

Merton Council Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel



Date: 29 September 2022

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council chamber - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

AGENDA

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel membership

Councillors:

Usaama Kaweesa (Chair)
Chessie Flack (Vice-Chair)
Michael Butcher
Caroline Charles
Jil Hall
Billy Hayes
Andrew Howard
Linda Kirby MBE
Samantha MacArthur
Dennis Pearce

Co-opted Representatives

Mansoor Ahmad, Parent Governor
Representative Secondary and Special
Sectors
Roz Cordner, Church of England Diocese
Becky Cruise, Parent Governor
Representative
Dr Oona Stannard, Catholic Diocese

Substitute Members:

Max Austin
Sheri-Ann Bhim
Jenifer Gould
Edith Macauley MBE
Robert Page

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. For further advice please speak with the Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership.

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Overview and Scrutiny describes the way Merton's scrutiny councillors hold the Council's Executive (the Cabinet) to account to make sure that they take the right decisions for the Borough. Scrutiny panels also carry out reviews of Council services or issues to identify ways the Council can improve or develop new policy to meet the needs of local people. From May 2008, the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Panels have been restructured and the Panels renamed to reflect the Local Area Agreement strategic themes.

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

- ⇒ **Call-in:** If three (non-executive) councillors feel that a decision made by the Cabinet is inappropriate they can 'call the decision in' after it has been made to prevent the decision taking immediate effect. They can then interview the Cabinet Member or Council Officers and make recommendations to the decision-maker suggesting improvements.
- ⇒ **Policy Reviews:** The panels carry out detailed, evidence-based assessments of Council services or issues that affect the lives of local people. At the end of the review the panels issue a report setting out their findings and recommendations for improvement and present it to Cabinet and other partner agencies. During the reviews, panels will gather information, evidence and opinions from Council officers, external bodies and organisations and members of the public to help them understand the key issues relating to the review topic.
- ⇒ **One-Off Reviews:** Panels often want to have a quick, one-off review of a topic and will ask Council officers to come and speak to them about a particular service or issue before making recommendations to the Cabinet.
- ⇒ **Scrutiny of Council Documents:** Panels also examine key Council documents, such as the budget, the Business Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan.

Scrutiny panels need the help of local people, partners and community groups to make sure that Merton delivers effective services. If you think there is something that scrutiny should look at, or have views on current reviews being carried out by scrutiny, let us know.

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Agenda Item 2

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

22 JUNE 2022

(7.15 pm - 9.15 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Usaama Kaweesa (in the Chair), Michael Butcher, Caroline Charles, Jil Hall, Billy Hayes, Andrew Howard, Linda Kirby MBE, Samantha MacArthur and Dennis Pearce

Co-opted members Mansoor Ahmad, Roz Cordner, Becky Cruise and Dr Oona Stannard

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Brenda Fraser, (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) and Councillor Sally Kenny, (Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning)

Dheeraj Chibber, (Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion), Richard Ellis (Interim Assistant Director for Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation), Farah Ikram, Interim Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (Assistant Director for Education and Early Help) and Stella Akintan (Scrutiny Officer)

Dawn Hollis, (Head of Immunisations, NHSE/I)
Ellie Walker-Todd, (Immunisation Commissioning Manager)
Priyanka Trehan, (Senior Immunisation Transformation Manager).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chessie Flack and Councillor Jenifer Gould attended as a substitute

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4 CHILD IMMUNISATION PROGRAMMES IN MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

NHS Colleagues gave an overview of the report on immunisations for 0-5 years old. A panel member said low immunisation rates were an issue before the pandemic. There is currently an outbreak of Polio, and we need to look at steps to address low take-up rates.

Panel members asked about the target for pre-school booster and if low take up rates are contributing to health inequalities. NHS Colleagues reported that MMR1 in Merton is lower than England but higher than the region. The health community needs to tackle this ongoing concern. A number of initiatives include data cleansing, dealing with population movement and the launch of the Pan London Immunisations strategy will have actions at many levels and reach communities who have not taken up vaccines.

NHS colleagues reported that in addressing health inequalities there are extended opening hours for GP surgeries, pilot on digital appointments and work with local community groups looking at improving newborn health.

In response to concerns about the low take up of vaccines. NHS colleagues reported there is a national focus on immunisations. There is good practice on contact with some seldom heard communities. Proven strategies include good communication messages to communities and training for healthcare professionals.

A panel member asked for future reports to provide statistics on the differences in take up between the East and West of the borough.

A panel member highlighted the importance of using peers to spread vaccination messages.

In response to questions from the Panel about the lessons learnt from Covid and their implications for immunisation, NHS colleagues reported that although this was a pandemic response and required a different approach, there are lessons on data collection and swift responses. The NHS will be collating information on lessons learnt over the coming weeks.

RESOLVED

The Chair asked for a future NHS report on the effectiveness of the London wide Strategy

5 DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE (Agenda Item 5)

The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion gave an overview of the report.

A panel member asked if there has been an overview of safety in schools and if defibrillators are available as there is a campaign to get them into schools. The Assistant Director for Education and Early Help said schools already have single points of entry and phone entry, and schools have their own emergency plans.

The Assistant Director for Education and Early Help said she will provide an answer on defibrillators

A panel member asked about out of hours care. The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion said small numbers of children are received in an

emergency situation. Sutton provide the service and ensure social workers can place children in best place out of hours care.

A panel member said the Ofsted report highlighted out of hours care, flexible needs led housing for care leavers as areas for improvement.

The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion said the department are looking at a need led housing approach. The challenge is the availability of housing stock. There will be further reports on activities to address this in the months to come.

A panel member asked about provision for unaccompanied for asylum seekers from Ukraine.

The Interim Assistant Director for Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation gave an overview of the various routes into the UK via the Homes for Ukraine or unaccompanied minors scheme.

The Assistant Director for Education and Early Help gave an overview of main provisions within the Education White Paper and said more scrutiny on the proposals within the paper from this Panel will be useful in due course.

RESOLVED

The Chair thanked officers for their report

6 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES - VERBAL UPDATES (Agenda Item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services gave an overview of her portfolio highlighting her commitment to the safety of women. The Cabinet Member also reported she was attending the Children's Trust, visited the Acacia Centre and recognised the rise in mental health issues post Covid.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning said much good work is taking place in the borough and she will support and challenge schools to do the best they can as well as celebrate the good work taking place and help all schools to become outstanding. The Cabinet Member said her priorities are special educational needs, support for vulnerable pupils and the ongoing improvements related to the Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy.

RESOLVED

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members for their updates.

7 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The Interim Head of Performance Improvement and Partnerships gave an overview of the report.

A panel member asked if we carry out exit interviews with foster carers to learn from their feedback. The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion said each foster carer is attached to a social worker who conduct exit interviews.

A Panel member asked if the council is seeking foster carers of Ukrainian heritage and unaccompanied minors from Ukraine. The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion consider at all potential foster carers and do not impose limitations based on heritage.

In response to questions on surplus places. The Assistant Director of Education and Early Help said the council are seeking to manage number of school places and not close schools in the context of school budgets.

RESOLVED

The Chair thanked Officers for their report

8 WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23 (Agenda Item 8)

The work programme was agreed by the Panel

Committee: Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Date: 29th September 2022

Wards: All

Subject: Departmental Update

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member(s): Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children's Services, and Cllr Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning

Contact officer: Maisie Davies - Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments affecting the Children, Schools and Families Department, and not covered elsewhere on the agenda. It focuses on those aspects of particular relevance to the department.

