

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE  
SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING



Tuesday, 4 October 2022

## FAMILY CENTRES

### **Purpose of report:**

To review the Family Centre model of providing support to families, including usage, outcomes for service users and impact data of the new provision.

Overview of how the model is effectively supporting families to build their resilience and self-reliance.

Overview of the Early Help Continuous Improvement Programme.

### **Introduction:**

1. This report aims to capture the journey to date and where we are now in our partnership approach to early help. It also includes examples of what is working well, opportunities for improvement and the areas where collectively partners bring together contributions to create a whole early help system that effectively supports children, young people and their families and reduces families' needs for a social care or specialist intervention.
2. The early help transformation work started in 2019, Surrey County Council (SCC) moved to a new model of Family Centre services which would help develop a more effective way of supporting families that need help earlier to improve their outcomes. By reorganising Children's Centres into more targeted models of provision, the aim was to support more children and young people to avoid them becoming the subject of child protection processes or coming into public care.
3. On the ground, the voluntary and community sector plays a huge role in supporting families, not all of which is known about or recognised as part of an early help system. When families need support for more complex or embedded problems practitioners use a shared model of practice to build on family strengths and build family resilience as part of the county council's mixed model of early help and targeted help delivered through commissioned and in house services. This alongside our schools, early years settings, Police, libraries, health, maternity, and other services creates a rich, diverse, skilled, and committed early help resource. Family Resilience is an "umbrella" term under which a range of

services across partnerships support families as set out in the Helping Families Early Strategy.

4. Good progress has been made since the early help transformation in 2019 evidenced through the work of the Family Resilience Networks and Helping Families Early Strategy action plan (2020 – 2023), outcomes from the Surrey ILACS Ofsted inspection and Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Supporting Families assurance visit in 2021. However, there is still a way to go for our early help system to reduce the demand for children's social care and support children and families at the earliest opportunity.

### **Overview of where we are now**

5. Prior to 2018/19 the Sure Start Children's Centres supported all families with children aged 0 – 5 years needing early help. At this time, it was identified that there was insufficient targeted help provision for families with young children which resulted in delays for families with more complex needs to get the help they needed.
6. In 2019 it was agreed that Family Centres would focus on the children and families in most need. There was strong evidence that the families in greatest need did not use the children's centre service, instead accelerating into higher cost child protection or becoming children looked after by the local authority.
7. The new family centre model extended the age range to families with children 0 – 11 years as there was an identified gap in provision for families with primary school age children. Family Centres now provide early help and targeted help for families at Level 3 of Surrey's Effective Family Resilience Windscreen Levels of Need. Families are allocated to the centres via the Children's Single Point of Access (CPSA). This enables families most needing our help to receive the right help at the right time.
8. Family centres also offer group activities and courses for families needing early help at level 2. Families can access these directly without a referral through CSPA.
9. The Family Centres are part of a wider offer of early help for children and families they are a commissioned service delivered by multi-agency partners across the whole of the children's system. They also work closely with schools, early years settings and health. They are all now fully operational delivering targeted support to families with children 0 – 11 years with multiple family support needs.
10. Family centres work with the whole family so it is important that they work alongside other parts of the early help system so that all children, regardless of age, can be supported effectively as part of team around the family. The current model supports this by Surrey County Council funding the Family Support Programme (FSP) delivered by the Borough and District Councils. FSP deliver targeted help for families with children 5 – 18 years who have multiple and

complex needs and Surrey County Council's Targeted Youth Support Teams who undertake direct work with young people.

11. FSP offer individual family support for families where there is for example parenting-, domestic or substance misuse-, financial/debt/work-related issues in the home that are adversely affecting the outcomes for children. When this is working well they are able to link to the other services in the District/Borough, for example housing. Practitioners and families can request this help for a family by completing a Request for Support via the CSPA.
12. The County Council is beginning a conversation with the District/Boroughs to understand how FSP can support the delivery of the new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 'Supporting Families' Outcomes. This national programme focuses on providing targeted interventions for families with complex interconnected problems, through supporting:
  - Getting a good education
  - Good early years development
  - Improved mental and physical health
  - Promoting recovery and reducing harm from substance use
  - Improved family relationships
  - Keeping children safe from abuse and exploitation
  - Crime prevention and tackling crime
  - Safety from domestic abuse
  - Secure housing
  - Financial stability
13. In accordance with the Council's strategic ambition that "No one is left behind", Family Centres aim to reduce inequalities for disadvantaged children and families to prevent the need for statutory services. Strengthen family relationships to enable families to stay together. Improve child and family health. Improve readiness for and outcomes at school.
14. There is at least one Family Centre in every district and borough, 21 in total, with 9 further satellite centres. These enable other service providers such as health visitors to offer universal services from our Family Centres, with Surrey County Council no longer funding universal or open access services. Family Support is delivered through an outreach model in family homes or other locations that suit the family's needs.
15. List of the 21 main centre locations by borough and district with the provider identified.

