

# **Torbay Sure Start Programmes**

## **Local Evaluation Strategy**

## **Contents**

1. Purpose
2. Background
3. Programmes
4. Establishing Local Objectives and Measures
5. Local Monitoring Systems
6. Cost Effectiveness Analysis
7. Dissemination
8. Appendices
  1. Framework diagram
  2. Programmes Evaluation – Overview of Levels
  3. Outline of MORI Research
  4. Outline of Evaluation Process for Service Delivery areas

## **1. Purpose of Strategy**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to define the Torbay Sure Start Local Evaluation Strategy and the actions required to implement this strategy.
- 1.2 The Local Evaluation process will be operated seamlessly with the National Evaluation methods and will utilise the same data collection and monitoring systems. However, this Strategy does not describe any of the actions required to implement National Evaluation.

## **2. General Points**

- 2.1 Local Evaluation across the Programmes will be led by the Evaluation Sub Groups of the Programmes Boards. The Evaluation Sub Groups will develop and maintain the Local Evaluation Strategy They will assess all local evaluation reports and make any recommended changes to the Local Evaluation Strategy.
- 2.2 The Torbay Sure Start Local Evaluation Strategy is based on the assumption that evaluation is most effective when it is embedded within the Programmes. For this reason the Programme Boards have sought to implement Local Evaluation by including an Evaluation Officer as an integral part of the teams. This will bring the Local Evaluation Process into close contact with the practice base and situate ownership firmly within the teams itself. It should also improve the feedback of findings into Programmes control and objective setting.
- 2.3 The Local Evaluation Strategy shall be based upon the framework defined in the Local Evaluation Brief. An updated version of this Brief is attached with the strategy.
- 2.4 The Local Evaluation Strategy shall be based upon the framework shown in *Appendix 1: Framework Diagram*. Specifically, the strategy will implement evaluation in three key areas:
  - i. Outputs and outcomes of specific services : e.g. support to hard to reach Groups
  - ii. The Programme Boards, as an effective means of representing the needs and views of the stakeholders, and in its interaction with the services and with other agencies
  - iii. Involvement of the community, including parents and children.
- 2.5 The Programmes will commission MORI to undertake a piece of independent research identifying a series of starting points for service delivery. It will seek to establish some information about current service provision and how it meets the needs of people living in the Sure Start area at present. It is anticipated that this piece of work will be completed by the end of Autumn 2003. By December 2003 the results of this survey will be used to make recommendations to the Programmes Boards in relation to particular service delivery areas for the implementation of local objectives. This may require local monitoring systems to be updated.

2.6 The Programmes will implement an evaluation Programmes, as outlined below. This will lead to an assessment of the evaluation process and the planning of further evaluation work. The Evaluation Sub Groups will produce a *Programmes Evaluation Report*, as defined below. The aim is to complete a first round, including a cost effectiveness analysis by September 2004.

### **3. Programmes Evaluation**

3.1 Evaluation of the Programmes will take place at a number of different levels (see *Appendix 2* for an overview of these levels) The key levels within this are:

- *Action Research*
- *Individual Service Evaluation*
- *Local Evaluation*

#### **3.2 Action Research**

As mentioned earlier, an independent piece of research will be commissioned to establish a range of starting points for service delivery. The research will establish key circumstances and challenges particular to the Torbay catchment areas, which the Sure Start Programmes will seek to address. This research commissioned from MORI will ensure that a representative sample of parents living in the Sure Start areas are surveyed, providing a reliable baseline of information that can be treated with confidence. Findings from the research will be used for monitoring, evaluating and developing services.

In the first instance, the action research will seek to establish some baselines regarding satisfaction levels with current services. It will then address a number of key areas, such as special needs, transience and domestic violence seeking opinions on the efficacy of current services and identifying gaps in provision. The research will also seek to establish any key challenges relating to these areas that people living in our Sure Start area face. From this research a number of “starting points” will be identified, against which longer term progress will be measured. These specific starting points will be re-visited in three and five years time to establish the nature of progress made. Whilst the cohort of people surveyed in these later comparative pieces of research may change, we will ensure that they constitute a representative sample of people.

*Appendix 3* provides an outline of the areas that the MORI research will cover.

#### **3.3 Individual Service Evaluation**

Individual service evaluations will consist of a series of initiatives undertaken as part of local service provision. For the most part, they will be undertaken by Sure Start workers at key points within service delivery, for example at the start or end of a particular intervention. In relation to each service delivery area, particular elements of how the service is delivered and what difference it is making will be identified and evaluated. Evaluation methods used will include face-to-face interviews, questionnaires and focus Groups.

