



## **Playing For Health & Healthy Play**

**A Report Into Pakistani Families Taking up Children's Services In Redditch**

By: Dr Zahida Shah

**Funded By:** Worcestershire Children's Fund  
SureStart, Redditch

**October 2004**



children's fund

**SureStart**  
REDDITCH

## **Playing For Health & Healthy Play**

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**Executive Summary**

By: Dr Zahida Shah

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## **Introduction**

This report is an introductory document outlining some of the reasons why there is a low take up of children's services by Pakistani families. By undertaking interviews with Pakistani mothers with children aged between 0-13, I was able to establish what their needs were and how service providers could target their services in an appropriate way to ensure increased service take up. The report will also investigate strategies adopted by service providers to promote their services to Pakistani families in Redditch, and to ensure inclusiveness of service delivery. Whilst efforts have been made by children's service providers to promote their services to the local Pakistani community, low service take up continued to be a key feature and concern for organisations involved in provision. In particular, service take up tended to be lower in the play and recreational service provision.

### *Aims of the Study*

The aim of this study is to highlight the concerns of Surestart and Worcestershire Children's Fund as to why there was a low take up of children's services by Pakistani families in Redditch, with children aged between 0-13.

The report is organised into 3 sections. The first section looks at the methodology and methods of data collection, including the sampling frame, quantitative and qualitative techniques and the broad approach of the study and its aims. In this section, a background to Pakistani families in Redditch will also be included. Section 2 deals with the data and findings which will form the basis of the discussion. The final section will attempt to draw conclusions from the findings with a view to making recommendations to service providers on how the emergent issues can potentially be tackled and point to where further research may be necessary.

### *Emergent Themes and key issues*

Data received from the questionnaires indicated a low of take up of recreational services aimed at children aged 0-13. Having conducted research with Pakistani families in Luton and elsewhere in Britain, I found that the findings from this study were in line with those from previous studies and the reasons for a low take up of recreational services was located in cultural traditions of Pakistani families and a lack of promotional activity on the service providers part. In addition, play schemes and after school clubs tended to clash with Pakistani children's Quranic studies<sup>1</sup> (a more detailed description and the importance of this study is outlined further in the document).

### *Communication and language issues*

Of the 51 Pakistani mothers interviewed (including 12 from the focus group discussion), 35 had limited English fluency. This indicates that a low take up of services is likely to be due to the fact that service promotion and/or delivery requires staff recruitment from Pakistani

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<sup>1</sup> Pakistani children from around the age of 5 are expected to attend the mosque for Quranic studies. This study takes place after school and usually lasts until around 7pm, which coincides with play schemes and after school clubs. Which means that Pakistani children taking up studies at the mosque, are unable to participate in these activities.

backgrounds with appropriate language skills and/or staff with an understanding of Pakistani cultural traditions.

#### *Organisational activities*

When exploring services aimed at children aged 0-13, it emerged that a number of statutory and voluntary organisations specifically provided these or incorporated elements into their overall service provision through the development of local projects. For example, various small projects existed within local schools, leisure and arts centres and other such places.

Organisations participating in this research study were aware of their responsibilities in delivering an inclusive service and are attempting to address issues that act as barriers for Pakistani families in accessing their services. However, there is an awareness that a lack of understanding of the structures and processes surrounding minority families and communities plays a part in their lack of success in reaching Pakistani families.

### **Key Issues and Barriers to accessing services**

#### *Knowledge of service provision*

A lack of knowledge of services available has contributed to a low take up.

#### *Staff with relevant language skills*

Staff from Pakistani backgrounds with relevant language skills are instrumental in promoting services to the Pakistani community.

#### *Venues*

Many Pakistani mothers expressed an interest in taking up services aimed at their children, but were deterred due to the location of venues, ie, distance and/or unfamiliarity with location.

#### *Transport Provision*

Pakistani mothers found difficulty taking up some services due to their location. They found it difficult participating in some events held at locations further from their local and familiar area.

#### *Young people*

Young people have expressed an interest in sports/leisure and recreational facilities but found the times conflicted with responsibilities in the home and gender issues which suggest males more likely to take up such activities compared with females.

A lack of knowledge of services within schools young people attend. Often young people attending school were not aware of the services provided and funded by external bodies, such as the Children's Fund.

### *Quranic studies and recreational and play facilities*

Quranic studies take place after school and usually between the times of 4.30-6.30pm. Play schemes and after school clubs tend also to operate on roughly these times, which makes them less accessible for Pakistani children attending mosques.

### **Recommendations based on research findings**

The following recommendations can relate both to health and social care agencies as well the play and recreational service providers:

- Developing appropriate communication mechanisms. This would help with promoting services and in turn, affect service take up.
- Regular evaluations and/or monitoring – which many are currently doing through in-house research and other techniques to inform on how they can reach minority communities and improve service take up within these.
- Encouraging parents with limited English fluency to take up ESOL classes and providing them with childcare as necessary.
- Multi-agency partnerships are a crucial aspect of information and good practice exchange.
- Venues have to be considered for their appropriateness.
- Play and recreational service providers need also to consider the appropriateness of their venues and gender issues, for example, female only provision for sporting and leisure facilities.
- An interpreting bank at the local hospital and/or at the Town Hall, may be a useful way of ensuring communication between service providers and clients without compromising confidentiality by using relatives as interpreters.
- The use of children as interpreters is an unacceptable mode of communication between parents with limited English fluency and service providers, as children do not have the necessary understanding and experience to be able to interpret complex issues involving adults.
- Changing practice to accommodate the needs of Pakistani children and young people needs to be considered. Particular emphasis must be given to the age group of children the Children's Fund are aiming their services at – currently 5-13 year olds needs to be extended to 5-19, as this would then allow for services aimed at young people to be considered further, for example looking at Redditch Youth House.
- Organisations need to reconsider and/or change their practices in relation to promotional and delivery of their services, bearing the above issues in mind.

Promotional activities must be aimed at targeting the organisations' [limited] resources towards establishing themselves firmly with their client group.

- A more centralised information source needs to be established, particularly in relation to the Children's Fund funded projects.
- Speakers from the Children's Fund funded projects need to visit the mosques to promote the services they offer such as nurturing classes and other such initiatives. The Children's Fund is doing some very important work and funding very important projects aimed at young people, which needs to be brought to the fore so that all groups can benefit from these.
- If there are concerns about service providers becoming 'exclusive' to one particular group, then the necessary steps need to be taken to ensure a balance is achieved to ensure a seamless provision.
- One possible way of ensuring a seamless service would be for organisations and service providers to look into gaining a quality standard. Government supported initiatives such as Quality in Play or Investors in Children should be considered.
- Outreach staff need to reflect the community they are aiming to attract.
- The presence of a (mobile) Black and Minority Ethnic Information officer who recognises the needs of the community could act as a focus for advice and guidance – a *conduit* into the array of service provision – a mechanism which currently appears to be absent. Whilst the provision of such an individual has a cost implication, the value of personalised *on the ground* promotion in Redditch would add greatly to the visibility of services and may increase service take up.

### **Conclusion and future research**

This report has attempted to identify the key issues impacting on the Pakistani community in Redditch and how it consumes health, play and recreational services aimed at parents and their children. The barriers to accessing services outlined in this document need to be addressed individually, with specific attention given to tackling these albeit within the limited resources available to statutory, community and voluntary organisations.

A research study involving young people and children aged 5-13 is essential in establishing the needs of Pakistani children in Redditch. This study would need to address issues from the perspective of the young people themselves and use the emergent themes as the basis for policy recommendations. Young people's voices need to be heard in order that appropriate services are developed by the service providers and consumed by the target group.

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I would like to thank Worcestershire Children's Fund and SureStart Redditch for funding the research which gave me the opportunity to explore how Pakistani families accessed children's services in Redditch. Their reasons for commissioning this research were due to their concerns as to why Pakistani families were not making full use of their services. The aim of this research was to use the findings to inform them of the reasons and to make recommendations that would allow them to make the necessary changes to their current practices and target their services at the community they wish to include in their provision. I hope this report meets their needs and that it contributes in some way towards answering some of their questions in order that they may continue with their good work.

Thank you to Worcestershire Race Equality Council, in particular, thanks goes to Dr Mohammad Aslam for having selected me to undertake the research he had proposed to the above funders. Thank you also for your support and guidance, particularly with the laborious task of proof reading the draft report.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for putting up with stretching myself to the limits during the final stages of the report. In particular, my son Zeeshan (2 ½ ) who had to get used to a new way of life while his mummy returned to paid employment.

## Introduction

The 1989 Children Act paved the way for children to be both seen and heard, and in legislative terms, the Act emphasised the child's welfare as paramount and placed this at the heart of future social and welfare policy development (Denney, 1998).

Similarly, recent legislation - The Children Bill (2004), places the well being of *all* children at the heart of government policy. The Bill places a duty on children's service providers to make social inclusion an integral part of their service delivery, whilst emphasising the need for partnership work as a resource in exchanging information on current practices. Exclusion therefore, must be viewed as a series of institutional or personal barriers to full participation in economic and community life that children's service providers have a key role in helping people to overcome.

