


Notice of Meeting

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee



<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Web:</u>
Thursday, 13 March 2025 10.00 am	Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, RH2 8EF	Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer Julie.Armstrong@surreycc.gov.uk	Council and democracy Surreycc.gov.uk
			<u>X (Twitter):</u> @SCCdemocracy 

Elected Members:

Fiona Davidson (Guildford South-East) (Chairman), Jonathan Essex (Redhill East), Bob Hughes (Shere), Rebecca Jennings-Evans (Lightwater, West End and Bisley), Frank Kelly (Merstham & Banstead South), Rachael Lake BEM (Walton), Bernie Muir (Epsom West), John O'Reilly (Hersham), Ashley Tilling (Walton South & Oatlands), Liz Townsend (Cranleigh & Ewhurst), Chris Townsend (Ashted) (Vice-Chairman), Jeremy Webster (Caterham Hill) (Vice-Chairman) and Fiona White (Guildford West)

Independent Representatives:

Mrs Julie Oldroyd (Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church) and Mr Alex Tear (Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church, Diocese of Guildford)

If you would like a copy of this agenda or the attached papers in another format, e.g. large print or braille, or another language, please email Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer on Julie.Armstrong@surreycc.gov.uk.

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If you would like to attend and you have any special requirements, please email Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer on Julie.Armstrong@surreycc.gov.uk. Please note that public seating is limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(Pages
7 - 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 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

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

1. Any disclosable pecuniary interests; or
2. Other interests arising under the Code of Conduct in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at this meeting.

NOTES:

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

4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

To receive any questions or petitions.

The public retain their right to submit questions for a 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.

NOTES:

- a. The deadline for Member's questions is 12.00pm four working days before the meeting (Friday, 7 March 2025).
- b. The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (Thursday, 6 March 2025).
- c. The deadline for petitions was 14 days before the meeting, and no petitions have been received.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 19 - 34)

To review the actions and recommendations tracker and forward work programme, making suggestions for additions or amendments as appropriate.

6 CABINET RESPONSE TO SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 35 - 48)

Purpose: Note the Cabinet response to Budget and Alternative Provision recommendations made to Cabinet.

7 MOTION REFERRED TO SELECT COMMITTEE (Pages 49 - 52)

Purpose: A motion has been referred by Council to the Committee for the purpose of consideration and making recommendations to Cabinet or Council for decision.

8 INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE (Pages 53 - 64)

Purpose: Understand the role of the new IFSS service, how this service is different from other existing early help preventive family services, and how it interacts with and complements other services in the family early help area.

9 SURREY'S ADOLESCENT SERVICE (Pages 65 - 84)

Purpose: Receive overview of what the service introduced in 2024 does, what is different from prior provision, why it was changed, the benefits apparent so far and those expected.

- 10 CHILDREN'S HOMES - OFSTED REPORTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE** (Pages 85 - 104)
- To receive Ofsted reports on Surrey County Council-run Children's Homes.
- 11 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW** (Pages 105 - 120)
- To receive an overview of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning performance to help inform future Committee business.
- 12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**
- To note the next public meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 16 July 2025.

Terence Herbert
Chief Executive
Published: Friday, 28 February 2025

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND FILMING – ACCEPTABLE USE

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

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Thank you for your co-operation.

QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

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

Please note the following regarding questions from the public:

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

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 3 December 2024 at Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 13 March 2025.

Elected Members:

- * Fiona Davidson (Chairman)
- * Jonathan Essex
- * Robert Hughes
- * Rebecca Jennings-Evans
- * Frank Kelly
- * Rachael Lake BEM
- * Bernie Muir
- * John O'Reilly
- * Ashley Tilling
- * Liz Townsend
- * Chris Townsend (Vice-Chairman)
- * Jeremy Webster (Vice-Chairman)
- Fiona White

Co-opted Members:

Mrs Julie Oldroyd, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church

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

- * *present*

53/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Mrs Julie Oldroyd.

54/24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 14 NOVEMBER 2024 [Item 2]

The Committee **AGREED** the minutes from the previous meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

55/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

56/24 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None received.

57/24 CABINET RESPONSE TO SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS [Item 5]

WITNESSES

- Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families & Lifelong Learning

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

a CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL [Item]

1. On the serious implications of school absences on children's life chances and safeguarding, the Cabinet Member highlighted the team's efforts to address the various causes, including the recently approved Lifetime of Learning Strategy which prioritised attendance. The Chair said the Committee had reserved endorsement of the strategy while awaiting an actionable plan.

b EARLY HELP BUDGET [Item]

2. The Chair noted that the committee had recommended protecting early help spending have inflationary costs built in, as preventive spending had a positive impact on outcomes for children and reduced statutory demand. The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning responded by saying that while the early help budget was important, statutory spending demands had to come first. The Executive Director for Children, Families & Lifelong Learning said that there would be £250 million nationally for children's social care prevention in the local government settlement, though how this would be distributed across local authorities was unknown.

58/24 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

The Chair invited the committee to review the progress and updates related to the actions and recommendations tracker and forward work programme.

The Chair said that it was unclear whether all agreed recommendations from the February 2024 meeting had been implemented by the Children, Families & Lifelong Learning (CFLL) Directorate.

The Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendation tracker and the forward work programme.

ACTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Alternative Provision & Participation Manager: Update the Committee on the status of the implementation on the following recommendations: CFLLC 1/24, CFLLC 2/24 and CFLLC 3/24.

59/24 2025/26 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2029/30 [Item 7]

a VOLUNTARY SECTOR ELEMENT OF THE ADULTS, WELLBEING AND HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS DIRECTORATE

The Chair said that the Committee was unfortunately unable to provide a budget recommendation on the planned changes to Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector funding. Without an equality analysis, or prior information on the changes which the budget proposals were designed to support, the Committee was unable to assess the effects of the budget proposals, and the choices put before it. Following representations from Surrey Community Action, the Select Committee had requested a further meeting to understand the impact of the proposed removal of its funding, however the view of the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships Directorate was that an additional meeting was not warranted. The Chair argued their request passed the test of reasonableness and would discuss with the Monitoring Officer the Articles of the Constitution in relation to Select Committees' Terms of Reference and their role.

b CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE

WITNESSES

- Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Lifelong Learning
- Maureen Attewell, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Lifelong Learning
- David Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
- Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Patricia Denney, Director for Quality and Performance
- Nicola Kilvington, Director for Corporate Strategy & Policy
- Rachel Wigley, Director for Finance Insights & Performance
- Kay Goodacre, CFLL Strategic Finance Business Partner
- Nikki O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

1. A Member asked what the CFLL Directorate's target for additional efficiencies was and what might be sacrificed within CFLL if the Council's overall gap of £17.4m were unable to be closed. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Lifelong Learning said it would be a challenge to achieve the £11m efficiencies currently planned. The Cabinet Member for Finance said the gap would be closed, either by additional government grants, increased council tax or use of reserves. The Council's available reserves had been built up in the last six years and were now 12% of the net revenue budget. Additional efficiencies were being looked for across the organisation, but there were no specific targets related to the CFLL Directorate. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning added that should any further efficiencies be required, they would look to protect statutory duties first.
2. The Chair asked where anticipated job losses (a net decrease of 71 FTEs) in CFLL were expected to occur. The Executive Director said the number was notional and not tied to specific roles and reflected efforts to manage vacancies, redeploy staff and adjust work. She assured the Committee that the focus was not on cutting front-line jobs

and roles working directly with families in social care and SEND would be protected.

3. A Member asked whether an increase of 135 special educational needs and disability (SEND) staff proposed by the end-to-end review had been included in the 2025/26 budget. No assurance was given, though the Cabinet Member said current SEND staffing was funded until the end of the 2026/27 financial year, by the £15m recovery funding approved by Cabinet last year. Asked whether the use of artificial intelligence would be in addition to, rather than replace, the aforementioned staffing increase, the Cabinet Member responded that AI should have no impact on staffing in the 2025/26 budget.
4. The CFLL Strategic Finance Business Partner told the Committee that social worker salaries were above national living wage thresholds, so recruitment would not be impacted by the rise there. Central Government had announced there would be compensation for the national rise to employer National Insurance contributions, though the amount was not known ahead of the Local Government Finance Settlement. The Chair feared the impact of the rises on voluntary sector organisations doing work for the Council. A Member added that future strategies relied on leaning more on the third sector, which already had to deal with short-term contracts and reduced donations. The Executive Director said they would work with charities on a case-by-case basis to ensure sustainability of contracts, and commissioning would take into account inflationary pressures.
5. A Member raised concerns about the risks of delivering £11.1 million efficiencies, particularly considering a £10.7 million pressure for home to school travel assistance demand. At the suggestion of bringing some vehicles back in-house, the Executive Director explained this had been explored under the Freedom to Travel programme but was found to be impractical. They had not yet been able to identify a better way than external commissioning of transporting 10,000 children at one time. She gave a reasonable assurance of delivering the efficiencies, explaining lessons had been learned from past under-achievements.
6. A Member asked how SCC would ensure early help was prioritised given the need to focus on increased demand for statutory services. The Executive Director explained they were not able to prioritise early help over statutory services but were focusing on targeted intervention. Early help funding was a shared responsibility among safeguarding partners, not just the Council. Despite the ongoing demand, fewer children were in care or under a protection plan due to both partnership work and the Council's family safeguarding model. The family support programme funding for districts and boroughs was ending, though the Government had announced a national £250m Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.
7. A Member asked whereabouts in early help and family support the £2.1 million efficiencies across the next two years were planned. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning said they would look to deliver early help more efficiently when it came to contract renewal. This would involve focusing spend on what has been

shown to deliver outcomes. Efficiencies also related to community services covered by early help and adolescent work.

8. A Member asked whether there was any flexibility in the budget to support highly valued short breaks to reduce families' stress. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Lifelong Learning said efficiencies would be made after 2025/26 and the Council had been reviewing short breaks with Family Voice Surrey to understand need. Eligibility criteria for play and leisure would likely be introduced. The offer would in the future be redesigned to maximise inclusive provision like holiday clubs where siblings without additional needs could also access them. Plans, when developed, would be brought to Committee for scrutiny.
9. The CFLL budget for 2025/26 was expected to increase by 6.3% compared with the current year's budget – more than double the anticipated increase to the Council's overall budget. A Member asked if, notwithstanding the growth, service users would be negatively affected. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning said that residents may be upset by changes in service delivery, such as altered access points or longer waiting times, however statutory services had been prioritised to ensure vulnerable individuals still received the necessary support. These had consistently improved, while acknowledging there had been shrinkage in discretionary services. The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning added that difficult changes in home school travel assistance, and in the future Surrey adult learning and potentially short breaks, would sadly be felt.

[At 12.04pm, the meeting was suspended.]

[At 12.14pm, the meeting resumed.]

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED,

- I. The Committee notes the significant pressures on the Directorate's budget of pay inflation, and the efficiencies planned through staff restructuring. As the EIA is not yet available for the planned restructuring we are concerned at the impact on front line staff and at the risk that we will not have sufficient capacity to deliver vital preventive and statutory services. We are aware of high vacancy rates for social workers, with only some of these roles covered by agency staff.
- II. The Committee was reassured that frontline staff (including social workers, SEND caseworkers and residential caseworkers or alternatively qualified professionals) have been exempted from recruitment controls. It is important to the Committee that plans do not impact the continuing need to improve our communications and responsiveness in the area of additional needs and disability (SEND).
- III. We are aware that there has been some growth in senior roles over the past few years and we recommend that restructuring does not disproportionately fall on front line roles which are so vital to the delivery of services.

- IV. The Committee recommends that recruitment into vacant – or currently agency filled - front line roles is prioritised, and that difficulty recruiting some roles does not lead to budget being redirected or reallocated away from the frontline.

ACTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding: Once the local government settlement is received, inform the Committee of the potential impact of Surrey's share of the £250 million Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.
- Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding: Deliver more detail on where exactly in early help and family support the £2.1 million efficiencies across the next two years were planned.
- CFL Executive Director: Follow up with Cllr Essex what waiting list in the children's social care system he referred to.

c CULTURE (CUSTOMER, DIGITAL AND CHANGE)

WITNESSES

- Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities (re. libraries, arts and culture)
- David Lewis, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
- Liz Mills, Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change
- Susan Wills, Assistant Director for Cultural Services
- Rachel Wigley, Director for Finance Insights & Performance
- Nicola Kilvington, Director for Corporate Strategy & Policy
- Louise Lawson, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Customer & Communities
- Nikki O'Connor, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Corporate

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

1. The Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change said that the libraries transformation programme had been delivered on budget, with £2.1 million spent between 2019/20 and 2023/24, an investment that resulted in ongoing efficiencies of £3.5 million.
2. Asked about the impact of staffing reductions on library staff, the Strategic Director said that for the upcoming year, the library network had planned £30,000 in staffing reductions through natural turnover and changes in library assistant roles, without affecting opening hours or services. Additionally, £77,000 had been saved by deleting a long-vacant senior management position, with work shared among the remaining team members. The library had also planned for a £57,000 loss in income due to refurbishments, which carried over into the next financial year but was expected to return to normal afterwards.
3. A Member asked what the plan was to bring customers back to Surrey Arts following cancellations during COVID and the drop in income. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services said that student numbers for art lessons had returned to pre-COVID levels, school programmes had

increased, and music ensemble membership was recovering as part of an ongoing plan.

4. A Member asked about the consequences and implications of cutting the Surrey County Archaeological Unit, particularly on planning and historical research. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services said that the responsibility for archaeological investigations in planning had been handled by Surrey County Council's Historic Environment Planning Team, not the Surrey County Archaeological Unit. The Archaeological Unit had been one of several commercial organisations providing services, which had not been competitive in the marketplace. Stopping the archaeological service would not affect planning applications or the Historic Environment Planning Team's work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED,

- I. The Committee notes the success of the transformation programme which has delivered significant efficiencies whilst also transforming libraries into inclusive hubs for the community giving access to a range of community events and services.
- II. The Committee welcomes and supports the new partnerships and funding streams that are being developed to deliver additional services.
- III. The Committee recommends that the 2025/26 CDC Budget and MTFS should ensure there are sufficient staff to provide community hubs, identified as an important aspect of the library's strategy and a key factor in helping to reduce isolation in society.

60/24 MODERNISATION OF THE LIBRARIES ESTATE [Item 8]

WITNESSES

- Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities
- Liz Mills, Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change
- Susan Wills, Assistant Director for Cultural Services

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

1. A Member asked how many of Surrey's 52 libraries were currently used for adult learning and other activities. The Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change said that the libraries were developing into multi-purpose hubs offering a range of services, including adult learning, through partnerships with other local services. Progress had been slow due to space constraints, but Sunbury was a key example where adult learning had been integrated. Removing income generation barriers had enabled more effective use of library spaces for such activities.
2. A Member asked how residents had been involved in designing the transformation process, as well as what the strategy had been for promoting the transformation. The Strategic Director explained staff

had been trained in co-design skills, and resident feedback through events and surveys, like those in Weybridge, had helped shape the design and services to better meet community needs. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services said that Surrey County Council had invested in transforming libraries by modernising facilities, increasing access hours, and launching a communications campaign to attract new and returning users. As a result, library events, attendees, and registered borrowers had significantly increased, making it the busiest library service in the country.

3. Asked if the refurbishment of the Weybridge Library had been on schedule and within budget, the Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change said it had remained on budget. A delay due to operational and safety concerns meant the opening was now expected by June 2025.
4. A Member asked how security had been maintained at the unstaffed Super Access buildings and whether there had been any issues that could affect its continuation. The Assistant Director for Cultural Services said that the technology had allowed users to access libraries outside of normal working hours after completing a sign-up process that included an induction on extensive security and safety measures, and since its rollout in December 2023, there had been no reported security incidents.
5. Asked about the programme's popularity, the Strategic Director said that since its rollout, Super Access had gained over 2,600 additional registered users across various locations, with 10% of users aged 16-24, mainly students. There had been nearly 7,600 visits during Super Access hours.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

61/24 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION UPDATE [Item 9]

WITNESSES

- Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion & Additional Needs SE
- Dee Turvill, Alternative Provision and Participation Manager

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

1. A Member asked for clarification on the reduction since February 2024 in children receiving fewer than 15 hours of alternative provision (AP) a week, and what the target was for this. The Alternative Provision and Participation Manager said the target was to increase provision to 15 hours for every child where suitable. Training had been rolled out to increase officers' understanding of their responsibilities and there had been a focus on reviewing individual support packages to ensure

referrals met the minimum 15-hour threshold. Those children who received less due to their complex needs had regular reviews conducted to adjust provision where appropriate.

2. Several members questioned whether alternative education for children met expectations for quality, achievement, and hours, stressing the need for consistent standards across all funding sources and providers, such as local authorities and schools. The Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning said full-time mainstream education was considered the best option for children and should always be the goal where possible, however, some children required alternative provision due to their individual needs. She expressed concern about setting percentage targets as children's needs varied and rigid percentages might not be helpful; the focus should be on meeting each child's needs and not comparing figures across different services.
3. The Committee wanted to know how well individual education plans had been working. The Alternative Provision and Participation Manager clarified that a case officer tracked the progress of children in alternative provision, regularly reviewing and adjusting their plans. The Committee requested that, in order to help assess the effectiveness of current strategies, any future report on AP include more detailed information on outcomes, especially whether children had successfully reintegrated into schools or reached other important goals.
4. A Member asked whether schools, parents, officers, and other stakeholders had a clear understanding of what alternative provision was, its objectives, and when it should be used, and whether the same was true for Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP). The Alternative Provision and Participation Manager said that the service was in the process of developing a suite of documents to improve clarity on roles, responsibilities, and the purpose of alternative provision, including resources for families and schools. These documents aimed to ensure transparency regarding AP services, their suitability, and expected outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED, The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee notes the significant improvement between February 2024 and October 2024 in the number of children and young people receiving 15 or more hours of education each week. It is encouraged by the Service's increased focus and attention on children not in school and applauds the efforts so far to ensure that this easily forgotten cohort is not neglected.

