Merton Council
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 21 October 2015
Time: 7.15 pm
Venue: Committee rooms B & C - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

AGENDA

Page Number

**This is a public meeting – members of the public are very welcome to attend.
The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel membership

Councillors:
Linda Taylor OBE (Vice-Chair)
Charlie Chirico
Edward Foley
Joan Henry
James Holmes
Katy Neep (Chair)
Marsie Skeete
Dennis Pearce
Jeff Hanna
Agatha Mary Akyigyina
Substitute Members:
Sally Kenny
Peter Southgate
Fidelis Gadzama
Najeeb Latif
Stephen Crowe

Co-opted Representatives
Peter Connellan, Roman Catholic diocese
Colin Powell, Church of England diocese
Simon Bennett, Secondary and Special
School Parent Governor Representative
Denis Popovs, Primary School Parent
Governor Representative

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that mater and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, .withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

What is Overview and Scrutiny?
Overview and Scrutiny describes the way Merton's scrutiny councillors hold the Council's Executive (the Cabinet) to account to make sure that they take the right decisions for the Borough. Scrutiny panels also carry out reviews of Council services or issues to identify ways the Council can improve or develop new policy to meet the needs of local people. From May 2008, the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Panels have been restructured and the Panels renamed to reflect the Local Area Agreement strategic themes.

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

⇒ **Call-in**: If three (non-executive) councillors feel that a decision made by the Cabinet is inappropriate they can 'call the decision in' after it has been made to prevent the decision taking immediate effect. They can then interview the Cabinet Member or Council Officers and make recommendations to the decision-maker suggesting improvements.
⇒ **Policy Reviews**: The panels carry out detailed, evidence-based assessments of Council services or issues that affect the lives of local people. At the end of the review the panels issue a report setting out their findings and recommendations for improvement and present it to Cabinet and other partner agencies. During the reviews, panels will gather information, evidence and opinions from Council officers, external bodies and organisations and members of the public to help them understand the key issues relating to the review topic.
⇒ **One-Off Reviews**: Panels often want to have a quick, one-off review of a topic and will ask Council officers to come and speak to them about a particular service or issue before making recommendations to the Cabinet.
⇒ **Scrutiny of Council Documents**: Panels also examine key Council documents, such as the budget, the Business Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan.

Scrutiny panels need the help of local people, partners and community groups to make sure that Merton delivers effective services. If you think there is something that scrutiny should look at, or have views on current reviews being carried out by scrutiny, let us know.

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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
1 JULY 2015
(19.15 - 21.05)**

PRESENT	Councillors Councillor Katy Neep (in the Chair), Councillor Linda Taylor, Councillor Charlie Chirico, Councillor Edward Foley, Councillor Joan Henry, Councillor James Holmes, Councillor Marsie Skeete, Councillor Dennis Pearce, Denis Popovs, Councillor Jeff Hanna and Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina

ALSO PRESENT:	Councillor Maxi Martin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)
	Paul Ballatt (Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance), Yvette Stanley (Director of Children, Schools and Families), Jane McSherry (Assistant Director of Education), Paul Angeli (Assistant Director of Children's Social Care), Rebecca Redman (Scrutiny Officer)

1   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)**

None.

2   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Martin Whelton, Simon Bennett and Colin Powell.

3   **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2015 (Agenda Item 3)**

RESOLVED: The Panel agreed the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

4   **MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)**

Councillor Linda Taylor asked what work had ben undertaken to promote apprenticeships, as discussed at the last meeting. Paul Ballatt advised that meetings had been set up to discuss with departments across the council as part of a wider piece of work.

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Councillor Katy Neep welcomed Jane McSherry to the meeting and stated that the Panel looked forward to working with Jane in the future.

5   OVERVIEW OF SERVICES AND KEY CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT 2015-16 (Agenda Item 5)

Councillor Maxi Martin outlined her priorities which included budget pressures, increase in child population and demand on services. In particular, how the department can respond given reduced funding. Also, the recruitment and retention of quality social workers and how to manage child sexual exploitation and prevention of FGM and the new requirements surrounding OFSTED.

Councillor James Holmes asked what policies and solutions were in place or planned to address some of the issues raised. Councillor Maxi Martin explained that work was underway in a number of areas; for example, policies are in place for the recruitment and retention of social workers and, as Cabinet Member, has regular dialogue with the department on responses to all of the issues and priorities raised to ensure that progress is being made and solutions generated.

Councillor Charlie Chirico asked what guidance had been published on radicalisation and what support was being provided to vulnerable children. Yvette Stanley explained that the department are implementing policy around the Government's 'Prevent' agenda. Schools are also briefed on referral routes through MASH should they have any concerns and protocols have been shared. Schools also promote the right value set and explore issues around radicalisation with students. A multidisciplinary group has also been convened by the MSCB to look at good practice guidance in this area. Parents have received safeguarding leaflets so that they are aware of this issue.

Councillor Linda Taylor asked if there was consensus across schools as to how to approach this issue. Councillor Maxi Martin explained that schools were supportive of this agenda and have taken differing approaches. Jane McSherry explained that there is a regular slot on Prevent in meetings with Heads and there has been positive engagement with the agenda.

Yvette Stanley outlined the following key areas that are departmental priorities for the year ahead:
- School expansion
- Support to schools including Academies and Free Schools and continuing focus on standards;
- Changes regarding care proceedings and adoption;
- Reducing time for adoption process building on recent improvements

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- Difficulties in recruitment and retention of social workers (as Merton employ 40% of its social workers as agency staff). Salaries have been benchmarked against other London Boroughs and incentives have been offered. Merton also has reasonable caseloads but budgetary pressures mean that competing for staff with some boroughs is difficult.

- Changes in legislation regarding leaving care and support to be provided for up to 25 year olds despite this not being accompanied by an increase in funding to do so.

- Continuing to develop services in the transition from public health services to the local authority

- Changes in legislation surrounding the council's role in intervention

Councillor Dennis Pearce asked if some children do not receive the 15 hours free childcare due to lack of funding and how the additional hours for childcare announced would be provided. Jane McSherry explained that the current 15 hour allowance has different take up across the borough particularly for children in the 0-2 age bracket. The council are finding ways to reach out to families that are entitled to free child care. The funding to cover the cost of the additional hours proposed in the recent Government announcement is not yet clear. Councillor Linda Taylor enquired about the proposals to outsource some aspects of the adoption service. Yvette Stanley explained that this is a complex issue . Yvette Stanley added that she is the budget lead for the London Directors group looking at the policy and legislative changes underway and in discussion with civil servants to advise on this and necessary resources.

Councillor Jeff Hanna asked how basic need grant was accounted for in the costs outlined for school expansion. Paul Ballatt explained that there is an annual bidding round for capital funding in the council as part of the MTFS. The figures outlined are indicative year on year and adjusted accordingly annually. The Government provides a basic needs grant but it is not sufficient to meet demand. It is incorporated in to the corporate capital budget but is not reflected in the figures shown in this report as they are not known at this stage. An additional 20 forms of entry are estimated to be required with additional 10-14 forms of entry required before 2020. The development of Harris will provide a 6 forms of entry school and 3 existing schools have agreed to expand by an additional 2 forms of entry if required. The council have been asked by Harris Federation to identify a site for the new school.

Councillor Jeff Hanna asked for more information on what was planned regarding shared school improvement services and if this was focused more on savings than improvements. Yvette Stanley explained that there were economies of scale to be achieved in running services on a shared basis. Jane McSherry explained that there were current shared services which were well established however there were no

current plans to change the delivery model of our school improvement service. A new Head of School Improvement has recently been appointed.

Councillor Jeff Hanna enquired about out posted accommodation and what implications this would have for the service and savings. Yvette Stanley explained that the department had been proactive in disposing of outposted services accommodation and savings had already been realised. The integration with health services will reduce costs and the council are discussing options with CAHMS at present which could help to reduce unit costs.

Councillor Jeff Hanna noted that the figures provided regarding the required additional forms of entry required in the secondary sector had been amended following previous updates to the Panel. Paul Ballatt explained that the figures were kept constantly under review had changed and that an update could be provided to the Panel on what has been delivered to date and new estimates/projections. Additionally, there should be opportunities for pre decision scrutiny on a a report that it is planned to take to Cabinet in October in connection with site options for the new secondary school although timing for this is not yet certain.. This would cover the support provided to the EFA, site options for schools given the pre opening approval and options appraisal for the available sites.

Councillor Joan Henry asked about the transfer of universal youth services to a new provider. Yvette Stanley explained that there were on-going discussions with two potential funders.

Councillor Charlie Chirico asked about plans to employ entry level social workers to replace agency staff. Paul Angeli informed the Panel that newly qualified social workers have been employed through a specific programme that has been extended.. This recruits 10 students per year and they are evaluated to determine if they are suitable for the newly qualified programme. This delivers 10 qualified social workers per year for Merton and is a well established scheme; The council have also just joined a DfE led programme, First Line, bringing in high quality graduates from Russell group universities to qualify as social workers. This is expected to commence in September. Working with HR, the department expect to be fully staffed with social work practitioners by September 2015 although the position is always fluid. Councillor Charlie Chirico asked how many social workers come through the First Line Programme and how many social workers are employed by the council. Paul Angeli explained that this should generate 4 per year and that there is a significant amount of central government funding to support this. Councillor Charlie Chirico congratulated Paul Angeli and his team on their good work.

Councillor Agatha Akyigyina asked if students from non Russell Group universities were also employed on the training programmes. Paul Angeli confirmed that this was the case.

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RESOLVED: The Panel hold their rearranged October meeting in September 2015 to allow for pre decision scrutiny on school places at that meeting subject to timing of the cabinet item.

6 AGREEING THE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 (Agenda Item 6)

Councillor Katy Neep outlined the draft 2015/16 work programme for the Panel's agreement.

Councillor Agatha Akyigyina asked what could be expected in the budget report. Yvette Stanley explained that the report may include some revised/replacement savings, up to 2016/17, when it is presented to the Panel in October 2015.

RESOLVED: Panel agreed their 2015/16 work programme.

7 DRAFT FINAL REPORT - ONLINE STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS TASK GROUP (Agenda Item 7)

Councillor Jeff Hanna expressed his thanks to the task group for their work.

RESOLVED: Panel endorsed the report and agreed to forward to Cabinet for consideration at their September 2015 meeting.

8 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

Paul Ballatt introduced the report and explained that there would be more data included which would be relevant to the thematic meetings as part of the Panel's agreed 2015/16 work programme.

Councillor Agatha Akyigyina expressed her concern about the red status on a number of the performance indicators and enquired about the possibility of monitoring school standards data throughout the year at each panel meeting. Yvette Stanley explained that the department are only able to provide an annual data set but that other associated data regarding school standards is received and monitored by the schools standards committee and the Children's Trust board. Paul Ballatt drew the Panel's attention to some of the indicators that are relevant re school standards on the data set it receives at each meeting. He added that the data is benchmarked on an annual basis and that this year's results are due to be received by the Panel in February 2016 which will provide performance of Merton's schools and benchmarking information where available.

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Councillor Jeff Hanna expressed his concerns at underperformance against some of the indicators and asked if the narrative in the report needed to be clear regarding the circumstances surrounding this e.g. against stability of placements for children in care and also on the percentage of children in care participating in reviews. He added that this should not be a prompt to criticise social workers. He asked why some children do not attend their reviews. Paul Angeli explained that the attendance at a review is often beyond the department's control. The department are looking into why children are not attending their reviews. It is older teens that tend to be absent. An alternative may be to have the young person chairing their review encouraging them to participate and shape the services they receive.

Paul Angeli informed the Panel that placement changes are reviewed constantly and issues reported to the corporate parenting panel. The council have also established a new team that deals with permanency and ensures young people have long term support through a stable social work team. The team are tracking all cases in which concerns have been expressed about the placement. One of the possible causes for the lack of stability of placements can be down to the fact that there are a lot of older children who are looked after and there can be particularly complex and challenging behaviour.

Councillor Joan Henry asked about BME pupil exclusion rates. Yvette Stanley explained that these would not be ready until spring 2016.

Councillor Charlie Chirico asked if all school places were now offered and agreed. Yvette Stanley explained that school places have been planned and not overprovided but that some parents wait to try and take up places that they want. Paul Ballatt added that the school appeals process was underway.
Councillor Agatha Akyigyina asked if any parents had not received an offer. Paul Ballatt explained that the department have made central offers which are not always parent's first choice but that the council has been effective in providing places. A report on school places will be provided in the update report at the next Panel meeting.

RESOLVED: Panel noted the report.

9   **CHANGE OF MEETING DATE - OCTOBER 2015 (Agenda Item 9)**

Councillor Katy Neep informed the Panel that the meeting date for the October Panel meeting was to be changed and that dates would be consulted on shortly.

RESOLVED: Panel agreed this change.

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Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 21 October 2015

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Corporate Parenting, Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley

Lead member: Cllr Maxi Martin,

Contact officer: Paul Angeli, Assistant Director CSC & YI/Sarah Daley, Head of Permanency, LAC & Care Leavers

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Recommendations:

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

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1   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.   The report provides members of the Children and Young people Overview and Scrutiny Panel with information which is seen and scrutinised by the statutory Corporate Parenting Panel. This panel   oversees the work the council and partner agencies undertake to help looked after children and care leavers achieve positive outcomes. The panel also has a championing role for this group of service users for whom the council has key responsibilities.

2   DETAILS

2.1   The Corporate Parenting Panel is chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the administration and opposition lead members for children's services as well as officers from across the council and its partners in providing children's services.

2.2   The terms of reference include:

- Understanding and championing the needs and ambitions of Looked After Children and care leavers across the Merton Partnership.

- Ensuring joined up pathways in education, health, employability, leisure and recreation, for Merton LAC, LAC children overseen by the Virtual School and Merton Care Leavers.

- Receiving direct feedback from Merton Children in Care Council and the wider Looked After Children population, to improve council and partner service development and delivery.

- Providing mutual challenge within and across the partnership to prioritise continuous improvement of services and outcomes.

- Giving conspicuous care and attention to particularly vulnerable Looked After Children such as young offenders, substance misusers and

pregnant teenagers, to ensure effective risk assessment and appropriate service support.

2.3   The Panel meets bi-monthly and routinely: reviews the LAC and care leavers and their outcomes; receives feedback from LAC and care leavers participation; and receives reports with a specific focus: health; education; housing; CAMHs etc. An annual report is produced in the autumn of each year.

2.6   A selection of reports received at the last meeting of the Panel are attached providing information on our LAC cohort and our very important work on ensuring that our LAC and care Leavers views are built into their care planning and inform service development. CYP scrutiny Panel are invited to comment and ask questions on the content of these reports to better understand our LAC, care leavers and the partnership's work to give them the best life chances and choices during and post care.

3   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1.   None for the purposes of this report.

4   CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1.   None for the purposes of this report.

5   TIMETABLE

5.1.   N/A

6   FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1.   No specific implications.

7   LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1.   The council has extensive legal duties with regard to LAC and care leavers and is the legal parent to these children and young people..

8   HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1.   We are dedicated to narrowing the gaps in outcomes between our Lac and care leavers and their more advantaged peers.

9   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1.   Children entering the care system become looked after and can be eligible for leaving care services. .

10   RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1.   No specific implications.

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

- LAC & care Leavers Cohort Update
- Participation Annual report

12   BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1.   None

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LAC & Care Leaver Cohort Review July 2015

London Borough of Merton

Issue Date	Author	Date Of the Next Review	Lead officer
August 2015	Sarah Daly	November 2015	SM

LAC Cohort

- There are currently 163 looked after children. Of these 101 (62%) are male, and 62 (38%) are female.
- There continues to be a significantly larger number of children in the 14+ cohort (89), whilst the 0-5 cohort is small with only 21 children in this cohort.
- The majority of children looked after in Merton are from a white background. Mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black or Black British heritage and 'other ethnic groups' have looked after children proportions greater than the resident population.

Table 1-3 – Age, Gender and Ethnicity of LAC cohort

No	5	6	5	3	1	1	2	10	3	5	9	7	5	12	8	20	25	36
Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

Gender of LAC Cohort
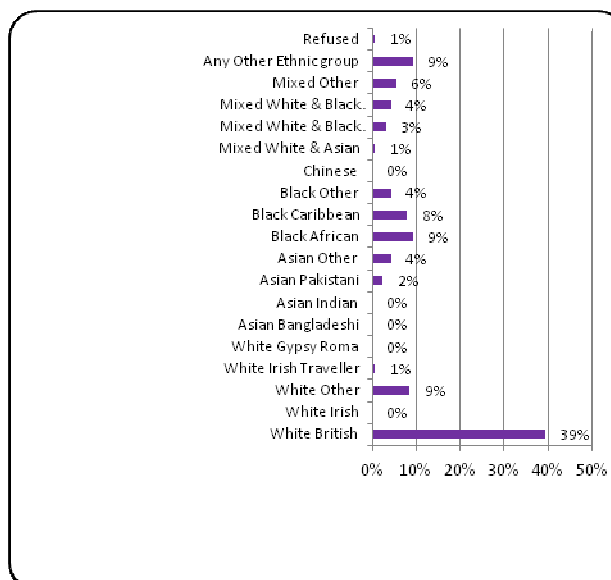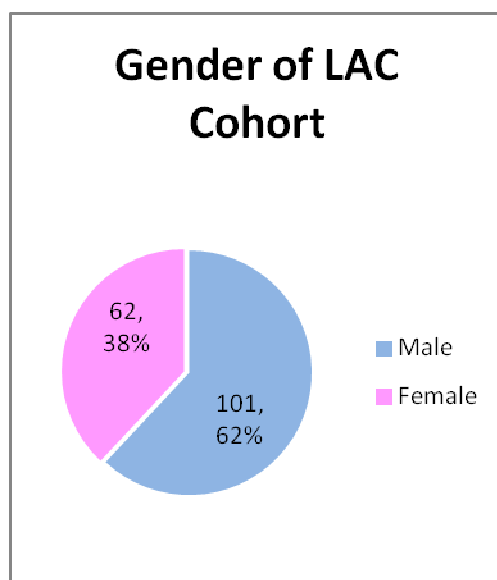
Children Aged 5 and Under

Table 4 – Length of time accommodated (0-5 years)

Length of time accommodated	Number of children
3-4 Years	1
2-3 Years	5
1-2 Years	1
≤ 1 Year	14

- Of the 163 Looked after children 21 are aged 5 or under.
- Of these 21, 6 are placed under S20 CA 89 and 6 children are on Interim Care Orders. There is appropriate care planning in place for all of the children accommodated under S20 and they have all been considered at the monthly

0-5 Tracking Meeting.   The remaining 9 children are subject to placement orders.

- Of the 6 children in the 2- 4 year cohort 5 are part of 2 sibling groups. All but one of the children in this cohort are now in their adoptive placements adoption order applications made to the court.

Children on Placement Orders

- There are currently 12 children who have a legal status of Placement Order. All of these children have a parallel plan that includes adoption as one possibility.
- Of the 12 children with placement orders 9 are living with their prospective adopters. For the remaining children 1 is matched with carers and introductions are underway. For the remaining 2 children family finding is ongoing (both these children are considered 'hard to place' due to their age, ethnicity and additional needs).
- We have one relinquished baby who is accommodated under S20 but in his adoptive placement (in line with court process)

Table 5 – Children with placement orders/placed for adoption

	Age	Date LAC	ADM	Placed for adoption	Adoption Order
	7	5.3.10	19.3.12	22.5.13	Adoption hearings on-going – case transferred to high court due to complexity – next court hearing will be October 2015..
	7	5.6.08	20.1.09	Placement disruption	Parallel plan in place and bridging placement being sought.
	3	10.5.12	17.9.13	10.5.12 (placed with foster carer)	Match agreed at Panel in August 2015.
	2	21.5.13	17.9.13	23.5.12 (placed with foster carer)	Match to be presented at Panel in August 2015.
	5	01.05.13	11.12.14		Foster carer has withdrawn application - Family finding
	0	22.9.14	26.11.14	28.4.15	Placed with Adopters
	0	24.10.14	13.3.15	08.07.15	Placed with Adopters
	7	29.4.13	20.11.13		Introductions ongoing
	2	7.5.13	01.11.13	26.11.14	Adopters have put in application.
	4	22.4.13	1.11.13	03.02.15	Adopters have put in application.
	3	22.4.13	1.11.13	03.02.15	Adopters have put in application.
	1	2.9.14	26.11.14	28.04.15	Adopters have put in application.

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	1	24.11.14	20.03.15	27.04.15	Adopters have put in application.

Children aged 6-13

- There are 53 looked after children in the age cohort 6-13 years. The majority of these (29 children) have a plan for long term fostering and are subject to Full Care Orders. 1 is subject to an Interim Care Order and there are on-going care proceedings. 20 children aged 6-13 are accommodated under S20 arrangements.
- 3 children in this cohort are subject to placement orders and were referenced in table 3. 1 is in an adoptive placement but there are significant complexities being dealt with through the courts. For 1 child the care plan for adoption is actively being pursued as part of a broader permanence parallel plan. For one child a successful match has been agreed and introductions will commence in August 2015.

Children aged 14 and 15

- There are 28 looked after children in the age cohort 14-15 years. 13 of these young people are accommodated under S20 arrangements, 10 are subject to Full Care Orders. 5 are subject to Interim Care Orders.

Young People aged 16 and 17

- 61 (37%) of our LAC population are aged 16 and 17 years.

Table 6 – Age of young person and year accommodated

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008-1997
16 years	5	9	4	0	3	1	0	2
17 years	12	12	8	1	2	0	0	1

- Of the 163 looked after children 25 young people are aged 16 and 36 are aged 17.
- In the year 2015-16 we have accommodated thirteen 16 and 17 year old young people.
- 5 young people (38%) in this cohort have been accommodated as a result of their UASC status and 2 (15%) have been accommodated following joint CSC and Housing assessments (Southwark). The reasons for accommodation are set out in table 7
- Of the 13 young people 5 are no longer in our care (3 have successfully returned home and 2 have left care having turned 18). Of the remaining 8 young people 4 are UASC, 1 is Southwark and 2 are accommodated due to their anti-social/criminal behaviours all of which are factors over which we have little control in terms of accommodation decision making.

Table 7 – Reason for accommodation

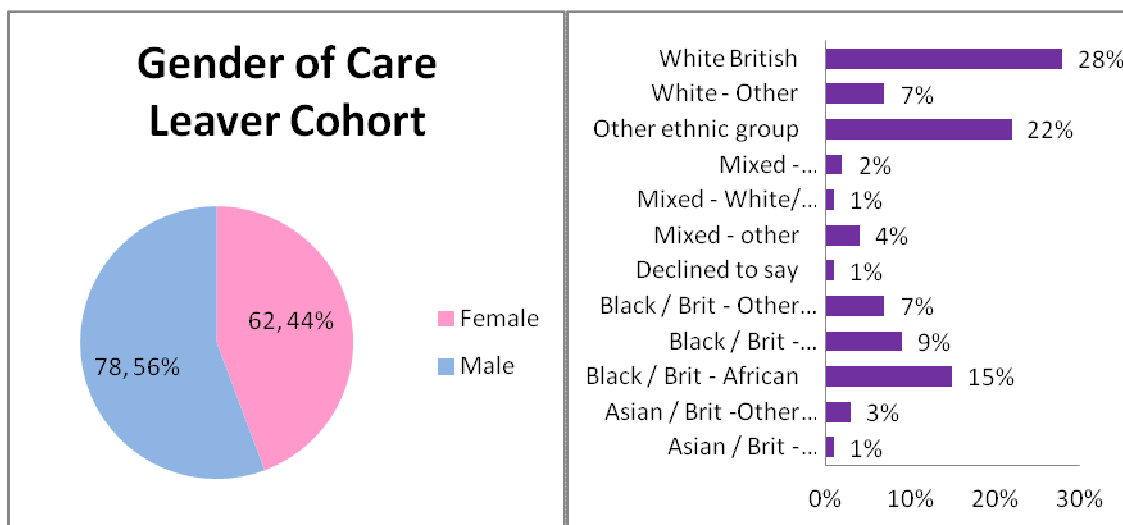|	Age	Previous CSC involvement?	Reason for accommodation
	17	No	UASC
	17	No	Concerns relate to anti-social behaviour and gang affiliation (no longer LAC as 18 years)
	17	No	UASC
	17	Yes –since 2010	Previous LAC young person. Concerns relate to anti-social behaviour. (Has since discharged himself from care).
	17	No	UASC (no longer LAC as 18 years)
	17	Yes – some previous involvement relating to mother's mental health.	Remand to LA care
	17	No	UASC
	16	No	UASC
	16	Yes – significant concerns in respect of CSE and missing episodes. Previously accommodated under S20	Accommodated following concerns relating to CSE and mother's ability to safely parent. However care plan of accommodation was not felt to be effective and YP has now returned home – (ongoing intervention in place).
	17	Yes – previous issues relating to relationship between YP and his mother	Southwark – issues relating to domestic violence and threats to family. YP presenting as isolated.
	17	Yes – significant history relating to anti-social behaviour and gang affiliation. Received a custodial sentence in 2014.	Planned discharge from YOI – placed in semi independent placement.
	17	Yes – significant historical involvement. YP had a long period in accommodation, including secure accommodation when he was younger due to persistent missing episodes and anti social behaviour.	Accommodated as a relevant child – YP presented as homeless following breakdown in his relationship with his mother
	17	No	Southwark – issues relating to historic sexual abuse and domestic violence (successful rehabilitation home following resolution of issues).

Care Leavers (18-25 years)

Children's Social Care has a range of duties and powers to provide after care advice and assistance to these young people, and to those who have been accommodated

by other specified agencies. Good corporate parents will provide young people with help and support to access education, employment and training opportunities and to find accommodation suitable to meet their needs.

We currently have a care leaver population of 140 young people. 136 have a legal status of 'former relevant' and 4 have a legal status of 'qualifying' (status is dependent on the length of time in care and the age that the young person was accommodated).

Table 8-10 – Age, Gender and Ethnicity of Care Leaver cohort

No.	40	39	22	20	8	5	3	2	1
Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Gender of Care Leaver Cohort

Female 62, 44%
Male 78, 56%

White British 28%
White - Other 7%
Other ethnic group 22%
Mixed -... 2%
Mixed - White/... 1%
Mixed - other 4%
Declined to say 1%
Black / Brit - Other... 7%
Black / Brit -... 9%
Black / Brit - African 15%
Asian / Brit -Other... 3%
Asian / Brit -... 1%

All care leavers are allocated to a social worker or personal advisor and all have a pathway plan in place which identifies the interventions that are in place to support the young person achieve positive outcomes whilst focusing on their move towards independence.

The work in this area is measured against specific performance indicators in the following areas:

- In touch
- NEET
- Living in suitable accommodation

In Touch

The DfE SSD903 return currently gathers 'in touch' information for all care leavers aged 19/20 and 21 years. For this return the definition is that there is 'contact'

between your local authority and the young person eligible for care leaver support around 3 months before and one month after the young person's birthday.

In the SSD903 return for 2014/15 we reported that the % of care leavers aged 19/20/and 21 and 'in touch' was 77%. There has been some improvement in our contact with this cohort July data showing a figure of 85% (69/81 young people).

In terms of our whole care leaver cohort the July data indicates that we are currently 'in touch' with 125 out of 140 young people (89%). Of the remaining 15 young people 1 has advised us that they do not require us to provide a service to them and 14 are refusing contact

In addition to this performance measure the 'Care Leaver Regulations' set out that the practitioner must visit the care leavers at no less than 2 monthly intervals. Due to the current reporting limitations of the CSC information system (Carefirst) we are not able to provide a report detailing the regularity of care leaver visits undertaken by the 14+ Team. In order to ensure worker and management oversight of the scheduling of visits each individual practitioner maintains a tracking sheet which is reviewed on a monthly basis.

