



My Family, My Future, My Merton

"A place where children and young people feel they belong, stay safe and can thrive"

Merton Children and Young People's Plan 2019 - 23

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Speak to Us



WELCOME

From Martin and Toby - Young Inspectors

We are a team of young people from Merton who are passionate about improving the lives of children and young people in the borough. The plan you are about to read is different to every plan that has been written before this, as it was directed and co-produced by us - for the young people of Merton, by the young people of Merton.

Obviously, a plan of this size required more than just two of us in an office – that’s where you come in. The contents of this plan have been shaped as a result of multiple borough wide consultations, allowing us to input feedback from over 1,287 Merton young people. We have worked closely with Merton Youth Parliament to ensure that we are putting the most focus in to the things that matter the most to you.

Ultimately, our fundamental aim was to ensure that this plan enables Merton to be a place where children and young people feel they belong, stay safe, and can thrive.

Councillor Kelly Braund - Cabinet Member for Children's Services

For many years, Merton’s Children’s Trust has bought together key partners to set joint priorities for Merton’s children and young people, but when creating our plan for 2019 – 2023, we took a different approach.

As a demonstration of our commitment to the children and young people across Merton, we handed the consultation and construction of the plan over to the children and young people themselves, led by our Young Inspectors, Toby and Martin.

The Children’s Trust is ambitious for all the children and young people in our borough, and by listening to what those young residents care about, this plan focuses in on their priorities and demonstrates how we as a Trust can help achieve their aims.

This plan will be monitored by the Children’s Trust Board and our progress will be scrutinised by our young residents, so that we can all make sure that every child in Merton matters.

Merton's Children's Trust

The strategic priorities of Merton's Children's Trust are supported by an understanding of need informed by data and the outcomes of consultation.

Our Values

We keep children and young people at the heart of our work.

We are committed to doing what we say we will do.

We work together to achieve the best for children, young people and families.

We learn from what we do to improve the experiences of children, young people and families.

We Think Family.

We celebrate difference.



**Children,
Young People
and Families**



Health



**Voluntary/
Community
Sector**



Police



**Early Years,
Schools and
Colleges**



**Merton
Council**

Did you know?



75%*

fall in teenage pregnancy rate since 1998



105*

children and young people taking part in Police Cadets

Top 10%*

Pupils in Merton schools are in the top 10% nationally for Progress 8 and Key Stage 2



33*

first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System



3,000*

children and young people engaged in having a voice



86%*

of young people received a secondary school offer from their top 3 preferences.

Young People*



are part of the Merton Council's Scrutiny Panels, working with and challenging LBM staff and elected members



No**

Permanent exclusions in primary or special schools



88%*

of 2-2.5 year olds are at or above their expected level of development in all five areas



98.2%*

of young people are in education, employment or training



94%*

of families identified improved outcomes from interventions provided by the Merton early years service.



88%*

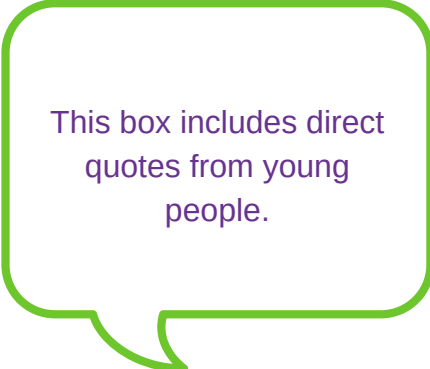
of all Reception children seen by School Nursing for National Child Measurement Programme ahead of schedule

* statistics 2018-19

** statistics 2017-18 as nationally validated

Understanding the Plan

This strategy has been written to be accessible for all. This page will help children, young people and adults alike to understand how the plan has been written.



This box includes direct quotes from young people.

What Our Young People Said

On each page, this section includes key things that children and young people have told us is important to them.

We Know

This section includes key things that we know from data about children, young people and families in Merton.

Professionals can use this information to help design and deliver important services in the borough.

We Will

This section includes the next steps that the Children's Trust will take in response to the needs of children, young people and families in Merton.

