

Merton Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 23 January 2024

Time: 6.15 pm

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

Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of pecuniary interest
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting 1 - 12
- 4 NHS Estates Update
A verbal update to be provided at the meeting.
- 5 Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 13 - 46
- 6 Merton Safeguarding Children Annual Report 47 - 86
- 7 An update on the Joint Targeted Inspection
A verbal update to be provided at the meeting.
- 8 HWS Priority Report - School Superzones 87 - 110
- 9 Young Inspector Membership of HWBB Review (Public Health)
A verbal update to be provided at the meeting.

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Health and Wellbeing Board Membership

Merton Councillors

- Peter McCabe (Chair)
- Brenda Fraser
- Jenifer Gould

Council Officers (non-voting)

- Director of Community and Housing
- Director of Children, Schools and Families
- Director of Environment and Regeneration
- Director of Public Health

Statutory representatives

- Four representatives of Merton Clinical Commissioning Group
- Chair of Healthwatch

Non statutory representatives

- One representative of Merton Voluntary Services Council
- One representative of the Community Engagement Network

Quorum

Any 3 of the whole number.

Voting

3 (1 vote per councillor)

4 Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (1 vote per CCG member)

1 vote Chair of Healthwatch

1 vote Merton Voluntary Services Council

1 vote Community Engagement Network

Agenda Item 3

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

28 NOVEMBER 2023

(6.15 pm - 8.40 pm)

PRESENT Cllr Peter McCabe (Chair), Cllr Jenifer Goad, Cllr Brenda Fraser, Mark Creelman (Local Executive Director), Anna Huk (Young Inspector), Barry Causer (Public Health Lead for Adults, Health Improvement and Health Protection), Sarah Goad (Chief Executive Officer, Age UK Merton)

ALSO PRESENT Sara Quinn (Commercial Services Manager Environment and Regeneration), Sam Perkins (Consultant in Health Protection, South London Health Protection Team), Anita Davies (Senior Public Health Principal), Amrinder Sehgal (Senior Programme Manager, Social Prescribing and Self-Management), Dr Sekeram (GP and Social Prescribing Lead), Vusi Edeki (Interim Health Partnerships Manager), Tony Molloy (Merton Connected), Megan Coe (Public Health Principle), Nick Atkins (Head of Health and Wellbeing for Enable), Rachel Tilford (Senior Public Health Principle), Jayde Watts (Democratic Services Officer)

PRESENT ONLINE John Morgan (Executive Director, Adult Social Care, Integrated Care & Public Health), Gemma Dawson (Deputy Director – Merton Health and Care Together), Dr Sy Ganesaratnam (GP Principal), Mike McHugh (Interim Consultant in Public Health)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Dr Karen Worthington, Russel Styles, Jane McSherry and Dan Jones with Sara Quinn in attendance as substitute.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 NHS ESTATES UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

Mark Creelman introduced the item.

Mark informed the board that due to inflation costs all estates projects had to go through a pre application reprioritisation process at the ICB (Integrated Care Board). The process was nearly complete and needed to be signed off by internal

governance. The Rowans project and the Wilsons project would both move to the next stage.

The Colliers Wood project had been more of a challenge due to the affordability score. They planned to meet with Merton Vision next week to explore alternative plans.

In relation to the Wilsons project, Mark requested to meet with the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Ward Councillors to discuss the portfolio of services. There were many ideas such as sexual health services, breast screening services and children services but wanted to map the services to meet the needs of the local community. Two pieces of work had been commissioned; one was to work with the mental health trust to help maximise the use of their space. This piece of work was now completed and highlighted that they did not need as much space as originally thought. An engineering survey was also commissioned to evaluate the refurbishment of the building as opposed to a rebuild. The survey concluded that they could get almost double the space with a refurbishment for the same cost.

The Rowans project needed to agree the lease terms with the lead GP practice. This would be followed by a portfolio of services conversation with local councillors, stakeholders and the patient group which was already established by the PCN (Primary Care Network) to ensure services were the right fit for residents. The team were also in conversation with the district valuer who looked at the costs and ongoing costs to rent the building.

Pharmacy space was also looked at and there were questions around whether a commercial pharmacy would find the space viable, and if not, what could the space be best used for.

In response to questions, the following was stated:

- Part of the prioritisation process was to look at where funds would come from. Funding for the primary and community estates were separate to that of hospitals. To compare, £2.5 million was made available to primary care last year as capital investment, which was not enough to fund the projects. To mitigate this, they worked with property services around the disposal of their estates to fund The Wilson. For the Rowans, the investment and capital would come from the developer which only left the rental charges for them to look into further. The Chancellors autumn statement would not necessarily affect the two projects but across Southwest London may affect others.
- The chair of the board noted that NHS property services agreed that refurbishment was less expensive and gave more space. Mark confirmed that the engineering survey completed for The Wilson was specific for The Wilson and would not necessarily apply to all projects.
- Additional resources had been allocated to both projects to help move them along as they accepted and acknowledged the frustration. At present they were working towards getting the necessary sign off so that the building work could start as soon as possible. Each team were asked to provide indicative

timelines and milestones which would be shared with all stakeholders in the next couple of weeks.

- The scout hall and community hall were part of the redevelopment and the developer was in contact with the estates team within the local authority. The space which was mentioned as being used for storage was something that would be picked up with councillors. Mark confirmed that he would be happy to attend councillor meetings with residents to support with queries as well as provide the plan, in writing, to councillors.
- The building was owned by a private organisation and not the NHS. They understood that the private organisation had now sold the property and the funds obtained from the sale would not go back into the redevelopment.
- Breast screening was a partnership of different NHS organisations. They have gone through a capital bid, which was still ongoing, to fund a Merton breast screening site but in the meantime agreed to explore the option of a mobile unit. Sexual health was commissioned by public health.
- Barry Causer informed the board that the initial capital bid for breast screening was approved. There were also positive discussions with NHS England for a revenue funding bid and they were meeting the NHS England Breast Screening lead tomorrow to discuss further. Additional sites for sexual health were also a consideration and on the list.
- The primary and community infrastructure across Southwest London and the ICB was being looked at to address concerns. This would form part of a longer term plan which would allow them to look at population growth, areas of deprivation and where the need was for breast screening, sexual health centres, local authority services and GP practices.
- The two schemes discussed were moving forward but the third required further conversations around the alternatives available for both Merton Vision and the GP practice to move in. No further information was available at this stage.
- The business case was dependant on the figures received from the refurbishment survey which would then be put together by the project team. The business case for The Wilson project would initially go to the Merton estates group, chaired by Mark Creelman, to endorse the right partnership approach. It would then go to the ICB but because of the value of the investment it would then need to go to the Capital Investment Group, followed by NHS England. The Rowans Project would follow the same process but would not need to go to NHS England. Most of the meetings took place monthly so once the business case was completed and agreed with partners, they would then attend the required meetings.
- Alternative options for Colliers Wood were essentially a blank piece of paper at present. They were aware that that the GP practice was not fit for purpose and was struggling with capacity and size. They would have to look at alternative premises or utilising the existing premises. This would be discussed further in the coming weeks.

RESOLVED: That the Board noted the update.

(Agenda Item 5)

Mark Creelman introduced the item and highlighted that Merton's Social Prescribing was award winning. Mark introduced Amrinder Seghal and Dr Mohan Sekeram who presented the report.

Amrinder spoke through the presentation and explained that social prescribing was the vehicle that became popular within primary care for lifting and shifting patients who had a psychosocial need out of primary care and into the voluntary and community sector.

Social prescribing differed from GP and practice nurses as they had more time with patients to understand their issues, concerns and their journey which allowed them to understand the patients more. A social prescriber could see a patient between two to six times.

The six primary care networks within Merton were at East Merton PCN, North Merton PCN, West Merton PCN, Northwest Merton PCN, Southwest PCN and Morden PCN.

Social prescribing continued to look at proactive support through High Intensity User project, 7 Green Social Prescribing projects, Social Prescribing patients Support Group and a Pain Clinic Pilot with Epsom and St Heliers NHS Trust.

Over 50% of referrals were for mental health and diabetes. Hypertension also had high referrals.

The three long term conditions looked at was diabetes, mental health and respiratory. Diabetes looked at three treatment targets which were HbA1C, cholesterol and blood pressure. A similar approach was taken for Mental Health.

The figures showed a rapid improvement for patients within 12 months of using the service.

Going forward Social Prescribing in Adults Social Services, developing a Community Chest initiative, Condition Specific Social Prescribing Programmes and Self-Referrals would be further explored.

In response to questions, the following was stated:

- Social prescribing data looked at all types of cancer. It was important to highlight that social prescribing applied regardless of what someone's conditions was. Part of social prescribing was about meeting the unmet need and the community. One way to address the gap between male and females who used the service was to widen the access and to change where social prescribing was delivered.
- When the programme was first established there was engagement with the voluntary sector via Merton Connected and they established the Capacity Support Grant. This was designed for voluntary sector organisations who received too many referrals and allowed them to apply for a bid from the grant

and gain financial support to help meet demand. There was not a significant uptake of the grant, so they were able to roll over the underspend and commission community chest intervention. There had not yet been a scenario where voluntary sector organisations had to turn people away.

- Tony Molloy confirmed that they had not been in a position where they were not able to meet demand. This was partly because they were treating people as people as opposed to a condition. Another reason was due to the brilliant partnership working, which allowed referrals to be spread across the organisation.
- A benefit of having a voluntary sector under CVS hosting the contract was them knowing the voluntary sector and local area very well. When a social prescriber was employed into the service, they had a 4-6 week induction period which helped them to better understand Merton. More work could be done with Merton Connected to ensure grassroots organisations were reached. Based on relationships established, they felt that an organisation would come forward if they were oversubscribed.
- The presentation highlighted the volume of referrals but not how many people attended the appointment which was an important factor. This would be investigated further as part of the next steps and would help to truly understand the impact on the voluntary sector.
- Tony Molloy informed the board that the recruitment process was in-depth and varied. Along with the recruitment process and induction process, staff met regularly to discuss cases and feedback. Merton Connected worked closely with volunteering and social prescribing groups and was comfortable that they were on top of any potential oversubscribing.
- Barry Causer expressed that the health gain data was significant and positive. This was because they had a fabulous asset base in the voluntary and community sector within the borough. Thinking outside of social prescribing, they needed to reflect this in the integrated community services approach to benefit from the working partnerships in the voluntary sector. There were two other opportunities which already began with the social prescribing team around the role of physical activity and utilising the Borough of Sport. The data presented within the report was significant and it was good to explore that further to look at how the data could be used to make a case for additional investment in preventative services.
- Mark Creelman expressed that the data showed tangible benefits of social prescribing and wondered if the board would agree to include the clinical lead for cancer in the work programme to address concerns raised, particularly around prostate cancer. Work on the website of practices was currently taking place and it would be beneficial to include more about access to the voluntary sector.
- Areas of deprivation were accessing the service; it was the other end that was not accessing the service as much.
- Priority for frailty could be identified and was demonstrated through diabetes, asthma and mental health.
- Men's health was notoriously underrepresented which was a real issue. Social prescribing looked at social in terms of health and did not look at everything so

there was a danger of trying to make social prescribing achieve everything which it unfortunately could not do.

- Sarah Goad added that the social prescribers had the time to get to know the services available within the borough and build personal relationships. This led to a streamline referral process with a high proportion of referrals from social prescribing. Although it was agreed that a comprehensive up to date bank of the existing assets and services was needed, what they saw was that if someone was struggling with isolation or mental health, it was sometimes overwhelming for the individual to see the number of services available. When social prescribers were able to get to know the individual, they were able to make the available services more digestible for the individual.
- Thanks were given to the voluntary sector for all the help that they did and the huge contribution that they made was acknowledged.

RESOLVED: That the Board noted the report

6 SOCIAL PRESCRIBING (CHILDREN) CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES (Agenda Item 6)

Megan Coe, Mike McHugh and Nick Atkins introduced the report.

Adult social prescribing had been around for some time, but children social subscribing had started to gain momentum in London and nationally over the last few years.

The initial funding was in response to increasing rates of young people living with obesity as well as increased mental health issues as a result of the pandemic.

The pilot took referrals from the East Merton Primary Care Network area since October 2022 and received over 169 referrals. They received referrals from Morden Primary Care Network since September 2023 and so far, received 18 referrals.

Following the initial investment from Merton Council Public Health, the additional extension to the original 12 month pilot came from the Southwest London Health Inequalities Fund, following a successful bid in 2022. A further bid for the extension of the pilot until December 2024, which included an expansion to a third PCN area, was placed and they were awaiting the outcome of this.

In addition to the support provided for young people, the main purpose was to provide evidence on how CYP (Children and Young People) social prescribing worked, the impact it could have and how it differed from adult social prescribing. A key function of the pilot was to adapt the model in response to the learning.

An independent review of the pilot by an external organisation was being conducted, the final report would be ready in December.

Referrals into the pilot could be made through a variety of sources such as school nurses, additional staff members, early help teams and GP's. This differed to other social prescribing pilots which would use only one or two different referral pathways. Two adaptations to the model were considered which were self-referrals and to change the utilisation of the personalised care grant to allow link workers to take service users to activities. There was a small, personalised care budget to support activities from young people in voluntary sector organisations. They proposed that the criteria for CYP who lived with obesity was extended to those over 11 years old instead of 13 years old and over the 91st centile in weight.

The standard offer was six 14 minute appointments with a link worker either by phone, online or in person. After school appointment were also available. It was also possible, if needed, for a person to have more the six appointments.

The pilot was overseen by a multi-disciplinary steering group which included young inspectors and several other partners.

375 appointments had been conducted. Users tended to be females from the CR4 postcode area and predominantly referred for mental health reasons. The largest number of onward referrals were to Talk off the Record.

Service users were asked short questions when they first used the service and at follow up. The average monthly improvement was between 10-18% but they hoped that the independent evaluation would help them to delve deeper into the impact they had.

Two cases in the papers were referred to which highlighted positive impacts from the service.

A key principle in public health was to engage and support people as early as they could which was important for children and young people. The impact of adverse childhood experiences impacted life prospects and the evidence had shown that having a trusted adult in the young persons life could mitigate this.

In response to questions, the following was stated:

- They agreed that they should have included the leaflets and posters that were made in the report.
- As part of the self-referral proposal, there would be a separate task and finish group which included the communications department and a young inspector to ensure that they had a young person's perspective.
- They generally recruited youth workers.
- Going forward they wanted more self-referrals and referrals from other organisations.
- Throughout the inception of the project, they have ensured that children and young peoples voices were heard through communication and engagement.

RESOLVED: That the Board agreed the recommendations.

7 HWS PRIORITY REPORT / AIR QUALITY / RESPIRATORY HEALTH & SMOKING/VAPING (Agenda Item 7)

Barry Causer introduced the report and reminded the board of the conversation held in March where two options were posed for the boards rolling priority. The suggestion was either air quality, tobacco and respiratory health or workplace health and the board requested for both. In June, the framework was shared with the board and they now presented the draft plan which included 10 draft high value actions as detailed in the papers. The team planned to submit more internal and external bids to secure more resources.

Air quality, tobacco and respiratory health were three big themes but were not a totality of all the actions which took place within Merton. There were many synergies with practical action which took place in Merton currently.

Since March 2023, the government announced their plans to create a smoke free generation which was fully supported by the Chief Medical Officer. There were several interventions which included raising the age of sale of cigarettes, additional ringfenced funding for local authority public health teams and exploring the additional roles around trading standards.

In relation to the smoke free generation, there was a consultation from DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care). Merton planned to put together a response to the consultation and would encourage the Health and Wellbeing Board to also respond to the consultation.

Some of the actions from the plan was to systematically imbed air quality into respiratory pathways, a switch to greener inhalers, a focus on indoor air quality and active community sustainable travel.

The final action within the action plan was to set up a community of practice within Merton.

In response to questions, the following was stated:

- Barry Causer agreed to find out more about the closure of school streets and feedback to the board.
- Sara Quinn agreed to find out more about whether schools would be given air quality monitors now that there would no longer be school streets within the borough and feedback to the board.

RESOLVED: That the Board agreed the recommendations.

8 HEALTH PROTECTION UPDATE (Agenda Item 8)

Barry Causer introduced the report and explained that they intentionally focussed the report on three components which were screening, immunisations and communicable disease prevention and control.

Anita Davies confirmed that Merton established a health protection oversight group which met six times per year, with a focus to gain oversight, developing partnerships and hold providers and partners to account in their work to increase the uptake of screening, immunisation and communicable disease prevention and control.

There was a monthly health protection surveillance summary report which provided an overview of suspected or confirmed notifiable infectious diseases which gave a comparison on where Merton was in relation to Southwest London and London as a whole.

The oversight group was led by Merton's public health team and its members included all partners.

The UK Health Security Agency Health Protection Team were the forefront operation responders when there was a health related incident. The South London ICB was an important partner who worked closely with the public health team to ensure health protection services were provided and vaccination programs were commissioned, screening services and infection prevention and control measures.

There were 11 screening programs in England, all of which were offered to Merton residents. There were 5 screening programs for young people and adults and 6 screening programmes for antenatal and newborns. At present, there was no breast cancer screening site in Merton, but they were working with service providers to ensure that Merton residents received a site in Merton.

A partnership approach was the best way to increase the uptake of vaccines and they worked with Southwest London's ICB who led on vaccination programmes, further details of vaccination programmes were included in the report. Immunisation programmes were split into children and young people and adults. Data showed that childhood vaccine uptake had dropped, particularly for measles, mumps and rubella which dropped to its lowest uptake in a decade.

There was a push to ensure that vulnerable adults had access to vaccines and there were several locations within the borough. When the Merton programme ended on 15th December 2023, the Southwest London Immunisation Programme would continue. For 65yrs old and over, the pneumococcal and shingle vaccine was readily available for all Merton residents.

To improve vaccine uptake, a joint bid was placed to the Southwest London for an enhanced MMR immunisation programme to be placed in children's services. To improve uptake, the services were promoted.

Sam Perkins highlighted that 80-90% of their work was around communicable disease control as well as instances of chemical, biological, radiological and that of a nuclear nature.

A key activity was to receive notification of infectious diseases, some of which were required by law to be reported and would trigger activities such as contact tracing. This also enabled good surveillance data so they could identify trends, compare years and seasons and be able to predict, in some cases, when there might be an increase in activity.

The team worked closely with regulatory services who supported to administer specific enhanced surveillance questionnaires that were used to identify potential sources of infection and help mitigate risk.

They now attended the Health Protection Oversight Group which allowed for them to provide briefings when needed. The team also provided assurance to the Director of Public Health on a range of issues.

Sarah Quinn expressed that this was an example of partnership working at its best. The team carried out multiple proactive visits and dealt with reactive work such as outbreaks of E. coli and food poisoning. They also attended nurseries and primary schools to ensure that basic infection control was in place.

In response to questions, the following was stated:

- Full details of the immunisation's programs were detailed in the report. They were working on a programme to provide immunisation at children centres to bring the service to where the children already were.
- There was an increased focus on health inequality and health equity and they were aware that access was a key part. When notified of potential or suspected cases of measles, as part of the risk assessment, they would ask about vaccine history which helped to identify individuals who had not had the MMR vaccine.
- There were many national and local campaigns to address immunisations.
- Programme data was scrutinised and all programmes had detailed action plans across the partnerships. February's Scrutiny meeting was considering CYP immunisations.
- At present there was no circulation of measles within the borough.
- Family hubs were also used to provide information and were already a key partner.

RESOLVED: That the Board agreed the recommendations.

9 REPORT ON PROGRESS OF LOCAL HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (Agenda Item 9)

Gemma Dawson (Deputy Director of Merton Health and Care Together) introduced the report and provided an update on the progress made on the Merton Local Health and Care Plan and gave an indication of areas of focus as they approached the last six months of the two year plan.

The Local Health and Care Plan started in 2022 and would run until the summer of 2024.

The plan was informed by a predecessor plan which was formed in 2019 and ran for two years. The plan was also informed by the Merton Prevention Framework and principles laid out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Merton Plan identified 9 priorities across three areas of Start Well, Live Well and Age Well.

For Start Well and Live Well, one of the priorities was to change how people accessed health and wellbeing services. For Start Well they wanted to improve integration of children services and to focus on mental health and wellbeing.

With Live Well, as well as changing how people accessed services, they wanted to improve and optimise information on Primary Care and to focus on prevention services.

For Age Well they wanted to support people to access resources within their communities, to improve the integration of services and to focus on frailty.

Sixteen projects were identified against the portfolio and for each project they created a results chain as detailed in the report. Key measures were also identified which they could collect to understand the impact made.

Many of the projects were still in the implantation phase but there was great progress made around changing the way that people accessed health and wellbeing services for Start Well through the expansion of children and young people social prescribing and improved integration services through the family hub work.

In Age Well there was strong progress made on the focus on Frailty. Through a series of workshops, they developed a new service model which brought together multidisciplinary teams to proactively identify people who were at risk of frailty. The project was still ongoing and already reached just under 300 people.

For Live Well, there was a great focus on prevention with many of the highlights detailed within the report.

The Health on the High Street project had moved forward and strengthened the community's ability to impact health and wellbeing through multiple events in and around the high street.

A series of Dementia cafes, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society and local cafes, took place and increased access to local dementia information support services.

There were a series of health and wellbeing days which showcased a range of local community support, with each one reaching over 100 people.

The final round of small grants was completed to help develop new projects that saw local organisation lead improvements in health delivery. Many projects were greatly improved by the investment fund from Southwest London.

On reflection, much of the delivery had been hyper focussed and worked out from a cluster of GPs or a singular GP. There were only a few successful projects which spanned the whole of Merton so there was a challenge of how they could scale up some of the existing and new innovations and models across the wider borough.

The final challenge was to ensure that all projects were robustly evaluated to understand the impact. There was additional support through the health inequality funds to help build tools and techniques to improve evaluation capabilities.

For the remaining 6 months of the plan, they wanted to strengthen and focus on robust evaluation as well as to pick up on some of the priorities that did not have the broadest portfolios, with a continued focus on mental health and wellbeing for children and young people.

In response to questions, the following was stated:

- The Family Hub project received some national funding which helped it to propel. It was imperative for all partners to make best use of the funds to implement the Family Hub model in a sustainable way.
- Something that was discussed at the Borough Committee was how they could take successful pilots into the mainstream funding.

RESOLVED: That the Board agreed the recommendations.

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 24/1/24

Agenda item: Merton Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022/23

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead officer: Aileen Buckton, Independent Chair, Merton Safeguarding Adults Board

Lead member: Cllr Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Catherine Dunn, Safeguarding Adults Board Manager

Catherine.dunn@merton.gov.uk

Recommendations:

- A. To note the content of the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) Annual Report for the period 2022-23
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) Annual Report which covers the period April 2022 to March 2023. The full report can be found in Appendix 1.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Merton Safeguarding Adults Board has a statutory duty to publish an annual report outlining how effective the work of the Board has been against its strategic priorities as set out in its [Strategic Plan](#) for 2021-24. The Safeguarding Adults Board is an independent board which operates at a strategic level to oversee safeguarding arrangements in a local area and ensure that adults at risk being supported and protected from neglect and abuse. Core members of a SAB are the local authority, police, and Integrated Care Board (ICB) but also includes partners such as the fire service, probation services, housing, Healthwatch, voluntary sector and representatives from children services, community safety and other health agencies.
- 2.2. The Annual Report 2022/23 provides a summary of the work that has been undertaken over the previous financial year 2022 – 23 through the MSAB as a partnership and its sub-groups but also its member agencies. This includes assurance of effective safeguarding arrangements in Merton and progress against the strategic priorities of the Board, as well as information on Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) carried out that year.

3 DETAILS

- 3.1. A key highlight from this year in the work of the MSAB as a partnership was our engagement with people with lived experience, through working with the daughters of SK 'Sandra' who was the subject of a SAR published last year.

Sharing their experiences of caring for their mother - as well as her experience of engaging with services - has been invaluable in giving a voice to SK as a person and identifying areas of learning and improvements for future. They have continued to work with us over the year 2023-24 and demonstrated the immense value of hearing from people with lived experience to strengthen safeguarding practice.

- 3.2. The successful launch of a Community Adult Safeguarding Champions Network last year was an additional highlight and an important step forward for the MSAB in strengthening connections with the wider community in Merton. This group is made up of representatives from local organisations and the wider community and meets regularly with the aim of raising awareness of safeguarding adults, sharing key messages, and building insight into key safeguarding issues for local communities across Merton.
- 3.3. During 2022-23, the MSAB received 3 Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) referrals over the course of the year which were considered by the SAR Subgroup. 1 SAR was published in this reporting period – ‘Annabel’. Safeguarding Adults Reviews are carried out when an adult with care and support needs dies and there are concerns about abuse and neglect or how agencies have worked together. The focus of these reviews is on learning, not blame so that actions can be identified to improve how the system work in future and better safeguard individuals.
- 3.4. Further detail on this SAR (‘Annabel’) is included in the report and work is underway to implement these actions. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board may wish to read [more information on SARs](#), recent reviews and learning briefings on the MSAB website.
- 3.5. Merton continues to have a good track record on Making Safeguarding Person with 95% of enquiries concluded in 2022/23 where a person’s preferred outcomes were fully or partially met and risk reduced in over 93 % of cases. The Annual report also includes analysis of safeguarding data for 2022-23 including more detailed ethnicity analysis of safeguarding concerns and enquiries. Further work is being carried out through the MSAB Performance and Quality subgroup to develop multi-agency safeguarding data for the Board’s assurance.
- 3.6. The report includes detail about training and multi-agency learning sessions over the course of the year. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are reminded that [Level 1 Safeguarding Adults Training](#) is available on the MSAB website which can be accessed by all agencies, Members, and the wider community.
- 3.7. The commitments for the following year (the current financial period 2023 – 24) are set out in the report and progress on these will be reported in next year’s annual report. The current strategic plan runs from 2021 – 2024 so work will be undertaken by the MSAB to set a new strategic plan for the following four years to further our work as a partnership and provide assurance of effective safeguarding arrangements in Merton.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. N/A

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1. The Annual Report has had contributions from key partners such as the ICB, Police, Health, Fire Brigade as well as colleagues internally in Adult Social Care. The MSAB Board reviewed and approved the final draft on 6 Dec 2023 and a previous draft was considered by the Strategic Safeguarding Group on 21 November 2023. The Annual Report will also be considered by the Healthier Communities Scrutiny on 24th January and any comments and feedback will be shared with the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Independent Chair for the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board.

