

**SURE START KINGS CROSS AND HOLBORN - PLAY, LEARNING AND CHILDCARE.  
' PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER'**

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# **SURE START KINGS CROSS AND HOLBORN - PLAY, LEARNING AND CHILDCARE. ' PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER'**

## **INTRODUCTION.**

This report describes the work, findings and recommendations of the 'Putting the Pieces Together' Project which was undertaken by a group of Sure Start parents between April and July 2004.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT.**

In December 2003, the Sure Start Stakeholders Forum considered options for the future funding of services from the Play, learning and childcare budget and it recommended that further work was needed to look at

- What local services offer families.
- How well they meet parents' needs and contribute to Sure Start objectives.

The aim of the Project was to *'help the Partnership decide on the type of childcare services it wants to fund for the next few years'*.

It was agreed that parents and carers would have a central part to play in undertaking this work supported by a facilitator. The group was asked to present its finding and recommendations to the Stakeholders Forum meeting in July. It was acknowledged that this was a very challenging Project because of its complexity, tight timescales and the time commitment required of parents. The specification for the Project appears as Appendix 1 of this report.

### **The approach of the Project.**

The success of the Project depended on:

- Involving and listening to the views of different stakeholders
- Recruiting and supporting a group of parents to lead the work
- Working with service partners to keep them informed about the Project and contributing to it.

There were two linked strands to the Project, information gathering and analysis by a core group of parents and focus group meetings to consult with families who may not have been fully reached by previous consultations. The groups targeted were homeless parents; Chinese parents; working parents; Bangladeshi parents and Somali parents. The findings from these groups were presented to the Parent's group to be considered alongside the wide range of other information gathered during the Project. A summary of the Focus Group report appears as Appendix 4.

Parents were recruited to join the core group through presentations at meetings with parents/carers, a leaflet for parents which went to all service partners and an item in the Sure Start newsletter. A copy of the leaflet appears as Appendix 2.

Initially about fifteen parents expressed an interest, of which ten signed up for the Project. Nine parents finally joined the Project but a core of seven parents attended all the workshop sessions and undertook the information gathering visits.

The group decided that it wanted to look at two main areas:

- To what extent do the services meet families' needs and overall Sure Start objectives? Is there unmet need, duplication and gaps?
- Are services of a high quality? To what extent are they inclusive - welcoming, demonstrating equality, and addressing families additional and specific needs e.g. child with a disability.

Parents recognised the need to be realistic about the information that they could collect and analyse in the short time they had to do the work. It was important to keep it simple and concentrate on a few areas rather than collect a mass of data which could then result in information overload. Two types of information were identified

- Quantitative - numbers of users, characteristics of users, numbers on a waiting list etc.
- Qualitative - parents' views on services, how staff feel that services can be improved.

**The group identified sources of information gathering as:**

1. Feedback from parents/carers through semi structured interviews
2. Feedback from staff through a questionnaire
3. Observation visits to services including the use of a checklist with a scoring system.
4. Data from services' monitoring information and any other relevant reports.
5. Collation and analysis of previous and ongoing consultations with parents and others
6. The findings of the Focus Group work.

The Group also identified the services to be visited and agreed how these would be undertaken; with at least two parents attending each and visiting services that they did not currently use. The group also discussed good practice examples although it was not possible within the time constraints of the Project to visit the services identified.

More detailed information about the methods of gathering data appear as Appendix 3 to this report. A list of people contributing to the Project appears as Appendix 5 and feedback on the work of the Project appears as Appendix 6.

# THE BACKGROUND TO THE SURE START PROGRAMME.

## **Aims, objectives and targets of Sure Start.**

The overall aim of all Sure Start Programme's is to make life better for children, parents and communities by bringing together:

- early education
- childcare
- health and family support.

## The national objectives for all Programmes' are:

1. Improving social and emotional development
2. Improving health
3. Improving the ability to learn
4. Strengthening families and communities.

## Local objectives and targets.

There are specific targets set both nationally and locally for the Play, learning and childcare strand of the local Programme as follows:

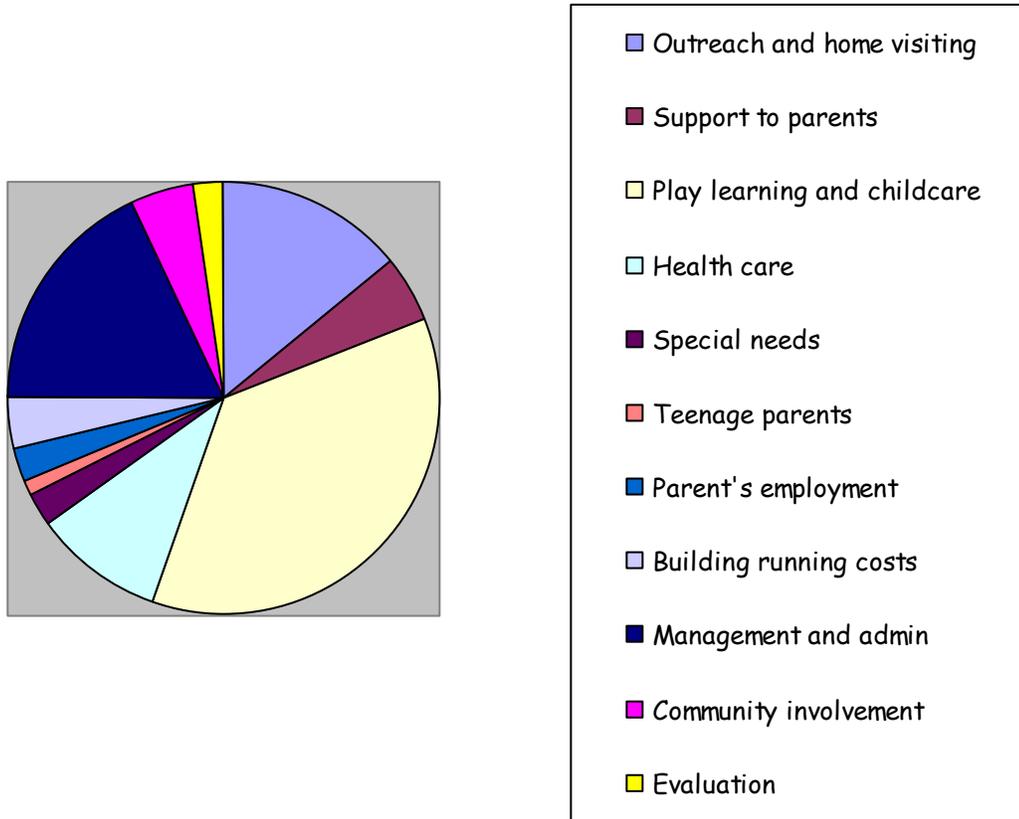
- Achieve by 2005-6 an **X** increase in the proportion of children in Sure Start areas with **normal language development at age 2** and an **x %** increase in the proportion of children living in Sure Start areas having **normal levels of communication, language and literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage.**
- All children in the Sure Start areas to have **access to good quality play and learning opportunities**, helping progress towards early learning goals when they get to school.
- **Increased use of libraries** by families with young children in Sure Start areas.
- Achieve by 2005/06 a **12% reduction in the proportion of 0-3 year old children living in households where no one is working.**
- All Sure Start programmes to have **established links** with job centres Plus, local training providers and further education institutions
- All Sure Start programmes to work **with their EYDCP to help close the gap** between the availability of accessible childcare for 0-3 year olds in Sure Start area and other areas.

