

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 27th June 2018

Wards: All wards

Subject: Departmental Update Report June 2018

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead member: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children Services
Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

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

Recommendations:

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

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments not covered elsewhere on the agenda and affecting the Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last meeting in March 2018.

2 DETAILS

2.1 **Harris Academy Wimbledon** – The school is opening as planned in Whatley Avenue SW20 in September 2018 and is fully subscribed. Harris Federation is undertaking minor refurbishment to ensure the building is suitable for two years and the planning application for the permanent site in South Wimbledon has recently been submitted. Despite 265 additional Year 7 resident applications for all schools this year the council has been able to make a reasonable offer of a place to all residents.

2.2 **School Ofsted Inspections** – Further inspections have been held in the following schools where the report is yet to be published: Melrose Special School on 15th May 2018 and Liberty on 20th June 2018. No new reports have been published since the last meeting. This means that our results remain as previously reported, so we continue to have:

- 100% of secondary schools being rated as “Good” or “Outstanding”
- 93% of all schools now rated as “Good” or better; and
- 95% of our pupils are educated in schools rated as “Good” or better.

2.3 **Children's Centres** – The new centrally managed and reshaped Children Centre service for families with children under the age of 5, has completed its first year of delivery with data showing that by Quarter 3 there have been increasing numbers of families using the centres. By the end of the year nearly 60% of the total 0–4 year old population had accessed a Children's Centre service. There has been a focus on assertive outreach activities to ensure that services are promoted to families living

within defined areas of the borough, with additional services set up in certain children's centres and targeted plans to engage families known to be eligible for 2 year funding. Take up of 2 year old funded places for children meeting specific low household income criteria continues to be a priority for the service, working in partnership with the childcare sector to ensure sufficient and high quality places across the borough, near to where these cohorts of children live. In 2017/18, the outreach service supported 640 families to receive an eligibility code and made contact with over 950 families working towards an improved take up across the borough. In January 2018, 421 children took up a 2-year-old funded place and 964 families took up the additional 15 hours of funded childcare and education for working parents with children aged 3 and 4.

- 2.4 3,030 referrals were made in to the early years' service for signposting, preventative or early help services, with a high proportion coming from Health Visitors who have been co-located in the boroughs Children's Centres since 2017. These health visitors also deliver some of the child health services from the centres. Feedback from families, reported a high level of satisfaction with the services they accessed, with over 95% of all families stating improved outcomes due to the targeted intervention / programme they attended. Priorities for 2018/19 include: continuing to increase the take up of funded early education with a focus on 2 year olds and children with additional needs; supporting families in the completion of the programmes they attend (reducing drop out levels during the course); and to increase referrals from other partner agencies.
- 2.5 **Performance Management** – Following implementation of MOSAIC in May 2017, we have been working hard to establish effective performance reporting to Scrutiny, at a team, directorate and corporate level and to meet statutory reporting requirements. This has entailed working to resolve a number of data quality and data migration issues, requiring an iterative process of exception reporting and data checking. Whilst this work continues to get the required level of data accuracy, we are now at the stage where we are able to report on a number of our performance measures with a relatively high degree of confidence. Through finalisation of the statutory returns and census returns over the course of the next month, some of these figures may change. These indicators within the current reporting framework are contained in Appendix 1. Having completed development of statutory reports, emphasis is now moving towards development of team and departmental reporting, enabling active performance management to be resumed after the summer.
- 2.6 Work continues to get the same degree of confidence around the other indicators and extra resource is being used in the directorate on an agency basis to progress this work as quickly as possible whilst ensuring that we are able wherever possible to meet our statutory reporting requirements and submission of our census data. Simultaneously, work is in hand to resolve the remaining data quality and migration issues – some of which should be resolved through the system upgrade in June and others have been escalated to the system provider to resolve wider system issues.
- 2.7 **Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)** – The MSCB is continuing to embed the working being done around Think Family, whilst developing proposals for the new partnership arrangements to succeed the MSCB during 2019 and revise the performance framework to deliver a new partnership dataset. The work on designing new partnership arrangements builds on the many strengths and outstanding judgement of the MSCB to ensure that we retain they partners around the table and are able to have an effective dialogue to lead, challenge and deliver upon our safeguarding commitments within the borough.
- 2.8 The new dataset builds on the existing performance management reporting to ensure clarity around partner contributions and enable effective oversight, management and

analysis of performance across the partnership. This will support greater alignment with other areas, minimising impact on the partners, whilst enabling timely collection, analysis and presentation of data.

