

# **Baseline Survey: Sure Start Halewood**

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## **Chapter 1 Background**

Monitoring and evaluation of local Sure Start programmes is a national requirement. A baseline study is required in order to generate data which can be used in conjunction with user satisfaction surveys conducted in future years in order to establish whether the programme is making a difference; to review levels of service use; review levels of satisfaction; review levels of knowledge of Sure Start services and to inform service development.

This survey of families in the Sure Start Halewood area was undertaken in collaboration between The Centre for Study of the Child, The Family and The Law (CSCFL) at the University of Liverpool and Halewood Sure Start in December 2003. This analysis report was produced by the CSCFL, as part of its monitoring and evaluation contract with the programme.

## Chapter 2 Study design and methodology

The approach taken to study participation and satisfaction with local services for parents and children under 4 in the Halewood area was through surveys conducted face to face with parents and carers at "Winter Wonderland" events in the Halewood area. These events were facilitated by the Knowsley Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, Halewood Sure Start and Community Concepts. The approach was taken in order to generate a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time and also in consideration of the fact that one of the aims of Sure Start is to address problems of illiteracy.

Limitations of the survey were that the sample size was relatively small, compared with a postal survey of all households in the district. However at this time of year it was felt that responses through postal surveys would be more of an inconvenience to householders and would result in lower response rates. A further limitation of this approach to the survey was that those who don't access many child / parent related services or are unaware of them would be less likely to be in attendance and therefore not have their views represented in the survey.

Surveys were completed over two days, 10/12/03 and 11/12/03, at "Winter Wonderlands" in the Leathers Lane area and Macketts Lane area of Halewood administered by two research associates from the Centre of Study for the Child, the Family and the Law at the University of Liverpool. 78 surveys were completed.

Participants were asked their postcode in order to determine whether they lived within the relevant Sure Start area. Everyone included in the survey was asked whether they were a parent or carer of a child under 5, or expecting a baby in order to ensure that the relevant people were surveyed

The questions included in the questionnaire related to:

- Use of 'mainstream' and Sure Start services and groups;
- Satisfaction with services used;
- Use of, and access to childcare;
- Socio-demographic data in relation to: number of children in the household

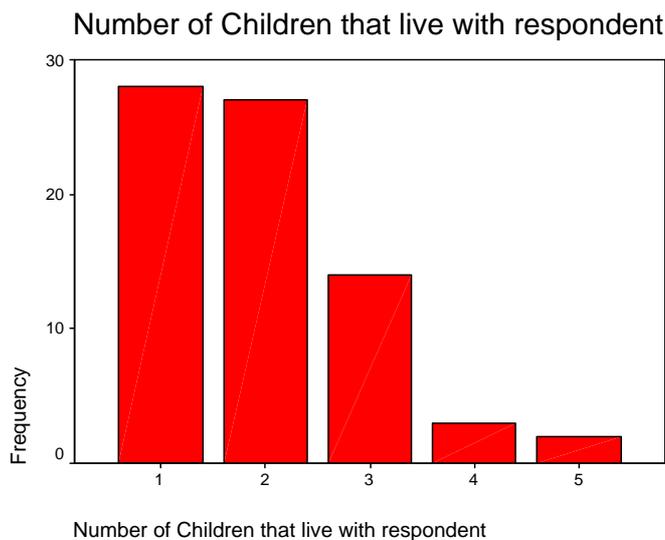
The questionnaire was developed through negotiation with the programme manager in order to establish the needs of the programme. The evaluators also examined examples of other baseline surveys on the NESS website. A draft questionnaire was designed and distributed to Sure Start staff and a number of service users, with a number of amendments suggested and incorporated into the final questionnaire. The emphasis was on designing a simple and straight forward questionnaire, whilst also including enough questions to generate useful information.

The completed questionnaires were anonymous in order to maintain the privacy of respondents.