<b>Family Centre Name</b>	<b>Lead Provider</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Borough &amp; District covered</b>
Ewell Family Centre	Riverview School	Riverview CofE Primary & Nursery school, Riverview Road, West Ewell, KT19 0JP	Epsom & Ewell
Epsom Family Centre	Epsom Primary School	Epsom Primary School, Pound Lane, Epsom, KT19 8SD	Epsom & Ewell
Elmbridge Family Centre - Walton	Spurgeons Childrens Charity	Centre Address: Sandy Lane, Walton-on-Thames, KT12 2EQ	Elmbridge
Elmbridge Family Centre - Three Rivers	Spurgeons Childrens Charity	Chandlers Field Primary, High Street, West Molesey, KT8 2LX	Elmbridge
Guildford Family Centre - Bellfields	Guildford Nursery School	North Guildford Site, Hazel Avenue, Bellfields, Guildford, GU1 1NR	Guildford
Guildford Family Centre - Park Barn	Guildford Nursery School	Guildford Grove Primary School Southway, Guildford, GU2 8YD	Guildford
Mole Valley Family Centre	Dorking Nursery School	Goodwyns Road, Dorking, RH4 2LR	Mole Valley
The Red Oak Family Centre - Merstham	Furzefield primary School	Radstock Way, Merstham, RH1 3NH	Reigate & Banstead
Redhill Family Centre	Welcare in East Surrey	Welcare House, 24 Warwick Road, Redhill, RH1 1BU	Reigate & Banstead
Horley Family Centre	East Surrey YMCA	Horley Young People and Family Centre, The Old Fire Station, Albert Road, Horley RH6 7JA	Reigate & Banstead
Epsom Downs Family Centre	Epsom Downs Primary School	Sure Start Building, Epsom Downs Primary School, St Leonards Road, Epsom Downs, KT18 5RJ	Reigate & Banstead
The Runnymede Family Centre	The Hythe School	The Hythe School, Thorpe Road, Staines, Middlesex, TW18 3HD	Runnymede

The Runnymede Family Centre @ Addlestone Young People and Family Centre	The Hythe School	121 – 125 Church Road, Addlestone KT15 1SH	Runnymede
Stanwell Family Centre	Surrey Care Trust	Hadrian Way, Stanwell, Middlesex, TW19 7HE	Spelthorne
Clarendon Family Centre	Clarendon Primary School	Clarendon Primary School, Knapp Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2HZ	Spelthorne
Surrey Heath Young People and Family Centre,	Barnardos	Kingston Road, Old Dean, Camberley GU15 4AF	Surrey Heath
Tandridge Family Centre	Barnardos	Hurst Green School, Wolfs Wood, Hurst Green, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0HJ	Tandridge
Waverley Family Centre - Hale	Barnardos	Upper Hale Road, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 0LR	Waverley
Waverley Family Centre - Loseley Fields	Barnardos	Green Lane, Binscombe, GU7 3TB	Waverley
Woking Family Centre - The Bungalow	Woking Borough Council	Sythwood Primary School, Sythwood, Woking, GU21 3AX	Woking
Woking Family Centre - Parkview	Woking Borough Council	Parkview Community Centre, Off Blackmore Crescent, Sheerwater, Woking, GU21 5NZ	Woking

<b>Supporting data - evidence of improving outcomes for vulnerable children</b>
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16. In July 2021 SCC introduced a central case management system, the Early Help Module (EHM) to our Family Centres that allows us to share and access relevant children's information to ensure children and families to not have to repeat their story.
17. EHM is used to record work with families receiving targeted support who require an Early Help Assessment and a Team around the Family. Before the introduction of EHM, information was held locally by Family Centre partners, providing a challenge in getting accurate data about the support given to families.

