

CABINET – 11 DECEMBER 2023**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions:****Question (1) Catherine Powell**

The Inspection Report confirms that we simply must identify needs earlier, support children and young people more quickly and effectively and ensuring that parents / carers are kept fully informed and that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. It is great that there is an end to end review of the EHCP process and more SEND places are being created in Surrey but I strongly feel there are gaps in opportunities for early intervention and support that are simply being missed.

Can the Cabinet Member commit to reviewing these potential opportunities for earlier intervention that have come out of discussions I have had with various professionals?

1. Work with Health colleagues to ensure that all children have the health and development review at age 2 to 2 and a half and any concerns are flagged to the child's nursery, playgroup or childminder and the Local Education Authority to support early intervention and support. This should include initial screen for ASD and nomination for the Surrey Local Early Autism Programme, so that they can be supported in their preschool year. Funding being made available to support places for all children nominated by Health professionals and impact monitored.
2. Ensure that the primary school place application process clearly identifies:
 - a. any child that may have missed their health and development review at age 2 to 2 and a half and
 - b. children where health colleagues identified concerns that may require adjustments, support or therapies in mainstream school or a specialist provision.
 - c. Children who have an EHCP in place or therapy such as SALT that needs to be transferred to the school SALT team.
 - d. Have started the EHCN assessment process
3. For every child with SEND monitor and report the following:
 - a. Short break / respite care that is identified in their EHCP
 - i. Has it been provided?
 - ii. Does the provision match the EHCP or are there gaps?
 - b. Where short breaks / respite care has been requested by parents and whether:
 - i. This has been provided
 - ii. The child is on one or more waiting lists
4. Creation of a Complex Case Social Worker role for children with complex needs to act as a co-ordinator for all the support each child needs from Education, Health and Social Care so that the parent has a single point of contact rather than multiple points of contact. These social workers should have a lower case load but replace the multiple social workers that are often involved with a single child.

Reply:

Early Intervention and Support has been a focus within health. Health Visiting services offer support to every child in Surrey via the Healthy Child Programme mandated checks. The offer is 100%, although uptake is lower, we encourage uptake of these checks. *Recent 2.5 year check data – latest uptake is at 75.6% for quarter 2 of 23/24 against a local uptake target of 69%.*

The Community Health Early Support (CHES) team provides practical support in the home for families who may be concerned about their child's development. The team have followed up with families who have been unable to attend the 12-month review and children who may be waiting for specialist assessment.

The Health Visiting team also support with speech and language and communication needs, this has enabled families to receive support at the earliest opportunity.

As part of the Best Start and Additional Needs and Disabilities strategies, we are embedding learning from the work of the Birth to Five Partnership. Our current solution for a Surrey wide Integrated 2-year review focusses on communication with parents, early years settings and health around the child's personal child health record (PCHR), where early years share their progress review via a child's PCHR with health and all maintain liaison as required to support any identified child development needs.

Health and early years continue to discuss, review the model, complete surveys for feedback with teams and scope national models of practice and communication to review any changes we can make to support our integrated model.

We have liaised to both promote health and early years reviews via our aligned webpages: CFHS 27-month review:

<https://childrenshealthissurrey.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting-service/27-month-reviews>

Health and development reviews at age 2 Surrey County Council:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/families/education-and-learning-advice-for-families/early-learning/two-year-old-checks-information-for-parents>

We both share parent contacts, in parent and professional facing presentations/events. We have created a new 2-year poster for future promotion and are awaiting sign off to cascade.

Our teams are committed to delivering the 27-month offer to all Surrey children adapting contact dependent on their known need, working in partnership with our early years colleagues to support identified development needs in readiness for

starting school. Where a child does not attend/ 'was not brought' to their health review, a letter is sent to the family reminding them of the value of a review of their child's progress.

