

**SureStart**



# **SURE START BOURNEMOUTH**

**FAMILY SURVEY 2004**



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***With all of Sure Starts' help, support and superb facilities, my children love going there. It is always interesting, with lots to do and being a 'classroom' gives them a basic learning of 'school. It has helped integrate them with other children to develop socially and learn the value of play. Also it builds adult friendships too. We moved here in November 2002 and to find a facility like this has been a godsend. This would benefit the country nationwide if all towns could have a Sure Start (Sure Start Parent).***

**Thank you to all of the parents who live in the Sure Start Bournemouth area for responding to the questionnaire**

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## Summary

The primary aim of the 'Family Survey 2004' was to assess what local parents with children under six who live in the Sure Start Bournemouth area think about:

- Sure Start services which are available
- the professional support (pre-, post-natal and up to attending full-time school) for their youngest child
- special needs services for children under six
- health matters
- other local community services and issues

Five hundred and forty-four (544) questionnaires were distributed in total. Ninety-seven (97) families within the Sure Start Bournemouth area completed and returned a questionnaire. Within these returns, eighty-three (83) were completed by Sure Start registered families (357), giving a response rate for registered families of 23%.

A number of important issues have emerged from the analysis of this data which include:

- Views about Sure Start Bournemouth services and groups
  - Overall parents who are accessing Sure Start Bournemouth services expressed high levels of satisfaction
  - Awareness and uptake of services and activities are increasing, especially the Toy library and the home visiting service
  - Positive findings mirrored the findings from the in-depth evaluations of the Breastfeeding group, Let's Play and the Toy Library.
  - Some families are still not using Sure Start services for a variety of reasons.
- Sure Start Bournemouth's response to community need
  - It is clear from the findings of the survey that Sure Start Bournemouth has made excellent progress in responding to families needs in the area since the last community survey (2002)
  - There has been the introduction of new courses, groups and services based upon what parents and children want. Computer and DIY courses have been the most popular along with the 'make and take' course. All courses have creche support which has been vital to uptake.
  - The programme has been working hard to encourage more Dads to get involved in Sure Start activities. Since the first survey it is clear that there has been an increase in Dads accessing courses and services.
  - When considering the Sure Start objective of *improving children's health*, it is clear that Sure Start Bournemouth have made great progress in addressing these targets. The Breastfeeding group and the introduction of a midwifery team is responding to these objectives, along with an integrated Speech & Language service, stop-smoke courses, infant massage, stress and relaxation and first aid courses.

- Environmental issues and community concerns
  - This section of the questionnaire yielded the biggest response. Residents felt very strongly about many community issues, especially relating to crime and litter.
  - Satisfaction with local parks was low, this was the case in the first community survey (2002) which indicates there has been little or no improvement in the standard of parks and outside play areas.
  - Respondents were generally satisfied with other local amenities, such as libraries, shops and transport.
  - The refurbishment of the new Play area at the Sure Start site in recent weeks has been an important development and will need to be evaluated in the future.

The value of the model of integrated service delivery employed by Sure Start Bournemouth has been evident in all of the individual evaluations carried out. Levels of satisfaction with both Sure Start and non-Sure Start community health and social care services provided in the area have increased since the first survey (e.g. Speech & Language, Midwifery). This is encouraging in terms of services working together, delivery at the point of access leading to continuity of support.

- The way forward

The conclusions from this Community Survey have provided valuable insights into family profiles, satisfaction with services and service development needs. The survey findings will be used as one of the means of assessing whether Sure Start Bournemouth is achieving not only Sure Start National Objectives, but also responding to local need. Good progress has been made with all Sure Start Project Workers now in post and many services and activities available or being developed, which will, in turn, be evaluated during the life of the programme.

Sure Start Bournemouth have made great progress in adopting the Sure Start principles which draw on best practice learnt from delivering childcare, early education and Sure Start local programmes (Sure Start Guidance 2004-2006). By adopting these principles Sure Start Bournemouth can continue to mainstream the Sure Start approach.

# 1. Background & rationale

One of the requirements for all Sure Start programmes is that they undertake a local survey with residents who live within Sure Start areas who are parents of children under four. These local surveys need to be carried out within three months of the programme's approval, that is, at baseline (starting point) and again at the end of year 3.

In the local context, Sure Start Bournemouth required the local evaluators (Bournemouth University) to undertake satisfaction services surveys during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2001/2002 and again in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2003/2004.

February - May 2002 1 <sup>st</sup> Family Survey →	October 2002 - July 2004 Individual Evaluations →	January - July 2004 2 <sup>nd</sup> Family Survey
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These local surveys provide a means of assessing progress towards the achievement of all Sure Start National Objectives which are:

- Improving the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare
- Improving learning
- Improving social and emotional development
- Improving children's health
- Strengthening families and communities

Other local surveys have also been identified by the Sure Start Unit as a possible source for start-point data in the following areas: per cent of women smoking during pregnancy; percentage of parents (of young children) very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied with local services for young children; per cent of children in Sure Start area whose one or both (residential) parents smoke in their first 2 years of life; per cent of mothers who smoked prior to pregnancy, but stopped during pregnancy: at confirmation, by 6 months, by 9 months (Sure Start: a guide to planning and delivering your programme, Autumn, 2001)

The first community survey was carried out by Bournemouth University in April 2002 when 350 questionnaires were distributed to parents with children under four who lived in the Sure Start Bournemouth area. The response rate was 25.4%. A great deal of valuable base line information was provided which enabled Sure Start to respond to the service needs of local residents and their children. It also showed that Sure Start were beginning to meet many of the National Objectives set out by the Sure Start Unit.

Individual service evaluations were undertaken in the period between the first and second community surveys. The findings from these evaluations, together with the

findings from the community surveys, will be used to produce a final report for Sure Start Bournemouth aiming to show how the programme has developed over three years, met National targets and most importantly provided an integrated service for children and their families based on their individual needs.

## **2. Aims of the survey**

The primary aim of the 'Family Survey 2004' was: to assess what local parents with children under six who live in the Sure Start Bournemouth area think about:

- Sure Start services which are available
- the professional support (pre-, post-natal and up to attending full-time school) for their youngest child
- special needs services for children under six
- health matters
- other local community services and issues

Parents with children under six were included in this survey in order to capture the views of parents whose children may have been involved with Sure Start Bournemouth since the first Community Survey (2002) and are now attending school full-time.

Additional aims were to identify:

- additional courses or services that parents would like to see Sure Start provide
- suggestions for family support services; suggestions for special needs services; leisure facilities; suggestions for involving men more fully in the activities at Sure Start Bournemouth; suggestions for litter control; and ways of crime prevention
- any difference made to families in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas
- experiences of transition into school
- levels of satisfaction with opportunities available to children under 6 in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas
- global changes seen in the Sure Start Bournemouth area during the last three years
- progress against Sure Start National Objectives and Targets

## **3. Family Survey Group**

The Family Survey Group was formed in October 2003 with the aim of carrying out a second community survey. Parents interested in taking part in the local evaluation, and in particular undertaking a survey, were asked to attend a community training session focusing on the survey process. Three local parents indicated that they would like to be part of the Group.

Crèche support for children of participating parents was offered for all meetings and research activities and meetings took place at both Sure Start premises, Bournemouth University and at parents' homes. Parents chose to be supported financially for their

time with vouchers for a local supermarket. The survey process was planned from October 2003 to May 2004. Parents were keen to be involved in all stages of the survey process from questionnaire development, distribution, data input, analysis through to report writing and dissemination. The following quotes are drawn from the individual experiences provided by all members of the group which are at the back of this report.

*It has been really interesting to see how peoples views differ on the same subject. It has also been good to hear how people in the West Howe area have seen changes over the last couple of years.*

*Along the way we've questioned everything, argued, been passionate, been embarrassed, learnt jargon (like P.C.T. for one) been dejected, thrashed things out, been amazed, learnt a lot, been bewildered but most of all enjoyed ourselves.*

*Overall I think it has been really educational for me.*



## 4. Methods

### Questionnaire development

The Family Survey questionnaire was developed by the Family Survey Group, in consultation with the Evaluation Working Group, comprising the Sure Start Bournemouth Manager, Sure Start Project Workers, members of the Partnership Board, residents and members of the evaluation team. The final draft was approved by the Evaluation Working Group.

The questionnaire contained 90 questions and was designed, in sections, to address aims as outlined earlier.

Section content was structured as follows:

- **Your opinion of Sure Start Bournemouth** – registered with Sure Start Bournemouth; heard about Sure Start Bournemouth; contact with members of the Sure Start Team; attending Sure Start courses; satisfaction with Sure Start Bournemouth services; support for you and your youngest child; suggestions for other Sure Start services; special needs services; involving Dads in Sure Start.
- **About You** – basic demographic information e.g. gender, age
- **West Howe and Paddington Grove Family Matters** – employment status; changes in employment status; childcare issues; midwifery questions; breastfeeding; smoking; starting school.
- **West Howe and Paddington Grove Community Services** – satisfaction community services for children (under 6); satisfaction with community facilities for children (under 6).
- **West Howe and Paddington Grove Community Issues** – transport; libraries; park and play facilities; leisure; recycling/litter; shops; crime.
- **General questions about West Howe and Paddington Grove** – opportunities for children (under 6); changes in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas in last three years.

### Sample

Five hundred and forty-four (544) self-completing questionnaires were distributed to parents with children under six who live in the Sure Start Bournemouth area. Self-complete questionnaires were used to avoid the potential for bias towards expressed satisfaction with services in a face-to-face interview situation (Blaxter, 1995). Stamped addressed envelopes were provided. An incentive of a prize draw was included with the survey to encourage completion.

The sampling strategy aimed to reach as many of these families as possible. Those residents already registered with Sure Start Bournemouth were sent questionnaires by

post (n=357). These questionnaires were addressed and posted by members of the Sure Start Team in compliance with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Members of the Family Survey Group also handed out questionnaires via local schools, shops, the post office and community groups (n=187).

