

CFL Practice Improvement and Performance Information
CFLLC Select Committee – February 2024
EHCP Accelerated Recovery Plan Update



The EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan – a recap

- A comprehensive multi-agency recovery plan is underway with the objective of achieving a good overall timeliness rate of 60% by the end of May 2024. This target surpasses the national timeliness percentage and aligns closely with the 2021 performance. The approach is to address overdue assessments and ensure timely assessments for children with higher risks.
- To support this initiative, a £15 million investment has been allocated for Special Educational Needs (SEN), Educational Psychology (EP), and early intervention capacity over a three-year period. The plan encompasses three key objectives:

Reducing Long Waiting Times:

- To complete the EHC needs assessments for all children, young people, families, and schools who have been waiting longer than the statutory timescales as soon as practically possible.

Better Support While Waiting:

- To support children, young people, families, and schools as effectively as possible whilst they are having to wait longer than they should.

Securing a Sustainable Service Model:

- The goal is to restore a sustainable service quickly, ensuring that the majority of EHC needs assessments are completed within statutory timescales, beginning with achieving a 60% rate and ultimately striving for 100%.

Ofsted/CQC Local Area Inspection and links with EHCP Timeliness

There was an Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection of the local area on the 25th – 29th September 2023. In relation to the recovery plan, inspectors recognised:

'Where families have built trusted relationships with professionals, they feel more involved in and understand decisions better. Leaders have improved the access to and timeliness of decisions about education, health and care needs assessments (EHCNA). They have recently introduced a multi-agency triage where decisions are made quickly, and families are supported well to understand them.'

The overall inspection judgement was:

“The local area partnership’s arrangements lead to **inconsistent experiences and outcomes** for children and young people with SEND. The **local area partnership must work jointly** to make improvements.”

And EHCP timeliness was identified as an Area of Improvement and is now part of the Ofsted action plan monitoring the following:

“Leaders across health, social care and education should ensure that improvements continue in line with their recovery plan in respect of:

- reducing waiting times for health assessments;
- increasing timeliness and quality of needs assessments; and
- increasing timeliness and quality of EHCPs and annual reviews.“

Area of Improvement 3 – Waiting times and quality

Area of Improvement 3:

Leaders across health, social care and education should ensure that improvements continue in line with their recovery plan in respect of:

- reducing waiting times for health assessments;*
- increasing timeliness and quality of needs assessments; and*
- increasing timeliness and quality of EHCPs and annual reviews.*

Senior Responsible Officer: Tracey Sanders, Assistant Director IAN (SEN Recovery and Educational Psychology) & Harriet Derrett-Smith, Associate Director Commissioning – Health & Wellbeing

Impact statement:

Through collaborative work across the partnership, timely assessments of education, health, and social care needs will be facilitated where necessary. Working hand in hand with parents, carers, children, young people, and stakeholders, our co-production will support partners to produce high-quality Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans and annual reviews, delivered within statutory timescales.

Strategic Improvement Priority

3.1 The Partnership will ensure delivery of the EHCP recovery plan.

3.2 The Partnership will ensure waiting times for health assessments; to access children's health therapies and developmental paediatrics are reduced.

3.3 The Partnership will ensure a refined neurodevelopmental pathway encompassing early intervention, support, assessment, and post-diagnosis.

3.4 The Partnership will continue to develop, implement, and embed a multi-agency quality framework for EHCNA's, plans, and reviews.

EHCP Accelerated Recovery Plan



EHCP Recovery Objectives	EHCP Recovery Approach	2023/24 Academic Year Targets
<p>1. Reducing long waiting times</p> <p>To complete the EHC needs assessments for all children, young people, families, and schools who have been waiting longer than the statutory timescales as soon as practically possible.</p>	<p>We will do this by scaling up our capacity rapidly through several contracts with EP and SEN providers, as fast as the available capacity in the market will allow, and working with partners to ensure that they have sufficient capacity and assessments are well co-ordinated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP assessments are returned to timeliness by March 2024 • EP assessment capacity increases by 1275 advices to produce assessments per month
<p>2. Better support whilst waiting</p> <p>To support children, young people, families, and schools as effectively as possible whilst they are having to wait longer than they should.</p>	<p>We will do this by further improving communications to families and schools and providing more targeted support from our Specialist Teaching service to children and young people whose assessments are overdue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families with delayed EHCNA are contacted every three weeks • Specialist Teaching for Inclusive Practice (STIP) service visit all schools with children with delayed EHC needs assessment to ensure all children receive the help and support they need whilst waiting over the 23/24 academic year
<p>3. Securing a sustainable service model</p> <p>To return to a sustainable service as quickly as possible so that the majority of EHC needs assessments are completed within the statutory timescales, starting by reaching 60%+ and ultimately aiming for 100%.</p>	<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking an end-to-end review of our EHCP functions and implementing reforms of our processes and practices to ensure that they are as effective and efficient as possible. • Ensuring that key teams are “right sized” to deliver the expected service levels, including contracted capacity if necessary. • Working alongside schools and settings to strengthen early help and support so that children and young people only go through EHCP processes if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 strengthened decision making in line with ordinarily available provision guidance and a strengthened SEN support offer leads to a 20% reduction of EHCNA requests moving to assessment when compared with 2022/23. • Phase 1 of decision making completed on time on more than 95% of occasions per month • EHCPs issued within 20 weeks* – over 60% by 31 May 2024* • SEND case officer cohort increased from 81 fte posts to 111 fte filled by October 2023 (figure to be reviewed after the end-to-end review is completed) and EP capacity reflects EHCNA demand and provides early intervention offer.