Service providers within the statutory and voluntary sector, have a responsibility to ensure their services are seamless, equally promoted and consumed by all their clients. In this context, it is important to consider whether children's services in Redditch are universal and aimed at all families and whether they are being taken up by all families equally. If this is not the case, then service providers need to ask questions around their systems of delivery, promotional techniques and accessibility, and whether these systems are meeting the needs of all their clients. They would also need to consider the likelihood of external barriers<sup>2</sup> and how they can overcome these in order that service provision is inclusive and universal.

Some children's service providers in Redditch have raised concerns as to why the local Pakistani families are not adequately taking up their services. Given these concerns, this study is an attempt at investigating why Pakistani children are not benefiting from service provision in the same way as their non-Pakistani counterparts may be doing so. SureStart and Worcestershire Children's Fund funded this study, with the aim of exploring current provision of children's services offered by the statutory and voluntary sector, with a view to investigating and understanding why the Pakistani community in Redditch is not adequately accessing these. The study aims to provide insights into why Pakistani families with children aged between 0-13 are not taking full advantage of the available services to them.

This report is an introductory document outlining some of the reasons why there is a low take up of children's services by Pakistani families. By undertaking interviews with Pakistani mothers with children aged between 0-13, I was able to establish what their needs were and how service providers could target their services in an appropriate way to ensure increased service take up. The report will also investigate strategies adopted by service providers to promote their services to Pakistani families in Redditch, and to ensure inclusiveness of service delivery. Whilst efforts have been made by children's service

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<sup>2</sup> 'external barriers', in this case, refers to barriers that may not necessarily be attributed to organisational structures and processes, but to external factors such as language issues for example. While it is suggested here that language may be an external barrier, it should not be viewed in terms of a problem with the clients. For example, if clients have little English fluency then organisations aiming to provide them with a service need to be aware of this and act accordingly in terms of ensuring that they provide clients with information in languages they understand, otherwise the provision must be seen as exclusionary.

providers to promote their services to the local Pakistani community, low service take up continued to be a key feature and concern for organisations involved in provision. In particular, service take up tended to be lower in the play and recreational service provision.

Pakistani families in Redditch share common features of family life with other local families, including concerns around children's education, health and well being. However, they differ in their cultural, religious and linguistic experiences. These differences are where potential difficulties lie when service providers attempt to accommodate the needs of Pakistani children and families. This is not to say that service providers are unaware of the different needs of these families but to point out that service provision has to consider the need to accommodate difference and, accordingly, offer appropriate provision and delivery techniques that aim to include and attract Pakistani families. The aim of inclusive provision must be central to any promotional strategies as is the need to understand family and community structures and processes of minority groups. The need to work in partnership with community organisations, involving and engaging Pakistani families is crucial to successful service delivery and take up. It is insufficient to suggest problems lie with the client group without a thorough consideration of internal practices and statutory obligations of a given organisation. This report is concerned with identifying the needs of Pakistani families with a view to presenting some of the potential barriers to service take up.

Child development is a complex process made more problematic by the range of different perspectives offering the best methods of child rearing. As parents, we are bombarded with conflicting advice on how to rear our children and what is best for their development. Most of us are aware that in order for our children to become good citizens, we need to consider their physical, cognitive, social and moral development. We may all consider these key features of our children's development in a common fashion, but how we administer the processes in practical terms may differ depending on our capacities as individuals and our cultural, religious, ethnic and material position in society. Within this framework it is necessary to consider that while our methods of rearing children are different, the services our children receive from statutory and voluntary organisations must aim to provide a universal service, albeit within the context of considering difference and diversity within a positive and celebratory light as opposed to viewing it as difficult and problematic. This study is concerned with presenting Pakistani families as different, in their internal structures and processes but similar to the majority population in its needs for appropriate service provision aimed at their children. These families are entitled to provision that considers their needs and the potential barriers to their accessing services in an appropriate way, without pathologising their cultural and religious traditions.

### **Aims of Study – An overview**

The aim of this study is to highlight the concerns of Surestart and Worcestershire Children's Fund as to why Pakistani families in Redditch, with children aged between 0-13, are failing to access children's services and resources offered by local children's organisations. Key objectives of this exercise are to:

- Identify and debate the key requirements for health and social care needs of Pakistani families in the Smallwood area of Redditch

- Investigate the need for appropriate venues for Pakistani women who would like to access SureStart services, Children's Fund services and any other relevant local projects
- To inform future work of the existing services such as SureStart and other appropriate service providers for young children and their families and address issues of social inclusion
- Identify key issues affecting the development of the mother and child during the pre-birth period
- To offer an outline of the importance for children's services aged between 0-13 targeted directly towards ethnic minority families and children following recent legislation – The Children's Bill (2004)
- Offer recommendations regarding ways in which involvement opportunities for parents, children and young people can be offered locally and nationally, particularly through multi-agency partnerships
- Offer recommendations and suggestions on how existing statutory and voluntary children's services can develop involvement and engagement with ethnic minority families and children in their work

In order that the aims and objectives of this study are met, the subsequent discussion will centre on issues that emerged from the data and key findings to illustrate the needs of the Pakistani community, as well as reviewing strategies currently used by service providers to include Pakistani families when developing service delivery techniques.

The report is organised into 3 sections. The first section looks at the methodology and methods of data collection, including the sampling frame, quantitative and qualitative techniques and the broad approach of the study and its aims. In this section, a background to Pakistani families in Redditch will also be included. Section 2 deals with the data and findings which will form the basis of the discussion. The final section will attempt to draw conclusions from the findings with a view to making recommendations to service providers on how the emergent issues can potentially be tackled and point to where further research may be necessary.

### **Section 1: Methodology**

The methods selected for data collection were largely qualitative using a combination of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, questionnaires were developed and sent/administered to children's service providers in Redditch, in order to establish current activities of the organisations and strategies used to attract local Pakistani families.

It should be noted that while most organisations were willing to participate in this study, it was difficult to get hold of key workers, particularly so in the recreational and play service sector. Perhaps due to the nature of the work – many key workers have outreach type roles or are based at several locations during the day – it was hard to get a response from them. It was decided that after several attempts at reaching particular organisations/individuals,

alternative staff would be approached so that an exploration of the services available and the numbers of Pakistani families taking up these could be achieved. However, this also proved problematic, as several messages were left with children's and young people's service providers to contact me in relation to this research, to which no response has been received to date (4 months after my initial and subsequent contact).

### *Sample and Sampling frame*

As this study is concerned with identifying reasons why there is a low take up of children's services by Pakistani families in Redditch, it was necessary to draw a sample from the local community. In particular, it was felt that Pakistani mothers with children aged between 0-13 would be key to answering questions around issues of knowledge of existing children's services, access to these and the reasons for a low take up. In addition, it was necessary to select individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds. This proved difficult in that access to Pakistani mothers was achieved through community and statutory organisations, community workers and using snowballing techniques (Maxwell, 1996), which allow access from existing participants to the study to potential participants. With the exception of one, whose husband owned his own business and therefore suggested her family were middle-class, all other participants could be classified as working or lower middle class, in that they or their partners were unskilled or semi-skilled employees - mainly taxi drivers and production/assembly workers.

The reason for assessing socio-economic backgrounds of the families was to establish how much this impacted on parents' involvement in their children's health, educational and recreational activities. However, due to the similar socio-economic structure of the families involved in this study, it was not feasible to undertake a class analysis.

### *Quantitative survey*

Initially, questionnaires were sent to 15 organisations who provided recreational and health related services for children aged 0-13. However, 5 completed questionnaires were returned, but others were 'chased up' and questionnaires were administered over the phone. In total 8 questionnaires were returned. In addition, telephone conversations and face-to-face interviews were conducted with the relevant voluntary and statutory organisations. The questionnaires included a variety of questions on topics outlined in the table below. Additionally, issues of how well the services were promoted and the consultation process involved in promotional activities, had also been discussed with the organisations.

Table 1: Questionnaire topics

Numbers of staff employed with each of the organisations
Main activities
Target clients
Services aimed at children aged 0-13
Total service users registered with the organisation from 2000-2004
How and where services are delivered
How services are delivered to Pakistani families
Venues services are delivered from
Whether the organisation feels the venue is situated appropriately for service take up
Languages spoken within organisations
Recruiting staff from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds

In addition, through telephone conversations and face-to-face interviews with key workers within organisations, the following issues were discussed:

- How is information on local children’s services delivered to Pakistani mums?
- What organisational structures are in place to ensure appropriate<sup>3</sup> promotion of services? i.e employment of staff in key positions for example, at consultative stage filtering towards the operational and delivery level
- Are the above mechanisms sufficient in ensuring an adequate take up of services
- Appropriateness of venues for Pakistani women

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Appropriate’ in this context, refers to relevant language media, interpreters with relevant language skills and staff with an understanding and awareness of the needs of the Pakistani community. As Pakistani families are different from other Black and Minority Ethnic groups, services aimed at them would require an understanding of their specific needs and therefore provide the appropriate services to ensure adequate take up.

### *Interviews with community organisations and practitioners*

Some interviews were conducted with individual children's service providers – and at the same time the issues implicit in service delivery were explored in detail with the individual – including the individuals responsible for community links and communication and promotion.

