OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES:
TODAY'S CHILDREN, TOMORROW'S FAMILIES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

Obstacles and opportunities is a short report based on what 200 parents told us over a ten year period of visiting them in their homes in low-income urban areas. We have produced three books based on this research: *EastEnders: Family and Community in Urban Neighbourhoods; City Survivors: Bringing Up Children in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods; and Family Futures: Childhood and poverty in urban areas* (to be published by Policy Press in July 2011). The research that went into the three books informs this report but here we pull together a unique body of evidence and quotations. The particular focus of this report is on the opportunities and obstacles facing children and young people growing up in disadvantaged areas and the struggles of parents to overcome these barriers and build a better future for their families.

We hope that this report will underline the sense of urgency about providing more, not less, for children and young people in disadvantaged areas. For these areas are still remarkably different from the average and the future of our society hinges on them becoming more equal and more integrated.

Anne Power, February 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Obstacles and Opportunities' tracks 200 families bringing up children in four low-income urban areas over nearly ten years between 1998 and 2008. It examines how disadvantaged families overcome educational handicaps and how they find opportunities for their children to progress. Evidence from these four highly disadvantaged areas shows that low-income parents have limited educational and work backgrounds; that government interventions to support and help families overcome these limitations; but that there is a serious lack of spaces, facilities and activities for children and young people. More needs to be done, particularly to help these groups. Our main findings are in four key areas: parents' backgrounds; schools; social capital; progress and gaps.

FINDINGS

1. Limited work and educational opportunities
At the beginning of the study in 1998 a majority of low-income families in the four areas were in receipt of out-of-work benefits. Many families moved into work over course of our research. A big barrier to work for mothers was poor education coupled with fragile work experience; another was the lack of childcare and its cost.

Education and training: About a quarter of low-income parents have such a weak employment history that catching up is a huge challenge. The lowest skilled, most undesirable jobs such as office cleaning late at night are so poorly paid, often through illegal contracts, that low-skilled parents have poor bargaining power and are inevitably caught in the poverty trap.

Mothers with stronger work records get jobs more easily and more often work fulltime. But the need to earn enough to escape the poverty trap creates big pressures on family life, particularly for lone mothers. When parents are offered training, either in work, as volunteers, or simply as a route to more social contact, they enjoy it and it invariably builds confidence and boosts skills.

Work opportunities were greatly expanded by the introduction of tax credits. These supplement the earnings from low paid part-time jobs, and alleviate the poverty trap. Tax credits make part-time working more feasible and therefore help mothers with child-care responsibilities.

Training that leads to practical qualifications helps parents progress into work, and also do their current jobs better. Voluntary work in local organisations provides valuable experience and sometimes training, both of which can lead to a job.

The **childcare allowance** was introduced to help low-income parents pay for pre-school childcare but the cost gap between the price of formal childcare and the childcare supplement is still significant for parents in very low paid jobs. Relatives play a significant role in informal childcare – usually involving grandparents living nearby.

2. Children's Schools

Most parents were satisfied with their children's schools, and schools help families in many different ways to meet the specific needs of their children. Schools are good at taking action to help the individual needs of children, particularly if they are falling behind in the classroom, or are shy. Children with special educational needs, through physical disability, behavioural problems, or emotional needs, require special help and schools try hard to fill this need. They adopt a holistic approach to teaching.

There are some key obstacles to educational success facing low-income families:

Children often **struggle with homework** if their parents cannot help them. Children invariably need support at home if they are to keep up. But different methods are used since parents' own school days, and they find maths particularly difficult. If mothers are working or have several children, finding time to help is sometimes impossible. Language is often a barrier for foreign-born parents.

Bullying is a pervasive problem in schools, and both parents and children worry greatly if it is not tackled firmly and fairly by the teachers.

A high turnover of teachers creates instability and insecurity among children, and this is a much more common problem in difficult areas.

Children with special educational needs require intensive, ongoing and long-term help to avoid failure.

3. What helps children and young people in deprived areas?

Our research establishes clearly what holds children back and what helps parents and children to overcome problems in the areas, over and above low-income and poor education. The following box lists the main obstacles and how to overcome them.

Obstacles to opportunities	How can we make areas better?
Crime	Crime prevention measures
Drugs	Drugs education
Traffic	Traffic calming
Having nothing to do	More things for children to do
Having nowhere to go	More places for children to go
Peer pressure	More support and stronger communities

Social Capital

Social capital, which refers to links between people that help them develop stronger communities, emerged as a powerful asset under three key themes:

a. Local support networks, or 'bonding social capital', that tie local people together in close knit groups of family and friends, is extremely important to the families.
- Family and close friends usually live nearby and see each other weekly or more often
- Family and close friends help with many different support needs
- The biggest help is with childcare either as a regular arrangement or on an ad-hoc basis.
- Informal childcare, usually by relatives, makes low-paid work possible and provides emotional and material support as well.

b. Child-focused services, or 'bridging social capital', that link parents into wider networks, is also extremely valuable:
- Sure Start is a prime example quoted by many parents; offering many different services to overcome disadvantage, including outings and activities, some financial assistance and equipment; courses, work experience and voluntary work; help with specific problems e.g. health, behaviour, confidence; emotional support; a base to take children to each day.
- Sure Start generates a sense of being part of a community.
- Key 'locals' such as health visitors, neighbours, the doctor, teachers, also link parents in.

c. Crime reduction initiatives

Two of the most important innovations in the neighbourhoods since 2000 are the introduction of Community Police Support Officers, and Neighbourhood Wardens who patrol the areas, befriend young people, report trouble and reassure residents. Greater security is a high priority for parents for these main reasons;
- Direct experience of crime affects most parents directly – at least a third had experienced crime themselves in the previous year or knew someone who had.
- Parents worry about bringing up children in these neighbourhoods because of constant fears of high crime, drug abuse, and paedophiles living in the estates.
- The introduction of Community Police Support Officers (CPSOs) by the police, and Neighbourhood Wardens (NWs) by the local authorities, leads to uniformed patrols on the streets, in shops, schools, play spaces, parks. They improve neighbourhood conditions for families and children in several ways:
  – they reduce the opportunities for crime, its visibility, and the temptation for older children and young people to get drawn into crime;
  – the wardens and CPSOs are trained to engage with young people, and to make it easier for residents to report crime or suspicious behaviour;
  – their presence makes neighbourhoods feel safer, by deterring crime and preventing young people from moving into crime.

4. How can different services be better adapted to the needs and families and children?

Progress and gaps
In spite of many positive changes to local services over the decade, parents highlighted several remaining problems. Below we summarise the problems and solutions from the parents' point of view.

Working Tax Credits	
Problems	**Solutions**
• Over-complex system	• Simplify system
• Over/under payments with changes of income	• Make slower adjustments
• Childcare credit restrictions	• Allow more informal childcare
• Sharp taper as tax credits start	• Integrate benefits with working tax credits

Schools	
Problems	**Solutions**
• Weak basic skills	• Targeted structured help
• Insufficient help with special needs	• More support for children with dyslexia & reading difficulties
• Inadequate control of bullying	• More immediate and long-term action on bullying
• Homework and other barriers	• More work-related and practical teaching
• Cultural/ethnic segregation	• More effort to prevent segregation
• High turnover of teachers	• More stable staff
• Weak contact with parents at secondary level	• Better parent/school links

Sure Start	
Problems	**Solutions**
• Sometimes missing most vulnerable parents	• Make open to all parents regardless of socio-economic status
• Catchment areas too rigid	• Make catchment areas more flexile
• Age restriction – nothing equivalent for children 5+	• Provide a 'Sure Start' for children of school age
• Worries about Sure Start funding	• Mainstream funding
• Creates over-dependence	• Encourage self-help

Community Police Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens	
Problems	**Solutions**
• Limited powers to enforce	• Keep full police back-up in place
• Focus on minor crime & transgressions	• Senior police intervention around gangs & violence
• Moving crime on rather than tackling the roots of criminal behaviour	• Tackle real trouble to avoid just moving crime on
• Limited working hours that miss peak trouble times	• More flexible working hours to fit with local needs

What more do families think can be done to improve conditions to help their children?
The following measures are the most important in helping parents help their children:
- **Crime prevention programmes** not only lead to falls in crime but better relations with young people and less fear among parents;
- **Schools** work hard to raise standards, build stronger relations with parents and help children with special needs;
- **Expanding employment opportunities** encourage parents to take up training and jobs opportunities, relying on tax credits to boost income;
- **Sure Start and early years support** for low-income parents have a transforming impact in family lives. Family support and the proximity of that support is also very important.

Obstacles in poor neighbourhoods do shrink through targeted local programmes. During our research, crime and fear of crime fell; access to work and training rose; schools and other services improved; community-focused programmes such as Sure Start opened up opportunities for families. The biggest gaps still remaining are a **lack of facilities and activities for children**

of school age. Parents' top priority is **more for children and young people** to do and more places to go.

Other significant issues arise from what parents say:
- **voluntary work** linked to training helps build confidence;
- **local programmes** encourage community involvement and empowerment;
- **local children's services** have immense value to parents;
- **the extended family** makes work and progress more possible;
- **a holistic approach to teaching** supports the special needs of particular children and families;
- **educational standards** rise with targeted inputs;
- **working tax credits** enhance low-incomes;
- **lone mothers** struggle to juggle home, child-care and return to work;
- parents need **simple, reliable, clear systems** of support.

Our overarching conclusion is that low-income parents most need more safe places for children and young people to go and more organised low-cost activities to join. This would create more family-friendly neighbourhoods.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 1998 and 2006, the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics tracked 200 families in four low-income disadvantaged areas, gathering a very large amount of evidence on how low-income families bring up children in difficult neighbourhoods. This research – the Families Study – provided us with a wealth of knowledge which has allowed us to probe deeper into neighbourhood conditions, community and family life, young people, educational opportunities, the hopes and fears of low-income families. Our repeated visits to the same families allowed us to pick up on the impact of government interventions over a period of intense policy focus on equalising opportunities in poor communities. This report uses key sources of information from the Families Study to examine how disadvantaged families overcome educational handicaps and how they find opportunities for their children to progress, looking in particular at parent's, children's and young people's experiences of school, training and work; to uncover what helps; and what more is needed.

In order to find out how low-income families fare in difficult environments we posed five questions:
- What limits educational and work opportunities for disadvantaged families?
- What opens such opportunities up?
- What helps children and young people overcome disadvantage in deprived areas?
- How can different services be better adapted to the needs of families and children?
- What do families think could be done to improve conditions and help their children?

a) The CASE Families Study
The CASE Families Study involved yearly visits over seven years to 100 families in East London and 100 in two Northern cities, living in four fairly typical, but still distinct, disadvantaged city neighbourhoods in England. 60 per cent of the original families were still in the survey at the end of our seventh visit. All families had school-age children at the outset and we interviewed the main carer, or 'most present parent', almost always the mother[1]. Parents were always keen to talk about their children, their hopes and fears, what helped or hindered their progress. The interviews probed how neighbourhood conditions affect parents bringing up children. Within this framework, families talked about community, social networks, family relations, schools and other supports within their areas. These families struggle with much harsher area conditions than the average, often finding it difficult to cope. Despite these challenges, the families show remarkable resilience, often overcoming major handicaps so that their children can progress.

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1   For more detail on the Families Study and the methodology applied, see *East Enders: Family and community in East London* by Katharine Mumford and Anne Power; and *City Survivors: Bringing up children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods* by Anne Power, both published by Policy Press

b) The four neighbourhoods

The two East London areas were both traditionally white working-class areas, dominated by large council estates. The inner area (West City), on the edge of the city, was the original stomping ground of the pre-war Fascists, and retained a reputation for toughness and crime. It was rebuilt after the war in dense blocks with some high rise. In the 1980s, a big turnover of people led to a rapid increase in minority ethnic communities and by the late 1990s nearly three-quarters of children in local schools were from a minority background. The high blocks of flats that dominate the area are considered 'poor' and 'unattractive'. There are few parks, several busy roads and a crowded atmosphere, but the location is popular and city 'yuppies' have pushed up prices of Right-to-Buy council flats.

The outer London area (**East Docks**) in the heart of the old, long-closed docks has much more space, and even feels somewhat empty and therefore more threatening, with more low-rise blocks and more houses than West City, but still some high rise, dissected by a heavily congested dual carriageway out of London. As a traditional dock area it had always housed a mixed community, but when the docks closed in the late 1960s an exodus began and large numbers of newcomers filled the spaces. Extreme politics flourished in the fast-changing community and it was one of the few areas of East London to elect a British National Party councillor in 2002. The local council is demolishing much of the area to build new, expensive housing in an attempt to create a 'more mixed community'.

The Northern inner area (**The Valley**) spreads up a steep hill out of an old industrial city centre and is a mixture of old, stone terraces, with some large and attractive houses. There are blocks of modern council flats, small housing association developments and traditional Yorkshire terraced streets. At its heart is a small green, with bus stops, surrounded by struggling, small shops. When we first visited the whole area was dominated by an atmosphere of decay and neglect, yet among the four areas, it was potentially the most attractive and the most conveniently located just above the city centre. There are signs of young professionals moving in because they find the area appealing with its strong 'multicultural and traditional Yorkshire atmosphere'.

