

NIMA helps Sure Start employ a GI system worth in excess of **£280,000** to help target those in need.

GIS helping to target projects for NI's disadvantaged children

The Sure Start Programme provides support services for parents with children under 4 years old in Northern Ireland's (NI) disadvantaged areas. Funded by the Department of Education (DE) and managed by the Department of Health (DoH) with a budget of £26m, the programme provides services to support children's learning, health and well-being and social development. Government policy requires each Project to deliver services to the 20-25% most deprived areas in NI. Land & Property Services (LPS) helped Sure Start to deploy a GI system to help identify these areas accurately.

Challenge

Sure Start were identifying deprived areas using 2010 Multiple Deprivation Measures, wards and super output areas, and local knowledge.

Additionally, to determine a family's eligibility, staff use printed postcode lists, hardcopy maps and commercial addressing tools. Non-standard workflows employed across Projects are time and resource intensive and sometimes result in ambiguous or even erroneous results.

The challenge for LPS was to create a GI system with definitive boundaries that would allow transparent and standardised methods to determine service eligibility.



What is Geographic Information (GI)?

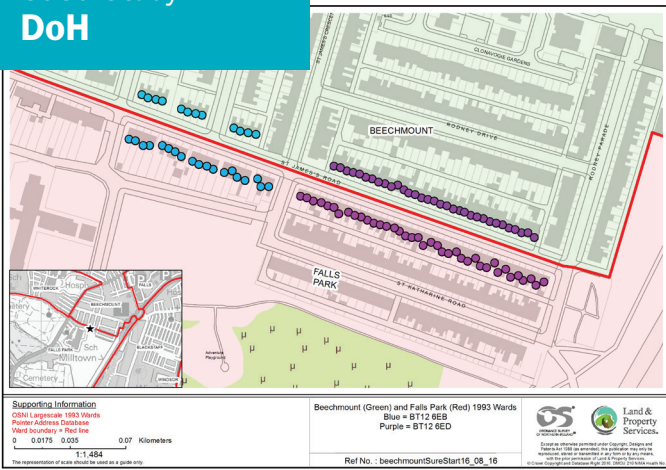
Over 80% of data used by our public sector services can be described as GI because it has a geographic element i.e. an address; and because of this, it can be mapped.

What is a Geographical Information System (GIS)?

(GIS) refers to a range of software packages that helps organisations harness the geographic element of data, not only to map the data, but to analyse it in new and more powerful ways.

LPS GI Consultancy Services

LPS provides a free GI consultancy service to the public sector in NI. The team provides tailored advice and assistance on how GI can improve processes and service provision; how to interrogate and present data and statistics using GIS.



Map highlighting how a split across neighbouring Sure Start Projects with a Ward boundary further splitting postcodes can make service eligibility hard for staff to determine.

The Solution

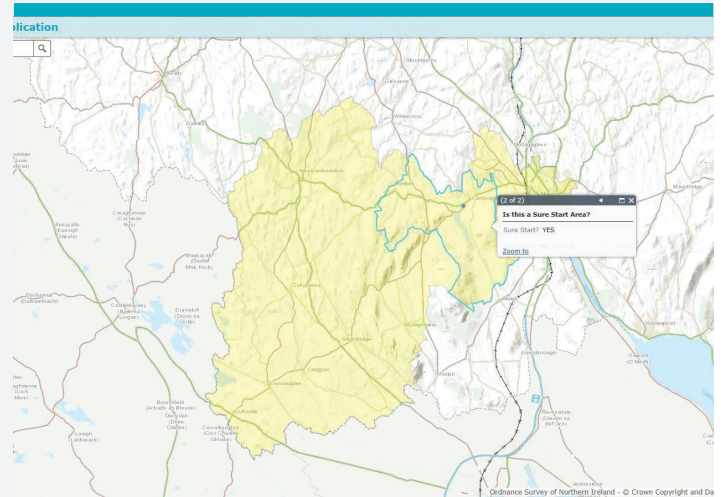
As a Northern Ireland Mapping Agreement (NIMA) customer, the Sure Start Programme was able to access data and consultancy services from LPS through a Geographic Information (GI) consultant.

The consultant advised and supported both regional and local managers in delineating definitive boundaries using GI software and referencing the most current LPS spatial datasets including the Pointer address database and large scale mapping data.

Additionally, the consultant collaborated with the LPS Spatial NI team to develop a bespoke web-based mapping application accessible to all Sure Start employees in a variety of platforms, thereby ensuring a transparent and standardized method for determining any family's eligibility to access services.

“Access to GI consultancy services and LPS resources under NIMA has provided Sure Start Projects with invaluable tools for helping to ensure services are targeted at areas of highest need”

Tommy Doherty - Social Care and Children HSCB



Sure Start web-mapping application for parents to check if their address is within a Sure Start area.

The Benefits

- With authoritative boundaries defined, each Project can focus their resources within their catchment area, enabling staff members to spend less time on eligibility processes and more time on service provision. Staff resource savings are estimated at £10,000 per year going forward.
- Staff members are able to utilise a standard set of workflows and tools, allowing definitive responses to access-related questions. These processes also help to preserve Sure Start's reputation as a transparent, non-discriminatory health service provider.
- Consultancy support provided through NIMA enabled Sure Start to realise total savings in excess of £280,000 over the course of the project by forgoing external procurement of a web-based mapping application, contracting consultancy services and acquiring data licenses. Additionally, there are projected yearly savings of £3,000 in data hosting and site maintenance fees.