



Monday, 17 January 2022

## **Inclusion, Post-16 Destinations and School Improvement**

### **Purpose of report:**

This report seeks to provide oversight of the current position in relation to:

- Our work on Inclusion in relation to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activity we are undertaking and the activities that are supporting schools and other educational settings to be more inclusive
- The alternative provision offer within Surrey for compulsory school age pupils
- The current position of the post-16 rate of participation in education, training and employment (and subsequent proportion of young people who are not in employment education or training, NEET) and
- The work of Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) in securing school improvement.

Finally, the report considers the challenges and opportunities for local authority (LA) maintained schools in a new education landscape.

### **Introduction: Inclusion**

1. Surrey County Council's priority 'Rooted in Surrey' is interpreted to mean Surrey children and young people should be able to have their needs met in Surrey whenever it is possible and safe to do so. They should be able to feel connected to Surrey, feel supported and be happy active participants in their local community.
2. Inclusivity is at the heart of this priority and the council has embarked on several projects and initiatives to support the necessary culture change that is required to make the county more inclusive. This includes the establishment of an EDI group chaired by the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning to explore how the council can be more inclusive in its own practice.
3. A key component of inclusive practice is ensuring children and young people have a school place based in their local community.
4. The inclusivity of our system can be indicated by the number of children who are missing education, the numbers who are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS), those who are attending Alternative Provision and finally the young people who do not participate in education employment or training at post 16.

5. Our profile of need identifies children with additional needs or vulnerabilities to be more likely to experience barriers to inclusion. This can be for a range of reasons including neurodiversity, special educational/additional needs, behaviour that is found challenging, communication needs, poor mental health/anxiety, familial issues, being a young carer, and the impact of long-term medical conditions to name but a few.

### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

6. There are a very small number of pupils in Surrey who are missing education – the definition of a child who is CME that is they have no educational provision at all i.e. they not on the roll of a school and not accessing alternative education. This is to be differentiated from pupils on the roll of a school or receiving education otherwise than at school who may not be receiving 25 hours of education a week. These children are known as pupils missing out on full-time education. The local authority has a duty to ensure that all children are receiving an appropriate full-time education.
7. There are only 39 young people who are classified as CME with no provision currently. The young people who are noted as having no provision constantly change as they are allocated provision. The two main reasons for being CME are generally movers into the county who are waiting to be allocated a school place or pupils who have extremely complex needs and are provided with packages of tailored education whilst they wait for a specialist placement. The characteristics of those without a school place are as below:

CME total is 39 (11 South East (SE), 11 North East (NE), 14 North West (NW) and 3 South West (SW)) of which:

17 have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (5 SE, 1 NE, 9 NW and 2 SW)

4 are children who are looked after,

1 have a Child in Need plan (CIN),

1 have a Children Protection Plan (CP)

The average time that a young person is CME is 110 days

The majority are in year 9 (10), year 10 (7) and year 11 (13)

### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

8. During the COVID pandemic the numbers of children and young people who were being electively home educated rose. The increase in the numbers of children and young people who were EHE was replicated across the nation. At this moment Surrey has 1509 young people who are being educated at home; our highest numbers were in July 2021 when we had 1662 children who were being home educated. The greatest challenge for the county has been to ensure the education these children receive is appropriate and that they are

making progress and are safe. The statutory guidance provides limited powers for local authorities in this area. Surrey County Council monitors the arrangements made by parents at least once a year.

## **Inclusion in our schools**

9. Surrey schools, the local authority and its partners are involved in several projects and initiatives which are designed to support inclusion in schools and the local community. These are set out below.
  - **All age autism strategy** - An all-age autism strategy has been co-produced with autistic young people and their families and is designed to raise awareness of the needs of autistic young people. As these young people become adults, they will form a significant portion of the population and it is important the wider community are aware of their needs. The launch of the strategy has been coupled with the availability of training for all staff to raise awareness. The strategy is supported by the work that has been undertaken to understand the gaps in the sufficiency of our provision.
  - **Capital sufficiency programme** - the County Council has committed to a £85 million capital programme to increase the sufficiency of placements we have both in the mainstream and specialist sector to meet the needs of those young people who have special educational needs. It also aims to enable pupils placed in out of county schools to return to a Surrey school. These are often autistic young people and those with social, emotional and mental health needs. 1,600 new places are planned over the first 4 years with 290 places created in year one/2020/21.
  - **Outreach review** – outreach support is support provided by specialist settings to their mainstream peers and is a mechanism for supporting children in a wider variety of settings. It builds on some key strengths of our specialist settings. The outreach on offer and its quality and quantity is being reviewed to ensure we have sufficient capacity in the right areas to enable young people to be supported to remain in their current settings.
  - **Team around the School (TAS)** – the bringing together of several support services to wrap around a school to support them in addressing a wide range of needs. Schools experience a wide range of needs in their school population – poverty, neglect, additional needs, behaviour that is found challenging, as well as learning needs, communication needs, poor mental health and the impact of long-term medical conditions. Drawing services together in a team around the school reduces the requirement for schools to refer onwards to multiple other service providers.
  - **Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP)** – the County Council continues to support locality arrangements for preventing exclusions through the provision of additional funding which is delegated from the Dedicated Schools Grant. This enables headteachers to work collaboratively to reduce permanent exclusions. The data indicates that permanent exclusions continue to be low.