The Committee recommends that the CFLL Service:

- I. Prioritises achieving the target of 15 hours a week for all Children and Young People, except those who have complex medical or mental health needs that mean they can cope only with fewer hours.
- II. Delivers a strategy and plan to assess the quality of Alternative Provision provided based on whether the provision is meeting the needs of the CYP receiving it and enabling the CYP to return to full-time education or appropriate alternative employment/training.

- III. Considers – with safeguarding partners – how children not in school (and not just those who are electively home educated) could be better safeguarded. The Committee remains concerned that this sizeable cohort of children are particularly vulnerable and the issue warrants increased attention.
- IV. Works with schools to understand why 2,303 children and young people are missing more than half of the school year, and how this number can be reduced - particularly the 514 severely absent pupils with an EHCP in mainstream, given the SCC strategy of ensuring more children with EHCPs are educated in mainstream environments.
- V. Presents to the Select Committee the findings of the Surrey Virtual School review into 'suitable education', which was due to go to the education subgroup of the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2024.

ACTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Alternative Provision and Participation Manager: Please provide an explanation about how the Council ensures that a similar level and number of hours of alternative provision is being provided by those funded by schools.
- Assistant Director for Inclusion & Additional Needs SE: (For written response) What can the progress made between Feb-Oct (reduced number of children receiving fewer than 15 hours of AP a week) be attributed to? Is this change sufficient – are we now where we want to be, and if not how much progress is needed (quantitatively and qualitatively)? What are the cost implications of any further improvement needed?

62/24 CHILDREN'S HOMES - OFSTED REPORTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 10]

WITNESSES

- Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

1. The Chair noted that the home had been inspected in September 2024 and was judged to be "Good" overall, following an "Outstanding" rating in January 2024. Despite the lower grade, it was acknowledged that the report highlighted the home as well-managed and child-centric, with a continued focus on care.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

63/24 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW [Item 11]

WITNESSES

- Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
- Patricia Denney, Director for Quality and Performance

KEY POINTS MADE IN THE DISCUSSION

1. The Chair noted a significant rise in speech and language therapy waiting times and an increase in MindWorks referrals, expressing disappointment in the consortium's lack of progress. A Member emphasised that while overall performance was improving, MindWorks remained a significant outlier, and the Committee agreed further joint scrutiny with the Adults and Health Select Committee was needed.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

64/24 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 12]

The Committee **NOTED** its next meeting was scheduled to be held on 13 March 2025.

Meeting ended at: 2.21 pm

Chairman

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

March 2025

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

KEY			
	No progress reported	Action in progress	Action completed

RECOMMENDATIONS

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
14 November 2024	Preparing for Adulthood [Item 7]	CFLLC 28/24: 1) The Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) booklet co-produced with Family Voice Surrey (FVS) is actively communicated to families of children in Year 9, with immediate effect.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	18 December 2024		<i>Emailed to Committee 23 December</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
14 November 2024	Preparing for Adulthood [Item 7]	CFLLC 29/24: 2) The regular Preparing for Adulthood events held in previous years, allowing families to speak to relevant members of the team and learn more about options and next steps, are reintroduced as soon as possible to benefit families and ensure a real focus on PfA.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	18 December 2024		<i>Emailed to Committee 23 December</i>
14 November 2024	Preparing for Adulthood [Item 7]	CFLLC 30/24: 3) Within one month, the Cabinet Member responds to Family Voice Surrey and the Select Committee on five of the key issues with adulthood preparation identified by FVS.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	18 December 2024		<i>Emailed to Committee 23 December</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7b]	CFLLC 31/24: I. The Committee notes the significant pressures on the Directorate’s budget of pay inflation, and the efficiencies planned through staff restructuring. As the EIA is not yet available for the planned restructuring we are concerned at the impact on front line staff and at the risk that we will not have sufficient capacity to deliver vital preventive and statutory services. We are aware of high vacancy rates for social workers, with only some of these roles covered by agency staff.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7b]	CFLLC 32/24: II. The Committee was reassured that frontline staff (including social workers, SEND caseworkers and residential caseworkers or alternatively qualified professionals) have been exempted from recruitment controls. It is important to the Committee that plans do not impact the continuing need to improve our communications and responsiveness in the area of additional needs and disability (SEND).	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7b]	CFLLC 33/24: III. We are aware that there has been some growth in senior roles over the past few years and we recommend that restructuring does not disproportionately fall on front line roles which are so vital to the delivery of services.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7b]	CFLLC 34/24: IV. The Committee recommends that recruitment into vacant – or currently agency filled - front line roles is prioritised, and that difficulty recruiting some roles does not lead to budget being redirected or reallocated away from the frontline.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
3 December 204	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7c]	CFLLC 35/24: I. The Committee notes the success of the transformation programme which has delivered significant efficiencies whilst also transforming libraries into inclusive hubs for the community giving access to a range of community events and services.	Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities (re. libraries, arts and culture); <i>Liz Mills, Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>
3 December 204	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7c]	CFLLC 36/24: II. The Committee welcomes and supports the new partnerships and funding streams that are being developed to deliver additional services.	Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities (re. libraries, arts and culture); <i>Liz Mills, Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
3 December 204	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30 [Item 7c]	CFLLC 37/24: III. The Committee recommends that the 2025/26 CDC Budget and MTFS should ensure there are sufficient staff to provide community hubs, identified as an important aspect of the library's strategy and a key factor in helping to reduce isolation in society.	Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities (re. libraries, arts and culture); <i>Liz Mills, Strategic Director for Customer, Digital and Change</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>
3 December 204	Alternative Provision Update [Item 9]	CFLLC 38/24: I. Prioritises achieving the target of 15 hours a week for all Children and Young People, except those who have complex medical or mental health needs that mean they can cope only with fewer hours.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
3 December 2024	Alternative Provision Update [Item 9]	CFLLC 39/24: II. Delivers a strategy and plan to assess the quality of Alternative Provision provided based on whether the provision is meeting the needs of the CYP receiving it and enabling the CYP to return to full-time education or appropriate alternative employment/training.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>
3 December 2024	Alternative Provision Update [Item 9]	CFLLC 40/24: III. Considers – with safeguarding partners – how children not in school (and not just those who are electively home educated) could be better safeguarded. The Committee remains concerned that this sizeable cohort of children are particularly vulnerable and the issue warrants increased attention.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Recommendation	Responsible Member or Officer	Deadline	Progress check	Recommendation response accepted or implemented
3 December 2024	Alternative Provision Update [Item 9]	CFLLC 41/24: IV. Works with schools to understand why 2,303 children and young people are missing more than half of the school year, and how this number can be reduced - particularly the 514 severely absent pupils with an EHCP in mainstream, given the SCC strategy of ensuring more children with EHCPs are educated in mainstream environments.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>
3 December 2024	Alternative Provision Update [Item 9]	CFLLC 42/24: V. Presents to the Select Committee the findings of the Surrey Virtual School review into 'suitable education', which was due to go to the education subgroup of the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2024.	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; <i>Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE</i>	Cabinet 28 January 2025		<i>See Cabinet Response in Agenda Item 6 (13 March 2025).</i>

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

March 2025

ACTIONS

Date	Item	Action	Responsible Member/ Officer	Deadline	Action response
14 November 2024	Cabinet Response to Select Committee Recommendations [Item 6]	CFLLC 29/24: To follow up on the 2024/25 year-to-date figures and the numbers of parents/carers who have used the mediation and dispute resolution service, rather than just percentages.	Rhianwen Fox, Service Manager - SEND Practice	12 December 2024	<i>Emailed to Committee on 12 December</i>
14 November 2024	Preparing For Adulthood [Item 7]	CFLLC 30/24: To share with Committee the CFL Service's response to the June 2024 Orbis internal audit report on Transition of Children into AWHP.	Jenny Brickell, Assistant Director for Children with Disabilities	12 December 2024	<i>Emailed to Committee on 2 January 2025</i>
3 December 2024	Recommendations Tracker and Forward Work Programme [Item 6]	CFLLC 31/24: Update the Committee on the status of the implementation on the following recommendations: CFLLC 1/24, CFLLC 2/24 and CFLLC 3/24 (February 2024).	Dee Turvill, Alternative Provision & Participation Manager	10 January 2025	<i>Emailed to Committee 9 January</i>
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2029/30 [Item 7]	CFLLC 32/24: Once the local government settlement is received, inform the Committee of the potential impact of Surrey's share of the £250 million Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.	Matt Ansell, Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding	10 January 2025	<i>Emailed to Committee 10 January 2025</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Action	Responsible Member/ Officer	Deadline	Action response
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2029/30 [Item 7]	CFLLC 33/24: Deliver more detail on where exactly in early help and family support the £2.1 million efficiencies across the next two years were planned.	Matt Ansell, Director for Family Resilience and Safeguarding	10 January 2025	<i>Emailed to Committee 10 January 2025</i>
3 December 2024	2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2029/30 [Item 7]	CFLLC 34/24: Follow up with Cllr Essex what waiting list in the children’s social care system he referred to.	Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – CFL	10 January 2025	<i>Emailed to Committee 10 January 2025</i>
3 December 2024	Alternative Provision update [Item 9]	CFLLC 35/24: Cllr Jonathan Essex -Details Requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific changes have occurred between February and October 2024 that have contributed to the progress made in reducing the number of children receiving fewer than 15 hours of AP per week? • Is the progress made sufficient to meet our goals? • If not, how much more progress is needed, both quantitatively (in terms of numbers) and qualitatively (in terms of addressing children’s additional needs)? • What are the cost implications of further improvements needed beyond the progress already made since February 2024? 	Sandra Morrison, Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs – SE	10 January 2025	<i>Emailed to Committee 9 January 2025</i>

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

March 2025

Date	Item	Action	Responsible Member/ Officer	Deadline	Action response
3 December 2024	Alternative Provision update [Item 9]	CFLLC 36/24: Please explain how the Council ensures that a similar level and number of hours of alternative provision is being provided by those funded by schools.	Dee Turvill, Alternative Provision & Participation Manager	10 January 2025	<i>Emailed to Committee 10 January 2025</i>

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

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

Chair: Fiona Davidson | Scrutiny Officer: Julie Armstrong | Democratic Services Assistant: Jacob Schanzenbach

Date of Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Issue for Scrutiny	Purpose	Outcome	Relevant Organisational Priorities	Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
10 July 2025	Overview, policy development and review	Additional Needs and Disabilities	Review progress made following the Task Group's recommendations in September 2024	Provide good experience for parents and carers of children and young people with AND	Tackling health inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; Assistant Director for Inclusion and Additional Needs SW; Liz Bone, Send County Service Planning & Performance Leader - SEN Recovery
	Performance monitoring	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report and Performance Report in relation to Looked After Children	Review key performance data for year ending March 2024 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, Families and Lifelong Learning; Tina Benjamin, Director – Corporate Parenting

<p>8 October 2025</p> <p>(joint with and led by Adults and Health Select Committee)</p>	<p>Performance monitoring</p>	<p>Mindworks Transformation Programme</p>	<p>Review evidence of the performance data against key metrics – number of referrals and the timeliness of assessments, the lessons learned and implemented as a result, how they are being managed, supporting children with unique needs</p>	<p>A sound plan to meet currently unmet needs</p>	<p>Empowering communities to thrive, tackling health inequality</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; Claire Edgar, Executive Director for Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships; Harriet Derrett-Smith, Associate Director for Commissioning - Health & Wellbeing</p>
<p>16 October 2025</p>	<p>Overview, Policy development and review</p>	<p>Response to Local Authority Children's Services Inspection (ILACS)</p>	<p>Scrutinise the Service's response to Ofsted's findings (inspection expected spring 2025)</p>	<p>Robust response to improve quality and impact of social work practice in Surrey</p>	<p>Empowering communities, tackling health inequality</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Rachael Wardell, Executive Director for Children, Families & Lifelong Learning</p>
	<p>Overview, policy development and review</p>	<p>Post-16 vocational education and pathways</p>	<p>Ascertain the level of demand and whether SCC can meet it, explore what circumstances the Service would look to provide it and whether location is a barrier</p>	<p>Provide good opportunities for young people, with and without AND</p>	<p>Tackling health inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities</p>	<p>Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth (Apprenticeships); Dawn Redpath, Director for Economy and Growth; Julia Katherine, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning; FE college principals</p>

2 December 2025	Pre-decision Scrutiny	2026/27 Budget and MTFS to 2030/31	Select Committee to receive draft budget proposals, provide feedback and make recommendations	Ensure value for money and sufficiency of services	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; 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; Nikki O’Connor (Corporate), Kay Goodacre (CFLL) & Louise Lawson (CDC)
	Overview, policy development and review	Children’s Services post-Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	Following proposal to Government in May 2025, Committee to consider issues when Children’s Services is disaggregated	Ensure a safe and legal service is handed over to new authorities	Tackling health inequality, Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, Empowering communities	Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning; Rachael Wardell, Executive Director – Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; Nicola Kilvington, Director - Corporate Strategy & Policy
26 February 2026	Policy review and performance monitoring	VCSE funding structure	Monitor the impact of changes to the community and voluntary sector funding arrangements	Ensure voluntary organisations are well-supported to deliver services	Empowering communities	Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing, and Public Health Claire Edgar, Executive Director for Adults, Wellbeing & Health Partnerships Jean-Pierre Moore, Head Of Community Partnerships & Prevention

SITE VISITS / INFORMATION BRIEFINGS

Date	Site/Topic	Contact
18 February 2025	Elmbridge Family Centre – Three Rivers, West Molesey	Sue Turton, Service Manager Early Help Partnerships
17 March 2025	Update on Mindworks Transformation, Microsoft Teams (joint with AHSC)	Justine Leonard, Director of Children and Young People's Services at Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

UNSCHEDULED ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Topic
SEND School Place Sufficiency in light of LGR Safeguarding Educational attainment (after January 2026) Preparing for Adulthood update (after November 2025)

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.

Next Practice Improvement and Performance Information informal meeting: 7 July 2025.

CABINET- 28 January 2025**Cabinet Response to the Recommendations from Select Committees Following Scrutiny of the Draft Budget Proposals in December 2024.**

* * * * *

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture (CFLLC) Select Committee

- I. The Committee notes the significant pressures on the Directorate's budget of pay inflation, and the efficiencies planned through staff restructuring. As the EIA is not yet available for the planned restructuring we are concerned at the impact on front line staff and at the risk that we will not have sufficient capacity to deliver vital preventive and statutory services. We are aware of high vacancy rates for social workers, with only some of these roles covered by agency staff.

Cabinet Response:

Cabinet notes the Select Committee's comments. We can confirm that an EIA is required before all restructures.

- II. The Committee was reassured that frontline staff (including social workers, SEND caseworkers and residential caseworkers or alternatively qualified professionals) have been exempted from recruitment controls. It is important to the Committee that plans do not impact the continuing need to improve our communications and responsiveness in the area of additional needs and disability (SEND).

Cabinet Response:

Cabinet notes the Select Committee's comments.

- III. We are aware that there has been some growth in senior roles over the past few years and we recommend that restructuring does not disproportionately fall on front line roles which are so vital to the delivery of services.

Cabinet Response:

Cabinet notes the Select Committee's comments.

- IV. The Committee recommends that recruitment into vacant – or currently agency filled - front line roles is prioritised, and that difficulty recruiting some roles does not lead to budget being redirected or reallocated away from the frontline.

Cabinet Response:

Cabinet notes the Select Committee's comments. We can confirm that recruitment to front-line roles is prioritised.

Culture Budget

- V. The Committee notes the success of the transformation programme which had delivered significant efficiencies whilst also transforming libraries into inclusive hubs for the community giving access to a range of community events and services.

Cabinet Response:

Cabinet notes the Select Committee's comments.

- VI. The Committee welcomes and supports the new partnerships and funding streams that are being developed to deliver additional services.

Cabinet Response:

Cabinet notes the Select Committee's comments.

- VII. The Committee recommends that the 2025/26 CDC Budget and MTFs should ensure there are sufficient staff to provide community hubs, identified as an important aspect of the libraries' strategy and a key factor in helping to reduce isolation in society.

Cabinet Response:

There are existing resources assigned to specific community hub developments where that includes a library facility as part of the further implementation of the Libraries' transformation. Building on the success of this approach to date, additional future opportunities to make better use of community-based facilities will be identified and progressed through the One Council Transformation Programme. This will include the funding and staffing model required to deliver impact and value, with an expectation this is met through re-direction and re-prioritisation of existing council resources.

CABINET- 25 FEBRUARY 2025

CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

Item under consideration: ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (AP)

Recommendations:

The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee notes the significant improvement between February 2024 and October 2024 in the number of children and young people receiving 15 or more hours of education each week. It is encouraged by the Service's increased focus and attention on children not in school and applauds the efforts so far to ensure that this easily forgotten cohort is not neglected.

The Committee recommends that the CFLL Service:

- I. Prioritises achieving the target of 15 hours a week for all Children and Young People, except those who have complex medical or mental health needs that mean they can cope only with fewer hours.
- II. Delivers a strategy and plan to assess the quality of Alternative Provision provided based on whether the provision is meeting the needs of the CYP receiving it and enabling the CYP to return to full-time education or appropriate alternative employment/training.
- III. Considers – with safeguarding partners – how children not in school (and not just those who are electively home educated) could be better safeguarded. The Committee remains concerned that this sizeable cohort of children are particularly vulnerable, and the issue warrants increased attention.
- IV. Works with schools to understand why 2,303 children and young people are missing more than half of the school year, and how this number can be reduced - particularly the 514 severely absent pupils with an EHCP in mainstream, given the SCC strategy of ensuring more children with EHCPs are educated in mainstream environments.
- V. Presents to the Select Committee the findings of the Surrey Virtual School review into 'suitable education', which was due to go to the education subgroup of the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2024.

Cabinet Response:

- I. Teams to increase the number of hours of provision CYP can access. There is an ongoing challenge to teams to continue to review the number of hours provision being made and progress remains ongoing. Guidance has been circulated to Case Workers regarding the expectation that no child shall have education below 15 hours unless for complex medical reasons. In DfE most

recent guidance around Alternative Provision – “Arranging Alternative Provision – A guide for Local Authorities and Schools – February 2025” it states:

“The law does not define “full-time education” but children should have provision, where possible, which is equivalent to the education they would receive in a mainstream (or special) school. This may not mean the same number of hours. If, for example, a child receives one-to-one tuition, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the education may be more intensive.”