*Appendix 4* provides an outline of service delivery areas identified for evaluation and timescales in relation to these.

### 3.4 *Local Evaluation – Sure Start Torbay*

This step within the evaluation process is based on the information gathered from individual service evaluation. The findings of this information will be collated and analysed by the Evaluation Officer and Programmes Manager. They will seek to identify particular trends and themes in relation to the findings and will refer these to key members of the Sure Start teams for consideration of all possible implications. In this way, findings from the multi-faceted service evaluations will be effectively linked back into service planning and delivery. In some instances findings will be considered within workshops attended by relevant members of the teams to ensure that all implications for service planning and delivery are fully considered.

## **4. Programmes Boards Evaluation**

### **4.1 General**

4.1.1 Evaluation of the Programmes Boards will be conducted continuously, from the appointment of the Evaluation Officer who, assisted by the Programmes Manager, will report regularly to the Evaluation Sub Groups.

4.1.2 The results of this evaluation will be presented to the Programmes Boards at regular intervals, at least termly.

4.1.3 At the end of the initial evaluation period the Evaluation Officer and the Evaluation Sub Groups will prepare a report analysing the evaluation and presenting any recommendations to the Programmes Boards.

### **4.2 Attendance and Involvement**

4.2.1 Attendance at Programmes level meetings (principally the Boards meetings) shall be recorded and used to assess individual continuity and representation from the partner agencies.

4.2.2 Attendance records will also be used to assess the seniority of attendees from the partner agencies and the involvement of attendees in their own agency's strategic planning processes.

4.2.3 Attendees shall be asked at the end of each meeting to complete a simple feedback form about the conduct and relevance of the meeting. This form will also provide space for attendees to record any issues they were unable to raise during the meeting.

4.2.4 Attendee participation during the meeting will be recorded from time to time to analyse contribution levels and assist in making meetings more participative and open.

4.2.5 The results of these evaluations will be collected in and disseminated in subsequent meetings, together with any recommendations made by the Evaluation Sub Groups. They will also be included in the overall report produced at the end of the initial evaluation period.

### **4.3 Interaction with services**

4.3.1 The purpose of this evaluation process will be to measure the effectiveness of the interactions between the Programmes Boards and individual services i.e.

how well does the Boards facilitate the work taking place within particular services.

- 4.3.2 The Evaluation Officer will implement a system for recording and tracking issues raised by the services for resolution by the Programmes Boards through to identifying a satisfactory resolution. This system could be used to administer service-related issues as well as monitoring them.
- 4.3.3 The Evaluation Officer will produce a simple report each month recording the status of service-related issues. This could include the number of issues relating to each service and the age profile of open issues. This should be used to inform the Programmes Boards of its timeliness in resolving service-related issues.
- 4.3.4 The Programmes Boards and the Service Delivery Teams will be asked to complete a simple questionnaire once every six months to gather more qualitative data about the relationship between the Boards and services. The Evaluation Officer and the Evaluation Sub Groups will prepare a brief report analysing the results and making any recommendations. This report will be disseminated to the Boards and service delivery staff.

## **5. Evaluation of Community Participation**

### **5.1 Family Forums**

- 5.1.1 The Family Forums will be the main vehicle used to collect the views and concerns of parents involved with the Programmes.
- 5.1.2 The Evaluation Officer will design a simple questionnaire to be handed out at each Forums meeting for completion at the end of the meeting, addressing the conduct and relevance of the meeting and any other views parents would like to express.
- 5.1.3 The Evaluation Officer will analyse completed questionnaires and produce a simple report for dissemination to the Forums and to the Programmes Boards.

### **5.2 Feedback**

- 5.2.1 The Evaluation Officer will design a universal feedback form to be made available for use across the entire Programmes.
- 5.2.2 Completed forms shall be collated by the Evaluation Officer and reported to the Programmes Boards at regular intervals.
- 5.2.3 Specific issues raised through the feedback process should be raised with the Programmes Manager and forwarded to the appropriate person for further action. The Evaluation Officer will track progress of all such actions.

## **6. Programmes Evaluation Report**

- 6.1 At the end of the initial evaluation period, the Evaluation Officer, together with the Evaluation Sub Groups and the Programme Manager/Deputy, will prepare a Programmes Evaluation Report.

6.2 The objectives of this report are:

- To demonstrate the progress and achievements of the Programmes during the evaluation period.
- To demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the services being delivered by the Programmes.
- To identify any areas of concern and make any appropriate recommendations for change.
- To provide a plan for continued local evaluation across the Programmes.

