

Sure Start Scotland Mapping Exercise

**Report to the Scottish Executive
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Sure Start Scotland Mapping Exercise

1. Introduction

1.1 Sure Start Objectives

Sure Start Scotland is part of a broader programme of action to promote social inclusion ‘through a positive start in young children’s lives’. Following the receipt of plans from the local authorities, the Scottish Executive allocated Sure Start Scotland funding to each Scottish local authority for the first time in 1999/2000. As the revised Guidance to local authorities (June 2000) notes, the focus of Sure Start Scotland is on ‘integrated support, on directing support to more deprived groups in a non-stigmatising way and on meeting needs identified by parents’. The guidance encourages co-operation and joint working between the local authorities, health bodies, the voluntary and private sectors.

Sure Start Scotland has four broad objectives:

- To improve children’s social and emotional development
- To improve children’s health
- To improve children’s ability to learn
- To strengthen families and communities

1.1.2 In addition, provision should encourage parental involvement in identifying what would be helpful resources and services, provide a stimulating environment for very young children, encourage parents to assist in their child’s development, support parents, promote self-esteem, provide opportunities for parents to acquire skills, provide inclusive support and target areas of greatest need.

1.1.3 This report maps the services provided for children and families, which meet the Sure Start Scotland objectives and identifies the ways in which this initiative has impacted on pre-existing provision. It is primarily based on information supplied by local authorities to the researchers during telephone interviews and correspondence, supplemented by a small number of interviews with service providers.

1.2 The Mapping Process

1.2.1 Using the information supplied by local authorities to the Scottish Executive, summaries of Sure Start Scotland spending, service provision and service use were drawn up for each local authority by the researchers and sent to the named local authority contact person along with requests for missing information and additional details. This was the beginning of a series of written and oral communications between local authorities and the research team. The request for further information about services and service use was followed up by a telephone interview with the relevant contact person. This interview provided the main source of data on views about Sure Start Scotland and on the nature of the services provided. There were two components the

interview. One section encouraged discussion of a range of general issues such as the aims, strengths, weaknesses and impact of the programme. These comments have been anonymised, and this report provides a collation of these responses. Much of the evidence presented represents the views expressed during this part of the interviews. The other component involved the gathering, checking and clarifying of information about the details of specific service provision; this has been attributed to each local authority in order that services can be mapped.

- 1.2.2 Further contact took place by telephone, email or fax where further clarification of services, service use or financial information was required.
- 1.2.3 Sixteen telephone interviews were also conducted with a range of service providers from the statutory and voluntary sectors. These covered general issues relating to Sure Start Scotland, more detail of specific services and experiences of partnership working as appropriate.
- 1.2.4 The mapping process is described in greater detail in Appendix 1. This also includes the topic guides used in the interviews, the list of service providers interviewed and a consideration of the limitations of the study.

1.3 Limitations of the data

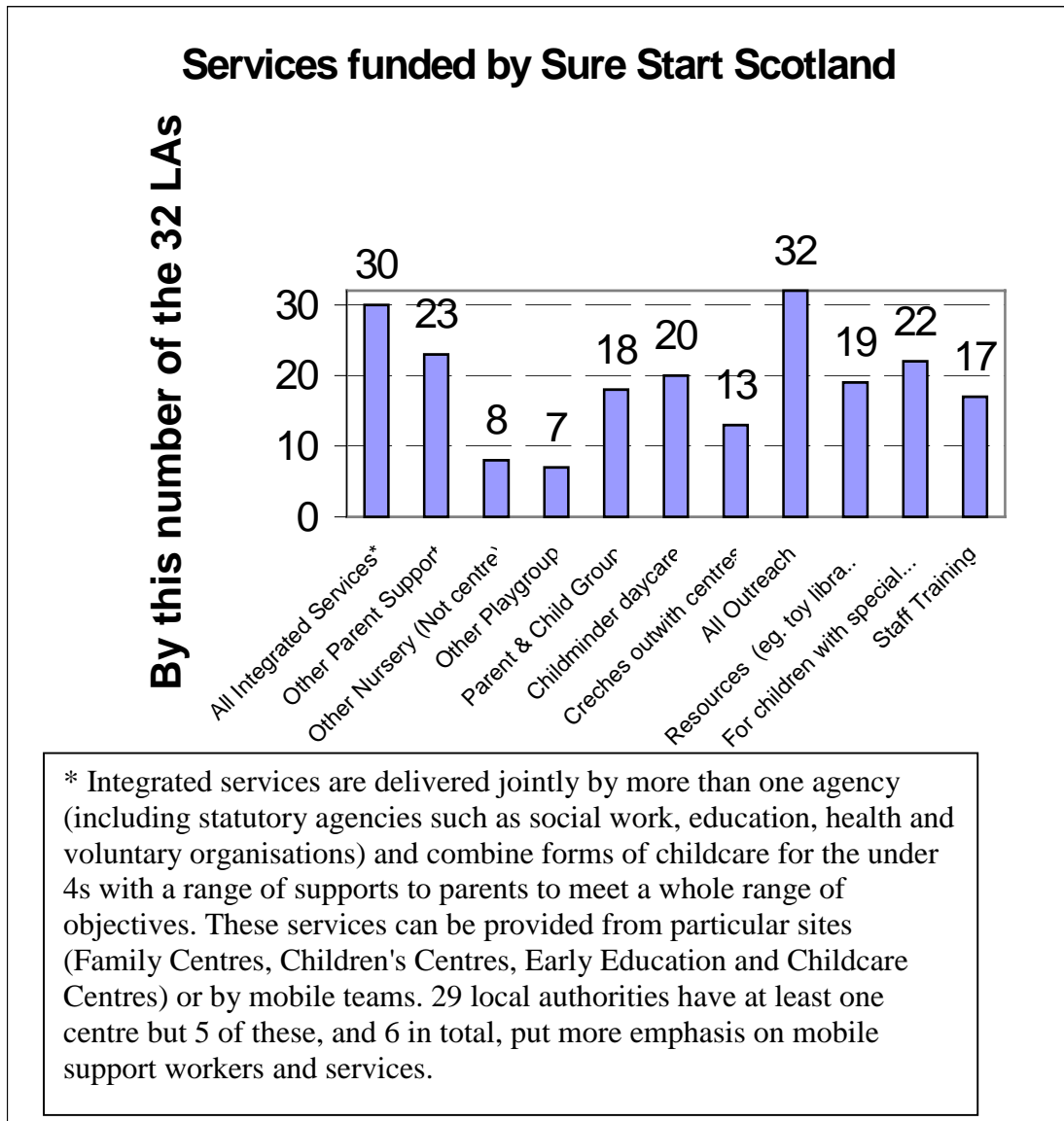
- 1.3.1 This report is dependent on the quality of information obtained from the local authorities. A number of issues were raised by local authorities' Sure Start Scotland contact officers concerning the quality of data that they were able to supply. Reservations were particularly expressed about: data quantifying the development, take up and impact of Sure Start Scotland services; the difficulties of categorising services and assessing its use. These are concerns are detailed further in Appendix 1.

2. Services to children under four and their parents

This section of the report describes the range of services provided across the local authorities in response to Sure Start Scotland and associated funding. All local authorities reported that they have sought to use Sure Start Scotland to develop a package of several forms of support for parents and children under the age of four. The range of services developed varies, as does stage of development. In order to capture similarities and variation, services are categorised using a number of dimensions: the extent of integration from joint agency, multi-objective integrated services to single agency, single objective services, the type of benefit they bring to clients, the form of their delivery - group work, one-to-one work or resource provision, whether their provision is universal or for a specifically targeted population. These dimensions inform the descriptive discussion below and the categories used in the table show the number of all local authorities using Sure Start Scotland to offer particular services. The categories have been developed from understandings of the services derived from the interviews with contact officers. They are different

from the categories initially suggested to local authorities by the Scottish Executive and in the section providing numerical estimates of service use.

Fig. 1 Services funded by Sure Start Scotland



2.1 Integrated Services

- 2.1.1 As can be seen from the table, nearly all local authorities have developed some joint-agency integrated services combining childcare, with a number of forms of support to children, parents and families. In terms of the overall menu of services on offer to parents and young children, integrated services are the dominant form of Sure Start Scotland in the majority of local authorities. Many service-providers view integrated services as the best means of achieving all the aims and objectives of Sure Start Scotland. They are widely regarded as offering the potential for best practice by combining team working across agencies, 'joined-up services', with a client experience of one-contact-provides-access-to-all. 'Integrated' refers both to service provision and the experience of the service user, although it not possible within the limits of this study to offer any evidence concerning the latter.
- 2.1.2 Depending on previous histories of the local authority, prior inter-agency and partnership working and the nature of local need, integrated services are more or less developed in different areas. However, in most local authorities, integrated services are well developed. In two thirds of the local authorities, integrated services are primarily achieved through clustering services in local centres that are the focus for inter-agency team working. Twenty-nine of the 32 authorities have at least one centre, but centre-based work is the primary means of delivering integrated services for 24 local authorities. Six local authorities put more emphasis on mobile support workers and services.
- 2.1.3 The range of centre-based activities and their public face varies slightly from local authority to local authority. In most authorities, centres involve the joint working of staff from education, social work and health, although degrees of joint working vary and one agency may provide most of the input. In some local authorities, centre based, integrated services are in purpose built or specially refurbished premises. A number of local authorities have used Sure Start Scotland funding on capital projects for this purpose. These facilities are typically called Family Centres or Children's Centres or Early Education and Child Care Centres or variations thereof, such as Family Support Centres. In other local authorities, a package of services has clustered around an existing childcare provision such as a crèche in a community hall or a nursery. In Perth & Kinross, for example, the expansion of community crèches has been seen as a priority in order to provide foci for integrated services.
- 2.1.4 The location of centre based facilities and the areas of coverage of outreach teams often reflect patterns of need identified by the local authority. Many local authorities have ensured that centres are based in or near Social Inclusion Partnerships or areas of deprivation. Local authorities have also conducted more or less detailed mapping of demand for childcare and other services. All local authorities are concerned to ensure that their services meet people in particular need, but there are different models for doing so. Some local authorities have, as a matter of policy, aimed for universal provision, seeing universal coverage by some services as the means of identifying families in particular need who can be targeted for additional support. Additional support

typically includes more intensive one-to-one working often through home visits and priority access to childcare or playgroup facilities. Some local authorities also include an extension of home help type provisions to families with vulnerable children.

- 2.1.5 Centre-based childcare typically includes crèche or nursery facilities where children can be left to give parents respite or freedom to attend other services. Many centres host playgroups and parent and toddler groups, some of which are parent led and some of which have programmes for parents and children organised by centre staff. Some centres are also the site of educational nursery provision, enabling smooth transitions. The support services to parents usually include programmes of parenting courses, parent self-help and support groups, staff supported parent and child groups, periods of access to health visitors and perhaps other professionals (early learning specialists, speech therapists), and intensive one-to-one support to parents of families in particular need. Some centres also connect parents wishing to return to employment with training opportunities, and some specifically offer training in child-care work.
- 2.1.6 The number of centres in a local authority is highly variable depending on the pre-Sure Start Scotland history of service provision and the demographic characteristics of the population. Urban local authorities often have many centres offering packages of integrated services. With the help of Sure Start Scotland funding North Lanarkshire now has 18 centres. The disaggregation of local authorities to smaller units left some local authorities with few centres and services for children under four. More sparsely populated local authorities typically have fewer centres. The rural local authorities of Angus and Shetland each had only one centre before Sure Start Scotland. A small number of local authorities assist with transport to their centres or other resources in order to extend their reach to outlying areas and/or to families who would have difficulties in meeting transport costs.
- 2.1.7 Centre-based, joint-agency multi-objective, integrated services are a feature of almost all of the local authorities, but about a fifth put as much or more emphasis on mobile teams as their mode of delivering integrated services. For example, an integrated service has been developed on an outreach basis in West Lothian through a peripatetic team of two project workers and four early-years workers in combination with crèches and parent support services based in family centres. East Lothian has also put as much emphasis on the development of new outreach teams as on new centre provision. In some predominantly rural local authorities, the emphasis is almost entirely on outreach and peripatetic services. Angus, Shetland and the Western Isles have extended their services not by adding new centres, but by outreach teams and satellite services supplementing the one existing centre (in the case of the Western Isles, an NCH facility rather than a local authority created centre). In these local authorities, Sure Start Scotland has helped to elaborate the services offered from centre provision but, for obvious reasons, a greater weight has been placed on mobile personnel and resources in new developments. In Angus this has included satellite mini-centres and inter-agency mobile teams, referred to as 'Family Support Teams'. In Shetland and the Western Isles the integration of services is less well developed and relies heavily on an outreach

worker, working from NCH in the Western Isles and as a 'Home Link worker' in Shetland. Orkney has chosen not to develop any family centres and is also developing integrated services through a Home Link worker.