In line with best practice, already being implemented by Surrey Virtual School, our ambition for those able to is that they would receive the equivalent of 18 hours of provision. However, for those children receiving 1:1 provision which could include 1:1 tuition, the number of hours they are able to successfully access is likely to be less.

- II. As set out in ‘Area of Improvement 4: Alternative Provision’ of the Surrey Local Area SEND Partnership Improvement Plan (January 2024), a comprehensive programme of activity is underway to increase the breadth, level, and quality of AP services in Surrey. Progress against the AP Strategic Improvement Plan activities is overseen by the AP Governance Board as well as the Additional Needs and Disabilities (AND) Joint Commissioning, Alternative Provision and Pathways to Independence Project Board.

A key activity within the AP Improvement Plan is the implementation of the Independent AP Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), established to ensure high quality and consistency in the commissioning of provision for CYP requiring independent AP. The DPS process ensures that all successful providers meet a benchmarked standard, allowing providers to join at set periods provided they meet the necessary qualitative evaluation criteria. This strengthened commissioning process for independent AP is supported by the development of a range of new reporting mechanisms, enabled through the DPS framework, which align with the wider AP Improvement Plan KPIs. KPIs include a key focus on outcomes for CYP (including reintegration), underpinned by Individual AP Agreements (IAPAs) for each placement. The IAPA outlines the expected outcomes of the placement at its inception, linking to needs set out in the EHCP. As part of the ongoing monitoring of provider quality, work is underway to implement a Risk Assessment tool (RAV) for AP, overseen by an AP Quality Assurance monitoring steering group. This will be in place by March 2025.

In line with the objectives set out in the Alternative Curriculum and Reintegration Support Strategy, Surrey is transitioning to an ‘in-house first’ approach, reducing reliance on independent providers. Where it is necessary to commission an independent AP provider Surrey’s position is that these settings must be registered with the DfE or be contracted under the DPS framework. Only in exceptional circumstances would there be reason to commission a new placement with a provider not meeting one of these criteria, i.e. because of a Tribunal decision, in which case Surrey will conduct the necessary compliance checks to provide a minimum level of assurance around the quality and suitability of provision.

The current Alternative Curriculum and Reintegration Support Strategy will be refreshed for September 2025.

New guidance for Schools on roles and responsibilities with regards to the commissioning of AP will be published by April 2025. This will support schools in ensuring a focus on quality and outcomes for CYP in AP. For those CYP with an EHCP whose AP has been commissioned by the LA, new Case Officer Guidance will be implemented which outlines the expectations for regular review of provision. Currently for Children Looked After review of provision being made to children takes place through the maintenance of their Personal Education Plan. The provision made to children with an Educational Health and Care Plan will be reviewed through the Annual Review of their Plan. Both these mechanisms assure whether the needs of a child or young person are being met and they are making progress.

- III. Joint working across the directorate has facilitated the development of guidance, training, and enhanced reporting to ensure the safeguarding of Children Not in School (CNiS) is prioritised. Areas of focus include:
- Creation of practice guidance by Surrey Virtual School all children with a Social Worker not in school to ensure clarity around LA responsibilities and policies.
 - Education leader participation in regular Social Worker training events (e.g. 'Team Tuesday' session)
 - Social Care and Education data and reporting enhanced to include tracking of electively home educated children coming to the attention of the C-SPA
 - Schools are required to ensure all children on their roll receive access to the national curriculum and have access to a suitable education that meets their needs. Schools may need to differentiate how they deliver that education according to the needs of the child. Attending school part time for a short period of time to allay anxiety may be the best option for a young person.
 - Guidance has been provided to schools around the use of Part-time timetables.
 - Schools make a half termly return to the Council of the names of children who are accessing part-time timetables and provide reasons why this is in place and when the provision will be reviewed
 - Ongoing training for Social Workers around CNiS/Elective Home Education (EHE)
 - New guidance for schools setting out their role and responsibilities when commissioning AP – to be published by April 2025
 - Data matching on a rolling 6-months basis between EHE and referrals to C-SPA. This is available to practitioners via Tableau.

The Department for Education recently published information on thematic reviews for CNiS, focussing on joint commissioning of programmes with

health and social care. A plan outlining our preparation for a potential thematic review has been developed and outcomes of the national thematic review report will identify areas for development.

- IV. As at 24.01.25 there were 2,667 children recorded as Severely Absent in academic year 2024/25. Of these 1,673 remained as active on roll with their school.

	Total Aut 24/25	No. remaining on roll at same school		
		Total	Of which EHCP Mainstream	Of which EHCP Special
No. pupils SA	2,667	1,673	427	121

Of the 994 that are no longer identified as on roll at the school in which they were recorded as being severely absent in Autumn 24/25,

Destination Situation	Total	Of which EHCP
EHE	231	23
Change of school placement**	182	97
Accessing AP	77	39
CME	11	6
Other* (i.e. moved out of area)	493	4
Total	994	169

*This primarily consists of children that have moved out of area

**Not recorded as SA in new placement

Further work to better understand the circumstances leading to absence will be carried out, auditing those who remain active on roll. Auditing and dip sampling will continue on a regular basis with particular attention being paid to vulnerable groups (children with a Social Worker, those Severely Absent, EHE, those on a part-time timetable). This activity will be a focus of a multi-agency CNiS group being formed in response to the DfE Thematic review and will then be used to support ongoing partnership working, including:

- Implementation of new attendance guidance, including targeted support meetings
- Encouraging attendance group – working with schools and wider partners to focus on education neglect and develop action plans to address this

Whilst work is ongoing to ensure strong partnership working to improve children's attendance it is important to note that Surrey is not an outlier with regards to attendance. As indicated below, the proportion of children severely

absent from a Surrey school was below that seen nationally and across the South East.

Category/ Cohort	Surrey number of children	Data Source	National average	SE average	Stat neighbour average	Comment	Good to be.
Children who are Severely Absent from School	3184 pupils Attendance > 50% 23/24 – provisional estimate 2.0%* (2505 pupils, 1.7% 22/23)	DfE provisional LA data download Aug 24 for AY 23/24 (DfE published data)	2.0% 22/23	2.1% 22/23	n/a	Lower than national and SE	Low

*this is based on a calculation of 3184 pupils / total 155,679 pupils in the DfE file. The published figure may differ from this when released as there are complex rules applied when calculating attendance statistics. Individual children may be counted more than once if they attend multiple schools in the same period

- V. A key findings summary will be made available to the Select Committee by end February 2025. A final draft is attached to this document at Annex 1.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
17 February 2025

Surrey Virtual School SVS

Ensuring Children Looked After Receive a Suitable Education

Findings from a review conducted by the Surrey Virtual School

Anwen Foy
Virtual School Headteacher
and Assistant Director

January 2025

Findings from a review of children looked after who are not in full time education

Aims of the review

- To define expectations of a 'suitable education' for children in the care of Surrey
- To review why a minority of these children are not currently receiving a 'suitable education'
- To clarify the LA's approach as the Corporate Parent, to ensuring a suitable education is in place and the Virtual School and partners' actions to secure this for every looked after child
- To make recommendations and highlight next steps to ensure all children looked after receive a suitable education

Brief Background

Children's right to an education

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has a right to an education. In England, those who hold parental responsibility (including the LA as corporate parent for children they look after) have a legal duty to secure education for any of their children of compulsory school age.

Looked after children who are not in school: Context

The Children's Commissioner's 2023 report, '[Lost in Transition](#)', found that children missing from education were more likely to come from deprived neighbourhoods, have a special educational need, or be known to social care. [Further research](#) conducted by the Children's Commissioner (2023) showed that looked after children were over-represented among those missing from school and that **2.7% of looked after children nationally were not in school**. Her analysis also highlighted that "*unaccompanied children seeking asylum, male children, older children, children with special educational needs, and children without stable care placements were disproportionately more likely to not be in school.*"

This review took into account the requirements of statutory guidance and legislation which support an understanding of what a 'suitable education' means for a looked after child. This included [Section 19\(1\) of the Education Act 1996](#), [DFE Statutory Guidance](#) around the education of looked after children, [the SEND Code of Practice](#) as well as [DfE's guidance on the registration of schools](#) which sets out that there is no legal definition of what constitutes 'full-time' education and that "*generally, we consider any institution that is operating during the day, for more than 18 hours per week, to be providing full-time education.*"

Which children were in scope?

The Virtual School's review focused on the available dataset as at June 2024, and included looked after children **of statutory school age** who were not in school because they were:-

1. **Children Missing Education.** DfE defines CME as '*children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school*'.
2. **Children who are receiving unregistered education provision.** This means that the education provision that a looked after child is receiving is not registered as a school with the DfE.
3. **Children who are enrolled at a school but not attending.** This includes those who are 'persistently' absent (90% or less attendance) and those who are 'severely' (50% or less attendance) absent. Some of these children may have a reduced hours timetable in place, or a blended programme of Alternative Provision (AP).

Please note that: -

- For unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, the concept of 'alternative' provision must be viewed in a different light, as it is generally not being used as an alternative to traditional full-time schooling. Instead, it forms part of a graduated induction into life in a new country and formal education, alongside the development of cultural orientation and age-appropriate life skills. This is followed up in the 'recommendations' below.
- Young people in post 16 (years 12 and 13) were not in scope of this review.

Key findings by group

Please note that as numbers are small in each group, exact data is not included in order to ensure that no child can be identified.

Group 1: Children Missing Education (CME)

- The percentage of children looked after recorded as CME included in this review was very low (below 2%). This is reflective of consistently low figures for the past 2 years due to the collective efforts led by the Virtual School, to ensure that every child has education in place. As of December 2024, this figure reduced to 0.5%.
- Within this small group, over half were in Key Stage 4, with the majority of others in Key Stage 3, therefore reflecting a predominantly adolescent demographic. A small number were asylum experienced young people, newly arrived in the UK.
- There was an equal distribution of in and out of county, however, all those with EHCPs (around a third of the total CME) were out of county.
- Children 'new to care' (i.e. in care for 12 months or less as of March 2024) were a feature of this group. We work hard to minimise the impact of any unavoidable school moves as a result of a care setting move.
- Although this group is very small, the characteristics outlined above are representative of what is seen at other points in the year

Group 2: Children in unregistered alternative provision (AP) (not on roll of a school)

- Within the review, as of June 2024, 5.2% of the statutory school CLA cohort were receiving their education in this way. There is no national dataset for this measure, however benchmarking with the Children's Commissioner report (2023) is possible, which shows that a higher percentage of Surrey CLA within this review were in unregistered AP than the 2.7% found nationally in 2023.
- Within this group of Surrey CLA included in the review, over half had EHCPs, there were no children recorded as 'SEND Support.' However just over a third were UASC recent arrivals (and therefore new to care). If this group were discounted, the overall percentage would reduce from 5.2% to 3.2%.
- Over half of the group were in Year 11 (correlating in part to the presence of UASC in this group) and nearly three quarters were living out of county.
- Children were receiving a mixture of online and in person tuition, and UASC were also accessing other strands of the Virtual School's UASC induction programme.
- The number of hours' of education accessed by each child varied, although Section 19 legislation around children with EHCPs stipulates that it education should be 'suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have.' Equally, DFE guidance around UASC recognises that these young people '*may never have had access to education before*' and that it may need to be introduced gradually alongside '*cultural orientation and life skills appropriate to their age.*'

Concerns about unregistered alternative provision

- We are mindful that this type of education is not regulated by the government or inspected by Ofsted, and therefore it is less possible to independently assess its appropriateness as a "suitable education" for the children who receive it.
- As good corporate parents, our other main concerns about this for looked after children are around the gradual increase we are seeing in its use, the potential variability in number of hours, quality and breadth of curriculum provided and the

assurances around access to therapeutic aspects of EHCPs where these are in place. Safeguarding and cost requirements also need to be met from within the LA rather than with through a child's registered school or provision.

Group 3: Children who are enrolled at a school but not attending (persistently or severely absent)

- As of June 2024, there were 127 statutory school aged looked after children who were on the roll of a school but persistently absent and a further 61 who were severely absent.
- Whilst 'unauthorised absence' is generally very low for looked after children, it was higher within the group in scope of this review who were either persistently or severely absent.
- We know from Welfare Call (the provider which collects daily attendance marks for all CLA) that 'refused' is sometimes used by schools as a reason for non-attendance, meaning that it is unauthorised. This is always followed up by the Virtual School and the reason for absence is frequently found to be EBSNA (Emotional Based School Non-Attendance) based. This reflects the prevalence of emotional and mental health needs within this group of children.
- Our review also found that children looked after who were persistently absent were more likely to have additional needs (with either an EHCP or SEND Support) or to be UASC, with reduced hours timetables in place for around 20% of this group of children.
- Just over 10% of children persistently absent and 20% of children severely absent were new to care during the previous school term, and therefore still in a period of adjustment and stabilisation, including to their pattern of school attendance.
- 15% of children who were severely absent had additionally experienced 2 or more care placement moves during their Year 11, reflecting that dealing with changes, transitions and potential feelings of instability are highly likely to have affected children's school attendance, on practical, emotional and behavioural levels.
- 80% of the children severely absent were in Years 9-11, a much higher proportion than for persistently absent (51%) and within this group, 13% became 'not on roll' during the year, meaning that severe absence for a proportion, was a pre cursor to coming off the roll of a school altogether.
- A higher proportion of children persistently absent than severely absent were attending schools in other LAs.

Educational outcomes

Finally, the Virtual School's review considered Key Stage 4 educational outcomes for the 38 children in year 11 who were included in this review. The following caveats apply:-

- Individual children will frequently have multiple factors impacting on their education which have a cumulative effect. Each child will respond to these kinds of challenges in different ways.
- The group in scope here is small (38 children) and presents a snapshot of the Year 11 children

Findings

- Whilst mindful of these caveats, our review strongly suggests that children who do not receive a 'suitable education' are far more likely to achieve poorer educational outcomes and struggle more at transition points.
- It also suggests that being in DfE registered provision more strongly supports achievement of at least some qualifications and likelihood of successful transition to post 16 EET.
- Unsurprisingly, children persistently absent were more likely to achieve qualifications than those with greater levels of absence (severe absence).

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been agreed by both social care (CP PLT) and education leadership teams (ELL LT) and are already being actioned, led by an Assistant Headteacher from the Virtual School – progress is shown below

	Recommendations (December 2024)	Progress	RAG
1	<p>We take collective responsibility within CFLL, as good corporate parents to ensure that every statutory school aged looked after child, is on the roll of a DfE registered education setting and we agree that sufficiency of 'suitable education' in a specific geographical area is not an acceptable reason for a looked after child to be out of school.</p> <p>Where this is the case: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An SVS Deputy Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher will quality assure the PEP following completion by the Education Support Officer <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 18 hours of online tuition for a block of 6 weeks* will be offered as interim education with a clear start and end date in line with the statutory guidance and best practice. b. Tuition providers will need to provide assurances of quality and sufficiency, inputting into meaningful learning targets which link to the child's current and future needs as recorded on their PEP. c. Steps taken to support the child back into education are clearly recorded and dated on their PEP. d. A new 'Practice Standard' is drawn up to guide social workers in their practice around children looked after who are not in full time, registered education 	<p>Agreed by ELL leadership team 16th January and Corporate Parenting PLT 15th January 2025</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Published and in place</p>	
2	<p>Escalation processes are used where support and challenge have not been successful including:</p>	<p>All in place, monitoring of use and impact</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Referral and follow up from the monthly SEND SVS SCT quadrant-based meetings so that visibility and accountability remain high b. An IRO alert c. Use of appeal and direction to admit d. Use of the multiagency FAST process (Finding A Solution Together where appropriate) (Surrey only) e. Referral to the 'School Monitoring Group' within ELL 'as appropriate. (Surrey only) f. For children not resident in Surrey, the Surrey Virtual School will facilitate contact with the other LA's Virtual School, so that 'local' escalation routes (including lodging an official complaint) can be explored and identified. 	now put in place	
3.	For those OOC CLA with EHCPs there will be a named Surrey 'virtual' SEND Case Officer acting as a link for the other LA's SEND team and taking the necessary steps to secure DfE registered provision without delay for the child, should they return to Surrey.	Agreed at ELL Leadership Team 16.1.25 Currently being operationalised	
4.	A qualified SENCO to be part of the SVS staff team who will support and challenge the child's professional network and SEND Commissioning about the quality of education and delivery of their EHCP whilst they are not on roll of DfE registered provision. For children who are 'CME' they will retain oversight of their EHCP and Annual Review and monitor their access to the therapeutic aspects of their plan.	SENCO now in place	
5.	AP Commissioners for children looked after with EHCPs to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that arrangements for delivery of therapeutic aspects of their plan are either built in and delivered as part of the service received or commissioned separately for the child. b. Number of hours provided is sufficient and builds to full time as soon as possible 	Discussions with Commissioning at an early stage	
6.	SVS Education Support Officer (ESO) will attend (in person or virtually) and input into Annual Review of any Surrey CLA with EHCPs OOC <i>who are CME or have AP only in place</i> . Support and training to be provided by Surrey SEND for this activity. Best practice would be for the Annual Review and PEP to be a combined meeting.	Introduced January 2025	

7.	That consideration is given within the LA to ways in which Surrey children looked after could be placed on roll on a Surrey DFE registered education setting, short term, whilst they are receiving unregistered 'AP only' provision – one example could be children in Year 11 placed on the role of a post 16 college.	Discussions underway with lead LA officers prior to discussion at Post 16 Phase Council	
8.	The impacts and implications of a 'suitable education' for UASC have been identified following SVS' review for children looked after and are currently being shared and carefully considered. Consideration of a connected document which focusses on the needs of UASC is taking place and will be reported back in February 2025 to Education Subgroup of Corporate Parent Board.	To be presented at the March meeting of the Education Sub Group for Corporate Parenting	
9.	Social care teams to do everything possible to avoid care placement moves in the time leading up to statutory assessment in Years 6 and 11. Where this is unavoidable, we recommend that signoff is required from the Virtual School Head, and rationale recorded by the social worker on the child's record on LCS. Details of mitigations and support to prevent educational underachievement recorded on PEP.	In progress	
10.	<p>Reduced hours timetables (RT) are put in place only in exceptional circumstances, in line with the requirements of statutory attendance guidance as outlined in this paper and should not be used as a way to manage a child's behaviour.</p> <p>We expect that a RT for a looked after child:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines its purpose and ambition for the child Includes a clear start and finish/review date Is uploaded to the child's PEPIs always notified to the local authority where the child attends school The Surrey Inclusion and Virtual School teams will link half termly to track and monitor the use of RTs for looked after children, as well as linking closely and regularly with the SVS Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for school attendance. 	RT closely monitored by the Virtual School. In progress.	