## **The funding for play, learning and childcare objectives within the Programme.**

The Group gathered information about the overall funding for the Programme and more particularly the current and projected revenue budget for Play, learning and childcare from 2004/05 to 2009/10.

Current Revenue budget allocation across the Programme.

The Programme is funded on a taper from 2002/03 - 2012/13 with an annual grant ranging between £514,000 in 2003/04 up to £945,562 in 2007/08 reducing to £199,686 in 2011/12. At present the funding is allocated broadly under the following headings in which the Play, learning and childcare budget represents approximately 37% of the Programme's total budget.



The breakdown of the Play, learning and childcare Revenue budget.

| Year       | Total Budget | Salaries (Librarian and early year's worker.) | Parent Forum Commissioning | Grants  |
|------------|--------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| 2004/2005. | £289,674     | £54,610                                       | £10,000                    | Grants April - September 2004<br>£ 95,000<br><b>Remaining budget to be allocated : £130,065</b> |
| 2005/2006  | £324,835     | £57,341                                       | £10,500                    | <b>£256,994</b>   |
| 2006/2007  | £332,956     | £60,208                                       | £11,025                    | <b>£261,723</b>   |
| 2007/2008  | £341,280     |   |                            |   |
| 2008/2009  | £349,812     |   |                            |   |
| 2009/2010  | £358,555     |   |                            |   |

Important factors in the Play, learning and childcare budget is that the level of funding available for grants in year 1 (£289,674) is higher than in year 2 (£256,994) and from 2006/07 an allocation of approximately 60,000 is committed to funding day care places at 1A. While it is possible that this level of funding may not be required, at this stage the budget planning needs to reflect this commitment. In any event some funding will be needed to resource some of the other services planned for the centre including drop ins and crèches. The group felt therefore that the allocations to service partners should reflect these change and therefore offer them consistency in funding over the three year cycle.

Capital Strategy related to Play, learning and childcare

| <b>Project</b>               | <b>Amount allocated</b> | <b>Purpose of funding</b>  | <b>Progress report.</b>           |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Bedford House                | £10,000                 | Replace tiles on the floor in the room used for daily crèche and twice a week for messy play.                            |                                   |
| Field Lane                   | £3,547                  | Upgrade the fabric and furnishings of the play room.   | Completed 31.3.03                 |
| 1A Community Centre          | £750,000                | Sure Start Children's Centre - base for staff and programme activities. 26 day care places.                              | Planned for completion April 2006 |
| Coram Fields                 | £55,000                 | Contribution towards the refurbishment of the nursery to create 6 new places for under 4s                                |                                   |
| Argyle Primary School Annexe | £201,203                | Development of the school annexe to provide a base for crèche/drop ins with the potential for the provision of day care. |                                   |
| Calthorpe Project            | £55,000                 | Extension of the drop in and some development of outdoor play facilities for under 4s.                                   |                                   |

## KEY FINDINGS.

- 1. The level of demand for a wide range of childcare services can not possibly be met through the existing Sure Start budget** and so decisions must be made to fund those services which are likely to have the widest benefits for the largest number of families, including those families most disadvantaged because of discrimination, economic hardship or their social circumstances. It will also be important for Sure Start to actively use its influence and resources to inform the funding decisions of partners in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors.
- 2. Services currently funded by Sure Start are highly valued by the families using them and are contributing significantly to meeting both the Play, learning and childcare objectives as well as the broader Programme objectives.** Services scored a rating ranging between average to very good and among the very few services which scored poor or very poor on individual areas of service; the two main issues related to premises and equipment and/or the availability of information about services. These services offer a geographic spread across the Sure Start area, although Coram Fields is seen by the community as a 'natural' geographic barrier separating Holborn and Kings Cross. There remain some gaps in the Holborn and Covent Garden area however these will be addressed more fully by the development of 1A and the rollout into the Covent Garden area. The partners provide a range of activities and are linked into other relevant opportunities such as the Healthy Families Partnership at Kings Cross. The partners also have a track record on delivering services, sometimes in difficult and uncertain circumstances.
- 3. The previous uncertain and short term funding of these services has led service partners to experience difficulties in planning and developing their services.** Longer term funding commitments of at least 3 years, initially up till 2006/07 will enable partners to plan and deliver their services more effectively and is more likely to enable them to attract alternative and/or additional funding. It will also provide a stable basis from which to develop collaborative work with other local services not currently funded through Sure Start.
- 4. A serious weakness across the existing services is the extent to which they are working in isolation from each other.** Generally, they have very limited contact or knowledge of what other funded childcare services are providing and as importantly do not all see themselves as key partners within the Sure Start Programme more generally. Improvements in the co-ordination of services and increased collaborative work across partners will diminish the feeling that they are 'in competition' with each other, promote a higher degree of flexibility in service planning and delivery; and secure better value for the funding invested. There were some examples of good practice such as the music sessions delivered by Coram's Field to families at Field Lane Family Centre. Service

partners' capacity to work together more closely and to achieve some of the service improvements identified will depend on the level and flexibility of their funding. For example sessional workers paid an hourly rate with 15 minutes allowed to set up and clear away after sessions are likely to experience difficulties in simply meeting some of the Programme's existing expectations and so simply hoping that they will be able to absorb additional tasks within existing time constraints is not viable. Serious consideration therefore needs to be given to what level of funding is required to achieve better partnership working at both a strategic and operational level.