One example of a service developed in the absence of family centre provision in the mixed rural and urban area of East Ayrshire is a Family Day-Care Project. Funded entirely from Sure Start, the project recruits and trains registered childminders to become day-carers, who provide families identified as the most vulnerable with appropriate placements for their needs. The service focuses on improving the child's development and supporting the needs of parents who are enabled, for instance, to attend counselling sessions. Much of the work is preventive in nature but crisis placements have also supported families in numerous problematic situations, such as when a mother has been unexpectedly admitted to hospital with mental health problems or been remanded in custody. As a result of the project, all children identified as being the most vulnerable according to the authority's criteria now have some form of day-care.

2.1.8 Joint-agency, multi-objective, integrated services are not developed in the local authorities of Argyll & Bute and East Dunbartonshire, neither of which have any family centres or joint agency outreach teams. Nevertheless, both authorities have enhanced or created a range of supports for parents and children under four that meet Sure Start Scotland objectives and links between services are made by service providers. East Dunbartonshire was left with a very low level of service provision following the disaggregation of local authorities and has concentrated on expanding and enhancing the quality of childminding, nurseries and playgroups. Argyll & Bute has also prioritised childcare provision. Parenting classes and parent support groups have also been developed in both authorities.

2.1.9 Overall, the development of integrated services within local authorities suggests a strong commitment to the overall philosophy of Sure Start Scotland, a commitment that is also strong in those authorities without centre based provision. The range of Sure Start Scotland objectives can therefore be met in a holistic and responsive way.

2.2 Outreach Services

2.2.1 While centres are located in specific places, the staff based there may include outreach work in their activities. This typically means going out to families with young children and working more intensively with them in their own homes to support child development and parenting skills. Intensive work with families is generally triggered by particular need and may involve providing support that enables parents and children to connect effectively with other services. Some intense work with families is a feature of all local authorities. The term 'outreach' is sometimes also used to refer to peripatetic support given to community-based group work as well as to support that is centred on home-visits. For example, a mobile crèche provided through peripatetic workers or peripatetic input to local parent-led playgroups, parent and toddler groups, or parent support groups might be described as 'outreach'. The balance of resources between outreach work and centre based work varies from local authority to local authority. In all the local authorities with centres, centre based services are complemented by outreach work.

2.2.2 Outreach work, then, is a feature of all local authorities and in the majority of cases, is an aspect of their integrated services. Many local authorities have partnership arrangements with voluntary sector organisations to provide outreach work, most commonly Home-Start. Home-Start organise volunteers to provide a befriending home visiting service to families with at least one child under five. However, the mean age of children supported is two years. Their services often link with others that they provide including crèches. Home-Start is involved in outreach work in over half of the local authorities and is typically complementing work performed by local authority staff. For example, in Highland, in the Alness area, home-visiting support to families with young children is provided by Home-Start volunteers and social work staff working in close liaison through the family centre. The home visiting programme aims to identify difficulties, help families access resources and enable change through raising self-esteem, self confidence and parenting skills by activities including home-based play and counselling sessions. In Argyll & Bute, where there are no centres, Home-Start is the main provider of outreach work and has been extended through Sure Start Scotland funding into new geographical areas. Parenting groups, supported by an Early Years worker, are proposed for areas with no Home-Start projects. Outreach was often described as being particularly valuable in reaching vulnerable families not in contact with services, but needing intensive support. Outreach was also described as appropriate in rural and remote communities.

2.3 Parent Support Services

2.3.1 All integrated services offer a range of supports to parents typically including parenting courses, support groups, parent and child groups, drop-in sessions with health visitors and other professionals, and intensive one-to-one support. Twenty-three local authorities have used Sure Start Scotland funding to fund a range of specific parent support projects that are outwith their centre-based or mobile integrated services, or, in the case of two local authorities, in the absence of integrated services. All local authorities are providing support services to parents. If joint-agency, multi-objective integrated services are well developed then formally free-standing projects will nevertheless be drawn into a set of connections across services including cross-referral. Some projects are clearly very well integrated although having specific objectives and operating outside of centre-based integrated provision. The 'Fit Ayrshire Babies' project, operating across the three local authorities that comprise Ayrshire, bridges integrated services and free-standing projects. It is partially delivered from family centres and the project itself involves a package of training for workers and support to children and parents/carers, encouraging them to engage in and be aware of the benefits and importance of physical exercise for very young children; it also enhances parent skills and wider social and emotional development. It provides an example of effective collaborative working by linking with the health sector.

2.3.2 Some projects are not different in kind from the range of things on offer in integrated service provision, but simply extend integrated service beyond local authority provision in a particular authority; some offer innovative and distinct projects. To take some examples, in the City of Edinburgh, the range of

parenting work outside of family centres includes 'Second Chance to Learn' courses in childcare work supported by crèche facilities, speech and language therapy groups for parents, free-standing fathers' groups, a parenting project for parents with learning difficulties, an ethnic minority parenting project and a support project for post-natal depression. In the case of some of these projects, some centres offer these services as part of their integrated package. The number of single agency services in Edinburgh partly reflects the vibrancy and quality of voluntary sector provision on which the local authority can draw. Because integrated services are fairly well developed in Edinburgh, a range of links have developed between these projects and centre based provision. Some parent support services outside of integrated services are highly innovative. For example, in Angus, an art project was piloted to help parents identify ways of using art-work with their children and to address mental well being.

2.4 Nursery, Crèches, Playgroups and Parent & Children Groups

- 2.4.1 Nearly all local authorities are providing childcare and support for parent and children groups through Sure Start. In most cases this is done through centre-based integrated services, but nurseries, crèches, playgroups and parent & children groups outwith family centres are also supported. Indeed, this is a growing area in many local authorities, and an important component of strategies to strengthen communities as well as families with young children
- 2.4.2 In a small number of local authorities, Sure Start Scotland funding gives direct support to increasing nursery provision for young children and in some local authorities families in particular need are provided with funded nursery places and sometimes transport to the nursery. There are some attempts to integrate with the wider framework of educational provision for 3-5 year olds. Many nurseries are developing as community nurseries, and offer services beyond sessional places for young children.
- 2.4.3 Thirteen local authorities are funding crèche provision in addition to, or in the absence of, centre-based crèche provision. Crèche provision both supports the needs of young children as well as their parent who is often enabled to take up training or other support such as self-help or skills development. Greater support for crèche workers and provision of equipment has also been provided by Sure Start Scotland in some areas.
- 2.4.4 Seven local authorities have used Sure Start Scotland funding for specific projects in association with the Scottish Pre-School Play Association, although 18 local authorities fund the SPPA to work with local playgroups and parent and children groups. Supporting parents while they are interacting with their children directly addresses the Sure Start Scotland objective of encouraging parents to assist in their child's development. Some of the Sure Start Scotland funded SPPA projects are part of a package of integrated services. For example, in the Scottish Borders the 'Play and Stay' programme, sessions in which parents review issues while their children are in a crèche then play with their children, is delivered through family centres. In Dumfries and Galloway peripatetic play workers are part of a package of outreach services. However,

in East Dunbartonshire, the SPPA 'Off to a good start' project is necessarily more free-standing because there are no family centres and integrated services are less well developed. This project involves a worker supporting both parent and toddler groups and parenting workshops.

2.5 Childminding Daycare

2.5.1 Over half of the local authorities have used Sure Start Scotland funding as an opportunity to stimulate the provision and quality of childminding within their authority. Many local authorities work in partnership with the Scottish Childminding Association to standardise training and recruitment of childminders, and much of this funding comes from mainstream budgets. Some local authorities have made the training of childminders a high priority, and have used Sure Start Scotland funding to develop a childminding network to provide care for very young children from vulnerable families. A number of authorities have taken steps to develop specialist childminders to work with very vulnerable families and to create liaison between childminders and family centres. Although childminders work with children, this supports parents through providing respite or enabling them to take up other services, treatment or training. In Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and West Lothian, an SCA development worker has been appointed to increase the numbers of childminders and improve the training of childminders. In Renfrewshire, childminders have been encouraged to do SVQs. Training has also been a focus in Angus, Dundee, East Dunbartonshire, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, and South Lanarkshire. The development of better conditions of work, pay, training, access to resources and integration with other services has helped to improve day care provision and strengthen resources available to communities.

2.6 Play and Educational Resources

2.6.1 In over half of local authorities, a range of play and early educational resources has been developed within Sure Start Scotland. These are used to support group and intensive work, on an outreach as well as centre based level. Resources support community based groups, such as parent and toddler groups and mobile crèches, childminders and sometimes go more directly to families with young children (for example 'Play at home'). The provision of books for very young children was often prioritised through schemes like 'Bookstart' or similar programmes such as Kickstart for Kids in West Lothian. Toy libraries and play equipment, especially for very young children (soft play) have also been supported. Other provision includes the Shetland 'Play Bus' and a Special Needs Play Equipment Lending Resource in South Lanarkshire. All this provision has helped to improve the quality of care in and outside the home, and helped to support the wider social and educational development of children. Some of these resources, especially where linked to increases in mobile crèche provision, have led these to be much more central in supporting children's play while parents are involved in other activities. Developing resource based provision has also been a way for local authorities to offer a more universal approach to service provision and meet the needs of much larger numbers of families with young children.

The East Dunbartonshire Libraries Project aimed to encourage young children into libraries with their parent or carer. The approach was a combination of universal – improving provision across the board – and targeting through specific promotion in the libraries areas in disadvantaged areas. There were four main strands to this development: story sacks were provided for pre-school groups along with support from library staff; family reading areas within libraries were developed with more appropriate and comfortable seating; a 'look at a book' scheme encouraged parents/carers to bring their very young children into a library to look at a book; this was supported by a reward scheme for repeated visits – so far 68 people have received the small reward token; and lastly there were 'baby bounce' sessions with library staff leading rhymes and clapping songs in libraries with an associated booklet.

2.6.2 Some authorities have also used Sure Start Scotland funding to provide equipment within expanded or new centre or nursery provision. This has been important in supporting the expansion of services to the under fours where different types of equipment, especially for soft play, are required.

2.7 Children with Special Needs/ Disability and other specifically targeted services

2.7.1 In many local authorities resources are dedicated to services specifically for children with special needs. In Aberdeen, for example, this includes a specialist crèche, childcare workers who can provide respite care in families' own homes and a telephone support service. In Edinburgh, it includes a playgroup for deaf children, an early years autism project (also provided in other areas), home-based and small group support through Capability Scotland and adapted toys for children with special needs. Support for special needs involved both outreach and centre based provision as well as specialist provision outside the home.

2.7.2 Although all local authorities aimed to meet the needs of vulnerable families with young children, a number have developed services for other specific groups with particular needs. Families with young children affected by drug abuse are the focus of specialised outreach work in a number of local authorities; others have developed services for those with mental health problems. A number of local authorities have developed specialist services giving support to young parents. A small number of authorities with large traveller populations have developed specialist services and others have provided services for minority ethnic groups and asylum seekers. These provisions were described as attempts to reach the most vulnerable and/or marginalised, and also to provide culturally sensitive services. Many contact officers noted that much more could and should be done to access 'hard to reach' groups, thus extending the scope of Sure Start Scotland within the context of developing wider provision.

2.8 Staff Training

While not a direct service, staff training improves the quality of all services. In the context of Sure Start Scotland it has been given considerable priority at local level, especially as extending services for 0-3s requires new skills within the existing workforce as well as new recruitment. Over half of the local authorities have used Sure Start Scotland funding for some kind of staff training. Some local authorities have multi-agency training programmes that help to develop

collaborative working and the sharing of skills and expertise. The range of training includes child development, child protection, specialist work in parenting skills and play programmes, and specific skills such as baby massage for very young children with special needs. Many authorities, as noted above, have developed training for childminders in order to increase the quality and quantity of provision for very young children.

2.9 Diversity Worthy of Sharing

The overall description of Sure Start Scotland services indicates that local authorities are working hard to meet the general and more specific objectives of Sure Start Scotland. The diversity of service provision and models of delivery across Scotland offers much opportunity for all local authorities to learn from each other. Many contact officers said that they would welcome more opportunities to share Sure Start Scotland experiences with others, especially from different authorities. Although many contact officers had attended Scottish Executive seminars on Sure Start Scotland and one mentioned the newsletter, some felt that they were working somewhat in isolation. There were exceptions in some authorities where specific meetings were organised in order to share experiences, for example, there were meetings across the three Ayrshires. A number of service providers interviewed for the study also suggested that more could be done by local authorities to share good practice that had developed under the auspices of Sure Start Scotland. One interviewee suggested a Scottish conference at which examples of good practice could be shared and used as models for service delivery, another suggested a national forum bringing together all the key organisations providing early years services. Service providers were generally pleased that a study was mapping Sure Start Scotland. Many of interviewees expressed interest in how the mapping exercise would be fed back to them and would welcome opportunities to engage in further discussion and dissemination.

