

Manton Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

Written by: Janet Lang, LANG RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

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45 Caledon Road
Nottingham
NG5 2NF
0115 841 2844
janet.lang@ntlworld.com

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Main Report

1. Background to the Research

- In line with the government's current initiative to introduce Children's Centres into communities which fall within the top 20% of disadvantaged wards nationally, Nottinghamshire has identified 21 communities to receive Children's Centres due to be completed by March 2006. A further 27 in Round Two will follow this, due to be completed by March 2008
- Children's Centres are intended to provide services and support to children, aged from 0-5 years, their parents and carers, based on partnerships between statutory, voluntary and private organisations and the local authority.
- It is the government's policy to develop Children's Centres within partnerships. Some may be based on a 'strong linked' partnership, bringing together existing facilities (e.g. neighbourhood nursery, infants and junior schools, family centre, library, health centre, community centre). Some may involve a new building, creating a one-stop centre attached to or on a school site. Even with a new 'one stop building', there will be a need for sound partnerships with other providers throughout the area.
- All Children's Centres will provide day-care, with a qualified Early Years teacher leading the curriculum. Some day care places in each centre will be reserved for families in the immediate locality.
- Work in conjunction with existing Sure Start programmes is in hand, both to learn from their experience and ensure that remaining capital is spent in a timely and cohesive manner.
- Depending on the variable position in childcare, education and other support in local communities, parents/carers and other residents are likely to have different experiences, and therefore will have variable views and feelings about the advent of a Children's Centre in their community.
- Understanding the views of both users and providers, who may be affected in the short and longer term by the implementation of the programme, is vital to ensure that the rollout of Children's Centres is successful and well received within communities.
- Central to the development of Children's Centres is parental involvement and participation, leading to parental involvement in the management and governance of the centres, as appropriate structures emerge.
- Development of the Children's Centres is for families with children under 5; the centres have the potential for wider community use however and could develop into 'community centres for children' serving a wider age-range and incorporating, for example, after school care, holiday clubs etc.
- The interviews and the focus group were conducted in an inclusive manner, to enable any parent, worker or member of the community who wished to take part in the consultation to do so. The team aimed to comply with equal opportunities policies and principles throughout the consultation.
- Where possible, hard-to-reach families have been included, where service providers or other agencies were able to give contact details and encourage participation.

2. Aim and Objectives of the consultation

- Overall Aim:
 - to find out parents' and carers' views and opinions of services on offer for families and young children in their area and how best their requirements can be met in the future with the development of Children's Centres.
 - to involve community members and partners in planning together to develop the optimal Children's Centre services for the community.

Specific objectives are:

- i. To identify current provision of child care, education, health services, family support, employment and training, leisure facilities and other services relevant to young children and their families, through existing sources where these exist, such as Children's Information Service (CIS), databases or local knowledge
- ii. To identify gaps in the current provision of these services through the involvement and knowledge of service providers, and through discussion with local parents and the community
- iii. To determine which known services on offer are used by parents/carers
- iv. To determine levels of use of services amongst local parents/carers
- v. To gather information on how parents/carers rate the current services used and to seek views on how service delivery could be improved locally
- vi. To understand the likely take-up amongst local parents/carers of the proposed Children's Centre
- vii. To determine an appropriate mechanism for receiving and disseminating information from different local groups
- viii. To identify local anxieties/perceptions/expectations and potential problems for a new Children's Centre amongst parents/carers and partners
- ix. To establish appropriate benchmarks for future research and evaluation
- x. To conduct communications with parents in such a way that future involvement and participation in Children's Centres is encouraged and promoted
- xi. To use the information gathered in the consultation to help create the delivery plan

3. Methodology

- The consultation consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents, through completion of a questionnaire; a questionnaire distributed to service providers and key stakeholders in the area, who were also invited to include a list of services in the area; two focus groups with parents recruited via the questionnaire, who also completed a mapping exercise.

3.1 Parents Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation consisted of interviews with parents. It was planned to include:
 - Parents/carers with children at local schools
 - Parent/carers who are users of local pre-school and other sessions for parents and young children
 - Parent/carers living locally
- Most interviews were conducted on Tuesday 8th November and further interviews were also completed in the following week or so.
- A training session was held prior to interviewing parents, to allow volunteer interviewers to have some familiarity with the questionnaire, to give some pointers on how best to interview parents, taking into consideration the importance of issues such as confidentiality and impartiality. Three local parents were amongst those receiving training, as well as local service providers and community workers. Training certificates were issued.
- Workers from the Children's Centre team, staff from Manton and Ryton Park Primary Schools, staff from Bassetlaw Sure Start, Family Centre staff and other local workers who had volunteered their services conducted the interviews.
- The interviews took place in schools, at nurseries and in the neighbourhood.
- The full list of interviewing locations was therefore:
 - Manton Infants School & Nursery
 - Ryton Park Infant School
 - Priory School & Nursery
 - St Pauls Toddler Group

- Stay & Play Session at Manton Infants
- Lilliput Nursery
- It was also planned that interviews would be completed at the following locations if at all possible
 - Library Van
 - Baby Clinics
- The questionnaire included an incentive prize draw for a child's Arts & Crafts Set, and an invitation to take part in the planned focus group. Contacts details were taken where possible, but this sheet was kept separate from the completed questionnaire.

3.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers were invited along with parents to an open information session, held at Manton School on 20th July 2005, where they were informed about the planned consultation in Manton.
- Some later attended the training session mentioned above when again the purpose of the consultation was discussed.
- They were issued with a questionnaire by post, consisting of open-ended questions, with a covering letter, and they were encouraged to return this.
- They were also asked to complete a mapping exercise, giving details of the services of which they were aware in the Manton neighbourhood, with times and contact details.
- It was hoped to use this to develop a map of services available in the area to identify any service provision gaps or overlaps, and for future planning.
- Other service providers, such as childminders within a 5-mile radius of Manton were also sent the questionnaire, with an explanatory sheet about developments.
- The opportunity to give contact details was given so that the team can make contact in the future, and all but one of the respondents completed this section.

3.3 Focus Group

- Respondents for the focus group were recruited from those who had volunteered to do so while completing a questionnaire. A good response to this was received with some 25 from Manton offering to take part.
- Parents were contacted at random by phone from the resulting list, and 10 agreed to come along to the Manton School Sports Hall on Thursday 17th November, between 9.30 am and 11.00pm. In fact most parents stayed on until the nursery session ended at 11.30 am.
- A free crèche was available at the Stay & Play session in the school for those parents who wished to use it.
- They were also offered a £10 Wilkinson voucher as a thank-you for taking part in the focus group.
- A letter of confirmation, with venue and time details was sent to these parents on the same day as the phone call.
- A mapping exercise was conducted as part of the focus group to gather knowledge about existing services for them and their children in the area.
- As part of the introduction to the group, an explanation about Children's Centres was given by a local community development worker to ensure that respondents were not confused about the lack of new build in the area. This was seen as a good way of enabling a wider understanding of the concept to be gained by the parents before the discussion started.
- Subsequently, it was decided to hold an additional focus group in Ryton Park School, in order to see if any differences existed amongst this group of parents.
- Parents who live in Manton were recruited by the Head of the Nursery School but because of the Christmas holidays, this did not take place until Tuesday January 17th, between 9.30 am and 11.00pm.
- No-one requested a crèche place, but all those who took part in the discussion again received a £10 Wilkinson voucher.

- The same mapping exercise was carried out with this group, and a brief explanation about the concept of Children's Centres was given.

4. Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 79 interviews were completed with parents/carers in the various interviewing points – this was less than the desired total of 100, which would represent 25% of the total number of children in the area, but was still a useful level of response.
- 72 or 91% of the respondents were female, while only 6 (8%) were male.
- While 51% were under the age of 29, with 4 of these respondents being under 20, 41% were aged between 30 and 39 years. Only five respondents were aged between 40 and 49. One person refused to give an age.
- Just under 1/3 of respondents (32%) had 2 children under 5 in the household, with under half (44%) having only one child under 5. 16% of respondents were reported as having no children under 5 in the household, while 5% (4 respondents) had 3 children under 5 in the household. Two people did not answer this question.
- Most people (44% or 35 people) were reported as having no children in the 5-16 age group. One quarter had 1 child and 19% had 2 children in this age group. 5% (4 people) had 3 children, 1 person had 4 children and 2 people had 6 children all in the 5-16 age group.
- Children aged 16+ were found in only 3 families, one in each instance.
- Between them, respondents had 178 children; the number of families with 1 child was 12, the number with 2 children was 37 (47%) and 18 families had 3 children (23%). Four families had 4 children, and one family had 5 children, one had 8 children, and one family had 9 children in the household. Two respondents did not respond to this question at all, while 3 said they had no children in the household.
- This gives the average number of children per family as 2.3, just about the national average.
- The total number of children aged under 5 in families interviewed was 97, the number of 5-16s was 78, while the number aged 16+ was 3, giving 178 in total.
- Only 2 people of those who responded to this question revealed that they were expecting a baby, with two giving no answer, so the vast majority (95%) were not pregnant at that time.
- Most households (63% or 50 respondents) had 2 adults aged over 18 living together in the household, while 28% of respondents lived in households of only one adult. 5% reported having more than 3 adults in the household and two people said that no one aged over 18 lived in the household. The average was 1.8 people in the household aged 18+.
- 41% or 32 respondents said that one adult was working in the household, with 28% saying that two were working. Just over a quarter (29% or 23 people) said there was no-one working in the household, while 1 person did not respond to this question. Another respondent said that 3 adults were working in the household.
- Just under one quarter (23%) of respondents were working part-time, while 16% said they were working full-time, with only 9% saying that they were unemployed. In addition, over half of all respondents (53%) described themselves as Parent/Carers. One described himself or herself as 'other relative or friend', while 3 did not answer this question.
- 61% (48) of respondents were either married or partnered, while 37% (29) were single; 1 respondent described himself or herself as 'other', such as widowed.
- Asked about their ethnic background, all but two respondents who answered (76) said they were white (96%). One respondent described himself or herself as Indian; another described their ethnic group as Traveller.
- The majority of the postcodes given fell into S80 ***, as follows, with S80 2N being the highest given. Two did not give a postcode at all.

	No	%
S80 2N*	15	19%
S80 2R*	14	18%
S80 2Q*	9	11%
S80 2U*	8	10%
S80 2S*	7	9%
S80 2J*	4	5%
S80 2T*	4	5%
S80 1**	3	4%
S80 2H*	2	3%
S80 2L*	2	3%
S80 3**	2	3%
S80	1	1%
S80 2**	1	1%
S80 2B*	1	1%
S80 2P*	1	1%
S81 0**	2	3%
DN22	1	1%
None given	2	3%

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 12 completed questionnaires were received from service providers in the Manton area, and all but one gave contact details.
- The disciplines in which respondents worked were as follows:

Table 1 – Partners' disciplines

Discipline	No of responses
Healthcare	4
Education	2
Day Nursery	1
Community Development Team	1
National Childminding Association	1
Adult Community Learning Service	1
Job Centre	1
Library	1
Total	12

- The roles of service providers included:

Table 2 – Partners' roles

Children's Services Co-ordinator
Community Development Worker
Foundation Stage Team Leader
Head of Midwifery
Head Teacher
Health Visitor
Lone Parent Advisor
Midwife

Nursery Manager
Partnership Worker
Public Health Facilitator
Senior Project Manager

- Between them, the respondents have a total of 75 years worth of experience, in their current posts, ranging from 3 months to 30 years with an average of 6 years.

4.3 Focus Groups

- In previous Children's Centres consultations, normally only one focus group has been undertaken, but in Manton, it was decided to hold two, in order to capture views of parents who send their children to Manton School and Ryton Park School, to see if there were any differing views about the needs of local parents.
- Altogether, 18 local parents attended the focus groups, out of the 20 who had agreed to come along, which is a very good response rate, including 2 dads, one in each group.
- Between them, respondents had 37 children, of whom 22 were aged 5 or under, and 12 were aged between 6 and 11, but no-one had children of their own aged 11+, other than one mum who had 3 step-children, who were all of secondary school age.
- Apart from two mums with one child, the mothers had at least 2 children - 8 had 2 children, 5 had 3 children, and 1 had 4 children.
- This gives an average of 2.3 children per family, more than the national average but the same as the reported average of 2.3 seen in the total number of completed interviews.
- Two mums were expecting another child.
- As well as being parents to their children, a few of these respondents were also involved in a variety of roles, including:
 - Two were owners of their own small business
 - Part-time cleaner
 - Catering worker
- Most respondents had lived in the area most of their lives, but three had moved in the last couple of years from elsewhere in the country. All lived in the Manton area of Worksop.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 79 questionnaires were completed, which was a satisfactory response overall, although lower than the target of 100, which would have been more representative of the total number of children in the area, but still a useful level of response.
- Some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, so care must be taken when comparing percentages.
- Some 56% of respondents, mainly women, said that they knew about Sure Start.
- Just over 1/3 did not know, while 5% were not sure.
- An encouraging 23% said that they knew about the proposed Children's Centre for Manton, but the majority (77%) did not know.
- 14 respondents were aware of both Sure Start and the Children's Centre plans, but 30 people who knew about Sure Start did not know about the plans for the Children's Centre.

5.1.1. Services Ever Used

- All respondents were asked which local services they had ever used, by means of a Showcard (see Appendix 2).
- Their responses are shown in Table 3 below.
- Responses are shown for all respondents; and for comparison purposes, responses by female respondents and by those who claimed to be aware of Sure Start, to see whether responses varied at all amongst these groupings.
- Shaded cells represent higher usage amongst women or by those aware of Sure Start than for all respondents.
- Care must be taken where numbers responding are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- The table shows that the Health Visitor service is the most frequently used service at 84% of all respondents in Manton, and amongst 85% of all female respondents. Of those who are aware of Sure Start, 89% mentioned using the Health Visitors.
- In comparison, while 14% overall have used the Home Safety Equipment Service, 25% of those aware of Sure Start had done so.
- Those people who were aware of Sure Start tended to have used services more than all respondents as shown by the number of shaded areas in the Awareness of Sure Start column in comparison with the total column.
- As might be expected, those services which are seen as a necessity (Health Visitor, GP, midwife) score highest, while those which are less widely available (Toy Library, pre-school playgroup) were mentioned less often.
- However, services such as antenatal sessions scored less highly which is perhaps an indication of the practical difficulties of accessing this service, especially after the first pregnancy.
- The Family Centre was only mentioned by 3% of respondents.

Table 3 – Services ever used

Shaded areas represent a percentage higher than the total.

Care must be taken where numbers responding are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.

	Numbers using service	% Total ever used	Female	Aware of Sure Start
Total	79	100%	91%	56%
Health visitors	66	84%	85%	89%
GP practices	62	78%	78%	82%
Midwife	59	75%	76%	80%
Nursery in a school	57	72%	71%	82%
Family member	35	44%	42%	55%
Antenatal sessions	34	43%	46%	55%
Job Centres	31	39%	38%	34%
Children's Library service	29	37%	38%	36%
Friends	29	37%	36%	41%
Toddler group	26	33%	36%	36%
After school club	25	32%	31%	39%
Pre-school playgroup	17	22%	24%	30%
Home Visits	17	22%	19%	30%
Day nursery	15	19%	17%	20%
Further Education	15	19%	17%	25%
Story Time Sessions	15	19%	21%	32%
Speech/Speech therapist	13	16%	17%	18%
Home Safety Equipment	11	14%	14%	25%
Childminder	11	14%	13%	23%
Breakfast club	9	11%	11%	16%
Dietician	9	11%	13%	16%
Toy Library	8	10%	11%	11%
Crèche	7	9%	7%	16%
Parenting advice & guidance	7	9%	10%	11%
Breast feeding group	6	8%	7%	9%
Homestart	5	6%	6%	11%
Independent School	4	5%	6%	7%
CIS	3	4%	3%	7%
Family Centre	2	3%	1%	5%
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	1%	1%	2%

5.1.2. Usefulness of Services

- Respondents were then asked how **useful** they'd found those services they'd mentioned, for themselves and their family. By service mentioned in the previous question, responses were as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 – Usefulness of services ever used

Care must be taken where numbers responding are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.

