



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Tuxford Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

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

Written by: ActionPoint Marketing Solutions

July 2006

SureStart

Table of Contents

Section		Page Number
1	Background to the Research	3
2	Aims & Objectives of the Consultation	4
3	Methodology	5
4	Observations on the Samples	7
5	Main Findings	12
6	Key Messages for the future	32

List of Tables

Table No.	Description	Page No.
1	School/Nursery child attends	8
2	GP Practice/Health Centre registration	8
3	Area where parents live in Tuxford	9
4	Partner's disciplines	9
5	Partner's roles	10
6	Focus group attendees – children per family	11
7	Services ever used	13
8	Usefulness of services ever used	14
9	Reasons for service not being useful	15
10	Child friendliness of services ever used	16
11	Reasons for not being child friendly	17
12	Rating of services - Comparison of mean scores	18
13	Most helpful service to parent	19
14	Most helpful service to child (see Chart 1 also)	20
15	Help required to use services more often	21
16	Preferences in receiving information	22
17	Three things Tuxford needs	23
18	Thoughts on the arrival of the Children's Centre	24

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% and 30% of disadvantaged wards nationally, Nottinghamshire has been 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. This will be followed by a further 25 in Round Two.
- 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, 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 child care for 50 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 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 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 main part of the Tuxford consultation, 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 the Tuxford area and how best their requirements can be met in the future with the development of a Children's Centre in Tuxford.
 - to involve community members and partners in planning together to develop the optimal Children's Centre services for the Tuxford 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 comprised of three stages:
 - Face-to-face interviews with parents
 - A self completion questionnaire distributed to service providers and key stakeholders in the area
 - A focus group with parents recruited via the parents' questionnaire

3.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation consisted of interviews with parents. It was planned to include:
 - Parents/carers with babies, who use the local baby clinic
 - Parents/carers who are users of local pre-school activities
 - Parents living locally with children 5 years and under
- Interviews were conducted at Tuxford Primary School on Thursday June 15th '06. Interviews were also completed the day before, the 14th June, at the baby clinic that operates at the Tuxford Clinic on alternate Wednesdays, across the road from the primary school.
- There were also some questionnaires completed directly by parents themselves. (i.e. self completion). The library personnel at Tuxford library and the manager at the Tuxford Mine of Information, the local Advice Centre, kindly agreed to encourage parents with children of eligible age to complete the questionnaire.
- The full list of interviewing locations/sources was:
 - Tuxford Primary school
 - Tuxford Clinic
 - The Mine of Information, Tuxford
 - The Tuxford Library
- As an incentive to complete the questionnaire parents could participate in a prize draw for a child's arts and crafts kit. The prize draw will take place at the feedback session in September '06.
- At the end of the questionnaire parents were asked if they would like to take part in a focus group. If willing their details were completed on a contact sheet at the back of the questionnaire which was removed before data processing.

3.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- The partners' consultation stage commenced with a meeting to inform them about the new Children's Centre and the consultation process overall. The meeting was held on Friday May 19th at Tuxford primary school and 20 partner organisations attended.
- The self completion questionnaire was distributed at the meeting with a reply paid envelope for easy return to ActionPoint.
- The questionnaire comprised mainly of open ended questions but also included a mapping exercise which required partners to list all the activities they were aware of in Tuxford and the surrounding area. This would help identify any service provision gaps or overlaps.
- Childminders within the area were also sent the questionnaire and invited to attend the meeting. A crèche was available if required.

3.3 Focus Group

- Parents for the focus group were recruited from those completing the parents' interview and who had indicated an interest on the contact sheet at the back of the questionnaire.
- There were around 25 parents who had said they would like to come to the group, and others also stating 'possibly'. To recruit parents to the group ActionPoint rang and confirmed the availability of those interested ('possiblys' were not contacted) the day after the parents interviewing (15th June). The recruits were then sent an invitation with the venue and timing details of the group. There were 15 booked to attend the group in order to achieve 10-11 attendees on the day.
- There were some parents (8) who had indicated they would like to come but who were not needed and therefore not telephoned for recruitment. These were contacted separately to inform them or a message left if no one was available. In one instance there was no answer machine available to leave a message. Even so two parents did come to the group who had not been invited.
- The group was held on Wednesday June 21st at 9.30am in the new Children's Centre on the Tuxford Primary School site. A crèche was available and all who attended were given a £10 Argos voucher as a thank you for taking part.
- The group lasted 1.5 hrs and 12 parents attended on the day.
- There were three stages within the focus group discussion;
 - An explanation about the Children's Centre with particular emphasis on its operation in partnership with Ollerton & Boughton Children's Centre. This enabled a wider understanding of the concept and the situation specific to Tuxford.
 - A mapping exercise to gather knowledge about existing services for parents in Tuxford and surrounding villages.
 - A discussion on the type of facilities and services parents would like and their views on the existing ones, as well as their views on the Children's Centre and any concerns about its arrival.

4. Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- Some 67 questionnaires were completed, which is low for statistical purposes so the data should be used with caution, although figures may be taken as an indication of parents' views rather than representative of all parents in the area. However it is important to note that in Tuxford there is a relatively small number of children 0-5 years, only 152, we have therefore contacted 44% of the parents in the Tuxford community, a high proportion of the total (assuming 1 child under 5yrs per family). Each Children's Centre consultation aims to reach at least 25%.
- Percentages, which can be misleading, have not been used in this section of the report because of the low number of interviews completed.
- Some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, so care must be taken when comparing responses.
- Of the 67 interviews completed with parents/carers in the various interviewing locations, the majority were female (59).

The following outlines some of the top line figures for the parents' consultation:

- Twenty nine respondents knew about Sure Start, 7 were not sure and 31 said they did not.
- Over half (37) were aged 30 to 39, while 17 were between 20-29 years, and only one was under 20. 12 respondents were over 40, with 4 of these being 50+.
- Sixteen respondents had two children under 5 in the household, while 30 had only one child under 5. Twenty respondents were reported as having no children under five and one respondent had three children under 5 in the household.
- While 20 respondents had one child aged 5-16 in the household, 14 had two children, 2 had three children, 2 households had 4 children and 1 household had 6 children in this age group. 28 were reported as having no children in this age group.
- Twelve respondents had one child aged 16+ in the household
- Between them, respondents had 145 children 18 years and below in the household; the number of families with one child was 13 and the number with two children was 32. 14 families had three children, one family had 4 children, 2 families had 5 children, and two families had 6 children. This gives the average number of children per family as 2.2.
- The total number of children aged under 5, whose mums were interviewed was 65, giving 43% of the total children under 5 covered by the consultation in the Tuxford area. The number of 5-16s was 68, this gives 133 children in total, 16 years and below.
- Only 5 respondents revealed that they were expecting a baby, so the vast majority (62) were not pregnant at the time of interviewing.
- Most households (52 respondents) had 2 adults aged over 18 living in the household while 7 respondents lived in households of only one adult and 7 reported having 3 adults in the household. Consequently, the average was 2.1 adults in the households aged 18+.

- Levels of employment were high – only 6 said there was no-one working in the household. Twenty seven respondents said that one adult was working in the household while 32 said that two were working and two said that 3 were working.
- Seventeen respondents were themselves working full-time, while 23 were working part-time, and only two said they were unemployed. In addition, 27 of the respondents described themselves as (full time) Parents/Carers. Six also said they were grandparents.
- 51 of the 67 respondents said they were either married or partnered, while 10 were single; no one described themselves as 'other', such as widowed.
- Asked about their ethnic background, 65 respondents said they were white, one said they were Black African and one said they were Chinese.
- All but one of their home postcodes fell into NG22 code, with practically all in the NG22 0 area.
- Respondents were asked which school or nursery their children under 5 go to. Of those parents interviewed, the majority of their children under 5 years (48 out of 67 respondents) went to Tuxford Nursery.

Table 1 – School/Nursery child attends

School/Nursery	No of responses
Total	67
Tuxford Primary & Nursery	48
East Markham Primary	3
Walesby C of E	2
Pippins Pre School	1
All Aboard Day Nursery	1
Busy Bees - Sutton	1
Hand in Hand Nursery	1
DK/NR	10

- Regarding doctors surgery parents were registered with, most were registered with Tuxford Medical Centre (60 out of 67 respondents).

Table 2 – GP Practice / Health Centre Registration

Doctors Surgery	No of responses
Total	67
Tuxford Medical Centre	60
Riverside Health Centre	3
Tuxford Clinic	2
Crown House, Retford	2
Workshop	1

- Almost half the parents live in the centre/near the centre of Tuxford. A further third of the respondents said that they lived on the edge/outskirts of Tuxford.
- There was a minority living in the rural areas, only 10 of the 67 who participated. However this represented over 10% of the total and meant that views from outside the Tuxford community were also included in the consultation.

Table 3 - Area where Parents live in Tuxford

Area of Tuxford where parents live	No of responses
Total	67
In the centre of Tuxford/near the centre	33
On the edge/Outskirts of Tuxford	24
In the surrounding villages	6
In a rural area outside villages/town	2
Green Belt	1
DK/NR	1

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 15 completed questionnaires were received from service providers in the Tuxford area.
- The disciplines in which partners worked were as follows:

Table 4 – Partners' disciplines

Partners' disciplines	No of responses
Notts County Council	4
Education	3
Childminder	2
Church	1
Pre-school	1
Health	1
Voluntary	1
Info & training	1
Children's services	1

Table 5 – Partners’ roles

Partners’ roles
Minister
Librarian
Childminder (2)
Pre-school development
Out of work development
Early Years teacher
Health visitor
Senior rural officer
Centre manager, Mine of Information
Deputy/Assistant Headteacher
Local learning partnership worker
Headteacher (2)
Deputy Manager

- Between them, the respondents have a total of over 74 years experience in their current posts, ranging from 1-10 years with an average of around 5 years.