3. Mapping service use through numbers supported

3.1 Limitations of data

During the research we received data on service use, in terms of numbers of children and parents supported through Sure Start Scotland, from all local authorities. However, as already noted, such data are limited because of the complexity of the provision, because no uniform criteria had been established for collecting information and because of the uneven developing of monitoring across local authorities. The amount of information available from each local authority was inevitably variable.

- 3.1.1 In managing the information given to us during the research by local authorities, a number of strategies and assumptions were developed for dealing with imperfect information. All of these err on the side of caution resulting in a conservative estimate of the numbers of extra places, parents and children serviced by Sure Start Scotland. These assumptions were sometimes discussed and agreed in dialogues with local authorities. They are itemised below:

- Occasionally numbers given were for children aged 0-5 and not 0-3. Where this was the case, a calculation was made of two thirds of the figure given to represent the proportion of 0-3s.
- Not all local authorities provided information on both the number of places provided by a service and the number of children and/or parents using the places. Where only numbers of places were given, we have taken one full-time place to mean one child. Where only numbers of children were given, we have taken one child to mean one place. Where only numbers of families were given, we have taken one family to mean one parent and one child.
- In some cases, parents and children supported are from the same family. In some cases, these are counted as **only** parents or children.
- Unless told otherwise, we have assumed that the figures for years one, two and three are total numbers of parents and children using services. Hence the number using these services before Sure Start Scotland must be subtracted to find the **extra** parents and children helped by Sure Start Scotland.
- Some numbers given to us have been excluded because they are not meaningful. For instance, occasionally numbers of childminders were provided but no data for child places or children supported.
- Data relating to resource work, such as Book Start, toy library and mobile crèche provision are presented separately because the large numbers that these resources reach, in order not to artificially inflating the figures of overall numbers of children supported.

3.2 Children and parents supported by Sure Start Scotland

Figure 2 Children and parents supported by Sure Start Scotland services excluding play and educational resource based provision

Overall total of extra children and parents supported			
1999/2000		2000/2001	
Children	Parents	Children	Parents
3387	3100	6556	6381

Fig 3. Children supported by play and educational resource based provision

Overall total of extra children supported	
1999/2000	2000/2001
5768	8864

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These figures have involved subtracting, where appropriate, the baseline figure for year 1998/99 in order to estimate the number of extra children and parents supported by Sure Start Scotland. Since much support may be on-going, it would be unwise to total the two years figures, although, of course, new parents and children will be being supported in year 2.

3.3 Monitoring and evaluation

3.3.1 Systems for monitoring and evaluating services were discussed with the contact officers and these varied in the extent of their development. The most common involved quarterly or annual reporting mechanisms. Some local authorities were able to monitor referrals and admissions routinely. Many had specified monitoring and evaluation within their service agreements with voluntary sector organisations. Some authorities had conducted specific evaluations of services, especially where these were new. Dumfries and Galloway have commissioned an overall evaluation from the period 2000 – 2002. Similarly, some of the services provided by voluntary sector organisations were being evaluated. For example, the Aberlour Childcare Trust has commissioned an evaluation of one of their projects.

3.3.1 West Lothian and Angus are examples of local authorities that report putting considerable effort into effective monitoring.

West Lothian have developed a model of service delivery that allows for monitoring, using three levels of indicators of impact. Firstly, long term outcomes are considered by reviewing the number of children on the child protection register, the number of children accommodated and on statutory orders, reduction in accidents involving pre-school children, improved health including oral health and nutrition, and the preparation of children and parents for pre-school and primary education. Secondly, indicators are used to measure short term progress towards Sure Start Scotland objective including capacity building and partnership working. The impact of projects is evaluated through looking at numbers involved in projects, numbers of parents moving on to formal education or employment, and referrals to mainstream support services. Finally, individual projects are monitored through participant evaluation, evaluation by other professionals and self-evaluation.

In Angus, a system has been developed allowing monitoring of outcomes for clients. Firstly, services delivered by an authority wide Sure Start Scotland team, base their work on seeking agreement with parents on targeted areas of work relating to their initial difficulties. These are recorded, form the basis for services offered and are reviewed regularly. They are also revisited four months after they 'leave' the project – so longer term monitoring of outcome is possible.

3.3.2 Service providers interviewed also recognised the need for monitoring and evaluation, although not every service provider interviewed claimed that this was being done with respect to their own service. Some commented that they would have liked guidance from the outset regarding how their services were to be measured and spelling out the specific evaluation criteria that would be used.

3.4 Problems of Measuring 'Success'

- 3.4.1 Many of those interviewed noted that Sure Start Scotland has not only had the effect of increasing the amount and the range of service provision to young families and the numbers of children being serviced, it has also resulted in a number of other important benefits not reflected by 'counting heads'. The capacity building in terms of investment in staff training and development and the building of new and extended premises are instances of this. Improvements in the skills-base of staff may not have resulted in additional places for children, but has improved the quality of provision. Similarly, adapting or extending some centre-based provision may not necessarily have increased the number of young children attending the centre. However, these developments are likely to have improved the children's environment and the quality of their daily experience, thus improving their social and emotional development, their health and their ability to learn. The rolling out of Sure Start Scotland impacts on other provision in quite immeasurable ways.
- 3.4.2 Other unquantifiable benefits cited by Sure Start Scotland contact officers were that additional staffing ratios had allowed more preventive and developmental work to be done. For instance, instead of having to be available to provide minimal levels of cover for day-care in centres, staff can now do more work engaging with parents in providing general support and encouraging them to take part in other centre activities, such as parents' groups or training/adult education classes. Tailored interventions for specific families, often in the short term, have required additional staff input, but have not necessarily increased the number of places available, simply the level of support for a child already helped.
- 3.4.3 Similarly, staff have been given the capacity, and now more formalised support, to work with the harder to reach families by, for instance, spending more time in the centre or in the family home building relationships with parents traditionally found to be difficult to engage, such as those with substance dependencies. Targeting the hardest-to-reach families, as defined above, has been a common theme across authorities.
- 3.4.4 Capacity building in the community by recruiting local people as volunteers for services, such as Home-Start, or as childminders, day-carers, volunteer 'buddies' and as carers in crèches and playgroups has been widespread but may not yet be translated directly into the number of children or parents serviced. Rather, the benefits may be seen in increased self-confidence, improved quality of parent-child relationships and the adoption of training and employment opportunities that may previously not have been taken.

An example of this type of impact of Sure Start Scotland was described with reference to a family centre located in a Social Inclusion Partnership area of one large urban authority. A woman with several problems, including suffering from depression, was initially given intensive, one-to-one support by the centre. Having made progress through the support given, she became involved with various groups and training courses and now, as a consequence of the change in her health and self-esteem, has

felt able to take up full-time employment for the first time. She will continue to receive a service from this centre to help sustain the changes in her life, as an aim of the centre, like many others, is to support and promote such change over the long-term.

3.4.5 The impact of Sure Start Scotland on staff was also cited as an unseen and difficult to quantify benefit. Additional training and new work experiences have a potential impact not only on the quality of services delivered but also the professional development, career steps and morale of staff. Overall, staff morale on the ground is said to have been improved as a result of Sure Start Scotland.

4. Local Authorities' Use of Sure Start Scotland funding allocations

4.1 Use of funding

After the comprehensive spending review in July 1998, an additional £42 million was made available to develop support for families with very young children. Guidance to local authorities emphasised the importance of joint working, both across statutory and voluntary agencies, and the need to build on existing supports especially at community level. This has resulted in diversity at local level of the range and type of services developed, extent of partnership working, and prioritising to meet local need and circumstances. Unsurprisingly then, the picture emerging from financial reports from the 32 local authorities is also one of variation.

4.1.1 The majority of local authorities said that their funding streams and finances were too complicated to accurately break down into Sure Start Scotland initiatives and into financial years. In many cases, Sure Start Scotland has been developed in the integrated way encouraged in the Guidance, so the specific allocation has not always been kept as a separate funding stream within local authorities. There was no requirement to ring fence the allocation, which came to Education Departments. Where integrative approaches have been the main way of working, it has been difficult for authorities to accurately identify exactly what Sure Start is paying for, and what other funding is paying for, either separately or jointly. In addition, authorities take different approaches to what is counted as Sure Start Scotland services; for some these are only those funded in some way by the Sure Start Scotland allocation, but for others it includes all those relevant to Sure Start Scotland objectives. This leads to additional funding complexity, as both philosophy and accounting procedures interact to produce diverse data. Although this creates some problems for mapping spend in relation to Sure Start Scotland, such variation can be interpreted as a positive response to embracing the broad Sure Start Scotland objectives across services, departments and spending streams. In many cases, this has led to the integration of both the planning and delivery of services as well as in terms of how they are funded. However, all of this will be played out differently in the way that financial reports are given.

4.1.2 There were a variety of other factors contributing to the complexity of the figures for spending under Sure Start Scotland and for the difficulty in

breaking these down into years: reported late payment of Sure Start Scotland funds in year 1; use of Sure Start Scotland funds in conjunction with other funding; cross initiative projects and the straddling of financial years by some projects and uncertainty about whether allocations could be carried forward. Particular difficulty was reported in differentiating between total childcare and education expenditure and Sure Start Scotland expenditure. Despite requesting actual spend figures, some authorities still gave estimated figures.

4.2 Spending patterns across years

- 4.2.1 As would be expected as the initiative got underway in each local authority, overall spending increased over the first two years. This meant increases in actual spend, and in the proportion of the Sure Start Scotland allocation being spent. In year one, £7 million was spent (78% of the year one funding allocation) and in year two, over £11.5 million (84% of year two allocated funds).
- 4.2.2 Most authorities spent the amount they had been allocated for Sure Start Scotland, with several able to indicate additional funds allocated to the programme. The figure below identifies the number of local authorities with different percentages of spend across years one and two. In year one, 16 authorities (50%) spent between 95% and 105% of their allocation, two others spending 113% and 168%. In year two, 13 authorities spent between 95 and 105%, with five spending between 108% and 157%. This is suggestive of integration of Sure Start Scotland objectives into overall strategies (and their funding) for families with very young children. Any additional funding sources reported in the information provided to us by local authorities are described below.
- 4.2.3 There was also a degree of under spending on Sure Start. In Year one, three authorities did not spend any of the Sure Start Scotland funding on Sure Start initiatives. A further two spent less than 11%, and a further five less than 50%. Five spent between 50 and 80%. In year two, only one local authority did not spend its allocation at all, and six spent less than 50%. Reasons for an under-spend were reported as being varied and include reported internal difficulties such as some of the money being used by the local authority to meet financial shortfalls or overspends in other parts of the local authority budget, (as the money was not ring fenced) as well as circumstances requiring long lead times to develop services. However, given the limitations to the information which authorities were able to provide within the timescale of this mapping exercise, there may be underreporting of actual spend.

Figure 4 Sure Start Spending as a percentage of allocation of Sure Start Scotland funding by number of local authorities.

Percentage of allocation spent	Number of local authorities	
	Year One	Year Two

0%	3	1
Less than 30%	2	0
30%-50%	2	5
51%-90%	7	7
91%- 100%	14	12
Over 100%	4	7

Beyond these trends, spending patterns are varied, with different proportions allocated to statutory and voluntary sector agencies, their use for different service developments, and diverse ways of distributing funds within a local authority.

4.3 Use of additional funds

Authorities were asked to specify other sources of funding used in conjunction with Sure Start funds, which were also administered by the Sure Start Scotland officer. None of the authorities stated they had additional external funds, but some of them did give figures for local authority funding used in conjunction with Sure Start. This does not mean that those who did not give figures do not use extra funding, simply that it was not reported to the research team. The following additional sources of funding used to fund services meeting Sure Start Scotland objectives were mentioned: Children’s Services Development Fund; Childcare Strategy or Partnership; Social Inclusion Partnership; Health for All; Excellence Fund; Pre-school Rural Supplement; Social Work Department; Housing Department; Education Department; Health Board; Scottish Executive (unspecified). Clearly, the scope for future collaborative working will be dependent partly on the expansion of jointly funded initiatives and the rolling out of Sure Start Scotland’s objectives to all those sectors involved in the social, emotional and physical well-being of families with very young children.

5. The Views of a Sample of Service Providers

5.1 Methods

Interviews were conducted with a small sample of service providers in order to elicit their perspectives on the development and implementation of Sure Start Scotland, especially in relation to their particular service and to issues relating to planning and partnership. Sixteen people were interviewed by telephone (see Appendix 1 for the topic guide used and the list of service providers interviewed). This sample comprised twelve working in the voluntary sector and four in the statutory sector. We selected a range of voluntary sector organisations (large to small) who have received Sure Start Scotland funding, from all those mentioned in our interviews with the Sure Start contact officers. All of the national voluntary organisations had some history of working with local authorities prior to the Sure Start Scotland programme. We selected more voluntary sector organisations than statutory sector because our interviews with the Sure Start contact officers involved greater discussion of the statutory sector. The four statutory sector

providers covered both rural and urban areas, and diverse services, from resource, outreach to centre based provision.

