

## Notice of Meeting

# Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee



**Date & time**  
Monday, 17 January  
2022 at 10.00 am

**Place**  
**REMOTE &  
INFORMAL MEETING**

**Contact**  
Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny  
Officer  
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**Chief Executive**  
Joanna Killian

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**Please note: due to the COVID-19 situation the Chairman has decided that this meeting will take place remotely and will therefore be an informal meeting of the Select Committee.**

**Please be aware that a link to view a live recording of the meeting will be available on the Committee's webcasting library page on the Surrey County Council website. This page can be accessed by following the link below:**

<https://surreycc.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

**If you would like a copy of this agenda or the attached papers in another format, e.g. large print or braille, or another language please either call 07816 091463 or email**

[benjamin.awkal@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:benjamin.awkal@surreycc.gov.uk).

### **Elected Members**

Ayesha Azad (Vice-Chairman), Liz Bowes (Chairman), Fiona Davidson, Jonathan Essex, Rachael Lake, Andy Lynch, Michaela Martin, Mark Sugden, Alison Todd, Liz Townsend, Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Webster and Fiona White

### **Independent Representatives:**

Mr Simon Parr (Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church), Mrs Tanya Quddus (Parent Governor Representative) and Mr Alex Tear (Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church, Diocese of Guildford)

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Children's Services (including safeguarding)
- Early Help

- Corporate Parenting
- Education
- Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- Adult Learning
- Apprenticeships
- Libraries, Arts and Heritage
- Voluntary Sector

## **AGENDA**

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

To report any absences and substitutions.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 13 DECEMBER 2021**

(Pages 5  
- 18)

To review the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes will be formally agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings at the next public meeting of the Select Committee.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

- I. Any disclosable pecuniary interests and / or
- II. Other interests arising under the Code of Conduct in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at this meeting

#### **NOTES:**

- Members are reminded that they must not participate in any item where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest
- As well as an interest of the Member, this includes any interest, of which the Member is aware, that relates to the Member's spouse or civil partner (or any person with whom the Member is living as a spouse or civil partner)
- Members with a significant personal interest may participate in the discussion and vote on that matter unless that interest could be reasonably regarded as prejudicial.

### **4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

To receive any questions or petitions.

#### **Notes:**

1. The deadline for Member's questions is 12.00pm four working days before the meeting (*Tuesday, 11 January*).
2. The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (*Monday, 10 January*)
3. The deadline for petitions was 14 days before the meeting, and no petitions have been received.

### **5 CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT AND NO WRONG DOOR UPDATE**

(Pages  
19 - 48)

***Purpose of the report:***

This report provides an update on the improvement of Surrey's children's services, an overview of our readiness for a full Ofsted ILACS inspection, a summary of the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit (September 2021) findings/feedback, our response and any impact on our improvement priorities.

**6 INCLUSION, POST-16 DESTINATIONS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT** (Pages 49 - 68)

***Purpose of the report:***

This report seeks to provide oversight of the current position in relation to:

- Our work on Inclusion in relation to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activity we are undertaking and the activities that are supporting schools and other educational settings to be more inclusive
- The alternative provision offer within Surrey for compulsory school age pupils
- The current position of the post-16 rate of participation in education, training and employment (and subsequent proportion of young people who are not in employment education or training, NEET) and
- The work of Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) in securing school improvement.

Finally, the report considers the challenges and opportunities for local authority (LA) maintained schools in a new education landscape.

**7 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN** (Pages 69 - 82)

For the Select Committee to review the attached actions and recommendations tracker and forward work programme, making suggestions or amendments as appropriate.

**8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next public meeting of the Select Committee will be held on Thursday, 7 April 2022.

**Joanna Killian  
Chief Executive**

Published: Friday, 7 January 2022

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING & CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 13 December 2021 as a REMOTE & INFORMAL MEETING.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 17 January 2022.

**Elected Members:**

- \* Ayesha Azad (Vice-Chairman)
- \* Liz Bowes (Chairman)
- \* Fiona Davidson
- \* Jonathan Essex
- \* Rachael Lake
- Andy Lynch
- \* Michaela Martin
- \* Mark Sugden
- \* Alison Todd
- \* Liz Townsend
- Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman)
- \* Jeremy Webster
- \* Fiona White

**Co-opted Members:**

- \* Mr Simon Parr, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church
- \* Mrs Tanya Quddus, Parent Governor Representative
- \* Mr Alex Tear, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church, Diocese of Guildford

**41/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Chris Townsend.

**42/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2021 [Item 2]**

Minutes to be agreed at the next public meeting.

**43/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

Fiona White declared a personal interest in relation to an aspect of Item 5. The Member was to leave during the discussion of that aspect of the Item.

Declaration: Surrey County Council representative on the Limnerslease Management Committee, part of the Artist Village at Watts Gallery.

#### **44/21 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

**Witness:**

Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

1. A question had been received from Fiona Davidson.
2. As a supplementary question, the Member asked whether the same data could be provided with reference to full-time equivalent social workers, rather than based on the number of social workers.
3. The Director – Corporate Parenting replied that the data could be provided at a later date.
4. A Member asked whether there was guidance for part-time social workers regarding caseload numbers. The Director highlighted that experience of social workers was a greater factor when distributing the caseload, which was also dependent on the varied demands of each child. Social worker caseloads was closely managed by managers.

**Action:**

- i. The Director of Corporate Parenting to provide data, including commentary on caseload, on the number of full-time social workers by the next public meeting, in January 2022.

#### **45/21 SCRUTINY OF 2022/23 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2026/27 [Item 5]**

**Witnesses:**

Becky Rush, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities

Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Marie Snelling, Executive Director for Customer and Communities

Susan Wills, Assistant Director for Cultural Services and Registrations

Rachel Wigley, Director – Finance Insights and Performance

Daniel Peattie, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Nikki O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Improvement and TPP/Resources

Mark Hak-Sanders, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate

**Key points raised in the discussion:**

1. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that the council's draft Budget for 2022/23 contained a gap of £19.5 million, including a £2.2 million gap in the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) Directorate and a £8.6 million gap in the High Needs Block. There was a focus on self-funding opportunities within the Capital Programme, as well as those which would deliver revenue savings in the future.
2. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate explained that the budget setting process was underpinned by core planning assumptions developed under the PESTLE Framework (political, environmental, social, technological, legal and economic factors). Funding projections were based on expected council tax, business rate and government grant income. The Local Government Finance Settlement was expected later in the week, which would establish central government funding and provide clarity on the council's funding position. Each directorate had been asked to identify efficiencies to contribute towards closing the gap for 2022/23 and the medium-term. The Capital Programme was described as being at the limit of what the council could afford. Consultation with residents and stakeholders on draft proposals and Equality Impact

Assessments would conclude at the end of December. The final budget was to be presented to Cabinet in January 2022 and approved by Cabinet in February 2022.

3. The Strategic Finance Business Partner highlighted that the budget setting process was built around the Community Vision 2030 and the council's priority objectives. The draft corporate budgetary position presented net pressures of £71.1 million, which was expected to be offset by an assumed funding increase of £2.4 million and efficiencies of £49.8 million, leaving a net gap of £19.5 million to close. The pressures were largely associated with pay and contract inflation and increased demand for services. Efficiencies which had been rated as red (achievable but challenging and/or complex to deliver) accounted for £11.1 million of the overall efficiencies, similar to the £10.8 million in the 2021/22 budget.
4. At month seven of 2021/22, an overspend of £17 million for the directorate budget envelope was forecast. The overspend was largely across Adult Social Care (£3 million), CFLAG (£7.1 million), and the DSG High Needs Block offset (£8.8 million). These were offset largely by an underspend in Environment, Transport and Infrastructure due to an improvement in waste prices. The overall council position at the end of the 2021/22 financial year was expected to be balanced, with reserves supplemented with unused contingency.
5. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2022-27 was based on the same core planning assumptions. The assumed funding gap over the 5-year MTFS was £157.4 million, which reflected the anticipated budget requirement and spending pressures and the expected funding reduction from 2023/34.
6. The Select Committee was informed that the total contingency available for 2022/23 was approximately £58 million, which would be supplemented by any used amounts from the 2021/22 budget.
7. Consultation had found that protection of funding for services that support vulnerable residents, including adult social care and services for children, was of high importance to residents, as were joining-up services to improve outcomes, putting vulnerable people at the heart of decision-making, and greater involvement of residents in decision-making and delivery affecting local places. Residents also supported the shift to early



intervention/prevention, wanted guidance on how they could make a difference in their areas and wanted the council to lobby Government for support for the county to transition to a greener future. A call for evidence which was open to all stakeholders would run until the 28 December and its findings would be included in the final budget report.

8. The Director – Finance Insights and Performance outlined the Twin Track approach to budget setting to be used by the council going forward.
9. A Member asked how much of the current financial year's red ragged efficiencies were in the CFLL Directorate Budget and how much of that sum was likely to be saved. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate stated that there was a correlation in the distribution of the red-rated efficiencies between the two financial years, as in 2021/22 they were also predominantly found in adult social care and the CFLL Directorate. It was highlighted that a lot of the in-year overspend pertained to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had not been anticipated when that Budget was agreed – adequate contingency was available to meet that pressure. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – CFLL stated that £3.6 million of undelivered efficiencies were expected within the Directorate in the 2021/22 financial year, mostly associated with levels of social care demand.
10. A Member queried how much of the adult social care precept had been levied already and how much remained. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate stated that the 2022/23 draft Budget assumed no use of the adult social care precept. In the 2021/22 Budget, of the available 3%, a precept of 0.5% was used; the Spending Review earlier in 2021 provided a further flexibility of 1% per year over the course of the three-year Spending Review period, making an adult social care precept of 3.5% available for the 2022/23 Budget.
11. The Member asked to what extent a reduction of the government grant funding over the medium term had been factored into the budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Strategic Finance Business Partner explained that for the 2022/23 budget there was no such funding reduction expected, but from 2023/34 onwards there was a high-level assumption that government funding for the council would disappear altogether over the course of a five-

year transitional period. This was suspected to be somewhat offset by an increase in the council tax base.

12. A Member asked how the council-wide draft Budget and MTFs would affect the delivery of the Community Vision 2030 and the council's four priority objectives. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate stated that the council set its budget with regard to the Community Vision 2030 and the four priority objectives. This was shown through decisions regarding whether directorates were required to close budget gaps in their entirety or whether additional funding could be directed to those services. Thus, it was unlikely that the budget gaps for 2022/23 for Adult Social Care, CFLL and DSG High Needs Block would be closed through further efficiencies. The Member queried how the draft Budget and the MTFs took account of the resident's priorities. The Strategic Finance Business Partner stated that the consultation with residents which took place prior to the draft Budget being presented to Cabinet reflected resident's key priority of protecting the services that delivered to the most vulnerable residents. The total investment into such services had increased at a higher rate than the council's total funding.
13. The Member asked how the future funding had been estimated in the draft Budget, the level of confidence in those estimates, the accuracy of previous estimates and whether any further clarity around the Local Government Finance Settlement had been received since publication of the draft Budget report pack. The Strategic Finance Business Partner said that the final funding position of the previous financial year was as had been assumed, the one exception was the additional COVID-19 funding included in the Settlement. The current financial year was difficult to predict due to the varied mechanisms central government could utilise to distribute the £1.6 billion of additional local government funding included in the Chancellor's Autumn budget.
14. The Executive Director for Customer and Communities introduced the Customer and Communities draft Budget for 2022/23. The net budget for the Directorate was £10.8 million, including income in excess of £10 million. Directorate pressures, largely associated with pay inflation, were £0.7 million, added to the Directorate's share of the corporate funding gap resulted in an overall gap of £0.9 million. The Directorate had, as a result, identified £0.8 million of efficiencies, which left £0.1 million of the overall gap left to close. The draft Budget assumed service

income was to return to pre-COVID levels, this remained a risk and challenge which would be closely monitored. The draft Capital Programme contained £34 million of investment into the Libraries Transformation Programme – a five-year programme to modernise libraries had been agreed at Cabinet in November 2021.

15. A Member enquired about the basis of the assumption that service income would return to pre-COVID levels and the degree of confidence in that assumption. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – Improvement and TPP/Resources highlighted the challenge of this assumption and highlighted that there had already been positive movements in the latter half of the 2021/22 financial year, especially in the Registration service, although £500,000 of COVID funding had been used to support the Directorate in the 2021/22 financial year due to a sustained loss of income.
16. The Member asked about the terms, methodology and the objectives of the comprehensive review of the Heritage Service. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services Libraries and Registration explained that the review was based on ensuring value for money within the service whilst improving the offer, such as through digitalisation.

*Fiona White left the meeting at 11:15.*

17. A Member raised the issue of a broken lift at Weybridge Library that had been out of order for over a year, preventing hire income. The Cabinet Member for Communities told the Member this would be followed up and he would respond to the Member directly. There had been a similar issue with a lift in Guildford Library and there was great difficulty obtaining the correct parts in order to fix the lifts. The Executive Director for Customer and Communities added that there had been a backlog of maintenance issues at the council's libraries, which were being addressed with Land and Property colleagues.

*Fiona White rejoined the meeting 11:22.*

18. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families introduced the CFLL directorate pack by highlighting the increased demand for the Directorate's services. Significant pressures arose from staffing costs, recruitment and retention of social workers and children's placements in the 2021/22 year, which had been

factored into the 2022/23 draft Budget. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning explained that there was rigorous monitoring of the progress of the transformation programme aiming to bring High Needs Block spending back into balance within the next five years. There had been discussions with the Department of Education (DfE) regarding a Safety Valve agreement. A review was underway to reduce home to school transport spending and increase independence for young people and was to be taken to Cabinet on 14 December 2021.

19. A Member asked what impact government's SEND review could have on the assumptions around funding for the 2022/23 budget and the MTFS. The Strategic Finance Business Partner – CFLL explained that the current assumptions around ongoing funding for the High Needs Block included an 8% year on year increase in funding, which was based on previous years and was likely to be broadly correct for the next couple of years. Following this, the indications suggest that it could then reduce from the current level.
20. A Member brought attention to a number of cases where eligible children were still yet to have been provided with home to school transport for the current academic year, which has resulted in children missing their education. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning acknowledged the situation and recognised the impact this was having on some families. The number of eligible children without transport was lower than in previous years and the commissioning team continued to work hard to try and resolve the issue on a case-by-case basis. The issues were usually due to negotiations with providers or families about suitable provision. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning added that the review was considering the council delivering some provision itself and utilising community vehicles and was to ensure parents were well informed about the home to school transport offer.
21. A Member asked how the draft Budget and MTFS would meet the needs of the Directorate's service users by improving outcomes whilst addressing its key financial challenges and the council's strategic priorities. The Executive Director highlighted that the approach taken was about working differently to better meet families' needs at a lower cost, such as through the prior introduction of the new Family Safeguarding Model and the creation of more in-county placements. The Member asked

officers to explain the main drivers of pressures in the draft Budget and MTFs. The Executive Director stated that children's services were yet to witness the reduction in demand expected as a result of practice changes implemented prior to the pandemic, although they had mitigated demand; during the pandemic, the council had more children in care, as well as an increase in the number of children with additional needs supported in education and with Educational Health and Care plans. The Member highlighted the challenge of the high number of agency social workers and the financial pressure this created. The Executive Director stated that agency workers cost around £23,000 more than permanent staff and some of the planned efficiencies aimed to reduce this pressure in a number of ways. An improved OFSTED rating would likely improve the recruitment and retention of permanent staff. The Member asked what changes to the level of need and demand were expected in the next financial year and MTFs. The Executive Director explained that the Directorate had experienced an increase in the level of need and demand as a result of the pandemic.