18. At the point of the introduction of Family Centres EHM was an internal system used by Surrey County Council staff including the Childrens Single Point of Access (CSPA) and Targeted Youth Service to store personal information on children and families. As the family centres are commissioned out to external partners, a number of barriers had to be overcome to enable them to access EHM. These included technological solutions to access the site from an external device. Data protection sharing agreements and training and support for external staff to use the system.
19. We are now able to see the work carried out with families needing targeted help that are allocated by the CSPA. Early Help Assessments (EHA) carried out by the family centres have contributed significantly to the increased number of EHAs completed and recorded on EHM.
20. Since implementation over 3000 children who have needs that require a multi-agency or targeted response have been allocated to Family Centres for individual family support and over 1360 to the Family Support Programme. Children's Centres did not offer this level of support so we cannot provide a comparison data set.
21. At any one time there is capacity to work with 960 families on a 1-1 basis across the whole family centre system calculated on an average case load of 12 families per worker. Funding for each centre was allocated based on the number of children living in the family centre area. A higher funding rate for the children most at risk of poor outcomes was provided. This means that each provider has a different staffing model which is based on the needs of the area.
22. As not all families require targeted support, in addition to the 1-1 work, families that need a little more help can access groups and courses in response to their emerging needs, for example, parenting programmes and adult learning.
23. As the families accessing group work go direct to the services for support their records are not held on EHM and it would be inappropriate to do so creating an unnecessary record of a child. Information on families that access the families centre groups is therefore not stored on EHM. The proposed solution to enable us to extract information about the extent and impact of groupwork has been to consider buying a separate module to store these records.
24. We are currently working with IT colleagues in Surrey County Council to introduce the Groupwork module which allows for family's data to be stored outside of the case work module. The licence for the module has been purchased as part of a wider systems improvement and is currently being configured to meet the needs of the service.
25. While transitioning our data recording system onto the groupwork module of EHM, providers have used local systems to collect data. We collect this data from providers but cannot compare the information on numbers of children and families attending groups or courses with previous data on numbers attending groups and courses at children's centres.

26. Data from our providers shows over 2000 families accessed the support groups between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and 30 June 2022. More detailed breakdown on the number of families and the types of groups they attend will be available from next year, when the groupwork module is in place and being used by the providers.
27. To ensure services are delivered to high standard, quarterly performance conversations take place throughout the year with an end of year review. At these meetings there is a discussion on service delivery against contractual requirements, the focus is to review evidence of the impact of Family Centre work on outcomes for children, young people, and families. We reflect on the quality of the service delivery, how Family Centres are responding to local emerging needs and contributing to their communities.
28. Results are collated and stored by the family resilience commissioning team and Early Help partnerships service and are used to inform action planning, training and support to the workforce over the following year. Themes are fed into the Family Resilience Network events where key stakeholders come together to prioritise actions and drive forward the Helping Families Early Strategy.
29. Feedback from parents provided at these conversations showed satisfaction with the service they received. One parent's quote *"I am much happier in myself and take more pride in myself & my son The service for me and experience was a really positive one and I'm very thankful for it"*. Another parent noted *"A huge improvement both at home and the mood of our boys. We honestly couldn't have got through the last few months without Family Support Workers support"*.
30. Outcomes for the family are measured using an evidence-based tool called the Outcomes Star. This measures progress in 10 areas of family life. Use of the Outcome Star tool enables family centres to measure the impact of their work and distance travelled for families. Data on family outcomes is added to the Outcome Star database. This has its own analysis software. The figures in this report are taken from the platform provided to SCC under licence. Evidence of the outcomes for the family are also recorded on an individual child and family record on EHM.
31. Distance travelled reports from the Outcome Star data show an improvement in outcomes for families. 95% of families improve outcomes in at least 1 area, on average outcomes improve in 4.6 of the 10 outcome areas. (This is above the national average in other local authorities). The top three areas of improvement for families working with family centres and the family support programme are.
- Boundaries and behaviour
  - Parents meeting their children's emotional needs
  - Improvements in parents' own wellbeing
32. Outcome Star data on how parents keep their children safe shows that 90% of families working with the targeted interventions maintain or improve how they keep their children safe from harm.

33. In 2019/20 Surrey CC saw a reduction in contacts and the number of children who are the subject of a CP plan significantly reduced. Numbers of contacts and referrals increased in 20/21 leading to increased numbers of CP plans in 2020/21, which is likely to be attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

34. The attached table shows the annual referral rate into Children’s social care since 2017/18 and for April 2021 – August 2022 as taken from DfE explore education statistics website and the compendium for the current reporting year. Explore education statistics – GOV.UK ([explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)) The data for 2021/22 has not yet been released by DfE, therefore this is local data from the tableau reporting system. Initial data should be released by late October.

