

Notice of Meeting

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

**Date & time**

Thursday, 15
February 2024 at
10.00 am

Place

Woodhatch Place, 11
Cockshot Hill, Reigate,
RH2 8EF

Contact

Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny
Officer

julie.armstrong@surreycc.gov.
uk

Chief Executive

Joanna Killian

We're on Twitter:
@SCCdemocracy



If you would like a copy of this agenda or the attached papers in another format, eg large print or braille, or another language please email julie.armstrong@surreycc.gov.uk.

This meeting will be held in public. If you would like to attend and you have any special requirements, please contact Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer.

Elected Members

Fiona Davidson (Chair), Jonathan Essex, Bob Hughes, Rebecca Jennings-Evans, Rachael Lake, Bernie Muir, John O'Reilly, Mark Sugden, Ashley Tilling, Liz Townsend, Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Webster (Vice-Chairman) and Fiona White

Independent Representatives:

Julie Oldroyd (Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church) 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

1/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

2/24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 6 DECEMBER 2023

(Pages 5
- 18)

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3/24 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.

4/24 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 (*19 June 2020*).
2. The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (*18 June 2020*)
3. The deadline for petitions was 14 days before the meeting, and no petitions have been received.

The public retain their right to submit questions for written response, with such answers recorded in the minutes of the meeting; questioners may participate in meetings to ask a supplementary question. Petitioners may address the Committee on their petition for up to three minutes. Guidance will be made available to any member of the public wishing to speak at a

meeting.

5/24 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN (Pages 19 - 50)

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

6/24 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (Pages 51 - 70)

Purpose: To assess how well Surrey's Alternative Provision meets the needs of Children and Young People in the county, and how well it enables them to maximise their potential in both adolescence and adulthood.

7/24 FOSTER CARER SUFFICIENCY (Pages 71 - 90)

Purpose: To understand whether Surrey County Council's current strategy to recruit and retain foster carers will be successful in improving the sufficiency of homes for Looked After Children.

8/24 CHILDREN'S HOMES - OFSTED REPORTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE (Pages 91 - 100)

Purpose of report: **The Select Committee will receive Ofsted reports on Surrey County Council-run Children's Homes in its agenda, as part of a communications plan agreed in June 2022.**

9/24 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW (Pages 101 - 144)

The Select Committee is apprised of the latest CFL performance information, which consists of:

- (a) External assessments of all areas within the Committee's remit;
- (b) Key indicators in children's social care measuring progress made in Ofsted recommendations following the January 2022 inspection of Surrey Local Authority Children's Services;
- (c) Performance against targets in the EHCP timeliness recovery plan;
- (d) Turnover of social workers and foster carers to measure progress in the Children's Recruitment, Retention and Culture Workforce Planning Strategy.

10/24 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING 17 APRIL 2024

The next public meeting of the committee will be held on 17 April 2024.

Joanna Killian

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND FILMING – ACCEPTABLE USE

Those attending for the purpose of reporting on the meeting may use social media or mobile devices in silent mode to send electronic messages about the progress of the public parts of the meeting. To support this, Woodhatch Place has wifi available for visitors – please ask at reception for details.

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Thank you for your co-operation

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 6 December 2023 at Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 15 February 2024.

Elected Members

* Fiona Davidson (Chair)

* Jonathan Essex

r Robert Hughes

Rebecca Jennings-Evans

Rachael Lake

* Bernie Muir

* John O'Reilly

* Mark Sugden

* Ashley Tilling

* Liz Townsend

* Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman)

* Jeremy Webster (Vice-Chairman)

Fiona White

Co-opted Members:

Mr Simon Parr, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church

Mr Alex Tear, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church, Diocese of Guildford

*Present

r remote

45/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans, Cllr Rachael Lake, Cllr Fiona White, Mr Alex Tear and Mr Simon Parr.

46/23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 2 OCTOBER 2023 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

47/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Jonathan Essex declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee at Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead in relation to the budget item.

48/23 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Key points made in the discussion:

1. There were two Member questions and no public questions or petitions. The responses to those questions are annexed to these minutes.
2. A Member asked a follow up question on what changes were planned for the adult education budget. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning noted that there were no plans to reduce the budget for Surrey Adult Learning for the coming year. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning added that the budget for Adult Learning did not include any centre closures in 2024/25.

49/23 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PLAN [Item 5]

Key points made in the discussion:

1. On action 29/23 regarding a written response on the multi-agency network and school absences for girls with ASD, the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning said that the initial answer was not satisfactory and would send an updated response by the end of the week to the Committee.
2. The Director for CFL Commissioning assured the Committee that as soon as procurement regulations allowed, action 40/23, a written response outlining the scale of Health Service Investments in the EHCP process and data on the recruitment and retention of Occupational Therapists would be provided.

50/23 HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE UPDATE [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families & Learning

Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)

Chris McShee, Travel and Assessment Team Manager

Lucy Clements, Director – CFL Commissioning

Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning

Leanne Henderson – Participation Manager, Family Voice Surrey

Kate Goode – Participation Manager, Family Voice Surrey

Key points made in the discussion:

1. The Participation Managers from Family Voice Surrey gave a short presentation on Home to School Travel Assistance. They noted that Family Voice had seen good progress but highlighted that families were still experiencing communication issues with the transport team. The Chair thanked Family Voice for the informative presentation.
2. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning thanked Family Voice for their engagement with the transport team and the production of the parent guide. She noted that issues brought up in the survey were issues the sector faced as a whole.
3. A Member asked a question on independent travel allowance. The Participation Manager answered that parents were now being paid for four journeys instead of two a day. However, the allowance did not consider the cost of vehicle maintenance. The Participation Manager noted that it was difficult to find drivers who were understanding of complex needs and stressed the importance of the independent travel allowance.
4. A Member asked if plans in place since the results of last year's Family Voice Survey had had the desired impact. The Member stressed that many children did not have travel arrangements in time for the start of term. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) answered that 31 July was the cut-off for applications for transport arrangements but that when applications were received late, the service had a 30-day turnaround. The Interim Assistant Director said she hoped to make significant improvements to the process in time for the next academic year.
5. A Member asked if applications within timescales deteriorating between July (2%) and September/October (8%) were expected or normal. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) noted that the rise was due to an unprecedented volume of applications and the Home to School Transport team expected elevated levels in August.
6. A Member asked if the service was measuring adherence to the policy of having travel arrangements in place within six weeks of an application. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) answered that applications were assessed within 20 days and arrangements confirmed seven days before the start of term. The Member asked if parents were updated on plans between application and term starting. The Interim Assistant

Director said that parents who had applied early were alerted with an update in August.

7. A Member asked how the SEND and Home to School Transport teams communicated and if there were aspirations for better communication. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) explained that she met with the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning on weekly basis and had a Microsoft teams chat. This year they had seen a marked improvement in collaboration. The Travel and Assessment Team Manager noted that access to information had been better and weekly meetings had resulted in better key stage transfers.
8. A Member asked why vehicles were travelling 5% further in 2023/24 when the strategy was to reduce distance travelled and reduce journey times. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) answered that the timing did not take in variables such as getting children on and off vehicles or road works. The Member asked if the transport team received highway work plans to better plan routes. The Interim Assistant Director said they did not receive anything currently, but schools alerted the team on areas around the school that had changed, the legacy systems used currently did not have live data.
9. A Member queried the high turnover of drivers. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) noted that the service had struggled to find skilled drivers who could meet the demand of transport for children with additional needs. The Interim Assistant Director emphasised that the service was working to provide greater stability for children and families.
10. A Member asked how the Council could enable parents to arrange their own school transport for monetary compensation. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) answered that the Council was doing this through the Personal Travel Budget pilot. Feedback received so far was positive and indicated it made more financial sense than other travel arrangements.
11. A Member asked who was consulted on which children needed their own solo taxi. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) answered that the parameter around solo arrangements came down to medical needs. Case Officers also utilised the advice of schools on whether children needed certain arrangements.
12. A Member asked how safeguarding incidents were being logged and actioned. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) noted that incidents were logged throughout the year and the most appropriate next steps such as suspensions were discussed in whole team meetings. The Chair noted concern about the timeliness of the process. The

Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning said that swift action in line with statutory process must be taken when a safeguarding concern was raised. Ensuring the safety of the child was the utmost priority.

13. A Member asked what the scale of the issue of providing off-site Alternative Provision was. The Interim Assistant Director Support Services (Home to School) noted that there were 250 children in this year's cohort, and most required solo arrangements. This was costly and logistically difficult as children had different finish times for different schools. The Interim Assistant Director noted that new draft guidelines were being produced and would be completed in the next couple of months after consultation with Alternative Learning providers.

Actions/requests for further information:

1. The Interim Assistant Director -Support Services (Home to School) to provide a written answer on what proportion of journeys meet the maximum guidance of 45 minutes for primary school children and 75 minutes for secondary school children.

Resolved:

The Select Committee recognises the significant improvement in H2ST at the start of the autumn term and wholeheartedly commends the team's effort and commitment. This Committee:

1. Endorses all the recommendations in the Family Voice Surrey report and requests that they provide an update to the Committee on progress against each recommendation at the June 2024 committee meeting.
2. Welcomes ongoing efforts to join up the SEND and H2STA processes and recommends these are pursued so that when decisions on placements are made, there is visibility of the transport implications at an early stage to facilitate effective planning and ensure that families are informed of transport arrangements as early as possible.
3. Recommends that a KPI is introduced – and reported to each Select Committee meeting from April 2024 onwards – to monitor compliance with the Service Level Agreement that for in-year applications, transport is arranged *and communicated to families* within 10 working days of eligibility being confirmed.
4. Recommends that for applications submitted by 31 July, families are notified what home to school transport has been arranged no later than 7 days prior to the start of term. Performance should be monitored and reported to each select committee meeting from April 2024 onwards.

5. Recommends that a replacement for the Mobisoft route planning system is investigated as a priority. An updated route planning system to enable efficient pupil pick-up and drop-off sequencing, as well as taking into account traffic and road conditions, would improve journey times for children and young people and ensure that route costs are managed effectively.
6. Recommends that a cost analysis is undertaken to interface all the software packages used in the home to school travel process, in view of the budget sub-group's finding that eight stand-alone systems are currently being used throughout the process. Replacing both the outdated dynamic purchasing system as well as the route planning system have the potential to generate efficiencies.

51/23 DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2028/29 [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities

David Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Sinead Mooney, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Nicola Kilvington, Director - Corporate Strategy & Policy

Louise Lawson, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Customer & Communities

Nikki O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate

Rachel Wigley, Director – Finance Insights & Performance

Daniel Shurlock, Customer & Communities Strategic Lead

Susan Wills, Assistant Director for Cultural Services

Jean-Pierre Moore, Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention

Matt Marsden, Strategic Finance Business Partner – CFL

Key points made in the discussion:

1. A Member asked witnesses why library income levels were declining and what plans were in place to counteract that. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities said that extensive efforts had been made to find alternative provisions due to the temporary closures recently. The Deputy Leader noted that the service had faced risks such as planning issues or procurement, but this had all been tracked timely and vigorously.

The Assistant Director for Cultural Services noted that while the library went under refurbishment in Redhill, a temporary library in a Council owned site would be in place. This new library space directly under the current library would mean as little disruption as possible to residents and the Council would still be able to utilise the space for events. The Assistant Director offered to meet with the Member outside the meeting to hold a discussion about the Redhill library interim and refurbishment plans.

2. A Member noted that there was a proposed £100,000 shared reduction in funding from the Council to the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) in 2024/2025. The Member asked how the diverted funding would be used and the repercussions for the organisations. The Deputy Leader noted that there would be a period of transition. The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention noted that during the period of transition they would help the charities be more independent. The actual amount of the efficiency was £68k, rounded to £0.1m for the purposes of the budget papers. The Council had invested £100,000 in the Strategic Strength Transformation Fund from the Community Foundation for Surrey that was available for the whole voluntary sector. The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention noted that the VCFS would also be putting around £230,000 in the same fund. This funding would empower smaller grassroots organisations to access better funding as part of a long-term funding strategy. The Member asked to see the impact assessment of the funding reductions. The Head of Community Partnerships said that he could share it with the Committee.
3. A Member asked to hold a conversation with the Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention regarding the voluntary sector within Surrey. The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention agreed.
4. A Member noted that Surrey Youth Focus's funding had already been cut, impacting their work. The Deputy Leader said that there had been a safety net around this transformation with additional funding to create capacity and resource around infrastructure organisations.
5. A Member emphasised the need to create a longer-term financial plan for the voluntary sector. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said that there was a budget gap and if more funding was being asked for, it had to be considered where it would be drawn from.

Draft CFL Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

6. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning noted that the proposed budget did not impact funding for children with additional needs and that the Council was bound by statutory duties to provide certain services. The Chair noted the need to comply with statutory duties but felt that the Council should invest more heavily in early intervention.
7. A Member asked witnesses how achievable the £9 million in efficiencies identified were. The Strategic Finance Business Partner for CFL said that

although the efficiencies were ambitious, he wanted to provide assurance to Members that they were achievable.

8. The Chair asked if the Cabinet was being pessimistic on the achievability of efficiencies, 60% of which were rated as amber or red. The Strategic Finance Business Partner for CFL noted that with time and better data, the Council would become more confident in the deliverability and achievability of efficiency savings. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning noted that there was a distinction between delivery as expected and delivering services that achieved efficiencies as well. Services such as solo taxis which had experienced a rise in route numbers and allocations had all delivered to their intended targets, but the offsetting pressures of inflation outweighed any efficiencies.
9. A Member asked what the effect of the 10% spend reduction on contracts being procured during 2024/25 would be. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning said this referred to new contracts that had been commissioned and would expect changes to service delivery models to be more efficient or to redirect budget to another high priority area to ensure a balance of priorities was found.
10. A Member asked for clarification of when there had been robust consideration of the reversing of the 10% reduction policy. The Chair asked to see a response from witnesses in writing.
11. A Member asked how savings could be achieved through the expansion of children in fostering care considering the shortage of foster parents. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning said that there was increased investment in the recruitment and retention of foster parents. The Service was also looking to maximise current resources such as ensuring foster parents had the maximum number of children they could look after and looking at utilising capacity elsewhere in the system when possible.
12. A Member asked if the budget took account of the increase in the number of children needing Home to School Travel assistance. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning said that the demand for EHCPs was considered in the budget process and the Service worked on the assumption that 30% of EHCP children would need transport assistance.
13. A Member asked a question on skills development and adult learning in Surrey and noted that community skills could be paid for by individuals to help offset the cost of the programmes. The Director for Education and Lifelong Learning noted that different programmes could be commissioned or funded through various organisations. The Service was reviewing changes, but the priority was to still ensure programmes were affordable to residents but also generating income for the Council.

14. A Member asked what the outcomes of the recommendation from June 2023 regarding prioritising community-based play and youth schemes budget for children with disabilities had been. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, formerly Cabinet Member for Children & Families, answered that the Council was committed to keeping the budget under review. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning noted that there had been no further budget for short breaks but there had been a one-off grant from the Department for Education which would re-occur next year as a one off. The Member emphasised the importance of short breaks to families and children. The Cabinet Member said that the budget was not being cut but the priority had to be providing statutory services to thousands of children in Surrey.
15. A Member emphasised the importance of short breaks to families and children. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning noted that the core budget would not be reduced for non-statutory additional services. To improve short breaks the budget would have to be diverted from another area. The need to meet statutory obligations had to be prioritised.
16. A Member noted that not providing short breaks had a knock-on impact on the finances of other services. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning said there was no budget to increase capacity for play and leisure. The Chair noted that the reduction in short breaks and play and leisure had profound negative impacts on the mental health of residents. The Cabinet Member regretted that there was no budget to meet the demand for play and leisure.
17. A Member asked if all changes identified as a result of the SEND inspection findings could be accommodated within the budget envelope. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning expressed confidence that it could be. The Cabinet had agreed to an extra £15 million funding over next few years and that was ringfenced for children with additional needs.

Actions/requests for further information:

1. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services will hold a discussion with Jonathan Essex on the Redhill library interim and refurbishment plans.
2. The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention to share the EIA impact Assessment with the Committee.
3. The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention and Bernie Muir to discuss issues currently faced by the voluntary sector.
4. The Strategic Finance Partner – Corporate to provide a written response on whether there are different policies between adults' and children's social care

in respect of inflation or efficiencies automatically applied when recommissioning.

5. Cabinet Member for CFLL to outline evidence of the robust consideration given to reversing the policy of applying a blanket 10% reduction to the financial envelope for each service when it is recommissioned.
6. Director – CFL Commissioning and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to provide what evidence was considered in the evaluation that led to the decision to reduce the budget for community-based play and youth schemes for children with disabilities from 2023/24, explaining how they evaluated the impact of the cut as well as the financial value and clinical value (mental and physical) of the initiative.

Resolved:

The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee recommends that:

1. In order to give the voluntary sector stability, Cabinet should increase funding to VCFS organisations in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in line with inflation and outline how it can offer the organisations longer term stability. These organisations play a crucial role in enabling and empowering communities and voluntary sector organisations.
2. The aspiration of prevention should be supported by restoring the £0.37m play and leisure short breaks cut from the 2023/24 budget, which has had significant detrimental repercussions on some of the most vulnerable families. This is in addition to applying for the Department for Education’s Short Breaks Innovation Grant, which supports new and complementary short breaks services. It should be noted that the DfE funding, if awarded, would not replace the play and leisure short breaks which were cut in 2023/24.
3. Rather than being classed as an overspend, the £16.3m 2023/24 pressures identified as historic (in CLA placements, home to school travel assistance, Special Guardianship Order rates, children with disabilities packages of care, care leavers) should be incorporated into the CFLL budget envelope going forward.
4. If the Council is to stay on track with “getting to good” whilst meeting demands for statutory services and supporting the ambition of “no one left behind”, the CFLL budget envelope for 2024/25 should increase to £283.91m. This comprises:
 - 249.8m opening budget
 - + 39.9m pressures
 - + £0.37m play and leisure restoration

- 6.16m for the green and 60% of red and amber identified efficiencies that the Committee considers are likely to be achieved.

A smaller budget risks both the “getting to good” strategy and the guiding principle of the 2030 Community Vision that no one is left behind.

5. Should any proposed changes to the delivery of adult education come from the current review of cost to run the Council’s sites versus fees earned, there should first be a full and formal exploration of how any changes would impact residents’ access to community learning and adult skills. This recommendation is made in the context of the Council’s strong commitment to deliver the Surrey Skills Plan and promote skills and education to grow a sustainable economy, together with the proposed Level 2 County Deal which would devolve Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget to the Council.

52/23 CHILDREN’S HOMES – OFSTED REPORTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

Rachael Wardell, Executive Director - Children, Families & Learning

Key points made in the discussion:

1. The Chair noted there had been one Ofsted report published since the last meeting and was pleased that it continued the trend of positive reports and commended the work of all staff involved and thanked them for enabling the continuity of that trend.

53/23 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

Rachael Wardell, Executive Director - Children, Families & Learning

Patricia Denney, Director – Quality and Performance (remote)

Key points made in the discussion:

1. The Chair asked if more up to date information on additional needs and disabilities key performance indicators (KPIs) could be brought to the February 2024 Full Select Committee. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning said that it would be shared as soon as possible.
2. The Chair asked when the social worker recruitment and retention statistics would this be available. The Executive Director for Children, Families &

Learning noted that it was a priority to access the data and would be shared once received.

3. A Member asked how the Service was increasing the number of Children In Need visits. The Director for Quality and Performance noted that there were only marginal increases to Children In Need visits, but this was being rectified under the new delivery model that would address this issue.
4. A Member asked if everything promised to be delivered around EHCPs was on track, The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning and the Director for Quality and Performance confirmed yes.
5. The Chair asked to see a comparison of progress to date of improvements of KPIs 2.3, 5.2, 6.4 and 6.8 against the original target plan ahead of the February 2024 Select Committee Meeting.
6. A Member asked a question on the 341 looked after children who were not placed in Surrey. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning agreed that sufficiency issues around placements in Surrey were an issue but that solutions were being explored to improve it, such as working with independent foster providers and the work around the Extended Kinship Network or reunification. The Director for Quality and Performance noted that there were constant conversations with health colleagues to notify them of children coming into care in order to provide medical care such as EHCP demands.
7. A Member expressed concern over the number of pupils absent from schools and asked witnesses to send further information on school attendance in Surrey. The Director for Quality and Performance noted that Surrey had high school attendance during the pandemic as compared with other counties.
8. A Member noted that MindWorks was closed for referrals. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Learning noted that there had been no further recent data from MindWorks and that neurodivergent pathways had stopped accepting referrals.
9. The Chair thanked witnesses and Members.

Actions/requests for further information:

1. Director – Quality and Performance Extend action CFLLC41/23 [Provide a short report explaining performance in and steps to improve KPIs 4.3, 5.2, 6.4 and 6.8] and have a comparison of progress to date against the original target plan in July 2023 and the current reprofiled plan, ahead of the February Select Committee meeting.
2. Committee to make the Adults and Health Select Committee aware that the percentage of Looked After Children Initial Health Assessments completed

dipped below 90% in September due to both Initial & Review Health Assessments continuing to be affected by health staffing issues.

3. Executive Director – Children, Families & Learning to share report on school attendance in Surrey and reasons why parents were keeping children at home as opposed to attending school.

Jonathan Essex left the meeting at 14:46

54/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15 February 2024.

Meeting ended at: 14:52

Chair

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Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee Forward Work Programme 2024

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee
Chairman: Fiona Davidson | Scrutiny Officer: Julie Armstrong | Democratic Services Assistant: Emily Wilkinson

Date of Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Issue for Scrutiny	Purpose	Outcome	Relevant Organisational Priorities	Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
17 April 2024	Overview, policy development and review	Youth work	Review the provision of youth work and outcomes for all young people at county and district levels and outcomes for service users since universal youth work was replaced by targeted youth work following Cabinet decision in 2018; compare and contrast data from new provision with that of previous provision	Committee assured of adequacy and impact of provision	Tackling health inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Matt Ansell, Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding; Jackie Clementson, Assistant Director for Early Help, Youth Justice and Adolescent Service
	Overview, policy development and review	Adult Learning and Skills	Committee asked at June 2023 meeting for a progress report in relation to the Task Group's recommendations, to include an analysis of the funding implications	Parity in community learning and adult skills across Surrey	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, Lifelong Learning; Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth; Julia Katherine, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning; Dawn Redpath, Director for Economy and Growth

Item 5/24

<p>10 May 2024 (hosted by AHSC)</p>	<p>Overview, policy development and review</p>	<p>Children’s Mental Health (joint with and led by Adults and Health Select Committee)</p>	<p>Review Mindworks performance data (number of referrals and timeliness of assessments), lessons learned and implemented as a result, how they are being managed and how they are supporting children with unique needs.</p>	<p>Assurance there is a plan to meet current unmet needs and improve mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children in Surrey</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality, Empowering communities</p>	<p>Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and Public Health Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Rachael Wardell, DCS; Helen Coombes, Executive Director for Adults, Health and Wellbeing; Harriet Derrett-Smith, Associate Director for Commissioning - Health & Wellbeing; Kerry Clarke, lead for Children’s Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health</p>
<p>27 June 2024</p>	<p>Overview, policy development and review</p>	<p>Children Missing Education</p>	<p>Explore how many children of statutory school age are not registered at school or suitably electively home educated, the range of reasons and the impact</p>	<p>Provide an inclusive education system which enables all children and young people to achieve their potential</p>	<p>Tackling health Inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Julia Katherine, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning; Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs SE</p>

	Overview, policy development and review	Home to School Travel Assistance Update	Committee recommended in December 2023 that Family Voice Surrey provide an update to the Committee on progress made against each of their recommendations	Achieve learning review objectives	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, Lifelong Learning Patricia Denney, Director – CFL Quality & Performance Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)
	Overview, policy development and review	Report of the Additional Needs and Disabilities Task Group	Committee to review and endorse the Task Group's report and its recommendations	Improved support of CYP with AND and their parents/carers	Tackling health inequality, Empowering communities, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit	Jeremy Webster, Chairman of the Task Group
	Performance overview	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report and Performance Report in relation to Looked After Children	Committee to review key performance data for year ending March 2023 for Looked After Children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally, and any relevant national policy developments that impact Corporate Parenting	Assurance of provision for Looked After Children	Tackling health inequality, Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

12 September 2024	Overview, policy development and review	Libraries	Scrutinise modernisation of the Library Estate as part of the Library and Cultural Services Transformation programme, including refurbishment of Epsom, Redhill, Staines and Woking and impact of Open Access technology	Provide modern and inclusive multi-use facilities and value for money	Empowering Communities, Enabling a greener future, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit	Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities; Liz Mills, Strategic Director – Customer Service Transformation; Sue Wills, Assistant Director for Cultural Services
	Overview, policy development and review	End-to-end review of EHCP process with EHCP Recovery Plan	Learn lessons from and monitor implementation of improvements following in-house review by Digital Discovery team in early 2024 Progress check if plan is working to bring timeliness in line with statutory obligation	Improve EHCP process and timeliness, make easier to navigate and reduce complaints	Tackling health inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Julia Katherine, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning; Tracey Sanders, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs SW
14 November 2024	Overview, policy development and review	Transitions to Adulthood	Review outcomes in areas of educational attainment/ destinations, mental health and housing for vulnerable cohorts, particularly those with AND, are how they are helped to prepare for adulthood. Exclude care leavers as these will be subject of deep dive day	Enable disadvantaged children and young people to achieve positive outcomes	Tackling health Inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Julia Katherine, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning;

<p>3 December 2024</p>	<p>Pre-decision scrutiny</p>	<p>2025/26 Budget and MTFS to 2029/30</p>	<p>Select Committee to receive draft budget proposals, provide feedback and make recommendations</p>	<p>Help to ensure value for money and sufficiency of services</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Enabling a greener future, Empowering communities</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety; Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; Liz Mills, Strategic Director – Customer Service Transformation; Anna D’Alessandro, Director - Corporate Finance & Commercial; Rachel Wigley, Director - Finance Insights & Performance; Kay Goodacre, Strategic Finance Business Partner CFL</p>
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Informal Meetings

<p>10 June 2024</p>	<p>Oversight</p>	<p>Youth Justice Plan</p>	<p>To see the plan, renewed annually, before submission to the local Youth Justice Management Board at end of June</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Matt Ansell, Director - Family Resilience & Safeguarding Jamie Cottingham, Service Manager - Youth Offending & Youth Offer</p>
<p>tbc</p>	<p>Overview, policy development and review</p>	<p>Safeguarding of Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children</p>	<p>Review the needs of asylum seeking and refugee children and families, and the support provided to them to settle into schools and communities, with a focus on unaccompanied children.</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Mary Burguieres, Assistant Director for Systems & Transformation (chair of the Immigration and Education Rapid Response Group)</p>
<p>tbc</p>	<p>For information</p>	<p>Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) case review</p>	<p>For SSCP to share with the Committee learnings from case review on racial incident outside Ashford school.</p>	<p>Derek Benson, Independent Chair SSCP; Matt Ansell, Director – Family Resilience and Safeguarding</p>

Task and Finish Groups

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Relevant organisational priorities</u>	<u>Membership</u>
Jan-Jun 2024: Additional Needs and Disabilities: Parental Experience	Tackling health inequality, Empowering communities, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit	Jeremy Webster (Chairman), Jonathan Essex, Fiona White, Mark Sugden, Bob Hughes
Autumn 2024: Deep dive day, potentially joint with CPB, on Care Leavers – accommodation, support (staffing/process, Personal Advisors), transitions.	Tackling health inequality, Empowering communities	To be determined

Member visits arranged

12 January SEND; 26 January CFL Commissioning; 28 March User Voice and Participation Team; Mindworks (date tbc).

Standing Items

- **Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme:** Monitor Select Committee recommendations and requests and forward work programme.
- **Performance Overview:** Dashboard of key indicators in SEND, EHCP timeliness and Children’s Services showing level of progress made against ILACS recommendations; social worker and foster carer turnover data; overview comparing current external assessors’ grades with previous year, in all areas of CFLLC remit.