## Characteristics of the respondents and their families

- Participants were asked their postcode in order to ensure that they live within the relevant Sure Start area.
- Everyone included in the survey was asked whether they are a parent or carer of a child under 5, or expecting a baby in order to ensure that the relevant people were surveyed.
- 78 people took part in the survey, 92.5% were female.
- 12% of those interviewed were either expecting a baby themselves or had a partner who was expecting a baby.
- The majority of parents (71%) had either 1 or 2 children living with them and this remains the case even when taking into consideration those who were expecting a baby. This information is illustrated in Figure 1 below

**Figure 1**



## Chapter 3: Results

### Life

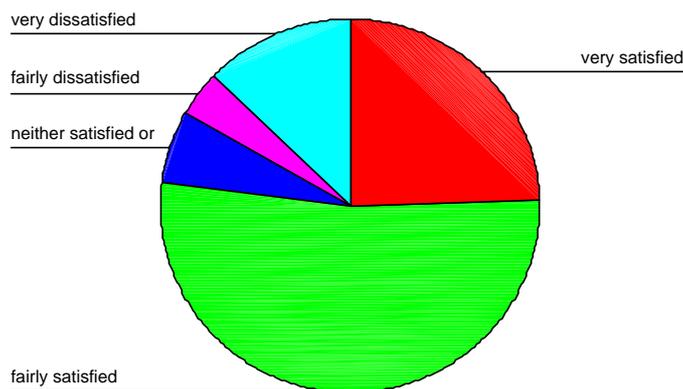
A number of questions relating to quality of life were asked in the survey, for example satisfaction with quality of life and satisfaction with the area as a place to bring up young children under 4.

#### Satisfaction with quality of life

Just over half the people surveyed (53%) said that they were fairly satisfied with their quality of life, and 77% stated that they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their quality of life, as illustrated in the pie chart below (Figure 2). Only 13% were very dissatisfied with their quality of life, whilst 6% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

**Figure 2**

Satisfaction with quality of life



#### Improvements to increase quality of life

Table 1 summarises the responses to the question "Which two or three things most need improving to increase your quality of life". The element which most people (56%) expressed is needed was a nicer local environment. This was followed by:

- a better social life (43%)
- improved safety (37%).

The least number of people felt that access to better quality food (8%) needed improving to increase their quality of life.

**Table 1**

**Table to show factors to improve quality of life**

Element that needs improving	Number of responses out of 78
Nicer local environment	44
Better social life	34
Improved safety	29
Better housing	28
More opportunities for training	24
Better access to childcare	23
More opportunities for learning	20
Better health generally	10
Better quality food	6

The most common responses to “Which 2 or 3 things most need improving to increase the quality of life for your child” were “more opportunities to play outside” (64%) and “more opportunities to play with other children” (54%). The least common responses were “better quality food” (9%) and “more toys to play with.” (8%). The responses to this question are summarised in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

**Table to show factors to improve children’s quality of life**

Element that needs improving	Number of responses
More opportunities to play outside	49
More opportunities to play with other children	41
Nicer local environment	34
More opportunities for learning	29
Better housing	22
Improved safety	22
Better access to childcare	16
Better health generally	12
Better quality food	7
More toys to play with	6

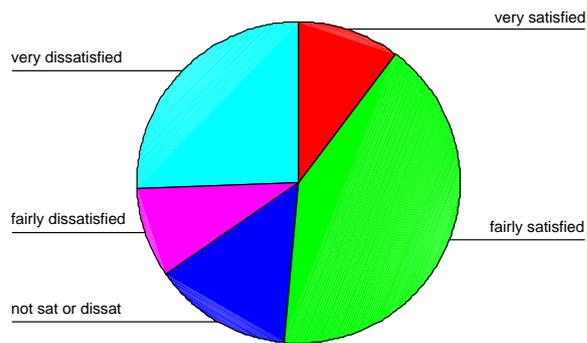
Satisfaction with the local area as a place to bring up young children

Just over half the people (51%) responding to the survey claimed to be either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to bring up young children (under 4 years old), however 26% of people said that they were very dissatisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to bring up young children; this is 16% more than those who felt very satisfied and accounts for almost a quarter of those who were surveyed.

