Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all parents who use the services offered by Sure Start, especially those who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

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Background and Rationale

1.1 Introduction

Sure Start Local Programme is a government funded initiative which works with families, local communities and other organizations to help provide the best possible services for expectant parents, families and children under four in Sure Start areas. There are five main objectives that Sure Start aims to meet to achieve this goal:

1. Improving social and emotional development of both parents and children
2. Improving health
3. Improving children’s ability to learn
4. Strengthening families and communities
5. Supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment

These objectives will be achieved by:

1. Helping the development of new and enhanced services in disadvantaged areas
2. Encouraging families to attend these services through promotion
3. Developing educational and enjoyable activities
4. Support for parents to afford childcare

There are currently 524 Sure Start programmes running in Britain giving access to 400,000 children to these facilities.

1.2 Aims and objectives:

A requirement of all Sure Start programmes is that a local satisfaction survey is conducted with parents of children under the age of four who live within Sure Start areas. These surveys allow the evaluation team to see whether the mentioned objectives are met.

The purpose of the User Satisfaction Survey was:

- To assess the quality of the services offered to registered Sure Start users.
- Satisfaction of users.
- Evaluate attendance of Sure Start activities.
- Develop a strategy for further studies to amend any highlighted improvements.
Sure Start Redditch

2.1 Introduction

In 1964 Redditch was designated a New Town to accommodate people and industry from the West Midlands conurbation. Redditch Borough Council was created on 1st April 1974, with the district comprising the whole of Redditch New Town and roughly equal area of green country with two villages (Astwood Bank and Feckenham). Since then the area has undergone considerable expansion with both industrial and residential developments.

Redditch has a population of 76,700 (1997 estimate), a high percentage of which are children. It has the largest Asian and Black African/Caribbean population in Worcestershire. The Batchley Ward is within the top 20% most deprived wards nationally based on the 1991 census.

These factors made Redditch an ideal location to create a large and thriving Sure Start Programme.

2.2 Geographical Structure:

Redditch Sure Start encompasses the following areas:

- Abbeydale
- Batchley
- Lakeside
- Lodge Park
- Riverside
- Smallwood
- St Georges
- Town Centre

This is a population of approx. 750 children

2.3 Personnel Structure:

The everyday running of Redditch Sure Start is led by:

- Judith Willis, Programme Manager,
- Bryan Tait, Deputy Programme Manager
  
  - They lead an administration team of four and a community team of seventeen.
  - The community team consists of midwives, health visitors, community family link officers (CFLO), nursery nurses, speech and language therapists and psychologists.
  - 72% of the total annual budget is spent on salaries.

2.4 Evaluation Team:

- Dr Alex Cooper – Clinical Psychologist
- Bryan Tait – Deputy Programme Manager
- Prem Chana – Medical Student, Exeter University
- Brinder Bains – Assistant Psychologist
Methodology

The evaluation team created the survey in 2003; a small pilot study was then conducted on Sure Start members of staff and a sample group of 12 parents to ensure that it was accessible and relevant. Following this initial study, necessary amendments were made to the survey and the finished article was distributed in June 2004.

The most important general features of questionnaire design were adhered to; these were maintaining user anonymity and tailoring the questions so that they and their responses were representative of the whole population that was being investigated.

Surveys were delivered by post to 600 registered families along with a self-addressed envelope for it to be returned. An incentive of a free ticket to a Sure Start activity was given to encourage a positive response rate.

Questions were asked in a manner where quantitative results were obtained. This enabled the evaluation team to easily analyze the results and formulate a realistic management strategy for improvements that were highlighted from the survey.

Initial discussions by the evaluation team came to the conclusion that a questionnaire alone would not be the most effective way of carrying out the survey; it was therefore decided that follow up semi-structured interviews would be conducted by the psychologists. This idea has currently been suspended due to staffing issues but a suitable scheme of analysis for the results from interviews has been developed by the Clinical Psychologists to collate narrative results which are very subjective and require appropriate method for monitoring results. This is an issue that will however be considered when the next satisfaction survey is carried out.
Results

600 copies of the survey were sent out, 132 replies were received (22% response rate.)

