

Annual Report 2011-2012

Children, Schools and Families Directorate

1. Introduction

The annual report of Nick Wilson, Strategic Director Children Schools and Families summarises the directorate's progress over the past 12 months, and areas for development going forward. Performance data predominantly reflects the financial year 2011-12 apart from schools data which reflects the 2010/11 academic year.

There are 272,800 children and young people aged 0 to 19 in Surrey, and we want to ensure that they all benefit from living in this prosperous and economically competitive county. This includes being healthy, safe, well educated, having leisure opportunities at each stage of their childhood and having good employment prospects.

The timing of the report reflects the need to reflect key messages from the Ofsted inspection of children's services in the Autumn 2012. The Ofsted inspection of Surrey County Council's arrangements for the protection of children in September 2012 found that our work to keep children safe is effective. We are child focused, we are listening and our work is making a difference to vulnerable children and young people. Following the Ofsted inspection of children's services there is still much to do including implementing an early help approach to tackle problems before they become more serious, and strengthening our work with partners. Financial pressures in the next few years will have a strong impact on the directorate, and in order to sustain continued improvement we have developed our children and young people's strategy for 2012-17. This will help us work more closely with our partners and with children, young people and their families to provide high performing services that deliver the best outcomes at all stages of childhood, and support the most vulnerable. A number of highly innovative projects are underway to improve outcomes for children and improve value for money.

2. Leadership and management

Nick Wilson continued in his role as strategic director for Children, Schools and Families. Councillor Mary Angell continues as statutory Lead Member for Children's Services. Councillor Linda Kemeny replaced Councillor Tim Hall earlier this year and holds the Children and Learning portfolio. Councillor Kay Hammond has continued in her role as portfolio holder for Community Safety. The Deputy Directors Caroline Budden, P-J Wilkinson and Garath Symonds have also played a hugely important role in supporting Nick Wilson's leadership of the directorate.

Ofsted found that senior leaders within Surrey County Council are well supported by elected members and have delivered significant improvements. There is also a good understanding of strengths and areas for development within the council through well developed performance management and quality assurance structures.

3. New children and young people's strategy and lifecourse outcomes

The Children and Young People's Strategy 2012-17 was published in September 2012, following consultation with a range of internal and external partners, elected members, children, young people and families. It has four priorities that reflect the areas we most need to focus on with partners, so that we can use our common resources more effectively. These are:

- **Prevention** - we will support children and young people to have positive contributions and achievements by promoting outcomes that will help boost their own and their families' capacity to avoid developing problems.
- **Protection** - we will protect Surrey's children and young people to keep them safe from harm and neglect, so that they can grow up in an environment that allows them to achieve their best.
- **Participation** - we will increase the number of children and young people in Surrey participating in the best opportunities on offer in the county and beyond.
- **Potential** - we will provide and support excellent opportunities and services for Surrey's children and young people so they can realise their full potential.

Lifecourse outcomes

The children and young people's strategy is underpinned by the 'lifecourse outcomes' approach, which aims to help us better understand the types of support that children and young people need at each stage of their childhood, and enable us to work better with partners. It is intended to develop a common narrative for our aspirations for children and young people and will become a corner piece for our commissioning framework.

Delivery plans

The children and young people's strategy will be delivered through three plans:

- The **health, wellbeing and safeguarding plan** will protect children, promote their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, and improve outcomes for families, engaging a wide range of partners such as clinical commissioning groups, police and schools.
- The **education and achievement plan** will build on strong partnership working with local education providers to achieve good educational outcomes at all stages in a child's life.
- The **young people's employability plan** will deliver the county council's strategy of full participation for all children and young people.

4. Prevention

4.1 Early help

Our preventative approach aims to ensure problems are identified early so that children and young people are provided with additional support alongside traditional case work to prevent the need for more acute or specialist services. The preventative service comprises three teams:

- The family group conference (FGC) service works with young people who are on the cusp of being accommodated. Of the FGCs held in the first quarter of 2011/2012 (April to August 2011), 128 children were prevented from being looked after; 12 subject to care proceedings went back to their family; and 12 were rehabilitated back to family/friends. 43 young people with FGC plans were not prevented from becoming looked after, and 29 families withdrew from the FGC process.
- The extended hours service became operational in September 2011, providing practical and therapeutic multi-agency support for young people on the edge of becoming accommodated. Feedback from service users and partners has been positive.
- HOPE offers a therapeutic day service for young people with mental health issues who are at risk of family or placement breakdown. In 2011-2012, HOPE worked with 119 young people. Key successes include preventing 35 young people from requiring admission to a child psychiatric unit, and increasing average attendance to 79% among young people of compulsory and over compulsory school age, compared to 24% average attendance before their involvement with HOPE.

As reflected within our two year public value programme, one of our most important challenges going forward is to strengthen our focus on early help to stop issues escalating, making it easier for children and young people to stay on track and realise their potential. We will need to work effectively with partners to implement coordinated early help across the county, and agree thresholds for when to use social care as an intervention and when to use less targeted provision. We will need to develop our evidence base to demonstrate the effectiveness of our approach in preventing the need for statutory services.