5.2 Service Providers' Views of the Aims, Impact and Future of Sure Start Scotland

- 5.2.1 All of the service providers interviewed were very enthusiastic about Sure Start Scotland and the objectives it embraces, with one interviewee going as far as to say, 'Sure Start Scotland is one of the best things that the Scottish Executive has come up with'. It was both the overall approach expressed in the aims and objectives and the availability of new money that were particularly praised. As one interviewee put it 'It sounds trite to say it, but the physical amount of money has to make a difference'. Overall, the programme was seen as a very welcome opportunity for a more integrated approach to provision for children in their early years, and the development of new and innovative services as well as the expansion of existing services that already met Sure Start Scotland objectives such as Home-Start. Some interviewees commented that provision for the 0-3 age group had been previously neglected, and hoped to see the current developments continue within a broad approach to services for families and children. All felt that Sure Start Scotland had already made a difference and was enhancing the lives of children under four and their parents in Scotland. Like many of the Sure Start contact officers, providers could cite particular examples of families that had been helped, and brought a sense of a real difference being made to the lives of families with young children.
- 5.2.2 This overall positive picture of the impact of Sure Start Scotland on service provision both specifically and generally was sometimes tempered by concern about how the financial allocation had been spent. A few interviewees expressed disquiet that the money had not been ring fenced and reported that it was not used in every local authority exclusively for appropriate services. Perhaps not surprisingly, given their positions as service providers, some felt that not enough funding had gone directly to the services themselves. In the voluntary sector, some representatives of Scottish wide agencies commented on the unevenness of services across local authorities and suggested that greater parity of provision should be encouraged. Some service providers expressed disappointment that Sure Start Scotland funding had been used to sustain existing services while not supporting the expertise, experience and innovation within the voluntary sector. At the same time, all voluntary organisation service providers had direct experience of Sure Start Scotland creating new, expanded or enhanced services provided by their organisation. For example, Home-Start has been able to expand the number of schemes operating in Scotland from 18 to 31. This will result in an additional 1350 families being supported once all schemes have had time to become established.
- 5.2.3 Service providers expressed a range of views about the targeting of services. All were using mechanisms for giving priority to families that were in particular need, vulnerable families although not always those at the 'sharp end of social work involvement', such as those serviced by an outreach project provided by the Aberlour Childcare Trust (CLASP project). Those who would

like to see their service as being open to all families with young children, typically accepted targeting as necessary because of resource limitations. Some had success stories of services that had started in areas of particular need but were being widened out to universal provision. The provision of new support to fragile groups in very isolated rural areas was highlighted as a successful form of targeting by OPPA in Orkney. Others included the involvement of asylum seeker families within the Glasgow based Jeely Piece Club and increased SEN provision through Capability Scotland. Concerns included the consideration that there were still insufficient resources to reach all in the most vulnerable categories. Some of those interviewed also expressed a concern to 'provide services that enabled families to articulate their own needs rather than having their needs dictated by professionals'. However, there was also a recognition that this might be very difficult to achieve in practice, and that more attention needs to be paid to how to ensure that parents are involved directly in service provision and identifying their own needs.

- 5.2.4 All service providers interviewed, statutory and voluntary, were concerned to see Sure Start Scotland funding continued and disliked the fact that they were uncertain about the future of the funding. One interviewee commented 'What will happen when it's gone? Many families will suffer if funding is not ringfenced for this age group.' Various service providers pointed out that the annual allocation of funding worked against strategic planning with knock on effects for service delivery. The suggested defects of short time-scales included: inhibiting innovation; funding what was already there; sometimes perpetuating the compartmentalisation of services (rather than looking at a bigger picture of how best to input into children's early years); and staff recruitment and retention difficulties. The process of funding allocation also attracted some adverse comment. One interviewee suggested that service providers should bid directly for funding rather than the allocation being made to the local authority. Another interviewee was concerned that the voluntary sector in particular might be used as an expendable resource to be dispensed with when the funding ends, rather than a major contributor fulfilling all the criteria of Sure Start Scotland.

5.3 Service Providers' Experiences of New Cross-Sector and Inter-Agency Working

- 5.3.1 Interviewees whose organisations had been working with a local authority prior to Sure Start Scotland described how the programme changed the services being delivered. Sometimes completely new services funded by Sure Start Scotland have been added to the existing suite of projects run by a voluntary organisation. For example, Barnardos Family Assessment and Support Services offered a range of services to children under the age of eleven in West Lothian before Sure Start Scotland, but now provide specific support service for parents of children under age four, living in isolated rural communities. Similarly, Sure Start Scotland funding has resulted in Capability Scotland adding new child development services for early years children with special needs in Edinburgh and Ayrshire to their provision. Children 1st now provide additional support to vulnerable families with children under four within a local authority provision, the Edinburgh Family Support Team. In

some cases, Sure Start Scotland funding has enabled additional attention to the needs of children under four across all services provided by a voluntary agency. For example, Sure Start Scotland funding has helped One Plus to fund a community health worker who addresses the health needs of under fours as these are identified across all of One Plus services. For organisations that are centrally concerned with children under four, the difference between Sure Start Scotland funded projects and projects funded from core local authority budgets is of degree or intensity of intervention rather than type of services. For example, the Scottish Childminding Association receives core funding from many local authorities to work to provide training support and information to childminding groups. Sure Start Scotland funded projects focus on developing community childminding networks specifically equipped to support children from vulnerable families.

- 5.3.2 Interviewees typically reported that the new or improved services being provided under Sure Start Scotland have enhanced working relationships between the local authority and voluntary organisations. At the level of service delivery, those from voluntary organisations typically reported that links with statutory and voluntary services were multiplied or intensified. Most of the voluntary organisations reported close links with social work, health visitors, and other childcare providers and some had specific links with education. Some remarks were critical, suggesting cross sector and inter-agency work could go further. For example, two interviewees reported that the poor working relationships between, or the cultural gulf in approach of, education and social work seriously hampered the development of a coherent programme of services in particular local authorities. Another suggested that in many local authority areas, health services had too low a profile in Sure Start Scotland and were not fully playing their part.

The 'Jeely Piece Club', Castlemilk Glasgow and the Aberlour CLASP project are examples of contrasting types of organisations providing descriptions of successful joint working practices. The former is a small local voluntary organisation and the latter is a voluntary organisation with a Scottish wide remit.

The 'Jeely Piece Club' was started by local people as a play scheme which has extended its remit over the years to include crèche facilities, parent and toddler groups, involvement in parenting programmes and outreach work while retaining the strong involvement of local parents. They receive income from a range of funding streams including through their local Social Inclusion Partnership and Sure Start Scotland. The project is attached to a family learning centre, jointly works with the health visitor based there and has close working links with social work including referral meetings. Referrals are passed between the club and other agencies. The club is reported not to be seen, by local parents, as stigmatising in the way that social work often is. This enables the club to work with some families that social work cannot reach.

CLASP is an outreach service in the Falkirk local authority area. This service works with families that are not involved with statutory services, but are identified as needing additional support because of concerns about a child's development, parenting skills or family illness, stress, social need or isolation. The parent works with the outreach worker to identify issues and how they may be addressed. The

success of the project is due to inter-agency working as the overwhelming majority of referrals are through health visitors, social work and children's centres.

5.4 Service Providers' Involvement in Planning

While interviewees reported many success stories about cross sector and inter-agency working with respect to the delivery of services, there were fewer accounts of the effective joint planning of services, even where agencies had a considerable history of work within a local authority area. Those interviewed suggested that involvement of voluntary organisations in the planning of services delivered under Sure Start Scotland was low, although there were some examples of good partnership planning and working. Some described having to struggle to get the local authority to recognise the relevance of their service to the aims of Sure Start Scotland and to be included as part of a package of new services. Involvement in discussion of the overall shape of Sure Start Scotland at local or national level was rare. Three of the national organisations were involved in the child care planning process in at least some local authorities. However, most of the voluntary organisations, including most of those who were representatives of Scottish wide or UK wide organisations, had not participated in the early planning stages with local authorities. Several interviewees interpreted this as local authority blindness to the relevance of their experience and expertise and argued strongly that voluntary organisations should be invited into the strategic planning of children's services. It was the view of some voluntary service representatives that local authorities were unaware of the services already provided by the voluntary sector or of the expertise and models of service delivery available there. One interviewee suggested that a mapping of provision should have been undertaken jointly by the local authorities and the voluntary sector as an aspect of planning appropriate services at the outset of Sure Start Scotland.

5.5 Commitment to Sure Start Scotland

Overall, the service providers interviewed during the research were very enthusiastic about Sure Start Scotland, and their own services had developed and expanded directly as a result of Sure Start or other related funding. Some felt that they were well placed to work with local authorities in meeting Sure Start Scotland objectives, as they were already working in this way; others could now expand their services to include the under fours, or specific vulnerable groups. One provider said that Sure Start Scotland was 'an excellent mechanism for tackling child poverty'. Many were operating with the same tensions and concerns as the Sure Start Scotland contact officers. It does not seem that service providers, and particularly local and national voluntary organisations, have been given a key place in the planning process, although there is considerable variation by local authority. The opportunities, then, for collaborative working, the sharing of expertise and the development of integrated services across sectors have not yet been fully developed.

6 Planning and development of provision

6.1 Planning and funding

This section of the report considers the number of factors affecting the planning and development of provision under Sure Start Scotland, as identified through the process of mapping. These include the policy context, partnership issues and funding issues, all raised as important in the interviews with the Sure Start contact officers. The central focus here is on the planning and funding mechanisms of the local authorities; the reported effect on the delivery of services is the focus in the next section. However, the material discussed here is also of relevance to the next section. The degree of partnership between a local authority and parents in planning services no doubt also has an impact on the delivery of services. Funding issues, such as the extent to which a local authority ring-fences Sure Start Funding obviously also impact on the delivery of services.

6.2 Policy Context

- 6.2.1 A variety of policy initiatives preceding and running alongside Sure Start Scotland were reported by contact officers interviewed to have impacted on the planning and delivery of services in a variety of ways. Sure Start Scotland was announced after the establishment of the National Child Care Strategy, which aimed to bring together the planning of pre-school education and childcare, and produce a combined plan for these. In most authorities child care partnerships had already been established with multi-agency membership, and existing child care services for under 5's had been audited. This gave many authorities a picture of services on the ground that was much clearer than available previously, thus aiding the planning process in addressing gaps, looking at targeting, and considering vulnerable families and communities. The partnership structure also provided an umbrella for planning in many local authorities. The Children's Services Planning Process, introduced in 1995 as part of the Children (Scotland) Act had also led to developed structures that were in some cases utilised as an umbrella for Sure Start Scotland planning. In addition, the Children's Services Development Fund impacted on some of the services planned for families with very young children.
- 6.2.2 In addition to these, there are a range of other initiatives, mentioned by local authorities' contact officers as having impact on the development of Sure Start Scotland by being part of the landscape into which Sure Start Scotland services are planned and delivered. The Social Inclusion Partnership initiative was cited by many authorities as a way of working with organisations and services in designated areas of need. The New Community Schools Initiative has led to joint work in many areas, and the Excellence Fund has some relevance to work with pre school children.

6.3 Partnership working

- 6.3.1 Reorganisation of local government was reported to have impacted on partnership working at a planning level. In some local authorities (especially the city based ones), relationships before and after reorganisation remain much the same in terms of personnel, departments and links with health. In many of these authorities, local authority staff are working with the same partners as before reorganisation, and many were already working in an integrated way.

However, in many authorities new relationships had to be forged and new departments established. In some areas the boundaries with health have become more complex. In some places health structures have remained centred on the cities, making partnership working more difficult for the authorities surrounding the cities to develop their own separate relationships with health at a planning level. In others, there is more than one Health Board working within the local authority boundaries, making it difficult to develop provision across the authority without complex partnership negotiations.

