



Lindhurst (Bellamy Road) Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

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Nottinghamshire County Council

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Main Report

1. Background to the Research

- In line with the Government's current initiative to introduce Children's Centres into communities which fall within the top 20% of disadvantaged wards nationally, Nottinghamshire 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 2007. A further 25 were planned for Round 2, which is now underway.
- Whilst Lindhurst ward covers affluent Berry Hill, it also includes Bellamy Road estate, one of the most disadvantaged areas in the County, and where the Children Centre will be located.
- Children's Centres are intended to provide services and support to children, aged from 0-5 years, their parents and carers, based on partnerships between statutory, voluntary and private organisations and the local authority.
- It is the government's policy to develop Children's Centres within partnerships. Some may be based on a 'strong link' partnership, bringing together existing facilities (e.g. neighbourhood nursery, infants and junior schools, family centre, library, health centre, community centre). Some may involve a new building, creating a one-stop centre attached to or on a school site. Even with a new 'one stop building', there will be a need for sound partnerships with other providers throughout the area.
- All Children's Centres areas will have day care for a minimum of 48 weeks a year, 8am – 6pm offering care integrated with education.
- 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, leading to parental involvement in the management and governance of the centres, as appropriate structures emerge.
- Development of the Children's Centres is for families with children under 5; the centres have the potential for wider community use however and could develop into 'community centres for children' serving a wider age-range and incorporating, for example, after school care, holiday clubs etc.
- The interviews and the focus group were conducted in an inclusive manner, to enable any parent, worker or member of the community who wished to take part in the consultation to do so. The team aimed to comply with equal opportunities policies and principles throughout the consultation.
- Where possible, hard-to-reach families have been included, where service providers or other agencies were able to give contact details and encourage participation.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Consultation

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

Specific objectives are:

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

3. Methodology

- The consultation consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents through completion of a questionnaire; a questionnaire distributed to service providers and key stakeholders in the area and one focus group with parents recruited via the questionnaire.

3.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents. It was planned to include:
 - Parents/carers with children under 8 years of age at local schools
 - Parents/carers who are users of local pre-schools and other sessions for parents and young children
 - Parents/carers living locally
- During the consultation the following locations were used to help target parents and carers from the local area.
 - St Peter's C of E Primary School and Nursery
 - Berry Hill Primary & Nursery School
 - Caterpillar Club - Mother & Toddler Group
 - Direct targeting of households on Bellamy Road Estate
- Most interviews were conducted on Friday 20th October 2006 by a team of interviewers located outside the local schools - St Peter's Primary School and Nursery and Berry Hill Primary School and Nursery. Both these schools have morning and afternoon nursery sessions. Berry Hill Primary is the main catchment school for Lindhurst (Bellamy Road) and St Peter's C of E Primary School is located within the Bellamy Road Estate, but serves a wider area of Mansfield.
- Parents/carers living in Lindhurst Bellamy Road and Berry Hill who have children aged 8 and below were targeted to take part in the interview which took about 10 minutes. A list of postcodes was used to help determine in which area respondents lived.
- Direct targeting of households on the Bellamy Road estate was undertaken in conjunction with the local health visitor who gained permission from some residents for interviewers to interview them at home.
- The interviewer team included workers from the Children's Centres Development team, staff from Ravensdale Children Centre, Oaktree Children Centre, Sherwood PCT, Homestart Mansfield and researchers from Silver Dialogue.

3.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers from Lindhurst and across Mansfield were invited along to an open information session held at Oaktree Children's Centre on 3rd October 2006. As many of the service providers cover more than one area the open meeting was combined with the Forest Town consultation service providers meeting. Participants were informed about the planned consultations in Lindhurst - Bellamy Road to be carried out on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council by Silver Dialogue.
- Attendees were given a self-completion questionnaire to take away with them and invitees that couldn't attend were sent a questionnaire by post or e-mail with a covering letter encouraging them to return this.

- Other 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 Lindhurst - Bellamy Road area 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.
- The opportunity to give contact details was provided so that the team could make contact in the future, and all the respondents completed this section.
- Following email and telephone reminders a total of 8 completed Partners Questionnaires were received.

3.3 Focus Group

- Parents taking part in the survey were asked whether they would be interested in attending the focus group to be held on 9th November between 9.30 and 11.00 at Bellamy Road Community Centre. A good response was received with 31 parents (accounting for 42% of those surveyed) showing an interest in attending the focus group.
- Ten respondents were recruited randomly by telephone from the list of interested respondents. Follow up invitation letters were sent.
- Two confirmed attendees did not turn up for the focus group.
- The focus group finally consisted of two parents from Berry Hill and six from Bellamy Road.
- A free crèche provided by Oaktree Children Centre was available in the community centre 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, an explanation about Children's Centres was given by the Children's Centre Support Officer and the Oak Tree Co-ordinator. This was seen as a good way of enabling a wider understanding of the concept by parents before the discussion started.
- Two representatives from Oaktree Children's Centre attended the focus group to answer any specific questions arising.
- All attendees were given a £10 shop voucher as a thank you gift for their help.

4. Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parent's Questionnaire

- 73 interviews were completed in total. Sure Start data for the ward show that there are 201 children under 5 living in Lindhurst ward. The 73 parents interviewed accounted for 69 or 34% of the under 5s in the area. The number of interviews achieved was higher than the target of 50 required and therefore provides a good representative sample from the area.
- 62 or 85% of the respondents were female, while only 11 (15%) were male.
- Just less than half (44%) of the respondents were aged 30-39. 7% were aged under 20, 29% were aged 20-29, 15% were 40-49 and 5% were aged 50 or more.
- The parents interviewed accounted for 154 children living in the area of the following ages: 69 under 5s, 80 aged 5 to 16 and 5 aged 16 plus.
- The average number of children per family was 2.1.
- On average the respondents had 1 child aged under 5 and 1 aged 5 to 16. Most people (95%) were reported as having no children over 16. There were only four households with children aged over 16.
- Just over half (55%) of the respondents had one child under 5. Around one in six (15%) had two children aged under 5, one parent had three under 5s and one parent had four children under 5. Close to a quarter (27%) had no children under 5 (n.b. parents with children aged 8 and below were targeted for the interviews).
- 5 (or 7%) of those who responded revealed that they were expecting a baby. The vast majority (93%) were not pregnant at this time.
- Most households (60 or 82%) had two adults aged 18 or more living together, whilst 13 or 18% lived in households with only one adult. The average was 1.8 adults (18 and above) per household.
- 15% of the respondents were single, 78% were married or partnered. Four respondents described themselves as 'other', such as widowed.
- Half of the households (51%) had one adult working, 26% had two adults working and 26% had no adults working.
- Close to a third of the respondents (30%) were working part-time. 16% worked full time. 4% described themselves as unemployed whilst half (50%) were parent/carers/grandparents. 1 described themselves as a relative/friend.
- The Ethnic origin of all respondents was white.
- An analysis of postcodes showed that half (51%) or 37 out of the 73 respondents lived in the Lindhurst - Bellamy Road Estate, another quarter (19 accounting for 26%) lived in Lindhurst - Berry Hill and another quarter (17 accounting for 23%) came from many other wards in the Mansfield area. Five of the respondents lived in Eakring ward, three lived in Oaktree ward, four were from Mansfield Town, two from Ladybrook and one each from Ashfield, Edwinstowe and Cumberlands. The reason for the spread of these respondents across Mansfield is because St Peter's Church of England Primary School although located in the Bellamy Road Estate is a church school and does not therefore have a specific localised catchment area.
- There is no GP surgery specifically for Lindhurst and the doctors surgeries that respondents were registered with were very spread across the Mansfield area. The main four surgeries attended by over 10% of the parents were: Roundwood

