



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

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

Written by: Anita Maidment of Anita Maidment Research

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Anita Maidment Research
Diamond Cottage
Garrison Hill
Droxford
Hampshire
SO32 3QL

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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.
- Children's Centres are intended to provide services and support to children, aged from 0-5 years, their parents and carers, based on partnerships between statutory, voluntary and private organisations and the local authority. Partnership with local parents and their early involvement in planning of Children's Centres is an essential part of the ethos of the Children's Centres programme.
- It is the government's policy to develop Children's Centres within partnerships. Some may be based on a 'strong link' partnership, bringing together existing facilities (e.g. neighbourhood nursery, primary schools, family centre, library, health centre, community centre). Some may involve a new building, creating a one-stop centre attached to or on a school site. Even with a new 'one stop building', there will be a need for sound partnerships with other providers throughout the area.
- All Children's Centres areas will have child care available for 50 weeks a year, 8am – 6pm offering care integrated with education, for children aged 0-5 years.
- 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 Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood 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, “hard-to-reach” families have been included, where service providers or other agencies were able to give contact details and encourage participation.

2 Aims and Objectives of the consultation

- Overall Aims:
 - to find out parents’ and carers’ views and opinions of existing 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 local service providers and key stakeholders, who were also invited to include a list of services in the area; three focus groups (one in each village) with parents recruited via the questionnaire, who also completed a mapping exercise of local services.

3.1 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers were informed about the planned consultation in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood at a well-attended meeting on 18th January at Selston Parish Hall. The partners' questionnaire was handed out to all who attended to complete at the meeting or return by 16th February 2007. In addition it was sent to partners who did not attend the meeting and to pre-school playgroups, day-care providers and registered childminders in the area.
- A mapping exercise was included as part of this questionnaire, asking for details of any services of which they were aware in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood, with times and contact details. It was used to develop a map of services available in the area to identify any service provision gaps or overlaps and to help identify locations for interviewing parents.
- The opportunity to give contact details was given on the questionnaire so that the team could make contact in the future; most respondents completed this section.

3.2 Parent's Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation with parents consisted of 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 toddler groups and other sessions for parents and young children eg baby clinics, library sessions
 - Parents/carers living locally
- Interviews were conducted on 7th February. The venues were:
 - Selston
 - Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School
 - Selston Church of England Infants and Nursery School
 - Somerfield supermarket and Health Centre site
 - St Helen's Church toddler group
 - Leisure Centre and library site
 - Matthew Holland School playgroup
 -
 - Jacksdale
 - Westwood Infants School and Nursery
 - Jacksdale Primary School and Nursery
 - CO-OP and local shops
 - Library
 - Underwood
 - Underwood Primary School

- Bagthorpe Primary School
 - Allsorts playgroup in community centre
-
- Interviewers were recruited from the Partners' meeting held on 18th January. They included workers from the Children's Centre central team and from Newstead Children's Centre, Homestart workers, councillors, extended schools coordinator, health workers and librarian. Including the researchers, thirteen interviewers were interviewing on that day. A briefing session was held the day prior to interviewing parents for those who had not taken part in a Children's Centre consultation before, to familiarise interviewers with the questionnaire, address issues such as confidentiality and low literacy levels amongst parents when interviewing, and to give an opportunity to clarify any questions arising.
 - The questionnaire included an incentive prize draw for a gift voucher, and an invitation to take part in the planned focus groups. Contact details were taken where given, with permission for inclusion on the Children's Centre database for future contact, but this sheet was kept separate from the completed questionnaire to preserve confidentiality.

3.3 Focus Groups

- This is a widespread rural area, and transport and community links are reportedly weak between the three villages. To have only one focus group would therefore have potentially excluded an important group for us to include; those with transport needs that could be affecting their access to services. We were also keen to ensure that we explored issues particular to each village, which might not be possible in a single focus group. It was therefore decided to conduct a focus group in each village, to ensure that all were fully represented in the qualitative research.
- Respondents for the focus groups were recruited from the contact sheet of the parent's questionnaire, from those who said they would be interested in taking part. Overall, just over half of these parents were interested in attending a focus group, with some 41 saying yes to being interested and a further 19 possibly interested.
- Alongside the focus groups, Homestart provided drop-in Stay and Play sessions to maximise the opportunity to raise awareness about Children's Centre in local communities. Leaflets advertising these sessions were given to parents at the time of the interviews.
- Parents who had definitely or possibly agreed to come along to the focus groups were contacted by telephone if possible to confirm whether they should do so, although tight timescales or lack of a contact phone number sometimes prevents this. Those with children under five were given priority, and we tried to include a good spread of use of the various schools and GP surgeries.
- Nottinghamshire County Council provided a free crèche for those parents wishing to use it and a £10 Argos gift voucher was given as a thank-you.
- A letter confirming venue, time details, crèche requirements and incentive was sent to parents beforehand and they were contacted the day before the group to remind them to come.
- Twelve parents agreed to come along to the Underwood group at Bagthorpe Baptist Chapel on 27th February between 9.15am and 11.15am. The day before the group each respondent was telephoned again as a reminder to attend. At this

point, four parents were no longer able to come because of sickness or other commitments. In actuality, five of those who had confirmed attended the focus group.

- Twelve parents had also agreed to come along to the Selston group at Selston Parish Hall on 27th February between 1.15pm and 3.15pm. The day prior to the group five parents were no longer able to come. The remaining seven parents all came, and one parent who had come to the Stay and Play session also opted to join the group discussion, making a total of eight parents in all.
- The lowest number of leads (10) were available to recruit the Jacksdale group. Six parents agreed to come along to the discussion, which was held at Jacksdale Community Centre on 5th March between 1.15pm and 3.15pm. One parent was no longer able to attend when phoned the day before. Three of the remaining parents came along on the day, but two parents who had come along to the stay and play session opted to join the group. This brought the total number participating to five.
- A mapping exercise was completed as part of each focus group to gather knowledge about existing services for them and their children in the area.
- As part of the introduction to the groups, an explanation about Children's Centres was given. This enabled the groups to have a wider understanding of the concept of Children's Centres before the discussion started.