NEET/ETE

The number of care leavers who are not engaged in education employment or training has become an area of focus for us as we have seen a year on year decline in performance in this area. As part of the Care Leaver Task Force we have reviewed the intervention resource in this area and have now agreed that we will recruit to an ETE worker to be based in the Virtual School to work solely with the care leaver cohort. In the interim period the 2 students based in the 14+ Team have undertaken a piece of work with the Virtual School start to address this issue.
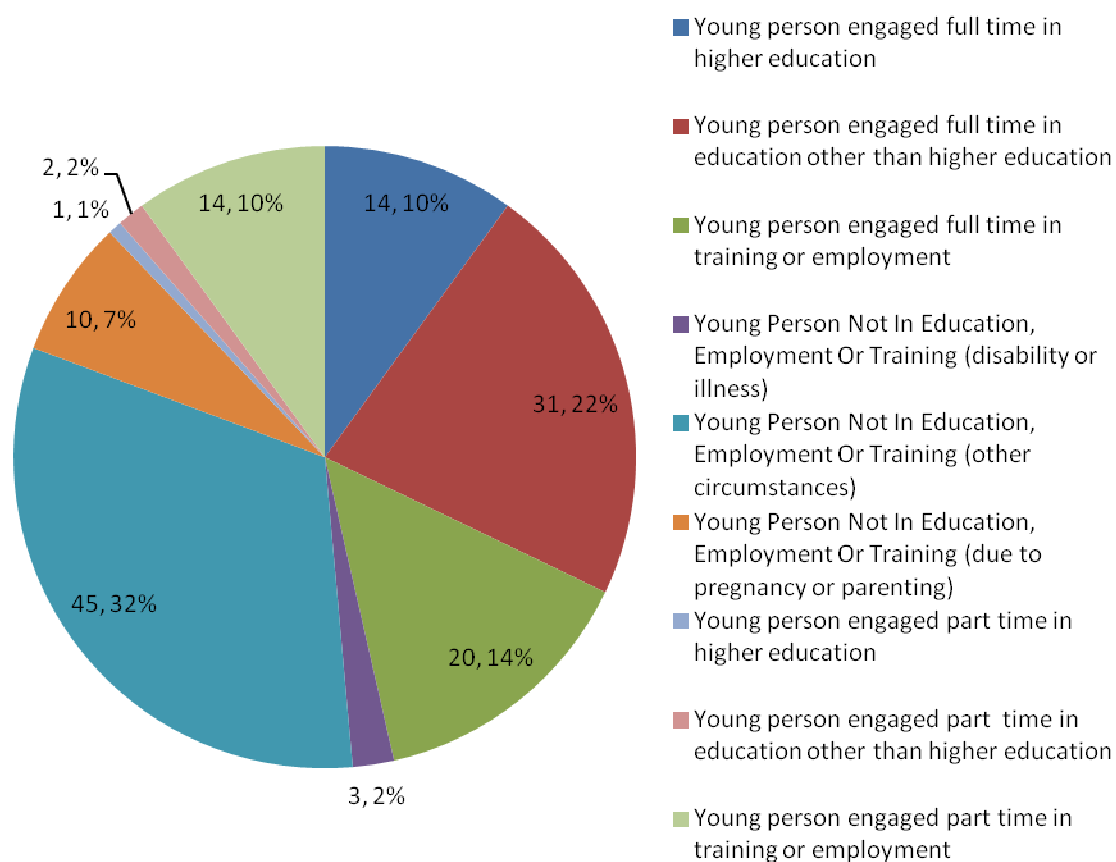
In the SSD903 return for 2014/15 we reported that the % of care leavers aged 19/20/and 21 who were in education, employment and training was 41%. There has been some improvement in the activity data for this cohort with the July figure showing 49% (40/81) young people in ETE.

In terms of our whole care leaver cohort the July data indicates that 82 out of 140 young people (59%) are currently engaged in employment education and training.

The following table sets out the type of ETE activity that the young people are engaged in.

Table 11 – NEET/ETE Activity

NEET/ETE Activity

Pie chart legend:
- Young person engaged full time in higher education
- Young person engaged full time in education other than higher education
- Young person engaged full time in training or employment
- Young Person Not In Education, Employment Or Training (disability or illness)
- Young Person Not In Education, Employment Or Training (other circumstances)
- Young Person Not In Education, Employment Or Training (due to pregnancy or parenting)
- Young person engaged part time in higher education
- Young person engaged part time in education other than higher education
- Young person engaged part time in training or employment

Pie chart values: 14, 10%; 31, 22%; 20, 14%; 3, 2%; 45, 32%; 10, 7%; 1, 1%; 2, 2%; 14, 10%

Accommodation

The legal framework for care leavers aims to make sure that they receive the right support and services in their transition to adulthood, including access to accommodation. General homelessness legislation also provides a safety net for young care leavers experiencing homelessness.

The legislation most relevant to care leavers' accommodation needs is the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which imposes accommodation duties on local authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers.

Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people.

In the SSD903 return for 2014/15 we reported that the % of care leavers aged 19/20/and 21 living in suitable accommodation was 76.3% and for this cohort there has been little change with the July data 76.5% (62/81 young people).

In terms of our whole care leaver cohort, the % currently living in appropriate accommodation is 82%. Table 12 sets out some context for the unsuitable accommodation cases.

Table 12 – Suitable Accommodation July 2015

Type of accommodation	Number	Context
Suitable	115	Placements include independent housing, semi independence, supported lodgings, staying put and living with parents
Unsuitable – No in touch	15	We have no up to date information
Unsuitable – No fixed abode	2	Currently staying with friends and being supported to make housing applications in their local areas.
Unsuitable – Accommodation not seen	3	Asylum young people who are still in contact with their social worker but we are not aware of their current location
Unsuitable - Custody	2	Custody can never be considered appropriate
Unsuitable – Other accommodation	3	These young people are living with friends and are not/cannot pursue their own accommodation

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LAC & Care Leaver Participation
End of year review 2014/15

London Borough of Merton

Issue Date	Author	Date Of the Next Review	Lead officer
September 2015	Sarah Daly	September 2016	Paul Angeli

Content

1. Context

1.1   We have the highest ambitions for our Looked after Children and Care Leavers, and we judge our success by a range of criteria including being able to demonstrate that the voices of those children and young people are listened to, and have informed and improved our service offer.

1.2   In 2014 Merton's Children's Trust launched a User Voice Strategy to further implement one of the eight core values of the Children and Young People's Plan, which highlights the importance we give to listening and responding to our children, young people and service users. *"**We listen, respond to and value our children and young people.** Children and young people have rights to participate in decisions affecting their lives and participation provides opportunities for them to develop important life skills. Services should not only listen but should help children and young people shape services they receive. We should also canvas and respond to the views of parents and carers".*

1.3   Our ambitions are in line with and underpinned by key legislation, policy and regular guidance. The **Children Act 1989 and 2004** for England and Wales recognises children as citizens with the right to be heard. The Act made it a legal requirement for the views of children to be taken into account in any court decisions affecting them. The Children Act 2004 (section 53) amends sections 17, 20 and 47 of the Children Act 1989. It requires that when working with children in need, their wishes and feelings should be ascertained and used to inform making decisions. **Working Together 2015** states that one of the key principles for effective safeguarding arrangements in a local area is to take a child centred approach: 'for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children'. In addition the document is clear that assessing need and providing help should focus on 'the needs *and views* of the child'. **Ofsted Joining the dots (March 2015)** highlighted that 'Senior leaders in [Good and Outstanding] authorities sought feedback from a variety of sources including children and families, staff and partners. Leaders in these authorities kept a relentless focus on demonstrating how they were improving outcomes for all the children who received the services. They saw gathering feedback as a crucial element in driving forward such improvements.

1.4   Children and young people in local authority care are greatly affected by the policies and decisions of the local authority as their 'corporate parent'   Being able to influence those decisions is a fundamental right. Enabling young people in care to work together to create change for themselves and their peers is a crucial role for local authorities. Participation for children and young people in care can range from having a say over their individual circumstances and being able to express one-off views about the quality of provision (for example through complaints and comments procedures).

1.5   Our User Voice Strategy provides a framework by which we capture and monitor feedback to influence service design, delivery and continuous improvement. The Children, Schools and Families Department deliver this through an annual programme of user voice activity embedded within our service planning process. This report summarises some of our key successes in including children and young people's

voices in our daily practice and service improvements and how we have delivered our five User Voice Strategy commitments during 2014/15.

1.6 A central component of Merton's User Voice Strategy is a commitment to encouraging and supporting Looked After Children to give us feedback and to ensure that their views are key to informing decisions about care planning as well as informing wider service planning and delivery.

1.7 We listens to the views of children and young people, carers, parents and other service users through four key avenues. These are:

- An approach expected of all practitioners and managers which puts children's wishes and feelings at the centre of decision making and planning
- Merton's youth participation promise
- Targeted user feedback
- Complaints and compliments

2. The LAC Participation Team

2.1 Staffing in the team is as follows:
- Participation Officer – 1fte
- Apprentice Participation Officer - 2fte

2.2 The role played by the Participation Officer has been key in supporting the work of the Child in Care Council, improving the engagement of young people in their reviews and developing opportunities to ensure that young people's voices are heard through the Corporate Parenting Board. Successes to date include the development of young people's chairing of their own reviews, the re launch of the Care Leaver's Pledge and key improvements in the work of the CICC. The CICC's success has been in its capacity to engage the older young people who are in or who have left care.

2.3 In 2014/15 we undertook a review of the role of the Participation Officer and the resulting consultation concluded that children and young people's participation is a priority for the London Borough Merton. As a result we have expanded the role of the worker to encompass a broader range of participation activity including working with children who are subject to child protection plans and those 'in need'.

3. Action Plan Activity

Activity 1: Develop links between the Child in Care Council and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Board

3.1 In 2014-15 discussions were started with the interim LSCB Board Manager to agree how best to ensure that the Child in Care Council have a voice on the safeguarding board and ensure that a two way communication is promoted between the board and the council.

3.2 The apprentice will ensure that the voice of the child is considered in all discussion. They will be able to ensure that local and national issues are fed into both the work being done by the participation team and into the CICC.

3.3   This piece of work is being taken forward in 2015-16 and a meeting is planned with the Independent Chair of the LSCB on 8 September.

Activity 2: Develop a website for the Child in Care Council

3.4   We aim to launch a new Merton Website for LAC which will utilise up-to-date technology and be a hub for children and young people's interactions. Young people will be able to access it whilst being on the move via their smart phones and tablets.

3.5   Young people will be able to access information, join debates, and fill in questionnaires all from the palm of their hand whether Merton offices are open or not. The website must be kept up to date with Apps, features, and information if it is to be a success with young people, this website could possibly be the main way young people living away from Merton keep in touch with the service due to their living distance from Merton.

3.6   The specification for the website has been developed and signed of by the Corporate Technical Design Authority. As part of the specification process we held a themed Child in Care Council Meeting which enabled young people to participate in a workshop focusing on the design and functionality of the website. We are now awaiting the proposal from the commissioned company and hope to be able to progress the build in the coming months.

3.7   In the interim period prior to the implementation of the website we have agreed that the Participation Apprentice will set up a webpage on the council website that will have information for our looked after children and care leavers.

Activity 3: Develop leaflet and information pack for children and young people in care

3.8   We have developed a LAC Pack for all children and young people who are accommodated by the local authority. The pack contains introductory information on various aspects of being looked after including health, education, advocacy and complaints.

3.9   This resource pack was developed by the apprentices working in the participation service. This initial pack was prepared with older young people in mind and for the 2015-16 plan we will be looking at developing information for our younger looked after children.

Activity 4: Voice of the child in foster care

3.10   The Fostering Team worked with young people from the Child in Care Council to produce the 'Let's Talk' document. The document supports the recording of a monthly discussion between the foster carer and the child in placement. Subjects covered in the discussion relate to the child's awareness of their care plan, how they feel about the placement and how things are in terms of school.

3.11   Information from the Let's Talk discussions are shared with the child's social worker to ensure that areas for further discussion and exploration are taken forward.

3.12 From the "Let's Talk" forms recently reviewed all the young people said that they enjoyed the leisure activities afforded them in their placements, (one young person was going to watch his favourite team Manchester United play at White Hart Lane). One young girl enjoys singing, writing songs and drama but she is not happy with the number of social workers she has had since being accommodated. She told her carer that she "misses her home which she can't wait to go back to". This sentiment was shared by another young person who said that it was "sad as it is planned that I will stay in care long term, but I have to accept it and wait until I can go home" All the forms sampled showed that the children and young people were in full time education and had good friendship groups at school/college.

Activity 5: Young people involved in foster carer training

3.13 In 2014-15 we developed a session within the Foster Carer Preparation Training to involve young people from the Child in Care Council. A young person-led Saturday morning session focusing on the fostering experience from the perspective of the young person is now a regular part of this training. This has also been invaluable in providing live evidence of prospective foster carer interaction with young people. As part of this process, the young people also provided written feedback of their impressions of the applicants.

3.14 We have also developed a course 'Welcoming the child into your home'. As part of this course, a member of the Children in Care Council spoke about what was beneficial from a young person's point of view, in terms of the foster carer helping them to settle into the foster home. This was well received by the foster carers who attended the course.

3.15 Feedback from potential/ current foster carers suggested that the training increased their understanding of the needs and experiences of looked after children; the aim is that this will have a positive impact on their practice:

- 'I have learnt about how to welcome a child. Let the child know you are there for him'

- 'Listening to the young people who experienced foster caring was very useful, as hearing their stories and what went wrong and right in their placements made me think of ideas on how to use my skills in working with young people'

- 'The best information was from the young girl called Michelle, who spoke very confidently to the class, and made the class aware of children in care from the child side. It was very informative to me when she said that children need to join in decisions about rules in the house'

Activity 6: Voice of the Care Leaver – annual survey

3.16 We ran the care leaver survey in September 2014 and the findings were shared with the Child in Care Council members in January 2015. The recommendations from the survey were as follows:

- Ensure all workers are aware of the 'Skills support for Care Leavers' and are utilising this to support care leavers to understand further education options and the range of supports available.
- We will undertake an annual review of the Setting Up Home Allowance with our Child in Care Council

- We will undertake an annual review of the Financial Provision document.
- Develop a housing pathways/options guidance
- Run a housing themed Child in Care Council meeting on an annual basis
- Run the Care Leaver Survey on an annual basis and consider the results at the Child in Care Council

3.17 Since the survey was completed we have held a themed Child in Care Council meeting with a focus on housing issues and queries. We have reviewed the financial provision guidance for care leavers and involved the members of the council in this review (this work also included a review of the Setting Up Home Allowance). We are currently reviewing the Care Leaver Survey and will aim to run this in October 2015. In September 2015 we will be seeking to recruit an ETE worker to be based in the Virtual School to work specifically with our Care Leaver cohort. Part of this role will include awareness building in respect of national initiatives such as the 'Skills support for Care Leavers'.

Activity 7: Review the Child in Care and Care Leaver Pledge, and develop the Care Leaver Strategy

3.18 In August 2014 an event was held to review the LAC and Care Leaver Pledge. The event was well attended by our young people and was supported by the DCS and Cllr Maxi Martin (Lead Member for CSF). During the event activities were carried out to support young people to review and amend the detail of the pledge which was then formally signed off by the DCS and Lead Member with key members of the Child in Care Council.

Activity 8: Supporting young people to make complaints and give feedback

3.19 All children and young people entering care are given a 'Have your say' leaflet in their LAC Pack that advises them how to make a complaint, compliment or comment. All looked after children are also given information about the local advocacy service.

3.20 The issues that have been raised by young people are set out in Section 5.

3.21 Following feedback from our Child in Care Council abut a reluctance to give formal feedback we set up informal drop in sessions one evening a month at a local coffee shop. These sessions offer our young people a time to socialise and meet up with other LAC and care leavers. The meetings are attended by managers, social workers and benefits maximisation officers and offer young people the opportunity to discuss issues or seek advice.

Activity 9: Support participation in LAC reviews

3.22 The involvement of children and young people in LAC reviews must take into account the range of age, ability and communication requirements of the individual child, and ensuring the participation of all children in their LAC reviews should be a priority for social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's).

3.23 Participation of the child/young person at LAC Reviews will usually mean physical attendance at meetings but it is not limited to this. For some children attending meetings may be extremely stressful, and for some they are considered boring (as reported by one member of the CICC). There are many other ways a child can be

encouraged to express their wishes and feelings to the review meeting, from briefing others such as their advocates or through the use of artwork.

3.24   In 2014-15 the LAC Participation Team worked on a project to support children and young people to chair their LAC reviews. A leaflet was developed for the LAC pack to explain to children about their LAC reviews and about what it means to chair/co-chair your LAC review.

3.25   Participation in LAC reviews continues to be an area of focus for Children's Social Care. The Service Manager for LAC has developed an action plan to seek to support improvement in this area (we have already seen an improvement with Q1 data indicating that 86.4% participated in their LAC review, compared to 65.7% end of year 2014/15). One of the longer term activities within the plan is also featured in the LAC & Care Leavers Participation Plan 2015/16 and relates to an ongoing project to gather the views of young people about their experiences of LAC reviews. This will then feed into service development work to ensure that LAC review meetings and the consultation processes are more child friendly.

4. Child in Care Council

4.1   The role of the Merton Child in Care Council is as follows:

- Provide a voice for the wider population of children looked after and care leavers
- Help to monitor and implement the Merton Pledge
- Bring together service users and senior managers to influence positive change
- Develops skills and confidence building

4.2   The Child in Care Council meets at the Civic Centre on a monthly basis and there is an established core membership of 8 young people. This year in response to the feedback received from the care leaver survey we have held themed meetings on housing, health, e-safety and the Child in Care website. We extend the membership to themed meetings to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to participate.

4.3   We have also used the Child in Care Council meetings to consult on the following developments within the service:

- Staying Put
- Financial Provision for Care Leavers
- LAC Health Needs Assessment

5. Advocacy Service

5.1   We currently commission an independent advocacy service from Jigsaw 4U to provide support to Looked After Children to ensure that their voice is heard and is central to decisions made about their care, since 2013 this has been delivered as an opt out service. We receive feedback from the advocacy service when there are specific issues or areas that need addressing. Examples of specific issues raised are:

- A young person experiencing a number of changes of social worker
- A young person raising some issues in respect of his placement (not safeguarding)
- A child raising questions about the contact that she has with other family members

5.2   Where issues are raised by individual children the advocate will liaise with the relevant social work team to seek resolution.

6. Celebrating Success

6.1   There are 2 events held during the calendar year to celebrate the success of the children and young people in our care. In August 2014 we had a BBQ for our 14+ LAC and Care Leavers and in February 2015 we held a science themed event for our 5-14 year olds. These events are well attended by our looked after children, care leavers and their carers and give everyone the opportunity to recognise the achievements of the previous year.

6.2   In March we had an event to support positive engagement in leisure activities which took place at the Wimbledon Park Watersports Centre where young people had the opportunity to take part in a number of outdoor activities including kayaking and archery.

7. Action Plan

7.1   Our participation work is tracked through an annual plan that is reviewed on a quarterly basis. The plan for 2014-15 is attached as appendix a and has been rag rated to indicate the progress made. The plan for 2015-16 is attached as appendix b.

LAC & Care Leavers Participation Plan 2014/15

Action/Activity	Lead Officer	Timescale	Impact	RAG
Develop links between the Child in Care Council and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Board: One of the Participation Apprentices has been identified to attend the MSCB and ensure the voice of the child in care council at the board. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Junior Nelson/Sarah Daly	April 2014 Ongoing	The Child in Care Council will have a voice on the safeguarding board and will ensure that a two way communication is promoted between the board and the council. The apprentice will ensure that the voice of the child is considered in all discussion. They will be able to ensure that local and national issues are fed into both the work being done by the participation team and into the CICC. LAC young people will play a role in the MSCB annual conference.	
Develop a website for the Child in Care Council: The Participation Officers and Service Support Manager are currently working through the procurement process for the new CICC website. Good practice examples have been used to inform the specification of the website. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Junior Nelson/Lisa Richardson	November 2014	All looked after children will have access to the Child in Care Council website. The website will ensure that looked after children have up to date information on all aspects of being looked after. The website will enable us to advertise events and CICC meetings and support participation through blogs and surveys. We are hoping that we will be able to engage a care leaver apprentice to support the development and maintenance of the website.	
Develop leaflet and	Junior Nelson	July 2014	All looked after children will receive an information pack when they are	

information pack for children and young people in care: The Participation officers have been working on an information pack containing leaflets on a variety of subjects including LAC Health, Virtual School, IRO's and the Advocacy Project. Further work is being done to review the independence guides that are provided to young people aged 16+. A further resource pack will be developed for younger children. **(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)**			accommodated (carers will also be provided with a pack). This will contain useful information on a variety of areas including health, education, complaints and what it means to be looked after.	
Voice of the child in foster care: A template is developed to ensure that a monthly conversation between the carer and the child is formally recorded	Sadi Atim/Sarah Daly	August 2014	Foster carers are prompted to hold regular discussions with children and young people about key areas of their lives (including health, education and their care plan). The information from these reports is reviewed by the Supervising Social Worker and shared with the child's social worker. This will support early identification of issues.	
Voice of the Care Leaver – annual survey: A survey document has been prepared and will be circulated to care leavers	Junior Nelson/Stuart Barker	November 2014	Care leavers will be asked to complete an annual survey to feedback on their experiences with a focus on accommodation, ETE, health and social work support. The messages from this survey will inform service development.	

over the summer. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**				
Review the Child in Care and Care Leaver Pledge and Charter and develop the Care Leaver Strategy: Consultation has taken place with the CICC and the Merton Pledge will be re-launched in August 2014. A Task and Finish Group has been established to develop Merton's Staying Put Policy which will be a key component of the Care Leaver Strategy. **(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)**	Junior Nelson/Stuart Barker/Sarah Daly	October 2014	Care leavers will have a good understanding of their entitlements and will have had input into the development of a local pledge. Merton will have a policy in place that sets out the services and practice standards that will meet the needs of our young people and support their transition into adulthood. A launch event will ensure that all young people are aware of the pledge and to ensure that it is a live document the pledge will be considered at all Care Plan/Pathway Plan review meetings. All social work practitioners will be asked to sign the pledge.	
Young people involved in foster carer training: Care leavers are now supporting one of the preparation groups run for prospective foster carers and feedback from these sessions has been positive. Several care leavers have also attended a meeting with the local foster care	Junior Nelson/Steve Butcher	April 2014	Prospective foster carers will meet members of the child in care council as part of the preparatory training that they undertake. It is hoped that this will support their understanding of the needs and the stories of the young people who they will be caring for. It is also hoped that some foster carers may then make the decision to extend their age category to care for teenagers. It is hoped that we will be able to expand this offer so that our looked after young people are supporting more of our core training.	

association to discuss participation and the experience of the young person in care. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**				
Supporting young people to make complaints and give feedback: Re-launch of the complaints process through distribution of leaflets and awareness building in respect of the advocacy project run by Jigsaw4U. Regular 'drop in' sessions for young people will be held to support them to meet social care managers and other partners/agencies who can offer support and advice. To support the initial set up of these meetings social workers will be asked to accompany at least one of their young people to these events. All LAC young people presenting at the Civic Offices will be asked to complete a short feedback	Junior Nelson/Stuart Barker	July 2014	The anticipated outcome is that Looked after young people are supported to make complaints and raise issues about all aspects of their lives. Young people will have an improved understanding of the services available to them and have the opportunity to discuss issues in an informal setting.	

form. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**				
Support participation in LAC reviews: Fully embed the project to support young people to chair their own LAC reviews through the distribution of leaflets and awareness building regarding this opportunity. In July all looked after children aged 12+ will receive information on chairing their LAC review. Social workers and IRO's will be asked to discuss will all children whether they wish to be involved in the chairing of their reviews. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Junior Nelson	On-going	All young people aged 12+ will be offered the opportunity to chair their LAC reviews, the anticipated outcome is that young people are chairing meetings and are fully involved in the reviewing of their care plans. Young people will have a better understanding of the review process and more of a voice in the process. Their participation will support them to 'own' their care plan.	

LAC & Care Leavers Participation Plan 2015/16

Action/Activity	Lead Officer	Timescale	Impact
Develop links between the Child in Care Council and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Board: The Participation Apprentice will have a formal link to the MSCB and ensure the voice of the child in care council at the board. The Chair of the MSCB will meet with a group of young people on a 6 monthly basis. An initial meeting will be set up between the participation apprentice and the MSCB chair in September 2015 **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	August 2015 ongoing	The Child in Care Council will have a voice on the safeguarding board and will ensure that a two way communication is promoted between the board and the council. The participation apprentice will ensure that the voice of the child is heard and responded to. They will be able to ensure that local and national issues are fed into both the work being done by the participation team and into the CICC. Care Leavers and LAC young people will play a role in the MSCB annual conference.
Participate in the 'Help keep us safe' project: The participation apprentice will be invited to participate in and support the project being run by Southbank University **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/Paul Bailey	Ongoing from September 2015	Loui will be involved in the project to ensure that the voice of the care leaver and looked after child is represented.
Develop a website for the Child in Care Council: The specification has been written and agreed by the Technical Design Authority (TDA). A session has been held with the CICC to get ideas for	Loui Garrett/Lisa Richardson/Sarah Daly	April 2015 ongoing	All care leavers and looked after children will have access to the Child in Care Council website. The website will ensure that care leavers and looked after children have up to date information on all aspects of being looked after. The website will enable us to advertise events and CICC meetings and support participation through blogs and surveys. We are hoping that we will be able to engage a care leaver apprentice to

look, feel and functionality. In the interim develop a web page for the CICC (LG to go on training). **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**			support the development and maintenance of the website.
Develop leaflet and information pack for children and young people in care: The LAC Pack is in place and shared with all newly accommodated children. We will now look to develop a pack for our younger LAC. **(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	Ongoing	All looked after children will receive an information pack when they are accommodated (carers will also be provided with a pack). This will contain useful information on a variety of areas including health, education, complaints and what it means to be looked after.
Voice of the child in foster care: Attend a fostering association meeting to ask foster carers about their views on this and the Let's Talk leaflet **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/Sadi Atim/Sarah Daly	October 2015	Foster carers are prompted to hold regular discussions with children and young people about key areas of their lives (including health, education and their care plan). The information from these reports is reviewed by the Supervising Social Worker and shared with the child's social worker. This will support early identification of issues.
Voice of the Care Leaver – annual survey: A survey document has been prepared and will be circulated to care leavers in October. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	October 2015	Care leavers will be asked to complete an annual survey to feedback on their experiences with a focus on accommodation, ETE, health and social work support. The messages from this survey will inform service development.
Review the Child in Care and Care Leaver Pledge and Charter and develop the Care Leaver Strategy:	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	Q4 2016	Care leavers will have a good understanding of their entitlements and will have had input into the development of a local pledge. Merton will have a policy in place that sets out the services and practice

Consideration to be given as to how best to review the pledge and to ensure that all LAC and Care Leavers are aware of the promise made by the LBM. **(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)**			standards that will meet the needs of our young people and support their transition into adulthood. A launch event will ensure that all young people are aware of the pledge and to ensure that it is a live document the pledge will be considered at all Care Plan/Pathway Plan review meetings. All social work practitioners will be asked to sign the pledge.
Young people involved in foster carer training: Care leavers are now supporting one of the preparation groups run for prospective foster carers and feedback from these sessions has been positive. Several care leavers have also attended a meeting with the local foster care association to discuss participation and the experience of the young person in care. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/ Steve Butcher	Ongoing	Prospective foster carers will meet members of the child in care council as part of the preparatory training that they undertake. It is hoped that this will support their understanding of the needs and the stories of the young people who they will be caring for. It is also hoped that some foster carers may then make the decision to extend their age category to care for teenagers. It is hoped that we will be able to expand this offer so that our looked after young people are supporting more of our core training.
Supporting young people to make complaints and give feedback: Consider this as a themed event at the CICC and invite Jigsaw 4 u to attend. Ensure that we are learning from the issues being raised through the advocacy service. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	October 2015	The anticipated outcome is that care leavers and looked after young people are supported to make complaints and raise issues about all aspects of their lives. Young people will have an improved understanding of the services available to them and have the opportunity to discuss issues in an informal setting.