18%, Oak Tree Lane Surgery 15%, Orchard 15% and Rainworth (Newark and Sherwood District) 11%. Other surgeries used were Dr Dale, Goldsmith St., 8%, Churchside 8%, Sandy Lane 5%, Court View 4%, Dr Khan, St John St 3%, and Crownhill Drive 3%. 7% of the parents were registered with an "other" surgery not on this list and 3% were not yet registered with a doctor.

- Around two thirds (64%) of the respondents had children aged under 5 at St Peter's C of E Primary and Nursery and one in five (19%) had children at Berry Hill Primary and Nursery. 1 parent used a nursery/day care school elsewhere and 15% did not currently use a pre-school establishment.

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 8 completed questionnaires were received (6 paper versions and 2 via the web survey).
- All respondents gave their contact details.
- Between them the service providers had clocked-up around 34 years of working in this community. On average, they had each been in their current role for 4 years, with a range from 0.5 up to 20 years.

Table 1 - Partners' Disciplines

Discipline	Number of Responses
Support in the Community	1
Learning in the Community	2
Education	1
Children's & Parents' Services	3
Healthcare	1

Table 2 - Partners' Roles

Role	Number of Responses
Adult & Family Learning/Training	2
Head Teacher	1
Children's Worker	2
Support in the Community	1
Co-ordination of Children's Activities	1
Midwife	1

Table 3 - Areas of Responsibility

Area of Responsibility	Number of Responses
Lindhurst-Bellamy Road	3
Oaktree (close to Lindhurst -Bellamy)	4
Mansfield (including Lindhurst-Bellamy)	4

4.3 Focus Group

- Eight parents attended the focus group out of the ten who had agreed to come along.
- Six attendees lived in the Lindhurst - Bellamy Road estate and two were from Lindhurst - Berry Hill.
- All attendees were female, six had children at St Peter's Church of England Primary School and Nursery, one parent used Berry Hill Primary School and Nursery and one parent did not currently have a child at nursery school.
- Between them, respondents had 15 children in total, ten of whom were under 5, four aged 5 to 11 and one aged over 11.
- Two respondents had three children, three had two children and three had one child.
- One respondent had a six year old, the rest had at least one child under 5. Three of the parents had two children aged under 5.
- The respondents were registered with a wide spread of GP practices: 2 at Rainworth, 2 at Orchard, 2 at Oaktree, 1 at Roundwood and 1 at Courtview.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 73 questionnaires were completed which was higher than the target of 50, which was felt to have been a good representation of the children aged under 5 in the area. In addition 51% of the surveys were from Bellamy Estate residents giving a good representation of the views of parents living in the neighbourhood where the new Children's Centre is planned.
- Even with 73 surveys completed some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, in particular those referring to services used, so care must be taken when comparing percentages - attention is brought to this throughout the report.
- Some 82% of respondents were aware of Sure Start. 15% had not heard anything about Sure Start and 3% were not sure. There was no difference in awareness of Sure Start across age group or location. However results suggested that there was lower awareness amongst males with only 6 in 10 being aware of Sure Start versus females where 9 in 10 were aware.
- 27% of those who knew about Sure Start were also aware of the planned Children's Centre for Lindhurst - Bellamy Road. Over two thirds (70%) of those who knew about Sure Start were unaware of the local development plans. 3% of those who were aware were not sure if they had heard anything regarding these local developments.
- Those who lived in Lindhurst - Berry Hill were less likely (less than 1 in 10 were aware) to have heard about the Children's Centre development plans for Lindhurst - Bellamy Road than those living in the Bellamy Road Estate or those living outside Lindhurst (in both these locations 3 in 10 parents were aware of the plans).

5.1.1. Services Ever Used

- Respondents were asked which local services they or their family had ever used, by means of a Showcard (Appendix 2). Responses in Table 5.1.1 are shown for all respondents. Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- As might be expected those services which are seen as a necessity i.e. GP (93%), Health Visitor (85%), and Midwife (78%), were used by over three quarters of respondents.
- Nearly two thirds (60%) of respondents used a nursery in a school which is quite high and will have been affected by the survey method used i.e. targeting parents outside nursery schools, although it should be noted the take up of nursery education is very high in Nottinghamshire with 97% of 3 and 4 year olds accessing their free entitlement.
- Services used by around a half of respondents included: Family Member (51%), Antenatal sessions (44%) and Toddler group (42%).
- Close to a third of respondents had used Children's Library Service (37%), Pre-school playgroup (33%) and Friends (32%).

- None of the respondents had ever used dietician/nutritionist or welfare rights sessions.
- Respondents who were aware of Sure Start were more likely to use health visitors (9 in 10 of those aware of Sure Start used health visitors compared with 7 in 10 for those not aware) and the toy library (3 in 10 for those aware versus 0 in 10 for those who were not aware).
- Respondents who were single were more likely to use a Family Centre than those who were partnered/married (2 in 10 versus less than 1 in 10).

TABLE 5.1.1. Services Ever Used	Numbers using service	Percent who have ever used
Total	73	100%
GP practice	68	93%
Health visitor	62	85%
Midwife	57	78%
Nursery in a school	44	60%
Family member	37	51%
Antenatal sessions	32	44%
Toddler Group	31	42%
Children's Library Service	27	37%
Pre-school playgroup	24	33%
Friends	23	32%
Toy Library	16	22%
After School Club	15	21%
Home Visits	13	18%
Speech Therapists	11	15%
Day Nursery	10	14%
Job Centres	10	14%
Home Safety Equipment	9	12%
Breakfast Club	6	8%
Breast Feeding Group	6	8%
Registered Childminder	6	8%
Further Education	6	8%
Crèche	5	7%
Family Centre	4	5%
Homestart	4	5%
Story Time Sessions	4	5%
Children's Information Service	3	4%
Independent School	3	4%
Parenting advice & guidance	2	3%
Dietician/Nutritionist	0	0%
Welfare Rights Sessions	0	0%

- Where respondents live seems to affect the services they have used.
 - On average each respondent has used 7 child related services on the list of 30. Those living in Bellamy Road Estate have used an average of 7 services whilst those living in Berry Hill have used 9 and those living elsewhere have used 6.
 - Those living in Bellamy Road are more likely than those living in Berry Hill to have used: Home visits (3 in 10 respondents versus less than 1 in 10) and Home Safety Equipment (2 in 10 versus 0 in 10).
 - Those living in Berry Hill are more likely than those living in Bellamy Road to have used a Day Nursery (4 in 10 versus less than 1 in 10), Nursery in a School (8 in 10 versus 6 in 10), an after school club (4 in 10 versus 1 in 10), a registered Childminder (2 in 10 versus less than 1 in 10), Story Time Sessions (1 in 10 versus 0 in 10) and the Children's Information Service (2 in 10 versus 0 in 10).