4 Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parent's Questionnaire

- 112 interviews were completed with parents/carers at the various interviewing points.
- 101 respondents (90%) were female and 11 (10%) were male.
- 26% of respondents were aged under 29, while 58% were between 30 and 39. 16% were aged over 40, of which only a fifth (22%) said they were grandparents.
- 70% of those interviewed had at least one child under the age of 5 in the household. 42% had just one child in this age group, with 23% having two and 4% having three.
- The total number of children aged under five in families interviewed was 114.
- 61% of those interviewed had one or more children older than five. 36% had one child in this age range, 22% had two and 3% had three.
- The total number of children aged five or over in families interviewed was 99.
- Eight respondents had one child aged 16 plus in their household.
- Between them, respondents had 221 children; the number of families with one child was 16, 59 families had two children, whilst 23 families had three children. Two families had four children and two families had five children in the household. Four said they had no children living in their household and six did not reply to this question.
- Given that 112 interviews were completed, this gives an average number of children per household as 2.0.
- Three parents (3%) reported that they were currently expecting a baby.
- While only 20% of respondents were working full time, 39% were working part time and only 6% described themselves as unemployed. A third (31%) said they were a parent/carers, 4% said they were a grandparent and one person was another relative or friend.
- Just under three-quarters (72%) were either married or partnered, while 12% described themselves as single.
- 80% of households had two adults aged over 18 living together in the household, while 13% lived in households with only one adult. Just 6% reported having three or more adults in the household. The average was 1.9 people in the household aged 18+.
- 99% of respondents described themselves as white, while 1% were of mixed race.
- All except one respondent's postcode fell into NG16.

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 14 completed questionnaires were received from service providers in the Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood area, 12 of which gave contact details.
- As the table below shows, responses were from a range of partners, including health workers, those involved in pre-school care and early years education, those with an interest in adult education and employment, and support organisations for families.

Table 1 – Partners' disciplines

Discipline	No of responses
Healthcare	3
Childminding	3
Councillors	3
Education	2
Community	2
Library	1
TOTAL	14

- The roles of service-providers are shown below.

Table 2 – Partners' roles

Head teacher
Registered Childminder (x2)
Spokesperson for National Childminding Association
Midwife
School health nurse
Community paediatric assistant
Secretary
Parish council (x 3)
Family centre manager
Extended schools coordinator
Children's services coordinator/ Senior project manager

- The respondents varied in the length of time in their current roles, from three months to 25 years. In total they had an impressive 127 years of experience, with an average of nine years.

4.3 Focus Groups

4.3.1 Selston

- Seven mothers and one grandmother attended this focus group, totalling eight participants.
- Between them, they had 16 children, ten of whom were aged five and under.
- Five had two children, one had three and one had one child.
- One parent was working full time, working from home and using family as carers. Two others were working part time around school hours and using family for childcare as necessary. Two others would like to work if they could fit it better around their children.

4.3.2 Jacksdale

- Four mothers and a grandmother attended this group, totalling five participants.
- Between them they had nine children, eight of whom were aged five or under. The grandmother was working as a full time registered childminder, looking after a further six children, five of whom were aged five or under.
- Four had two children and one had one child and was expecting her second child.
- In addition to the childminding grandmother, three mothers were working part time, using family for childcare.

4.3.3 Underwood

- Five mothers attended this focus group.
- Between them, they had 13 children, ten of whom were aged five and under.
- Four mothers had two children and one had five.
- One mother was working part time in a day nursery during school hours, one was on maternity leave and another was training for an NVQ2.

Main Findings

5 Parent's Questionnaire

- A total of 112 questionnaires were completed, in excess of the target of 100. Given that there were around 582 under fives in the area, and 114 under fives lived in the families of respondents, the research reached a respectable 20% of this population. In terms of coverage of each village, this breaks down to 23% in Selston, 10% in Jacksdale and 14% in Underwood.
- Two-thirds (65%) of respondents said they had heard about Sure Start. A quarter (26%) had not heard of it and 9% were not sure.
- Awareness of Sure Start was lowest among men (18%)¹ but did not differ significantly by age, marital status or location.
- Only 16% of respondents were aware of the proposed Children's Centre to be developed in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood, rising slightly to 22% of those who knew about Sure Start. 79% knew nothing about it.

5.1 Services Ever Used

- All respondents were asked which local services they had ever used, using a showcard (see Appendix 2). Their responses are shown in table 3 below, ranked by number of mentions. Responses are shown for all respondents, and for comparison purposes, those who claimed to be aware of Sure Start, and by age.
- Shaded cells represent a significant difference from the total for all respondents.
- Care must be taken when numbers responding are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people in this sub-group (eg we only spoke to 18 people aged 40+).
- Health services were most often reported as being used by at least seven in ten respondents, with the notable exception of antenatal classes, used by half (52%).
- Those aged 40 or over were less likely than others to have used health visitors locally (50% compared with 74% overall).
- Nursery in a school was used by 61%, reflecting the level of provision in the area, with five of the six schools having a nursery.
- The children's library service, was also mentioned often, by 57% of parents and carers overall, rising to 65% of those aged 30-39. However, only 10% specifically mentioned that they had used story time sessions, although this was highest amongst the 40+ age group.
- Pre-school playgroups were used by more than half of parents (54%), while toddler groups were used by less than half (46%).
- Family members were the most commonly used childcare after nursery in a school and pre-school, with 43% using a family member for childcare compared with 22% who relied on friends.
- After-school clubs and breakfast clubs were used by just under a fifth of parents (19% used after school clubs and 17% used breakfast clubs). Day nurseries were used by 14%.
- Home visits, Job Centres, and further education were all mentioned by 13%. The same proportion used a crèche, but this rose to 28% of those aged under 29.

¹ Care must be taken in interpretation because of small base sizes. (Men n=11)

- Whilst 13% overall used Speech therapists, this fell to 6% of those aged 30-39.
- Registered childminders were used by just 12% of parents.
- All other services were used by less than 10% of parents, with the exception of home safety equipment; mentioned by just 6% overall, this rose to 17% of parents aged under 29.

Table 3 – services ever used

Service	% ever used service (N = 112)	% Sure Start-aware using service (N = 73)	Age		
			<29 N = 29	30-39 N = 65	40+ N = 18
	%	%	%	%	%
GP Practice	78	77	79	78	72
Health visitors	74	79	79	78	50
Midwife	71	77	66	77	56
Nursery in a school	61	62	66	58	61
Children's Library Service	57	62	48	65	44
Pre-school playgroup	54	53	62	48	61
Antenatal sessions	52	51	48	55	44
Toddler group	46	42	38	49	50
Family member	43	44	45	45	33
Friends	22	26	17	22	33
After school club	19	21	14	22	17
Breakfast club	17	22	17	18	11
Day nursery	14	16	10	15	17
Home visits	13	16	17	14	6
Speech therapists	13	15	21	6	22
Job Centres	13	10	21	8	22
Breast feeding group	13	10	21	11	6
Further education	13	12	14	12	11
Crèche	13	19	28	9	6
Registered childminder	12	16	10	8	28
Story time sessions	10	11	3	9	22
Home safety equipment	6	4	17	2	6
Toy library	5	7	7	5	6
Homestart	4	4	7	3	0
Dietician/nutritionist	4	3	3	5	0
Parenting advice and guidance	4	3	10	2	0
Children's information service	4	5	3	5	0
Welfare rights session	4	1	7	3	0
Independent school	3	1	7	2	0
Family centre	3	3	7	2	0

Shaded cells represent a significant difference from the total for all respondents.

