

The Sure Start Mellow Valley area Through the lens of a camera

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Section 1: Introduction

This report gives an account of a participatory evaluation conducted using photography within the Sure Start Mellow Valley area. Information about the current status of the Sure Start programme and the plans for the future are first provided. The report then describes the research that was undertaken and presents and discusses the findings.

NB: For simplicity, throughout this report we use the term 'parent' loosely to refer to those in a position of care of children. This may therefore include parents, grandparents and other relatives as well as child minders and so on.

Sure Start Mellow Valley – the current status and plans for the future

Sure Start Mellow Valley is an established 6th wave programme that works across the Little London, Woodhouse and Meanwood areas of Leeds. The programme has begun its transition to Children's Centres and ends officially as a Sure Start local programme at the end of March 2007. Funding for Sure Start programmes has moved from being administered from central government to local authorities. In this case, Leeds City Council Early Years department are leading on Children's Centre budget allocations.

For the financial year 2007-2008 The Children's Society (lead agency for Sure Start Mellow Valley) bid for and received funding to deliver services from Children's Centres as part of the Budget Holding Lead Professional pilot and 7 day response service. The Children's Society jointly put forward a proposal for service delivery in the inner North West wedge of Leeds with Sure Start Burley and Barnardos, and also for the Meanwood area (which sits in the North East wedge) within which the programme currently works.

Throughout 2007-08 Sure Start Mellow Valley will cease to exist and will instead provide a menu of services (making up the 7 day response service) through Little London, Quarry Mount and Scott Hall Children's Centres, as well as beginning to link up with other Children's Centres in the inner North West wedge. This menu of services builds upon the work requested by the local community and established by the Sure Start team and will be delivered by the existing staff team with a few adjustments. The programme is also offering services as part of each local Children's Centres' Delivery Plan, which is again built upon existing provision and establishing partnerships with other agencies such as health and early years.

In general the programme is shifting towards offering more family support work at a range of levels. Targeted services for families with complex needs are also beginning to be focused upon more than previously due to the high demand. Some aspects of the original Sure Start programme are now being taken on by mainstream partners, for example there is no longer a role for a midwife in the programme and work is being done instead with midwives employed by the local NHS Trust. The programme is shifting more towards guiding and overseeing best practice in local groups rather than continuing to

deliver groups directly. This is a move towards making groupwork sustainable and building capacity within the local community.

The programme currently receives money from European Objective 2 funding (ERDF) for additional jobs focused on supporting local parents' personal development and movement into work. These roles link closely with the existing Sure Start/Children's Centre team and enable a broader range of services to be offered to families. This project ends in Feb 2008 although it is planned that the jobs that have proved particularly successful will be continued.

It is expected in the year 2007-08 that criteria will be put together for the ongoing commissioning of Children's Centre services. It is hoped that The Children's Society will be in a strong position when budget allocations occur for the next financial year following a successful 7 day response pilot.

The evaluation of Sure Start Mellow Valley

The Centre for Health Promotion Research at Leeds Metropolitan University was commissioned to evaluate the Sure Start Mellow Valley programme in May 2004. Since then, the following evaluation activities have been conducted:

Year One - 2004/2005

- Baseline User Satisfaction Survey (BUSS)
- Stakeholder Survey

Year Two – 2005/2006

- Evaluation of the Family Support Team
- Audit of evidence from the core Sure Start Mellow Valley teams

The Baseline User Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2004 provided a valuable insight into views and experiences of local parents and carers in relation to a number of key themes: Places to play; Child care; Health services; Support for parents; Living in Little London, Meanwood and Woodhouse; Work and educational opportunities; Sure Start Mellow Valley. A team of local parents were trained as parent researchers and were involved in the design and conduct of the survey.

The key themes investigated within the BUSS remain central to the work of the SSMV programme. Almost three years on, the aim of this piece of research was to re-investigate the views and experiences of local parents around five of the key themes:

- Places to play
- Support for parents
- Work and educational opportunities
- Sure Start Mellow Valley
- Living in Little London, Meanwood and Woodhouse

It was decided that the themes of child care and health services (which were in the BUSS) would not be covered as these are core areas of activity.

NB: Further information about the other evaluation activities that have been conducted to date is provided in Appendix 1.

Baseline User Satisfaction Survey 2004: Summary of key relevant results

A total of 120 questionnaires were completed - 51 (43%) from Meanwood, 29 (24%) from Little London and 40 (33%) from Woodhouse.

Places for children to play

- ❖ Most parents felt that their area had a lack of places/groups to take their child to play or meet other children and two thirds were dissatisfied with outdoor play areas.
- ❖ Problems raised included the playground being dirty, fears about crime and vandalism and the play area being dominated by older children.

Living in the Mellow Valley area

- ❖ Most parents (61%) viewed opportunities in their area for meeting other parents of young children as either 'good' or 'quite good'.
- ❖ Overall 48% of parents were satisfied with their area as a place to bring up young children compared to 52% who were dissatisfied.
- ❖ Parents felt that the **best** things about their area included activities for children, access to good health care and other amenities such as schools and shops. The **worst** things included issues of crime and drug misuse.

Work and educational opportunities

- ❖ Many parents viewed the availability of suitable opportunities for work in the area as poor. Over half of the parents (57%) were dissatisfied with the education and training opportunities available to them in their area.

Sure Start Mellow Valley

- ❖ Parents felt that they benefited from Sure Start through the opportunities for both themselves and their children to meet and socialise with others. As well as activities being enjoyable, parents also saw them as helping their child to develop.
- ❖ Over two thirds thought that there had been an improvement in the activities and support available for parents and children under 4 over the last year. There were high levels of satisfaction with activities and support provided by Sure Start.

Section Two: Evaluation Methods

The current research sought to re-investigate the views and experiences of parents in relation to 5 key themes that were first explored in the BUSS in 2004. However, instead of simply repeating the BUSS, it was decided that we would collect data through a more participatory and creative method using photography. This was an approach that the Leeds Met team had successfully used previously within their evaluation of the Sure Start programme in Harehills.

Recognising the successful involvement of local parents as parent researchers within the BUSS, a team of local parents were again involved in this stage of the evaluation. Alongside having useful views on effective ways to engage other local parents, their knowledge and experience of living in the local area was considered essential.

Why did we choose to use photography?

There were felt to be a number of potential advantages to using photography and visual images to gain the views of parents. As well as being seen as a novel and 'fun' approach and an effective way of stimulating discussion, it was also considered to be potentially beneficial in overcoming language barriers, as many of the local parents do not speak English as their first language.

Various authors (for example, Feuerstein (1986), Wang (1999), Donaldson (2001), Goodhart et al. (2006) have also advocated the use of photography in research (including within participatory needs assessment and evaluation). Wang (1999) described the method as an effective way to enable people to reflect on their lives and communities and communicate their views and experiences. Additionally, Goodhart et al. (2006) found the method to be valuable in empowering participants to become more aware of their surroundings.

Study design

There were two distinct phases to the research. The **first phase** involved the training of a team of parent researchers to participate in photographic data collection in their local area around the five key themes.

The **second phase** involved displaying an exhibition of the parents' photography and taking the photos to a range of Sure Start activities in order to seek the opinions of other local parents who were invited to respond to the images and give their views.

More details about the two phases are provided overleaf.

Recruitment of the parent researchers

The parent researchers were recruited by Sure Start Mellow Valley staff, principally the Parent Development Co-ordinator. Information about the proposed work and invitations to take part were sent to particular parents who they felt were likely to be interested. Posters and flyers were also put up and distributed within Sure Start Mellow Valley venues. A team of eight parent researchers were recruited.

Phase one - Training and involvement of parent researchers

During January 2007, four training sessions were held with the parent researchers, each lasting approximately two hours. Three researchers from Leeds Met and the Sure Start Mellow Valley Parent Development Co-ordinator were present at each session.

