friday 4th February 2005**
- There are three prizes to be won by three parents:  
**1st £50 Asda vouchers**  
**2nd £30 Iceland vouchers**  
**3rd £20 Boots vouchers**
- The winners will get a letter by **Monday 14th February 2005**

Thank you for your time

Your answers will help the **SureStart** team make the right choices for you and your children.

The survey is being carried out by: The Centre for Public Health Research  
University of Chester  
Parkgate Road  
Chester  
CH1 4BJ.

On behalf of:  
**SureStart**  
Jolly Giraffe  
Runcorn

# SureStart



For 1 year, the **SureStart** Jolly Giraffe team has been providing services for families with children under 4, living in the Mersey, Grange and Placefields areas of Runcorn by offering

Activities based around play, learning and child development

Support to families and children

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**Appendix 2**  
**Participant information sheet**

## **Sure Start Jolly Giraffe, Runcorn: User Satisfaction Survey**

### **Information for Participants**

The Sure Start Programme aims to provide support to families with children under 4 years old. It is very important to find out if Sure Start is successful. We are inviting you to take part in this survey so we can find out if local families are getting the support they need. We are also interested in your ideas about how local families could be supported in a better way.

### **Why do we need to do the research?**

We need to do this research to find out if Sure Start is meeting the needs of local families. This will help Sure Start to improve its services and tell us if any new services are needed.

### **Why are you being asked to take part?**

You are being asked to take part because you live in the local area and have a child who is 4 years old or younger.

### **Who is organising the study?**

The study is being organised by the Centre for Public Health Research at University College, Chester at the request of Sure Start, Jolly Giraffe.

### **What does it involve?**

Taking part in this survey involves filling in a questionnaire which asks questions about local services and how well they meet the needs of families. This will take about 10 minutes of your time. No one will know what you have said because your name will not be on the completed form used for the analysis. If you want to enter the prize draw you may give your details on the prize draw slip. This slip will be separated from your questionnaire before we read it. We will not use your name in the report.

### **Your rights**

You can choose not to take part in the survey. If you choose not to take part you will still be entitled to use Sure Start or other services and be involved in the operation of Sure Start.

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Rebecca Manning at the Centre for Public Health Research at University College, Chester on 01244 375444 (extension 2059).

**Thank you very much for your help with this survey**

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## Appendix 3

### Letter



Dear Parent/Carer,

For 1 year, the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe team has been providing services for families with children under 4, living in the Mersey, Grange and Palacefields areas of Runcorn by offering:

Activities based around play, learning and child development



Support to families and children

We are currently carrying out an evaluation of the Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, and would like to know what you think. This would involve completing a short questionnaire over the telephone.

.....Have you ever used the services? If you have what do you think? If you haven't would you like to?.....

If you would like to tell us, please complete the tear off slip below with your contact details and return it in the freepost envelope provided. A researcher from the Centre for Public Health Research will then contact you. All the replies to the questionnaire are confidential, and your name and address will be used only for the prize draw.

Everyone who completes a questionnaire will be entered into a free prize draw...

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize £50 Asda vouchers
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize £30 Iceland vouchers
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize £20 Boots vouchers

If you would like further information please contact Rebecca Manning at the Centre for Public Health Research on 01244 375 444 extension 2027.

Thank you

✂.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Contact telephone number.....

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**Appendix 4**  
**Telephone calls**

737 telephone numbers of non-respondents were obtained.

Details of telephone call	Number of telephone calls
Already completed	23
Anonymous call bar	23
Did not want to complete	6
Error with telephone	5
Line dead	147
Message left	97
Not applicable	12
Phone back	56
Questionnaires completed over the telephone	98
Remove number from database	1
Ringling out	188
Send in the post	2
Wrong/duplicate number	79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>737</b>

Unsuccessful calls incorporated the following outcomes: line dead; anonymous call bar; error with telephone; Not applicable; and wrong/duplicate number.

Successful calls incorporated the following outcomes: questionnaires completed over the telephone; phone back; send in the post; did not want to complete; already completed; not available; not convenient; remove number from the database; message left.

