

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

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Wards: All

### **Subject: Performance Overview Report**

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families

Lead member(s): Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children's Services, and Cllr Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning

Contact officer: Maisie Davies, Head of Performance, Improvement 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 2022/23, up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2022/23.

## **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>
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	A	Assessment timeliness has fallen just below the 91% target this month.  This was due to planned changes to workflow on our management information system causing a minor technical issue, which temporarily delayed data entry for assessments. However, this issue has now been addressed and is not expected to impact future performance data.  A recent quarterly review of the data, which captured late data entry showed

			assessment timeliness at 94% across Q3.
7	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	R	This is an indicator that we monitor every month. Performance data shows that we consistently complete 94% and above of reviews within timescale, achieving 96% over the last quarter. However, there has been a slight dip in performance this year, taking us below the target of 99%. With leave and families being away in December this can impact timeliness of reviews. We continue to monitor the situation closely.
9	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for the second or subsequent time.	R	This indicator shows the % of children with an open CPP as at the end of the period who are the subject of a CPP for the second or subsequent time.  Numbers rose from 14 in April to 30 at the end of December. Numbers have stabilised during quarter 3, with a slight reduction in the percentage at the end of December. We are closely monitoring this indicator and a thematic audit is being undertaken.
13	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.	R	Data for Q3 is yet to be published. Nationally a target of 26 weeks has been set for an authority to conclude court proceedings and to achieve a court decision. We always strive to meet the nationally set target of 26 weeks. Due to a small number of children in proceedings in Merton, delays with one family can skew our figures. See commentary below for further information.

28	Secondary school surplus places	R	See commentary below
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## Commentary

*Indicator 13: Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.*

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

2.3. A range of influences impact on the duration of court proceedings – some of which are outside of the authority’s immediate control. These include court availability, the availability and timeliness of expert witness input, and the desire to engage effectively with the wider family network to explore alternatives (where appropriate and safe to do so).

2.4. The service has monthly court and PLO tracking meetings including legal representatives. On a quarterly basis, representatives from the Children and Families Court Advisory Services (Cafcass) attend. These meetings allow the authority to raise concerns about timeliness.

2.5. As reported previously, the Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Youth Inclusion met with Merton’s link judge who commented very positively on Merton’s PLO work. There was an acknowledgement that achieving and maintaining 26 weeks timescales for care proceedings across London and across the country is problematic; impacted on by significant District Judge vacancy rates and delayed Court timescales. There are some challenging and long-standing cases due to complexities and need for additional expert assessments; however, these are exceptional.

*Indicator 28: Secondary school surplus places*

2.6. Surplus places in secondary school year 7 have reduced from 3.2% to 2.4%, remaining below the 5% target, hence has a red rating. However, as the lower roll numbers flow through from primary school there will be more surplus places in future years.

2.7. To reduce the surplus in primary schools, and within the context of the School Place Planning Strategy (which was brought to Scrutiny in autumn 2021), officers continue to review school admission numbers to reduce capacity, with two further schools reducing their reception intake in September 2022.

## 3 AMENDMENTS, CORRECTIONS AND DATA CAVEATS

### Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

3.1. We are currently unable to report against the following indicators:

No	Indicator	Service Commentary
6	% of quorate attendance at CPP conferences	Following amendments to the system workflow, as part of the Mosaic Repair Project, a report has now been built to extract this data and we are currently in the process of user acceptance testing.

3.2. Performance data is provided for the below indicators in the attached Index; however, the target and RAG rating for these indicators are under review to ensure they provide an accurate reflection of service performance across the year, as the data is cumulative. This will be reviewed in the new year alongside target setting for the next financial year. A brief service commentary is provided for information.

No	Indicator	Service Commentary
19	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	Merton places a large proportion of children with in-house foster carers. There were some challenges last year within recruitment due to the pandemic. We have refreshed our communication strategy for the new financial year. We aim to promote the Mocking Bird model and open a second cluster in 2023 which will help with recruitment.
22	% of total 0-5 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services (cumulative)	This figure shows cumulative data across the year. The proportion of children aged 0-5 years old from areas of deprivation whose families have accessed children's centre services saw a decrease over the course of the pandemic. There is now a full face to face offer from Children's Centre staff for parenting programmes etc, which are being well used. This, with the return to face to face contact from Health Visitors and other partners (who are co-located in the Children's Centres), and the

		development of a Family Hub model (as promoted by the Government) has already resulted in improvements in the proportions of relevant families accessing services and it should continue to rise.
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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 2022/23.

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