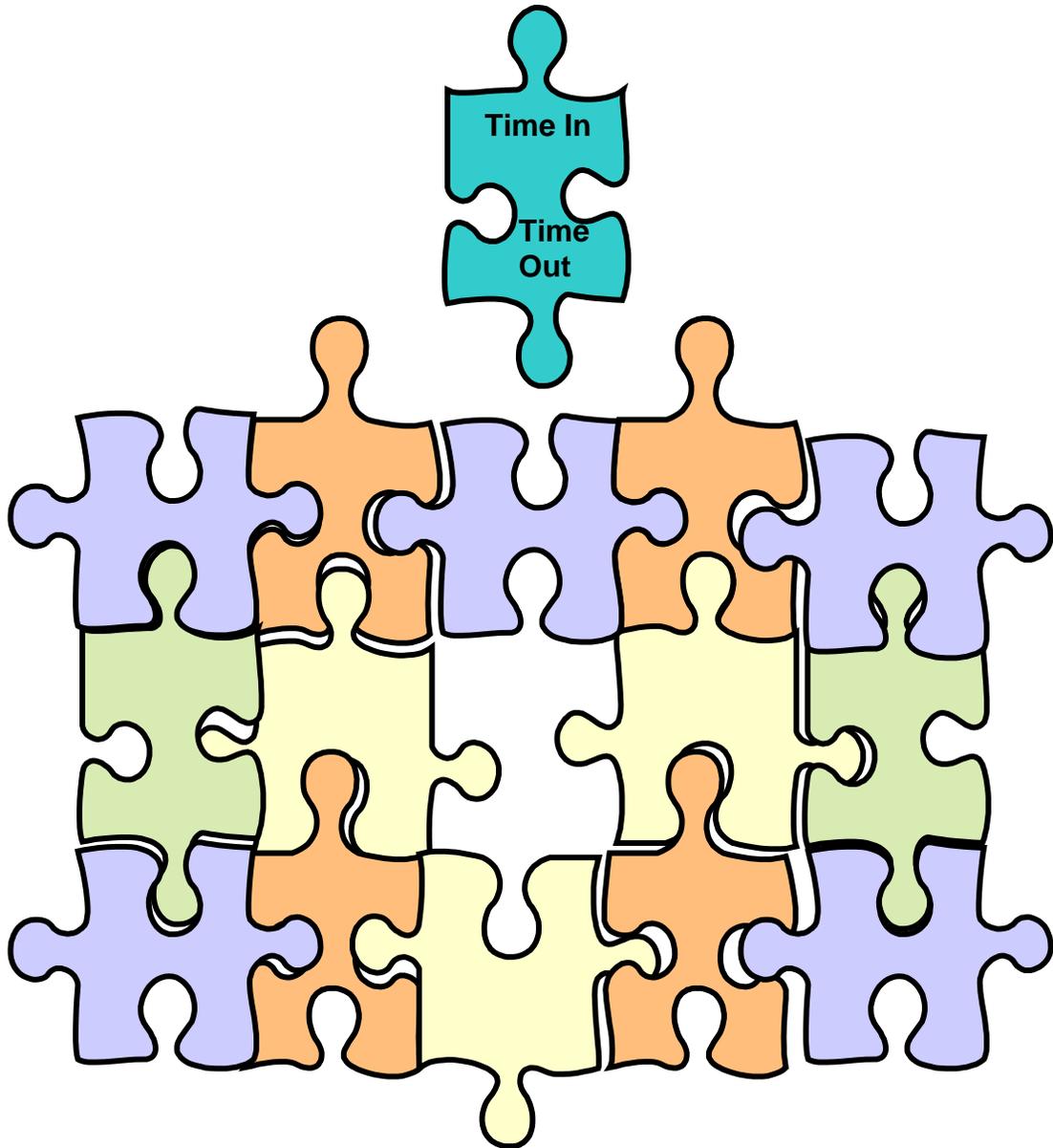


Evaluation of  
Time In Time Out



Pam Carter, Senior Evaluation Officer, August 2004

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Senior Evaluation Officer would like to thank the parents who responded to the survey, the link worker who interpreted, staff who collaborated in the evaluation, including administration staff who helped with data analysis and taking minutes.

## **Executive Summary**

Time In Time Out has been running for approximately twelve months since September 2003. During that time, mums have participated in a range of “Time In” social and health education activities including “rainy day activities on a shoe string”, “stress busting” and “nail art.” Of all those who registered and attended some sessions, eight women attended six or more sessions. Women of Black and minority ethnic origin tended to opt out earlier. “Time Out” has offered a free crèche so that parents can have time to themselves. Children have been cared for by crèche staff and in the case of at least one little girl, this has prepared her well for starting nursery. The evaluation shows that Time In Time Out objectives overlap with other projects in the programme and that no one person has overall responsibility for arranging venues, speakers and crèches. Findings also showed that parents do not need the incentive of Time Out to encourage them to attend Time In. It is not cost-effective to provide a free crèche that parents can book but then do not have to make a commitment to turn up to. Parents’ satisfaction with the service depends on a comfortable venue, the right time of day, approachable staff who do not patronise them, being able to settle their child in creche and provision of language support. Another finding is that Time In Time Out was not the first SureStart Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley service that parents had contact with. First contact with the programme has tended to be with the Outreach Home Visiting service or the Community Development service. The evaluation concludes with a recommendation that the Board consider carefully how Time In Time Out now fits within the overall Programme and whether parents’ interests in social support, educational courses as well as parenting advice could be met more effectively by other means.

## **Introduction**

The Time In Time Out project is aimed at introducing families to Sure Start in various friendly, accessible venues. It offers two sessions per week – a two hour “time in “ session when parents are offered an activity whilst children are cared for in a crèche, and a two hour “time out” session when children are cared for in the crèche and parents are encouraged to do their own thing with their free time. The stated goal of the project is “To promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children of those families who would not access the main Sure Start centre.”

## **Evaluation approach**

An initial meeting was held with staff to discuss the purpose of the evaluation and to agree an approach. The RUFDATA framework (see LTSN resources <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/edres/ltsn-eval/docs.htm>) was used to structure the discussion (see Appendix).

Staff were very keen to seek the views of those parents who had attended just one or two sessions then dropped out. There was a genuine concern that parents should have the opportunity to voice criticisms but it was felt that people may not be willing to be critical if programme staff asked the questions. This concern in itself demonstrates that these members of staff are willing to be responsive to parents' needs. It was agreed that the Senior Evaluation Officer would carry out a telephone survey to seek the views of people who had registered for Time In Time Out. Guidance was sought from the Research Governance Manager who agreed that this evaluation did not fall within the remit of the research governance framework. Despite this, ethical considerations were taken into account so that the anonymity of respondents was assured and responses were held in a confidential space accessible only to the evaluation officer. A draft questionnaire was devised and piloted (see appendix) and two further meetings were held to gather data from staff and to discuss interim findings from the survey.

## **Context**

The Baseline Delivery Plan describes the programme area that covers the neighbourhoods of Shelton, Hanley Town Centre and Cobridge. These different neighbourhoods are not all within "pram-pushing" distance of the main programme base. In order to incorporate sufficient numbers of young children to meet Sure Start Unit requirements, the programme boundary needed to stretch over a large geographical area. The Plan states that :

"Within the area there is a large student population based around the college and university to the south of the boundary, there are also large areas of industry and so the geographical area covered appears to be large." (p.17)

As well as geographical communities, the programme encompasses different ethnic communities.

Stoke-on-Trent has historically had good provision of LEA maintained nursery places compared to other areas that are now in receipt of Sure Start. These contextual factors influence the delivery and uptake of services as this report will demonstrate.

