

North Leverton Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. Nottinghamshire has been given approval to develop 21 Children's Centres in the county by March 2006, 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, and involving local parents in the planning, delivery, management and evaluation of their local Children's centre.
2. All Children's Centres will provide day-care, with a qualified early years teacher leading the curriculum, with some day care places reserved for local families. Other core services are support to child minders, play and early learning for the 0-3s, health and family support, and opportunities to access training and employment.
3. The overall purpose of the consultation in North Leverton, as elsewhere, was to inform the community about the forthcoming Children's Centre development, determine the views of parents, carers and partners, to identify knowledge and views of current services and the perceived needs for the future for families; to involve parents, carers and partners in developing future services for the community, and use the output from the consultation to help in the development of the delivery plan for North Leverton Children's Centre.
4. The full report discusses the consultation in greater detail; the report, with appendices, is available from Di Kingaby, Children's Centre Development Officer or Janet Lang, Consultant and author of this report, or will shortly be available as a pdf file from www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/eydcp/childrenscentres.

Questionnaire completion

5. After an initial meeting with partners to explain the purpose and process of the consultation, self-completion questionnaires gathering their views were completed and returned by 6 service providers.
6. Members of the Children's Centre team conducted interviews with 28 parents and carers, of whom 12 volunteered to take part in the planned focus group, to be held in Leverton School the following week.
7. In fact, more were keen to take part, but in order to use the school premises for the focus group and the crèche, it was planned to take place on the school inset day, which meant that some parents were unable to come along, as no childcare would be available for their older children.
8. This is an indication of the keen interest shown by parents.
9. While only 28 interviews were completed, which is low for statistical purposes, but represents about one quarter of all potential respondents.
10. Some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, so care must be taken when comparing responses. Percentages have not been shown, as these could be misleading with such low numbers.
11. Figures must therefore be taken as an indication of parents' views, rather than being representative of the whole.
12. All respondents were female and the majority (18) were aged 30 to 39.
13. While 13 respondents said they had children under 5, slightly more (14) had no children of this age; only 2 said they were pregnant at the time.
14. More (25) had children aged between 5 and 16, but no one had children over 16.

- 15. Levels of employment were high with only 2 respondents saying that no one in the household was working.
- 16. The average number of adults 18+ in the household was 2.0.
- 17. All respondents described their ethnic origin as white.
- 18. 16 of the 28 respondents had known about both Sure Start and the proposed Children’s Centre in North Leverton, about which 22 of the 28 had been aware.
- 19. Asked about local services ever used, the highest mentioned were:

- Pre-school playgroup (25 out of 28)
- GP Practice (24)
- Health Visitor (24)
- Midwife (22)

20. Other services which received a lesser number of mentions included those specifically for children, such as

- Children’s Library Service (18)
- Family Members for childcare (16)
- Nursery in a school (12)
- Toddler Group (11)
- Friends for childcare (11)

21. All other services received less than 10 mentions, apart from Antenatal, which received 12 mentions. This is perhaps an indication of the difficulty of accessing antenatal services, especially for subsequent pregnancies.

22. Respondents were asked how useful, and how child-friendly, they had found the service they’d mentioned. From the results, an average (or mean) score was calculated showing which service was most highly rated, with 5 being the highest possible score. (See tables 4 & 5 in main report).

23. The following scores show that these services tended to be very highly rated.

	Ever used	Mean score* - usefulness	Mean score* - child-friendly	
Pre-school playgroup	25	4.7	4.8	<i>Child-centred service</i>
GP practice	24	4.7	4.8	
Health visitors	24	4.9	4.8	<i>Health Services</i>
Midwife	22	4.8	4.4	
Children's Library Service	18	4.4	4.6	<i>Child-centred services</i>
Family Member	16	4.9	4.9	
Antenatal sessions	12	5.0	3.9	
Nursery in a school	12	4.8	4.9	
Toddler group	11	4.3	4.7	
Friends	11	5.0	5.0	

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

24. The child-centred services tended to be considered more or equally 'child-friendly' than 'useful', whereas the Health Services were all more 'useful' than 'child-friendly' except for the GP practice.
25. Reasons given for perceived shortcomings for any of the services included being 'not child-friendly', 'no toys or play area', but responses were very low (See table 6 in main report).
26. The most helpful service cited by parents for themselves from the list shown was Pre-school playgroup by 8 respondents, followed by the GP at 4 mentions and Family Member at 3. (See table 8 in main report)
27. The one most helpful service for the child was again said to be Pre-school playgroup (14), with all other mentions at 2 or less. (See table 9 in main report)
28. Most parents suggested that different times of events would help them to use services more often, followed by 'childcare' and 'someone to go with'. 'Better public transport' was the last choice of these respondents. (See table 10 in main report).
29. The preference for receiving information tended to be by newsletter or information sheet. (See table 11 in main report)
30. Asked what 3 things North Leverton would need to make it better for parents with young children, the most frequently suggested ideas focused on play and leisure activities for all children, including older ones, indicative of the concerns of respondents who feel that the lack of facilities for older children impacts on their younger children.
31. However, the top mention was for more further education courses and advice provision.
32. Only a few respondents mentioned the need for facilities for small children and childcare, but this probably reflects the age of the respondents and their children.
33. The need for more community facilities was also mentioned. (Table 12).

The Focus Group

34. Ten parents were subsequently selected at random from the 12 available for the focus group, of whom 6 took part.
35. Between them, the respondents had 16 children, with only three aged 5 or under. All had lived in the area for some time, although a couple had previously lived in Newark and Retford. They carried out a mapping of services and activities during the focus group. (See Appendix 6 in main report)
36. On the whole, the findings of the group reflected the results from the questionnaire.
37. Most of the mums were in agreement about the usefulness of the pre-school playgroup, which was said to have been established in Leverton for around 30 years, both for the opportunity for socialising for their children, and for themselves.
38. Some said that although they had lived in the area for many years, they felt quite isolated as mums at home with children, and welcomed the opportunity to both get to know other mums and, for some of them, to get involved in village life.

"When I first started bringing my daughter, even though I'd lived in the village a long time, I didn't really know anyone, I'd never really mixed apart from family. To me, it was a community, I made friends, you get involved from there really. As well as being a benefit for her, it was also a benefit for me. It got me out too."

39. Although they felt their GP and Health Visitor service was very good, their main concern was the lack of opportunity to attend specific sessions at times which fitted in with the family commitments, to the extent that some essential appointments e.g. Well Woman clinic were being deferred.
40. Many were dependent on family to help with childcare and other support in their lives.
41. This group seemed particularly keen to access training and other course – they spoke highly of the library service in the guidance it could give, and the mobile library service; they welcomed the additional services that should come about via the Children’s Centre.
42. Parents’ ideas for improvements tended to focus on the need for more play facilities for their children, both the younger ones and those outside of the scope of the Children’s Centre, which supported the findings of the questionnaire.
43. They spoke of their wish for better playing fields for their younger children to access (in addition to the one at the school).
44. They claimed that the one playing field in the village they would like to access tends to be dominated by older children, so they don’t take their younger children there.
45. But they felt it was important to resolve some of the problems of vandalism and litter etc so that the young children in the village would be able to play in safety and without fear of perceived intimidation from older ones.
46. The fact that some of the parents have established a committee to look at the provision of facilities for older children is an indication of their concern and bodes well for the future of parental involvement in the Children’s Centre. However, it was also mentioned that the Youth club had to shut through lack of support, so more work will be required to harness enthusiasm to resolve problems in the village and beyond.
47. They envisaged that the Children’s Centre initiative would both help their children to get over the sense of “*being bored*”, especially during the school holidays, while allowing them to develop their sense of independence; it would also provide somewhere for mums to go to meet and talk to other mums; and would provide advice that they were not able to access locally.
48. Some concerns had been expressed about the arrival of the Children’s Centre, which included thoughts about what the building would include, what type of people it would be looking after etc.