The Northern outer area (**Kirkside East**) comprises a single large, pre-war council estate, four miles from the city centre, on a frequent bus route. It is still predominantly white, housing overwhelmingly low-income families, a large majority with roots in the estate, spanning three or four generations, some living there since the estate was first built. This fairly homogeneous community is unpopular in the wider city and some property is hard to let in spite of shortages of affordable housing. At the same time there have been many Right-to-Buy sales of houses with gardens, reflecting the contrast between more secure, more popular, and 'rougher' sections of the estate. (See Annex 1 for more details on the areas)

The Northern areas feel less pressured and more manageable than the East London areas. They have a distinct Northern character, less enclosed, greener, less tense. East London feels very much part of the big city. For all the neglect of rundown spaces, visible changes are much more in evidence in London than in the North. In spite of these differences, the four areas are all low down the urban hierarchy, housing overwhelmingly disadvantaged populations, which

in three of the four areas have experienced rapid ethnic change. They all have a reputation as rough, high-crime areas. We have used pseudonyms for the neighbourhoods – East Docks, West City, The Valley and Kirkside East – to preserve their anonymity.

Although the four neighbourhoods have distinct characteristics, we found that many of the families' experiences were common across the areas – in particular poverty and low-income, insecurity, crime and disorder, population exodus and inflow. Government action was visible in these neighbourhoods, impacting directly on the lives of the families. Their experiences tell us a lot about how families overcome disadvantage and open up opportunity for their children.

The findings of this report are in five main sections following the methods. Section three focuses on the parents' work experience, work history, training needs and experience of routes into work. Section four discusses children's schools, their educational needs and problems, the pressures on local schools and teachers' responses. Section five explores three specific forms of support that help parents and children overcome disadvantage – community support, child-centred services and crime prevention. Section six examines the way local services could be better adapted to family needs. Section seven summarises parents' priorities for improving their children's prospects in such disadvantaged areas.

2. METHODS

The 200 families were selected using a 'snowball' method to reflect the broad population characteristics of the areas. The families reflect the demographic make-up, household type, work patterns, tenure and ethnic background of families in the four areas (see Annex 2 for summary information about the families). Families who moved away and lost touch were replaced with families of similar backgrounds, and we did 'catch-up' interviews with them, so that their experiences fitted into the study.

The information we present in this report draws on tabulated evidence from seven rounds of interviews (1998-2006) and selected quotes from parents on key themes. (See Annex 3 for themes). We asked parents around 300 questions in relation to children's education and opportunities, as well as the performance of schools and other educational influences, such as the parents' own education, work experience and training. We drew on the evidence on these topics and the direct quotes on key themes in order to write this report. The main tables we used for this report are in Annex 4. We also revisited the neighbourhoods between 2007-10 to record more recent changes. CASE's ongoing research in disadvantaged areas provides us with further material on children's opportunities, family support, social mobility, neighbourhood renewal, meeting the child poverty target, community networks, all of which are relevant to our five questions.[2]

Many issues affect families and their children's development, including ethnic background, local opportunities for play, organised activities, space etc. These and many other issues are touched on but not probed in depth. The dominant areas we cover here are child-care and parenting, school, training, work, income, crime prevention and social capital. We also explore what helps and what the biggest gaps are. First in section 3 we explore the parents' own educational and work-backgrounds and opportunities since. Their scant work background and income poverty are extremely strong influences on their children's prospects.

2   Hills, J, Sefton, T, Stewart, K (2009) *Towards a More Equal Society? Poverty, inequality and policy since 1997* Bristol: Policy Press.

3. WHY ARE EDUCATIONAL AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES LIMITED FOR DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES?

Parents' education and work

Parents' educational background, work experience and ability to access work while bringing up children, all influence children's own attitude to learning and later to work. Most of the parents we visited only had minimal or no qualifications at the outset, and had on the whole done low-paid, non-professional or casual jobs. About one fifth had such limited education and work experience that their opportunities to progress affected their children's chances. Almost all parents needed special support to overcome these major handicaps. Below we look at how parents with some previous experience managed to progress.

a) 'Work poverty' and the 'poverty trap'

At the beginning of the Families Study, many of the families faced 'work poverty', with no one in the household in employment, training or studying, relying heavily on benefits. In the northern neighbourhoods, 45 per cent of adults in Kirkside East and 51per cent in The Valley, and in the two London neighbourhoods, 33 per cent of adults in East-Docks and 42per cent in West-City were not working, studying or training. 65 per cent of households with working age adults in the northern neighbourhoods, and just over half in the London neighbourhoods were receiving non-work state benefits, reflecting the low-incomes of the families at the outset. These figures were very high compared with the national average of 25 per cent in 1999[3].

Some parents stayed at home to look after their children in pre-school years, and therefore hadn't built up their experience, qualifications, skills or training for paid employment. Lack of work experience was a strong barrier to paid work, a 'catch 22' situation. Some parents with young children found the high costs of childcare a major obstacle to working in low paid jobs. The 'poverty trap' – earning too little to be much better off working than on benefits – was common:

> It's very hard because, you know, I feel like I'm trapped in a situation of being on benefits and maybe wanting to work, but not being able to get a job that would be well enough paid to make up for all of the benefits that would be lost. It's the same old trap that a lot of people get into, isn't it? [Trudy, West City]

By the final round of the study there had been a significant increase in the number of parents in work. Over seven visits we recorded an increase of 54 per cent in West City, 29 per cent in East Docks, 18 per cent in Kirkside East, and 53 per cent in The Valley. An overall increase in work of 39 per cent, shows the large reduction in the level of 'work poverty' within the households studied, partly as a result of the children getting older (see annex 4.1).

The rise in paid employment within the families showed up in what parents told us about their main sources of income at our last visit. In the East London areas a quarter of parents now relied entirely on their wages, double the rate for the North. Meanwhile in the North, working tax credits and other in-work benefits were much more common, helping 60 per cent of all families compared with 40 per cent of London families.

b) Voluntary work

Parents moving into work for the first time, or after a break to raise children, often first got involved as volunteers. Several parents helped out in schools, then became teaching assistants. In some cases they took courses run by Sure Start[4], then went on to help with Sure Start courses themselves. Others helped Sure Start as volunteers anyway. Voluntary work in Sure Start or local schools and clubs, or in New Deal for Communities organisations, provided a stepping stone to paid work, as the following extracts illustrate:

> I do two hours voluntary work at a local family learning centre and my tutors want me to do it in a paid capacity. I'm really pleased. I really enjoy doing it. [Kathleen, Kirkside East]

> I have become self-employed since the beginning of these interviews… I got lots of experience via volunteering for New Deal people, it was a catalyst. [Adam, The Valley]

Voluntary work gave parents not only valuable work experience, but also the confidence to take up paid work. This comes across clearly from a mother working in a literacy club:

> I used to use Sure Start, then I became a volunteer, and now I work there. I used the Family Support Service, a worker would come and see you and take you out or just support you [at home]. Then I became a volunteer worker and now I am a paid worker...It has given me opportunities, and given them to others, that I wouldn't have got. So many free things. And then work experience. [Nita, The Valley]

One mother explains well the job satisfaction of helping local children and the knock-on benefits of this on the child's family as well as her own. Annie works in the local primary school

> I did so well they asked me to stay on...The children I've worked with didn't have confidence and do now. It opens up opportunities and lifts their self-confidence. It has a knock-on effect on their families too. [Annie, East Docks]

A foster parent spoke directly of the confidence she gained through voluntary work, which she was developing in creative ways to help other children:

3   Mumford, K & Power, A (2003) *East Enders: Family and community in East London*. Bristol: Policy Press; Lupton, R (2003) *Poverty Street: The dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal* Bristol: Policy Press

4   Sure Start is a Government programme set up in 1998 to deliver the best start in life for every child by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support. This programme is now being severely curtailed and many Sure Start centres are closing.

I have been thinking quite a bit lately about whether to go back to work, but it is just, all the enquiries I have made have made me think 'oh, it is too hard'. But I have also applied for a grant, because speaking at these fostering meetings, it has built my confidence so that I am starting this thing to go into schools to talk to teenagers about the dangers of foetal alcohol syndrome, because that is what [the child I am fostering] has got, and what some of the foster babies that I looked after had, you know. I have managed to get a grant for a lap top and a Power Point thing to go into classes in local schools to talk about that. And that is a direct result of having done the training and discovered that I am braver than I thought I was. But it is still not paid employment, so, you know. [Trudy, West City]

The number of parents working continued to rise until our last visit, but in the new economic climate, many of the service-related part-time jobs mothers did are now vanishing.[5]

c) Tax credits
In 1999 the government announced programmes such as the New Deal for work to ensure that everyone had the opportunity of a job – 'no fifth option'. The introduction of the tax credit system opened up work opportunities for many of the families. Tax credits supplemented low-paid jobs above a minimum number of hours, thus reducing the problem of the 'poverty trap'. One working mother explained how the tax credits helped:

Just that crucial bit of extra money which tips the balance in favour of you working [Jasmine, West-City]

Another mother explained how tax credits had levered her out of poverty:

If I'd gone into work without the tax credits I'd be no better off [Liz, The Valley].

Prospective employers recognised the danger of a poverty trap as a barrier to work before the introduction of the tax credits:

I've been on job interviews and people'd honestly said to me, 'I'm not being funny, it's not worth your while to work here 'cause the money ain't high enough'. I had to be on, like, £250 and up, 'cause otherwise it just wasn't worth it by the time you get taxed and all that. [Natalie, West-City]

Tax credits changed this:

I don't think I'd have gone to work without it. We'd be just working to pay the rent. I think that did, you know, help. [Natalie, West-City]

Tax credits expanded opportunities for part-time work helping mothers particularly. For example, one mother explained:

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5   Repeat visits to the areas in 2009-10

I could not do this job if not for the tax credits. Managing on my part-time wages would not be possible without them. [Jenny, The Valley].

Tax credits also helped mothers to cope better with childcare:

I would prefer to work part-time and I can because of Child Tax Credit. I could not afford to work and pay childcare fees without them. [Gillian, The Valley]

I suppose I don't have to work full-time because of Tax Credits. I mean, it doesn't make up a full wage but I can be at home with the kids [ages 7, 9 and 11]. [Tina, Kirkside East]

One mother explained how the introduction of tax credits had helped her work in a way that fitted with her children:

Yes. Definitely influenced my decision to return to work part-time… Also, my kids are older now and that is a second reason to go back to work" [Shirley, Kirkside East].

In general children growing up allowed parents more opportunity to work, and that showed too in the progression of parents into work over the course of our visits.

d) Parents' education and training
Parents realised that education was a key to progress, for them, for their children and for all of their community. Many parents were involved in studying and training which subsequently helped them gain work. Others were newly qualified and were hopeful that it would help them secure paid work. New courses and qualifications also helped those already in work. In many cases the opportunity to train 'on the job', led to further opportunities in their current post or helped them to progress to another job.

I just finished a Cache Level 3 Teaching Assistant course to work with special needs kids. And I did a 28 week course on managing health and social care institutions. And I am doing a 60 credit project management course at university. I know I want to work in special needs and these extra topics are a good extra. [Louise, Kirkside East]

I've done an OCN Counselling course and recently a 'Reading Matters for Life' OCN course. I hope they've enhanced them [my job prospects]… I wouldn't look at counselling as a career, too long to train, I couldn't do it, but it is a useful thing to have done if I want to work in a school. And the 'Reading Matters...' course proves that I can establish a rapport with secondary school kids. So the two together should make it easier to get a job. [Francesca, The Valley]

Several parents did work-based training to improve their current job performance rather than progressing to better jobs:

I have done City and Guilds Adult Learning Support 01 and 02, in work time though. Through work. It wasn't part of the job. Just an opportunity I could take. It didn't

change my job prospects or enhance them, it showed me how to be more structured with the adults with learning disabilities I work with, and how to take notes on the work. [Patsy, Kirkside East]

The training that parents did was mainly vocational and practical but it often enhanced their job prospects:

I've done a NVQ level 4 in customer service which is very useful, then they want me to do the receptionist side of it as well. They're good at training you, they allow you to progress. It enhanced it a lot. I could move on to another side of the practice, managerial or whatever. [Yetunda, West-City]

I have just finished a Cache Level 2 in Childcare and Education. And a computer course… I've got upgraded at work after the NVQ. [Lindsey, Kirkside East]

I've been on lots of courses through this work, training courses, six or seven different courses. Healthy and Safety and First Aid, and Drugs Awareness, and Working With Drug Users, and Communication Skills. These courses are good for this job and will be for future ones. [Emma, The Valley]

Some working parents explained that their training would help them move into a different area of work altogether. For example, one mother pursued a two year long medical secretary course. Parents also believed that their own progress in training and work would help their children:

Really really important that parents encourage their children. What you do yourself, they look up to you as a role model, so you have to think about how you go about your life as well. [Annie, East Docks]

e) Limits to educational and occupational opportunities
Many influences opened up opportunities for parents in the Families Study – working did this, whether paid or as a volunteer; so did the introduction of the tax credits, studying and training. However, the families highlighted continuing obstacles to progress and frustrated ambitions. Lack of experience was one of the biggest problems, and parents worried that this could also affect their children:

I never had a job and I want them to have one. I just want them to all have a job when they grow up, not like me, just do well for themselves [Angela, Kirkside East]

One mother was held back from further studying due to a lack of funding. Another working parent explained that, despite having qualifications and a position of responsibility, an unsupportive, discriminating workplace has seen her training needs completely overlooked. Another described the limits to progression:

There is always a ceiling with these careers, I cannot go any further. Unless I want to do teaching. [Rosemary, West-City].