Session One

At the outset, parents were given further details about the proposed research and were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to be involved. *(Please see Appendix 2 for a copy of the Participant Information Sheet provided)*. After establishing ground rules for the sessions, the Leeds Met team outlined the plan for data collection and discussed with parents the use of photography as a research method. A range of photos taken as part of the evaluation of Sure Start Harehills were used as a demonstration of what was required. The parents were also asked what they thought of the photos and to consider issues such as whether the photos convey a strong message and what factors make them effective or not effective.

The group then spent some time considering the five research themes in relation to their own experiences within the local area and identified some initial ideas for photos that they would like to take.

Parents were given advice about how to take a good photo and a guide was provided as a checklist (see Appendix 3). Things 'not to do' were also discussed, including 'staging' photos. Consideration was also given to the practicalities and potential risks involved in taking photos in their local area, and how these should be managed. It was agreed that participants should not go out alone but should work in groups of at least two people. Ethical issues concerning taking photos of other people (especially children) were raised and participants were advised not to take photos of others without their knowledge and consent. Participants were provided with consent forms to give to individuals who agreed to be photographed.

Parents were provided with **notebook 'diaries'** for them to record (if they wished) their experiences of being involved in the research. It was stressed that these diaries were for their own personal use and that they did not have to share what they wrote with anybody else, including the Leeds Met team.

Session Two

Parents were split into three groups according to the area in which they lived. Each group then went out to take photos in their respective areas accompanied by a Leeds Met researcher and a SSMV member of staff. A combination of digital, disposable and standard cameras were used. The teams re-grouped briefly towards the end of the session to reflect and feed back on their experiences and the photos they had taken. A plan was established for the parents to go out in their own time to take additional photos during the coming week.

Session Three

Parents were given time at the start of the session to go out to take any final photos. The photos that had been taken using digital cameras were then downloaded on to a laptop computer for parents to review. The parents discussed the photos and why they had chosen to capture the particular images. They were also asked to think about issues such as:

- Were they happy with the photos they had taken?
- Were there additional photos they would have liked to have taken but were unable to? If so what had prevented them?
- How easy / difficult was it to choose which photos to take?

The disposable cameras and completed films from the standard cameras were developed by the Leeds Met team.

Session Four

Considering each area in turn, all the parents joined together to look at the photos and discuss which images should be included within the exhibition. It was ensured that images in relation to all five themes were chosen. Once all the exhibition photos had been selected, each group wrote a few words on the back of the photos either describing what was shown or reflecting what the image meant to them.

The parent researchers were subsequently consulted about the organisation of the exhibition and whether (and in what ways) they would like to be involved. At the end of the session, the parents were given the opportunity to feed back their experiences of being involved with the research.

In the week following the final session, the Leeds Met research team enlarged (either to size A4 or A3) the selected photos, which were then printed and laminated.

Phase two - The Exhibition: gaining the views of other local parents

A launch of the exhibition to celebrate the work of the parent researchers was held on 2nd February 2007 at the Little London Children's Centre. Other local parents were also invited to attend and give their views on the photos. The exhibition remained on display for a week following the launch. Following this, the exhibition was also displayed at a Sure Start 'Funky Thursday' event and at a meeting of the Sure Start Management Board.

What happened at the exhibition?

The Leeds Met team introduced and explained the purpose of the exhibition to the parents who were each given a Participant Information Sheet for further details (see Appendix 4). Parents were then invited to comment on the photos and what the images meant to them. In order to help stimulate thought and discussion, 'trigger' questions were displayed among the photos. These included:

- What do you think?
- What do these photos mean to you?
- Which of these photos mean most to you and why?
- What photos would you take?

Parents were also given the opportunity to respond to the following questions which were displayed on large A3 sized posters with space for written comments.

Tell us about.....

- Places to play
- Support for parents
- Work and educational opportunities
- Sure Start Mellow Valley
- Living in Little London, Meanwood and Woodhouse

and the more specific questions:

- Has Sure Start made a difference to you and your child? How?
- What do you think about bringing up children in your local area?
- What is good / bad about bringing up young children in your area?
- If you could, what changes would you make to the area?

In addition to the exhibition of enlarged photographs, the photos were also available to view in A4 sized booklets within which space was provided for written comments. Parents were able to record their views in three main ways: (i) writing comments on post-it notes and sticking them on the relevant exhibition photo/question. (ii) writing comments into the pages of the photo booklets (iii) speaking to the researchers who wrote down the comments.

In order to gain the views of a larger number of parents, the photos were subsequently taken to a range of Sure Start Mellow Valley groups, events and

activities. Due to practical reasons it was not possible to display the photos within a full exhibition at these venues. Therefore, on these occasions, only the A4 booklets of photos were used. In addition, the evaluation team spoke to the parents about their views and experiences in relation to the five key themes. As before, parents were given Participant Information Sheets providing further information. At some groups and activities, parent researchers were involved in speaking to and recording the comments of other local parents.

Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the responses provided by parents. The purpose of this was to identify the range of common themes that emerged. For each of the five issues of interest, comments were read and then grouped together according to the specific theme which they represented. Overall, most comments were gained from parents writing their views in the photo booklets. The findings are presented in the following section.

Section 3: Findings

This section is split into two, starting with a discussion on how the parent researchers selected the photos for the exhibition, followed by an analysis of the comments given by other local parents in response to the images.

Parent researchers' experience of taking the photos

The parent researchers said they enjoyed taking photos within their local area. They were happy with the photos they had taken and felt that they had been able to capture all the images they had intended. No problems were encountered during data collection.

Parents commented that being involved had been an 'eye-opening experience' making them more aware of the positive and negative aspects of their surroundings.

A: Working with parent researchers – collecting visual images

What photos were taken by the parent researchers?

A wide variety of photos were taken by the parent researchers. Images were captured that highlighted both the positive and negative aspects of the area and many of the photos showed images relevant to more than one theme. Alongside capturing images relevant to the five key themes, the parent researchers also gave regard to the potential 'artistic value' of the photographs. They considered factors such as colour, lighting and angle and the contrasting positive and negative images that could be captured within one photo. The photos selected for the exhibition and what they represent for the parent researchers are discussed in more detail below.

Parent researchers selecting the photos for the exhibition

This section will look at how the parent researchers selected the photos which they felt should be included in the exhibition. A total of 79 photos were selected (24 from Meanwood; 31 from Little London and 24 from Woodhouse). The exhibition of photos is available to view in Appendix 5.

Living in Little London, Woodhouse and Meanwood

The parent researchers chose photos which showed the different types of housing available in the area. During the discussion, the parent researchers spoke of plans underway to knock down some of the flats in the area and the uncertainty that remained among local people about where tenants (including young families) would be re-housed. They also noted that the high rise flats (principally in Little London) did not provide the best accommodation possible

for young families, particularly in relation to lack of opportunity for children to play outside.

The parent researchers wished to document pertinent environmental issues in relation to housing. These ranged from the presence of boarded-up and run-down property (which could be turned into much needed housing) to the more easily solvable problems of rubbish being dumped outside homes. Parent researchers also wanted to highlight a number of other environmental issues which they felt portrayed a lack of care and attention being given to the area. As well as graffiti, general litter and mess, these included run-down, disused, or under-used (often prominent) buildings and areas of land which were felt to represent a waste of opportunities for local people.

Through their photos, the parent researchers wished to draw attention to hazards such as exposed electric cables, sharp fencing, broken glass, discarded industrial and household waste and dog faeces. A photo of a dead rat was felt to be a powerful symbol of some of the environmental problems of the area and the parent researchers spoke of the persistent problem of mice and rat infestations within some local homes. The parent researchers felt strongly about the potential dangers featured within the photos, especially for children.

A number of photos were also selected to show the area's busy roads and to highlight problems of road safety. Photos of environmental features, such as steep steps, making it difficult for parents with prams or with mobility problems were also chosen.

A photo showing an example of 'legal graffiti' (advertising organised sessions at Little London Community Centre) was also selected to highlight how attempts can be made to control the problem of graffiti at the same time as providing structured activity for young people. Additionally, a photo of a multicoloured mural adorning the outside wall of someone's home was chosen to point out efforts that had been made by individuals to brighten up the immediate area.

Parent researchers also selected photos which showed local services available, including post offices, shops and advice centres.

Photos of positive landmarks within the local area were also felt important to include, in particular Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and Farm Escape which represent local day trip opportunities for families.

Support for Parents

Parent researchers commented that photos of Sure Start Mellow Valley and the Little London Children's Centre had been taken with this theme in mind. Also in relation to this theme, parent researchers selected photos of a range of facilities including Quarry Mount Children's Centre, 'Space' @ Little London, Little London Community Centre, Meanwood Community Centre,

Woodhouse Community Centre, Woodhouse Community Health Centre, a local housing office, the Community Café at Stainbeck Church and a nursery. The parent researchers mentioned that alongside providing opportunities to meet other parents, these facilities also provide support, information and advice on a range of issues.

Places to Play

Photos were selected of local parks and outside play areas and included facilities aimed at both young children and older youths. The parent researchers were keen to find out the views of other parents with regard to these facilities in comparison to their own experiences. In terms of some of the areas aimed at younger children, the parent researchers commented that while these are often pleasant places to take children, there were sometimes problems of older youths hanging around (especially in the evenings), causing families with young children to feel uneasy and deterring them from making the most of the facilities. It was felt that this situation (coupled with problems of youths in the area drinking and taking drugs) largely resulted from inadequate provision of activities for local young people.

Photographs showing indoor play opportunities at Sure Start Mellow Valley were also selected, with parent researchers speaking positively of what was available and the good times they spent there with their children. The parent researchers also chose photos of places in which Sure Start (and other) play activities take place (for example, Quarry Mount Children's Centre and Woodhouse Health Centre (Woodhouse Parents Group & Baby Morning)). Photos of other provision of organised play opportunities such as the Angels Nursery (Stainbeck church) and 'Space' @ Little London were also selected.

Parent researchers also selected a photo of Blenheim Nursery which has recently shut down. They were keen to hear the views of parents who had used the facility in relation to how the closure had affected them and their children.

Work and educational opportunities

The parent researchers selected photos of principal buildings providing educational (and potentially employment) opportunities for adults in the area. These included Leeds University, local community centres and 'Space' @ Little London.

The role of Sure Start Mellow Valley in providing employment and education opportunities and signposting parents to relevant services was also raised. This was shown most obviously through a photo of a display of information advertising education / training courses and job opportunities available both through the programme and other local organisations. A photo of children's story sacks was included as an example of how Sure Start seeks to develop the learning of under 4s.

Sure Start Mellow Valley

In order to gain other parents' views of the overall programme, photos were selected for the exhibition which showed Sure Start premises as a whole taken from the outside. In addition, a number of photos (taken inside) showing particular aspects of programme provision were selected in order to obtain more focussed comments on what is available. These included the children's clothing 'swap shop', 'story sacks', preparations for the lunch club, and activity equipment used for the Time Out crèche. No photos had been taken during individual groups or activities.

B: Finding out the views of other local parents

As mentioned previously, the views of parents were gained in three main ways – post-it note comments added to the photo exhibition, written comments on the photo booklets and through speaking to the researchers. At most of the venues, it was not possible to display the full exhibition of photos. Therefore, the majority of parents made their comments through the photo booklets and through conversations with the researchers. A sample of key comments is provided alongside the photography exhibition in Appendix 5.

Living in Little London, Meanwood and Woodhouse

When talking to the parents, there was a mix of views in relation to what they thought of the area as a place to bring up young children.

A number of positive comments about living in the area were voiced. The presence of Sure Start Mellow Valley and what the programme provides was regarded as one of the best things. Some parents spoke positively about living in an area that was home to a lot of young families and valued the number of activities that were run to enable parents and children to meet. For example, one parent commented '*There is something every day to go to – a good selection*'.

However, many of the photos displayed less positive images of living in the area.

Photos showing environmental hazards and dangers in the area (ranging from exposed electric cables and discarded industrial waste to dog faeces and dead rats) aroused a lot of concern and indeed fear among many parents, often in relation to children. A photo of a dead rat raised a number of comments concerning the problems many local families face dealing with infestations of mice or rats within their homes.

Images of rubbish, dirt and graffiti and run-down or boarded up derelict buildings also provoked many comments. Alongside the potential safety issues, several parents were also concerned about the visual impact both for residents and visitors. For example, in response to a photo of a boarded up

pub in Woodhouse, one parent described it as *'an eyesore'*, whilst another wrote:

'... This is one of many blots on our community.'

A strong sense of anger (and indeed sadness) among some parents was evident in a number of the comments. For example, a photo of exposed electric cables prompted *'totally outrageous, get it sorted!'*

Comments strongly suggested that parents had a desire for change and for the area to be invested in, cleaned up and maintained. Many of the remarks suggested that parents felt the area to be uncared for and neglected, both by the council and some community residents who were thought to have a lack of respect for and pride in their area. Both the council and the community as a whole were regarded as having responsibility for dealing with the problems. In terms of the local community, for example, a photo showing green space covered in rubbish prompted one parent to write *'maybe the community can tidy it up'*. A few comments were also made noting the responsibility of parents for keeping children safe within the community.

Alongside the negative feelings which many of the photos evoked, a number of responses also indicated the potential for improvement and positive change which parents felt was present. For example, in response to a photo of a large unkempt field in Little London, comments such as *'It's a dumping ground!'* contrasted with comments such as *'Could this be changed into a recreational space for families?'* and *'This area could be so nice if someone made an effort'*. One parent's child (a boy of about 11 years old) spoke of enjoying playing on the field with his friends. With regard to areas of green open space, a couple of parents expressed a specific wish that these are kept and not used for building upon.

The potential of currently run-down, boarded up or disused buildings was also remarked upon, with a number of parents stressing that these properties should be renovated and made use of. Photos of Blenheim Lodge and Woodhouse Church for example prompted comments that they should be used for the community. One idea suggested was that Blenheim Lodge *'would make a great youth club'*. The presence of uninhabitable housing provoked a lot of concern and again anger, particularly when so many people are homeless.

'It is quite sad to see houses boarded up when people need housing'.

'All the homeless and yet this stands empty'.

Coupled with seeing the potential of the area, it was clear that some parents did not like the level of waste of resources which they felt was shown within some of the photos. As well as noting the waste of land and buildings (as mentioned above), a number of parents felt that a photo of a discarded highchair provided evidence of community members wasting resources at a

more personal level. Comments included: *'a baby somewhere could have made good use of this'* and *'why dump it when there is charity?'*

Several comments were made in relation to the high rise flats in the Little London area, a number of which are scheduled to be demolished. While these were regarded as unsuitable accommodation for young children, and some parents were keen to see them knocked down, there was some concern with regard to where tenants (including young families) will subsequently live. Coupled with the environmental hazards, a number of parents also noted a perceived threat to safety from other people, such as local youths, drug dealers and joyriders. A parent in Meanwood voiced a need for more police patrols.

Some comments were made about the busy roads in the area and the difficulties parents often face when trying to cross safely. The road near Little London Children's Centre (Oatland Lane) which was shown in a photo was described as an *'accident hotspot'*.

The photos of Meanwood Valley Farm prompted many positive comments, including *'a nice day out'*, *'great for small children'* and *'fab place'*. The benefits of other local shops and services were also commented upon.