Summary Headlines

- Timeliness remains low as projected in the recovery plan at 10% for December 2023. It was anticipated that this would be the case while overdue assessments were finalised.
- Sourcing the EP capacity needed for the recovery plan has been challenging and has not been in line with external contract providers commitments.
- However, the increased capacity combined with the lower-than-expected demand for assessments has enabled us to reduce the number of unallocated EP assessments from 1014 in May 2023 to 130 as of 22nd of January 2024
- Once the overdue assessments have been completed and assuming demand remains low, we continue to be on track for an end of May target of 60% EHCNAs being completed on time.
- School aged SLT assessment timeliness has significantly improved, it is now around 90%
- Other health advice timeliness range from 60-100% on time, the data fluctuates as the numbers are small
- Early decision making about proceeding to assessment is on time in 96% of cases
- Support while waiting is being targeted and increased for those waiting over 20 weeks
- 98% of SEN Officer roles are now filled



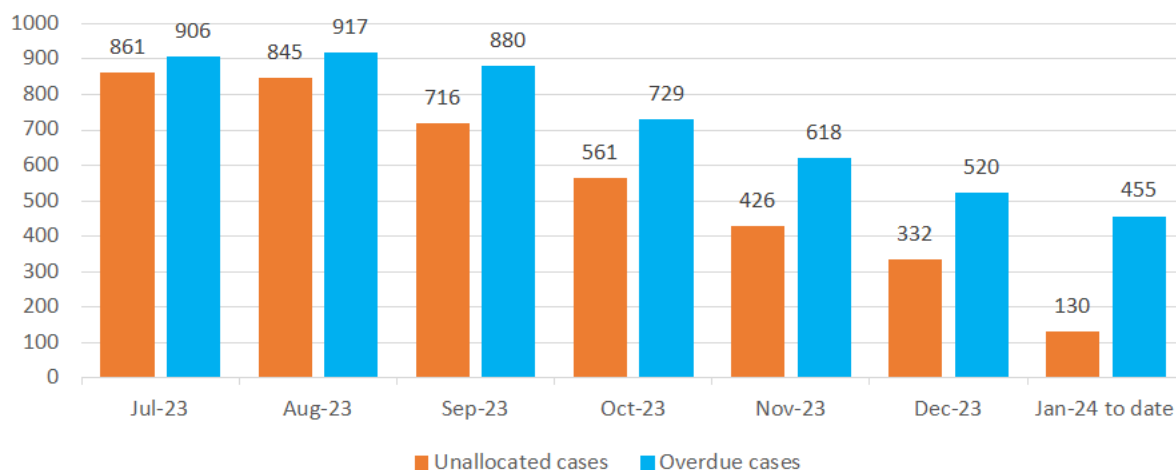


Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Target : EP assessments are returned to timeliness by March 2024

- There has been an increase of over 100 EP assessments per month being completed, continuing the reduction in the backlog of unallocated EP assessments.
- The number of unallocated cases has reduced by two thirds since May 23 when the backlog was 1014. Mid-January data confirms that only 130 assessments remain unallocated in the EP backlog.

EP Unallocated and Overdue Cases



The orange bars show how many EP assessments are unallocated. The blue bar shows how many are yet to be completed that are overdue.

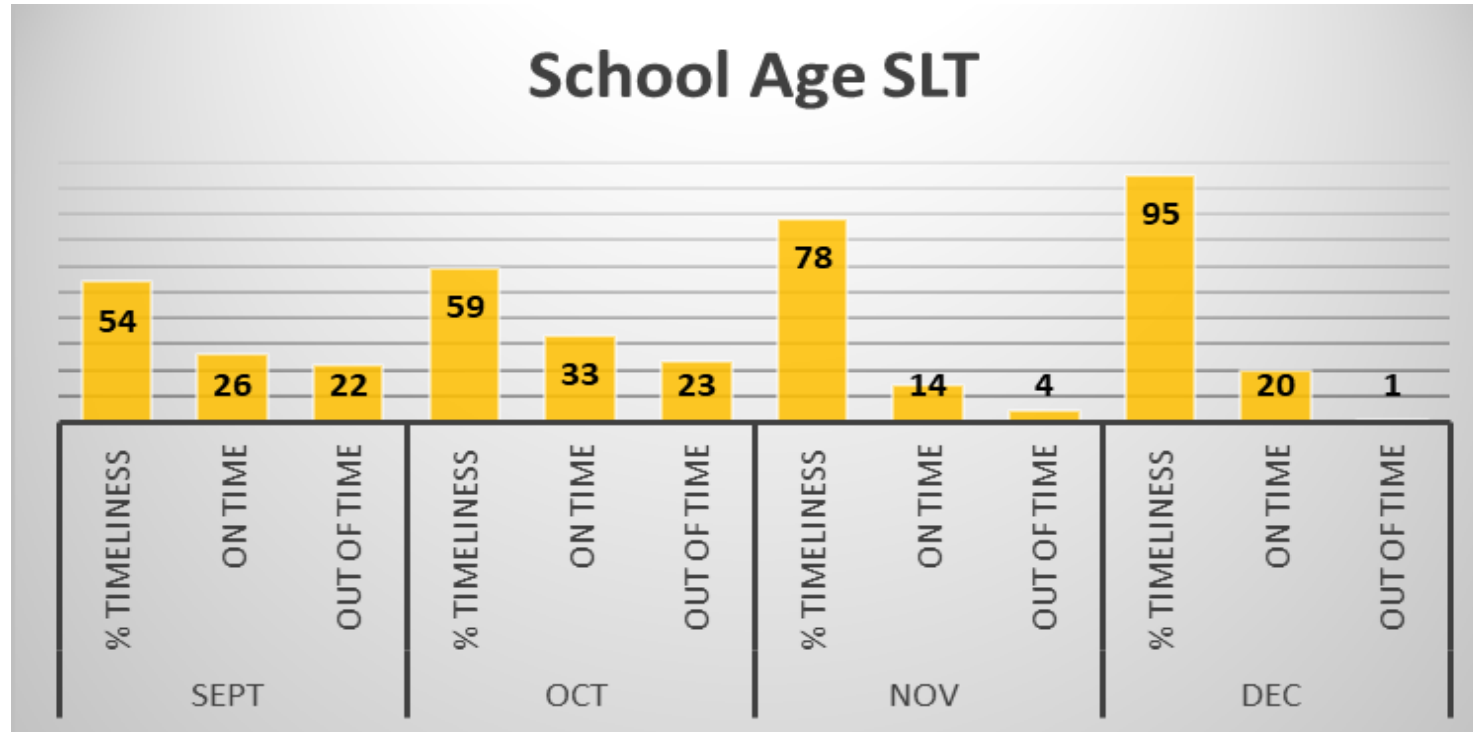
Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Target : EP assessments are returned to timeliness by March 2024

