**Transcripts of Thematic Report on Sure Starts' planning, delivery and monitoring of services to children and families during COVID-19**

**SLIDE 1**

The Education and Training Inspectorate has evaluated Sure Start projects since 2016.

A new report from ETI reflects how Sure Start projects have adapted their services during Covid‑19 by introducing new and creative ways to provide support for families and children.

It gives examples of the innovative strategies to help support to families during this difficult time.

All 38 projects in Northern Ireland completed a questionnaire and 10 of them took part in more detailed discussions with inspectors.

**SLIDE 2**

The report highlights successes including:

* how promptly Sure Start providers adapted their normal services to help families in need;
* the wide range of online and practical support made available, as well as face-to-face communication;
* the continued emphasis on helping children develop their speech, language and communication skills; and
* an increased sharing of practice at all levels.

**SLIDE 3**

The key challenges reported during the pandemic were:

* the need for further ICT support and training, for those staff whose skills and confidence were limited, so that Sure Start services could still be delivered online;
* ensuring that children with additional needs received the required support from other services in the health and education system; and
* the restrictions on face-to-face interaction with, and support for, families.

**SLIDE 4**

Because of their experiences during lockdown, Sure Start providers are considering extending their traditional face-to-face and group support to include:

* a combination of online materials and workshops, along with practical resource packs;
* more connections with individual families; and
* building on the partnerships started and strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic.