

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 12 June 2023

Agenda Item 8, Section 4 describes the change in Short Break provision for children with disabilities (and their siblings) in Surrey. Paragraph 4.3 sets out the short break budget was frozen in 2023/24 and then paragraph 4.6 notes the 30% increase in funding due to securing the grant from the Department for Education's Short Break's Innovation Fund. This does not provide any indication of how the budget and the DfE grant changed the amount of service that is provided for different types of short breaks, including a) weekend and holiday play and youth activities, and b) day visit short breaks and c) overnight short breaks. Please provide a breakdown of the changes in level of provision from 2022/23 to 2023/24 in the budget (due to rising unit costs) and the increase in provision resulting from the DfE grant for the different types of short break provision.

Cllr Jonathan Essex

Response

Please see below the breakdown of budget for delivery by provision type:

Provision type	Budget allocation in 2022/23	Budget allocation in 2023/24	Change	% change
All short breaks	£2,484,990	£3,387,105	£902,115	+36%
Play and youth activities*	£1,353,204	£1,676,302	£323,098	+24%
Overnight short breaks**	£920,786	£1,396,803	£476,017	+52%

*2023/23 includes a small allocation of £12,000 on new wrap-around in-reach support for families and a new service targeted exclusively at children requiring 1:1 support, funded by the DfE Innovation Grant

**The figures shown for overnight include a small proportion of day visits – the capacity commissioned in 2023/24 matched the capacity commissioned in 2022/23

Please see below the breakdown of hours of delivery by provision type:

Provision type	Hours funded in 2022/23	Hours funded in 2023/24	Change	% change
All short breaks	165,610	149,790	-15,820	-10%
Play and youth activities*	90,494	70,356	-20,138	-22%
Overnight short breaks**	60,879	69,663	8,784***	+52%

*2023/23 includes a small allocation of hours for new wrap-around in-reach support for families and a new service targeted exclusively at children requiring 1:1 support, funded by the DfE Innovation Grant

**The figures shown for overnight include a small proportion of day visits – the capacity commissioned in 2023/24 matched the capacity commissioned in 2022/23

***Additional hours of overnight represent a new flexible, short-notice respite bed available to families of children with complex needs, which has been funded through the DfE Innovation Grant

With regards to hours of delivery, it is important to note that SCC has intentionally allocated a higher proportion of available funding to services that support children with the most complex needs, in response to our engagement and co-design work with provider partners and families. This includes additional overnight respite services and a new play and youth activity service focussing exclusively on children requiring 1:1 staff support to access their short break – which was identified as a key service pressure. This does result in a reduction in overall hours of short breaks available to children, but ensures that a higher proportion of available funding is going towards those with the greatest need. To illustrate this in the context of play and youth schemes, the inclusion of additional 1:1 provision affects overall capacity, as a member of staff is required to support a single child, rather than 3 or more children who do not require 1:1 staffing support – which would contribute 3 or more hours of short breaks to our total capacity, rather than 1 hour in the case of a 1:1 space.

For completeness, in addition to the service types mentioned in the question, the below table also provides information on the two other sets of services that complete our current externally commissioned short breaks offer – a new whole family breaks service, which offers day or weekend breaks to children with complex needs and their families and is being funded as a result of the DfE Innovation Grant funding secured by SCC – and SCC’s own short-term Innovation fund, which provides up to one year of funding for providers who wish to deliver something additional, that either delivers something complementary but distinctive from the overall short breaks offer or responds to a particular identified additional need in the county.

Provision type	Budget allocation in 2022/23	Budget allocation in 2023/24	Change	% change
Family breaks	£0	£194,000	£194,000	+100%
SCC Innovation Grants	£211,000	£120,000	-£91,000	-43%

Provision type	Hours funded in 2022/23*	Hours funded in 2023/24	Change	% change
Family breaks	0	4,296	4,296	+100%
SCC Innovation Grants	14,237	5,475	-9,878	-69%

***Please note** – each hour of family breaks provision delivers activity and support to the child and the immediate family members participating in the break, not just the child themselves as for other provision types.

Response prepared by Chris Tisdall, Head of Commissioning – Corporate Parenting

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 12 June 2023

Whilst I am glad to hear the leader of the council say that "prevention is absolutely front and centre of everything they do" - this is not being felt by families, settings or most importantly the children. What is Surrey's definition of prevention; as setting expectations would be good.

As prevention is important, what is Surrey doing to ensure that children with early markers are allowed to attend childcare settings? Realistically for a child to get help they need to be in a setting for them to apply for SALT or OT, then EIF prior to ECHP. If these children are not accepted (which parents are reporting online) due to early signs then how can they get the help they need?

Roisin Kennedy

Response

Early identification and intervention is a priority for Surrey County Council and our health partners, especially for our youngest children. Access to good quality early education can have a significant positive impact on a child's development and can make a real difference to their educational outcomes. We are committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to access their early education in their local community. As a Local Authority we have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient early years places to meet the needs of families with a particular focus on children with additional needs and disabilities.