- Children who are identified **with additional vulnerabilities** continue to be prioritised for assessment. As we move towards business as usual, then we will aim for all new assessments to be completed on time and the additional vulnerability markers will no longer be applied for allocation.
- We have ensured that EP assessment requests made prior to mid-2023 have been allocated and we are now working through those from the second half of the year.
 - All 2022 assessments have now been completed and all assessments requested before July 2023 are either completed or allocated
 - 95% of assessment requests from July 2023 are either completed or allocated and 86% of assessment requests from August 2023.
- Whilst we have been successful in securing additional EP capacity through external providers, there has been an overall shortfall of 259 EP assessments that contracted providers proposed to complete up to the end of December. It is possible that we have now saturated the available market for EP resource. This shortfall has largely been offset by low demand. Further mitigation options are being implemented and if demand remains low, we are on track for attaining 60% timeliness by the end of May.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

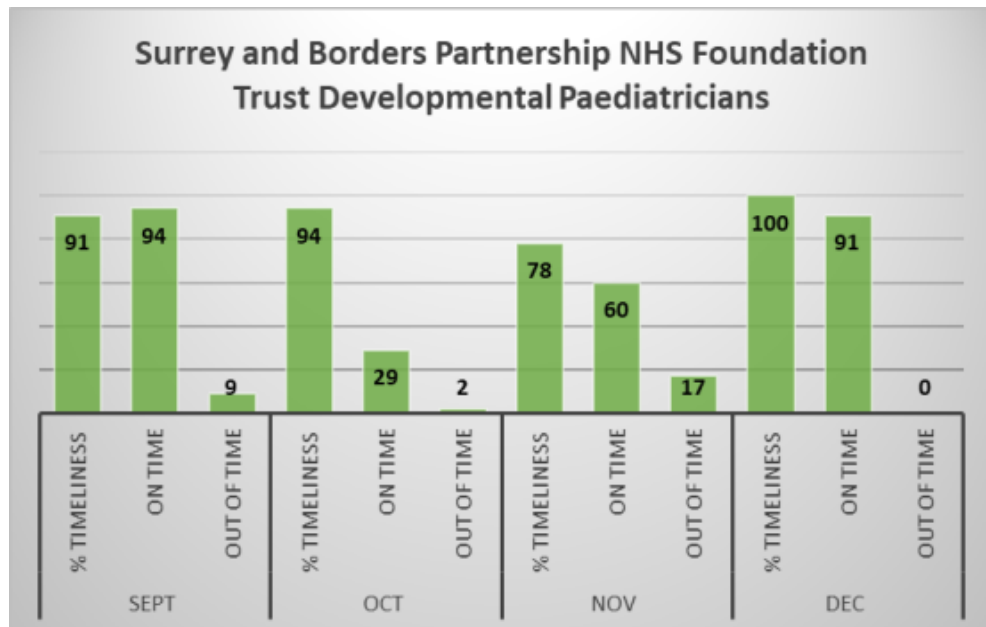
School Age Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)



