

# Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Robert Ward (Chair)  
Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Sue Bennett, Mary Croos, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Maddie Henson,  
Helen Redfern, Leo Morrell, Elaine Jones, Dave Harvey, Paul O'Donnell and  
Victoria Maltby

Reserve Members: Margaret Bird, Sherwan Chowdhury, Patsy Cummings,  
Felicity Flynn, Patricia Hay-Justice, Ian Parker, Andy Stranack and  
David Wood

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 12 March 2019 at 6.30 pm** in **Council Chamber - Town Hall**. **A pre-meet for Members only will take place at 6:00pm in room F5**

Jacqueline Harris Baker  
Council Solicitor & Monitoring Officer  
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Monday, 4 March 2019

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting.  
If you require any assistance, please contact the person detailed above, on the righthand side.

N.B This meeting will be paperless. The agenda can be accessed online at [www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)



## **AGENDA – PART A**

**1. Apologies for absence**

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

**2. Minutes of the previous sub-committee meeting (Pages 5 - 16)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 as an accurate record.

**3. Disclosures of interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

**4. Urgent Business (if any)**

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**5. Action List Update**

Discussion on the actions arising from previous meetings.

**6. Special Education Needs and Strategy (Pages 17 - 56)**

To consider the report on the outcome of the consultation on SEND Strategy and proposed approach to implementation.

**7. Statutory Children's Complaints Report: Quarter 3 (Pages 57 - 66)**

To receive a summary of the Quarter 3 volumes of Statutory Complaints.

**8. Update on the Early Help and Children's Social Care Improvement Programme (Pages 67 - 78)**

To consider the update on the Improvement Programme in children's services.

**9. Task and Finish Group: Exclusions and Off Rolling of Pupils**

(Report to Follow)

**10. What Difference has this meeting made to Croydon's Children**

To discuss the findings from this meeting and the expectations for Croydon's Children.

**11. Work Programme 2018/19 (Pages 79 - 82)**

To note the work programme for the remainder of 2018/19 municipal year

**12. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

"That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended."

## Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 5 February 2019 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber - Town Hall

### MINUTES

- Present:** Councillor Robert Ward (Chair);  
Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Sue Bennett, Jerry Fitzpatrick and Helen Redfern
- Also Present:** Councillor Patsy Cummings  
Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning  
Robert Henderson, Executive Director Children Families and Education  
Shelley Davies, Head of Standards, Safeguarding ,Learning Access and Inclusion  
Chris Roberts, Head of School Place Planning, Admissions and Learning Access.  
Kate Bingham, Head of Finance  
Orlagh Guarnori, Finance Manager  
Kamilah McCalman, Assistant Unit Manager  
Michael Perrieau- Daley, Consultant Practitioner
- Apologies:** Councillor Maddie Henson  
Dave Harvey and Leo Morrell

### PART A

7/19 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Councillor Maddie Henson, Councillor Patsy Cummings attended in her absence.  
Dave Harvey and Leo Morrel gave their apologies.

8/19 **Minutes of the previous sub-committee meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2019 were signed as an accurate record.

9/19 **Disclosures of interest**

There were none.

10/19 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There was none.

11/19 **Action List Update**

Officers were reminded of the actions that were still outstanding and required a resolution. Officers agreed to look into the items outstanding and provide updates.

12/19 **Cabinet Member Question Time: Cabinet member for Children Young People and Learning**

The Cabinet Member gave a presentation on aspects of her portfolio which included the following:

- The priority and vision was for young people to feel safe
- Focus on the improvement journey which was on an increasing level of pace
- Change in leadership following the permanent recruitment of senior staff.
- Improvement in Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in supervision
- Implementation of the Early Help and Gateway Strategy
- Completion of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy with final papers to be presented to Cabinet
- Increased representation of the voice of child through the work of the Young Mayor and the Child in Care Council
- Ongoing challenges remained in the recruitment and retention of staff and the rising number of children in care proceedings.

In response to a Member challenge on the evidence of occurrence of actions as directed by the Line of Sight document, officers stated that actions were being carried out as directed and that a schedule of the activities carried out was being produced. The Chair requested that this information be circulated to the Sub-Committee after the meeting. Additionally the Chair asked for the monthly performance data that was gathered and reviewed by the Improvement Board be shared with the Sub-Committee.

A Member commented on the lack of progress made on recruitment and retention of staff and queried what further work was being done to address the challenges. Officers responded that this was a complex issue with high vacancy rates experienced in a competitive market. Human Resources (HR) was working to produce an attractive remuneration and welcome package. Additionally there had been a reduction in caseloads across the service and which would also help to attract staff. Strong leadership and guidance was important and there had been an emphasis on improving supervision due to ongoing inconsistencies of practice.

The conversion rate of locums was compared to other local authorities and when improvements would be seen was questioned. Officers replied that locum numbers in Croydon were high but that was to be expected given the Ofsted rating, the rate was currently 30% and improvement of 20% by 2020 was possible.

A Member challenged the likelihood of achieving a 20% conversion rate and highlighted that previous directors had attended scrutiny over a number of years giving reassurance that improvements would be made. Due to past experience the Sub-Committee was not reassured of the likelihood of the realisation of this promise and requested data which proved this task was possible. The Executive Director of Children Families and Education advised that an action plan on recruitment and retention of staff had been produced and was confident that 20% was achievable in 12 months.

The Chair said that it should be noted that good and outstanding local authorities also had high numbers of agency staff and this was not just specific to Croydon. What was important was whether there were safeguards in place to ensure that we had good quality locum staff. Officers responded that the quality of the locum's in Croydon was good and that the plan was to encourage them to convert. While this was possible by ensuring a good offer was made, a careful balance must be struck to ensure minimal conflict between locum and permanent staff as a result of the conversion package.

A staff workforce representative informed the committee that retention of staff was not just about the financial reward but about changing people's perception of Croydon. Croydon had developed a reputation that it lacked vision and was not a good place to work but this was changing. The message being spread by social workers at network events was that Croydon was changing, and was a good place to start, progress and develop careers.

Officers also informed the Sub-Committee that the agencies that managed locum contracts had been providing feedback that Croydon's reputation was improving. Assisted Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)'s had also reported that they felt confident in recommending Croydon as a place to start their careers due to the level of support received.

A Member referenced the three additional teams that had been brought into assist with the management of caseloads. Officers responded that they were commissioned as whole teams on an agreed time scale with the possibility of an extension as necessary. While they had been brought in on a short term basis to reduce the caseload in assessments, they were being kept on to assist with cases in other teams.

It was challenged that there was an implication that caseloads for remaining staff may increase at the end of the contract of these teams, to which officers responded that they had made a commitment to staff and were confident that this would not happen. Caseloads would remain as they were and the strong Early Help offer in place would help to support this.

A Member highlighted that members of the autism community has voiced concern about the lack of awareness and knowledge of their condition in mainstream schools and stressed the importance of training being a significant action point in the strategy. Officers responded that all feedback from the consultation was taken seriously and officers were committed to

ensuring that schools were clear on their expectations in order to produce strong outcomes for young people.

If was further stressed that early years mental health was and should be a priority but additionally the needs of children on the autistic spectrum must be prioritised with consideration given in terms of enhanced provision. Officers replied that a survey for schools was being conducted to gather intelligence on services that were being commissioned to enable gaps in knowledge and expertise to be identified. Resources were being invested in early intervention to ensure an effective partnership between schools and the Council.

The timescale for assessment following referral to the Child Adolescence Mental Health Service was questioned and officers responded that there were different timescales for different parts of the service. It was acknowledged that there were difficulties with response times and the flexibility of the service. Funds were being invested on improvements as the vision was for a preventative service. Ongoing conversations were taking place with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on how to improve waiting times and outcomes for young people.

It was additionally questioned whether there was strategy being developed for young people in transition, officers responded that there were ongoing developments in this area of the service and it may be useful for the Chair of the Sub-Committee to discuss this further with the Executive Director of Health Wellbeing and Adults.

Representatives from the staff workforce advised that multiagency working was vital and key to delivering successful outcomes for young people and stressed the importance of improved partnerships. They voiced concern that relationships were often challenging which often led to frustration and welcomed any support or influence from Councillors to strengthen these relationships.

A Member asked what officers felt the role of Scrutiny was in terms of strategies and asked if Scrutiny should be informed of emerging strategies in order for pre-decision Scrutiny to take place. The Cabinet Member responded that following the Ofsted judgement, conversations had taken place about Scrutiny holding Children's Services to account and that it was important for pre-decision scrutiny to take place where appropriate.

The Member further stated that it was vital for professionals as well as the community to be consulted and it was of utmost importance that Scrutiny had sight of forward plans on emerging strategies in order for pre decision scrutiny to take place.

The Cabinet Member and Officers were thanked for their responses to questions.



### **Information request by the Sub-Committee**

- Line of Sight – Schedule of activities and intelligence gathered to be shared with the sub- committee.
- Monthly performance data that was presented to the Improvement Board
- Forward Plan on emerging Strategies

### **The Sub-Committee Came to the Following Conclusions:**

- The attendance of representatives from the staff workforce at the meeting provided a positive element to discussion.
- There was concern regarding the pace and progress of improvements in the recruitment and retention of staff.
- There was lack of evidence of plans being in place to improve the conversion rate of locum staff to permanent roles.
- It was concerning that emerging strategies were not being shared with the Sub-Committee.
- It would be beneficial for the Chair to discuss development of a Transition service with relevant officers with the possibility of a future joint meeting with Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee to be considered.

### **13/19 Education Quality and Standards**

The Head of Standards, Safeguarding, Learning Access and Inclusion introduced the report and pointed out the key aspects of the report which included the following:

- Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes had been above the national average for a number of years and were in line with the London average.
- Vocational outcomes at Level 3 remain high
- Ofsted outcomes had been positive with a school moving to good status and one from good to outstanding.
- The improvement programme and partnerships with schools were robust
- Working on recognised key areas of development
- Key Stage 5(KS5) outcomes remain a challenge with gaps to be closed between the highest and lowest achieving schools.
- Challenge to close the gaps in outcomes by gender and ethnicity.
- The Looked After Children (LAC) cohort improvement had risen but more work still to be done
- Continued progress to be made to increase the number of personal education plans for LAC which is linked to outcomes

The report also included the next steps which were the following:

- Inclusion funding

- Maintaining of resources
- Maintaining places in mainstream education for SEN children.
- Funding a curriculum conference to take place to ensure good practice and steps being taken to closing gaps for boys and ethnic group through all key stages.
- Continued improvement to personal plans for LAC

A Member asked what was being done to address instances of persistent absence in schools. Officers responded that in the last year a team around a school approach had been developed. Officers had been allocated to schools where instances of persistent absence and high rates of fixed term exclusions had been identified. Officers had been looking at data and working with a number of schools and this work would continue to be rolled out to more schools. Through work with independent officers and visits to schools they were raising the profile that this was an issue which was a priority and measures had to be taken to achieve improvement.

It was further commented by a Member that some Boroughs were investing in breakfast and after school provision to tackle issues of persistent absence. Officers responded that there were some schools in the Borough that offered this service. What was important was for schools to look at the barriers to getting children into school and putting measures in place to combat the barriers. The development of the Early Help Strategy would be key to achieving these improvements.

A Member questioned what the identifying factor was and what work was being carried out in the three schools that were reported to have a high number of exclusions. Officers advised that in all of the schools there were individual factors that led to the numbers reported. One of the schools did not have an historic high rate of exclusion and the figure was high as a result of one serious incident that resulted in a number of pupils being excluded. Intervention work with the police was taking place. In another of the schools a factor was leadership and there was now new leadership in place and officers were working closely with the school, with discussions held on strategies to be adopted to tackle prevalent issues.

A Member raised concern that in key stage 5, there was a return to a model that included large providers and it was fundamental to avoid a situation that would result in a curriculum in schools that was not broad enough or a risk of larger classes sizes in some subjects and not others. Officers responded that conversations were being held with schools on their curriculum offer and for them to ensure that their offer was viable. Schools also needed to engage in a dialogue with pupils, supporting them in making the right choices and ensure that they were following the right pathways. Officers in the 14-19 team were working with colleges to improve figures, focusing on encouraging young people to get the right advice and guidance before they reach post 16.

Further concerns were raised by a Member that the competitive element, that was brought in a number of years ago, which allowed schools to extend their provision beyond age 16 through the viability of subjects had diminished, with

a closure of Sixth Form provision in one school experienced. Concerns had been flagged up by officers themselves in recent years about the unviability of Sixth Forms. The Member was under the impression that schools had been working in partnership to ensure the viability of subjects was taking place and it was disappointing that this may not be happening.

Officers took on board Members' comments and acknowledged that conversations needed reigniting on the viability of Sixth Forms. What was clear was that the local authorities wanted to ensure that there was provision for children to have the opportunity for further study in their area of choice.

The Head of Standards, Safeguarding, Learning Access and Inclusion agreed to take away the comments raised and to reflect on this matter with the officer responsible for post 16 provision. Additionally a briefing would be provided for the Chair on this matter to enable discussions to be held on how this item would fit into a future work programme of the Sub-Committee.

A Member observed that Octavo and their service had been mentioned in the report and asked how the progress of schools that did not buy into the service was monitored. Officers responded that it was important for schools to ensure that they bought into a service to ensure that they were receiving support and this could be from any provider of their choice. Two link advice sessions took place each year on school improvement and outcomes. They looked at the impact of support with questions asked of schools such as how they were ensuring the quality of the support provided from the services they bought into. The same questions on areas of development were asked of all schools in the borough regardless of their Ofsted ranking.

In response to a Member question about Statistical Neighbour Averages and what learning could be derived from the data, its usage as a comparative tool and if actions of other boroughs were used as a provision of quality insight, officers said that conversations were taking place about its usage. Officers further responded that a head of service meeting took place with colleagues across London to share practice but that these meetings needed to be further developed.

A Member further commented that this comparative information would be beneficial for schools in terms of benchmarking and for them to track their progress against similar types of school. Officers said that some of the information has been shared with Chairs of Governors to better enable them to further support and challenge practices as appropriate.

A Member questioned how the Council managed engagement with schools in academy chains and were there performance concerns with any of the chains. Officers responded that they dealt with instances of non-engagement on an individual basis and there were some schools that engaged and other that did not. The approach for all schools was that if there was a lack of compliance from a head teacher, dialogue would take place with the CEO of the trust as focus was on outcomes and challenge would be presented to schools.

regardless of the type of school they were, Further concerns were shared with the Regional Schools Commissioner where necessary.