Balancing raising a family with education and paid work dominated mothers' thinking as they were invariably the main carer. Most mothers we interviewed who didn't work said it was because of children. For these women, being a full-time, stay-at-home mother was the obvious choice:

When I had no kids I worked and studied, years ago. A levels at college – Art and Urdu, and I worked as a Nursery Nurse in a nursery. And before I had my third child [now age 2] I did a returning to work course in administration and IT, aiming to get a job, but I fell pregnant with my third. [Fatima, The Valley]

Other mothers were less constrained, but they explained at length the challenges of juggling paid work and childcare. The following extract captures how complex an issue this was for mothers. Here Alice talks not only about the importance of getting the balance of hours at work and home right, but also the balance of stress in life:

But my whole idea of going back to work now is out the window. I'd like to do something different, I don't know what I'd like to do, because working with children I find, especially with special needs children, it's very stressful, very hard work. It's very rewarding but I've now got a baby and I'm going to have another baby. It's very demanding at home anyway. So if you've both had a very stressful day at work and then having to come home and look after them yourself, it's too demanding. If I hadn't had [my son], I think I might've gone on to do teaching training, 'cause they'd been asking me to do that, for the last year. But once I'd had him, I was like 'no way, I'm not doing more hours'. I want to cut down my hours if anything. I'd like to see my child grow-up, 'cause when I had my other two I only worked part-time, three and a half hours a day, it's quite alright. I didn't go to work till 10.30 and was home by 1.30, which wasn't too bad. But now, school, you go out about half eight and you get home at quarter to four at night, it's nearly all the day gone. Especially when they're this age. [Alice, West-City]

Adequate, affordable childcare and after-school provision were big limitations on mothers' ability to work and progress. But that was coupled with many parents' reluctance to leave their children fulltime, even as they got older:

I've decided to stay at home and be here to collect her from school and be part of her life because I'm not with her dad. [Flowella, East Docks]

Parents shared a strong feeling that children needed supervision and mothers who worked full time often felt guilty:

I have pangs of guilt as a working mum. I do sometimes worry if they think I've abandoned them. I do like having more time with them. [Joyce, East Docks]

4. WHAT OPENS UP EDUCATIONAL AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES?

Children's Schooling
Schools play a critical role in children's lives and their prospects, but schools can only succeed with the support and co-operation of parents. Schools act as magnets for parents and create a strong sense of belonging between families as well as linking the wider community into the schools. Parents rely on schools to help their children learn essential skills in order to progress, but they also know that they must push hard on behalf of their children, when things are not going well. Not all parents are successful in doing this.

a) Overall positive feelings about children's schools
On our first visit, we asked about children's schools and education. Worries emerged including lack of resources, poor academic attainment, language problems, inadequate buildings, bullying, and for some families, truancy. However there was a generally positive and hopeful feeling amongst the families about their children's schools. By our last visit, parents were just as positive, and most were satisfied overall. In three of the four neighbourhoods, by far the largest group of parents were satisfied with their children's schools and felt that there were few problems. 70 per cent of Northern parents felt this way, in spite of some problems, compared with 40 per cent in West City and 60 per cent in East Docks. Only a small minority of parents expressed direct dissatisfaction with schools; 2 per cent in the North and around 16 per cent in London, while the rest either had mixed experiences or were fairly or very satisfied (see annex 4.2).

Parents' satisfaction with their children's schools is clearly linked to the schools' performance and efforts to help their children's education. Parents talked about the many and varied ways in which the schools met the special needs of their children, thus helping their education. They praised their children's schools for their support suggesting that many teachers coped well with the challenges of educating children from disadvantaged backgrounds and helped far beyond direct educational requirements:

> *The local school does the best it can, given all the difficulties. I'm really happy for them to be there. I don't want Ben to be a snob. I don't think it's the best school that could be found, but given the situation and circumstances of the area and different ethnic groups, they do quite well really, far more than they have to. The classes should be smaller....The reality is these kids are starting from below the level of kids who already speak the language. They have to work even harder to get the same level. [Pheobe, The Valley]*

b) Schools help underperforming children
Parents described how schools took action when their children were not producing work of the required standard for their age or year. This included meetings with parents and sometimes extra tuition. The following quotation captures one mother's surprise and gratitude at the level of commitment displayed by the teachers at her son's school:

> *My neighbour next door-but-one, her daughter goes to another school where she used to live, and they haven't picked up that she can't read or write properly, and she's about to leave school. So, you know, her school let her lapse and let a child through a net. Where at my son's school, he was pulled up at the age of six and they thought he was not performing as well as he should, and there's extra classes there for children and they get 'em up to the standard, and that's how they carry on, they're very good. The teachers've been there for years. They haven't got a high rate of supply teachers, they do a lot of after school clubs. And leading up to the SATS he was getting an extra two hours a week after school, education, from 3.30 to 4.30 for ten weeks. No other school I knew of done that. It weren't compulsory, but I thought well, you don't chuck education back, do you? And, he was doing Tuesdays and Thursdays every week for ten weeks before the SATS exams to get him through because that's how good the school is. Teachers and everyone putting themselves out, you know. Could you imagine that, after work, you'd just want to go home wouldn't you? Not stand doing another hour. [Alexa, East Docks]*

> *Sometimes you can get disillusioned because it's all about results to please the government. But you can see how much effort teachers put in. Recently we've been having interviews about my son and I feel they'll go that extra mile to help under-performing kids. [Rachel, East-Docks]*

Parents often remarked that their own poor education hampered their ability to help; then they relied on schools, family and friends:

> *When there's a piece of homework I can't help her with – I'd say the schools fairly good because my daughter learns a lot from schools. [Flowella, East Docks]*

Flowella also explained how her own lack of schooling motivates her now:

> *I was a 'latch-key kid', lacked support and supervision, so didn't take school seriously. There was no one really to push me, to make sure I'd done my homework and things like that. [Flowella, East Docks]*

c) Schools help with special educational, physical and emotional needs
Parents spoke of their children's schools having a positive, proactive approach to children's individual needs and problems. In particular they described schools' efforts to help with dyslexia, attention deficit hyper-active disorder (ADHD), autism and physical disabilities. Many children had special needs. The following extracts illustrate how schools meet these needs and how external agencies help overcome these disadvantages:

Speech therapy
> *He is going to see a psychologist next month because he has speech problems, he sees a speech therapist as he is behind at school, and they want to see if the two are linked… A health visitor referred us to a speech therapist when I said I was worried, and he does work on it daily with his teacher too, and the school*

found the psychologist because he isn't doing as much as he should for his age. [Sara, Kirkside East]

Dyslexia Statements
My son's secondary school, fine, no problems… they have been excellent, he has come on loads there. He is dyslexic, he is statemented, they have a dyslexia base there, that is why he went there, and he gets transport to and from school too, and there's only four such places a year. [Jackie, Kirkside East]

Mentoring
My son doesn't look up to anyone as he's in his own world. But at school he's got a mentor he does look up to him. They're like guidance teachers. They're trained in a different way from teachers – teachers shout whereas mentors talk to him. He stays with him all the way through. I have his mentor's mobile number so I can contact him. [Clare, East Docks]

Special needs support
He is on the Special Needs Register because he has low concentration…at nursery they got him registered as Special Needs and got someone to sit with him at nursery, and they suggest things for me to try with him. [Deidre, The Valley]

Behavioural control
My son's primary school, very satisfied, my son is supported with his behavioural problems, they give him extra support. [Chloe, Kirkside East]

Including disabled children
The local primary school is a really good school. My five year-old does the work of a seven year-old and she has extra lessons too. They accommodate all kids. And they will be able to support my three year-old disabled son too. And I want him to go to a normal school. [Louise, Kirkside East]

Turnover of children
For example, it is a white minority school and over one third are with special educational needs and a third leave during the year, because of being refugee and asylum seekers here, and people being short term housed here. The school is very child centred, looking at the needs of the particular population of children. [Louise, The Valley]

Louise not only praised the attention the school gave to special educational needs but also admired their response to the special challenges of refugee children. Overall schools seemed responsive to parents' anxieties and children's specific needs.

d) Schools' holistic approach to teaching

Parents praised the holistic approach to teaching adopted by schools. They praised the schools for approaching the individual children as people rather than focusing exclusively on 'teaching' and meeting targets. Parents clearly felt this helped their children's education. For example, one mother praises the school for being:

> Genuinely concerned about the kids [Laura, The Valley].

Another mother praises her children's Catholic school:

> They make all the pupils feel valued and build up self-confidence [Amber, East Docks].

Rosie explains how her children's primary school treats each child holistically:

> I'm very satisfied with my child's primary school, it is genuinely trying to look at the child as a whole and the importance of the family and looks at the child's overall development, not just literacy and numbers but creative development too, that is the general feel to the school. [Rosie, Kirkside East]

A Northern family somewhat reluctantly sent their daughters to the local comprehensive, in spite of it being dominated by Asian girls, and their experience reflects well on the school's ability to develop the 'whole child':

> There are too many coloured. My husband would say I'm being racist, but there are only three white girls in her class. But we went to an open day and it far outshone the other schools. We were impressed. The teachers seemed more interested in the children. They have more going on. The head is doing very well to bring the cultures together. [Peter's wife, Kirkside East]

e) Schooling problems can limit children's education

Homework

Despite the general overall satisfaction with schools, parents often referred to barriers that were detrimental to their children's education. We asked parents about helping children with their homework. In all four neighbourhoods, some parents experienced problems with this, particularly once their children began secondary school, because school teaching methods and skills requirements had changed since their own time at school; meanwhile standards had risen for schools in poorer areas. Maths was the most common problem:

> Maths is a problem. I can't do it in my head, they've changed it that much [Abigail, The Valley]

> I don't know half of it, the Maths is totally different [Nina, The Valley].

Some schools are tackling this problem

> I am confident except for Maths. The teacher showed a whole load of mums how to take away without carrying, because they're not taught like that anymore [Chloe, Kirkside East].

Other parents weren't sure what had been covered in their children's classes. As one mother put it:

> I must admit I find it a bit difficult. Some of the homework, you don't know what's been discussed in the lesson and it's frustrating [Rani, The Valley].

Parents often found it difficult to find the time to help with homework, especially when working long hours; others mentioned language barriers:

> She gets homework now and again. They get homeworms – photocopied sheets for their age group…. Some of the sheets are difficult to understand as well, which would put pressure on some of our ethnic minority families. [Peggy, The Valley]

Truancy

Attendance was an issue in several families. Schools tried to prevent and overcome truanting, but it needed parental support:

> He was truanting, but he learnt he couldn't get away with it. His brother says 'don't worry Mum. I'll keep an eye on him.' The school helped sort it out. He's not truanting anymore. [Angela, Kirkside East].

A few parents simply accepted that their children would get sick of school in their teenage years and gave up, as this East End mother commented when we saw her 14 year old hanging about during school hours:

> I don't know what he dislikes. I think it's just school. [Lesley, East Docks]

Work experience

Parents worried a lot about their children finding work if they only had limited schooling and ambitions. Many were not sure how they would. Angela in Kirkside East explains how valuable work experience, organised by the school, was to her son, when he'd decided that he didn't want to be at school any more:

> My son did a work placement. He's been doing work-related training. He passed his exam with distinction. They've kept him at Asda, he's done well. He wasn't paid for about a year and a half, which he accepted rather than go back to school. He did do two out of five days at college. [Angela, Kirkside East]

Another mother talked about her son's unrealistic ambitions:

> He wants the highest money and the fewest hours – reality might hit him one day [Joyce, East Docks]

Bullying

Bullying came up on our third visit. A quarter to a half of families across the four neighbourhoods reported that their children had been bullied (54 per cent in Kirkside East and 34 per cent in The Valley in the north, 28 per cent in West-City and 24 per cent in East-Docks in London). In all neighbourhoods the vast majority of bullying happened in and around school. A common finding, recounted by several families, was the detrimental effect of bullying on school attendance and thus work. One East End mother talked about her daughter not wanting to go to school anymore, and work experience becoming a way out for her:

> *I took my daughter out of school when she was 15 because she was being bullied…that was getting a rough school. My daughter went on to work experience in a bank, then to work at a travel agent. She's worked in a lot of companies. [Ellie, West City]*

Bullying was an ongoing problem for another mother:

> *He got beaten up by twenty kids and changed overnight, it is in the hands of solicitors. He is a lot better, but has days off. [Nina, The Valley].*

Another boy missed out on a school-related cycling course due to bullying. His mother explained her worries about how bullying is handled in some schools:

> *My son, he was bullied on one of the summer play schemes that they arrange in the area. He was, again, about seven or eight at the time. It was a learn-to-ride-a-bike-safely-on-the-road scheme. They do nice things during the summer holidays to try and keep the kids off the streets and that. And there was a group of kids there … and they started taking the mickey out of him … the age range was from 7 till 11 I think, so it was quite a big gap – and they'd started picking on him, pestering him. I said 'ignore them, tell the teacher' and whatever. The next day it happened again and on the third day, it kind of got worse. In the end, because it couldn't be sorted out, I took my son out of the course. So, in a way it wasn't fair because he ended up missing out on the course because of the situation not being be dealt with and sorted out … If that had been in a school situation, I would have had to carry on 'cause you can't just pull a child out of school because it's their whole future they're disrupting.*

> *In one of the secondary schools that I was looking at when I was going to choose a secondary school for my son, I asked the school what their policy on bullying was, anti-bullying policy or something? … I said 'What would you do in a situation where a child was being bullied by a group of kids?' They said that they'd talk to the child, talk to the group, talk to the parents and whatever. I said, 'What if it wasn't sorted out, what would you do if it carried on?' And what I heard really shocked me. He said, 'We'd ask the child that was being bullied, recommend that they leave the school because' he said, 'we'd rather lose one child than a group of kids from the school'.*

It's like, oh my goodness, not only is that poor child going to be bullied, but regardless of whether they're doing well at the school or they like the school or they've got friends, they have to leave because they value having a group of kids, keeping a group of kids than keeping one kid. And it just didn't feel right, and I thought 'no, my son's not coming here' … It's like, 'I didn't do anything, why should I leave my school, leave the teacher I like, leave my friends, when I didn't do anything? Is it my fault that they picked on me' kind of thing, and you sort of worry where that would end up. [Tamara, East Docks]

Another Northern parent had a hard time getting the school to deal with bullying:

It got ignored and he didn't want to go to school. He pointed out the lad to me from a distance and I had a word with the form teacher and she did deal with it. [Poonam, Kirkside East].