Several Meanwood parents voiced strong opinions against the imminent closure of Miles Hill Primary School. As well as being concerned about the impact that the change would have on their children, they were also disappointed at the prospect of pupils losing good facilities and not having access to as much green space at the new school. Comments included:

'Very sad to see this school close and go to Potternewton, as not much greenery at Potternewton'.

'Don't take our community – this building is the heart of the community'.

'It's a shame that a school closes with such good facilities'.

Places to play

There was a mix of comments in relation to places to play for young children.

Outdoor parks and play areas

With regard to local outdoor parks and play areas, some parents voiced positive views and said they made use of facilities. For example, in response to a photo of the play area near Little London Children's Centre, comments included *'fantastic play area'*, *'very good, let's have more, very good for kids to play'*. In addition, a few parents remarked positively about Meanwood Park, both in terms of play equipment and as somewhere to go for a picnic and a walk with the family. As well as providing children with somewhere to play, several parents also spoke of the parks and play areas providing a place to

meet with other parents. The need for more play areas (including more green spaces) for children was voiced.

In contrast, a number of parents expressed negative opinions with regard to local play areas with many saying that they did not use them. One parent voiced her concern about the safety of the equipment for children under 4 years. However, concerns were mostly in relation to the presence of youths (often drinking alcohol or using drugs) preventing younger children from using equipment and making parents feel intimidated and unsafe. In relation to Little London play area, comments included *'too many big kids crowd the park, so the little ones can't get on'*. In addition, a photo of a play area in Woodhouse provoked responses such as *'wouldn't go there with my children'* and *'don't feel safe – needs patrolling in some way'*. Feeling deterred from using local facilities, some parents spoke of taking their children outside of the area to play, for example to Roundhay Park or Hyde Park.

Several parents commented on a lack of facilities and activities in the local area for older children and felt that more were needed in order to overcome problems of youths hanging about play areas designed for younger children.

Indoor play opportunities

A number of parents commented about indoor play opportunities for children within the area. Sure Start groups and activities were viewed positively by many in terms of what they provided for parents and children. Examples included the Woodhouse Parents Group and the Pals group held in Meanwood. The Woodhouse Parents group was described as a *'very popular group'* and as having a *'good space to play'*, whilst the Pals group was described as *'brilliant'* and praised for having *'lots of variety and things to do'*. A few parents spoke specifically about the important role of the groups and activities in providing opportunities for their children to get used to interacting with other children and learn social skills such as sharing.

The Sure Start bungalow at Meanwood was described as having *'good toys'* and being a *'good place to play'* and a *'nice place for children to play'*. Included within the comments were some suggestions for additional provision at the bungalow - a few parents stated that they would like to see afternoon play sessions, whilst another felt that a baby area is needed. Additionally, one parent wrote *'I love it here, but it's not open enough'*. The limited space within the bungalow was also specifically remarked upon by a few parents in relation to play opportunities that could be provided, for example *'could do a variety of toys but the place isn't big enough.'*

Reflecting positively upon their experiences of play opportunities in Meanwood, one parent wrote: *'We are very lucky in Meanwood. We have the Sure Start lunch club, Friday Friends and a park at the end of the street – all with different toys for the children'*.

Other services providing play opportunities for children were also commented upon. For example, photos of Stainbeck Church raised a number of positive

comments, including *'good local place for activities'* and *'very good church because there are always things to do for the children'*.

Support for parents

Sure Start Mellow Valley was considered by many parents as providing a valuable source of information, help and support. Programme groups and activities were viewed as important in this regard. They were seen to provide something positive and fun to do and several parents valued the opportunity to meet with others. For example, comments on the lunch club held at Stainbeck church included *'nice place to meet, have food and chat with friends and enjoy time with kids'*. In addition, a parent attending Friday Friends stated *'I come here with my friend. It's excellent. It gets me out of the house and gives me a break. And the kids can play together.'*

As well as enjoying the social aspects of attending, a number of parents commented on benefiting from receiving information, advice and support from other parents, Sure Start staff and external speakers.

Several parents also noted the benefits of practical support services such as the clothes swap, story sacks and the time out crèche. Comments in response to a photo of the clothes swap included: *'fantastic idea'* and *'saves spending loads of money – children grow so fast'*. Another parent commented on the value of *'recycling'* clothes and *'hating to throw out clothes which have hardly been worn'*. A further parent valued the opportunity to help other parents through donating clothes her own child no longer used. This provides an additional example of parents being conscious of wasting resources.

A couple of suggestions were made by parents in relation to the provision of Sure Start groups and activities. Some commented on being unable to attend due to other commitments and expressed a wish that the times are changed. In relation to the Lunch Club, one parent wrote:

'Very good but don't agree with having to book – makes it inaccessible to me as I am a childminder and don't know until the last minute whether I can attend or not.'

Other facilities and services in the area were also commented upon in relation to what they provide. For example, a number of positive comments were made in response to photos of SPACE @ Little London, Little London Community Centre and Meanwood Community Centre. For example Little London Community Centre was described as *'a place to meet new people'* while Meanwood Community Centre was said to provide *'lots of activities'* and a *'good service to the community'*. SPACE was viewed as a *'fantastic investment for the community'* and *'a great space for affordable services'*. In contrast however, some parents said that they were unaware of these facilities and better advertising was suggested.

In response to a photo of Blenheim Lodge, a few parents commented negatively on the closure of the children's nursery that used to be run there.

Work and educational opportunities

Very few comments were made in relation to local work and educational opportunities. A few parents said that they were not personally seeking such opportunities and were therefore not able to comment. Some spoke of working outside of the area. One positive view expressed was that 'Space' @ Little London provided *'excellent resources for learning'*. Additionally, Sure Start Mellow Valley was mentioned by a few parents in terms of providing educational, training and work opportunities within the programme. For example, one parent said that she was about to start working for the team. The programme's role in signposting to other organisations and creating a space at events such as Funky Thursday for local services such as colleges to meet with parents was also valued.

Sure Start Mellow Valley

There were a number of positive comments made with regard to Sure Start Mellow Valley. Views in relation to much of the programme's provision have already been mentioned above.

It was evident from comments that many parents value and benefit from the services, groups and activities provided by the programme. Alongside the regularly weekly provision, a few parents remarked specifically about appreciating the opportunities that the programme provided to go on trips.

Coupled with comments about how the programme has helped them and their families on a personal level, a number of parents also spoke of the positive influence they felt Sure Start had made within the area as a whole. For example, speaking about Meanwood, one parent said *'Sure Start is amazing and has made a big difference to the area. Before Sure Start there was nothing here for parents and young children.'*

In addition to comments about programme provision, positive comments were made specifically about the new Sure Start premises within the building of Little London Children's Centre.

While some comments about the Bungalow at Meanwood made reference to the lack of space available, comments were principally positive, including *'wonderful place'*. A number of parents voiced concern about the future of the bungalow and were unsure whether it would remain for local families given its location on the site of Miles Hill Primary School which is set for closure.

Further comments about Sure Start included:

'Sure Start is really good – there are always lots to do and loads to be involved in. I go to the lunch club and come here on a Friday and I do other stuff with my kid. The food is really good (at the lunch club). It is really good for parents, You meet other people in the same position and it gets you out. It is something to do.'

'I do a lot with Sure Start when I have got time. I work 3 days a week as a nurse but when I am not working I come. All the activities are really good.'

'Fantastic boost to the area.'

In response to a photo showing the sign for Little London Children's Centre, comments included:

'Where would I be without this 'safe haven'? In front of the TV getting fatter, and my baby would be bored too!'