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Recommendations

Meeting	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Officer / Member	Deadline	Progress Check On	Update/Response
12 June 2023	Adult Learning and Skills Task Group Report [Item 8]	CFLLC 17/23: Asks the relevant officers to provide a progress report to this Select Committee on the progress being made in relation to the Task Group's recommendations at the first Select Committee meeting of 2024, to include an analysis of the funding implications.	Liz Mills, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning; Dawn Redpath, Director for Economy and Growth; Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning; Matt Furniss, Cabinet	Response by 25 September 2023	Paper request 1 February 2024	Progress report on Forward Work Programme to come to 17 April 2024 Committee meeting.

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			Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth			
2 October 2023	EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan [Item 6]	CFLLC 23/23: Data on how the EHCP timeliness recovery plan is performing against the targets stated in the report to the Select Committee on 2 October (EHCP Recovery Plan Figure 2, page 46) forms part of the performance overview item at each Select Committee meeting. By the first meeting of 2024, this should include the percentage of EHCP requests returned from MindWorks on time.	Tracey Sanders, Assistant Director - Inclusion & Additional Needs Harriet Derrett-Smith, Associate Director for Children and Young People's Integrated Commissioning for Surrey Heartlands ICS			Complete, see agenda reports packs.

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			Patricia Denney, Director – Quality and Performance			
2 October 2023	EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan [Item 6]	CFLLC 24/23: In order to identify the quality and timeliness of communication on the subject of EHCPs, Internal Audit undertake a dip sample audit of responses to parents and schools over a period of one month.	Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning David John, Audit Manager			Response 13 December 2023: Following the recommendations set at the Select Committee on the 2 nd of October 2023, Orbis Internal Audit was asked to carry out an audit on the quality and timeliness of communication on the subject of EHCPs. Scoping took place with the audit team and terms of Terms of Reference which was approved on the 23 rd of November. Field work has now commenced and is expected to conclude early January 2024. The audit team will then examine the findings and will produce a draft report to be shared with service leads in early February 2024. The time frame for completion of the report is dependent on findings during testing. Once the report has

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						been finalised, findings will be shared with Committee Members.
2 October 2023	EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan [Item 6]	CFLLC 25/23: In order to ensure that parents always know how to make contact with a new SEND case officer, line managers ensure leavers have a handover meeting with their successor (or their manager if none in place) and remind leavers to set up an out of office reply that includes their date of leaving and the identity and contact details of their (interim) successor and the contact details of their manager. Staff should also be encouraged to set up out of office messages when they are absent or on holiday, containing details of who parents and schools can contact in their absence.	Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning			<p>Response 13 December 2023:</p> <p>We issued an updated communication protocol on 21 November 2023 to all SEND staff which sets out the expectation of, and the wording to be used in, out of office replies when; staff are leaving the service; if they are on annual leave; and if they are unwell.</p> <p>We have also met with team leaders to confirm that handover meetings are expected and these have been taking place with new case officers when possible, or with senior case managers if not. The protocol also sets out the expectations of details given in email signatures to ensure contact details are clear and openly shared.</p>

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2 October 2023	Commissioning [Item 7]	CFLLC 26/23: Children's Service professionals / practitioners in each area are actively involved in the development of the commissioning requirements and specifications – alongside Commissioning professionals – from the outset of the process.	Lucy Clements, Interim Director – Integrated Children's Commissioning			Response 12 December 2023: Commissioning teams work closely and collaboratively with members of the Children's services operational teams, including the professionals and practitioners. The service model which is eventually commissioned, is designed in collaboration with the service leads so we can ensure the residents of Surrey can access a service which has their needs and outcomes at the centre and draws on any lessons learnt and best practice.
2 October 2023	Commissioning [Item 7]	CFLLC 27/23: Robust consideration is given to reversing the policy of applying a blanket 10% reduction to the financial envelope for each service when it is recommissioned.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning			Response 12 December 2023: Robust consideration has been given to the changes in financial envelope for recommissioned services. It has been agreed by the CFLL Leadership Team, the Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning that the 10% reduction will continue to apply, where appropriate.

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						We will continue to engage with providers through the procurement process and design service models which are deliverable within the agreed financial envelope. This may mean prioritising certain elements of the service or transforming how the service is delivered, but through co-production with service users and working with operational teams and providers, we will ensure services delivered to children and young people continue to meet their needs and deliver the outcomes they expect.
2 October 2023	Commissioning [Item 7]	CFLLC 28/23: A mechanism for ensuring that providers can apply for uplifts to cover inflationary pressures is built into the lifetime of all contracts.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Lucy Clements, Interim Director – Integrated			Response 12 December 2023: Commissioning teams will ensure there is a mechanism to apply for uplifts to cover inflationary pressures across the lifetime of the contract. This will be in line with our procurement and contract management process.

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			Children's Commissioning			
2 October 2023	Commissioning [Item 7]	CFLLC 29/23: Where required, the additional funding to enable points 1 and 2 is found from outside the Children's Services' budget envelope.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning David Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources			Response 12 December 2023: If additional funding is required, we will work with colleagues across the Council to ensure it is found in the most financially sustainable way.
6 December 2023	Home to School Travel Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 30/23: Endorses all the recommendations in the Family Voice Surrey report and requests that they provide an update to the Committee on progress against each recommendation at the June 2024 committee meeting.	Leanne Henderson and Kate Goode, FVS			Response 31 January 2024: A response was shared with Family Voice on the 8 th of January and the Action card is attached (see Annex A below). We have agreed to review these points in our monthly meetings and a formal response will be shared with Family Voice in April & July.

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6 December 2023	Home to School Travel Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 31/23: Welcomes ongoing efforts to join up the SEND and H2STA processes and recommends these are pursued so that when decisions on placements are made, there is visibility of the transport implications at an early stage to facilitate effective planning and ensure that families are informed of transport arrangements as early as possible.	Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)			Response 31 January 2024: Attendance at the Key Stage Transfer meetings has proven to be beneficial and will be continued during this academic year along with the continued utilisation of the MS Teams chat groups. This reaches all SEND case workers within each quadrant and supports data queries leading to timelier responses. A review of SST&AT training material is underway to help support our colleagues in SEND. These will in time be added to olive and mandatory for all workers within SEND. Ongoing attendance at the SEND strategic board meeting will strengthen our working relationships and a review is under way for the opportunity to create a focus group.

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6 December 2023	Home to School Travel Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 32/23: Recommends that a KPI is introduced – and reported to each select committee meeting from April 2024 onwards – to monitor compliance with the Service Level Agreement that for in-year applications, transport is arranged <i>and communicated to families</i> within 10 working days of eligibility being confirmed.	Patricia Denney, Director – Quality and Performance Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)			Response 31 January 2024: This request was made to our Data colleagues on the 12th of January and have it marked as a priority. We aim to have this report available from April, all being well with development & testing of the data.
6 December 2023	Home to School Travel Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 33/23: Recommends that for applications submitted by 31 July, families are notified what home to school transport has been arranged no later than 7 days prior to the start of term. Performance should be monitored and reported to each select	Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)			Response 31 January 2024: Development of a report is needed to support with this functionality. Work will be undertaken on our internal processes and ways of working to make sure we are capturing all data fields for reporting purposes. Ideally once we have a reportable solution, we can then turn this into a dashboard with support from the data team.

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		committee meeting from April 2024 onwards.	Patricia Denney, Director – Quality and Performance			This is work in progress for January through to April of this year.
6 December 2023	Home to School Travel Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 34/23: Recommends that a replacement for the Mobisoft route planning system is investigated as a priority. An updated route planning system to enable efficient pupil pick-up and drop-off sequencing, as well as taking into account traffic and road conditions, would improve journey times for children and young people and ensure that route costs are managed effectively.	Andrew Fisher, Business, Education & Social Care Applications Manager Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)			Response 31 January 2024: Freedom to Travel undertook a programme of works between October and December 2023 which included; A full review of required functionality for route planning, Review of alternate market providers, identification of a number of modules and features within Mobisoft that are available, which Surrey County are not utilising. Between January and the end of March 2024 Freedom to travel will be reviewing whether the features will provide us with the solutions we need (within Mobisoft) and creating a list of implications, costs and timeframes of implementing the above.

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						This will then inform our decision on next steps and what the longer-term strategic options may be.
6 December 2023	Home to School Travel Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 35/23: Recommends that a cost analysis is undertaken to interface all the software packages used in the home to school travel process, in view of the budget sub-group's finding that eight stand-alone systems are currently being used throughout the process. Replacing both the outdated dynamic purchasing system as well as the route planning system have the potential to generate efficiencies.	Andrew Fisher, Business, Education & Social Care Applications Manager Gerry Hughes, Interim Assistant Director – Support Services (Home to School)			Response 31 January 2024: In line with above, Freedom to Travel is mapping out key systems and interfaces. This work will be completed by end of March, will not include full costs and analysis, but will inform next steps. In the interim, the Freedom to Travel programme are working with the service to implement a number of service and operational enhancements and these are expected to generate efficiencies.
6 December 2023	Draft Budget 2024/25 and MTFS to	CFLLC 36/23: In order to give the voluntary sector stability, Cabinet should increase	Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet			Response 19 December 2023:

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	2028/29 [Item 7]	funding to VCF organisations in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in line with inflation and outline how it can offer the organisations longer term stability. These organisations play a crucial role in enabling and empowering communities and voluntary sector organisations.	Member for Customer and Communities			<p>The Cabinet values the crucial work of the voluntary, charity and faith sector (VCFS) in Surrey in working with and supporting so many local communities across the county. Ongoing conversations are taking place with representatives of the sector about how they can continue to evolve, collaborate and together develop sustainable long-term models that reduce their reliance on grant funding and enable them to work, often alongside the Council, in serving local residents to best effect.</p> <p>To support this work, the County Council has contributed £100,000 to the Community Foundation Surrey (CfS) Strategic Transformation Fund, with match-funding from CfS at least doubling this to make £200,000 available to local VCFS organisations. The impact of the funding is continually reviewed and assessed to ensure that value for money is being secured by the Council and CFS funders.</p> <p>Cabinet will consider the proposal to increase VCF sector funding in line with inflation</p>
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						assumptions for 2024/25 as part of the decision making process on how to balance the budget and dependent on the outcome of the upcoming Local Government Finance Settlement.
6 December 2023	Draft Budget 2024/25 and MTFS to 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 37/23: The aspiration of prevention should be supported by restoring the £0.37m play and leisure short breaks cut from the 2023/24 budget, which has had significant detrimental repercussions on some of the most vulnerable families. This is in addition to applying for the Department for Education’s Short Breaks Innovation Grant, which supports new and complementary short breaks services. It should be noted that the DoE funding, if awarded, would not replace	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning			<p>Response 19 December 2023:</p> <p>The draft budget for play and leisure for 2024/25 is £1.32m including a £70k contribution from Health and £50k for contract inflation. The Childrens’ Families & Lifelong Learning Directorate would welcome additional funds to be able to further invest in the play and leisure short breaks, but are unable to find that within the existing budget proposals without impacting on statutory or other key priorities of the service. Cabinet is required to set a balanced budget for 2024/25. The scale of the identified pressures for 2024/25, driven predominantly by inflation and demand increases, results in a residual gap to close of £13.5m in the Draft Budget position.</p> <p>Cabinet will consider the proposal to increase investment in play and leisure short breaks</p>

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		the play and leisure short breaks which were cut in 2023/24.				alongside consideration of the final budget decisions and dependent on the outcome of the upcoming Local Government Finance Settlement.
6 December 2023	Draft Budget 2024/25 and MTFs to 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 38/23: Rather than being classed as an overspend, the £16.3m 2023/24 pressures identified as historic (in CLA placements, home to school travel assistance, Special Guardianship Order rates, children with disabilities packages of care, care leavers) should be incorporated into the CFLL budget envelope going forward.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning David Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources			Response 19 December 2023: The in-year overspend position of all Directorates are reviewed as part of the annual budget setting process. Where Directorates are forecasting overspends in the current financial year, these are assessed to understand the impact in future years. Where an ongoing impact is anticipated, these are factored into future year budgets as pressures. In some cases, mitigations are put in place to off-set in-year overspends which have a positive impact on the future trajectory and so ongoing pressures are not anticipated to materialise. It is therefore important that in-year overspends are assessed individually to understand the ongoing medium-term impact. The draft budget for the Children, Families & Lifelong Learning Directorate currently includes

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						the £16.3m representing the ongoing cost of overspends being experienced in 2023/24. This is being reviewed for the final budget, recognising the in-year position continues to be challenging.
6 December 2023	Draft Budget 2024/25 and MTFS to 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 39/23: If the Council is to stay on track with “getting to good” whilst meeting demands for statutory services and supporting the ambition of “no one left behind”, the CFLL budget envelope for 2024/25 should increase to £283.91m. This comprises: 249.8m opening budget + 39.9m pressures + £0.37m play and leisure restoration - 6.16m for the green and 60% of red and amber identified	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning David Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources			Response 19 December 2023: The draft budget includes a budget requirement of £280.7m for the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) Directorate. There are likely to be further changes to this before the Final Budget in light of further decisions to be made, both in terms of council tax levels, potential investments (such as the recommendations made above) and the ongoing review of all pressures and efficiencies, in order to ensure that a balanced budget position can be proposed. This may result in increases or decreases to the amount set out in the draft budget. The Final budget will be considered by Cabinet in January and Full Council in February.

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FEBRUARY 2024**

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		<p>efficiencies that the Committee considers are likely to be achieved.</p> <p>A smaller budget risks both the “getting to good” strategy and the guiding principle of the 2030 Community Vision that no one is left behind.</p>				<p>The CFLL leadership are very clear on what is needed to deliver good quality services, and have plans in place to achieve this, supported by the proposed budget. However, this is not without risks, Surrey along with most other authorities are operating in extremely difficult times for children’s services, with increasing levels of complexity of need, a broken placement provider market and rising prices in home to school travel assistance, putting significant strains on Children’s service budgets. Another key strand to Surrey’s strategy in ensuring we provide consistently good services to children and families is increasing the number of permanent social workers to provide the stability and consistency a family needs and help deliver the plans for Children’s services.</p> <p>As we strive to manage within the budget envelope set, we find ourselves constantly faced with issues outside of our control. This requires constant review of the plans and proposed spend, but always with the mindset of improving the outcomes for our children in</p>
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**CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE
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						Surrey and our aim of getting services to a consistently good standard.
6 December 2023	Draft Budget 2024/25 and MTFS to 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 40/23: Should any proposed changes to the delivery of adult education come from the current review of cost to run the Council's sites versus fees earned, there should first be a full and formal exploration of how any changes would impact residents' access to community learning and adult skills. This recommendation is made in the context of the Council's strong commitment to deliver the Surrey Skills Plan and promote skills and education to grow a sustainable economy, together with the proposed Level 2 County Deal which would devolve Adult	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Liz Mills, Director – Education and Lifelong Learning			Response 19 December 2023: There are no plans to close any adult learning centres, the review being undertaken at present is in its early stages. Should there be any proposed assessment of change to an adult learning centre, the assessment will include the recommended requests from the select committee.

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		Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget to the Council.				
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Actions

Meeting	Item	Action	Responsible Officer/Member	Action Author	Deadline	Progress Check On	Update/Response
2 October 2023	Questions and Petitions [Item 4]	CFLLC 29/23: Director for Education and Lifelong Learning will provide a written response to Catherine Powell's question on the school absence multi-agency network and school absences for girls with ASD.	Director for Education and Lifelong Learning – Liz Mills	Liz Mills			Response received and circulated 06.02.2024.
2 October 2023	Commissioning Within Children, Families And Lifelong	CFLLC 36/23: Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Executive Director for Children,	Cabinet Member for Children and Families – Sinead Mooney	Lucy Clements to arrange discussion			Discussed at meeting on 09/01/2024. Committee was referred to the response to their October 2023 recommendations on Commissioning

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	Learning [Item 7]	Families and Learning to discuss the policy to reduce spending by 10% year on year and share outcomes of the discussion with the committee.	Executive Director – Children, Families and Learning – Rachael Wardell				
2 October 2023	Commissioning Within Children, Families And Lifelong Learning [Item 7]	CFLLC 38/23: Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding will, in 2024, describe to the Committee what the SCC offer to families of varying degrees of need will look like.	Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding – Matt Ansell	Matt Ansell			An update will be provided when an item is scheduled for Committee.
2 October 2023	Commissioning Within Children, Families And Lifelong Learning [Item 7]	CFLLC 40/23: At a point that Procurement regulations allow, Director for CFL Commissioning to share registration of interests of lead providers with the Committee.	Interim Director of Integrated Childrens Commissioning - Lucy Clements	Lucy Clements			This will be actioned when procurement regulations allow.

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6 December 2023	Home To School Travel Assistance Update [Item 6]	CFLLC 42/23: The Interim Assistant Director -Support Services (Home to School) (Gerry Hughes) to provide a written answer on what proportion of journeys meet the maximum guidance of 45 minutes for primary school children and 75 minutes for secondary school children.	The Interim Assistant Director -Support Services (Home to School) Gerry Hughes				Response shared with Committee 10/01/2024.
6 December 2023	Draft 2024/25 Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 43/23: The Assistant Director for Cultural Services will hold a discussion with Cllr Jonathan Essex on the Redhill library interim and refurbishment plans.	The Assistant Director for Cultural Services Susan Wills				Meeting held 20 December 2023.
6 December 2023	Draft 2024/25 Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To	CFLLC 44/23: The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention to share the EIA impact Assessment with the Committee.	The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention Jean-Pierre Moore				Response circulated with Committee 24 January 2024.

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	2028/29 [Item 7]						
6 December 2023	Draft 2024/25 Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 45/23: The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention and Cllr Bernie Muir to chat about issues faced by the voluntary sector.	The Head of Community Partnerships and Prevention Jean-Pierre Moore				Meeting took place 30 January 2024.
6 December 2023	Draft 2024/25 Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 46/23: The Strategic Finance Partner – Corporate (Nikki O'Connor) to provide a written response on whether there are different policies between adults' and children's social care in respect of inflation or efficiencies automatically applied when recommissioning.	The Strategic Finance Partner – Corporate Nikki O'Connor				Response circulated with Committee 24 January 2024.

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6 December 2023	Draft 2024/25 Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 47/23: Cabinet Member for CFLL to outline evidence of the robust consideration given to reversing the policy of applying a blanket 10% reduction to the financial envelope for each service when it is recommissioned.	Cabinet Member for CFLL Clare Curran			Response circulated with Committee 17 January 2024.
6 December 2023	Draft 2024/25 Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2028/29 [Item 7]	CFLLC 48/23: Director – CFL Commissioning (Lucy Clements) and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to provide what evidence was considered in the evaluation that led to the decision to reduce the budget for community-based play and youth schemes for children with disabilities from 2023/24, explaining how they evaluated the impact of the	Director – CFL Commissioning Lucy Clements			Response shared 25 January 2024.

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		cut as well as the financial value and clinical value (mental and physical) of the initiative.					
6 December 2023	Performance Overview [Item 9]	CFLLC 49/23: Director – Quality and Performance (Patricia Denney) Extend action CFLLC 41/23 [Provide a short report explaining performance in and steps to improve KPIs 4.3, 5.2, 6.4 and 6.8] and have a comparison of progress to date against the original target plan in July 2023 and the current reprofiled plan, ahead of the February Select Committee meeting.	Director – Quality and Performance Patricia Denney				Response circulated with Committee 24 January 2024.
6 December 2023	Performance Overview [Item 9]	CFLLC 50/23: Committee to make Adults & Health Select Committee aware that the percentage of	SO & DSA				Meeting held 5 February 2024.

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		Looked After Children Initial Health Assessments completed dipped below 90% in September due to both Initial and Review Health Assessments continuing to be affected by health staffing issues.					
6 December 2023	Performance Overview [Item 9]	CFLLC 51/23: Executive Director – Children, Families & Learning (Rachael Wardell) to share report on school attendance in Surrey and reasons why parents were keeping children at home as opposed to attending schools.	Executive Director – Children, Families & Learning Rachael Wardell				Response circulated with Committee 24 January 2024.

Monday 08 January 2024

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Purpose of report:

This report seeks to advise the Select Committee on the use of alternative provision in Surrey, with reference to the use of registered and unregistered provision as well as provision in and out of the county. The report will explore the alternative provision market, the needs of the cohort accessing or on a pathway to alternative provision and Surrey County Council's strategies and policies supporting the delivery of high-quality provision. The information presented will set out how Surrey's alternative provision meets the needs of children and young people in Surrey, and how well it enables children and young people to maximise their potential in both adolescence and adulthood.

Introduction:

1. A new national policy direction for Alternative Provision (AP) was set out in the Department for Education's White Paper, Right Support, Right Place, Right Time in March 2023; this cited that AP would be fully incorporated into the SEND System with implementation through a new National SEND and AP Board. The SEND and AP Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time sets out a vision and delivery approach to improve outcomes and enable CYP with additional needs and disabilities to thrive and fulfil their potential. Alongside the revised Local Area SEND Inspection Framework, this underpins the ongoing programme of improvement across AP in Surrey, helping us to shape our thinking and deliver a child and family centred approach to areas of development.
2. AP is defined by the Department of Education as "education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools, for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for reasons such as exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, short- or long-term illness" (*Alternative Provision: Statutory guidance for local authorities*). It can be for children who have social, emotional, or mental health needs (not necessarily with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who may have been excluded), complex health needs or for whom an academic pathway of GCSEs is not appropriate. Surrey County Council as an

education authority has a duty to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise for each child who for the reasons outlined above would not receive it unless such arrangements were made (Section 19 of the Education Act 1996).

