



Evaluation Strategy 2004/6

Draft 19/04/04



Evaluation Strategy 2004/06

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1. Introduction

There are two main elements to the evaluation strategy for SureStart. These are:

- **National evaluation**
A comprehensive, long-term national evaluation of the impacts, implementation and economic cost of the programme as a whole.
- **Local level evaluation**
Local level evaluation of individual Sure Start programmes carried out by local programmes themselves and their evaluators.

A pragmatic approach has been adopted when formulating this evaluation strategy in order to make it as user friendly and as straightforward as possible.

This report acknowledges and incorporates the guidance and requirements of the National SureStart Unit and the National Evaluation of SureStart (NESS). The involvement of NESS will be key in our endeavor to ensure that South Westminster's evaluation strategy operates to high standards, uses appropriate methodologies and provides an effective mechanism for the review and improvement of the programme's service delivery.

The ultimate objective is to support South Westminster's strategic decisions through robust evaluative processes, which ensure that we are meeting the needs of our local community through the delivery of an effective programme.

2. Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that South Westminster's Management board:

- ❖ Endorse the Evaluation Strategy set out in this report.
- ❖ Authorise the establishment of an Evaluation Sub Group as set out at 11.1.

3. SureStart Unit Requirements

The Sure Start Unit requires all local SureStart programmes to include three main areas in any monitoring exercise:

- Monitor progress towards the objectives and targets set for SureStart in the PSA (Public Service Agreement) and SDA (Service Delivery Agreement) and in reaching other local milestones and targets.
- Review the working practices and processes (process evaluation) through which SureStart is being delivered.
- Assess whether the services being provided achieve good value for the public money invested in them.

An annual progress report on local evaluation should be completed in January each year. This report should be returned to the SureStart Unit Programme Development Officer and NESS (National Evaluation of SureStart).

A more comprehensive evaluation report should be completed after three years, summarising the first three years and recommending how future services should be developed.

A progress against annual milestone report (M5) should be submitted on 1st September each year, reporting on the previous financial year.

4. Aim of Local Evaluation

Local evaluation should help us answer the following key questions in order for us to make better decisions about service development:

- **Is SureStart South Westminster working?**
Is it reaching local children and families in the way intended?
- **How well is it working?**
Are services having the desired effects?
- **What helps or hinders its effectiveness?**
- **How can the design and implementation of services be improved?**

The guiding principles reflects the broader SureStart aim of improved service delivery through the ability to:

- Co-ordinate, streamline and add value to existing services in the SureStart area.

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- Work with individual families, including mothers, fathers, extended family members and other carers, in ways that build on their existing strengths.
- Promote the participation of all local families in the design and working of The programme.
- Be culturally appropriate and sensitive to particular needs.
- Avoid stigma by ensuring that Sure Start services are of high quality, relevant to local needs and accessible to all local families.
- Be based on evidence of what works and adopt a rigorous approach to evaluating results.
- Adopt practical evaluation methodologies that will effectively deliver answers to the questions that we pose.

5. SureStart Principles

All local evaluation undertaken by the programme should observe the key SureStart principles:

- **Working with parents and children**

Every family should get access to a range of services that will deliver better outcomes for both children and parents, meeting their needs and stretching their aspirations.

- **Services for everyone**

But not the same service for everyone. Families have distinctly different needs, both between different families, in different locations and across time in the same family. Services should recognise and respond to these varying needs.

- **Flexible at point of delivery**

All services should be designed to encourage access. For example, opening hours, location, transport issues and care for other children in the family need to be considered. Where possible we must enable families to get the health and family support services they need through a single point of contact.

- **Starting very early**

Services for young children and parents should start at the first antenatal visit. This means not only advice on health in pregnancy, but preparation for parenthood, decisions about returning to work (or indeed, starting work) after the birth, advice on childcare options and on support services available.

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- **Respectful and transparent**

Services should be customer driven, whether or not the service is free.