5.2 Usefulness of Services

- Respondents were then asked how useful they had found each of the services they had used.

- Responses are shown in Table 4 for each of the services mentioned, listed by amount of use to correspond with Table 3 above.

Table 4 – usefulness of service

Service	Numbers using service	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful/not at all useful	Average score*
		%	%	%	
GP Practice	87	43	33	11	4.0
Health visitors	83	54	24	9	4.2
Midwife	79	78	11	5	4.6
Nursery in a school	68	91	7	0	4.9
Children's Library Service	64	53	31	2	4.4
Pre-school playgroup	60	73	18	2	4.7
Antenatal sessions	58	66	14	6	4.4
Toddler group	52	54	15	10	4.2
Family member	48	92	6	0	4.9
Friends	25	84	8	0	4.8
After school club	21	62	29	5	4.4
Breakfast club	19	74	21	0	4.8
Day nursery	16	75	13	6	4.5
Creche	15	73	13	0	4.6
Home visits	15	67	13	0	4.5
Job Centres	15	47	27	14	4.0
Further education	14	71	29	0	4.7
Speech therapists	14	57	14	14	4.1
Breast feeding group	14	43	7	14	3.6
Registered childminder	13	92	8	0	4.9
Story time sessions	11	73	27	0	4.7
Home safety equipment	7	43	29	14	3.9
Toy library	6	67	17	0	4.5
Homestart	4	75	0	0	4.5
Dietician/nutritionist	4	25	25	0	3.8
Parenting advice and guidance	4	100	0	0	5.0
Children's information service	4	0	50	0	3.7
Welfare rights session	4	25	50	25	3.5
Independent school	3	100	0	0	5.0
Family centre	3	100	0	0	5.0

* Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't know/no response', average = mean score where 5 = very useful, 4 = quite useful, 3 = neither, 2 = not useful, 1 = not at all useful

- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents. The closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction. However, care must be taken where numbers using the service are low, as resulting percentages are not necessarily representative of the views of all. We have therefore commented only on services used by ten or more respondents, and on sub-groups where 50 or more respondents overall have used the service and where the sub-group comprises 10 or more respondents.

- Amongst those services used by ten or more respondents, most useful were nursery in schools, support of family, and registered childminders (all scoring 4.9).
- The support of friends and the breakfast club were both also rated as very useful, with a mean score of 4.8.
- Pre-school playgroup, further education and story time sessions were all rated 4.7.
- Lowest rated services used by 10 or more of those we interviewed were the breastfeeding group (3.6), Job Centres and GP practice (both 4.0).
- Health visitors scored 4.2 overall, with 54% rating them as very useful. This rose to 78% of those aged under 29. There were no other significant differences by sub-group.

5.3 Reasons given for services mentioned as being not useful

- If respondents rated any service as not useful or not very useful (codes 1 or 2) they were asked why this was. The response to this question was low (29 people responded in total), reflecting the generally high level of satisfaction with available services.
- The GP and health visitor received the most mentions, but this should be kept in the context of these being the most commonly used services.

Table 5 – reasons why service not useful

Type of comment	Number of comments*
GP not helpful/not very good/problems with GP	7
Health visitor poor/not needed/unreliable	4
Toddler group not friendly/not constructive	3
Problems with midwife	2
Job Centre not friendly/not child-friendly	2
No appointments/waiting time too long for appointments	2
No help/support	2
Other	3
Don't know/No response	8

* Some respondents made more than one comment
(For full comments see Appendix 5)

- 'Other' comments were single comments about individual services and are not detailed here because they would be unrepresentative of the views of most users.

5.4 Child-friendliness of Services

- Respondents were asked how child-friendly they had found each of the services they had used.

Table 6 – child-friendliness of service

Service	Numbers using service	Very child-friendly	Quite child-friendly	Not child-friendly/not at all child-friendly	Average score*
		%	%	%	
GP Practice	87	44	18	12	3.9
Health visitors	83	69	12	0	4.6
Midwife	79	71	10	4	4.6
Nursery in a school	68	90	9	0	4.9
Children's Library Service	64	69	13	2	4.6
Pre-school playgroup	60	77	7	2	4.7
Antenatal sessions	58	52	10	5	4.2
Toddler group	52	69	10	6	4.5
Family member	48	90	8	0	4.9
Friends	25	88	12	0	4.9
After school club	21	67	14	0	4.7
Breakfast club	19	89	11	0	4.9
Day nursery	16	81	6	0	4.9
Creche	15	80	0	0	4.8
Home visits	15	73	7	0	4.5
Job Centres	15	47	7	27	3.6
Speech therapists	14	79	7	7	4.6
Breast feeding group	14	50	0	7	4.5
Further education	14	57	21	14	4.2
Registered childminder	13	100	0	0	5.0
Story time sessions	11	73	9	0	4.9
Home safety equipment	7	29	14	0	4.3
Toy library	6	67	17	0	4.8
Homestart	4	100	0	0	5.0
Dietician/nutritionist	4	50	25	0	4.3
Parenting advice and guidance	4	75	0	0	5.0
Children's information service	4	25	25	0	3.8
Welfare rights session	4	0	0	25	1.0
Independent school	3	67	0	0	5.0
Family centre	3	100	0	0	5.0

* Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't know/no response', average = mean score where 5 = very useful, 4 = quite useful, 3 = neither, 2 = not useful, 1 = not at all useful

- This time, closeness to 5.0 indicates child-friendliness. Once again, where base numbers are low, they cannot be seen to reflect the views of all parent/carer users. We therefore have not commented where users numbered less than 10.
- All services except two (with 10 or more users) scored 4.0 or above, showing a high level of child-friendliness overall.
- Services ranked as most child-friendly were registered childminders (5.0). Nursery in schools, family member, friends, breakfast club, day nursery and story time sessions (all ranked 4.9). Whilst nursery in schools was rated as very child-

friendly by 90% overall, this reduced to 78% of those aged 40 or more, although this still gives a high ranking of 4.7.

- Least child-friendly were Job Centres (3.6) and GPs (3.9).
- The midwife was more likely to be ranked as very child-friendly by those aged under 29. Almost nine in ten of this age group (89%) said they were very child-friendly compared with compared with 71% overall (a ranking of 4.6).