But some parents had much better experiences:

Once my son had got his bus fare stolen on the way to school. I got in touch with the school and the lad got suspended. [Angela, Kirkside East]

Teacher turnover
A different, but possibly related problem, was a high turnover of teachers:

It was two teachers in the class but one was on maternity leave, and through the year they went through thirty teachers, so I complained, because I just felt that children need stability. They need to have that one person there all the time. [Faye, West City]

I'm not really satisfied. In a year, these children could have five different teachers. It's not right, because if you keep changing staff, they don't know what they're dong. And the food, my younger boy complained throughout five years of secondary school. It distracts a child, not make them concentrate. To make a child really concentrate and do well at school, teachers shouldn't change, and they should get a proper meal. It did contribute a lot to problems, because when the child is always complaining it's not right, 'they keep changing the teachers and I'm not getting things right, it's the third teacher in the term'. [Gloria, East Docks]

5. WHAT HELPS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEPRIVED AREAS?

Local support
The parents rely incredibly heavily on the people they know and trust locally, mainly family and close friends.

a) The disadvantages and how to tackle them
On our sixth visit we asked the parents about the main risks they saw for their children in their neighbourhoods. Their answers illustrate the types of disadvantage that children and young people have to overcome in their daily lives if positive opportunities are to open up. These risks include crime of many sorts, drugs, peer pressure, personal attacks, abuse, poor parental supervision, lack of constructive activities, nowhere to go and many others (see annex 4.3). The first three were the parents' biggest worries. Things that would make the areas better for their children reflected these priorities, tackling crime, drugs education, traffic calming, more things for children to do and more safe places for children to go. Having reliable friends locally and social meeting points were also important (see annex 4. 4).

Three dominant ideas emerged from the parents' answers:
- **the importance of local support networks;**
- **the need for child-oriented services and facilities;**
- **the urgency of tackling crime.**

These three factors – local support networks, family-friendly conditions, and crime prevention – help the most, as families struggle to overcome the obstacles their children and young people face. We illustrate these three important supports with concrete examples in the next sections.

b) Local support networks
'Social capital' means that people's links with each other are valuable and create direct community benefits. Everyday networks and associations bind people together and encourage them to pull together for the common good. This builds trust which creates 'the everyday fabric of connection and tacit co-operation'[6]. Social capital can take several forms. *Bonding social capital* implies strong, intense personal relationships, offering mutual support, understanding and mutual exchange, often based on family or close personal friendships. *Bridging and linking social capital* imply broader membership of groups, including neighbours, wider networks such as those relating to work and more structured links through organisations such as Sure Start or a choir or church. Both forms of social capital are important to families and in different ways help them to help their children and young people progress[7]. Almost all families had close ties with relatives, local friends and if they were lucky, with teachers, doctors and other supports. Two thirds of parents in both northern neighbourhoods saw their closest friends at

6 Halpern, D (2005) *Social Capital*, Cambridge: Polity Press
7 Rural Evidence Research Centre (2007) *Social Capital in Rural Places,* report to DEFRA. London: Birkbeck; Power, A & Willmot, H (2007) *Social Capital Within the Neighbourhood* London, LSE: CASEreport 38

least weekly. In London these figures were even higher – 86 per cent in West-City and 73 per cent in East-Docks. The vast majority relied on family and intimate friends. Over 90 per cent of parents felt able to 'be themselves' with key trusted individuals, felt appreciated by others, and felt they had local people they could talk to and they could call on when they needed. A few parents mentioned professionals such as Sure Start employees, health visitors, and their local doctor, as providing this sort of support, but more mentioned neighbours, friends and family. Over half the parents maintained frequent, regular contact with their own mothers, at least fortnightly – by phone if the family was from abroad.

> Sometimes I might not go round to my Mum's in a week, but just knowing she's there [Anne, East Docks]

A large majority of key friends and relatives lived within the area or nearby, and helped in various ways, including babysitting and childcare, help with the school run and collecting children, help with decorating and DIY, sharing information, and giving advice. Moral support was also important. Between a third and two thirds received direct help from family members such as childcare – the proportion was highest in East Docks somewhat surprisingly.

By far the most common form of help received from family members was childcare. For many of the parents, this was an organised, long-standing arrangement, facilitating paid work, as the following extracts illustrate:

> My mum-in-law and father-in-law have my daughter, 18 months old, four days a week when I am at work, and the third Thursday of each month I work and my Mum has her. [Denise, Kirkside East]

> The plan was to go back to work at the nursery. I lasted two weeks! I was determined to go back to work but everything changed when I had him. I don't want to work. It took four months to get registered as a childminder. Now I work four days a week, my mum comes on all four days of the week. My mum's so good. She's an emergency back-up … We have a strange relationship. We don't hug and tell each other we love each other but we're very close. She's one of my best friends and she'd do anything for us. [Rebecca, West-City]

> My sister picks up my son. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to stay on at work. [Louise, East-Docks]

> My mum-in-law and father-in-law have my daughter, 18 months old, four days a week when I am at work, and the fourth Wednesday of each month my mum has her. Both lots of family are there 24 hours a day if we need them. [Nellie, Kirkside East]

This intense form of social support, or **'bonding social capital'**, helped parents to work or study, providing greater financial resources. It therefore de facto created **'bridging social capital'**, by linking parents into work. This helps families hugely.

Families sometimes help with childcare in more ad-hoc ways, but parents still find it helps them to work and also get occasional respite from the demands of caring for young children:

> They are fantastic, best parents in the world, help with childcare when I do work for the business. [Jenny, The Valley]

> My daughter is over at my Mum's now. No buses in the city at the moment and I am finding it hard to get anywhere at the moment. She is driving me mad. So I am having a break. And my in laws will have her at the weekend. [Peggy, The Valley]

> There's seven of us brothers and sisters, and we've got lots of children all over the area. Sometimes I might not go to mum's in a week, but just knowing she's there, over the road, or my sister's just round the corner makes all the difference. It is mutual, sort of moral support, you know they are there, and can ring them to collect the kids or have them, et cetera. [Abraham, The Valley]

Other members of an extended family besides mothers help too:

> If I am struggling with my son, my aunt and uncle will take him for a few hours. [Meg, The Valley]

> I found this young cousin of mine who's just moved into the area. She took over from my auntie looking after the baby. I want someone I can trust for babysitting. [Cynthia, West City]

Families offer emotional as well as practical support, making them feel connected:

> My sister's round the corner, makes all the difference [Anne, East Docks]

Loss of relatives close by can leave mothers feeling very isolated:

> It feels like the heart's been ripped out of the East End [Lesley, East Docks]

Parents also offer invaluable mutual aid in caring for their parents so children, parents and grand parents all receive benefits:

> I've come back home where I'm needed [Joyce, East Docks]

c) Child focused services – Sure Start

We asked parents what help they had received with their children from public services (see annex 4.5). The most common answer was a route into paid work, coupled with 'something to do' – volunteering, training or work. This bears out the importance of work in helping families build a better future. When we asked parents what their top priority was, it was invariably more for the children to do.

In meeting this need, Sure Start came out extremely strongly. Sure Start was a key provider of child-focused services, in all four neighbourhoods, supporting parents with young children. On our last visit, we asked families about neighbourhood regeneration programmes, including Sure Start. Parents explained that this initiative provided pivotal support for low-income families with young children. Sure Start not only helped parents make the transition into paid work, via courses and voluntary roles (see section 3.1 above); it also helped families financially in other ways, providing maternity grants of £500 as well as vital equipment such as fire guards, stairgates, toy loans etc.

Parents explained that Sure Start had helped them with a specific problem or concern with their children, from serious **medical conditions**, and **behavioural problems**, to **confidence problems** which may only need low level support:

> The main thing I will love Sure Start forever for is they were brilliant about my son, age 4, helped me to get him diagnosed with autism, for a speech and language therapist to see him, and that started the whole diagnosis process. I just feel they take parents very seriously. And it has been nice to meet other mum's with kids the same age. [Gillian, The Valley]

Sure Start's ability to generate social networks was extremely important for isolated mothers with shy children:

> It came at the right time. He wouldn't mix with other kids at all. I was at the end of my tether. They advised me to go to parent and toddler group and I did. I was shy, so he suffered. But Sure Start got me to go to groups and to mix and he benefited from it. [Deidre, The Valley]

Involvement with Sure Start fostered a greater sense of community, as one parent explained:

> Well, I think it is nice to know what is happening in the community and to be part of the community, to get your name recognised, and to be able to share your information with others. That is really important to me. [Chandra, The Valley]

Perhaps the most significant benefit of Sure Start is the provision of somewhere to take the children each day. Sure Start has made a big difference to the daily lives of families without many resources as mothers explained:

> It is helpful. No Sure Start, nowhere to go. [Laverne, Kirkside East].

> Sure Start is good. It helps new mothers to get out more, instead of being inside with children [Naomi, East-Docks]

There's always somewhere to take the children now. Parent and toddler drop-ins, fun days, and music groups. There's somewhere to go every single day. Toy libraries, whatever. Before then we just went to the park really. Especially if it's a cold, rainy day, going to the park, it's hard. But now there is somewhere to go every single day. [Destiny, West City]

Sure Start's strength seems to lie in the general support and links that it provides, so parents are not lonely or isolated. One mother talked about Sure Start's drop-in service for parents to discuss their fears and problems with raising children. One mother expressed this graphically:

You're not in a lonely world [Millie, West-City].

The following views are typical of many we picked up:

They are always there. [Meg, The Valley]

You're not on your own. You've got someone to turn to. [Amy, Kirkside East]

I had a little bit of support when my son, now age two, was quite small. And I have done some of their courses, like First Aid. They do Christmas parties for kids too. It is another group of people you can go to and to a lot of extent it is just another group of people I know, you know they are there. [Laura, The Valley]

It would be a lot harder without Sure Start. Even before the baby comes you get £500 maternity grant. Then after, all drop ins and stuff, and a really good support system. [Angie, Kirkside East].

Sure Start provides a strong and detached source of help with family problems:

I got support from Sure Start with my son's behavioural problems... You've got someone to support you, when friends and family are not enough! [Chloe, Kirkside East]

When I was going through behavioural problems with my son [age 5] they supported me. Just a support network really. [Rosie, Kirkside East]

Sure Start also promotes emotional well-being and parents feel better for knowing that Sure Start is there for them. Parents feel involved with and supported by Sure Start and take comfort from knowing that Sure Start workers and their open-door services are for them. This builds confidence, trust and community co-operation, the keys to social capital, a highly valued, non-monetary, non-tradable asset that is precious to low-income families with few resources. Sure Start has been a huge success in helping families overcome many disadvantages. Olivia's sister who had serious depression got more help from Sure Start than other services:

She's had problems with Social Services so she went to the Sure Start group
[Olivia, Kirkside East]

Many other activities and services helped too, such as schools (see section 4), clubs, parks, swimming etc. But schools and Sure Start form two of the most regular, dependable, accessible and well organised activities that families use. The rapid shrinkage in resources currently underway risks undermining much of the good that we uncovered.

d) Crime prevention
The third main support to the families in overcoming disadvantage for their children is the work in preventing crime and creating a greater sense of security. 'Social trust', the confidence that you can count on family, neighbours, friends and local services was particularly important to parents, because of worries about security and the threat of crime. The following discussion explores just how dominant crime was and how much could be done to reduce fear. We learnt very early on that **crime was a problem** in the **neighbourhoods** for a majority of parents in all four neighbourhoods, and around half felt it was a serious problem (see annex 4.6). More than a fifth of the parents we visited had directly experienced crime in the previous year.