3. Surrey County Council may establish Pupil Referrals Units (PRU) to deliver their responsibilities in relation to alternative provision but do not have a duty to do so. A PRU can only be established after exploring the possibility of opening an AP Academy (or AP Free School). An AP Academy receives funding directly from the government and is run by an academy trust, giving them more control over how they do things than community schools. The Local Authority has a duty to provide education for a permanently excluded child from the sixth day after the exclusion.
4. To address the duties outlined above, Surrey County Council (SCC) has:
 - Non-medical Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)/AP Academies
 - Medical PRUs
 - Access to Education (A2E)
 - Surrey Online School (SOS)
 - Further Education (FE) Colleges offering 14-16 programmes for those better suited to a vocational pathway.
 - A range of independent alternative providers (registered and unregistered) delivering face-to-face and/or online tutoring and vocational programmes.
5. SCC also have specific duties in relation to young people (primarily girls) with a Surrey postcode who have been sectioned to a mental health hospital/ward. This does not include Hospital Schools which are special schools.
6. It is important to note that AP differs from the provision of Education Other Than at School (EOTAS). In addition to the rights under section 19, children and young people (CYP) with an EHCP can be considered for provision under EOTAS if they meet the criteria set out in Section 61 of the Children and Families Act. Provision under EOTAS is a formal special education package which covers a range of provision for children for whom a school setting is considered inappropriate or not possible.
7. Between 2019-2020, SCC carried out a comprehensive review of the AP system across Surrey. This included consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including parents/carers and young people, and looked at all aspects of the system with a key focus on:
 - Need
 - Progress and outcomes for children and young people
 - Spend
 - Sufficiency (including Capital)

The output of the review along with exploration of good practice and research into innovative and effective alternative provision strategies culminated in the delivery of Surrey's Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Strategy which was published in November 2021

8. The revised Local Area SEND Inspection Framework (which came into force on 1 January 2023) strengthened the focus on alternative provision as a key priority area, reinforced further by the roll out of thematic reviews of alternative provision in local areas. Areas of focus with regards to oversight and commissioning of alternative provision outlined in the framework and explored in detail through the thematic reviews include:
 - Early identification of need
 - Intervention plans
 - Transition arrangements
 - Impact and Outcomes
 - Quality and performance of provision

Alternative Provision in Surrey

9. Alternative provision is education arranged for pupils of statutory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons would not otherwise receive suitable full-time education as set out under Section 19 of the Education Act (1996). Provision commissioned or operated by SCC to meet these duties include:
 - 9.1 Five maintained PRUs with 168 funded place (137 on-site capacity), including three medical PRUs – one dedicated to pupils with an acquired brain injury which supports and educates children and young people nationally, one dedicated to pupils with a designated CAMHS Consultant or case-holding social worker and one for those medically unable to attend mainstream school as evidenced by a consultant-level health professional.
 - 9.2 Three Alternative Provision (AP) Academies that are commissioned to deliver 140 places (with a current on-site capacity of 127).
 - 9.3 An Access to Education (A2E) service which provides a flexible service for children and young people who through exceptional circumstances cannot attend school, including medical reasons and permanent exclusions. A2E offers a service made up of teaching, emotional, behavioural and social development work, mentoring and access to a virtual learning environment. A2E aims to cater for up to 280 children and young people at any one time.

- 9.4 Surrey Online School, an initiative that provides live, online lessons to a range of pupils across all key stages across the whole county. This is delivered in partnership with Tute Education Ltd (registered providers of the Department for Education’s National Tutoring Programme) who are partnered with an ‘Outstanding’ academy trust.
- 9.5 SCC also make use of several independent alternative providers (registered and unregistered) delivering face-to-face and/or online tutoring and vocational programmes. As at the start of January 2024 there were 61 independent AP providers (excluding therapies) meeting SCC’s minimum requirements.
- 9.6 Additionally, Further Education Colleges in Surrey offer 14-16 programmes for those better suited to a vocational pathway. Places within these settings are primarily commissioned directly by schools although there are some circumstances where SCC may make referrals and commission a place.

10 Of the places funded/commissioned for children and young people of statutory school age by SCC in 2022/23, places at the PRUs/AP Academies deliver nearly 50% of placements.

AP Places* commissioned by the LA/Capacity	No.	% of Total
Non-medical PRU/AP Academy**	240	45%
Medical PRU	68	13%
A2E#	133	25%
Surrey Online School#	13	2%
Independent AP#	83	15%
Total	537	

*The number of places commissioned for PRUs/AP Academies equates to FTE places. In contrast, placements at A2E, SOS and within Independent AP are most likely part-time.

**Funded FTE equivalent places

#As captured in the 2023 AP Census

Pathways to AP

- 11 SCC’s AP Strategy reflects a culture shift in approach, moving away from a focus on ‘alternative provision’ to a focus on the alternative curriculum pathways that alternative provision can offer children and young people. Accessing an alternative curriculum can and should be more fluid, with greater resource emphasis being placed on outreach and reintegration.
- 12 AP plays an important specialist role in supporting children and young people whose specific needs or circumstances (often associated with their additional needs or disability) prevent them from attending a mainstream school, re-engaging them in education as much as their health allows, and providing a supported transition back to mainstream school when appropriate.

13 Surrey County Council must make arrangements for suitable education at a school or otherwise for those children of compulsory school age who, by reasons of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. This may be full-time education or part-time where this is considered to be in the child's best interest.

14 The date which Surrey County Council have a duty to provide full-time education for a child are:

- 14.1 Exclusions: from the sixth school day after the exclusion
- 14.2 Health needs/anxiety: as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, and at the latest by the sixth day of the absence
- 14.3 Children with no school place: immediately

15 Reasons for making alternative arrangements for education and how those arrangements are made (and responsibility for reviewing and monitoring) are summarised below.

Reasons for making alternative arrangements for education	How arrangements are made and responsibility for reviewing and monitoring
Where a Child or young person (CYP) is medically unfit to attend a school.	School and/or (A2E) to make a referral to be considered at medical panel.
Where a CYP has been permanently excluded from a setting.	School to provide education up to day 6. The LA will secure alternative provision after day 6
Where a CYP with an EHCP is awaiting a new school/change of type of placement, as agreed appropriate by the LA, and it is clear that the CYP is not receiving a suitable full-time education	School or the LA can put in AP to support transition arrangements back into setting or whilst awaiting a new school placement
Where a CYP with an EHCP is not on a school roll and the local authority is unable to place them within 20 days. The CYP would be considered to be a child missing education (CME).	The LA will arrange alternative provision whilst a new setting is secured.
Where the LA has agreed that a CYP with an EHCP would be inappropriate to attend a setting they will make arrangements for the provision outlined in section F to be delivered (EOTAS).	LA agreement at EHCP Governance Board or via a tribunal agreement under section 61 of the Children and Families ACT.

16 In some instances, SCC will provide funding for AP for those children and young people on a school roll awaiting a new type of setting and/or not attending a school which impacts on receiving full-time education. Further to this AP can, in some circumstances, be used where a child has not been excluded, where there

are medical needs, or they need a placement/provision to support them with their behaviour or to deliver a specific provision the setting cannot.

- 17 A recent Local Ombudsman review found that Surrey County Council were at increased risk of being found not to be providing suitable AP for children out of school. The review looked at 139 cases recorded as 'alleged missed education' as identified by the categorisation used within the Council's complaints procedure. Of the 139 cases reviewed, the Council was found to be not fully compliant with our duty in 87 cases. In response to this ruling training was implemented in September 2023 across several Surrey County Council teams. The objective was to address common misunderstandings in relation to responsibility, duty to act and suitability of provision in relation to provision of AP. Further to this a number of additional actions were initiated, including the formation of a Section 19 Learning Group, development of improved reporting mechanisms and ongoing development of practice in relation to early identification of children not receiving a suitable, full-time education.
- 18 In addition to the rights under section 19, children and young people with an EHCP can be considered for provision under EOTAS if they meet the criteria set out in Section 61 of the Children and Families Act. Provision under EOTAS is a formal special education package which covers a range of provision for children for whom a school setting is considered inappropriate or not possible. EOTAS can only be agreed in conjunction with the Local Authority via an EHC needs assessment, a reassessment of needs or at the EHCPA annual review.
- 19 In some circumstances, unregistered AP may be considered. Unregistered AP plays a key role in the delivery of alternative curriculum pathways for many young people who are not at the time able to access a registered school setting. This provision is predominantly used for those with additional needs and disabilities requiring a specialist package of support under the legislative allowances of EOTAS. In some circumstances unregistered provision may also be used as an interim provision of AP. Where this is the case adherence to [SCC's Unregistered Schools Strategy \(Sep 2019\)](#) is key. Any provider of education should be registered as an independent school if it meets the criteria – that it provides fulltime education to five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has an EHCP. The majority of Independent AP providers do not meet the criteria set out by the DfE to register as an independent school as their provision is on a part-time basis. A number of Independent AP Providers, although not a registered independent school, are registered with the DfE as learning providers and as such are listed on the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP). The allocation of a UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) does not constitute a process of quality checks, nor is it an indication of provider performance or capabilities. Responsibility to carry out quality assurance checks for these providers remains with the commissioner, as it does for all unregistered provisions.
- 20 SCC is currently in the process of developing an AP Admissions policy outlining the responsibilities in relation to AP in line with the provisions and pathways available. This will sit alongside our Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy to provide greater clarity and detail with regards to processes and decision making. This will be underpinned by a new Quality

Assurance Framework built on good practice from the [IntegratED AP Quality Toolkit](#)

- 21 The Council is developing an Independent Alternative Provision Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for 2024. The purpose of this DPS will be to provide key education and/or other support services to CYP. This builds on the implementation of an interim AP Directory to deliver improved consistency and quality of AP commissioning as seen across many neighbouring authorities. Significant engagement has taken place with providers of Independent AP through 2023, with a particular focus on ensuring the DPS delivers improved quality whilst encouraging applications from a wide array of business types in Surrey (such as smaller organisations, community interest companies or sole traders).
- 22 Where a need for AP is identified, communication with the parents/carer and CYP is critical to ensuring the success of any arrangements made. The referring service/organisation is responsible for ensuring that the voice of the family is captured and communicated as part of the transition to any AP placement. For those accessing AP as part of an EOTAS package, parents/guardians and pupils must be consulted with and have input into the decision-making process of any arrangements.

Demand and Spend

23 Following the comprehensive review of alternative provision undertaken in 2020 several areas of improvement in relation to data capture and quality were identified. These include:

- Accuracy and timely updating of AP placements on SCC's Education Management System (EMS) (formerly Capita, now EYES).
- Alignment of education and financial records for all AP placements.
- Clarity around roles and responsibilities with regards to recording of AP Placements on SCC's EMS.
- Accuracy of Establishment categorisations.
- Reporting of EOTAS cohort as a separate category, unique to wider AP cohort.

Work is ongoing across all these areas to deliver improved reporting mechanisms that better support strategic oversight and performance improvement.

24 The number of registered AP placements increased by 31% between 2020/21 and 2022/23, with increases seen across all key stages. Placements in unregistered AP increased by 75% in the same period (exceeding this in 2021/22).

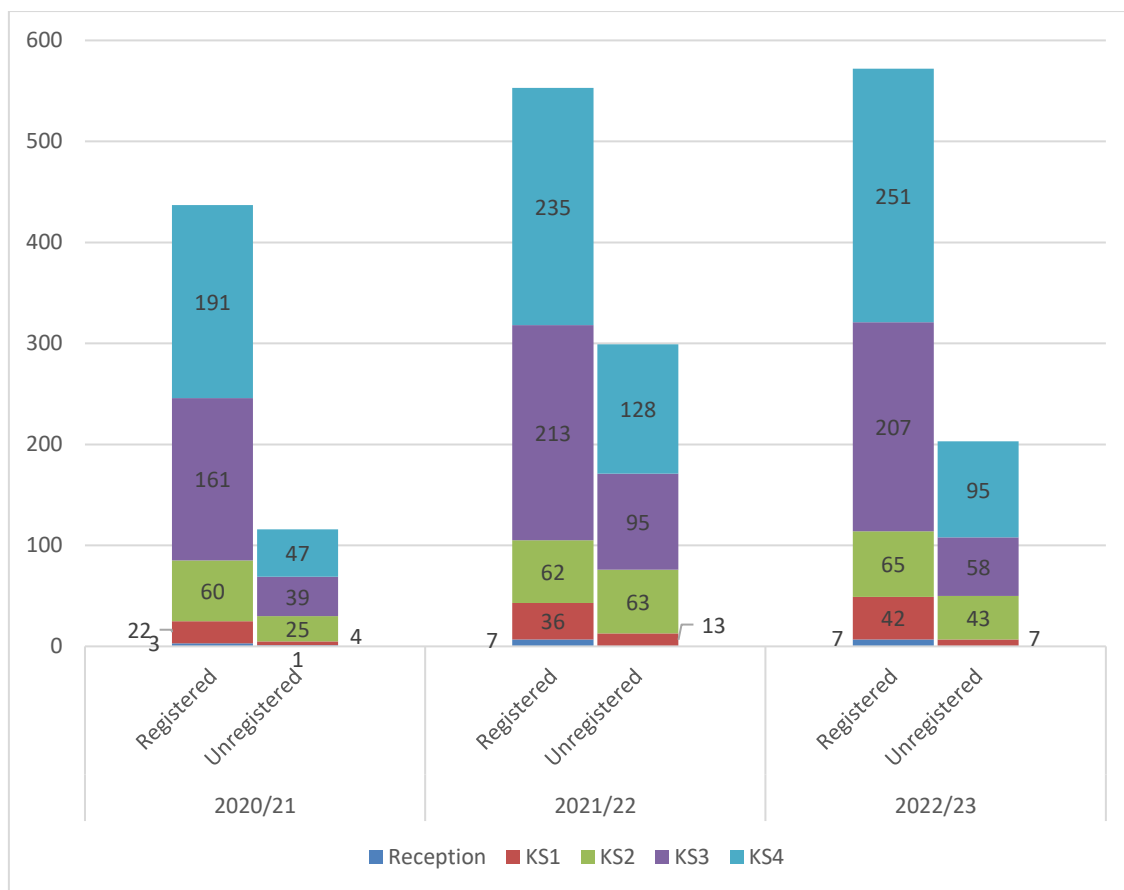


Figure 1: AP placements by registration status and year (extracted from PRU On roll data and AP Census data - Registered AP constitutes all PRUs/AP Academies and any Independent AP with DfE or UKRLP registration)

25 Of the 775 AP placements funded by SCC in 2022/23. 7% were part of an EOTAS package (comprised of 0.8% UKRLP registered and 6.2% unregistered provision). In a small number of cases (where AP is not commissioned as part of an EOTAS package) a CYP may be accessing more than one part-time provision to build a full-time package of education.

26 The vast majority of registered AP placements commissioned by SCC reflect full-time provision delivered by our PRU/AP Academy providers. Placements with Independent AP Providers are more likely to be part time provision. In 2022/23 87% of pupils accessing Independent AP (excluding those which were part of an EOTAS package) were doing so on a part-time basis. These part-time provisions ranged from 1 to 9 session per week, with the vast majority being between 1 to 5 sessions per week.

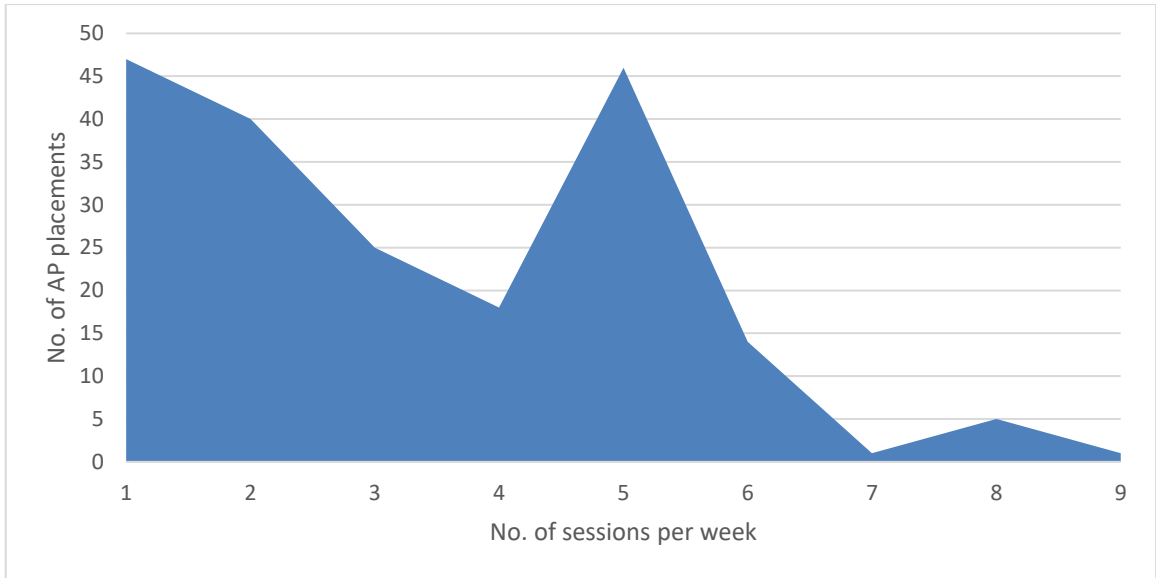
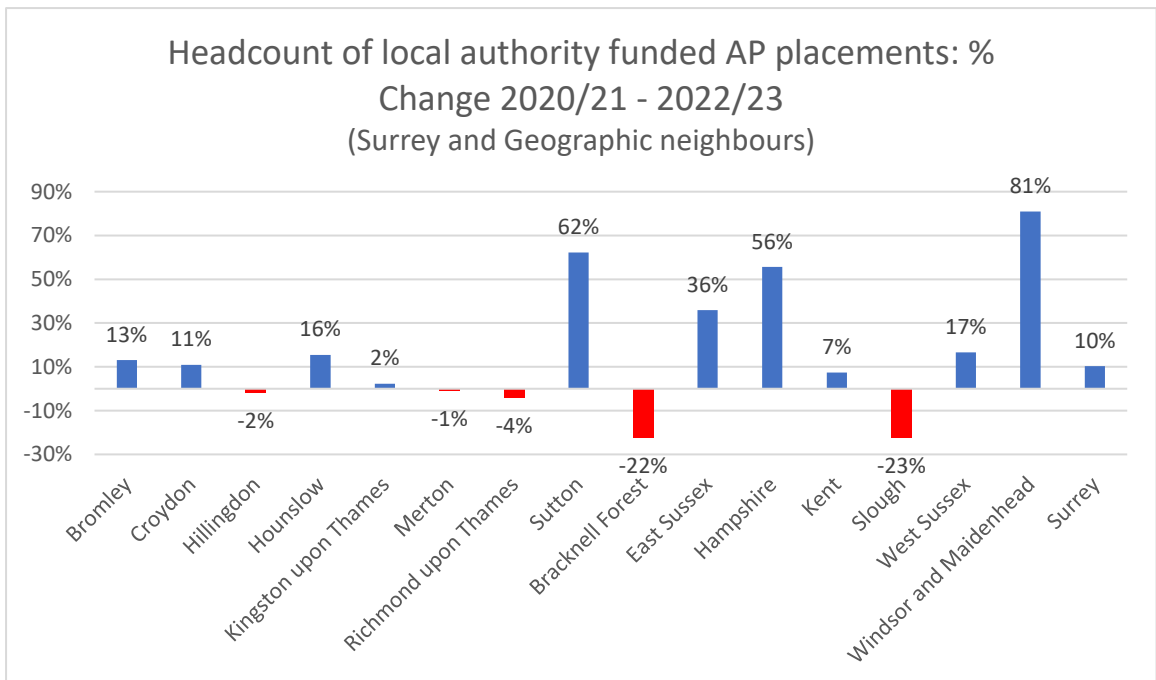
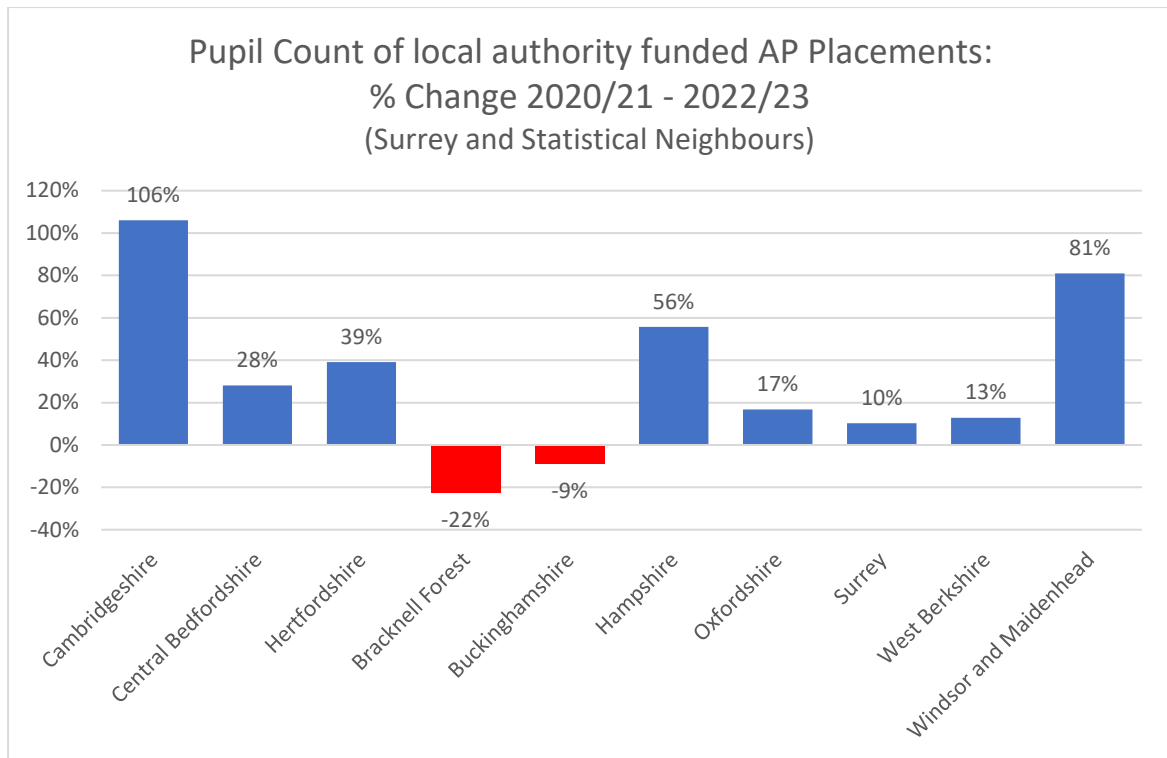


Figure 2: No. of AP Placements by No. of sessions per week (2022/23) for part-time AP Placements recorded in the 2023 AP census.

27 Of the 30 unregistered independent providers commissioned in 2022/23, 57% delivered one-to-one tuition. The remainder consisted largely of vocational pathways, mentoring or bespoke provision. Providers were predominantly Surrey based (70%). Of those located outside of Surrey the registered office base for the providers spanned Hampshire, Kent, Islington, Merton, Cardiff, Cumbria and Gloucestershire. Most of these providers were delivering one-to-one tuition, likely operating as an online provision or utilising a local hub base.

28 When looking at SCC’s use of AP compared to both geographic and statistical neighbours, our percentage increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23 is significantly lower than a number of our neighbours.





For most of these local authorities the actual number of placements remains significantly below those made by Surrey County Council due to the relative pupil population. Although Hampshire's pupil population exceeds that of Surrey, again their total number of AP placements remains below that of Surrey across the three year period, although the rate of increase across the period is notably greater than Surrey's.

29 SCC is continuing to see an upward trend of increasing demand for EHCPs. The resultant impact within Surrey is that the independent AP market has grown substantially to meet new and emerging need. Most growth has been toward the later age ranges (28% growth from 2021 to 2022 for ages 20-25), which has limited impact on the demand for AP across the compulsory school age group. Whilst predominantly AP is utilised as an intended, short-term intervention/support, use of this market to support the 5-16 age group has grown since the pandemic to support increasing numbers of permanent/part time excluded individuals and to support the reintegration of individuals back into education or to transition into employment.

30 A2E has become the primary provision for young people with an EHCP requiring AP over the past 3 years.

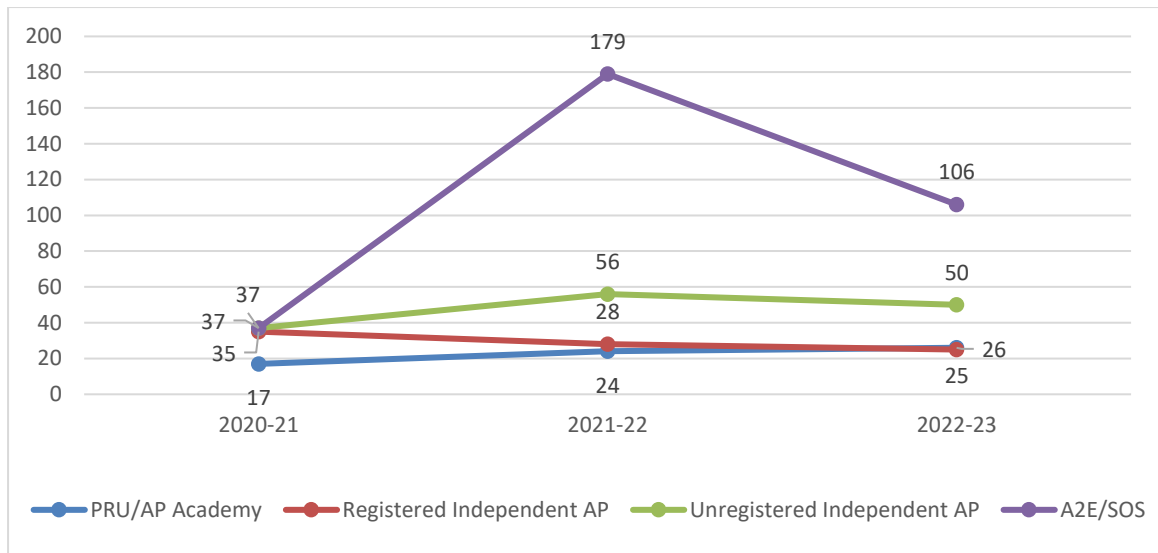


Figure 3: No. of AP placements for statutory school age with an EHCP in Registered and Unregistered AP (extracted from PRU/AP Academy on roll data (SEN Stage when joining school) and AP Census data – including A2E/SOS)

31 When comparing the EHCP status when joining AP in 2022/2 with the current EHCP status of these pupils there is a notable increase. This indicates that a significant number of young people who enter a PRU/AP Academy have additional needs that have not been identified within their original school setting or may have been awaiting assessment.