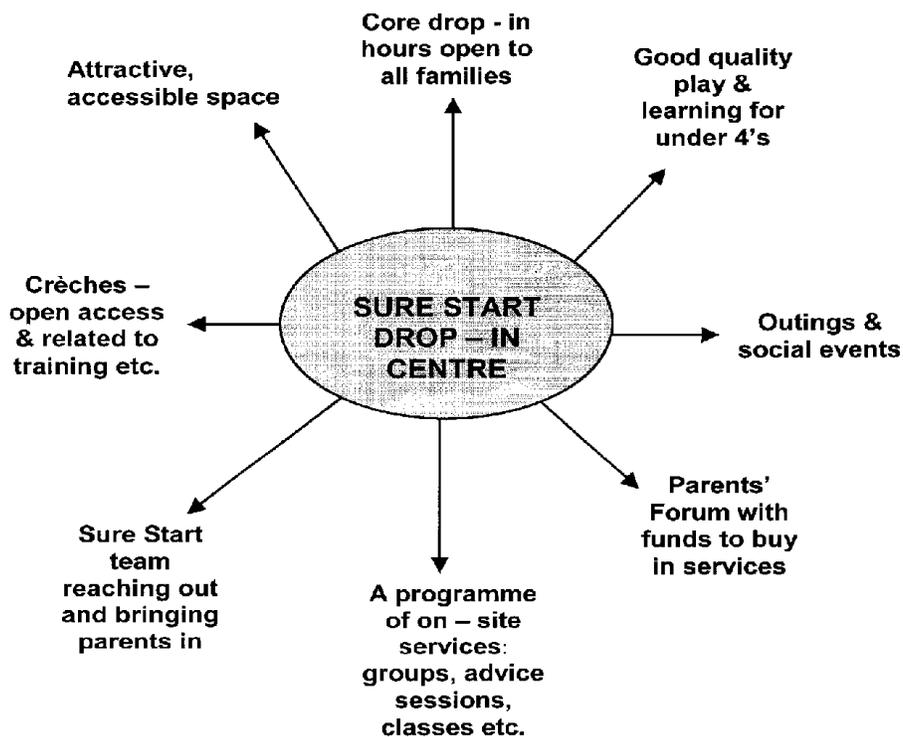
5. **There is a need to increase reach and take up of services by more families in order to make the most effective use of resources and achieve targets set locally and nationally.** Patterns of service use emerged of a few families making regular use of a number of different services each week, while others using only single services, some only once a week while others used as regularly as every day. Although families' decisions about which services to use, when is based on a number of different factors, the Programme needs to feel confident that services are inclusive and accessible. Improving publicity about services, actively encouraging families using services to try other services and an effective outreach programme to families not using services will contribute to this. The Early Years worker could lead this work by supporting service partners and making direct contact with families.
6. **The ethnic composition of the Sure Start is very diverse with a significant and growing Bangladeshi community. The importance of recognising the numbers and needs of children who are of mixed race/dual heritage in service planning was also identified as these families may experience isolation from both their birth communities.** While families from these communities are using services, a pattern emerges of their use being centred on certain services such as Argyle primary school and Bedford House Community Centre, because of the additional services provided on site. Anecdotal evidence suggests that families from the Bangladeshi community tend to use a more limited range of services and while their choices must be respected, the Programme needs to be confident that these are informed choices and that services are meeting families' needs. A range of strategies are needed to encourage service use including the employment of workers from those communities so that cultural practices including language can be shared.
7. **There was agreement that Sure Start has a crucial role to play in leading and supporting work that enabled workers and families to have a greater understanding of the needs, values and cultures of families, thereby promoting inclusive services.** It was felt that this could include a mixture of 'special events' as well as building it routinely into services activities for example parents /carers sharing their customs and beliefs related to new born babies. Also, while there is clearly a continuing need for some specific

services/groups for families with particular needs e.g. fathers and some ethnic communities, there was also a strong drive from parents/carers for integrated provision.

8. Although there was anecdotal evidence that there were some **children with disabilities and special needs** using services, there was no evidence of this on the monitoring information provided by service partners, where no children were recorded. Sure Start has an extremely important role to play in the early identification and support of such children and service partners should be actively encouraged to review the extent to which their services are reaching and meeting the needs of these children and their families. Similarly, **parents and carers who have disabilities or special needs themselves** related to physical or learning disabilities, mental health needs or substance dependence also need to be reached by services and their needs identified.
9. **The high number and vulnerability of families living in homeless or other temporary accommodation in the Sure Start area is well documented.** Their vulnerability due to homelessness is often compounded by other difficulties related to their domestic circumstances, immigration status and poverty. While local services are working hard to support families, their level of funding very often does not reflect the higher needs of the families they are serving. Sure Start has a very important part to play in working with families and homeless organisations to improve families' access to childcare services including family support services offered through the Programme and other community resources.
10. **The lack of high quality information in plain English and translations was consistently raised by families.** Such information should be available in the range of places where families go, should provide information about services and other issues such as child development as well as practical information such as how and when you should put your child's name down for a nursery or school place. Parents felt that all workers, whether paid or acting in a voluntary capacity should be able to provide information to families and that this. Families who receive Sure Start mailings found them very useful although some families reported some duplication. However families who are not yet registered are dependant on community outlets for their information. Service partners therefore have a significant role to play in getting information to families, especially families where written material may be inaccessible. Evidence suggests that the vast majority of families get their information through 'word of mouth' through friends and family. The level and quality of publicity and information produced by organisations is dependant on the budget allocated to services partners which is variable and on the staff having the time and skills to design, produce and distribute the material. One suggestion made was that a video or photographic display of all the childcare services could be produced and toured round the Sure Start area to places where families go.

- 11. There is a significant shortfall in both part and full time affordable day care** for parents and carers wishing to take up work or training with particular unmet demand for baby places and very young infants up to 2 years of age. While the Programme does not have the funding to meet this need, the Programme will be developing 26 full time places at 1A and also has a significant role to play in working with Camden's Early Years Services to support and develop daycare not least through providing a range of information about daycare, especially to hard-to-reach groups within the community and to work closely with existing and prospective service providers.
- 12. There was some overlap between drop in and crèche provision in some services.** Families were clear that the purpose of drop ins was for their children to play, learn and socialise and for parents/carers to socialise with other parents, develop social networks and get advice, information and support from staff. The drop ins offer parents and carers the opportunity to meet together as well as access services such as baby massage, music sessions etc. As the Programme develops the drop ins will become one of the key ways that Sure Start will bring together the wide range of services offered through the Programme at a local level within easy reach of families as described below.

**The key features of a Sure Start Drop in.**



The need to develop afternoon, weekend and some evening sessions has consistently been identified and these are not being delivered at the level required through existing service arrangements. While the weekend sessions seem to have been seen of particular value to working families who can not access week day sessions, in fact many families who were not working voiced their need for these. They will provide a valuable resource to all families including lone families and more socially isolated families and those who do not have the more traditional Monday to Friday work pattern.