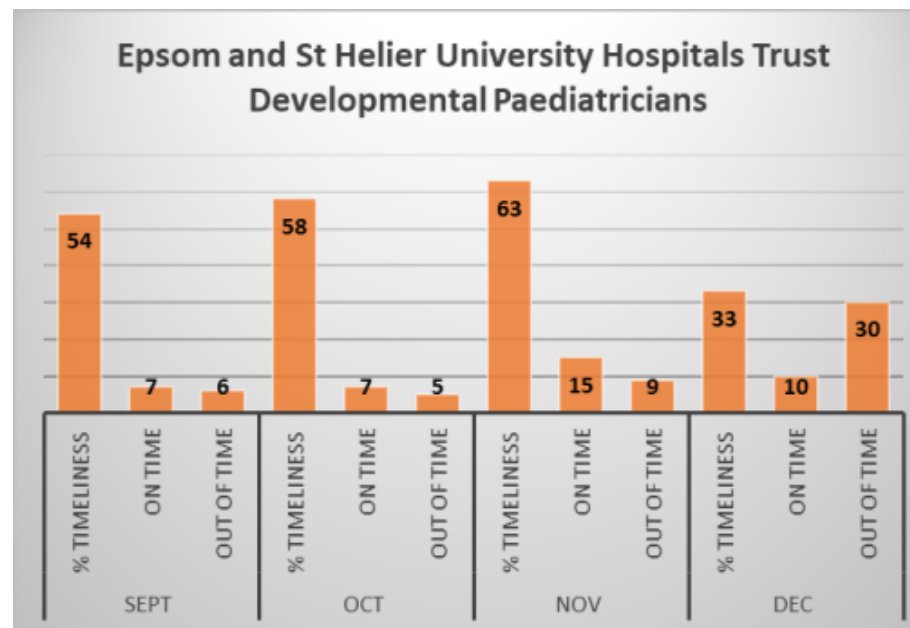
School Age Speech and Language Therapy: School Age Speech and Language Therapy shows an increase in timeliness from 54% in September to 95% in December. There is no backlog reported and therefore an improvement plan is not currently required.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends – Developmental Paediatricians



Surrey and Borders Developmental Paediatricians: Reports timeliness at 100% in December 2023, showing an increase of 28% timeliness from November 2023. They do not currently report a backlog and therefore no improvement plan is required at present.

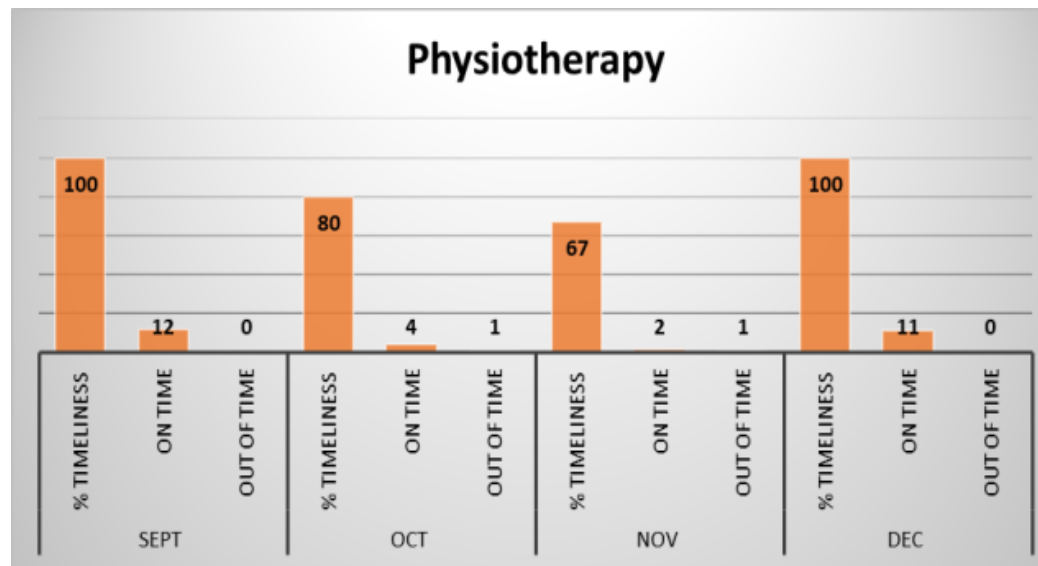
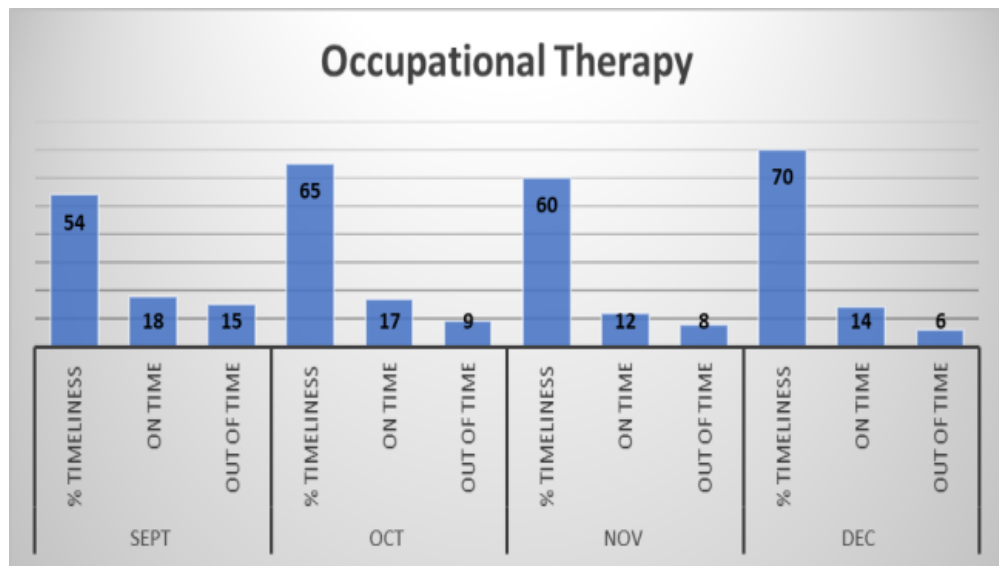


Epsom and St Helier Developmental Paediatricians: Reports timeliness at 33% in December 2023, showing a decrease of 30% from November 2023. Information in relation to backlog and improvement plans is currently being developed and will be made available week ending 19/01/2024.