Fewer people (43%) were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with facilities and services in the area for young children (under 4), whilst 47% were either very or fairly dissatisfied with these facilities / services. These results are illustrated in figures 3 and 4.

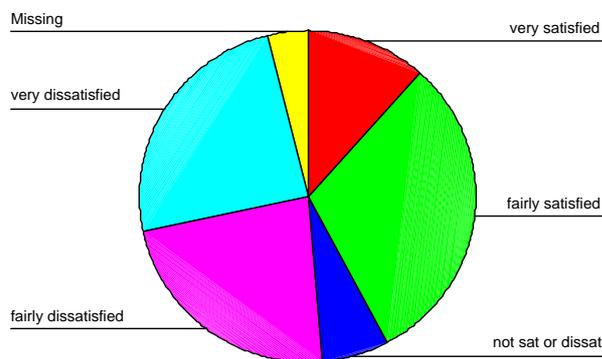
**Figure 3**

satisfaction with the area to bring up a child under 4



**Figure 4**

satisfaction with services for young children in the area



Only 29 people chose to respond to the question "are there any facilities or services for young children under 4, which you would single out as having been most help?". Of these responses 13 singled out Sure Start as having been the most help.

**Table 3**

**Table to show the services singled out as being most help to parents**

Facility / Service	Number of responses
Afterschool club	1
Midwife	1
Housing association	1
Nursery	5
Playgroup	5

Roseheath School	1
Steering Wheels	2
Sure Start	13

Only 12 people chose to respond to the question "are there any services or facilities for young children under 4, which you would single out as having been unhelpful or refused support. Of these respondents, 8 concerned health related services in the area. Table 4 highlights the response to this question.

***Table 4***

**Table to show the services that have been unhelpful or refused support**

Facility / service	Number of responses
Doctors	2
Police	1
Health visitor	4
Post natal services	2
Social services	1
Sure Start	1
Tomorrows People	1

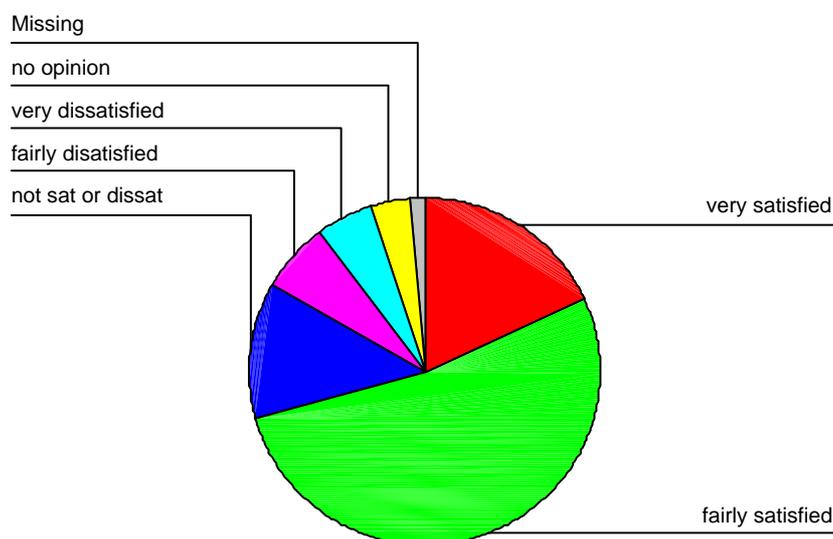
## Use of and satisfaction with health services

### Satisfaction with health services

The majority of people (70%) said that they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with health services in the area, as illustrated in the pie chart (Figure 5) below. However, out of the 12 people who responded to the question "Are there any services which you would single out as having been unhelpful or refused support?" 8 responses stated health related services, such as the doctors and health visitors.