Officers were thanked for their attendance and responses to questions

### **Information request by the Sub-Committee**

- Briefing note on viability of Sixth Form provision to be provided to the Chair by May 2019

The Sub-Committee came to the following **Conclusions:**

- i. The report was thorough and informative.
- ii. There were concerns regarding the viability of Sixth Form provision and further information was required in order for the Sub-Committee to plan its inclusion in the future work programme.

### 14/19 **Education Budget 2019/20**

The Head of Finance introduced the report which detailed the components of the budget for the coming year. The total allocation for Croydon which is regulated by the Department for Education (DfE) was £342mil for the four blocks for 2019/2020. The DfE announced that the implementation of the National Funding formula would be introduced as a soft formula for schools for next year.

It was further explained that the DfE had introduced a requirement for each authority to produce a three year recovery plan in the event that a 1% or more deficit was incurred in the year. Officers informed the Sub-Committee that Croydon as well as other local authorities would definitely have a deficit of more than 1% especially due to the high needs block. There were concerns at the lack of detail and guidance on this as yet and during consultation strongly expressed that three years was too short for a recovery period. They would continue to highlight that the suggested three years was more of a medium term programme of recovery.

It was explained to the Sub-Committee following comment by a Member that when the DSG was introduced it was based on deprivation as well as other factors, and in 2005 the amount that local authorities received was frozen with additional spend plus adjustments made to the per pupil funding. This meant that the amounts received were locked in irrespective of changes to demographics and deprivation levels. This has been to some local authorities advantage but not to Croydon's. However the New National Funding formula would mean that more recent demographic factors will be taken to account going forward.

It was expressed that it would be beneficial for the table that showed comparisons with other Local Authorities to include all of the London boroughs. Officers agreed to circulate this after the meeting.

It was noted that the report alluded to the funding differential between Croydon and other boroughs and question if there was any further documented evidence that would enable the Council to make a case to central government on the low funding allocation for the borough. Officers agreed to research this and report back to the Sub-Committee.

A Member expressed that the implications of the deficit that the DfE required local authorities to produce a recovery plan for was not quite clear and further clarify of this would be beneficial. Officers responded that there were concerns due to the lack of guidance from the DfE to date but that steps were already been taken such as early intervention on SEN to mitigate the high costs associated with the High Needs block. The LA will have to consider many factors in development of the recovery plan such as good commissioning, clear pathways, and financial implication to areas of service. Health, Education and Social care will have to work together on the plan.

It was further commented by a Member that a communication strategy with the residents of Croydon would have to be considered in the event that the Council finds itself in a situation of recovery.

It was questioned how capacity on schools affect the budget and the schools financial position. Officers replied that some schools in the borough were in deficit positions and they worked extensively with these school that have capacity on exploring ways to address issues such as reducing their PANs, combining classes, teacher ratio as well as learning and good practice form other schools.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the schools forum made a decision to increase the funding allocation that was awarded through the DfE funding formula from £110k to £114k for 2019/20.

Officers were thanked for their responses to questions.

### **Information request by the Sub-Committee**

- A table that reflected all the 32 London Borough's DSG 2019/20 Schools block allocations per pupil
- School block funding – documented evident of low funding and its effects.

In reaching its recommendations the Sub-Committee came to the following **Conclusions**:

1. The Sub-Committee were concerned about the risks arising from the lack of government guidance on the requirement for local authorities to have a recovery plan in the event that their Designated Schools Grant budget falling below a 1% deficit.

2. It was clear that Croydon's Designated Schools Grant funding allocation was insufficient for the borough's need and that the funding differential to other local authorities was evident.
3. The Sub-Committee were pleased to note that information was being gathered to evidence Croydon's low funding allocation, enabling the Council to present a case for fairer funding to the Department for Education.

The Sub-Committee resolved to recommend that:

1. Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning that the Council and its partners should be meeting in preparation for the eventuality of the Council finding itself in the position of having to utilise its recovery plan.

15/19 **What Difference has this meeting made to Croydon's Children**

Members expressed that there have been various outcomes from this meeting which included the following:

- Actions that's needed to be completed were reinforced, in particular long standing items.
- The additional challenge throughout the meeting reinforces the expectations of officers by Members.
- The effects of change in leadership was evident in the loss of collective knowledge on service area and in instances where further information has been requested but not produced.
- The social workers attendance and contribution to the meeting was beneficial and their experienced enabled members to form a picture of the service from frontline point of view/reference.
- The Collaborative work of the Education department was good and the reports and response to questions were encouraging

16/19 **Work Programme 2018/19**

The Sub-Committee **Noted** the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Robert Henderson, Executive Director Children, Families and Education Shelley Davies, Interim Director of Education and Youth Engagement</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Alison Farmer, Head of 0-25 SEN</b>

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	<b>The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered a paper setting out the draft SEND Strategy and proposed approach to consultation in November 2018. An update paper following consultation was requested.</b>
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee are asked to consider the report of the consultation outcomes, updated SEN Strategy and proposed approach to implementation.</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This report provides the outcome of the Council's consultation on the SEND Strategy and proposed approach to implementation.*

## 2. SEND Strategy

2.1 A draft strategy for Croydon children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was developed during 2018 to take forward a shared vision for children and young people with SEND and a shared strategic direction of travel for the local area, including key partners in health and education settings.

2.2 The Strategy was informed by the views of parents and young people and focuses on key areas for improvement, across the Council, health, care and education with the key aim of improving the opportunities for young people with

SEND to live fulfilled lives and achieve independence in or near their local community.

2.3 The draft strategy set out the views of parents and young people that had informed the strategy, identified four key areas for strategic development (see below), a set of principles for delivery and specific changes that would be achieved:

- Early identification of needs
- Improved joint working across education, health and social care
- A better graduated response, which provides the right support at the right time
- Improved post 16 pathways and transition to adulthood

2.4 Consultation on Croydon's draft 0-25 SEND Strategy started on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 and ran until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The consultation was far reaching with views sought from parents/carers, young people and other agencies and stakeholders all of whom offered important views and feedback to be taken into consideration.

2.5 The consultation was extensively promoted through a number of channels. This included direct contact with young people, families and stakeholders through focus groups. There was online availability of consultation documents including surveys available through the Local Offer and Get Involved webpages and social media. There were ninety-nine responses to the on-line survey and feedback was given in face to face meetings by one hundred and twenty members of the public, with the majority of stake-holder feedback being from young people and parents.

### **3. Consultation Outcomes**

3.1 A report of consultation feedback has been included in the Appendices to this documents. Findings have informed the revision of the SEND Strategy.

3.2 Broadly, those consulted agreed with the four key areas that had been identified for development and stakeholder views coalesced around these themes. Feedback was greatest in the area of 'Post 16' and 'Joint Working'.

3.3 Following feedback and during the initial period of the consultation a fifth key area, 'workforce development' was identified as a recurring theme which was not sufficiently addressed in the draft SEND Strategy and as a consequence this was added part way through the consultation period.

3.4 While there are overlaps in the issues raised, identification of relevant stakeholder feedback according to theme has been considered useful.

3.5 Feedback on early identification drew attention to the need to consider 'identification' across the age spectrum, not just in the early years. Stakeholders indicated they considered there was an issue in regard to resources in relation autism services, health visiting and other provision, such as speech and language therapy, was raised. The recent re-instatement of the Portage service was welcomed by parents. In general, parents indicated that reduced waiting times was important, consideration of the wider family,

including siblings and the need to identify children's needs before 'crisis point' is reached.

- 3.6 Stakeholder feedback in regard to the area of Joint Working highlighted the significant work that is needed to join up the Council priorities of education and care with Health priorities, in addition to processes for Governance. There was a sense that parents sometimes felt as though they and their child were 'stuck in the middle' of services that lacked coherence and a shared approach. Parents were keen to play a greater part in developing approaches to joint working in Croydon.
- 3.7 The eligibility of children with autism for social care and out of school short breaks was raised. In general, the lack of a joined up autism pathway across health, education and care was a recurring theme. Issues were raised regarding the link between GPs and paediatricians and a need to have a shared information and commonality of approach, so that parents do not have to re-tell their story.
- 3.8 The Graduated response feedback focused on key issues relating to children's mental health and the capacity of mainstream schools to meet children's needs. The need for training for parents and practitioners, in particular, in regard to autism was identified. A repeated concern was the lack of graduated response for children and young people with mental health needs, which families indicated, left them desperate and not knowing where to turn for help.
- 3.9 Discussion about Post 16 pathways generated the greatest volume of feedback. There was clear feedback that parents welcomed the development of local college provision and would like to play a part in shaping this development. There was a consensus that the current approach to transition from childhood to adulthood for young people with SEND was not working, did not start sufficiently early and, as a consequence, there was anxiety about young people leaving school. Parents felt there was no respite and a lack of engagement by health and that, as young people became adults, some families struggled to cope. Young people themselves indicated their aspiration to gain employment and the need for support to help them achieve this goal.
- 3.10 Workforce development was added as a theme partway through the consultation. Feedback on this area of development indicated that there was a need for the wider workforce to have a better understanding of SEN legislation, autism, sensory needs and speech and language needs and intervention. Specific feedback focused on autism outreach for mainstream schools so that children could have their needs met at SEN Support.
- 3.11 This feedback has informed revision of the SEND Strategy (see Appendix).

#### **4. SEND Strategy Implementation 2019-2022**

- 4.1 An implementation plan with key milestones, clear accountabilities and agreed measures of impact is being developed and will be subject to the Governance of the Children's Partnership Board with links into the Health and Well-Being Board.
- 4.2 Implementation will align with Council priorities and developments in practice across Children's and Adults Services to ensure consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of performance.
- 4.3 The key areas for action in the implementation plan will be organised in accordance with the five themes set out in the strategy with a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) from the Council and Health for each of these five areas of work. SROs will be responsible for reporting progress against key outcomes regularly and as directed by the Children's Partnership Board.
- 4.4 Parents will be represented on each of the work groups, with Parents in Partnership (Croydon's parent/carer forum) providing co-ordination of parent representation to ensure a cross-section of parents have the opportunity to inform developments.

#### **5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 Funding for children with SEN comes to the Local Authority through a High Needs Block Grant from the Department for Education. This funding is announced annually and the total allocation for Croydon for 2019/20 is £61.347 million.
- 5.2 The High Needs Block forecast at the end of Quarter 3 is an overspend of £5.745 million in year with a cumulative overspend of over £13.176 million. Increased demand, with numbers of children with an EHC Plan standing at over 2900, compared with 1800 statements of SEN in 2013, an over-reliance on the independent sector, in particular post 16, and a need to improve transition to adult services are key drivers.
- 5.3. The scale of the challenge of managing a balanced High Needs budget is such that this requires all partners within the Council, in education, children's and adults social care, schools and health partners, including CAMHS and the voluntary sector to work together to better meet needs in local state-funded education. This strategy helps to address this challenge over the medium term.

(Approved by Kate Bingham – Head of Education Finance, Investment and Risk (S151 Officer).

#### **6. Comments of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer**

- 6.1 Christopher Clark, Social Care and Education Lawyer, on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance noted that the SEND Strategy conforms with current legislation and guidance.

6.2 Consultation on the strategy has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's policy.

(Approved by Chris Clark, Lawyer, on behalf of the Director of Law and Monitoring Officer)

## 7. **Human Resources Impact**

Not applicable. Whilst there are no direct human resources implications arising from this report the information presented will help to shape and influence HR practice, policy and procedures in relation to roles and responsibilities that relate to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy.

(Approved by Nadine Maloney, Head of HR: Children, Education and Families)

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**Contact Officer:** Alison Farmer, Head of 0-25 SEN

**Background Documents:** None

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 Proposed Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy  
Appendix 2 Public Consultation Report  
Appendix 3 Equality Impact Report

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disability  
Autism  
difficulties<sup>visual</sup>  
speech<sup>hearing</sup>  
special<sup>injury</sup>  
learning<sup>anxiety</sup> processing. Dyspraxia  
physical  
communication



# Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Draft Strategy 2019-2022 for Children & Young People in the London Borough of Croydon

## ***Our vision***

*Children and young people in Croydon will be safe, healthy, and happy and will aspire to be the best they can be. The future is theirs.*

## **Introduction**

This is Croydon Council's and Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) draft strategy for improving outcomes and life chances for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

The strategy sets out our aspirations for children and young people with SEND and the approach to meeting their needs and addressing barriers to learning, in partnership with parents and local education settings. Croydon's strategy focuses on young people's well-being and attainment, building on young people's strengths with a focus on local education, health and care pathways to adulthood.

## **Our aim**

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities will achieve independence and employment, whenever possible, in or near their local community so that they can live fulfilled lives and be active contributors to Croydon's future. Croydon has high aspirations for children and young people with SEND.



## Priorities

We asked parents and young people with SEND what they wanted and what was important to them going forward – these are some of the things that they said:

Parents have had varied experiences early on when their child's needs were being identified, there was too much variability:

One parent said:

*My son had fantastic early intervention. What made it great for us was them coming to us. I couldn't take on the special needs label, I wasn't ready for it. Having people come to the home where he could play, and I could talk was incredible'.*

Another parent said:

*We had to wait a lot, there was never a sense it was going anywhere or that it was linked up – it felt like it was all on me and what if I don't make the right connections in the right place'.*

Parents would like better communication and a clear sense of what to expect.

*'I don't want a Rolls Royce, I'm happy with a bike but it has to be going in the right direction'...*

Young people want to be included in planning for adulthood, they are thinking about transition.

*'You can't leave this school and not know what you're doing in life, you need to sort out what you're doing'.*

Parents have mixed experiences of different educational provision, both compared to other parents and at different points of their children's journey:

*'Present year great so far but last year awful – dependent on staffing'.*

*'To be fair my Croydon primary was excellent.'*

*'It is a small school so not too overwhelming. SENCO is brilliant, and some teachers are very proactive in finding ways to support my child'.*

Although parents had strong views about which individual school would be appropriate for their child, this was personalised, and there was no consensus on the best sort of provision (e.g. mainstream vs special).

In general, there was a shared view between parents and head teachers about areas for development over the next three years, they were keen to see:

1. Improved early identification
2. Improved joint working with health, social care and education
3. Better graduated response so that children have their needs met in the right way at the right time and, if and when, a child's needs are met through an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the EHC Plan is co-produced and accurately reflects a child's needs and provision.
4. Improved post 16 opportunities and outcomes with a greater number of young people with SEND gaining employment and having choices about how they achieve independence to stay in or near their family and local community.
5. Workforce development – so that children are supported by practitioners who have the skills and knowledge to meet their needs and parents have the information they need.

Key to achieving priorities is shared information about the children in Croydon with special educational, care and health needs. This information allows us to work with the right families to meet the specific needs of children; this is done by joint planning, commissioning and targeting of resources. Outcomes for young people are tracked so that there is a continuous cycle of improvement that has a positive impact on children's lives.

### **The Croydon context**

In Croydon we have made a commitment to providing effective support for our children and families, working in partnership with others. Our aim is to provide the right support at the right time.

Nationally and in Croydon, about 93% of children are educated in the state-funded school system without the need for help or support beyond that which a mainstream school can provide. The January 2018 Census indicates that 15% (9750) of the 65,029 Croydon school age children had a special educational need, compared to an outer London average of 13.6%. Of these, between 12-13% had been identified as needing SEN Support, additional support to address a learning need for varying periods of time. This help comes from the skills, expertise and resources available in the child's mainstream school and is co-ordinated by the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

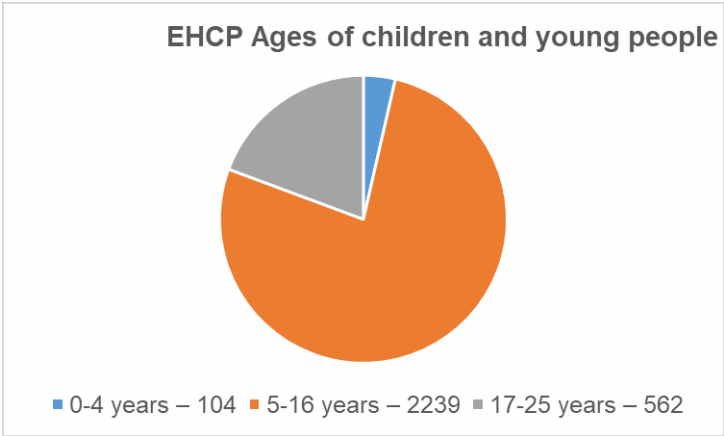
Croydon Council maintains an EHC Plan for approximately 3% of school age children, these are young people with long-term complex special needs such that additional and different provision is needed.

The Children & Families Act 2014 raised expectations and extended the age range for which an EHC Plan can be maintained. Nationally there has been an increase in the number of EHC Plans maintained by Local Authorities; the increase in the number of EHC Plans maintained by Croydon mirrors that of other Local Authorities.

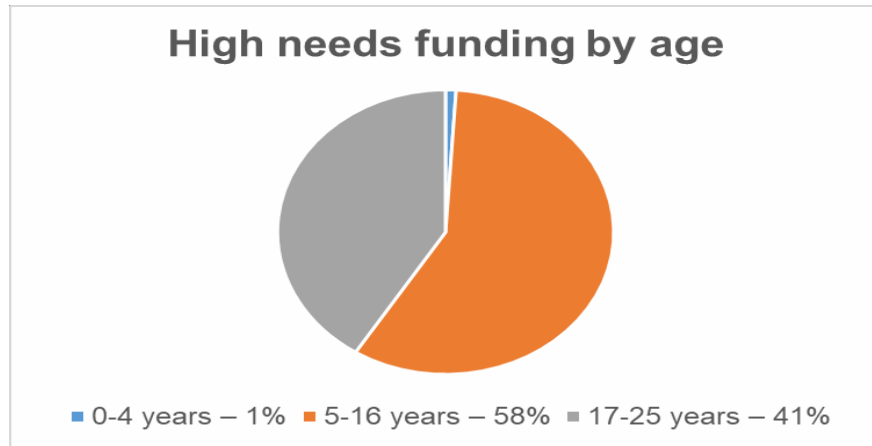
The London Borough of Croydon maintains 2900 EHC Plans (September 2018) and has seen an increase in demand such that more than 300 new EHC Plans have been issued and less than 50 ceased during the period January 2018 to October 2018. The funding allocated to Croydon through the Dedicated Schools Grant is set to increase by 2.2% over three years. There is an assumption that as schools find the financial climate increasingly challenging, this has driven demand for funding through EHC Plans. Croydon has historically placed a number of children and young people out of the borough and in the independent/non-maintained sector, in particular those in the older age range, due to a lack of suitable education and care provision pathways locally. In the academic year 2018/19 55% of young people with an EHC Plan 16 years old and over are placed in schools and colleges outside of Croydon; this compares with 15% of under 16 year olds. Placement outside of the borough has financial implications with increased transport costs and does not support the long-term outcome of independence in or near a young person’s local community.

While legislation endorses inclusion for children with SEND in mainstream schools, national drivers in the school system have led to increased demand for special school places and, in particular at secondary age young people with learning difficulties have told us that they have not felt that their needs were understood or met (PPL 2017).

By age range the number of EHC Plans maintained by Croydon (October 2018) is:

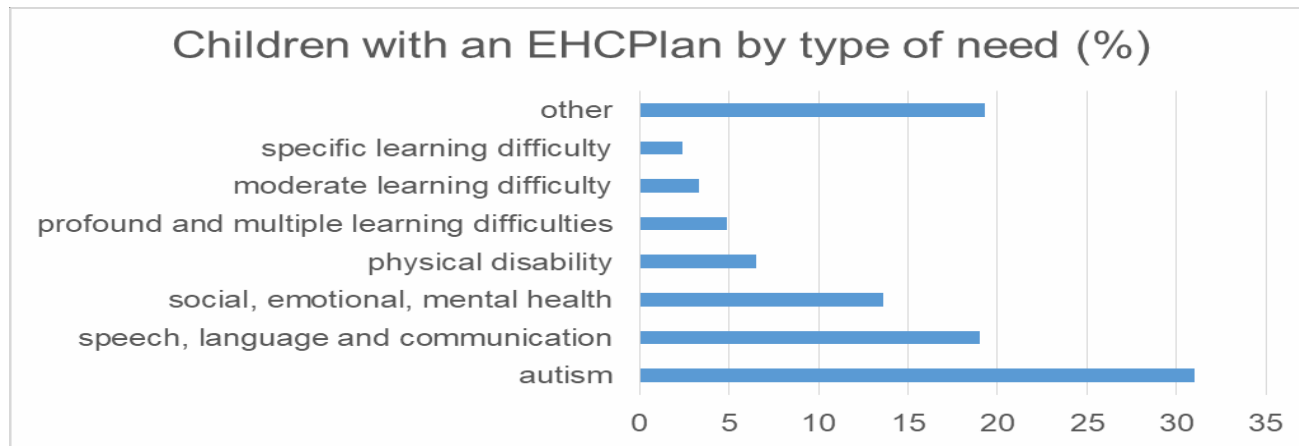


The percentage of High Needs Funding that is spent by age group (October 2018) is:



In terms of improving outcomes and life chances, Croydon had the second highest rate of 16/17 year olds (10.5%); nearly double that for the whole of London at 5.3%/. in 2016. The percentage of adults with learning disabilities in employment is lower than the national and London average.

By type of need for children with an EHC Plan (School Census 2017):



Looking to the future, the numbers of children needing SEND support will most probably be affected by the overall numbers of children and young people in the population. There are an estimated 131,493 0-25 years olds living in Croydon in 2018, with this figure set to rise by 7.5% by 2026. However, this rise is not equal across the age groups which needs to borne in mind when planning services. For example, by 2026;

- the 0 to 1 group is predicted to decrease by -2%. The number of live births In Croydon decreased for example between 2016 and 2017
- the 0 to 4 group is predicted to grow by 2.2% (621 children)
- the 5 to 11s are predicted to increase by 6% (2385 children)
- the 12 to 19s are predicted to increase by 22.3% (8148 children)
- the 20 to 25 group is predicted to increase by 3.4%.

Research (Frank Field, 2011, EPPE: 1997-2003, Taggart, B.) indicates that early intervention makes a difference for children and young people with SEND. The current financial constraints on public services make it important that resources are used effectively and that there is a joined-up approach to meeting children's special educational needs earlier.

### **What our current provision looks like**

So that young people with SEND live fulfilled lives in or near their community this strategy sets out to enable children and young people's special educational and developmental needs to be identified early; to children with SEND attending local early years settings, state-funded schools and colleges which can meet their needs and a pathway to adulthood which is effective in enabling a young person to achieve the outcome of living independently. This will take the commitment of the Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), parents, young people, education settings, health and care practitioners to work together better to support young people with SEND achieve in Croydon.

Croydon has a range of state-funded mainstream and special education provision. Mainstream schools have a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who is responsible for organising provision for children with SEND. The SENCO is the key point of contact for parents and professionals. Croydon mainstream schools provide support through quality teaching which differentiates the curriculum to meet children's needs and carefully tracks children's progress.

For children with a need for SEND support, mainstream schools provide access to individual or group interventions to address key areas of need, including access to support from staff with additional training and expertise. SEND Support in mainstream schools may include precision teaching and will often be informed by expert advice from a specialist. For all children in mainstream schools

with SEND Support, parents/carers can expect termly review of a child's progress with a record of intervention and future support recorded in a SEND support plan.

There is a range of state-funded special school and resource base special education provision in Croydon:

- special schools (two primary, two secondary and two all through) all of which have been judged good or outstanding by Ofsted.
- primary (11) and secondary (6) enhanced learning provisions (resource bases), which provide specialist teaching alongside and in mainstream school lessons. All specialist education provides a personalised curriculum matched to a child's needs and to support progress.
- specialist nursery classes (3).

Additionally, alternative provision for children educated other than at school.

## Principles

Croydon's strategy for children with SEND has been informed by legislative duties, the views of young people and parents, schools and practitioners.

The principles that will form the basis of the proposed SEND Strategy are:

- **Inclusion** – schools and colleges increase participation of young people and make accessible the curriculum and facilities which enable engagement in everyday life. Schools and colleges respond to the diversity of students in their locality. Young people feel safe and are included in their community.
- **Dignity and independence** – so that children with SEND and their families feel welcomed. They have the right information and the right services at the right time so that they and their families can live a dignified life, as independently as possible, the same as any other child.
- **Choice** – children, young people and parents are supported in participating fully in decisions that promote young people's aspirations.
- **Best Value** – effective use of resources for better outcomes, with pooled resources and integrated health, care and education pathways. Better partnership work across education, health and care, and with other partners e.g. housing and the voluntary sector. Increasing provision and places for children with SEND in state-funded mainstream and special education in Croydon, so that there are local pathways for young people, without the need to travel outside the borough.

- **Better outcomes** – young people with SEND achieve sustained employment, entering supported internships and/or living independently in their community in Croydon.

## Croydon's SEND Strategy – Key areas for development are set out below

### Improve early identification of need

1. **Through improved health visiting services.** The Health Visiting Service (HVS) leads on the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme for the 0 to 5's and plays an integral part in ensuring the young people of Croydon have the best possible start in life for good health and wellbeing later in life.

The health visiting service is integral to early identification of developmental issues primarily through the one and two Year developmental health checks. If developmental progress causes concern the child is then referred onto other services as appropriate. However, the levels of one and two year checks being carried out has been low.

To help address this and other issues, the health visiting service has a transformation plan one of which aims is to create more capacity for the universal developmental checks; these are available for every child so that the state may know if the child needs extra provision. The integrated 2 years check with early years providers is being introduced across the borough. The aim is to improve the early identification, appropriate referral of children with developmental issues so that children's needs are met and parents have confidence and understand how to access support through services and provision within the community. This will be done by increasing antenatal, universal 1 and 2 years development checks. In particular, through the implementation of the three year SEND Strategy integrated health visitor and early years education setting assessment will be established with targeted early intervention for EY settings to support practitioners in meeting children's needs.

2. **Through improved early help** there will be better co-ordinated support based in localities and matched to community needs. This will include provision of Early Support/Inclusion Co-ordinators who help families of children with SEND navigate social care, health and the universal offer. Support for families will help to maintain children's progress with access to universal and targeted support, including SEN Support in schools.
3. **Improved timescales for diagnosis of autism.** The current diagnosis pathway in Croydon is fragmented with a long waiting list and waiting time for a diagnostic appointment. A new Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnostic pathway for children under 5 is being piloted so that over the course of the 3 years strategy, Croydon CCG will provide more timely diagnoses and reduced waiting times (which are currently over 12 months).
  - Under 5s – (currently a wait time of 14-15 months)

- 5s and over – (currently a wait time of 8 months).



The Clinical Commissioning Group's aspiration is to reduce the waiting times for both age groups to be in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance standard which states that the diagnostic assessment should commence within 3 months of referral.

4. **Improved communication** - establishing an early years' passport for children with SEND which brings together developmental information, assessment and intervention information; is owned by the child's family and supports preparation for and start of school.
5. Improving communication through the Local Offer website, with a stakeholder user group including representation (champions) from across parent and young people groups, the Council, Health and the wider community, established to take forward communication about the offer for children and young people with SEND in Croydon so that families can be independent in accessing the right resource at the right time.
6. For children from one year old, provision of 'Portage' home-based learning to support the development of children with severe, profound and multiple needs early, before attendance at an early years setting. There will be robust annual reviews of these interventions; these reviews will inform the future model for home-based learning. Outcomes will be monitored and the programme adapted. A key outcome of the strategy will be improved developmental outcomes and better support for families through targeted referral for early help and the provision of parenting support. This provision will lead to effective planning for these children's start to education and transition into school. Details will be set out in an Action Plan.

**Better graduated response:** a continuum of provision to meet a continuum of need to ensure children and young people who have SEND needs, have their needs met whenever possible and they make best progress.

1. The introduction of guidance for schools and families about the support available in mainstream schools for children who have their needs met through SEND Support.
2. Development and publication of local eligibility guidance for children for whom the council undertakes and EHC needs assessment and maintains an EHC Plan.

3. Early years education settings supported to identify and meet children's needs and prepare children for school through the early years area Special Education Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCO) forum and early years support for inclusion. The introduction of high needs inclusion funding to the end of Foundation Stage (from birth to aged 5) to provide support for transition into school and until the end of reception year in school for children with additional learning needs.
4. Groups of schools in the same area working together to apply high needs inclusion funding to include children with SEND Head teachers working collaboratively with the council to provide for a wider range of children and young people through mainstream SEN support and without the need for an EHC Plan. This will support effective transition from primary to secondary with reduced fixed term and permanent exclusion. The aim is for schools to be supported in providing mainstream education for children with SEND that live in their community and to support children with SEND to be included in their local community.
5. Improve the provision of local state-funded special education so that children with more complex needs have a special school place in state-funded education provision within Croydon. Increased special school places through the new free special school we are building (for 2-19 years Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and increased places in existing special schools through capital investment. Alongside these developments will be the introduction and development of admission guidance for specialist education to support equity of access and transparent decision-making and resource allocation.
6. Through the three year SEND strategy there will be a commitment by the Council to maximise accessibility in public spaces and Council settings so young people with SEND feel included and welcomed. Improved access to universal services – there are numerous universal services offered in the borough for all children and young people. However, some need to be made more accessible for children and young people with SEND.