Service	Numbers using service	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful / not at all useful	Average score *
Health visitors	66	55%	18%	16%	4.0
GP practices	62	55%	18%	8%	4.1
Midwife	59	83%	7%	4%	4.7
Nursery in a school	57	82%	14%	0%	4.8
Family member	35	71%	23%	0%	4.7
Antenatal sessions	34	41%	21%	15%	3.9
Job Centres	31	13%	16%	35%	2.9
Friends	29	62%	28%	0%	4.5
Children's Library service	29	69%	14%	10%	4.3
Toddler group	26	77%	15%	0%	4.7
After school club	25	80%	4%	4%	4.6
Pre-school playgroup	17	82%	12%	0%	4.8
Home Visits	17	41%	29%	12%	4.0
Day nursery	15	73%	13%	7%	4.5
Further Education	15	40%	40%	7%	4.2
Speech/Speech therapist	13	46%	31%	8%	4.1
Home Safety Equipment	11	73%	18%	0%	4.6
Childminder	11	64%	9%	9%	4.2
Breakfast club	9	67%	22%	0%	4.6
Dietician	9	33%	22%	33%	3.4
Toy Library	8	63%	25%	0%	4.5
Parenting advice & guidance	7	57%	14%	0%	4.5
Crèche	7	57%	29%	14%	4.3
Breast feeding group	6	50%	33%	0%	4.3
Homestart	5	40%	40%	0%	4.2
Independent School	4	50%	25%	0%	4.3
CIS	3	67%	33%	0%	4.7
Family Centre	2	50%	50%	0%	4.5
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	0%	0%	0%	3.0
Story Time Sessions					

* Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't know/no response', where 5= Very useful, 4 = quite useful, 3 = neither, 2 = not useful, 1 = not at all useful

- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents, and the closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction.
- The service with the highest recorded level of usefulness, with a reasonable number of responses, is the nursery in a school, with the average of 4.8. The pre-school playgroup scores the same average score, but from a lower number.
- However, the two highest used services – health visitors and GP practices have lower scores than this, at 4.0 and 4.1 respectively.
- Most services score well, and those with lower ratings tend to come from low response numbers.
- Care must be taken with the low numbers of responses for some services, as resulting scores are not necessarily representative of views of all. For example, while CIS scores a high average of 4.7, this is based on only 3 respondents, so while they found the service very useful, this is not necessarily reflective of all users.

5.1.3. Reasons given for services mentioned as being not useful

- Respondents were then asked about any of the services they had mentioned, which they had described as being ‘not useful’ or ‘not at all useful’, and why this was so. The total number of responses was fairly low (28 in total) reflecting the generally high level of satisfaction recorded.
- Fourteen, or half, of respondents were unable to say why they had described a service as being ‘not useful’ or ‘not at all useful’.
- As the responses to open-ended questions, these can seem to be overlapping, but give a flavour of the type of feelings expressed by respondents.

Table 5 – Reasons for services mentioned as being not useful or not at all useful

Service	Number of responses	% of those responding
Total	28	100%
Poor information / advice / communication	2	7%
Health Visitor poor / not needed / not wanted	2	7%
No appointment/waiting long time for appointment	2	7%
Midwife was lazy/rude/Problems with midwife	2	7%
No help/support	2	7%
Other	4	14%
Don't know/no response	14	50%

- It seems that the reasons for the service being described as ‘not useful’ or ‘not at all useful’ focus on negative reasons – ‘not needed’, ‘poor information’ - rather than on specific problems, although the problems with appointments was also cited.

5.1.4. Child-friendliness of Services

- Again, by service mentioned, respondents were then asked how child-friendly they had found the services. Responses were as shown in Table 6.
- The average score gives an indication of the level of child friendliness felt by respondents, with the closeness to 5.0 indicating the level of satisfaction.
- Caution should again be shown when looking at low response numbers.
- Job Centres is the service with the lowest average score (2.1) for Child friendliness, from a reasonable response rate, while Nursery in a school scored 4.9 as did pre-school playgroup. With lower response rates, the breakfast club, crèche and Family Centre all scored 5.0 for child friendliness ie very child friendly, the latter from a particularly low base of only 2 people.

Table 6 – Child friendliness of services ever used

Service	Numbers using service	Very child-friendly	Quite child-friendly	Not child-friendly / not at all child-friendly	Average score *
Health visitors	66	52%	17%	11%	4.1
GP practice	62	24%	19%	25%	3.5
Midwife	59	61%	14%	8%	4.4
Nursery in a school	57	82%	7%	0%	4.9
Family member	35	83%	9%	3%	4.8
Antenatal sessions	34	21%	26%	15%	3.6
Job Centres	31	10%	10%	68%	2.1
Friends	29	76%	14%	0%	4.7
Children's Library service	29	69%	14%	3%	4.5
Toddler group	26	73%	19%	0%	4.7
After school club	25	80%	12%	0%	4.8
Pre-school playgroup	17	88%	12%	0%	4.9
Home Visits	17	47%	24%	12%	4.2
Day nursery	15	67%	27%	0%	4.7
Further Education	15	20%	13%	33%	3.3
Speech/Speech therapist	13	46%	23%	23%	3.8
Home Safety Equipment	11	36%	9%	27%	3.5
Childminder	11	82%	0%	9%	4.5
Breakfast Club	9	100%	0%	0%	5.0
Dietician	9	22%	11%	33%	3.1
Toy Library	8	38%	25%	0%	4.3
Parenting advice & guidance	7	71%	14%	0%	4.8
Crèche	7	100%	0%	0%	5.0
Breast feeding group	6	50%	17%	17%	4.0
Homestart	5	60%	0%	0%	4.5
Independent School	4	75%	25%	0%	4.8
CIS	3	67%	33%	0%	4.7
Family Centre	2	100%	0%	0%	5.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	0%	0%	100%	1.0
Story Time Sessions					

* Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't know/no response', where 5= very child friendly, 4 = quite child friendly, 3 = neither, 2 = not child friendly, 1 = not at all child friendly

5.1.5. Reasons given for services mentioned as being not child friendly

- Respondents were asked about a service they had mentioned as being not child friendly or not at all child friendly, and why this was so.
- Responses were received from about ½ of respondents (40 in total) higher than the response of 'not useful' or 'not at all useful', reflecting the higher level of dissatisfaction in the way children are said to be treated in the area.

- The lack of child-friendly environment, no toys or play area was the most frequently mentioned reason, with a couple of mentions of services not being helpful or having little interest in the child.

Table 7 – Reasons for being not child friendly or not at all child friendly

Service	Number of responses	% of those responding
Total	40	100%
Not child friendly / no toys or play area	28	70%
Not helpful/No interest in child/no patience with child	2	5%
Other	4	10%
Don't know / no response	6	15%

5.1.6. Comparisons of usefulness and child-friendliness

- Looking at both these sets of data – usefulness and child-friendliness - in table 8 and comparing the average scores of respondents' views of parent and child's needs shows the difference in views held.
- The closer to an average score of 5, the more 'useful' or 'child-friendly' a service is considered to be. The difference is shown in bold when the service is more 'child-friendly' than 'useful'.
- From this it can be seen that the crèche is the service with the greatest difference between child-friendliness and usefulness, although this is from a low base.
- The GP practices were viewed as more 'useful' than 'child friendly', while Health Visitors were viewed as slightly more 'child-friendly' than 'useful'.
- The average scores show that these providing a child-centred service are considered more child-friendly than health services.

