



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(MOLE VALLEY)**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT

13 SEPTEMBER 2010

KEY ISSUE

To give members an update of the restructure in Children's Services and provide some context to the current work in South East Surrey

SUMMARY

There have been significant changes to the structure and operation of Children's Services in Surrey since April 2010. This has been in response to the Joint Area Review in 2008 and has led to the setting up of Area Teams, focused on the delivery of child protection and safeguarding services to children, young people and their families. The South East area geographically covers the 3 district and borough council areas of Mole Valley, Tandridge and Reigate and Banstead.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to

- i) note the contents of the report
- ii) consider how members can support the work of services to children to enable children to access full opportunities and reach their potential, particularly in education and learning, leisure and health issues.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The last 12 months have been probably the most challenging and significant in terms of Children's Services in Surrey.

In addition to moving forward with the next stage of improvement, focusing upon practice quality and embedding high standards, we are in the final stages of implementing a new organisational structure. The re-organisation and ongoing improvement work that we are doing is in fact the first stages of divisional redesign / transformation being taken. This transformation journey is also essential to the future financial viability of the statutory services that we must provide:

- a) Delivering safe core services
- b) Improving partnership relationships, and partnership delivery
- c) Developing a model of earlier intervention

Our aims in this context are to:

- a) To ensure all children and young people in Surrey are safe from harm
- b) To provide high quality services for vulnerable children and young people
- c) To be excellent corporate parents to all Surrey's Looked After Children
- d) To address the continuum of need for vulnerable children in Surrey by developing and improving early access to targeted services

2 ANALYSIS

2.1 Services for Children and Safeguarding are now organised geographically and the South East Area geographically covers the 3 district and borough council areas of Mole Valley, Tandridge and Reigate and Banstead. The Area Head of Service is responsible for four strands of children's social care service within their area – these being:

- a) Duty and Assessment
- b) Child Protection and Proceedings
- c) Looked After Children
- d) Children in Need

As of the 31st July 2010, the South East Area Children's Service is managing the following number of cases:

- a) 165 children subject to a child protection plan (2nd highest in the county)
- b) 185 looked after children (highest in the county)
- c) 388 cases open to our Child in Need Team (3rd highest in the county)

- d) 176 new referrals up to the month ending July 31st
(highest in the county)
 - e) In July 922 open cases
- 2.3 This is broken down by district by the number of cases open as of 29th July 2010:
- Mole Valley = 267
 - Reigate and Banstead = 427
 - Tandridge = 228
- 2.4 Looked After Children (LAC) are one of the local authorities priorities and require all partners and agencies to be engaged in improving their outcomes. They are one of the most disadvantaged groups in our community and need integrated and multi-agency support to improve their outcomes.
- 2.5 There are 185 children who are looked after who have originated from the South East. As of 31st March 2010, 44 of our LAC originated from the Mole Valley area. 30 LAC are placed in foster homes in Mole Valley. These maybe children from within Mole Valley and also from other parts of Surrey. We are keen to develop our partnership working to improve the outcomes for this group of children, particularly in terms of education, learning, leisure, health and achievement.
- 2.6 Of the 165 children subject to a child protection plan in the South East area, 43 live in the Mole Valley district.
- 2.7 Of the 388 cases open to our Children in Need Team, 202 live in the Mole Valley district.
- 2.8 Since April 2010, our Assessment Team has responded to 112 new referrals from the Mole Valley District.
- 2.9 Partnership working between Children's Services and our partners in the South East requires further development and the Children's Services area children's plan for the South East has prioritised the development of this area. We are keen to work closely with partner agencies to ensure all of our safeguarding responsibilities are clear and ensure we develop trust and confidence in each other to provide the best possible support for our most vulnerable children and young people.
- 2.10 The Strategic Preventative Approach was implemented in Surrey in March 2010 and a series of road show events took place across the county. In the 2009/10 Children and Young People's Plan, Surrey and our partners agreed to shift the emphasis and resources to early intervention and preventive services and reduce the need for more intensive/acute or specialist support. The Strategic Preventative Approach document at [Annexe 1](#) is designed to enable Surrey and our partners to work towards a shared commitment to deliver and implement an approach to prevention. It provides clarity about what we mean by

prevention and early intervention, the role of all partners in delivering this agenda and how we will work together to achieve this. This will enable a holistic and partnership approach to prevention and early intervention in order to effectively meet the needs of children and young people in Surrey.