Acknowledgements: Kind thanks to members of Surrey Corporate Parent PLT, Quality and Performance Service, Education and Lifelong Learning Leadership Team and Surrey SEND, for their consultation and input.

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 March 2025



MOTION REFERRED TO CFLLC SELECT COMMITTEE

Purpose of report: The Select Committee will consider a motion entitled 'Taking a broader preventative approach to Children's Services', as requested by the Council.

Background:

On Tuesday 10 December 2024, at the meeting of Council held at Woodhatch, Members of Surrey County Council under item 11 voted to refer motion (ii) on 'Taking a broader preventative approach to Children's Services' to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee for their feedback and input.

The motion, proposed by Cllr Jonathan Essex and seconded by Cllr Liz Townsend, asks the Council to commission a review of recent research into the benefits of taking a broader preventative approach to Children's Services, and to ask the Local Government Secretary for additional funding directed to prevention.

Full text of the motion presented to the Council meeting is at Annex 1.

Process:

According to the Surrey County Council constitution, Part 1 of the Standing Orders states that:

- When an original motion is referred to the Cabinet or appropriate committee under Standing Order 12.3, the Member of the Council who has moved the original motion and his/her seconder shall be notified of the meeting at which the Cabinet or committee will consider it. They shall have the right to attend the meeting and speak to the motion.

The motion was referred to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee at the Council meeting on 10 December 2024 and will be considered by the Select Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2025.

Recommendation:

That the Select Committee hears from the proposer and seconder of the motion, the Cabinet portfolio lead and service representatives, asking questions as appropriate, and that following debate the Committee makes recommendations to Cabinet or Council for decision. This might include endorsing the proposer's original motion or recommending an alternative course of action.

Next Steps:

The Select Committee will report back to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, scheduled for 18 March 2025.

Report contact

Julie Armstrong, Scrutiny Officer

Contact details

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Annex 1

MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

10 DECEMBER 2024

NOTICE OF MOTION

Item 11 (ii)

Jonathan Essex (Redhill East) to move under standing order 11 as follows:

This Council agrees that:

- Surrey County Council used to support a network of 58 Sure Start Children Centres with some government support. These were replaced with 23 Family Centres in 2017 and these are now funded through 11 Family Centre and Family Resilience contracts that also include youth services up to 18 (and age 25 for those with SEN).
- This shift to the family centres model has been accompanied by a shift in council funding for children services. There is now less funding allocated to universal and community support, and signposting to families (often through group sessions) alongside increased funding for more targeted and intensive support to individual families, including through the new Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS).
- Recent academic research has highlighted that the Sure Start Children Centres model reduced childhood obesity and youth crime whilst increased early identification of SEN (and reduced SEN and EHCPs in secondary schools) and improved educational outcomes.
- The above shift in funding in children's services within a post-Covid context of continued austerity, together with service improvements in Surrey County Council, has contributed to a reduction in children being taken into care in Surrey. However, at the same time there has been an increase in the numbers of children requiring additional support when they start school, and a surge in the number of children who have mental health needs.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Commission a review of recent research into the benefits of taking a broader preventative approach to children's services. This review should include recommendations to improve long-term outcomes for Surrey families, including through strengthening universal and community support to meet emerging needs earlier.
- II. Write to the new Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, to call for additional funding for local authority Children's Services across the UK that is directed to prevention, to improve outcomes to meet the objective that no children or families are left behind.

Seconder: Liz Townsend

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THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 2025

Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS)

Purpose of report:

This report is to update the Committee on the Intensive Family Support Service including its scope, model of operations, funding, partnerships and impact.

Executive Summary:

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) supports families across the county when they need intensive support, but do not require the ongoing involvement of statutory services. The teams are based in four main locality offices but primarily work within communities, including homes, schools, and other relevant spaces. Established in October 2023, in response to a recognised gap in existing provision, IFSS aims to provide an early intervention for families with interconnected needs, reducing the need for escalation to statutory interventions.

The IFSS focuses on families struggling to cope where earlier interventions have been insufficient or have not made a lasting impact. The service is depicted in the Continuum of Support, launched in 2024, in the realm of 'Intensive Support – Getting More Help'. The Continuum encourages a responsive approach to family needs, providing consistent and compassionate support.

Consistency in support is crucial, as highlighted in the statutory guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023." Families should develop meaningful relationships with a trusted practitioner. The close interface between IFSS and statutory Family Safeguarding Teams ensures consistent support and better decision-making at this more intensive level of early intervention. Data shows that IFSS can reduce the demand for statutory interventions by supporting families early. IFSS is funded through baseline and grant funding, with a budget of £1.897 million for 2024/25. £1.465 million is funded through Surrey County Council baseline funding, and the remaining £432,000 is from what was the 'Supporting Families Grant'¹.

¹ The Supporting Families Grant is discontinued. Instead in 2025/6 this and five other funding streams are consolidated into a single funding stream known as the Children and Families Grant.

Between April and December 2024, 280 children from 121 families were referred to IFSS. The average support period is four to five months, with no re-referrals so far. Family feedback highlights the importance of trust and safety in achieving goals.

Strong partnerships are essential for successful early help, including intensive support. New collaborations, such as with Surrey Heartlands and Surrey and Borders Partnership, enhance support for families with interconnected needs. IFSS is also exploring opportunities to expand access to specialist support, such as Family Group Conferencing and the Children's Crisis Service.

The main challenges include supporting mental health, children with additional needs, school attendance, and family relationships. IFSS is creating new interfaces with specialist services to address these challenges. Ongoing feedback and audits help the service continually improve and strengthen partnerships.

Introduction: Service Makeup and Mission

Service Makeup

1. The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) supports families across the whole County. The teams are contractually based to work from the four main locality offices in the County (St. Francis Centre in Guildford, Quadrant Court in Woking, Dakota in Weybridge, and Woodhatch Place in Reigate), to enable them to foster close relationships with colleagues in statutory social care teams based there. These are contractual bases; however, the teams work mainly out in the communities where families are; including their homes, schools and wider community spaces which could include a Family Centre, Health Clinic or anywhere else that is pertinent to the needs of the family and the children.
2. All staff within the Intensive Family Support Service have been recruited on the basis that this is a countywide service; meaning there is an expectation of flexibility as one service to meet family needs, wherever they are needed. Family Intervention Workers travel to ensure that the support is offered to families in their communities; so, families are not travelling to reach support.
3. Four area teams have been set up to pragmatically ensure there is a manageable distribution of support countywide. The areas are aligned to District and Borough boundaries, and this provides good opportunities for partnerships with local housing teams and a wide variety of services that are pertinent to the wider determinants of health for families. The Northwest IFSS team supports families in Woking, Surrey Heath and Runnymede; the Northeast supports Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Epsom & Ewell; the Southeast

Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge; and the Southwest Waverley and Guildford.

- Each team consists of a Team Manager, two Senior Family Intervention Workers, and six Family Intervention Workers. It should be noted that the Senior Family Intervention Workers have their own allocation of families that they support. There was a previous query from the Select Committee that the teams appeared “management heavy”, however, this is not the case and each team when fully recruited to will have the capacity of seven full time equivalent posts providing hands on support to families as well as sufficient senior experienced oversight to ensure effective decision-making at this important interface between early help and statutory services. Being an intensive support service there is a high demand to forge effective partnerships with wider care and support services, which requires an appropriate level of practitioner experience and confidence. The Team Managers lead on this in their areas and manage all operational aspects of the team, including new referrals and safeguarding escalations should statutory interventions be required. The below image provides a visual representation of an IFSS team:

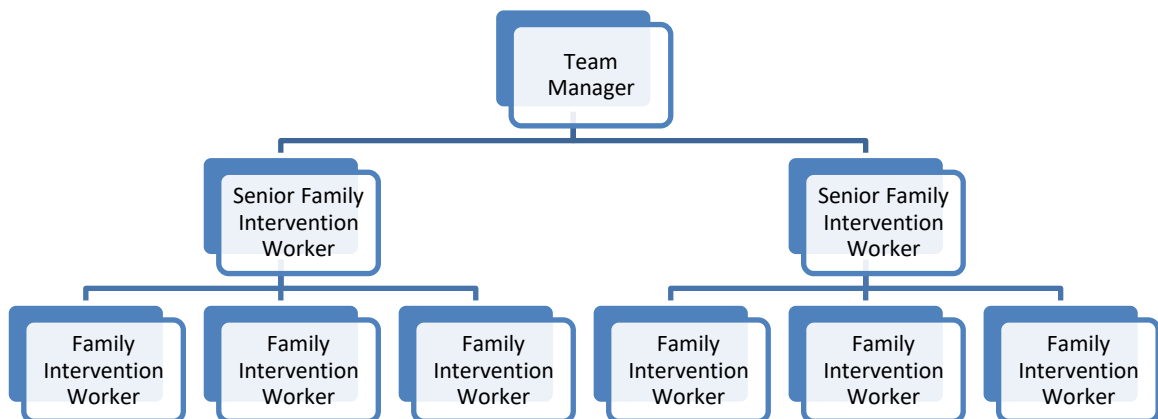


Figure 1 An IFSS team structure (there are four teams)

Service Mission

- The Intensive Family Support Service was established following approval in October 2023. The identified opportunities in the Business Case included the need for more intensive early intervention for whole families with interconnected needs, reducing the need for escalation from targeted early help services to statutory interventions, with unnecessary and disruptive transfers between practitioners and teams as a result. Feedback from the providers of existing early help services was that they were struggling to meet the needs of families allocated to them where they had this range of needs. This was confirmed in the Joint Targeted Area Inspection 2023.

6. This was also reflected in feedback from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities in May 2023, who recognised that Surrey would at that time struggle to successfully support enough families to meet its annual early help target, associated with the Supporting Families Grant 2022 - 2025. At that time, all targeted early help services in Surrey, apart from what was then the Targeted Youth Support service, were commissioned from external providers that could not operate at this level. There therefore needed to be a service with greater flexibility and responsiveness to meet the needs of families where needs exceeded the capacity and capability of targeted support services. The Intensive Family Support Service can now bridge the gap between targeted support and statutory services. Now in 2024/25 the Council is on track to meet its annual target in this final year of the Supporting Families Programme (2022 – 2025).
7. The scope of the Intensive Family Support Service is best depicted in the [Continuum of Support](#) which launched in 2024 and can be found on the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership website. The definition of the intensive support offer on the website describes children and families who are struggling to cope, where earlier targeted interventions have not sustained change; therefore, longer term, specialist services are required to meet these needs.
8. When families are allocated to the Intensive Family Support Service it is because there are multiple needs across the whole family. Support is required throughout the week, for a sustained period, to help establish meaningful change according to the family goals. The highest needs of families referred to IFSS relate to parenting support, mental health needs of children and parents, school attendance, and domestic abuse.
9. This example of family feedback from the team in Guildford and Waverley boroughs describes the positive impact of intensive support:

"[IFSS] has provided a consistent, compassionate approach that recognises the needs of our entire family. [IFSS] actively engages with us, listens to our concerns, and follows through on the commitments. The ability to coordinate support from various professionals has been invaluable, and [IFSS] genuinely cares about our well-being. This continuity and personalized support have made a significant difference, helping us feel more secure and hopeful about our situation

Overall, I want to emphasise that the service [IFSS] represents has been crucial for our family during this challenging time. The focus on addressing the needs of our entire family has been greatly appreciated, especially as we work toward healing and stability."

Service Model

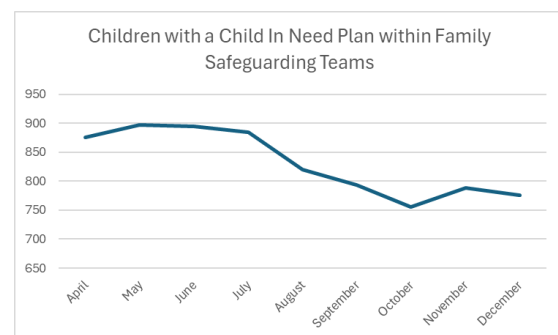
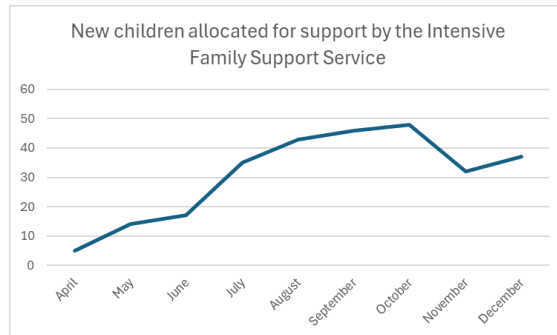
10. The feedback above positively portrays the impact of consistency for the family with a trusted relationship, instead of multiple changes of staff and transfers to other teams. The importance of this is highlighted in the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) (p.54) which states that “Local authorities should set out who can act as a lead practitioner in supporting children and their families under Section 17 and reflect that the decision about who will act as lead practitioner will be made in line with practitioner knowledge and skills and resources”. This ultimately means that families should have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with a trusted practitioner and that local processes should enable this, rather than hinder or disrupt it.
11. The close interface between the Intensive Family Support Service and statutory Family Safeguarding Teams enables families to receive greater consistency in their supported relationships. In this new model, when the needs of families escalate, the Family Intervention Worker or their Manager will consult with the statutory Family Safeguarding Team prior to any escalation or transfer to a statutory team. This consultation process enables IFSS to have greater confidence in their decisions through peer reflection, and the outcome could be to continue with the current plan with the family, or to jointly work together to complete the statutory Child and Family Assessment if the needs of the family require a Child Protection intervention.
12. Prior to this new interface between early help intensive support and statutory teams, this early discussion between colleagues would not have happened and the family instead would have been transferred to a social worker to complete a statutory assessment which was disruptive to the relationship they had with their support practitioner. The outcome could have been ongoing statutory social work support likely from a different practitioner or a re-referral to an early help service; hence families feeling like they are being passed around a system and from person to person. This new closer integration therefore enables better sharing of knowledge and expertise, working together, and a consistent relationship with a trusted lead practitioner who is capable of undertaking work at a higher level of complexity and need, closer to the interface with statutory services.

Impact on demand for statutory interventions

13. Prior to the Intensive Support offer there was not a dedicated early help service at the intensive support level, that could hold and support whole families

experiencing crisis and requiring specialist interventions without a Child in Need Plan. The Intensive Family Support Service therefore enables more families to be supported in early help without the need for statutory intervention.

14. The impact of this is demonstrated in data below which arguably shows, even within this early first year of delivery, that allocating families to the Intensive Family Support Service directly reduces the demand on statutory interventions:



15.

Figure 1

Figure 2

16. The graph on the left tracks the numbers of children allocated to the Intensive Family Support Service between April and December 2024, and the graph on the right tracks the numbers of children with a Child in Need plan within Family Safeguarding Teams during the same period. The two graphs show opposite patterns which is significant; one decreases as the other increases. It arguably demonstrates that as allocations to the Intensive Family Support Service increased in quarter one and quarter two this year, the number of children in the Family Safeguarding Teams with a Child in Need plan reduced. Similarly in November 2024 as new allocations to the Intensive Family Support Service reduced slightly due to ongoing recruitment, so the number of statutory Child in Need plans increased.

17. The actual numbers in the data support this comparison. Between May and October 2024, the number of children with a Child in Need plan in Family Safeguarding Teams reduced by 142, as shown in Figure 2 from the highest point of the graph to the lowest. Over the same period as shown in Figure 1, 203 children were referred to the Intensive Family Support Service and therefore these numbers seem comparable. There will always be a range of factors that impact allocations, so it is necessary to be cautious about overclaiming for the impact of the IFSS; however, these early indications positively show that investing in intensive early help support can directly reduce demand in costly statutory services to some extent. In 2025 as recruitment for the Intensive Family Support Service concludes, we should expect to see an even greater impact in this area.

Funding

18. IFSS is funded through a combination of baseline funding and grant funding. For 2024/25 the budget for the Intensive Family Support Service is £1.897 million. £1.465 million is funded through Surrey County Council baseline funding, and £432,000 is from the Supporting Families Grant.
19. For 2025/26, it is assumed that all IFSS posts will be recruited to and therefore, the baseline funding is increased to £1.684 million, and the Children and Family Grant (which replaces the Supporting Families Grant) will contribute £432,000.
20. The Early Help Strategic Board has been instrumental in overseeing plans for future investment in early help and is keen to ensure that support services have the resources they need. In December 2024, over 130 practitioners across the partnership completed a survey to capture their thoughts and priorities on strengthening the early help offer in Surrey. A focused multi-agency workshop was then conducted to explore how we can seek to continue to integrate early help support for families and further invest in areas we need to strengthen. The priority needs were child and adult mental health, school attendance, parenting support, and supporting families with children with additional needs.
21. Discussions are underway with Family Centres regarding their increased inflationary costs and seeking to ensure they have the funding they need to deliver flexible and responsive support for families in their communities. This investment will strengthen the local support offer for families and enable the Family Centres to facilitate more local groups and preventative support with partners, focusing on antenatal and baby care, mental health and wellbeing, and supporting children with additional needs. Additionally, the Children's Crisis Service will be expanded to support more families with children with learning difficulties and autism where there is a risk of family breakdown. The early help partnership team is also being remodelled to enable it to work more flexibly with schools and to support the wider workforce where there are gaps or increases in demand for support.
22. The Children and Family Grant is for investment for 12 months in 2025/26 and therefore there was a strong message from the partnership to strengthen what already exists as has been outlined above, rather than create something new. This is in the knowledge of the wider context that there will be a transformation in Children's Social Care in 2025/26 with longer term funding arrangements. Details and guidance on planning for this will be shared from the Department for Education to Local Authorities in April 2025.