Table 8 – Comparison of parent and child average (mean) scores

Service	Average score *	Average score *	Difference
Crèche	4.3	5.0	0.7
Independent School	4.3	4.8	0.5
Family Centre	4.5	5.0	0.5
Breakfast club	4.6	5.0	0.4
Childminder	4.2	4.5	0.3
Parenting advice & guidance	4.5	4.8	0.3
Homestart	4.2	4.5	0.3
Friends	4.5	4.7	0.2
Children's Library service	4.3	4.5	0.2
After school club	4.6	4.8	0.2
Home Visits	4.0	4.2	0.2
Day nursery	4.5	4.7	0.2
Nursery in a school	4.8	4.9	0.1
Pre-school playgroup	4.8	4.9	0.1
Health visitors	4.0	4.1	0.1
Family member	4.7	4.8	0.1
Toddler group	4.7	4.7	0.0

CIS	4.7	4.7	0.0
Toy Library	4.5	4.3	-0.2
Midwife	4.7	4.4	-0.3
Antenatal sessions	3.9	3.6	-0.3
Speech/Speech therapist	4.1	3.8	-0.3
Dietician	3.4	3.1	-0.3
Breast feeding group	4.3	4.0	-0.3
GP practice	4.1	3.5	-0.6
Job Centres	2.9	2.1	-0.8
Further Education	4.2	3.3	-0.9
Home Safety Equipment	4.6	3.5	-1.1
Welfare Rights Sessions	3.0	1.0	-2.0

* Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't know/no response', where 5= Very useful, 4 = quite useful, 3 = neither, 2 = not useful, 1 = not at all useful

5.1.7. Most helpful service to parent

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had mentioned was the most helpful to them, as a parent. The following table 9 shows the most frequently mentioned.
- The Midwife was most frequently cited by 15% of respondents as being the most helpful service, followed by the Nursery in a school.
- The Health Visitors were mentioned by 13% of respondents as being the most helpful service to parents.
- However, many respondents found it hard to choose just one service, or even to decide which one spontaneously.

Table 9 – Most helpful service to parent

Service <u>most</u> helpful to you as parent	Number of mentions	% Mention
Midwife	12	15%
Nursery in a school	11	14%
Health visitors	10	13%
After school club	6	8%
Toddler group	6	8%
Day nursery	5	6%
GP practice	4	5%
Childminder	3	4%
Family Member	2	3%
Friends	2	3%
Homestart	2	3%
Parenting advice & guidance	2	3%
Don't know/no response	9	11%

All other services are recorded at less than 3%. Low responses are possibly because of the difficulty in answering the question.

5.1.8. Most helpful service to your child/children

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had mentioned was the most helpful to their child or children.
- The service considered by respondents to be most helpful to their child were again largely concerned with the child's social development, especially the nursery in a school as well as the toddler group.

- Health services such as health visitors, midwife, speech therapists and GP practice were also mentioned by respondents as being the most helpful service for their child.
- The following table shows the most frequently mentioned:

Table 10 – Most helpful service to child

Service <u>most</u> helpful to child	Number of mentions	% Mention
Nursery in a school	26	33%
Toddler group	10	13%
Health visitors	7	9%
Midwife	6	8%
Day nursery	4	5%
After School Club	3	4%
GP practice	3	4%
Pre-school playgroup	2	3%
Speech therapists	2	3%
Don't know/no response	9	11%

All other services are recorded at less than 3%. Low responses are possibly because of the difficulty in answering the question.

5.1.9. Help to use services more often

- A list of suggestions that might help parents to use services more often or more easily was shown to respondents. See Showcard 2 (Appendix 2). They were asked which of those listed might help them.
- In table 11, it can be seen that 'different times of events' was mentioned most often by 39% of respondents, just ahead of 'better public transport'.
- 'Better public transport' was particularly important to younger age groups of parents, although other reasons given were more important to the next age group.

Table 11 – Help to use services more often

Suggestion	Numbers	%	Female	< 29 yrs	30-39 yrs
Different times of events	24	30%	31%	24%	41%
Better public transport	23	29%	31%	37%	13%
Better price	21	27%	25%	27%	28%
Childcare	20	25%	26%	22%	31%
Someone to go with	17	22%	24%	17%	31%
None of these	12	15%	15%	17%	13%

5.1.10. Preferences in receiving information

- Shown a list of ways of receiving information, respondents were asked to say which they would prefer. Results are shown in table 12.
- This would suggest that a newsletter is most favoured, by most respondents, followed by flyer/information sheet and article in the local paper.

Table 12 – Preferences in receiving information

	Numbers	%	Female	< 29 yrs	30-39 yrs
Newsletter	48	61%	58%	61%	56%
Flyer / information sheet	30	38%	40%	46%	34%
Article in local paper	20	25%	26%	29%	25%
Word of mouth (professional)	19	24%	22%	24%	25%
Information session	17	22%	19%	22%	22%
Word of mouth (family/friends)	14	18%	18%	12%	22%

- ‘Flyer/information sheet’ appears more popular amongst the younger age group, compared to other formats overall.
- Although numbers were low, men appeared to prefer a more formal mode such as word of mouth from professionals and information sessions, as well as newsletters.

5.1.11. Three things Manton needs

- When asked what 3 other things Manton needs to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13 – Suggestions to make the area better for parents with young children

Suggestion from respondent	Number	%
Better/Safer/ Cleaner Playground/Park	27	34%
Outdoor/More/Better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities	25	32%
Mother & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups	10	13%
Youth club / activities for older children	9	11%
Clean up drugs / litter/ dog mess	7	9%
Doctor/Health Visitor	7	9%
Drop in sessions / drop in centre	5	6%
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	4	5%
More/Better buses/Pushchair friendly buses	4	5%
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities	3	4%
More/Better facilities for smaller children	2	3%
More support/somewhere for support	2	3%
Holiday activities / care for children	2	3%
Before & after school activities/clubs	2	3%
Days out/Trips/Organised outings	2	3%
Services nearer/ more local	1	1%
Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol	1	1%
Public toilets/nappy changing facilities	1	1%
Further education courses/advisors	1	1%
Other	19	24%
Don't know/no response	5	6%

Play / leisure facilities

- The most frequently suggested ideas focused on play and leisure activities for all, including older children, outside of the Children’s Centre remit, but indicative of the concerns of respondents who feel the lack of facilities for older children impacts on their younger children.
- Some called for general improvements to the area and a meeting place for mums.
- Suggestions were also made for more local services and support, and better public transport.

5.1.12. Thoughts on the arrival of the Children’s Centre

- Finally, respondents were asked whether they had anything to say about the arrival of the Children’s Centre in the area, which was difficult for the majority who had not been aware of the plans.
- Some of those who did comment (13 people or 16%) said they thought it was ‘a good idea’, ‘great’, ‘brilliant’, ‘excellent’.
- 92% of these were aware of Sure Start so it may be that this is giving them a positive view of the possibilities for the area.

- However, 20% said that they were 'not sure' or 'don't know anything about it' so could not comment.
- One person commented that the scheme needs more publicity and information giving, while 2 said they hoped the arrival of Children's Centre services would lead to improvements locally.

5.2 Partners' questionnaire

- Partners' responses varied depending on their role and experience in the area. Anonymised responses are shown in full in Appendix 5, but a summary of responses to each question is given below.
- For each of the questions asked, a level of consensus was shown amongst respondents, as well as some individuals' responses, which were more focused on their own involvement in the community, rather than their views for the community as a whole.
- One respondent commented that as her work covers the whole of the county, she found it difficult to express views particularly about Manton, but her comments have been included as they were said to be typical across the county.

5.2.1. Current problems

Q1. What do you think are the current problems, or gaps in current services, for parents and young families in Manton?

- The overall view is that there is:
 - A lack of services and facilities, and lack of support, for parents with young children.
 - The gaps mentioned included
 - "Mums & bumps" groups
 - Support groups for mums
 - Early Years Play Groups
 - Tumble-tots
 - Playground facilities
 - Childminding
 - Affordable local childcare
 - GP & chemist not easily accessed
 - Another problem mentioned was the suspicion of authority amongst parents, the cost to parents of services and their reluctance to travel far to access them.
 - An insufficient number of professionals to provide a comprehensive service, and a need for more coordinated approach amongst service providers were also mentioned.
 - One respondent suggested a more holistic view:

"Family problems impact on learning. Exclusions – LEA does not so as I can see, view the family as a whole if, for instance, several siblings are all out of school on exclusions. Poverty is an issue, substance misuse too."

5.2.2. Possible Changes

Q 2. In what way do you think the advent of the Children's Centre will change the way services are delivered in Manton?

- Service providers placed much emphasis on the need for greater communication and interlinking of services for better delivery to families.
"It will focus delivery and make it easier to access services, which are sometimes spread out and hard to find."
- However, it appeared that many seemed to believe that the new Children's Centre would be placed in one building, which to date has not been agreed.
- Others were keener to see greater cooperation amongst their fellow professionals and more services acting together for the benefit of parents.