**Figure 5**

Satisfaction with health services in the area



### Use of health services

The most commonly used health service over the past 12 months was the doctors / GP, with 87% of people saying that they had used their GP over the past year; this was followed by the dentist, (56%). Only a small number of respondents had used the following services in the last 12 months:

- Antenatal classes (9%)
- Accident prevention in the home (9%)
- Advice on contraception (8%)
- Advice on giving up smoking (8%)
- Advice on breast feeding (6%)
- Advice on nutrition (6%)
- Social worker (4%)
- Counselling / support for mother with post natal depression(1%)

It should be noted that numbers for using services such as those for mothers with postnatal depression may in reality be higher than the numbers recorded here, due to the perceived stigma attached to being affected by post natal depression and the reluctance to share this information with an unfamiliar researcher.

#### Access to health services

Just under a quarter (22%) of respondents said that they accessed health services in Liverpool rather than Knowsley.

The vast majority felt that the health services they needed were easy to locate (93%) and within walking distance or a short journey by bus (92%).

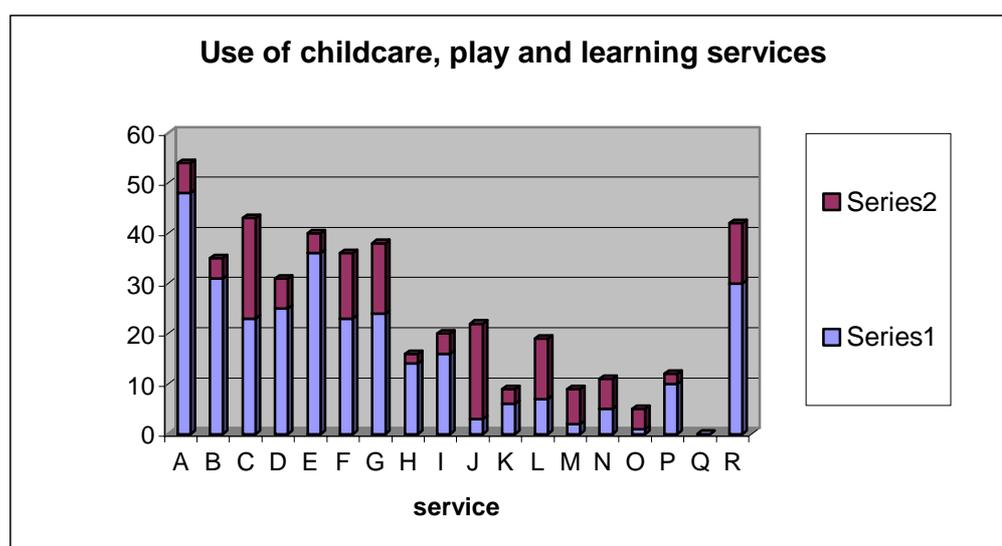
## Use of, and satisfaction with childcare, play and learning services

### Use of Childcare, play and learning services

The most frequently used childcare, play and learning services were relatives (62%), friends (40%), nursery classes (46%) and Sure Start (39%). The services used least frequently were toy libraries (4%), paid baby sitter (8%), part time childcare crèches (3%), full day care nursery (6%), childminders (1%) and playschemes (9%). No one said that they had used specialist facilities for children with special needs or disabilities.

The childcare, play and learning services which parents said they would most like to use or use more frequently than they currently do were parks and play areas (27%), toy libraries (24%), libraries (17%), sports / leisure centres / facilities (18%), Sure Start (15%).

**Figure 6**



### Key

Letter	Service
A	Relative
B	Friend
C	Parks and play areas
D	Mother / toddler groups
E	Nursery classes / school
F	Libraries
G	Sports /leisure centres and facilities
H	Pre-school playgroups
I	Family centres
J	Toy libraries
K	Paid baby sitter / baby sitting scheme

L	Playschemes
M	Part time childcare crèche
N	Full day care nursery
O	Childminder
P	Afterschool club
Q	Specialist facilities for children with Special needs / disabilities
R	Sure Start

