

Merton Council

Children and Young People

Overview and Scrutiny Panel

13 January 2021

Supplementary agenda

5	Impact of Covid-19 in Merton - Verbal Update	1 - 34
6	Departmental update report	35 - 42

This page is intentionally left blank

Children and Young Person's Scrutiny Panel – 13th January 2021

Situational Awareness Report: COVID-19 in Merton

Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Director of Public Health

Merton Public Health Intelligence

13th January 2021

Produced by Ben Bezuidenhout (ben.Bezuidenhout@merton.gov.uk)

Quality Assured by Gary Forbes (gary.forbes@merton.gov.uk)



Summary key messages

13th January 2021

London overview

- Estimated cases rate in London is **2,540 per 100,000** (ONS)
- The current London R value is between **1.1 and 1.4**

Merton Cases (3rd Jan – 9th Jan):

- 7 day case rate **942.4 cases per 100,000**.
- **2,004** new COVID cases in Merton, of which **224** cases were in those aged 18 or younger.
- New COVID variant estimated responsible for 63% of cases in London 29th Nov – 22nd Dec.

Merton Deaths:

- **18** new registered Merton COVID deaths for the week ending 1st January.
- Merton has seen COVID-related 268 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

Merton Testing (3rd Jan – 9th Jan / pillar 2 PCR tests only –excluding Lateral Flow tests):

- 7 day testing rate **508.7 daily tests per 100,000**.
- 7 day test positivity increased to **22.0%**.

Positive cases per 100,000 across London boroughs

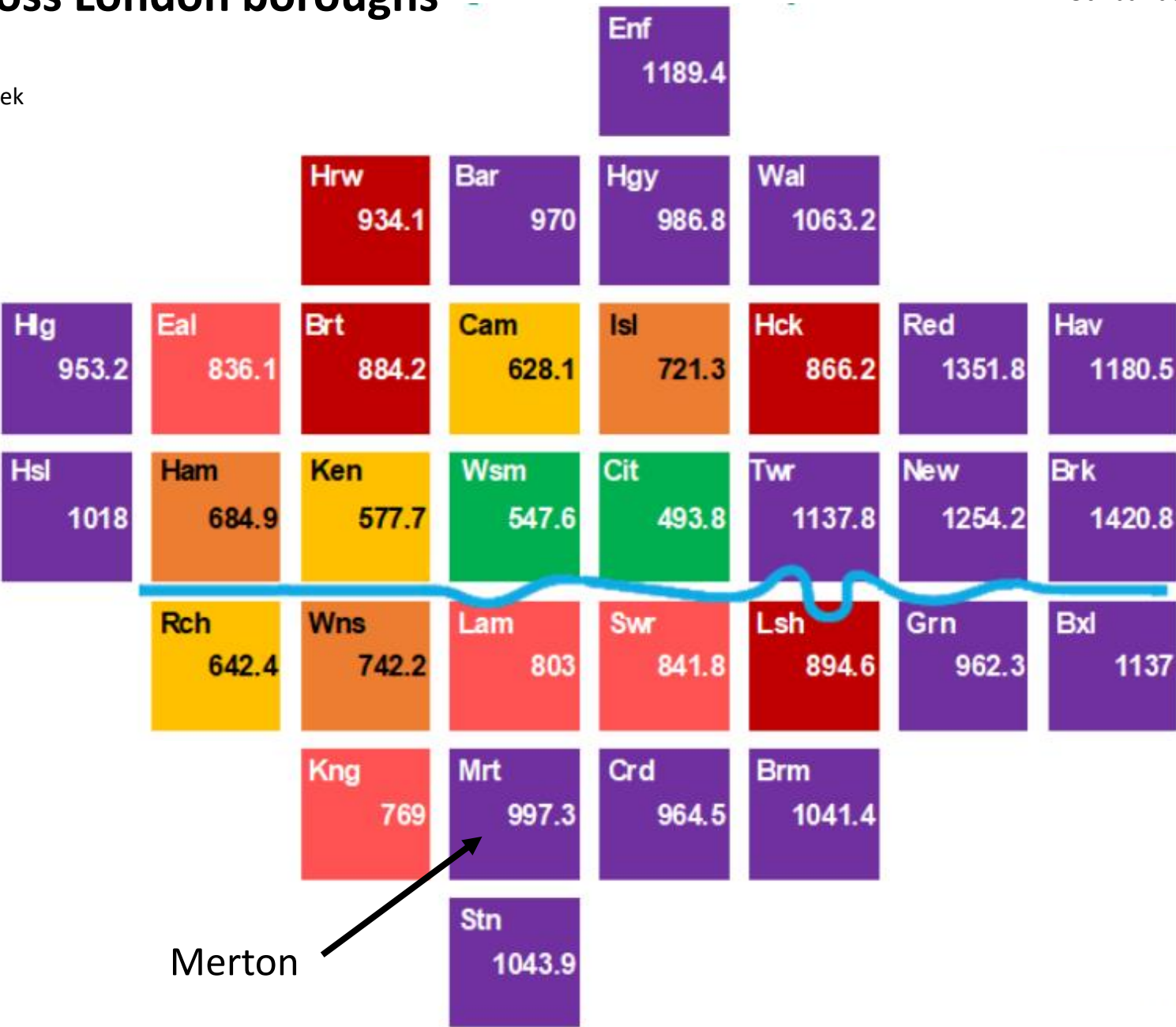
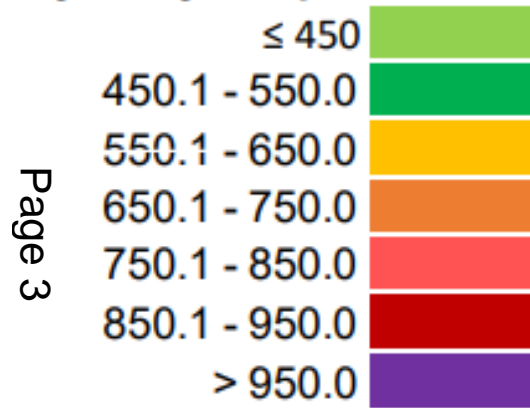
13th January 2021

For reporting period 24.12.2020 – 30.12.2020

Colour of box illustrates weekly cases per 100,000 for that week

Positive cases per 100,000 population

Key: 7-day rate per 100,000

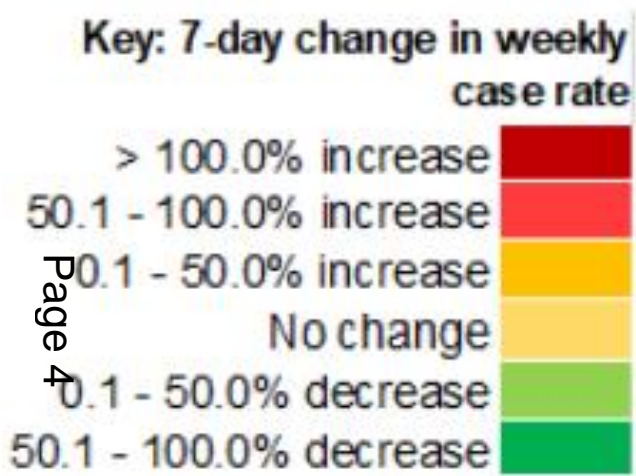


Positive cases per 100,000 across London boroughs – change since previous week 13th January 2021