4.3 Focus Group

- There was a good attendance at the focus group – 12 of the 15 recruited parents attended.
- Between them the parents had 29 children giving an average of 2.4 children each; of these 17 were 5 years and under, which represented 11% of all the children identified by the Change for Children team for the Tuxford area (152). The number of children per household ranged from 1 to 5. The breakdown is seen in table 6 below:

Table 6 – Focus group attendees – children per family

No. of children per family	No of parents in group
One child	3
Two children	5
Three Children	2
Four children	0
Five children	2

- Eleven of the attendees were parents and one was a grandmother caring for two young children aged 6 and 4 years old.
- The majority of the parents in the group lived in the centre or on the edge of Tuxford. There were 5 living in the centre, 6 on the edge of Tuxford and one in a surrounding village.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- Some 67 questionnaires were completed, which is low for statistical purposes. BUT did represent 44% of that total community
- Figures must therefore be taken as an indication of parents' views, rather than being representative as a whole.
- Percentages, which can be misleading when used with small sample sizes, have not been used in this section of the report because of the low number of interviews completed.
- Some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, so care must be taken when comparing responses.
- 59 out of the 67 respondents were women.
- Twenty-nine or about half of respondents said they knew about Sure Start. However, 3 did not know and 7 were not sure.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents interviewed (40 out of 67) said that they knew about the proposed Children's Centre for Tuxford, but 20 were unaware and 7 were not sure (NB no publicity had been issued – the consultation is often the first awareness raising event in developing a Children's Centre)

5.1.1 Services ever used

- All respondents were asked which local services they had ever used, by means of a Showcard (see Appendix 2). Their responses are shown in Table 7 overleaf.
- Responses are shown for all respondents, and for comparison purposes, responses by age group and by those said to be aware of Sure Start.
- Care must be taken where numbers responding are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- The most frequently used service was the GP practice used by 58 respondents.

Table 7 overleaf shows services ever used

Table 7 – Services ever used

Service	Total using service	Aged Under 29yrs	Aged 30 – 39yrs	Aged Over 40yrs	Aware of Sure Start
Total	67	18	37	12	29
GP practice	58	16	32	10	27
Health visitors	46	12	28	6	19
Midwife	45	11	25	9	21
Nursery in a school	34	8	21	5	15
Children's Library Service	33	9	19	5	15
Family member	26	8	13	5	11
Antenatal sessions	22	3	14	5	14
After School Club	20	5	11	4	9
Toddler group	19	2	13	4	11
Pre-school playgroup	18	3	11	4	9
Friends	14	4	9	1	7
Job Centres	10	4	4	2	5
Childminder	9	1	7	1	5
Further Education	9	2	4	3	5
Home Visits	8	5	2	1	3
Speech Therapists	8	1	5	2	4
Day Nursery	7	2	3	2	2
Children's Information Service	6	2	3	1	4
Story Time Sessions	6	0	6	0	4
Breakfast Club	5	1	3	1	1
Home Safety Equipment	5	2	2	1	2
Crèche	4	1	2	1	2
Independent School	3	2	0	1	0
Dietician/Nutritionist	3	1	0	2	1
Homestart	3	1	2	0	2
Toy Library	3	1	1	1	3
Parenting advice & guidance	2	1	0	1	1
Family Centre	2	1	1	0	1
Breast Feeding Group	1	0	0	1	1
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	0	1	0	1

5.1.2 Usefulness of services

- Respondents were then asked how **useful** they had found the services they had previously used for themselves and their family. Their responses are shown in Table 8 below.
- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness of the service found by parents, on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not at all useful and 5 is very useful.
- However, care must be taken with the low numbers of responses for some services as results are not necessarily representative of the views of all. For example, Independent School scored 5.0 – Very useful, this is based on only 3 respondents.

Table 8 – Usefulness of services ever used

Service	No. using service	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful/ not all useful	Average score*
GP practice	58	22	20	5	4.0
Health visitors	46	28	7	2	4.4
Midwife	45	32	9	2	4.6
Nursery in a school	34	28	4	0	4.8
Children's Library Service	33	15	13	1	4.3
Family member	26	24	1	0	5.0
Antenatal sessions	22	15	4	1	4.6
After School Club	20	17	2	0	4.8
Toddler group	19	11	5	1	4.4
Pre-school playgroup	18	10	5	0	4.5
Friends	14	12	2	0	4.9
Job Centres	10	3	2	0	3.9
Childminder	9	8	1	0	4.9
Further Education	9	6	3	0	4.7
Home Visits	8	5	2	0	4.5
Speech Therapists	8	4	1	0	4.1
Day Nursery	7	6	0	0	5.0
Children's Information Service	6	2	4	0	4.3
Story Time Sessions	6	2	0	0	3.8
Breakfast Club	5	2	3	0	4.4
Home Safety Equipment	5	5	0	0	5.0
Crèche	4	4	0	0	5.0
Independent School	3	3	0	0	5.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	3	2	0	0	4.3
Homestart	3	3	0	0	5.0
Toy Library	3	1	2	0	4.3
Parenting advice & guidance	2	1	1	0	4.5
Family Centre	2	2	0	0	5.0
Breast Feeding Group	1	0	0	0	3.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	1	0	0	5.0

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

5.1.3 Reasons given for services mentioned as being not useful

- Parents were then asked about any of the services, which they had described as being 'not useful' or 'not at all useful', and why this was so.
- Only 10 respondents gave reasons, reflecting a generally high level of satisfaction recorded.
- Problems were mainly with personnel, ranging from a receptionist who was, in the parents' words, 'rude' and 'unhelpful', to problems with a GP and midwife, although of the 5 respondents who mentioned a GP practice in Table 8, only one gave a reason specifically about a GP.