"It is hoped that services will become more interlinked with each other – offering support on a more immediate basis when needed."

"I think it needs close work between various agencies with signposting and holistic approaches to families, their issues and problems."

5.2.3. Biggest Challenge

Q3. What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge locally in developing the Children's Centre in Manton?

- Respondents mentioned the following as challenges to the development of the Children's Centre;
 - The relevance of the idea to local people and making sure it meets their needs so that they will engage with the Children's Centre.
 - One saw the challenge to be getting parents involved and therefore developing the area.
 - Some saw finding a suitable venue as a challenge, although one respondent saw the need to explain the concept of a Children's Centre that was not planned to have a building as a focal point, to be the biggest challenge.
 - Lack of transport to get parents to services in a large area was also mentioned.
 - One suggested that if more jobs could be found timed to fit with school times, the 'centre' would be used more ie for childcare. While this may be true, this is not the sole purpose of the Children's Centre.
 - It seems that there are some parents who are disinclined to get involved with Manton Primary School, maybe for historical reasons of association, and one respondent has mentioned this. This could be a barrier to success of the Children's Centre, if parents believe the service is focused only in this part of the area, or even only in this school building.

"For reasons I do not understand, there seems to be resistance to getting involved with Manton Primary amongst parents."

5.2.4. Effectiveness of Meetings

Q4. If workers from different settings / services have regular meetings to discuss local issues, how useful are these? Are parents invited to these? [Please indicate how often these are held, if at all]

- Most respondents mentioned the Manton Community Alliance, with members from "a variety of local volunteer groups and educational establishments".
- It seemed to be suggested that parents are either already invited to meetings, or will be in the future. However, there seems to be a tendency for Service Providers to be a bit vague about the role of Manton parents, which perhaps suggests this is limited.
- One service provider was more positive about the value of meetings, and the involvement of parents.

"Meetings are important and sometimes useful. Parents have recently been encouraged to join steering group – feel extremely important to be a heard voice and important information source."

- One respondent suggested that the implementation of any change seems very slow.

"The process of going from discussion to real action/change seems very slow. I think parents have been invited."

5.2.5. Partners' Priorities

Q5. What are your top three priorities for developing services or facilities or resources for parents and young children in Manton?

- Respondents were asked to list three things that they thought would be beneficial for the area for parents and young children, which when grouped suggested the following priorities, in order of number of comments, ie Better Support Services received more comments as priorities than other topics.

1. Better support services eg

- “One Stop Shop” for combination of support agencies.
- Drop in services for pre-pregnancy, antenatal and postnatal care.
- Improved networking and coordination of services.
- Midwives clinics in Manton rather than GP premises outside Manton.
- More early years support groups on offer – Mums & Bumps, Sure Tots, Stay & Play and regular weekly slots.
- More front line, ‘hands-on’ staff
- Services available everyday or regular times.
- When all schools offer breakfast clubs, after school clubs and school holiday clubs, then many more families would have parents in work and more likely to be using Children’s Centres.
- Contact Centre for estranged parents to have contact with child.

2. Better facilities for all children eg

- Early Years Provision including play area that is safe and secure
- Activities for older children, over 8s.
- Good quality daily childcare for under 3s.

3. External benefits

- Better benefit levels, better wages.
- To try and convince employers that to offer work in school hours would be a positive and effective change of working practices.
- Sufficient funding to keep centre open for long hours.

4. Need to engage the community

- Continue to listen to community needs – engage local community
- Making services relevant and of value to parents so they utilise these to good effect.
- Showing parents what fun it is to see their children grow and develop with the help of high quality services, trained personnel and plenty of flexibility to encourage parents to raise their own expectations in life if something or some opportunity presents itself which happens to fit eg shadowing, helping, supporting others, leading to increased self-esteem and pride in the area.

5. Literacy improvements

- To increase library usage of families in the Manton area.
- To increase literacy levels of both Children and Adults in the area

5.3 Focus Groups

- As mentioned earlier in this report, two focus groups were held in Manton, one at Manton School and one at Ryton Park School, to see if they were any differing views about the needs of local parents.
- The discussion guide used in the focus groups will be found in Appendix 3. This included areas which reflected the main sections of the parent's questionnaire:
 - Knowledge of services in the area
 - Strengths and weaknesses of current services
 - Areas for improvement in the local area
 - Perceived outcomes from the arrival of the Children's Centre
- Focus group respondents were first invited to undertake a mapping exercise, to gather information about services and activities in the area. This can be seen in Appendix 6
- This showed that peaks of activities in the area fall on certain days, with little known activities on other days.

5.3.1. Knowledge of services in the area

- Parents generally tended to suggest that there were few services for them in Manton, whilst much of what they did access was in Worksop.
- Quite a few activities mentioned were for their older children, while they agreed there was little for the under 5s or for themselves.

"I just go shopping on Tuesdays.

I stay at home."

- Some parents found it difficult to let their older children take part in some of the activities for them, if it meant the younger ones were excluded.

"When they start school and everything's there to entertain them, but not when they're tiny, so if you've got littler ones, like we have, do you let your bigger one go and keep your little one at home or do you keep them both at home? So it's not fair especially like when they're 3 and 4, they want to go with the bigger sisters or brothers."

- Parents often reported the problem of trying to fit the timings of school and playgroups around their daily lives, so that they sometimes found it easier not to attend sessions or appointments because of conflicting times and difficult-to-reach locations, and the cost and hassle of using public transport.

"If you drop your other kids off and catch the bus down to get there on time and then you need a bus back to come and pick them up from nursery.

And it's money as well isn't it?"

- One of the dads, who attended the group, expressed the view that there was nothing specific for him as a dad, and that any sessions that were suitable for the age of his children seemed aimed at women. One respondent mentioned a single stay-at-home dad known to them who felt very isolated.

"He's a single dad, a full time single dad and he's got nowhere to turn to, he can't take her anywhere. He feels as though he's, I don't know, he has tried, but you have toddler groups for women don't you? There's nothing like that really, it's hard if you're outnumbered isn't it?"

- Several of the parents were critical of the St Paul's Playgroup which it claimed should be called St Paul's Bingo, as it had been the practice for parents to play bingo, during which the children were left to play on their own.

"We went to this toddler group and it was really funny actually because all the parents, or should I say the majority of the parents that were there, left the children to their own devices and just went and played bingo."

"They were telling the kids to shut up because they couldn't hear the numbers!"

- Others were quick to point out that this was no longer the case. However it seemed that the reputation of this practice still existed in several parents' minds, from both focus groups.
- Parents in both groups were confused about the time and locations of Story-time sessions in Manton, although they were sometimes aware of them taking place at Worksop library, especially those just up the road at Ryton Park School.
- Those parents who had used the Playzone activity centre for children in Worksop mentioned it enthusiastically, although several in both groups were not aware of it. They liked the idea of all their children, up to the aged of 12, being able to play at the same place, for a reasonable amount, with tiered charges for more than one child.
- One parent mentioned Homestart and was very enthusiastic about the service offered.

"Home Start is like they come out, they come and sit with you if you've got a problem with your kids and to help you and they come and sit with you and just talk to you and you can say anything to them and they'll just talk to you they are, my Home Start worker, is absolutely great."

5.3.2. Strengths and weaknesses of current services

- The services that parents at the Manton School focus group immediately mentioned as being most useful to them were:
 - Nursery School
 - Health Visitors
- Parents at Ryton Park School also suggested these services, along with family members by some mums.
- The School Nursery was recognised as a service that was the most helpful to them as parents because they said that it stops children getting bored at home and gives parents a break.
- But they also felt that it was only true once their children reached the age at which they can attend nursery.

"Once you're up here, you're laughing, but you've got to get them to the age where you're up here."

- Manton parents who knew about the Stay & Play sessions welcomed them, but those without school age children, and those at Ryton Park School, didn't know about them until invited to attend the focus group; they said they had not seen the posters about it, and they had not seen any of the publicity.

"It's brilliant if you've got kids up at school, but I mean the girl who lives across the road from me, she's got a 2 year old and one who's about 6 or 7 months old, she hasn't got a clue about it. Unless you're walking up here you don't know."

- One parent with children at Manton School had been previously, but felt her child was too old for the group.