- **Mindworks** – mental health and emotional wellbeing is a key issue for our population especially amongst teenagers and boys. The pandemic lockdowns have resulted in increasing numbers of young people experiencing anxiety in social situations and impacting on their ability to participate and engage in learning. ‘Mindworks’ is the new name for the provider alliance which is now contracted to deliver emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Surrey. This alliance, which includes Surrey and Borders Partnership and a range of voluntary sector providers, ensures there is a variety of sources of help, information and advice for young people, their parents, schools and the professionals supporting them.
- **Neuro Development Pathway** – this is a part of the Surrey Mindworks contract and has been developed at the same time to identify and respond without having to wait for a diagnosis. The shift in culture encourages the early identification of a requirement for support to address need.
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) review** - a SEMH review is underway to look at the skills and capacity within our current provision as well as identifying gaps in provision. The quality of the provision available to young people with these needs is variable and the provision within the county is also variable. The review will map what skills and provision we have in the county both in the maintained and voluntary sectors. The role of our partners in addressing the needs of these vulnerable young people is key and will provide an opportunity to join up with initiatives such as the Neuro Developmental Pathway, Team Around the School and the outreach review, with the capital sufficiency programme addressing availability of placements in county.
- **Closer to home project** – The preparing for adulthood team working with housing and the adults transition team are assessing the needs of all children and young people placed outside of the county to determine if they can come back and be supported in the county. The project embraces the priority for young people to be rooted in Surrey and to be part of their local community. The project enables young people with additional needs and their families to begin to think long term about their needs as they become young adults and what plans need to be put in place post education and the life of an EHCP. The project has required joint working between the Adults Social Care team, transitions team, health, housing, and lifelong learning
- **Equality, Diversity, and inclusion (EDI)**  
In addition to the activities and projects that are underway with schools and partner agencies the County Council is also addressing how it can become more inclusive and embrace diversity. An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion stream of work is being developed to underpin every aspect of the Council’s work and to ensure over time the workforce reflects the community it serves and every person who works for the council or supported by the council is treated equitably and fairly. The moral imperative to support the agenda for EDI is reflected in the commitment to an EDI strategy. The following data is indicative of the need to ensure we pay attention to this area of work – for example:

- 9.6% of the population is from an ethnic minority yet <1.0% of our managers are reflective of the diversity in the communities we serve
- 14% of the population have a disability and yet only 3% of the workforce have declared a disability

A webinar for all staff was held in September to launch the proposed implementation plan for EDI across the service.

### **Introduction: Alternative provision and post 16 Destinations**

10. For those pupils of compulsory school age unable to attend mainstream school due to exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, short or long-term illness, it may be necessary to put in place alternative provision. Alternative provision may be commissioned directly by a school or alternatively by the local authority in line with the statutory duty to ensure children receive their entitlement to education. Surrey County Council has recently launched a new Alternative Curriculum - Pathway and Reintegration Support Strategy (endorsed by Cabinet in March 2021) which sets out the renewed vision for alternative provision in Surrey and ambitions for Surrey pupils on a pathway to or within alternative provision.
11. The renewed focus on an “outcomes driven” alternative provision offer is underpinned by inclusion and reintegration back into mainstream education resulting in sustained progression. The overarching objective is to reduce the number of pupils requiring offsite interventions and support successful, sustained reintegration where offsite interventions are required. Pupils of compulsory school age accessing alternative provision, particularly those at Key Stage 4, are among those at greater risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) post-16.
12. The Local Authority has a statutory duty (under the Education and Skills Act 2008) to support, enable and assist young people to participate in education up to the age of 18, or up to 25 for those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This includes a requirement to track young people’s current destinations in order to identify those young people who are NEET and support them to re-engage with education or training. The annual cycle for tracking post-16 destinations requires confirmation of participation at the start of every academic year and includes statutory reporting requirements of the September Guarantee and an Annual Activity Survey.
13. Historically, Surrey has a strong performance with respect to the participation rates of young people post-16. Disadvantaged young people are however known to be disproportionately represented within the NEET cohort, both locally and nationally.

## Alternative Provision

14. Alternative Provision within Surrey consists of a combination of:
- Maintained Pupil Referral Units (PRU),
  - Alternative Provision (AP) Academies,
  - Further Education Colleges,
  - Specialist/Medical provisions, and,
  - Independent providers.
15. The new Alternative Curriculum - Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy aims to reduce the number of offsite interventions required by pupils (previously recorded as 0.5% of the compulsory school age population) and improve outcomes for pupils within alternative provision. It seeks to deliver a whole system approach that is interdependent with Surrey County Council's Inclusion Strategy.