For reporting period 24.12.2020 – 30.12.2020

Colour of box illustrates weekly cases per 100,000 for that week

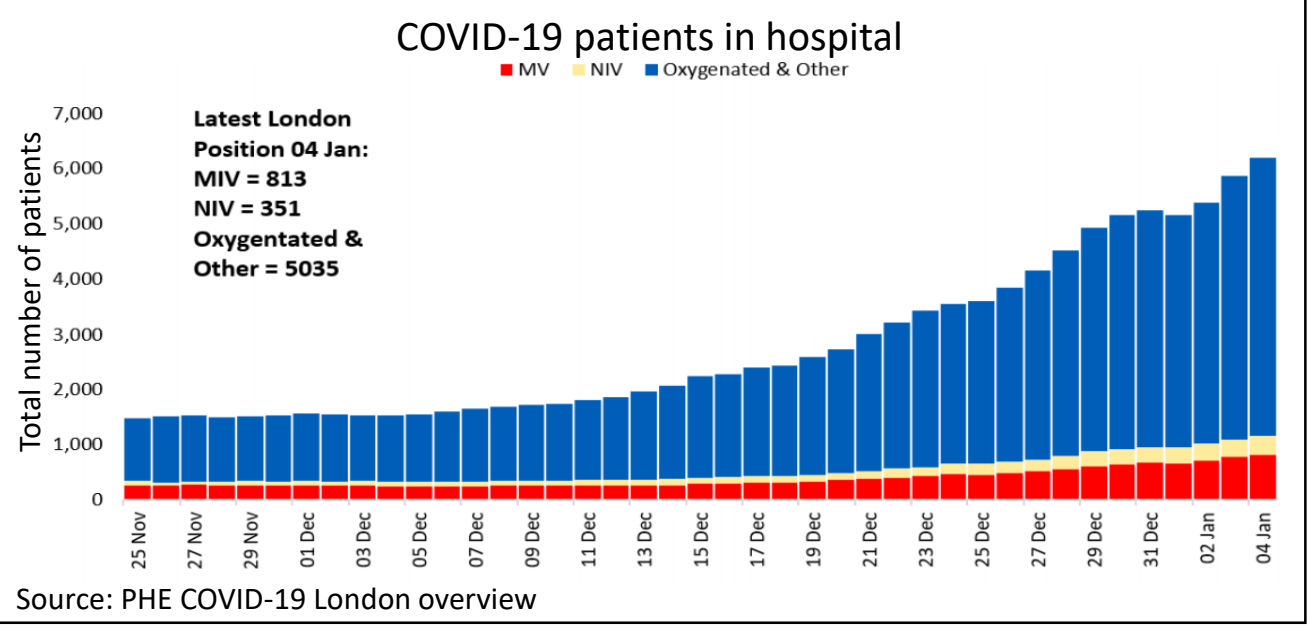
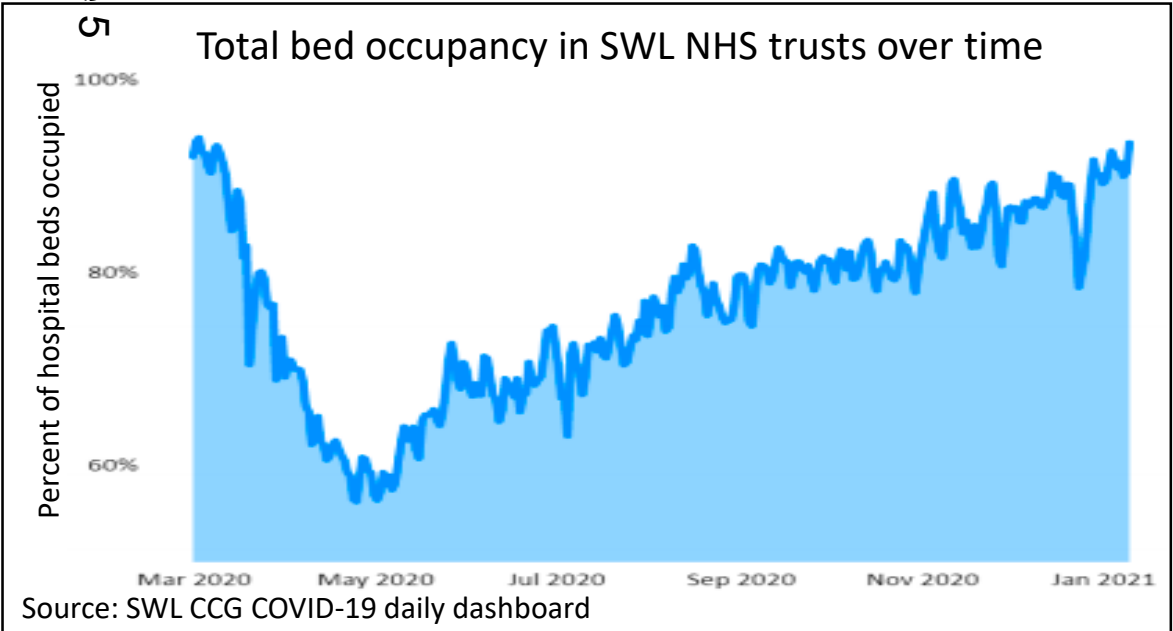
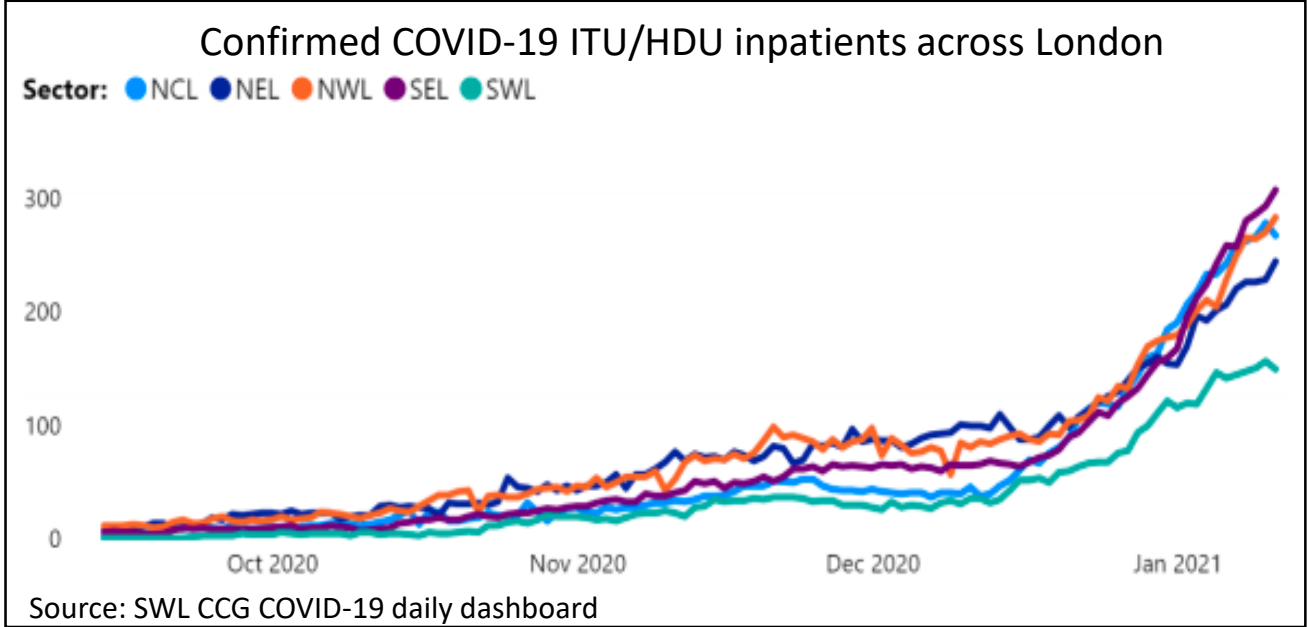
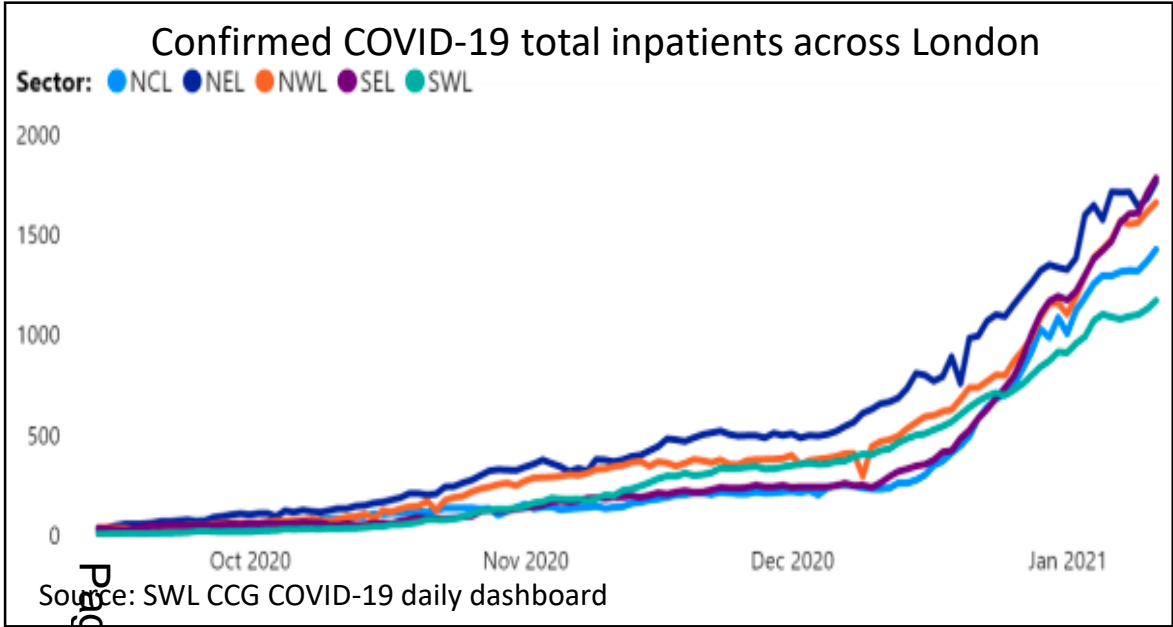
Change in positive cases per 100,000 population