6 TIMETABLE

There are no financial or resource implications from this report as it summarises activity over the past financial year March 2022 -March 2023

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None arising from this report

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The Merton Safeguarding Adults Board has a statutory duty to produce an annual report outlining progress against the priorities outlined in its Strategic Plan.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. N/A – none arising from this report

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. N/A – none arising from this report

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. N/A – none arising from this report

12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix A -MSAB Annual Report 2022- 23

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

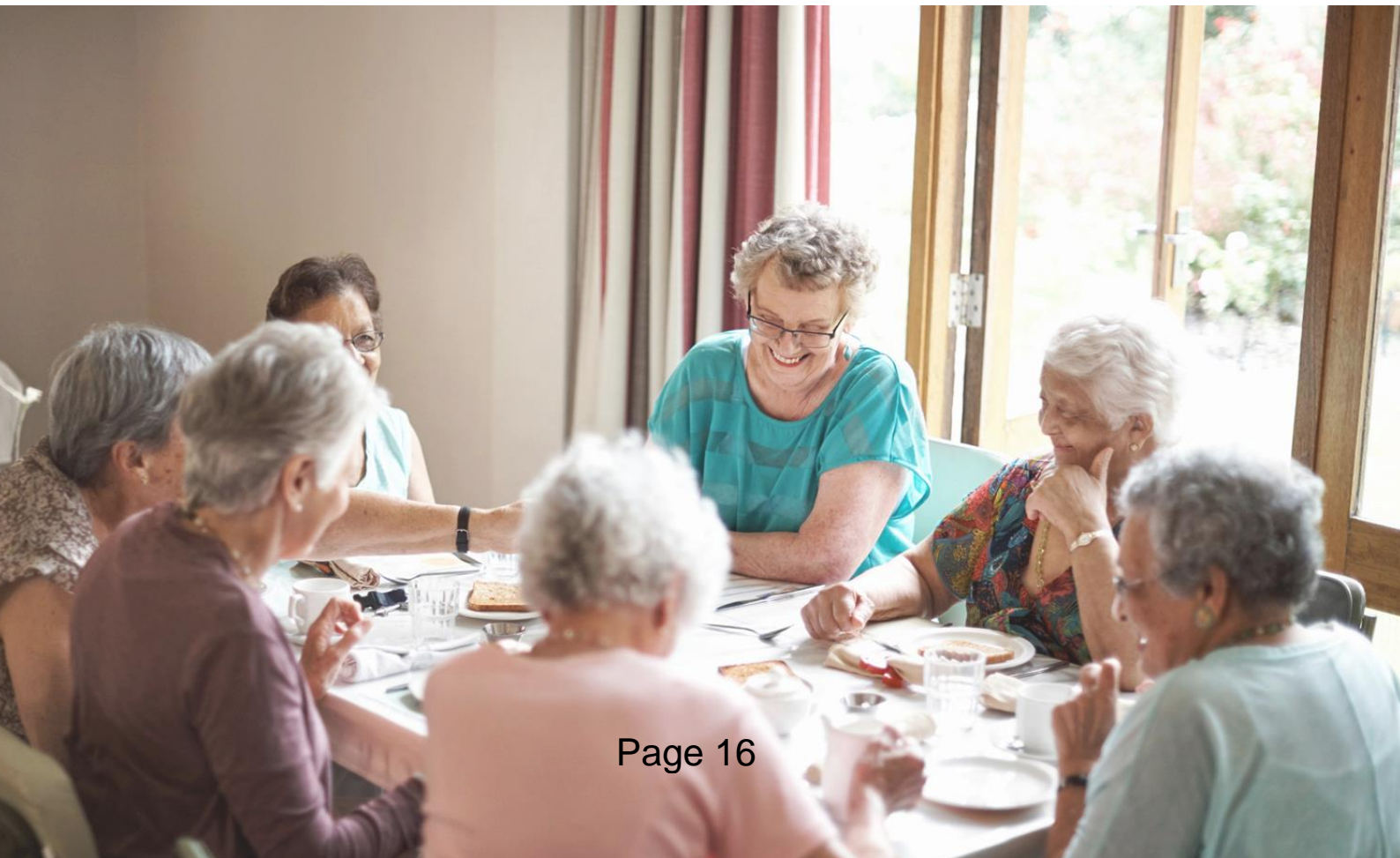
MSAB Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024



Merton
Safeguarding
Adults Board

Merton Safeguarding Adults Board

Annual Report 2022 - 23



Message from the Independent Chair

This report covers the work of the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board during the period March 2022 – 2023.

This year, the Board has continued to focus on how we develop our engagement with local communities and hear from people with lived experience of safeguarding, such as Sandra's Story. I am delighted to see the successful launch of Community Adult Safeguarding Champions Network this year, which is a significant development for the Board. Representatives from local organisations across Merton and members of the wider community have signed up as Champions and engaged in the network. This will be an important vehicle for reaching out to our local communities and raising awareness about safeguarding to residents across the borough.

As we look ahead to the next year, we are committed to working in partnership with the Merton Child Safeguarding Partnership to embed a Think Family and transitional safeguarding approach. As joint Chair for both partnerships, I can see how vital this work is and how it will make a difference for adults, children and young people across Merton.

I once again extend my sincere thanks to all partners in the Board and the business support team for their work over the year and look forward to continuing our ambitious programme of work. I would like to express my particular thanks to Nicola Brownjohn for covering the position of Independent Chair for part of this year.

Aileen Buckton



Independent Chair of the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board

Safeguarding Adults at Risk in Merton

Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) is made up of a collection of local organisations both statutory members (Local Authority, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Police) and non-statutory members (provider health services, fire, housing, probation, Healthwatch and the voluntary sector and other provider services).

We work together as a partnership to ensure adults at risk of abuse or neglect with care and support needs (whether or not those needs are being met by any agency) receive appropriate advice, support and guidance to keep themselves safe and ensure they are safeguarded in a proportionate, empowering and responsive manner.

What we do and how we do it

The role of the MSAB is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place to help and protect adults in Merton. Our main objective is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partner organisations act to help and protect people aged 18 and over in the area who have needs for care and support and:

- are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect (as a result of their care and support needs)
- are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or experience of, abuse or neglect regardless of whether the local authority are funding care or not.

Core Duties

The core duties of the Safeguarding Adults Board are to:

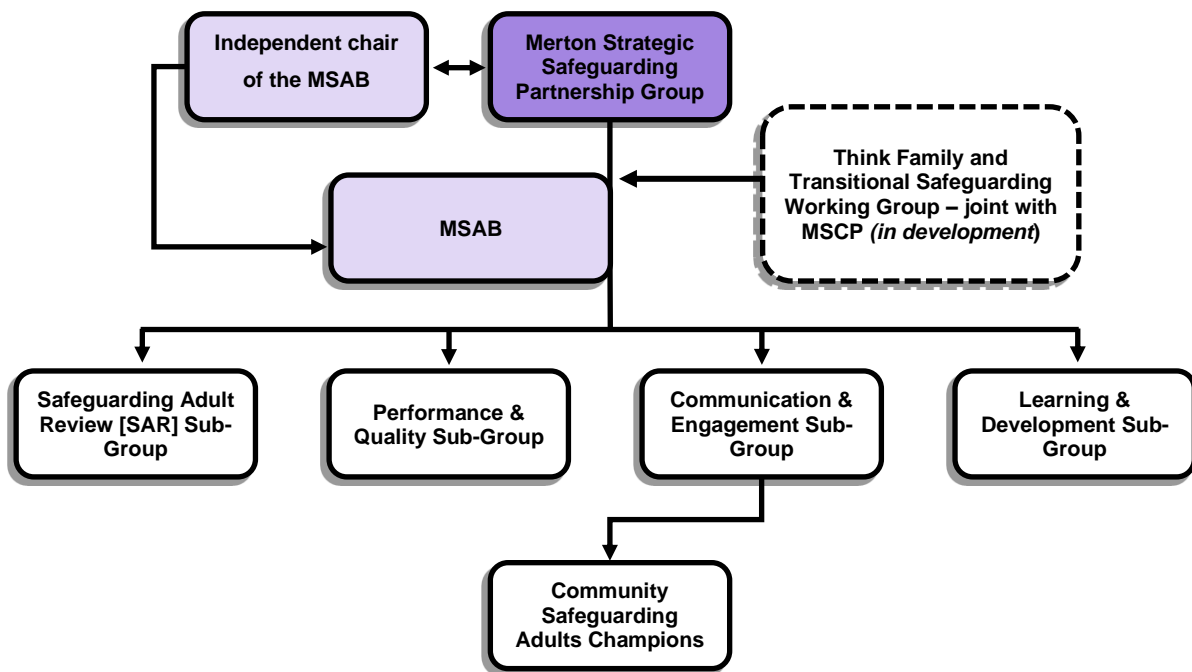
- develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how they will meet their objectives and how their member and partner agencies will contribute.
- publish an annual report detailing how effective their work has been.
- commission safeguarding adults' reviews (SARs) for any cases which meet the criteria for these. (See -Safeguarding Adults Review Section)

Governance Structure

In 2022-23 the MSAB continued to work closely with the Merton Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (MSCP). This included activities delivered together and the attendance of key representatives to link the MSAB, the MSCP Executive and MSCP Full Partnership. The MSAB and MSCP continued to share an Independent Chair, including via interim cover, which has further supported this.

Additionally, a Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding Subgroup will also meet for the first time in in 2023-24. This new subgroup was initiated as an outcome from the March 2023 Joint Safeguarding Conference, to work on the delivery of important cross cutting themes, as well as building on already established links across the partnerships.

A new Strategic Safeguarding group is in the process of being set up with the first meeting in 2023-24. This new group will provide senior level strategic oversight of safeguarding for the MSAB and the MSCP.



Merton
Safeguarding
Adults Board

Strategic Safeguarding Group

- Chaired by LB of Merton Chief Executive and co-chaired by SW BSU Chief Superintendent
- Provide senior oversight of the MSAB and MSCP, including annual reports, priority setting and key themes

Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding Subgroup

- Delivery of activity around key themes for both partnerships, including but not limited to Think Family, transitional and contextual safeguarding, housing conditions

MSAB Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Priority 1 - Prevention and Early Detection

Our aim- Adults from all communities will feel supported to keep safe. Partners, service users, carers and residents will recognise risk and be confident in their response.

Priority 2 - Building and Strengthening Connections

Our aim- Partners, service users and residents from all communities are engaged and working together to ensure an inclusive safeguarding framework.

Priority 3 - Making Safeguarding Personal

Our aim- People will feel listened to and have real choice and control in shaping their safeguarding journey.

Priority 4 - Quality Assurance & Embedding Learning

Our aim- Establish a Quality Assurance & Performance Framework to provide assurance that the Board and its partner agencies have effective systems, structures, processes, and practice in place to improve outcomes and experience in the context of safeguarding adults at risk.

To learn from reviews, for example SAR's, Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) and Learning Disability Mortality Reviews (LeDeR) will be embedded, and mechanisms are in place to measure effectiveness.



In 2022-23 We Said, We Would

We set out specific commitments for action in the previous MSAB annual report 2021-22 on how we would work together in partnership to progress against the four strategic priorities in our Strategic Plan.

- Develop a program of work to engage people with lived experience and to include their voices in the work of the Board as well as the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) action planning process.
- Continue our work around learning from SAR's. To focus on what SAR's are telling us in terms of themes we might be seeing and how, as a partnership, we can improve our practice for those at risk.
- The Communication and Engagement Subgroup of the Board will work with Merton Connected on developing a model of Community Safeguarding Adults Champions. They will be the vehicle for raising awareness of safeguarding adults in the community and amongst its residents, as well as informing the board of what's needed to support the community and to identify any emerging issues.
- Develop a data set and analyse meaningful information to support the Board with Prevention and Detection so that adults from all communities will feel supported to keep safe.
- The MSAB will be kept updated and prepare for the implementation of the Care Quality Commission's framework on Oversight for Local Authorities and Integrated Care Systems, due to be introduced in April 2023.

What we did to achieve this

‘Sandra’s Story’ Working in Partnership with People with Lived Experience – Making Safeguarding Personal

Work has begun to engage people with lived experience to support the improvement of safeguarding work in Merton. One example of this work is how we have engaged with the daughters of Sandra. Following the SK Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR), now known as Sandra’s Story, we sought the views of Sandra’s daughters to share their experience. They have since spoken at the joint MSAB and MSCP conference well as **Epsom and St-Helier’s Hospital** Annual safeguarding conference to share their story and experience. The learning has been immense, and we thank them both for their contributions.

Plans are underway with the CLCH Patient Experience Team to produce a video which can be used on the MSAB website, for learning events and for wider SAR learning.

Comments and evaluations on ‘Sandra’s Story’ from the Joint Safeguarding conference:

“Sandra story - having people with lived experience brings so much more meaning and learning - with them bringing a perspective and details that professionals can’t possibly bring.”

“Highlights the impact on the whole family and need to consider whole family needs.”

“Ensure we cross over with children and adults and understand children’s experience as it will influence them in adult life, but also understanding adults’ experiences.”

“Commitment to change and hearing the voice of the child /think family.”

“Remembering the words of those who experienced our services and how we missed opportunities to support and safeguard them better and how we can remain curious and respectful and work alongside families in distress to create plans to bring about change.”

Learning from SARS and practice development – Prevention and Early Detection

Analysing themes from recent Safeguarding Adults Reviews has been a focus of the SAR Subgroup. This year the subgroup has looked at improving how agencies work collaboratively together on complex cases, particularly where there is a high level of risk and where the person with care and support needs declines support.

This work developed from a recent SAR 'Colin' and has resulted in a new framework to guide a multi-agency and coordinated approach to cases where there is a high level of risk. The 'Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Tool' is currently being used by the partnership to support their work with adults at risk and further work will continue in 2023/24 to embed this approach. Alongside this framework, the subgroup has been looking at self-neglect and supporting improved practice through a self-neglect and hoarding tool to help practitioners working on these cases.

Developing the Community Safeguarding Adults Champions Network – Building and Strengthening Connections

In 2022-23, the MSAB partners established the Community Safeguarding Adults Champions initiative. The launch took place in National Safeguarding Week November 2022 which successfully recruited representatives from the local community as well as some key organisations from the Voluntary Sector. The network has grown to 30 members since its launch. Forums have been well attended by Community Champions and key topics around adult safeguarding have been covered including a dedicated session on modern slavery and exploitation.

Meet the Champions!



"We work with vulnerable adults. By becoming Safeguarding Champions, we are making a public declaration as to the importance of safeguarding within our organisation, whilst also ensuring we are able to keep up to date and continue to cascade key messages to staff, volunteers and our beneficiaries."

Veronica Fleming and Daljinder Nagi,
Imagine Independence



"Vestry Hall has hundreds of unique visitors pass through its doors every week. It is so important that we can all recognise potential safeguarding issues and know how and whom to report"

Julie Noel, Manager of Vestry Hall



I became a safeguarding champion because I want to be confident that I am doing the right thing when working with the public and the people who use our services".

Sabriti Ray, Project Manager Ethnic Minority Centre Merton



" We work to support vulnerable women and girls, safeguarding is always uppermost in our mind. It's imperative that we all can recognise signs of safety and confidently refer individuals when we have concerns".

Maureen Bailey and Camz Campbell, Inner Strength Network

Developing Data Collection - Quality Assurance & Embedding Learning

Collecting meaningful data to support the work of the Board has been a high priority for the Board over 2022-23. This includes a deep dive into ethnicity data relating to concerns and enquiries which is outlined further below in this report.

The MSAB has been working closely with partners over the course of this year to identify data by partners on key safeguarding areas and will continue to build on this work next year over 2023-24. Audits also continue to be undertaken of the safeguarding adults process and information to support quality assurance and provide learning to improve outcomes for people in Merton.

Progress on our Strategic Priorities – feedback from partners

1. Prevention and Early Detection

Partners have worked together to ensure staff and volunteers working in the community have a basic knowledge of awareness of Safeguarding Adults. The Safeguarding Adults Level 1 training which is accessible to all partner agencies, including the voluntary sector was launched in November 2022. A free E-learning package is available on the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board website training platform.

During National Safeguarding Week 2022 the **SW London Integrated Care System (ICS)** held a conference focusing on the National Themes for Safeguarding which are: “Responding to Contemporary Safeguarding Challenges”. They looked at the challenges of dealing with abuse, exploitation, or neglect and how harm can have a devastating and long-lasting impact on victims, their families, and carers.

It was outlined that how safeguarding adults at risk remains a priority for Southwest London ICS and the aim of this conference was to increase awareness, so as a collective system, they can continue to keep vulnerable adults at risk safe, wherever people live and whenever they access services.

Responding effectively to domestic abuse is a priority that is woven throughout the work partners do to support adults at risk. Support from **Safer Merton** continues and in 2022-23 they funded an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) to join the Local Authority First Response Team initially for 12 months. This will assist with improving early identification of domestic abuse cases as well as improve staff’s knowledge and understanding.

Safer Merton has also led on ‘White Ribbon’ accreditation and Merton Council achieved accredited status in November 2022, demonstrating the commitment in the borough to ending violence against women and girls by men and boys. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) continues to be held regularly and has representation from the Safeguarding Adults Team as well as other partners, including statutory members of the MSAB.

Merton Housing colleagues have revised their domestic abuse processes to support improvements around prevention and early detection of domestic abuse. They are now using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) tool, bringing housing assessments in line with best practice.

Domestic Abuse Case Study

The example below shows how the expertise of specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) can support early intervention and prevention of further harm. In this case, effective professional expertise and partnership working ensured that the victim at risk was identified and action taken to safeguard her from further harm:

“A softly spoken male victim approached a female IDVA stating that he was being abused. His comments included “my partner hits me with an umbrella, she has mental health issues and one day she will hurt herself” as well as other comments that seemed strange. The IDVA in this case was not totally satisfied that the male was the victim and felt the female maybe the person at risk. Something did not sit right for the IDVA, so she decided to refer the case to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

When MARAC discussed the case, there was not a lot of information about either from party agencies and after lengthy discussions all partners said that they felt that the female was the likely victim and were worried about her safety. Collectively we agreed to ask a male IDVA to talk with the male to help understand the dynamics of the relationship.

The male IDVA contacted the self-referred male and during that conversation he spoke completely differently to way he spoke to a female IDVA. He came across very bold, arrogant, and self-entitled and said that he would be the one to hurt the female and he was trained in martial arts and the female would not be able to defend herself. Following this disclosure, the male IDVA called 999 and the male was arrested and charged with several offences. The female partner was contacted by an IDVA, offered support and was now safe.

It is not always the case that a perpetrator presents as a victim but in this case, it showed how professional curiosity, partnership working to discuss the case, shared professional opinions and information helped to safeguard the female. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of MARAC and how agencies worked extremely quickly together to achieve an excellent outcome.”

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) [published its Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\)](#) in January 2023 and includes a seven-year commitment and action plan for Londoners. There was considerable consultation with all communities in London to shape the plan and as a result it outlines how the LFB will engage with all communities going forward, including Community Forums. The Borough Commander in Merton is working closely with the Board and in particular the Subgroups to ensure the CRMP is communicated to all partners and community groups. In 2023-24 a program of learning events will be scheduled.



2. Building and Strengthening Connections

In 2022-23 **partners** have worked hard to get the [Community Safeguarding Adults Champions network](#) and quarterly forums off the ground. This was launched in National Safeguarding Week 2022 and Partners participated in the promotion of the network via their individual platforms as well as using the MSAB website to advertise forums and the Safeguarding Adults E-learning training, which is very much part of equipping Champions in their role.

Partners, including **Central London Community Health Care Trust (CLCH)**, **Mental Health, St George's** as well as the Board and **Merton Childrens Safeguarding Partnership (MSCP)** have delivered safeguarding conferences in 2022-23. Focus has very much been around learning and particularly sharing learning from local and national Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's).

Local Police continue to share information and intelligence with partners via systems already set up including MARAC. Working together to keep vulnerable children, young people, and vulnerable adults safe from harm, by safeguarding, initiative-taking and investigation is a priority and partners continue to improve practice in this area. A key improvement has been having the right representation at the right meetings to improve outcomes for people using safeguarding services.

Colleagues from the **MET SW Borough Command UNIT** delivered Road Shows in 2022/23 which were held virtually and in person. The events were shining a light on safeguarding during and post the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a particular focus on reaching the voluntary and community sectors who contribute towards public protection and keeping people safe during the current challenging times. Positive feedback came from the voluntary and community sectors in relation to the improved relationships between them and the police.

3. Making Safeguarding Personal

In 2022, **Merton Adult Social Care**, led on the introduction of a new process called 'Discovery Interviews' to support the gathering of feedback and gaining valuable insight, directly from people who had been through a Safeguarding Adult Enquiry.

Over the coming year, plans are in place to role this approach out further with the Safeguarding Adults Managers (SAM's) taking the lead. This will help strengthen the voice of people going through the safeguarding process, as well as to identify learning areas, make improvements to the systems used, and support people through what can be a difficult process.

Colleagues from the **SW BCU** have been trained in trauma informed practice and utilising this approach when working with individuals with complex needs. Officers have reported listening to adults at risk and respecting their views as well as working with them to achieve the desired outcomes. This includes considering alternative avenues for addressing behaviour and not unnecessarily criminalising adults at risk, where this is appropriate.

The **SWL ICB** have supported the introduction of new approach to patient safety incidents – PSIRF (Patient Safety Incident Response Framework) –which came into place this year. This new approach will change the way that the system learns from patient safety incidents and events. Compassionate engagement and involvement of those affected has been highlighted as an important aspect of the PSIRF framework.

The MSAB SAR Subgroup has been focusing on the voices of people with lived experience who have gone through the SAR process and continues to develop this work. Feedback from family and friends with lived experience remains a focus to inform how people using services are supported.



4. Quality Assurance and Embedding Learning

As done in previous years, Board partners completed the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Audit Tool (SAPAT), followed by a Challenge Event to look at the findings and to inform the annual priorities.

In 2022-23 we have seen good engagement and representation from diverse partners from all the MSAB Subgroups which has enhanced ownership of the MSAB priorities and contributed to improving practice for those at risk. Co-chairs, include partners from **CLCH, Integrated Care Board (ICB), Merton Connected and Adult Social Care (ASC)**.

Achievements in 2023 have included the launch of a New Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Framework and Tool following the 'Colin' SAR as outlined above. This was signed off by the Board in December 2022. Further work around the implementation and review of the Framework will take place in 2023-24. The Board continues to undertake and learn from SAR's. Three SAR's have been completed in 2022-23 and one has been published (See Section on SAR's).

In February 2023 Michael Preston Shoot, who led the review of the SAR Analysis 2018-19, provided a workshop for Board members around the SAR process. It covered decision making, legal literacy, commissioning, Quality Markers and learning and service improvement. The Merton SAR Protocol was reviewed to incorporate this information as well as any learning from the review process in Merton and included the updated SCIE Quality Markers.

Following feedback from managers and staff regarding the SAR Process and challenges often faced in terms of the issues raised by staff and how they might be left feeling, the SAR Subgroup Co-Chair delivered a workshop on Compassion Fatigue. Also led by the SAR Subgroup, [guidance to support managers and staff](#) has been produced and is available on the MSAB website.

7-minute briefings have been developed to share the learning and they sit alongside published SARs on the website. Learning Events are also arranged to share SAR learning and further work is underway to measure the impact of learning on practice as well as for people using services, asking the key question 'What difference has this made?'

The Work of the Subgroups

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR)

Considered SAR referrals and commissioned reviews in line with the SAR Protocol

Raised awareness of the contribution of people with lived experience in the SAR process at the Joint Conference 2022

Guidance for Managers and Staff to support them during the SAR Process.

Learning and Development

Level 1 Safeguarding Adult Training available free and to the Voluntary Sector, Faith communities, volunteers and the wider community.

Online training now available on the website to raise awareness of prevent, radicalisation and extremism

Raising awareness of Fire Safety through promoting news, campaigns and engagement from the LFB

Promoted the Think Family approach in collaboration with the MSCP

Performance and Quality

Continued to progress the work on gathering data for MSAB quality assurance

Produced a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Framework and Tool for complex and high risk cases

Developed and piloted 'Discovery Interviews' to hear the voices of people having experienced the safeguarding adult enquiry process.

Communication and Engagement

Launched the Community Safeguarding Adults Champion Network November 2022

Arranged quarterly forums for the Champions with speakers on topics such as the work of the Board, Scams and Financial Abuse

Advertised events for National Safeguarding Week November 2022 as well as MSAB partner events

Updated and maintained the MSAB Website as a resource for partners



Spotlight on: Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) and the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) Joint Conference – March 2023

On 15th March 2023, Nicky Brownjohn, the interim joint chair led the annual conference for Merton's Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children's Partnership: ***Domestic Abuse Safeguarding: "Learning from the Lived Experience of Trauma from Child to Adult"***.

Councillor Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, and Councillor Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member for Children's Services provided the opening addresses.

Hayley Tuffin delivered a keynote speech on trauma informed practice which set the scene for the afternoon, looking at the lifetime impact of childhood trauma.

CLCH followed with a session about Safeguarding Adult Reviews, taking us from an overview of the national learning from reviews to a Merton SAR. Lorel and Kerylyn were introduced as the daughters of SK and spoke from their lived experience of being hidden young carers, when they were children, to their parent who could not manage their own care and support needs.

This provided the conference with a vital picture of how services saw the adult at risk without seeing the children. Lorel and Kerylyn showed us how important it is for professionals to 'think family' to prevent harm. Lorel has since presented their story in video form that is accessible via the MSAB website.

Feedback has demonstrated the impact and learning gained from people with lived experience as well as giving an opportunity to people to describe how it was for them, which does not always happen.

For the final part of the conference, Safer Merton spoke about the impact of domestic abuse on children, and their lifelong trauma. They provided advice on how to approach individuals who disclose domestic abuse: '*Begin from a place of empathy*'.

The conference ended with break out room activities to consider the next steps in our learning. Key outputs were:

1. Continue strengthening relationship-based practice
2. Let's be bold, let's create a Think Family charter
3. Focus on children, don't just listen to the adult
4. Adult and children services working together
5. Consider the recurring themes: Relationships

This year the MSAB and MSCP Joint Chair and Statutory partners have been reflecting on the key outputs for the conference and are working together to develop the Strategic Safeguarding Partnership to support the safeguarding strategic

priorities and governance of both partnerships. This group will be jointly chaired by Merton Chief Executive and the Met Police.

A joint Think Family and Transitions working group will also be developed in 2023-24 to look at areas such as learning from reviews, transition from Children to adults and other agendas that impact on both adult and children's safeguarding.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews- 2022-23

The Board received three SAR notifications during 2022-23. One notification was approved for an in-depth review, and one other is awaiting further information and one did not meet the criteria for a review.

Three other reviews were concluded during the last year, two of which were not published. The Board considers the publication of each review on a case-by-case basis recognising that in some situations, there are factors which mean that is not appropriate to publish – such as the wishes of the family or where the individual has suffered serious harm or neglect.

SAR Notifications received	3
Reviews initiated	1
Reviews completed	3
Reviews published	1

SAR Annabel (published 31st March 2023)

Annabel was a mother to several children from different relationships. At the time of her death, she was still considered a permanent resident in LB Merton but had been living in temporary accommodation in Brighton & Hove since January 2021. In her short life, Annabel had experienced multiple trauma, through rape as a teenager, significant domestic violence and abuse in several relationships, multiple miscarriages and the separation from her children due to care proceedings.

Annabel and her family had been known to several agencies within and outside of Merton due to incidents of domestic abuse leading her to seek emergency accommodation outside of Merton. During the time period under review, Merton Children's Services escalated their involvement to child protection and subsequently issued care proceedings in relation to four of Annabel's children, which was an enormous shock to the whole family and devastating for Annabel.

Annabel experienced multiple crises of physical and mental ill health, including several attempts to take her life. In December 2020, a road traffic collision left Annabel temporarily paralysed and with care and support needs. The children's care proceedings concluded with the judge ordering for the children to live with extended family members and limited contact was granted to Annabel. Annabel sadly took her own life on 5th March 2021 by taking an overdose. She was 34 years old.

Key Learning Points

- Adequately managing risk for vulnerable mothers if the local authority proposes care arrangements for their children outside the family home.
- A think family approach is required to be fully embedded in circumstances where children's services are initiating court proceedings. Adequate input is required from a range of adult services who know the mother, to feed into planning at the stage of the child protection processes.
- Vital information must be shared about risks of self-harm or suicide linked to their despair, so support can be provided.

The MSAB and the MSCP are committed to the learning from the Annabel review and are working together to ensure system changes and improvements are made.