“When I first heard about it, I thought – I don’t know how to say this – like it was an Adult’s Centre, for people needing help. I know it will be that as well, but my concern was with it being so close to the school, and strangers coming in, that the children don’t know, that was basically what I was thinking, to start with.”

49. Respondents were reassured about the purpose of the Children’s Centre, and the security that would be in place, both during the construction of the building and once it had opened.
50. It was also pointed out to respondents that the needs of the local area would be the main consideration in the development of any services and activities in the new Children’s Centre, in conjunction with existing service providers and local facilities, such as the school.

Partners' Views

51. Although only 6 completed questionnaires were received from Partners, these tended to reflect the views of parents.
52. They spoke about the isolation of many parents in Leverton, the lack of community facilities and low provision of childcare for children in the village and immediate area.
53. They thought the advent of the Children's Centre would bring about a more centralised, coordinated service, which would be accessible to parents locally.

"Bring them into a defined, regular setting that is local and accessible; join up services and extend them."

54. The biggest challenge in developing the Children's Centre was said to be the need to persuade people to use it, and therefore the need to remove any stigma that might exist.

"Getting people to use it and have confidence in it."

55. Meetings involving parents were not thought to occur very often, if at all, but it was said that parents are very involved in the life of the school. However, the concept was welcomed by most, although a couple were dubious.
56. Priorities for developing services tended to support their previous views, so that the main priority was involved in providing support and more services to parents and families locally.
57. Only one respondent mentioned the need for creating the right environment i.e. a quality and inclusive service, as a priority.
58. The need for more play activities for all children was again mentioned, as well as social activities for parents and more facilities for the community at large.
59. Partners also mentioned the need for more cooperation and good communication.

"Good communication between agencies to deliver services that meet LOCAL needs."

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 been given the go-ahead for 21 centres to be completed by March 2006, with 3 more to be started in Round One, but completed in Round Two by 2007. This will be followed by a further 25 in Round Two.
- 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, 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

- 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, 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, through completion of a questionnaire, with parents; 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; one focus group with parents recruited via the questionnaire.

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 playgroups and other sessions for parents and young children
 - Parent/carers living locally
- Following a briefing session, interviews were conducted by Children's Centre team members on 19th April, in North Leverton, both in the nursery and main school and amongst parents watching a school football match at nearby Rampton School.

- 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 if possible, but this sheet was kept separate from the completed questionnaire.

3.2 Partner's Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers were invited to a information session, held at North Leverton School on the same day as the interviews took place on April 19th, where they were informed about the planned consultation in North Leverton and surrounding villages.
- They were issued with a questionnaire, consisting of open-ended questions, and were encouraged to return this, although it was also used as the basis of a discussion about parents' needs in the area.
- They were also asked to complete a mapping exercise, giving details of the services of which they were aware in the North Leverton 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.
- Other service providers, such as childminders within a 5-mile radius of North Leverton were also sent the questionnaire, with an explanatory sheet about developments in the area.
- The opportunity to give contact details was given so that the team can make contact in the future, but not many respondents completed this section.

3.3 Focus Group

- Respondents for the focus group were recruited from the indication in the tick-box on the contact details sheet of the parents' questionnaire, showing their agreement to take part. A good response to this was received with some 12 offering to take part.
- In fact, more were keen to take part, but in order to use the school premises for the focus group and the crèche, it was planned to take place on the school inset day, which meant that some parents were unable to come along, as no childcare would be available for their older children.
- Parents were contacted at random from the resulting list, and 10 agreed to come along to the school in North Leverton on 27th April, between 9.30 am and 11 am.
- A free crèche was available those parents who wished to use it.
- They were offered a £10 Wilkinson voucher as a thank-you for taking part in the focus group.
- A letter of information, venue and time details and forms for completion for the crèche were sent to these parents on the same day.
- The day before the group was due to take place each respondent was telephoned as a reminder to attend, and all but one said they were still able to attend.
- A mapping exercise was also 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 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.

4. Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parents' Questionnaire

1. Some 28 questionnaires were completed, which is low for statistical purposes, but represents about one quarter of all potential respondents.
2. Figures must therefore be taken as an indication of parents' views, rather than being representative of the whole.
 - Percentages, which could be misleading, have not been used in this section of the report because of the low number of interviews completed.
 - Some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, so care must be taken when comparing responses.
 - Of the 28 interviews completed with parents/carers in the various interviewing points, all were female.
 - Nineteen of them knew about Sure Start, 1 was not sure and 8 said they did not.
 - The majority (18) were aged 30 to 39, while only 4 were 29 years or under, and none were under 20. Six respondents were over 40, with one of these being 50+.
 - Only 3 respondents had two children under 5 in the household, while 10 had only one child under 5; 14 respondents (half of the total) were reported as having no children under 5 in the household. One did not reply to any of the questions about numbers of children in the household.
 - While 11 respondents had one child aged 5-16 in the household, 8 had two children, 5 had three children and 1 mum had 5 children in this age group. Only 2 were reported as having no children in this age group.
 - No one said they had children aged 16+ in the household.
 - Between them, respondents had 63 children; the number of families with one child was 5 and the number with two children was 12. Seven families had three children, two families had 4 children and one family had 5 children. One respondent did not respond to this question at all. This gives the average number of children per family as 2.3, slightly higher than the national average.
 - **The total number of children aged under 5, whose mums were interviewed was 16, and the number of 5-16s was 47, giving 63 in total.**
 - Only 2 respondents revealed that they were expecting a baby, so the vast majority (26) were not pregnant at that time.
 - Most households (23 respondents) had 2 adults aged over 18 living in the household, while 3 respondents lived in households of only one adult and 2 reported having 3 adults in the household. Consequently, the average was 2.0 people in the households aged 18+.
 - Levels of employment were high - only 2 said there was no-one working in the household. Twelve respondents said that one adult was working in the household, while the same number said that two were working. The households with 3 adults said they were all working.
 - Six respondents were working full-time, while 12 were working part-time, and non-one said they were unemployed. In addition, nearly 1/2 of all respondents described themselves as Parent/Carers (13 out of 28). One also said she was a grandparent.
 - 24 of the 28 respondents said they were either married or partnered, while 4 were single; no one described herself as 'other', such as widowed.
 - Asked about their ethnic background, all respondents said they were white (100%).
 - All of the postcodes fell into DN22, with all but two registering DN22 0**.

- DN22 9** was recorded for 1 respondent, and one respondent only gave DN22.
- While there were 5 clusters of postcodes with more than one respondent, only one cluster had 3 individuals at one postcode and the rest had only 2 individuals
- All other postcodes given were from one individual.
- So in spite of being in a village location, most respondents were not necessarily local to one another.

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 6 completed questionnaires were received from service providers in the North Leverton area.
- 5 of the total gave contact details
- The disciplines in which respondents worked were as follows:

Table 1 – Partners' disciplines

Discipline	No of responses
Children's Information Service	1
Early Years	1
Education	2
Health	1
Social Services	1

- The roles of service providers included:

Table 2 – Partners' roles

Chair of School Governors
Locality Officer, Children's Services
Childminder
Head teacher
Health Visitor
Information Officer

- Between them, the respondents have a total of 24 years worth of experience, in their current posts, ranging from 18 months to 8 years with an average of 3.9 years.
- Other information was captured from partners at the meeting held on 19th April.

4.3 Focus Group

- 6 of the 10 recruited parents, all of whom were mothers, attended the focus group.
- Between them, respondents had 16 children, of whom 3 were aged 5 or under, 8 aged between 6 and 11, and 5 who were 11+.
- One mum was also a grandmother.
- Apart from one mum with one child, the mothers had at least 2 children - 1 had 2 children, 3 had 3 children, and one had 4 children.
- This gives an average of 2.7 children each, more than the national average and above the reported average of 2.0 seen in the total number of completed questionnaires.