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**Appendix 5**  
**Frequency of use of services**

Community Service	% of respondents using the service at least once	<i>more than once</i>		<i>only once</i>		<i>never</i>		<i>no response</i>	
		Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents
CAB	22	8	6	23	17	98	71	10	7
Halton Family Groups	15	18	13	3	2	108	78	10	7
Toy Library	17	18	13	5	4	108	78	8	6
Musical Minis	13	11	8	7	5	113	81	8	6
Midwifery Service	29	35	25	5	4	91	66	8	6
Health Visiting Service	39	45	32	9	7	76	55	9	7
Speech and Language	5	7	5	0	0	123	89	9	7
Child Safety Equipment	27	19	14	18	13	94	68	8	6

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**Appendix 6**  
**Satisfaction with services**

Community Service	% of respondents using the service at least once	very helpful		helpful		Not Helpful		No response		Number using
		Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Numbers	% of respondents	Numbers	% of respondents	
CAB	22	17	55	12	39	2	6	0	0	31
Halton Family Groups	15	9	43	11	52	1	5	0	0	21
Toy Library	17	15	65	5	22	1	4	2	9	23
Musical Minis	13	12	67	6	33	0	0	0	0	18
Midwifery Service	29	33	83	7	18	0	0	0	0	40
Health Visiting Service	39	33	61	18	33	3	6	0	0	54
Speech and Language	5	5	71	1	14	1	14	0	0	7
Child Safety Equipment	27	27	73	10	27	0	0	0	0	37

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**Appendix 7**

**Complete list of respondents' comments**

**Question 10 services for dads and dads-to-be:**

**Please comment upon any other activities you feel may be helpful**

'Helping with the future for a child like what nursery, and schools are available, and what you have to do to enrol them.' (1)

'I have used the midwifery/health visitor/speech and language services at St Paul's Health Centre but am not sure if they were Sure Start or not. If they are separate I would like further information on Sure Start speech and language services.' (11)

'Activities at weekends or out of working hours would be very helpful.' (20)

'Soft play. Swimming. Sport, e.g., tots and dads soccer.' (22)

'I would be extremely interested in any Mums and Tots groups in my area - Palacefields.' (25)

'Sure Start sent out a newsletter in October 2004 which included a timetable of services offered. I decided to use one of the baby clinics shown in the timetable (Thursday - Hallwood). After trekking all the way up there I was told there wasn't a baby clinic on that day it was a mistake on the timetable and the clinic was at Murdishaw. It was extremely inconvenient. Future timetables should be more accurate.' (26)

'Toddler dance classes. I can't find any [and] my children are always dancing. Swimming or like. Sure Start Dino [who] offer free swim[ming] at [the] local pool. Have already requested these but not heard anything.' (32)

'Dad works quite long hours. Send some information though and we will have a look. The DIY sounds quite interesting' (43)

'He's too busy' (44)

'Send the information. It's up to my partner really.' (45)

'He works. We both do. We just don't have the time.' (50)

'He's in work. I'm in work as well. He goes to work for support!' (58)

'He works full-time unfortunately' (59)

'Would be interested depending on the times because my husband works in the morning and then when I go to work in the afternoon he looks after our little boy.' (60)

'I think he would go along to some but he works shifts so I'd have to ask him, but send out some information by all means.' (62)

'He works full-time.' (65)

'That would be brilliant. At the moment I'm breastfeeding so he [husband] only seems to get the baby when he's changing his nappy. Anything to do with bonding, that kind of thing.' (70)

'He works full-time so not really' (79)

'He works quite a bit and he's a bit shy.' (84)

'He would feel silly'. (100)

'Difficult most dads work'. (102)

'DIY for women would be good as well'. (109)

'Yes but it would depend on the time of the sessions as most dads work'. (114)

'Some dads might but not all dads would be up for that sort of thing'. (115)

'If you can get people to go along it could be very good but dads are sometimes reluctant'. (120)

'The only problem is he works and would not be able to attend'. (121)

'Yes it is a god idea if they are interested and can be bothered'. (122)

'My partner works shifts so it would be difficult for him to attend'. (125)

'Not easy to get dads involved in that sort of thing, especially those who work'. (129)

'Yes it is a good idea but my husband never has time due to work commitments'. (135)

'Keep trying to get him to go but he is not keen'. (139)

'My partner asks about the sessions and is keen to start going'. (140)

**Q11 services for parents and carers Under-21:**

**Please comment upon any other activities you think would be helpful**

'New Mums get back in to shape group. For example, yoga, aqua-aerobics, aerobics or any sort of exercise for post-pregnant Mums.' (26)

'A Mums and Tots group for younger Mum's.'(28)

'I think something, e.g., Mum's and Tots for young Mums would be very helpful as there are lots of young Mums in this area who don't have the confidence to talk and sit with older women. (28)

'I was attending baby massage and pampering group and found these really helpful. [I've] been told that they are changing to parents with babies under 6 months. I will really miss these groups.' (32)

'My partner does not know/too scared to bath the baby, change a bum. Dads and baby, hands on.'(35).

