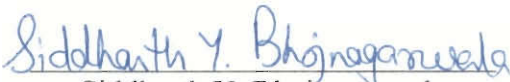# Merton Social Services Information

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
submitted to the Faculty of

## WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

by:

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# **Abstract**

The Strategic Planning and Performance Review Unit of Merton Housing and Social Services Department sponsored us to help them identify the best means of communication between the borough and the residents.  We used surveys and interviews to gain hands-on information from residents of Merton and from officials of other boroughs about the best means to inform the public about social services.  Through these interaction we proposed the most effective ways for Merton to communicate with the residents.

## Executive Summary

The Strategic Planning and Performance Review Unit of Merton Housing and Social Services Department sponsored us to help them identify the best means of communication between the borough and the residents. Our project objective was to find ways to better inform the residents of the Borough of Merton about social services provided within the borough. We achieved our project goals of discovering the most effective ways that the public would like to be informed about social services, best locations to provide information, key information that should be provided in publications, and best means for the Council to use in obtaining feedback about social services. We also designed a web page that could be updated and would provide the residents with another, more advanced means of accessing information about social services.

In order to attain our objectives and goals our group decided that surveys and interviews were the best means to gain hands-on information. We chose three groups of people in order to gather information: residents, who may or may not be users of social services; users, to see how they currently access information about the service they are using; and borough officials, to find information on how other boroughs near Merton are currently disseminating information to the public. What we learned through these interactions allowed us to propose the most effective ways for Merton to communicate with the residents.

After collecting and analyzing our data, we made recommendations to the Housing and Social Services Department about the best ways to inform the public. These recommendations include a Directory or Booklet, which should contain a listing of all social services available within the community. We also made recommendations on the design of Pamphlets, Flyers, or Leaflets. This design includes some ideas for reaching specific groups

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of residents, for example using Makaton symbols for the learning disabled and larger print and Braille for the visually impaired.

We also designed a web site that provides current information on social services provided within the borough. We found through our research that a web site is not currently a very effective means of communicating information about social services to the public; this was indicated by the respondents of the resident and user surveys. We designed our web site as a new source of information, that will undoubtedly grow in popularity as more and more people access the internet. We suggest that the web site be updated frequently to allow Merton residents to access any information about a social service they may need.

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# 1.0 Introduction

Imagine that you are in need of a place to sleep for one cold night. What would you do? Or maybe that your house burnt down or you lost your job. What would you do? How would you support your family? These are questions that some people have to ask themselves every day, every night. Some of these people are fortunate enough to know where to go, and what questions to ask. However, those most in need may not know the right questions to ask or the right place to go for help. This is a problem for a portion of the population in London's Borough of Merton, a problem that needs to be addressed.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Review Unit of Merton Housing and Social Services Department sponsored our project team (from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, WPI) to help them with the following problem: social services are not very accessible and not well known within the community. There was a mandate from the national government stating that all boroughs must inform citizens of services that the community provides and of any changes that will be happening in the future. Our job was to help solve the communication problem between the Housing and Social Services Department and the residents of the London Borough of Merton. We interacted with various groups: the residents of Merton, the users of social services, borough officials from Merton; and borough officials from neighbouring boroughs. We then proposed the most effective ways to communicate with residents of Merton and the users of social services thereby contributing to a new public information plan for the Housing and Social Services Department.

This project began with an investigation of the most popular means used to access social services provided within the community. These services include

services to the elderly, the disabled, families, the homeless, drug addicts, and many others. We also ascertained the most popular ways to obtain information from users and potential users of these services.

We collected feedback from the subjects (residents of Merton, users of social services, and officials in the social services department in Merton and other boroughs) through surveys and interviews. We analysed the data and made suggestions on how to communicate with the public. One of the important methods used to provide information to the residents of Merton was a web site, which we designed to contain information about the various social services, contact information, and links to other important local social services sites.

A diverse group was interested in the findings of our project. The Merton Department of Housing and Social Services, in charge of sponsoring this project, will use the information to better locate and inform those in need of the services they provide and to gain better knowledge on ways to acquire feedback from those people. The users of social services took interest in the ways they may be informed about the social services available and the residents of Merton should take interest as well. Other departments in the Merton Civic Centre found our project helpful because they could use our ideas to disseminate information about their own services. Other boroughs of London, as well as other towns throughout England, could find our report of help if they have similar goals of improving communication within their jurisdictions.

We used surveys and interviews to obtain information about the best ways to reach those in need of the provided services. Information collected from these surveys and interviews further allowed us to make suggestions to the Council on how to effectively gather feedback from the service users. Also, we made

recommendations to the Housing and Social Services Department as a contribution to the development of a public information policy.

This project was the culmination of work done in the United States and in the London Borough of Merton, in accordance with the requirements of an Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP). An IQP is an interdisciplinary project designed to help Worcester Polytechnic Institute students realise how technology affects and is affected by society. Today various technologies such as television, radio, and the internet, are used for communication and for fast and easy access to information. We chose to design a web page for the Housing and Social Services Department of Merton, thereby providing a resource that will allow for the constant availability of up-to-date information in an ever-increasing technical environment. The IQP helped us to realise how we can make a difference in our society and in this world.

## 2.0 Background and Literature Review

### 2.1     Merton

#### 2.1.1    Demographics of Merton

Merton is one of the 32 boroughs that form Greater London (Hermosa et al., 1997, p. 3).  Merton is situated near Surrey, south of the Thames River.  Croydon lies to the Southeast of Merton, Sutton on the south, Kingston-Upon-Thames to the west, and Wandsworth and Lambeth to the north.  Merton was created in 1965 by the merger of the former boroughs of Wimbledon, Mitcham, and the urban districts of Merton and Morden.  A Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and 54 councillors govern Merton (Hermosa et al., 1997, p. 3).

Merton is mainly a residential suburb but has some manufacturing businesses, making products like fabrics, toys, and paints.  A great deal of residential development occurred between World War I and World War II (Hermosa et al., 1997, p. 3).  The suburban residential development now covers 14.6 square miles and will have an estimated population of about 191,000 in 2001 (Borough of Merton, 2000).  The wealthiest section of Merton is Wimbledon.  Being the most economically stable of the three it is considered a desirable place to reside.  Morden, which is the centre of the borough, has a suburban, middle class economy.  Mitcham is the poorest of the four, with its economy centred on a retreating industrial base.

### 2.1.2   Current Social Services Offered in Merton

Many different types of social services are offered in Merton to a variety of people (London Department of Health, 2000, pp. 8-11). The services are for older persons, children, learning disability, mental health needs, drug and alcohol misuse, HIV, and for people with physical or sensory impairment, as well as families seeking to adopt or become foster parents. There are many service centres in Merton that provide these services such as Eastway, Jan Malinowski Centre (JMC), Chapel Orchard, All Saints, and Bond Street Nursery. There are also a number of services designed to helping people stay independent (London Department of Health, 2000, p. 17). These include services such as meals on wheels, home care, and rehabilitation services. Appendix E on page 108 contains a detailed list of the services provided at these Day Centres.

### 2.1.3   Housing Services Provided in Merton

The housing services in Merton are designed to help people find the right information either to aid in living in their current accommodation, or to find a more suitable accommodation. There are a few services dedicated to helping people in housing situations such as: repairs and improvements to houses, helping the homeless find shelter, adult placement, resettlement, help with moving to a residential or nursing home, sheltered housing (London Department of Health, 2000, pp.13-16).

### 2.2   Housing and Social Services Information

The following sections outline general information about Housing and Social Services provided in the U.K. We have included the Housing information section

because the conclusions given by this project may be used by the Housing section of the department as well as the Social Services section.

### 2.2.1 Housing in England, Practices and Policies as Compared to the U.S.

There are many differences between housing policies in the U.S. and the U.K. (Wolman, 1975, pp. 3-5). In the U.K. public housing is not just for the poor but is available to all residents. It is used to meet the housing needs of the community, rather than only to house poor or needy families, which is most often the case in the United States. There is a general feeling in the U.K. that the state should provide basic social services for its people on a universal basis.

The set-up of the government in the U.K. differs from the U.S. in that it is a unitary system of government (Wolman, 1975, p. 5). This means that the central, or national, government is responsible for everything, and that local governments exist as smaller entities of the larger government. However, this is not the case when it comes to authority over housing. Local communities (municipalities) are typically responsible for their own housing and housing policy, and the central government is much less likely to take action over the local governing body.

There are two major reasons why public housing policy developed differently in the U.K. from that of the U.S. (Wolman, 1975, p. 7). One is that in the U.K. local communities were given control over housing so that they could provide sanitary housing for working class citizens. The second reason is perhaps more important, that being, soldiers coming home from the World Wars needed places to live, so a massive movement came about to provide housing for these people.

The British government provides housing services to its citizens as a social service, and it also holds some responsibility for the housing conditions (Wolman,

1975, p. 17). Another interesting aspect of public housing in the U.K. is that the residents are a mix of different income levels and are located in different communities (Wolman, 1975, p. 105). This is very different than in the U.S. where public housing is typically in the poorest areas, which are unfortunately often areas with high minority populations.

### 2.2.2 Social Services in the U.K.

The government of the U.K. provides many different services to its population (U.K. Department of Health: 1998-99, 2000, p. 4). These services include those given to children, the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, and people with learning disabilities. The government of the U.K. has within the last few years begun to restructure its social services. According to the Modernising Health and Social Services: National Priorities Guidance, prepared by the Department of Health (1998, p. 2), the program to restructure the social services of the country, "...is based on a clear vision of what people expect from health and social services..." The government wants to remove barriers between different services, especially those that are typically offered to the same people, such as medical assistance and domicile care to the elderly. By eliminating the lack of communication between different services, the government hopes to make services quicker and easier to use.

The main idea behind removing the barriers between different services is to make certain that people have an integrated system of care (U.K. Department of Health, 2000, p. 4). The main focus of this system is to create collaboration between local government, health, and social services. Public services in the U.K. are provided on a local basis and therefore should be designed to meet the needs of the local community.

The Government also wants to provide care that is more convenient and faster, so that users do not become "…sick of waiting…" (U.K. Department of Health, 2000, p. 5). Allowing caregivers and users to be well informed will ensure that the best care is being provided, and that it is being done efficiently. The future use of information and communication technologies is considered crucial to this cause (U.K. Department of Health, 2000, p. 10).

The national government of the U.K. has set priorities for this modernisation process (U.K. Department of Health, 2000, p. 14). Some of these priorities are set with the idea that the separate departments that share responsibility in similar areas, will finally work together to streamline the manner in which care is provided. Every local community must develop a Health Improvement Program. This program will be created with as much local involvement as possible; that way numerous people will feel committed to its being carried out. Social Service and National Health Service (NHS) authorities are expected to consider the local goals outlined in the Health Improvement Program in their own local plans.

### 2.2.3 Local Dissemination of Information Practices in Communities Other than Merton

According to Brenda Venn, of the London Borough of Hillingdon (personal communication, December 4, 2000), leaflets, booklets, posters, the press, focus groups, user groups, citizens' panels, the web site, and parent/career groups are used to inform the residents of Hillingdon of the various services that they offer.

Kashif Mohammed (personal communication, December 8, 2000) states that the Borough of Brent informs the residents by using the local press, internet, hoarding boards (billboards or signs), and other more conventional means, such as flyers and

leaflets. Due to the ever-increasing number of people connected to the internet, the community has considered this medium, their web site, as a platform for advertising their services.

## 2.3  Surveying

Through the use of surveys we will identify the best means of providing and obtaining housing and social services information to and from the residents of Merton. The following sections will discuss general information on how to conduct useful surveys.

### 2.3.1  General Surveying Information

Arlene Fink (vol. 2, 1995, p. 1) defines a survey as "a system for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behaviour". Fowler (1984, p. 9) states that the purpose of a survey "is to produce statistics – that is, quantitative or numerical descriptions of some aspects of the population being studied. One does not develop a survey in a vacuum. There is always a purpose for the survey – the purpose depending on the audience wanting the information". Therefore, the audience must be involved in the planning of the survey to make sure that the survey results meet their needs (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 1).

There are four reasons for deciding to do a survey: "probability sampling, standardised measurement, collection of information that is available from no other source, and analysis requirements" (Fowler, 1984, p. 11). A sample survey brings together three different methodological areas: "designing questions, sampling, and

interviewing". Each of these methods has many uses other then sample surveys, but the combination of these is essential to a good survey design.

### 2.3.2   Designing Questions

Survey questions should be written so that they encompass the survey taker's data needs but they must also be designed so that respondents can answer them easily and accurately (Fink, vol. 2, 1995, pp. 10-15). Fink goes on to explain that questions should be designed in a standardised format and be asked in the same way. In order to provide a consistent data collection for all respondents, a good questionnaire should have the following properties (Fowler, 1984, p. 76):

1. The researcher's side of the question and answer process is fully scripted, so that the questions as written fully prepare a respondent to answer questions.
2. The question means the same thing to every respondent.
3. The kinds of answers that constitute an appropriate response to the question are communicated consistently to all respondents. (Fowler, 1984, p. 76)

Another item to keep in mind while designing questions is the more detailed a question, the more reliable it may become (Fink, vol. 2, 1995, p. 19). For example, "in providing a time period, avoid asking about usual or typical behaviour". Instead, provide a specific time period. Also to aid in making sure the questions are understandable by all, "use complete sentences, avoid abbreviations, slang, and biasing words, and be careful of jargon and technical terms" (Fink, vol. 2, 1995, p. 18).

Fink (vol. 2, 1995, pp. 31-32) suggests using either one of two types of questions. Surveys should be designed using either closed questions or open questions. Closed questions are more difficult to write than open ones because the answers or response choices must be known in advance. One of the advantages of

using closed questions is that they produce standardised data that can be analysed statistically.

On the other hand, an open question allows respondents to give answers in their own way (Fink, vol. 2, 1995, pp. 33-39). These questions are useful in getting unanticipated answers and for describing the world as the respondent really sees it rather than how the researcher does. One disadvantage of choosing to use open questions is that the responses to the questions are often more difficult to compare and interpret than for closed questions.

### 2.3.3  Sampling

"A sample is a portion or subset of a larger group called a population" (Fink, vol. 6, 1995, p. 1). A good sample is a miniature version of the population. The best sample is representative, or a model of the population. Fowler (1984, p. 9) states that the "key to good sampling is finding a way to give all (or nearly all) population members the same (or a known) chance of being sampled, and to use probability methods for choosing the sample".

There are three key aspects of sample selection: "the sample frame, probability sampling procedures, and the details of the sample design" (Fowler, 1984, p. 19-20). The sample frame is the group of people who have an equal chance to be selected, using the sampling approach that is chosen. Probability sampling procedures must be used to designate individual units for inclusion in a sample. Each person should have a known chance of selection as defined by the sampling procedure. Finally, the details of the sample design, its size, and the specific procedures used for selecting units will influence directly the precision of sample estimates, that is, how closely a sample is likely to approximate the characteristics of the whole population. Fowler

(1984, pp. 20-21) also claims "there are an infinite variety of ways to design sampling procedures, but most sampling schemes fall into three general classes":

1. Sampling is done from a more or less complete list of individuals in the population to be studied.
2. Sampling is done from a set of people who go somewhere or do something that enables them to be sampled.
3. Sampling is done in two or more stages, with the first stage involving sampling something other than the individuals finally to be selected. (Fowler, 1984, pp. 20-21)

Once a researcher has made a decision about a sample frame, the next question is how to select the individual units to be included (Fowler, 1984, p. 22). There are a number of different ways to select the individuals such as, simple random sampling, systematic samples, and stratified samples.

Simple random sampling is an objective means of choosing a sample (Fink, vol. 6, 1995, p. 69). Members of the target population are selected one at a time and independently. Once they have been selected, they are not eligible for a second chance and are not returned to the pool. Because of this equality of opportunity, random samples are considered relatively unbiased. Systematic sampling is a method of selecting every "nth" (5th, 10th, or 12th, and so on) from a list of eligible survey subjects. Finally stratified samples are when the population is divided into subgroups or "strata", and a random sample is then selected from each subgroup.

### 2.3.4 Types of Surveys

One of the most far-reaching decisions a researcher must make is the way in which the data will be collected (Fowler, 1984, p. 61). According to Newman and McNeil (1998, p. 25) there are four basic ways to collect survey information: mail, direct administration, telephone, and interview. The way a researcher plans to draw a sample is related to the best way to collect data. Certain kinds of sampling

approaches make it easy or difficult to use one or another data collection strategy (Fowler, 1984, p. 62).

One of the most frequently used is the mail survey (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 25-26). The developer of the survey should be concerned about aspects such as length, pertinence, clarity, and types of responses. The survey should be accompanied by a brief, non-technical cover letter clearly explaining its purpose and relevance. An advantage of this type of survey is that a large sample can be reached in an economical manner. However, the disadvantage is that the return rate is generally quite low.

Directly administered surveys are designed similarly to mail surveys. However, they are administered directly (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 27). An example of such a situation would be administering a survey to students in a classroom, or at a meeting of a targeted group from which the results will be generalised. The major difference between these two types of information collection (directly administered and mail surveys) is that the poor return rate is generally not a problem with directly administered surveys.

Telephone surveys are popular because information can be quickly obtained and because such surveys are inexpensive to conduct (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 27). They are only appropriate when simple and superficial information is needed and only a few questions have to be asked. However, it should be recognised that people tend to be uncooperative in providing information over the phone, and this may be a major limitation for the survey.

Interview surveys are those that are conducted in person, with one respondent at a time (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 27). Fowler (1984, p. 107) states that interviewers have three primary roles to play in the collection of survey data:

1. To locate and enlist the co-operation of selected respondents.
2. To train and motivate respondents to do a good job of being a respondent.
3. To be a good question asker and answer recorder, providing a consistent stimulus, asking questions in a standardised way, and ensuring that answers meet the question objectives. (Fowler, 1984, p. 107)

Procedures for interviewing can be divided into three broad categories: structured, partially structured, and unstructured (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 27). The structured interview is constructed using the same considerations as mail and directly administered surveys. This style consists of an interviewer reading the questions, possible answers, and recording the answers. This type of interview is most appropriate when the researcher is not interested in attitudes or personal feelings.

The partially structured interview is similar to the structured interview in that both have a core of objectives around which the questions are built (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 27). The difference is that the interviewer in the partially structured interview is interested in the reasons behind the responses and will try to explore those reasons in depth by using follow up questions. This procedure requires extensive training to achieve a high degree of skill by the interviewer.

The effectiveness of the unstructured interview in gathering information is totally dependent on the skill and training of the interviewer (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 28). There is no basic core of questions; the procedure is primarily useful when the purpose is to obtain highly personal information.

### 2.3.5    Analysing the Results

To be able to competently analyse and interpret the data of a survey, one must first have clearly defined the objectives on which the research is based (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 54). One should make sure that all the data gathered and every

question asked is specifically related to the objectives of the survey. Once collected, the data must be collated, organised, summarised, and described (Woods, 1999, Sec. Data Analysis).

Newman and McNeil (1998, p. 56) claim that one of the most important things to remember is that survey research is either descriptive or ex post facto. Descriptive research means that the survey is designed simply to describe answers provided by the respondents. Ex post facto research compares two or more groups, such as comparing males to females, or volunteers to non-volunteers.

The analyses that you use depend on the stated objectives (Newman & McNeil, 1998, p. 56). If you want to describe the sample, then descriptive statistics such as sample size, sample mean, sample proportions, and sample standard deviation would suffice. Inferential statistical analyses allow one to generalise to the population. The two most common inferential statistical techniques are testing for the significant correlation between two variables and the difference between two means.

## 2.4   Interviewing

Interviewing plays an important role in our project. Interviews will be implemented to obtain one-on-one information concerning housing and social services. Focus groups may also be implemented to gather information from the public about the best means of disseminating and obtaining information from them. The following section outlines some important guidelines that should be followed when interviewing.

### 2.4.1   Styles of Interviewing

The reasons for an interview determine the needs, and thus style, of that interview (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 7; Rubin & Rubin 1995, p. 5). Simple facts about how often something happens or how many of something one has can be determined with what is called the Standard Interview. If the researcher wishes to probe into a deeper meaning, then a more Qualitative or Active interviewing style is needed. Berg (1998, p. 60) mentions three types of interviewing: the standardised (formal or structured), the non-standardised (informal or non-directive) and the semi-standardised (guided or focused).

Rubin & Rubin (1995, p. 6) describe Qualitative interviewing as being a modification or extension of conversation. They also mention that the interviewer is interested in understanding, knowledge, and insights rather than in simply categorising, while keeping in mind that one person's *truths* are not intrinsically truer than another's. Berg (1998, p. 68) acknowledges the use of symbols in communication. The interviewer must learn from the respondent certain terms and phrases that have particular meaning to the respondent. In this way, the interview changes to accommodate the respondent (Rubin & Rubin 1995, p. 6).

One variation on interviewing, the focus group, is composed of usually five to ten respondents who discuss a topic with guidance from the interviewer/moderator (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, pp. 70-71). Interaction is one of the main advantages of group interviews. Agreements and disagreements in a particular population are highlighted. Diverse categorisations may emerge showing how respondents construct and reconstruct viewpoints. Group interviews also display the local inventiveness dealing with brainstorming of ideas and reactions between participants. In many

ways, the proceedings more naturally resemble the complex multi-vocality of everyday life than the standard, individual interview.

### 2.4.2   Pre-Interview Work

Bruce Berg (1998, p. 65) describes how essential questions concern the central focus of the study, extra questions are those similar to essential though worded slightly differently, throwaway questions may be used to develop rapport or facilitate a change in focus, and probing questions help to draw out more complete stories from subjects.  Herbert and Irene Rubin (1995, p. 66) describe three qualifications for interviewing: knowledge about the subject of study, willingness to talk, and openness to the range of points of view on the subject matter.  Rubin & Rubin (1995, p. 19) also mention that it is important for an interviewer to understand him or herself and the cultural views that may cause misunderstanding with the words and conversation in an interview.

### 2.4.3   Conducting the Interview

The standardised approach attempts to strip the interview of all but the most neutral, impersonal stimuli, allowing for straightforward and precise answers (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 39), while the active or qualitative approach deals with the interview as more of a guided conversation or storytelling (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995 p. 39; Rubin & Rubin 1995, p. 6).  If possible, the researcher should audio- or videotape interviews.  The tapes can later be transcribed for further detail (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 78).  If this is not possible, detailed notes of the interview are taken, which should be clarified and elaborated as soon after the interview as possible.

With or without records, the researcher also records notes of the circumstances surrounding the interview to provide details of the contexts to which the conversation might have been addressed.

Concerning the focus group method, it is easiest to use two interviewers, one focusing mainly on the *what*'s and the other on the *how*'s of the interview (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 66). The *what*'s are concerned with exactly what is said, the "meat" of the interview. The *how*'s are concerned with how things are said, such as noted sarcasm or other tones in respondents' voices or actions. This method provides a way of encouraging and monitoring different lines of perspective. The moderators must also keep in mind that each participant is a potential respondent to what others say and do. One must take note of the various questions, answers, interpretations, and positional shifts.

### 2.4.4 Extrapolating Useful Information from the Interview

The more standardised an interview, the less visible are meaning-making linkages. A standardised perspective yields precise data that may be analysed and charted easily after the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995 p. 10; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 52). However, meaning-making is a continually unfolding process, which begins before the interviewing ends by examining what various respondents have said and considering similarities and differences. Although the individual interviews convey varying meanings in their own right, multiple perspective gained with focus groups can emphasise the richness of meaning and more "true to life" interactions.

**2.5     Web Site Design**

We designed a web site to allow another means for residents of Merton to

obtain information regarding social services.  The sections that follow give a brief

overview of proper ways to design a web page.  When we designed our web site we

kept in mind the following sections so that our web site was easy to read, navigate,

and find what information the user of the site was seeking.

**2.5.1     Web Site Design and Hypertext**

Hypertext is defined by White (1996, p. 304) as "a method of organising on-

line information in which the user browses using author-designed links rather then

searching for information on a keyword.  It can also describe the non-linear

presentation of information".  The first step in creating effective hypertext is to

choose projects that adhere to the *Golden Rules of Hypertext* (Shneiderman, 1998, p.

556):

1.  There is a large body of information organised into numerous fragments.
2.  The fragments relate to one another.
3.  The user needs only a small fraction of the fragments at any one time
    (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 556).

**2.5.2     Creating Documents for Hypertext Database**

The first necessary item in creating web pages is to know the users and their

tasks (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 558).  Throughout the design phase of the web site, the

designer should consult the users.  He or she should know why the user would use the

web page and what tasks the user would perform (Shneiderman, 1998, pp. 558-559).

Instead of concentrating on the technology, the developer should put more

emphasis on the structuring and presentation of the information.  The developer

should make full use of the resources available such as information specialists

(trainers, psychologists, graphic artists), content specialists (users, marketers), and technologists (system analysts, programmers).

The information provided on the web page should be appropriately organised. If a piece of information gets too large, the developer should consider breaking the information down into smaller sections. While breaking the sections down into smaller pieces he should keep in mind that the information should be interrelated and each section should contain links to the other sections.

