

SureStart



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Titchfield and Oakham Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

Written for: Sure Start Children's Centre Team
Nottinghamshire County Council

Written by: Nicola Stanley, SILVER DIALOGUE LIMITED

August 2007

fwa

Family Welfare Association

Silver Dialogue Limited
PO Box 6470
Rushden
Northamptonshire
NN10 0ZW
01933 418009
info@silverdialogue.com

Table of Contents

Main Report.....	3
1. Background to the Research	3
2. Aim and Objectives of the Consultation	4
3. Methodology	5
3.1 Partners' Questionnaire	5
3.2 Parents' Questionnaire	5
3.3 Focus Group	6
4. Observations on the Samples	7
4.1 Parent's Questionnaire	7
4.2 Partners' Questionnaire	8
4.3 Focus Group	9
5. Main Findings	10
5.1 Parents' Questionnaire	10
5.1.1. Services Ever Used.....	10
5.1.2. Usefulness of Services	12
5.1.3. Reasons for Services Not Being Useful	14
5.1.4. Child-Friendliness of Services	15
5.1.5. Reasons for Services Not Being Child-Friendly.....	17
5.1.6. Comparisons of Usefulness and Child-Friendliness	18
5.1.7. Most Helpful Service to Parents	19
5.1.8. Most Helpful Service to Children	21
5.1.9. Help to Use Services More Often	23
5.1.10. Preferences in Receiving Information.....	24
5.1.11. Three Things the Titchfield and Oakham Areas Need.....	24
5.1.12. Thoughts on the Arrival of the Children's Centre.....	26
5.2 Partner's Questionnaire	27
5.2.1. Current Problems	27
5.2.2. Possible Changes	28
5.2.3. Biggest Challenge	28
5.2.4. Effectiveness of Meetings.....	29
5.2.5. Partners' Priorities	30
5.3 Parents Focus Group	33
5.3.1. Knowledge of Services in the Areas	33
5.3.2. Strengths and Weakness of Current Services	33
5.3.3. Gaps in Current Provision.....	35
5.3.4. Good Things to come from the Arrival of the Children's Centre.....	35
5.3.5. Areas for Improvement in the Local Area.....	35
6. Key Messages for the Future	37
7. Appendices	38

Main Report

1. Background to the Research

- In line with the government's current initiative to introduce Sure Start Children's Centres into communities which fall within the top 20% and 30% of disadvantaged wards nationally, Nottinghamshire was 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 March 2007. A further 25 have followed in Round Two, and will be completed by March 2008. Within Round 2, Nottinghamshire was also given permission to include wards that fell outside of the 30% most disadvantaged provided that they included a Super Output Area showing levels of disadvantage similar to the 20% and 30% areas.
- 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. Partnership with local parents and their early involvement in planning of Children's Centres is an essential part of the ethos of the Children's Centres programme.
- It is the government's policy to develop Children's Centres within partnerships. Some may be based on a 'strong link' partnership, bringing together existing facilities (e.g. neighbourhood nursery, primary 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 areas will have child care available for 50 weeks a year, 8am – 6pm offering care integrated with education, for children aged 0-5 years. This will be delivered through linkages with established childcare settings in the area.
- Children's Centres are built on the successful practice of Sure Start Local Programmes, which have now all been integrated into the Children's Centres programme.
- 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 in the planning, delivery, evaluation, 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 in partnership with the Extending Services In and Around Schools programme.

- The Titchfield and Oakham consultation was 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, families who do not traditionally engage with mainstream services 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, 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 an interviewer administered questionnaire; a self-completion questionnaire distributed to service providers and key stakeholders in the area and one focus group with parents recruited via the interviews.

3.1 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers from Titchfield and Oakham were invited along to an open information session held at Newgate Lane Children's Centre on 23rd May 2007. Participants were informed about the planned consultations in Titchfield and Oakham to be carried out on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council by Silver Dialogue.
- The commissioned accountable body arrangements with the Family Welfare Association were also explained.
- Developing models for Children's Centres in areas outside of the 30% most disadvantaged were discussed, explaining that service provision would differ in these areas. Resources will be targeted on the Super Output areas within the ward, and also the neediest families within the whole ward.
- Attendees were given a self-completion questionnaire to complete at the meeting or to take away with them. Invitees who couldn't attend were sent a questionnaire by post or e-mail with a covering letter encouraging them to return this.
- Partners and service providers including registered childminders within the area were also sent the questionnaire, with a covering letter and leaflet about Children's Centres and a reply paid envelope.
- Follow up letters and emails were sent to those who had not returned the questionnaires (75 follow up questionnaires were sent out).
- Service providers were also asked to complete a mapping exercise, giving details of the services they were aware of in the Titchfield and Oakham areas with times and contact details.
- The mapping exercise would be used to develop a map of services available in the area to identify any service provision gaps or overlaps for the future and to identify likely settings for interviewing parents.
- The opportunity to give contact details was provided so that the Children's Centre team could make contact in the future and 11 (of 14) respondents completed this section.

3.2 Parents' Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation with parents consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents. It was planned to include:
 - Parents/carers with children under 8 years of age at local schools and nursery sessions.
 - Parents/carers who are users of local toddler groups and other sessions for parents and young children.
 - Parents with babies who attend Health Visitor sessions or receive home visits.
 - Parents/carers living locally with young children.
- Most interviews were conducted on Friday 15th June 2007 by a team of interviewers located outside the local schools - King Edward Primary and Nursery, High Oakham Primary, Newgate Lane Primary and Nursery and Sutton Road Primary and Nursery. All of the schools apart from High Oakham Primary

have morning and afternoon nursery sessions; High Oakham Primary has the Little Acorns day care centre located on site.

- Interviewers also targeted parent and toddler sessions including: Sure Tots at Sutton Road Primary school and Little Titches at the West Titchfield Matters community centre.
- Parents/carers were targeted for interviews if they lived in Oakham or Titchfield and/or used the children's services based locally.
- The interviewer team included workers from the Children's Centres Development team, a member of staff from West Mansfield Sure Start Children's Centre, teaching assistants from Sutton Road Primary school, a member of staff from the Children's Information Service, a member of the community and researchers from Silver Dialogue.
- The interview took about 10 minutes.
- 132 face to face interviews were conducted, in addition 39 self-completed questionnaires were returned from parents linked with King Edward Primary School, making a total of 171 responses.

3.3 Focus Group

- Parents taking part in the survey were asked whether they would be interested in attending the focus group to be held on 22nd June between 1.30 and 3.00pm in the Retrace Centre at Sutton Road Primary school. A good response was received with 76 parents (accounting for 44% of those surveyed) showing an interest in attending the focus group.
- Eleven respondents were recruited randomly by telephone from the list of interested respondents. Follow up invitation letters were sent.
- Six participants came to the focus group with five confirmed attendees not attending (the rain storms were no doubt responsible for some of these deciding not to attend on the day).
- A free crèche provided by West Mansfield Sure Start was available at the venue for those parents who wished to use it. Four children attended this crèche.
- A mapping exercise was conducted as part of the focus group to gather parents' perceptions about existing services in the area for them and their children.
- As part of the introduction to the group, a local Sure Start representative gave an explanation about Children's Centres. This was seen as a good way of enabling a wider understanding of the concept by parents before the discussion started.
- All attendees were given a £10 gift voucher as a thank you gift for their help.

4. Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parent's Questionnaire

- 171 interviews were completed in total. Sure Start data for the ward show that there are 595 children under 5 living in Titchfield and Oakham. The 171 parents interviewed accounted for 29% of the under 5s in the area. The number of interviews achieved was higher than the target of 25% required and therefore provides a good representative sample from the area.
- 149 or 87% of the respondents were female, while only 20 (12%) were male. Two respondents who completed the survey themselves had not answered this question.
- More than a third of the respondents (40%) were aged 30-39. Four (2%) were aged under 20. Just over a third (35%) of respondents were aged 20-29, 18% were 40-49 and 4% were aged 50 or more. (Again 2 self-completing respondents had not answered this question).
- The parents interviewed accounted for 321 children living in the area of the following ages: 174 under 5s, 140 aged 5 to 16 and only 7 aged over 16.
- The average number of children per family was 2.0.
- On average the respondents had 1 child aged under 5 and 1 aged 5 to 16. Most people (89%) were reported as having no children over 16. There were only six households with children aged over 16.
- Just over a third (38%) of the respondents had one child under 5. Close to a third (27%) had two children aged under 5 and five parents had three under 5s. Around a quarter (24%) had no children under 5 (n.b. parents with children aged 8 and below were targeted for the interviews). Eight respondents had no children in their household because they were grandparents or other relative/friend, while 13 did not choose to answer this question.
- Four (or 2%) of those who responded revealed that they were expecting a baby. The vast majority (93%) stated that they were not pregnant at this time. 5% did not answer this question.
- Three quarters of households (128 or 75%) had two adults living together, whilst 31 or 18% lived in households with only one adult. Ten households (6%) had more than 2 adults living together. The average was 2.0 adults (18 and above) per household.
- Some 16% of the respondents were single, three quarters (74%) were married or partnered. One respondent described themselves as 'other' e.g. widowed. Fifteen respondents did not reply to this question.
- Just over two in five households (42%) had one adult working, close to a third (31%) had two adults working and close to a quarter (23%) had no adults working. The remainder of households had more than 2 adults working (3%). Two respondents had not answered this question.
- Just over a quarter of the respondents (26%) were working part-time and 13% worked full time. Some 8% described themselves as unemployed whilst just over half (51%) said that they were full time parents. 5% also described themselves as grandparents or other relatives/friends. Two respondents did not answer this question.
- All the respondents described their ethnic origin as white. Two respondents did not answer this question.
- Half (51%) of the respondents described themselves as living on the outskirts of Mansfield, 36% in the centre of Mansfield and 12% in other surrounding towns/villages. Three respondents didn't answer this question.

- An analysis of those respondents who provided a postcode showed that 18 (11%) respondents were from NG19 areas, 1 (1%) from NG21 and 109 (64%) from NG18.
- Over three quarters of the respondents were registered with one of five GP Practices: Orchard Medical Practice (19%), Sandy Lane (19%), Roundwood Surgery (15%), Churchside Medical Practice (15%) and Millview Surgery (11%). Other surgeries used included: Court View Surgery (6%), St John's Health Centre (5%), Oaktree Lane Health Centre (3%) and Bull Farm Practice (1%). Ten respondents mentioned other Doctors and two did not know or were not yet registered with a Doctor.
- The majority of the responses were from parents with under 5s at King Edward Primary & Nursery (35%), followed by Newgate Lane Primary (25%), Sutton Road Primary & Nursery (16%) and High Oakham Primary (15%). Four respondents had under 5s attending other schools and 14 had very young children who were not currently attached to a nursery or day care establishment.

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 14 completed questionnaires were received.
- 11 respondents gave contact details (3 declined).
- Between them the service providers had accumulated up to 38 years of working in this community (although two declined to give this information). This gives an average of 3 years each, with a range from 6 weeks up to 13 years. About half of the respondents had been in their current role for at least 2 years.
- Only one Registered Childminder returned a service providers' survey.

Table 1 - Partners' Disciplines

Discipline	Number of Responses
Community Development	4
Early Years Education	4
Healthcare	2
Social Welfare	2
Adult Education	1
Education Support	1

Table 2 - Partners' Roles

Role	Number of Responses
Support in the Community	6
Adult Learning in the Community	2
Headteacher/Leader	2
Health Visitor/Community nurse	2
Registered Childminder	1
District Councillor (ex)	1

4.3 Focus Group

- Six parents/carers attended the focus group out of the eleven who had agreed to come along.
- One parent had a five year old child at King Edward School and two had a child attending Sutton Road Nursery. The under 5 children of the remaining parents/carers were not yet attending nursery school. Two of the parents attend the Sure Tots parent and toddler session at Sutton Road School.
- One of the attendees was a Grandmother, caring for her grandchildren for a few days each week.
- One focus group participant was male and the remaining five were female.
- Between them, respondents had 11 children in total, six of these were under 5, four were aged 5 to 11 and one was aged over 11.
- Five respondents cared for two children and one parent had one child.
- All the participants had at least one child aged 5 or under. One attendee cared for two children aged under 5.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 171 questionnaires were completed which accounted for close to a third (29%) of the households with children aged under 5 in the area. This provides a good representative view of households in the area.
- Even with 171 surveys completed some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, in particular those referring to services used, so care must be taken when comparing percentages - attention is brought to this throughout the report.
- A high number (92%) of respondents were aware of Sure Start, while 4% had not heard about Sure Start and 4% were not sure.
- The highest awareness of Sure Start was for those parents with children at Newgate Lane Primary where a Sure Start Children's Centre is located on-site, so that all parents were aware of Sure Start. The lowest awareness was seen for those respondents living in a village or town surrounding Mansfield (8 out of 10 were aware) rather than in Mansfield (9 in 10 aware), those parents with children at King Edward Primary school (9 in 10 aware), carers aged over 50 (only 5 in 10 were aware) and males (8 in 10 were aware).
- Close to a quarter (23%) of those who knew about Sure Start were also aware of the planned Children's Centre for Titchfield and Oakham.
- Those who were aged 30 to 39 were least likely to have heard about the plan for the new Children's Centre (only 12% aware) compared with those aged 20 to 29 (34% aware).
- Those parents with children at Newgate Lane Primary school were more likely to have heard about the plans for the Children's Centre services (4 in 10 aware) than parents from King Edward School and High Oakham School (where only 1 in 10 parents were aware).
- Only 2 in 10 parents from Sutton Road Primary school were aware of the plans as were parents with very young children who currently have no connection to a local school.

5.1.1. Services Ever Used

- Respondents were asked which local services they or their family had ever used, by means of a Showcard (Appendix 2). Responses in Table 5.1.1 are shown for all respondents. Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- As might be expected those services which are seen as a necessity i.e. GP (87%), Health Visitor (80%), and Midwife (75%), were used by over three quarters of respondents.
- Close to two thirds of respondents use a Nursery in a School (61%) or the Children's Library Service (60%).
- The level of respondents using a Nursery in a School at 61% is quite high and will have been affected by the survey method used i.e. targeting parents outside nursery schools; although it should be noted that the take up of nursery education is very high in Nottinghamshire with 97% of 3 and 4 year olds accessing their free entitlement.
- Services used by around half of the respondents included: Family Member (47%) and Antenatal Sessions (46%).

- More than a third of respondents had used a Toddler group (39%) or Friends (38%).
- Just under a third of respondents had used Pre-school playgroup (30%) or a Day Nursery (27%).
- All of the services, even those which are considered more specialist with limited take up, had been used by at least 5 respondents.

TABLE 5.1.1. Services Ever Used	Numbers using service	Percent who have ever used
Total	171	100%
GP Practice	148	87%
Health Visitor	136	80%
Midwife	129	75%
Nursery in a School	105	61%
Children's Library Service	102	60%
Family Member	80	47%
Antenatal Sessions	79	46%
Toddler Group	67	39%
Friends	65	38%
Pre-school Playgroup	51	30%
Day Nursery	47	27%
Speech Therapists	37	22%
Job Centres	35	20%
Story Time Sessions	35	20%
Home Visits	33	19%
Toy Library	30	18%
Further Education	26	15%
Home Safety Equipment	23	13%
Breast Feeding Group	21	12%
Registered Childminder	19	11%
Breakfast Club	18	11%
After School Club	17	10%
Dietician/Nutritionist	16	9%
Homestart	15	9%
Crèche	13	8%
Children's Information Service	12	7%
Parenting Advice & Guidance	12	7%
Family Centre	12	7%
Independent School	11	6%
Welfare Rights Sessions	5	3%

- An analysis of the service use data showed the following trends.
 - Antenatal services are less likely to have been accessed by single parents (2 in 10) versus married parents (5 in 10).
 - Single parents are half as likely to have accessed the Children's Library Service (3 in 10) compared to married parents (6 in 10).
 - Males are less likely to have stated that they or their family have used the services of a Health Visitor (5 in 10) compared with females (8 in 10).