5.1.2. Usefulness of Services

- Respondents were then asked how useful they had found those services that they'd 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.
- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents, and the closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction.
- Most services scored well with at least half of the users scoring them as quite (4) or very useful (5). The Children's Information Service was scored highly by less than half of its users however this had been used by only 3 of the respondents.
- The top three services with a reasonable number of responses and the highest mean score of 4.9 for usefulness were Nursery in a School, Friends and Family Member. At least 9 out of 10 users of these services scored them as either quite or very useful.
- Many of the least used services were rated very highly by the few respondents that used these including: Further Education (with the top mean score of 5.0), Registered Childminder (4.7), Breakfast Club (4.7), Independent School (4.7 - see note below), Story time sessions (4.5), Parenting Advice & Guidance (4.5). Care must be taken in interpreting these results however as they may not reflect the satisfaction level of all users of these services.
- Other services with a low number of users that had at least a third of these rating them as either not very or not useful were Family Centre, Job Centres and Breast Feeding Group.
- 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: Home Visits (3.9), Health Visitor (4.0), Day Nursery (4.1), and Home Safety equipment (4.1).

*Note: Results suggest that St Peter's C of E Primary School was classed as an independent school by some but not all of the parents.

Table 5.1.2 Usefulness of Services	Numbers using service	Percent Scoring Very (5) or Quite Useful (4)	Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)	Average Score
GP Practice	68	79%	7%	4.3
Health Visitor	62	63%	10%	4.0
Midwife	57	86%	4%	4.6
Nursery in a School	44	98%	0%	4.9
Family Member	37	97%	3%	4.9
Antenatal Sessions	32	72%	6%	4.3
Toddler Group	31	94%	0%	4.5
Children's Library Service	27	85%	7%	4.4
Pre School Playgroup	24	96%	0%	4.7
Friends	23	100%	0%	4.9
Toy library	16	94%	6%	4.3
After School Club	15	87%	0%	4.4
Home Visits	13	69%	23%	3.9
Speech Therapists	11	73%	9%	4.2
Day Nursery	10	80%	20%	4.1
Job Centres	10	50%	40%	3.0
Home Safety Equipment	9	67%	11%	4.1
Breast Feeding Group	6	50%	33%	3.3
Registered Childminder	6	83%	0%	4.7
Breakfast Club	6	100%	0%	4.7
Further Education	6	100%	0%	5.0
Creche	5	60%	0%	4.0
Homestart	4	50%	0%	4.0
Family Centre	4	50%	50%	3.0
Story Time Sessions	4	75%	0%	4.5
Independent School	3	100%	0%	4.7
Children's Information Service	3	33%	33%	3.0
Parenting Advice & Guidance	2	100%	0%	4.5
Dietician/Nutritionist	0	0%	0%	0.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	0	0%	0%	0.0

Table Note:

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

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

5.1.3. Reasons given for services mentioned as being not 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.

- 35 ratings were given to services as being not very or not useful. This is quite a high level of dissatisfaction overall representing 7% of all the possible scores (538 total number of users of services as listed above) allocated for service use.

Table 5.1.3 Services scored as not being useful	Numbers using service	Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not useful (1)	Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)
Family Centre	4	2	50%
Job Centres	10	4	40%
Breast Feeding Group	6	2	33%
Children's Information Service	3	1	33%
Home Visits	13	3	23%
Day Nursery	10	2	20%
Home Safety Equipment	9	1	11%
Health Visitor	62	6	10%
Speech Therapists	11	1	9%
Children's Library Service	27	2	7%
GP Practice	68	5	7%
Toy library	16	1	6%
Antenatal Sessions	32	2	6%
Midwife	57	2	4%
Family Member	37	1	3%

- Only 24 reasons were given for scoring services as not being useful.
 - 3 responses related to health visitors, particularly that they were not flexible in their approach or that they were not wanted or not needed.
 - 3 responses related to respondents either having problems with their GPs or finding them to be not very helpful.
 - 1 response was concerned with the difficulty of booking appointments or having to wait a long time for appointments.
 - 3 felt that the service did not provide any benefit or was not helpful to them.
 - 1 felt that they had been given poor information/advice/communication.
 - 1 mentioned problems they had with their midwife.
 - 9 gave an "Other" reason.
 - 3 didn't know or were unwilling to provide a reason as to why they had given 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.
- The service with a reasonable number of users and the highest child-friendliness scale was Nursery in a School with a top score of 5.0.
- Other services with a reasonable number of users and high child-friendliness scores included: Friends (5.0), Pre-School Playgroup (4.9), Family member (4.9),

Toddler Group (4.8), Toy Library (4.7), After School Club (4.6) and Speech Therapists (4.6).

- High child-friendliness scores were also given to a group of services that had less than 10 users i.e. Breakfast Club, Homestart, Story time sessions, Breastfeeding group, Registered Childminder, Independent School and Crèche. Although all these users rated them highly - because of the low number of users the view may not reflect that of all users of these services.

Table 5.1.4. Child-friendliness of services	Numbers using service	Percent Very (5) or Quite (4) Child Friendly	Percent Not very (2) or Not (1) child friendly	Average Score
GP Practice	68	66%	15%	4.0
Health Visitor	62	63%	6%	4.2
Midwife	57	79%	4%	4.5
Nursery in a School	44	96%	0%	5.0
Family Member	37	95%	3%	4.9
Antenatal Sessions	32	41%	13%	3.7
Toddler Group	31	94%	3%	4.8
Children's Library Service	27	82%	4%	4.4
Pre School Playgroup	24	96%	0%	4.9
Friends	23	96%	0%	5.0
Toy library	16	88%	0%	4.7
After School Club	15	93%	0%	4.6
Home Visits	13	54%	15%	3.9
Speech Therapists	11	64%	0%	4.6
Day Nursery	10	80%	20%	4.2
Job Centres	10	10%	60%	1.9
Home Safety Equipment	9	56%	11%	4.0
Breast Feeding Group	6	50%	0%	4.7
Registered Childminder	6	83%	0%	4.7
Breakfast Club	6	100%	0%	4.8
Further Education	6	17%	50%	2.0
Crèche	5	60%	0%	4.5
Homestart	4	100%	0%	4.8
Family Centre	4	50%	25%	3.5
Story Time Sessions	4	100%	0%	4.8
Independent School	3	100%	0%	4.7
Children's Information Service	3	0%	33%	1.0
Parenting Advice & Guidance	2	50%	50%	3.5
Dietician/Nutritionist	0	0%	0%	0.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	0	0%	0%	0.0

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.