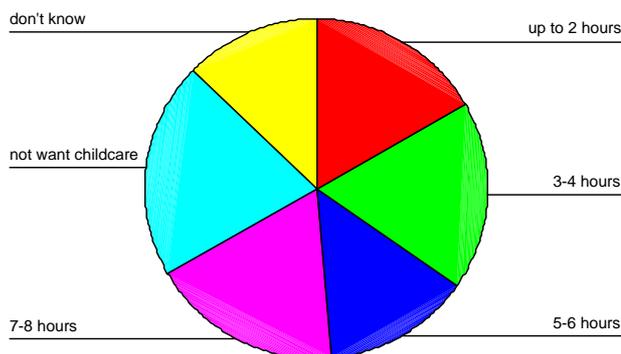
Access to childcare, play and learning services

The majority of people (85.3%) said that they tended to access these services in Knowsley rather than Liverpool.

The number of hours per day that parents would ideally like to have childcare facilities for differed greatly amongst those surveyed, with each choice category receiving a fairly equal number of responses, as illustrated in the pie chart below (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

Ideal number of hours of childcare on an average day



The times which parents would most like to have improved provision for childcare is during school holidays (28%) and during the day, 9-5 (20%).

## Use of, and satisfaction with parent support services

### Satisfaction with parent support services

The majority of parents were either very satisfied (18%) or fairly satisfied (60%) with existing services that support them as parents, only 10% of those surveyed were fairly or very dissatisfied with existing services that support them as parents, whilst 8% said that they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with such services.

### Knowledge of facilities for parents / families in the area

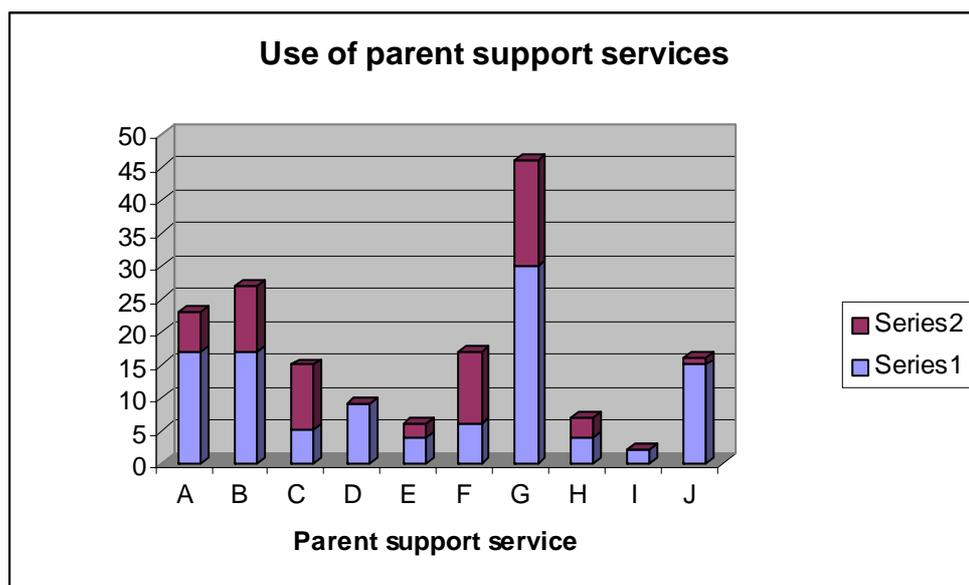
There was only a small difference in the number of people who felt that they knew a fair amount about facilities / services for families in the area (45%) and those who felt that they knew not very much or nothing at all (42%).

### Use of parent support services

The service which was used by the most parents was Sure Start (38%) followed by advice on benefits / money (21%) and drop in groups where parents can meet with other parents (21%). 21% of parents said that they did not use any of the services stated in the survey. These findings are illustrated in Figure 8.

Sure Start was the service that the most number of parents (21%) said that they would like to use or would like to use more often.