## **Response rate**

Five hundred and forty-four (544) questionnaires were distributed in total. Ninety-seven (97) families within the Sure Start Bournemouth area completed and returned a questionnaire.

Within these returns, eighty-three (83) were completed by Sure Start registered families, giving a response rate for registered families (total number of families registered = 357) of 23%. Surveys of this nature tend to have response rates of between 25-30% (Burns & Grove 1993). Fourteen (14) completed questionnaires were received from non-registered families living in the Sure Start Bournemouth area.

Various strategies were employed in order to increase the response rate. Follow-up letters were sent to all registered Sure Start families in the area, members of the Family Survey Group attended groups at the Sure Start Centre to remind parents to fill in the questionnaire and follow up calls were made to community groups.

## 5. Findings

The findings are based on the 97 questionnaires which were returned from parents with children under the age of six who live in the Sure Start area. A combination of tables, graphs and text are used to describe the data, along with a more detailed account of the qualitative data provided by parents. Anonymous quotes by parents about their feelings of services and their community are included throughout the findings. The findings are presented below under the following headings:

- Family Information
- Using Sure Start
- Health matters
- Community issues

### 5.1 Family information

Some basic demographic information about the sample was obtained. Questions were about age, household composition, employment and ethnicity. Findings show the actual number of respondents for each question. All but one respondent (one father) to the questionnaire was the mother of a child or children under the age of 6 living in the Sure Start area.

**Age of parent:** Table 1 shows the age range of respondents. Half of the sample were aged between 26 and 35 years.

**Table 1. Age of parent**

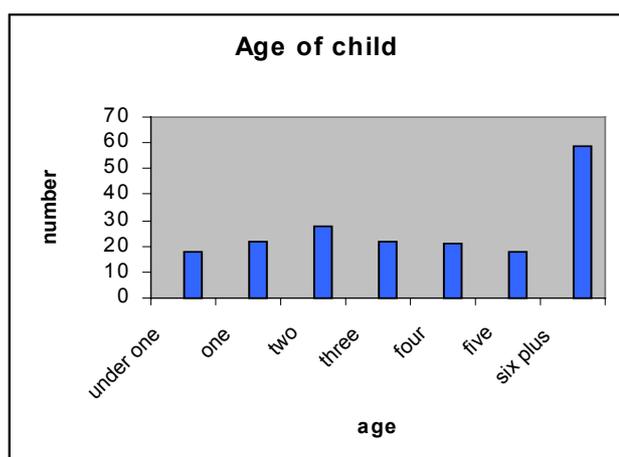
Age range	Frequency
16-25	25 (25.8%)
26-35	49 (50%)
36-45	21 (21.6%)
46-55	2 (2.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>97 (100%)</b>

**Household composition:** Over half of the respondents were living with a partner (66.3%), with approximately six per cent (6.1%) of households containing another adult relative. Twenty-four of the respondents out of the 95 who answered this question were living independently (24.5%).

A third reported that they had either one or two children living at home (38.8% and 36.7% respectively). A total of 16 (16.3%) had 3 children living with them, 6 (6.1%) had 4 children at home and only 2 households had 5 children living there.

**Age of children:** The following graph shows the age of respondents' children. The number of children are evenly spread from 0 - 5 years. Twenty-four families have one other child aged 6 or over, 13 families have two and 3 have 3 children 6 or over.

Figure. 1



**Ethnicity:** Table 2 shows the ethnic background of respondents. The ethnicity of children was not asked. The vast majority of respondents described themselves as White British.

**Table 2. Ethnic background**

	Frequency
<b>White British</b>	<b>92 (93.9%)</b>
<b>Other White</b>	<b>3 (3.1%)</b>
<b>Other mixed background</b>	<b>2 (2.0%)</b>
<b>White Asian</b>	<b>1 (1.0%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>97 (100%)</b>

Respondents were asked if they considered Sure Start to be user friendly for parents who were from all cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds.. Out of the 95 who answered this question, 79 (80.6%) said 'yes' and 16 (16.3%) answered 'not sure'.

*I see many different people coming to and from Sure Start, they seem happy. (Parent)*

The Public Service Agreement for Sure Start sets out a number of challenging targets which includes those that are specifically concerned with reaching all families within the area. To achieve these targets a Sure Start guidance document states:

' Services need to be designed to meet the particular needs of individual families, minority ethnic families, mixed race/heritage families, faith groups and any other kind of family for whom the use of mainstream service may be problematic' (Sure Start for all: Guidance on involving minority ethnic children and families).

Staff at Sure Start Bournemouth are willing to spend more time with families if there is a language barrier. Some respondents were aware, however, that there could be

some cultural barriers. For example, it is difficult for Muslim women to be in the same room with other men, without their husbands present. One respondent suggested that ‘ethnic meals’ might encourage families from more ethnic groups to use the café.

**Employment:** Table 3 shows the employment status of respondents and their partners. Full time employment is defined as paid employment for 30 hours or more per week. Half of the parents (51%) who answered this question indicated they were looking after the home. Women who were working were doing so part time, whereas the majority of male partners were in full time employment.

**Table 3. Employment status**

<b>Employment</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Partner</b>
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>2</b> (2%)	<b>40</b> (64.5%)
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>31</b> (31.6%)	<b>7</b> (11.3%)
<b>Self-employed</b>	<b>2</b> (2%)	<b>8</b> (12.9%)
<b>Full-time education</b>	---	<b>1</b> (1.6%)
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>7</b> (7.1%)	<b>2</b> (3.2%)
<b>New Deal</b>	<b>1</b> (1%)	<b>2</b> (3.2%)
<b>Permanently sick/disabled</b>	---	<b>2</b> (3.2%)
<b>Looking after the home</b>	<b>50</b> (51%)	---
<b>Training</b>	<b>3</b> (3.1%)	---
<b>Voluntary work</b>	<b>2</b> (2%)	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b> (100%)	<b>62</b> (100%)

Other activities listed by parents were child-minding; Sure Start courses; college courses and full-time carer.

Parents were asked if their employment status had changed in the last three years to try to discover if Sure Start had contributed to helping parents return to work, by providing training, help with childcare and offering general support to those wishing to gain employment.

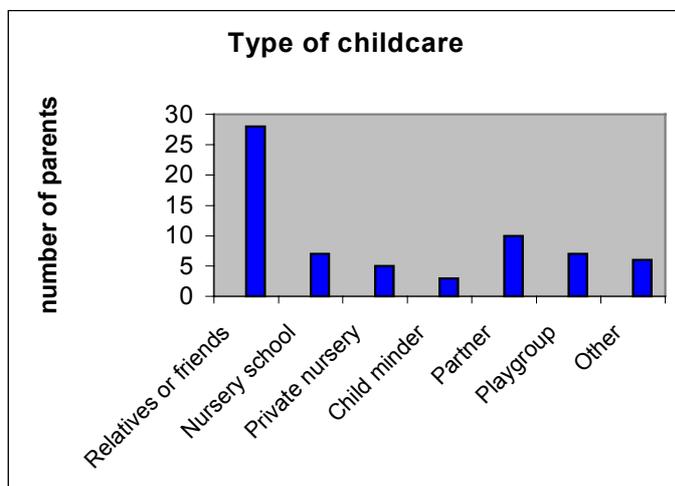
From the data obtained in this small sample, it can be seen that changes in employment status are inevitable within families who have young children. Over a third of those who answered this question had changed their employment status (38) and gave a number of reasons which included, a move from full-time work to part-time following the birth of a baby. A third of the mothers reporting changes to their employment status had given up work completely in order to look after their child(ren) full-time. However, nearly a third of the respondents, who had changed employment status, had either returned to work or were planning to in the near future.

In light of Sure Start’s national target of reducing the number of 0-3 year old children in Sure Start areas living in households where no one is working by 10%, further research about working decisions after childbirth is needed.

**Childcare:** It was considered important to find out what childcare arrangements parents made and whether a lack of suitable childcare provision prevented parents from obtaining employment. Out of the 96 parents who responded, 41 (42.7%) did

make childcare arrangements for their child/children. The following graph shows the type of childcare used:

**Figure 2**



In response to the question whether a lack of suitable childcare was preventing parents obtaining employment, almost a third of those who answered said yes (29.9%). It is recommended that further evaluation is undertaken after the introduction of the Neighbourhood Nursery to measure its impact on child care availability and parental choices about returning to work.

However, many of the parents who answered this question wanted to look after their own children and valued watching their children develop. Some parents were nervous about leaving their children in the care of other people.

*I want to spend all the time I can with my son until he goes to school (Parent)*

For those parents who wanted to return to work part-time or full-time, availability and affordable child-care were important issues. The feeling was that most of their wages would be spent on child-care.

*Not enough straightforward information – i.e. on lone parent tax credit. What do I have to pay for childcare, rent, transport. What help is there? (Parent)*

*A lot of jobs in our area are not well paid so by the time you pay the child minder you are better off not working. (Parent)*

Care during school holidays was also a barrier to returning to work. A number of parents had resorted to working at night when family members could care for their children.

*Have to work nights as no child care available. (Parent)*

It is apparent, therefore, possibly through lack of information and advice, that some parents feel they are better off not working. Sure Start Bournemouth is addressing this problem in a number of ways: a neighbourhood nursery is nearing completion with 34 places available. Tax credits/benefits advice sessions are run at the Sure Start Centre by Job Centre Plus and a Lone Parent Advisor and Careers Guidance is offered by a Connect to Learning Counsellor.



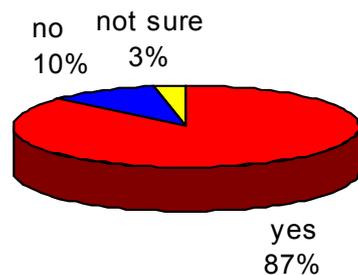
## 5.2 Using Sure Start

This section of the questionnaire was designed to find out if families in the area had heard about Sure Start and if they were using any of the Sure Start services. Respondents who were using the services were asked if they were satisfied with them and given the opportunity to express their views in more detail.