- **Community driven and professionally coordinated**

All professionals with an interest in children and families should be sharing expertise and listening to local people on service priorities. This should be done through consultation and by day-to-day listening to parents.

- **Outcome driven**

All services for children and parents need to have as their core purpose better outcomes for children. The Government needs to acknowledge this by reducing bureaucracy and simplifying funding to ensure a joined up approach with partners.

6. Community and Staff Involvement

When used effectively, evaluations can involve Stake Holders in the planning and design of services, while at the same time encouraging review and innovation amongst those delivering services. In contrast a badly conducted evaluation can have the counter effect of contributing to bureaucratic systems and undermining the work of those whose services are under evaluation.

Ownership and full participation of those whose services are under review, in the planning and design of the evaluation is therefore essential from the very earliest opportunity.

As with any effective project: clear objectives, schedules of activity and thorough communication are essential ingredients for success.

7. Stages of Evaluation

In all stages we need to establish the questions we want to ask, the methods we will use, the time in which we have to answer them and the cost.

When	What	Method
Before services are provided	Evaluation looks at needs assessment, which services are needed and for whom	Formative
Early stages (Year 1)	Accountability – are the services, and the whole programme being provided in the way that we planned	Formative & process

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When	What	Method
Up and running for some time - services being delivered (Year 1 / 2)	Clarification – can it be improved?	Process
Up and running – services modified after initial evaluation (Year 2 / 3)	Progress against targets and objectives	Process and outcome
Well established (Year 3 onwards)	Service impact – have things changed	Outcome

NB. The ongoing delay in the recruitment of the full SureStart South Westminster Management and Outreach teams means that for practical purposes local evaluation Year 1 will be 2004/5.

8. Suggested Themes for Local Evaluation

8.1 Year One		
Theme	Focus	Lead
<p>Parental involvement How successful is the involvement of parents in the planning and delivery of services?</p>	<p>Write and implement a parental involvement strategy, to include participation in consultation activities, in consultation with parents' Forum/parents. Fathers Involvement in the process and consultation will be encouraged. (See 11.6 Role of the Evaluation Sub Group.)</p> <p>Involvement in evaluation to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the design of evaluation questions. (see 11.2 Methodologies.) - deciding on methods - planning design - dissemination of findings - membership of evaluation sub group. 	<p>Outreach Team worker, Parents Forum / Employability, in consultation with Outreach Team Coordinator.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cont/d...</p>

Theme	Focus	Lead
<p>Training and capacity building for staff and users.</p>	<p>Write and implement a training and employment strategy that includes the skills required to participate in evaluation exercises. (See 11.3 Training and Practical Support.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake a Training Needs Analysis. 	<p>Outreach Team worker, Parents Forum / Employability, in consultation with Outreach Team Coordinator.</p>
<p>Partnership development and sustainability</p>	<p>Review implementation of SureStart values and management arrangements?</p>	<p>Finance and Monitoring Manager in consultation with Management Board</p>
<p>Additional themes for Year 1 evaluation</p>	<p>Undertake Needs Analysis:</p> <p>Health - to identify gaps in services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special Needs. - training & Employment. <p>Involving Children in Local Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Evaluation of Toy Library project. <p>Parental Satisfaction</p> <p>The Sure Start Unit also requires local programmes to undertake a parental satisfaction survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on one core area e.g. Play, Learning and Childcare or Primary Care and Health. 	<p>Finance and Monitoring Manager in consultation with Outreach Team Coordinator</p>

8.2 Year Two		
Theme	Focus	Lead
<p>Reshape/change services in line with year 1 evaluation.</p>	<p>Commission more detailed (external) evaluation on a service(s)</p> <p>Possible options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - most innovative service - service that prompts the most concern/ controversial service - most highly used service - most costly service or, - selected users and their experience of the programme (e.g. teenage parents). <p>Build in cost effectiveness (of core services or specific services) using programme finance records and relevant literature.</p>	<p>Finance and Monitoring Manager in consultation with SureStart Director, Outreach Team Coordinator and Management Board</p>
<p>Continuation of partnership theme - how well are we working with our partners? Do professionals think that Sure Start has impacted on their work? What is most effective process for setting up effective local services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental satisfaction survey (Year two). 	<p>Outreach Team worker, Parents Forum / Employability</p>