5.5 Reasons given for services mentioned as being not child friendly

- Where respondents said a service was not very or not at all child-friendly, they were asked why this was.
- 23 respondents commented. The type of comment is shown in table 7, with most comments relating to not having a play area or toys to amuse children.

Table 7 – reasons why service not child-friendly

Type of comment	Number of comments
Not child-friendly/No toys/No play area	7
No facilities for children/No childcare	1
Not appropriate/Not suitable for children	1
Other	3
Don't know/No response	11

- Other comments were specifically about individual services so are not included here. (see Appendix 5).

5.6 Comparisons of usefulness and child-friendliness

- Matching the average scores of respondents' views of parent and child's needs gives the results shown in table 8.
- A plus score in the 'difference' column indicates that a service were rated as more useful than child-friendly, while a minus score indicates that a service was rated as more child-friendly than useful.
- Scores with a difference of 0.2 points or more (and rated by ten or more respondents) are shown in bold.
- The following were all rated as more child-friendly than useful: breast feeding group, speech therapists, health visitors, day nursery, toddler group, after school club, crèche, story time sessions and children's library service.
- Further education was rated as more useful than child-friendly, along with Job Centres and antenatal sessions.

Table 8 – comparison of parents and child average (mean) scores

Service	Average score usefulness	Average score child-friendliness	Difference
GP Practice	4.0	3.9	0.1
Health visitors	4.2	4.6	-0.4
Midwife	4.6	4.6	0.0
Nursery in a school	4.9	4.9	0.0
Children's Library Service	4.4	4.6	-0.2
Pre-school playgroup	4.7	4.7	0.0
Antenatal sessions	4.4	4.2	0.2
Toddler group	4.2	4.5	-0.3
Family member	4.9	4.9	0.0
Friends	4.8	4.9	-0.1
After school club	4.4	4.7	-0.3
Breakfast club	4.8	4.9	-0.1
Day nursery	4.5	4.9	-0.4
Creche	4.6	4.8	-0.2
Home visits	4.5	4.5	0.0
Job Centres	4.0	3.6	0.4
Speech therapists	4.1	4.6	-0.5
Breast feeding group	3.6	4.5	-0.9
Further education	4.7	4.2	0.5
Registered childminder	4.9	5.0	-0.1
Story time sessions	4.7	4.9	-0.2
Home safety equipment	3.9	4.3	-0.4
Toy library	4.5	4.8	-0.3
Homestart	4.5	5.0	-0.5
Dietician/nutritionist	3.8	4.3	-0.5
Parenting advice and guidance	5.0	5.0	0.0
Children's information service	3.7	3.8	-0.1
Welfare rights session	3.5	1.0	2.5
Independent school	5.0	5.0	0.0
Family centre	5.0	5.0	0.0

5.7 Most helpful service to parent

- Respondents were asked which service they had used was most helpful to them as a parent. Table 9 shows those mentioned in frequency order.
- The most helpful services were nursery in schools, mentioned by 18%, followed by pre-school (13%). Health visitors and midwives were rated most helpful by 12% and 11% respectively, with GPs rated most helpful to parents by 8%.

Table 9 – single service most helpful to parent – all respondents

Service <u>most</u> helpful to parent	% mentions all respondents (N= 112)
	%
Nursery in a school	18
Pre-school playgroup	13
Health visitors	12
Midwife	11
GP practice	8
Family member	7
After school club	6
Toddler group	5
Registered childminder	4
Antenatal sessions	4
Speech therapists	3
Day nursery	3
Children's library service	3
Friends	3
Crèche	2
Breakfast club	1
Home visits	1
Independent school	1
Don't know/No response	9

- The analysis above is based on all respondents and is therefore biased towards services with high numbers of users, and against more specialist services with fewer users. Therefore another analysis was undertaken to reduce the bias by calculating the percentage of users **for each service** who saw this service as their most helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 10 below.
- So we had the five most helpful services in the **all respondent** analysis above:
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - Health visitor
 - Midwife
 - GP practice
- Compared with the five most helpful services in the **user** analysis below:
 - After school club
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - Registered childminder
 - Speech therapist

Table 10 – single service most helpful to parent – by service use

Service <u>most</u> helpful to parent	Number of users of service	Number of mentions as most helpful	Percent of users rating most helpful
			%
After school club	21	7	33
Nursery in a school	68	20	29
Pre-school playgroup	60	15	25
Registered childminder	13	3	23
Speech therapists	14	3	21
Day nursery	16	3	19
Family member	48	8	17
Health visitors	83	13	16
Midwife	79	12	15
Crèche	15	2	13
Toddler group	52	6	12
Friends	25	3	12
GP Practice	87	9	10
Antenatal	58	4	7
Home visits	15	1	7
Breakfast club	19	1	5
Children's Library Service	64	2	3

- Table 11 below summarises how the position of the perceived parent-helpfulness of the services changes between the two analyses.
- In this case the speech therapist, day nursery, after school club, crèche and registered childminder all move to a higher position on helpfulness because 13% or more of their users (albeit a small number of respondents) chose them as the most helpful service. These might therefore be considered to be helpful emerging services that are not yet used by a large number of parents.
- The GP practice, antenatal sessions, health visitor, midwife and library service, all traditional services used by a relatively large number of respondents, drop to lower relative positions. This is an indicator that there is scope for these services to increase their perceived parent-helpfulness amongst users.

Table 11 – helpfulness of the services for parents – changes in rank position

	Relative position on helpfulness: All Respondents	Relative position on helpfulness: Users Only	Change in rank position
GP practice	4	13	-9
Children's library service	10	17	-7
Antenatal sessions	8	14	-6
Midwife	4	9	-5
Health visitors	3	8	-5
Toddler group	7	11	-4
Family member	5	7	-2
Breakfast club	15	16	-1
Friends	10	11	-1
Nursery in a school	1	2	-1
Pre-school playgroup	2	3	-1
Home visits	15	14	1
Crèche	14	10	4
After school club	6	1	4
Day nursery	10	6	4
Registered childminder	8	4	4
Speech therapists	10	5	5

5.8 Most helpful service to your child/children

- Respondents were then asked which service they had used was most helpful to their child. Table 12 shows those mentioned in frequency order.
- Most helpful services for children were, as with parents, nursery in a school and pre-school playgroup, followed by toddler group and after school club. All of these services provide childcare and early education.