4.2 Common assessment framework (CAF)

From April 2011 to March 2012, 1,381 CAFs were completed, exceeding the target of 1,000 for that period. It is likely that the target for 2012/2013 (1,000) will be exceeded, with 521 CAFs completed between April to July 2012. There has been a focus on auditing CAFs, monitoring outcomes and gathering user feedback in order to evaluate the effectiveness of early help. Work continues to encourage services, partners and frontline staff to use the CAF appropriately as a holistic assessment and response to children's needs, and to encourage consistent quality of assessment.

4.3 Physical health

Surrey continues to have one of the lowest teenage pregnancy rates in the country. Latest data (2010) indicates that the conception rate for girls under 18 in 2008-2010 was down to 21.4 per 1000 from 22.3 per 1000 in 2007-2009.

The rates for sexually transmitted infections for young people between 2009/10 and 2010/11 fell amongst 15-19 year olds but increased for those under 15. Nationally, the sexually transmitted infections rate fell slightly for both under 15s and 15-19s. Over the past year the Youth Support Service has established new borough based local sexual health schemes providing contraception, condom distribution, Chlamydia testing, advice/signposting and where appropriate, engagement with families around risky sexual behaviours. School nurse and drop in clinics have been established in target areas, and are working to gain the 'You're Welcome' quality standard accreditation so that they reach out to young people who might otherwise be reluctant to use them.

4.4 Emotional wellbeing and mental health

The targeted mental health in schools programme has been extended to over 200 schools, offering training in mental health awareness. The targeted mental health in schools team will continue to promote and develop the key messages to all schools in Surrey, thus ensuring more effective mental and emotional health support for all pupils. Schools can also access early advice and consultation from borough-based primary mental health workers.

The child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) partnership has increased capacity with the deployment of four CAMHS senior nurse practitioners. CAMHS youth advisors continue to involve young people in service development, including training CAMHS staff and peer education in schools. A new and innovative service, 'No Labels', uses a youth work approach to support young people with significant mental health needs who do not wish to engage with statutory services. A mental health equalities project led by Services for Young People will review how needs are being met. The mental health public value review is investigating how children in families where adult or sibling mental health is a concern can be better supported.

4.5 Children and young people with disabilities

In 2011/12, 1,920 disabled children and young people accessed short break activities. Over 250 families are now in receipt of direct payments and there has also been a corresponding increase in the provision of carers breaks grants, which allow families to tailor their own support. Surrey has published a 'short breaks statement' which provides a description of the range of services available. We are also ensuring that necessary savings can be achieved without impacting on individual care packages.

A specific focus on transition, with closer links between children's and adults' services, has enabled earlier planning to take place. Data collection regarding the needs of young people in transition is supporting joint projects with Adult Services to increase the range of options for young adults to remain living in Surrey, reducing costly out of county college placements.

4.6 Housing and youth homelessness

A rapid improvement event earlier this year delivered significant improvements in working relationships with borough and district housing authorities, and a potential resource of 15 bed spaces for young people has been identified. The joint housing protocol is being updated and a common referral form and eviction process has been agreed with all accommodation providers, with a restorative justice approach used to avoid eviction. Young people's housing support panels became operational in September 2012, and our new homelessness prevention service, which went live in November 2012, aims to ensure no young person is homeless or placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

4.7 Surrey Family Support Programme

Surrey is implementing the national troubled families agenda through the Surrey Family Support Programme. The government defines troubled families as those who are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour and have a child not in school and an adult on out-of-work benefits. This definition does not cover all the families with multiple problems who live in Surrey so a database is being developed with input from the Department for Work and Pensions, the police and other partners to target families who would most benefit from the programme.

We have agreed to work jointly with partners to support 1,000 families with multiple problems over the next two years. Local coordination of this work will be led by a small team of staff managed by each borough and district council and supported by the county council, police and other agencies. All families eligible for the support programme will undergo a single multi-agency assessment, incorporating the common assessment framework (CAF), and will have a single multi-agency plan covering the whole family. A team around the family approach will bring together all agencies and professionals working with the family with the aim of intelligently coordinating people and resources. Each of the families in the programme will be given 12 weeks of intensive support provided by family coordinators based in the local borough and district teams.

4.8 Families in poverty

Surrey's families in poverty strategy aims to develop a joint approach with partners to tackle child poverty and its effects locally. It is intended to improve cohesiveness by:

- Encouraging better planning and coordination of services by providing borough and district needs assessments to inform local commissioning.
- Identifying key provision and enhancing this through new, targeted local projects.
- Developing training to raise awareness among frontline staff about family poverty and its effects, including benefits changes and their implications for service users.
- Improving information about available services to ensure families are signposted to appropriate support at an early stage and prevent difficulties from escalating.