This can be seen as a success as according to Wilcox et al. 2003 a return rate of 20% is a success for a postal questionnaire.

A separate results booklet has been printed with results breakdown.

Evaluation of Results

5.1 Are you registered with Sure Start?

Are you registered with Sure Start?

The results of this question raised several essential issues that require address; seven people who replied to the survey stated that they were not or did not know whether they were members of Sure Start. This figure should be zero as surveys were only sent to registered families; the identity of Sure Start is therefore brought into question as individuals obviously do not know that they are members. The advertising and promotion of the organisation may need review.
5.2 Do you have, or are you living with any children under the age of four?

121 people answered yes to this question, leaving 11 people who were not living with children under four years old. Sure Start offers services to pregnant women; therefore replies may have come from some of these expectant women and also several grandparents returned the survey.

The average number of children under the age of four per family was 1.19. This question could have been improved by asking how many children there are in the household in total, (rather than only under four); this would have given more information on the modern family unit in Sure Start areas, as it would help Sure Start mould services in the future to meet the needs of older children in families to encourage the development of the family unit.

The graphs above show that the three main areas of returned surveys are Abbeydale, Batchley and Smallwood. This would indicate that a majority of activities would take place in these areas; however further studies have shown that all areas in Redditch have very full and busy activity schedules. However specific focus is being placed upon the 3 mentioned areas with a children’s centre to be developed in Batchley and a CFLO with a specialty in dealing with Asian families being located in Smallwood, where the Asian community is at its largest. This may explain the increased numbers in this area.
5.3 What is your relationship to the child?

The key issue raised from this question is that no fathers responded to the survey; this is a disappointment as one of the aims of Sure Start is to encourage the development of the family unit and especially relationships between fathers and their children.

Many of the activities run by Sure Start are held during weekdays; it is expected that a majority of fathers would be at work during this time and would not be able to attend; the only solution to this would be to arrange events to be held during evenings and weekends to allow for maximum paternal involvement.

The suitability of activities may also be a cause for poor turnout in activities for fathers; events such as, Dads and Tots Breakfast Club may not be the most effective way of encouraging fathers to spend time with their children. A further study to determine the needs of fathers is required to find a solution to this problem. An element of this study will be beginning in September 2004 in conjunction with Redditch Borough Council Leisure Services; the aim of it will be to determine what activities people enjoy participating in with their families, where they go and if they do not take part in any activities, why they don’t. It will allow Sure Start to develop a plan of action to provide relevant and stimulating activities; such as golf lessons and football tournaments; which will encourage more fathers to attend and become part of Sure Start.

However the survey was addressed to the principle carer; therefore in most cases this would be the mother so it may be that fathers do attend events but they have not replied to the questionnaire as it has already been completed by someone else. This is another flaw in the way that the survey was conducted. If this is the case details can be obtained from the Sure Start database which contains a breakdown of all activities and who attended; this highlights another possible future evaluation study.
5.4 Where did you first hear about Sure Start?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
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<td>Friend</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antenatal Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Visitor</td>
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<td>Midwife</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFLO</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
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This was an effective question as it gave a lot of information that could be used to form an analysis.

The referrals from Midwives and Health Visitors were very positive as over 50% of the returned surveys stated that they had first heard about Sure Start through these healthcare professionals; this was especially evident in Smallwood. It may be useful to conduct a further study where the evaluation team shadow and interview the community midwives to gain information on how they work to promote Sure Start in such a positive way.

The use of posters to advertise Sure Start has also been a success. This policy should be exploited as posters are a relatively low cost way of spreading information to a potential mass audience. The strategic placement of posters in high profile locations across Redditch will undoubtedly be a successful marketing policy.

However several results were surprising and highlighted areas of weakness that require address. Only 6 referrals came from community family link officers. This figure is exceptionally low considering that they are employed as an outreach tool. Further evaluation needs to be carried out into how link officers integrate themselves into the community.