Even though the pages are meant to be read thoroughly, they should have as few links as possible. Index pages should be used to provide links to other sections and web sites. Index pages generally contain hundreds of links usually in a format that is easy to understand. The web site developer should make sure that it is easy for the user to negotiate through the web page.

Consistency is a key factor in web design. The screens should be designed so that the viewer can easily understand them. The web page should give a clear focus of attention, have good headings, and provide useful links. It is best if the layout is compact vertically, so the user of the page does not have to scroll very far to find his or her information. The developer must keep in mind to avoid blank space since it is a waste; however, white space can sometimes be helpful in increasing clarity. He may also want to avoid putting too much burden on the user's short-term memory (White, 1996, p. 141). Most people find it difficult to process large amounts of information in a short period of time. The user should not be required to memorise codes or paths, he or she should be allowed to concentrate on the information contained within the web site.

### 2.5.3    Compactness and Branching Factors

The length of page and number of links are a key issue in web page design (White, 1996, p. 150).  Meaningful structures that guide users to the fragments that they want are the goal, but excessive fragmentation disrupts people who wish to read or print the full text (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 575).  A higher branching factor is almost always preferred for index pages, especially if it can save an extra layer that users must traverse.  For example, the Yahoo home page and the MSN home page have around 100 links.  Compact vertical design is necessary to reduce scrolling.  Many times designers have a single, left-justified column of links that leaves the right side of the display blank, forcing extra scrolling.

### 2.5.4    Sequencing, Clustering, and Emphasis

Sequencing, clustering and emphasis are very important features of a web page, especially the highly visible home page of an organisation (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 576).  Items should be arranged according to their order of importance.  Related items should be clustered together.  Important items should be emphasised by using larger fonts, different colours, and surrounding boxes.

### 2.5.5    Good Graphical Design

Graphics have become an integral element in World Wide Web pages (White, 1996, p. 168).  Graphics provide a lot of extra information and can also be used expressly for logos, fancy horizontal rules, and icons.

Page layout is a well-developed topic for graphic designers, whose expertise is vital for innovative and effective designs (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 577).  Grid layouts

and consistent structure help to guide the reader. The user can also traverse the page rapidly if proper indexes and shortcuts are provided.

### 2.5.6 Navigation Support

A reader's progress cannot be easily seen online (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 577). Scroll bars, tree or a network diagram (site maps), and page bars are effective progress indicators. Designers can also make use of tops and bottoms of pages to provide navigational cues (headers, footers, and page numbers).

### 2.5.7 Testing

Usability testing is extremely important for all user-interface projects (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 579). The testing should be done with representatives of each of the primary user communities, and if time and money permit, even secondary user communities should be tested. The subjects should be chosen from a wide variety of users. After early in-house testing, an intensive field-test is recommended. A phased rollout process will protect against disaster, improve quality, and ensure highest satisfaction by the largest number of users.

### 2.5.8 Maintenance of Web Sites

Web site maintainers can acquire feedback from users by electronic mail or survey questions embedded in the web site itself (Shneiderman, 1998, p. 579). Extensive knowledge of user demographics is useful in refining a web site. Web site maintainers may also interview users individually by telephone or in person, or conduct focus-group discussions among users.

## 3.0    Methodology

### 3.1  Methods Used to Complete Project Objectives

Our project team carried out the following procedures while in London in order to complete our given project goals. Our team decided to use two methods to collect information from the public: surveys and interviews. Using the data we collected, we made recommendations to the London Borough of Merton for a new public information policy. We also constructed a web page as an additional means of communicating information about Social Services offered by the Borough of Merton to the residents.

### 3.2  Specific Methods

We used the methods outlined in the following sections to gather data from the residents and user of social services in Merton and officials from other boroughs involved in informing the public of social services and the design of a web site for the Social Services Department.

### 3.2.1 Surveys

Our project team designed and implemented two surveys to aid in collecting information about what the public of Merton and current users of the services know and understand about services provided to them by the Council. Our group distributed one survey via mail to a representative sample of the population of Merton residents. Our team then directly administered (handed out) the survey to users of the services at Social Service Day Centres. We visited Social Service Day Centres that included Chapel Orchard, a facility for adult mental health patients; All Saints, a

facility for adult physical impairment; JMC, a centre for adults with learning

disabilities; Eastway, a centre for elderly people; Bond Street Nursery, a day-care

facility for children. Group members also visited a few District Offices. For a

description of the services provided for each day centre see Appendix E, on page108

through 114.

### 3.2.1.1 Survey question design

The first step in completing the survey process was question design. We

designed two surveys, one for residents and one for users. We used simple and

precise questions to allow participants to have a complete understanding of what was

being asked. Each question provided us with ideas and suggestions, from the public,

about disseminating information on social services.

The questions on the residents survey allowed us to gain knowledge on what

information the residents know about where to find information on social services

provided in the community; if they or family members are currently obtaining social

service(s); how they went about obtaining information about the social service(s); and

if they had any suggestions of how to better inform the public of social services. For

example the following question was asked of residents in our survey:

*If you or a member of your family has used services*
*in the past, how did you hear about these Social*
*Services? (Please tick all that apply.)*
  ☐ *Television*
  ☐ *Radio*
  ☐ *Newspaper*
  ☐ *Friend or Relative*
  ☐ *Advice from GP Surgery*
  ☐ *Pamphlet or Flyers*
  ☐ *Care Connect (A local charity providing services for adults)*
  ☐ *Visit to Local Service Agency or Provider of Services*
  ☐ *Internet*
  ☐ *Other: (Please Specify)_____*

**Figure 3-1**: Sample question from resident survey

Our team designed the user survey so that we could gather information on how the users of social services found information about the service they currently use, as well as if they could recommend better ways to inform people like themselves of the services provided. The following is an example of the type of question we designed for our user survey:

*In what locations would you like to see information*
*about Social Services provided by the borough?*
*(Please tick all that apply.)*
- ☐ *Supermarkets*
- ☐ *Underground Stations*
- ☐ *Petrol Stations*
- ☐ *Churches or other religious institutions*
- ☐ *Libraries*
- ☐ *Post Office*
- ☐ *Other (Please Specify)_____*

**Figure 3-2**: Sample question from user survey

Our team also decided to include an optional section in both of our surveys for contact information. This section was included to ask the participant if they would like to volunteer for a personal interview. If the participant decided that they would like to participate in an interview then they were asked to fill out and return the section with the survey. The complete surveys that were used during our project can be found in Appendix C; the resident survey is on page 95 through 101 and the user survey is on page 101 through 106.

Due to time constraints our team did not have enough time to conduct interviews with users and residents. The information was recorded and stored securely and passed on to our liaisons. They will conduct the interviews as they see fit, we left a copy of our interview protocol as a suggestion for what questions to ask. This interview protocol is included in this report and is in Appendix L on page 139.

### 3.2.1.2 Pre-test of survey

Once we completed the question design and survey revision phases, we carried out a pre-test of the survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions. The pre-test consisted of asking twenty random people to read and evaluate the survey and make any corrections and recommendations that they felt would make the survey completely understandable by all participants. We then revised our survey using the comments and corrections suggested to us from the participants in the pre-test. We reworded questions, and changed question structures in order to simplify the survey and cause less confusion for the participants (the general public and the users).

For example after the pre-test we found that the following question was much too confusing and complicated, it was described as "…being difficult to even look at", by one pre-test participant.

> *4.) Which of the following are the most convenient ways for Merton to obtain feedback from you about services you are using? (Please rank, 0 being the worst and 10 being the best)*
>
> > *Surveys*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*
> > *Town Meetings*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*
> > *Internet*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*
> > *Personal Interviews*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*
> > *Phone Interview*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*
> > *Other (please specify): _____*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*
> > *I don't want to give feedback to the borough*
> > *0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10*

**Figure 3-3**: Question before pre-test

We then revised this question to the following example, which proved to be clearer and much easier to understand.

*7.) Which of the following are the most convenient and effective ways for the Council to obtain feedback from you about Social Services that you are using? (Please tick one box for each of the following).*

|  | *Bad* | *Fair* | *Good* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Surveys and  Questionnaires* | ▱ | ▱ | ▱ |
| *Town Meetings* | ▱ | ▱ | ▱ |
| *Internet* | ▱ | ▱ | ▱ |
| *Personal Interviews* | ▱ | ▱ | ▱ |
| *Phone Interview* | ▱ | ▱ | ▱ |
| *Other (please specify):* _____ | | | |
| *Other (please specify):* _____ | | | |

**Figure 3-4**: Question after pre-test corrections

### 3.2.1.3 Sampling of general public and users

The project team chose to use a representative sample of the residents using the Register of Electors 2001. We decided on a sample size of fifteen hundred residents to allow for a fifteen percent response rate, or two hundred and twenty-five responses to the mailed survey.

The Register of Electors is divided into twenty wards, or sections. We divided the sample size by the total number of registered electors and then used the percentage to get the total number of residents selected per ward. Finally we selected names from the list by choosing every ninetieth resident to receive the mailed survey.

We decided to approach the users of social services in a different manner. We aimed to reach about twenty users from each of the five chosen social service centres, giving us a total of one hundred. These services included those for adult mental

health, physical impairment, learning disabilities, elderly services, and nursery services for children.

### 3.2.1.4 Implementing the survey

After all the questions were designed, revised, and tested, and the sample of the residents was selected, we mailed out the survey to the fifteen hundred residents of Merton. The mailed survey included a cover letter explaining what the survey was being used for, and that a speedy reply was requested to allow us to analyse the results and come up with suggestions to improve the information policy to benefit the residents. A translation page containing ten different languages prominent in Merton was also included in with the survey. This page stated in each of the ten languages that if help is needed with reading the survey to please contact the Merton Civic Centre Housing and Social Services Department for help. The translation sheet is included in this report as Appendix D on page 107.

Our project team directly administered the user surveys at the five main social service centres. Using the directly administered approach each team member handed out a number of surveys to users at each social service centre. The team member would ask if he/she would like to participate in a survey about finding information on social services in Merton. We collected the completed surveys from the participants and our group analysed the results from the data.

### 3.2.2 Interviews

We conducted interviews with local officials, such as the managers of Care Connect and Play Care to see how Merton already goes about disseminating information to the public. These two centres are privately owned, borough funded

organisations that provide information about social services to adults and children. Detailed information on these to centres can be seen in Appendix I on page 128 through 129.

We also conducted interviews with neighbouring Borough officials. Interviewing these officials allowed us to further our knowledge about how other boroughs near Merton are currently going about disseminating information about the social services they provide to the public. The information from these interviews was used to give us some ideas to use to inform the Council in Merton on how to effectively inform people. The interview protocol that we used to conduct interviews with borough officials is in Appendix F on page 115. These interviews are included in Appendix G on page 116 through 123.

### 3.2.2.1 Selecting and interviewing significant officials

We selected officials based on their involvement in the social services of Merton or other Boroughs of London. We interviewed officials such as Quality Assurance Advisor, Web Site Managers, and Public Information Officers. These boroughs included Wandsworth, Sutton, Croydon, and Lambeth. We selected boroughs based on suggestions from the staff in the Housing and Social Services Department in the Merton Civic Centre as to which boroughs were useful to contact someone to interview.

We designed an interview protocol that was used to interview the selected borough officials. Working in teams of two, our project team interviewed selected officials. We asked each official to first identify what department they work for as well as their role in the department. We then asked the officials to identify the ways in which information is disseminated to the public concerning their particular social

service or services. We also asked them to identify what they believe to be the most popular ways to inform the public, and whether they are aware of any deficiencies in the manner in which the public is informed about social services.

### 3.2.2.2 E-mail interviews with other boroughs of London

We conducted e-mail interviews with boroughs throughout London to gather information from a wider range of boroughs, without having to spend extra time travelling to the borough and interviewing someone involved in social services. E-mail served as a method to obtain data quickly and easily from a large area. We sent out e-mails requesting the information to seven boroughs and received four replies. These interviews are included in Appendix H on page 124 through 127.

### 3.2.3 Web Site

We designed a web site as a new method of informing the public. Through the use of this web site the Social Services Department will better inform potential users of services what is available through Merton Council. We constructed the web site as a future method for informing the public as more and more users begin to go online. While designing the page we kept in mind that it needed to remain easily updateable so that the information could remain current to allow people who are accessing the page to have the correct information on the service. The web site includes direct links to a number of other social service web sites that are available to the public, such as National Health Service (NHS) and Play Care. The site also contains information, such as telephone numbers, addresses, contact names, and a brief description of the different social services.

### 3.2.3.1 Web site design

Our web site was based on the current Merton web page template. The template consists of the Merton colour scheme (green and purple) and a left-column navigation bar. The Council is currently working with web designers to update the overall design of the Merton Council's web site. Upon completion of this new template the web master will update the site we developed to the new template.

Through consultation with our liaisons, we organised the information that needed to be included on the web site and developed its basic structure. The main page for the web site we constructed is shown in Figure 3-5.
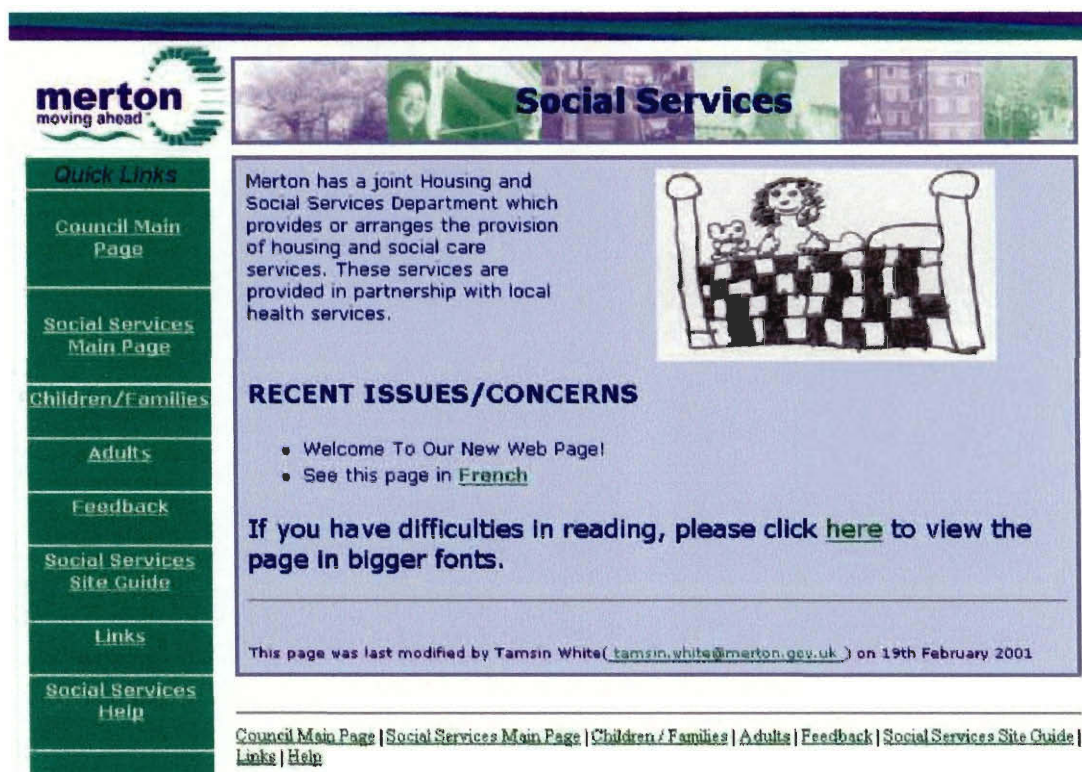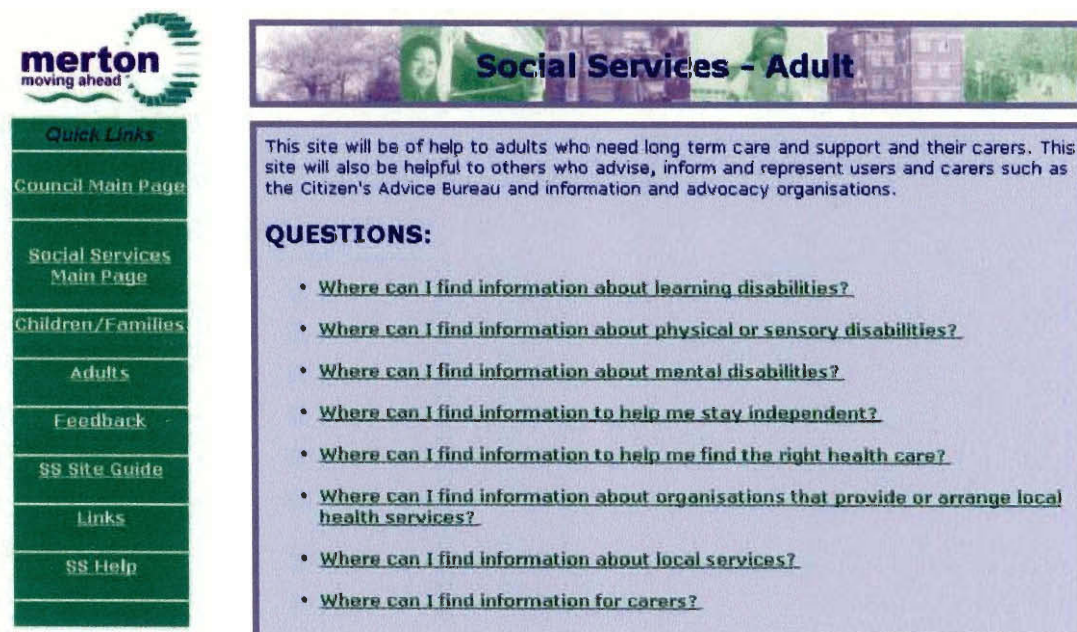


**Figure 3-5**:  Main page of the social services web site

The content of the site was divided into two groups:  services for adults and services for children and families.  Text links on the main Social Services page point

to these sections, and can be seen on the left of Figure 3-5.  Figures 3-6 and 3-7, are

the first pages of each of these major sections.  On the first page for each section there

is a list of links which the user of the site can click on to view more information.

These links are given in the form of questions to make the site user-based and

personal, rather than service-based and impersonal.  To give an example a service-

based link would appear as 'Services for those with dependency problems' whereas

the same user based linked would be 'Where can I find information on staying

independent.'  We also included links to other agencies that provide helpful

information about social services, such as Play Care and NHS.



**Figure 3-6:** Services for adults page on the social services web site

**Figure 3-7:** Services for children and families page on the social services web site

To create the web site we used three different software packages. First the pages were created and edited with a simple text editor and Macromedia ® Dream Weaver. We then used Microsoft ® Internet Explorer to test the pages at various screen resolutions and sizes.

Each page consists of three main sections. A vertical navigation bar is located on the far left which includes links to the major sections of the Social Services web site. These links include those to: Council Main Page, Social Services Main Page, Children/Families, Adults, Feedback, Social Services Site Guide, Links, and Social Services Help. These links are also included along the bottom of the screen so that if users scroll down they will still be able to view all the links available. This feature can be seen at the bottom of Figure 3-5. The title of each section appears at the top of every page within that section, followed by a sub-heading if necessary.

We chose to design the content section of each page on the web site so that there was not too much information on a single page. Each page contained small

pieces of information about each service provided along with an address and a telephone number. Few pictures were also included so that we did not exceed the maximum suggested file size for each page, that being 30 kilobytes (Kb). This allows each page to load quickly so users of the web site are not waiting for information to load onto their web browser.

### 3.2.3.2 Implementation of the web site

Once we completed the design of the Web Site, we added it to the current Merton Web Site, and added a direct link from the main page to our site. In order to do this we had to give the web site we constructed to the Web Information Manager, who approved it, and then sent it to Information Technology Services, who then added it to the Merton Web Page. A feedback section on the web site homepage will allow users of the web site to express their thoughts on the construction and usability of the web page.

### 3.2.3.3 Maintenance

As mentioned previously, Merton is in a state of reorganising and redesigning their web site, and it has not yet been determined how the web site will be updated or whose job it is to update it. The Web Information Manager volunteered to teach whoever is responsible for updating the web site as soon as they know the procedure. Despite this, we developed a short manual that identifies the processes necessary to take when an update of the web site is necessary. This manual is included in the report as Appendix M, on page 140 though 142.

### 3.3  Organisation of Data

We collected all the directly administered surveys, received replies from our mailed survey, and conducted interviews with borough officials.  We gathered all the information, organised the data into a database, and drew conclusions about the following:  information the citizens know about services provided in the community; what the people know about obtaining services; if they obtain services, how they went about obtaining services; and if they have any suggestions for improving the communication between the Housing and Social Service Department of Merton and the community of Merton.

### 3.3.1 Organisation of Survey Data

We organised the surveys, from both the residents and the users, so that we could suggest the most convenient ways to inform the public as a whole.  We organised the data obtained from the resident and user surveys into databases that we set up.  The following figure illustrates the form we constructed and used in order to organise and compile the information that we received from the residents' surveys.

**Figure 3-8**: Database entry form for residents' surveys

We used a similar form for organisation and compilation of the information from the user surveys. Additional information on the user surveys included a section where we could indicate which service centre the survey data was collected from and any additional comments that we wanted to make about the people that were surveyed from those centres. For example we recorded in the comments section of the user form for the elderly centre that these people have trouble getting around and cannot visit places to access information on social services.

We then looked at user surveys more closely and put them into categories. These categories allowed us to suggest specific ways to reach certain users. For example we categorised all the users surveys that were received from the JMC Service Centre as users with learning disabilities. We analysed the results of that category and recorded the best means to reach people who may be seeking learning disability services.

### 3.3.2 Organisation of Interview Data

We also compiled all the information that was received from interviewing Merton officials as well as neighbouring officials. This information was analysed to find out which methods, that are currently being used, are working and which are not doing the job of informing the public. We also took the suggestions from the interviews on innovative ideas for informing the public about social services.

### 3.3.3 Use of Data

Our project group then used the data obtained from these methods to make specific recommendations to the Borough of Merton Department of Housing and Social Services on what practices they should consider using to inform the residents of Merton about social services. The information that was collected from all of our research will be used by the Borough of Merton to develop a public information plan. Finally, after all information was recorded all surveys and personal information was destroyed.

## 4.0 Results and Analysis

### 4.1  Introduction to Results and Analysis

The following sections describe the results that we collected during our project in London.  We collected the information through two methods: surveys and interviews.  The data contained in these sections will be used by the London Borough of Merton to improve their communication to the public regarding social services. We compiled the results into charts and graphs to make the results easier to understand and view.

In order to draw conclusions we then analysed the results that we obtained. The graphs we generated from the data allowed us to analyse the results and draw conclusions about the best means of informing the public from the standpoint of the residents and users of services in Merton.  The conclusions that we reached are discussed in the next chapter.

### 4.2  Survey Results and Analysis

We collected all the surveys and processed them into the database that we created.  We then complied the results to obtain the information necessary to find most effective ways to inform the public about social services within the Borough of Merton.  The reader should note that each individual was allowed to tick all that applied when responding to many of the questions on the survey and because of this totals on some questions will add up to more than the total number of respondents.

