

Notice of Meeting

Cabinet - Special Meeting Supplementary Agenda



Date and Time

Monday, 11
December 2023
9.30 am

Place

Council Chamber,
Woodhatch Place,
11 Cockshot Hill,
Reigate,
Surrey,
RH2 8EF

Contact

Huma Younis or Sarah
Quinn
huma.younis@surreycc.gov.uk
or
sarah.quinn@surreycc.gov.uk

Web:

[Council and
democracy
Surreycc.gov.uk](#)



@SCCdemocracy

AGENDA

3 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(Pages
1 - 6)

There is one Member question. A response from Cabinet is attached.

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(Pages
7 - 12)

There are four public questions. A response from Cabinet is attached.

**Joanna Killian
Chief Executive**

Published: Friday, 08 December 2023

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND FILMING – ACCEPTABLE USE

Members of the public and the press may use social media or mobile devices in silent mode during meetings. Public Wi-Fi is available; please ask the committee manager for details.

Anyone is permitted to film, record or take photographs at Council meetings. Please liaise with the committee manager prior to the start of the meeting so that the meeting can be made aware of any filming taking place.

The use of mobile devices, including for the purpose of recording or filming a meeting, is subject to no interruptions, distractions or interference being caused to any Council equipment or any general disturbance to proceedings. The Chairman may ask for mobile devices to be switched off in these circumstances.

Thank you for your co-operation.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Cabinet and most committees will consider questions by elected Surrey County Council Members and questions and petitions from members of the public who are electors in the Surrey County Council area.

Please note the following regarding questions from the public:

1. Members of the public can submit one written question to a meeting by the deadline stated in the agenda. Questions should relate to general policy and not to detail. Questions are asked and answered in public and cannot relate to “confidential” or “exempt” matters (for example, personal or financial details of an individual); for further advice please contact the committee manager listed on the front page of an agenda.
2. The number of public questions which can be asked at a meeting may not exceed six. Questions which are received after the first six will be held over to the following meeting or dealt with in writing at the Chairman’s discretion.
3. Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received.
4. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion. The Chairman or Cabinet members may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer the question.
5. Following the initial reply, one supplementary question may be asked by the questioner. The Chairman or Cabinet members may decline to answer a supplementary question.

CABINET – 11 DECEMBER 2023**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions:****Question (1) Catherine Powell**

The Inspection Report confirms that we simply must identify needs earlier, support children and young people more quickly and effectively and ensuring that parents / carers are kept fully informed and that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. It is great that there is an end to end review of the EHCP process and more SEND places are being created in Surrey but I strongly feel there are gaps in opportunities for early intervention and support that are simply being missed.

Can the Cabinet Member commit to reviewing these potential opportunities for earlier intervention that have come out of discussions I have had with various professionals?

1. Work with Health colleagues to ensure that all children have the health and development review at age 2 to 2 and a half and any concerns are flagged to the child's nursery, playgroup or childminder and the Local Education Authority to support early intervention and support. This should include initial screen for ASD and nomination for the Surrey Local Early Autism Programme, so that they can be supported in their preschool year. Funding being made available to support places for all children nominated by Health professionals and impact monitored.
2. Ensure that the primary school place application process clearly identifies:
 - a. any child that may have missed their health and development review at age 2 to 2 and a half and
 - b. children where health colleagues identified concerns that may require adjustments, support or therapies in mainstream school or a specialist provision.
 - c. Children who have an EHCP in place or therapy such as SALT that needs to be transferred to the school SALT team.
 - d. Have started the EHCN assessment process
3. For every child with SEND monitor and report the following:
 - a. Short break / respite care that is identified in their EHCP
 - i. Has it been provided?
 - ii. Does the provision match the EHCP or are there gaps?
 - b. Where short breaks / respite care has been requested by parents and whether:
 - i. This has been provided
 - ii. The child is on one or more waiting lists
4. Creation of a Complex Case Social Worker role for children with complex needs to act as a co-ordinator for all the support each child needs from Education, Health and Social Care so that the parent has a single point of contact rather than multiple points of contact. These social workers should have a lower case load but replace the multiple social workers that are often involved with a single child.

Reply:

Early Intervention and Support has been a focus within health. Health Visiting services offer support to every child in Surrey via the Healthy Child Programme mandated checks. The offer is 100%, although uptake is lower, we encourage uptake of these checks. *Recent 2.5 year check data – latest uptake is at 75.6% for quarter 2 of 23/24 against a local uptake target of 69%.*

The Community Health Early Support (CHES) team provides practical support in the home for families who may be concerned about their child's development. The team have followed up with families who have been unable to attend the 12-month review and children who may be waiting for specialist assessment.