Learning from Life and Death Reviews (Previously LeDer)

The National programme aimed at making improvements to the lives of people with learning disabilities is known as “Learning from Lives and Deaths” People with a learning disability and autistic people, previously known as The Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR). It requires that reviews are carried out following the death of anyone with a learning disability and those people who have a diagnosis of autism.

The purpose of the review is to identify whether there are any concerns or areas of learning to improve the health and quality of care for people with learning disabilities. These reviews are conducted by South West London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the findings are reported to NHS England.

All deaths notified to the programme are reviewed locally by trained reviewers. The focus of each review is to identify good practice and what has worked well, as well as where improvements to the provision of care could be made.

In 2022-23 there have been nine reviews carried out for Merton.

The figures show for completed reviews to date, out of the nine, one person had a Learning Disability and Autism, whilst eight recorded a Learning Disability. Five people had ethnicity classed as white British and one white Irish. Two were from a Black Asian Minority Ethnic community (one ethnicity was not recorded).

Over the year, three males and six females were reviewed. Four lived in care homes, two in supported/sheltered living, whilst three lived at home with family. All died in hospital except for one person who had good end of life care at home with services to support. The youngest was 18 and the oldest 73 (both females). There were no unavoidable deaths.

Concerns identified in Life and Death Reviews:

- Concerns were raised around neglect.
- Lack of appropriate weight management and dietary management in the community.
- Delay in accessing a timely mental health assessment.
- Non-attendance for health screening or appropriate age-related screening.
- Reported delays in specialist equipment being put in place.
- Transition handover, including communication from Children’s to Adults could have been improved.

Positive Practice identified in Life and Death Reviews

- One report showed good planning and end of life care at the care home (which were the persons wishes).
- Report of good care in hospital and another report of excellent end of life care provided in hospital.
- Two reports showed good GP involvement, with timely access to care and services with dignity, kindness, compassion, and respect.
- One report identified very good care and relationships between the carers and the person.
- Demonstration of comprehensive community assessments by dementia diagnostic team, and same person whilst in hospital a non-pharmaceutical approach via one-to-one support was used rather than medication. The day centre in this case were also able to refer directly to dysphagia team without having to go via GP.
- A review showed cultural awareness on death, hospice had open door policy and supported the person and family well at home.

Learning and Development

The Board has offered several learning and development opportunities for partners over the course of this year. The delivery of Blue Light training was a key action which emerged from the recommendations of the SK SAR review to improve how services work with people who are alcohol dependent.

Safeguarding Adults Level 1 E-training is now available on the MSAB website where it can be accessed by partners, voluntary sector and the wider community – including our Community Champions Network. 62 people have booked onto this training, with 24 completing and 34 ongoing.

Overview of learning events and training sessions	
Multi Agency Learning Events	Compassion Fatigue 1 st March 2023.
	WDP Drug & Alcohol Treatment in Merton 8 th July 2022.
	Bitesize training London Fire Brigade 30 th June 2022.
SGA Champions Network,	Safeguarding Community Awareness film
	Financial abuse and Scam Awareness – Dec 22
Public Health- Blue Light Training,	1 day training =79
	2-day Train the Trainer =7
MSAB Learning Sessions	February 2023 - Decision Making Regarding SARs (Michael Preston-Shoot).
	December 2022 - Office Public Guardian

Merton Council Adult Safeguarding Training	
Safeguarding Adults Level 1	82
Safeguarding Adults Level 2 ASC Health 2020	38
Safeguarding Adults Level 3	9
Care Certificate - Standard 10: Safeguarding Adults	1
Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	17
Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	58
Safeguarding Adults	47
Mental Capacity Act Level 1	2
Mental Capacity Act Level 2	36
Safeguarding Adults - Basic Awareness	1
Safeguarding Adults Managers - Level 3	15

Safeguarding Adults Data 2022 - 23

During 2022-23 850 concerns were received by Merton Local Authority in total. This is an increase of 40 (5%) on the number of concerns raised in 2021-22 Section 42 enquiries were commenced in 392 cases and Other enquiries commenced in 64 cases, giving a total of 456 enquiries commenced. This is an increase of 9 (2%) on 2021-22 and represents a conversion rate (concerns raised to enquiries started) of 54%.

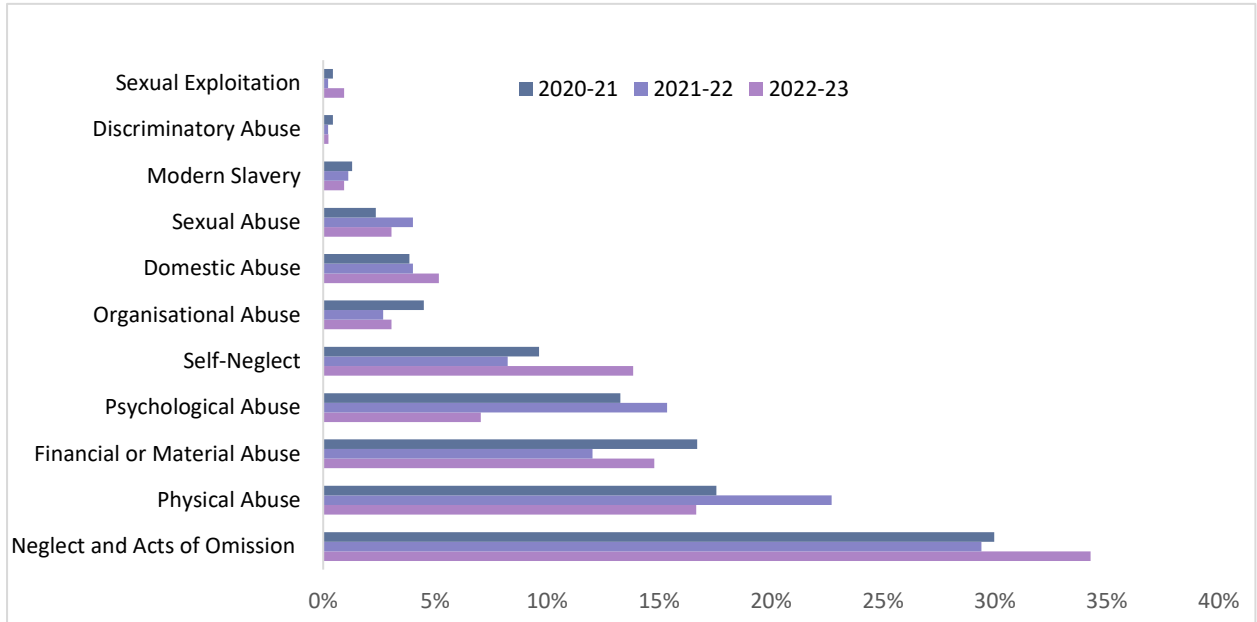
The percentage of the conversion rate is slightly lower this year and is attributed to improved understanding of the thresholds for safeguarding adults at risk. In 2023/24 further work is planned in the Safeguarding Adults and DoLS Team to address the conversion rate to ensure it reflects closer to the national and London average.

In terms of type and location of risk in enquiries, 61% were reported to be in people's own homes, in common with previous years, and there was a slight increase in percentage of 'Neglect and Acts of Omission' risks (4%). Safeguarding Adults data for all local authorities is published by the Department for Health and Social Care each year including all London boroughs and can be viewed [here](#).

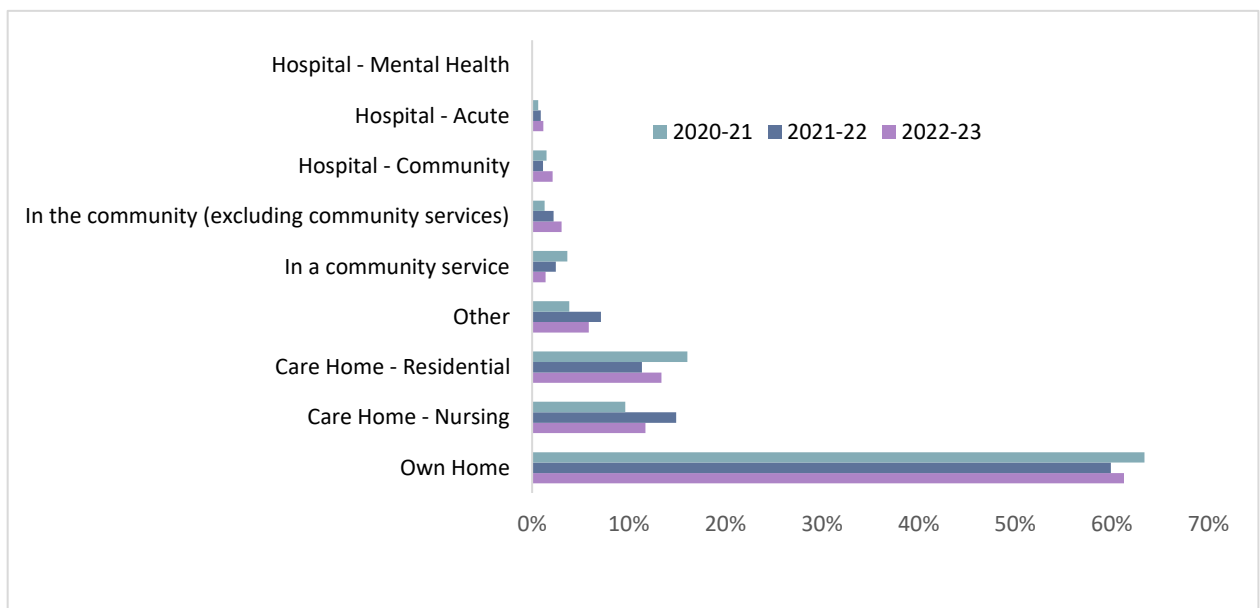
Year	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Total number of Adult Safeguarding Concerns raised during the year	850	810	830	732
Total number of Adult Safeguarding Enquiries commenced during the year	456	447	379	366
Conversion Rate in Merton (Number of Section 42 Enquiries + Number of Other Enquiries) /Number of Concerns	54%	55%	46%	50%
Conversion Rate (England)	33%	34%	34%	37%
Conversion Rate (London)	35%	33%	33%	41%

Type and location of risk in enquiries 2022-23

Type of risk in concluded enquiries during the year 2022-23



Location of risk in concluded enquiries during the year 2022-23



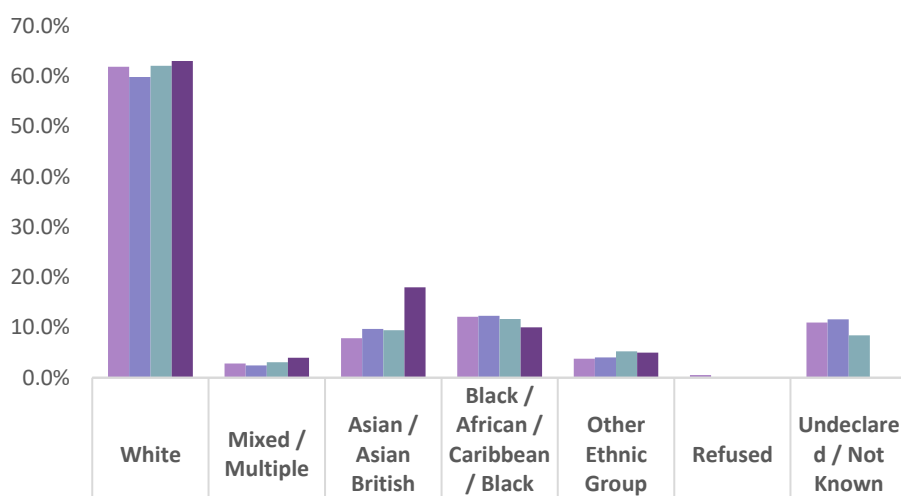
Safeguarding Ethnicity Data 2022-23

This year we have continued to analyse our data in relation to Ethnicity. This analysis helps us to understand inequalities but also identify where we need to focus our work to address where there are disparities. The Performance and Quality Assurance Group will continue to review this data.

During 2022/23 7.9.% of people from Asian/Asian British were involved in safeguarding concerns and 8.8% were involved in safeguarding enquiries. There is a decrease in the proportion involved in safeguarding concerns and safeguarding enquiries compared to 2021/22.

During 2022/23, 12.1% of people involved in safeguarding concerns and 14.3% of people involved in safeguarding enquiries were Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British. This compares to 10% of the Merton 18+ population who are Black/African/Caribbean/Black British. Work is underway in the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Subgroup to consider why this is the case as we see a similar picture for this group of people involved in SARs in Merton.

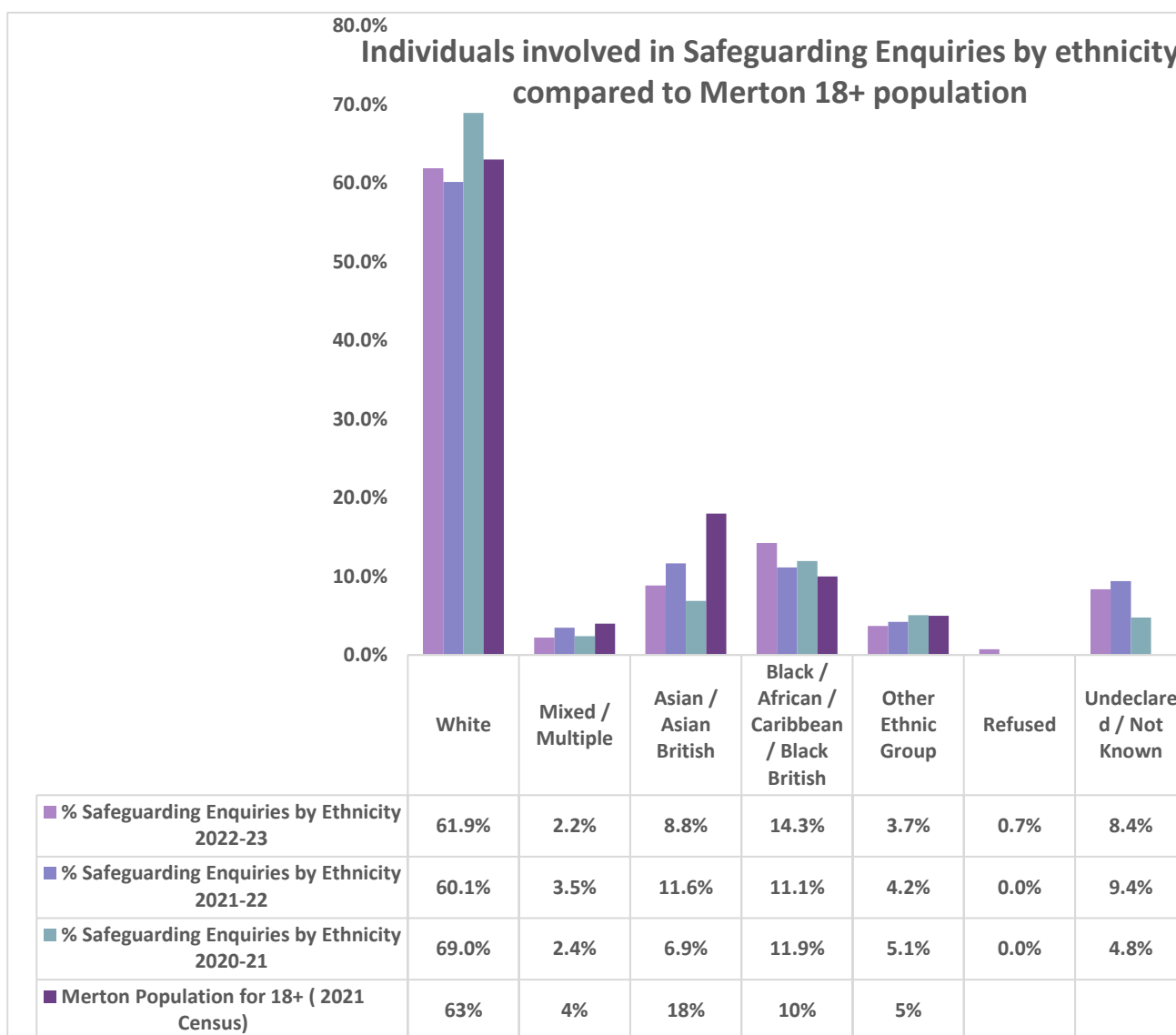
Individuals involved in Safeguarding Concerns by ethnicity compared to Merton 18+ population



	White	Mixed / Multiple	Asian / Asian British	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Other Ethnic Group	Refused	Undeclared / Not Known
% Safeguarding Concerns by Ethnicity 2022-23	61.8%	2.8%	7.9%	12.1%	3.8%	0.6%	11.0%
% Safeguarding Concerns by Ethnicity 2021-22	59.8%	2.5%	9.7%	12.3%	4.1%	0.0%	11.6%
% Safeguarding Concerns by Ethnicity 2020-21	62.1%	3.1%	9.4%	11.7%	5.2%	0.0%	8.5%
Merton Population for 18+ (2021 Census)	63%	4%	18%	10%	5%		

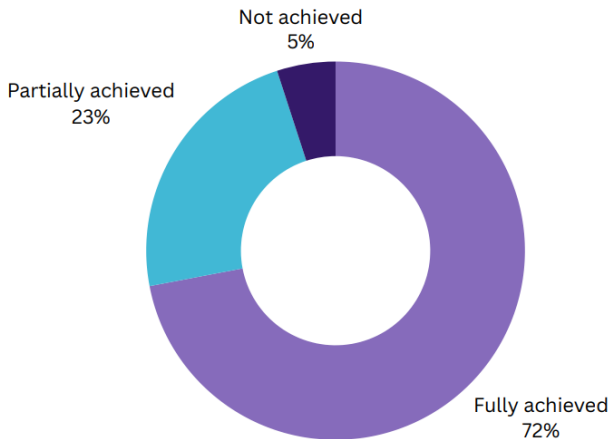
In terms of action to address disparities, developing how we hear from people with lived experience will feed into this and our new Community Adult Safeguarding Champions Network will play a crucial role.

This network is comprised of a range of local voluntary sector organisations, including faith groups, so it is an important initiative for reaching the community and hard to reach groups and get key messages out. It is hoped that these Community Champions can help people across the community to recognise and report cases of suspected abuse and neglect but they will also be important in alerting and engaging the Board around potential safeguarding issues in the community.



Making Safeguarding Personal

An important success measure of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' is the extent to which the person's desired outcomes are met. Locally, Making Safeguarding Personal is well embedded in practice, with **95% of people's outcomes being fully or partially met**.



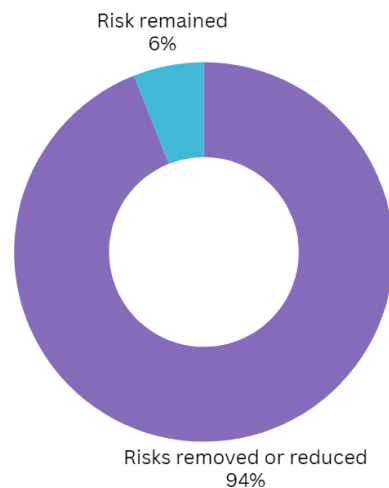
Percentage of enquiries concluded where outcomes were fully or partially met over 2022-23

Safeguarding aims to remove or reduce the risk to the adult. It is not always possible to completely remove risk and the risk will remain in cases where adults with capacity make a decision to continue living with an elevated level of risk.

The impact of safeguarding on risk is good with the risk removed or reduced in over 93% of cases. Where the risk remains, this is usually the result of people choosing to live with risk and understanding the implications of it.

Where outcomes were not met, this is usually due to the person not engaging with the process or being unable to articulate if they consider that their outcomes were met.

There was a slight increase in the number of people who expressed a desired outcome compared to last year.



Percentage of enquiries concluded where risk was removed or reduced over 2022-23

Making Safeguarding Personal Case Study- Robert

“Robert was a 76-year-old man who grew up in Merton. He lived in a ground floor rental flat. He was a sociable person and enjoyed conversations and visiting the local pubs.

He had a diagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and was living with dementia. A few years prior he invited a friend to move into this home and he was helping with practical tasks. As well as this a care package was provided for one care call daily to assist with personal care.

This arrangement appeared to be going well, however, his GP contacted Merton Adult Social Care to raise a safeguarding adult referral after noticing at a visit by medical staff, that he had bruises to his face.

As part of the Safeguarding Enquiry a Team Manager and an Assistant Social Worker undertook an urgent visit. During the visit he disclosed that the person living with him was drunk and had hit him. At this time a place of safety was offered, however this was declined.

Early in 2022 a new concern was raised, and a subsequent safeguarding referral was received from the care agency. Robert had a bruise above his eye and a cut on his cheek. The team manager and a Senior Social Worker visited Robert, however, once again he refused a place of safety in a care home. Consent for a Safeguarding Enquiry to proceed was sought, however, Robert's mental capacity needed to be assessed. He could not remember what happened or when he sustained the bruise and cut. A referral was made for an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) to act on Robert's behalf to make certain decisions.

As part of the Safeguarding Enquiry the carer and the neighbour were interviewed. The neighbour disclosed that they had called the Police during the previous weekend as she could hear the friend shouting at Robert."

Outcome of the Safeguarding Adults Enquiry

- A referral was made for an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)
- Locks were changed for Robert's friend so he could no longer access his home.
- The friend agreed to present at Homeless Person Unit and was placed into B&B due to his homelessness.
- Robert's care package was increased to 2 care calls daily.

Making Safeguarding Personal

- **Empowerment** – Robert was supported and encouraged to make his own decisions via an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) support.
- **Prevention** – locks to the external doors were changed.
- **Proportionality** – using the least restrictive option i.e., Robert wished to stay in his home.
- **Partnership working** – with Police, GP, Social Services, Care Provider, Housing and IMCA
- **Protection Plan** – the friend could only access his belongings when escorted by a social worker after the locks were changed.
- **Accountability** – clearly defined roles/responsibility for each organisation.

Our priorities for 2023-24

- Improve the multi-agency approach to complex and high-risk cases by providing practitioners with new guidance and approaches to use in their work.
- Support the development of the Community Safeguarding Champions Network with a focus on hearing the voices from our communities, encouraging participation and raise awareness about safeguarding in the wider community.
- Develop an approach to working with people who have lived experience of safeguarding so that their voices are heard and make a difference, including through the SAR process.
- Strengthening our work across children and adult services by:
 - embedding a Think Family approach
 - improving how we support the transition of children and young people into adulthood
- Continue the work with all partners on bringing together key data on safeguarding to provide better quality assurance arrangements in Merton.



Merton
Safeguarding
Adults Board

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 23rd January 2024

Agenda item:

Wards:

Subject:

Lead officer: Aileen Buckton, Independent Chair, Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Lead member: Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children's Services

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Sarah Slater, Policy & Partnerships Manager

Recommendations:

- A. To note the content of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report for the period 2022-23.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report provides an overview of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) Annual Report which covers the period April 2022 to March 2023. The full report can be found in Appendix 1 alongside a visual summary in Appendix 2.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1. The MSCP is required to produce and publish a report annually on actions taken by statutory partners and relevant agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare and outline how effective those arrangements have been in practice. The MSCP has commissioned a one-page visual summary poster to sit alongside the detailed report, in response to positive feedback from our Young Scrutineer and the partnership on the 2021-22 version.

3 DETAILS

3.1. Whilst there remained continued pressures on safeguarding systems following the pandemic and exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, safeguarding partners in Merton have worked together to continuously improve our safeguarding systems and strengthen the voice of the child in our Partnership.

3.2. During the reporting period, the partnership continued to be supported by our Young Scrutineer, Halima Mehmood, who worked in partnership with our Independent Scrutineer, Sarah Lawrence, and Independent Chair, Aileen Buckton. Our Independent Chair also chairs Merton Adults Safeguarding Board (MSAB) and both chairing roles were covered on an interim basis by Nicola Brownjohn during the report period, providing continuity during a period of sickness. Sharing an independent chair and holding our second Joint Safeguarding Conference in March 2023 has supported us to progress joint working with adults' colleagues including around "Think Family" and embedding learning from local adults and children's learning reviews.

3.3. Our Executive Group remained stable during the reporting period. We have since welcomed Ian Cameron as our Met Police representative, replacing Andrew Wadey.

3.4. During 2022-23 work was progressed against our three thematic priorities; Early Hep and Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Think Family, and Contextual Safeguarding. The appended report provides further details about activity in these areas and the difference this has made to safeguarding practice locally. Our Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer led a thorough piece of scrutiny on “What can MSCP do to prevent the adultification of black children in Merton?”, which included focus groups with children and young people to hear directly about their experiences. The MSCP also further strengthened our training and audit programmes and followed up on actions from the previous year’s Section 11 safeguarding audit.

3.5. During 2022-23, the partnership oversaw the publication of one local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) for Franklyn. In addition, the partnership undertook two further rapid reviews for Child M and Child O following serious incident notifications submitted to Ofsted. The MSCP annual reports sets out some of the steps the partnership has taken to respond to these reviews and how learning has been embedded across the Partnership.

3.6. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board may be particularly interested in exploring the learning from the MSCP’s local child safeguarding practice reviews, partnership reviews, and audits, which are all available on the [MSCP’s website](#)¹. Seven-minute briefings are available to be widely disseminated among all professionals working to safeguard children and young people in Merton.

3.7. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board may also be interested in the MSCP’s training offer which is available free of charge to all MSCP member agencies, the voluntary sector and independent sector agencies working with children, young people and their families in Merton. Places can be booked via the following link: [Merton Safeguarding - Learning Management System](#).²

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. N/A

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

5.1. The MSCP annual report has had input from all statutory partners as well as local agencies and the MSCP sub-group chairs. The draft was considered by the MSCP Full Partnership in October 2023, the Strategic Safeguarding Group in November 2023 and received formal sign off from the MSCP Executive partners in January 2024. The MSCP’s Independent Chair, Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer have had the opportunity to review and comment. The Annual Report will also be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 25th January and any comments and feedback will be shared with the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Independent Chair for the MSCP.

¹ <https://www.mertonscp.org.uk/>

² <https://training.safeguardinginmerton.org.uk/>

6 TIMETABLE

N/A

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None.

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. As outlined in the report.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. As outlined in the report.

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. As outlined in the report.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. As outlined in the report and the MSCP's Business Plan 23-25, available on the MSCP website.

12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1 – Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022-23.

Appendix 2 - Visual Summary Poster - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022-23

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None



MERTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report 2022-2023



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Foreword

This report covers the work of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) during the period April 2022 to March 2023, a year which saw pressures on safeguarding systems from the Covid-19 pandemic reducing, albeit with other pressures developing for children and families and local services, such as the cost-of-living crisis. In this year, the government launched their Stable Homes, Built On Love proposal based on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the national review into the tragic murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson, and committed to reforms aimed at promoting children's welfare by supporting children's families and the loving relationships around them. Focus on addressing disproportionality and promoting anti-racist practice continued to be a priority, in response to the Child Q review in Hackney alongside many other local and national factors. Strong partnership working with schools continued to be important, particularly in response to Everyone's Invited and concerns around school attendance continuing to remain below pre-pandemic levels nationally.

During 2022-23, the MSCP saw a period of stability after recruiting to our independent posts and permanent business support unit in the previous financial year. The Partnership's Executive Group also remained consistent through the year. This allowed us to maintain a strong focus on delivering our priorities in the MSCP business plan, including further strengthening our multi-agency training programme, ongoing review of multi-agency datasets and delivering robust learning reviews and thematic scrutiny.

Within this work, we are pleased to have gathered the voice of children and their families in various ways and are keen to continue building on this important work going forwards. We were delighted to hear from our Young Scrutineer, Halima Mehmood, and Independent Scrutineer, Sarah Lawrence, during the year, with their holistic and

child-focused approach to scrutiny, including on the adultification of black children.

