

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel – July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012

### Briefing Report: Overview of CSF Department

The CSF department is led by the Director of Children's Services and 3 Heads of Service who manage operational and strategic services

#### Education Division

##### **School Standards and Quality (including Virtual School)**

FTE: 21.81

Budget: £937,140

The purpose of the School Standards & Quality team is to ensure that pupils in Merton receive the best possible education provision and achieve the best possible educational outcomes. We support schools to improve the quality of teaching & learning, leadership & management, governance and the effectiveness of school ICT systems in order to:

- raise standards of attainment
- increase rates of progress
- narrow gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of pupils
- achieve positive outcomes in Ofsted inspections
- support specific vulnerable groups ie. newly arrived; Gypsy, Roma traveller and Looked After pupils.
- Management of the Virtual School for Looked After Children.

There is a general level of support for all schools and more intensive, targeted support for those which need it.

The SSQ team supports schools through direct work by specialist advisers and also by:

- identifying and disseminating good practice
- brokering school to school support
- brokering external support where appropriate
- providing a programme of continuous professional development for school staff and governors, jointly with Sutton LA.

##### **Early Years and Children's centre services**

FTE: 82.84

Budget £13,397,390 (inc c £9million 2,3,4 yr old places)

The purpose of the service is to meet the statutory duties as defined in the Childcare Act 2006:

- To ensure that all young children and their families receive the highest quality early years services which improve the wellbeing of young children and reduce inequalities between them.

- To ensure the sufficient delivery of integrated Children's Centre services
- To secure sufficient childcare for children aged 0 – 16 and sufficient free education places for children aged 2, 3 and 4 across all sectors.
- To provide advice and information for parents to be and families with children aged 0 – 20
- To make available training, advice and support to the childcare and early education sector

The main functions of the service are:

- Support, advice, challenge, training/CPD and continuous improvement of the maintained, independent private and voluntary childcare and early education sector for Ofsted registered provision. (400 plus providers)
- Management of the Council's day nurseries, Lavender Locality Children's Centre and Acacia Centre
- Managing the childcare and early education market (0-16), to secure sufficiency of places (childcare and Children's Centres) in partnership with the sector
- Administration of funded early education places for 2,3 and 4 year olds
- Communication and information dissemination
- Family Information Services (0-20), Family Services Directory
- Gatekeeper of information, budget monitoring, performance monitoring, commissioning, accountable body for Children's Centres and data base management
- Provision of an early intervention model of targeted support for children aged 0 – 12 through family support, parenting and co-ordinated health and economic well-being for families living in Merton, in partnership with a range of providers
- Improve ofsted grading for registered early education, children and children's centres
- Develop and implement early years and early intervention programmes in line with government policy and funding
- Strategic lead for early years, childcare, children's centres and family poverty

### **Integrated service for Children with disabilities and SEN**

FTE: 85.9

Budget: £9,719,870

The purpose of the SEN & Disabilities Integrated Service is to:

- Secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND, within their community where possible.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of Children and Young People.
- Provide an efficient and effective integrated service for Children and Young people with SEND and their families.

- Enable effective and early intervention.
- Further develop the capacity of schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Quality assure existing and future provision.

The main functions of the service are-

- Statutory assessment for special educational needs processes
- Provide the integrated support service for children with disabilities
- Provide the educational psychology service
- Sensory service and other specialist support
- Parent partnership
- Support for Special Educational Needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) in schools
- Strategic development of SEND and Inclusion provision and commissioning of additional health needs

### **Social Care and Youth Inclusion**

The purpose of the social care service is to ensure that children and young people at risk of abuse are kept safe, to look after children in care including achieving the best possible outcomes for this group and to provide a leaving care service.

Social care is split into 3 service areas, whose main functions are described below.

#### **Community Support**

FTE: 65.15

Budget; £3,393,880

- Assesses and signposts children presenting at the front door of social care.
- Identifies and manages children at risk of significant harm or abuse.
- Seeks to prevent children entering the care system through co-ordinating a range of resources and responses including child protection.
- Identifies and supports alternative options: extended family, friends.
- Reduces risks through targeted and specific intervention: parenting programmes, group work, one to one, multi agency work, family group conferencing, parenting assessments.
- Takes some families into court proceedings where all other options are exhausted and legislative thresholds are met

#### **Safeguarding, Training and Standards**

FTE: 21.4

Budget: £869,690

- Provides looked after review and child protection case conferencing service.

- Delivers social care learning and development including newly qualified social worker programme and leads on recruitment and retention.
- Services Merton's Safeguarding Board and 5 sub-groups in partnership with external agencies. Delivers multi-agency safeguarding board training to all organisations on the board.
- Quality Assurance function to maintain and continuously improve operational services, inspection preparation and post inspection action planning.
- Track and monitor referrals to the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) regarding allegations against staff in the entire local children's workforce.

### **Looked After Children, Permanency and Placements.**

FTE: 54.5

Budget: £4,407,200

- Provides casework services for all children in care including care leavers in young adulthood promoting outcomes: health, education, emotional well-being
- Finds alternative families for children in care both short and long term: adoption, fostering, kinship etc.
- Works through legal proceedings to move children out of the care system either home, to friends or family, or alternative permanent family homes.

### **Youth Inclusion**

FTE: 76.76

Budget; £2,782,790

This service provides universal and targeted youth inclusion services for children and young people, providing early intervention and support.