**4.2.1 Resident Surveys Results**

In total our project group mailed out resident surveys to fifteen hundred

residents. These residents formed a representative sample of the total population of

Merton. We received responses from 308 participants, giving us a response rate of

20%. From these responses we generated the following graphs representing age,

gender, and ethnicity of the survey sample. Some of the residents surveyed did not

answer all of the questions, which accounts for the gap in surveys received and the

numbers displayed in the graphs below.
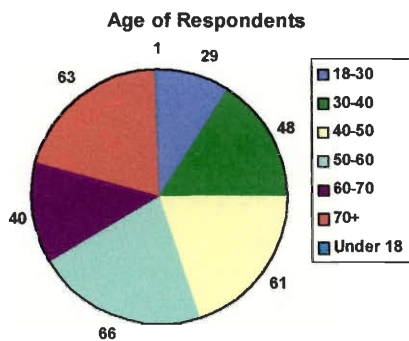


**Figure 4-1**: Ages of respondents
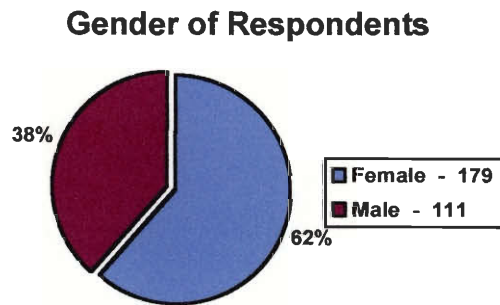


**Figure 4-2**: Gender of respondents
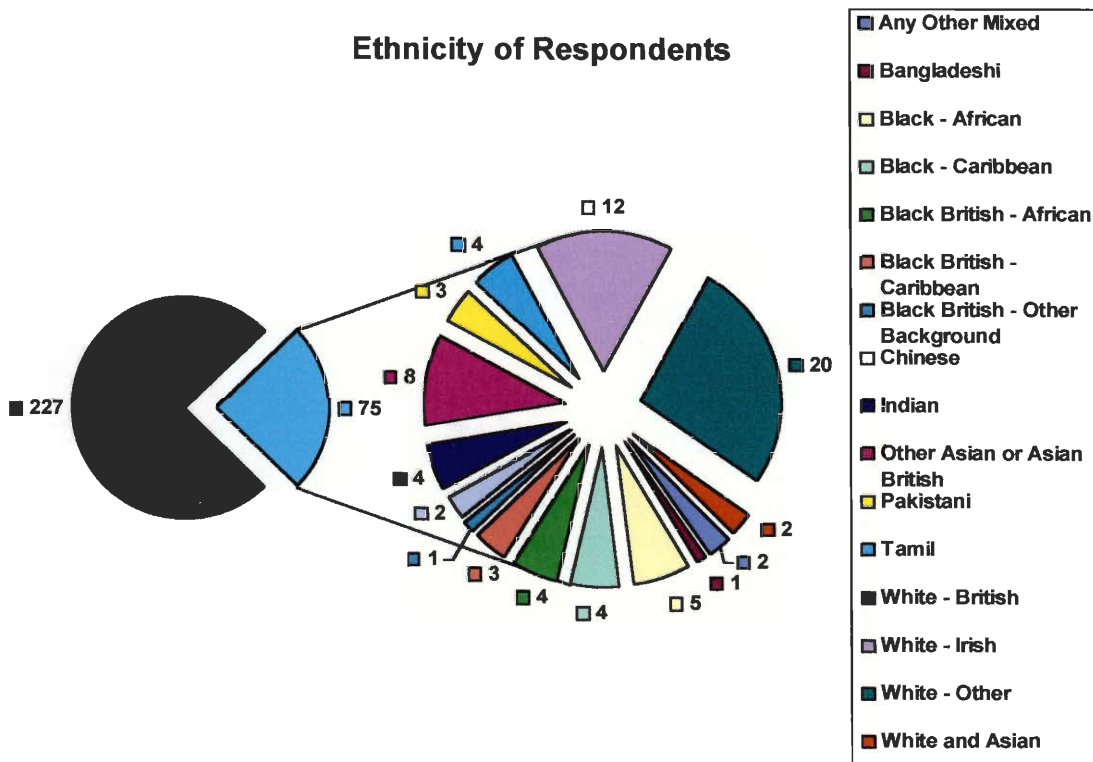


**Figure 4-3**: Ethnicity of the respondents

We then compared the values depicted in the above graphs to the ethnic make-up and gender of Merton in 1996. The actual values for Merton are shown in <u>Figure 4-4</u> and <u>Figure 4-5</u>. These data show that we were fairly close to surveying a representative sample of the Merton population. These values are given for comparison only.
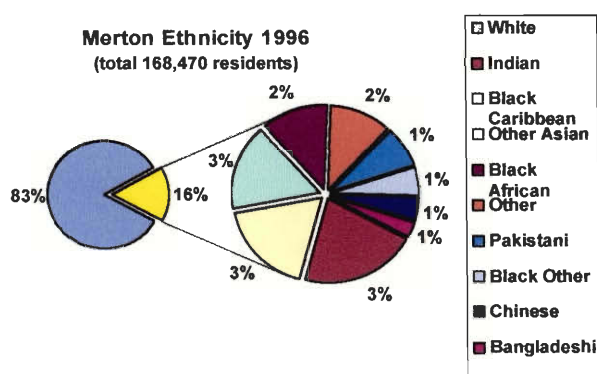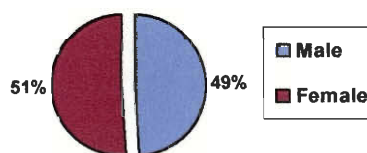


**Figure 4-4**: Merton residents' ethnicity 1996     **Figure 4-5**: Merton residents' gender 1996

### 4.2.1.1 Use of social services by respondents

We constructed figures to show how many of the residents have used social services in the past, and whether they or a member of their family are currently using social services.
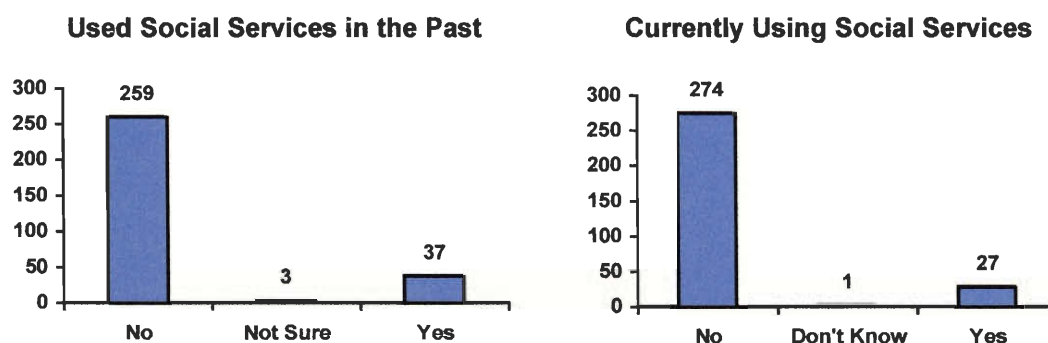


**Figure 4-6**: Respondents and/or family members who use or have used social services

These graphs make it clear that many of the residents may have had no direct contact with the borough with regards to social services. It is also evident that a large number of the residents have never used and are currently not using social services. These data suggest either that many residents may not have had the need to use the services, or if they wished to use the services but could not find information, this suggests a need for better dissemination of information. This problem could lead to many residents being unable to obtain the social service(s) that they are in need of.

The next figure relates to residents who have themselves or have family members who have used or are currently using social services. It depicts how respondents of the survey found information about those services.
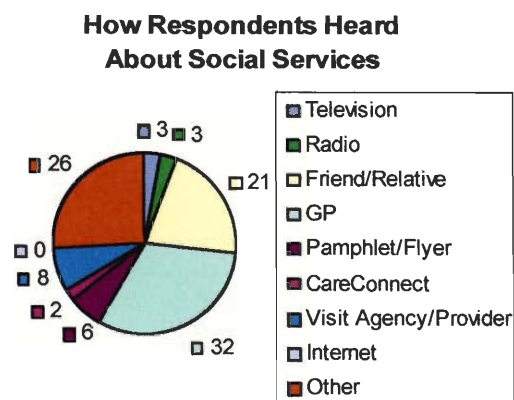


**Figure 4-7**: How respondents who use or have used social services heard about them

The most common method that residents used to find out about social services was advice from GP Surgery (a doctor). This result shows that of the residents we sampled most people who are using social services found out about what was available to them from a visit with their doctor. Another method of learning about

social services that was written in by many respondents was a hospital visit. This shows that hospitals are providing some information about social services to their patients.

### 4.2.1.2 Methods of communicating information about social services to residents

The pie graph below shows the best methods for communicating information about social services to the public, from the view of the residents of Merton.

**How Respondents Would Like to be Informed**
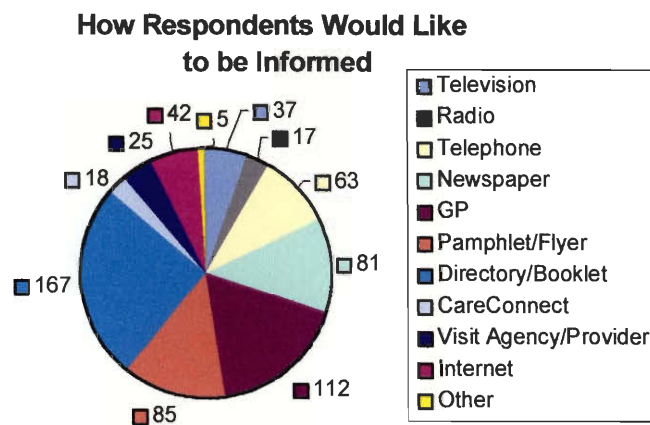
**Figure 4-8**: How respondents would like to be informed

This graph indicates that the best methods, from the respondents' view, are Directory or Booklet, GP Surgery, Pamphlet or Flyers, and Newspapers. This is out of the 308 respondents from our resident survey. Not all of these methods are currently employed by the borough to inform the public of social services offered. (It is important to note the difference in the information provided from a GP Surgery, which is a referral, and a Newspaper, which is directly informing the reader.)

**4.2.1.3 Location of information according to respondents of the**

**resident survey**

Locations that residents have seen information provided by the borough about

social services are represented below. Also below is a graph representing the

locations where Merton residents would most like to see information displayed.



**Where Respondents Have Found Information**
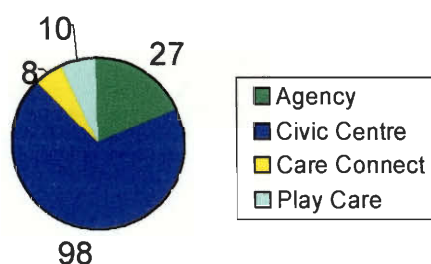
**Preferred Locations to Provide Information According to Respondents**
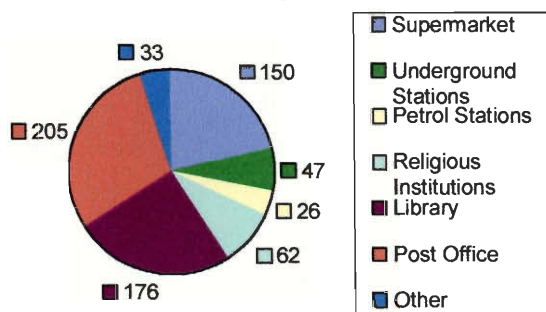
**Figure 4-9**: Current information locations          **Figure 4-10**: New information locations

Figure 4-9 shows that the public is currently finding the most information

about social services at the Merton Civic Centre. It is important to note that a large

portion of respondents did not fill in this question on the survey. This graph indicates

that many people have never seen or did not recognise social service information.

We then examined where the public would like to find information about

social services. Figure 4-10 illustrates that the public would like to see information

posted or displayed at Post Offices, Libraries, and Supermarkets. A significant

number of survey subjects also specified that they would like to see information on

social services posted at their GP surgery.

### 4.2.1.4    Feedback methods according to respondents of the resident survey

Another aspect that we researched was how the residents of Merton felt about giving feedback to the Council with respect to social services.  The bar graph below shows the respondents' preferences as to how they would like to give feedback.  This graph illustrates the best and worst means that the respondents have specified with regards to giving feedback.  This is out of the 308 respondents from our resident survey.

**Methods of Obtaining Feedback from Respondents**
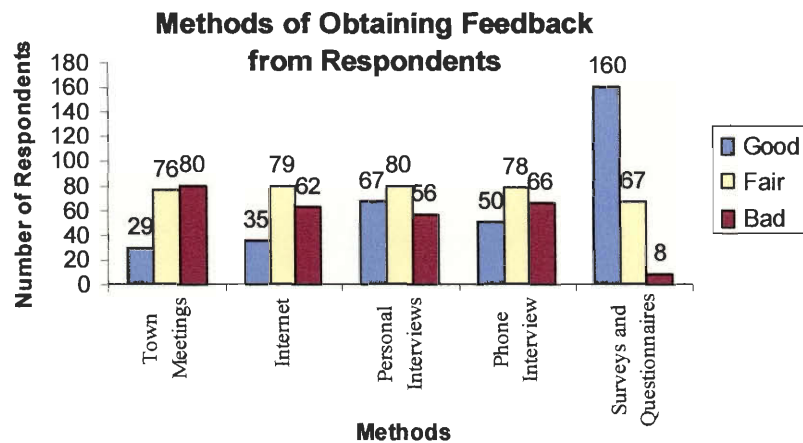
**Figure 4-11**: Feedback strategies (residents)

This graph clearly indicates that the respondents' would like surveys and questionnaires to be used for obtaining feedback about social services.  It is also evident from the graph that the residents are almost evenly split on their views of the other methods of feedback.

**4.2.1.5 Key information for publications according to respondents of the resident survey**

Finally we examined what information people found either necessary or unnecessary to know in order to obtain a social service, information such as contact number or contact name at a service centre. The bar graph illustrates the residents' feeling on each of the different key pieces of information that could be provided.
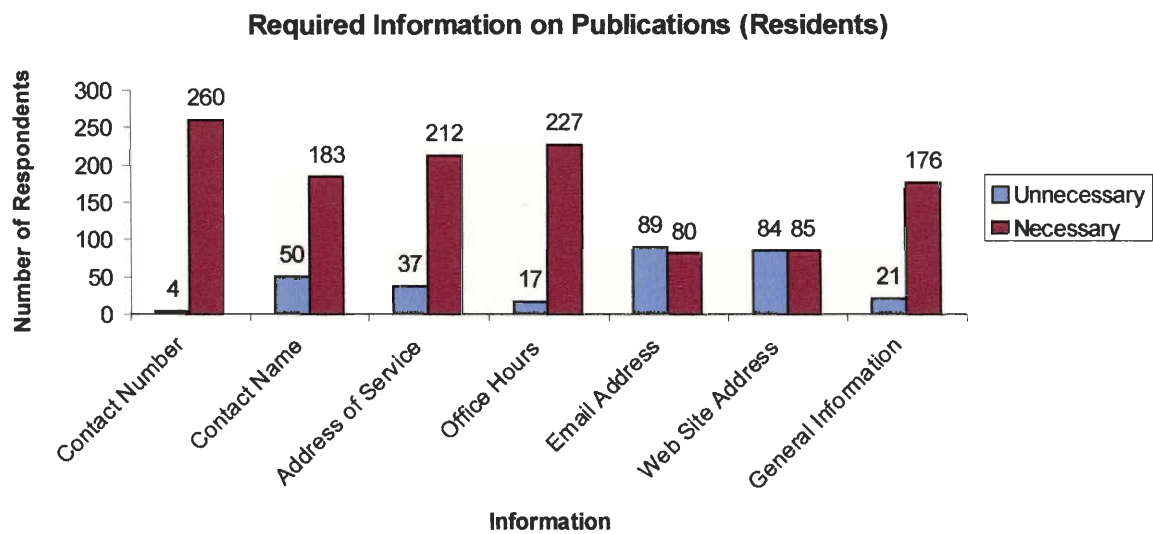


**Figure 4-12**: Key information (residents)

The above graph displays what respondents identified as important information to be included on publications. In order of most important to least they are: a contact telephone number, office hours of service, address of service, contact name, and general information. These five key pieces of information were clearly seen by the respondents of the survey as being more necessary than a web site or e-mail address. (This is out of the 308 respondents from our resident survey.)

E-mail addresses and web sites could be viewed poorly due to many residents not having internet access or knowledge of computers. In the future, however, the

number of residents using this avenue of accessing information will almost certainly

increase.  We discuss this further at the end of the following section.

### 4.2.2 Residents Survey Results by Age

We furthered our study of the surveys by separating the results into smaller

sections making our analysis more precise.  We divided up the age groups by young

(77 residents), middle-aged (127), and elder populations (103), giving us a total of

307 residents (we had one respondent under 18 years of age which was not included

in this set of data).  Using these three groups we developed graphs that show how the

different age groups would prefer to find out about social services offered and where

they would like to find information about social services.  Included in Appendix K on

page 137 through138 we have included the graphs for every age group on the survey.
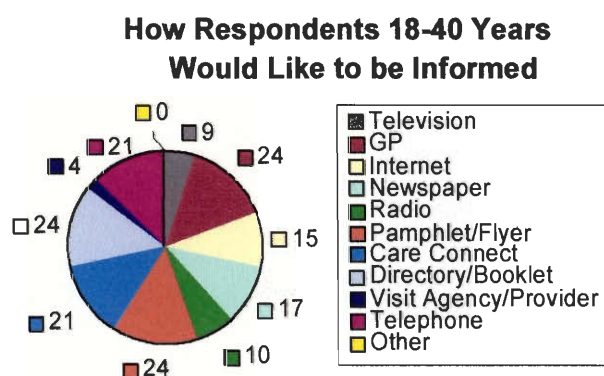


**Figure 4-13**:  Most effective
methods to inform 18 – 40 year olds
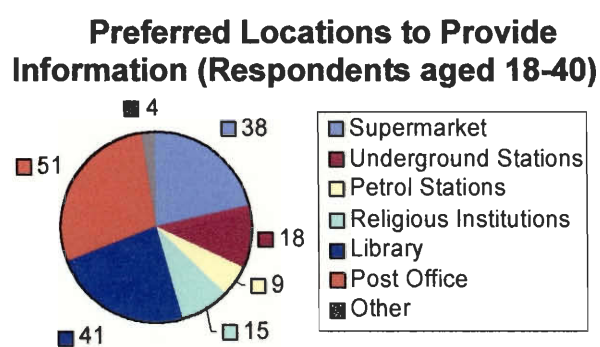


**Figure 4-14**:  Best location to provide
information to 18 – 40 year olds

Figure 4-13 illustrates the most effective ways to inform residents aged 18 –

40 about social services, according to respondents of the survey in that age group.

From this graph we learned that the best methods for informing residents of this age

group is to use a Directory or Booklet listing social services and contact information,

Pamphlet or Flyers, and advice from a GP Surgery.  This age group ranked all three of

these methods equally. The next figure shows the locations where 18 – 40 year olds would prefer to see information posted or displayed about social services. The most popular location that we identified from this data is Post Offices, followed by Libraries and Supermarkets. Another location to provide information about social services that was written in by a few respondents is GP Surgeries.

**How Respondents 40-60 Years Would Like to be Informed**

- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other

**Preferred Locations to Provide Information (Respondents aged 40-60)**

- Supermarket
- Underground Stations
- Petrol Stations
- Religious
- Library
- Post Office
- Other
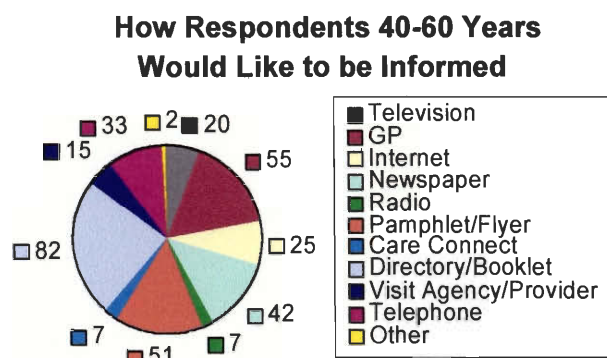
**Figure 4-15**: Most effective methods to inform 40 – 60 year olds
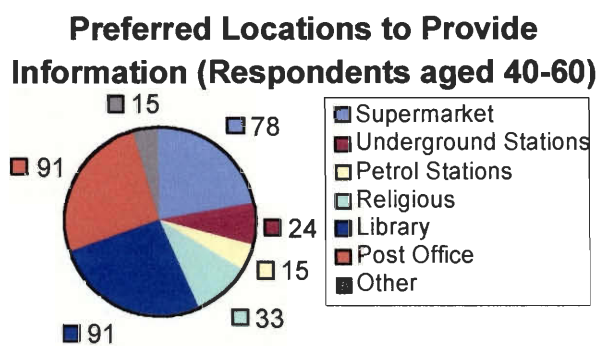
**Figure 4-16**: Best location to provide information to 40 – 60 year olds

With respect to the 40 – 60 year old age bracket, we found the most effective means of disseminating information on social services to be a Directory or Booklet and GP Surgery. Libraries and Post Offices tied for being the most convenient places to display or supply information about social services to those aged 40 – 60. GP Surgeries and Hospitals were written in by many respondents as being a location to display information at.

**How Respondents 60+ Years Would Like to be Informed**

- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other

**Preferred Locations to Provide Information (Respondents aged 60+)**

- Supermarket
- Underground Stations
- Petrol Stations
- Religious Institutions
- Library
- Post Office
- Other
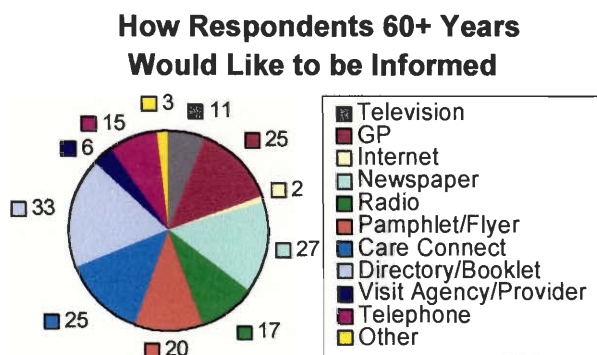
**Figure 4-17**: Most effective methods to inform 60+ year olds
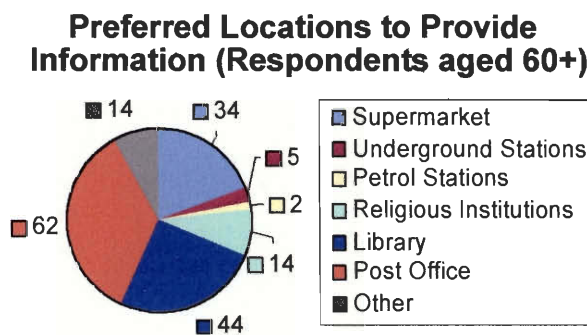
**Figure 4-18**: Best location to provide information to 60+ year olds

From the graph above, <u>Figure 4-17</u>, we found that the best means of informing residents from ages of 60+ years is a Directory or Booklet, with Care Connect and GP Surgery being tied for the second most popular method. This portion of the age population also indicated that Post Offices, Libraries, and Supermarkets are the places that they would most like to see information about social services displayed. Again, GP Surgeries and Hospitals were indicated by this age group as being helpful locations to provide information on social services.

### 4.2.3 Analysis of Results by Age Groups

After examining all of the data from the specific age groups, we found many correlations between them. All age groups indicated that the most effective means at disseminating information would be a Directory or Booklet that listed key information such as a contact name, contact number, and general information about each social service. The 18-30 age group was the only of the three to indicate Pamphlet or Flyers and GP Surgery to be as equally important.

All age groups analysed rated the best location to provide information as either Library or Post Office; both of these choices were always rated first or second. The third location indicated by all the age groups was Supermarkets.

Another interesting aspect of the data can be seen when the three groups are contrasted. We noticed that technology based methods such as Telephone Advice Line and Internet became less popular as age increased, and in the 60+ age group only two out of 103 respondents thought the Internet was useful. This shows that more technology-based methods are more appealing to younger residents. However, more

conventional methods of providing information, such as a newspaper, are almost

equally appealing to all age groups.

### 4.2.4 Residents Survey Results by Ethnicity

We continued by looking at the resident surveys with respect to ethnicity. We

compiled the data into graphs showing how different ethnic groups would prefer to

hear about social services and where they would like to find this information. The

graphs divide the residents of Merton that we surveyed, into three main ethnic groups:

White; Black; and Mixed, Asian, or Any Other. Using these groupings we found the

most effective ways to obtain information and the best locations to find the

information for each particular ethnic group. We decided to group the Mixed, Asian,

or Any Other categories due to the low number of persons represented.
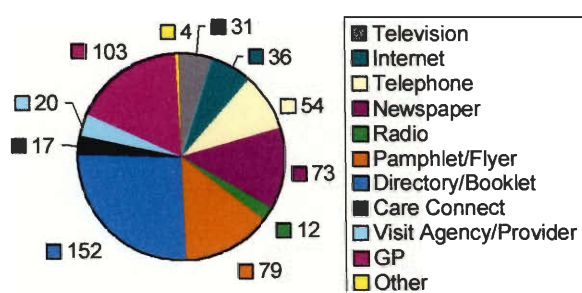


**Figure 4-19**: Preferred methods of informing (Ethnicity – White)
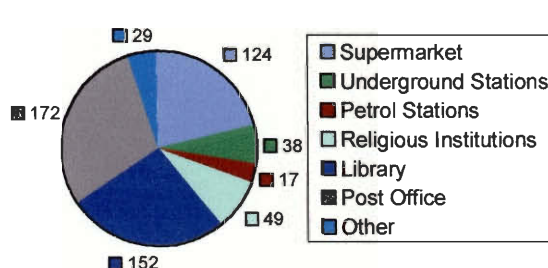


**Figure 4-20**: Preferred locations (Ethnicity – White)

From Figure 4-19 we decided that the best method of getting the information

about social services out to the residents with white ethnic backgrounds was through a

Directory or Booklet. This is by far the most popular method among the white ethnic

group. The second most popular method, well behind that of a Directory or Booklet,

was advice from a GP Surgery. The location that residents of this ethnic group

indicated as being the best location to provide information on social services is at Post

Offices. Another location rated highly by this group of individuals was libraries.