Our Independent Chair, Aileen Buckton, was unwell for a period and we were very grateful to Nicola Brownjohn for stepping in to provide interim cover and help maintain independent leadership of our partnership.

Through working closely together with the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB), including sharing an Independent Chair and delivering a second Joint Safeguarding Conference in March 2023, we have been able to progress joint working with adults' colleagues including around "Think Family" and embedding learning from local adults and children's learning reviews.

We are immensely proud of the work of all our partners who work tirelessly with families to keep them safe and promote their welfare and wellbeing. We also remain highly ambitious for our children and families and hope the year ahead will bring further opportunities to improve how children and families experience our services.

Justin Roper

Director of Quality, SWL ICB on behalf of Gloria Rowland

Ian Cameron

Head of Safeguarding, Public Protection, Southwest BCU

Jane McSherry

Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families, London Borough of Merton

Introduction

The Children's Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 requires each Local Authority area to establish arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership fulfills this role for the London Borough of Merton. More detail on our local arrangements can be found in our [Partnership Agreement](#).

Every 12 months the safeguarding partners must prepare and publish a report on what the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies for the local authority area have done as a result of the local safeguarding arrangements and outline how effective those arrangements have been in practice.

This report provides an overview of the impact of the MSCP's work on the safety and wellbeing of Merton's children and families, as well as an update against the Partnership's key priority areas outlined in the partnership's business plan for 2021-23. These priorities are:

Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership		
Early Help and Neglect	Domestic Abuse and Think Family	Contextual Safeguarding

Under the first priority area, the report will also include how the Partnership learns from scrutiny, audits and learning reviews (local child safeguarding practice reviews) to embed a culture of continuous improvement in our local safeguarding arrangements.

Our Children & Young People

We have 51,985 children and young people living in Merton

41,350 CYP are in school or full-time education

36% school-age children have English as an additional language

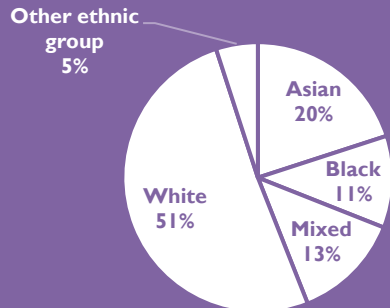
2,446 children with an Education, Health & Care Plan at March 2023

1,229 children in need of help and protection at 31 March 2023*

Pages 53

* Defined by Children Act 1989 as including children on child in need plans, child protection plans, looked after by local authorities, care leavers and disabled children.

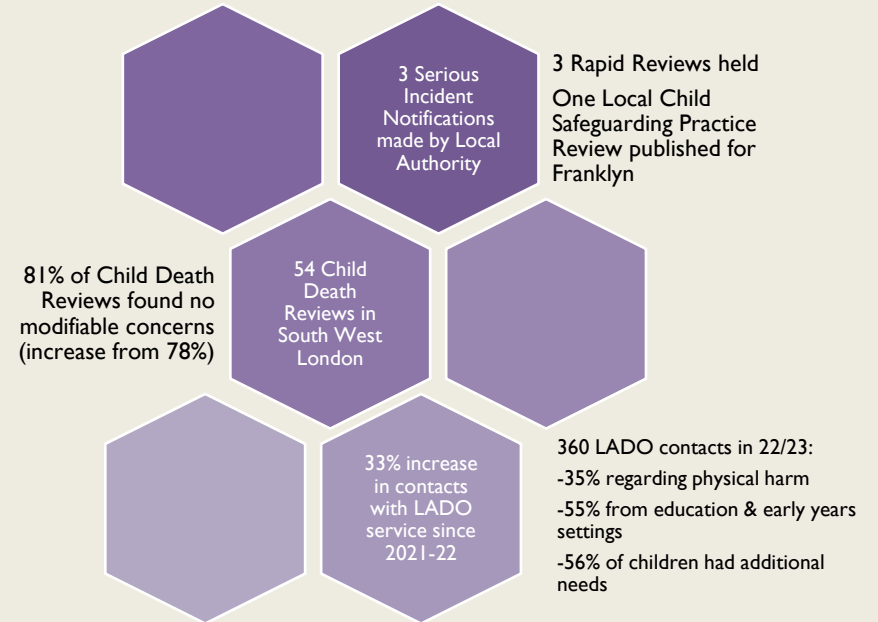
ETHNICITY OF MERTON CHILDREN



¹ Data sources: 2021 Census, Merton School Census 2023, Merton SEN dashboard March 2023, DfE Children in Need statistics 2023.

Data Overview

Below is a brief overview of the key data included in this report.



²

MSCP Training programme

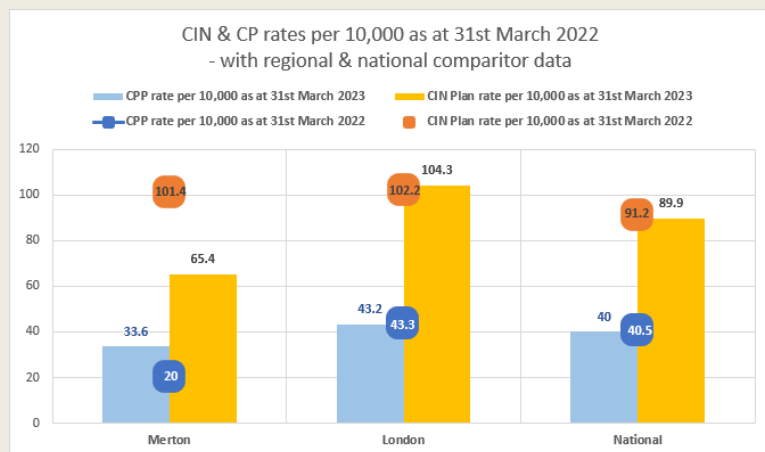
- 792 multi-agency delegates trained through delivery of 63 sessions of 36 separate courses/events
- Significant increase maintained from 222 delegates during the pandemic in 2020-21 and small increase from 760 in previous year 2021-22
- Attendance rate of 70% of the total bookings made (1,125)

² Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) manages concerns and allegations against professionals and volunteers working with children in Merton

Children's social care

In 2022-23, **Merton remained below London and national averages for the below children's social care indicators.** Compared to previous year (2022), Merton saw a:

- Reduction in the rate of children with a child in need (CIN) plan from 101.4 to 65.4 per 10,000 children at 31 March. This relates to a reduction from 484 children to 312 children with a CIN plan between March 2022 and March 2023.³
- Increase in the rate of children subject to child protection plans (CPP) from 20 to 33.6 per 10,000 children at 31 March. This relates to an increase from 94 children to 158 children with a CPP between March 2022 and March 2023.
- 26 of every 10,000 children in Merton are in care, in line with previous year and lower than the rate nationally (70) and across London (52). This relates to 122 children in care in Merton at March 2023.



Re-referrals to Merton children's social care were 18.3% during 2022, in line with London average (18%) and remaining below national (21.5%).

³ CIN plan reporting for CIN census is currently experimental statistics- local data provided here. Work is ongoing to ensure data accuracy.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

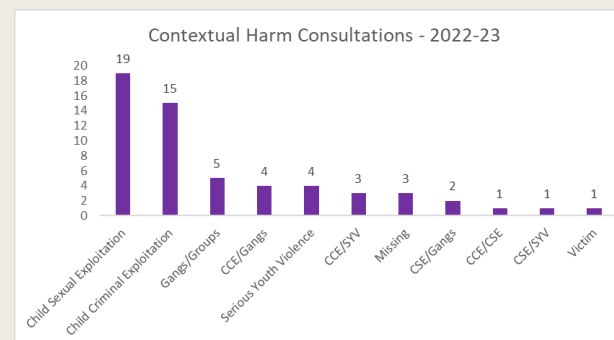
In 2022/2023 the MARAC discussed **592** high risk and complex cases involving domestic abuse, **564** children were identified as part of these discussions. This is in line with an increase in the number of cases discussed at MARAC since the pandemic started in 2020.

Figure 1: An overview of MARAC cases 2019/20 – 2022/23

Year	Number of Cases Discussed	Number of Repeat cases	% repeat cases	Number of children in the household
2020-21	576	234	41%	557
2021-22	636	301	47%	639
2022-23	592	259	44%	564

Contextual Harm consultations

During 2022-23, **58 contextual harm consultations were completed** as per the pathway into the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel (28 females and 30 males).



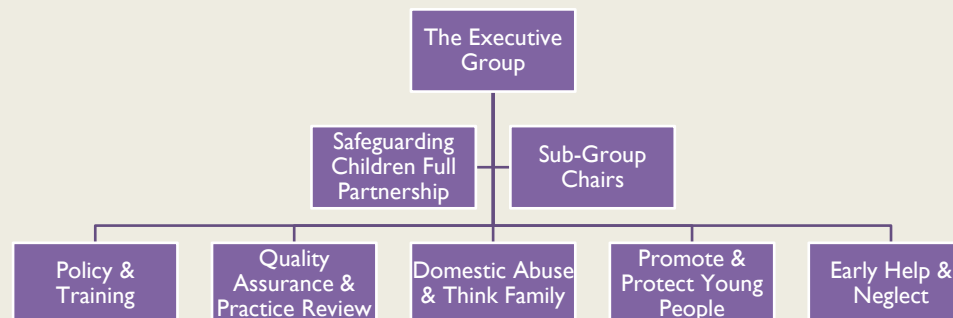
Strong Leadership and Strong Partnership

Governance and Oversight

The MSCP has two key documents, our Partnership Agreement and our Business Plan⁴, which provide an overview of the partnership's agreed priorities, and the governance and oversight established to oversee delivery of them.

Changes to governance implemented in 2021-22 are now well embedded, and partners fed back during consultation on the business plan for 2023-25 that structures, as outlined in the diagram below, were working well. This includes a monthly Executive of the three statutory partners for agile decision-making, a termly Full Partnership meeting including wider partners such as schools, providers and so on, and five subgroups meeting quarterly to drive forward workplans based on the partnership's statutory duties and agreed priorities. Sub-group chairs also meet monthly to ensure that the work of sub-groups is coordinated and support with strategic updates to the Executive.

Agency engagement has been strong overall, and strong multi-agency engagement in the delivery of statutory and non-statutory processes demonstrate continued commitment from partners. The chairing of subgroups is shared across the three statutory partners and there has been a strong commitment to ensuring all relevant agencies are represented within these meetings.



The Partnership also has three independent posts to support with our core duty to promote the welfare of children and monitor the strength of partnership working.

- An Independent Chair
- An Independent Scrutineer, and
- A Young Scrutineer

An Independent Chair, Aileen Buckton was recruited during 2021-22. Nicola Brownjohn provided sickness cover from January 2022 – March 2023 within the year this report refers to. Aileen and Nicola have provided independent challenge to our Partnership when chairing the Executive and the Full Partnership. Aileen, and Nicola whilst in post, also chaired the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board, facilitating stronger working relationships between the two safeguarding partnerships, including effective delivery of our second Joint Annual Conference in March 2023, themed on Domestic Abuse Safeguarding: “Learning from the Lived Experience of Trauma from Child to Adult”.

⁴ Dec 2021 Partnership Agreement and MSCP Business Plan 2021-2023 are available on request. Both documents have since been refreshed for 2023-24, and therefore MSCP website reflects the updated versions.

Sarah Lawrence has been our Independent Scrutineer since February 2020, and Halima Mehmood has been our Young Scrutineer since May 2021. Both have developed strong working relationships with partners in Merton, enabling robust and informative scrutiny of key themes to help the MSCP embed improvements to safeguarding practice.

Our Young Scrutineer role places us within the 29% of local safeguarding partnerships nationally, who involve young people in a scrutiny role⁵.

"As the outgoing Young Scrutineer, I'm really pleased that the MSCP has both developed and matured in youth voice inclusion. It is crucial to maintain this through improving accessibility, specifically for disabled and marginalized children across the Borough, as this ensures that we continue to provide informed insights on children's safeguarding concerns. I am grateful for the time I have spent working with the MSCP and Sarah Lawrence, the Independent Scrutineer, and proud of the work we have achieved."

Halima Mehmood, Young Scrutineer, MSCP

Business Plan refresh

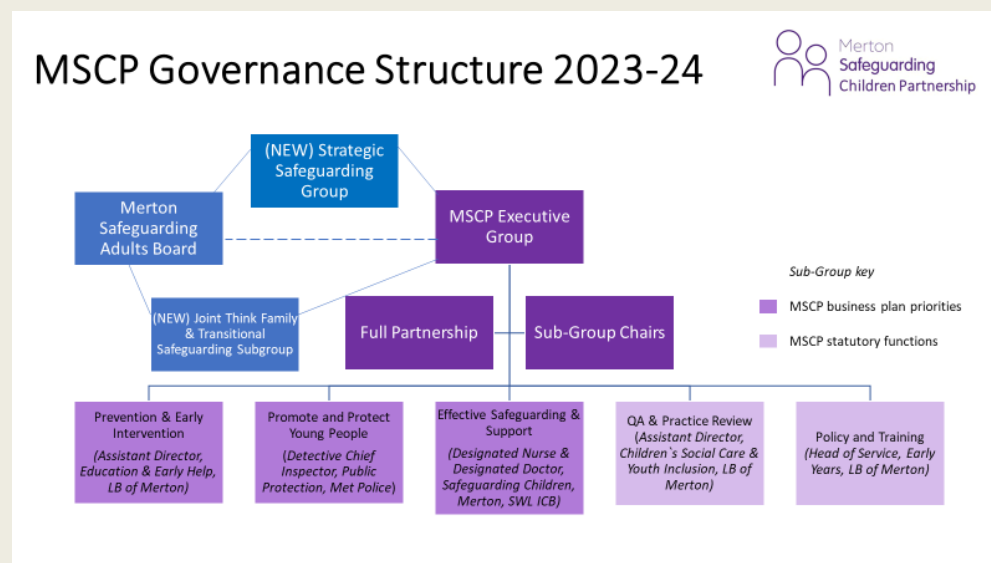
During 2022-23, work began to refresh the MSCP business plan for 2023-25. The positive feedback on existing governance structures was considered and therefore, although priorities have changed slightly and a set of cross-cutting themes have been introduced, the above governance structures have remained with small tweaks to

⁵ [Independent Scrutiny and Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements](#)

the focus of the three thematic subgroups (and their titles alongside this).

To further build on joint working with the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) and ensure effective senior leadership oversight from the statutory partners of both partnerships (local authority, integrated care board and police), a new Joint Strategic Safeguarding Group will also be established during 2023-24. It is proposed the group will meet twice yearly and be chaired by the London Borough of Merton Chief Executive. There is also a proposal to establish a joint Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding subgroup which will be accountable to the MSCP Executive Group and the MSAB Board.

From April 2023, the MSCP governance has therefore been agreed as follows:



Scrutiny Activity

The MSCP's Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer work to a jointly owned workplan and report regularly to the Executive. The workplan uses best practice models for Independent Scrutiny including the 'Checklist for Independent Scrutiny' published by Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) and the 'Six Steps to Independent Scrutiny'.

"What can MSCP do to prevent the adultification of black children in Merton?"

During 22-23, the Scrutineers undertook their annual thematic review based on the above question. This followed learning identified in the Child Q LCSPR in Hackney, national research and local work focused on disproportionality in the justice system by the Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board.

Importantly, our Independent and Young Scrutineer spoke directly to young people living and learning in Merton to understand their experience of adultification and how to improve the Partnership's response to the issue. This included focus groups with children in secondary schools, special schools/colleges, conversations with children working with the Youth Parliament and Our Voice children in care council. Children told them about lots of examples of adultification and how this had negatively affected them, and other children:

"We are automatically labelled as aggressive for making a point"

"Whenever anyone mentions drugs they always look at us black children first..."

"In sports we are expected to be better, and get criticised if we aren't the best"

"You don't realise its racism because you're used to it"

The review also included a survey, and meetings with practitioners that work with children in the borough including those working in schools and colleges, police, health and local authority, including children's services and community safety.

At the MSCP's Full Partnership meeting in March 2023, our scrutineers presented the findings of their adultification scrutiny. Key themes identified were:

- Race and Racism
- Children's safety, children's rights and vulnerability
- Disproportionality & Bias
- Attitudes and Language
- Expectations and Pressure
- Trust in Services.

In follow-up, the Executive made a commitment to respond to the recommendations including a Task & Finish group and to build on existing work to address racism across the partnership. Going forwards into 2023-24, our Young Scrutineer will also lead the presentation of the findings to other forums, including the Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board, Children's Trust and delivering workshops at the Race Equality in Schools Conference.

Recommendations from the scrutiny work continue to be incorporated into the Partnership's ongoing workplans. Some examples of these include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Developing and delivering adultification training to the partnership to raise awareness and help professionals to guard against it in their practice.
- Incorporating learning from the adultification scrutiny into the refresh of the substance misuse in schools' procedure.

- Incorporating learning from the sexual harassment and violence in schools & colleges scrutiny into the refresh of the harmful sexual behaviour policy.

Further Independent Scrutiny activity undertaken in 22-23

- Work with the Full Partnership and sub-groups to ensure focus on children's and families voices in all MSCP activity.
- Chairing an annual Section 11 (of the Children Act) peer review session of partner duties, to scrutinise partners progress in taking actions to improve from previous review.
- Research, feedback and challenge to partners on issues raised nationally – including learning from cases via the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel, and reviews such as the Care Review.
- Disseminating learning from previous scrutiny on sexual violence and harassment in schools and colleges, including via visual summary poster (see below).
- Presenting annual report to Overview and Scrutiny Panel, responding to debate and raising awareness of key safeguarding issues.
- Review and input to 21-22 MSCP Annual Report, ensuring a focus on assessing impact on children.



Reflections from Independent Scrutineer & Young Scrutineer

“Our joint work with children, practitioners and with the MSCP during this year has provided us with some very rich information enabling us to assess how well the partners work together to safeguard children in Merton.

In this year we heard from over 45 children about their lived experience of adultification and racism, how this impacted on their safety, and their ideas that can bring about change. Their insights were powerful and very hard to hear. Children gave many examples of the harm and negative impact of adultification – often complex and detailed, examples can be found in our findings document. What was striking to us, and a recurrent theme not only for Merton to consider, was the sense that racism and adultification happens to black children every day, in all aspects of their lives – in relationships, in school, in the community, at home. In one child's words;

“This is part of my 'normal life', it happens every day”

Children told us that their negative experiences are exacerbated where intersecting issues exist, for example because of their gender, special educational need or disability and / or their status as a care giver or young parent. For example;

“As a young black parent, I am treated like an adult, **no exceptions**. ... You are expected to know everything straight away”

Learning from our engagement with children has shaped the recommendations we made to the MSCP. We are aware of the next steps planned in response to the scrutiny locally and will be supporting this work and, with MSCP, will seek assurance of progress throughout the coming year. We want to take this opportunity to thank the children for their honesty and trust in us in this process. We also want to express our gratitude to the many practitioners that engaged with us in this work, including those that work with Our Voice, Youth Parliament and Merton schools and colleges for enabling independent and open engagement with children that they work with.

Our wider reflections on the MSCP, and local leadership of safeguarding services this year are predominantly positive. Attendance at strategic and political meetings has shown to us that safeguarding is a priority in the borough, and we are encouraged by the commitments made to develop safeguarding services at this high level. Partners demonstrated their ability to adapt to changing needs of families in feedback to each other at MSCP meetings. We therefore feel confident that MSCP can act on ‘stubborn’ safeguarding issues and has prioritised them in future planning for multi-agency work. While we have identified learning and improvement that is needed through scrutiny, including co production, accessibility, and engagement with children, we feel confident that the MSCP is a mature and developed safeguarding partnership that can continue to respond to ever present challenges that face children and families at this time.

Sarah Lawrence
Independent Scrutineer MSCP

Halima Mehmood
Young Scrutineer MSCP

Joint Work with Merton Safeguarding Adults Board

The MSCP continued to work closely with the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) during 22-23, including delivering activities together and attendance of key representatives to link the MSCP Exec and Full Partnership to the MSAB Board. The MSCP and MSAB continued to share an Independent Chair, including via interim cover, which further supported this.



The image shows the agenda for the Joint Annual Conference 2023, featuring logos for Merton Safeguarding Adults Board and Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership. The agenda is structured as follows:

Lead	Description	Time
Opening Address		
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Brownjohn: Interim Independent Chair for MSAB and MSCP Clr. Brenda Fraser: Cabinet Member for Children's Services Clr. Peter McCabe: Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care 	13:30 – 14:00
Part 1		
2. Keynote Speech: Trauma-Informed Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hayley Tuffin: Registered social worker and experienced psychotherapist with a particular interest in trauma 	14:00 – 14:40
3. Sandra's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trish Stewart: Associate Director of Safeguarding, DASH (Reflections on a recent Safeguarding Adult Review) Loret and Karlyn: Speakers with lived experience 	14:40 – 15:30
10-Minute Break until 15:40		
Part 2		
4. Understanding Childhood Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoe Gallen: Domestic Abuse and VAWG Lead, London Borough of Merton Claire Bowden: Senior IDVA, Victim Support 	15:40 – 16:10
5. Breakout Rooms and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What learning/actions can we take forward in our different agencies? 	16:10 – 16:45
6. Closing Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Brownjohn: Interim Independent Chair for MSAB and MSCP 	16:45 – 17:00



In March 2023, the MSCP delivered a second joint conference with the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board on Domestic Abuse Safeguarding: “Learning from the Lived Experience of Trauma from Child to Adult”. These themes were jointly agreed by representatives from the MSCP Policy and Training sub-group and the MSAB Learning and Development sub-group. The post-event evaluation highlighted the event was well received as per the above chart.

Feedback from participants included:

"Attending this event will help me be more professionally curious, listen to the voice of the child more, and think family and more systemically."

"Sandra story - having people with lived experience brings so much more meaning and learning - with them bringing a perspective and details that professionals can't possibly bring."

"That lead councillors attended and showed their passion for the work and what the council are working on to improve services for the residents of Merton."

The MSCP also commissioned training on Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty for children and young people, which was identified as part of joint work with MSAB around implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards.

As noted in the earlier governance section, plans have been agreed during 22-23 to further strengthen existing links between the two partnerships through establishing two new groups during 23-24:

Strategic Safeguarding Group

- Chaired by LB of Merton Chief Executive and co-chaired by SW BSU Chief Superintendent
- Provide senior oversight of the MSCP and MSAB, including annual reports, priority setting and key themes

Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding Subgroup

- Chair to be agreed
- Delivery of activity around key themes for both partnerships, including but not limited to Think Family, transitional and contextual safeguarding, housing conditions

Reviewing and Developing Practice

Learning Reviews

During 22/23, there were three serious incident notifications, one of which led to a local child safeguarding practice review (LCSPR) for Franklyn.

Given the publication of three LCSPRs (Jason, Baby Grace, and Ananthi), and two partnership reviews (Eddie, and SUDI review) during the previous year 2021/22, there was also continued focus on sharing and embedding the learning from these children's cases.

All our [learning review full reports](#) and [7 minute learning briefings](#) can be found on our website at the relevant webpages.

Review & link	Published	Themes
Jason LCSPR	Jun 2021	Contextual Safeguarding; Child Criminal Exploitation
Baby Grace LCSPR	Aug 2021	Non-Accidental Injury; Support with crying babies; Domestic abuse
Ananthi LCSPR	Nov 2021	Parental health; Impact of Covid-19 - health services and school closure; Use of interpreters
Eddie Partnership Review	Nov 2021	Contextual Safeguarding; CYP Mental Health/trauma informed approaches
SUDI Review	Feb 2022	Housing/homelessness, professional curiosity, safe sleeping
Franklyn LCSPR	May 2023	Trauma-informed practice; Clarity of services for families; Disproportionality; family voice; Commissioning care packages

Child L / 'Franklyn' – LCSPR

Franklyn was a baby born with a life-limiting disability and complex health needs. He died in hospital aged four-and-a-half months old, after suffering an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, in June 2022. At the time of his death, Franklyn had been subject to a Child Protection Plan for seven weeks due to concerns around domestic abuse and parental substance misuse.

The Franklyn review was approved in early 2023, and learning was shared within the partnership including at the March 2023 Full Partnership meeting. The final report was published in May 2023, following Police investigation concluding, allowing for lunch & learn and wider sharing of learning to take place during 23/24.

Rapid reviews

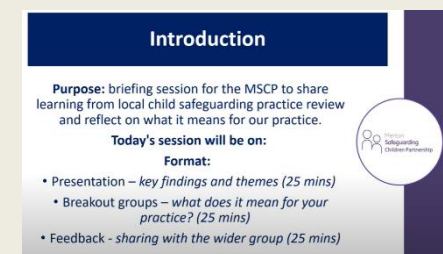
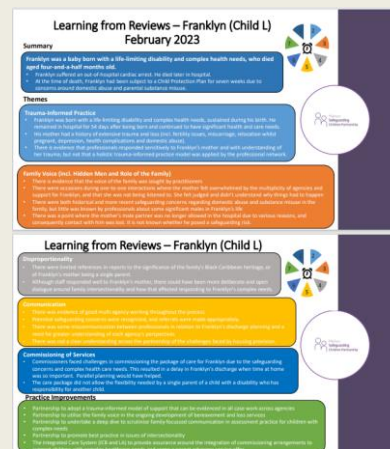
There were **two serious incidents** which the rapid review panels concluded **did not require a further LCSPR** - for Child M and Child O⁶. Some of the themes raised within these reviews included: trusted relationships & attempts to achieve positive engagement; collaboration, child's voice in safety planning, timely information sharing and use of escalation processes; school attendance and creative approaches, and prioritisation of safeguarding first approach.

During 2022-23, the MSCP also **contributed to a Surrey rapid review** for a young person who had previously been open to Merton children's social care. This also did not proceed to LCSPR. Learning was shared with the MSCP networks.

⁶ Decision reversed for Child M following national panel feedback and review by our Independent Chair. LCSPR to be undertaken during 2023-24.

What we did in response to the reviews

The MSCP took a range of actions in response to the reviews outlined above. In addition to final reports for each review, the chair and lead author for each review helped **develop learning materials** for dissemination across the partnership, which are published alongside the full reports on the [MSCP website](#).



We continued with our well-received **'Lunch and Learn' events**, launched in 21/22, to share the learning from our reviews and audits. These provide an opportunity for report writers and practitioners to explore the themes and recommendations from the reviews and embed the learning into their future work and practice. The MSCP also worked with agencies to **embed learning from reviews into multi-agency and single agency training and events** such as delivering presentations at the Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board, Strategic Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) and Children Schools and Families' Practice Week and Learning & Improvement Board.

The MSCP's Section 11 audit 2021/22 identified that disseminating and embedding learning from reviews was a particular strength for the Partnership, demonstrating the impact of this work.

Learning from the practice reviews has also directly impacted on the strategic work of the MSCP and its training programme. During 22-23, the MSCP continued to implement its contextual safeguarding strategy and action plan, as highlighted in the below [contextual safeguarding section](#) to respond to issues raised in the Jason and Eddie reviews, as well as two rapid reviews during the current year.