The Health Visiting team also support with speech and language and communication needs, this has enabled families to receive support at the earliest opportunity.

As part of the Best Start and Additional Needs and Disabilities strategies, we are embedding learning from the work of the Birth to Five Partnership. Our current solution for a Surrey wide Integrated 2-year review focusses on communication with parents, early years settings and health around the child's personal child health record (PCHR), where early years share their progress review via a child's PCHR with health and all maintain liaison as required to support any identified child development needs.

Health and early years continue to discuss, review the model, complete surveys for feedback with teams and scope national models of practice and communication to review any changes we can make to support our integrated model.

We have liaised to both promote health and early years reviews via our aligned webpages: CFHS 27-month review:

<https://childrenshealthissurrey.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting-service/27-month-reviews>

Health and development reviews at age 2 Surrey County Council:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/families/education-and-learning-advice-for-families/early-learning/two-year-old-checks-information-for-parents>

We both share parent contacts, in parent and professional facing presentations/events. We have created a new 2-year poster for future promotion and are awaiting sign off to cascade.

Our teams are committed to delivering the 27-month offer to all Surrey children adapting contact dependent on their known need, working in partnership with our early years colleagues to support identified development needs in readiness for

starting school. Where a child does not attend/ 'was not brought' to their health review, a letter is sent to the family reminding them of the value of a review of their child's progress.

There is a huge amount of activity due to the expansion of Early Years Entitlements – to be launched in April 2024. We are extending teams in order to meet the needs of the new cohorts but also to address our key priorities:

- Enhancing the universal language and communication offer in Early Years and Reception
- Providing a workforce development budget to provide training and information/best practice
- Extending Inclusion Pathway Planning into Reception
- Extending and developing the Early Intervention Fund to provide a broader range of interventions and opportunities
- Creating a Best Start/Start for Life budget and considering the possibility of a bespoke role to manage the creation of the Parent/Carer Forum

The mainstream new round application form asks whether the child has an EHCP; and states that if so, the parent should not complete the form but should refer to the child's SEND case officer instead for details on how to apply for a primary or secondary school place. The mainstream application form cannot ask whether the child has SEND but no EHCP as this does not form part of the admissions criteria for any school. This would include children who have started the EHCN assessment process. If a child undergoing an EHCN assessment is later granted an EHCP, the SEND Admission team would take over the application from the School Admissions team, if this was before the child had been offered a place.

To support great transitions for every child from early years there is clear guidance for all settings entitled Supporting Positive Transitions in the Early Years: Guidance for Practitioners and documents to help Early Years staff support successful transitions for children into, within and from their setting, Early Years Educational Effectiveness Team and SEND Team (January 2023) [Supporting families, settings and schools with transitions \(surreylocaloffer.org.uk\)](https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/supporting-families-settings-and-schools-with-transitions). This document is available on line and is reinforced through the Early Years Teams who visit settings and communication to all early year providers. Resources can be found on-line [Graduated Response Early Years | Surrey Local Offer](https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/graduated-response-early-years).

Where Short Breaks have been identified as a need and are listed as a provision in an EHCP then this would be kept under review as part of the annual review of the plan. If a child is open to the Children with Disabilities Service, then the short breaks would be reviewed as part of the Child in Need plan. Both of these review mechanisms should address and respond where possible and appropriate to identified needs.

It is important to note that access to overnight respite services currently depends on there being an identified need for this in a child's Care Plan or following the completion of a social care assessment that includes short breaks in its recommended new plan, this should be incorporated in the EHCP which is reviewed annually.

There is not a statutory entitlement to Play and Leisure Short Breaks, so a change of SCC policy would be required to introduce new eligibility criteria for these services.

There is a Designated Social Care Officer in post working to improve social care engagement and alignment of Annual Reviews with social care meetings where possible. There is a focus on improving the social work contribution to EHCP reviews and attendance where possible.

Where Short Breaks have been requested directly by parents/carers approaching providers, SCC does not collect data in relation to those requests, and providers are not contractually required to collect it, until such time as the child is registered on and begins to access services.

We do not currently collect child level data regarding waiting lists, which is held by providers who directly manage services, and providers are not contractually required to share it, but we do periodically request data from providers on overall volumes on waiting lists and movement off them, as well as considering these with providers as part of contract review meetings.

We are planning a co-production process with families and providers to begin in spring 2024 to explore a range of areas for service improvements, including the management of waiting lists and how we might better support families whilst they are waiting to access a service. This will need to include GDPR considerations about what child-level data can be shared with SCC, prior to families beginning to receive a Short Breaks service, as this is not currently covered by our Privacy Notices, which only cover data relating to service delivery.