2 DETAILS

CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

- 2.1 It has been a busy period for Children, Schools and Families; like other parts of the Council, the Department has been supporting the Council's emergency response following the gas explosion in Galpin's Road. The gas explosion tragically took the life of a four-year-old girl and left three others injured. To ensure the safety of residents, more than 500 people have been evacuated and many of these have now started to be able to return home.
- 2.2 CSF has played a key role in supporting families affected by the gas explosion, including those who have been displaced. We are supporting the bereaved family, as well as working jointly with schools to identify children and families who require emotional or mental health support in the wake of this tragic event. In the return to school period, we have also supported families with school transport requirements. We are immensely proud of our staff, many of whom have volunteered significant amounts of time to the emergency response and continue to do so.

3 EDUCATION

Summary of recent developments in national policy

SEND Inspection Consultation

- 3.1 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are [seeking views](#) on proposed changes to the way they jointly inspect area SEND arrangements from 2023. The changes are intended to enable SEND inspections to focus more on the impact that a local area partnership's SEND arrangements has on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people. The arrangements will look to strengthen accountability and drive continuous improvement by introducing inspection cycles and annual engagement meetings; three inspection outcomes; and an expectation that all areas produce and publish a strategic plan for SEND, to be updated following inspection. The inspection process will also gather more evidence directly from children, young people and their families; look more closely at arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision; and include social care inspectors in SEND inspection teams to enable a more holistic view.
- 3.2 Children, Schools and Families submitted a response to the consultation welcoming the increased focus on impact for children and young people. We will incorporate any changes to the framework into our inspection readiness planning.

Supporting Vulnerable Children

Supporting vulnerable Children and with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

- 3.3 An Education Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) is a legal document which describes a child or young person's special educational needs (SEN), the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve for pupils aged 0-25 years. An EHC plan can also describe health needs which relate to the pupil's SEN and any health care provision reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities which result in the child or young person having SEN. In addition, the EHC plan can describe social care needs which relate to a pupils SEN or to a disability and any social care provision required from social services under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, and/or reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities which result in the child or young person having SEN. The special educational provision described in an EHC plan must be provided by the child or young person's local authority or the clinical commissioning group (now integrated care system).
- 3.4 An EHC plan can only be issued after a child or young person has gone through the process of an Education, Health and Care needs assessment (EHCNA). An Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment is a detailed assessment where the LA seeks professional advice from education, health and social care to determine what a child's special educational needs are and what provision should be put in place. Following the EHCNA the LA will decide whether they will issue an EHCP.

- 3.5 Since January 2022 the service has received 234 requests for an EHCNA. In this calendar year the LA has agreed to undertake 202 EHCNA's and agreed to issue 116 EHCPs.
- 3.6 At August 2022 Merton currently maintains 2,481 EHCPs. This is a decrease of 99 plans since January 2022. The Service has actively been following up pupils who are not returning to education or training and we have ceased their plans following the legal process.
- 3.7 The EHCNA process should be completed within 20 weeks. As of August the year to date timeliness for completing an EHCNA is at 71% in the total number of EHCPs being issued within 20 weeks
- 3.8 The recruitment of 8 additional Education Health and Care Co-ordinators has been successful. We are currently inducting the new staff members. In September the new SEN Structure of Assessment Team/Early Year – Primary Team, Secondary Team and the Post 16 Team will go live. The focus of the Primary, Secondary and Post 16 Team will be to ensure that statutory timescales of the EHCP Review process are met and to improve the quality of EHCPs.

Expansion of SEND provision

- 3.9 In line with our safety valve proposals, two new provisions opened as planned for the start of term in September, and two provisions were expanded. Whatley Campus, for children with Autism and Communication needs, and part of Melrose School, opened to 40 children, with an eventual official capacity of 80, and Cranmer School opened its Additional Resourced Provision. Provisions at West Wimbledon and Hatfield Primary Schools were both expanded, with the second phase of expansion for West Wimbledon following next summer.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language

- 3.10 In May 2022 (school census data), 44.9% of Merton's primary school cohort, 30.5% of the secondary school cohort and 32.8% of pupils in Merton's special schools (LA maintained and academy schools) are registered as speaking English as an additional language.
- 3.11 LA primary schools with the highest proportion of EAL pupils include Bond, Links, St Thomas of Canterbury and Gorringe primary schools and, of the secondary schools, St Mark's Academy and Rutlish.
- 3.12 By the end of Key Stage (KS) 2, EAL pupils in Merton's primary maintained LA and academy schools attain outcomes that are broadly the same as the whole cohort, whilst the progress they have made from KS 1 to KS 2 is better: 61% of Merton's EAL pupils achieved the Expected Standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of KS 2 in 2022, which is in line with the performance of EAL pupils nationally that year and with the outcome for All pupils in Merton. The progress that Merton's EAL pupils made from KS 1 to KS 2 was significantly above average in each of the three core subjects and in maths was +2.79 compared with +1.62 for

the whole KS 2 cohort (please note this is according to provisional data for 2022).

- 3.13 2022 GCSE data for the EAL cohort is not yet available.
- 3.14 Merton School Improvement Service funds an Equalities Adviser whose role includes EAL and who offers a borough-wide training programme which includes 'Welcoming new Arrivals' and training for Early Careers Teachers on supporting EAL pupils' learning across the curriculum. Resources to support class teachers include an Early Reading pack translated into a range of community languages. The EAL adviser provides a termly network meeting for EAL leaders and provides bespoke support for EAL leaders in individual schools, for example those new to the role. There are also initiatives which support schools in meeting the needs of EAL pupils (and other pupil groups) and these include an Oracy project: Power of Reading, Storytelling Schools, Voice 21. Support for individual schools in 2021 – 2022 has included leading staff meetings, supporting individual teachers and support with curriculum development to ensure that EAL learners have equal access.

Attain Partnership

- 3.15 Attain is the partnership of Merton schools with London Borough of Merton. The Attain Board combines expertise across the borough with two headteachers representing each of the 8 school clusters, Primary and Secondary phase governor representatives and LA officers.
- 3.16 2021/2022 highlights include
- The Young People's Race Equality Conference at which students aged 16 – 24 worked with an external facilitator and a Merton Youth Worker to create a Young People's Race Equality Manifesto which has been shared with school leaders and school staff through the Black Lives Matter and Equalities Forum. A student group continues to meet to share their voice, with support for this led by Merton's Participation and Engagement Manager.
 - Attain funded a Race Equality in Education Conference on 1st July 2022, which was attended by 73 school leaders and council officers, and 31 schools were represented. Cllr Kenny opened the event and it was drawn to a conclusion by Cllr Kaweesa. Guest speakers included Laura Henry-Allain MBE and Professor Paul Miller. There was an excellent presentation by Alison Jerrard and her Student Cultural Ambassadors. Themes explored included racial stereotyping, organisational culture and adultification. In 2022 – 2023 we intend to bring together the school staff and student conferences so that there is a platform for young people to speak directly to an audience of school leaders.
 - The Merton Reading Fluency Project was designed to increase the number of Y2 pupils achieving the Expected Standard (ES) in reading at the end of KS 1 and cultivating enthusiastic, confident readers able to tackle challenging texts. All 11 schools in the project found their

implementation of the project hugely affected by Covid absences of pupils and staff. Nevertheless, at the end of the one year project, 71% of the targeted cohort reached the Expected Standard in Reading at the end of Key Stage 1; the average improvement in comprehension for pupils was 24 months. Black pupils made more progress in reading comprehension than any other wider ethnic group, with an average of over 31 months progress. EAL boys made 3 years and 6 months progress.

- 3.17 In 2022 – 2023, Attain funded projects and initiatives will include a comprehensive support package for new headteachers in Merton schools, the extension of the Secondary School Peer Review programme into the primary school phase and an expansion of the Reading Fluency project into the KS 3 cohort.