Referral Pathway and Recruitment

23. All families supported by the Intensive Family Support Service are referred either through the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA), or Social Workers in the Assessment teams. Prior to its launch and ongoing, there are regular consultations between IFSS Team Managers and the referrers and this is enabling the service to offer families the appropriate level of support according to their needs.
24. At the time of writing there are 10 vacancies (out of 24) for Family Intervention Workers, however, these positions have now all been offered to successful applicants and will all be filled early in 2025/26.
25. The original plan was to recruit to all positions in 2024 and the recruitment campaign commenced as soon as possible following the approval of the funding and the HR due processes. The reason for the delay in these final appointments was due to legal discussions with District and Borough Councils regarding the ending of the Supporting Families Grant 2022 – 2025 which funded the Family Support Programme (a targeted early help service). Time was required to ascertain if TUPE was applicable from the Family Support Programme into IFSS. This is resolved and recruitment continued as a result.
26. These roles are popular and there is no difficulty in recruiting skilled and motivated staff for the Intensive Family Support Service. We typically receive applications from people with a broad range of experience and have recruited staff from neighbouring Councils, Family Centres, Mental Health services, Domestic Abuse support services, Education settings and the Voluntary Sector. The richness and diversity of experience and skills enables IFSS to support the interconnected needs of whole families and reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of this work.

Performance and Achievements

27. The first family was allocated to the Intensive Family Support Service at the end of April 2024. In total, between quarter one to the end of quarter three in 2024/25 there have been 280 children from 121 families referred to IFSS. 45% of these have been referred from statutory Assessment teams (stepped-down) and 55% from the C-SPA. The average support period to date is four to five months and, so far, there have been no re-referrals. However, it is very early days and at the time of writing in early quarter four of 2024/25, it is now that most families are starting to end their period of intensive support, and therefore this requires further monitoring.

28. However, early data shows that out of 26 families who have closed to IFSS following referral, 17 completed with their support needs met, 6 were transferred to a statutory safeguarding team when their needs escalated, and three withdrew consent. All families who withdraw from support are provided advice and guidance and the referrers are informed. This can happen for different reasons and sometimes it is because their needs are already being met.
29. It is often asked if families supported by IFSS could 'step-down' to a Family Centre or other early help service after a period of intensive support. In general families should not be transferred between early help services if the help can be provided by the team already working with them. As an early help system in Surrey, we need to be sharing skills and expertise across teams; not moving families around a system to receive interventions. For example, IFSS could work with a Family Centre to deliver a parenting course, and likewise with the Adolescent Service if there are skills needed that help enhance the Team Around the Family. This should happen seamlessly and enable the family to access the help they need, whilst maintaining the relationship with their lead practitioner.

Partnerships and New Opportunities

30. Successful early help is reliant on strong partnerships and opportunities for local integration. There are now more opportunities for working together across the partnership because of the countywide Intensive Family Support Service. One example is a new collaboration with Surrey Heartlands whereby a part-time Family Intervention Worker from IFSS has joined a multi-disciplinary team as part of a pilot clinic from Ashford and St. Peter's Hospital. The service is called [Complications with Excess Weight \(CEW\)](#) and it supports families with children who have health needs due to obesity such as liver disease, insulin retention, sleep disorders and social and emotional concerns. This enables families to receive clinical care, which is complemented by holistic family support, all from one multi-disciplinary team.
31. The mental health of children and parents is one of the highest needs of families referred to IFSS. We are currently in discussion with Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) to recruit up to three Family Intervention Workers to join the School Based Needs Teams. If confirmed, this will provide children with clinical support and the Family Intervention Workers will help to engage the whole family and provide wider support, instead of multiple referrals for one family and their interconnected needs.
32. Work is ongoing to enable families receiving intensive support to have access to specialist services that were previously not available outside of statutory interventions. Family Group Conferencing is now available to IFSS which

previously was not available in early help settings. This is a specialist service that supports family networks to formulate support plans to achieve their goals. Expanding this offer now is in line with the Government's new direction of travel (outlined in the paper 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive) which seeks to offer Family Group Conferencing to families at the earliest stages when needs arise.

33. We are also exploring opportunities to expand the Children's Crisis Service in Surrey which supports families with children requiring specialist support with learning difficulties and autism. Until now, families have needed to be escalated to statutory safeguarding teams to access this support. However, having the IFSS service and creating these new connections means that help can be consistent, targeted and seamless for families and that they retain their relationship with one trusted and consistent practitioner throughout.

Challenges and Learning

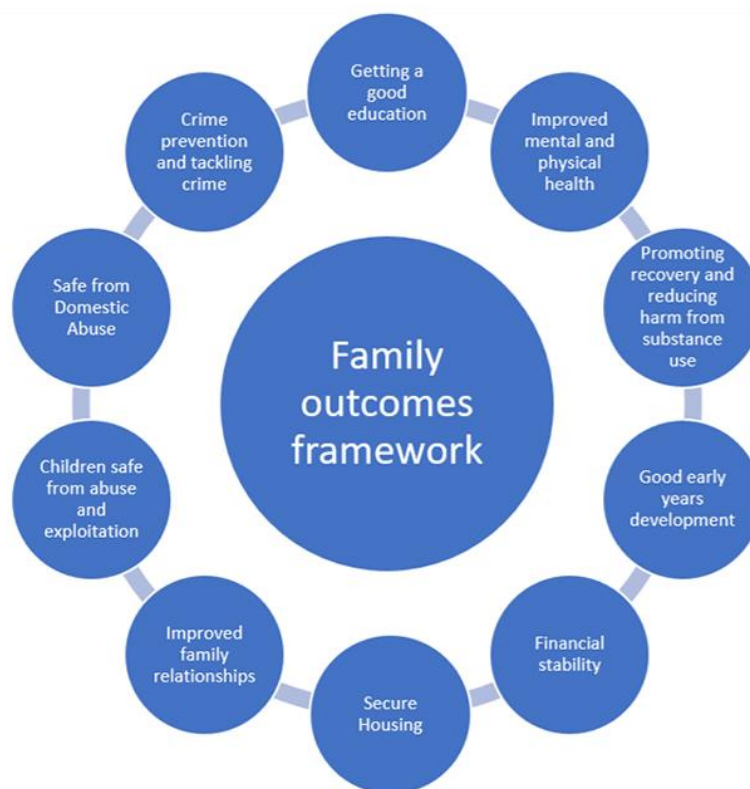


Figure 2 - Supporting Families Framework

34. The Supporting Families Framework above shows the types of challenges faced by families supported by the Intensive Family Support Service. This framework is the mechanism for capturing the impact of the service and although the Supporting Families Programme itself ends in 2025, this framework is likely to remain either in this form or with minor changes as an appropriate framework for evaluating the impact of support to families. An

example of how IFSS supports family needs that are interconnected, such as is shown in this framework, is below in Appendix A.

35. At this early stage in service delivery there have not been enough families who have closed to IFSS support to show definitive impact trends. However, data collected across the early help workforce shows that the main challenges faced are supporting child and adult mental health, supporting families with children with additional needs, improving school attendance, and family relationships through parenting support.
36. To support these challenges IFSS are creating new interfaces with specialist services as has been described above with family group conferencing, mental health and the crisis support team. Regular feedback and learning from audits support the service to continually reflect and improve, and having one countywide service with bases in all parts of the county enables us to strengthen partnerships. One example of this for 2025 is to better connect IFSS with adult mental health services. Joint service days have been organised for March 2025 to bring these teams together and seek ways to better integrate. This is one of many potential areas to develop and there are real opportunities ahead for collaboration and innovation as we work together.

Conclusions:

37. The Intensive Family Support Service has shown early indications of success in reducing the demand for statutory interventions and providing consistent, compassionate support to families with interconnected needs. Continued collaboration and innovation are essential for future success.

Recommendations:

38. To note the progress of the Intensive Family Support Service to date and the future opportunities this provides for families in Surrey.

Report contact

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Sources/background papers

IFSS Business Case 2023

Good Practice on a Page

What were the concerns?

(Worries? What needs to be different?)

- C (Mum) has a number of physical disabilities, health needs, PTSD and is currently undergoing an assessment for ASD. She has recently had multiple operations on her leg, has diabetes, arthritis in her hands, wrists and legs, severe asthma, high blood pressure and alopecia.
- C's mobility issues meant she was unable to take S (5 year old daughter) to school. L (Dad) works full time and is out of the house for long hours. As a result, S's school attendance was very poor as no one was able to take her to school.
- C's poor mobility meant that she struggled to get up and down the stairs and was having to use a commode in the living room.
- C was finding it challenging to keep up with her own personal care and housework. There were large items of broken furniture taking up space in the house which she was unable to move.
- C finds it difficult to read and understand letters, messages, information and advice, both written and verbal.
- The family were struggling financially and were not in receipt of any disability benefits, despite C and both children having additional needs.

Where were we? (What was happening /not happening? What services were involved? Specific and from child's perspective)

- The family were referred to IFSS, after the school raised concerns around attendance and neglect
- They had received previous support from the Family Centre and had been on a CIN plan.
- The family have no support network; no family or friends who can help and they are not linked in within their local community

What difference have we made?

(Outcome? Impact? Use child parents/carers' own words where you can)

- S's school attendance has improved as she now has an adult who can take her to school
- C will be able to help with bedtime more as it is easier for her to get up/down the stairs. She will also be able to use the bathroom upstairs, rather than a commode in the living room.
- C looks visibly much better, her appearance has improved and the home is in a better condition
- Once PIP and DLA is in receipt, the family will be able to maintain the rental of a mobility scooter
- The family are able to access more health services, such as physiotherapy and the GP.
- C reports herself a real improvement in her mood as well as physical health as a result of the support put in place for her

What did we do? (Focus on agency of Case Worker/Manager, what they did or enabled to happen, any obstacles and how these were overcome?)

- Application made to Midas Plus to request rental of a mobility scooter. It was agreed they would pay for the fees for 3 months
- Support in getting the hand rail fixed so C can get up and down the stairs easier – coordination between OT and the landlord
- Coordination with the council and a charity to collect the large items of furniture
- Carers now attend 3x per day to support C
- Breaking down all communication to enable C to better understand. Support in reading letters, accessing health appointments, taking time to explain information etc
- Support in applying for PIP and DLA benefits



THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 2025

Surrey's Adolescent Service

Executive Summary:

1. Adolescents represent the largest growing age group in need of child protection and care, often facing complex needs and vulnerabilities, including poor mental health, exploitation, and trafficking. We are starting to realise the full impact of the pandemic on this vulnerable group. Adolescence is a critical phase for young people, marked by exploration and identity formation; as they navigate this transitional period, they encounter both opportunities and risks. Our strategic partnership approach in Surrey recognises the unique challenges adolescents face, particularly concerning extra-familial harms, and the multi-agency response needed to protect and support them.
2. We aspire for Surrey to be a place where all children and young people are healthy, happy, and safe and no one is left behind. Our partnership is dedicated to a clear, data-driven approach that outlines anticipated outcomes, ensuring that services are aligned and consistently applied to support adolescents experiencing multiple and/or complex needs effectively.
3. Following the Ofsted ILACs inspection in January 2022 and the Joint Targeted Area Inspection in Early Help in March 2023, the Partnership has undertaken an extensive review and reform of our approach to adolescent help by integrating a number of services supporting young people into one adolescent service, with a view to providing a more holistic and partnership-based service delivery. This restructure took the unusual step of departing from our more usual quadrant-based delivery model and instead created three area-based teams in Surrey (North, East, and West) to align with police divisions and enhance collaboration with the police's Child Exploitation and Missing Unit. This reflects the way the harms facing adolescents are much more likely to be those that also require police involvement. A Central Hub was also established to oversee the county-wide response to Extra Familial Harm. This model sets the stage for developing Family Help services, as recommended in the social care review [Keeping children safe, helping families thrive](#). For a summary of the planned reforms please refer to Annex 8 (exempt).

4. One of the key drivers for the new Adolescent Service is to align the key principles of early help services by providing the “right service at the right time” and the notion of “bringing together a co-ordinated approach to multi-agency support” for vulnerable young people under the umbrella of extra familial harm, contextual safeguarding, exploitation & mental health. The Adolescent Service brings together an early help and statutory response across the intensive and statutory domains the Continuum of Support.
5. Initial data from the newly implemented Adolescent Service shows promising improvements, interagency collaboration, and responses to extra-familial harm. Specifically, risk and vulnerability management processes have improved the quality and consistency of our Safer Planning across the county, with increased attention to young people's voices and targeted safety and disruption actions. Missing child processes have also seen improvements in Return Home Interviews being completed and improved quality of those interviews.

Purpose of report:

6. This report will provide an overview of the new adolescent service which was introduced in June 2024 and was an amalgamation of Safeguarding Adolescents Team, Targeted Youth Support and No Wrong Door. This report will detail why the change was needed, what the new service does and the impact that it has already made as well as plans for further development.
7. This report outlines areas of development for the integrated Adolescent Service, including: deeper embedding of the practice model within locality teams, ensuring consistency and quality in recording and performance; enhanced training and support for practitioners in using the Safer Plan tool, focusing on incorporating the child's voice and developing SMART, trauma-informed actions; improved data collection and analysis tools for missing children and youth homelessness; further development of the Adolescent Performance Dashboard and the LCS/EHM (Child Record Management System) Extra Familial Harm pathway; and full integration of the Council's Youth Offer Service into the Central Hub.

Introduction: The need for change
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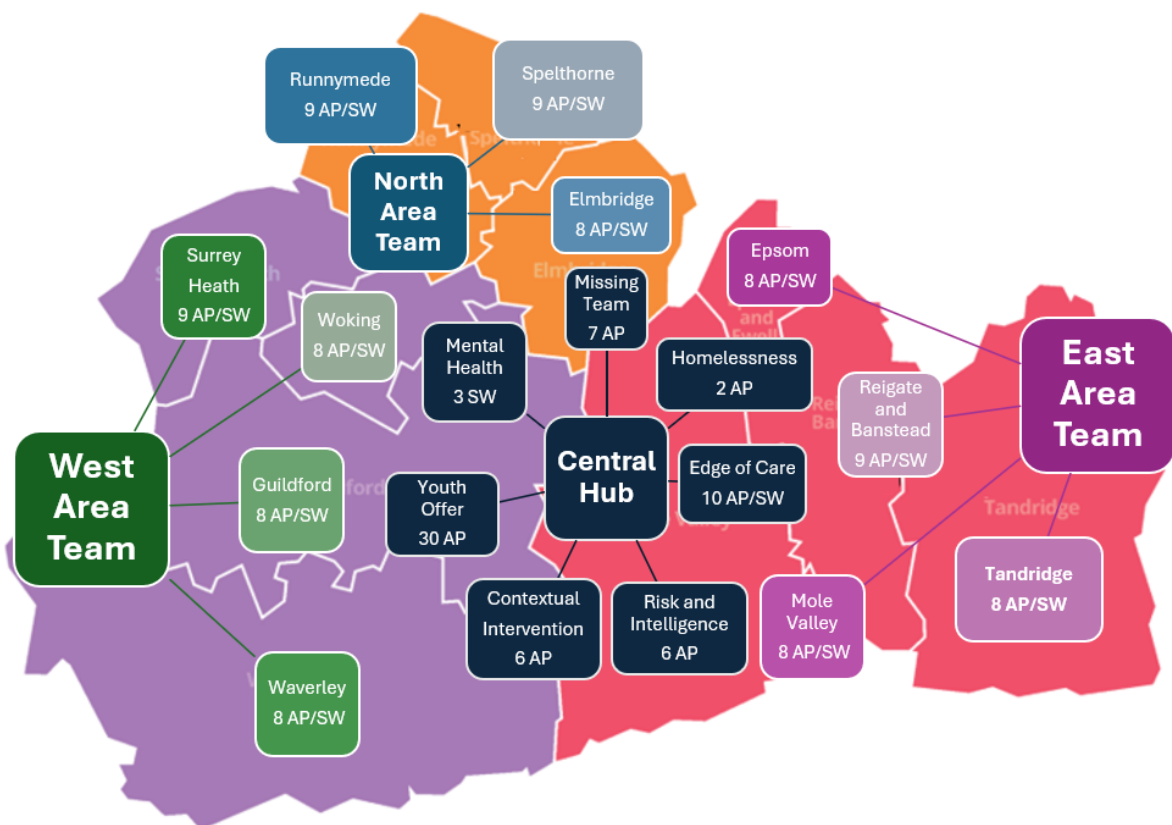
9. In the last year the Safeguarding Partnership has undertaken an evaluation of support for adolescent young people which established that services designed

to respond to complex adolescent and family challenges were extensive, with some significant strengths in our Youth Justice Service, multiagency co-located health and social care services including Hope, Children’s Crisis Service (formerly CCISS) and embedded Mental Health Social Workers. There was already a substantial adolescent social work offer, a large, targeted youth offer, and three dedicated police child exploitation and missing units. Despite the availability of these resources, some children and families experienced multiple handovers, changes of professionals involved in their lives and the frequency of support provided was not always in line with the presenting needs.

10. Consequently, services have been reorganised and repurposed into an integrated Adolescent Service model. We have implemented the formation of a central hub, area-based teams that align with our partners (Police Divisions and Districts and Boroughs), and a streamlined risk and vulnerability management (RVM) process that is underpinned by a clear infrastructure.

11. This new model will ensure that we intervene early, prevent unnecessary escalation into statutory services and support children to remain in their homes rather than coming into care.

12. The diagram below shows the new areas aligned with police divisions and the teams in each of the areas with FTE staff numbers. AP/SW relates to Adolescent Practitioner and Social Worker. Please note that the numbers of



staff relate to our establishment and not the actual numbers of staff which are less due to vacancies.