- As well as being mothers to their children, these respondents were also involved in a variety of roles, including two who worked in local schools and one who worked in the family's farm business.
- The respondents all lived in the area but a couple had previously lived in Newark and Retford.
- A couple of the respondents regularly took adult education courses on offer at the school in North Leverton.

Main Findings

5. Parents' Questionnaire

- Some 28 questionnaires were completed, which is low for statistical purposes, but represents about one quarter of all potential respondents.
- Figures must therefore be taken as an indication of parents' views, rather than being representative of the whole.
- Percentages, which could be misleading, have not been used in this section of the report because of the low number of interviews completed.
- Some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, so care must be taken when comparing responses.
- All respondents were women, of whom 19 said that they knew about Sure Start.
- However, 8 did not know, while 1 was not sure.
- Encouragingly, the majority of people interviewed (22 out of 28) said that they knew about the proposed Children's Centre for North Leverton, but 5 did not know and 1 was not sure.
- 16 respondents were aware of both Sure Start and the Children's Centre plans.

5.1 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.
- Responses are shown for all respondents; and for comparison purposes, responses by age group and by those said to be Aware of Sure Start.
- Care must be taken where numbers responding are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- This shows that the Pre-school playgroup is the most frequently used service by 25 of respondents, of whom 16 were aged 30-39.
- The GP and the Health Visitor service were equally the next most used service followed by the midwife.
- It would seem that apart from the playgroup, those services that are seen as a necessity (GP, midwife) have the highest usage.
- However, other health 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.
- There was also an indication of confusion over the definition of some of the services used, so some responses may be lower than might be expected.
- Some services mentioned may have been outside of the immediate area, either in Retford or further afield.

Table 3 – Services ever used (overleaf)

Table 3 – Services ever used

Service	Total using service	Aged under 29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40+	Aware of Sure Start
Total	28	4	18	6	19
Pre-school playgroup	25	3	16	6	16
GP practice	24	3	15	6	15
Health visitors	24	3	16	5	15
Midwife	22	4	14	4	14
Children's Library Service	18	1	13	4	14
Family member	16	1	12	3	11
Antenatal sessions	12	2	8	2	8
Nursery in a school	12	1	7	4	8
Toddler group	11	0	6	5	8
Friends	11	1	9	1	7
Job Centres	8	0	5	3	5
After School Club	7	0	6	1	4
Further Education	7	0	5	2	5
Speech Therapists	6	1	3	2	2
Childminder	4	0	3	1	3
Day Nursery	3	0	2	1	2
Dietician/Nutritionist	3	0	3	0	2
Home Visits	3	0	2	1	1
Breakfast Club	2	1	1	0	2
Children's Information Service	2	0	1	1	2
Parenting advice & guidance	2	0	2	0	1
Toy Library	2	0	2	0	2
Crèche	1	0	1	0	1
Home Safety Equipment	1	0	1	0	1
Homestart	1	0	1	0	1
Family Centre	1	0	1	0	1

5.2 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.
- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents, and the closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction.
- However, care must be taken with the low numbers of responses for some services, as results are not necessarily representative of views of all. For example, while Toy Library scored 5.0 =Very Useful, this is based on only 2 respondents.

Table 4 – Usefulness of services ever used

Service	Numbers using service	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful / not at all useful	Average score *
Pre-school playgroup	25	19	2	0	4.7
GP practice	24	17	6	0	4.7
Health visitors	24	21	2	0	4.9
Midwife	22	18	4	0	4.8
Children's Library Service	18	9	6	0	4.4
Family Member	16	14	1	0	4.9
Antenatal sessions	12	12	0	0	5.0
Nursery in a school	12	9	2	0	4.8
Toddler group	11	6	2	0	4.3
Friends	11	10	0	0	5.0
Job Centres	8	3	3	1	4.0
After School Club	7	5	1	0	4.6
Further Education	7	6	1	0	4.9
Speech Therapists	6	3	3	0	4.5
Childminder	4	3	1	0	4.8
Day Nursery	3	2	1	0	4.7
Dietician/Nutritionist	3	2	0	0	4.3
Home Visits	3	3	0	0	4.7
Breakfast Club	2	2	0	0	5.0
Children's Information Service	2	1	0	0	4.0
Parenting advice & guidance	2	2	0	0	5.0
Toy Library	2	2	0	0	5.0
Crèche	1	1	0	0	5.0
Home Safety Equipment	1	1	0	0	5.0
Homestart	1	0	0	0	3.0
Family Centre	1	0	1	0	4.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	1	0	0	5.0

* 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

5.3 Reasons given for services mentioned as being not useful

- Respondents were then asked about any of the services, which they had described as being 'not useful' or 'not at all useful', and why this was so.
- Only 1 respondent gave a response here, reflecting the generally high level of satisfaction recorded.
- This one respondent mentioned having to stay too long at the Job Centre, which may reflect the problem of having to deal with a service not locally based.

5.4 Child-friendliness of Services

- Again, by service mentioned earlier, respondents were asked how child-friendly they had found the services. Responses were as shown in Table 5. Again 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.

Table 5 – 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*
Pre-school playgroup	25	21	1	0	4.8
GP practice	24	18	5	0	4.8
Health visitors	24	20	4	0	4.8
Midwife	22	12	4	1	4.4
Children's Library Service	18	11	5	0	4.6
Family Member	16	15	1	0	4.9
Antenatal sessions	12	3	2	1	3.9
Nursery in a school	12	10	1	0	4.9
Toddler group	11	9	1	0	4.7
Friends	11	11	0	0	5.0
Job Centres	8	4	2	2	3.9
After School Club	7	6	0	0	5.0
Further Education	7	4	1	1	4.2
Speech Therapists	6	5	1	0	4.8
Childminder	4	3	1	0	4.8
Day Nursery	3	2	1	0	4.7
Dietician/Nutritionist	3	1	1	0	4.0
Home Visits	3	2	1	0	4.7
Breakfast Club	2	1	1	0	4.5
Children's Information Service	2	1	0	0	4.0
Parenting advice & guidance	2	1	0	1	3.0
Toy Library	2	2	0	0	5.0
Crèche	1	1	0	0	5.0
Home Safety Equipment	1	1	0	0	5.0
Homestart	1	0	0	1	1.0
Family Centre	1	1	0	0	5.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	0	0	1	1.0

* 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

5.5 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.
- The response was very low (3 in total) reflecting the high level of satisfaction generally recorded, or difficulty in answering the question, although higher than the response of 'not useful' or 'not at all useful'.
- One mum mentioned the lack of child-friendly environment, with no playthings or changing facilities.
- Two mums felt that services were not child-friendly but they were unable to specify quite why.

Table 6 – Reasons for being not child friendly or not at all child friendly

Service	Number of responses
Total	3
Not child friendly / no toys or play area	1
Don't know / no response	2

- Looking at both these sets of data – usefulness and child-friendliness - 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 midwife is viewed as more 'useful' than 'child friendly', while Pre-school playgroup viewed as slightly more 'child-friendly' than 'useful'.
- The biggest discrepancy is the Welfare Rights Sessions, which is seen as very useful but not at all child friendly, but is the view of only 1 respondent.