How Will We Do This?

This Children and Young People's Plan is a five-year document delivered by Merton's Children's Trust. This means partners will build an annual action plan with specific and measurable activities to deliver the priorities over the next five years.

If you would like to see a copy of these action plans, please contact us using the details above.

We will undertake regular consultation, with feedback, with children, young people and their families to check if this plan makes a difference, this will involve representatives monitoring the delivery of the actions.

(You will not see this section on each page).

Being Healthy

What Our Young People Said



Healthy activities are too expensive



Childhood obesity is important to us



50%+ say healthy food is too expensive



23% of Merton Care Leavers were identified as having low well-being.

We Know

- 1 in 5 children in Reception are overweight or obese.*
- Over a third of children leaving primary school are overweight or obese.*
- 54% of children aged 2 do not access free childcare places.*
- 2,380 children and young people aged 5-16 are estimated to have a mental health disorder.*
- 50% of young people accessing A&E departments are already known to CAMHS.*
- 60% of young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities are on the autistic spectrum.*
- 129 young people accessed specialised substance misuse treatment in 2017/18. 99 were aged under 18.**



*Give us more fruit (especially raspberries) cheaper as we need to be healthy.
Age 12*



The majority felt that they could talk to someone when feeling low. Almost 1 in 10 could not.

We Will

The Children's Trust will:



Help children and young people to access diverse and regular physical activities.



Work with business partners to support families to access affordable and healthy food.



Provide good-quality support and guidance during pregnancy and the first 1,001 days of a child's life.



Make sure young people have easy and timely access to local health services including mental health, sexual health and substance misuse.



Deliver better, consistent services for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Staying Safe

What Our Young People Said



33% are most worried about the amount of crime



Almost a quarter feel there is too much drug dealing and use



There needs to be better relationships with police and more on the streets



That you could feel protected and walk around without being worried.
Age 15

We Know

- On average there are 175 children on a Child Protection (CP) Plan.*
- There are currently 160 children with care experience.*¹
- Over the past 3 years, there has been an average of 33 young people per year access help as they are considered at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).**
- Between 2006 and 2018, 23 county lines cases were mapped.* (to be amended)
- There were 11 young people referred to Prevent services as they were at risk of radicalisation.**
- Merton's Stonewall rating for tackling bullying has improved to 11th out of 39 and first in London.*

We Will

The Children's Trust will:



Work with partners to reduce crime and violence in the community



Help build skills and resilience for children, young people and families to feel safe and stay safe



Help children and young people to appropriately deal with bullying and stay safe on-line



Work together pro-actively to support vulnerable children, young people and families



Make sure the partnership have up-to-date skills, knowledge and understanding to work with children, young people and families in Merton.

1 (children aged up to 18)

Enjoying and Achieving

What Our Young People Said



Almost half feel school work and future opportunities cause the most worry



21% say more places to go and things to do needs the most improvement

We Know

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- 78% of children achieved a 'Good Level of Development'.**
- 69% of all pupils and 56% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard at Key Stage 2.**
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has reduced in the Progress 8 indicator at Key Stage 4.**
- The number of Children Missing Education (CME) has increased.*
- There has been a significant rise in pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan to 1,790 in 2019.*
- 91% of all Merton schools are rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted for Overall Effectiveness.*
- *Sports and activities data to be added*



*'If you don't have any friends, there isn't anything to do'
Age 15*
*"There needs to be more youth clubs"
Ages 14-15*

We Will

The Children's Trust will:



Continue to provide good or outstanding nursery provision and actively promote access to 2 year-old funding



Improve careers information, advice and guidance and offer young people a variety of learning opportunities including vocational paths



Stay focused on vulnerable groups to help them to achieve



Continue to develop and improve local SEND provision



Develop and improve access to after-school and youth club activities.

Getting Involved, Having a say

What Our Young People Said



Children and young people want to be included more on decisions affecting them.



Over 67% would like to volunteer in their local community.