Table 12 – service most helpful to child – all respondents

Service <u>most</u> helpful to child	% mentions all respondents (N= 112)
	%
Nursery in a school	29
Pre-school playgroup	18
Toddler group	9
After school club	5
GP Practice	4
Health visitors	4
Family member	4
Day nursery	4
Speech therapists	4
Registered childminder	4
Children's Library Service	3
Breakfast club	3
Midwife	2
Crèche	2
Friends	1
Job Centres	1
Dietician/nutritionist	1
Independent school	1
Don't know/No response	9

- As with services most helpful for parents, we then repeated the analysis to remove the bias created in the usefulness ratings by high numbers of users. This analysis reduces the bias by calculating the percentage of users **for each service** who saw this service as their most helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 13 below.
- So we had the four most helpful services in the **all respondent** analysis above:
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - Toddler group
 - After school club
- Compared with the five most helpful services in the **user** analysis below:
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - Registered childminder
 - After school club
 - Speech therapists

Table 13 – service most helpful to child – service users

Service <u>most</u> helpful to Child	Number of users of service	Number of mentions as most helpful	Percent of users rating most helpful
			%
Nursery in a school	68	33	49
Pre-school playgroup	60	19	32
Registered childminder	13	4	31
After school club	21	6	29
Speech therapists	14	4	29
Day nursery	16	4	25
Dietician/nutritionist	4	1	25
Toddler group	52	10	19
Breakfast club	19	3	16
Crèche	15	2	13
Family member	48	4	8
Health visitors	83	4	5
Friends	25	1	4
GP Practice	87	4	3
Children's Library Service	64	2	3
Midwife	79	2	3
Job Centres	15	0	0
Independent school	3	0	0

- Table 14 below summarises how the position of the perceived child-helpfulness of the services changes between the two analyses.
- In this case the dietician and crèche move to a higher position on child-helpfulness because 25% and 13% of their respective users (albeit a small number of respondents) chose them as the most helpful service for their child. The dietician and once again the crèche can be considered to be helpful emerging services that are not yet used by a large number of parents in this area.
- GP practices, health visitors, family members and toddler group, all used by a relatively large number of respondents, drop to much lower relative positions. This indicates that there is scope for these services to increase their perceived child-helpfulness amongst users.
- In contrast, nursery in schools, pre-school playgroup and after school club hold their places, showing that their child-helpfulness is really valued, regardless of user numbers.

Table 14 – helpfulness of the services for children – changes in rank position

	Relative position on helpfulness: All Respondents	Relative position on helpfulness: Users Only	Change in position
Dietician/nutritionist	15	6	9
Crèche	13	10	3
Registered childminder	5	3	2
Breakfast club	11	9	2
Friends	15	13	2
Speech therapists	5	4	1
Nursery in a school	1	1	0
Pre-school playgroup	2	2	0
After school club	4	4	0
Day nursery	5	6	-1
Midwife	13	14	-1
Job Centres	15	17	-2
Independent school	15	17	-2
Children's Library Service	11	14	-3
Toddler group	3	8	-5
Family member	5	11	-6
Health visitors	5	12	-7
GP Practice	5	14	-9

5.9 Help to use services more often

- A list of suggestions that might help parents to use services more often was shown to respondents (see Showcard 2, Appendix 2). They were asked which of those listed would help them.
- Table 15 shows responses by village and by all respondents. A quarter (27%) of all respondents felt that different times would help them use services more often, while 26% thought better public transport would help, and 22% would use services more often if the price was better.
- Other options of childcare and someone to go with were felt to be helpful for at least 13% of all respondents.
- Selston residents had a similar pattern of responses to that found overall. However, residents of the smaller villages felt that a more local venue was also very important in helping them to use services more often; more than a third (35%) of Jacksdale residents felt so, along with a quarter of residents of Underwood (27%) and surrounding villages (25%).

Table 15 – Help to use services more often²

Suggestion	Total N=112	Selston N=68	Jacksdale N=17	Underwood N=15	Surrounding villages

					N=12
	%	%	%	%	%
Different times of events	27	24	35	33	25
Better public transport	26	26	24	33	17
Better price	22	25	12	27	17
Childcare	17	18	18	20	8
More local venue	17	9	35	27	25
Someone to go with	13	15	12	13	0
None	24	24	18	27	33

5.10 Preferences in receiving information

- Respondents were also asked (using Showcard 3) how they would like to receive information about services for themselves and their children. In addition to the preferences for all respondents, table 16 shows the rank order of preferences for each village².
- For all locations, the preferred way of receiving information was via a newsletter.
- Flyers were the second choice overall and for Jacksdale and Underwood. Selston residents preferred newspaper articles while residents of surrounding villages ranked word of mouth from professionals as their second choice.
- Email/websites and word of mouth of professionals were favoured by a fifth overall (21% email/website, 20% word of mouth).
- Information sessions and word of mouth from friends and family were preferred by 18% and 16% overall.

Table 16 – receipt of information

Information	Total N=112	Selston	Jacksdale	Underwood	Surrounding villages
	%	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Newsletter	69	1	1	1	1
Flyer/information sheet	38	3	2	2	3
Article in local paper	35	2	3	3	6
Via email/website	21	4	5	3	4
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	20	6	5	7	2
Information session at nursery/clinic/sure	18	5	5	5	6

² Multiple answers were permitted at this question and numbers of answers given varied greatly between villages. Thus direct comparisons or percentage scores are potentially misleading.

start					
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	16	7	4	6	4
None	1	0	0	0	0

5.11 Three things Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood needs

- When asked what three things Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood needs to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in table 17 below.
- The most frequently suggested ideas focused on parent and child activities, and were spontaneously mentioned by 15%. This included parent and baby activities, toddler groups, playgroups and toddler activities.
- Parents would also like to see more play facilities generally; 14% would like outdoor facilities improved (and a further 10% specifically ask for playgroup improvements), while 11% ask for an indoor play space. Another 11% would like more affordable activities.
- Requested improvements to the park, policing and safety, while outside the remit of Children' Centres, indicate the impact of lack of facilities for older children on those with very young children.

Table 17 – suggestions to make area better for parents with young children

Suggestion	Total N = 112
	%
Mother & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities	15
Outdoor/more/better play areas/somewhere to play/more activities	14
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	11
More/Cheap/Affordable activities/facilities	11
More child care/nurseries/Crèche	10
Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park	10
Before and after school activities/clubs	10
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities/Sports Facilities	8
More/better buses/Better transport	7
Clean up drugs/litter/dog mess/youths hanging around	6
More policing/Police	4
More/better information	4
Holiday activities/care for children	4
More/Better facilities for smaller children	3
Drop in sessions/drop in centre	3
Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol etc	3
Youth club/Activities for older children/teenagers	2
More shops/better shops	1
Further education courses/advisors	1
Place to meet/Groups for mums to meet	1
Other	39
Don't know/No response	12

* Respondents could make more than one suggestion so totals don't add to 100%

5.12 Thoughts on the arrival of the Children's Centre

- Respondents were asked if they had anything else to say about the Children's Centre, from what they had heard so far.
- 63% did not have anything to add (reflecting the high proportion (79%) who were unaware), but 22% expressed enthusiasm about the arrival of the Centre, with comments such as, "good idea", "great", "brilliant" and "excellent".
- Nine percent commented that they had heard nothing, or that more publicity was needed.

