



Nottinghamshire County   
Teaching Primary Care Trust



# Greasley with Brinsley Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

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

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# Main Report

## 1. Background to the Research

- In line with the government's current initiative to introduce Sure Start Children's Centres into communities which fall within the top 20% and 30% of disadvantaged wards nationally, Nottinghamshire was given the go-ahead for 21 centres to be completed by March 2006, with 3 more to be started in Round One, but completed in Round Two by March 2007. A further 25 have followed in Round Two, and will be completed by March 2008. Within Round 2, Nottinghamshire was also given permission to include wards that fell outside of the 30% most disadvantaged provided that they included a Super Output Area showing levels of disadvantage similar to the 20% and 30% areas.
- Children's Centres are intended to co-ordinate the provision of services and support to children, aged from 0-5 years, their parents and carers, based on partnerships between statutory, voluntary and private organisations and the local authority. Partnership with local parents and their early involvement in planning of Children's Centres is an essential part of the ethos of the Children's Centres programme.
- It is the government's policy to develop Children's Centres within partnerships. Some may be based on a 'strong link' partnership, bringing together existing facilities (e.g. neighbourhood nursery, primary schools, family centre, library, health centre, community centre). Some may involve a new building, creating a one-stop centre attached to or on a school site. Even with a new 'one stop building', there will be a need for sound partnerships with other providers throughout the area.
- All Children's Centres areas will have child care available for 50 weeks a year, 8am – 6pm offering care integrated with education, for children aged 0-5 years. This will be delivered through linkages with established childcare settings in the area.
- Children's Centres are built on the successful practice of Sure Start Local Programmes, which have now all been integrated into the Children's Centres programme.
- Depending on the variable position in childcare, education and other support in local communities, parents/carers and other residents are likely to have different experiences, and therefore will have variable views and feelings about the advent of a Children's Centre in their community.
- Understanding the views of both users and providers, who may be affected in the short and longer term by the implementation of the programme, is vital to ensure that the rollout of Children's Centres is successful and well received within communities.
- Central to the development of Children's Centres is parental involvement and participation in the planning, delivery, evaluation, management and governance of the centres, as appropriate structures emerge.
- Development of the Children's Centres is for families with children under 5; the centres have the potential for wider community use however and could develop into 'community centres for children' serving a wider age-range and incorporating, for example, after school care, holiday clubs etc in partnership with the Extending Services In and Around Schools programme.
- The Greasley with Brinsley consultation was conducted in an inclusive manner, to enable any parent, worker or member of the community who wished to take part in the consultation to do so. The team aimed to comply with equal opportunities policies and principles throughout the consultation.

- Where possible, families who do not traditionally engage with mainstream services have been included, where service providers or other agencies were able to give contact details and encourage participation.

## 2. Aim and Objectives of the Consultation

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

Specific objectives are:

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

### 3. Methodology

- The consultation consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents through completion of an interviewer administered questionnaire; a self-completion questionnaire distributed to service providers and key stakeholders in the area and two focus groups (one in Greasley and the other in Brinsley) with parents recruited via the interviews.

#### 3.1 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers from the Greasley with Brinsley areas were invited along to an open information session held at Greasley Beauvale D H Lawrence Infant School on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007. Participants were informed about the planned consultations in Greasley with Brinsley to be carried out on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council by Silver Dialogue.
- Partners were also given an in-depth presentation covering Sure Start Children's Centres and the core service offer provided including the commissioned accountable body arrangements with the Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust.
- The presentation included in-depth explanations about the model of provision and the differences between the core offer for 30% disadvantaged super output areas in comparison to the 70% non-disadvantaged areas. Service provision would differ in these areas. Resources will be targeted on the Super Output areas within the wards, and also the families identified as needing most support across the area.
- Concepts of need were also outlined and Sure Start services discussed, including family support, outreach work, training, family learning and links with Job Centre Plus and early years provision etc.
- Explanations were also given about the current Eastwood Sure Start Children's Centre catchment areas and the reasons behind them.
- Attendees were given a self-completion questionnaire to complete at the meeting or to take away with them. Invitees that couldn't attend were sent a questionnaire by post or e-mail with a covering letter encouraging them to return this.
- Partners and service providers including Registered Childminders within the area were also sent the questionnaire, with a covering letter and leaflet about Children's Centres and a reply paid envelope.
- Follow up letters and emails were made to those who had not returned the questionnaires.
- Service providers were also asked to complete a mapping exercise, giving details of the services they were aware of in the Greasley with Brinsley areas with times and contact details.
- The mapping exercise would be used to develop a map of services available in the area to identify any service provision gaps or overlaps for future planning, as well as to provide likely locations for interviewing parents during the consultation.
- The opportunity to give contact details was provided so that the Children's Centre team could make contact in the future, and all but two of the twelve respondents completed this section.

#### 3.2 Parents' Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation with parents consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents. It was planned to include:
  - Parents/carers with children under 8 years of age who live in the Greasley, Brinsley and East Eastwood postcoded areas of interest.

- Other parents/carers who live locally and use local schools and nursery sessions in the areas of interest.
- Parents/carers who are users of local toddler groups and other sessions for parents and young children.
- Most interviews were conducted on Tuesday 16th October 2007 by a team of interviewers located outside the local schools – Brinsley Primary and Nursery school, Greasley Beauvale DH Lawrence Infant and Nursery school.
- Interviewers also targeted parent and toddler sessions including: Wiggles at Brinsley School and the playgroup at Greasley Sports and Community Centre.
- Parents/carers were targeted for interviews if they lived in Greasley, Brinsley or East Eastwood and/or used the children's services based locally.
- The interviewer team included professional interviewers, workers from the Children's Centres Development team, members of staff from Eastwood Children's Centre and staff from the Brinsley and Greasley Beauvale schools.
- The interview took about 10 minutes.
- 132 face to face interviews were conducted.

### 3.3 Focus Groups

- Parents taking part in the survey were asked whether they would be interested in attending a focus group either at Brinsley or at Greasley on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. A good response was received with 49% of parents showing an interest in attending a focus group.
- The first focus group took place as planned at Brinsley School on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. The initial Greasley focus group also planned for the 31<sup>st</sup> October had to be cancelled due to the original venue being inaccessible, although it was re-run on 16<sup>th</sup> November at a different venue - Greasley Sports and Community Centre.
- Ten respondents for each focus group were recruited randomly by telephone from the list of interested respondents. Follow up invitation letters were sent.
- Seven parents/carers attended the Brinsley focus group and another eight came along to the re-run Greasley focus group.
- A free crèche provided by Eastwood Sure Start was available at each venue for those parents who wished to use it.
- A mapping exercise was conducted as part of the focus group to gather parents' perceptions about existing services in the area for them and their children.
- As part of the introduction to the group, a local Sure Start representative gave an explanation about Children's Centres. This was seen as a good way of enabling a wider understanding of the concept by parents before the discussion started. It also clarified the differences between the core offer for 30% disadvantaged super output areas in comparison to the 70% non-disadvantaged areas and the reasons behind the current Eastwood Sure Start Children's Centre catchment areas.
- All attendees were given a £10 gift voucher as a thank you gift for their help.
- The four parents who turned up for the group at Greasley which was then cancelled were also given £10 gift vouchers for their time and invited to attend the re-scheduled focus group.