- Many of the services which are most used scored comparatively low on child-friendliness these included: GP practices (4.0), Home Visits (3.9), Antenatal sessions (3.7). All the scores for these services were depressed by at least 1 in 10 users rating them as either not very or not at all child-friendly.
- The least child-friendly services were rated as Children's Information Service, Further Education, Job Centres and Parenting Advice and Guidance, where at least 1 in 3 users rated them as not very or not at all child-friendly. Again each of these services had been used and therefore scored by less than 5 users so care should be exercised in the interpretation of the results for these services.

5.1.5. Reasons Given for Services Mentioned as Being Not 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.
- 40 low scores for child friendliness were given out of the total of 538 possible scores for all users. This represents a total of 7% of total scores given. This is the same level of dissatisfaction as parents had scored for usefulness of services in the area.

Table 5.1.5 Services Scored as not being Child-friendly	Numbers using service	Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not at all child- friendly (1)	Percent not very (2) or not at all child- friendly (1)
Job Centres	10	6	60%
Parenting Advice & Guidance	2	1	50%
Further Education	6	3	50%
Children's Information Service	3	1	33%
Family Centre	4	1	25%
Day Nursery	10	2	20%
Home Visits	13	2	15%
GP Practice	68	10	15%
Antenatal Sessions	32	4	13%
Home Safety Equipment	9	1	11%
Health Visitor	62	4	6%
Children's Library Service	27	1	4%
Midwife	57	2	4%
Toddler Group	31	1	3%
Family Member	37	1	3%

- 28 reasons were given for why they had given lower scores for child-friendliness and these were:
 - 8 responses were that there was no play area and/or no toys.
 - 4 felt that there was no interest in/patience with the child.
 - 1 felt there were no facilities for children/No childcare.
 - 2 felt it was not appropriate/not suitable for children.

- 6 mentioned an 'other' reason.
- 7 didn't know or chose not to complete this question.

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 of parents' and children's needs, table 5.1.6 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.

Table 5.1.6 Score Comparisons	Numbers using Services	Usefulness Score*	Child Friendliness Score*	Gap
Breast Feeding Group	6	3.3	4.7	1.3
Homestart	4	4.0	4.8	0.8
Family Centre	4	3.0	3.5	0.5
Crèche	5	4.0	4.5	0.5
Toy library	16	4.3	4.7	0.4
Speech Therapists	11	4.2	4.6	0.4
Story Time Sessions	4	4.5	4.8	0.3
Toddler Group	31	4.5	4.8	0.2
Health Visitor	62	4.0	4.2	0.2
After School Club	15	4.4	4.6	0.2
Pre School Playgroup	24	4.7	4.9	0.2
Breakfast Club	6	4.7	4.8	0.2
Day Nursery	10	4.1	4.2	0.1
Friends	23	4.9	5.0	0.1
Nursery in a School	44	4.9	5.0	0.1
Children's Library Service	27	4.4	4.4	0.1
Independent School	3	4.7	4.7	0.0
Family Member	37	4.9	4.9	0.0
Registered Childminder	6	4.7	4.7	0.0
Home Visits	13	3.9	3.9	0.0
Midwife	57	4.6	4.5	0.0
Home Safety Equipment	9	4.1	4.0	-0.1
GP Practice	68	4.3	4.0	-0.3
Antenatal Sessions	32	4.3	3.7	-0.6
Parenting Advice & Guidance	2	4.5	3.5	-1.0
Job Centres	10	3.0	1.9	-1.1
Children's Information Service	3	3.0	1.0	-2.0
Further Education	6	5.0	2.0	-3.0

**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.*

- Overall, 16 services are seen as being more child-friendly than useful and 7 services as more useful than child-friendly. 5 services are equally balanced on usefulness and child-friendliness.
- The Breast Feeding Group is the most child-friendly service which shows the biggest difference with usefulness from the parents' view. Homestart, Family Centre and Crèche show a similar trend. All these services had been scored by less than 10 users so care should be taken in interpreting these results.
- Further Education is one of the most useful services from the parents' viewpoint however it showed the biggest gap between usefulness and child-friendliness. Again it is a service that has been used by less than 10 of the respondents.
- The Children's Information Centre and Job Centre score lowest on both usefulness and child-friendliness albeit from a low base.

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 shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top four helpful services for parents mentioned by over 10% of respondents were Midwife (16%), Family Member (15%), Nursery in a School (14%) and GP Practice (11%). Two of these services provide healthcare and two provide childcare facilities. In this area family members are particularly available and seen to be helpful in providing childcare support.

Table 5.1.7a Service most helpful to you as a parent	Number of Mentions	Percent Mentions All Respondents
Midwife	12	16%
Family member	11	15%
Nursery in a school	10	14%
GP practice	8	11%
Health Visitor	6	8%
Registered Childminder	4	5%
Toddler group	4	5%
Pre-school playgroup	3	4%
After School Club	2	3%
Antenatal sessions	2	3%
Day Nursery	2	3%
Home Visits	2	3%
Breast Feeding Group	1	1%
Children's Library Service	1	1%
Crèche	1	1%
Family Centre	1	1%
Home Safety Equipment	1	1%
Don't know	9	12%

- 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.
- The top four most helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
 - Midwife
 - Family member
 - Nursery in a school
 - GP practice
- The top four most helpful services in the USER analysis are:
 - Registered Childminder
 - Family member
 - Nursery in a school
 - Midwife

Table 5.1.7b Service most helpful to you as a parent for users only	Number of Mentions	Number of Users	Percent Users
Registered Childminder	4	6	67%
Family member	11	37	30%
Nursery in a school	10	44	23%
Midwife	12	57	21%
Day Nursery	2	10	20%
Crèche	1	5	20%
Breast Feeding Group	1	6	17%
Home Visits	2	13	15%
After School Club	2	15	13%
Toddler group	4	31	13%
Pre-school playgroup	3	24	13%
GP practice	8	68	12%
Home Safety Equipment	1	9	11%
Health Visitor	6	62	10%
Antenatal sessions	2	32	6%
Children's Library Service	1	27	4%
Family Centre	1	37	3%

- In this case registered Childminder moves to the top position on helpfulness because two out of three users (albeit a small number of respondents with less than 10 users) chose this as the most helpful service that they use.
- Other services which were used by 10 or fewer respondents which are also highly appreciated above all other services by at least 1 in 6 users were Day Nursery, Breast Feeding Group and Crèche. These services taken together with use of a Childminder 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 (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 shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top three helpful services for children and mentioned by at least 10% of respondents were Nursery in a school (23%), Pre-school playgroup (11%) and Family Member (10%). All of these activities are largely concerned with the child's social and educational development. It is again interesting to see the importance of the extended family to childcare in this area.
- The analysis shown in table 5.1.8a shows the overall level of the services' helpfulness to children across all respondents - it is therefore biased towards services that are used by a greater number of respondents i.e. they had a greater chance to be chosen as the best service by more respondents. Another analysis was undertaken to reduce this bias by calculating the percentage of users who saw this service as their most child-helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.1.8b.

