Social Care Services for Children in Tandridge

22 January 2003

KEY ISSUE
This report gives information on Children’s services performance in Tandridge, concentrating particularly on the social care services. An overview of the county picture is also given.

SUMMARY
The new Children’s service integrates services for children and young people across the former Social Services and Education departments. This report explains what is happening in Tandridge, and gives information on the performance of the local service and the issues they face. Members are asked to contribute their ideas about how best to build on the good work of children’s services locally, and improve areas where performance is not so good.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The Committee is asked to;

a) note the changes to the Children’s Service in Surrey.

b) note the issues and pressures for the social care services in Tandridge and suggest any ways in which the Local Committee might help take this forward (see paras 14-18)

c) give feedback on improvements that can be made to local performance reports to facilitate discussions on services for children and local needs
THE SURREY CONTEXT

1. The Children and Young People’s Service has only recently been established following the introduction of a significantly different approach to service provision for Surrey in April 2002. The Children’s Service integrates services for children and young people across the former Social Services and Education departments. The service became fully operational from September 2002.

2. The Best Value review of children with Special Needs in November 2000 recommended the integration of Social Services Children’s Service and the Education Children’s Service into one new ‘Surrey Children’s Service.’

3. The key aims were to:
   - Ensure the safety of all Surrey children and the identification and protection of those who are vulnerable.
   - Make our best practice and processes centred on the needs and timescales of children and young people and their families.
   - Develop preventive strategies and ensure that children and young people are included into local initiatives, which reduce the needs for targeted and specialist services.
   - Focus on the achievement of all children, especially those who have additional needs so that they are able to fulfil their potential for development.
   - Ensure that the County Council acts as best corporate parent throughout its functions.

Key aspects of the new service are integrated service management at an area level, integrated planning and service development, and clear information and processes for children and families

4. As the service is evolving the following benefits have already been noted:
   - Co-ordinated joined up management structures in place
   - Children’s Service performance structures in place to meet the requirements of external inspection
   - Clear Area Management links to progress multi agency work across PCTs Health, Schools and Voluntary sector
   - Improved practice in residential boarding schools as a result of the work of the Residential Care and Support Unit.

5. Education Children’s Service was working to four areas, and Social Care to five. It was decided to continue with these existing boundaries at the inception of the service. A decision regarding alignment of boundaries will take place after the outcome of the Joint Review and OFSTED is known. Arrangements across the five Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are still being developed.
6. Further information about the performance of children’s services in the county is set out in Annex 1.

**CHILDREN’S SERVICES IN TANDRIDGE**

7. Three teams provide social care for children in the Tandridge area. They are the East Surrey Assessment Team, the Children’s Team and the Family Centre. The addresses and contact names for these teams are set out in Annex 2.

8. The Assessment team covers Reigate, Banstead and Tandridge, and the core services provided are;
   - (ii) Taking new referrals.
   - (iii) Initial Assessments.
   - (v) Initial Legal Proceedings.
   - (vi) Initial Child Protection Registration.
   - (vii) Initial work with Looked After Children.

9. The Children’s team also covers Reigate, Banstead and Tandridge, and the core services provided are;
   - (ii) Longer term work with children on the Child Protection Register and their families.
   - (iii) Case Management for Looked after Children.
   - (iv) Legal Proceedings.
   - (v) Private Fostering.
   - (vi) Unaccompanied minors (asylum seekers).

10. The Family Centre covers Reigate, Banstead and Tandridge, and focuses on;
    - (ii) Core assessments.
    - (iii) High risk children in need cases.
    - (iv) Contact arrangements.
    - (v) Family Group Conferences.
    - (vi) Parenting Programmes/Groupwork.

11. In addition to the social care teams the Multi Professional Team is a new and large team covering Tandridge established with the integration of the former Education Children’s Service into the new Surrey Children’s Service. The Multi Professional Team consists of the following former County Services, now managed within an Area structure:
    - (ii) Education Psychology.
    - (iii) Education Welfare.
    - (iv) Learning and Language Support.
    - (v) Behaviour and Pupil Support.
    - (vi) English as Another Language.
    - (vii) Special Needs Administration.

The work of the Multi Professional Team will be reported in detail at a later date.
Item 7

12. The Children with Disabilities Team currently provides services for children with disabilities and their families throughout east Surrey. The service is to be integrated within the area structure in the coming year.

13. The Early Years and Childcare service is Surrey-wide, and its overall purpose is to ensure that;

- Surrey County Council meets its statutory obligations to secure free early education places for every 4 year old and increases the provision for 3 year olds.

- early education and childcare provision is of a high quality and is accessible and affordable to all parents, particularly those in areas of identified need.

- early education and childcare provision offers children quality play and learning experiences that promotes their physical, emotional and intellectual development.