- Those living in the centre of Mansfield are more likely to have used a pre-school playgroup (4 in 10), versus those living on the outskirts of Mansfield (3 in 10) or from a surrounding town or village (1 in 10).
- There were a number of differences in services used by parents affiliated with different schools.
 - Parents connected with Newgate Lane School (which has a Children's Centre building located on-site) showed more differences in service use than parents from the other schools, for example:
 - Newgate Lane parents were less likely to have used antenatal services (2 in 10 Newgate Lane versus 6 in 10 from other schools).
 - Newgate Lane parents were less likely to have used the Children's Library Service (4 in 10 versus 6 in 10 from the other schools).
 - Newgate Lane parents were more likely to have used the Job Centre (3 in 10 versus 1 in 10 others).
 - Sutton Road Primary School parents were twice as likely to have used a Toddler Group (6 in 10 versus 3 in 10 for the other schools).
 - Parents connected with High Oakham School were half as likely to have used a Nursery in a school (3 in 10 versus 7 in 10 others). (High Oakham School was the only school not to have a nursery session; however it has the Little Acorns day nursery located on-site).
 - Parents connected with High Oakham School were also less likely to have had home visits or home safety equipment services (0 in 10 versus 2 in 10 for the other schools).

5.1.2. Usefulness of Services

- Respondents were then asked how useful they had found those services that they had mentioned, for both themselves and their family. They scored usefulness of the services on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 = not very useful to 5 = very useful. Responses are shown in Table 5.1.2 overleaf.
- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents, and the closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction.
- The top three services for usefulness with a reasonable number of responses were: Family Member (mean score 4.9), Nursery in a School (4.9) and Friends (4.8). Other popular services highly scored for usefulness by at least 9 out of 10 users included Midwife (4.6) and Pre-school playgroup (4.6).
- Most services scored well with at least two thirds (66%) of the users scoring them as quite (4) or very useful (5). Those that were scored below this were Job Centres (51%), Children's Information Service (42%) and Welfare Rights Sessions (20%). The number of users of the Children's Information Service and the Welfare Rights Sessions were below 15 so these results may not reflect the views of all users of these services.
- Many of the least used services were rated very highly by the few respondents that used them including: Crèche (mean score of 4.7), Independent School (4.6), After School Club (4.6) and Breakfast Club (4.6). Care must be taken in interpreting these results however as they may not reflect the satisfaction level of all users of these services.
- Some services with a reasonable number of users had depressed mean usefulness scores because at least 1 in 10 users had rated them as being either not very or not at all useful. These services included: Registered Childminder

(4.4), Speech Therapists (4.3), Homestart - a support service (4.3), Parenting Advice and Guidance (4.3), Dietician/Nutritionist (4.1), Breast Feeding Group (4.0) and Job Centres (3.6).

Table 5.1.2 Usefulness of Services	Numbers using service	Percent Scoring Very (5) or Quite Useful (4)	Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)	Average Score
GP Practice	148	84%	2%	4.6
Health Visitor	136	76%	5%	4.3
Midwife	129	89%	1%	4.6
Nursery in a School	105	95%	0%	4.9
Children's Library Service	102	88%	1%	4.6
Family Member	80	100%	0%	4.9
Antenatal Sessions	79	77%	9%	4.3
Toddler Group	67	88%	1%	4.6
Friends	65	95%	0%	4.8
Pre School Playgroup	51	90%	2%	4.6
Day Nursery	47	87%	6%	4.5
Speech Therapists	37	76%	11%	4.3
Story Time Sessions	35	77%	9%	4.4
Job Centres	35	51%	11%	3.6
Home Visits	33	82%	9%	4.3
Toy Library	30	83%	3%	4.5
Further Education	26	73%	4%	4.3
Home Safety Equipment	23	74%	9%	4.2
Breast Feeding Group	21	67%	19%	4.0
Registered Childminder	19	79%	11%	4.4
Breakfast Club	18	83%	6%	4.6
After School Club	17	88%	6%	4.6
Dietician/Nutritionist	16	69%	13%	4.1
Homestart	15	87%	13%	4.3
Crèche	13	92%	8%	4.7
Family Centre	12	83%	8%	4.3
Parenting Advice & Guidance	12	75%	17%	4.3
Children's Information Service	12	42%	8%	3.9
Independent School	11	91%	9%	4.6
Welfare Rights Sessions	5	20%	20%	3.0

Table Note:

i) An average score for usefulness was calculated by assigning a score of 5 for very useful, 4 to quite useful, 3 to neither/nor, 2 to useful and 1 to not at all useful. 'Don't know' or no responses were excluded from this analysis.

ii) Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.

5.1.3. Reasons for Services Not Being Useful

- Respondents were then asked about any services they had mentioned, which they had scored as being 1 = not at all useful or 2 = not useful and why this was. Results are shown in Table 5.1.3.
- 61 ratings were given to services as being not very or not useful. This is a low dissatisfaction rate overall representing only 4% of all the possible scores allocated (1399) by the total number of users of services.

Table 5.1.3 Services scored as not being useful	Numbers using service	Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not useful (1)	Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)
Welfare Rights Sessions	5	1	20%
Breast Feeding Group	21	4	19%
Parenting Advice & Guidance	12	2	17%
Homestart	15	2	13%
Dietician/Nutritionist	16	2	13%
Job Centres	35	4	11%
Speech Therapists	37	4	11%
Registered Childminder	19	2	11%
Independent School	11	1	9%
Home Visits	33	3	9%
Antenatal Sessions	79	7	9%
Home Safety Equipment	23	2	9%
Story Time Sessions	35	3	9%
Family Centre	12	1	8%
Children's Information Service	12	1	8%
Crèche	13	1	8%
Day Nursery	47	3	6%
After School Club	17	1	6%
Breakfast Club	18	1	6%
Health Visitor	136	7	5%
Further Education	26	1	4%
Toy Library	30	1	3%
GP Practice	148	3	2%
Pre School Playgroup	51	1	2%
Toddler Group	67	1	1%
Children's Library Service	102	1	1%
Midwife	129	1	1%

- 23 respondents had provided low scores for some of the services and they described their reasons for this as:
 - 5 responses related to health visitors, particularly that they were not wanted or not needed or unreliable.
 - 3 felt that the service did not provide any benefit or was not helpful to them.
 - 2 had found their GP to be not very helpful.
 - 1 mentioned problems they had with their midwife.
 - 1 had found the antenatal service to have been poor and not useful to them.

- 13 gave "Other" reasons:
 - Three mentioned problems with the Job Centre i.e. one that jobs offered were not relevant and two that they had experienced difficulties there when their young children had run around or been noisy.
 - Three comments related to the Speech Therapist service, one that her child had been waiting 2 years from referral to see a Therapist and two felt that they had not found the advice to have been suitable for the needs of their child.
 - Two felt that the Day Nursery service had been unhelpful to their child either by not sufficiently preparing the child for transition to school or that they would not look after a 'clingy' child.
 - Two were concerned about unhelpful lists that they had received from services, one from Home Safety Equipment where the listed items were not appropriate for their house and the other from the Dietician where the adapted lists of foods were not helpful in themselves to solve weight problems.
 - One comment was made about the Breast Feeding Group where they had felt there was too much pressure to breastfeed in a particular way.
 - One comment related to Story Time Sessions where the child had been uninterested and bored.
 - Another comment related to the fact that a particular service had been disinterested in parent's comments.
- 5 respondents didn't provide a reason for their low scores.