4 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Ofsted Action Plan

- 4.1 Members are aware that the department's Social Care and Early Help services were inspected (ILACS) in February and March 2022. An overview of the positives and the overall outcome was provided in the departmental update of June 2022. Over the summer period, the department developed and submitted the post ILACS inspection action plan to Ofsted in August.
- 4.2 Although the overall judgement was Outstanding, the two areas identified for improvement were:
1. The quality of work with some children by out-of-hours staff when children need to come into care;
 2. A flexible needs-led housing offer when young people leave care.
- 4.3 The appended action plan (Appendix 2) provides an overview of the activities already undertaken as well as those underway as part of further improvement work. The progress of these actions is overseen within various departmental meetings and overall line of sight will continue to be held through the monthly Learning and Improvement Board.

Disproportionality and the Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board

- 4.4 The Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board (YCPEB) is a partnership board chaired by the Director of Children's Services and attended by various agencies. It is responsible for the management, oversight and strategic direction of Youth Justice and Prevention services.
- 4.5 A Disproportionality Subgroup of the YCPEB is chaired by Education and includes representation from Police, Youth Justice Service, Early Help, Housing, and Mental Health. The Subgroup addresses the overrepresentation of Black and Mixed-Heritage children and young people in the youth criminal justice system. The group has reviewed data

and potential drivers for overrepresentation and agreed key areas where partners can work together to make a positive impact on outcomes. While there has been much work done in this area, it is recognised that issues of disproportionality persist.

- 4.6 As part of the above, the group undertook a Disproportionality Data Review to understand if Lammy Review¹ findings are replicated in Merton regarding 'no comment interviews' and other disproportionalities. If a young person gives no comment, they are more likely to be charged and go to court, which increases their chances of being put on a Youth Justice Order rather than triaged and having an out of court disposal.
- 4.7 South West London Borough Command Unit (BCU) reviewed data for all young people that came to notice in a 3 month period: Black young people were more likely to give no comment interviews than other young people. They were also more likely to be arrested for higher gravity offences i.e. those that are deemed more serious. It made no difference who accompanied the young person at the interview.
- 4.8 In response, a court process was agreed that if the young person gives no comment, then chooses to comment in court, it can be returned to the police to decide if an out of court disposal is possible. The youth justice service is also working with young people to look at what and who might be able to influence them to give a comment-based interview.
- 4.9 The second theme reviewed by the Subgroup was stop and search, which is often not only the first point of entry to the system, but also disproportionate. We know from Merton's Youth Survey² that trust in the police correlates strongly with having been stopped or a friend having been stopped. Therefore, improving practice in stop and search may be able to affect higher trust in the police, which is central to no comment interviews. Data has been reviewed by young people and senior police officers; workshops were held and a reverse mentoring project was successfully run between young people who have been stopped and senior BCU police officers. The findings and graphic minutes have been widely circulated (graphic minutes are available at Appendix 3).

¹ The Lammy Review was an independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system. [Lammy Review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642222/Lammy_Review_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

² The Impact of Covid-19 on young people in Merton was a co-produced research report which reached over 2,000 children and young people living and learning in Merton, and was co-produced by Merton's Young Inspectors. [The Impact of Covid19 on young people in Merton - Final.pdf](#)

Appendix One – The Safety Valve Programme

1. This Appendix sets out background to the Merton DSG Safety Valve Agreement and the second monitoring return.
2. The Safety Valve process is a DfE Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit intervention which recognises the nationwide issues with the funding of special educational needs.
3. The process requires local authorities to work with partners to produce a plan to re-balance the Special Education Needs system and get to a balanced DSG budget over five years. In recognition of the scale of the challenge, an agreement comes with deficit funding from the DfE.
4. Discussions with DfE were conducted over several months culminating in the final submission in December 2021. To get agreement LBM was pushed to bring forward actions to earlier years, which has resulted in a highly ambitious plan.

Merton’s Safety Valve agreement

5. Merton’s Safety Valve Agreement was signed in March 2022. It commits Merton to getting to a balanced budget by 2026/27. DfE expect Merton to remain in deficit until the final year.
6. In return the DfE will provide deficit funding of £28m paid in instalments. The first instalment of £11.6m was paid in March 2022 and the second instalment of £875k in July 2022.
7. The agreement sets out nine conditions to be met which are as follows:
 - i. Support mainstream schools to adopt inclusive practice to enable more children and young people to remain in mainstream settings where appropriate. Develop a graduated response which sets clear guidance on support that should be available in mainstream settings;
 - ii. Strengthen the SEN Support offer available in mainstream schools to reduce escalation of children and young people’s needs and manage demand for EHCPs. This should include targeted investment on effective early intervention;
 - iii. Strengthen the professional networks across mainstream settings to promote learning and confidence in meeting children and young people’s needs, including articulating school level inclusion standards;
 - iv. Develop Merton’s sufficiency strategy to ensure that current specialist provision is being used most effectively, including working closely with school leaders to optimise availability of provision. Expand specialist provision within the LA appropriately in order to meet the needs of children and young people within the authority;

- v. Secure collaboration and financial commitment from partner agencies where appropriate, in particular ensuring health partners make adequate contributions to provision;
- vi. Develop and implement a clear planning and decision making process for placements, in line with the sufficiency strategy;
- vii. Strengthen oversight and contracting with independent and non-maintained schools to ensure value for money, including reviewing expensive placements;
- viii. Strengthen the EHCP annual review process in order that EHCPs can be stepped down where children and young people's needs have been met appropriately;
- ix. Review and develop a clear SEND financial strategy that ensures case level decision making is strategic and appropriate.

Merton's Safety Valve Plan

- 8. Work commenced in January 2022 ahead of the agreement recognising that the changes were necessary to improve outcomes as well as achieve financial balance. We are making good progress against all of the actions and are seeing significant reduction in costs from opening new in-borough provision.
- 9. The key headings and their current status are as follows:

Actions	RAG
Slow the growth of EHCPs	
Commissioning of non-maintained independent special schools (NMISS)	
New special free school	
New ARP places	
Contributions LBM and health	
DSG income/Block transfer	

10. Progress is good across all the actions in the plan, but this is only the first year of a five-year plan and there is a long way to go. As at the end of August the forecast in-year deficit was £10.4m, a significant improvement of the March position of £13.55m and progress towards being in balance by 2026/27. However, we are only five months into a five-year plan and we need to maintain momentum and delivery across the five years.

11. Merton has had a high level of EHCPs, which has been a key factor in the developing deficit and stemming the growth is part of the plan. As of 1st

September, Merton had 2,493 EHCP plans, fewer than the 2,525 set out in the plan. The number of referrals is down. In the period June to August 2022, there were 74 referrals for assessment, compared to 126 in the same period in 2021, and 107 in 2020.

12. Another of the key factors in Merton has been the over dependence on expensive and out of borough independent provision. We are working to expand the in-borough offer in Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) and in special schools.
13. We have opened new special school places at Whately Avenue campus, a satellite of Melrose School. At the start of the new school term in September 40 new places were filled, with a further 40 opening available for further use.
14. Phased works were also completed for the start of term in September for West Wimbledon Primary School to double the size of their ARP (Additional Resourced Provision) from 24 to 48 places, with the first phased completed as planned to provide 7 extra places in 2022/23. Works were also completed at Hatfield Primary School to double the size of their ARP from 14 to 24 places, to provide at least 6 extra places in September 2022.
15. Following the statutory process, the Council confirmed the prescribed alteration for Cranmer Primary School to provide an ARP for children with Communication Needs including 24 places. Only Minor works were required for September, with the permanent project planned for summer 2023, and the provision opened for 10 children in September with the potential to rise to 16 children through the year.
16. Another key response to this is a bid for a new special free school in the borough. In the Safety Valve plan this was assumed to open in September 2026. We have received in principle agreement for DfE for a new school and need to submit a more detailed bid by the end of this month. We are still exploring options for potential sites for the school with the DfE. However, we are working to see if we can deliver the new school ahead of the planned date to deliver the benefits earlier.
17. We have engaged a specialist commissioner who has been reviewing the placements made in the ten independent special schools that we use most. This has raised a number of issues and we are engaged in further discussion around their services and costs.
18. Contributions from the LBM General Fund, which was part of the plan submitted, are secure and reflected in budget monitoring. DSG income reflects the most recent funding announcements and the assumptions we were instructed to make by DfE. The block transfer is a movement within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the schools block to the High Needs Block. Any transfer above 0.5% requires Secretary of State approval.

