

Evaluation of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Wallasey

Sure Start Wallasey
Evaluation Report No. 5

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the findings of a questionnaire survey that was designed to evaluate the level of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Wallasey and local services for families with young children generally.

Key findings

1. 99 per cent of parents who had used Sure Start Wallasey in the past 12 months expressed overall satisfaction with the services they had received. 81 per cent of parents said they were very satisfied.
2. Of those parents who had used Sure Start services in the past 12 months:
 - 94 per cent rated the range of services on offer as excellent or very good
 - 93 per cent of those who had used the Sure Start Building in Guildford Street rated the premises and facilities as excellent or very good
 - 92 per cent rated the staff as excellent or very good
 - 60 per cent rated the information publicising Sure Start as excellent or very good
3. Lack of adequate information about Sure Start Wallasey and the services it provides appears to be mainly a problem for families not yet registered with the programme rather than for registered families.
4. 83 per cent of parents surveyed said they were satisfied with local services generally for families with young children. The percentage of parents who were very satisfied was much higher for those who had used Sure Start in the previous 12 months (49 per cent) than for other parents (27 per cent).
5. 87 per cent of parents surveyed believed that their children had access to good quality play and learning opportunities in the past 12 months. 94 per cent of parents who had used Sure Start services in this time period believed this to be the case compared to 76 per cent of parents who had not used Sure Start.
6. 78 per cent of parents believed that local services for families with children aged 0 – 4 had improved over the past 12 months, with 58 per cent believing that they had improved a lot. The percentage of parents who had used Sure Start services in the past 12 months who believed that services had improved (88 per cent) was higher than for those parents who had not used Sure Start services in this time period (58 per cent).

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aims of the evaluation

This report summarises the findings of a questionnaire survey that was designed to evaluate the level of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Wallasey and local services for families with young children generally. It addresses the following questions:

1. How satisfied are parents with the programme overall and with different aspects of it, such as the range of services provided, the premises, the staff and the information publicising Sure Start?
2. How satisfied are parents with local services for families with young children generally? Do parents believe that their children have had access to good quality play and learning opportunities?
3. What improvements would parents like to see to the Sure Start programme?

1.2 Research methods

This evaluation has used the following methods:

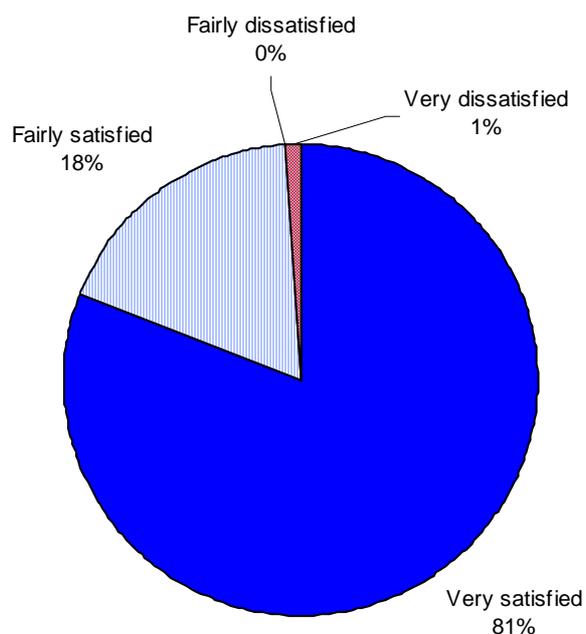
- A questionnaire survey of 150 parents with children under the age of 5 living in the Sure Start Wallasey area. The survey was done by means of face to face interviews conducted at or outside a wide variety of locations in the area including the Sure Start Building, Seacombe Family Centre, local schools, local nurseries and play groups, Guinea-Gap baths, local GP surgeries, Kwik-Save and Central Park. Parents were also approached and interviewed on the street. The fieldwork method adopted meant that the survey was able to obtain the views of a significant number of parents who were not registered with Sure Start or who were registered but had not used Sure Start services in the past 12 months.
- Two focus groups of local parents. The first group consisted of 11 parents who were Sure Start service users. The second comprised 3 parents who were not registered with Sure Start or were not using Sure Start services.

2. Evaluation findings

2.1 Overall satisfaction with Sure Start Wallasey

The survey asked parents who had used Sure Start Wallasey in the past 12 months how satisfied they were overall with the Sure Start services they had received. Figure 2.1 reveals that 99 percent of parents said they were satisfied with 81 percent being very satisfied.

Figure 2.1 – Overall satisfaction with Sure Start services



Note: The question was asked of 87 parents who had used Sure Start Wallasey in the previous 12 months. For clarity, 4 parents who answered 'don't know' have been excluded from the analysis.

2.2 Satisfaction with different aspects of Sure Start

The survey asked parents who had used Sure Start Wallasey in the previous 12 months to rate various aspects of the service they received. The results are summarised in Table 2.2 on the next page.

The table shows that 94 per cent of parents who had used Sure Start in the previous 12 months thought that the range of services on offer was either excellent or very good. Conversely, only 3 per cent of all parents surveyed said that Sure Start Wallasey did not offer the services their family needed (see Evaluation Report Number 4 on Service Uptake and Reach).