The Early Years and Childcare Service promotes the availability of childcare and the support available to pay for it, and thus plays a key role in reducing child poverty. Children's centres can support families to prepare for and/or return to work, and together with the Surrey Family Information Service, provide information about means-tested and non means-tested benefits and services. The young people's employability plan signed off by cabinet in July 2012 contains key actions to tackle worklessness in families, supporting the goal for all young people to participate in education, employment or training, and break the cycle of poverty.

We are currently working with partners in other directorates, the voluntary sector and district and borough colleagues to coordinate support and information for families affected by welfare reforms. This will include training and briefings for staff, and publicity about services that can offer advice/advocacy. Outcomes from district and borough projects commissioned in 2011/12 as part of Surrey's families in poverty strategy are currently being evaluated, and learning will be shared with key partners to help sustain the effective approaches. The child poverty chapter of our joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) will be reviewed in 2013, to inform our on ongoing strategic approach.

5. Protection

5.1 Safeguarding boards

Following a review of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), four area safeguarding groups were established in 2011, forming a vital framework for partnership working. Positive achievements of the area groups include:

- Establishing domestic abuse services for children and funding support groups for adult victims.
- Development of a new children's services threshold document.

- Regular liaison meetings with schools' child protection officers.
- Championing responses to the problem of child sexual exploitation (CSE) across all agencies and successfully raising awareness.
- A joint assessment protocol in the north-west for teenagers who self-harm.
- Funding of specialist training for practitioners on targeted parenting courses.

The service has agreed to switch from being a training provider to a training commissioner. The next year has major challenges and the SSCB will concentrate on:

- Ensuring that service thresholds are adhered to by all key agencies for children in need and those in need of protection.
- Establishing a clear joint commitment with partners to the implementation of an integrated early help offer.
- Implementing the agreement to deliver an integrated child protection initial and risk assessment unit.
- Ensuring that assessments clearly evaluate risks, needs and protective factors, and that consideration of ethnicity and diversity informs planning and interventions.
- Ensuring that child protection and children in need plans are specific about what needs to change for the child, and timescales, and ensuring that risks are reviewed when children have been on child protection plans for more than 18 months.
- Developing and implementing a new quality assurance strategy.
- Scoping, modelling and tendering from provision of a multi-agency safeguarding training plan.
- Developing a strategy to address the problem of domestic abuse, informed by outcomes from a rapid improvement event.

5.2 Education safeguarding

Extra resources have enabled the education safeguarding group to agree an action plan to address areas of weakness. The following priorities have been agreed for this year:

- Delivering up to date and role-relevant safeguarding training to Surrey's education workforce.
- Child sexual exploitation awareness training for all education providers and staff.
- Developing relations with independent education providers in Surrey and where applicable, the safeguarding leads of their sponsors and companies.
- Completing the Section 11 audit for Schools and Learning; co-ordinating and monitoring action plans.

5.3 Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse continues to be a significant priority and a number of workstreams are being developed and implemented. These include building on the existing domestic abuse awareness training framework to offer additional professional and service-specific skills training options; high profile awareness campaigns with core partners and local media, and piloting new ways to share information in a more timely way. A service level agreement is now in place for a centralised commissioning arrangement for specialist domestic abuse outreach services, using service providers' and service user's views to inform commissioning. The operating protocol for multi-agency risk assessment conferences is being reviewed alongside use of the multi-agency information sharing protocol. A deep dive this autumn into case files with Surrey safeguarding children board (SSCB) will complement the learning from recent work where the local safeguarding group worked with specialist

domestic abuse services to review case files and practice. There is also a bid for a joint funded post to support multi agency domestic abuse work.

5.4 Looked after children and care leavers

In line with national trends, the numbers of looked after children continued to rise in 2011/12, reaching 807 at the end of March 2012. 39.5% of looked after children were placed outside Surrey (March 2012). Children placed within their own kinship networks grew from 40 in April 2011 to 100 at the end of March 2012. Most kinship placements are within Surrey, with extended families allowing existing relationships and commitments to continue.

The use of independent fostering agencies (IFAs) increased very slightly over the year but given the overall rise in numbers this rise was not significant. 163 children were placed in IFAs at the year end, meaning that most children needing to be looked after with foster carers were successfully placed within our in-house service. A new parent and child fostering scheme became operational in August 2011, with seven placements approved to date. The scheme offers time-limited assessment placements for parents and children who are subject to care proceedings.

Services for care leavers were brought back in-house under a streamlined model. New teams will work with young people from 16 years old and will have an area based focus, working alongside looked after children teams to improve the arrangements for transition.

The Corporate Parenting Board continues to take an active role in overseeing services and outcomes for looked after children, and links closely with the Care Council to ensure children's views are listened to and acted on. Following a request for more help with savings, a scheme has been developed for looked after children that will see the council match savings made by young people, and the development of a bursary funded by county councillors. This is the first scheme of its kind nationally.

5.5 ICS award

In January 2012, Surrey County Council Children's Services won 'best project delivery' at the UK Public Sector Digital Awards for the implementation of a new integrated children's system. Ofsted praised Surrey for the swift implementation of the new system and resulting improvements in service delivery. The new ICS has improved safeguarding of children through improved increased visibility of data and a reduction in the duplication of records.

