

Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Board
16 September 2015

**Joint Commissioning of Speech and Language Therapy
 Services for Children and Young People in Surrey**

Purpose of the report: The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Speech and Language Therapy Commissioning Strategy and the new service delivery model.

Introduction:

1. Research into the prevalence of children and young people who have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) suggests:
 - a) 10% of children and young people have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
 - b) 5-7% of children and young people have specific speech and language difficulties
 - c) More than 50% of children have poor language skills on school entry in some areas of the UK – including areas of Surrey.
 - d) Poor speech, language and communication skills have a detrimental impact on literacy development, overall academic achievement, social relationships and personal skills, self esteem and confidence, emotional regulation and behavior, employability and life chances. Research indicates that up to a third of children with untreated SLCN will develop subsequent mental health issues.

In 2103/14 Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Board identified a priority to improve access to paediatric therapies, including the Speech and Language Therapy Service. Feedback from stakeholders and service users identified key issues in the system that needed to be addressed:

- lack of resource and shortage of trained therapists;
- long waiting times and delays in planned treatment when therapist goes on leave or maternity leave;
- need for more speech and language therapists to deliver therapy to all children who need it;
- poor 'transition arrangements from early years to school; and
- poor communication between key partners.

Commissioning Intentions and Responsibilities:

2. Commissioning Intentions:

The following commissioning intentions describe how we aim to develop a more joined up child centred approach to commissioning. Our intentions for collaborative commissioning are:

- a) Putting children and families at the centre of the service to ensure best outcomes for children and young people are achieved
- b) A shared understanding of what a Speech and Language Therapy Service spanning 0-25 years should look like in Surrey in line with the Children and Families Act 2014
- c) A shared understanding of the need to support early intervention, diagnosis and prevention escalation of negative behaviours or avoidable impact on learning
- d) Agreement and transparency of commissioning responsibilities, providing clarity for providers and service users over who commissions different areas of the Speech and Language Therapy Service
- e) To ensure that families and other key partners have a clear understanding of commissioning arrangements
- f) To empower families to have greater control than they had previously with traditional models of commissioning this service
- g) Make effective use of resources across the system
- h) Shared responsibility in up skilling the wider workforce, including families, early years settings, schools, colleges and other professionals
- i) A single, outcome focused and evidence based service delivery model that achieves equity across Surrey
- j) Shared monitoring and quality assurance arrangements

3. Commissioning Responsibilities:

Based on the principles of both early intervention and the Children and Families Act 2014 with the associated revised SEN Code of Practice, the strategy proposes that:

- a. Surrey County Council becomes responsible for commissioning speech and language therapy for school age children and young people aged 16-25 (with an Education, Health and Care plan) which will enable them to progress in their learning and as they get older to be well prepared for adulthood. Provision will be delivered in an education setting and focused on enabling children and young people to access the curriculum.
- b. Surrey Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are responsible for commissioning services to meet health needs (2006 NHS Act: 2014 Mandate and 2014 NHS Outcomes). The focus of Surrey CCG commissioned services will be on early assessment, diagnosis, intervention and prevention of speech, language and communication needs in Early Years. There will be an emphasis on the early year's population working alongside the council's Early Years team and those with specific clinical, health related issues such as dysphagia. These services could be successfully delivered in a non-educational environment.

- c. Early years settings, schools, academies and colleges will be supported to meet the universal and sometimes targeted speech, language and communication needs of children and young people who require support in order to progress with their learning and access the curriculum.

Stakeholder Engagement:

4. A chronology and full details of the range of consultation, collaboration and co-production events can be found in Annexe 1.

Proposed Service Changes:

5. The most significant changes to the service from the perspective of the CCGs is that they will no longer be commissioning speech and language therapy in mainstream, special schools or specialist centres unless medically related. Resources will be redirected Early Years to:
 - a) Reduce waiting times for assessments and interventions
 - b) Provide a total of 200 specialist places providing intensive therapy groups. It is anticipated that where possible these groups will be held in children's centres or nursery settings in close collaboration with Surrey County Council Early Years Service.

There will be a single 0-25 year service specification which will ensure an equitable and consistent service across Surrey.

6. The school aged service, which Surrey County Council will be responsible for commissioning will be brought in-house to Surrey County Council's four area education teams to deliver to mainstream schools and funding will be devolved to special schools/specialist centres to commission or provide speech and language therapy directly. Therefore the current contracts which Surrey County Council hold with Virgin Care Services Ltd and Central Surrey Health Ltd to deliver Speech and Language Therapy Services will be terminated.
7. At the same time, Surrey County Council will also be de-commissioning the part of the specialist school nursing service which is delivered to the eight special schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties and savings from this will be re-directed to the new Speech and Language Therapy Service. Therefore the current contracts which Surrey County Council also holds with Virgin Care Services Ltd and Central Surrey Health Ltd to deliver this service will also be terminated. Currently Surrey CCGs also commission part of the service and will become fully responsible for commissioning a specialist school nursing service from September 2016.

Benefits to Children and Young People and Public Health Impacts:

8.
 - a) A study by the Audit Commission estimated the cost for a 16 year old of not intervening to support speech, language and other educational and social needs at an early age as £153,687. The cost of providing speech and language support and an educational psychologist from the age of 5 to 15 was £42,243. Thus a saving of £111,444 could be made through early diagnosis and intervention.

- b) A survey of employers in Scotland showed that communication was rated high as an essential skill when recruiting staff. With an increased dependence on communication-based jobs, 'diseases of communication' such as hearing, voice, speech and language disorders are considered by some to be the new public health issue. SLCN is viewed as a major health concern for the 21st century because untreated; it adversely affects the economic well-being of a communication age.
9. Implementation of the new Surrey Speech and Language Therapy Service will ensure:
- a) All children and young people in Surrey access the right support at the right time to meet their needs
 - b) Everyone knows what therapy support is available and how to access it
 - c) Families and professionals work together to help and support a child to achieve their agreed outcomes and are equipped with the right skills and resources to help children achieve their agreed outcomes
 - d) Therapy provision is focused on helping children and young people achieve realistic and achievable outcomes that will help them to achieve their life-time aspirations

Recommendations:

10. a) The Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Board agree that there has been full engagement and consultation with stakeholders regarding the joint commissioning strategy.
- b) The Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Board endorses the new service model.

Next steps:

11. a) Service specification is finalised
- b) Early years and schools costing model and staff resourcing structure agreed
- c) Service implemented September 2016

Report contact:

Anne Breaks, Head of Children's Commissioning (community), NHS Guildford and Waverley Clinical Commissioning Group

Zarah Lowe, Provision and Partnership Development Manager, Surrey County Council. tel 01483 519393

Sources/background papers:

Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication - ICAN
Joint Commissioning Strategy for Speech and Language Therapy for Children and Young People - Cabinet Paper (26/5/15)
26 January 2015 – Children and Education Select Committee
26 May 2015 - Cabinet
Annex 1