Table 9 Reasons for service not being useful

Reasons for service not being useful	Number of responses
Total	10
Receptionist 'rude'/Unhelpful	3
Health visitor 'poor'/not needed/not wanted	2
No appointments/Waiting long time for appointments	2
Midwife was 'lazy'/'rude'/Problems with Midwife	2
GP Not helpful/Not very good/Problems with GP	1
	1
No benefit/Not Helpful/Not very good	1
Other	1
DK/NR	1

5.1.4 Child-friendliness of Services

- Again, by service mentioned earlier, parents were asked how child-friendly they had found the services. Responses are shown in Table 5. Again the average score gives an indication of the level of child friendliness with 1 being not at all child friendly and 5 being very child friendly
- Caution should again be shown when looking at low response numbers.

See Table 10 overleaf - Child friendliness of services ever used

Table 10 – Child friendliness of services ever used

Service	Numbers using service	Very child friendly	Quite child friendly	Not child friendly/ not at all child friendly	Average score*
GP practice	58	18	8	13	3.5
Health visitors	46	28	9	0	4.6
Midwife	45	27	7	0	4.6
Nursery in a school	34	29	2	0	4.9
Children's Library Service	33	19	8	0	4.5
Family member	26	22	1	0	4.9
Antenatal sessions	22	7	3	2	3.9
After School Club	20	17	2	0	4.9
Toddler group	19	12	4	1	4.6
Pre-school playgroup	18	11	3	0	4.6
Friends	14	12	0	0	4.8
Job Centres	10	1	0	3	2.6
Childminder	9	9	0	0	5.0
Further Education	9	4	0	2	3.5
Home Visits	8	5	2	0	4.5
Speech Therapists	8	6	1	0	4.6
Day Nursery	7	5	1	0	4.8
Children's Info Service	6	0	2	0	3.7
Story Time Sessions	6	4	1	0	4.8
Breakfast Club	5	4	1	0	4.8
Home Safety Equipment	5	4	0	0	5.0
Crèche	4	4	0	0	5.0
Independent School	3	3	0	0	5.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	3	3	0	0	5.0
Homestart	3	3	0	0	5.0
Toy Library	3	1	1	0	4.5
Parenting advice & guidance	2	1	0	0	4.0
Family Centre	2	2	0	0	5.0
Breast Feeding Group	1	0	0	0	3.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	1	1	0	0	5.0

***Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't know/no response', where 5 = Very child friendly, 4 = quite child friendly, 3 = neither, 2 = not child friendly, 1 = not at all child friendly*

5.1.5 Reasons given for services mentioned as being not child friendly

- Parents were asked about a service they had mentioned as being not child friendly or not at all child friendly, and why this was so.
- About a third gave reasons (18 in total) suggesting that there was overall a high level of satisfaction with this aspect. Full reasons can be seen in table 11 below.

Table 11 – Reasons for being not child friendly or not at all child friendly

Service	Number of responses
Total	18
Not child friendly/no toys or play area	8
Patronising/negative	2
Not appropriate/not applicable	2
Not helpful/No interest	1
Other	2
Don't know/no response	4

5.1.6 Comparisons of usefulness and child-friendliness

- Looking at both these sets of data – usefulness and child friendliness, we have compared the average scores of parents' views to show the net difference in average ratings of the two aspects.
- The closer the average score of 5, the more 'useful' or 'child-friendly' a service it is considered to be. The difference is shown in bold when the service is more 'child-friendly' than 'useful'.
- From this it can be seen that Job Centres, Further Education, Antenatal sessions and GP practice are viewed more 'useful' than 'child-friendly', while Speech Therapists and Breakfast Club were viewed as slightly more 'child-friendly' than 'useful'.
- Parents seemed to find it easier to comment on the lack of child friendliness of services for their children rather than the usefulness for themselves.
- Please note that the base sizes get smaller the further down the table so must be treated with caution.

