



Family Resilience Strategy **Phase 1,** **Children's Centres**

Dear Surrey residents and partners,

Our ambition is that every child in Surrey should have the opportunity to reach their potential and we also believe that the best place for children to be supported to grow and achieve this is within their own families. Whilst many children will experience these things without our support, some will need extra help, as a result of their own additional needs, their family circumstances or the adversity they face. We particularly want to help these children, and their families, at the earliest opportunity in ways that do not leave them feeling singled out as different.

We also know that we haven't been doing this well enough until now and this was confirmed by Ofsted earlier this year. They inspected our children's services and told us that they were 'inadequate'. This means we have not been effective in keeping some children and families safe and providing them with the right support when it is needed. As a result, we are fundamentally changing the way we do things to improve the lives of children and families.

This means a new way of working with families that affects everything we do, which we're calling family resilience. Through this consultation, we want to share this approach with you and invite your feedback on how we are proposing to change our children's centres to support this.

We are embarking on our ambitious journey towards becoming an outstanding local authority at a time when Surrey County Council is facing unprecedented financial pressures in children's and adults' social care due to rising demand and falling government funding. This means we have to make some tough choices about how we use our funding and resources to make the biggest difference we can to the children and families who need the support most.

We know that the journey ahead will be challenging but we are also confident that the changes we are proposing will be the right ones to achieve lasting change for the children and families really needing our support.

We look forward to hearing your views about our proposals and working with you as we work together to achieve the best we can for children in Surrey.

The consultation is open until Friday 4 January 2019

With sincere thanks,

Dave Hill
Executive Director for Children,
Families and Learning

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children

Our plan for the future

Over the spring and summer of 2018, we engaged with residents, communities and partners across the county to understand what Surrey should look like in 2030. Informed by the conversations we had, we have created a community vision for Surrey.

We are now on an exciting journey of transforming our services so they can be in the best place to deliver our 2030 ambitions.

Community vision for Surrey 2030

By 2030 we want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community, and no one is left behind.

We want our county's economy to be strong, vibrant and successful and Surrey to be a great place to live, work and learn. A place that capitalises on its location and natural assets, and where communities feel supported and people are able to support each other.

Our ambitions for people are:

- **Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident.**
- **Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life.**
- **Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.**
- **Everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place.**
- **Communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life.**

Our ambitions for place are:

- **Residents live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities.**
- **Journeys across the county are easier, more predictable and safer.**
- **Everyone has a place they can call home, with appropriate housing for all .**
- **Businesses in Surrey thrive.**
- **Well connected communities, with effective infrastructure, that grow sustainably.**

Family Resilience Consultation

What are we proposing to change?

We believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their potential and that they are best supported to grow and achieve within their own family, as part of a strong, local community. We will therefore work with families, children and young people to try and keep them together by helping them when needed and enabling them to be resilient. Being resilient means that people are able to cope with change and bounce back when difficult things happen.

To support family resilience we need to change the way we do things and our culture - our values and the way we behave. Everyone who works with children and young people, and their families, will work together in an open way to identify both the strengths and needs of families, to find practical and achievable solutions, and provide the right amount of information, advice and support at the right time. We will focus on preventing problems before they happen and offer flexible, responsive support when and where it is required.

Our new family resilience approach will also enable early identification of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and contribute to the graduated model of support for them and their families. A parallel public consultation is also running in relation to SEND in Surrey.

This will mean changes to a range of services and activities that children, young people and families use at the moment. We intend to review the current services that are provided by Surrey County Council to support young people, including the future role of universal youth work and youth centres in the context of achieving family resilience. That review will include consulting with young people and key stakeholders to design a 'youth offer' for the future and further strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sector in delivering universal youth work. We will consult on the outcome of the review next year.

The main focus of this consultation is on the role that we propose children's centres will play in the new family resilience delivery model.