- 6.3.2 On the whole, Sure Start Scotland has been planned at a local level using a multi-agency approach, creating a complex picture across Scotland. Although detailed exploration of this process was outwith the scope of this mapping exercise, in the discussions with local authorities on Sure Start Scotland, a range of issues have emerged as important.
- 6.3.3 Multi agency planning takes place in most authorities under the auspices of the Childcare partnership or the Children's Service Planning group. These bodies involve joint planning between education and social work, and often health, the voluntary sector, and sometimes community education, housing, private sector service providers and other local authority departments. The extent of involvement of different partners, and at which level, was reported as variable. The concept of Sure Start Scotland was one that all agencies could support enthusiastically, and was seen as a positive influence in the development of the programme, with easily understandable aims that cut across departmental boundaries.
- 6.3.4 At local authority level, the lead for Sure Start Scotland has been taken by an Officer in Education or Social Work, sometimes devolved to a specific Sure Start Scotland Officer, and, in some cases, a voluntary organisation. Sometimes, the lead officer has been seconded from Social Work to Education, or vice-versa, and this was thought to have enhanced multi-agency working. There are many examples of creative and imaginative thinking to enhance multi-agency working within the local authorities. The fact that Sure Start Scotland was an Education department initiative, but that Social Work was experienced in working with children aged three and under, helped create the environment for working across departments. In some areas there has been a big effort to collapse the boundaries between education and social work at a planning and service delivery level. However, as discussed in a later section, this was not always effortless or without tension.
- 6.3.5 From the interview data, it seems that health has been harder to engage in many authorities, and several officers interviewed said that they would like to enhance work with health, particularly at a planning level. These difficulties seem to have arisen for a variety of reasons, including those of reorganisation discussed above. Some officers expressed difficulties in understanding the different structures within the health sector, and so found it hard to identify appropriate officers with whom to liaise. Others had difficulties in getting planners from health with sufficient seniority to make joint planning decisions around the table. Although most described good relationships with health care workers on the ground, a few mentioned some difficulties here, mostly

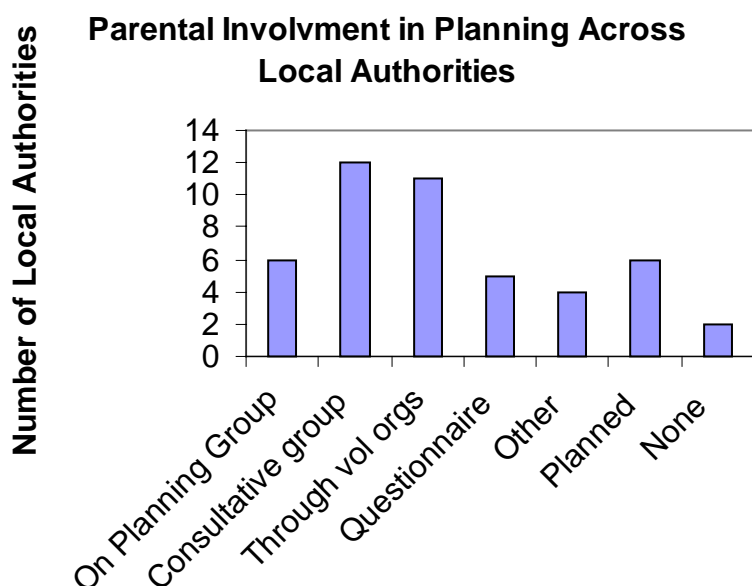
relating to existing pressures of workload inhibiting development of new models of working.

- 6.3.6 The development of services was reported to be affected by a variety of factors. The quality of existing relationships between agencies, along with the level of services relevant to very young families in place prior to Sure Start Scotland, combine to provide a particular set of circumstances in each local authority. These combinations were described as helping or hindering the development of a programme of services for very young children and their families. When effort has had to be expended on relationships at a planning level, or in developing services from a very low level, development may be slower than where existing relationships are good, and there are more existing services. In some cases, authorities may be dealing with both of these factors at the same time; in others, neither.

6.4 Involvement of Parents

- 6.4.1 Parents have been involved in the planning and delivery of services in a variety of ways, as the figure below represents. Only two contact officers reported no actual or planned mechanisms for parental involvement. In two thirds of authorities, officers described a range of ways that were already ensuring some engagement with the views of parents. The level at which parents were involved varied from participation at planning group level to being asked for feedback on specific services, as illustrated in figure 5.

Fig 5 Parents involvement in planning.



6.4.2 In some cases, a parent representative sat on the planning group for Sure Start Scotland within the authority. This model was discussed by a number of officers. It was noted in discussion that thoroughly representing parents' views required mechanisms for gathering views from a wide constituency of parents. At least one contact officer felt that this needed a specific financial commitment under Sure Start Scotland before it could be fully developed. Concern was expressed that the most vulnerable families, at whom Sure Start Scotland was aimed, were unlikely to be the parent representatives sitting in planning meetings.

6.4.3 In some cases, voluntary sector organisations were seen as a way that parent views could be represented in the planning group, as the voluntary organisations involved in the group had parents on their own management committees, or were seen as advocates of parents' views. In many cases, parents' views had been sought as part of the Childcare Strategy, including the use of widely distributed questionnaires in some areas. This information was drawn on in planning services under Sure Start Scotland. In many places there are user groups, parent forums or parents groups that are used as consultative bodies in the planning process. Information gained in the process of running parenting groups and classes was also drawn on to inform planning and delivery of services in some local authorities. In some areas parents' conferences have been held. Parents are often involved in the delivery of services, through user groups, involvement in training, or by being individually consulted on the development of the services they use.

- 6.4.4 In some local authorities considerable thought had gone into mechanisms to represent parents' views. Below is an example of how a rural authority is proposing to strengthen the voice of parents in the planning and delivery of services:

The Parents' Participation Project being proposed for development in the rural authority of Dumfries and Galloway provides an example of ways that Sure Start has encouraged innovation in partnership working with parents to give them a more active voice in the planning of services. Local volunteers, many of whom will be parents, will be recruited and trained as 'Buddies' to support parents to take part in democratic structures and planning processes. Local volunteer child-carers will be engaged to run an appointment and respite crèche in order to support the work of this project. This also provides an example of parents being involved in service delivery.

6.5 Funding Issues

- 6.5.1 There are a variety of funding issues that were reported to have affected the development of Sure Start Scotland services. In some local authorities, it was reported that funding crises that were quite independent of the Scottish Executive allocation of Sure Start funding led to Sure Start Scotland funding being used in ways that were outside of the authority's Sure Start Scotland plans. Elements of the funding were diverted to other provision or used to support existing services related to Sure Start Scotland objectives that were under threat. The fact that the funding stream was not ring-fenced seems to have led to a variety of outcomes across local authorities, from funding being diverted to unrelated services, to local authorities treating the funds as-if ring-fenced and using them entirely for new services for young children and their families.
- 6.5.2 Funding in the first year was delayed, and the actual allocation was sometimes reported as not matching the plans submitted by the local authority. This generally was reported as having led to a less ambitious pattern of activities that year than in the subsequent year. Many authorities used the funds to support or enhance existing services relevant to Sure Start Scotland objectives, but did not have sufficient time to develop a more strategic approach, or mechanisms through which to deliver it. However, the funding was often used creatively, to enhance services or to develop new services or models of delivery.
- 6.5.3 Many officers commented on the fact that they saw the funding stream as insecure and the impact this has on their ability to plan, develop and deliver services. Others commented on how they have had to overcome a fear of short-termism, and plan optimistically. Many commented on the availability of funding lubricating the wheels of multi-agency working, and certainly reported that Sure Start Scotland had enabled provision to develop that would not otherwise have done so.
- 6.5.4 However, concern that income may not be maintained was reported to have influenced the nature of the provision in some cases. Officers reported that the perceived short-term nature of the funding has an impact on the ability to

recruit staff, as local authorities only feel able to offer short-term contracts. This has led to the secondment of many staff into the Sure Start Scotland programme, leaving gaps elsewhere, that are also hard to fill.

- 6.5.5 The perceived short-term nature of the funding was also seen as problematic for services engaging vulnerable families, often hard to reach, which is a delicate and long-term process. There is concern that if funding stops, then many of these families will be let down by service providers having to pull out, just when they have managed to reach a level of trust that enables them to really make a difference with these client groups.

7 Influences on the Delivery of Sure Start Scotland Services

Factors affecting the planning of services often also affect their delivery. In this section of the report, further factors that seem to have influenced the delivery of Sure Start Scotland within the thirty-two local authorities are considered. The context of each authority has impacted on the way that the challenges and opportunities of Sure Start Scotland have been met. In many local authorities, the philosophy, aims and objectives of Sure Start Scotland were reported to have been considered good practice for some time, although work of a Sure Start Scotland character had previously been relatively piecemeal, lacking the funding, broader branding and political impetus that now lie behind the programme. However, not all local authorities were previously in tune with the Sure Start Scotland philosophy and objectives and this, along with many other factors influencing the base-line levels of services, modified the subsequent delivery of Sure Start Scotland.

7.1 Historical differences between local authorities

- 7.1.1 Historical differences in the organisational and political contexts of the local authorities appear to have played a role in the baseline resources and service provision available at the outset of Sure Start Scotland and, in consequence, the way that the programme has then unfolded. In the large urban centres, such as Glasgow and Edinburgh, the re-organisation of authorities seems to have had little deleterious impact in terms of the level of service provision upon which Sure Start Scotland could expand. Thus, family centres, outreach services and specialist provision were already on the ground and some working relationships with voluntary organisations were already in place.
- 7.1.2 The same appears to be the case within some of the smaller disaggregated authorities in close proximity to these urban areas, such as North Lanarkshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire. In this type of authority the legacy of the larger urban authorities was to leave them with an approach to children's services that is now mirrored in Sure Start Scotland and also with significantly more provision at the baseline date of 1999 than in some other authorities.

Glasgow City has built on existing wide-ranging centre-based provision and created new centres in specific locations. All such centres have been resourced so that they can adopt the status of family or children's centres from which a myriad of work takes place. The work is multi-disciplinary and seeks to address the needs of the local

community. This includes centre-based provision of day-care, intensive individual and family work, parents' groups and training, community development and work with volunteers. Outreach work is also provided to individuals and families to support and develop play and toddler groups and through partnership with Home-Start or other volunteer befriending schemes. Capacity building in terms of staff and volunteer training, and building on community resources more generally, has been key to this approach.

7.1.3 This is a considerably different picture to that of some of the disaggregated authorities, such as Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute and East Dunbartonshire. In such authorities, re-organisation appears to have resulted in the authorities having to build up services from a fairly low level. Furthermore, particularly (though not exclusively) in rural and remote areas, problems in recruitment of staff have exacerbated the difficulties faced by some authorities in taking forward the Sure Start Scotland programme, as noted above.

East Dunbartonshire is a contrasting example of an authority with a low level of integrated services prior to Sure Start Scotland and no family centre provision. It is an urban authority with pockets of deprivation. The programme has been used to support childminding with improved pay, training and access to equipment for childminders, to provide additional and new crèche facilities, parenting workshops and groups, and to focus on the educational needs of young children through an early language and literacy programme and a home visiting teaching service for those with special needs. Provision under Sure Start Scotland has been used to extend services from existing nurseries, support and create new outreach and resource provision and to undertake intensive work within the family home. A centre could not be built as well as this programme of work.

7.1.4 However, some of these authorities have also focused on a building programme to create centres from which to provide integrated services; this has required substantial capital outlay and resource costs for staffing and equipment. It has also involved considerable time to get any project up and running. Contact officers, in authorities with little in the way of an integrated approach to services prior to Sure Start, also reported the need to focus efforts and resources on staff training, breaking down disciplinary barriers, challenging insular and protectionist attitudes to work with children, and setting up policies and structures to enable integrated services to be created. Thus, work under Sure Start Scotland has been focused on capacity building, both in terms of investing in staff and volunteers and in the construction of, or extension/adaptations to, premises.

7.1.5 The widely varying starting points of local authorities at the introduction of Sure Start Scotland in 1999 has to be taken account when making comparisons about progress across Scotland. It cannot be assumed that a smaller proportion of children supported by Sure Start Scotland in one authority, compared to another, means less effort or progress towards meeting the objectives of Sure Start Scotland.

7.2 Sustainability

In order to ensure sustainability of services, some authorities have employed a deliberate policy of using the funding to attract other sources of revenue from statutory agencies or voluntary organisations or of working towards mainstream funding through a process of charging. However, such strategies are by no means universal. In other local authorities, the need to support essential services, the recognition of, as yet, unmet need and the relative infancy of the programme mean that any early cessation of Sure Start Scotland funding is predicted to result in many services being reduced or withdrawn and some never developed. Most authorities concurred that meeting the objectives of Sure Start Scotland has provided a substantial boost to services for young children, but that these now need time to become embedded in order to survive over the longer-term. This is an issue of particular concern to those authorities whose baseline provision started at a relatively lower level than most. Most of the contact officers reported that continued funding would be required to sustain Sure Start Scotland developments and to meet the needs of vulnerable families with very young children in the longer term.