In addition, face to face interviews were conducted with:

- *Redditch Play Council – Manager*
- *Palace Theatre and Arts: Theatre and Arts Development Manager*
- *Home Start - Manager*
- *SureStart – Asian Family Link Worker, Deputy Manager, Midwife (including Head of Midwifery) and Health Visitor*
- *All Women's House – various key workers and telephone conversations with Manager*

Telephone conversations were conducted with others at the Borough Council and Trinity School, as well as messages left for various youth and children's service providers, who, as mentioned above, have not returned my calls in relation to this research. An example of this is the Youth House in Redditch and other similar organisations.

The issues addressed during this stage of the exercise were

- Service providers' evaluation of the Pakistani families taking up their services
- A description and appraisal of intervention activity – and priorities for future activity
- Specific barriers
- Cultural awareness
- Difficulties experienced by suppliers of services

### *Emergent Themes and key issues*

The aim of asking questions within these subject areas was to establish the organisations' main activities and how these were promoted to Pakistani families in Redditch. It was also important to establish whether Pakistani families were taking up the services outlined by the organisations and if not, why this was the case and to put this to Pakistani families during interviews with them.

It should be noted that the questionnaires were sent/administered prior to interviews with Pakistani families as responses would allow for in-depth interview topic guides to be developed and used when interviewing the families.

Data received from the questionnaires indicated a low of take up of recreational services aimed at children aged 0-13. Having conducted research with Pakistani families in Luton and elsewhere in Britain, I found that the findings from this study were in line with those from previous studies and the reasons for a low take up of recreational services was located in cultural traditions of Pakistani families and a lack of promotional activity on the service providers' part. In addition, play schemes and after school clubs tended to clash with

Pakistani children's Quranic studies<sup>4</sup> (a more detailed description and the importance of this study is outlined further in the document).

#### *Individual and Focus Group interviews*

In addition to the questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with key workers, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with Pakistani mothers of children aged between 0-13. This involved 39 interviews with individual Pakistani women and 1 focus group with 12 women. At a sports day event (details below) which a number of Pakistani mothers and their children attended, was used to interview some young women who had siblings aged up to 13 years, to assess their views on why particular services were not being used. These sessions explored respondents knowledge of existing services aimed at children aged 0-13, access to these services and attitudes towards using them.

These qualitative sessions enabled me to explore the following:

- Awareness of existing children's service provision
- Communication and promotional themes
- A clear description of and evidence of barriers experienced

#### *Communication and language issues*

Of the 51 Pakistani mothers interviewed (including 12 from the focus group discussion), 35 had limited English fluency. This indicates that a low take up of services is likely to be due to the fact that service promotion and/or delivery requires staff recruitment from Pakistani backgrounds with appropriate language skills and/or staff with an understanding of Pakistani cultural traditions. It is not sufficient that information is provided through the publication of Urdu leaflets or other such modes of communication as research suggests that where minority group members have limited English fluency they are less likely to possess literacy skills in the minority languages. Some organisations have begun producing information in audio-visual form to ensure that this reaches communities with limited English fluency. However, this itself is not always adequate, as many of the women prefer to receive information from an Urdu speaker as they can engage in conversations where they are made aware of services and if they have any questions, these can be answered instantly. Mothers with small children do not always have the time and/or resources necessary to ensure that they are up-to-date with what exists, so to find someone who works for organisations relevant to them and their children who can take time out to explain what is available and answer their queries simultaneously, can be helpful. However, efforts towards learning English are being made as is mentioned below.

Bearing these issues in mind, all interviews with Pakistani mothers, were undertaken in Urdu and/or Punjabi to ensure that respondents fully understood the nature of the research and what was being asked of them. Using these languages as a mode of communication

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<sup>4</sup> Pakistani children from around the age of 5 are expected to attend the mosque for Quranic studies. This study takes place after school and usually lasts until around 7pm, which coincides with play schemes and after school clubs. Which means that Pakistani children taking up studies at the mosque, are unable to participate in these activities.

ensured an environment where women felt at ease to reveal their concerns and engage in discussions around the issues outlined above.

*Broad approach*

The table below illustrates the broad thrust of the study which involved primary face to face interviews with

- Pakistani women with children aged between 0-13
- Pakistani teenagers, with siblings aged 0-13
- Statutory and voluntary organisations in Redditch providing children’s services

*Table A: Study plan*

	Awareness of children’s services	Promotion of services	Staff with relevant language skills	Modes of Communication/ information	Accessing information	Appropriate venues
Interviews with Children’s Service Providers						
Interviews with Pakistani mothers/ Pakistani siblings of children aged between 0-13						



*Issues discussed with Children’s Service providers*



*Issues discussed with Pakistan mothers*

Subsequent sections discuss these activities in detail.

*Background structure of Redditch Pakistani population*

Much of the South Asian and Caribbean immigration into Redditch took place in the late 1960s and 1970s – slightly after the first waves of immigration into the West Midlands conurbation. Thus there are two or three generations of Pakistanis (around half of the Black and Minority Ethnic total excluding mixed race) - and other ethnic groups in smaller numbers – often with different understandings of community/voluntary and statutory service provision. In total around 1500 Pakistanis are resident in Redditch. The other significant grouping includes a reasonable Black Caribbean presence (around 600 in total). Bangladeshi and Indian communities are relatively small.

The other key local issue is the fact that most of the Pakistani population in Redditch originated from the rural and traditional Gujrkhan, which is a town in the North Eastern part of Pakistan and approximately 30 miles from Rawalpindi and the capital Islamabad. Due to

the rural and traditional nature of this region, Pakistani families settled in Redditch have limited experiences of the provision of children's services and how to access these. In particular, language play a large part in the take up of service. For example, just under 30 per cent of the Pakistani population in Redditch has limited English ability (Vector Research, 2004).

## **Section 2: Children's service providers In Redditch: structures, processes and concerns**

Community organisations appear to understand the range of issues and barriers - and do appear to provide some appropriate services and information on the current provision of children's services within Redditch. The All Women's House is a good example of where many Pakistani women go to find out about this or any other type of information they may need. Due to its women only environment, the All Women's House is able to offer a place to women who, for cultural, religious or personal reasons, prefer to use a venue where men are not present.

If there is a weakness in community provision it may relate to the pre-occupation with chasing numbers<sup>5</sup> rather than the quality of the information delivered and the inclusiveness of delivery. For example, many organisations – in Redditch<sup>6</sup> as well as nationally - rely on funding from bodies, and in order to gain and sustain this funding they in turn, need to demonstrate service take up through the numbers of people taking up their services. In pursuing this aim, the quality of service delivery can sometimes suffer. This is not to underplay the important role these organisations have and the contribution they make to Pakistani families accessing children's services but to demonstrate that resource constraints play an integral part in the gap between service delivery and service take up.

Statutory organisations have made attempts at addressing issues of accessibility to information, but are still concerned that numbers taking up children's services from the Pakistani community are low. For example, SureStart has employed an Asian Family and Link Worker on a full-time basis with an element of her hours being used for interpreting purposes. The employment of such a person is valuable to Surestart, as the individual is able, through her language skills and cultural and religious understanding of the community,

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<sup>5</sup> What is meant by chasing numbers is that resource constraints experienced by many community organisations can mean that in order to gain future funding/increased resources they may become concerned with getting people through doors which may mean that service delivery techniques may suffer somewhat. An example, of this can be seen in a study undertaken with British-Pakistanis in Luton, where a community centre – funded primarily by the Borough Council – was visited by a personnel officer, offering advice to clients of the Centre on how to complete job applications for Borough Council jobs. The organisers of this event were so concerned with ensuring sufficient numbers attended the event that they lost of track of who attended – mainly older people over 65, all of whom were retired and had no desire of entering the labour market.

<sup>6</sup> All the organisations involved in this study relied on some type of external funding from bodies like the Children's Fund, PCTs and so on. In one case – the Play Council – felt that there was no need to promote their services too widely, as they were taken up very quickly and were often oversubscribed. The fact that the Council meets its target in terms of numbers doesn't necessarily mean they achieve a cross section of the community in terms of ethnicity and disability.

to promote the organisation's services to Pakistani families and thus ensure an increased participation by Pakistani mothers and their children within their programmes.

Organisations tend to point to the failure of the community when assessing service take up without a thorough consideration of their promotional and delivery strategies. This is perhaps due more to the fact that consultative processes involve very few community members who can provide insights into the cultural and linguistic issues that Pakistani mothers face when dealing with organisations. For example, one organisation uses interpreters from the Redditch Pakistani Forum (where staff are male), to transmit information and/or communicate with Pakistani mothers with limited English fluency. This is problematic in that discussing health related issues with men and particularly issues around pregnancy is culturally considered inappropriate. Such issues would necessarily emerge during a consultation process surrounding communication and service delivery techniques, the outcome of which would provide organisations with insights into how to improve these and ensure a better service take up by the target client group.

It is fruitful to delve into the activities of some of the organisations participating in this study. It should be noted that all activities have not been highlighted as this was not felt necessary. However, an overview of their main activities is provided to give an idea of the types of services available to families in Redditch and the incident of take up by Pakistani families.

#### *Organisational activities and niches of success*

When exploring services aimed at children aged 0-13, it emerged that a number of statutory and voluntary organisations specifically provided these or incorporated elements into their overall service provision through the development of local projects. For example, various small projects existed within local schools, leisure and arts centres and other such places. With this in mind it was necessary to focus on these of the projects/organisations. The organisations listed are ones that gave permission to be interviewed and allowed observations of their facilities. It should be noted that these are not the only organisations in Redditch providing children's services, but they were selected due to their geographical accessibility for Pakistani families in Smallwood.