13. Similarly, while some services are providing crèches, with the exception of the Saturday shoppers' crèche, these are centred on enabling parents/carers to take up specific activities including training opportunities or attending Sure Start meetings. **The need for respite crèches to enable parents to rest, keep appointments, spend time with older or younger siblings etc has consistently been identified and is not currently being delivered through funded services.** There is a need for these to be delivered flexibly at different times during the day and throughout the week. **Also, the number and process for allocating crèche places needs to be reviewed to ensure that they are reaching Sure Start families and offering best value.**
14. **While some services are specifically ring fenced for families living within the Sure Start area e.g. Peacocks drop in, others serve a wider community.** Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages for both approaches, but parents were concerned that Sure Start resources should be more carefully targeted to families living within the area because resources are limited and some families are being excluded. One suggestion was that crèche places funded by Sure Start to support parent's activities should be prioritised and/or ring fenced for Sure Start parents/carers.
15. **Opportunities for outside play are really important** for children, many of whom live in small flats or homes without gardens. Services which can only offer indoor facilities should try wherever possible to build in opportunities for children to do physical activities on site and/or to work closely with services with outdoor facilities to visit for planned sessions.
16. **Parents and carers are one of the Programme's most valuable resources.** As paid and voluntary workers parents/carers bring a high level of local knowledge and community credibility to their work; the ongoing success of the Programme will depend on harnessing the enthusiasm, commitment and skills of parents. Strategies to promote their training and employment within childcare services as well as their involvement in service planning, delivery and evaluation will be critical to the improvement of local Sure Start services including childcare services.

17. **Families with children of mixed ages or families with one than one under 4 identified the difficulties caused in accessing services.** In families with children over 4 year olds, who were not eligible for Sure start services; parents and the younger children were often not able to participate in services. This restricted their access to Sure Start services principally to the school day during term time only, which had implications for weekend and holiday services. While this is not just a local issue, it would be of value to consider how this may be addressed as well as exploring what arrangements are in place to support families once their child is no longer eligible for Sure Start services because of their age. The sudden loss of services at such a key transition stage can be very hard for some families. Families also felt that it was helpful to plan services to reflect the age range of children, allowing the **younger and older children to have separate activities** such as the under 3s baby gym sessions. Finally, Parents felt that services needed to be more sensitive to the **needs of families with one than one under 4** in terms of giving them practical support during sessions e.g. help in arriving and settling children into a session, allowing parents to spend time with individual siblings.
18. **Families judged a services' quality by whether it was clean and safe, had friendly and helpful workers and provided a range of activities for children.** While it is clear that the different services are likely to be determined by their location and premises, the nature of their activities and to some extent the demand created by seasonal factors e.g. higher demand for indoor services during the winter months; **there is a need for greater consistency across services funded through Sure Start.** This includes the 'core offer' provided at each service which could include identifying a key worker to welcome parents, a notice board (fixed or mobile) with information about services and events; a suggestion box or monthly feedback meeting with families. There is also a need for consistency with broader Sure Start objectives across services for example promoting healthy eating by encouraging partners to provide fruit or healthy options for snacks, rather than biscuits. Families felt the Programme had a very key role to play in reassuring them about the safety and suitability of staff working in settings e.g. police and other checks as well as ensuring that staff were appropriately trained. Parents felt that service had an important role to play in supporting families' understanding of the importance of play as a way of children learning rather than their only valuing more 'formal or traditional' type learning styles e.g. letters of the alphabet. Finally, they felt that one of the key functions of staff working in services is to encourage families to mix and try out other services possibly by taking them to activities. It was suggested that all services should have a worker with the lead responsibility for this role.

## **FACTORS AND CRITERIA USED TO INFORM THE RECOMMENDATIONS.**

- 1. The process for making recommendations should be transparent and fair based on the information collected during the Project.** We recognised the possibility that some services while providing a very valuable service to families were not contributing to Sure Start objectives in a way that enabled funding to continue at all or at the same level. However, irrespective of any funding decision it is important for Sure Start to continue working in partnership with organisations to support their work within the community.
- 2. The Group took into account a range of issues** such as the geographic spread of services, duplication and gaps in service; the extent to which they reflected the community and families served; and offered best value.
- 3. Another significant factor was looking at the consequence of funding decisions,** for some services a reduction or loss of funding from Sure Start would result in a permanent or temporary closure of an entire service.
- 4. It was recognised that the short term nature of earlier funding had inhibited service development and that the certainty of longer term funding would secure service improvements** including considerable scope for further service development.
- 5. The group felt that the initial funding round should cover the three year period 2004/05 to 2007/08.** This would offer service partners some stability to plan while at the same time allowing the Programme to make informed decisions about the forthcoming years based on monitoring the effectiveness services; seeing the consequences of the roll out of services to the Covent Garden area and progressing work on the design of services at 1A.
- 6. The group recognised that the costs of similar services provided by different service partners varied considerably.** However apart from making some direct comparisons for unit costs, there was limited information available to inform other comparisons about their efficiency and quality. Where services are identified as 'more costly' or the grants are of a higher value, the Programme may wish to work with partners to identify the added value they bring to their services including their potential to deliver services flexibly and to support local service developments. The Sure Start Funding Panel recently assessed all the service partners being recommended for funding as providing value for money.

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 1. The majority of funding for grants within the Play, Learning and Childcare budget should be allocated to drop-ins and crèches** because these will benefit the most children and will contribute significantly to achieving other Sure Start objectives including health and family support targets. However, from 2006/07 it is planned that approximately 20 % ( £60,000) of the budget will be allocated to creating new, affordable day care places at 1A and the Programme will also work with Camden Early Years Services and other organisations to develop and support other services including daycare places.
- 2. To continue to invest and work in partnership with the currently funded service partners.** This will require further work to agree a service specification and budget allocation which builds on the strengths of existing services, while at the same time reshaping some services and developing new ones which reflect the expressed needs of parents and the findings of this Project. The funding agreement should include **the 'core offer' made consistently to all families** to address differences across services and share good practice. This 'offer' could include a key worker to welcome parents, information provided and parental/carer involvement. The group's funding recommendations appear at the end of this report and are indicators of the relative allocations for each partner. Further more detailed work is needed with the individual partners and the group of service partners together to finalise agreements including the level of funding allocated to each. Where it is not possible for the existing service partners to deliver the services required through either reshaping their existing services or in some circumstances through additional resources, the level of funding needed to deliver that element of the service should be identified and used to commission the services from other local service partners.
- 3. Improved coordination across services to ensure that more drop ins are available during the afternoons, in the evenings and at weekends.** Much more detailed work is required on this proposal and the following is presented only as an indicator of what might be possible. The Programme should aim to provide:
  - At least three afternoon drop in sessions, this could possibly be achieved by moving an am to a pm session at Bedford House, Coram Fields and Coram Parents' Centre. However this proposal would need to take into account the unique issues arising for each service.
  - Two evening drop ins each week at two different venues possibly Calthorpe and Coram Parents' Centre
  - Rationalization of weekend provision currently on offer at Coram's Field and Coram Parents' Centre to either offer a morning and afternoon session on a Saturday or a session on both weekend days.