Another disappointing fact was that there was no referral from GPs or schools. These are both highly influential sources of information in the community and it is an opportunity to get free advertising as all families will frequently visit schools or GP surgeries; if Sure Start were to implement its poster strategy in these locations, more people would be informed. It would also be an excellent way of breaking the negative attitude that some areas of the medical profession may have towards community projects.

The Mosque would also be an effective way of getting more Muslims, (who form a large proportion of the Sure Start population) involved. This is because the mosque has a huge influence on the lives of Muslims and mosque approval would encourage more Muslims to join. It may be beneficial to meet with the Muslim community leaders to forge a relationship.

Word of mouth was also a popular way of spreading news about Sure Start. Perhaps it would be useful to give several Sure Start brochures to each parent to allow them to distribute to friends.
5.5 Have you ever used any Sure Start services?

This question gave some interesting results. A majority of the recipients stated that they had used a Sure Start service before. However 31 people claim to have not used or did not know whether they had used a service.

Once again this raises an issue to whether the advertising and promotion of the services is currently effective and is Sure Start branded properly. Every family who participated in the survey was a registered member of Sure Start therefore must have used a service at some point. It is possible that families have attended events run by Sure Start and do not know who is running it. However it may just be that the principle carer who returned the survey has not attended any services but other members of their family have. Despite this the promotional sub-group is reviewing their marketing strategy and will be publishing a document in the near future.
5.6 Why don’t you use Sure Start services? (View with key Appendix I)

The most common reason given for families not attending Sure Start services was that their child is at nursery. This is understandable as attending nursery is seen by many as an essential element in a child’s social development; however this does not necessarily exclude parents and their children from attending Sure Start services, if more services were held at weekends and during holidays it would give these families an opportunity to attend more activities.

The second most common reason for families not attending was that they haven’t felt the need to use Sure Start services. Seven responses were given for this option; this raises the question to whether Sure Start is running useful activities. Services should aim to be educational yet fun, stimulating and approachable. A review of services may be necessary to determine whether they are useful to parents and are meeting the aims of the organization that are displayed in the introduction to this report, this is one of the aims of the follow up interviews to be conducted.

Six of the responses stated that they needed encouragement to go along to events/activities. This should fall under the role of the CFLO team as they are the main source of contact that Sure Start has with the members of the community. Their encouragement may help people to attend services and feel welcome.

There were five people who felt that their child was too young to attend activities; this needs to be addressed as the Sure Start Programme is designed for children of the ages from 0-4. Therefore the suitability of events should be reviewed to ensure that there are appropriate activities for very young children. Parents also need to be informed of these events and encouraged to attend them.

Advertising and promotion was again raised from this question as four people said they don’t know about the services. It is not clear why this is the case as the promotions officer sends out a monthly timetable of events to every registered family, which contains a list of all of the activities that Sure Start holds. This appears to be all that Sure Start can do to inform people of services and the members of the community should be more proactive in finding out about times and locations of services.

There were also some people who said that they worked full time and could not attend services offered due to this. Sure Start is however making a conscious effort to develop a programme of weekend events to cater for the needs of these people, especially for parents who work during the week.
5.7 Which services have you used and how satisfied are you with them? (View with key Appendix II)

The following graph is a diagrammatic display of which services are used and how often.

![Total numbers attending each Sure Start service](image)

Fun days and trips have proved to be the most popular activity by far. They are a success because they provide a change from people’s daily normal routine; this can be a great way of boosting morale and building a good spirit and reputation for Sure Start. It is an effective marketing tool to advertise other services as there is a large and receptive audience.

However it is important for Sure Start to not become too reliant on trips as they are very expensive, (can cost several thousand pounds per trip.) Activities that are conducted during trips should also be monitored to ensure that ‘meaningful contact’ is maintained throughout and the aims of Sure Start are met.

It may also be helpful to consult the Sure Start database as it is important to ensure that trips are just used as a taster of what Sure Start offers and that families fully engage in other services. It would not be ideal if families were only going on trips and not using other services, which will be more beneficial in developing the family unit.