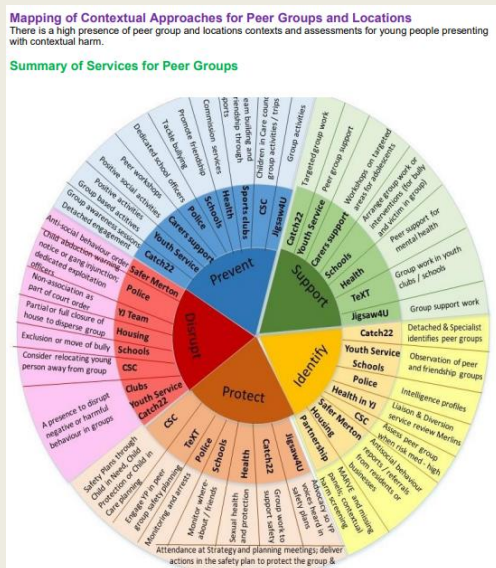


Image from MSCP contextual safeguarding strategy

The actions from the 2022-23 rapid reviews are being overseen by the Quality Assurance & Practice Review subgroup. In addition, due to contextual safeguarding and criminal exploitation themes, the Strategic MACE panel has embedded actions from one rapid review into their own workplan.

Local reviews continue to highlight the importance of trauma-informed practice (e.g., Franklyn), although positively there was evidence of good practice around this seen alongside areas for improvement. Multiple agencies have an internal offer around trauma-informed practice, however the MSCP has agreed to include a trauma-informed practice course as part of the core MSCP training programme to enhance consistency. The 2022-23 Joint Conference with MSAB included a keynote speech on trauma-informed practice.

Learning from Child O rapid review has been shared with Children Missing Education panel membership to ensure it is considered within panel decisions and actions, and secondary behaviour leads. There will also be a move towards strengthened attendance tracking based on DfE requirements during 2023-24.

In response to 2022-23 reviews, the Section 11 audit for 2023-24 will be amended to provide assurance from agencies around:

- Trauma-informed practice (Franklyn)
- Safeguarding First approach (Child O, Child M)
- Equality, diversity & inclusion policies (Franklyn, Child O)
- Think Family approach (Franklyn, Child M, alongside various Safeguarding Adults Reviews and LCSPRs from previous years)

The MSCP also delivered training to embed learning from reviews from previous years, for example:

- Baby Grace: the MSCP has commissioned and launched the ICON programme across the partnership, which shares important messages with new and expectant parents about coping with crying. More details are highlighted in the [Early Help & Neglect section](#). The MSCP also commissioned Inner Strength Network (ISN) to deliver multi-agency training on Having Difficult Conversations.
- Jason: No Recourse to Public Funds training was commissioned and delivered.

Learning from national reviews

There continued to be **considerable learning for safeguarding partnerships nationally**, following the 2022 publication of the Child Protection in England report on the tragic deaths of Arthur and Star. Work continued into 2022-23 including the **launch of two refreshed MSCP documents**: Bruising in Non Independently Mobile Infants and Children policy and Pre-Birth Protocol and Assessment Tool.

In March 2022, the concerning case of Child Q in Hackney reminded us of the **ongoing concerns around the adultification of Black children** and the **importance of professional challenge** across partnerships. The MSCP chose this **theme for the 2022-23 scrutiny** topic led by Independent and Young Scrutineers, alongside **commissioning training from Listen Up**, delivered in part during 2022-23. The training was commissioned jointly with Wandsworth and Croydon safeguarding children partnerships. Plans for 2023-24 include developing a local training course that can be delivered across the three partnerships routinely.

Independent scrutiny 2022-23 – quotes from children



Merton has contributed towards and considered the recommendations of the **national review into safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings**⁷. In Merton, the Phase 1 audit of two children that met criteria was completed by children's social care with oversight from MSCP Executive.

The review highlighted **good relationship-based practice** with the young people. All the professionals working with the young people knew them very well and had developed significant and meaningful relationships. No significant concerns were raised through this review however there were areas identified to strengthen practice as a multi-agency partnership, including **strengthening transitions pathways** between children's services and adults and **developing monitoring of children's placements**. Learning was shared with the QAPR subgroup with areas for improvement picked up by relevant services. A focus on **implementing the national recommendations from Phase 2** will be a key priority in 2023-24.

The relevant MSCP subgroups also considered learning from the national panel reports published on the **management of bruising in non-mobile infants** and **multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse**, including incorporating findings into relevant policies under review.

The national panel published their annual report detailing themes from LCSPRs alongside rapid review examples, which were reviewed by the QAPR Subgroup and the Full Partnership. The themes outlined in the report were considered during development of the refreshed MSCP business for 2023-25, to ensure that the MSCP was **focusing appropriately on nationally important themes alongside local priorities**.

⁷ [Safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/safeguarding-children-with-disabilities-in-residential-settings)

Child Death Overview Panel (Summary of Caseload 2022-23)

The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership works alongside the Child Death Overview Panel, which **reviews all child deaths in Merton**. A full report of activity of the Child Death Overview Panel can be found in the CDOP annual report. The Child Death Review process is a systematic process whereby the circumstances surrounding the death of a child under the age of 18 are reviewed and analysed to identify any actual or potential opportunities for prevention and improvement in health and other agencies to prevent similar deaths in the future.

The panel commenced reporting on feedback activity with the SW London Patient Safety Surveillance group in 2022-23 based on shared learning from SW London Child Death Overview Panel reviews as part of the CDOP's contribution to the organizational response to child deaths in the integrated care system (ICS).

As part of the upcoming National Patient Safety Strategy, the purpose is to provide professionals with a resource of learning and recommendations from child death reviews. Child death reviews can **contribute to collaborative learning**, for better health, public health, social care, and safety provision during the reporting year to reduce child deaths.

The report covers statistical information from the 6 South West London boroughs of Merton, Sutton, Kingston and Richmond upon Thames, Croydon, and Wandsworth. As of 1st April 2023, there were 64 new notifications of child death and 97 open cases. **Child death notifications have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels** of child deaths per annum. In 2021-22 there was a reduction of 16 deaths which was attributed to the social distancing and public health measures implemented by the regulations of the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. For the 2022-23 reporting year:

- **Fifty-four (54) Child death reviews** were completed.

- There were fifty-four local Child Death Review Meetings completed at SW London Hospitals, three at other tertiary level hospitals outside the local area, and eight Child Death Overview Panel Meetings under the new working arrangements for Child Death Reviews.
- In 2022-23, **81%** of child deaths had no modifiable concerns which was more than the previous year at **78%** of child deaths in SW London.
- For unexpected deaths notified across SW London during the 2022-23 reporting year, **twenty-six** Joint Agency Response (JAR) meetings were initiated.
- **48%** of child death reviews were completed in six months, with **52%** completed up to 12 months from notification. As a result of delays in obtaining post-mortem reports and coroners' inquests, **20%** were over one year old at the time of review.

Local Authority Designated Officer service (2022-23 overview)

The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership works alongside the LADO service. The service **manages concerns and allegations against professionals and volunteers working with children** in Merton. A full report of activity of the LADO can be found in the LADO annual report. The LADO post within Merton is a permanent role covered by one full-time LADO. Since February 2023, the LADO service expanded to include a part time LADO who covers 1.5 days per week.

- This **additional capacity** has enhanced the ability of the service to manage the increase in contact with the service which has risen by **33%**, from 271 contacts in 2021-22 to 360 in 2022-23.
- Early years and education settings have the most contact with the service, accounting for **55%** of all contacts.
- Concerns about physical harm continue to be the primary reason for contacting the LADO with **35%** of all contacts

relating to concerns about physical harm. This is a slight increase from last year's figure of **30%**.

- Children with additional needs are referred in high numbers (**56%**). This is a broad category and includes pre-school children, children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, children looked after by the local authority and children subject to child protection and child in need plans.

Most consultations do not progress to allegations meetings which suggests that **advice is being sought around issues that could be dealt with as complaints or practice issues with LADO oversight**, rather than allegations against individual staff members.

The **establishment of a regular training programme** and work to **enhance the profile** of the role within Merton are contributing factors to the increase in contacts over the last year. The LADO continues to provide training via the MSCP, reaching 32 multi-agency delegates during 2022/23, and has **delivered bespoke training** to local settings. Awareness raising of the role and training remained a key priority for 2022/23.

The LADO has worked with the MSCP and another local authority to **produce a set of leaflets** aimed at schools, parents/ carers and after school provision. The leaflets are aimed at **keeping children safe in after school activities** and are being circulated across the borough (see [Safer After School campaign](#) on MSCP website).



The LADO continues to **liaise with regulatory bodies** and to **make referrals** when there are concerns about potential risk of harm and the suitability of that individual within the children's workforce.

The LADO service has **sought feedback** from a range of settings. The feedback has been positive however the responses have come mainly from the education sector. We need to ensure that our next evaluation includes more views from our colleagues in the wider statutory and voluntary sector. Some comments from referring agencies have been provided below.

What do you think we do that is good?

- "Being very quick to respond to concerns and to offer guidance and support every step of the way".
- "The outcome and advice was comprehensive and I was able to share with all parties easily".
- "LADO is easily accessible; happy to discuss concerns and offer advice"
- "Easy service to access, quick to respond and very knowledgeable" (Education setting). (Placement)

What do you think we could do better?

- "Perhaps offer more frequent training to community groups"?
- "Training/CPD sessions have been valuable; please can we have more of these please".
- "Timelines when outside agencies are involved such as police- this can be problematic".
- "Perhaps updates on ongoing situations although this was fairly good".

Learning from audit

During 22-23, the MSCP continued to establish the multi-agency audit programme aligned with its commitment to continuous improvement, and to ensure the MSCP meets expectations set out in Working Together 2018 to learn from multi-agency audits.

Section 11

The MSCP undertakes bi-annual Section 11 audits, in line with the Working Together guidance, to help organisations in Merton undertake their own quality assurance processes to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. More information on the previous 21-22 audit can be found in our Section 11 learning summary.

To ensure actions had been progressed and learning was being implemented effectively from the 21-22 audit, the MSCP held a **'One-Year-On' Peer Review session** in January 2023.

The 16 organisations who submitted an audit response were invited and this was chaired by our Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer. Examples of progress included:

- To strengthen voice of the child strategically, Young Scrutineer attended the 5 sub-groups and the Full Partnership to explore this and share findings of the Young Residents Survey. Participation and the child's voice is further embedded into 2023-25 business plan with each subgroup required to agree activity for their workplans around this.
- Regular promotion of the Escalation Policy and several sessions held on having 'difficult conversations' to support with healthy professional challenge.
- Commissioned wider training opportunities on mental health and wellbeing, in particular self-harm and suicide, Kooth mental health resources.

- Scrutineers contributed to review of MSCP Learning and Development strategy.
- Child-friendly version of St George's Mental Health Trust safeguarding policy developed, and a section written by young people.

Multi-agency audits

During 2021-22, the MSCP developed a modest audit programme, with a rotating chair to share ownership across partners, and overseen by the QA sub-group. All audit briefings are published on our website to support dissemination of learning.

During 22-23, the MSCP led a **multi-agency audit on contextual safeguarding**, which concluded:

What is working well?

- Good inter-agency communication and information sharing.
- Voice of the child – routinely captured alongside voice of their family, even where engagement had been difficult to achieve.
- Evidence of work to build positive relationships.

Themes for improvement

- Information and decisions could have been shared more quickly after key meetings and across agency boundaries
- Although services championed the use of trusted adults, further support could be offered to help with building of strong, positive relationships between young people and professionals supporting them.

The **findings were shared widely**, including at the MSCP Full Partnership, relevant subgroups and the Strategic MACE panel.

Actions that have taken place as a result include:

- MSCP training programme reviewed by Policy & Training subgroup to ensure professional curiosity is picked as key theme across relevant courses.
- Development of relationship-based practice training for multi-agency audience, to build up knowledge of children's social care practice within the partnership (to launch in 2023-24)
- 2023-24 audit theme will focus on national review into murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson to further review core multi-agency safeguarding practice.
- Plans for a multi-agency roundtable to consider and propose approaches to improve information sharing following key meetings.

Cross-boundary working is key theme within 2023-24 LCSPR for Child M with engagement from Sutton and Croydon where further learning will be explored on this.

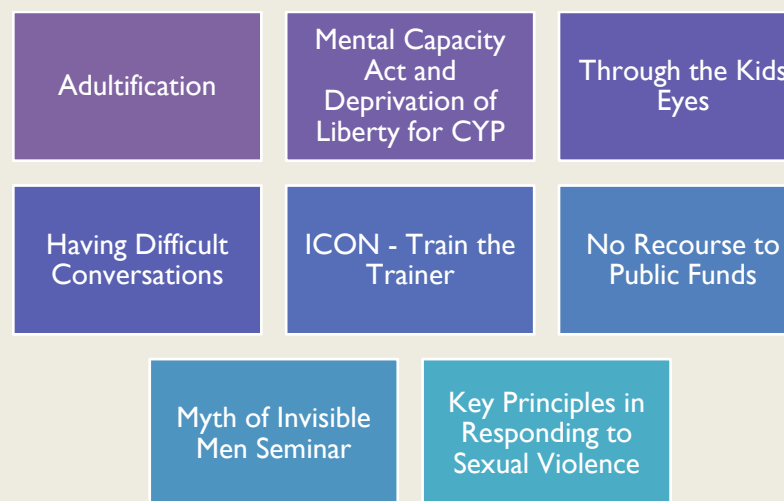
The recommendations from the audit are being overseen by the QAPR sub-group, and relevant actions have been added to the workplan for the PPYP subgroup which focuses on contextual safeguarding.

Learning and Development

Training Programme 2022-23

The MSCP training programme is overseen by the quarterly Policy and Training sub-group. The MSCP offered **63 sessions of 36 separate courses/events** in 22-23, **reaching 792 multi-agency delegates** through the year. Feedback indicated that the option to **access training remotely** enabled more partners to participate and therefore, the MSCP continued to deliver most courses virtually.

The training programme is mostly delivered in house, by a range of partners across the MSCP. Courses and training themes are derived from sub-group work plans and recommendations (via Policy & Training Sub-Group), as well as from learning from case reviews. The training programme for 22/23 included training modules on three of our thematic priorities (Domestic Abuse, Early Help via Effective Support for Families, and Contextual Safeguarding), as well as a range of core safeguarding training. It also included a wide range of courses to respond to ongoing or emerging concerns:

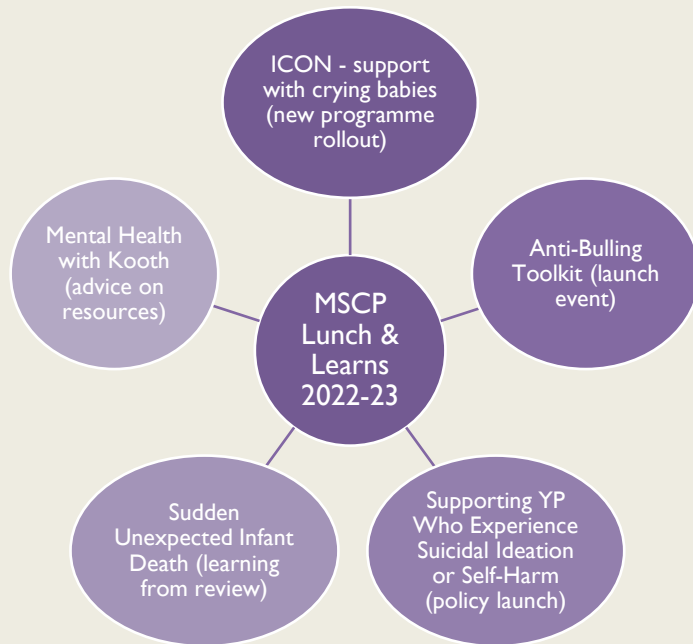


In the previous year, the MSCP introduced 'Lunch and Learns' to share bitesize learning from emerging themes from our learning reviews, which have continued to be successful in engaging higher numbers of delegates from a wider range of partners.

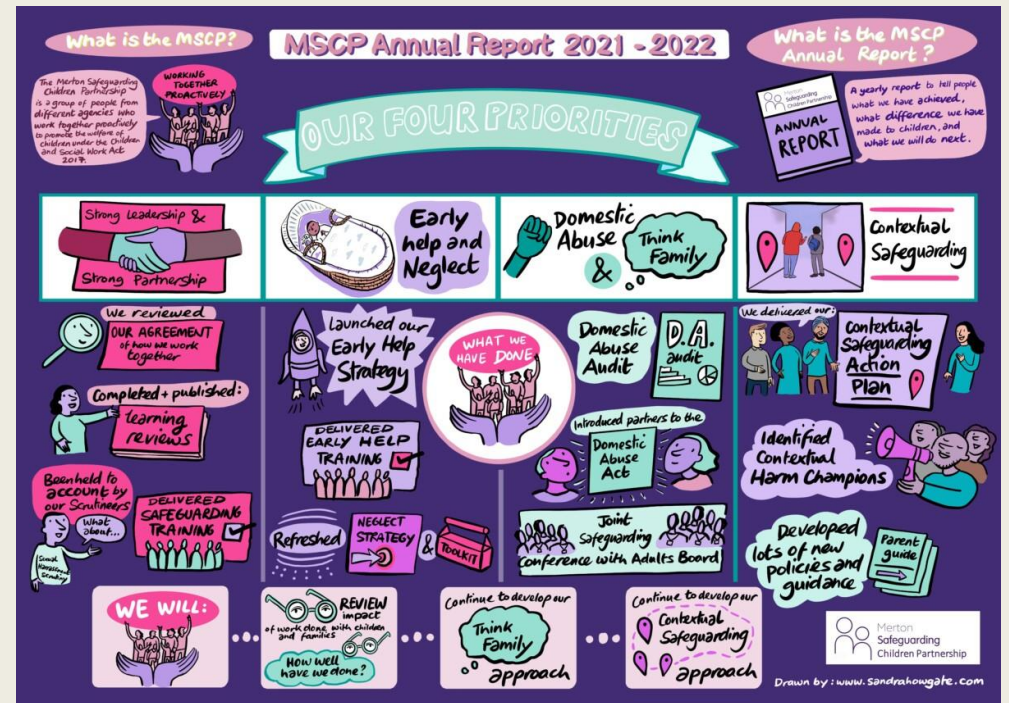
"I enjoy the lunch and learn sessions, they provide essential information and allow for multi-agency discussions."

This year we expanded this to pick up other key pieces of partnership activity, such as the launch of new guidance and toolkits, as highlighted in the diagram below:

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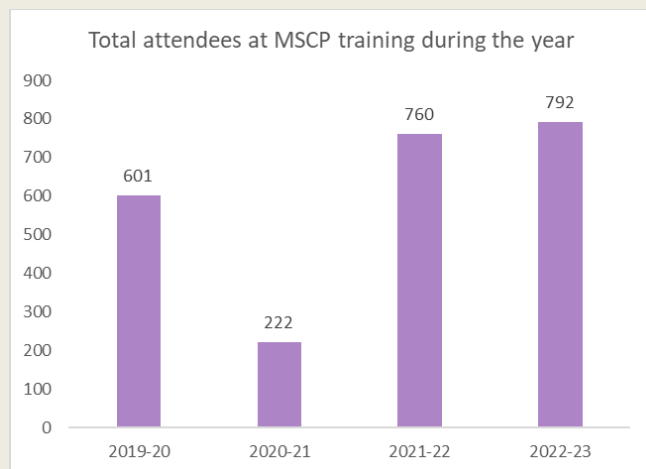
To support with **sharing learning and partnership updates with professionals and children, young people and families**, the Policy & Training subgroup approved funding of **visual summaries** of the 2021-22 annual report (see below) and the sexual violence in schools & colleges scrutiny (see [Scrutiny section](#)). These were positively received and it has been agreed to develop similar visual summaries in future.



Impact of our Training Programme

During the 2022/23 period, the MSCP offered 63 occurrences of 36 separate courses/events. We offered a total of 1,726 training places; we had 1,125 bookings and **792 attended**, an attendance rate of **70% of total bookings**. This has dropped slightly compared to last year's attendance rate of 74%. However, as the chart below

shows, there has been a small increase in total numbers since last year and has **continued to be above pre-pandemic training attendance.**



The services with the highest number of attendees at MSCP training events during 2022/23 were London Borough of Merton Children Schools and Families (Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion), Education (Schools, Colleges & Nurseries), Central London Community Healthcare Trust, South West London St. George's Mental Health Trust (SWL STG MHT). Compared with last year, **attendance by SWL STG MHT has improved significantly. Attendance by Police colleagues has also improved**, increasing from 1 registered attendee last year, to 10 during 22-23. We are continuing to prioritise increasing this further. The Policy and Training sub-group monitors attendance at training by agencies regularly and follows up with agencies where take up is lower.

Evaluation

Improving the rate of return for evaluation forms was a priority during 2022-23. To date, **103 evaluation forms were returned** via the Learning Management System. This is a **significant improvement** from

last year (56 forms returned). The MSCP provides summaries of evaluation feedback to trainers, to **inform the development of the training programme.** It continues to be a priority to increase the evaluation response rate.

Feedback forms are distributed to participants via the Phew online platform. This year, feedback from participants resulted in the following average scores:

- How relevant to your current role do you think this topic is? (1, `not at all`, to 4, `extremely`) – **3.49 average, out of 4**



- The training facilitator's skills were... (from 1, `poor` to 4, `excellent`) - **3.70 average**

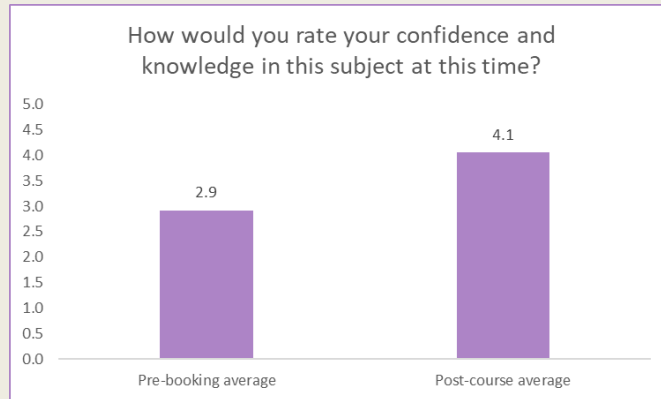


- Rate to what extent you agree that Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discriminatory practice were integrated (from 1, `not at all`, to 4, `extremely`) - **3.44 average, out of 4**



Although the average ratings were similar, there was a slightly lower score given for anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities (3.44). This is **fed back to trainers** to ensure they are sufficiently incorporating this in design of their course.

We also use pre-event and post-event forms. By asking the same questions before and after training, the MSCP assesses improvement in attendee knowledge and confidence. The two "**learning gain**" questions are assessed on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high):



The above chart highlights an **average “learning gain” increase** of 1.2, almost double last year’s increase of 0.66. This reflects an improvement in attendee confidence and knowledge.

Quotes from our training courses are shared throughout the report, including **highlighting the positive impact attendees felt the training will have on their practice with children and families.**

The **theme and content of the MSCP training programme and the sub-group workplans** is informed by multi-agency data and its analysis alongside the quality of multi-agency practice from audits and learning reviews. Each of the sub-groups conduct performance monitoring as standing items on their agenda to ensure that trends and themes identified are better developed, understood and responded to. Where training gaps are identified, the Business Support Unit works with the Policy and Training sub-group to source suitable courses.

MSCP-MSAB conference

The annual joint conference was **attended by over 160 multi-agency delegates**. It provided an opportunity to share practice between children and adults’ practitioners, particularly focused on **domestic abuse safeguarding (children and adults), trauma-informed practice**.

Two young people bravely **shared their lived experience**, after involvement in a Safeguarding Adult Review following their mother’s death, with powerful messages for all partners in attendance. Some of the feedback from delegates about the event and how it would support their practice can be found in the [MSAB](#) and the [Domestic Abuse & Think Family](#) sections.

Communicating with the Partnership

Alongside training and events, the MSCP continued to share learning and relevant updates with the wider Partnership during 22-23 through various routes. This has included:

- maintaining the MSCP website to ensure content for professionals is up to date, accurate and reflects best practice, including addition of new pages such as [ICON / Abusive Head Trauma](#) in response to local reviews
- A bi-monthly news bulletin to help share local, regional and national safeguarding news and best practice with partners, alongside promotion of the MSCP training programme.
- A mailing list to share relevant updates more quickly and encourage sign-ups to training programme where spaces remain available.

Partners have fed back that they find these methods helpful, particularly for keeping up to date with the MSCP’s training offer and to understand learning from learning reviews and audits.

Early Help and Neglect

One of the MSCP's priorities for 2022-23 was Early Help and Neglect. A dedicated sub-group, comprising a range of partnership agencies progressed actions to improve our early help offer and response to neglect.

What have we achieved this year?

After **launching our Early Help Strategy and Effective Support for Families Model** in 2021, focus continued on delivery and ensuring the new model was effectively embedded. Following a major focus on training and wider communications in 2021-22, we agreed a **core offer of quarterly training sessions** available to the multi-agency workforce.

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During 2022/23, a multi-agency task & finish group led the **rollout of the [ICON programme](#)**, chaired by the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children (SWL ICB), in response to Baby Grace LCSPR. ICON is a public health programme designed to help those caring for babies to cope with crying and reduce Abusive Head Trauma in infants. Development of materials, training and awareness raising took place in advance of and during the launch in December 2022, involving key agencies such as midwifery and health visiting alongside wider partners such as Children's Centres. Voluntary organisations, faith groups and Community Champions.

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During 2022-23, the Insights to Intervention Project continued to be overseen by the Early Help & Neglect subgroup. Funding was secured from the Supporting Families programme towards **improving business intelligence and data maturity, to help build a more detailed picture of Merton's residents, better understand their needs and indicators of risk and vulnerability**. The project aims to support services to more easily identify emerging trends to support delivery of early help to improve outcomes for children and families and prevent escalation of risk and high-cost statutory interventions. From 2023-2024, the next phase will focus on developing data lake further and integrating a range of data sets including anti-social behaviour, children missing education and substance misuse data.

Activity to **increase school attendance** has been monitored closely by the Early Help & Neglect subgroup. An example of the work in the last school year was the **development of an excellent tool to support schools** to make sure that children with mental health issues affecting their attendance can receive help. A borough-wide plan is in place to improve attendance and a new national strategy will be discussed with the DfE at a challenge/support meeting in autumn 2023.

Merton Council was successful in **securing funding through national DfE Family Hub Transformation (TF1)** from November 2022 until March 2024. A Family Hub is a system-wide model of providing high-quality, whole-family, joined up family support services. Planning began quickly for Merton delivery against the three main requirements: More Accessible, Better Connected and



Relationships-Centered. This work will be overseen by the Prevention & Early Intervention Subgroup during 2023-24, alongside other key partnership forums in the early help space.

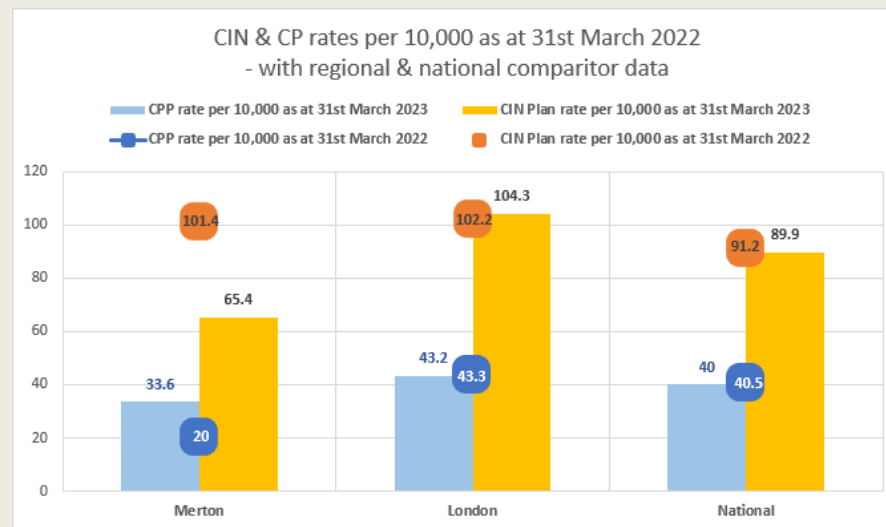
The MSCP commissioned a course on “**Introduction to support options for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)**”, following our local child safeguarding practice review for Jason, which took place in February 2023. Attendance was targeted to leads across the multi-agency partnership to ensure messages could be disseminated back to relevant workforces. This included anti-social behaviour service and voluntary/community sector representatives.