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends (Children and Family Health Surrey)



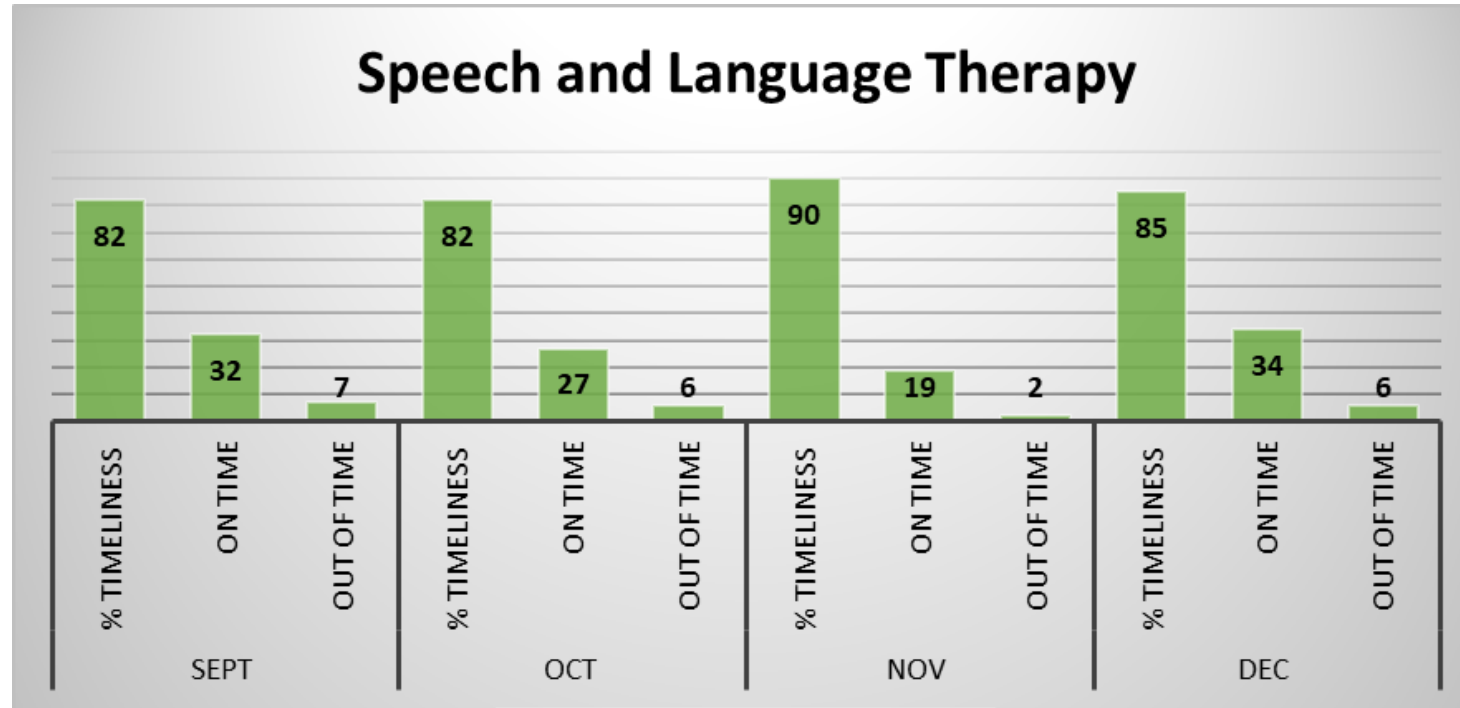
Occupational Therapy: Reports timeliness at 70% in December 2023, showing an increase of 10% timeliness from November. They report a backlog of 1 referral that is yet to be sent, this is due to no parental response received.

Physiotherapy: Reports timeliness at 100%, showing an increase of 33% from November 2023. They do not report a backlog. Individual numbers are relatively small – this has a greater impact on timeliness % (i.e. 1 late report in November = 33% timeliness reduction)

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable

Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends (Children and Family Health Surrey)