### **Pupil Referral Units (PRU)/Alternative Provision (AP) Academies**

16. A total of 240 places are commissioned across Surrey's PRUs/AP Academies, although the current estate only allows for a maximum of 156 pupils to be on-site at any given time due to the constraints of the buildings. Taking into consideration both full-time and part-time pupils, the average number of pupils at any given time for 2021/22 so far is 163. The PRU Capital Programme, delivering a £22.7m investment in the estate, will deliver a long-term, sustainable PRU offer that has the capacity to accommodate the number of places commissioned by the local authority. In line with the strategic objective of adopting a preventative approach PRUs will deliver a strong outreach offer until the capital programme is delivered. This is facilitated through the implementation of a new robust service level agreement which will also deliver improved monitoring and evaluation of their work. The programme is on track for delivery and a formal launch took place in the Autumn 2021.

### **Independent Alternative Provision**

17. At the end of November 2021 there were 88 pupils in independent alternative provision commissioned by Surrey County Council. The majority of these were pupils of secondary age (71.6%). 86.4% have an EHCP, whilst 5.7% require SEN Support. Of those with an EHCP the most common primary need was ASC or SEMH (36.8% and 34.2% of the EHCP cohort respectively). Of the total cohort, 26.1% were a child looked after (CLA) by the local authority.

18. Numerous workstreams are contributing to the objective to reduce the reliance on independent alternative provision across the EHCP cohort as well as improving the quality and outcomes of provision commissioned. The SEND Capital Programme seeks to increase capacity in respect of the needs most prevalent within the alternative provision cohort. A new Alternative Provision Commissioning Framework will deliver a list of approved/preferred providers along with a robust monitoring cycle. This will provide support and guidance for both internal Surrey County Council services commissioning alternative provision as well as a toolkit for schools.
19. Alternative provision is a valuable tool in meeting the needs of looked after pupils. Due to the fact this cohort can experience multiple and/or short notice placement changes, there is often a need to implement provision at short notice until a permanent school can be found. It should be noted however that this is not always the reason that alternative provision is required. This vulnerable cohort have often experienced significant trauma which can impact behaviour and attendance. Ensuring schools are well equipped to support these pupils, through the compassionate schools programme, will deliver improved reintegration and reduce exclusions particularly amongst the looked after children cohort.

### **Medical/Specialist Pupil Referral Units**

20. There are three medical/specialist PRUs within Surrey. One has a very specialist remit (for pupils with an acquired brain injury) meeting the needs of children and their families across the South of England. The number of Surrey resident pupils is therefore relatively limited. Pupils within the remaining two provisions most commonly have SEMH needs preventing them from participating in mainstream education.
21. In line with wider developments to improve the commissioning of alternative provision within Surrey, new service level agreements for these providers will support more effective monitoring and ensure that pupils with medical needs requiring alternative provision have access to their full education entitlement.

### **14-16 Vocational Pathways in Further Education Colleges**

22. Many of Surrey's Further Education Colleges have a 14-16 vocational offer which delivers an alternative curriculum for those not suited to the academic pathway within schools. Early engagement in vocational learning for this cohort delivers better outcomes with regard to post-16 progression. There are however some inconsistencies across the county in the availability and cost of this offer. A comprehensive mapping exercise has been initiated as part of the Alternative

Provision Action Plan which will enable the identification of gaps in provision and barriers to access. Working with colleagues across Further Education Colleges through the Post-16 Phase Council we will then seek to support programme development where required. This activity will link closely with the review and development activity being undertaken as part of the Surrey Alternative Learning Programme (SALP) networks across schools.