#### *All Women's House*

The All Women's House in Redditch offers activities ranging from adult learning courses through to children's services on and off-site. The fact that female outreach workers from Pakistani backgrounds are employed and a variety of programmes are offered with a multicultural element, has meant that this organisation has been able to reach Pakistani mothers and children.

The organisation employs 6 key workers of Pakistani origin. The manager of this organisation stressed that outreach workers from Pakistani backgrounds have been key to the promotion and take up of their services by Pakistani families. This process, in turn, has been instrumental in the take up of services by Pakistani families, which indicates that the success of service take up requires the recruitment of staff from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, who have a knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions and have the language skills necessary for promoting services to Pakistani families, which in turn ensures a good take up of services aimed at children.

### *Worcestershire Children's Fund: Locally Funded projects*

The Children's Fund in Worcestershire has funded projects in Redditch within schools, sports and leisure centres and the Arts, through the Arts Forum, that are aimed at children aged 5-13, including after school play schemes and school holiday play schemes. In one local school, the Children's Fund has provided funding for the provision of 'nurturing classes'<sup>7</sup>. These have been set up for pupils who have been identified as experiencing difficulties with school work/life but not necessarily as a result of the school itself, rather through bereavement or domestic issues within the home, that are impacting on their schooling.

Marketing these projects/initiatives is problematic as there is no system which collates these centrally and no 'one stop' information service where potential clients can go to access information on the various initiatives set up in various educational, recreational and arts venues around the Borough.

### *Redditch Play Council*

Redditch Borough Council supports school holiday play scheme activities provided by the Play Council. The Council also offers a sports programme from their managed sports/leisure centres, which is accessible to children.

Redditch Play Council is funded by the Family Services section within the Social Services. It offers crèche facilities for people living in Batchley, but if spaces are available then the service is extended to people from around the borough- although this is unlikely at present. They also have a venue at St Georges School and Arrow vale sports centre, where after school play schemes are offered. The Council's promotional activities tend to minimal due to the 'over subscription' of these and a shortage in resources in accommodating numbers exceeding their limits.

### *Home Start*

Home Start is a voluntary organisation that offers support to families with children aged 0-4. A range of activities are provided that fall within the health related and leisure and recreational categories. The activities include: assisting new mothers to cope with isolation, providing counselling where necessary, and recreational activities for children. Services are delivered through outreach workers and volunteers and clients are usually referred by GPs and health visitors, as well as literature distributed to various organisations advertising Home Start services.

The bulk of the work involves home visits and visits to family group centres. If interpreters are required, Home Start approach the Pakistan Forum to assist with this. Currently this service is attempting to adjust services to meet all clients' needs by gaining a better understanding of minority ethnic communities to ensure an inclusive service.

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<sup>7</sup> Please refer to appendix 1 which provides a comprehensive outline of what nurturing classes are and who they are aimed at.

### *Palace Theatre Arts Forum*

Facilities include theatre productions and through the Theatre Arts and Development section, various activities and projects run to promote the Theatre to Black and Minority Ethnic communities. Through consultations with the Redditch Pakistan Forum and Worcestershire Race Equality Council, attempts have been made to attract young people and older people from minority communities to become involved in the theatre.

Delivery of services by these organisations, is undertaken via a combination of consultations with community organisations dealing specifically with Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and developing an awareness of cultural issues that may impact on service take up. However, despite promotional activities few Pakistani children are involved in the take up service provision. It should be noted that there are no staff from Pakistani backgrounds currently working within these organisations, although efforts have been made to attract staff with relevant experience in relation to the job role and with the necessary language skills and cultural knowledge.

### *Surestart*

Offer a range of activities and facilities, including a midwifery service, various groups for mothers and mothers-to-be at various venues, including St Georges Community Room, Smallwood Health Centre and Sallop Road Community Centre. SureStart also employ an Asian Family and Link Worker, who speaks Urdu and Punjabi and works with local Pakistani families promoting SureStart services.

### *Redditch Youth House*

The Youth House offers activities for young people aged between 13-19, living in Redditch. These include a cricket project at Trinity School, residential trips for young people, an internet room, the 'chit chat' project aimed at young women, the provision of a contraceptive<sup>8</sup> service available on a Saturday morning and other leisure related activities. The Centre is based in Smallwood and due to its geographic position, it attracts a large proportion of local Pakistani young people. The manager is aware the young Pakistani men are the predominant users of their services – he estimates that 65% of service users are Pakistani young men - nevertheless efforts to attract young women and non-Pakistani young people have been made and the Centre has steadily increased participation from these groups as a result of promotional activities.

However, there is a history whereby the killing of a young man<sup>9</sup> 4 years ago has led to the Youth House being seen as an 'exclusive' organisation aimed specifically at the local Pakistani community. The manager has challenged this through the promotional techniques developed over the years to bring back a positive attitude towards the Centre,

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<sup>8</sup> The chit chat project and the provision of emergency and non emergency contraception service are currently used by the non-white young people and are fairly popular, which challenges the belief that the service is exclusive and/or ghettoised

<sup>9</sup> This incident involved two young men from different ethnic backgrounds – one from the majority 'white' population and one from the Pakistani community. The fight resulted in the 'white' youth's death and the Pakistani man's imprisonment for manslaughter.

by 'selling the idea to parents during summer holidays', that the Youth House is for all young people in Redditch and through outreach work with young people, networking with agencies such as Windrush and Connexions and leafleting, some success in dispelling myths has been achieved. However, the manager is aware that more work needs to be done to promote the Youth House in a more positive light and ensure that it is accessible to young people from other parts of the borough, by looking into transport provision and other facilities that will enable diverse groups to use the Youth House.

One of the interesting aspects of the Youth House is that it is a service that draws a large majority of its clients from the minority group and a small proportion from the majority. This is one of the few organisations in Redditch that is this situation. However, this fact itself is contentious with many other service providers who have accused it of being 'exclusive', ghettoised and so on due to the majority of its client group being of Pakistani origin. Similar assertions could be made about other service providers who have the opposite of this situation, such as Home Start and the Play Council, yet they have not been given these labels. Perhaps due to the Youth House's success in accessing the Pakistani community because the manager is Pakistani and/or the incident that took place 4 years ago, it is an easy target for criticism?

The organisations listed here have all been involved in attracting and promoting their services to local Pakistani families and have had some success in doing so. One key worker pointed out:

*"Since I have been in post, I have been involved in developing a variety of initiatives that have helped increase the number of Pakistani mums and children taking up our services" (Key Worker from a statutory organisation)*

Other organisations have been involved in consultations with local community organisations to inform them on how they can attract local Black and Minority Ethnic communities:

*"We've attempted to work with individuals and organisations to attract and involve Black and Minority Ethnic communities, but there are problems which we are looking at and attempting to find ways of resolving these".*

One key worker pointed to staffing issues and a lack of referrals by other agencies, which she saw as being the main reason local Pakistani families were not aware of, and subsequently not taking up their services:

*"In the past we have attempted to recruit volunteers from Black and Minority Ethnic communities but found that confidentiality was being compromised because volunteers knew the families they were working with, on a personal level. We are looking at ways of overcoming this. We're also looking into informing relevant GPs of our services and requesting that they make referrals to us".*

Recruitment of staff from the relevant minority backgrounds may be useful in promotional activities of organisations and attracting clients, however, there is a need for organisations to be mindful that they do not come to resent minority communities because they have statutory obligations to include them in their service delivery. For example, one key worker at an organisation providing recreational services, suggested that statutory requirements

(OFSTED) state that they demonstrate multiculturalism by displaying multicultural resources, took up too much time in that these resources needed to be bought over to their Centre from another organisation who lends these:

*“It is very time consuming for us to go to the All Women’s House to borrow the multicultural resources and then display them at our different venues. If we need to do this, then we need our own resources that can travel with us.... We don’t have many Asians living in this area, and only one uses our service”.*

This implies that multiculturalism, and indeed, social inclusion are situational. If there are few Black and minority ethnic people living in particular areas, then, the suggestion from this particular key worker is that there is no need to demonstrate policies of inclusion through displays of murals and other artefacts etc that represent people from different cultures.

Organisations are aware of their responsibilities in delivering an inclusive service and are attempting to address issues that act as barriers for Pakistani families in accessing their services. However, there is awareness that a lack of understanding of the structures and processes surrounding minority families and communities plays a part in their lack of success in reaching Pakistani families. Given that the new legislation stresses the need to ensure services are inclusive and accessible to all, children’s service providers need to consider reviewing their current information and delivery strategies with a view to modifying these in order to meet clients’ needs. How this is done would require processes of consultations with organisations working with minority communities and with individuals themselves. No single organisation is in a position to adequately represent a whole community, this is why future research needs to focus more on how organisations can be informed of minority group processes with a view to establishing key individuals or groups who are willing to represent a given community.

