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Hollyoaks celebrity mum launches scheme to protect children from harmful cigarette smoke on No Smoking Day

When: Wednesday 11th March 2009

**Where: 11 March 2009, 8.30am – 3.30pm
Wythenshawe Forum Centre, Forum Square, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 5RX**

On 11th March Hollyoaks actress, Stephanie Waring, who plays Cindy Cunningham in the soap, will be helping to launch the Smokefree Homes Scheme, a partnership between Manchester Stop Smoking Service and Barnardo's Sure Start Children's Centres in Manchester. The scheme aims to raise awareness of the harmful effects of smoking near children and young people.

To raise awareness of the range of support available at Sure Start Children's Centres, Stephanie and her daughter Mia will be taking part in the range of activities lined up to celebrate the day, including face painting and stilt walking for the children to smoking advice, health MOTs and money saving advice for parents. The activities will give Stephanie the chance to see firsthand how Sure Start Children's Centres and partner organisations are helping to support local families with children under five.

Children's centres like Barnardo's Sure Start Children's Centres in Manchester bring together all the different support agencies to offer a wide range of services to meet the needs of the local community. Sure Start Children's Centres are somewhere children can make friends and learn as they play, and where parents can get professional advice on health and family matters.

There are over 2,900 Sure Start Children's Centres around the country, many of which offer childcare and early learning as well as an array of extra services including breast feeding support, services for families such as speech therapy, immunisations for new babies, help with managing money, and activities such as parenting advice, baby massage, stay and play sessions and dad's clubs.

Opportunities to photograph Stephanie: 11.15am

Interview opportunities: 11.30/45am

By 2010 there will be 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres throughout England - one for every community. To find out more about Sure Start Children's Centres go to www.direct.gov.uk/childrenscentres. To find your nearest centre, call 0800 2 346 346 or go to www.schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk

Programme of the day:

8.30am	Start
9.30am	Cllr Eddie Newman, Wythenshawe Ward Lynn Keenaghan, Head of PHDS Joe Ranson, Associate Director Specialist Services
10.00am	Stilt walkers Face painter Wythenshawe FM radio (outside broadcast) Lloyds pharmacy – health MOTs Therapists
12 noon	Start of staff lunch in Forum café (£3.00 voucher)
1.00pm	Cllr Pat Karney Prize draw – Smokefree Homes and raffle Swim pass
3.30pm	Finish

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Notes to Editors

1. Manchester Stop Smoking Service is part of Manchester Community Health which is the provider arm of NHS Manchester.
2. No Smoking Day is in its 26th year and is a registered charity supported by an alliance of the UK's health promotion agencies and major health charities.
3. For more information on how to quit go to www.nosmokingday.org.uk
4. There are now over 2,900 Sure Start Children's Centres across England and by 2010 there will be 3,500 centres – one for every community. They offer a range of services for under fives and their families including, childcare, access to health services such as midwifery and health visitor services, family and parenting support and help to find training or employment.
5. For more information about Sure Start Children's Centres in your area, call 0800 2 346 346 or go to www.schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk
6. The latest findings from the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) were published on 4 March 2008.

The report found that in Sure Start Local Programme (SSLP) areas compared with non-SSLP areas:

- a) parents of three-year-old children showed more positive parenting skills, while providing a better home learning environment
- b) three-year-olds showed better social development, and higher levels of positive behaviour and independence
- c) families took more advantage of the range of support services available than in areas without Sure Start.

In addition, the report found that there was almost no evidence of adverse or negative findings on any of the resident population, and that the positive impacts were found across all population sub groups.

This is a significant improvement on the previous 2005 NESS report which highlighted varied experiences for different groups.

“The Impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on Three Year Olds and their Families” is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/research