Summary

19. We are only five months into a five-year plan. We are making good progress against all actions. The deficit has come down significantly but there is still a long way to go over the five years of the plan.

Post-ILACS Action Plan

Following Inspection - 28 February to 4 March 2022

No.	Issue raised by Ofsted	Outcome	Action	Responsible AD / Head of Service	By when	Reported to
Page 15 1	The quality of work with some children by out-of-hours staff when children need to come into care.	Children who are placed into care out of hours receive a high-quality service	a) Meet with leads for out of hours service delivery and commissioning to agree principles of placing children in care out of hours and plans for monitoring meetings and updated guidance.	Director of Children's Services / Assistant Director for Children's Social Care & Youth Inclusion	May 2022 (complete)	Children, School & Families (CSF) Departmental Management Team
			b) Re-issue updated guidance on expectations for when children are placed in an emergency out of hours.	Head of Family Assessment and Intervention	Initial comms – May 2022 (complete) Formal guidance - October 2022	CSF Departmental Management Team
			c) Ensure monitoring of children's cases (performance data and case file audits) via out of hours service meetings with Sutton and other LAs and ad hoc as necessary between meetings.	Head of Family Assessment and Intervention	July 2022 (in place)	CSF Departmental Management Team
		Ensure robust commissioning arrangements for out of hours service, including reviewing options for ensuring children are placed into care out of hours with a social-work qualified worker present.	d) Review out of hours contract with Sutton and ensure robust contract monitoring in place to oversee service quality and take timely action in response to any issues.	Children's Commissioning Manager / Head of Family Assessment and Intervention	September 2022	CSF Departmental Management Team
		e) Review arrangements with third party providers of out of hours social care services.	Children's Commissioning Manager / Head of Family Assessment and Intervention	September 2022	CSF Departmental Management Team	

Post-ILACS Action Plan

Following Inspection - 28 February to 4 March 2022

No.	Issue raised by Ofsted	Outcome	Action	Responsible AD / Head of Service	By when	Reported to
		Robust and proportionate partnership response to safeguarding children out of hours.	f) Review out of hours arrangements with local Child Abuse Investigation Team and Borough Command Unit.	Head of Family Assessment and Intervention	September 2022	Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership
Page 16 2	A flexible needs-led housing offer when young people leave care.	All care experienced young adults are able to access accommodation which meets their needs when they leave care.	a) Establish Joint Housing Panel to ensure joint working around housing offers, which also addresses any unsuitable offers for care leavers	Head of Corporate Parenting / Head of Housing and Strategy	May 2022 (complete)	CSF Departmental Management Team / Community & Housing (C&H) Departmental Management Team
			b) Establish a framework for providers of accommodation and support for care experienced young adults.	Head of Corporate Parenting	November 2022	CSF Departmental Management Team / CSF and C&H Joint Transformation Board
			c) Create in-house Semi-Independent accommodation offer for care leavers.	Head of Corporate Parenting	May 2023	CSF Departmental Management Team / CSF and C&H Joint Transformation Board
			d) Review Merton's housing offer for care leavers.	Head of Corporate Parenting / Head of Housing and Strategy	November 2022	CSF and C&H Joint Transformation Board / Corporate Parenting Board

Post-ILACS Action Plan

Following Inspection - 28 February to 4 March 2022

Glossary

CSF	Children, School & Families (Directorate)
C&H	Community & Housing (Directorate, includes Adult Social Care)
CSF Directorate Management Team	Weekly meeting chaired by Director of Children's Services and attended by Assistant Directors within CSF.
CSF and C&H Joint Transformation Board	Monthly meeting between CSF and C&H Directorates, providing strategic oversight of joint priorities and projects. Co-chaired by Director of CSF and Director of C&H, attended by Assistant Directors & Heads of Service in both Directorates.
Corporate Parenting Board	Chaired by Chief Executive, attended by lead council members, the council's Corporate Management Team (all Directors), Assistant Directors in CSF and C&H, and relevant Heads of Service.

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WORKSHOP 3: REVIEW SESSION and CLOSE GROUP



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Committee: Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

Date: 29th September 2022

Wards: All

Subject: SEND Written Statement of Action

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member(s): Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children's Services, and Cllr Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning

Contact officer: Maisie Davies - Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and associated work by local partners to address the areas for improvement identified.

2 DETAILS

2.1 Following a 2019 inspection by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, Merton was asked, as a local area partnership, to develop a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address three areas for development identified:

Area 1: A lack of cohesive oversight of, and effective planning for, the implementation of some key aspects of the reforms, particularly by health partners

Area 2: The inconsistent quality and contribution of health partners and the poor utilisation of health information in EHC assessment and planning

Area 3: Poor quality EHC plans compounded by ineffective quality assurance.

2.2 Since then, the partnership has been working hard to address these areas together and considerable progress has been made to strengthen strategic and operational partnership working (see also Appendix One). This includes:

- Improvement in the quality of professional advice provided for EHC assessments and the quality EHC plans, as evidenced by routine quality assurance and audits. Team Manager audits in the SEND

Integrated Service have shown improvements in all sections of EHC plans. Between 2020-21 and 2021-22, Outstanding ratings improved from none to 6% of all EHC plan sections rated and Good ratings improved from 57% to 85% of all sections rated. In line with this, the proportion of Requires Improvement ratings have decreased from 42% to 9% and there were no sections rated Inadequate.

- Improvement in timeliness of professional advice provided for EHC assessments and completion of EHC plans, as evidenced by our performance reports. Between January and August 2022, 77% of EHC plans (excluding exceptions) were completed within 20 weeks, an improvement on 71% in 2021 (January to December) and above the national average of 60%.
- Parents, carers, children and young people are given opportunities to feedback routinely. This has included positive views of support received from partners in the system, alongside supporting identification of next priorities for development (e.g. annual reviews, which has led to the development of annual review improvement plan). In the latest responses to SENDIS online feedback form, the service received 3.7 out of 5 rating by parents/carers and young people gave a rating of 3.8 out of 5 stars for 'my views were included in the plan'. Merton's parent/carer forum, Kids First, is also represented on a wide range of strategic and working groups, providing routine feedback from their membership and supporting the partnership to co-produce solutions.
- Improved operational partnerships, including more collaborative relationships established, revised procedures including new EHC advice templates and improvements to multi-agency panels, and a robust quality assurance framework embedded including single- and multi-agency audits. This has been accompanied by a strengthened training offer rolled out across the partnership, including bespoke training for some providers, picking up areas for development from audit and performance reports.
- Refreshed governance structures, including a new multi-agency SEND Governance Board chaired by the council's Chief Executive and a fortnightly senior WSOA Task & Finish Group, continue to provide stronger oversight of progress against the WSOA alongside delivery of the 2020-23 SEND Strategy and the Safety Valve Programme.

2.3 Quarterly monitoring meetings take place with regional leads at the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England, attended by partnership leads and representatives from Kids First. These will continue until a re-visit takes place in Merton under the Ofsted and CQC SEND inspection framework, which will be focused on determining whether sufficient progress has been made in addressing the three areas for development details above.