5.1.4. Child-Friendliness of Services

- By service used, respondents were then asked how child-friendly they had found the services.
- They scored child-friendliness of the services on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 = not very child-friendly to 5 = very child-friendly. Responses are shown in Table 5.1.4 overleaf.
- The top five services for child-friendliness were Nursery in a School (4.9), Family Member (4.9), Friends (4.8), Toddler Group (4.8) and Pre-School Playgroup (4.8). All of these services were scored as either very or quite child-friendly by at least 9 in 10 of their surveyed users.
- Most services scored well with at least two thirds (66%) of the users scoring them as quite (4) or very child-friendly (5). Those that were scored below this (and with a reasonable number of responses) were Breast Feeding Group (57%), Antenatal Sessions (47%), Further Education (42%), Dietician/Nutritionist (38%) and Job Centres (26%).
- Many of the least used services were rated very highly by the few respondents that used them, including: Crèche (4.7), Registered Childminder (4.6) and Independent School (4.6). Care must be taken in interpreting these results however as they may not reflect the satisfaction level of all users of these services.
- Some services with a reasonable number of users had depressed mean child-friendliness scores because at least 1 in 10 users had rated them as being either not very or not at all child-friendly. These services included: Family Centre (4.3), Homestart (4.1), Children's Information Service (4.0), Breast Feeding Group (3.9)

Antenatal Sessions (3.6), Further Education (3.6), Dietician/Nutritionist (3.3) and Job Centres (2.7).

Table 5.1.4. Child-friendliness of services	Numbers using service	Percent Very (5) or Quite (4) Child Friendly	Percent Not very (2) or Not (1) child friendly	Average Score
GP Practice	148	74%	4%	4.3
Health Visitor	136	81%	4%	4.5
Midwife	129	80%	2%	4.6
Nursery in a School	105	90%	0%	4.9
Children's Library Service	102	85%	1%	4.7
Family Member	80	94%	0%	4.9
Antenatal Sessions	79	47%	19%	3.6
Toddler Group	67	93%	3%	4.8
Friends	65	92%	0%	4.8
Pre School Playgroup	51	94%	2%	4.8
Day Nursery	47	85%	6%	4.6
Speech Therapists	37	70%	5%	4.5
Job Centres	35	26%	37%	2.7
Story Time Sessions	35	86%	3%	4.7
Home Visits	33	79%	9%	4.4
Toy Library	30	80%	7%	4.5
Further Education	26	42%	12%	3.6
Home Safety Equipment	23	70%	4%	4.5
Breast Feeding Group	21	57%	19%	3.9
Registered Childminder	19	79%	5%	4.6
Breakfast Club	18	72%	6%	4.4
After School Club	17	76%	6%	4.4
Dietician/Nutritionist	16	38%	19%	3.3
Homestart	15	73%	20%	4.1
Crèche	13	92%	8%	4.7
Children's Information Service	12	67%	17%	4.0
Parenting Advice & Guidance	12	75%	8%	4.3
Family Centre	12	83%	17%	4.3
Independent School	11	82%	9%	4.6
Welfare Rights Sessions	5	40%	20%	3.3

Table Note:

i) An average score for child-friendliness was calculated by assigning a score of 5 for very child-friendly, 4 to quite child-friendly, 3 to neither/nor, 2 to not very child-friendly and 1 to not at all child-friendly. "Don't know" or no responses were excluded from this analysis.

ii) Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.

5.1.5. Reasons for Services Not Being Child-Friendly

- Respondents were then asked about any services they had mentioned, which they had scored as being 1 = not at all child-friendly or 2 = not child-friendly and why this was.
- 82 low scores (i.e. not very or not at all) for child-friendliness were given out of the total of 1399 possible scores for all users. This represents a total of 6% of total scores given which is a higher level of dissatisfaction than the 4% seen for usefulness of services in this area (section 5.1.4).

Table 5.1.5 Services Scored as not being Child-friendly	Numbers using service	Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not at all child- friendly (1)	Percent not very (2) or not at all child- friendly (1)
Job Centres	35	13	37%
Homestart	15	3	20%
Welfare Rights Sessions	5	1	20%
Breast Feeding Group	21	4	19%
Antenatal Sessions	79	15	19%
Dietician/Nutritionist	16	3	19%
Children's Information Service	12	2	17%
Family Centre	12	2	17%
Further Education	26	3	12%
Independent School	11	1	9%
Home Visits	33	3	9%
Parenting Advice & Guidance	12	1	8%
Crèche	13	1	8%
Toy Library	30	2	7%
Day Nursery	47	3	6%
After School Club	17	1	6%
Breakfast Club	18	1	6%
Speech Therapists	37	2	5%
Registered Childminder	19	1	5%
Home Safety Equipment	23	1	4%
GP Practice	148	6	4%
Health Visitor	136	5	4%
Toddler Group	67	2	3%
Story Time Sessions	35	1	3%
Midwife	129	3	2%
Pre School Playgroup	51	1	2%
Children's Library Service	102	1	1%
Nursery in a School	105	0	0%
Family Member	80	0	0%
Friends	65	0	0%

- 39 respondents had provided low scores for some of the services and they described their reasons for this:
 - 4 responses said that there were no play areas and/or no toys.
 - 5 felt it was a service that was not appropriate/not suitable/not necessary for children.

- 1 felt there were no facilities for children/no childcare.
- 7 gave "Other" reasons.
 - Two comments related to the Day Nursery, where one parent felt that it had not helped with the transition to school - "they just played". The other parent felt that there was not enough staff to cope with special needs children.
 - Two comments related to the hard attitude of either the Midwife or Health Visitor. One of these parents felt that they had been humiliated by a Health Visitor in front of other parents at the baby clinic.
 - One parent felt that the GP Practice had a poor relationship with children.
 - Another felt that the Family Centre did not have any activities for children.
 - One parent felt that the Toy Library was not safe for children.
- 22 respondents didn't provide a reason for their low scores (around half of these non-completes were from returned self-completion questionnaires rather than interviewer administered surveys).¹

5.1.6. Comparisons of Usefulness and Child-Friendliness

- Looking at both sets of data - usefulness and child-friendliness - and comparing the average scores of the respondents' views for parents' and children's needs, table 5.1.6 overleaf shows the difference in views held.
- The closer to an average score of 5, the more useful or child-friendly the service is perceived to be. The gap is shown in bold when the service is more child-friendly than useful.
- Overall, 13 services are seen as being more child-friendly, although the difference of up to 0.2 points is negligible.
- Eight services are equally balanced on usefulness and child-friendliness.
- Nine services were seen to be more useful than child-friendly.
- Further Education and Antenatal Sessions are viewed as relatively useful services from the parents' view however they showed one of the biggest gaps between usefulness and child-friendliness.
- Services that rate relatively low on both scores for usefulness and child friendliness include Job Centres and Dietician/Nutritionist, but are still considered more useful than child friendly.

¹ It should be noted that the questionnaire is not designed for self-completion, so a level of non-completed returns might be expected.