'Difficult because I work full-time' (54)

'as long as there's a crèche involved' (55) - this Mum was over the age of 21 but mentioned that she would like some sort of pampering group

#### **Q14 Additional comments about Sure Start Jolly Giraffe**

'I didn't know about Sure Start till the Health Visitor told me about it. I think you should get it more well known what they need to qualify, also what activities there are like a list.'(1)

'My son and niece both attended "Tot Stars". They enjoyed themselves thoroughly but unfortunately the hour went so quick. I know you are probably very busy but maybe if the sessions were half an hour longer the children would settle in and enjoy them more. My son is now four and not eligible to attend any more but I am expecting our second child in April and would appreciate if you could keep our names and address for future use. Thank you.' (3)

'I have used both baby massage and the pamper group. I felt that both benefited myself and my baby. We were made to feel very welcome and part of the group. The groups are well run in a nice relaxed atmosphere. It is lovely to get out of the house and meet people and I feel this helps to combat against feeling low and depression. This is why I feel upset at the possibility go these services only being offered to parents with babies under six months. I do hope this will not be the case as many parents will lose out in the future, as many parents begin to go back to work at this stage. It is great to balance work with these sorts of groups, because I feel a lot of women begin to feel guilty and depressed at this stage as well due to work pressures.' (4)

'I feel as a parent we don't get the information in enough time to join in the activities. The newsletters should be sent out earlier than at the beginning of each term. I would like to see more Mums and Tots groups and more advertising to promote them as the one I currently attend is very low on numbers yet there are plenty of families in the area.' (6)

'We tried to involve our child in groups that Jolly Giraffe were doing. When I phoned and told them about our child's problems they didn't want to know and said the portage service would be better. This is without meeting our child and seeing that despite her health problems she is a normal two year old and we feel really really let down because of this. No child should be discriminated against because of health problems.' (10)

'I think that Sure Start teams are an advantage in the communities they cover. Although I don't really access them, I have spoken to the teams over the telephone and always found them helpful, courteous and friendly.' (14)

'Please let us have the Sure Start group at Churchill Mansions as it is ideal for people with no car and very spacious for a lot of kids to enjoy themselves.' (16)

'Information on groups/activities is sometimes slow to come through.' (20)

'Never thought I was in a Sure Start area - as I was told when I moved to Runcorn I couldn't access the services. However, we have collected stickers for the library. Shame Sure Start doesn't help those of us in full-time employment who just tip over the 'poverty' line who could really use some support and friendship. Poverty isn't just about money. I feel very poor without friends support. Just to know you're not alone.' (21)

'I find certain members of the team very patronising. She doesn't seem to realise that not all mothers only have children as they are incapable of a career. Some people take a career break for their family. Comments such as "it's all about getting you back to work and off the benefits" are insulting. [Sure Start team member] is wonderful, however. More and more activities are being limited to families with babies under 6 months but why are extra activities not planned to compensate for families who do not fit this criteria. Sure Start team members] are always approachable and helpful beyond the call of duty. It is a pity [Sure Start team member] does not make herself accessible to parents. i.e., she will not attend the parents meetings, and can only relate to them in a condescending and patronising way.' (22)

'I haven't ever received any information regarding Sure Start or any of the activities apart from the Health Visitors.' (25)

'After having my son I started going to Sure Start groups - Baby Massage and Pamper group. I was very self-conscious at first as I was meeting new people. The groups were helpful as they got me out of the house. I was devastated to find out that they have now decided to only offer these groups to Mums with babies who are 6 months and under as it means I can no longer go, especially after persevering and getting to know all the other Mums in the group. Sure Start have not offered any alternative groups to all the Mums who can no longer go to these two groups. The whole thing is depressing.' (26)

'Sorry not gone to any, but would like too.' (31)

'I feel that compared to other Sure Start teams Jolly Giraffe is way behind. Whenever a new group or activity starts I don't receive any mailings for them. I go [to the] parents group and nothing the parents suggest is taken on board as if the parents don't matter. I find [Sure Start staff member] patronising assuming all parents are thick and on income support. The services are not promoted well, [the] newsletter [is] often late, I haven't had a December one. I was told by the manager Sure Start is not doing trips but other Sure Start groups were. I thought at first it would be a good programme offering support, advice and groups for parents and children. I really wanted to be part of it, but it doesn't seem that the parents who are dedicated are wanted. If I could I would register with a different one. I have been registered for over a year now and have still not received a Sure Start card (with number on).' (32)

'[I] always find [the] staff very helpful and friendly.' (34)

'My six month old son loves musical minis and [the] toy library. I am very grateful for these groups as my son and I can play one-to-one as well as in a group. I can also get out more and meet new people. Thank you. I think Jolly Giraffe are great.' (35)

'I would like information to come through the door often so I know what's on offer. I've heard about Sure Start but I don't know where it is.' (36)

'I am [child] grandma so I don't use all the services on offer but the ones I take [child] to 'Toy Library' and 'Musical Minis' I find them to be excellent. [child] loves to go the staff are lovely. Thank you.' (38)

'My third child's due in 8 weeks so I'd just like some information about the services really - health visiting, midwife services' (40)

'I haven't used any of the services but I'd like some information about them' (42)

'They've always been very helpful. Looking for information about Mums and Tots, we've been to tumble tots. Information about pre-school at the children's information service.'(43)

'List of up-coming event. What's on in the holidays' (44)

'I work the evenings until late in the day. My friend lives in Brookvale and she uses a nursery there where you can leave your kids for a few hours and it doesn't cost much. I'd like some information if there's anything like that near me.' (45)

'I usually get the newsletter too late to enrol on any of the courses. It would be better to get the newsletter earlier because by the time you find out they've already started the courses.'(46)

'I used to be on the committee when it first started but I've started University now so we don't really have much time to go. They did ask if [child] wanted to go to the Speech and Language group but we couldn't go because I was at University.'(47)

'Working full-time I don't really have much time to use the services. Information on the toy library would be good.' (49)

'Any funding or help for trips would be good. If they come to your house and the children can make music. That kind of thing.' (55)

'When he was first born I was taking him to the baby massage groups and the pamper groups, but they stopped them after he was six months old. It wasn't as if the groups were swamped with people. You get into a routine and you get used to going. It gets you out of the house.' (56)

'I get bits sent through the post. I've got one (child) that's a few months and one that's two so I don't really get time to use the services to be honest with you.' (57)

'Do you do anything for swimming because I think the Runcorn baths are a bit dangerous when you get in and you're only allowed to take one child with you which isn't any good when you look after two.'(58)

'I need my Jolly Giraffe number. I'm desperate for a stair gate because she's nearly crawling' (59)

'The white gates aren't very good. The rubber sides come off and the bar across the bottom is dangerous, your children can fall over it when the gates open. The first aid is very good value for money.' (61)

'Re-start - help going back to work, paying for shoes. A friend said there's a crèche that if you go back to work you don't have to pay for. It would be good if there was something like that in the Beechwood area. I've worked all my life and then I had a child and had to stop work. If there was something like that on offer I'd go back to work.' (61)

'Days out - I'd be interested in information about them because I wanted to go on the last one but I couldn't' (62)

'Just to say that I'm very surprised how everything's improved since my other children were small. All of these things were never on offer then.' (63)

'Anything going on through the summer I'd like some information about. I don't really use the services very much because I work and I take my little girl with me.' (64)

'Pampering group/holistic therapy I'd like some information because I think I just missed it the last time.' (65)

'Send some information out about the services. I haven't used any really, I moved nearly 12 months ago and I haven't had any information about the services.' (66)

'Anything over 1 year services as I can no longer use the baby massage group. I'd be really interested in anything for me as well like a pampering or relaxation group.' (67)

'I've only used the Mums and Tots group I don't use anything else. I get all the information I need when I go to the group on a Monday.' (68)

'I haven't had a newsletter for absolutely ages since about September so I don't know what's going on.' (69)

'If Sure Start are doing anything drama based, performances, I'd be interested in that because I'm doing primary teaching. My oldest sons four so I'm not really sure how many of these services we would be able to use with the new baby. Also really like to go on some of the trips.' (70)

'What equipment is available for the Child Safety service. Information I could do with about that.' (72)

'Went to the CAB for information about maternity leave and pay, but I didn't really find out much.' (72)

'Aquanatal or exercise classes for pregnant women as there doesn't seem to be anything like that in the area or that are easy to get to or close by.' (74)

'They keep sending me information and it all looks very good and everything but I'm in full-time work now and he's in full-time nursery so we just don't use it.' (75)

'I'm only pregnant so I haven't used the service yet. I was supposed to go and see them about registration but I couldn't because I had to go to College.' (77)

'Like to go to Mums and Tots group. Is there a twins group first thing in the morning when I've dropped Jasmine off at nursery. Anything like that really would be good where I can have some quality time with them.' (79)

'Pregnant women pampering group I've heard they do one and I'd like some information.' (81) - one baby on the way

'I don't actually use any of the services to be honest with you. I do get the newsletters and information regularly.' (82)

'I haven't used any of the services at all. I've only just recently moved up so it's all a bit new yet. I do get bits through the post though.' (83)