**Registered with Sure Start:** At the time of this survey there were a total of 357 registered families with Sure Start within a catchment of approximately 500 families with 601 children under the age of 4 years (Sure Start Start Point Data 2003/2004).

Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents to the survey who were registered with Sure Start and using the services provided by them.

**Figure 3. Registered with Sure Start**



**Not using Sure Start Bournemouth:** Of those respondents who were not using Sure Start Bournemouth (14), over half were unaware or unsure what Sure Start was about or what it offered. One parent needed more information on how to register. Others felt they were too busy, worked, or it was difficult to find the time amongst other children’s activities. Being let down after an offer of a lift to a playgroup and ‘not feeling comfortable’ were also given as reasons for not having accessed services.

**Heard about Sure Start:** Respondents were asked how they had heard about Sure Start. The following table shows how they found out about the services and facilities available.

**Table 4. How heard about Sure Start**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Sure Start leaflet</b>	<b>24 (28.6%)</b>
<b>Group leaflet</b>	<b>10 (11.9%)</b>
<b>Health/education/social care professionals</b>	<b>38 (45.2%)</b>
<b>Friend/family member</b>	<b>7 (8.3%)</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>5 (6%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>85 (100%)</b>

Other ways of hearing about Sure Start Bournemouth given by respondents included: living close by and seeing the Sure Start Centre being built, leaflets advertising Sure Start handed out at their children’s schools and from the local church. Respondents had also been told about Sure Start projects/services such as the Breastfeeding Support Group and Midwifery service available at Sure Start Bournemouth.

In the first community survey 2002, the majority of respondents (96%) had heard about Sure Start from either a Sure Start leaflet or a group leaflet, for example the parent & toddler group. It is interesting to note that almost half the respondents in this survey (46%) first heard about Sure Start Bournemouth from health and social care workers. This finding indicates that non-Sure Start Health & Social Care professionals working in the area are themselves more aware of what Sure Start Bournemouth have to offer and are providing information for families so they can access Sure Start services. Further evaluation would enable understanding as to how information is being shared and the impact on Health & Social Care services.

Respondents were asked if they or a family member had experienced any contact with a member of the Sure Start team in the last 12 months. The majority of those who responded said they had been in contact (89%).

**Sure Start Courses:** Sure Start hosts a number of courses for residents, respondents were asked to indicate if they or their partner had attended any of the courses. The following lists show the most popular courses being attended by how many respondents and their partners.

<i>Respondents</i>		<i>Partner</i>	
<b>Computer skills</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>DIY</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>DIY</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>First Aid</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>First Aid</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>Computer skills</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Make &amp; Take</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>Step parenting</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Personal safety</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>Home safety</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Developing English</b>	<b>(4)</b>		
<b>Home safety</b>	<b>(3)</b>		
<b>Step parenting</b>	<b>(2)</b>		



**Other courses:** Parents were asked about any other courses they had taken at Sure Start Bournemouth these included the following:

<b>Baby massage (4)</b>
<b>Cooking (3)</b>
<b>Health &amp; Safety (1)</b>
<b>Coffee morning for newcomers (1)</b>
<b>Self defence (1)</b>
<b>Stop smoking (1)</b>
<b>Bosom Buddies workshop (1)</b>
<b>Stress &amp; relaxation (1)</b>

**Satisfaction with Sure Start Services:** Sure Start Bournemouth runs and supports a range of services. Parents were asked how they felt about the services they have used selecting either 'very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'not sure', 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' as their answer. Table 5 shows the findings.

**Table 5 satisfaction with Sure Start services**

Service	n	Very satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Home visiting	54	36 (66.7%)	18 (33.3%)	-	-
Pregnant club	6	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	-	-
Bosom Buddies	16	9 (56.2%)	7 (43.8%)	-	-
Infant massage	17	11 (64.7%)	6 (35.3%)	-	-
Let's play together	56	41 (73.2%)	14 (25%)	-	1 (1.8%)
Terrible two's	18	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	-	-
Sure tots-Henry Brown	20	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	1 (5%)	-
West Howe Toy library	37	25 (67.6%)	12 (32.4%)	-	-
Sure Can	11	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	-	-
Coffee Hour	14	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	-	-
Homestart	10	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	-	1 (10%)
Sure tots-St Philips	10	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	1 (10%)	-
Healthy eating- "	5	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	-	-
Coping with kids- "	6	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	-	-
Contact centre- "	4	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	-	-
Smoke Stop	9	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	-	-
Midwifery	13	9 (69.2%)	4 (30.8%)	-	-
Substance misuse	3	-	3 (100%)	-	-
Health visitor	26	18 (69.2%)	8 (30.8%)	-	-
Parents forum	18	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	-	-
Focus group meetings	9	6 (66.7%)	3 (33.3%)	-	-
Let's weigh less	10	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	-	-

**\*n = total number of respondents**

Parents were asked to describe what they felt about the Sure Start services they had used. There was general satisfaction with the Sure Start facilities which had been accessed.

Parents felt that the Sure Start Centre was very welcoming and expressed satisfaction with the groups attended. Although services and groups offered vary in numbers of parents using them, with Let's Play, the Toy Library, the Health Visitor and Home Visiting being the largest, overall expressed satisfaction was high throughout.

In particular, the high satisfaction with the Let's Play Together groups mirrored the positive findings from the in-depth evaluation of Let's Play (2003) which concluded that this service was meeting many of the National Sure Start objectives, especially Improving learning.



Parents who responded to this question had appreciated support from the midwifery services, the Breastfeeding Support Group, and the Opportunities Group. They valued being able to access members of the Sure Start team for help with their children's development.

Suggestions from parents included different playtimes for different age groups in Lets Play sessions, extended sessions/extra days for the Toy Library and a later 'Song and Rhyme Time'.

**Not using the services:** Parents were asked if there was a reason why they were not using some of the services. A number of the families who answered this question had used Sure Start Services in the past, but their children had turned 5 and started school.

*My children are now in full-time school so we mainly use the café and come to the fun days (Parent)*

Others, although aware of the services offered felt they were not relevant, whilst some with very young babies said they would use more services in the future. Some parents had found it difficult to use certain services as they were unable to take their older children.

*I have a child of 4 and one of 2. Some of the things for the 2 year old, like infant massage (when he was a baby) I couldn't take my 4 year old to. (Parent)*

Not enough time and working or taking courses were also given as reasons for not using services. However, parents also said they felt reassured that the services were available, if needed.

**Other courses or services suggested by respondents:**

<p><b>Educational activities/skills</b>                  Sign Language (9)                  Speech &amp; Hearing (1)                  Academic Courses (4)                  Needs of children (2)                  Counselling (1)                  Interview Techniques/CV's (2)                  Advanced Computers (2)</p> <p><b>Social activities</b>                  Art &amp; Craft (3)                  Photography (9)                  Music/Poetry/Drama/Dance (4)                  Sports (1)                  Gardening (1)                  Car Maintenance (1)                  Dress Making (1)                  Discussion/Debating Group (1)</p>
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**Support in pregnancy and pre-school:** This set of questions related to the respondents' level of satisfaction with either Sure Start professional support or other professional support they received for their youngest child during pregnancy, in the first two months after the birth and before their child attends full time school. Tables 6 and 7 show the findings.

**Table 6. Sure Start professional support for youngest child**

	n	Very satisfied	satisfied	Not sure	dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
<b>During pregnancy</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13 (44.8%)</b>	<b>12 (41.4%)</b>	<b>2 (6.9%)</b>	<b>2 (6.9%)</b>	-
<b>First two months</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18 (56.3%)</b>	<b>11 (34.4%)</b>	<b>2 (6.3%)</b>	<b>1 (3.1%)</b>	-
<b>Pre-school</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34 (68%)</b>	<b>10 (20%)</b>	<b>6 (12%)</b>	-	-

Overall, respondents who answered this question expressed high levels of satisfaction with Sure Start Bournemouth services. Parents said they particularly appreciated the friendly and helpful approach of the Sure Start Team who were supportive and provided valuable advice and information, when needed.

*[Sure Start] provides the missing link to education before full-time nursery. Gets a child used to a classroom experience, structure and integration with others. (Parent)*

Parents said they had benefited from support during pregnancy and post-natally, both from Sure Start and other mothers attending Sure Start. Their children were, they felt,

gaining in confidence from attending playgroups and crèches and making good progress with speech and language support, when needed.

Being able to access members of the Sure Start Team (e.g Health Visitor) for information and advice more quickly than other services was also appreciated.

*When I've had problems I've been able to access the Health Visitor immediately instead of waiting sometimes 24 hours. (Parent)*

A small number of parents, however, had received little or no support. This seemed to be due to lack of information or unawareness that Sure Start offered support services during pregnancy.

*I received no support during the pregnancy as I was not told by my midwife about the service (unfortunately). My Health Visitor only told me about it when my child was about six months old. (Parent)*

Clarification and increased awareness of service provision within the community for parents and health/social care professionals may be needed in some areas. However, as mentioned previously there are some indications from this small sample that there is increased awareness from health professionals other than Sure Start workers within the area.

Parents were asked about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with other services provided by health and social care professionals during pregnancy, postnatally and during the period before their child attends school.

**Table 7. Other professional support for youngest child**

	<b>n</b>	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>satisfied</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>
<b>During pregnancy</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>23 (46%)</b>	<b>23 (46%)</b>	<b>3 (6%)</b>	<b>1 (2%)</b>	-
<b>First two months</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>24 (50%)</b>	<b>20 (42%)</b>	<b>3 (6%)</b>	<b>1 (2%)</b>	-
<b>Pre-school</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>15 (32%)</b>	<b>23 (49%)</b>	<b>8 (17%)</b>	<b>1 (2%)</b>	-

The majority of parents were satisfied with the support received. Health & social care professionals were described as helpful, friendly and supportive.