"Yeah he was just turned 3 and it was beyond him. It was just soft play and they were all babies and it was like, he didn't want to be there, he kept saying when can I go?"

- It was suggested by one mum that as it was younger age children (the under 3s) who are most lacking social activity with other children, that they should form their own group just for this age group.
- Many parents saw the Health Visitor service as very useful, providing helpful advice, although a few did not like the way they commented on issues such as smoking or young parents.
- It was agreed that support and advice rather than criticism was needed, to give them confidence, which could be undermined, especially if conflicting advice was received from midwives or family.
- They also agreed that often by the time they were able to see a Health Visitor, the problem they had been experiencing had often been sorted out.

“And if you do need the help and you ring the clinic you can never get hold of them straightaway, you’re normally waiting 3 or 4 days for them to get back in touch with you and by then it’s been sorted out yourself.”

- Some of the Ryton Park parents seemed to have less satisfactory experiences of Health Visitors, with more difficulty in getting regular visits reported, although this was variable.
- Another spoke of how her initial feelings of intimidation by the Health Visitor were changed, once they’d got to know one another and by the prompt and helpful service received.

“I didn’t like her at first when I first met her, and the way she came across when she came to my house made me feel intimidated. But then after that, once she started coming to the check ups and we met her at clinic and that, I phoned her up, she’d got diarrhoea, she’d got a really, really sore bum, it was blistering and everything and I didn’t know what to use, Sudocream was doing absolutely nothing. I phoned her up and she was there in my house within an hour and I thought that was really good.”

- There was definite confusion about the location of the Baby Clinic, especially now the Shrewsbury Road Community Centre was said to have closed, as this had also been a venue for the Baby Clinic on certain days. A central location in Manton was called for, and to replace the portacabin used for Speech Therapy and Baby Milk collection.
- One parent made the suggestion of a local drop-in clinic, especially where other mums with young babies or newly pregnant women would be, and this was well received. One spoke of attending the twice weekly clinic at Newgate Street, which although not local to her, had been a good service.

“Somewhere where you can drop in and go if you need the help and if you don’t need the help then you don’t need to go out.”

“When I had my baby, there was nobody my age, I didn’t mind mixing with older people you know what I mean, but I would have loved for someone my own age to be going through what I was going through you know, but they just didn’t.”

- Most seemed to have had a good experience and continuity of service from midwives, although one spoke of a friend who felt her midwife’s service was poor because she was a single mum.
- Few considered that antenatal was necessary after the first child.
- For the few parents who had moved to Manton from outside of the area, they felt that it was useful to be able to meet other mums as they had done elsewhere, some instances in a Sure Start setting, to prevent feeling totally isolated.

“It would be a good idea, especially for young first time mums, you don’t know many people who have already got little ones, you don’t really know people but as a first time mum I think you feel isolated especially up here, God, I’m glad I didn’t have my first [here] or I wouldn’t have had no more. You wouldn’t meet anybody, would you, until they got to play?”

- A couple who had moved from elsewhere were disappointed not to find Sure Start in Manton, so went to Langold to find out about local services, as they had been unable to find out anything locally.

"It took us to go all the way out to Langold to find out and literally found there was nothing in Manton, we were absolutely devastated really because we'd come from literally everything, loads of things going on our doorstep and to nothing, absolutely nothing."

- Some suggested the doctors' practice as the most useful service to them, but there was strong disagreement about this, largely dependent on which practice parents used.
- The Newgate Street practice was criticised for:
 - having no toys for children to play with while waiting to see the doctor
 - having a non parent-friendly appointment system, with long waiting times
 - problems with accessing the upstairs surgery (the lift does not accommodate double pushchairs, and only just fits in a wheelchair, with no room for a carer)

"Even if [only] one's ill, I've still got to take them both if nobody's at home and I can't go in the lift with the buggy so I've got to take them out, carry them upstairs and your bags..."

- nowhere safe to leave buggies, other than on clinic day, when there is someone to watch over them. Parents were concerned about the potential for theft of their pushchairs.

"When it's baby clinic upstairs, there's a lady there who watches your prams but when it's just normal doctors, I went with this tandem buggy, I said to her, the lady downstairs, can I leave it here so you can watch it? She went no, it's not, it's up to you. I went where am I going to put it like? She just said take them out and carry them upstairs and leave your pram there but it was down to you if it got stolen."

- Parents who were registered with the Larwood surgery were much more enthusiastic with the service received, with a child-friendly appointment system, although they also reported that there were few toys or other amenities to keep their children occupied while waiting for their appointment.

"If it's kids under 5 you're in straight away, if there's a problem with you, they get a nurse practitioner to ring you back and if she thinks it's something important then you'll get an appointment but if it's something that she can write you a prescription for, all you do is go and collect the prescription."

- The stress of having to cope with small children at the doctors, which were not felt to be very child-friendly, lead to the suggestion from a mum about the need for a crèche or similar at the doctors.

"What would be a brilliant idea, but I don't think they'd do it, is do you know at your doctors just to have a little crèche or something to put, you know when it's for you, to pop them in. Just like if you've got a smear or something, and you've got nobody about to have your kid, do you want your little toddler sat there watching?"

- Many respondents stressed their dependency on their family for support with their children, especially in visits to the doctors, and wished that either there was more support for all of them or more flexibility in the timing of appointments having to fit in with school times.

"If you haven't got family about, if you've got somewhere where you can just put them for five minutes, just go and get yourself sorted and come out and you're laughing. If you haven't got anyone to have your kids you're stuck."

- No facility exists in Worksop for minor operations on the under 5s, so parents have to travel to Sheffield, which some find difficult.
- Mention was made of how the Manton Community Alliance has been trying to establish a doctor's surgery in Manton for at least one day a week, although parents felt this would not be enough and were generally disbelieving that this would actually happen.
- Some of these parents had been to the Albion Family Centre, but this was seen by some who hadn't been there as a place for people with problems, so there were concerns about being seen going into the building, and especially the impression it might give other people.

"I'm not being awful but going there, I mean I'm not being funny, my husband and his mates, if you walked through the door of a battered wives thing, even if I were only going to playgroup, I know it sounds, you know what men are like, but he wouldn't like that."

- Others suggested that Manton people were often prejudiced about a place or service, more than in other areas, and that it would take a lot for this prejudice to be removed, which could have an impact on the development of the Children's Centre in Manton.
 - The Community Centre in Shrewsbury Road was also held in suspicion by some the group and was suggested by some as a place to avoid. The facility was not being used by most in the group, so they were not sure of what it was like, and some claimed to be scared to go in.
 - One mum spoke of problems with bullying of children at sessions there and how those in charge at the Community Centre were unable to resolve this to her satisfaction.
 - Many seemed to feel that the Community Centre was not a facility to which they wished to go, that it catered for *other* people, not for them, although some had been on courses there quite happily. It seems that the Community Centre needs to have more of a purpose to encourage more usage as a venue for these mums.
- Some parents, with a disabled child or a child with special needs, either in the family or that of a friend, spoke of the problem of dealing with some difficult situations locally.
- One mum with a disabled child spoke of her earlier difficulties having to take both children to the doctors, but how the intervention of the nurse had made all the difference to her visits, although she felt she was also learning to cope with her situation.

"I don't always have to, but one time I took them both and I had a doctor's appointment and I just had to walk out in the end because it was too much, one was playing up and it was just a nightmare. But I've been since and the nurse has been really good and I've had both of them at the nurse and that, and she's been good."

- Other parents were indignant on her behalf that she should have to learn to cope with the situation, feeling that more should be done for her and her children.
- Better access and facilities for children with Special Needs or with a Disability were felt to be required, with individuals mentioned as having specific needs, which Manton School could not totally provide.
- One mother spoke of a child who currently has to take her child home at lunchtime, as the Council does not give enough funding for support all day, although this is being sorted out.
- They spoke of the apparent difficulty of recruiting dinner ladies prepared to cope with the additional requirements of Special Needs children.
- Manton School parents think that the buses in the area are not child-friendly, and are difficult to access; the drivers were also thought to be less than child-friendly, although some thought that this was because they were not allowed to help people on and off the buses.