See Table 12 overleaf – Comparison of parent and child average (mean) scores

Table 12 – Rating of services- comparison of mean scores

Service	Average score ¹ Usefulness	Average score ² Child friendliness	Difference ³
GP practice	4.0	3.5	0.5
Health visitors	4.4	4.6	-0.2
Midwife	4.6	4.6	0.0
Nursery in a school	4.8	4.9	-0.1
Children's Library Service	4.3	4.5	-0.2
Family member	5.0	4.9	0.1
Antenatal sessions	4.6	3.9	0.7
After School Club	4.8	4.9	-0.1
Toddler group	4.4	4.6	-0.2
Pre-school playgroup	4.5	4.6	-0.1
Friends	4.9	4.8	0.1
Job Centres	3.9	2.6	1.3
Childminder	4.9	5.0	-0.1
Further Education	4.7	3.5	1.2
Home Visits	4.5	4.5	0.0
Speech Therapists	4.1	4.6	-0.5
Day Nursery	5.0	4.8	0.2
Children's Information Service	4.3	3.7	0.6
Story Time Sessions	3.8	4.8	-1.0
Breakfast Club	4.4	4.8	-0.4
Home Safety Equipment	5.0	5.0	0.0
Crèche	5.0	5.0	0.0
Independent School	5.0	5.0	0.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	4.3	5.0	-0.7
Homestart	5.0	5.0	0.0
Toy Library	4.3	4.5	-0.2
Parenting advice & guidance	4.5	4.0	0.5
Family Centre	5.0	5.0	0.0
Breast Feeding Group	3.0	3.0	0.0
Welfare Rights Sessions	5.0	5.0	0.0

¹Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't knows/no response', where 5 = Very useful, 4 = quite useful, 3 = neither, 2 = not useful, 1 = not at all useful,

²Of those giving a response, excluding 'Don't knows/no response', where 5 = Very child friendly, 4 = quite child friendly, 3 = neither, 2 = not child friendly, 1 = not at all child friendly

³ The larger the figure the larger the difference in the perception of the usefulness and child friendliness of the service. A score of 0 means that the service is seen as equally child friendly and useful

5.1.7 Most helpful service to parent

- Parents were asked to say which *one* out of the services they had mentioned was the most helpful to them, as a parent. The following table shows those services most frequently mentioned.
- Health visitors were most often cited as the most helpful service by parents, followed by the nursery school, Midwife and GP Practice.
- Some respondents gave more than one answer, while 8 respondents found it hard to choose a service at all

Table 13 – Most helpful service to parent

Service most helpful to you as a parent	Number of mentions
Total	67
Health visitors	10
Nursery in a school	9
Midwife	7
GP practice	6
Pre-school playgroup	5
Toddler group	5
Family member	5
After School Club	2
Day Nursery	2
Further Education	2
Homestart	2
Children's Library Service	1
Childminder	1
Dietician/Nutritionist	1
Home Visits	1
DK/NR	8

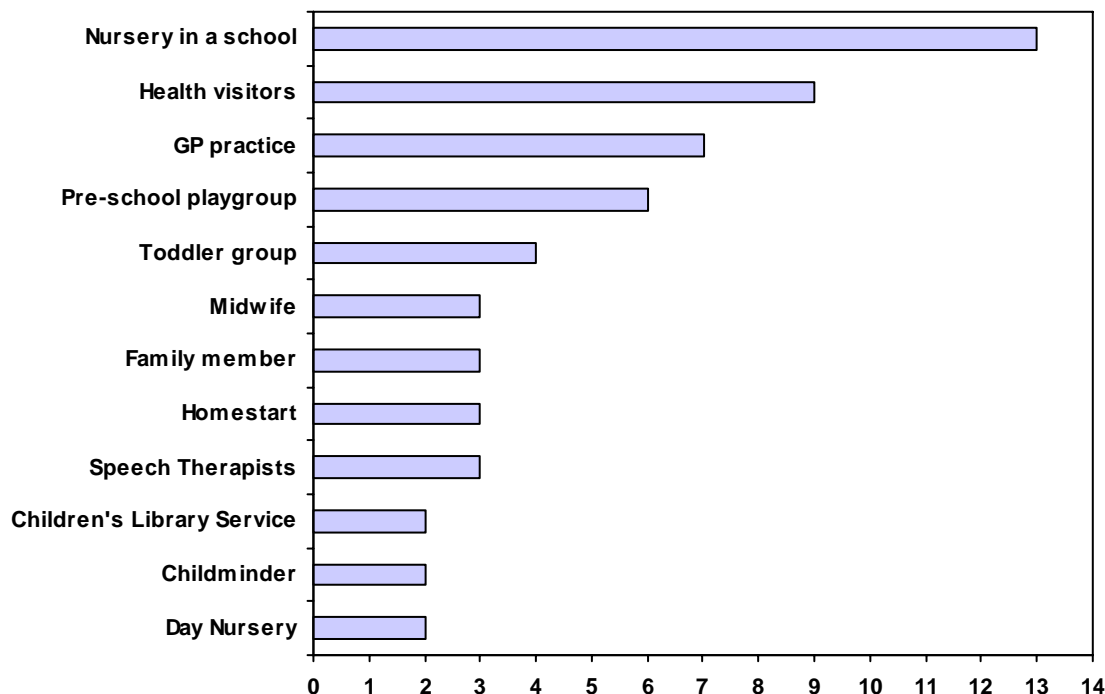
Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

5.1.8 Most helpful service to your child/children

- Parents were asked to say which one out of the services they had mentioned was the most helpful to their child or children.
- The service considered by parents to be the most helpful to their child was the nursery in school, chosen by half of the respondents.
- Health visitors, GPs and Pre-school playgroups were also considered to be helpful.