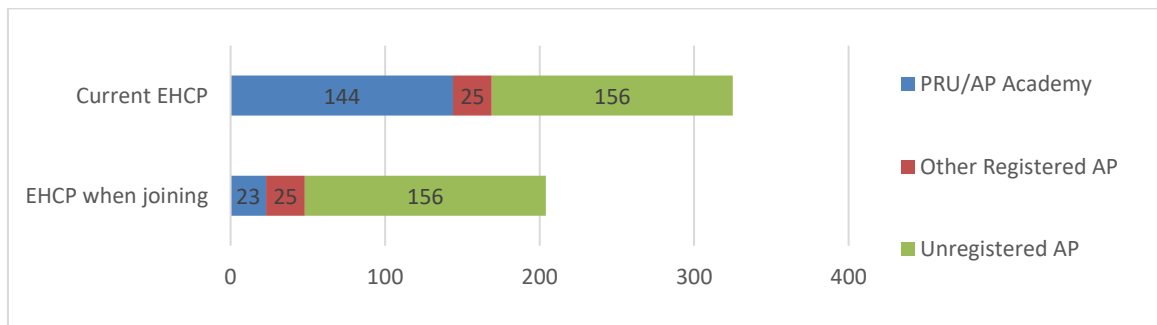


Figure 4: EHCP stats of those in PRU/AP Academy in 2022/23 when joining compared to current status (as of December 2023)

Consistency between those with an EHCP when placed, and those with a current EHCP across other registered AP and unregistered AP is as expected. Placements with these providers are typically driven by additional needs and in a number of circumstances reflect an EOTAS package.

Costs

32 Market analysis conducted in 2018 by the Isos Partnership on behalf of the Department for Education identified the average cost of an AP placement to be £18,000. This did however vary by provider type with Independent AP being of a higher cost (£19,000 for unregistered and £20,400 for registered). State funded AP (PRUs and AP Academies) were closest to this overall average at £17,600 and £18,100 respectively.

- 33 The average per pupil commitment for Independent AP (2023/24 to date) in Surrey is £20,528, however the range varies greatly from £96 for one pupil to £153k for another. Of the cost commitments for independent AP to date for 2023/24, the average costs per pupil for registered AP is £9,266 compared to £23,266 for unregistered AP. This differs to the Isos market analysis that indicated independent registered AP typically ran at a higher cost than unregistered. This result may however reflect the attendance pattern at registered settings making up a smaller proportion than unregistered provision.
- 34 Funding for a full-time equivalent placement at a non-medical PRU/AP Academy in 2023/24 is £22,504. Although slightly above the figure reflected in the Isos research, inflation must be factored into the comparison as well as the relative cost of provision within Surrey compared to other areas of the country.
- 35 SCC's overall projected spend on AP (excluding home to school transport associated with AP) for 2023/24 is £17.9m. Costs associated with home to school transport for AP amount to an additional £2.2m.

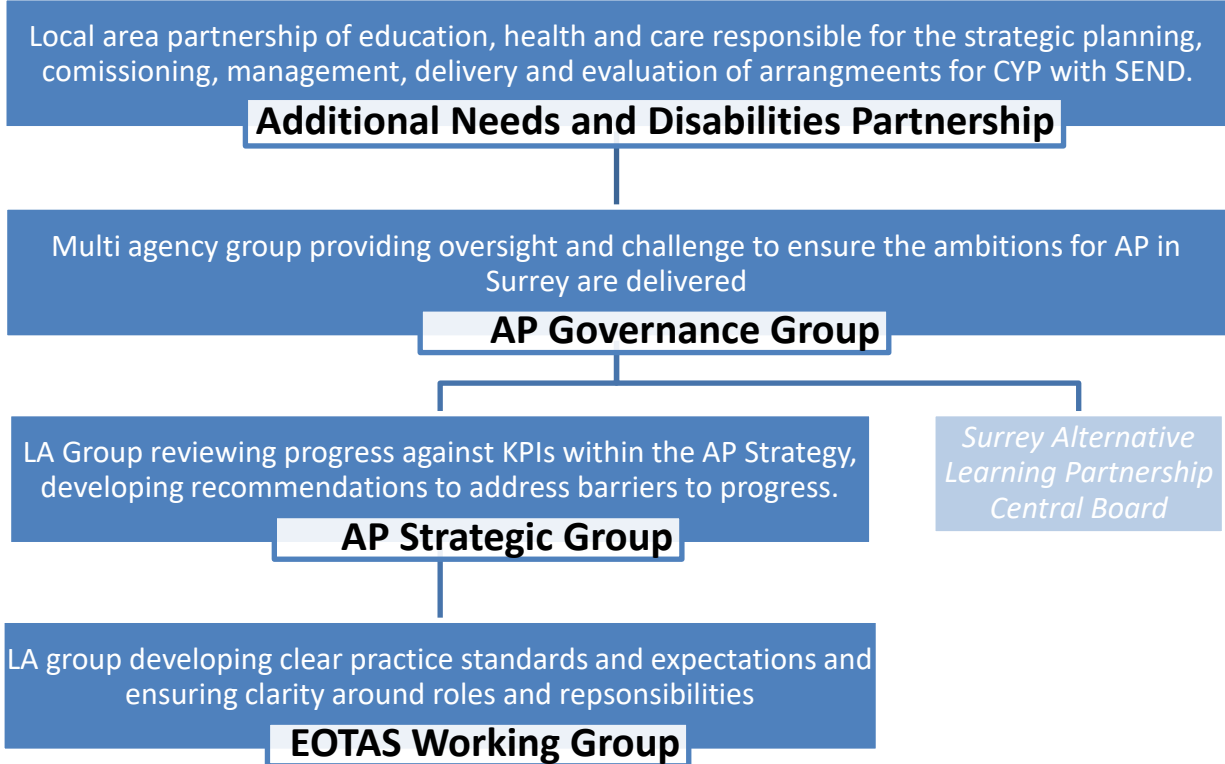
Provision	2022/23 Spend	2023/24 projected cost
Non-medical PRU/AP Academies	5,242,258	5,401,000
Medical PRU	697,004	722,000
PRU - HOPE	756,000	782,000
Access to Education	2,200,000	2,500,000
Hospital Education	410,000	393,000
AP Transport*	1,447,552	2,210,000
Independent AP (Pre 16)	2,995,130	2,781,000
Independent AP (Post-16)	3,319,519	3,308,000
Independent AP (Direct Therapies)	336,697	491,800
SALP	1,250,000	1,250,000
Total excl. AP Transport		17,878,800
TOTAL incl. AP Transport		20,088,800

**This is a subset of the overall SEND transport costs.*

- 36 To meet the growing demand for an alternative curriculum, the alternative provision capital programme will improve the infrastructure of our non-medical PRUs/AP Academies, to ensure all 240 pupil places can be delivered on site. The Council has invested £43m capital funding to achieve this by September 2026.

Oversight

- 37 Oversight for AP across Surrey is delivered through a robust governance structure, based on partnership working and collaboration.



Work is underway to further strengthen this structure, broadening the scope of the Working Group to cover AP (including EOTAS), providing traction to key areas of activity. Furthermore, consultations to align the work of the SALP Central Board and AP Governance Group more closely.

- 38 A key focus of SCC’s AP strategy, underpinned by a governance structure that draws on a strong partnership approach, is supporting schools to identify need, access and effectively commission AP. SCC Officers identified a potential gap in our support with regards to communicating SCC’s AP vision. All maintained schools have a local authority governor, some of whom are local authority councillors. The Education Service is working with Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) governor services in order to design training and support material for local authority governors, making them aware of key issues and policies to support them in their strategic role and developing the critical friend approach.
- 39 The Council has put Service Level Agreements (SLA) in place with all non-medical PRUs/AP Academies, ensuring CYP accessing an alternative curriculum have a high-quality experience, where the focus is on reintegration and in the meantime the provision delivers strong outcomes for all. These SLAs have ensured that CYP using these services have clear intervention plans in place.
- 40 Council officers consistently monitor placements as part of a robust quality assurance process, which also includes an annual visit built around a new QA document based on learning from the 2022 IntegratED Alternative Provision Quality Toolkit. This is underpinned by regular monitoring of Key Performance

Indicators through our PRU Performance Cards, which focus strongly on pupil outcomes and destinations.

- 41 Individual progress, safeguarding and attendance are monitored through a wide range of teams including A2E (qualified teachers) and Inclusion Teams. Attendance monitoring for PRUs/AP Academies is also facilitated through SCC's Group Call functionality within EYES, delivering a 'live' feed of attendance from these settings. Intervention plans – monitored half termly, annual reviews for children with an EHCP, schools' direct monitoring (where children are on roll) and information on attendance provided by providers are key processes.
- 42 Independent AP providers, under the interim AP Directory arrangements, are required to meet a range of minimum requirements relating to quality, including evidence of DBS checks, safeguarding policies, insurance etc. The implementation of the new dynamic purchasing system in 2024 will strengthen these arrangements. The DPS will deliver significant improvements in the monitoring of progress and attendance for all pupils placed in Independent AP through the requirement to submit both high-level activity monitoring forms and termly attendance forms.
- 43 The recent Area SEND Inspection of Surrey Local Area Partnership identified some key areas for improvement within Surrey with regards to AP:
 - 43.1 Strengthen quality assurance processes.
 - 43.2 Focus on ensuring CYP in AP are accessing a full-time equivalent education.
 - 43.3 Embed a robust feedback loop for parents/carers and CYP and increase consultation and coproduction in relation to AP strategy and policy.
 - 43.4 Continue to review the breadth and offer of AP to inform commissioning of provision meets need and improves outcomes.
- 44 These areas for improvements have been reflected in SCC's improvement plans, with key areas of focus being:
 - 44.1 Enhancing the breadth and level of alternative provision commissioned and provided, ensuring that CYP, with involvement of their parents/carers and school, receive timely and appropriate levels of suitable alternative provision that align with their needs.
 - 44.2 Ensuring the delivery of high-quality alternative provisions services that deliver the aspiration and outcomes specified in the EHCPs for all CYP who require it as identified by CYP, parents/carers, and their educators.
 - 44.3 Enhancing SCC's inclusion strategy to proactively identify CYP at risk of education placement breakdown to enable timely and tailored provision of support to facilitate continued participation in mainstream settings.

Progress and Outcomes

- 45 The average placement duration for pupils in AP across all provisions is 28 weeks. When exploring this data in more detail some notable differences between the categories of provision provide some valuable insights.
- 46 Of the placements in PRUs/AP Academies that ended in academic year 2022/23, the average placement duration with non-medical settings was greater for those who were dual registered than those single registered. For those placed in a medical PRU, the placement duration across both registration types is comparable.

	Single Registered	Dual Registered
Non-medical PRU/AP Academy	29 weeks	42 weeks
Medical PRU	20 weeks	21 weeks

This indicates that those who had been permanently excluded were likely to transition to a mainstream or special school setting sooner than those at risk of permanent exclusion in receipt of a period of intervention were to reintegrate into their school.

- 47 For those whose placement in Independent AP was reported to have ended within the 2023 AP Census, the average placement duration was 30 weeks. The range however across this category is quite large, from 1 week up to 143. This reflects the wide variety of provision types captured within this category, from short term interventions and interim placements to long term EOTAS package provisions.
- 48 For those whose placement with SCC's A2E service ended as reported to the Department for Education in the 2023 AP Census, the average placement duration for those receiving a service due to a medical need was 41 weeks. For those receiving a non-medical related service whose placement ended in the same period the average placement duration was 37 weeks. This demonstrates the greater level of support and intervention required for those with medical needs. Attainment data for those accessing AP is limited due to the disparate data sources and complexities in extracting the relevant data at pupil level. For example, for those accessing a PRU/AP Academy in Year 11 where they are dual registered for all or part of the year, qualifications achieved may well be captured in the main pupil population of the 'home' school. Whereas those single registered with the PRU/AP Academy will be linked to this establishment. For those attending Independent AP, though some may take accredited qualifications, others may be focussing on soft skills and personal development.
- 49 Pupils engaged in SCC's A2E service are supported to achieve qualifications appropriate to their needs and aspiration. These include Functional Skills, GCSEs and other vocational qualification. Attainment information for 2022/23 is summarised below.

Functional Skills	GCSE	Other
13 X Entry Level English 7 x Entry Level Maths 2 x L1 English 4 x L2 Maths 2 x L3 Maths	10 x GCSE inc. Maths, English and Computer Science	159 x AQA Awards

50 As part of wider development activity, SCC has begun rolling out consistent Individual Support Plans for all AP pupils. This will support the monitoring of progress.

Destinations after Alternative Provision

51 Destinations data for KS4 (and KS5 from medical PRUs) leavers from AP settings in 2022/23 indicates that of the 234 leavers 65% are participating in post-16 education, employment or training, with 46% being in mainstream or specialist further education, training or employment and a further 19% continuing in some form of AP. Of those who have not yet progressed, 12% are confirmed to be NEET whilst 23% do not yet have a confirmed destination.

52 Of those CYP pre-16 who accessed AP in 2022/23 (838), 44% reintegrated back into a school setting (29% to mainstream and 15% to specialist provision). A further 40% continued in the same setting into 2023/24 or transferred to an alternative AP setting. Those supported by A2E and/or accessing Independent AP are more likely to continue with this provision than those in PRUs/AP Academies. This primarily reflects the proportion of those who are accessing an EOTAS package and/or have complex needs.

53 A small proportion (3%) of CYP pre-16 in AP in 2022/23 moved to being electively home educated in 2023/24, the majority of whom had been in receipt of intervention from a non-medical PRU/AP Academy. Destinations for a further 13% are currently unconfirmed.

54 Tracking of destinations data for the AP cohort is at present a complex process requiring mapping across multiple data sources along with significant amount of manipulation and data cleansing. Much development work is underway to improve data insights for AP, with the development of multiple Tableau dashboard to enable interrogation and analysis to support strategic planning. Furthermore, ongoing data cleansing following the implementation of the EYES system continues to provide greater confidence in reporting.

	2022/23 AP setting			
	Non-medical PRUs/AP Academies	Medical PRU	A2E	Ind AP

Cohort		Pre-16	KS4 Leavers	Pre-16	KS4/KS5 'Leavers'	Pre-16	KS4 Leavers	Pre-16	KS4 'Leavers'
2023/24 Destinations	Ind AP	1		3		4		78	
	Post-16 AP				1		13		19
	PRU/AP Academy	18				2			
	Medical PRU			26	8			1	
	A2E	9		2		187			
	Mainstream School	141		5		75		24	
	Specialist School	12		1	2	62	5	51	5
	FE		31		8		28	1	16
	Employment		12				1		
	Re-engagement				1		1		1
	EHE	16				6		1	
	NEET / CME		12		1	1	11	1	4
	Unknown	27	11	53	15	16	21	14	7
	Total	224	66	90	36	353	80	171	52

55 Tracking of destinations for 2023/24 for the post-16 cohort continues, with a priority focus on identifying SCC's vulnerable cohorts to offer support to reengage with education and training as appropriate.

Conclusions:

56 Surrey has a wide range of AP provisions including SCC-operated services, state-funded education and independent providers. This diverse offer enables us to meet the wide-ranging needs of some of our most vulnerable CYP whilst also ensuring we deliver against our statutory responsibilities. A comprehensive programme of development has been underway since 2020 to evolve the Independent AP market to drive improvements in quality and ensure sufficiency of provision. Further work is underway to improve the PRU/AP Academy estate to

deliver fit-for-purpose facilities which can accommodate the full number of funded places on site. SCC's Access to Education Service continues to provide flexible support and oversight to a wide range of CYP to support them to reintegrate into a school setting.

- 57 Alternative provision plays an important specialist role in supporting children and young people whose specific needs or circumstances (often associated with their additional needs or disability) prevents them from attending a mainstream school, re-engaging them in education as much as their health allows, and providing a supported transition back to mainstream school where appropriate. SCC is committed to ensuring children and young people with additional needs and disabilities are supported within county, close to their local communities.
- 58 A significant programme of improvement is underway across SCC AP, spanning all aspects of delivery, with a key focus on strengthening oversight to deliver improved outcomes for CYP accessing AP. The recent Local Area Partnership SEND inspection reaffirmed that the areas for improvement identified remain a key priority. These form part of the Local Area Partnership Improvement Plan (to be available at <https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/improvement-plan> following approval by the Department for Education).
- 59 Although demand for AP has increased significantly in recent years, largely linked to the upward trend of increasing demand for EHCPs and the impact of the pandemic, work across SCC services around inclusive practice in schools and internal practice related to the commissioning of AP has been seen to have some impact. This will be further driven by the implementation of the DPS in 2024 which will aim to strengthen commissioning of independent AP, focussing on quality assurance, value for money and reducing reliance on unregistered provision.
- 60 Spend on AP has increased since 2020/21 reflecting the increased demand outlined above. Overall spending on independent AP remains an area of focus as well as the use of home-to-school transport for AP. Work being undertaken to support and strengthen our PRU/AP Academy offer will contribute to addressing this issue, along with further strengthening the governance structure to provide robust support and challenge.
- 61 Data analysis indicates that some young people spend an extended period in AP. This can have a significant impact on their progression and does not align with our strategic ambition to facilitate reintegration. Evidence suggests that those CYP accessing AP, particularly in KS4, are less likely to progress successfully to further education or training. Limited data is available on the attainment for those in AP making this performance measure difficult to scrutinise.

Recommendations:

62 That the Select Committee notes:

- a) The breadth of development activity underway, driven by the national policy change in 2023, to increase the profile, breadth and quality of the AP offer, with a focus on sustained outcomes by September 2026.
- b) The ongoing activity to deliver improvements in performance reporting and data analysis across all aspects of AP, with a particular focus on progress and outcomes, addressing current limitations and embedding new processes and functionality across the EYES system and Tableau analytics.
- c) The strengthened governance and oversight for AP within SCC.

Next steps:

Finalise the detailed Action Plan delivering the required improvements outlined in the Surrey Local Area Partnership Improvement Plan, with progress to be monitored by the AP Governance Board and reported to the AN&D Partnership.

Report contact

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Sources/background papers

[Alternative provision market analysis: Research report \(October 2018\)](#)

[Alternative Provision: Statutory guidance for local authorities \(January 2013\)](#)

[Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook \(2023\)](#)

[Area SEND inspection report: Surrey Local Area Partnership 25 to 29 September 2023](#)

[Section 19, Education Act \(1996\)](#)

[Section 61 of the Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) and Alternative provision \(AP\) Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time \(March 2023\)](#)

[Surrey Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy \(revised July 2023\)](#)

[Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Partnership Strategy \(2023-2026\)](#)

Surrey Local Area SEND Partnership Improvement Plan (January 2024)

[Thematic reviews of alternative provision in local areas \(2023\)](#)

Thursday, 15 February 2024

FOSTER CARER SUFFICIENCY

Purpose of report: To provide information to the Committee in respect of their line of enquiry as to whether Surrey County Council's current strategy to recruit and retain foster carers will be successful in improving sufficiency of homes for looked after children.

Introduction:

1. Recruitment and retention of sufficient foster carers is essential to enable Surrey children who are looked after to remain or return close to their communities, family and friends.
2. For all children, care from within their extended family or networks is considered as the first option. This may be under a formal fostering arrangement, or another legal arrangement such as Special Guardianship or a Child Arrangement Order. In Surrey 15% of Looked after Children live with friends and family foster carers (sometimes referred to as Kinship or Connected Person foster carers). This is 36% of the in-house fostering provision.
3. Nationally it is estimated by The Fostering Network that there is a shortage of 7200 fostering households, which is especially acute for teenagers, large sibling groups, children with certain disabilities, externalising behaviours and complex needs.
4. If a Surrey County Council foster carer is not available to care for a child, this may result in them being cared for by a foster carer approved by an Independent Fostering Agency, the majority of whom live outside of Surrey. If a foster carer is not available at all, an alternative placement type, such as residential care or supported accommodation, may need to be considered.
5. Most children have better long-term outcomes if they are able to experience legal security and emotional stability in a family setting close to their family home and school. Repeated moves can be disastrous for children and children who live with more experienced foster carers with strong parenting skills are less likely to have unplanned moves (Rock et al, 2013).

6. A robust recruitment and retention strategy is therefore the cornerstone of a good fostering service. The Fostering Network have published research about [foster care recruitment and retention](#) to inform practice in the sector, noting

'...across all perspectives, the importance of feeling respected and supported was core to foster care retention and recruitment....Research participants recommended greater pay, better support, less social work turnover, and being treated with respect as a valued member of the team.'

The Wider Context and legal framework

7. The assessment and approval of foster carers is heavily regulated, with the [Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#) prescribing how all Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) have to assess, approve and review foster carers. [Statutory Guidance](#) and [National Minimum Standards](#) add further detail about how fostering services and their operations are conducted.
8. As there is a national shortage of foster carers there can be some degree of competition between IFAs and Local Authorities, all of whom want to attract prospective carers to their service. [Research](#) has shown that prospective foster carers will make enquiries with multiple fostering services at once.
9. Other legal arrangements for children that are **not** foster care (as the children are not looked after by the Local Authority) are:
- **Special Guardianship:** an arrangement whereby a Family Court has granted Special Guardianship of a child to one or more Guardians. This can be granted during Care Proceedings to former foster carers, including friends and family foster carers, or following a private law application not involving the Local Authority.
 - **Child Arrangements Order:** whereby a Family Court has determined arrangements for the child, such as where they should live and who should exercise parental responsibility for the child. This can be granted during Care Proceedings or following a private law application.
 - **Private Fostering:** whereby a parent of a child aged under 16 has asked an individual who is not an immediate relative of the child to care for them under a private arrangement. The child is not looked after and it is not a foster care arrangement, but the Local Authority has responsibility for assessing the suitability of the arrangement and for visiting the child regularly.

Types of Fostering

10. There are broadly two types of fostering arrangement – family and friends care and ‘mainstream’ or general foster care. All approved foster carers, regardless of whether they are family and friends or general foster carers, will have approval terms set by the Agency Decision Maker which states the number of children they are approved for and may specify an age range or category of care they can provide. In some cases, the approval will be solely in relation to a named child or children. All foster carers have to have their approval reviewed every year with a formal decision made by the fostering service about their continued suitability to foster.
11. Family and friends foster carers are assessed and approved by a Local Authority in relation to a child or children known to them who has become looked after by that Local Authority. The carers usually have a pre-existing relationship with the child, but in some cases they may be nominated by the child’s parents to care for the child, having never met the child. This will be part of the assessment of their suitability. In some cases (but not all) family and friends foster carers may be granted temporary approval to allow them to care for the child whilst the full fostering assessment is undertaken. In some cases, the child’s case may be before the Family Court to determine their legal status and care arrangements. Family and friends foster carers hold particular importance in a Local Authority fostering service; not only do they enable children to live with people familiar to them but a strong family and friends placement strategy relieves the level of demand for general foster carers.
12. General foster carers are members of the public who enquire and apply to be assessed as foster carers for a child or children not known to them. They choose which Local Authority or IFA they apply to and can only be approved by one fostering service at a time. During the fostering assessment process, they will work with their assessing social worker to identify the number and age range of children that they are best able to care for.
13. General foster carers may also decide that they are particularly suited to offer a specialist type of care. This could include:
 - Parent and child placements
 - Short breaks for disabled children
 - Full-time care for disabled children
 - Out of hours, or same day emergency placements
 - Specialist mental health placements linked with the Hope Service
 - Specialist one to one care for adolescents and those transitioning from residential care

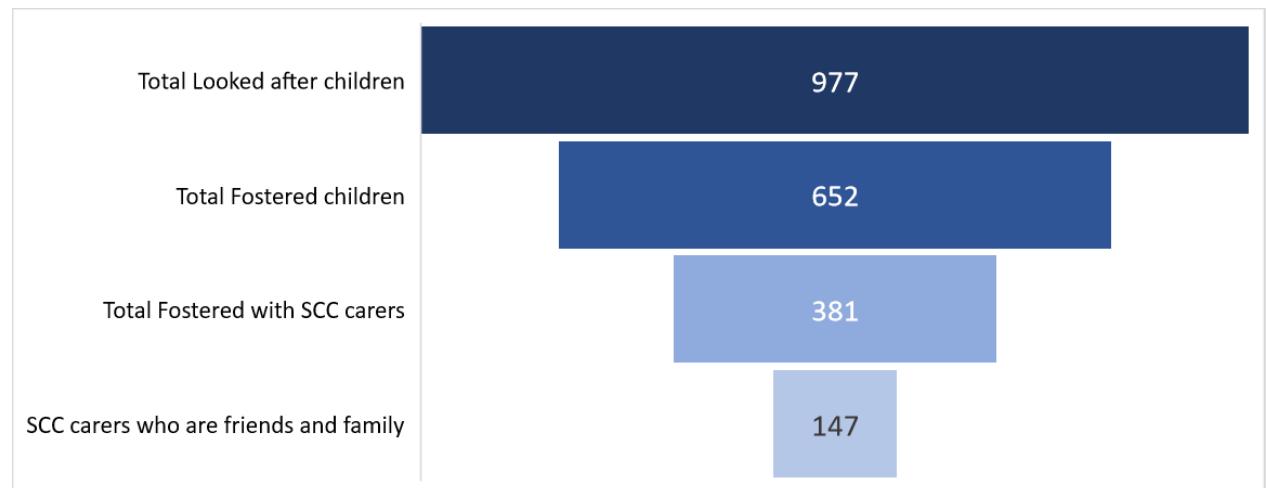
- Mockingbird Hub care
- Part-time or respite care

14. There are no legal differences between foster carers recruited by Local Authorities and IFAs and all fostering services are required to adhere to Regulations, Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards. Both types of service are regulated by Ofsted. However, within the legal framework, each fostering service is able to determine how it operates, including its Statement of Purpose, its payment structure to foster carers, the amount and type of support provided to carers and children, how many staff it employs. The only difference is that Local Authorities have to assess and approve family and friends carers, a responsibility that IFAs do not have.
15. IFAs receive payment from the placing Local Authority for each child placed. This is usually one all-inclusive amount to cover all costs in relation to that child, including the fees paid to carers, the costs of the routine support provided to carers and the running costs associated with providing the fostering service. All costs and services (and any extra payments) will be outlined in a contract between the placing Authority and the IFA. In Surrey, the unit cost of an IFA placement is approximately 90% more expensive than the cost of an in-house fostering placement (including all Local Authority central costs).
16. Local Authority fostering services are funded from the Council's core budgets, including fees to foster carers, staff salaries and the running costs of the service, as well as support services such as Human Resources, training, legal service, office and facilities, IT etc.
17. In practice IFAs tend to offer more intensive support to foster carers. IFA Supervising Social Workers usually carry lower caseloads than their Local Authority counterparts and visit/supervise foster carers more frequently. IFAs also tend to offer 'all-inclusive' support to foster carers and children, giving a respite break allowance as standard, and usually engaging specialists within the agency, such as educationalists, clinical/psychotherapeutic support, family support workers. Local Authorities now offer similar levels of payments and training as IFAs.