6. Participation

6.1 Participation in education, training and employment

Following major reorganisation, a new Youth Support Service provides an integrated response for Surrey's most vulnerable young people, complemented by the commissioning of a range of targeted provision for those at risk of failing to make a successful post-16 transition.

The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained low, relative to our statistical neighbours. Latest figures for June 2012 show that Surrey was one of the best performing authorities (at 4.1%), ranking second among its statistical neighbours, behind Buckinghamshire (3.8%).

The percentage of young people achieving level 2 qualifications by age 19 increased by 2% to 84.6% in 2010/11. This meant that the 2012 target of 83.2% was exceeded a year early. Similar progress was seen at level 3, with a record high of 65.5% attaining this level. Local targets were again exceeded early as the 2011 level 3 results were above the 2015 target of 65%.

The 2011 Surrey Youth Festival provided almost 2,000 year 11 pupils with the opportunity to meet representatives from more than 60 local colleges, training and apprenticeship providers, and help them plan for year 12 and beyond. Surrey County Council has agreed to offer free meals to teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds who attend college courses.

Skills centre pilots in youth centres have successfully concluded in five areas, with the start of countywide roll-out in October 2012 to provide flexible pathways to education, apprenticeships or employment. New contracts with the voluntary sector provided opportunities for 990 young people to participate in youth and community work and local prevention activity in the first months of 2012. Surrey's future jobs fund scheme concluded having successfully created over 350 jobs for young people, and schemes are now being run in three boroughs to continue this positive initiative. 'Work pairing' trials have been commissioned to match a young person with a small business for a no-commitment trial period.

In the first three weeks of availability (August 2012), 90 Surrey apprenticeship grants were claimed, providing £1,500 to each Surrey business taking on a Surrey-resident young person as an apprentice. The 200 in 100 campaign secured 216 pledges (target 200) to employ young people in Surrey businesses in the 100 days leading up to National Apprenticeship Week.

Responsibility for commissioning provision for post-16 learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities (LLDD) transferred from the Learning and Skills Council just over two years ago. The LLDD strategy has been in place for 18 months, showing significant progress including:

- Increased numbers of young people with LLDD accessing local provision.
- Making sure that all young people with statements are able to have a learning difficulty assessment, and that discussions on post-16 options and long term aspirations start much earlier, from Year 9.
- College assessments for high needs learners now take place 14 months before transition, rather than 2-6 months before.
- Multi-agency planning meetings take place each year to plan provision for young people 18 months in advance.
- There are regular focus groups with parents and young people.
- Developing the quality of the assessments, resource allocation and training and development needs.
- Developing closer links between commissioning for supported living and commissioning for education.

6.2 Youth offending

Surrey has achieved an 85% reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system between 2008 and 2012, the lowest per capita in England, with the projection for 2012 -13 indicating a further 50% reduction. First time entrants to the youth justice system are now the lowest ever with just 27 young people in the first three months of 2012. Use of custody continues to be amongst the lowest in the country, with 15 young people receiving a custodial sentence in 2011-12. This is the lowest per capita

use of custody in England for any sizeable authority and represents a 73% reduction in the use of custody in Surrey over the last five years. The most recent Ministry of Justice figures (March 2012) indicate a 28.3% re-offending rate for young people in Surrey. The continued downward trend is encouraging against a flat performance in the south-east region and an increase nationally. New initiatives on preventing homelessness and increasing participation through the ready for work programme and skills centres will further support the drive to reduce reoffending and reduce both remand and sentence custody.

6.3 Children and young people's participation

Opportunities for young people to challenge and debate service provision have included consultation events run by the rights and participation service concerning the design of the new leaving care service; an event for unaccompanied minors, and the development of the new Children's Services pledge (the promise to looked after children about to work with them). Young people have contributed to the 'design a contact room' project, which will see supervised contact rooms redesigned and updated by young people with support from the children's rights team. Total Respect training involving Care Council members has been delivered six times this year, with a plan to extend provision in the coming months. Care Council Juniors has been established for 8 to 12 year olds, and the 'One Voice' group for disabled children has been valuable in helping drive service changes.

6.4 Advocacy and complaints

There has been a significant increase in the number of young people requesting advocacy support, 34 in 2011 2012 compared to seven in the previous 12 months, suggesting that more children and young people are aware of their rights. In response to this increased demand, the service has run an advocacy training course for new advocates. Following the training, several new external advocates have been added. The training is being extended to social workers to provide issue based advocacy support to young people making a complaint.

The directorate received 326 complaints, an increase of 31%. There was also an increase in complaints made directly by young people, demonstrating accessibility. Three quarters of complaints were responded to within 10 working days at the first stage of the process. We have improved the quality of responses at stage one and recorded a low level, 3%, of escalation to stage two, working closely with operational services to establish improvements to practice. The team is focusing on resolution and learning from complaints and works closely with senior managers in operational services to address improvements to practise. Key learning from complaints in 2011-2012 included raising staff awareness about how to handle information relating to a parent's gender identity; awareness of looked after children's cultural/faith and dietary needs, and recognising the importance of timely and accurate record-keeping. Going forward, our challenges include showing how learning from complaints has been used to influence strategic developments, service design and review; and enabling more children and young people to express their views concerning their care plans and whether these have been effective.