## 4. Observations on the Samples

#### 4.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 132 interviews were completed in total.
- Sure Start data shows that there are around 587 under 5s living in the Greasley with Brinsley areas. Greasley is a 70% 'non-disadvantaged' ward with approximately 441 children aged under 5. Brinsley has approximately 86 children aged under 5, with about 56 living within a 30% disadvantaged Super Output Area and there are 60 under 5s living in East Eastwood.
- Out of the 132 parents interviewed 94 (or 71%) lived within one of the target postcode areas of the previous Greasley, Brinsley and East Eastwood ward.
- Based on a postcode analysis, 50 of the parents interviewed live within the previous Greasley boundaries, 31 of the parents come from postcodes within Brinsley and 16 parents are from East Eastwood.
- Table 4.1. below shows how respondents described the neighbourhood in which they lived. It is interesting to see how few (4) actually describe themselves as living in 'Greasley' compared to the postcode analysis showing that 50 of the respondents live within the previous Greasley boundaries.

**Table 4.1. Claimed area of residence with number of children aged under 5**

<b>Claimed area of residence</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Number of children under 5 represented in consultation</b>
Brinsley	37	34
Eastwood	36	33
Giltbrook	12	12
Greasley	4	2
Moorgreen	1	2
Newthorpe	34	24
Surrounding Villages	3	2
Other	5	5

- Of those 35 parents interviewed who were classified by their postcodes as living outside the target area; 17 were from current Eastwood South postcodes, 3 from Eastwood North, 5 from Underwood, 2 from Selston, 1 from Kimberley, 1 from Watnall, 1 from Ironville, 1 from Langley Mill and 1 from Hallam Fields in Derbyshire. The remaining three were from unrecognised postcodes.
- The consultation is well represented for parents of under 5s in Brinsley (40%) and East Eastwood (27%), however it is lower for Greasley (11%) and the results provide guidance for future service needs of parents and under 5s in the area but it is not a truly representative view. It should be noted however that approx 50% of children attending Greasley Beauvale Infant school live in the Eastwood South ward, that is already covered by Eastwood Children's Centre.
- 120 or 91% of the respondents were female, while only 12 (9%) were male.
- Half of the respondents (51%) were aged 30-39. None were aged less than 20. Around a quarter (24%) of the respondents were aged 20-29, 18% were 40-49 and 6% were aged 50 or more. One respondent had not answered this question.
- The parents interviewed accounted for 265 children living in the area of the following ages: 114 under 5s, 145 aged 5 to 16 and only 6 aged over 16.
- The average number of children per family was 2.1.

- On average those respondents with children had 1.3 children aged under 5 and 1.7 children aged 5 to 16. Most people (92%) were reported as having no children over 16. There were only six households with children aged over 16.
- Close to a half (48%) of the respondents had one child under 5. Close to 1 in 5 (17%) had two children aged under 5 and two parents had three under 5s. Around a third (33%) had no children under 5 (n.b. parents with children aged 8 and below were targeted for the interviews). Six respondents had no children in their households because they were grandparents.
- Ten (or 8%) of those who responded revealed that they were expecting a baby. The vast majority (89%) stated that they were not pregnant at this time. 3% did not answer this question.
- Over three quarters of households (109 or 83%) had two adults living together, whilst 16 or 12% lived in households with only one adult. Six households (5%) had more than 2 adults living together. The average was 1.9 adults (18 and above) per household.
- Some 14% of the respondents were single, while over three quarters (85%) were married or partnered. Two respondents described themselves as 'other' e.g. widowed.
- Just over a third of households (36%) had one adult working, close to a half (49%) had two adults working and one in ten (11%) had no adults working. The remainder of households had more than 2 adults working (3%). One respondent had not answered this question.
- Close to a half (43%) were working part-time and 18% worked full time. One respondent described themselves as unemployed whilst close to a half (44%) said that they were full time parents. 5% described themselves as grandparents. One respondent did not answer this question.
- The majority of respondents (96%) described their ethnic origin as white. Other ethnic groups included 1 respondent from an Indian background, 1 from a Traveller background and 1 described them self as "other".
- Over three-quarters of the respondents were registered with one of three GP Practices: Church St Medical Centre (36%), The Surgery, Church Walk, Eastwood (27%) and Newthorpe Medical Centre (14%). Other surgeries mentioned included, Dr Khaliq Bilborough Medical Centre (7%), Selston Surgery (3%), Dr Hama Medical Centre Kimberley (2%), Heanor (2%), Underwood Surgery (2%), Park View Surgery (1%), Dr Sandhu Kimberley Medical Centre (1%) and Jacksdale Medical Centre, Main Rd (1%).
- Three respondents mentioned other Doctors and two did not know or were not yet registered with a Doctor.
- The majority of the responses were from parents with under 5s at Greasley Beauvale DH Lawrence Infant and Nursery School (43%), Brinsley Primary and Nursery (24%), Lynncroft Primary and Nursery (6%), Brookhill Leys Primary and Nursery (4%), Eastwood Primary and Nursery (4%). 10% mentioned other schools/nurseries/establishments that their under 5s attended and 8% didn't answer this question.

## 4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 12 completed questionnaires were received.

- 4 registered childminders returned questionnaires.
- 10 respondents gave contact details.
- Between them the service providers had accumulated about 106 years of working in this community. On average, they had each been in their current role for 9.6 years, with a range from 1.5 to 23 years.

Table 1 - Partners' Disciplines

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Childcare	5
Healthcare	2
Education Support	2
Early Years Education	1
Community Development	1
Adult Education	1

Table 2 - Partners' Roles

<b>Role</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Registered Childminder	4
Group Leader/Headteacher	3
Health Visitor/Assistant	2
Teaching Support	1
Support in the Community	1
Adult Learning in the Community	1

Table 3 - Areas of Responsibility

<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Brinsley	5
Eastwood	4
Broxtowe	1
Unknown	2

### 4.3 Focus Groups

#### Greasley Focus Group

- Eight parents/carers attended the re-run focus group held at Greasley Sports and Community Centre out of the ten who had agreed to come along.
- All participants were female.
- Between them respondents had 18 children in total, eight of these were aged under 5, five were aged 5 to 11 and five were aged over 11.
- Two respondents cared for four children aged under 16, one cared for three children, three respondents cared for two children, one cared for one child and one was pregnant.
- All but one of the participants had at least one child aged under 5, the other participant was pregnant and awaiting the arrival of her first child.
- One attendee cared for two children aged under 5.
- Five participants were from Newthorpe, two from Giltbrook and one from Eastwood.

### Brinsley Focus Group

- Seven parents/carers attended the focus group at Brinsley School out of the ten who had agreed to come along.
- One participant was male.
- Between them, respondents had 14 children in total, nine of these were aged under 5 and five were aged 5 to 8.
- One respondent cared for four children aged under 11, four respondents cared for two children, and two currently cared for one child (one of whom was pregnant with her second child).
- All the participants had at least one child aged 5 or under. Three attendees cared for two children aged 5 or under.
- All participants lived in Brinsley.

