

Children and Young People's Strategy 2012-17 and Lifecourse Outcomes consultation

1. Introduction

In Spring 2012 Surrey County Council consulted on its Children and Young People's Strategy for 2012-2017 and a new 'Lifecourse Outcomes' approach. The consultation involved elected Members; practitioners from SCC and partner organisations; parents, and children and young people. Their views were collected through an online questionnaire; face to face interviews; practitioners' workshops, and partnership meetings. The consultation also provided an opportunity to comment on three proposed delivery plans that will underpin the strategy – the Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Plan; Education and Achievement Plan, and the Young People's Employability Plan - and begin shaping these plans ahead of more detailed consultation on each of them. For further information about the Children and Young People's Strategy consultation process, please see Appendix 1 to this report.

This report outlines the findings from the consultation and explains how they influenced the development of the Children and Young People's Strategy 2012-17; Lifecourse Pathways, and three delivery plans. The strategy and Lifecourse Outcomes was published on Surrey County Council's website in September 2012.

2. What are the Children and Young People's Strategy and Lifecourse Outcomes approach?

The Children and Young People's Strategy sets out our vision and priorities for Surrey's children and young people from now until 2017. It aims to be ambitious in the outcomes it seeks and enable us to commission services effectively, yet realistic in recognising the need to address budgetary challenges.

The Lifecourse Outcomes approach (previously called 'Lifecourse Pathways') offers a new way of thinking about childhood development in Surrey, identifying the outcomes that children and young people should achieve at each stage of their development. It recognises that no two children or young people are the same, so it is important to consider children's individual needs and develop more personalised approaches to meeting those needs. The Lifecourse Outcomes approach aims to provide a better understanding of the types of support that children and young people need at each age and phase of development, and will enable the council to work better with partners to provide coordinated and effectively targeted services.

3. Overview of key findings

Despite having short timeframes for the consultation, there was a high level of interest and engagement from stakeholders. On the whole, people responded positively to the Lifecourse Outcomes and draft strategy, but wanted the aspirational tone of these documents modified to set out more realistic, measurable and achievable outcomes for children and young people. There were concerns about having three separate delivery plans, so we will need to ensure the plans enable effective, cross-cutting partnership approaches.

4. Summary of consultation findings and outcomes

About the Lifecourse Outcomes	
You told us that....	We agreed to....
You agree with what we want children and young people to achieve, but some children and young people may take longer to get there, or may achieve different outcomes.	Explain clearly what our aspirations are for children and young people at different ages and stages in their lives, and make sure that the Lifecourse Outcomes recognises that what children and young people can achieve depends on their individual circumstances.
You would like to see outcomes covering children and young people's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emotional wellbeing, happiness and social skills; • weight, diet and physical fitness; • decision-making skills and learning to take appropriate risks; • education - helping them develop skills for employment and career progression. 	Ensure all of these are included at every lifecourse phase, with a clear 'golden thread' showing how these outcomes and skills develop as children and young people get older.
Some of the outcomes are not measurable.	Make sure the outcomes we include can be measured. We will be developing an outcomes framework, using existing measures where possible.
About the Children and Young People's Strategy 2012-17	
You told us that....	We agreed to....
There needs to be continuity between the strategy and three delivery plans and all of these should reflect the outcomes described in the Lifecourse Outcomes. Having three separate plans could lead to silo-working and gaps in delivery.	Make sure that the strategy, delivery plans and Lifecourse Outcomes are aligned, and continue to work together to strengthen relationships between all partners to ensure joined-up delivery across all agencies.
You were concerned whether the strategy's vision and aspirations can be achieved given that public services budgets are being cut.	Work with our partners to ensure that our strategy and plans deliver the best possible outcomes for Surrey's children and young people and provide excellent value for money.
Partnership working will be key to success. Children and young people thought that schools could be especially important in bringing everyone together when lots of different agencies are involved. Practitioners highlighted how well a 'team around the child' approach can work, and said the Common Assessment Framework could be used to better support joined-up working. Everyone who responded thought that having good information about services, available at the right time, in the right place can help parents, children and young people to find the support they need before problems get more serious.	Make sure that the right agencies are included in planning how we can deliver the strategy, and that schools are included; think about best practice to make sure that agencies work together effectively to support children, young people and families; and make sure we provide up-to-date, easy-to-understand, and easy-to-find information about local services.