By way of example, in Croydon centre young people who are disabled there are no sign-posted disabled changing facilities. Additionally, a service that is targeted at improving health outcomes is the council commissioned children's weight management service. Accessibility for children with SEND and their families requires improvement.

### Joint Working

1. For children with disabilities the SEND 3 year strategy will drive development of the short breaks offer so that there is equity in provision, families are better supported to live an ordinary life. It is recognised that currently some children access short breaks at the council run short breaks and respite provision while others may struggle to find providers which can meet their child's needs and use their direct payments to do so. The aim is to support families and help them keep children in the

community, reducing family breakdown and promoting child's right to family life through a short-breaks offer that is responsive to family needs.

2. The Council and CCG have widened a previously joint commissioned contract for solely speech and language therapy to include occupational therapy. Over the course of this 5 year contract it is intended that the joint commissioning of these services will lead to further improved quality, effectiveness and efficiency and build on the levels of integration. We will undertake a review of speech and language needs and therapy provision so that we are confident that the likely prevalence of speech, language and communication and occupational therapy needs – including across vulnerable populations (e.g. PRU attendees; CLA; Elective Education etc.) are identified, and jointly commissioned SALT/OT services are adequate to address need for provision across – (Health, Care and Education) i.e. Virtual School/CLA; YOS; PRUs; CWD and SEN. The review will provide recommendation for a strategic, evidence-based and system-wide approach to improving speech, language and communication.
3. For children for whom the Council is undertaking an Education, Health and Care needs assessment the aim is that there will be better joined up assessment and review of a child's progress through the introduction of a new IT system with a portal to facilitate transparent and open sharing of communication.
4. Develop coherent pathways across health, education and care for children with autism, including diagnosis, support for education and mental health, support for parents and siblings, workforce development and pathways into employment. Make Croydon an autism-friendly Borough.

#### **Improved post 16 opportunities and outcomes.**

1. Support for emotional wellbeing and mental health through the Local Transformation Plan and the commitment to improved transition planning and access to services for children with complex needs and multiple diagnoses including mental health needs. This support will be available for young people with or without an EHC Plan.
2. The development of local specialist college education provision, the post 16 SEN Centre of Excellence at Croydon FE College. This post 16 centre is due to open in September 2020 with 75 places. A key focus will be pathways into supported employment for those for whom this is an option and for others there will be support for transition to adult care services in the community. The college is expected to provide job coaches and to work with local employers to establish pathways into supported internships and employment.
3. The adult social care offer for young adults with SEND is being reviewed. During the coming three years there will be consultation and engagement with young adults and their carers so that sufficiency of provision can be established, and decision-making can be based on local pathways for local young people.

4. Improved pathways into supported accommodation. Croydon council currently has a programme of work to deliver more units of 'settled accommodation' for people with a disability. This means increasing the amount of housing available for people to live in with the security of having their own tenancy. This housing stock is being developed by working with the council's own property department, with registered social landlords/housing associations in the borough and with the private rental market.
5. For young people with an EHC Plan transition planning to adulthood will start from age 13 years. The SEND Service has been re-organised with a new 12-25 SEND Team established. The outcome of better early planning is intended to be a

clear pathway and progression post 19, improved outcomes of employment and better tracking of young people's destinations.

6. A clear pathway from children to adults' health services for young people with complex medical needs who have continuing healthcare needs.

### **Workforce Development**

1. Establish a core training offer for all practitioners across agencies so that there is a shared understanding of legislative duties and children and young people's special educational needs.
2. Work in partnership with education settings and schools to develop evidence-based SEN Support for children in Croydon so that children's needs are identified; assessed; met and reviewed and parents have confidence that children and young people are making progress. Particular focus on meeting the needs of autism and social, emotional mental health needs in school.
3. In partnership with community organisations, the Council and health provide a core offer of training for parents – in particular regarding behaviour management at different ages and stages and autism.

### **Next Steps**

This strategy has been informed by a wide-range of parents, young people and practitioners' views.

The SEND Strategy is being taken forward through an implementation plan led by Senior Officers from across the Council and Health. The Implementation Plan will be subject to Governance by the Children's Partnership Board.

# **PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT**

## **SEND Strategy 2019-22**

**Public consultation report on proposed  
Special Education Needs and/or  
Disabilities Strategy.**



**Draft Summary Report of  
Methodology, Feedback and Responses**

**February 2019**

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report brings together Croydon Council's consultation findings on the proposed changes to the SEND Strategy 2019-22 together with recommendations.

With grateful thanks to all involved in supporting the delivery of the consultation.

The consultation process started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 and ran live until the 31 January 2019. The consultation was far reaching with views sought from parents/carers, young people and other agencies/stakeholders all of who offered important views and feedback.

The consultation was extensively promoted through a number of channels. This included direct contact with young people, families and stakeholders through focus groups. There was online availability of consultation documents including surveys available through the Local Offer on Get Involved. All documents were also available in Easy Read. All information about the consultation was circulated widely. This included education settings, Youth Clubs, neighbouring local authorities, and parent support groups. Social media for example Twitter and Facebook was also used to promote the consultation.

The consultation was on the proposed 3 years Strategy spanning Education, Health and Social Care, 2019-22.

The consultation exercise reinforced the main strands of the Strategy which are:

- 1) *To improve early identification of needs.*
- 2) *To improve joint working across education, health and social care.*
- 3) *A graduate response, which is a wider range of support and provision.*
- 4) *Post 16 opportunities*

During consultation it became necessary to add a 5<sup>th</sup> objective which is:

- 5) *Workforce development*

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The original version of the strategy was consulted on with 6 parents at Parents in Partnership on 19.9.18. The feedback was reviewed at the SEND Strategic Board meeting on 25.9.18 and instruction was given to all 3 services (health, social care and education) to re-write the Strategy together.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The target cohort for the consultation was parents, carers and young people with special education needs and/or disability. And we have also consulted with associated practitioners and professionals.

Materials were produced in plain english and Easy Read versions. The on-line survey was also in plain english and in Easy Read.



Printed versions were distributed in all face-to-face sessions and the link was also provided to the online survey.

#### Distribution and Communications

A series of communication and publicity activities also took place including:

- Publishing details on school bulletins
- Croydon website banners and links to the survey
- Tweets

## **4. CONSULTATION PROCESS**

### **4.1 Focus Groups**

A number of focus groups were run across the borough, targeting parents and carers of Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and / or Disabilities. Please see table below.

We engaged with:

- 45 Children and Young People
- 40 parents
- 32 Practitioners of professionals

The format for consultation was that a senior member of the SEND management team briefed the participants of the key aims of the strategy and the four themes for improvement:

- 1) **Improved early identification of need**
- 2) **Improved joint-working**
- 3) **Better graduated response with better joint working:** a continuum of provision to meet a continuum of need to ensure children and young people who have SEND needs have their needs met whenever possible and they make best progress.
- 4) **Improved post 16 opportunities and outcomes.**

A standard set of questions were used:

1. Is the vision clear?
2. What do you like about the draft SEND Strategy?
3. Is there anything in the draft SEND Strategy that worries/concerns you?
4. What impact do you think the Strategy will have on you, your child/ren, family, school or wider community?
5. Is there anything missing from the Strategy that you feel should be included?

<b>Date</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Number of attendees</b>
5.12.18	CAMHS services SLAM	Professionals	15
7.12.18	Waddon Youth Centre	Parents	6
12.12.18	Bensham Manor	Parents	1
17.12.18	NHS Community Services	Practitioners	13

	Practitioners		
20.12.18	Parents in Partnership	Parents	1
7.1.19	Waddon Youth Centre	Young People 18-25	6
9.1.19	Parents in Partnership	Parents inc. Advisor	4
10.1.19	Parents in Partnership	Parents	2
16.1.19	Autism Partnership Board	Parents, Councillors inc. A Fleming	9
16.1.19	Waddon Youth Club	Young People age 7-16	34
17.1.19	St Giles School	Parents	7
24.1.19	SENDIASS	parents	1
28.1.19	Beckmead School	Young People	5
	1 hr YP 1 hr parents	Parents	7
29.1.19	St Nicholas School	Parents	6
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>117</b>

4.2. Questionnaire: online survey questions

<b>To help us get a good idea of who is completing the survey, please indicate in what capacity you are responding</b>	
A child or young person	
A parent/carer of a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)	
A professional such as a teacher or social worker	
An organisation representing young people, families/carers or those with SEND needs	
Other	
	Grand Total

<b>Other:</b>	
Resident	
Disabled person, Professional disability practitioner and representative of professional organisation for staff working with disabled students.	
Volunteer involvement with a college and Croydon Drop In	
Someone who cares	

<b>Do you agree with our aim: "Children with SEN and/or disabilities will achieve independence and employment, whenever possible, in or near their local community so that they can live fulfilled lives and be active contributors to Croydon's future. Croydon has high aspirations for children and young people with SEND" (%)</b>	
Yes	
No	
Not sure	
	Grand Total

<b>Do you support the principles that form the basis of the SEND strategy?</b>	
Yes	
No	
Not sure	
	Grand Total

<b>Do you agree with our aim: "Children with SEN and/or disabilities will achieve independence and employment, whenever possible, in or near their local community so that they can live fulfilled lives and be active contributors to Croydon's future...."?</b>	
	%
<b>Do you support the principles that form the basis of the SEND strategy?</b>	
	%

<b>Do you support the area of development?</b>
<i>Improve early intervention</i>
Yes
No
Not sure
Grand Total

<b><i>Better graduated response with better joint working</i></b>
Yes
No
Not sure
Grand total

<b><i>Improved post 16 opportunities and outcomes</i></b>
Yes
No
Not sure
Grand Total

<b>Do you think we should adopt the SEND Strategy?</b>
Yes
Yes with changes
No
Not sure
Grand total

<b>Gender</b>
Female
Male
Prefer not to say
Transgender
Grand Total

<b>Please tell us how old you are</b>
Under 15 yrs old
16-19 yrs
20-25 yrs
26-34 yrs
35-44 yrs
45-54 yrs
55-64 yrs
65+ yrs
Grand Total

<b>Do you consider yourself to have a disability</b>
Yes

No	
Prefer not to say	
	Grand Total

<b>If you said yes, please specify</b>	
Mobility	
Visual impairments	
Hearing impairments	
Mental health	
Learning disability	
Prefer not to say	
Other	
	Total

Other, please specify	
dyslexia and ASC	
None	
Grand Total	

<b>What describes your ethnic group?</b>	
Arab	
Bangladeshi	
Black Caribbean	
Chinese	
Indian	
Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	
White and Asian	
White and Black Caribbean	
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	
White Irish	
Any other ethnic background	
Grand total	

Any other background (specify)	
British Asian	
British Mauritian	
Bulgariq	
mixed family with several ethnic groups	
Prefer not to say	
	Grand Total

## 5. FINDINGS

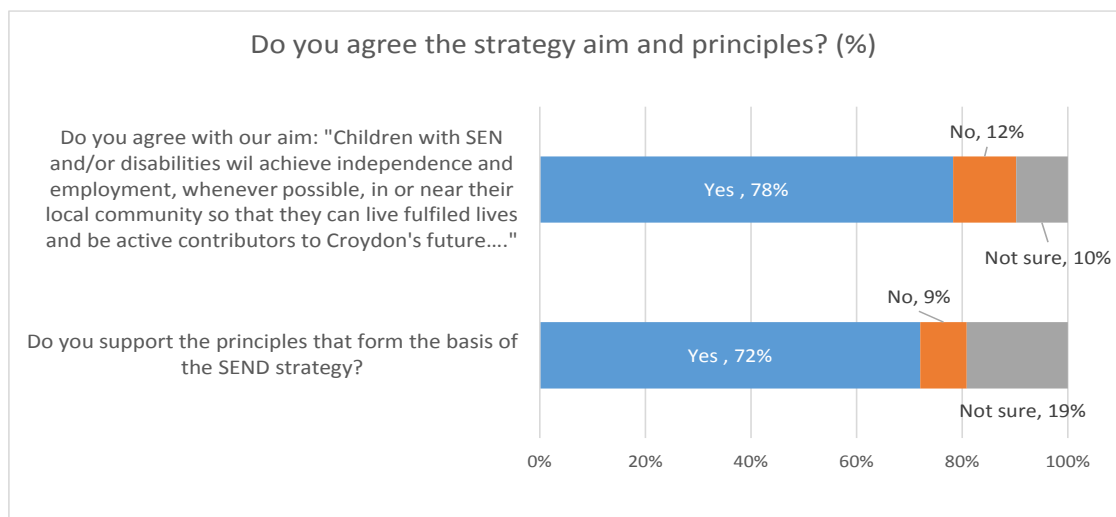
### 5.1 Presenting Qualitative findings

As the main topics of the consultation were the four themes we grouped the feedback accordingly. All the topics generated discussion. However, Post 16 Opportunities and Joint Working created most comments. Discussions also informed us that a fifth area of development was needed, which is Workforce Development across the services.

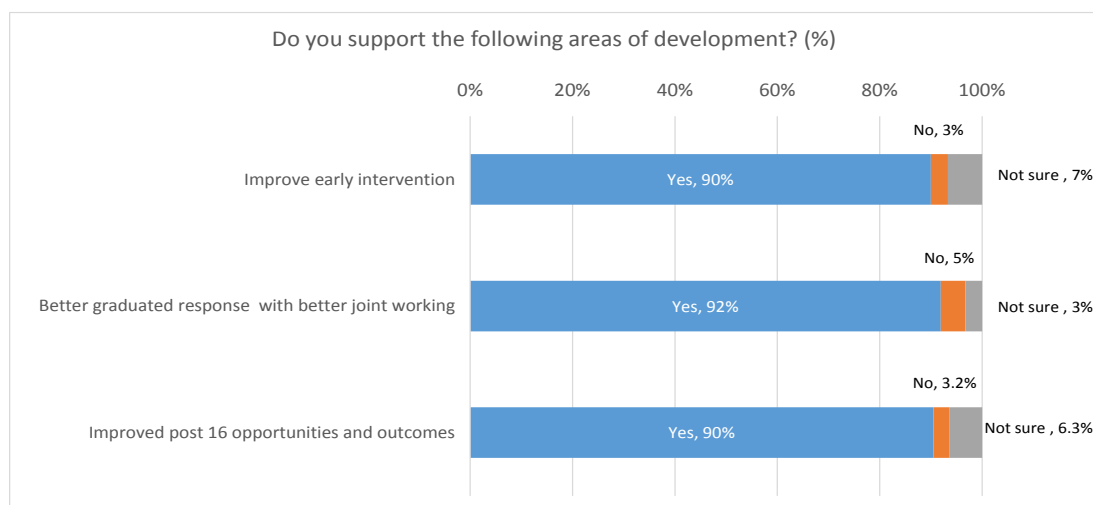
There is a theme of questioning if the intentions will actually be delivered, a sense of having heard it all before.