## 5. Main Findings

### 5.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 132 questionnaires were completed accounting for parents/carers of 114 under 5s living or using services in the area. This corresponds to 19% of the number of under 5s (587) in the area. This provides a good sample of parents/carers but is not by any means representative of the views of all parents/carers living within the area. For this reason care must be taken when comparing percentages - attention is brought to this throughout the report.
- A high number (81%) of respondents were aware of Sure Start, reflecting the original Eastwood Sure Start programmes local profile, while 12% had not heard about Sure Start and 7% were not sure.
- The highest awareness of Sure Start was for those parents aged 20 to 29 (9 in 10 were aware) compared with 7 in 10 for those who were older. Single parents were more aware (9 in 10) than married/partnered respondents (8 in 10). Respondents who described themselves as living in Eastwood and Giltbrook were more aware (9 in 10) than those living in Brinsley, Greasley or Newthorpe (7 in 10).
- Just over a third (35%) of those who knew about Sure Start were also aware of the planned Children's Centre for Greasley with Brinsley.

#### 5.1.1. Services Ever Used

- Respondents were asked which local services they or their family had ever used, by means of a Showcard (Appendix 2). Responses in Table 5.1.1 (overleaf) are shown for all respondents. Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- As might be expected those services which are seen as a necessity i.e. GP (91%), Health Visitor (77%), and Midwife (68%), were used by over two thirds of respondents.
- Services used by around half of the respondents included: Children's Library Service (52%), Antenatal Sessions (49%) and Pre-School Playgroup (48%).
- More than a third of respondents had used a Nursery in a School (42%), Toddler Group (42%) or Family Member (33%).
- Around one in five respondents had used Day Nursery (21%), After School Club (20%) or Friends (20%).
- Some of the more specialist services have limited take up in this area with less than 5 respondents having used them, including Family Centre, Homestart and Welfare Rights Sessions.

<b>TABLE 5.1.1. Services Ever Used</b>	<b>Numbers using service</b>	<b>Percent who have ever used</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100%</b>
GP practice	120	91%
Health visitors	101	77%
Midwife	90	68%
Children's Library Service	68	52%
Antenatal sessions	65	49%
Pre-school playgroup	64	48%
Nursery in a school	56	42%
Toddler group	55	42%
Family member	44	33%
Day Nursery	28	21%
After School Club	27	20%
Friends	26	20%
Job Centres	19	14%
Home Safety Equipment	17	13%
Home Visits	17	13%
Story Time Sessions	17	13%
Speech Therapists	15	11%
Toy Library	15	11%
Breakfast Club	14	11%
Registered Childminder	13	10%
Crèche	12	9%
Independent School	11	8%
Breast Feeding Group	10	8%
Further Education	9	7%
Children's Information Service	8	6%
Dietician/Nutritionist	7	5%
Parenting advice & guidance	5	4%
Family Centre	4	3%
Homestart	2	2%
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	1%

- An analysis of the service use data showed the following trends.
  - Parents/carers living in Brinsley are more likely than those living elsewhere to use a pre-school playgroup (6 in 10 of the parents living in Brinsley use these services).
  - Those living in Brinsley and Eastwood are more likely to use family members (4 in 10) reflecting availability of local provision.
  - Those living in Brinsley are more likely to use a Job Centre (2 in 10) and Further Education services (2 in 10) than those living elsewhere.
  - Those in Giltbrook are more likely to attend story time sessions (2 in 10).
  - Those in Newthorpe are more likely to use a breakfast club (2 in 10).
  - Those living in Brinsley are more likely to use an after-school club (3 in 10).

### 5.1.2. Usefulness of Services

- Respondents were then asked how useful they had found those services that they had mentioned, for both themselves and their family. They scored usefulness of the services on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 = not very useful to 5 = very useful. Responses are shown in Table 5.1.2 overleaf.
- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents, and the closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction.

<b>Table 5.1.2 Usefulness of Services</b>	<b>Numbers using service</b>	<b>Percent Scoring Very (5) or Quite Useful (4)</b>	<b>Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)</b>	<b>Average Score</b>
GP practice	120	93%	1%	4.6
Health visitors	101	81%	6%	4.3
Midwife	90	92%	2%	4.6
Children's Library Service	68	94%	0%	4.6
Antenatal sessions	65	83%	3%	4.4
Pre-school playgroup	64	91%	3%	4.6
Nursery in a school	56	96%	0%	4.8
Toddler group	55	89%	0%	4.6
Family member	44	95%	0%	4.9
Day Nursery	28	79%	11%	4.3
After School Club	27	100%	0%	4.8
Friends	26	100%	0%	4.9
Job Centres	19	47%	26%	3.4
Home Safety Equipment	17	76%	0%	4.5
Home Visits	17	71%	12%	4.1
Story Time Sessions	17	88%	6%	4.3
Speech Therapists	15	60%	13%	3.9
Toy Library	15	87%	0%	4.6
Breakfast Club	14	100%	0%	4.8
Registered Childminder	13	85%	0%	4.8
Crèche	12	75%	0%	4.3
Independent School	11	100%	0%	4.8
Breast Feeding Group	10	90%	0%	4.4
Further Education	9	89%	11%	4.1
Children's Information Service	8	63%	13%	3.6
Dietician/Nutritionist	7	71%	0%	4.0
Parenting advice & guidance	5	80%	0%	4.2
Family Centre	4	100%	0%	4.8
Homestart	2	100%	0%	5.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	100%	0%	5.0

*Table Note:*

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

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

- The top two services for usefulness with a reasonable number of responses were: Friends (mean score 4.9) and Family Members (4.9) used for childcare.
- Other popular services used by over 10 respondents, all with helpfulness mean scores of 4.8, were Nursery in a School, Registered Childminder, Independent School, After School Club and Breakfast club.
- The majority received comparatively good scores for usefulness with at least three quarters (75%) of all users scoring them as either very or quite useful.
- Three services were scored by less than 75% of users as very or quite useful; these were Speech Therapists, Children's Information Service and Job Centres, although care should be taken in the interpretation of the results for Children's Information Service which had only 8 users in this survey.
- Many of the least used services were rated very highly by the few respondents that used them including: Homestart (5.0), Welfare Rights Sessions (5.0) and Family Centre (4.8). Care must be taken in interpreting these results however as they may not reflect the satisfaction level of all users of these services.
- Some services with a reasonable number of users had depressed mean usefulness scores because at least 1 in 10 users had rated them as being either not very or not at all useful. These services included: Day Nursery, Further Education, Home Visits, Speech Therapists, Children's Information Service and Job Centres.

### 5.1.3. Reasons for Services Not Being Useful

- Respondents were then asked about any services they had mentioned, which they had scored as being 1 = not at all useful or 2 = not useful and why this was. Results are shown in Table 5.1.3.
- 28 ratings were given to services as being not very or not useful. This is a low dissatisfaction rate overall representing only 3% of all the possible scores allocated (940) by the total number of users of services.

<b>Table 5.1.3 Services scored as not being useful</b>	<b>Numbers using service</b>	<b>Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not useful (1)</b>	<b>Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)</b>
Job Centres	19	5	26%
Speech Therapists	15	2	13%
Children's Information Service	8	1	13%
Home Visits	17	2	12%
Further Education	9	1	11%
Day Nursery	28	3	11%
Health visitors	101	6	6%
Story Time Sessions	17	1	6%
Pre-school playgroup	64	2	3%
Antenatal sessions	65	2	3%
Midwife	90	2	2%
GP practice	120	1	1%

- 20 respondents had provided low scores for some of the services and described their reasons for this as:
  - 3 responses related to health visitors, particularly that they were not wanted or not needed or unreliable.
  - 2 felt that they were given poor information or advice or had not been listened to.
  - 2 mentioned problems they had with their midwife.
  - 2 had found the antenatal service to have been poor and not useful.
  - 1 felt that the service did not provide any benefit or was not helpful.
  - 4 gave "other" reasons:
    - One felt that the Job Centre was not child friendly.
    - One said that a day nursery had left their child crying and with a dirty nappy.
    - One would have preferred that the speech therapists sessions were of longer duration.
    - One felt that their child currently attending a day nursery was not progressing in reading as quickly as their previous child had.
  - 7 respondents didn't provide a reason for their low scores.