- Those with children at Ryton Park also spoke of the difficulties in accessing buggy- or wheelchair-friendly buses, which affected all age groups.
- Travelling with small children and pushchairs on buses, which are not easy-access, can cause problems in visiting the doctors or other places in town, with small children, disabled or not.
- Several mums at Ryton Park School spoke about their reasons for sending their children here, even though they might live closer to Manton School. In some instances, this was for ease of access to Worksop town centre after dropping children at school, but in other cases, it was the reputation that Manton School was not such a good school and had poorer results.

“That’s the reason why I didn’t take my kids to Manton because I’d have to get a bus to come into town if I’m shopping when I’ve dropped them off and then by the time I get a bus and the little one’s only in a pram then, I had to fold the pram down, try and get that on a little bus and it was just a nightmare.”

- Manton School parents also described the problems they face when collecting older children from the school with pushchairs, as the congestion in the doorway causes problems but they don’t want to leave their pushchairs outside, again for fear of theft.

“It’s just open yeah, there’s nothing like that up here for, I mean I’d love it if you could just leave it, you know, just take your daughter out and leave the pushchair there, knowing that no-one’s going to touch it or anything but you can’t.”

- The Job Centre was not felt to be particularly child-friendly, with parents reporting being asked to leave if children were crying, and that no facilities for breast-feeding, or toys for children, were available.
- Parents with young children felt very uncomfortable in the Job Centre, as if they were not welcomed.
- In contrast, parents at Ryton Park agreed that they appreciated the manner in which the school and nursery staff spoke to them and their children, which made them feel valued as a person.

“They talk to you like I’m talking to you, like you’re a person. They talk to the children like they’re people as well rather than being a bit patronising, yeah? Some schools, they tend to talk down at the children, don’t they? I think here they don’t do that, they just treat them as equals.”

- The lack of feeding facilities was also reported elsewhere in Worksop, along with very few toilet facilities for parents with young children. The toilet facilities were not readily available in the library for small children, even at the Story Time sessions, although pregnant women were said to be able to use it. While they recognised that public toilets were often subject to abuse, they felt that at such sessions for young children, the lack of facilities was discouraging some people from attending.

5.3.3. Areas for improvement in the local area

- Some parents spoke about the lack of suitable jobs that would fit around school times, and the cost and availability of good childcare.
- They also were concerned about leaving their children in the care of someone unknown and in whom they did not have confidence.

“Because one, you don’t want to put on people, two the situation that I’ve been going through has been tough on my kids and I want to be there for them, I don’t want it to be somebody else trying to deal with their situation when it should be me and other thing, you’re worse off if you go out to work, you’re a single mum, if you go out to work you’re worse off.”

- Even those with family living locally did not feel able to rely on them for childcare on a daily basis, or especially in the summer holidays.

“And like you’ve said you’ve family around you but you don’t want to say right, every Monday to Friday in the school holidays you’ve got them like 10 till 4 or whatever because then it doesn’t become a novelty to your parents or nanna’s or whatever, they don’t, if they know for the school week they’ve got your kids it’s not like them saying can I have the kids today or can I have the kids at the weekend?”

- There was also the conviction that they would be worse off financially, especially once childcare had been paid for, including those who had been to Job Centre Plus.

“And then like how much would you have to earn to be able to pay a childminder to look after your kids? There’s absolutely nowhere to leave your kids - if you wanted to work you can’t.”

“They calculated it saying I’d have a certain amount of money extra each week and be able to live and I’d be quite happy, I was meant to have like £40 extra money in my pocket just to do what I wanted with after I’d paid my bills and everything, but I worked out I was £5 worse off before I started.”

- Parents also felt that a major hindrance to their working was the lack of suitable, and affordable, play schemes or childcare in the school holidays.

“There’s a school holiday club now but that’s £8 for half a session, which is like 8 until 1 or 1 until 6, or £15 for a full session, which is great if you’ve got 3 kids you’re really bugged, and if you’ve got 2 kids that’s £30, you’d have to have a good job and work all day just to pay for them, so you’re no better off.”

“Knowing it’s there so when, I mean say, like going for a job and thinking right, there’s after school club or there’s breakfast club, but what do you do in the summer holidays?”

- However, many of the parents though the after-school and breakfast clubs at school were good value and much enjoyed by their children, but these were only suitable for school-aged children, so did not solve the problem of under 5s.
- The lack of confidence in their children’s ability to stay with unknown people did not extend to school or nursery, as this was compulsory, something over which they had no choice, compared to leaving them at a childminders.

“You don’t have a choice in taking them to school but you’ve got a choice in leaving them with childminders.”

- However, it seemed that their image of a childminder was very negative compared with that of a nursery.

“That would be different as well, if you drop them off at somebody’s house, a childminder right, that’s one thing, but if you drop them off in a room full of loads of other little kids and they’ve got an art table, a painting table, a cutting and gluing table, it’s like ‘See you then mum’, and they’d be off.”

- The Manton School and Ryton Park School parents spontaneously mentioned the need for a park and/or playground in the area, but for all ages of children.
- The Ryton Park parents were keen that smaller parks in different parts of the area were required, to provide a something for all children, feeling that one big park would be less well used.

“It’s finding an area to actually put it, I think we need one in quite a few areas, because Manton is such a big place you know. If you put it at the top end then the ones at the bottom end won’t be able to get to it, if you put it at the Manton end then the ones at the top end won’t be able to get to it.”

- One of the group spoke about the plans of the Manton Community Alliance in conjunction with the local authority to develop a new playground in the grounds of the

Community Centre on Shrewsbury Road, on the existing BMX track, which was not well received by many of the parents.

- As this part of the grounds is out of sight, the concerns of both sets of parents focussed on the potential for vandalism and lack of use, as younger children would be unlikely to be allowed to use the playground alone; they also spoke of the need to retain the BMX facility for older children.
- Some called for an old playground opposite the shops on Edinburgh Road to be reinstated, as this was felt to be more convenient for parents, and more secure as CTV cameras were already installed, but were told that the Council would not agree to this because of restrictions on the grant allocation, in that the site was not considered big enough as a multi-ball play court had to be included.
- It was also explained that the MCA were also hoping to include some play equipment for young children on the Edinburgh Road site, but at the time this was unclear.
- It was clear that the difficulties in trying to find a way to satisfy both the Council and local opinion were proving difficult for the parents on the MCA.
- Some of the Ryton Park parents suggested a park should be placed near the old people's homes, but while some felt that the elderly would complain about this, others thought the sight of young children playing would be welcomed.
- Other requirements of this group were for activities for children in the school holidays, including the under 5s, especially where children and mums could attend together.

"Yeah it could do with clubs in the school holidays, not just for 5 years and above but for little ones and not ones where you take them and leave them like the school ones, ones where you can go to like a mum and toddlers."

- A couple spoke about a session they had attended in the school holidays, but which was primarily designed for older children without their parents in attendance, so that activities were not geared up for young children.

"Yeah, they did it one day in the school holiday, you just go and sit there and we went and the kids from the school holiday club whose mums weren't there went and that was about it."

"And not a lot of people turned up either, did they?"

"They didn't have anything for the little ones".

"They need to advertise more as well."

- Most parents were unaware of this scheme, but welcomed the idea so as to avoid having to take children to expensive places in the school holidays just to entertain them. They agreed that the long summer holiday was a major problem for parents – too long and too expensive!
- One of the parents at the Ryton Park focus group mentioned the problem of getting children to learn how to swim, as the school no longer takes them swimming.
- They spoke about finding it easier to take their children swimming on the bus to Retford than taking two buses to get to the one in Worksop, but that this was quite an expensive excursion.
- Parents spoke about the difficulty of getting to see a dentist in Worksop, as NHS lists appear to be full.
- They felt it was important for their children to be registered with a dentist, in order to ensure their teeth were well looked after.

"You've got doctors and all that lot telling you look after your teeth and all this lot, how can you look after your teeth if you can't take your kids to a dentist."

- They spoke about having to be referred to a dentist by NHS Direct and using a relative's address elsewhere to get their children to be seen by a dentist.

- Others spoke of the high costs associated with visiting a dentist experienced by those who had managed to get an appointment, with deposits of £15 and charges of £50 for a consultation.