ISSUES AND PERFORMANCE FOR THE SOCIAL CARE TEAMS IN TANDRIDGE

14. The Children’s team and Family Centre generally have a history of low staff turnover, which has resulted in strong team cultures, consistency of approach and a high level of service to children in Tandridge. Recruitment of social workers has generally not been a problem in this area. However, vacancies are high in the Assessment Team, 25% (3wte), and the team is handling 50 referrals per week. Vacancies are even higher in residential homes and agency costs are 50% extra.

15. The most significant issue in managing work in the 3 teams is balancing the demands of long term complex cases where there are statutory responsibilities with the demand to assess new referrals and undertake preventive work with lower need situations. The Assessment Team is unable to meet its targets in relation to timescales for new assessments because of the volume of longer term work in the team. The Children’s Team is seeking to take on more of this longer term work in order to relieve the Assessment Team.

16. In June 02 the number of children on the Child Protection register in Tandridge was 9. This compared with 52 children in Reigate & Banstead. These figures tend to remain fairly stable.

17. Tandridge has 13 fostercare households (Reigate & Banstead 31) out of a county total of 209. In the east of the county, we have fostercare capacity for 163 children with 176 actually placed. Over this past year, we have lost more mainstream fostercarers (15) than we have recruited (4).

18. The number of foster carers working in the Tandridge area is limited. The consequence of this is that children from this area who are admitted to care often have to be placed in other parts of the county resulting in a change of school, long journeys for contact with parents, and a loss of links with the local community. There is very little “placement choice".
19. The number of Tandridge children on the CP Register was 9 at 30 June 2002, representing 0.10% of the 0 – 17 population. This is lower than the Surrey average of 0.143%, and has been fairly stable over the previous four quarters. The average ratio of children on the CP Register to families is slightly under 2 children per family (Surrey-wide). The “turnover” on the register represents a significant workload, with approximately three hundred new registrations and three hundred de-registrations, countywide, per year. The main factors in families leading to Child Protection concerns were Domestic Violence and parental Substance Misuse. (ACPC Statistics for 1 January 2002 – 31 March 2002), and the main registration categories, consistent with the countywide picture, were Risk of Neglect and Risk of Physical abuse.

The county picture is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>30/06/02</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epsom &amp; Ewell</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmbridge</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guildford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mole Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reigate and Banstead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Runnymede</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelthorne</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey Heath</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandridge</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National as at 31/03/01</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>0.143</td>
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</tbody>
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**SOURCES**

Population data: 2000 mid-year estimates
Surrey CPR data: ACPC Report 30 June 2002
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN


The county picture is;

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<td>Guildford</td>
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<td>Mole Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woking</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB There are 67 children looked after for whom District/Borough is not recorded on Swift.

National as at 31.3.01  0.52%
Surrey  0.264

SOURCES

Population data: 2000 mid-year estimates
Surrey CLA data: SSID Report SRCLA65L
CONCLUSION

21 The new Children’s Service in Surrey is still at an early development stage but there are already signs that the new arrangements are providing a more integrated and joined up service. Tandridge benefits from having lower than average numbers of children on the child protection register or ‘looked after’. However there are serious issues for the social care teams in that the assessment team has a high volume of longer term work in the team, which needs to be moved on to the Children’s team and to other providers. Also the lack of preventive services means that referrals are higher than they should be. If these two problems could be eased, the service to children and families in Tandridge would be greatly improved, and the teams would improve on their performance targets.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Index of Multiple Deprivation
COUNTYWIDE ISSUES AND PERFORMANCE

The National Assessment Framework was implemented in Surrey in November 2001. This was delayed as a result of a reconfiguration of front line teams in June 2001 in order to be able to meet the requirements as a number of concerns were raised in the 1999 SSI inspection. We set up specialist assessment and childcare teams to work alongside our Family Centres.

The Assessment Teams like those in other authorities have not met the timescales for assessment. We are still in the early phase of monitoring the work of these teams. An audit has just been completed with the report due in November 2002. It is likely that an in-depth action plan will be developed once the report is agreed.

Performance

Performance is monitored through quarterly updates from Quality Protects programme, Best Value and Making Surrey a Better Place targets. The main external scrutiny for the service takes place through the Performance Assessment Framework. Spring and autumn targets are assessed against previous performance and targets set. This has a direct effect on the service’s Comprehensive Performance rating and Joint Review outcomes.

The Social Care Service is due to have a Joint Review in April 2003 and preparations are currently taking place to prepare for this. The Education service is also preparing for an OFSTED inspection to take place in February 2003. The department is still awaiting formal notification of the outcome of Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which took place in June 2002.

The Social Service Inspectorate (SSI) has judged Surrey services ‘to be serving some people well and with uncertain prospects for improvement.’ The Social Care Service along with Adults has been judged as a one star authority and the service is currently working on an action plan to improve performance to two stars.

Some of the reasons the SSI has judged the prospect for improvement as uncertain are because:

The effectiveness of the People First changes has yet to be demonstrated.

Surrey continues to experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.