## **7 Conclusion**

7.1 The strategy for the Local Evaluation within Sure Start Torbay will be to establish a comprehensive local monitoring system incorporating the three key stages described above. Additionally, continuous work will take place to ensure that the Programmes Boards and the community as a whole are effectively involved in steering the progress of the Sure Start Programmes of services. This will ensure that evaluation is relevant, timely, and appreciated by all the parties involved and that the Programmes can obtain maximum benefit from this process in reviewing progress towards its objectives.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1:



## Appendix 4: Outline of Evaluation Process for Service Delivery areas

Service Delivery Area	Evaluation Method	Lead within the Sure Start Teams	Commencement Date	Review Date
Support to families with children who are potential at risk	Face-to-face interview	Teams Leader - Outreach	February 2004	Every 6 months
Support for families with PND	Face-to-face interview	Teams Leader – Health	December 2003	Every 6 months
Support for families experiencing domestic violence	Face-to-face interview	Teams leader-Health	October 2003	Every 6 months
Support for women who smoke during pregnancy	Face-to-face interview	Teams Leader – Health	October 2003	Every 3 months
Effective information about the Programmes provided to parents in Sure Start area	Questionnaire	Community Development Officer	August 2003	Every 3 months
Support to mothers in relation to breast-feeding	Face-to-face interview	Teams Leader – Health	March 2004	Every 9 months
Ante-natal advice and information	Questionnaire	Midwife	March 2004	Every 6 months
Family support in relation to mental health issues and substance misuse	Face-to-face interview	Link Worker	December 2003	Every 6 months
Speech and Language Therapy – Early services	Questionnaire	Evaluation Officer	September 2003	Every 6 months
Speech and Language Therapy – DNA's	Face-to-face interview	SALT's Evaluation officer	December 2003	Every 6 months
Improved use of Library Services	Questionnaire	Play Learning and Link Worker	November 2003	Every 6 months
Increasing childcare places	Focus Groups	Play Learning and Link Worker / EYDCP	September 2003	Every 6 months

## Appendix 3: Outline of Mori Research

**1. General levels of satisfaction with current services.**

Questions will explore current facilities, childcare provision and support services for families with children under 4. Levels of uptake, gaps in current provision and related issues and challenges will be addressed.

From this point, questions will be based on the following areas, according to any issues *identified by respondents*:

**2. Children with special needs**

Where relevant questions will be based on current use of local services and facilities including experience of hospital care. Usefulness of current service will be explored and any gaps and other issues identified.

**3. Transience**

Where relevant questions will seek to establish a families first points of contact within the area, what services they are using/aware of and the nature of their support needs.

**4. Women experiencing domestic violence**

Targeted research will be undertaken, facilitated by the current SLA with the women's refuge, to establish key issues for women experiencing violence.

**5. Male Carers**

A key part of the MORI research will be to identify and interview a number of male carers, and to explore their issues in relation to current facilities and services as well as any support needs they might have.

**6. Improving Levels of Literacy**

MORI will seek to establish, what if any issues there are in relation to levels of literacy within the household. Questions will seek to establish any current support needs.

**7. Family Mental Health**

Where relevant questions will seek to establish any mental health issues, their impact on the family and levels of support needed.

**8. Substance and Alcohol Misuse**

Where relevant, questions will seek to determine if families are experiencing any problems relating to substance and/or alcohol misuse. From this information relating to any current support needs will be sought.

**9. Non-attenders at pre-school facilities**

Where appropriate, use of pre-school facilities will be explored and any potential barriers to their use identified.

**10. People who are unemployed**

Where applicable, issues relating to unemployment will be identified, and questions will seek to establish possible reasons for unemployment and related support needs.

# **Sure Start Torbay**

## **Local Evaluation Brief**

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this brief is to provide a framework for producing and implementing a local evaluation strategy.

### **2. Background**

2.1 Every Sure Start Programme is required to monitor its achievement of key objectives and to use this information to assist in setting priorities and improving planning. This process operates at two levels: a national evaluation against pre-defined objectives and monitoring criteria; and a local evaluation to assist the Programme Boards in establishing targets and measuring success.

2.2 The purpose of the National Evaluation is to provide a long-term assessment of the impact and effectiveness of Sure Start across the [United Kingdom]. This will be carried out by collating the results from all Programmes and will inform future policy.

2.3 The purpose of the Local Evaluation is to measure the effectiveness of local services and the achievement of local and Sure Start objectives, and to inform planning where improvements can be made.