**Figure 8**



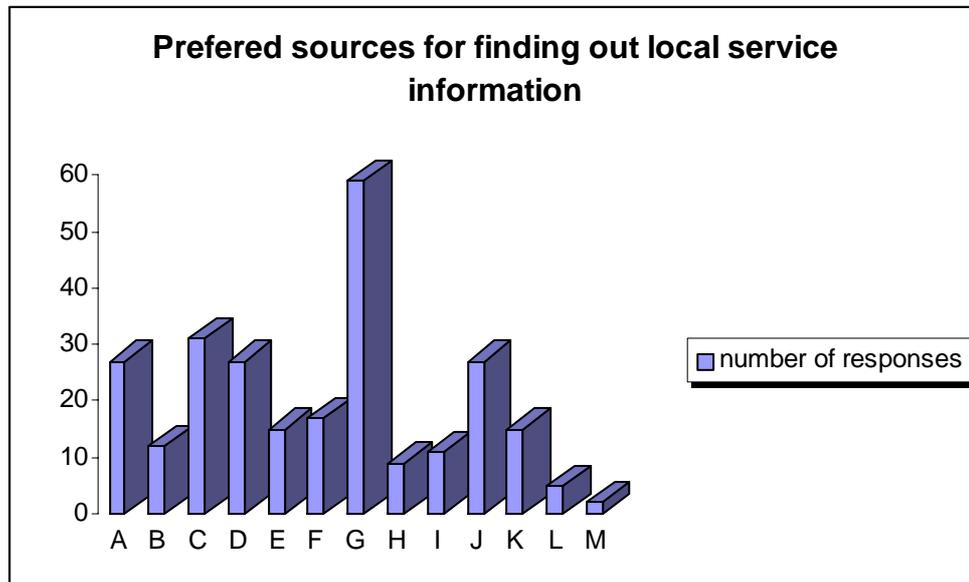
**Key**

A	Advice on benefits / money
B	Drop in where you can meet other parents
C	Support / advice for children who have behavioural problems
D	Support from social services
E	Support for parents with children with special needs
F	Parenting classes / support
G	Sure start
H	Any other place or person that can help the family
I	Other
J	None of these

Information on parent and family services

Figure 9 demonstrates that the most favoured method for receiving information about local services for families with children under 4 was a leaflet through the door of the home, whilst the internet and social services were seen as relatively unfavourable methods of receiving information

**Figure 9**



**Key**

A	Adverts in local paper / magazine
B	Adverts in yellow pages / local directory
C	Adverts / posters / leaflets in doctors surgeries and clinics
D	Adverts / posters / leaflets in local shops
E	Adverts / posters / leaflets in public libraries
F	Adverts / posters / leaflets in churches
G	Leaflet through the door

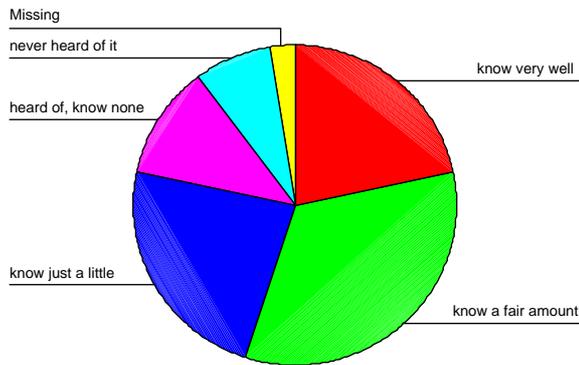
H	Health visitor
I	Midwife
J	School / school teacher
K	Other parents / word of mouth
L	The internet
M	Social Services

**Familiarity with Start Start**

Only 8% of the parents surveyed had never heard of Sure Start, However 44% of respondents knew only a little; the name only; or nothing at all about Halewood Sure Start. The results to this question are highlighted in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10**

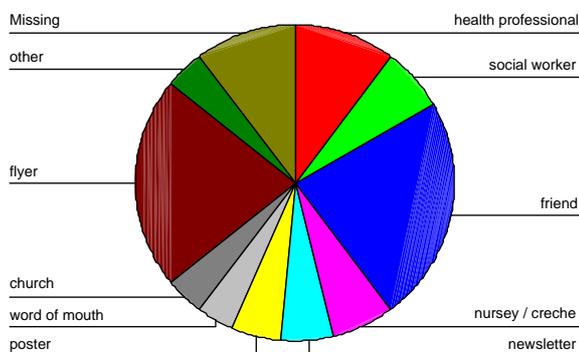
How well do you know the local Sure Start programme?