#### 5.1.4. Child-Friendliness of Services

- By service used, respondents were then asked how child-friendly they had found the services.
- They scored child-friendliness of the services on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 = not very child-friendly to 5 = very child-friendly. Responses are shown in Table 5.1.4 overleaf.
- The top services for child-friendliness scored by a reasonable number of respondents are Friends (4.9), Family Members (4.9), Nursery in School (4.9), After School Club (4.9), Toy Library (4.9) and Breakfast Club (4.9)
- Most services scored well with at least two thirds (66%) of the users scoring them as quite (4) or very child-friendly (5). Those that were scored below this (and with a reasonable number of responses) were: Home visits (65%), Home Safety Equipment (65%), Dietician/Nutritionist (57%), Antenatal Sessions (51%) and Job Centres (26%).
- Some of the least used services were rated very highly by the few respondents that used them, including: Family Centre (5.0), Homestart (5.0) and Welfare Rights Sessions (5.0). Care must be taken in interpreting these results however as they may not reflect the satisfaction level of all users of these services.
- One service with a reasonable number of users, Job Centres (2.6), had a depressed mean child-friendliness score because at least 1 in 10 users had rated it as being either not very or not at all child-friendly.

<b>Table 5.1.4.</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Average</b>
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Child-friendliness of services	using service	Very (5) or Quite (4) Child Friendly	Not very (2) or Not (1) child friendly	Score
GP practice	120	77%	3%	4.3
Health visitors	101	81%	4%	4.4
Midwife	90	72%	6%	4.4
Children's Library Service	68	91%	1%	4.7
Antenatal sessions	65	51%	6%	3.9
Pre-school playgroup	64	89%	3%	4.7
Nursery in a school	56	95%	0%	4.9
Toddler group	55	87%	0%	4.6
Family member	44	95%	0%	4.9
Day Nursery	28	89%	4%	4.7
After School Club	27	85%	0%	4.9
Friends	26	96%	0%	4.9
Job Centres	19	26%	42%	2.6
Home Safety Equipment	17	65%	0%	4.4
Home Visits	17	65%	0%	4.2
Story Time Sessions	17	88%	0%	4.6
Speech Therapists	15	80%	7%	4.3
Toy Library	15	87%	0%	4.9
Breakfast Club	14	93%	0%	4.9
Registered Childminder	13	77%	0%	4.7
Crèche	12	75%	8%	4.6
Independent School	11	91%	0%	5.0
Breast Feeding Group	10	90%	0%	4.8
Further Education	9	56%	33%	3.3
Children's Information Service	8	38%	25%	3.2
Dietician/Nutritionist	7	57%	0%	4.0
Parenting advice & guidance	5	60%	0%	4.7
Family Centre	4	100%	0%	5.0
Homestart	2	100%	0%	5.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	100%	0%	5.0

*Table Note:*

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

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

#### 5.1.5. Reasons for Services Not Being Child-Friendly

- Respondents were then asked about any services they had mentioned, which they had scored as being 1 = not at all child-friendly or 2 = not child-friendly and why this was.
- 36 low scores (i.e. not very or not at all) for child-friendliness were given out of the total of 940 possible scores for all users. This represents a total of 4% of total scores given which is at a similar low level of dissatisfaction at 3% seen for usefulness of services in this area (section 5.1.4).

Table 5.1.5	Numbers	Numbers	Percent not
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Services Scored as not being Child-friendly	using service	scoring as not very (2) or not at all child-friendly (1)	very (2) or not at all child-friendly (1)
Job Centres	19	8	42%
Further Education	9	3	33%
Children's Information Service	8	2	25%
Crèche	12	1	8%
Speech Therapists	15	1	7%
Antenatal sessions	65	4	6%
Midwife	90	5	6%
Health visitors	101	4	4%
Day Nursery	28	1	4%
GP practice	120	4	3%
Pre-school playgroup	64	2	3%
Children's Library Service	68	1	1%

- 23 respondents had provided low scores for some of the services and they described their reasons for this:
  - 6 felt it was a service that was not appropriate/not suitable/not necessary for children.
  - 2 said that there were no play areas and/or no toys.
  - 2 found that there were no facilities for older siblings/ nothing for them to do when taking younger children.
  - 1 felt there were no facilities for children/no childcare.
  - 1 had found the service to be not helpful/no interest in child/no patience with child.
  - 2 gave "Other" reasons.
    - One didn't feel that the child had settled well at the crèche.
    - One had perceived that there was favouritism at the playgroup which they felt was noticeable both to the children and the adults.
  - 12 respondents didn't provide a reason for their low scores.

#### 5.1.6. Comparisons of Usefulness and Child-Friendliness

- Looking at both sets of data - usefulness and child-friendliness - and comparing the average scores of the respondents' views for parents' and children's needs, table 5.1.6 overleaf shows the difference in views held.
- The closer to an average score of 5, the more useful or child-friendly the service is perceived to be. The gap is shown in bold when the service is more child-friendly than useful.
- Overall, 16 services are seen as being more child-friendly, although the difference of up to 0.2 points is negligible.
- Six services are equally balanced on usefulness and child-friendliness.
- Eight services were seen to be more useful than child-friendly.
- Further Education and Antenatal Sessions are viewed as relatively useful services from the parents' view however they showed one of the biggest gaps between usefulness and child-friendliness.

- The Children's Information Service and Job Centres were both scored low for child friendliness and usefulness and were perceived to be more useful than child friendly. Care should be taken however in the interpretation of these results where services have less than 10 users rating them.

<b>Table 5.1.6 Score Comparisons</b>	<b>Numbers using Services</b>	<b>Usefulness Score*</b>	<b>Child Friendliness Score*</b>	<b>Gap</b>
Parenting advice & guidance	5	4.2	4.7	<b>0.5</b>
Day Nursery	28	4.3	4.7	<b>0.4</b>
Breast Feeding Group	10	4.4	4.8	<b>0.4</b>
Speech Therapists	15	3.9	4.3	<b>0.4</b>
Story Time Sessions	17	4.3	4.6	<b>0.3</b>
Crèche	12	4.3	4.6	<b>0.3</b>
Toy Library	15	4.6	4.9	<b>0.3</b>
Independent School	11	4.8	5.0	<b>0.2</b>
Family Centre	4	4.8	5.0	<b>0.2</b>
Home Visits	17	4.1	4.2	<b>0.1</b>
Health visitors	101	4.3	4.4	<b>0.1</b>
Children's Library Service	68	4.6	4.7	<b>0.1</b>
Pre-school playgroup	64	4.6	4.7	<b>0.1</b>
Nursery in a school	56	4.8	4.9	<b>0.1</b>
After School Club	27	4.8	4.9	<b>0.1</b>
Breakfast Club	14	4.8	4.9	<b>0.1</b>
Family member	44	4.9	4.9	0.0
Toddler group	55	4.6	4.6	0.0
Friends	26	4.9	4.9	0.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	7	4.0	4.0	0.0
Homestart	2	5.0	5.0	0.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	5.0	5.0	0.0
Home Safety Equipment	17	4.5	4.4	-0.1
Registered Childminder	13	4.8	4.7	-0.1
Midwife	90	4.6	4.4	-0.2
GP practice	120	4.6	4.3	-0.3
Children's Information Service	8	3.6	3.2	-0.4
Antenatal sessions	65	4.4	3.9	-0.5
Job Centres	19	3.4	2.6	-0.8
Further Education	9	4.1	3.3	-0.8

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

#### 5.1.7. Most Helpful Service to Parents

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had used was the most helpful to them, as a parent. The following table 5.1.7a overleaf shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top five most helpful services for parents mentioned by over 10% of respondents were GP Practice (14%), Nursery in a school (13%), Toddler Group (11%) and Health Visitors (11%). Two of these services provide healthcare and two provide help with childcare and early year's education.