6.5 Parents' participation

Family Voice aims to increase participation of parents, carers and disabled children and young people, and is actively involved in a number of strategic planning groups and consultations. The Partnership with Parents team offers support and advice to parents of children with special and additional educational needs. It has a dedicated parent helpline and outreach initiatives including parent's evenings and conferences. The team is currently working to improve its links with schools and the

special educational needs (SEN) service, to embed learning from parents' experiences and it is also involved in the SE7 Pathfinder.

7. Potential

7.1 Early years

The early education and childcare sector in Surrey continues to be nationally recognised as a major infrastructure support for working parents and the economy, and is vital to improving outcomes for children. Provider quality is consistently above regional and national averages, with 81% of early years providers achieving good or outstanding in Ofsted inspections, compared to 78% for the south east region and 74% nationally. 161 childcare providers have undertaken the Surrey Quality Improvement Award, with 31 having completed it so far and almost all who complete/take part improving their Ofsted inspection judgements.

The number of practitioners qualified to full early years professional status continues to rise, with 149 in 2011 compared to 92 in 2010. 33% of leaders are now qualified to level 4 or above and 42% of staff qualified to level 3. Surrey continues to have higher than the national average of male carers - 5% of practitioners in group care settings and 3% of home-based childcare providers.

The proportion of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage reaching the national indicator (NI) 72 milestone (good progress in the early learning goals) has increased from 64.1% in 2010 to 65.7% and indications for end of school year (July 2012) show a further increase to 70.4%. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the early years foundation stage and the median (NI 92) has reduced from 30.1% in 2010 to 28.5%, with indications for July 2012 showing a further reduction to 27.6%. The gender gap has reduced from 17.8% to 15.4%, with boys having made good progress during the period. There have been steady improvements in the proportion of children gaining six or more points in the personal, social and emotional development scales. Focus continues on targeted intervention work for children with English as an additional language, children with special educational needs and to address boys' writing in the early years.

The every child a talker (ECAT) initiative has been embedded with the implementation of a new early language team from July 2012. Other initiatives include London 2012 language-themed events and free books for pre-school children through the Bookstart programme. A number of leaflets have been produced to support parents in developing children's communication skills.

Over 1,334 children with additional needs have been supported by the Early Years and Childcare Service. Extra support for children with additional needs has been provided through 318 inclusion support grants and 25% of settings benefited from funding for small pieces of equipment to meet the needs of an individual child. Funding individual needs equipment grants provided essential specialist equipment to enable 15 children to take up their free entitlement. Free entitlement take-up is closely monitored to ensure it reflects local populations and that identified groups do not miss out. Currently 13% of children accessing the early years free entitlement in the private, voluntary and independent sector are from an ethnic minority background, with 84% of eligible looked after children accessing a funded place.

Over 40 out-of-school settings took part in the disabled children's access to childcare scheme, which aims to improve disabled children's access to childcare and to reduce attitudinal barriers through bespoke training workshops, hands on activity days, and resources to support practice improvements.

Surrey early support service helps families with disabled children from birth to five years old, and currently has 214 active cases and 43 cases awaiting allocation. The 'Including Me' scheme allows certain children attending special schools and units to go to mainstream after-school clubs, with support if needed, reducing pressure on spaces at oversubscribed specialist schemes. Over 65 children benefitted from this scheme during the year.

7.2 Educational achievement

The majority of pupils in Surrey state-funded schools continue to perform better across all key stages, and the majority of performance areas, than their peers regionally and nationally. This has been the trend for the last five years, although sustained improvement for some cohorts of children remains an area of focus. The annual local authority school improvement plan has been completed to respond to new government floor thresholds that incorporate both pupil progress and absolute attainment.

At key stage 1, Surrey is ranked in the top 10 local authorities nationally for both reading and maths and in the top 20 for writing. Key stage 2 results in individual subjects improved by at least one percentage point in 2011, which is on a par with national figures. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in both English and maths at key stage 2 in 2011 was static at 77%, with national results also static. There were overall improvements in writing, English and maths. Compared to last year, relatively fewer pupils made expected progress in English, although pupil progress in maths improved both in Surrey and nationally. Surrey remains behind national performance in English and maths progress measures at key stage 2, so this remains an area for improvement, together with ensuring children from vulnerable groups make at least expected progress at each key stage. Provisional results indicate substantial improvement in all these measures in 2012.

17 schools (9%) were below the government floor threshold at key stage 2, compared to 19 schools in the previous year. This is better than national (10%) and south-east regional (11%) figures. Provisional results indicate a reduction in 2012 with less than 10 primary schools below the floor standard.