7.3 Targeting of services

- 7.3.1 In enabling authorities to target the 0-3 age group, Sure Start Scotland has widened the population of families to whom services are offered. In many authorities some provision is universal in nature, but allows specific targeting of the most vulnerable within this. The adoption of such a model is regularly explained as aiming to reduce the stigmatisation and ghettoisation of families with particular needs. In a few authorities, however, a sense of the unmet need of the most vulnerable, and the relative lack of resources to meet that need has led to a policy of targeting mainly or exclusively those seen as the most disadvantaged; a judgement typically made through the operation of referral and admissions panels.
- 7.3.2 As noted earlier, a number of local authorities have developed services for groups identified as having special needs, such children with disability, families affected by alcohol/drugs and solvent dependency, those where violence and protection issues pertain and young parents. Whilst contact officers and service providers reported there is a great deal more to do in this regard, progress is reported due to the Sure Start Scotland programme. Some noted that this is relatively more successful when voluntary organisations have played a central role in such work. One target group, referred to by a number of interviewees, are those families who are not considered to be the most in need, but who are at risk of becoming so and with whom preventive work is being done. In these cases, Sure Start Scotland is seen as enabling primary prevention to take place, thus obviating the need for statutory intervention and the removal of children.
- 7.3.3 Most contact officers stated that they have continued to have some difficulties engaging with the most marginalised families and also that they have, as yet, been unable to target all groups they would like. They have indicated a wish, for instance, to undertake more intensive work with the most vulnerable

families, more preventative work and to widen the range of their target groups of families.

7.4 Tension of balancing universal/non-stigmatising and targeted provision

The interview data suggest a tension for many authorities between a model that supports maintaining universal provision and meeting the considerable needs of the most disadvantaged families with very young children. This tension is particularly visible for those authorities that contain many Social Inclusion Partnership areas and where the unmet need of the most vulnerable is thought to be far greater than current resources could meet. However, it is becoming an issue for many local authorities. The work of Sure Start Scotland is resulting in a growing sense of unmet need, as services are starting to reach difficult to engage families and preventive work is being developed with those at risk of being in crisis. It also thought that as more people become aware of the new and expanded provision, demand is likely to increase. This tension is currently managed in different ways, for example, by enabling children and families to reach different levels of support, with resource intensive support restricted to the few. Authorities have also simultaneously supported the provision of resources to all, for example, by increasing mobile crèche provision or toy library resources, or by improving training, and supporting community based parent and children groups. The situation for authorities in managing this tension, then, is likely to be exacerbated if funding is restricted or static.

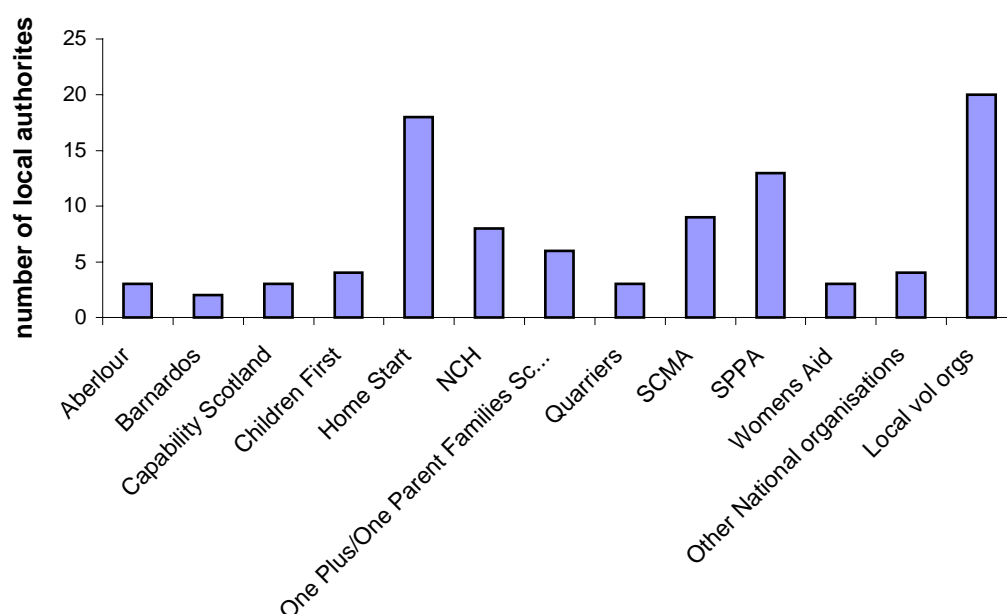
7.5 Partnership Working at Service Delivery Level

- 7.5.1 In some areas, new partnerships have been formed at service delivery level as a result of the programme. A common example is the integration of health workers into some centre-based and outreach provision and in wider training and resource programmes. New links with the voluntary sector have been created in some local authorities and, in some others, existing links have been deployed to increase significantly service provision and joint working. There are numerous examples of Sure Start Scotland funding being used to support and develop joint and independent services with the voluntary sector.

One example of partnership working at service delivery level between the voluntary and statutory sectors, extended by Sure Start Scotland funding, is a service to support families in a large peripheral housing estate of Glasgow City. The service is a joint venture between an authority run Family Learning Centre and a project initiated and run by a local community group, the Jeely Piece Club. The service is comprehensive in nature offering a range of provision that includes, day-care, parents' groups, intensive family work, crèche facilities, crisis work, extensive play activities, outreach and resource-based work. The funding from Sure Start Scotland has enabled the voluntary part of the service to expand its crèche work and also its outreach work for the 0-3 age group. In particular, the funding has allowed work to be done to support asylum seekers in the area with very young children.

Figure 7 below represents the range of voluntary sector organisations working within local authorities over Sure Start Scotland.

Fig 7 Number of local authorities funding voluntary organisations through Sure Start Scotland



7.5.2 There is also evidence in many authorities of partnerships with parents. For example, as noted earlier, local people are being recruited as volunteers, as childminders and as day-carers. There are numerous examples of local people also being trained as tutors for childcare and parenting programmes.

One example of partnership working with parents at the service delivery level is in Inverclyde, a mixed rural/urban authority where Sure Start Scotland has funded parents' involvement in seminars and training courses. For instance, the National Children's Homes has been supported to run parenting skills courses to parents and multi-agency staff that focus on the management of children's behaviour. Parents are being trained as trainers to roll the course out across the authority area. In addition, within the same authority, parents are also being trained as trainers in the 'eat, skip and smile' courses that focus on diet, exercise and dental health.

7.5.3 The picture of improved or well-established partnership working at service delivery level was not universal. There were exceptions in the accounts of local authority contact officers. In one case, difficulties were attributed to poor

relationships between two statutory departments that are key to the implementation of Sure Start Scotland. In another, it was reported as being the consequence of a lack of general enthusiasm amongst most statutory partner organisations, making it an up-hill struggle to implement integrated services on the ground. In a number of authorities there is a reported need for further work to break down professional or disciplinary boundaries. Sometimes successful working was attributed to staff 'goodwill' rather than official policies. For example, it was often noted that Health Visitors have made efforts to participate in local developments, even though the health sector itself has been difficult to engage. In a few authorities, interviewees noted tension between voluntary organisations claiming user demand for more universal provision and the local authority, which wants to target priority groups.

8 Factors reported to have helped and hindered the development of Sure Start Scotland

This section describes factors that seemed to have helped or hindered developments within Sure Start Scotland. A number of recurrent themes emerged from the interviews that were said to have helped and hindered the work of the Sure Start Scotland programme from planning and development to delivery of services. Many factors could indeed both hinder and help depending on the context within which they were operating.

8.1 Factors that have been identified as helping

These factors can be grouped around three key themes – context, staffing and resources.

8.1.1 The general context worked to help Sure Start Scotland:

- If the philosophical, political and organisational context in existence in 1999 was already 'in-tune' with the Sure Start Scotland objectives.
- If authorities already had an 'unswerving commitment' to Sure Start Scotland as a valuable way forward.
- Where the impact of re-organisation on authorities, and the related baseline service provision in place prior to Sure Start Scotland, was positive.
- Where pre-existing mechanisms and relationships for integrated working at both the strategic and practice levels were already in place.
- If local authorities had already undertaken childcare audits or pre-5 services reviews, thus knowing what services would be required at the baseline date.
- If there was a strong pre-existing policy context framework that Sure Start Scotland could fit into, for example, a Children's Services Plan.

8.1.2 The staffing context worked to help Sure Start Scotland:

- If there was already agreement and support from those with power in the local authority (both members and officers) about the Sure Start Scotland philosophy and work.

- Where local authorities had a dedicated Sure Start Officer in place, who could give sole attention to the programme.
- Where staff on the ground had positive attitudes towards and established working practices that fitted with Sure Start Scotland principles.
- Where there was goodwill amongst staff, voluntary organisations and community groups were also noted as important. This included partnership working already being in existence across statutory organisations and with voluntary organisations and local people.
- The fact of existing staff and those from other organisations having local knowledge, experience and the skills to carry out the work.

8.1.3 The resources context worked to help Sure Start Scotland:

- Where centre-based and other provision already existed, so that these could be built upon; especially where centres were in Social Inclusion Partnerships.
- Where the funding was protected against competing priorities and the officer was able to control this, thus having some influence on other departments/organisations.
- The fact that this was new money and, in some authorities, this was only being spent on extended or new services.
- The fact that the Scottish Executive was not imposing a prescribed model of how the funds should be used and gave latitude to authorities about how best to spend this in their own area (including it being spent both on capital and revenue costs).

8.2 Factors that have been identified as hindering

Factors that were reported to have hindered the Sure Start Scotland programme could be grouped into the same three areas, with an additional 'other' category.

8.2.1 The general context hindered Sure Start Scotland:

- Where local authorities had a low baseline of services at the outset of Sure Start Scotland due, in part, to re-organisation.
- Where there had been no significant history of integration in the planning and delivery of services.
- Where there had been poor relationships between departments and individuals within departments.
- Where there was no well-developed policy context or plan for services prior to Sure Start Scotland.
- Where local authorities diverted funds to meet competing local priorities.

8.2.2 The staffing context hindered Sure Start Scotland:

- Where there were recruitment problems, especially in some isolated and rural areas, and also a loss of staff due to retirement and sickness.
- Where there was not a dedicated Sure Start Officer in post and the contact officer had to multi-task.

- Where there had been no or little history of joint working, so that much work had to be done to break down professional and disciplinary boundaries; this was reported as slowing down the development of service provision. Conflicts between major departments and lack of integration of some health authorities at the strategic level particularly were also identified as hindering.
- Where there had been little joint working, and staff attitudes and traditional working practices were out of tune with Sure Start Scotland.

8.2.3 The resources context hindered Sure Start Scotland:

- Where there was no, or not enough, centre premises to base work around and insufficient funds to build anew.
- While Sure Start Scotland funding was welcomed, it was sometimes said to be insufficient to meet the level of unmet need in many authorities.
- Funds in the first year coming late impacted on the extent to which there could be planning for their use.
- The fact that funds were not ring-fenced within many authorities resulted in the programme planners having difficulty in long-term planning when they were given less by their authorities than that allocated by the Scottish Executive. This was said to be exacerbated by the belief of many authorities that the funding has to be spent by the end of each financial year.
- The fact that Sure Start Scotland has only been going for (three years to date) and the problems of planning over the longer term without certainty about the level of future resources. There were concerns about sustainability and ability to make commitments to staff, service users and communities.
- The difficulties that this perceived ‘short-termism’ was said to create in recruiting and keeping staff. A loss of skills and experience (some of which was invested in staff through Sure Start Scotland funded training), and resultant lack of continuity for service users when staff leave, were mentioned as problematic.
- The Health Boards’ personnel involved in planning or delivery did not always have the authority or funds to commit to any projects, making such integration difficult.

8.2.4 Other:

- A tension was reported between perceived demand or appropriateness of universal services and the frequent strategy of focusing on the most vulnerable groups.
- A lack of clarity was noted about how strict the cut-off age for Sure Start Scotland is, and the belief that strict adherence to only servicing the 0-3s is contradictory to the philosophy of seamless and holistic care.
- A lack of clarity from the Scottish Executive about the extent to which the numbers of children serviced is more important than the quality of work and the possibility that important aspects of quality may not be measurable.
- The absence of specific guidance about how success would be measured and the monitoring mechanisms that needed to be in place.

9. Conclusion

Sure Start Scotland has the broad objectives of improving children's social and emotional development, their health, their ability to learn and of strengthening families and communities. This report has mapped the extent and nature of developments under Sure Start Scotland across local authorities. It has considered the ways in which local authorities are developing services intended to meet these objectives, and identified the factors that seem to support or hinder such development. In this conclusion the main findings of the exercise from both the qualitative and numerical data. are drawn out and some consideration given to wider issues relating to Sure Start Scotland. The final section presents a list of recommendations.

9.1 Methods

The main sources of data used in the mapping exercise were from local authorities themselves, primarily via the Sure Start Contact officer designated by the local authorities. Accounts of the impact of Sure Start Scotland were collected through the qualitative telephone interviews conducted with these officers and with a sample of service providers from the statutory and voluntary sectors. These described the range of new and expanded services developed as a result of Sure Start Scotland, the context within which such developments took place, and some of the factors reported to have helped or hindered developments. Numerical information on service use were also obtained, as well as financial information.