(i) Impacts of crime on families
As the families talked about their neighbourhoods, they often spontaneously highlighted worries about crime and safety. In all four of the neighbourhoods, up to a third of parents were dissatisfied with the areas from the point of view of bringing up children (22 per cent in East-Docks and 30 per cent in West-City in London, and 20 per cent in The Valley and 32 per cent in Kirkside East in the north). These figures are much higher than the national average of 13 per cent[8]. Families living in London were worried for children, because of high crime, drug abuse and the presence of paedophiles locally. In the two northern neighbourhoods, crime and drugs were also dominant fears, but most families felt safe in the area immediately surrounding their homes, while being much less confident about the wider neighbourhood. One of the worst effects of crime and fear was that children were kept indoors and not allowed to venture out alone to play.

Mine aren't allowed out of the garden. Sometimes I daren't even leave them
in the garden [Poonam, Kirkside East]

(ii) Government initiatives to tackle crime
Several government initiatives to tackle crime were in evidence in the four neighbourhoods; two examples are Community Police Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens. Community Police Support Officers (CPSOs) provide a uniformed physical, recognisable street presence and work to develop community networks. Their role also includes intelligence gathering, crime recording, problem solving, and picking up 'slow-time' response ie less urgent policing matters. By 1999, all four of the neighbourhoods had Community Police Officers at work. The function of Neighbourhood Wardens is to provide a civilian supervision and enforcement

presence in local areas, also uniformed, playing a lower key role in identifying and monitoring problems in the neighbourhood and calling in the relevant services to tackle them. By 2003, Neighbourhood Wardens were also in place in all the neighbourhoods.

On our last visit we tried to find out how such anti-crime initiatives had worked. The findings were mainly positive, with more than half of parents in all four of the neighbourhoods feeling that one or more initiative had improved their neighbourhood in some way (see annex 4.7).

Parents told us how these anti-crime initiatives had prompted different responses. Parents said the visible patrols acted as deterrents, and praised the way in which the CPSOs and wardens dealt with children and young people on the edge of criminal activities. They said it was easier to report crime as a result of the local patrols and they felt safer, as crime became less visible (see annex 4.8). Some parents realised that displacing crime could create ongoing problems for other neighbourhoods; underlining the need for crime prevention everywhere, not just in highly disadvantaged areas

Families painted a picture of high levels of engagement of CPSOs and wardens with local children and young people. The CPSOs' and Neighbourhood Wardens' relationship with children and young people in the neighbourhoods allows them to collect names and addresses. This acts as a powerful deterrent to children and young people truanting or getting into mischief. Their presence dissuaded young people from 'loitering' and hanging about in groups, sometimes seen as encouraging trouble; also they help prevent and combat truancy. The following extracts capture some of the ways in which the CPSOs and wardens in the four neighbourhoods engage and work with children and young people:

The Community Police walk about and stop and check kids hanging about, so
they help. [Laverne, Kirkside East]

See the Neighbourhood Wardens a lot, they are very approachable, they help
with kids hanging about. They do help. [Rani, The Valley]

A friend is a Neighbourhood Warden actually. If they see kids messing about, graffiti,
et cetera, they deal with it. They are good they are. [Rachel, The Valley]

I've seen Community Police four or five times. They are OK. They do their job.
They have asked my kids their names when they have been out playing, and
asked where they live. [Cath, Kirkside East]

I think it is good because I feel nuisance stuff, not crime, which I would never
have rung Police for, you can talk to these not-quite-police CPOs people, like
we did when there were some youths on the street that bothered a lot of
people. [Gillian, The Valley]

They said to him 'Why you not at school?' He said, 'I'm going there now'. They
said, 'okay, get in the car, we'll drop you off'. [Flowella, East-Docks]

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8   Survey of English Housing 1997/98

Parents highlighted their approachable manner as central to the engagement of children and young people. One mother explained:

Community Police are really nice, because they don't go in guns blazing, they talk to kids. Treat them with humanity. [Amanda, Kirkside East]

Another parent contrasted anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) with the wardens because they were able to relate to children and young people, and tried to explain why:

Neighbourhood Wardens, seen them around a lot. Do a lot when on duty. Do all they can. ASBOs not so good. Dished out a lot and people are not taking any notice. And Community Police are on the increase but not sure of what they've done. I think the Neighbourhood Wardens have been more effective because they can relate to the kids, they're more on their wavelength. [Louise, The Valley]

The CPSOs' and wardens also work with schools, for example going into schools to talk about their work, responding to particular problems or incidents in schools, and CPSOs working with schools on an ongoing basis to prevent problems including truancy, bullying, fighting and carrying weapons:

I think they're a bit more involved with schools now, the Police – when we've had problems or we're not happy with what the children have done. We just had an incident – it wasn't a big knife or anything like that – we really needed to put it across that you can't have them, so they will come in and talk to them, and to that particular child. If we had a problem with a student, they will actually come in. We've got good links with the Police, actually now. [Barbara, East-Docks]

Some accounts of partnerships between schools and crime officers showed how many local barriers the police had to overcome:

We've got the Community Police coming in now. They come to the parents' evening and they even come to the fete, to try and get their faces known. One of the Community Police ladies, she said, 'they hate us', which is not very good, you know. So they are trying very hard to make things a little bit more friendlier, which would be good. You know, a bit more trust. Strike up a relationship there that they could work on, perhaps, to improve the area. [Peggy, East-Docks]

Many parents explained that they had already seen changes amongst children and young people as a direct result of the work of these crime prevention initiatives, such as a noticeable reduction in youth crime over time:

The other good thing now is the wardens, coming around the estates now, which is absolutely brilliant. Because we don't see the groups of children that used to be on the stairs anymore. [Niamh, West-City]

We have, at the moment, lots of community support police on patrol, which I think has made a difference. [Barbara, East-Docks]

The CPSOs and wardens in the four neighbourhoods respond to immediate troubles and thus prevent crime more generally. By working with children and young people to stop them getting into trouble, these crime prevention initiatives help families to overcome one of the biggest disadvantages of living in high crime areas – fear itself. Wider evidence supports the significance of crime reduction in countering fear and in helping families and communities to flourish.[9]

e) Three Bands of Support

The three strands described above – local family support, child-focused services, crime prevention – form three rings of support around the families, helping them to overcome the disadvantages posed by neighbourhood conditions and faced daily by their children. These rings work outwards from the most intense, closest-to-home support to the wider neighbourhood level of action on crime.

- The first ring – core community support usually from family or close friends – offers help 'on tap' when it is most needed. This helps parents survive the harshest problems and access paid work ensuring more financial security for the families, and more social capital.

- The second ring is child-based and family-oriented services. Sure Start, in particular, offers many services and activities for parents of young children, on a daily basis, that transforms the daily experience of user-parents. It also promotes the emotional well-being of families through friendly support and social contact, combating loneliness, isolation, and depression – again creating social capital.

- The third ring focuses on crime prevention, building better communication with children and young people who need more attention, tackling actual problems when they arise, helping schools, and deterring criminal activity. Parents are greatly reassured by this work.

Figure 1: The Three Bands of Support

Crime prevention – reducing fear and increasing trust

Core Community Support – whenever needed

Children's and Family Services – daily activity and advice
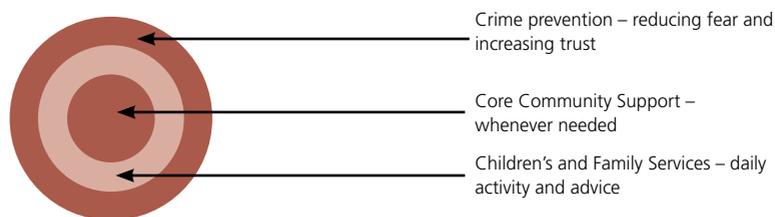
9   Samson, R. J, Raudenbush, S and Felton, E (1997) Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science* 277:918-24, Casey, L (2008) *Engaging communities in fighting crime.* London: Cabinet Office

6. HOW COULD SERVICES BE BETTER ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN?

Better value for money

So far this report has focussed on what the problems are and what helps. This section explores what might improve the help that is on offer, to maximise its value to parents. Many services have opened up training and work opportunities for families, and have helped children and young people overcome some of the major disadvantages of their neighbourhoods. These services – the tax credits system to support job access, Sure Start to support young families, schools to help all children, and crime prevention to reduce fear in families – were not only praised by the families but also critiqued. Their comments highlight ways in which such services, valuable as they are, might be better adapted to their needs.

a) Tax credits

Tax credits helped parents into work but threw up many difficulties in their early implementation, including overpayment and having to pay back, the high cost of using registered childminders in order to qualify for childcare support, and the fact that tax credits limit the hours recipients can work and therefore their earnings, sometimes making the gains too marginal.

Across the board, whether families were financially better off with tax credits or not, parents commented on how badly run and administered they were at first. Annoyance, anger, and exasperation sometimes emerged:

Last time we looked into it, we had had pay rises and owed them money. It is ok for us, but not for those worse off, how do they cope with that? The system is terrible, really messes people about. It's supposed to help people on low-incomes. [Paulo. The Valley]

This mother suffered acute anxiety through not knowing where she stood:

Working Tax Credits need to sort themselves out and not mess you about and then leave you broke. I'd have blown a fuse if I'd try to fight it. They are playing with people's lives. They shouldn't. Well I get £75 a week now. Sorry, I forgot to say, £43.11 I paid a week on that house, I had to let them get on with it, not fight, get chest pains, like panic attacks, from it. [Patsy, Kirkside East]

This parent who child-minds explains how Tax Credits could work better :

What this government has got to do, is simplify the Tax Credit system for people that want to go out to work and need childcare. They have got to simplify it, and they've got to make more childcare places available, to get especially single parents, off benefits and out of poverty. A child that I look after, her mum is a single parent, alright, she gets her childcare Tax Credits. She is better off but not a lot better off. She still has to seriously juggle her finances. 'Cos

you know, she has rent, council tax, and things like that to pay. I personally think they still need a lot, lot, more help. There still a lot of work to be done on it. [Destiny, West City]

Several parents did not feel any better off with the new tax credits. For some this was because receiving tax credits meant forfeiting other benefits, resulting in little change to the household finances. The childcare component of tax credits forced parents to use a registered childminder, but this automatically increases costs, in spite of the help. One working mother describes this problem and the inevitable costs of working, even on a low wage, starkly:

Now they say mothers should go to work, but I should've stayed as I was. If you're not working, you get things. [Cynthia, West City]

b) Schools
Parents' worry about their children's education on many fronts: the general standard of teaching provided, class sizes, failure to meet the individual needs of their child, racial tensions between different ethnic minority groups, and sometimes poor relations between school and parents.

While schools were instrumental in helping children who were falling behind in their work, helping with special needs, and adopting a holistic approach to teaching, parents highlighted aspects that negatively affected children's education. Parents sometimes voiced concerns over the quality of education that their children were receiving:

My older son was in reception and they swapped books everyday and he couldn't read them, so he should have been finishing a book and then starting a new one. And they got older kids in the school to hear the little ones read and I don't agree with it. Children need proper tuition and the older kids need to spend their time on their own work. [Poonam, Kirkside East]

Although many praised their children's schools for the help and support that they give children with any kind of special needs, others explained that their children's schools were failing to help with their children's specific needs, including some reports of children not receiving help with dyslexia, learning disabilities, behavioural problems, and autism, amongst other problems. Parents were also sometimes critical of their children's schools for not dealing with the problem of bullying. The following extracts capture the frustration and anxiety parents felt when problems were not being dealt with properly by their children's schools:

Learning difficulties
The local High School, it is the worst school I've ever known. And I'm trying to get him out of it. They don't want to know. They just don't want to know. He is badly behaved and has learning difficulties and they don't help. I'd go in every day. In tears I told them he needs help and they didn't want to know. [Cath, Kirkside East]
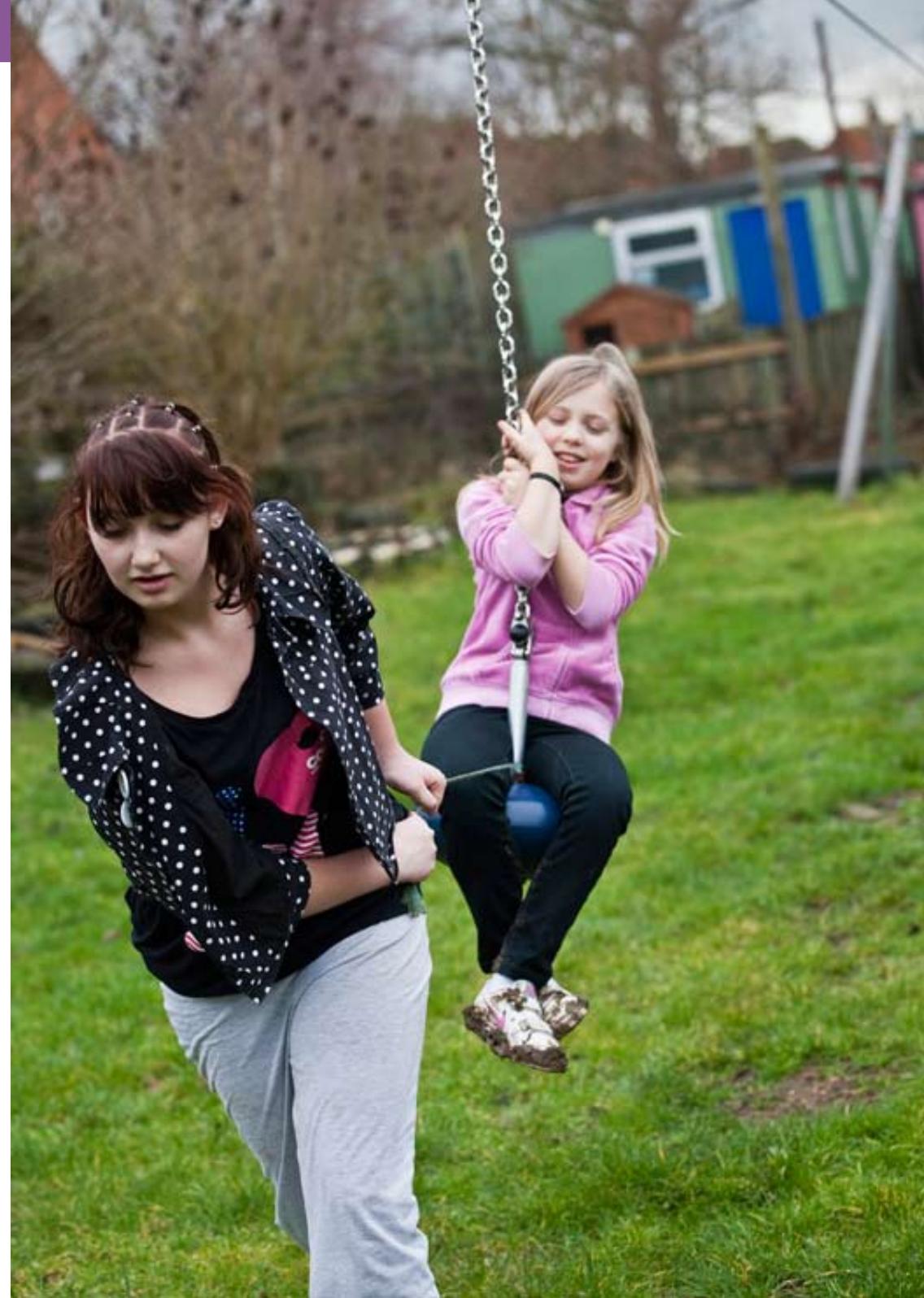
Dyslexia
We've had zero help with the children despite them all being dyslexic. The eldest is dyspraxic. It's all been pushed through by me. [Leah, West-City]

Statements of special educational needs
My sixteen year-old son is at the local high school, and I'm not happy at all. He is statemented and his first year was fine, but since then his statement's not been met at all. He leaves next Easter. We need to keep him in school and help him at home as much as possible. [Kathleen, Kirkside East]

Need for practical learning
My son gets some help but not enough. In schools generally, if you are good at Maths and English and Science, et cetera, you are okay. But if not, you are not helped. They need more practical learning at school. [Chandra, The Valley]

Unruly classes
My son… his class this year has been very unruly, very noisy, and he has not wanted to go, and the school doesn't seem to have been able to deal with it, not improved it. [Kerry, The Valley]

Bullying
There is a bullying issue, low grade bullying is allowed amongst boys, my son is being bullied, age 9, been going on for years. The school doesn't address it. [Avril, The Valley]

When a school fails to deal with a child's behavioural problems and academic weak spots, there are particularly worrying knock-on effects. A few parents spoke of their children failing to gain the most basic skills at school. One mother was very concerned that her son was not learning despite displaying a bright and inquisitive nature:

My son could do very well, but at the moment comes under the influence of lots of naughty boys at school. He is a follower, and the school don't tackle that. [Maya, The Valley]

Parents with children who show signs of being quite gifted academically felt that their children were not being sufficiently encouraged by their schools, leaving their potential unfulfilled. One mother seemed particularly aware of the likely long-term effects of this on her daughter's life:

She wants to be a scientist. She's very good at science and English. She was on the 'gifted and talented' list at primary but they don't seem to be doing anything to encourage it now she's at secondary… I hope they can get access for a good education to get a good start in life. Go to college or university, get a good job and get out of this area so they don't have to bring up their kids here. [Leah, West City]

Some parents sensed a patronising attitude towards them, accentuated by the lack of contact and communication, particularly with secondary schools.

They're not very parent-friendly in that school. They're not. They seem to shut parents out, to me. Often it's only open from 3.15pm to 4pm, to parents, it's not good enough really is it? They suggest you either ring up or email. I said 'But not everybody's got access to email', you know, 'All the people that are poor, and there's loads of them, they don't have computers at home'. They've got a high refugee, a high proportion of refugees around here – they haven't got computers, you know. And it's not fair, it's not right. [Destiny, West City]

Ethnicity, multiculturalism and the problem of racism emerged in other comments. There were tensions between different ethnic minority groups within the local area and particularly in the local secondary schools. One mother was worried about how the ethnic divisions and tensions within schools and education might affect the future:

It leads to a division amongst the children when they get older. [Cynthia, The Valley]

Parents all seemed to desire the same thing – truly multicultural schools:

When you look, a lot of them aren't white. Most are Asian, Pakistanis. I'm not saying they don't behave well, but it should be more mixed. [Kamal, The Valley]

c) Sure Start
Parents worried that Sure Start did not always reach or help the most disadvantaged parents, and conversely that it was too geared towards disadvantaged families. Lack of provision for children beyond the age of five was a common criticism, and access to Sure Start services was sometimes limited. The sustainability of Sure Start long-term was a big worry.

While overall Sure Start, along with schools, earned more praise from parents than anything else, there were still ways it could be improved. The biggest criticism was the 'cliff edge' of the age bar:

It is a good service. We need more for older kids though. They could do more for that age. [Olivia, Kirkside East]

The sad thing is that after my son is five years old, he won't be able to join in. It would be better if they still keep in contact and have 'Sure Start for Juniors'. [Aziz, West-City]

Sure Start was set up for all parents of young children in tightly targeted, highly disadvantaged areas. Some parents felt uneasy about the way Sure Start was so narrowly targeted, and didn't want to feel deprived:

I went to Sure Start local nursery and used their Books for Children scheme… I think Sure Start, personally, made less difference than help from the New Deal

Lone Parent Advisor. It was aimed at people not bothered about books and education and I am not part of that group, it is something I've always wanted. But free things are nice and appreciated always! [Patsy, Kirkside East]

My criticism would be, in my area, Sure Start use a lot of incentives, so are parents going for the freebies or the services? Also, it's only a ten year programme and it's 2006, so what'll happen next? It doesn't really cater for working parents as we all work nine to five and not weekends. [Amber, East Docks]

There's a stigma to Sure Start, as something for deprived people. [Amanda, Kirkside East]

Another mother felt that Sure Start might be doing too much for young mothers in difficulty:

I wonder if there is too much help for young girls having a baby. It is easy, an easy way out. [Jessica, The Valley].

Others talked about Sure Start not actually reaching the most vulnerable parents. In West City and the Valley Sure Start services attracted some white, middle class mothers, who might in turn make more disadvantaged parents feel inadequate:

It's great, Sure Start, it's really good. I'm just sorry that there aren't more working class families making use of it. I've been taking the baby to a One O'Clock Club, that's Sure Start, and actually there's been quite a few working class women there. Immigrant women. I don't know why it's more popular with them to go to something like a One O'Clock Club. It is a lot more mixed, 'cause I used to take my son to an art class ... and it was just packed full of middle class white women in big houses who were going 'this is great, you know, 50p'. But I haven't been for quite a bit so it may've changed, who knows. [Jasmine, West City]

One mother had hoped that Sure Start would help her make the transition into paid employment but was disappointed by the help she received:

With Sure Start, I was very involved, but they weren't helping me so I left. They wanted to teach me to chop vegetables and do baby massage, and to make the best of a bad situation, rather than getting back out to work. Sure Start is overrated. [Carmen, East Docks]

A number of parents were out of the Sure Start catchment area and were therefore unable to attend their groups and use their services:

I did receive help with my second child, now age 7, but now am out of the catchment area for Sure Start. [Jessica, The Valley].

Some parents noticed the beginning of a decline in Sure Start services, whilst others asked what would happen once the initial ten years of funding comes to an end as parents had come to depend on it:

The more they offer, the more parents want! The parents were saying the playgroups need to be more educational, but it's quite a lot they're asking for. If it does go, people will have relied on it so much. It's supposed to empower people, but they're being spoon fed. [Amber, East-Docks].

Parents' worries, and particularly worries about dependence on support, underline a big barrier to opportunity for families in deprived areas. Support services need to be long-term and need to be part of mainstream provision if we are to prevent problems recurring. One huge advantage of schools is their permanence, but parents are most vulnerable and in need of support in the early pre-school years and help for very young children pays off over the long term.[10]

d) Community Police and Neighbourhood Wardens
Community Police Support Officers (CPSOs) and Neighbourhood Wardens help prevent local crime and make neighbourhoods safer for children, young people, families and the elderly. The local crime initiatives make it easier to report crime and promote feelings of security and confidence. CPSOs and wardens build positive relationships with children and young people who are often hard to reach. But the limited powers of CPSOs and wardens – with their focus on minor crimes and the risk of simply moving crime on; the working hours not fitting with the times when most crime takes place; and the lack of local awareness – all invite some criticism.

A common criticism of CPSOs and wardens is that they are not 'proper' police:

We need more visible, proper police. These 'Help Policemen' [CPS0s], they help but they don't take the place of real policeman. [Trudy, West-City]

CPSO's got no power. They're only a deterrent for a certain age group. Where there's any agro they're never around. Where I work, there's fights, stabbings everyday, but you can't get in at groups of sixteen to eighteen year-olds. I'm unsure how much they can actually do and they get paid an awful lot of money for it. They're probably going to report what's going on but nothing's going to go on in front of a fluorescent jacket. Telling ten year-olds to move along. They're a positive thing to have around but there's a limit. They're just replacing what the police should do. [Rosemary, West-City]

Nonetheless, they help a bit:

I'm not convinced any of them make a lot of difference. But I do think crime has gone down. So don't know why. Like, the Neighbourhood Wardens patrol the streets, but faced with a crime what, would they do? [Janice, The Valley]

10 McKey, R H et al (1985) *The Impact of Head Start on Children, Families and Communities* (Final Report of the Head Start Evaluation, Synthesis, and Utilization Project). Washington, DC: CSR.

The one big problem is the drugs, but the police don't do anything about it. The only thing that's good is they walk through the estates. [Trudy, West-City]

Other parents offered more balanced views:

It is mainly Community Police. They probably have helped to reduce crime but the only thing is, like, the kids know their limited powers basically. So, in terms of the teenagers or whatever, I don't think they're that effective because the kids, they do know their limited powers . But, sort of presence round the street is not a bad thing anyway. [Barbara, East-Docks]

They don't see them CPSOs as having power so they don't look up to them. It doesn't matter if they're on the street or not. Some people could argue that it's a waste of resources but for those vulnerable people that feel intimidated, they feel more secure, so there's pros and cons. [Amber, East-Docks]

Another limitation was failing to get at the root of the problem. One parent observed CPSOs chasing teenagers away in her neighbourhood saying:

If they don't do it here, they do it somewhere else. Occasionally there's an incident after school. If you have Community Police Officers outside all of the time, it might keep a lid on that, but I but I think you move it on to somewhere else, and you also don't address the underlying issue, so when they're not there, there's still a possibility that it might happen. It's almost like the analogy of putting a sticky plaster on something and not actually dealing with what the problem is. So I think, yes, they build relationships in the community and people like to see them around but I'm not sure they're dealing with the underlying issues or the problems. [Andrea, East-Docks]

The working hours of both CPSOs and wardens did not always fit local needs:

They're here] just now waiting for a bus. It makes the 'toe rags' sit up and think but CPSO's get belittled because they know they've not got as much power as the old bill. They clock off, at night time's when you need 'em, when there's lots of drugs on the street. [Alexa, East-Docks]

When the Community Police are walking around here, it's just nice to see, it's that reassurance that they're there. When the Wardens come round it's normally in the afternoon about twelve, one o'clock and there's never really nobody much round here. [Faye, West-City]

I think these initiatives could all be more effective, because there are different projects in different areas run differently. Like, in this neighbourhood there is no evening cover of Wardens for example. [Angie, The Valley]

They are all wrong place, wrong time. I think of the Wardens especially here. [Judith, The Valley]

Neighbourhood Wardens attracted more criticism than CPSOs, partly because they cover much bigger patches so are inevitably less visible; also they do not have such a direct policing role as CPSOs:

You don't hardly see 'em really – the Wardens. I think they're quite lazy actually. We see Community Police Officers from time to time, more than you do normal policeman. Which I think, you know, I s'pose it's a good thing. I think they can help to reduce crime yeah, because they're more on the scene that what the normal police are. [Destiny, West-City]

7. WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS TO HELP FAMILIES AND CHILDREN?

Closing the gap

The number of families involved in some way in regeneration initiatives at our last visit illustrates the impact of these initiatives on their neighbourhoods, especially in the northern neighbourhoods; 63 per cent in Kirkside East, 85 per cent in The Valley, 48 per cent in West-City, and 45 per cent in East-Docks said they were familiar with one or other initiative. In many different ways, wide ranging work in the four neighbourhoods over the ten years has improved conditions and helped the families overcome some of the disadvantages they face. They benefited from more work opportunities, helped by working tax credits, less crime, helped by proactive crime prevention; and more support for young families, particularly through Sure Start and schools. Parents found opportunities in education and training, financial help, and emotional support. These things in turn helped their children – although not always and not in all cases. We also uncovered measures which the families thought would help sustain progress. In this final section we briefly summarise the main areas of progress in overcoming disadvantage and opening up opportunity. We then try to capture parents' views on what would most help their children's futures, before drawing some conclusions.

a) What has progressed?