At key stage 4 the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalents at grades A* to C including English and maths increased from 62% to 63.4%; this was five percentage points above the national average in 2011. However, the rate of improvement in Surrey was slower than the rate nationally (Surrey – 0.9 percentage point improvement; national – 2.6 percentage point improvement). Expected progress in English from key stage 2 to key stage 4 was similar to 2010 but more pupils made expected progress in maths this year. One secondary school was below the government floor standard introduced last summer.

Pupils eligible for free school meals showed improved attainment across all key stages in the 2011 results and narrowed the gap with their peers. A free school meals primary project was launched in 2010/11, sharing data and good practice to improve outcomes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen slightly over the last five years, from 6.5% in 2008, to 8.1% in 2012.

Performance in school sixth forms improved again in 2011, with results for points achieved per student and points achieved per entry remaining above the national average.

7.3 School improvement

Of all school inspections carried out up to 31 March 2012, 71.9% of Surrey state-funded schools were judged to be good or outstanding compared with 69.8% nationally. 27.3% of schools were judged as 'outstanding', compared to 21.2% nationally. 14 schools were judged as 'inadequate', representing 3.6% of Surrey's schools and academies, compared with 2.3% nationally. Of these, six were inspected under the new framework which commenced in January 2012.

During the period from April 2011 to March 2012, two schools were removed from a 'notice to improve' and four schools were removed from special measures. Schools in Surrey are removed from a category of concern within Ofsted's recommended timescales. In April 2012, 28 schools were being supported through the additional support and intervention programme (ASIP) register. We have continued to partner our outstanding schools with those experiencing difficulties. The programme of school to school support has been enhanced by nine national leaders of education and 35 local leaders of education who have been deployed in Surrey schools as part of our successful local leadership strategy.

7.4 Schools commissioning

Recent trends of rising pupil numbers resulted in the need for additional school places, A 5 year programme of expansion will result in an increase of around 10,000 primary and 4,230 secondary places. In some areas this demand may be met by additional new schools.

Births rates rose significantly in 2010, compared with 2008 and 2009; over the last decade there has been a 20% increase. Transfers from private education and increased inward migration have resulted in unanticipated additional demand for school places, particularly within the larger conurbations in Surrey. To meet this demand there has been an acceleration of the Basic Need programme for schools (SBN) in 2011/12. In exceptional circumstances we have met this demand with an initial temporary solution whilst plans for a permanent solution are developed.

All Surrey applicants were offered a place at school to start in September 2011 (and again in 2012). There was also a slight increase in the proportion of these that were a preference of the applicant.

7.5 Special educational needs (SEN)

In January 2012, 5,345 pupils (2% of 0-19s) had statements of special educational needs (SSEN) maintained by Surrey. 98% of statutory assessments are completed within prescribed timescales. The percentage of pupils with statements attending schools in Surrey (regardless of which local authority maintains the statement) has remained consistent over the last five years at 3%.

The SEN strategy is currently being revised to improve the range of special school provision and support the inclusion of more pupils with special educational needs, often with increased complexity of needs, in mainstream schools. 601 children with Surrey SSENs were placed in non-maintained special schools, independent special schools and other independent schools in January 2012. The impact of the changes as a result of school funding reforms will be monitored.

7.6 Education support

The referral rate for specialist teaching and education psychology services was 546 children per month (March 2012 figures), with an average of 81% of individual pupil interventions judged successful. Interventions through the 12 week portage programme for families who have concerns about their young child's challenging behaviours, continue to be highly successful, showing significant changes to the behaviour checklist scores for individual children and high approval/satisfaction ratings on parent feedback questionnaires.

Behaviour support teachers are helping to implement Surrey County Council's anti-bullying strategy by supporting schools to develop effective processes to tackle bullying. The educational psychology service continues to extend its nurture group provision to develop four clusters that work in partnership with groups of schools. The race equality and minority achievement service has continued to provide specialist support to improve outcomes and raise the achievement of children and young people from ethnic minority groups including travellers. 100% of pupil-focused interventions evaluated between September 2011 and July 2012 were judged as successful and support for pupils with English as an additional language has resulted in most pupils making a significantly better than average rate of progress.

7.7 Reducing exclusions and absence

Total permanent exclusions figures for 2012, based on five half terms of data, are on a par with the previous academic year, following several year-on-year reductions (43 exclusions in half-terms 1-5 in 2011/12). Fixed term exclusions continued to fall, with 4440 in half-terms 1-5 in 2012, compared to 4561 for the same period in 2011.

Secondary schools in Surrey have seen a steady decrease in overall absence over the last five years, and attendance rates have been above the national average for the last three years (full academic year data to 2010/11). In primary schools, attendance has also been consistently above the national average for the last four academic years (full academic year data to 2010/11). A slight rise in absence in primary schools observed in 2009/10 was addressed through the introduction of a primary attendance strategy. Attendance in primary schools improved in 2010/11 beyond those observed in 2008/09; therefore the overall trend since 2007/08 is downwards.