Merton

COVID-19 and NHS-related indicators (all figures are numbers unless stated)

13th January 2021



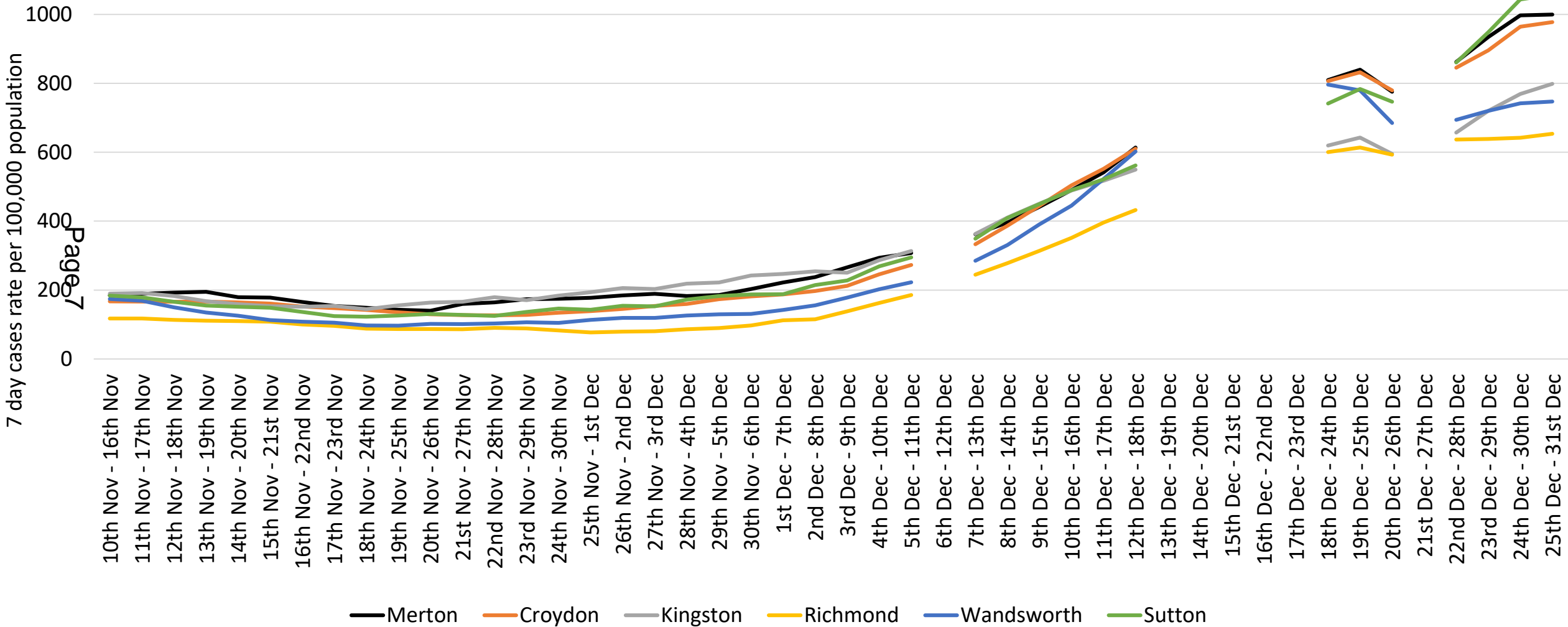
Local analysis: COVID-19 testing in Merton

Page 6

Rolling 7-day rate of confirmed positive cases per 100,000 population in Merton compared to South West London boroughs (Pillar 1 & 2)

13th January 2021

Source: PHE/PHEC Daily Report
Reporting frequency: Daily



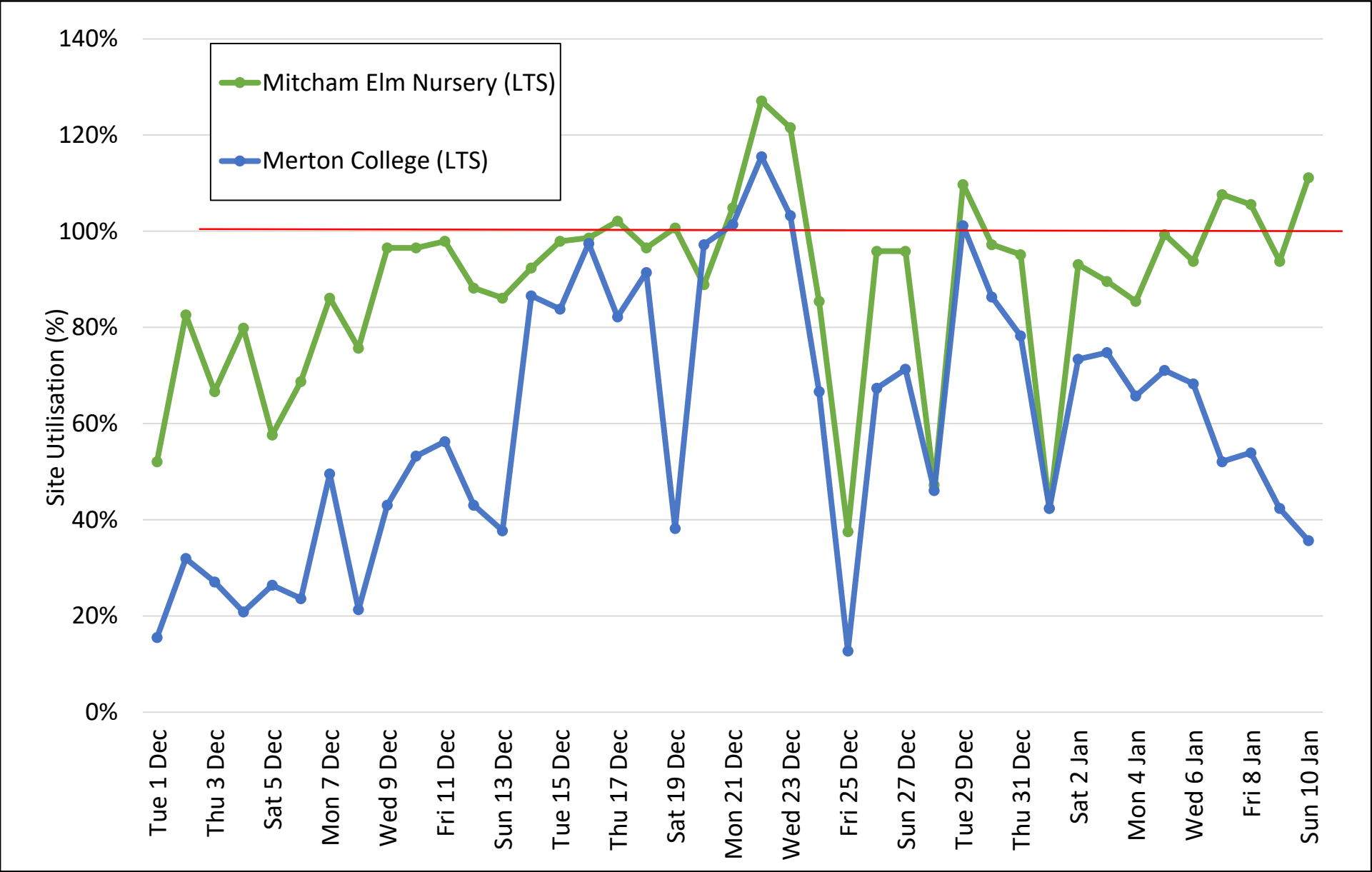
Due to reporting issues no data was available for 8th-14th November and 6th -12th December
Please note no data was released for weeks 13th – 19th December until 17th – 23rd December