Table 7 – Comparison of parent and child average (mean) scores

<i>Service</i>	<i>Average score* Usefulness</i>	<i>Average score* Child friendliness</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Pre-school playgroup	4.7	4.8	-0.1
GP practice	4.7	4.8	-0.1
Health visitors	4.9	4.8	0.1
Midwife	4.8	4.4	0.4
Children's Library Service	4.4	4.6	-0.2
Family Member	4.9	4.9	0.0
Antenatal sessions	5.0	3.9	1.1
Nursery in a school	4.8	4.9	-0.1
Toddler group	4.3	4.7	-0.4
Friends	5.0	5.0	0.0

Job Centres	4.0	3.9	0.1
After School Club	4.6	5.0	-0.4
Further Education	4.9	4.2	0.7
Speech Therapists	4.5	4.8	-0.3
Childminder	4.8	4.8	0.0
Day Nursery	4.7	4.7	0.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	4.3	4.0	0.3
Home Visits	4.7	4.7	0.0
Breakfast Club	5.0	4.5	0.5
Children's Information Service	4.0	4.0	0.0
Parenting advice & guidance	5.0	3.0	2.0
Toy Library	5.0	5.0	0.0
Crèche	5.0	5.0	0.0
Home Safety Equipment	5.0	5.0	0.0
Homestart	3.0	1.0	2.0
Family Centre	4.0	5.0	-1.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	5.0	1.0	4.0

* 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

5.6 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 shows the most frequently mentioned.
- The pre-school playgroup was most frequently cited as the most helpful service by parents, followed by the GP practice.
- Only one or two people chose many of the other services, presumably because the service had helped them with a specific need.
- Some respondents gave more than one answer, while 4 respondents found it hard to choose a service at all.

Table 8 – Most helpful service to parent

Service <u>most</u> helpful to you as parent	Number of mentions
Total	28
Pre-school playgroup	8
GP practice	4
Family member	3
Children's Library Service	2
Day Nursery	2
Nursery in a school	2
Midwife	1
Childminder	1
After School Club	1

Breakfast Club	1
Toddler group	1
Health visitors	1
Speech Therapists	1
Don't Know / no response	4

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

5.7 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 the most helpful to their child was the pre-school playgroup, chosen by half of the respondents.
- Others were predominantly concerned with the child's social development, such as the Children's Library Service and the nursery in a school, but also with the child's physical development such as the GP and Health Visitor.
- Family member received a slightly lower score than the rating for help for the parent, seen in the previous section.
- The following table shows the most frequently mentioned:

Table 9 – Most helpful service to child

Service <u>most</u> helpful to child	Number of mentions
Total	28
Pre-school playgroup	14
Children's Library Service	2
Nursery in a school	2
Family member	2
GP practice	2
Health visitors	2
Child minder	1
Day nursery	1
Toddler group	1
Speech Therapists	1
Don't know/no response	4

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

5.8 Help to use services more often

- A list on Showcard 2 (Appendix 2) was shown to respondents, and they were asked which of those listed might help them to use services more often.
- In table 10, it can be seen that 'different times of events' was mentioned most often by just under half of respondents, ahead of 'childcare' and 'someone to go with'.
- 'Better public transport' does not seem particularly important to these mums, so perhaps living in a rural area means that many already have transport, or else many of

the services are accessible within walking distance, so transport is not that much of a requirement.

- 'Someone to go with' was more important to younger respondents than any of the other options
- Overall, 6 respondents did not answer this question, which may reflect the fact that these are not issues of great importance to some, or that they find it hard to answer the question; some respondents choose more than one option.

Table 10 – Help to use services more often

Suggestion	Total	Aged under 29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40+	Aware of Sure Start
Total	28	4	18	6	19
Different times of events	12	0	10	2	9
Childcare	7	0	6	1	5
Someone to go with	7	2	2	3	4
Better price	6	1	3	2	3
Better public transport	5	0	2	3	2
None of these	6	2	3	1	4

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

- Those who were aware of Sure Start were proportionally more in favour of 'different times of events' and 'childcare' than the rest of the mums.

5.9 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 11.
- This would suggest that a newsletter is most favoured, by over 4/5 of respondents, followed by flyer/information sheet.

Table 11 – Preferences in receiving information

Suggestion	Number making Suggestion				
	Total	Aged under 29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40+	Aware of Sure Start
Total	28	4	18	6	19
Newsletter	23	3	15	5	15
Flyer/information sheet	10	0	8	2	9
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	8	1	7	0	6
Article in local paper	8	1	6	1	5
Information session at nursery/clinic/sure start	7	1	5	1	4
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	6	0	6	0	5

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

- Word of mouth from professionals and articles in local paper were equally favoured, followed by information session and word of mouth from family and friends.

5.10 Three things North Leverton needs

- When asked what 3 other things North Leverton needs to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in Table 12 below.
- Although this was a difficult question for many to answer, only 1 respondent was unable to suggest anything.

Table 12 – Suggestions to make the area better for parents with young children

Suggestion from respondent	Total	Aged under 29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40+	Aware of Sure Start
Total	28	4	18	6	19
Further education courses/Advisors	6	0	4	2	5
Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities	5	1	3	1	4
Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park	5	1	2	2	4
Youth club/Activities for older children	4	0	2	2	2
Holiday activities/care for children	4	0	3	1	4
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	3	0	3	0	1
Mother & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups	3	1	2	0	2
Village Hall	3	0	1	2	2
Before and after school activities/clubs	2	0	2	0	2
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities	2	0	2	0	1
More/Better information	1	0	1	0	1
More/Better facilities for smaller children	1	0	1	0	1
More/Better child care/nurseries	1	0	1	0	1
Other	3	1	2	0	1
Don't Know/No Response	1	0	0	1	0

- After requests for more FE courses and advice, 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.
- Outdoor play areas; better playground or park and more activities for all ages of children were also requested.
- Specific facilities such as a village hall and swimming pool or leisure facilities were mentioned by a few.
- Childcare and other facilities for younger children were not so high on the list, although this probably reflects the age profile of the respondents and their families.

6. Partners' questionnaire

- Only six questionnaires were received from Partners. Anonymised responses are shown in full in Appendix 5.

6.1 Current problems

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

- The overall view is that parents can be isolated in the village; the issue of transport in a rural context was mentioned by several of the partners.
- They also spoke about the lack of community facilities, and lack of meeting places for parents and leisure facilities for children.
- The low provision of day care for children, dependent on one registered childminder was also highlighted.
- There was also mention of the lack of other services and support in the area, especially for young parents or hard-to-reach groups.

“Isolation and lack of transport; no facilities for children or parents i.e. play centres, social meeting places; somewhere to learn skills, i.e. cooking.”

6.2 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 North Leverton?

- Responses to this question were positive, with partners foreseeing the possibility of a more coordinated approach in the development and delivery of services.

“Bring them into a defined, regular setting that is local and accessible; join up services and extend them.”

- They also spoke about the potential for the delivery of services in a non-stigmatising way so that parents would be encouraged to use services that they might not have considered before.
- The fact that these services would be delivered locally was also seen as a positive.
- One mentioned the benefit of parents being able to access support and advice about returning to work.

6.3 Biggest Challenge

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

- Some respondents found this question more difficult, but the main focus was on the need to encourage parents to use the Centre.

- There was the perception that some parents would not engage and they would need to be encouraged to do so.
- This was felt to be particularly true of hard-to-reach families.
- Again, the issue of the perceived stigma about such services as Family Centres was mentioned, and the view that this must be overcome for the Children's Centre to be successful.

"Maintaining strong links between services by networking/ meetings on a regular basis and getting parents (hard-to-reach) to attend."

6.4 Workers' 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]

- The partners were asked to identify cross-agency/service meetings already held in the area to discuss local issues.
- There was a general lack of awareness as to whether many meetings, especially any involving parents, took place locally, although it was said that parents tend to be very involved in the life of the school.

"Don't know if these meetings take place but would be good to have meetings locally."