Table 5.1.6 Score Comparisons	Numbers using Services	Usefulness Score*	Child Friendliness Score*	Gap
Story Time Sessions	35	4.4	4.7	0.3
Home Safety Equipment	23	4.2	4.5	0.3
Welfare Rights Sessions	5	3.0	3.3	0.3
Health Visitor	136	4.3	4.5	0.2
Toddler Group	67	4.6	4.8	0.2
Speech Therapists	37	4.3	4.5	0.2
Registered Childminder	19	4.4	4.6	0.2
Pre School Playgroup	51	4.6	4.8	0.2
Children's Information Service	12	3.9	4.0	0.1
Children's Library Service	102	4.6	4.7	0.1
Nursery in a School	105	4.9	4.9	0.1
Home Visits	33	4.3	4.4	0.1
Day Nursery	47	4.5	4.6	0.1
Friends	65	4.8	4.8	0.0
Creche	13	4.7	4.7	0.0
Parenting Advice & Guidance	12	4.3	4.3	0.0
Family Centre	12	4.3	4.3	0.0
Toy Library	30	4.5	4.5	0.0
Family Member	80	4.9	4.9	0.0
Midwife	129	4.6	4.6	0.0
Independent School	11	4.6	4.6	0.0
Breast Feeding Group	21	4.0	3.9	-0.1
Homestart	15	4.3	4.1	-0.1
Breakfast Club	18	4.6	4.4	-0.2
After School Club	17	4.6	4.4	-0.2
GP Practice	148	4.6	4.3	-0.2
Antenatal Sessions	79	4.3	3.6	-0.7
Further Education	26	4.3	3.6	-0.7
Dietician/Nutritionist	16	4.1	3.3	-0.7
Job Centres	35	3.6	2.7	-0.9

**An average score was calculated by assigning a score of 5 for very useful/child friendly, 4 to quite useful/child friendly, 3 to neither/nor, 2 to useful/child friendly and 1 to not at all useful/child friendly. "Don't know" or no responses were excluded from this analysis.*

5.1.7. Most Helpful Service to Parents

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had used was the most helpful to them, as a parent. The following table 5.1.7a overleaf shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top five most helpful services for parents mentioned by over 10% of respondents were Midwife 16%, Nursery in a school 15%, Family member 13%, GP practice 12% and Health visitors 11%. Three of these services provide healthcare and two provide help with childcare.

Table 5.1.7a Service most helpful to you as a parent	Number of Mentions	Percent Mentions All Respondents
Midwife	27	16%
Nursery in a School	25	15%
Family Member	23	13%
GP Practice	20	12%
Health Visitors	18	11%
Pre-school Playgroup	10	6%
Toddler Group	9	5%
Day Nursery	9	5%
Antenatal Sessions	7	4%
Children's Library Service	6	4%
Toy Library	5	3%
Home Visits	5	3%
Friends	5	3%
Breast Feeding Group	5	3%
Registered Childminder	4	2%
Story Time Sessions	3	2%
Speech Therapists	3	2%
Homestart	3	2%
Further Education	3	2%
Family Centre	3	2%
Home Safety Equipment	2	1%
Crèche	2	1%
Job Centres	1	1%
Independent School	1	1%
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	1%
Children's Information Service	1	1%
After School Club	1	1%
Don't know/No reply	10	6%

- The analysis shown in table 5.1.7a shows the overall level of helpfulness across all respondents - it is therefore biased towards services that are used by a greater number of respondents i.e. they had a greater chance to be chosen as the best service by more respondents. Another analysis was undertaken to reduce this bias by calculating the percentage of users who saw this service as their most helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.1.7b overleaf.
- The top four most helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
 - Midwife
 - Nursery in a school
 - Family Member
 - GP practice
- The top four most helpful services in the USER analysis are:
 - Family Member
 - Family Centre
 - Nursery in a school
 - Breast feeding group

Table 5.1.7b Service most helpful to you as a parent for users only	Number of Mentions	Number of Users	Percent Users
Family Member	23	80	29%
Family Centre	3	12	25%
Nursery in a School	25	105	24%
Breast Feeding Group	5	21	24%
Registered Childminder	4	19	21%
Midwife	27	129	21%
Homestart	3	15	20%
Pre-school Playgroup	10	51	20%
Day Nursery	9	47	19%
Toy Library	5	30	17%
Crèche	2	13	15%
Home Visits	5	33	15%
GP Practice	20	148	14%
Toddler Group	9	67	13%
Health Visitors	18	136	13%
Further Education	3	26	12%
Independent School	1	11	9%
Antenatal Sessions	7	79	9%
Home Safety Equipment	2	23	9%
Story Time Sessions	3	35	9%
Children's Information Service	1	12	8%
Speech Therapists	3	37	8%
Friends	5	65	8%
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	16	6%
Children's Library Service	6	102	6%
After School Club	1	17	6%
Job Centres	1	35	3%

- In this case Family Member moves to the top position on helpfulness because close to a third (29%) of respondents who use family members for help with childcare found them to be the most helpful option.
- Other services which were used by a small number of users were highly appreciated above all other services by at least 1 in 5 users. These were Family Centre (25%), Breast Feeding Group (24%), Registered Childminder (21%) and the Homestart support service (20%). These services can be considered to be helpful emerging services that are not currently used by a large number of parents. Further research is recommended to explore the satisfaction levels amongst users of these lesser used (or less available) services.

5.1.8. Most Helpful Service to Children

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had used was the most helpful to their child/children. The following table 5.1.8a overleaf shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top three most helpful services for children and mentioned by at least 9% of respondents were Nursery in a School (29%), Toddler Group (10%) and

Pre-School playgroup (9%). All of these activities are largely concerned with children's social and educational development.

Table 5.1.8a Service most helpful to your child across all respondents	Number of Mentions	Percent Mentions All Respondents
Nursery in a School	49	29%
Toddler Group	17	10%
Pre-school Playgroup	15	9%
Family Member	14	8%
Day Nursery	14	8%
Children's Library Service	14	8%
GP Practice	13	8%
Health Visitor	12	7%
Speech Therapists	9	5%
Toy Library	4	2%
Midwife	4	2%
Friends	4	2%
Registered Childminder	4	2%
Story Time Sessions	3	2%
Independent School	3	2%
Homestart	3	2%
Home Visits	3	2%
Family Centre	3	2%
After School Club	3	2%
Crèche	2	1%
Further Education	1	1%
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	1%
Breakfast Club	1	1%
Don't know/ No reply	10	6%

- The analysis shown in table 5.1.8a shows the overall level of the services' helpfulness to children across all respondents - it is therefore biased towards services that are used by a greater number of respondents i.e. they had a greater chance to be chosen as the best service by more respondents. Another analysis was undertaken to reduce this bias by calculating the percentage of users who saw this service as their most child-helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.1.8b overleaf.
- The top three most child-helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
 - Nursery in a school
 - Toddler group
 - Pre-school playgroup
- The top three most child-helpful services in the USER analysis are:
 - Nursery in a school
 - Day Nursery
 - Pre-school playgroup

- In this case Nursery in a school and Pre-school playgroup are confirmed as being in the top three child-helpful services and Day Nursery moves up to the second highest position.

Table 5.1.8b Service most helpful to your child by users only	Number of Mentions	Number of Users	Percent Users
Nursery in a School	49	105	47%
Day Nursery	14	47	30%
Pre-school Playgroup	15	51	29%
Independent School	3	11	27%
Toddler Group	17	67	25%
Family Centre	3	12	25%
Speech Therapists	9	37	24%
Registered Childminder	4	19	21%
Homestart	3	15	20%
After School Club	3	17	18%
Family Member	14	80	18%
Crèche	2	13	15%
Children's Library Service	14	102	14%
Toy Library	4	30	13%
Home Visits	3	33	9%
Health visitor	12	136	9%
GP Practice	13	148	9%
Story Time Sessions	3	35	9%
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	16	6%
Friends	4	65	6%
Breakfast Club	1	18	6%
Further Education	1	26	4%
Midwife	4	129	3%

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 5.1.9 overleaf, it can be seen that three items were mentioned the most and by more than 1 in 5 respondents - these were 'different times of events' (27%), 'more local venue' (23%) and 'better public transport' (23%).
- It is of interest to note that twice as many males (4 in 10) than females (2 in 10) rated 'better public transport' as an issue.
- 'Different times of events' was not an issue for parents connected with Newgate Lane School where less than 1 in 10 rated this compared with 3 in 10 parents linked to other schools.