8.3 Year Three (Ongoing)		
Theme	Focus	Lead
Reshape/change services in line with year 2 evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake more detailed analysis of baseline data - are we meeting our objectives and targets? • Focus on mainstreaming. • Maintain a measure of cost effectiveness. • Undertake a Parental satisfaction survey (Year three ongoing). 	Finance and Monitoring manager in consultation with Programme Director, Outreach Team Coordinator and Management Board
Monitoring data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing monitoring data (monthly monitoring statistics, quarterly qualitative reports and 6 monthly/annual reviews) will be used in each year of the evaluation to ascertain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the extent to which individual providers are contributing to the programme progressing against national targets? - whether we are reaching the right people? - which of our services are best used by families and why? - make comparisons between services – analyse variations in take up of service (age, gender, ethnicity, location). 	

9. Assessing Value – Measuring Cost Effectiveness

The SureStart Unit also requires local evaluation to assess value, by using a specific quantitative method (comparing the unit costs).

Programmes are advised to start measuring cost effectiveness in Year 2 (or when services have been operational for 12 months). The exercise should help inform local programmes about the areas in which their resources could be challenged, or should be examined in more depth. As a minimum programmes are expected to assess the cost effectiveness of home visits and childcare.

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The cost effectiveness of any single core service costing more than 10% of the total Sure Start revenue grant should also be thoroughly assessed.

10. Resources

By using a combination of in house and external/independent evaluation, we should ensure that local priorities are given sufficient emphasis and that available resources are used effectively, while external expertise and objectivity can be brought in where appropriate.

No piece of evaluation should cost more than 5% of total programme budget (over and above the costs of monitoring), including cost of surveys.

Budget allocation:

Year 1 Evaluation 04/05 - £21,000

(NB. For the purposes of local evaluation, Year 1 = 2004/5.)

Budget allocation in each year is subject to budget being finalised by the Management Board at the beginning of each financial year and notification of overall budget allocation from the SureStart Unit.

Service provider workers are also expected to undertake or contribute to ongoing evaluation as part of their SLAs (Service Level Agreements).

11. Next steps

11.1 Establish an Evaluation Sub Group (to agree themes, methodology and timescales).

The first step in the evaluation programme will be the establishment of an Evaluation Sub Group (ESG), with a membership that reflects key Stake Holders. It is recommended that the SureStart South Westminster representative on the ESG is the Finance and Monitoring Manager. Such a group would also have the potential benefit of pooling expertise around evaluation and ensuring a multi-disciplinary approach that operated across service and professional boundaries from the outset.

The ESG could also provide guidance in terms of prioritising different subjects for evaluation and ensuring that the recommendations of any such work found practical effect in terms of SureStart's decision-making and service delivery. The establishment of ESG would also in itself be an indicator of the value placed upon evaluation within the Programme.

11.2 Methodologies

Evaluation can take numerous forms and use a variety of methodologies. A comprehensive evaluation of a service often takes several different forms in order to attain a complete picture of all the components that comprise the service. A wide selection of methodologies is available to those undertaking evaluation:

- open interview
- structured interview
- focus groups
- participatory appraisal methods
- structured questionnaire
- semi-structured questionnaire
- participant observation
- non-participant observation
- case studies
- user profiles – service users asked to complete an account of their experiences of using the service
- action Research plan, act, observing and reflecting
- plan Do Study Act cycles
- self reporting survey – diary
- qualitative evaluation
- case record review
- working with other organizations as part of a joint evaluation process
- quantitative evaluation
- pre-paid “comment postcards”.