Fostering in Surrey

The need for foster care in Surrey

18. As of 2 January the overall picture for fostering in Surrey is:



19. Of all the children living in foster care (with general Surrey carers and IFA) 38% live outside of the Surrey border and over 20 miles from their family home postcode. 5% live inside Surrey but over 20 miles from their family home postcode. 45% live within Surrey and under 20 miles from their family home postcode. (The remaining children are unaccompanied minors who do not have a family address in Surrey).

20. For children living with friends and family foster carers, 25% live outside the Surrey border and 75% live within Surrey and under 20 miles from their family home. Whilst location is important for these children, being able to live with family members may mitigate some of the issues of living at distance from their home community.

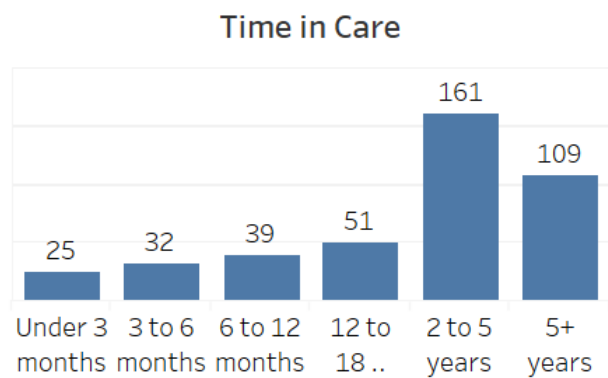
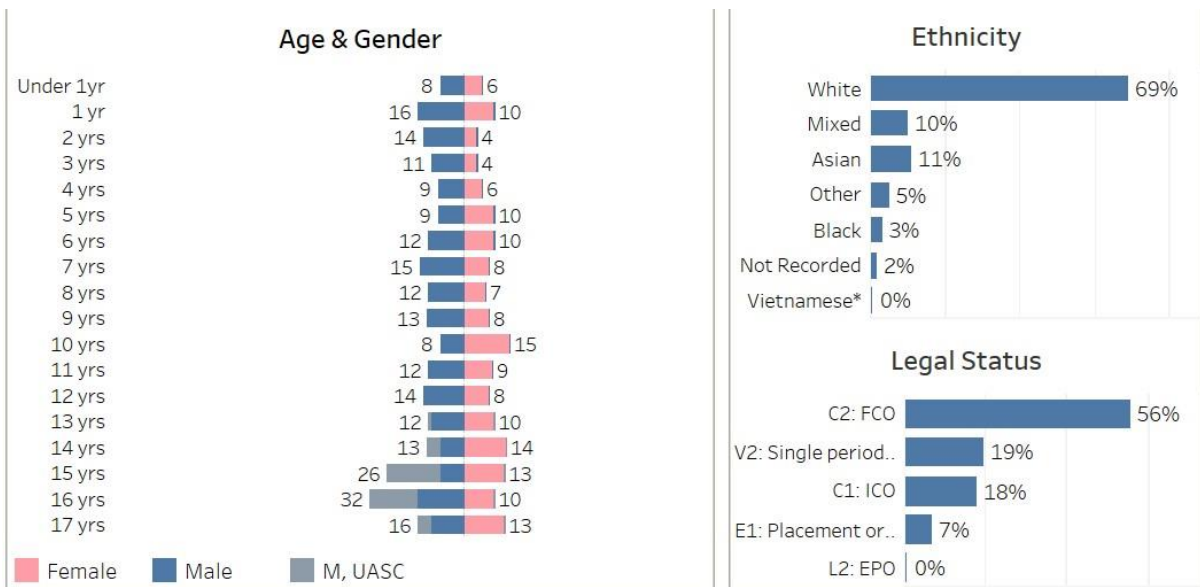
21. It has not been possible to provide a breakdown of the numbers of children in foster care in a particular 'category' as this is not recorded on children's records. Approval types of foster care and the numbers of places as defined by the Department for Education (DfE) in its annual data return and are more generic in description than those used day to day in the fostering service. The latest data is detailed in Annex One.

22. We also know the following:

- 139 children (73 with Surrey carers and 66 with IFA carers) have been matched with their foster carers for long term care where the plan is for them to remain living with their carers until at least aged 18 or into adulthood if possible

- On average between 5 and 10 children at any one time are placed with their parents for an assessment or intensive support placement. It is usually the Local Authority preference for this to be in a parent and child fostering arrangement, but sometimes children and their parent(s) are placed in a residential parenting centre if a parent and child fostering arrangement is not available or if the Family Court directs a residential placement as the plan. There were 57 referrals for parent and child care in the past two years
- At the beginning of January 2024 Surrey was looking after 97 unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people

23. Some demographics of children currently living in short-term general foster care (with Surrey and IFA carers as at 19 December 2023) are:



24. To improve our sufficiency within this period we estimate that we need Surrey-approved foster carers for an additional 130 children. This will enable children to live closer to home, to prevent children who become looked after having to move out of the county or to IFA carers, and to enable children living in residential care

to be able to move to a family setting where this is in their best interests. This will also provide more choice of foster homes to enable better matching between children and foster families.

25. On average there are 30 referrals of children per month for foster care, of which 40% are placed with in-house carers. 52% are placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers and 8% have to move to residential care due to a lack of suitable fostering provision.

26. As children move through the age-range, the balance between in-house and IFA provision shifts significantly. For example, 81% of foster placements for 0-3 years olds are with in-house carers, reducing to 34% in the 16-17 years age group.

27. We need foster carers who can provide full time care for children of all ages, but in line with the national shortage of foster carers we have a particular need for foster carers who can:

- Accommodate and care for sibling groups
- Meet the needs of older children and teenagers
- Meet the needs of children with additional vulnerabilities or needs, such as those with emotional or mental health needs, those at risk of criminal exploitation, children who are neuro-divergent and/or who have disabilities
- Provide parent and child assessment or intensive support placements
- Provide same-day homes for children becoming looked after, or where there has been an emergency breakdown in their current looked-after home

28. Children from ethnic minority groups as well as teenagers are disproportionately represented in the looked after population compared to the wider Surrey children's cohort.

Meeting the need

29. Data on the numbers of fostering households, the children they can care for, the types of care, as well as new approvals and foster carers leaving the service is included in Appendix One. This includes the numbers of friends and family foster carers which is key to the health of placement sufficiency.

30. As each fostering household's terms of approval (numbers, age range and type of foster care offered) are individual to each case it has not been possible to provide a summary of the types of care offered by carers approved in the last three years.

31. Numbers of foster carers leaving the fostering service and their reasons are detailed in Appendix One; the reasons for foster carers' resignations have

previously been provided to this Committee in July 2023. The majority leave for retirement or due to changes in their circumstances such as moving from the area or changes to their other caring responsibilities or family network. A significant proportion of carers leaving are friends and family who resign as they have secured other legal arrangements for the child in their care, or the child has returned home.

Recruitment and Retention Strategy

32. The Fostering Service develops a marketing and recruitment strategy each year, which evaluates the success of recruitment activities in the previous year, analyses the current foster care community and develops a plan for the coming year.
33. The 2023-24 strategy identified that the service has a conversion rate (measured as the percentage of fostering approvals compared to numbers of enquiries) of 8%. This compares to 3% for all fostering services, and 7.7% for Local Authorities.
34. Most enquiries by far come from people making internet searches, showing the importance of Surrey having a strong web-presence and ensuring that fostering for the Council appears high on search-engine results. However often this is triggered by seeing another source of marketing such as an advert or leaflets. We receive very detailed analytics showing the impact of digital marketing across all channels. In a recent Regional Fostering Group mystery shopper exercise which looked at 26 websites for Local Authorities and IFAs, the Surrey fostering website was rated as outstanding, with information about allowances singled out for particular praise.
35. The next biggest source of enquiries comes from the word of mouth from foster carers, SCC staff or family members and introduction fees are offered for carers or staff who introduce a new prospective carer to the service.
36. Analysis has shown that the main reason for enquiries not progressing is due to households not having a spare bedroom in the home. Others cited changes in their circumstances, including their finances, housing affordability and changes in their family network as reasons for not making a formal application after enquiry.
37. The service identified a significant dip in enquiries in the first half of 2022-23 which corresponded with widespread media coverage of the cost of living crisis. Revised payments for fostering came into effect for new carers from 1 April 2023 and key marketing messages have been updated to ensure people are aware that it is possible to work and foster, or that specialist fostering can offer a level of remuneration that could compete with paid employment.

38. The service has identified that there are fewer fostering households in the North-east quadrant of the county compared to all other quadrants. Nearly a third of households live in the South-east with only 12% in the North-east. Historically it has been difficult to recruit in the North-east area and particularly in Epsom & Ewell and Elmbridge. This could be due to their boundaries with London Boroughs. Our strategy in 2023-24 has increased marketing activities in these areas.
39. Analysis of the age distribution of current foster carers shows their mean age is 53.4 years old, meaning they will reach retirement age in the next 10-15 years. Whilst this reflects the national picture (41% of foster carers are aged between 51 and 60) we will continue to focus campaigns at the 21-45 age group. In 2022-23 26% of newly approved foster carers were in their 20s or 30s.
40. We know that most foster carers in Surrey are of White British ethnicity and most children from Black, Asian or Mixed Heritage ethnicities are placed with White British foster carers. There is therefore a need for us to recruit more black and Global Majority carers. This is a challenge as 85.5% of the population identify as White. Data from the 2021 census shows that the highest proportion of residents who identify as Black are living in Epsom & Ewell and the highest proportion who identify as Asian are living in Woking. We are concentrating marketing activities in these areas including working with faith communities.
41. The recruitment strategy has set a target of approval of 30 new general fostering households in 2023-24 focussing on homes for teenagers, 0-3 year olds, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, parent and child placements, children with disabilities (including short break care) and specialist care for those with additional vulnerabilities. It also aims to increase current carer engagement to support recruitment activities and increase word of mouth referrals.
42. Up to 31 December 2023, 42 households had been approved, comprising 14 households for general foster care and 28 providing family and friends care. A further 13 households offering general foster care are due to be presented to the Fostering Panel before the end of March 2024; if approved this will take the total number of households approved in 2023-24 offering general fostering to 27, a significant increase on 2022-23.
43. The detailed plan sitting underneath the strategy outlines specific activities and a campaign diary including:
- Regularly tracking recruitment with operational managers
 - Ensuring smooth customer service during the pre-approval process
 - Targeting activities to particular communities, including
 - Black and Global Majority communities and engagement with particular faith settings in Elmbridge and Woking

- IFA carers who could transfer to Surrey
- Surrey County Council staff
- LGBTQ+ specific campaigns
- Promotion of the Fostering Recruitment Heroes initiative
- Job seekers and skilled workers looking for a new role
- Places of worship
- Third sector groups and volunteer groups
- Youth workers and those working with teenagers
- Continual development of brand awareness and messaging
- Multi-channel activities and communications
- High community visibility at places and events across Surrey

44. In 2023 Surrey County Council, in partnership with 80 other Local Authorities produced a powerful and moving short film 'Any Of Us', aiming to raise awareness of fostering, dispel common myths and relieve any doubts for prospective foster carers. The launch, held on 28 September was attended by Councillors, foster carers, care experienced adults and Council managers and staff.

45. The fostering service is very aware of the need to attend to retention of foster carers as well as on the recruitment of new carers and therefore retention activities are included in the Strategy outlined above. All carers leaving the service are offered an exit interview and learning from these informs improvements. The reasons carers cite for leaving are mostly relating to changes in their circumstances and availability for the fostering commitment, including moving out of the area and changes for their own children. The cost of living crisis has resulted in adult children returning to the family home temporarily which has had a knock-on effect in some cases because there is no longer a spare bedroom. A steady number of carers retire each year, and most resignations relate to Family and Friends carers who have obtained Special Guardianship or where the child has returned to their parents.

46. Since November 2022, the annual review of foster carers' approval has been undertaken by arms-length Reviewing Officers. This is an opportunity to hear from foster carers about their fostering career, including what needs to be improved and what would assist them with their continuing fostering career. These posts are currently funded by a Transformation project.

47. All approved foster carers have access to a range of support, including

- regular supervision from their social worker
- an out-of-hours telephone support service, offering access to support and advice from a Surrey fostering service social worker

- practical support at weekends from Fostering Support Workers if carers need intensive support at times of stress or crisis (funded to March 2024)
- support groups run by both the fostering service and the Surrey County Fostering Association (SFCA)
- specialist clinical support for themselves
- support from the Virtual School to assist with education matters
- a comprehensive fostering handbook and SharePoint site providing a wealth of information about fostering and services in Surrey and links to key policies and procedures, written in conjunction with the Fostering Association
- a comprehensive training offer, including pre-approval training, mandatory courses and post-approval short courses
- regular opportunities to meeting with Service Managers and senior leaders
- membership of the Fostering Network and the National Association for Therapeutic Parenting
- Access to the national Kinship charity support service for family and friends carers

We also recognise that enrichment and leisure activities for foster carers and their own children are essential and offer discounted leisure as well as hosting celebration events.

48. The uplift to fostering allowances and changes to the structure of payments which took effect from 1 January 2023 means Surrey is competitive in the market in relation to other local fostering services.
49. The Surrey County Fostering Association provides peer support and advice to foster carers and we maintain an excellent relationship with the Association, meeting regularly to share ideas, progress development and gather the views of foster carers. They have co-produced a refreshed Foster Care Charter which will be launched in 2024.
50. We have also developed a specialist programme of support for some fostering households under the Mockingbird model developed by the Fostering Network. This model of care which was highlighted as a beacon of good practice and support for carers in the [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#) nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a constellation – a community of six to ten satellite foster families, with a hub home carer and a liaison worker providing peer support, guidance, learning and development, social activities and sleepovers. Further funding from the Department for Education has been made available for the next two years to continue the development and delivery of this model in Surrey.

51. We provide intensive support to foster carers who may care for children with additional needs, or who may be facing short-term pressures:

- Fostering Support Workers (funded to March 2024) provide practical and/or intensive support to new foster carers, those caring for a new child, or in situations where there are particular pressures. Feedback from carers is very positive about this support with carers saying it has had an impact on their decision not to give up fostering
- The Hope and Extended Hope service can provide particular support to children experiencing mental health crisis
- The CCISS service can provide intensive support to children with autism
- Where foster carers are managing risks to children from criminal exploitation, missing episodes or pro-criminal behaviour the Treehouse outreach service will provide intensive support and assist with safety planning. This service also has a Speech and Language Therapist and Child Psychotherapist.
- The [New Leaf](#) service for children with emotional and mental health needs provides a range of support to children and their carers

Feedback from foster carers

52. We regularly engage with foster carers regarding recruitment and retention and a dedicated group, which includes foster carers, meets regularly. The themes from foster carers in relation to retention are mainly about the working relationship with children's social workers and the impact of turnover of social workers for children and carers. It is important to foster carers that they are treated with respect and courtesy and included as a key member of the team around the child. The Foster Carers' Charter which will be launched shortly has a set of commitments to foster carers from both the fostering service and the wider corporate parenting service, including children's social work teams. An action plan is being developed to bring the Charter to life, including how awareness of the foster carers' role and treating them as a respected peer can be further developed with children's social workers.

53. In respect of recruitment, current foster carers and those interested in fostering who have not taken their interest forward say that the biggest issue is finance. Prospective carers do not always feel confident that the income from fostering will allow them to foster with other financial commitments. Although our marketing messages outline that foster carers can continue to work, or that some fostering schemes offer payments that could be an alternative to employment, carers are understandably reticent in the current economic circumstances. Foster carers have also lobbied for Council Tax discounts.

Costs of providing foster care

54. Current average costs, per child, per week are as follows:

Type of care	Cost per week (£)
In-house foster care	602
IFA foster care	1141
Children's home	6410
Supported accommodation (16-17 year olds)	3258

55. Current fostering allowances benchmarked with IFAs and neighbouring Authorities is summarised in Appendix 2.

National and Local Context

56. Ofsted publishes an [annual report](#) which outlines the national picture in relation to the numbers of foster carers and fostering places in both local Authorities and IFAs. In summary:

- Since 2019 nationally the number of mainstream local Authority households has fallen by 11% and the number of family and friends households has increased by 21%. The number of IFA households has not changed significantly. In 2022-23 nationally there was a 5% decrease in the number of mainstream Local Authority households, translating to 12% fewer places for children
- Nationally there has been a downward trend in the number of applications since 2019 and 2022-23 saw the lowest number of applications in several years (18% lower than 2018-19). At the end of March 2023 the number of newly approved mainstream households was 26% lower than 2018-19
- Although the number of households leaving fostering has fluctuated from year to year, in 2022-23 the number of leavers exceeded the number of joiners. Of fostering households that had held approved status at some point during the year, 13% had deregistered by the end of the year

57. Data showing neighbouring Authorities' level of success in recruiting and retaining foster carers is contained in Appendix Three. Only Hampshire and LB Sutton had a net increase in foster carers in 2022-23.

Conclusions:

58. This report gives a comprehensive picture of the fostering recruitment and retention landscape to assist the Committee with its line of enquiry.

59. The analysis of recruitment and retention data and themes is detailed and a central function of the fostering service.

Recommendations:

60. That the Committee notes the information provided.

Next steps:

61. Activity detailed within this report will be undertaken as business as usual.

Report contact

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Clark McAuley, Fostering Service Manager, clark.mcauley@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers

The Fostering Network [Foster Care Retention and Recruitment May 2023](#)

[Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#)

[Children Act 1989 Statutory Guidance on Fostering Services](#)

[Ofsted Fostering in England 2022-23](#)

[The Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#)

Mindworks Surrey [New Leaf](#) Service information

Appendix One

Table 1: The numbers of fostering households and the children they can care for (as at 31 March in each year)

	Number of general fostering households	Total places – general fostering	Places not available	Number of family and friends households	Total places – friends and family
2020-21	274	492	(data not available)	109	164
2021-22	275	490	80	122	170
2022-23	250	455	55	107	146

Table 2: The types of care foster carers can offer (some foster carers offer more than one type of care)

	2020-21 (number of households)	2021-22 (number of households)	2022-23 (number of households)
Family and Friends	109	122	107
Long term/permanent care	56	65	75
Short term care	163	185	180
Parent and child	5	5	5
Emergency care	0	0	5
Short breaks		15	30
Shared care	0	0	5
Foster to adopt*		5	0

*this is a specific type of temporary approval to allow approved adopters to foster a specific child pending the child being placed for adoption with those adopters

Table 3: Approval of new foster carers

Fostering Households approved by fostering panel in year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-24 (to 31/12/23)
General foster care	31	21	18	14 (Estimated 27 by 31/3/24)
Short breaks	4	2	0	0

Family and Friends	50	41	37	28 (Estimated 52 by 31/3/24)
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Table 4: Numbers of carers leaving fostering

	Total Number of households resigned or deregistered by fostering panel	Number of mainstream fostering households	Number of connected person fostering households
2020-2021	42	11	31
2021-2022	38	24	14
2022-2023	47	31	16
2023-2024 (to 31/12/23)	48	32	16

Table 5: Reasons for foster carers leaving fostering

Deregistration reason – Household number	2022-23	2023-24 (to 31/12/23)
Resigned due to retirement	11	7
Resigned due to change of circumstances	14	13
Resigned due to difficulty fulfilling the fostering role	3	1
Resigned as child no longer looked after (Special Guardianship obtained or Adopted)	8	3
Resigned as child no longer looked after (turned 18 and Staying Put/Supported Lodgings or Shared Lives))		9
Resigned due to impact of fostering on emotional well-being	1	
Resigned as child no longer in their care	5	13
Resigned following standards of care investigation	1	1
Deregistered by the service as no longer suitable to foster	4	1

(Source: Fostering Service exit interviews and Fostering Panel Case Data)

Appendix Two

LA	Age	Child Allowance	Levels	Fee	TOTAL	Notes
SURREY	0-4	£ 190.66	1	£ -	£ 190.66	
			2	£ 101.94	£ 292.60	All new carers start on level 2 if pre-approval training completed
			3	£ 203.88	£ 394.54	
	5-10	£ 216.25	1	£ -	£ 216.25	
			2	£ 101.94	£ 318.19	
			3	£ 203.88	£ 420.13	
	11-13	£ 288.30	1	£ -	£ 288.30	
			2	£ 101.94	£ 390.24	
			3	£ 203.88	£ 492.18	
			Specialist	£ 520.00	£ 808.30	Mockingbird, 1:1, Emergency Duty and Hope
	14-17	£ 334.95	1	£ -	£ 334.95	
			2	£ 101.94	£ 436.89	
			3	£ 203.88	£ 538.83	
			Specialist	£ 520.00	£ 854.95	Mockingbird, 1:1, Emergency Duty and Hope
	Specific allowance	£ 113.83		Paid on top of other allowances for child with specific needs		
child	£ 190.66	Parent & Child	£ 520.00	£ 1,045.61		
parent	£ 334.95					
W SUSSEX	0-4		foundation		£ 330.61	All inclusive allowances
			core		£ 465.99	
	5-10		foundation		£ 365.19	
			core		£ 500.57	
	11-15		foundation		£ 395.85	
			core		£ 531.23	
	16-17		foundation		£ 447.51	
			core		£ 582.89	
parent & child				£ 1,245.19		
HAMPSHIRE	0-1	£ 171.01	1	£ -	£ 171.01	
			2	£ 110.11	£ 281.12	
			3	£ 353.43	£ 524.44	
	2-4	£ 177.03	1	£ -	£ 177.03	
			2	£ 110.11	£ 287.14	
			3	£ 353.43	£ 530.46	
	5-10	£ 195.02	1	£ -	£ 195.02	
			2	£ 110.11	£ 305.13	

			3	£ 353.43	£ 548.45	
	11-15	£ 237.79	1	£ -	£ 237.79	
			2	£ 110.11	£ 347.90	
			3	£ 353.43	£ 591.22	
	16+	£ 289.17	1	£ -	£ 289.17	
			2	£ 110.11	£ 399.28	
			3	£ 353.43	£ 642.60	
CROYDON	0-4	£ 181.00		£ 210.00	£ 391.00	
	5-10	£ 201.00		£ 210.00	£ 411.00	
	11-15	£ 234.00		£ 210.00	£ 444.00	
	16-17	£ 269.00		£ 210.00	£ 479.00	
SUTTON	0-2	£ 179.00		£ 283.87	£ 462.87	Additional enhancement of £129.54 may be paid for some children
	3-4	£ 182.00		£ 283.87	£ 465.87	
	5-10	£ 203.00		£ 283.87	£ 486.87	
	11-15	£ 232.00		£ 283.87	£ 515.87	
	16-17	£ 270.00		£ 283.87	£ 553.87	
KENT	0-1	£ 178.09	Std	£ 136.16	£ 314.25	
			Solo/Complex	£ 272.32	£ 450.41	
	2-4	£ 183.96	Std	£ 136.16	£ 320.12	
			Solo/Complex	£ 272.32	£ 456.28	
	5-8	£ 202.71	Std	£ 136.16	£ 338.87	
			Solo/Complex	£ 272.32	£ 475.03	
	9-10	£ 202.71	Std	£ 258.63	£ 461.34	
			Solo/Complex	£ 517.26	£ 719.97	
	11-15	£ 231.99	Std	£ 258.63	£ 490.62	
			Solo/Complex	£ 517.26	£ 749.25	
	16-17	£ 270.66	Std	£ 258.63	£ 529.29	
			Solo/Complex	£ 517.26	£ 787.92	
	Parent & child	£ 448.75	Std	£ 394.79	£ 843.54	
			Enhanced	£ 653.42	£ 1,102.17	
E SUSSEX*	0-4		new (up to 2 years' service)		£ 279.92	*It is not clear from the website how carer enhancements work in practice
			experienced		£ 284.02	
	5-10		new		£ 279.92	
			experienced		£ 314.67	
	11-17		new		£ 353.07	
			experienced		£ 373.07	
	parent & child		std		£ 831.09	
			enhanced		£ 1,456.99	
INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCIES						
	Average	Maximum				
Barnardo's	£495	£630				
National Fostering Group	£471	£673				

Compass	£460				
Foster Care Associates	£435				
ISP	£498	£558			

Appendix Three

Data from 2022-23 Ofsted return regarding recruitment and retention of carers (excludes friends and family carers) numbers are rounded to the nearest 5

Local Authority	Number of households	Number of places	Number of enquiries	Number of applications	Number of approvals	Number of carers deregistered
Hampshire	365	725	760	145	60	45
Kent	610	1240	690	130	65	80
West Sussex	205	365	255	25	15	35
West Berkshire	45	95	50	5	5	10
LB Croydon	145	260	160	65	10	40
LB Sutton	40	75	30	0	5	0
Richmond/Kingston upon Thames	55	85	10	0	5	15
Surrey	250	455	220	25	20	30

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CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEE



Thursday, 15 February 2024

CHILDREN'S HOMES – OFSTED REPORTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE

Purpose of report: The Select Committee will receive Ofsted reports on Surrey County Council-run Children's Homes in its agenda, as part of a communications plan agreed in June 2022.