There is a clear expectation that all early years settings and childminders are inclusive, and this includes their admissions policy and processes.

If this is not the experience for a family, then we will always contact the setting to understand why they felt that they were not able to offer a place. We have a specialist Early Years SEND Team which provides support, advice and training for all registered settings. They would work with the setting to understand what barriers there are to meeting the needs of a child and would then work with the setting to put together a package of support. This would be in partnership with the parents. If for whatever reason the setting were not able to meet the child's needs or if a parent is struggling to find an appropriate early years place for their child to access their funded entitlement, they can contact us at eycommissioningteam@surreycc.gov.uk and we can support them to broker a place. This can also include registered childminders.

We are committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to access their early education in a local mainstream provision with appropriate and individual support. In the rare event that a child's needs cannot be met in mainstream or that they are struggling to find a place we can arrange a meeting with parents and all professionals involved which we call an Early Years Inclusion Pathway Planning meeting (EYIPP) which enables us to explore all the options available to support the child and to plan and agree the next steps for their early education. Early Intervention Funding can be used for a very wide variety of

interventions and resources including enhancing the staff ratio, staff training, specialist outreach support for early years settings, parents and to support transitions.

Children can be referred for assessment and therapies without being in an early years setting through their GP or Community Health teams.

We work very closely with our Health colleagues to ensure that children have access to the support and services that they need. All children can access these assessments and interventions without an EHCP.

Response prepared by Carol Savedra, Head of Commissioning – Education

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 12 June 2023

How many looked after children from Surrey are currently in Tier 4 CAMHS inpatient hospitals and how long have their admissions been? I am primarily interested in the young people's overall length of stay in Tier 4 units, but would also appreciate information on the average length of stay over a 12 month period. It would also be interesting to know how many times the young people moved between different inpatient wards/hospitals.

Charles Kennedy

Response

There are currently fewer than 5 looked after children from Surrey in Tier 4 CAMHS units, and because of this low number we are not able to provide any further information due to the potential for identification. The individual(s) concerned would have an expectation of confidentiality around their treatment and circumstances, and we consider that providing any further detail would be unfair, could destroy trust in the care provided to them and would be a breach of Data Protection principles.

Response prepared by Tina Benjamin, Director of Corporate Parenting

Question to Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee – 12 June 2023

Can the select committee please advise me and other parents stuck in a similar situation? We feel we have tried everything to encourage Surrey SEND team to progress our children's cases. For many of us, communication and action continue to be poor, despite 'way forward' meetings. Many of us have contacted all the right people, we have escalated complaints appropriately, and initiated the tribunal process. Is there anything at all that can be done to help our children with special educational needs and disabilities to access the educational support they need and are entitled to?

Tim Oliver says, "No one left behind is the guiding principle for all that this council does – helping those that need us most and improving quality of life for everyone in Surrey". Well, Surrey's SEND Department continues to leave hundreds of vulnerable children behind, so what about them?

Anna Sutherland

Response

Surrey County Council officers are committed to ensuring that children and young people with additional needs and their families receive the *'right support at the right time'*, have a positive experience of assessment and timely interventions. Our aspiration is *'to enable Surrey children and young people aged 0 to 25 with additional needs and/ or disabilities to lead the best possible life'*, as stated in our Inclusion and Additional Needs strategy.

The Council supports over 13,000 children and young people aged 0-25 with a statutory Education Health and Care Plan. Many more children and young people with additional needs are successfully supported by early years education settings, schools, and colleges, without the need for a statutory plan. Our parents/carer survey carried out last year received over 1,000 responses and 52% of those receiving SEN Support and 46% of those with a statutory plan reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support their child was receiving.

We recognise that we don't always get it right and when this is the case, we actively seek feedback from families so that we can learn from this. Our survey indicated that 32% of those receiving SEN Support and 36% of those with a statutory plan were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. In order to address this, we have put into place a number of actions, including a communications protocol to ensure families are informed about the progress of their assessment and additional information for families published on the local offer website to help families to more easily navigate the complex SEND system.

We have also begun an 'end to end' review of the Education Health and Care needs assessment process to further streamline the process and improve families' experiences of the assessment process. In addition to this we have expanded resources within our SEN Teams and Educational Psychology Teams. All of our improvement work is overseen by Surrey's Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership Board, which includes external challenge from partners such as Family Voice Surrey, and ensures that we co-produce our improvement plans and all partners hold each other to account for the delivery and impact of this work.

We understand how frustrating it is when things haven't gone well and how important it is to get it right for children and young people along with their parents and carers. The council will continue to find ways of improving services for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.

Response prepared by Liz Mills, Director for Education and Lifelong Learning

This page is intentionally left blank