11.3 Training and Practical Support

We also want to support those working on evaluation projects and ensure that they are working to robust systems through providing training in evaluation techniques – such as questionnaire design, sampling techniques and IT skills. Training, for example in the form of a workshop, would be open to all those working within SureStart – both core team and commissioned services.

Topics covered might include:

- planning for evaluation – project management skills within the context of evaluation strategies
- selecting and prioritising topics for evaluation
- evidence based practice and critical appraisal techniques
- setting objectives for your evaluation project
- looking at sources of data to support your evaluation
- collecting data – different approaches to evaluation, choosing the right methodology

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- questionnaire design, standard setting, written feedback – diaries, interviews, observation etc.
- analysing your data, using computers to collate and query your findings
- reporting back on your findings in a written or visual format
- making change happen – through good project management.

11.4 Organisational Links / Mainstreaming

We also aim to develop our links with other organisations working within the Sure Start area – such as our accountable body Westminster City Council, in order to access the findings of their evaluative work. We also hope to work in a coordinated way with other SureStart programmes in Westminster and Beyond.

Provision of a workshop would also satisfy one of SureStart's key principles of adding value to existing services through mainstreaming the good practice and expertise that exists within the programme. By providing practical training to those working within existing services operating within the local community we will have effectively provided a mechanism for sustaining evaluation and skills around quality improvement.

11.5 Best Practice

We also need to consider how the lessons of good practice can be sustained beyond the lifetime of the Programme and extended beyond the existing geographical boundaries of the Sure Start area. There exists a clear link between Sure Start's responsibility to "Mainstream" its activities and the ability of the Evaluation Strategy to act as a mechanism for this to be achieved. Evaluation has the ability to provide the evidence to support mainstreaming.

A rigorous process of identification, prioritisation and selection, as detailed above, therefore needs to be in place in order to ensure that the limited resources available for evaluation are used to greatest effect.

1.6 Role of the Evaluation Sub Group

The Evaluation Sub Group (ESG) will play a crucial part in shaping the early stages of the strategy. It is hoped that membership of the ESG will reflect those components of the Programme which may potentially become participants in any review. At the same time the ESG will also provide a forum of professional expertise around this area of practice able to provide practical guidance and support.

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Baring these principles in mind it is therefore suggested that members of the ESG include: parent representatives, representatives from our commissioned services, representatives from our local statutory partners in health and social care, staff from within the SureStart core team and those with specialist expertise around evaluation including staff performing a similar function with Westminster City Council.

Terms of reference will need to be developed for the ESG, including arrangements made for regular meetings, a quorum of attendance etc. The ESG will also oversee production of an Evaluation Annual Report.

On a more practical level the ESG will help to select and plan evaluation projects, ensuring that the Evaluation Strategy operates in a co-ordinated way, within acceptable and realistic timescales and to acceptable standards. While at the same time ensuring that recommendations resulting from individual projects are acted upon.

The ESG will therefore play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the Strategy by ensuring compliance with the “best practice” standards discussed above.

Parent’s Forum It is also proposed that in a complimentary role to that of the ESG, the existing Sure Start Parent’s Network will both comment on proposed ad hoc evaluations (questionnaires etc.) and also in themselves form a focus for feedback and comment about existing and future services.

The involvement of the ESG will facilitate Stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process and thereby ensure the Strategy operates within a participatory framework. It may also be possible to deploy parents and service users in implementing particular aspects of the Evaluation Strategy for example as interviewers.

1.7 Ethics and Consent

Evaluation Projects must operate within the standards outlined in existing guidance around these issues. The role of the Evaluation Steering Group should include ensuring the maintenance of expected standards of ethics and consent within all Evaluation Work undertaken within the programme.

Appendix 1.

Evaluation initiatives undertaken prior and during SureStart South Westminster's set up.

Sure Start South Westminster's Planned Service Provision

SureStart South Westminster's Consultation with Parents, Providers and Local Stakeholders

The majority of the consultation that has informed the development of the Delivery Plan was carried out during September and October 2002.