The aim of this survey was to assess user satisfaction, the following graph shows people who were very satisfied by the services offered to them.

![Very Satisfied](image)
This graph is very encouraging as it virtually mirrors trends that are shown in the total numbers that attend; showing that many people are very satisfied with Sure Start services.

The following graph shows people who were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the services offered:

Although this graph looks fairly dramatic, it is important to look at the scale that has been used. The highest number of dissatisfied people was from Batchley Stay and Play and this was only three responses (2% of total replies.) This is a great success for Sure Start as it shows that the organization is pleasing its families. However the Deputy Programme Manager is aiming for excellence and has looked into the reasons why these people, (despite being a small minority) are not fully satisfied with the service.

A more detailed breakdown of user satisfaction follows:

The second most popular activity were Stay and Plays that are offered by the community team. The CFLO team should be congratulated for encouraging excellent attendance at these activities. The following graphs show the user satisfaction of this service:

The above graph shows that there is a very good turnout at Abbeydale Stay and Plays and of the 28 responses, 24 were very satisfied with the activity. There was however one parent who was very disappointed.
Batchley has also been running a successful Stay and Play scheme with 14 of 17 people saying that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service. Three people stated that they were disappointed with the service.

Salop Road Stay and Play is proving to be a success, the apparent low turnout for this can be attributed to a low response rate to the survey from this area. Therefore this result is not representative of the population that it is representing. However those who replied to the survey were happy with the service.

Parents using St Georges are also happy with their Stay and Play.

Speech and language therapy was another popular run activity which is encouraging as it is seen by many as a very worthwhile service that can make a significant difference in children’s
lives. Speech and language therapists are seen to improve the quality of children’s lives as they prepare them to start school on an equal footing to their peers which will increase the child's confidence. Sure Start must ensure that this service is available to every child that needs it.

There were however many services which appear to be very undersubscribed which is a concern: parents talk, dad’s group and the toy library stand out; however other services can be seen on the graph to be low on numbers. Sure Start may need to refocus its efforts and budget onto these activities to help to boost numbers. Another option could be to discard these services and develop new activities that would be more popular but at the same time meet the aims and objectives of Sure Start.
5.8 What did you like about the services offered? (View with key Appendix III)

The main reason that parents gave for liking Sure Start services was that it gave their children an opportunity to play with other children; this can explain the success of Stay and Play as that is one of the objectives of the activity, to encourage play. The second most popular reason given was that the child enjoys it indicating that the activities run are stimulating and fun. Many parents also stated that their child is learning something; once again the community team should be praised for this as education is a fundamental aim of the Sure Start philosophy. These three responses highlight that parents are looking for a child-focused service, rather than provide a service for adults. This is encouraging as it shows that parents value services that aid their child’s development.

Despite having very successful results regarding children’s issues, it is important that parents’ needs are met by Sure Start. Three of the options that were regarding parents needs had the lowest response. The lowest of these was ‘I have more confidence’ it is important for Sure Start to build up parents confidence as it is only then that they will be able to improve social interaction skills. Confidence can be built by allowing parents to take more of an active role in services such as Stay and Play; if a parent is leading a successful group it will give them new skills and enhanced confidence and it will also take pressure off the CFLO who can focus their time on other activities. Increased confidence will also support the national Sure Start target to decrease workless households.

Many parents also did not place feeling supported as a priority according to this question; the onus of family support lies with the community team. It is very easy to give someone support; just by spending a few minutes talking to an individual can comfort them and make them feel welcome. This should be happening already throughout Sure Start and if it is not a re-focus of priorities during activities needs to take place.

There was also a low response rate for parents saying that they can learn something; Sure Start already provides adult education in teaching English and basic computer skills in conjunction with the All Women’s House. However perhaps it needs to broaden its horizons by encouraging more adult education; this can be done in conjunction with local training providers and NEW College Redditch which offers many evening courses in a wide range of subjects.