22. A Member sought further clarity and context around the efficiencies rated red and amber and which would result in service reductions. The Member questioned the Service's readiness of delivering the substantial efficiency related to the No Wrong Door programme, as well as many other efficiencies related to looked after children. The Executive Director explained that efficiencies had been focused on areas where the Service was facing the greatest financial pressures. The Director – Corporate Parenting shared that through the shadow-form/pilot No Wrong Door service, a significant number of children had been diverted from entering care. The planned efficiencies were described as challenging and ambitious, but there were some which were more likely to be achieved than the table suggested, such as quality and performance staffing. The Executive Director shared that the placement costs for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) were covered by the Home Office, but the increased demand on social workers was unmet.

23. A Member asked about the numbers of children who had secured placements in non-maintained independent school settings and the resulting cost to the Education Service. The Executive Director stated that there was a significant cost difference between a non-maintained independent setting and a maintained special school of around £30,000 per placement. At the pre-16 stage, the Education Service had over 1,000 children in non-

maintained independent settings and a further 277 young people at post-16. The Cabinet Member for Adult and Learning added that the Service had a stepping down policy to move children into Surrey schools where appropriate.

24. A Member asked how many 18-25 year olds could be impacted by the planned efficiency of no longer funding housing provision which had originally been commissioned for care leavers but was not being allocated accordingly by District and Borough Councils, and in what way they might be impacted. The Executive Director explained that this would reduce the housing options for some young adults, but these were young adults to whom the council did not such duties as it did care leavers.
25. The Member asked how the planned efficiencies related to the home to school transport review might adversely affect learners. The Executive Director explained there were statutory requirements, such as in respect of the length of journeys, which were always complied with. The planned efficiency was focused on exploring alternative transport options for these children which could reduce costs, whilst ensuring suitability and building independence.
26. A Member asked which of the efficiencies directly impacted on areas of delivery where performance was significantly below target. The Executive Director stated that performance should not be impacted in any of those areas, as there would be no reduction in staffing. The Member questioned whether there was a need for additional staffing in these areas, especially Educational Health and Care plan caseworkers. The Executive Director stated that stability and training of staffing was more important than an increase in the number of staff.

**Actions:**

- i. Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to share the number of children with SEND placed in non-maintained independent settings with the Select Committee.
- ii. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to provide the number of 18-25 year olds with no prior Surrey County Council contact that would be affected by the planned efficiency.

**Recommendation:**

1. After the meeting, the Committee shall agree wording for inclusion in a joint report from the council's Select Committees to the Cabinet in respect of the draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium-term Financial Strategy to 2026/27. That wording shall be drafted under the oversight of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and then shared with the Committee for agreement.

**46/21 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN [Item 6]**

1. A Member brought attention to a number of actions and recommendations which had been on the tracker for an extensive period of time without a clear indication as to when responses would be provided and sought clarification regarding the progress of outstanding actions. The Executive Director stated that these outstanding actions had been chased. A Member proposed that a response to all outstanding actions would be provided by the next public meeting of the Select Committee, unless there were significant reasons why it could not be possible. The Chairman noted the views of the Members and the Executive Director and stated that an appropriate approach would be established moving forward.
2. The Cabinet Member for Families and Children shared that she had suggested at Cabinet that a cross-party task group of the Select Committee could be a helpful way to monitor the implementation of the Child Poverty Action Plan. The Scrutiny Officer explained that a sub-group comprising Members from across the Select Committees had been discussed with the Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and scrutiny officer colleagues.

**47/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 7]**

The Select Committee noted that its next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 18 January 2022.

Meeting ended at: 12.35 pm

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**Chairman**

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**Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 13 December 2021**

In the light of the recent appalling death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes there has been a great deal of focus on the workload and inexperience of many front line children’s social workers. Can you please advise:

- How many cases an ordinary level children’s social worker at Surrey County Council is dealing with at any one time?
- What is the maximum children’s social worker caseload that Surrey County Council sets?
- If and how Surrey County Council is ensuring that senior children’s social workers with significant experience accompany less experienced workers on family visits to provide on-the-job training to spot parental deception and ensure that the child is spoken to directly, without parental involvement?

**Response**

- We are able to monitor the caseloads of all practitioners supporting children, young people and families. As of 7 December 2021, the average caseloads for our social workers and other practitioners are as follows:

<b>Team</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>Case Holders</b>	<b>Average Caseload*</b>
Assessment Teams	1,192	72	16.6
Children with Disabilities	803	49	16.4
Family Safeguarding	1,917	119	16.1
Fostering & Adoption	133	26	5.1
Leaving Care	783	51	15.4
Looked After Children	768	62	12.4
Other	11	4	2.8
Safeguarding Adolescent	642	42	15.3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6,249</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>14.7</b>

*(\*Caseload is based on headcount, not FTE)*

- There is no fixed ‘maximum’ caseload for social workers or other case holding practitioners within children’s services. We do however have an aspiration for no social worker to hold more than 15 cases at any one time. This does differ depending on the complexity and nature of the social work cases and

managers are routinely assessing the workload of practitioners to ensure it is suitable and manageable.

- Regarding the support we provide to Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs):
  - In terms of induction NQSWs have a two week induction which covers Motivational Interviewing, Emotional Resilience and SelfCare, Personal Safety, Abuse & Neglect, Social Work Law, Genograms/Ecomaps/Chronologies, Home Visits and Chairing Meetings, Safeguarding Approach- Social Work Practice Model, What does 'Good Practice' look like and speakers from Health, Police, Children's Single Point of Access, Fostering, User Participation.
  - Then in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), the NQSWs are supported by their Team Managers who provide them with reflective supervision on a weekly basis for the first six weeks, then fortnightly from six weeks to six months and thereafter on a monthly basis. In addition, the quadrant based ASYE Assessor facilitates monthly ASYE Learning Events which incorporate Action Learning Sets and provides the NQSW with monthly supervision on an individual or group basis.
  - NQSWs are provided with two days each month of protected time; one day to attend the monthly ASYE Learning Events and one day to work on their ASYE portfolio.
  - The caseload for NQSWs is 25% of a 'standard' caseload at three months, 50% at six months and then from six to twelve months in the role, this increases steadily (to 90% of a normal caseload) and complexity.
  - The quadrant based ASYE Assessor undertakes the assessment of the NQSW at the review stages of three, six and eleven months, in partnership with the NQSW and their Team Manager.
  - NQSWs also have a 12-month probation period.

**Liz Bowes, Chairman – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture  
Select Committee**



Monday, 17 January 2022

## CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT & NO WRONG DOOR UPDATE

### Purpose of report:

This report provides an update on the improvement of Surrey's children's services, an overview of our readiness for a full Ofsted ILACS inspection, a summary of the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit (September 2021) findings/feedback, our response and any impact on our improvement priorities.

Further information is included on the services and activity outlined in the last report to the Select Committee. At the meeting of the Select Committee in July 2021, [the decision was made \(see item 26/21\)](#): *'That the Cabinet Member for Children and Families provide an update on the Children's Improvement Programme at the Select Committee's first meeting of 2022'*.

In addition, the report provides an update to the Select Committee on the implementation of the No Wrong Door model in Surrey following discussions at the meeting in July 2021.

### Introduction:

1. Children's services improvement is a high priority for the Council. It is important that the Select Committee is aware of the evidence of progress made to improve services so far, as determined by both internal and external scrutiny and of the ongoing, ambitious and innovative improvement plan which is driven by a focus on improving outcomes for children and families and goes well beyond resolving only the issues highlighted by Ofsted, the Department for Education (DfE) and the Commissioner.
2. The routine national inspection activity resumed in May 2021 and Ofsted are continuing to carry out the 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) programme. Although the timetable for inspection is not notified in advance, we are anticipating a full re-inspection of Surrey's children's services between Spring and Summer 2022.

3. In July 2021, the Director for Corporate Parenting updated the Select Committee on progress developing and implementing the No Wrong Door model in Surrey. The delays to the project, impact from Covid-19, progress identifying suitable sites and the staff consultation were all discussed with Members. A revised implementation plan and go-live date have subsequently been agreed with the Safeguarding Adolescents and Youth Offending Board; further details are included in this report.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Services**

4. Since the last update to the Select Committee in July, arrangements across frontline children's services largely remain the same with both frontline and support staff being asked to work in offices and the community where required to enable services to function effectively.
5. The recent [Government announcement](#) setting out new measures in response to the Omicron variant and moving to 'Plan B' in England does not have any immediate impact on the day-to-day running of services for children and young people in Surrey. We will of course continue to monitor guidance, legislation changes and the local situation to ensure we are responding appropriately.
6. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced since the last report – though there are still higher levels of demand across certain parts of the service, this is having a less disruptive impact day-by-day. Whilst the day-by-day impact has reduced, COVID-19 still has a significant impact on the remaining levels of demand on services, particularly when compared to the planned strategic direction pre-pandemic.
7. Throughout this period of local and national lockdowns and the wider impact from COVID-19, our focus has continued to be on delivering the essential work to support Surrey's residents, to safeguard children and to maintain consistency across frontline services wherever possible. As we enter the winter months and the risk of further disruption to services increases, we will remain vigilant and ready to respond – at pace – to any impact from the pandemic and will enact contingency plans where needed.

### **Inspections Update**

#### **Ofsted – Monitoring Visit – September 2021**

8. On 7 and 8 September, Ofsted carried out their 5th monitoring visit (since the 2018 inspection); this 2-day visit was focused on care leavers and specifically looked at areas of practice that were of concern during the last inspection:
  - The provision of information for young people on their entitlements and health histories.

- The workloads of personal advisers (PAs) in the leaving care team.
  - The experiences and progress of young people aged 18 to 25 years of age who have left care.
9. The inspectors spoke to 10 care leavers, met with over 15 frontline practitioners and Team Managers, reviewed a selection of recent audits and looked at a significant amount of evidence and performance information both during the visit and in the days leading up to it.
  10. Ofsted found that Surrey's children's services are helping children "make progress in their transitions to becoming independent young adults" and "young people who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UAS) receive specialist and skilled support". They fed back that Personal Advisers (PAs) understand the profiles and needs of young people well and are in touch with nearly all care leavers and they work hard to maintain contact and trusting relationships.
  11. Some concerns were highlighted where young people have not been well supported because of frequent changes in their allocated PA and the support provided by the Duty system (e.g. when PAs are unwell or absent) was not always good enough. The care leavers service is exploring a new way of supporting young people when their PAs are absent for long periods – a team in the South West quadrant has an exemplary model for this which we want to learn from for the rest of the county.
  12. During the visit, inspectors identified that the majority of young people are in suitable education, employment and training, however, "nearly a third of young people are not, and this rate of non-engagement has not improved since the last inspection". Although this rate of young people not in education, employment or training is similar to our statistical neighbours and consistent with the wider picture across England, we are working determinedly to reduce it.
    - a) There is also considerable churn in this cohort of young people - i.e. it is not the same young people throughout the year that are out of education, employment or training (EET). The Virtual School has had considerable success with supporting a number of young people into EET, however with significant numbers of young people coming into care at age 16-17 – including many unaccompanied asylum seeking children - increasing the overall percentage of care leavers in EET remains a challenge.
    - b) There are a variety of reasons why young people may not be in education, employment or training. It can be due to a lack of provision, particularly when trying to start college or similar during the year and after enrolment. Some young people demonstrate historical disengagement with education and their ambitions are more focused on employment. The need for Level 2 qualifications in English and Maths can also put up barriers for some young

people. Mental health needs or additional education needs can also be factors for some.

- c) The service's virtual school provides helpful dedicated education and employment advice for care leavers and UAS young people and an extensive range of mentoring and other well-targeted initiatives, which helps many young people make progress.
- d) Ofsted noted that "Senior managers recognise that they need to do more work within the county council and with local employers to provide more opportunities for young people to enter employment, apprenticeships and training in the local economy."

13. The full report is available on the Ofsted website – published on 12 October 2021 and is attached here (see: 'Annex 1 - Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter 12.10.2021'). There is still more to do to ensure we are providing consistently good support for our care leavers – the Getting to Good team are working closely with the service to tackle the areas for improvement highlighted during the visit – and to build on the strengths and examples of great practice as well. The priority improvements following the feedback include:

- Adopting a new model to manage staff absence and improve the duty system across all quadrants (learning from best practice in the South West).
- Updating the Care Leaver Local Offer website and published document to improve knowledge of the offer and entitlements.
- Expanding the role of the Virtual School to provide additional support to young people aged 16 and over.
- Updating the housing protocol (for care leavers) alongside districts and boroughs.
- Ongoing work of the Placement, Value, Outcomes (PVO) programme to improve sufficiency of suitable accommodation for care leavers.

#### **Ofsted Inspections – What Next:**

14. Surrey's children's services have now completed 5 Ofsted Monitoring Visits and 1 Ofsted Focused (Assurance) Visit since the last full inspection in 2018. As of this month, children's services now anticipate the next inspection from Ofsted to be the full ILACS inspection which will result in a graded judgement of the quality of our services.

15. Each visit over the last 2-3 years has looked at different areas of practice across different parts of children's services. While there is still more to do to improve services, the quality of practice and the outcomes for children and families have vastly improved since 2018. This position is supported and evidenced both by the external scrutiny (e.g. from Ofsted, Department for Education, Peer Reviews, etc) and the internal quality assurance, performance

and audit intelligence (e.g. case audit programme, mock inspections, performance information, etc).

16. At the time of the last report to the Select Committee in July 2021, we were anticipating a full re-inspection of children’s services sometime later in 2021 or in early 2022. This timeline has been revised (by Ofsted) which may have led to the decision to hold a Monitoring Visit (focused on services for care leavers) in September 2021.

### **Inspection of Youth Offending Services**

17. From 22 – 26 November Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) visited our Youth Offending Service to carry out a full inspection, with 8 inspectors looking across the system at our youth justice practice and our governance. This included 47 interviews with practitioners about children they are supporting, 17 focus groups, individual conversations with children and numerous conversations with leadership and management. This included a conversation with our Safeguarding Adolescence Youth Offending Board members and our Deputy Cabinet Member Maureen Attewell.
18. The inspectors gave limited feedback at the end of the week however they did acknowledge that an incredible amount of activity had taken place since the last inspection in 2019 and reported that they had seen an engaged partnership and energetic, child-focused practitioners. The final report with the findings, recommendations and overall graded judgement will be published in February 2022.

<b>No Wrong Door Update</b>
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### **The No Wrong Door Model and Way of Working**

19. As part of the Children’s Services Improvement Programme Surrey has committed to implement the No Wrong Door™ model which was pioneered by North Yorkshire Council and which provides support (and if necessary flexible accommodation) from one multi-agency hub for the most complex teenagers. The hub provides outreach and crisis support to enable young people to remain in their family home or to prevent a breakdown of their home in care and provides very flexible support and accommodation if needed. The hub comprises residential and outreach workers, a life coach (psychologist or family therapist), communication worker (speech and language therapist), embedded police officer and performance and intelligence roles, and can provide outreach, residential beds, specialist foster care and supported lodgings and flexible solutions.

20. The whole hub team works within a restorative and solution focussed approach with the underlying principle that the No Wrong Door hub 'sticks' with the young person and there is a multi-agency intelligence-based approach to managing risk. Young people's aspirations drive practice and services wrap around young people, rather than them having to be re-assessed and re-referred, especially when they may struggle to make and keep appointments. No matter how diverse or complex, young people's needs are met within one team of skilled and trusted workers

### **No Wrong Door in Surrey.**

21. Following the report to Cabinet in October 2020 from the Members' Reference Group, Surrey County Council formally committed to develop two No Wrong Door Hubs by the end of 2022/23. North Yorkshire County Council have been engaged to support our journey towards formal accreditation of our implementation of the model and their input and support has been invaluable.
22. The first hub will be based from Cheyne Walk, Horley and will become operational in January 2022. Each hub will be able to work with up to 40 young people at any one time who are at imminent risk of becoming looked after. They will also support up to 10 young people who are looked after and who would benefit from the No Wrong Door accommodation as well as support. This will reach a total of approximately 150 young people a year and will also provide a 24/7 crisis response.
23. The Virtual School and colleagues in Children Looked After Health Services, the Youth Offending Service and the voluntary sector have been part of developing the offer to young people and how No Wrong Door can build on the good work that is already ongoing. In particular we have ensured appropriate focus on how important educational engagement and attainment is for young people's long-term outcomes.
24. Development of the No Wrong Door service has been an integral part of work to implement a Safeguarding Adolescents approach in Surrey. This work has been undertaken by a 'joining the dots' group comprising social work teams, the Youth Offending Service, the Safeguarding Partnership Hidden Crimes manager and led by the Assistant Director for Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA), Early Help & Youth Justice. No Wrong Door managers have been part of delivering learning events to staff in the Quadrants about the Safeguarding Adolescents Practice Model, as part of helping positively influence the networks and practice around vulnerable adolescents. This is essential to provide a strong foundation for roll-out of the No Wrong Door Service, and its principles and provocations.



## Progress To-Date

25. Operational planning for the first No Wrong Door Hub is at an advanced stage and 'go-live' is expected by mid-January 2022. Activities completed include:
- a) Restructure of the social care workforce has taken place and the Hub management team is in place – most hub workers will be in post by January.
  - b) Identification of the first hub location and resources and development of business processes and pathways.
  - c) Delivery of a programme of learning and development for staff and future sessions in place.
  - d) Scoping with the Virtual School and the management team how young people will be supported with the core offer, including support to achieve in education, skills, training and employment.
  - e) A highly effective and well attended Operational Board, and contribution of the No Wrong Door model to the wider safeguarding adolescents' agenda.
  - f) Commencement of the communication workers in post.
  - g) Identification of resource to deliver the life coach role, and recruitment is planned.
  - h) Accreditation programme agreed with North Yorkshire County Council.
  - i) Role descriptions for Family Hub foster carers and supported lodgings families have been developed and foster carers and families have been spoken to about the roles.
  - j) Data gathering and analysis needs have been identified and joint working with the Performance Team is being progressed.
  - k) Involvement of care experienced young people in developing a name and logo for the Surrey No Wrong Door service and consulting with a wider group of young people.
26. Key to the success of No Wrong Door is strong multi-agency sign-up to, and strategic governance of, the model, eligibility, principles and provocations. It has been decided that overall strategic governance of implementation should sit with the new Safeguarding Adolescents and Youth Offending Board which is a multi-agency board, and which will ensure join-up of vision and focus. However, this Board has only just become operational and there has been a void in formal multi agency strategic governance and direction of No Wrong Door until recently. This has delayed implementation of the model and continues to be a risk to the whole-system approach that is the underpinning foundation of the model. North Yorkshire County Council have stressed the importance of a strong leadership spine in maximising the effectiveness of this way of working for young people and for the agencies involved.
27. The implementation of the No Wrong Door model has been delayed by 10 months from the original planned timescale, largely due to the impact of Covid-19 on all agencies, changes in senior personnel in some agencies, a delay in

establishing the Strategic Governance of the work, delays in the social care staff consultation and subsequent recruitment. However, no further delays are anticipated.

28. The second No Wrong Door Hub is being built as one of the projects from the Capital Programme and is likely to come on stream in Autumn/Winter 2022.

### **Measuring Benefits and Outcomes**

29. No Wrong Door will measure a range of activities, and outcomes for young people and a monthly dashboard is currently being designed to report on the expected benefits/outcomes of the model:
- a) Reduce the length of time children spend in care.
  - b) Reduce repeat admissions to care.
  - c) Improve placement stability and reduce the number of placement changes that children experience.
  - d) Reduce the number and length of missing episodes.
  - e) Reduce involvement with the criminal justice system - arrests, charges, repeat offending.
  - f) Increase positive engagement and involvement with drug/alcohol services and reduction in substance misuse.
  - g) Reduce out of county placements.
  - h) Reduce the usage of children's homes beds.
  - i) Increase education, employment and training for young people aged 16+.
  - j) Improve engagement with education/learning for children aged under 16.
  - k) Improve emotional well-being measures.
  - l) Increase the number of communication assessments and plans.
  - m) Improve visibility of self-reported impact from young people and families/carers (Outcome Stars and 'Score 15' reports).
  - n) Increase the time and capacity to respond to urgent/crisis referrals.
  - o) Increase the number of young people that are diverted from care or reunified with family members.
30. In addition, our budget monitoring will monitor the financial impact of the No Wrong Door model. Conservative financial 'impact targets' have been set showing how No Wrong Door will contribute to future cost containment in the looked after placement budgets:
- Cost avoidance through availability of emergency placement and 28-day work to enable children to return home quickly of approx. £138k per year
  - Cost avoidance through the medium-term accommodation offer and prevention of externally commissioned residential care of approx. £692k per year.

- Cost avoidance through the No Wrong Door foster carers and supported lodgings preventing an Independent Fostering Agency placement of £50k per year.
- Cost avoidance through hub work to prevent children becoming looked after of approx. £1.1m per year.

### **Creative Solutions**

31. Whilst No Wrong Door is not yet live, a ‘pop-up’ edge of care service (called Creative Solutions) has been running since late January 2021, initially as a response to support families in the second COVID-19 lockdown. This has been a single agency social care service and has been a purely outreach service (without the accommodation options and multi-agency management of risk provided by No Wrong Door). It has enabled some ‘shadow’ running of the No Wrong Door ways of working and given staff the opportunity to develop their skills in working with children and families on the edge of care.
32. In the first 9 months that the Creative Solutions service has been running it has received 126 referrals. A service has been provided to 75 young people who were at imminent risk of becoming looked after, or who were at risk of having to move home within the looked after system. Following review, the other 51 referrals were not progressed with Creative Solutions due to not fitting with the criteria and instead the young people continued to receive support from their social workers and other practitioners within Family Safeguarding.
33. 9 of the young people that received a service from Creative Solutions were already looked after and of the remaining 66 young people, 6 became looked after or moved home whilst Creative Solutions became involved. This therefore shows the potential that No Wrong Door will have to offer effective support as an alternative to admission to care, and with the multi-agency co-ordination, to improve long term outcomes for children and reduction in crisis presentations to social care, health and police services.

<b>Children’s Services Improvement Update</b>
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#### **‘Getting to Good’**

34. The Getting to Good (GtG) plan (i.e. the next iteration of the children’s improvement plan) was developed 12 months ago and incorporates the learning from previous inspections, peer reviews, feedback from children and families and the significant amount of quality assurance work. The plan goes beyond the inspection findings from 2018; Effective Family Resilience is an entirely new practice model and therefore a more ambitious and innovative improvement plan was required to ‘Get us to Good’.

35. The GtG Working Group continues to meet weekly and is overseeing a huge amount of improvement activity across all services – including some significant projects currently underway. The group members work closely with Quality Assurance and frontline services to ensure the improvement work is prioritised and delivered to a high standard with robust evidence in place.
36. Throughout the Summer the GtG group was reviewing – in detail – the Ofsted ‘grade descriptors of good practice’ and self-assessing against these. There is still a lot to do before we can be confident of achieving an overall ‘Good’ judgement at a full Ofsted inspection; however, we are on the right trajectory – as evidenced by the recent Ofsted visits and our quality assurance findings.
37. The next 6 months are critical for Getting to Good and Inspection Readiness. The recent Ofsted visit enabled us to model our service, staff, quality and performance information preparation and in October 2021 we developed a forward plan to ensure all services are ‘ready’ for a full inspection next year. Further information is included in the attached Annex document (see ‘Annex 2 - Getting to Good & Inspection Readiness 6-Month Forward Plan’).
38. As reported in July, our improvement work and Family Resilience Transformation Programme continues throughout this year and we have been giving particular focus to Neglect and Children with Disabilities (CWD) as these areas have been highlighted as requiring further improvement, a position supported by the feedback from the Ofsted Focused Visit in Spring this year. The continued implementation of our Family Safeguarding Model for children in need of help and protection is a key part of shifting our services to a model of earlier intervention and we are also maintaining a relentless focus on our workforce to ensure that children and families are supported by skilled and experienced practitioners.
39. The rollout and embedding of Family Safeguarding and Motivational Interviewing continues with significant effort on training, staff engagement and support. The embedding of these new ways of working continues to be a challenge. We can see the improvements happening in frontline practice but getting all practitioners comfortable using these approaches is taking longer than expected. There are pockets of excellent work but sometimes social work practice is not as strong as it needs to be and it can be inconsistent.

## **Neglect**

40. Neglect continues to be the most common category of harm for children subject to child protection plans in Surrey. Developing colleagues’ skills in working with families where neglect is an issue is an important aspect of their professional development. We are continuing to embed the Graded Care Profile 2.0 (GCP2) assessment tool to be used by social care and multi-agency practitioners to

better identify and respond when there are concerns about the quality of a child's care in the family home.

41. Practitioner training continues to be delivered for our own staff and colleagues in partner agencies, and the centralised recording system for GCP2 went live in the summer. As of October 2021, over 700 staff from children's services and partner agencies have been trained and licensed in the use of GCP2 (this includes over 75% of our social workers). We're working hard to recruit schools and the education sector into using the Graded Care Profile 2.0 and while this has been challenging at times, further engagement should help. Our recently released video ([GCP 2 in Surrey film - YouTube](#)) explaining the purpose of the tool is intended to increase engagement within children's social care and across the wider partnership. Greater use of data and performance reports is also helping to identify gaps in use of the tool.

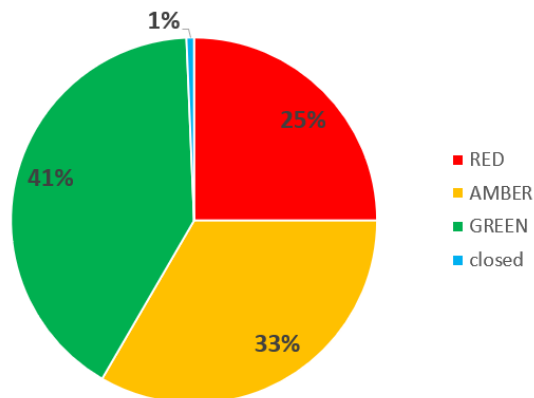
### Children with Disabilities (CWD) Service

42. Since the last report to the Corporate Parenting Board the Quality Assurance Inspection Leads team have completed the comprehensive review of support being given to all children by the CWD service. The focus of the review was to seek assurance that:

- The interventions provided to the child/family are relevant to the specific needs of the child.
- Where there are concerns regarding parenting capacity which are of a safeguarding nature, these concerns are appropriately and transparently discussed and addressed.

43. All children's cases were RAG rated based on the quality of practice – this followed a complete case-audit and a reflective discussion with the practitioner. The findings highlight the need to improve practice for children and families supported by the service:

CWD Case RAG RATINGS (combined for entire service)



The chart shows the RAG rating (Red, Amber or Green) of CWD children's cases following the review.

41% have been assessed as 'Green', 33% as 'Amber', 25% as 'Red' and the remaining 1% were closed cases.

44. The review highlighted some strengths for the service:
- Practitioners and managers in the service entered into reflective discussions and feedback was overall positive.
  - Assessments completed in the service are generally of a good quality.
  - Practitioners in the Level 3 Service have a good understanding of practice standards and were seeking to work towards these standards.
  - Management oversight and supervision in the Reviewing Team was noted to be purposeful and generally timely.
45. A number of themes were identified showing areas for improvement when looking at the quality of plans, reviews, case recordings, service provision and management oversight & supervision: These include:
- Planning needs to be smarter and more timely
  - Safety Plans are often not evident in the case summary, historical concerns should be better recorded in chronologies and training on use of the Workbook required for all new staff.
  - Assessments are frequently not completed within the required timescale.
  - Supervision & management oversight need to focus more on improving children's outcomes and additional training is needed for frontline staff.
  - Behaviour Management intervention and support needs to be far more timely and provided at the earliest opportunity and there is an absence of appropriate emergency accommodation.
46. A series of recommendations have been made and these are being progressed as a priority over the coming months. These include:
- a) New Practice Standards to be rolled out in the service and practitioners advised of the importance of adhering to the standards.
  - b) Threshold criteria to be reviewed regarding the distinction between Level 3 and Level 4 services.
  - c) Every child should have regular reviews which could coincide with EHCP reviews or health reviews.
  - d) Safeguarding children's training to be undertaken by all practitioners and managers.
  - e) Direct work toolkit and communication aids to be devised for practitioners to utilise.
  - f) Dip sampling to be undertaken by Service Managers regarding quality of S.47 Investigations on a monthly basis.
  - g) Workshops to be scheduled and delivered to develop practitioners understanding of threshold for deprivation of liberty.
  - h) Duty System to be reviewed and practice expectations clearly outlined.

## **Mindworks Surrey**

47. The way children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health services in Surrey are delivered is being transformed. We reported on our progress to the Select Committee in July 2021 and highlighted that this remains an area of priority concern for the Council where the most work is needed to improve children and families' experiences. Our new approach which began in April this year ensures children and young people have a central voice in decisions about their care, and their needs are met based on their goals.
48. During the summer we announced the new service name (Mindworks Surrey) and launched the website which was co-produced with children and young people alongside families, carers, schools, GPs, and alliance staff. The [Mindworks Surrey website](#) provides children, young people, families and carers with information about services, advice and resources and also features a dedicated area for professionals including schools and GPs. It is a source of essential information, including how to ask for help in a crisis via the 24/7 Crisis Line.

## **Transforming Surrey Children's Residential Services**

49. On 30 November we submitted a report to Cabinet to seek approval to transform Surrey County Council Children's Homes by addressing vulnerabilities in the current staffing structure and management capacity, strengthening the specialised purpose for each home and developing a new provision for children with autism experiencing crisis. This is an important and exciting change to provide Surrey homes for Surrey's children and young people, enabling them to stay living in Surrey wherever possible and appropriate by having a range of homes that can meet children's diverse needs. Our aim is to update the current staffing establishments, specialise the purpose of each home, transform the specialist crisis provision for young people with mental health difficulties – and for children with disabilities, and use the funding to better enable efficiencies by containing or saving costs on commissioning external placements. This proposal was agreed.

## **Recruitment, Retention & Culture**

50. We have a comprehensive plan to develop our workforce strategy and improve our offer to potential and existing employees. We know that in service areas where retention is poor, the turnover of staff affects children and families' abilities to develop positive work relationships that will effect change. We concluded 'Phase 2' in the Summer – developing and implementing new approaches – and have already seen a noticeable impact on our workforce with improved retention and staff turnover rates reducing from 27% in January 2020 to 19.65% today. We do still have over 35 vacant social worker posts and a

further 80-90 with locums in place of a permanent social worker; there is more to do in order to reduce vacancies and improve retention and further initiatives will be rolled out during the year.

