

SureStart Teesdale

EVALUATION PLAN

Background

Sure Start local programmes have two strands to their evaluation:- local and national; and in every programme data is collected on such items as maternal smoking, educational attainment and childhood accidents. This is anonymised and sent to the national evaluation team for use in the national evaluation of Sure Start. The national evaluation is intended to measure outcomes linked to Sure Start programmes on an aggregated basis and eventually to influence policies on children's services in the early years.

Sure Start Teesdale will collect this data, with parental consent, on all the families in the local programme area. We will hold it on our "Smartstart" database and send it to the Unit. We will also be able, over time, to make a quantitative analysis of our impact locally, using the same data. The database we have bought has the capacity to store data other than that specified by the Sure Start monitoring requirements. This will make it possible to acquire quantitative data in other areas important to our programme, eg access to information, and will feed in to the local evaluation.

The local strand of the evaluation is contextual. The aim of the local evaluation is to:

- help us understand how well services are performing
- keep track of progress in meeting the objectives and targets of Sure Start
- see how far key principles are being implemented

This information can be used to improve the quality of services and will be useful in planning and implementing mainstreaming.

Framework for a Local Evaluation

The purpose is to:

- 1) look at the process of delivering services
- 2) look at cross-cutting processes such as partnership working and inter-agency collaboration
- 3) find out how the local community feels about the services provided

The Sure Start Unit require us to evaluate using the following framework:

- baseline user satisfaction survey with follow-up survey at the end of year three
- individual service evaluation (to include cost-benefit analysis)
- evaluation of partnership working/inter-agency collaboration

Baseline User Satisfaction Survey

The programme holds much information around parents' satisfaction with current services.

- RED's survey of parents perceptions of services (December/January 02/03)
- Minutes/notes of parental consultation meetings in most areas (January–June 03)
- Minutes of parents' forums (ongoing)
- Community appraisals for many of the villages in the Sure Start Teesdale area
- Health needs assessment data
- EYDCP childcare audit

Another survey of parents' views may well be counter-productive. The programme should collate information from the above sources and any others which may be appropriate and produce a baseline report. They should also consider ways in which the survey could be redone at the end of three years (August 2006) so as to reflect genuine views on user satisfaction. An external evaluator should be appointed as soon as possible to do this piece of work.

Individual Service Evaluation

The Partnership needs to decide on which services our local evaluation should focus. At programme level we intend to build in evaluation of process/quality to each activity. This will be through the use of questionnaires, photographs etc. (Appendix 1). The evaluation of different services which are made up of several activities, (eg Baby Play and Parent and Toddler development are activities which contributes to the Creative Play service) will use the ABC framework which reflects our community development approach (Appendix 2). By keeping these records we will be able to assess how users regard our services in many different dimensions. We should also look to find ways in which children themselves can contribute to this process.

We should select which services to evaluate more thoroughly through the formative process and summative phases of the programme using the following typology:

- our most controversial service
- our most typical service
- the service that prompts most concern
- the most used service
- the most costly service

- a good spread between core services

Our aspiration should be to closely involve service users in the choice of areas to evaluate and the actual process of evaluation. External evaluators who can help us set up structures to achieve this should be sought.

Partnership Working/Inter-agency Collaboration

The programme should plan to evaluate the above in terms of programme management and structure. This involves looking at the way in which services are planned and provided and how staff and resources are used. It should include an assessment of inter-agency working and of the involvement of parents in service planning and development.

This part of the evaluation will be invaluable in monitoring the effectiveness of partnership governance and the decision-making mechanisms which we have adopted. An external evaluator would provide an objective and balanced view of these processes and help facilitate the necessary changes.

The programme guidance suggests up to 5% of budget be spent on evaluation. This amount has been set aside in the Finance Plan over the first three years (from August 03).

LOCAL EVALUATION ACTION PLAN

Jan 2004	Hold Evaluation Strategy Workshop to inform brief for evaluators. Write brief for evaluators.
Feb 2004	Invite tenders for evaluation. Evaluation Summary for Sure Start Unit.
Mar/Apr 2004	Appoint external evaluator.
May 2004	User satisfaction survey produced. Evaluation Report to Sure Start Unit.
Jun 2004	Evaluation of partnership/management working begins.
Dec 2004	Report on partnership/management working produced and presented to Partnership Board.
Jan 2005	Evaluation Summary for Sure Start Unit. Evaluation workshop to decide on services to be focussed on for evaluation.
Feb 2005	Focussed service evaluation begins.
May 2005	Evaluation Report to Sure Start Unit.
Jun 2005	Interim feedback on service evaluation.
Dec 2005	Interim report on service evaluation to Partnership Board (including cost/benefit analysis on at least one service).
Jan 2006	Evaluation Summary for Sure Start Unit. Workshop around service development and mainstreaming.
May 2006	Evaluation Report to Sure Start Unit.
Aug 2006	Final Evaluation Report produced and presented to full Partnership Board.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Objectives

Project Objectives	Planned Outputs	Planned Outcomes
1 To provide exercise for local children	a) Swimming club 3 nights per week b) Junior football team 1 night per week c) After school club developing a sports programme	a) Fitter children
2 To encourage school's to remove confectionery from the tuck shop and replace with fruit snacks	a) Providing information to schools on low fat/sugar alternative foods b) Arranging fruit delivery to schools	a) Improved diet
3 To promote breastfeeding support groups for new mothers	a) Providing breastfeeding support in hospital b) Ensure breastfeeding information is available during ante-natal appointments c) Breastfeeding support group information at post-natal checks	a) Improved health of babies
4 To monitor environmental issues affecting children's health; especially in respect of road safety	a) Campaign to reduce traffic speeds past schools b) Monitoring accident rates for RTA's involving children	a) Safer roads

NB: These are examples only

Measuring the Effectiveness of Outputs

Outputs	Indicator	Source of Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Swimming club 3 nights per week ▪ Junior football team 1 night per week ▪ After school club developing a sports programme 	a) Number of children attending the swimming club over a 3 month period b) Number of children attending the football club over a 3 month period c) Number of children participating in after school club sports activity d) Children's comments on their sporting activity	a) Club records b) Club records c) Club records d) Interviews with children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing information to schools on low fat/sugar alternative foods ▪ Arranging fruit delivery to schools 	a) Changes in sales of sweets and crisps b) Changes in sales of fruit and healthy snacks c) Children's comments on their buying habits	a) Shop records b) Shop records c) Questionnaire to children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing breastfeeding support in hospital ▪ Ensure breastfeeding ▪ Information available during ante-natal appointments ▪ Breastfeeding support group information at post-natal checks 	a) Changes in number of mothers breastfeeding for at least 6 months b) Mothers' comments on the value of breastfeeding their children c) Mothers' commenting on the usefulness of information provided	a) Statistics from Health Visitors b) Interviews with mothers c) Focus group with mothers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campaign to reduce traffic speeds past schools ▪ Monitoring accident rates for RTA's (road traffic accidents) involving children 	a) Activities undertaken by the group b) Attitudes of relevant officials to road safety issues c) Dissemination of collected statistics	a) Group minutes b) Interviews with selected officials c) Group minutes

NB: These are examples only