



**SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE**  
**Children's Service in Runnymede**  
**February 8<sup>th</sup> 2008**

**KEY ISSUE:**

To update Members on performance and issues within the Children's Service in Runnymede.

**SUMMARY:**

This report outlines the performance of the Runnymede Locality Team and provides updates on Children in Care, Joint Area Review, Common Assessment Framework and preventative work within the borough of Runnymede and North West Surrey.

**The report is for information only.**

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Surrey Children's Service provides integrated working in the area of education and children's social care. The service is divided into 4 geographical areas which further divide into localities. Runnymede Locality Team provides an integrated service for the children and young people of Runnymede.

This report provides an outline of the establishment, staffing levels and performance of the Runnymede Locality Team and an update on the current initiatives in the following areas:

- Common Assessment Framework
- Children in Care
- Joint Area Review
- Supporting Parenting Strategy
- Preventative Work in the North West

## 2.0 RUNNYMEDE LOCALITY TEAM

Runnymede Locality Team was formed as a result of the Surrey County Council Business Delivery Review in August 2006. The multi-professional team consists of social workers (SWs), family support workers (FSWs), education welfare officers (EWOs), specialist teachers (STs), behaviour support assistants (BSAs) and educational psychologists (EPs).

### 2.1 Staffing Situation

The current staffing shortages (including maternity leave) have led to an over-reliance on locum social workers and education psychologists. This has implications for the staffing budget and, in some cases, performance. Priority is given by the team manager and assistant team managers to attend central recruitment days for social workers as this is seen as a key priority for the area.

The recruitment of a second assistant team manager for Runnymede in December has improved the capacity of the team to respond to a recent increase in workload. The assistant team manager has been appointed on a locum basis whilst awaiting confirmation of her permanent position.

The locality team manager is due to begin maternity leave in March 2008.

**TABLE 1: STAFFING OVERVIEW**

	ATMs	SWs	FSWs	Specialist Teachers	EWOs	EPs	BSAs
Establishment	2	6	1.6	3	2	2.3	1
Ongoing	0.8	3	0.6	2.6	1	0.8	0
Locums	1	4	0	0	0	1	0
Vacancies	1.2	3	1	0.4	1	0.5 *	1

\* 1 FTE on maternity leave

**Action Required:**

- Recruit to existing posts on a permanent basis, reducing cost of locum cover and providing full establishment of staff.

**2.2 Analysis of Performance and Commentary**

**2.21 Initial Assessments completed within timescale**

This performance indicator shows the percentage of Initial Assessments completed within seven working days of the referral. Although the number of Initial Assessments within each locality is relatively low, with small staff numbers in locality teams, one or two assessments within a month can have a significant impact on workload. Runnymede Locality Team has performed at 100% over the past months due to a system developed in the North West that flags up an Initial assessment as the case is opened to the team and alerts managers to this. Managers are then able to ensure progress is made appropriately.

**TABLE 2: SHOWING INITIAL ASSESSMENT COMPLETION FIGURES TO TIMESCALE FOR RUNNYMEDE COMPARED TO SURREY AVERAGE AND TARGET**

Surrey Target for County = 75%

Initial Assessments completed on time	September 2007	October 2007	November 2007	December 2007
Runnymede	100 %	N/A (none required)	100 %	100%
Surrey average	74.4 %	73.3 %	81.4 %	Data not yet available

Runnymede performance continued at 100% for the months of November and December 2007 and remains on target for 100% in January.

**Action required:**

- Continue to prioritise Initial Assessment completion to timescale.

**2.22 Core Assessments completed within timescale**

This performance indicator shows the percentage of Core Assessments completed within 35 days of the end of the Initial Assessment. Although the number of Core Assessments within each locality is relatively low, with small staff numbers within locality teams, one or two assessments within a month can have a significant impact on workload.

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**TABLE 3:** SHOWING CORE ASSESSMENT COMPLETION FIGURES TO TIMESCALE FOR RUNNYMEDE COMPARED TO SURREY AVERAGE AND TARGET

Surrey Target for County = 75%

Core Assessments completed on time	September 2007	October 2007	November 2007
Runnymede	100 %	100 %	100 %
Surrey average	69.1 %	63.8 %	Data not yet available

Runnymede performance continued at 100% for the months of November and December 2007 and remains on target for 100% in January.

**Action required:**

- Continue to prioritise Core Assessment completion to timescale.