Consultation with Parents

SureStart South Westminster began consulting with local parents of 0-3 year olds and local providers and stakeholders during September 2002. A structured questionnaire was designed for the purpose of face-to-face interviews with parents of under 4 year olds who live within the Sure Start South Westminster catchment area. 215 parents of under 4 year olds, who lived within the catchment area were interviewed during this first wave of consultation.

SureStart South Westminster sought to identify:

- parent's views upon the services available for families with 0-3 year old children in the catchment area, i.e., what they thought was good, what they believed needed to improve.
- parent's level of satisfaction with current services.
- service's which parents would prioritise for short-term and long-term development.
- parent's views on the local services available for first-time mothers.
- whether parents would like to become further involved in the development of the Sure Start South Westminster Programme.

The majority of the interviews were organised and conducted by a staff nurse who was employed on a temporary basis by one of SureStart South Westminster's key partner agencies – Westminster Primary Care Trust.

Additionally, interviews with parents were carried out by the interim programme manager at venues including:

- Pimlico Toy Library
- Bessborough Street Day Nursery
- Pimlico Library.

Surestart South Westminster partner agencies also assisted with the consultation process. Representatives of partner agencies interviewed parents at the following venues and locations:

- Cardinal Hume Family Centre
- Abbey Community Centre
- Marsham Street Day Nursery
- Grosvenor Housing Estate.

On the 30th October 2002, SureStart South Westminster's Parental Involvement Sub-Group organised a consultation meeting with parents held at Westminster Children's Society offices. Local parents were informed about the aims and objectives of the Programme and were invited to comment upon what they considered to be gaps in provision for families with 0-3 year olds, and how they thought parents could potentially become involved in the development of SureStart South Westminster.

Additionally, during October 2002, SureStart South Westminster held focus groups with:

- a local Bengali Women's Group (at Bessborough Street Health Clinic)
- a local Arabic Women's Group (at the Abbey Community Centre)
- a group of Latin American mothers (at the Migrant Resource Centre).

The views and issues highlighted by the parents who attended the focus groups are included in the results section to follow. The Programme intends to revisit these groups during Quarter 1, 2003-2004, to assess their views on the initial impact of the Programme.

SureStart South Westminster is aware that consultation with parents should be an ongoing process. For example, a number of parents were consulted about, and invited to comment upon the content of the Delivery Plan at a meeting of the Parental Involvement Sub-Group on the 16th January 2003.

Consultation with parents will naturally be a key part of SureStart South Westminster's evaluation strategy.

Finally, SureStart South Westminster is planning to develop a parent mentoring project. The development of this project will be part of the remit of the proposed Community and Health Outreach Team. SureStart South Westminster would like parents who sign up to the Mentoring Project to assist with the planning and co-ordination of future research and consultation with their neighbouring parents.

Consultation with Local Providers and Stakeholders

During September 2003 three consultation initiatives were carried out in partnership with local providers and stakeholders:

- a postal questionnaire for (South Westminster based) stakeholders and providers.
- focus group - held at Churchill Gardens Resident's Committee Room – (17th, September 2002).
- focus group - held at Bessborough Street Health Clinic – (23rd, September 2002).

Essentially, local providers and stakeholders were requested to give their views upon:

- examples of where the needs of parents with under 4 year old children were not being met, or could be improved upon
- potential for re-shaping aspects of local provision
- priorities for future development.

Responses and attendance came from representatives of the:

- local daycare/early years sector
- local nursery/primary schools
- local housing sector/ estate management representatives
- local health sector, i.e., Primary Care Trust, (e.g. representatives from the local health visiting team, and Westminster's oral health services).
- local provision for children with special needs
- local community arts sector
- local Jobcentre Plus office.

Summary of the Results of the Consultation with Parents under 4 Year Olds

In terms of the development of the Delivery Plan, the key question asked to parents during the consultation was:

“What services would you like to see developed for local families with 0-3 year old children?”