Support participation in LAC reviews: Children and young people are involved in a project to ensure that LAC reviews are child centred. There will be a themed CICC event in September and an event for our younger LAC in October to support children and young people to influence the local development of child centred LAC reviews. Training will be run for foster carers to enable them to prepare children and young people for their LAC review. Training will be run for children and young people in chairing their LAC reviews. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/Judy Walsh/Sarah Daly	Q2-4 2015-16	Children and young people will have a better understanding of the review process and more of a voice in the process. Their participation will support them to 'own' their care plan and express their views. Children and young people will have been proactively involved in the consultation process and will influence the development of local practice in respect of the LAC review process.
Hold Celebration Events for the 14+ Team and younger LAC: The annual event is held in the summer. SW's provide statements for all young people recognising their achievements. All children and young people are presented with a certificate. **(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)**	Loui Garrett/Tayo Phillips (14+) Loui Garrett/ Aneesa Kaprie	August 2015 (14+) February 2016	All children and young people receive recognition for a personal achievement.

Participation Events 0-6 & 7-13: Specific events are arranged to support the participation of the younger looked after children. Consider whether this is run as a separate part of the CICC with older members supporting events **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garret/SW/ Aneesa Kaprie	½ termly	The views of younger looked after children are sought and influence practice and service development.
Social Work/Child/Young person Survey: A questionnaire is developed asking social workers and young people a series of questions about imagining going into a foster placement/how it felt going into placement. This information should feed into a training event supporting social workers to better understand the experiences of our children and young people. **(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly/ Paul Lawrence	Q3& 4 2015-16	Social workers are encouraged to better understand the experiences of the children and young people who are placed in care. This will support reflective practice. Young people will have the opportunity to share their experiences with practitioners and support practice development. This training will be an extension to the training provided to our in house foster carers 'welcoming a child into your home', which has been well received by our carers and by the young people involved.
LAC Health Study: A questionnaire is circulated to our LAC and Care Leavers asking them about their experiences of LAC health services. A report will then be prepared to feed into the LAC health needs assessment. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Rebecca Devine	August 2015	We have an understanding of the experiences and views of our young people and this informs service development.

Young person on the fostering and adoption panel: The participation apprentice is a member of the panel **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/Eva Lindsay	September 2015	The apprentice will consider applications along with other panel members and work to ensure that the issues that are important to young people are taken into account within the approval process.
CICC – Functionality and membership: Revisit the allocation of roles and responsibilities, agree a chairperson. Links with partners/corporate parents are revisited and formalised **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	October 2015	The CICC members have roles allocated to them and are supported to develop links to officers in the council. The feedback loop to the CICC is improved and there is a greater understanding of the role of the corporate parent in the council.
Child in Care Council present to the Corporate Parenting Board: Participation apprentice to work with the CICC to prepare a presentation for the Corporate Parenting Board **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	CICC/Sarah Daly	March 2016	The CICC are participating in the Corporate Parenting Board and present key issues and challenges to the board.
Communication with children and young people Develop a newsletter and calendar of events **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	October 2015 and ongoing	There is clear communication to all looked after children about the events and activities that are going on. All LAC, Care Leavers and carers are aware of planned events and activities. The newsletter will also be an opportunity to celebrate the events that have taken place.
Young people are involved in the interview process Training is delivered to support young people to understand the interview process.	Rebecca Devine/ Dee Elliot	Ongoing Training in August 2015	Young people are involved in all panels (either by joining with the formal interview process or with separate interview panels). They are involved in the decision making around the appointment process.

Young people are involved in the interview process for all social work and management roles in CSC. **(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)**			

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Committee: Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 21 October 2015

Subject: Annual report of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) 2014/15

Lead officer: Keith Makin, Chair of the MSCB

Lead member: Cllr Maxi Martin

Contact officer: Paul Bailey, Business Manager

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel discuss and comment on the content of the MSCB annual report

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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. For Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel to have sight of the MSCB annual report

2 DETAILS

2.1. It is a statutory requirement for all Safeguarding Children Boards to produce an annual report each calendar year. This report details the progress the MSCB is making on delivering its Working Together 2015 and other statutory duties.

3 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

3.1. Information on the SCB budget is included in the annual report.

4 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

4.1. SCBs must have an Independent Chair and must produce an annual report.

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

Appendix 1 - MSCB annual report 2014/15

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1. None applicable

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Annual report of the

Merton Safeguarding Children Board

2014/15

Date of publication: September 2015

www.merton.gov.uk/lscb

Lead: Keith Makin, Independent Chair, MSCB

Contact: Business Manager

Contents

1.0 Chair's Introduction

It has been over a year since my appointment as the Independent Chair. The decision was taken by the Board to delay the publication of the report for 2013-2014 in order to enable me to review with the Board its effectiveness and to develop, agree and implement changes to the constitution. This report will overlap, in part, with the MSCB Annual Report for 2013-2014.

There remains much to do and there are many challenges ahead, including the challenge of delivering high quality services within the context of reduced resources, however, this report demonstrates how much can be achieved when we work together, both as individual agencies and in partnership. The report shows that the work that has been done in revising the constitution of the Board and having a more robust and rigorous focus on quality assurance is improving the way that the young and children are protected and their well-being is safeguarded.

A highlight of 2014-2015 was The Joint MSCB/Children's Social Care/Children Schools and Families Conference held on the 5th March 2015, which had a focus on hearing the voices of children and young people. The theme for the Conference was '*W T F*' – *Working the Frontline* and the event focused on enhancing children and young people's participation. The event featured delightful presentations from children and young people from Merton primary and secondary schools and was chaired by representatives of Merton's Youth Parliament. This event was attended by 120 practitioners and managers from a range of multi-agency settings and was rated as very good.

In November 2014, the MSCB and Children's Trust also undertook a self evaluation of our work using the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework. We noted the Board strengths as:

- Senior representation and engagement from agencies
- A Lay member and a Young Member linking with the Children in Care Council
- A strong performance focus including the annual QA process
- Financial contributions from all relevant partners
- Annual conference and comprehensive training programme.

Our agreed areas of focus included:

- Building on the annual QA meetings and multi-agency auditing to further strengthen peer challenge;
- Implementing new sub Board structures[1] with a stronger QA Sub-Group;
- Reviewing our Board infrastructure to support the Board's extended role under Working Together 2013;
- Ensuring we maintain our focus on the voice of the child;
- Learning the lessons of SCRs nationally and from our local SCR and any learning reviews;
- Strengthening our links with the adult safeguarding Board; and
- Ensuring we are sighted on the issues for looked after children placed in our boroughs by others as well as maintaining our focus on Merton LAC.

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[1] See Appendix 3: MSCB Structure

The national attention on safeguarding issues has continued throughout the year with the publication of the Rotherham Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and heightened awareness of the Prevent agenda with young people being groomed to participate in wars overseas and terrorist activities at home. Towards the end of this reporting period, in March 2015, the MSCB appointed a new permanent Business Manager.

The focus of MSCB was to continue to drive through and embed the changes made as a result of the revised constitution and ensuring that the Board is able to maximise its impact. The questions that the Board is continuously seeking to answer are:

- Is there evidence that the right standards, policies, guidance, procedures, protocols are in place?
- Is there good evidence that these are being implemented and applied consistently?
- What impact/difference does this make in keeping Merton children and young people safe from harm and ensuring that their well-being is supported?

This report shows how the work we are doing as the MSCB seeks to answer these questions.

I would like to close by thanking all Merton SCB agencies for their hard work and continued commitment to making a difference for Merton's children, young people and their families.

Keith Makin

MSCB Chair

July 2015

2.0 Progress of MSCB Business Plan 2014 – 15

The MSCB is a statutory body established under Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance in Chapter 3 of Working Together 2015. The Independent Chair of the MSCB is Keith Makin.

The objectives of the Board as defined by statute are:

(a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and

(b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes[2].

The MSCB has a well established Business planning process, with the Business Plan receiving regular scrutiny at each meeting of the Board's Business Implementation Group. The last update received by the Board at its annual Away Day in March 2015 is attached as an appendix.

Key areas of focus in the plan over the period of this report have been:

- quality assurance and challenge to improve direct safeguarding with children, young people and their parents in all local agencies,
- engaging with and listening to children and young people,
- continuous learning and feedback,
- better understanding of our local needs, including children with particular vulnerabilities[3], with particular emphasis on child sexual exploitation (CSE emphasis added Nov 2014)
- greater involvement of schools and early years services as places where children and young people are best safeguarded,
- increasing understanding about chronic neglect and working to safeguard children who are particularly vulnerable; and
- better communication to the local community and to practitioners about safeguarding.

3.0 Key Achievements and Challenges for the MSCB 2014 – 15

The key achievements of the Board during this period are detailed as follows:

3.1.1 Appointment of a Permanent Board Manager.

The Board was able to appoint a new permanent Business Manager who started in on 2nd March 2015. The Board also ensured that there was an effective handover process in order to secure a robust induction and transition process.

3.1.2 Learning and Improvement.

The Board has sought to embed and disseminate learning from Serious Case Reviews and Learning and Improvement Reviews (LIRs), by conducting regular briefings and learning

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[2] Children Act 2004 Section 14
[3] *e.g. domestic violence, sexual exploitation, parental mental ill-health, neglect, alcohol and substance misuse, abusive cultural practices,*

events. These are aimed at keeping frontline staff and their managers informed on recent developments in relevant safeguarding topics (national and local policies, research, etc.), feedback from local learning (including audits and case reviews) as well as maintaining an open dialogue between practitioners and the Board; the Board has held two such events since Autumn 2014. The Board has signed off the Child J LIR with a briefing event delivered to Managers and frontline practitioners across the children's workforce.

3.1.3 The Annual Conference.

The Board held a very successful Joint Annual Conference. The theme for the Conference was '*W T F' – Working the Frontline* and the event focused on enhancing children and young people's participation. The event featured keynote speeches from Professor Jan Horwath and Dr Alan Cooklin as well as delightful presentations from children and young People from Merton primary and secondary schools and was chaired by representatives of Merton's Youth Parliament. The Conference was attended by 120 practitioners and managers from a range of multi-agency settings and was rated as being very good.

3.1.4 Quality Assurance.

The Board has streamlined and embedded its multi-agency quality assurance process and delivered multi-agency audits.

Building on the experience of 2012-2013, the Board has improved the level of rigour in its QA Challenge process and conducted 5 challenge meetings across the MSCB Agency partnerships, to review each agency's compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The Board used this process to hold partners to account regarding their work to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people, including, each agency's self-review of its work to safeguard children during period, April 2013 – March 2014. The Board asked each agency to provide relevant data, demonstrating impact of safeguarding activity from the agency's perspective, asking each agency to demonstrate its learning and improvement with regards to safeguarding (Agency and Multi-Agency Learning and Development; take up of MSCB Training/Briefings). This includes implementing learning from SCRs, LIRs or Sudden Untoward Incidents, agency performance regarding the safeguarding of Care Leavers and Looked After Children (LAC), each agency was asked to provide an update of its work in relation to CSE and its work in relation to implementing statutory and other guidance.

The Board has also revised its Performance Dataset to ensure that our performance data is rich in both content and analysis.

3.1.5 Work on CSE.

In the autumn of 2014, the Board led a multi-agency challenge process to assess local agency understanding of and compliance with the findings of the Rotherham Inquiry. This was peer reviewed by other LSCBs. The MSCB's arrangements were found to be appropriate its CSE action plan was updated to implement the findings of this review. The Board held a National CSE Awareness Day on 18th March 2015. At this event, the Board re-launched its refreshed CSE Strategy, CSE Protocol and CSE Procedure. We have also established CSE champions in schools and Health. The event was attended by 101 participants from a range of agencies and partners including Children's Social Care (CSC), Education, Youth Services, Health, Probation, the Police and a number of Voluntary

Organisations. The event also included the voice of a young person, by means of audio recording, who had experienced CSE; sharing with professionals her experience of the safeguarding process and what she felt would be helpful in supporting young people experiencing CSE. This was very powerful and well-received by participants.

3.1.6 The Business Implementation Group (BIG)

The Board established the BIG Sub-Group. The purpose of the BIG is to coordinate and prioritise key actions, to ensure coverage of the statutory functions of the Board and to monitor the implementation of the Board's Business Plan. The BIG also ensures that there is connectivity across the Sub-Groups and Task and Finish Groups. The BIG held its first meeting in February 2015 and will meet 4 times throughout each MSCB Business Year (March 15 to April 16).

3.1.7 Other Achievements

The Board has also developed the following initiatives, Guidance, Policies, and Protocols:

- Established the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Group in partnership with Merton Safer and Stronger to oversee MARAC and VAWG related activities
- Revised its Constitution including the revision of the terms of reference for all sub-groups
- Re-issued our Information Sharing Protocol
- Revised the Performance Dataset
- Revised the Learning and Improvement Framework
- Re-issued of the Safer Recruitment Strategy
- Revised the Participation Strategy
- Prepared Guidance for working with children and young people who are vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism and prepared advice for parents and carers which is due to be approved by the Board in May 2015.
- The Board developed a Communication Strategy which was approved at its meeting in January 2015 and is being implemented
- The Board appointed a second Lay Member.

3.2 The challenges for the Board

Whilst the Board has made great strides in embedding improvements in its constitution, we are not complacent and we have a number of key challenges; these are described as follows:

3.2.1 Consistency and membership

The Board has generally good membership and attendance, however, the representation of secondary education needs to be strengthened on the Board. The Board has taken action to address this by a adding this to our risk register; the Chair has enlisted the support of the Assistant Director of Education and is arranging a series of meetings with Secondary Head Teachers in order to secure their full commitment and representation on the Board.

3.2.2 Demonstrating Impact by Improving Links with Frontline Practice

The Board is also seeking to demonstrate its impact by improving the inter-face between the Board and frontline practice. The Board is addressing this challenge through events such as the annual conference and termly practitioner briefings, feeding back learning from multi-agency audits; in addition we are improving our communication by reviewing the MSCB Website, contributing to workforce wide publications such as Young Merton and the development of an Escalation Protocol that will enable frontline practitioners to bring cases to the attention of the MSCB for audit.

3.2.3 Strengthening our ability to listen to children and take their views into consideration

The Board is always seeking to strengthen our ability to listen to children and take their views into consideration. The Board has developed a Children and Young People's Participation Strategy in partnership with Children's Schools Families (CSF) Department and the Children's Trust, which is due to be approved by the BIG in May 2015.

The Board has also commissioned research from London South Bank University (LSBU) on the theme Help Keep Us Safe. This is a collaborative, consultative project which is proposed between LSBU and MSCB. The project will consult young people who are at risk and/or have used Merton Safeguarding Services, using questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The data gathered will be used to provide a contemporary knowledge-base of current risk issues in the area and to consider how young people want Merton children's services to work with them to best ensure their on-going safety. The project will also include the participation of young people in the design and analysis of questionnaires.

4.0 Local context and need of the childhood population for Merton

4.1 Merton the place

Merton is an outer London borough situated in south west London, covering 14.7 square miles. Merton has a total population of 200,543 including 47,499 children and young people aged 0-19 (Census 2011). The number of 0-19 year olds is forecast to increase by 3,180 (7%) by 2017, within which we forecast a 20% increase of children aged 5 to 9 (2,270). We have a younger population than the England average and have seen a 39% net increase of births over the last ten years (2,535 births in 2002 rising to 3,521 in 2010). The birth rate reduced in 2012/13 and again slightly in 2013/14 suggesting that the rate is stabilising. However the last ten years alongside other demographic factors has placed additional demand on all children's services.

Predominantly suburban in character, Merton is divided into 20 wards and has three main town centres; Wimbledon, Mitcham and Morden. A characteristic of the borough is the difference between the more deprived east (Mitcham/Morden) and the more affluent west (Wimbledon). There are a number of pockets of deprivation within the borough mainly in the eastern wards and some smaller pockets in the central wards. These wards have multiple deprivation, with high scores on income deprivation, unemployment and limited educational attainment. Merton has 39 Super Output Areas[4] which are amongst the 30% most deprived areas across England for children. This means 45% of Merton school pupils are living in an area of deprivation (30% most deprived, IDACI 2010). Since 2010 we have seen an increase of 31% of children who are eligible for free school meals (2010, 2881 FSM children, 2015, 3796 FSM children).

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[4] Super Output Areas are a geographical are for the collection and publication of small area statistics.

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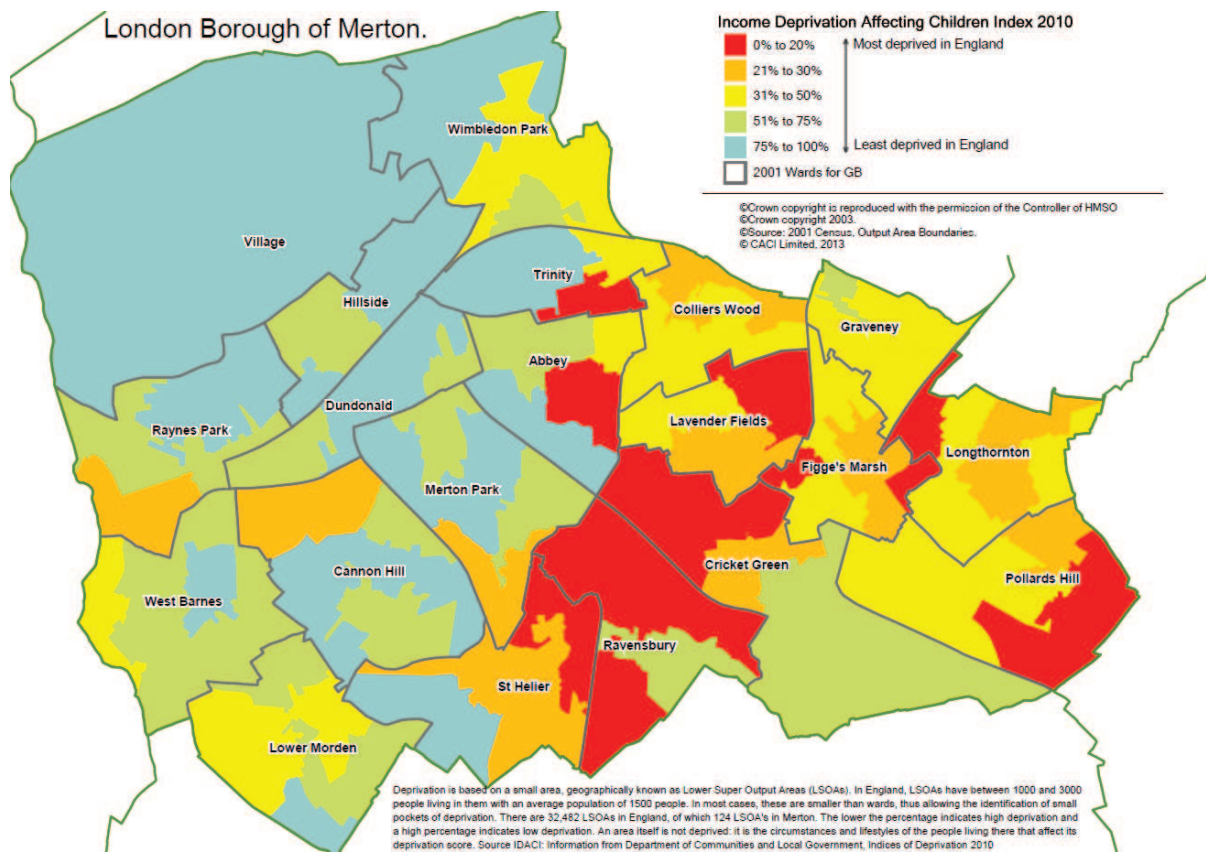
Merton income deprivation affecting children index 2010

Thirty five per cent of Merton's total population is Black, Asian or Minority ethnic (BAME) this is expected to increase further to 39% by 2017. Pupils in Merton schools are more diverse still, with 66% from BAME communities, 42% with a first language which is not English, speaking over 124 languages (2015). The borough has concentrations of Urdu speaking communities, Sri Lankan, South African and Polish residents. The most prominent first languages for pupils apart from English are Tamil 5.7%, Urdu 5.8% and Polish 5.7%.

The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs is also rising, with SEN statements/EHC plans rising from 668 in January 2011 to 880 in January 2015 an increase of 32%).

Number of Statemented pupils 2011 to 2014
(Merton and non Merton residents)
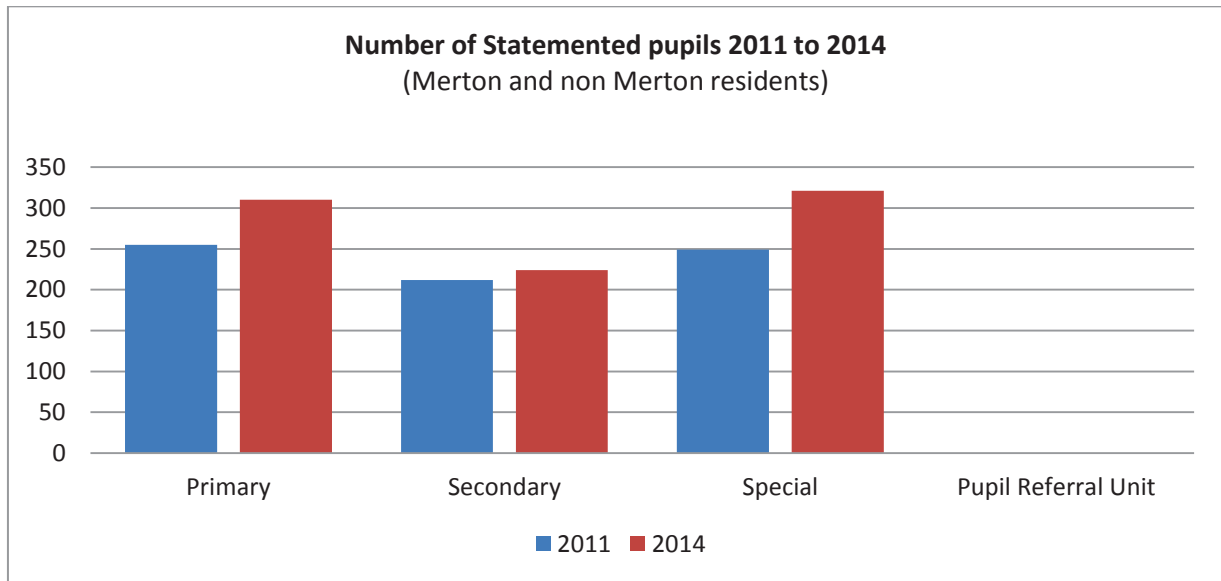
We can also demonstrate a similar rise in pupils with School Action Plus cohorts in primary schools rising from 737 in Jan 2011 to 814 in Jan 2014 (+10%)

4.2 Merton's Children in Need, Children with a Protection Plan and those Looked After

Merton's children in need rate per 10,000 (2014/15, 335.8) is lower than the London average (367) and broadly in line with the National average (346.4), we remain close to our statistical neighbours (2013/14). Our CIN rate has increased over a number of years alongside our population changes from 171.0 in 2008/9, 276.8 in 2009/10, 288.3 in 2010/11, 371.3 in 2011/12, 336.8 in 2012/13 and 355.1 in 2013/14.

Rates of Children subject of a child protection plan in Merton (2014/15, 38.5) are similar to London (37.4) and national (42.1). As at the end of 2014/15 16.4% of children became subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time, this in line with the increasing national benchmark (15.5%) and London (13%) averages (2013/14).

Nationally 4.5% (2013/14) of children were subject of a child protection plan lasting two years or more, in Merton this was 4.3% (2014/15) relating to 10 children.

Children who were the subject of a child protection plan
Rate per 10,000 children aged under 18 years
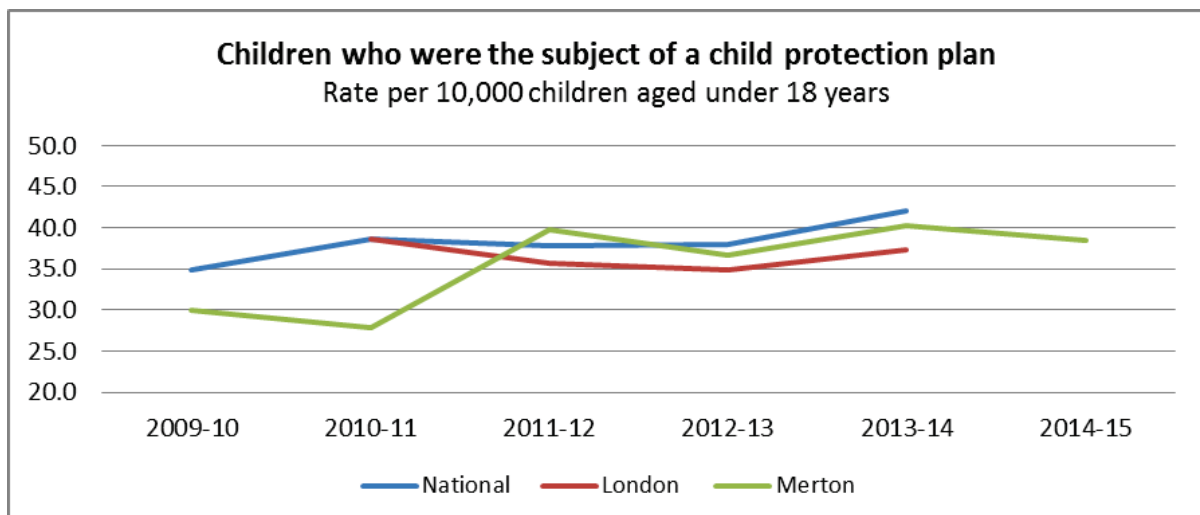
Merton's looked after children population in the last ten years has ranged from a low of 96 (2006/7) to 157 (2014/15), rising to 160(+) during 2013/14. This increase has been reviewed and audited to establish what is behind this trend. There are a number of reasons for this increase including increased national awareness of children's safeguarding, an increasing birth rate and more general demographic changes. Merton has a higher than average profile of looked after children at the older age range, including a significant increase in the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers, 32 during 2014/15.

Looked after children
Actual numbers

Baby Peter Connolly Aug 2007

Lamming Report Mar 2009

Outer London change in UASC (2010/11)

Merton's SCR Sept 2012

Global Financial Crisis 2008
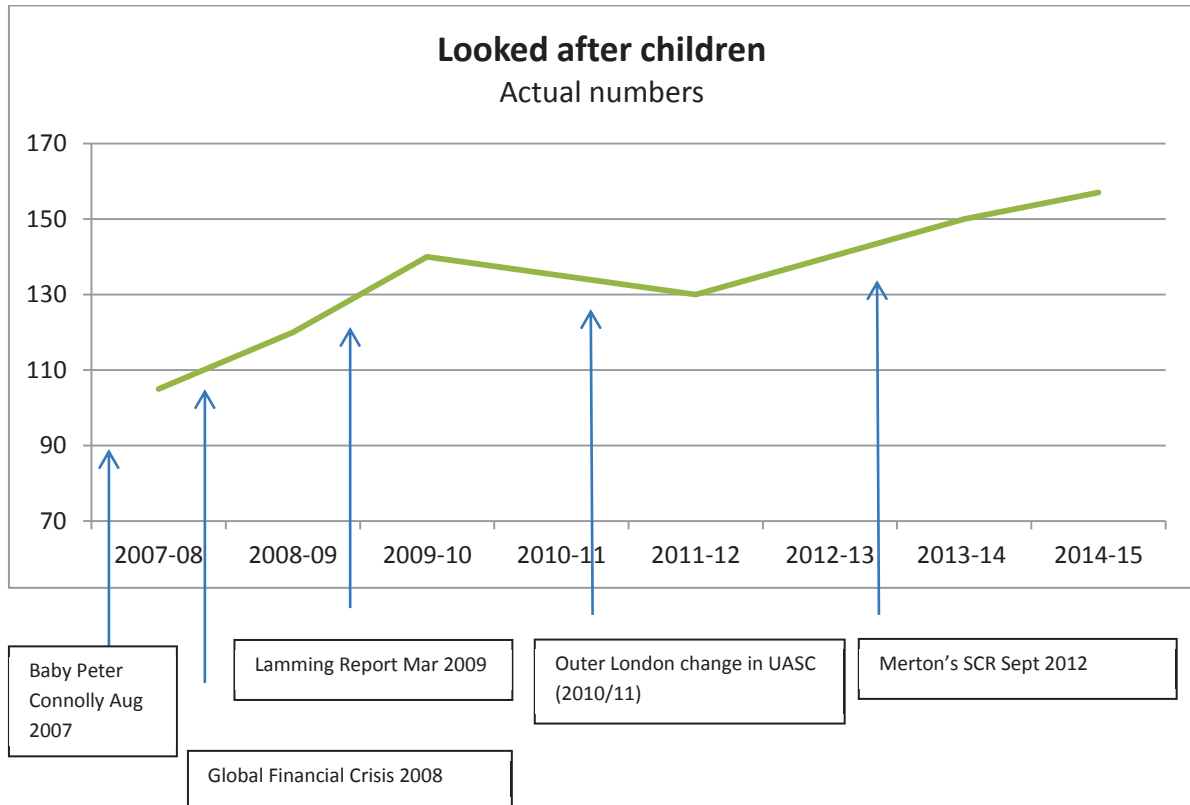
Merton's LAC rate per 10,000 remains within the range of its comparable statistical neighbours (2014/15). London's LAC rate per 10,000 ranges from the low 40s to the high 60s. Merton's rate per 10,000 in March 2014 was 34 (2014/15), this remains within the range of our statistical neighbours statistical neighbours.

