

CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

4a

Members Questions

Question (1) Barbara Thomson (Earlswood and Reigate South):

- i. In each of the three most recent years for which complete data is available, what was the adolescent suicide rate in Surrey?
- ii. In the most recent month for which complete data is available, in how many instances did children go missing from home in Surrey; what were the mean, modal and median time periods for which those children were missing; and how many of those children are yet to be located?
- iii. What steps do public agencies typically take to locate Surrey-resident children who are missing from home?

Reply:

- i. **Number of suicide related deaths recorded in Surrey adolescents (aged 18 and under) and young adults**

Age Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Under 10	0	0	0	0	0
10-14	0	Under 5	0	0	0
15 - 18	0	Under 5	0	Under 5	0
19-24	Under 5	6	5	Under 5	0

*In line with information governance and in order to protect data disclosure, values between 1 and 4 have been suppressed and are recorded as under 5 in the table. Other figures, denoted with an asterisk, have been rounded.

Source: PCMD November 2020 extract

There are less than 5 deaths due to suicide recorded in Surrey residents aged 18 years and younger each year. The number of suicides in people aged 19 to 24 years old have also been provided in the table above for reference.

There have been no suicides recorded in 2019 and 2020 in Surrey adolescents to date (recorded in complete death data for registrations up to November 2020). Suicide related deaths take a longer time to process and it is therefore possible that 2019 and 2020 data is incomplete.

Even one death by suicide is too many and therefore the matter is taken very seriously in Surrey. [A thematic review](#) was commissioned by the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership and published in 2020.

The report analysed and sought to understand the risk factors and circumstances surrounding 12 deaths in Surrey over a 6-year period. This learning has been shared widely since the report was published.

Action taken:

As a result of the thematic the following action has been taken:

- Renewed governance for mental health across the system including the implementation of Mental Health Partnership Board and a Mental Health Escalation Board
- A series of webinars have been hosted to share the findings in the thematic review
- Training materials have been produced including a [suicide prevention toolbox](#)
- There is a suicide prevention network in Surrey
- Work has begun to implement a Children & Young People's suicide prevention working group. The actions from the thematic review, the Suicide Prevention strategy and local learning have been used to inform the recommended actions. Membership will include CAMHS, children's services, schools, key commissioners and the third sector along with other key partners.
- Further embedding of the Healthy Schools approach and Targeted Approaches to Mental Health in schools across the county
- Monitoring the Surrey suicide real-time surveillance data on a fortnightly basis
- Success in a bid for funding towards a project around self-harm from the national suicide prevention funding, Wave 4

What does the new Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) service look like as a result of this learning:

The Local Authority and the Surrey CCGs have commissioned a new EWMH Service from an Alliance of partners with a contract start date of April 2021. The new service includes significant additional investment in early intervention, including a requirement for the Alliance of partners to develop and promote an online resource to set out how and where young people can access support (including during the evenings and at weekends). This support includes the children and young people's Havens and a 24-hour crisis telephone line. We want young people to know that there is always help available if they are struggling with their mental health or are in crisis.

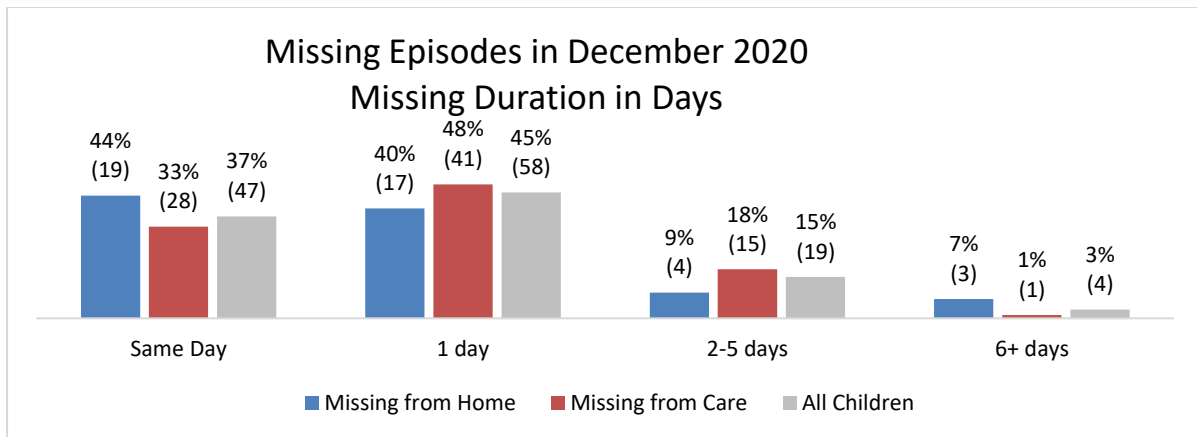
Regional and national picture:

There is also a regional and national focus on the mental wellbeing of Children and Young People, this includes meeting the goals set out in the [Mental Health Implementation Plan](#) and the local establishment of [Mental Health Support Teams](#) that are jointly delivered by the NHS and the Department for Education.

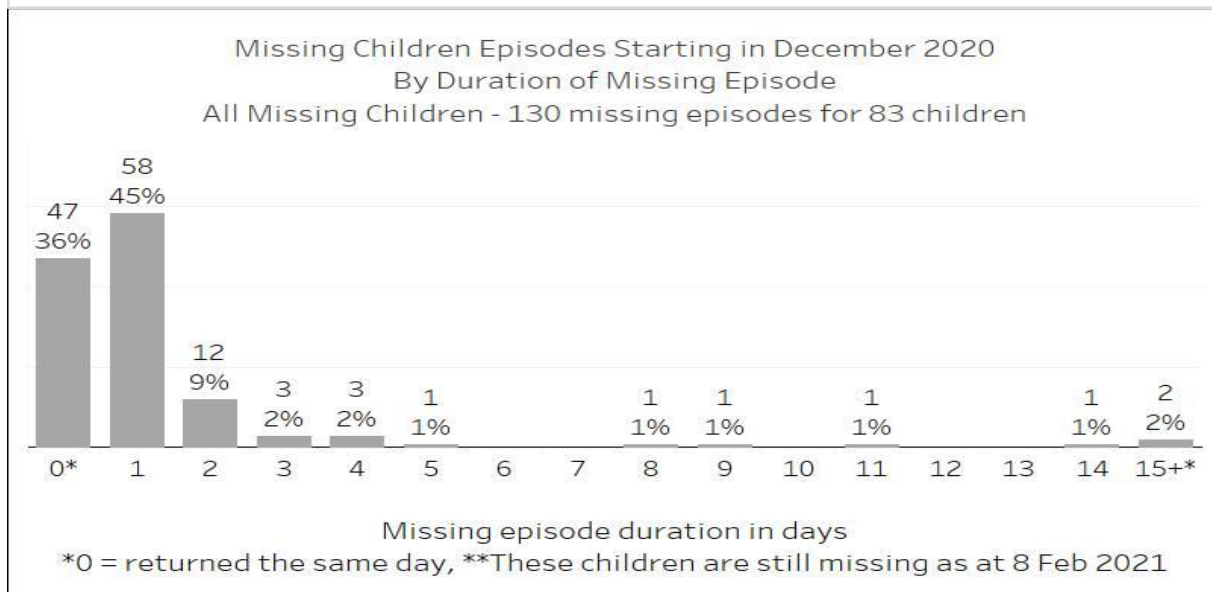
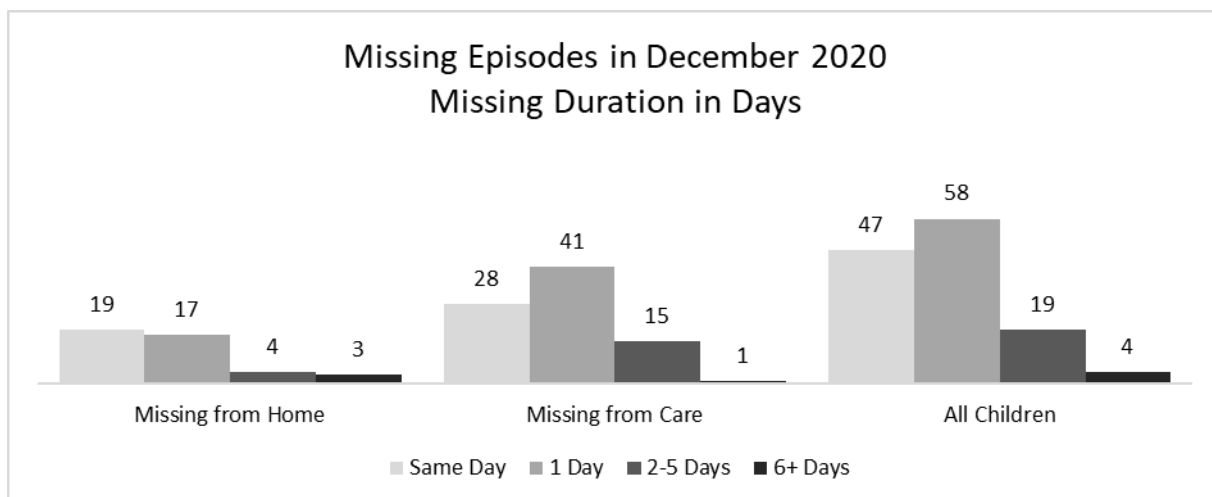
ii. When answering this question, it's important to note how missing episodes and the length of time children are away, impacts on the graph and thereby perception of risk. At face value when we created the graph to answer this question our answer looked as if Surrey children went missing for days when in fact Surrey children in the main go missing for around 4-10 hours. The risk is amplified as they are often missing in the evening or overnight.