'I think you are doing a great job just keep up the good work.' (85)

'I've been going to a twins group but it was only on a six week trial and I couldn't go to the last one because one of them was ill. So I need to find out really if it's continuing because it was really good.' (88)

'I would have been registered through my midwife, but I've never used the services and I'm not really interested in using them to be honest with you.' (89)

'I'd like some information about the midwife services because I'm pregnant again.' (91)

'To be honest with you I take my little boy to school in the morning which is when most of the sessions seem to be. If there's anything on in the afternoon though I'd go to that. I am due to move soon as well so I think I'll be under a different Sure Start then.' (94)

'Toddler library should be done a couple of time a week as it is only once a week at the moment'. (99)

'Everybody in the team is very helpful, very good. If they cannot help you they will get the information to help'. (100)

'Not been very often as only young, I have had lots of information through and it looks good'. (103)

'Some good stuff but it is a case of having the time with one in school, one in nursery and the baby'. (104)

'Very helpful'. (106)

'The service is really good but we both work and it is very difficult to attend as there are no sessions on in the evening and weekends'. (114)

'It is nice to know it is there if you should need it'. (118)

'It is really good thing especially for young mums and single mums'. (119)

'The Sure Start team are a good team and deal with it very efficiently'. (120)

'Musical Mini's is great she has come on leaps and bounds since attending the sessions'. (123)

'It is a really good service but I don't make much use of it, but good for those who can'. (125)

'The staff do give up their time and are really easy to approach if you do have questions'. (127)

'With regards to trips they advertise on leaflets posted out but when you ring to book all the spaces have gone already'. (128)

'The Sure Start service is very much geared to at home mums not those who go out to work'. (129)

'Very good'. (130)

'I have been to mums and tots and was given no information about any of the other services. I feel I don't get enough information about what is going on'. (132)

'I have found the services very helpful'. (134)

'I went to a fun day and it was absolutely brilliant and I am hoping to start more soon'. (135)

'I have no transport and some of the sessions are quite a distance away and that is the only problem'. (140)

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**Appendix 8**  
**Programme Evaluation**  
**Information for Participants**

## **Sure Start Jolly Giraffe Programme Evaluation Information for Participants**

Sure Start Jolly Giraffe has asked the Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR) at University of Chester to evaluate the local programme and its services. As part of this evaluation the CPHR has recently conducted a user satisfaction survey to find out what parents/carers think about the different services provided by Sure Start Jolly Giraffe. We would also like to find out what children think about the services. In order to do this a researcher will be visiting the following services:

- ❖ Play Days
- ❖ Busy Bodies
- ❖ The Creche
- ❖ Dads and Kids Soft Play

The researcher will observe during the sessions she visits to see what kind of activities take place and how much the children enjoy them. She may like to talk to some children while they are playing, to ask what they think about the different activities. If you are not happy for the researcher to be present at the session please mention it to a member of staff.

If you have any questions about the evaluation then please talk to the researcher during the session, or contact Sarah Davies on 01244 375 444 (extension 2023), or write to her at the Centre for Public Health Research, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ.

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**Appendix 9**  
**Observation Schedule**

## **Observation Schedule**

### **Aims and objectives of the session**

- Are there specific aims and objectives for the session?
- If so, what are they and how are they addressed?

### **Suitability of the environment**

- Who are parents and children greeted by?
- Is there a set procedure for entering and leaving the room?
- How many people are there? (Staff, parents and children).
- How was the room set out – what was visible?
- Does the room represent a welcoming and pleasant environment?
- How does the layout of the room impact on the atmosphere?
- Are there any other factors that impact on the group, for example, the noise from and movement of other children and parents?

### **Personnel and user interaction**

- To what extent do the staff interact with parents and children?
- To what extent do parents interact with children?
- To what extent do children interact with each other?
- Are particular interactions encouraged? In what way?

### **Activity related factors**

- What activities are children involved in? (Structured/directed/free choice).
- How engaged are children in what they are doing?
- Do the children appear to be enjoying the activities?
- Is children's learning and development encouraged? In what way?

### **Time charting/Shadowing**

Follow the actions of a small number of children (2 or 3) for a short period of time (5-10 mins), in order to see how individual children react to the environment.

Look at body language, facial expressions, noises / speech. Describe observations of the child's experience.

Observation schedule adapted from "Prompt sheet for classroom observation", [www.soewrs.rdg.ac.uk/artdesignpgce/schoolclassroom-observation.htm](http://www.soewrs.rdg.ac.uk/artdesignpgce/schoolclassroom-observation.htm) (retrieved 24.03.03).