There is a huge amount of activity due to the expansion of Early Years Entitlements – to be launched in April 2024. We are extending teams in order to meet the needs of the new cohorts but also to address our key priorities:

- Enhancing the universal language and communication offer in Early Years and Reception
- Providing a workforce development budget to provide training and information/best practice
- Extending Inclusion Pathway Planning into Reception
- Extending and developing the Early Intervention Fund to provide a broader range of interventions and opportunities
- Creating a Best Start/Start for Life budget and considering the possibility of a bespoke role to manage the creation of the Parent/Carer Forum

The mainstream new round application form asks whether the child has an EHCP; and states that if so, the parent should not complete the form but should refer to the child's SEND case officer instead for details on how to apply for a primary or secondary school place. The mainstream application form cannot ask whether the child has SEND but no EHCP as this does not form part of the admissions criteria for any school. This would include children who have started the EHCN assessment process. If a child undergoing an EHCN assessment is later granted an EHCP, the SEND Admission team would take over the application from the School Admissions team, if this was before the child had been offered a place.

To support great transitions for every child from early years there is clear guidance for all settings entitled Supporting Positive Transitions in the Early Years: Guidance for Practitioners and documents to help Early Years staff support successful transitions for children into, within and from their setting, Early Years Educational Effectiveness Team and SEND Team (January 2023) [Supporting families, settings and schools with transitions \(surreylocaloffer.org.uk\)](https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/supporting-families-settings-and-schools-with-transitions). This document is available on line and is reinforced through the Early Years Teams who visit settings and communication to all early year providers. Resources can be found on-line [Graduated Response Early Years | Surrey Local Offer](https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/graduated-response-early-years).

Where Short Breaks have been identified as a need and are listed as a provision in an EHCP then this would be kept under review as part of the annual review of the plan. If a child is open to the Children with Disabilities Service, then the short breaks would be reviewed as part of the Child in Need plan. Both of these review mechanisms should address and respond where possible and appropriate to identified needs.

It is important to note that access to overnight respite services currently depends on there being an identified need for this in a child's Care Plan or following the completion of a social care assessment that includes short breaks in its recommended new plan, this should be incorporated in the EHCP which is reviewed annually.

There is not a statutory entitlement to Play and Leisure Short Breaks, so a change of SCC policy would be required to introduce new eligibility criteria for these services.

There is a Designated Social Care Officer in post working to improve social care engagement and alignment of Annual Reviews with social care meetings where possible. There is a focus on improving the social work contribution to EHCP reviews and attendance where possible.

Where Short Breaks have been requested directly by parents/carers approaching providers, SCC does not collect data in relation to those requests, and providers are not contractually required to collect it, until such time as the child is registered on and begins to access services.

We do not currently collect child level data regarding waiting lists, which is held by providers who directly manage services, and providers are not contractually required to share it, but we do periodically request data from providers on overall volumes on waiting lists and movement off them, as well as considering these with providers as part of contract review meetings.

We are planning a co-production process with families and providers to begin in spring 2024 to explore a range of areas for service improvements, including the management of waiting lists and how we might better support families whilst they are waiting to access a service. This will need to include GDPR considerations about what child-level data can be shared with SCC, prior to families beginning to receive a Short Breaks service, as this is not currently covered by our Privacy Notices, which only cover data relating to service delivery.

There are no plans to create additional social work posts for children with complex needs, however, we are reviewing the Children with Disabilities service to ensure that we have proportionate social work involvement for families, so that we use our social work resource as effectively as possible. We work hard to ensure that there are not multiple social workers involved with children, but we accept that we have recruitment and retention challenges within Surrey children's services which reflects the national picture of social work recruitment and retention and unfortunately does result in changes of social workers for children in some instances.

The Early Support Team based within education works with families holistically to improve outcomes for their children, 0-5 years old with multiple, complex health needs and disabilities. The service works closely with colleagues from health, education, the voluntary sector and social care. Putting the child at the centre, we listen to parents and establish a team around the family to coproduce a plan of support. This approach builds confident parents and enables children to reach their

full potential. Our aim is to make life a little bit easier as simple daily tasks can be very challenging when you have a child with complex needs. There may be a large number of people and services involved and the service helps by coordinating these.

We do have a health funded National key worker service that is hosted within the Children with disabilities service which is a single point of contact for children with a significant risk of hospital admission or becoming looked after. The key working service will act as the main point of contact for young people aged between 5-25 who have a diagnosis of autism and/or learning disability, the service uses person-centred approaches to ensure that the young person and their family remain at the centre of all planning helping to navigate systems, breaking down barriers and working across education, health and social care.

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

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