Table 5.1.8a Service most helpful to your child across all respondents	Number of Mentions	Percent Mentions All Respondents
Nursery in a school	17	23%
Pre-school playgroup	8	11%
Family member	7	10%
Toddler group	6	8%
GP practice	6	8%
Health visitors	5	7%
Day Nursery	5	7%
Speech Therapists	3	4%
Children's Library Service	3	4%
Midwife	2	3%
Crèche	2	3%
Home Visits	1	1%
Registered Childminder	1	1%
Breakfast Club	1	1%
Don't know	9	12%

- The top 5 most child-helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-School playgroup
 - Family Member
 - Toddler group
 - GP Practice
- The top 5 child-helpful services in the USER analysis are:
 - Day Nursery
 - Crèche
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - Speech Therapists

Table 5.1.8b Service most helpful to your child by users only	Number of Mentions	Number of Users	Percent Users
Day Nursery	5	10	50%
Crèche	2	5	40%
Nursery in a school	17	44	39%
Pre-school playgroup	8	24	33%
Speech Therapists	3	11	27%
Toddler group	6	31	19%
Family member	7	37	19%
Registered Childminder	1	6	17%
Breakfast Club	1	6	17%
Children's Library Service	3	27	11%
GP practice	6	68	9%
Health visitors	5	62	8%
Home Visits	1	13	8%
Midwife	2	57	4%

- In this case Crèche, Day Nursery, Breakfast Club and registered Childminder all move to a higher position on child-helpfulness. All these services were scored by 10 or fewer parents as the most child-friendly service that they use. They can be considered to be very child-helpful 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 (less available) 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 below, it can be seen that three items were mentioned the most and by more than 1 in 5 respondents - these were 'better public transport' (30%), 'different times of events' (25%) and 'childcare' (23%).
- 'Someone to go with' at 14% was the least mentioned item.
- Responses to these questions depended on where parents lived. Those living in the Bellamy Road Estate were more interested in 'better public transport' (49%) compared with those from Berry Hill (11%) or elsewhere (12%). In addition 'price' was also more important to Bellamy Road residents (30%) versus those from Berry Hill (5%) and elsewhere (12%).

Table 5.1.9 Help to use services more often	Numbers	Percent Agreeing
Better public transport	22	30%
Different times of events	18	25%
Childcare	17	23%
Better price	14	19%
Someone to go with	10	14%
None of these	26	36%

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 two thirds (68%) of parents prefer.
- The second most preferred communication route (with half the preference rating compared to the newsletter in first position) is flyer/information sheet (34%).
- 40% of the Bellamy Road parents would prefer an information session to be held compared with only 16% of Berry Hill and 12% of parents who lived elsewhere.
- The least preferred option with only 16% of respondents preferring this route is word of mouth through friends/family/other parents.

Table 5.1.10 Preferences in Receiving Information	Numbers	Percent Preferring
Newsletter	50	68%
Flyer/information sheet	25	34%
Information session at nursery/clinic/sure start	20	27%
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	18	25%
Article in local paper	16	22%
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	12	16%
None of these	2	3%

5.1.11. Three Things Lindhurst - Bellamy Road and Berry Hill Needs

- When asked what 3 other things Lindhurst - Bellamy Road and Berry Hill 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 by at least 11% of parents/carers were: Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park (21%), Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities (16%), Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities (16%), More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities (14%) and Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol (11%).
- Three of the most frequently suggested ideas focus on play/leisure activities and one relates to improving child care facilities locally and one relates to road safety especially within the vicinity of St Peter's C of E School.
- The most requested item for better/cleaner playgrounds was not actually mentioned by any Berry Hill parents who have access to a number of park areas within Berry Hill.
- Other' mentions which related to current activities in the area included:
 - Two concerns were about how and who the council allocated flats to for example one parent felt that there needed to be stricter controls and another that mothers with young children should be prioritised for ground floor accommodation.
 - Two concerns were mentioned about the Bellamy Road Estate in general including its lack of good role models.
 - One parent requested the need for drugs awareness training for young people.

- One parent felt that there was a need for a place where children can go outside school hours and another felt that there was nothing to do at the weekends.
- Another parent felt that it was difficult to get to activities.

Table 5.1.11 Suggestions from Respondents	Number of Mentions	Percent of Respondents
Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park	15	21%
Mother & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities	12	16%
Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities	12	16%
More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities	10	14%
Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol etc	8	11%
Clean up drugs/litter/dog mess	7	10%
Holiday activities/care for children	7	10%
More child care/nurseries/Creche	6	8%
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities/Sports Facilities	4	5%
Improved security on the Bellamy Road Estate	3	4%
Parenting skills workshops	3	4%
Before and after school activities/clubs	3	4%
More shops/Better Shops	3	4%
More/Better buses/Better Transport	3	4%
Place to meet/Groups for mums/parents to meet	3	4%
Further education courses/Advisors	2	3%
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	2	3%
More policing/Police	2	3%
More/Better facilities for smaller children	2	3%
Youth club/Activities for older children/teenagers	2	3%
A Children's Centre	2	3%
Storytime sessions	1	1%
Doctor/Health Visitor	1	1%
Drop in sessions/drop in centre	1	1%
Family entertainment/pub/Somewhere to eat with children	1	1%
More/Better information	1	1%
More/Better parking	1	1%
Services nearer/more local/more affordable	1	1%
Village Hall/Community Centre	1	1%
Other	12	16%
Don't Know	12	16%

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

- Finally, respondents were asked whether they had anything to say about the arrival of the Children's Centre in the area, which was difficult for the majority who had not been aware of the plans.
- 41 people or 56% of the respondents commented. 34 of these respondents had already been aware of Sure Start prior to taking part in the interview.

- 36% of parents thought it was 'a good idea', 'great', 'brilliant' or 'excellent'.
- 7% said they had not heard anything about Sure Start so couldn't comment.
- 1% felt it was a very positive move.
- 1% thought that it was not targeted for them and felt that it was for lone parents/ disadvantaged families.
- 12% mentioned 'other' reasons for example two parents were interested in taking part in a wider range of activities for their children, two other parents felt that Children's Centres should cater for a wider age range and one parent was interested to have heard that Children's Centres run courses with crèches.