However this question highlights the overall success that Sure Start Redditch has had in providing services that its families appear to enjoy and appreciate.
Why did you stop attending Sure Start services?

The main issue that was raised from this question was that all of the reasons that were given for people ceasing to use Sure Start can and should be avoided; the future strategy will aim to amend this.

A majority of the responses stated that the times that activities were run did not suit parents; this is an interesting observation as in a later question 63% said that they were full time parents and therefore not working. This raises the issue of whether Sure Start is a priority in the social lives of the registered families; should the organization be making a greater effort in promoting itself to families to increase its profile. 33% of the parents were employed either part or full time. The timing of events may clash with work commitments for these people; offering services in the evenings or at weekends would increase the attendance. However this needs to be counteracted by the greater unit costs of running events at these times, (paying staff out of hours etc.) A balance therefore needs to be struck between convenience and cost.

19 people said that they stopped attending Sure Start services due to illness or personal problems; this figure is fairly high as members of the community team should be contacting these parents and encouraging them to return to Sure Start. If there was greater contact with GPs there would also be a greater number of parents returning to activities as there is nobody on the community team that is clinically trained to handle parents’ health problems.

There were 6 people that said that they felt the snacks offered were unhealthy which is why they stopped attending activities. In some parent’s opinion this highlights a large problem as Sure Start is failing to meet one of its fundamental aims. A solution to this would be to review snacks and introduce nutritional advice to parents and children. To help achieve this it maybe necessary to forge links between Sure Start and the community dietitians.

Several parents stopped attending services due to parents being too cliquey; this can be a highly demoralizing to an individual. The responsibility for this lies with the link officers that run the activities. They should be structuring events to encourage integration and teamwork between parents; the CFLO team leader is aware of this situation and is aiming to rectify it.

The issue of language was raised again with people claiming that services were not provided in their own language. An aim of Sure Start is to encourage inter-race integration but should it provide services in other languages and employ specialist staff at increased cost or run everything in English where integration is not only encouraged but necessary. Sure Start has commissioned a report regarding the needs of the Asian population in Redditch, which is currently being written; it will address language issues in greater detail.
5.10 What is your marital status?

The results from this question showed that 67 of the responses came from married couples, which was 55%. This figure was relatively low but not surprising, due to high divorce rates in modern society.

27 replies came from lone parents; this can account for the many responses that said families were not able to attend Sure Start activities as times did not suit. Being a parent is very time consuming and if the parent is working as well as caring for their children it makes it very difficult to find the time to attend social activities.

There were a large number of parents who were living with a partner; this highlights a modern sociological trend were individuals may prefer to co-habit with partners rather than marry.
5.11 What is your employment status?

These results link to the previous two questions; approximately two thirds of the replies came from full time parents/carers, this implies that they do not work at all. It is assumed that these people form a majority of those attending Sure Start activities as most are held during weekdays. However the figure for full time parents is very high compared to what would be expected on a national level; an aim of Sure Start should be to try and get some of these parents employed by providing basic training in subjects such as IT and English literacy. This can be achieved by forming more links with the Job Centre and the various colleges in the area that provide courses in adult education. Sure Start should also seek to support parents in accessing affordable childcare if they choose to work as this can be a major hindrance due to the cost of private childcare.

12 replies came from full time employed parents, this links to 5.9 where 12 people said that they stopped attending Sure Start because times did not suit them; this direct correlation indicates that there is a problem in trying to meet the needs of working parents. Discussion needs to take place with these parents to find a solution of convenient times to hold certain events to maximize participation.
5.12 How old are you?

The main observation from this question is that Sure Start appears not to be attracting many young mothers. There were only 7 mothers who were under 20 that replied to the survey. Sure Start should be focusing on these mothers as they are very young and potentially vulnerable; therefore Sure Start should be providing relevant skills and education in issues such as good parenting. However this low figure may just be due to a flaw in the survey method and a questionnaire was not the most appropriate method of collecting data; parents may just be too busy or do not see the point in filling out a questionnaire.