On our last visit, we asked parents whether they had seen significant changes in their neighbourhoods; and what these were.

The most significant positive changes were:
- physical upgrading of homes and neighbourhood environments;
- new facilities and services, particularly in the two northern neighbourhoods;
- more education, training and jobs;
- crime reduction initiatives.

(see annexes 4.9 and 4.10)

The scale of the changes and the impact they have had on the lives of the parents and their families were striking:

> I think Sure Start has done a lot. Lots of courses and some are Sure Start and some are Community Learning Coordinators run adult education [courses], via schools. So I've done Parenting and First Aid courses, and the schools get money so my daughter did a summer school at the start of summer, and sports stuff. So a lot happening for the kids. [Laura, The Valley]

> They gave us an incentive to move, money, but we decided not to...we're getting our money's worth [Cynthia, West City]

b) Where is progress still needed?

Throughout our visits, families highlighted what more needed to be done to improve their families' chances. A large majority of parents in all four of the neighbourhoods thought their areas lacked facilities mainly for children – 68 per cent in Kirkside East and 80 per cent in The Valley, in the north, 82 per cent in West-City and 81 per cent in East-Docks, in London. We asked parents what they would prioritise if they were in charge of managing their neighbourhood; in all four of the neighbourhoods the most common answer was facilities for children with one third giving this as their over-riding priority, alongside organised activities. Families had many suggestions of how to do this:

> Put supervisors in parks and get something in for older kids [Cara, Kirkside East]

> Things for kids, like a park [Kelly, The Valley]

> There's nowhere safe for the kids to go at night, so a youth club or something. [Lesley, East-Docks]

> I'd focus on the youngsters, especially the boys. There's nothing for them to do. [Yinka, East-Docks]

> I definitely would concentrate on facilities and parks and stuff straight away … and that's because I've worked with children, and I know what can make this anti-social behaviour stop. [Flowella, East-Docks]

> Getting young people off the streets. There is a lot of crime in this area because youths have nowhere to go. [Charlene, West-City]

> Children's facilities. We need facilities for them to gather and play. [Yetunda, West-City]

Parks were very important and needed more supervision:

> If there was a park near by she could play out; and less roads. [Suzie, Kirkside East]

> Nice parks with no needles in and less intimidation generally around, and more community spirit and less suspicion [Fiona, The Valley]

One dominant suggestion came up across all four of the neighbourhoods – more things for children to do:

> Things for children, for teenagers. They need more community halls – not token facilities. They need a place kids can really go. More of a family feel. [Charlotte, West-City]

> Things for children such as playschemes and childcare, and things for the youth. [Sola, West-City]

Mostly things for teenagers, because they ain't got nothing to do. [Rose, East-Docks]

By the end, the vast majority of parents thought that intervention by government was still needed – 84 per cent in Kirkside East and 91 per cent in The Valley in the north, and 86 per cent in West-City and 79 per cent in East-Docks in London. The most common shortfall was still more for children and young people, even after the efforts that had gone in and paid off:

The kids hanging about are still there, still not good. To be honest, the environment has improved, but the anti-social behaviour is a problem; the Police and Council are not doing anything about it. So, environment better, but kids on corners, so no change. [Kamal, The Valley]

There's not really many places you can take them after school. There's no After School Clubs. When they grow up, where they gonna go? Where are they going to play? [Kerry, East-Docks]

I don't think there's much emphasis on children around here. [Faye, West-City]

The families paint a clear picture of concrete achievements and improvements, often through targeted, time-limited programmes. But they struggle with continuing gaps and end of special programmes. This fits wider findings.[11] The needs of youth in troubled areas and help for children who are falling behind in highly disadvantaged areas are both part of this over-riding concern.

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11 Sustainable Development Commission (2009) *Every Child's Future Matters*, London: SDC; Voce, A (2010) 'Places to play? How can we make lower income communities healthier places for children and families?' Presentation given at LSE Housing and Communities Workshop on Poor Areas, Poor Health: Health inequalities and the built environment. Trafford Hall, Chester, November 24

8. CONCLUSION

Key findings and summary of recommendations
This study of how families in disadvantaged areas overcome educational handicaps and open up opportunities for their children, is part of a ten year project on bringing up children in poor areas. There are many areas we could not cover in this short report, which we hope to discuss in future studies. The key findings of this study are:

- Parents of children in poor neighbourhoods often have limited education and work experience. They live in 'work-poor' households where sometimes no working age adult has a job. This restricts their own ability to get a job and raise their families' income, thus severely limiting their children's opportunities.

- Training, volunteering and tax credits all help parents access work, though not all parents' progress into work or escape poverty. Work is definitely the surest escape from poverty.

- Parents are almost without exception hopeful and ambitious for their children', yet accept the limitations and problems of local schools. They are generally satisfied with their schools, particularly primary, and express praise and admiration for teachers, who offer many different kinds of support. A holistic approach to children works best.

- Schools try to help children with special needs, but sometimes the help has to be fought for and is not always adequate.

- The parents' limited education restricts how much help they can offer their children.

- Truanting and bullying are both problems and bullying in particular seems pervasive, damaging and not always easy to control.

- Three kinds of support emerge as particularly helpful to parents:
  - Family, close friends and childminders not only share parents' troubles but also help with taking on a job. The threats from crime and insecurity are countered through this 'bonding' form of social capital.
  - Child-centred services such as Sure Start for pre-school children and parents in deprived areas and schools are a main stay of educational and social opportunity.
  - Crime prevention through frequent, visible patrols and friendly contact with children and young people at risk of offending create a more positive, confident and less fearful atmosphere.

- Social capital, an invaluable asset in a resource-scarce community, not only grows from local programmes and local social links (bonding); it also directly fosters work opportunities by encouraging parents to access training, volunteering and actual jobs (bridging).

- On-going, long-term daily support is necessary if parents and children are to flourish in spite of serious handicaps.

Help from family members with childcare enables many parents to work and earn, as has Sure Start, thus promoting greater financial well-being. Sure Start provides other forms of financial assistance, and also activities and a welcoming environment for parents to take children each day, helping parents without the resources to pay for clubs or groups or excursions. Sure Start has also helped with children's individual problems and parents' worries, and has promoted the emotional well-being of parents by simply being open daily and ensuring that parents do not feel alone and isolated in raising their children in the early years. Crime prevention through a street presence of uniformed officers has reassured parents and won the confidence of children – in spite of limitations.

We are forced to conclude that families bringing up children in disadvantaged areas are themselves highly disadvantaged by their surroundings, by the pressures and resource limits within which they are managing. Our interviews with the two hundred families identified some key obstacles facing children and young people such as crime and drugs, traffic, peer pressure, having too little to do and too few places to go.

Recommendations
The tax credits system, schools, Sure Start and the new crime tackling initiatives – Community Police Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens – were both praised and criticised by the families. These services are helping parents to overcome disadvantage for their children in many ways, but they remain flawed, sometimes uncovering new problems that need to be addressed. Parents suggest how they could be better adapted to the needs of those they are targeting.

The tax credit system could be better adapted to the needs of families by:
- **simplifying the system** so as not to overburden recipients with confusing paperwork and mixed messages;
- **avoiding the over-rapid removal of other benefits**, so that people face a sudden 'cliff edge';
- **changing the payment system**, to avoid the need to reclaim over-payments;
- **being more flexible about the hours worked**, to reduce perverse work incentives;
- **finding ways of approving less formal childcare**, to increase provision.

Schools could be better adapted to the needs of families and children with:
- **smaller classes**;
- more **recognition o**f children's different **abilities and** related **educational needs**;
- truly **multicultural schools** which integrate different groups;
- **better parent/school communication** particularly at secondary school.

Children's services, including Sure Start, could help more by:
- providing **for children beyond the age of five** along Sure Start lines;
- offering **long-term underpinning** for successful programmes like Sure Start;

- **making catchment areas** for targeted services more flexible to allow all local parents to benefit;
- opening up local services in disadvantaged areas to parents from all **socio-economic backgrounds** while making sure that low-income families are catered for.

Crime prevention initiatives could meet community needs better by:
- **adapting the working hours** of CPSOs and wardens;
- **spreading the word about the work** of CPSOs and wardens;
- **increasing police activity alongside CPSOs and wardens** to reduce the problem of insufficient powers, and the focus on minor crimes. This should also avoid simply moving crime on.

Overall, we have five lessons that can be applied as new approaches are tried out.

Firstly, policies must be streamlined rather than simply meeting the administrative requirements of large bureaucracies. Work itself is hugely beneficial to family prospects and children's aspirations and working is made much easier for most parents through tax credits with a reduced the poverty trap and making part-time, low-paid work pay. But the tax credit system when first introduced was overcomplicated and seriously flawed. **Tax** credits are aimed at those with low levels of education, job opportunities and skills. The necessary paperwork needs to be **simple, uncomplicated** and **user-friendly** to maximise access to work. Assessments need to be made with extreme care as missed payments can literally cause havoc in family budgets, particularly when financial assistance is being targeted at people managing on very little.

Secondly, services need to be tailored to particular social needs, as a blanket approach can miss vital demographic issues. For example, schools in multi-cultural neighbourhoods, such as The Valley and East London, need to be truly multi-cultural, working hard to include white and diverse minority children in an atmosphere of warmth and respect.

Thirdly schools taking early action with both children and parents when children are clearly struggling with any special needs, ensures a holistic and supportive approach to teaching.

Fourthly, involving parents and responding to their priorities greatly enhances social capital. Sure Start did this by responding directly to parents needs in many different ways. They felt their own priorities became the priorities of the staff in a flexible and responsive way. Parents' top priority was a similar service for older children. Similarly, families praised crime prevention initiatives for making it easier to report crime and promoting a greater sense of safety, particularly by winning over children and young people, at risk of criminal activities and truancy. Feedback mechanisms for such local services are vital.

Fifthly, housing policy should support families living within reach of vital supports, particularly other relatives. This helps with childcare, help for disabled and frail elderly grandparents, sense of community, support, trust and other forms of social capital.

In conclusion, we have shown how much can be achieved through tried and tested methods of support, expanding access to work, improving schooling, building community confidence, reducing crime; but we also saw how many gaps remain and how much more needs to be done. The fact that visible progress was being made and opportunities were opening up makes the present climate of cuts, affecting the poorest areas most, all the more worrying in its impacts. Parents respond to support and understanding, 'helping hands' and locally responsive services. Cuts in public support for low-income communities put at risk these family and child-friendly approaches to equalising opportunity in the poorest areas.

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ANNEX 1A: CONDITIONS IN THE FOUR AREAS

Location	West City	East Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Inner/Outer	Inner	Outer	Outer	Inner
Ethnically Mixed	Yes	Yes	Very little	Yes
Dominant Tenure	Council	Council	Council	Social renting
Housing Type	Estates – flats	Estates – mixed	Estate – houses; some flats	Mixed
Older Street Property	Yes	Yes, some	No	Yes – many Victorian terraces
Park(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes, but largely considered to be unusable / not 'family friendly'	Yes, but largely considered to be unusable / not 'family friendly'
General Appearance	Poor – small park improved. Some signs of gentrification	Poor – some new facilities & some new housing	Poor – some basic repair & minor improvements	Poor – small park improved
Housing changes	New Deal for Communities investment (slow start). Significant increase in luxury flat building.	6,500 new homes Private Finance Initiative for estates major demolition & investment	Arms Length Management Organisation housing management & investment – some demolition	Objective 1 (EU) New Deal for Communities Housing Market Renewal some demolition & investment
Type of Area	Increasing number of new luxury flats alongside mainly council estates (flats). Some older private streets.	Mainly council estates (flats & houses). Some new mixed tenure developments	Predominantly one large inter-war council estate (houses with some flats)	Mixed area – council, Housing Association, private (houses & flats)

ANNEX 1B: SUMMARY OF AREA CHARACTERISTICS

	West City	East Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Population (rounded)	31,000	23,000	18,000	14,000
Tenure-%				
Local Authority	49	40	56	34
Housing Association	12	11	4	8
Owner occupation	24	32	33	44
Private renting	12	13	2	11
Owner occupier National = 69%				
Ethnic Composition[1]-%				
White	61	60	97	59
Black	26	27	0.4	12
Asian	6	7	1	23
Mixed	4	4	0.3	2
Main Regeneration Programmes[2]	• NDC • Excellence in Cities • Sure Start	• EAZ • Excellence in Cities • Sure Start • SRB	• Excellence in Cities • Sure Start • SRB	• NDC • EAZ • Excellence in Cities • Sure Start • SRB
Deprivation Rank (IMD 2000)	Within poorest 1%	Within poorest 1%	Within poorest 5%	Within poorest 1%
Crime statistics local authority recorded offences per 1000 pop. Jan-Mar 2004 National = 28 (Home Office, 2010)	Significantly above England/Wales average, but fell 2% 2001-2004 46	Above England/Wales average, but stable 2001-2004 38	Above England/Wales average, but falling since 2003 40	Above England/Wales average, and rose 3% since 2003 30
School performance 2008/9 Local authority: % of total pupils with 5 GCSEs (A*-C) National = 70 (DCSF, 2009)	Below England average 67	Below England average 64	Below England average 67	Below England average 65
Tenure change	Right To Buy, housing association conversions, private new build	Right To Buy, housing association properties and private new build flat shares	Right To Buy, small housing association developments, selected demolition	Right To Buy, housing association and gentrification
Transport/Roads	Good bus connections. Underground not nearby, very busy roads	Overground trains, good underground and bus connections, dissected by A13	Good bus service along busy main road, which divides the estate, many minor estate roads	Buses along busy main road, lots of smaller roads
Demolition	None	Large scale	Small scale	Moderate scale, but slow and piecemeal
Ethnic change	Rapid (far above average)	Rapid (far above average)	Slow (typical of outer Northern council estates)	Rapid (far above average)