The most frequent response to this question, given by approximately 80% of those parents who were interviewed, was:

“more local childcare facilities”

Issues raised by parents upon the subject of local childcare included:

- *(most frequently)*... a need for more local crèches
- a need for childcare facilities to be available during weekends
- a need for increased availability, (i.e., opening times/sessions) at the local Toy Library
- a need for more registered childminding places, and more “experienced” local
- childminders
- a need for more full-time daycare places at local nurseries
- a need for a local drop-in childcare venue, which would double-up as a meeting place for local mothers.

One mother suggested that,

“ ... a really good idea would be a community centre or drop-in centre for mothers

and babies with facilities for feeding babies... most ‘groups’ don’t allow feeding of solid food to babies and toddlers so we have to rush a feed or spend a fortune in a café”.

The request for more local crèches was frequently accompanied by a suggestion that a lack of such provision had prevented, (and in some cases, continued to prevent) local parents with under 4 year old children, from undertaking a particular further education course, or a training course. Notably, a number of mothers from ethnic minority backgrounds, outlined how they had been unable to attend a course to enhance their English Language Skills, (for example, at Ebury Bridge College), because they were unable to locate any suitable childcare, for example , a crèche, which could provide care for their child during their attendance at classes.

A number of other issues were raised with recurring frequency by parents of under 4 year olds:

A need for more play areas and playgrounds which could cater for children aged under 4 years

A number of parents suggested that there was a need for more outdoor play areas which could cater for children aged 0-3 years of age. In the opinion of a number of parents local play spaces and playgrounds needed to be better equipped and more suitable for children aged under 4 years.

Quotes from parents included:

“most of the local parks are very small... there is not enough equipment for very young children”.

“ ... security in the local playgrounds needs to be improved”.

A need for more local meeting places for parents with under 4 year old children

Suggestions from parents included:

- A baby club
- A local community café which had a crèche on-site.

A need for more health related support for local mothers, (especially first-time mothers)

Parents highlighted a range of priority issues, including:

- a need for more support and advice with breast-feeding
- a need for first-aid training for new mothers
- a need for more support for mothers who may experience post-natal depression
- a need for more local mid-wives
- more advice upon the oral health of young children
- a need for the provision of weekend ante-natal groups
- a need for multi-lingual ante-natal and post-natal classes
- a need for more advice on child development.

A need for more support for under 4 year old children with special needs

A recurring issue among those parents who were interviewed was a need for more support for children who were experiencing either:

- speech and language difficulties
- behavioral problems.

One parent informed Sure Start South Westminster that:

“... it needs to be clearer as to where parents can access information about assistance for a young child with special needs... this only became clear to me when I signed up to a nursery”.

A need to improve the delivery of information to families

A number of parents highlighted how they did not feel well informed about services available to them and to their children within the catchment area and the wider South Westminster locality.

A number of suggestions were offered by parents, including:

- a central information point which would provide a range of help and advice
- access to information at local meeting places, parks and playgrounds.

Certain parents stated that they would appreciate more advice and support upon social care issues. Additionally, a number of parents from ethnic minority communities outlined how they would appreciate more translated advice materials, especially with regards to information about health and housing related support.

A need for more exposure to the arts for young children

A number of parents suggested that their under 4 year olds would benefit from opportunities around learning to paint and draw outside of local daycare settings where this may have been introduced to them.

A need for more educational and training opportunities for local parents

A selection of parents requested opportunities to attend:

- parenting skills classes
- courses in Basic Skills
- courses in English Language Skills
- homework clubs to support parents and children who are studying English as a second language
- course in improving self-esteem and assertiveness skills
- training to improve parent's employment prospects
- more informal classes that would help to alleviate feelings of isolation for some parents, especially parent who move into the catchment area.
- workshops on issues such as benefits advice and housing rights advice.