### 5.2 Presenting Questionnaire findings

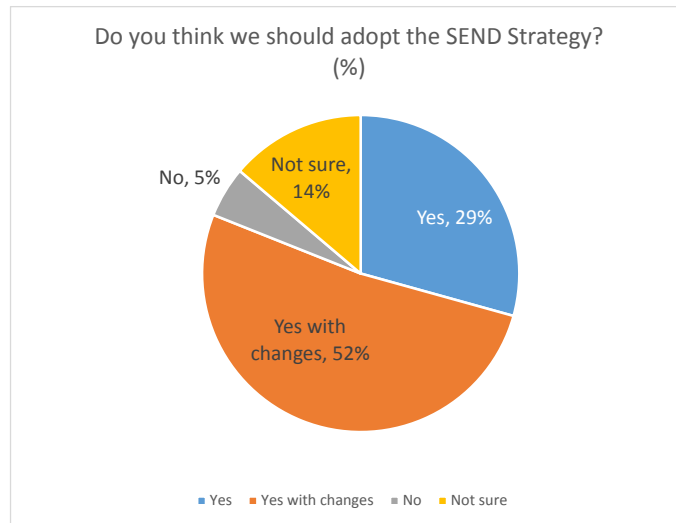
The key questions and findings are as follows:



Above: actual count 92 and 68



Above: actual count 63,62 and 60



Above: actual count 58

## 6. Conclusions

The overall response enabled Croydon to prioritise the four themes in the Strategy. It informed the Council of parents and families of the frustrations of services not being joined up and of the anxiety for parents and young people about Post 16 provision and employment within the borough.

## 7. Recommendations

Recommendations about how to proceed will be discussed amongst the three services: education, health and social care.

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## Stage 1: Initial Equality Analysis

The council has an important role in creating a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. Equality is integral to everything the council does. We are committed to making Croydon a stronger, fairer borough where no community or individual is held back.

The Initial Equality Analysis helps to determine if the proposed change will have no impact, a positive or negative impact on groups that share a protected characteristic and ascertain if you will need to undertake a full equality analysis.

An Equality analysis enables us to target our services, and our budgets, more effectively as well as understand how they affect all our communities. It also helps us comply with the Equalities Act 2010.

Please note that an equality analysis must be completed as early as possible during the planning stages to ensure information gained from the process is incorporated in any decisions made. [If you are not at the beginning stage of your decision making process, you must inform your Director and the Equalities Manager that you have not yet completed an equality analysis.](#)

In practice, the term '**proposed change**' broadly covers the following:

- Policies, strategies and plans;
- Projects and programmes;
- Commissioning (including re-commissioning and de-commissioning);
- Service Review;
- Budgets;
- Staff restructures (including outsourcing);
- Business transformation programmes;
- Organisational change programmes;
- Processes (for example thresholds, eligibility, entitlements, and access criteria).

<b>Directorate:</b>	Children, Families and Education
<b>Title of project or proposed change:</b>	SEND Strategy
<b>Officer responsible for assessment:</b>	Alison Farmer
<b>Date assessment completed:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2019

## 1.1 Information about the proposed change

1.1.1	<p><b>Brief outline of proposed change</b> <i>(see above for examples of proposed changes)</i>                  Please provide a brief outline of the proposed change, why it is being considered. Please also state if it is an existing, new/proposed or revised change</p> <p><b>SEND Strategy</b>                  The London Borough of Croydon Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2018 to 2021 (SEND Strategy) sets out to improve the outcomes and life chances for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It is a new Strategy.</p> <p>The SEND strategy sets out the Council’s approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, with a focus on developing ways of working together with families, early years settings, schools, FE colleges and health providers over the next three years to support positive outcomes for young people. The strategy addresses Croydon’s need for long-term provision for children with SEND ensuring an efficient use of public resources, sustainable and effective.</p> <p>The Send Strategy provides an umbrella document that sets the direction of travel for all policies and criteria that link underneath it. This includes specifically, the following two new documents:</p> <p><b>Eligibility Criteria</b>                  Local authorities are required to ensure that there is an offer for children and young people with SEND, including a graduated response in schools and other education settings; that they undertake EHC needs assessment and issue and maintain an EHC Plan for those children who have the most complex learning difficulties and need additional and different provision and provide or co-ordinate and jointly commission the provision of services to meet the assessed needs of children and young people with disabilities where it is deemed necessary to so. (Children and Families Act 2014)</p>
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The overall aim of the SEND strategy and the supporting criteria and policies is to improve and make enhancements to the service for all children and young adults with SEND in Croydon through effective identification, assessment, planning and review of children and young people's progress. The goal is for children and young people and their families to be actively involved in planning a future independent life in Croydon. For children and young people to be safe, healthy, and happy and aspire to be the best they can be.

This strategy is for all children and young people with SEND and their families, this includes children and young people 0-25 who have a learning need or disability that is identified and met through SEN support, an EHC Plan and/or a Care Plan.

The only impact is related to age as the services are different for children and adults. This is dictated by the different legislation relating to children and adults (Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014). The probability and impact is reflected below in the scoring.

## 1.2 Who could be affected by the change and how?

### Scoring your adverse impact

You will need to score impact on service users, community groups and/or staff and record this in your Action Plan.

### Deciding whether the impact could be positive or negative

You must gather evidence to help you decide how each of the protected groups could be affected. This evidence must be of two types:

- about people (quantitative) – for example, statistics, borough and ward profiles on the Croydon Observatory (<http://www.croydonobservatory.org/>), national research
- from people (qualitative) – for example, consultation results, complaints, surveys, information from relevant voluntary or community organisations

You will find it useful to discuss sources of information with the equalities manager. They may be able point you towards relevant information from another equality analysis or concerns about equality matters from inspections or audits.

However, you can make reasonable assumptions where impact is likely to be minimal. For example, changes to the school admissions policy are likely to have minimal impact on older people. Negative impacts can often be identified by the concerns that stakeholders raise about whether a change will work or not.

### Ranking the potential impact

You have to act to eliminate any potential negative impact that, if it was to be realised, would breach the law (perhaps by abandoning your proposed change). However, you may not be able to take action to minimise all your potential negative impacts or maximise all your potential positive ones. You must be realistic and proportionate about how many actions you can resource.

When you act to reduce the negative impact or maximise the positive impact, you must be sure that this does not create a negative impact on another group. If this is unavoidable, it can only be justified if it is done to eliminate discrimination.

#### 1.2.1 PROBABILITY - What is the likelihood of the service, policy or function having an impact on service users, community groups and/or staff?

Use table below to assign the proposed change a category code for each protected group.

Category Code	IMPACT ON PROTECTED GROUP(S)								
	Race	Age	Gender	Disability	Religion or Belief	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Pregnancy Or Maternity	Marriage or Civil Partnership
<b>1 Rare</b>	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>2 Unlikely</b>		2							
<b>3 Possible</b>									
<b>4 Likely</b>									
<b>5 Almost Certain</b>									

**1.2.2. SEVERITY OF IMPACT** - Identify the highest possible impact on the service, policy or function.

Use this table as a general guide

Probability	Potential Impact on Protected Group(s)	The Potential for Complaint/Litigation	Potential Impact on Organisation
1	No impact or adverse outcome	Unlikely to cause complaint/litigation	No risk at all to organisation
2	Short term impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaint possible</li> <li>Litigation</li> </ul>	Minimal risk to organisation
3	Semi-Permanent Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Litigation possible not certain</li> <li>High potential for complaint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need careful PR</li> <li>Reportable to EHRC</li> <li>External Investigation</li> </ul>
4	Permanent Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Litigation certain expected to be settled for &lt;£1M</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service closure</li> <li>Threat to Divisional/Directorate objectives/priorities</li> <li>Local Publicity</li> </ul>
5	Permanent and Severe Impact	Litigation certain expected to be settled for >£1M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National adverse publicity</li> <li>Threat to Trust objectives/priorities</li> </ul>

**1.2.3 Equality Impact Score**

Use the table in 1.2.2 and matrix below to calculate the equality impact score by using the formula: **Impact x Likelihood = Equality Impact Score**

I M P A C T	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5	
	LIKELIHOOD					



Risk index	Risk Magnitude
20-25	Maximum
15-19	High risk
10-14	Medium Risk
5-9	Low Risk
1-4	Minimum Risk

Example

If we are going to reduce parking provision in a particular location, officers will need to assess the equality impact as follows;

1. Determine the severity of the impact. You can do this by using the table in 1.2.2 as a guide, for the purpose of this example as 3 Semi-Permanent Impact
2. Estimate the Likelihood of this impact. You can use the category codes in the table in 1.2.1 to, for the purpose of this example as 5 Almost Certain
3. Calculate the equality impact score using the formula above and record it in the space provided below, for the purpose of this example - **Impact (3) x Likelihood (5) = 15 Red**

Calculate and enter the Equality Impact Score in the space provided ( 2 )

**A full Equality Analysis will be required if the proposed change has been graded as scoring 10 or above (orange or red in the above table ) as this will help you detail how you are going to address any negative impact.**

**1.2.4** Please state if the proposed change will adversely impact the Council’s ability to meet one or more of the Public Sector Duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 below: Please tick the relevant box(es) and provide a brief explanation

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who belong to protected groups   
 The strategy will have a positive effect on equality and opportunity for people with SEND

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation   
 The strategy will have a positive impact and therefore we do not envisage any unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Fostering good relations between people who belong to protected characteristic groups   
 The aim of the strategy is to have a positive effect on the lives of people with SEND due to integration into the community and mainstream schools.

A full Equality Analysis will be required if the proposed change will adversely impact the Council’s ability to meet one or more of the Public Sector Duties set out above.

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### 1.3 Decision on the Initial Equality Analysis

<b>Officer responsible for assessment</b>	Name: Alison Farmer Position: Head of SEN Services Date: 15.02.19  Should a full equality analysis be carried out? <b>No</b> Please state why not and outline the information that you used to make this decision. Statements such as 'no relevance to equality' without any supporting information or 'no information available' could leave the council vulnerable to legal challenge.  There is no need to conduct a full equality analysis because the risk assessment has identified the proposed changes as being low risk.  <b>You must include this statement in any report used in decision making such as CCB or cabinet.</b>
<b>Departmental Strategy Lead</b>	Name: Yvonne Okiyo Position: Equalities Manager Date 18.02.19  Should a full Equality Analysis be carried out? (tick appropriate box) <b>Yes</b> <b>No</b> x

	<p>Please state why and outline the information that you used to make this decision.</p> <p>The proposed change will have a positive impact on protected groups and will improve and make enhancements to the service for all children and young adults with SEND through effective identification, assessment, planning and review of children and young people's progress.</p>
<b>Director</b>	Name: Shelley Davies      Position: Director for Education      Date: 05 February 2019

DRAFT



For general release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Sub-Committee 12 March 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Q3 Statutory Children’s Complaints Report</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care/Clare Davies, Complaints Manager</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Nick Pendry, Director of Early Help and Children’s Social Care &amp; Clare Davies, Complaints Manager</b>

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<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	<b>This item is contained in the Sub-Committee’s work programme.</b>
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>To review the volume of Children’s Statutory Complaints Received in October-December 2018</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This report provides a high level overview of the performance of the Statutory Children’s Service, taking into account volumes, number within corporate service level agreements (SLA), number of complaints upheld and the themes and learnings from these. The way in which complaints are used to drive service improvements plays a key role in Croydon Council’s drive to be an excellent authority which delivers both a positive resident experience and shows that we are a learning authority.*

## 2. Annual Statutory Complaints Report

### **CHILD STATUTORY COMPLAINTS UPDATE - 2017/18**

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This update provides a summary of the volumes of Statutory Complaints received in Q3 2018/19.

#### 2. CHILD - STATUTORY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 2.1 The complaints procedure for children’s social care comprises of three stages. Stage 1 is managed by the service or services being complained about. Stage 2 is an independent investigation. Finally, Stage 3 is a Review Panel Hearing. If the complainant remains dissatisfied they can refer their complaint to the

Local Government Ombudsman.

2.2 Stage 1 is managed by the service or services being complained about. Stage 2 is a review by an independent investigator via the Complaint Resolutions Team on behalf of the Chief Executive.

Stage 3 is an independent Review Panel Hearing,

If the complainant remains dissatisfied they can refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

### 3. CHILD - STATUTORY COMPLAINTS

#### 1. Introduction:

1.1 This update provides a summary of the volumes of Statutory Complaints received across the statutory children's service in **Quarter 3 October-December 2018**.

#### 1.2 New operating model:

Please note: there have been significant structural changes across the organisation. These have now been updated on the complaints system. However, for some areas this may impact the reporting meaning that direct correlation at department level may be difficult due to changes at this level.

#### 1.3 New Reporting Style:

The style of the quarterly complaints reports is changing. We understand that the reports need to be clear and concise and show the department what they want to see in a snapshot. Therefore the reports will become more visual, shorter and clearer with the use of Power Bi. This change will take effect at the next report (end of year).

### 2. Statutory Children's Complaint Comparisons: Quarter 3: 2016 -2019

Statutory Children's complaints 2018-19	Q2 17/18			Q3 17/18			Q1 18/19			Q2 18/19			18/19Q3		
	Total	Upheld	In Sla	Total	Upheld	In Sla	Total	Upheld	In Sla	Total	Upheld	In Sla	Total	Upheld	In Sla
Complaint - Stage one	26	6	16	28	6	22	18	1	9	40	4	11	51	7	23
Complaint - Stage two	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	5	5	0	5	4	0	0
Complaint - Stage three	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Complaint - Ombudsman	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

#### 2.1 Stage 1 Statutory Children's Complaints

- Complaints rose by **28%** in comparison to last quarter. (11 complaints).
- The rate upheld was **14%**, which is an increase compared to last quarter (increase of 3 complaints), where only 10% of complaints were upheld.
- The service has responded on time to **45%** of complaints. This is an improvement compared to just 27% last quarter, however work still needs to be done on this aspect, particularly when comparing this to other areas of the local authority, where we are responding within SLA to 90% of complaints.

#### 2.2 Stage 2 Statutory Children's Complaints

Stage 2 complaints decreased by 1 compared to Q2. These are all still under investigation.

