



Developments with communication and working practice

- We are working towards Relational and Restorative practice being embedded across Directorate, CFLL, with it being promoted as a specific focus for all staff working with families and part of normal practice expectations and alongside other models including 'Trauma informed practice'. Relational Practice training is being provided to all staff in the Education and Lifelong Learning Offer, and this will be included in Induction for new staff.
- Co-produced 'Guiding Principles of Relational Practice' including best practice examples was published in February 2025. This sets out the expectations for providing good service including communication. It includes guidance on how to adopt a relational approach in working with families and partners. There is also specific guidance on additional considerations when working with children and young people, this is based on input from UVP/ATLAS. This will be used for ongoing induction, training and coaching.
- We are developing new Induction and Supervision model to include specific training on communication, customer service and embedding relational practice. We are building on this in collaboration with Family Voice Surrey to include lived experience of families (Spring 2025) so that it is brought to life.
- Improvements are continuing to all information and guidance, including the Local Offer. This is based largely on feedback from users. We have now employed a Local Offer Development Officer who is conducting a detailed review of the content to ensure it is accurate and accessible to all families. We have also produced an Early Years specific version of the Parent Carer Guide to Additional Needs & Disabilities, this content is live on the Local Offer, and we are developing this into a printed version, as families have requested this. The printed version is now ready. Feedback on the Local Offer is good – when asked 'Was the information helpful?' 61% of respondents answered Yes.

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- SEND communications protocol updated to specify the KPI requirements for communications and staff embedding this to improve communication and consistency. Completed
- Standard wording in email signatures, out of office messages and emails to update on change of staffing co-produced with Family Voice Surrey included in protocol document. Completed
- Standard letters produced following SEND decisions being updated, following co-production with Family Voice Surrey – local offer pages being updated to reflect any changes. Completed
- Task and Finish Groups established with Schools and settings; Families; young people; and partnership advice givers to review decision making process, communication around this and membership at multi-agency discussions to support decision making. New process to be in place for September 2025
- Engagement with families and schools to re-draft case officer adverts and support recruitment activity. Started (Jan 2025)
- Test and Learn on moving to a single phone number point of contact being trialed in the first half of 2025.
- Parent portal development underway, due for testing around Easter 2025.
- Key touch points identified in customer journey to support development of more proactive communications approach. Underway to be in place for September 2025 as part of new processes.

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- Our Community Connectors continue to share information and guidance out in the community and work closely with FVS. They have continued to host 'AND Showcase' events in the community, these are marketplace events to share information and guidance from a range of services. The most recent event feedback was positive with 77% of those surveyed stating they felt it was helpful. There are additional events being planned for 2025. A rating of 70% to 84% of attendees finding an event valuable is generally considered a strong result based on industry standards.
- We have explored the Key Worker Approach and how we can embed this in practice, the findings of this study will be used to improve guidance, practice standards and procedures across the partnership, this includes defining the key worker role and identifying the lead person by September 2025.
- Starting in January, we have two additional working groups commencing co-design work to build on the guiding principles, this includes focusing on developing tools for schools and settings to enable them to understand relational practice and embed it at a setting level. The tools will be developed in co-production with education staff, parents, carers and other stakeholders. Another workstream will be exploring how we can embed good practice consistently, so that families and partners consistently have a positive experience.
- We have a new Participation Officer who started in post in January 2025 funded by Transformation, will be working on improving participation and engagement, particularly in the seldom heard communities.
- We continue to work in partnership with the parent carer forum (Family Voice Surrey) but building on this engagement we have made connections with other groups, including the Minority Ethnic Forum, and Action for Carers to increase the range of families we are able to include in co-production and other engagement activities.

Next Steps



- Feedback indicates that the impact of improvements is not being felt consistently by families engaging with the service.
- We are working with families and other stakeholders to explore what we may need to do differently so that they the impact is felt. This includes a review being conducted as part of our Self Evaluation.
- We know that progress has not been as quick as we had hoped in some areas but hypothesize that once we roll out some significant planned improvements families will begin to feel a step change, this includes:
 - Co-production activity leading to a developed 'request for assessment' process
 - A new system for monitoring telephone calls and emails so that improvements to service can be targeted and monitored
 - Parent Portal for statutory SEND processes
 - Improvements to letters and communications to make them easier to read and understand
 - Right sizing of teams to allow staff to provide a more relational service
 - Re-Organisation of services to a functional model, to aid consistency across the service
 - Development of our new Mediation And Dispute Resolution Officer team; this team will work where there are disagreements in relation to SEND, and find solutions without the need for families to engage in the formal mediation or tribunal route (although their legal right to do so is not delayed or impacted)
 - Introduction of bookable drop-in sessions (face to face or online) so families can speak to key staff