2.11 Despite Surrey's reputation as an affluent County, there are pockets of disadvantaged communities and groups for whom outcomes are significantly poorer than for the majority. The areas with the highest levels of deprivation affecting children also tend to have:

- a) Higher numbers of children and young people that need support from Children's Services (such as Children in Need (CIN), children subject to Child Protection Plans (CPP) and Looked After Children (LAC)
- b) Higher rates of childhood obesity
- c) Higher rates of mental health problems in children and adults
- d) Lower levels of breastfeeding
- e) More children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse
- f) More young people with parents who misuse alcohol/substances
- g) Lower educational achievement and higher levels of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- h) Young people who are first time offenders
- i) Young people who are not in education and training

2.12 More detailed analysis has revealed that in Surrey parenting and family dysfunction/acute stress is the main reason for the higher levels of abuse/neglect compared to other Local Authorities – particularly in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Higher numbers of children and young people become Looked After, classed as 'in need' or subject to a Child Protection Plan due to family problems and abuse and neglect (*Surrey has higher numbers of children subject to CPP, LAC, and in need due to family dysfunction and family acute stress than in other LAs and National Average whereas abuse and neglect is below*).

2.13 Engagement with a number of key professionals has revealed a number of key priority areas for improvement:

- a) **Parenting support:** the need for more provision of parenting support and parenting classes across all localities
- b) **Domestic abuse:** the need to ensure that support is provided for families suffering from domestic abuse
- c) **Mental health services:** the need for more alternatives to CAMHS and difficulties accessing the service, as well as easier access to, and further development of, low level counselling services for children young people and their parents/carers that addresses their emotional well-being

- d) **Access to services:** ensuring that services are provided in appropriate child and family friendly venues to make sure that they are accessible, and the need to have information about preventative services held in one place.

2.14 There is also a need for a partnership approach to the planning and delivery of services to enable a more cohesive approach and ensure coordination between central and local priorities. This will enable services to be linked together by a common understanding about what they are designed to strategically achieve, how they measure achievement, and how they work together to proactively target the communities and groups in greatest need.

2.15 The Strategic Preventative Approach will be delivered through the staying safe priority. Based on the findings from the needs assessment, engagement with professionals in Surrey and research, the staying safe priority will focus on improving outcomes for children in the following key areas:

- a) Improve parenting support and resilience in families to prevent family dysfunction and poor parenting
- b) Improve services for families and young people where domestic abuse is a feature and may have a detrimental effect on the child
- c) Ensure that services for children and young people with vulnerable needs are comprehensive, and targeted appropriately so that there is a decrease in those who are at risk of becoming Looked After and needing to be subject to multi-agency protection plans and requiring services at the complex and acute end of the spectrum
- d) Improve access to services for children and young people who require CAMHS provision to include emotional and behavioural problems
- e) Provision of services for children and young people who present challenging or offending behaviour
- f) Provision of services for young people who are homeless
- g) Improve services for young people so that they remain in education, training or employment
- h) Ensure that children and young people and their families who abuse alcohol/drugs have access to appropriate provision
- i) Improving health outcomes for children and young people of all ages

2.16 In order for us to meet these objectives there is a need for all partners to shift the emphasis from crisis intervention and reactive services by having earlier identification and response to vulnerable children and families. A key element of this is to focus support and services at an early stage to prevent difficulties getting worse or becoming serious.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 The objectives will be achieved through the following key areas:

- a) Improve early identification and targeting of children and young people and their families who require additional support
- b) Move to needs led commissioning of evidence based services
- c) Provide a comprehensive range of preventative and early intervention services to support needs of children and young people and their families
- d) Ensure services are response and flexible enough to respond to any changes in needs
- e) Full implementation of the Common Assessment Framework in the County including a stronger focus on the role and identification of lead professionals
- f) Improve integrated working, with partners working together to meet needs
- g) Improve knowledge about, and access to, services for children, young people, families and professionals, including greater localism and community engagement
- h) Develop a valued and multi skilled workforce
- i) Over time, move to needs led commissioning of services where findings from needs assessments, performance management information and feedback from services users are used to inform strategic decisions around preventative and early intervention services that are commissioned

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 This requires further work and whilst professionals have been fully engaged with this approach, we need to develop our feedback from service users to inform strategic decisions.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A key driver is value for money and localised services offering integrated, preventative and targeted provision

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All services for children and young people provided by Surrey County Council work within the best practice of equality and diversity standards

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Children's Services are keen to develop partnership working to improve outcomes for children and young people living in South East Surrey. There are key priorities for action in relation identified above and the CLC is asked to note the contents of the report. Children's Services is

keen to develop an ongoing relationship with partner agencies focussed on the needs of our looked after children where we have a collective responsibility to improve outcomes. Children's Services are keen to engage with the Mole Valley local committee and propose an ongoing relationship through the informal CLC to update the committee on progress to achieve the objectives and raise any issues of joint concern.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 As above

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10.1 As above

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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