Answering this question 'literally' gave a mean average of all children being missing 1.2 days each and that children in care went missing an average of 1.8 times each. It was felt that a more substantial answer would better support the spirit of the question.

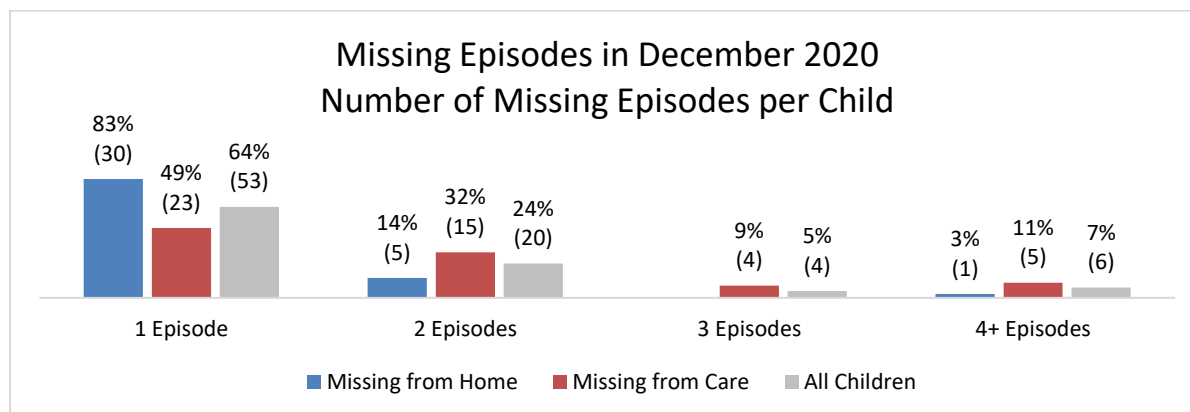
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The below graph gives a visual representation of how long each child was actually missing during December 2020. The data counts one day if the child has gone missing on one date and returned on the next. As mentioned earlier in this response, children often go missing for several hours, 4-10, yet as they have perhaps been missing over midnight, the data classes these as one day. Therefore, in the main one can say that 81% of our children missing in December, were missing for less than 24h. Over 90% of all 83 of these children received an RHI and offer of support.



As can be seen by the graph below, most children who go missing do so only once, 64%. We know that children who are looked after are prone to seeking out both family and close friendships from their past as this keeps their past alive and cements the connection. 51% of the children in care have gone missing more than once in the same month with 5 of the 23 children going missing over 4 times in the same month.