5.2 Partners' questionnaire

- Partner's responses varied depending on their role and experience in the area. Anonymous responses in alphabetical order are shown in Appendix 6, and a summary of responses to each question is given below.
- For each of the questions asked responses were very much focused on their 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, childcare and training for parents.

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 Lindhurst (Bellamy Road/Berry Hill)?

- The overall view is that there is a need to set up and improve on the existing services and activities that are available for children and parents in the area, in particular pre-school activities and healthcare. Activities and care for older children are also required. The lack of community cohesiveness due to the transient nature of the population, high levels of unemployment and the lack of facilities are major concerns for service providers who cover the area.

"In Lindhurst (Bellamy Rd Estate) there are no services for anyone!"

Setting Up Services for Children and Parents

- Accessible pre school activities.
- Helping parents cover costs of childcare.
- Lack of groups/sessions on offer/families to attend.
- Local health services.
- "Not much activity is happening here."

Setting Up Services for Children and Young People

- Care for children and young people 11+
- Activities for young people 11+

Improving the Social/ Community Infrastructure

- High un-employment.
- Temporary housing.

- "Drugs and lots of boarded up housing."
- No shops in the area.
- "It is very difficult to find a suitable venue for training."

5.2.2. Possible Changes

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

- Most of the views held by the respondents showed that they felt the Children's Centre would start to address some of the concerns and issues that they had outlined in Q1. In particular they felt the Children's Centre would increase service provision for young children and their parents, engage with parents and help to reduce the transient nature of the population. The need for close partnership working was highlighted.

Integrated Services for Children and Parents

- An extra resource to help signpost & co-ordinate other organisations.
- By supporting the provision of a more coordinated approach to service delivery.

Engagement with Parents

- "I hope the Children's Centres will be able to reach some of the families with whom it is difficult to engage."
- "Make young people feel that they want to take up services and put down roots."
- More information given to help them become more aware of what is on offer.

Partnership Working

- "I think that depends on how the Children's Centres work with those organisations already in the local communities."
- "I hope to fill identified gaps in services."

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 Lindhurst -Bellamy Road?

- Most service providers felt that the biggest challenge would be gaining involvement of parents and families, followed by the requirement to build partnership working arrangements with local service providers. There is also considered to be a lack of suitable venues in the area specifically for training.

Gaining Involvement of Parents/Carers

- Commitment from parents.
- Encouraging & continuing contact.
- Encouraging families to access new services.
- Risk if families are not aware of services and not asked what they would like.
- Support for families.

Partnership Working

- Building up new partnership working agreements with local agencies.
- Working in co-operation with all bodies involved.

Facilities

- Venues (for training etc).

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].

- Two types of local meetings were mentioned: neighbourhood/community meetings and service provider meetings. One service provider mentioned that they felt parents should be included, while another was concerned that the Children's Centre project should ensure that it meets with all relevant stakeholders.

Neighbourhood/Community Meetings include:

- There is a local NMT (Neighbourhood Management Team *see note below) in Bellamy Road, which holds frequent meetings.
- "Meet the people who you would need to speak to about things."

Specific Meetings for Service Providers include:

- Sure Start (Oaktree) - has a parent's board meeting (monthly). Planning meetings are for staff only (every 2 weeks).
- Meeting for Homestart workers delivering services are 6 times per year.

General Views About Meetings Involving Parents:

"Parents should be included."

**Note: The Neighbourhood Management Team is involved with the local newsletter, the Bellamy Bugle, this is shortly to be rejuvenated. There are also plans for a community radio initiative.*

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 Lindhurst - Bellamy Road?

- 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) Improving the social/ community infrastructure
 - ii) Targeted support to parents and carers
 - iii) Engaging parents and carers
 - iv) Partnership working
 - v) Skill acquisition for parents

- The comments categorised according to each of these headings are shown below.

i) Improving the Social/ Community Infrastructure

- Health services on the estate.
- Adventure playground.
- Purpose built centre to accommodate the delivery of all Children's services.
- Support for tenants - housing repairs.
- "In Bellamy a good venue with a training room and a bank of computers for training courses and events."

ii) Targeted Support to Parents and Carers

- Children's Centre - access to services/agencies.
- Healthcare.
- Breast feeding support.
- After school club.

iii) Engaging Parents and Carers

- Opportunities for parents to meet and share.
- Services to go out to reluctant families.
- More parents/families accessing what is offered in the areas.
- Involvement of local parents/carers and local organisations in planning of Children's Centre.

iv) Partnership Working

- Working together.
- "Good partnership/joined up working between the Children's Centres and other organisations locally and service providers."
- Appropriate level of staffing realistic to the expected service delivery.

v) Skill Acquisition for Parents

- Provision of parent education.
- Literacy support - books/library visits etc.

5.3 Focus Group

- The discussion guide used in the focus group is found in Appendix 3. This included areas which reflected the main sections of the parent's questionnaire:
 - Knowledge of services in the area
 - Strengths and weaknesses of current services
 - Gaps in current provision
 - Good things to come from the arrival of the Children's Centre
 - Areas for improvement in the local area
- Focus group respondents were initially invited to undertake a mapping exercise, to gather information about services and activities in the area that they know about. This can be seen in Appendix 7. This 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 so that this could be compared with the map of actual services offered in the area from the service provider responses.

5.3.1. Knowledge of Services in the Areas

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

"nothing is happening around here!"

- Following further discussion, four local services were mentioned and a number of activities in the surrounding area - Mansfield centre, Forest Town and the Oaktree estate. Awareness of all activities was low.

Local Activities (Bellamy Road Estate)

- Half of the parents were aware of the Caterpillar Club Toddler Group. This is the most local activity taking place twice a week - once on Monday Mornings (term time) at the Bellamy Road Community Centre and then on Thursday afternoon at Trowell Court. The Thursday Caterpillar Club includes a Health Visitor session and operates both during term times and holidays. The Monday Caterpillar Session includes a half hour visit from a mobile Toy Library.
- Within the group there were mixed feelings about the Caterpillar Group. One Mother had attended a few years ago and had found it to be unwelcoming for newcomers. She had not since returned to the group. One Mother had been along recently and had found the group to be very friendly.

"I had a bad experience of the group - mothers and toddlers - not welcoming - not a good experience. People that go are all friends with each other - how can my kids be happy playing if I am not happy?"

"I had a different experience from you - I'd never felt so welcome anywhere in my life even though I was from the Berry Hill area and lots of parents were from Bellamy Road. I was made to feel very welcome. It was lovely".

- One Mother then clarified that a few years back the Caterpillar group had had difficulties with falling attendance and had re-launched itself with a new management team.
- One of the parents was aware of the Council Library bus which parks once a fortnight on Thursday mornings behind the shops at Bellamy Road. It includes the lending of books and DVDs and also has toys on board for toddlers to keep them occupied.

"You can return books from the library van to any library."