51. Our initiatives in 'Phase 3' (Jun-Sep 2021) and 'Phase 4' (Oct-Dec 2021) include the launch of a new continuing professional development package to support staff professional development, an 'Aspiring Managers & Practice Experts Programme', an Academy talent pipeline, succession planning workshops, ongoing events & promotions to attract skilled social workers, ongoing employee-led cultural development and the implementation of a permanent 'Staff Retention Group'. This will enable us to retain, develop and attract the best staff to Surrey and to cultivate a culture that is positive, supportive and meets the needs of our practitioners and managers.

### **Fostering Services – Systems, Processes & Performance Information**

52. A new project started in September for the Fostering service to address the issues related to recording on LCS, performance reporting and business processes. The aims of the project are:
  - To have a system that works for the fostering service that enables accurate recording and up-to-date data accessible to all to enable strategic and operational improvements of the service.
  - To have an efficient system for recording, reporting, and monitoring to ensure compliance.
53. Since September, there has been significant effort from the service (and supporting teams) to drive forward the improvements needed:
  - a) Data and performance dashboards have been developed, tested and signed-off to give greater visibility of the key performance information and insight into the day-to-day operation of the service. An accurate Fostering Register is now available at any time and dashboards are in place for Management Oversight, Supervision and Statutory Visits.
  - b) Bespoke system training programme almost completed with over 20 separate sessions provided since October – all business support and over 90% of the service have completed this training already.
  - c) Complete end-to-end process mapping is needed for the service – this has commenced at a high-level last month and by the new year is expected to have fully mapped all business processes.
  - d) Meetings have taken place with the Fostering Service and System & Development to develop the scope of a LCS “champion” group. The champions’ role will include leading on support and advice about LCS recording, responding to requests from colleagues for help using LCS and supporting colleagues with any queries to assist progressing their cases and reporting issues to the support team.



54. The project team and Fostering Service will continue to progress with these improvements over the next 3-4 months and provide a further update at the next meeting of the Select Committee.

### **Fostering Services – Peer Review**

55. As part of our continued improvement journey, our Partner in Practice, Essex County Council, carried out a peer review of our Fostering services in November. During the review, the team met with colleagues across children's services and spoke directly with some of our Foster carers to hear about their experiences. The review provided us with a valuable learning opportunity looking at all parts of our Fostering services and also gave particular focus on the follow key areas:
- Effectiveness of leadership and management.
  - Workforce development.
  - Availability of quality placements for our children.
  - Our support to foster carers and children.
  - The effectiveness of our systems and compliance with regulations and quality standards.
56. The review highlighted significant strengths for the service including:
- a) **Foster carers and Supported Lodgings providers** reported positive relationships and good supervision.
  - b) **Foster carers** self-reported as a resilient and proactive group who support each other. The buddy system and support groups are positive, and Yammer was recognised as a helpful tool to enable engagement with foster carers.
  - c) The implementation of the **Mockingbird** family support model was universally identified as a strong element of the support package to carers.
  - d) **Looked After Children Team Managers** were clear about the vision and able to articulate why IFA foster carers may benefit from transferring to SCC.
  - e) The introduction of the **panel adviser role** has had a positive impact.
  - f) A clear **recruitment strategy** is in place with robust procedures for processing and progressing applications from potential carers.
  - g) A strong **Supported Lodgings** service and **Out of Hours** telephone support line for carers is in place.
57. In addition, the review team identified several areas for development within the service:
- a) The **'Unique Selling Point' (USP)** is not clearly defined, and there is not a clear sense of the menu of services and benefits available to carers.
  - b) The **fee structure**, and arrangements for progression is not explicit and does not appear to incentivise fostering as a career choice.

- c) While some core **training** is available for all carers, they reported that some specific training is not available to all or is difficult to access.
  - d) **Communication** with foster carers is reported, by carers, to be sporadic and clear consistent messages are not given to all quadrant teams.
  - e) The **Sufficiency Strategy** would benefit from a greater focus on in-house fostering.
  - f) **The case management system** requires further development (the current project in this area is welcome) and management information is not yet sufficiently developed to support managers in delivering improvement.
  - g) **Respite/short breaks/holiday/practical help** for foster carers is not always readily available.
  - h) The **voice of children**, and how they experience fostering was not heard clearly through the Peer Review diagnostic activity.
58. The Peer Review has resulted in a series of recommendations. A Project Manager has been appointed to assess the findings and develop a project plan to address the areas for improvement and subsequent recommendations. It should be noted that **the report from the review team has not yet been finalised** and we expect there to be further detail shared with service that may result in further recommendations. We expect the report and findings to be finalised by the new year and any further additions can be reported to the Select Committee at the next meeting. From the initial report, some of the recommendations identified include:
- a) Urgently develop a strategy for two-way, open and collaborative communication with existing in-house foster carers.
  - b) Consider establishing a programme of re-direction of spend, from commissioning IFA placements to improving the in-house fostering provision.
  - c) Establish a USP for the Surrey Fostering Service with a clearly defined menu of benefits available to all Surrey foster carers; that both attract and retain foster carers.
  - d) Continue to implement the recommendations of the Fostering Panel Review, undertaken in June 2021.
  - e) Consider strengthening the Panel Adviser capacity and developing a role to provide independent scrutiny through annual household reviews.
  - f) Review the allocation of tasks across the fostering teams – ensuring recruitment social workers are relentlessly able to focus on assessing, developing and upskilling applicants to meet sufficiency needs; and that Supervising SWs are able to relentlessly focus on supporting, developing and retaining existing foster cares to meet sufficiency needs.
  - g) Continue to develop LCS and Tableau to support the service to work efficiently and increase availability of performance management data.

## Conclusions:

59. While the fifth Ofsted Monitoring Visit provided assurance that services are improving for young people, it also highlighted some improvement work needed for the care leavers service as outlined in paragraph 13; the Getting to Good team are working closely with the service and these areas for improvement are being addressed as a priority while also building on the strengths and examples of good practice seen during the visit.
60. Despite the delays, the No Wrong Door service is in a strong position to go-live in January 2022. Nevertheless, ongoing work is needed to ensure there is strong strategic governance and drive, along with ongoing commitment from all agencies to the vision and resourcing of the model. The 'Creative Solutions' edge-of-care service – in place since January 2021 - shows the potential that No Wrong Door will have to offer effective support as an alternative to admission to care, and with the multi-agency co-ordination, to improve long term outcomes for children and reduction in crisis presentations to social care, health and police services.
61. The significant internal and external scrutiny of the improvement programme shows the huge amount of progress made to improve services so far. We continue to deliver the ambitious and innovative improvement plan and are driven by improving outcomes for children and families and not simply on solving the issues highlighted by Ofsted, the DfE and the Commissioner. The next 6 months are critical for Getting to Good and Inspection Readiness as we anticipate a full inspection between Spring and Summer 2022.
62. There are ongoing challenges for the service related to the COVID-19 pandemic and while these have reduced since the last report, the relatively high demand on operational services puts pressure on the workforce at a time when we are delivering significant change to practice. This, along with the ongoing challenges recruiting permanent qualified social work staff is resulting in some delays to the improvement programme and extending the time it is taking to embed change. We are continuing to improve but there is still more to do before we can be confident of achieving a 'good' judgement at a full Ofsted ILACS inspection.
63. Further detail on the content of the report and the attached annexes is available if required along with information regarding the actions being taken by the service.

## **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Select Committee:

64. Reviews the findings from the September 2021 Ofsted Monitoring Visit (focused on services for care leavers) and the updated improvement plan and priorities as set out by children's services in response to feedback received.
65. Notes the progress made delivering the children's services 'Getting to Good' plan, the improvement priorities resulting from the Ofsted Focused Visit in March 2021 and the services' preparedness for a full Ofsted ILACS inspection.
66. Agrees to receive a further update on the progress made delivering the children's services 'Getting to Good' plan and the overall inspection readiness in Spring 2022 (unless such an inspection has already taken place).
67. Notes the update on the No Wrong Door implementation and to consider receiving a further update on progress and impact in Summer 2022. Select Committee Members are also asked to be ambassadors for the model through their Council roles and to highlight to officers and partners where No Wrong Door should have links with other strategic and operational priorities.

## **Next steps:**

1. We are anticipating a full re-inspection of Surrey's children's services between Spring and Summer 2022.
2. Delivery of the transformation and improvement work outlined in this report will continue at pace with significant resources focused on improving the quality of practice and frontline services for the children and families we support.
3. No Wrong Door will formally launch the first hub in January 2022. Current work to strengthen the strategic governance of the model, multi-agency involvement, learning and development activity and ongoing communication & engagement work will continue alongside the go-live. Evaluation of the impact of the model for individual children and the wider cohort will begin after go-live as will development of the second No Wrong Door hub.
4. Oversight and scrutiny of the improvements to children's services will continue to take place at the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership (Executive group), the Surrey Corporate Parenting Board and the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee. Detailed action plans are in place which will take the service through to the next full inspection.

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## **Annexes:**

- Annex 1 - Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter 12.10.2021
- Annex 2 - Getting to Good & Inspection Readiness 6-Month Forward Plan

### **Report contacts**

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- Fiona Mackirdy, No Wrong Door Project Manager - Children, Families and Lifelong Learning [fiona.mackirdy@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.mackirdy@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Sources/background papers**

- GOV.UK [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for children's social care services.](#)
- 'Children's Improvement Update' at the 15 July 2021 meeting of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee ([Item 26/21](#)).
- [Mindworks Surrey](#) website.

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12 October 2021

Rachael Wardell  
Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning  
Surrey County Council  
Woodhatch Place  
11 Cockshot Hill  
Reigate RH2 8EF

Dear Rachael

### **Monitoring visit to Surrey County Council children's services**

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Surrey County Council children's services on 7 and 8 September 2021. This was the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in May 2018. Her Majesty's inspectors for this visit were Nick Stacey and Christine Kennett.

#### **Areas covered by the visit**

Inspectors reviewed the progress made in the following areas of concern identified at the last inspection:

- The provision of information for young people on their entitlements and health histories.
- The workloads of personal advisers (PAs) in the leaving care teams.
- The experiences and progress of young people aged 18 to 25 years of age who have left care.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework.

#### **Headline findings**

Most young people are supported well by their PAs, and this work helps them to make progress in their transitions to becoming independent young adults. Young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers (UAS) receive specialist and skilled support. The workloads of PAs are manageable. Some young people have not received sufficient support and advice from a duty system that covers vacant posts. This is due to workforce instability in some care leavers' teams as a result of high levels of PA sickness and turnover. Young people have information on their health

histories and are provided with a range of information on their entitlements and the local offer for care leavers.

### **Findings and evaluation of progress**

PAs understand the profiles and needs of young people well and are in touch with nearly all care leavers. They work hard to maintain contact and trusting relationships. This enables strong progress in many important areas of their young adult lives. A small number of young people have not been well supported because of frequent changes in their allocated PA. A few young people have been supported through a duty system for lengthy periods due to their PA being absent on sick leave, or because of gaps in allocated workers while vacant posts are waiting to be filled.

PAs complete skilled and sensitive work with young people. This help is highly valued by the young people that inspectors spoke to during the visit. Examples of this important work include helping young women safely exit from abusive and controlling intimate relationships; negotiating with universities when young people are having difficulties that interrupt their studies, preventing them from dropping out of their courses; sensitive work with sexual orientation issues and during periods of mental and emotional distress.

The quality of PAs' written records of their direct work with young people varies widely. Many are very brief descriptions of activity and events. Some records illustrate warmth and curiosity about their lives and progress through comprehensive, succinct evaluative summaries that address priority needs. Young people's opinions, frustrations and achievements are clearly conveyed.

Young people's awareness of the local authority's offer for care leavers and their entitlements is mixed. When they are involved with an active and influential user voice and participation group, their knowledge was highly informed. A small number of young people are frustrated that some PAs, particularly when they were inexperienced, did not understand their entitlements and they sometimes had to explain them. Young people are, however, provided with extensive information, both in paper and digital formats. These have accessible links and signposts to more detailed information and further sources of advice.

PAs ensure that young people receive their critical documents promptly. A small number did not receive their passports and National Insurance numbers quickly enough, and these delays had serious adverse impacts. A few young people complained that their weekly support payments and travel warrants were repeatedly delayed, causing acute difficulties.

Many young people's pathway plans are engaging documents demonstrating their active involvement. These plans comprehensively address all of their short- and longer-term needs. They also document parallel and triple contingency planning to consider different pathways and circumstances that could emerge. Other plans are



predominantly bureaucratic, 'tick box' documents that some young people said were boring and irrelevant. Young people are provided with paper and electronic copies of their plans and benefit from a range of well-targeted support services. However, the impact of effective multi-agency work is rarely captured in their pathway plans and reviews. Reviews are mainly held every six months, but usually involve just the young person and their PA.

Young people are provided with their health histories and are registered with local GPs. Their physical, emotional and mental health needs are largely understood well, and promoted. Young people living outside the local authority, particularly UAS, wait much longer to receive support if they struggle with poor mental health.

The majority of young people are in suitable education, employment and training, commensurate with their abilities and ambitions. However, nearly a third of young people are not, and this rate of non-engagement has not improved since the last inspection. The virtual school provides helpful dedicated education and employment advice for care leavers and UAS young people. An extensive range of mentoring, and other well-targeted initiatives, helps many young people to make progress. Senior managers recognise that they need to do more work within the county council and with local employers to provide more opportunities for young people to enter employment, apprenticeships and training in the local economy.

Young people who arrived in the UK as UAS are very well supported by PAs who work in two specialist teams. Most young people initially live in suitable short-term hostel-type settings while their needs are assessed. Most move on to live in suitable semi-independent accommodation within reasonable time frames. Young people's urgent practical needs are met quickly. This crucially includes quickly offering legal support for their applications to the Home Office. PAs quickly put them in touch with the Red Cross to help them try and find information about their families.

Young people's cultural and religious affiliations, and their preferences and habits, are strongly promoted by their PAs. Care is taken to facilitate their access to places of worship and to help them eventually move to live closer to, or in areas where they have friends, extended family and larger populations from their countries of origin. Increased risks of exploitation are considered if young people move to live in areas where they may be more vulnerable if important support networks are not in place, underpinned by cautious safety planning. Senior leaders are keen to provide more targeted help and support that may encourage more young people to remain in areas of Surrey with larger multicultural communities.

The cumulative trauma and abuse many young people experience in their countries of origin and during their arduous, dangerous journeys to the UK are understood and skilfully addressed. This work is supported by a specialist mental health worker and a wide range of local, commissioned and voluntary resources that help young people's assimilation into the UK. Young people benefit from swift enrolment on English for speakers of other languages courses. This enables many to subsequently progress to

other courses and training pathways. Many young people are well supported by a dedicated UAS worker in the virtual school, and their PAs.

Young people live in suitable accommodation. A limited proportion of young people stay put with their former foster carers when they reach 18 years of age, but this rate is comparable with other local authorities. Many UAS young people, and care leavers more broadly, express a strong preference to live in non-family settings. A wide spectrum of support is provided in semi-independent settings, tailored to each young person's needs. Support is increased, when needed, or alternatively is reduced as young people develop more skills and confidence in managing independent living. Most young people feel safe in their accommodation and like it. They appreciate the support and guidance provided by their accommodation key workers. Commissioning, contract monitoring and quality assurance of semi-independent accommodation has strengthened further since the last inspection.