Covid-19 LTS Utilisation (1st December 2020 – 10th January 2021)

13th January 2021

Key Messages:

- Local site daily capacity is
 - Mitcham Elm 144
 - Merton College 432 (Source: RSP Merton).
- The smaller Mitcham Elm Nursery site operating at near full capacity, Merton College site within capacity. Average for Jan (1st to 10th):
 - Mitcham Elm (92%)
 - Merton College (58%)



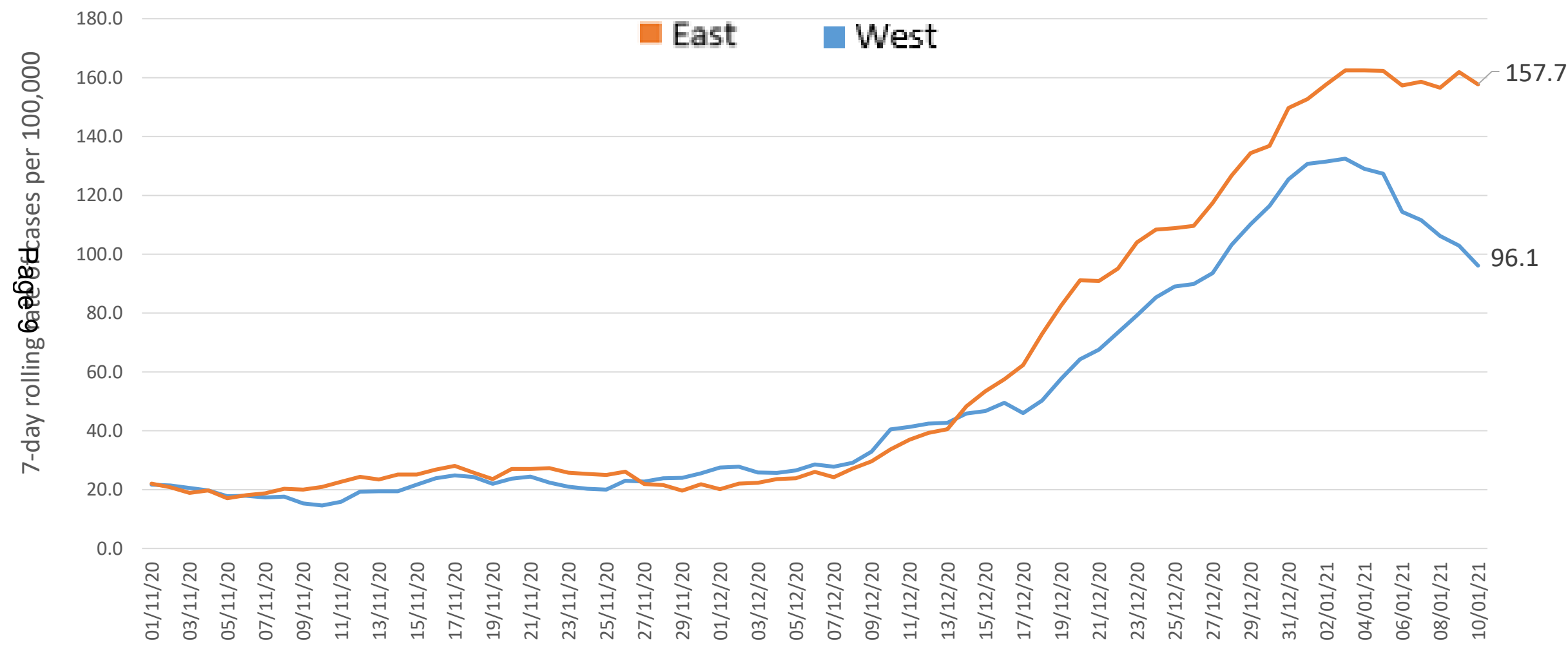
COVID-19 case rates in East and West Merton

13th January 2021

Source: LSAT daily line list

Reporting frequency: Daily

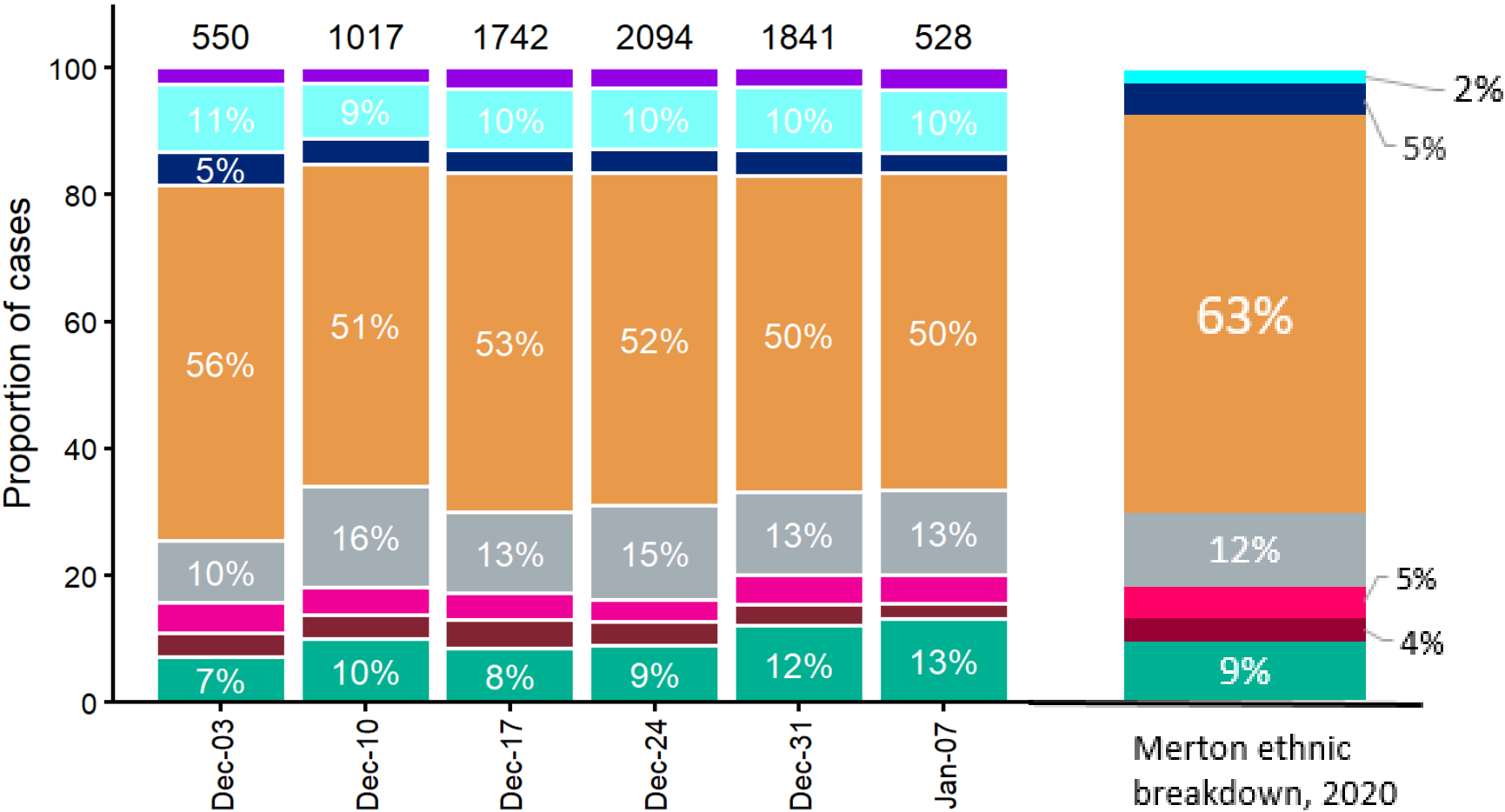
7-day rolling total number of cases in East and West Merton



COVID-19 total positive cases in Merton by ethnicity

13th January 2021

Weekly distribution of cases by ethnic group in Merton compared to 2020 overall Merton ethnic breakdown.