Chart 1 & Table 14 shows the most frequently aspects mentioned.

Chart 1- Most helpful services to child



No. responding 67 - chart based on number of mentions

Table 14 – Most helpful services to child

Service most helpful to child	Number of mentions
Total	67
Nursery in a school	13
Health visitors	9
GP practice	7
Pre-school playgroup	6
Toddler group	4
Midwife	3
Family member	3
Homestart	3
Speech Therapists	3
Children's Library Service	2
Childminder	2
Day Nursery	2
After School Club	1
Dietician/Nutritionist	1
DK/NR	8

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

5.1.9 Help to use services more often

- A list on Showcard 2 (Appendix 2) was shown to parents, and they were asked which of those listed might help them to use services more often.
- In Table 15, it can be seen that 'different times of events' and 'childcare' were mentioned most often, both by 15 respondents, just ahead of 'better public transport'.

Table 15 – Help required to use services more often

Suggestion	Total	Number making suggestion			
		Aged Under 29	Aged 30 -39	Aged Over 40	Aware of Sure Start
Total	67	18	37	12	29
Childcare	15	2	8	5	9
Different times of events	15	2	11	2	8
Better PublicTransport	13	3	9	1	3
Someone to go with	11	5	5	1	6
Better price	11	4	5	2	6
None	25	6	15	4	9

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

5.1.10 Preferences in receiving information

- Parents were shown a list of ways of receiving information, and asked to say which they would prefer. Results are shown in Table 11.
- Responses suggest that a newsletter is most favoured by 41 respondents followed by flyer/information sheet.
- Table 16 overleaf shows parents' responses

Table 16 – Preferences in receiving information

	Total	Aged Under 29	Aged 30 - 39	Aged Over 40	Aware of Sure Start
Total	67	18	37	12	29
Newsletter	41	7	25	9	17
Flyer/information sheet	31	7	18	6	15
Information session at nursery / clinic / Sure Start	21	6	12	3	9
Article in local paper	13	2	10	1	8
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	9	4	4	1	5
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	8	4	3	1	4
None	2	1	0	1	1

Multiple choices means responses add to more than the total

- Flyer/Information sheet was favoured by nearly half the respondents while 21 favoured an information session at the nursery/clinic/Sure Start.

5.1.11 Three things Tuxford needs

- When asked what 3 other things Tuxford needs to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in Table 17 below.
- Although this was a difficult question for many to answer, only 7 respondents were unable to suggest anything.

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

Suggestion from parent	Total	Aged Under 29	Aged 30 – 39	Aged Over 40	Aware of Sure Start
Total	67	18	37	12	29
Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park	24	5	15	4	11
Mother & Baby/Toddler Groups/ Playgroups/Toddler activities	23	6	14	3	13
Outdoor/More/better play areas/ Somewhere to play/More activities	16	3	11	2	11
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities	9	3	5	1	3
Youth club/Activities for older children	7	2	4	1	2
More/Better facilities for smaller children	7	3	4	0	5
Place to meet/Groups for mums to meet	5	3	1	1	4
More/Better child care/nurseries/Creche	5	2	1	2	4
Holiday activities/care for children	4	2	1	1	2
Before and after school activities/clubs	3	0	2	1	2
Drop in sessions/drop in centre	2	0	2	0	2
More/Better parking	2	2	0	0	1
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	1	0	1	0	0
Road safety/speed bumps/ School Crossing Patrol etc	1	1	0	0	1
Village Hall	1	0	0	1	0
Further education courses/Advisors	1	0	1	0	0
More policing/Police	1	1	0	0	0
Cheap/Affordable activities	0	0	0	0	0
Other	10	4	5	1	3
DK/NR	7	1	3	3	0

- The main areas that parents suggested were for better/safer/cleaner playgrounds/parks, various Mother/toddler playgroups and better outdoor facilities/activities.
- Specific facilities such as a swimming pool and a youth club were also mentioned by a few.

5.1.12 Thoughts on the arrival of the Children's Centre

- Most parents (48 out of 67) did not provide any further comments of the arrival of the Children's Centre
- The comments from those respondents who did provide feedback were very positive citing it as a great/brilliant idea.

Table 18 – Thoughts on the arrival of the Children's Centre

Comments on Sure Start	Total	Aged Under 29	Aged 30 – 39	Aged Over 40	Aware of Sure Start
Total	67	18	37	12	29
Good idea/Great/Brilliant/Excellent	8	2	2	4	5
Positive/Very Positive	3	0	3	0	2
Not heard anything/Don't know anything about it/Not sure	2	0	2	0	1
Other	6	2	3	1	3
DK/NR	48	14	27	7	18

5.2 Partners' questionnaire

- A total of 15 questionnaires were received from Partners. Anonymised responses are shown in full in Appendix 6.
- Question numbers shown below relate to those in the questionnaire. Q1-4 related to partners' contact & job details shown in section 4.2, Observations on the Sample.

5.2.1 Current problems

Q5. What do you think are the current problems, or gaps in current services, for parents and young families in Tuxford?