The Programme database was interrogated to establish all the people who had enrolled for Time In Time Out. This identified thirty five women (no men). The ethnic group of those registering is presented below:

Pakistani	White British	African	Bangladeshi	White/Asian	not specified	Other White
11	17	1	3	1	1	1

**Chart 1 Ethnic background of all children eligible for Shelton / Cobridge / Hanley Sure Start**

Source: local NHS Trust Child Health Records

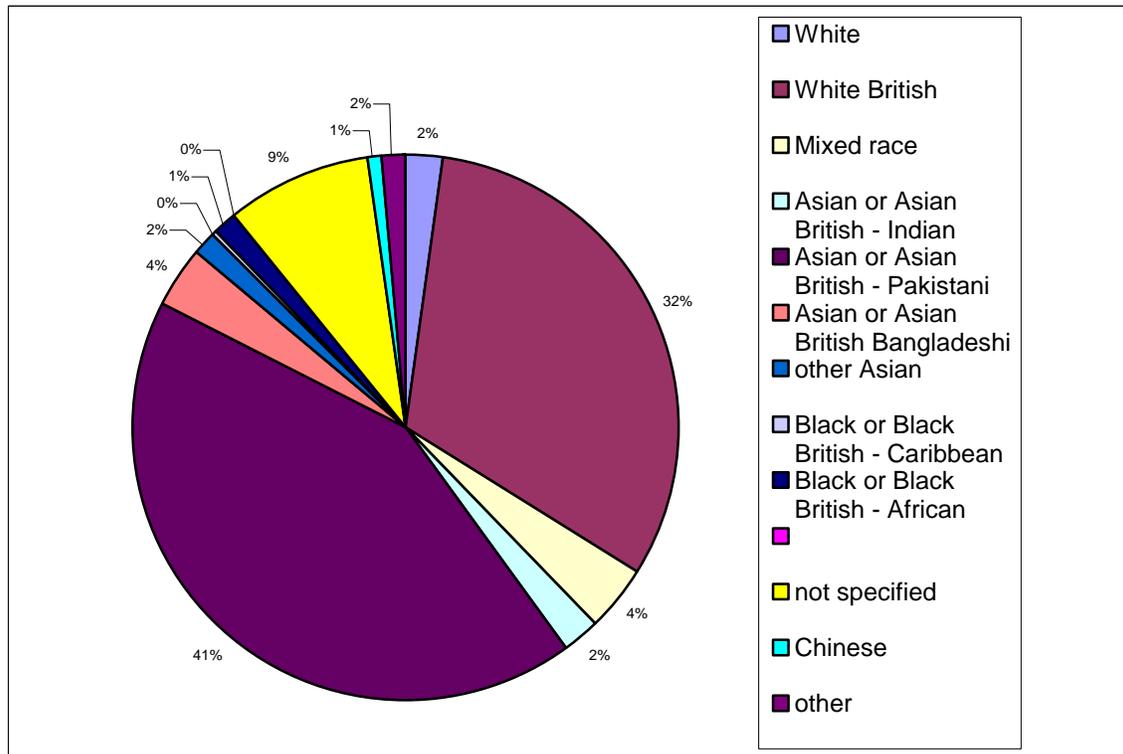
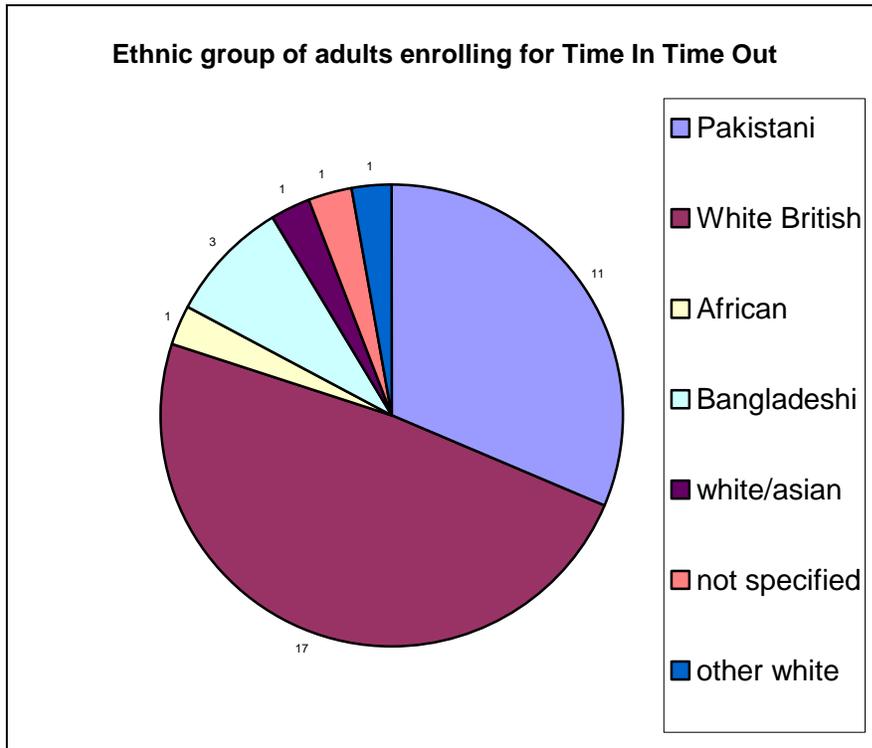


Chart 2

**Enrolment for Time In Time Out**



**Attendance**

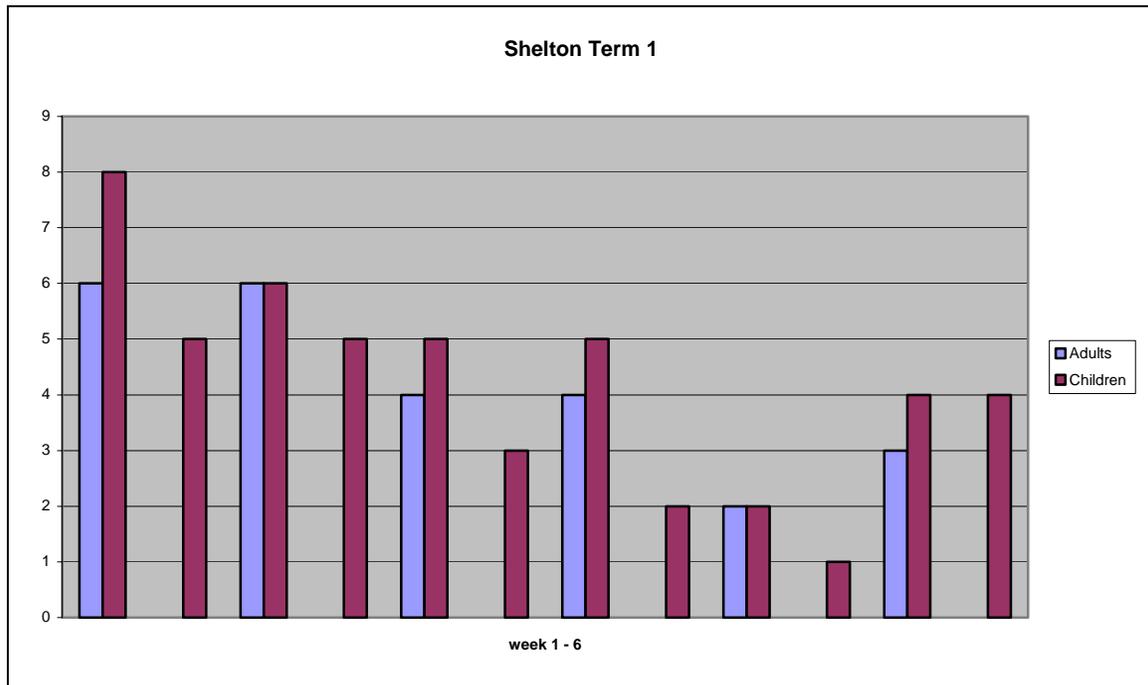
Time In Time Out has been delivered in three different neighbourhood locations – Shelton, Cobridge and Joiners Square. The Programme addressed the challenge of identifying a convenient meeting space with separate rooms for parents and the crèche at an affordable cost. The Joiners Square sessions did not attract many parents and so were dropped after nine weeks. **It is recommended that families from the Joiners Square neighbourhood are consulted on whether their needs are being met and whether there is further need to establish more appropriate outreach venues in this area.** There does not appear to be any particular theme or consistency around which sessions were more popular. The highest adult attendance was seven women at Shelton in November for

“food for toddlers” and “henna painting” and seven women at Cobridge in November (the register does not identify the topic).

