

2016-19 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

A BACKWARDS LOOK AT KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

DELIVER EARLY HELP AND IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR THOSE SUBJECT TO THE EFFECTS OF DISADVANTAGE

Joined-up and effective early help

Continued strong partnership working between schools, health services and the local authority to provide support to children and young people below statutory thresholds through a range of core and buyback services (e.g. Education Welfare, Virtual Behaviour, TAMHS).

Early help services recognised as outstanding in most recent Ofsted inspection (May 17). This includes strong local early years provision and effective services to meet the needs of new demands around early education for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds.

Maintained successful Transforming Families programme to deliver support to families with multiple and complex needs. Partnership working facilitated 434 families achieving Significant and Sustained Progress (March 18).

- ☺ Young people placed Transforming Families as 8/9 on a satisfaction scale of 1-10.
- ☺ *'The stability and support from my worker led to my own inner strength to change'* (parent attending the Transforming Families parent forum).

Embedded Merton's Single Point of Access (SPA) to CAMHS to streamline referrals and ensure the appropriate level of service at the right time and place.

Implemented new commissioning priorities with services focused on children missing from home or care, children at risk of sexual exploitation, advocacy for children on CP plans/LAC/Care Leavers, young carers and children with disabilities.

- ☺ *'My advocate got my opinions out loud, made people listen to me and got what I asked for'*. (Young person supported by Jigsaw4u advocacy service).

Streamlined and targeted early years services

Re-shaped Early Years service with streamlined management structure and co-location of Community Health services staff to enable better collaborative working. This partnership working has resulted in increased referrals made by health visitors for children's centre and early help services.

Re-designed children's centre programme includes provision of a range of evidence-based programmes including Incredible Years, Triple P and PIPT. Assertive outreach activities promote services to families living in defined areas of the borough and targeted plans engage families eligible for 2 year-old funding.

- ☺ 95% of families said they had experienced improved outcomes after attending a children's centre programme or service, including feeling more confident in, and enjoying caring for their child; understanding their child's needs; feeling able to support their child's development in learning and play; managing behaviour; and knowing how to access further support (Early Years Service Review 2017/18).

Positive progress on outcomes within Merton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy under *Theme 1: Best start in life-early years development and strong educational achievement*. Since 2015, the three-year trend has demonstrated an increase of six percentage points in children achieving a 'Good Level of Development' (74% in 2016-17).

Increased the % of FSM pupils achieving a 'Good Level of Development' in early years from 58% (AY 2015-16) to 64% (AY 2016-17).

Increased the number of 2 year olds accessing 'Free child places' from 396 (Summer 16-17) to 450

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Delivering multi-agency priorities in partnership	<p>Ensuring vulnerable cohorts such as children at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE), missing children, young people at risk of radicalisation and violence against women and girls (VAWG) are safeguarded via a range of activity including through multi-agency panels and associated strategies/protocols/guidance, improved data sets/profiles and triangulation, awareness training and development and frontline work on complex caseloads.</p> <p>☺ Young people supported by Catch 22 were Involved in service needs assessments with regard to type and location of activities; including participation in the design of diversionary interventions to reduce a group of young people from going missing together.</p> <p>Development of a multi-agency Neglect Strategy and Neglect tool to support its effective consideration in practice and ensure the issue is widely understood. Positioned neglect as a key cross-cutting issue across MSCB priorities.</p> <p>Addressing national issue around growing youth violence locally through development of a multi-agency serious violence protocol and move towards contextual safeguarding to raise awareness and improve safeguarding practice.</p>
Focusing on frontline practice	<p>Confirmed systemic practice model for Merton Children's Social Care and continuing to roll out and embed Signs of Safety to the wider safeguarding network so that its solution-focused and engagement centred approach can be applied to different parts of the Merton Well-Being Model.</p> <p>☺ <i>'It's getting down to the point, and having a connection with the family and understanding their dynamics which I really feel you did which helped us to move forward to a better place. We now have our lives back.'</i> (Parent supported using the Signs of Safety approach).</p> <p>Continued work to deepen policy and practice around the MSCB's priorities of Think Family, Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents and Early Help. Commenced work on new partnership arrangements to succeed MSCB to continue to deliver on safeguarding commitments.</p> <p>Continued to deliver a comprehensive MSCB training and development programme for professionals from multi-agency and multi-disciplinary backgrounds to gain knowledge, skills and expertise.</p>
Appropriate and timely safeguarding responses	<p>Reviewed the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and implemented changes to improve leadership and quality assurance, build shared understanding of thresholds across partners and put in place a stronger partnership response and single-agency improvements for better MASH outcomes.</p> <p>☺ Positive feedback from professionals about the MASH included – <i>'available, supportive, clear on thresholds, and gives feedback on the outcome of the referral'</i>.</p> <p>Maintained performance on % of children subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time (13% for 2017-18).</p>

