

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 4 October 2022

1. The report on Family Centres states: *“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.”* and *“Family centres also offer group activities and courses for families needing early help at level 2.”* and *“They are all now fully operational delivering targeted support to families with children 0 – 11 years with multiple family support needs.”*

This is not strictly true as the Family Centre in Hale does not provide these services as the Commissioning model that is in place until 2024 allows the provider to make provision out of the Family Centre in Godalming in Waverley, which is not practically accessible to families in Hale as it is over an hour away on a complex bus route.

I continue to work with Surrey Officers and local voluntary groups to try to fill the gap in accordance with the Council’s strategic ambition that “No one is left behind”, however, currently there is little doubt that some families and children are being left behind.

Please can the report be updated that reflect the gaps in provision so that they can be filled by further co-operation with the voluntary section and also as part of recommissioning of services in 2024

2. Item 7 of the Agenda for the Select Committee Meeting on the 4th of October includes a table under item 27.1 regarding a table of exit interview questions. Please can you advise why the percentages to the question “I felt my workload was manageable” add up to more than 100%. Please can you provide the corrected data
3. Again, regarding item 7 of the Agenda for the Select Committee Meeting on the 4th of October. Given we well document conflict that the practices and procedures around EHCP assessments, SEND provision and Home to School Transport is currently creating between parents / guardians / schools / social workers and other officers at SCC, is it possible to add some questions about whether the level of conflict they have to manage as part of their work has impacted on their reasons for leaving?

The fact that work / life balance is the deciding factor for leaving in the highest number of cases (27.2) would suggest that levels of stress, which are related to conflict, are a contributing factor.

4. Please can the data on how many Social Workers in Children's Services are currently not working due to stress.
5. Can the Exit Interview feedback data for just the Social Workers be shared, along with the number of Social Workers who completed the exit interview?

Catherine Powell

Response

Question 1 Response:

The Sandy Hill Estate in Upper Hale has been for many years one of the most deprived areas in Surrey. It is one of the Health and Wellbeing Board priority areas due to the level of health inequalities in the community. Many initiatives and activities have taken place in the past to support families and improve outcomes for children and young people. However, the COVID pandemic exacerbated the gradual depletion in services and support available over time and many have now ceased altogether due to lack of funding.

Recently there has been a focus on the needs of the whole Sandy Hill Estate population and how the lives of all residents can be improved. A youth centre in part of the school's unoccupied nursery space is now open, there are plans for creating a local space for young people to gather that doesn't impede other residents and there has been some improved overall look and feel by planting an orchard and improving footpaths.

The community centre continues to thrive and there are discussions underway to improve the use of the Family Centre building which is currently an underutilised resource. SCC are exploring appropriate funding for community led- improvement projects and to see how we can support and build capacity in the community centre and other local services.

There is however more to be done to ensure that this community is getting the help they need and there are many and varied outstanding issues still to be tackled. Various meetings and discussions are being had locally with partners although these can feel disjointed and struggle to make progress.

Ongoing areas of focus already identified include:

- Children who have additional needs: children are on long waiting lists for assessments and are not currently having their needs met.
- 5–11-year-olds
- Literacy (including adults) & digital access
- School attendance (teenagers)

The other workstreams are:

- Tackling health inequality
- Provision for young people
- Social enterprise and local employment.

At the current time we can confirm the following activities take place and are delivered via the Family Centre in Hale:

Monday 9-5 – Tongue tie clinic all day

Tuesday 10-12 – Freedom Programme in the morning now postponed to next term due to low numbers

Wednesday 9.30 – 11.30 (9-12)– stay and play sessions

Thursday 1:45 – 3.45– health workshops first week of every month

The Family Centre in Hale currently offers and facilitates 1:1 work with families who live on the Sandy Hill estate, these times vary according to family needs and the type of support required. This is a flexible and tailored approach for families aimed at early intervention and identifying change for families to keep their children happy and safe.

There is work happening with relevant members, key officers, partner agencies and community to ensure that the community is well supported by early help services to address the identified areas of need within this community.

Question 2 Response:

The number in the table is incorrect (see highlighted number below). This is how the report currently reads:

EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTION	YES / AGREE	NO / DISAGREE
I felt my workload was manageable	66.67%	100.00%

The correct figures are:

- 66.67% of respondents agree that their workload was manageable
- **33.33%** of respondents disagree that their workload was manageable.

Question 3 Response:

Following discussions with colleagues in HR, we agree that conflict/difficult conversations/stress related to someone’s role should be covered in the Exit Interview questions. We are considering how best to include this amongst the existing questions about reasons for leaving and will amend this by mid-October.

Question 4 Response:

At the time of writing, absence data with sickness reasons is available up to 31/07/2022. There were 296 social workers in post at the time – 180 Social Workers, 88 Senior Social Workers and 28 Advanced Social Workers.

There were 6 social workers absent due to sickness, 3 of these on short-term sickness (none due to stress) and 3 of these on long-term sickness (1 due to 'Stress - General') – Therefore as at 31/07/2022, 17% of sickness at the time for all social workers was due to stress.

In the 12 months to 31/07/2022, 31.82% of all long-term sickness for social workers was due to stress. This represents 7 instances of long-term sickness, specifically:

- 4 instances (3 people) due to: 'Stress - General'
- 3 instances (3 people) due to: 'Stress - Work Related'.

Question 5 Response:

Of the 45 respondents from the CFLL directorate, 14 of those were in Social Worker roles. Feedback for just those in Social Worker roles is as follows:

EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTION	YES / AGREE	NO / DISAGREE
I felt valued by the Council	57.14%	42.86%
The Council has a positive working culture	57.14%	42.86%
The Council offers good benefits as an employer	57.14%	42.86%
I felt there was a clear sense of direction for the Directorate / Service	57.14%	42.86%
My line manager was visible and approachable	85.71%	14.29%
I had regular, helpful and supportive one to ones / supervision	71.43%	28.57%
There were suitable promotion opportunities for me to apply for	50.00%	50.00%
I felt valued	71.43%	28.57%
I had clear objectives and responsibilities	71.43%	28.57%
I felt my workload was manageable	57.14%	42.86%
I had a good work life balance	42.86%	57.14%
Have you ever experienced any bullying, harassment or discrimination at work?	21.43%	78.57%
Would you consider working for Surrey County Council again?	85.71%	14.29%



Liz Bowes, Chairman – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

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