Semi-independent providers are effective in giving most young people the skills and confidence they need as they progress towards living independently. An accredited independence skills programme has recently been introduced to further strengthen young people's preparation. Young people are rarely placed in independent accommodation before they have the practical skills and emotional maturity to manage capably. Floating outreach support is provided for some young people to reduce abrupt transitions.

Young people's access to council and social housing varies. Senior managers have continued negotiations with the county's 11 district councils to try and achieve a more consistent pathway. Good progress has been achieved, and all the district councils provide exemption from Council Tax for care leavers. Bidding processes and prioritisation of care leavers' applications are different, meaning that some young people are offered flats sooner than others. PAs actively advocate for young people to secure permanent housing, both inside the local authority, and for a significant number of young people who choose to live elsewhere. Young people who live outside the county do not have priority access to dedicated mental health support, and their access to other support services is more difficult to arrange. Despite this disparity, most PAs try hard to find the support that young people need.

PAs have manageable workloads that provide sufficient time for them to undertake direct work with young people. They are largely well supported by their team managers, some of whom are very skilled and knowledgeable. Most young people allocated to PAs are reviewed in supervision meetings every three months. Many supervision records demonstrate useful reflective, problem-solving discussions. Well-targeted actions are set and reviewed, but it is not always evident why some are subsequently delayed or incomplete. PAs value reflective group practice sessions as helpful forums, supported by the attendance of a specialist mental health worker.

Senior managers fully accept that some care leaver teams have been adversely affected by significant absence and turnover of PAs, resulting in poorer support for a

small number of young people. They are working hard to stabilise these teams and some progress is evident. Leaders and managers have a strong understanding of the quality of practice provided to young people through rigorous quality assurance work.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Nick Stacey  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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# Getting to Good & Inspection Readiness

6-Month  
Forward Plan

—

October 2021

# 6-MONTH PLAN OF INSPECTION READINESS ACTIVITY

**Context:** Feedback following the September 2021 Monitoring Visit (MV) showed how the activity in the 3-4 weeks leading up to the visit from the Getting to Good group and the Inspection Leads helped best prepare us for Ofsted.

We currently expect our next 'visit' from Ofsted to be a full ILACS inspection – we will have very little notice before the inspection starts and it will not be possible to have the same level of preparation activity with all of children's services.

**The intention is to use the next 6-months to support all of children's services to prepare for an Ofsted inspection – learning from what worked well this autumn.**

## This Inspection Readiness activity will include:

### Getting to Good meetings

- Meetings focused on individual service(s)
- Service Managers, partners, managers invited (where needed)

### Preparing Teams for Ofsted

- Led by QA: Inspection Leads team and APS Leads
- Attending Team and Service meetings to discuss 'what to expect' during an ILACS inspection, general expectations of a practitioner or manager, Ofsted behaviour 'dos and don'ts'.
- Service specific expectations – Open-table discussion: 'what might Ofsted ask us about our service or the children we support?'

### Preparing Support & Guidance Materials

- Reminder / sign-posting guides for practitioners to 'useful links', key policies & procedures, ILACS framework guidance and relevant operational / strategy documents.
- Short videos for staff – Hints & tips, advice from colleagues

### Improvements & Action Plans

- Ongoing improvement work but with a greater focus on timescales and ensuring priority actions are delivered (and embedded) prior to an inspection.

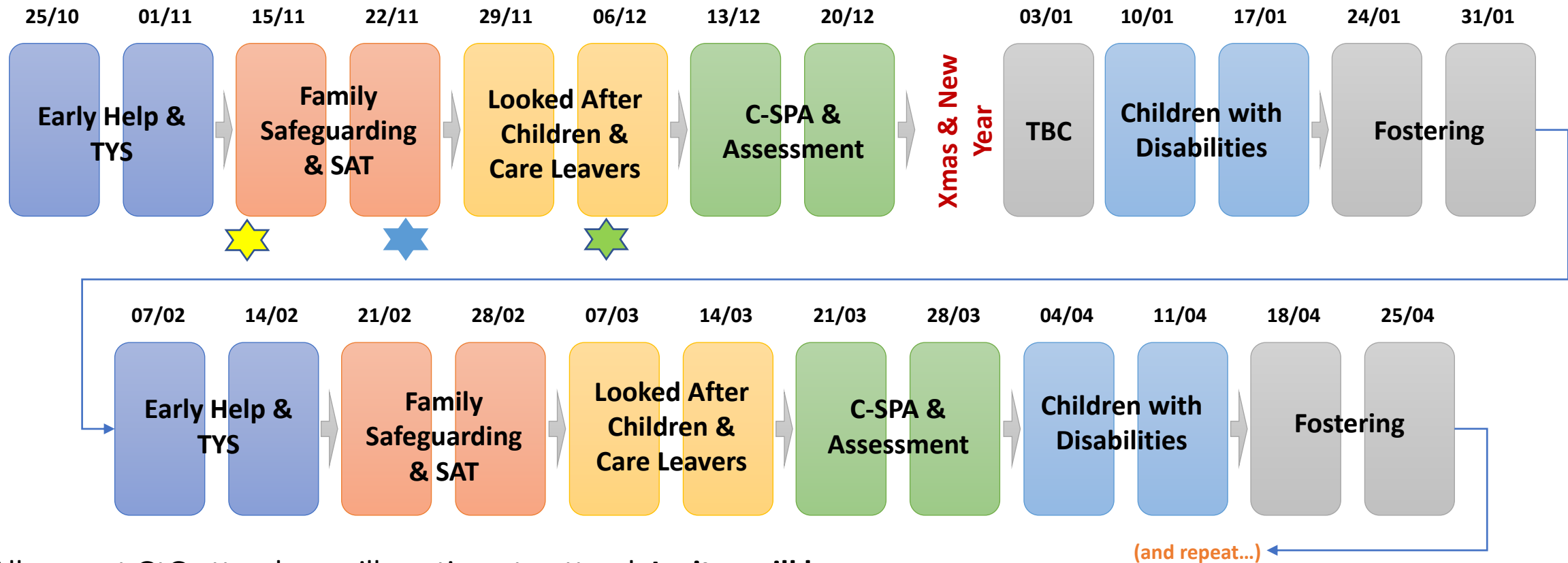
### Mini-Mock Inspections

- Aiming to deliver

# GETTING TO GOOD MEETING CYCLE

We will continue weekly GtG meetings. These will be **focused/themed on a service or group of services for 2 weeks** before moving onto the next service(s).

This cycle of fortnightly focused meetings is expected to **repeat at least twice before a full ILACS** inspection. The routine can be revised if needed.



All current GtG attendees will continue to attend. **Invites will be extended** to Service Managers and other relevant partners (internal or external) as needed depending on the service focus that week.

-  = YOS HMIP Inspection
-  = Fostering Peer Review 10-11 November
-  = FST & SAT Mini-Mock-Inspection 6 December - TBC

# Getting to Good Plan On-a-Page



## Children's Services Core Practice

## Enablers of Success

Children's Services Core Practice								Enablers of Success				
<b>Early Help</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Family Safeguarding</b>	<b>Children with Disabilities</b>	<b>Looked After Children</b>	<b>Fostering</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	<b>Care Leavers</b>	<b>Performance &amp; Quality Assurance</b>	<b>Academy</b>	<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>User Voice &amp; Participation</b>	<b>Governance</b>
Helping Families Early Strategy	Cancelled Assessments	Motivational Interviewing	Pathway Plans, Improving Transitions and working with Adult Social Care Services	Permanence & Reunification Programme	Mockingbird	Continuous improvement of LAC and Care Leaver Offers	Health Histories	Mock Inspections / Thematic Audits	Motivational Interviewing	Relationships / Meetings with Schools & Providers	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	SSCP Executive (OPAB)
Early Help Plans	Pre-Birth Assessments	Independent Chairs Escalations	Updated Eligibility Criteria, Thresholds	Permanence Training	Fostering Panel Review: Pre-Panel / Panel / Post-Panel Processes	Engagement with education and training providers	Dedicated team and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)	Case Audit & Re-Audit Programme	Partnership Training Offer – Developing the Faculties	Surrey Fire & Rescue Offer for Care Leavers	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	SCC Cabinet, Children, Families Lifelong Learning Select Committee
Universal Youth Offer	Family Network Meetings (FNMs) and Family Group Conferences (FGCs)	Core Group Meetings	Alignment with SEND services and the SEND Transformation Programme	Role of Permanence Manager	Impact of the Panel	Surrey Fire & Rescue Offer	Pathway Plans	'Single View of a Child': EYES & Finance Improvement Programme	Red Book Offer for SCC Managers & Practitioners	Supporting the SSCP and Sub-Groups	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	Member Engagement - Performance Meetings Finance Meetings - Corporate Parenting Board
Page 48 Thresholds: Safeguarding Adolescents Team (SAT) & Targeted Youth Support (TYS)	Parental Capacity – working with families	Public Law Outline	HOPE Service	Improved Tracking	Long-Term Fostering Placements and SGOs	Improving links with the Corporate Parenting Operational Group (CPOG)	Independent Skills Programme	Multi-Agency Auditing	Learning Sets informed by Best Practice	Helping Families Early Strategy	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	Performance Meetings Finance Meetings - Corporate Parenting Board
Relationships / Meetings with Schools & Providers	Multi-agency Strategy Meetings – attendance and partnership engagement	Step-Downs, Team Around the Child, Step-Down Plans	Review of all CWD Cases – June 2021	Consideration under PLO	Implementing changes from the Panel Annual Report	2021 – Impact and working with Partners	Staying Put Policy	Performance Management Continuous Improvement – Ongoing Development of Tableau and support for Managers	Induction Programme	Universal Youth Offer	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	Family Safeguarding Board
Youth Justice Board Review		Advocacy Offer – Awareness, Training and Uptake	Skills Audit	Sufficiency Strategy	Foster to Adopt Placements		Housing and Links with Housing Providers	Performance Management Continuous Improvement – Ongoing Development of Tableau and support for Managers	Conversation Cafes	Early Help Providers	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	Practice Leadership Team (PLT)
No Wrong Door		Neglect & Graded Care Profile 2.0 rollout	Structure Analysis – Engagement with other LAs	Residential Homes – Capital Expenditure Programme				Inspection Readiness	Effective Management Oversight & Supervision Training	Education, Employment & Training Providers (LAC & Care Leavers)	Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	Tri-X – Effective Policies & Procedures
Levels of Need / Thresholds Update		Risk Management Arrangements	Tools, Guidance, Exemplars, Website	Residential Homes – Capital Expenditure Programme				Practice Standards Refresh & Service-Specific			Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	
		Extra-familial risk and behaviours		Pathway Plans				Shift in Audit programme focus			Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	
		QA of Risk & Exploitation		Extended HOPE							Child's Voice through the whole child's journey – through the whole children's services 'system'	
				Placements Priority: Policy review and Vision / Matching & Decision-Making process / children entering care late / alignment to SAT strategy / system development for improved recording / tracking & evidence / supported accommodation provision								

Iterative Getting to Good Plan – Respond to Internal & External Factors as Required

Workforce: Recruitment & Retention Programme





Monday, 17 January 2022

## **Inclusion, Post-16 Destinations and School Improvement**

### **Purpose of report:**

This report seeks to provide oversight of the current position in relation to:

- Our work on Inclusion in relation to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activity we are undertaking and the activities that are supporting schools and other educational settings to be more inclusive
- The alternative provision offer within Surrey for compulsory school age pupils
- The current position of the post-16 rate of participation in education, training and employment (and subsequent proportion of young people who are not in employment education or training, NEET) and
- The work of Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) in securing school improvement.

Finally, the report considers the challenges and opportunities for local authority (LA) maintained schools in a new education landscape.

### **Introduction: Inclusion**

1. Surrey County Council's priority 'Rooted in Surrey' is interpreted to mean Surrey children and young people should be able to have their needs met in Surrey whenever it is possible and safe to do so. They should be able to feel connected to Surrey, feel supported and be happy active participants in their local community.
2. Inclusivity is at the heart of this priority and the council has embarked on several projects and initiatives to support the necessary culture change that is required to make the county more inclusive. This includes the establishment of an EDI group chaired by the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning to explore how the council can be more inclusive in its own practice.
3. A key component of inclusive practice is ensuring children and young people have a school place based in their local community.
4. The inclusivity of our system can be indicated by the number of children who are missing education, the numbers who are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS), those who are attending Alternative Provision and finally the young people who do not participate in education employment or training at post 16.

5. Our profile of need identifies children with additional needs or vulnerabilities to be more likely to experience barriers to inclusion. This can be for a range of reasons including neurodiversity, special educational/additional needs, behaviour that is found challenging, communication needs, poor mental health/anxiety, familial issues, being a young carer, and the impact of long-term medical conditions to name but a few.

### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

6. There are a very small number of pupils in Surrey who are missing education – the definition of a child who is CME that is they have no educational provision at all i.e. they not on the roll of a school and not accessing alternative education. This is to be differentiated from pupils on the roll of a school or receiving education otherwise than at school who may not be receiving 25 hours of education a week. These children are known as pupils missing out on full-time education. The local authority has a duty to ensure that all children are receiving an appropriate full-time education.
7. There are only 39 young people who are classified as CME with no provision currently. The young people who are noted as having no provision constantly change as they are allocated provision. The two main reasons for being CME are generally movers into the county who are waiting to be allocated a school place or pupils who have extremely complex needs and are provided with packages of tailored education whilst they wait for a specialist placement. The characteristics of those without a school place are as below:

CME total is 39 (11 South East (SE), 11 North East (NE), 14 North West (NW) and 3 South West (SW)) of which:

17 have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (5 SE, 1 NE, 9 NW and 2 SW)

4 are children who are looked after,

1 have a Child in Need plan (CIN),

1 have a Children Protection Plan (CP)

The average time that a young person is CME is 110 days

The majority are in year 9 (10), year 10 (7) and year 11 (13)

### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

8. During the COVID pandemic the numbers of children and young people who were being electively home educated rose. The increase in the numbers of children and young people who were EHE was replicated across the nation. At this moment Surrey has 1509 young people who are being educated at home; our highest numbers were in July 2021 when we had 1662 children who were being home educated. The greatest challenge for the county has been to ensure the education these children receive is appropriate and that they are

making progress and are safe. The statutory guidance provides limited powers for local authorities in this area. Surrey County Council monitors the arrangements made by parents at least once a year.

### **Inclusion in our schools**

9. Surrey schools, the local authority and its partners are involved in several projects and initiatives which are designed to support inclusion in schools and the local community. These are set out below.
  - **All age autism strategy** - An all-age autism strategy has been co-produced with autistic young people and their families and is designed to raise awareness of the needs of autistic young people. As these young people become adults, they will form a significant portion of the population and it is important the wider community are aware of their needs. The launch of the strategy has been coupled with the availability of training for all staff to raise awareness. The strategy is supported by the work that has been undertaken to understand the gaps in the sufficiency of our provision.
  - **Capital sufficiency programme** - the County Council has committed to a £85 million capital programme to increase the sufficiency of placements we have both in the mainstream and specialist sector to meet the needs of those young people who have special educational needs. It also aims to enable pupils placed in out of county schools to return to a Surrey school. These are often autistic young people and those with social, emotional and mental health needs. 1,600 new places are planned over the first 4 years with 290 places created in year one/2020/21.
  - **Outreach review** – outreach support is support provided by specialist settings to their mainstream peers and is a mechanism for supporting children in a wider variety of settings. It builds on some key strengths of our specialist settings. The outreach on offer and its quality and quantity is being reviewed to ensure we have sufficient capacity in the right areas to enable young people to be supported to remain in their current settings.
  - **Team around the School (TAS)** – the bringing together of several support services to wrap around a school to support them in addressing a wide range of needs. Schools experience a wide range of needs in their school population – poverty, neglect, additional needs, behaviour that is found challenging, as well as learning needs, communication needs, poor mental health and the impact of long-term medical conditions. Drawing services together in a team around the school reduces the requirement for schools to refer onwards to multiple other service providers.
  - **Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP)** – the County Council continues to support locality arrangements for preventing exclusions through the provision of additional funding which is delegated from the Dedicated Schools Grant. This enables headteachers to work collaboratively to reduce permanent exclusions. The data indicates that permanent exclusions continue to be low.