Summary of the views and experiences of parents

Living in Little London / Meanwood / Woodhouse

- ❖ There was a mix of views in relation to what parents thought of the area as a place to bring up children. Some spoke positively about living in an area with a lot of young families and valued the activities enabling parents and children to meet.
- ❖ Photos showing negative environmental images (ranging from discarded waste to boarded-up buildings) raised concern among many parents. As well as safety concerns, comments were also made about the negative visual impact.
- ❖ Many parents voiced concern and anger about the waste of resources shown through images such as boarded-up housing and areas of unused land.
- ❖ The potential for positive change in the area was noted. Responsibility was seen to lie with both local authorities and community residents.
- ❖ Coupled with environmental hazards, several parents also spoke of threats to safety from other people, such as local youths and drug dealers.

Places to play

- ❖ Some parents voiced positive views about local outdoor parks and play areas, and valued them as places to meet with other families. In contrast, other parents voiced negative opinions, mainly being deterred by the presence of older youths.
- ❖ Many parents commented positively about indoor play opportunities. Sure Start groups and events were valued for providing lots of activities for families.

Support for parents

- ❖ A number of parents commented positively about services in the area which provide support and activities for families.
- ❖ Sure Start was viewed by many parents as providing a valuable source of information and support. Groups and activities provided something positive to do and parents valued the opportunity to meet and socialise with others.
- ❖ Coupled with social and informational support, many parents valued the practical support provided, for example through the Clothes Swap.

Work and educational opportunities

- ❖ Few comments were made in relation to work and educational opportunities. SSMV was mentioned in terms of providing educational, training and work opportunities. Its role in signposting parents and inviting representatives from relevant organisations to meet parents at programme events was also valued.

Sure Start Mellow Valley

- ❖ Many parents value and benefit from SSMV services, groups and activities. Coupled with the views mentioned above, several parents commented positively about the new Sure Start premises within the Little London Children's Centre and the Bungalow at Meanwood.

Section 4: Discussion and Conclusion

The discussion is split into two sections. Firstly, there is a reflection on the research process, followed by a discussion of the findings.

Reflection on the research process

Overall, using photography was a useful method for collecting data around the five key themes, albeit one that was quite time consuming (in terms of both preparing the exhibition and for parents viewing the photos). The training went well and the parent researchers were enthusiastic and engaged well with their role. They produced a variety of relevant good quality photos which were able to stimulate discussion and inspire a range of valuable comments from their fellow parents in the community.

A key strength of the photography method was the degree of freedom it provided parents. Parent researchers took photos of their own choice and other local parents were able to express their opinions in their own words, rather than their responses being limited as was largely the case with the BUSS questionnaire method. Conversely, this greater freedom of response also represented one of the main challenges for the evaluation team. On the whole, the BUSS produced full responses to a set of relevant questions. However, the less structured photography method provided less 'guarantee' about the number and range of comments that would be forthcoming. It was the case that some of the photos attracted a large number of comments whilst others drew no responses at all. Consequently, a greater amount of data was provided around some of the themes than others.

The use of photography inspired a different depth and type of response to the BUSS. The BUSS provided an insight into the proportion of parents who felt and behaved in a certain way. This was not possible to achieve through the photography method. However, responses to the photos revealed a number of important themes and strength of parental feeling which the BUSS did not uncover to the same extent.

The views of 120 parents were obtained through the BUSS. Due to the nature of the photography method, it is not possible to say exactly how many parents gave comments within the current research. Furthermore, many of the BUSS questionnaires were completed through door-to-door research with Sure Start registered parents. It is likely, therefore, that the BUSS captured the views of more parents not involved with Sure Start activities (and with less knowledge of the programme) than was the case through the approach adopted in the current research.

Discussion of the findings

A number of responses provided to the BUSS drew attention to negative environmental issues in the area. Much of the data from the current work under the theme **Living in the Meanwood, Little London and Woodhouse** suggest that such issues remain of key concern to many parents. Dealing with environmental problems such as litter and run-down buildings is clearly outside the remit of Sure Start. However, working alongside local parents, the programme is in a good position to lobby for such issues to be addressed by relevant organisations. The results suggested that many parents care deeply about their local community and environment. This passion is itself a resource which the programme could tap into and channel effectively, both in terms of drawing problems to the attention of authorities and in terms of what parents themselves can achieve as local residents.

In relation to **places to play**, a key finding within the BUSS was that the majority of parents felt their area had a lack of places/groups for them to take their child to play or meet other children. Some 54% stated that 'there are only a few places' and 13% commented 'there is nowhere'. Such a lack of play opportunity did not emerge as a strong theme within the current research. This could potentially be a reflection of an increase in opportunities or an increased awareness and reach of facilities and activities.

Despite the statistics above, some positive comments were made in the BUSS about *indoor* places to play, particularly those provided by Sure Start. Such comments were also made by several parents in the current research. In terms of *outdoor* play opportunities, both the BUSS and the current research highlighted a contrast between parents who expressed positive views and made use of facilities with their children, and others who voiced negative opinions. A key issue raised in the BUSS was the presence of youths often acting anti-socially and deterring young families from using facilities. In total, some 51% of parents responding to the BUSS said they were discouraged from using local play areas by the presence of 'too many older children'. Findings from the current research show that the issue of youths and their behaviour remains a concern for many parents. It was suggested that this problem may stem from a lack of facilities available locally for young people. Again, while Sure Start can not directly solve this issue, working in partnership with parents the programme could have a role locally in bringing about change.

Sure Start Mellow Valley continues to have an important role to play in the lives of local families. It was evident, both within the BUSS and the current research that many parents valued and benefited from the programme and what it provides both for themselves and their children. In the BUSS, 76% (n=57) parents answered that they and/or their child had benefited from Sure Start.

The Sure Start Mellow Valley programme clearly has a 'multi-purpose' for many parents. As well as enjoying having access to a range of different groups, activities and services, parents also spoke of valuing the opportunity

to meet and socialise with others. The **information and support** which they are able to access both from other parents and Sure Start staff was a key benefit of importance to a number of parents. In addition to the social and informational support, the value of the programme providing practical support such as through the clothes swap shop was also stressed. This view of Sure Start as providing a source of support again confirms the findings of the BUSS in which 97% of parents (n=74) said that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the activities and support provided by the programme.

Very few comments were made within the current research with regard to **work and educational opportunities** in the area. The significance of this and the reason behind the shortage of comments is not clear. It may reflect the parents' lack of knowledge about or take-up of available opportunities, or that they perceive there to be few suitable choices. On the other hand, it could just be the case that this theme is more difficult to capture visually. However, it is not possible to know for certain and it may therefore be worthwhile for the programme to explore this issue with parents in further depth.

Conclusion

As mentioned in previous evaluation reports, Sure Start Mellow Valley has established a wide range of groups, activities and services for local families. The results from this current work suggest that these continue to be valued by parents. Along with other local organisations, the programme was viewed by many parents as providing support in a number of key ways. These included providing opportunities to meet and socialise with others, and providing information and practical support.

A number of negative environmental issues were raised about the area, especially in relation to concerns including hazards and the waste of resources. Comments from some parents also suggested that there remains a problem with outdoor play areas, particularly due to the presence of local youths deterring young families from using facilities. Responses indicated that parents were largely satisfied with indoor play opportunities.

Working in partnership with local parents and other relevant organisations, Sure Start Mellow Valley could potentially have a key role in helping to bring about positive change in the area.

Evidence from the current and previous evaluation activities have revealed many positive aspects of the Sure Start Mellow Valley programme and its work. It is hoped that what the programme has achieved can be sustained in the work of the Children's Centres.

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Section 5: Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation Activities to date

Year one: 2004/2005

Baseline User Satisfaction Survey (BUSS)

During Summer 2004, a total of 120 questionnaires were completed with local parents and carers. The findings provided a valuable insight into their views and experiences in relation to a number of key themes: Places to play; Child care; Health services; Support for parents; Living in Meanwood, Little London and Woodhouse; Work and educational opportunities; Sure Start Mellow Valley. A team of local parents were trained as parent researchers and were involved in the design and implementation of the survey.