### 2.23 Open Cases

This indicator shows the number of open social care cases within the Runnymede team. This gives an indication of scale and workload for the team. As a result of the further increase in number of cases in November, an additional social worker was appointed on a temporary basis.

**TABLE 4 :** SHOWING OPEN CASES FIGURES FOR RUNNYMEDE COMPARED TO OTHER NORTH WEST TEAMS

Number of Open Cases	September 2007	October 2007	November 2007
Surrey Heath	156	179	167
Woking	224	214	220
Runnymede	173	175	190

**Action required:**

- Ensure all cases are regularly monitored through supervision and cases closed as appropriate.

### 2.24 "Open to Duty"

This shows the number of social care cases that have not yet been allocated to an individual worker. These cases are working on within a duty system, overseen by a duty manager. Arrangements are in place to ensure risk management of such cases, however. It is always preferable to allocate cases to a worker for more intensive work to be achieved and for continuity for the family.

This figure is largely dependent on staffing levels remaining appropriate and a low turnover of staff. Dependence on locum staff adversely affects this figure, as each new locum worker needs time to build up an allocation of new cases.

**TABLE 5: SHOWING OPEN TO DUTY FIGURES FOR RUNNYMEDE**

Number of unallocated cases open to duty	September 2007	October 2007	November 2007
Runnymede	22	3	7

Although these figures rose to 22 in September, this was due to an influx of cases in August together with a rise in staff turnover. Subsequent figures for December and January remain at below 10. However, over a four week period in January/February, 3 further locum social workers are due to leave the team which is likely to impact on open to duty numbers for January/February.

**Action required:**

- Recruit locum and permanent staff to team vacancies as soon as possible.
- Continue to ensure thorough risk assessment arrangements are followed on cases open to duty.

**3. Common Assessment Framework**

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children, young people and their families has been developed to provide a professional tool for all those who work in a children's setting. It is part of a wider programme to provide more integrated services under the Government's "Every Child Matters" Agenda and aims to:

- **Support earlier intervention**, by providing methods to help practitioners who come into day-to-day contact with children, young people and families to identify and address unmet needs at an earlier stage.
- **Improve multi-agency working** by appointment of a Lead Professional: a children's or young person's practitioner who co-ordinates provision of services from more than one agency or organisation, based on a child or young person's identified additional needs. The aim of a Lead Professional is to pull together the input required from a number of settings to create an integrated package that addresses the child or young person's needs.
- **Reduce bureaucracy for children, young people and their families**, by providing practitioners with a fuller overview of a child's needs and responses, thereby reducing the number of inappropriate inter-agency referrals, separate assessment and different agencies working with a child.

A number of agencies within Runnymede have already completed the CAF training and are preparing to use the CAF. Recently, two multi-agency training days were established specifically for the Runnymede Locality Team and representatives from Health and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) from South Runnymede Confederation were invited to join them.

**4. Children in Care**

- 4.1 There are currently 897 Children in Care in Surrey. This number includes children with complex needs whose respite arrangements deem them Looked After.
- 4.2 The West has 310 Children in Care. 194 in the West Children's Team, 19 in the NW Localities and 28 in the SW Localities.
- 4.3 There are currently 30 children who originate from Runnymede. They are placed with foster carers in Surrey and out of Surrey, in residential care and with kinship carers.
- 4.4 There are 2 children's residential homes in West Surrey – Burbank in Woking and Woodlands – also in Woking at Knaphill.
- 4.5 CAMHS (Children and Mental Health Service) at St Peters is used for therapy and counselling for Children in Care and we also use a variety of independent providers when CAMHS cannot meet need.
- 4.6 Our placement stability service offers support to children when placements become difficult to manage with support to carers and to children.

**5. Preparation for the Joint Area Review**

- 5.1 The Joint Area Review (JAR) is an integrated inspection of publicly provided services for children and young people. It will focus on how all partners work together to deliver *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*. It will look at how services are improving the lives of children and young people in Surrey, particularly those who are disadvantaged or at risk. This includes Looked After Children, children that require safeguarding and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Surrey will have an additional area of investigation, which will focus on teenage pregnancy.
- 5.2 The JAR replaces the separate inspections for local education authorities, social services, Connexions and provision for 14-19 year olds. The JAR will be carried out at the same time as the Audit Commission's corporate assessment of the council whilst an inspection of the Youth Justice Service will take place shortly before. The key dates:

**18 January 2008** - Set up meeting with inspectors

**25- 29 February 2008** - JAR Reading Week - Programme for the inspection agreed

**31 March - 11 April 2008** - Inspection fortnight

**15 May 2008** - Draft JAR report for comment

**22 July 2008** - JAR report published

**14 October 2008** - JAR Action Plan published

- 5.3 A set-up meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, attended by the JAR Lead Inspector, the Deputy Lead Inspector, the CA Team Leader, key Surrey County Council staff and Members, and some partner representatives. The meeting set out expectations and requirements during the inspection period.