Table 5.1.9 Help to use services more often	Numbers	Percent Agreeing
Different times of events	46	27%
More local venue	40	23%
Better public transport	39	23%
Childcare	28	16%
Someone to go with	27	16%
Better price	18	11%
None of these	51	30%

5.1.10. Preferences in Receiving Information

- Respondents were shown a list of possible ways of receiving information about activities and services for children. Respondents were asked to say which they would prefer. Results are shown in table 5.1.10 below.
- The most popular way was clearly a newsletter, which close to two thirds (64%) of the parents preferred.
- The second most preferred communication route, chosen by just under a third of respondents (32%), was a flyer/information sheet.
- The least preferred option with only 11% of respondents preferring this route was an information session.

Table 5.1.10 Preferences in Receiving Information	Numbers	Percent Preferring
Newsletter	110	64%
Flyer/information sheet	55	32%
Article in local paper	36	21%
Via email/website	32	19%
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	29	17%
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	21	12%
Information session at nursery/clinic/sure start	18	11%
None of these	3	2%

5.1.11. Three Things the Titchfield and Oakham Areas Need

- When asked what three other things the Titchfield and Oakham areas need to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in Table 5.1.11 overleaf.
- The top 5 suggestions requested were:
 - Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park (14%)
 - Parent & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities (9%)
 - More/Better information (9%)
 - Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities (9%)
 - More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities (8%)
- Three of the most frequently mentioned ideas focus on providing more play/leisure facilities both indoors and outdoors. The remaining two of the top five ideas demonstrate the need for improving current facilities/events, through providing better information about what is happening and by making the activities more affordable.

Table 5.1.11 Suggestions from Respondents	Number of Mentions	Percent of Respondents
Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park	24	14%
Parent & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities	16	9%
More/Better information/Advertising	16	9%
Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities	16	9%
More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities	13	8%
Before and after school activities/clubs	11	6%
Holiday activities/care for children	8	5%
Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol etc	8	5%
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	7	4%
More/Better facilities/activities for smaller children	5	3%
More child care/childminders/nurseries/ crèche	5	3%
Clean up drugs/litter/dog mess/Youths hanging around	5	3%
Place to meet/Groups for mums/parents to meet	4	2%
More/Better buses/Better Transport	4	2%
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities/Sports Facilities	4	2%
More policing/Police	4	2%
More support/Somewhere for support & advice	3	2%
Youth club/Activities for older children/teenagers	2	1%
More/Better parking	2	1%
Public toilets/Baby changing facilities	2	1%
Days out/Trips/Organised Outings	2	1%
Village Hall/Community Centre	1	1%
Further education courses/Advisors	1	1%
Clinic/Doctor/Health Visitor	1	1%
Other	38	22%
Don't know	51	30%

- The top item 'Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park' was mentioned more by parents linked with Newgate Lane School (4 in 10 parents mentioned this) versus those linked to other schools (less than 1 in 10 parents).
- No parents connected with Newgate Lane School mentioned the need for Parent & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler' activities compared with 1 in 10 parents mentioning this from other schools.
- The need for 'More/Better information' was mentioned more by parents from King Edward Primary, High Oakham School and those parents who were not yet connected with a school (1 in 10) than from those connected to Sutton Road Primary (where no parents mentioned this) and Newgate Lane Primary (mentioned by less than 1 in 10).
- Requests for 'Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities' were more from parents linked with Sutton Road Primary School (2 in 10) than for those from other schools (less than 1 in 10).
- The mentioning of 'More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities' was not dependent on which school parents were connected with.

- 'Other' mentions which related to current activities in the area included:
 - Five parents mentioned more need for a variety of other things to do (nature walks, cooking/sewing) and entertainment for children.
 - Four parents felt that child related activities should be cheaper and help with costs be made available.
 - Three parents felt that there was a need for more flexible timing of current activities. One of these also felt that evening parenting workshops should be available.
 - Three mentioned a need for an informal venue for parents with their children to have a chat, coffee mornings or take part in joint activities.
 - Two mentioned the need for activities for older children/teenagers.
 - Two parents mentioned the need either for a breast feeding group or for more areas being available in which to breastfeed.
 - Two felt there was a need for better security in public places with more patrols and improved parking.
 - Two requested more Sure Start sessions and centres.
 - One parent requested more help for children with behavioural problems.
 - One parent felt that a baby sitting service was required.
 - One parent felt that it should be made easier for Mothers to work out of normal hours.
 - One felt that there should be a volunteer system in place for disabled parents.
 - Fourteen "Other" comments were made (Appendix 5).

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 previously been aware of the plans.
- Only 47 people or 28% of the respondents commented. All of these respondents had already been aware of Sure Start prior to taking part in the interview.
- 15% of parents thought it was 'a good idea', 'great', 'brilliant' or 'excellent'.
- 2% felt it would be useful or helpful to have a Children's Centre in the area.
- 2% said they didn't know enough about Children's Centres to comment.
- 2% felt that more publicity or information was required.
- 2% commented that they thought a Children's Centre was for disadvantaged families/lone parents/under privileged areas and was therefore not relevant to them.
- 1% felt it was about time that a Children's Centre was available locally.
- 4% (7) mentioned 'Other' reasons.
 - Two were happy or quite impressed with Children's Centres.
 - One felt that it should be eligible for all. When she was a young Mum she had been unable to access courses because of living on the wrong side of the street.
 - One parent felt that siblings should be able to attend the same Sure Start groups (otherwise it could be difficult for parents).
 - One mentioned that they felt staff should talk to the family about who has been to Sure Start each day.
 - One parent requested the possibility of centres to help families.
 - One felt that a Children's Centre should also be set up in Littleworth.

5.2 Partner's Questionnaire

- Partner's responses varied depending on their role and experience in the area. Anonymous responses in alphabetical order are shown in Appendix 6, and a summary of responses to each question is given below.
- For each of the questions asked, responses were very much focused on partners' own personal involvement in the community, although some clear community wide issues were also raised.
- Responses were focused on improving problems in the community and tailoring current support services to help. Some specific gaps in service provision were identified for the area including pre-school and after school and holiday clubs.

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 Titchfield and Oakham?

- Many useful comments were made. However, several of the partners did not give a response to this question or stated that they felt unable to provide a useful answer due to lack of knowledge.
- **A lack of integration between the community organisations** was highlighted:

"Information about services and joined up working."

"Duplication of services already being delivered by other professionals."

"Need to consider how to manage and jointly plan the adult and family learning with both other Children's Centres and other community organisations."

"Knowledge and understanding of different provisions."

- Perceived **gaps in the service provision** were seen to be mainly in terms of **nursery places and after school/holiday care** and **jobsearch** help.

"Requirement for King Edwards after school club to expand, we need to find larger space on school site."

"In all areas i.e. nursery places, wrap around care and holiday care."

"With regards to jobsearch. Help is only available to certain eligible groups."

- Several comments also highlighted **a lack of a central meeting place** in the locality.

"There's a lack of a sustainable centre/meeting place for toddlers and their parents/carers."

"A dedicated place for parents and young families to go to access services."

"Nothing in the local area without having to travel."

5.2.2. Possible Changes

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

- The partner's responses were positive and it was felt that the Children's Centre would improve the perceived problems of lack of co-ordination between services and it would lead to **more integrated services**.

"Increase links between service providers."

"Hopefully, pull existing services together."

"Help to co-ordinate/join-up different agencies and services operating in the area."

"More co-ordinated approach."

"By bringing together the currently fragmented services so that economies of scale are achieved, duplication kept to a minimum and real needs are met."

- It was felt that the Children's Centre would **provide a much needed venue** in the local area and would lead to the provision of services better tailored to the local needs.

"Provision of childcare (Daycare – pre-school for 2-5 yrs, wrap around care and holiday care) and provision for parents."

"Information/Support more easily accessible within the Community."

"Dedicated support and base for accessing services."

"Currently pockets of deprivation that are 'missed out'. Inclusion into a Children's Centre will provide much needed support services within their geographical location."

"It may offer a venue and an opportunity to engage with parents and involve in education not currently met."