Other issues highlighted by parents included:

- a need to make Pimlico Library more child friendly, plus to have satellite libraries within the catchment area
- organisation of regular family fun events
- a need for support groups for parents who have a child who is experiencing special needs

- a need for measures to reduce anti-social behavior among older children, (especially on the housing estates within the catchment area).
- availability of advocacy support for parents

Summary of the Results of the Consultation with Providers and Local Stakeholders

In terms of the development of the Delivery Plan, the key question asked to local providers and stakeholders during the consultation was:

“What would you consider are the main gaps in provision for local families with 0-3 year old children?”

The most frequent response to this question was:

“a lack of affordable childcare places”

This complemented and substantiated the responses upon this issue which were outlined by local parents.

The issues raised by local providers and stakeholders upon the subject of local childcare included:

- a need for more local crèches – especially to support mothers who wished to attend further education or training courses
- a need for the recruitment of more local registered childminders
- a need for more playgroups and drop-in childcare facilities in the catchment area.

Other issues highlighted with recurring frequency by local providers and stakeholders were:

A lack of local Speech and Language Therapy services

An attendee at a focus group outlined how:

“currently all children, including under 4 year olds, in the catchment area may have to wait up to a year for a (speech and language) service”.

Local providers and stakeholders advocated:

- more support for nursery and daycare staff in terms of identifying and acting upon special needs, and/or concerns among parents that a child may have special needs
- disability awareness training for local parents and daycare staff.

A lack of suitable outdoor play space

Those consulted highlighted:

- a need for more 'toddler' friendly outside play areas in the catchment area
- a need for more 'weather' protected outside play areas

An attendee at a focus group stated that:

"...a number of local play areas are always locked up..."

The potential benefits of a multi-use centre

An attendee at a focus group stated that:

"local parents with 0-3 year olds would really benefit from a place like the Portman Centre, which acts as a base for activities at Church Street Sure Start".

A number of ideas concerning the provision at such a venue were proposed, including:

- courses in IT for parents
- base for speech and language support
- community café
- job-search facility/support
- base for English Language Skills classes, (with a crèche on-site)
- courses in basic skills
- health education workshops.

Additional issues highlighted by providers and stakeholders included:

- a need for more home-visiting and community outreach work within the catchment area
- a need for more (*"very popular"*) story-telling sessions aimed at under 4 year olds at Pimlico Library
- a need to encourage mothers of under 4 year olds who are currently living in temporary accommodation to attend classes which addressed their health and their child's/babies health
- a need for more support/meeting groups for local fathers.

Sure Start South Westminster's Plans for Re-Shaping Services

SureStart South Westminster intends to enable a number of local providers and mainstream services to re-shape aspects of their existing provision in order to enhance local services for families with 0-3 year old children.

SureStart South Westminster anticipates that the process of re-shaping existing services will become more pronounced when the Programme has carried out a second wave of consultation with local parents during Quarters 2 and 3 - 2003-2004, plus when the Programme's plans for monitoring and evaluation are fully implemented, and therefore the needs of local families become more evident and quantifiable.

Additionally, SureStart South Westminster anticipates that the proposed Parent's Forum, will play a key role with regards to consideration and implementation of identified possibilities for the re-shaping of existing services.

However, the outcome of the initial consultation, during October 2002, with parents of 0-3 year olds in the catchment area allowed SureStart South Westminster to develop a set of proposals which constitutes the re-shaping of local services. The initial consultation helped to inform the development of one of SureStart South Westminster's Early Services Proposals, Disability Awareness Training, which included an element of re-shaping, i.e., - investing in training to improve practice - (see page 100). The proposal was submitted to the Sure Start Unit in October 2002, (and approved during November 2002).

In November 2002, SureStart South Westminster's Interim Steering Group were invited to prioritise and ratify a number of proposals which contributed towards the re-shaping of local services. These proposals were put together by the Programme's interim sub-groups: Parental Involvement Sub-Group, Health Improvement Sub-Group and the Play, Capital and Environment Sub-Group and the Daycare and Learning Sub-Group.

The proposals are included within the Programme's 10 Year Money Plan. Sure Start South Westminster is confident that the plans for the re-shaping of certain existing services will make a significant contribution in terms of achieving the Programme's local PSA targets.