There are no plans to create additional social work posts for children with complex needs, however, we are reviewing the Children with Disabilities service to ensure that we have proportionate social work involvement for families, so that we use our social work resource as effectively as possible. We work hard to ensure that there are not multiple social workers involved with children, but we accept that we have recruitment and retention challenges within Surrey children's services which reflects the national picture of social work recruitment and retention and unfortunately does result in changes of social workers for children in some instances.

The Early Support Team based within education works with families holistically to improve outcomes for their children, 0-5 years old with multiple, complex health needs and disabilities. The service works closely with colleagues from health, education, the voluntary sector and social care. Putting the child at the centre, we listen to parents and establish a team around the family to coproduce a plan of support. This approach builds confident parents and enables children to reach their

full potential. Our aim is to make life a little bit easier as simple daily tasks can be very challenging when you have a child with complex needs. There may be a large number of people and services involved and the service helps by coordinating these.

We do have a health funded National key worker service that is hosted within the Children with disabilities service which is a single point of contact for children with a significant risk of hospital admission or becoming looked after. The key working service will act as the main point of contact for young people aged between 5-25 who have a diagnosis of autism and/or learning disability, the service uses person-centred approaches to ensure that the young person and their family remain at the centre of all planning helping to navigate systems, breaking down barriers and working across education, health and social care.

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

11 December 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET – 11 DECEMBER 2023

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Public Questions:**Question (1): Chris Young**

How is the review, update and delivery of EHCPs monitored and to what extent has the monitoring officer been involved where statutory requirements are not being met?

Reply:

The SEN service is responsible for the EHCP statutory processes. Each case officer has a caseload which is overseen by a senior case manager, through supervision, to check that work is on track. The area SEN manager oversees the performance of the teams and reports to the education and inclusion service manager who monitors the timeliness of completion of EHC needs assessments and annual reviews. As a result of this we know that there have been delays and a growing backlog of work. An EHCP recovery plan is in place and is monitored by the Executive Director for Children Families and Lifelong Learning, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning and relevant directors. Regular progress reports are provided to the Select Committee Children Families and Lifelong (CFL) Learning Practice Improvement and Performance Information group, the CFL Transformation Assurance Board and the Inclusion and Additional Needs Partnership Board. The Inclusion and Additional Needs Partnership Board consists of members from partner agencies, the school sector as well as Surrey Family Voice and our user voice team. There is also a fortnightly operational assurance meeting led by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning to oversee the implementation of the programme, this work is supported by a stakeholder group chaired by the Leader of the County Council.

An external consultancy review of the approach to the EHCP Timeliness Recovery commissioned by Corporate Transformation was carried out in July 2023. This concluded that the project is operating well, with some areas for development appropriate to the phase of the project.

The Monitoring Officer reports any finding of serious maladministration by the Local Government Ombudsman concerning EHCPs to the Cabinet and draws the report to the attention of each Member of the Council.

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

11 December 2023

Question (2): Catherine Mackinlay

Why is Surrey County Council not conforming with post tribunal, SENDIST orders in the legal timeframe and forcing the public to serve pre action papers on the Local Authority?

Reply:

It is recognised that going through a tribunal and awaiting a SEND Tribunal decision is an anxious time for parents and families. When a Tribunal decision is issued, all parties are keen to implement any provision ordered by SENDIST at the earliest opportunity.

The timescales with which the Local Authority is required to comply are set out in section 25 of the 2014 SEN Regulations. These vary from a requirement to comply with immediate effect to 5 weeks from the date of the tribunal decision, dependent on the type of appeal.

The Local Authority is committed to complying with these deadlines. The actions required may involve more than one service. Training has been provided for staff to ensure there is a good understanding of the importance of complying with these deadlines. New monitoring systems are being put in place to ensure there is careful oversight of the performance in this area.

Unfortunately, there are times when tribunal decisions are complex and this may, in exceptional circumstances lead to some delays such as when a specific educational provision needs to be commissioned from external providers. The Local Authority works hard to avoid such circumstances and recognises that such delays may cause additional anxiety for families. If families are concerned about any delay, then they can seek an update from their SEN Case Officer or their Tribunal Officer.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning
11 December 2023

Question (3): Louise Gannon

May I refer you back to your comment in Surrey Live report dated 10/03/22.

"We're not going to stand still we're going to listen again to our children and their families and our workforce as we strive to move forward". Then your latest statement to Surrey Live dated 24/11/23. Nothing has changed same apologies and excuses. Surrey CC lack of care and support is causing parents undue stress. It's hard enough for parents to support their children with SEN needs and then having to fight Surrey CC to get what your child is legally entitled to is having a detrimental effect on families. It's causing parents to have breakdowns, feel suicidal and having to seek help from their GP's. We're getting the same sorry's and excuses time and time again. The onus falls on to the top management.