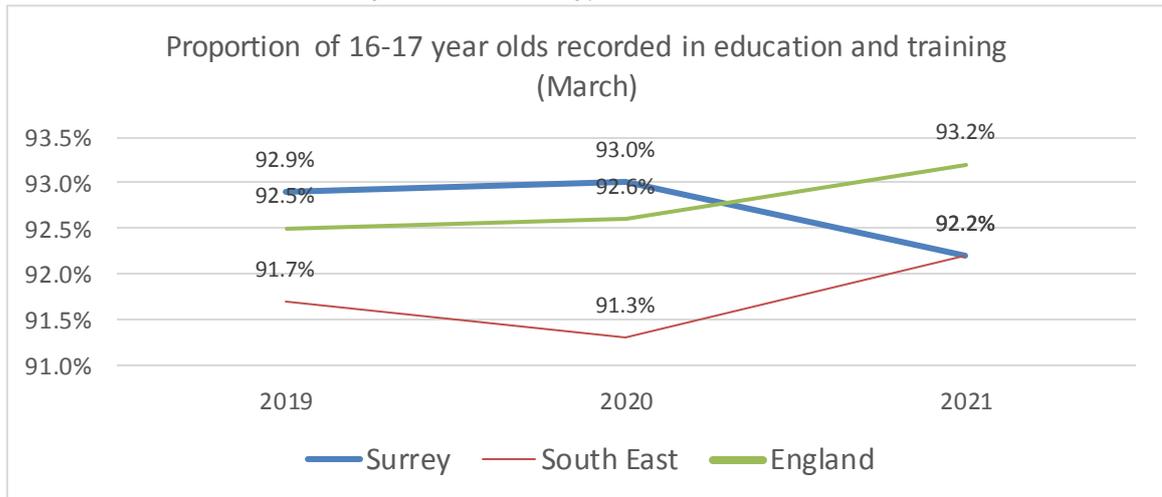
### **Operationalising Our Ambitions**

23. The new Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy outlines a shift in the way the alternative provision is understood across the county. It draws on the development of inclusive schools with preventative practice, growth of personalised education, strengthening of offsite interventions and excellence in the approach to commissioning. Through improved intelligence the local authority will be better equipped to understand the needs of the children and young people in alternative provision and their outcomes.
24. Since the summer term of 2020, we have seen an increase in the number of pupils unable to attend school due to mental health issues and anxiety. Supporting and enabling schools through the activity undertaken by the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health working group, combined with the roll out of the compassionate schools programme seeks to ensure these pupils are reintegrated into mainstream school efficiently and effectively. The growth and development of services such as Access to Education are a key contributor to this activity.

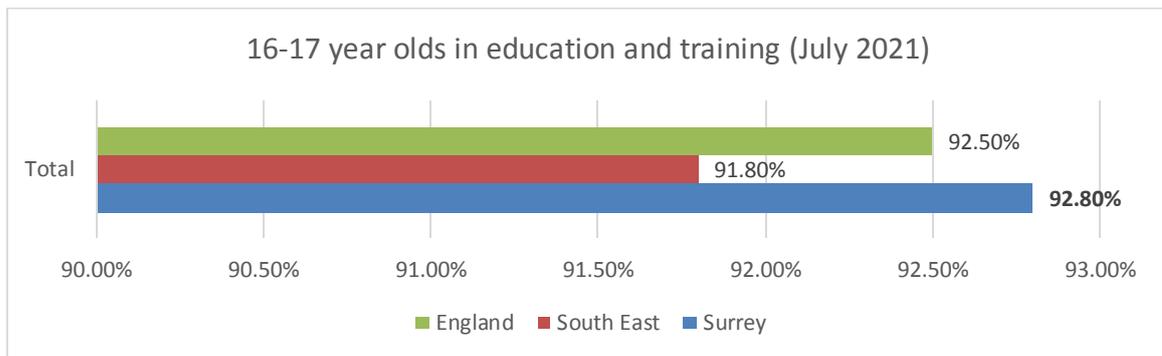
<b>Post-16 Destinations and NEET</b>
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25. The total proportion of young people participating in education and training within Surrey has remained above both the regional and national average to 2020, with a slight decline recorded in 2021. This was largely amongst those participating in apprenticeships (declining from 4.1% in 2020 to 3.0% to 2021) The decline also reflects some operational challenges experienced in relation to the collation and timely processing of data received from schools and colleges contributing to the calculation of the national average (based on average data

across December, January and February).



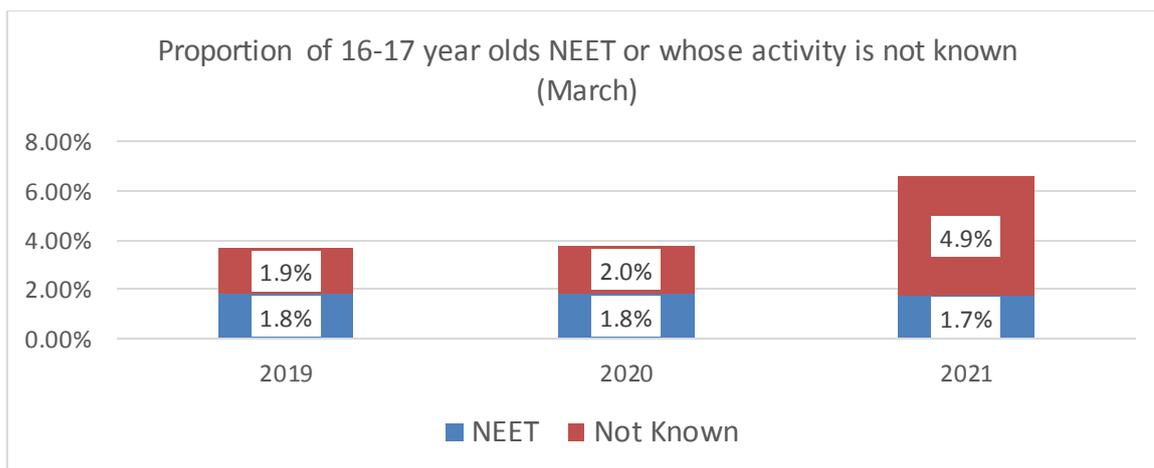
Participation figures reported for July 2021 indicated a return to comparable levels.