### How Respondents Would Like to be Informed (Ethnicity - Black)



### Preferred Locations to Provide Information (Ethnicity - Black)
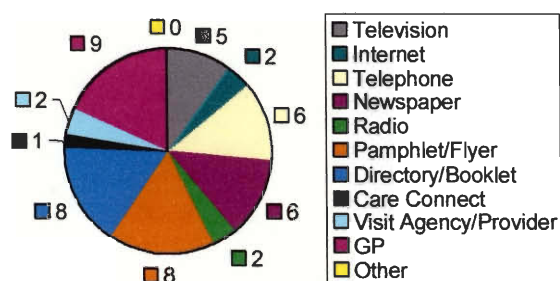


**Figure 4-21**: Preferred methods of informing (Ethnicity – Black)
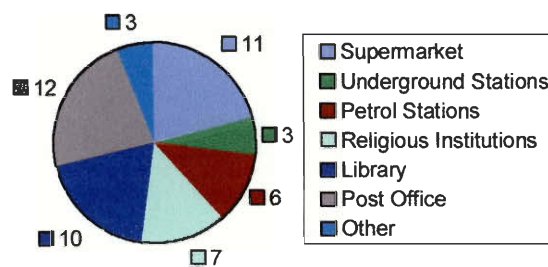
**Figure 4-22**: Preferred locations (Ethnicity – Black)

The next segment of the population we examined was residents with black

ethnic backgrounds. Seventeen respondents represented this group of Merton

residents, which is significantly smaller than the white ethnic group of 259. However,

this group felt that advice from a GP Surgery would be the most effective means of

communicating information on social services. Closely behind Advice from a GP

Surgery, residents of this ethnic group found a Directory or Booklet and Pamphlets or

Flyers also very useful. Again Post Offices were rated as the best location to provide

information. However, Libraries and Supermarkets were rated closely behind,

whereas in the white ethnic group Post Offices were ranked significantly higher.

**How Respondents Would Like to be Informed (Ethnicity - Mixed, Asian, Any Other)**

**Preferred Locations to Provide Information (Ethnicity - Mixed, Asian, Any Other)**
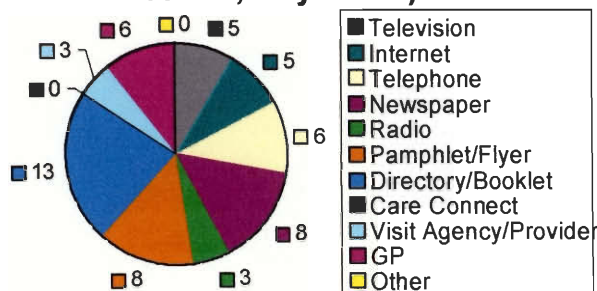
**Figure 4-23**: Preferred methods of informing (Ethnicity – Mixed, Asian, Any Other)
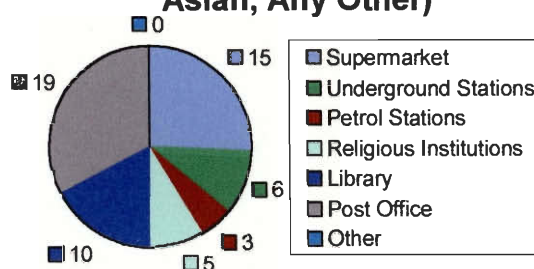
**Figure 4-24**: Preferred locations (Ethnicity – Mixed, Asian, Any Other)

The last ethnic group, consisting of Mixed (four residents), Asian (sixteen), and Any Other (six), had a total of twenty-six residents mainly asian in background. From Figure 4-23 we found, once again, that the most popular method at informing the public about social services was through a Directory or Booklet. Directory or Booklet was then followed by Pamphlets or Flyers and Newspaper, of which the respondents of this group rated equally. Post Offices are again the most popular location to provide information about social services.

### 4.2.5 Analysis of Resident Surveys by Ethnicity

Once we finished examining all the data of the ethnic breakdown section we compared and contrasted the data from the separate groups. We chose to compare and contrast the results in order to identify the common methods of informing and preferred places of displaying information among the different ethnic groups. From this examination of the data we discovered that overall the most commonly indicated means of disseminating information was a Directory or Booklet that contains key information about social services. However, the black ethnic group indicated that the

best means to disseminate information was through a GP Surgery. The reason why Directory or Booklet is rated higher is that GP Surgery was not rated as high by either of the other two groups, and Directory or Booklet was rated as the second most popular among the black ethnic group.

Overwhelmingly Post Offices were considered to be the best locations to display information on social services. All three of the groups rated Post Offices as the top place, with Libraries and Supermarkets rated as the next best places to display or provide information about social services.

When comparing the graphs we found there were only slight differences between each group. All three ethnic groups had the same view on the top three ways of informing the public and the top three places to put information, with slight differences in ranking. After the top three methods of informing and locations, somewhat larger differences occur in the data.

### 4.2.6 Analysis of Resident Survey Results

The overall results of the survey data seem to indicate the same preferences among respondents of the resident survey. The overall results of the resident survey show that the respondents overwhelmingly indicated the use of a Directory or Booklet as being the best method to provide information about social services. The resident survey respondents also indicated the same locations to display information, those being Post Offices, Libraries, and Supermarkets. While the results of each specific group we examined may vary, the three locations listed are always ranked within the top three locations.

The locations that were most often suggested by writing them on the survey by the respondents were hospitals and GP surgeries. These two locations are indirect

methods of informing the residents because residents often visit these locations for other reasons and then are directed to social services for help. While on the other hand displaying information at Post Offices, Libraries, and Supermarkets is a more direct approach because the residents can go and get the information when they need or want it.

### 4.2.7 User Surveys

Our group directly administered surveys to five Social Service Day Centres and two district offices in teams of two. The following table illustrates the number of surveys handed out and collected from each day centre that was visited.

**Table 4-1**: Number of surveys directly administered to users of services, by location.

| *Day Centre* | Number of Surveys Handed Out | Number of Surveys Collected |
|---|---|---|
| Eastway Centre | 14 | 14 |
| JMC Centre | 17 | 17 |
| All Saints Centre | 13 | 13 |
| Chapel Orchard | 9 | 9 |
| Bond Road Nursery | 8 | 8 |
| District Offices | 6 | 6 |

We compiled all the information from these surveys and formulated graphs similar to the graphs from the residents' data. We started by designing graphs that show the age, gender, and number of years the services have been used by the survey subject. The following represent these data in graphical form.

**Age of Service Users**

■ 11    ▣ 9
■ 6              ■ 16
▣ 11
□ 10

Legend:
▣ 18-30
■ 30-40
□ 40-50
▣ 50-60
■ 60-70
■ 70+

**Gender of Service Users**

■ 22              ▣ 42

Legend:
▣ Female
■ Male

**How Long Users Have been Using Service(s)**

■ 11    ▣ 10
              ■ 11
▣ 20    □ 8

Legend:
▣ 0-1
■ 10+
□ 1-2
▣ 2-5
■ 5-10
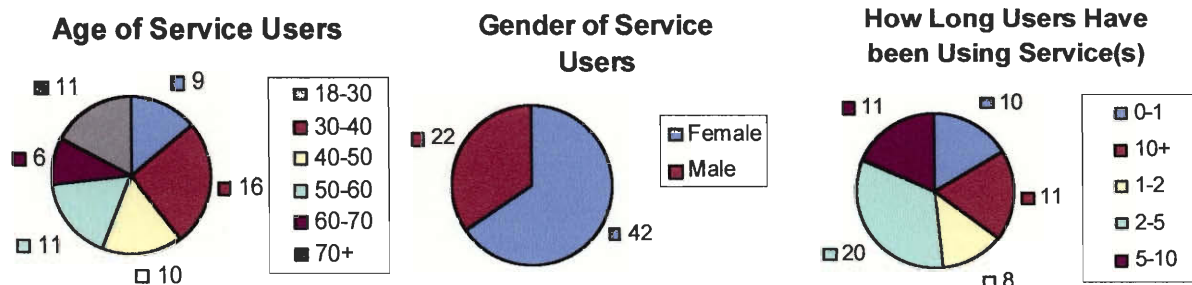
**Figure 4-25:** Age of service users

**Figure 4-26:** Gender of service users

**Figure 4-27:** How long users have been using the service

We developed these graphs from the data to give the reader an idea of the user population that we sampled. The next graph illustrates the overall data we collected from users in regards to how they heard about the social service(s) they are currently using.

**How Users Heard About Services**

▣ 3 ■ 1
■ 18        □ 2
              □ 16
■ 7
□ 0
▣ 2 ■ 2    ■ 20

Legend:
■ Television
■ Radio
□ Newspaper
▣ GP
■ Friend or Relative
■ Pamphlet or Flyers
■ Care Connect
□ Internet
■ Visit Agency/Provider
■ Other
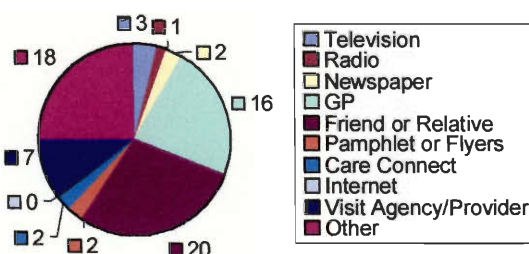
**Figure 4-28:** How users heard about services

Figure 4-28 shows that most users heard about the service through a friend or relative. Other popular methods included GP Surgeries and Social Workers. This shows that word of mouth is very important to remember when trying to reach residents.

## 4.2.7.1 Methods of communicating information about social services to users

The pie graph below shows the best methods for communication information about social services to the public, from the view of the users of services.

**How Users Would Like to be Informed**
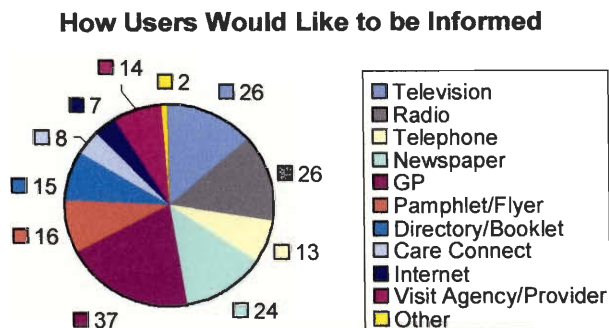
**Figure 4-29:** How users of services would like to be informed

This graph depicts that the best method for informing people is through a GP Surgery, Television and Radio were also rated very high. This is due to the participants with disabilities that took the survey, who found it difficult to read.

## 4.2.7.2 Location of information according to users

These next two pie graphs show were users have seen information about social services displayed and where they would like to see information displayed in the future.

**Where Users Have Found Information**
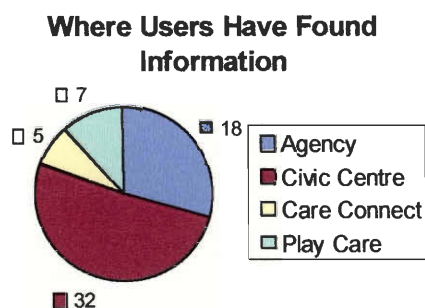
**Figure 4-30:** Current information locations (users)

**Best Places to Display Information for Users**
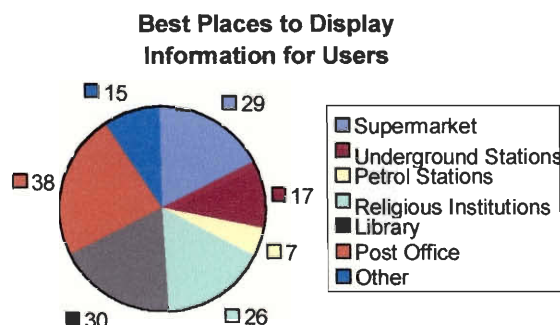
**Figure 4-31:** The best locations to provide information for users

Figure 4-30 shows that many users of social services have found information at Merton Civic Centre. The users also noted that they found some information at agencies, such as Day Centres and District Offices. Then next figure shows locations that users would like to see information displayed at. Post Offices were rated the highest among users and followed by Libraries and Supermarkets. There were also a very significant amount of users who specified that they would like to see information about services displayed at Hospitals and GP Surgeries.

### 4.2.7.3 Feedback methods according to users

We also researched ways to obtain feedback from the users of services. The following bar graph depicts the methods that could be used to obtain feedback versus how the respondents rated the methods, the ratings being good, fair, or bad.

**Methods of Obtaining Feedback from Users**
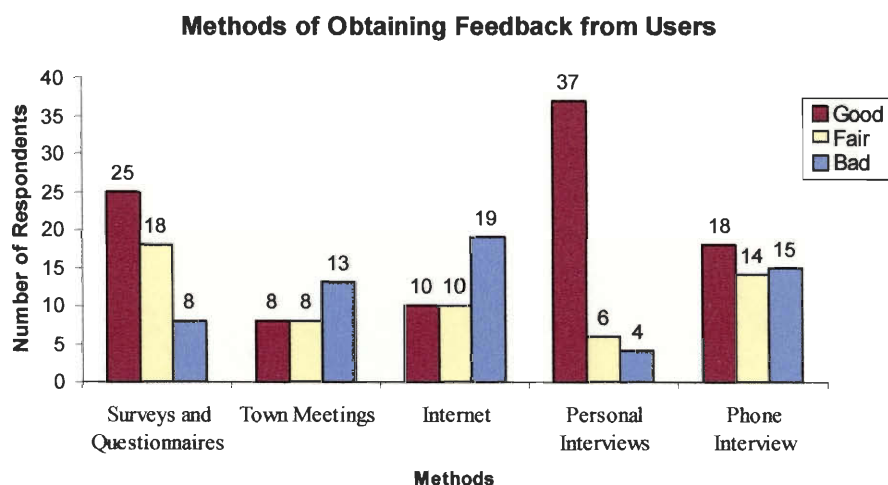


**Figure 4-32:** Feedback strategies for users

This graph indicates that respondents' of the user survey prefer personal interviews to all other methods. The users rated Internet as a very bad method for obtaining feedback. Users tend to prefer personal interviews because it is easier for

them to speak one-on-one with someone than it is for them to fill out a survey or

questionnaire.


### 4.2.7.4 Key information to provide according to users

Finally we examined what key information users found necessary to have on

publications about social services. We show the results of what the users ticked on

the survey in the bar graph that is below.

**Key Information on Publications (Users)**
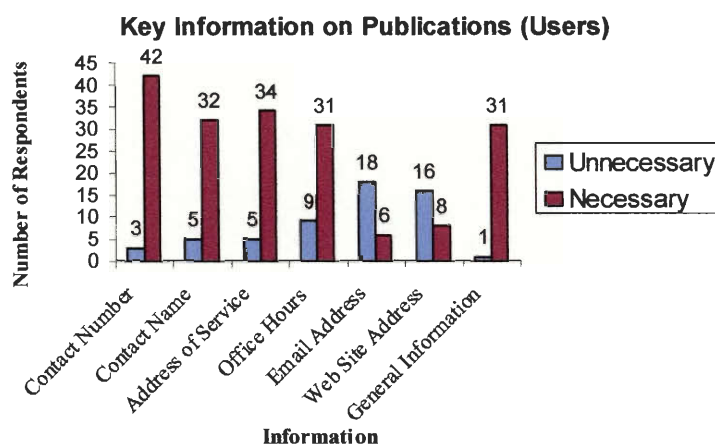


**Figure 4-33:** Key information (users)

The most necessary item that users believe should be included on publications

is a contact number to the service they are looking for. They also felt that the address

of the service and a contact name were very important to include in social service

publications. Once again e-mail addresses and web sites were viewed poorly by the

users due to many of them not having Internet access or knowledge about computers.


### 4.2.7.5 Eastway Day Centre results and analysis

Two group members visited Eastway Day Centre, an older person care centre,

on 31 January 2001. We surveyed all members present at the centre that morning.

The results of the fourteen surveys were entered into the user database under Eastway.

These data were then separated further to find out what users of the Eastway Day Centre thought were the best methods of communication, what the best locations were to place information regarding social services, and how they initially heard of the service they are currently using. This information is shown below.

**How Eastway Users Would Like to be Informed**

| | |
|---|---|
| ▢ | Television |
| ■ | Radio |
| ▢ | Telephone |
| ▢ | Newspaper |
| ■ | GP |
| ▣ | Pamphlet/Flyer |
| ■ | Directory/Booklet |
| ▢ | Care Connect |
| ■ | Internet |
| ▣ | Visit Agency/Provider |
| ▢ | Other |
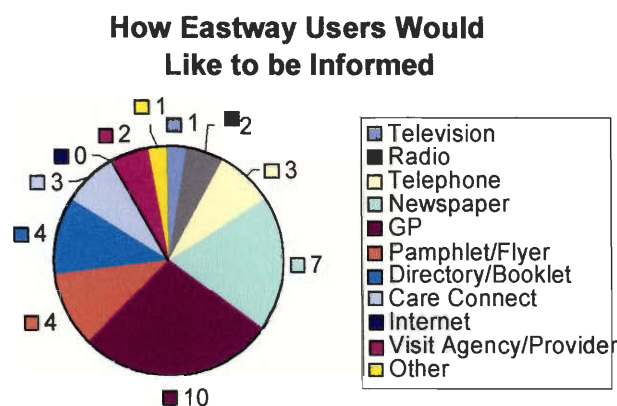
**Figure 4-34**: Informing Eastway users of social services

**Where Eastway Users Would Like to See Information**

| | |
|---|---|
| ▢ | Supermarket |
| ■ | Underground Stations |
| ▢ | Religious Institutions |
| ▣ | Petrol Stations |
| ■ | Library |
| ▣ | Post Office |
| ■ | Other |
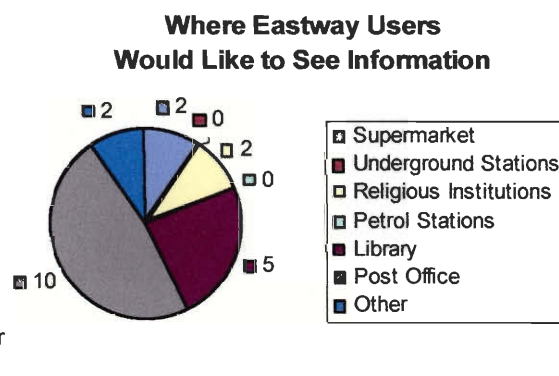
**Figure 4-35**: Preferred locations to display information for Eastway users

According to users of the Eastway Day Centre Advice from a GP Surgery was the best method of being informed of social services offered by the borough. The best location to display information for the users of Eastway that took the survey is by far Post Offices.

We believe that GP Surgeries were so popular among the elders at this day centre because they tend to make more frequent GP visits. This shows that having information available either in pamphlet form or by information given directly from the GP would be helpful in reaching potential users of elder services.

**4.2.7.6 Jan Malinowski Centre (JMC) Day Centre results and analysis**

JMC is a learning disabilities centre that we visited on 1 February 2001. The manager of the centre provided a room for team members to interview clients of the

centre on a one-on-one basis. Over the course of our time there that morning we conducted 17 surveys. The information from this centre was separated into the following graphs. These graphs illustrate how the users of this service centre found out about the services provided, what they suggest is the best means of communicating with people who have learning disabilities, and what places are most convenient for them to find information.
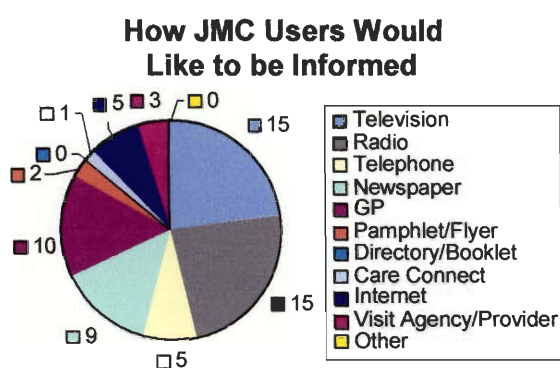


**Figure 4-36**: Informing JMC Users of social services
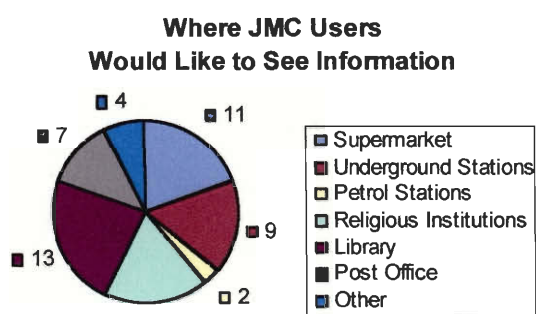


**Figure 4-37**: Preferred locations to display information for JMC users

Users of JMC indicated the two best methods of informing them about services to be Radio and Television. This is understandable for those with learning disabilities, for they would have difficulty in reading or understanding a Directory or Booklet, or Pamphlets, unless they were specifically designed for them. Libraries were indicated to be the most important location to display social services information for JMC users.

These data show that it is important to take into consideration the needs that a certain individual may have when trying to find information. Television and radio were found to be most popular with the users who have learning disabilities because it is easier for them to understand the information when heard. To help in informing

people with learning disabilities a pamphlet written using Makaton symbols may

prove to be very useful.

### 4.2.7.7 All Saints Day Centre results and analysis

On the morning of Friday, 2 February 2001, our group visited All Saints, a

centre for people with physical disabilities. The manager of the centre had posted the

survey one-week prior to our arrival and informed the users of the centre that we were

coming. He first introduced us to the survey subject and we then proceeded to work

one-on-one with the users due to their need for assistance in filling out the survey.

The information was arranged in the same manner as the other centres and organised

into graphs to better show the data we collected.



**How All Saints Users Would Like to be Informed**

- Television
- Radio
- Telephone
- Newspaper
- GP
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Directory/Booklet
- Care Connect
- Internet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Other
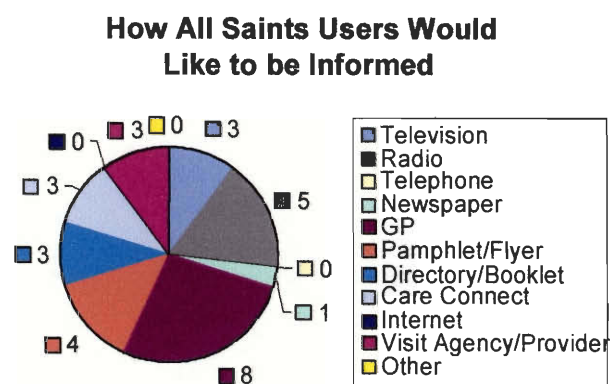
**Figure 4-38**: Informing All Saints users of social services



**Where All Saints Users Would Like to See Information**

- Supermarket
- Underground Stations
- Petrol Stations
- Religious Institutions
- Library
- Post Office
- Other
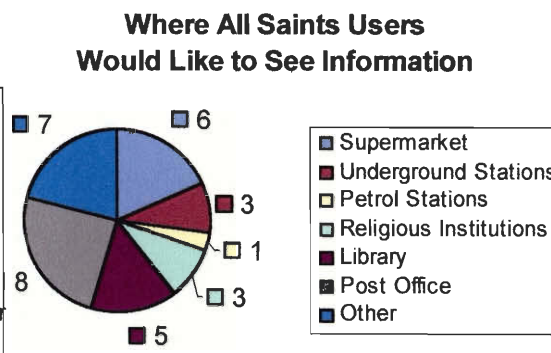
**Figure 4-39**: Best locations to display information for All Saints users

Figure 4-38 shows that All Saints users would like to be informed about

services thorough their GP Surgeries. We feel that GP surgeries are found to be very

popular among users with physical disabilities because their GP has been dealing with

them and their disability and understand their needs. Post Offices are again rated as

the best location to display information. All Saints users also specified that another

location that they would like to see more information about social services provided at

day centres. This could be due to day centres being more accessible to those with

physical disabilities because they are handicap accessible.

### 4.2.7.8 Chapel Orchard Day Centre results and analysis

On Friday, 9 February 2001, our group visited Chapel Orchard, a facility for

people with mental health. We administered and collected 9 surveys from the users of

the service centre. We compiled the data, once again, into the user database under

Chapel Orchard and formulated the correct graphs to display the information that we

had gathered. The following graphs depict the means that the users of Chapel

Orchard identified as being the most useful ways to inform people.

**How Chapel Orchard Users Would Like to be Informed**

**Where Chapel Orchard Users Would Like to See Information**
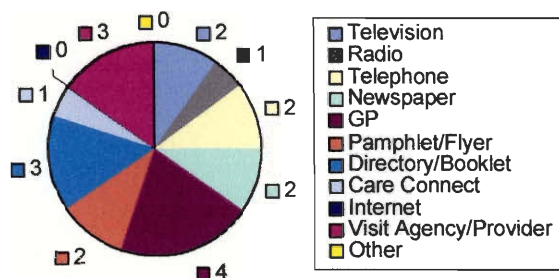


**Figure 4-40**: Informing Chapel
Orchard users of social services
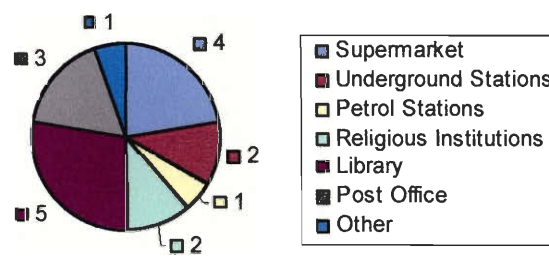
**Figure 4-41**: Preferred locations to display
information for Chapel Orchard users

From these data we have found that Chapel Orchard users would like to be

informed about social services by their GP Surgery, Visit to Local Service Agency, or

a Directory or Booklet. We have included more methods for Chapel Orchard users

due to the wide distribution of the results, there wasn't any one clear method that they

chose. This could be due to the low number of respondents from Chapel Orchard.