- The overall view is that there is a lack of parent/toddler/under 3's groups available in the village.
- They also felt that parents in the villages surrounding Tuxford were isolated due to the remote location of some of the villages. This issue was also thought to be relevant for Tuxford itself as it is relatively isolated in relation to nearby towns.
- Being a remote location was also problematic as there was a lack of access/transport from the village which meant that there was further isolation as parents/children were unable to access services.

"Lack of transport over the wide area causes isolation"

- There was also a mention of a lack of registered childminders/crèche facilities/out of hours care available in the area.

5.2.2 Possible Changes

Q 6. In what way do you think the advent of the Children's Centre will change the way services are delivered in Tuxford?

- Responses to this question were positive, with partners foreseeing the possibility of a more co-ordinated approach bringing families together.

"Coordination/opportunities made possible within Tuxford hopefully bringing families together"

- Some felt that it would provide a closer community particularly with the more isolated villages.

"It could increase the gap in opportunity between Tuxford residents and rural residents"

- The Children's Centre was also felt to be a good focal point and a good environment to meet.

“Hopefully it will provide a non threatening venue for parents to meet informally to develop knowledge of parenting skills whilst also helping them to become self supporting”

5.2.3 Biggest Challenge

Q7. What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge locally in developing the Children's Centre in Tuxford?

- One of the biggest challenges was to encourage parents to come and use the centre.

“To encourage those who really need it to come and share in it. It will take time and require home visits”

- An additional challenge was the problem of the rural location both in terms of the communications reaching the villages and transport.

“Getting the information out to those isolated families in small villages”

- A couple of partners felt that some parents would not engage and they would need to be encouraged to do so.
- Funding was also mentioned by one partner as a possible issue.

5.2.4 Effectiveness of Meetings

Q8. If workers from different settings/services have regular meetings, how useful are these ? Are parents invited?

- The partners were asked to identify cross-agency/service meetings already held in the area to discuss local issues.
- There was a general lack of feedback in terms of how useful these meetings were to everyone.
- Meetings varied in terms of frequency from once every six months to every two months.
- Four of the Partners said that parents were invited to take part – but for one of these groups no parents have taken up the offer.

“Keep people informed and allow parents to have an impact on service”

5.2.5 Partners' Priorities

Q9. What are your top three priorities for developing services or facilities or resources for parents and young children in Tuxford?

- The main area mentioned was the request for provision of a parent/toddler group and for other play facilities.
- Another priority was for support and service provision for parents and their families.

“Good quality and understanding support”

- There was also the issue of providing appropriate transport so that they can access the facilities.

“Transport for children and families to gain access to services”

- The need for accessible information on services/resources/courses in an appropriate location in the village was also required.

“Information centre on childcare & services that can be provided in the village”

5.3 Focus Group

- The discussion guide used in the focus group will be found in Appendix 4. This included areas which reflected the main sections of the parents' 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 Tuxford area. This can be seen in Appendix 7
- This showed that activities for children in the 0-5 age range are perceived as being very limited in Tuxford itself and currently most mums have to travel out of the village to access activities.

5.3.1 Services most useful to them as parents

- The services thought to be the most helpful for parents were:
 - The Walesby Mother and Toddler group
 - The Baby Clinic –Tuxford Clinic
 - The Early Years Learning - Nursery at Tuxford Primary School
- The Walesby toddler group is very popular. It is thought to be very safe, the children love it and there are lots of toys. The 'Messy Play' session is particularly popular on Thursdays. The facility to bring older children along during school holidays and the opportunity for parents to talk are also big positives.

"As a mum you don't always get time to do these things with your kids"

- The baby clinic gives peace of mind to new mothers and an opportunity to talk with other mums with new babies. The Nursery is also thought to be excellent.
- Specific positives mentioned were the structured environment of the nursery with a range of different activities for the children.

5.3.2 Services most helpful to their children

- The Tuxford Nursery was also mentioned as being the service most helpful for children. The opportunity to leave the children to get independence, away from siblings and parents was considered very important.
- It was mentioned that some children were ready to go to nursery before 3 years of age - the earliest age for entry to the nursery. Some commented that Pippins (East Markham toddler group) held on Wednesdays takes children from 2-2.5yrs at an earlier age than the nursery.

- There was general comment on a lack of services where there is a casual arrangement i.e. where you can get children used to being left without mum/dad for short periods. Most places don't have this option.

"You either have to go with the kids or leave them there"

5.3.3 Services which don't work/Unhelpful?

- Play areas – The play area on Linden Avenue Tuxford is thought to be dangerous for smaller children, as teenagers go there to drink and smoke. Syringes and broken glass have been found there, making it unsuitable for young children to play.
- A facility for young children which is attached to a play area for older children would be better or a separate building for the sole use of younger children.
- Another suggestion was for open play areas to have cameras to discourage teens from going there.
- Lack of information on where to go – there was a definite need for a central information point/publication on all services available for parents with children in the 0-5yrs age group in Tuxford and the surrounding area. Suggestions ranged from poster advertising to a booklet – a publication which gives all information in an easily accessible format.
- The Mine of Information in Tuxford does have a wide range of information on activities and services in Tuxford but is not thought to be comprehensive on children's activities in general and therefore not for children under 5yrs.
- Parents were aware that information is available in the local newspaper 'The Tuxfordian' but this is just for people living in Tuxford and is not distributed to those in the surrounding villages.