### **Interviews with Pakistani mothers/siblings with children aged between 0-13: Key Issues and Barriers to access**

#### *Knowledge of service provision*

While organisations providing children’s services in Redditch have made some attempts at ensuring that their services are promoted and accessible to all living in Redditch, there appears to be some gaps in this process as the agencies are not always able to adequately offer information to those with limited English fluency. There is a recognition through research and by some organisations, that the publication of information in Urdu and other languages is not adequate, in that many people from the Pakistani community who have limited English fluency are less likely to be literate in their ethnic languages. For this reason other modes of communication have been used, for example audio and visual media. However, the Pakistani mothers involved in this study, preferred to engage with Urdu and/or Punjabi speakers working within organisations providing children’s services. A two-way process of interaction allows both the organisation to transmit information about its services to its client group, as well as ensuring the engagement and involvement of Pakistani mothers. For example, at one of the ‘stay and play’<sup>10</sup> groups, the researcher overheard two

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<sup>10</sup> ‘stay and play’ groups are provided by SureStart for mothers and children under 5. The groups provide play activities for children with the help of trained workers, while mothers can meet and

Pakistani mothers discussing future nursery provision for their children. Both were unsure of what the process of application was and when their children would be entitled to this. The researcher, being aware of the procedure and when their children would be entitled to free nursery places, explained this to the mothers in Urdu one of whom commented:

*“If you hadn’t told me that my son would be entitled to a free nursery place next year, I would not have known about it. I think I did hear something about this but now that you’ve explained it it’s a bit more clear..... who do you speak to about what services are available to us?”. (A Pakistani mum)*

Another Pakistani mum explained how she found out about the ‘stay and play’ groups offered by Surestart:

*“My sister-in-law told me that she knew that a Pakistani woman worked at Surestart and that she was involved in the groups. I only started coming because I knew that there would be someone who spoke my language and would tell me about the other things [facilities] I could get for my children. It’s easier when someone explains things to you in your language, sometimes it’s hard to understand what the services are about, but it’s easier when you’re speaking to someone because you can ask them to explain something you have not understood”. (Pakistani mother)*

A key worker from the Children’s Information Service was invited to participate in the focus group set up for this study. The individual provided information on some of the local organisations and their activities. When she mentioned the services offered by Home Start, one of the mums was annoyed to learn that a service providing mothers with children under the age of 4 with practical and emotional support existed and that she had not been aware of this:

*“I could have done with this help when my children were younger, but nobody told me about it. The midwife or health visitor should have let me know. My husband’s right, we don’t get anything even though we pay taxes.” (Pakistani mother)*

Lack of awareness of services is an issue for most people but it tends to be more problematic amongst those with limited English fluency. Many Pakistani mothers are taking up ESOL classes to learn English. This was seen in the All Women’s House and the Reddi Centre. Overall mothers’ experiences of learning English were positive ones:

*“It’s good idea for me to learn English, because when my children go to school, I will be able to speak to their teachers and know what is going on when they are at school... After this class I want to learn how to do the driving theory test and might even try computers”. (Pakistani mother at an ESOL class at the All Women’s House)*

Not all Pakistani mothers’ experiences of learning English were positive. One stated her experience:

*“I began an ESOL class at the All Women’s House. Then I wanted to learn IT, as my English wasn’t that bad when I enrolled on the class, but after a few weeks the*

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socialise with other mums.

*numbers of women attending the classes began to fall, until there were only 2 of us left. After this our tuition wasn't very good, because we were not being taught the things I thought we would at the start. I stayed till the end of the course, but wasn't given a certificate or anything to say that I had attended or completed the course. This really put me off taking up other courses".*

Another mum stated that due to a waiting list for the nursery at the All Women's house, and in the absence of other childcare, she was unable to take up ESOL classes.

This indicates that Pakistani mothers are keen to learn English in order that they can consume the services available to them, but due to the issues outlined here, many have not been able to do so. Local learning providers are actively involved in promoting learning, but have overlooked practical issues that are either exclusionary or unsatisfactory to potential learners. ESOL providers need to be mindful about these issues and ensure that they not only chase numbers, i.e. getting clients in the door but monitor service delivery more effectively. If a service user complains to another potential client about the services or treatment they have received by a service provider, then this will impact negatively on future clients taking up their services. As the Pakistani community in Redditch is close knit, such information is passed around very quickly and can be damaging to an organisation despite the hard work and efforts it may put into attracting this particular group. Organisations need to ensure that they monitor clients' attitudes, using user satisfaction type surveys and/or other monitoring techniques available to them.

The paradox here is that service providers are keen for Pakistani families to take up their services and Pakistani families appear keen to take up services aimed at them, yet there is a gap in the transmitting and receiving of knowledge that impacts on service delivery and service take up. Consultation process involving Pakistani parents as well as other community organisations is crucial in tackling this problem.

#### *Staff from Pakistani background with relevant language skills*

One of the main issues that impacted on service take up was the employment of staff from Black and Minority Ethnic communities with relevant language skills. Organisations using staff with the appropriate language skills to promote their services to the Pakistani families, found that service take up had increased, for example the All Women's House and Surestart (as mentioned above). When interviewing Pakistani mums with children aged between 0-13 about their experiences of organisations offering services to them, most of them preferred to have services provided by someone with appropriate language skills. The following are statements from some of the mums interviewed:

*"I come to this group [stay and play] because the key worker is a Pakistani, and she speaks our language, which means she can explain what is happening, where and when. I came to this focus group<sup>11</sup> because X informed me of it otherwise I wouldn't have known it was happening".*

*"Of course we would use children's services, especially if they were free, who wouldn't! But some times we don't hear about the services until someone like you*

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<sup>11</sup> The focus group had been set up by me for the purpose of this study

*explains them to us in our language. We all need support when we have children and to find out now that there were lots of services available to me when my youngest was born [4 years ago], but I wasn't made aware of these by my GP or health visitor, is very disappointing. I feel I have missed out".*

*"I didn't know they had these groups [stay and play] for mums with children like me. Nobody told me about them. I used to go to the All Women's House to learn English, and some of the staff there spoke Urdu which made it easier for me to know what services existed in my area. Some of them were not relevant to me and my children but these groups are really useful. If the lady at the All Women's House hadn't explained, in my language, what the groups were about and who could go, I wouldn't have known about them".*

These responses clearly suggest that staff from Pakistani backgrounds with relevant language skills are instrumental in promoting services to the Pakistani community and in turn the Pakistani community is involved in taking up the services on offer. This is not to suggest that only Pakistani employees can reach out to Pakistani families, but to demonstrate that in the absence of appropriate promotional activities, service providers need to consider recruiting staff that reflect the community they serve.

#### *Venues*

Another important issue for taking up services was the location of venues where services were offered. Many Pakistani women expressed an interest in taking up services aimed at their children, but were deterred due to where the venues were located. SureStart offer a wide range of services to mums with children aged 0-4, which are located in various parts of Redditch. This has proven problematic for many mothers for a number of reasons including not knowing where a particular group will be held:

*"I am happy to go to the mothers and toddlers groups but they are held in so many different places that I can't remember where and what time they happen".*

*"I don't have my own transport, so if there is a group at my local community centre I can walk up to it, but if it's somewhere else, I would need to get the bus or rely on someone giving me a lift, which can be off putting. If there was one place where all the groups were held then it would make it easier".*

*"It's very difficult to get to some of the places where the groups are held, because they seem to be spread everywhere. I don't like to go to places where there are going to be a lot of men, so if you don't know the place then you might think there may be men there". (Pakistani mothers)*

Service providers need to consider the appropriateness of a venue in terms of its distance, as well as where it is located. Gender issues have to be considered when deciding on venues providing children's services to Pakistani families. Consideration needs to be given to the location of a venue and whether it is likely to be accessible to mothers who depend on public transport and/or who are concerned about male presence. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on a 'one stop' type venue for mothers and their children, or a building

used by a particular organisation that provides most of its facilities at one location rather than they being spread around the borough. It should also be noted that transport provision impacts on service take up as is outlined below.

### *Transport Provision*

Many key workers involved in children's services provision and Pakistani mothers themselves, have agreed that the provision of transport ensured an adequate take up of services. A Sports Day was recently (July 04) organised by staff from the All Women's House for women using their services. The organisers approached Redditch Borough Council to provide a minibus which would take the women and their children to the stadium. The Council agreed to do this and the organisers were pleased with the number of people who attended as a result of transport provision. For the purpose of this study it was necessary to attend the event to:

- Evaluate the numbers of Pakistani mums and children attending
- What the factors were that ensured attendance

The event took place at Abbey Stadium which is located approximately 10 minutes drive from Smallwood. However, the turn out was good in that many Pakistani (and other) mums attended and it emerged that this was due to the provision of a mini-bus, without which many of the mothers would not have been able to attend and tend to their commitments of dropping off and picking up children from school. As one Pakistani mum pointed out:

*"If it wasn't for the good weather and the mini-bus I don't think I would have been able to come today, especially as I've got two children to pick up from school after this".*

On another occasion, when trying to set up a focus group for this study, Pakistani mums were asked if they would be willing to participate in the group as their input in the discussion would be valuable. The main question the mums asked was where the group would be held. When they were told it would be held at the Race Equality Office, two of them were not aware of its location and one stated that it was too far for her to travel to:

*"I wouldn't mind coming to your group, but I don't know where the Race Equality Office is..... That's a bit out of my way and I would probably need a lift, because I will need to get back this way to pick up the children from school".*

*"If you could pick me up and drop me back home, then I'm quite happy to come along, otherwise it's too far for me to make it"*

Transport provision needs to be considered when attempting to attract Pakistani women and children's participation to events further from their local vicinity, as this can often ensure their participation.