6 Partners' questionnaire

- Partners' anonymised responses are shown in full at Appendix 6.

6.1 Current problems

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

- The overall view from partners is that transport is one of the key issues for local parents. Lots of parents do not have access to a car during the day, and bus services are limited, particularly between the villages. Walking is often not safe because of a lack of pavements in more rural areas.

"Transport to and from the parish to main centres and around the parish."

"Transport/access can be an issue"

- There is also a need for more support for parents, particularly new mums. Lack of facilities means there are few opportunities for local parents to meet.

"Under 1 group for new mums. Teenage mums group. Breast feeding support groups for new mums. "

"There are some lovely people, young parents, who need to talk to ones their own age"

- One partner mentioned that there is a lack of joined up information on current provision locally.

6.2 Possible Changes

Q2. In what way do you think the advent of the Children's Centre will change the way services are delivered in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood?

- The partners anticipate that one of the key changes will be greater coordination of services, through a central focal point. They hope that it will lead to greater engagement of the rural community and to more support for parents.

"Improve communication and coordination between the areas both to support parents and coordinate services"

"Having a clear focal point will be beneficial."

"Crèche facilities, venues, support for new parents in the area who are often isolated from extended family".

- Additional effects will therefore be raised awareness of available services along with more, and more easily accessible, services, which may mean tailored provision in each village.

“People are more likely to be involved with local centres”

“Engage community from rural areas”

6.3 Biggest Challenge

Q3. What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge locally in developing the Children’s Centre in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood?

- Nearly all partners consider the main challenge to be finding a venue that parents can easily access. Most appear to be thinking about provision of one venue for the whole area, but of course there may be other solutions to this key issue.

“finding a site where everyone will be able to attend if they have to walk”

“the geography of the area.”

“accessing a centre from all areas”

- Related to this, some partners mention linking with the separate communities and integrating services across the parish.

“integration of children’s services across the parish. Due to the ingrained parochialism”

“providing services across the area. Ensuring access to services”

- Engaging with local families, building up trust and delivering services on a tight budget were also mentioned as challenges.

6.4 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]

- There is very little evidence of mechanisms to promote partnership working in the area. One long-serving parish councillor recollected that it had happened in the past but that group interests had got in the way of effective partnership working.
- There is some evidence that it does occur in relation to the extended schools program. There is also mention of the rural area partnership by a representative of the family centre team.

"It has happened in the past but I fear self/group interest will not allow this (seen it before)"

"Very useful. Yes, everyone is invited. I'm unsure how often they are held"

"The rural area partnership is in place"

6.5 Partners' Priorities

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

- Responses to this question reflected the partners' hopes and concerns expressed earlier in the questionnaire. Thus, needs were identified for:
 - Informing parents about the services that are available, and engaging parents and the wider community in the development of Children's Centre services

"Raise awareness, communicating availability clearly"

- Providing joined up services, and increasing the services that are available, by supporting current workers who would like to extend their services, and taking the lead on providing other services
- Organised play sessions, opportunities for parents to meet each-other and a drop-in centre were specific mentions

"organised play and meeting opportunities"

- Ensuring parents can access services, given the rural nature of the area and inadequate public transport network
- Need led local childcare
- Improving recreation grounds
- Provision of a building.

7 Focus Groups

- The discussion guide used in the focus groups will be found in Appendix 4. 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. This can be seen in Appendix 7. The mapping is based on knowledge of parents and partners. Parents were aware of toddler groups in their immediate area, and occasionally in other villages.
- Activities run by Selston Leisure Centre and the Tin Hat were not well known.
- This showed that most activities take place in Selston. There are no activities on a Friday.

7.1 Knowledge of services in the area

- Knowledge of local services was limited for each of the mums in the focus groups. They are generally aware of the school nurseries, playgroups and of toddler groups they use themselves. Information on activities was by word of mouth or through the local library or free newspapers. There is a parish newsletter but those who read it say most of the information is out of date when it comes out. Those with children at school found the school was useful as a source of information on local services.

"In school as well. Our school's quite good at sending out newsletters, but if you haven't got access to that. When I first moved here I didn't know anybody and I had got a new baby and I didn't know where to go or anything. It was really difficult to get information about finding out about groups and stuff."

Selston focus group

- Knowledge of schools-based nursery services was good. Participants were able to give details on the provision of nurseries in schools both in their village and in some other schools as well.

"At the school [Jacksdale] there is a nursery."

"I mean it is the best of both worlds because it is a little building all of its own isn't it?"

"Yes it is lovely, really lovely."

"I used a playgroup at Selston [Matthew Holland]. It's every morning. That's why she has gone to Selston C of E because all the nursery children have gone there."

"They can go there from two at Selston."

Underwood focus group

- They were also able to talk about alternative local early years education provision. Some had visited several options when deciding on where to send their child to access their free entitlement to funded early years education provision, and expressed preferences in relation to schools or voluntary sector provision.

"There is a pre-school at Matthew Holland."

"They have a day off, is it Friday?"

Selston focus group

"What Underwood has too is the pre-school playgroup."

"You can have a funded place but it is not constructive enough, it is just a playgroup."

Underwood focus group

- However, it was difficult to find out about pre-school provision outside their immediate area, since they relied on word of mouth.

"I don't know how I found out about it [pre-school at Matthew Holland]. It is really hidden away isn't it?"

"It was third hand I heard of it."

Underwood focus group

- In terms of childcare for children under school nursery or pre-school age, there are registered childminders locally, although the general perception by parents is that they are very busy. There are private day nurseries outside the area, for example at Ironville, but at around £12 per half-day session these are perceived to be not cost-effective for most parents to consider, reflecting low levels of awareness of support for fees through working tax credit. Some of these parents reported that they tend to work school hours or rely on family for childcare.
- Parents are aware of the toddler groups very local to them and the ones they use. Once again they rely on word of mouth and occasional local advertising.

"There is one at the church isn't there on Wednesday morning. St Helen's Church, Selston."

Selston focus group

"There is Mums and Tots here on a Thursday."

