

LISTER S.T.E.P.S.

SERVICES, TRAINING, EDUCATION, PEOPLE, SUPPORT.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTS OCT 01-MAR 02

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Section 1 – Background Information

1.1 Introduction

Lister STEPS (Service, Training, Education, People, Support) was established in summer 2000; its launch saw the start of a major regeneration initiative in the Tuebrook area of Liverpool, Merseyside. Located within the Parks / Leap Partnership Pathway Cluster¹, the aim of the organisation is to provide practical services to help eradicate the barriers people face to employment. One of the key services is the provision of childcare for children aged 2-14 years.

The organisation developed out of Lister Drive Kids Club, which was established in November 1997 by a group of six working mothers, managing the project voluntary, to solve their own and other parents' childcare needs. Legally constituted as a Company Limited by guarantee with charitable status, the initial purpose was to employ staff to provide high quality, affordable childcare for working parents.

The commitment of the original trustees and high demand led to the development and expansion of the service. Primary and secondary research conducted by the original committee indicated serious deficiency in community support services locally. Negotiations between the management committee and Liverpool City Council led to the gifting of a former school site to the organisation. The group developed a business plan and secured funding for a comprehensive feasibility study. Negotiations with regulatory bodies ensured the planned developments met legislation regarding safety and quality standards. Funding from National Lotteries Charity Board New Opportunities Fund enabled the necessary refurbishment to commence phase one of the development plans.

Special clearance from the Charity Commission allowed 5 of the 6 founding trustees to take up operational roles within the organisation to oversee the day to day running and development of the initiative. The organisation currently employs 6 full time staff, 7 part time staff and 8 Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) trainees, we currently provide childcare services for 132 children each day. To date the organisation has attracted 50 members.

Running alongside the day-to-day services on offer, a capital fundraising campaign is taking place. The charitable status of the organisation enables the group to approach trusts and Grant Making Bodies to enable the full physical redevelopment of the site. The successful completion of this campaign will result in the organisation being able to provide support services to the wider community. The full redevelopment will enable Lister Steps to move away from grant dependency and become a viable social business, creating social wealth. Income derived from the commercial arm of the organisation i.e. rental income from small business incubator units and sports facilities will ensure financial sustainability to provide affordable services to members of the community. The current contract with Liverpool City Council, Social Economy Team has enabled the development of an Intermediate Labour Market in childcare, creating full time, salaried training positions for local, long-term unemployed people.

¹ Areas defined by the European Union as suffering extreme social and economic disadvantage, warranting special measures and funding through Objective 1 status.

1.2 Structure and Organisation

Lister Steps Ltd was established in November 1997; the organisation became legally incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in July 2000 and has held registered charitable status since its conception.

A Board of Directors consisting of 8 members who have the complimentary skills and experience to represent the different sections of the local community oversees the project. Our financial procedures are in accordance with legislation laid down by Companies House and the Charity Commission. Operationally a Senior Management Team whose responsibility is to ensure that service delivery meets set targets in terms of quality, income and expenditure manages the project. Answerable to this team are designated Service Managers who take responsibility for the day-to-day running of particular activities.

The current directors are; Mrs Gail Fulton (Chair), Mr Yale Davies (Vice Chair), Mr Shaffi Shaffi (Treasurer), Mrs Julie May (Company Secretary), Mr Geoffrey Mitchell, Ms Nancy Bower, Mrs Pam Clein, Ms Lyn Wallace, Mrs Diane Dunn (Over 5's Manager), Ms Karen Kayll (Under 5's Manager).

Co-opted members are; Ms Gaynor McKnight (Centre Manager), Mrs Sara O'Brien (Finance Manager), Ms Judith Worrall (Operations Manager), Mrs Pauline Pendleton (Parent).

1.3 Social Audit

Lister Steps have produced these Social Accounts and subjected them to Social Audit to provide an ongoing framework for assessing the performance of Lister Steps against its agreed objectives and the perceptions of the stakeholders with regard to the quality of service they currently receive. Lister Steps exists to provide social benefit and services to the community rather than to generate a financial profit Social Accountancy is an effective mechanism for the assessment of this intangible performance.

1.4 Major Activities During Reporting Period

The social accounts for the period October 01 – March 02 will be influenced by the major activities during this time.

We have partly achieved our mission by providing childcare, employment and skills development; however some of the organisational objectives are long term so as such the account for this period will be limited to the objectives to which the organisation is currently active.

- October 01 – Received £24,000 funding from Riverside Housing Association to cover the management costs of the planned expansion

- November 01 – Secured £78,000 from New Opportunities Fund to allow the development of 72 new childcare places based at three locations within the Dovecot area to support the Education Action Zone initiative, EXCITE, active in the areas primary and secondary schools.
- January 02 – Opened the first of the New after school clubs at Mab Lane Primary School, Liverpool.
- January 02 – Contract to provide Intermediate Training Market (ILM) positions extended by Liverpool City Council from 2 to 8.
- January 02 – March 02– Recruited 6 new ILM participants to the newly created training positions.
- January 01 – March 02 – created three part time positions for qualified childcare workers and successfully recruited local people to fill these posts.
- January 02 - Invited by Early Years Childcare Development (EYDCP) Officer to provide long-term staff cover for Holy Name School Playgroup, Fazakerley, Liverpool. This opportunity enabled the management of Lister Steps to extend the working hours of two of our existing staff team.
- February 02– Following the qualification of an existing staff member in baby massage, the first of a series of six-week courses was launched to develop the skills of new parents.
- February 02 - Invited to provide bank staff to cover the launch of Sure Start initiative in Kensington, Liverpool.
- March 02– Asked to support another community organisation in Kirkdale, Liverpool through OFSTED registration and provision of staff to provide crèche facilities for single parents attending further education and training courses

1.5 - Structure of Report

In this section of the report background details of Lister Steps have been outlined. We have explained the key activities of the accounting period and the reasons why we have produced these Social Accounts.