LBM’s Head of Housing Strategy reported to the June 2022 Full Partnership meeting regarding **legislation around housing in the borough**. The housing presentation was shared with all partners and published online to continue to raise awareness. Housing and Children’s Services colleagues have provided assurances through ongoing joint working as presented in the above. Further training sessions for single agencies are being delivered on request by Housing following their offer to the partnership. Housing were also part of the targeted attendance at our No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) training commissioned noted above.

The **MSCP’s Neglect Strategy and toolkit** supports partners to identify and recognise neglect of children and young people. After launching in February 2022, the focus during 2022-23 was to raise awareness across the partnership and ensure the toolkit was being used effectively. Following exploration of internal offer with an external trainer, the MSCP has agreed to fund development of a Neglect training course during 2023-24.

What difference have we made?

During 2022-23, there was a **reduction in the rate of children with a child in need (CIN) plan** in Merton per 10,000 children alongside an **increase in the rate of children subject to child protection plans (CPP)**. For both indicators, Merton rates remained below London and national averages. Thresholds are scrutinised closely by the multi-agency partnership to ensure that they are being applied appropriately throughout the child’s journey.



Re-referrals to children’s social care were also monitored by the group which were 18.3% during 2022, in line with London average (18%) and remaining below national (21.5%).

Family Wellbeing Service (**targeted early help**) case audits findings were reported into the subgroup, with an overview of

actions in response to areas for improvement. The audit highlighted:

What's working well?

- Evidence of service users voice, wishes and feelings
- Family plans are clear and concise
- Timeliness at all points of the case work
- Consent across the multi agency network to gather and share information
- Initial contacts agree taking place in timescales (within 5 days of allocation)
- Provides context for data/performance

Areas for improvement

- Consistency around the audit process i.e 2 per month per managers
- Supervision frequency (varies across different managers)
- Closure summaries

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The Insights to Interventions project has helped **deliver SEND inclusion profiles**, which will be rolled out to schools in Merton during 2023-24 academic year.

In December 2022, we **rolled out ICON** across Merton with the support of over eight key partners, including Public Health, Police, Children's Social care, Voluntary Sector, Community Health services including Health Visitors, General Practitioners, CAMHS, Drug and Alcohol Services, Epsom & St Helier and St George's Maternity and Acute services, Merton Safeguarding Adults Board, Merton Libraries. We ran **two MSCP "Launch & Learn" events**, attended by 31 multi-agency partners, and delivered bespoke sessions for providers including Children's Centres (now Family Hubs). We **provided materials, including**

leaflets and posters, for partner agencies to display in their workspaces and use with expectant and new parents/carers. As a result of this training and awareness raising:

- **Over 200 professionals trained** in ICON to deliver the messages to new and expectant parents, including "Train the Trainers".
- **ICON message embedded** into Baby Early Learning Together 0-6 months and baby Massage course run by all children's centres (now family hubs).

School attendance in Merton is better than national and outer London comparators in Primary, Secondary and the Pupil Referral Unit. Attendance in our special schools is below national and outer London. However, attendance is 2-3% below pre pandemic levels of attendance and Persistent Absence (those below 90%) is double the level it was in 2019 (similar nationally). Therefore, **improving school attendance** remains a key focus for the partnership.

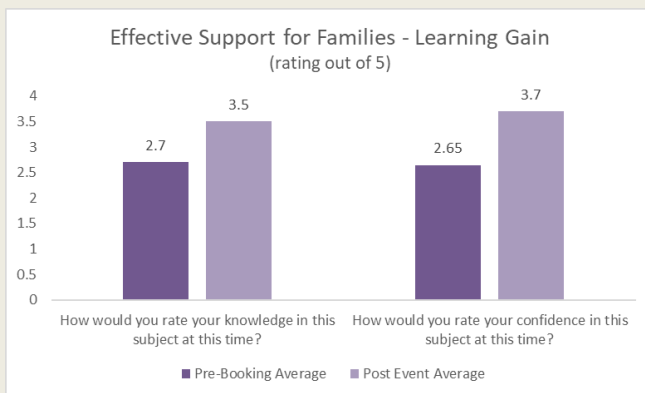
Highlights from the annual Children Missing Education (CME) report for 2022-23 include:

- There was a **significant fall in the number children in care who were vulnerable to CME**; a percentage drop of 2%.
- There were **no young people who had offended off roll** in the year and only 5 who were vulnerable to CME. This is the lowest this figure has been which is a significant achievement.
- **Ongoing rise in children with ECHPs identified as off roll** pending placement to 31 (from 16 in 2017-18), caused by a lack of specialist placements (locally & nationally).
- However, we have seen a fall in the number of children with EHCPs on roll who became vulnerable to CME from

80 in 2018-19 to 52 in 2019-20, whilst still a high number this a significant fall.

The **Children Missing Education (CME) Dashboard** compares performance to the previous year, which highlighted more children are now off roll and on roll but not attending school. This is in line with national data. However, work by the CME panel and partnership in Merton has led to improvements in the time taken to get children back into school - more children with “complex” cases are back in school within 140 days; this was previously 185 days.

We delivered 4 “**Effective Support for Families**” sessions to the Partnership, to 29 attendees from a wide range of partners. This reduction in numbers attending was expected, following 9 sessions with over 100 attendees in 2021-22 for the launch year. This continues to be monitored to ensure we are reaching the correct partners and delivering an appropriate number of courses through the year. Feedback from the course continued to be positive and encouraging, as highlighted below:



“I feel a lot more confident in my ability to signpost families and in my ability to assist families since the training.”

What will we do next?

Under the refreshed business plan, the Early Help priority will be overseen by the Prevention & Early Intervention Subgroup, and Neglect priority will be overseen by the Effective Safeguarding & Support Subgroup.

Priorities for 2023-24 will be:

- To continue to promote the Effective Support for Families Model and review alignment with pan-London threshold matrix.
- Refreshing and launching the new Early Help Strategy and corresponding multi-agency performance framework, aligned with Supporting Families Outcomes framework
- Strengthening promotion of the Neglect toolkit, including through adding a neglect course to our core MSCP training offer
- Continue to develop our multi-agency early help approach further, using resource secured through grant funding, e.g. Supporting Families, Reducing Parental Conflict and delivery of Family Hubs.
- Continue to develop our Data Maturity work through the Insights to Intervention Project.
- Continue to work with partners to improve school attendance, including implementing systems to achieve new government requirements.
- Continue to promote the ICON programme across Merton's safeguarding system and evaluate impact of first year.

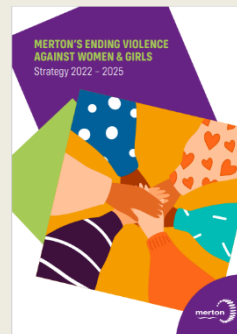
Domestic Abuse & Think Family

The MSCP's Domestic Abuse and Think Family sub-group has oversight of work on domestic abuse from across the Partnership. This includes regular reporting from representatives from the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Boards. Merton's multi-agency MARAC panel coordinates the partnership's response to the most complex/high risk domestic abuse cases using a range of statutory and non-statutory agencies.

What have we achieved this year?

The subgroup has continued to oversee:

- Communications around domestic abuse pathways and support services. Including **routine sharing of information from the VAWG & MARAC Lead with the partnership** via the mailing list and bi-monthly news bulletin.
- Driving **forward of actions from the MSCP's 'Baby Grace' LCSPR**, which featured learning on identifying and addressing risk of domestic abuse and promotion of Clare's Law.
- **Drafting of Think Family guidance** for raising awareness of the principles and how to apply to practice across the partnership. This will be finalised and shared in 2023-24.
- **Dedicated multi-agency performance dashboard** to monitor outcomes on a quarterly basis, including MARAC data.
- **Well-established Domestic Abuse multi-agency training**
- **New course** added to the core MSCP training programme: **Evidence Based Interventions to support Parents experiencing conflict in their relationships'** and delivered by Early Help Development Manager. This was offered three times during 2022-23.



In December 2022, Merton launched its [new strategy for 2022-25](#) to help **prevent all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and domestic abuse** in the borough. The partnership strategy brings in departments across the council as well as external partners such as the police. The strategy is formed of five key priorities as highlighted below and was informed by various pieces of work across the partnership, including the MSCP's sexual violence in schools and colleges scrutiny. Objective 5 has been a major focus following the murder of women such as Sarah Everard, Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry and Sabina Nessa in 2021, and a specific Women and Girls task group has been set up in the borough to look at this issue.

Merton Council **achieved White Ribbon accredited status** in November 2022, demonstrating the commitment in the borough to ending violence against women and girls by men and boys. As part of this, Bystander Training has been offered to partners and residents which is promoted by the MSCP. **Campaigns** have been led by Safer Merton **raising awareness** of Domestic Violence and Abuse and VAWG among our partners and the community – for example the 16 Days Against Domestic Violence and Abuse Campaign in November and December 2022 – which the MSCP has helped promote to children's safeguarding partners.



A **successful bid** was submitted to the Home Office for the **Perpetrator Programme**. This will involve 7-boroughs and each borough will have an attached Perpetrator Intervention Worker and IDVA. The IDVA will focus on the partner and children to ensure their

voice is heard. Perpetrator Intervention Workers will also work with the victims to ensure no escalation occurs in the home.

The DA Act Officer has compiled a **directory for child victims**, available on various websites. Training with MARACs took place around Clare's Law, and there are aims as part of the Police project to offer this across the partnership during 2023-24 via the MSCP.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 brought in some significant changes including a statutory definition of domestic abuse for the first time and explicit recognition of children as victims of domestic abuse. The MSCP has continued to work with Safer Merton to **raise awareness of the changes and implications for practice**, including a directory of services for children as victims and highlighted during training that children are victims in their own right.

The sub-group also identified **child and adolescent to parent violence and abuse** as a key area of focus through regular discussions on our performance data. This prompted partners to bid for funding from MOPAC Violence Reduction Unit to support families better where CAPVA is present. In 23-24, we found out our bid was successful and will be taking this work forward in the coming year.

What difference have we made?

In 2022/2023 the MARAC discussed **592** high risk and complex cases involving domestic abuse, **564** children were identified as part of these discussions. There has been a **continued increase in the number of cases discussed at MARAC** since 2020 and during the pandemic we saw a 90% increase in cases being discussed. The rise in repeat cases being seen by MARAC across the three reporting years has also continued and we believe this was due to the pandemic where more domestic abuse was reported but also professionals and agencies have better identified repeat victims and survivors and referred them back to MARAC.

Figure 1: An overview of MARAC cases 2019/20 – 2022/23

Year	Number of Cases Discussed	Number of Repeat cases	% repeat cases	Number of children in the household
2020-21	576	234	41%	557
2021-22	636	301	47%	639
2022-23	592	259	44%	564

Independent Domestic Violence Advocates [IDVAs]

The work of Merton's IDVAs continued throughout 2022/23. Having **introduced a case worker within the Children and Families Hub** (previously MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) the three IDVAs in the community and Complex Needs IDVA have seen an increase in case referrals. This arrangement remains under review and reports regularly to the Domestic Abuse and Think Family sub-group.

The IDVAs role includes sourcing safe/emergency accommodation, referrals to Safeguarding and/or MARAC, accompanying service users to court, information provision around criminal justice system, signposting for legal advice including clients with no recourse to public funds, and emotional support. It is recognised that the **IDVA role plays a pivotal role in supporting and managing domestic violence issues**.

The **One Stop Shop confidential weekly drop-in service** for people experiencing domestic abuse has been re-opened since November 2021, after operating on a virtual basis during the pandemic. Numbers accessing have continued to rise.

The **IDVA service** received **626** referrals between April 2022 and March 2023 (compared to 769 the previous year), of which **256** were high risk. **54** of the total referrals came from Social Care services. In addition, the MASH DVA Caseworker (who took up post in June 2022):

Referrals during April 2022 to March 2023

Intensive support	Medium support
The MASH DVA Caseworker provided 21 clients with 6 or more significant contacts e.g., appointments, joint appointments, telephone-based RIC and ISSP completion.	The MASH DVA Caseworker provided 27 clients with 2-5 significant contacts. Single contact and advice provision was provided to 14 clients by the MASH DVA Caseworker.

Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme – Clare’s Law

Clare’s Law is a Police policy giving people the right to know if their current or ex-partner has history of violence or abuse. The aim is to help people to make a more informed decision on whether to continue a relationship and provide support when making that choice, or after separation. Learning from Merton’s Baby Grace review suggested that Merton would benefit from **increased promotion of Clare’s Law locally**. As a result, the MSCP has **delivered awareness raising activity**, promoting the law in our news bulletin as well as raising awareness of local training coordinated by the Police.

59 Clare’s Law requests have been made in Merton and of those **23** disclosures were carried out, the remaining numbers were either no DA history, disengaged or not authorised.

Operation Encompass

Following successful implementation at many schools in Merton, **Operation Encompass continues to inform school settings of incidents of domestic abuse involving children on roll**. This makes sure that Designated Safeguarding Leads and key staff are aware of this context when supporting and working with their children. However, a **recent DHR has highlighted that Op Encompass should be reviewed,**

to provide assurance that all schools are using the secure system to see notifications. This will be a priority during 2023-24.

Training

During 2022-23, the MSCP Training programme **delivered four Domestic Violence and Abuse training courses**, attended by 45 participants. This is an improvement compared to the previous year, with double the number of sessions, a jump in attendance from 14 attendees. Feedback from attendees was very positive, with all delegates saying they would recommend the course to a colleague.

“[The training] made me look at interactions and behaviour I have witnessed in my past from a different viewpoint and I hope that it will enable me to be more proactive should those situations reoccur.”

“The course was up to date with its information and included how technology can be used to track people, the difficulties that people face in leaving, and where people, both clients and professionals can access help.”

During 2022-23, the MSCP **delivered three Evidence Based Interventions to support Parents experiencing conflict in their relationships courses**, attended by 34 multi-agency participants. Positive feedback has been received within post-course evaluations and therefore the training will be continued in 2023-24.

“I can tell the different therapists in my service about this course which they could then communicate with health visitors / school nurses.”

The subgroup's **awareness raising around Think Family** helped lead to the joint conference focus alongside the proposal for a new Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding subgroup joint between the MSCP and Merton Safeguarding Adults Board.

Members of the sub-group **supported the planning of the Joint Conference**. The Merton Lead for DA/VAWG and a Senior IDVA **led a session on Understanding Childhood Experiences**. They provided an overview of key indicators of domestic abuse, the importance of professional curiosity and used a case study to help attendees explore “How does understanding Childhood Trauma or experiences help us better understand and support the person in front of us?”

- **91%** of attendees found this Extremely or Somewhat Useful (remaining **9%** chose Neutral).
- Attendees were also asked the below question in the, and many noted Think Family as a key take-away:

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“What difference do you think attending this event will make to your work with children, young people and their families?”

“Attending will help me be more professionally curious, listen to the voice of the child more, and think family and more systemically.”

“Encouraged re continuing to be holistic and to always consider family members with vulnerable adults.”

“Highlights the impact on the whole family and need to consider whole family needs .”

What will we do next?

Under the refreshed business plan, the Domestic Abuse Neglect priorities will be overseen by the Effective Safeguarding & Support Subgroup. Think Family will be a cross-cutting theme that all subgroups will be expected to deliver activities around, and the joint Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding subgroup with MSAB will provide further oversight.

In 2023-24, the Effective Safeguarding & Support sub-group will:

- Work with 6 boroughs to successfully implement Perpetrator Programme (led by Lambeth).
- Deliver multi-agency Clare’s Law training (led by Police).
- Implementation of grant funding for Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA), including recruitment to new posts.
- Work to better capture the voice of the child and family on their experience of domestic abuse support and services in Merton.
- Support Safer Merton with White Ribbon, implementation of the new Merton Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy, including review of Operation Encompass and re-commissioning of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service for July 2024 onwards.
- Continue raising awareness and knowledge around local thresholds and referrals pathways for domestic abuse and implications of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Contextual Safeguarding

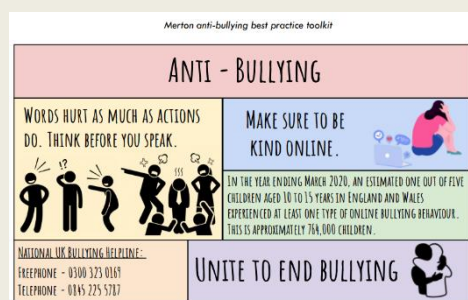
The Promote and Protect Young People (PPYP) sub-group has led on the Partnership's approach to contextual safeguarding, to facilitate effective understanding and response to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.

What have we achieved this year?

Following the launch of the multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding Strategy in the previous year, work included:

- Delivery of **regular training** on contextual harm to safeguarding partners through 2022-23 reaching 67 multi-agency delegates, and our annual CSE awareness day.
- Continuing to **develop and promote online safety** work, through training and promotion of our policy and resources.
- Oversight of our Catch 22 Risk & Resilience Service, an integrated substance misuse, child exploitation and missing from home service, focused on **mitigating risk and promoting resilience** in young people in Merton.
- A **new protocol** regarding [Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation](#) was developed and launched, with 2 training sessions held in October 2023 reaching 30 partners.

The subgroup also oversaw **publication of an Antibullying Best Practice Toolkit alongside Guidance for Schools**, with a launch event held in Q3. This incorporated best practice from national and local resources including case studies, alongside recommended tools and approaches.



The **MACE Panels in Merton** are based on the [Pan-London Child Exploitation Operating Protocol](#) and help to ensure swift identification of children at risk using screening tools. Plans are put together and cases reviewed by a panel of local subject matter experts (Pre-MACE) alongside supporting leaders locally to understand trends in the borough (Strategic MACE), which are regularly reported to the PPYP for oversight. Work includes:

- **Patterns of Exploitation & Early Intervention for younger children at early risk of exploitation:** the new contextual harm pathway explicitly recognises Early Help and Tier 1 and 2 aspects, and support can be sought from specialists for Tier 3 and 4 support in those early stages. This is clarified in the protocol pilot launch.
- **Pilot of joint Youth Integrated Offender Management/MACE panel** from September 2022 to ensure there is no duplication or gaps between the panels. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and this will be permanently embedded for 2023-24.
- **Promotion of multi-agency trigger plans** ensuring joined up responses to our children at times of crisis.
- **Identification of key spaces and peer groups** that are risky and supporting multi-agency responses to improve those spaces and disrupt or engage risky groups.
- **Supporting Child Exploitation training** in schools, businesses, licensed premises & hotels (under MAKESAFE protocol) and for professionals all year and during National CE awareness week.

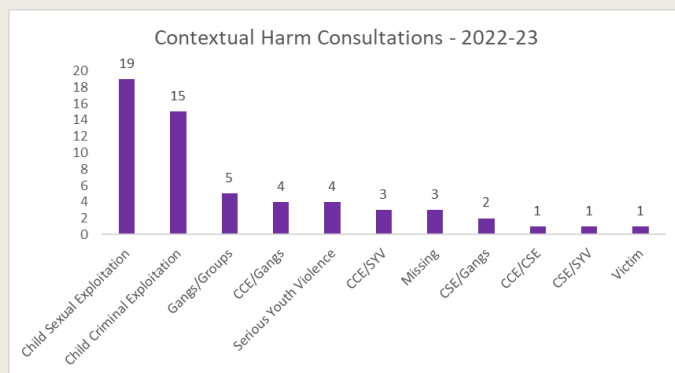
In early 2023, Merton's **multi-agency Missing Panel meeting** was reviewed to look at its effectiveness in assessing the risk for missing children. This included reviewing effective partnership working with key agencies. The panel moved from being online to key members attending in person and social workers giving feedback online. In addition to the Missing Panel itself, there is a **Pre-Missing meeting** agenda planning, where all missing episodes are reviewed and graded to ensure high risks are heard at panel.

The partnership continued to **respond to incidents and conflicts between groups and gangs in the borough and neighbouring boroughs**. This involved detailed individual safety planning with families, working in partnership with professionals across the network, including police, social workers, youth justice workers, youth workers, neighbouring boroughs, schools and colleges. Senior officers also met routinely, to agree joined-up communications plans for schools and the community and to ensure additional senior police representation at key strategic and operational meetings. This included weekly multi-agency meetings at points during the year, and **Police multi-strand activity focusing on all opportunities to disrupt, divert and safeguard**.

Merton's Youth Justice Service received the new **'Turnaround' grant** from the Ministry of Justice. The grant, which is offered to Youth Offending Teams across England and Wales, is available over three years, and has a **focus on early intervention and improving outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system**. Work began in 2022-23 to implement the project and the grant requirements within Merton.

What difference have we made?

During 2022-23, **58 contextual harm consultations were completed** as per the pathway into the MACE panel (28 females and 30 males).

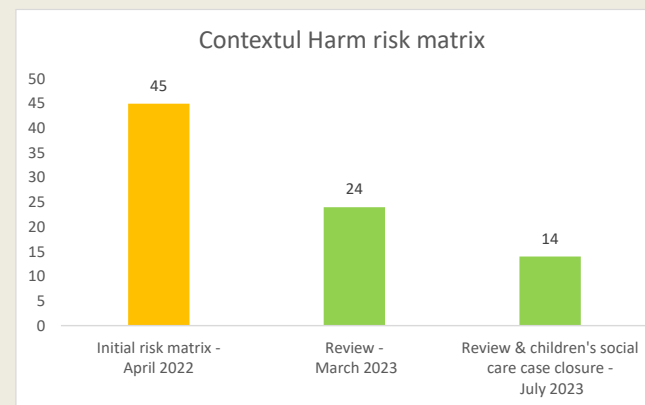


Case studies have **highlighted significant positive change** – for example, the young person highlighted below.

Case study

Reduction in risk for young male seen over persistent, partnership approach to support him and his family.

- Joined-up and relationships-based, trauma-informed support from partners including UTURN, Police Exploitation team, children's social care, Off the Record counselling, Redthread, youth justice service.
- Young person achieved employment, completion of youth justice order, accessed counselling and strengthened relationship with parents, who have also been engaged in safety planning and made progress in supporting and challenging him.



Score on CH Risk Matrix:

10-32 = Early Help (Emerging) – getting help/advice

33-64 = Targeted (Moderate) – getting more help

Catch's 22 [Risk & Resilience annual report 2022-2023](#) also highlights key achievement during the year **mitigating risk and promoting resilience in young people around substance misuse, child exploitation and missing from home**. Highlights include:

- **925** people reached. Of these: **174** were engaged in care planned interventions with SMART and achievable goals agreed, **95** successfully exited the service, and **76** remained engaged at year end.
- This year, the service achieved **97%** positive outcomes for the young people engaged in these interventions.
- **379** Return Home Interviews (RHIs) completed. **98%** offered within 24 hours of notification, and **82%** conducted within 72 hours where young person consented and was available. **55** missing from home “follow-on interventions” completed for young people where risk rating was red/amber.
- **96%** of young people under 18 (who completed treatment) had reduced their substance use and/or were drug free and met care plan goals at exit.



The **multi-agency MACE continued to enable partners to better understand practice and risk for young people**, identifying key themes and patterns including children and risk of being exploited, Locations, Cross-Border Working/Intel, Borough Intel, Missing young people, Group and Peer Mapping, and Best Practice. We have:

- Supported a dedicated multi-agency group working on identified group of young people at risk of exploitation and violence leading to multiple engagements, as well as arrests of linked adults.
- **Brought Clarion Housing into the MACE panel and engaging with their outreach work.** Through both Pre-MACE & Strategic MACE, with funding support from Clarion Housing (member of the MACE strategic panel), U-Turn (the council's contextual harm team) were able to **offer a music project** in one of the hot spot areas.
- A **particular park in the borough was identified** as a key area of concerns for young people linked to robberies, violence and sexual offences. This generated a joint visit and inspection from the Contextual Harm Service, Designing Out Crime and Neighbourhood Policing and relevant property owners within the park. Youth outreach programme and proactive monitoring was put in place which has led to a **decrease in anti-social behaviour in the park.**
- Across all London Boroughs it was noted that there was a decrease in referrals for CSE, both male and female. **Following training refreshers there has been an increase in CSE referrals**, including CSE and CCE links, CSE and Gangs, and CSE and Serious Youth Violence. The above data reflects this.

The rapid reviews and contextual safeguarding audits undertaken during the year also identified good practice around contextual safeguarding as summarised earlier in the report.

“Every agency involved with Child O showed genuine care and concern about him, recognising his young age and vulnerabilities, and wanted to ensure that he was safe and well and wondered how he could be diverted away from the significant risks he was experiencing outside of his family home.”

“There have been, and continue to be, persistent efforts to support Child O and his mum by multiple agencies and services. At times, different professionals have been able to develop a positive relationship with Child O and his voice and his mother’s voice were heard clearly throughout the information supplied to the rapid review.”

“There was evidence of strong collaboration and information sharing across the partnership.”

Child O rapid review, February 2023

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During the year, two Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) courses were offered (CSA Awareness and Intra-Familial CSA) and attended by 33 multi-agency participants in total. When asked *“What difference do you think this training will make to your work with children, young people and their families?”*, attendees noted:

“Greater awareness and being able to use the indicators tool.”

“I will feel more confident when speaking with a patient or their parent / guardian.”

Feedback from our Anti-Bullying toolkit launch included:

“As a newcomer to school social work, I feel I will be able to successfully complete work on restorative practice with children who are affected by bullying.”

What will we do next?

Priorities for 2023-24 will be:

- Finalise & launch refreshed young people's substance misuse protocol and accompanying guidance for schools and community settings
- Contribute to pan-London MACE review, including development of consistent process for multi-agency work around peer group mapping and safety planning.
- Review & refresh multi-agency online safety policy
- Refresh multi-agency harmful sexual behaviour, missing from home and care and online safety policies and raise awareness with partnership workforce.
- Support the Adultification Task & Finish group to develop and deliver actions in response to scrutiny recommendations, including rollout of multi-agency adultification training.
- Maintain strong oversight of the MACE panels and ongoing review of effectiveness in reducing risk and protecting children and young people from exploitation.
- Planning for 2024 refresh of MSCP Contextual Safeguarding Strategy
- Supporting the effective implementation of the Serious Violence Duty in Merton

Looked After Children and Care Leavers

When a child comes into care, the council becomes their 'Corporate Parent', the term means the collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children in our care. Children in Merton are less likely to be in care when compared to other boroughs. In 2022/23, 26 out of every 10,000 children in Merton are in care, which remains in line with the previous year, and lower than national (70) and London (52) rates.

Merton continues to buck the trend in increases of the number of children entering care nationally. The children-in-care population in Merton has been declining over the last five years. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in our care, had been declining over the past few years, but increased during 2022/23. Close oversight is maintained on thresholds and practice to ensure children who need to come into care in Merton are doing so. This has highlighted strong relationship-based practice in place and effective work to support children on the edge of care to remain with their families.