My question is: What are you going to do differently this time to make changes that work because it's very obvious the system used is not working, case workers are always leaving, delays effect the children time and time again, or are we going to get the same old excuses and sorry's in another 3 years whilst in the meantime Surrey continue time and time again to fail our children.

"No one is left behind" says Surrey. Well what about the hundreds of children that continue to be let down by Surrey.

Reply:

We understand that there is still work to do in improving our SEN system and our Ofsted report highlights this. It has been recognised that Surrey's services for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities are making progress, but there are inconsistencies in experiences. The findings appear to be a fair reflection of areas for focus and further improvement, as well as of good practice.

All Partners acknowledge that the service and support some children, young people and their parents and carers are receiving in Surrey is currently not good enough, and we apologise to families when this is the case. We also recognise the frustrations felt by some families and practitioners within Surrey while trying to navigate the complex SEND system and access the right support for their children.

The Inspection report highlights the Partnership's collective commitment to make a difference and deliver the plans already in place for improvement. We are undertaking a range of new areas of work supported by a £15 million additional investment over three years to achieve this. We are coming to the conclusion of our SEN end-to-end review of the system and are developing proposals which will enhance the way that the SEN service operates.

SEN staffing has been strengthened and we have increased the size of the SEN service by over 50%. The service is at 95% staffed and a number of new ways of working are being introduced. For example, we will have an Additional Needs and Disability (SEND) helpdesk in operation next term which will improve the communication and support for families.

The EHCP recovery programme is progressing positively. We have increased our educational psychology service capacity so that children who are identified with additional vulnerabilities continue to have their assessments completed on time. The number of overdue EP assessments has now halved. This will lead to an increase in timelier plans.

Our Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice continue to work with schools where there are children with outstanding assessments to offer help and support. They have played a key part in providing advice to schools so that children and families awaiting an overdue needs assessment are able to access support to better meet their needs.

The Team Around the School (TAS) model has also been extended and the Learners' Single Point of Access (L-SPA) increased capacity to deliver support to schools, to help schools become increasingly able to meet needs at SEN Support.

All these measures are steps towards ensuring the no one is left behind. We will continue to work hard to resolve the poor experiences of families and children and drive towards consistently good experiences.

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

11 December 2023

Question (4): Amanda Lazenby

Within the Local Area SEND Inspection Report it states:

"Many children and young people with SEND and their families wait too long for neurodevelopmental (ND) assessments."

Can you please then explain why it has been decided to entirely withdraw the schools referral to Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic Assessment Pathway (other than for 2 students per school who are most at risk)? This was announced on the Mindworks website on 30th November. The announcement states "We recognise this is an exceptionally difficult position to be in and not one we would want for our children, young people and their families". Can you also explain how this decision feeds in to the All Age Autism Strategy?

Reply:

Nationally children and young people are facing lengthy wait times for ND diagnostic assessments, and this is also the case in Surrey. Some children and young people are waiting 2½ years to be assessed. Mindworks acknowledge that this is an unacceptable position and one that requires immediate improvement.

A priority has been identified to develop a strategic partnership approach that builds on early support for children, young people (CYP) and families building on the priorities of the All-Age Autism Strategy, Additional Needs and Inclusion Strategy and CYP Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health strategy. This will enable approaches for earlier support for neurodiverse children in schools that will help prevent distress and challenge that may otherwise require further intensive intervention across health, education and care.

Through a series of engagement activities that have included partnership/organisations working with schools, families and CYP, there is support to prioritise early intervention capacity to improve outcomes and develop innovative ways to help with the education and health needs of neurodiverse children. For assessments to be valid we need valid screening tools. Digital Connors (ADHD) and SCQ (ASD) have been agreed but are not yet in place. We are hoping that these tools will be in place by the end of 2023 but it is important that referrals use these tools for greater accuracy/validity of screening and assessments. It will also ensure that YP are put on the right pathway at the start.

Communication has been sent to schools and has been published on the Mindworks website. Specific comms to families is now being developed to explain how children will be supported and our next steps for improvement.

Support remains available -

- Children and young People (CYP) with complex needs can access support via the Access and Advice Team

- If there are learning / developmental concerns, schools and families can access the LSPA (Learners Single Point of Access)
- Schools can access consultation slots to discuss and work together on developing strategies to support CYP and families, and we have started to see effective use of building confidence in trying new approaches that improve child's experiences in home / school.
- Families can access the ND helpline 5pm till 11pm, 7 days per week.

Further information and updates can be found on the MindWorks Website which is scheduled to be updated next mid-January 2024 <https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/about-us/talking-points/update-neurodevelopmental-diagnostic-assessment-pathway-children>

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning
11 December 2023

This page is intentionally left blank