5.3.4 Areas for Improvement in Tuxford and the local area

Suggestions included:

- A parent toddler group focused on the 0-3 year age group is the key service/facility thought to be most needed in Tuxford - there has been one in the past but currently (Summer 2006) there is nothing for the 0-3s. Parents have to take their children out of Tuxford if they want them to go to a toddler group.
- Play parks for children up to 10 years and over 10 years. As outlined earlier the only existing facility is vandalised, unpleasant and unsafe to take young children.
- Adult education courses to fit in with nursery hours. Examples given were computer courses and children's first aid

"Anything to help you get back to work"

- Children's holiday activities- particularly those which could cater for both 0-5s and children over 5 – particularly 6-9s. Many parents with 3-5s have children in the 6-9 age group also but there are few facilities/activities which both ages can go to.

- Similarly there are activity days where it is not possible to take 2s and 4-5s to the same day/event – activities/fun days covering 1-2s and 4-5 s is necessary and would be welcomed.

“if you have a 2 year old and a 4 year old but the activity day is only for 0-3s

- Non-judgmental advice and guidance on subjects such as behaviour and parenting skills would also be useful. Again this type of advice is not available in Tuxford.

“where you don’t have to feel judged”

- Rural transport is an issue for those living in local villages. A car is essential as the bus service is relatively limited.
- The routes should be planned so they service local facilities e.g. bus routes which goes to Retford swimming centre a car is essential to get to such facilities at present.
- It was also mentioned that the buses aren’t push chair friendly and that many elderly people didn’t like push chairs and buggys.

“older people complain about push chairs”

- Several commented on a lack of resources and facilities for the disabled or children with learning difficulties.
- Although the discussion on this aspect centred on children over 5 years as one parent had a child with learning difficulties in the 6 -12 year age group, it was thought to be relevant for all ages.
- It was thought the provision of a resource worker is needed at the centre, who could help parents get the necessary help and assistance required.

5.3.5 Good things to Come from arrival of the Children’s Centre

- There was an overall positive view that there would be a marked improvement in services and facilities for the 0-5s in Tuxford as a result of the new Children’s Centre.
- The main aspects mentioned were:
 - children being able to interact with each other
 - a good support (centre) for parents
 - having all services based in one location without have to ‘shop’ around to go to different places for different services/facilities
 - The Children’s Centre is a new facility and there was a general excitement about one opening in Tuxford
 - An advice centre for all services for 0-5s but also it would be good if parents with over 5s could come and ask for help

“Would be good if parents could feel free to come and ask (over 5s age group)”

5.3.6 Issues arising from the focus group

- These mainly involved concerns about the location of the centre on the site of Tuxford primary school. The safety and security aspects were highlighted – people getting in and also children getting out.
- Whether the centre will be open in the holidays was a concern – particularly for parents working, as a job which can allow for school holidays are not easy to find so holiday clubs/services which cover the holidays were seen as important.
- A slight concern over whether the Children’s Centre facilities would be available for parents of over 5s-parents – parents felt the Children’s Centre should act as an advice centre covering facilities for young children in general, even though the facilities and child care is focussed on 0-5s.

“so parents can feel free to ask advice /obtain guidance for specific issues”

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 Tuxford for the future.

These include:

- A parent-toddler group particularly catering for 0-3s
 - More up-to-date information about services and activities to be available to parents in a format and location/s to be agreed, accessible to the majority.
 - Increased provision of relevant services for families with young children in the area.
 - The need for more play and leisure activities, for young children, throughout the year including holiday periods.
 - Provision of a focal point for parents and children.
 - The coordination of service providers and improved partnership working to deliver services.
- The consultation in Tuxford has been comprehensive with a high proportion of parents with children 0-5 years participating and input from partners from a wide range of organisations. Results are therefore thought to be representative of the Tuxford community. Input from surrounding villages was more limited, but since parents living in the villages represent over 10% of parents interviewed we feel that their views have been represented.
 - There is the need to build on the level of awareness already established of the Children's Centre. Although sited in a school location where parents are coming and going for nursery the centre is to one side down a narrow path and its exact location should clearly be communicated.
 - The operation of the centre as a satellite to the Ollerton and Boughton Children's Centre is also a potential area for misunderstanding, as perhaps services may not be as comprehensive as expected. Managing expectation is crucial here.
 - The consultation has established a good base on which to build the development of services at the Children's Centre in Tuxford, but involvement of all parties is crucial to 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 these responses that parents will become involved, so that the Children's Centre becomes their service, rather than something delivered to them.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Showcards

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Service Providers / Partners

Appendix 4 – Discussion Guide for Tuxford Focus Group

Appendix 5 – 'Other' Responses from Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 6 – Responses from Partners and Service Providers

Appendix 7 – Mapping exercise: Current Services in Tuxford from parents and partners