

Sure Start Lightbowne and Harpurhey User Satisfaction Consultation

M.E.L Research was commissioned by Sure Start Lightbowne and Harpurhey in September 2003 to carry out a user satisfaction consultation across the Lightbowne and Harpurhey programme area. Sure Start is a government programme aimed at improving the health and well being of families with children under four years of age. The purpose of the consultation was as follows:

- To establish levels of satisfaction with services in the programme area
- To inform the future planning and delivery of Sure Start services



How did we carry out the research?

Questionnaire Survey

In total, 624 questionnaires were completed across Lightbowne and Harpurhey. These were carried out with parents and carers of children aged under four years. 293 surveys were completed with residents of Harpurhey, and 331 surveys with parents and carers living in Lightbowne.



'Chattabout' sessions

Seven chattabout sessions were held with 51 parents, carers and grandparents of children under 4. Four sessions were held in Harpurhey, and 3 in Lightbowne. The aim of these sessions was to gain more in-depth information about local services, and whether these are meeting the needs of families.

What we found out

Chattabout sessions

Positive aspects of local service provision praised by parents and carers at the sessions included:

- Parent and Toddler Groups/Playgroups
- Midwives
- Sure Start Lightbowne and Harpurhey
- Sure Start trips and days out

Negative aspects of provision included:

- Lack of information on local services
- Parks
- Crime in the local area
- Lack of support for parents
- Lack of contact with Health Visitors
- Poor public transport

Improvements to services

Some of the most popular suggestions for service improvements were:

- More information to be provided about local services, notably Sure Start
- More crèche and day care provision
- More support for recent/expectant parents
- Improved security in parks
- More affordable childcare
- A drop-in centre to be used by parents for information, advice and support
- Leisure facilities for parents e.g. yoga classes
- More baby massage classes
- More community events and fun days
- Childcare provision during school holidays

Questionnaire results

Profile of respondents

- The vast majority of respondents were female (94%)
- Exactly half of respondents were aged 25-34 years, with 38% in the 16-24 age group.

- 92% of respondents were 'British'. Other respondents were 'Black African' (2%), Black Caribbean (1.5%) and Chinese (1.1%).
- Just over half (51%) of respondents had sole responsibility of their child/ children.
- 60% of respondents were 'not seeking work for other reasons'. This aside, 11% were in a part time job, 9% in a full time job, with 10% of respondents unemployed and seeking work.
- 11% of respondents reported to be suffering from a long-term illness, health problem or disability, which limits their daily activities or work.



Sure Start Lightbowne and Harpurhey

Awareness of Sure Start

Awareness of Sure Start Lightbowne and Harpurhey was found to be very high amongst local parents and carers. Overall, 94% of parents questioned were aware of Sure Start. Respondents who were aware of Sure Start were most likely to have found out about Sure Start through:

- A Leaflet/poster (25%)
- Through a friend (21%)
- Through my Health Visitor (15%)

Awareness of Sure Start services

There is variation in awareness of specific Sure Start services. The 3 most commonly known Sure Start services are:

- Sure Start social events (e.g. trips) – 60% of all respondents were aware of the service
- Sure Start baby massage – 55% aware
- Sure Start registration & learning pack- 52% aware

Some services, however, lower levels of awareness, these included:

- La Leche League Training (breastfeeding) - 11% of parents were aware of this service
- Baby Movers -12%

Use of Sure Start services

61% of respondents had already used a Sure Start service. The services that had the highest uptake amongst those parents interviewed were as follows:

- Sure Start Registration and Learning Pack (65% of respondents who had used Sure Start services had used this in the last 6 months)
- Sure Start Social Events (44%)
- Home Safety Equipment Scheme (41%)

The services with the lowest take-up amongst the parents taking part in the survey were as follows:

- Volunteer Project (10% of respondents who had used Sure Start services had used this service in the last 6 months)
- Network of Care (11%)
- Home Start (13%)

Suggested improvements to Sure Start services

The majority of parents and carers could not suggest any improvements that could be made to Sure Start, explaining that they already provide an excellent service. Other parents suggested that Sure Start could improve childcare provision and increase the number of Parent and Toddler groups. Finally, parents called for improved advertising of Sure Start.

Local services for families with children under 4

Use of services

The most frequently used services (used once a week or more) were as follows:

- Parks and play areas (13%)
- Playgroups/play schemes (8%)
- Parent and Toddler groups (7%)



The services with the lowest uptake include Social Services (93% of parents questioned had never used this service) and childminders (92%).

Satisfaction with services

Overall, the services that were most likely to be given a 3 star rating (high satisfaction) by parents consulted were:

- Midwives (with 85% of parents who had used the service giving this service a 3 star rating)
- Nursery classes in schools (84%)
- Crèche facilities (84%)

Whilst the services above were extremely popular with parents and carers, some services showed lower levels of satisfaction. These included:

- Parks and play areas (41% of parents who had used the service gave it a one star rating)
- Social services (19%)
- GP services (11%)

Satisfaction with services in general was shown to be considerably higher in the Lightbowne area.

Satisfaction with Lightbowne and Harpurhey

Services in Lightbowne & Harpurhey

- Results were extremely positive, with 89% of parents satisfied or very satisfied with services.
- Satisfaction was highest in Lightbowne (93% compared to 85% in Harpurhey)

Living in Lightbowne & Harpurhey

- Again, perceptions were very encouraging; with 78% of parents indicating that they are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with life in the area.
- Satisfaction with living in the area was slightly higher in Harpurhey

The appearance of Lightbowne and Harpurhey

- Parents were least satisfied with this aspect of the area. Fifty three percent of respondents were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the appearance their local neighbourhood.
- Dissatisfaction with the appearance of the area was highest in Harpurhey.

Improvements to the area

Parents were asked what could be done to improve life for families with children under 4 years in the local area. The most popular suggestions across both Lightbowne and Harpurhey include:

Improving park and childcare facilities- improving the quantity and quality of local parks and play areas, improving access to childcare and crèche facilities

Improvements to the environment- including cleaner and safer parks and play areas and improving the appearance of the area

Crime and security- increasing the police presence to tackle anti social behaviour.

Support for parents- notably support for first time parents and support for parents to access training.



Improvements to the appearance of the area

Respondents were also asked what could be done to improve the *appearance* of their local area. The most important changes to the appearance of the area identified by local parents are as follows:

Clean up and regeneration- '*cleaning up the streets*' improving housing, roads and leveling pavements

Improving parks and play areas- improving safety and increasing the number of green spaces.

Tackling crime- Parents identified problems with community safety and stressed the importance of tackling anti social behaviour, addressing vandalism and drug dealing.

Training

Overall, 12% of parents questioned were studying or training at the time of the interview. Respondents were most likely to be attending courses in childcare, business, health and beauty and IT skills.

In total, 43% of parents and carers would like to access a/another training course. This need was particularly high in Harpurhey, where exactly half of respondents wished to access training. The training courses with the highest demand were as follows:

- Childcare (n=44 responses)
- Computing/IT (n=38)
- Medical professions including nursing (n=27)

Barriers to training

Overall, 69% of parents and carers consulted explained that there were currently barriers that prevented them from taking up training opportunities. The most important barriers to training were family commitments and the lack of childcare, particularly that which is affordable. Other barriers included a lack of information about the courses on offer and a lack of time to attend training courses.