The respondents did however indicate their preferences for where they would like to

see information about social services displayed.  Their top choice was Libraries,

followed by Supermarkets and Post Offices.

### 4.2.7.9 Bond Road Nursery results and analysis

We visited Bond Road Nursery on Thursday, 1 February 2001.  We met with

the manager of the centre, who was awaiting our arrival.  The manager indicated that

it was better for us to leave her the surveys so that she could hand them out to parents.

We went over the survey in detail with her, so that she would be able to answer

questions that parents might have.  We left her our telephone number to our desk so

she could direct any specific questions to us.  We gave a time period of one week for

the surveys to be returned.  We went back to Bond Road Nursery on 8 February 2001

and picked up the surveys, of which 8 had been returned.  The following charts

illustrate the information that was collected from the parents at this service centre.

**How Bond Road Users Would Like to be Informed**

**Where Bond Road Users Would Like to See Information**
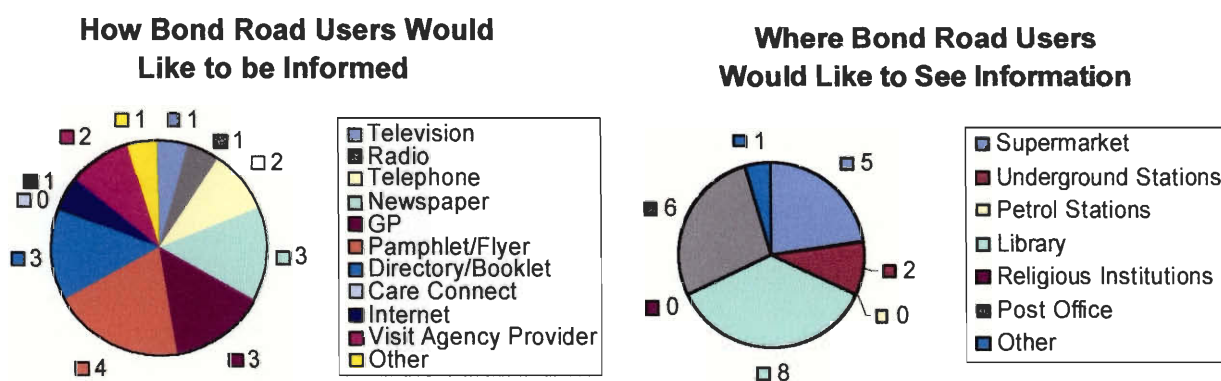
**Figure 4-42**: Informing Bond Road users of social services

**Figure 4-43**: Preferred locations to display information for Bond Road users

From these data we have found that parents of Bond Road users would like to

be informed about social services by Pamphlet or Flyers, Newspaper, GP Surgery, or

a Directory or Booklet.  We have included more methods for Bond Road users, once

again due to the wide distribution of the results; there wasn't any one clear method

that they chose.  This could be due to the low number of parents that responded to our

survey. The respondents did however indicate their preferences for where they would like to see information about social services displayed. Their top choice was again Libraries, followed by Post Offices and Supermarkets.

### 4.2.7.10 District Offices results and analysis

We visited two District Offices, Russell Road and Worsfold House, on Thursday, 9 February 2001. These offices are used to provide information to the public about social services and to evaluate the needs of residents who are applying for them. Some of these offices specialise with certain areas of social services, such as Worsfold House that specialises in family and children's services, but still has information available about other social services.
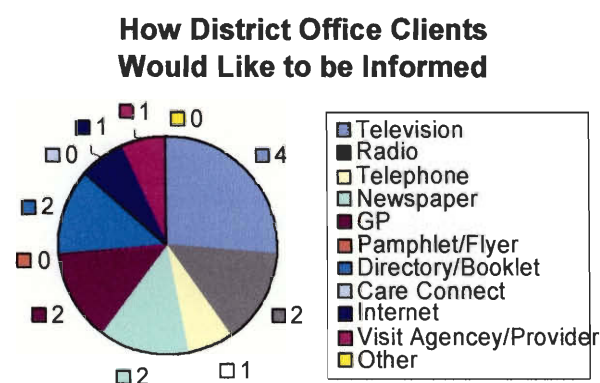


**Figure 4-44**: Informing District Office clients of social services
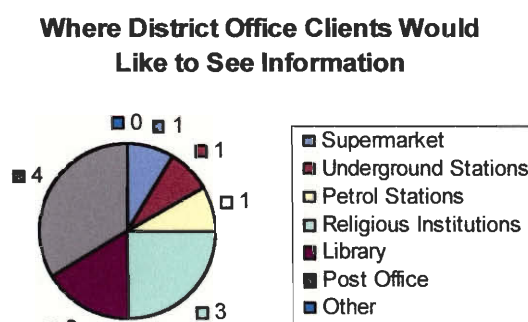


**Figure 4-45**: Preferred locations to display information for District Office clients

We directly administered only six surveys at these offices over the course of four hours. This is due to the very low number of people who visit these offices daily. We have included the graphs so that we do not discount the data. However, we do not believe that this data accurately represents the users of District Offices because while there are few users on a day-to-day basis, the total number of people that use the District Offices is much greater.

### 4.2.8 Overall Analysis of Users

Most users of services have heard about them from their Friend or Relative and GP Surgery. Users also indicated that they would like to hear about services from their GP Surgery. This is understandable because GP's are involved in the care process, and are usually a person that understands the patients needs. The locations identified by the users varied much more than in the resident surveys we received. However, the three most popular locations still remained, those being Libraries, Post Offices, and Supermarkets.

It should also be kept in mind that the different user groups did have differences in how they would like to be informed. For example Eastway users preferred GP Surgeries to Television, whereas JMC users thought the reverse. This is due to the different needs of the users in each user group.

### 4.3 Results from Interviews

These sections include all the data that we collected from interviews that we conducted with borough officials throughout London. These interviews were administered in two forms: personal interviews and e-mail interviews. We analysed the results that were collected from the interview to find the best practices that are used by other boroughs and can be adapted to use in Merton.

### 4.3.1 Borough Official Interviews

The next sections describe the results gathered at the personal interviews we conducted with neighbouring boroughs to Merton. These interviews were conducted on various days and allowed us to get in depth information on how these neighbouring

boroughs are going about informing their residents about social services provided. These sections also contain the analyses that we developed using the data that we received. For a complete write up of each of the interviews we conducted with borough officials please see Appendix G on page 116 through 123.

### 4.3.1.1 Sutton

Ms. Di James from the London Borough of Sutton is currently the Communication & Quality Officer for Community Services. Sutton distributes information through the following methods: radio, television, internet, leaflets/booklets, posters, word-of-mouth, a telephone hotline for those who have difficulty or are unable to go out, GP Surgeries, local interest groups, church groups, hospitals, libraries, and a magazine that is distributed every 3 months via mail, with a handbook of services included once a year. Sutton does use the press, such as local papers, however they tend to edit the content.

The three most important pieces of information in a publication are a contact telephone number, a web site address, and a description of exactly who is eligible for the publicised service(s). In order to deal with language barriers, Sutton has contracted an independent company, Language Line, to provide voice/personal translation services. Lastly feedback is received from residents by using town meetings, focus groups, and satisfaction surveys.

### 4.3.1.2 Croydon

Mr. Lawrence Ovenden is the Corporate Information Manager for the London Borough of Croydon. To reach residents Croydon uses local newspapers, leaflets in

libraries, a web site, radio, and TV.  More local methods for informing the public are neighbourhood partnership meetings, resident associations, tenants groups, and citizens' panels.

### 4.3.1.3 Wandsworth

Jim Cowan is the Quality Assurance Advisor from the London Borough of Wandsworth.  His position in the social services department deals with the relationship between those who receive the services and those who deliver them.

Wandsworth's best method for informing the public about social services is A5 brochures that give a brief overview of what services are available to the public. Mr. Cowan stressed that the brochures should be easy to look at; catch your eye; have routine updates to keep the information current; have different languages on the back cover; have key information bolded, such as phone numbers, so it is easy to find; and contain a page listing useful web sites that provide more information on the services.

The brochures should also be made to reach the particular users of the service. For example Mr. Cowan showed us a brochure that was used to inform people with learning disabilities.  This brochure contained Makaton symbols, such as the following, so that the readers could understand what the main aspects of the brochure were.  These symbols are simple pictograms that represent the words listed, and are nearly universal in meaning.



| Wheelchair Accessibility | Braille | Information | Sign Language Interpretation |
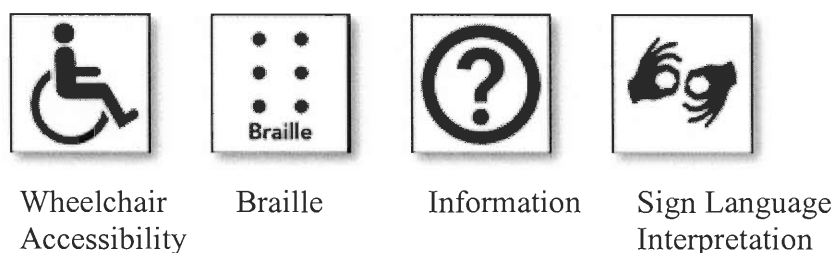
**Figure 4-46:** Makaton symbols used to identify certain services that are available.

At present the Social Services Department is using a web page provided by Care Line, in order to provide information via the Internet. Care Line is a contracted company that provides the information distribution services for the borough. Care Line handles all of the printing for the pamphlets, flyers, and brochures. Upon request they send out this material to any location that displays pamphlets, flyers, and brochures.

Feedback from residents comes mostly in the form of complaints. One method that Wandsworth is using are feedback cards that residents can take from a social service agency or provider, fill out quickly, and then return via mail free of charge.

Mr. Cowan described a few deficiencies in informing the public of social services. One is caused by managers of Day Centres who may "do their own thing", meaning that they may print what they believe is necessary rather than what residents see as necessary. Another deficiency caused by managers is that they may neglect to distribute the information provided by the social services department. Other deficiencies include the problem that if a resident does not know the information exists than he/she will not look for that information, as well as the gap that has formed as to what the public's information needs are and what the Council thinks they need.

### 4.3.1.4 Lambeth

Ms. Lisa Christensen, the Executive Director of Social Care and Health, and Ms. Valerie Dinsmore, the Information and Publicity Officer, for the London Borough of Lambeth, both stressed that there is no 'best way' of publicity. Everyone prefers

different methods, and it is the duty of the Council to inform people in as many ways as possible, while continually looking for better methods.

Lambeth uses many methods to inform the public of the services that are available. Pamphlets describing the services offered are placed in various locations, such as: libraries, schools, hospitals, GP Surgeries, clinics, other service centres, post offices, and town halls. Every location that receives the pamphlets is also given an index of all the pamphlets that are available.

There are many steps taken in order to reach certain minority groups. Pamphlets are sent to local community groups, who then send pamphlets directly to the people. Large print pamphlets, audiotapes, and Braille are used so that the visually impaired have access to the information. Lambeth also uses pamphlets with symbols similar to Makaton symbols to inform residents with learning disabilities.

Lambeth also uses a web site, however this tends to concentrate more on life-events than on departments. What this means is that it would describe 'what facilities are available for a new born baby' rather than an A-Z listing of all services available.

Lambeth uses a Citizens Panel, town meetings, and an annual survey to collect feedback. Individual service providers also use surveys to gather feedback about the service they offer.

### 4.3.2 E-mail Interview with Other London Boroughs

The following sections contain the E-mail interviews that our group conducted with other boroughs of London. These interviews contain how other boroughs disseminate information about social services to their residents. We sent e-mails to seven boroughs requesting information about how they disseminate information about social services to their residents. From these seven e-mails we received four replies

which are outlined below. A complete write up of each of the e-mail interviews we conducted with borough officials is included in Appendix H on page 124 through 127.

### 4.3.2.1 Greenwich

Janice Harwood of the London Borough of Greenwich described a number of practices that their borough is currently using to inform the public. The Borough produces a tabloid style paper that is printed about 22 times a year and is normally twelve pages long, that is delivered to approximately 90,000 homes in Greenwich and contains information and news from the Council as well as items of interest from across the Borough. Twice a year an A-Z listing of all services provided by the borough is included in the paper.

Greenwich uses leaflets, posters, and newsletters to provide the public with information about particular services or issues. The leaflets, posters or newsletters are distributed in different ways as well, such as by mail or via Council buildings and community organisations. The Council also has a web site that includes a complete listing of services provided, as well as information about the Council, Councillors and Departments, and details of news and events.

Public consortium meetings are held to discuss issues and inform residents of the progress of particular plans within the borough. Town meetings are held in different parts of the borough to listen to the views of residents about any issue that is of concern to them. Their views are then reported back to the Councillors responsible for taking care of the residents' concerns.

### 4.3.2.2 Brent

Kashif Mohammed wrote, "We inform the public of our services via methods such as advertising on hoarding boards (billboards) and by using the local press. He claimed that Brent is constantly finding more and more people have internet and as a result they have begun using web pages to advertise their services.

'One Stop Shops' are used to allow residents and visitors to obtain information about wide range of services from a single location. The customer care professionals help visitors with any council enquiry and help people if they need a council service, advice, information, or a guide around the council, or want to complain, or make a suggestion.

### 4.3.2.3 Hillingdon

Our group spoke with Brenda Venn from the London Borough of Hillingdon. She replied telling us that Hillingdon is currently in the process of writing an Information Policy and at this time it is not ready. She did write that the borough currently uses leaflets, booklets, posters, the press, focus groups, user groups, parent/carer groups, citizens' panels, and the web site to inform the public of social services.

### 4.3.2.4 Bexley

Rob Scully, of the Bexley Social Services department, replied stating that the borough uses a variety of different methods, one of which is a web site. He wrote, "We have several regular Council publications: Bexley Magazine [which] is [published] quarterly, glossy with news and views, listings etc; delivered free to every home in the borough; Bexley Bulletin; Teamwork; Teamtalk and Facts are staff magazines

produced regularly. There is also Partners magazine, which is quarterly, delivered free to the business community with business and industrial news." The Council also issues regular press releases to local newspapers.

There are many other specific leaflets available on various Council services. These leaflets can be found in all Council offices, libraries etc. Bexley also has a dedicated Information Centre at the Civic Offices. This centre is open to the public for help and information about services provided within the borough.

### 4.3.3 Service and Information Provider Interviews

The following sections contain interviews that were conducted with managers of two charity organisations that are funded by the London Borough of Merton. Care Connect is an organisation that deals primarily with providing information to adults. Play Care provides information to adults about services for their children. These sections also contain a short analysis of the information that was obtained from these two interviews. The complete write-up of these interviews can be found in Appendix I on page 128 through 129.

### 4.3.3.1 Care Connect

Jenny Collins from Care Connect started off the interview by identifying two deficiencies. The first being that Merton Council has a serious need for an information strategy. She added that she feels the Council is not sure where to send people to find information. The second deficiency Ms. Collins described was that no instructions are given with the pamphlets she receives on social services about how to display the information appropriately.

One method of "getting the word out" concerning services, suggested by Ms. Collins, is to set up a table at supermarkets and other locations and answer anyone's questions about where they might go to find more in depth information.

### 4.3.3.2 Play Care

Ms. Jenny Jennings from Play Care, stated that they use multiple places to post information. These places include parent groups, toddler groups, play groups, committee centres, libraries, clinics, schools, commercial outlets, doctor surgeries, council offices, and school admissions. Play Care receives feedback from users, through surveys and forms that are required to be filled out after direct administration of Play Care's services.

She gave simple guidelines that should be followed such as pamphlets and booklets should be simple-worded with all jargon and acronyms removed. The pamphlets should be more "upbeat" to catch and hold interest and should show somewhere on the cover that it is not a pamphlet for just the English speaking community. She also suggested that pictures should be used more in booklets because they are very useful, they are "language independent" allowing anyone who happens to pick up the pamphlet can understand the main ideas that are illustrated in the brochure.

### 4.3.4 Analysis of Interview Results

From analysing the results of the personal and email interviews we conducted we found that the most commonly used method of informing the public about social services was through a Pamphlet or Leaflet. The locations that are most often used for displaying this information are Libraries, however GP Surgeries and Hospitals

were also used.  Another common method for disseminating information to the public was through a borough-published magazine that is distributed to every household in the borough.  Once or twice a year an A-Z guide to services is included within the publication.

Every borough we interviewed used some sort of web site to provide information to the public.  Not every borough had their own web site dedicated to social services, but those that did not were in the process of developing one.  An additional comment made by most of the officials we interviewed was that measures have to be taken so that information reaches all of those who need it.  For example pamphlets should include Makaton symbols for those who are learning impaired, or larger print for those who are visually impaired.

## 4.4  Web Site Results

After analysing the survey and interview data we noted that the most important information to provide on a publication or web site includes a contact telephone number, address, office hours, contact name, and general information about the service.  Each listing of a service on our web site, therefore, contains general information, office hours if available, contact name if applicable, address, and telephone number.  The address and telephone number, being the most important according to survey respondents, is indented on the page to keep them apparent and clear.  Telephone numbers are also made bold and green in colour so that they stand out from the rest of the description.  An example of the phone numbers is illustrated in Figure 4-47.  The web site we developed can be viewed at

http://www.merton.gov.uk/socialservices.

**Figure 4-47:** Telephone numbers in a different colour

In order to provide access to the web site for as many people as possible, we included a link for those who are visually impaired. This link increases the font size of the web site, making viewing much easier for those who may have difficulties reading smaller fonts, Figure 4-48 illustrates this page. Please refer to Figure 3-6 for comparison.

**Figure 4-48**: Increased font size of web site

We also included a link on our help page so that viewers who may not read English, and who read Spanish, French, German, and Italian, can click a link and have the entire site translated. Figure 4-49 shows the page with the links to the translation site. Users will click on the link we provided, and then click on the translate button that appears on the screen.

**J'ai besoin d'aide en ce langage...**
C'est une traduction littérale. Vous pouvez visualiser le website entier comme ceci.
Altavista.com a un service de traduction. Cliquetez ici, et cliquetez alors le bouton étiqueté
"Translate".

---

**Ich benötige Hilfe in dieser Sprache...**
Dieses ist eine wörtliche Übersetzung. Sie können das gesamte website so ansehen.
Altavista.com hat einen Übersetzungsdienst. Klicken Sie hier, und klicken Sie dann die
beschriftete Taste "Translate".

---

**Ho bisogno dell' aiuto in questo linguaggio...**
Ciò è una traduzione letterale. Potete osservare l' intero website come questo.
Altavista.com ha un servizio di traduzione. Scattarsi qui ed allora scattare il tasto
identificato "Translate".

---

**Necesito ayuda en este lenguaje...**
Esto es una traducción literal. Usted puede visión el website entero como esto.
Altavista.com tiene un servicio de traducción. Haga clic aquí, y después haga clic el botón
etiquetado "Translate".

---

**I need help increasing the size of the text on these pages...**

If you have a visual impairment then you can use an enhanced version of our site.
We have created all of these pages in a "Large Text, Black on White" style. As the
name implies, this increases the size of the text and removes most of the colour.
If you would like to view these pages, please click here.

**Figure 4-49**: Translation section of help page

## 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Introduction to Conclusions and Recommendations

In this section we provide recommendations for a Public Information Plan to the Strategic Planning and Performance Review Unit of the Social Services Department of the London Borough of Merton. We generated these recommendations from surveys conducted with residents and current users of social services, as well as from interviews with officials who work with social service information from neighbouring boroughs.

We have separated the recommendations into three major sections. The first section discusses the best methods to consider for informing the residents and users of social services. It also provides some specific recommendations for reaching particular groups. The following section outlines recommendations for updating and adding to the web site. Lastly, we provide other recommendations, such as obtaining feedback, suggestions on pamphlet design, information that should be included on social service publications, and includes some of our own observations from our work.

### 5.2 Recommendations to the Public Information Plan

We have concluded from the analysis of the results of our surveys and interviews that there are several different ways to go about informing the residents of Merton. Some of these methods were shown to be more popular than others. We have identified the most effective method to employ when trying to inform certain

age, ethnic, or user groups.  Finally, we give recommendations as to the best location to provide information to the overall public, as well as the specific groups outlined above.

### 5.2.1 Recommendations for Overall Resident and User Populations

From the data we collected from our surveys, we found the most popular method of providing information to the residents of Merton, according to the respondents of our survey, is a Directory or Booklet.  This Directory or Booklet should contain a listing of services offered and give key information such as a general description of the service and contact information.  The key information that should be provided for each listing in a Directory is outlined in section 5.4.3.

From the interviews we conducted with officials from neighbouring boroughs we recommend that the design of this Directory should be kept simple.  The cover should have a large bold title that is easily understood and a small design or picture that is appealing to all potential readers of the document.  Inside when providing information about each service, the name of the service and the contact number (or name if appropriate) should appear in the same colour, but separate from that of the general information of the service. This design allows the reader to glance quickly at the page and obtain the information necessary to get into contact with a particular social service.  Lastly an index should be included and should be easy to read, thus allowing readers to go directly to the information they need quickly.

The best location to provide information about social services is at Post Offices.  A wide range of the population uses Post Offices frequently.  We recommend that a Directory or Booklet, as well as Pamphlets and Flyers be displayed in an organised manner for the residents, and available for them to take home.  Other

areas we recommend for displaying information are Libraries and Supermarkets. The respondents of our resident survey rated both of these locations high, in fact always in the top three locations.

From the interviews that we conducted with borough officials many of them stated that the boroughs use libraries, hospitals, and GP Surgeries to display information about social services. Ms. Di James from Sutton explained that libraries are centres where a wide range of individuals and families can have access to information. After analysing all of these results we believe that displaying some type of information about social services at these locations will aide in better informing the public.

The users of social services found it better to obtain information about social services from their GP Surgery. We therefore recommend that GP Surgeries be given the Pamphlets and Flyers for display in the office and for patients to take home. Also we feel that doctors themselves should be as informed as possible about the services, to allow them to suggest the social service(s) that may be available to the patient.

The best location to provide users with information about social services would be at Post Offices. Once again, the next most popular were Libraries and Supermarkets. We do not recommend filling these two locations with loads of information regarding social services. A simple poster (or something similar) directing residents where to go to find more information on social services, should suffice. For example providing a contact number for Care Connect and Play Care, as well as listing locations people could find information, such as Post Offices, would be very useful.

### 5.2.2 How to Reach Certain Groups

There are many different considerations to keep in mind when trying to inform different groups of the population. There are many different groups within a population, such as age, ethnicity, and types of disabilities. We have made recommendations on how the Borough of Merton should go about reaching a few of these population groups.

The first group that we had analysed was different age groups of the residents. We found that there was no major change in the ways people would like to be informed and the locations to display information. However we do think it is very important to keep in mind what age groups are meant to be reached. As we found in our analysis, the younger population indicated that internet would be of some interest to them. On the other hand the elder population felt that Pamphlets, flyers, and newspapers would be more beneficial to them. Keeping this in mind we recommend that internet be considered an alternative to reaching the younger population and more conventional means, pamphlets, booklets, and flyers, be considered to inform the whole population.

The next population group that we analysed was ethnic groups. There are many different ethnic groups that could be reached throughout the Borough of Merton. We chose to make recommendations on informing the major categories of the ethnic population: White, Black, and Mixed, Asian, or Any Other. After analysing all the data on how these groups would like to find information we found that a Directory or Booklet, once again, was the best means of informing residents. Other methods, such as Internet, Television, and Telephone Advice Lines, had only slight changes or preference between each of the major categories. These slight

changes were very insignificant, and therefore we recommend using the same methods to inform all of the ethnic groups.

One further method that was suggested and currently employed by Lambeth is distributing leaflets, pamphlets, and flyers to different community groups around the borough. The community group then distributes the information to its members, and others within the community. The borough should always consider the language needs of each of the community groups and therefore distribute the information in the appropriate language(s).

The final group that was examined by our team was the users of services. After analysing all our results from the users we found that there are many different methods that can be used to inform the groups. In particular we found people with learning disabilities preferred radio and television to items such as newspapers and directories, which may be difficult for them to understand.

From the interviews we conducted we found that many other boroughs are dealing with reaching different disabled groups in a variety of ways. We recommend that publications about services for specific groups be targeted towards those groups. We outline below a few ideas from other boroughs about the methods that they employ to inform certain groups about services that pertain to them. We recommend that these methods be considered because of their success in other boroughs.

Lambeth is currently using large print and Braille leaflets to provide people with visual disabilities information about social services and about services which are particular to them. Both Lambeth and Wandsworth currently have leaflets written with Makaton or other similar symbols to inform people with learning disabilities. These pamphlets also include simply worded sentences to accompany the symbols.

Lastly, Sutton uses a telephone advice or hotline to allow residents with mobility or dependency problems to obtain information about social services.

### 5.3 Web Site Recommendations

The content of the web site is its most important feature. We therefore recommend that the information on the web site be checked thoroughly and updated to accommodate any changes that may occur with addresses and phone numbers, or the addition or deletion of services offered. We propose that this web site go through this process, at the very least, once every six months. This will ensure that the information supplied on the page is current and up-to-date; so that users of the site are not given incorrect information about services provided. It is important to remember that when updating a page, the corresponding page for the visually impaired must also be updated.