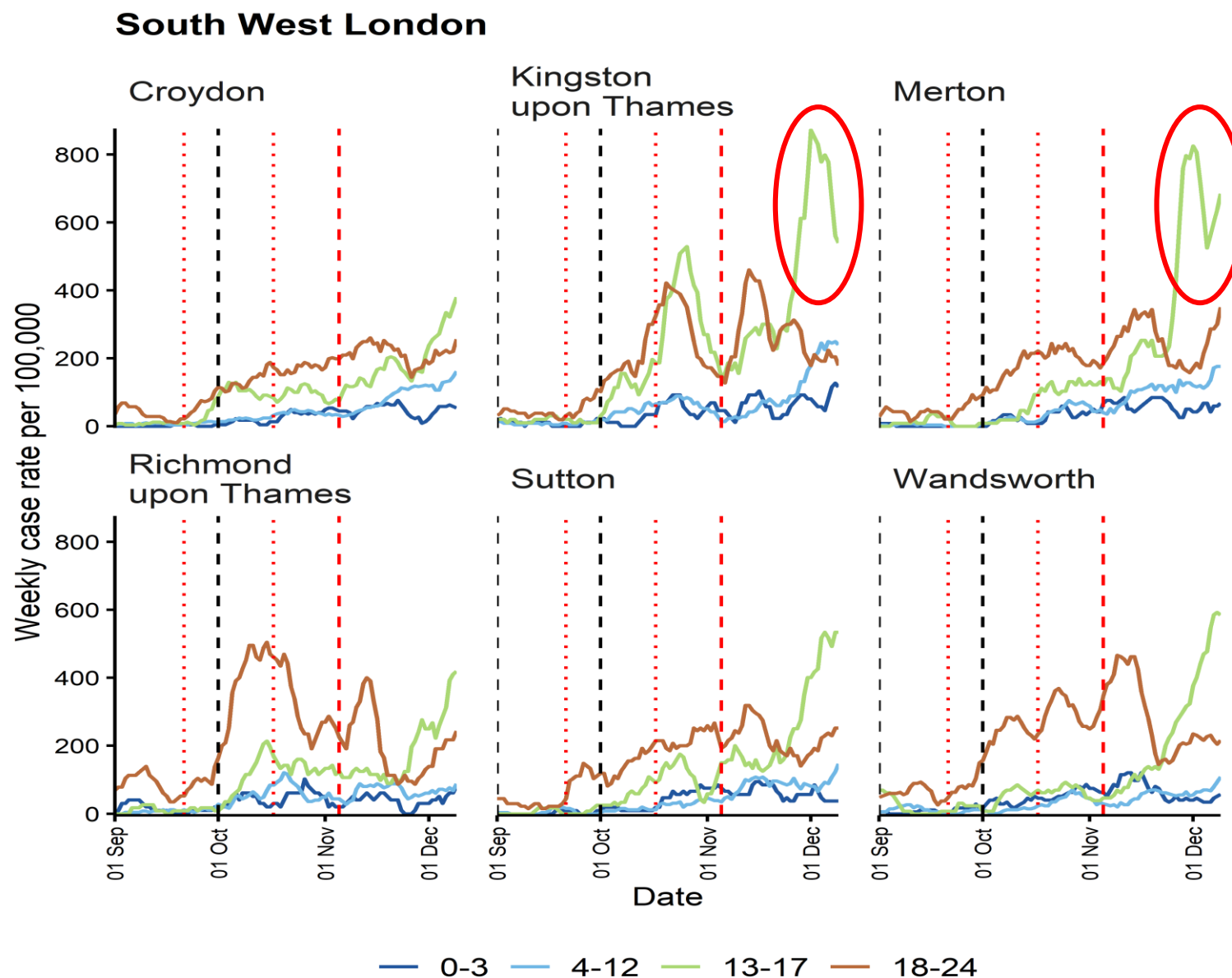


Peak in cases Nov-Dec 2020

13th January 2021

Key messages

- **Significant increase in cases among secondary school age (13-17) individuals** in early November and December, particularly in Merton and Kingston.
- In Merton the weekly cases per 100,000 among 13-17s jumped from around 200 on 15th November to over 800 by the end of November.
- A number of schools in West Merton were identified as common exposures of confirmed cases.
- A school was identified as a common exposure of 108 cases.



Source: Case data from SGSS, PHE

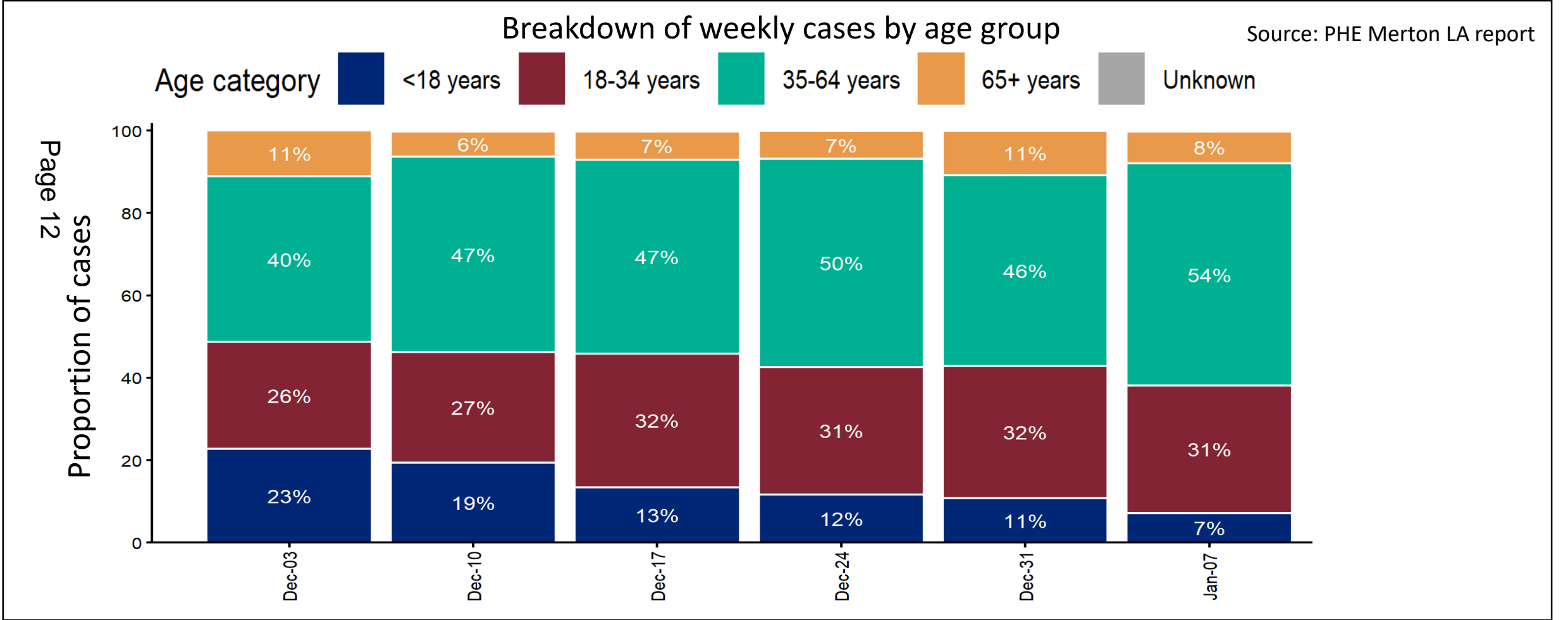
Enquiries ben.bezuidenhout@merton.gov.uk

COVID-19 cases in Merton broken down by age category

13th January 2021

Key messages

- Cases among <18s as percent of total cases in Merton decreased throughout December.
- Cases among 18-34s and 35-64s as percent of total cases increased.