9.2 Numbers supported by Sure Start Scotland

The quantitative data provide an overall figure of an additional 3387 children and 3100 parents supported by Sure Start Scotland services in 1999/2000 and 6,556 children and 6381 parents in 2000/2001 with many more, 5,768 children in 1999/2000 and 8864 in 2000/2001, benefiting from additional play and educational resources. However, the construction of such summary figures masks the complexity of service use which was reported to characterise much of Sure Start Scotland provision as well as the extent of its impact. A global figure necessarily requires some assumptions, especially as routine monitoring was not in place in many local authorities. Caution was exercised in the assumptions made about the available figures on service use.

9.3 Financial data

The financial data returned by local authorities suggest that all are now using Sure Start Scotland funding, often in collaboration with other funding, to expand and develop services. However, not all spent their first year allocation and a number of reasons were identified for this – the late payment of the money, the lack of time for planning and developing provision, or competing demands.

9.4 Impact of services

The overall figures on service use cannot provide a sense of the quality of the services or of the range of ways in which children, parents, families or communities are helped by Sure Start Scotland. Many authorities have been concerned to implement high quality of services, for example, and have implemented programmes of staff training and also improvements in recruitment, pay, conditions and support for childminders. Contact officers reported that access to services has been improved through changes in quality, by the integration of services as well as through new provision. For example, there is more open access through drop-in sessions, on-site health visitors and parents' groups. These provide points of contact that act as bridges to and from more intensive and specific support as well as more mainstream provision in centres, nurseries, crèches or parent and children groups.

9.5 Models of service provision

- 9.5.1 A move towards integrated services, often within expanded or new centres, has begun in almost all authorities. In the few cases where there was no centre type provision, other forms of integrated support could be achieved. Authorities are targeting vulnerable families with very young children, and are increasingly able to offer a dynamic and varied package of support to meet individual and changing needs. The scope for early intervention and thus primary prevention is, therefore, enhanced. However, authorities are also developing a universal approach to provision, often in the form of resource and mobile support, as well as within a developing strategy for the under fours or under fives.
- 9.5.2 Outreach work is also being developed in all authorities. The work of outreach provision such as mobile crèches, toddler group support and peripatetic play workers is described as encouraging and facilitating families, who would otherwise not seek out services, to access other types of support for themselves and their young children. In this way individual families and communities are strengthened.
- 9.5.3 The mapping has identified a range of innovations in service development and delivery typically involving inter-agency working. Most authorities have some voluntary sector involvement in service delivery, and this is key in some of the developing outreach work. Although linking of social work and education is often being achieved, and this was reported as being essential in meeting the needs of families with very young children, links with the health sector have been harder to establish. However, there are, nonetheless, examples of good practice, especially at service delivery level.

9.6 Meeting Sure Start Scotland objectives

The range of services are all aiming to meet the four main Sure Start Scotland objectives, although an outcome focused evaluation will be required to assess whether the objectives are being successfully met. Improved centre, nursery, other day care provision, crèches and support for community based parent and child groups can all improve children's social and emotional development and their overall health. Some services are specifically aimed at improving children's

health, however, other services that support parents in developing skills, especially when involving health visitors, are also working towards that objective. Children's ability to learn is being enhanced in a range of ways, through improvements in services and how they are being resourced. Often, these services are universal in nature, rather than only focussing on vulnerable groups. Many interventions are supporting families through a holistic approach, and also through targeting hard to reach groups not always able to access services. Communities are being strengthened through increased use of volunteers, better training for childcare workers, including childminders, and also through overall improvements in resources and provision within local authorities, often targeted to areas of deprivation.

9.7 Engaging parents

Many authorities are seeking to engage directly with parents in order both to elicit their views and to involve them in the services to be provided. In a small number of authorities such engagement was at a very early stage of development. However, further research would be required to assess the extent to which this is effective. A holistic approach often means that parents are encouraged to assist in their children's development, through joint activities and sessions. However, parents are also being supported through other developments aimed at improving skills and promoting self-esteem. A combination of informal interaction as well as programmes for groups is often being developed, especially within new or expanded centres.

9.8 The impact of historical factors

The extent to which local authorities progressed towards Sure Start Scotland objectives has to be seen in the context of circumstances affecting service development prior to Sure Start Scotland and modifying the way in which Sure Start Scotland funds were used. Conditions prior to Sure Start Scotland featured strongly in accounts of what had helped and hindered the development of the programme.

9.9 Other factors affecting the development of the programme

The Sure Start Scotland funding was in itself identified as a key factor enabling the development of relevant services to the aims of the programme. Additional factors helping the development of Sure Start Scotland in local authorities include the extent to which authorities were already working in an integrated way and had already developed services for families with very young children. A dedicated officer was also considered to be helpful. Factors that hindered were authorities having few services at baseline and not having well developed ways of partnership working. The perceived short term nature of the funding as well as problems with recruitment also hampered developments in some areas.

9.10 Impact of Sure Start Scotland

Regardless of the different starting points of authorities at the outset of Sure Start Scotland, the programme seems to be generally regarded as a major impetus for change and development. It has been described as a 'catalyst' that has galvanised the energies of staff across agencies, the voluntary sector and people in local communities. Most interviewees report that it has significantly improved both the approach taken to and the level of services provided for the 0-3 age range. At the strategic level, many authorities reported that Sure Start Scotland has allowed a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to services for this group for the first time. At the service delivery level, it is said to have altered the focus of work with children by seeing them in the wider context of the family and community setting and no longer just working with the child in isolation. Sure Start Scotland, with its emphasis on joint working, has meant that specifically tailored and integrated care plans for individual children and their families are being more systematically put in place.

9.11 Wider issues relating to Sure Start Scotland

- 9.11.1 Although the mapping identified considerable achievements within almost all local authorities, it also highlighted areas of difficulties and some weaknesses. With some exceptions, there was little evaluation of services, nor of the effectiveness of the planning process or partnership working. Many of those interviewed described a tension between developing targeted and universal provision, and the importance of developing de-stigmatised services. At the same time, it was clear that there are groups within authorities whose needs are not being met, especially those hardest to reach or those from very marginalised groups. Partnership working, especially involving the health sector, could also be more developed, and barriers to effective joint planning and joint working further broken down. At the level of strategic planning, local authorities are at different stages in including service providers, the voluntary sector and parents into the planning process.
- 9.11.2 The overall models being developed under Sure Start Scotland, while certainly aiming to strengthen families and communities, also do not seriously challenge the persistence of structural inequalities. Although it has to be said that this was not one of the objectives of the Sure Start programme. Most care work is done by women, and in practice this is reinforced in service development, which, de facto, tends to support mothers of very young children, or women as childcare workers. The gendered division of labour is thus unintentionally reinforced, and despite improvements being made through training, working conditions and pay, the child care sector remains low status and low paid. Although it is unreasonable to expect the limited funding from Sure Start Scotland to be able to effect large scale social change, very few projects or services were specifically aimed at involving men either as parents or as carers, although, of course, services were for parents not just mothers and men are sometimes recruited as child care workers. Perhaps more attention should also be paid to involving parents in a range of ways and at different levels. Although services were specifically described as involving parents in identifying their needs and planning support requirements, how this actually operates in practice remains to be further researched. It may be very difficult

for those who are most vulnerable and marginalised to articulate their needs, especially if the wider context implies that their parenting skills are inadequate and that the social and emotional development of their child may be in jeopardy.

10. Recommendations

10.1 At Scottish Executive level:

- Clearer guidelines to local authorities in terms of information requirements.
- Development of evaluation alongside the initiative, with clear guidance to local authorities about quantitative and qualitative criteria.
- Reduction of funding uncertainty by longer notice of actual allocation and continuity of funding.
- Further consolidation of joint working at national level across sectors to help inform practice at local level.
- Bring developments for the under 4s into wider strategies for children, young people and families.
- Provision of more opportunities for local authorities and others to share and disseminate good practice.

10.2 At Local Authority level:

- Improve the inclusiveness of the planning process.
- Improve joint working within the local authority itself.
- Develop working relationships with the health sector.
- Develop coherent strategy for monitoring and evaluation.
- Share good practice within and between local authorities.
- Improve parental involvement.
- Continue to improve conditions for child care workers.
- Encourage fathers and men to become involved.
- Consider the range of expertise in the voluntary sector and in other services.

10.4 Implications for further research and evaluation

While a mapping exercise can provide a basic description of what is being developed within and across local authorities, and analyse the reports of those involved, it cannot offer an in-depth assessment of the impact of Sure Start Scotland, nor thoroughly evaluate the initiative. Further quantitative and qualitative research could usefully:

- Describe and evaluate different practices at planning level .
- Identify specific case studies for further in-depth research and evaluation – these might be large providers or innovative developments selected from different authorities.
- Draw together existing evaluations being conducted within local authorities and voluntary sector organisations.

- Assess the extent to which provision is meeting need.
- Elicit the views of service providers (including those involved with children aged 3 and over).
- Explore the contributions made by the voluntary sector.
- Elicit the views and experiences of service users.
- Elicit the views of families with very young children who are not accessing services.

Appendix 1

The Mapping Exercise

The aim of the mapping exercise was to describe the services provided for children and families, which meet the Sure Start Scotland objectives, and to identify the ways in which this initiative has impacted on pre-existing provision.

The specific objectives were to:

- Describe the range of services delivered, including the numbers and characteristics of users, which meet the specified objectives of Sure Start Scotland, distinguishing between those that are new and existing provision and indicating what changes, if any, have been made to local authorities' planned services since 1999.
- Indicate which of the Sure Start Scotland objectives the services provided address and whether these services are also intended to meet other objectives.
- Identify different models of service delivery associated with Sure Start Scotland with specific reference to the role of the voluntary sector, the health service and any other partner organisations.
- Describe the factors that have inhibited or facilitated the establishment and delivery of services supported through Sure Start Scotland.
- Describe the funding arrangements for services that receive support through Sure Start Scotland, including the total cost of provision and details of any other sources of funding.

Stage one

In the first phase of the mapping process, the team of researchers drew on the available evidence supplied by local authorities to the Scottish Executive and on the database set up within the Children and Families Division. This identified inconsistencies as well as gaps in available evidence. Four members of the research team were responsible for identifying, reading and collating information for a set of local authorities. Researchers drew up pro-forma for each local authority. Available data were input using the same categories of services as in the database (childminding; family centre; other day care; playgroups/play initiatives; learning support; outreach support; SEN/disability; specific support to communities; support to young parents; parenting initiatives; therapeutic support; crisis supports; training/support for staff and other non-measurable), along with numerical and descriptive data on places, children and parents supported. A short version of the pro-forma provided these general categories and the numerical data available. A longer version also provided qualitative descriptions derived from the database and the local authority reports sent to us by the Children and Families Division. Each local authority was sent their short pro-forma, with missing numerical information highlighted and a set of specific questions about Sure Start Services, including service use and progress on planned service developments, that would gather information needed to complete the mapping.

At this stage we identified a number of problems with the Children and Families Division database. The database itself was difficult to work with. Its structure made it difficult to manipulate the large numbers of fields and entries and to print out all the information contained within a field. More importantly, the data were sometimes problematic. Many figures were missing and it was not always clear whether absence reflected absence of provision or missing information. Where descriptive information was given on services, it was not always clear where the information had come from or why it had been categorised in the way it had. There seemed to be some inconsistencies. Subsequent enquiries indicated that some of the missing information could, perhaps, have been avoided with more careful planning and communication of information requirements prior to the actual implementation of Sure Start Scotland. Difficulties in developing a meaningful classification system and rules for consistently categorising services might also have been reduced by earlier discussion with local authorities about the information requirements of the Scottish Executive. However, in the course of the research, it also became clear that these difficulties reflect the complex and diverse nature of Sure Start Scotland. This complexity and diversity is discussed in detail in the report.

Stages two and three

Having identified missing information, the contact person for Sure Start Scotland in each local authority was written to. This letter (see next section) outlined the mapping exercise, introduced the research team and enclosed the pro-forma listing the requested information on service use as well as specific questions on developments. One member of the team was responsible for the organisation of this phase of the exercise, arranging the times for the telephone interviews to be conducted. The four members of the research team involved in describing and collating the existing evidence for each local authority conducted these telephone interviews with 'their' local authorities. It was originally intended to conduct two interviews, one to obtain the additional factual and specific information, and a second to obtain more open ended responses to broader issues such as partnership working, impact on services, targeting and factors that helped or hindered Sure Start Scotland developments in the local authority (see interview guide). However, after the first few interviews, it became clear that there was no need to separate these components of the study, and, indeed, it was easier not to do so. This was for several reasons: the authorities needed much more time to get the missing numerical data on service use, but were happy to discuss the broader issues first; much of the required descriptive information about provision in the local authority was obtained during the open ended questioning; and the numerical information could be emailed, telephoned or faxed through once it was available. These interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes, were scribed and notes written up afterwards for subsequent analysis.