<b>Table 5.1.7a</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Percent Mentions</b>
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<b>Service most helpful to you as a parent</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>
GP practice	19	14%
Nursery in a school	17	13%
Toddler group	15	11%
Health visitors	15	11%
Pre-school playgroup	13	10%
Family member	9	7%
Antenatal sessions	8	6%
Midwife	8	6%
Children's Library Service	7	5%
Registered Childminder	6	5%
After School Club	4	3%
Home Safety Equipment	4	3%
Breakfast Club	3	2%
Day Nursery	3	2%
Parenting advice & guidance	2	2%
Speech Therapists	2	2%
Breast Feeding Group	1	1%
Independent School	1	1%
Crèche	1	1%
Friends	1	1%
Family Centre	1	1%
Toy Library	1	1%

- The analysis shown in table 5.1.7a shows the overall level of helpfulness across all respondents - it is therefore biased towards services that are used by a greater number of respondents i.e. they had a greater chance to be chosen as the best service by more respondents. Another analysis was undertaken to reduce this bias by calculating the percentage of users who saw this service as their most helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.1.7b overleaf.
- The top four most helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
  - GP Practice
  - Nursery in a School
  - Toddler Group
  - Health Visitors
- The top four most helpful services in the USER analysis are:
  - Registered Childminder
  - Parenting Advice & Guidance
  - Nursery in a School
  - Toddler Group

<b>Table 5.1.7b</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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<b>Service most helpful to you as a parent for users only</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Users</b>
Registered Childminder	6	13	46%
Parenting advice & guidance	2	5	40%
Nursery in a school	17	56	30%
Toddler group	15	55	27%
Family Centre	1	4	25%
Home Safety Equipment	4	17	24%
Breakfast Club	3	14	21%
Family member	9	44	20%
Pre-school playgroup	13	64	20%
GP practice	19	120	16%
Health visitors	15	101	15%
After School Club	4	27	15%
Speech Therapists	2	15	13%
Antenatal sessions	8	65	12%
Day Nursery	3	28	11%
Children's Library Service	7	68	10%
Breast Feeding Group	1	10	10%
Independent School	1	11	9%
Midwife	8	90	9%
Crèche	1	12	8%
Toy Library	1	15	7%
Friends	1	26	4%

- In this case Registered Childminder moves to the top position on helpfulness to parents because close to half (46%) of respondents who use Registered Childminders for childcare found them to be the most helpful option.
- Other services which were used by a small number of users and which were highly appreciated above all other services by at least 1 in 5 users were: Parenting Advice and Guidance (40%), Family Centre (25%), Home Safety Equipment (24%) and Breakfast Club (21%). These services can be considered to be helpful emerging services that are not currently used by a large number of parents. Further research is recommended to explore the satisfaction levels amongst users of these lesser used (or less available) services.

#### 5.1.8. Most Helpful Service to Children

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had used was the most helpful to their child/children. The following table 5.1.8a overleaf shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top four most helpful services for children mentioned by over 10% of respondents were Nursery in a school (21%), Toddler Group (12%), Pre-School Playgroup (11%) and GP practice (11%). Three of these services provide early learning and socialisation opportunities for young children, the fourth provides healthcare.

<b>Table 5.1.8a Service most helpful to your child</b>	<b>Number of Mentions</b>	<b>Percent Mentions All Respondents</b>
Nursery in a school	28	21%
Toddler group	16	12%
Pre-school playgroup	14	11%
GP practice	14	11%
Children's Library Service	9	7%
Health visitors	9	7%
Family member	8	6%
Day Nursery	6	5%
After School Club	5	4%
Speech Therapists	4	3%
Registered Childminder	3	2%
Breakfast Club	3	2%
Home Safety Equipment	3	2%
Toy Library	3	2%
Independent School	2	2%
Story Time Sessions	2	2%
Midwife	1	1%
Friends	1	1%
Parenting advice & guidance	1	1%
Family Centre	1	1%

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

<b>Table 5.1.8b</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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<b>Service most helpful to your child for users only</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Users</b>
Nursery in a school	28	56	50%
Toddler group	16	55	29%
Speech Therapists	4	15	27%
Family Centre	1	4	25%
Registered Childminder	3	13	23%
Pre-school playgroup	14	64	22%
Day Nursery	6	28	21%
Breakfast Club	3	14	21%
Toy Library	3	15	20%
Parenting advice & guidance	1	5	20%
After School Club	5	27	19%
Family member	8	44	18%
Independent School	2	11	18%
Home Safety Equipment	3	17	18%
Children's Library Service	9	68	13%
Story Time Sessions	2	17	12%
GP practice	14	120	12%
Health visitors	9	101	9%
Friends	1	26	4%
Midwife	1	90	1%

- In this case Nursery in School remains firmly in top with half the users of this service rating it as the most helpful service for their child.
- Speech Therapists and Family Centre rated by a small number of users are highly appreciated above all other services by at least a quarter of their users. These services can be considered to be helpful niche services that are not currently used by a large number of parents. Further research is recommended to explore the satisfaction levels amongst users of these lesser used services.

#### 5.1.9. Help to Use Services More Often

- A list of suggestions that might help parents to use services more often or more easily was shown to respondents. See Showcard 2 (Appendix 2). They were asked which of those listed might help them.
- In Table 5.1.9 overleaf, it can be seen that two items were mentioned the most and each by more than a quarter of the respondents - these were 'more local venue' (28%) and 'different times of events' (26%).
- It is of interest to note that those living in Brinsley were more likely to request 'more local venue' (half of the respondents living in Brinsley felt this was an issue for them).
- 'Someone to go with' was a bigger issue for those who were aged under 29 (3 in 10 felt this was an issue compared with 1 in 10 of the older age groups).

<b>Table 5.1.9</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percent</b>
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<b>Help to use services more often</b>		<b>Agreeing</b>
More local venue	37	28%
Different times of events	34	26%
Childcare	25	19%
Better public transport	23	17%
Better price	20	15%
Someone to go with	19	14%
None of these	29	22%

#### 5.1.10. Preferences in Receiving Information

- Respondents were shown a list of possible ways of receiving information about activities and services for children. Respondents were asked to say which they would prefer. Results are shown in table 5.1.10 below.
- The most popular way was clearly a newsletter, which close to two thirds (64%) of the parents preferred.
- The second and third most preferred communication routes, both chosen by just over a quarter of respondents (26%), was a flyer/information sheet or via email/website.
- The least preferred option with only 13% of respondents preferring this route was word of mouth through friends/family/other parents.
- The communication preferences across locations, gender and age were similar for all options apart from by email/website; 4 in 10 males preferred e-mail/website compared with 2 in 10 females and 1 in 10 single parents compared with 3 in 10 married/partnered respondents.