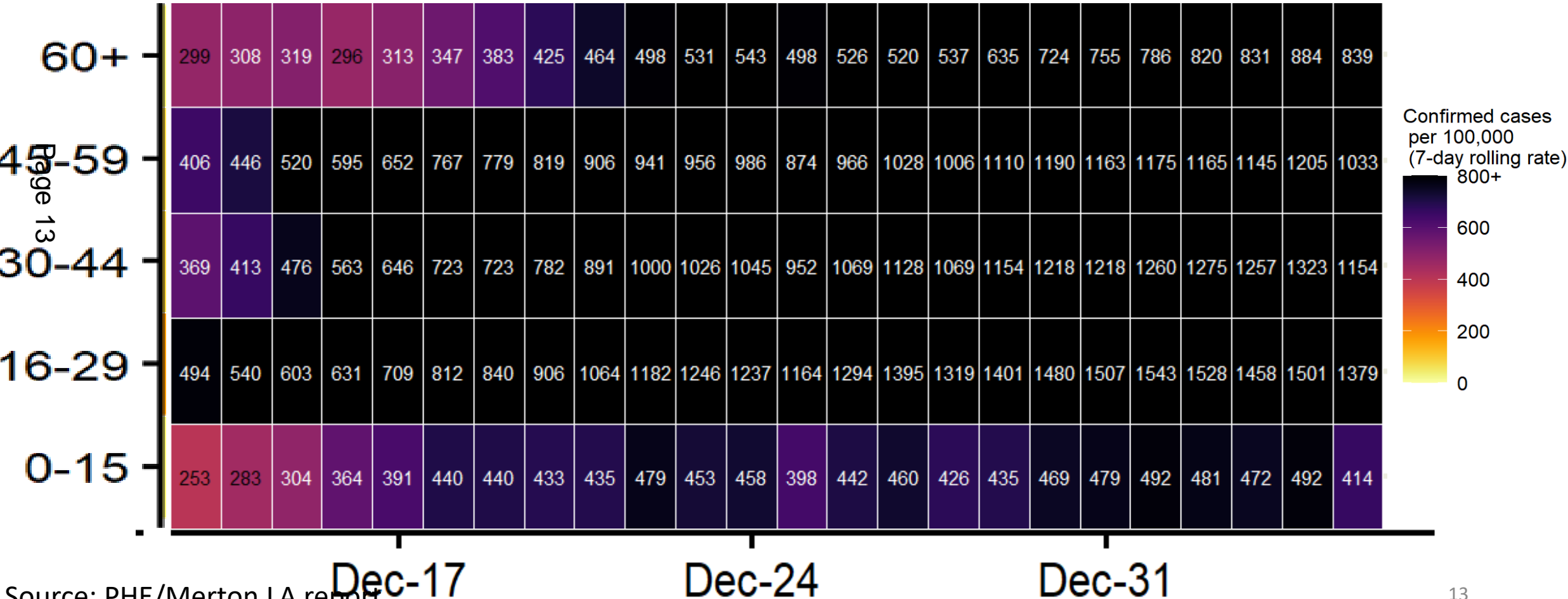
COVID-19 cases rates in Merton by age group heat map over time

7-day rolling total case rates per 100,000

Source: PHE/Regional Epi Slides London

Key messages

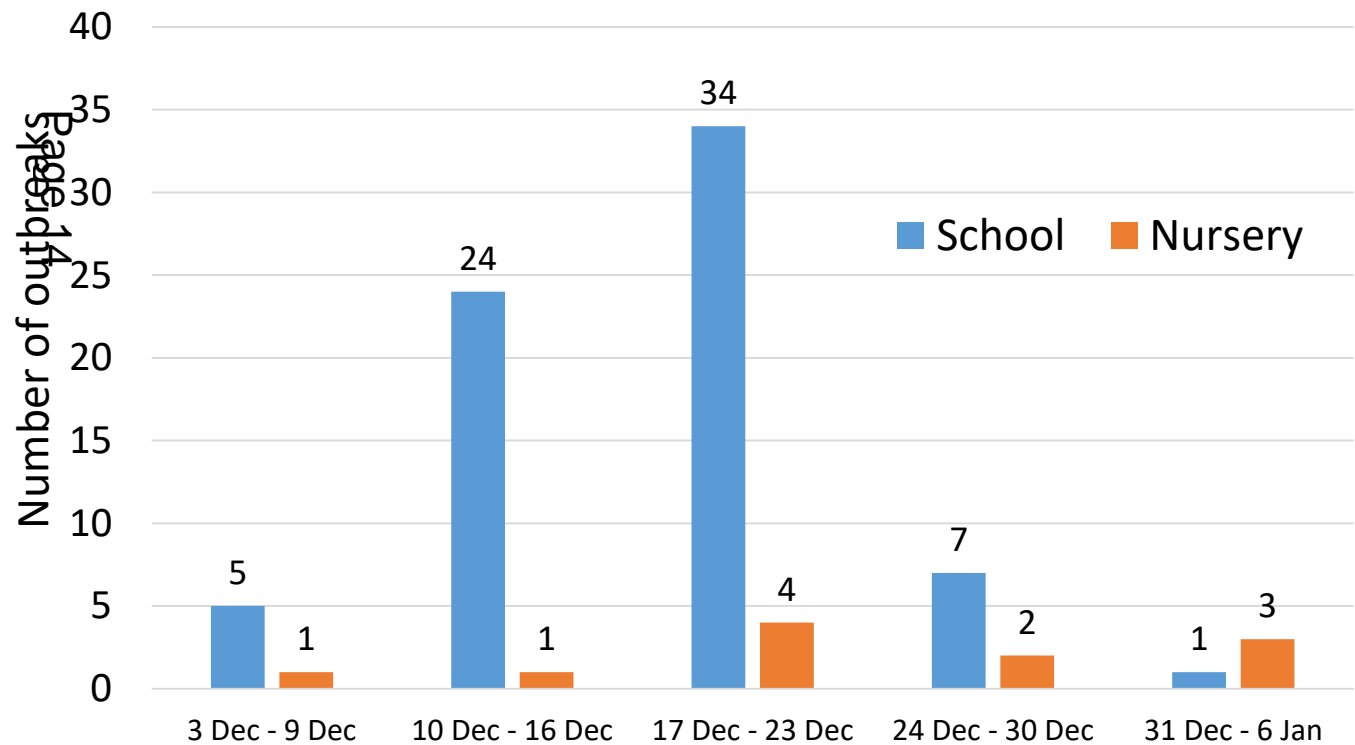
- Rate of cases among 0-15s doubled between 13th December and 4th January - increasing from 253 to 492 cases per 100,000 population.
- Rate of cases among 16-29s increased from 494 to 1501 cases per 100,000 population.



Key messages

- Increase in number of outbreaks in Merton throughout December.
- Number of outbreaks in recent weeks fallen (Christmas holidays).
- Number of nursery outbreaks remains low.

Weekly outbreaks in Merton schools and nurseries*



Source: Schools and EY settings log, Merton council

*Outbreak defined as setting with two or more confirmed cases.

Merton COVID-19 Schools Update

Cases

- Schools available until Christmas Eve to engage with tracing contacts of cases, and some continued beyond this time, reporting positive cases throughout Christmas holidays.
 - 11 of reported outbreaks during this period (possible underestimate if parents did not report cases over the bank holidays)

Testing

- Before lockdown, secondary schools prepared for asymptomatic testing of all pupils using Lateral Flow Devices (LFDs).
- This has been scaled down, and schools are now beginning to test staff weekly and contacts of positive cases.
- Once pupils are back in school, they will also likely be tested weekly (to be confirmed).
- The government announced roll out of LFD testing in primary schools (weekly testing of staff, and serial testing of contacts of positive cases) to happen in the next few weeks.
- In the interim, primary school staff are invited to use the new testing sites set up in pharmacies for key workers.

Asymptomatic Covid testing model in Merton

Dagmar Zeuner, January 2021

Page 15

Principles and overview

Purpose

- **Test-to-find** – identify asymptomatic positive cases and ensure self-isolation to prevent onwards transmission (30-40% of Covid asymptomatic)
- **Test-to-enable** – confirm negative individuals in order to come out of self-isolation or enable activities that are otherwise restricted; requires daily testing for 7d (serial testing); approval outstanding (apart from secondary schools)

Tests

- **Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)** - highly accurate but requires laboratory, 24-72 hour result turn-around, currently used nationally for asymptomatic testing in certain settings e.g. care homes
- **Lateral flow test (LFT)** - lower accuracy point-of-care test, results in 20-30 minutes; used for most asymptomatic testing; home testing approved in principle by MHRA; not yet for current model

Merton model for asymptomatic testing

Focus

- Mainly targeted at front-line staff (regular testing 1-2x wk)
- Opportunity for resident testing (one-off)

Service offer from LBM

- 1 Support for national testing service** – ie secondary schools, care homes
- 2 Local community pharmacists**
- 3 Devolved LFT staff testing** to LBM teams and partner organisations
- 4 Morden Assembly Hall – site-based LFT use;** dual purpose for targeted staff testing & resident testing

This page is intentionally left blank

Covid-19 vaccination programme

update on delivering the programme in Merton

Page 19

Phil Howell, Assistant Director, Community & Housing
(slides prepared by and used with permission of SWL CCG)
January 2021