Looked after children
Rate per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

National   London   Merton
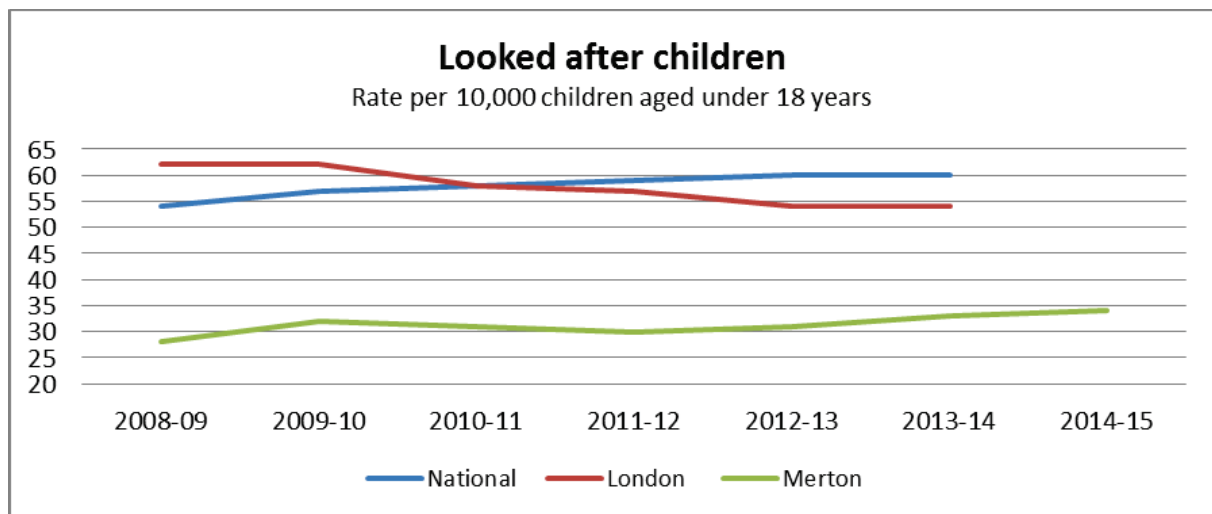
Merton's LAC gender distributions are similar to national averages; we have more LAC boys than girls. The age profile of children looked after at 31 March in Merton varies from the national norm with Merton caring for a large number of older looked after children 24% are aged 10 – 15 and 23% are aged 16 and over.

Merton has a changing profile of ethnic groups for LAC. The majority of children looked after in Merton are from a White background, this is lower than the general resident population (48% 2014/15). There are fewer Asian or Asian British (8%) than the all persons Merton population. Mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black or Black British heritage and 'other ethnic groups' have looked after children in greater proportions than the resident population. We continue to report an increase in the category of 'other ethnic groups', the majority of which are known to the authority as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

The total number of Children Looked After in Merton during 2014/15 was 255. On 31 March 2015 there were 157 children and young people looked after by Merton (34 rate per 10,000); 87 of these children were looked after for one year or more. We have lower rates of younger children in care and higher rates of older children in care compared to the national averages.

Merton expects the highest standards of care for all our looked after children and we have a policy of not using external placements which are not rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. There are no suitable children's homes within Merton which we would choose to use (except Merton's own respite unit for children with disabilities). There are limited placement options within neighbouring authorities. We use agency carers only when we are unable to place in-house or it is in the best interest of the child both in terms of safeguarding but also in terms of suitability of match. We continue to focus on increasing the numbers of in-house foster carers based on our LAC sufficiency needs analysis.

Merton's fostering agency was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in November 2012, inspectors noting that "Children and young people are able to make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their care and effective arrangements are in place to support this. Children and young people have positive views about their care and their relationships with foster carers." [5]

Looked after children
Rate per 10,000 children aged under 18 years

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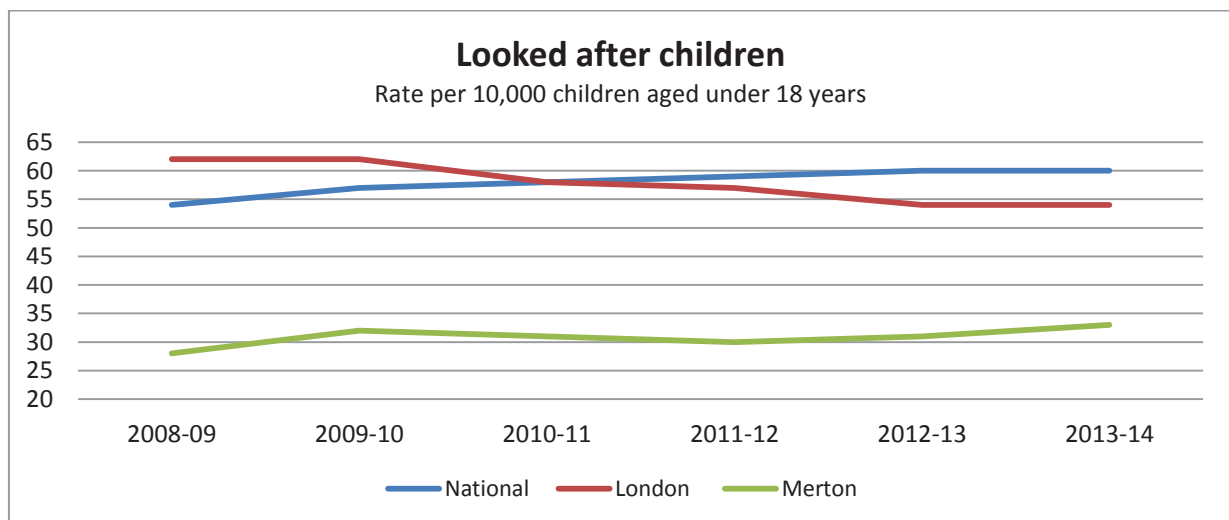
[5] Inspection Report: London Borough of Merton Fostering Services, 20/11/2012, © Crown copyright 2012

The total number of Children Looked After in Merton at any time during 2013/14 was 253. On 31 March 2014 there were 150 children and young people looked after by Merton (33 rate per 10,000); 83 of these children were looked after for one year or more. Our children have a range of complex needs at the point they become looked after 19% (2014) have SEN statements. Significant numbers of our LAC have experienced mental health and drugs or alcohol abuse issues within their families. We have lower rates of younger children in care and higher rates of older children in care compared to the national. Merton's LAC age profile compared to national is as follows: 1-4 years olds (Merton 10%, National 17%), 5-9 year olds (Merton 13%, National 20%) and for 16+ (Merton 41%, National 21% all 2014).

At 31st March 2014, 53 of 150 looked after children were placed over 5 miles away. Of these 16 were placed 6-10 miles away

- (1/16) placed for adoption.
- (11/16) in foster care (10 agency; 1 in-house).
- (2/16) in children's homes.
- (2/16) in residential accommodation not subject to children homes regulations (supported lodging).

Of our 150 looked after children, 37 were placed over 10 miles away:

- (2/37) placed for adoption.
- (1/37) fostered with a relative or friend.
- (16/37) in foster care (16 agency; 0 in house).
- (9/37) in a children's homes.
- (2/37) in a residential school.
- (1/37) in a YOI or prison.
- (2/37) in NHS/Health Trust or other establishment providing medical or nursing care.
- (1/37) in residential accommodation not subject to children homes regulations (supported lodging).
- (2/37) in secure accommodation.
- (1/37) in a residential care home.

Merton's adoption agency was inspected in January 2013. Ofsted found that we provided an effective service to all affected by adoption and gave an overall judgement of Good. Inspectors noted that the DfE adoption scorecard published in 2012 highlighted historical poor timeliness issues but found that the authority had worked hard to improve. They recognised that subsequent year on year performance showed substantial improvements across all areas albeit that the impact of the rolling three year data would continue to impact on published performance tables for some time. We recognise the need to maintain our improvement trajectory and continue to act more quickly in our family finding and deliver our action plans to improve permanency and speed up care proceedings. Whilst we have achieved timely and effective placement for many of our children and this is evident in our data, sibling groups tend to take longer as do those with disabilities to secure permanency. Ofsted noted that Adoption is viewed as a positive option for all children needing

permanency, whatever their needs or characteristics and that "the lifelong implications of adoption are fully understood and people's needs are catered for, whatever their age."[6]

We remain fully committed to achieving timely permanency for all our children.

4.3 Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation

Tackling the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a priority for the MSCB. The strategic intent of the Board is to clearly identify victims and perpetrators of CSE; to ensure that victims receive appropriate support and that the perpetrators of this crime are disrupted and prosecuted; the Board also monitors closely each young person at risk of CSE and to ensure that support is provided to prevent CSE.

During 2014 Merton undertook a CSE self review of the local arrangements to manage Child Sexual Exploitation. We also met with colleagues in Kingston, Sutton and Richmond to submit to a peer review in early December 2014. This was part of a pan-London review of CSE. Merton's arrangements to address CSE were found to be appropriate. The findings from this process contributed to the MSCB's CSE action plan.

CSE is a priority for the Promote and Protect Young People (PPYP) Sub-Group of the MSCB. The MSCB reviewed its CSE arrangements in 2012 putting in place a strategy and strengthening the work of the PPYP in 2013. It established the PPYP as a Sub-Group of the MSCB. The PPYP group has a broad multi-agency membership including representation from: Barnardos, Jigsaw4U, Catch22, Education Welfare, Youth Offending Service, Police, Primary Health (School Nursing and Health Visiting), Pupil Referral Unit, MASH and the 14+ Looked After Team.

In February 2015, the MSCB approved the refreshed CSE Strategy and Protocol which was formally launched on National CSE Awareness day in March 2015. As noted above, the event was attended by 101 professionals and frontline practitioners from a range of agencies including Children's Specialist Services, Health, the Police, Youth Services and Voluntary Organisations. The protocol sets out local guidance on the identification and referral of CSE concerns utilizing the screening and risk assessment tool which has also been reviewed and updated.

The work across the Borough and partnership has continued to improve practitioner awareness and skills in identifying and referring CSE concerns. The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel continues to meet on a monthly basis and cases are routinely reviewed to ensure effective multi-agency collaboration, planning and intervention.

Other activities to raise awareness of CSE included

- CSE and e-safety briefings to 100+ staff at the Merton Council Staff Annual Conference.
- 50 staff attended the first two of an ongoing monthly programme of CSE briefings to multi-agency staff focusing on identification and referral pathways.
- Over 100 staff attended the National CSE Awareness day event in March 2015.

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[6] Inspection Report: London Borough of Merton Adoption Service, 01/02/2013, © Crown copyright 2013

- Over 2,500 students and staff from across MSCB agencies, attended CSE focused assemblies for National Awareness day.
- Leaflets on CSE were distributed to local businesses as part of Metropolitan Police's Operation Makesafe launch.
- The MSCB Multi-agency Training programme offers training for frontline practitioners and mangers on CSE two times per year. The evaluation of this training includes workers commenting on how this training has improved/affected their practice in this area.
- There has been single agency training to police officers and social workers and specialist awareness raising training is being delivered by health safeguarding leads across key elements of the health economy.

Number of Young People Identified

For the year 2014-15 there were 56 cases open to the PPYP/MASE panel; 13 of which were judged to be High risk. We are working with neighbouring Boroughs to share information, expertise and data to improve our benchmarking. At the most recent MASE meeting 17 young people were reviewed 7 were identified as being at a high risk of CSE; 8 medium and 2 as low. The remaining 'on ice' cases represents those cases having been previously judged at risk of CSE that show no current indication of risk but are scheduled for review before being considered for closure. There are currently 30 cases 'on ice'.

Of the Open cases, 7 are assessed as High risk: 8 as Medium risk and 2 as Low risk. The CSE Strategy and Protocol in Merton incorporates the refreshed screening and risk assessment tool developed by Steven Rimmer and Birmingham LSCB.

CSE Cases

- All 30 cases are or have been open to Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion.
- 1 of the open cases is male.
- 12 cases have been or are subject to a child protection plan.
- 8 cases are looked after young people; 7 of which are placed out of Borough
- Ethnicity is broadly in line with the changing demographics in Merton with just over 50% from a White/British or White background
- The age distribution shows 13% of young people referred for possible sexual exploitation is aged 13 and under.
- 35% were aged 15 at the time of referral.
- Risk factors include 5 cases with drug and alcohol concerns and 6 with mental health issues.
- Routes of victimisation include 6 gang related: 14 older male and 9 victimised through peers and 1 trafficked young person.
- 5 of the cases have been identified as at risk because of images and messages posted on social media.

4.5 Children Missing from Home and School

In 2014/15 the Jigsaw4u project received 158 referrals and worked with 126 families. This is consistent with the previous year when 169 new referrals were received. Of these families, 27 (21%) were families previously known to the service, 70 were first time runaways and

there were 17 repeat runaways on average each quarter. In this time period 64 young runaways were recorded as a Looked After Child and 32 were known to social care. An average of 27.2% engagement in the service was achieved over the year. While this may seem low, this should be read in the context of the high numbers of young people going missing only once that do not go on to receive an in-depth service.

As part of the National CSE Awareness Day campaign, schools in Merton conducted whole school assemblies. This included a specialist workshop and extensive PHSE briefings with a focus on CSE. CSE champions have reported that over 2,500 students and staff attended the focused events across all Secondary Schools across the LA. The campaign was well received by students and staff alike and as a result of our auditing we are especially aware that this work needs to be effectively targeted to our most vulnerable students in Specialist Education and Additionally Resourced Provision.

The London Borough of Merton operates a Children Missing Education panel, which reviews young people who have persistent absence –over 85%. This panel meets on a monthly basis and tracks a wide range of children noted to be missing education for a number of potential reasons such as ill health, newly arrived and placement change or disruption. The annual report on CSE shows increasing levels of referral with higher numbers of boys missing (55%) than girls (45%). It was also noted that the numbers of looked after children notified to be missing education had also increased. Recent checks of the respective database showed that there were three young people open to the MASE panel who had also been referred to the CME panel. The manager of the EWS team and the Schools Inclusion Manager sit on both the CME panel and the PPYP Sub-Group.

Young people vulnerable to being out of education, employment or training are also identified and supported by the My Futures team providing systemic interventions and practical support to families and liaising with key professionals addressing concerns such as substance misuse and adolescent mental health.

4.6 Prevent [7]

During 2014 the issue of young people becoming involved in extremist activity has become much more heightened and we will be reviewing our local strategy and policy in early 2015 to respond to the changing legislation and rising concerns.

Merton is not considered by the Home Office to be a priority Prevent borough. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Channel referrals have been relatively low but as Prevent awareness increases the borough has seen an increase in the number of channel referrals being made. In 2014/15, 6 referrals were made, 2 of which became formal channel cases with interventions satisfactorily put in place (both have now been exited from the programme). None of the channel referrals involved children and young people.

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[7] Prevent is part of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy; represented by the 4 Ps: **Pursue**: to stop terrorist attacks; **Prevent**: to stop people, becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism; **Protect**: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack; and **Prepare**: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack., *CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism*, July 2011

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When referrals are made an initial assessment is conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service's Prevent Engagement Officer who undertakes low level intelligence gathering and contacts the subject to have a discussion. Often the referrals do not become formal channel cases because they are assessed as not being a threat from a Prevent perspective. Most of the people referred have some form of mental illness and have been referred on to mental health teams in order to get the appropriate support from mental health practitioners.

Merton's Safeguarding Children Board has developed *'Guidance for working with children and young people who are vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism'*. This guidance was developed in the context of the Government's overarching counter-terrorism strategy *'CONTEST'* and the **'***Prevent Strategy***'** which was developed in 2011 to respond to the threat of extremist activity; the *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* has recently been passed, which places the Prevent Strategy onto a statutory footing.   In addition the document is informed by *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* and the *Pan London Child Protection Protocols for safeguarding*, to ensure that it implements good and best practice in safeguarding vulnerable children and young people. This guidance is due to be approved by the Board in May 2015.

As part of our work to raise awareness and support parents and carers on this issue, the Board has developed guidance for parents and carers, on *Keeping children and young people safe against radicalisation and extremism.* Subject to approval by the Board, this information will be distributed to all secondary and primary schools, as well as to special schools and PRUs and will be available online and in local libraries.

5.0 Statutory and Legislative Context

Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) is the Local Safeguarding Children Board for Merton.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) have a range of roles and statutory functions.

Section 13 of the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board for their area and specifies the organisations and individuals (other than the local authority) that the Secretary of State may prescribe in regulations that should be represented on LSCBs.

Children Act 2004 Section 14 sets out the objectives of LSCBs, which are:

(a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and

(b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

The LSCB is not an operational body and has no direct responsibility for the provision of services to children, families or adults. Its responsibilities are strategic planning, co-ordination, advisory, policy, guidance, setting of standards and monitoring. It can commission multi-agency training but is not required to do so.

The delivery of services to children, families and adults is the responsibility of the commissioning and provider agencies, the **Partners**, not the LSCB itself.

Regulation 5 of the **Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006** sets out LSCB duties as:

5.1 (a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:

(i) the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention;

(ii) training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;

(iii) recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children;

(iv) investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children;

(v) safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered;

5.1 (b) communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so;

5.1 (c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by the authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advising them on ways to improve

5.1 (d) participating in the planning of services for children

Regulation 5 (2) relates to the LSCB Serious Case Reviews function and regulation 6 relates to the LSCB Child Death functions.

Regulation 5 (3) offers that an LSCB may also engage in any other activity that facilitates, or is conducive to, the achievement of its objectives.

These duties are further clarified in the statutory guidance: ***Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, 2015***   **(WT 2015)**

LSCB duties are specified in WT 2015, Chapters 3, 4 and 5, with a responsibility to have oversight of single agency and multi-agency safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare (under Children Act 2004, section 11, see the footnote on page 33) as set out in WT chapters 1 and 2.

6.0 MSCB Inter-relationships and Influence with other Key Partners

The Board has a rolling 24-month Business Plan, to be refreshed each March for the business year starting each April. The update of the MSCB Business Plan for 2014-2015, agreed by the Board in June 2015, is attached as Appendix 1. The Business Plan outlines the Board's priorities for 2015-2017 and was agreed by the Board at its annual Away Day in March 2015. Priority items can be added within the year.

The MSCB meets three times per year in half-day business meetings; and in a Business Planning Away Day once per year, in March. The Business Implementation Group of the Board meets four times per year. The progress of the actions agreed in the Business Plan is reviewed at each meeting. Each Sub Group has an agreed Work Plan and each Sub Group reports to the MSCB annually.

7.0 MSCB Sub-Groups

7.1 Quality Assurance Sub-Group

The purpose of the Quality Assurance (QA) Sub-Group is to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and protected by overseeing the quality of single and multi-agency work carried out in partnership across the children and young people sector.

During the period covered by this report the QA Sub-Group has been chaired by the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion and includes representation from relevant agencies including, Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, the Police, Children's Social Care, Education etc. The QA Sub-Group maintains and interrogates the MSCB dataset, monitors serious incidents and responses to local and national issues arising out of SCRs and oversees multi-agency audit activity for the Board. The Quality Assurance Sub-Group operates with the MSCB's Learning and Improvement System, agreed by the Board in July 2014 and the Board's Performance Management Framework agreed by the Board in September 2014.

In the period covered by this report, the QA Sub-Group (both Business and Audit) has met 9 times. The QA Sub-Group (Business) met to consider business items such as the MSCB performance data and to monitor learning from SCRs and LIRs and to review the work being done to safeguard children on 5 occasions. The QA Sub-Group (Audit) met on 6 occasions. These audits focused on a variety of safeguarding themes including, CSE, the effective working of Core Groups, etc. Each case is reviewed by a group of Senior Managers from a range of agencies in the MSCB partnership including Health, Mental Health Services, the Police, Children's Social Care and colleagues from Early Help and Education. Each case is used to provide a window into Merton's safeguarding system and allows the Board to be assured regarding the quality of safeguarding practice and to identify gaps and areas for improvement. Each case is assessed to see if learning from SCRs and LIRs is being implemented across the system. The learning from these audits is fed back to staff through MSCB briefings and through summary reports on each audit process. We are working together to further strengthen our shared audit programme and to ensure audit informs practice improvement. The children's safeguarding performance dataset supports the MSCB in reviewing service access and thresholds as well as caseloads and access to supervision and training.

7.2 Promote and Protect Young People Sub-Group

The Promote and Protect Young People (PPYP) Sub-Group met 5 times in 2014-2015. The purpose of the PPYP is to take overall lead responsibility on behalf of the MSCB to ensure that there are effective and up-to-date multi-agency policies, protocols and procedures to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and protected and their welfare is promoted; *concentrating* **extra-familial** *abuse where there is* *risk of abuse outside the family.* PPYP is responsible for policies relating to issues like CSE, children missing from home, care or education, child on child abuse, other forms of exploitation (such as radicalization), e-safety, trafficking, abuse by those in a position of trust or in institutions – including faith organisations and community organisations; and policies and procedures in relation to allegations against those in a position of trust (LADO referrals).

PPYP also takes the lead responsibility for the MSCB's CSE Strategy, Procedures and Action Plan. This includes the direct management of the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel, which tracks and advises the multi-agency professional teams responsible for young people who are identified at serious risk of harm from sexual exploitation and/or who are at risk from going missing from time to time.[8] PPYP also oversees the work of the Person's of Concern Group which meets in order to identify, monitor and disrupt the activities of individual or groups who pose a risk of CSE. The PPYP refreshed the MSCB's CSE Protocol and CSE Strategy which was approved by the Board in February and re-launched as part of the CSE National Awareness Day. The Board continues to monitor Looked After Children identified as being at risk of CSE who are place outside of the Borough of Merton.

This year PPYP oversaw the work of the Prevent Task and Finish Group which produced Guidance for professionals working with children and young People who are vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism. This guidance is to be presented to the Board for approval in May 2015. Similarly, the Task and Finish Group produced Advice to Parents and Carers regarding keeping children and young people safe from radicalisation and extremism of all forms; this advice will also be presented to the Board for approval in May 2015.

7.3 Learning and Development Sub Group

The purpose of the Learning and Development Sub-Group is to take overall lead responsibility on behalf of the MSCB, to ensure that there are effective arrangements to inform and keep up-to-date the multi-agency and multi-disciplinary workforce in knowledge and skills for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The Learning and Development Sub-Group also plans and delivers the Joint MSCB/CSC/CSF Multi-Agency Annual Conference for practitioners and managers to increase awareness and dialogue with frontline practice and to ensure that young people are involved in commissioning and delivery.

The Learning and Development Sub-Group revised its terms of reference which was approved by the MSCB in March 2015.

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[8] MASE Panels have their own Terms of Reference agreed across London

New to 2014 has also been the introduction of termly Multi-Agency Briefings. These are aimed at keeping frontline staff and their managers informed on up-to-date a range of legislative and good practice developments in safeguarding (including national and local policies, research, etc.). These briefings also provide feedback from local learning (e.g. audits and case reviews) as well as at maintaining an open dialogue between practitioners and the Board.

7.3.1 MSCB Joint Conference With Children's Social Care

The Joint MSCB/CSC/CSF Conference was held on 5th March 2015, at Epsom Race Course. The Conference theme was, 'W T F' – Working the Frontline' and the Conference focused on enhancing children and young people's participation. The guest speakers at the conference were Professor Jan Horwath and Dr Alan Cooklin who delivered the keynote speeches. The event included presentations from children and young people from Merton primary and secondary schools on online safety and the Rights of the Child. A range of workshops were held on a variety of topics, including, CSE, Young Women and Relationships, Communicating with Disabled Children, etc.

The Conference was attended by 120 practitioners and managers from multi-agency settings and was highly rated by all attendees.

7.3.2 MSCB Training

From April to 31st 2014 to March 2015, the MSCB has run a total of 95 training events attended by 1403 multi-agency professionals (the totals for April 13- March 14 were 90 courses attended by 1295 staff). The attendances for each course is provided in the table below:
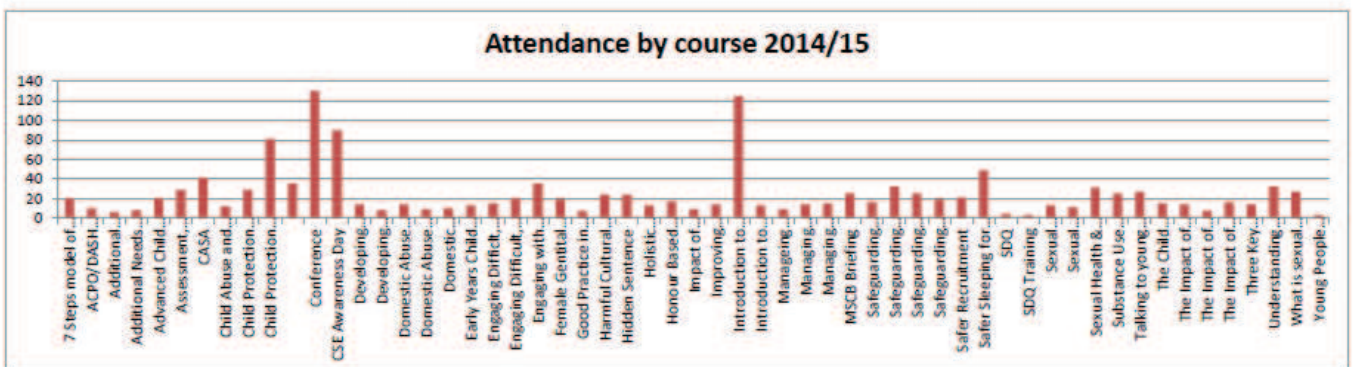
The table on the following page provides a breakdown of attendance by each agency.