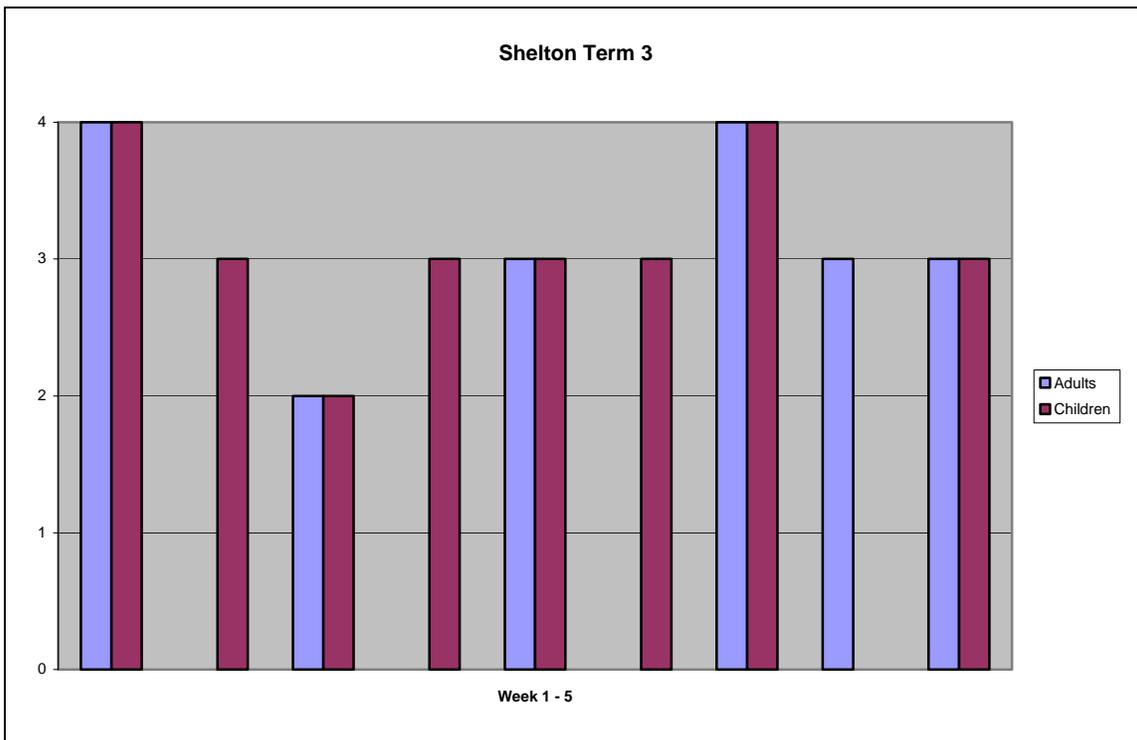
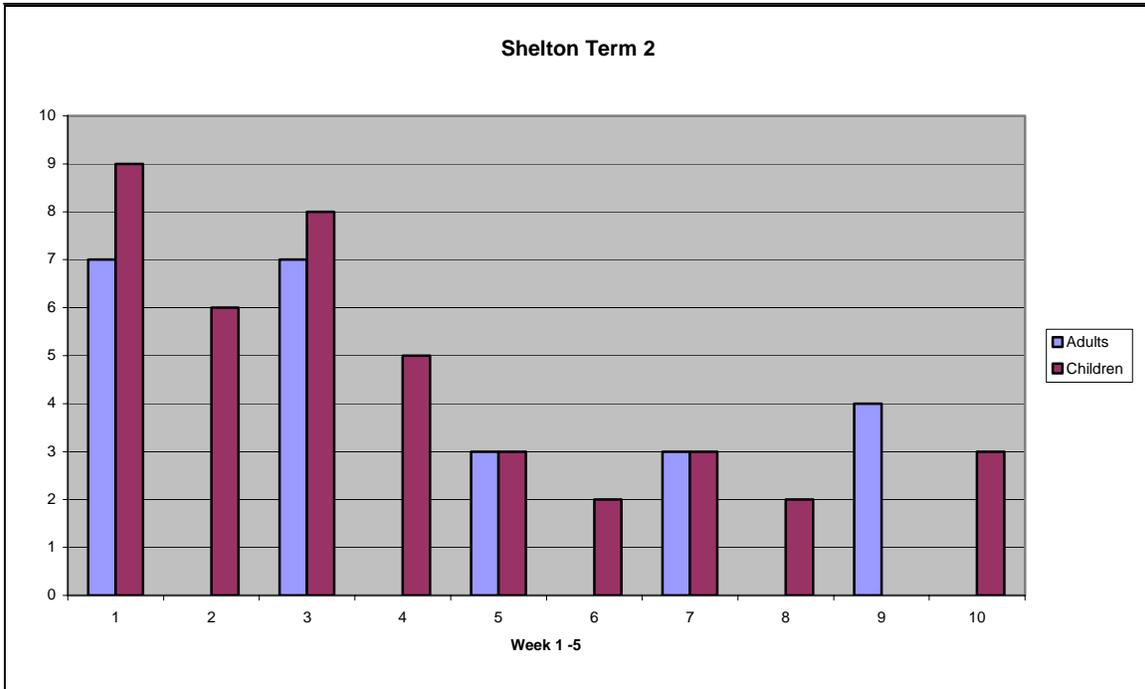
The average age of child when they first attended a Time In Time Out crèche was twenty two months. The youngest was one month and the eldest three and a half years. The average number of Time In Time out attendances by adults was four. The most number of attendances was sixteen and the least was one. Of those who attended six sessions or more, (eight in total), seven were White British and one woman was of Pakistani origin. In fact most people (twelve) just came once. Of these, the majority were from black and minority ethnic families. Further analysis of the programme database demonstrates that all of these people accessed other services as well as Time In Time Out. Therefore, whatever their experience of this particular project, it does not seem to have affected the take up of other Sure Start Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley services. At the end of April 2004, ten of the families who came to Time In Time Out, had been engaged with Sure Start Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley for at least fourteen months and half had been receiving some sort of SureStart service from the local programme for at least twelve months.