SWL overview

- **Hospital Hubs** - Croydon and St George's hospitals went live on 8 December. Kingston, Royal Marsden and St Helier went live 29 December 2020.
- **Care Home and social care staff** - Single points of contact have been established for these groups to allow easy and rapid access to Covid Vaccines. By 30 December just over 5000 Care Home (80%), Home Care and Social Care (20%) staff had logged a request for a vaccine.
- **Primary Care** - Between 15 -31 December 12 PCN vaccination sites opened across SWL delivering an estimated 15,000 vaccinations by 31 December 2020 across the three priority cohorts: over 80s; care home staff; patient-facing high risk health and social care staff. A further 14 PCN sites will be open by 11 January 2021 as part of Wave 5-6 roll out.
- **Care Homes** – Vaccination in care homes began in mid-December. Due to the characteristics of the Pfizer vaccine, care homes with over 50 residents were identified to receive the vaccine during the initial roll-out. The roll out of the vaccine to care homes will accelerate during January 2021
- **Large vaccination centres** – These will begin to open in January and February.
- **Workforce** - the NHS have recruited 174 people who have been cleared and trained to be vaccinators. 157 returners to practice identified - mixture of medical, nursing and AHP with 89 cleared and undertaken their training. Modelling shows that in SWL we need 464 vaccinators and we are track to secure this number as to date 1,203 applications have been received.
- **Communication and engagement** materials circulated and insight work to be completed to ensure good uptake across all population groups within the priority cohorts.



Current information on JCVI cohort prioritisation

Table 2 – Priority groups for vaccination advised by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

Priority group	Risk group
1	Residents in a care home for older adults Staff working in care homes for older adults
2	All those 80 years of age and over Health and social care workers
3	All those 75 years of age and over
4	All those 70 years of age and over Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (not including pregnant women and those under 18 years of age)
5	All those 65 years of age and over
6	Adults aged 18 to 65 years in an at-risk group (Table 3)
7	All those 60 years of age and over
8	All those 55 years of age and over
9	All those 50 years of age and over

Scheduling of the delivery of the vaccine to the priority cohorts is dependent on the vaccine characteristics



Modelling

* Priority	Cohort	Population	No of vaccinations
	1 Care Home Residents	4,547	9,094
	1 Residential Care Workers	8,253	16,506
	280+	35,404	70,808
	2 Healthcare workers	32,840	65,680
	2 Social care workers	21,803	42,166
	375-79	23,901	47,802
	470-74	34,133	68,266
	565-69	36,858	73,716
	6 High Risk Under 65	5,020	10,040
	7 Moderate Risk Under 65	68,955	137,910
	860-64	32,520	65,040
	955-59	42,299	84,598
	1050-54	52,816	105,632
	11 Key Workers 18-49 Not at Risk	68,890	137,780
	11 Other 18-49 Not at Risk (BAME)	176,687	335,374
	11 Other 18-49 Not at Risk (non BAME)	242,212	484,424
	Total	877,134	1,754,268

The table shows the SWL population totals against the priority cohorts and then the number of vaccinations that will be given that 2 doses are required. The modelling has been adjusted to assume 75% take up with 100% uptake in care homes. Definition of at risk still to be confirmed- the original COVID19 shielding categories have been used as a proxy measures. Key workers are defined as – Education and Childcare; Food and necessary Goods; Key Public Services; National and Local Government; Public Safety and National Security; Transport; Utilities and Communications



COVID-19: Vaccination Deployment Delivery Models

Delivery model overview

Delivery models have been defined centrally to ensure consistency in deployment across all regions. Each region has defined the mix and number of delivery models required based on local demographics.



Vaccination Centres

High volumes, high throughput in a fixed location for an extended period e.g. sports venues, conference venues

Target cohorts: All JCVI Cohorts (except care home residents and staff)



Local Vaccination Services

Community / Primary Care Led vaccination (centres and roving teams at vaccination peak)

Temporary use of primary care facility, retail, community facility or portacabin, to deliver capacity for temporary period / Vehicles with vaccinators visiting locations, such as care homes, detained estate and individual addresses for housebound

Target cohorts: All JCVI Cohorts for centres, roving to vaccinate eligible individuals in care homes, households, Secure MH estate, MHLDA estate, detained estate



Hospital Hubs

Delivered from NHS provider premises of a defined number of hubs and further NHS trusts

Target cohorts: NHS provider staff



GP-led vaccinations

Merton Primary Care Networks

- Merton GP practices are working together in Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to deliver the vaccine to people in the community.
- Merton has two Primary Care Networks delivering vaccinations at dedicated sites on behalf of the borough. The Wilson & the Nelson.
- Vaccinations may not take place at residents' usual GP practice, but at a primary care vaccination site (led by GPs and practice nurses).



GP-led vaccinations

Vaccination site	Primary Care Network	Go live date	GP practices involved
The Wilson Hospital	East Merton PCN North Merton PCN	Tuesday 15 December 2020	Cricket Green Medical Practice Figges Marsh Surgery Rowans Surgery Tamworth House Medical Centre Wide Way Medical Centre Colliers Wood Surgery Merton Medical Practice Mitcham Family Practice Mitcham Medical Centre Riverhouse Medical Practice
The Nelson Health Centre	Morden PCN North West Merton PCN South West Merton PCN West Merton PCN	Week commencing Monday 4 January 2021	Central Medical Centre Morden Hall Medical Centre Ravensbury Park Medical Centre Stonecot Surgery Alexandra Road Surgery Vineyard Hill Surgery Wimbledon Medical Practice Wimbledon Village Practice Grand Drive Surgery Nelson Medical Practice Francis Grove Surgery Lambton Road Medical Practice



Priority groups for the vaccine

- In line with national advice from the Joint Vaccination and Immunisation Committee (JVCI), in these first four weeks we have been delivering the Pfizer vaccine to the priority groups of people over 80 and care home staff.
- The vaccination programme is phased - we need to make sure that the most vulnerable people get it first, so the NHS will be advising people in priority groups when it's the right time for them to come forward for the vaccine.
- To reduce waste, vaccination sites have been using unfilled appointments to vaccinate healthcare workers who have been identified at highest risk of serious illness from Covid-19.
- Increased supply and the approval of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine means that vaccination can now immediately be expanded to all frontline health and social care workers.
- Currently, we expect most over 80s to have been offered the vaccine by the end of January, though over 80s will be able to come forward and receive the vaccine throughout the Covid-19 vaccination programme.



Care home staff, residents and front line care workers

- Before the first vaccines were delivered in early December we began to work with care homes across all 6 SWL boroughs to reach out to care home staff as a top priority group
- Around 4,000 care home workers out of about 14,000 have come forward. Currently around 500 in Merton. We continue to work hard to encourage them to do so.
- The local authority are working closely with health colleagues to coordinate vaccine appointments for front line social care workers including front line domiciliary and agency staff and all those who work directly with vulnerable adults. We are also coordinating the roll out to the workforce working with clinically vulnerable children and young people.



Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine approval and new guidance on the second dose

- The approval of the UK-developed and manufactured Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine provides a major boost to our plans to offer protection to those who would benefit most as quickly as possible.
- [This new vaccine is easier to transport and store, which means it is perfect for helping to vaccinate many more people in our communities](#) - including being able to more easily vaccinate residents in care homes and for the over 80s who are housebound in their own homes.
- Our PCN sites have begun to receive supplies of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine, starting last week



New guidance on 2nd dose

- The Government has decided to increase the gap between the two doses of the COVID-19 vaccines from three to four weeks to up to three months.
- This new guidance on the period between doses is important as it means that we will be to get the maximum benefit for the most people in the shortest possible time and will help save lives.
- Therefore, focusing on giving the first dose of the vaccine to as many people and front line health and care staff as possible.



How people are being contacted

- The NHS will continue to contact people directly to invite them to receive the vaccine - when it is their turn, they will receive an invitation for an appointment.
- This may be via the phone, text message or letter either from a Merton GP practice and there is likely to be a national booking system coming on line.
- This will be the same for those patients who are housebound and would require a home visit. If those people who are housebound are offered an appointment at a centre, they should talk to their GP or respond to the contact details in their invitation.
- As only a proportion of PCN sites are live at this time, many over 80s will not yet have been contacted.