Following the interviews, summary descriptions of Sure Start Scotland were written up for each local authority. These followed a template and covered a standard range of elements including their approach to implementing Sure Start Scotland, descriptions of the range of service provision within the local authority, the models of service delivery and the objectives being met.

The descriptions of service provision included in the summaries were faxed to the contact officer within each local authority for checking. One member of the research

team was responsible for collating, sending, receiving and updating these summaries. Follow-up calls were made to local authorities to obtain the numerical information on service provision and use requested.

Stage four

All qualitative information received from each local authority was analysed for cross cutting themes. This involved members of the research team reading all the interview notes and summary descriptions, drawing out themes, discussing these as a team, and identifying similarities and differences across local authorities. Interviews are drawn on in the report to provide examples as illustrations where appropriate. These have been selected to help highlight the issues being discussed, rather than as being representative of all authorities or of particularly good practice.

The final component of the mapping exercise involved interviews with a small sample of service providers (16 in total, see list). Six members of the research team conducted these interviews. Priority was given to including voluntary sector providers from both large and small organisations (12). A small cross section of statutory providers (4) were also interviewed. These interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes, and were again scribed and analysed as above. The topic guide asked providers to discuss the projects they were involved with, issues relating to targeting, Sure Start Scotland objectives and the planning process (see interview guide).

In all the interviews, the researcher gave the respondent an assurance of anonymity for all aspects of the discussion except the descriptions of the details of particular services that would be attributable to the specific local authority or service. The depth of discussions that followed reassured us as researchers that the respondents had given us a frank account of their views and had drawn on their knowledge and experience to provide as full an account of the impact of Sure Start Scotland as possible.

In order to provide some contextual information, the numbers of children aged 1-4 in each local authority, and the number of postcodes with a high level of deprivation were added to the standardised summaries of Sure Start Scotland in each local authority. The population estimates are Crown Copyright data supplied by the Registrar General of Scotland's Office available on their website. The deprivation scores by postcode districts were derived from the report 'Carstairs Scores for Scottish Postcode Sectors from the 1991 Census' by McLoone P (1994) available on the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit website. The categorisation of postcodes provided there was checked against a list of postcodes by the current local authority boundaries. This enabled us to identify the number of postcode districts with the two highest deprivation ratings in 1991 by current local authority boundaries. Note that this is a crude and dated indication of levels of deprivation, shortly to be superseded by the availability of 2001 census data.

Quality control

The research team met on at least a weekly basis to monitor the progress of the mapping process. All data input into spreadsheets were checked internally. The tenderers conducted 14 of the total interviews themselves, and read all the templates and interview notes. Emergent themes, issues and problems were discussed regularly. All data and progress tracking were held on a secure site available only to the research team. During the last three weeks of the mapping, we recruited two additional team

members, one specifically responsible for checking the standardised summary descriptions of Sure Start Scotland in each local authority and liaising with local authorities over accuracy and amendments and the other to collate and check the numerical information on service use as it was received from local authorities. The total figures for service use have been double checked manually and internally within Excel. In complex cases these figures were discussed with the contact officer. We also sent copies of our final compiled figures back to 30 of the 32 local authorities for final checking. The remaining two were considered sufficiently robust because the figures had been thoroughly discussed on an earlier occasion. We had 16 replies about these final figures.

Limitation and difficulties with quantitative data

Firstly, robust quantitative data requires routine monitoring and reporting procedures to be in place. It was difficult for local authorities to establish the means of gathering appropriate data at the beginning of the programme. No detailed guidance was given by the Scottish Executive concerning the sort of data that would be requested. Many contact officers said that they would have liked to have had more specific guidance and one suggested that some training would help. There was variation across local authorities in terms of the development of monitoring and evaluation procedures - more detail is given in the next section - although all contact officers thought that such procedures were important. One pointed out that there was no specific money allocated for evaluation and that the emphasis within the local authority had been on service development and delivery. Despite the variation in procedures, a number of common difficulties also emerged.

Many local authorities found the categorisation of services difficult. The Scottish Executive sought data using a classification of services that did not always fit with the pattern of local provision. Static categories were not helpful in describing integrated services. It was not always straightforward to separate intensive (one-to-one or one-to-two support) from group or from resource based support. There could be overlap in provision especially at the level of an individual family or child and through the increasing integration of services in centre based provision.

A recurrent issue concerned difficulties in counting both places available for children or parents and the actual numbers of parents or children using services because of the varied types of provision and complex patterns of usage. For example, there is difficulty in counting service users when a range of services are supporting one family. The meaning of a 'place' is not straightforward – it might be a part time or full time place in one form of day care over a period of days, weeks or years. An additional place might be found for a child for a very short term, or an additional worker brought in to cover lunch times to enable a child to stay in a centre all day during a time of family crisis. A child may also be supported in an ad-hoc way through one off visits to a mobile crèche, or for a longer period of time. Outreach work might involve seeing a family in their own home, but also accompanying a child and parent to a playgroup or some other community based resource, such as a library. If the full range of resource-based provisions, such as toy libraries, are considered then counting either children or places becomes increasingly difficult and perhaps even meaningless.

Some contact officers expressed frustration with attempts to measure the Sure Start Scotland programme in quantity rather than quality. Many contact officers were keen to demonstrate the qualitative impact of Sure Start Scotland, by describing individual cases where expanded or new provision had made a real difference to a family's life. Such cases to them demonstrated the limits of using numerical data given the flexibility of much provision and the flux in service use. For example, a vulnerable family may be supported over a period of several months by bridges between a range of services. This could include childminding (the childminder may have had new training and also receive additional resource support) during a crisis period where a parent needed respite or time to undergo therapy, nursery provision in an expanded family centre, perhaps increasingly involving parent and child in other activities, a mobile crèche (itself supported by resources and additional, newly trained staff) while the parent went to some kind of parent group or underwent training, and then maybe a parent and toddler group once the family was out of crisis.

Letter to Local Authorities

«Title» «First_Name» «Surname»
«Title_of_Post»
«Name_of_Organisation»
«Address_1»
«City_»
«Postcode»

date

Dear «First_Name» «Surname»

Sure Start Scotland Mapping Exercise

We are writing to you from the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) as we are carrying out the Sure Start Scotland mapping exercise on behalf of the Scottish Executive. Please find enclosed a leaflet about the CRFR, and the researchers who are working on this project.

The first phase of the Sure Start Scotland mapping exercise involves completing, analysing and elaborating on information collected by the Scottish Executive about Sure Start initiatives. In order to carry this out effectively and accurately we should like to discuss provision in your Local Authority area with you by telephone sometime over the next few weeks.

Enclosed in this letter are some questions we would like to ask you which will give us the information about your Local Authority provision that is missing or incomplete. It will be very difficult to complete the mapping exercise without this information and we would be grateful if you could have it ready to tell us when we contact you by telephone. If you are unable to provide some of this information, please just let us know when we phone.

Later on during the study, we would like to telephone you again to ask some more general questions about Sure Start provision in your area. We want to ensure that the valuable experience and opinions of officers such as yourself, also informs the mapping exercise. Specific information, such as the type of service or numbers of children aged under four benefiting, will necessarily be attributed to particular Local Authorities. Any general opinions expressed to the research team will not be attributed to individuals or local authorities in order to maintain confidentiality in the final published report.

We also require up to date financial information about Sure Start spending in your authority area. A grid is enclosed with this letter, it can either be completed in hard copy and returned to CRFR or it is also available as an excel spreadsheet by contacting crfr@ed.ac.uk. If you do not hold this financial information, can you please give us the name of the appropriate officer who does?

Kathryn Dunne or Vivienne McFarlane from the Centre will telephone you to arrange a suitable time for us to call and we hope to speak to you over the next two weeks.

We may need to contact you again in order to clarify information we have received from you. We will do this informally, by phone. Your help and co-operation is essential to the success of this process, and we thank you in advance for your time.

Please feel free to get in touch if you would like to discuss any of the above.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Morton
Research Liaison and Information Officer

Rachel Adam
Research Assistant

Interview schedule for Local Authority contacts

General Questions

We'd like to begin by asking about information gathering on Sure Start Scotland

Q1. Do you have any comments on the information the Scottish Executive asked Local Authorities to provide on Sure Start?

Q2. Apart from the information put together for the Scottish Executive, were you already gathering information about the Sure Start programme?

Probe *What sort of information and for what purpose?*

Q3. Do you know if projects funded under Sure Start have routine monitoring and evaluation system in place?

Prompts *Has the local authority issued any specific guidance concerning monitoring and evaluation? Are there any plans in this direction?*

We'd now like to talk about the impact of Sure Start Scotland on the local authority's services.

Q4. Could you describe generally the impact Sure Start has had on service provision in your council area?

Q5 As we see it, Sure Start money may have impacted on services in three ways: 1. by sustaining existing services that might otherwise not have been sustained 2. it may have elaborated existing services 3. it may have created new services. What do you think the balance has been between these three types of impact in your local authority?

Prompts *To what extent has it extended what was already in existence and to what extent has it created new services that otherwise would not have been possible? [then check meaning of 'extended' - sustained existing service or elaborated existing service]*

Now some more specific questions about the planning of services

Q6 Has the introduction of Sure Start made any difference to the council's ways of planning services?

Prompts: *Were new groupings established to plan services?*

Please describe any new partnership arrangements formed as part of the planning.

Q7 Are parents being actively involved in groupings to plan services?

Probe: *In what ways? [check involvement of voluntary orgs, private sector]*

Turning to the delivery of services

Q8 Has the introduction of Sure Start made any difference to the council's way of delivering services?

Prompt: *Were any new groupings established to deliver services? Please describe any new partnership arrangements formed as part of service delivery.*

Q9 Were parents actively involved in service delivery?

Probe: *In what ways*

Q10 Do you think Sure Start Scotland introduced any new and innovative practices or services in your local authority?

Probe: *Please describe the service, who is involved? Can you send us any further information?*

Q11 Have you been able to do any staff or parent training as a result of Sure Start? Can you give details of this?

Q12 Also, have there been any opportunities for the sharing of new or innovative practice across agencies and with others involved in the programme?

Now some questions about targeting services.

Q13 Sure Start Scotland has very broad objectives - **to improve children's development** (physical, social, emotional, including self esteem and self-confidence, children's health, ability to learn, communication and language) **to support parents** (including help parents help children develop through play, help parents enjoy parenting, encouraging parents to identify helpful resources and services, support for a healthy upbringing, opportunities for training for employment) to strengthen families and communities including **targeting those in**

greatest need and providing culturally appropriate and sensitive support taking account special needs. Was your local authority giving more priority to any particular one of these?

Q14 Could you tell us more about how the council is making decisions about prioritising and targeting services?

Q15 Who is being targeted and why?

Q16 Who do you think has benefited the most from Sure Start in your area?

Q17 Are there any groups or sections of your population that you feel should be benefiting who aren't at the moment?

Finally just three very general questions

Q18 Were there any circumstances that helped establish and implement Sure Start Scotland in your local authority area? If yes: prompt to describe.

Q19 Were there any circumstances that hindered the implementation of Sure Start Scotland in your local authority area? If yes: prompt to describe

Q20 Is there anything else you would like to say about the programme that we haven't discussed?

Interview schedule for service providers

1) Can you describe the services you provide under the Sure Start Scotland programme, i.e. any services that receive full or part funding from Sure Start Scotland ? (If you provide service across several local authority areas, can you give a summary of the types of services offered.)
(prompts: existing, extended or new services; whole or part funded from Sure Start Scotland; work with children and/or parents).

Ask for any specific numbers of service users we require.

2) Who is the target group of your service(s)?
(Prompts: have they engaged target group; how was it decided).

3) Sure Start Scotland has very broad objectives - **to improve children's development** (physical, social, emotional, including self esteem and self-confidence, children's health, ability to learn, communication and language) **to support parents** (including help parents help children develop through play, help parents enjoy parenting, encouraging parents to identify helpful resources and services, support for a healthy upbringing, opportunities for training for employment) to strengthen families and communities including **targeting those in greatest need** and providing culturally appropriate and sensitive support taking account special needs.

Which of these objectives do your services meet? How do you meet them?

4) Have your organisation been involved in the planning of services under Sure Start Scotland alongside the local authority? (At what level; as individual org. or part of consortium etc).

5) Do you have any other comments about the Sure Start Scotland programme?

List of service providers interviewed*

Aberlour Child Care Trust
Barnardos, West Lothian
Capability Scotland
Children 1st
Dunbeth Nursery Centre, Coatbridge
East Dunbartonshire Libraries Project
Hamiltonhill Early Learning Centre, Glasgow
Home-Start
Jeely Piece, Castlemilk, Glasgow
Montrose Family Support Team, Angus
NCH Action for Children, National Office in Scotland
One Plus
Orkney Pre-school Play Association, Orkney
Scottish Childminding Association
Scottish Pre-School Play Association
Stepping Stones for Families

* Main office for Scotland unless otherwise specified.