Section 2 describes the Mission, Objectives and Actions against which we hold ourselves accountable. Section 3 breaks down the groups who have an interest or ‘stake’ in our performance. Section 4 outlines the scope of our accounts and describes the limitations and methodology we approached the Accounts with.

Sections 5, 6, and 7 describe in detail the process of consultation, feedback and evaluation. This has been carried out objective by objective. Actions are described together with quantitative information regarding numbers of people, service users involved, the rate of response and average scores on performance. Each objective concludes with feedback from the directors and Social Accountants commentary.

Sections 8, 9 and 10 bring together the consultation and illustrate how the information will be disseminated and used by the organisation as a tool for further development.

Section 2 Statement of Values, Mission, Objectives and Actions

Lister Steps Mission, Values, Objectives and Actions are detailed below. All of the above mentioned were developed at our Board Development Weekend (2001) and have been included as part of the organisational strategic planning. These statements will provide the framework for stakeholder assessment and the subsequent development of the social accounts.

2.1 Mission: To bridge the gap between the generations, by providing high quality affordable childcare, youth provision and opportunities for business and skills development for all.

2.2 Values:

- Every parent has the right to available, accessible, affordable and quality childcare to meet his or her individual needs.
- Every child has the right to a safe, structured and fun environment to relax, socialise and develop personal and social skills.
- The empowerment, through skills development, of local people to benefit the wider community.
- We recognise that certain groups and individuals in our society are: -
Discriminated against because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, physical, sensory or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, age, social class, religious belief, employment or HIV status.
Accordingly, we are strongly committed to action to remove and/or counter discrimination in all aspects of our work; in our practice as employers, in the way we work with other organisations, and in all our work with children, families and others.

2.3 Objectives (with actions)

1. To provide a range of quality, affordable community childcare services. By:
 - Providing pre-school activities.
 - Providing full day nursery care for children aged 0-5 years.
 - Providing out of School Hours childcare on site and at other venues.
 - Meeting National Day-care Standards regulated by OFSTED.
 - Offering subsidies to those in need.
 - Providing Bank Staff to other agencies.
 - Following a nationally approved childcare scheme.
2. To provide an accessible local venue for community use. By:
 - Location Hire
 - Youth facilities
 - Subsidised hire to unfunded groups.
 - Flexible letting arrangements.
 - Publicising availability through local, established organisations.
3. To maintain a sustainable community building.
 - Provision of community Café

- Provision of managed workspace.
 - Provision of sports facilities to commercial groups.
 - External funding.
 - Maintain a strong community base.
4. To be a good employer. By:
- Involving all staff members in decision-making process and policy development.
 - Staff representation on board of Directors.
 - Providing opportunities for personal and professional development to all staff and volunteers.
 - Providing a comprehensive induction.
 - Providing regular supervision.
 - Offering good terms and conditions of employment
 - Providing childcare.
5. To provide training and employment opportunities
- Employment of local, long term unemployed people.
 - Provision of Intermediate Labour Market training positions.
 - Accessing training relevant to the individual.
 - Offering training placements to schools, colleges and local training agencies.
 - Through the expansion of services.

Section Three – Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders can be defined as those people or groups who are either affected by or who can affect the activities of an organisation.

Lister Steps have identified its key Stakeholders as:

- Service Users – Parents, Carers, Grandparents, Children.
- Members of Charity –Local Residents, Other local groups
- Internal Stakeholders –Directors, Founder Members, Staff, Trainees.
- New Opportunities Fund
- Other external funding agencies
- OFSTED
- Youth Forum
- Bank Staff Customers
- Liverpool Early Years and Childcare Development Partnership.
- Training providers and accreditation bodies.

Other Stakeholders include:

- Local residents not directly involved in the project.
- Local School
- Other local community organisations
- Other National Voluntary Agencies e.g. Kids Club Network, Pre-School Learning Alliance.
- Family and friends of founder members.
- Local health practitioners
- Businesses in the area.
- Education Action Zone (EXCITE)
- Suppliers

Section Four – Scope of Accounts

4.1 Scope

Lister Steps is a fairly young organisation and has only occupied its premises since July 2000. We recognise that some of the organisational objectives are long term and our timetable of development has not allowed any activity towards them in this social accounting period. The objectives selected for this report adequately covers the services that we are up and running with at present.

For this reason we will limit the scope of our enquiry to the following objectives and activities:

Objective Number 1

To provide a range of quality, affordable community childcare services. By:

- Providing pre-school activities.
- Providing full day nursery care for children aged 0-5 years.
- Providing out of School Hours childcare on site and at other venues.
- Meeting National Day-care Standards regulated by OFSTED.
- Offering subsidies to those in need.
- Providing Bank Staff to other agencies.

Objective Number 4

To be a good employer: by

- Involving all staff members in decision-making process and policy development.
- Staff representation on board of Directors.
- Providing opportunities for personal and professional development to all staff and volunteers.
- Comprehensive induction.
- Regular supervision.
- Offering good terms and conditions of employment
- Providing childcare.