The majority of people had heard of Sure Start either through a friend (23%) or a flyer (21%).

**Figure 11**

How did you hear about Sure Start?



### Reasons preventing access

The main reasons preventing people from accessing family support services were thought to be a lack of information (35%) and a lack of confidence (23.8%).

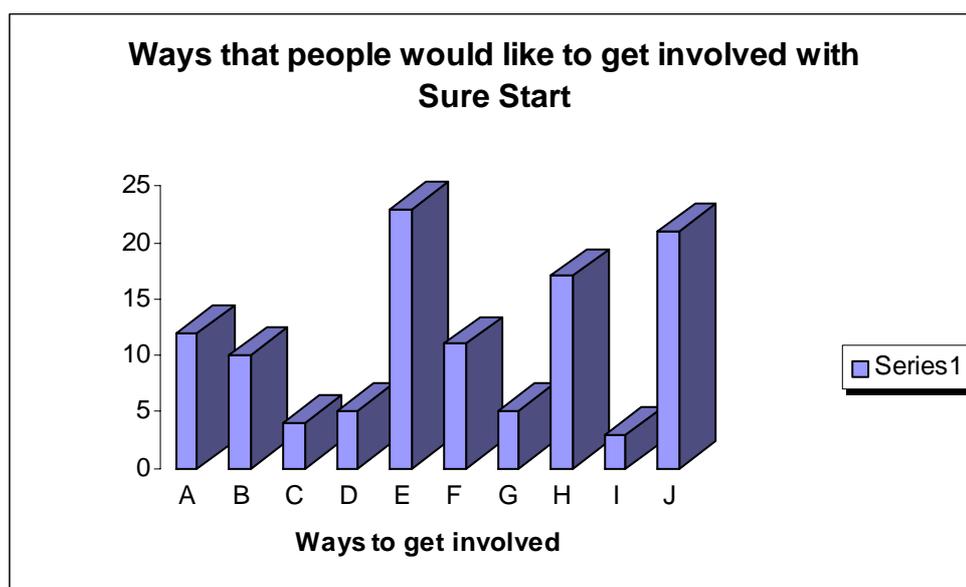
**Table 5**

Reason preventing access to family support services	Number of responses
Lack of information	26
Lack of confidence	19
Difficult to get childcare	12
Wrong time	10
Other	9
Don't feel welcome	9
Not much for parents to do	8
Lack of transport	7
Not much energy	3
Having a child with special needs	3
Not much for dads	1

### Ways to get involved

The main way in which people stated that they would like to be involved in Sure Start was through parent support groups (23 responses), followed by accessing training (17 people). 21 people said that they did not want to be involved in any of the ways listed.

**Figure 12**



**Key**

A	Being involved in how Sure Start money is spent locally
B	Finding out the views and needs of local parents
C	Being a member of the sure Start partnership board
D	Working as a volunteer in services for the under 4's and their parents
E	Parent support groups
F	Childcare
G	Health
H	Education / training
I	Other
J	None of the above