*Good personal interaction – not just another pregnancy. (Parent)*

The reasons for dissatisfaction were: ‘lack of time for you’; ‘more medical advice needed’; ‘more information needed’; and ‘being judged’.

**Special needs:** Respondents were asked if their child had any special needs and if they would mind explaining what those needs were. 16 (16%) of the sample indicated they had a child with special needs. These were described as follows:

<p><b>Speech &amp; Language (10)</b> <b>Hearing (2)</b> <b>Autism (1)</b> <b>Glaucoma (1)</b> <b>Behaviour problems (1)</b> <b>Cerebral Palsy (1)</b> <b>ADHD (1)</b> <b>Dyslexia (1)</b> <b>Epilepsy (1)</b></p>
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Parents with children with special needs were asked how they felt about the Sure Start special needs services they had received. Ninety-one per cent of parents attending the Opportunities Group (10 parents) were 'very satisfied' with the level of support provided.

In the Community Survey 2002, 10% of the parents who took part in the survey reported that they had a child with special needs. The increase from 10% to 16% in this survey may be due to a number of reasons: health/social care professionals are aware of the services offered by Sure Start Bournemouth for children with special needs (Sure Start Speech Therapist, Opportunities Group and Terrible Two's) and are referring families to Sure Start; Sure Start Team members refer children; and community information sharing.

One of Sure Start's aims nationally is improving language skills and, more specifically, the target aimed to achieve a reduction of 5% in the number of children with speech and language problems requiring intervention by the age of 4. The increase from 10% to 16% of children receiving specialist support is, therefore, encouraging.

Parents were also asked what special needs services, if any, would make a difference to them and their child(ren). The following suggestions were made:

<p><b>Sign language (2)</b> <b>Speech (2)</b> <b>Hearing (1)</b> <b>Children's issues (1)</b> <b>Respite/support group (2)</b></p>
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**Welcoming place for Dads:** Research undertaken by NESS (National Evaluation for Sure Start) looked at involving fathers in Sure Start. Key reasons which emerged from the research for wanting to increase father involvement included:

- The potential benefit to children of being presented with positive male role models
- The potential importance for child development of supporting fathers in their parenting
- The benefits to children and families of fathers participating in Sure Start sessions. (Lloyd et al., 2003)

In addition, the research identified that Sure Start Programmes:

‘welcomed increased involvement from fathers and male staff but were often unclear about how best to pursue this aim’ (page iv, Lloyd et al., 2003)

Parents were asked whether they felt Sure Start Bournemouth was a welcoming place for Dads. There was a good response to this question (80). Most respondents (60%) felt that Sure Start Bournemouth was a welcoming place for everyone and that Dads were made to feel welcome.

*My partner felt very comfortable when he came to Sure Start. (Parent)*

There are a few Dads who attend groups regularly and use the facilities offered. Dads are also encouraged to take their children to the Centre for the Saturday morning drop-in.

Nearly forty per cent (30), however, were unsure. Whilst parents may be unaware of what is available at Sure Start for Dads, some respondents also expressed a feeling that perhaps Dads might feel overwhelmed and out-numbered, particularly on week-days, by what is almost exclusively a ‘female building’.

*Men feel intimidated by all the women. (Parent)*

*Until they feel comfortable in the surrounding and women get used to seeing men [in the building] its going to carry on. (Parent)*

Parents were asked for suggestions for what might encourage Dads to become more involved in the activities at Sure Start. Respondents provided a range of ideas, the most popular being: a Dads Club (10); Dad and Child sessions (10); Sure Start activities outside of work time (8); Dads courses (6); more information & advertising (3); whole family events (3); more male staff members (2); and Let’s Play sessions for Dads when they are caring for their children (1).

Sure Start Bournemouth have organised a Saturday morning ‘Stay & Play’ Group for Dads and working Mums who can’t access services during the week and have held Dad’s Groups in the evenings. Various other events have been organised including a Dad’s Day, a ‘Connect to Learning’ session focusing on employment, a Men’s Health session and a Streetwise safety workshop. Sure Start Bournemouth are also looking to employ a male sessional worker with experience of working in the community and with men’s groups.

### 5.3 Health matters

The following section describes the findings from questions about midwifery care, breastfeeding and smoking habits

**Midwifery care:** In the Community Survey 2002 the need for support during pregnancy and postnatally was highlighted. In response Sure Start Bournemouth appointed a midwife to work closely with existing services. This appointment was expected to impact positively on service provision, and on other Sure Start targets, including reduction in the proportion of low birth weight babies, increasing the number of women breastfeeding and reduction in hospital admissions due to illness such as respiratory infection/asthma (Sure Start Bournemouth Revised Plan 2002-2004).

Women were asked if they had been pregnant in the last 12 months and if yes, had they had contact with a Sure Start Midwife. Twenty-eight women had been pregnant and out of those, 14 had been in contact with or had a visit from a Sure Start Midwife. If respondents indicated they had not had contact with a Sure Start Midwife in pregnancy, they were asked to state why not. Table 8 shows these findings.

**Table 8. Reasons for no contact with a Sure Start Midwife in pregnancy**

	Number of women
<b>Did not know about Sure Start Midwives</b>	<b>6</b> (40%)
<b>Had community midwifery care</b>	<b>2</b> (13.3%)
<b>Had hospital midwifery care</b>	<b>1</b> (6.7%)
<b>Had GP care</b>	<b>3</b> (20%)
<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b> (20%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b> (100%)

The total includes one extra response

As the findings show, six women who had been pregnant indicated they were not aware of the Sure Start midwifery service. Further work to increase awareness is necessary to ensure all women have access to a Sure Start midwife in the area. Evaluation of the midwifery service is currently being planned which will help the midwifery team develop their service, meet women's needs and reach National Sure Start targets.

Those women who had had contact with a Sure Start midwife were asked about their feelings about the contact or visit. The respondents who answered this question were very positive about the support they had received.

*Very friendly. Not too busy to put your mind at rest about any problems you have. (Parent)*

They appreciated the friendly and supportive approach and valued the advice that the midwives could offer when problems arose. Having support there, if needed, was reassuring.

**Breastfeeding:** Women were asked if they had breastfed their youngest child. They were also asked to state if they had received any help and advice about breastfeeding and if so, who gave the support and were they satisfied with the service. Table 9 shows that over half of the mothers who responded to this question had breastfed their youngest child and of these the majority did receive some help and advice (78.2%).

**Table 9. Breastfeeding**

	<b>yes</b>	<b>no</b>
<b>Breastfed youngest child</b>	<b>56</b> (58.3%)	<b>40</b> (41.7%)
<b>Received help and advice</b>	<b>43</b> (78.2%)	<b>12</b> (21.8%)

Of those women who did receive help and advice with breastfeeding, 75% were either very satisfied or satisfied with this support. The list below shows where women were receiving support from, the number in brackets indicates how many responses there were to each type of support.

<b>Community Midwife</b>	<b>(16)</b>
<b>Health Visitor</b>	<b>(15)</b>
<b>Hospital</b>	<b>(11)</b>
<b>Breastfeeding Support Group/Bosom Buddies</b>	<b>(10)</b>
<b>Friends/family</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Sure Start Midwives</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>GP</b>	<b>(2)</b>

As can be seen many parents had received advice from their community midwives, health visitors and the midwives at the hospital. Subsequently, support from the Breastfeeding Support Group, the Bosom Buddies, the Sure Start Midwives and friends and family were valued sources of support.

Twelve women did not receive breastfeeding support for their youngest child and an open question allowed them to comment. Most of these agreed they would have benefited from breastfeeding support enabling them to breastfeed longer had it been available at the time when they needed it. Most of the parents who answered this question would have welcomed advice and support.

*I started to breastfeed my daughter but as I didn't have any advice and support I wasn't doing it properly and was in extreme pain. (Parent)*

*Yes, it would have been nice. Maybe I would have continued longer if help was there. (Parent)*

The community survey carried out in 2002 showed very similar breastfeeding rates for the West Howe area suggesting rates have not changed over the last 2 years. However, the women who responded to this part of the survey indicated that they had

received breastfeeding support and advice from the Sure Start midwife and the breastfeeding support group (Bosom Buddies). These peer-led groups have been particularly effective in areas such as West Howe where breastfeeding rates are low enabling women to access others who have had similar experiences and problems with feeding and all aspects of childcare.



Findings from the evaluation of the breastfeeding support group showed high satisfaction with the group, providing a much needed service for new mothers wishing to breastfeed as well as a strong social network for mothers in the community. The evaluation findings also indicated that many of the women interviewed breastfed for longer than they would have done as a result of the extra encouragement.

Supporting parents in caring for their children to promote healthy development before and after birth is the aim of Sure Start National Objective, Improving children's health. The breastfeeding group is achieving this by providing information and support on all aspects of breastfeeding as well as promoting healthy lifestyles, parenting skills, safety and health awareness.

The peer support which exists within the group has been fundamental in providing a network of local mothers who can offer on-going support and friendship to others within the community. This is an important factor in strengthening families and communities (Sure Start National objective) in particular by involving families in building the communities capacity to sustain the service.

**Smoking habits:** Questions about smoking asked respondents if they or any other household members smoked, if they gave up during pregnancy, when they gave up and if they started smoking again. The following tables describe the findings.

**Table 10. Number of smokers**

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Respondent</b>	<b>40</b> (41.7%)	<b>56</b> (58.3%)	<b>96</b> (100%)
<b>Partner</b>	<b>27</b> (44.3%)	<b>34</b> (55.7%)	<b>61</b> (100%)
<b>Adult relative</b>	<b>4</b> (80%)	<b>1</b> (20%)	<b>5</b> (100%)
<b>Children under 16</b>	<b>2</b> (100%)	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b> (100%)

The following tables show findings of those who smoked in their last pregnancy.