Referrals to children's social care			
	Surrey	National	Regional
2017/18	13,626	655,630	106,590
2018/19	10,635	650,630	104,890
2019/20	8,519	642,980	114,440
2020/21	10,428	597,760	111,140
2021/22	<b>9,239</b>	N/A	N/A

There is no statutory requirement to send early help returns to the DfE, therefore they collate all contacts to social care and there is not a distinction between contacts going to a statutory or early help services. Consequently, there is no benchmarking data available or comparable data from when there were Children’s Centres as the Family Centre offer is very different.

**Next steps - The Early Help Continuous Improvement programme**

35. The Early Help Continuous Improvement programme has been established to ensure the county council are working collaboratively with our partners, children, families, and residents to inform Surrey’s future Early Help partnership delivery going forward. We will be reviewing and building on what is currently working well, establish what could work better and how we could do things differently in the future. It is our ambition to work in partnership on this programme, ensuring it is driven by the insight identified through engagement activities with partners, children, families, and relevant stakeholders. We want to have a truly co-designed model by the 1st of April 2024.



36. As part of Surrey County Council's Early Help Continuous Improvement Programme, we have undertaken research engagement with families who use early help and those that haven't and service providers/partners to gain insight into their experiences and inform how we can improve the early help system which meets the needs of children & families. This research required specific experience and expertise in this area, in addition to strong research capacity. On the advice of Surrey County Council's Research and Insight team, Ideas Alliance were subsequently commissioned to carry out the research engagement. The insights from this research will closely inform the next phase of service commissioning, in addition to providing presentations and reports to CFLL that provide an in-depth view on how the service is experienced by those on the front line.

37. The research engagement itself followed three strands

- Four in-person workshops have taken place with service providers/partners. Using an appreciative enquiry approach, the workshops enabled organisations and partnerships to uncover existing strengths and opportunities within their structures and environments. It was a highly collaborative approach that involved facilitated dialogue to reach a common understanding of what works well currently, to imagine what could be and to plan for this in practical ways.
- Ideas Alliance recruited and trained a team of 4 community researchers to engage in interviews with service users (18+). This approach provided far more comfort to service users as they were speaking to someone who has a shared experience and provided us with richer insight. It also had a Social Value aspect of providing opportunities to people in the local community being trained in how to carry out research activities.
- The Ideas Alliance core team worked with the providers and partners to find opportunities to engage in creative methods with families and young people. This involved, for example, engaging in stay and play session to chat alongside parents and hear their experience.

38. The findings from this work are not yet finalised and the insights from this will be included in the next select committee update.

39. The Surrey Safeguarding Children's partnership (SSCP) have recognised that there is a lot of activity and focus on early help and some really good work that is making a real difference for children and families. There are currently numerous strategies and initiatives for example: Best Start, Emotional Health and Wellbeing, SEND, Domestic Abuse, Health and Youth Justice Vanguard ('Building Belonging'), Youth Offer and the Youth Justice Child First approach, each including a focus on identifying and helping children, young people, and families at the earliest opportunity. Activity is also being undertaken through a Place and Asset Based approach to help support community projects thrive and families to self-serve.

40. Early help is complex with many component parts, activities, services, and partners across all areas of need. One of our key challenges is aligning all these

aspects of our work and how this can be achieved in one strategic plan. The National Supporting Families Programme has provided an outcomes framework and the platform for how we deliver an early help system which is easily accessible to families to provide support at the earliest opportunity and prevent problems escalating.

41. SSCP have already identified the need for stronger governance through a strategic early help board. Discussions have already begun, and a partnership workshop is planned for the autumn hopefully facilitated by the Early Intervention Foundation.

42. With the right support and challenge from the SSCP this will enable us to build on what is working well and start to drive forward an aligned whole system approach across the partnership.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Select Committee:

- a) Reviews and notes the updates outlined in the report and the progress made to deliver these important changes aligned to the Early Help Continuous Improvement programme.
- b) Agrees to receive a further update on the programme and the development and implementation of the Early Help Continuous Improvement programme in 2023.

### **Next steps:**

43. Strengthening partnership work to ensure that we have a systemic approach to delivering early help.

44. The insights from Ideas Alliance will be included in the next select committee update.

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### **Report contacts**

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### **Contact details**

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### **Sources/background papers**

None

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