MSCB Learning and Development Subgroup
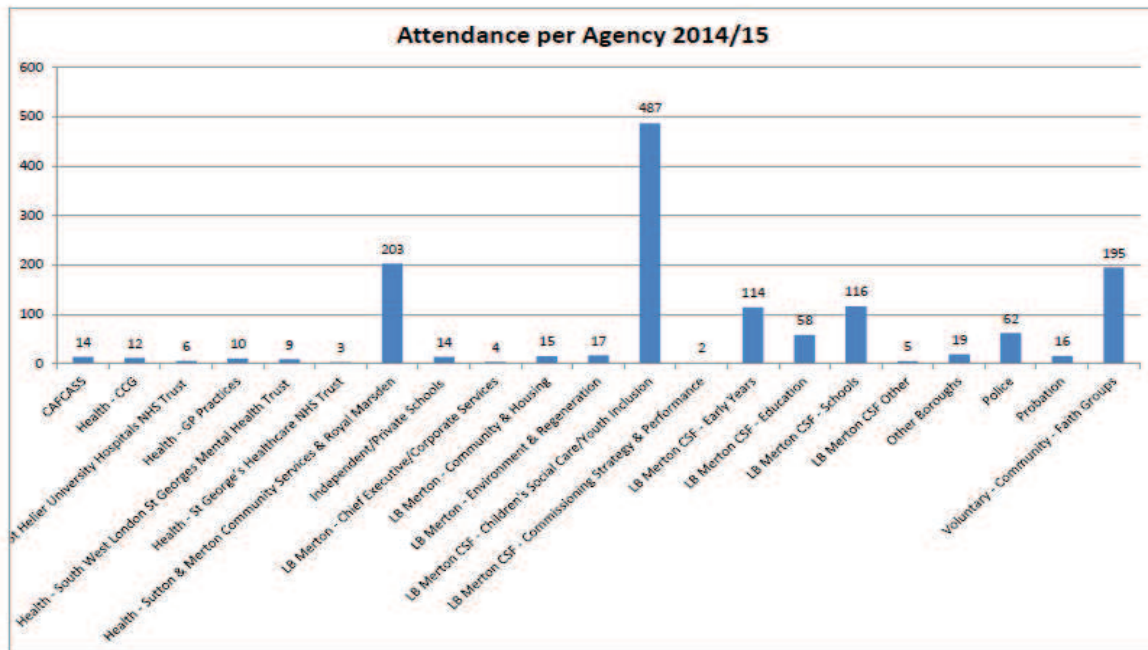
7.3.3 E-Learning

Merton SCB partners have made much better use of their e-learning licence allocation since September 2013, and even more so over the last 3 months - 322 passes in the year to September 2014 and a further 181 to December 2014, compared with only 192 passes in the previous 18 months March 2012 to September 2013. Value for money (VFM) is much improved, with the cost per licence passed being £21.74 for the year to September.

The Sub-Group has focused on the following areas:

1. *Ensuring that MSCB training is relevant to the needs of the workforce*. The Sub-Group's has employed a range of strategies to conduct needs analysis with limited responses. The decision was therefore taken to focus on developments in legislation and policy, nationally and through the policy development work of the MSCB and to ensure that learning from the work of Sub-Groups such as, PPYP, Policy and QA, informed the training offer so that learning issues from QA audits, LIRs, SCRs, etc., and the dissemination and implementation of MSCB policies, protocols, guidance, etc.
2. *The quality assurance of training*. The Learning and Development Sub-Group is striving to increase the monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of training delivered by 'in-house' and external trainers. As part of this work, the Sub-Group takes the lead in quality assuring training by attending courses and providing feedback. The MSCB quality assured 4 courses this year.

7.4. Policy Sub-Group

The Policy Sub-Group, formerly the Policy and Communication Sub-Group, revised its terms of reference in December 2014. As a result, the functions of this Sub-Group are focused on policies and procedures and not communication. The revised terms of reference were approved by the MSCB in March 2015. Under the revised terms of reference, the purpose of the Policy Sub-Group is to take overall lead responsibility on behalf of the MSCB to

ensure that there are effective and up-to-date multi-agency guidance, policies, protocols and procedures to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and protected and their welfare is promoted. The Policy Sub Group also has lead responsibility for policies in relation to *safeguarding children from harm and neglect within their families or substitute families*. This includes core early intervention and child protection procedures and looked after children procedures; private fostering; the Sub-Group also leads on specialist areas such as parental mental ill-health, parental alcohol and substance abuse, and parental disabilities; FGM, cultural-based abuse and so-called 'honour' violence.

The Policy Sub-Group has approved the MSCB statement on FGM and is overseeing the development of strategic response to this issue. It is hoped that there will be guidance and procedures issued to professionals working with children and young people at risk of FGM. The Sub-Group has also commissioned a Multi-Agency Task and Finish Group to develop a strategic response to the issue of neglect.

7.5 CDOP

There were 6 CDOP meetings held in 2014 – 2015 and 29 cases reviewed in total. In the year from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, there were 32 child deaths reported to the Sutton and Merton CDOP. 30 deaths were of residents of Sutton and Merton; 2 were out of borough deaths, 1 Greenwich child who was resident with a young mother in foster care died in Merton; 1 Sutton child died out of borough.

The CDOP reports that there have no SUDI cases reviewed this year. In 2013-14, 7 SUDI deaths were reviewed. Safer sleeping messages constantly have to be reinforced not only to mothers, but to other members of the family such as fathers, grandparents and carers.

There was 1 case escalated from the CDOP to the MSCB. This was the case of a child who died in 2012. The circumstances were that this child died in nursery provision as a result of suffocating on a cube of jelly that was stuck in the child's throat. The child was not previously known to children's social care. The matter was referred to Ofsted who agreed with the MSCB's decision not to convene a Serious Case Review (SCR).   Ofsted subsequently included this issue in their bulletin to local authorities and the Health and Safety Executive reported on the incident. It was concluded that there was no further role for the MSCB.

7.6 Youth Crime Executive Board (YCEB)

The YCEB is chaired by the Director of Childrens, Schools and Families Services and the vice chair is the Chief Inspector of the Metropolitan Police (Merton). The YCEB is the governance structure for Merton in relation to the work of the Youth Justice/Offending Team (YOT), including the Youth Justice Annual Plan, performance and quality assurance. It also oversees the partnership response to Serious Youth Violence, Gangs and Troubled Families (known locally as Transforming Families) (TF). Membership includes CSF, CSC; Youth Justice; Looked After Children (LAC), Education Inclusion, Police, Probation and the Central Commissioning Group (CCG). The YCEB reports to the MSCB and the Safer and Stronger Partnership reviews the performance of the partnership, the Youth Justice Service as well as wider youth crime issues.

The YCEB's key priorities over the past year have involved maintaining and monitoring the strong performance of the YOT (particularly in relation to the reduction of First Time Entrants into the youth justice system and the sustaining of low numbers for young people who are sentenced to custody); delivering and extending the TF programme and reducing the levels of serious youth violence in the borough. The YCEB also seeks to ensure that key partnership work continues which ensures that the key aim of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) is achieved which is to prevent offending and re-offending in young people. We have also been overseeing the impact of the C&F Act of 2012 in relation to the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) requirements. The introduction of this Act means that when a young person is remanded to custody for an offence, they become LAC.

Family and Adolescent Services (FAS) is a strand within Social Care. Youth Inclusion and CSC that delivers a range of government prescribed and legislative functions to children at risk of harm, children in care, care leavers and young offenders, as well as wider services for families. A number of the interventions are targeted with the aim of providing an intervention before problems escalate within a family. This involves working closely with schools, academies, the Police and the Education Welfare Service. This work has included contributing to the CSF Equalities Action plan and actions are now in place to ensure that young people from deprived wards in the borough are supported. An example of this work is the Performance Reward Grant (PRG) Phipps Bridge (ward), which is focused on reaching and supporting young men from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and White working class backgrounds

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, the YCEB monitors the Youth Justice Team's Improvement and Development Plan, which was written before and (updated) after a successful inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in 2013. The Short Quality Screening concluded that Merton's Youth Justice Team had made "important changes" when compared to the inspection which took place in 2011. The improvement and development work includes the consistent use of auditing and the closer scrutiny of cases during the supervision process. We have also enhanced the quality assurance process within the YOT which includes adhering to the management auditing timetable and the use of thematic audits. All key documents are 'gate kept' and monitored prior to presentation at court and there are regular reviews of work. There is evidence that Merton's low custody rates are influenced by thorough assessments and specific interventions which are presented as robust alternatives to custody.

The YCEB remains committed to the core value of ensuring the voice of the child (VOC) and that this is captured and acted upon. The Online Viewpoint Questionnaire is completed with young people and Merton has exceeded the required target. In addition to this, Youth Board Panels, comprising of young people, meet regularly with the FAS Manager and YOT manager. Feedback is received from young people and suggestions for change are acted upon. The YCEB continues to focus on the Ending Serious Youth Violence (ESYV) agenda. The objective is to target more high risk offenders and Merton joined the Home Office's 'Ending Serious Youth Violence' programme in 2013. We recognise that a multi-agency approach is essential in tackling this issue. Subsequently, we continue to work closely with key partners such as the Police, CSF, Education, Health and the Voluntary sector. The

MOPAC[9] funded Gangs Worker continues to provide support to young men vulnerable to being caught up in gang-related crime and anti-social behaviour. Also a gangs' matrix has been developed between the Police and FAS and assists with the review of cases at the Youth Offender Management Panel (YOMP).The YCEB assists with the reviewing and monitoring of these essential pieces of work.

Assessment Intervention and Moving on (AIM) training has been delivered to CSC and members of the Youth Inclusion Team in order to support assessments, interventions and practice with young people who display sexually harmful behaviour. The Assessment Planning Panel (APP) has been launched and it will help plan treatment and support packages for young people who display sexually harmful behaviour. The YCEB also has oversight of this significant work and agenda.

Merton CSF also focuses on the CSE agenda especially with regards to reducing the vulnerability of young women and girls. This is done through the work of the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel and the Youth Offender Management Panel (YOMP). A MOPAC funded Young Women and Girls Worker helps support some of the most vulnerable young women in the borough who are affected by this area. The YCEB also has oversight of this significant work.

7.7 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Sub-Group

This Sub-Group reports to the Safer and Stronger Partnership and includes attendance by CSF, CSC, Adult Social Care, the CSE lead, Safer Merton, Public Health, the Police and the Voluntary and Community Sector. The VAWG oversees a wide range of issues including domestic violence (DV), CSE, prostitution, trafficking, girls and gangs. It also considers DV involving persons of all genders and sexualities. The VAWG was established in mid 2014-2015 and has met 3 times during this period.

A Task and Finish Group was established to review and advise, regarding an appropriate performance framework for the VAWG. In addition, the VAWG reviewed the performance metrics for the MARAC[10]. The VAWG will be conducting a self-evaluation of the MARAC during 2015-2016.

7.8 Structure and Effectiveness of the MSCB and Key Changes

During 2014/15 we reviewed our constitution and examined the effectiveness of all our Sub-Groups. As a result we approved a new constitution and a suite of documents strengthening local arrangements:

- The Board adopted an FGM Mission Statement
- A new Learning and Improvement Framework was adopted
- New terms of reference was drafted for all Sub-Groups
- The multi-agency case work auditing process was refreshed and a new audit tool has been produced and adopted

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[9] MOPAC stands for Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime
[10] MARAC is A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (**MARAC**) is a local, multi agency victim-focussed meeting where information is shared on the highest risk cases of domestic violence and abuse between different statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

- The Board has revised its Performance Management Framework with a streamlined dataset.
- A Communication Strategy and a Participation Strategy have both been adopted by the Board.

The Board has worked hard to strengthen its effectiveness by appointing a Head Teacher of one of the Secondary Academies; the appointment of a Head Teacher of a Secondary Community School and the appointment of a Head Teacher representing Special Schools. We have also appointed an interim Designated Nurse (two members of the Clinical Commissioning Group share this role). The Board has also appointed a second lay member.

The Board's Business Implementation Group was established towards the end of 2014. The Business Implementation Group meets 4 times per year and co-ordinates, prioritises actions and ensures the coverage of statutory functions and the MSCB business plan by ensuring governance and connectivity across the Sub Groups and task groups.

Sub Group Chairs may be asked to attend the Business Implementation Group if the business of their Sub-Group is on the agenda.

Sub-Groups are chaired by Senior Officers from a range of agencies including Health, Children's Social care, Police, and Education.

7.9 MSCB Budget

The MSCB has a healthy budget and all agencies contribute. Its income for 2013/14 was £213,852. The MSCB Budget for 2014-2015 is detailed as follows:

Brought forward from 2013-2014 £11,502

Income for 2014-2015

Agency Contributions

CAFCASS	£550
London CRC	£1,000
London Probation Service	£1,000
London Borough of Merton	£106,240
Merton CCG	£35,000
Metropolitan Police	£5,000
Sub- total	**£148,790**
London Borough of Merton Baseline supplement[11]	£53,060
Other income	£500
Total	**£213,852**

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[11] In 2014-2015, the MSCB expenditure exceeded income from Agency contributes; LB Merton therefore supplemented the MSCB budget.

Expenditure

Staffing	£82,544
Premises	£2,992
Supplies and Services	£108, 257
Transport	£1,417
Totals	**£195, 210**

Brought forward from 2014-2015	£18,642

8.0 Sub-Group and Task and Finish Group Summary Reports/Effectiveness

8.1 Prevent Task and Finish Group

As reported under 7.2, the MSCB appointed a Task and Finish Group to review Merton's response to radicalisation and extremism and to develop some guidance for those working with children and young people who are vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism.   This guidance is being developed in the context of the Government's overarching counter-terrorism strategy *'CONTEST'* and the '*Prevent Strategy*' and the forth-coming *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015*. The group has completed its work and has prepared guidance for professionals and advice to parents and carers which will be submitted to the Board for approval and adoption when it meets in May 2015.

8.2 Neglect Task and Finish Group

A Task and Finish Group was appointed to develop a strategic multi-agency response to the issue of neglect at the Board's Annual Away Day in March 2015. The key responsibilities of the Group include reviewing data sources for monitoring neglect by child and by family, reviewing thresholds especially with regards to chronic neglect, exploring the issue of parental capacity, motivation and ability to sustain positive change with regard to providing good enough care, reviewing knowledge and skills across the CSF and proposing a draft MSCB strategy for tackling neglect: including parenting support and early intervention, health, education (across early years, primary and secondary phases) early help (CASA), MASH, CIN and CPP. It is anticipated that this Group will report to the Board in September 2015.

8.3 Performance Management Task and Finish Group

The MSCB appointed a Task and Finish Group to review the MSCB's Performance Management Dataset to ensure that there was an appropriate balance between the quality of data and the quality of analysis. The Task and Finish Group completed its work and the proposed revised Performance Dataset was finalised in March and is due to be presented for approval at the Board's BIG meeting in May 2015. The revised performance monitor consists of 27 indicators included within the new national policy framework[12] and a number of proposed local performance indicators to support further contextualisation. The revised monitor aims to provide a stronger safeguarding-led narrative in relation to the 'child's journey', starting with the pathways (e.g. Initial contacts and referrals), the assessments used to determine risk (e.g. single assessments and Initial Child Protection Conferences) and the use of specialist interventions (e.g. Child Protection Plans).

8.4 Learning & Improvement Reviews and Serious Case Reviews

A Serious Incident (SI) occurred in November 2014 and was referred to the MSCB through the Quality Assurance Sub Group in December 2014; this was then passed on to the MSCB Chair who convened a case meeting. At the meeting held on the January 2015, The MSCB considered that although there was significant harm to a child, the criteria for a SCR were not met.   The incident was notified to Ofsted in February 2015.

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[12] The Children's Safeguarding Performance Information Framework, January 2015, Crown Copyright

In considering if the criteria for a SCR were met, the Panel agreed that there were lessons which could be learned from the case. The hospital had already initiated a SI review and it was agreed that other agencies could learn from their response and communication following the discovery of the injuries. The MSCB Chair agreed to commission a multi-agency LIR. The Chair wrote to agencies January 2015 asking them to undertake an IMR and forward this to the Board by the end of February. When the reports were received a case panel was convened to consider lessons to be learned. The MSCB is in the process of concluding this review.

The MSCB contributed to a learning review concerning a Croydon resident who was placed briefly in the borough in temporary accommodation and who subsequently committed murder.

On 25th March 2014 CSF received a serious LADO notification regarding Child J, an 11 year old boy placed in a residential school setting. The LADO notification concerned a deteriorating situation in relation to this young person; this resulted in an escalation in care management, including the restriction of his movements and the need to provide restraint to prevent harm to Child J and others.

A Merton LADO strategy meeting was held within 24 hours in order to put a plan in place to meet Child J's needs and to protect him from harm. The Surrey LADO was notified, as was Ofsted, whose inspectors visited the school. CSF commissioned an internal management review which was conducted by the Assistant Director of Children, Schools and Families Department, who had no prior involvement with the case, and the MSCB commissioned a LIR which was conducted by Jane Wonnacott, who reported her findings in February 2015. The decision to conduct a LIR was reported to the National Panel, who endorsed this decision.

9.0 Agency Effectiveness in Safeguarding – reports for each key agency drawing on Section 11 and QA and Challenge Meetings

Section 11

One of the key tools for understanding and demonstrating the effectiveness of safeguarding is the Annual Section 11 audit. Section 11 of The Children Act 2004 places a duty on LSCBs to ensure that organisations have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

Agencies completed their returns during April and May 2014 and there were a series of Quality Assurance and Challenge meetings in June and July 2014. The meetings were led by the Independent Chair of the MSCB and the Director for CSFs. The purpose of these meetings was to monitor agency compliance with Section 11 standards and key MSCB actions, to note key challenges and to consider priorities for the MSCB Business Plan. The Quality Assurance and Challenge Meetings for 2014-2015 were arranged as follows:

1. Children, Schools and Families (4 June 2014)
2. Health Services (10th and 18th June 2014)
3. Police, Probation and Community Safety (18th June 2014)
4. Voluntary and Community Sector (18 June 2014)
5. Community and Housing Services (1 July 2014)
6. Mental Health Services including CAMHs (2 July 2014)

These Challenge meetings included a review of Section 11 Compliance, analysis and discussion of each agencies' self-review of work to safeguard children during April 2013– March 2014; including relevant agency data showing impact of safeguarding children from the agency's perspective, the agency's performance against the MSCB dataset and key performance indicators. The Challenge meetings also considered each agency's implementation of learning from the TS SCR. Each agency was also asked to comment on its compliance to relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance including *Working Together 2013* and *Keeping Children Safe In Education 2014*.

As a result of this process the Board was able to hold partners to account regarding their work to safeguard the well-being of children and young people, to assure itself that each partner is achieving the 8 safeguarding standards outlined Working Together and the pan-London Audit Tool.[13] The QA Challenge meetings also ensures that the Section 11 process

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[13] Section 11 Standards include: a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services; 2. arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB);.3.a designated professional lead (or, for health provider organisations, named professionals) for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. Designated professional roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Professionals should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively; 4. appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training: 5. employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role; 6. staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a

is not simply a paper exercise and agencies' self-audit is tested through questioning and challenge.

The returns from statutory partners indicate full compliance on 90% of the safeguarding standards and clear plans to take action on identified areas for improvement.

9.1 Schools

9.1.2 Ofsted inspection outcomes rated Good or Outstanding

Ofsted outcomes rated Good or Outstanding
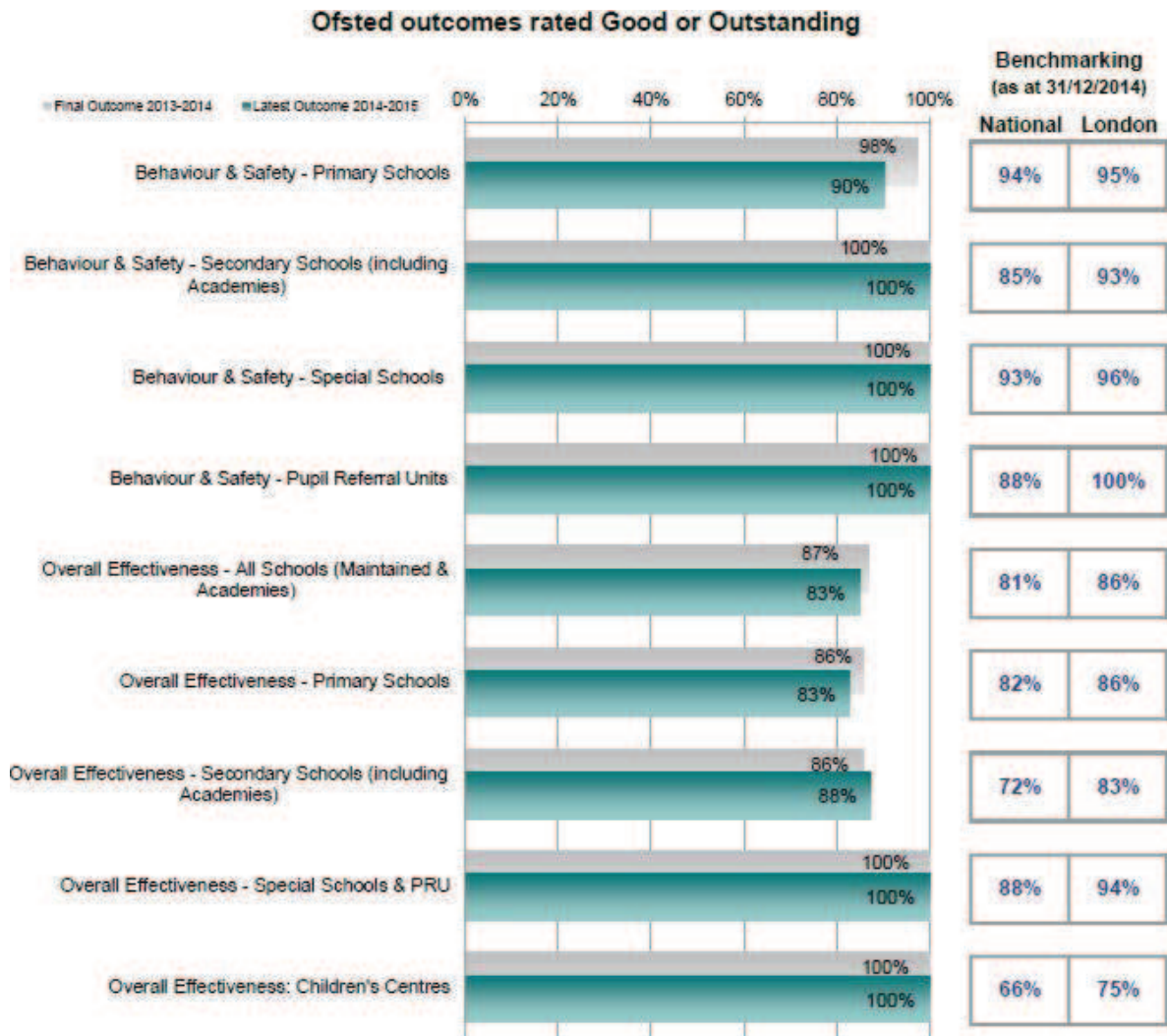
Merton Schools contributed to the Section 11 audit and formed part of the CSF Section 11 return.

9.2 CSF department

CSF department completed section 11 audits for CSC; Early Years; the Youth Service, Education Inclusion and the FAS (including Youth Justice).

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child's safety or welfare; 7. and all professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time; and; 8. There is effective Information Sharing between agencies

During 2014 CSC services reviewed remits and capacity issues across the teams and have added additional social work staff into the MASH and core social work teams. It also implemented a new caseload policy to ensure fair distribution and manageable workloads across the service. The recruitment and retention of social workers in common with most authorities continues to be challenging and the MSCB and CSF management continue to monitor use of agency staff closely and the department has a proactive recruitment and retention strategy.

The council has procured a new social care information system to support good casework practice which will be implemented in 2015/16. The aim is to provide casework staff with a system which is more user friendly for frontline practitioners than the current system and to enable a more comprehensive dataset (in line with new Annex A) to be inputted and reported both for internal management information and service improvement planning and for statutory returns.

Following the full review of our early intervention and prevention strategy in 2012/13 the council produced revised structures for CSC and our enhanced services as well as new commissioning intentions for our EIS commissioned services. A range of services were commissioned externally for 2013-16 with a strong focus on early help/intervention and prevention as well as specialist support for vulnerable groups. Safeguarding is embedded in all specifications as is a strong performance focus on impact and outcomes.

9.3 Acute Trusts

9.3.1 Sutton and Merton Community Health Service and the Royal Marsden Trust

The Trust and the service provider completed a Section 11 Self-audit and attended Quality Assurance Challenge meetings, which gave the Board assurance that the Trust is fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

9.3.2 SW London & St George's Mental Health Trust

South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust completed Section 11 Self-audit; this was undertaken at a time of considerable organisational change due to a major transformation programme.

9.3.2 Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust

The Trust and the service provider completed a Section 11 Self-audit and attended Quality Assurance Challenge meetings, which gave the Board assurance that the Trust is fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

9.4 Community and Housing Dept. - London Borough of Merton

Community and Housing Department completed Section 11 Audits for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Housing and participated in the Quality Assurance Challenge Meetings.

9.5 Corporate Service – HR – London Borough of Merton

A section 11 audit of the council's safer recruitment and employment practices was undertaken. The council has also re-issued advice to schools in the period covering

revisions to the vetting and barring arrangements and on the new DfE guidance on disqualification by association.

9.5 Metropolitan Police/Probation/Cafcass

Regional Section 11 returns have been completed by all three organisations. The Metropolitan Police have completed returns for the Borough Command and CAIT. The police have included local information and analysis.

10 Views of Children and Young People and the Community

In 2014 Merton's Children's Trust launched a User Voice Strategy to further implement one of the eight core values of the Children and Young People's Plan, which highlights the importance we give to listening and responding to our children, young people and service users:

> "We listen, respond to and value our children and young people. Children and young people have rights to participate in decisions affecting their lives and participation provides opportunities for them to develop important life skills. Services should not only listen but should help children and young people shape services they receive. We should also canvas and respond to the views of parents and carers".

Our ambitions are in line with and underpinned by key legislation, policy and regular guidance. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 for England and Wales recognises children as citizens with the right to be heard. The Act made it a legal requirement for the views of children to be taken into account in any court decisions affecting them. The Children Act 2004 (section 53) amends sections 17, 20 and 47 of the Children Act 1989. It requires that when working with children in need, their wishes and feelings should be ascertained and used to inform making decisions. Working Together 2015 states that one of the key principles for effective safeguarding arrangements in a local area is to take a child centred approach: 'for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children'. In addition the document is clear that assessing need and providing help should focus on 'the needs and views of the child'. Ofsted Joining the dots (March 2015) highlighted that 'Senior leaders in [Good and Outstanding] authorities sought feedback from a variety of sources including children and families, staff and partners. Leaders in these authorities kept a relentless focus on demonstrating how they were improving outcomes for all the children who received the services. They saw gathering feedback as a crucial element in driving forward such improvements.

Our User Voice Strategy provides a framework by which we capture and monitor feedback to influence service design, delivery and continuous improvement. The Children, Schools and Families Department deliver this through an annual programme of user voice activity embedded within our service planning process. This report summarises some of our key successes in including children and young people's voices in our daily practice and service improvements and how we have delivered our five User Voice Strategy commitments.

Commitment ONE - Gathering feedback through a variety of models. We have continued to embrace a variety of models of feedback and participation, recognising that one style may not fit all, during the year we have identified and embedded four key ways in which we approach listening to the views of children and young people, and families:

- An ongoing 'practice approach' expected of all practitioners and managers to put children's wishes and feelings at the centre of decision making and planning.

- Continuing to deliver Merton's youth participation promise.

- Bespoke targeted user feedback sought from vulnerable groups.

- Ongoing management oversight to learn from complaints and compliments.

Commitment TWO - Providing opportunities for children and young people to influence key decision makers. We have continued to develop participation methods for children and young people's views to be heard in key governance structures, including influencing the work programme of the Merton's Children's Trust, Local Safeguarding Children Board and Member Scrutiny Panels. Merton's Annual Young Resident (2014) demonstrates that we are doing this well as 47% of young people feel involved in decision making, significantly better than the London average of 31%.

Commitment THREE - Understand what our feedback is telling us to continuously improve services. We have a long history of reviewing feedback at a local level to influence operational delivery. During 2014/15 we have reviewed what the feedback is telling us at a strategic level quarterly and shared this analysis across the Children's Schools and Families department and wider Childrens Trust to inform service improvement.