Other results from this question were unremarkable as they produced results that were expected. Many women choose to have children in their 20's as they are at their physical peak. However many women are delaying starting a family until later in life due lifestyle and career choices; this is enabled by advances in antenatal care that allow for successful pregnancy in older women.
5.13 How would you describe your ethnic background?

The majority of the population of Redditch is White British (figure.) This is demonstrated in the diagram above which shows that 83% of the people that responded to the survey were of this ethnic origin.

The second largest group in Redditch is the Pakistani community. This is a significant figure as only 10 responses were received by families of Pakistani origin. This can be seen as a flaw in the construction of the questionnaire as perhaps if a copy was sent out in Urdu there would be a greater response rate from the Pakistani community.

However there are many issues that need to be raised when discussing the Pakistani population and how Sure Start should be providing services that are appropriate to their needs. One of the primary aims for the community team should be to encourage integration between Pakistani’s and other groups; this is essential to remove any prejudices that there may be between different ethnic groups. A potential way of doing this would be to run English language courses for Pakistani women; this would give them the confidence to become more out going. It would also help in achieving one of Sure Starts core targets which is helping to get parents into employment. Teaching English is providing individuals with the necessary tools to make them employable as well as improving necessary social skills.

There was a very disappointing return from the black population which will be investigated in future studies to determine the specific needs and cultural issues that may be preventing black families from being as involved in Sure Start as perhaps they should. However it should also be noted that the black population of Redditch is relatively small so a very large response rate was not expected.
5.14 How would you describe your religion?

The wording of this question could have been improved regarding Christianity; denominations were not properly classified and this may have caused confusion when answering the question. The evaluators are assuming that the option 'Christian' was referring to Church of England as it is the major religious group in the country. Religious categories should be reviewed for the next survey.

Muslims formed the second largest religious group, this again emphasises the importance of tailoring services to meet the needs of the Muslim community.

There were 43 people who stated that they had no religion; this again is an interesting trend as it shows how religion is less influential in the Sure Start areas of Redditch than maybe it would have been in the past. This also again questions the suitability of the venues used by Sure Start as many are venues with a religious focus, good and approachable locations to encourage positive attendance at activities.
Conclusion

The User Satisfaction Surveys has shown that Sure Start Redditch is overall very successful and the team should be proud of what they have achieved over the past few years. However there are many improvements that are needed to be carried out to improve the service even more; evolution is necessary to maintain the current success.

There were several limitations in the survey itself; the method of sending out a questionnaire in the post was almost certain to produce a low turnout of replies; (it is the nature of using this technique.) This brings the reliability of the whole survey into doubt as the question of whether the survey is representative of the population is raised. However the method was used as it is the best way of reaching a large number of people.

The method of questioning may not also give the most useful replies; an example of this is an option for a response was, "Times did not suit me." This does not give the information that would be useful to this study. A narrative response may have been more beneficial as it would have given reasons into why times did not suit; such as: the individual was at work or Neighbors was on television. This information would allow Sure Start to see how its users felt towards the organization. There were several other questions where a narrative reply would give better results than tick boxes alone.

Further studies into this survey may be carried out in the form of semi structured interviews to gain more information from the users to expand the study.

The language in which the survey was sent out may have deterred responses; the large Pakistani community may have preferred the survey to be sent out in Urdu or Punjabi, making it easier for them to reply and therefore increasing the response rate in theory. However this would not guarantee more replies because many of the Pakistani women did not attend school so cannot read Urdu or Punjabi despite being able to speak the language; the cost of employing an interpreter and printing in another language needs to be weighed up against the potential benefit of increased response rate.