**This is significant as it indicates that Sure Start seems to have become a part of these families lives, at least while their child is pre-nursery or school age.**

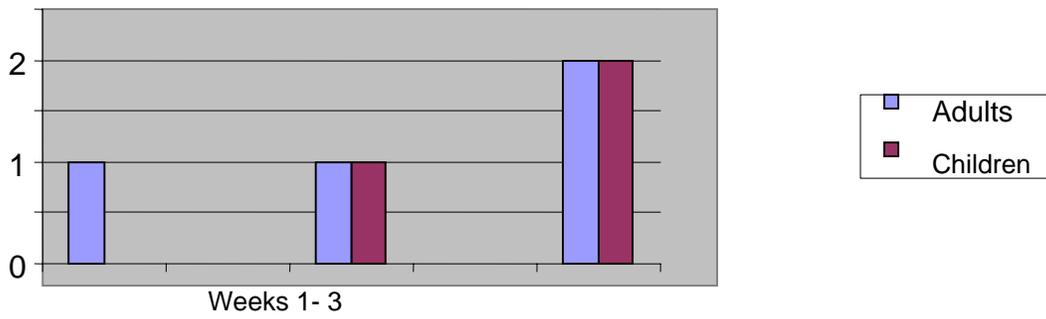
### Number of families attending per course



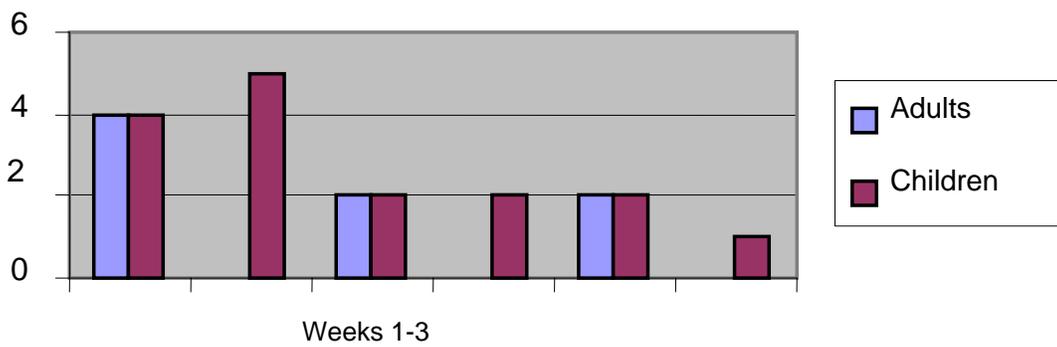
Time In sessions maintain a register of adult and child attendances. Time Out child attendances at crèche only are recorded.

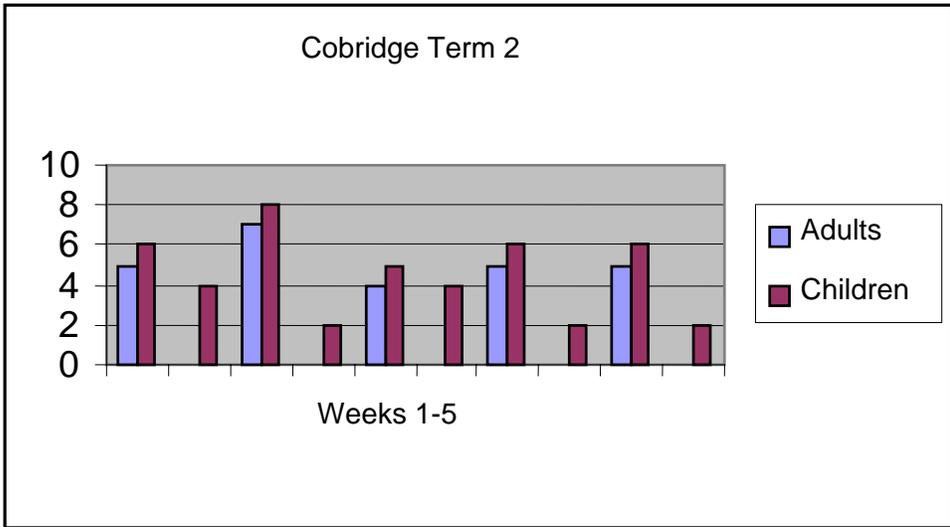
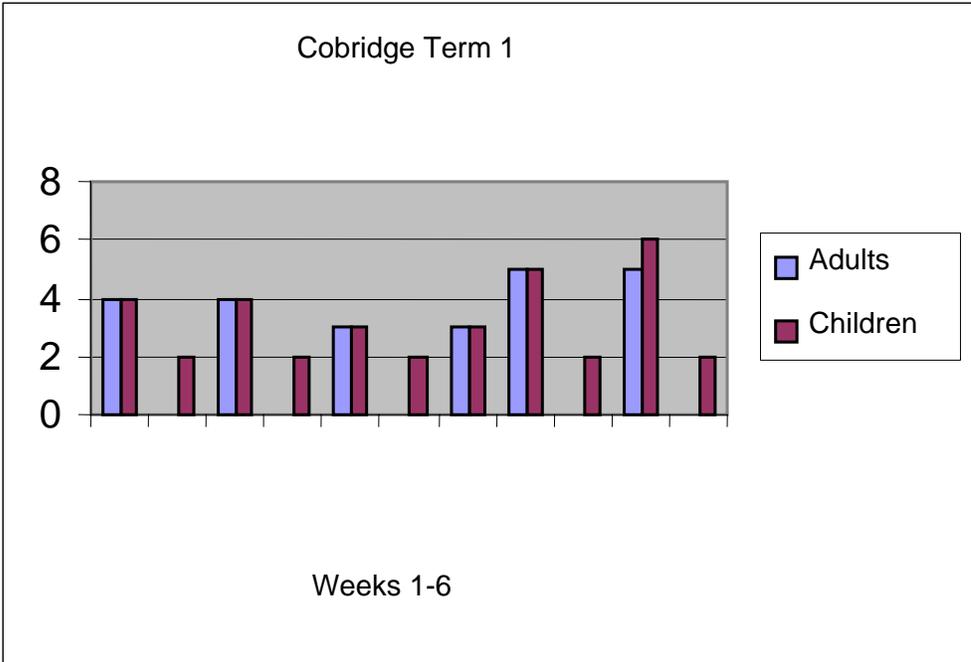


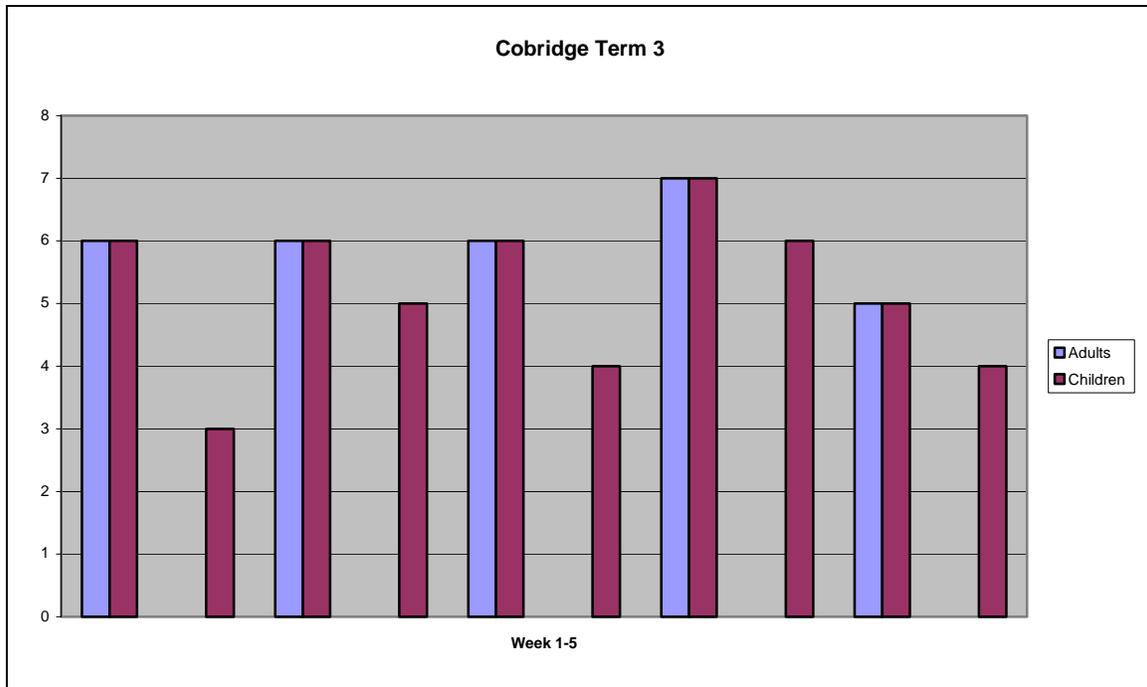
Joiners Square Term 1



Joiners Square Term 2







These charts show that generally Time In was better attended than Time Out. This indicates that Time Out did not act as an incentive. There were no penalties for non-attendance at Time Out and the project did not monitor the two sessions (Time In and Time Out) in conjunction and so it is difficult to see how the incentive could have functioned effectively. Parents were encouraged to register in advance in order to arrange enough staffing but the sessions were all free. **The fact that this has been offered to parents at no cost whereas other services in the Programme, including “stay and play” charge a fee deserves further exploration.**