Commitment FOUR - Publish and share our feedback findings across the children's workforce. We have where appropriate, published our feedback findings in Young Merton Together the Childrens Trust professionals e-magazine published five times a year receiving 52,000 hits by 1000 readers over the year. We have shared user voice findings with staff and partners at Staff Forums, Merton's Childrens Trust, MSCB and Corporate Parenting meetings.

Commitment FIVE - Demonstrate to those who participate in user voice activity the impact of their involvement. We have, where possible, fed back to participants who share their views, what has happened as a result of their input. Merton's Annual Young Residents' Survey (2014) demonstrates that we are doing this well and that young people feel their input is valued with 57% reporting that they feel listened to 'a great deal or to some extent'; better than the London average of 47%.

As noted under 3.2.3, the Board has commissioned a research project with LSBU which focuses on listening to and learning from children and young people's experiences of the safeguarding system here in Merton. It is hoped that one of the outcomes of this research is that we will be more responsive to the expressed needs of children and young people.

Our goal is to make sure that we continue to listen and learn from the complaints and compliments we receive and to use this process to ensure that there is continuous improvement in our services to our young people.

11 Conclusions and Priorities for 2015 – 17 Business Year

2014-2015 has been a year of change and consolidation for the Board. We have fully revised the constitution of the Board and renewed the Terms of Reference for each Sub-Group. The purpose of these changes has been to improve the effectiveness of the Board. We will continue embed these changes and there is evidence of effectiveness in the breadth and depth of the work of the Board.

On the evidence set out in this report we judge MSCB's current safeguarding arrangements to be effective. We are strengthening the Board's ability to enquire into and challenge frontline practice with children, young people and families through the work of the Quality Assurance Sub-Group; through single and multi-agency case audits, we are growing in our understanding of the intended and actual impact of safeguarding practice. Through the Section 11 and quality assurance challenge process we have been able to hold partners to account so that they provide the Board with assurance regarding the quality of safeguarding across the system. Learning from audits LIRs, SCRs etc., is fed back to the front line through training, briefings, conferences and other learning events. Attendance levels at training are good and continue to improve.

The Board has a good understanding of early help and child protection thresholds and ensures that children, young people and their families get right level of help at a time when this help is needed and that frontline practitioners are supported in using their professional judgment when working with families.

The Board has streamlined its performance dataset so that we have the right level of information with commentary from partners so that the Board is able to be rigorous and robust in its analysis of its performance. The work of the Board is also informed by Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which provides the Board with an overview of local needs so we are able to prioritise our work.

Our Section 11 and quality assurance and challenge process ensures that safeguarding is a priority for all of our statutory partners, who have all completed Section 11 self-audit and participated in the challenge process.

The Board has prioritised the safeguarding of children from CSE, exploitation through radicalisation and extremism, and FGM. With regard to CSE, robust strategic and operational measures are in place to ensure that the MSCB has a strong grasp of this issue and that children at risk are identified, supported and monitored to ensure that risks are reduced and the activities of perpetrators are disrupted and, where there has been an offence, there are persecutions.

The MSCB continues to play an active and influential role in the planning of services for children using its role as a scrutiniser of safeguarding to inform and influence the planning priorities across strategic partnerships such as the Health and Well-Being Board, YCEB, the Safer and Stronger Partnership, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.

The commitment of the partnership to continuous improvements continues to be a positive feature and we aim to demonstrate our ability to monitor and challenge performance in the next year.

In conclusion the MSCB is compliant with statutory guidance and working well to protect children and young people in the London Borough of Merton.

Priorities for the 2015 calendar year are:

1. To evidence Board impact through Quality Assurance – Multi-Agency Audits/Learning reviews/Front line practice

2. To maintain strategic oversight of CSE including e-safety, missing young people, young people missing from education

3. To have a strategic multi-agency response to the issue of neglect

4. To have a strategic response to the prevention of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

5. The Children and Families Act 2014, Supporting Children and Young People with Complex Needs and LASPO

6. Ensure that there is a strategic focus on and all children are safeguarded from radicalisation and violent extremism

7. MSCB Governance: Implement the revision of the MSCB Governance, Structure and Board Business Processes

8. Engage with Faith and BAME Communities on Safeguarding issues

Appendix 1: MSCB Business Plan 2014-2016

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Merton Safeguarding Children Board

Business Plan 2015 – 17

Progress of this Plan will be updated monthly & monitored at each MSCB Meeting

Approved by Business Implementation Group 12ᵗʰ May 2015

Objectives		Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
1. Quality Assurance – Multi-Agencies Audits/Learning reviews/Front line practice					
1.1	To have a robust dataset that enables the MSCB to have a strategic oversight of key performance data	For MSCB to have a robust dataset which gives a strategic overview of multi-agency performance in relation to the safeguarding of children To have a revised dataset for 1st quarter plus commentary	To implement the revised core multi-agency dataset reporting for 1st quarter data	NC and PB	BIG May 15
1.2	To review annual safeguarding performance dataset for MSCB and the annual report	To provide an annual summary of safeguarding dataset for MSCB and annual report	To complete annual review of safeguarding performance dataset for 2014-15	All agencies led by PB and NC	April 15

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? **(Work plans etc.)**	**When?**
1.3	To quality assure multi-agency safeguarding practice	To be assured of the quality of multi-agency frontline practice	To conduct 4 multi-agency themed case audits and to report findings	PA to lead, with QA Sub	Quarterly and an annual report to MSCB
1.3	To ensure compliance under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004	Annual report from each key agency	To have an overview of the quality of single agency safeguarding work through annual agency reports to sub group including audits.	All agencies undertake audits as required within their service areas	Annually and as required; i.e. 31/05/2015
1.4	To ensure learning from SCRs and LIRs is disseminated and applied.	A regular report on progress of actions an regarding LIRs and learning from SCRs	To monitor actions from case reviews, LIR and SCRs	All led by QA Sub-group	Quarterly reviewed at each BIG

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? **(Work plans etc.)**	**When?**
1.5	To ensure that there is a clearly understood process for escalating cases to the QA Sub-group	A review of the process for escalating cases to the sub-group Greater awareness of how to challenge case work decisions and escalate cases when needed	To ensure that cases where there are difficulties in multi-agency working are reviewed and lessons learned. To agree how the London CP Procedures will be localised and to ensure that practitioners and agencies are aware of the key contacts for implementing them.	PA/PB	June 15

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? **(Work plans etc.)**	**When?**
2.2	To ensure that all agencies are aware of their roles in prevention and intervention in CSE	To increase awareness of agencies' roles in effective intervention in relation to CSE	To provide information for the public including parents on CSE and its risks To ensure that universal information is available Specialist and targeted services to ensure parents of YP at risk of CSE can access information and support	PPYP Sub-group CSF LH	On going, monitored at each PPYP Sub group meeting

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| | Objectives | Outcomes | Actions | Resources | |
				Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
2.3	To ensure that CCG has clear oversight of health providers' performance with regard to CSE	To strengthen CCG's overview of the performance of the local health economy with regard to CSE	CCG to review QA processes and contractual requirements so that the MSCB is assured of the effectiveness of performance with regard to CSE	CCG Director QA Lynn Street	

	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? **(Work plans etc.)**	**When?**
2.4	To maintain strategic oversight of missing young people in Merton	Maintain and strengthen robust oversight of missing young people in Merton	To incorporate operational and strategic oversight of young people missing from Home/Care/School in to MASE monthly panel	CSC & YI, CSE Lead and LH	Mar-Apr 15
				CSC & YI, CSE Lead LH and Sarah Daly	Monthly

	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
2.5	To maintain strategic oversight of LAC placed outside of the borough	To have robust oversight of LAC placed out borough	To establish a mechanism to share data across the CSE MASE panel and the Chronic Attendance Project to ensure patterns of absence are analysed for risk of CSE as well potential neglect.	LH, CSC & YI	Mar to Jul 15

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
2.6	To maintain strategic oversight of LAC from other boroughs placed in Merton	To have robust oversight of the LAC of other boroughs placed in Merton	To incorporate operational and strategic oversight of Young people missing from Home/Care/School in to MASE monthly panel	CSC & YI, CSE Lead and LH	Mar-Apr 15
			To establish mechanism to share data across the CSE MASE panel and the Chronic Attendance project to ensure patterns of absence are analysed for risk of CSE as well potential neglect	PPYP	May 15
			To train CAT project staff in awareness and referral pathways for possible CSE		
			To provide quarterly update to Corporate Parenting Panel and annual summary report		

	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
				Resources	
2.7	To ensure a strategic focus on the voices of vulnerable and at risk young people	To maintain strong focus on voice of the child strategically and operationally	To engage in a Research Project with Southbank University To agree scope and methodology of research project to gather evidence of young people's experience of child protection system including young people's exposure to sexual exploitation	PB, LH, LSBU	

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? **(Work plans etc.)**	**When?**
3.1	To have a strategic multi-agency response to the issue of neglect	To agree a Merton neglect strategy so that there is a robust approach to identifying and intervening in neglect	To form task and finish group to research best practice and to propose a strategy for MSCB on neglect	Led by PB	22 Sept 15

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Objectives		Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? **(Work plans etc.)**	**When?**
4.1	To introduce a multi-agency strategy to prevent FGM.	Agree and implement FGM Strategy	To increase awareness of FGM; how to recognise risk and respond sensitively and to prevent it	Policy SubGroup	March 2016
5.1	To ensure that MSCB partners are aware of their responsibilities under the 2014 Act	To ensure that MSCB are aware of the key changes	To deliver a briefing on the main changes and the impact of the Act	To ensure that MSCB partners are aware of their responsibilities under the 2014 Act	To ensure that MSCB are aware of the key changes

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
6.1	To ensure that MSCB has strategic oversight in relation to the safeguarding and well-being of children and young people vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism, with regard to the Prevent and Channel strategy	To have a Merton guidance, policy and protocols to safeguard the well-being being of children and young people vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism.	For a task and finish group to prepare a draft Prevent Strategy The MSCB to approve and adopt guidance to safeguard the well-being being of children and young people vulnerable to the messages of radicalisation and extremism.	Prevent Task and Finish Group PPYP Sub-group and BIG	12 May 15
6.2	To have strategic oversight on the multi-agency implementation of the Prevent and Channel strategy	To ensure that the implementation of the Prevent Strategy is monitored	To monitor the implementation of the Prevent strategy through the PPYP Sub-group	PPYP Sub-group	BIG May 15 and Annually

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	Objectives	Outcomes	Actions	Resources Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
7.1	Strengthen school membership of the LSCB and the LSCB involvement in schools' designated persons meetings and HT's meetings	Increase school representation on MSCB LSCB Chair to write to schools & establish a clear relationship with Heads Forum	Increase the involvement of Head Teachers in the LSCB, increased understanding of young people's needs	AD Education Chair	Sept 15
7.2	To undertake a review of all agreed MSCB policies, protocols and procedures	To ensure that all MSCB policies are reviewed and up-to-date		Policy Sub-committee	Sept 15

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Objectives		Outcomes	Actions	Resources	
				Who? (Work plans etc.)	When?
8.1	Develop a list of individuals and groups who can provide advice on faith/culture, with a view to improving the understanding of safeguarding in BAME communities	MSCB to have a list of trusted advisers from faith and BAME communities who can advise the Board on relevant community issues	To map faith and BAME communities To meet with key leaders in faith and BAME communities	Board Manager	Jan 16

This Business Plan contains the MSCB priority actions. The on-going work of the MSCB and its Sub-Groups and Task Groups continues alongside it and will be incorporated into the Sub-Groups' annual work plans and reporting cycle to the MSCB.

The Plan will be updated and presented to each MSCB meeting by the Board Manager for monitoring and exception reporting.

The plan will have two appendices:

A **rolling action plan** which will list all the agreed actions from MSCB meetings monitoring them until they are completed.

A **risk and challenge log** listing identified risks and particular challenges which may impact on the whole safeguarding system or single agencies.

Appendix 2: Performance table summary

Children who need help and protection

Referrals and assessments							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	London 2013/14	Outer London 2013/14
Referrals	Number	1527	1372	**1745**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	351.5	311.0	**386.5**	**573.0**	469.6	441.1
Referrals where within 12 months of a previous referral	Percentage	17.9%	12%	**10.1%**	**23.4%**	16.2%	16.7%
Referrals which resulted in No Further Action	Number	46	33	**35**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Percentage	3%	2.4%	**2%**	**14.1%**	8.2%	7.5%
Single Assessments completed	Number	n/a	n/a	**1533**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	n/a	n/a	**333.2**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Single Assessments completed as a percentage of referrals	Percentage	n/a	n/a	**87.8%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Percentage of Single Assessments completed within 45 days	Percentage	n/a	n/a	**81%**	**82%**	78%	Data not available

Children in Need							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	London 2013/14	Outer London
Children starting an episode of need	Number	1323	1222	**1407**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	304.5	277.0	**311.7**	**372.6**	364.0	336.9
Children in need throughout the year	Number	2546	2373	**2513**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	586.1	537.9	**556.7**	**680.5**	688.0	610.2
Children ending an episode of need	Number	933	887	**910**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	214.8	201.1	**201.6**	**334.6**	320.1	297.4
Children in need at 31 March	Number	1613	1486	**1603**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	371.3	336.8	**355.1**	**346.4**	367.8	312.7

Children in Need							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	London 2013/14	Outer London
Children in need at 31 March, by duration of open cases (3 months or less – 91 days)	Percentage	18.7%	17.4%	**19.8%**	**24.8%**	23.7%	24.9%
Children in need at 31 March, by duration of open cases (between 3 and six months- 183 days)	Percentage	17.2%	10.6%	**17.7%**	**12.2%**	12.3%	13.6%

Children in need at 31 March, by duration of open cases (between six months and one year – 365 days)	Percentage	16.9%	19.4%	**20.3%**	**15.8%**	14.9%	15.9%
Children in need at 31 March, by duration of open cases (between one and two years – 730 days)	Percentage	**22.8%**	21.1%	**15.2%**	**15.1%**	16.2%	15.5%
Children in need at 31 March, by duration of open cases (two years or more)	Percentage	**24.5%**	31.4%	**26.9%**	**31.6%**	33.0%	30.1%

Children in Need – Attainment							
Indicators		Merton 2011-12	**Merton 2012-13**	Merton 2013/14	**National 2012-13**	London 2012/13	Outer London 2012/13
Children in Need Key Stage 2 – percentage Reading Level 4+	Percentage	Data not available	**70.2%**	Data not available	**56.8%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need Key Stage 2 – percentage Maths Level 4+	Percentage	56.7%	**57.4%**	Data not available	**55.7%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need Key Stage 2 – percentage Reading, Writing and Maths level 4+	Percentage	Data not available	**48.9%**	Data not available	**42.3%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need Key Stage 2 – percentage Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Level 4+	Percentage	Data not available	**53.2%**	Data not available	**40.9%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need GCSE – percentage 5+ A* to C	Percentage	42.1%	**41.5%**	Data not available	**35.3%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need GCSE – percentage 5+ A* to C including English and Maths	Percentage	15.8%	**24.6%**	Data not available	**16.1%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need KS2-4 – percentage expected progress in English	Percentage	29.6%	**30%**	Data not available	**27%**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in Need KS2-4 – percentage expected progress in Maths	Percentage	25.9%	**36.7%**	Data not available	**25.5%**	Data not available	Data not available
Unauthorised absence – percentage sessions missed by Children in Need	Percentage	3%	**3.7%**	Data not available	**3.9%**	Data not available	Data not available
Overall absence – percentage sessions missioned by Children in Need	Percentage	8.7%	**9.3%**	Data not available	**10.4%**	Data not available	Data not available
Persistent absence – percentage Children in Need classed as persistent absentees	Percentage	12.4%	**14%**	Data not available	**15.4%**	Data not available	Data not available
Exclusion – percentage of Children in Need with at least one fixed term exclusion	Percentage	7.5%	**Data not available**	Data not available	**7.8%**	Data not available	Data not available

*Absence, Exclusions and Attainment data for Children in Need excludes children who were looked after at any point during the year unless those children were also the subject of a child protection plan (as per data represented in DfE Matrix)

Child protection

Section 47 enquiries and initial child protection conferences							
Indicators		Merton 2011-12	Merton 2012-13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	London 2013/14	Outer London 2013/14
Children subject to S.47 enquiries which started during the year	Number	318	493	**593**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	73.3	111.7	**131.4**	**124.1**	11.9	107.7
Children who were the subject of an initial child protection conference which started during the year	Number	223	177	**239**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	51.4	40.1	**52.9**	**56.8**	49.9	48.3

Children who were the subject of a child protection plan							
Indicators		Merton 2011-12	Merton 2012-13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	London 2013/14	Outer London 2013/14
Child protection plans started in the year	Number	192	160	**212**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	44.2	36.3	**47.0**	**52.1**	43.2	41.6
Child protection plans ended in the year	Number	139	171	**192**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	32.0	38.8	**42.5**	**47.4**	39.7	37.5
Children subject of a plan as at 31 March	Number	173	162	**182**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	39.8	36.7	**40.3**	**42.1**	37.4	35.1
Child protection plans reviewed within the required timescales (cases open 3 months or more)	Number	104	118	**131**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Percentage	93.7%	97.5%	**92.9%**	**94.6%**	97.2%	96.7%
Child protections plans: child seen every 28 days	Percentage	n/a	n/a	**53.5%**	**58.4%**	61.0%	60.8%
Child protections plans: child seen every 35 days	Percentage	n/a	n/a	**77%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Children who became subject of a plan for the second or subsequent time	Percentage	7.8%	10.6%	**11.3%**	**15.8%**	13%	12.5%
Child protection plans lasting two years or more	Percentage	1.4%	3.5%	**3.3%**	**2.6%**	3.6%	3.0%

Progress of children looked after and achieving permanence

Looked After Children							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	**London 2013/14**	**Outer London 2013/14**
Children in care throughout the year	Number	210	215	**253**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	48	48	**56**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
Children in care at 31 March	Number	130	140	**150**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
	Rate per 10,000	30	32	**33**	**60**	**54**	48

Looked After Children – Placements							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	**London 2013/14**	**Outer London 2013/14**
NI 62 – Stability of placements – number of moves	Percentage	14.7%	15.7%	12.7%	11%	n/a	n/a
NI 63 – Stability of placements – length of placement	Percentage	67.6%	63.9%	**58%**	**68% (3 year rolling)**	n/a	n/a
LAC Placed over 20 miles away	Percentage	19%	14%	**17%**	**17%**	18%	18%

Looked After Children - Reviews							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	**London 2013/14**	**Outer London 2013/14**
NI 66 – LAC reviews within timescale	Percentage	95.9%	95.9%	**97%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Children in care participation in reviews	Percentage	79.4%	88.2%	**87.4%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available

Looked After Children – Health							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	**Merton 2013/14**	**National 2013/14**	**London 2013/14**	**Outer London**

					2013/14		
Children with Health Surveillance checks up to date	Number	12	12	8	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Percentage	86%	80%	100%			
Children who have had their annual health assessment	Number	70	70	79	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Percentage	83%	82%	95%	87%	90%	88%
NI 58 - Emotional & behavioural health – Average SDQ score	Score	11.4	14.6	12.3	13.9	13.4	13.7
Children who have had their immunisations up to date	Number	76	75	79	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Percentage	90%	88%	95%	83%	73%	80%
Children who have had their dental checks up to date	Number	83	85	69	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Percentage	99%	100%	83%	82%	88%	87%
Children who have been identified as having a substance misuse problem	Percentage	18.9%	10.7%	8.4%	3.5%	6.1%	6.2%

Looked After Children – Education							
Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	Merton 2013/14	National 2012/13	London 2012/13	Outer London 2012/13
Absence from school of children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months	Percentage	5.50	3.90		4.40	4.50	Date not available

Adoption

	Merton Single Year 2011-2012	Merton Single Year 2012-2013	Merton Single Year 2013-2014	National 3 Year Average 2010-2013	Merton 3 Year Average 2010-2013	Merton 3 Year Average 2011-2014
Adoption						
A1 - Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)	807 days	467.2 days	694.9 days (8cyp)	647 days	685 days	689 days
A2 - Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	344.1 days	124.25 days	291.7 days (6cyp)	210 days	256 days	281 days

A3 - Children who wait less than 20 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)	25%	23%.	76%	55%	42%	51%
A4 - Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted)	7% (9/93)	6% (5/85)	9% (10/107)	13%	7% (19/272)	8% (24/286)
A5 - The number of children for whom the permanence decision has changed away from adoption	3	2	9	n/a	n/a	n/a
A6 - The percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted	22% (2/9)	60% (3/5)	50% (5/10)	7%	26% (5/19)	42% (10/24)
A7 - The percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted	11% (1/9)	0% (0/5)	30% (3/10)	4%	11% (2/19)	17% (4/24)
A8 - Average length of care proceedings locally (weeks)	n/a	n/a	n/a	51 wks	65 wks	n/a
A9 - Number of children awaiting adoption	3	7	17	6890		

Care leavers

Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	Merton 2013/14	National 2013/14	London 2013/14	Outer London 2013/14
Care leavers							
Total Care leavers	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**96**	**n/a**	n/a	n/a
Care Leavers aged 19	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**29**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
	In touch with	Data not available	Data not available	**23 (79%)**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Care Leavers aged 20	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**34**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
	In touch with	Data not available	Data not available	**28 (82%)**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Care Leavers aged 21	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**33**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
	In touch with	Data not available	Data not available	**18 (54%)**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Subtotal Care Leavers aged 19, 20, 21	In touch with	Data not available	Data not available	**69 (72%)**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
% of children leaving care over age of 16 who remained looked after until their 18th birthday	Percentage	66.0%	63.0%	**65.1%**	**68%**	n/a	n/a

Indicators		Merton 2011/12	Merton 2012/13	Merton 2013/14	National 2012/13	London 2012/13	Outer London 2012/13
Care leavers - Accommodation							
% of young people aged 19, 20 or 21 Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**67.7%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
% of young people aged 19 Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Number	88.2%	85.0%	**64.3%**	88%	88%	87%
% of young people aged 20 Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**79.4%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
% of young people aged 21 Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Number	Data not available	Data not available	**58.1%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available

		Merton 2011-12	Merton 2012-13	Merton 2013/14	National 2012-13	London 2012/13	Outer London 2012/13
Care leavers – Education							
Care leavers aged 19, 20 or 21 not in education, employment or training	Percentage	Data not available	Data not available	**48.4%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Care leavers aged 19 not in education, employment or training	Percentage	17.6%	25.0%	**42.9%**	34%	28%	29%
Care leavers aged 20 not in education, employment or training	Percentage	Data not available	Data not available	**55.9%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Care leavers aged 21 not in education, employment or training	Percentage	Data not available	Data not available	**45.2%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Young people aged 19, 20 or 21 who were looked after aged 16 who were in higher education (i.e. beyond A-Level)	Percentage	Data not available	Data not available	**11.8%**	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Young people aged 19 who were looked after aged 16 who were in higher education (i.e. beyond A-Level)	Percentage	5.9%	10.0%	**0.0%**	6%	8%	9%
Young people aged 20 who were looked after aged 16 who were in higher education (i.e. studies beyond A-Level)	Percentage	Data not available	Data not available	14.7%	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available
Young people aged 21 who were looked after aged 16 who were in higher education (i.e. studies beyond A-Level)	Percentage	Data not available	Data not available	19.4%	**Data not available**	Data not available	Data not available

Appendix   3:   MSCB   Structure
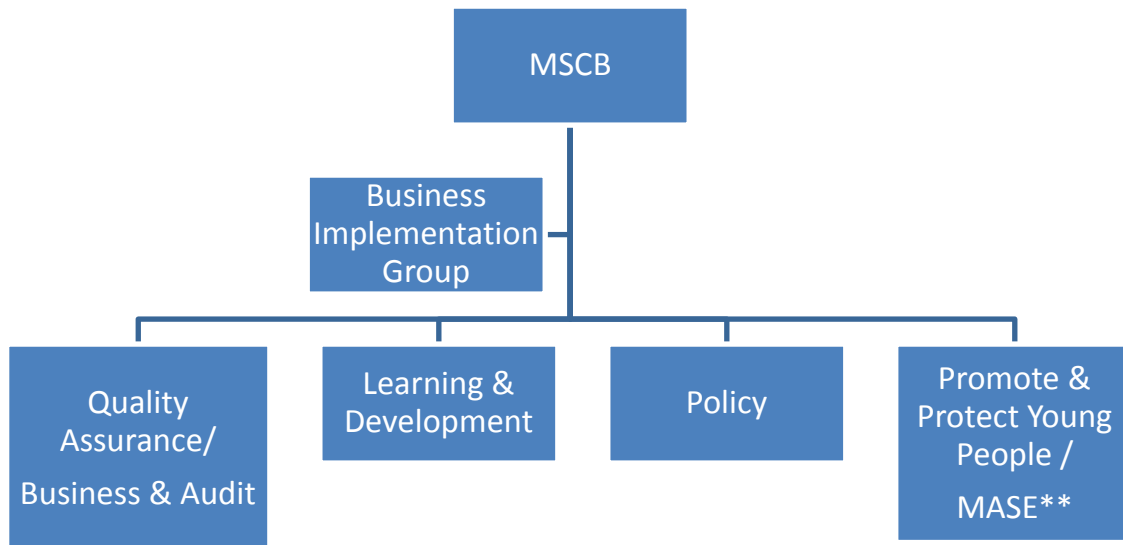
** MASE Multi -Agency Sexual Exploitation Group

In addition there are Joint Sub Groups with Sutton LSCB – namely

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) and the Joint Human Resources Sub Group.

The MSCB will commission Task and Finish Groups as required.

The MSCB Chair may commission a Panel to undertake SCRs or LIRs. (See Appendix Eight)

Reporting
Sub Groups will routinely report to the MSCB on their work plans as follows; and where required   by   exception:

Quality   Assurance
-        Multi-Agency   data   –   quarterly   in   arrears
-        Lessons   from   quality   assurance   at   each   MSCB   meeting

Learning   and   Development   –   twice   per   year

Policy – twice per year

Promote   and   Protect   Young   People   -   twice   per   year
- Quality and aggregated lessons arising from case monitoring in Promote & Protect/MASE meetings   will   be   reported   via   QA   and   to   the   MSCB

Joint   HR   Sub   Group   –   once   per   year

Joint CDOP – once per year, usually through the draft CDOP Annual Report

The Sub Groups will work together to ensure that Policy Development and Learning and Development reflect lessons being learned through QA and PPYP

Appendix 4: Membership

Membership of MSCB has been agreed as follows:

P Statutory Partner   **PO Participant Observer**

S Statutory Sector Partner   **SA Statutory Advisor**

C Co-opted   **A Advisor**

V Voting   **B Board support**

	MSCB
	Independent Chair **Casting vote**
P	**Vice Chair to be drawn from the Statutory Members**
P V	Chief Officer, Merton Clinical Commissioning Group
P V	NHS England (London)
P V	Chief Nurse, Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and Merton Community Health Services
P V	Sutton & Merton Service Director, SW London & St George's MH Trust
P V	Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, SW London & St Georges
P V	St George's Healthcare NHS Trust
P V	Director of Nursing, Epsom & St. Helier NHS Trust
P V	Borough Commander, Met Police

P V	DCI, Child Abuse Investigation Team, Met Police
P V	Assistant Chief Officer, London Probation
P V	Assistant Chief Officer The London Community Rehabilitation Company Limited
S V	Lay Members (Two)
S V	Voluntary Sector Agency (Two)
P V	Director, Children Schools & Families
P V	Head of CSC & YI, CSF
P V	Head of Education, CSF
C V	Director of Public Health Merton, Community & Housing
C V	Safeguarding Adults Manager, Community & Housing
C V	Housing Needs Manager, Community & Housing
P V	Senior Service Manager, CAFCASS
SV	Head Teacher Primary School 'Rep of Governing Body of a Maintained School

SV	Special School	
SV	Maintained secondary school	
SV	Representative of the proprietor of a city technology college, a city college for technology or the arts, or an Academy	
SV	Independent Sector School – vacant at Jan 2015	
CV	CP Officer, Merton Priory Homes	
PO	Merton Council Lead Member Children's Services	**Non-voting**
SA	Designated Doctor for Child Protection, Merton CCG	**Non-voting**
SA	Designated Nurse Safeguarding, Merton Clinical Commissioning Group	**Non-voting**
SA	Principal Social Worker	**Non-voting**
P V	Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, SW London & St Georges	
A	Joint Head of HR Business Partnerships	**Non-voting**
A	Service Manager, Policy, Planning and Performance	**Non-voting**
BS	MSCB Board Development Manager	**Non-voting**
BS	MSCB Administrator/s	**Non-voting**

A	MSCB Training Officer	**Non-voting**

Statutory Partners will nominate an agreed senior Agency Deputy who is able to speak and take decisions on their Agency's behalf

Sector Partners will cover each other and do not require a deputy for their own agency.