<b>Table 5.1.10 Preferences in Receiving Information</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percent Preferring</b>
Newsletter	84	64%
Flyer/information sheet	34	26%
Via email/website	34	26%
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	23	17%
Information session at nursery/clinic/sure start	22	17%
Article in local paper	20	15%
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	17	13%
None of these	1	1%

#### 5.1.11. Three Things Greasley with Brinsley Needs

- When asked what three other things the Greasley with Brinsley Area needs to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in Table 5.1.11 overleaf.
- The top 5 suggestions requested were:
  - Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park (18%)
  - Parent & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities (16%)
  - More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities (11%)
  - Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities (7%)
  - More/Better information (6%)
- Three of the most frequently mentioned ideas focus on providing more play/leisure facilities both indoors and outdoors. The remaining two of the top five ideas demonstrate the need for improving current facilities/events, through

providing better information about what is happening and by making the activities more affordable.

- Two of the respondents mentioning the need for a better/safer/cleaner playground/park felt that someone/some organisation should be actively involved in keeping the playground safe.

<b>Table 5.1.11 Suggestions from Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Mentions</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
<b>Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Parent &amp; Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>More/Better information/Communication</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6%</b>
More child care/registered childminders/nurseries/Creche	7	5%
Before and after school activities/clubs	7	5%
More varied activities (such as Tumble Tots, Jo Jingles, Drama, Sports)	7	5%
Youth club/Activities for older children/teenagers	5	4%
Holiday activities/care for children	5	4%
More/Better buses/Better Transport	5	4%
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities/Sports Facilities - club/pitches	5	4%
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	3	2%
More/Better facilities/activities for smaller children	3	2%
Improved environment for pushchairs (paths/pavements, lifts, countryside, overhanging hedges)	3	2%
More flexible timing of activities and longer session times	3	2%
More support/Somewhere for support & advice	2	2%
Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol etc	2	2%
Clinic/Doctor/Health Visitor	2	2%
More policing/Police	2	2%
Place to meet/Groups for mums/parents to meet	2	2%
Toy library	2	2%
Need a Sure Start locally	2	2%
More accessible services - not postcode driven	2	2%
More/Better parking	1	1%
Clean up drugs/litter/dog mess/Youths hanging around	1	1%
More shops/Better Shops	1	1%
More child friendly places (e.g. job centre)	1	1%
More extended schools services	1	1%
More pre-school places	1	1%
Non-cliquey groups	1	1%
Cheaper housing (so both parents don't need to work)	1	1%
Don't Know/Not Sure	39	30%

- The top item 'Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park' was mentioned by just under a quarter (24%) of those parents/carers living in Brinsley.

- One in 10 parents/carers living in Brinsley, Newthorpe or Gilbrook mentioned the need for Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities. Respondents living in the other areas did not mention this as a requirement.

#### 5.1.12. Thoughts on the Arrival of the Children's Centre

- Finally, respondents were asked whether they had anything to say about the arrival of the Children's Centre in the area, which was difficult for the majority who had not previously been aware of the plans.
- Only 53 people or 40% of the respondents commented.
- 14% of parents/carers thought it was 'a good idea', 'great', 'brilliant' or 'excellent'.
- 11% felt that it should be open to all this reflects the current situation in respect of Eastwood Children's Centres continuing need to target services in the most disadvantaged part of the area (not just postcode specific).
- 5% said they didn't know enough about Children's Centres to comment.
- 4% were very positive and looking forward to its arrival.
- 3% felt that more publicity or information was required.
- 5% (7) mentioned 'Other' reasons.
  - Three asked specific questions about Sure Start
    - What age groups would it be for?
    - Are the staff at Sure Start fully qualified in the same way as nursery teachers are qualified?
    - How will it benefit me personally?
  - Two were concerned about the location of the centre when it had to cover such a large area, reflecting the misconception that a Children's Centre refers to a single building rather than a way of working.
    - "One building will not be enough to cover such a large area."
    - "I live in Brinsley and rely on public transport."
  - One was concerned that there was nothing to support parents of older children (youth).
  - One commented that Sure Start would benefit all children in the area.

## 5.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners' responses varied depending on their role and experience in the area. Anonymous responses in alphabetical order are shown in Appendix 6, and a summary of responses to each question is given below.
- For each of the questions asked responses were very much focused on partners' own personal involvement in the community although some clear community wide issues were also raised.
- Responses were focused on improving problems in the community and tailoring current support services to help. Some specific gaps in service provision were identified for the area including healthcare, affordable childcare and training for parents.
- A quarter of the responses (4 out of the 12) were from Registered Childminders in the area.

### 5.2.1. Current Problems

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

- The overall view is that there is a **problem concerning access to services** as transport links are weak and there is a lack of knowledge/information about available services.

*"Feeling isolated. Not being able to access services that are available in Eastwood. Although many of these families require the same amount of support."*

*"Not all parents know what services are available or where to find it."*

*"Not knowing what childcare is available and how to access it. Knowledge of childminders' meetings they can attend to find out about our childcare."*

- Service providers are aware of some **gaps in the service provision** in particular local health services, affordable childcare, children's play areas, parental learning opportunities.

*"No baby clinic."*

*"Have to come a long way to a child health clinic."*

*"Public park – nothing for young children – only swings."*

*"Courses with a crèche."*

*"Paid childcare (only 1 childminder in village)."*

*"Toy library."*

### 5.2.2. Possible Changes

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

- All of the partners/service providers' responses were **positive** towards the effect of a new Children's Centre, example comments include:

*"Will make it easier for children/parents in Brinsley."*

*"Bring the community together, young families."*

*"More choice."*

*"Will, I hope, be a "beacon" group and that all other services may improve standards to match leading example."*

- Many felt that the Children's' Centre would **improve the access problems** outlined above, particularly in terms of access to information.

*"It will provide a one-stop shop of information where parents/carers can access services."*

*"Giving parents one access point for all types of information. At the moment it seems very fragmented with information in library, citizens' advice etc."*

- There was one slight concern expressed about the effect that the Children's Centre might have on existing childcare providers:

*"Hopefully, will NOT affect childcare providers already in the area."*

### 5.2.3. Biggest Challenge

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

- The responses to this question divided into three main categories each being mentioned with approximately equal frequency. These were as follows:

- **Engaging the parents that need it.**

*"Engaging community and identifying unknown families pre-5 yr old."*

*"Initially engaging parents."*

*"Getting interest from parents/carers."*

- **Finding a venue with suitable pushchair access for local delivery of services.**

*"Finding a suitable venue with access for pushchairs i.e. the doors at Beauvale Infants School are not wide enough for double buggies."*

*"Finding suitable venues with easy access for parents/carers with pushchairs."*

- **Ensuring information reaches all parents, including young parents.**

*"Making sure all young people are aware of what is happening."*

*"Communication with parents who do not have links with school. I think there is a need and people will come."*

A concern was expressed about the potential provision of health visitor services:  
*“Currently health visitor service will struggle to cope with any more required. Can only meet basic needs of current clients.”*

#### 5.2.4. Effectiveness of Meetings

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

- COG (Community Operations Group) meetings are held three times per annum. Local residents would be welcome.
- Less than half of the participants responded to the question and did not have much knowledge or information.