"Parents very involved in life of school (and other community)"

- Two respondents commented about the downside of such meetings, either in that they can be not particularly informative or not well attended.
- It seems that at the moment more work will be required to achieve regular and cooperative involvement of parents in local, well-attended meetings, with support from partners, which the Children's Centre should be well placed to encourage.

6.5 Partners' Priorities

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

- Only one respondent mentioned the need for creating the right environment i.e. a quality and inclusive service, as a priority.
- The main focus was on support and service provision for parents and their families, including fathers, appropriate to their need.
- Many mentioned the need for an increased provision of play and leisure facilities.
- The needs of the community at large were also mentioned - providing the opportunity for more social activities, and for parents to meet.

"Good communication between agencies to deliver services that meet LOCAL needs."

7. The Focus Group

- The discussion guide used in the focus group will be found in Appendix 3. This included areas which reflected the main sections of the parents' questionnaire:
 - Knowledge of services in the area
 - Strengths and weaknesses of current services
 - Gaps in current provision
 - Areas for improvement in the local area
- Focus group respondents were also invited to undertake a mapping exercise, to gather information about services and activities in the area.
- Additionally, as a means of asking parents for their views on services, some of the early results from the questionnaires were shared with them and their comments were invited.

7.1 Services available

- The mapping exercise showed that there is some activity for young children, based around the school everyday of the week, with more planned for September in the form of breakfast and After-school clubs for older children.
- There are also some activities further afield such as the Toddler Group on Wednesday afternoon in Sturton, which currently only attracts 5 mums!
- More details of activities can be found in Appendix 6.

7.2 Services most useful to them as parents

- Parents were generally in agreement about the results from the questionnaire, which at that the time of the focus group¹ were:
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - GP practice
 - Family Members
- Most of the mums were in agreement about the usefulness of the pre-school playgroup, which was said to have been established in Leverton for around 30 years, both for the opportunity for socialising for their children, and for themselves.
- Some said that although they had lived in the area for many years, they felt quite isolated as mums at home with children, and welcomed the opportunity to both get to know other mums and, for some of them, to get involved in village life.

“Before we moved up here, we were quite isolated, and always had to get in the car to go anywhere, and there was no other children around, so it was nice for them to get to play with other children. I found it was really good for them.”

¹ Early analysis of questionnaires, based on 27 responses

“When I first started bringing my daughter, even though I’d lived in the village a long time, I didn’t really know anyone, I’d never really mixed apart from family. To me, it was a community, I made friends, you get involved from there really. As well as being a benefit for her, it was also a benefit for me. It got me out too.”

- Respondents felt that the playgroup staff were not only friendly and welcoming but experienced in what they were doing, so that the parents felt comfortable.

“And the staff have been doing it a long time, you knew where you were, you could trust them with your children.”

- Respondent’s views about the GP practice were fairly similar in that they found them to be useful when required – a service which they valued but tended to take for granted.

“Well, it’s there if you need it.”

“They always let me have an appointment pretty straight away if it’s for the babies – they are pretty good.”

- Subsequent discussion about the Well Woman clinic held at the same surgery revealed that the timing of appointments depends on the working hours of the nurse who runs the clinic – which is not always at the best time for these mums – but they had not questioned this in the past, assuming this was the way the service has to operate.
- As well as the services mentioned above, some of the respondents mentioned the use of family and friends for childcare and other support purposes. They all tended to agree that family and friends are really important to them, in their daily lives.
- This often involved collecting children from school, or taking them in the morning, to allow mums to attend courses in Retford especially for those dependent on public transport.

“I was doing a course in Retford, which started at 9, so I needed to leave her with my friend as I had to get the bus at 8.20. Then she took her to school.”

- Any courses run in local areas are dependent on the availability of a village hall, which North Leverton does not have, so they are generally needed to travel to attend a course.
- Although some of the mothers had attended courses in the school, these were only felt to be of a limited number and range.
- Since the closure of the Community House on the estate, one of the mums had been unable to continue her course in childcare, as she was unable to find a placement.
- One of the mums was keen to find out more about childminding and was pleased to hear about the support she might expect to get from the Children’s Centre once it was established. She was not aware of the service offered by the CIS.

“My daughters are 2 & 3 now and I’d like to start training as a childminder, but I’ve no idea how to go about it – where to start, where to go, where to get help, so. ...that would be useful.”

- They also spoke about the positive feeling of community within the village of North Leverton, particularly the involvement of the local pensioners in attending performances by the children in the school; it was also noted that local OAPs came for lunch in the school on a regular basis, which encourages the feeling of community.
- The mums welcomed this type of initiative.
- The respondents also mentioned other services, which they had found particularly useful, either now or in the past.
- At the time of the focus group, the results of the questionnaire showed the Health Visitor to have scored highest in the list of services ever used, but not so high in the list of usefulness of services. Respondents wanted to point out that this was largely because most of them no longer have children of that age (i.e. under 5), but they had valued the service at the time.
- They were adamant that the Health Visitor gave a good service, with regular checks at the times they felt to be appropriate.

“He is good, yeah.”

“He gave you his number and said if you’ve got any problems, you could ring him. You could always get hold of him.”

- One respondent in particular also spoke highly of the speech therapy service, which had been suggested both by the Health Visitor when her child was young, and again by the teacher who hadn’t been aware that he already attended, when he started school.

“It’s going really well – she’s very pleased with him. He’s been going since he was 2, he’s come on a lot, he’s nearly six now. They’re very good.”

7.3 Services most helpful to their children

- The most helpful service to children from the questionnaire was the Pre-school playgroup, followed by a group of services including the GP practice, the Health Visitor, the School Nursery, Family and the Children’s Library service.
- These respondents agreed with all of the above, but made particular mention of the library service in the form of the mobile library van, which they found useful because of being more isolated.
- However, those who lived on the estate were disappointed that the mobile library van no longer goes there since the demolition of many of the houses, so that they have to remember when it is coming to the village on a fortnightly basis, especially in the school holidays.

“You have to remember it’s coming.”

- They would like it to make more stops in the village, or on a more regular basis.

“It doesn’t come on the estate any more, it just stops outside the school, for the school children to get their books. But during the holidays it still comes and stops in the village, outside the old people’s bungalows and outside the school. It would be helpful if it stopped elsewhere in the village, especially in the holidays.”

- They felt that the mobile library seems to have a good selection of books, although perhaps less so for teenagers.
- Those that knew about it also valued the special sessions delivered by the Children’s Librarian from Retford Library, the information available from the library, and the computer access there, with someone on hand to give advice.

“Retford Library is very good if you want information on colleges or local facilities – they’ve got a really good choice in there.”

- Some had accessed Learn Direct, because training was free of charge here, but claimed that the library staff in Retford were more helpful.
- The PCs in school had been used by some for Access courses but were not generally available for public use.
- This led to a brief discussion about the significance of the cost of services, of importance to these parents.

“I think with a lot of things as well, cost does come into it, well I know it does for me. When my daughter used to come to playgroup, I only used to access two mornings, as that’s all I could afford to send her. It’s nice that she can come in for 5 sessions now.”

- Toddler groups were also mentioned as being useful for children and for parents, again for socialising purposes, although fewer had accessed this.

“I suppose taking them to toddler group, I think that’s helped my children a lot, playing with children their own age – and it’s brilliant for me, getting to meet other mothers, people in the same situation, with young children, stuck in the village, it gets you out.”

7.4 Child-friendly services

- The discussion focussed on what it is which makes a service or activity ‘child-friendly’.
- The mums mentioned a variety of situations that they felt demonstrated whether services were child-friendly – things that make their lives easier or not.
- These included:
 - Acceptance of a certain level of noise from young children, especially in the library
 - Access to toilets with young children
 - Nappy changing facilities
 - Facilities for, and acceptability of, breast feeding in public
 - Facilities for children in an adult environment e.g. Job Centre
- Most of these were found wanting locally, although it was acknowledged that the staff in the library in Retford were very helpful in allowing access to the toilets there, particularly important as there were not felt to be many others locally.