26. Work is underway to address the decline seen within published statistics in 2021. This includes

- Closer working with colleges to share data on NEET young people to implement targeted support and reengage them in education through in year start dates.
- Developing more robust communications with schools in relation to the importance timely data returns and the provision of up-to-date contact details for all pupils (including those leaving compulsory schooling) to enable effective tracking.

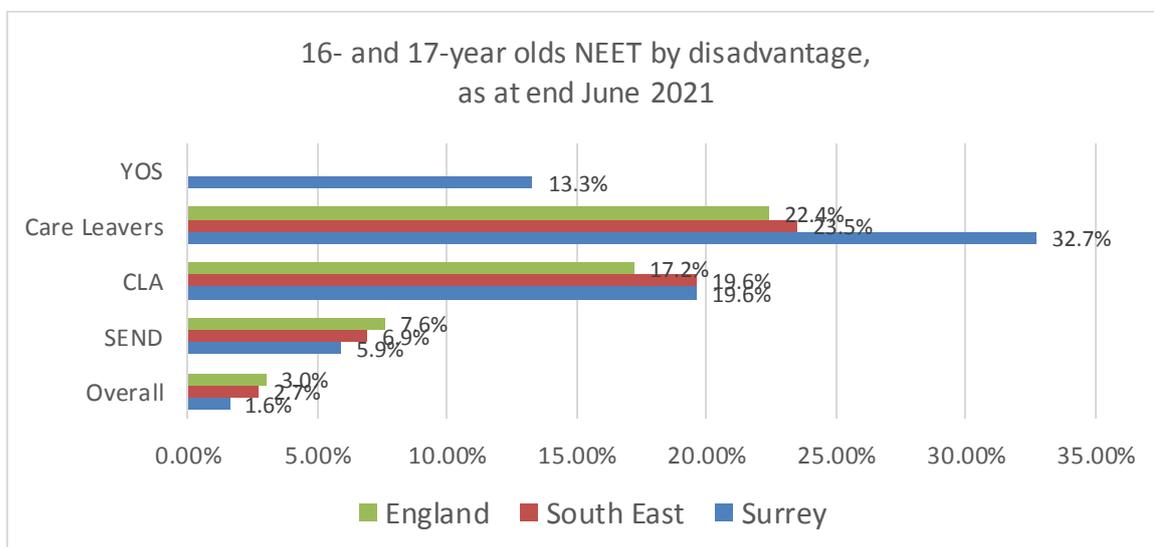
27. The decrease seen in the participation rate was not directly translated into an increase in the proportion of young people identified as NEET. In fact, in 2021, Surrey's known NEET cohort was slightly lower than that of previous years. The 'activity not known' rate was however higher.



28. Activity undertaken between September 2021 and November 2021 secured an overall participation rate of approximately 81.9%. This indicates that Surrey County Council is on track to return to performance rates seen pre-2021.

### NEET by Disadvantage

29. Although Surrey's overall NEET rate remains low, when looking at specific disadvantaged groups these young people form a large majority of the cohort. With a specific focus on young people with additional needs (SEND), children in our care, care leavers and the young people working with the Youth Offending Service, the proportion of young people who are NEET within each of these cohorts is significantly greater than seen across the cohort as a whole.



*N.B. No national comparator data available for YOS*

30. Work is ongoing to track the destinations of all young people, however NEET rates by disadvantage as currently recorded for end November 2021 (yet to be signed off and submitted) indicate a continued pattern of high levels of NEET across disadvantaged cohorts.

31. It is important to note that reporting of destinations to the Department for Education (DfE) relates specifically to those young people currently resident within the local authority area. Therefore, those children in our care who are resident out of county are not reflected in reported statistics in the same manner. Of those children and young people in our care who are NEET, 24.3% are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

### **Participation Strategy**

32. Key barriers to vulnerable young people, particularly the children in our care, participating in education and training identified are:
- Disengagement with education
  - Entering KS5 without English and maths qualification
  - 'SEND' needs
  - Emotional and mental health needs
33. The refreshed Participation Strategy has a strong focus on vulnerable learners. Working closely with Surrey Virtual School, 'SEND' services and Youth Offending Services we are proactively developing education, training and employment opportunities which effectively meet the needs of these cohorts. Some specific areas of development/opportunities which deliver in line with the objectives of the Participation Strategy are:
- Growth and development of the Social Value Framework
  - Establishment of the 'No One Left Behind' network
  - Roll out of the Skills Leadership Forum and Skills Improvement Plan
  - 'SEND' Capital Strategy
  - Building on good practice from the Alternative Provision Transition Grant, now considered to be business as usual
  - Development of vocational pathways for 14–16-year-olds to improve post-16 engagement

### **Introduction – an update on the work of Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE)**

34. SAfE is a not-for-profit school improvement company incorporated in September 2019. It is an alliance of Surrey schools and other partners, including the local authority. Their focus is to deliver a high quality, cohesive, coordinated school-led improvement system to serve all children and schools in the Surrey and wider area from nursery to post-16. SAfE was built upon a strong legacy of partnership working between schools bringing coherence to the education system and to ensure that all schools have access to the support that they need.