Merton Local Area Written Statement of Action - Update

Date of update: 14 June 2022

Lead officer: Elizabeth.Fitzpatrick@merton.gov.uk

Contact officer: Sarah.Momber@merton.gov.uk

For more details see here: [Merton Local Area Written Statement of Action and Easy Read Guide](#)

Objective	Action	RAG-Rating	Progress update
IMPROVEMENT OUTCOME 1 Lack of cohesive strategic management and effective planning, particularly from health partners, in implementing some aspects of the reforms			
1.1 Strategic management of SEND reforms to be jointly reviewed by Children and Young People's Integrated Commissioning Group	ACTION 1.1.1 - Development of a scorecard to allow review of numbers of EHCPs, timeliness of advice and statutory timeliness of EHCP completions	Complete	A detailed piece of work was undertaken to devise a purposeful and operational dashboard that would provide a comprehensive overview of EHCP performance across Merton from key partners. The dashboard is an information management tool used to track performance against agreed indicators in line of local/national statutory guidance and timeframes. The dashboard has been discussed at the monthly Integrated Children & Young People Commissioning Group (ICYPCG) since June 2020 to provide partnership oversight of EHCP performance. Timeliness of EHCP completion improved in 2021 to 72.0%, well above our previous performance (40% in 2020) and the national average of 59.9% in 2021.
	ACTION 1.1.2 - Quarterly report on EHCP audits to be presented by the DMO and Head of SENDIS to Strategic management group	Complete	From June 2020 onwards, the Designated Medical Officer (DMO) and the Head of SEND Integrated Service jointly reported to the ICYPCG details of the audit process (single or multi-agency). The reports include findings and areas of improvement with recommendations. The ICYPCG continues to give regular scrutiny to SEND audit findings. During 2021 and 2022, a joint approach between Central London Community Health (CLCH) & SEND Integrated Service has also provided audit updates to the bi-monthly partnership SEND Operational Board, as well as reporting our progress to the DfE and NHS England via quarterly monitoring meetings.
	ACTION 1.1.3 - Review of implementation of improvement plans as a result of audits	Complete	As a result of the audits that have taken place, training has been provided to the SEN Team, partners services and professional advice templates have been developed, trialled and introduced. Implementation plans are written as part of the audit reports and this has been a partnership effort with close working between the LA, CCG and health providers. The focus has now moved onto improving the annual review process.
	ACTION 1.1.4 - Review of WSoA action plan	Complete	The WSoA is closely monitored and reviewed by the weekly WSoA Task & Finish group with senior leaders from local authority, SW London Clinical Commissioning Group & CLCH. WSoA updates are also a standing item on each ICYPCG (monthly) and SEND Reform Implementation Board (bi-monthly). Leads from the CCG and LA have reviewed the whole action plan and updated progress against each action point. This is then fed back to the above forums where actions are approved and signed off. The new SEND Strategic Governance Board established from June 2022 will be receiving regular updates on the WSOA action plan - this is chaired by LA Chief Executive and attended by senior partnership and parent/carer representatives.

Objective	Action	RAG-Rating	Progress update
	ACTION 1.1.5 - Review the workplan of the DMO and define options for further support if required after the review which may include the use of a DCO	Complete	A part time Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) was appointed in Merton from Oct 2020, working jointly with Sutton, to provide oversight and support to health partners regarding their statutory responsibilities within SEND, alongside the Designated Medical Officer (DMO). A key priority was to devise and deliver a training programme for the workforce across health, education and social care on EHC needs assessment and planning for children and young people. Training was delivered from October 2020 onwards; this has included all health partners, including 50 health practitioners, 10 children with disabilities social workers and 60% of GP practices represented. Due to restrictions of COVID all training was offered via online webinars. A DCO progress report evidences the impact of the role in 2020-21, and a 2021-22 report is currently being developed. The DCO role is currently filled under temporary maternity cover by the previous SEND Health Team Lead. Previously, the SEND Health Team Lead was embedded within the SEND Integrated service, playing a key role in the EHCP process and providing a valuable interface/conduit with the SENDIS Team and health partners. This position was successful in 'bridging' the gap and communication between EHCP coordinators and health is now stronger. This position also worked closely with the SEND Nurse from Epsom and St Heliers hospital to review health professional advice.
1.2 - Finalise and publish a revised joint SEND Strategy for the local area	Finalise and publish a revised joint SEND Strategy for the local area which outlines how feedback from young people, parents and carers and professionals is being used to improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Complete	SEND Strategy 2020-2023 and action plan published. Progress on implementation plan has been monitored by Children's Trust and updates on implementation reported to CCG Governing Body and CYP Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The final year of the plan will also be overseen by the new SEND Strategic Board from June 2022 onwards.
1.3 Undertake a specific JSNA profile on children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities, building on and strengthening existing JSNA data analysis and intelligence.	ACTION 1.3.1 - Define scope of profile and agree between partners	Complete	Comprehensive SEND Needs Analysis prepared in 2020 and reported to Integrated Children & Young People Commissioning Group (ICYPCG) to inform commissioning plans. Safety valve work involved comprehensive analysis of local SEND data throughout 2021 which is continuing in 2022.
	ACTION 1.3.2 - Desk based research, formulation of JSNA and stakeholder engagement	Complete	
	ACTION 1.3.3 - Sign off and publication of JSNA profile	Complete	
IMPROVEMENT OUTCOME 2	The inconsistent quality and contribution of health partners and poor utilisation of health information in EHC assessment and planning		
	ACTION 2.1.1 - Carry out a review of current processes in health	Complete	Reviewed with local commissioned community provider Central London Health Care (CLCH). Quality assurance has evidenced improvements in health contributions to EHC planning.
	ACTION 2.1.2 - Define common process moving forward	Complete	The EHCP Health Lead/Head of SENDIS and have clear processes in place for requesting and receiving Professional Advice. A Health Advice Template for CLCH and the Community Paediatric service has been developed, trialled and incorporated into practice.

Objective	Action	RAG-Rating	Progress update
2.1 Health oversight of EHCP process is defined and implemented	ACTION 2.1.3 - Process map current health process of EHCP with a focus on sign off and oversight	Complete	SEND health roles and responsibilities were clearly outlined in 2020. The SEN Specialist Nurse reviews and contributes supports the SEN Team to ensure that the professional advice is fit for purpose. Through 2021, the EHCP Health Lead reviewed the professional advice received from CLCH and worked with the SEN Specialist Nurse to ensure that Sections C, F and G are clear and includes the relevant and appropriate outline of the pupil's health needs and the provision required. CLCH is continuing to quality assure professional advice, working closely with the Head of SEND Integrated Service from the LA. This has included live review of advice that means recommendations from audit can be incorporated into the final advice submitted to the SEND Integrated Service ensuring new EHC plans include high quality health advice.
	ACTION 2.1.4 - Implement a revised and standardised process across all health providers to ensure that input into EHCP works alongside education and care input.	Complete	The standardised templates and the oversight of the professional advice by the Specialist SEN Nurse and the EHCP Health Lead has ensured that the SEN Team are supported to ensure the relevant Health advice and provision is included in the EHCP.
	ACTION 2.1.5 - Development of a Training and education programme that includes education, health and care providers to enable a joint approach to training	Complete	Also see 1.1.5 and 3.2.6. Training has been delivered to CLCH and Children & Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) by the DMO, Specialist SEN Nurse and the Head of SEND Integrated Service. The additional support provided by the CCG (in the form of a DCO and SEND Health Lead) has supported the DMO in developing a comprehensive training programme which has been delivered on an ongoing basis from October 2020 onwards, to all partners who contribute to the EHCP process. Council for Disabled Children and National Development Team for Inclusion training has also been delivered across Merton.
2.2 CAMHS input into EHCP's is improved	ACTION 2.2.1 - Process map current health process of CAMHS input into EHCP (link to 2.1.2)	Complete	CAMHS/Head of SENDIS have jointly devised a template for professional advice into EHCP from the CAMHS service.
	ACTION 2.2.2 - Implement a revised and standardised process across the CAMHS providers to ensure that input into EHCP is completed within standard operating procedure (SOP).	Complete	Training described above has been provided to the CAMHS workforce by the DMO and Head of SENDIS, including most recently in November 2021. The training covers the expected time frames of assessments and health reports.
2.3 Implement a system (within the SOP) for Health contributors to review health input prior to the person centred planning meeting and for them to receive a copy of the final EHCP	ACTION 2.3.1 - Draft EHCP to be distributed to health leads until the new IT platform is implemented when they will have direct access	Complete	This was put in place straight away following inspection. Health professionals are invited to attend draft planning meetings. EHC Coordinators also meet with professionals prior to the draft going to parents, where possible. Final Plans are going to be sent from a central service from September 2022 to ensure that EHCP and appendices are sent to all professionals involved. The development of a new IT platform where health contributors can access plans directly is being considered.