"And in Selston at the church. It's on a Wednesday morning at 9.30 till 11. I go along sometimes."

Jacksdale focus group

“At Brinsley School they do a little group called Wiggles and I think it’s a Tuesday morning. The only reason I know about it is because I did go to take [name] once and for whatever reason I never went but when I was out running the other day, I saw on every telegraph pole they had put a little printed thing “Wiggles” so they must be trying to drum up some support.”

Underwood focus group

- One of the issues with toddler groups locally is that because they are run on a voluntary basis, they can cease to operate. Thus, if they are not used or advertised frequently, parents become unsure of whether or not they are running, and the details of days, times and location.

“They used to have one at Brinsley Parish Hall but I don’t think there is anything now is there? It used to be Monday afternoon and two or three years ago it stopped because no one else would take it over.”

Underwood focus group

- Parents have good awareness of services offered by the local libraries. It appears that the library service are pro-active about advertising their sessions for under 5’s. One parent commented on information she had received through the post, and leaflets advertising ‘rattle and rhyme’ sessions were seen in several public buildings in the area.

“What about the library on a Wednesday. Story, rattle and rhyme. It is advertised in the library, isn’t it?”

Selston focus group

“There is a mobile library on a Wednesday, so I go there. They do a specific time for little ones.”

“You see there is Eastwood library but again if you haven’t got transport... they sent me a thing – is it Rattle and Rhyme but I have been to other Rattle and Rhymes at other libraries and they are lovely.”

Underwood focus group

“There are things on at the library but not often. Sometimes the ladies ring me if something is going on.”

Jacksdale focus group

- Some parents mentioned the exercise class with crèche offered by Selston Leisure Centre on a Wednesday morning. However, some commented that they would find it intimidating to go along because they would assume they would not be as physically fit as others. They are also concerned that there would not be sufficient crèche space.
- There is little awareness of services for under 5s offered by the leisure centre. Some mentioned a Gym Tots session, which they believed, had stopped some years before. Others mentioned that the Centre has soft play equipment that is used for children’s parties.

"[Gym Tots] was at the leisure centre."

"Would you say about three years ago it stopped? That was really popular."

Selston focus group

- Parents in Selston are aware of the Tin Hat but it is not top of mind as a facility because it is so tucked away and not clearly signposted. Courses are not widely advertised. One parent in Selston was aware of the classes offered at the Tin Hat, while others had forgotten that it was there. Parents in the other villages do not hear at all what is on at the Tin Hat unless they know someone who uses them. They do not know where to go to find out.

"There is the Tin Hat. I would like that to be used more for community things. It is a lovely facility isn't it, lovely building...They do all kinds of courses...I think we got leaflets through the door, in that brochure you get, The Community News, when it first opened. But I am now down at the leisure centre a lot anyway so I know it was happening."

"No one talks about it, you forget because that's what I have done. I knew when it opened and I got all excited and I never did anything."

Selston focus group

"My friend goes to the Tin Hat centre, she has been doing a baby first aid course and I think it was six weeks or it might have been twelve weeks. She could take her baby and there was a crèche for the baby. The course is free, they still charge for the crèche though. Nine pound."

Underwood focus group

- Health services in the area were low profile and only mentioned when specifically prompted. As in any area, attitudes towards GP surgeries were mixed. Jacksdale parents had a particular problem with health visitor services because some used GPs in Derbyshire. This is discussed in the next section. Underwood parents had nowhere local where they could get their baby weighed and it was assumed they would be able to travel to Eastwood or Selston with a young baby to attend a clinic.

"You can't even go to a clinic to get your baby weighed in Underwood, you have to go somewhere else. I go to Selston."

"They used to do a clinic here on a Monday and that stopped probably four years ago. So really there's a need here."

"I was asked the second time I saw the midwife to go up to the health centre at the fire station in Eastwood, that was when she was 10 days old. If [husband] wasn't at home I would have had to ask a family member or get on a bus."

Underwood focus group

- Those who used Selston commented that the baby clinic has been reduced from weekly to fortnightly and that the additional pressure on health visitors is showing in the service they are able to provide.

“You can only go to the baby clinic once a fortnight and there is so many people there, they haven’t got time to...you know, they couldn’t sit down for half an hour and especially with the second one they are like, ‘oh you know what you are doing, oh yeah that’s fine’.”

Underwood focus group

- Play parks locally came in for criticism as generally having few items of play equipment and often having broken glass around, making them unsuitable places to take small children.

“There is the play-park but there is broken glass though”

Jacksdale focus group

“There’s the park. There is one on the main road, it is very little. You don’t see anybody on them any more. Two swings.”

“At Kingswood they have got all their climbing frames.”

“At Selston they have got a lovely one where you turn into the Matthew Holland complex.”

Underwood focus group

“The parks in this area, especially where we live down the other end of Selston, I petitioned to keep the one open on St Helen’s estate because they was after shutting it down and there’s not much on there, there is three swings and a slide that’s it. I have to get in the car to take mine to Brinsley, it’s fantastic, there is the climbing frame, there is the roundabout.”

“We have been [to Selston parks] a few times but whenever you go it is full of glass and rubbish. You can’t constantly be saying to her ‘Don’t run around because if you fall over you are going to cut yourself’.”

Selston focus group

7.2 Strengths and weaknesses of current services

Strengths

- Because of the low level of service provision in Jacksdale and Underwood, these groups in particular struggled to think of any service that currently helped them as a parent.
- The library service is felt by parents to be particularly helpful, because of their child-friendly attitude.

“They are really good with the children. When you go in they have a chat with the children”

Jacksdale focus group

- Parents in Underwood also tended to use the park and other outside spaces, which are fine in good weather, but reported that there are no physical activity facilities in bad weather, so those with transport have to drive a distance to a commercial indoor play centre.

- In Selston, the convenience of having a baby clinic in the village is demonstrated by the fact that the health visitor service is rated as the most helpful service. However, parents still pinpoint weaknesses within the service because of perceived under-resourcing. But they say it is the best, given a perceived lack of services generally.

“It is one that you do definitely connect with, whereas others are more a sort of voluntary thing. So I am not saying they are overly helpful or anything necessarily.”

“I mean they had got so many people, haven’t they?”

Selston focus group

Weaknesses

- As evidenced above, one of the main weaknesses of local services generally is lack of information on what is available in the area.

“Lack of information as well. There is just no central point where you can go”
Jacksdale focus group

“Tin Hat...But even now it is not well advertised is it. You have to go in and find out what courses are on.”

Selston focus group

- Lack of local things to do with young children is an issue for those in both Jacksdale and Underwood, particularly for children aged under three and for parents with children under one.