The main functions and elements of the service are -

- Virtual Behaviour Service (VBS) - is a multi-agency service for children, young people and their families providing support and advice to improve school related behaviour.
- Education Welfare Service - The service is targeted at those with poor attendance and high levels of persistent absence and a more universal service is offered to schools both strategically and on a casework basis to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Youth Service – The service provides youth work opportunities for young people aged 11 to 25 with a priority aged 13 to 19 anywhere in the borough. It is both available to any young person who lives or is educated or works in Merton and who may wish to participate, but it is also a targeted service for young people in need.
- Integrated Youth Commissioning – has a number of functions including the commissioning of the NEET (not in education, employment or training) service, Teenage pregnancy and substance misuse services

- Youth Offending Service - is a partnership of different agencies, which aims to prevent and reduce youth offending within the Borough. The service also seeks to address the safeguarding / vulnerability issues of the young people (YP) with whom it works as well as their risk of harm to others. The YJS has 2 principal teams (Court, Custody & Supervision Team and the Prevention Team (which includes Turnaround Family Services)

## **Commissioning Strategy and Performance**

### **Contracts and School Organisation**

FTE: 15.66

Budget: £1,916,890

The purpose of this service is to ensure the school admissions process is managed and delivered and to ensure there are sufficient school places in suitable temporary and permanent accommodation. The service is also responsible for maintaining and improving Merton's school estate. Additionally, the service is responsible for procurement and contract management for the department.

The service area has three main functions -

#### Admissions and School Places Planning

- Ensuring there are sufficient good quality school places to meet parental demand..
- The administration of the admission of children to community and voluntary controlled, and the co-ordination of admissions for all categories of school.
- Liaison with colleagues across CSF with regard to the re-integration of permanently excluded pupils and the integration of looked after children and other vulnerable children.
- The assessment of eligibility for free school meals and home to school transport

#### Capital Programme

- Developing capital strategy to prioritise building projects and obtaining maximum capital support, particularly in relation to school places.
- Managing the overall Capital Programme for Children, Schools and Families Department including devolved formula capital.
- Project management of school building projects to deliver strategic aims, particularly in relation to school places, and to meet time and costs requirements.

#### Contracting

Service responsibility for contract arrangements in the department including:

- Management of the PFI contract for four secondary schools to ensure facilities management is to a high standard and capital projects can be delivered within the complex PFI mechanism.
- Managing the school meals contracts on behalf of schools on a 'buy back basis', with an emphasis on providing freshly cooked meals on site.
- Managing the schools and other council buildings cleaning contract
- Managing the Service Level Agreement (SLA) process with schools and to this end the business relationship with schools.
- Managing early intervention and family support contracts.

### **Commissioning and Partnerships**

FTE: 1.6

Budget: £179,260

The purpose of the service is to undertake strategic commissioning on behalf of CSF and Children's Trust partners and to provide business support to the Children's Trust (CT), and Merton Safeguarding Children's Boards (MSCB).

Functions include

- Ensuring effective commissioning of services for Children and Young People and their families in line with the Merton C&YP Plan.
- Ensuring the smooth running of the CT and MSCB by providing effective and efficient business and development support.

### **Access to Resources Service (ART)**

FTE: 14.5

Budget; £8,881,760

The purpose of the ART team is to ensure that Merton Children and young people receive placements which best suit their individual needs and provide value for money.

ART has four main functions:

- Sourcing and commissioning of placements for looked after children and young people where appropriate, with responsibility for the LAC placement budget
- Sourcing and commissioning of placements for children and young people with a statement of special education needs where a residential non-maintained school placement is deemed appropriate
- Recruitment and assessment of in house foster carers
- The Contact Service currently arranges, provides and supports supervised contact with birth parents and families for all looked after children

### **Policy, Planning and Performance**

FTE: 6.89

Budget: £273,690

The purpose of this service area is to ensure data is gathered, used and analysed to improve outcomes for children and young people. The service also ensures the department has a cohesive business planning and equalities planning framework in place as well as the specific purpose of providing policy support for children's social care.

Functions include

- Business and strategic planning - Facilitate and support business planning across the department; coordinate the production of the Children's Trust Children and Young People's Plan; manage the department's equalities planning as part of the council's statutory equality duty – coordinate the departmental equalities and community cohesion action plan, and support managers to complete equality analyses (EIAs).
- Research and Information Team – undertakes statutory returns, data analysis, performance monitoring and reporting, support and training, including data literacy training relating to children, young people and schools in Merton. Working across the Children, Schools and Families department the information is used to best support the children's agenda.
- Performance Monitoring To produce performance reports for DMT (inc quarterly review), CSC and YI division, the corporate centre, the Children's Trust and MSCB. Support for the department in developing business metrics and the use of information centres
- Staff induction, information and engagement: - the Coordination and delivery of the Children's Workforce Induction. Production the Young Merton Together emagazine. Coordination of managers and staff forums
- Children's social care policy development: to continue to develop a cohesive and current set of policies and procedures for Children's Social Care, reflecting the structure of the division, current legislation and guidance and strategies.
- Inspection and assessment preparation - Provide support for external assessments and inspections.

### **Business Support Team**

FTE: 7.5

Budget: £276,450

The function of the team is to provide a centralised business support and administrative service for CSF functions based in Civic Centre. The main functions include:

- Raising orders and processing payments on the corporate electronic finance system
- Support to budget managers completing budget monitoring returns
- Arranging meetings and appointments, organising agendas and paperwork
- Take minutes of meetings including Panels and HR meetings

- Diary management
- Word processing and producing presentations using various software packages