Objective	Action	RAG-Rating	Progress update
IMPROVEMENT OUTCOME 3			
Poor quality EHC plans compounded by a lack of effective quality assurance			
3.1 Development and implementation of a local SOP for the EHCP process	ACTION 3.1.1 - Review of best practice across other areas and process mapping in Merton to understand current state	Complete	We have worked with DfE to review EHCP quality with feedback from our link officer on the improvements seen. Head of SENDIS has reached out to other areas. Partnership groups continue to receive updates on best practice from other areas to help embed improvements.
	ACTION 3.1.2 - Agreement of a SOP across education, health and care	Complete	Standard Operating Protocols have been developed by health for CAMHs, CLCH Nursing & Therapy teams and community paediatrics across Merton to ensure consistency within the EHCP Process and support the training process. It was decided to keep separate but consistent SOPs for different agencies, to ensure professionals are only working to the information they need. However the SOPs and training together raise awareness about the contributions of all health partners to the EHC process. The previously implemented pathway and templates for social care are being reviewed and improved by the Designated Social Care Officer.
	ACTION 3.1.3 - Implementation of SOP and templates to assist with process and clarity of information to be provided in to EHCP by education, health and care	Complete	Professional advice templates for Health and Social Care were implemented in 2020. A new Designated Social Care Officer role took up post in May 2022 who will be reviewing the social care processes and implementing further improvements following the restructure in children's social care and early help.
	ACTION 3.2.1 - Agreement of a Quality assurance framework toolkit across education, health and care	Complete	A robust quality assurance framework has been embedded over the past 3 years with regular reports to partnership meetings on the findings from QA. These reports have highlighted improvements to EHC planning including clear target outcomes outlined for children and young people. Joint working between CLCH and SENDIS to regularly audit EHCP process and implement recommendations based on findings. This has included single- and multi-agency audits of professional advice and EHC plans. The Department for Education lead advisor has had oversight of this process through quarterly monitoring meetings, reviewing EHC plans & moderating audits, and has provided assurance that the QA framework is robust and quality of plans reviewed were improved.
	ACTION 3.2.2 - Development and agreement of an audit cycle and co-produced audit templates based on legal compliance and qualitative KPI's	Complete	As above
	ACTION 3.2.3 - Implement Audit cycle	Complete	As above

Objective	Action	RAG-Rating	Progress update
3.2 Implementation of an EHCP quality assurance framework to ensure robust oversight of quality of EHCP's	ACTION 3.2.4 - Using the findings from regular audits to develop an improvement plan that is regularly reviewed and updated and shared with partners	Complete	Following audits, the SEN Team have received training on Section A, B, E and F and how to work with parents and young people to ensure that Section A accurately reflects the child/young person's voice and aspirations. Merton has also benefited from training pertaining to Year 9 Reviews being facilitated by the NDTi, which will follow on from the CCG commissioned training. Re-auditing has taken place to evidence improvements; including CLCH cross-checks with Head of SENDIS. All EHC Coordinators will have completed the Nasen Casework Award in July 2022 which will address some of the training needs identified through the audit action plan. It was identified that annual reviews and updating of plans following these meetings still remains an area for improvement. The annual review process and paperwork is being reviewed in August 2022 and training will be provided at the start of the academic year to all partners across education, health and care.
	ACTION 3.2.5 - Provide support and feedback to case officers through 1:1 supervision with team manager/appraisals and monthly team meetings in order to improve the quality of EHC Plans	Complete	This continues, alongside the training for the team which has been mentioned above. Team managers complete a set of monthly audits of EHC plans following which case officers receive feedback and any recommendations for improvements.
	ACTION 3.2.6 - Provide support and feedback to all contributors to EHCP's	Complete	Bespoke training continues to take place with partner agencies which incorporate audit findings and recommendations specific to the agency. DCO and Head of SENDIS undertake this. Now the DSCO has been appointed, they will be providing support and feedback to social care. SENDIS and the social care training team will be delivering training to children's social workers starting in July 2022. Social care training team have gone on Council for Disabled Children Train the Trainer training.
3.3 To understand the impact of changes implemented in 3.1 and 3.2	ACTION 3.3.1 - Review and feedback on 10 new complex cases to audit progress against actions	Complete	Audits have evidenced improvements in quality of EHC plans and professional advice from health. This includes audits on new EHC plans issued showing better quality of new plans and current auditing is focusing on amended EHC plans following review, to ensure this process is also robust and the quality of older EHC plans is also being improved.
	ACTION 3.3.2 - Reviews completed and feedback to ICYPCG	Complete	This continues to multi-agency groups - Integrated Children & Young People Commissioning Group and SEND Operational Board. Most recent update highlighted improvements across every section of the EHCP in September 2021 audits compared to 2019-20 audits.

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Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 29 Sept 2022

Wards: All

Subject: Performance Monitoring Report

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member(s): Brenda Fraser – Education and Lifelong Learning

Sally Kenny – Children’s Social Care

Contact officer: Maisie Davies, Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report summarises the performance information for 2022/23, up to 31st July 2022, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2022/23.

2 DETAILS

Exception Report

2.1. The following indicators are marked as amber or red.

No	Indicator	Rating	Service Commentary
7	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	A	This is an indicator that we monitor every month. Performance data shows that during Q4 we consistently reached our target of 100%. However, there has been a slight dip in performance from April 2022, which mirrors a trend seen towards the start of the last financial year. We will be monitoring the situation closely.
9	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for	R	This indicator shows the % of children with an open CPP as at the end of the period who

	the second or subsequent time.		<p>are the subject of a CPP for the second or subsequent time.</p> <p>This is the first time in over a year that the % of children has risen above 20%. This is mainly due to a large sibling group.</p> <p>Numbers rose from 14 in April to 22 in May and peaked at 27 in June. Whilst the % remains at 24%, actual numbers had started to decline in July and we are closely monitoring this indicator.</p>
13	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.	R	<p>Nationally a target of 26 weeks has been set for an authority to conclude court proceedings and to achieve a court decision. We always strive to meet the nationally set target of 26 weeks. Due to a small number of children in proceedings in Merton, delays with one family can skew our figures.</p> <p>A range of influences impact on the duration of court proceedings – some of which are outside of the authority’s immediate control. These include court availability, the availability and timeliness of expert witness input, and the desire to engage effectively with the wider family network to explore alternatives (where appropriate and safe to do so).</p> <p>The service has monthly court and PLO tracking meetings including legal representatives. On a quarterly basis, representatives from the Children and Families Court Advisory Services (Cafcass)</p>

			attend. These meetings allow the authority to raise concerns about timeliness.
19	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	R	Merton places a large proportion of children with in-house foster carers. There were some challenges last year within recruitment due to the pandemic. We have refreshed our communication strategy for the new financial year. We aim to promote the Mocking Bird model and open a second cluster in 2023 which will help with recruitment. We have recently recruited 2 fostering households that are not reflected in these figures but will show in the next quarter.
22	% of total 0-5 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services (cumulative)	R	The proportion of children aged 0-5 years old from areas of deprivation whose families have accessed children's centre services has seen a decrease over the past two years in particular because of the impact of the pandemic. There is now a full face to face offer from Children's Centre staff for parenting programmes etc, which are being well used. This, with the return to face to face contact from Health Visitors and other partners (who are collocated in the Children's Centres), and the development of a Family Hub model (as promoted by the Government) should see numbers beginning to rise again over the next few years.
27	Reception year surplus places	R	See commentary below.
28	Secondary school surplus places	R	See commentary below

Commentary

Indicator 13: Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.