Objective Number 5

To provide training and employment opportunities

- Employment of local, long term unemployed people.
- Provision of Intermediate Labour Market training positions.
- Accessing training relevant to the individual.
- Offering training placements to schools, colleges and local training agencies.
- Through the expansion of services.

We feel that enquiry into the above areas will provide enough information to determine the social effectiveness of the organisation to date.

Not all key stakeholders were consulted in this first audit period. This was due to a number of factors the most significant being time constraints and lack of resources. Being the initial consultation the enquirers felt that too wide a consultation at this stage might cause confusion and work overload potentially threatening the completion of the accounts.

Prior to drawing up a list discussions and consultation with Directors and Staff members took place. This was to ensure the appropriateness of the stakeholders chosen with respect to the objectives selected for examination.

The following key stakeholders have therefore been excluded from this enquiry.

1. New Opportunities Fund
2. Other External funding Agencies
3. OFSTED
4. Youth Forum Members
5. Members of the charity.
6. Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
7. Training Providers and Accreditation Bodies.

4.2 Environmental Issues

This report does not take into account the environmental impact of Lister Steps. However at present the organisation does try and minimise its impact on the environment. Actions to reduce this impact include the reuse of paper for internal documents and memo's, turning down the heating system and ensuring lights are turned off in unused parts of the building, using scrounge materials for art and craft activities with the children. We would expect to expand this activity as the organisation grows.

4.3 Evidence

The evidence used in this report comes from existing documentation and data held by Lister Steps. Additional evidence was collected from stakeholders for the purposes of the accounts.

Existing Information

- OFSTED Certificates and questionnaires
- Staff responses to questionnaire
- Policies
- Staff Handbook
- Childcare Registers
- Childcare Records
- Waiting Lists
- Business Plan

- Minutes from Staff and Board Meetings
- Funding Applications
- Funding Agreements
- Operational Plan
- Employment contracts
- Staff Timesheets
- Thank you letters and Cards
- Complaints Book
- ILM files
- Feasibility Study
- Address Book

4.4 Specific Social Accounts Information

Questionnaires were piloted on a sample group of parents and directors.

1. Parent/ Carer Questionnaire Service Managers distributed a total of 65 questionnaires to randomly selected parents of children attending a childcare service. Roughly 1 in 3 families were consulted, 14 were returned.
2. Directors Questionnaire Distributed to all serving directors, 3 were returned in the given timescale.
3. ILM Questionnaire Distributed to all ILM participants.
4. Children's Consultation. Group interviews with children chosen randomly from After School and Playscheme services. Judith Worrall conducted the interviews, due to her qualifications and experience with children it was felt a familiar face would be less threatening to the children taking part. It was felt the risk of inaccuracy due to respondents giving answers they felt expected, was lesser than the children clamming up due to shyness or trepidation.
5. Bank Staff customer interviews. A total of 6 agencies were randomly selected to take part in the consultation. Managers were asked the same questions . No secondary questions were allowed to ensure fairness.

4.5 Acknowledgements

We would like to thank

- John Duncan (Social Economy Network) and Terry Bibby (Liverpool City Council, Social Economy Team, for the provision of Social Accountancy training.
- Graham Worrell (SEN) for his mentoring support.
- Gail Fulton for undertaking the bank staff customer consultation interviews and providing lunch at the audit panel.
- Helen Millne for Chairing the accounts panel meeting.
- Stella Curran (Liverpool EYDCP) and Carol Robinson (Riverside Housing Association) for conducting the audit.
- All the stakeholders who completed questionnaires and/or were interviewed.
- Liz Allen (Dovecot Leap for Health) and Leanne Freeman (Diggers) for observing.

Section Five – Report on Performance Objective One

Objective One – To provide a range of quality, affordable, community childcare services.

a.) By providing pre-school activities

Lister Steps is currently registered with OFSTED to provide 24 pre-school childcare places to children aged 2 – 4 years.

At present 40 individual children are registered to attend each week, turnover is low, 18 children have been attending regularly for over twelve months. A further 13 children have been with us over 3 months.

Fifteen questionnaires were distributed to parent/carers; approximately 1 in 3 families were consulted. Four questionnaires were returned within the given timescale.

The aim of the questionnaire was to assess the parents' experience of quality. Specific questions related to the tangible aspects of the service i.e. the condition of the building, toys and equipment available etc, and the intangibles i.e. staff competence, the convenience of opening hours and the affordability of fees.

Space was also allowed for parent/carers to give feedback and opinions not covered by the questions.

The following table gives a summary of the findings, the questionnaire has been divided to show which question relates to which area the figure given is an average of the responses given.

Aspect of Service	Average Score
Condition of Building	2.00
Resources	2.6
Staff Competence	1.3
Convenience	2.25
Affordability	1.75

Note: Where 1 is strongly agree and 7 strongly disagree.

It would appear that playgroup parent/carers find the tangible aspects of the service to be most disappointing at present.

The average scores by respondent are as follows.

Respondent	Average Score
1	1.95
2	1.22
3	1.54
4	1.36

The closer to the number one indicates a higher level of satisfaction; it would appear that the relatively low scores indicate a fairly high level of satisfaction at present. This

is supported by the positive comments given by parent/carers in the final section of the questionnaire. E.g.