- **Mindworks** – mental health and emotional wellbeing is a key issue for our population especially amongst teenagers and boys. The pandemic lockdowns have resulted in increasing numbers of young people experiencing anxiety in social situations and impacting on their ability to participate and engage in learning. ‘Mindworks’ is the new name for the provider alliance which is now contracted to deliver emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Surrey. This alliance, which includes Surrey and Borders Partnership and a range of voluntary sector providers, ensures there is a variety of sources of help, information and advice for young people, their parents, schools and the professionals supporting them.
- **Neuro Development Pathway** – this is a part of the Surrey Mindworks contract and has been developed at the same time to identify and respond without having to wait for a diagnosis. The shift in culture encourages the early identification of a requirement for support to address need.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) review** - a SEMH review is underway to look at the skills and capacity within our current provision as well as identifying gaps in provision. The quality of the provision available to young people with these needs is variable and the provision within the county is also variable. The review will map what skills and provision we have in the county both in the maintained and voluntary sectors. The role of our partners in addressing the needs of these vulnerable young people is key and will provide an opportunity to join up with initiatives such as the Neuro Developmental Pathway, Team Around the School and the outreach review, with the capital sufficiency programme addressing availability of placements in county.
- **Closer to home project** – The preparing for adulthood team working with housing and the adults transition team are assessing the needs of all children and young people placed outside of the county to determine if they can come back and be supported in the county. The project embraces the priority for young people to be rooted in Surrey and to be part of their local community. The project enables young people with additional needs and their families to begin to think long term about their needs as they become young adults and what plans need to be put in place post education and the life of an EHCP. The project has required joint working between the Adults Social Care team, transitions team, health, housing, and lifelong learning
- **Equality, Diversity, and inclusion (EDI)**  
In addition to the activities and projects that are underway with schools and partner agencies the County Council is also addressing how it can become more inclusive and embrace diversity. An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion stream of work is being developed to underpin every aspect of the Council’s work and to ensure over time the workforce reflects the community it serves and every person who works for the council or supported by the council is treated equitably and fairly. The moral imperative to support the agenda for EDI is reflected in the commitment to an EDI strategy. The following data is indicative of the need to ensure we pay attention to this area of work – for example:

- 9.6% of the population is from an ethnic minority yet <1.0% of our managers are reflective of the diversity in the communities we serve
- 14% of the population have a disability and yet only 3% of the workforce have declared a disability

A webinar for all staff was held in September to launch the proposed implementation plan for EDI across the service.

### **Introduction: Alternative provision and post 16 Destinations**

10. For those pupils of compulsory school age unable to attend mainstream school due to exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, short or long-term illness, it may be necessary to put in place alternative provision. Alternative provision may be commissioned directly by a school or alternatively by the local authority in line with the statutory duty to ensure children receive their entitlement to education. Surrey County Council has recently launched a new Alternative Curriculum - Pathway and Reintegration Support Strategy (endorsed by Cabinet in March 2021) which sets out the renewed vision for alternative provision in Surrey and ambitions for Surrey pupils on a pathway to or within alternative provision.
11. The renewed focus on an “outcomes driven” alternative provision offer is underpinned by inclusion and reintegration back into mainstream education resulting in sustained progression. The overarching objective is to reduce the number of pupils requiring offsite interventions and support successful, sustained reintegration where offsite interventions are required. Pupils of compulsory school age accessing alternative provision, particularly those at Key Stage 4, are among those at greater risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) post-16.
12. The Local Authority has a statutory duty (under the Education and Skills Act 2008) to support, enable and assist young people to participate in education up to the age of 18, or up to 25 for those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This includes a requirement to track young people’s current destinations in order to identify those young people who are NEET and support them to re-engage with education or training. The annual cycle for tracking post-16 destinations requires confirmation of participation at the start of every academic year and includes statutory reporting requirements of the September Guarantee and an Annual Activity Survey.
13. Historically, Surrey has a strong performance with respect to the participation rates of young people post-16. Disadvantaged young people are however known to be disproportionately represented within the NEET cohort, both locally and nationally.

## Alternative Provision

14. Alternative Provision within Surrey consists of a combination of:
- Maintained Pupil Referral Units (PRU),
  - Alternative Provision (AP) Academies,
  - Further Education Colleges,
  - Specialist/Medical provisions, and,
  - Independent providers.
15. The new Alternative Curriculum - Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy aims to reduce the number of offsite interventions required by pupils (previously recorded as 0.5% of the compulsory school age population) and improve outcomes for pupils within alternative provision. It seeks to deliver a whole system approach that is interdependent with Surrey County Council's Inclusion Strategy.

### **Pupil Referral Units (PRU)/Alternative Provision (AP) Academies**

16. A total of 240 places are commissioned across Surrey's PRUs/AP Academies, although the current estate only allows for a maximum of 156 pupils to be on-site at any given time due to the constraints of the buildings. Taking into consideration both full-time and part-time pupils, the average number of pupils at any given time for 2021/22 so far is 163. The PRU Capital Programme, delivering a £22.7m investment in the estate, will deliver a long-term, sustainable PRU offer that has the capacity to accommodate the number of places commissioned by the local authority. In line with the strategic objective of adopting a preventative approach PRUs will deliver a strong outreach offer until the capital programme is delivered. This is facilitated through the implementation of a new robust service level agreement which will also deliver improved monitoring and evaluation of their work. The programme is on track for delivery and a formal launch took place in the Autumn 2021.

### **Independent Alternative Provision**

17. At the end of November 2021 there were 88 pupils in independent alternative provision commissioned by Surrey County Council. The majority of these were pupils of secondary age (71.6%). 86.4% have an EHCP, whilst 5.7% require SEN Support. Of those with an EHCP the most common primary need was ASC or SEMH (36.8% and 34.2% of the EHCP cohort respectively). Of the total cohort, 26.1% were a child looked after (CLA) by the local authority.

18. Numerous workstreams are contributing to the objective to reduce the reliance on independent alternative provision across the EHCP cohort as well as improving the quality and outcomes of provision commissioned. The SEND Capital Programme seeks to increase capacity in respect of the needs most prevalent within the alternative provision cohort. A new Alternative Provision Commissioning Framework will deliver a list of approved/preferred providers along with a robust monitoring cycle. This will provide support and guidance for both internal Surrey County Council services commissioning alternative provision as well as a toolkit for schools.
19. Alternative provision is a valuable tool in meeting the needs of looked after pupils. Due to the fact this cohort can experience multiple and/or short notice placement changes, there is often a need to implement provision at short notice until a permanent school can be found. It should be noted however that this is not always the reason that alternative provision is required. This vulnerable cohort have often experienced significant trauma which can impact behaviour and attendance. Ensuring schools are well equipped to support these pupils, through the compassionate schools programme, will deliver improved reintegration and reduce exclusions particularly amongst the looked after children cohort.

### **Medical/Specialist Pupil Referral Units**

20. There are three medical/specialist PRUs within Surrey. One has a very specialist remit (for pupils with an acquired brain injury) meeting the needs of children and their families across the South of England. The number of Surrey resident pupils is therefore relatively limited. Pupils within the remaining two provisions most commonly have SEMH needs preventing them from participating in mainstream education.
21. In line with wider developments to improve the commissioning of alternative provision within Surrey, new service level agreements for these providers will support more effective monitoring and ensure that pupils with medical needs requiring alternative provision have access to their full education entitlement.

### **14-16 Vocational Pathways in Further Education Colleges**

22. Many of Surrey's Further Education Colleges have a 14-16 vocational offer which delivers an alternative curriculum for those not suited to the academic pathway within schools. Early engagement in vocational learning for this cohort delivers better outcomes with regard to post-16 progression. There are however some inconsistencies across the county in the availability and cost of this offer. A comprehensive mapping exercise has been initiated as part of the Alternative

Provision Action Plan which will enable the identification of gaps in provision and barriers to access. Working with colleagues across Further Education Colleges through the Post-16 Phase Council we will then seek to support programme development where required. This activity will link closely with the review and development activity being undertaken as part of the Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP) networks across schools.

### **Operationalising Our Ambitions**

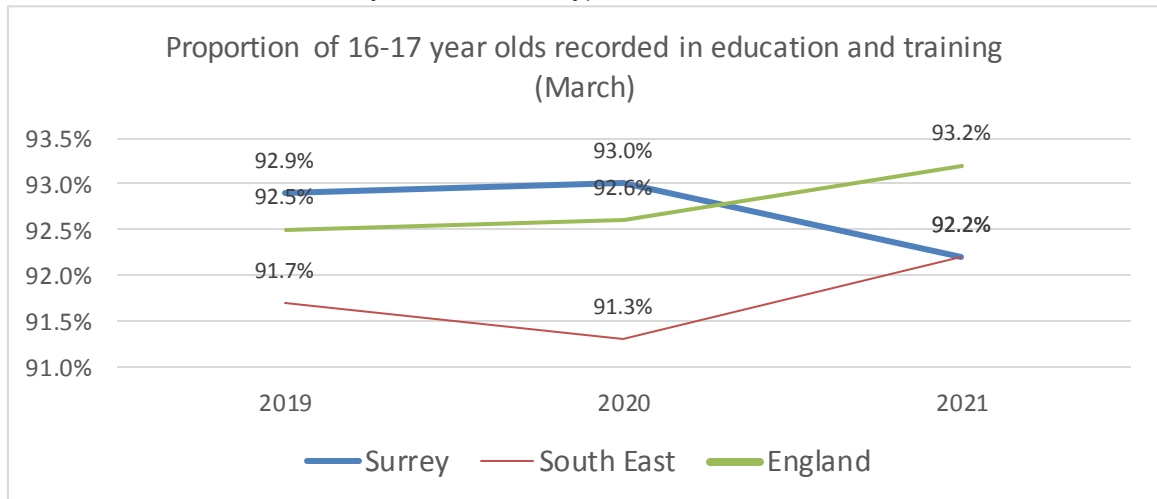
23. The new Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy outlines a shift in the way the alternative provision is understood across the county. It draws on the development of inclusive schools with preventative practice, growth of personalised education, strengthening of offsite interventions and excellence in the approach to commissioning. Through improved intelligence the local authority will be better equipped to understand the needs of the children and young people in alternative provision and their outcomes.
24. Since the summer term of 2020, we have seen an increase in the number of pupils unable to attend school due to mental health issues and anxiety. Supporting and enabling schools through the activity undertaken by the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health working group, combined with the roll out of the compassionate schools programme seeks to ensure these pupils are reintegrated into mainstream school efficiently and effectively. The growth and development of services such as Access to Education are a key contributor to this activity.

<b>Post-16 Destinations and NEET</b>
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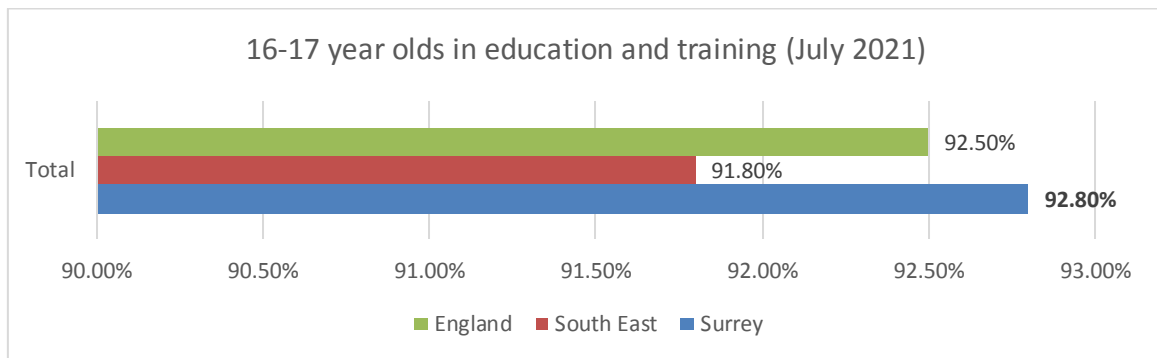
25. The total proportion of young people participating in education and training within Surrey has remained above both the regional and national average to 2020, with a slight decline recorded in 2021. This was largely amongst those participating in apprenticeships (declining from 4.1% in 2020 to 3.0% to 2021) The decline also reflects some operational challenges experienced in relation to the collation and timely processing of data received from schools and colleges contributing to the calculation of the national average (based on average data



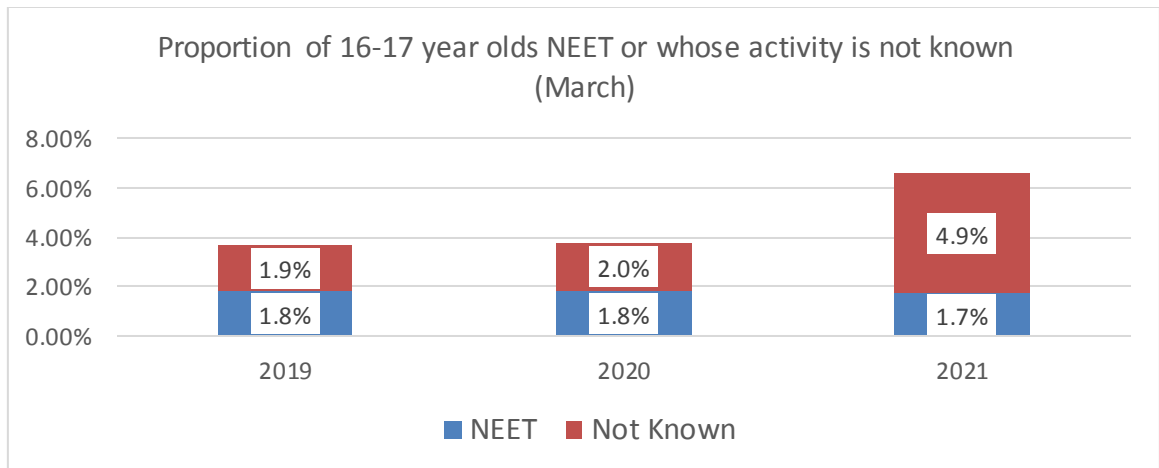
across December, January and February).



Participation figures reported for July 2021 indicated a return to comparable levels.