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS

Timeliness of care proceedings and achieving permanence	<p>Strengthened procedures and processes in relation to care proceedings to improve timeliness to ensure compliance with Public Law Outline.</p> <p>Delivering transformation projects such as the Family Drug & Alcohol Court (FDAC) and Social Impact Bond (SIB) to prevent children from coming into care.</p> <p>Improved permanency planning through rigorous tracking of plans to ensure steady progression.</p> <p>Sustained significant progress made around timeliness of child's journey to adoption through increased</p>
--	--

	<p>management oversight and scrutiny of care planning to enable early identification of factors causing delays.</p> <p>Improved the 3-year rolling average of time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family from 531 days (2013-16) to a provisional rate of 393 days (2014-17).</p> <p>Actively engaged with the South West London Adoption Consortium and currently on track to move towards regionalisation of adoption in line with the national context.</p> <p>☺ Adoption and permanence team bi-annual report states that adopters are positive about each stage of the adoption process: <i>'We were allowed to progress at our own pace with support and clarification.'</i></p>
Placement choice and stability	<p>Delivered successful recruitment campaigns year on year to recruit in-house foster carers including those for target groups through a cost-effective mix of marketing, communications and events.</p> <p>☺ The majority (94%) of children and young people felt safe in their homes 'all or most of the time', in comparison 75% of children in the general population felt 'totally safe' at home. (LAC Strategy consultation).</p> <p>Annual refresh of LAC Sufficiency Strategy renews focus on demand and areas of development.</p> <p>Maintained approval numbers for in-house foster carers (11 in 2017-18).</p> <p>☺ 84% of respondents to the foster cares survey described their level of satisfaction with the fostering service as 'good' or 'very good'.</p>
Health and education outcomes	<p>Continuing to deliver robust challenge, tracking and facilitating individualised intervention through Merton's Virtual School to raise aspiration and attainment for LAC. Targeted support includes monitoring and scrutiny of the Pupil Premium grant and attendance and quality assurance of Personal Education Plans at all phases as well as the education portion of Pathway Plans post-16.</p> <p>☺ A higher proportion of looked after young people in Merton liked school (84%) and felt that their carers showed an interest in their education (97%) compared to their peers in the general population. (LAC Strategy consultation).</p> <p>Implemented new process resulting in timely and effective dissemination of health reviews and information for looked after children and care leavers following Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>☺ Compared to the general population, a higher proportion of young people in Merton were happy with their appearance, felt that the things they did in their lives were worthwhile and felt positive about their future.</p>
Supporting Care Leavers towards independence	<p>Refreshed Merton's Staying Put policy which offers greater incentives to carers to keep young people beyond their 18th birthday. This has seen an increase in the number of young people staying put with 14 currently taking this option.</p> <p>Developed a Care Leavers Local Offer covering health and well-being, relationships, education and training, employment, accommodation and participation in society. These web pages are in development and are due to be published as part of the Young Merton Directory at the end of October.</p> <p>Provision of a Personal Advisor till age 25 to ensure appropriate advice and support is given to manage transition and settle into independence and adult life. This includes coordinating provision of services, support to find further education, employment or training, providing information on finances and housing options, and remaining informed about progress and well-being.</p> <p>Continued to buy into the Aim Higher organisation's targeted programmes for LAC to raise aspirations and understanding of higher education (HE). In 2017-18, two young people attended the post-16 conference – both of whom are on Level 3 programmes and on course for university. A more bespoke, individual programme involving outreach, careers advice and progression routes other than HE is in development which Merton LAC can access.</p>

Participation and voice of LAC and Care Leavers	<p>Continuing to seek the views of LAC and Care Leavers through a variety of mechanisms such as the Children in Care Council (CiCC).</p> <p>☺ Children in care council informed planning on a range of issues: housing; 'Staying Put'; budgeting; visa status; health; emotional well-being; LAC reviews.</p> <p>Commissioned independent advocacy services to support attendance and participation in LAC Reviews to enable children and young people to be listened to and part of the decision-making process.</p> <p>☺ 99% of LAC participated in their review (68% attended the meeting themselves), and 99% of reviews were conducted within timescale.</p>
--	--

CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AND OPPORTUNITY

Delivering high-quality education and focus on disadvantaged pupils	<p>Continuing to provide high-quality education in Merton with 100% of secondary schools rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding', 93% of all schools rated 'Good' or better and 95% of pupils educated in schools rated 'Good' or better (June 18).</p> <p>Monitoring and support to Merton schools to raise the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils through effective use and impact of Pupil Premium funding and targeted training to help lower attaining groups.</p> <p>Increased the % of children meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 from 57% (AY 2015-16) to 66% (AY 2016-17).</p> <p>☺ In one example of 'pupil voice' a primary school used pupil feedback to inform the implementation of new activities and resources to support pupils' writing and literacy; these are presented in poster form in each classroom.</p> <p>Strong improvements for disadvantaged pupils in 2016-17 with 52% reaching the expected standard in the combined indicator.</p> <p>Reduced secondary school persistent absenteeism from 12% (AY 2015-16) to 8.4% (AY 2016-17).</p>
Ensuring availability of local school places	<p>Responded to demand for additional secondary school places through the opening of Harris Academy Wimbledon and made a reasonable offer of a place to all residents (June 18).</p> <p>Work is underway to support the further increase in provision and sufficiency of local SEN places in special schools, particularly in response to the continued rise in ASD and SEMH. This has seen further expansion of Perseid and Cricket Green expansion currently underway.</p> <p>☺ 64% of parents who responded to the High Needs Strategic Review consultation were able to find educational placement for their child which was a reasonable distance from their home, and which met their needs.</p>
Developing and maintaining services for vulnerable cohorts	<p>Engagement of secondary schools in the Fair Access Protocol to place eligible 'hard to place' children. Implementation of a Fair Access and Managed Moves Protocol at primary phase.</p> <p>Continued to operate an effective multi-agency Children Missing Education (CME) panel in order to ensure vulnerable children and young people receive and engage with a suitable education offer.</p> <p>Continued to commission provision for Key Stage 4 pupils requiring EAL support to access teaching in relation to individual needs whilst experiencing normal school life – results have been exception year on year with see 16th Sept 2016</p>

ENGAGE AND ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE BETTER OUTCOMES

Diverting young people	<p>With numbers of First-Time Entrants (FTE) into the Youth Justice System reducing, significantly better outcomes are being delivered (compared to London and nationally) for young people in Employment,</p>
-------------------------------	--

<p>from the Youth Justice System</p>	<p>Training or Education at the end of their order.</p> <p>Specific interventions and projects undertaken to reach and support relevant young people, particularly members of the BAME community. Delivered extensive planned and coordinated interventions via group work and 1:1, where appropriate, through the Youth Offending Team to stem re-offending and engage young people to build better futures.</p> <p>☺ Delivered the monthly Youth Board Forum for young people involved in youth justice which led to service developments in response to the young people's requests including: notification of home visits, timings of youth board meetings, access to the building.</p> <p>Reduced the number of First-Time Entrants into the YJS (aged 10-17) from 61 (2015-16) to 47 (2017-18).</p> <p>Lowered the rate of reoffending by young people in the YJS from 0.88 (2015-16) to 0.50 (2017-18).</p>
<p>Promoting safety in schools and the community</p>	<p>Re-commissioning of the Safer Schools Partnership with Safer Schools officers now key members of the children's and school's workforce to provide a safe and secure learning environment.</p> <p>☺ Merton Youth Parliament (MYP) delivered a manifesto based on young people's top concerns (crime, gangs and health and safety) including a gangs 'think tank'; first aid training; 'and a day of action' on health, environment and crime prevention.</p> <p>Increased focus in local partnership working around gangs and county lines crime to develop a coordinated response and linking to contextual safeguarding.</p> <p>☺ Delivered a 'County Lines' workshop for parents which have led to developments based on parents' feedback including parenting support, and gang awareness training for primary school years 5&6.</p> <p>Refreshed Merton's Serious Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Protocol to improve multi-agency practice in combating this issue and reduce harm to individuals and communities in the borough.</p>
<p>Targeted support for NEET young people</p>	<p>Continuing school-based and individually targeted intervention to reduce NEET. Coordinated work across the My Futures, Transforming Families and YOT to manage complex cases.</p> <p>☺ <i>"I really appreciate how understanding you are, it makes a change from all the other adults who just get angry with me all the time about stuff like this, thank you."</i> (Young person supported by the My Futures ETE Team).</p> <p>Created a NEET post within Merton's Virtual School for LAC to provide support for individual young people to access training and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Decreased the number of CYP (16-17 year olds) NEET from 2.2% (2015-16) to 1.6% (2017-18).</p>
<p>Diversions intervention and support</p>	<p>Established the Risk and Resilience Service with a number of positive outcomes achieved to date including delivery of a range of diversionary activity courses, meaningful contact through detached youth work, targeted workshops in education and youth settings, a large number of opportunistic alcohol brief interventions and good engagement in comprehensive treatment interventions.</p>
<p>Sustaining youth services and participation</p>	<p>Refreshed the Merton Youth Partnership to be based on new model of youth provision steered by Merton Voluntary Services Council with local authority support for mobilisation and delivery.</p> <p>☺ Uptown Youth Service voluntary sector youth centre set up the 'Saturday Step Up' inclusive session supported by peer mentors, in response to requests from its young people.</p> <p>Facilitated a range of forums for children and young people to influence and enact change in the borough including the Youth Parliament, young advisors and young inspectors, CiCC and KidsFirst.</p> <p>☺ <i>'We developed confidence over time by being as active and involved as we can'</i> (Merton Youth Parliament Member).</p>