Recommendation:

That the Select Committee reviews and notes the attached report, asking questions as appropriate.

Next Steps:

The Select Committee will receive further reports as they are published.

Report contact

Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer

Contact details

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SC068827

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides care for up to four children with social, behavioural, and emotional difficulties.

The suitably qualified manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2022.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2023	Full	Good
05/12/2022	Full	Inadequate
25/08/2021	Full	Good
22/08/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive relationships with staff. Interactions between children and staff are kind-hearted and nurturing. One child identified particular members of staff who they trust and have built good relationships with.

Discussions between staff and children are well planned, restorative, and reflective. These conversations are a strength of the home. Staff are proactively invested in supporting children to achieve positive outcomes.

Children are making progress from their starting points. The children are enrolled in and attending education provisions. One child has made particularly strong progress in this area. They now engage in education and have aspirations to complete an apprenticeship. The staff team work collaboratively with education professionals to support children in achieving their goals.

The staff work closely with partner professionals. They describe staff as 'communicative' and 'transparent' in their approach. These professionals are positive about the care and support the staff provide the children with. Consequently, the home promotes a sense of collaborative working to meet the needs of the children.

Staff support children who are due to move on to independence, at their own pace. Staff involve the children in the preparation of these plans from moving on. For example, staff support them in learning how to use public transport and make health appointments. As a result, children know their plans for moving on to independence, and are positive about this.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff safeguarding practice is good. During an unsettled period in the home, some children made allegations against staff. Senior leaders managed these allegations appropriately. Children's views are taken seriously and prioritised. Safeguarding policies and procedures are followed, and actions taken are well documented. Professionals, staff and the local authority designated officer raised no concerns regarding the safeguarding practice of the staff.

Staff understand and manage the risks to children well. The staff are helped to understand risk through individualised risk assessments for each child. Staff update these risk assessments to ensure that they reflect the current needs and required support for the child. Staff are aware of, and review, new information to reflect the changes in need.

Staff use a variety of de-escalation strategies to prevent the use of physical intervention. As a result, physical restraint is rarely used in the home. When restraint has been used, it has been as a last resort. Restorative work with children around

the use of restraint is reflective and child focused. The manager plans to further support staff confidence through additional physical intervention training.

Staff work closely with the children to promote the development of positive peer relationships. These relationships are closely monitored and tracked by the staff team. This monitoring enables staff to have targeted conversations with children to support them. While there continues to be some challenge with dynamics in the group, incidents have significantly decreased due to staff's support.

The manager has clear monitoring processes in place to ensure that staff are recruited only once all suitability checks have been carried out. This reduces the risk of unsuitable people working with children.

Two significant incidents have occurred, which the manager did not inform Ofsted about. As a result, Ofsted, as the regulator, has not had full oversight of the home and any actions that have been taken to keep children safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager knows the children and staff well. She was previously the deputy manager and has worked at the home since it was registered. She is accessible to both children and staff.

Staff feel very well supported by the management team and state that staff morale is high. One staff member said that they could not ask for a 'better management team'. Staff supervisions are consistently undertaken to a good standard, with children and safeguarding routinely discussed.

Managers and leaders understand the strengths and areas for development in the home. The manager undertook a detailed learning review following two children moving out in an unplanned way. New procedures have been implemented specifically around children moving in to the home as a result. This has had a positive effect, with a more-settled home.

There is an emphasis on staff training and development in the home to enable staff to meet the needs of the children. All staff are either up to date or booked to complete core training.

The quality of record-keeping is variable. Some information from significant incidents is missing or not clearly recorded. Some language used in the records has not always been child friendly.

The staff team is diverse, and children are supported to express their cultural and spiritual needs. One child is supported to engage in online worship with their former place of worship. Opportunities for personal prayer, as appropriate, are promoted by staff in the home. This encouragement supports children to grow into confident and open adults.

What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))</p>	<p>29 January 2024</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC068827

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Christine Hamilton

Inspectors

Karen Flanagan de Martinez, Social Care Inspector
Skye Frain, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEE



Thursday, 15 February 2024

PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Purpose of the report: The Select Committee is apprised of the latest CFL performance information, which consists of:

- (a) Key indicators in children's social care measuring progress made in Ofsted recommendations following the January 2022 inspection of Surrey Local Authority Children's Services;
- (b) Key indicators relating to the additional needs strategy and EHCP timeliness recovery plan;
- (c) Turnover of social workers and foster carers to measure progress in the Children's Recruitment, Retention and Culture Workforce Planning Strategy;
- (d) External assessments of all areas within the Committee's remit.

Recommendation:

Members review the performance information.

Next Steps:

The Select Committee will use the performance overview to inform Committee business.

Report contact

Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer

Contact details

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External Assessments

Area	Assessor	Situation in 2021	Situation in 2024
Children's services	Ofsted	Inadequate (May 2018)	Requires improvement (Mar 2022)
Youth offending team	HM Inspectorate of Probation	Inadequate (Aug 2019)	Good (Mar 2022)
In-house children's homes (Table 1)	Ofsted	70% Good or Outstanding	70% Good or Outstanding
Schools and AP (Tables 2 & 3)	Ofsted	Maintained: 96.1% Good or Outstanding Academies: 90.1% Good or Outstanding	Maintained: 97.2% Good or Outstanding Academies: 89.2% Good or Outstanding
SEND (local area inspection)	Ofsted & CQC	Progress in 4 of 5 areas of weakness identified in 2016 (May 2019)	Inconsistent experiences and outcomes (November 2023)
Adult learning	Ofsted	Good (Jun 2016)	Good (Jun 2022)

Table 1: SCC children's homes as of January 2024

SCC children's home	Previous inspection	Most recent inspection
SC405933	Good (Apr 2022)	Good (May 2023)
1230411	Good (Jul 2021)	Good (Jun 2023)
SC370703	Improved effectiveness (Interim Mar 2022)	Good (Mar 2023)
SC040633	Outstanding (May 2021)	Good (Mar 2023)
SC040638	Inadequate (Sept 2022)	Monitoring visit Oct 2022
SC040631	Requires improvement Nov 2022)	Requires Improvement Jun 2023
SC040642	Good (Feb 2023)	Good (Sep 2023)
SC068827	Inadequate (Dec 2022)	Good (Mar 2023)
SC045408	Good (Nov 2022)	Good (May 2023)
2756164	N/A	Not yet inspected (new registration)

Non-SCC children's homes housing Surrey children as of January 2024

Ofsted grade	Percentage of homes in England	Number of Surrey children affected
Outstanding or Good	91%	108
Requires improvement	4.5%	4
Not yet inspected	4.5%	4

NB In addition three children are housed in homes in Wales/Scotland, inspected by the Care Inspectorate.

Schools and Alternative Provision

Who runs what in the sector as of December 2023:

	Primary	Secondary	Special	PRU
Maintained	149 (50%)	10 (17%)	11 (44%)	5 (63%)
Academies	150	48	14	3
Total	299	58	25	8

Table 2: Ratings for maintained schools

Ofsted Monthly Management Information: Data Tables
 1 = Outstanding | 2 = Good | 3 = Requires Improvement | 4 = Inadequate.

Table Name: 31 Dec 2023
 Data taken at end of: December 2023

Show Data As: No. of Schools No. of Students
 School type at time: (All) | Current School Type: (Multiple values)

Surrey										
	Overall effectiveness ¹					Total	Inspected	Good or Outstanding	As a Percentage (G or O R or I)	
	1	2	3	4	Not been inspected					
Nursery	2	2				4	4	4	100.0%	
Primary	17	127	3	1	1	149	148	144	97.3%	2.7%
PRU	2	3				5	5	5	100.0%	
Secondary	3	6	1			10	10	9	90.0%	10.0%
Special	7	4				11	11	11	100.0%	
Grand Total	31	142	4	1	1	179	178	173	97.2%	2.8%

All Local Authorities										
	Overall effectiveness ¹					Total	Inspected	Good or Outstanding	As a Percentage (G or O R or I)	
	1	2	3	4	Not been inspected					
Nursery	232	141	7	1		381	381	373	97.9%	2.1%
Primary	1,220	7,716	679	50	9	9,674	9,665	8,936	92.5%	7.5%
PRU	30	129	8	4		171	171	159	93.0%	7.0%
Secondary	77	481	65	6		629	629	558	88.7%	11.3%
Special	214	319	21	7		561	561	533	95.0%	5.0%
Grand Total	1,773	8,786	780	68	9	11,416	11,407	10,559	92.6%	7.4%

Table 3: Ratings for academies including free schools

Ofsted Monthly Management Information: Data Tables
 1 = Outstanding | 2 = Good | 3 = Requires Improvement | 4 = Inadequate.

Table Name: 31 Dec 2023
 Data taken at end of: December 2023

Show Data As: No. of Schools No. of Students
 School type at time: (All) | Current School Type: (Multiple values)

Surrey										
	Overall effectiveness ¹					Total	Inspected	Good or Outstanding	As a Percentage (G or O R or I)	
	1	2	3	4	Not been inspected					
Primary	25	109	12	4		150	150	134	89.3%	10.7%
PRU	3					3	3	3	100.0%	
Secondary	12	33	2		1	48	47	45	95.7%	4.3%
Special	4	4	4	1	1	14	13	8	61.5%	38.5%
Grand Total	44	146	18	5	2	215	213	190	89.2%	10.8%

All Local Authorities										
	Overall effectiveness ¹					Total	Inspected	Good or Outstanding	As a Percentage (G or O R or I)	
	1	2	3	4	Not been inspected					
Primary	967	5,249	592	206	82	7,096	7,014	6,216	88.6%	11.4%
PRU	28	93	22	12	7	162	155	121	78.1%	21.9%
Secondary	431	1,735	360	140	56	2,722	2,666	2,166	81.2%	18.8%
Special	137	227	36	35	53	488	435	364	83.7%	16.3%
Grand Total	1,563	7,304	1,010	393	198	10,468	10,270	8,867	86.3%	13.7%

NB Academies may not have been inspected since converting.

Children's Social Care Key Indicators

Metrics - KPI component	What is the KPI/Target where applicable	What is the statistical benchmark for National/Comparable LAs		Figure for: October	October RAG	Figure for: November	November RAG	Figure for: December	December RAG	RAG Narrative
Number of CSPA contacts received	N/A	N/A		4422		4958		3810		December saw a reduction in contact levels, but as with the August holiday period this may simply indicate the fall off approaching Christmas. Year on year there is no significant difference to December 2022 and volumes throughout the year have been well above 4000, indicating continued pressure from high contact rates which do not progress to higher tier interventions.
Number and percentage of contacts progressed to social care	N/A	N/A		509 12%		802 16%		513 13%		Aligned to the above reduction is a corresponding reduction in referrals to CSC, but as has been referenced before, statistically a similar volume of children are progressed to intervention regardless of the size of the overall Contact volumes. It is this core group of children who will benefit from the changes being made to the way referrals are triaged to ensure consistent application of our Levels of Need threshold.
4.2 Re-referrals to Children's Services	15 - 20%	21%	23%	18%	G	16%	G	14%	R	The Re-referral rate is outside of the target range. This may indicate good performance but a dropping re-referral rate can also suggest that thresholds are too high or family need is not being recognised. Work is being undertaken to explore this area of work through audit activity in March 2024. The RAG rating is related to the divergence from benchmarking. If we gain assurance that low re-referral rates relate to good & better practice the target will be reviewed.
4.3 Proportion of Assessments completed within 45 working days	100%	82%	84%	94%	A	93%	A	91%	A	There is Countywide variability which hides some of the real improvements made in key areas, such as C-Spa/Assessment where 497/515 (97%) were completed in time & CWD with 100% completion albeit with a smaller volume at 24. Within FST & LAC, individual team performance can vary significantly highlighting the need to understand & support or challenge individual team managers on localised performance. This is being pursued by the County Performance Meeting & through more robust reporting mechanisms from Practice Challenge Meetings to County Performance Meetings.
5.2 Number of Children in Need	N/A	N/A		1843		1857		1987		The Family Safeguarding Model envisages that most children will be supported under child in need processes, so this figure will potentially rise as families are diverted from higher tier interventions where it is right & safe to do so.
5.2 Child In Need Visits up to date	100%	N/A		83%	R	84%	R	81%	R	In contrast to the good performance in assessment timeliness, C-Spa/Assessment is performing less well in CiN visiting. There is work to be done around timeliness when a decision has been made to close a child's file so that all work is completed before the next scheduled visit. Where there are transition challenges this will be worked on by the respective service managers. FST teams are performing better in this area but there is still distance from target.
6.2 Proportion of S47 Enquiries with an outcome of Initial Child Protection Conference	N/A	33%	34%	24%		37%		41%		158 children were subject to Sec47 processes in December and 64 (41%) progressed to ICPC. This is an improving picture as we believe only the most vulnerable children who need the level of intervention from Child

										Protection processes should be taken through Sec.47. Accepting that there will be a proportion of children who can be supported through CIN processes once initial assurance from enquiries has been gained, there is a continued need to understand why most children are taken through a process that does not result in longer term child protection planning.
6.3 Child Protection volumes and rate	N/A	43.0	41.0	623 23.5		616 23.2		616 23.2		There has been a reduction of 259 children on CP Plans since December 2022. This primarily relates to the diversion of all but the most vulnerable children into CiN services in line with our Family Safeguarding model. There is a clear divergence from National/Comparator benchmarking as a result, but this is an expected & accepted outcome of our practice model.
6.4 Initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	100%	78%	78%	87%	R	80%	R	92%	A	This indicator has seen variable performance over the Quarter, but latest data shows an improvement. There has been comprehensive work within the Independent Reviewing Service and local Business Support to try and get timely notification of the need for ICPC so that other time sensitive processes are managed well.
6.5 Child Protection Plan repeat in 2 years	10% - 15%	N/A		23%	R	15%	G	18%	R	Although there is no national indicator assigned to this area, the number of children returning to child protection plans within 2 years is an area for scrutiny to understand the rationale for CP Planning rather than other responses. We have set an "expected" return of between 10% & 15% hence the RAG rating. There is ongoing analysis of returning children's situations through the Independent Reviewing Service.
6.6 Review Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	100%	88%	90%	99%	A	100%	G	97%	A	As has been referenced previously the Independent Reviewing Service is much more in control of the outcomes for this indicator and the higher performance reflects this. This figure relates to 25 children in 7 individual teams, demonstrating that for most areas timely planning is the norm.
6.7 Proportion of children subject to a CP Plan for over 24 months	2%	2.2%	2.3%	4.2%	R	4.9%		5.5 %	R	31 children have been on CP Plans for more than 2 years. There is nothing within data suggesting that this is a particular issue for individual Teams or individual Child Protection Chairs. There is the potential for this total to increase given the number of children who are nearing 24 months. The Service Manager QA has been asked to review these children and discuss with relevant Service Managers the continued need for CP Planning for these children. The outcomes of this exercise will be reported on in the next report.
6.8 Children subject to a CP Plan seen in the last 10 working days	100%	N/A		88%	R	87%	R	88%	R	As with other KPI's there is variable performance against this target between and within Service areas. FST South is performing well in this area and other service areas have a similar level of performance pro-rata. Individual teams can have very different performance but because of the low volumes some of this may be related to one worker or one family rather than a lack of management oversight & grip. Triangulated analysis is seeking to map which teams across a number of domains are performing less well.

Metrics - KPI component	What is the KPI/Target where applicable	What is the statistical benchmark for National/Comparable LAs		Figure for: October		October RAG	Figure for: November		November RAG	Figure for: December		December RAG	Narrative to attach to the RAG ratings
7.1 Number of Looked After Children and rate per 10k	N/A	71	49	1020	38.5		1019	38.4		1003	37.8		There is a continued decline in numbers of looked after children under 18 as more young people transfer to Leaving Care or exit care than come in. There is a similar decline in numbers of UASC partly because most enter care at 16/17 and quickly age out. UASC account for around 10% of LAC.
7.1 Number of Care Leavers	N/A	N/A		826			818			821			
7.2 Looked After Children with up to date Reviews	100%	N/A		95%		A	91%		A	90%		A	There is deteriorating performance against this indicator over the Quarter. There is pressure on IRO's due to the number of children who are out of county and the ability to meet initial review timescales in some cases. There are recording issues which can affect the LCS Workflow that impacts on reporting. Most delay is at the first Review within 4 weeks of accommodation and performance improves at subsequent Reviews where the IRS arranges the Review. As seen above at point of subsequent reviews, timeliness is achieved.
7.3 Looked After Children statutory visits	100%	N/A		95%		A	94%		A	94%		A	83 out of 984 children were not seen within timescale in December. There are no service areas which are performing worse than others when volume is factored in. Again, individual team managers may need to exercise greater oversight of the work within their team. The AD for LAC & Care Leavers is working across service areas to track and harmonise performance.
7.7 Looked After Children Initial Health Assessments completed	100%	N/A		90%		A	92%		A	91%		A	There is fluctuating performance within a very narrow band over the Quarter. There is no significant difference in overall numbers having an IHA but children placed in Surrey are more likely to have one within time, although there are still overall timeliness issues. 64 children who had been in care for more than a year had not had an RHA. 3 LAC teams achieved 100%.
7.8 Looked After Children Review Health Assessments completed	100%	89%	91%	90%		A	89%		R	90%		A	64 children who had been in care for more than a year had not had an RHA. 3 LAC teams achieved 100%.
7.9 Looked After Children Dental Checks completed - in care more than 1 year	100%	76%	79%	85%		R	86%		R	86%		R	Although not meeting our target performance locally is significantly better than national/stat neighbour. Examination of data shows that most who have not had dental checks sit within the adolescent cohort. This is a featured area within LAC Reviews and IRO's will be asked to profile/promote dental health in forthcoming reviews.
7.13 Looked After Children Short Term Placement Stability	9%	10%	11%	10.9%		R	11.9%		R	11.0%		R	Short term stability is just over the target and in line with national & stat neighbours and been consistent over the quarter. Most children have one placement following care entry, and the next largest cohort move to one other placement. A small number of young people can have multiple placements which can impact on this indicator. This level of movement indicates challenges in responding to a young person's high level of needs and demonstrates some of the pressures that creates standalone placement options to provide a short term solution.
7.14 Looked After Children Long Term Placement Stability	75%	69%	67%	69%		A	67%		A	68%		A	Again, although aligned to national/comparator indicators we are adrift from our own target. Long term stability appears more likely when young people are retained "in County" and are under 10. Performance against this indicator has been stable over the quarter.
7.15 Looked After Children placed over 20 miles from Surrey	20%	17%	25%	34%		R	34%		R	34%		R	Given the above the ability to place in County can have a significant impact on young people's outcomes. There is ongoing work to provide an accurate and current availability status of our

										in-house carers. 346 children are cared for more than 20 miles from home at the time of writing. The majority of children and young people at 461 are cared for within Surrey or immediate neighbours but less than 20 miles from home.
7.6 Personal Education Plans – Quality Termly	100%	N/A						79%	A	The introduction of our new Statutory School age PEP template and a more aspirational quality assurance framework for this age group in September 2023, including a new ‘gold standard’ PEP has resulted in an improvement in PEP quality and has resulted in examples of exemplary PEPs – key features from which will be shared in training with schools. 12% of PEPs were rated red in Autumn 2023, compared to 16% in Autumn 2022. 83% were of good quality for children of statutory school age, and for all PEPs (including the early years and post 16) 79% were rated good. PEP completion rates have also increased, reflecting better engagement with the process particularly in the early years and post 16 – and better positioning us to improve quality further.
7.12 Pathway plans – Looked After Children	100%	N/A		100%	G	99%	A	98%	A	229 Pathway Plans have been completed in a timely way and 3 remain unfinished. There is good performance across all areas for this domain and all young people have had a Pathway Plan completed by the time they transition to Leaving Care
8.2 Care Leavers in Contact with Surrey	95%	N/A		94%	A	93%	A	91%	A	There are 9 care leavers between 17-21 who are not in touch with the LA bringing the percentage down to 91% . In Touch performance is in line with national averages.
8.3 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	100%	91%	88%	86%	R	84%	R	82%	R	There are 14 young people who are in “unsuitable” accommodation, although 4 of these may be included because although not entitled to Leaving Care support the system flags them. 2 young people are in custody, 3 are NFA, 2 are in Emergency accommodation & a further 3 have an unknown residence. The Care Leaving service is re-examining these young people’s situations and all also ensuring that data is clean.
8.3 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	90%	88%	89%	94%	G	93%	G	93%	G	Care Leaver accommodation suitability is at very good levels and significantly above the Surrey target and that of statistical neighbours. This indicator suggests that the majority of young people are in accommodation that is of a good standard and is meeting their needs. The bi-monthly Accommodation Panels looking at young people’s needs is one strand of how quality is maintained. Where accommodation is unsuitable this can be custody as for 1 young person or other types of accommodation which does not correspond with the care plan.
8.4 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment and training (EET)	75%	66%	66%	70%	A	67%	R	66%	R	Performance in the area of EET is consistent but underperforming against target, although in line with comparators. It is an area of vulnerability within the new ILACS Care Leaver domain. National research shows that care leavers are 10 times more likely to be NEET at 21 than young adults who are not care experienced and there are efforts across Corporate Parenting to understand & respond to the particular needs of Surrey young people.
8.4 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment and training (EET)	65%	56%	59%	62%	A	62%	A	62%	A	
9.2 LAC Missing Children Going Missing in the Month	N/A	12,740	92	52		50		44		44 looked after children had missing episodes in December. 3 young people are still missing from care. In total there were 95 missing episodes highlighting that some children go missing more than once. Return Home interviews were offered to all young people and 38 took up the offer of an RHI on at least one occasion and 6 refused to discuss the reasons behind the missing episode.
10.1 Child Supervision recorded to timescale	95%	N/A		81%	A	86%	A	78%	R	Supervision on children’s case records continues to be problematic Analysis of data shows that most overdue supervisions are “in month” not that there is evidence of supervision not occurring in the long term. Care Leavers & FST South are the strongest performer at 94% & 92% respectively. No service area is a

									<p>statistical outlier but all have issues at some level with timeliness and planning for timely completion. Service Managers are stressing the need for improvement and this will be a featured area of scrutiny in Performance Challenge Meetings with reporting to County Performance Meeting monthly on progress.</p>
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CFL Practice Improvement and Performance Information
CFLLC Select Committee – February 2024
EHCP Accelerated Recovery Plan Update



The EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan – a recap

- A comprehensive multi-agency recovery plan is underway with the objective of achieving a good overall timeliness rate of 60% by the end of May 2024. This target surpasses the national timeliness percentage and aligns closely with the 2021 performance. The approach is to address overdue assessments and ensure timely assessments for children with higher risks.
- To support this initiative, a £15 million investment has been allocated for Special Educational Needs (SEN), Educational Psychology (EP), and early intervention capacity over a three-year period. The plan encompasses three key objectives:

Reducing Long Waiting Times:

- To complete the EHC needs assessments for all children, young people, families, and schools who have been waiting longer than the statutory timescales as soon as practically possible.

Better Support While Waiting:

- To support children, young people, families, and schools as effectively as possible whilst they are having to wait longer than they should.

Securing a Sustainable Service Model:

- The goal is to restore a sustainable service quickly, ensuring that the majority of EHC needs assessments are completed within statutory timescales, beginning with achieving a 60% rate and ultimately striving for 100%.

Ofsted/CQC Local Area Inspection and links with EHCP Timeliness

There was an Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection of the local area on the 25th – 29th September 2023. In relation to the recovery plan, inspectors recognised:

'Where families have built trusted relationships with professionals, they feel more involved in and understand decisions better. Leaders have improved the access to and timeliness of decisions about education, health and care needs assessments (EHCNA). They have recently introduced a multi-agency triage where decisions are made quickly, and families are supported well to understand them.'