Our principles

To support family resilience, we are committed to the following principles, which will inform the way we work with children and families:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is at the centre of all that we do;
- Engaging with families by working alongside parents, children and young people and seeking their consent and agreement;
- Working to families' strengths - especially those of parents and carers – and take the time to understand their needs fully. Parents tell us they are motivated by having goals that reflect their family priorities;
- Focusing on preventing problems before they occur and offer flexible, responsive support when and where it is required;
- Building the resilience of parents, children, young people and communities to support each other;
- Working together across the whole system (all the different agencies and partners who have an interest in helping families) to align our resources so we can best support families and do what needs to be done when it needs to be done;
- Basing all that we do on evidence of both what is needed and what works, and be brave enough to change things that are simply not achieving the results children need; and
- Being clear and consistent about the outcomes we expect, and assessing how these are being achieved to make a positive difference.

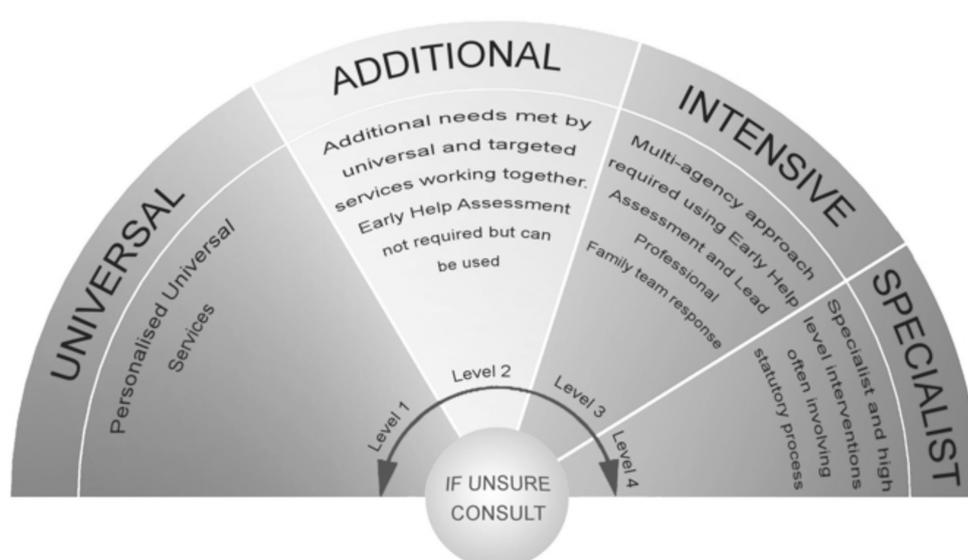
What positive changes are we seeking to achieve?

By adopting a new approach we will seek to reach those children and families in need of assistance to ensure that:

- Everyone knows how to access help for children and their families;
- Children with needs are identified early, they and their families are offered help at the earliest opportunity;
- The majority of children's needs are met without statutory intervention;
- Children and their families are subject to statutory assessment and support only when it is evident their needs cannot be met through early help;
- Adults are provided help to meet their own needs and this will enable them to have a better focus on parenting;
- Children and their families move on from statutory services as soon as their needs have been met, to continue on their birth family journey or if they cannot be cherished in birth families, with permanent alternative families wherever possible;
- Children and their families are helped to become resilient so that they can manage future life challenges independently;
- Children and their families' needs are met by confident practitioners trained in evidence based interventions;
- The children's workforce is aligned to meet demand across the levels of need;
- The children's workforce is supported by agile technology to enable them to maximise their direct work with children and their families;
- Surrey County Council is able to support the delivery of children's services at the right level of need;
- Children's social care is able to demonstrate good financial stewardship and reduce spending.

Our overall approach to planning services

To support family resilience, we will plan our services in response to the needs of children and families in four levels: universal; additional; intensive; and specialist.



Universal services meet the needs of all children and families, covering areas like parenting, health and education.