Table 2.2 – Service users' rating of various aspects of the Sure Start service

Aspect of the Sure Start service	Rating					
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The range of services offered	50	44	6	0	0	100
The Sure Start Building	67	26	7	0	0	100
The Sure Start staff	64	28	8	0	0	100
Information publicising Sure Start	35	25	24	7	9	100

Note: The questions were asked of 87 parents who had used Sure Start Wallasey in the previous 12 months. For clarity, parents who answered 'don't know' have been excluded from the analysis.

Survey respondents did identify a number of services that they would like Sure Start Wallasey to provide more of. These included:

- more outdoor activities
- more holiday activities
- more combined activities/sessions for under and over 5s
- more swimming sessions
- aerobics for mums
- more trips and outings
- more parent and toddler sessions
- more activities for children approaching school age
- more activities for under 1s
- holding a Sunday 'school' to improve learning of pre-school and young school age children
- more services for children with disabilities or special needs
- more parenting courses or parenting courses to address the changing issues as children grow older
- more crèche provision to support activities for parents
- starting a baby-sitting circle

93 per cent of those respondents who had used the Sure Start Building in Guildford Street rated the premises and facilities as excellent or very good. The building was typically described by parents as being bright, clean, cheerful and safe.

I can let the kids come here. I know they are not going to hurt themselves. It's a really nice safe place for them to play. (Parent)

More parent feedback on the accessibility and convenience of venues used by Sure Start Wallasey is provided in Evaluation Report Number 4.

92 per cent of survey respondents who had used Sure Start in the past 12 months rated the staff as excellent or very good. Participants in the parent focus groups described the staff as friendly, welcoming, and accessible.

The lady I met before I came in (to the focus group) was really friendly and she showed me around the crèche and everything. It was good. (Parent)

All the staff are friendly, so it doesn't put you off coming. (Parent)

If I have got a problem and I ring (the home visitor) up I can get help virtually there and then. (Parent)

While 60 per cent of survey respondents rated the information publicising Sure Start as excellent or very good, this was not as high as for other aspects of the Sure Start service. A closer examination of the issue revealed that lack of adequate information about Sure Start Wallasey and the services it provided was mostly a problem for families not yet registered with the programme rather than for registered families. The parent survey revealed that only 7 per cent of those registered with the programme cited lack of information as a reason for not using services. All families living within the Sure Start area who have registered with the programme are sent regular newsletters and leaflets keeping them informed of events. A check made at the focus group for Sure Start service users found that 9 of the 11 parents present were receiving regular newsletters and leaflets. The two parents who were not receiving information both lived outside the Sure Start catchment area. It is the programme's policy not to market proactively to families living outside the Sure Start area. By contrast, 47 per cent of non-registered parents in the survey cited lack of information or awareness about Sure Start as a reason why they had not used Sure Start services. One focus group participant commented that:

If you come regularly you do know what is going on. But if I say to other people, 'I'm going up to Sure Start', they'll say 'What is Sure Start? What do they do?' (Parent)

A more detailed discussion on information and marketing is contained in Evaluation Report Number 4.

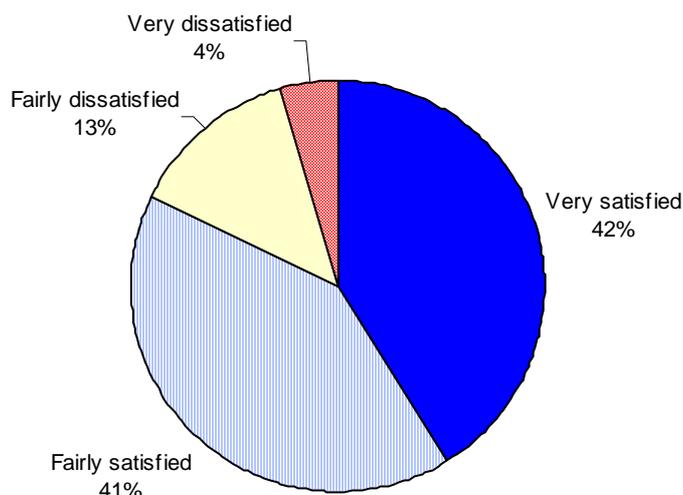
2.3 Satisfaction with local services for families with young children generally

As well as asking parents to provide feedback on Sure Start Wallasey and its services, the survey also gathered information on the levels of satisfaction with local services generally for families with children aged 0 – 4. The results are shown in Figure 2.3. on the next page.

83 per cent of parents surveyed said they were satisfied with local services generally for families with young children. The percentages were broadly similar for parents who had used Sure Start in the past 12 months and those who hadn't. However, the percentage of parents who were very satisfied was much higher for Sure Start service users (49 per cent) than for other parents (27 per cent).

87 per cent of parents surveyed believed that their children had access to good quality play and learning opportunities in the past 12 months. 94 per cent of parents who had used Sure Start services in this time period believed this to be the case compared to 76 per cent of parents who had not used Sure Start.

