



Thursday 20 July 2023

Corporate Parenting Annual Report and Annual Performance Report 2021-22

Purpose of report:

This report provides the key performance data for year ending March 2022 for Looked After Children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally.

The annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board has been provided as a separate report.

Introduction

1. On 28 July 2020 it was agreed for the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning Select Committee to receive an annual report in relation to the delivery of Corporate Parenting within Surrey County Council.
2. In order to provide comparative data within the report, it was agreed to present the Department for Education (DfE) benchmarking data. The current data covers 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the data

3. The Government ended all Covid restrictions in February 2022.
4. The impact of Covid can be seen in this data and more so in the indicators that require an NHS service for example the numbers of children who have visited the dentist, which although above statistical and national outcomes is below the Surrey target of 90%.

The key performance data for year ending March 2022 for Looked After Children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally

5. The key performance data for the Council in relation to Looked After Children can be found in the attached report entitled *Annex 1: Corporate Parenting Data & Performance Information*; this report will be referred to as the Annex 1 report within this document. The performance intelligence team have undertaken a comparison of the data, from 2020/21 with that of 2021/22 including data from, statistical neighbours, and national performance.
6. Local authorities submit data for children who have been Looked After during the year, but the DFE publish data predominantly for those that have been Looked After for 12 months or more.

Looked After Children performance data and comparisons

7. Slides 2 and 3 of the Annex 1 report shows that as of the 31 March 2022 the number of Looked After Children (CLA) by Surrey County Council was 1048, which was an increase of 5.0% from the previous year. This resulted in a slight increase in the rate of children per 10,000 when compared to 2021. Surrey County Council, however, continue to have lower rates of Looked After Children than both statistical neighbours and nationally.
8. Slide 4 shows the data for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and reveals that the percentage of UASC increased by 3% between 2021 and 2022 rising from 78 in March 2021 to 119 by 31 March 2022. This is a similar picture to that seen by statistical neighbours and nationally. It is suspected that this increase may well have been as result of the end of the Covid-19 pandemic and the easing of travel restrictions. This view would be supported by the increase we are seeing in numbers of UASC at the current time.
9. The majority of Surrey County Council's Looked After Children, as of 31 March 2021, were placed with foster carers although this decreased from 72% in 2021 to 68% in 2022 (Slide 5).

10. For Surrey County Council's Looked After Children living in children's homes (regulated, non-regulated and secure units) there was no change from 20% in 2021 whereas for our statistical neighbours and nationally there was a slight increase. This data supports our approach to use foster carers as the first option for the majority of children.
11. Slides 6 and 7 show that for children placed for adoption, Surrey saw a decrease of 0.4% for adoptive placements. Our statistical neighbours saw no change and nationally there was a 0.2% decrease. Surrey County Council have lower numbers of adoptions in comparison to statistical neighbours and nationally, and we also have lower numbers of Special Guardianship Orders.
12. Slide 8 shows that the proportion of Surrey County Council's Looked After Children placed within 20 miles of their home address has decreased slightly by 1%, from 57% in 2021 to 56% in 2022. The proportion of Looked After Children living over 20 miles from their home address has also decreased by 3.0%, from 36% in 2021 to 33.0% in 2022. Surrey differs from the national performance data, however, is very similar to statistical neighbours. When this is considered in context, Surrey is a large geographical area surrounded by other local authorities and we are in the unusual position where keeping children in Surrey can mean moving them over 20 miles away, whereas moving them out of county could be a much closer option. For instance, Oxted to Farnham is 41 miles, whereas Oxted to Westerham, Kent, is 3.4 miles.
13. Slide 9 indicates that there was no change in the number of Looked After Children living within Surrey, as of 31 March 2022 This percentage was 52% as it was in 2021. For those Looked After Children living outside the boundaries of Surrey, again the percentage hasn't changed from 48%.
14. Slide 10 shows that the number of Looked After Children with an up-to-date Dental Check increased significantly from 58% in 2021 to 85% in 2022. This can be attributed to the easing of restrictions due to COVID-19. Positively, Surrey fairs well when compared to both statistical neighbours (69%) and nationally (70%).