To answer the final part of the question we needed to look both at the children who had gone missing in the month and those that perhaps has already been missing prior to the identified month 'December 20'. There are nine children aged between 15 and above who are currently seen as missing from Surrey Care. Two of these went missing in December 20. They are all Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC). We continue to be concerned about UASC who have gone missing, and we know that there are particular pressures on them.

iii. Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed. All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from 'no apparent risk' to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action. Risk assessing is dynamic and can change with any new information.

WHEN A CHILD IS THOUGHT TO BE MISSING

If a child or young person is reported or thought to be missing, immediate efforts should be made to try and locate him/her. Parents/carers/staff or the responsible adult involved with the child or young person are expected to undertake the following basic steps to try and locate the child if considered safe to do so:

- Search bedroom/house/outbuildings/vehicles;
- Contact known friends and relatives where child/young person may be;
- Check mobile phone, email and internet sites such as Facebook (if you have access to these);
- Visit locations that the child is known to frequent.

If the child is a Surrey Looked After Child and has not been found through the above procedure, residential staff/foster carers must without delay notify the:

- Police (providing information from Missing Persons Checklist)
- Those who have parental responsibility (where appropriate)
- Social worker/supervising social worker and the accountable team manager
- Placements Team
- Independent reviewing officer, Safeguarding Children Unit
- Emergency Duty Team (if out of hours) by email
- Responsible authority if the child is placed by another local authority

- Surrey's Virtual Head teacher for Looked after Children In addition, supervising social workers or residential workers should complete a Cause for Concern form and inform their Service Manager if the child has been missing over 24h.

If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or a S47 enquiry and has been missing over 24h, the allocated social worker should inform:

- Head of Safeguarding Unit, CP Conference Chair and the Lead Nurse for Safeguarding Children;
- All members of the Core Group
- Legal Services – if the child is subject to court proceedings.

In all cases, if the child is missing for more than 24 hours, a Cause for Concern report should be completed and sent to the Service Manager for the area of work who will decide if more senior managers should be informed.

THE POLICE RESPONSE

When the child is reported as missing the Police will initiate an investigation that is appropriate to the level of risk. The parent/placement/referrer must inform the Police of any relevant information that may alter the level of risk, and also notify Police if the child returns or is located as soon as possible. Arrangements should be agreed and made for when the child is located. The Police will not transport as a matter of routine, and the care provider/person with parental responsibility will be expected to collect the child or arrange and pay for transport. However, Police will assist with transportation if there is evidence of risk of violence or risk to the child's safety.

Police will attend and conduct a prevention interview for all missing incidents. This should be completed at an appropriate time where the child is placed in a regulated Surrey Children's Home and accepted as Safe. It is therefore essential that any concerns that arise on their return are relayed to the Police. Where the Police are concerned that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm a referral will be made to Surrey Children's Service.

Negotiation can be undertaken where there are regular Prevention Interviews for Surrey Looked after children. Appropriate times and frequency can be discussed.

The Police have responsibility for advising the media regarding children missing from care, however, decisions to publicise missing looked after children will always be made in consultation with the Head of Children's Services in conjunction with the child's parents and carers.

MISSING FROM CARE

- Being missing from care can increase a child's vulnerability and risk. Understanding push and pull factors and any patterns related to a child's missing occurrences can help professionals identify harm a child may be experiencing. Any missing occurrence should not be viewed in isolation and should always be treated as a clear indicator that something is not right in the child's life. All absence or missing occurrences should warrant professional attention to help safeguard children.
- Although becoming looked after or a placement move can be positive for many children, for some children it be a negative experience that can contribute to an increased risk of going missing and increased vulnerability when missing. To help reduce a child's likelihood of going missing and help create placement stability, carers, the local authority and partner agencies should adopt a coordinated, consistent, and restorative approach to working with children, to reduce the likelihood of going missing for individual children, and all children in the local area.