Stakeholder Survey

A stakeholder survey was carried out between January and March 2005. A combination of focus groups and interviews were conducted to gain the perspectives of a range of different people involved in Sure Start Mellow Valley including parents, staff, board members and other professionals working with the programme. The survey investigated three main issues.

- The development of the programme and progress made to achieve targets
- Perceptions of programme goals and the approaches used to achieve change
- Challenges facing Sure Start Mellow Valley.

Year two: 2005/2006

Two core evaluation activities were undertaken in Year Two:

Evaluation of the Family Support Team

The evaluation of the Family Support Team involved an in-depth examination of the work of the team. This included seeking the views of team members, parents and professionals from external organisations. Different research methods were used in order to gain a rounded picture of what the team does, how it works with other organisations and what it offers to families.

Audit of evidence from the core Sure Start Mellow Valley teams

The evaluation team worked closely with the programme's four core teams (Health; Play and Learning; Strengthening families and communities; Admin) to audit the range of current activities and identify evidence of effectiveness. Workshops and focus groups with staff teams investigated issues such as how they work and with whom, what has or hasn't been successful and what lessons have been learnt. Additionally, the views of parents were sought through questionnaires and a telephone survey.

Written reports of these evaluation activities are available.

Appendix 2

Evaluation of Sure Start Mellow Valley

Working with parent researchers - Using Photography in research

Participant Information Sheet

All Sure Starts have to check out (evaluate) whether the activities and support that they provide meet the needs of families. The Sure Start Mellow Valley programme is being evaluated by a team of researchers from the Centre for Health Promotion Research at Leeds Metropolitan University.

The next step of the evaluation

In 2004, we carried out a survey with local parents and carers about various issues related to Sure Start and living in the local area. This was a good way for us to find out the views and experiences of local families. Now we would like to ask local parents/carers about these same issues again, but this time through using an exhibition of photography capturing local images. To help us with this, we are hoping to recruit about 8-10 local parents/carers to join the evaluation team as parent researchers.

Why does the evaluation team need the help of parent researchers?

Much of the success of the 2004 survey was down to a small team of parent researchers that helped us carry out the research. The evaluation team learnt a lot from working with the parents, especially through their knowledge of the local area, and we feel that we would benefit again from your help with the next stage.

What will be involved?

Parent researchers will be asked to attend 4 sessions at Sure Start Mellow Valley (Little London Primary School). These will be held once a week for four weeks and each session will last about two hours. The sessions have been planned to be fun and informal and involve no written work.

In the sessions, we will explain more about the research and how we would like the parent researchers to help. You will also learn about using photography in research and be trained in using a digital camera* (if necessary). We will then go out as a group to take photos that are felt to best reflect parents' experience of the following:

- places to play
- support for parents
- work and educational opportunities
- Sure Start Mellow Valley
- living in Little London, Meanwood, Woodhouse.

(*disposable cameras can be used if preferred).

Working in small teams, parent researchers will also have the opportunity to take some photos in their own time. Once the photos have been developed, the group will spend some time discussing the images and why they were chosen. Photos to be displayed in an exhibition will then be selected. Sarah Grant (Parent Development Co-ordinator) and other Sure Start staff will be involved with the training and available to offer support to parent researchers.

Taking part in the training and evaluation is always voluntary, and you can stop being involved at any stage without giving a reason.

What is planned for the exhibition?

The photos will be exhibited at a number of different venues (including Sure Start activities) in the local area. Other local parents will be invited to comment on what the photos show and on other issues about services and opportunities in the area.

What will happen to the information?

At the end of the exhibition, the evaluation team will look at all the comments that have made about the photos and a report will be produced. This will be given to the Sure Start team and any other interested organisations and individuals.

All comments and quotes will be totally anonymous so nobody will know who they came from.

If you have any questions about the evaluation or the training, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Evaluation Team:

Caroline Newell, Jane South, Ruth Cross, Marianne Kennedy

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Taking a good photograph

Here are a few tips for taking the perfect picture. Just have fun and experiment.

Watch the light

Bright sunlight can cause shadows and silhouettes. A cloudy day can be ideal to create a soft effect. To be safe, try taking outdoor photos with and without the flash

Know your flash range

Don't take pictures beyond the flash range. Pictures beyond the flash range can get too dark. For most cameras, the maximum flash range is less than 15 feet (about 5 steps away)

Take some vertical pictures

A lot of subjects may look better in vertical format

Digital camera resolution

To get the clearest photos set your camera to its highest resolution. This does take up more memory, but because we are printing them it will be better.

Get Closer

It is advised to get closer to the target object rather than shooting from distance and using the zooming lens, and flashlight will fade when needed.

Pay extra attention to the background

Pay extra attention to the background. Look at the whole image.

The direction and strength of the light source

You have to know where the sunlight is coming from. Ideal light source will be gentle light from the side. If light is coming from the front it will make the subject flat and light. If it is coming from the back it may cause a silhouette.

Unstable Cameras

Unstable camera will cause the picture to shake and become blurry. You should either hold your camera firm or use a sturdy surface.

Move to eye level and get in close

When taking a picture of someone, first get his or her consent. Hold the camera at the person's eye level. For children that means stooping to their level. Don't get too close or your photos will be blurry. The closest focussing distance for most cameras is about 3 feet.

Don't cover the camera lens or flash.



Appendix 4

Evaluation of Sure Start Mellow Valley

An exhibition of local photography – Finding out the views of parents

Participant Information Sheet

All Sure Starts have to check out (evaluate) whether the activities and support that they provide meet the needs of families. The Sure Start Mellow Valley programme is being evaluated by a team of researchers from the Centre for Health Promotion Research at Leeds Metropolitan University.

The next step of the evaluation

Through using an exhibition of photographs taken within the Sure Start Mellow Valley area, we are seeking the views of local parents and carers around various issues related to Sure Start and living in the local area:

- Places to play
- Support for parents
- Work and educational opportunities
- Sure Start Mellow Valley
- Living in Little London, Meanwood and Woodhouse.

The exhibition photographs were taken by a group of local parents working with the Leeds Met team. Using their knowledge of the area, they have captured a variety of images which they feel would reflect the experiences of local families.

How will other local parents and carers be involved?

The exhibition of photos will be shown at a number of different venues (including Sure Start activities) in the local area. If parents would like to be involved, we are inviting them to comment on what the photos show and on other issues about services and opportunities in the area.

What will happen to the information?

At the end of the exhibition, the evaluation team will look at all the comments that have made about the photos and a report will be produced. This will be given to the Sure Start team and any other interested organisations and individuals. All comments will be totally anonymous so nobody will know who they came from.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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Appendix 5

Exhibition of photography with sample of key comments



'Fantastic idea that's great for when your child has an accident in a group and you're not prepared'
 'Great idea', 'Fantastic idea' x 2, 'good idea'
 'Very good idea'
 'Recycle, useful. Parents hate to throw out children's clothes that have hardly been worn. Children grow quickly and often the clothes don't get their full use unless passed on'
 'Useful'
 'Excellent idea', 'Very helpful'
 'Saves spending loads of money, children grow so fast'



'The hole should be properly covered but a watchful parent wouldn't allow a child to be walking inside the barrier'
 'Hole should be covered up and barrier a bit further out'
 'Very dangerous but parents should be vigilant', 'Need more council work'
 'Needs urgent assistance'
 'Inconvenient/Health Hazard'
 'Danger – not protecting the public'



'Wasted space, run down, lot of rubbish'
 'Council need to come out and clean up. An area that with a bit of a clean up could be used', 'In need of work'
 'Could this be changed into a recreational space for families?' 'It's a dumping ground'
 'Should be tidied up and a park put in'
 'Fantastic green space for children and young people to use'
 'Health hazard – breeding ground for vermin'
 'Should be clean so kids can play there',
 'This area could be so nice if someone made and effort'



'Excellent idea'
 'Sure start activities such as mini movers and the Opera North initiative should be in the morning and not the afternoon. Most under 4's have a nap at the times these activities take place. Open play starts at 10.30 but parents dropping off siblings at school or nursery have to get there by 9 then return home until the bungalow etc opens. Not always practical'
 'Sure Start is fantastic with all the groups'



'What happened to street cleaners?'
 'Lazy - council needs to clean up'
 'Not safe for children - Keep your area clean and safe for everyone'
 'Why is there no pride in keeping your space nice?'
 'Keep your area clean and safe for everyone', 'Again why? Clean it up quick'
 'Council needs contacting to clear up, could be very dangerous if a child, elderly person was to fall..'
 'Council issues – where does it come from? Local business?'
 'Disgusting, no respect, clean it up',
 'How can people pass with pushchair or wheelchair?'