1 Ethnic definitions: Interviewees were asked to self-identify using showcards which included the following categories: White, Black Caribbean, Black African. Black British, Other Black Groups; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Chinese; Irish, Mixed; None of these (please describe)

2 Glossary: NDC = New Deal for Communities; SRB = Single Regeneration Budget; EAZ = Employment Action Zone

3 Statistics in this annex are drawn from census data except where otherwise specified

ANNEX 1C: MAIN FEATURES OF THE FOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

West City (London inner)	The Valley (Northern inner city)
• Several large council estates – mainly flats, mixed in with Victorian street properties, very near City	• Close to the city centre, up a steep hill lined with stone terraces
• Also near local markets	• Many different styles of housing, some large Victorian houses, some unpopular modern flats
• The RTB is now very expensive	• Very low demand at outset but increased demand over course of visits
• Some higher income buying into estates	
• Gentrification nearer the City – main road divides the south (gentrifying) and north council estates	• Decayed properties and shops but a major facelift of older properties happening on main road and some estates – Some gentrification near the park
• Trendy bars, boutiques, tattoo parlours and specialist shops opening	• Some recent housing association development
• Rapid ethnic change – with new minorities dominating many areas and white population declining – mainly elderly left	• Some blighted council blocks, demolition planned
	• Some visible drugs problems – leading to strong police intervention
• Fractured social networks but lots of activities for families	• Growing diversity of ethnic minority populations including refugees
• Major investment through NDC but slow to take off and upgrading is piecemeal	• Visibly very poor, with high crime and drugs area
• Tenant Management organisation has taken over biggest estate	• Beautifully restored local park

East Docks (London outer)	Kirkside East (Northern outer estate)
• Now well connected to city centre with new tube line and DLR extension	• Large low income outer council estate, built before and just after the War
• Docks form focus for regeneration	• "Cottage" style semis, some prefab concrete 1970s houses
• Big new conference centre – attracts many outsiders	• Several rows of shops & a big new Tesco and a new adult education college
• New "urban village" – attracting higher incomes but socially & geographically isolated from existing 'core' community	• Lots of open space, park, stream, woods – all poorly supervised and maintained
• Dome is visible across the river	• On main bus route to centre with several local schools, including an all girls secondary school, very popular with Asian families from inner city
• Much of area dominated by a very busy main	
• Noise, dirt of dual carriageway dominates local environment	• Some community facilities but few sports facilities
• An ugly underpass provides a crucial link	• Few minorities, some mixed race children
• Lots of unused and unattractive spaces	• String family networks – ¾ have relatives nearby
• New secondary school and adult education college in the docks	• Many complaints about repairs until estate is taken over by an Arm's length management organisation
• Some council housing is being demolished	• North and south of the estate have very distinct reputations and family networks eg, 'hot spot' for teenage car crime in the south
• Some new HA building	• Minimum spending programme with unfunded proposals to 'regenerate' the estate
• Strongly growing ethnic minority population – particularly African –leading to rapid change	
• Declining white working class population hostile to changes	
• Run down appearance of local shops, some of the blocks and many of the streets	

ANNEX 1D: BACKGROUND TO THE AREAS STUDY

The CASE Families Study is linked to CASE's study of disadvantaged areas – the '12 Study Areas Study', which researched twelve low income areas across England and Wales. The study aimed to establish and explain the current direction of change in the poorest areas in the country, where social exclusion is concentrated, looking at the following questions:

- Are such areas recovering or getting worse?
- How are they faring relative to others?
- Is polarisation increasing or decreasing?
- What causes areas to recover or decline?
- Why do some recover and others not? What are the impacts, positive and negative, of policy interventions, and what can we learn for regeneration policy?

To answer these questions we followed twelve small areas in detail, over time, using both local data and qualitative information to understand the trajectories of the areas in relation to the cities or boroughs in which they are located, and to the national picture. The areas were selected to reflect the distribution and characteristics of the top 3per cent most deprived wards in the country, using measures based on 1991 Census data. This study tracked the areas back to 1991 and forward to 2009. Each of our 'areas' operates at several levels:

- neighbourhoods comprising an estate or small group of streets;
- areas covering approximately 20,000 people;
- local authority and city;
- region.

The study aims to find out why some areas recover while others do not, and to assess the effectiveness of different interventions, including large government-driven regeneration schemes. To do this, we collected a wide range of data from: interviews with staff at all levels; health indicators; educational performance; housing indicators (such as empty property rates, turnover, stock condition); crime statistics; and a record of the aims and progress of the special initiatives being tried in each area. The 12 areas are in: Hackney, Newham, Knowsley, Nottingham, Newcastle, Sheffield, Blackburn, Birmingham, Caerphilly, Redcar and Cleveland, Leeds and Thanet. The four 'family areas' were selected from these.

For more information on the CASE areas study see Paskell, C and Power, A (2005) 'The future's changed': local impacts of housing, environment and regeneration policy since 1997. LSE CASEreport 29. London: LSE; and Lupton, R (2001) Places Apart? The initial report of CASE's areas study CASEreport 14. London: LSE

ANNEX 2: SUMMARY INFORMATION ABOUT THE 200 FAMILIES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDY (%)

	West City	East Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Couple status:				
Married	52	28	38	34
Unmarried – with partner	20	10	20	22
Alone	28	62	42	44
Ethnic composition:				
White/Irish	44	46	94	68
Minority (all others)	56	54	6	32
Housing:				
Flat/maisonette	86	64	0	18
Terrace/semi	6	34	100	82
In work:	25	28	38	14
Of those in work – % full-time	66	75	66	40
Of those in work – % part-time	33	25	33	60
Tenure:				
Council	72	78	72	30
Housing Association				22
Private landlord	10	8	2	14
Owner	18	14	26	32
Time in area:				
Under 2 years	10	4	12	8
2-10 years	40	52	28	42
11-20 years	28	16	28	28
21-30 years	4	4	20	12
Whole life	18	24	12	10

ANNEX 3: DEVELOPMENT OF THEMES BY ROUND OF VISITS

	1 (1999-2000)	2 (2000-1)	3 (2001-2)	4 (2002)	5 (2003-4)	6 (2004-5)	7 (2006)
1	Family Ethnic Housing	Update on household	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Area-change, Like/dislike Time in area	✓	✓ Plan to move/stay	✓ Area better/worse	✓ Local environment. Gentrification Moving	✓ Most sig. change Better/worse/same Plan to move/stay Safe for children Risks for children What would make it better	✓ Plan to move / stay Area better/ same/ worse than at start of study? What still needs to be done/ sorted out
3	Schools	Schools and children's activities	Same/better/worse Secondary	Secondary school – work preparation. Difference – primary/ secondary	Same schools Secondary		Children's progress Any school failures/ successes
4			Health – disability/ medicine/ smoke/ health services		When last used Who/what for/ how often Better/same/ worse	Disability Depression Support with it	Special needs – experience of help/ support
5	Local links/ community	Ethnicity Links with community Belong to groups	Relatives and friends	Community relations Barriers/ Divisions Bringing people together Who to count on		Family locally Get on help Friends locally Help	How race relations are going
6	Image of area	Assets of area problems				Outsiders' view and Own view of area	
7	Income/ benefits	Work history Qualifications		Unofficial work – cash in hand	Changes in income/benefits Bank accounts Credit cards Who handles money Family budget Partner-employment Children's work	Changes in income/ benefits New child/ family benefits Jobs via ND Tax credits influence on work	H'hold income: Source / tax credits -Do these help
9		Voluntary roles	Trust, security, mutual aid, influence	Political engagement, voluntary roles			Voluntary roles
10	Future hopes, worries in area				Pressures within area		
11		Crime and drugs			Police Wardens Community safety		Any safer/ less crime
12		Local services					
13		Parks and open spaces			Parks renovation		
14	Housing	✓	Regeneration programmes	Housing changes / demolition	Regeneration NDC/ parks/ projects		Use of NDC Housing satisfaction Decent Homes
15					Transport		
16					RTB / 00		
17				Parenting enjoyment Parenting problems Time/enjoy Pressures Gangs/ Bullying What Helps What safer Let out	Helping look after children Sure Start	Getting child/ren to behave? Reward Different from own childhood Bullying How advise child/ren Hyperactive problems Support – on own / with partner? Dads' role Other male figure	Overall family coping Sure Start
18					Social exclusion		
19					Use of time		Mapping activities
21						Problems in family worsened by area? why	Area impact on family life

ANNEX 4: TABLES OF CORE EVIDENCE FROM FAMILIES

Table 4.1: Household members gaining paid employment throughout the study (%)*

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Interview Round 2	2	–	14	12
Interview Round 3	4	2	–	–
Interview Round 4	–	14	14	18
Interview Round 5	7	10	8	4
Interview Round 6	2	2	2	14
Interview Round 7	10	12	5	7

These percentages do not take into account where jobs were gained in households reporting more than one change in any given round, therefore some job gain will be unreported.

Table 4.2: How satisfied interviewees were with their children's schools in 2006 (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Satisfied, no problems	41	52	51	50
Satisfied, but some problems	7	10	19	24
Satisfied with one school, but not with another	2	5	9	15
Not satisfied	17	14	2	2
NA	33	19	19	7

Table 4.3: The main risks for children in the neighbourhood (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Drugs	30	21	14	28
Traffic	–	–	20	22
Peer pressure from 'wrong crowd'	2	12	18	18
Being attacked/mugged	11	26	6	6
Strangers or paedophiles	2	2	4	2
Wandering off	–	–	2	–
Playing out in the dark	–	2	8	–
Reputation	–	–	2	-
Nothing to do	2	2	8	8
Poverty of expectations	2	–	–	2
No clean and safe park	5	–	–	2
Bad school	–	–	–	2
Being bullied	2	–	–	-
Racism	–	–	2	-
Multiple listed reasons	32	14	6	4
No main risk	2	19	8	4
Don't know	2	–	2	2

Table 4.4: What would make the area better for children (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
More family friendly, more for kids	57	49	50	44
Better, more controlled local environments	15	14	32	40
More crime prevention & anti-social behaviour control	16	25	18	19
Multiple factors	12	12	–	–

Table 4.5: Which government interventions helped parents (2006) (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Financial help	0	5	2	4
Emotional support	5	-	7	2
Something to do	10	10	7	9
Source of advice	2	–	–	–
Forges community links	–	–	2	15
A route to paid work	2	–	9	22
Practical help	–	7	14	7
Fosters feelings of safety	–	–	–	2
More than one of the above	12	7	16	9
Means everything/invaluable	2	–	2	4
Nothing (neutral)	5	7	–	2
Nothing (negative)	7	7	–	2
Did not specify	–	–	5	4
Q missed	–	–	–	2
NA	55	57	35	13

Table 4.6 Crime as a serious problem (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Serious problem	57	64	44	50
Problem but not serious	28	11	20	12
In some parts	0	0	8	20
Not a problem	13	22	22	14
Don't know	2	2	6	4

Table 4.7 Which crime tackling initiatives have improved the neighbourhoods (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Community Police	21	50	28	4
Neighbourhood Wardens	14	–	9	26
Parks Constabulary	–	5	–	–
ASBOs	–	–	5	2
Security Cameras	–	–	–	2
Police	7	12	5	2
More than one of these	7	10	7	13
None	26	17	28	35
Do not know	24	7	19	13

Table 4.8: How Government crime tackling initiatives have improved the neighbourhoods (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Reduced visibility ofrime/more crime tackled	2	2	–	2
Easier to report crime/ more crime reported	–	–	–	13
Increased presence of law enforcement	17	12	26	11
Deal with kids	5	17	14	9
Increased deterrents	7	19	7	2
Feel safer	10	14	5	9
Moved crime on	7	–	2	2
Not applicable	48	24	47	49

Table 4.9: Whether there has been significant neighbourhood change since the study began (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Yes	79	83	86	87
No	7	10	9	4
Do not know	14	7	5	7

Table 4.10: The most significant neighbourhood change since the study began (%)

	West-City	East-Docks	Kirkside East	The Valley
Generally positive improvements	36	43	51	70
Environmental/structural improvements/housing	24	21	23	24
Housing work	27	2	12	4
New facilities and services	7	17	21	22
More education/training/jobs	7	5	9	2
There is not one single most significant area change	2	10	5	15
Increased crime tackling/safety measures	–	–	14	7
Demographic changes	7	14	–	–
Negative changes	18	12	2	4

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