

Family Resilience Consultation – Phase 1, Children’s Centres

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/family-resilience-childrens-centres/>

Please use the notes below as a guide to help you complete the consultation. If you would like to talk more, then pop into our open sessions on

- Monday 19th November 1pm – 2pm at West Street, Dorking,
- Tuesday 20th November 11am – 12pm at Goodwyns Road, Dorking
- Monday 26th November – 10am – 11am at Aperdale Road, Leatherhead
- Wednesday 28th November – 10am – 11am at Aperdale Road, Leatherhead

The consultation takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

QA – Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or as someone who lives, works or studies in Surrey?

Q1a – Do you have any comments on the new family resilience approach? Please write your response in the box below (you only have 200 words to use in this section, so please consider carefully your response)

You may want to consider these issues before you respond:

- *Can all families in need be supported on the large cut in budget Surrey suggest?*
- *What about families in need of support who live a long way from a centre?*
- *Less groups and universal sessions will increase isolation and may harm community cohesion*
- *Volunteers may not offer the same level of service as Children’s centre staff*
- *The Dorking site is already busy. Is there space to do all the work with health and partners that is needed?*
- *Where will families go if the Stay and Play groups close?*
- *Will the same advice and support be available from other groups locally?*
- *Who will do all the early work with new Mums and young babies when Health visiting services are also being cut back?*
- *Reducing universal sessions risks missing an opportunity to support families at an early stage in a child’s life, before issues escalate. What impact would having less access to the children’s centre make to you and your family?*

Q1b – To what extent to you agree or disagree with our aim to invest more in services that help families earlier?

Tick one box only

We think this is a good thing to target funds to help families earlier

Q2 – To what extent do you agree or disagree with SCCs proposal to withdraw the mobile CCs from service? Tick one box only

Although Dorking CC does not use the mobile CC, Leatherhead CC does. Therefore this cut will impact on the service in the north of the District. The Mobile CCs are widely used in some parts of Surrey where families tend to not leave their community. Therefore, if these services were withdrawn it would impact on those isolated families.

Q3 – We are proposing to allocate funding to CCs in areas where there are families on low incomes. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? Tick one box only

Allocating funds to high need areas is a good thing, however, consider the families who need help and are not low income. Is it only families on low income who need Children’s Centres?

Q4 – To what extent do you agree or disagree that families who can afford it should pay a fixed charge for certain activities? Tick one box only

We already ask for voluntary donations and fixed rate for some services (for example Baby Massage, First Aid), but we would never turn a family away. Who decides who can afford to pay and who can’t? How will this be enforced? How will a centre know who is ‘deemed able to afford it’?

Q5 – The Council has a vision to develop stronger communities. To what extent do you agree or disagree that children’s centres play a role in supporting local communities to take part in volunteering to help children and their families? Tick one box only

We already welcome volunteers and have a number who work with us. However, services cannot be relied upon from volunteers, and we know of some local community groups that are running less often or closing due to lack of commitment from volunteers. Volunteers are not trained to support families in the same way. Would this then put families at risk? Is supporting volunteers what Children’s Centres are for or should we focus on improving outcomes for families? Lots of part time volunteers would be difficult/impossible to manage.

Q6a – CCs should encourage more people to volunteer to run activities and help in the CCs.

See the comment above – we welcome volunteers, but there is a commitment involved. Would this impact the quality of what is offered given that many of our current staff are qualified and highly experienced? Should we depend on volunteers to do this work? Research shows that qualified early years staff produce better outcomes for children.

Q6b – I would volunteer to help in a CC.

This is down to the individual to decide, however, see Q5 above – can you make a regular commitment?

Q7 – What should we call the new service?

This is down to the individual to decide

Q8 – Is there anything else we should think about/be aware of when making changes to the CCs? For example, do you have any ideas how we can make sure that all children and families who need help and support get the services they need when they need them within the funding available?

Consider - Surrey have not shared the financial implications for CCs in the consultation. Over the whole of Surrey there will be a reduction of at least 35%. Each area will be impacted differently by this, and in Mole Valley this implication is approximately 60%. Therefore, what we can offer will change hugely. Consider how we can support families across the whole of Mole Valley, with less financial resources, less staff and a wider age range of children to support in the CC area. There is a contradiction when thinking about early help for families, as it is unlikely that we can offer the same level of universal services (ie Stay and Play) in the future, therefore, we cannot offer the same amount of early help. What are your thoughts on this?

Q8b. To what extent do you agree or disagree that children’s centres are an appropriate area for the county council to make savings? Tick one box only

Consider other areas where there could be savings before answering this question.

Q8c. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the savings should be made from other county council services before making any saving from children’s centres? Tick one box only

Consider whether you think that the cuts could come from another service.

SPECIFIC CHANGES IN YOUR BOROUGH

Please go to the Mole Valley section (unless you wish to comment on the other areas):-

Q15a – Do you have any views on the proposed changes in Mole Valley?

Families in Mole Valley are served through the services at the Leatherhead CC (based in Leatherhead, but also delivering in Bookham and Ashted locations), the Dorking CC (based at Goodwyns Road and West Street) and Dovers Green CC (based in Reigate). In the proposed model, there will be one base at Goodwyns Road, Dorking and a satellite at West Street. We are unsure as to what a satellite will look like. This will mean all the families in Mole Valley will need to be supported by a team based at Goodwyns Road, therefore a huge geographical area, with potentially a smaller team travelling around the area. There will need to be a base for services in the Leatherhead area – but this has not been included in the proposal. Consider the needs of the families across Mole Valley and transport links when writing your response.

Q15b – Given that we have to make these reductions and are committed to targeting funding at the areas of highest need; to what extent do you agree or disagree that we have chosen the right locations for these services? Tick one box only

Goodwyns Road site is currently the area of highest need, however, there is a high level of need in the Leatherhead area too. In the past North leatherhead was one of the areas that was targeted for CC support. If we withdraw the service will the level of need rise again? Are public transport links available and are they affordable? Is the proposed location in Goodwyns Road accessible for you and your family?

Q15c – If we are unable to use the current CC buildings we will endeavour to final a local alternative. To what extent to you agree with this approach? Tick one box only

The proposal does not include an alternative site in Leatherhead. We believe a site will be needed to meet families’ needs

Q20 onwards is about you....