4. **The creation of crèche places to offer parents respite**, at all the funded services. The following is an indicator of what might be offered to families but again further work with service partners is needed to see whether they are able to deliver the sessions.
- Argyle primary School - one every half term
  - Bedford House - once a month
  - Calthorpe Project and Coram's Field - fortnightly /three weekly
  - Coram Parent's Centre - weekly /fortnightly
  - Bourne Estate - weekly.
5. Increasing the capacity of service partners to deliver improved quality services supported through an **ongoing staff development Programme**. The aim of the Programme could be to improve the co-ordination of services, sharing of resources and good practice as well as services identifying more fully with the Sure Start Programme more generally. The Programme should address the objectives and ethos of the Programme, provide regularly updated and detailed information about local services; and explore issues related to child development and cultural diversity. The early year's worker could play in key role in developing, supporting and evaluating the effectiveness of the Programme.
6. **Increasing the involvement of families in service planning, delivery and evaluation which reflects the level to which they wish to become involved and/or may need support to do so**. This includes their employment on a paid or voluntary basis within local services which could be supported through reviewing existing training opportunities for parents/carers to undertake childcare training which enhances their career opportunities e.g. NVQ level 3 and publicising paid and voluntary employment opportunities to parents/carers; arranging support where necessary to compete for such opportunities e.g. help with completing forms.

Devising ways in which parents can become actively involved in the ongoing development and evaluation of childcare services as well as other Programme services will be a natural and positive development on this Project. Parents have expressed an interest in doing this and following further work on the 'offer' to be agreed with funded services it may be possible to progress the following areas:

- A visit to another local Sure Start to look at drop ins and crèches
- A visit to a Children's centre in another borough with a similar demographic profile, potentially Tower Hamlets or Newham to inform thinking about the development of 1a.
- Explore the potential value of funded services signing up to a local service benchmark, such as the national or local crèche good practice guidance and/or Camden's own Quality Assurance Scheme.

7. **Improve families' access to high quality information** by reviewing the existing arrangements for the production and distribution of material to prevent duplication and identify gaps, improve consistency and quality; ensure the most effective use of resources.
8. Review the level and type of service used by **children with disabilities and special needs and families where parents and carers have special and additional needs themselves**. This could assess:
- The difference between the recorded and actual numbers of people using services
  - Why are services not recording service use by this group of children and families in their monitoring information?
  - To what extent services are able to provide a service to such families; through their staff's skills, knowledge and experience, their access to appropriate play and other equipment and accessible buildings.

A similar piece of work has recently been undertaken by Euston Sure Start and could inform the design of any such review.

9. The Programme should continue to **built and strengthen its partnerships with other childcare services not funded by the Programme**. Developing and sustaining relationships with **community organisations** especially those which are used and trusted by the diverse range of ethnic communities will be critical to the Programmes' achievement of objectives. The Sure Start team and especially the Early year's worker have a key role to play in this work.

## **FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS.**

### **Service/Organisation funding.**

1. Subject to the development of agreed service specifications as outlined above, it is proposed that the existing service partners should continue to be funded. An indicator of the funding allocations proposed appear below, but will be subject to further negotiation before budgets can be finally agreed.
2. It is also proposed that Field Lane Homeless Families Centre which provides a much needed service to some of the most vulnerable families should be funded to provide:
  - more one to one work with children and their families,
  - crèche support for parents to take up activities and respite;
  - outreach play sessions to homeless hostels.

A nominal figure of £16,000 per year (2005/06) is recommended with negotiation to take place on the best way that this service can be delivered taking into account the parents comments about the restrictions of on site crèche provision.

**Proposed funding allocation summary.**

| Service partner                | Brief summary of proposed services  | 2004-05<br>September 2004 - March 2005 | 2005-06  | 2006-07  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|----------|----------|
| Argyle Primary School          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drop-in sessions x 2 a week.</li> <li>▪ Book start and toy library x 2 sessions a week.</li> <li>▪ Home-school liaison -bilingual support.</li> <li>▪ <i>Crèche x 1 half termly: 6 a year (Yr 1 -4) *</i></li> </ul>   | £5,800                                 | £12,180  | £12,789  |
| Bedford House Community Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby gym for under 2s x1 weekly</li> <li>• Baby gym for under 5s x2 weekly</li> <li>• Parent sport session with crèche support x 1 weekly at weekend.</li> <li>• <i>Crèche x monthly; 12 per year (Yr 1- 6)</i></li> </ul>   | £5,100                                 | £10,200  | £10,710  |
| Bourne Estate                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drop-in once a week</li> <li>▪ <i>Crèche x1 weekly. X 40 weeks (Yr 1: 20)</i></li> </ul>   | £7,800                                 | £15,500  | £16,275  |
| Calthorpe Project              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 120 weeks equivalent of activities for parents and carers supported with a crèche including Pilates, sewing and healthy eating <i>at least one in the evening and one at the week end.</i></li> <li>▪ Drop ins x 5 including <i>one evening.</i></li> <li>▪ Saturday shopper's crèche x weekly</li> <li>▪ <i>Crèche x three weekly : 15 per year(yr 1 - 7)</i></li> </ul>  | £10,800                                | £21,708  | £22,793  |
| Coram's Fields                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peacocks drop-in sessions x 5 a week; <i>1 an afternoon /early evening drop in.</i></li> <li>▪ Week end drop in session x1 weekly.</li> <li>▪ Music sessions x 3 a week.</li> <li>▪ 4 fun days</li> <li>▪ <i>Crèche x 1 three weekly.: 15 per year (Yr 1 -7)</i></li> </ul>  | £21,000                                | £43,100  | £45,255  |
| Coram Parents' Centre          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drop-in sessions x 7 a week including one week end day session and <i>two afternoon/early evening sessions</i></li> <li>▪ Crèches for adult education and parenting groups x 5 a week;</li> <li>▪ Crèche and crèche support for parents' meetings.</li> <li>▪ Support for parents undertaking childcare training to become crèche and drop in workers.</li> <li>▪ <i>Crèche (respite) x three weekly 15 per year ((Yr 1 :7)</i></li> </ul> | £49,800                                | £104,580 | £109,809 |