*“Don’t know. I’ve never been invited to a meeting!”*

*“I do not know of any meetings. Would be a great way of networking/building relationships and sharing good practice.”*

Several comments were made which indicated negative experience or interest, for example,

*“Parent participation meetings, tried and failed, did not attract ‘target group’. This was set up to encourage the ‘voice’ of the community. Not much activity in this area!”*

*“Would probably be useful, however makes it difficult to always attend if lots of meetings/commitments.”*

#### 5.2.5. Partners' Priorities

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

- Respondents were asked to list three things they thought would be beneficial for the area for parents and young children, which when grouped suggested the following priorities, in order of number of comments:

- i) Accessible, local services**
- ii) Information/communication about facilities and services**
- iii) Family learning opportunities (with crèche)**
- iv) Integrated support**
- v) Play facilities for under 5s**

- All of the comments, categorised according to each of these headings, are shown below.

- i) Accessible, local services
  - *“A larger, better equipped room with toy library also offering courses.”*

- *“Enabling children access to all services.”*
- *“Access to building.”*
- *“Quality services within reach.”*
- *“Physical access to local service.”*
- *“Venues where parents can meet us.”*
- *Access to support.*
- ii) Information/communication about facilities and services
  - *“Information about services available.”*
  - *“Information about childminders in the area.”*
  - *“Information giving.”*
  - *“Communication – share info. access to info.”*
  - *“Advertising our services.”*
- iii) Family learning opportunities (with crèche)
  - *“Learning opportunities” (x3)*
- iv) Integrated support
  - *“Become a “partner” – voices heard/have a say.”*
  - *“Contacts with other services e.g. health visitors etc. easily accessed.”*
  - *“Continued support.”*
- v) Play facilities for under 5s
  - *“Better equipped Park.”*
  - *“Services provided out of term-time (in school hols.)”*
  - *“Groups with support or crèche workers to share play ideas.”*

## 5.2.6 Factors for Improvement for under 5’s

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

- When asked the different question of what would most benefit the area for families with children under 5, the introduction of more facilities/groups was still mentioned the most, but parental learning opportunities and venues were mentioned more often than for the previous question, with factors concerning information/communication not really being mentioned.

- i) Groups/facilities**
- ii) Family support and learning opportunities**
- iii) Venues**
- iv) Integrated support**

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

- i) Groups/facilities
  - *Toddler groups – subsidised so they are free.*
  - *More organised groups with play workers at hand.*

- *Sure Start Baby and Toddler group with toy library that is educational and promotes parenting skills.*
  - *Groups with support or crèche workers to share play ideas.*
  - *Investment in the park for under 5's.*
  - *More recreation facilities (Park).*
  - *Soft play area (e.g. Lanky Bills).*
  - *Holiday activities - as everything closes.*
- ii) Family support and learning opportunities
- *Support for families.*
  - *Have the support of professional staff if needed.*
  - *Responsive learning opportunities that meet needs, so encouraging families to value learning.*
- iii) Venues
- *New, modern centre that families can access.*
  - *Venues with suitable access.*
  - *Suitable venues. Flyers about them.*
- iv) Partnership working
- *All working together, Playschool, Sure Start, Toddler group, Nursery and with input from other services to enable easy access by parents.*
  - *Sharing info. via all services.*

Other factors that were mentioned as priorities in the three response categories include:

Response 1

*"Easier access to health services."*

*"An end to low pay and poverty – level benefits."*

Response 2

*"Transition process into the school system."*

Response 3

*"To feel involved and maybe help with activities".*

### 5.3 Parents' Focus Groups

- The discussion guide used in the focus groups is found in Appendix 3. This included areas which reflected the main sections of the parent's questionnaire:
  - Knowledge of services in the area
  - Strengths and weaknesses of current services

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

### 5.3.1. Knowledge of Services in the Areas

- The parents worked in teams of two to map services and activities that they were aware of for under 5s in their local area. The results from this can be seen in Appendix 7.

#### Greasley

- Parents knew of a number of pre-school playgroup and toddler sessions taking place in Greasley and Kimberley.
- They were aware of the activities taking place at Eastwood Library including the 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' sessions.
- The activities are well spread across the weekdays and also across mornings and afternoons.
- A local commercial play centre 'Lanky Bills Fun Shack' also runs specific toddler sessions three times a week.

#### Brinsley

- Parents knew of a number of parent and toddler sessions running in Brinsley with sessions taking place on three weekday mornings and one on a Monday afternoon.
- They were also aware of a number of playgroup sessions taking place locally.
- Some parents were aware that the library bus visits Brinsley every fortnight.
- They also mentioned Lanky Bills Fun Shack with its various toddler play sessions.
- Parents sometimes take their children to the family fun days during school holidays at local parks including Coronation Park, Eastwood.
- Some were also aware of the 5 a side football tournaments for children.

### 5.3.2. Strengths and Weakness of Current Services

#### Greasley

- Parents felt that the good things about living in the Greasley area were easy access to the children's play parks including the Smithhurst Road Parks, Coronation Park and Beauvale Park (next to the Greasley Sports and Community Centre). As with elsewhere in Nottinghamshire, parents were very concerned

about the problem of teenagers “sitting on the swings and drinking”. They also felt that there was a need for the parks to be “kept clean and tidy”.

- They felt that the Library in Eastwood was an excellent place to take young children with its specific sessions for toddlers and also because of its toy section and book play areas.
- The Lanky Bills Fun Shack is seen to be a good facility with separate toddler group sessions and soft play areas. They did feel that it can be costly when they include the cost of drinks and snacks purchased there in addition to the £2.75 entry fee. They also felt that it was difficult finding parking places because it was located on an industrial estate. The location also makes access difficult for parents/carers who do not have a car

### Brinsley

- Parents felt that the most helpful services for them were the local school nursery sessions, playgroups and the Wiggles toddler group. They felt these activities were most helpful because everyone knows about them, they are local friendly services and it provides the opportunity for children to socialise and gain new friends and also for parents to meet other parents.
- They felt that living in the village can be difficult for young families as it is very quiet, “you don’t often see people around, there are few things to do and no facilities.”
- The parents appreciate Brinsley Recreational Ground although they feel that the equipment is “decrepit”. They are particularly concerned about splinters in the Toddlers' area and the fact that the equipment is often used by teenagers who leave broken glass about and use bad language which the younger children playing at the park hear.
- Parents would like to see improved facilities at the recreational ground and they gave examples of places that they felt had good play equipment including Heanor Leisure Centre in Derbyshire (good facilities in a small play park), Shipley Country park - (children's play area) and Halls Ley park in Matlock Derbyshire (water park play/paddling area).
- In terms of special needs children, parents were positive about the relationship that Brinsley School has with Fountaindale School in Mansfield which provides specialist advice and support to mainstream schools.

### 5.3.3. Gaps in Current Provision

#### Greasley

- Parents were very interested in having more specific focused activities for young children such as “Jo Jingles” type music groups and singing groups and “Tumble Tots” gymnastics.
- One parent felt that it was too distracting for her daughter to go to multi-activity sessions because she would never settle with just one of the activities. Parents

were very interested in the idea of sessions focused on one theme such as singing or gym.