- ‘XX always enjoys her sessions in the pre-school and this makes me feel more secure about her movement into a school environment.’
- ‘He loves it and it will get him ready for school’

The negative comments given included:

- ‘Ringing the doorbell in the morning we are sometimes left outside’
- ‘There are always a lot of new staff and the children sometimes don’t know who they are.’

b.) Full day care nursery for children aged 0-5 years

This service is not currently provided by Lister Steps. However an application to DFES and New Opportunities Fund, under The Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative was submitted to Liverpool EYDCP for approval during the reporting period.

c.) Providing ‘Out of school hours’ childcare on site and at other venues

Lister Steps is currently registered with OFSTED to provide 108 ‘out of school hours’ childcare places each day. This is organised as follows:

On site	Number of places	Places occupied
Breakfast club	24	12
After School club	32	27
At external venues		
Mab Lane Primary School	20	28
Lister School, Green Lane, Tuebrook	32	15

During school holiday periods Lister Steps is registered with OFSTED to provide full day care play schemes as follows:

	Number of Places	Places occupied
On site	20	17
Lister School	20	10
Mab Lane Primary School	20	9

Evidence provided by Liverpool EYDCP suggests occupancy is high in comparison to other similar provision

To the end of March 02, Lister Steps had not received any formal written complaints regarding the quality and experience of the service provided. All service users are issued with a copy of the complaints procedure upon registration

We have received numerous thank you letters and cards from parents in recognition of what is provided. Some of the positive comments we have received are detailed below.

'Thank you for looking after me, I am sorry to leave, but I'll miss you all very much.'

'Thanks for your support during XX stay at Kids Club, Thanks for everything'

'Thanks for giving XX great memories of his first days at school'

'Thank you very much for everything you have done to make XX and XX summer break one they can remember with happy memories.'

Regular consultation with parents and children are activities Lister Steps have engaged in from the start to ensure an accurate evaluation and user input into the service provided.

A specific questionnaire was prepared for the social audit and 50 copies were distributed to parent/carers at random. The only criteria being that they had a child currently attending one of our after school or play scheme provisions.

10 questionnaires were returned within the given timescale.

The aim of the questionnaire was to assess the parents' experience of quality in the same categories as those used for playgroup consultation. Space for open comments was also included. Feedback is as follows:

Aspect of Service	Average score
Condition of Building	2.5
Resources	2.35
Staff competence	1.8
Convenience	1.8
Affordability	1.8

Note: Where 1 is strongly agree and 7 strongly disagree

These scores are slightly higher than the responses given by playgroup parents; however the averages are still fairly low – suggesting that at present parents are more satisfied than they are dissatisfied.

Again the tangible aspects of our service would appear to cause the most concern/dissatisfaction amongst after school service users. Of the ten questionnaires returned response to question 26 'Are there any aspects of the service you are unhappy with? Only two parent/carers chose to comment. These comments were:

'Snack sounds very similar each day if not the same, a choice of drink could be made available orange/ blackcurrant'

'Certain behaviour of some children'

When asked 'How has Lister Steps been of benefit to you as a parent/carer' **all ten respondents mentioned their ability to go to work or take on further education or training.**

Of those questionnaires returned 5 parent/carers chose to add further comments. These were 100% positive.

'Lister Steps are doing a good job creating a fun, friendly and safe environment for the children and helping lots of families with Childcare problems.'

'Everyone does a fantastic job, with regard to question 23 (affordability) it is difficult to respond, it is affordable while recognition is given to cost of living rises, individuals have their own overheads, the government should pay more towards childcare.'

'Thank you Lister Steps for all you do for the children; it is not an easy job but one that is essential for the community.'

In addition to consulting parent/carers over their experience of after school services we also seek the opinions of the children who attend on a regular basis as part of our standard procedures. As the primary receivers of the service we offer we feel that it is important that a channel for feedback exists.

For the purposes of the social audit the opinions of 25 children were sought. (This figure is lower than our normal consultation as the opinions of all the children would be invited – this limit was due to time constraints). The consultation took the form of a focus group consultation, children were asked whether they enjoyed coming to the club, 21 were happy to attend, 1 was unsure and 3 did not feel happy.

Of those happy to attend comments included:

'I like coming to Kids Club.'

'Its good'

'Its fun.'

'Its something to do.'

The child who was unsure sometimes enjoyed the club and sometimes didn't. Of those who did not feel happy coming the reasons were that they were prevented from playing out with friends after school, one child felt scared.

Snack seemed to be an important factor for the children's satisfaction, chip shop food and jam butties would be popular as would noodles and ice-cream.

To promote democracy and ownership all children are involved with the development of club rules at the start of each academic year, it was felt to be an important area to ask about for audit purposes. 15 children felt that the rules were adequate and no changes needed to be made. 1 child was unsure and nine thought that amendments needed to be made. Changes around the availability of football – at present only available on a rota basis during winter periods in the small hall area and on the field during summer – some children suggested the use of the junior hall area for football – at present this could not be allowed due to registration restrictions. One child thought fighting should be permitted, but again this could not be considered.

Unlike parent/carers the children consulted did not consider the importance of the condition of the building and the toys available to them their concerns were more physical and based upon their relationships with their peers.

d.) By meeting National Day-care Standards regulated by OFSTED.

An analysis of service user experience of quality has been enclosed early in this document – we suggest that their experience of the service, details of accidents documents in our Accident manual indicate our ability to meet the requirements legislated by OFSTED.

e.) By offering subsidies to those in need.

At present the fees charged for each service are as follows:

Service	Charge per session
Breakfast Club	£3.00
Playgroup	£3.00
After School	£1.50 - £4.00
Playscheme	£5.00 ½ Day

Fees for After School Services are currently scaled as follows:

Criteria	Charge per session
Unemployed families	£1.50
Families unable to access WFTC	£4.00

Our ability to offer a subsidy of £2.50 to unemployed families is a result of our current funding agreement with New Opportunities Fund; we have budgeted for this level of subsidy to be in place for three years.

A subsidy of £3.00 is currently offered by Lister Steps to families unable to receive any support towards their childcare charges. This subsidy is dependant upon the charitable status of the organisation and its continued success in attracting donations and grants.

Families able to access assistance from Working Families Tax Credit or The Learning Skills Council are currently charged the full unit cost of the service we provide.

At present a total of 9 children attending after school pay £1.50, 96 pay £4.00.

Responses to the question ‘Are Lister Steps Fee’s affordable?’ asked to parent/carers, averaged a score of 1.77 (where 1 indicates strongly agree). This suggests that of those families randomly selected a feeling of general satisfaction exists and that at present fees are affordable.

f.) Providing Bank Staff to other agencies.

This area of our work has expanded significantly during the social accounts reporting period. The provision of this service is important to the organisation in two ways. Firstly it ensures the organisation communicates externally with other agencies, this enables operations to stay in touch with relevant best practice and for the organisation to be publicised, secondly the income the organisation derives from the management and administration of these services ensures the continuance of financial subsidies to those families in need requiring childcare.

Because of the importance of these factors all six of our regular bank staff customers were invited to take part. Approachability, efficiency, affordability and professionalism were decided to be the most important features of maintaining and expanding this service. The customers responses to these questions are detailed below:

Question 1 - Please comment on the quality of Lister Steps’ staff and their work with children.	
Customer	Response
Holy Name School	Very Good. No problems
Kirkdale Community Centre	Not his concern couldn’t comment.
St. Paul’s Family Support Group	Reliable and professional and organised
Ellergreen	Very good. Committed to training and developing staff.
Gladwys St School	Quality is very good. All the staff are qualified to NVQ level 3
Kensington Sure Start	Very pleased with staff. They have done quite a bit of work for us at different functions, courses and family days , the staff always joined in really well.
Question 2. How approachable and friendly are the childcare staffs, supplied to you by Lister Steps.	
Holy Name School	Very approachable.
Kirkdale Community Centre	Not his concern couldn’t comment.

St. Paul's Family Support Group	Find them reliable and friendly ,very good with children
Ellergreen	The staff have been lovely. Used them a couple of times both in our crèche and the bank staff.
Gladwys St School	Very friendly and approachable
Kensington Sure Start	Very friendly and approachable. The children really like the staff.
Question 3. How efficient are the Lister Steps administrative systems regarding Bank Staff hire.	
Holy Name School	Very good.
Kirkdale Community Centre	No problems. Very efficient. Like Lister Steps policy, and it is put into practice.
St. Paul's Family Support Group	Efficient. Runs like clockwork.
Ellergreen	Could have been quicker on invoice side.
Gladwys St School	Very good that is why they are used.
Kensington Sure Start	Very good. In fact before they will send anyone out someone comes and checks the venue and sees that insurance is in place.
Question 4. How do you find the standards of care provided by Lister Steps staff.	
Holy Name School	Excellent.
Kirkdale Community Centre	o.k.
St. Paul's Family Support Group	Good or wouldn't have used Lister Steps .They have the same philosophy as our organisation.
Ellergreen	Very good.
Gladwys St School	Good
Kensington Sure Start	Good
Question 5. How reliable are the services provided to you by Lister Steps.	
Holy Name School	Had occasional problems with time keeping. For example only 1 person turned up. today. But quickly sent a replacement
Kirkdale Community Centre	Reliable. Have an agreement, LL able to supply new member of staff the same morning when it was requested.
St. Paul's Family Support Group	Very reliable.
Ellergreen	Came on time at short notice
Gladwys St School	Excellent.
Kensington Sure Start	Very reliable, they have never let us down.
Question 6. How far do you feel Lister Steps has an understanding of your childcare needs?	
Holy Name School	Very good understanding.
Kirkdale Community Centre	Understanding

St. Paul's Family Support Group	Lister Steps understands exactly.
Ellergreen	I feel that they do understand our needs. I have nothing but praise for the management team.
Gladwys St School	They do understand our needs, they are very flexible.
Kensington Sure Start	They do understand. Before they came to work in the crèche 2 people were willing to come and view it before.
Question 7. How affordable is the service provided to you by Lister Steps.	
Holy Name School	Reasonable.
Kirkdale Community Centre	More expensive than employing staff ourselves, but needs must as we aren't registered to do so ourselves.
St. Paul's Family Support Group	Very reasonable, competitive
Ellergreen	Going market rate.
Gladwys St School	Fine, not too expensive. Other agencies are double.
Kensington Sure Start	O.K standard prices.
Question 8. How confident are you regarding the professionalism of Lister Steps.	
Holy Name School	Very good organisation, except for occasional time keeping.
Kirkdale Community Centre	Very confident in the way they practice.
St. Paul's Family Support Group	Very confident. I trust them.
Ellergreen	Very confident.
Gladwys St School	Can't comment on that.
Kensington Sure Start	Very confident had no problems. They have never let us down. If they are fully booked they will tell us immediately. Administration works well.
Question 9. Are there any further comments you wish to make regarding the service supplied to you by Lister Steps.	
Holy Name School	No everything runs O.K.
Kirkdale Community Centre	As I say very good and efficient.
St. Paul's Family Support Group	They are our first port of call. Reliable and professional. Lister Steps know what I want as their standards are the same as ours.
Ellergreen	We are very happy to use them all the time. We pass them on to other people. Have complete confidence in them.
Gladwys St School	Very happy with the service that they provide, wish we had more money to provide crèche cover for all our service.
Kensington Sure Start	We still actively use the service. We use two services. But we will continue to use them in the future.