- It was suggested that the council offices had installed nappy changing facilities in the Council Offices, but this was not confirmed.
- There was some disagreement about the issue of breast-feeding in public; some had found it to be a problem, while others had not.
- However, it was suggested that the least child-friendly service for those who did not drive was the local bus service, which was not very accommodating to pushchairs and buggies, and whose drivers tended to be less than sympathetic to mums with young children.

“Before I was driving I used to find that the bus service wasn’t very child-friendly. Getting on with a buggy was difficult, and then before you’ve sat down, he’s speeding off. I found it very intimidating going out on my own on public transport.”

- Overall, most things in their lives were felt to be fairly child-friendly, but it was suggested that this was perhaps because they only went to places or used services that they were comfortable with.

“Perhaps you tend to only go to the places you know are child-friendly. You stick to what you know.”

- The GP surgery was felt to be child-friendly with toys available, but was perhaps less parent-friendly.

7.5 Parent-friendly services

- As mentioned previously, some of the respondents talked about the problem of going the doctors when there was no-one to look after their children.

“I’m due to go for a smear, and I’ll go when the eldest is at school, but finding someone to look after the younger ones is difficult so it would be helpful if one of the secretaries could watch them for 10 minutes when I nip in, as it’s impossible to take them in with you, you just can’t do it.”

- Some said they use their own parents, other family members or friends to look after their children, but the main problem seems to be the timing of the Well-woman clinic in the afternoon, run by the practice nurse who only works in the afternoons.

“You find yourself putting off making an appointment, as you don’t think you’ll be able to find someone to look after the children.”

- This reflects the findings of the questionnaire in which time of events was mentioned as being of high importance in helping parents to use services more easily.
- The provision of childcare or a crèche facility for such appointments was also felt to be useful in this situation.

7.6 Ideas for Improvements for the area

- Parents’ ideas for improvements tended to focus on the needs of their children, especially in terms of play activities, which supported the findings of the questionnaire.

- They spoke of their wish for better playing fields for their younger children to access (in addition to the one at the school)
- They claimed that the one playing field in the village they would like to access tends to be dominated by older children, so they don't take their younger children there.

"If I take my children down to the park, they won't stay there as they don't like the big kids."

- They also disliked the amount of rubbish left behind by older children, and did not feel the park was a particularly attractive proposition for their children.

"Also, it's the rubbish that goes with it – I don't want my 3 year old daughter picking up the coke cans and stuff that the big kids have left down there. It's just not a nice place to take them really."

- They said that the wooden playthings had been removed as they had been vandalised.
- They spoke about the efforts being taken to establish facilities for older children, which they felt would then improve the situation for the younger ones.
- The Youth Bus, which had previously been available for the young people of the village, which was placed in the play park, had been removed because of complaints from local residents; this had irritated some of the mums who felt that people were unreasonable in their demands of older children.

"You can't have it both ways – you can't have something for the older kids to do and then complain about the noise – there's got to be a bit of give and take."

- However, the situation on the park was not felt to have deteriorated any further since the removal of the Youth Bus, but that it had always been a problem, which had not improved.
- This had led to the establishment, through a committee of local mums, of a community venture to set up a facility such as a Youth Shelter and play equipment for older children and young people.
- They suggested that a youth club within the school would be better, but that the previous facility, which had been available for the 14+ age group, had been closed down fairly recently because of the attitude of some of the young people and lack of parental support in the running of the club.
- It was also suggested that as an outcome of the establishment of the planned breakfast and after-school club, a holiday club for children aged 5-14 would be able to run alongside the Children's Centre.
- Some parents in the focus group spoke about the need locally for advice about further education and other courses.
- They felt that the movement to provide facilities for all age groups was a very positive attitude, which they welcomed, and that the Children's Centre arrival will help this even more.

- They envisaged that the initiative would both help their children to get over the sense of *'being bored'*, especially during the school holidays, while allowing them to develop their sense of independence; it would also provide somewhere for mums to go to meet and talk to other mums; and would provide advice that they were not able to access locally.

"Just so you're not sat at home on your own."

7.7 Concerns about the arrival of the Children's Centre

- One of the respondents expressed her previous earlier doubts about the arrival of the Children's Centre, as she had not known what it actually entailed.
- This led to a discussion about their overall concerns which included thoughts about what the building would include, what type of people it would be looking after etc.

"When I first heard about it, I thought – I don't know how to say this – like it was an Adult's Centre, for people needing help. I know it will be that as well, but my concern was with it being so close to the school, and strangers coming in, that the children don't know, that was basically what I was thinking, to start with."

"It did cross my mind what Drop-In might mean, like for drug users."

- Respondents were reassured about the purpose of the Children's Centre, and the security that would be in place, both during the construction of the building and once it had opened.
- It was also pointed out to respondents that the needs of the local area would be the main consideration in the development of any services and activities in the new Children's Centre, in conjunction with existing service providers and local facilities, such as the school.

7.8 Issues arising from the Focus Group

Many of the issues that emerged from the discussion amongst parents in the focus group reflected those found amongst partners, service providers and from the questionnaire.

- These included a certain sense of isolation in North Leverton, as some of these mums spoke of not knowing many people outside of the family, until they accessed the playgroup.
- This had given some of them the opportunity to get to know other people and to develop other interests.
- Although they felt their GP and Health Visitor service was very good, their main concern was the lack of opportunity to attend specific sessions at times which fitted in with the family commitments, to the extent that some essential appointments e.g. Well Woman clinic were being deferred.
- Many were dependent on family to help with childcare and other support in their lives.
- This group seemed particularly keen to access training and other course – they spoke well of the library service in the guidance it could give, and welcomed the additional services which should come about via the Children's Centre.

- Many of their ideas for improvements to the area focused on the need for more play facilities for their children, both the younger ones and those outside of the scope of the Children's Centre.
- But they felt it was important to resolve some of the problems of vandalism and litter etc so that the young children in the village would be able to play in safety and without fear of perceived intimidation from older ones.
- The fact that some of the parents have established a committee to look at the provision of facilities for older children is an indication of their concern and bodes well for the future of parental involvement in the Children's Centre. However, it was also mentioned that the Youth club had to shut through lack of support, so more work will be required to harness enthusiasm to resolve problems in the village and beyond.

8. 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 North Leverton for the future.

These include:

- More play facilities and activities for children of all ages
 - More day-care and crèche facilities
 - Different timings for some appointments for mums at the surgery
 - More opportunities for social activities for all age groups
 - More advice provision, especially for Further Education opportunities
- While the consultation necessarily had its limitations, due to small numbers of residents and the fact that it was the first Children's Centre contact with this area, the results are still felt to be representative of the community, and provide a basis with which to build the future Children's Centre in the area.
 - However, it is felt that more work with younger parents is important to ensure that their views are included in the planning for North Leverton Children's Centre.
 - This consultation and the planned feedback session are the starting points from which services for children under 5 and their families will develop. It is hoped and anticipated that parents in North Leverton will become involved, so that the Children's Centre becomes their service, rather than something delivered to them.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Questionnaires – parents and partners

Appendix 2 – Showcards

Appendix 3 – Focus Group discussion guide

Appendix 4 – List of other suggestions for improvements from parent questionnaires

Appendix 5 – Responses from partners

Appendix 6 – Mapping exercise from focus group & partners

Children's Centres Questionnaire

- We're talking to local people about the new Sure Start Children's Centre that's coming along in North Leverton – which will be a partnership of services for parents and their children under 5 – health, education, child care etc - and finding out what parents think about current services.
- Taking part in this survey means that you'll be included in a prize draw for an arts & craft set for your child - and should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete.
- All replies will be treated in strict confidence and no one will be identifiable. Please help us by answering as many questions as possible