### **Outreach and engagement**

The project objectives state that Time In Time Out is aimed at families who have not previously accessed Sure Start services. The implicit assumption seems to have been that the project could reach some of those who had previously been “hard to reach”. The database was analysed to find out whether Time In Time Out was, in fact, the first Sure Start service for these people – i.e. whether the project had met the objective of acting as a means of introducing people to the programme for the first time. This was the case for only two out of the thirty five Time In Time Out participants. For twenty-three people (66%) their first introduction to the Programme was via the outreach home visiting team or the community development service who then introduced them to Time In Time Out. For the other twelve families, Time In Time Out followed on from their other Sure

Start experiences or they were told about the project by their mainstream health visitor. This suggests that, rather than women making their own way to Time In Time Out via publicity materials, they found out about the project from other Sure Start staff. It seems that the outreach and community development service are able to meet parents in informal community settings or via home visits and refer them to Time In Time Out as well as other Sure Start activities. **Therefore the aim of attracting new parents to the Sure Start programme seems to be being met effectively by the community development and outreach home visiting team without the need for the particular Time In Time Out project as a means of reaching “hard to reach.” families.** This finding has implications for the future development of the programme as it transforms into a Children’s Centre as successful outreach will be important.

### **Location and Timing**

The Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley Programme covers a large geographical area. Location and timing of services is important to families – not simply in terms of “pram-pushing distance” but also in terms of a venue being warm and inviting and ideally already familiar to families. One parent commented via the survey that when a session ends at 2.30 it can be a rush for a half-hour walk to the primary school to collect older children. Friday would be too busy a day for one Muslim mum who organised her day around Friday prayers. **It is recommended that a mapping exercise be undertaken to analyse what outreach venues are being used by different projects within the programme and also an analysis of access to the programme by parents from the different geographical neighbourhoods be carried out to determine whether all these neighbourhoods are equally well served by Sure Start Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley.**

All families had either previously or subsequently accessed a wide range of Sure Start services within the Programme including computer courses, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Midwife, Community Development, Emergency First Aid, Bookshare, Play and Rhyme, First Steps Psychology, Sewing Group, Arts Project, Sure Start Miniatures, and an Exercise Class. In terms of outcomes for these children and families then, it may not be sensible to disentangle outcomes for families by a specific project. It may be that there is an overall Sure Start effect. This is backed up by research that suggests that a holistic approach to child and family health, especially in areas of deprivation, is likely to be more effective than delivering single issue interventions or narrow, clinically defined services. (see for example Hall and Elliman, 2003 and Ghate and Hazel, 2002)

### **Innovation**

SureStart Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley is prepared to take some risks in developing new services. The project team understood some of the risks associated with this project at the outset. Identified risks and assumptions were that :

- People don't attend
- Crèche can't meet demand
- Venue may not be suitable
- Professionals will promote the project
- Costs are sustainable
- Language support will be available where needed
- Time In sessions contribute to personal and social education aims.

At a review meeting to discuss the evaluation, these risks and assumptions were re-visited.

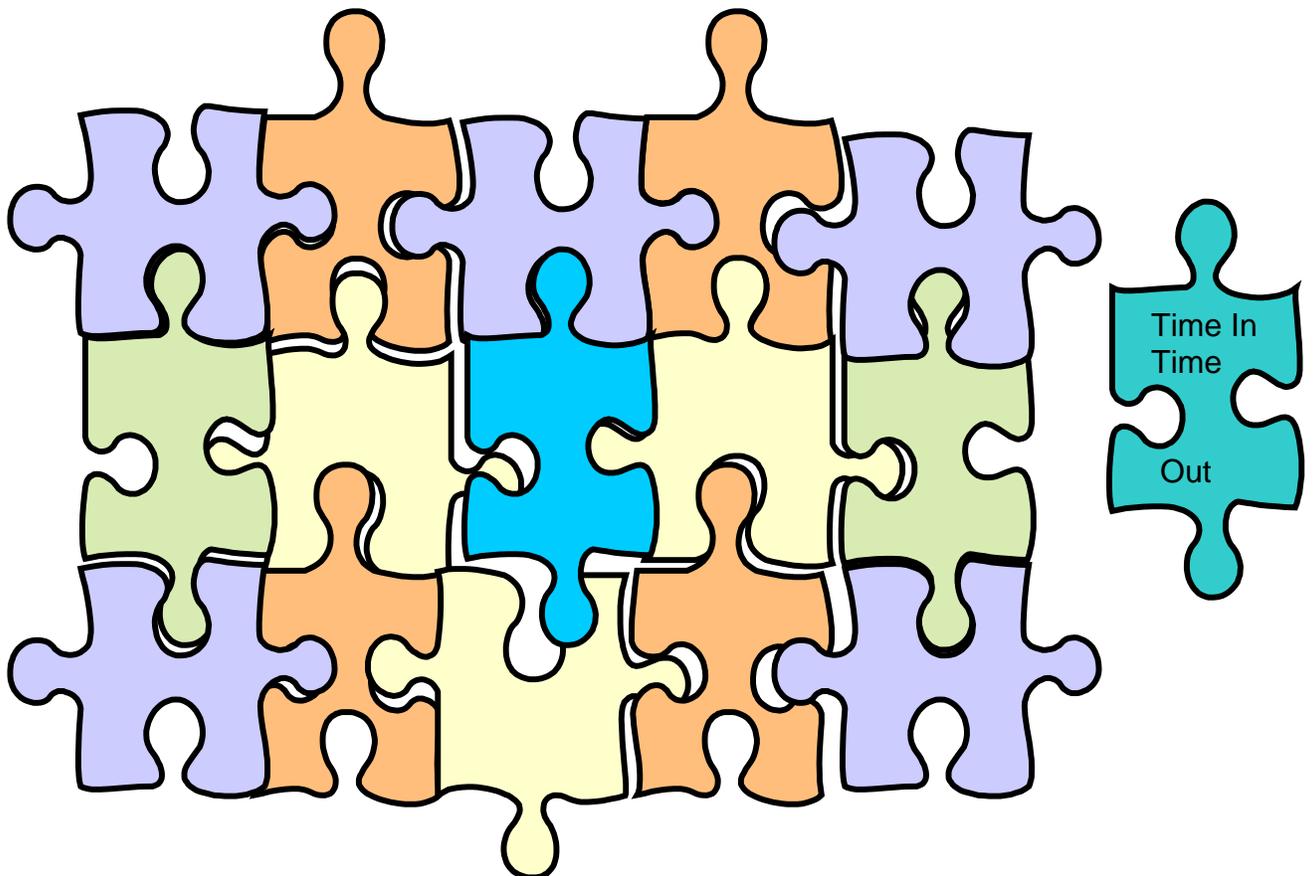
Table 2

<b>Original project design (then)</b>	<b>Review (now, mid-term)</b>
People don't attend	At the end of April 2004 35 people have attended
Crèche can't meet demand	The crèche has met demand through flexible working although this has presented challenges
Venue may not be suitable	Evaluation sheets had 3 negative comments about the venue at Joiners Square
Costs sustainable	The lack of a planned budget makes it difficult to compare predicted spend with actual spend
Language support available where needed	A comment from the evaluation sheet said " <i>did not feel part of group if needing interpreters</i> ". Registers show that women from Black and ethnic minority communities have dropped out of the project at an early stage
Assume Time Out is an incentive to attend Time In	Crèche registers show no evidence of this.
Assume Time In sessions contribute to improving personal, social and emotional well-being.	This assumption deserves further unpicking to understand the relationship or distinctions between health education, community education, socializing and recreation.