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Strategy and integrated service development	<p>Refreshed the SEN Self-Evaluation Framework as a tool to improving joined-up practice in identifying and responding to the needs of children with SEN or disabilities, improving their outcomes and ensuring inspection readiness.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement around Merton's Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategy and pathways undertaken. Merton's Autism Outreach Service provides advice and guidance to schools to support inclusion of ASD and Social Communication Difficulties in mainstream settings.</p> <p>☺ Feedback from children and young people with autism and their families was used to set the priorities and actions of the new Merton Autism Strategy.</p> <p>Continued review and development of Portage service with new pathways and more defined criteria and service offer to support holistic assessment and children's transition from home into community settings and early years provision.</p> <p>Co-production, publication and ongoing expansion work to improve Local Offer information on all relevant services. Establishment of permanent post to support families around awareness and use. Creation of new information hub via merging of Family Service Directory, Young Merton website and Local Offer to improve quality and variety of services listed.</p>
Meeting health needs	<p>Re-commissioned Community Health contract to deliver integrated and specific services including health visitors located in children's centres, therapy services and a co-located EHC planning team.</p> <p>☺ 75% of parents who responded to the High Needs Strategy Review consultation were satisfied or better with the support given by their child's nursery/ school/ college as set out in the EHCP.</p> <p>Jointly funded EHCP Health Team based within SEND Integrated Service to provide health advice and guidance in the development of EHC Plans and facilitate referrals and access to services for continuing care and community health services.</p> <p>Seamless transition services at school entry with health visitors and school nurses working jointly for smooth handover, early identification of need and support and to ensure school readiness.</p> <p>Provision of school nursing services including work with children with SEN and disabilities to support health and wellbeing needs and help for schools with regard to policies, procedures and training on aspects of medicine management.</p>
Transition and supporting independence	<p>Strengthened transition arrangements through establishment of dedicated 14+ SEN team to facilitate preparation for adulthood and development of a Transitions Procedure for all agencies to ensure the process is timely, appropriate and proportionate to complexity of need. Development of a guide for young people providing an overview of choices available as they approach adult life.</p> <p>☺ <i>'Thanks so much for your help, I really appreciate everything you do'.</i> Parent of 18 year old with very complex needs and ASD supported by our MIASS post-16 service.</p> <p>Initial roll out of personal budgets for short breaks and transport and publication of policy statements for these services.</p>
EHC Planning and Assessment	<p>Successfully delivered the transfer of existing SEN Statements and LDA assessments to EHC Plans in accordance to deadline.</p> <p>☺ In response to concerns raised by Kids First forum for parents of children with SEND we streamlined the Education, Health and Care Plan application (EHCP) process, and delivered training in schools for senior case officers on delivering an effective assess, plan and review process for pupils with SEND.</p> <p>Responded to a continued increase in demand for new EHC Plans and established additional resource to improve timeliness of these plans to enable more to be completed within the 20 week timescale and ensure that those going over timescale are achieved as quickly as possible whilst producing a robust plan.</p>