

## **Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 10 October 2017**

Wards: All wards

### **Subject: Ofsted Inspection Report 2017**

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley, Director, Children Schools and Families

Lead member: Councillor Katy Neep; Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah.

Contact officer: Mark Gwynne, Interim Head of Policy, Planning and Performance.

**Recommendations:** That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- A. Note the outcome and recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection Report
- B. Consider how the recommendations made by Ofsted inform the Panel's work programme

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#### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To provide the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel with an update on the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

#### **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. As part of their regular and planned inspection programme, Ofsted announced during May that they would be visiting from 12 June to 6 July 2017 to carry out this inspection. The inspection report was published on 25 August 2017. This report identified some major achievements and commented that "Children in Merton benefit from services that are dynamic, ambitious and successful. Exceptional leadership and governance and strong frontline management ensure that children's services are consistently good. All children receive a good service and some receive an outstanding service. Inspectors saw that significant and sustained improvements had been achieved since the last inspection in 2012, when all services were judged as good. Staff are very effective in improving outcomes for children."
- 2.2. This acknowledgement contributes significantly towards The Merton Partnership's shared vision for: "Merton to be the best place to grow up and for all children and young people, including the most vulnerable to achieve the very best outcomes".
- 2.3. The Panel will be pleased to note that Ofsted identified that "Senior managers and politicians model a constructive, enquiring and engaging style of leadership and management. It comprises a blend of compassion and concern for the most vulnerable children and families, and conspicuous care and support for frontline workers."

2.4. Ofsted’s categorised judgement shows each aspect of the service provided as shown:

<b>Children’s services in the London Borough of Merton are good.</b>	
<b>1. Children who need help and protection</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>2. Children looked after and achieving permanence</b>	<b>Good</b>
2.1 Adoption performance	<b>Outstanding</b>
2.2 Experiences and progress for care leavers	<b>Good</b>
<b>3. Leadership, management and governance</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>4. Review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

2.7. In making this judgement, Ofsted have identified particular successes in several of our frontline services including early help “Children are protected through an outstanding early help offer and a robust ‘front door’, to consider which intervention would help them best... Effective intervention at an early stage is having a positive impact on the number of children who require more specialist support.”

2.8. They identified significant strengths in supporting our looked after children “Adoption performance is outstanding, with all children requiring adoption currently placed and no children waiting. Merton has not had an adoption placement breakdown for over five years” and recognised the outcomes for children and young people stating that “Adoption support is excellent and highly creative. It ensures that adopted children form strong attachments to their families, and potential issues are identified and addressed at the earliest stage.”

2.9. In concluding that Merton Safeguarding Children Board is outstanding, inspectors recognised that “There are strong governance arrangements underpinned by established partnerships with other strategic boards, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Corporate Parenting Board, the Children’s Trust and the Safer and Stronger Partnership.”

2.10. All Ofsted inspections are required to make recommendations to support the continuous improvement of services. The inspection report highlighted four recommendations as show below:

1. Ensure that all plan, including child in need, child protection, care plans for children looked after and pathway plans, consistently contain specific actions, achievable timescales and clear, measurable outcomes.
2. Improve the use of return home interviews for each episode of missing for children missing from home or care and ensure that risks are understood and reduced for individual children.
3. Ensure that ‘staying put’ is made available to all care leavers who would benefit from this.

4. Ensure that all former relevant care leavers receive information on their health histories.
- 2.11. A response and action plan will be developed, involving other key agencies, during October to address these recommendations quickly and clearly, with most only requiring a small revision of our approach or communications. Delivery of this action plan will be managed through Merton Safeguarding Children Board. It is recommended that scrutiny consider progress in addressing these recommendations as part of the work programme for the year.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1. None

### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1. None

### **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. None

### **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. None

### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None

### **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None

### **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None

### **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. None

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

Appendix 1: Ofsted Inspection Report, August 2017

### **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes Presentation

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