New risks and assumptions identified:

- It has been difficult to plan crèche sessions in response to demand, partly because of staff ratios, but also due to staff sickness
- Venues should be familiar for parents and children and should be warm, inviting and safe
- During this review, staff are now reflecting on the assumption that parents are willing and able to join new groups, that they are happy to leave their children, whatever the age of the child, and that there is a relationship between happy, confident parents and the emotional well-being of their children. Separation anxiety can affect parents. If children get upset in the crèche then parents find it difficult to relax.
- The unacknowledged assumption that a six-week session is the right length needs reviewing. Topics such as car safety could be delivered as ad hoc workshops rather than being delivered as part of a structured programme. Women and their children both need time to settle in and get familiar with a new group and make friends. Some groups may wish to stay together longer.

A jigsaw puzzle exercise explored how the project fitted into the overall programme.



It was felt that there were overlaps between some of the objectives of the Time In Time Out project and other projects including Mum 2 Mum which allows mums to socialise in a relaxing environment and gain support for breastfeeding if they want to, the Triple P parenting programme which offers a structured approach to promoting positive parenting, baby massage, training that is offered at the Shelton Centre and the Stay and Play group in Cobridge and the arts group that happens at the American Clubhouse.

## **Time In**

Time In sessions included the following topics:

- Road safety
- Childhood Ailments
- Nail Art
- Rainy Day Activities on Shoe String
- Healthy Eating for Toddlers
- Stress Busting
- Fancy a cuppa
- Henna Painting
- Celebrations
- Toddlerobics
- Children's Speech and Language

These mainly relate to the Sure Start objectives of improving health and improving social and emotional development. Some of the sessions were delivered by staff already involved in delivering Sure Start projects, others were delivered by colleagues from partner organisations and a few were bought in from a specialist sports provider, a community healthy eating project and an aromatherapist.

## **Time Out**

This was a two hour crèche session intended to provide parents with a break and introduce those who may be unfamiliar with Sure Start to the concept of crèche and to the child care staff. An assumption made was the Time Out would be valued by parents and act as an incentive for them to attend Time In sessions. In discussion, crèche staff revealed how important it is for parents and their children to feel comfortable with staff and the crèche environment. The review of assumptions confirmed that separation anxiety had not been taken into account. It had been assumed that parents would be willing to leave their children in the crèche even if they had no previous experience of this and irrespective of the age and developmental stage of their child.

## Running the project

A team of Programme staff took responsibility for this project with various members of staff delivering sessions, booking speakers, arranging venues, arranging crèche and promoting the project and recruiting families. There was no identified pre-planned budget for the project. In the course of the evaluation, it has been a complicated task to collate data held in different places such as crèche registers, costs and adult attendance registers. **The amount of planning and administration time could have been reduced by having one nominated lead person taking responsibility for arranging venues, speakers, crèche and having the responsibility and authorisation for a budget.**

## Responsiveness

At the end of each Time In session, parents completed a sheet to say what they liked and didn't like. At the end of the first term, the project carried out a self-evaluation. This showed that the St John Ambulance Building was too cold and there had been three negative comments about All Saints Church. Comments gathered related to distance, transport and not feeling part of the group if English was not the mum's first language. These comments had been recorded by staff and themes around language and distance are borne out by the telephone survey. **The fact that comments had been recorded did not necessarily translate into improvements** and therefore the needs of, in this case, a family who does not have much English, are not being met at this point in time by this project.

As part of the routine evaluation by project staff, a list was compiled of what training parents would like to see in the future. This was as follows:

Massage, computers, childcare, first aid for children, stress, how to keep children occupied, healthy eating, fitness for children, development, how play helps my child, cooking, activities with children, longer time for relaxation and nail art (not nail care). The programme has made a genuine attempt to respond to parents' requests. The training officer, working in partnership with College in the Community, has arranged computer training. The Programme offers a Play and Rhyme service that addresses "How play helps my child" and some of the same parents that had attended Time In Time Out have also used Play & Rhyme. A positive parenting programme (Triple P) that the Programme also delivers could address the theme of "how to keep my child occupied". In these flexible ways then, the Programme has successfully engaged with parents, discovered their interests and introduced them to a range of options for them to choose which services meet their needs. **Choice is likely to be a key aspect of parental engagement with the programme.** Research carried out by Ghate and Hazel found that:

*“Making parents feel listened to and respected, and acknowledging that they are also “experts” in their own lives seems to be as important – if not more important – as providing them with access to specific types of practical help.” (2002, p251)*

## **New ways of working for child-care staff**

Crèche staff commented that it is important for children to get used to an environment. They themselves had enjoyed taking the crèche out to community venues although when crèches were poorly attended this resulted in some frustration. This was very different work for those who had previously worked in a day nursery or as a child-minder. Child-care staff get job satisfaction when they are able to care for children over time and see them develop their skills and confidence. The staff felt that their opinions were valued within the project and that they were able to contribute ideas and suggestions. Some of the challenges of this way of working arose from dealing with the unexpected. It was difficult to juggle supply and demand to respond to the correct ratios of staff to children of different ages. Women booked crèche space in advance but sometimes did not turn up. It was sometimes difficult to tailor play activities when staff were not sure in advance the age range of children would be attending.

## **Cost effectiveness**

Sure Start guidance on cost effectiveness does not expect the medium or long term benefits of Sure Start to be measurable in cost effectiveness exercises. (Meadows, [www.ness.bbk.ac.uk](http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk)) It is reasonable to infer, when services are based on evidence of effectiveness, that short term results such as uptake of services and customer satisfaction will lead to beneficial outcomes in terms of the SureStart objectives. A Best Value approach to assessing value for money would consider the four C's – Challenge, Compare, Compete and Consult.

## **Challenge**

The need for this particular activity should be challenged. Clearly those families who attended regularly over a period of time enjoyed the project. The evaluation has highlighted the potential overlaps between this project and other services operating within the programme. The Board is recommended to review its delivery against the SureStart aims and objectives to identify whether aims and objectives can be met more effectively by other means or whether Time In Time Out contributes a unique process or outcome. As part of this, the Board should aim for a consistent charging policy across different services.

## **Compare**

There is no immediately comparable service that has carried out a cost-effectiveness study. However, a search of the NESS web-site identified an

evaluation carried out on a “Time Out for Parents” project in Denaby Main and Conisborough Sure Start. This project consisted of a ten week two hour course facilitated by the Workers Educational Association. Costs to the programme were £10,000 for up to 40 parents for 4 x 10 week courses per year. The Time In Time Out project at Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley appears to compare favourably in terms of readily identifiable costs to the programme, but when the time taken by existing programme staff is calculated, costs rise significantly. Costs of hiring community venues amounted to £2844.00. Various programme staff collectively spent 215 hours on planning and administering and 69 hours on direct delivery of the project. Crèche time is additional to this. A further £418.00 was spent paying for external providers to deliver specialist sessions such as henna painting, nail art and healthy eating.