We also recommend that when creating new pages a copy of one of the current pages of the web site be followed. This will guarantee that the basic layout of the pages will remain uniform. Any new pages will also need to be added to the *Social Services – Site Guide* page, which can be seen in Figure 5-1. This page has a tree layout in the form of a bulleted list. Every page stems off of the main page and should be put under its respective branch.
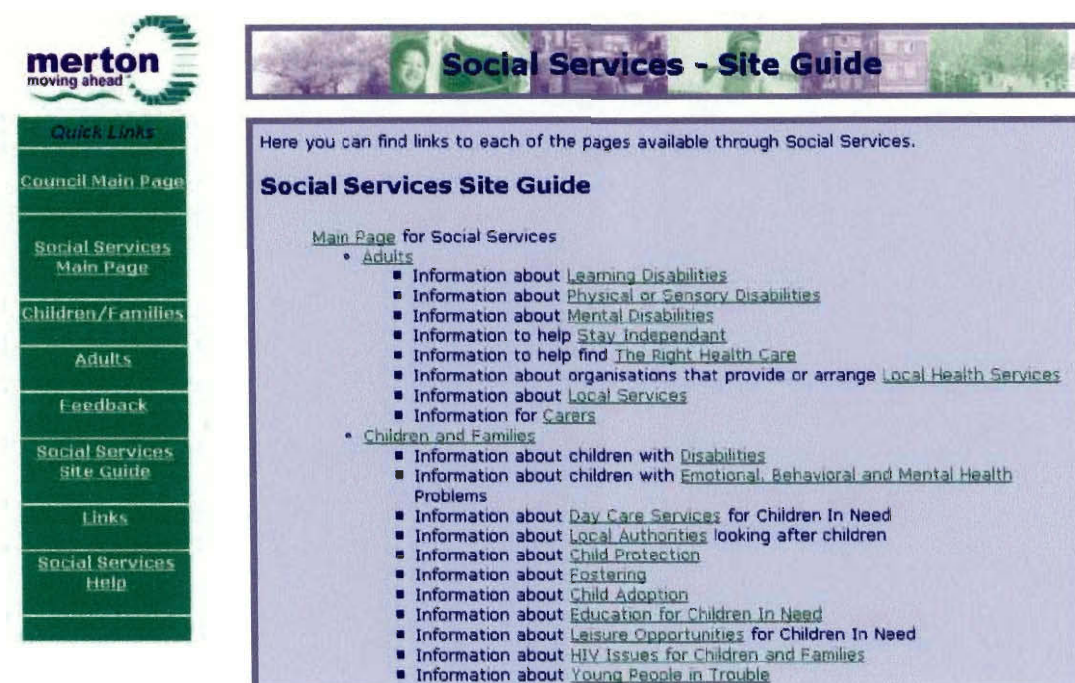
**Figure 5-1:** Tree structure of the social services – site guide page

## 5.4  Other Recommendations, Observations, and Suggestions

These sections give other recommendations and suggestions to consider while developing a Public Information Plan. We will discuss methods for obtaining feedback, designing pamphlets, and providing key information in social service publications. We have also included some of our own suggestions that we developed from our own observations throughout the project.

### 5.4.1 Feedback

From the analysis of the resident survey we concluded that residents feel that surveys are the most effective, and the most convenient, method for the borough to obtain information. Other boroughs that we interviewed also use surveys, but also employ other methods, such as citizens' panels, town meetings, and focus groups.

The analysis of the users surveyed showed that they would rather give feedback through personal interviews and surveys and questionnaires. Other methods, such as town meetings and internet were rated very poorly among users. We recommend that personal interviews be considered to obtain feedback from users. This method, however, is very time consuming and surveys and questionnaires should be considered as an alternative to interviews.

When constructing a survey a few key points should be kept in mind. The length, or the amount of time it is going to take to be filled out, should be kept as short as possible, so that people are not turned off by the amount of effort required. The questions should be worded very simply making it easy to understand for as many participants as possible. We finally recommend using an attention-grabbing cover letter describing the survey and its purpose.

### 5.4.2 Design of Publications

Through our interviews we uncovered many suggestions as to how to design leaflets, pamphlets, and booklets. As a general recommendation we suggest that social service publications be designed to reach all groups, for example Makaton symbols for those with learning disabilities, larger print for the visually impaired, and foreign languages.

We propose that the methods other boroughs use for their designs be considered. Wandsworth's publications catch your eye, are easy to look at, and have key information, such as phone numbers, bolded. Play Care suggests that pamphlets and booklets be simply worded and have all acronyms and jargon removed. These pamphlets should be as 'upbeat' as possible to catch and hold the interest of the

reader. They should also contain pictures from different cultures so that different groups feel included in some way.

We suggest that these materials be updated regularly. Wandsworth currently conducts routine updates of its publications to keep the information as correct and recent as possible. Wandsworth's pamphlets have the dates on the front cover of when they are considered valid. It is important to consider this because if a pamphlet's information becomes out of date then it is useless.

We recommend that more time be spent on researching how to design an effective publication. What we have found are just simple suggestions that should be considered and are only a starting point for more in depth research of the topic.

### 5.4.3 Key Information

We drew conclusions about key information to be included in social service publication from our analysis of the question on our survey which asked: *What information do you feel is necessary for you to be able to obtain a Social Service from the London Borough of Merton.* We found the most important piece of information to be a contact telephone number, followed by office hours of service, address of service, contact name, and general information. From this we propose that this information be included for any service listing in any publication. While web site addresses and e-mail addresses were rated very low they will inevitably become more important in the future and should therefore be included.

### 5.4.4 Resident Interview Information

Due to the time constraints we fell under while conducting our project we were unable to complete resident and user interviews or focus groups. We

recommend highly that these interviews or focus groups be carried out to generate

possible new ideas and more personalised suggestions from the residents of Merton.

In this section we outline the basic guidelines we feel should be followed when

conducting these interviews.

The interview protocol we developed for use with residents and users has been

included in Appendix L on page 139. Please note that this protocol is an outline of

possible questions; there are many others that the interviewer needs to generate while

conducting the interview. We recommend that these be carried out before the end of

March 2001, so that residents do not forget about having volunteered for the interview

or focus group. We suggest that the focus group consist of no more than 10 residents

in order to maintain control of the topic under discussion. Interviews should be

conducted one-on-one to make the situation comfortable for both the interviewer and

the interviewee. Both of these methods should strive to obtain in-depth information

from the residents.

### 5.4.5 Suggestions from Observations

During our time in Merton we made many observations, one of which we felt

we should include in this report. The observation that we made involved the Day

Centres and District Offices that we visited. We found that information, such as

pamphlets, booklets, and leaflets, were very disorganised and very unattractive to look

at. The information we saw was in no particular order, and made it very hard to find

specific information about a service.

While at Russell Road District Office we attempted to find information

regarding learning disabilities but stopped looking due to the apparent futility of

finding anything we wanted. Residents may look at the display of information in the

same way, thereby causing them to not even attempt to look for the information they may need. We recommend that any display of social service information be kept neat and organised allowing residents to easily find what they want or need.

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# 7.0 Appendices

## **Appendix A** – Agency Information

Name of the Agency: Housing & Social Services Department
Strategic Planning & Performance Review Unit

Mission of the Agency: To provide "strategic planning, operational
management and service delivery to housing tenants, children and
families in need and vulnerable adults, through a range of personal and
social care options, and day and residential care provisions".

People Whom the Agency Serves: Children and families in need and
vulnerable adults.

**Lisa Smith** — DMT Secretarial Support

**Rea Mattocks** — Director of H&SS

**Pat Yeboah** — Support Services

**Housing**

**Social Services**

**Paul Ryrie** — Housing Operations

**Peter Mulloy** — Housing Policy & Consultation

**Lorna Campbell** — Children's Services

**Simon Williams** — Purchasing & Commisioning

**Cindy Baker** — Provider (Social Services)

- Doug Miles — MASCOT
- Manna Santokhee — Housing Advice
- Manny Adam — Adult Services
- Pat Nethergate — Home Care Services

- Eileen Nutting — HM-Wimbledon
- Fiona Davies — Asylum Seekers
- Judith Franklin — HM-Mitcham
- Lynn Horton — Home Sales
- Ray O'Shea — Housing Advice
- Richard Cullip — HM-Morden
- Ric Johnson — Central Arrears
- Sheila O'Keefe — Homeless Persons
- Steve Langley — Lettings

**Peter Mulloy** — Housing Policy & Consultation
- Kathy Bucknill — Housing Strategy
- Marion Ridyard — Inspection & Performance Review
- Mark Leahy — Housing Liaison
- [Vacant1] — Commisioning Unit
- [Vacant2] — Information Systems Support

**Doreen Brown** — Fostering & Adoption

**Margaret Horrell** — Children's Fieldwork Services
- Barry Crossley — Mitcham North
- Nick Fielder — Duty
- Nick Smith — Mitcham South
- Tim Djavit — Children's disability
- [vacant?1] — Morden
- [vacant?2] — Wimbledon

**Geoff Lowry** — Youth Offender Team

- Gunga Chumun — Registration & Inspection
- Jed McAndrew — Adolescent Services
- Vanessa Stillwell — Under 8's
- Vicky Mills — Child Protection

**[Vacant3]** — SPPRU
- Colin Wilard — Performance review & contracts
- David Wright — Research & Service Planning
- Fiona Jones — Management Information
- Vicky Murray — Office Manager

**Ian Threadgold** — Income & Assesment

**Lowenna Harty** — Mental Health & substance Misuse
- Ben Smith — Wimbledon
- Gopal Neeliah — Morden
- Zowina Green — Mitcham

**Nancy Adamson** — Disability Services
- Terry Bucher — Older People
- [Vacant4] — Occupational Therapists
- Unity Slade — Learning Disabilities
- Vernon Jones — Physical Disabilities

## **Appendix B** – Work Plan

**Work Plan for London, C – 2001**
**Merton Social Services Information Project Team**

| Task | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Choose sample of public for survey | xxxx | | | | | | |
| Choose sample of users for survey | xxxx | | | | | | |
| Gather information on best practices elsewhere | xxxx | xxxx | | | | | |
| Contact officials in other towns to set up interviews | | xxxx | xxxx | | | | |
| Contact service providers | xxxx | xxxx | | | | | |
| Revise survey questions | xxxx | xxxx | | | | | |
| Revise interview questions | | xxxx | xxxx | | | | |
| Mail out survey | | xxxx | xxxx | | | | |
| Distribute user survey | | | xxxx | xxxx | | | |
| Conduct officials interviews | | | | xxxx | xxxx | | |
| Enter survey data in database | | | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | | |
| Analyse data from surveys | | | | | xxxx | xxxx | |
| Analyse data from interviews | | | | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | |
| Design a web site | | | | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | |
| Implement web site | | | | | | xxxx | xxxx |
| Revise final report | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx | xxxx |
| Final Presentation | | | | | | xxxx | xxxx |

## **Appendix C** – Resident Survey

**Finding out about Social Services in Merton**

Dear Resident,

What if you or a member of your family needed care or assistance and did not know where to go or how to find out about what was available?

With this letter is a survey by the Social Services Department of the London Borough of Merton. It is intended to identify the best means of communication between you and the Merton Council with regards to Social Services. Even if you do not use services provided by the Borough, we ask that you please complete the survey.

We would greatly appreciate your participation, as your input will help us to develop recommendations for a public information policy, which will benefit everyone in the Borough. The survey should only take 5 minutes of your time to complete and is your chance to help shape the policies of the Social Services Department of the London Borough of Merton.

The information provided to us in this survey will be kept confidential. It will be entered into our computer in an anonymous form and the survey form then confidentially destroyed. If you provide your name and address we will only use it to contact you.

Please return the survey within one week in order to facilitate the speedy completion of the public information policy for the Borough.

Yours faithfully,

Colin Willard                                    David Wright

## Merton Social Services Information Survey

Instructions: This survey should take 5 minutes of your time. Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible by ticking, circling, or filling in the appropriate answers.

## Section 1.

Please tick or circle all that apply:

1.) Age:
- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-30
- ☐ 30-40
- ☐ 40-50
- ☐ 50-60
- ☐ 60-70
- ☐ 70+

2.) Gender:    Male          Female

3.) Annual Family Income (optional):
- ☐ 0 – 5000
- ☐ 5000 – 10000
- ☐ 10000 – 17000
- ☐ 17000 – 24000
- ☐ 24000 – 31000
- ☐ 31000 – 38000
- ☐ 38000 – 45000
- ☐ 45000 – 52000
- ☐ 52000 +

4.) How long have you been a resident of Merton?
- ☐ 0 – 1 year
- ☐ 1 – 2 years
- ☐ 2 – 5 years
- ☐ 5 – 10 years
- ☐ 10 + years

**Section 2.**

1.) Have you ever used Social Services from the London Borough of Merton?
(eg. Home care, meals on wheels, day care, nursery / child care, etc.)

                                    Yes     No     Not Sure

2.) Are you or a member of your family currently using any Social Services?

                                      Yes       No       Don't
                                                                  Know

3.) If you or a member of your family have used services in the past, how did
you hear about these Social Services?  (Please tick all that apply.)
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Friend or Relative
- ☐ Advice from GP Surgery
- ☐ Pamphlet or Flyers
- ☐ Care Connect (A local charity providing services for adults)
- ☐ Visit to Local Service Agency or Provider of Services
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Other: (Please Specify)_____

4.) Which methods would you prefer to hear about the services offered?
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Telephone Advice line
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Advice from GP Surgery
- ☐ Pamphlet or Flyers
- ☐ Directory/booklet listing Social Services and contact information
- ☐ Care Connect (A local charity providing services for adults)
- ☐ Visit to Local Service Agency or provider of services
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Other: (Please Specify)_____

5.) In what locations have you seen information about Social Services provided
by the Borough?
- ☐ Local Social Service agency
- ☐ Merton Civic Centre
- ☐ Care Connect
- ☐ Play Care

6.) What locations would you like to see information about Social Services provided by the Borough posted?

- ☐ Supermarkets
- ☐ Underground Stations
- ☐ Petrol Stations
- ☐ Churches or other religious institutions
- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Post Office
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____

7.) Which of the following are the most convenient and effective ways for the Council to obtain feedback from you about Social Services that you are using? (Please tick one box for each of the following).

|                          | Bad | Fair | Good |
|--------------------------|-----|------|------|
| Surveys and Questionnaires | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Town Meetings | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Internet | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Personal Interviews | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Phone Interview | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Other (please specify): _____

Other (please specify): _____

8.) What information do you feel is necessary for you to be able to obtain a Social Service from the London Borough of Merton.

|                          | Unnecessary | Necessary |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Contact Number | ☐ | ☐ |
| Contact Name | ☐ | ☐ |
| Address of Service | ☐ | ☐ |
| Office Hours of Service | ☐ | ☐ |
| Email Address | ☐ | ☐ |
| Website Address | ☐ | ☐ |
| General Information | ☐ | ☐ |

Other (Please Specify): _____

*Ethnicity*

To which of these groups do you belong?  (Please tick one)

**a. White**

White – British ☐

White – Irish ☐

White – Other ☐

**b. Mixed Parentage**

White and Asian ☐

White and Black African ☐

White and Black Caribbean ☐

Any Other Mixed ☐

**c. Black or Black British**

Black – African ☐

Black – Caribbean ☐

Black British – African ☐

Black British – Caribbean ☐

Black British – Other Background ☐

Black – Other non-British ☐

**d. Asian or Asian British**

Bangladeshi ☐

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Other Asian or Asian British ☐

**e. Any Other Group**

Chinese ☐

Tamil ☐

Any other ☐

**Section 3:** Optional

It would be helpful to us if we could interview you to gather a more personal and in depth view on the subject matter.

If you would like to participate in a one on one or group discussion about how services are advertised please fill in the following information.

☐ One on one interview
☐ Group discussion

**By completing this section you consent to our anonymising the information and the confidential destruction of the survey form.**

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone Number: _____

Please indicate the most convenient times for us to get in contact with you:

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return it in the postage paid envelope provided.**

**For your views to make a difference please return by
7 February 2001.**

**You have certain rights to receive a copy of the personal information held about you for which a fee may be charged. If you would like a copy please write to us at the address below.**

London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX
Attn: Colin Willard

**This information will not be given out to any third party.**

**<u>Appendix C</u>** (continued) – User Survey

## Finding out about Social Services in Merton

Dear Resident,

With this letter is a survey by the Social Service Department of the London Borough of Merton. It is intended to identify the best means of communication between you and the Council with regards to Social Services.

We would greatly appreciate your participation, as your input will help us to develop recommendations for a public information policy, which will benefit everyone in the Borough. The survey should take 5 minutes to complete and is your chance to help shape the policies of the London Borough of Merton.

The information provided to us in this survey will be kept confidential. It will be entered into our computer in an anonymous form and the survey form then confidentially destroyed. If you provide your name and address we will only use it to contact you.

Please return the survey within one week in order to facilitate the speedy completion of the public information policy for the Borough.


Yours faithfully,



Colin Willard                                        David Wright

## <u>Merton Housing and Social Services Information Survey</u>

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible.

**Section 1.**
Please tick or circle all that apply:
1.) Age:
- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-30
- ☐ 30-40
- ☐ 40-50
- ☐ 50-60
- ☐ 60-70
- ☐ 70+

2.) Gender:     Male          Female

3.) Annual Family Income (optional):
- ☐     0 – 5000
- ☐     5000 – 10000
- ☐     10000 – 17000
- ☐     17000 – 24000
- ☐     24000 – 31000
- ☐     31000 – 38000
- ☐     38000 – 45000
- ☐     45000 – 52000
- ☐     52000 +

4.) How long have you been a resident of Merton?
- ☐     0 – 1 year
- ☐     1 – 2 years
- ☐     2 – 5 years
- ☐     5 – 10 years
- ☐     10 + years

**Section 2.**

1.) How long have you been using Social Services from the London Borough of Merton?

- ☐      0 – 1 year
- ☐      1 – 2 years
- ☐      2 – 5 years
- ☐      5 – 10 years
- ☐      10 + years

2.) How did you hear about the Social Services you use?  (Please tick all that apply.)

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Friend or Relative
- ☐ Advice from GP Surgery
- ☐ Pamphlet or Flyers
- ☐ Care Connect (A local charity providing services for adults)
- ☐ Visit to Local Service Agency or Provider of Services
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Other: (Please Specify)_____

3.) Which methods would you prefer to hear about the services offered?

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Advice from GP Surgery
- ☐ Pamphlet or Flyers
- ☐ Directory/booklet listing Social Services and contact information
- ☐ Care Connect (A local charity providing services for adults)
- ☐ Visit to Local Service Agency or provider of services
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Telephone Advice line
- ☐ Other: (Please Specify)_____

4.) In what locations have you seen information about Social Services provided by the Borough?

- ☐ Local Social Service agency
- ☐ Merton Civic Centre
- ☐ Care Connect
- ☐ Play Care

5.) In what locations would you like to see information about Social Services provided by the Borough?

- ☐ Supermarkets
- ☐ Underground Stations
- ☐ Petrol Stations
- ☐ Churches or other religious institutions
- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Post Office
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____

6.) Which of the following are the most convenient ways for Merton to obtain feedback from you about Social Services that you are using? (Please tick one box for each of the following).

|                     | Bad | Fair | Good |
|---------------------|-----|------|------|
| Surveys             | ☐   | ☐    | ☐    |
| Town Meetings       | ☐   | ☐    | ☐    |
| Internet            | ☐   | ☐    | ☐    |
| Personal Interviews | ☐   | ☐    | ☐    |
| Phone Interview     | ☐   | ☐    | ☐    |

Other (please specify): _____

Other (please specify): _____

7.) What information do you feel is necessary for you to be able to obtain a Social Service from the London Borough of Merton.

|                         | Unnecessary | Necessary |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Contact Number          | ☐           | ☐         |
| Contact Name            | ☐           | ☐         |
| Address of Service      | ☐           | ☐         |
| Office Hours of Service | ☐           | ☐         |
| Email Address           | ☐           | ☐         |
| Website Address         | ☐           | ☐         |
| General Information      | ☐           | ☐         |

Other (Please Specify): _____

*Ethnicity*

To which of these groups do you belong?  (Please tick one)

### a.  White

| | |
|---|---|
| White – British | ☐ |
| White – Irish | ☐ |
| White – Other | ☐ |

### b.  Mixed Parentage

| | |
|---|---|
| White and Asian | ☐ |
| White and Black African | ☐ |
| White and Black Caribbean | ☐ |
| Any Other Mixed | ☐ |

### c.  Black or Black British

| | |
|---|---|
| Black – African | ☐ |
| Black – Caribbean | ☐ |
| Black British – African | ☐ |
| Black British – Caribbean | ☐ |
| Black British – Other Background | ☐ |
| Black – Other non-British | ☐ |

### d.  Asian or Asian British

| | |
|---|---|
| Bangladeshi | ☐ |
| Indian | ☐ |
| Pakistani | ☐ |
| Other Asian or Asian British | ☐ |

### e.  Any Other Group

| | |
|---|---|
| Chinese | ☐ |
| Tamil | ☐ |
| Any other | ☐ |

**Section 3:** Optional

It would be helpful to us if we could interview you to gather a more personal and in depth view on the subject matter.

If you would like to participate in a one on one or group discussion about how services are advertised please fill in the following information.

- ☐ One on one interview
- ☐ Group discussion

---

**By completing this section you consent to our anonymising the information and the confidential destruction of the survey form.**

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone Number: _____

Please indicate the most convenient times for us to get in contact with you

_____

---

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return it in the postage paid envelope provided.**

**For your views to make a difference please return by 7 February 2001.**

**You have certain rights to receive a copy of the personal information held about you for which a fee may be charged. If you would like a copy please write to us at the address below.**

London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX
Attn: Colin Willard

**This information will not be given out to any third party.**

# <u>Appendix D</u> – Translation Sheet

If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the bottom box.

மேலதிக தகவலை தமிழில் பெற விரும்பினால் கீழே உள்ள பெட்டிக்குள் தரப்பட்டிருக்கும் விலாசத்தில் எம்முடன் தொடர்பு கொள்க.

**TAMIL**

Si vous avez besoin de quelques renseignements plus complets en français, veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse qui se trouve dans la case ci-dessous.

**FRENCH**

જો તમને ગુજરાતીમાં વધારે માહિતી જોઈતી હોય તો, મહેરબાની કરીને નીચેની બોક્સમાં આપેલ સરનામે અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

**GUJARATI**

যদি বাংলা ভাষায় আরো তথ্য চান তবে দয়া করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। তলার বক্সে আমাদের ঠিকানা দেয়া হয়েছে।

**BENGALI**

Si desea más información en español, por favor contáctenos en la dirección que se indica en la última casilla.

**SPANISH**

如果您更詳細的中文版資料，請按下列方格內所提供的地址与我们联繫。

**CHINESE**

اگر آپ کو مزید معلومات (اپنی مادری زبان میں) درکار ہوں تو براہ کرم نیچے خانے میں درج شدہ پتہ پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں

**URDU**

ਜੇ ਹੋਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਥੱਲੇ ਦੇ ਬਕਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

**PUNJABI**

HADDII, AAD U BAHAANTAHAY WARA DHEERADE AF SOMALI AH FADLAN, NAGALA SOO XIDHIID CINWANKA KA MUUQDA SANDUUQA HOOS.

**SOMALI**

WPI
Housing and Social Services Department
Strategic Planning & Perfromance Review Unit
Merton Civic Center
London Road Morden

# **Appendix E** – Service Centre Information

This Appendix includes a brief summary of what each of the five Day Centres and the two information centres provide as services.

## **All Saints:**

The All Saints is a day service centre for those having physically disabilities and are aged between 18 and 65. Its main objective is to offer opportunities for users of the services to gain personal and living skills

- to acquire new interest
- to develop self awareness
- to achieve their full potential

The users are provided with a wide range of practical and artistic activities including

- art skills, particularly in watercolours and pastels
- interesting and varied crafts, such as silk and glass painting
- weaving - bags, waistcoats, jackets, and wall hangings
- picture framing
- tapestry and creative embroidery
- basic cooking skills
- introduction to word processing and computer skills
- gardening

The All Saints centre also arranges

- advice session, given by external agencies
- speakers and demonstrators invited to talk on relevant topics
- occasional outings and visits
- communal gatherings, games and entertainment

**Bond Road Day Nursery:**

Bond Road Day Nursery provides care and education for up to 50 children, aged 2 to 5, daily.  The London Borough of Merton, Housing and Social Services Department manages the nursery.  The service is usually provided to children with particular needs and who qualify certain criteria, although five places are available for children whose parents are willing to pay the standard nursery rates and wish to apply. The staff is fully trained, maintaining a very safe and caring environment and providing a wide range of learning experiences.  The nursery also provides individual plans and maintains achievement records for the children.  It also maintains contacts with other centres and professionals to provide help for those children who require special care or additional support.  The nursery recognises that parents are the main carers and first educators of their children.  The nursery works together with the parents of the children by welcoming their involvement in the nursery.  It also discourages any kind of discrimination.

