

CABINET – 26 JULY 2022

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Members Questions**Question (1) Lance Spencer (Goldsworth East and Horsell Village)**

According to a new report backed by some of the UK's biggest children's charities it was noted that cuts in funding for early support for children have created a "vicious cycle", with thousands more young people going into care and needing crisis help.

As Sure Start centres, youth clubs and family support services for substance abuse have shut down, children and teenagers told the report's authors they felt they had to "get hurt or harm someone " before they could get help.

With a succession of Conservative-led governments slashing central funding to local authorities in England by around 40 per cent over the past 12 years, many councils have responded by cutting services which they are not required by law to deliver, such as early intervention support for children.

As one of the authorities that closed its children's centres and introduced 'Family Centres' as part of a new strategy would the Cabinet Member,

- a. Confirm whether all the proposed family centres are now fully operational.
- b. Provide data to show that the Council's targeted approach is succeeding in preventing vulnerable children and their families from slipping through the net compared to the last three years that children's centres were operational.

Reply:

- a. The Family Centre offer is part of a wider offer of early help for children and families delivered by multi-agency partners across the whole of the children's system. They are all now fully operational delivering targeted support to families with children 0 – 11 years with multiple family support needs. They work alongside the Family Support Programme delivered in partnership with the District/Borough Councils and Targeted Youth Support teams so that collectively children and young people aged 0 – 18yrs and their families are supported to get the help they need at the earliest opportunity.

Practitioners across all the children's system including schools, voluntary organisations, health, and police can request this help through the Children's Single Point of Access (CSPA) once they have identified the needs of children/young people and their families and sought their agreement to take up the offer of help.

There were 6,200 referrals to Early Help from March 2021 – to the end of June 2022, it is worth noting that Family Centres and the Family Support programme only started recording on the Early Help Module data base in August 2021, so the actual referrals are likely to be higher.

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Alongside the offer of targeted help, family centres offer activities/groups for families who need some extra help and offer their buildings for use by other organisations to deliver services for children and families. Practitioners can signpost to these groups as part of their offer of early help for the families they work with.

The Surrey Partnership Helping Families Early Strategy (2020 – 2023) encompasses this partnership approach whereby families are supported through a range of multi-agency services/activities. The aim is that together we can identify families and deliver services based on a multi-agency operating model in a more co-ordinated way and avoid children/young people falling through the net.

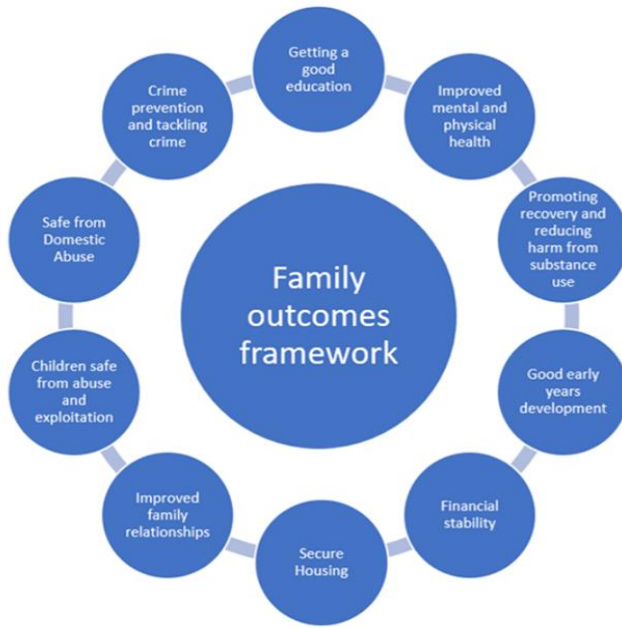
Other initiatives and investment in supporting our most vulnerable children, young people and their families as a multi-agency partnership include:

- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Supporting Families programme extended for a further 3 years with 40% uplift in funding to identify and support more children and families with multiple issues.
- DfE funding for Reducing Parental Conflict extended for further 3 years and uplift in funding.
- Department of Health published the 10-year Drug Strategy in May 2022, following the Independent Review of Substance Misuse Services by Dame Carol Black and have invested a further £3million over the next 3 years. This is a total investment of £900 million for local authorities over the spending review period.
- 10% uplift in Youth Justice funding to support prevention activities
- Building Belonging pilot project to provide additional support for the most vulnerable children and young people with complex needs across multiple domains between the ages 0 – 18 yrs.
- Youth offer including mental health therapeutic support programme being delivered.
- Police – Child First approach and early help initiative based on a core framework putting in place a trauma /Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) approach that identifies levels of need and the right intervention.

To ensure that we continue to improve our approach to identifying and supporting our most vulnerable children, we have commissioned a research partner to engage and listen to families using services, those currently not engaging and practitioners within the early help system to understand what matters to them, how they are managing day to day and who they are turning to for support and guidance. This will build a full picture of what is working well and how we can build on it as we develop our future offer.

- b. Supporting Families targets set by DLUHC have been fully achieved for the last 2 years, where families have achieved successful and sustained outcomes when they have been supported through the Family Centre and Family Support programme.

Targets are set by DLUHC, and the programme has been expanded from 2022- 2025 recognising the impact that the pandemic has had on families.



Surrey Targets

2020-2021	680 families - fully achieved
2021-2022	680 families – fully achieved
2022- 2023	680 families
2023- 2024	1,101 families
2024-2025	1,361 families

There are many more families who access support in their communities through the private, community and voluntary sector and through faith organisations. The Family Information Service is a web-based service provide through CFL, so parents and professionals can find support in their districts and boroughs. Surrey County Council also employs Community Connectors who are based in localities and are a physical presence to support families finding support at the earliest opportunity.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children and Families
26 July 2022

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