“I think it is just the lack of stuff to do with young children that is the worst thing locally.”

Jacksdale focus group

- Transport is a big issue for those without access to a car. In Jacksdale there is one bus an hour. Although there is a local mini bus they perceive this to be for pensioners.

“You just can’t get anywhere to get back to collect the children from school. If you haven’t got a car you are stuck”

Jacksdale focus group

- In Jacksdale in particular, we came across an issue around cross-border use of health services between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Some parents use GPs in Derbyshire, because of the proximity to the county border. They are told that they can have their baby weighed at the local clinic in Jacksdale, but parents reported that when they attend they are made to feel less welcome than other parents. They said that health visitors will weigh but will not offer advice, which parents find unwelcoming.

"I'm with the doctors in Derbyshire but I live in Nottinghamshire. So when they come down here [Jacksdale community centre] to do the baby weighing we was told we could come here but they wasn't that forthcoming if you did come here if they found out you was with Derbyshire doctors. They just weighed them. Some mums they wouldn't give advice to"

Jacksdale focus group

7.3 Gaps in current provision

- There is a need for better information dissemination in all three villages, since there is very little - and nothing effective - at the moment.

"If somebody could produce a booklet of what services are available locally from all agencies because it is so difficult to try and find out what is in each neighbouring village, even if you have got transport."

Underwood focus group

- Parents in Underwood and Jacksdale find it hard to meet local parents because there is nothing in the village for the under 3s, so new mums can become particularly isolated as they don't have contact with other mums through taking older children to school. Even those in Selston find it hard to go to groups if they don't already know people who go.

"if you don't know anybody you have no way of meeting people in this village because there is nothing. You are not going to meet anyone until your children go to school."

Underwood focus group

"Age 1-3 it can be quite lonely. You have got nothing to do, you want to do stuff."

Jacksdale focus group

"I was really reluctant to go anywhere when I first moved here because I didn't know anybody. I didn't do anything until she was two and a half and I found out she could go to playgroup because I didn't even know what age they go to what."

Selston focus group

- All parents would like more organised activities for the under 3s. Selston parents suggested a drop-in centre, perhaps in partnership with the Tin Hat. Gymtots and bouncy castle sessions or dance class are all suggestions of specific activities.

"I think physical things for young children, particularly in the winter when it is really cold, you could do with something where they can really let off steam and jump about, from a year old."

Jacksdale focus group

“Maybe something in conjunction with the Tin Hat providing a place for parents to go with the younger children. When they are toddlers it’s nice to have a place to go and the health visitor could be there.”

Selston focus group

“I have been to the odd active tots before and I think something like that you know, get involved and using the energy.”

Underwood focus group

- Parents in Selston would like cost-effective soft play sessions and messy play sessions.

“Soft play costs an absolute fortune. It’s not just paying to get in it’s food, sweets, toys and that sort of thing.”

“Anything they are going to enjoy.”

Selston focus group

- In terms of library services, whilst being very positive about the current service offered they would like to see more regular story time sessions, and not just at Selston – possibly even on the mobile library.

“It would be nice if the mobile could do something like that [Rattle and Rhyme] wouldn’t it?”

“It would be yes, I mean it could park up on the community centre car park couldn’t it?”

Underwood focus group

- Parents in Jacksdale suggested a toy library would be helpful.

“Children get bored with their own toys and you can’t always afford to go out and buy more.”

Jacksdale focus group

- One parent suggested that providing a good park for older children might keep them off the parks designed for younger children, so both groups would benefit.
- To support slightly older children, parents would like to learn about how best to support their learning, for example with current phonics schemes.

“I think something structured around nursery, like Jolly Phonics, you know how they teach them, it’s different to how we learnt.”

“It’s nice to know what they are doing in school so you can carry it on. You don’t want to be contradicting what they are doing in school as well.”

Jacksdale focus group

- Other suggested courses for parents are baby signing or sign language, and a ‘back to exercise’ class with a free crèche to ease mums into getting fit again.

“There is one here on an afternoon but I could never start doing something like that. I don’t think so and you would be paying twice, you would pay to go to the class and pay someone to look after the little ones.”

Underwood focus group

7.4 Good things to come from the arrival of the Children’s Centre

- Group participants were very positive about the advent of a Children’s Centre in their area. It can only be a positive improvement if it means more services in an area with very few. They hope it will reduce the isolation felt by some parents of young children and will also help to tackle transport issues. They anticipate that services will be joined up in a more parent-friendly way.

“I know other places where Sure Starts are and they will have the health visitor at the building, won’t they? But there is nothing at all and there must be a need for it even if it was only once a month that you could go and see them.”

Underwood focus group

- Parents are aware that the advent of a Children’s Centre does not mean a new building. The community is so dispersed that this would not be a sensible approach anyway. The individual communities would like at least some services delivered on their doorstep, negating the need to travel outside of their village and enabling them to meet parents from the same village.

7.5 Priorities for improvement in the local area

- A central source of information
- Something for new mums
- Exercise with toddlers
- A toddler group for Underwood
- Publicising and ensuring access to courses at the Tin Hat

- Suggested venues in Selston are the Tin Hat and Selston Parish Hall, the latter being the more central location.
- Suggested venues in Jacksdale include the new room at the back of the Dale Club and Jacksdale Community Centre. Where services are to be provided in Selston, Jacksdale parents say that the Tin Hat is better placed for bus routes than the Parish Hall.
- Suggested venues in Underwood are the Community Centre, Bagthorpe Chapel and the Miners’ Welfare.
- Parents in Jacksdale and Underwood would like some services in their own village, but would be happy to travel to Selston where necessary, if convenient transport were available.

“Probably like courses that are on at the Tin Hat and places like that and if there is a crèche then some of the courses probably would be of interest....if you could get to the places but I don’t look into it because I know I can’t get there”

Underwood focus group

8 Key messages for the future

- The interviews with parents, the focus groups and input from the partners show a high level of agreement about the needs of parents and young children in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood for the future.

These include:

- More up-to-date information about services and activities across the villages
 - Raised awareness of existing services across the area
 - Better access to health services for all
 - Increased provision of relevant services for families with young children in the area, particularly organised activities for mums and tots up to age 3 and for parents of under 1's
 - Services that parents and carers in all villages can access. This means provision of some services in Jacksdale and Underwood, and ensuring transport is available to Selston for services where this is not logistically possible
 - Educational classes with crèche
 - A drop-in centre where parents can meet
 - The coordination of service providers and improved partnership working to deliver services.
- 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 services in Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood.
 - 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 on 27th April 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.

9 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 Selston, Jacksdale and Underwood from parents and partners