# Care Connect:

Care connect provides confidential, free and impartial information on a wide range of health and community care issues to everyone who lives or works in Merton. The users of care connect can either visit the centre office or get information by calling the centre. Trained volunteers and paid staff assist the clients in finding the right place to go for service.

The clients can get answers to questions like:

- What services are available from local social services, health care services, voluntary organisations, and private care agencies?
- How to access these services?
- What are their eligibility criteria?
- Do they have a waiting list?
- How to complain if not satisfied with the services?

The kinds of services available include

- Home Care - help with personal care, shopping and housework.
- Day Care at day centres or day hospitals
- Meals at home or at lunch clubs
- Respite Care - short term breaks
- Equipment & adaptations to help you to manage at home
- District nursing
- Community health services, chiropody, physiotherapy, speech therapy
- Residential Care when you cannot manage at home
- Nursing Home Care
- Alarm scheme to summon help in emergencies
- Befriending schemes
- Transport - help to get about
- Support to get into employment
- Support for family and friends who care for the people who need help

## Chapel Orchard:

Chapel Orchard is a Mental Health Centre, which provides a range of services for adults within the London Borough of Merton who have or are at risk of having mental health difficulties.

What Is Our Aim?

We aim to work together with people to identify their goals and needs, and to enable them to make informed and appropriate choices from a wide variety of services. This includes small group work, counselling, brief and family therapy, etc., which have all been specifically developed to help service users towards meeting their goals.

Why Do People go To Chapel Orchard?

- Getting back into everyday life after a period of mental illness
- Gaining confidence, developing relationships and building social networks
- Finding ways to express and understand feelings
- Addressing specific issues and difficulties through one-to-one counselling or brief therapy
- Learning new skills or re-learning old skills that make independent living possible
- Finding alternatives to going into hospital
- Addressing particular difficulties in the family or partnerships
- Meeting other people who have had similar experiences themselves, for mutual support and learning new ways of managing difficulties
- Working towards both paid and voluntary work

There are usually about 15 people working at Chapel Orchard on a full-time, part-time or sessional basis. Within the staff there is a range of experience and qualifications (eg., social work, arts therapies, psychiatric nursing, counselling).

## Eastway:

The Eastway Day Centre provides services to elderly people who are mentally disabled. The services provided include

- A staff team that works towards creating a friendly atmosphere at the centre.
- Activities program to enable users to meet people and socialise.
- Outings
- Quarterly newsletter.
- A shop that offers dry stores, frozen meals, ice cream, and occasional cards.
- One hot meal a day that meet individual dietary needs.
- Transportation to collect clients from home if required.
- Annual user survey
- A named member of staff who will be a keyworker.
- A regular care plan to keep the users and the centre up to date with user needs.
- Extended care for the support of users who wish to use the centre for longer hours.

**JMC:**

The Jan Malinowski Centre (JMC) is a day service for adults who have a learning disability. It operates within the remit of a Social Education Centre. It has space for about 100 adults (over 18), who have moderate or extreme learning disabilities, and who may have additional physical disabilities, mild health care needs or moderate behavioural difficulties. Depending on the intensity of the disability, the user can choose to either use the centre part-time or full-time. The various services provided encourage the clients to learn and develop skills that enable greater personal development and allow more productive use of community facilities. The JMC seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide services to clients in a way that respects individual rights, needs and dignity.
- Enable people to enjoy an increasing range of experiences and opportunities by participating in and contributing to their local and wider communities.
- Encourage and create opportunities for clients to make choices and decisions for themselves, promoting the concept that adults with a learning disability can take responsibility for their own lives.
- Acknowledge and respect the religious and cultural beliefs and practices of each individual, and to help them as far as possible to maintain their religious and cultural values.
- Continually assess, evaluate and improve the quality of service and facilities provided, and provide yearly reviews of each client.
- Co-operate with other organisations, both statutory and voluntary, which have responsibilities in promoting the welfare of people with learning disabilities.
- To give support to families and carers whenever possible.

The various activities, most of which take place in the centre itself, provided to the clients include:
- Basic Literacy and Numeracy (Adult Education)
- Arts and Crafts, including Pottery and Fabric Design
- Personal Care
- Cookery
- Budgeting
- Travel training
- Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication
- Self-awareness / Assertiveness
- Leisure activities like bowling, swimming, weight lifting and preparation for "Special Olympics".
- Dance and drama
- Horticulture and Conservation, including weekly trips to the Ecology Centre in Sutton
- Car maintenance and other practical skills.
- Work and work related activities, via the Employment Assessment Centre at Weir Road.

## Play Care:

Play Care is a very similar organisation to Care Connect, except that it concentrates on information for children. If a resident of Merton is looking for childcare than the best place for him/her to go would be Children's Information Service (CIS) or Play Care. Play Care provides information on the various nurseries, childminders, pre-school playgroups, out of school clubs, activity based groups and other organisations serving children. Information on what the various centres offer, their timings, address can be found out from Play Care. The information provided is accurate and up-to-date. It also provides advice and information to parents and carers about local childcare support groups, council services, and training sessions for taking care of children and leisure activities.

The areas covered by Play Care includes:
- Pre-school childcare
- Activities for residents of Merton and their children
- Education
- Out of school care
- Disability Organisations
- Health
- Leisure
- Activity Clubs/Classes
- Information for Minority Ethnic Groups
- Essential Contacts
- Other Support Services
- Other facilities and Crèches
- Help lines

## **Appendix F** – Interview Protocol for Borough Officials

Interviewee:  Borough Officials (From any London Borough or neighbouring community)

1. Does this department identify the typical users of its services?  If so, how?

2. Do you know what proportion of the local population uses these services?

3. In what ways do you inform people of the services available?

4. What are the most popular ways to inform the public about the services, which are offered?

5. Have you developed a public information policy?

6. Do you have a public information officer?  If so, what are their duties?

7. Are you aware of any deficiencies on how the public is informed about these services?

8. Does this department allow users to give feedback about the services?  If so how?

9. What are the most popular ways of obtaining information from the public (such as town meetings, focus groups, surveys, etc.)?

10. What other, if any, departments or organisations are involved in informing the public about services that are offered?

<u>**Appendix G**</u> – Borough Official Interviews

The following sections are detailed write-ups of the interviews we conducted throughout or project with neighbouring boroughs:

**Sutton:**

On 6 February 2001, two team members interviewed Ms. Di James from the London Borough of Sutton. She has worked in the social services department for twelve years and is currently the Communication & Quality Officer for Community Services. Her responsibilities for this position in the department are to interpret pamphlets/booklets into "plain English", deal with press publication, deal with the many private and voluntary partnerships, and work on the Borough magazine and handbook.

She informed us that the goal of the Community Services Department is to keep people as independent as possible. Taking independence into account, she went on to say that it is important to provide access routes to information for people who may find it difficult or impossible to go out to locations to find information. For these people the Sutton Council runs a telephone hotline, called First Contact, which is open from 9 to 5.

In order to deal with language barriers, Sutton has contracted an independent company, Language Line, to provide voice/personal translation services. Alphabet Street is another similar organisation that handles paper translations for the borough.

Ms. James continued to discuss the major sources of distributing information. These sources include the following: radio, television, internet, leaflets/booklets, word-of-mouth, doctor surgeries, local interest groups, church groups, hospitals, and

posters. Ms. James added further that Sutton does use the press, such as local papers, as a means of informing the public, but they tend to edit the content for space reasons. Other means of disseminating information include a magazine that Sutton distributes once every 3 months via mail and a handbook of services, which once a year is included in the magazine. According to Ms. James another good method of distributing information is to have brochures and pamphlets located at local libraries. This is very useful because libraries are centres where a wide range of individuals and families can have access to information. Ms. James pointed out that the three most important pieces of information in a publication tend to be a contact telephone number, a web site address, and a description of exactly who is eligible for the publicised service(s).

Sutton receives feedback from its residents using town meetings, focus groups, and satisfaction surveys. She explained that the methods used to receive feedback also allow the council to inform the public. She noted that communication would be more efficient if the internal structure of the Council was more accessible. This would allow residents to go directly to the people that could help them the most with the service they are looking for.

## Croydon:

We conducted a phone interview with Mr. Lawrence Ovenden, the Corporate Information Manager for the London Borough of Croydon. Mr. Ovenden's roll in the Council is to manage and update the council's web site.

Mr. Ovenden stated that Croydon uses various ways to inform and keep the public up-to-date about the social services provided. To reach the residents of Croydon, local newspapers, leaflets in libraries, web site, radio, TV, and sports facilities are very useful. The Croydon Council has a press officer who manages the borough's relationship with the press in terms of media contacts and press information.

More local methods for informing the public are neighbourhood partnership meetings, resident associations, tenants groups, and citizens panels are also used to inform the public. The citizens' panel of Croydon consists of around 1000 people representing the residents. The Council uses surveys and meetings to communicate with the citizens' panel about various issues concerning the public. The neighbourhood partnership meetings are open meetings held quarterly, again about various issues concerning the public, as well as a forum for residents to give feedback or to complain about various matters. Mr. Ovenden continued on to state that further methods of obtaining feedback could not be described because every department in the Council obtains feedback in their own manner.

According to Mr. Ovenden the best and most convenient method for the residents to find out about services the Council offers, is by calling the Council. The Council's number is publicised in leaflets, telephone directories, and other similar sources.

## Wandsworth

Two of our team members interviewed Jim Cowan, the Quality Assurance Advisor from the London Borough of Wandsworth on February 8, 2001. His position in the social services department deals with the relationship between those who receive the services and those who deliver them. Mr. Cowan is in charge of writing the public information policy for Wandsworth. He informed us that their public information policy is divided to inform each major user group using the services. Mr. Cowan went on to say that "it is a one person job"; he is the only one who writes the policy and updates it every year. A copy of the Wandsworth Public Information Plan has been included with this report and is in Appendix J on page130 through 136.

He was very excited to explain that Wandsworth's best method for informing the public about social services is A5 brochures that give a brief overview of what services are available to the public. The brochures follow some key points to make them very appealing. Mr. Cowan stressed that the brochures should be easy to look at; catch your eye; have routine updates to keep the information up-to-date; have different languages on the back cover explaining where to obtain information in their own language; have key information bolded, such as phone numbers, so it is easy to find; and contain a page listing useful web sites that provide more information on the services.

The brochures should also be made to reach the particular users of the service. For example Mr. Cowan showed us a brochure that was used to inform people with learning disabilities. This brochure contained Makaton symbols, such as the following, so that the readers could understand what the main aspects of the brochure were. These symbols are simple pictograms that represent the words listed, and are nearly universal in meaning.

Wheelchair    Braille     Information    Sign Language
Accessibility                              Interpretation
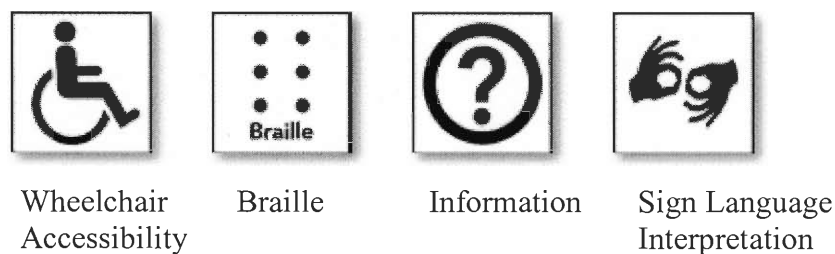
**Figure G-1**: Makaton symbols used to identify certain services that are available. Another means of informing its residents that the Borough of Wandsworth is currently developing is a social services web site. Mr. Cowan explained that they are in the process of gathering the important information that would be necessary to include on the web site. At present the Social Services Department is using a web page provided by Care Line, an independent company, at www.careline.org.uk, in order to provide information via the Internet.

Mr. Cowan went on further to describe that Care Line is a contracted company that provides the information distribution services for the borough. Care Line has a database set-up with a list of all the service centres in the borough, public or private. One of the advantages of this database, Mr. Cowan explained, was that a list of criteria for service centres could be given to Care Line and the centres that matched those criteria would be made into list form and sent back to the requestor of the information. Care Line also handles all of the printing for the pamphlets, flyers, and brochures for the borough. Upon request they send out this material to any location that displays pamphlets, flyers, and brochures. They do send a limited number in order to save in printing costs and to cutback on excess printing. However, sending these limited amounts does not usually result in a lack of the information at these locations. In order to make sure that stocks are replenished at a location that has the information available, a card with the phone number and web site of Care Line is

provided in every shipment. This card gives instructions on how to reorder any of the pamphlets, leaflets, or brochures that may have run out.

Mr. Cowan next described the methods the Borough of Wandsworth uses to gather feedback from the residents. He stated that most feedback from residents comes in the form of complaints. One method that Wandsworth is using are feedback cards that residents can take from a social service agency or provider, fill out quickly, and then return via mail free of charge. Mr. Cowan went on further to state that another source of feedback comes from interest groups such as carers groups.

There are many areas that Mr. Cowan described as having or causing deficiencies in informing the public of social services. Managers of social service agencies or day centres cause one such deficiency. This deficiency being that managers may "do their own thing", meaning that they may print what they believe is necessary rather than what residents see as necessary. Another deficiency caused by managers is that the managers may neglect to distribute the information provided by the social services department. Other deficiencies include the problem that if a resident does not know the information exists than he/she will not look for that information, as well as the gap that has formed as to what the public's information needs are and what the Council thinks they need.

Mr. Cowan lastly identified a deficiency that was recently corrected. Many locations that displayed the pamphlets describing the various social services offered were unaware that they could order more from Care Line, causing them to run out. To correct this problem Mr. Cowan stated that a card was developed which gave the information that was necessary to order further pamphlets to replenish their stocks. These information cards are now included in each shipment of pamphlets sent out.

## Lambeth

On Friday, 16 February 2001, two team members spoke with Ms. Lisa Christensen who is the Executive Director of Social Care and Health for the London Borough of Lambeth. We also spoke with Ms. Valerie Dinsmore who is Lambeth's Information and Publicity Officer. Ms. Christensen and Ms. Dinsmore both stressed that there is no 'best way' of publicity. Everyone prefers different methods, and it is the Council of Lambeth's job to inform people in as many ways as possible, while continually looking for better methods.

Lambeth uses many methods to inform the public of the services that are available. Pamphlets describing the services offered are placed in various locations, such as: libraries, schools, hospitals, GP Surgeries, clinics, other service centres, post offices, and town halls. Every location that receives the pamphlets is also given an index of all the pamphlets that are available. This allows all the information to remain organised and well stocked. The largest fault with pamphlets is that the information is difficult to keep up-to-date.

In order to reach certain minority groups, pamphlets are sent to local community groups, who then send pamphlets directly to the people. The pamphlets that are sent to community groups are often translated into other languages specific for each community group. Volunteer agencies that work directly with families are able to distribute specialised information, such as foreign language pamphlets, out to residents. Large print pamphlets, audiotapes, and Braille are used so that the visually impaired have access to the information. Lambeth uses pamphlets with symbols similar to Makaton symbols to inform residents with learning disabilities.

They went on to describe that visual aids should be used as much as possible in pamphlets. Pamphlets act as more of a 'first point of contact', and should include

as many photographs, pictures, and personal contact to make the pamphlets more appealing to the residents. Lambeth also uses a web site, however this tends to concentrate more on life-events than on departments. What this means is that it would describe 'what facilities are available for a new born baby' rather than an A-Z listing of all services available. They did stress, however, that nothing is as good as sitting down with someone and explaining what services are available to them.

Finally, we discussed Lambeth's methods for generating feedback. Lambeth uses a Citizens Panel, town meetings, and an annual survey. They mentioned that town meetings most often focus on environmental issues, but are still an important source of feedback. Individual service providers use surveys as well, to gather feedback about the service they offer.

**Appendix H** – E-mail Interviews With Other London Boroughs

This Appendix includes the write-ups of the e-mail interviews we conducted with other boroughs throughout London:

## Greenwich:

Janice Harwood of the London Borough of Greenwich described a number of practices that their borough is currently using to inform the public. The Borough produces a tabloid style paper that is printed about 22 times a year and is normally twelve pages long. This paper is delivered to approximately 90,000 homes in Greenwich and contains information and news from the Council as well as items of interest from across the Borough. Twice a year an A-Z listing of all services provided by the borough is included in the paper.

Ms. Harwood further stated that the Council web site includes a complete listing of services provided, as well as information about the Council, Councillors and Departments, and details of news and events. The Council sends information about services offered to the public and upcoming events to the local press an average of 15 times per week. Information is also sent out to larger press organisations whenever appropriate.

Different departments often use leaflets, posters, and newsletters to provide the public with information about particular services or issues. The leaflets, posters or newsletters are distributed in different ways as well, such as by mail or via Council buildings and community organisations.

Public consortium meetings are held to discuss issues and inform residents of the progress of particular plans within the borough. Town meetings are held in

different parts of the borough to listen to the views of residents about any issue that is of concern to them. Their views are then reported back to the Councillors responsible for taking care of the residents' concerns.

## Brent:

Our group also e-mailed London Borough of Brent and received a reply from Kashif Mohammed. We asked what ways Brent is currently using to inform the public about the social services that they have. Mohammed wrote, "We inform the public of our services via methods such as advertising on hoarding boards (billboards) and by using the local press." He went on to explain that the methods they currently use to inform the public are very conventional. He claimed that the borough is constantly finding more and more people have access to the World Wide Web and as a result they have begun using web pages to advertise their services.

Brent uses "a community driven web site" called BRAIN (Brent Resource And Information Network). This web site is managed by Brent Council and allows community groups to update their own information pages using password-controlled access on the web site. Mohammad gave us the following statistics "We have had 3 million hits on our web site this year, that is a 50% increase from 1999"; this illustrates the success and usefulness of the web site.

In addition to the web site Brent Council also offers what they call "One Stop Shops." These shops are located in convenient areas within the borough. These shops allow residents and visitors to obtain information about wide range of services from a single location. The customer care professionals help visitors with any council enquiry and help people if they need a council service, advice, information, or a guide around the council, or want to complain, or make a suggestion. The employees will also try to

put the person in touch with another organisation if Brent Council is not able to help them with their enquiry.

## Hillingdon:

Our group spoke with Brenda Venn from the London Borough of Hillingdon. She replied telling us that Hillingdon is currently in the process of writing an Information Policy and at this time it is not ready. She did write that the borough currently uses leaflets, booklets, posters, the press, focus groups, user groups, parent/carer groups, citizens' panels, and the web site to inform the public of social services. However Ms. Venn did not go into detail about how these methods benefit the public in finding information about services.

## Bexley:

Our project team contacted London Borough of Bexley and asked how they are currently informing their residents about social services provided within the borough. Rob Scully, of the Bexley Social Services department, replied stating that the borough uses a variety of different methods, one of which is a web site. The Council also issues regular press releases to local media in Brent as well as to regional and national media when appropriate.

Mr. Scully went on to write, "We have several regular Council publications: Bexley Magazine [which] is quarterly, glossy with news and views, listings etc; delivered free to every home in the borough; Bexley Bulletin; Teamwork; Teamtalk and Facts are staff magazines produced regularly. There is also Partners magazine,

which is quarterly, delivered free to the business community with business and industrial news."

There are many other specific leaflets available on various Council services. These leaflets can be found in all Council offices, libraries etc. Bexley also has a dedicated Information Centre at the Civic Offices. This centre is open to the public for help and information about services provided within the borough.

## <u>**Appendix I**</u> – Information Centre Interviews

This Appendix includes write-ups of interviews that we conducted with social service information providers in Merton:

## **Care Connect:**

Our project team spoke with Jenny Collins from Care Connect, a privately owned, borough funded organisation that provides information about services to adults. Ms. Collins started off the interview by identifying two deficiencies. The first being that Merton Council has a serious need for an information strategy. She continued to say that she feels the Council is not sure where to send people to find information. The second deficiency Ms. Collins described was that no instructions are given with the pamphlets she receives on social services about how to display the information appropriately. One method of "getting the word out" concerning services, suggested by Ms. Collins, is to set up a table at supermarkets and other locations and answer anyone's questions about where they might go to find more in depth information.

## Play Care:

We also interviewed Ms. Jenny Jennings from Play Care, another privately owned, borough funded organisation that provides services and information to children. Ms. Jennings stated that they use multiple places to post information. These places include parent groups, toddler groups, play groups, committee centres, libraries, clinics, schools, commercial outlets, doctor surgeries, council offices, and school admissions. She went on to say that Play Care also receives feedback from users of their services through surveys and forms that are required to be filled out after direct administration of Play Care's services.

During this interview Ms. Jennings also mentioned many suggestions that she had concerning the dissemination of information to the public on local services. She gave simple guidelines that should be followed such as pamphlets and booklets should be simple-worded with all jargon and acronyms removed. The pamphlets should be more "upbeat" to catch and hold interest and should show somewhere on the cover that it is not a pamphlet for just the English speaking community. She also suggested that pictures should be used more in booklets because they are very useful, they are "language independent" allowing anyone who happens to pick up the pamphlet can understand the main ideas that are illustrated in the brochure.

## 2000-2001 Public information plan

Review since 1996

In the early part of this decade the Department's public information was subject to regular criticism from groups in the community, through the various consultative processes. In 1996 responsibility for a public information strategy for Social Services was given to the Quality Assurance Group. This year sees the culmination of 5 years of consistent attention to public information by QAG based on annual public information plans. This years plan starts with a brief look at the 3 years from 1996 to 1999.

In 1996 improved Community Care leaflets were produced. A leaflet distribution system run by CareLine was set up. These twin themes of improved content / appearance of leaflets as well as their effective distribution, carried through into 1997 and 1998 (largely centred on Community Care and Departmental public information).

Last year's plan reported on an audit of the effectiveness of the distribution system and improvements were carried out. For the first time last year, too, Children and Families public information began to be brought within a strategy. A specific strategy for informing Asian communities was also reported on.

Public information has been the subject of national standard setting and a second audit was carried out last year of all the Department's public information. To carry out the audit national standards, together with local standards, were developed into a single audit style questionnaire which now guides the production of all public information known to QAG (appendix 1). This has resulted in substantial improvement in leaflets. `Substantial` here means greater consistency, breadth of coverage of information about the relevant agencies and services, and better appearance. These all amount to better access to information. QAG has received many more requests for advice from service managers around the Department than during the previous 3 years. Managers have become more aware of and are increasingly using CareLine for distribution.

Review of 1999

1 The standard for leaflets

Not every element in the standard for leaflets is appropriate for every leaflet. It may be that the standards reflect the greater emphasis in Social Services public information towards access to information for adults. Through the work currently being done by Children and Families to upgrade their leaflets it may be possible (and desirable) to produce a set of standards specifically for their public information. Managers in Community Care may wish to revise the standard for leaflets. Equivalent standards for posters and electronic information would seem a sensible addition to the Department's public information strategy.

2 New leaflets in 1999
There have been a lot of new leaflets produced or worked on since the last plan, including;

| Departmental | How to contact Social Services |
|---|---|
|  | Complaints |
| **Community Care** | Transport for people with disabilities* |
|  | Guide for people with physical disabilities* |
|  | Services for adults living with HIV |
|  | Community Care: talking to a social worker about learning difficulties |
|  | Information for people who have sight loss |
|  | Information for people who are hard of hearing, Deaf or Deafblind |
|  | Sign language interpreting and lipspeaking service |
|  | Ideas for Independent Living* |
|  | Occupational therapy service* |
|  | What if...a guide to services for older people* |
|  | The learning disability service* |
|  | The Community Care set* |
| **Children and Families** | Charging for services to children and their families |
|  | Caring can be fun |
|  | Minding children in need |
|  | Looked after by Wandsworth Council...YOU are the best person to tell us about our services |
|  | Private fostering* |
|  | Parenting orders* |
| **Asian communities** | Making use of Social Services* |

* in preparation/being re-worked at the time of writing.

This is not a comprehensive listing of all the leaflets currently in use or under development. It would also be sensible to get a full set of what is available and a list of leaflets in development.

3 Public information at Departmental level
As intended in 1996, this has come down to 2-3 leaflets (How to contact Social Services, Complaints). Managing the revision and distributing of these is now relatively straightforward.

4 The Community Care strategy
This is evolving into a set of A5 leaflets targeting older people, adults with transport needs, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, adults wanting to

remain independent and adults living with HIV. As the set becomes established, revision also becomes straightforward and cheaper. It costs a lot less to reprint with the same graphics and revision is faster. The experience of the first distribution informs the distribution of the revision. Because these leaflets are covering services offered by a range of agencies, changes in boundaries between Social Services and other agencies can be accommodated through revision, as can new services and entitlements. It becomes relatively straightforward at the point of revision to reflect new policy directions from central government in provision (e.g. shift in thinking about services for the elderly to reflect a more active, independent way of life). In another sense these kinds of information products might also be seen as giving practical expression to the government's desire for more `joined up thinking`.