Conversely, some service providers have expressed concerns over the contradictory nature of this assertion. For example, SureStart found that a large proportion<sup>12</sup> of Pakistani

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<sup>12</sup> Anecdotal evidence from Key Surestart employees, therefore exact figures not available to

families living in the Smallwood area were using a GP in Churchill, which would require some form of transport to reach, due to the distance (approximately 3 miles). It should be noted that there is a tradition of Pakistani families in the UK using a GP that is of Pakistani origin and has been used by previous generations of their family. The fact that all families are aware of a GP service due to the historical nature of GP service establishment, and given Pakistani families preference for GPs from a Pakistani background, the likelihood of families travelling some distance to visit him/her is not uncommon. Mothers are likely to be taken to the GPs by a relative with transport or be accompanied by someone when using public transport. This would then require the question as to why there is a need for transport to participate in activities provided locally by other service providers? Given the preference and traditions of Pakistani families outlined here, it would appear that other less established organisations providing children's services, for example, Sure Start would need to establish themselves with the community and seek ways of ensuring that they are viewed in the same ways as GPs currently are.

#### *Young people: gender, domestic responsibilities and recreational interests*

Young people<sup>13</sup> of Pakistani origin have expressed an interest in sports/leisure and recreational facilities. One of the young woman attending this event, explained that she is keen on taking up sports and other leisure activities but found the times conflicted with her responsibilities in the home and because her family felt that sports activities related to boys, they were not so encouraging of her taking them up:

*"I am interested in sport, I go running every now and again with my sister. We go to Lakeside, because she has a car we can go there when she's free. Going to things after school or weekends is a bit difficult because I have to help my mum with the housework and looking after my nieces. My Dad doesn't think it's a good idea for me to do sports after school, because he says you have to wear shorts and things and he doesn't want me to wear those type of clothes if boys are around. If it was for girls only, then there would be no problem."*

Further discussions took place around other family members and their interest in recreational activities. One of the questions posed was whether young people expressed their interest in recreational activities to parents. One young woman stated that she had and that parents' ideas around such activities related to health concerns in general:

*"I was surprised to see so many Asian ladies here [at the sports day], because usually they don't care about sports and keeping fit... My mum and sister cook all this food that's full of fat and they don't go out and exercise and when they complain that they're fat, I tell them to do some exercise, and they say we can't be bothered to go to the gym... If my mum and sisters went to the sports and leisure centre then I could go with them too, but they don't seem to be interested. English people [referring to the white majority population] are into low fat eating and keeping fit, but in our families they're not that bothered."*

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provide statistics.

<sup>13</sup> The quotes used to illustrate the points young people were making were taken by Pakistani teenagers with siblings aged 0-13. These young people were aged 14 and 15, but were able to demonstrate their own and their siblings' experiences of children's services within Redditch.

Another young woman pointed out:

*“My mum doesn’t cook food with too much fat in it, she watches these cookery programmes so that she can make food without much fat in it. That’s because my brother’s into training [at the gym] and he tells my mum to make sure she makes food without too much fat.... I would go to dance classes if my mum and dad didn’t mind, but the ones they have at the Theatre happen when we’re supposed to be at mosque”.*

This young woman was aware that Palace Theatre held dance classes for young Asian women, but could not attend because the classes were held at the same time as her attendance at the mosque was required.

When asked if they were aware of after school clubs and holiday play schemes and smaller projects and initiatives within schools such as ‘nurturing classes’, there appeared to be some knowledge of these, albeit limited.

*“I know that some schools have after school clubs, but I’ve never been to them and neither have my brothers and sisters. Aren’t they for children whose mum and dad are in work?... We all have to go to the mosque at that time.”*

*“Our school [Trinity] has a holiday play scheme that my brother goes to occasionally, but I’m supposed to help my mum with the housework in the holidays, so I can’t go”.*

*“What are nurturing classes? I’ve never heard of these”*

The above quotes are from young people with siblings aged 5-13.

A Pakistani mother was asked if she knew about after school clubs and holiday play schemes, to which she replied:

*“The children tell me so many things I can’t keep track of them all. I know that they wouldn’t be able to go to any of the things when they finish school, because they have to go to the mosque. In the holidays, if they want to go anywhere then that’s fine by me.”*

Young people associate leisure, sport and recreational activities with keeping fit. They tend to view them more in terms of the health benefits they provide rather than for recreational purposes only. This may well be to do with the fact that parents focus on this aspect rather than viewing it in terms of a development process vital for young people. Organisations need to be aware of this so that they can change not only organisational practices but also cultural thinking of the minority communities which currently places a lesser emphasis or importance on such activities.

Service providers may need to look into separate provision for young men and women and reconsider times when activities are laid on, as the case of this young woman is not an isolated one and requires developing strategies that will incorporate young people with domestic responsibilities within the home, into taking up sports and leisure activities.

Accommodating some of the concerns raised by this young person, for example, gender segregated facilities, may override the family's concerns around dress and mixing with males, and they may become more flexible in terms of their expectations of her domestic role within the home. Which in turn may ensure an increased take up by young women, who are clearly interested in participating. It would also be useful for service providers to promote services to target clients, by making clear links between recreational services and health.

For example, a study undertaken by Bangor University looking into families and migration of older South Asian people living in Birmingham found that when links between exercise and healthy eating were made and explained to a cohort of older people (obvious as this may appear on the surface) an increasing number of older people would attend exercise and healthy eating classes put on for them by the local temple. Previous marketing strategies of attracting older people – such as leafleting – had little impact on their own. Therefore, there is a tendency, by service providers, to inadvertently overlook the obvious.

What often appears the most obvious strategies are the ones that work best. An example of this can be seen in the marketing strategies used by Trinity school to promote holiday play schemes they are offering and the success in attracting Black and Minority Ethnic young people. The strategy used in 2003 to attract local Pakistani children to participate in these, involved door-to-door leafleting to families living in Other Road, on the day the play scheme began. The leaflets had been posted in the morning and by lunchtime up to 15 young people turned up and parents had stated their reason for not sending the children was due to their forgetting the start date.

The current figures for young people attending holiday play schemes at Trinity school is as follows:

40 in total
7 from South Asian
3 African-Caribbean

Source: Trinity School, play scheme worker

These figures suggest that a quarter of the young people attending this play scheme are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, yet breaking this figure down to the South Asian population reduces this further to less than 1/5 of the total numbers. It should be noted that figures for the Pakistani community specifically were not provided due to there not being a mechanism for establishing the proportions of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian who all fall into the category of South Asian.

It would be useful for service providers to bear these issues in mind and develop marketing strategies that increase participation. Parents will not readily admit to forgetting an event that their child may have found useful in terms of their development – social and/or physical – but often this is the case, so a reminder from the relevant organisations/play schemes may help.

### *Quranic studies and recreational and play facilities*

As mentioned earlier, Pakistani children aged 5 and over are expected to attend the mosque for Islamic studies. The vast majority of Pakistani families are Muslims and therefore have an obligation to transmit principles of Islam onto their children and involves both males and females. The process is undertaken by sending children to the mosque for 'Quranic studies' which is a combination of religious teachings and moral education. Quranic Studies is not about religious teachings per se, but involves teaching children how to be good citizens, respecting each other as individuals and being taught right and wrong. Teaching their children Islam is an important part of Pakistani family life and an important aspect of Pakistani children's moral and educational development. For these reasons parents have a duty to ensure their children are taught the Quran and know the fundamental principles of Islam in order that they can become decent human beings.

Quranic studies take place after school and usually between the times of 4.30-6.30pm. Play schemes and after school clubs tend also to operate on roughly these times, which makes them less accessible for Pakistani children attending mosques. Many mothers were interested in the recreational and play facilities on offer to their children, however, they were also concerned about the times that they took place which clashed with their children's mosque attendance. One mother pointed out:

*"They [children] go to the mosque after they come back from school and by the time they get home it's nearly 7 o'clock and the play schemes would be finished". (A Pakistani mother)*

Another mum pointed out:

*"We have to send our children to the mosque because it is our duty as parents to ensure they know about Islam and can read the Quran. If they didn't have to go to the mosque then I would take them to the play schemes, because when they're all at home they fight and say they are bored".*

Organisations providing children's play facilities are not always aware of cultural/religious commitments of all families they target their services to. When one recreational service provider was asked if she was aware of Pakistani children's commitment to mosque attendance after school, she stated that she was aware that there may be a clash between the two, but was unable to offer alternative times as the venues they were providing the play schemes at, as they were allowed them use up to a certain time – usually until about 6.30pm after which the venues were booked by other people for different activities.

This is an area that needs to be looked into further by service providers, particularly in terms of providing their services from venues that accommodate the needs of all local children. Times and days that are more appropriate for children need to be established via consultations with parents, children and professionals who have a knowledge and understanding of the target communities, where there is a lack of service take up.

The themes that tend to emerge overwhelmingly as a barriers to taking up play and recreational services after school is Pakistani children's obligation to attending the mosque -

parents are not likely to prioritise play/recreational activities over mosque attendance and a lack of knowledge of the existence of these services.

