

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 31 MARCH 2020****SUBJECT: REPORT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES TASK GROUP****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In comparison to its statistical neighbours, Surrey has a large number of children receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support both with and without statutory Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Outcomes for children in Surrey with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are lower than comparator authorities and require improvement.

Surrey County Council has experienced significant financial pressures due to significant growth in demand for SEND services, increases in more complex needs, changes to legislation, and population growth.

On 14 October 2019, the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee established a Task Group to investigate the provision of SEN support services.

This Report contains nine recommendations, which are informed by evidence gathered over three sessions involving council officers, educators and SEN practitioners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended:

1. *That, as soon as is reasonably practicable, nurseries be supported to provide appropriate support to children in early years through commissioning of outreach interventions into nursery settings.*
2. *That the funding arrangements for specials schools that provide outreach services for SEN children in mainstream schools be reviewed; and that the Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate report with the findings of that review to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee no later than September 2020.*
3. *That, with immediate effect, the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate work with independent providers of SEN support to ensure that there is adequate, cost-effective provision to meet the needs of service users; and officers work with independent providers of SEN support to develop robust systems for contract management to prevent supply-driven demand caused by the overstatement of service users' educational needs.*
4. *That, to reduce journey times for service users, the commissioning of SEN provision closer to demand and the development of outreach services in mainstream schools under the capital programme be accelerated with immediate effect.*

5. *That, with immediate effect, commissioners work with SEND case officers to provide alternative pathways to support that do not require an Education, Health and Care plan.*
6. *That a review of the implementation and effectiveness of the Graduated Response be conducted; and that the Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate report with the findings of that review to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee no later than October 2020.*
7. *That, with immediate effect, the development of, and communication with, Special Educational Needs Coordinators be improved to support the implementation of the Graduated Response Approach.*
8. *That, with immediate effect, to assist schools to use their budgets to appropriately resource SEND provision, Special Educational Needs Coordinator networks be invested in to ensure SEND staff and Governors are engaged and aware of the challenges faced by the education system.*
9. *That the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate report by no later than December 2020 to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee on the implementation of recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 of this Report.*

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The rationale for the Task Group's recommendations can be summarised as the need to provide early intervention which can prevent the need for more intensive support; the need to ensure that support is cost effective, appropriate to service user needs, and promotes positive outcomes; and the need to ensure that policies are well implemented and well understood.

DETAILS:

Details of the Task Group's methodology and findings may be found in its Report in Annex 1 to this Report.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate implement the recommendations of this Report and report back to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee in line with the timescales contained in those recommendations.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning

Council officers, educators, SEN practitioners, and other stakeholders as outlined in the Task Group's Report (Annex 1)

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Report of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Task Group

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