## Conclusions and recommendations

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results of the survey

- Just over half of the people surveyed (56%) said that they knew the local Sure Start programme very well or fairly well. This means that there are still a large proportion of people in the area who are unsure of what Sure Start is or are uninformed about what the programme offers. The need to raise awareness of the programme is a key challenge for the Halewood Sure Start programme over the next 12 months.
- The survey results demonstrate that there is a fair amount of interest in Sure Start and getting involved in various parts of the programme and the services on offer, with 21% saying that they would like to use Sure Start or use Sure Start more frequently as a parent support service and 15% saying that they would like to use Sure Start or use Sure Start more often as a facility for their child. It is vital therefore to ensure these people become informed about Sure Start and engaged in the programme.
- An interesting finding was that people who knew the local Sure Start programme very well or fairly well were more likely to be satisfied with their quality of life. Further research of a more qualitative nature would be needed to find out if this meant that Sure Start is having a particularly positive impact on the lives of parents or if the local Sure Start programme have not yet managed to reach harder to reach families or more marginalised families.
- People who said they knew the local Sure Start well or a fair amount were also more likely to be satisfied with local support services for parents.
- The Sure Start programme in Halewood is the most used parent support service and also the service that people would most to like to use more of, which helps to demonstrate that services are popular with those in attendance and that through this the services are gaining a good reputation and are becoming more in demand. Sure Start Halewood is also one of the most used childcare, play and learning services in the area. This indicates that there is a demand for a range of services offered by Halewood Sure Start and therefore the Sure Start team need to look to ways of utilising, and coping with this demand.
- The majority of people said that they were satisfied with parent support services in the area, although just under half felt that they didn't know much about facilities and services available for families in

the area, indicating that there is a challenge to provide more information and also with regards to the way in which information is disseminated in order to raise awareness of services.

- The main barriers to involvement in parents support services are found to be a lack of confidence and a lack of information.
- Most people who were surveyed were satisfied with their quality of life, although still almost 25% (1 quarter) could not say that they are satisfied with their quality of life
- Just over half of those surveyed said that they are satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children under 4. Just over a quarter said that they are very dissatisfied.
- Less than half of the respondents were satisfied with facilities and services for young children in the area, demonstrating a key challenge for Sure Start in Halewood through their provision of services and their work in partnership with other organisations providing such facilities and services
- The results highlight that there are a number of services that parents are eager to use / for their children to use more of:
  - More play facilities, particularly outdoors in parks and play areas
  - More opportunities for children to play with other children
  - Toy libraries
  - Sports and leisure facilities
  - Libraries
  - Playschemes
  - Sure Start
  - Drop in groups for parents
  - Support for children with behavioural difficulties
  - Parenting classes
- The survey also highlighted that although a significant proportion of respondents said that they did not want childcare, the results provide an indication that flexible childcare is needed at a range of times, in particular during the day (9-5), during school holidays and at weekends.
- The survey results have demonstrated a fairly high satisfaction with health services in the area
- The survey had a lack of responses relating to children who have special needs. It may be useful to conduct further work to assess the needs of parents with children with special needs to ensure that needs are being met and services accessible.

## Summary of recommendations

### **Childcare**

- More information about choice of and access to childcare
- Greater availability of childcare during the school holidays, during the day (9-5) and weekends
- Ensure flexible hours of provision
- Parents would like greater availability of playschemes

### **Play and learning**

- More opportunities to play outside
- More opportunities to play with other children
- Parents would like their children to be able to use parks and play areas more often
- More parents would like to be able to use toy libraries than currently do
- More access to play schemes, Sure Start, libraries and sports / leisure facilities

### **Support for parents / carers**

- More information about facilities / services for families in the area
- More information delivered through the door of families homes
- More information about the local Sure Start programme
- Better access to information on training for parents
- More opportunities for training for parents
- More informal drop in facilities for parent support groups or more information about such facilities already in existence
- More support / advice for parents with children who have behavioural problems

Finally, during analysis of this baseline survey a number of improvements to the design and implementation of the next baseline / satisfaction survey to be completed by Halewood Sure Start have been considered

Information about the following would enhance the conclusions that can be drawn from the survey:

- Age of children in the family
- Whether the mother is in employment, education or training
- Use of and satisfaction with specific Sure Start activities
- Satisfaction with specific health services
- Views of parents who have a child with special needs

It is also recommended that further ways to survey parents are investigated in order to maximise the sample size and gain the views of as many different parents as possible.

Limitations to the results also need to be taken into consideration, for example because the questionnaires were undertaken at an event associated with Sure Start, parents may be

- a) more likely to have heard of Sure Start (although the “Winter Wonderlands” were situated in tents close to local schools thus attracting attention from parents collecting older children from school and dropping in on the way past, rather than being in a Sure Start run building).
- b) more likely to feel that they should respond positively

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