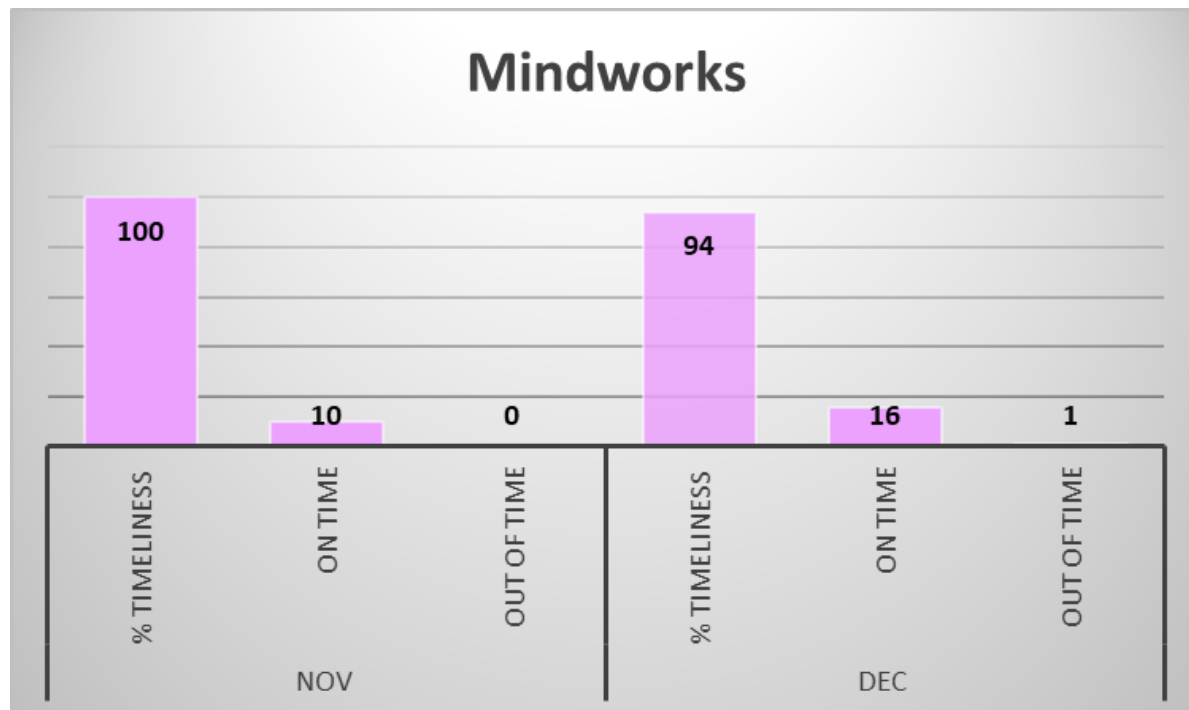
Speech and Language Therapy: Reports timeliness at 85% for December 2023, showing a decrease of 5% from November. They report a backlog of three referrals that are yet to be sent. The two referrals not sent were both for school aged children.

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable



Current timeliness performance against targets: Reduce Long Waiting times

Health Timeliness Trends - Mindworks



Mindworks are not returning advice for children who may have mental health needs and are on the waiting list for an assessment or have been recently discharged. This has been raised as an issue and both practice and recording processes are under review.

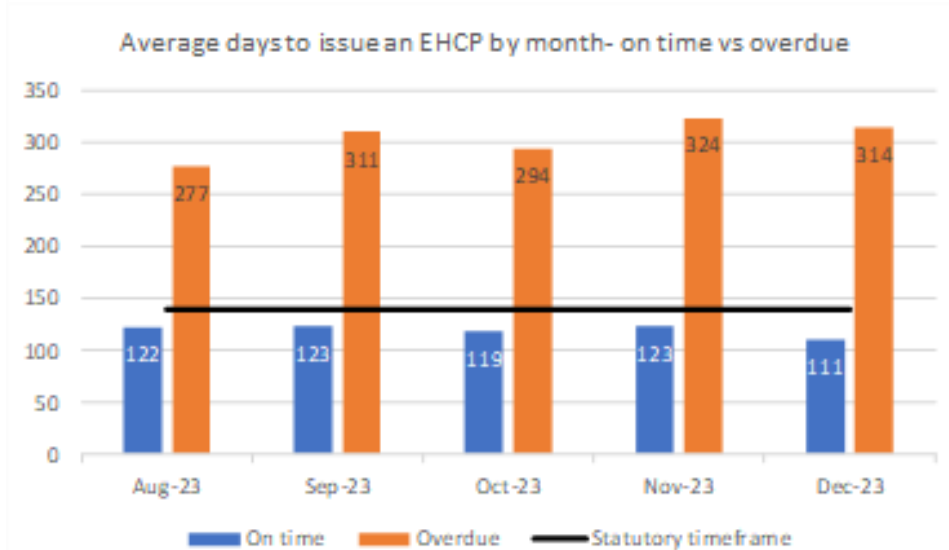
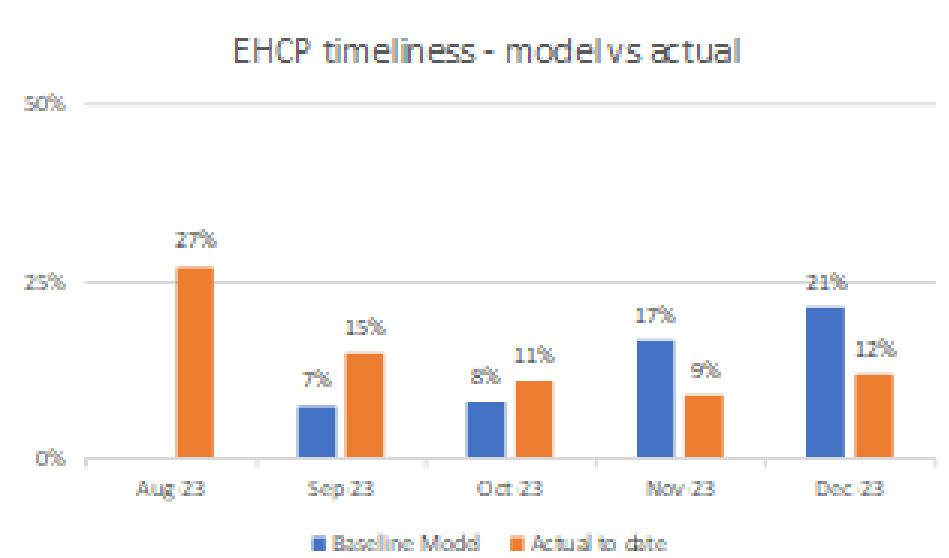
Data submitted for December shows total declined at 16. These children are either not known to the service or were discharged over 6 months ago but will still require an assessment.