Additional services provide coordinated support on a voluntary basis to children and their families who may benefit from extra help to:

- Access and make the most of their education;
- Parent children as well as possible, in particular where parents are finding it hard;
- Improve their health or emotional wellbeing;
- Cope with challenging material circumstances, for example money, housing or relationships;
- Overcome a short-term crisis, like a bereavement or a parental separation.

Intensive services support vulnerable children and their families who have a number of different needs or whose needs are more complex. This could include children and families:

- Where a member of the family has a disability that results in complex needs;
- Whose behaviour has a big impact on others, for example anti-social behaviour;
- Who suffer from neglect or poor family relationships;
- Who have chosen not to or been unable to engage with key services such as school and health;
- Who are not in education or have been out of work long-term.

Specialist services are intended to support the small number of children and families where there is a statutory intervention required. This will include:

- Children and young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect;
- Children with significant impairment of function or learning and/or have a life limiting illness;
- Children whose parents and wider family are unable to care for them;
- Families involved in crime or misuse of drugs at a significant level;
- Families with significant mental or physical health needs.

We believe that by working together effectively with children and families who need 'additional', and 'intensive' support, they will achieve better outcomes and not need specialist services or be on a statutory plan.

To meet the needs of children and families across the four levels we will work in partnership with schools, early year's settings, partners and the voluntary sector and other universal services that regularly come into contact with children and families. Through effective partnership working we can build a network of support for families to meet their needs at the right time. This network will be supported by providing accessible information and advice either through community venues or the use of digital platforms.

We are remodelling how we ensure the needs of families are identified and matched to the most appropriate support. This will bring together a single gateway that will ensure families are considered as a whole and will bring together other existing pathways for children who need early help, SEND support and CAMHS. The services provided by children's centres will be part of a network of services that will be accessed through the new single pathway.

The county council has a really important role to play in ensuring that children and families with the most complex needs are well supported and kept safe, but we also know that helping families to build their resilience at the earliest point makes the biggest difference. With this in mind we want to change over time so that we invest more in services that support children's families earlier, so that fewer families end up needing specialist support.

Services provided by children's centres

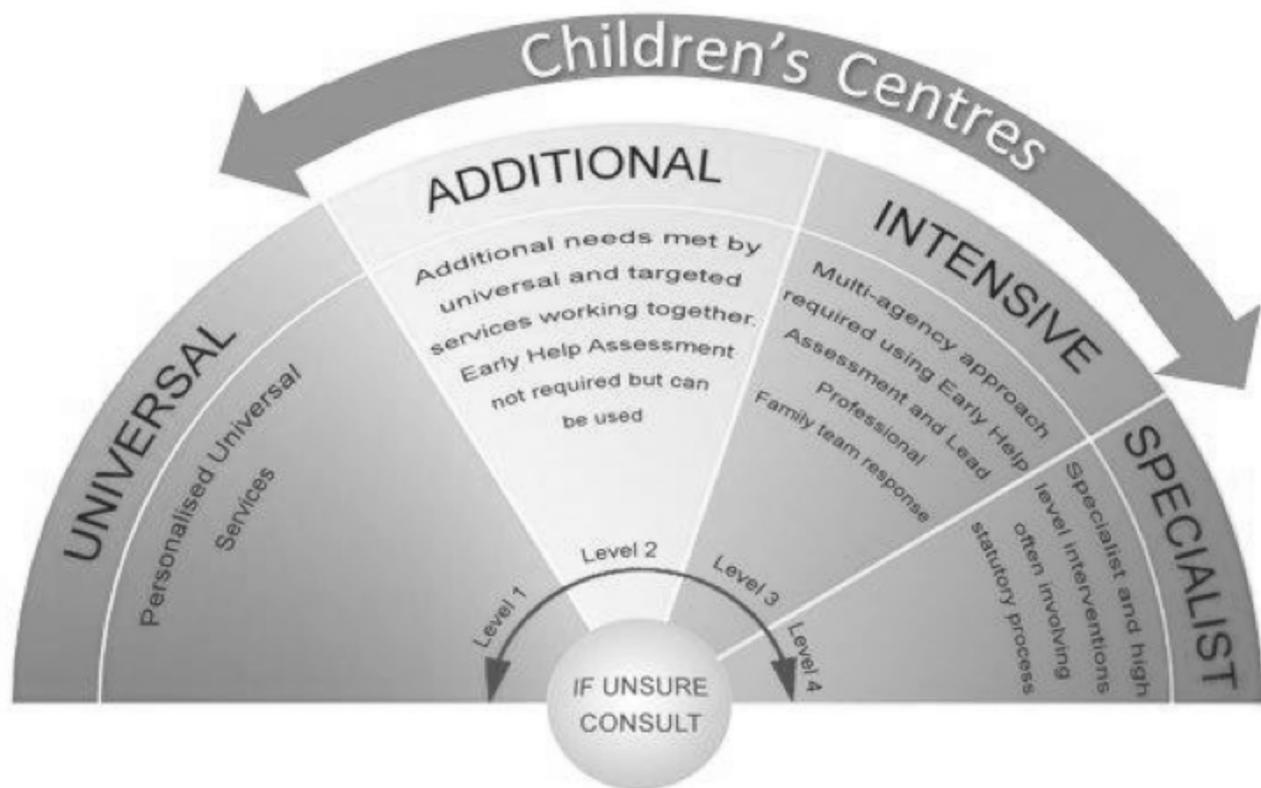
As part of the consultation we are looking at services provided by children's centres. This section describes how we envisage services provided by children's centres will continue to contribute to meeting the needs of children and families in Surrey through centres, outreach and increased partnership working.