Figure 2.3 – Overall satisfaction with local services generally for families with children age 0 – 4

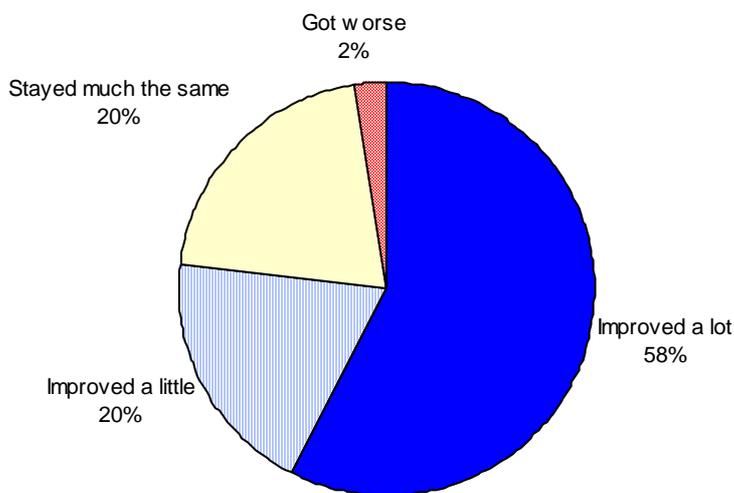


Note: The question was asked of 150 parents. For clarity, 16 parents who answered 'don't know' have been excluded from the analysis.

Survey respondents were also asked whether in their opinion local services for families with children aged 0 – 4 had improved in the past 12 months. The results are summarised in Figure 2.4. on the next page.

78 per cent of parents believed that services had improved, with 58 per cent believing that they had improved a lot. Again, the percentage of parents who had used Sure Start services in the past 12 months who believed that services had improved (88 per cent) was higher than for those parents who had not used Sure Start services in this time period (58 per cent).

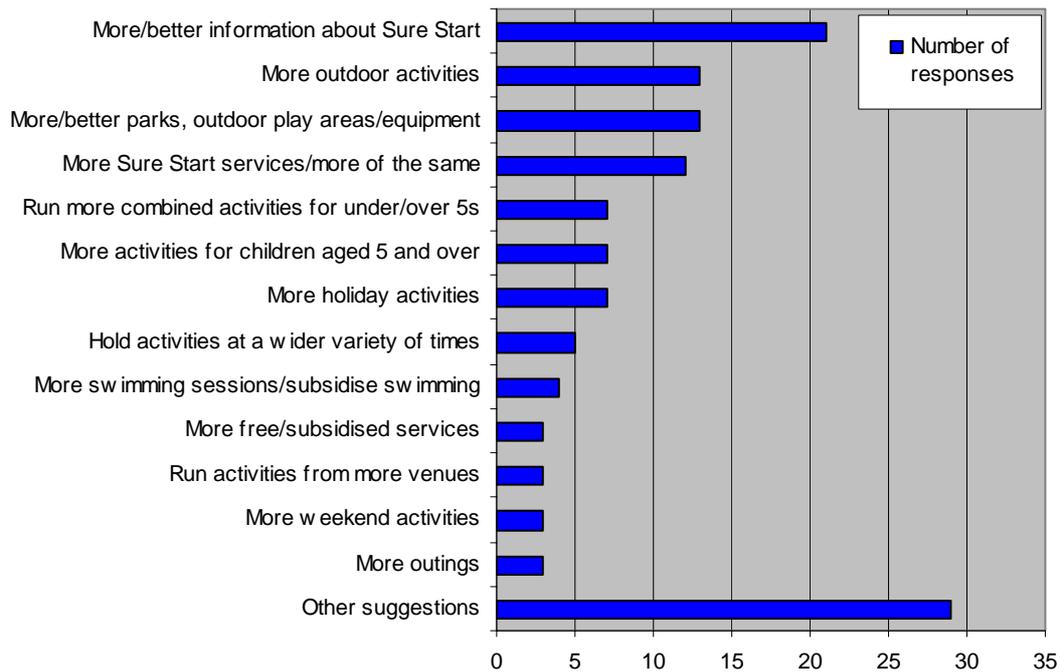
Figure 2.4 – Parents’ views on extent of improvement in local services for families with children aged 0 – 4 over the last 12 months



Note: The question was asked of 150 parents. For clarity 28 respondents who answered 'don't know' have been excluded from the analysis.

The survey also asked parents about what they would like to see done to improve services for families with young children living in the area. Figure 2.5 on the next page sets out the most frequently mentioned ideas.

Figure 2.5 – Parents’ views on how local services for families with young children could be improved



Note: The question was asked of 150 parents. Respondents could give several answers or none.

The need for more or better information about Sure Start Wallasey was mentioned by 21 survey respondents. A number of parents said they would like to see more outdoor activities provided or improvements made to outdoor spaces and facilities for young children. Another popular theme was the need to improve services for children aged 5 and over or for more activities to be held (particularly in school holidays) where parents could bring both over 5s and under 5s. Many of the other suggestions made which are not listed separately in the table are already set out in Section 2.2 of this report.