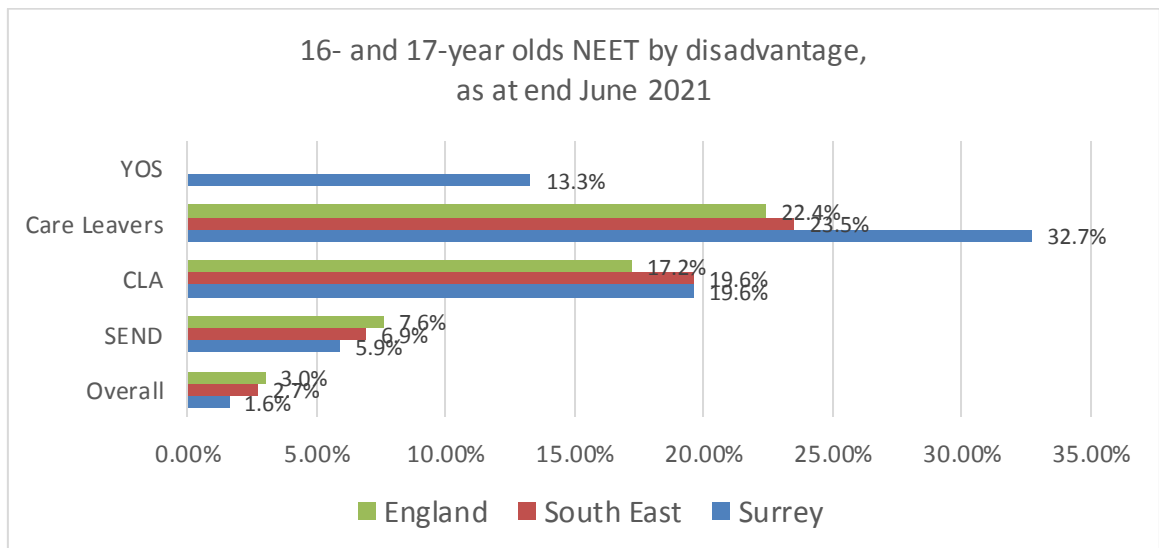
26. Work is underway to address the decline seen within published statistics in 2021. This includes
  - Closer working with colleges to share data on NEET young people to implement targeted support and reengage them in education through in year start dates.
  - Developing more robust communications with schools in relation to the importance timely data returns and the provision of up-to-date contact details for all pupils (including those leaving compulsory schooling) to enable effective tracking.
  
27. The decrease seen in the participation rate was not directly translated into an increase in the proportion of young people identified as NEET. In fact, in 2021, Surrey's known NEET cohort was slightly lower than that of previous years. The 'activity not known' rate was however higher.



28. Activity undertaken between September 2021 and November 2021 secured an overall participation rate of approximately 81.9%. This indicates that Surrey County Council is on track to return to performance rates seen pre-2021.

### NEET by Disadvantage

29. Although Surrey's overall NEET rate remains low, when looking at specific disadvantaged groups these young people form a large majority of the cohort. With a specific focus on young people with additional needs (SEND), children in our care, care leavers and the young people working with the Youth Offending Service, the proportion of young people who are NEET within each of these cohorts is significantly greater than seen across the cohort as a whole.



*N.B. No national comparator data available for YOS*

30. Work is ongoing to track the destinations of all young people, however NEET rates by disadvantage as currently recorded for end November 2021 (yet to be signed off and submitted) indicate a continued pattern of high levels of NEET across disadvantaged cohorts.

31. It is important to note that reporting of destinations to the Department for Education (DfE) relates specifically to those young people currently resident within the local authority area. Therefore, those children in our care who are resident out of county are not reflected in reported statistics in the same manner. Of those children and young people in our care who are NEET, 24.3% are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

### **Participation Strategy**

32. Key barriers to vulnerable young people, particularly the children in our care, participating in education and training identified are:
- Disengagement with education
  - Entering KS5 without English and maths qualification
  - 'SEND' needs
  - Emotional and mental health needs
33. The refreshed Participation Strategy has a strong focus on vulnerable learners. Working closely with Surrey Virtual School, 'SEND' services and Youth Offending Services we are proactively developing education, training and employment opportunities which effectively meet the needs of these cohorts. Some specific areas of development/opportunities which deliver in line with the objectives of the Participation Strategy are:
- Growth and development of the Social Value Framework
  - Establishment of the 'No One Left Behind' network
  - Roll out of the Skills Leadership Forum and Skills Improvement Plan
  - 'SEND' Capital Strategy
  - Building on good practice from the Alternative Provision Transition Grant, now considered to be business as usual
  - Development of vocational pathways for 14–16-year-olds to improve post-16 engagement

### **Introduction – an update on the work of Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE)**

34. SAfE is a not-for-profit school improvement company incorporated in September 2019. It is an alliance of Surrey schools and other partners, including the local authority. Their focus is to deliver a high quality, cohesive, coordinated school-led improvement system to serve all children and schools in the Surrey and wider area from nursery to post-16. SAfE was built upon a strong legacy of partnership working between schools bringing coherence to the education system and to ensure that all schools have access to the support that they need.

35. Surrey County Council discharges its statutory duties in relation to school effectiveness and schools causing concern through the company, as agreed by Cabinet on 16 July 2019. In August 2021, the contract was amended to include the provision of Surrey County Council's statutory duties for governance services. This contract is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 but may be extended for up to a period of a further four years.
36. During the Summer term of 2021 SAfE worked with partners to review and refine its mission, vision, and values in light of the changing education landscape post-pandemic. In doing so, SAfE engaged with all partners through a strategic workshop with the SAfE Board, the Senior SAfE team and over 100 heads. Throughout this engagement the key themes of collaboration, inclusion, excellence, and sustainability were key.
37. **SAfE performance priorities for 21/22 are:**
- Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at all Key Stages
  - Improving outcomes for Children in Need at all Key Stages
  - Ensuring outcomes for children identified with SEN(D) remain high
  - Supporting schools to mitigate 'learning loss' due to Covid particularly for vulnerable groups
  - Supporting schools to ensure that their curriculum (Intent, Implementation and Impact) is robust
  - Ensuring leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils following Covid and that this is realised through strong, shared values, policies, and practice.

In addition, with the recommencing of both Section 5 and Section 8 Ofsted inspections, SAfE have provided universal and bespoke support for schools to meet the requirements of a testing new framework.

#### **Update on School Improvement and Ofsted**

38. In September 2021 Ofsted resumed routine inspections. In addition, outstanding schools that were previously exempt are now also routinely inspected. The framework Ofsted is inspecting under was first introduced in September 2019 but paused due to the pandemic in March 2020.
39. The 2019 Framework is significantly different to previous frameworks and places a much greater emphasis on the 'quality of education' which puts a single conversation about education at the centre of inspection, drawing together curriculum, teaching, assessment, and standards. By taking into account a school's **broader curriculum offering**, it aims to lessen the reliance on exam results as a measure of school quality.

40. This has placed significant strain on Surrey schools including a number of small schools, particularly infant schools. In some cases, they have been unable to provide sufficient curriculum oversight given the expectation of curriculum expertise and mastery across all subjects and year groups.
41. In addition, Ofsted have been very clear that outstanding is now an even more challenging and exacting judgement.

‘Our aim in making this change is that schools should only be judged outstanding... if they are performing exceptionally, and this exceptional performance...is consistent and secure across the whole school.’

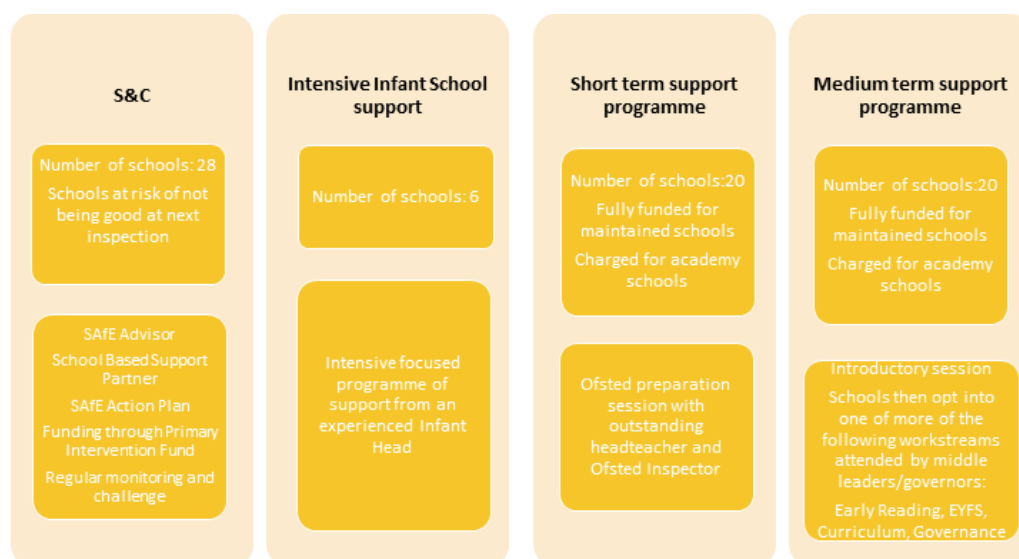
They expect the proportion of schools nationally that are judged to be outstanding to decrease from 20% to no more than 10%. As of 31 August 2021, there were 29% of schools graded as outstanding in Surrey; 77 schools (maintained and academies) last inspected pre-September 2015 and 43 pre-September 2010.

42. There are two types of Ofsted Inspection:
- S5 – a ‘full inspection’ where inspectors will make a full range of judgements and
  - S8 – where inspectors will visit a good or outstanding school to confirm that its grade has not changed and indicate whether it might have a full inspection next time as there is some evidence that it is possibly declining or improving – most good or outstanding schools receive this type of inspection.
43. Between September 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 there have been 37 Ofsted Inspections

	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary/ All through</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>PRU</b>
<b>S8</b>	2	15	0	3	3
<b>S5</b>	0	13	1	0	0

44. Overall S8 inspection outcomes are positive with the majority of S8 inspections confirming judgements and only five identifying potential declines. These include two PRUs, two specials and one outstanding infant school.
45. Eight previously outstanding schools have had a S5 inspection. None of these have retained outstanding – three declined to good, three declined to RI and one was judged inadequate. One inspection judgement is still subject to moderation.

46. The school judged inadequate was due to ineffective safeguarding, and this meant that the overall judgement for the school was inadequate.
47. In schools with lower than a good judgement key areas for improvement focus on:
- Early reading
  - Curriculum intent
  - Professional development around curriculum
  - Disadvantaged/vulnerable learners
  - Governance
  - Safeguarding
48. SAfE have instigated a comprehensive programme of support for schools. This has included: support sessions run by experienced Ofsted inspectors and official webinars by senior HMI; sessions for governors; support for schools addressing sexual harassment and abuse issues; practical support on the SAfE website and sessions to explore the deep dive methodology of inspections.



49. In addition, SAfE have four support streams for 72 schools focused on the 'quality of education' and 'leadership and management'.
50. The education team within the local authority are holding conversations with schools to ensure that they are able to demonstrate a strong and effective safeguarding system and culture.

### Mitigating the Covid Gap and Supporting Vulnerable pupils

51. Inclusion and raising the outcomes for all pupils, in particular the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, continues to underpin all school improvement work. SAfE's strategy remains based around three connected evidence-informed strands:

- Quality First Teaching
  - Literacy and Early Language Acquisition
  - Innovative Curriculum Design
52. Programme content and design is underpinned by robust evidence and expertise making explicit links between theory, evidence, and classroom practice. SAfE are working with leading national experts such as Mark Rowland, Christine Counsell and Jean Gross to design and deliver programmes for Surrey schools.
53. In addition, schools are focusing COVID catch-up provision – including School-led Tutoring – on disadvantaged pupils.
54. The cancellation of statutory end of key-stage assessments and exams has meant that there is limited quantitative evidence of improvement. However, recent inspection reports and visits show that most schools are addressing these issues and supporting vulnerable pupils well.
55. SAfE’s secondary specific programme led by Marc Rowland, which has included 36 secondary schools culminates in the spring of 2022 with a published report on the findings from Marc’s school visits, impact, and recommendations.
56. SAfE have also introduced a strategy for supporting the development of inclusive practices in the classroom – working in partnership with Whole School ‘SEND’. This is complemented by their focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which includes their annual leadership Summit, Belonging Without Barriers, and their Race, Identity, and Leadership Programme.

<b>Professional Learning and Partnership Working</b>
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57. SAfE continues to run a rich programme of professional learning which is directly aligned to the Teacher and Headteacher professional standards and supports collaborative and evidence informed professional development.
58. SAfE programmes, events and networks are also underpinned by the following principles that have been developed



59. This ensures that everything that SAfE does impacts either directly or indirectly on outcomes for children and young people.
60. Relationships with the new Teaching School Hubs (South Farnham Education Trust - SFET and Xavier) are strong. STSN (part of SAfE) are delivering the NPQs for both Teaching School Hubs with Teach First as the Lead Provider. SAfE are also working collaboratively with the SFET and Xavier on a cohesive professional learning offer which allows a clear line of sight between the 'Golden Thread' of the NPQs and other Professional Learning.
61. SAfE also provide support and "thought-leadership" for Surrey schools and in particular produce a fortnightly blog covering pertinent education issues.



## Governance

62. SAfE's contract was altered in August 2021 so that it now offers statutory governance services for maintained schools on behalf of Surrey County Council. SAfE is providing:
- An advice and guidance service to governors and clerks of Surrey's maintained schools
  - Support, administration and processing of Local Authority Governor nominations and appointments
  - Guidance on parent and staff elections
  - Maintaining governors' and clerks' details on Surrey's database and providing clerks details of governor membership for schools on request
  - Support for governing boards and provision of Interim Executive Boards (IEB) for 'Schools Causing Concern' or 'Support and Challenge' schools
  - Development and deployment of Surrey's Local Leaders of Governance (LLG) network
  - Point of contact for governors for notification of Headteacher Recruitment
  - A termly SAfE Governors' Bulletin and a *new* termly Clerks' Briefing
  - Half-termly 'update' webinars for governors and trustees
  - A termly clerks' forum to support the practices of Governance Professionals in Surrey maintained schools
  - A *new* termly welcome and induction for all new Surrey governors
  - Limited resources, such as, an annual governance planner which includes key Surrey dates

## Moving forward in a new education landscape

63. Since the beginning of the academic year the education landscape has begun to significantly change again. The government (with a new Secretary of State) have restated their vision for all schools to be part of a strong multi-academy trust and following Surrey's Resilience and Sustainability Conference there has been greater interest, amongst maintained schools in all sectors, in exploring academisation. There is also an expected education White Paper due in the spring which is likely to set out changes in local authority responsibilities for schools.
64. In November, the DfE consulted on proposals set out in "Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded." In these proposals the school improvement grant currently paid to local authorities will be paid at half rate in 2022/23 and withdrawn thereafter, and local authorities will be expected to fund their statutory school improvement work from central services levy or general fund. If approved and implemented, this would mean a loss of £400,000 to Surrey County Council in 2022/23 and twice that in the following year. Much of this funding forms the contract with Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) who deliver the Schools Causing Concern statutory duties on behalf of the

Surrey County Council. Schools Forum have agreed to underwrite this potential shortfall in funding for 2022/23.

65. SAfE's contract with Surrey County Council expires in August 2022 and both parties are exploring options available including negotiating an extension.

