

## **Appendix 3 - Matters arising update - Kent County Council education matters**

### **Responses received following letters sent by the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing:**

Kent County Council – on behalf of Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services.

*“The SEN Home to School Transport re-tendering is one which is subject to an internal and external audit, so Shellina, and Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, have confirmed that they would not like to set the narrative before the outcomes of the audits are made; however, they have noted there will be lessons to be learnt.”*

The response from NHS NELFT:

*“Unfortunately, there continues to be a high demand for ASC and ADHD assessments in the Neurodevelopment and Learning Disabilities Service (NLDS). The impact of COVID-19 has resulted in increased waiting times for an assessment. We apologise for any distress caused to families due to this delay.*

*The NLDS are still working closely alongside the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to reduce waiting times and therefore we are now running additional assessment clinics for the longest waiters.*

*We do not state a timeframe to families, just that families are kept up to date, offered support while waiting and escalated according to need.”*

### **Updates by Cllr Hannah Perkin:**

#### **Travel provider for pupils with Special Educational Needs**

A Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) transport update was called into Scrutiny at Kent County Council (KCC) on 20 April 2022 where “SEND Transport lessons learnt review” terms of reference were presented. This was an internal review commissioned by the Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer following what KCC deemed to be “significant and well publicised service failures in the redesign of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport services and the adverse reputational impact upon and loss of confidence in Kent County Council.”

It will review various aspects of the tendering of the contract including:

- Impact upon Families and Children;
- consultation process with parents, carers and Kent PACT;
- decision making;
- re-tendering and contract award processes;
- project planning and change management arrangements;
- review of risk management and assurances prior to implementation;
- communication process with parents , carers and Kent PACT Dec 21-March 22;
- Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) Directorate governance arrangements;

- Children, Young Persons and Education (CYPE) Directorate governance arrangements;
- cross- directorate governance and communication between GET Directorate and CYPE Directorate; and
- review effectiveness of short-term remedial actions from February 2022.

I haven't heard that this review has been published yet but it will be interesting to read it when it has and can update the Eastern Area Committee when it is published for their interest. Anecdotally, I have heard from parents that a lot of the problems have now been solved and that there is some obvious relief. However, there are a number of parents that are going through the complaints system.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism assessments**

In terms of waiting list times for assessment, the Health and Wellbeing Officer is asking his equivalents at other councils as to whether this is a countywide issue (I suspect the answer is yes as it is a problem nationally). Some positive news, KCC have awarded Autism Apprentice the contract to supply autism support and advocacy in Swale. They will be offering support in school meetings, for children who are attending school but at risk of exclusion, day-time family support and out of hours family support too. The Eastern Area Committee members may wish to know about this so they can signpost families that they might encounter in their casework load.