### 2.3 Stage 3 Statutory Children’s Complaints

0 complaints escalated to stage 3 at quarter 3 this year.

### 2.4 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Statutory Children’s Complaints

0 complaints have been escalated by the LGSCO this year for quarter 3.

### 3. Complaints by Service Team

Team	Volume	No in SLA	No Upheld
LAC	15	8	4 (50%)
Child Protection & Proceedings	12	3	1 (8%)
Assessments	9	6	0 (0%)
CIN	8	2	0 (0%)
Adolescent Support Teams	1	1	0
Adoption	1	1	1 (100%)
Early Help	1	1	1 (100%)
Disability	1	1	0
Single Point of Contact	3	0	0

### 4. Top Complaint Trends

- No communication/lack of support from social worker
- Unable to contact social worker
- Contents of assessments/unable to grant a request
- Social worker rude
- Delays (assessments/funding)

### 5. Learnings

- SW need to respond to all emails/contact within SLA and keep clients updated
- Ensure we respond and clearly explain to requests why they cannot be granted.
- SW to ensure they are professional at all times
- Ensure assessments or funding are actioned on time without delay
- Ensure social workers are contactable

### Children’s Complaint Trend commentary- Shaun Hanks-actions and improvements:

- SW to ensure they are professional at all times
- Ensure assessments or funding are actioned on time without delay
- Ensure social workers are contactable

The findings of this quarterly report were presented and discussed at the Quality Assurance Learning Loop meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

Actions arising from this report are:

- Poor communication:
  - Staff will be reminded of the SLA in terms of responding and the importance of keeping service users updated on progress.
  - The lack of business support to answer phones for staff who are out on visits / away has a significant impact on this area. The improvement team are working with Business Support to resolve this before the next financial year.
  
- Assessment timeliness is now monitored through Performance Clinics and during January 2019 achieved 79% on time (target 85%). The current performance does represent an improvement, but clearly needs to remain a focus.
  
- Sharing of reports with families before reviews and meetings, to confirm facts and explain omissions, is an area that we need to improve. Actions we will undertake:
  - For Child Protection conferences and Looked After Reviews the timeliness of sharing reports before meetings will be a focus of the performance clinics during March 2019, identifying poor performance (<90%) and setting clear targets for teams to improve.
  
- Closer engagement with the Complaints Team with the introduction of Department Complaints Officer (DCO) Training sessions to improve the quality of stage 1 responses and ensure that a 'customer service' culture is developed.
  - With the complaints team we will apply learning from services that are achieving 90% SLA.

## **6. Forward Plan**

Preventing complaints and learning from what we are seeing every quarter is key in improving our service across the Council. This is why these reports continue to focus on the key themes for your service. We would like you to help focus on an action plan for your service, to help implement improvements to the service and what you are offering, based on these common trends. This is crucial to reducing complaints in the long term and the volume we are upholding. These actions will be taken forward by the Executive Director at DLT and will be re-visited at the next one. Let's all work together to ensure we are learning from the complaints from our residents, and provide a better service all round.

*\*Benchmarking data to be provided annually, and will be available on the end of year report.*

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**Contact Officer:** Clare Davies, Complaints Manager

**Background Documents:** None

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 Children's Complaints Themes & Learnings

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SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.

Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress.

Ensure adequate time/warning is given to client prior to arranging/cancelling or changing meetings.

Ensure reports are supplied to clients within statutory timescales

Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales.

Ensure timescales for arranging educational provisions are kept and customer kept updated on progress.

SW to ensure they attend or re-arrange meetings as required.

SW need to complete agreed tasks within agreed timescales or keep client fully updated as to any delays.

SW need to ensure correct files and documents are ready and up-to-date and that they supply required documents for all court cases.

SW to ensure any legal advice they supply is correct.

Ensure client's claims are updated swiftly to ensure they continue to receive full entitlements.

Ensure a personal advisor is allocated to a client swiftly once required.

Ensure safeguarding referrals are completed within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.

Ensure we respond and clearly explain to requests why they cannot be granted and the clear reasons for this in writing.

Ensure care plans are fully assessed and implemented within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.

SW needs to ensure they communicate agreed actions with all parties involved.

Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.

SW needs to ensure they arrange/action agreed support/ respite care and ensure client is receiving the full agreed support.

*Managers need to ensure all reports of violence are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.*

*Ensure SW attend meetings as arranged or re-arranged to ensure they are able to attend.*

*Ensure all relevant 3<sup>rd</sup> party professionals are invited to relevant meetings.*

*Ensure when responding that all points have been covered or clear details as to when the customer can expect a response or update.*

Case Ref (Service Reference ID)	Division (Service Area)	Service Area Name (Service Area)	Stat Stage 1 Outcome	Raised by	high level detail	Learnings:
CASE4087095	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Leaving care - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld	By the Client	Delay releasing savings to client Contacting SW but not receiving resolution	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4089533	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disability	Upheld in Part	Parent - Mother	Lack of contact or support from SW Failure to implement agreed actions of meeting 12 months prior - Chased but received no update or action	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4098823	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children (previously Permanence Service 1) - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld	By the Client	Meetings cancelled without prior warning when client had already arrived on site Delay completing age assessment Client feels the assessors were rude and aggressive and shouted Decision letter issued Jan 17 but client had not received the full report in July 17	Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress. Ensure adequate time/warning is given to client prior to arranging/cancelling or changing meetings. Ensure reports are supplied to clients within statutory timescales
CASE4095831	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Adoption & SGO - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Parent - Mother	Lack of support from SW SW was not taking client's religion into consideration	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4100543	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disability	Upheld	Career	Delay from transition team to sort placement Delay from transition team receiving confirmed placement or plan Lack of contact or support from SW and lack of response to client's requests No stability as multiple SW assigned to case - SW change with little or no notice	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4104522	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Adoption & SGO - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Manager - Willows House	Assault concerns raised to SW who did not respond Delay submitting a referral following contact with SW Failure/delay regarding agreeing the Educational provision Agreed task outlined for the SW was delayed SW was late/did not attend meeting called by the lead Clinical psychologist	Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales. Ensure timescales for arranging Educational provisions are kept and customer kept updated on progress. SW to ensure they attend or re-arrange meetings as arranged. SW need to complete agreed tasks within agreed timescales or keep client fully updated as to any delays.
CASE4107677	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1) - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Parent - Mother	SW unprofessional SW did not prepare required Section 7 in time for court appearance SW does not speak to the children properly, client concern child has stated will self-harm rather than meet SW Client was given advice by SW which SW claimed legal provides which proved incorrect	SW need to ensure correct files and documents are ready and up-to-date and that they supply required documents for all court cases. SW to ensure any legal advice they supply is correct.
CASE4110061	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children (previously Permanence Service 1) - Statutory Childrens	Upheld	Advocate	Delay allocating a Personal Advisor Lack of contact or support from service/SW Not receiving any payments from Croydon since client turned 18	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure client's claims are updated swiftly to ensure they continue to receive full entitlements. Ensure a personal Advisor is allocated to a client swiftly once required.
CASE4121952	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanence 2) - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld	Parent - Father	Lack of contact or support from service/SW CAHMs refusing responsibility to assist Failure to safeguard child	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure safeguarding referrals are completed within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process. Ensure we respond and clearly explain to requests why they cannot be granted and the clear reasons for this in writing.
CASE4123575	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disability	Rejected	Parent - Mother	Lack of contact or support from Council	Complaint was rejected as Court Proceedings currently underway
CASE4134062	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disabilities - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Parent - Father	Delay completing/supply a Care Package Lack of contact or support from SW and lack of response to client's requests	Ensure care plans are fully assessed and implemented within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process. SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave
CASE4170708	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Adoption & SGO - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Aunt / Career	Lack of contact or support from SW and lack of response to client's requests SW not updating foster carer of agreed contact	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. SW needs to ensure they communicate agreed actions with all parties involved.
CASE4144784	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1)	Not Upheld	Parent - Mother	SW inappropriate behaviour with client's child Client was advised a merlin was raised but has heard nothing further from Council Breach of confidentiality	Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.
CASE4149247	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disabilities - Statutory Childrens	Upheld	Sister	Failure to supply agreed extra respite care Lack of contact or support from SW and lack of response to client's requests	SW needs to ensure they arrange/action agreed support/ respite care and ensure client is receiving the full agreed support. SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4154405	Care Planning Service	Child Protection and Proceedings (previously Care Planning 2) - Statutory Childrens	Closed - Consent not received	Sister	Inaccurate information held on system - advised would be rectified but was not and incorrect info supplied to courts SW advised client that she doesn't want to get involved in the case Lack of support from SW resulting in OOB placement	SW need to ensure correct files and documents are ready and up-to-date and that they supply required documents for all court cases. Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.
CASE4164863	Care Planning Service	Child Protection and Proceedings (previously Care Planning 2) - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld	By the Client	SW threatened violence on clients Mum Delay/Failure to complete a review of the original assessment Lack of support from SW	Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress. Managers need to ensure all reports of violence are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process.
CASE4192756	Care Planning Service	Assessments (previously CIN - Triage & Immediate Response) - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Sister	Delay completing viability assessment Lack of contact or support from SW and lack of response to client's requests	Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress. SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4179681	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1) - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld	By the Client	Lack of support from SW Client feels the SW is harassing them Unhappy with the frequent (and sometimes unannounced) visits by SW	SW/Manager need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4180449	Care Planning Service	Assessments (previously CIN - Triage & Immediate Response) - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld	Parent - Father	Failure to act on safeguarding referral Lack of support from SW	Ensure safeguarding referrals are completed within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process. SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave
CASE4200133	Care Planning Service	Child Protection and Proceedings (previously Care Planning 2) - Statutory Childrens	Upheld in Part	Parent - Father	Lack of contact or support from SW and lack of response to client's requests	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4203533	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Leaving care	Not Upheld	Advocate	Lack of support from Council/SW resulted in client becoming homeless Lack of support from SW	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.
CASE4215274	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Adoption & SGO - Statutory Childrens	Upheld	Career	Delay arranging funding Lack of support from SW	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure client's claims are updated swiftly to ensure they continue to receive full entitlements.
CASE4218715	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Adoption & SGO - Statutory Childrens	Upheld	Advocate	Delay in completing assessment Poor standards in care provision	Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress.
CASE4230942	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1)	Not Upheld	Parent - Father	Requests for support were ignored Lack of support from Croydon Council	Service need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave.



Officer Dealing	Date Received	Date Response Sent	In SLA	Case Ref	Division (Service Area)	Service Area Name (Service Area)	Outcome	Raised by	high level detail	Learnings
RE	03/10/17	17/10/17	Yes	CASE4237203	Care Planning Service	Assessments - Childrens	Upheld in Part	Parent - Mother	Delay receiving social services report Failure to advise mother of concerns for child's safety Council did not complete follow on checks to confirm child was safe	Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales. Ensure letters/reports are issued to all relevant persons Ensure safeguarding referrals are completed within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process, and that follow-on contact made for safeguarding concerns
RE	23/10/17	07/11/17	No	CASE4266742	Care Planning Service	Child Protection and Proceedings	Not Upheld	Parent - Mother	Lack of contact from SW Lack of support from social services or the allocated SW SW are meeting with people about her case and not informing her	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. SW needs to ensure they communicate agreed actions with all parties involved.
RE	31/10/17	13/11/17	Yes	CASE4277695	Early Help and MASH	Early Help and Partnerships		Advocate	The key worker met the client without an interpreter The key worker prepared an assessment which was not shared with the client and the client was unable to make comments The assessment was shared with housing without the clients consent and the KW gave opinions to housing which affected the housing review decision A copy of the assessment was only supplied after the client requested a copy	Ensure reports are supplied to clients within statutory timescales Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress and advised when an assessment is being completed. Complete agreed tasks within agreed timescales or keep client fully updated as to any delays. Ensure we communicate agreed actions with all parties involved, this includes requests or need for interpreter.
RE	01/11/17	14/11/17	Yes	CASE4279563	Looked after children	Looked after children	No Finding			
KH	03/11/17	07/11/17		CASE4287771	Care Planning Service	Children in Need	Not Upheld	Father	Father unhappy mother and children had been housed in a refuge and he has had no contact with them and does not know where they are.	Communication - ensure all parties/parents are kept informed of the decisions taken and reasons for the decision taken. Also to ensure parents are aware of their rights and are correctly directed for assistance.
RE	03/11/17			CASE4296851	Mental Health Social Care	MH Safeguarding				
SS	07/11/17	20/11/2017		CASE4288873	Care Planning Service	Children in Need	Upheld in Part	Mother	Parent unhappy with the support they are receiving/not receiving from social worker.	Give regular updates and correct information.
SS	07/11/17	19/11/17		CASE4289111	Care Planning Service	MASH	Upheld in Part	Father	The assessment completed has not been shared with you, your partner or your support network. Croydon Social services should have spoken to your support network to have a clear understanding of your difficulties. The social worker did not write to you or your partner about the meeting of making our children 'Child in need'. You feel bullied and afraid of the allocated social worker.	Ensure those who are involved in the assessment receive a copy of the assessment when it is finalised. Ensure parents are able to attend the date set for meetings.
RE	08/11/17			CASE4291680	Care Planning Service	Children in Need	Rejected	Parent - Mother	Mother trying to stop care proceedings; lack of communication with SW team, delay in foster carer payments to paternal grandmother.	Case going ahead to care proceedings, we cannot address the complaint as it may prejudice the case.
KH	10/11/17	10/11/17	Yes	CASE4293822	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children (previously Permanence Service 1) - Statutory Childrens	Upheld			
SS	14/11/17			CASE4299551	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption		Parents	Reduction in allowance.	COMPLAINT NOT RESOLVED YET.
KH	16/11/17	12/12/17		CASE4303723	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption	Upheld	Foster child	Foster child complaining of poor communication, lack of action and financial support	Explanations of decisions taken to be fully conveyed to service users. To ensure that all aspects of a case are taken into account before decisions are made.
KH	20/11/17	07/12/17		CASE4309389	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1)	Not Upheld	Mother	Lack of communication, lack of promised action and disagreement with assessment	Improved communication. Explanations should be given as to the reasons for an outcome of an assessment. More attempts to contact a service user to be made and not just e-mail.
RE	21/11/17			CASE4312775	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption		Parent - Mother	Re assessment; child up for adoption and feels let down.	
RE	22/11/17			CASE4310635	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption		Parent - Mother	Lack of contact and support; lack of response to requests for assessment for son.	
KH	13/12/17			CASE4310887	Care Planning Service	Child Protection and Proceedings (previously Care Planning 2) - Statutory Childrens			Unhappy with number of social workers, unhappy with actions taken by social worker and incorrect focus of fathers drinking rather than childrens education	Improved communications. Explanations as to why it is important to focus on certain areas of family.
RE	22/11/17			CASE4313088	Care Planning Service	Children in Need		Parent - Mother	Parent feels MH assessment should have been carried out and medical evidence sought.	
RE	24/11/17			CASE4315153	Child Protection	Care Planning		Parent - Great Grandmother	GGM feels child should be placed with her, and says this was verbally agreed.	
RS	29/11/17	13/12/17	No	CASE4324067	Assessments (previously CIN - Triage & Immediate Response) - Statutory Childrens	Care Planning	Not Upheld	Aunt	Lack of support from Council - Children know and placed by Council at risk of homelessness	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process. Follow on checks to be completed when vulnerable children are placed to ensure ongoing support is in place. Positive learning - swift action was taken in co-ordination with housing rents to ensure arrears on property were wiped and rent held to ensure that the vulnerable children in lamp placement at property were not placed as risk of homelessness
RS	30/11/17	09/01/18	No	CASE4326075	Care Planning Service	Assessments (previously CIN - Triage & Immediate Response) - Statutory Childrens	Upheld	Career	Delay receiving payments Lack of support from Council - no information on progress of court involvement Council had not supplied copied of requested reports Copies minutes from the strategy meeting were not supplied	SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure reports are supplied to clients within statutory timescales Ensure careers claims are updated swiftly to ensure they continue to receive full entitlements.
RS	04/12/17	22/12/17	No	CASE4329810	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disability	Upheld in Part	Advocate	Failure to action concerns raised in safeguarding referral Council has delayed in establishing clients mental capacity Social worker has not been completing agreed actions regarding contacting the clients schools for information Delay confirming if request for respite has been received and if it is being considered	Ensure all reports/concerns are correctly raised, investigated and responded to within adequate timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process. SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure safeguarding referrals are completed within statutory timescales and that the client remains constantly informed and updated throughout full process. SW needs to ensure they arrange/action agreed support/ respite care and ensure client is receiving the full agreed support.
SS	07/12/17			CASE4341160	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanence Service 2)				
RE	08/12/17			CASE4339398	Care planning 2	CIN				
RS	11/12/17	17/01/18	No	CASE4343802	0 - 25 SEN & Disability	Disability	Upheld	Client	Delay confirming if request for respite has been received and if it is being considered Lack of contact or updates from council / SW Delay receiving payments Client had made requests for support and service for the child and is not receiving updates or feedback - long delays Service were in constant contact with the customer when they received the complaint Apologies for errors and has offered £2000 compensation for the delays Officer is working closely with customer moving forward to ensure no further delays experienced	SW needs to ensure they arrange/action agreed support/ respite care and ensure client is receiving the full agreed support. SW need to respond to all emails/contact within corporate timescales and ensure clients are supported when they are on leave. Ensure timescales for assessments are kept and customer kept updated on progress.
SS	12/12/17	13/12/17	Yes	CASE4341366	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanence Service 2)	No Finding			
RE	15/12/17	18/12/17	Yes	CASE4346747	Care Planning Service	Assessments - Children	Not Upheld			
RE	18/12/17			CASE4348376	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanence 2) - Statutory Childrens				