- 2.9 **Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)** – Working together with Croydon County Court, West London Family Court and the Inner London Family Court, the partnership will offer an alternative form of care proceedings for parents and children in those cases where substance misuse is a key factor in the decision to bring proceedings: known as the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC).
- 2.10 The FDAC service went live on the 1st January 2018 and the service overall currently has 25 referrals with Merton’s contribution being 3 referrals. The council is funded for 5 referrals per year. There are no issues with the provider or partnership members and the service is currently working with all boroughs to identify reports required by each borough on their own referrals.
- 2.11 **Social Impact Bond (SIB)** – The Pan-London Care Impact Partnership involving Merton, Tower Hamlets, Bexley, Newham and Sutton councils has been launched during January to deliver Multi-Systemic and Functional Family Therapy services for councils within the partnership, leveraging in financial resources using a (SIB). The aim of the programme is to keep vulnerable families together and prevent children from being taken into care. There are currently 3 Merton families receiving these therapy services and a further 3 families who have been recommended and are awaiting approval.
- 2.12 The project went live on 15th January 2018 and work is underway in Merton, and across the partnership, to design and implement a tracking mechanism, which is required to monitor the placement data of young people receiving either of the services provided.
- 2.13 Barking and Dagenham Council have submitted their proposal to join the Partnership and have been successful in their bid. They will not be entitled to lottery funding from the existing Partnership however have successfully approached the lottery fund for a 20% contribution. The impact on the provider is considered to be minimal however will be closely monitored. The Strategic Board has submitted a paper to the Big Lottery Fund asking for an increase in the fund’s contribution to outcome payments, increasing these from 15% to 20% of the total £1.5m, awarded to the Pan London Service.
- 2.14 **Contextual Safeguarding** – Over the past few months presentations have taken place with Merton Partnership Executive Board, the Children’s Trust Board, schools and with parents in the community in order to raise awareness. Particular issues covered include gangs, youth violence (including the rising instances of knife crime and stabbings) and County Lines.
- 2.15 This work recognises that whilst instances of knife crime within Merton are low and the gang culture is not the same as some neighbouring boroughs, these issues make young people feel unsafe since large numbers through their connections and social media know of people who have been affected by the issues. The relationship between gangs and their respective alliances can cause rifts and engage Merton’s gangs in conflict outside the borough. This is a significant area of focus at the current time and further awareness raising activities and presentations will ensure that this remains a high priority and area for sustained focus.

- 2.16 **Peer Review** – The department is currently participating in a pan-London peer review programme, having developed a self-evaluation which is initially considered on a sub-regional basis prior to coming together across London. We are working with Sutton, Richmond and Kingston, with self-evaluations having been initially discussed during June. This was a constructive meeting which facilitated identification of a number of areas of common interest which will be considered for a more in depth peer review in the autumn once data and spend has been analysed.
- 2.17 Initial work on the peer review will feed into the self-assessment required for the ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services) which will be submitted to Ofsted at the end of September. It is unlikely that the deep dive aspect of the peer review will have been started by this stage.
- 2.18 **Inspection Update** – Preparations for upcoming inspections are in hand, along with progress on actions arising from last year’s SIF inspection, as summarised below:
- **Ofsted Action Plan Progress** – an update on progress was provided to the last meeting identifying the significant improvements made regarding health histories and the refreshed Staying Put policy. Several actions are nearing conclusion and a more detailed update will be provided to the next meeting at which point we envisage that most actions will be concluded.
 - **Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS)** – this new inspection framework came into place in January 2018. We are required to submit a self-evaluation on an annual basis, in September this year, which is followed by a conversation between the director and lead inspector for the region to identify inspection or targeted visit proposals for the coming year.
 - **Youth Offending** – a new inspection framework has been introduced for Youth Offending Teams and traditionally we have been inspected early on in the programme, so preparation is in hand with developing the self-evaluation and compiling documentation.
 - **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)** – these inspections have been ongoing for 2 years to monitor implementation of the SEN Reforms 2014. Sutton was recently inspected, as have 10 other London boroughs, from whom we are learning to continue to refine our self-evaluation and ensure that we are as well prepared as possible. This is a local area inspection, jointly with the CCG.

3. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 No specific implications from this report.

4. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No specific implications from this report.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No specific implications from this report

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No specific implications from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No specific implications from this report.

- 8. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**
- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Performance Report

- 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 9.1 None

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