"If you go to a dentist in Worksop they all say no, but if you phone the NHS Direct number up they said right, go to this dentist, I said I've just been there and he told me no chance for 6 months, they said no, you go back there in 10 minutes, we phone them up and they see you there and then. So I went back down and they said yes, NHS Direct just phoned me up you're on our books now and that's it, I'm on their books."

- Another problem that parents spoke about was the amount of dog muck found on the streets in Manton, especially on the way up to the school, according to some.
- Some thought that any money spent by the council on bins specifically for dog muck was a waste of time because the bins would get vandalised or would not be used, as people would be reluctant to pick it up.
- Others suggested that there was a need for litterbins as well, instead of the two litter pickers said to be in Manton because of the lack of litterbins, as this would be cheaper, but not all were convinced this would work.

"They got misused and burnt and that's why they gave us a litter picker instead of giving us more bins. They're trying now to give us more bins to overcome the litter and the dogmuck but it's not going to work, I don't think, because they'll all get misused again."

- There was a call from some for adults to keep Manton looking good by taking more care over litter etc, but they felt this needed more effort from adults to set a good example to young people and children.

"The adults need better education. It's not the children, because the children are being brought up how the adults have brought them up, it's the adults that need to be trained into using them isn't it?"

- The discussion turned to the Manton Community Alliance, which was known about by everybody, by the presence of the office on Edinburgh Road, although not all were sure about what it actually does for the neighbourhood. One respondent was still involved with the Alliance, while another had been in the past.
- While most felt the individuals involved were approachable and well intentioned, several felt that the Alliance didn't advertise itself or its events as much as it could.
- There was a feeling that more regular receipt of the Newsletter would be good, as not everyone claimed to receive on – the distribution was felt to be a bit 'hit and miss'.
- In talking about how best to receive information from schools or elsewhere, these parents were not convinced that newsletters were a good idea if sent home with children, as they tend to get left in school bags, or missed if the child is not in school. Some saw communication as a big issue to be resolved.

"Communication for a start because I mean when we were sort of like in the Alliance, we found out quite a few things that were going on but then we've not had a newsletter for I don't know how long, we hear nothing now, we don't seem to get anything through the door, we don't know anything that's going on. You've got to do the running to find what you want and you come up against a brick wall because it isn't there."

- The ideal would be for newsletters were posted once a fortnight, if funding allowed. There was the suggestion that funding for joint newsletters from the MCA might be available to raise awareness of services.
- The discussion about the impact of two Community Cops in Manton, jointly funded by the MCA and the Police, was generally positive, in that most thought this demonstrates a visible sign to potentially misbehaving kids and brings a level of satisfaction to local people. However, some thought that the money could be better spent elsewhere.

- Some of those who had been involved with the MCA were becoming disillusioned, feeling at a disadvantage to some of the service providers, in spite of training received.

“The service providers are a select few, not all of them, some of them are brilliant, but a select few it’s bully boy type tactics and to be honest it shouldn’t be like that.”

“Yeah, but you’re just residents so they think that they can turn round and say what they want and you’re not going to stand up for yourself, don’t they?”

- There seems to be a level of disillusionment amongst some residents in Manton that involvement with the MCA is proving difficult for them; this is something that the Children’s Centre needs to be aware of when developing partnership working in the area.
- Some parents mentioned their concern about the use of the name Children’s Centre, suggesting it implied social services had ‘taken over’. They felt that work would need to be done to ensure the stigma attached to social services did not transfer to the Children’s Centre.
- Word of mouth was felt to be very important in reducing this stigma, and would also be preferable to newsletters that either might not be seen, or would a problem for those with dyslexia or literacy problems.

5.3.4. Good things to come from the arrival of the Children’s Centre

- Initially, many found it hard to identify what improvements would come about with the arrival of the Children’s Centre, but those who had experienced a Sure Start either locally or elsewhere in the country talked enthusiastically about potential benefits.
- They mentioned such things as baby massage, opportunities to make friends and have some one to talk to about concerns with children etc; childcare; good buildings and facilities.
- While some parents in Manton had been able to access Safety Equipment because of being on benefits, they felt that if Sure Start could provide this for all parents, as suggested, this would be a good.
- Other parents thought these initiatives would be good for them and Manton in general, provided they were well advertised to encourage take-up and ongoing use, so as not to waste more money.
- They generally did not have any concerns about the arrival of the Children’s Centre in Manton, although there were anxieties about the lack of a specific venue and how this would work in practice.
- Alternatively, those who had been told that the building was to be built at Manton School had been concerned that this would not be central enough for access by all of the community so parents from both schools seemed pleased when told this was not believed to be the case.
- Some felt that because the children of people in the MCA generally attended Manton School, this was seen as the focal point of all activities in the area, so a more central location and inclusive organisation would be better for the community.
- A parent at Ryton Park School who had experience of Sure Start elsewhere spoke about the vegetable and fruit bags organised with local farmers. It was felt this would be a good idea for all the community, but needed to be organised in a central location, not at Manton School as had been suggested by the MCA.

“If you’re here it doesn’t bother you because your kids are here so... it is a big them and us. That’s why it needs to be independent like somewhere like the community centre building or you know, at the end of the day, somewhere that’s completely separate from schools, and bringing people together.”

5.3.5. Issues arising from the Focus Group

- Many of the issues that emerged from the discussion amongst parents in the focus groups reflected those found amongst partners, service providers and from the questionnaire.
- It seems that there are some parents who are disinclined to get involved with Manton Primary School, maybe for historical reasons, and one service provider respondent has mentioned this. It will be important to encourage parents to be able to use any venue that delivers services for them and their children, but this may take time.

"I must admit I wasn't impressed with that idea [building new Children's Centre at Manton School] because, although I actually live in the next street to Manton Primary, it was so out of the way for everybody living this side it needed to be centralised and I was thinking that's unfair because my kids aren't at Manton Primary and I felt a bit, I felt like an outsider."

- Some parents thought a centre with swimming, ice-skating, soft play and activities for all ages of children would be ideal for the community. The preliminary results from the information evening that took place in November, in which local residents were invited to say what they would like from a potential centre for sport, education and healthy living, also identified that Sports facilities were high on the list of requirements, although this centre aims to be more than that. Future work in conjunction with the development of the Children's Centre will be vital.
- The concerns that some parents feel about leaving their child with someone unknown, and the long term suspicion of some services or organisations will mean that it may take time for the Children's Centre to become accepted.
- One mum at Manton School expressed the frustration felt amongst them

"Everyone's trying to make Manton better, Manton can't be better until we've earned money, and we can't earn money when we've got no decent childcare, and we do care about our kids, and we don't just want to leave them, we don't want to dump them on the street and pay a fortune for it into the bargain."

- The relationship between the Manton Community Alliance, local parents, service providers and the Children's Centre is crucial and one that needs to be developed in a positive spirit.

6. Key messages for the future

- The interviews with parents, the focus group and input from the partners show a high level of agreement about the needs of parents and young children in Manton for the future.

These include:

- More up-to-date information about services and activities to be available to parents in a format and location/s to be agreed, but somewhere accessible to the majority.
 - Raised awareness of existing services across the area.
 - Increased provision of relevant services for families with young children in the area.
 - The need for more play and leisure activities, for young children, throughout the year, with their families, and for older ones as well.
 - Provision of a focal point for parents and children.
 - The coordination of service providers and improved partnership working to deliver services.
- While the consultation necessarily had its limitations, due to lack of time and resource, the results are still felt to be representative of the community; it was always seen as a first conversation to provide a basis with which to build the future Children's Centre in Manton.
 - There is the need to assure parents and partners that the Children's Centre is sustainable and that the involvement of all parties is crucial in its success, as well as allowing parents to take ownership of the Children's Centre, to be jointly engaged with professionals in the provision of services for them and their families.
 - This consultation and the planned feedback session are the starting points from which services for children under 5 and their families will develop. There is every reason to think from responses that parents will become involved, so that the Children's Centre becomes their service, rather than something delivered to them.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Showcards

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Service Providers / Partners

Appendix 4 – Discussion Guide for Sure Start Children's Centres Focus Groups

Appendix 5 – 'Other' Responses from Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 6 – Responses from Partners and Service Providers

Appendix 7 – Mapping exercise: Current Services in Manton