Adolescent Service Area Based Teams:

13. Our long-term vision is to establish area teams that bring together professionals from different disciplines including Police Officers, Social Workers, and Therapists under the umbrella of a single adolescent service. This vision places the child or the locality where the harm is occurring at the centre, with services wrapping around them seamlessly, eliminating barriers, handovers, or internal referrals. Services will be drawn together both strategically to provide oversight and to unlock any issues preventing the implementation of a child's safer plan and operationally, as part of a team around a child or family. The Intensive Intervention arm of the central hub will work alongside the area-based teams, to provide holistic, wraparound support to children across the practice system—whether they are engaged in Early Help, Assessment, Family Safeguarding, or Children Looked After. This intervention will be relationship-based, which we see as central to ensuring effective and meaningful involvement.
14. Children will receive support from the Adolescent Service via a request for support received by the CSPA (Child Single Point of Access). These requests largely come from police, health, and education. The CSPA will undertake their triage and decide if the adolescent service best meets the presenting needs of the young person or if it needs to go the assessment service. The Area Based Team will then start their intervention and then it is at this point that the other services in the Central Hub can also provide support. In addition, the Central Hub works across the whole of the practice system to provide specialist and/or additional capacity.
15. We have established a solid foundation for our work with adolescents experiencing extra-familial harm, grounded in our safer approach, focusing upon strengthening collaboration and integration. This ensures that a child has one 'safer plan' that brings everyone together to work with and for the child, increasing their safety and reducing risk. The Safer Plan is quality assured by the Central Hub and then reviewed at RVM which ensures that across the county there is consistency in the quality and impact of plans. This approach has already led to positive examples of disruption of adults seeking to exploit children and tangible improvements in safety, demonstrating the power of collaborative, partnership-led working.
16. The work of the area teams is led by a Children's Service Manager who directly oversees the Risk and Vulnerability Management process for their

area, in partnership with a Detective Inspector who oversees the Child Protection Investigation Team and Child Exploitation and Missing Unit for that locality (they jointly chair RVM). They share the overall ability to task all police and social care resources across the area (North, East, West) to ensure plans are active and impactful. This work then feeds directly back into the central hub for quality assurance, data collection and building of our Surrey wide picture through strategic mapping.

Adolescent Service Central Hub:

17. The central hub is integral to the implementation of an integrated approach to meeting adolescent and whole family needs. Children are allocated a practitioner from an area team and if their need alters and evolves, supplementary and/or additional support is provided through the central hub, enabling key relationships to be preserved and swift and specialist intervention provided to children and families when required. The entire system is working collectively and collaboratively to meet the needs of our young people.

Missing

18. The Missing Team undertakes the direct delivery of Return Home Interviews (RHI's) along with colleagues in the regional hubs. A Return Home Interview is a statutory intervention that local authorities have a duty to undertake within 72 hours of a young person returning home. Its key purpose is to understand why the child went missing and to provide help and support to prevent further missing episodes.

19. The team also assists in compiling and maintaining detailed missing data, upskilling and development for adolescent practitioners on the expectations around missing episodes, including ensuring the relevant recording is completed within agreed timescales. The team also supports the risk and intelligence function in compiling detailed locations and thematic data relating to missing children.

Edge of Care

20. The Edge of Care function responds in real-time to crises in-family and support in those circumstances where there is a risk of a child coming into care and where 16/17-year-olds are at risk of becoming homeless. This team is agile and can mobilise quickly in order to mitigate the likelihood of adolescents becoming displaced through inter-familial conflict. This function

works closely with the lead for Youth Homelessness to ensure staff are skilled in providing effective and up to date advice and guidance.

16/17-Year-Old Homelessness Prevention

21. This team is comprised of the Homelessness Lead and one adolescent practitioner with the remit of supporting the lead in their role providing practical support, advocacy and advice and guidance to other professionals. In addition, the Homelessness Lead is responsible for maintaining and updating policies and procedures, undertaking staff development work, and driving standards across the county. This team works closely with the Edge of Care team in trying to ensure as best as possible that children in crisis with their families do not end up presenting as homeless.

Contextual Intervention Support

22. The Contextual Intervention Support team undertakes work at a community level with partners, children, and families to understand the harm to children and then puts in place measures with partners to increase the safety for children and disrupt harm within that locality. This could involve action by licensing to prevent alcohol being sold to young people by a local newsagent, a Child Abduction Warning notice being issued by the police to an adult who we are concerned may be exploiting a child or housing undertaking a partial closure order of a house that is being used to exploit children.
23. The Intervention Support function also supports the risk and intelligence team in devising effective actions from mapping exercises and is responsible for maintaining a consistent approach in the use of tools and resources for addressing context-based problems and sharing and compiling useful information to support the data picture across the county. They also undertake intervention support to the regional hubs, special projects designed to impact on existing Extra Familial Harm issues and staff development in the use of contextual resources.

Risk and Intelligence

24. The Risk and Intelligence team has the combined purpose of supporting the regional hubs with the management of their most high-concern children, supporting the risk and vulnerability management (RVM) function and providing direct short-term interventions for children and leading on the service approach to mapping problematic locations, groups and other contexts where exploitation is present.

25. The staff of the Risk and Intelligence team also supports the district and borough risk management functions by attending JAG (Joint Action Groups) and / or CHaRMM (Community Harm and Reduction Management Meetings) meetings and ensuring that actions carried through the RVM meetings are held locally by these functions.
26. This team is also responsive to requests for support with 'mapping' groups of children within an area. This work is important as it helps build an understanding of the networks of young people within a local area and the adults that are harming them and brings together practitioners from different services, areas, or authorities to plan how we can work together to intervene more effectively.

Youth Offer

27. The Youth Offer provides a comprehensive range of support and services, including emotional wellbeing and mental health support through drop-in sessions, targeted group work, phone line support, and one-on-one support via the CYP Havens programme. The targeted nature of the youth offer provides support to children mostly known to children services. It is different to the model of universal open access youth provision which is now provided by the voluntary sector across Surrey.
28. Targeted community-based interventions focus on areas of need such as LGBTQ, SEND, and young carers through evening sessions and is largely provided on a referral basis. Support for vulnerable and at-risk young people includes outreach to at-risk youth in police custody, direct referrals from lead workers, and targeted outreach based on contextual assessments. Outcome-focused interventions align with the young person's existing plan and multi-agency support. Additionally, targeted youth work provides allocated youth workers, small group project-based interventions, and one-to-one relational youth work and partners with the Youth Justice Service to facilitate community reparation, unpaid work projects, and court order activity hour requirements.

Mental Health Pathway

29. Improving the intervention for children and young people experiencing multiple and complex challenges with their emotional wellbeing and mental health; by refining the management of demand to ensure the right support is delivered by the best placed service at the right time, clarifying pathways and roles, commissioning training and development for practitioners across the system, developing and embedding shared language and a culture of improved confidence in responding proactively to support improved mental health for our young people.

30. Mental Health Social Workers (MHSW) are embedded in Adolescent Service Central Hub, where they will retain links into the 3 area-based Adolescent Services and the 3 corresponding Mindworks hubs. This support can also be accessed by practitioners in the assessment and Family Safeguarding Teams. The MHSW offer will refine its package of support to social workers where there are children who have attended A&E due to self-harm or suicidality, are detained under the Mental Health Act, are eligible for s.117 aftercare, or have experienced a bereavement because of suicide – including swift network response where there is potential risk of contagion (multiple linked suicides).
31. The MHSW's attend multi-disciplinary meetings with colleagues in the Mindworks hubs and can request an urgent mental health assessment for children in crisis. Work is ongoing to improve links with the broader network of Mental Health services in Surrey, through a series of partnership events and development of a multi-agency triage model.
32. The Adolescent Service is working with Public Health and colleagues in Surrey & Borders Partnership to develop Suicide Prevention Plans, facilitating joint workshops and responses to emerging issues on children's mental health and developing a package of training in trauma informed practice. This affords the opportunity for strengthening the response to the children in crisis and providing a joined-up response to their health and social care needs. In addition to this the MHSW team will be developing a package of training and resources aimed at ensuring frontline practitioners feel confident and competent in responding to concerning mental health presentation in the context of their roles and where they have existing good relationships with children.

Systems to support young people at risk of Extra Familial Harm

Risk and Vulnerability Management (RVM)

33. The Risk and Vulnerability Management (RVM) model is a process through which Surrey and its partners respond to identified extra familial concerns. It is a partnership response where all agencies provide containment, scrutiny, and support to achieve collaborative intervention.
34. The risk and vulnerability panels use an updated agenda that brings together any incidents of note, children, adults, contexts, data, and themes. This information is utilised to better understand locality-based risk and harm and inform the safety and disruption planning required for those (likely to be) impacted. Feedback to the central hub assists in developing the Surrey wide

picture. The central hub interventions teams assist in initiating contextual safeguarding assessment, linking with partners as detailed below.

35. RVM 1 - Initial multiagency review takes place within the Central Hub led by CEMU Sergeants and Central Hub Team Managers, Health and Education partners and liaison with District and Borough Services. RVM 1 aims to review and strengthen all assessments and plans that are due to be heard at RVM 2 with the practitioner. The outcome of review is to either progress to RVM 2 or that further information is needed. Where there is emerging risk, it will be held at RVM 1.
36. RVM 2 - This is a bi-weekly multiagency panel that takes place across the three Surrey divisions, North, East and West. The panels are co-chaired by the area Adolescent Service Manager and CEMU Detective Inspector. Meetings follow a VOLT framework, focussing on Victims (Children), Offenders (Adults), Locations (Contexts) and Themes. Meetings need to be assured that plans in place have recognised risks and harms, are proportionate and robust, and are delivering increased safety including the disruption of harm. This relates to a child, adults, or an identified location.
37. Strategic RVM - This group is chaired by the Detective Chief Inspector – Complex Abuse Unit & P-SPA across Surrey and has an overview of all RVM activity to ensure that it is being purposeful and timely, that children are being supported appropriately and that where strategic support is required that this is being delivered and that as a partnership we are doing all we can to build safety and disrupt harm for some of our most vulnerable adolescents.

Mapping and Intelligence

38. Over the last year we have also developed our tools to help us map and understand key locations of risk to support intervention. This data helps us to identify trends, we can also overlay this with other details regarding crime, school attended and then look at specific locations or addresses (children's homes) to see if there has been an increase in the number of young people going missing from this address.

Partnership Working

39. The Adolescent Service has developed effective working relationships with our key partners from schools, health, and police. We are in the process of delivering training to these partners on the new service and our response to Extra Familial Harm which will include specific training for school DSL's,

police, health, and other colleagues. All these partners play a key and active role in RVM across all levels. We have aligned our services to mirror the police divisional areas to improve closer working and a better response to vulnerable young people.

Impact

40. The Adolescent Service has been operational since June 2024. During this time, we have been establishing area teams within localities and developing the key principle of our work together. There have been some challenges with respect to recruitment in certain parts of the county. However, what we are seeing is the positive impact for the area teams that has been brought about by bringing the early intervention and safeguarding responses together, so that we can provide wrap around support for children and families and reduce the transitions between services that used to exist. We are also introducing Risk Outside the Home Child Protection conferences across the county and are now seeing children moving seamlessly between Early Intervention and Statutory teams which is an area we will continue to build on, in line with national reforms.
41. The Adolescent Service is currently supporting 1,018 children. Of these 56 are supported by child protection plan, 192 are on a child in need plan, 40 are a child looked after, 609 are receiving early intervention and 123 are currently being assessed to ensure that they receive the right support. To date the Adolescent Service has contributed over 300 successful outcomes to the national Supporting Families programme in the programme's final year.
42. We have also developed the way networks come together within the area teams to support children and create positive change. We have been able to share areas of good practice by bringing those teams together and have been able to learn from each other, refine skills and offer a more specialist approach to those children and young people where extra familial harm is the concern.
43. Risk and Vulnerability Management (RVM) – RVM has now been operational across the county since November 2024. As of February 2025, there are 92 children who are vulnerable to or experiencing Extra Familial Harm. Of these 13 are to be heard at the next RVM, 38 have emerging concerns, 24 have medium concerns and there are 17 children who are at high risk of extra familial harm.
44. Already we are seeing a significant improvement in the quality of the Extra Familial Harm Assessment and Safer Plans that are being reviewed. Through

recent audit work we saw increased evidence of the young person's voice within them, alongside specific actions to increase safety and disrupt harm. This is a significant improvement on previous plans where the young person's voice was not captured, and actions were neither specific nor robust. The partnership is also reflecting that plans are now much more detailed and there is more oversight of actions and in general the partnership is working together much more effectively to consider the vulnerabilities of the child, the adults that may be seeking to harm them and the locations where this may be occurring.

45. Edge of Care - The Edge of Care team have worked with 107 children and families since it went live in June 2024 until the 14th of January 2025. Of these:
- 5 young people have become looked after and remained CLA: 4.67%
 - 5 young people were subject to Section 20 (Provision of accommodation for children who can no longer live with parents) at point of referral and supported by Edge of Care intervention returned home: 4.67%. This was achieved within an average timeframe of 8 weeks.
 - 4 young people were in care subject to Section 20 at point of referral and remained in care, despite intervention: 3.74%
 - 4 young people have been engaged in Edge of Care intervention and been made subject to Section 20 and are in process of being reunified home: 3.74%
 - Out of the 4 who are in process of being reunified home, 3 are on course to meet the 8-week planned transition and 1 will require longer term support due to complexity of need.
 - 89 of the active referrals have remained out of care with Edge of Care intervention
46. Officers are working with finance colleagues to calculate the financial impact of the preventative measures of the Edge of Care team to calculate what the costs would have had the children become looked after and how the savings (cost avoidance) are reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This includes the calculation of the potential costs of expenses which relate to the type of placement, foster care, residential care, Social Work time and any other associated costs.
47. Missing - Following the setup of a new Missing team for at-risk missing children, we have seen improved Return Home Interview (RHI) completions. The quality of our RHI's in adolescent services has also improved as evidenced by feedback from partners. On several occasions, the quality and depth of the RHI has meant that the police have been able to begin exploitation investigations. In January we completed 71 Return Home Interviews, and we now have the reporting tools which enable us to track our progress on the completion of these return home interviews within 72 hours.

This has led to a 25% increase in RHI's being complete in 72 hours over the last 3 months and now stands at 69% which is 9% higher than the national benchmark of 60% (Missing People).

48. The Central Hub currently have 5 location assessments in progress across Surrey, focusing on different aspects of extra-familial harm, ranging from criminal exploitation to sexual harm in a community residential setting. The team are also in the process of reviewing an existing location assessment, to understand the concerns and issues for young people and residents in these areas. We have screened a further location in Horley, where the team were able to assert that extra-familial harm was not a significant factor and fed this back to the referring Community Safety Joint Action Group for an alternative response to be sought.
49. The Central Hub have worked to improve the efficacy of mapping processes, and this will assist significantly with the completion of contextual peer group assessments. The Central Hub and wider adolescent service staff have supported 6 British Transport Police and Surrey Police Operations with partners, where we have been able to provide real-time safeguarding information and diversionary work with any children stopped on the rail network who may be at risk of or experiencing modern slavery through exploitation.
50. Staff are now integrated into the district and borough JAG (Joint Action Group), CHaRMM (Community Harm and Reduction Management Meetings) and SOCJAG (Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Groups) meetings, ensuring that safeguarding in context is being emphasised in these fora regularly and the idea of designing in safety is being considered as an alternative to designing out crime. This also ensures that information is transferred more efficiently to and from RVM2 in a timely way and which allows for robust monitoring and oversight of tasks.
51. The Central Hub are also supporting a number of education providers with awareness around extra-familial harm, building safety around students who may be vulnerable to extra-familial harm or abuse, support for parents of adolescents in understanding and responding to concerns around internet safety, online grooming, and safer use of mobile phones.
52. For further evidence of the impact that the Adolescent Services are starting to make please refer to the case studies detailed in (the exempt) Annexes 1 to 8.

Areas of development

53. Locality based teams are working on embedding the practice model in greater depth, ensuring everyone is clear about practice expectations. Ensuring that we are working with the right children at the right time, achieving consistency with performance balanced against quality recording. We are also developing our approach of 'writing to the child' and ensuring that the young person has agency and a voice in their plans.
54. In November, a review of the 86 young people who are open to RVM showed that their Safer Plans were of varying quality. The key elements that we want to see within the plan is evidence of the voice of child and that it is their plan – customised to their specific needs and experiences. We also want to see very specific actions that focus on identified extra familial harms and look to build safety for the child and disrupt harms within their locality.
55. The Missing Team now has accurate data with which to monitor our performance against our statutory responsibility to complete a Return Home Interview within 72 hours. Our key next steps are to ensure that all young people have an RHI form completed, and that a greater proportion of these are completed within 72 hours. The Missing Team will also develop the support and training offered to our foster carers on supporting young people who regularly go missing and work more closely with Surrey's children's homes to ensure that effective support is given to young people who frequently go missing.
56. We are working on improving the efficacy of practitioners updating LCS regarding the housing status of 16/17 year old children, so we can accurately monitor and support those who are presenting as homeless, at risk of homelessness or in a precarious housing arrangement.
57. Adolescent Performance Dashboard - The Performance & Intelligence Team have developed a dashboard so we can ensure that key performance metrics are being met, and we are measuring impact. This product is evolving, and we are confident that as it becomes more refined it will become a vital tool in helping us clearly understand the impact, quality, and direction of our work.
58. LCS/EHM (Child Record Management System) Extra Familial Harm pathway – A pilot project was completed and reviewed, and we are now embarking on re-designing the pathway. This pathway will embed the EFH Assessment and Safer Plan within LCS/EHM and enable the effective review of plans, sharing with others and greatly improve our data analysis of children experiencing EFH.

59. At a systems level we are looking to integrate the Youth Offer Service into the Central Hub by ensuring that we have joint consultations so we can offer a tailored package of support to young people that could include group based interventions provided by the youth offer, one to one support from the Edge of Care Team and local contextual assessments in the community where the young person is coming to harm.
60. Children missing education is a key priority for the Adolescent Service and there is on-going collaboration with Education Services to help us provide effective support within the context of such a large and complex system of needs, processes, and relationships. Key to this will be the development of our partnership working with the Virtual School.
61. Embedding of the new multi-agency Missing Protocol.
62. Co-design of the service with children, young people, and their families. The Adolescent Service collates feedback from children & families to inform the development of the service. However, we would like to develop this further and bring groups of young people together so they can help us review and plan the service moving forward.
63. Co-design of the service with children, young people, and their families. The Adolescent Service collates feedback from children & families to inform the development of the service. However, we would like to develop this further and bring groups of young people together so they can help us review and plan the service moving forward.