**Table 11. Smoking before pregnancy**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>45 (95.7%)</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>2 (4.3%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>47 (100%)</b>

**Table 12. Gave up smoking during last pregnancy**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>20 (44.4%)</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>25 (55.6%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>45 (100%)</b>

Table 13 shows at what stage of their pregnancy respondents gave up smoking. Results show that 75% of those who stopped smoking did so as soon as they discovered they were pregnant.

**Table 13. Time of giving up smoking**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>As soon as found out was pregnant</b>	<b>15 (75%)</b>
<b>By six months</b>	<b>4 (20%)</b>
<b>By birth of baby</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 (100%)</b>

Table 14 indicates that most of those who had stopped smoking during pregnancy had started again after the birth of their baby (70%).

**Table 14. Started smoking after the birth**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>14 (70%)</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>6 (30%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 (100%)</b>

Women were asked about smoking during the last pregnancy in the Community Survey 2002. The percentage of women who gave up smoking during last pregnancy was 33.3%. In this survey 44.4% of women reported having given up smoking during their last pregnancy.

Similarly, women were asked when they gave up. In the first survey 54.5% gave up as soon as they found out they were pregnant and in this survey 75% reported giving up immediately.

These trends are encouraging and may be attributable in part to the initiatives offered by Sure Start Bournemouth, particularly the Smoke-stop Group, Sure Start Midwives

and the Breastfeeding Support Group. They are also encouraging in the light of the Sure Start National Objective Improving children's health which aims for a 6% point reduction in the proportion of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy.

**Starting School:** One of the aims of Sure Start nationally is that the confidence children gain through their 'Sure Start experience' will help them with transition into full-time school. Parents were asked if they felt that Sure Start Bournemouth had had an impact on their child(ren)'s introduction to school.

*It gave her an earlier kick start into every aspect of nursery life. (Parent)*

*Mum and toddler groups helped them to mix with other kids before starting school. (Parent)*

In general, parents felt that their children had gained in confidence, learned how to interact and mix with other children and be comfortable about being left in safe surroundings through the Sure Start experience.

Anecdotal data received from a local primary school indicates that:

- Children start school with more confidence if they have spent a considerable time at Sure Start
- Children are more willing to leave their parents on intake
- Children are on the whole more willing to communicate with new adults and children

In addition, the school has found that parents who have been involved in Sure Start have more confidence and are far more responsive and actively involved in nursery life.

## **5.4 Community issues**

This section of the questionnaire asked about residents' views on community services and facilities **other** than those provided by Sure Start. This includes questions about health, education and childcare services, leisure, transport and feelings about crime and litter in the area.

A list of both community health led services and child centred community services were presented for respondents to state if they were very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with them in general.

### **Community health services**

Table 15 lists a range of health services that can be used in the area by Sure Start residents with their children. Responses varied, with most indicating satisfaction with

the health visitor, GP, midwife and the baby/child clinic. Dissatisfaction with services was rare. However, social work, NHS Direct and counselling services were mentioned as areas of dissatisfaction. These findings are very similar to the findings from the first community survey (2002). One difference however is the Speech and language service. In this survey 12 out of 14 respondents were satisfied with the service compared to the first survey where respondents indicated some dissatisfaction (25%). This reflects the introduction of the Sure Start Speech & Language worker who has developed a support service for all Sure Start parents as well as the appointment of a clinic-based Speech & Language therapist at the West Howe Clinic. An evaluation of the Sure Start Speech & Language service is currently underway and the findings will be available in the near future.

**Table 15. Satisfaction with community health services**

Services	response	very satisfied	satisfied	not sure	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
Midwife	62	33 (53.2%)	24 (24.5%)	3 (4.8%)	2 (3.2%)	---
Health visitor	80	35 (43.8%)	37 (46.3%)	3 (3.8%)	5 (6.3%)	---
District nurse	16	4 (25%)	6 (37.5%)	6 (37.5%)	---	---
Baby/child clinic	51	26 (51%)	22 (43.1%)	1 (2%)	2 (3.9%)	---
Social worker	18	5 (27.5%)	6 (33.3%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	3 (16.7%)
GP	70	40 (57.1%)	24 (34.3%)	3 (4.3%)	3 (4.3%)	---
Speech therapy	14	8 (57.1%)	4 (28.6%)	2 (14.3%)	---	---
NHS Direct	43	20 (46.5%)	12 (27.9%)	5 (11.6%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)
Counselling	15	4 (26.7%)	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)
Nursery nurse	18	7 (38.9%)	7 (38.9%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	---

Parents were given the opportunity to comment on local community services and were generally positive.

*I have had so much help with my autistic child – that to move here has been the best thing we could ever have done – everything is so child orientated. (Parent)*

However, some negative comments were received about NHS Direct. Parents did not wish to access this service again after ‘bad experiences’ preferring to contact their doctors in future.

*Will never ring NHS Direct again if I need advice. I will now phone my doctors. I trust someone I know more than a distant voice that I don't know. (Parent)*

### **Child-centred community services**

Table 16 shows how respondents felt about some of the community services they were using with their child. Generally parents were satisfied with the child care they were using, especially with the playgroups in the area. Satisfaction was high with the library services, including the toy library.

**Table 16. Satisfaction with child-centred community services**

Services	response	very satisfied	satisfied	not sure	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
Playgroups	34	24 (70.6%)	9 (26.5%)	1 (2.9%)	---	---
Parent/toddler	50	32 (64%)	13 (26%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Nursery	34	21 (61.8%)	12 (35.3%)	---	1 (2.9%)	---
Private care	10	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	---
Toy library	22	14 (63.6%)	5 (22.7%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (4.5%)	---
Library	54	35 (64.8%)	18 (33.3%)	1 (1.9%)	---	---
Leisure/sport	39	13 (33.3%)	17 (43.6%)	2 (5.1%)	5 (12.8%)	2 (5.1%)
Early learning	17	11 (64.7%)	6 (35.3%)	---	---	---

Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with Mother & Toddler Groups in the West Howe area. They described the staff as friendly and appreciated the provision of good outdoor activity. One respondent was particularly appreciative of the facilities in the area:

*We feel very lucky to live here. With living elsewhere you appreciate the fantastic facilities that are available. (Parent)*

The majority of parents who responded to this question, however, felt that the parks and streets in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas were not taken care of and were in a poor state of repair. (see elsewhere in this report)

*The children's play parks are not taken care of – they have broken glass regularly and I have stopped using them. Queens Park is swept daily even though it doesn't need it. (Parent)*

**Transport:** The majority of respondents had access to a car (81.6%). Over half indicated that they used public transport (62.5%) and of those, half felt that it met their needs. Explanations about why public transport did not meet the needs of other respondents included the following:

<p><b>Unreliability (13)</b>  <b>Lack of low floor buses (9)</b>  <b>Inadequate service (7)</b>  <b>Insensitive to people with a buggy (5)</b>  <b>Expensive (3)</b></p>
--

Generally, the comments about respondents' disappointment with public transport focused on the services being unreliable and not having enough routes. Parents with buggies, especially three wheeler or double buggies explained that they found it very difficult to use buses, particularly with more than one child and shopping.

Parents described their experiences:

*I have a three wheeler buggy and I have been told to fold it up when on a buggy bus. Which is hard with 3 boys and having to take the wheel off as well. (Parent)*

*The local bus service is not very good because there are many places you can't get to by bus. Also they do not run frequently enough and stop too early in the evening. There should be conductors to stop unruly behaviour. (Parent)*

*The leisure card is helpful but it would be better if it could be used on more bus routes. (Parent)*

**Libraries/Reading:** Respondents were asked about library membership for themselves and their child. All but one respondent answered this question. Table 17 shows the findings.

**Table 17. Belong to local library**

<b>Parent</b>	<b>74 (76.3%)</b>
<b>Child under 6 years</b>	<b>56 (57.7%)</b>

Two respondents expressed the wish to join the library and others explained that they felt their child was too young to join or that the system had changed and they needed to rejoin, as reasons for not belonging to their local branch.

Parents were asked about time spent reading with their child. Ninety-seven parents responded to this question. Table 18 shows the findings.

**Table 18. Time spent reading with children**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Often</b>	<b>75 (77.3%)</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>21 (21.6%)</b>
<b>Hardly ever</b>	<b>1 (1%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>97 (100%)</b>

Reading with children was considered to be extremely important to many parents. Some comments included:

*My son would rather read a book than play. He loves to choose his own books. (Parent)*

*My children love the libraries and thoroughly enjoy being read to and reading to me. (Parent)*  
*I've always wanted to join up at the library. I just forget, should do it really. (Parent)*

An in-depth evaluation of the West Howe Toy Library, situated in the West Howe Library and supported by Sure Start Bournemouth, has indicated that, as well as being able to play with good quality developmental toys, ‘a new generation’ of children is becoming familiar with its local library and being introduced to books and the ‘reading habit’ from an early age. The West Howe Toy Library has met a number of National Sure Start targets, especially within the Objective improving learning, Target 10 ‘Increase use of libraries by families with young children in the Sure Start area’.

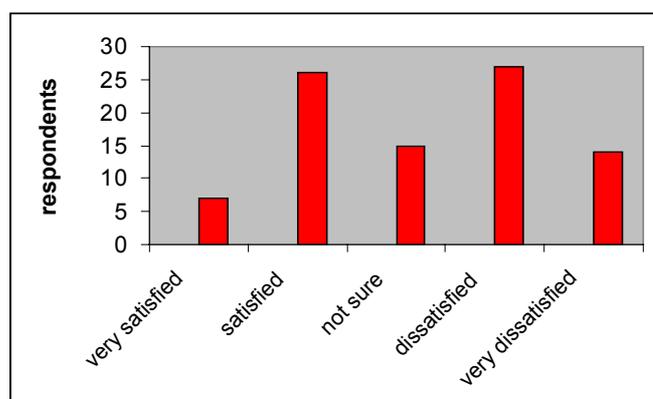
**Park and Play Facilities:** A wide variety of parks and playgrounds are used by over half of the respondents both in and out of the West Howe area. Respondents were asked to name the ones they used and to state if they were satisfied with the park and play facilities in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas, giving an explanation if they wished. The following list shows the parks being used by residents in West Howe who answered the question with the number of responses in brackets.