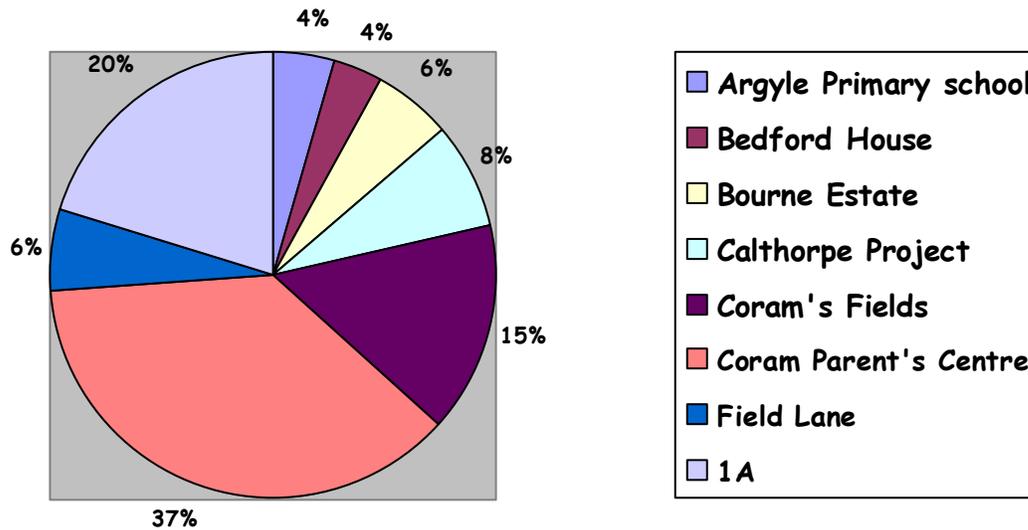
| Service partner  | Brief summary of proposed services   | 2004-05<br>September<br>2004 -<br>March 2005                              | 2005-06         | 2006-07          |
|--|--|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Field Lane Homeless Families Project   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Increased level of one to one work with families.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Crèches to support parents/carers activities including respite.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>One play session x weekly in suitable local homeless hostels.</i></li> </ul> | £8,000  | £16,000         | £16,800          |
| 1a Community Centre  | Children's centre to be planned for completion in 2006/07. Services will include 26 place full day care places and potentially a range of other services such as drop ins, crèches.  | £10,000   | £5,000          | £60,000          |
| <b>Total committed budget</b>  |  | £118,300  | £228,268        | £294,431         |
| <b>Total allocation £s as set in Delivery Plan agreed by the Government:</b> |  | <b>£130,065</b><br>(September - March )<br><b>£289,674</b><br>(full year) | <b>£256,994</b> | <b>£261,723</b>  |
| <b>Estimated budget variance.</b>  |  | <b>£11,765</b>  | <b>£28,726</b>  | <b>- £32,708</b> |

\* Services *in italic* indicate the new/reshaped services proposed.

#### Budget assumptions

- Budget Projection assumes a 5% inflation allowance, although the actual budget increase is less than 2% and so further work will be needed to determine the inflationary increase awarded. In any event the estimated costs are likely to be higher than actual costs because inflation will not be applied to all service costs at the same rate e.g. publicity costs etc.
- An estimated costing of £60 has been allowed for each respite crèche session. This figure may need to be revised to reflect any cost savings or additions negotiated with the individual service partners.
- The cost of providing an additional community fun days is estimated to be £800 in Year 1.

The relative distribution of the proposed funding across service partners based on Projected Year 3 figures.



It is clear from this information that funding is not equally distributed to all the service partners but reflects the level and range of services provided by them as well as the costs to each organisation for providing a service, which is variable. Further information on this appears later in this report. The highest levels of investment are proposed for the existing Children's Centre based at Coram Family and the new Children's Centre planned at 1A. This level of investment will be important to ensure that the Centres are able to deliver the range of services required; especially as they will be the key mechanisms through which the services of the Programme will be sustained in the future including beyond 2010, when the Programme's funding ends.

Managing the budget variance.

On the recommendations made, there is a predicted under spend in Years 1 and 2 and an overspend in Year 3. It is unlikely that the overall level of overspend in Year 3 will be as high as the figure estimated taking into account the level of inflationary costs, for example an inflationary rate of 2.5% per annum would bring planned expenditure within budget. Other factors are that there is some expectation that the grant required for 1A will be less than estimated £60,000 and the opening of the Centre is predicted to slip beyond April 2006.

Given the potential under spends in years 1 and 2, the group considered how to allocate this funding. We considered the benefits of investing in developing new services and/or more places and their sustainability once the budget reduces in 2006/07. We felt that some of the 'interim' services could feed into the development and opening of 1A, although at this

stage there remains uncertainty about the level of funding that will be available to sustain these beyond 2006/07. On balance the group proposes that a criterion is drawn up to allocate any under spends identified in Years 2004/05 and 2005/06 as grants to progress areas of work identified within this report. This work should have the effect of adding value to existing services by improving the quality, co-ordination and accessibility of services.

#### **Further areas recommended for consideration.**

- 1. An ongoing staff development Programme across all childcare services funded by Sure Start as well as involvement where relevant of all local childcare services.** Although the Programme is likely to include some trainer costs it could be done very cost effectively by drawing on existing training opportunities/funding streams as well as sharing the skills, knowledge and experience of existing partners. Also the development of partnership and collaborative working can be achieved through minimal cost activities such as staff exchange, visits and joint service planning meetings. This budget should include training, materials, travel and staffing/ cover costs. It would be useful to front load this work to support the implementation of the new funding agreements and to give a positive start to the co-ordination and service development work. The funding of this work beyond 2005/06 will depend on its success and the identification of funding either through Sure Start or other budgets. Consideration should also be given to the overall capacity building of organisations, supporting them to access resources either directly through Sure Start or more realistically through regeneration initiatives taking place locally.
- 2. Review and improve access to services for children with disabilities and their families and carers with additional needs themselves.** This could include an audit of need and assessment of service use to identify service gaps, training and support including practical solutions to enable services to include such children and families. More effective monitoring of families' use of services is needed to assess their impact. This work could potentially require a smaller level of funding if it can build from the similar work undertaken by Euston Sure Start.
- 3. Review existing publicity and information systems to improve efficiency and devise a development plan.** This could include the development of a short term working group to assess the existing arrangements including costs, reach and efficiency. The group could devise a three year plan which co-ordinates publicity and information; ensures that workers are able to play their key role as information givers and promotes the Sure Start ethos and identity.
- 4. Review existing training opportunities for parents/carers to undertake childcare training and work with others to develop a strategy which enhances their employment opportunities particularly in local services.** This work could include training providers,

employment agencies and local services in identifying the demand for childcare workers locally and a plan to support parents to access relevant services including higher level qualifications.

5. **Allocation of a subsidy to parents to fund daycare places so that they can take up employment or training opportunities.** This could reflect the subsidy planned for places at 1A until it opens in 2006/07.
6. **Invite proposals for time limited Projects** which will support the development of services at 1A or which can be shown to improve the quality or accessibility of childcare services; to be assessed against clear eligibility criteria.

# APPENDIX 1

## SPECIFICATION FOR PROJECT WORK

### FOR SURE START KING'S CROSS & HOLBORN UNTIL JULY 2004.

**Helping Sure Start King's Cross and Holborn decide on the type of childcare and allocation of resources to be commissioned within the locality.**

**Purpose:** Collating information, identifying needs, evaluation of existing services, consulting and participation - to enable an informed commissioning decision for the lifetime of Sure Start King's Cross and Holborn. This will enable appropriate targeting of resources to match needs, for a 10 year strategic funding Programme which will deliver key services for parents and children, responding to the current gaps and building on or sustaining some existing services.

One of the main aims is to ensure co-ordination between services, so that they are not duplicated or resources used inefficiently.