Officer Dealing	Date Received	Date Response Sent	In SLA	Case Ref	Division (Service Area)	Service Area Name (Service Area)	Outcome	Raised by	high level detail	Learnings
SS	02/01/18	17/01/18		CASE4365534	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Leaving care - Statutory Childrens	Not Upheld			
RE	04/01/18	18/01/18		CASE4368466	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Leaving care - Statutory Childrens	No Finding			
RE	12/01/18			CASE4382882	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1) - Statutory Childrens				
SS	12/01/18			CASE4388923	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Leaving care - Statutory Childrens				
RE	17/01/18			CASE4389507	Looked after children and resources	LAC - Leaving care - Statutory Childrens				
RE	19/01/18			CASE4394319	Care Planning Service	Children in Need (previously Care Planning 1) - Statutory Childrens				
KH	24/01/18			CASE4401219	Looked after children and resources	Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanece 2) - Statutory Childrens				

**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b> <b>Date 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Update on the Early Help and Children's Social Care Improvement Programme</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Robert Henderson, Executive Director, Children, Families &amp; Education</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Learning</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Robert Henderson, Executive Director, Children, Families &amp; Education</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

The plans and recommendations in this report focus on ensuring that all Croydon's children live a happy, healthy life, free from harm and that they have every opportunity to thrive and become fulfilled adults.

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	<b>This item is contained in the Sub-Committee's work programme.</b>
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>To consider the progress update on the Children's Improvement Programme</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Improvement Programme in children's services, including:

- A progress update on the Improvement Plan as at February 2019
- High level feedback on the recent Ofsted monitoring visit in advance of the publication of the formal feedback letter
- An overview of vacancy rates across children's social care between December 2017 – December 2018
- An update on the learning and development offer for staff in early help and children's social care.

## **2. Progress update on the Children's Improvement Plan**

2.1 In November 2018 the Children's Improvement Board agreed a simpler, shorter Improvement Plan with a sharper the focus on the right priorities at increased pace.

2.2 The plan is made up of four workstreams overseen by task groups, reporting to a programme board chaired by the Chief Executive to monitor and challenge progress across all work streams and ensure there is sufficient corporate support, focus and resource to drive improvement activity and deliver the plan.

The workstreams are:

1. Management & Practice covering actions to improve management grip and the quality and consistency of social work practice
2. Workforce covering actions to recruit and retain staff and learning and development activity
3. Partnerships covering actions to develop a partnership early help offer, improve partnership working and strengthen the local safeguarding board
4. Platforms covering actions relating to corporate support services including finance, performance, children's recording systems, commissioning and business (administrative) support

2.3 Underpinning these is a priority to create a culture of shared ownership and social work values, which is developed and overseen by the Staff Reference Group.

2.4 Progress is monitored and reported across the improvement programme each month using the strengthening families approach: what is working well, what are we worried about and what are we doing about it.

### **2.5 Overall progress as at February 2019**

#### Key achievements and what's working well

- Positive feedback from Ofsted on leadership changes, increased pace, more manageable caseloads, threshold decisions, Early Help practice and good examples of social work practice
- Positive feedback from staff reference group and staff at the early help and children's social care staff conference on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan on the leadership changes, vision for the service and an improving 'feel' in the department, also observed by Ofsted when they spoke to staff
- The Family Group Conferencing service has received 49 referrals, completed 28 FGC's and received some really positive feedback from children and families involved
- Bureaucracy busting workshops started on 8<sup>th</sup> February to identify and address unnecessary or cumbersome admin or processes that get in way of early help and social work practice

#### What we are worried about

- Recruitment & retention; high staff turnover and percentage of agency staff particularly in care planning and assessment

**Planned actions:**

- Recruitment and Retention package agreed for 2019/20 to help retain talented staff and convince locums to become permanent.
  - Additional HR capacity agreed to focus on performance management (in place), locum conversion and creative recruitment strategies (e.g. social media campaign).
  - HR to work with performance team to gather intelligence about the impact staff turnover is having on children.
- Not enough staff are benefitting from regular reflective supervision with their managers

**Planned actions:**

- Collating good supervision examples and video role plays with the Director are now live on the children's practice library
  - commissioning systemic training for all managers to start in April 2019
- Child in Need work is being 'squeezed out' as identified by Ofsted, which will be addressed through establishment of 'Brief Intervention teams', linked into the assessment service

**Planned actions:**

- proposal being developed to create dedicated brief intervention teams in the assessment service to work on CIN cases to be in place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019
- The need to improve practice and performance in services for looked after children [both local and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)] and fostering at pace
    - New Head of Service (18/2/19) taking robust approach to improving performance and practice with support from an HR specialist
  - Rising numbers of local looked after children and UASC are causing significant financial and placement pressures
    - Work underway by the performance team to understand the growth in demand

2.6 More detailed feedback for each of the workstreams is included at appendix 1.

### **3. Feedback from the fifth Ofsted monitoring visit**

3.1 The fifth Ofsted monitoring visit on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February focused on plans stepped down when risks reduce including:

- Step down from child protection to child in need
- Step down from child in need to early help
- Children returning home from care

In addition inspectors reviewed the provision of early help in its own right.

3.2 The following recommendations from the July 2017 inspection were tested in the visit:

1. Recommendation 1: management oversight and supervision
2. Recommendation 2: Establish a stable workforce; provide targeted training for frontline staff and managers so that they have the right skills and knowledge; ensure the workloads of social workers are manageable
3. Recommendation 5: plans and planning including support for children returning home
4. Recommendation 6: the understanding and application of thresholds
5. Recommendation 11: the provision of early help support, early help strategy and thresholds

3.3 Written feedback on inspectors' judgements will be published on the Ofsted website on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March. At the end of the visit inspectors gave verbal feedback which is summarised below. It should be noted that Ofsted apply robust internal quality assurance to ensure judgements are backed by inspection evidence. This can result in changes in the letter compared to the verbal feedback, so at this stage it should be treated with some caution.

3.4 Overall the feedback recognised some strengths in practice including some sophisticated work going on on our Early Help Service by confident and capable practitioners. Some examples of good social work practice were seen with workers who inspectors would be 'happy to have in my team', who knew their children well and had good relationships with them. However, inspectors agreed with our self-assessment that we still have a long way to go for practice to be consistently good across the service. As many of the areas for development fed back by the inspectors were included in our self-assessment there are a number of actions planned or already underway.

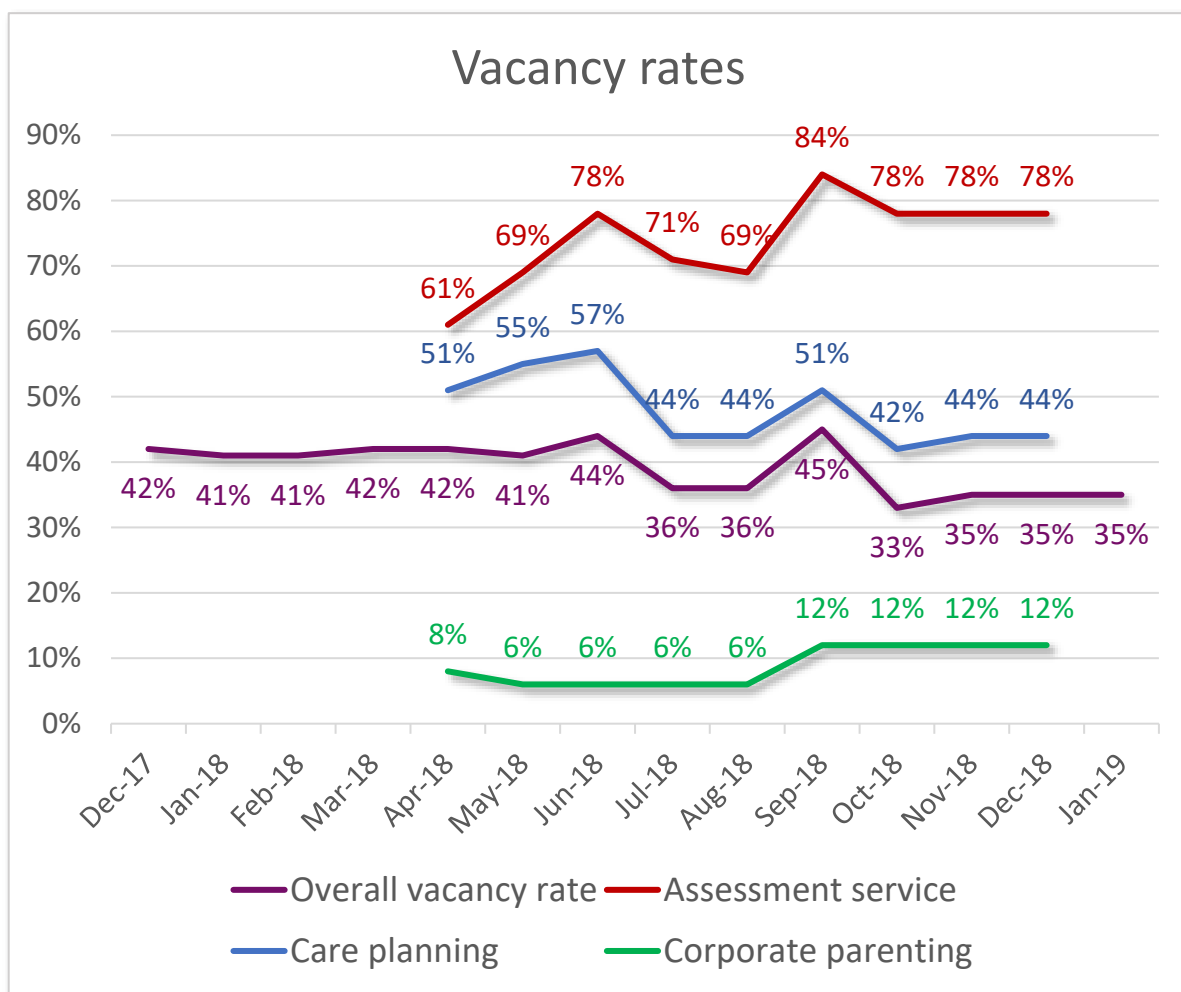
## Positives

- **Leadership:** a renewed drive and energy from the new leadership, recognition that Croydon knows itself well and is taking 'brave' and 'bold' decisions to improve the service. Leaders are moving quickly to focus on the right things in the right order.
- **Caseloads:** recognition that there has been a tangible reduction in caseloads in the care planning service since their visit in July 2018
- **Early Help:** early positive signs that the new model is welcomed by staff and that we are on the right trajectory. Inspectors saw practice that was of good quality.
- **Thresholds:** our thresholds are broadly right, children's cases are being worked at the right level and step down decisions are appropriate.
- **Examples of good social work practice and direct work:** inspectors spoke to social workers who knew their children well, had built good relationships and did strong child-centred work; they highlighted good examples that will be celebrated and shared.
- **Staff morale:** staff were more positive and feeling encouraged, appreciating the increased visibility of senior leaders and a more culturally diverse senior leadership team

## Areas for improvement and planned actions

- **Reflective supervision:** inspectors told us that supervision is not happening consistently for all staff and whilst managers may be available and accessible this is not the same as creating a reflective space to discuss practice  
**Planned action:** a substantial professional development programme on systemic supervision skills starts in April for managers at all levels from the Executive Director and Director through to frontline team managers. This will focus on the quality and impact of supervision.
- **Plans and planning;** whilst plans exist for children, many of these need improvement to be SMART, focused on key issues and outcomes focused  
**Planned action:** following the senior leadership team's focus on what is a good assessment over February and March, the next focus will be on planning and plans that lead to purposeful work with families.
- **Management oversight of decisions:** evidence of management oversight of step down or return home decisions was not always evident on case files  
**Planned action:** closer monitoring of step down oversight, to be discussed and challenged at the Director's weekly performance and practice clinics at service level.
- **Auditing:** although audits were seen as 'broadly useful documents' inspectors felt that some were not thorough enough  
**Planned action:** case audits are completed every other month. The feedback will inform a strengthening of the audit process for the March cycle
- **CIN work being 'squeezed out':** inspectors found CIN plans that were not up to date. In addition the quality of CIN work is not where it should be.  
**Planned action:** the proposed realignment of the care planning service will create three dedicated brief intervention teams to do targeted work with children in need and their families.