5 Children and Families

It should be possible in next year's report to begin to take stock of the lessons from the first year. However at this early stage it is clear that routing all public information through QAG is going to be essential if consistency in the application of public information standards across the division is going to be achieved. There has in the past been some reluctance to use CareLine to distribute leaflets which need distribution beyond being posted or handed to young people or carers/parents being worked with directly (i.e. where the leaflet is public information). The small distribution charge by CareLine needs to be budgeted for and the well established distribution mechanisms utilised. As the experience with Community Care shows, in the longer term there are significant savings through reprinting revisions at lower cost as well as printing lower more precisely targeted volumes for distribution in the first place.

If there is a problem with the sites `covered` by CareLine this needs to be addressed directly with CareLine so that new sites are added and managers know their leaflets are going where they want them to.

6 The concept with the Asian communities strategy

......is to bring together, across the Department, service information relevant to these communities, presented in a manner which makes the information relevant and intelligible. The strategy includes producing a multi lingual leaflet, taped versions in more languages, posters in shops along the High St in Tooting/ use of local radio, and distribution to sites used by the communities.

The competence to produce high quality Urdu and Gujerati text in a multi lingual product (English, Urdu and Gujerati) does not reside within the Council. WIS simply does not have the capability to produce translated written material to the required standard. Written material required to adequately communicate what Social Services is about, in these languages, is really very challenging to get right. The Asian Communities strategy has consequently taken a lot longer than originally intended. There are two reasons for this. One is the reliance on individuals in the Borough with competence in this area. Secondly, the checking of the initial English text and then the translated text with a range of Asian providers has added considerably to the time. However

a first version is now being proofed by a number of Asian groups and the first ever multi lingual leaflet produced by the Department is nearing completion.

7 Consistency of overview
Most of our public information now brings in information about provision by other agencies and voluntary groups, relevant to an audience. Because it is `information rich` it is very difficult for material originated within a specific service in this Department to cover all the ground, and do it in an even handed way. There have been several examples in the last year of well intentioned public information originating within a section, having then to be substantially re-worked to take into account the breadth of provision relevant to the target audience. It would be entirely counter productive to find public information production by passing QAG `in order to get it out fast`, resulting in a product which the various audiences regard poorly or which, if delayed, could carry key information about new provision, becoming that much more relevant. In other words there are judgments about when to aim to produce public information, in light of known developments in a fast changing world. It seems reasonable to conclude that it is now MORE important than ever before for all service managers to involve QAG at the outset in the development of public information.

Maintaining an up to date picture of what is being produced across the whole Department has proved impossible. Despite greater seeking of advice from QAG, managers and staff have not been consistent in notifying QAG about all public information in production. The messages from managers to staff delegated to produce public information have not been at all consistent. Some guidelines may help to address this.

Because of the nature of public information, the standards required, as well as the pace of change (see later) it is now more important than previously to maintain an overview and other ways to maintain an accurate overview are now needed, such as the notification by graphics to QAG of all Social Services leaflet and poster work.

8 QAG quality checks
These quality checks are used every time a leaflet is produced. To check that the information about them is accurate/up to date all agencies/services referred to in the leaflet are rung or written to. Secondly, the `nearly finished` version is proof read by two people reading through word by word, line by line. Before material reaches this stage every leaflet, known about, is put through some form of consultation. For busy managers it is quite easy for this aspect of the production of public information to fall by the wayside. A reminder may be in order.

9 Audit of 100 sites
Do all of the public information products get to their audiences? One of the things to emerge from the audit of sites last year was that sites simply did not know what to do when they ran out. Also the volumes initially distributed were too high for many sites and created a `spoon fed` ethos. Two things have been done to address these points. Firstly, a flyer is put into each distribution

to each site clearly saying how to get more copies from CareLine. Secondly, the volume initially distributed has been reduced as has the overall volume printed. With greater experience in distribution, how many of which kinds of leaflet to print has become much clearer. We now have a number of examples where the right number were originally printed, the right number went out in initial distribution, and the margin left has been adequate to meet requests from individuals and sites following the initial distribution (in some cases several thousand have been sent out AFTER the initial distribution).

In the original audit it was suggested an occasional poster informing people who manage these sites of our available public information and detailing immediate contact information for services on the reverse side should be developed. There has not been time to do this but it should still be done as it would push an already healthy distribution system further along the lines it is going.

10 The speed of change, the emergence of newly funded programmes, the development of new local initiatives ….
…these all put pressure on public information to be capable of responding faster and to keep what is put into the public domain sufficiently up to date and accurate to be of use. There are implications for future public information, e.g.
- greater emphasis on poster campaigns, linked in with tailored distribution of leaflets, Brightside coverage, and web information.
- Building in the ability to change entire SETS of leaflets quickly by having a common house style which has the same or a similar format for information about the Departments services and contact numbers
- Adding new one offs to and themed in with a previously existing set
- Review dates on all public information

This reinforces the need to bring posters within a set of standards to be applied consistently.

11 Staff as information providers
The two Community Care Best Value pilot reviews of services for older people and services for carers produced recommendations about public information. These were to audit staff knowledge of public information and establish packs for social work and OT teams to explain and give out during their work. Best Value, Chartermark etc drive in the direction of staff building the provision of up to date information and making available existing products, into the normal working practices. A start should be made on this during 2001

12 Routine communication
There has been a longstanding desire to audit all the standard letters and routine forms of communication sent across the entire Department to service users. It would be appropriate to programme this for a 2001 start.

## 13 CareLine

CareLine have received numerous requests from staff of departments of the Council and other agencies for lists of available leaflets (sample at Appendix 2). Staff run their eyes down these, ticking what they would like, returning it to CareLine. Appropriate lists of available information could be circulated by CareLine to staff of the two operational divisions so that more up to date information is held in services and more people know they can get this information from CareLine. Staff with web access can be pointed in the direction of the CareLine website.

The flyer included in packs of leaflets sent to sites telling sites how to get more copies of the leaflet should be amended to point sites to CareLine's website through which they can order leaflets

In the audit of public information in 1999, the Department's use of other agencies public information emerged as an area to improve. What to hold in stock, how to co-ordinate access to it for greater consistency across the Department were key issues. This still needs to be done. CareLine can also play a part in this. There is a secondary point here. Our own leaflets now refer to leaflets produced by other agencies, CareLine needs to check it retains sufficent stocks of these so that Wandsworth residents who get our public information can get other agencies publications from CareLine easily.

On advice from QAG, CareLine also produced a revised leaflet about its services this year. This details more concretely and specifically what they offer and the numerous ways to get access to it.

## 14 With the development of the web, email etc ....

....the Departments public information could now be communicated electronically. While last year's plan acknowledged this, there has been little movement towards this apart from a thorough re-working of the CareLine website. The Department does not have a web presence, although one is planned. The Department now needs to develop its web presence on the Council's web site and continue to improve use of the CareLine website. Leaflets are increasingly drawing attention to email addresses and websites.

The OT service could make immediate use of this to provide their self referral form electronically. The new Better Care Higher Standards charter needs also to be included. Bringing electronic means of communicating public information within the normal working of the Department in the way that much of the public information strategy has become embedded in what we do, is a challenge for the future. Just as products like leaflets require the ownership of the relevant service manager so too will electronic products.

## 15 Corporate communications

Finally the Department has opportunities to work in closer co-operation with communications produced by other Departments of the same Council. Departments produce newsletters and in some cases it may be relevant to produce inserts in these.

Proposals for 2000-2001

1 . Review the leaflet standards with Community Care managers. Consider producing a set of standards specific to Children and Families. Develop poster and electronic standards.

2 Set out a leaflet development and revision plan for 2001. Include Charters for the two operational divisions in this.

3 Take stock of C&F `first year`. C&F budget in CareLine distribution where information products are for public. Check sites at CareLine reflect needs of C&F distribution.

4 Request copies/details of all leaflets and posters being used or in development from all managers. Ask graphics to provide copies of all leaflet/poster jobs in the last year and to notify QAG of new work. Produce guidelines for managers and staff about producing public information. Include, among other things, a reminder to all managers about consulting during production.

5 Produce the first occasional poster for sites detailing newly available public information and contact numbers.

6 Audit all routine letters and communications materials sent to service users (start 2001).

7 In community care audit staff knowledge of public information and establish packs for social work and OT teams to explain and give out during their work, as recommended by the Best Value review pilots.

8 Ask CareLine to;
- send listings of available leaflets to managers and staff in both operational divisions
- inform managers and staff about the CareLine website and what they can do through it (e.g. order public information)
- hold stocks of other agencies leaflets based on the needs of our managers and staff and other agencies leaflets referred to in our leaflets

9 Develop the Departments presence on the Council website, as planned

10 List the newsletters of other Departments and other relevant details and circulate it to managers

# Appendix K – Graphs of Specific Age Groups

This Appendix contains further results to where respondents to the resident survey would like to be informed as well as the best locations to provide information by age categories:

**Best Places to Display Information for Residents 18-30 Years**

1, 14, 19, 10, 16, 6, 6

Supermarket
Underground Stations
Petrol Stations
Religious Institutions
Library
Post Office
Other

**Best Places to Display Information for Residents 30-40 Years**

3, 24, 32, 8, 3, 9, 25

Supermarket
Underground Stations
Petrol Stations
Religious Institutions
Library
Post Office
Other

**Best Places to Display Information for Residents 40-50 Years**

7, 36, 44, 15, 6, 15, 45

Supermarket
Underground Stations
Petrol Stations
Religious Institutions
Library
Post Office
Other

**Best Places to Display Information for Residents 50-60 Years**

8, 42, 47, 9, 9, 18, 46

Supermarket
Underground Stations
Petrol Stations
Religious Institutions
Library
Post Office
Other

**Best Places to Display Information for Residents 60-70 Years**

4, 17, 24, 4, 2, 8, 23

Supermarket
Underground Stations
Petrol Stations
Religious Institutions
Library
Post Office
Other

**Best Places to Display Information for Residents 70+ Years**

10, 17, 1, 0, 6, 38, 21

Supermarket
Underground Stations
Petrol Stations
Religious Institutions
Library
Post Office
Other

### How Residents 18-30 Years Would Like to be Informed



Legend:
- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other
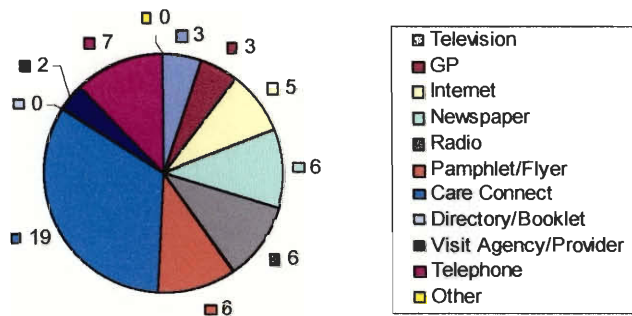
### How Respondents 30-40 Years Would Like to be Informed



Legend:
- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other
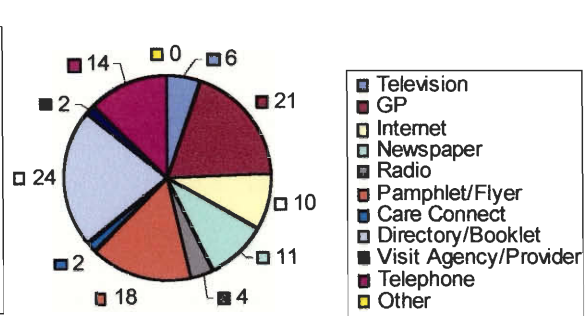
### How Respondents 40-50 Years Would Like to be Informed



Legend:
- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other
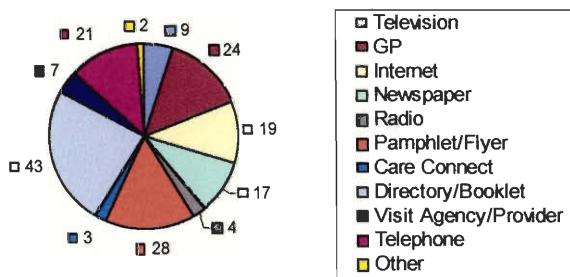
### How Respondents 50-60 Years Would Like to be Informed



Legend:
- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other
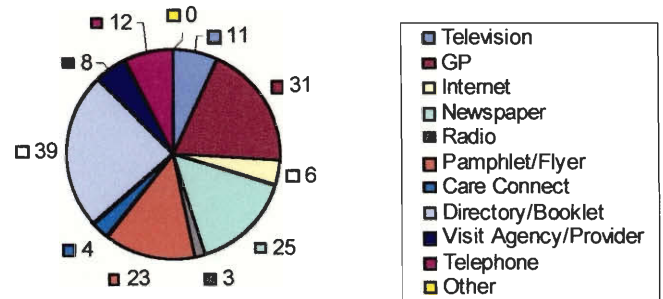
### How Respondents 60-70 Years Would Like to be Informed



Legend:
- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other
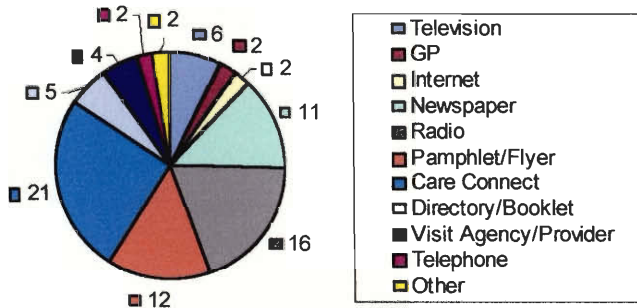
### How Respondents 70+ Years Would Like to be Informed



Legend:
- Television
- GP
- Internet
- Newspaper
- Radio
- Pamphlet/Flyer
- Care Connect
- Directory/Booklet
- Visit Agency/Provider
- Telephone
- Other
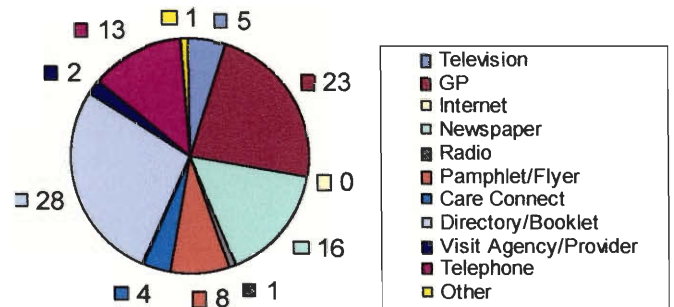
## <u>**Appendix L**</u> – Resident Interview Protocol

This Appendix contains the interview that we have recommended to use when interviewing residents of Merton and users of social services.

Interviewee: User or Resident Interview

1. Are you currently using social services?  If so ask how long?

2. How did you hear about these services?  Give examples if necessary

3. In what ways would you prefer to have heard about available services?  Why?

4. Can you think of any new ideas of informing the public?

5. How would you like to give feedback to the borough?  Give examples if necessary

6. Why do you prefer this method?  Do you think it works well for everyone?

7. What do you think the major problems are with the current ways of informing the public about social services?  Why?  Give examples if necessary

8. What information is necessary on a pamphlet, flyer, or web site, so that you can obtain a social service easily?

## **Appendix M -** How to Update the Web Site Using Dreamweaver UltraDev

This section describes how to update the web page using the software MacroMedia ®
Dreamweaver UltraDev. This section would be extremely important for someone
who does not know how to use Dreamweaver.

### Opening a page:

The easiest way to open any page in Dreamweaver is to open the folder containing
that page and then right click on that page's icon. Assuming DreamWeaver is
installed, then choose 'Edit with Dreamweaver UltraDev'.

### To edit text:

Click on the text that you want to edit. Then you can change it as easily as you would
in any other editor like Word or Notepad. To view the properties of the text, right
click on the text and then choose properties. The property bar shown below will
appear at the bottom of the page. This bar will tell you all the various properties of
the text like font size, colour, style of font, links etc. To change the colour of the font,
click on the 'Text colour' icon and choose the colour of your choice. In order to make
a link to some other site (hyperlink), click on the link text bar, and then type in the
address of the link. If you are familiar with html then you can even write the tags by
clicking on one of the two boxes provided towards the left of the property bar. There
is also a help button towards the right of the bar.

Click here to open Help



**Figure M-1**: Location of help button

Inserting an email link:

To insert an email link, select the text where you want to insert the link. Then click

on 'Insert' on the menu bar, and then select 'Email Link'. A new box will appear

asking you to put in the email address. Insert the email address and press 'Ok'.

Inserting an internal link:

Internal links make it easier to move within a page. Click, on the page, where you

want to insert the link. Then click 'Insert' on the menu bar, and then select 'Named

Anchor'. Give a name to the anchor, try to make it as understandable as possible.

Then select the text, which needs to be, linked to that anchor. On the property bar, in

the link text bar, write '#' and then the name of the anchor.

Tables:

Tables are very useful in making web pages. They help to design organised web

pages so that when the size of the page is changed, it does not cause problems. To

view the properties of the table, right click on the table and then select 'Properties'. A

property bar will appear at the bottom of the screen, which gives the properties of the

table like colour, background colour, height, width etc. Rows and columns can be

added or deleted by right clicking on the tables.

<u>Inserting Images:</u>

A good web designing skill is to always insert the images in a cell (a part of a table).

For example, if you want the text and the image side by side, then first insert a table

of one row. In order to insert a table click on the 'Insert' option on the menu bar and

then select 'Table'. After that split the row into two columns by right clicking on the

table and selecting 'Table – Split Cell'.

Then you can insert the text in one column, and the picture in the other column. To

insert the image, click on the 'Insert' option on the menu bar and then select 'Image'.


<u>Saving the file:</u>

Click on the 'File' option on the menu bar, then select 'Save' if you want to update

the page, or 'Save As...' if you wish to save as a different file name such as when

making a new page.

# merton
## moving ahead

# Social Services

### Quick Links

**Council Main
Page**

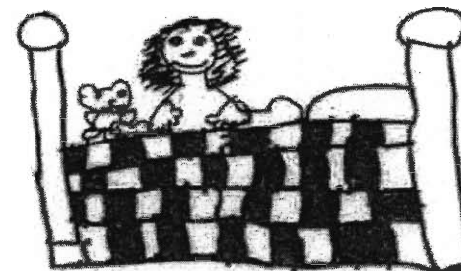**Social Services
Main Page**

**Children/Families**

**Adults**

**Feedback**

**Social Services
Site Guide**

**Links**

**Social Services
Help**

Merton has a joint Housing and Social
Services Department which provides or
arranges the provision of housing and social
care services. These services are provided in
partnership with local health services.

## RECENT ISSUES/CONCERNS

- Welcome To Our New Web Page!
  More information will be coming soon.
- For help in any of these languages, click on the appropriate flag:

If you have difficulties in reading, please click <u>here</u> to view the page in bigger fonts.

This page was last modified by Tamsin White( <u>tamsin.white@merton.gov.uk</u> ) on 19th February 2001

Council Main Page | Social Services Main Page | Children / Families | Adults | Feedback | Social Services Site Guide | Links | Help

# Social Services - Adult

**Quick Links**

**Council Main Page**

**Social Services Main Page**

**Children/Families**

**Adults**

**Feedback**

**SS Site Guide**

**Links**

**SS Help**

This site will be of help to adults who need long term care and support and their carers. This site will also be helpful to others who advise, inform and represent users and carers such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau and information and advocacy organisations.

## QUESTIONS:

- **Where can I find information about learning disabilities?**

- **Where can I find information about physical or sensory disabilities?**

- **Where can I find information about mental disabilities?**

- **Where can I find information to help me stay independent?**

- **Where can I find information to help me find the right health care?**

- **Where can I find information about organisations that provide or arrange local health services?**

- **Where can I find information about local services?**

- **Where can I find information for carers?**

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# Social Services - Children/Families

*Quick Links*

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**Links**

**Social Services Help**

## Children In Need

Social Services provide a range of services to children who, because of various disadvantages, are regarded as children in need.

## Questions:

- **Where can I find information about children with disabilities?**

- **Where can I find information about children with emotional, behavioural and mental health problems?**

- **Where can I find information about day care services for children in need?**

- **Where can I find information about local authorities looking after children?**

- **Where can I get information about child protection?**

- **Where can I find information about fostering?**

- **Where can I find information about child adoption?**

- **Where can I find information about education for children in need?**

- **Where can I find information about leisure opportunities for children in need?**

- **Where can I find information about HIV issues for children and families?**

- **Where can I find information about young people in trouble?**

- **Where can I find information about young carers?**

- **Where can I find information about support to young people leaving care?**

- **General advice and information for young people**

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# Social Services - Feedback

**Quick Links**

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**Social Services Main Page**

**Children/Families**

**Adults**

**Feedback**

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**Links**

**Social Services Help**

## METHODS I CAN USE FOR FEEDBACK

Feel free to send us any comments, concerns or questions.

Housing and Social Services Department
Strategic Planning And Performance Review Unit
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
Surrey SM4 5DX
Tel. **8545 3605**

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# Social Services - Site Guide

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**Social Services Main Page**

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**Social Services Site Guide**

**Links**

**Social Services Help**

Here you can find links to each of the pages available through Social Services.

## Social Services Site Guide

Main Page for Social Services
- Adults
  - Information about Learning Disabilities
  - Information about Physical or Sensory Disabilities
  - Information about Mental Disabilities
  - Information to help Stay Independant
  - Information to help find The Right Health Care
  - Information about organisations that provide or arrange Local Health Services
  - Information about Local Services
  - Information for Carers
- Children and Families
  - Information about children with Disabilities
  - Information about children with Emotional, Behavioral and Mental Health Problems
  - Information about Day Care Services for Children In Need
  - Information about Local Authorities looking after children
  - Information about Child Protection
  - Information about Fostering
  - Information about Child Adoption
  - Information about Education for Children In Need
  - Information about Leisure Opportunities for Children In Need
  - Information about HIV Issues for Children and Families
  - Information about Young People in Trouble
  - Information about Young Carers
  - Information about support to Young People Leaving Care
  - General Advice and Information for young people
  - Feedback from You

- o Feedback from You
- o Social Services Site Guide
- o Links to other useful pages
- o Social Services Help
  - Visually Impaired version of the Social Services web pages

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# Social Services - Links

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**Social Services Main Page**

**Children/Families**

**Adults**

**Feedback**

**Social Services Site Guide**

**Links**

**Social Services Help**

## USEFUL LINKS

**Altavista Translations**
Translate English words, phrases, or entire websites into many European or Asian languages.

**NHS Direct**
Provides health advice and information. Here you can find a monthly magazine with links, an easy to use guide to treating common symptoms at home, over 200 audioclips on a wide range of health topics, and much more.

**National Health Service (NHS)**
Has information about and links to various Local Health Services. Also provides national information about the NHS -- what it does, how it works, and how to use it.

**ChildCare Link**
Contains local and national information on the Childcare Information Service (CIS).

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# Social Services - Help

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**Social Services Help**

## HELPFUL INFORMATION

- Where can I get help outside of normal working hours?

- How do I navigate this web site?

- J'ai besoin d'aide en ce langage...

- Ich benötige Hilfe in dieser Sprache...

- Ho bisogno dell' aiuto in questo linguaggio...

- Necesito ayuda en este lenguaje...

- I need help increasing the size of the text on these pages...

---

**Where can I get help outside of normal working hours?**
In emergencies needing a Social Services response, such as safeguarding a child or a mental health crisis, ring 8770 5000. This gains access to a team of Emergency Duty Social Workers able to give advice over the phone, or visit when necessary. Again, that number is **8770 5000**.

---

**How do I navigate this web site?**
Every web page here dealing with Social Services is set up similarly. It is like a big table, or box filled with smaller boxes. To the left of the page is a column, which may appear green on your screen, that is labelled "Quick Links". This column contains links to each of the main sections of the Social Services web page, as well as a link to the main Council web page. This section you are reading from right now, which may appear as a light-blue box on your screen, will always have the content for each page.

---

### J'ai besoin d'aide en ce langage...

C'est une traduction littérale. Vous pouvez visualiser le website entier comme ceci. Altavista.com a un service de traduction. Cliquetez ici, et cliquetez alors le bouton étiqueté "Translate".

---

### Ich benötige Hilfe in dieser Sprache...

Dieses ist eine wörtliche Übersetzung. Sie können das gesamte website so ansehen. Altavista.com hat einen Übersetzungsdienst. Klicken Sie hier, und klicken Sie dann die beschriftete Taste "Translate".

---

### Ho bisogno dell' aiuto in questo linguaggio...

Ciò è una traduzione letterale. Potete osservare l' intero website come questo. Altavista.com ha un servizio di traduzione. Scattarsi qui ed allora scattare il tasto identificato "Translate".

---

### Necesito ayuda en este lenguaje...

Esto es una traducción literal. Usted puede visión el website entero como esto. Altavista.com tiene un servicio de traducción. Haga clic aquí, y después haga clic el botón etiquetado "Translate".

---

## I need help increasing the size of the text on these pages...

If you have a visual impairment then you can use an enhanced version of our site. We have created all of these pages in a "Large Text, Black on White" style. As the name implies, this increases the size of the text and removes most of the colour. If you would like to view these pages, please click **here**.

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