



Children and Education Select Committee  
19 September 2013

**Chairman's Introduction**

**Purpose of the report:** This report provides Members with an introduction to substantial items on this agenda, which all relate to the theme of early help and prevention.

**Introduction: Why is the Select Committee scrutinising early help and prevention?**

1. In recent years, a number of Government initiatives and major policy reviews have called on councils (and other key agencies) to improve their early help and prevention offer. It is hoped that supporting children and families early on will prevent problems from reaching crisis point, and reduce the need for high-cost acute and specialist services.
2. After an unannounced inspection of child protection arrangements in September 2012, Ofsted recommended that the Council and its partner agencies "should establish a clear, joint commitment to the implementation of an integrated early help offer in order to ensure seamless support arrangements for those children not yet, or no longer, at risk of significant harm."<sup>1</sup> It is therefore timely for the Committee to review progress in this priority area twelve months on.

**Meeting Structure**

3. The Committee has been provided with three reports which all relate to the early help and prevention 'agenda'.
  - The first report (item 7) details how Surrey is working with partners to develop a Surrey-wide 'Early Help' strategy. It also provides examples of initiatives that are already in place to deliver the strategy, such as the Central Referral Unit (CRU). This report will be introduced by Caroline Budden, Deputy Director for Children, Schools and Families at Surrey County Council.

<sup>1</sup> ['Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children: Surrey County Council' Ofsted, October 2012](#)

- The second report (item 8) provides an update on the Surrey Family Support Programme, which is a key delivery mechanism for early help and prevention in the county. This report will be introduced by Sean Rafferty, Head of Family Services at Surrey County Council.
- The third report (item 9) details how Public Health, responsibility for which has recently been transferred to the local authority, can contribute to and strengthen the early help offer in Surrey. This report will be introduced by Helen Atkinson, Acting Director of Public Health at Surrey County Council.

#### **Additional Witnesses**

4. As well as the officers listed above, a small number of additional witnesses have been invited to assist the Select Committee in its scrutiny of this area. Members will be provided with details of the witnesses prior to the Committee meeting.

#### **Further Information**

5. If you require further information regarding the meeting please contact the scrutiny team using the contact details below.

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#### **Report contacts:**

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#### **Sources/background papers:**

['Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for the Protection of Children: Surrey County Council' Ofsted, October 2012](#)