There are a further five children known to Mindworks waiting to be assessed. These are still within timescales.

Mindworks data has been submitted for November 2023 and December 2023. It has been identified that 100% of advices returned in November and 94% of advices in December, were returned on time, **where children are already open to the service.**

To note: As health timeliness is being collated from multiple providers, further work is being carried out to ensure all are comparable

EHCP Timeliness - Reducing Waiting Times – EHCP delivery



- The successful backlog work has meant that we finalised more out of date plans than anticipated in the modelling and therefore the proportion of on time assessments (which are those completed for vulnerable children), is at a slightly lower than projected level.
- The average time to issue a plan is still high as we work through the backlog and there is currently a 16 week wait. However, we anticipate this will reduce over the coming months in line with the trajectory.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: All families with delayed EHCNA are contacted every three weeks

SEN Communications:

- A Helpdesk team is in the process of being onboarded to support with regular and timely communication with families and other stakeholders. The initial team of six call-centre staff and a Senior Case Manager to oversee their work, are in the process of being trained and on-boarded. We expect to see the team fully operational by the end of January 2024.
- The North-East team are piloting the use of a text messaging system to deliver the three-weekly updates to parents and carers in respect of the delayed assessments since December 2023. They will be feeding back their findings before the end of January 2024.
- SENDCO drop-in sessions are being piloted in the South-West team, offering schools a fortnightly slot to discuss any cases with their named Case Officers, in addition to the termly in person visits. This was initially a single Case Officer led initiative in the final quarter of 2023, which was rolled out as a pilot in late November 2023. The South-West team will be feeding back their findings before the end of January 2024

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: All families with delayed EHCNA are contacted every three weeks

SEN Communications:

- The drop ins for parents and carers are being established following the success of the Family Voice Surrey event in late November 2023. The roll out is being planned in collaboration with Family Voice Surrey colleagues and will be developed with specific feedback from families. Current plans are for a monthly opportunity to book either in person or online meetings with Case Officers or senior members of the operational SEN teams.
- The EHCP Focus Group is working to build upon the SEN Service communications improvement plan and clarify the key requirements from stakeholder groups, with the EHCP Focus Group overseeing the roll out and impact of the work. This work will involve gathering views from existing stakeholder groups where possible, making use of the SENDCO network, Deputy Headteacher meetings, Special Phase meetings, Primary Headteacher and Secondary Headteacher Quadrant meetings to gain the views of schools. The views of parents and carers will be gathered via a series of drop-in sessions facilitated by Family Voice Surrey. This work has been welcomed by stakeholder representatives and will build upon the Ofsted findings.

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: Specialist Teaching for Inclusive Practice (STIP) service visit all schools with children with delayed EHC needs assessment to ensure all children receive the help and support they need whilst waiting over the 23/24 academic year

- Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice are providing proactive outreach support to children and families awaiting an overdue needs assessment through termly visits to all schools. The table below shows the number of hours delivered to date:

<https://tableau.surreycc.gov.uk/#/views/SpecialistTeachersforInclusivePractice/STIPActivitiesSupportCodeHeatmap?iid=2>

Academic year 23/24 to date	Early Intervention Support	EHCP Support	Exclusion Support	Maintaining Placement	Multi Professional Meeting	SEN Support
Number of activities	46	50	16	2	9	384
Number of Pupils	35	38	13	2	9	304
Total Hours	46.5	60	13.5	1.5	8	496

Each visit will take 3 hours therefore it can be assumed over 150 schools have been visited to date, however, further data analysis is required to monitor which schools have been visited and impact of advice for children discussed who have EHCNA delays

Current timeliness performance against targets: Better Support Whilst Waiting

Target: Specialist Teaching for Inclusive Practice (STIP) service visit all schools with children with delayed EHC needs assessment to ensure all children receive the help and support they need whilst waiting over the 23/24 academic year

- During the autumn term 2023, the STIP team spent **126** hours discussing pupils who have waited more than 20 weeks for an EHCNA and **140** meetings with SENCO's took place.
- As of 17/01/23 the STIP teams have allocated spring term planning meetings for the approx. 330 children who were not yet allocated to the EP team as of the end of December. Data has been distributed to the teams and they will be recording this work in EYES so that we can monitor progress. However, it is too early to provide accurate data regarding this activity.