The overall inspection judgement was:

“The local area partnership’s arrangements lead to **inconsistent experiences and outcomes** for children and young people with SEND. The **local area partnership must work jointly** to make improvements.”

And EHCP timeliness was identified as an Area of Improvement and is now part of the Ofsted action plan monitoring the following:

“Leaders across health, social care and education should ensure that improvements continue in line with their recovery plan in respect of:

- reducing waiting times for health assessments;
- increasing timeliness and quality of needs assessments; and
- increasing timeliness and quality of EHCPs and annual reviews.“

Area of Improvement 3 – Waiting times and quality

Area of Improvement 3:

Leaders across health, social care and education should ensure that improvements continue in line with their recovery plan in respect of:

- reducing waiting times for health assessments;*
- increasing timeliness and quality of needs assessments; and*
- increasing timeliness and quality of EHCPs and annual reviews.*

Senior Responsible Officer: Tracey Sanders, Assistant Director IAN (SEN Recovery and Educational Psychology) & Harriet Derrett-Smith, Associate Director Commissioning – Health & Wellbeing

Impact statement:

Through collaborative work across the partnership, timely assessments of education, health, and social care needs will be facilitated where necessary. Working hand in hand with parents, carers, children, young people, and stakeholders, our co-production will support partners to produce high-quality Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans and annual reviews, delivered within statutory timescales.

Strategic Improvement Priority

3.1 The Partnership will ensure delivery of the EHCP recovery plan.

3.2 The Partnership will ensure waiting times for health assessments; to access children's health therapies and developmental paediatrics are reduced.

3.3 The Partnership will ensure a refined neurodevelopmental pathway encompassing early intervention, support, assessment, and post-diagnosis.

3.4 The Partnership will continue to develop, implement, and embed a multi-agency quality framework for EHCNA's, plans, and reviews.

EHCP Accelerated Recovery Plan



EHCP Recovery Objectives	EHCP Recovery Approach	2023/24 Academic Year Targets
<p>1. Reducing long waiting times</p> <p>To complete the EHC needs assessments for all children, young people, families, and schools who have been waiting longer than the statutory timescales as soon as practically possible.</p>	<p>We will do this by scaling up our capacity rapidly through several contracts with EP and SEN providers, as fast as the available capacity in the market will allow, and working with partners to ensure that they have sufficient capacity and assessments are well co-ordinated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP assessments are returned to timeliness by March 2024 • EP assessment capacity increases by 1275 advices to produce assessments per month
<p>2. Better support whilst waiting</p> <p>To support children, young people, families, and schools as effectively as possible whilst they are having to wait longer than they should.</p>	<p>We will do this by further improving communications to families and schools and providing more targeted support from our Specialist Teaching service to children and young people whose assessments are overdue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families with delayed EHCNA are contacted every three weeks • Specialist Teaching for Inclusive Practice (STIP) service visit all schools with children with delayed EHC needs assessment to ensure all children receive the help and support they need whilst waiting over the 23/24 academic year
<p>3. Securing a sustainable service model</p> <p>To return to a sustainable service as quickly as possible so that the majority of EHC needs assessments are completed within the statutory timescales, starting by reaching 60%+ and ultimately aiming for 100%.</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking an end-to-end review of our EHCP functions and implementing reforms of our processes and practices to ensure that they are as effective and efficient as possible. • Ensuring that key teams are “right sized” to deliver the expected service levels, including contracted capacity if necessary. • Working alongside schools and settings to strengthen early help and support so that children and young people only go through EHCP processes if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 strengthened decision making in line with ordinarily available provision guidance and a strengthened SEN support offer leads to a 20% reduction of EHCNA requests moving to assessment when compared with 2022/23. • Phase 1 of decision making completed on time on more than 95% of occasions per month • EHCPs issued within 20 weeks* – over 60% by 31 May 2024* • SEND case officer cohort increased from 81 fte posts to 111 fte filled by October 2023 (figure to be reviewed after the end-to-end review is completed) and EP capacity reflects EHCNA demand and provides early intervention offer.

Summary Headlines

- Timeliness remains low as projected in the recovery plan at 10% for December 2023. It was anticipated that this would be the case while overdue assessments were finalised.
- Sourcing the EP capacity needed for the recovery plan has been challenging and has not been in line with external contract providers commitments.
- However, the increased capacity combined with the lower-than-expected demand for assessments has enabled us to reduce the number of unallocated EP assessments from 1014 in May 2023 to 130 as of 22nd of January 2024
- Once the overdue assessments have been completed and assuming demand remains low, we continue to be on track for an end of May target of 60% EHCNAs being completed on time.
- School aged SLT assessment timeliness has significantly improved, it is now around 90%
- Other health advice timeliness range from 60-100% on time, the data fluctuates as the numbers are small
- Early decision making about proceeding to assessment is on time in 96% of cases
- Support while waiting is being targeted and increased for those waiting over 20 weeks
- 98% of SEN Officer roles are now filled

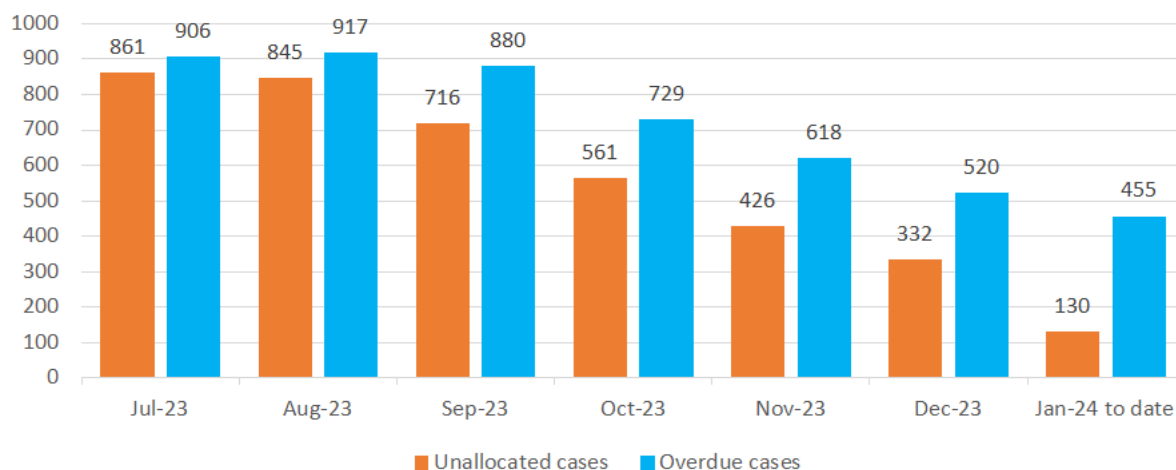


Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Target : EP assessments are returned to timeliness by March 2024

- There has been an increase of over 100 EP assessments per month being completed, continuing the reduction in the backlog of unallocated EP assessments.
- The number of unallocated cases has reduced by two thirds since May 23 when the backlog was 1014. Mid-January data confirms that only 130 assessments remain unallocated in the EP backlog.

EP Unallocated and Overdue Cases



The orange bars show how many EP assessments are unallocated. The blue bar shows how many are yet to be completed that are overdue.

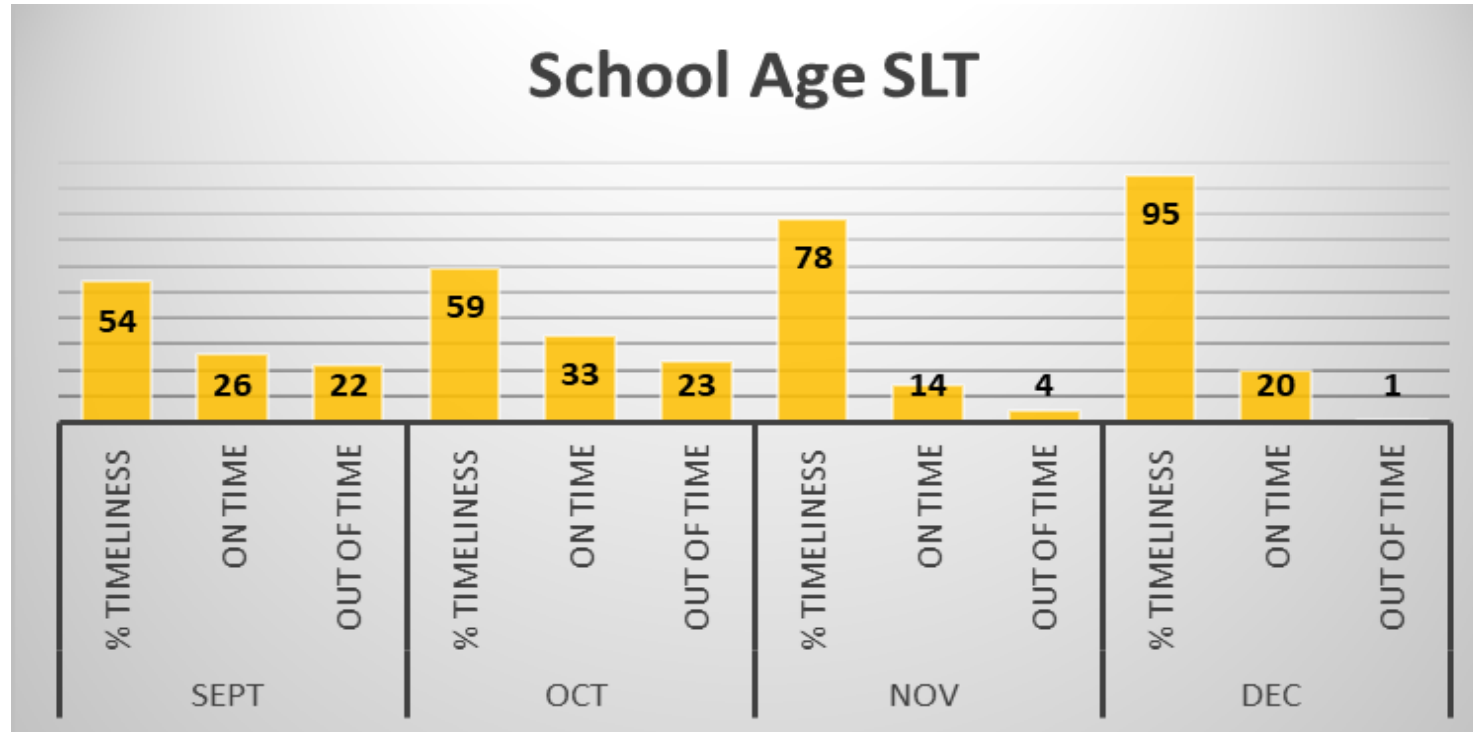
Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Target : EP assessments are returned to timeliness by March 2024

- Children who are identified **with additional vulnerabilities** continue to be prioritised for assessment. As we move towards business as usual, then we will aim for all new assessments to be completed on time and the additional vulnerability markers will no longer be applied for allocation.
- We have ensured that EP assessment requests made prior to mid-2023 have been allocated and we are now working through those from the second half of the year.
 - All 2022 assessments have now been completed and all assessments requested before July 2023 are either completed or allocated
 - 95% of assessment requests from July 2023 are either completed or allocated and 86% of assessment requests from August 2023.
- Whilst we have been successful in securing additional EP capacity through external providers, there has been an overall shortfall of 259 EP assessments that contracted providers proposed to complete up to the end of December. It is possible that we have now saturated the available market for EP resource. This shortfall has largely been offset by low demand. Further mitigation options are being implemented and if demand remains low, we are on track for attaining 60% timeliness by the end of May.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

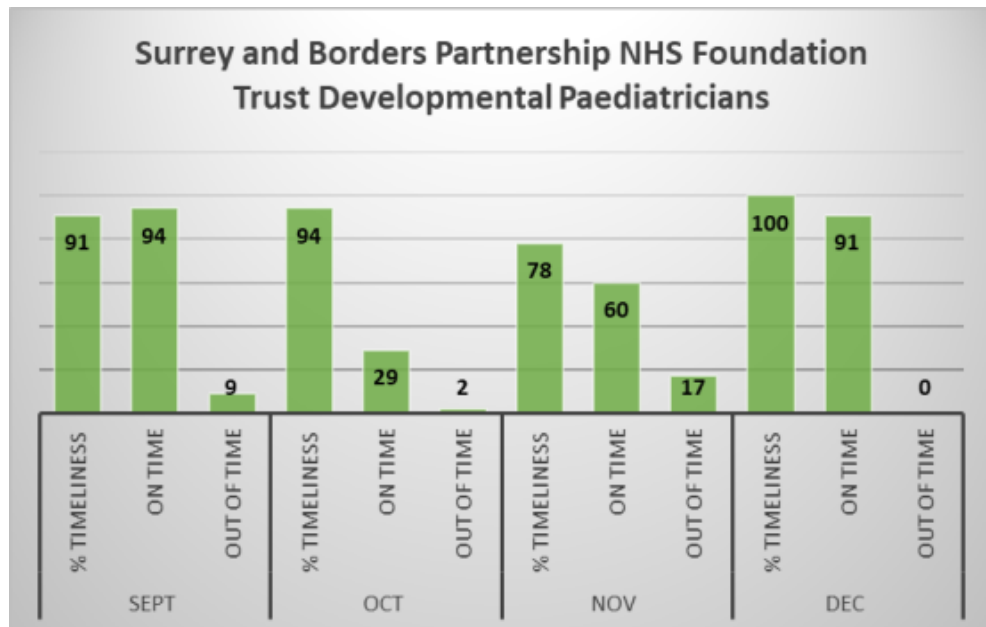
School Age Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)



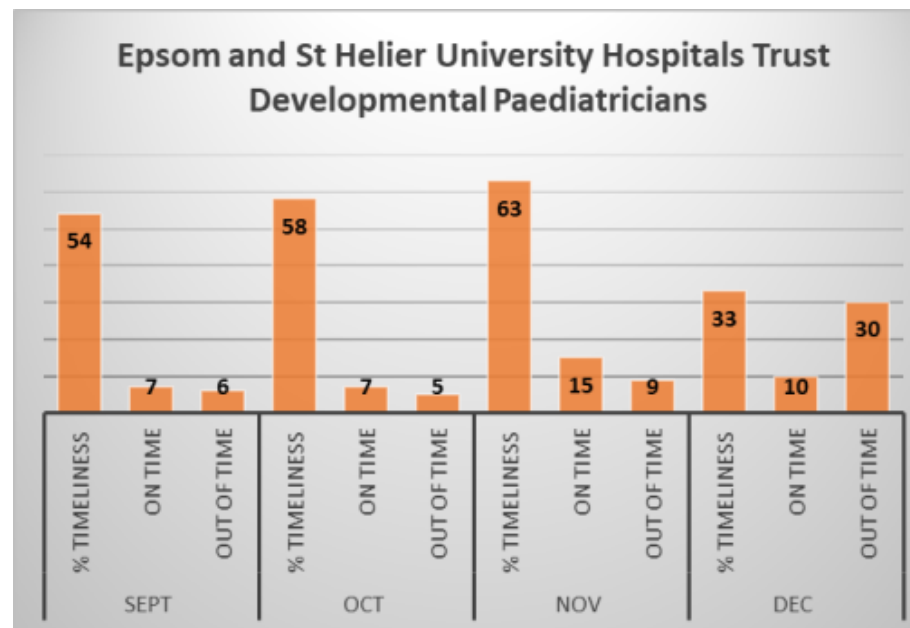
School Age Speech and Language Therapy: School Age Speech and Language Therapy shows an increase in timeliness from 54% in September to 95% in December. There is no backlog reported and therefore an improvement plan is not currently required.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends – Developmental Paediatricians



Surrey and Borders Developmental Paediatricians: Reports timeliness at 100% in December 2023, showing an increase of 28% timeliness from November 2023. They do not currently report a backlog and therefore no improvement plan is required at present.

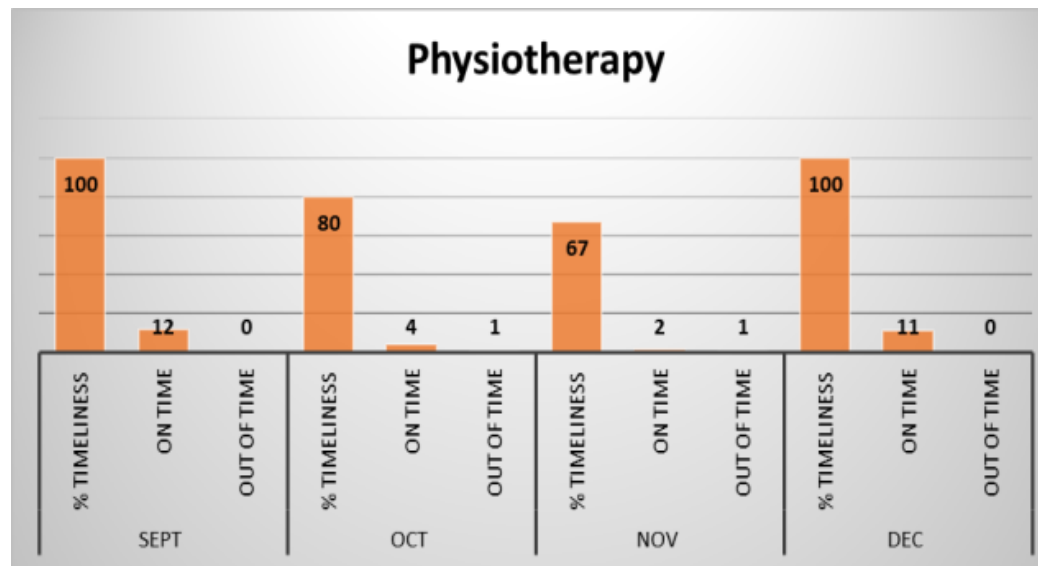
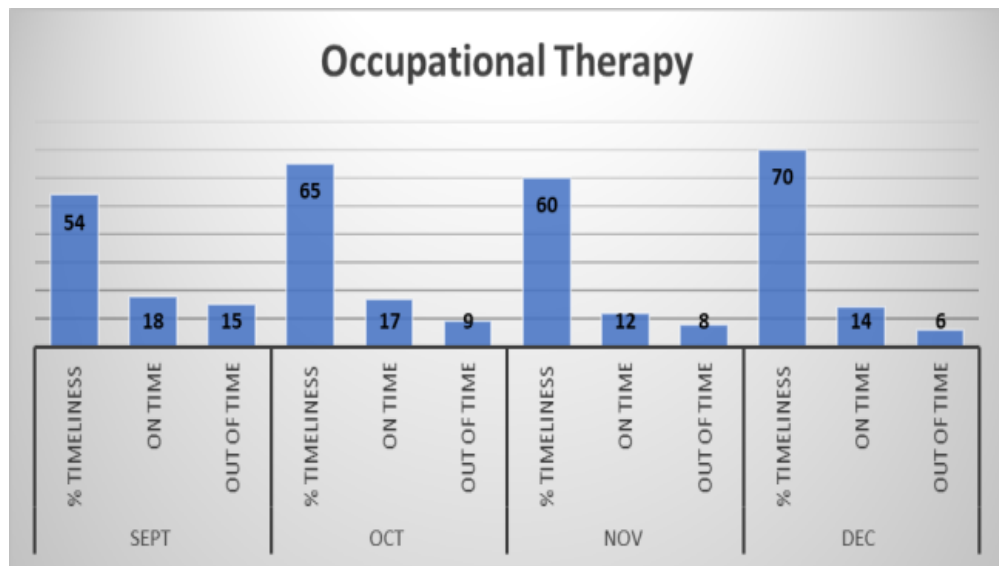


Epsom and St Helier Developmental Paediatricians: Reports timeliness at 33% in December 2023, showing a decrease of 30% from November 2023. Information in relation to backlog and improvement plans is currently being developed and will be made available week ending 19/01/2024.

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends (Children and Family Health Surrey)



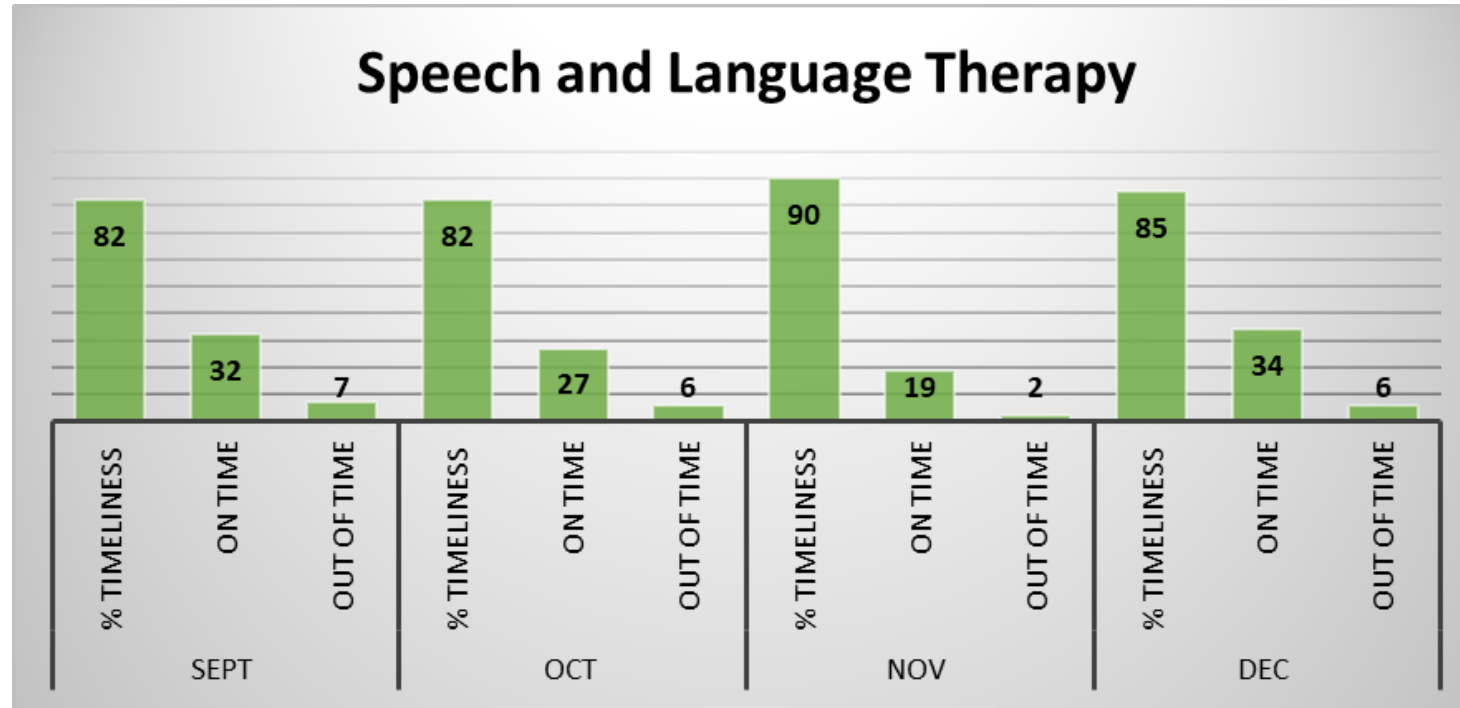
Occupational Therapy: Reports timeliness at 70% in December 2023, showing an increase of 10% timeliness from November. They report a backlog of 1 referral that is yet to be sent, this is due to no parental response received.

Physiotherapy: Reports timeliness at 100%, showing an increase of 33% from November 2023. They do not report a backlog. Individual numbers are relatively small – this has a greater impact on timeliness % (i.e. 1 late report in November = 33% timeliness reduction)

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends (Children and Family Health Surrey)



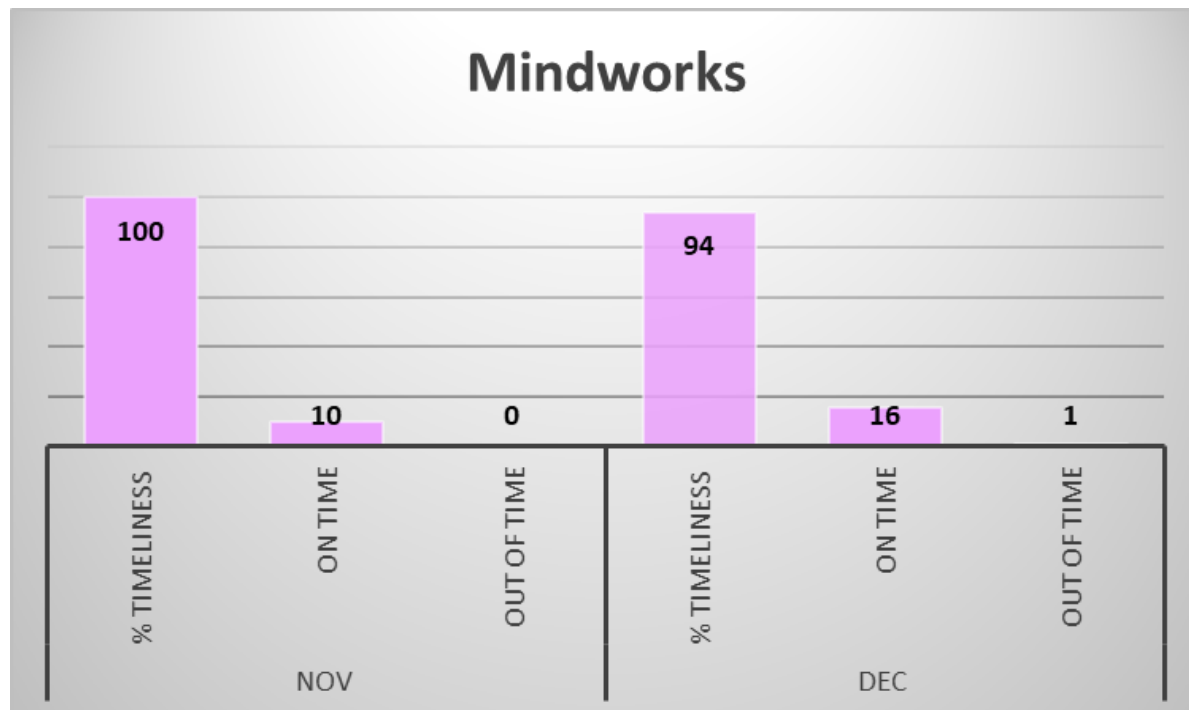
Speech and Language Therapy: Reports timeliness at 85% for December 2023, showing a decrease of 5% from November. They report a backlog of three referrals that are yet to be sent. The two referrals not sent were both for school aged children.

