

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 12th January 2022

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

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. This report summarises the performance information for 2021/22, up to 30th September 2021 for quarterly indicators, and up to November 2021 for monthly indicators, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2021/22.
- 1.2. Information on Q3 (October to December) will be made available at the next scrutiny meeting in February.

2 DETAILS

Exception Report

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

No	Indicator	Rating	Service Commentary
16	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.	R	<p>We always strive to meet the nationally set target of 26 weeks. Due to small number of children in proceedings in Merton, delays with one family can skew our figures.</p> <p>Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. In Q1 (2021) this stood at 44 weeks. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.</p> <p>An update on Q3 will be available for the February</p>

			meeting.
19	Stability of Placements – 3 of more moves in the year)	R	<p>Whilst still outside of the target range, we have seen an improvement in the last quarter. This improvement is primarily due to how we record. Previously we were incorrectly including short term hospital stays in placement counts which has now been amended.</p> <p>There is continuous work ongoing to improve our placement stability.</p>
21	% of looked after children who are placed with in-house foster carers	R	<p>The number of mainstream fostering households (excluding connected carers) has remained stable with 69 households at the end of quarter 1 2020 and 70 at the end of quarter 1 2021. The end of quarter 2 2022, we have 71 households.</p> <p>Recruitment continues to be challenging. The committee will be aware that we are currently processing a number of applications of Merton residents wishing to become foster carers.</p> <p>As part of the roll-out of the Mockingbird model, we are therefore confident that we can increase the number of in-house foster carers in the medium term.</p>
22	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	R	See commentary below.
30	Reception year surplus places	R	See commentary below.

Commentary

Number of in-house foster carers recruited

- 2.2. Whilst our total appointments in 2021/22 so far is 3 and our target of 20 for this financial year is at risk, this figure masks the wider success of our foster recruitment work. We received a total of 27 new applications. We

have made 6 initial visits and 11 assessments are ongoing. We expect to see an increase in the number of approvals shortly.

Indicator 30: Reception surplus places

- 2.1. This indicator is the total school reception roll against total operating admission numbers. In 2020/21 the percentage was 10.6% against our benchmark of 5-10%.
- 2.2. There is no official national benchmark on an appropriate level of surplus places. Surplus places across schools provide more choice of school places, but since schools are largely funded based on numbers on roll, surplus places have a negative impact on the school budget, and therefore potentially teaching and learning. In the late 1990s the Audit Commission recommended that a surplus of 5-10% would enable the appropriate balance of choice and to economically provide sufficient school places, and this is still considered a reasonable estimate of best practice and so has been used for this indicator.
- 2.3. With a greater fall in demand for reception year places due to the migration impacts of Covid, we narrowly missed the 10% target maximum for 2020/21. Members will note the School Places Strategy document.

Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. We are currently not able to report accurately against the following indicators:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Commentary
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. The QA and Practice Development Team review quoracy as part of their service.

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.

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