You would like to know more about the context for the strategy, and why the four priorities were chosen.	Explain how the strategy and delivery plans have been shaped by the findings from recent needs assessments; national and local policy developments, and best practice; and address budgetary challenges.
The priorities were not explained as clearly as they could be - we need to explain how 'prevention' and 'protection' relate to each other.	Ensure that the strategy clearly explains what the four priorities mean and why they are important.
The language we use needs to be easy to understand. We need to think about the order that information is presented, otherwise it can make some things seem more important than others.	Re-draft the strategy, avoiding technical language or explaining it clearly if needed, and think about the order that information is presented.
About the Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Plan	
You told us that....	We agreed to....
The plan needs to recognise the future role of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in providing local services.	Ensure that we involve individual CCGs or the Joint Commissioning Steering Group in developing the plan.
Although it is good that looked-after children are a priority, the plan needs to include a strong commitment to prevention and early intervention more universally. It will be important to recognise the services that already exist, including universal services as well as targeted and specialist services, and to have effective signposting for children and young people who do not meet service thresholds.	Ensure that the plan has an explicit commitment to prevention and early intervention, and shows how universal, targeted and specialist services can work together to support children, young people and families as needed.
You felt that the plan did not, but should, take into account emotional and mental health.	Ensure that the plan includes emotional health and wellbeing as an integral part of its remit and shows how all agencies can contribute to promoting children and young people's emotional and mental wellbeing.
About the Education and Achievement Plan	
You told us that....	We agreed to....
The 'Education and Attainment Plan' should be renamed the 'Education and Achievement Plan', to recognise that children and young people's education offers them opportunities to develop many different life skills as well as gaining academic qualifications.	Rename the plan as suggested, and ensure a holistic focus.
The plan should include early years settings, colleges and independent schools and other education settings, and should explain the changing roles of learning institutions. The plan should align with and build upon the Primary Vision, perhaps using a similar process to meet education needs in the early years, secondary and special schools.	Extend the focus of the plan to include early years settings, colleges, special schools and other educational settings. Ensure that the plan aligns with the Primary and Secondary Visions, building on existing work and relationships where possible.

About the Employability Plan	
You told us that....	We agreed to....
Children and young people's formal education offers an important opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge for work, including social skills.	Show the importance of the skills and knowledge gained through formal education in increasing young people's employability.
We should work with local businesses to develop programmes to build young people's skills for employment, and build relationships between educators and employers. Children and young people said they would like to see better partnership working to support their education, employment and careers, and their relationship skills.	Consider the role of local businesses in developing programmes to build young people's employability skills, and the role of schools and other educational establishments.
About the consultation process	
You told us that....	We agreed to....
The timescales for this consultation were very short, considering the importance and scope of the work involved.	Carry out further consultation on each of the delivery plans as these are developed.

Appendix 1: Consultation methodology

The consultation ran from 1 May to 25 May 2012 and comprised of four parts:

1. Questionnaires

There were two market research style questionnaires, one tailored for children and young people, the other for parents. The parents (with children aged under 5) were approached during morning 'stay and play' sessions in the Leatherhead and Guildford Children's Centres. The children and young people were approached at the Children and Young People's Assembly in Guildford. Questions to all groups focused on the outcomes in the Lifecourse Outcomes and on:

- Whether the outcomes covering *education; health; respect and responsibility; aspirations; relationships; safety and access to information* accurately summarise the areas where children and young people need support to achieve what they want
- Which outcomes areas are the most important
- Which single area partners need to work on in providing support to children, young people and their families

The questionnaires engaged 33 children and young people and approximately 30 parents in semi-structured interviews.

2. Practitioners workshops

Three bespoke workshop events took place in May for practitioners from SCC and partner organisations. They were attended by a cross section of staff from the Children, Schools and Families Directorate, health, the Police, and voluntary sector. The workshops provided opportunities to comment on the Lifecourse Outcomes and the role of partners; and to discuss the Strategy, three delivery Plans and the four strategic priorities. There were five groups at each event, each covering a different stage of the Lifecourse Outcomes. In total, 96 practitioners attended the workshops.

3. Meetings with Members, Surrey County Council management groups and relevant partnership groups

A joint Select Committee workshop took place on 17 May for Members of the Children and Families and Education Select Committee, to provide an opportunity to comment on the strategy and Lifecourse Outcomes. There were a number of engagement meetings with Children, Schools and Families management teams and with various partnership groups such as schools confederations, to seek their input.

4. Online consultation

The online consultation invited respondents to comment on the Lifecourse Outcomes as a general concept and on outcomes for particular stages; and to comment on the strategic priorities, plans and the role for partnerships. Of the 91 respondents to the online consultation, 60% (54) were professionals; 27% (35) were parents, and 3% (2) were children and young people.