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- 5.4 The document giving details of the Children and Young Peoples' Plan Review of June 2007 will be available shortly, and will be submitted to the Inspectors in February.
- 5.5 A total of 25 voluntary and community sector organisations which work to deliver services to children and young people in Surrey will receive a questionnaire from the Inspection team, to find out their views on partnership working, funding arrangements and their role in safeguarding children.
- 5.6 Surrey Children's Service submitted 100 case files to Ofsted in January, and they are expected to select 10 cases for more detailed study during their reading week. During the inspection fortnight at the end of March, the inspectors will interview professionals involved in delivering services and also talk to service users about their cases. Ofsted will also review 33 other key documents on how services are provided.
- 5.7 The Joint Area Review (JAR) provides a comprehensive report on the outcomes for children and young people in the local area. It will assess how our services are improving the lives of children and young people within Surrey. It will examine the leadership and management of these services and the way they work together to support the five outcomes for children. It replaces the separate inspections for local education authorities, social services, Connexions and provision for 14-19 year olds. The JAR will be carried out at the same time as the Audit Commission's corporate assessment of the council whilst an inspection of the Youth Justice Service will take place shortly before.

### **6. Supporting Parenting Strategy**

The Children and Young People Strategic Partnership has endorsed a Supporting Parenting strategy for Surrey, which is coordinated by Fiona Taylor, Strategic Development manager. The strategy focuses on early interventions with positive impacts on family life, changing intergenerational issues that can have negative impacts on children and young people health, well being and education. The focus is to create better relationships between parents and children, which ultimately improve community life by contributing to reduced crime and disorder, including domestic violence and substance misuse. The strategy comprises five areas of action:

1. leadership
2. universal parenting support
3. targeted support
4. parent and carer and young people participation
5. improving communities

The North West area has successfully piloted a fathers' programme to address the needs of fathers in supporting their children through programmes of activity and support sessions. The Area Partnership is implementing the parenting strategy as part of its work programme in consultation with health, local councils and school confederations.

## **7. Preventative Work in the North West**

### **7.1 0 – 11 Project**

0-11 is a short-term (3 month) multi-agency service for children and families in crisis. Referred children must be between 0 and 11 years of age, be living in Surrey and fulfil the following criteria; They must be either at risk of permanent exclusions, be subject to frequent fixed term exclusions, have chronic school attendance problems, present with severe and ongoing challenging behaviour where familial factors contribute to the difficulties, or be at risk of fostering/kinship placement or family breakdown.

Referrals can be made directly from outside agencies such as schools, health practitioners and CAHMS, as well as from within Surrey Children's Services.

The team comprises an assistant team manager, three social workers and 1.6 family support workers. There is also regular input from CAMHS primary mental health workers, a health visitor and from behaviour support teachers.

A multi-agency wrap-around-the-child meeting is held monthly to gather information, express views and plan. These are attended by the 0 – 11 team, school representatives, parents and any other relevant agencies. The plan from this meeting then forms the basis of the 0 – 11 team's intervention. At the end of three months, the case is either closed, transferred into the locality team or referred to a relevant agency.

0 – 11 are currently working with 5 Runnymede families.

### **7.2 12 -16 Preventative Service**

A similar service is presently being set up to work with older children who are at risk of family breakdown. Referrals for this service will only be available to children who are already open to social care.

The team will have an assistant team manager, 3 social workers, a part time family support worker, a Connexions worker and a part time CAMHS worker. This service should be in place by early April.

### **7.3 Groupwork**

Parenting groups are run at the SHAW Family Centre for expecting and existing parents of young children. These groups are targeted at parents who need basic instruction in parenting and who often come from backgrounds where they themselves have not had good parent models.

The groups are Preparation for Parenthood, Intensive Parenting Program for parents of newborn babies, Parent and Toddler and the Maintenance group. Activities Days are also run for children who are open to social care.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the successes and challenges of the Children's Service Locality Team in Runnymede.