Advisers will not have deputies

Where a Sub Group Chair is appointed who is not a Board Member they will be co-opted to the Board but will not be a voting member, unless they are deputising for an Agency Member.

Contact details

Merton Safeguarding Children Board

9th Floor, Civic Centre

London Road

Morden

SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 4866

Email: mertonlscb@merton.gov.uk

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Date: 21st October 2015

Subject: Update on Developments Affecting Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families Dept
Lead members: Cllr Maxi Martin, Cllr Martin Whelton
Contact officer: Paul Ballatt, Assistant Director, Commissioning, Strategy and Performance

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

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1   PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1.   The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments affecting Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last meeting in July 2015.

2   DETAILS

2.1   Four Ofsted school inspection reports have been published since the panel's last meeting. Garfield, Poplar and St Mark's primary schools have retained ratings of 'good' while the grade for Merton Park primary school improved to 'outstanding'. Two further inspections – of Gorringe primary school and the Smart Centre have taken place but reports have not yet been published.

2.2   Provisional GCSE and A-Level results, and a new NEET 'scorecard', were published over the summer period. Details of these are contained in the performance report on this agenda.

2.3   As a result of representation from parents and a recent letter from the Schools Minister to all local authorities on the subject, the department has reviewed its position on delayed admission of summer born children. An interim policy and guidance note has been issued in respect of Merton's community schools which adopts a more flexible approach than previously with a presumption that requests for delayed admission will be agreed provided reasonable justification is provided that such a delay will be in a child's best interests. This position is in line with the government's policy intention but will be reviewed when the new national Admissions Code is published in early 2016. A copy of the interim position is attached at **Appendix One.**

2.4   Officers are continuing to work closely with the government's Education Funding Agency and the Harris federation to identify a prospective site for the new secondary school in the Wimbledon area which has been given pre-opening approval by the DfE. As options appraisal and feasibility work is continuing on a small number of options, it has not been possible to submit a report to Cabinet

in October with a recommendation on a preferred site as was hoped. It is now anticipated that Cabinet will receive this report in December 2015.

2.5   The school admissions service was able to allocate a place to every child applying for a primary school reception place this year. At the time of writing, we are maintaining a vacancy rate of around 5%, in line with levels historically recommended by the Audit Commission. For year 7 entry (start of secondary school), the council received 161 additional applications from LB Merton residents this year, generally as expected in our pupil projections, and were also able to offer places to all residents with a significantly reduced surplus.

2.6   Promotion of Free School Meals (FSM) and the Pupil Premium continues across Merton schools. Feedback confirms schools are promoting this initiative in a variety of ways including parent meetings, newsletters, and as part of the induction process for new starters. Pupil Premium data provided by the DfE confirms 4983 children eligible for FSM in 2014/15 and attending Merton schools are still entitled in 2015/16. The data also shows that an additional 1060 eligible children were identified in the last year and will now generate Pupil Premium funding for Merton schools. This funding is worth in the region of £1.26M. However, largely as a result of changes to entitlement through welfare benefit reform, there are a significant number of pupils no longer entitled to FSM and Pupil Premium with over 1000 children removed from the register over the last year.

2.7   Officers and partners are currently engaged in a refresh of the borough's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Although no longer required by statute to have a CYPP, the council and our partners have continued to be committed to this Plan as it is seen to be a key tool in promoting partnership practice across services for children and their families and in promoting multi – agency accountability for the implementation of key priorities. As agreed by the Children's Trust Board, the Plan is to retain the focus it has had for some years now, driven by public sector funding pressures, on improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough. A copy of the draft Plan is attached at **Appendix Two** and comments from panel members are welcome. The final plan will be presented for approval to the Children's Trust Board in November 2015.

2.8   An examination of data and the results of multi-agency case auditing has led Merton's Safeguarding Children Board to commission a new local strategy for responding to issues of neglect in families. The strategy reinforces the need to identify children suffering neglect as early as possible and it clarifies thresholds for intervention, particularly in relation to chronic neglect.

2.9   As part of their own transformation planning, Merton CAMHs is adopting a 'Single Point of Entry' (SPA) model through which all referrals to the service are considered and directed to the most appropriate form of CAMH intervention. In a further step to improve co-ordination and increase integration across services, the MH Trust has agreed that the SPA will be located in Civic Centre alongside Merton's MASH and assessment services. This proximity will improve information sharing and support more 'joined up' assessments of children's needs.

2.10   Members of the panel will be aware of the significant numbers of refugee children, young people and families migrating to Britain as a result of conflicts in

their countries/regions of origin. Pressures on children's services in Kent have been unsustainable and central and local government across the country are currently developing procedures for the dispersal and re-settlement of refugees, both unaccompanied minors and families. Merton has agreed to participate in this scheme and is currently awaiting further information on its implementation.

3   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1.   None for the purposes of this report.

4   CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1.   None for the purposes of this report.

5   TIMETABLE

5.1.   N/A

6   FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1.   No specific implications.

7   LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1.   No specific implications.

8   HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1.   No specific implications.

9   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1.   No specific implications.

10   RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1.   No specific implications.

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

- Appendix 1 – admission of summer born children
- Appendix 2 – draft Children and Young People Plan

12   BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1.   None

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London Borough of Merton

Interim Policy and Guidance to parents: The Admission Of Summer Born Children

October 2015

Introduction

Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, issued a letter on 8 September describing the Government's future policy intention regarding summer born children. Accompanying this was a request for admission authorities to take immediate action prior to new guidance and regulations being issued. This follows earlier Department for Education guidance issued in December 2014 which stated requests should only be agreed in very limited circumstances.

LB Merton officers will take a more open approach to such applications for late summer born children with the presumption that they will be approved as long as there is a reasonable justification from the parents that it is in the child's best interests, and we have undertaken some procedural checks to ensure there are no known issues that we may need to consider further.

To make the process easier for parents we will also no longer routinely request specific evidence from a professional, but we will continue to require a written request for consideration until such time as Regulations are amended.

Please note this policy update only applies to Merton community schools, as VA schools, Free Schools, Academies and schools in other boroughs are able to have their own policy.

This Interim Policy and Guidance is to enable the council to administer admissions applications fairly to the spirit of the School Minister's letter, while taking into account some of the practical issues that arise from it, such as the implication for nursery places.

Submitting Requests

Written requests should be made at the same time as a Reception application for entry according to the child's date of birth; this allows us to seek the view of the preference school (which we are required to do under current regulations) as well as ensures a school place can be allocated if, for any reason, the request is not granted or parents decide not to proceed with the request.

Requests should therefore be submitted in advance of the closing date for Reception applications, 15 January 2016, and may be made by email to admissions@merton.gov.uk .

Where parents wish to be considered for a school where the London Borough of Merton is not the admission authority (such as an Academy, Free School, Voluntary Aided school, or school outside of Merton), a separate request must currently be made to each admission authority.

Outcomes

We will endeavour to consider requests and provide outcomes within 2 weeks of the request being made. Outcomes will provide instructions on what to do next and, if the request is not agreed, the reasons for this will be given.

Reception Applications The Following Year

Where parents, whose requests have been agreed, make a further Reception application for the following academic year, this must be made on a paper application form via the parents' home local authority.

The Pan-London Online Admissions Portal currently only permits applications to be made according to the 12 month date of birth range.

Nursery Education

Parents may continue to access the Nursery Education Grant until they reach statutory school age. Parents should speak to their nursery provider (if not a LB Merton community school) if their place will remain available for a further year.

Attending a Nursery Attached to a Community School

Where a request is made for delayed entry to Reception prior to the closing date of 15 January, and the request is agreed, a child attending a LB Merton community school nursery may remain in the nursery for the following academic year up to the end of the summer term prior to reaching statutory school age.

If a request is not agreed, the child will leave nursery at the end of that academic year.

Where a late request is made following the 15 January closing date, the parent will need to request to go back onto the waiting list for the nursery as the nursery place may have already been allocated on to another child.

If no application for nursery has been made, this may be done following the outcome being issued.

Please note – attendance in a school nursery does not give any priority for a Reception place.

Future Review of This Policy

A new School Admissions Code is expected to be introduced in early 2016; LB Merton admissions policy will be reviewed and determined at that time.

Draft

Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19

Context

Introduction

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is a multi-agency plan of plans which underpin Merton's Community Plan.

It sets out how agencies in Merton collectively deliver the borough's priorities for children, young people and their families and particularly to those who are vulnerable to poorer outcomes than their peers.

TO BE DRAFTED……….

- *CYPP is a Plan of plans drawing together key priorities from other plans/strategies for children and young people to be delivered collectively by the Childrens Trust.*
- *Focus on targeted intervention and most vulnerable groups*

The national and local context

Since publishing our last Children and Young People's Plan in 2012 we have managed ongoing change on a national and local level. This plan is written within a context of greater national expectations, local demographic changes with an increasing population, further reducing budgets and increasing government scrutiny.

The global financial crisis of 2009 led to a programme of austerity and deficit reduction, consequently children's services have operated within a context of unprecedented funding pressures.

Alongside the financial challenges, we have also managed widespread public sector reforms. Nationally, Professor Eileen Munro (2012) led an independent review into how agencies worked together to safeguard children and young people. The review concluded that child protection had lost its focus on the needs and experiences of children and its publication led to a programme of reform of local safeguarding governance and practice.

The revised Public Law Outline 2013 highlighted the need for faster care proceedings leading to permanence for vulnerable children, with a particular focus on adoption.

Educational reforms have led to greater school autonomy, with the creation of academies and free schools and a drive to improve standards. The introduction of the Pupil Premium has offered schools additional resources to help narrow the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

With the raising of the participation age from 2013, local authorities are now also expected to work with schools, colleges and employers to promote participation in education, employment or training for all 16 and 17 year olds.

A greater focus on early intervention has resulted in initiatives such as 'free childcare for vulnerable 2 year olds' and funding for targeted holistic family interventions for 'Troubled Families' vulnerable to criminal and anti-social behaviour, poor mental health, unemployment, school absence and the Family Nurse Partnership.

In healthcare, Clinical Commissioning Groups have been established and are now responsible for commissioning local health provision (2014). The Public Health function has transferred to Local Authorities. Strategic multi-agency Health and Wellbeing Boards have been established, supported by strengthened Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) and local voluntary sector led 'Health watch'. These reforms promote whole systems thinking and a greater focus on jointly informed local commissioning.

Finally the Children and Families Act 2014 legislated for a complete review of the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, requiring the implementation of a Local Offer and new multi-disciplinary Education, Health and Care Plans replacing the old SEN statement.

Within the context of these legislative and regulatory changes, our local knowledge, needs analysis and collective understanding, we have recognised that we need to continue to focus on the most vulnerable groups within our population, securing improved outcomes for these young people and narrowing outcome gaps.

Our focus on the most vulnerable groups is rooted within a clear evidence base. It is not rhetoric that poverty, ethnicity, gender, social care vulnerability, and special educational need are linked to poorer life outcomes. The following are national facts which have informed our priorities.

- 'The attainment gap between rich and poor which opens up before children start school, is visible during the infant years and increases over time' (White Paper, The importance of teaching, 2010)
- Pupils entitled to free school meals are only half as likely to achieve five good GCSEs as their peers' (White Paper, The importance of teaching, 2010)
- 32 per cent of looked after children do not get any GCSEs and a further 24 per cent achieve fewer than five GSCEs, this is around seven times higher than for children on average (Monitoring poverty and social exclusion, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2010)
- 33 per cent of carer leavers are not in education, employment or training (DfE, 2011)
- A particular vulnerable group is children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM), especially white British boys
- Of those pupils known to be eligible for FSM there are variations in achievement by gender and ethnicity
- It is estimated that the current generation of 16 to 18 year olds who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) will cost society £31 billion during their life time, or £4.6 billion annually (No Excuses: A Review of Educational Exclusion, Centre for Social Justice, 2011)
- There is a proven correlation between illiteracy, innumeracy and offending. Before custody 53% of male offenders and 71% of female offenders have no qualifications whatsoever' (Factsheet Education in Prisons Civitas: Institute for the study of Civic Society, 2010)
- Young people of today will be parents of the future therefore improving their life chances is not only important for breaking the cycle of poverty but also for reducing the likelihood of their children being in poverty, with ill health and/or not achieving their educational potential.

Our Children and Young People's Plan is therefore focused on the following six priorities:

- Children in need of early help and those subject to the effects of disadvantage
- Children requiring effective, timely and targeted safeguarding
- Children looked after and care leavers
- Narrowing the gap in educational outcomes and opportunity
- Engage and enable young people to better outcomes
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Within each of the following chapters we describe our policy position, the data which informs our understanding, some of our successes to date, our future actions, the impact we hope these actions will have and how we will measure our progress.

Ways of working

There is a strong ethos of working together in Merton to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. The partnership landscape is well established, with strong commitment from partner organisations. (NB to be redrawn)
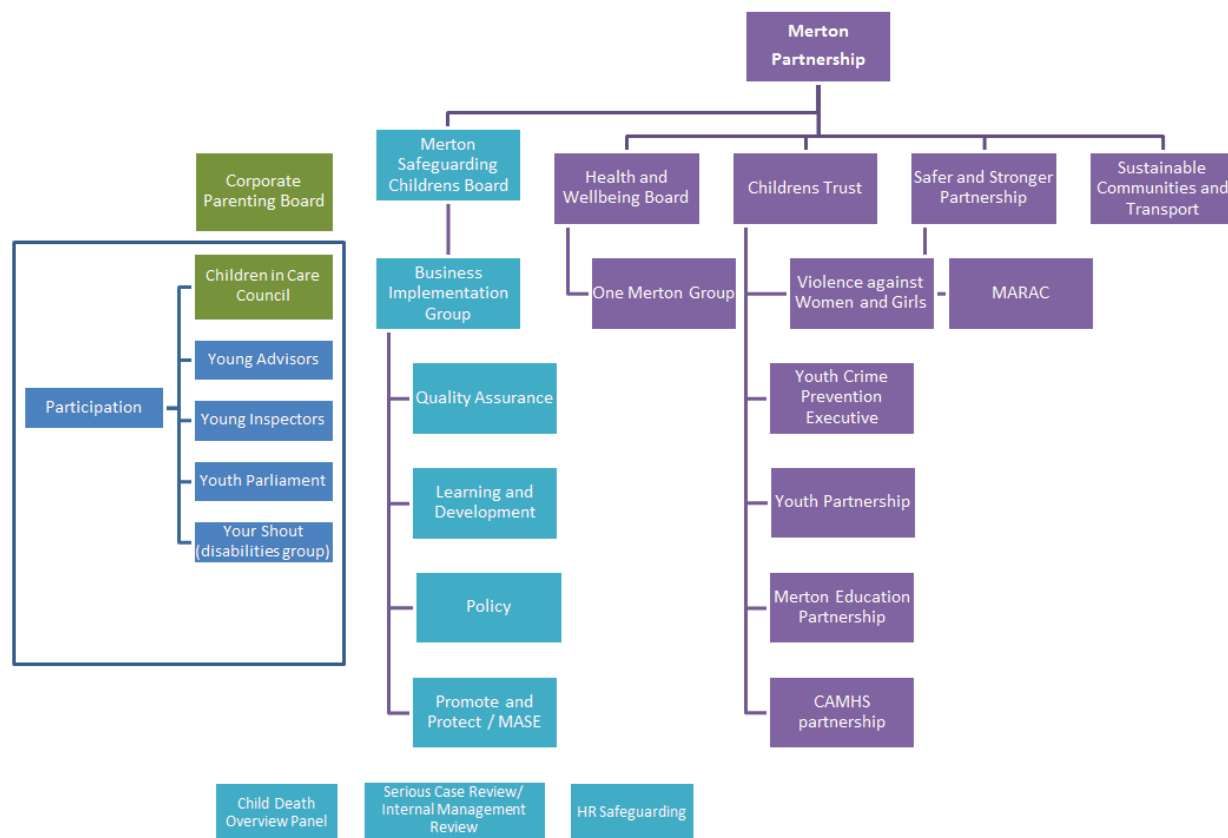
Figure X: Merton Partnership structure relating to children as at June 2015

Merton's Children's Trust Board and the Merton Safeguarding Children's Board are committed to working in the following ways to achieve the strategic outcomes in this plan:

- Keeping children and young people at the heart of our work.
- Equality, equity, inclusion and valuing diversity – judged on our impact on the most vulnerable.
- Local accountability and partnership.
- Making a difference – quality assurance and continuous improvement
- Promoting a learning culture
- Promoting a culture that values children and young people.

Performance management and governance

Merton's Children's Trust brings together services in the borough to focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. Key partners of the trust are:

- Merton Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services
- Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Public Health and health providers
- Merton Borough Police
- Merton Voluntary Service Council, representing the voluntary and community sector
- Primary, secondary and special schools in Merton
- South Thames College

Representatives from all these organisations make up the Merton Children's Trust Board which will keep a strategic oversight of the plan. Each organisation has agreed to be responsible for implementing the Children and Young People's Plan.

The Children's Trust Board will monitor this plan against a combination of the 'What will we do? (action plan) ' and the 'Key representative performance indicators' sections detailed in each chapter of this plan with progress reports submitted to the board.

Finally, we will continue to consult and engage children, young people and their families by implementing our User Voice Strategy. Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with service users, parents, carers (including young carers), professionals and advocates will be vital in driving improvement, ensuring challenge and accountability, and ensuring that our priorities remain relevant.

Understanding need

The Children and Young People's Plan has been informed by a wide range of information, including demographic data, performance information and service users' views. The section below provides a brief overview of the key messages.

Borough profile - Merton the Place

- Merton is an outer London borough situated to the south west of central London.
- Merton covers 14.7 square miles and is home to 200,543 people of which 47,499 are children and young people. The number of 0-19 year olds is forecast to increase by 3,180 (7%) by 2017, within which we forecast a 20% increase of children aged 5 to 9 (2,270).
- We have a younger population than the England average and have seen a 39% net increase of births over the last ten years (2,535 births in 2002 rising to 3,521 in 2010). The birth rate reduced in 2012/13 and again slightly in 2013/14 suggesting that the rate is stabilising. However the last ten years alongside other demographic factors has placed additional demand on all children's services.
- Predominantly suburban in character, Merton has three main town centres: Wimbledon, Mitcham and Morden, with high levels of commuter flows in and out of central London.
- Census 2011 data estimated that 40.1% of the population is from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, with the range across schools being 32% to 91%.
- There are over 121 languages spoken in Merton's 43 primary schools, eight secondary schools, three special schools, one Pupil Referral Unit and 11 children's centres. The borough has concentrations of Urdu speaking communities, Sri Lankan, South African and Polish residents. The most prominent first languages for pupils apart from English are Tamil 5.9%, Urdu 5.9% and Polish 4.5%.
- 100% of children's centres have been judged as good or outstanding and 83% of schools are judged as good or outstanding.
- Our post 16 offer is delivered by South Thames College and a number of schools sixth forms and post 16 training providers.
- Seven libraries provide internet access, summer reading schemes and homework clubs as well as traditional book, CD, DVD and video lending. Three leisure centres and youth partnerships provide a wide range of facilities and participation activities in Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon. Merton also boast 65 parks and open spaces (including Wimbledon and Mitcham commons), 28 conservation areas, 11 nature reserves and 17 allotment sites.
- Merton is consistently amongst the top four safest boroughs in London which is a tribute to the excellent partnerships between the council and Metropolitan Police.

According to the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Merton is the fourth least deprived of the 33 London boroughs. Nationally the borough is ranked 208 out of 326, where 1 is the most deprived. This overall lack of deprivation does, however, hide stark inequalities in the borough between deprived wards in the east of the borough (Mitcham) and the more affluent wards in the west (Wimbledon).

Our most deprived wards according to the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children are Ravensbury, Cricket Green, Lavender Fields, Figgie's Marsh, Longthornton and Pollards Hill. These wards are also home to the majority of children and families supported by Childrens Social Care services.
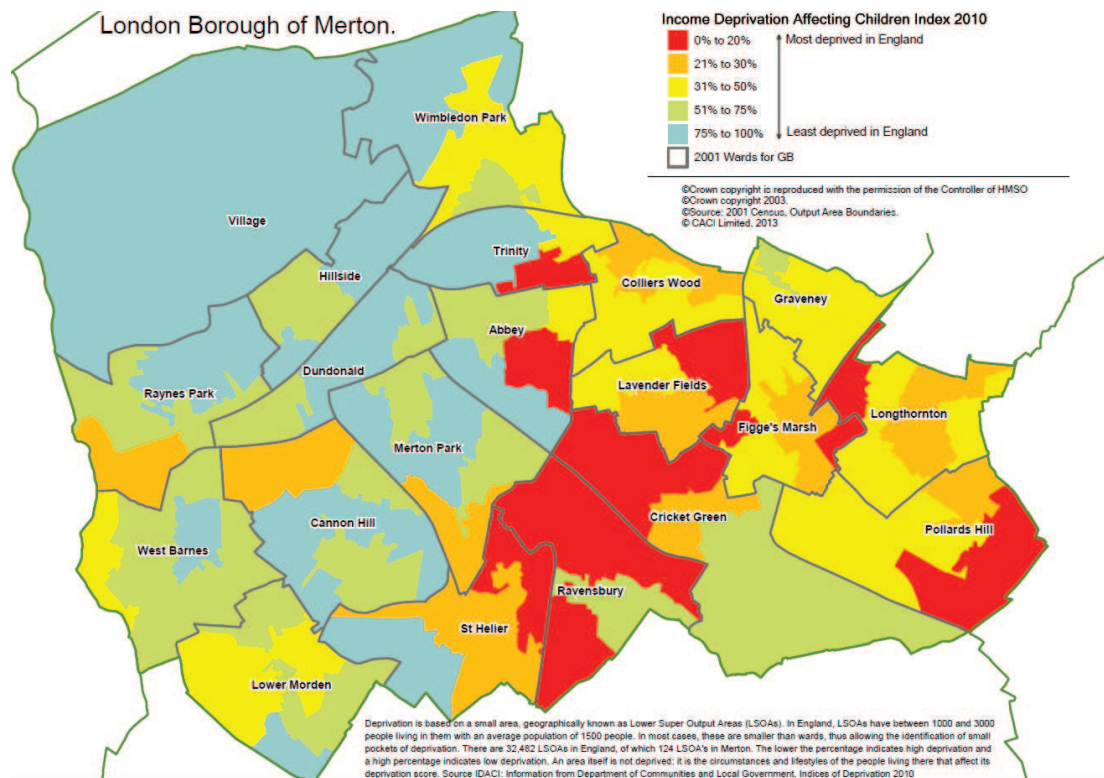
Figure X: Income of deprivation affective children (2010) in Merton by ward.

The following statistics highlight the inequalities between the east and the west of the borough.

- Median household income is £34,461 per annum. However, it is estimated that 27% of those employed living in the east of the borough earn under £20,000.
- The east of the borough has much higher levels of serious illness and early deaths from illnesses such cancer and heart disease.
- Life expectancy for men in the most deprived 10% of the borough which is in the east is 77.20 years whilst for the least deprived 10% living in the west it is 83 years
- Merton has 39 areas which are amongst the 30% most deprived areas across England for children (39 Super Output Areas).
- 45% of Merton school pupils are living in an area of deprivation (30% most deprived, IDACI 2010).
- Although unemployment in the borough is below the national average, it rises significantly in some of the eastern wards, and 63% of all benefit claimants live in the east of the borough.
- Since 2010 we have seen an increase of 23% (2014) of children who are eligible for free school meals.

Merton is, therefore, a borough of contrasts. Bridging the gap between the east and the west of the borough is the main theme of the Merton Community Plan and as such a key driver for our Children and Young People's Plan.

IF MERTON WERE A VILLAGE OF 100 CHILDREN...

IT TAKES A WHOLE VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD

children and young people
merton partnership

83 Immunised by 1st Birthday

60 Achieve a 'Good Level of Development' in Early Years

Girls **48**

Boys **52**

69 Breastfed at 6 to 8 weeks

48 Are BAME

19 Live in poverty

86 Breastfed at birth

22 Obese at Year 6

9 Obese in Reception

78 Have mothers who accessed early maternity services

15 Have special educational needs

4 Are referred to Childrens Social Care

7 Born under 2.5kg

7 Have mothers who smoked during pregancy

0.4 Are subject to a Child protection Plan

100

95 In Education, Employment or Training

0.33 Are 'Looked After Children'

66 Achieve at least 3 A levels

80 Attend schools graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted

0.52 Commit an offence

3 Primary school pupils are absent 15% of the year

79 Achieve Level 4 at KS2 in reading writting and maths

4 Secondary school pupils are absent 15% of the year

64 Achieve 5+ GSCEs A* to C inc. English and maths

3 Girls under 18 become pregnant

If Merton was a village of 100 Children - data as at 2013/14

Priority area 1: Deliver early help and improve outcomes for those subject to the effects of disadvantage

Why do we need to focus on this?

Early help is provided at different levels of our Child and Wellbeing Model and in Merton we use the C4EO definition:

> *Intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle emerging problems for children, young people and families….early help can take place early in a child's life or early in the development of a problem….effective early help prevents escalation of need and reduces severity of problems…early help can be provided to individual families, particular vulnerable groups or whole populations (C4eo 2012)*

Conscious of language across our partnership we agree that the term 'Early Help' is often used interchangeably and as reference to 'Early Intervention and Prevention', 'Early Support' and 'Early Years'.

Our focus is on working to create and deliver clear plans, often as multi-disciplinary services, which improve outcomes for children and reduce the escalation of need.

We understand that providing early help as soon as a problem emerges is more effective and potentially less expensive in promoting the welfare of children, we agree that:

- identifying and assessing problems at an early stage increases the chances of their effects being minimised or eliminated.
- good support in early years is a determinant of good outcomes and improved life chances.
- being alert and responding early to the key determinants of child protection in families – e.g. adult mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse – can prevent more intrusive interventions later

> *(Allen (2011); Field (2010); Tickell (2011); Munro (2011) et al)*

Early help involves a broad range of multi-agency services and support. The physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people is incredibly important to them having a good quality of life, and good chances in adulthood.

We know that parents, children, and young people make a whole range of decisions that affect their life chance now and in the future. We know that parental capacity is key to good early life outcomes.

Having a good enough place to live, and the financial resources to manage, are an important part of children and young people being able to succeed in life. Without secure housing and financial stability families can find it hard to prioritise other things in life, and if the most basic of needs aren't met we have a very limited foundation to build on improving children and young people outcomes.