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable



Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends - Mindworks



Mindworks are not returning advice for children who may have mental health needs and are on the waiting list for an assessment or have been recently discharged. This has been raised as an issue and both practice and recording processes are under review.

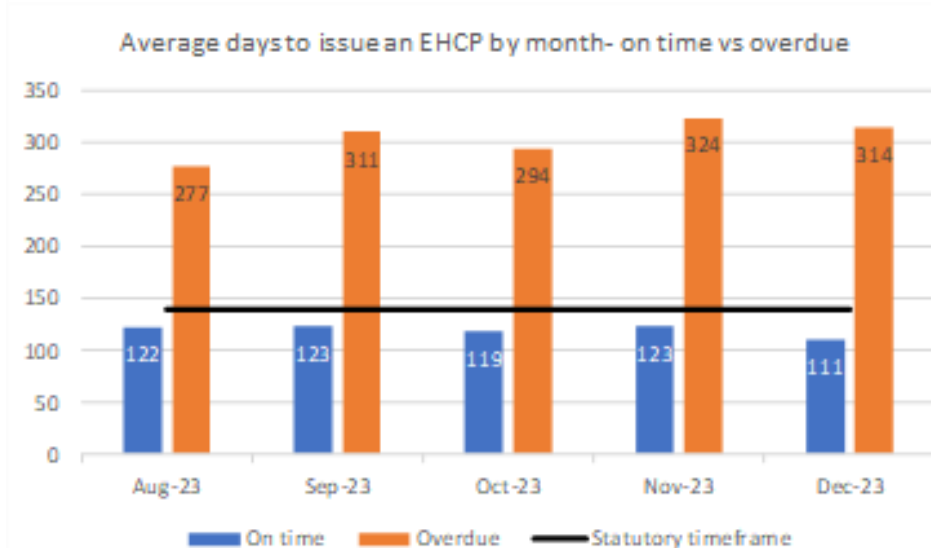
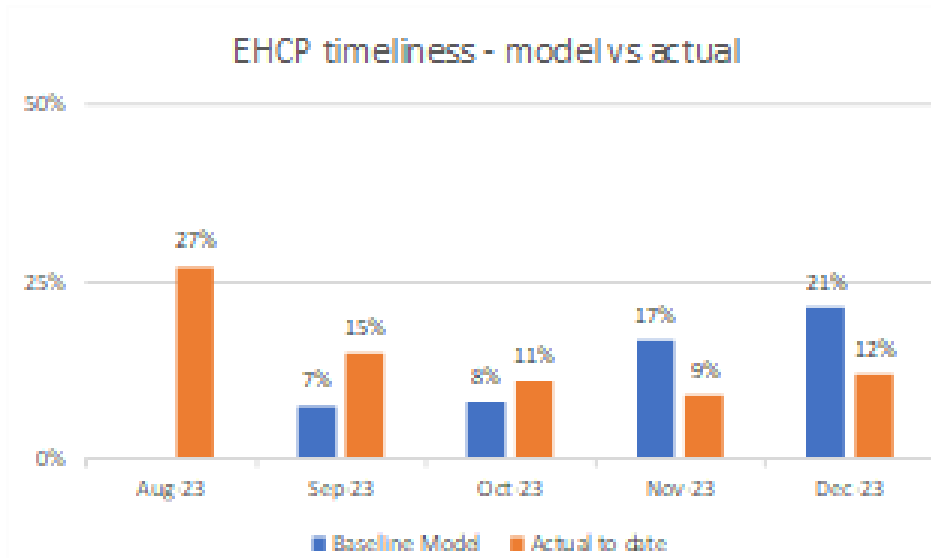
Data submitted for December shows total declined at 16. These children are either not known to the service or were discharged over 6 months ago but will still require an assessment.

There are a further five children known to Mindworks waiting to be assessed. These are still within timescales.

Mindworks data has been submitted for November 2023 and December 2023. It has been identified that 100% of advices returned in November and 94% of advices in December, were returned on time, **where children are already open to the service.**

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable

EHCP Timeliness - Reducing Waiting Times – EHCP delivery



- The successful backlog work has meant that we finalised more out of date plans than anticipated in the modelling and therefore the proportion of on time assessments (which are those completed for vulnerable children), is at a slightly lower than projected level.
- The average time to issue a plan is still high as we work through the backlog and there is currently a 16 week wait. However, we anticipate this will reduce over the coming months in line with the trajectory.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: All families with delayed EHCNA are contacted every three weeks

SEN Communications:

- A Helpdesk team is in the process of being onboarded to support with regular and timely communication with families and other stakeholders. The initial team of six call-centre staff and a Senior Case Manager to oversee their work, are in the process of being trained and on-boarded. We expect to see the team fully operational by the end of January 2024.
- The North-East team are piloting the use of a text messaging system to deliver the three-weekly updates to parents and carers in respect of the delayed assessments since December 2023. They will be feeding back their findings before the end of January 2024.
- SENDCO drop-in sessions are being piloted in the South-West team, offering schools a fortnightly slot to discuss any cases with their named Case Officers, in addition to the termly in person visits. This was initially a single Case Officer led initiative in the final quarter of 2023, which was rolled out as a pilot in late November 2023. The South-West team will be feeding back their findings before the end of January 2024

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: All families with delayed EHCNA are contacted every three weeks

SEN Communications:

- The drop ins for parents and carers are being established following the success of the Family Voice Surrey event in late November 2023. The roll out is being planned in collaboration with Family Voice Surrey colleagues and will be developed with specific feedback from families. Current plans are for a monthly opportunity to book either in person or online meetings with Case Officers or senior members of the operational SEN teams.
- The EHCP Focus Group is working to build upon the SEN Service communications improvement plan and clarify the key requirements from stakeholder groups, with the EHCP Focus Group overseeing the roll out and impact of the work. This work will involve gathering views from existing stakeholder groups where possible, making use of the SENDCO network, Deputy Headteacher meetings, Special Phase meetings, Primary Headteacher and Secondary Headteacher Quadrant meetings to gain the views of schools. The views of parents and carers will be gathered via a series of drop-in sessions facilitated by Family Voice Surrey. This work has been welcomed by stakeholder representatives and will build upon the Ofsted findings.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: Specialist Teaching for Inclusive Practice (STIP) service visit all schools with children with delayed EHC needs assessment to ensure all children receive the help and support they need whilst waiting over the 23/24 academic year

- Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice are providing proactive outreach support to children and families awaiting an overdue needs assessment through termly visits to all schools. The table below shows the number of hours delivered to date:

<https://tableau.surreycc.gov.uk/#/views/SpecialistTeachersforInclusivePractice/STIPActivitiesSupportCodeHeatmap?iid=2>

Academic year 23/24 to date	Early Intervention Support	EHCP Support	Exclusion Support	Maintaining Placement	Multi Professional Meeting	SEN Support
Number of activities	46	50	16	2	9	384
Number of Pupils	35	38	13	2	9	304
Total Hours	46.5	60	13.5	1.5	8	496

Each visit will take 3 hours therefore it can be assumed over 150 schools have been visited to date, however, further data analysis is required to monitor which schools have been visited and impact of advice for children discussed who have EHCNA delays

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: Specialist Teaching for Inclusive Practice (STIP) service visit all schools with children with delayed EHC needs assessment to ensure all children receive the help and support they need whilst waiting over the 23/24 academic year

- During the autumn term 2023, the STIP team spent **126** hours discussing pupils who have waited more than 20 weeks for an EHCNA and **140** meetings with SENCO's took place.
- As of 17/01/23 the STIP teams have allocated spring term planning meetings for the approx. 330 children who were not yet allocated to the EP team as of the end of December. Data has been distributed to the teams and they will be recording this work in EYES so that we can monitor progress. However, it is too early to provide accurate data regarding this activity.

Securing a sustainable service model

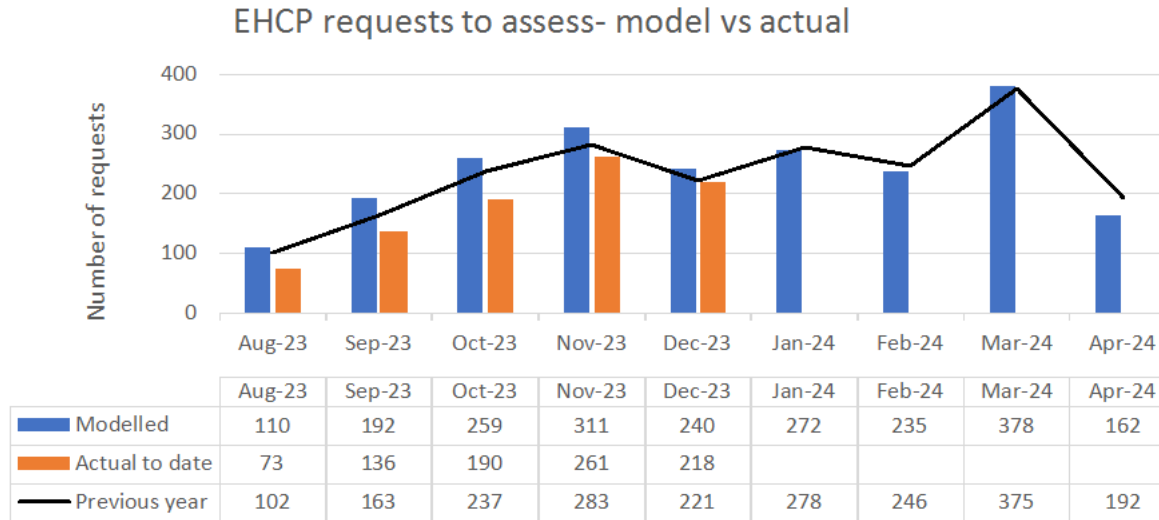
Target: Phase 1 of decision making completed on time on more than 95% of occasions per month

- So far during the current academic year, the L-SPA have completed the initial phase 1 decision on time in **96%** of cases. Late cases were all late by only 1 day.
- The average time taken to make a decision was **28 days in December 2023, down from 33 in September 2023.**
- The reduction in requests for assessment and robust decision-making means that good timeliness should be sustained.



Securing a sustainable service model

Target: Phase 2 strengthened decision making in line with ordinarily available provision guidance and a strengthened SEN support offer leads to a 20% reduction of EHCNA requests moving to assessment when compared with 2022/23.



- Overall requests for EHCNA have plateaued at levels at or below the previous year since April 2023, following the launch of the Ordinarily Available Provision Guide in January 2023. This is a significant development and marks a move from year-on-year growth in requests.
- We have seen a reduction in the number of requests proceeding to assessment so far during the academic year September-December of 33%, from 664 at this stage in 22/23 to 447 in 23/24. This exceeds the target above.

EHCP Timeliness – Sustainable Service

End to End Review – improving customer experiences and the efficiency and effectiveness of our processes:

- We are in the closing stages of the final discovery sprint in the End-to-End review, following which a report will be produced highlighting the key areas for development across the service.
- An interactive workshop took place at the Surrey Schools SEND Conference on November 30th, allowing school colleagues to contribute to the future of the SEND service. This information is being used to inform improvements.
- Staffing within the quadrant Case Officer teams is at 97.7% of the FTE, with agency Case Officer staffing currently at 25 of 30 positions filled, with the contracted provider in the process of filling the remaining vacancies.

Performance indicators (with columns showing both baseline model and adjusted figures)	Model for month	Monthly actual data to Dec 23					
	Baseline model	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Diff to baseline
Inputs - staffing							
Internal FTE – existing	68.13	68.13	68.13	68.13	68.13	68.13	0
Internal FTE – new	12.87	2	2	9.3		10.97	-1.9
Total internal FTE	81	70.13	70.13	77.43	77.43	79.1	-1.9
External FTE	30	n/a	0	28	28	25	-5
Total FTE	111	70.13	70.13	105.43	105.43	104.1	-6.9

End to End Review - Where are we in the review now?



Sprint 1 (4 weeks)

Sprint 2 (4 weeks)

Sprint 3 (4 weeks)

Sprint 4 (4 weeks)

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Suggested priority/sequential order:

20-week statutory process (Request an EHCP, Assessment of EHCP, Placement decisions and Issuing EHCP)

Quality assurance and reasons for tribunals

Annual Review

Data, systems and reporting

Communications

People and change

End to End Review – Key findings and Issues

Issues and pain points identified in the E2E review:

**Fragmentation
of system**

**Consistency
across the SEN
service**

**Capacity of
team**

**Supervision,
support and
development of
staff**

End to End Review – Key findings and Issues



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Conclusion of the discovery phase

- **Discovery activities to be concluded**, surveys and office-based observations to be undertaken. Annual review activity to be completed
- **Discovery team to produce report** detailing the findings, and highlighting possible solutions to address issues identified
- **Project development plan** to be drawn up in response to the discovery report, ensuring consultative and collaborative response to the proposals

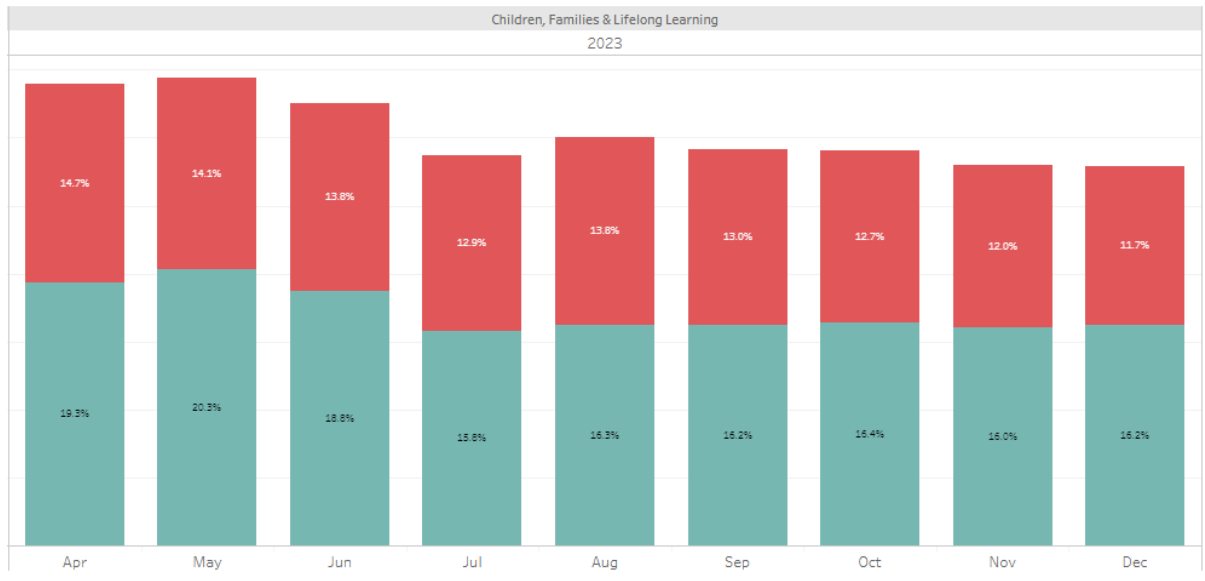
Next Steps

- Carefully monitor demand and continue to seek increased external EP advice.
- Continue to provide STIP support and SEN communications to support children and families where assessments are delayed and enhance SEN communication generally.
- Continuation of health and partner's recovery plans as appropriate with system to prevent delays in issuing EHCPs where possible.
- Enhanced focus upon sustainable services:
 - Implement range of early intervention and prevention support strategies
 - Continued robust decision making
 - Right size EP and SEN teams
 - Improved SEN communications



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Social Worker turnover (voluntary leavers) for December 2023 is 16.2%, financial year to date below (green = SW and red = non-SW).



As of December 2023, the turnover rate for Social Workers (Social Worker, Senior Social Worker and Advanced Social Worker and excluding Bank Staff) within the Family Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services is 16.97%.

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Surrey Foster carers turnover data

Information is supplied annually to Ofsted in the form of a prescribed data-set.

Collection year	Total Number of households at 31 st March	Number of places at 31 st March	Number of Family and Friends households
2018	388	658	
2019	377	643	
2020	393	656	109
2021	398	662	113
2022	397	660	122

(Source: Ofsted Fostering Data Set Return)

Fostering Households approved by fostering panel in year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023 (to 31/03/23)	2023-24 (to 21/11/2023)
General foster carer	31	21	18	14
Friends and family carer	50	41	37	29
Fostering to adopt carer	2	4	-	
Short breaks – children who are also looked after carer	1	2	-	
Short breaks – children who are not otherwise looked after carer	3	0	-	
Total	88	62	55	43

(Source: Surrey Fostering Panel Case Data)

Collection year	Total Number of households resigned or deregistered by fostering panel	Number of mainstream fostering households	Number of connected person fostering households
2020-2021	42	11	31
2021-2022	38	24	14
2022-2023	47	31	16
2023-2024	47	29	18

(Source: Surrey Fostering Panel Case Data)

Deregistration reason – Household number	2022-23	2023-24 (to 21/11/2023)
Resigned due to retirement	11	7
Resigned due to change of circumstances	14	14
Resigned due to difficulty fulfilling the fostering role	3	
Resigned as child no longer looked after (Special Guardianship obtained / Adoption Order)	8	3
Resigned due to impact of fostering on emotional well-being	1	
Resigned as child no longer in their care	5	3
Resigned following standards of care investigation	1	
Deregistered by the service as no longer suitable to foster	4	
Child returned home (planned move)		8
Placement Breakdown		4
Staying put/Supported Lodgings		7
Becoming Shared lives carers for previously fostered child		1

(Source: Fostering Service exit interviews and Fostering Panel Case Data)

Special Guardianship Order's made	2022-23	2023-24 (to 21/11/2023)
Number of children who have had an order made in financial year..	59	25

National Statistics – Fostering in England April 22 – March 223

Ofsted's statistical release covers 146 Local Authority fostering services and 282 Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) for 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. It includes data about fostering households, foster carers, retention, recruitment and capacity.

There is an upward trend in fostering provision provided by family and friends households. Family and friends households made up 27% of all Local Authority fostering households as at 31 March 2022, an increase from 21% in 2017-18. Family and friends households accounted for 60% of households approved in-year that were still active on 31 March 2022, up slightly from 56% in 2017 to 2018. This type of household made up 60% of deregistration's by Local Authorities in the 2021 to 2022 period

Data for Figure 1: Number of fostering households by type and sector as at 31 March, over the last 5 years

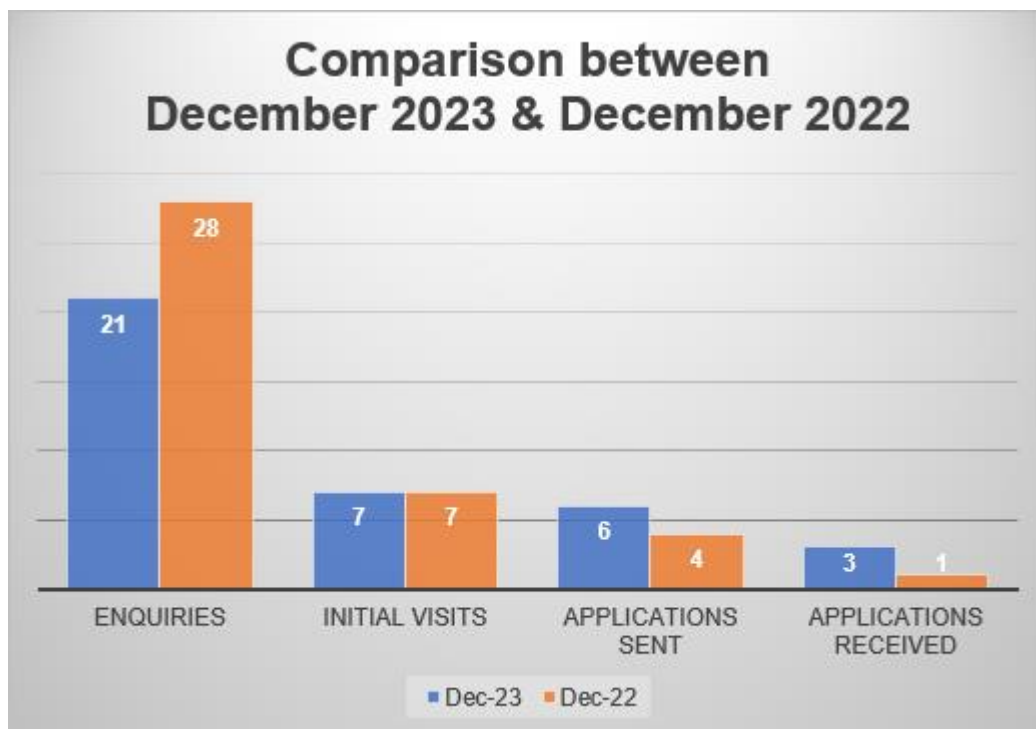
Sector	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Family and friends (LA)	6,930	7,310	8,045	7,855	8,400
Mainstream (LA)	22,395	21,885	21,495	20,845	19,835
Mainstream (IFA)	15,125	15,345	15,830	15,205	15,170
Total	44,450	44,540	45,370	43,905	43,405

Since 2021, there have been year-on-year net decreases in the number of mainstream fostering households in both the IFA and LA sectors (figure 2).

Data for Figure 2: Year-on-year net change in mainstream fostering households by sector over the last 5 years

Sector	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
IFA	360	220	485	-625	-35
LA	-220	-510	-390	-650	-1,010

Surrey Recruitment Stats 2022/2023 comparison for December with enquiries from prospective foster carers, initial visits made in follow up and application forms subsequently sent and those received by Fostering Recruitment.



Comparison between November 2023 & November 2022



HOW DO WE MEASURE THE IMPACT OF OUR PARTNERSHIP?



Quantitative and qualitative impact summary data

This is the agreed summary of KPIs to be monitored termly by the Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership Board. We have a more comprehensive data set to support this, which is aligned to each of the seven priority areas.

Priority	Measure	Target	Previous	Latest	DoT	Notes
Early Identification & Support	SEN support notifications	n/a	116 (Jan 23)	201 (Jan 24)	↑	Monthly
	Early Years Development checks	69%	71.3% (Q1)	75.6% (Q2)	↑	Quarterly
Inclusion in Education and Community	Number of Children missing education	n/a	116 (Dec 23)	106 (Jan 24)	↑	Monthly
	Proportion of pupils with EHCP who are persistently absent	37.3%	38.7% (HT1-2 22/23)	32.7% (HT1-2 23/24)	↓	Half termly
	Proportion of pupils on SEN Support who are persistently absent	32.7%	28.8% (HT1-2 22/23)	26.1% (HT1-2 23/24)	↓	Half termly
Joint Commissioning, Sufficiency and Evaluation 143	Waiting time – SLT, patients waiting over 18 weeks	0	83 (Nov 23)	69 (Dec 23)	↓	Monthly
	Number of MindWorks referrals	n/a	2936 (Nov 23)	2138 (Dec 23)	↓	Monthly
	Waiting list – MindWorks (ND pathway) - no. of working days until first appointment	tbc	210 (Dec 23)	223 (Jan 24)	↑	Monthly
Systems and Practice	Timeliness of EHCP assessments for plans issued in month (completed in 20 weeks)	60% interim target	10% (Dec 23)	13% (Jan 24)	↑	Monthly
	Number of overdue EP advice requests	0	520 (Dec 23)	418 (Jan 24)	↓	Monthly
	Number of overdue EHCPs (inclusive of the cases with an overdue EP advice request)	tbc	948 (Sept 23)	709 (Jan 24)	↓	Monthly, may include completed cases not yet recorded
	Overall % EHCPs graded good or outstanding	-	37% (Spring '23)	32% (Summer '23)	↓	Termly
	% of CYP with an up-to-date Annual Review recorded (recovery work underway to ensure that all completed reviews are recorded)	40%	37% (Dec 23)	39% (Jan 24)	↑	Monthly
	No. of complaints as % of EHCPs	-	5.4% (2022)	5.0% (2023)	↓	Stage 1 Complaints
	No. of active tribunals		405 (Dec 23)	461 (Jan 24)	↑	Monthly
SEND tribunal rate as a % of appealable decisions	3%	4.1% (2021)	4.6% (2022)	↑	Annual	

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