Large vaccination centres

- As well as hospital hubs and primary care sites, we are working to bring on line community vaccination centres to help further expand our capacity to deliver the vaccine programme
- Plans in place to open large vaccination centres in SWL in the coming weeks and this will be capable of treating large numbers of patients.
- Across South West London there has been a large scale recruitment campaign to recruit teams to manage and deliver vaccines at these vaccination centres across six boroughs. Currently running a volunteer recruitment campaign which has generated a good response.



Sharing key messages

- The SWL CCG communications and engagement team has been sharing all the latest public facing materials and Q&As with Merton & Wandsworth partnership communications and engagement group members.
- Members of the public have an important part to play to help us with this programme of work, please share these important messages:
 - please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you
 - when we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments
 - and please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives.



Building confidence

- The government has set out the challenging ambition of vaccinating all those in the top four priority groups by February 2020 as set out by the Joint Vaccination and Immunisation Committee (JVCI).
- We will continue to work hard to build confidence in the vaccine with local residents and we would appreciate your support with this.
- The CCG engagement team has started to reach out to community groups and organisations to help raise awareness of the benefits of the vaccination and address the questions and concerns that people have. The local authority will actively support with this engagement



This page is intentionally left blank

CSF – Departmental Update

Supplementary slides presented to
Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel
January 2021

Schools/Early Years Update

- **Nurseries/Early Years:** Under national guidance, nurseries and early years settings remain open for all children. A small number of Merton nurseries have had to close due to Covid-related staff sickness and isolation.
- **Merton schools:** are open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers in all year groups. We are meeting weekly with secondary, special and primary headteachers to identify key issues they are facing and to help them problem solve.
- **Mass asymptomatic testing using Lateral Flow Devices in schools** – secondary schools have started this. Plans for it to start in primary schools in the next few weeks. The testing of secondary pupils within special schools is being planned in partnership with our health partners to ensure that this can take place in a way that is safe for pupils and causes the least distress to the pupils
- **Digital Devices and remote learning:** All schools have now been given the chance to order their allocation of Digital Devices from the DfE. Some schools are reporting that this will be adequate for their pupils' needs, others are reporting that they need more. Schools are also sourcing devices from charities such as Keeping Kids Connected (the Dons). All schools have moved to remote learning for the majority of their pupils. Remote education offers have developed since the last lockdown (for example all secondary schools are reporting a degree of live lessons in their offer now). The Government and Ofsted have issued guidance about remote learning: it should include aspects of online provision (for example pre-recorded videos, as well as potentially live lessons).
- **School Attendance:** no longer compulsory, but for vulnerable children is 'expected' and will be encouraged.
- **Free School Meals:** for benefits related FSM children not attending, schools are providing a £15 per week supermarket voucher
- **School admissions:** Children put on roll even if they need to start remotely. Secondary offer day as normal on 1 March 2020

Special educational provision and youth work

- **SEND:** Special Schools remain open for all children. We are working closely with our maintained special schools and health partners to ensure that pupils can attend safely during national lockdown. The Government has not made temporary changes to special educational needs and disability legislation (Section 42 of the Children and Families Act) during the current Tier 5 restrictions. This means that the LA and the CCG is required to deliver the provision outlined within a pupils Education Health and Care Plans and comply with the statutory timescales for phased transfers, new EHC Needs Assessments, and Annual Reviews
- **Home to school transport:** No covid-related impact. Service running as per government Covid guidance for lower number of SEND children attending provision
- **Youth Work:** Under National Youth Association Guidelines all youth centres and the Adventure playground must be closed. They have moved to virtual support. We have continued to track and support children who are out of education, training and employment. Catch 22 and Art Against Knives are commissioned to provide detached youth work across the borough. We are discussing with them setting up our Lockdown detached team who previously went out and engaged young people to support social messaging about safety.

The Views of Children and Young People

- Throughout the lock-down our youth services have been collecting feedback from children and young people. This feedback has not been systematically analysed but here is a flavour of what they have said.
- Children and young people have told us the following:
 - They have enjoyed not feeling the pressure to be in school/college v worried about falling behind
 - They have liked being able to stay at home and sleep in and have found on-line lessons all day exhausting
 - Children and young people are missing physical activities/trips seeing their worker in person (we have continued contact sessions for high risk young people) are feel isolated from their peers/friends.
 - Children and young people are missing seeing friends and want youth clubs to be open
 - Children and young people have valued online workshops we have provided, learning new things, and making new friends online, many have requested we run more of these. Some voiced reluctance to do online work at the end of a day of on line school

• **Introduction**

- Staff anxiety about visits to children and families is high due to increased transmission of Covid-19 new variant
- In the third lock-down there is a greater expectation nationally that face-to-face visits should continue. Practitioners continue to be creative in the way in which they engage with children and families and our staff continue to go the extra mile to support children and families.
- We are working to maintain staff resilience by reviewing case loads regularly and considering ways to support our staff.
- In December, 267 (49%) of our visits were undertaken in person. 276 (51%) were undertaken virtually.
- We are better at managing the impact of Covid having learnt from the first two lock-downs. However, there are additional challenges in the third national lock-down announced earlier this month, including:
 - A greater infection rate, and evidence that more staff are incapacitated due to Covid
 - Greater service pressures: There are 200 additional children in receipt of services from CSC (as at the end of November 2020). This requires additional oversight and leadership capacity. We have therefore deployed additional service managers to manage these pressures.
 - A continued expectation to manage business as usual functions during this period.

• **MASH / First Response**

- MASH is stable and continues to function as usual.
- First Response – there are staffing implications due to Covid. Of the 20 social worker establishment 5 are not available for work due to Covid-19 infections/isolation. The Business Support function has also been affected in this service area.
- Staff absences together with increased demand for services has increased caseloads: 282 children and families are allocated across 15 Social Workers (avg. 19). This is not distributed equally and masks the fact that newly qualified social workers are required to have reduced case loads of ca. 5 children. Therefore some experienced social workers are working with a higher number of children and families (in the mid- to high-20s).

Children's Social Care Update (contd)

- **Safeguarding and Care Planning**

- Staffing in the service is stable although there are vacancies which are being recruited to. There are 2 staff members who are impacted by infection or isolation.
- All children have risk assessments to inform frequency and type of visits
- There is an increase of children with child in need and child protection plans within the service which is placing pressures on social worker caseloads. Caseloads are higher than optimum levels with some experienced social workers holding responsibility for 25 children.
- Additional social work and operational leadership resource is being mobilised to ensure caseloads and decisions for children are safe and manageable

- **Children in Care/Resources Team**

- No Covid-19 issues. Service is stable. One member of staff absent due to Covid infection in the fostering service.
- The number of children supported has increased over the last couple of weeks. Agreement the earlier transfer of children into the service to reduce pressures elsewhere in the system (court work).
- Ongoing partnership work to secure timely delivery of Initial Health Assessment and Repeat Health Assessments.

- **Care Experienced Young People**

- No Covid-19 issues. Service is stable. One member of staff absent due to Covid infection.
- Face-to-face visits only happening where a risk-assessment deems this to be necessary. All other visits are happening virtually.
- During the lock-down our Personal Advisors were having increased contact with our care experienced young people.
- Care experienced young people are receiving their winter-grant. We are paying additional allowance to care experienced children to support meeting increased costs of food, internet access and heating costs.

- **Adolescent Family Service**

- No current C-19 staffing impact. Service is stable. Pracitioners continue to find creative ways to engage with children and young people in the context of the lock-down.

- **Youth Offending Service**
 - No current C-19 staffing impact. Service is stable.
 - The service is working under the recovery plan submitted to the Youth Justice Board.
 - Courts are operating
 - Visiting children face-to-face in secure settings is challenging and based on risk. Alternative virtual methods are being used.
- **Quality Assurance and Professional Development (QAPD)**
 - No current C-19 impact. Some staffing absences in the reviewing service presenting challenges in the context of increasing number of children on child protection plans.
 - The service is providing online virtual training. This training cannot be delivered at the same intensity and rate compared to group learning models.
- **Business Support Team**
 - 3 covid-related absences in the Business Support Team.
 - The Business Support Team has overseen the roll-out of devices to vulnerable children.

Page 1

Table 1: Device Allocation overseen by BST (January 2021)

Device	DfE Allocation	Total Allocated	Available Stock
Laptop	396	253	143
Tablet	50	43	7
4G	75	34	41
Total	521	330	191

This page is intentionally left blank