Surrey alternative learning provision has been recognised and commended by the government behaviour expert as one of the best models of practice nationally. There is emphasis on preventative work, the number of learners has increased and feedback is positive. Headteachers are engaged in the shaping and commissioning of future services, which is likely to result in further devolution of provision to network and school level. Improved arrangements to support hard-to-place pupils and to monitor the 'children missing education' cohort have led to decreased numbers on the register. Special educational needs pupils represent the majority of pupils missing education, so special education needs managers attend monthly meetings of area professionals to address this issue.

7.8 Virtual school

Pupil numbers in the virtual school continued to rise throughout the year, and are now the largest ever. In March 2012 there were just under 500 school-age children in care to Surrey (a 17% rise in numbers on the same period last year), 49% of these in Years 9 to 11 (aged 13-16 yrs).

Our overall results at key stage 1 continue to be well above all national averages for children in care. Significant improvements continue in reading and writing, with reading levels at 83% approaching those for all pupils in Surrey (86%) and the 2011 maths result (92%) exceeding the national figure for all children (90%) and just one percentage point lower than for all Surrey children.

Despite high numbers of children with a statement of special educational needs and others on the code of practice in the key stage 2 cohort, results from last year were maintained in both English and maths. 58% of pupils made expected progress in maths between key stage 1 and key stage 2, and 68% in English. Performance in English is below national averages, but the gap has been closed in maths and Surrey's ranking against statistical neighbours has improved for all measures.

2011 saw a considerable improvement at key stage 4 in all measures, delivering our best results since the introduction of higher thresholds. Just over half of all children in care achieved five or more A*-G grades - an 11% improvement; 37% achieved five or more A*-C grades - a 14% improvement and six percentage points higher than the national average; and 22% achieved five or more A*-C including English and maths - an 11% improvement and nine percentage points higher than the national average. These results place Surrey as the highest ranking local authority among its statistical neighbours.

The virtual school monitors and reports on the overall attendance of all young people on roll. By the end of the 2010/11 academic year, there was a reduction in overall absence among primary age pupils, including numbers of fixed term exclusions across Surrey and out-of county schools, and there had been no permanent exclusions.

The 2010/11 overall absence rate for secondary pupils on roll in out-of-county educational provision pupils showed an improvement of just under 2%, despite a slight increase in the overall number of fixed term exclusions. The absence rate for pupils on roll in Surrey provision remained static, despite a significant reduction in fixed term exclusions.

A strong partnership has been established with the four Surrey further education colleges to ensure young people in care maximise their potential through supported choices and consistent professional guidance. College staff have been receptive to training around the impact of trauma on learning and the context pre-care, which may affect the learning and ongoing conduct of students. 100% of our 2011 Year 11 cohort achieved their transition goal for the beginning of Year 12.

Work with the asylum support team and the race and ethnic minority achievement team has helped promote timely assessment and placement for incoming unaccompanied asylum seeking children. An 'adoption and education' policy written collaboratively with the adoption team will be disseminated shortly, and the education section in the foster carers' handbook has been rewritten. An admissions protocol for children in care has been finalised, which should ensure that progress in securing timely admissions is maintained. Work to ensure distribution and promotion of the pupil premium for children in care has been accredited nationally.

A toolkit for designated teachers and foster carers to develop financial capability among looked after children has been launched. Two conferences for designated teachers for children in care were well attended and positively evaluated. Training around personal education plans (PEPs) continues to be delivered termly, and elected members are now key auditors of PEPs. We have again secured funding for 'Letterbox Club' (a scheme from the Booktrust that provides monthly parcels of books and learning materials to children in care), and have worked in partnership with Surrey Libraries and the Surrey History Society to supplement these materials and make local links.

Our next steps for development are to:

- Work with colleagues in the Early Years and Childcare Service to embed early intervention in the learning opportunities for children in care and ensure their free nursery entitlement is accessed.
- Continue to monitor and reduce fixed term exclusions by early intervention and collaborative working.
- Develop further support for those following courses leading to higher education.
- Investigate ways of providing for children in care who are out of school for any reason for a period of time, looking at other authority models to inform this.

7.9 Surrey special educational needs and disability (SEND) pathfinder

Surrey, as a member of SE7¹, is one of 20 national SEND pathfinders who are currently trialling the Government's plans for a new approach for young people with SEND. The aim is to design and test a new single, integrated assessment process and plan which is more outcomes focused, is co-produced with children, young people and families, is less repetitive and bureaucratic, and is developed through effective joint working. Following two well attended launch events, the Surrey pathfinder team has recruited families to trial the new process and participate in joint training and network meetings with key workers who will support them through the trial process. Other workstreams are focused on developing a local offer (giving transparency of services available for children and young people with SEND), and developing personal budgets to meet a range and complexity of needs, including transition/preparation for adulthood.

According to interim feedback from national evaluation, Surrey's progress is generally in line with the national picture but has been particularly successful in engaging parents and carers. We anticipate new challenges as the pathfinder moves into its delivery phase, and a number of possible solutions may need to be trialled and tested.