2.4 The National Evaluation requires the Sure Start Programme and each of its services to complete regular, defined monitoring reports. The Local Evaluation is intended to operate within the same framework, supplementing these with measures appropriate to the local objectives agreed by the Programme Boards.

### **3. Programmes**

3.1 The Programme for implementing Local Evaluation is outlined below:

3.1.1 Establish a team for each area to be evaluated. For example, particular services may decide that the whole team should be involved in the evaluation process. Parent Groups must include parent and carer representatives as a part of the teams.

3.1.2 Agree a framework of Local Objectives with Programme Boards, covering service outputs and outcomes together with the Programme working practices and processes.

3.1.3 Develop measures and targets corresponding to these objectives and a Local Monitoring System to collect these measures. Ensure that the Local Monitoring System dovetails with national evaluation monitoring and data collection required by other local initiatives.

3.1.4 Involve Programme Board members, Service Delivery Teams, parents and carers in the development objectives, measures and targets, as appropriate.

- 3.1.5 Collect initial measures to establish the “starting points” from which to measure progress through comparison with later evaluations.
- 3.1.6 Develop a Cost Effectiveness Analysis based on the Local Monitoring System to provide the Programmes Boards with feedback on the cost effectiveness of projects.
- 3.1.7 Develop and agree a dissemination strategy that must minimally address the following requirements:
  - i. Routine reporting from a “rolling evaluation” to support Programmes Boards meetings and other milestones relating to meetings. Typically this should involve producing summary reports and poster style single page summaries. Ensure wide dissemination to include parents and carers.
  - ii. Annual Evaluation Report to support the Programmes planning cycle and submitted to the Programmes Boards and Sure Start Unit.
  - iii. Detailed Evaluation Report at the end of year three to assess the overall effectiveness of the Programmes and assist in planning the following three years, submitted to the Programmes Boards and Sure Start Unit.
  - iv. The Programmes Boards may also require specific reports to support the evaluation of particularly innovative services or to cover areas where the Boards has a special concern.

3.2 *Appendix 1* illustrates a framework for the evaluation process.

#### **4. Establishing Local Objectives and Measures**

4.1 Each Sure Start Programmes has been established in response to local needs and is responsible for evaluation of these needs, allocating resources and delivering services to address these needs. All Programmes are limited in time, and must therefore build capacity in their communities to maintain the improvements they deliver.

4.2 A Programmes is required to demonstrate how it is delivering the National Sure Start Objectives and the Sure Start Unit conducts a National Evaluation to assist in this. In addition, each Programme must also establish its own Local Objectives that reflect the particular needs of its community and the specific projects established to address these.

4.3 Local Objective need to be established to cover the following areas:

- i. The operation and outcomes from the Programmes project
- ii. Operation and outcomes from the Partnership Groups
- iii. Effectiveness of inter-agency working across the Programmes
- iv. Involvement of and impact on the Sure Start community

4.4 The Programmes will most likely already have established a set of local objectives. These will need to be reviewed to assess how well they complement the Local Evaluation Process. For example:

- i. Local Objectives need to be focused on short to medium term objectives that can be delivered within the first three years of the Programmes.
- ii. They should reflect the breadth of the services being implemented, whilst focusing on the particular issues facing the community.
- iii. They should be grouped into related sets. For example, Groups may be determined around processes (e.g. one Groups for each service etc) or around outcomes.
- iv. There should not be too many objectives at the Programmes Level, for example, no more than four or five in each Groups and no more than 5 or 6 Groups. More objectives may be established at a lower level if necessary.
- v. They should complement and re-enforce the National Sure Start Objectives.
- vi. They should be readily measurable (see below).
- vii. There should be at least one objective in each Groups that can be assigned a cost (see cost effectiveness analysis below).

4.5 In reviewing existing Local Objectives, the teams should challenge any that are not readily measurable within the time frame of the Programmes and using the resources available to it. They should aim at reshaping such objectives to make them more measurable or replacing them altogether.

4.6 Each objective should be associated with one or more measures that clearly demonstrate how well the objective is being met.

4.7 Measures can be either quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative measures can be used to assess outcomes in the Sure Start community, such as the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy. They can also measure process performance or outputs, such as the number of mothers attending a smoking cessation course.

4.8 Qualitative measures can be used where it is difficult to quantify outputs or outcomes. Measures are achieved by grading or scoring responses. Some examples are:

- Questionnaire responses in the form of graded tick boxes (e.g. Bad to Good) scored as 1 to 5
- Traffic Lights used to indicate progress: green – on target; amber – off target but recovery plan in place; red – off target with no plan for recovery.