'Dangerous', 'get it mended',
 'dangerous, get it fixed', 'danger'
 'Disgraceful'
 'Accident waiting to happen'
 'Extremely dangerous to all, especially children'
 'So bad, why aren't council wardens noticing what is obvious?'
 'Easy access for children to get an electric shock and possibly death'
 'Outrageous'
 'Totally unacceptable'
 'Too dangerous to live like that'
 'Dangerous but doesn't just need replacing, sort it out with something else'



'Good entertainment for young people, get off those PCs and playstations'
 'A bit high, ok for adults, not for kids'
 'Maybe have a smaller one as well fitted to the same frame'
 'Where are the children?'
 'Could do with a good clean up, very shabby and dirty'
 'Makes local kids be occupied'
 'Playing basketball'
 'Good, get a team organised with local young people'
 'Good getting people to communicate with each other'



'Accessibility good'
'Take another look at the building, it has won an award, 1st in Leeds'
'Fantastic boost to the area'
'An impressive building'
'Nice Sure Start building'



'Should be out in homes – very useful'
'What are these for?'
'Didn't know about these'
'They are a good idea'
'Brilliant idea'
'The story sacks are fantastic'
'Awesome!'
'Good idea'
'Hours of family fun, even dad liked the sacks!'



'Very unappealing, needs a good clean up'
'focal point for gangs of youths to congregate'
'That is fantastic' 'good idea'
'Good place for parents to meet and chat'
'People drink alcohol – I go to Hyde Park or Roundhay instead'
'Nice and clean for people to sit'
'It's a start but more needs to be done'



'Brilliant', 'Fantastic play area', 'Fantastic, good for kids, we need more green spaces for kids', 'Inviting',
 'Should have a good park in Meanwood' 'Very good, let's have more, very good for kids to play'
 'Good place for mums to gossip'
 'Too many big kids crowd the park so the little ones can't get on'
 'Looks long lasting and break resistant, well thought out', 'Very appealing, no shelter from rain'
 'Looks very nice, when I have passed on the bus I have seen adults using play area to drink. Gangs of children (teenagers)
 'These new style playgrounds may be vandal proof but they are dangerous for under 4's. There are big gaps where a child could fall'



'Don't know much about space'
 'Haven't heard of it'
 'Fantastic investment for the community'
 'Don't know what it is'
 'A great space for affordable services'
 'Good'



'Dirty'
 'Wasted land'
 'Very dirty, clean it up'
 'Disgrace, needs to be cleaned'
 'What a waste of land'
 'Dumping ground'
 'Please keep your area clean, we should all make the effort'
 'Looks horrible, needs to be cleaned'
 'Maybe community can tidy it up'
 'A waste of space!'



'What an impressive building'
 'Sure Start people are nice and help a lot'
 'A place for help and support'
 'Where would we be without this safe haven? In front of TV getting fatter and baby would be bored too!'



'When they get knocked down, where will the people live?'
'Residential, appears clean and tidy'
'Eye sore from the 70's'
'These need to be demolished, they are awful'
'Kids can't play and dangerous road'



'Disgraceful, what a mess'
'No local pride'
'Not nice to see'
'Vandal, infested. Invest more in area'
'Old building'
'Sort it – awful'
'Why keep eyesores like this?'
'Not very appealing sight'



'What a mess'
'Bollards say it all'
'That is not good to see'
'Ok inside, needs more to show it's a surgery'
'Vandal, infested. More youth groups should be formed'



'Meanwood needs this'
'I can't find the door to this place!'
'Good tea time club held here'
'A place to meet new people – also has a food club'
'Only for old people'



'Fire exits are where, where and where?'
'Should be demolished, an eyesore'
'Scary'
'Sad'
'Residential, do not like high rise flats,
Ideal for students'
'Bygone era'



'An accident hot spot'



'People do this to their homes. Why?!'
'It's no wonder no one wants to live in this
area with derelict, uncared for properties
which the council have no intention of fixing or
repairing'
'Housing could be improved'
'Little London not a good area for children to
play – not clean, people dumping things'
'Little London area not top priority for
government – need to put more money in'
'What a disgrace, council need to sort
themselves out'
'This is terrible, council needs to be made
more accountable for their actions (or lack of)'
'Typical 70's housing'



'Disgraceful, if this is lived in, occupants should be advised to tidy or move out'
'Surprised that the meter is still there'
'...people should have more pride'
'Not clean in Autumn'
'A mess'
Council should do something about this quick'
'Shocking, very dirty, look after your house'



'Germs'
'Disgraceful, dog owners at fault, not dog'
'Nasty'
'Fine them'
'Disgusting'
'Disgusting, people should be charged for fouling'
'You need to be 'hawkeye' when out and about to make sure there are no accidents'



'Dangerous'
'Needs moving'
'Hazard'
'No respect - make a community pick up truck come to all houses to collect stuff so nothing has to be dumped'
'This is dangerous'
'Why has this not been moved?'



'Fantastic scene for children'
'Happy'
'Nice'
'Good start'
'Nice and bright and welcoming'
'Taking pride in their surroundings'
'I like this'



'Too many steps for prams/older people'
'Accident waiting to happen'
'Could do with a tidy'
'A bit grotty, needs a good repair'



'What are the council doing about this?'
'My little boy would probably bring this home to show mummy!'
'Dirty', 'Vile', 'Not good'
'These are in our homes and all we get told is to put some poison down. The problem remains as they carry on breeding'
'Where are the environmental health workers?'
'A child could pick this up'
'Where are the wardens?! (having a cuppa!)'
'Pest control need calling'
'How can people leave this?'
'Area needs to be cleaned up and then maintained'



'Writing spoils picture'
'Wicked art!'