Feedback to the Bank Customer Questionnaire was generally positive, however a number of respondents commented on problems around staff timekeeping and the delay in the arrival of invoices.

Directors' feedback with regard to Objective 1.

Directors returned a total of three questionnaires within the given timescale. All three respondents felt that we are achieving this objective. Two of the three respondents felt that this objective is of priority to Lister Steps at present. One Director chose to make a comment on this area which was:

'I feel that Lister Steps constantly provides high quality, affordable Childcare.'

The low response of Directors generally makes it difficult to develop a conclusive picture; however the feedback received suggests management satisfaction in this area.

Lister Steps Observations and Comments

All the stakeholders chosen for consultation who returned questionnaires within the given timescales had positive feedback regarding our achievements in this objective. Concerns that were raised regarding the condition of the building were expected prior to the audit and action to develop the site is already underway.

Both Accountants felt that some sort of exit interview should take place, were possible, when children leave the service. This would provide useful information into the reasons why children leave – at present this information has not been documented. The disappointing return rate of the questionnaires particularly by directors is some cause for concern, the low level of response must be considered in the planning of the next audit cycle. Other forms of consultation such as one to one interviews and focus group meetings may elicit a higher level of response from stakeholders and may be a more effective method for future accounts.

Section 6. Report on performance Objective 4.

Objective 4 – To be a good employer. By:

a.) Involving all staff members in decision-making process and policy development.

Full staff meetings are held on a four weekly basis, all staff members and trainees are invited to attend on a voluntary basis, at present the organisation does not have the spare revenue to provide staff with overtime payments. A central collection point exists to ensure all staff have the opportunity to contribute agenda items. Details of meeting dates, times and venues are displayed in the Staff room. Agenda items put forward include ideas for service activity development, operational difficulties or issues of concern. The role of Chair is rotated amongst staff allowing everybody the opportunity to develop the skills. This is evidenced in minutes of the meetings.

At each meeting time is allocated to discuss a single company policy in detail, e.g. confidentiality, sickness policy and Child Behaviour.

In addition to regular staff meetings, Operational Managers meetings are held monthly, to discuss service improvements and development, Managers are expected to bring ideas from their staff team to the meeting and feed relevant information back to staff at site team meetings.

For the purposes of the Social Audit questionnaires were distributed to all staff (Different questionnaires were distributed to the ILM trainees), 11 questionnaires were returned within the given timescale. Specific questions were asked around policy input and the decision-making processes – staff responses in this area averaged 5.65 (with 7 indicating strongly agree). Although space was allowed for open comments no staff member chose to comment on their input into policy development.

b.) Staff representation on Board of Directors.

Up until November 01 the five founder members of the organisation were Directors of Lister Steps. This provision was allowed with special clearance from the Charity Commission to allow the founders to take up management positions within operations. The clearance allowed the smooth transition of the Management board as new Directors were recruited to take over the responsibility. At the Annual General meeting of the Charity in November 01 3 members of the founding team resigned from their Directorships. A further member stood down in February 02, at present one founding member remains as a Director but plans are in place for this person to step down shortly. At present all founding members are required to attend Board meetings to provide information and advice but do not take part in decision-making. These people are: Gaynor McKnight (Centre Manager), Judith Worrall (Operations Manager), Sara O'Brien (Finance Manager), Diane Dunn (Over 5's Manager), Karen Kayll (Under 5's Manager).

This attendance is evidenced in minutes of Board Meetings.

c.) Providing opportunities for personal and professional development to all staff and volunteers.

At present all employees of Lister Steps are undertaking some form of training. The qualifications that staff are currently working towards are: Health and Safety, 1st Aid, Food Hygiene (Basic and Intermediate Levels), Information technology, NVQ Level 2 Playwork, NVQ Level 2 Childcare and Education, NVQ Level 3 Playwork, NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education, Infant Massage, Self development, NEBS Certificate in Management, NEBS Diploma in Management, MBA.

Training is discussed at supervision and encouraged at every level within the organisation. The relevance of the specific training underpins the level of support given by the organisation in terms of day release; the organisation is currently aiming to develop a full training needs analysis within the next 12 months.

Lister Steps offer promotion internally prior to external recruitment, in order to encourage staff working towards or achieving qualifications. Since the establishment of the organisation in September 1998 5 staff members have been promoted to managerial positions in recognition of their increases skills and experience, this has been enabled through the expansion of service provision. Further positions will be created as the organisation continues to achieve its development objectives.

The responses to the questionnaire distributed for the purposes of the Social Audit averaged a score of 6.21 in this area, (were 7 indicates strongly agree). This suggests that this is an activity where Lister Steps performs well.

Staff were invited to make comments on the questionnaire regarding the most rewarding and frustrating aspects of their employment. Comments put forward include:

- 'Gaining experience and learning myself'
- 'Getting the experience and qualifications I need'
- 'Working as part of a team'
- 'Training, advancement and provision'
- 'Personal achievement'
- 'The attitude of children is frustrating'
- 'Not enough hours to do my job properly'

d.) Comprehensive induction.