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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66. Following the endorsement of the new approach to alternative provision in Surrey by Cabinet in March 2021 and the formal launch of the new Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy in November 2021, progress is underway to embed a whole system approach. The key objective of this work is to prevent escalation of needs leading to alternative provision placements and ensuring a fit for purpose alternative provision offer that is outcomes driven. Underpinning the Strategy is an action plan that seeks to address barriers to success and gaps in provision. Key areas of focus include the development of a commissioning framework for alternative provision, development of a clear and consistent referral pathway and a reduction in reliance on high-cost independent provision through the strengthening and growth of maintained provision/services.
67. Aligned closely to the objectives of the Inclusions Strategy, the aspiration is to reduce the demand for offsite alternative provision interventions, through increased outreach activity aimed at reducing exclusions and delivering efficient and effective reintegration.
68. A key success factor, beyond partnership working with Surrey schools and colleges to deliver a whole system approach, is communication with families and children/young people. Lack of clarity around processes, terminology and entitlement have been identified as needing to be addressed to secure better outcomes for alternative provision placements.
69. Surrey continues to have a strong participation rate amongst 16–17-year-olds however those known to be disadvantaged are disproportionately represented within the NEET cohort. The NEET rate reported for those with SEND within Surrey is below that seen regionally and nationally however this is not the case for the cohort of children in our care or our care leavers, where the NEET rate is equal to or exceeds regional and national rates.
70. The revised Participation Strategy focuses heavily on vulnerable cohorts, adopting a partnership approach with wider services to identify needs and develop opportunities to support access to and reengagement with education and training. The delivery of this strategy will be guided by the newly formed Participation Strategy group which will support and challenge Surrey County

Council and its partners to secure better outcomes through joint working and a coordinated approach to delivering statutory duties in relation to Raising Participation Age legislation and achieving wider economic success. Actions identified will be delivered through appropriate working groups and services such as the Post-16 Phase Council, No One Left Behind Network, Social Value Framework, Surrey Virtual School, Year 11-12 Transition Service and Post-16 Destination Tracking Team.

71. Since September 2019 SAfE has played an integral role in the Surrey school landscape working in partnership with schools, the Local Authority and others and drawing on the collective strengths to ensure that every child has access to an excellent education. A clear strength of the education partnership is the ability to sustain the collaborative working of the Surrey family of schools regardless of status or phase – to retain a clear sense of place.
72. Given the challenges that schools face post-pandemic, in the light of more challenging Ofsted inspections and with many schools facing significant capacity and financial issues, SAfE's role is increasingly needed. At the same time, its funding source is threatened.
73. The forthcoming White Paper and the already published intention for all schools to be part of a strong multi academy trust will bring both challenges and opportunities for schools and the local authority.

#### **Recommendations:**

74. That the Select Committee notes the breadth of development activity underway to ensure that our most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners are supported to engage in education and training, secure better outcomes and participate in post 16 learning.
75. The select committee receives a further report in April 2022 that focusses on the outcomes for children who are disadvantaged, children in receipt of pupil premium, and a further SEND Transformation Programme update.

#### **Next steps:**

To receive a further update in 12 months at the select committee.

#### **Report Contact details**

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Maria Dawes, CEO Schools Alliance for Excellence

[m.dawes@schoolsallexcel.com](mailto:m.dawes@schoolsallexcel.com)

### **Sources/background papers**

Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy (2021), Surrey County Council

Education and Skills Act 2008

[NEET and participation: local authority figures \(2019-2021\)](#)

[Participation of young people in education, employment and training: Statutory guidance for local authorities \(September 2016\)](#), Department for Education

Permanent School Exclusions in Surrey What works to keep children and young people in education? Dr Emily Glorney, Natasha Rhoden, and Professor Frank Keating; Department of Law and Criminology and Department of Social Work; School of Law and Social Sciences; Royal Holloway, University of London Research summary – July 2021

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE  
ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER  
JANUARY 2022**

The actions and recommendations tracker allows Committee Members to monitor responses, actions and outcomes against their recommendations or requests for further actions. The tracker is updated following each meeting. Once an action has been completed, it will be shaded green to indicate that it will be removed from the tracker at the next meeting.

<b>KEY</b>			
	No Progress Reported	Action In Progress	Action Completed

Meeting	Item	Recommendations/Actions	Update/Response	Responsible Officer/Member
21 September 2020	Questions and Petitions [Item 4]	i. For the proportion of looked-after children and care leavers living in independent accommodation, and the steps taken to safeguard such young people from criminal exploitation, to be shared with the Select Committee.	The Assistant Director has provided a response, and this has been shared with the Select Committee.	Jo Rabbitte, Assistant Director – Children’s Resources
14 December 2020	Update on the Implementation of the SEND Task Group [Item 5]	i. That the Director – Education, Learning and Culture share the re-designed outreach offer, once it is complete, with the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee.	The outreach review was delayed by one year due to the pandemic – the existing arrangements were extended during this period. A consultation is underway to help inform the new outreach offer and the Select Committee will be updated again once the proposals have been agreed.	Liz Mills, Director – Education, Learning and Culture

11 March 2021	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report [Item 5]	i.	The Director to provide data on adoption rates and the number of placement orders made in the 12-month period ending March 2021.	The Director has provided a response, and this has been shared with the Select Committee.	Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting
	Surrey Adult Learning [Item 6]	i.	Work with partners, within and external to SCC and with the Surrey Economy and Growth Team to develop a coordinated plan for the future, to ensure that the Adult Learning Service remains responsive to changing health, social and economic needs.	A response has been provided and has been shared with the Select Committee.	Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning
		ii.	Continuously review the Service delivery model to ensure sustainability and that the Service meets the needs and aspirations of the local community.	The recommendation has been noted by the Assistant Director.	Jane Winterbone – Assistant Director for Education
	Libraries Transformation [Item 8]	i.	Assistant Director to share the intended services, facilities, built environments of new libraries with the Select Committee.	The Executive Director, Assistant Director and Cabinet Member provided a briefing for Members on this topic.	Susan Wills, Assistant Director – Culture, Libraries & Registration
		ii.	Assistant Director to share the Art Council’s Children’s Promise with the Select Committee.	The Assistant Director has provided this information and it has been shared with the Select Committee.	Susan Wills, Assistant Director – Culture, Libraries & Registration
15 July 2021	Children’s Improvement Update [Item 1]	i.	Executive Director to provide Members with the names of their respective Area Schools Officer		Rachael Wardell, Executive Director - CFL

		<p>I. That the Director of Corporate Parenting share the findings of the review of the Children with Disabilities Service with the Chairman of the Select Committee for circulation to Committee members.</p>	<p>It has been agreed that this information will be provided in the Children’s Improvement Update report to the Select Committee in January 2022.</p>	<p>Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting</p>
		<p>II. That the Director of Family Resilience and Safeguarding share the findings of the review of the Family Safeguarding Model with the Chairman of the Select Committee for circulation to Committee members.</p>	<p>Report will be delivered to Council in February 2022 earliest and shared with the Select Committee subsequently.</p>	<p>Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding</p>
		<p>III. That the Cabinet Member for Children and Families provide an update on the Children’s Improvement Programme at the Select Committee’s first meeting of 2022.</p>	<p>Added to Select Committee forward plan</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>
18 October 2021	SEND Transformation Update [Item 5]	<p>i. Director – Education and Lifelong Learning to share average times for overdue EHC plan development and reviews by quadrant; and any actions taken to respond to increase demand for EHC plans in the 2021 Summer Term.</p>	<p>The Director has provided a response, and this has been circulated to the Select Committee.</p>	<p>Liz Mills, Director - Education and Lifelong Learning</p>

		ii. At an appropriate time, the Select Committee visit educational settings supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities.	On hold, until the situation with regards to the pandemic improves.	
		iii. The Director – Education and Lifelong Learning share the findings of the SEND Self-Evaluation and any actions to be taken in response to it with the Chairman of the Select Committee for circulation to the Committee once available.	The Summary Self Evaluation will be available in April 2022 and will be shared with the Select Committee along with actions planned in response.	Liz Mills, Director - Education and Lifelong Learning
		iv. The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning provide an update on the SEND Transformation Programme and other work relating to the support for children and young people with additional needs, including support at transitions, at the April 2022 meeting of the Select Committee.	Added to the Forward Work Plan.	Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
	Children's Homes Transformation [Item 7]	i. Director – Corporate Parenting to provide the Committee with the numbers of children placed in in-house and external residential provision.	The Assistant Director has provided a response, and this has been shared with the Select Committee.	Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting



		ii. Director – Corporate Parenting to submit to the Committee the most recent report on children’s residential provision submitted to the Corporate Parenting Board.	The Director has provided the report and this has been shared with the Select Committee Members.	Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting
	EWMH [Item 9]	i. Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Surrey to suggest to the Select Committee priorities for future scrutiny of children and young people’s Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services.	A response has been provided and shared with the Select Committee.	Kate Scribbins, Chief Executive Officer – Healthwatch Surrey
		ii. The Select Committee agree an approach to future scrutiny of Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services with the Adults and Health Select Committee.	A meeting has been set up between the respective Scrutiny Officers and the Scrutiny Business Manager to discuss the approach.	Benjamin Awkal, Scrutiny Officer – CFLLC Ben Cullimore, Scrutiny Officer – Adults and Health
		iii. That the Director – Commissioning arrange the development of a dashboard of key performance information and make it available to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture and Adults and Health Select Committees.	The Director has arranged for some slides to be created to share with the Select Committee.	Hayley Connor, Director – Commissioning

		<p>iv. That the Director – Commissioning provide the Select Committee with a report containing a clear overview of the Alliance Partnership’s governance including further detail on the specific role of each organisation within the Partnership Alliance, the associated performance measures and targets and the resources allocated to them by April 2022.</p>	<p>The Director has arranged a conversation in the new year to review.</p>	<p>Hayley Connor, Director – Commissioning</p>
13 December 2021	<p>Questions and Petitions [Item 4]</p>	<p>i. The Director of Corporate Parenting to provide data, including commentary on caseload, on the number of full-time social workers by the next public meeting, in January 2022.</p>	<p>The Director has requested updated caseload data and should be able to provide it by Wednesday, 12 January 2021.</p>	<p>Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting</p>
	<p>Scrutiny of 2022/23 draft Budget and MTFS to 2026/27 [Item 5]</p>	<p>i. After the meeting, the Committee shall agree wording for inclusion in a joint report from the council’s Select Committees to the Cabinet in respect of the draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium-term Financial Strategy to 2026/27. That wording shall be drafted under the oversight of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and then shared with the Committee for agreement.</p>	<p>The wording for the report is being prepared.</p>	<p>Select Committee</p>

		<p>i. Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to share the number of children with SEND placed in non-maintained independent settings with the Select Committee.</p>	<p>A response has been provided and shared with the Select Committee.</p>	<p>Daniel Peattie, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</p>
		<p>ii. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to provide the number of 18-25 year olds with no prior Surrey County Council contact that would be affected by the planned efficiency.</p>	<p>A response should be provided by the Select Committee meeting in January 2022.</p>	<p>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning  Hayley Connor, Director - Commissioning</p>

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# Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

## Forward Work Programme 2021 - 2022

**Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee**  
**Chairman: Liz Bowes | Scrutiny Officer: Benjamin Awkal | Democratic Services Assistant: Emily Beard**

Date of Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Issue for Scrutiny	Purpose	Outcome	Relevant Organisational Priorities	Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
7 April 2022	Overview, policy review and development	<b>Corporate Parenting Annual Report</b>	Select Committee to receive a report including an update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Corporate Parenting; the development of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board; and the key performance data for looked after children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally.	Committee assured of service performance and outcomes for users; Lead Member for Children and senior officers held to account.	Tackling health inequality  Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families  Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting
7 April 2022	Overview, policy review and policy development	<b>Leaving Care</b>	To review care leaving services and the outcomes for service users, with particular regard to support around transitions, educational attainment, post-16 destinations, the impact of out-of-area placements, and accommodation quality and stability.	Committee assured of service provision, performance and outcomes for looked-after children and formerly looked-after children	Tackling health inequality  Empowering communities  Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families  Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

7 April 2022	Overview, policy review and policy development	<b>SEND Transformation Update</b>	Committee to review progress of SEND Transformation Programme.	Cabinet Member and senior officers held to account	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Empowering communities</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Mary Burguières, Assistant Director – Systems and Transformation</p>
5 July 2022	Overview, policy review and development	<b>Youth Offending</b>	To review the issue of youth offending and the role, functions, governance, and performance of the Youth Offending Team and outcomes for its users, the response to the 2021 HMIP inspection of the Service, and the relevant impact of COVID-19.	Committee develops understandings of youth offending and youth justice in Surrey; and is assured of the Youth Offending Team’s performance and outcomes for service users and that appropriate, timely and effective actions are being taken in response to the 2019 inspection.	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p> <p>Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding</p> <p>John Drew, Chair – Youth Justice Board</p>

5 July 2022	Overview, policy review and development	<b>School Place Sufficiency</b>	To review strategic approach to ensuring a sufficiency of school places within a sustainable system, including schools capital estate (maintained, special and PRUs) management and programme, admissions and place planning (including current and forecast roll numbers)	Committee reviews strategic approach to maintaining a sufficiency of places within a sustainable school system and makes recommendations as appropriate.	Tackling health inequality  Empowering communities	Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning  Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning
5 July 2022	Overview, policy review and development	<b>Children’s Services (ILACS) inspection findings</b>	To review findings of anticipated Ofsted inspection of the Council’s children’s services and actions to be taken in response.	Lead Member and senior officers held to account.	Tackling health inequality  Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families  Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting  Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding

4 October 2022	Overview, policy review and development	<b>Universal Youth Work</b>	To review the provision of universal youth work and outcomes for users at county and district level.	Committee assured of adequacy and impact of provision	Tackling health inequalities  Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit  Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families  Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding
4 October 2022	Overview, policy review and development	<b>Family Centres</b>	To review the new model of providing support to families, including by reviewing usage and outcomes for users of Family Centres and reviewing historic data from previous provision.	Committee assured new model is effectively supporting families to build their resilience and self-reliance.	Tackling health inequality	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families  Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding
4 October 2022	Overview, policy review and policy development and pre-decision	<b>SEND Transformation Update and the development of the next SEND Strategy</b>	Committee to review progress of SEND Transformation Programme and be updated on the development of the SEND strategy and anticipated strategic direction for SEND support/services.	Cabinet Member and senior officers held to account in respect of SEND Transformation; and Committee reviews the development of the new SEND strategy and its anticipated principles.	Tackling health inequality  Empowering communities  Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit	Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning  Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning  Mary Burguieres, Assistant Director – Systems and Transformation



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>8 December 2022</b></p>	<p>Pre-decision</p>	<p><b>Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy</b></p>	<p>Select Committee to receive draft budget proposals and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23.</p>	<p>Select Committee scrutinises relevant aspects of the Council's draft budget and medium-term financial strategy, provides feedback and makes recommendations.</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality</p> <p>Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit</p> <p>Enabling a greener future</p> <p>Empowering communities</p>	<p>Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning</p> <p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p> <p>Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities</p> <p>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Marie Snelling, Executive Director – Communities and Transformation</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Items to be scheduled</b></p>						
<p><i>(Date)</i></p>	<p><i>(Type)</i></p>	<p><i>(Issue)</i></p>	<p><i>(Purpose)</i></p>	<p><i>(Outcome)</i></p>		<p><i>(Cabinet Member/Lead Officer)</i></p>

<b>TBC/once fully embedded</b>	Overview, policy review and development	<b>Family Resilience</b>	Committee to review service performance and outcomes for service users following transformation including the introduction of new practice models.	Committee assured of service performance, outcomes for users and identifies any learning opportunities following service transformation and embedding of new practice models.	Tackling health inequality  Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit  Enabling a greener future  Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families  Simon Hart, Independent Chair – Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership
<b>TBC</b>	Pre-decision and overview, policy review and development	<b>Adult and community learning and post-pandemic recovery</b>	Committee to review existing adult and community learning provision and proposed changes	Committee has opportunity to review existing adult and community learning provision and proposed changes thereto and to make recommendations regarding proposed changes.	Tackling health inequality  Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit  Enabling a greener future  Empowering communities	Denise Turner-Stewart, Education and Learning  Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

### Standing Items

- **Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme:** Monitor Select Committee recommendations and requests and forward work programme.