7.10 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children and young people

Following collaborative work in 2011 with members of Surrey's GRT community and partners within and outside the Children, Schools and Families Directorate, our needs analysis bringing together our understanding of the key issues affecting Surrey's GRT children and young people was published in 2012. It recognises that improving outcomes for GRT children and young people sits within the wider context of improving the quality of life for their families and communities. It has been welcomed across a range of services, with staff commenting that it has deepened their understanding of GRT needs and issues and raising awareness for future commissioning. The needs analysis and associated chapter in our joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) have been commended by the organisation 'Friends, Families and Travellers' as examples of good practice for other local authorities. We expect the needs analysis to inform development of a strategy in the coming months.

8. Partnership working

Following a number of changes to Surrey's children's trust arrangements, a children and young people's partnership board has been established, consisting of key commissioning agencies. It aims to

¹ Surrey, Hampshire, Kent, Medway, Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex

focus on those things where two or more partners working together can add value. Key areas of progress include:

- A comprehensive joint strategic needs assessment that clearly identifies children and young people's needs.
- A workforce group focused on multi-agency training.
- Local safeguarding children boards working through joint safeguarding actions.
- Working with Surrey's emerging clinical commissioning groups with a view to establishing joint working on children's health and care.
- A primary vision setting out how Surrey County Council and primary schools will work together.

Surrey took part in a peer challenge in 2012 that analysed the leadership of partnership arrangements as part of an improvement programme in the south-east region. The peer challenge team observed 'a strong appetite' among partners for the development of a collective narrative about Surrey's vulnerable children. We hope to build on this joint commitment through the Surrey Alliance and Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board, to implement an early help offer with shared agreement about when to use social care as an intervention and when to use less targeted provision arrangements. Partnership work in the next 12 months will also focus on delivering on the government's troubled families agenda by implementing the family support programme across Surrey; developing an inter-agency children's plan, and implementation of an integrated child protection unit.

9. Financial management

The directorate budget for 2011/12 was £283m, with allocations to services as follows:

- Schools and Learning £187m
- Children's Services £81m
- Services for Young People £15m

2011/12 was the first year of the 2011 comprehensive spending review, with the directorate being affected by grant rationalisation and the removal of targeted ring-fencing for many grants such as Sure Start and Aiming High. The economic climate worsened during the financial year and there were ongoing concerns about further reductions to public funds. The directorate successfully achieved target savings of £10.5m in 2011/2012, and, in planning for further significant savings over the next five years (over £40m), have used an additional underspend in 2012/13 to help achieve further savings and address the increasing demand of child protection cases and services.

The final dedicated school grant for 2011/12 was £688m. This reduced by £62m during the financial year as academy schools were established. During the financial year, 21 schools converted to academy status, which represents nearly 6% of the total schools in Surrey. The directorate capital budget for 2011/12 was £56m. This has mainly funded the statutory provision of additional school places and school maintenance. There will be a capital investment of £244m over the next five years for the provision of additional school places across the county.

10. Workforce development

Investment in leadership and management development has continued, in particular the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) regional programme and national Director of Children's

Services (DCS) and aspiring DCS programmes. Within the council, a coaching programme has helped to equip our managers with the skills to engage in positive conversations with colleagues.

We have been working on implementing the actions from the health check undertaken in Children's Services last year, combined with actions required under the social work reform programme. Highlights include the creation of a joint social work reform board with Adult Services, four new consultant senior social work practitioner roles, reviewing options for social work training and a training programme for frontline social work managers jointly with London boroughs.

Key actions for the coming year will include supporting the introduction of the new assessed year in employment for newly qualified social workers; introducing a new career framework for social workers that covers pay and professional progression, and strengthening performance management. We will also need to consolidate recent improvements in supervision, to ensure consistent practice across all teams. We will provide reflective developmental opportunities with explicit links to annual appraisals and training plans, particularly for newly qualified and recently recruited social workers.

11. Conclusion

During the past 12 months the work of Surrey's Children, Schools and Families Directorate has continued to improve in many areas. We received national recognition for the implementation of our new integrated children's system (ICS) and for an innovative savings scheme for looked after children. Our work is child focused, and there are many examples of children, young people and parents' participation in designing and evaluating services, helping to improve service delivery. Other successes for the directorate include continuing low levels of children who are not in education, employment and training; high uptake of initiatives such as the Surrey apprenticeship scheme, and reducing first-time entrance to the youth justice system to an all-time low.

There is still much to do, particularly in strengthening the cohesiveness of partnership working and implementing a coordinated programme of early help. We need to ensure shared understanding of service thresholds and embed the use of the common assessment framework (CAF) as a holistic tool for responding to children's needs. These areas will be taken forward through our public value programme, the children and young people's partnership and the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board.

The expertise of our partners is a huge asset that complements the dedication of staff working at all levels within the directorate, and our political leadership. I remain confident that together we can be resilient in the face of unprecedented financial challenges, and will continue to improve our services to deliver the best possible outcomes for Surrey's children and young people.

Nick Wilson
Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families
Surrey County Council

December 2012

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