2.2. Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.

Indicator 27: Reception surplus places

2.3. This indicator is the total school reception roll against total operating admission numbers. Between December 2021 and March 2022, the percentage of surplus primary school places increased to 11.6% and has remained at this level during Q1 2022, which is outside of our target range of 5-10%.

2.4. There is no official national benchmark on an appropriate level of surplus places. Surplus places across schools provide more choice of school places, but since schools are largely funded based on numbers on roll, surplus places have a negative impact on the school budget, and therefore potentially teaching and learning. In the late 1990s the Audit Commission recommended that a surplus of 5-10% would enable the appropriate balance of choice and to economically provide sufficient school places, and this is still considered a reasonable estimate of best practice and so has been used for this indicator.

Indicator 28: Secondary school surplus places

2.5. Surplus places in secondary school year 7 is 3.2% so below the 5% target, hence has an amber rating. However, as the lower roll numbers flow through from primary school there will be more surplus places in future years.

2.6. To reduce the surplus in primary schools, and within the context of the School Place Planning Strategy (which was brought to Scrutiny in autumn 2021), officers continue to review school admission numbers to reduce capacity, with two further schools reducing their reception intake from September 2022.

3 AMENDMENTS, CORRECTIONS AND DATA CAVEATS

Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

3.1. All data for 2021/22 are subject to EOY validation by the DfE.

3.2. We are currently unable to report against the following indicators:

No	Indicator	Service Commentary
6	% of quorate attendance at CPP conferences	Following amendments to the system workflow, as part of the Mosaic Repair Project, a report has now been built to extract this data and we are

		currently in the process of user acceptance testing.
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Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2022/23.

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Performance Index 2021/22

Please note that Year to date performance - unless otherwise stated indicates April - March

No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	Benchmarking and trend			BRAG rating	Merton 2021/22 performance															
				Merton 2021/22 (Subject to EOY Validation)	England (2021-22 not yet available)	London (2021-22 not yet available)		Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22
Assessments																							
1	Number of Early Help Assessments undertaken by the Authority	Monthly	Not a target measure	165	No benchmarking available	No benchmarking available	Not a target measure	5	16	9	24	22	18	14	13	12	6	16	10	6	8	15	11
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	Monthly	91%	89%	87.6% (DfE 2020/21)	89% (DfE 2020/21)	Green	97%	92%	85%	66%	87%	85%	93%	94%	90%	99%	94%	95%	91%	94%	92%	97%
3	% of Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale (YTD Calendar Year /Monthly)	YTD/Monthly	60%	TBC	58% (DfE: SEN2 Jan 2021 for the 2020 calendar year)	61.8% (DfE: SEN2 Jan 2021 for the 2020 calendar year)	Green	63%	61%	64%	61%	63%	66%	68%	69%	71%	100%	100%	89%	81%	76%	75%	71%
Child protection																							
4	Child Protection Plans rate per 10,000	Monthly	Not a target measure	20.5	41.4 (DfE 2020/21)	36.3 (DfE 2020/21)	Not a target measure	37.1	36.3	32.5	30.0	30.8	27.8	28.1	26.8	24.9	22.0	22.0	20.5	21.2	24.1	23.3	21.6
5	Number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan	Monthly	Not a target measure	110	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	176	172	154	142	146	132	133	127	119	105	105	98	101	115	111	103
6	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	Quarterly	95%	N/A	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	N/A			N/A			N/A		N/A			N/A			N/A		
7	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	Monthly	99%	98%	93.2% (DfE 2020/21)	96.7% (DfE 2020/21)	Amber	100%	97%	95%	94%	95%	98%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%	99%	98%	94%	95%	96%
8	% of Children subject of a CP Plan who had a CP visit within timescales in the month	Monthly	Not a target measure	96%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	97%	97%	95%	93%	99%	91%	89%	96%	82%	90%	94%	96%	94%	86%	90%	91%
9	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	Monthly	<20%	14%	22.1% (DfE 2020/21)	18.4% (DfE 2020/21)	Red	16%	14%	16%	13%	14%	14%	13%	12%	11%	12%	14%	14%	14%	19%	24%	24%
Looked After Children																							
10	Looked After Children rate per 10,000	Monthly	Not a target measure	25.8	67 (DfE 2020/21)	47 (DfE 2020/21)	Not a target measure	30.0	30.6	31.0	30.6	30.0	29.7	29.1	28.9	27.6	26.4	26.4	25.8	26.4	26.2	25.1	25.6
11	Number of Looked After Children	Monthly	Not a target measure	123	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	142	145	147	145	142	141	138	137	132	126	126	123	126	125	120	122
12	Number of UASC children and young people	Monthly	Not a target measure	19	No benchmarking available	No benchmarking available	Not a target measure	23	21	20	19	19	22	22	23	23	18	19	19	19	19	19	20
13	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks	Quarterly	26 weeks	41	41 (CAFCASS 2020/21)	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			42			69			39			41			52	
14	% of Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	Monthly	96%	94%	Not published	Not published	Green	99%	96%	94%	94%	97%	96%	96%	96%	98%	98%	97%	94%	94%	94%	96%	96%
15	% of Looked After Children participating in their reviews in month (year to date) (excludes children aged 0 - 4)	Monthly	Not a target measure	90%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	94%	88%	91%	100%	83%	73%	88%	86%	90%	94%	100%	87%	100%	80%	93%	92%
16	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - number of placements (3 or more in the year)	Quarterly	11%	10%	9% (DfE 2021/22)	9% (DfE 2021/22)	Green			14.9%			12.7%			11.4%			10.3%			7.5%	
17	Stability of placements of Looked After Children (aged under 16) - length of placement (in care 2.5years, placement 2 years)	Quarterly	65%	68%	70% (DfE 2020/21)	71% (DfE 2020/21)	Green			48%			64.4%			70%			68%			62%	
18	% of Looked After Children in foster placements who are placed with in-house foster carers	Quarterly	60%	68%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Green			63%			58%			62%			67%			57%	
19	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	Quarterly	5-10%	7	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			1			2			2			2			1	