"It has big cushions that you can sit on while you read to your child."

- The wrap around care for morning nursery children at St Peter's Church of England Primary School and Nursery was considered excellent to help prepare children for full days at school. The wrap around system provides lunch for morning nursery session children who can then attend the afternoon session.
- Concern was raised during the focus group that this wrap around service at St Peter's School was to stop at the end of 2006. An Ofsted requirement of increased staffing and additional accommodation was unable to be met by the school.

Activities in Neighbouring Areas

- St Peter's C of E School is closely connected with St Peter's Church in Mansfield (2.6 miles from Bellamy Road). As such children at the school are kept informed about the St Peter's Sunday Club at the St Peter's Centre near the church. This is for ages 0-8 years. Every third Sunday the children from the Club are involved in St Peter's Family Service at the Church.
- Berry Hill (within the Lindhurst ward) has many parks and children's play areas which the residents of Berry Hill enjoy. Bellamy Road residents feel that these parks are too far away from them to use - too far away to walk with young children.
- One Mother was aware that at Spider Park in Berry Hill (so called because of a large spider shaped climbing frame) there is football coaching for 5 to 16 year olds on Saturday mornings between 10am and 12pm.
- A number of the mothers were aware of pre-school gymnastics at the Oaktree Leisure Centre. This occurs on Monday and Wednesday Mornings.
- One Mother had heard about the Sure Start stay and play activities at Oaktree Children's Centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays and was planning to attend one of these in the future.
- Some of the mum's had attended the music sessions for toddlers at Forest Town Library on Thursday mornings. It was not considered very easy to get to by public transport either requiring a bus journey into Mansfield and then another to Forest Town or a 50 minute journey on one bus. Such journeys being difficult to make with young children and buggies.

"But the number 17 bus takes absolutely forever (50 minutes) - by the time you get there you'll want to come back. It goes all through the Oaktree estate. In fact it would probably take the same amount of time (50 minutes) to walk there."

- One Mother mentioned a music session for under 5s held at Mansfield library on the first Friday in every month.
- Parents discussed the children's activities centres located in Mansfield i.e. Playland Adventure Playground and Playmania. Both have soft play areas for younger children and provide parents with refreshments whilst their children play.
- One parent felt that these centres had enabled them to help their child prepare for full school days. Taking them to the nursery in the morning then to the playcentre for lunch to get used to the idea of using trays for dinner and then playing in the afternoon.

"They can have lunch there and you can stay all day if you like - I used it to help make the transition from nursery to reception for my child."

"I like to take them there it's like a workout for them."

"It's good for adults to go down the big slides too."

"It has a soft play centre for babies and costs £1.50 for a 2 hour session - they also do toddler groups."

- Parents were also aware of the parent/carer and baby and toddler swim sessions that are available at the Water Meadows Leisure Centre in Mansfield.

5.3.2. Strengths and Weakness of Current Services

Strengths

- The wrap around care which was currently provided for nursery school children at St Peter's was felt to very important to help children learn about school activities such as school diners. This was considered to be important to help their transition to starting school and was also convenient for parents to have their under 5s at nursery school for the day.

"You take them there in their uniform and it's just like going to school - lots of schools do this now."

- Parents were concerned that this service would no longer be provided at St Peter's school after Christmas 2006. The school is unable to update its service provision in line with its recent Ofsted inspection report.
- Child and parent services which were particularly liked were the commercial children's activities centres in Mansfield which were typically open everyday and included soft play area for smaller children (Playmania and Playland Adventure Playground).
- The large slide in Playmania was a particular favourite with parents as well as children. The group liked the fact that they could have a cup of tea whilst their children played.
- Parents were very positive about the swimming sessions that were available to them and their under 5s at the Water Meadows Leisure Centre in Mansfield Town Centre including the Little Fishes sessions and Toddler session.
- The parents liked the fact that there was a pre-school gymnastics session taking place at the Oaktree leisure centre, only around 15 minutes walking distance away from the Bellamy Road estate.
- Some of the parents were aware of a county pass that enabled people on benefit to have cheaper gym activities.
- On the whole the participants felt that they could catch buses to most destinations from Bellamy Road, although some bus rides (such as the no. 17 to Forest Town) were exceptionally long routes.
- There was a lot of sharing of information in the group discussion about bus numbers and routes suggesting that information about local bus routes is not widely known.

Weaknesses

- The parents were concerned that the wrap around service at St Peter's Church of England Primary and Nursery school will stop at the end of 2006.
- There is a shortcut through from Bellamy Road to Oaktree (for the leisure centre and health centre) which would make the walk to Oaktree 10 minutes rather than 15 minutes. Parents were concerned that the short-cut is not properly lit and the slope of the path makes it difficult to push buggies.
- In the experience of parents using buses there was felt to be a difference in service level across the local bus companies in how they cater for parents with buggies and young children. There were differences in experiences based on whether the design of the buses are push chair/buggy friendly and also the friendliness and helpfulness of the bus drivers.
- In general parents with buggies and young children had received good customer service both from the design of the buses and the friendliness of the drivers for the Dunline buses and Trent buses.
- Some of the bus companies' ticket price policies were questioned by the group for example one parent mentioned that in her experience children are free with one company although if you have more than two then you are required to pay.
- Some personal experiences on the rudeness of bus drivers to mothers with prams and young children were shared.

"I had a pushchair and my two children with me (both aged under 5). The bus was quite full and two older children wouldn't move to make room for me and my children. The driver didn't help and said that if I had a problem I should get off the bus."

- There were concerns about the cost of the Water Meadows Leisure Centre - one parent mentioned that there had been an article in a newspaper that rated Mansfield as being the most expensive place in the UK to have a swim.(* see note below).
- There was also a concern for Mums with under 5s with the hassle involved and cost of storing a pushchair at the centre whilst having a swim. They had to pay a deposit of £5.50 for chains to secure the pram in a buggy park area. There were concerns that even on securing the buggy in this area that it did not feel a safe place to leave a buggy.
- There were also concerns that the cost of the hire of a swimming ring for £5.00 is high and that the centre always deducts an amount from this £5 for wear and tear.