- It should be noted that plans for the Titchfield and Oakham Children's Centre do not include any capital plans for a new building, but rather a way of working in a more co-ordinated, multi-agency way, ensuring that family participation is central to delivery of services. This will therefore be a "virtual Children's Centre" operating as a "strong linked partnership". There are also no plans to provide day care as part of the Children's Centre development, although crèche provision for parents engaged in Sure Start activities and Stay and Play sessions for parents and children together will be delivered.

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 Titchfield and Oakham?

- Several different factors were mentioned but the one that was mentioned the most was to do with **communication between the different agencies/services** and the **difficulty of getting them to work together**.

“Encouraging service providers (JobCentre, Health Visitors, Social Workers etc) to access CIS and to work in partnership to deliver information to families.”

“Working in partnerships, strategically so that our services are effective.”

“Communication between numerous agencies.”

“Agencies working together.”

- The second most mentioned issue was that of **engaging the people that need it most.**

“Getting people on board.”

“Engagement of families.”

“Getting parents involved.”

“Meeting the severe needs of some very incompetent parents.”

- Several comments were also made to do with **finding the right location for the building.** (NB see note in 5.2.2)

“Siting of Centres.”

“Establishing and building in the ideal location.”

“Location and getting funding.”

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 people who responded to this question were positive about the usefulness of meetings:

“Useful to network.”

“Meetings and partnership working at a local level is paramount, but should be short and only arranged with an Agenda.”

“Extremely.”

However, one comment was that *“too many meetings often complicate things.”*

- Parent involvement itself and knowledge about whether parents are involved or not seemed to be generally quite low:

“It may be applicable to have a parent at some meetings where the agenda items are applicable.”

“Not aware how often or if parents invited.”

- Specific meetings mentioned were:

NMT (Neighbourhood Management Teams) meetings – once a month – open to all residents. Very useful but commitment from most service providers is low.

COG (Community Operations Group) meetings – quarterly. No parent involvement.

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 Titchfield and Oakham?

- Respondents were asked to list three things they thought were important to develop in the area for parents and young children. **Overall**, when the three response priorities were grouped together, the following factors emerged as having the highest priority (according to number of comments):

- i) Parental education/support
- ii) More childcare
- iii) Integrated support (links between agencies etc)
- iv) Venue
- v) Information
- vi) Accessibility of facilities (physically and psychologically)

Example comments from across the three priority categories which illustrate these categories are as follows:

- i) Parental education/support
 - “Parental education”*
 - “Support for families”*
 - “Outreach support in the home”*
 - “Supporting/Advising re. Healthy lifestyle choices”*
- ii) Childcare
 - “Affordable, quality local childcare”*
 - “Continuity of childcare 0-18”*
 - “Sustainable childcare”*
- iii) Integrated support (links between agencies)
 - “Co-ordinated approach”*
 - “Working in partnership with other agencies to provide services”*

“Commitment from all service providers”

- iv) Venue
 - “A sustainable centre”*
 - “Appropriate venue”*
 - “Location”*
- v) Information
 - “Correct information”*
 - Gathering and distributing up-to-date information”*
- vi) Accessibility of facilities (physically and psychologically)
 - “Accessibility for families”*
 - “Breaking down barriers, stigmas to accessing services”*

- No clear patterns emerged when looking at the **separate priorities (i.e. first response, second response and third response from each service provider)**. However, there was a tendency for more comments about venue and integrated support to be mentioned in either the first or second response, whereas issues about parental education tended to come up more in the third response. Although parental support and education appears as top priority in the list due to the number of mentions it received, in reality it was not one of the most ‘top of mind’ responses from service providers.
- Other important factors that were mentioned specifically include:
 - First response
 - “Funding for career guidance and job search help and advice”*
 - Second response
 - “Facilitating peer support (in relation to post-natal depression)”*
 - “Involve local community – not just parents”*
 - Third response
 - “Meeting CIS (Children’s Information Service) ‘Core’ offer”*
 - “Outreach support in the home.”*

5.1.6 Factors for Improvement for under 5’s

Q6. What 3 things in your opinion would most improve the area for families with children under 5?

- When asked the different question of what would most benefit the area for families with children under 5, the priority factors changed. When the three priority response categories were grouped together, the introduction of **more facilities** (of different types) was mentioned the most and family learning opportunities were not mentioned so much. Factors in priority order (according to number of comments) were as follows:
 - i) Improved facilities
 - ii) Childcare
 - iii) Venue/Building
 - iv) Integrated support
 - v) Family learning opportunities

Example comments from across the three priority categories that illustrate these categories are as follows:

- i) Improved facilities
 - “More play activities (under-one groups/drop-ins)”*
 - “More feeding/changing areas”*
 - “Outdoor facilities (parks)”*
 - “Play facilities in and outside”*
 - “Free leisure facilities”*
- ii) Childcare
 - “Affordable, quality, local childcare”*
 - “Continuity of childcare for parents/carers 0-18”*
 - “More provision for wrap-around care”*
 - “Sustainable childcare”*
- iii) Venue/Building
 - “Dedicated building/location”*
 - “Venue”*
 - “Venue for support networks”*
- iv) Integrated support
 - “Co-ordinated approach”*
 - “Create relations with parents of child, centres”*
- v) Family learning opportunities
 - “Introduce family learning opportunities”*

- When the responses are analysed individually, these priorities are broadly reflected across the responses. (i.e. more facilities mentioned more in response 1 and more parental learning/support mentioned more in response 3). Other specific factors that were mentioned as priorities in the three response categories include:

Response 1

- “Consultation with parents about their needs”*
- “Improved road safety”*
- “Easy access buses”*

Response 2

- “Housing refurbishment in Eat and West Titchfield”*
- “Support in the home (post-natal depression, behaviour management)”*
- “Dedicated childcare/outreach workers events”*

Response 3

- “Nutrition and behaviour advice”*

5.3 Parents Focus Group

- The discussion guide used in the focus group is 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
 - Gaps in current provision
 - Good things to come from the arrival of the Children's Centre
 - Areas for improvement in the local area
- Focus group respondents were initially invited to undertake a mapping exercise, to gather information about services and activities in the area that they know about. This can be seen in Appendix 7 and was similar to the exercise undertaken by the service providers. In the case of parents however this was to help gain an understanding of their level of awareness of local services, for comparison with the map of actual local services offered from the partners' responses.

5.3.1. Knowledge of Services in the Areas

- The parents worked in teams of two to map services and activities that they were aware of for under 5s in their local area. The results from this can be seen in Appendix 7.
- They knew of the activities taking place at Mansfield Library including a story time and 'shake, rattle and roll' sessions.
- They were aware of nine toddler sessions, one community led group taking place in West Titchfield, one led by a local theatre, three church run groups, three commercial sessions including two run by a play centre and one by a local restaurant/pub.
- Many of the Toddler group activities are heavily clustered around Tuesday and Thursday mornings.
- Fees for attending the toddler groups range from a £1.00 to £2.00.
- Two of the respondents had attended stay and play sessions or courses co-ordinated by neighbouring Children's Centres.
- Participants were aware of a number of after school and breakfast clubs, holiday activity schemes and after school sports such as football and netball.
- Some had attended play sessions available at two commercial indoor play centres in Mansfield (Playmania and Playland).
- They were also aware of toddler and baby swim sessions at Water Meadows and Sherwood leisure pools.

5.3.2. Strengths and Weakness of Current Services

Strengths

- The commercial play centres in Mansfield, Playland and Playmania, were viewed by the parents as being very child-friendly and providing a safe environment for children to play. At £3 for 2 hours it was seen to be good value.

"There are always people watching them (safety)."

"Parents can get involved in playing too or children can play on their own whilst parents have a drink and watch them from the cafeteria."

- Football training on a Monday evening for Queen Elizabeth School/King Edwards and All Saints was seen to be an excellent activity with sessions for 4, 5, 6 and 7+ year olds. A parent had found out about this activity from the school. It also provides a chance for parents to mix with other parents (Dads as well as Mums).