- | | Yes | Not sure | No |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Do you know about Sure Start? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Do you know about the proposed Children's Centre to be developed in xxxxxxxxxxxx? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Please can you tell me which local services [including Sure Start] you or your family have ever used [See list of services below - circle any used] | | | |
| 4. How useful were the services you have mentioned, for you and your family, from 1 - 5, where 1 = not at all useful to 5 = very useful? [Complete for all mentioned in Q3] | | | |
| 5. How child-friendly is the service you've mentioned, on a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is not at all childfriendly and 5 is very childfriendly? [Complete for all mentioned in Q3] | | | |
| 6. Of the ones you mentioned, which <u>ONE</u> service do you think was most helpful. ... to you, as a <u>parent</u> ? | | | |
| 7. and most helpful to your <u>child/children</u> ? | | | |

Use grid on below for recording answers to questions 3 to 7. (Circle numbers)

	3. Local services ever used (please circle all used)	4. Usefulness of the service, from 1-5, where 1 = not very useful to 5 = very useful	5. Child Friendliness of service from 1-5, where 1 = not at all child friendly to 5 = very child friendly	6. which <u>ONE</u> service do you think was most helpful to you as a <u>parent</u>	7. which <u>ONE</u> service do you think was most helpful to your <u>child</u>
Antenatal sessions	1	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1	1
Midwife	2	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	2	2
Breast-feeding group	3	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	3	3
Children's Library service	4	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	4	4
Childcare:					
Childminder	5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	5	5
After school club	6	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	6	6
Breakfast club	7	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	7	7

Day nursery	8	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	8	8
Nursery in a school	9	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	9	9
Independent School	10	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	10	10
Pre-school playgroup	11	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	11	11
Toddler group	12	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	12	12
Crèche	13	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	13	13
Family member	14	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	14	14
Friends	15	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	15	15
CIS (Children's Information Service)	16	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	16	16
Dietician/Nutritionist	17	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	17	17
Further Education	18	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	18	18
GP practice	19	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	19	19
Health visitors	20	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	20	20
Home Safety Equipment scheme	21	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	21	21
Home Visits	22	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	22	22
Homestart	23	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	23	23
Job Centres	24	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	24	24
Parenting advice & guidance	25	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	25	25
Speech Therapists	26	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	26	26
Family Centre	27	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	27	27
Toy Library	28	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	28	28
Welfare rights sessions	29	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	29	29
Story Time sessions	30	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	30	30

8. If you thought any of these services were **not useful** or **not very useful**, why was this? [Interviewer, only ask if circled 1 or 2 in Q4.]

9. If you thought any of these were **not childfriendly** or **not at all childfriendly**, why was this? [Interviewer, only ask if circled 1 or 2 in Q5.]

10. Please look at this list and tell me what would help you to use ANY of the services more often? [Use Showcard 2, or the list below, & circle any mentioned]

Better public transport	1
Childcare	2
Someone to go with	3
Different times of events	4
Better price	5

11. How would you ideally like to receive information about services for you and your child/children? [Use Showcard 3, or the list below, & circle any mentioned]

Newsletter	1
Flyer/information sheet	2
Word of mouth (eg Health Visitor / nursery staff / GP)	3
Word of mouth (friends / family / other parents)	4
Article in local paper	5
Information session at nursery/clinic/Sure Start	6

12. Can you say what 3 things you think the area needs to make it better for parents with young children?

a. -----

b. -----

c. -----

13. And finally, do you have anything else to say about the Sure Start Children's Centre, from what you've heard so far - any concerns or comments?

Just a few questions ABOUT YOU that will help us to **plan for future services**. All replies will be treated in strictest confidence.

14. Are you: Male Female

15. Your age is: Under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50 +

16. Number of adults (aged 18+) in the household (Please write in)

17. Number of adults (aged 18+) **working** in the household (Please write in)

18. Are YOU: (tick all that apply)

Working Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grandparent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working Part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/ Carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other relative /friend (write in)	<input type="text"/>

19. Are you and/or your partner expecting a baby? Yes No

20. Number of children in household: None Under 5s 5-16 16+

21. Are you: Single Married/partnered Other

22. Ethnic origin:

White	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please write in any other <input type="text"/>					

23. To help us make sure we have talked to parents from all areas, please can you tell me your postcode? We will not be able to identify you from this information.

Your postcode eg NG15 5JQ: -

Thank you

Contact sheet

(Will be separated from questionnaire)



There will also be the opportunity to join in a discussion group to talk about the Children's Centre, to find out more about what you think. Participants will receive £10 Gift Voucher as a thank you. Would you be interested in that?

Date: 14th April 2005

Time: 1pm - 3pm

Venue: Toy Box Nursery

Please tick

Yes

No

Focus Group

If you are interested, you may be contacted nearer the time to confirm this.

I also need to take your name, address and phone number to enter you in the prize draw* for the arts & crafts set. This information will be kept separate from your responses to the survey. **[Complete contact details]**

Please tick

Entry into Prize Draw

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Thank you for your help with this survey and the future plans for North Leverton Children's Centre. Look out for more information and feedback on the survey.

Please return this form to:

Janet Lang
Lang Research Associates
45 Caledon Road
Nottingham
NG5 2NF
0115 841 2844

OR the place you were given it eg school, playgroup
By xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. **THANK YOU!**

* Terms and conditions

1. Entry to the prize draw is free. Only one entry per person.
2. The draw will take place on xxxxxxxxxxxx 2005.
3. The winner will be notified by post or telephone.
4. No alternative to the prize stated will be offered.
5. The competition is open to all participants of this survey, excluding employees of Nottinghamshire County Council Early Years & Childcare team and their families.

Children's Centre Consultation – Questions for Key Partners/Service Providers

1. Introduction: The main purpose of this consultation is to gather the views of partners and service providers on existing services for parents and young children under 5 in **North Leverton** and on what you consider to be the priorities for the development of the Children's Centre in the area to serve these families.
 - Please be open and honest, and answer all relevant questions; your responses will help with the **planning** of future services.
 - All responses will be treated in confidence, and nothing attributed to any individual. However, if you wish to give your contact details for any follow up questions we may have, or for future research purposes, please complete the box below. Again, none of your responses will be identifiable in the final report.
 - Parents and carers will be completing another questionnaire, which will gather their views on the Children's Centre plans.
 2. **How to complete this questionnaire:** If you prefer to complete this questionnaire by email, please send an email to janet.lang@ntlworld.com requesting a copy. You will then be able to type your responses in the boxes (which will expand) and email back to janet.lang@ntlworld.com. Please complete and return the questionnaire by **22nd April 2005**.
 3. Please also list **the services and activities** with which you are involved on a **separate sheet**, giving your name, job title and organisation, to help us produce an up-to-date map of services in the area, and return with the questionnaire, under separate cover if you prefer.
- If you prefer to complete this in hardcopy, please print it out and post back, marked **North Leverton**, to **Janet Lang** at:

Lang Research Associates
45 Caledon Road
Nottingham
NG5 2NF

Thank you for your input, which is very welcome.

PTO

If you wish to give your contact details, please do so below:

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please give the type of organisation you work for 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please give your job title & employer (if relevant) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been working in this role? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's your main area of responsibility? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the current problems, or gaps in current services, for parents and young families in North Leverton? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what way do you think the advent of the Children's Centre will change the way services are delivered in North Leverton? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is going to be <u>the</u> biggest challenge locally in developing the Children's Centre in North Leverton? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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] 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your top three priorities for developing services or facilities or resources for parents and young children in North Leverton? OR • What 3 things in your opinion would most improve the area for families with children under 5? 	1.
	2.
	3.