<b>Poole Lane</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>Poole Park*</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>Turbary Park</b>	<b>(12)</b>	<b>Littlemoor</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>Moore Ave</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>Malvern Rd*</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Pelhams</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>Bearwood*</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Redhill*</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>Strouden Park*</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>East Howe*</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>Tedder Rd</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Paddington Grove</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>Anchor Rd*</b>	<b>(1)</b>

\* Parks outside the Sure Start Bournemouth area

Overall, respondents were dissatisfied with the park and play facilities in West Howe and Paddington Grove. Figure 4 shows the findings to this question. A total of 89 responded.

**Figure 4. Satisfaction with the Parks**



Whilst parents expressed some satisfaction with parks not in the Sure Start Bournemouth area nearly all of the comments about the park and play facilities within the area were negative. The most common problem mentioned was vandalism,

followed by safety issues with the equipment and the presence of broken glass. The following list shows the comments received.

<b>Vandalism</b>	<b>(10)</b>
<b>Not safe</b>	<b>(8)</b>
<b>Older children</b>	<b>(8)</b>
<b>Dog mess</b>	<b>(7)</b>
<b>Broken glass</b>	<b>(7)</b>
<b>Broken equipment</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Out of date</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Insufficient for age group</b>	<b>(4)</b>

Some of the descriptions of the local parks included:

*The local parks could do with brightening up and a few more things added. Also a park warden to cut vandalism down. (Parent)*

*I feel they need to made more clean safe and equipment working. (Parent)*

Comparison with feelings about local parks reported in the first Community Survey shows that, at the time of the second survey there had been little improvement. However, it is important to point out that, with lottery funding and in partnership with Bournemouth Borough Leisure Services, the Moore Avenue Park was in the process undergoing major refurbishment at the time of the survey. A number of respondents were looking forward to being able use this park.

*There aren't many parks and we can't wait for the new park. (Parent)*



**Leisure:** Respondents were asked what leisure facilities they would like to see in the West Howe area. There was a variety of responses, which included, gymnasiums (3), swimming pool (3), leisure centre (3), dance/drama activities (2), paddling pool (2), cinema (1), adventure park (1) and tennis facilities (1). However, two thirds of those answering this question said they did not want any extra leisure facilities in the area.

**Recycling/Litter:** Parents completing the questionnaire were asked whether litter was a problem in the local area. There was a large and detailed response to this question. The majority who replied considered it a huge problem (78.3%). The following list shows the type of litter problems highlighted by respondents. Total response is shown in brackets.

<b>Litter/rubbish</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>Beer cans/bottles</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Dog mess</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>Lack of rubbish collections</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Glass</b>	<b>(12)</b>	<b>Syringes</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>Lack of bins</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>Graffiti</b>	<b>(1)</b>
<b>Abandoned/burnt out cars</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>Condoms</b>	<b>(1)</b>

It is clear that the problems with litter and dirty streets is a very big concern for the community. Respondents talked about the lack of consideration shown by some people in not disposing of their rubbish properly and felt that if residents took pride in the way their community looked it could improve.

*Lack of consideration on the part of the litterbug!*  
(Parent)

*People do not clean up after their dogs. (Parent)*  
*I see a lot of rubbish thrown on the floor. The bins outside Cunningham Crescent shops are vandalised. Some people are too lazy to take their rubbish home. (Parent)*

The concerns that parents have shown in their responses in this survey with the condition of the parks, e.g. broken glass, dog-fouling and the dirty streets indicates potential health problems for families particularly with young children. Whilst determining health risks is not within the scope of this survey, it is important to raise awareness of community concerns.

Parents also described the problem with groups of children hanging around certain areas, such as the shops, community centres and residential areas leaving litter in the street.

*Teenagers hang around certain areas in Paddington Grove at night and leave smashed bottles and other rubbish (Parent)*

Respondents were given the opportunity to offer some solutions to the litter problem. Table 19 shows some of the extra measures that parents felt were needed to prevent litter being a problem in the future.

**Table 19. Extra measures to improve litter problem**

	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Regular collection of waste</b>	<b>44</b> (44.9%)
<b>Collect recycling materials from home</b>	<b>51</b> (52%)
<b>Information and education</b>	<b>26</b> (26.5%)
<b>Warden patrols</b>	<b>29</b> (29.6%)
<b>Public waste bins</b>	<b>60</b> (61.2%)
<b>Central recycling areas</b>	<b>39</b> (39.8%)
<b>Dog fouling bins</b>	<b>63</b> (64.3%)
<b>Fines</b>	<b>47</b> (48%)

**Local shops:** Parents were asked to state if they were satisfied with the local shops in West Howe and Paddington Grove area.

Two-thirds of those parents who responded to this question were satisfied with the local shops.

*I like to shop in town as it is cheaper, but if I run out last minute the local shops usually have what I need.*  
(Parent)

However, a third of those who answered indicated they were dissatisfied with the shops and gave a number of reasons. These were: being too expensive; lacking fresh produce; lack of variety; and inconvenient opening hours. Respondents also expressed concerns about the increased availability of alcohol in the area. Some of the comments included:

*The local shops are taking advantage of the fact that it is miles to anywhere decent. The prices are disgusting. Considering the amount of people that live here facilities are disgraceful.* (Parent)

*Within walking distance we have large clothing and furniture stores but nowhere to get decent fruit and veg at reasonable prices.* (Parent)

Access to fresh fruit and vegetables at reasonable prices is fundamental to the 'healthier ways of eating' move being promoted at a national level. Currently Sure Start Bournemouth are exploring the possibility of supporting parents in gaining access to a local allotment. In addition, Sure Start has supported the Healthy Eating Project run at St. Philips Church and maintained a healthy eating initiative at the Sure Start Community Café.

**Crime:** Questions were asked about crime affecting residents in the West Howe area. Many respondents were keen to express their views with this section providing the

biggest response to open questions. Seventy-seven per cent believed that crime was a problem in the local area.

A quarter (25%) of respondents also indicated that they had been a victim of a crime in the last 12 months. This compares with an average figure for the whole of the Bournemouth area between April 2002 and March 2003 of 3.7% (Crime Statistics for England and Wales, 2003). This large difference may be due in part to unreported crime. Further research would be useful into levels of unreported crime in the area and the reasons why people feel unable to report crime to the police.

The crimes that parents felt were causing the most problems are listed below, with the total number of responses shown in brackets.

<b>Abandoned/theft/burnt out cars</b>	<b>(28)</b>	<b>Arson/fires</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Anti-social behaviour</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>Drugs</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Vandalism</b>	<b>(12)</b>	<b>Graffiti</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Theft/burglary</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>Assaults</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>Joy riding</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>Drink</b>	<b>(1)</b>

As can be seen, the major concerns for residents are related to car crime and anti-social behaviour. Some of the comments provided by respondents clearly demonstrate how many local residents are angry and tired of these events.

*A lot of youngsters in the area congregate in the children's play area behind the flats and parents feel intimidated by them and won't use the parks. (Parent)*

*Not enough for teenagers to do. Better presence of 'Bobbies on the beat'. Parents need to be more aware of where their children are. (Parent)*

Sure Start Bournemouth, along with other local community groups, have periodically raised the issue of levels of crime, particularly car crime and anti-social behaviour with the local police. Currently, the West Howe Network has planned to set up a local anti-social behaviour group. Sure Start Bournemouth will be involved in this initiative.

Following on from the previous question, respondents were asked to put forward ideas for the prevention of crime in the area. These are as follows:

<b>More police patrolling</b>	<b>(11)</b>
<b>Stronger punishment/discipline</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Youth clubs/activities for older children</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Neighbourhood watch</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>Greater parental responsibility</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>CCTV</b>	<b>(2)</b>

Respondents had concerns about how effective any crime prevention would be. Some parents did not consider it just a West Howe problem but society in general. It was strongly agreed that parents needed to take greater responsibility for their children's actions. Respondents stated:

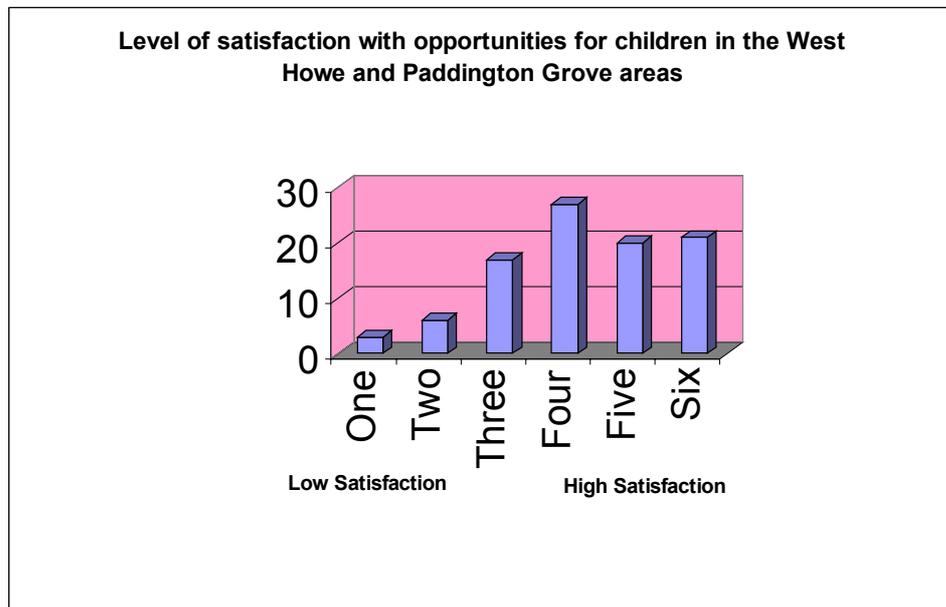
*More police presence on the estate, something to deter and distract the problem gangs in the area. They need something constructive to do. (Parent)*

*Educate the young, give them things to do. If they vandalise something get them to help mend it. (Parent)*

*Stronger discipline at home, in schools and by the police. (Parent)*

**Opportunities for children in the West howe and Paddington Grove areas:**

Parents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale from 1-6 with the opportunities available to their children under 6 in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas. (1 being 'very dissatisfied through to 6 as 'very satisfied'.)