Child Protection in Surrey

Surrey’s child protection practice appears vigilant. All Surrey children on the child protection register have an allocated social worker despite vacancies in a number of front line teams. Also, as reported to the Audit Commission Best Value Indicators 2000/01, 89% of Surrey children on the child protection register were visited at least six weekly by their social worker, which is 12% higher than the national county average. Surrey has recently undergone an inspection by the Social Services Inspectorate on Children’s Safeguards. The feedback indicates that there are effective relationships
between key agencies at both strategic and operational levels. There was evidence of a commitment to the safeguarding of children by all the agencies inspected and trust and confidence has been built up over a number of years. We have just received the formal report and will be developing an action plan to take account of the issues raised.

However, Surrey was asked to ‘investigate urgently’ its performance on the completion of child protection reviews (PAF C20). Two thirds of reviews were completed on time during 2000/01. This relatively low proportion came about for two reasons mainly, because child protection staff wished to ensure that parents and all key professionals were present at each of these meetings. Often, review meetings were postponed a week or so beyond the required date in order to achieve full attendance. It is essential that parents attend these conferences if they are to become and remain committed to the agreed child protection plan. Surrey has achieved a good record in encouraging parental participation, with around 85% of reviews attended by at least one parent.

Nevertheless, in light of this performance, Surrey social workers are sharpening their practice to ensure that the review deadlines are not missed, and the full year Performance Indicator for the year to 31 March 2002 demonstrates real improvement at 81% of reviews completed within time scales. The latest available quarterly figure related to this indicator is for June 2002 and indicates that 90% of Child Protection conference reviews were held within statutory time scales. This information is provided to demonstrate that current performance is at a much better level than the full year figure indicates, and will continue to improve ensuring we are not penalised in the future.

Children Looked After

The numbers of children ‘looked after’ are proportionately lower in Surrey than for the shire average, although the ‘looked after’ population has increased slightly (between 2001 and 2002), reflecting a national trend. The percentage of children in family placements excluding those placed with parents stood at 76% at the end of June 2002.

Between March 2001 and June 2002, there has also been a 9% increase in foster/adoptive placements for all ages (from 67% to 76%) and a 14% annual increase for under tens (from 79% to 93%). With regard to placement stability, only 9% of children had 3 or more moves in 2001/2. This is better than the regional and national average (13 & 12% respectively). 72% of children looked after for more than four years had lived with their current foster carers for the last two years. This is around 20% better than the regional and national average. Forty-eight children were adopted in 2001/2, two more than the year before.

The percentage leaving care with at least 1 GCSE/NVQ increased from 41% to 55% over this period although Surrey fared less well on the % achieving 5 GCSEs A-C (7.4% compared to a SE average of 26.5). However, Surrey has a higher proportion of children ‘looked after’ who have special educational needs. This may contribute to this result.

Performance levels have fallen in some other areas of ‘looked after’ measures e.g. routine health checks (5% lower), 5 or more GCSE passes (6 fewer), numbers of children with disabilities having short term breaks (12 fewer). Also the SATS results for looked after children were mixed with some improvements in certain age groups but some deterioration in others. Another area for improvement concerned the relatively higher numbers of children placed outside the authority.
In line with the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 requirements, Surrey remains strongly committed to supporting its care leavers, 30% of whom have additional needs (e.g. learning disabilities, mental/emotional health needs). However, in 2001/2, 26 nineteen-year-old care leavers (47% of the annual cohort) were in employment, education or training. This was 20% fewer than in 2000/1 and at the end of the year 40% of care leavers were unemployed. 84% of this group are still assisted by social work staff. The new Connexions service will be fully utilised in supporting more care leavers to secure employment or training. All care leavers will also have a Pathway Plan in place by March 2003. It is planned that the proportion of 19-year-old care leavers who have suitable accommodation will increase from 71% (0.5% below target) to 80% this year, with a further increase to 92% by March 2003. A joint accommodation strategy has been agreed with local housing authorities to underpin this plan.

The establishment of the Multi Professional Teams within the new area model will mean that higher priority can be given to supporting children looked after. Currently senior managers across Social Care and Education areas meet to problem solve and promote the educational needs of this group. We have also developed initiatives to support young people in a variety of placements.

Community & Placement Support Team
Family Group Conferences
Therapeutic support to children and carers
Education of L.A.C. Meeting
Residential schools support team
Annex 2

**Assessment Team** – Manager – Mary Peckham

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Noke Drive  
Redhill  
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**Children’s Team** – Manager – Peter Richards

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129 Farningham Road  
Caterham  
Surrey CR3 6LN  Tel: 01883 347551

**Family Centre** – Manager – Jim Horn

East Surrey Family Centre  
132-138 Station road  
Redhill  
Surrey RH1 1ET  Tel: 01737 762661

**The Multi Professional Team** – Manager – John Belfield

East Multi-Professional Team  
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Surrey RH2 7JA  Tel: 01737 737600

**Children with Disabilities Team** – Manager – Jacqui Lendrim

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Reigate  
Surrey RH2 7JA  Tel: 01737 737828

**Early Years & Childcare Service** – Head of Service – Phil Osborne

South East Area Office (AO2)  
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