*NOTE * We were unable to find the newspaper article mentioned but did locate the source press release from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) (www.csp.org.uk). Published: 7 Jun 2006: New CSP study finds cost of a swim highest in Mansfield, East Midlands. Hartlepool, North East, is cheapest for swimming. Splashing the cash – swimmers hit with widespread variations in pool charges In the run up to Physiotherapy Week 2006 (June 19-23), a new study by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP), compiled by the Labour Research Department, has revealed going for a healthy swim could mean losing pounds from your purse as well as your hips! Swimmers in Mansfield, East Midlands, have to splash out £4.50 for a dip in their local indoor 25m pool - three times as much as those in Hartlepool, North East, where swimmers pay £1.50 for a swim in a 33m indoor pool. The average price in England & Wales is £2.70.*

5.3.3. Gaps in Current Provision

- The biggest concern that the parents have is that they feel there is nowhere safe in or around the Bellamy Road estate for their children to play. They did feel that there were some nice parks in Berry Hill but that these were too far away from them.
- Although there is a small play park area close to the centre of the Bellamy Road estate it is not often used because of litter and drug user's needles left around. It is also not a suitable location for a children's play ground being next to the Social Club where people are often drunk and arguing.
- The parents felt that there is a need for play areas for both younger and older children. The group suggested that a new playground area could be located in the field opposite the Bellamy Road estate and that there would be a requirement for some form of security (such as neighbourhood wardens) to prevent the park from being wrecked and to keep it clear of litter.
- The parents in the Bellamy Road area have a limited number of services that they can use locally. Most rely on using public transport to travel out of the area.
- As many require public transport to travel out of the estate one suggestion was for a community bus to take parents/carers & toddlers out on trips for example to the swimming pool. Such a service would be similar to the service currently available for older people in the area.
- There is no GP practice or health centre in the Lindhurst ward area and all residents have to travel out of the area to GPs. As such there is a wide spread of health centres that take responsibility for residents in the area.
- A need for continuity of children's service provision was highlighted. Once children start school the support of the health visitor is replaced by intermittent meetings with the school nurse. In some circumstances this did not seem to be enough help.

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

- The group participants were extremely positive about the move to have a Children's Centre at Lindhurst - Bellamy Road and about the focus group which was seen to be part of the new Sure Start process.

"I am glad you are doing this (focus group) - it is nice to talk about things. I've seen all you parents at the school in the playground but I don't know you - it is nice to talk about things and I know my daughter is fine in the crèche there."

"I've not lived here for long - it's supposedly a nice area but there is nothing to take my child along too - it would be nice to have 30 minutes to take her somewhere and do things for myself. I thought Mansfield would have lots to do - but it doesn't. It's nice to interact with other Mums."

"I used to go to a Sure Start centre it was nice to have a cup of tea - I was able to breast feed my daughter and have her with me and I was able to talk - it was nice to talk about adult things with adults. I've regretted moving here!"

"It will be nice to have Sure Start and something happening around here."

"There is nothing around here for children - nowhere to play- the park is either wrecked or covered with dog muck - it is especially important for an only child to interact with others."

- One Mother felt that it was very important that there would be a new organisation to which parents could go and get support.

"I was stuck on my own - no support from anybody - and I felt that I needed some help with my child who seemed to have behavioural problems. I begged health visitors and social services to help but I received no help."

5.3.5. Areas for Improvement in the Local Area

- At this stage in the focus group discussion respondents were encouraged to "think outside the box" about new ideas for services and activities in the area that they felt would help them and also their under 5s. The following ideas were generated:
- The need for a safe and secure children's play area.
- Setting up a central information point to help on community issues such as:
 - Somewhere to go locally for help and local information.
 - A notice board of what's going on.
 - Access to a phone box if you don't have enough calling credit on your mobile and you have an important call to make for example to contact the Doctors.
 - Help with accessing the Metropolitan housing association for example how to deal with mould on the wall, or prioritising of housing of single parents with small children to ground floor premises.

"I have an upstairs flat - if I go shopping I have to take the pushchair and shopping and baby up and down the stairs. I've been on the waiting list now for over a year - since I found out I was pregnant - I am not getting any help even though I am a priority."

- The previous Information Centre located in the heart of the Bellamy Road Estate and now recently closed was meant to provide some of these services. However participants at the group felt that it failed to deliver on customer service. The centre did not feel accessible to them, was unfriendly and unhelpful. On a positive note the parents were aware that the Information Centre had provided computer courses.
- Parents at the group expressed an interest in receiving free courses with crèche facilities. Food hygiene courses were specifically mentioned.

6. Key Messages for the Future

- The interviews with parents, the focus group and input from the partners show a high level of agreement about the needs of parents and young children in Lindhurst - Bellamy Road for the future. These include:
- There is a need to build on the current activities for under 5s in the area and raise awareness and increase the accessibility of these activities.
 - The most urgent concern is that of the impending loss of St Peter's School wrap around nursery care.

- In particular the following needs for parents with young children were highlighted in this consultation:
 - A secure and safe play area - this was seen to be the most significant gap for under 5 service provision in the Bellamy Road area.
 - A central location where parents can obtain up-to-date information about services, activities and associated public transport routes.
 - A central body such as the Children's Centre to help parents communicate with bodies such as housing associations to improve the living standards of their accommodation, to help lobby public transport companies and leisure facilities to improve their service provision for customers with buggies and small children and to enable parents to request additional help and support if they are having particular difficulties with their children's behaviour.
 - Some continuity of service provision once children had started school.
 - Accessible health service provision (GP Practice, Health Visitors) within walking distance from the estate.
 - An informal drop-in centre for parents and with a soft play area for toddlers which is open flexible hours to suit all parents.
 - Connections with extended family members. Extended family members are an important part of child care in this area.
 - A training centre with computers to enable training providers to deliver courses in the area.
 - There are three main concerns about the safety of the Bellamy Road neighbourhood. The main anxieties are:
 - The need for speed bumps or a crossing patrol from the estate to the school.
 - Litter in the children's parks including used needles.
 - Drunks and drug addicts around the estate.
- There was a lack of awareness amongst many parents and some service providers about the new Children's Centre to be developed in the area. This should be addressed through specific communications covering the services that the Children's Centre will deliver within the community and how it plans to deliver them. Preferred approaches are through a newsletter an information/flyer and also specifically for the Bellamy Road Residents via an information session.
- In particular there is a need to form a stronger engagement with service providers and partners in the area, in particular the main schools (St Peter's School and Berry Hill School), the health service provision provided through many GP Practices outside the area and local registered childminders. No responses to the service providers/partners questionnaires were received from all of these important stakeholders.
- While the consultation necessarily had its limitations, due to lack of time and resource, the results are still felt to be representative of the community; it was always seen as a first conversation to provide a basis with which to build the future Children's Centre in Lindhurst - Bellamy Road.

- There is the need to assure parents and partners that the Children's Centre is sustainable and that the involvement of all parties is crucial in its success, as well as allowing parents to take ownership of the Children's Centre, to be jointly engaged with professionals in the provision of services for them and their families.
- This consultation and the planned feedback session are the starting points from which services for children under 5 and their families will develop. There is every reason to think from responses that parents will become involved, so that the Children's Centre becomes their service, rather than something delivered to them.
- The feedback session for all interested parties including all parents and partners/service providers involved in the consultation will be held on the morning of the 31st January 2007 at the Bellamy Road Community Centre.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Showcards

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Service Providers / Partners

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

Appendix 5 – 'Other' Responses from Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 6 – Responses from Partners and Service Providers

Appendix 7 – Mapping Exercise: Current Services in Lindhurst - Bellamy Road