Report contact

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEE



Thursday, 13 March 2025

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 reports, 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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SC370703

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by the local authority. It provides care for up to 12 children with learning or neurodevelopmental disabilities. There are four apartments that are suitable for providing short- or long-term care. There were seven children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2023.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 October 2024

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 22 February 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2024	Full	Good
01/03/2023	Full	Good
23/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/04/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make remarkable progress because they are looked after by staff who are deeply committed to understanding and meeting their individual needs. Staff are passionate about building and maintaining trusting relationships with children. They take great pride in their contribution to improving outcomes for children.

As a result of proactive support from staff, children make excellent progress in relation to their attendance and achievement in education. Staff celebrate children's success. They support them to maintain friendships with children from outside the home.

There is a deeply embedded culture of ensuring that children have positive experiences. Children benefit from being offered a wide range of activities. Staff also go to great lengths to celebrate special occasions. They involve children's friends and family members. One parent said staff had made their child's life interesting and fulfilled and they wished that the child could stay forever. Another parent said that they could not have wished for a better place for their child to live.

Children make good progress towards goals that are important to them. This is because staff are adept at noticing and rewarding children when they achieve something which may seem small but is significant for them.

Staff understand the importance of supporting children to spend time with their families. Family time is structured so that children and their families have quality time together. As a result, some children's relationships with their parents have significantly improved.

Staff are familiar with each child's methods of communication and enable children to influence decisions about the way that they are looked after. Staff are creative, and they are adept at expanding the range of communication tools available to children. Consequently, children know that their voices will be heard and their views are valued.

The processes that are followed when children move into and out of the home are exceptionally thoughtful. Managers and staff work closely with children's parents and with professionals who know children well to gain a thorough understanding of children's needs before they move in. Planning for children's moves to adult placements start many months before they leave. This ensures that children and their families experience positive and well-planned endings.

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

The home has been adapted so that children's physical needs can be safely met. The adaptations have been carried out sensitively to ensure that the children do not experience any unnecessary restrictions of their liberty. Careful consideration is given to which of the four apartments is the most suitable group living environment for children.

Staff know the children extremely well. They understand and consistently implement children's care plans and risk assessments, which are comprehensive and individualised.

The frequency and severity of behavioural incidents reduces over time because staff help children to overcome communication barriers. Staff recognise that changes in children's presentation and behaviour may indicate that they are struggling and need additional support. This enables staff to successfully de-escalate behavioural incidents at an early stage. All physical interventions since the last inspection have been at a low level.

Staff fulfil their responsibilities in relation to the safe storage, administration and recording of medication. Medication errors are rare. When errors do occur, they are taken seriously, and steps are taken to reduce the risk of a recurrence.

When safeguarding concerns are reported to the registered manager, she diligently follows safeguarding procedures. She involves external professionals when necessary. This thorough and transparent approach promotes children's safety.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager has created an aspirational and professional culture that is evident in all aspects of the way the home is run. One staff member said that the registered manager 'challenges us to be better. She supports our personal and professional development to enable us to be the next generation of leaders.'

The registered manager is extremely aspirational for children, and children's welfare is at the centre of all decisions. She understands the importance of working closely with other professionals and keeps them fully informed about children's progress. The registered manager proactively advocates for children and challenges decisions made by other professionals when she believes that those decisions are not made with children's best interests in mind.

Staff supervision and team meetings are used to good effect to ensure that staff have a sound understanding of children's needs. The excellent training offer ensures that children are looked after by knowledgeable and well-informed staff. The strong leadership of the home and the quality of care create an environment where staff are proud to work.

The registered manager is deeply committed to ensuring continuous improvement. As a result of robust monitoring systems, she has an exceptionally well-rounded view of the home's strengths and weaknesses. However, there was a minor shortfall in relation to records of the oversight of incident reports. The registered manager carries out thorough reviews of incidents with the children and staff involved, but the learning could be better recorded.

What does the children's home need to do to improve? Recommendation

- The registered person should make best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. She is responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: SC370703

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

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

Responsible individual: Paul Thomas

Registered manager: Allison Wykes

Inspectors

Sonata Brisley, Social Care Inspector
Kerry Howarth, Social Care Inspector

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2784702

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children’s home

This home is owned and run by a local authority. The home is registered to provide care for up to four children who experience emotional and/or social difficulties. Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The home was registered with Ofsted in April 2024, and the registered manager has been in post since that date.

This is the first inspection of the home since registration.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 December 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children’s home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

When children come to live in the home, managers consider a range of information and complete assessments that consider their needs. However, some of these lack full information about children and consideration of any specific training needs for staff. Consequently, staff have not always had a comprehensive understanding of children when they arrived and have sometimes felt unprepared.

Children enjoy warm and nurturing relationships with staff who talk about children, and to them, with care and respect. Staff understand the barriers children face because of their experiences and appreciate the importance of setting realistic targets for children. They can identify progress each child has made from their own individual starting point.

Children say that staff listen to them and support them with the things they need help with. Staff involve children in their own placement planning process and in things such as activity or menu planning. This helps children to feel valued.

Staff have not yet been able to find suitable education placements for children. Managers are working with education professionals to try and progress children's plans for education. They are proactive in exploring alternative options that are age-appropriate and targeted to children's strengths and interests. In the meantime, staff work hard to try and engage children in a structured plan of daily activities.

Children are supported to keep in touch and spend time with family members in line with their relevant plans. For all three children, the move to the home has brought them back into their home community. For two of them, this has helped them to see family members more. This supports children's sense of identity and belonging.

Staff work with children to encourage and support their independence skills, such as shopping, cooking and self-care. For one child, there has been a delay in allocating them a personal adviser and creating their pathway plan. There is no evidence of managers providing timely challenge to the placing authority about these delays, which weakens support for the child to prepare for the future.

Managers and staff have ensured that the communal areas of the home are clean and in good repair. Children enjoy the use of a large garden, although one area of this needs attention so it can be used for the benefit of all children. There are no photos of the children or displays of their activities and achievements in communal areas. Staff support children to personalise their rooms in some ways, but leaders have not given permission for them to have them repainted if they wish. This undermines efforts to help children have ownership of their environment and to feel heard.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children say they feel safe. They know how to make a complaint and feel able to talk to staff about worries. Managers and staff have a good understanding of the children and their vulnerabilities, and staff who were spoken to understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

There have been concerns about one child going missing from home. When this has happened, staff have followed missing-from-care protocols for the child and have been proactive in trying to locate them. Staff have safety plans in place in relation to the children's vulnerability in the community. However, the procedures for staff to take are not clear in all circumstances, and the plans do not capture agreements made about the expectations of other agencies. This means that staff may not always be clear about the actions to take and what has been agreed with partner agencies.

Staff understand that children often communicate through their behaviour, and they are guided to take a supportive approach if children show behaviours of distress. This helps to reduce the need for physical interventions, of which there has been one since the home opened. Managers understand the importance of having oversight of incidents, and this has improved. Recent incidents show consistent oversight and action being taken to address issues arising to help support the children.

On one occasion, when a child had been involved in an accident and was in hospital, staff did not arrange to go and be with them and bring them home. The child did not experience the care and nurture they needed. Managers have not taken action to address this.

Managers understand the role of the local authority designated officer and involve them when there are allegations against staff. However, this is not always done in a timely way in line with the provider's policy. Robust decisions about managing risks are not always made. Managers do not have a clear system for recording each allegation and the action taken. These shortfalls weaken systems for protecting children from unsafe staff practice and protecting the rights of staff.

Systems for managing medication and for monitoring health and safety in the home are secure. The registered manager took swift action following a medication error. As a result, there has been no recurrence.

When new staff come to work in the home, managers carry out a range of safer recruitment checks. This helps to ensure that children are cared for by safe people.

Bedroom door alarms are used. Written consent is provided for these from the placing authority, and their use is for safeguarding purposes. However, there is not a

system in place to review their use to ensure that it remains necessary and proportionate for each child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is led by a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager. They are enthusiastic about their role and about outcomes for children. They have a thoughtful approach to the support of staff and creative ideas for improving this. This makes them a good role model for staff.

Leaders have not ensured that there has been consistently good enough management oversight in the period since the home opened. Changes in senior management, the departure of deputy managers and sickness of the registered manager have impacted on this and, in turn, on the progress made in establishing a strong and stable team. This is reflected in things such as late safeguarding notifications and delayed action in response to the report of the independent visitor. There have recently been two new deputies appointed and a change in senior management arrangements, which have improved support for the registered manager, but it is too early to see the impact of this.

Staff describe the registered manager as supportive and helpful. However, the issues with oversight and leadership have impacted on the registered manager's ability to ensure that staff receive the right support. Staff supervision has not been taking place in line with company policy, including for staff who are on probation. The workforce development plan has not been updated to inform support. This undermines efforts to build staff confidence and resilience. Managers are aware of this shortfall and have begun to take action to address it.

Social care professionals are positive about the care provided by staff and their communication. Managers take part in multi-agency forums to review safety plans and manage risk collaboratively when needed. On two occasions, police did not accept a missing-from-home report, and return home interviews have not always been carried out by the placing authority following missing-from-home episodes. There is no evidence of managers challenging these responses to try and ensure consistently helpful responses for children.

Managers have effective systems in place to oversee staff training, which is helping to ensure that children are cared for by well-informed staff.

Managers understand the importance of consistency of staffing for children. There is some use of agency staff, but there has been active recruitment to address vacancies. When agency staff are used, they are alongside staff who the children know to ensure that children's care is led by staff they have a relationship with.

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, The 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, this refers to ensuring that there is consistency of oversight across the service, staff supervision, challenge to partner agencies and addressing concerns about staff practice.</p>	<p>31 January 2025</p>
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p>	<p>31 January 2025</p>

<p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, this relates to allowing children to fully personalise their rooms and upkeep of all outside space.</p>	
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;</p> <p>that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vii)(e))</p> <p>In particular, this refers to the management and recording of allegations against staff and the quality of safety plans for children.</p>	<p>31 January 2025</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that assessments completed to inform decisions about children coming to live in the home give full consideration to their needs and how staff will be supported to understand and meet these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person should ensure that staff celebrate children and their achievements by displaying them in the home for children to see. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.7)
- The registered person should ensure that the use of electronic door alarms is regularly reviewed, involving parents, children (if possible) and social workers to consider if it continues to be necessary for safeguarding purposes in accordance with regulation 24. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.16)

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: 2784702

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

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

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Vincent White

Inspectors

Jacob Robson, Social Care Inspector
Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE
SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 March 2025



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 tracking performance of the 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:

Note that Members will review the information at the Practice Improvement and Performance Information meeting on 11 March.

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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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: November	November RAG	Figure for: December	December RAG	Figure for: January	January RAG	RAG Narrative
Number of CSPA contacts received	N/A	N/A		5050		5091		5573		January saw the highest volume of contacts in the 12 months to date. Over those 12 months there has been some fluctuation, but the lowest volume was 4152 in August 2024. Contact volumes patterns did not change significantly in 2024.
Number and percentage of contacts progressed to social care	N/A	N/A		811 16%		912 18%		1045 19%		There has been a corresponding increase in children being progressed to Social Care with a 3% increase on November's total. Again 1045 is the highest number in 12 months but progression patterns across 2024 are consistent, with rises and dips. The percentage of contacts > referral is not significantly different.
4.2 Re-referrals to Children's Services	15 - 20%	21%	21%	18%	G	22%	R	20%	G	The Re-referral rate is within the target range. The re-referral pattern over 2024 was consistent but analysis of whether any areas have higher levels of re-referral will be commissioned to test threshold consistency Countywide.
4.3 Proportion of Assessments completed within 45 working days	100%	84%	88%	88%	R	94%	A	89%	R	There is variation month on month with the total number of assessments being completed on time. The Assessment teams are maintaining performance at above 90% and in January, although with smaller volumes, there was performance at 96% within CWD and 100% at FST West. Given that improvement in these other teams is the key to overall improved performance this is a positive indicator. There is still work to be done with some of the other teams, particularly in SAT, to improve timeliness.
5.2 Number of Children in Need	N/A	N/A		2086		2211		2183		Whilst on this indicator, the 12-month rolling average has remained relatively stable over time with slight fluctuations, the actual number of children in need shows some volatility with noticeable peaks and troughs throughout 2024. In the last three months there has been a continued fluctuation.
5.2 Child In Need Visits up to date	100%	N/A		87%	R	84%	R	91%	A	Consistency remains a factor in performance against this indicator as the 3 monthly figures demonstrate. However, performance in January across services was good in areas that had undertaken improvement work. FST in both East & West achieved 91%, CWD at 96%. Assessment was at 81% which suggests a weakness in follow-up or a data- cleansing need. SAT was at 87%.
6.2 Proportion of S47 Enquiries with an outcome of Initial Child Protection Conference	N/A	37%	39%	41%		37%		29%		November saw a peak in the number of children being progressed to ICPC (68 out of 165 or 41%). December and January, despite having more open Section 47 Investigations, saw a decrease with January returning to previous conversion rates at 29%. Rate of conversion to ICPC will be the focus of further work to analyse the narrative that the process of investigation provides assurance that follow up work can be provided at a Child in Need level.
6.3 Child Protection volumes and rate	N/A	52	40	586 22.3		604 23.0		602 23.0		The continued fall in the numbers of children on child protection plans seen throughout 2024 bottomed out with September's 542. Since then, there has been a rise in CP Plans to December's 604, with a minimal fall back in January.

6.4 Initial Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	100%	80%	82%	77%	R	78%	R	67%	R	Performance against this indicator is poor. January's data related to 7 families where ICPC's were not arranged within timescales. Timeliness issues related to the completion of the Sec.47 Investigation or its management sign off primarily impacted on this group of children.
6.5 Child Protection Plan repeat in 2 years	10% - 15%	N/A		16%	R	1%	R	10%	G	There is no national indicator assigned to this area, but the number of children returning to child protection plans within 2 years is an area for scrutiny. We have set an "expected" return of between 10% & 15% hence the RAG rating. Recent analysis suggests that most children returning to CP Plans have seen a re-emergence of issues related to domestic violence, parental mental health issues or dependency issues. There is ongoing analysis of returning children's situations through the Independent Reviewing Service.
6.6 Review Child Protection Conferences held within timescale	100%	90%	94%	100%	G	99%	A	98%	A	Consistently good performance by the Reviewing Service in managing the processes around review conferencing. 8 children out of 405 had a late Review with SAT and CWD achieving 100% timeliness.
6.7 Proportion of children subject to a CP Plan for over 24 months	2%	2.5%	3.9%	3.8%	R	3.3%	R	2.8%	R	16 children have been on Plans for more than two years. There is a higher number of children within the North East represented in the 10 children who have been on Plans longest. There has been consistent work recently to address long term child protection planning which has led to a positive reduction in the number of children and young people who are subject to long term child protection planning, through step-down to child in need or entering care proceedings
6.8 Children subject to a CP Plan seen in the last 10 working days	100%	N/A		94%	A	93%	A	94%	A	38 children out of 605 did not have a timely visit in January. There was strong performance across all service areas with individual teams having 100% compliance. There are clear indicators within management information for those teams which may need additional support, but sustained good performance management is delivering tangible improvement.