Securing a sustainable service model

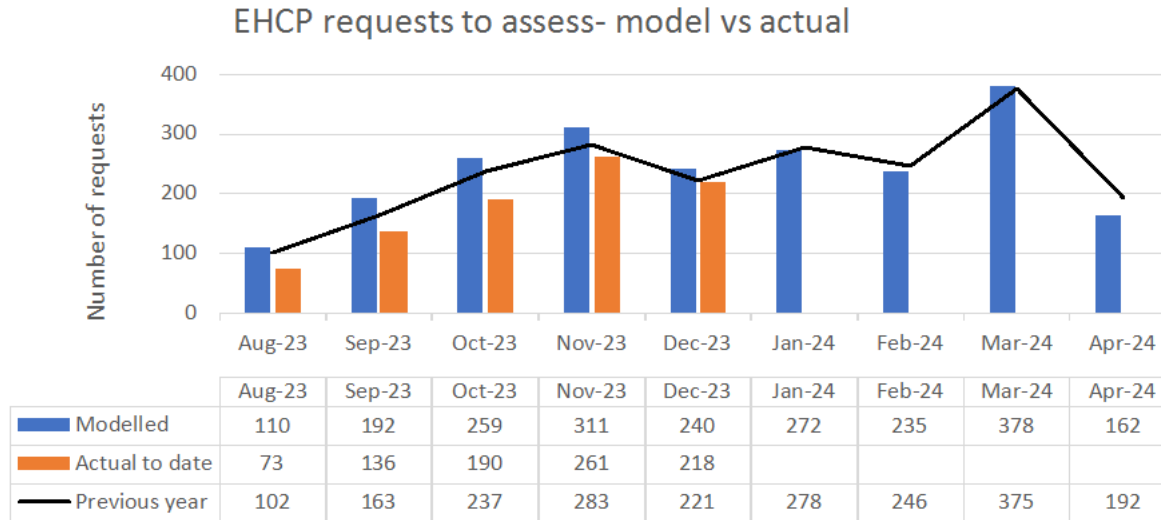
Target: Phase 1 of decision making completed on time on more than 95% of occasions per month

- So far during the current academic year, the L-SPA have completed the initial phase 1 decision on time in **96%** of cases. Late cases were all late by only 1 day.
- The average time taken to make a decision was **28 days in December 2023, down from 33 in September 2023.**
- The reduction in requests for assessment and robust decision-making means that good timeliness should be sustained.



Securing a sustainable service model

Target: Phase 2 strengthened decision making in line with ordinarily available provision guidance and a strengthened SEN support offer leads to a 20% reduction of EHCNA requests moving to assessment when compared with 2022/23.



- Overall requests for EHCNA have plateaued at levels at or below the previous year since April 2023, following the launch of the Ordinarily Available Provision Guide in January 2023. This is a significant development and marks a move from year-on-year growth in requests.
- We have seen a reduction in the number of requests proceeding to assessment so far during the academic year September-December of 33%, from 664 at this stage in 22/23 to 447 in 23/24. This exceeds the target above.

EHCP Timeliness – Sustainable Service

End to End Review – improving customer experiences and the efficiency and effectiveness of our processes:

- We are in the closing stages of the final discovery sprint in the End-to-End review, following which a report will be produced highlighting the key areas for development across the service.
- An interactive workshop took place at the Surrey Schools SEND Conference on November 30th, allowing school colleagues to contribute to the future of the SEND service. This information is being used to inform improvements.
- Staffing within the quadrant Case Officer teams is at 97.7% of the FTE, with agency Case Officer staffing currently at 25 of 30 positions filled, with the contracted provider in the process of filling the remaining vacancies.

Performance indicators (with columns showing both baseline model and adjusted figures)	Model for month	Monthly actual data to Dec 23					
	Baseline model	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Diff to baseline
Inputs - staffing							
Internal FTE – existing	68.13	68.13	68.13	68.13	68.13	68.13	0
Internal FTE – new	12.87	2	2	9.3		10.97	-1.9
Total internal FTE	81	70.13	70.13	77.43	77.43	79.1	-1.9
External FTE	30	n/a	0	28	28	25	-5
Total FTE	111	70.13	70.13	105.43	105.43	104.1	-6.9

End to End Review - Where are we in the review now?



Sprint 1 (4 weeks)

Sprint 2 (4 weeks)

Sprint 3 (4 weeks)

Sprint 4 (4 weeks)

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Suggested priority/sequential order:

20-week statutory process (Request an EHCP, Assessment of EHCP, Placement decisions and Issuing EHCP)

Quality assurance and reasons for tribunals

Annual Review

Data, systems and reporting

Communications

People and change

End to End Review – Key findings and Issues

Issues and pain points identified in the E2E review:

**Fragmentation
of system**

**Consistency
across the SEN
service**

**Capacity of
team**

**Supervision,
support and
development of
staff**

End to End Review – Key findings and Issues



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Conclusion of the discovery phase

- **Discovery activities to be concluded**, surveys and office-based observations to be undertaken. Annual review activity to be completed
- **Discovery team to produce report** detailing the findings, and highlighting possible solutions to address issues identified
- **Project development plan** to be drawn up in response to the discovery report, ensuring consultative and collaborative response to the proposals

Next Steps

- Carefully monitor demand and continue to seek increased external EP advice.
- Continue to provide STIP support and SEN communications to support children and families where assessments are delayed and enhance SEN communication generally.
- Continuation of health and partner's recovery plans as appropriate with system to prevent delays in issuing EHCPs where possible.
- Enhanced focus upon sustainable services:
 - Implement range of early intervention and prevention support strategies
 - Continued robust decision making
 - Right size EP and SEN teams
 - Improved SEN communications



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