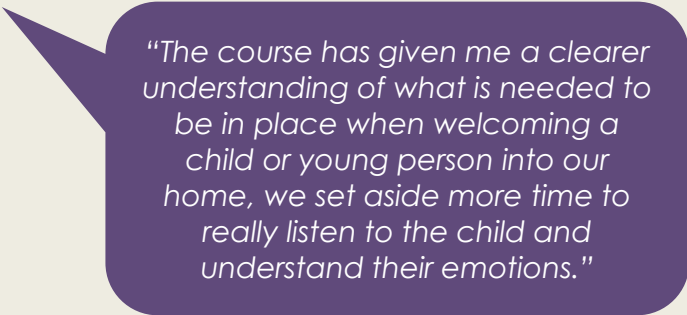
Provisional data shows there continues to be more boys in care than girls with no change in distribution from last year (55.7% vs 44.3%). We also know that proportionally more Merton children enter care at a later age when compared to London and national averages. Provisional data for 2022/23 also shows Black/Mixed children are over-represented in our care population. On 31st March 2023, the percentage of black/mixed-race is 46.3%; this compares with 24% of under-18s in Merton's general population. By contrast, only 7% of our children in our care are from an Asian background. This compares to just under 20% of Merton's under-18 population.

There are many reasons why a child may become looked after, in Merton for 2022/23, the main reasons for entering care are abuse or neglect. This has remained static for the last 7 years. Absent

parenting is the second biggest reason why a child became looked after in 2022/23.

For care leavers, provisional data shows, as at 31st March 2023, 91% of our care experienced young people between the ages of 19 and 21 were 'in touch' with the Local Authority; this compares with 92% nationally as of 31st March 2022. 89% of young people were in suitable accommodation at the end of 2022/23. Provisional calculations show performance remains in line with last year. 67% of our care experienced young people, according to provisional reports, were in education, employment or training during 2022/23.

During 22-23, the Corporate Parenting Board oversaw a refresh of [Merton's Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2022-24](#). This strategy offers an overview of strategic multi-agency priorities for children in care and care leavers. To support this work, the MSCP also commissioned "Through the Kids Eyes" training, which was delivered by a care leaver on experiencing the care system.



"The course has given me a clearer understanding of what is needed to be in place when welcoming a child or young person into our home, we set aside more time to really listen to the child and understand their emotions."

During 23-24, the Corporate Parenting Board will be reviewing and refreshing its approach, with the support of care experienced young people, foster carers and practitioners, beginning with an Away Day in July 2023. There will also be a focus on involving more young people with care experience in recruitment and training of professionals.

Annex 1: MSCP Budget and Spend 2022/23

MSCP Budget 2022-23 – Contributions by agency

London Borough of Merton	84,750
Merton ICB (previously CCG)	55,000
Metropolitan Police	5,000
Total	144,750

MSCP Spend 2022-23

	Spend	Budget	Variance
Staffing:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Salaries	89,962	90,168	-206
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent Posts	18,750	20,000	-1,250
Training	14,216	18,710	-4,494
Learning Reviews	4,000	3,890	110
Supplies and Services (Office costs)	4,768	11,982	-7,214
Total	131,696	144,750	-13,054

What is the MSCP?

The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership is a group of people from different agencies who work together proactively to promote the welfare of children under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.



MSCP Annual Report 2022-2023

OUR FOUR PRIORITIES



What is the MSCP Annual Report?



A yearly report to tell people what we have achieved, what difference we have made to children, and what we will do next.

Strong Leadership & Strong Partnership

Early help and Neglect

Domestic Abuse & Think Family

Contextual Safeguarding

FREE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Trained 792 multi-agency delegates

Delivered across many themes

Launched ICON programme for new parents

Babies Cry, You Can Cope!

200+ professionals trained

Activity to increase school attendance

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Communication of domestic abuse pathways and support services

- Clare's Law disclosure scheme
- Directory for child victims

Robust monitoring through our subgroups

MENTAL HEALTH TOOL FOR SCHOOLS

Secured funding for 2 new domestic abuse programmes

Perpetrator interventions

Contextual Safeguarding audit

Completed timely learning reviews & embedded actions

Been held to account by our Scrutineers

What can we do to prevent the adultification of black children?

Young Scrutineer

Independent Scrutineer

FAMILY HUB transformation

TRAINING & AWARENESS RAISING

"No Recourse to Public Funds"

"Effective Support for Families"

Joint Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Conference with Adults Board

Speakers with lived experience

Learning from the Lived Experience of Trauma from Child to Adult

Improved response for young people facing risk outside their home

Peer group

Location mapping

Safety planning with Families

Developed new policies and guidance

Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation

Antibullying Best Practice Toolkit

WE WILL CONTINUE:

Reviewing the impact of our work with children and families and making continuous improvements

LEARNING CULTURE

STRENGTHENING OUR TRAINING OFFER & take-up

IMPROVING OUR DATA MATURITY

From Insights to Intervention project

Aligning our work with the Adults' Board

Think Family & Transitional Safeguarding

Drawn by Sandra Howgate

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Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 23rd January 2024

Wards: All

Subject: For Information: Merton's 3 x GLA School Superzone's .

Lead member: Cllr Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Lead officer: Annalise Johns, Healthy Places Officer, Public Health

Recommendations:

Health and Wellbeing Board Members are asked:

- A. To reflect on the power of investment in the built environment as a tool for epigenetics and building long term local health resilience.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is an information sharing exercise, providing an introduction and overview of the work that has taken place as part of the three grants Public Health secured as part of the GLA School Superzone programme that began in May 2022.
- 1.2. No decisions are required.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Originally the School Superzone concept was piloted by the GLA during 2018 and 2019 across 13 London Boroughs. Boroughs identified 400m radius zones around schools by reducing hazards and harms children were most exposed to. The programme was later expanded by providing 50 grants of up to £30K to boroughs between 2022 and 2023. London Borough of Merton is one of two London borough that successfully secured 3 grants.
- 2.2. This paper will provide an overview of the three.

3. DETAILS

3.1 GLA School Superzone programme

The programme has consisted of four rounds in which boroughs could apply commencing in January 2022 (Round one), Round two July 2022, Round three October 2022, Round 4 January 2023. Each Round required boroughs to apply using the online portal, to answer the detailed application which identified the level of need and the intention for the funding. Applications were only for schools which; 1) fell within the 30 per cent most deprived areas (as measured using the English indices of deprivation 2019), 2) had been engaged with in advance, 3) aimed to address environmental improvements around the school and 4) could potentially implement a Healthy School Street Scheme. The Health Determinants that School Superzones must address fall in to the following categories;

- **Active Travel:** Improve the viability for students to walk and cycle to school (Follow the TFL [Health Streets Approach](#))
- **Air Quality:** enforce anti-idling policies, create a School Street, pupil engagement in air quality measurement.
- **Food and Drink Environment:** promotion of the Healthier Catering Commitment, install water fountains, restrict the sale of unhealthy foods and advertising near schools.
- **Community Safety :** improved lighting, create a safe space / safe havens for young people to go after school.
- **Access to green space:** Installation of green infrastructure, create a food growing programmes. and Collaboration: (i.e. Community of practice, ensuring there is consistency in the council communication .
- **Planning and Licensing:** planning policy to restrict, unhealthy food sales, alcohol / gambling licences near the schools.
- **Tobacco and Alcohol:** smoke-free zones around the schools, enforcement / test underage sales of tobacco and alcohol products in retailers within the Superzone to restrict,

3.2 Merton's GLA School Superzones

In Round one in May 2022, £30K was awarded to Public Health's project plan for Merton Abbey Primary School Superzone for a focus on improving Active Travel and Air Pollution. This pilot completed in June 2023. Attempts were made for Round 2, but schools were not receptive. In Round three, by February 2023 £30K was awarded to Public Health's project plan for Abbotsbury Primary to focus on both Active Travel and Community Safety. This pilot is underway and requires completion by the end of March/(April) 2024. In Round four in May 2023, £30K was awarded to Public Health's project plan for St Mark's Primary to address Community Safety and (Tobacco and) Alcohol. This project is underway and will be completed by the end of April 2024.

- Merton Abbey Primary** – The final report as provided to the GLA for this pilot which covers all actions, spending and outcomes forms part of the Appendix.
- Abbotsbury Primary** - Since the pandemic, students from the schools surrounding Morden Recreational Grounds, have developed agoraphobia and child obesity has increased. These issues were further exacerbated by the lapse in teaching students Kerb Craft (the national road safety programme for 5–7-Year-olds).

Additionally, vehicle usage has increased as has the lack of compliance of the 20mph speed limits on all roads surrounding the schools. This has led to a child being struck down in the spring of 2022, and pupils writing to the council to request improvements. This aim of this Superzone is to improve; active travel, air quality, community safety and access to green space. The

deliverable environmental improvements are the outcome of face-to-face engagement with 4 years 5 & 6 students from Abbotsbury whose submission of 50 physical designs and a recorded list of all students request to identify the priorities to be built. These include the crossing between the school entrance and the park to be raised and narrowed to establish pedestrian priority, better visibility and a shorter distance for children to cross the road. therefore, requiring the enforcement of parking around the crossing; the Central Road access gates to Morden Recreational Grounds to be refurbished to include a rainbow and a more accessible design for children to entre, and the refurbishment of the green space next to the school entrance to absorb air pollution. This work is set to be completed by June 2024.

- C) St Mark's Primary – In November 2022, following conversations with St Mark's Primary School's Head Teacher, regarding her students and staff encounters with inebriated/anti-social individuals across the 400m perimeter of their school in three hot spots; the car park next to the school, in the open space and playground immediately beside and behind the school. In addition, as of November 2022, the Metropolitan Police have recorded school aged victims of robbery. Due to successfully obtaining a third GLA grant, a task force and project plan was implemented by healthy place to address the priority of improving the safety and reduction of harm of pupils attending this school.
- D) In January 2023 a working group was established across a multidisciplinary group; Ania Kennedy Head Teacher for St Mark's Primary, the (Met Police) Safer Schools Officer at St Mark's Primary School, Community Safety Team, Anti-social Behaviour Team, Clarion Housing, Environment and Regeneration Team (Highways and Planning), Parks Team, Parking and CCTV colleagues, the land owner for the car park, Public Health's Substance Misuse Team, and Mitcham's DWP team. Since January this group has been able to 1) improve the CCTV, refurbishing the vegetation to create better visibility and perceptions of safety, improved lighting and a regular patrol system that is shared across the Anti-social behavior team and substance misuse team and the met police. This funding has paid for Public Space Protection Order signage to be formalized for the first time in Mitcham, as well as funding for outreach programmes for those who are regularly participating in routine anti-social behaviour. Work in this area has not finished but much progress has been made which was recently audited by the Met Police who have confirmed the improvements and welcome the continued progress.

3.3 Health in All Policies (HiAP)

Health in All Policies (HiAP) was agreed by this Board in June 2022 as an approach which places consideration of health, equity and environmental sustainability at the centre of policy decisions. The GLA School Superzone work is an exemplar of the HiAP working as it seeks to embed equitable, resilient healthy communities at the heart of all its multi-disciplinary work.

4. NEXT STEPS

None for the purpose of this report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

6. CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

None for the purpose of this report

7. TIMETABLE

None for the purpose of this report.

8. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

9. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

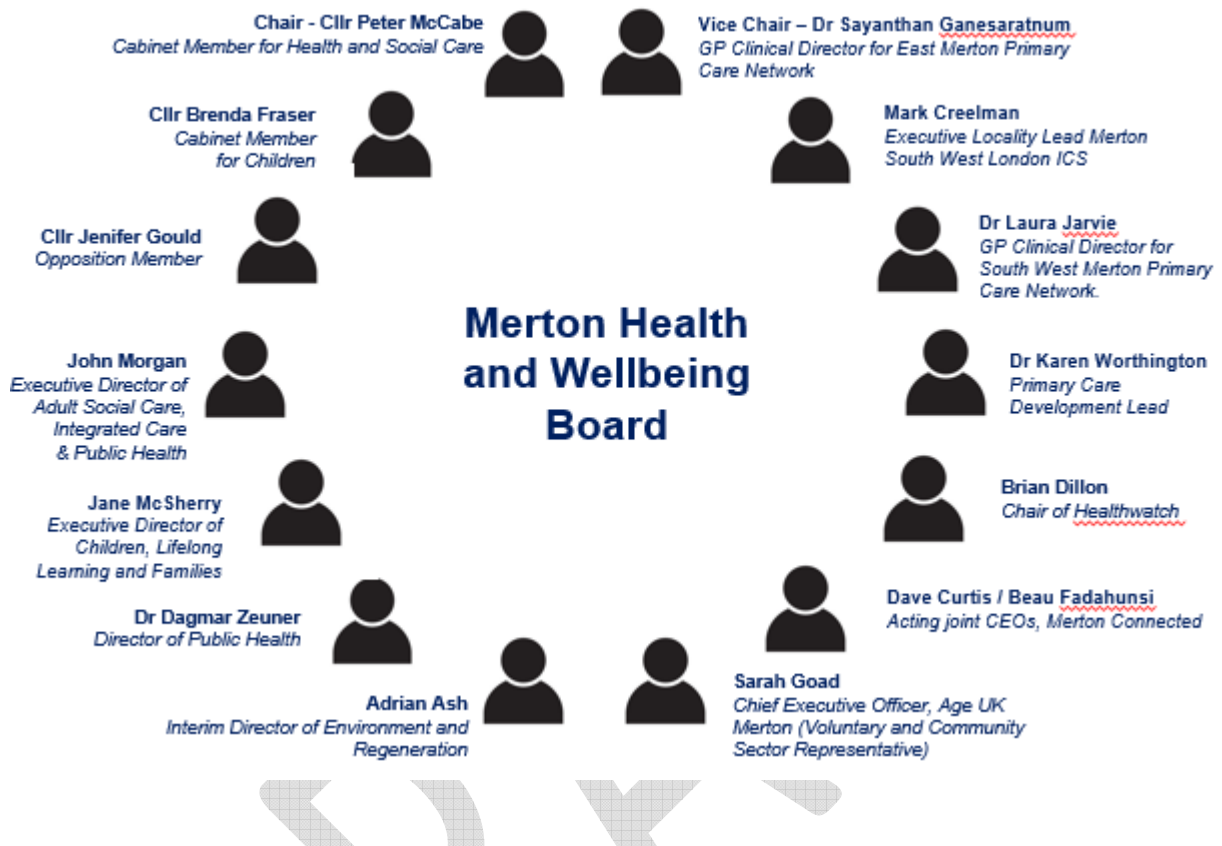
12. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

13. APPENDICES –





Appendix 1 – Merton Health and Wellbeing Board membership, purpose and principles of Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 -22






March 2023



Purpose	Principles and ways of working
<p>A statutory board working in partnership - providing strategic leadership, to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment summarised in the Merton Story annually informing priorities • Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 - 2024: <i>A Healthy Place for Healthy Live</i> 	<p>Underpinning everything that we do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling health inequalities • Prevention and early intervention • Health in All Policies approach • Community engagement and empowerment • Experimenting and learning • Think Family

Appendix 3 – Health and Wellbeing Strategy baseline indicators (February 2023)

Key Healthy Place attributes:	Key outcome of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy:	Indicator*	Timescale† for impact	Merton Previous	Merton Current	OHID Merton Trends (based on 5 most recent data points)*	London	England
Promoting mental health & wellbeing	Less self-harm Better relationships	Hospital admissions for self-harm aged 15-19 yrs (per 100,000 population)	Medium	415.9 (2019/20)	360.5 (2020/21)	No significant change (2016/17 - 2020/21) 	330.9	652.6
	Less depression, anxiety and stress	Prevalence of depression (aged 18+)	Medium	8.9% (2020/21)	9.0% (2021/22)	Increasing (2017/18 - 2021/22) 	**9.0%	12.7%
	Less loneliness Better social connectedness	% adult carers reporting as much social contact as they would like (aged 18+)	Short	24.9% (2019/20)	21.7% (2021/22)	Not enough data points to calculate trend 	27.5%	28.0%
Making healthy choice easy	More breastfeeding	Breastfeeding prevalence at the 6-8 week review, partially or totally	Short	81.6% (2021/22)	74.3% (2022)	N/A	-	-
	Less childhood obesity	Overweight (including Obesity) in Year 6	Medium	35.1% (2019/20)	34.8% (2021/2022)	No significant change (2017/18 - 2021/22) 	40.5%	37.8%

Page 93	Less diabetes	Diabetes QOF prevalence (17+)	Long	6.3% (2020/21)	6.5% (2021/22)	Increasing (2017/18 - 2021/22) 	**6.8%	7.3%
	More active travel	% adults cycling for travel at least three days per week	Short	3.4% (2019/20)	3.3% (2020/2021)	No trend available 	3.3%	2.0%
	More people eating healthy food	††Proportion of the population meeting the recommended '5-a-day' on a 'usual day' (adults)	Medium	53.3% (2019/20)	53.3% (2019/20)	Not enough data points with valid values to calculate recent trend 	55.8%	55.4%
	More active older people	Percentage of adults aged 65-74 who are physically active for at least 150 minutes a week	Short	64.4% (May 2020/21)	55.7% (Nov 2020/21)	N/A	60.1%	60.1%
Protecting from harm	Less people breathing toxic air	¶Deaths attributable to particulate matter (PM2.5) (aged 30+)	Short	8.6% (2019)	7.2% (2020)	Significance is not calculated for this indicator 	7.1%	5.6%
	Less violence	Violence against the person (offences per 1,000 population)	Medium	20.4 (2020/21)	20.7 (2021/22)	Increasing (2017/18 - 2021/22) 	**27.0	**34.9

*Dates vary based on most recent data points available.

**Aggregated from all known lower geographical values

Merton's GLA School
***Superzone* Pilot 1:**
Merton Abbey Primary School
2022-2023

JULY 21

London Borough of Merton
Authored by: Annalise Johns
Healthy Places Officer, Public Health.



UAE Southbank UAE	 Heavy traffic/fast cars	 Construction/no-go area
SP St Peter's Primary	 Car bottlenecking	 Busy area
 Buildings	 Frequented supermarket/ convenience store	 Air pollution
 Dark/Dodgy areas	 Frequented fast-food outlet	 Gym equipment
 Park or green space		

A child's-eye view of the Southwark Superzone

What is a School Superzone?

The school Superzone programme is based on accumulative best practice the GLA retrieved over a course of a year, between 2018 and 2019 with 13 schools across London, before launching a formalized four stage grant process in 2022. Each School Superzone consists of a 400m radius area-based initiatives to address hazards specific to the local primary school community such as; air quality, safety, tobacco and alcohol sales, advertising, active travel. Each Superzone seeks to reduce exposure to harmful elements in the urban environment and increase health promotion for children and young people and where possible draw out replicability. The London Borough of Merton currently has three school superzones from phases one, three and four, Merton Abbey Primary is the first which began in May 2022 , completing in July 2023.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PILOT IS TO DEVELOP A SCHOOL WIDE APPROACH TO BECOME “HAZARD-FREE SCHOOL ZONE”, WHEREBY ALL JOURNEYS TO AND FROM SCHOOL WILL OCCUR BY WALKING, CYCLING OR PUBLIC TRANSPORT. THIS IS MOTIVATED BY, THE RISE OF CHILD OBESITY SINCE THE PANDEMIC, THE GROWING THREAT TO INJURY BY THE PERSISTENT NUMBER OF PARENTS DRIVING STUDENTS TO SCHOOL AND DROPPING THEM OFF IN THE ROAD, AND THE RISE IN IDLING VEHICLES EXACERBATING AIR POLLUTION SURROUNDING THE SCHOOL. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CREATE A SYSTEM APPROACH TO ENABLE A BEHAVIOUR CHANGE BY ALL STUDENTS, STAFF AND PARENTS TO REPLACE ALL CAR JOURNEYS TO THE SCHOOL TO BE DONE BY EITHER WALKING, CYCLING OR BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

School Population:

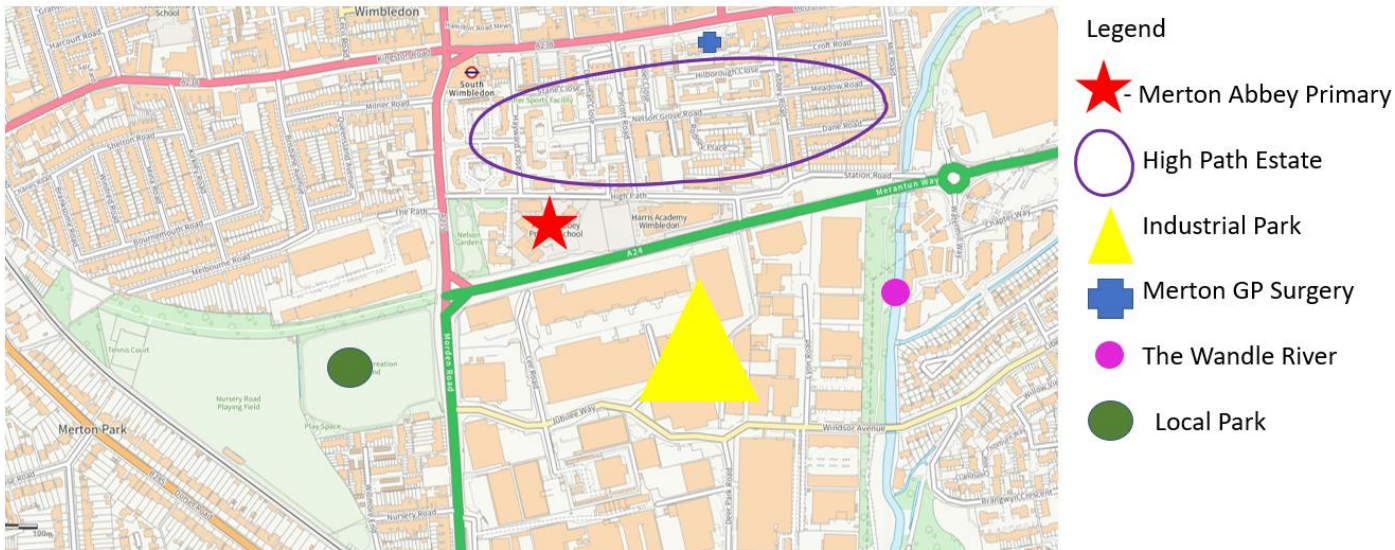
Geographically, the London borough of Merton has an east-west divide where the eastern residents experience higher levels of income deprivation. The Abbey Ward contains 18% of children living in income deprived households, and 17% of year 6 students are clinically obese. Merton Abbey Primary School falls within decile 3 within the 30% more deprived, in East Merton. Proportionately, Merton Abbey Primary has one of the borough's highest numbers of SEND students, and students of newly migrated refugee families.

Context:

Directly opposite the school is the High Path (housing) Estate, home to a significant percentage of Merton Abbey students, where a high proportion of residents are facing income deprivation. Of the students who must travel to school, 24% are being driven avoidable car journeys to school that could otherwise be carried out on foot, bike, or public transport. Merton Abbey's Head teacher Michael Bradley and staff have worked tirelessly to discourage parents from dropping children off by car, as staff are concerned about the real threat of injury posed by the vehicular conflicts with children at the school's only entrance. The school is heavily understaffed, and the staff have become essential for managing traffic to no avail. The redevelopment of the High Path estate opposite Merton Abbey Primary, will increase vehicular pressures, due to the 422 new parking bays to be accommodated within the redevelopment which will increase vehicular movements by an additional 486 car trips a day or 177,390 per annum. Therefore, in advance of this, Merton Abbey's school-wide behaviour change is needed to actively reduce hazards facing students via conflicts drop-offs taking place in the High Path. It is for this reason this work is addressing a holistic approach to educating everyone connected with school to be capable and motivated to use alternative transportation.

It should be noted the location of both Merton Abbey Primary and Harris Academy are according to TfLs Journey Planner; a five-minute walk to the South Wimbledon Underground Station, six bus stops, three cycle hire stations, a ten-minute walk to the Morden Road Tram Stop and cycle infrastructure was recently installed by the local council immediately outside the school the length of the High Path and beyond.

Merton Abbey is located between three major regional transport links; the A24 south of the school, the A219 west of the school and Kingston Road to the north of the school, not surprisingly Merton Abbey Primary, and its immediate neighboring school Harris Academy, are located at the heart of a pocket of air pollution with levels exceeding the limit value for NO2. Merton Council’s Air Quality Management Assessment encompassing the entire borough has been declared exceedances of the annual mean NO2 objectives and 24-hour PM10 objective. Efforts to reduce vehicles as part of the school drop off, will definitively contribute to the immediate levels of air pollution which disproportionately impact the residents of the High Path estate and all pupils being educated on the High Path.



School Superzone Pilot details.

Funding:

£30K in grant funding was secured by the GLA in April 2022. £21K (plus £9K match funded by public health) was allocated to the salary of a full-time active travel coordinator to work from within the school to support the staff and students over a seven-month period. In addition to establishing a working partnership with the student body and staff, regular meetings with Merton Abbey’s Headteacher were maintained to; identify and seize opportunities, 1) address issues when/if they arose promptly, 2) discuss scope for students to own and manage their progress and development, and 3) how best the local authority can serve and support the school. The key to the delivery of this pilot was the link made through the management of the active travel carried out by the council as this enabled a fluid transference of services available to the school as well as serving the council with the direct awareness of the issues and challenges being faced by schools and their staff, which helped to inform service delivery with better accuracy.

The remaining £9K of the grant has been used on a combination of mechanism to support behaviour change, including a wearable pedometer for every student in the school, equipment for the school to offer cycle

training for students (including the purchase of seven bikes, helmets, bike locks, and one bike pump for permanently use on school grounds.), and various awards for stages of the school's progress.

PROGRAMMS:

Cycling:

The active travel coordinator came in to post in November 2022. By mid-January 2023 pedometers had been distributed across the school and each classroom had received a pedometer scanner for students to log movement daily. By the week of February 20th, the first round of cycle training began at Merton Abbey for the first time since pre-pandemic times.

The cycle training (council funded programme) took place on various weeks between February and June to train students across Years 6 to 3. These courses were very well attended and due to the provision of a fleet of the school's own newly purchased bicycles, made the programme entirely inclusive. Though cycle training was offered to the staff all of whom drive (bar the Headteacher) none took up the training. The students, however, were very enthusiastic, and with the majority of whom could not ride a bike at the start, all students were able to complete the training with the skills to ride their bikes competently. The active travel coordinator was instrumental in orchestrating the scheduling of training sessions, which removed any reliance on the school's staff.

In addition to the cycle training, the active travel coordinator orchestrated the attendance of Dr. Bike (a council funded programme) to visit the school on two occasions to allow students and staff to have their bikes to be fixed, safe and road ready free of charge. These events were very well attended and proved very popular for students, particularly those who had taken the cycle training or had new bikes that needed to be set up. Many students who had training wheels originally used the opportunity with Dr Bike to have those removed as they now possessed the skills to ride proficiently without.

Walking:

The active travel coordinator carried out (with the support of all the teachers) "hands-up" surveys in December 2022, March 2023, and June 2023, to record the modes of transport students of each class used to arrive to and from school. This information was then mapped to analyze specifically the number of students who were driven and the distance in which they were driven. Two groups of students were created based on their post codes to create the school's first walking group or walking buses. These groups consisted of pupils who lived a 5-minute walking distance from the school, with the purpose to demonstrate the safest route to walk to school as a group, by rehearsing with the group during school hours, the exact journey to and from their homes on two separate occasions. The intent was, by grouping them, they would no longer need to rely on parents who were driving them, and they could travel together – "safety in numbers". The active travel coordinator organised the groups to be walked to and from the school during school hours on more than one occasion. An invitation was circulated to parents and carers of the students to participate in the hopes they would refrain from driving such

short distances. Sadly, none of the guardians took up the opportunity to participate and none of the walking buses progressed.