All staff receive a 2 hour induction on the first day of their employment. This session covers areas such as terms and conditions of employment, health and safety and operational policies and procedures. New employees are given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss any areas of concern or clarity. The induction process continues for a period of 1 month, new employees are supported by their line manager through on the job training and they receive guidance and advice during this period.

When questioned for purposes of the Social Audit Staff responses ranged between 4 and 7 (7 being strongly agree). The average response was 5.8 No comments regarding induction were made in the appropriate section of the questionnaire, therefore we can presume the majority of the staff are satisfied with the content and quality of induction they receive.

e.) Regular supervision.

All staff members receive formal supervision from their line manager at 6 weekly intervals. These meetings are recorded and copies of the notes are kept in individual personnel files. Areas of discussion include; Training and further development, relationships and team working, working with children, working with parents, equal opportunities. Time is also given at each meeting to discuss matters arising, these items can be brought up by the employee or supervisor. Both parties highlight areas of concern/ achievement during supervision, development goals can be set and agreed and from this Individual Action Plans are developed.

For the purpose of this Social Audit questions were included around levels of supervision and support. The average score in this area is 5.85 (were 7 indicates strongly agree). No specific comments positive or negative were stated in response to the open section.

f.) Offering good terms and conditions of employment

Each member of staff has a written contract of employment with the organisation detailing the minimum hours they are contracted to work, their standard rates of remuneration and their holiday entitlement. At present Lister Steps is unable to pay staff who are off sick or provide payments for bank holidays. This is not ideal, the long term business strategy of the organisation has allowed for the provision of such payments within 3 years.

Staff were invited to comment on their current feelings towards their terms and conditions of employment as part of the social audit process. Responses to the questions asked averaged 5.63 (were 7 indicates strongly agree), this proved to be our lowest score in terms of our objective to be a good employer. This suggests a fair degree of satisfaction; this may be due to the reduced salary scales that are in place for management at present. Our playwork staff are remunerated at above the current market rate. Whilst all responses to the questionnaire have remained confidential, comments given by 2 staff members suggest a certain degree of demotivation.

‘Not getting paid for bank holidays’

‘Not knowing whether my job is secure or not due to lack of money.’

g.) Providing childcare.

At present 8 of the 20 staff employed by Lister Steps make use of the childcare provision available. Staff are offered a 10% reduction on the cost of their childcare fees. Evidence of this is recorded in the Childcare registers.

Directors' feedback with regard to Objective 4.

Directors were mixed in their perception of our achievement in this area. Of the 3 returned the scores given were as follows:

- 5- We are Achieving this objective
- 4- We are fulfilling some requirements
- 2- We are starting to achieve

No respondent felt that this objective was priority for the organisation at present. However in terms of the purpose of the Board of Directors 2 respondents felt that providing support to staff was a very important role for directors. The other respondent also felt it was important.

No further comments were made by Directors concerning Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Lister Steps Observations and Comments

As employees of Lister Steps both Social Accountants felt that their input in this area would be extremely subjective. In response to the feedback given in the questionnaire there were no surprises in terms of the areas highlighted as more problematic. The following table summarises the averages scores and their rank in relation to each criteria.

Criteria	Organisation Average	Rank
Input into Policy and Decision Making	5.65	4
Personal and Professional Development	6.21	1
Induction	5.8	3
Supervision and Support	5.85	2
Terms and Conditions	5.63	5

Section 7. Report on performance Objective 5

Objective 5 – To provide training and employment opportunities. By:

a.) Employment of local, long term unemployed people.

At present Lister Steps employs 6 full time staff and 7 part time. Of these people who are currently employed 5 part time staff where unemployed for a period of 1 – 3 years prior to starting.

Of the full time staff employed 4 members had been employed for part time hours before joining the organisation. All staff in employment have a Liverpool postcode.

b.) Provision of Intermediate Labour Market training positions.

Lister Steps is currently contracted with Liverpool City Council to provide 8 ILM training positions. This figure increased from 2 positions in January 02. During the accounting period a total of 7 people were taking part in the programme. All of these people have been unemployed for a minimum of 12 months, during the first month of their employment trainees are given the opportunity to sample working with children of various ages. Following this a personal development plan is drawn up in negotiation with the trainee and the option given for them to specialise within a particular age group. This choice will then determine the NVQ qualification that the participant will follow.

During the 12 month training period participants receive training both day release and 'on the job'. The types of training the participants take part in include: 1st Aid, Food Hygiene Basic level, health and safety, Computer Literacy, Personal Development and Job Search, NVQ Level 2 Play work, NVQ Level 2 Childcare and Education. This training is accessed at a number of venues: MACTAC, Coates Training, Scottish Power, North West Community Services, Everton Development Trust.

At present trainees attend formal training for approximately 9 hours each week. This information is recorded on individual time management plans and centralised staff rota's. Trainees also have any qualifications gained recorded in their personnel files.

Prior to 2002 the low numbers involved in the programme enabled management to develop close relationships with participants and keep in touch, so no formal employment tracking was in place. The increase in numbers to 8 demands that such a system is developed for the future, we are currently receiving advice from officers at Liverpool City Council, Social Economy Team to ascertain the most relevant system for future use.

Turnover is low at present, this may be due to the relative newness of the programme. Only two participants were employed at the start of the accounting period. One left due to finding alternative part time employment and one is still with us. Of the

remaining five who were recruited in January all are currently remaining on the programme.

A questionnaire was distributed to all participants for the purposes of the social audit, 6 were returned within the given timescale. The questionnaire asked about their perceptions of the training available too them and asked specific questions around access to training and opportunities for further development.