'It's no wonder the streets and surroundings become used as a bin'
'Where's the bin gone?'
'What are we supposed to use for garbage?'
'Mess, dull'



'A mess'
'Disgraceful, owners need to be moved out'
'No need'
'Clean it up, very dirty'
'This tenant should be fined! This is what attracts rats and mice to infest the area'
'Why would anyone want to live with this'
'Get cleaning'



'People need to care about their community more'
'No good', 'not nice', 'smells'
'Council need to act'
'People need help in maintaining their homes and surrounding area'



'Not good'
'No graffiti, fantastic'



'Great for a bit of company'
 'Never been!'
 'Well advertised'
 'Good place for the community'



'Fab place/ 'Love it, fab place'/'Fantastic'/'Brill'
 'Needs more to make a longer visit'
 'A nice day out/'It's a nice day out - animals there'
 'Great to have farm so local kids can see animals at different times of year'
 'Need more money to extend the farm'
 'A great day out, use it weekly'
 'OK place - visited with Sure Start'
 'Good in summer'/'Great in summer for all ages'
 'Great food in café and good portions, fantastic after a visit to see the animals'
 'Great, need to promote more to families'
 'Great for small children'



'Why can't kids play here after school? They only want space to run around that's safe'
 'Very sad to see this school close and go to Potternewton - not as much greenery there'
 'We are losing our green spaces'
 'I use mini-movers, it's great/' 'mm is great there'
 'Looks lovely'
 'It's a pity it's closing, needs to keep it for community'/'A shame it's closing'
 'Nice friendly place'



'Always empty houses'
 'This area could be so nice'
 'Empty houses, why are they pulling them down?'
 'Dangerous for kids'
 'All the homeless and yet this stands empty'
 'Homes need to be tidied. Berries are nice to look at, children should not take berries of trees'
 'Because they are offered them without knowing they're mice infested, when you report it council ignore you'
 'I thought they had 22,000 people in Leeds on the waiting list!!'
 'It's sad to see houses boarded up when people need housing'
 'Daunting to walk past'
 'Not very nice to look at'



'Too dangerous'
'Dangerous' x 5
'A lot of things are dangerous but being a good parent you wouldn't let your child run off in front'
'Disgraceful, needs sorting urgently'



'Another eyesore, another demolition'
'Empty house'
'Trees, nice to look at, shame about the houses'
'Yet another'
'Sad!'



'So much nicer inside than out'
'Better than before'
'Good place to play'
'Nice place for children to play and parents to meet other parents'
'Could do with afternoon sessions'
'Could have a mural on this wall! Give mums a paint brush'
'Wonderful place'
'Fantastic inside'
'Never been in, does look a bit shabby on the outside'



'Not good enough for elderly or prams'
 'Put some ramps around the green as there are too many steps'
 'No access'
 'Need ramps'
 'The whole of the Beckhill estate that I have seen needs ramps. Too many steps'
 'No choice, council take no notice, the person who won an award for this estate should have it taken off her'
 'Should have a ramp up side but Beckhill's getting re-developed. Is it!!'
 'Don't walk around estate, drive to other places, this is why'



'This should be stopped'
 'Someone could live here, like me!'
 'Would you want to live here?'
 'Should be knocked down'
 'Yet another!'
 'People still don't get housed'
 'Too many houses boarded up'
 'Needs doing up'
 'Sort it out', 'Get rid'
 'It's getting knocked down, make use of land, not students'



'Can't cross'
 'Not good enough to cross'
 'Good team spirit'
 'Needs a pedestrian crossing'
 'Dangerous to play'
 'A place to drink'
 'Hard to cross'



'Good mums and tots here'
 'More opportunities for parents and families'
 'Lots of activities here'
 'Never promote any, used to run youth club here when I was younger'
 'Fantastic café', 'Make better use of community places'
 'Didn't even know it was there'
 'Never been but I hear they have a lot for the area, very good',
 'Good service to community'
 'Gorgeous, cheap food here'



'Brilliant group'
'Good group'
'Good for parents who have more children, helps them out'
'Good idea'
'A lot of good work being done here'



'Fantastic'
'Very good'
'Very nice'
'Wild animals'
'Have a play group for children to teach them about the animals and farming in general'
'Great stuff, I love walking to the farm'



'A place to dance and play'
'A positive place, run by a positive person'
'Good local place for activities; lunch clubs, pantomimes'
'More places are needed for children to play safely'
'Have some good activity days, Santa, bouncy castle'
'Very good church, there are always things to do for the children'
'Brilliant' 'Awesome'



'Looks downgrading'
'Sad'
'A mess'
'Needs cleaning'
'Needs a good clean up'
'Disgraceful'
'Don't like graffiti. Maybe get the kids who do it and take them on an art course and paint it properly'



'People in high places don't think'
'Terrible!'
'Needs cleaning up!'
'Needs reporting to the council'
'Council should be acting on this'
'When these come down in July.
Bring them down'
'Awful'
'Depressing'



'Lovely', 'Good group', 'Fantastic'
'Fantastic idea'
Nice place to meet, have food and
chat with friends and enjoy time
with kids'
'Best Sure Start group'
'Best meals in town'
'New ideas, good progress'
'Nice food, enjoy time with the kids'
'Nice place for kids and parents to
get together, nice learning activities
for kids'
'Arlene's a good cook'
'Very well used and fun club'



'Don't like to walk down Meanwood
Road, too busy and fumes, rather
take scenic route'
'Always busy'
'Always speeding traffic'
'At least we have a crossing now'
'Positive that we have a crossing
from all directions'
'Should show green man on big
traffic lights'
'Ok if good crossings and speed
down'
'Excellent'



'Needs fixing, very dangerous for children'
'Needs reporting'
'Disgraceful, needs cleaning'
'Would keep my child away'
'Keep kids safe – this is dangerous'
'Council will not mend fences – looks like my garden fence!'
'Need to do something before something happens'
'Sort it out'



'We are very lucky in Meanwood, we have Sure Start lunch club, Friday Friends, park at end of street, all with different toys for the children'
'I love it here but it's not open enough'
'I use this, the toys are good but a baby area is needed'
'Could do with a variety of toys but place isn't big enough'
'Should have more'



'Why dump it when there is charity?'
'A baby somewhere could have made good use of this'
'People don't care, need to recycle'
'Why when there is a tip down the road'
'If I had seen this it would be in my house!'
'Disgraceful, this has been dumped'
'Unhealthy'
'A mess', 'Recycle, recycle'
'Dangerous'
'Tidy it up'



'School needs to be left open, what about children's education?'
'It's a shame that school closes with such good facilities'
'Shame we couldn't keep this school open'
'Make use of it in the community'
'This building is the heart of the community'



'Nursery needs a bigger garden'
'Needs a play area and to be child friendly'
'Looks bright and friendly'
'Nice to have nurseries'
'Really good nursery'
'Beautiful'
'Make it a nice outside play area for children to plant things i.e. 'Angels Garden'
'Inside is nicer, but where do the children play?'



'Wouldn't go here with my children'
'Full of teenagers, not inviting to play when they're there'
'Don't feel safe, needs patrolling in some way'
'Good play area'



'No need'
'Why?'



'Should be used for something else for the community'



'My kids' Dad works here'



'Education place'
'My sister-in-law works here'
'Husband enjoys his course at uni'



'Nice medical centre for students'
'Nice facility'



Again, not used by local people with
small children'
'Waste of resources'
'Like this park'
'Fine during the day'



'Waste of resources and facility'



'Nice place for children'
'Good educational facilities'



'Messy'
'Dump'





'Good street for roller skating'
'Heavenly'



'Clean & tidy'



'Good space to play'
'Enormous space'
'Clean, tidy'
'Very nice, clean, tidy, inviting'
'Great baby clinic, friendly and fun'
'Spacious, functional and fun to play there too'



'Child friendly'



'Nice building, sad it's not used'
'Renovate it! Use it!'
'Make it into a wacky warehouse type place'



'User friendly'
'A good building, hope it will be well used by community'
'Nice, neat, modern, looked after'
'Quarry mount children's centre'
'Looks very welcoming'



'A big improvement'
'Mess'



'Get it cleaned'
'Disgusting'



'Good shop'
'One stop centre'



'Get council to keep on top of removal'
'Keep it tidy'
'Clean it – fine dumpers'
'Again, why?'



'Needs something doing with it, not a pub or student flats'
'Dump, get rid'
'This could be used for extended services like youth club'
'An eyesore!
'The sooner this building is demolished the better. Wake up all you councillors and earn your money for a change. This is one of the many blots on our community'
'Change it but not to flats for students'



'Very popular group'
'Staff make you very welcome'
'Good to have loads of services under one umbrella'
Good for Podiatry