It is important to consider the above barriers to accessing children's services. In particular, there is a need to develop strategies that would ensure potential barriers are tackled in order that the service provision is inclusive and accessible to all children.

### **Antenatal Bookings: The need for interpreters**

There have been concerns around how Pakistani mums with limited English language skills are able to make bookings for scans and antenatal check ups. One of the reasons for this concern is that the local hospital currently has no interpreters who can explain to Pakistani mums what they can expect from their visits. Enquiries to the hospital and the Smallwood health centre have suggested that there are no midwives who speak Urdu and/or Punjabi. Interviews with Surestart midwives and the head of midwifery have suggested there are practical problems relating to providing an appropriate service to Pakistani families in Redditch. The following were the key concerns put forward by midwives and other Surestart staff including a Health Visitor:

- How do Pakistani women with limited English fluency, make bookings for antenatal care?
- How are they made aware of the bookings process?

The staff interviewed expressed concerns over providing a service for Pakistani families, and were clearly concerned with the health of mothers and their unborn/existing children as a consequent of this. Midwives, health visitors and the Head of Midwifery all shared these concerns and a result produced a report highlighting the issues they saw as impacting on the delivery of their services to Pakistani families.

From the data received through interviews with Pakistani mothers, it emerged that they rely heavily on their GP<sup>14</sup> to explain the bookings procedure during their pregnancy. They are aware that their pregnancy needs to be monitored to ensure healthy development of the baby and their own well-being. In addition, when attending antenatal check ups and appointments, Pakistani mothers to be prefer their husbands to accompany them for interpreting and support purposes.

Two Pakistani mothers illustrate this point. Both women arrived to the UK from Pakistan and have very little English language fluency:

*"My husband accompanied me for check ups when I was pregnant. Because I speak very little English, it was important that he was with me to make sure I knew what I needed to do."*

*"In Pakistan, where I came from, they don't have antenatal check ups when you're pregnant, so I wasn't familiar with the system over here.... My husband made sure*

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<sup>14</sup> In particular, from GPs who were of Pakistani origin and could therefore explain the procedures in the language that they understood.

*that he was with me during my pregnancy when I needed to see the doctor or midwife”.*

Most women, in the absence of interpreters, preferred to have their husbands present when they were being informed of the antenatal bookings procedure. However, a high proportion of women interviewed – over 50% (35 women) stated that they would prefer to have an interpreter who could explain the procedures to them as husbands were not always able to take time off from work<sup>15</sup>, and more importantly, did not always fully understand the procedures themselves which impacted on keeping appointments:

*“My husband used to go to with me for my check ups, but he didn’t really understand what was going on. When we would leave, I would ask him what the midwife or doctor said and he would say, ‘it’s alright, they’re just doing routine checks they do with all pregnant women’. So I didn’t really know what was going on and I didn’t want to keep asking him. It would have been better if an Urdu speaking person was there to explain things” (Pakistani mother)*

*“I think it would be a good idea if there were interpreters at the clinics or hospital, because you can’t always rely on your husband to tell you everything. I used to miss so many appointments because he [husband] used to forget to tell me when they were, or he couldn’t make it on that particular day”.*

Even when husbands who do speak English are present, they do not fully understand processes and procedures and therefore cannot explain these to their wives, who are the ones missing out on crucial monitoring of their pregnancy. Particularly if a husband has not understood what the health care professionals have told him, but is reluctant to admit this:

*“My husband made me miss antenatal check ups when I was pregnant with my son, because he didn’t understand how important they were for the baby and didn’t bother taking me. I couldn’t speak very much English at the time so I relied on him to take me. I’m grateful the baby was fine when he was born, but I know someone whose baby was born with health problems that the doctors could have known about before she was born if the mother went for her check ups”.*

This would suggest that relying on family members as interpreters is problematic for the reasons mentioned here, but also for confidentiality purposes, which were concerns expressed by midwives and health visitors. For statutory purposes, confidentiality issues have to be considered by organisations, therefore family members interpreting for a mother with concerns over her children’s well being and/or issues around pregnancy infringes on confidentiality as well as preventing some Pakistani women from taking up a service they require. For example, one mother was reluctant for her extended family members knowing about her immediate family’s situation, thus preventing her from using them as interpreters when visiting a particular agency:

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<sup>15</sup> usually unpaid, due to the nature of their employment, ie, taxi drivers, production and shift workers

*“I don’t want anyone else from my family knowing what is happening in my home, as they will tell others in the community.... I would prefer an outsider to interpret for me”.*

As mentioned at the outset of this document, the Pakistani community in Redditch is a close-knit one where most people will know each other therefore confidentiality can be compromised when employing interpreters from the community. However, overcoming this may involve looking to agencies/individuals outside of Redditch to ensure that service provision is meeting the target clients’ needs while upholding statutory obligations of the organisations themselves.

### **Section 3: Reviewing organisational processes and making recommendations**

The findings of this study point, overwhelmingly to issues of communication and a lack of awareness of the available services by clients as key to accessing information, and subsequent service take up by Pakistani families in Redditch. As mentioned earlier, organisations which employed individuals from a Pakistani background were more likely to have an increased service take up by Pakistani families. This is not to suggest that organisations *must* recruit Pakistani individuals per se, but to demonstrate that local people prefer to identify or be familiar with employees of service providers with whom they feel comfortable and can communicate with.

Based on the findings of this study, it is necessary to make a series of recommendations that may assist in this aim. Some of these are general and can relate to any voluntary and statutory body providing services to the local community. Others relate more specifically to the data collected and presented in this study. The recommendations can relate both to health and social care agencies as well the play and recreational service providers, although some will be more clear as to who they are specifically related to are aimed at service providers:

- Reviewing the statutory obligations of the organisation itself. This would require considering issues of inclusion, particularly so in the light of any new legislation. The Children Bill (2004) and its emphasis on inclusive provision and multi-agency partnership work, is an example of this.
- Assessing the internal structure of an organisation, for example, staff performance, service delivery systems and management techniques is crucial in monitoring the appropriateness and effectiveness of service provision.
- Supporting staff through training and regular staff appraisals to measure performance and identify areas of weakness and strength and work accordingly with staff to ensure that they are identifying the needs of the communities and providing a needs-led service.
- Developing appropriate communication mechanisms which will require Urdu and/or Punjabi speakers – whether these are interpreters assisting staff or staff who speak the language(s) - to transmit information on organisational structures and processes to their target client groups.

- Regular assessments and/or monitoring – which many are currently doing through in-house research and other techniques to inform on how they can reach minority communities and improve service take up within these. Key issues emerging from survey questionnaires need to be followed up by qualitative interviews (semi-structured interviews) to ensure that not only are organisations aware of the ‘what’ but also from these follow up interviews, they establish the ‘why’ and accordingly tailor their policies and practices based on their findings.
- Staff training in the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of the diverse local community.
- Ensure staff responsibilities are clearly defined both within the organisation and to the client groups.
- A workshop or conference aimed at employees involved in the provision of children’s services in Redditch, to whom findings of this report are disseminated, highlight good practice, and where potential barriers are raised, to develop ideas for a seamless provision strategy targeting all needs would be a valuable first step in Redditch.
- The development of a providers’ forum the remit of which would be to share intelligence, promote multi-agency and partnership links and identify best practice. This would go some way towards following principles of the current children’s legislation which advocates partnership work, best practice identification and social inclusion.
- Organisations need to reconsider and/or change their practices in relation to promotional and delivery of their services, bearing the above issues in mind. Promotional activities must be aimed at targeting the organisations’ [limited] resources towards establishing themselves firmly with their client group.
- Attempting to change attitudes of their clients by relating their services to a particular benefit they may have on their overall well-being – not necessarily in health terms but also in terms of the social development of their children.

For example, emphasising the need for parents to encourage their children’s participation in play and recreational activities, by suggesting that the benefits of this would impact on the development of social skills, ie, team playing, sharing and learning other such skills that are necessary for good citizenship.

- Encouraging parents with limited English fluency to take up ESOL classes and providing them with childcare as necessary.
- Multi-agency partnerships are a crucial aspect of information and good practice exchange, which would necessarily benefit both organisations and their target clients. Communication within and between organisations, and consultations with the target clients as well as organisations working closely with them is a good starting point for partnership cooperation.

- Venues have to be considered for their appropriateness. For example, Sandycroft houses SureStart midwives providing services to expectant parents, however, as the building is located within the All Women's House, expectant fathers – who clearly have a role to play in their unborn child's development and the well being of their partners – may view this as exclusionary, purely due to the misunderstanding created by being on premises of a venue that has a historical tradition of providing services to women not willing to visit a male environment, whether this is for religious, cultural or personal reasons. Fathers have a role in their children's development and being excluded at the pregnancy stage may have an impact on their interest in the children's future development. It is therefore necessary to promote Sandycroft as separate from the All Women's House to avoid confusion and misunderstandings.
- Play and recreational services need also to consider the appropriateness of their venues and gender issues, for example, female only provision for sporting and leisure facilities.
- An interpreting bank at the local hospital and/or at the Town Hall, may be a useful way of ensuring communication between service providers and clients without compromising confidentiality by using relatives as interpreters.
- The use of children as interpreters is an unacceptable mode of communication between parents with limited English fluency and service providers, as children do not have the necessary understanding and experience to be able to interpret complex issues involving adults. Children cannot be exploited this way for this and other ethical reasons. Service providers should avoid this and parents must not feel that they can use their children for interpreting complex adult issues.
- Changing practice to accommodate the needs of Pakistani children and young people needs to be considered. Particular emphasis must be given to the age group of children the Children's Fund are aiming their services at – currently 5-13 year olds needs to be extended to 5-19, as this would then allow for services aimed at young people to be considered further, for example looking at Redditch Youth House.
- Service providers need to consider cultural and religious issues that impact on service take up, particularly so in relation to mosque attendance.
- Considering times when arts, play and leisure activities are provided. Providing such facilities at weekends may be a good way of ensuring inclusion of these young people.
- Actively promoting projects funded by the Children's Fund, for example after school clubs, holiday play schemes and other recreational, sporting, leisure and arts facilities to pupils from the local Pakistani community, who in turn can inform parents of these.