#### 4. Staffing and vacancy rates



4.1 The graph above shows the overall vacancy rate for children’s social care disaggregated into service areas, between December 2017 and December 2019.

4.2 Overall rates peaked in September 2018; however the data needs to be contextualized with the rapid increase in the children’s social care workforce over the same period. For example, additional teams of social workers have been added to the care planning service to meet the volume of referrals. These have been filled by locum staff, pushing up the vacancy rates.

4.3 The higher number of vacancies in the assessment and care planning services makes these particular areas of focus for focused recruitment and retention activity.

4.4 More detail on the starters and leavers in service areas over this time period will be presented to the committee to facilitate a more detailed scrutiny.



## **5. Workforce Development update**

5.1 We are committed to providing our workforce with the opportunities to deliver outstanding social work practice and are committed to investing in the development of all our staff to achieve this. The learning and organisational development strategy for Croydon Early Help and Children's Social Care was reviewed and refreshed in October 2019. The strategy sets out the Council's short, medium and long term approach to embedding a sustainable learning and development offer to ensure we achieve our vision to develop a skilled and competent workforce.

5.2 The new learning and development programme for 2018-2019 was launched in October 2018 and offers a comprehensive range of training opportunities and professional development. The offer demonstrates our commitment to a 'whole system' approach through drawing on the expertise of colleagues within the organisation as well as commissioning bespoke learning opportunities from experts in the field and accredited Continuous Professional Development post graduate programmes with leading universities. The programme was warmly received by the workforce who shared that they thought it was an excellent offer.

5.3 In November 2018 career progression pathway was launched for qualified social workers. The career pathways provides social workers with simple clear grading structures and offers progression routes to Head of Service level. Career progression for some grades was also simplified and made less bureaucratic.

## **6 Leadership and Management Transformation Programme**

6.1 To create the conditions for social work practice to flourish in Croydon we have invested in a Leadership and Management Transformation Programme that reflects systemic approaches and ideas. In 2019, all leaders and managers, from Executive Director to Team Manager, will be undertaking systemic training through the Institute of Family Therapy.

6.2 The British Association of Social Work have also been commissioned to provide a number of bespoke action learning sets for team managers. The sets will provide reflective opportunities as well as supporting team managers to embed the children's social care manager practice standards. Outward Facing Development Opportunities

6.3 As well as our learning and development offer, we are also actively engaged in ensuring our staff have access to a range of outward facing development opportunities. This includes the following;

6.4 In 2018 the Department for Education launched a national practice supervisor programme, which is being delivered by Research in Practice. The purpose of the programme is to support managers to develop knowledge and skills in relation to the Knowledge and Skills statements issued by the DfE, which form part of the National Assessment and Accreditation System, likely to be launched in 2020. Children's Social care have 3 manager's accessing the programme.

6.5 As part of our Teaching Partnership with Kingston University we also have five practitioners who co design and teach on the social work degree programme. Two practitioners are also undertaking a Coaching and Mentoring post graduate programme through the University and one manager is undertaking a joint University and British Association of Social Work leadership programme.

### **Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)**

6.6 In October 2018 two ASYE Assessors were appointed to support newly qualified social workers (NQSW) progress through their ASYE programme. This new delivery model has ensured a more robust and timely response to the developing needs of our NQSWs and 9 out of 10 would recommend our programme to their colleagues.

### **Routes into Social Work**

6.10 To support our recruitment and workforce planning, we offer a range of opportunities for student social workers. This includes:

- Providing learning and development opportunities for social work students from a number of local Universities. Currently we have 18 students on placement throughout children's social care.
- We offer the Department for Education Step Up to Social Work Programme.
- In September 2019 we will be introducing a Frontline social work student unit.
- Commissioning five Social Work Degree Apprenticeship placements for our differently qualified staff. This will be launched in January 2020.

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**Contact Officer:** Robert Henderson, Executive Director Children, Families and Education.

**Background Documents:** None

**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Improvement Plan Workstream progress reports, February 2019

## Appendix 1: Improvement Plan Workstream progress reports, February 2019

Management and Practice Workstream	
What's working well and how do we know?	What are we worried about and what are we doing about it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good examples of social work and Early Help practice identified by Ofsted which are being celebrated and shared (verbal feedback from HMI's)</li> <li>• Sustained improvement in some KPI's</li> <li>• Average caseloads across the Service remain below target levels with the exception of Leaving Care</li> <li>• Improvement in timeliness of CIN visits, now above target, although this target may need reviewing to be more ambitious</li> <li>• Timeliness of visits and CP Plan reviews remains strong</li> <li>• PEP improvements from a low base</li> <li>• Findings from January practice week suggest that more recent work is generally better and some examples of good work have been observed</li> <li>• Family Group Conferencing service has received 49 referrals to date and completed 28 FGCs and plans, with 23 of these plans focused on preventing children from coming into care (90% of feedback from children and families involved in FGC has been positive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring supervision is more reflective               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Collating good supervision examples and video role play with director live on practice library</li> <li>➤ commissioning systemic training for managers to start in April19</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Quality of plans our audit findings and feedback from Ofsted suggests that plans still require significant improvement to be SMART, purposeful and outcomes-focused               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Workshop to be held with Children's Leadership team in March to gain shared understanding of 'what good looks like' and create a 'Plans on a page' briefing to discuss and share in service and team meetings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• UASC and CiCC practice and performance               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> New Head of Service (18/2/19) taking robust approach to improving performance and practice with support from an HR specialist</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Persistent underperformance in some KPI's: in CIN work (visits and reviews), timely pathway planning [LAC 15], PEPs [LAC 13] and visits to foster carers [F4]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Addressed through weekly performance and practice clinics which began 22/1</li> <li>➤ proposal being developed to create dedicated brief intervention teams in the assessment service to work on CIN cases</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Workforce workstream	
What's working well and how do we know?	What are we worried about and what are we doing about it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible reduction in caseloads observed by Ofsted, but service averages skewed by NQSW numbers (~0.6). This should support attraction and retention efforts.</li> <li>• Clear progression pathways for social workers have been agreed and shared with staff to aid retention efforts. Learning and Development Programme well-received with good take-up</li> <li>• Positive response to Staff conference on 31<sup>st</sup> January and direction of travel outlined by Leadership team. SRG feedback that visibility of leadership has improved with new Directors. Ofsted also fed back that staff are appreciative of new leadership and direction.</li> <li>• High number of applicants for NQSW posts (over 50) and FGC Coordinator roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High workforce turnover, specifically in care planning and assessment service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> R&amp;R package agreed to help retain talented staff and convince locums to become permanent.</li> <li>➤ Additional HR capacity agreed to focus on performance management (in place), locum conversion and creative recruitment strategies (e.g. social media).</li> <li>➤ HR to work with performance team to gather intelligence about the impact staff turnover is having on children.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engagement of new recruits from offer to contract is not slick enough so we are losing potential staff due to recruitment timeframes and lack of contact during the pre-starting period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Monthly recruitment panels with defined responsibilities within service contact before working</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Better one-team culture, with recognition of non-social care staff e.g. Personal advisors, early help support workers, business support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Leadership team and managers highlight contribution, encourage nominations for Excellence in Practice from across the service – ongoing. Development of L&amp;D offer for Early Help – <b>19/2</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Improved support to team managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Further focus on supporting team managers e.g. BASW sessions on strength-based practice, getting the basics right and how to get to good/outstanding practice from April 2019</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Partnerships Workstream	
What's working well and how do we know?	What are we worried about and what are we doing about it?
<p><b>Early Help:</b> Inspectors saw early positive signs that new model is welcomed by staff and that we are on the right trajectory. Inspectors saw practice that was of good quality with sophisticated work by confident' and 'capable' practitioners.</p> <p><b>LAC Health review:</b> Recommendations from the LAC Health are being implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 LAC champion/health lead from social care have been identified.</li> <li>• a regular Partnership LAC Health operational meeting with health and social care partners to address data and performance issues across LAC health reporting. First meeting on 7 February focussed on therapeutic support on offer to children and young people in the care of Croydon Council</li> <li>• a new Joint Health/CSC workflow built into CRS to ensure a more streamlined approach to recording referrals to health and completed health assessment. Reconfiguration. First meeting to focus on the CSC pathway will take place on 26 February 2019.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Early Help:</b> Fit for purpose Early Help bases to support partnership working and family intervention in localities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Business case developed to refurbish the north and south locality hubs- timescales to be determined- to make them fit for purpose.</li> </ul> <p>Low referral rates into LAC CAHMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Director and Corporate Parenting leadership to encourage more referrals and comms plan to be developed with LAC CAMHS lead to raise awareness of CAMHS services available to looked after children and young people</li> </ul> <p>Impact of permanency and placement processes on LAC health: Performance around initial health assessments for looked after children is being negatively impacted by clunky processes which are currently under review (for example, timely notification of new LAC, including those placed with friends and family, timely notifications of placement addresses, and consent to medical requests uploaded to CRS).</p> <p><b>Action/s:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transformation of service underway</li> <li>➤ System review of permanency pathways in train.</li> <li>➤ Centralised 'panel approach' for being looked after being developed, to go live by April.</li> </ul>

<b>Platforms workstream</b>	
What's working well and how do we know?	What are we worried about and what are we doing about it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance:</b> SW's supported weekly to ensure compliance on case recording of the 'Croydon 5' (visits, plans, supervisions, case summaries and chronologies). 1<sup>st</sup> round of performance clinics – focused on outstanding PEPs, Young people &amp; LAC who go missing, supervisions</li> <li>• <b>Finance:</b> Agreed 2019-20 growth requirements for CFE with Exec Director.</li> <li>• <b>Business Support:</b> Business support growth bid and new structure agreed for 2019/20. Recruitment underway for 11.5 permanent posts, 18.6 fixed term contract posts</li> <li>• <b>CRS:</b> Mandatory training (recent decision to move from 1 to 3 day). CRS e-payment form rollout on course for end of March (positive feedback received). Positive feedback on CRS team support (Bureaucracy Busting workshop 15 February)</li> <li>• <b>Commissioning:</b> The Placements Board, co-chaired by Commissioning and the Service, overseeing the transformation of the service in place and met on 6 February</li> <li>• A high cost placement panel has been established and met on 7 Feb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance:</b> The volume of CRS amends required to support areas of specific service recording; Staffing capacity of Performance Task team to manage demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> CRS amends to be timetabled Task team resourcing needs</li> <li>➤ Request to extend the task team for decision by the end of March.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Finance:</b> Practitioner workshop to identify pain-points in payment processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Meetings to resolve issues and report back to next Platforms Task Group meeting in March 2019</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Business support:</b> Culture change to create one-team ethos with service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Action/s:, Business Support Workshop hosted by ED on 7 March</li> <li>➤ Business Support staff conference on 22 March to launch new structure and approach.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>CRS:</b> Knowledge development needs for some longer-serving staff; progress in developing Adoption workspace on CRS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> Meetings with new Service Leader for Adoption to scope requirements by end of March.</li> <li>➤ Refresher training for staff identified as needing support – ongoing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Commissioning:</b> Placement processes require streamlining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Action/s:</b> End to end process project initiated, with a revised set of streamlined processes to be agreed by April.</li> <li>➤ Co-owned Placements duty system to be implemented and championed across the placement and fostering services.</li> <li>➤ Placement Team restructure to be launched on 11 March 2019</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE</b> <b>12 March 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Simon Trevaskis, Senior Democratic Service and Governance Officer- Scrutiny</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	The Work Programme is scheduled for consideration at every ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub - Committee.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	To consider any additions, amendments or changes to the agreed work programme for the Committee in 2018/19.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This agenda item details the Committee's work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee has the opportunity to discuss any amendments or additions that it wishes to make to the work programme.

## 2. WORK PROGRAMME

### 2.1 The work programme

The proposed work programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Members are asked to note that the lines of enquiry for some items have yet to be confirmed and that there are opportunities to add further items to the work programme.

### 2.2 Additional Scrutiny Topics

Members of the Sub-Committee are invited to suggest any other items that they consider appropriate for the Work Programme. However, due to the time limitations at Committee meetings, it is suggested that no proposed agenda contain more than two items of substantive business in order to allow effective scrutiny of items already listed.

### 2.3 Participation in Scrutiny

Members of the Sub-Committee are also requested to give consideration to any persons that it wishes to attend future meetings to assist in the consideration of agenda items. This may include Cabinet Members, Council or other public agency officers or representatives of relevant communities.

### **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree the Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 with any agreed amendments.
- 3.2 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree that topic reports be produced for relevant substantive agenda items in the future.

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None

#### **APPENDIX 1**

Work Programme 2018/19 for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.



## Children & Young People Sub-Committee 2018/19 Work Programme

Meeting Date	Item
<b>19 June 18</b>	- Learning & Development Session
<b>18 September 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children's Improvement Plan Update</li> <li>- Recruitment &amp; Retention Update</li> <li>- Performance Data</li> <li>- Children's Statutory Complaints Update</li> <li>- Children's Safeguarding Board Annual Report (S)</li> </ul>
<b>27 November 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children's Improvement Plan Update (S)</li> <li>- Children's Complaints Overview Report</li> <li>- Academies</li> <li>- Special Educational Needs</li> <li>- Practice Week</li> </ul>
<b>14 January 2019</b>	- Review of New Safeguarding Arrangements Proposals
<b>5 February 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children, Young People &amp; Learning Q &amp; A (S)</li> <li>- Education Budget (S)</li> <li>- Education Standards (S)</li> </ul>
<b>12 March 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children's Improvement Plan Update &amp; Children's Social Care Annual Report (S)</li> <li>- Children's Complaints Report</li> <li>- Update on SEN Strategy</li> <li>- Task and Finish Group- Exclusions and Off Rolling</li> </ul>

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