15. In Surrey in terms of completed Health Assessments there was a 10% decrease between 2022 resulting in 84% compared to 94% in 2021 (Slide 11). Whilst statistical neighbours (84%) and national (89%) performance also decreased, Surrey was in line with statistical neighbours but below the national average.
16. Slide 12 shows that Surrey was in touch with 93% of its 17–18-year-old care leavers and 92% of its 19–21-year-old care leavers. This is a slight increase of 2% for the 17–18-year-olds but a significant increase of 6% for the 19–21-year-olds. For 17-18 years, both our statistical neighbours and nationally are above Surrey by 1% at 94%. For 19–21-year-olds our statistical neighbours are slightly lower at 91% and nationally it is in line with Surrey at 92%.
17. Slide 13 shows that of the care leavers Surrey were in touch with, 89% of 17–18-year-olds were in suitable accommodation and 87% of 19–21-year-olds were in suitable accommodation. For 17–18-year-olds both our statistical neighbours (91%) and nationally (90%) were slightly higher than Surrey. For 19–21-year-olds Surrey was in line with our statistical neighbours (87%) and nationally were slightly higher at 88%.
18. Slide 14 shows that of the care leavers Surrey were in touch with, 65% of 17–18-year-olds were in education, employment or training and 60% of 19–21-year-olds were in education, employment or training. For 17–18-year-olds, this is below our statistical neighbours (71%) and slightly below national (66%). For 19–21-year-olds, Surrey are slightly above statistical neighbours (59%) and above national (55%).
19. Slide 15 provides the overview of Surrey County Council's performance and comparisons for Looked After Children. The overview shows that for those children entering Care in 2022, those entering Care through the granting of interim Care Orders (ICOs) decreased significantly from 24.6% in 2021, to 18.2% in 2022. This is considerably lower than both our statistical neighbours and nationally, whereas those entering Care through section 20 is much higher; with Surrey using section 20 for 73.8% in 2022 (a significant increase on 2021).

Statistical neighbours used section 20 for 56% entering care and nationally used Section 20 for 54% entering Care.

20. The use of Section 20 as opposed to the use of ICOs perhaps suggests that Surrey County Council is less likely to enter care proceedings, less likely to seek an ICO, or less likely to be granted an ICO than both statistical neighbours and nationally. In addition, this approach would also be in line with that of the family safeguarding model, where there is an effort made to work in partnership with the family to address the concerns. The increase in unaccompanied children might also in part explain this difference as they almost all remain under S.20.
21. For those Surrey County Council children subject to care proceedings on 31st March, there was very little change in the proportion of children subject to interim Care Orders (S.38) at 17.7% and a 0.9% decrease in full Care Orders (S.31), falling from 51.0% in 2021 to 49.1% in 2022. It is highly likely that the delay in care proceedings caused by Covid-19 restrictions leading to longer proceedings resulted in the decline in S.31 Care Orders. In addition, the difficulties caused by Covid-19 may also have played a part in the slight increase in interim Care Orders.
22. Immunisation checks saw very little change, 92.7% in 2021 to 92.8% in 2022, reflecting that more focussed recording has been maintained.
23. Surrey County Council's Looked After Children with confirmed substance misuse decreased from 2.2% in 2021 to 1.1% in 2022. It is unclear at this time if this is as a result of the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, however if so, then it may increase again in next year's data.
24. For Surrey County Council's Looked After Children who had a strength and difficulties questionnaire completed, there was an increase of 7% from 88.7% in 2021 to 95.2% in 2022. This is a positive improvement on which to build. It is particularly relevant, knowing the impact Covid-19 has had on mental health/ wellbeing and loneliness.

25. For Looked After Children under 5 years old and continuously looked after for 12 months or more, there has been an increase in developmental checks. Again, this is a positive improvement.

National policy developments

26. Please find below link to CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) report: This report was published in March 2022 but gives the reader the context and difficulties we are working within whilst developing Sufficiency in Surrey

[Children's social care market study final report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107117/childrens-social-care-market-study-final-report-2022.pdf)

The report below is the government's response to the National Care Review and includes how it intends to support the Sufficiency difficulties reported in the CMA report

[Children's social care: stable homes, built on love - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107117/childrens-social-care-market-study-final-report-2022.pdf)

Conclusions

27. The performance data, both when compared from 2021 to 2022 in general shows stability or improvement when compared to statistical neighbours and nationally.
28. The exception to this is Looked After Children placed over 20 miles from their family home, and the percentage placed outside Surrey. It is however key when considering this information that the geographical size of Surrey, along with the number of counties it borders is recognised.

Recommendations

29. The Select Committee notes the Corporate Parenting Data & Performance Information in relation to Looked After Children (Annex 1) and Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report (Annex 2).
30. The Select Committee are to receive a report next year which will include:

- a) any relevant national policy developments that impact Corporate Parenting, including any updates in relation to the *independent review of children's social care in England*.
 - b) the key performance data for year ending March 2023 for Looked After Children as compared with statistical neighbours and nationally; and,
31. The Select Committee to agree that the development of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board can be provided as a separate report.

Report information

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Sources/background papers

Annex 1: Corporate Parenting Data & Performance Information

Annex 2: Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2022-23

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