- Play and recreational services need to be promoted more clearly. A lack of knowledge and/or understanding of after school clubs, play schemes and other initiatives developed specifically for children such as 'nurturing classes', plays a part in the lack of these services being taken up.
- Additionally, it may be useful to pilot nurturing classes in schools where a large proportion of pupils are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, with a view to exploring how discrimination impacts on pupils' schooling.
- A more centralised information source needs to be established, particularly in relation to the Children's Fund funded projects. These are currently dispersed around the Borough – within particular schools, leisure centres and Arts venues. Individuals and potential clients of these services require an extensive knowledge of the structures of the Children's Fund and how and where it funds certain projects. Without knowledge of these initiatives, it is unlikely that people will take up the services aimed at them and/or their children.
- The Children's Fund needs to promote itself and the projects it funds locally, more widely and liaise with minority established structures such as the mosques to increase their knowledge of Pakistani children's commitments to the mosque and how the Children's Fund can accommodate their needs.
- Speakers from the Children's Fund funded projects need to visit the mosques to promote the services they offer such as nurturing classes and other such initiatives. The NCF is doing some very important work and funding very important projects aimed at young people which needs to be brought to the fore so that all groups can benefit from these.
- Monitoring funded projects for their accessibility to minority groups including ethnicity, disability and gender and ensuring balances are maintained within these is crucial.
- If there are concerns about service providers becoming 'exclusive' to one particular group, then the necessary steps need to be taken to ensure a balance is achieved to ensure a seamless provision.
- One possible way of ensuring a seamless service would be for organisations and service providers to look into gaining a quality standard. Government supported initiatives such as Quality in Play or Investors in Children should be considered. Gaining a quality standard would give organisations credibility with their peers and demonstrate their commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and social inclusion, as well as reaching their target clients in an appropriate manner. Social auditing of service delivery may help with key performance results.
- Outreach staff need to reflect the community they are aiming to attract. A good example of this practice is the All Women's House, who recruit Learning Ambassadors from different ethnic backgrounds as well as ensuring consultation,

participation and involvement of women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in their activities, which has ensured a good take up of their services.

- It is crucial that consultations take place with the relevant bodies, but erroneous to think that any one particular individual or organisation can represent the interests of a whole community. Therefore consultation processes need to consider this and ensure that they engage and involve the relevant agencies and individuals.
- The presence of a (mobile) Black and Minority Ethnic Information officer who recognises the needs of the community could act as a focus for advice and guidance – a *conduit* into the array of service provision – a mechanism which currently appears to be absent. Whilst the provision of such an individual has a cost implication, the value of personalised *on the ground* promotion in Redditch would add greatly to the visibility of services and may increase service take up.

### **Conclusion and future research**

This report has attempted to identify the key issues impacting on the Pakistani community in Redditch and how it consumes health, play and recreational services aimed at parents and their children. The barriers to accessing services outlined in this document need to be addressed individually, with specific attention given to tackling these albeit within the limited resources available.

It is also necessary to consider changing practice, particularly where it has been identified that a particular organisation or service is not delivered to the target client group due to it conflicting with cultural traditions of a give community. Targeting particular services and providing staff with the appropriate training is also an important aspect of inclusive provision.

As mentioned above, it would be useful for organisations to seek gaining a quality standard for their organisation. This may appear a costly exercise (although there are organisations that provide the service almost free of charge), but it would ensure that structures and processes of the organisation are meeting their responsibilities in terms of how they deliver their services in an appropriate and efficient way. It would also ensure that staffing issues, service delivery and take up are meeting their statutory, internal and customer requirements. Organisations would need to consider operating as social businesses whose efficiency is monitored and assessed on the basis of their meeting the requirements of *all* its customers' specific needs, thus ensuring inclusion of all groups in their locality.

#### *Future research*

The aim of this research was to offer introductory insights into why there is a low take up children's services aimed at 0-13 year olds, by Pakistani families in Redditch. Further research needs to be done with these families to ensure that their needs are being met and that modes of communication, issues of accessibility and consideration of cultural issues can be explored further as a form of monitoring organisational processes as well as ensuring that Pakistani families' needs are being met. Therefore, it may be useful to undertake a larger study where some of the themes touched on here could be further

explored and developed. In particular, it would be fruitful to explore the views of fathers and grandparents who may be involved in the care of children; what their needs may be and how local children's service providers can accommodate these. It may also be interesting to undertake research with parents/grandparents asking questions around whether they would wish to engage in debates and consultations surrounding the provision of appropriate services for their children/grandchildren.

A research study involving young people and children aged 5-13 is essential in establishing the needs of Pakistani children in Redditch. This study would need to address issues from the perspective of the young people themselves and use the emergent themes as the basis for policy recommendations. Young people's voices need to be heard in order that appropriate services are developed by the service providers and consumed by the target group.

There is a visible Pakistani presence in Redditch, with children who require services and whose needs have to be recognised and addressed by the appropriate service providers. This study has attempted to highlight the needs of Pakistani families in Redditch by identifying some of the barriers to accessing children's services, but further research needs to be undertaken looking specifically, and in more detail, at how Pakistani families can engage with local children's service providers to inform them of their needs and how these can be accommodated. This type of communication process would ensure inclusive service provision using appropriate service delivery methods resulting in an increased service take up.

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## Appendix 1



### WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN'S FUND – SERVICE DESCRIPTION Assist children to make transition from home to school and school to school

children's fund

<b>Identified unmet need</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No provision for emotional behavioural difficulties children at Key Stage 1</li> <li>▪ Exclusion rate is one of highest in shire counties</li> <li>▪ Responding to government agendas</li> </ul>
<b>Service Aim</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To improve the emotional, social and behavioural responses of children in the groups. (Measured by the Boxall profile-pilot project has shown an average gain of 5 categories being scored as normal.)</li> <li>▪ To improve the ESB of children in the target schools (Measured by the QCA Emotional and behavioural development checklist, 2001. Target: improvement equal to or greater than 20%)</li> <li>▪ To improve on the forecast KS1 results (based on the profile on school entry.) Target 80% of children who have completed up to 4 terms in the Nurture Group.</li> <li>▪ Children will express a more positive attitude to school. (Measured by a before and after interview with children.) Target 80% of children who have completed up to 4 terms in the Nurture Group</li> <li>▪ LEA working with host pyramids will be able to give serious consideration to bringing groups into base funding</li> </ul>
<b>Service Activities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Senior specialist educational psychologist (behaviour) commissioned to co-ordinate project</li> <li>▪ Schools selected on criteria agreed with the LEA steering group which has co-ordinated the pilot project</li> <li>▪ Two groups established by October 2003</li> </ul>
<b>Involvement Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Service design, delivery and evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Output(s)/Outcome(s)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work continues with LEA, pyramids of selected schools and local and national charities to bring the groups into base funding. Initial target that schools contribute up to 10% of costs in first year</li> <li>▪ Nurture group will re-integrate 75% of their first cohort into mainstream</li> <li>▪ Schools trained in the school wide programme "The Nurturing Programme"</li> <li>▪ Parent groups in the same programme are being trained regularly</li> <li>▪ The schools have identified and had trained parent leaders to continue to run the "nurturing programme" for parents by March 2004</li> <li>▪ To improve the emotional, social and behavioural responses of children in the groups. (Measured by the Boxall profile-pilot project has shown an average gain of 5 categories being scored as normal.)</li> <li>▪ To improve the ESB of children in the target schools (Measured by the QCA Emotional and</li> </ul>

*behavioural development checklist, 2001. Target: improvement equal to or greater than 20%)*

- *To improve on the forecast KS1 results (based on the profile on school entry.) Target 80% of children who have completed up to 4 terms in the Nurture Group.*
- *Children will express a more positive attitude to school. (Measured by a before and after interview with children.) Target 80% of children who have completed up to 4 terms in the Nurture Group*
- *LEA working with host pyramids will be able to give serious consideration to bringing groups into base funding*

#### **Links to other initiatives, plans & strategies**

- *Children's Fund Sub-Objectives:*
  1. *Promote attendance in schools*
  2. *Improve educational performance*
  6. *Excluded/minority clusters of children and families*
  7. *Community capacity building*

#### **Children's Fund Money Available**

- *Year 1: £20,000*
- *Year 2: £40,000*
- *Year 3: £40,000*

#### **Eligible Expenditure**

- *Revenue only*

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