- The Corporate Parenting Board looks into the response to children missing from care every year. The Board will hear from children and young people about responses to missing episodes as well as from Officers, to ascertain whether the response is 'Good enough for our children.'
- It is important that local policies and procedures, and individual missing risk assessments and plans for children and young people provide clarity about expectations, roles, and agency responsibility for when children go missing from care; to ensure that professionals and carers respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns and reduce police contact with children, which can negatively impact on them.

Mrs Mary Lewis
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families
23 February 2021

Question (2) Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills):

The Cabinet Member for Highways has allocated additional funding to Local Committees to progress schemes on the ITS lists within each District / Borough and on 10 February 2011 the Mole Valley Informal Local Committee received a Draft Highways Forward Programme for 21-22 to 23-24 setting out how this additional funding would be allocated in the District.

The Mole Valley Local Committee has held a significant Residents Engagement Meeting and received two petitions with detailed presentations in recent months on requested improvements to the highway.

Will the Cabinet Member for Highways give a formal response from the County Council as to why neither of the proposed schemes for:

- introducing a controlled pedestrian crossing on Chalkpit Lane, Dorking (and in particular for funding a feasibility study that could lead to a bid for Strategic CIL held by Mole Valley District Council) to create a safe walking route to St Martin's School across Chalkpit Lane as promoted by Dorking Safer Streets; and
- reducing the speed limit through Mickleham Village and introducing sector speed limits within the Average Speed Camera scheme on the A24 from the Givons Grove to the Burford Bridge Roundabouts as requested by Mickleham Parish Council and extending the Average Speed Camera scheme on the A24 between the Denbies Roundabout and the Burford Bridge Roundabout, as proposed by the Westhumble Residents Association

were not included for potential funding in the Mole Valley Highways Forward Programme as all these local organisations deserve a clear and formal explanation from the Cabinet Member as to why, despite more funding being available and their outstanding presentations to the County Council, their proposals cannot be progressed.

Will the Cabinet Member for Highways also explain how he intends to meet the expectations of these organisations that have been raised through the Resident Engagement Meeting / Petition Presentations without damaging the reputation of the County Council as clearly the expectations that these organisations had following their Meeting / Petition Presentations that have been held are not being met and currently this is damaging the reputation of the County Council?

Reply:

As the Member for Dorking Hills should be aware having been on the Mole Valley Local Committee since it was first established some twenty years, it is for Members of the Committee to agree how best to use the funding allocations devolved to them. Officers will prepare recommendations based on a range of technical and policy considerations, but the final decision rests with the Committee. I have been advised that both schemes were considered but did not score sufficiently to be included in the officer prioritisation. Officers would be pleased to go through the scoring in detail with the Member if it aids her understanding.

I am delighted that the Cabinet have agreed to increase funding by £12m which will enable Local and Joint Committees to tackle the backlog of issues which are of the highest priority for them. It would never be possible or practical for every issue to be addressed, so it is crucial that all Members give careful consideration to any proposals officers present and ensure that they address the collective aspirations of their Committee.

Mr Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Highways
23 February 2021

Question (3) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

I understand that a staff travel survey has been undertaken as part of the Sustainable Transport Plan, to garner the views of staff who are being relocated from County Hall in Kingston to the Council's new civic heart at Woodhatch Place, Reigate.

Please can the results of this travel survey and the overall Transport Plan be shared, and can you confirm what sustainable transport improvements have already been made and what further improvements are planned in 2021.

Reply:

Please find attached (Annex 1) the results of the Woodhatch Place travel survey conducted in December 2020. This has previously been shared with the Resources and Performance Task Group.

With regards to the sustainable transport improvements, we commissioned a travel plan from Atkins Global, which is being finalised and should be completed in early March. The travel plan will contain recommendations on how we begin to enhance public and environmentally friendly access to the site. This will be an evolving travel plan as the site is developed. We are also exploring extending the local bus service to include collection from Reigate and Redhill train station and Woodhatch.

In addition to the above, a representative from Strategic Transport has joined the Agile Organisation Programme's (AOP) steering board. The purpose of the AOP is to enable the delivery of the Agile Office Estate Strategy from a people perspective, which will include travel planning.

Mr Tim Oliver
Leader of the Council
23 February 2021

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