- A discussion developed between the two Sure Start representatives present and the parents about the franchise and branding of the “Jo Jingles” and “Tumble Tots” sessions. Parents mentioned these brands/groups as they had heard of them from other areas and also because they were aware that “Tumble Tots” used to take place locally at Lynncroft school. As the discussion developed it became clear that parents wanted more specific activities such as singing, music and gym to be available for younger children in the area. It did not matter to them whether these were national branded/franchised activities or not. For example one parent mentioned that they felt that the Eastwood Library music sessions for toddlers could be longer as she felt that they were too short at only 30 minutes. *“It’s just enough time to get the instruments out and not enough time for focussed activity”.*

### Brinsley

- Parents were interested in having more toddler group sessions - such as another Wiggles group at the beginning of the week - perhaps even every morning. They were also keen to improve the facilities of the Wiggles group through setting up an outdoor play area/messy area and also arranging activities and trips out.
- Parents at the focus group appreciated that volunteers were required to help arranged outdoor visits and activities and a concern was raised about how difficult it was to find volunteers. They felt that there is *“an apathy barrier in the community that needed to be broken through”.*
- A discussion developed about the need for families and organisations in the area to be more aware of healthy eating options and for organisations to develop healthy eating policies. A Sure Start representative mentioned that healthy eating is an important part of the Sure Start philosophy.
- As part of the discussion on healthy eating, some of the parents felt that there was perhaps a requirement for the setting up of a local Women’s group. One of the participants was aware of a young wives group in Brinsley which was in need of an influx of new members.
- Parents in Brinsley held a similar view to those in Greasley about the need for sporty, more focused activities. One parent specifically mentioned “Little Kickers”, as an example, this consists of football training sessions and is a franchise system that is not currently run in Nottinghamshire.
- As the discussion developed on sports activities parents became concerned that swimming is no longer a core part of the school curriculum. They feel as parents that they could take on the responsibility for teaching their own children to swim. They discussed the idea of a swimming voucher scheme to help them support their children in this type of role.
- Participants also discussed information and how parents find out about what is available to them. They felt it was important that information sources are improved particularly for new parents with newborn babies who are often “out of the loop.”

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

- Parents in both groups were very positive about Sure Start coming to the area.

*"It's about time"*  
*"It can only be a good thing"*  
*"Will widen its current area of operation."*

- The postcode area restrictions for the Eastwood Children's Centre were known to many of the parents and these were a main area of concern to them.
- At this point in the discussion Sure Start staff representatives attending the group re-visited this topic and re-clarified the differences between the core offers for 30% disadvantaged super output areas in comparison to the 70% non-disadvantaged areas and explained the reasons behind the current Eastwood Sure Start Children's Centre catchment areas.

### 5.3.5. Areas for Improvement in the Local Area

#### Greasley

- Parents mentioned that there were toddler groups operated from schools locally that had been set up with help from the Children's Fund as part of encouraging liaison between school and home. They felt it was unfortunate that when the funding had shifted to other priorities that parents themselves now needed to continue these activities – which in fact was not happening.
- Sure Start staff mentioned that in comparison, the ethos of Sure Start was that if funding was known to be short term for activities such as this, that the setting up of the Toddler groups would be undertaken in such a way that parents would be trained and supported in continuing the activity themselves and that this would be part of the initial set up phase. This type of approach was welcomed by the parents attending the group.

#### Brinsley

- The top priorities for improving the area were improvements to the recreational ground and its facilities with a suitable playground for young children. They also believe that there is a requirement out of term time activities for children.
- Parents were very keen that facilities at the Brinsley Recreational Ground should be improved. Their focus was very much on developing facilities for older children and teenagers to enable the separation of different age groups at the park. Ideas they thought of were a cycle route around the edge of the field. As part of this route they suggested having more shelters around the track for teenagers to hang out and exercise points and areas spread around the park (i.e. wooden structures). A further suggested improvement to the park was lighting.
- Participants were also concerned about the safety of children crossing the roads to use the park. They believe that it is a dangerous road to cross to reach the park (Cordy Road/Church Lane). They see that crossing facilities are required to make it safer, such as a pelican crossing, a footbridge over the road or an island refuge.

## 6. Key Messages for the Future

- The interviews with parents, the focus groups and input from the partners and service providers, show a high level of agreement about the needs of parents and young children in the Greasley and Brinsley areas for the future.
- The highlights of service provision in Greasley and Brinsley are the many toddler groups and playgroups taking place within the area, and the playgroup and nursery provision at the local schools. The local parks and recreational grounds are an important for family life and are well appreciated although needing some level of improvement, security and management. Other highlights include Eastwood library, the library van visits to Brinsley and the Lanky Bill's Fun Shack commercial play centre.
- There is however a need to build on the current activities for under 5s in the area and to raise awareness through better information to increase the accessibility of these activities for all families.
- In particular the following needs for parents with young children were highlighted in this consultation:
  - Improved parks and recreation areas with better equipped play areas for under 5s and with other activities for older children/teenagers situated away from the under 5s area.
  - An organisation to actively oversee the playground and keep it safe.
  - A baby clinic/group.
  - A toy library.
  - Courses for parents with a crèche attached.
  - Affordable childcare.
  - Improved access for pushchairs at local venues.
  - Services provided out of term-time.
  - More structured play activities – more organised groups with play workers, possibly also helping to bring branded/franchised groups such as Tumble Tots, Jo Jingles and Little Kickers into the area or using similar Sure Start developed sessions such as Sure Tots.
- There was a lack of awareness amongst many parents and some service providers about the new Children's Centre to be developed in the area. Many thought it would provide a new venue in the area. There is no capital budget for this new Children's Centre, which will act as a virtual co-ordinating organisation providing support to existing local services, although arrangements to use rooms at both Greasley and Brinsley schools are developing well. This lack of awareness should be addressed through specific communications covering the services that the Children's Centre will deliver within the community and how it plans to deliver them. The preferred communication route for parents and carers is through a newsletter.
- There was a good level of participation and involvement in the consultation from service providers and partners showing a level of commitment to the future of Children's Services in Greasley and Brinsley.
- It is clear that the use of "Greasley" to describe the area of the new Children's Centre is not clearly understood by local residents who tend to describe themselves as living in Newthorpe, Gilbrook, Brinsley or (East) Eastwood.
- While the consultation necessarily had its limitations, due to lack of time and resource, the results are consistent with the views of the community; it was always seen as a first conversation to provide a basis with which to build the future Children's Centre activities within Greasley with Brinsley.

- There is the need to assure parents and partners that the Children's Centre is sustainable and that the involvement of all parties is crucial in its success, as well as allowing parents to take ownership of the Children's Centre, to be jointly engaged with professionals in the provision of services for them and their families.
- This consultation and the planned feedback session are the starting points from which co-ordinated services for children under 5 and their families will develop. There is every reason to think from responses that parents will become involved, so that the Children's Centre becomes their service, rather than something delivered to them.
- The feedback session for all interested parties including all parents, partners and service providers involved in the consultation will be held at 10.00 to 11.30 am on the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007 at Brinsley Primary School.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Showcards

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Service Providers / Partners

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

Appendix 5 – 'Other' Responses from Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 6 – Responses from Partners and Service Providers

Appendix 7 – Mapping Exercise – Current Services in Greasley with Brinsley