Criteria	Average score
Access to Training	5.83
Awareness of Opportunities	5.5
Opportunities for Further Education	6.5

Note. Where 7 indicates strongly agree

The relatively high average scores suggest that at present participants engaged in the ILM programme are satisfied with the opportunities they are offered and the quality of training they receive.

Concerns for future employment has been highlighted by one participant,
'Uncertainty of whether there will be full time employment at the end of the 12 months.'
'Not knowing the dates of my NVQ training will begin and end'

3 out of the 6 respondents felt that 'team work' was one of the most rewarding aspects of working at Lister Steps.

c.) Accessing training relevant to the individual.

Performance on this activity has been recorded under Objective 4 Activity C.

d.) Offering training placements to schools, colleges and local training agencies.

The development of this activity has been delayed until the capital refurbishment has taken place and the range of training provision is extended.

e.) Through the expansion of services.

Lister Drive Kids Club opened in September 1998 offering 32 registered, out of school childcare places during school term only. Demand for this service led to the expansion of the service and the acquisition of the old school site. At this time 4 staff were employed on a part time, term time only contract.

Easter 2000 saw the start of the expansion with the first 20 place playscheme running from the new Lister School site on Green Lane Tuebrook.

The incorporation of the Kids Club as a Company Ltd by Guarantee in July 2000 happened at the same time as the commencement of extended services on the old school site. The new places created were as follows:

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Breakfast Club 24 places
Playgroup 24 places
After School 32 places

This expansion led to the creation of 4 full time positions, 5 part time jobs and the 2 ILM positions detailed earlier.

Funding from New Opportunities Fund led to the development of a new after school and holiday facility at Mab Lane primary School, Dovecot, Liverpool in January 2002. This development created a further 20 childcare places and part time employment for 2 people. Lister Steps is due to open a further 2 clubs in the Dovecot area in spring 02 creating a further 4 part time positions for qualified childcare workers.

It is the long term business strategy of the organisation to continue this expansion details of this can be found in the organisations business plan and applications to funding bodies.

Directors' feedback with regard to Objective 5.

One Director felt that the provision of employment and training opportunities was priority to Lister Steps at present. All 3 respondents felt that we are achieving our objective in this area.

Lister Steps Observations and Comments

Other than providing training placements to schools and colleges activities conducted in this area meet the set objective.

The Social Audit process has highlighted to both accountants the need for more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems in this area. These are also necessary to meet our agreed contract with Liverpool City Council and the criteria for the ILM programme. Discussions are ongoing with Council officers with regard to these developments and we are receiving advice on the best way forward. We would expect that the improvements will be in place within 8 months.

Section 8 – Conclusions

Generally the results of the stakeholder consultation were as expected at the outset. Return rates for the questionnaire consultation were disappointing, and compared to the 100% return for the bank staff consultation and children's' focus group it would suggest that personal consultation is a more effective method of collecting data. The disappointing return must have some impact on the credibility of our findings i.e. only the parents who are satisfied may have bothered to return their questionnaire.

The surprisingly low return rate by Directors suggests some sort of confusion over the process of the Social Accounts. Questionnaires were piloted to Directors, with a 100% return rate and both Social Accountants feel that they may have thought that the initial questionnaire was all that was required from them. Unfortunately a number of omissions were made in the pilot questionnaire; questions were not asked around organisational values or objectives and just concentrated on the role of the Board. This incompleteness meant that it could not be used for analysis in place of the low response final questionnaire.

Findings from the consultation have been positive and reassuring, although concerns around the state of the building and future job security seem to be the main issues at present. Lister Steps acknowledge the need for the physical redevelopment of the site and understand that at present the organisation is in a state of limbo whilst bids are prepared and assessed. We would expect that decisions regarding the redevelopment will be made during the next social audit accounting cycle and that feedback from the organisation to stakeholders may address some of these concerns.

The consultation has proved that at present excellent relationships exist between service users, employees and directors of the organisation. In terms of Mission and values there is a clear consensus about the direction the organisation is heading towards and the processes required for that to be successful. Response from staff and trainees has shown clear commitment and job satisfaction, in addition to recognition for effort exerted and skills development.

Section 9 – Issues for Action

The social Audit consultation has highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed.

a) Company Activities

- Exit interviews organised for children leaving a childcare service.
- System for tracking for ILM participants on completion of programme.
- Review and monitor terms and conditions of employment.
- Development of full organisational training needs analysis.

b) Social Accounting Process

- Consider other methods of consultation other than questionnaires.
- Cross reference different stakeholder comments to cover different objectives and activities.
- Implement methods for the full consultation of all stakeholders including external funding bodies and the local community.
- Identify funding to allow professional publication of Social Report and Report summary for distribution to stakeholders.
- Research support available for organisation to go on-line and publish accounts on internet.

Section 10 – Dissemination of Social Accounts

Following the Social Audit Panel meetings and subsequent amendments the final report will be presented to our Board of directors for discussion and approval. We then aim to publish the accounts and circulate to the following individuals and organisations: Liverpool City Council, Social Economy Team, past and potential funding bodies, other local community organisations, local councillors and other interested organisations or individuals.

LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Organisational Chart
2. Parent/ Carer Questionnaire
3. Directors Questionnaire
4. Intermediate Labour Market Participant Questionnaire
5. Bank Staff customer Questionnaire
6. Customer Complaints Procedure
7. Copies of Registration Certificates
8. Operational Plan
9. Induction Record