Currently there are 58 children's centres across Surrey. All services provided predominantly support families with children 0 – 5 years of age. Each centre welcomes all families in their area and over time have already begun to target more of their services for the most vulnerable families.

The county council is proposing to build on this and remodel services provided by children's centres to be part of a wider family resilience model. This will ensure that families' difficulties can be identified as soon as they emerge and appropriate support offered at the earliest opportunity. This will help prevent problems escalating and help families become more resilient so that they can manage future life challenges independently.

To do this the county council proposes that children's centres will increase the level of targeted support for vulnerable children and offer services to the whole family particularly where families have children between 0 – 11 years. We know children's centres have been very effective at supporting children and families experiencing problems and we believe they have a lot to offer supporting families with children aged 5-11 facing similar challenges. We recognise that the services provided through children's centres are more than just about the buildings they are located in, for some families we need to look beyond the 'bricks and mortar' and engage them differently. Outreach workers will continue the important work they are doing in supporting individual families either in their homes or through various group activities or courses in other community settings.

You will see from the family resilience windscreen below that in Surrey the proposal is for the services provided by children's centres to predominantly focus on supporting families needing additional or intensive services. It will still be important for children's centres to continue to work alongside other agencies to support the smaller number of families needing specialist help and also to continue to offer some universal services particularly for the most vulnerable families.



Family Resilience windscreen

It is proposed that in future centres will be able to work more closely together and with other agencies and voluntary organisations in a quadrant of the county to provide a more flexible response to families. For example in the North West of Surrey (Woking, Runnymede and Surrey Heath) centres could co-ordinate parenting courses for families with children of all ages across the area, sharing staff and buildings and offering courses on rotational basis. One of the key principles of the new model will be to build on the existing strengths and relationships in the local community, being creative and innovative in finding new ways of working together with local partners, organisations and families. We intend for children's centres to be at the heart of bringing together other services such as health visiting, midwifery, citizen's advice and support with housing and employment. This could either be through a local children's centre or through the satellite and outreach approaches.

To enable as much resource as possible to be focused on the families needing help the county council is proposing to prioritise services provided by children's centres in areas where there are higher numbers of children living in workless or low income households. The services provided by each centre will include providing outreach support for vulnerable families who may not live near a centre. This will reduce the number of centres to 21 with at least one main centre in each of the 11 districts or boroughs in Surrey. In addition we are proposing that there will be smaller satellite centres to support the needs of families across an area. These will offer fewer, less frequent services and be available for family workers, partners and organisations to meet and support families. We will be working with partner organisations, schools and the voluntary sector to find alternative uses for the remaining centres that benefit children and families where ever possible. Families with additional support needs that live outside of the areas of most need can access support either through their closest main centre, satellites or outreach workers.