35. Surrey County Council discharges its statutory duties in relation to school effectiveness and schools causing concern through the company, as agreed by Cabinet on 16 July 2019. In August 2021, the contract was amended to include the provision of Surrey County Council's statutory duties for governance services. This contract is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 but may be extended for up to a period of a further four years.
36. During the Summer term of 2021 SAfE worked with partners to review and refine its mission, vision, and values in light of the changing education landscape post-pandemic. In doing so, SAfE engaged with all partners through a strategic workshop with the SAfE Board, the Senior SAfE team and over 100 heads. Throughout this engagement the key themes of collaboration, inclusion, excellence, and sustainability were key.
37. **SAfE performance priorities for 21/22 are:**
- Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at all Key Stages
  - Improving outcomes for Children in Need at all Key Stages
  - Ensuring outcomes for children identified with SEN(D) remain high
  - Supporting schools to mitigate 'learning loss' due to Covid particularly for vulnerable groups
  - Supporting schools to ensure that their curriculum (Intent, Implementation and Impact) is robust
  - Ensuring leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils following Covid and that this is realised through strong, shared values, policies, and practice.

In addition, with the recommencing of both Section 5 and Section 8 Ofsted inspections, SAfE have provided universal and bespoke support for schools to meet the requirements of a testing new framework.

#### **Update on School Improvement and Ofsted**

38. In September 2021 Ofsted resumed routine inspections. In addition, outstanding schools that were previously exempt are now also routinely inspected. The framework Ofsted is inspecting under was first introduced in September 2019 but paused due to the pandemic in March 2020.
39. The 2019 Framework is significantly different to previous frameworks and places a much greater emphasis on the 'quality of education' which puts a single conversation about education at the centre of inspection, drawing together curriculum, teaching, assessment, and standards. By taking into account a school's **broader curriculum offering**, it aims to lessen the reliance on exam results as a measure of school quality.

40. This has placed significant strain on Surrey schools including a number of small schools, particularly infant schools. In some cases, they have been unable to provide sufficient curriculum oversight given the expectation of curriculum expertise and mastery across all subjects and year groups.
41. In addition, Ofsted have been very clear that outstanding is now an even more challenging and exacting judgement.

‘Our aim in making this change is that schools should only be judged outstanding... if they are performing exceptionally, and this exceptional performance...is consistent and secure across the whole school.’

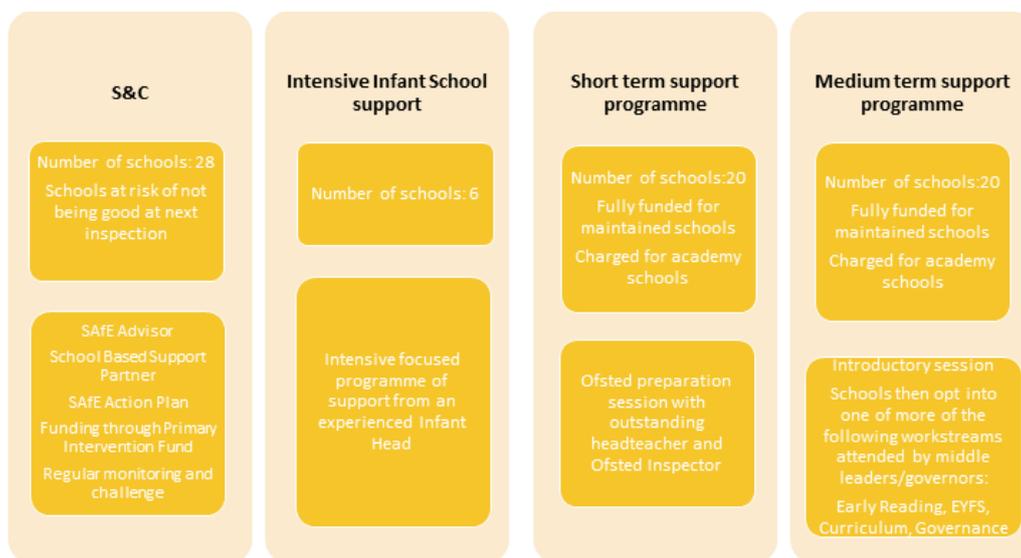
They expect the proportion of schools nationally that are judged to be outstanding to decrease from 20% to no more than 10%. As of 31 August 2021, there were 29% of schools graded as outstanding in Surrey; 77 schools (maintained and academies) last inspected pre-September 2015 and 43 pre-September 2010.