Comparison with other projects within the programme raises the issue of the specific objectives of the project. The idea that parents can benefit from “time out” from their children seems to have been conditional upon them attending a “time in” session. **It is not clear why parents should need to “earn” this and why childcare cannot be provided irrespective of why parents choose to use it or how else they choose to engage with the programme.** For those parents who are interested, courses in child development and health education could be developed in partnership with local training providers. This would offer parents the advantage of clear expectations of what the course would cover and would offer the programme the advantage of drawing on funding additional to the programme’s revenue budget. One disadvantage of a structured course could be the loss of flexibility and responsiveness to parents’ interests.

Comparison with community health projects such as womens’ groups and those that start from the expressed needs of local people shows that community development takes time to build trust and develop group work but that in the medium to long term these initiatives are often capable of becoming self-sustaining, thereby strengthening communities by building capacity and infrastructure. (see for example Skinner, S 1998 or <http://www.chuk.org/>). There may be further untapped potential for groups of parents in the community to address their own needs and function independently, or with minimal support from SureStart. If staff such as the Community Development Worker were freed up from the Time In Time Out project, this potential for strengthening communities could be developed. Similarly, the Training Officer could devote time to developing a wider range of courses and the Home Visiting Manager could offer more parenting support to groups and individuals. Crèche staff could deliver more stay and play or childcare sessions in the outreach community venues. Rather than this being a fragmentation of the project team that has delivered Time In Time Out, it could be viewed as a jigsaw that fits together peoples’ individual job roles and expertise into the whole of the Sure Start Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley programme. As choice is clearly important to families, it will be important to develop new opportunities and not restrict the range of activities.

## Compete

Competition was not considered. There was no commissioning process as the project was deliberately designed to be delivered in-house. Given that most of the resources for the project are in the form of existing staff time, the more relevant issue is the challenge of how else their time could be effectively deployed.

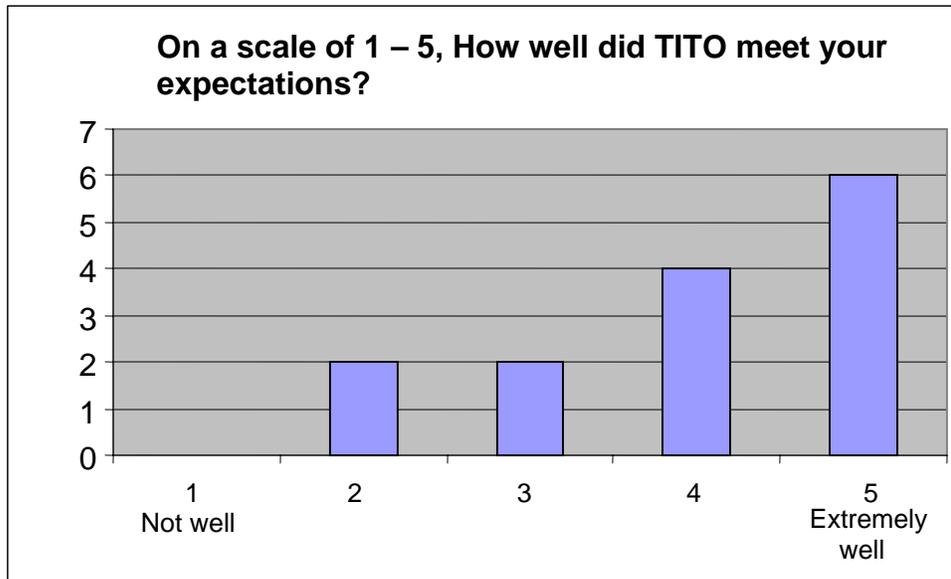
## Consult

There is no evidence that consultation had led to demand for this particular service. In effect part of the rationale for establishing it was to enable further consultation through engaging new parents from different neighbourhoods. We have seen that much of this engagement with individual families (or in some cases groups of friends) already takes place via the community development and outreach home visiting services. This has successfully resulted in the development of outreach venues in Cobridge and Shelton. It is recommended that the Board and the newly emerging parents' forums are consulted on options for change as a result of this evaluation. Also, further consultation in the Joiners Square and Hanley area should be carried out and consultation with Bangladeshi families should explore their needs for language support and culturally sensitive services.

## Survey results

The telephone survey used a semi-structured interview schedule and managed to contact fifteen women, a response rate of 43%. The ethnic group of these respondents, is as follows:

Ethnic group	Sample		Time In Time Out whole group	
	number	%	number	%
White British	6	40%	17	48%
Pakistani	5	33.3%	11	31%
Other White	1	6.6%	1	3 %
Bangladeshi	2	13.3%	3	9 %
White/ Asian	1	6.6%	1	3 %
African	0	0	1	3%
Not specified	0		1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>99.8%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>



Most people answered that their expectations were extremely well met. However, to better understand this, the survey asked “What were you expecting when you enrolled for Time In Time Out?” Analysis of responses to this question can be categorised into **clear expectations of what the project was about** : “*I was given a list of what we would be doing*”, **to an apparent lack of information or awareness** : *I didn’t know what to expect*”, “*I thought we’d be spending time with the children with them in Time Out. I didn’t think there’d be courses*”. **In future it could be worth spending time in the first session of a series discussing peoples’ expectations.**

One of the respondents, who said that her expectations were just to meet other parents, was disappointed with the courses.

Some parents had an interest in the activities on offer for themselves: “*I was interested in these courses, educational courses they do*” , others had an expectation that they would receive advice on parenting “*advice on how to behave towards my daughter in certain situations*”, “*just things on how to cope with children, things like play, stuff like that about children*”. Some responses that indicated that the social side was as important for them as the educational element: “*just to meet other parents really*”, but social support for themselves should not necessarily be disentangled from sharing information and advice that will benefit their children - “*I found it a big help – the discussions with friends.*” One woman had felt patronised by the worker who led a breast-feeding session. These expectations clearly indicate that parents are enthusiastic about learning about parenting, play and accessing social support without needing an incentive.

Some didn’t seem to understand the nature of a crèche, where children are cared for by staff : “*I thought that it would be the same as “normal playgroups”, “initially I didn’t realise about my child being left.”* Another mum understood that her child

would be left and that she would benefit from being with others : “R – [ child] *she will go and meet other people* “. One woman specifically complimented the crèche staff. She said that she was “... *more than happy with the staff looking after them.*” However, another felt that her experience of the crèche was poor quality as her child had been “*sitting in an empty room with just a few toys.*” Another respondent said that the crèche had prepared her daughter well for nursery as she had never previously been left apart from her mother. These comments indicate parents concerns with the quality of child care.

In response to the question “Do you and your child attend any other activities in your neighbourhood?” five answered no, four said that their children were now older and had started nursery, four said that they attended other Sure Start groups such as “stay and play” and two mentioned other community groups including an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class at a school that offered a crèche.

Some of the responses to the survey confused Time In Time Out with other services. For example, one commented about fees but there were no fees for this project whereas there are for some other services in the programme. **This incidentally highlights an anomaly within the programme’s charging policy.**

## **Reflection on evaluation process**

### Confidentiality

The survey guaranteed confidentiality so that programme staff could not know who had given answers to the survey. However, when people register for Shelton /Cobridge/Hanley, they generally agree to their data being used for monitoring and evaluation purposes. This means that it should be possible for staff to follow up non-attenders. Naturally, staff will want to strike a balance between pestering people and respecting their right to choose. **The recommendation is that this should be left to staff discretion.** Those who have an established relationship with particular families may wish to check whether they are satisfied with particular services or events and whether they need any further contact support from the programme at this point in time.

### Quantitative and qualitative monitoring

The Programme database seems to be reasonably reliable although there were a couple of anomalies whereby there was a discrepancy between a survey respondent’s recollection of how many times she had attended Time In Time Out and what the records showed. The database was not interrogated for out of area families. In discussion it emerged that one dad who did not live in the Sure Start Shelton/Cobridge/Hanley area had come to Time In Time Out. Ethnicity has been

analyzed as a variable within this study but other variables may have equal salience and this may be more likely to emerge through qualitative analysis.