#### **Context**

Parents and professionals attending a Stakeholders Forum in December 03 said that they would like further information before allocating Sure Start resources to crèches; drop ins and childcare within the Sure Start Kings Cross and Holborn local Programme. The Childcare, Crèches and Drop-ins Sub-Group (a sub-group of SSKCH Partnership Board) will lead the process, with active involvement of parents, carers and relevant professionals. Parents would like to understand the issues in a way that is meaningful to them and then be able to make informed decisions about commissioning local services.

Work needs to be 'utilisation-focused' (and make use of the knowledge and skills of parents who live in the area and professionals work in the area). If any new information is collected, there needs to be a clear reason for it, as Sure Start Kings Cross and Holborn has already completed wide service user consultation during the service planning stage (this information is available for review). This consultation has already made clear some priorities for the future service developments – e.g. more provision in the Holborn neighbourhood, and more drop-ins in evenings and at weekends.

While this evaluation and involvement phase takes place, Sure Start King's Cross and Holborn is providing stop-gap funding to maintain the status quo of several drop-ins and crèches in the area.

The aim of this proposal is to identify a process that will enable parents get the information that they want and then present their findings and recommendations, first to the Crèches Drop ins and Childcare Sub-Group, and then to a Stakeholders Forum in July 04, open to everyone involved in the local Sure Start Programme. The parents' recommendations may include proposed allocations of funding either to particular types of service or to particular service providers. Final decisions will then be made by the Partnership Board.

## APPENDIX 2. LEAFLET TO INFORM AND RECRUIT PARENTS TO JOIN THE PROJECT.

SURE START KING'S CROSS AND HOLBORN.



### HELP US GET THE PICTURE RIGHT!

If you are a parent or carer who lives in the King's cross and Holborn Sure Start area - The Sure Start Partnership needs your help to get a better picture of the drop in, crèche and childcare services in the area so that it can decide how to allocate its funding to these services over the next few years.

We are looking for parents and carers who can give some time and share their knowledge with us.

#### WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

- Interest in meeting and working with other local parents and carers
- Commitment of a few days of your time between now and the beginning of July.

#### WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU:

- Training and support.
- Crèche, transport and other supports you might need
- Opportunity to develop some skills which you could use again in the future
- Opportunity to shape services within the Sure Start Programme.

If you are interested in joining in with this Project and/or would like more information about it please contact

**Tara at the Sure Start office on free phone number 0800 731 0232**

or

**The Group leader of the Drop- in or Crèche.**

Because the Project is time limited please contact Tara or your Group's Leader by  
**FRIDAY 21st MAY 2004.**

**HOPE YOU CAN HELP US WITH THIS PROJECT.**

**APPENDIX 3 (A)**  
**PARENTS AND CARERS SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW.**

**PARENTS AND CARERS INFORMATION.**

*ONE FORM TO BE COMPLETED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL PARENT MET DURING THE VISIT.*

Name of person completing the form:

Name of organisation visited:

| <b>THE AREAS/QUESTIONS WE NEED TO ASK PARENTS</b>   | <b>WHAT PARENTS SAID.</b> |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. How do you and your children benefit from the drop in or crèche?   |                           |
| 2. How could it be improved?  |                           |
| 3. Is this the only service you use and if so why? If not what other services do you use and why?   |                           |
| 4. Do you feel that staff are welcoming and encourage parents to mix together? Do staff help you and other parents know about and use other services locally? |                           |
| 5. Is this service easy for you to get to and how did you hear about it?  |                           |
| Any other comments.   |                           |

## APPENDIX 3 (B) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF.

### STAFF INFORMATION.

Name of person completing the form :

Name of organisation visited :

| THE AREAS/QUESTIONS WE NEED TO ASK STAFF.  | WHAT STAFF SAID. |
|--|------------------|
| <p>1. What service/s do you provide?<br/><i>This includes activities funded by Sure Start and other services you offer including opening times and age group. E.g. Baby gym - Wednesday 10am - 12.30 for 0-3s</i></p>  |                  |
| <p>2. What else would you like to offer if you had secure, longer term funding? <i>For example funding for 2-3 years.</i></p>  |                  |
| <p>3. How do you think that parents, carers and children benefit from your service?</p>  |                  |
| <p>4. How do you cater for children and families' individual needs?<br/><i>We are looking for some information here about how staff organise the service to take into account families' ethnicity, language and culture, special needs or families with more than one child.</i></p> |                  |
| <p>Any other comments.</p>   |                  |

## APPENDIX 3 (C) CHECKLIST WITH SCORING USED DURING OBSERVATION VISITS.

### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST.

Score each issue using a scoring system of 1-5.

1 - Very poor      2 - Poor      3 - Average      4 - Good      5 - Very good.

Name of person completing the form :

Name of organisation visited :

| ISSUE TO BE SCORED   | SCORE GIVEN |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Mood and atmosphere - do children and parents look happy and involved in what they are doing. Is it a friendly and welcoming atmosphere?                          |             |
| 2. How do you feel staff deal with parents, carers and children - are they talking with parents in a respectful way, working in a caring way with children.          |             |
| 3. Health and safety issues - is it clean and safe? Is the equipment in good condition and age appropriate?  |             |
| 4. Role of workers - are they welcoming and working with parents to encourage them to talk together or join in activities?   |             |
| 5. Are fathers and other carers present? Are they involved in the group and activities?  |             |
| 6. Do the display areas e.g. walls and display tables include children and families' work? Do they look exciting, colourful and interesting?                         |             |
| 7. Are there a range of activities taking place e.g. play activities which are interesting and age appropriate? Are families joining in and enjoying it?             |             |
| 8. Is there information on display either as posters or leaflets etc about other local services including Sure Start? Is it up to date and available in translation? |             |
| 9. Give an overall scoring for the service ranging between 1 and 5.  |             |
| Any other comments.  |             |

## **APPENDIX 4.**

### **EXTRACTS FROM SURE START KINGS CROSS AND HOLBORN FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH - MAY 2004.**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This research was undertaken with the aims of

- Identifying the needs and views of parents and carers within the Sure Start Kings Cross and Holborn area on crèche, drop-ins and childcare services in the local area
- Establishing recommendations for allocation of funding to childcare services in the local area

The research was initiated by parents and professionals attending the Stakeholders Forum in December 2003 who requested further information before allocating Sure Start resources to crèches, drop-ins and childcare services in the Sure Start Kings Cross and Holborn area. The research process is led by the Childcare, Crèches and Drop-ins Sub-Group and parents, carers and professionals are actively involved in the research. The focus group part of the research was set up to fill gaps in existing consultation.

#### **2. METHODOLOGY - HOW THE GROUPS WERE CONDUCTED**

2.1 The researcher contacted the Sure Start Parent Involvement Worker who provided the contact names and details of local community groups. The local community involvement workers contacted parents and carers in their groups who agreed to attend a one hour focus group meeting. Working parents were contacted through email and leaflets and invited to attend an evening focus group or a telephone interview.