I want to help in the library, charity helping.
Age 11

We Know

- Around 3,500 children and young people have taken part in football events run by Fulham Football Club each year over the last 3 years.
- The number of Duke of Edinburgh awards achieved has grown from 350 in 2016-17 to 450 in 2018-19.
- There is active representation from Merton children and young people to influence and inform decision-making including under-represented groups.
- Merton Youth Parliament impacts on improvements for youth development in the borough.
- Membership of Kids First - Merton's forum for parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities - is growing across all strategic partnerships.
- Over 3,000 young voices have been heard through consultation, focus groups and youth-led activity to inform service delivery.*

We Will

The Children's Trust will:



Promote the voice of children, young people and families using the Participation Promise and 'The Merton Pledge'



Engage young people in decisions affecting them through regular consultation and feedback



Recognise children and young people's voices as active contributors to services



Improve access to volunteering and other opportunities



Ensure user voice feedback is heard and shapes service improvement.

Becoming Independent

What Our Young People Said



Access to part-time work and work experience is important



69% feel hopeful about their future and 74% feel supported to make decisions.



22% of young people are concerned about the lack of affordable housing.

We Know

- Overall, Merton's under 5 population living in areas of deprivation has decreased.*
- In 2019, 1.8% of 16-17 year-olds in Merton were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Over-representation of certain cohorts within this group continues.*
- Just after 2019, 52% of young people with care experience were engaged in education, training or employment.*¹
- Only 77% of young people with care experience are living in suitable accommodation.*¹
- London Borough of Merton pay for the council tax of Merton young people with care experience who live in Merton.
- 11,124 households in receipt of housing benefit.*
- 5,423 residents in receipt of universal credit.*

¹ (young people aged 18-25)



*I now understand what UCAS is and definitely want to go to university.
Age 16*

We Will

The Children's Trust will:



Improve housing security for Merton families and young people, especially care leavers



Education, employment and training (EET) opportunities will be available to young people and their families to develop skills and experience



Offer targeted support for vulnerable pupils to access and engage in EET



Strengthen support for young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities as they prepare for adulthood including access to services, learning and job opportunities and independent living



Work with business partners to support young people to access part-time work and work experience.



Undertake research to better understand the impact of universal credit and housing costs on our families in Merton.

My Merton

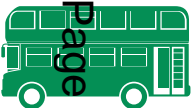
What Our Young People Said



Children and young people are mostly positive about their social and community experiences.



Air quality and litter need improving - Traffic (31%) was a main issue of concern.



Access to public transport is a challenge for young people



*I suggest building cleaner parks or making the space safer to talk or socialise.
Age 11*

We Know

- 62.7% feel there were enough spaces to socialise with friends.*
- 92% of young people aged 11-17 would go to their family if worried about health and safety. 29% would go to a teacher and 24% would go to the police.*
- Increasing social capital is a key priority in Merton's Sustainable Communities Plan to strengthen community connections.
- Merton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy supports focus on creating a healthy social and physical environment in the borough.

We Will

The Children's Trust will:



Work to support partners to make Merton a place where children and young people feel they belong, stay safe and thrive



Work with partners to encourage the involvement of young people in environmental design including the development of youth friendly spaces



Work with partners to challenge poor air quality surrounding youth friendly spaces and schools.



Improve access to the Local Offer and broaden the awareness of the range of opportunities available in Merton for Children and Young People.

Next Steps

Develop an action plan

Agencies and services who work with children, young people and families across the borough, are now working together to develop an action plan to implement the activities listed in the 'we will' sections.

Feedback on our work

You will hear all about the progress we make on this and be able to feedback on our work via the council and partner social media platforms across children's centres, schools, leisure and youth services.

Maintaining engagement

Continue to involve children, young people and families via participation forums in the borough so everyone knows about this plan and can tell us how we are doing to make Merton 'A place where children and young people feel they belong, stay safe and can thrive'.

In the meantime, if you would like to find out about any aspect of this plan or our approach to communication and engagement, please email: cypp@merton.gov.uk

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