42. There are two types of Ofsted Inspection:
- S5 – a ‘full inspection’ where inspectors will make a full range of judgements and
  - S8 – where inspectors will visit a good or outstanding school to confirm that its grade has not changed and indicate whether it might have a full inspection next time as there is some evidence that it is possibly declining or improving – most good or outstanding schools receive this type of inspection.
43. Between September 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 there have been 37 Ofsted Inspections

	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary/ All through</b>	<b>Special</b>	<b>PRU</b>
<b>S8</b>	2	15	0	3	3
<b>S5</b>	0	13	1	0	0

44. Overall S8 inspection outcomes are positive with the majority of S8 inspections confirming judgements and only five identifying potential declines. These include two PRUs, two specials and one outstanding infant school.
45. Eight previously outstanding schools have had a S5 inspection. None of these have retained outstanding – three declined to good, three declined to RI and one was judged inadequate. One inspection judgement is still subject to moderation.

46. The school judged inadequate was due to ineffective safeguarding, and this meant that the overall judgement for the school was inadequate.
47. In schools with lower than a good judgement key areas for improvement focus on:
- Early reading
  - Curriculum intent
  - Professional development around curriculum
  - Disadvantaged/vulnerable learners
  - Governance
  - Safeguarding
48. SAfE have instigated a comprehensive programme of support for schools. This has included: support sessions run by experienced Ofsted inspectors and official webinars by senior HMI; sessions for governors; support for schools addressing sexual harassment and abuse issues; practical support on the SAfE website and sessions to explore the deep dive methodology of inspections.



49. In addition, SAfE have four support streams for 72 schools focused on the 'quality of education' and 'leadership and management'.
50. The education team within the local authority are holding conversations with schools to ensure that they are able to demonstrate a strong and effective safeguarding system and culture.

**Mitigating the Covid Gap and Supporting Vulnerable pupils**

51. Inclusion and raising the outcomes for all pupils, in particular the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, continues to underpin all school improvement work. SAfE's strategy remains based around three connected evidence-informed strands:

- Quality First Teaching
  - Literacy and Early Language Acquisition
  - Innovative Curriculum Design
52. Programme content and design is underpinned by robust evidence and expertise making explicit links between theory, evidence, and classroom practice. SAfE are working with leading national experts such as Mark Rowland, Christine Counsell and Jean Gross to design and deliver programmes for Surrey schools.
53. In addition, schools are focusing COVID catch-up provision – including School-led Tutoring – on disadvantaged pupils.
54. The cancellation of statutory end of key-stage assessments and exams has meant that there is limited quantitative evidence of improvement. However, recent inspection reports and visits show that most schools are addressing these issues and supporting vulnerable pupils well.
55. SAfE’s secondary specific programme led by Marc Rowland, which has included 36 secondary schools culminates in the spring of 2022 with a published report on the findings from Marc’s school visits, impact, and recommendations.
56. SAfE have also introduced a strategy for supporting the development of inclusive practices in the classroom – working in partnership with Whole School ‘SEND’. This is complemented by their focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion which includes their annual leadership Summit, Belonging Without Barriers, and their Race, Identity, and Leadership Programme.

<b>Professional Learning and Partnership Working</b>
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57. SAfE continues to run a rich programme of professional learning which is directly aligned to the Teacher and Headteacher professional standards and supports collaborative and evidence informed professional development.
58. SAfE programmes, events and networks are also underpinned by the following principles that have been developed



59. This ensures that everything that SAfE does impacts either directly or indirectly on outcomes for children and young people.
60. Relationships with the new Teaching School Hubs (South Farnham Education Trust - SFET and Xavier) are strong. STSN (part of SAfE) are delivering the NPQs for both Teaching School Hubs with Teach First as the Lead Provider. SAfE are also working collaboratively with the SFET and Xavier on a cohesive professional learning offer which allows a clear line of sight between the 'Golden Thread' of the NPQs and other Professional Learning.
61. SAfE also provide support and "thought-leadership" for Surrey schools and in particular produce a fortnightly blog covering pertinent education issues.

## Governance

62. SAfE's contract was altered in August 2021 so that it now offers statutory governance services for maintained schools on behalf of Surrey County Council. SAfE is providing:
- An advice and guidance service to governors and clerks of Surrey's maintained schools
  - Support, administration and processing of Local Authority Governor nominations and appointments
  - Guidance on parent and staff elections
  - Maintaining governors' and clerks' details on Surrey's database and providing clerks details of governor membership for schools on request
  - Support for governing boards and provision of Interim Executive Boards (IEB) for 'Schools Causing Concern' or 'Support and Challenge' schools
  - Development and deployment of Surrey's Local Leaders of Governance (LLG) network
  - Point of contact for governors for notification of Headteacher Recruitment
  - A termly SAfE Governors' Bulletin and a *new* termly Clerks' Briefing
  - Half-termly 'update' webinars for governors and trustees
  - A termly clerks' forum to support the practices of Governance Professionals in Surrey maintained schools
  - A *new* termly welcome and induction for all new Surrey governors
  - Limited resources, such as, an annual governance planner which includes key Surrey dates