Our centres in the future will have better access to shared information systems to enable them to work more effectively with other services and provide support quickly where needed. The centres will be fully connected to the information and advice offer for families and the new approach to connecting families who need support to the right service and where appropriate leading on developing early help plans with families that involve other services.

In order for these changes to come about it is likely that some universal services will no longer be offered by children's centres. We are therefore seeking views about the role children's centres could play in helping create more resilient communities where families support one another through the normal challenges of parenting and family life. We want our children's centres to work closely with the voluntary and community sector to build their capacity to engage families through the centres and other settings. Our centres are already used extensively by other professions such as health visitors to meet with families, this will continue and we will work with other agencies to ensure the centres act as community hubs for services to come together and support families when they need it.

This set of proposals is a more targeted approach for services provided by children's centres to support our most vulnerable families with children aged 0 – 11 years in Surrey and to reflect this change we intend to rename our children's centres. We have suggested some options and have asked for views and alternatives in the consultation questionnaire.

There are currently two mobile children centre's in Surrey. When originally introduced these enabled services to be offered in isolated rural areas and in communities where vulnerable families found attending centre based services more difficult. More recently however they have predominantly been used to promote children centre's at community events and fun days which has enabled all families to hear about the services children's centres have to offer.

Due to the increased frequency and cost of repairs and the necessity to focus our resources on families most needing help, the council is now proposing that both mobile children centres are withdrawn from service.

Volunteering and voluntary contributions

In many children's centres people already make voluntary contributions for certain activities. In future there will be a fixed charged for some activities such as "play and learn". However, where payment may be difficult for some families, we would make sure that these charges did not stop them from taking part.