There was no mention of issues regarding people with disabilities; this is an important omission as the needs and satisfaction of this group is vital for Sure Start to continue to meet its aims and objectives. There would need to be questions tailored towards people with disabilities as their needs are very specific. However Sure Start aims to rectify this with the Leisure Services questionnaire which will have a set of questions that cover the needs and satisfaction of disabled users of Sure Start.
Recommendation

Advertising and Promotion

Advertising and promotion should be reviewed to raise the profile of Sure Start to both current and potential members. This can be done in many ways including: the use of posters, advertising by staff and brochures. Successful promotion would increase numbers using services due to increased awareness. Advertising encompasses the use of external agencies to promote Sure Start; an example of this is forging links with the GP surgeries that are located in Sure Start areas so that staff in the surgeries can promote Sure Start to their clients.

Venues

Venues should be safe and easily accessible for members of the community. Appropriate signage should make it clear that Sure Start activities are held at the venue, which is a form of promotion that will help to establish a Sure Start identity. Venues should also aim to be non offensive to the families using them; therefore a review of venue appropriateness may be necessary to determine whether using religious buildings or buildings where alcohol may be served are deterring families, rather than attracting them to Sure Start.

Timing of activities

Activities may need to be carried out in the evenings or at weekends to increase user participation as several parents stated that times that activities were run did not suit them. A possible solution to this would be to run sessions out of hours; (especially for working parents.) However the benefits of doing this need to be weighed up against the added cost of paying staff to work overtime and paying for venues at peak rates. A further study may be necessary to gauge the potential uptake for evening/weekend activities to see whether it is a justifiable option for the future of Sure Start Redditch.

Paternal Involvement

A further study into the needs of fathers will be carried out as a part of the Leisure Services questionnaire. It is important that Sure Start tries to include fathers as much as possible in its future plans; this can be achieved by providing suitable activities at suitable times.

Health (View alongside Appendix V)

The importance of smoking cessation cannot be underestimated as the proven benefits to health are extremely positive for both parents and their children. These recommendations focus upon pregnant women. The responsibility of smoking cessation advice should be with both the health and community teams as it such an important and broad issue which can be raised at many activities, such as Stay and Plays and Home Visits; therefore relevant staff need to be trained appropriately. However it can only be a successful venture if the smoker wants to stop, it is a two-way process.

The importance of healthy eating and lifestyle should become a Sure Start priority; therefore it may be beneficial to employ community dietitians to attend activities such as Stay and Play to advise parents on diet. Advice can be given so that parents can learn healthy recipes and good eating habits for themselves and their children to take away and implement in their homes. Examples of healthy eating include: 5 a day fruit and vegetables, drinking 1.5 liters of water per day and pregnant women taking specific vitamins and minerals such as B12 and folic acid. If this recommendation proves to be successful it will meet the government target of halting year-on-year rise in childhood obesity by 2010. Introducing exercise advice in conjunction with healthy eating will also be beneficial.

Cultural Issues

Due to the large Pakistani population in Redditch, it is important for Sure Start to develop links with key members of this community; leaders of the mosque would be a good point of contact
as the mosque is an influential element in all Muslim’s lives; therefore to get approval from this organization would benefit Sure Start greatly.

Training

Training is a very important part of the Sure Start ethos and the organization should be trying to empower many of the Pakistani women who cannot speak English by providing them with English lessons and other basic office skills. This will not only provide them with necessary skills, but also hopefully with the confidence to seek employment if they wish to. If this is to be a priority in the future Sure Start also needs to provide adequate childcare to allow these parents to undertake training courses.

Training opportunities are also extremely important for all our family members and it is important that Sure Start is aware of what training opportunities parents would like and could access whilst at the same time making all the relevant links with all the agencies that could provide those opportunities.

This recommendation meets several of the core aims previously mentioned in this evaluation.

Parental Participation

A recommendation that is linked with training is that there should be greater parental participation in activities; especially Stay and Plays. It is important for parents to take the lead in these activities and hold responsibilities such as: set up the room, prepare refreshments and arrange the activity. If this was done it would give parents valuable leadership and organizational skills that can potentially aid their quest for future employment. It also makes parents feel more involved in Sure Start which will aid the sustainability of the programme in the future. Parents leading Stay and Plays would also free the Community team to provide other services that they previously would not be able to due to time constraints.