## Moving forward in a new education landscape

63. Since the beginning of the academic year the education landscape has begun to significantly change again. The government (with a new Secretary of State) have restated their vision for all schools to be part of a strong multi-academy trust and following Surrey's Resilience and Sustainability Conference there has been greater interest, amongst maintained schools in all sectors, in exploring academisation. There is also an expected education White Paper due in the spring which is likely to set out changes in local authority responsibilities for schools.
64. In November, the DfE consulted on proposals set out in "Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded." In these proposals the school improvement grant currently paid to local authorities will be paid at half rate in 2022/23 and withdrawn thereafter, and local authorities will be expected to fund their statutory school improvement work from central services levy or general fund. If approved and implemented, this would mean a loss of £400,000 to Surrey County Council in 2022/23 and twice that in the following year. Much of this funding forms the contract with Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) who deliver the Schools Causing Concern statutory duties on behalf of the

Surrey County Council. Schools Forum have agreed to underwrite this potential shortfall in funding for 2022/23.

65. SAfE's contract with Surrey County Council expires in August 2022 and both parties are exploring options available including negotiating an extension.

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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66. Following the endorsement of the new approach to alternative provision in Surrey by Cabinet in March 2021 and the formal launch of the new Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy in November 2021, progress is underway to embed a whole system approach. The key objective of this work is to prevent escalation of needs leading to alternative provision placements and ensuring a fit for purpose alternative provision offer that is outcomes driven. Underpinning the Strategy is an action plan that seeks to address barriers to success and gaps in provision. Key areas of focus include the development of a commissioning framework for alternative provision, development of a clear and consistent referral pathway and a reduction in reliance on high-cost independent provision through the strengthening and growth of maintained provision/services.
67. Aligned closely to the objectives of the Inclusions Strategy, the aspiration is to reduce the demand for offsite alternative provision interventions, through increased outreach activity aimed at reducing exclusions and delivering efficient and effective reintegration.
68. A key success factor, beyond partnership working with Surrey schools and colleges to deliver a whole system approach, is communication with families and children/young people. Lack of clarity around processes, terminology and entitlement have been identified as needing to be addressed to secure better outcomes for alternative provision placements.
69. Surrey continues to have a strong participation rate amongst 16–17-year-olds however those known to be disadvantaged are disproportionately represented within the NEET cohort. The NEET rate reported for those with SEND within Surrey is below that seen regionally and nationally however this is not the case for the cohort of children in our care or our care leavers, where the NEET rate is equal to or exceeds regional and national rates.
70. The revised Participation Strategy focuses heavily on vulnerable cohorts, adopting a partnership approach with wider services to identify needs and develop opportunities to support access to and reengagement with education and training. The delivery of this strategy will be guided by the newly formed Participation Strategy group which will support and challenge Surrey County

Council and its partners to secure better outcomes through joint working and a coordinated approach to delivering statutory duties in relation to Raising Participation Age legislation and achieving wider economic success. Actions identified will be delivered through appropriate working groups and services such as the Post-16 Phase Council, No One Left Behind Network, Social Value Framework, Surrey Virtual School, Year 11-12 Transition Service and Post-16 Destination Tracking Team.

71. Since September 2019 SAfE has played an integral role in the Surrey school landscape working in partnership with schools, the Local Authority and others and drawing on the collective strengths to ensure that every child has access to an excellent education. A clear strength of the education partnership is the ability to sustain the collaborative working of the Surrey family of schools regardless of status or phase – to retain a clear sense of place.
72. Given the challenges that schools face post-pandemic, in the light of more challenging Ofsted inspections and with many schools facing significant capacity and financial issues, SAfE’s role is increasingly needed. At the same time, its funding source is threatened.
73. The forthcoming White Paper and the already published intention for all schools to be part of a strong multi academy trust will bring both challenges and opportunities for schools and the local authority.

#### **Recommendations:**

74. That the Select Committee notes the breadth of development activity underway to ensure that our most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners are supported to engage in education and training, secure better outcomes and participate in post 16 learning.
75. The select committee receives a further report in April 2022 that focusses on the outcomes for children who are disadvantaged, children in receipt of pupil premium, and a further SEND Transformation Programme update.

#### **Next steps:**

To receive a further update in 12 months at the select committee.

#### **Report Contact details**

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### **Sources/background papers**

Alternative Curriculum Pathways and Reintegration Support Strategy (2021), Surrey County Council

Education and Skills Act 2008

[NEET and participation: local authority figures \(2019-2021\)](#)

[Participation of young people in education, employment and training: Statutory guidance for local authorities \(September 2016\)](#), Department for Education

Permanent School Exclusions in Surrey What works to keep children and young people in education? Dr Emily Glorney, Natasha Rhoden, and Professor Frank Keating; Department of Law and Criminology and Department of Social Work; School of Law and Social Sciences; Royal Holloway, University of London Research summary – July 2021