Partners - please could you write down all the services and activities available from your team for children aged 0-5 and their families, living in **North Leverton**. This will allow us to map provision in the area, identify gaps for the Children's Centre planning to address, and promote those services that do exist. Thank you.

Example

Health Visitor	Healthy eating group	Community centre	Monday 10-11	Sue Smith 01636 717171
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Team/service	Activity/service	Venue	Times	Contact
				etc

Please continue over the page if necessary

Showcard 1 - List of Services

Antenatal sessions	CIS (Children's Information Service)
Breast-feeding group	Dietician/Nutritionist/Food & Diet Advice
Children's Library service	Family Centre
Childcare:	Further Education
Childminder	GP practice
After school club	Health visitors
Breakfast club	Home Safety Equipment Scheme
Day nursery	Home Visits
Nursery in a school	Homestart
Independent School	Job Centres
Pre-school playgroup	Midwife
Toddler group	Parenting advice & guidance
Crèche	Speech Therapists
Family member	Story Time sessions
Friends	Toy Library
	Welfare rights sessions

Showcard 2

Better public transport
Childcare
Someone to go with
Different times of events
Better price



Showcard 3

Newsletter
Flyer/information sheet
Word of mouth professional (eg Health Visitor/nursery staff)
Word of mouth friends and family
Article in local paper
Information session at nursery/clinic/Sure Start



Appendix 3 – Focus Group discussion guide

Introduction: 5 minutes

- Introductions, say carrying out work on behalf of Sure Start Children's Centre about which will explain more shortly
- All views expressed are confidential – not attributable to any source
- No right or wrong answers – the opportunity for them to have their say

Initial warm up: 15-20 minutes

- Initial warm up to get everyone talking; ask them in turn - name, where they live, number and age of children, which school/playgroup/nursery etc they attend and gather for mapping exercise.
- Whether they work/go to college, anything else of interest relevant to discussion eg how long lived in the area.

Areas to avoid dwelling on

- Individual workers in services, especially not individual weaknesses re improvements to services
- Things beyond the control of Early Years Team eg larger political or social issues

Explanation about Sure Start Children's Centre: 10 minutes

- Member of Children's Centre to lead, explaining the concept and purpose, plans etc

Main sections of discussion: 60 minutes

- Mapping of current services, by day, and time of day (20 minutes) on flip chart
- Highlights from questionnaire (to date): (30 mins)

- **Service most helpful to you as a parent:**
- **Service most helpful to your child:**
Which specific things cited as useful & childfriendly in the survey?
- **Services thought poor or very poor:**
- **Services thought not child-friendly or not at all child-friendly:**
Which were not useful or child-friendly?
When things aren't childfriendly, why is that?
What would make services more child-friendly?
- **Good thing about having Children's Centre:**
- **3 other things needed to make North Leverton a better place:**

Gaps in current provision
Areas for improvement in the local area

- **Thoughts or concerns about the idea of Children's Centre** (10 mins)

Next Steps: 5 minutes

- Feedback (report and one-page sheet)
- Letter of invitation to be sent to all who completed the questionnaire
- Stakeholder meeting to which all will be invited, including the plans for North Leverton

Thank you

Appendix 4 – List of other suggestions for improvements from parents’ questionnaire

Why not useful	Why not child-friendly	Other 3 things the area needs	Any concerns or comments about the Children's Centre
Q8	Q9	Q12	Q13
Keep you there longer than you want to be (Job Centre)	None given	Speech therapist within school/visit school	Need to be clear about supporting other areas - eg. Health visitor
		Parental sessions	Hope it will be used - low population area
		Provision for working mums	Security while it's being built. Not sure it should be built
			Playgroup committee
			Interesting to see how it is used - opportunities for parents

Appendix 5 – Responses from partners

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

1. Travel/distance; parenting support; support for young/teenage parents; black children and families are particularly isolated and disadvantaged.
2. Rural isolation; not a wealthy village (£3 return fare to Retford); access to services
3. Access to community venue for courses, meetings etc; 'Drop-in' centre / facilities to run courses with crèche etc.
4. Isolation and lack of transport; no facilities for children or parents i.e. play centres, social meeting places; somewhere to learn skills, i.e. cooking
5. No full day-care in the village, except for 1 childminder who has, up until recently, had no vacancies.
6. At the moment, I am the only registered childminder and I have to turn children away because I am full. More under 5s childcare is needed and out-of-school clubs for the older children.

Q2. In what way do you think the advent of the Children's Centre will change the way services are delivered in Hawtonville?

1. Opportunity to provide non-stigmatising early support and prevention for children and families.
2. Centralised, more accessible to community; school already very community minded, already used as a 'village hall'.
3. 'Focus'; coordinated delivery of service
4. Hopefully, coordinate services
5. Bring them into a defined, regular setting that is local and accessible; join up services and extend them.
6. Parents will be able to get more information about returning to work and how to get extra help if needed.

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

1. Engaging with hard-to-reach families.
2. Getting people to use it and have confidence in it.
3. Establishing the centre
4. Getting over the 'stigma' of family centres. Getting people to be involved.
5. Maintaining strong links between services by networking/ meetings on a regular basis and getting parents (hard-to-reach) to attend.
6. n/a

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]

1. n/a
2. Don't know if these meetings take place but would be good to have meetings locally.
3. Parents very involved in life of school (and other community)
4. There are few meetings that I am aware of locally.
5. Yes, but it can be difficult to get full attendance at each meeting. Tends to be difficult when members of the group only attend occasionally.
6. I have only attended one meeting but I didn't feel it was very informative.

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

Priority 1.

1. Development of parenting support
2. Drawing in the whole community
3. Preschool/mother & toddler support 'centre'
4. A place for parents to meet and learn.
5. Good communication between agencies to deliver services that meet LOCAL needs
6. New equipment at the park for children of all ages

Priority 2.

1. Appropriate services for all children and families, including young parents, socially excluded and black families.
2. More social activities for adults/parents
3. Delivering training courses
4. Play facilities
5. Opportunities for parents e.g. health issues, back to work, childcare, benefits
6. Sport activities at weekends and after school.

Priority 3.

1. Work with fathers
2. Play opportunities
3. Coordinated support services – speech/health services etc.
4. Parenting groups
5. Creating the right environment (quality and inclusive)
6. n/a

Appendix 6 – Mapping exercise from focus group - Current Services in North Leverton in bold (from parents)

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
A.M.	Foundation Stage @ North Leverton School 8.50 – 11.30 am (term after child ins 4 yrs old)				
	Lunch Club 11.30 – 1.00 @ North Leverton School (from 3 yrs to full time school) run by playgroup £2.25				
	Childminder 6.00am – 6.00 pm				
	Post Office closes 5.30; garage; pub; Health Centre; School				
	Doctor's surgery 8.30-1.00				
	[Breakfast & After School Clubs, run by School Governors. 5 – 14 yr olds. Starting in September 2005]				
	J-Js soft play centre @ Gainsborough (café, swimming pool 20 mins away)				
	Retford Swimming pool – closing soon	Toddler Group @ Retford Methodist Church			

P.M.	North Leverton Playgroup 1.00 – 3.30				
	Doctor's surgery 2.00 – 6.30				Doctor's surgery 2.00 – 6.30
	Asthma Clinic @ Retford Hospital		Toddler Group @ Sturton 1.30-3.30		
	Speech Therapy @ Retford Hospital			Baby Clinic 2.00 – 4.00 fortnightly	
	Dietician @ Retford Hospital		Netball @ North Leverton School 7 yrs	Football training @ North Leverton School	Rounders @ North Leverton School 5-7 yrs, 7 yrs
	Tumble Tots @ Retford Leisure Centre in School Holidays			Well-woman Clinic @ North Leverton GP	