In January, with the launch of the pedometers, the students were introduced to an activity challenge where all classes were in competition until the week of March 16th to accrue the most movement via walking or cycling to win; 1) a class prize of a day spent at Wimbledon Tennis Courts, 2) the first prize of tennis lessons awarded to the student with the most steps. (Prizes were also awarded to the teacher who did the most activity with an award of a tennis course.) Second prizes for students and teachers were tennis racquets. The first Challenge finished on March 17th.

In May, a second challenge was launched. The population of the school had been broken down into groups of four based on post codes to create a school wide walking bus programme fueled by; 1) measurements taken with the pedometers, and 2) the first prize to win one of four bikes (with helmets and locks). By the 9th of May pedometers had been programmed to sit within each group of four to monitor the which walking bus and specifically which distances were being covered and were they including the children who were typically driven. It was in May when pedometers began to malfunction causing a widespread unreliability. An attempt to correct this was made over the following month by 1) ordering 60% new batteries and replacing them, as well as 2) providing 1/3 new pedometers. By June, the contract for the active travel coordinator ended and it was decided the May challenge needed to be adapted to measure individuals rather than groups of walking buses. The final challenge was re-launched, resulting in a short extension to the pilot, with the help of a public health colleague on June 5th. An assembly took place where the new active travel coordinator was introduced, as well as the chance to show students the bikes that were on offer for those who participate. This resulted in a surge of students over the week trying to ensure their pedometer was working followed by almost all of the pedometers being given a new battery. Despite the lack of reliability of the pedometers, participation was very good and remarkable spikes in movement were recorded. The final challenge completed on Friday June 30th and bikes were awarded to students at assembly on Monday July 3rd. The appendix contains screen shots of the pedometers tracking, demonstrating the extent of steps students who won undertook, which was a remarkable accomplishment, not only by the winning students but by all those who participated.

Air pollution awareness.

Due to the affiliation with the GLA School Superzone programme, Merton Abbey Primary was offered support to the Asthma and Lung UK charity. In January 2023, the Charity provided air pollution monitors at no cost which enabled the school to gain further measurement of existing air quality surrounding the school (Results can be found in the appendix). Though Merton Council's air quality management team have had monitors in place along the High Path and surrounding area for years, the additional monitors provided an external measure to strengthen the existing awareness of the air pollution levels the students at the primary school are faced with.

Following the students return from Easter Break on April 16th a spokesperson from Asthma and Lung UK discussed air pollution and the solutions for students to explore. The remaining school assemblies held in

April, continued the conversation and awareness surrounding air pollution and the positive impacts that everyone will benefit from, when students use their newly acquired active travel skills attained over the length of the pilot.

Findings/ observations

The priority of this pilot, above reduction in child obesity and improving the air quality, was to eliminate the use of cars to and from the school, which sadly remains a very real hazard for students.

The pedometers evidenced a universal increase in students' movement over a period of 6 months. (Screen shots of sample students' pedometers measures can be found in the appendix.) Despite the alarming depreciation of the pedometer's reliability from May onwards, measurements were recorded, and an evaluation of movement was recorded sufficiently enough to see students universally moving more. These movements are also recorded in the three surveys, (that form part of the appendix) and the attendance of the cycle training.

In all cases, incentives, training, and information was tailored to the staff to enable them to participate in the behaviour change, 95% of staff's behaviour remained unchanged and apart from one staff member all (excluding the Headteacher) continued to drive. One teacher drove their two bikes (a 2-mile distance) to the school to take advantage of the Dr. Bike but not one staff member took up cycling or the training on offer despite surveying the appetite and being present for all of the school's assemblies.

The dominating reluctance from parents and 95% of teaching staff to participate in the behaviour change made headway difficult and any possible gains made by children mute.

Students were very enthusiastic and demonstrated unwavering momentum over the 6 months. Gains were made possible by the support from a combination of the Headteacher, the active travel coordinator, a select number of teachers and the presence of the pedometers. While the motivation to win a prize did indeed motivate, it is clear from the active travel coordinator's weekly updates that students were amply motivated by the ability to record their achievements recorded by their pedometers, which they wanted to share with the active travel coordinator regularly.

The threats of children being struck by a car remain high and will increase with the estate redevelopment, and the air pollution will continue to be a hazard to the school's community and that of the residents of the High Path Estate.

The south side of the High Path land use consists of two schools and a church, and the location is one of high public transport access.

To eliminate the threats posed to children and future local residents, the High Path should be closed to formalise the creation of a walking and cycling corridor up to the school's front door, to adequately support students at both schools. While a school street is a step, the life cost value of the road closure in terms of lifetime health impacts and accumulative maintenance costs to the road is more effective and efficient. It is clear the adult population will not make any positive changes unless they are enforced. It is the recommendation of the author of this pilot that 1) High Path be closed and transformed into public realm that can be an extended and much needed play space for the schools and the neighboring children of the High Path estate. It also recommended

that the staff car park be converted to accommodate 3 parking bays into covered cycle parking next to the staff entrance and a fleet of electric bikes be made available to all staff without charge to offset any concerns of discouraging future staff from joining this remarkable school to work.

“We are tying this into broader questions of street safety and confidence for children.” (Headteacher Michael Bradley)

LEGACY:

REPLICABILITY OF THE PILOT IN OTHER SCHOOLS WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON FUNDING FOR THE POST OF THE ACTIVE TRAVEL COORDINATOR AND THE PEDOMETERS, WHICH CLEARLY HAVE BENEFIT.

In September 2023 cycle training has already been scheduled to commence to capture those returning student who participated in the training that completed in June 2023.

Kerb Craft a Department for Transport programme of training primary school student road safety will have been updated, published, and circulated to all primary schools across Merton. The Council’s Road Safety lead will join Merton Abbey Primary to support the scheduling of training in September when the new student arrives.

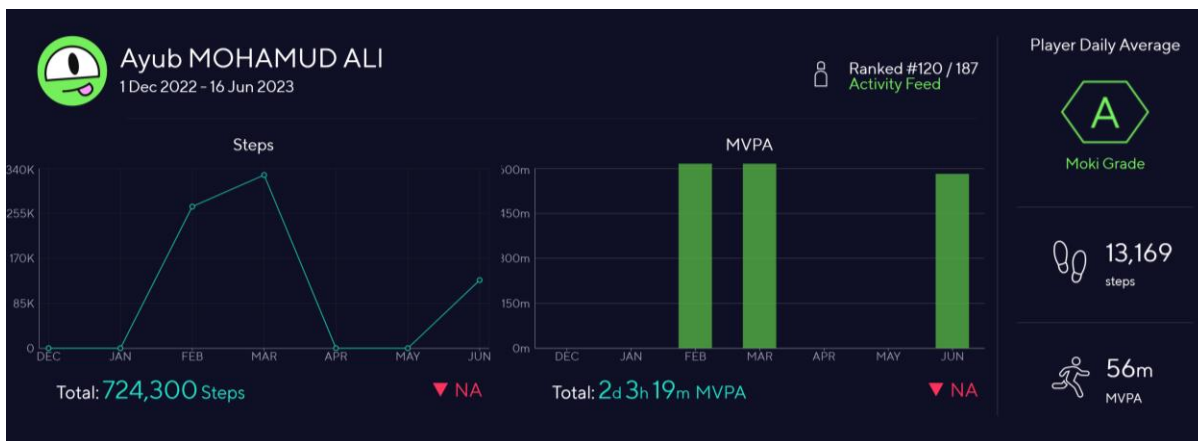
Finally, an Asthma, Air Pollution & Environment pilot has been granted to Merton Council by the Southwest London NHS. This innovative study is partnered with Cambridge University’s child asthmas researchers to look at asthmatic students of four primary school (including Merton Abbey Primary), to analyze their existing pathways to care and with the use of wearable monitors track the exact location of environmental triggers. This work will be able to build on all the groundwork established by the pilot described in this report, to shape the future care pathway for asthmatic Children across the UK.

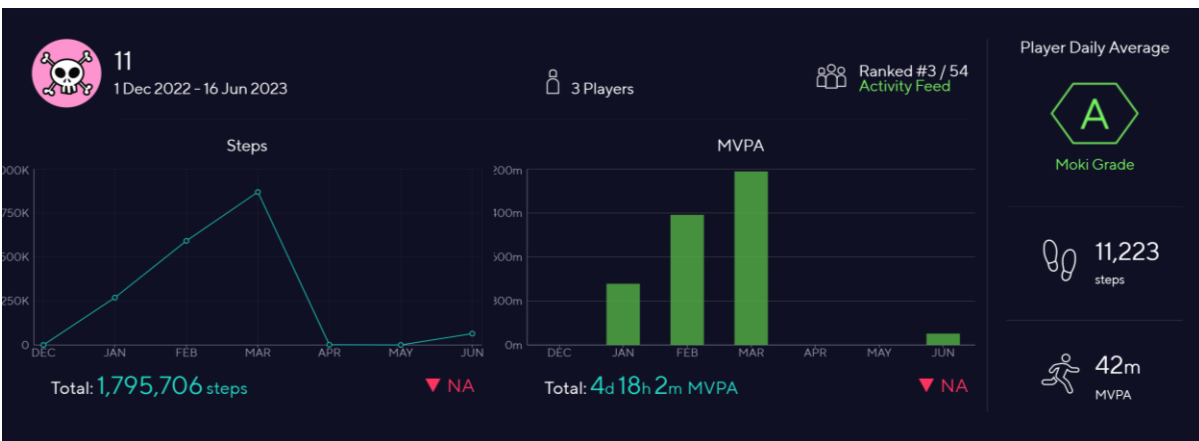
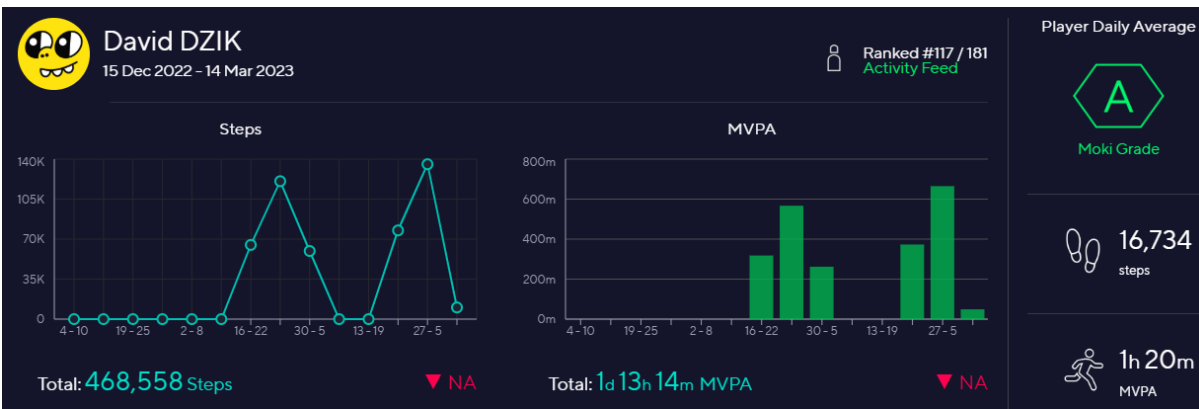
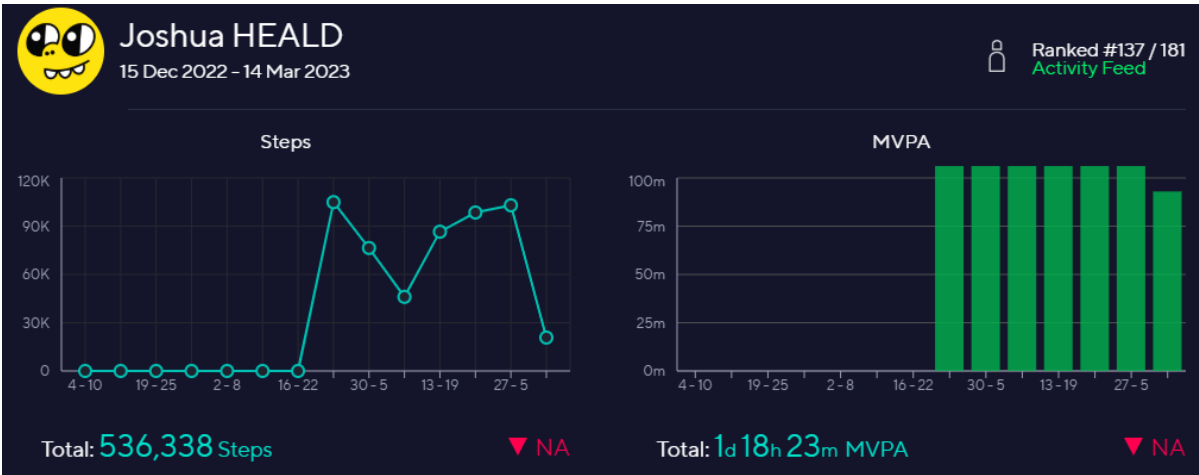
Appendix:

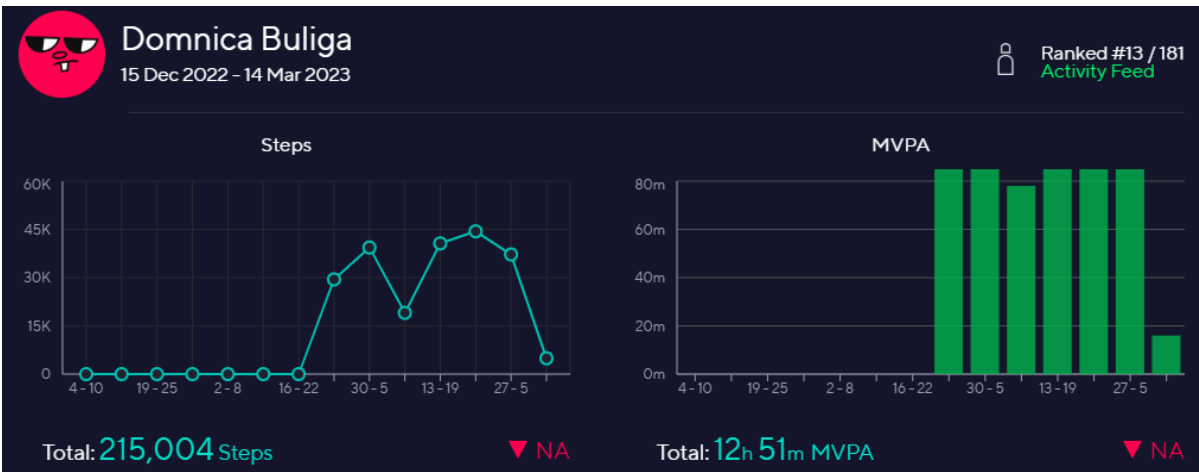
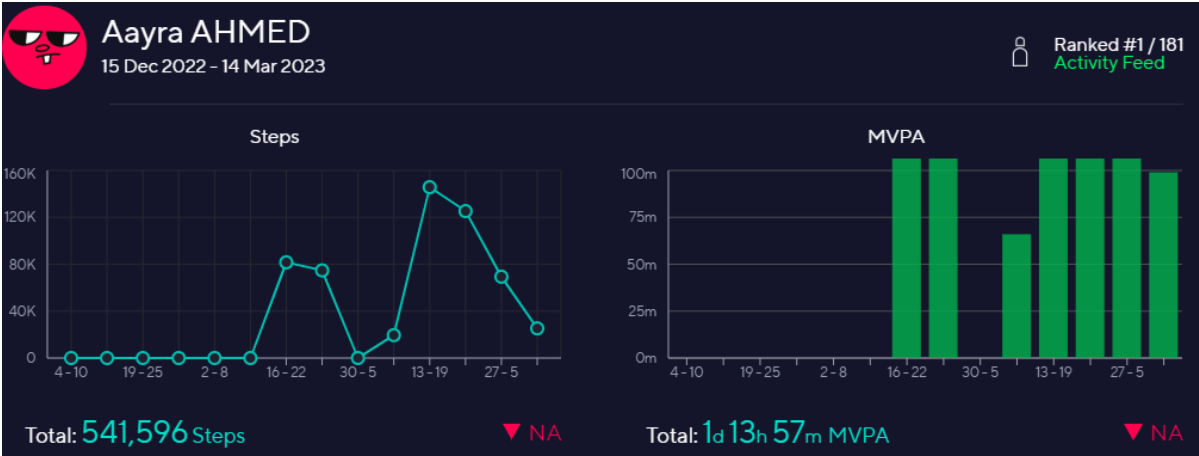
A photo of in school communication for students and the Active Travel Coordinator.



MOKI snap shots of students' movement between December 2022 and July 2023







Excerpt from an Active Travel Coordinator Assembly Presentation April 2023



Today it will be this group:
Muhammad Chaudry (YR1)
Louis-Aziz Webb (YR2)
Reza Ali (YR1)
Pal Proska (YR1)



It will be a 30-minute walk starting just before lunch time.



On Thursday it will be this group:
Tymon Wisniewski (YR6);
Alvin Kaplliani (YR2);
Veronika Muhovska (YR3)

Quick reminder that there will be some student walks today and tomorrow.

Findings from Asthma and Lung UK measurements of Merton Abbey Primary's Air Quality.

Thank you for helping us fight for clean air by taking part in our monitoring project at Merton Abbey Primary School.

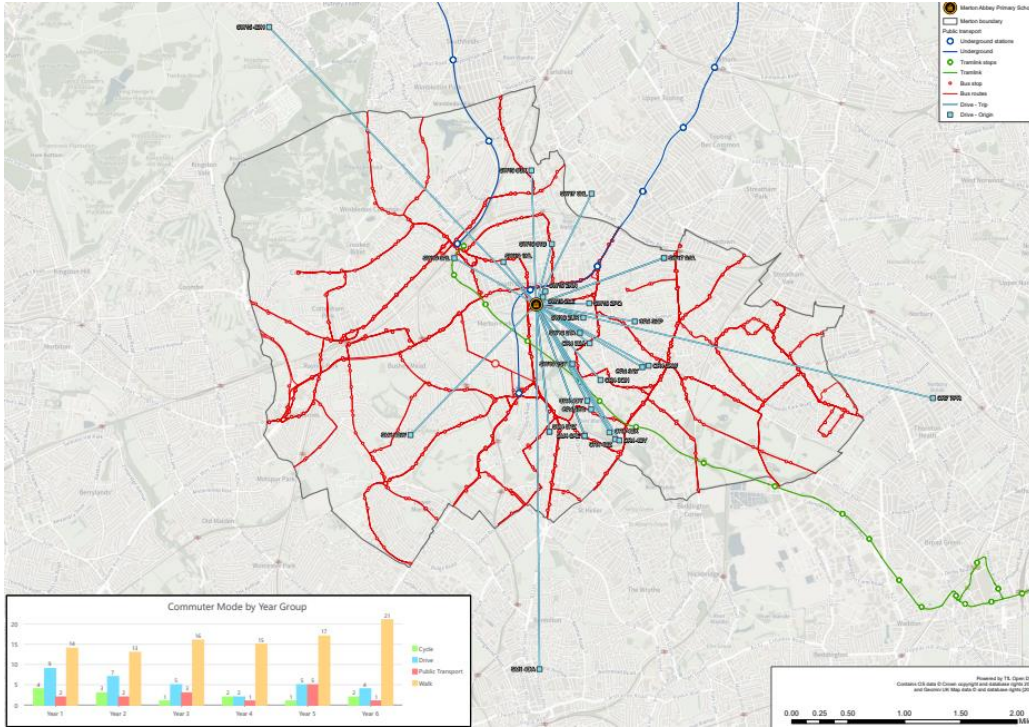
Here are the results from your experiment:

	Location	NO2 reading	
Site 1	Tree next to football goals	39.2	µg/m3
Site 2	Plain Street pole in front of Merton Abbey	37.5	µg/m3
Site 3	Street sign with blue arrow in front of Merton Abbey	37.2	µg/m3
Site 4	Tree along blue walking track, closer to A24	30.9	µg/m3
Site 5	Tree next to football goals	38.1	µg/m3
Site 6	Street sign in front of St John's Church Hall	33.9	µg/m3

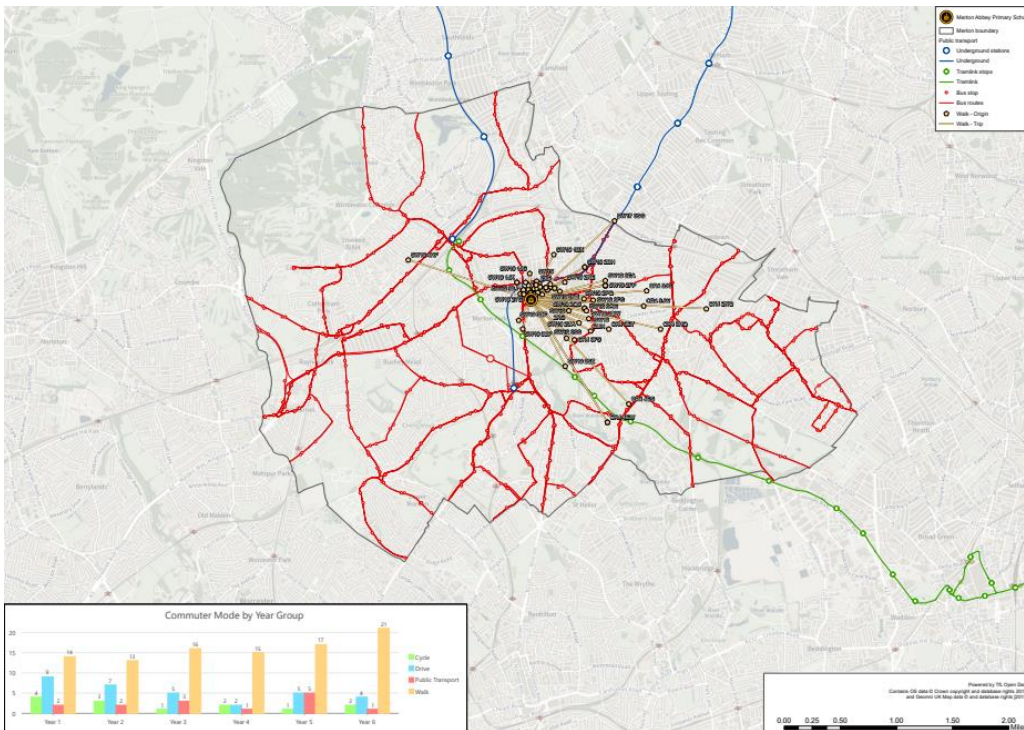
What do your results mean?

These data give you a snapshot of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the sites you measured. The legal annual average target for this pollutant is 40 micrograms per cubic metres of air (µg/m3). So, your results suggest pollution in 0 % of your sites is breaching this limit.

A map created from the student in class survey of students who were driven to school and the distances they are driven.



A map created from the student in class survey of students who walk to school and the distances.



Excerpt from table of alternative transport routes for groups of students based on groupings (each colour represents a post code cluster) of post code clusters to form the first phase of Walking Buses, based on survey data.

SW19 2PQ	N/A		Fast route - 2 minutes, Moderate route - 3 minutes, easy route - 4 minutes.	0.9km 3min		12 minute 0.8 km
CR7 7PR	16 min walk to Thornton Heath Station, 11 minutes to Balham Station Northern Line to South Wimbeldon Station 7 min, exit station was to school - 9 min.	52 min £2.60 per journey	fast route - 27 mins, Moderate route - 31 mins, easy route - 46 mins	8.3km 31 min		6.7km 1h 40min
SW19 2UR	walk to Runnymede 6min, Bus 200 to Haydons Rd 7min, walk to school 7min.	20 min	Fast route - 2 min, Moderate route - 3 mins, easy route - 4 min.	0.9km 3min		0.9km 13min
CR4 3AW	Haslemere Avenue - Boarding at Stop E Bus 200 to Runnymede - 4 mins - walk to School - 13 mins.	17min	Fast Route - 6min, moderate route - 10min, easy route - 11 min.	2.7km 10min		2.2km 33min
SW19 2TA	n/a		Fast route - 3 minutes , Moderate route - 4 minutes, easy route - 5 minutes	1.2km 4min		1.1km 16min
CR4 3BA	Walk to Haslemere Avenue - 2 mins, take Bus 200 to Runnymede (4mins) , walk to school 13 min	19min	Fast route - 5 minutes, moderate route - 5 minutes, easy route - 7 min.	1.5km 5min		1.3km 20 min
CR4 3AY	Haslemere Avenue - Boarding at Stop E Bus 200 to Runnymede - 4 mins - walk to School - 13 mins.	17min	Fast Route - 6min, moderate route - 10min, easy route - 11 min.	2.7km 10min		2.2km 33min
CR4 3PS	Walk to Phipps Bridge Tram Stop (8min), Tram to Morden Road Tram Stop (2min) , walk to school (12min)	22min	fast route - 6min, moderate route - 8min, easy route - 10 min.	2.2km 8min		2.0km 29min

CR4 3QH	Walk to Belgrave Walk Tram Stop (6min), Tram to Morden Road Tram Stop (3min), exit walk to school)12 min.	21min	Fast route - 6min, moderate route - 8min, easy route - 11 min.	2.3km 8min		2.1km 32min
CR4 4BY	Walk to Belgrave Walk Tram Stop (6min), Tram to Morden Road Tram Stop (3min), exit walk to school (12 min).	21min	Fast route - 6min, moderate route - 8min, easy route - 11 min.	2.3km 8min		2.1km 31min
CR4 4BZ	Walk to Mitcham Tram Stop (8min), Tram to Morden road Tram Stop (5min), exit walk to School	25min	fast route - 10min, moderate route - 14min, easy route - 19min	3.6 km 14min*		3.1km 46min
SW19 2SY	Walk to Phipps Bridge Tram Stop (7min), Tram to Morden Road Tram Stop (2min) , walk to school (12min)	21min	fast route - 5min, moderate route - 7min, easy route - 9min.	1.7km 5min		1.7km 25min
CR4 4DY	Walk to Belgrave Walk Tram Stop (6min), Tram to Morden Rd Tram Stop (3min), exit walk to school (12min).	21min £1.65 per journey	fast route - 8min, moderate route - 10min, easy route - 13 min.	2.5km 10min		2.4km 35min
CR4 4DB	Walk to Belgrave Walk Tram Stop (5min), Tram to Morden Rd Tram Stop (3min), exit walk to school (12min).	20min £1.65 per journey	fast route - 7 min, moderate route - 10 min, easy route - 13 min.			2.3km 34min
SM4 6AE	Walk to The Drive, Morden (2min), Bus 118 to Morden Station, (4min), Northern Line to South Wimbeldon (2min), exit walk to school (9min).	21min	fast route - 9min, Moderate route - 12 min, easy route - 17min	3.0km 12min		2.5 km 37min
SM4 5RZ	Walk to Connaught Gardens (4min), Bus 157 to Morden Station (4min), Northern Line to South Wimbeldon (2min) exit to walk to school (9min).		fast route - 8min, moderate route - 13min, easy route - 17 min.	3.2km 13min		2.3km 34min

SM1 4DA	Walk to Lenham Road (1min) Bus 154 to Morden Station (20min), Northern Line to South Wimbledon (2min), exit walk to school (9min).	37min	fast route - 23min, Moderate Route - 29min, Easy route - 37min	7.4km 29min		5.8km 1hr 27min
SM4 5PA	Walk to South Thames College (7min), Bus 93 to South Wimbledon Station (11min), walk to school (6min)	23min	fast route - 13min, moderate route - 15min, easy route - 20min	3.9km 15min		3.3km 49min