Forty-two per cent of the parents who answered this question expressed high levels of satisfaction (5/6) and forty-five per cent expressed levels of satisfaction in the mid-range (3/4 on the scale 1-6) with opportunities available to their children. Only ten per cent of parents expressed low satisfaction (1/2).

**Changes in the last three years:** Finally, parents were asked to describe what changes, if any they had seen in the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas during the last three years. The following table shows those changes mentioned most by parents.

<p><b>Sure Start (19)</b> <b>New Nurseries (2)</b> <b>New parks (4)</b> <b>More shops (3)</b></p>
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Half of the parents who answered this question referred to Sure Start Bournemouth and see it as a very positive influence in the area. The extension to the existing Sure Start Building housing the new nursery and refurbishment of the Moore Avenue playground and park were also welcome changes for parents.

*The Sure Start Centre and all its activities which is an excellent project. (Parent)*

*Moore Avenue new playground being built and plans for the rest of the park (Parent)*

Other initiatives have also been introduced in the area for over 5's during the same period including Childrens' Fund outreach workers, out-of-school clubs, Boredom Busters holiday play schemes and an extension of the work done by Fernheath Adventure playground to accommodate more children with special needs.

Generally, comments made about changes in West Howe and Paddington Grove were positive. Other aspects of change highlighted were a greater sense of community, a better support network for parents, the amount of money being injected into the area and one respondent mentioning less crime on the whole.

*Massive. The amount of money that is and will be injected into this area is fantastic. If everybody makes an effort local people, councils, and health care workers maybe in ten years time it will really start paying off. (Parent)*

However, there were a number of parents who hoped for further improvements. These included more active policing, more speed cameras, more activities for older children and teenagers and more shops. Comments provided by parents indicate that a bright future looks possible for the West Howe and Paddington Grove areas.

## 6. Conclusions

Thanks to the willingness of parents to take part in this Community Survey, a great deal of valuable information has been provided. Special thanks must be given to the parents involved in the research process for their insight and great enthusiasm throughout. The Family Survey 2004 has provided evidence that local residents have positive views of Sure Start Bournemouth. Responses are based on the views of 97 parents who returned the questionnaire.

The Family Survey 2004 was undertaken with a group of parents who were involved in all stages of the survey from questionnaire development, distribution, data input, analysis through to report writing and dissemination.

A number of important issues have emerged from the analysis of this data which include:

- **Views about Sure Start Bournemouth services and groups**

Overall, parents who are accessing Sure Start services expressed high levels of satisfaction. The physical surroundings have proven to be highly successful in providing a safe and welcoming environment for families. Areas of new service provision most commented on included the new play area, the increase in groups for parents to access with their children, extra courses and wider access to health and social support. Parents were also glad of the increased opportunity to meet other parents, further strengthening community networks.

Services showing the highest uptake by respondents to the survey included the Let's Play Together group, the Toy Library and the Home Visiting service. In the first community survey (2002), the Let's Play groups responses showed similar levels of high satisfaction and uptake. These groups are still as popular and frequently over subscribed. The increase in popularity of the Toy Library Service, Home Visiting as well as Sure Tots, Coffee Hour, Sure Can and Bosom Buddies indicate that these services and groups are reaching local families and awareness of Sure Start services has improved since their introduction.

The high satisfaction with Let's Play Together, Bosom Buddies and the West Howe Toy Library mirrored the positive findings from the in-depth evaluations recently undertaken. It can be concluded that all of these services are meeting many of the Sure Start Objectives, particularly, improving learning, improving social and emotional development and improving children's health.

Awareness and uptake of Sure Start services has increased since the last community survey (2002). Families now appear to be receiving most of their information about services from Sure Start workers and other health and social care professionals, as opposed to leaflets and word of mouth.

However, it is apparent that some families are still not using Sure Start services for reasons which include, inconvenient times or days, inability to take older children and a lack of understanding about what is on offer or how to register. Parents who worked or were taking courses tended not to use Sure Start facilities, but felt

reassured that the services were available to them if needed. Although Sure Start Bournemouth has greatly improved and extended its methods of sharing information and its accessibility these need to be regularly reviewed to ensure that all families in the area have the opportunity to access its services. Care for older children whilst parents access Sure Start services and courses is a problem for some families. These needs may be met in the future by new initiatives which include Children's Centres (providing services for children up to 5) and the Children's Fund (activities for children aged between 5 and 12).

- **Sure Start Bournemouth's response to community need**

It is clear from the findings of the survey that Sure Start has made excellent progress in responding to families needs in the area since the last community survey (2002).

There have been a variety of new courses, groups and individual services that have been introduced based upon what parents and children need and have indicated they want. The most popular courses are the computer, DIY and 'make and take' courses. All of the courses offered are supported by crèche facilities. The number of parents attending courses therefore is determined to a great extent by crèche availability.

Availability and affordability of childcare was an important issue for those parents wishing to return to work. Childcare during school holidays was also identified as a barrier. Assisting parents into employment, particularly lone parents, is a key priority for Sure Start. Sure Start Bournemouth is addressing these issues in a number of ways which include: development of the Neighbourhood Nursery; closer links with early years providers, and partners within the local authority; partnerships with Job Centre Plus, Connect to Learning and the Basic Skills Agency. Future evaluations of the impact on childcare availability as a result of these initiatives will be necessary.

Sure Start Bournemouth have been working hard to encourage more Dads to use services and generally get involved in Sure Start. Since the first community survey it is clear that more fathers of children in the Sure Start area are attending groups and courses and also using the facilities offered. Families can also take their children to the centre on Saturday mornings and crèches have been made available for some meetings, which has increased the opportunities for Dads to get involved.

It is encouraging that most respondents believed Sure Start to be welcoming place for dads and have many ideas about how to encourage their attendance. Sure Start are continuously developing new ideas and initiatives to encourage new families and are looking to employ a male project worker in the near future.

### **Improving Health**

In the 2002 community survey the need for added support during pregnancy and in the early days after birth was highlighted. Sure Start responded to this by appointing midwifery workers who work closely with existing community and hospital midwives as well as providing extra support for some families themselves. The aim is for all newly expectant parents to be visited by the team and followed through postnatally. It is clear that this service is having a positive impact on the levels of support and advice for pregnant and new mothers and also contributing towards National Sure Start

objective, improving children's health. However, it is recommended that further work needs to be undertaken to increase awareness within the community of these services. Further evaluation of the midwifery service is planned.

It has proved difficult to access accurate breastfeeding rates for the Sure Start Bournemouth area. Although numbers of women who reported breastfeeding their youngest child have not increased between the two surveys, it is clear that support and advice about breastfeeding has improved through the introduction of the Breastfeeding Support Group and the Sure Start midwives.

One of Sure Start's aims is to increase the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development by the age of two. Parents expressed high satisfaction with the level of support from the speech and language service at Sure Start Bournemouth. It can be concluded that the increased uptake of the services offered is due to their accessibility, the integrated service delivery model at Sure Start Bournemouth and increased awareness of parents and professionals.

It is not possible in this report to claim that less women are smoking in pregnancy than they were two years ago. However, from the small sample who answered the questions about smoking, it is encouraging to see that a higher proportion of women gave up smoking when they discovered they were pregnant. The Sure Start midwives, breastfeeding support group and the Smoke-Stop groups have played an important role in these trends, along with all of the other Sure Start services and groups who promote healthy lifestyles and are working together to achieve the objective of 'Improving Children's Health'.

## • **Environmental issues and community concerns**

The section of the questionnaire asking about views on community services and facilities yielded the most response. Residents in the Sure Start Bournemouth area feel very strongly about many community issues, especially relating to crime and litter and were keen to share their feelings.

Sure Start programmes in local areas promote community cohesion as well as providing individual support to parents. It is important that Sure Start Bournemouth are aware of the concerns of residents about community safety so they can provide appropriate interventions and share this information with other agencies. Most importantly, good quality early education should in the long-term lead to a reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Whilst parents responding to the questionnaire acknowledged the need for more parental responsibility, a community-wide concern about levels of policing and strategies for personal safety were apparent.

Satisfaction with local services was also discussed, such as feelings about local parks, transport, libraries and local shops. Residents were generally satisfied with local amenities, with the exception of the local parks. These findings mirror those from the first community survey which suggest there has been little improvement in the

standard of parks in the area. Families indicated they were travelling to parks outside of the Sure Start area which were reported to be cleaner and safer.

The refurbishment and opening of the new Moore Avenue play area in recent weeks has been an important development for the Sure Start community and is a positive response to disappointment about the state of parks in the area. It would be useful in the future to evaluate the usage of and satisfaction with the new playground.

### **Integrated service delivery**

The value of the model of integrated service delivery employed by Sure Start Bournemouth has been evident in all of the individual evaluations carried out. Levels of satisfaction with both Sure Start and non-Sure Start community health and social care services provided in the area have increased since the first survey (e.g. Speech & Language, Midwifery). This is encouraging in terms of services working together, delivery at the point of access leading to continuity of support.

Ensuring strong partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and local communities are essential if services are to be delivered which families need and in the way they want. Sure Start Bournemouth have many families working with them. Both parents and children provide crucial feedback and participate in the setting up of new services. Their involvement with the evaluation of existing groups and services is also a key component of this partnership.