A comment from a member of staff who had delivered a couple of Time In sessions revealed that parents had not settled to the Time In session as they were popping in and out to check on their children who were not settled in the crèche. This has implications if the aim is to impart information to parents but they are unable to concentrate and it also highlights the value of qualitative evaluation that can elicit this type of data.

## **Conclusion**

The project has succeeded in offering an enjoyable experience to some families, enabling some to experience a crèche for the first time. It has been a useful way for the Programme to learn about establishing activities in neighbourhood locations. Some mums gained social benefits from meeting other parents, although one parent felt that she had been patronised in a Time In session by the approach to breastfeeding advice. At least one little girl who used the crèche developed the social and emotional competence to prepare her for nursery school. Most survey respondents said that their expectations were met positively.

There is no evidence that Time Out has acted as a particular incentive. **The idea that parents need an incentive to encourage them to take up advice and support is not borne out by the evaluation.** In fact parents welcomed and actively sought information, guidance and social support. The evaluation has shown that parents are exercising choice and some appear to have decided that Time In Time Out is not for them but this has not put them off taking up other services within the Sure start programme. The survey found that non-attendance can be affected by reasons such as pregnancy, winter conditions, timing of sessions or the age or health of their children. However, the survey also found that in some cases this was due to lack of language support or feeling patronised or being disappointed with the crèche provision. A Best Value approach should be taken to its logical conclusion and parents should now be consulted on options for change as a result of this evaluation.

## **Recommendations:**

- The Board consider carefully how Time In Time Out now fits within the overall Programme and whether parents' interests in social support, educational courses as well as parenting advice could be met more effectively by other means.
- Further analysis be carried out of uptake of services by families living in the Joiners' Square area

- Consider how the Programme is meeting the needs of families whose first language is not English, in particular Bangladeshi families.
- The Programme should review its charging policy to ensure consistency and value for money.

### Bibliography

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## APPENDIX

### RUFDATA

<b>Reason</b>	Is Time In Time Out worthwhile? It is time consuming and we want to know what people get out of it
<b>Use</b>	To decide whether to continue the project in its current format or to inform changes
<b>Focus</b>	Time In Time Out project from inception to current end of march 2004. Include an estimation of "external" costs and identify how much staff time is allocated to the project.
<b>Data</b>	Registers, finance data, evaluation sheets from sessions, staff views, survey of attenders and non-attenders
<b>Audience</b>	Programme Manager, Programme Board
<b>Timing</b>	Complete evaluation by end of July
<b>Author</b>	Senior Evaluation Officer with contributions from Community development Officer, Home Visiting Manager, Training Officer, parents and administration staff.

## TITO Telephone Survey

### Introduction

Hello, my name is .....I am contacting you because you have attended or enrolled for a Sure Start Time In Time Out project. Please could you spare a few minutes to answer 5 questions as part of a short survey? Is this a convenient time or shall I call back?

Your answers will be kept confidential so no-one in the Sure Start Programme will know who gave which answers.

### 1. **What were you expecting when you enrolled for Time In Time Out?**

*Prompt - interested by the activities*

*Meet new people*

*Find out more about Sure Start*

*Good for child to mix*



### 2. **On a scale of 1 – 5, how far did it meet your expectations?**

1

2

3

4

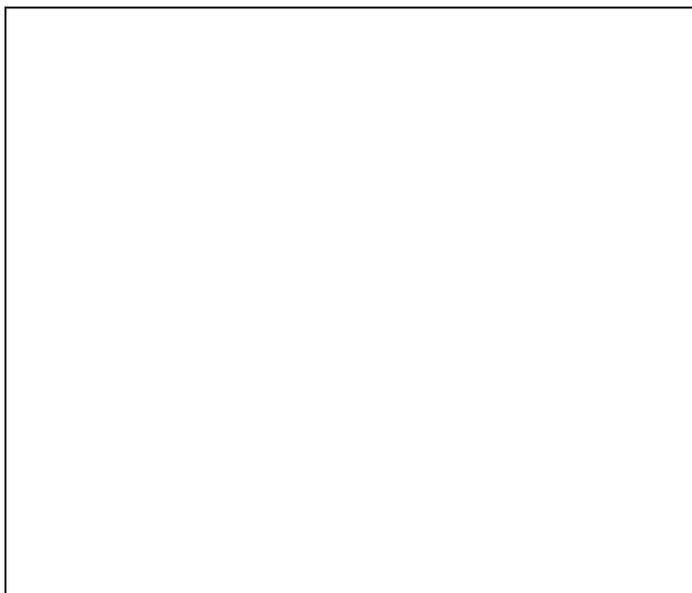
5

### 3. **How could it have been improved?**

*Prompt – different activities*

*More chance to have a say in planning activities*

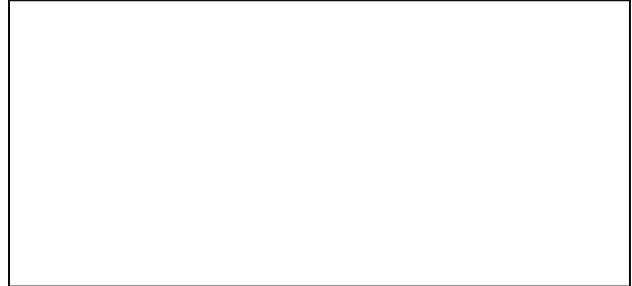
*Friendlier staff  
Different venue,  
time, help with transport*



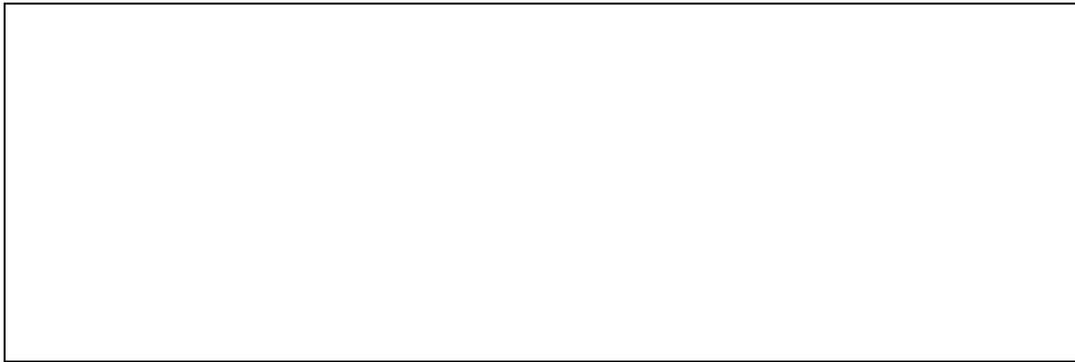
**4. Do you and your child attend any other activities in your neighbourhood?**

*Prompt playgroup, college course,*

*Nursery,*



**5. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about Time In Time Out?**



Thank you for your time. Your comments will be used to plan the way forward for this Sure Start project. The results of the survey will be written up in an evaluation report and results will be published in the Sure Start newsletter.

Dear

I am writing to you because records show that you have either been to a Time In Time Out Sure Start activity or you registered your interest.

I am carrying out an evaluation of this project and I would very much like to know your views. I will telephone you and check that the time is convenient. If it is, I would like to ask you a few questions over the phone about Time In Time Out. Where records do not show a phone number, I will contact you in person.

This survey is confidential and nobody in Sure Start will know who gave which answers.

Your views are very important and will be taken into account. The survey results will be published in the Sure Start newsletter.

Taking part in the survey is completely voluntary and will not affect any service you may be receiving from Sure Start. I will contact you shortly to ask if you are willing to take part and if it is a convenient time.

Yours sincerely

Pam Carter  
Senior Evaluation Officer