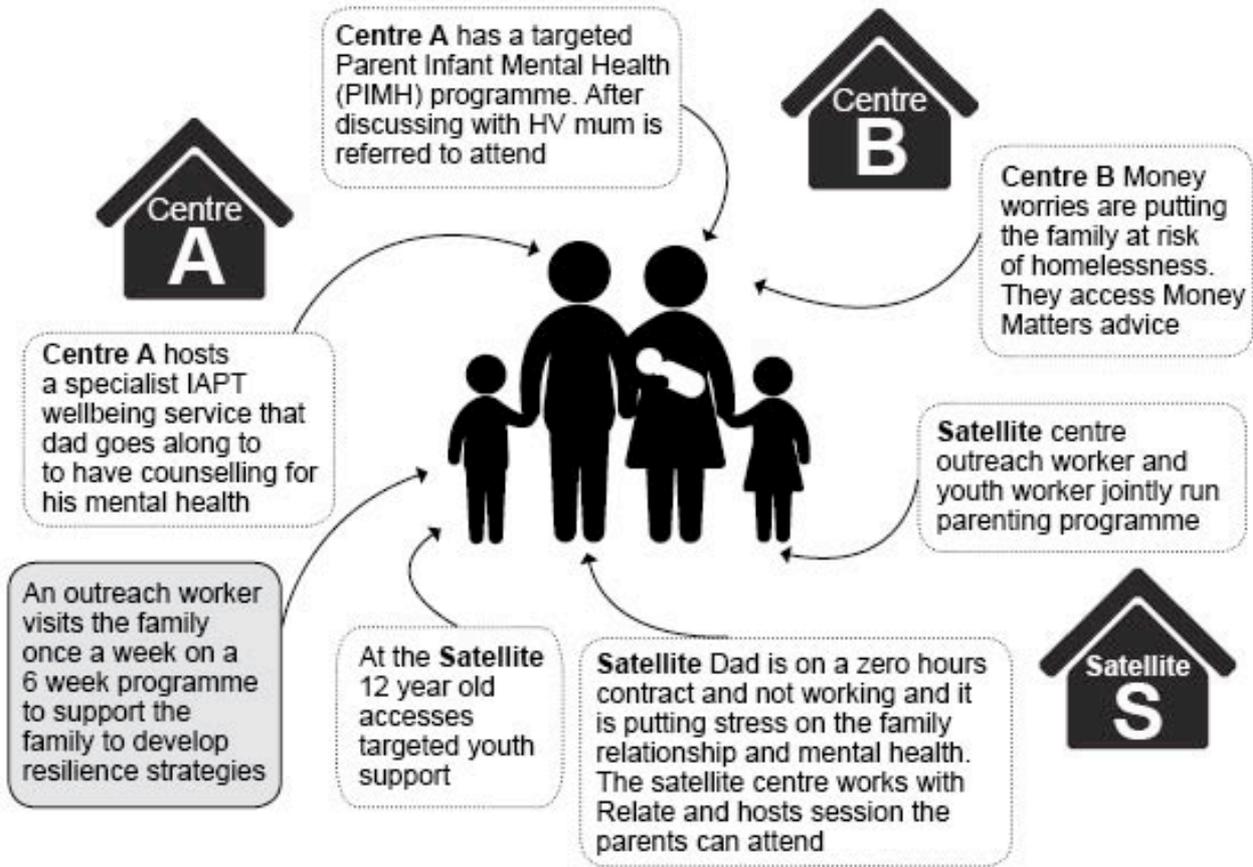
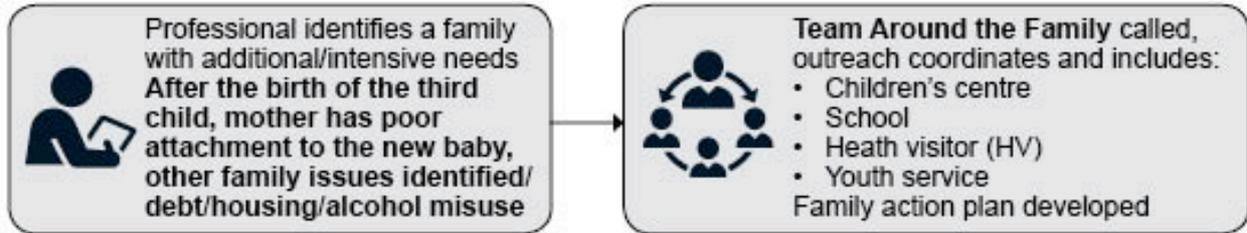
Some people volunteer to help out in children's centres- it can be as little as giving an hour a week of their time to help run activities or help out in the centre in some way.

Targeted offer

- A** Main centre A site is based on a primary school site.
- This is in an area of high need.
 - Health outcomes for families in the area are poor.
 - Families often don't travel for services.
 - Health and wellbeing activities focus on supporting families in the community.

- B** Main centre B is based in a community run venue in the town centre
- The centre focuses on services that help families out of poverty.
 - There is a food bank supported by local churches, this is open to all families in the borough.
 - There are good links with other charities locally.
 - The centre, is close to the main town, there are good bus and train routes to and from this centre.

- S** Satellite is in the local youth centre
- Space is maximised to provide services to the whole family.
 - Because it is a SCC building desks are available for social workers between visits.
 - Large numbers of temporary housing families are encouraged to go to the centre to reduce isolation.
- Outreach workers work at all the centres and in the family home on an individual basis.



The professionals have had worries about the family but the coordinated intervention means that haven't had to refer the family to children's services.

What happens now?

We are inviting you to give your views on our strategy which is outlined above and to share your ideas for shaping proposals for working together to achieve the best we can for children in Surrey.

The feedback questionnaire is available online at surreycc.gov.uk/consultations. You can also pick up a hard copy at your local library or children's centre or request one via text to 07860 053465 or by calling 03456 009009.

The consultation closes on Friday 4 January 2019