

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

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

Wards: All

### **Subject: Performance Monitoring Report**

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Contact officer: Karl Mittelstadt, Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

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### **Recommendations:**

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

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

1.1. This report summarises the performance information for 2020/21, up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2020/21.

## **2 DETAILS**

### ***Exception Report***

2.1. The following indicators are marked as amber or red.

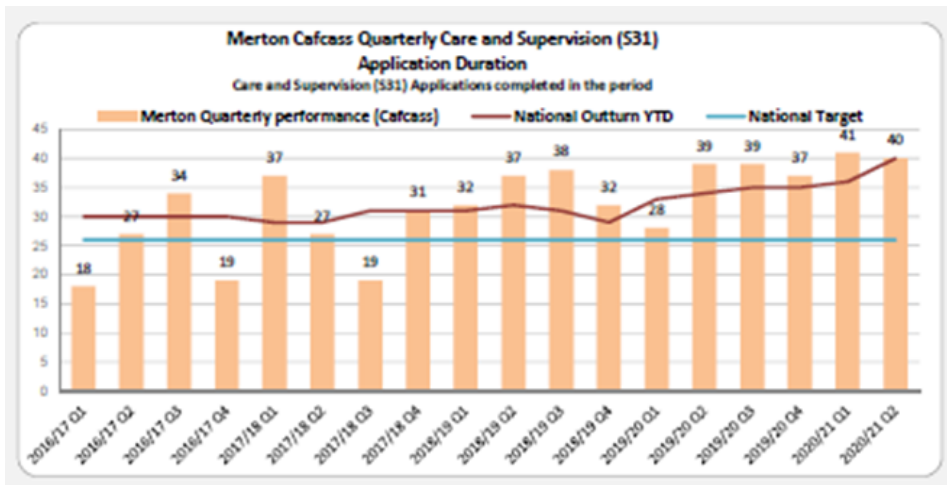
<b>No</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Service Commentary</b>
16	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.	R	See below.
22	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	R	The recruitment of foster carers has been impacted detrimentally by Covid-19. We continue to promote foster caring using online communication channels.

### ***Care Proceedings***

2.2. Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.

- 2.3. Whilst above the nationally set target of 26 weeks, Merton’s performance is in line with national performance. This is outlined in the table below.

Care proceeding timeliness 2016-2020 (Merton vs National)



Source: Cafcass published data

### Commentary

- 2.4. In addition, the following indicators, whilst not target indicators, will be of particular note to the scrutiny panel.

#### *EHCP Plan – 20 week timeliness (indicator 3)*

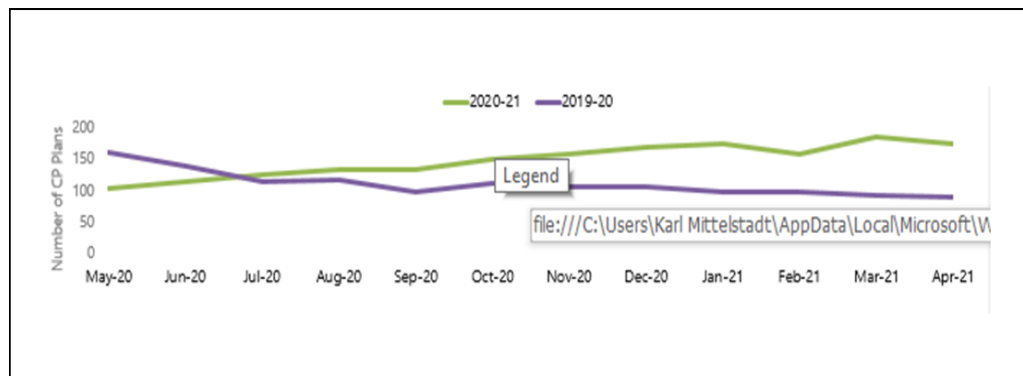
- 2.5. This indicator is no longer reporting as ‘red’.
- 2.6. In order to provide a richer understanding of performance, this month’s dashboard includes additional information about monthly performance. This information supplements the ‘year to date’ information members of the scrutiny panel have been historically receiving. In order to fall in line with the statutory annual SEN2 submission, we are providing a ‘year to date’ figure based on the calendar year (January to December) as opposed to financial year (April to March).
- 2.7. There was a significant decline in timeliness during May, June, July and August 2020. This was due to significant delays in receiving professional advice which was exacerbated during periods of lockdown.
- 2.8. We have continued to work with partners to improve the timeliness of the professional advice. The figures show an increase from September onwards. In February 2021, we issued 100% of plans within 20 weeks. Our current cumulative year-to-date (calendar year) figure is 77%.

#### *Number of children subject of a child protection plan (indicator 5)*

- 2.9. The number of children subject of a child protection plan has increased over the last 12 months, and stood at 187 in March 2021. The total

number of plans is higher than the same period in 2019-2020 and similar to the same period in 2018-19.

**Number of Child Protection Plans (May 20-March 20 compared to May 19 – March 20)**



Source: case management system

2.10. There are a range of reasons for the increase including increased demand for services together with an increase in the duration of child protection plans. Both of these factors are linked to the covid-19 pandemic.

2.11. A detailed piece of audit work has been commenced to better understand the underlying factors for children and families with child protection plans and receiving child protection interventions. The analysis is expected towards the end of the summer.

*Number of looked after children (indicator 13)*

2.12. The number of children in care has been stable for the last three years. This is against a backdrop of an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the care of Merton council, as well as a national rise in the overall number of children in care.

2.13. In November, we witnessed a marked decline in the number of children in our care. This decline was a result of a number of children turning 18 at the same time.

**Children in Care (April 20 – Dec 20)**



Source: case management system

*Average total caseload for social workers at month end (indicator 40)*

- 2.14. Data since September 2020 includes all children and young persons with open cases and all allocated workers, based on an open cases report.

As previously reported, the increasing numbers of children in the CSC systems are reflected in the increase in the average case load figures. However, providing an average number masks significant discrepancies across the different CSC service areas. In the assessment and safeguarding social work teams, average caseloads are above optimum levels. Further information about how we are addressing these pressures is included in the departmental update.

***Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats***

- 2.15. Current system configuration and data recording issues in our social care reporting system Mosaic have an impact on our ability to report performance against some of the indicators effectively. This does not mean that the department is unable to monitor performance.
- 2.16. We are currently not able to report accurately against the following indicators:

<b>Indicator Number</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
8	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	Data reporting is currently unreliable. The way in which Mosaic is currently configured does not allow an easy analysis of quoracy.

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

- Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2020/21.