

ADULTS AND HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE and CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

Item under consideration: Mindworks and the Neurodevelopmental Pathway.

Date Considered: 23 July 2024

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1. A joint item was brought to the Adults and Health Select Committee on 10 May 2024, with participation from six Members of the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee. Mindworks, who are the Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service commissioned by Surrey Heartlands and Surrey County Council, presented their plan to address the large backlog of children with neurodiverse conditions waiting for diagnosis and treatment in Surrey.
2. The two Committees heard from school headteachers and from parents who expressed their concern that the current complex and bureaucratic system will produce increasing problems for society if young people are not helped to find their way through it.
3. Councillors reported that parents and schools feel abandoned because Mindworks – the lead agency - appears to have given up providing front line neurodevelopmental screening and assessment, and has handed the responsibility over the schools, without a proper transition or preparation.
4. Mindworks expressed their inability to manage the backlog in its current form and informed they were unlikely to be able to do so under the current approach without further investment and reform, which would leave thousands of children and young people undiagnosed and untreated.
5. The Committees were not reassured that Mindworks – as the leading responsible agency in Surrey - has a strategy to handle the current situation, with the result that families and schools may be badly let down and left behind.
6. The joint Committees asked the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Public Health and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to exert all their influence and pressure to ensure that Mindworks actively listen to and respond to the needs of families and schools, while recognising that they alone cannot repair a broken system.
7. The Committees expressed a belief that, firstly, the NHS, and Children's Social Care and Education must work at every level to address the issue of growing numbers of children, young people and families who are not receiving the support they need to manage neurodiversity - an issue not just isolated to Surrey - and secondly, the education system in particular is not working, is

out of date and out of sync with the concerns of modern-day families with children who have neurodiverse conditions.

8. The joint Committees asked the Leader to work with other authorities and to urge the Government to make this their highest priority for our future society to give these children the best opportunities in life and ensure they are not left behind.

Recommendations

The Adults and Health Select Committee, with representation from the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Select Committee, agreed the following recommendations.

1. Mindworks must demonstrate how it proposes to regain the confidence of parents and schools, and that it demonstrates it accepts responsibility for the services that it is commissioned to provide, by
 - Publishing the Transformation Plan, with actions, dates, responsibilities, and levels of performance with appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets;
 - Providing research to identify the size of the problem;
 - Improving information on those organisations, such as the National Autistic Society, who can provide early help – prior to diagnosis;
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of partners who provide Mindworks services and drive improved performance where appropriate.

2. By scaling up supply to meet the level of demand, and securing sufficient support from the NHS England, showing how this is linked to the Transformation Project. We recommend that,
 - The response to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Report (JTAI) is extended to accommodate a joined-up Mindworks / Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process;
 - The Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust Recovery College needs to:
 - be more accessible to young people and their families and encourage more local access, with better publicity and provision of outreach services;
 - ensure that the College has the capacity to take on this extra workload;
 - establish skills and work coaches to help coach and support people to enable the transition to adulthood by helping people to maintain employment and get into employment.

3. Mindworks must provide a clear and simple information guide for parents on how to access services, so that pathways of access are coherent, accessible,

and easily understood, and to consider how it could be further reaching so that parents and schools are supported while children are on the waiting list.

Trefor Hogg, Chair – Adults and Health Select Committee

Fiona Davidson, Chair – Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

Background papers:

Final Report from Mindworks

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96816/Mindworks%20FINAL%20Report.pdf>

Appendix 1 of the Report – i-THRIVE in Surrey

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96817/Appendix%201%20i-THRIVE%20in%20Surrey%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 2 of the Report – User Voice Outcomes slide

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96818/Appendix%202.%20User%20voice%20outcomes%20slides%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 2a of the Report – School Reference Groups and messages

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96819/Appendix%202a%20School%20Reference%20Groups%20and%20messages%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 3 of the Report – Lessons learnt and current delivery

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96820/Appendix%203%20Lessons%20learnt%20and%20current%20delivery%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 4 of the Report – CYP ND Transformational AP

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96821/Appendix%204%20CYP%20ND%20Transformational%20AP%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 5 of the Report – Mindworks Alliance Performance Report

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96822/Appendix%205%20Mindworks%20Alliance%20Performance%20Report%20for%20Select%20Committee%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 6 of the Report – Mindworks Outcomes Summary

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96823/Appendix%206%20Mindworks%20Outcomes%20Summary%20-%20Mindworks.pdf>

Appendix 7 of the Report – ND Pathway System Risks

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s96824/Appendix%207%20ND%20pathway%20system%20risks.pdf>

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