Use of external agencies

The use of external agencies, such as: GP surgeries and primary schools is encouraged to aid the development of services and resources.
Question 6. Why don’t you use Sure Start services?

Key to abbreviations
a.) My children have a child minder/are at nursery

b.) I haven't felt the need

c.) I don't know about the services

d.) I can't afford to pay for them

e.) The services aren’t provided in my own language

f.) I don’t like leaving the house

g.) My child is too young

h.) My child is too old

i.) I have too many children to get out

j.) My child has a disability which makes it difficult to get out

k.) The services do not fit my child's routine

l.) Getting there is difficult with transport

m.) I need someone to encourage me/go with me

n.) I work full time

o.) Other
Appendix II

Question 7. Which services have you used and how satisfied are you with them?

Key to abbreviations

a.) Fun days/trips
b.) Speech and language therapy

c.) Clinical psychology

d.) Home start

e.) Multi-cultural library

f.) Lodge Park baby group

g.) Stay and plays at Abbeydale community club

h.) Stay and plays at St Georges community centre

i.) Stay and plays at Salop Road community centre

j.) Stay and plays at Batchley community centre

k.) Stay and plays at Oakhill 1st School

l.) Baby massage

m.) Tot stars

n.) Confident parents, confident kids

o.) Young parents 2B

p.) CFLO Home visits/individual support

q.) Sure Start courses at Sandycroft Centre

r.) Sure Start courses at REDDI centre

s.) Parents together group meeting

t.) Sure Start management meeting

u.) Sure Start antenatal clinic and drop in

v.) Sure Start antenatal breastfeeding workshop

w.) Sure Start borrowers toy library

x.) Parent talk

y.) Dad's group

z.) Other
Question 8. What did you like about the services offered?  
Key to abbreviations
a.) Gets me out of the house

b.) Gets my child out of the house

c.) I can meet new people

d.) My child can play with other children

e.) Its enjoyable

f.) I feel supported

g.) I have more confidence

h.) I can learn something

i.) My child is learning something

j.) Friendly atmosphere

k.) My child enjoys it

l.) Something to do

m.) My children who are over 4 can be involved

n.) Refreshments are provided
Question 9. Why did you stop attending Sure Start services?

Key to abbreviations
a.) Illness

b.) Personal problems

c.) Parents were too cliquey

d.) Not enough supervision

e.) Staff were not friendly/approachable

f.) Other parents were not friendly

g.) Staff were not helpful

h.) Snacks were unhealthy

i.) Times did not suit me

j.) The service was not provided in my own language
Appendix V
The following information was used by the evaluator to form two recommendations that have not been mentioned in the main body of the report

**Sex Education**

There are many organizations that provide Sex Education for free; an example of this being Sexpression, which is run by medical students across Britain. It may be beneficial to use this organization in the future to o a consultancy basis to attend Sure Start activities and give advice on sexual health.

**Smoking Cessation**

A Welsh study carried out by Tuthil et al. found that of 1242 stillbirths or infant deaths using a standard perinatal survey found that 65% of the deaths were to mothers who smoked; (most common causes of death being placental abruption, infection and SIDS.) Children who survive are also placed at greater risk as maternal smoking during pregnancy is a major cause of intra uterine growth retardation which leads to a low birth weight; this in turn can contribute to a reduction in mean IQ, increased risk of childhood obesity and non insulin dependent diabetes mellitus. These dangers should be reported to pregnant women to encourage them to stop smoking.

The benefits of smoking cessation are that after 15 years without smoking a former smoker has the same risk of premature death as someone who has never smoked; the risk of lung cancer has reduced by over 50% and if a pregnant woman stops smoking in the first trimester of pregnancy, the risk of low birth weight is reversed.

The economic factors involved with smoking cannot be ignored as Sure Start offers services to those who face economic hardship; a pack of 20 cigarettes now cost over five pounds. Therefore someone who smokes 20 a day is spending over £2000 per annum on cigarettes alone. This expenditure should be emphasized to aid smoking cessation.