The following focus groups were conducted during the week 17 May 2004.

Homeless parents - 8 families

Chinese parents - 10 parents/carers

Working parents - 4 parents/carers

Bangladeshi parents - 7 parents/carers

Somali parents - 7 parents/carers

2.2 The focus groups were attended by the parents and carers, the community workers who set the groups up, the researcher and a note taker. An interpreter and crèches were provided in some groups. The questions were developed in consultation with parents and professionals involved in the research. The same questions were asked on the telephone interviews.

### **3. THEMES ARISING IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

#### **a) Adult education, training and development services**

Parents and carers were interested in having a wide range of training courses available to do while their children were being looked after. These range from parenting skills, English, computing, cooking, arts and crafts, DIY- painting and decorating, interpreting, child minding courses including a course for fathers, to massage, sewing and exercise classes. These courses should be provided at flexible times with a crèche, in the evenings and weekends to enable working parents and couples to attend.

#### **b) Information, advice and guidance**

Many parents did not know about the location and availability of childcare provision in their local areas. They requested that updated information should be distributed regularly to local community groups, libraries, nurseries, GP surgeries, schools in simple forms of community languages and in plain English.

#### **c) Child care workers**

The attitude of the workers was important. They needed to be trained in child development and to be friendly and welcoming. Concerns were raised around workers just caring for the children and not encouraging parents to mix with each other. This would break down language and cultural barriers, promote understanding between different groups and reduce racism. The high turn over of child care workers meant that it was harder to develop trust and understanding between workers and parents. Parents were keen to have Somali, Chinese and Bangladeshi child care workers in drop-ins and crèches who understood their culture and who spoke their languages. This would help their children settle in and allay the parents concerns about their children's cultural needs being met.

#### **d) Facilities and Services**

There was a general consensus that drop-ins and crèches are not just places where children are dropped off. They should be run as community resources with toy, DVD/CD/Video and book libraries, health advice, employment and careers advice services. They can serve as places to sign post people to other services. Themed open days at weekends, evenings and in the day time will attract local parents/carers and families and will help to reduce isolation and social exclusion. Support groups for fathers and lone parents would be helpful to reduce loneliness and to provide emotional support. Employment and training courses such as child minding, interpreting and advocacy were careers parents expressed an interest in. Well equipped services with sufficient toys, changing mats, space and chairs.

#### **e) Opening hours**

Concerns were expressed about the lack of evening and weekend drop-ins. The reasons parents wanted childcare was to socialise, enable their children to mix with others children and to be able to do shopping and attend appointments.

#### **f) Food**

Muslim parents would like their children to be provided with halal food when attending child care services.

#### **g) Factors in selecting childcare**

Safety came up as a major factor. The parents wanted quality provision, a clean environment, flexible Programme, friendly workers and activities where children could learn and play.

#### **h) Activities for children**

A need for joined up provision was expressed. The restriction of services to under fours meant that siblings were split up during half term. A range of activities should be put on for children of up to six years old so siblings can play and learn in the same establishment with doing activities geared to their ages. Activities that stimulate children and engage them are welcome.

#### **i) Diversity Issues**

The need to be able to celebrate all cultural and faith group festivals is important including Christmas in all childcare services. This will lead to a multicultural society and avoiding feelings of alienation in some communities. The childcare workers need to be comfortable in working with families from different cultures and backgrounds. Parents will mix more and feel more comfortable if they have information about different cultures. Themed events such as multicultural days, cooking, fashion and festivals can encourage community cohesion.

#### **j) Costs**

Most parents on income support felt they could not make any financial contributions to childcare services. Others felt that small amounts such as £0.50 - £1/£2 per drop-in were reasonable.

#### **k) Trust**

A few parents expressed concern about their children's safety in childcare services. They wanted reassurance about the workers professional training, background checks and that the workers had an understanding of child development and their cultural needs.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS - FUNDING TO BE ALLOCATED TO SERVICE AREAS/ SERVICE PARTNERS.**

### **10.1 Service Level Agreements**

Partnership working and service level agreements with community groups like Field Lane and Chadswell Healthy Living Project to provide services to parents and carers. Parents and carers already use, appreciate and trust these groups that are often under equipped and under-resourced. Parents would like to attend mainstream childcare services/events in groups Sure Start King's Cross and Holborn - 'Putting the Pieces Together'

with their community worker to get to know other local people. The community groups can also put on cultural events at theme days.

### **10.2 Evening/Weekend Drop-Ins & Courses**

Replicate day time childcare services and facilities during the evenings and weekends to enable working parents to participate. Affordable weekend and day time drop-ins are also needed for parents who need some respite, to meet other parents and to attend hospital appointments and to do their shopping.

## **APPENDIX 5. INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT.**

A wide range of parents, carers and service partners have contributed to this Project either directly through the work undertaken by the Parent's Group or at earlier times in the development of the Sure Stat Programme. It is not possible to name all these individuals or groups and the list below highlights those people who have been most directly involved throughout this Project.

### **Core Parent's Group**

Elsie Anifowose

Salma Anwar

Nidhi Chauhan

Eva Driskell

Kawsar Pouget

Mary Sarpong

Sara Siddiqui

*Nadine Jackson*

### **Other individuals**

Lisa Bowles - Chair, Play, learning and childcare group.

Liam Hall - Programme Manager

Tara Ifill - Office Manager

Sharon McPherson - Deputy Manager, Community Involvement - until May 2004.

Tim Robertson - Camden lead officer for Sure Start.

Emua Ali - Focus Group Facilitator.

Members of the Play, learning and childcare group.

Parents/carers at Parents' Forums and Parent Volunteer meeting

### **Service partners.**

Tim Mehmet and other staff at the Argyle primary school.

Jessica Capelli and other staff at Bedford House Community centre

Louise Gates and other staff at the Calthorpe Project

Mary Christodoulou and other staff at Coram's Fields

Lucy Draper and other staff at Coram Parents' Centre

Gail Murphy and other staff at the Bourne Estate drop in.

Georgina Anderson and other staff at Field Lane Homeless Families Centre.

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **EVALUATION: WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT ABOUT THE PROJECT.**

#### **WHAT WENT WELL.**

##### **Parents involved in the Project.**

- Teamwork went very well as everyone contributed and shared ideas
- The visits were very interesting and fun.
- The information given was clear and explained.

#### **HOW WE COULD HAVE MADE IT BETTER.**

##### **Parents involved in the Project.**

- Nothing really, maybe extended the time we had to arrange the whole Project, perhaps 2 months - "I personally think we did everything ok because there was enough people working on the Project".

#### **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS.**

##### **Service partner.**

- "Your observations and comments are welcomed and will be a valuable contribution to our planning."