- Scored responses can be used to measure the percentage of the community with a particular response, e.g. the percentage of users who consider our service to have significantly helped them.

4.9 Qualitative measures may be better when balanced against quantitative measures. For example, a measure of the usefulness of Programmes Boards Meetings could be matched by the percent of attendance and the percentage of actual to planned meetings.

4.10 Each measure would be assigned a target. Initially these targets may be difficult to determine and should be reviewed and updated as the Programmes develops.

4.11 Once completed, the set of objectives and measures should be reviewed by and agreed with the Programmes Boards and disseminated across the Programmes. Local Objectives and measures should be reviewed after 6-9 months to check their efficacy, and again as a part of the annual planning process.

## **5. Local Monitoring Systems**

5.1 Once the Objectives and measures have been agreed, the teams will need to put in place a Local Monitoring System.

5.2 The purpose of the Local Monitoring System is to gather data relating to the Programmes on a rolling basis that can be used to calculate the measures and can also inform a more detailed annual evaluation.

5.3 The Local Monitoring System must be designed to account for the following:

- i. Existing monitoring systems such as those established by the National Evaluation process and other local initiatives.
- ii. Minimising the impact on those involved to avoid imposing an unnecessary burden.
- iii. Gathering sufficient data to enable a more detailed annual review and to check against chosen measures

5.4 Examples of monitoring systems that might be considered are:

- i. Monitoring forms to be completed by services, such as those specified by the National Evaluation teams.
- ii. Simple questionnaires available for [service users] to complete at any time and given to [users] at particular times
- iii. Simple questionnaires available at each meeting for attendees to complete and leave at the end
- iv. Detailed surveys carried out by means of a focus Groups or workshop on an annual basis, involving communities and professionals.

- 5.5 The outputs from the Local Monitoring System should be collated into a database to maintain records throughout the Programmes existence and ensure consistency of reporting.
- 5.6 Once the Local Monitoring System has been established it will be necessary to conduct regular surveys of the community and service providers to measure progress effectively. It may be necessary to design specific questionnaires to collect data in the absence of established services.

## **6. Cost Effectiveness Analysis**

- 6.1 The teams will need to design a Cost Effectiveness Analysis relevant to the Local Objectives.
- 6.2 The purpose of this Cost Effectiveness Analysis is to determine the costs associated with the delivery of each local objective and assess the benefits of each objective relative to these costs.
- 6.3 The Local Evaluation Teams will need to examine the costing structure of the Programmes to determine how best to map the cost onto objectives. It may be very difficult to assign specific costs to detailed objectives so Cost Effectiveness Analysis may be limited to a subset. There should, however, be at least one costed objective in each Groups.
- 6.4 One way of determining value for money would be to measure the actual costs per unit “delivered” against the target costs per unit. For example:
  - i. The cost of providing a particular service is £12,000 pa.
  - ii. The target for the service is to see 50 people per month, so the target cost will be £20 per person.
  - iii. The actual number of people seen per month was 25, so the actual cost per person was £50
- 6.5 In establishing budgets and setting targets, the teams should use the Best Value principles to ensure that services can deliver value for money. These principles will require the teams to:
  - i. Challenge why and how a service is being provided.
  - ii. Secure comparisons with the performance of others across a range of relevant indicators, taking into account the views of both service users and potential suppliers.
  - iii. Consult local taxpayers, service users, partners and the wider business community in the setting of new performance targets.
  - iv. Consider fair competition as a means of securing efficient and effective services

## **7 Dissemination**

7.1 The teams should agree to produce a set of reports that address the following needs:

- i. Summary reports to support regular meetings such as the Programmes Boards Meetings. These should clearly set out objectives and measures and show progress between this meeting and the last. A scorecard showing key measures could be used for this.
- ii. Quarterly reports in the form of simple posters to be shared across the Programmes and community, showing key objectives, measures, targets and results.
- iii. Annual report providing in-depth analysis of all aspects of the Programmes and recommending any changes required to objectives, measure and/or targets.
- iv. Detailed reports as commissioned to analyse particular aspects of the Programmes.
- v. Final report at the end of three years covering the entire Programmes and its achievements.

## **CONCLUSION**

The strategy for the Local Evaluation within Sure Start Torbay will be to establish a comprehensive local monitoring system incorporating the three key stages described above. Additionally, continuous work will take place to ensure that the Programme Boards and the community as a whole are effectively involved in steering the progress of the Sure Start programmes of services. This will ensure that evaluation is relevant, timely and appreciated by all the parties involved and that the Programmes can obtain maximum benefit from this process in reviewing progress towards its objectives.