No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	Benchmarking and trend			BRAG rating	Merton 2021/22 performance																
				Merton 2021/22 (Subject to EOY Validation)	England (2021-22 not yet available)	London (2021-22 not yet available)		Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	
20	Number of <u>Looked After Children</u> who were adopted (YTD)	Monthly	Not a target measure	3	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	2	2
21	Number of <u>Looked After Children</u> for whom agency Special Guardianship Orders were granted (YTD)	Quarterly	Not a target measure	4	3800 (14% of those leaving care, DfE 2020/21)	420 (9% of those leaving care, DfE 2020/21)	Not a target measure			0			3			3			4				0	
Childrens Centres and Schools																								
22	% of total 0-5 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services (cumulative)	Quarterly	55%	32%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			12%			24%			25%			32%				39%	
23	% outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	Quarterly	95%	N/A - C19	87% (30/04/2022)	94% (30/04/2022)	Green	Ofsted dashboard			95%			95%			95%			95%			95%	
24	Number of Primary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	0	4.9% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	0.8% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	Not a target measure	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	Number of Secondary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	5	28.5% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	14.6% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	Not a target measure	<5	5	13	13	13	1	2	2	3	3	3	5	5	6	7	7	7
26	Secondary *** persistent absenteeism (10% or more sessions missed)	Annual	Not a target measure		14.8% (DfE AY 2020/21)	13.1% (DfE AY 2020/21)	Not a target measure																	
27	% of Reception year surplus places*** (calculated October and January)	Reported Quarterly	5-10%	11.6% (Jan 2022)	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			8.7%			11.1%			10.8%			11.6%			11.6%		
28	% of Secondary school (Year 7) surplus places *** (calculated October and January)	Reported Quarterly	5-10%	3.2% (Jan 2022)	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			5.6%			5.6%			3.0%			3.2%			3.2%		
Young People and Services																								
29	Youth service participation rate	Annual	Not a target measure	N/A	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure																	
30	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Monthly	Not a target measure	1.0%	2.8% (DfE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	1.8% (DfE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	Not a target measure	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
31	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) education, employment or training status 'not known'	Monthly	Not a target measure	0.9%	2.0% (DfE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	1.6% (DfE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	Not a target measure	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.6%	1.1%	12.8%	2.2%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	
32	Number of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (cumulative)	Monthly	50	26	2.8 (rate per 10,000, 2021)	N/A	Green	3	4	8	10	13	14	16	18	20	21	22	26	0	0	2	3	
33	Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system - quarterly / annual (annual is 20/21)	Quarterly	Not a target measure	52.9% 45.2%	34.2% (2019/20 YJB pub)	41.8% (2019/20 YJB pub)	Not a target measure			45.5%			45.5%			40% 45.2%			52.9% 45.2%			27.3% 46.8%		
34	Number of families who will be eligible for support under Supporting Families programme.	Quarterly	Not a target measure	325	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure			100			175			250			325			50		
35	% of commissioned services for which quarterly monitoring was completed	Quarterly	100%	100%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Green			100%			100%			100%			100.0%					
36**	% agency social workers (HR data)	Quarterly**	Not a target measure		17.6% DfE Census Sept 2021	22.7% (DfE Census Sept 2020)	Not a target measure			28%			37%			N/A			N/A			N/A		

No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	Benchmarking and trend			BRAG rating	Merton 2021/22 performance															
				Merton 2021/22 (Subject to EOY Validation)	England (2021-22 not yet available)	London (2021-22 not yet available)		Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22
37**	Average total caseload for social workers (working with looked after children and/or children subject of child protection plans) (total caseload including non LAC and CPP cases as at end of month) Combines and replaces previous indicators 7 and 15	Monthly**	Not a target measure	13	14.36 (DfE Census Sept 2021 - Awaiting validation)	14.6 (DfE Census Sept 2020)	Not a target measure	14	15	13	12	12	13	13	13	12	13	13	14	15	14	13	
<i>Indicators 27 & 28 : * all pupils educated in Merton Schools (including special schools)</i>																							
<i>Indicators 29, 30 & 31: *** all pupils educated in Merton Schools (excluding special Schools)</i>																							
<i>Indicators 39 & 40** Quarterly and monthly data reported from live date reported by Human Resource or Mosaic respectively. There is no direct comparable benchmarkable data as the DfE uses a different definition of a 'social worker' for the purpose of who is included in the annual Children's Social Workforce Census.</i>																							

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Work Programme 2022/2023



This table sets out the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2022/23; the items listed were agreed by the Panel at its meeting on 22 June 2022. This work programme will be considered at every meeting of the Panel to enable it to respond to issues of concern and incorporate reviews or to comment on pre-decision items ahead of their consideration by Cabinet/Council.

The work programme table shows items on a meeting-by-meeting basis, identifying the issue under review, the nature of the scrutiny (pre-decision, policy development, issue specific, performance monitoring, partnership related) and the intended outcomes.

Chair: Councillor Usaama Kaweesa
Vice-chair: Councillor Chessie Flack

Scrutiny Support

For further information on the work programme of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel please contact: -
Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 020 8545 3390; Email: stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk

For more information about overview and scrutiny at LB Merton, please visit www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Meeting date: 29 September 2022 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm, 20 September 2022)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Departmental update including update on: safety valve support given to pupils with English as an additional language. Attain Programme	Report to the Panel	Jane McSherry, Director of Children Schools, and Families	Review priority work streams within the Children Schools and Families Department.
SEND Strategy and Written Statement of Action	Report to the Panel	Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director of Education and Early Help	Scrutiny of the current SEND strategy
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Strategy and Performance	To review the basket of indicators
Work programme 2022/23	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

Meeting date: 10 November 2022 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm 01 November 2022)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Budget/business plan scrutiny (Round 1)	Report to the Panel	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To discuss and make recommendations to forward to Cabinet
Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report.	Report to the Panel	Aileen Buckton, Independent Chair of the MSCP	Review the work of the Partnership.
Public Health Report 0-19 Healthy Child Programme.	Report to the Panel	Julia Groom, Consultant in Public Health	To Scrutinise the projects within this programme
Cabinet Member Priorities	Verbal Update	Councillor Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member for Education and Life Long Learning Councillor Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To scrutinise the Cabinet Member's priorities and key areas of concern
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern
Work programme 2021/22	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

Meeting date: 11 January 2023 (*Deadline for papers: 12pm 3 January 2022*)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Budget/business plan scrutiny (Round 2)	Written Report	Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services	To discuss and make recommendations to forward to Cabinet
Departmental update report including Speech and language services Alternative education provision Support for gifted and talented pupils	Written Report	Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families	An overview of the key issues within the Children, Schools and Families Department.
Cabinet Member Priorities	Verbal Update	Councillor Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member for Education and Life Long Learning Councillor Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To scrutinise the Cabinet Member's priorities and key areas of concern
Performance monitoring		Maisie Davies, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern
Work programme 2022/23	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

Meeting date: 09 February 2022 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm 31 January 2022)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Departmental update report	Written Report	Jane McSherry Director of Children, Schools and Families	An overview of the key issues within the Children, Schools and Families Department.
Mental health and wellbeing of children and young people	Written Report	Keith Shipman, Head of Education Inclusion	Panel to receive an update on this issue to ensure that services are meeting the needs of residents in Merton
Schools Standards Annual Report	Written Report	Elizabeth Fitzpatrick Assistant Director of Education and Early Help Keith Shipman, Head of Education Inclusion	To scrutinise attainment information
Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership	Written report	Aileen Buckton, Independent Chair of the MSCP	Review the work of the Partnership.
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Maisie Davies, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern
Topic suggestions for 2022/23	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To identify topics for the 2023/24 work programme

Meeting date: 15 March 2022 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm 07 March 2022)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Departmental Update Report: Care leavers accommodation Foster carer recruitment Support to young children (0-5), who have been identified as having significant special needs. including the Portage service	Report to the Panel	Jane McSherry, Director Children, Schools and Families	An overview of the key issues within the Children, Schools and Families Department.
Special Meeting on Cllr's Corporate Parenting Role - including presentation on Cllr Corporate Parenting responsibilities and Corporate Parenting Annual Report.	Report/Presentation	Jane McSherry, Director Children, Schools and Families	Review Corporate Parenting role and the work undertaken in this area.
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Maisie Davies, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern

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