Metrics - KPI component	What is the KPI/Target where applicable	What is the statistical benchmark for National/Comparable LAs		Figure for: November		November RAG	Figure for: December		December RAG	Figure for: January		January RAG	Narrative to attach to the RAG ratings
7.1 Number of Looked After Children and rate per 10k	N/A	70	47	960	36.6		963	36.7		941	35.8		There is a continued incremental decline in numbers of looked after children under 18 as more young people transfer to Leaving Care or exit care than come in. LAC per 10,000 was at 37.3 in January 2024 and is at 35.8 12 months later.
7.1 Number of Care Leavers	N/A	N/A		780			782			784			The numbers of care leavers had also been falling throughout 2024 until September's 775. Since then there has been an incremental increase in the numbers of young people open to the service.
7.2 Looked After Children with up to date Reviews	100%	N/A		95%		A	97%		A	97%		A	31 children out of 941 had a late review in January. There is no particular service area or IRO that is more likely to have a late Review. Workflow issues may account for some late notification of reviews having taken place. Most delay is at the first Review within 4 weeks of accommodation and performance improves at subsequent Reviews where the IRS arranges the Review. This has been an area for consistent and sustained strong performance.
7.3 Looked After Children statutory visits	100%	N/A		96%		A	95%		A	97%		A	26 children out of 941 were not seen within timescale in January. There is consistency month on month in performance county wide, and all services achieved 93% and above in January.
7.7 Looked After Children Initial Health Assessments completed	100%	N/A		86%		R	85%		R	89%		R	Performance fluctuates within a narrow band against this indicator. 812 children had an IHA within time against 87 who were overdue in January. There is no significant difference between service areas in the completion of IHAs. For Review HA's January saw parity between children in and out of County in the provision of timely Review Health Assessments.
7.8 Looked After Children Review Health Assessments completed	100%	89%	89%	92%		A	92%		A	91%		A	
7.9 Looked After Children Dental Checks completed - in care more than 1 year	100%	79%	79%	92%		A	91%		A	93%		A	Although not meeting our target performance locally is significantly better than national/stat neighbour. 618 out of 678 children had a timely Dental check. There is no real disparity in children receiving a timely service whether in or out of County. Examination of data shows that most who have not had dental checks sit within the 11-15 cohort. This is a featured area within LAC Reviews and IRO's promote dental health in reviews. It has also been an area of particular focus in county performance meetings.
7.13 Looked After Children Short Term Placement Stability	9%	10%	11%	8.0%		G	8.5%		G	8.4%		G	Short term stability is sitting within range and in line with national & stat neighbours.
7.14 Looked After Children Long Term Placement Stability	75%	68%	66%	73%		A	74%		A	74%		A	Performance when seen over 12 months shows a 7% increase in placement stability. Performance against this indicator has a number of factors at play in terms of children's needs and how these are best met. We are performing ahead of stat/national indicators.
7.15 Looked After Children placed over 20 miles from Surrey	20%	15%	22%	34%		R	33%		R	34%		R	The majority of children and young people are cared for within Surrey or immediate neighbours but less than 20 miles from home. We are however adrift from our own internal target and from stat/national comparators. There is ongoing work to address this issue including ongoing efforts to recruit new carers, the opening of new in Surrey children's homes and bringing children back into Surrey when possible due to changes in need and circumstances.
7.6 Personal Education Plans – Quality Termly	100%	N/A					86%		A				

										The aspirational Quality Assurance (QA) Framework for PEPs of statutory school age children introduced for the 2023-4 academic year is now fully embedded & in use across all schools as well as the Virtual School. The clear descriptors of expected quality have resulted in a further reduction in the percentage of PEPs failing to meet minimum standard, from 12% (Autumn 2023) to 5% Autumn term 2024. A similar QA system was introduced for Post 16 PEPs in September 2024. PEP completion rates have increased to 95% across the full age range, reflecting better engagement with the process particularly in the early years and post 16.
7.12 Pathway plans – Looked After Children	100%	N/A		98%	A	98%	A	99%	A	Consistently good performance is behind this very positive indicator. Only two children within the 16/3 months cohort do not have a Pathway Plan in place and this is being addressed with CWD & SAT.
8.2 Care Leavers in Contact with Surrey	95%	N/A		93%	A	95%	G	95%	G	There are 13 care leavers between 17-21 who are not in touch with the LA. In Touch performance is in line with national averages and local performance is consistent.
8.3 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	100%	91%	86%	86%	R	85%	R	96%	A	There are 4 young people 17-18 in unsuitable accommodation. 2 have returned to family care, 1 is in custody and 1 is missing & NFA. This latter young man is having all expected follow up to identify his whereabouts given the contextual risk he is exposed to.
8.3 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	90%	88%	85%	94%	G	94%	G	94%	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, 2 who have returned to family care and one young person who is of No Fixed Abode due to his missing status. All expected efforts are being made to trace this latter young person.
8.4 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment and training (EET)	75%	64%	64%	58%	R	55%	R	64%	R	Performance in the area of EET is consistent but underperforming against target, although in line with comparators. Analysis suggests that there is a particular spike at 18 when young people have a change in their accommodation, there is also the impact of short term employment and zero hours contracts. This is particularly noticeable between 18-21 after which most young people appear to be EET. There is a core group of young people who appear NEET in the longer term which needs further analysis.
8.4 Proportion of Care Leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment and training (EET)	65%	54%	54%	60%	A	60%	A	61%	A	
9.2 LAC Missing Children Going Missing in the Month	N/A	13,010	103	56		56		51		51 looked after children went missing in January on a total of 71 occasions. For most young people their missing episode was a single episode and appears to be staying out later than agreed. For a small group of young people there are more frequent episodes for longer durations but these young people are well known and have extensive supports in place.
10.1 Child Supervision recorded to timescale	90%	N/A		85%	A	86%	A	87%	A	Supervision on children's case records continues to be problematic. Within this, analysis shows a range of performance with some service areas and individual teams performing at a higher level. FST West at 94% with 3 individual teams at 100%. Care Leavers at 98% with 1 team at 100% and 3 in the high 90's and Looked After at 93% and 2 teams at 100%. Where performance is less good this is an area for Practice Challenge Meetings to progress.

ELL KPIs – AND and Inclusion – January 25

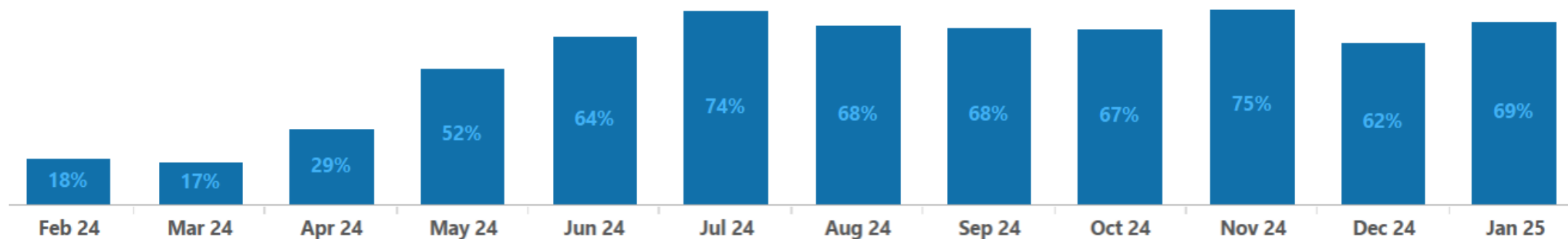
Priority	Measure	Target	Previous	Latest	DoT	Notes
Early Identification & Support	SEN support notifications	n/a	201 (Jan 24)	268 (Jan 25)	↑	Monthly
	Early Years Development checks	69%	65.3% (Q1 24/25)	82.9% (Q2 24/25)	↑	Quarterly
Inclusion in Education and Community	Number of Children missing education	n/a	136 (Dec 24)	167 (Jan 25)	↑	Monthly
	Proportion of pupils with EHCP who are persistently absent	37.3%	34.1% (HT1-2 23/24)	33.2% (HT1-2 24/25)	↓	Half termly
	Proportion of pupils on SEN Support who are persistently absent	32.7%	22.8% (HT1-2 23/24)	23.2% (HT1-2 24/25)	↑	Half termly
Joint Commissioning, Sufficiency and Evaluation	Waiting time – SLT, patients waiting over 18 weeks	0	114 (Nov 24)	105 (Dec 24)	↓	Monthly
	Number of MindWorks referrals	n/a	3154 (Nov 24)	2211 (Dec 24)	↓	Monthly
	Total <u>MindWorks</u> referrals in financial year to date (FYTD)	tbc	20,047 (Nov 24)	22,258 (Dec 24)	n/a	Monthly
	Total MW referrals in the FYTD as % of YTD commissioned capacity	tbc	128% (Nov 24)	127% (Dec 24)	↓	Monthly
	<u>MindWorks</u> (ND pathway) - no. of working days until 1st appointment	tbc	326 (Nov 24)	328 (Dec 24)	↑	Monthly
Systems and Practice	Timeliness of EHCP assessments for plans issued in month <u>exc exceptions</u> *	60%	63% (Dec 24)	70% (Jan 25)	↑	Monthly
	Number of overdue EP advice requests	0	27 (Dec 24)	49 (Jan 25)	↑	Monthly
	Number of overdue EHCPs (inclusive of overdue EP advice request) <i>(figure in brackets shows number excluding DfE allowed exceptions)*</i>	tbc	61 (Dec 24) (22)	21 (Jan 25) (16)	↓ (↓)	Monthly
	% of sections within sampled EHCPs graded good or outstanding**	-	75% (Nov 24)	84% (Dec 24)	↑	Monthly
	% of sections within sampled EHCPs graded satisfactory, good or outstanding**	-	97% (Nov 24)	99% (Dec 24)	↑	Monthly
	% of CYP with an up-to-date Annual Review recorded – LA response date	75%	81% (Dec 24)	79% (Jan 25)	↓	Monthly
	No. of stage 1 complaints as % of EHCPs	-	5.4% (2022)	5.0% (2023)	↓	Annual
	No. of cumulative appeals received during calendar year to date	-	70 (Jan 24)	74 (Jan 25)	↑	Monthly
	SEND tribunal rate as a % of appealable decisions	3%	4.6% (2022)	4.7% (2023)	↑	Annual

* DfE allowed exceptions largely relate to requests made during a period when schools closed for 4 or more weeks. Jan 25 data includes an on time case with appeal launched after issue which Tableau incorrectly excludes, as it cannot currently distinguish between appeals launched pre and post issue of plan. ** every month, approx 10% of newly issued EHCPs are sampled for audit – this is around 10-15 plans per month. There are 12 sections in an EHCP and the data shows the % of plans with satisfactory, good and outstanding sections, reporting on % of sections is consistent with satisfactory now being included in the above data

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Performance against targets in EHCP Recovery Plan

EHCP Completed on-time - by Issued Date



We reached 70% timeliness overall in January 2025. Please note that the graph above is incorrectly showing 69% as the Tableau dashboard cannot currently distinguish between appeals launched before and after the issue of a plan, and so is excluding a plan issued on time which has subsequently been challenged. We expect to continue to be above the national average of 50% timeliness this term.

Demand for EHCNAs has risen in December by 15% above the same period the previous year but last year saw an overall reduction of needs assessment requests and the 2024 autumn term rate is 9% less than 2022.

The backlog of overdue annual reviews continues to decline with timeliness of annual reviews for the whole eligible cohort at 77% as of 12th February 2025 (compared with 25% in July 2023). We have achieved our milestone of 75% of all annual reviews being up-to-date by December 2024.

We strive towards a position where every child receives their EHCP on time where it is within our control to achieve this.

We will continue to closely monitor this data at child level.



Monitoring of the progress of EHCNAs takes place daily, with resources being refocused, where needed, to support the completion of this work.

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SNAPSHOT DASHBOARD – SOCIAL WORKERS - December 2024



All data shown here includes Social Worker, Senior Social Workers and Advanced Social Workers only

Permanent: 263.0 FTE (59.13%) / 274 Roles (58.05%)

  266.5 (FTE) / 281 (roles) 12 months ago



7 fewer roles and 3.5 fewer FTE staffed with permanent workers compared to 12 months ago

Vacant: 69.1 FTE (15.54%) / 70 Roles (14.83%)

  76.7 FTE/ 80 Roles 12 months ago

(10 fewer vacant roles and 7.6 fewer FTE are fully vacant (no locum cover) compared to 12 months ago)

Locums: 112.7 FTE (25.34%) / 115 Roles (27.12%)

  (110.7 FTE (24.89%) / 114 roles (24.48%) 12 months ago

1 more roles and 2 more FTE staffed with locum workers compared to 12 months ago

(In FTE, 61.9 locums are Social Workers, 39.8 are Senior and 11.0 are Advanced)

Social Worker Workforce Trends (last 4 quarters & latest data)

	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Latest Data Dec-24
Permanent (%)	58.32%	57.98%	56.12%	56.82%	59.13%
Vacancy (%)	16.79%	18.51%	19.43%	16.05%	15.54%
Locum (%)	24.89%	23.51%	24.45%	27.13%	25.34%
Total (FTE)	456.8	441.5	438.5	428.0	444.8

Target Social Worker Workforce Ratio

Permanent: 80-85%
Vacancy: 5%
Locum: 10-15%

Turnover: 12.04% (voluntary)



By 4.93% over last 12 months (16.97%)

(Turnover has steadily reduced since a high of 30.70% in July 2022)

New Starters:



(34 in last 12 months)

Leavers (Voluntary):



(33 in last 12 months)

Sickness (long-term):

690 days 10 Employees



Sickness (short-term):

670.5 days 108 Employees



Total social worker staffing costs

£ Monthly spend – Permanent staff: £1.20m

£ Monthly spend – Agency staff: £0.99m

£ **Total monthly spend: £2.19M**
 **By £133k**

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Surrey Foster Carers Turnover

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
2023	358	599	107
2024	331	584	102

(Source: Ofsted Fostering Data Set Return)

Fostering Households approved by fostering panel in year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-24	2024-25 17 th Feb 2025
General foster carer	31	21	18	21	26
Friends and family carer	50	41	37	37	31
Fostering to adopt carer	2	4	-	1	Adoption SE report on this *
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	59	57

(Source: Surrey Fostering Panel Case Data)

*Foster to Adopt are adopters who are temporarily approved as foster carers to care for a named child under Early Permanence and are assessed and approved by ASE.

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	63	40	23	
2024-2025	48	21	27	

(Source: Surrey Fostering Panel Case Data)

Deregistration reason – Household number	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Resigned due to retirement	11	8	4
Resigned due to change of circumstances	14	23	10

Resigned due to difficulty fulfilling the fostering role	3		4
Resigned as child no longer looked after (Special Guardianship obtained / Adoption Order)	8	7	11
Resigned due to impact of fostering on emotional well-being	1		1
Resigned as child no longer in their care	5	4	
Resigned following standards of care investigation	1		1
Deregistered by the service as no longer suitable to foster	4		2
Child returned home (planned move)		10	7
Placement Breakdown		4	1
Staying put/Supported Lodgings		8	7
Becoming Shared lives carers for previously fostered child		3	

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

Special Guardianship Orders made	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 Q1, Q2 and Q3 (April to December)
Number of children who have had an order made in financial year. (Does not include children where an SGO has been made as an alternative to proceedings and child did not need to become CLA)	59	31	20

Temporary Approval Activity

The fostering service have undertaken roadshows and team Tuesday session to support the focus on family first principles in front line team. It has been clear that the roadshows have an impact on reg 24 numbers, but this is not sustained when roadshows ceased. The fostering service has therefore offered to undertake all viability assessments (this is assessment prior to reg 24's to see if family members are viable to care for children) for the assessment service. This is in hope of identifying family members early and to prevent children needing to be placed with carers that are not known to them. We are also trialling undertaking viability assessment for two family safeguarding teams. The fostering team managers have also offered to attend Family Group Conferences to support families to understand the offer to Kinship carers and produced a Kinship Offer to give to family members.

In December 2024 there were 9 Reg 24 referrals for 15 children. This resulted in 4 households temporarily approved as foster carers for 6 children.

Foster Carers Enquiries

Foster carer enquiries have been at the highest level ever with 302 new enquiries to fostering since the 1st October 2024 to 31st January 2025, with a total of 473 enquiries from 1st April 2024 to 31st January 2025. Compared to a total of 360 in financial year 2023/24 and 229 in 202/23. This has been through use of digital marketing, traditional organic marketing materials such as leafletting and community-based events.

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st January 2025, we have undertaken 103 Initial visits, which has progressed to 27 Stage 1 Assessments. We have found that enquirers are motivated by a desire to support children, but this is not always fully thought through in terms of children's needs and experiences and the requirements of fostering and registration, leading to what appears to be a high drop-out rate. However, we are hoping to approve 32 new general fostering households this year against our target of 30.

External Assessments

Area	Assessor	Situation in 2021	Situation in 2025
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	82% of those inspected Good or Outstanding
Schools and AP (Tables 2 & 3)	Ofsted	Maintained: 96.1% Good or Outstanding Academies: 90.1% Good or Outstanding	Maintained: 94.3% Good or Outstanding Academies: 88.1% 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 February 2025

SCC children's home	Previous inspection	Most recent inspection
SC405933	Good (Apr 2022)	Good (May 2023)
1230411	Good (Jun 2023)	Good (June 2024)
SC370703	Good (Feb 2024)	Outstanding (October 2024)
SC040633	Outstanding (Jan 2024)	Good (Sep 2024)
SC040638	Inadequate (Sept 2022)	Monitoring visit Oct 2022
SC040631	Requires Improvement Jun 2023 , Assurance inspection Jan 2024	Good (August 2024)
SC040642	Good (Sep 2023)	Good (August 2024)
SC068827	Good (Dec 2023)	Good (Sep 2024)
SC045408	Good (May 2023)	Outstanding (August 2024)
2756164	N/A new registration in Jan 2024	Good (September 2024)
2784702	N/A	Requires Improvement (December 2024)
2784664	N/A	Not yet inspected (new registration Apr 2024)

Non-SCC children's homes housing Surrey children as of February 2025

Ofsted grade	Percentage of homes in England	Number of Surrey children affected
Outstanding or Good	88.9%	107
Requires improvement	5.6%	6
Inadequate	1.1%	1
Not yet inspected	4.4%	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 end of January 2025:

	Primary	Secondary	Special	PRU
Maintained	132 (44%)	7 (13%)	9 (35%)	5 (63%)
Academies	167	51	17	3
Total	299	58	26	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 Jan 2025
Data taken at end of: January 2025

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	Not judged							
Nursery	2	2				4	4	4	100.0%		
Primary	11	113	2	6		132	132	124	93.9%	1.5%	4.5%
PRU	2	2	1			5	5	4	80.0%	20.0%	
Secondary	2	5				7	7	7	100.0%		
Special	7	2				9	9	9	100.0%		
Grand Total	24	124	3	6		157	157	148	94.3%	1.9%	3.8%

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 judged	Not been inspected						
Nursery	216	153	5		5		379	379	369	97.4%	1.3%	1.3%
Primary	775	7,133	531	25	563	6	9,033	9,027	7,908	87.6%	6.2%	6.2%
PRU	29	110	8	4	8		159	159	139	87.4%	7.5%	5.0%
Secondary	68	433	46	3	34		584	584	501	85.8%	8.4%	5.8%
Special	192	291	18	6	27		534	534	483	90.4%	4.5%	5.1%
Grand Total	1,280	8,120	608	38	637	6	10,689	10,683	9,400	88.0%	6.0%	6.0%

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 Jan 2025
Data taken at end of: January 2025

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 judged	Not been inspected						
Primary	21	129	8	4	5		167	167	150	89.8%	7.2%	3.0%
PRU	3						3	3	3	100.0%		
Secondary	10	33	2	1	4	1	51	50	43	86.0%	6.0%	8.0%
Special	5	7	1	1	2	1	17	16	12	75.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Grand Total	39	169	11	6	11	2	238	236	208	88.1%	7.2%	4.7%

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 judged	Not been inspected						
Primary	795	5,774	584	121	380	57	7,711	7,654	6,569	85.8%	9.2%	5.0%
PRU	28	105	17	9	10	6	175	169	133	78.7%	15.4%	5.9%
Secondary	379	1,782	325	82	169	33	2,771	2,738	2,161	78.9%	14.9%	6.2%
Special	143	259	33	25	22	43	525	482	402	83.4%	12.0%	4.6%
Grand Total	1,345	7,920	960	237	581	139	11,182	11,043	9,265	83.9%	10.8%	5.3%

Note: Ofsted do not now issue an overall grading for their inspections carried out, as of September 2024. Schools inspected under the new regime are shown above as 'Not Judged', whereas those showing as 'Not been inspected' have not yet been inspected at all.