"I love football and get so much enjoyment watching my son play football and I feel so proud....it's also good to watch how the coach disciplines the teams."

- Two of the parents had taken part in Sure Start activities through neighbouring Children's Centres and were very positive about their experiences.

"There was nothing before Sure Start came to the neighbouring area (only Playland and swim parties)."

"I've been on some of the Sure Start courses, it is a plus that the child care is there and the fact that the kids are only next door (in the crèche), any problems and they'll come to you and the children get a chance to develop listening skills and learn to play with other children."

- Respondents felt that Titchfield Park was a good open space with lots to do. They described the children's playground as being in good condition, although they felt that it was not lasting well since its revamp 2 years ago.

Weaknesses

- Although Titchfield Park was considered to be a strength and an asset to the area there were also some concerns about it. They were aware that there is meant to be a Park Warden however not many have seen any evidence of the warden. They felt that perhaps the warden would find it difficult dealing with the teenagers at the park.

"It (Titchfield Park) is overrun by teenagers on a Friday evening and Saturday afternoon"

".....Same for the park at end of the Sutton Road"

".....Same for Spider park near Littleworth"

- Moor Lane Park was seen to be particular problem with pieces of glass on the ground and wrecked equipment. The discussion then moved onto the difficulties with teenagers hanging around in parks and the fact that there is nothing for teenagers to do in the area and how this then impacted on the parks.

"They get bored and end up jumping on the play parks where they are not meant to be."

- Returning to the discussion about requirements for under 5s, parents were concerned that some restaurants/cafes in Mansfield required payment for a cup of hot water to mix with baby food. Examples of costs they had paid were: Wilkos 40p, BBs in Four Seasons shopping centre 30p. They had however found that Debenhams provided the hot water free of charge.

5.3.3. Gaps in Current Provision

- There was a concern that there are no longer 'proper playgrounds' with paddling pools in Mansfield. There were aware of a number of these in the past and wondered whether they had been closed down because of health and safety issues.

"There is not a proper playground with paddling pools for children in Mansfield anymore.... used to be some in Sutton Road, Titchfield Park and Chesterfield Road."

"With my eldest I used to take him down to the park for a paddle, there were dinghies there then too. But you daren't let them take their socks and shoes off to paddle now, for fear of what is under the gravel."

"We need one (a paddling/water play park) somewhere that is totally safe for them."

- Parents talked about Hall Leys Park at Matlock in Derbyshire which they felt was a good example of a water play area for children, with rubber non-slip tiles and rocking toys and is free of charge.
- Parents mentioned the need for drop-in crèches in shopping centres and shops, for example like IKEA in Nottingham and the Meadowhall shopping centre in Sheffield. There were aware that there had previously been one in Mansfield's Four Seasons Shopping Centre.

5.3.4. Good Things to come from the Arrival of the Children's Centre

- Parents were very positive about Sure Start coming to the area particularly the two parents who had experience of Sure Start activities in other areas.

"Brilliant!"

"The courses are refreshing even for Mums again - second time around."

- They felt it was an understanding and caring organisation and was particularly good for helping children to develop skills to be with other children.

5.3.5. Areas for Improvement in the Local Area

- Parents were becoming concerned about the commercialisation of some services for parents with under 5s.

"Some activities are not really a service to the community but are too commercial."

"They are making money from catching parents who are unplanned e.g. having no warm water to warm baby's bottle of food."

"You can't bring your own food; you have to pay for theirs - we are a captive audience. There are huge notices in both of them saying this (Playmania and Playland)."

"It's a frame of mind - they have caught you off guard."

- They felt that the local pub/restaurant that runs a toddler group had seen a business opportunity rather than a community need.

"They probably had quiet Thursday mornings so set up a parent and toddler session."

- Parents also felt that there should be subsidies on some services such as the swimming sessions at Water Meadows. They discussed the subsidised Kids Club at the Odeon cinema in Mansfield which they saw as being a good example of a subsidised service.

"Going to the pictures is expensive but a good example of subsidised services for children is the Odeon Kids Club. It's only £3.80 for a child on Sunday morning and in school holidays and you (an adult) go free."

- At the other end of the scale some parents said that they felt awkward when they attended activities that were free or where there was no requirement for them to contribute any help. For this reason they would welcome opportunities to volunteer and help with community based activities.

"When I go to Sure Start events and haven't paid - I feel awkward that I haven't helped them put the activity on."

"But.....then people are contributing by attending."

- There was a concern about the lack of activities for teenagers and young people. They saw the need for youth clubs and field sports clubs to help get young people off the streets.

"There should be a youth club for activities such as table tennis - or for them to learn about something that interests them to keep them away from just hanging around street corners."

- As part of the discussion about the need for facilities in the area for young people, there were some concerns raised about the recent closure of the Mansfield Leisure Centre and the opening of a new Tesco store on the site. The closure of the Mansfield Leisure Centre was cited to enable investment in alternative leisure provision; however the parents were concerned that this did not appear to be happening. For example they mentioned some land behind

B&Q² at Oaktree, which was destined for sports development but has so far come to nothing.

- Parents requested the development of open spaces where children can play safely and the possibility of having mobile play buses visiting parks.

"The Sammy Road Show used to visit the parks - it went on for a week in the summer holidays."

- There was a discussion about the possibility of having follow up sessions with Dads after they have been involved in antenatal classes. This is an idea that is worth discussing further with a number of fathers.

6. Key Messages for the Future

- The interviews with parents, the focus group and input from the partners and service providers, show a high level of agreement about the needs of parents and young children in Titchfield and Oakham for the future.
- The highlights of service provision in Titchfield and Oakham were seen to be the many Toddler groups taking place within the area, the afterschool football and netball facilities, the song time and story time activities for young children at Mansfield Library, the commercial play centres (Playmania and Playland) and the activities of neighbouring Sure Start Children's Centres.
- There is however a need to build on the current activities for under 5s in the area and to raise awareness and increase the accessibility of these activities for all families.
- A co-ordination of the current services would help reduce overlap of session times and should focus on providing greater spread and flexibility of times of activities to suit all parents.
- In particular the following needs for parents with young children were highlighted in this consultation:
 - Co-ordinated and partnership working to reduce overlap of services and to provide a cohesive offering.
 - Improved co-ordinated information for parents regarding what services are available.
 - Better timing of activities and events and more local venues.
 - A requirement for an improved playground/park facility particularly in the area around Newgate Lane.
 - Outdoor facilities, with open spaces where children can play safely and including a toddler-safe water play park.
 - Subsidised and more affordable services, in particular leisure facilities.
 - More baby/toddler groups and playgroups.
 - The possibility of having mobile play buses visiting parks at holiday times.
 - Parents mentioned the need for drop-in crèches in shopping centres and shops.

² [This may actually be referring to Tesco at Oaktree]

- Parents were becoming concerned about the commercialisation of some services for parents with under 5s, for example being charged in cafes for hot water to mix with baby food and the increase in commercial toddler groups.
 - Parents are interested in volunteering to help community based activities which benefit them with subsidised services.
 - There was a concern about the lack of activities for teenagers and young people in the area.
 - The possibility of having follow-up sessions with Dads after they have been involved in antenatal classes. This is an idea that is worth discussing further with a number of fathers.
- There was a lack of awareness amongst many parents and some service providers about the new Children's Centre to be developed in the area. This should be addressed through specific communications covering the services that the Children's Centre will deliver within the community and how it plans to deliver them. The preferred communication route is through a newsletter.
 - There was a good level of participation and involvement in the consultation from service providers and partners showing a level of commitment to the future of Children's Services in Titchfield and Oakham.
 - 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 activities within Titchfield and Oakham.
 - 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.
 - The feedback session for all interested parties including all parents, partners and service providers involved in the consultation will be held at 9.30 to 11.30 am on the morning of the 18th September 2007 at Newgate Lane Children's Centre.

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 Oakham and Titchfield