Parents have increasingly become involved in the running of Sure Start, contributing to meetings such as the Parents Forum and focus groups ('tell us what you think') as a means of influencing development of services. A growing number have also joined the Management Board working alongside professionals from statutory agencies and community groups to oversee the management of the Programme. The value of close partnership working between commissioned service providers (St. Philips Church, Henry Brown Youth Centre, Speech & Language Therapy, Bournemouth Midwifery Service, Homestart, Bournemouth Drug Action Team, Streetwise and Bournemouth Borough Council Community Arts) has been considerable with all making a vital contribution to the overall effectiveness of the Programme. This has been particularly important in terms of providing choice for families of where and how to access Sure Start services.

## **The Way Forward**

The conclusions from this Community Survey have provided valuable insights into family profiles, satisfaction with services and service development needs. The survey findings will be used as one of the means of assessing whether Sure Start Bournemouth is achieving not only Sure Start National Objectives, but also responding to local need. Good progress has been made with all Sure Start Project Workers now in post and many services and activities available or being developed, which will, in turn, be evaluated during the life of the programme.

Sure Start Bournemouth have made great progress in adopting the Sure Start principles which draw on best practice learnt from delivering childcare, early education and Sure Start local programmes (Sure Start Guidance 2004-2006). By adopting these principles Sure Start Bournemouth can now begin to mainstream the Sure Start approach. The principles are:

- Working with parents and children
- Services for everyone
- Flexible at the point of delivery
- Starting very early
- Respectful and transparent
- Community driven and professionally coordinated
- Outcome driven

National Sure Start guidance outlines responsibility for Early Years provision to deliver the Foundation Stage part of the National Curriculum (Sure Start Guidance 2004-6). Early intervention from birth and early education are key foundations for later learning. Early identification of special educational needs will also assist children's educational attainment. Sure Start Bournemouth have responded well to these requirements in their development of an integrated service which provides childcare, early learning support and advice, a speech and language service and ongoing support for parents as their children make the transition into school. Ongoing monitoring of all of these services will be needed to ensure that Sure Start Bournemouth continues to meet parents needs and that there are better outcomes for all children.

It is crucial that the findings from this survey and indeed all of the individual evaluations are shared within the community, with the partnerships and with the local authority. The Family Survey 2004 concludes the three-year local evaluation of Sure Start Bournemouth. However, the importance of evaluation of services has been acknowledged by both the national Sure Start Programme and the National Evaluators and will be ongoing.

It is extremely encouraging for Sure Start Bournemouth that most of the parents who responded to this survey felt that Sure Start was responsible for many of the positive changes happening in the West Howe and Paddington Grove area. Many felt there was a greater sense of community, improved support for parents and increased opportunities and better outcomes for their children.

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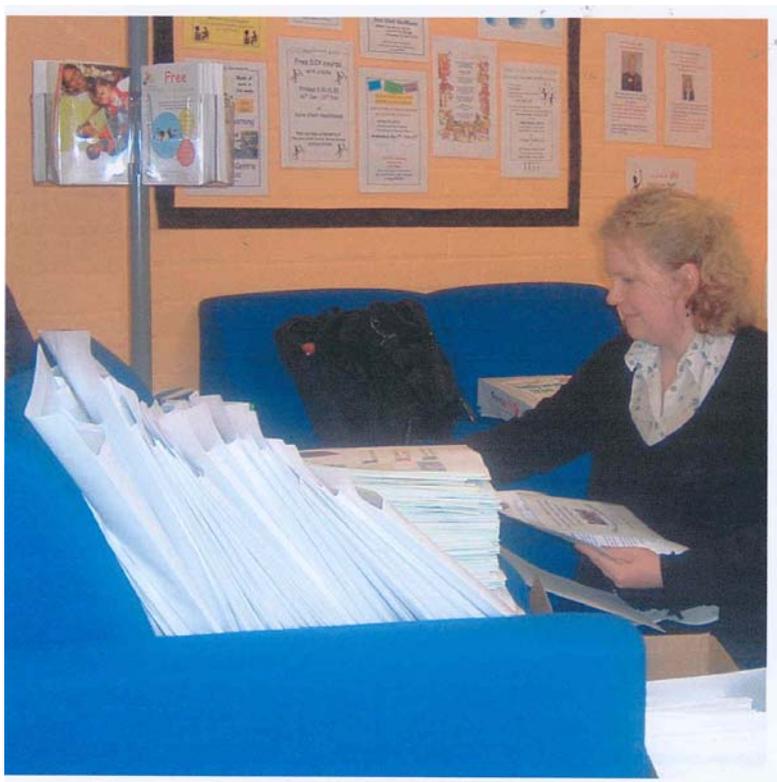
## Reflections from the family survey group

*Before I began helping put together the Sure Start Family Survey, I had absolutely no idea what I was getting myself into. I had surveys through the post before and thought nothing of throwing them in the bin. Now I know how much thought and work goes into them, I can't bring myself to throw them away now!*

*The whole process has been fantastic to say the least. I have learnt so much and everybody helping us have been so encouraging and supportive. All of the people involved from the university staff to the Sure Start crèche workers have made it so easy for us to be involved in the project. We certainly would not have been able to take such a big part if we had been left to get on with it by ourselves.*

*The most enjoyable part of the survey has been collecting the results. It has been really interesting to see how people's views differ on the same subject. It has also been good to hear how people in the West Howe area have seen changes over the last couple of years.*

*We have argued big issues ( and small ones!), been disappointed in some aspects along the way but most of all, along with learning all sorts of new skills, we have had fun!*



Being on the Partnership Board for Sure Start Bournemouth I attend a sub group called the Monitoring and Evaluation Group, I was asked if I'd like to be part of a group that would be working on the second community survey. Having seen evaluations and the results that were done by the University I thought ok give it a go. So last September Mel, Di and Myself met Ann and Chris from the University to find out what would be involved. I'd often wonder what was entailed, and how they were done. But little did I realise how much hard work there would be.

Putting the survey together, we had the first community survey to work from, which gave us a basis on what needed to be in this survey. We decided what had to stay, what was not needed to be in the survey and what we would like to be in there. Chris put two ideas of formats in front of us to choose how the survey questions would be presented. And we chose to put each section on different colour paper! Right through to making a report on the findings we did the Section about West Howe to see how different our conclusions differed from Chris and Ann or if there were any differences, ready for publication.

Di and I went down to Plymouth for an Evaluators Day and as Parents we were invited to join them. It was good hearing how different evaluations took place for the various Sure Starts in the South West Region. It was a thought-provoking day.

The hardest part for Me personally was putting my feelings and wants aside which didn't always happen and to think about what was best for the community and the survey. To put in questions that needed to be in and take out those that didn't. With an end idea to have a survey that would be beneficial to everyone and not too boring.

It wasn't easy sometimes trying to understand why some questions could go in but others couldn't, or why it even had to be worded differently. This was hard work and sometimes I'd finish a meeting feeling mentally and physically exhausted and we'd probably only done two hours! I'd walk away sometimes thinking had I gone too far arguing or been too argumentative how every one put up with me sometimes I don't know.

Along the way we've questioned everything, argued, been passionate, been embarrassed, learnt jargon (like P.C.T. for one) been dejected, thrashed things out, been amazed, learnt a lot, been bewildered but most of all enjoyed ourselves and on more than one occasion screamed with laughter and had a brilliant time.

*Thank you for asking me to join you to do the survey I've had a great time. I wouldn't want to be an evaluator full time and I certainly appreciate what goes on to get a survey done. But if I was asked if I'd like to do it again? I'd leap at the chance, more so if it meant I could work with the same team. And would I recommend doing this to anyone else? Yep I certainly would.*

**I felt nervous when I started to do the survey, but I am glad I did it – I have dyslexia, so it was good for me. Everyone in the group got on really well and were good to work with. If things were not clear there was always time for discussion.**

**I enjoyed designing the front page of the survey and being able to give my point of view when we were analysing the information provided in the completed questionnaires.**

**Group meetings were good – even filling 550 envelopes was fun! We also had a chance to have a meeting at the University. Overall I think it has been really educational for me. Mandy and I went to Plymouth for a regional meeting of Sure Start to talk about parents being involved in a survey. I really enjoyed it and would love to do a survey again.**

**Thank you.**



*The local evaluators of Sure Start Bournemouth planned a couple of presentations about 'doing a survey' for local parents who had shown interest in taking part in the evaluation. However, it was clear by the end of the first session that those parents who had attended were committed to the task and ideas were already flowing.*

*Parent members were able to guide the Group and bring a community perspective to all of our discussions.- this was particularly valuable during questionnaire development. All of the tasks throughout the process have been shared and we are now presenting the results, with our parent members taking the lead at local and regional events.*

*I feel the Group has developed a strong bond - we have worked hard but laughed a lot - and resorted to cakes when needed! I have enjoyed and learned from this experience.*

*I have worked closely in collaboration with parents in the past and enjoyed the experience. In those situations however I was able to have some control over the direction of events. I therefore viewed this collaboration with a little foreboding because I wasn't going to be 'in-charge' I was Chris – a Bournemouth University researcher – important – but no more so than anyone else in the group. For the first couple of meetings I always arrived fully prepared with lots of paper work in case there were embarrassing silences and gaps where there was little to do. I needn't have worried!!!! The whole experience was an exciting adventure and a collaboration in the truest sense. This wasn't Bournemouth University telling Sure Start parents what to do. We discussed, argued gently but always came to an eventual group decision that we all stood by. By the end Di, Mel and Mandy were selecting the direction the work was taking and really owned the Sure Start Family Survey 2004. To see them grow in confidence as we went through the different parts of the process was very exciting for us and their contribution at all stages was immense. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying experience working on the Bournemouth Sure Start Family Survey 2004.*