EARLY HELP

Improving outcomes for those subject to the effects of disadvantage

children and young people — merton partnership

Early help is provided at different levels of our Child and Young Person Well Being Model, in Merton we believe in the C4EO definition:

Intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle emerging problems for children, young people and families….early help can take place early in a child's life or early in the development of a problem….effective early help prevents escalation of need and reduces severity of problems…early help can be provided to individual families, particular vulnerable groups or whole populations (C4EO 2012)

COMMON AND SHARED ASSESSMENTS

Health
Learning
Identity
Outcomes
Behaviour
Parenting
Wider Family and Enviroment
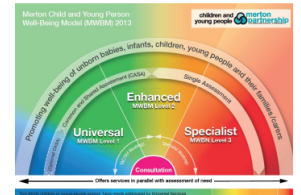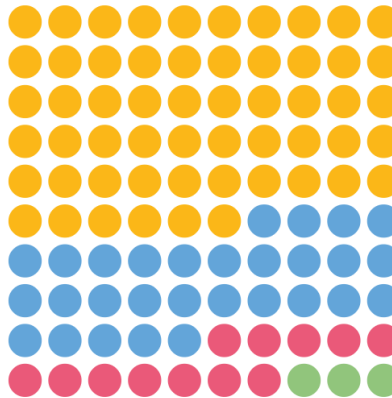
- Early years (56%)
- Primary school (29%)
- Secondary school (12%)
- 16+ (3%)

2000
Trained CASA professionals

EARLY YEARS

78% of users of children's centres live in areas of deprivation (2014/15)

60% of all children achieve a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2013/14)

A B C

44% of Free School Meal children achieve a Good Level of Development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2013/14)

A B C

6 to 8 weeks
Mothers breast feeding at 6 to 8 weeks 69% (2014/15)

MMR1 coverage Age 2, 84% (2014/15)
MMR2 coverage Age 5, 76% (2014/15)

Childhood obesity Reception 21% (2013/14) by Year 6, 36% (2013/14)

75% of parents referred complete 'Parenting programme' courses. (2014/15)

STEPPING UP AND DOWN IN NEED

escalating need

de-escalating need

For 80% of families early help works, they have no contact with children's social care for at least 6 months after attending a parenting programme (2013/14)

100%
370 Troubled Families turned around 2011 to 2015, now 378 more to support

Figure X: Merton intelligence profile: Early Help

What have been our key successes to date?

Since our last CYPP we have…

- Revised our Child and Young Person Wellbeing Model including implementing a new CASA model and tools with significant partnership engagement and consultation.
- Commissioned more targeted early intervention and prevention services, including services for families experiencing domestic violence and parental mental health issues and those requiring family support; services for young runaways and young people at risk of sexual exploitation; and services to support children with disabilities and young carers.
- Targeted the take-up of Children's Centre services to families from deprived areas in the borough, now making up 77% of all users.
- Turned around 100% (370) of high need 'troubled families' between 2011 and 2015. Merton was one of the first local authorities in the country to be selected by the DCLG to pilot the Expanded Programme for phase two of the programme.
- Troubled Families programme awarded national Compact Engagement award (November 2014).
- Implemented a project which has increased Pupil Premium income for Merton's schools.
- Forty four per cent of Free School Meal (FSM) children achieved a 'good level of development' (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2013/14, a 10% increase on 2012/13.
- Improved breastfeeding and immunisation rates; reduced levels of excess weight and obesity in pre-school children and reduced levels of teenage pregnancies
- Established a Family Nurse Partnership and a commitment to maintain the programme over the next three years.

Our user voice activity told us….	… so we did…
Families who use children's centres in one locality said "We want more groups, often it is too busy and we cannot get in".	We have changed the way that this locality offered groups so that families can attend at least one extra session per week, in addition to targeted sessions. This year 78% of families in deprived areas accessed children's centres.
Parents said that the benefits of the free childcare that they receive for their eligible two year old includes making new friends, improving language development, reading, improved behaviour, increased confidence, and toilet training.	To encourage further take-up of the offer we produced a video with parents about the benefits of free childcare for eligible 2 year olds; take up has increased over the year 2014/15.

What will we do?

We want partner agencies to continue to lead on Common and Shared Assessments (CASA) and Teams Around the Child, and our early help commissioned services to be more sharply targeted at those families most at risk of poorer outcomes.

- We will remain committed to our multi-agency Merton Child and Young Person Wellbeing Model and continue to deliver CASA training and development across agencies to provide early help for all aspects of life. (MSCB Training programme)
- We will continue to apply and develop impact measures for early help services and use learning to inform future commissioning plans (Joint Commissioning Service Plan)

Positive early attachment, bonding and resilience have long-term benefits and it is during the early years that we develop our lifestyle habits for later years. We want parents to have increased confidence and skills in living sustainable healthy lives.

- We will continue to deliver effective, impactful and evidence based parenting programmes, targeted where necessary to support family and child development. We will focus on those families who are hard to engage (Early Help Strategy)
- We will continue to offer families support via the Local Area Network (LAN) in which a lead practitioner works with the family and other professionals to coordinate a package of support based around the family's individual needs. (Early Years Partnership)

Developing children's language from the earliest possible moment is the most significant of all interventions in narrowing the gap. 'The attainment gap between rich and poor which opens up before children start school, is visible during the infant years and increases over time' (White Paper, The importance of Teaching, 2010)

- We will focus on improving the early years development scores " Good Level of Development' where we are below national (Merton's Equalities and Community Cohesion Action Plan)
- We will continue to focus on attracting families from the target areas to engage with a wide range of Children Centres services including access to play and stay and early education groups, job club, child health services, midwifery and antenatal as well as targeted home visiting services. (Early Years Partnership)
- We will continue to support the roll our free child care hours in line with National policy expectations. (Early Years Partnership)
- We will increase levels of school readiness in young children (Health and Wellbeing Strategy)

Despite improvement, Merton's immunisation rates are below recommended levels and inequalities in immunisation uptake persist among poorer families. Obesity levels for children aged 4-5 have improved and are in line with national averages, but we have not sufficiently impacted on levels of obesity for children aged 10-11.

- We will complete joint commissioning of the new community health services for children and young people including health visiting, school nursing and therapies ensuring mobilisation in line with Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Authority priorities (CCG Operational Plan and Commissioning intentions)
- We will engage GP practices in strategies to increase uptake and coverage of childhood immunisations. (Health and Wellbeing Strategy)
- We will increase parental access to and awareness of immunisations. (Health and Wellbeing Strategy)
- We will re procure weight management services for children with an even greater focus on prevention. (Health and Wellbeing Strategy)

We are committed to improving access for children and young people to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and to continue to develop pathways to timely services for our more vulnerable young people.

- We will refresh Merton's CAMHS Strategy with an emphasis on promoting resilience and early intervention as well as providing care for the most vulnerable (CAMHS Transformation Programme)
- We will introduce a CAMHS 'Single Point of Access', strengthening information sharing with Merton's MASH (CAMHS Transformation Programme)

We want to build on the success of our Transforming Families service and find ways of sustaining this model in the longer term. We recognise the importance of disposable income to families and we want to provide more parents with support to meet their needs around employment, benefits and housing.

- We will continue to deliver the targeted Transforming Families programme to 'turn around' the lives of families with parental mental health, employability and school attendance needs. (CSF, Family and Adolescent Service Plan)
- We will continue to deliver employability programmes in our Children's Centres. (Early Years Partnership)
- We will work with partners to reduce JSA claimants and getting more of our residents into work. (Health and Wellbeing Strategy)
- We will commission specific training and development for lone parents and carers and the long term unemployed (Economic Development Strategy)
- We will support the regeneration of Pollards Hill and Phipps Bridge Estate (Circle Housing Regeneration Plan)

Key representative performance indicators

Deliver early help and improve outcomes for those subject to the effects of disadvantage	2013-14 Outturn	2014-15 Outturn	National Benchmark
Percentage of parents referred completing 'parenting programmes'	85%	75%	n/a
Percentage of mothers breast feeding at 6 to 8 weeks	69%	68%	n/a
Percentage of 0-4 year olds from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) accessing Children's Centre services (estimated Census 2011 population)	78%	78%	n/a
Number of two year olds accessing 'Free child places"	613	917	n/a
Percentage achieving 'A Good Level of Development' at Early Years Foundation Stage (4 to 5 year olds)	46% (AY 2012/13)	60% (AY 2013/14)	60% (2013/14)
Percentage of Free School Meals cohort achieving 'A Good Level of Development' at Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (4 to 5 year olds)	33% (AY 2012/13)	44% (AY 2013/14)	45% (2013/14)
Percentage of MMR1 coverage: 1 dose of MMR by age 2 years	83.5%	84.1%	n/a
Percentage of MMR2 coverage: 2 doses of MMR by age 5 years	72%	76%	n/a
Percentage of excess weight in children age 4-5 years (overweight and obesity)	21% (AY 2012/13)	20.9% (AY 2013/14)	n/a
Percentage of excess weight in children aged 10-11 years (overweight and obesity)	35% (AY 2012/13)	36.4% (AY 2013/14)	n/a
Numbers of families engaged and 'Turned around' in the Transforming families programme (National Troubled Families programme)	173	370 (100% Turned around)	99% 'Turned around'

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Priority area 2: Safeguarding children and young people

Why do we need to focus on this?

Maintaining robust safeguarding arrangements is at the core of our activity. At our last Safeguarding and Looked after Children inspection in January 2012 Ofsted graded us as Good on all measures. Inspectors noted that "the council, its partners and elected members in Merton have identified and secured demonstrable improvements to services, which are contributing to improving outcomes for children and young people".

Merton has sustained a journey of continuous improvement, which where possible has been embedded into a 'business as usual' approach. We have a long established Children and Young People Well Being Model which reflects how local services provide support for children along a continuum of need supported by "Universal, Enhanced and Specialist" level services.

Merton's referral rate reflects a similar trend to London and National benchmarks, increasing from 351.5 in 2012/13 to 386.5 per 10,000 in 2013/14. Merton's children in need rate per 10,000 (2013/14, 355.1) is lower than the London average 367 but higher than the National 346.4, we remain close to our statistical neighbours (2013/14). Our CIN rate has increased over a number of years alongside our population changes from 171.0 in 2008/9, 276.8 in 2009/10, 288.3 in 2010/11, 371.3 in 2011/12, 336.8 in 2012/13 and 355.1 in 2013/14.

Rates of children subject to a child protection plan in Merton (40.3 2013/14) are similar to national (42.1) and London (37.4). As at the end of 2013/14 11.3% of children became subject of a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time, this is lower than the national (15.5%) and London (13%) averages (2013/14). Our developing use of "Signs of Safety" is providing a useful tool for working with families as well as enabling active discussion about practice and continuous professional development.

One of the key features and enablers of progress has been the strong partnership that exists across a wide range of children's services agencies at strategic and operational levels. We have strengthened the governance of safeguarding services provided by the Merton Safeguarding Children Board but remain ambitious to use performance management and quality assurance to further improve practice in line with our ambitions and expectations.

The council and partner agencies implemented an effective Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in line with national expectations. In the context of increasing pressure on specialist services, however, we need to review its functioning and ensure that the multi-agency capacity in the MASH is best utilised to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.

SAFEGUARDING
Effective, timely and targeted

children and young people / merton partnership

The Merton Children and Young People Well Being Model reflects how local services provide support for children along a continuum of need supported by "Universal, Enhanced and Specialist" level services.

We want to ensure that children and families receive the right intervention from the right agencies, continuing to work across the partnership to minimise harm to children and young people.

Merton Child and Young Person Well-Being Model (MWBM) 2013
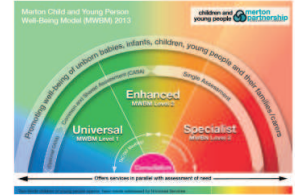
RATE PER 10,000

386 Referrals of which 80% lead to the provision of social care services

336 Single Assessments

131 Section 47 enquiries

CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION

Merton's children in need rate per 10,000 (2013/14, 355.1) is lower than the London average 367 but higher than the National 346.4, we remain close to our statistical neighbours (2013/14).

FACTORS IDENTIFIED AT THE END OF SINGLE ASSESSMENTS

Factors at the end of assessment 2013-2014
Factors at the end of assessment Ytd 2014-2015

Category	2013-2014	2014-2015
Young Carers	95	155
Privately Fostered	10	13
UASC	8	16
Missing	58	56
Child sexual Exploitation	73	79
Trafficking	4	10
Gangs	48	54
Anti Social Behaviour	130	160
Self Harm	91	88
Alcohol – Child	50	56
Alcohol – Carer	244	235
Alcohol – Other	38	38
Drugs – child	79	90
Drugs – Carer	189	192
Drugs – Other	50	52
Domestic Violence – Child	276	250
Domestic Violence – Carer	534	531
Domestic Violence – Other	129	114
Mental Health – Child	196	203
Mental Health – Carer	362	389
Mental Health – Other	60	65
Learning Disability – Child	182	170
Learning Disability – Carer	66	58
Learning Disability – Other	58	35
Physical Disability or Illness – Child	112	99
Physical Disability or Illness – Carer	102	98
Physical Disability or Illness – Other	46	27
Neglect	201	205
Emotional Abuse	423	454
Physical Abuse	179	212
Sexual Abuse	74	70
Other Concerns	158	145

CHILD PROTECTION

182 PLANS

40 children per 10,000 are subject of a child protection plan (National 42)

3% remain on a child protecion plan for 2 years or more (National 2%)

11% are subject for a second or subsequent plan (National 15%)

Rate per 10,000 - emotional abuse 21, neglect 9, physical abuse 3, sexual abuse 3

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

46% CIN achieving at least level 4 at KS2 in reading, writing and maths (National 46%)

22% CIN achieve 5 + A*-C grades at GCSE including English and maths (National 15%)

14% CIN persistently absent from school (National 13%)

5% CIN have at least 1 fixed term exclusion (National 7%)

Figure X: Merton intelligence profile: Safeguarding

What have been our key successes to date?

Since our last CYPP we have…
- Further developed the MSCB governance role and function
- Appointed a robust independent chair of the MSCB
- Reviewed the operation of the Board and sub-groups, establishing a new 'business implementation group'
- Strengthened multi-agency performance management via implementation of a new MSCB dataset
- Further developed and implemented our multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework with more routine case auditing; more robust section 11 assessments for safeguarding services and annual partner quality assurance and challenge meetings
- Undertaken self-evaluation and peer review of our response to child sexual exploitation and implemented a new strategy
- Reviewed and implemented a new Missing Children Strategy
- Responded to the 'Prevent' agenda through provision of guidance to parents and schools, and training for staff across partner agencies
- Implemented a successful recruitment and retention strategy for social work staff leading to reduced levels of agency staff and positive feedback from social workers about caseloads, supervision and learning and development opportunities

Our user voice activity told us….	… so we did…
A child on a 'child protection plan' was supported by our commissioned advocacy service to say how they wanted their family situation to be improved.	We fed back this information to the family and other professionals via key case meetings. There is now improved communication and support within the family, and the child's school attendance and punctuality has improved.
Our Young Inspectors said that they wanted to influence those who plan and deliver services which safeguard children and young people.	Young Inspectors chaired the 2015 Merton Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) Conference, and key presentations were delivered by pupils from local schools. Young people gave their views on children's safeguarding services to key managers and practitioners.

What will we do?

The Merton Children Safeguarding Board has identified the following key priorities:
- Maintaining the strongest focus on front line practice. (MSCB Business Plan)
- Developing a strategic multi-agency response to the issue of neglect. (MSCB Business Plan)
- Maintaining strategic oversight of specific cohorts of children including those at risk of child sexual exploitation, violence against women and girls, missing young people, children missing education, those supported by the Prevent strategy and young carers. (MSCB Business Plan & Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2015-16)
- Safeguarding children and young people with complex needs (MSCB Business Plan and SEND Single Improvement Plan)

Merton's MASH has a key role in ensuring that children and young people receive the right intervention at the right time. It needs to ensure that there is a prompt and appropriate safeguarding response where necessary and that children and young people can access pathways to support at 'children in need' level and early help support if they have lower level needs.

- We will review the functioning of the MASH in the context of our Children and Young People Wellbeing Model to ensure the appropriate differentiation of response to children and young people's needs. (MSCB Business Plan & Enhanced integrated 0 – 5 service provision in Merton plans)
- We will ensure collaboration between Merton's MASH and CAMHS services in the establishment of a co-located CAMHS Single Point of Access   (CAMHS Transformation Programme)

Focusing on front line practice;

- We will focus on front line practice and learn from multiagency auditing and management reviews where required. (MSCB Business Plan)
- We will continue to roll out the 'Signs of Safety' model in safeguarding work to strengthen direct work with families. (Local Authority Childrens Social Care)
- We will continue to ensure high quality learning and development opportunities are available through our MSCB training offer (MSCB Training Programme & Workforce development strategy)
- We will build on our work to implement the London Training Evaluation Impact Framework (incorporated in London Child Protection Procedures) to understand if our learning offer is working (MSCB Training Programme)
- The council will maintain its social work recruitment and retention activity to minimise use of agency staff and ensure newly qualified social workers are inducted, supported and supervised appropriately (Local Authority Childrens Social Care)

'Neglect is the most common form of child abuse in the UK today. Neglect is the most frequent reason for a child protection referral, and it features in 60 per cent of serious case reviews into the death or serious injury of a child.' (Action for Children, March 2014). We want to improve our strategic and operational response to this issue and maintain a robust focus on other key safeguarding themes.

- We will develop a 'neglect strategy' so that there is a robust approach to identifying and intervening in cases of neglect. (MSCB Business Plan)
- We will maintain conspicuous care and strategic oversight of children at risk of child sexual exploitation, violence against women and girls, FGM, missing children and young people, children missing education, those supported by the Prevent strategy, those with complex needs and LASPO. (MSCB Business Plan)

Key representative performance indicators

Safeguarding children and young people	2013-14 Outturn	2014-15 Outturn	National Benchmark
Number of MASH initial contacts received	4574	4,613	n/a
Percentage of Single Assessments completed within statutory requirements of 45 days	81%	91%	82% (2013/14)
Percentage of quorate attendance at Child Protection Conferences	93%	91%	n/a
Child protection plan rate per 10,000		42	37
Number of Children subject of a Child Protection Plan (as at 31 March)	188	172	n/a
Number of family groups subject of a child protection plans		86	n/a
Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescale (cases open three months or more)	93%	93%	94% (2013/14)
Percentage of Children subject of a Child Protection Plan who had a four weekly visit on time	84%	92%	n/a
Percentage of Children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan for second or subsequent time	12%	17%	15.8% (2013/14)
Percentage of reports to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day (Working Together 2014/15 requirement)	45%	42%	n/a

Priority area 3: Children looked after and care leavers

Why do we need to focus on this?

We have a longstanding approach to preventing children becoming looked after but when children do need to come into care we want to ensure that care proceedings are timely and that our care plans appropriately safeguard children and support decisions around permanency which are in the best interests of each child. We are committed to ensuring all our looked after children and care leavers are given every opportunity to experience a safe, healthy and happy life in which they achieve their potential. We will make every effort to ensure they are able to grow up in a stable and supportive environment with a sense of belonging. Our role as corporate parents is significant and far reaching and we exercise this with commitment and accountability. Through this we consistently strive for all our young people to reach their potential, develop into independent, self-confident adults and enjoy their place in society.

Merton's looked after children rate per 10,000 remains within a range expected of local authorities with statistically similar population, although our actual numbers have been steadily rising from a low of 96 (2006/7) to 150 (2013/14). Reasons for this increase include the impact of national awareness of children's safeguarding, an increasing local birth rate and more general demographic changes.

Merton's services for children looked after and care leavers were rated 'good' in the 2012 Ofsted Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection. Fostering and Adoption services were also rated good by Ofsted in 2012 and 2013.

The Government has been clear in its drive to improve services and outcomes for looked after children, with revised statutory guidance that sets out the need to address the problem of delays in achieving permanency for children. The Family Justice Review and the revised Public Law Outline has aimed to dramatically speed up care proceedings, including a time limit of 26 weeks within which all, bar exceptional cases, must be completed. In response, we have redesigned our looked after children and permanency services to deliver permanency more quickly. We have also established an 'Edge of Care and Rehabilitation' panel to ensure that any decision to accommodate a child or young person between the ages of 0-16 is reviewed and a robust care plan put in place that has a focus on short and long term care planning.

We are determined to find the most appropriate care for our looked after children using family and friends; in-house foster carers, Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) or residential placements. By involving our partners we ensure coordinated wrap-around services are provided so that our children maintain healthy development, are safe both in and out of the home, achieve at school, are involved in out-of school activities and develop skills for independence.

Children often enter the care system with a poorer level of physical and mental health than their peers, and their longer-term outcomes remain worse. Nationally two thirds of looked after children have at least one physical health complaint, and nearly half have a mental health disorder. Health outcomes for Merton looked after children are better than the national average and these are underpinned by good support from health partners with good levels of routine health surveillance and access to specialist provision where necessary.

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LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Enable Looked After Children
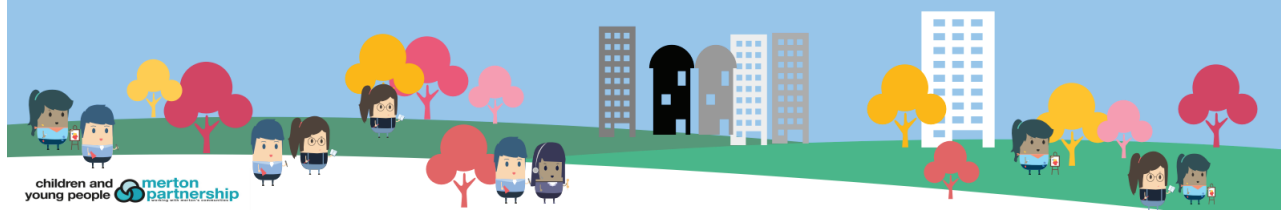
33 CHILDREN PER 10,000 BECOME LOOKED AFTER

150

■ Male (64%) ■ Female (36%)

Merton's looked after children rate per 10,000 remains within a range expected of local authorities with a statistically similar population. Our actual numbers have risen from a low of 96 (2006/7) to 150 (2013/14). Reasons for this increase include the impact of national awareness of children's safeguarding, an increasing local birth rate and more general demographic changes.

AGE

■ Under 1's (5%)
■ 1 to 4 years (10%)
■ 5 to 9 years (13%)
■ 10 to 15 years (31%)
■ 16+ years (41%)

ETHNICITY

■ White (47%)
■ Black (21%)
■ Mixed (13%)
■ Asian (10%)
■ Other groups (10%)
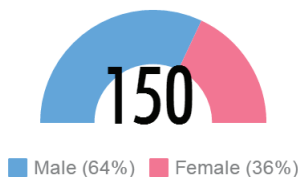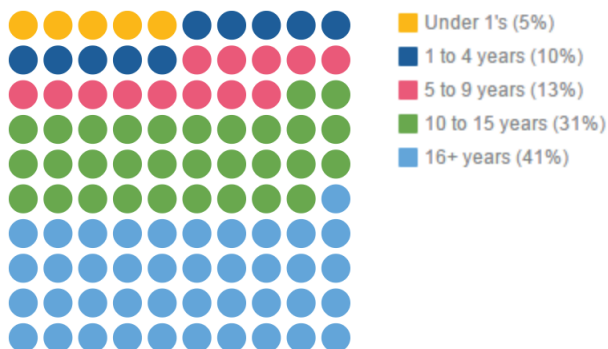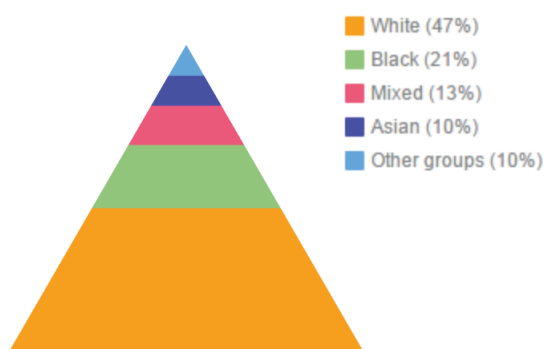
CARE AND PERMANANCE

40 weeks

Care and Supervision application average duration 2014/15

12% move placements 3 or more times (National 11%)

66% were in the same placement for two years or more (National 68%)

689 days

Adopted in 689 days compared to 981 three years ago

HEALTH

95% immunised (National 83%)

8% substance misuse (National 4%)

95% Annual health check (National 87%)

83% Annual dental check (National 82%)

EDUCATION

67% achieve Level 4 at KS2 in reading, writing and maths (National R63%, W59%. M55%)

23%

15%

23% obtain 5 GCSEs A* - C including English and maths (National 15%)

3% are absent from school (National 4%)

47% are in education employment or training (National 45%)

Figure X: Merton intelligence profile: Looked After Children, 2013/14

What have been our key successes to date?

Since our last CYPP…

- Merton's overall services for children looked after and care leavers were rated 'good' by Ofsted in spring 2012
- Merton's Fostering Agency was rated Good by Ofsted in 2012 and Merton's Adoption Agency was rated Good by Ofsted in 2013
- We have developed the role and function of the Corporate Parenting Board, now chaired by the Chief Executive.
- We refreshed our Looked after Children strategy and launched a new Care Leavers strategy in 2014.
- We improved the timeliness of our court proceedings from 72 weeks in 2011/12 to 40 weeks in 2014/15 (Merton 2014/15, CAFCASS).
- We have reduced the time between children entering care and being adopted.
- We have established an Edge of Care and Rehabilitation panel to strengthen management overview and decision-making for LAC
- We have researched placement stability to better inform our placement sufficiency assessment
- Co-developed with the Children in Care Council, we launched our LAC and Care Leavers Pledge
- We have revived our Children in Care Council and progressed our LAC Participation Strategy

Our user voice activity told us….	… so we did…
Our Children in Care Council said they wanted better information about their rights, services and participation opportunities.	We refreshed and reissued the 'LAC Pack' including information about participating in and Chairing LAC review, how to access an advocate, and how to give feedback or make a complaint.
Looked after children said that they wanted to be involved in the training and recruitment of foster carers.	Young people now run and facilitate foster carer preparation meetings to share their experiences of being looked after. Carers report that having an increased understanding of what it is like to be in care has developed their practice.

What will we do?

To improve timeliness of care proceedings a revised Public Law Outline introduced in April 2014 set out streamlined case management procedures for dealing with care proceedings.

- We will develop clear processes which ensure that as much activity as possible is undertaken in advance of proceedings. This includes robust care planning, the coordination of viability assessments, expert assessments and parenting assessments. (Looked After Children Strategy)

We are committed to achieving permanency for our looked after children in the shortest possible time. There are a range of permanent care options which can be considered to meet this commitment.

- We will ensure that all options for permanency for children requiring a placement outside of their own immediate family are considered, including for those with the most complex needs, regardless of the impact on our performance scorecard (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will continue to work closely with the South West London Adoption Consortium (SWLAC) to ensure that we are pooling resources and subsequently securing best matches. (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will continue to improve the timeliness of good quality matches for children for whom permanency is the plan. Including improving permanency planning for children aged 6+.(Looked After Children Strategy)

We want to improve placement choice and stability. This entails expanding our range of placement options and identifying the right placement for a child as early in their care journey as possible. Our annual LAC Sufficiency Strategy supports us to target our placement commissioning and procurement.

- We will continue to undertake work to understand our looked after children in order to inform our commissioning activity for suitable and sufficient places. (Looked After Children Sufficiency Statement)
- We will maintain conspicuous management oversight of all cohort so that vulnerable placements can be identified and greater support provided to young people and placements. (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will continue to focus on recruiting more in-house fostercarers to enable us to minimise use of IFA placements. (Looked After Children Sufficiency Statement)
- We will explore the commissioning of a small local children's home for adolescents. (Looked After Children Sufficiency Statement)

We want to improve educational outcomes for our looked after children. Nationally only 15% of looked after children achieved 5 good GCSEs including maths and English in 2012-13. Our performance in Merton was 23%, better than national but still not good enough.

- The Virtual School will continue to work with Early Years Specialists, carers and settings to develop robust early years PEPs for our younger LAC (Looked After Children Strategy, Virtual School)
- We will extend the Designated Teacher network to include all schools, colleges and commissioned Alternative Providers to enhance support for Merton Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Looked After Children Strategy, Virtual School)
- We will continue to improve pathway planning by ensuring earlier support for transition to education, training or employment at the end of Year 11 and beyond. (Looked After Children Strategy)

We want to improve health outcomes for Looked After Children. Children often enter the care system with a poorer level of physical and mental health than their peers, and their

longer-term outcomes remain worse. Nationally two thirds of looked after children have at least one physical health complaint, and nearly half have a mental health disorder

- We will continue to use LAC annual health assessments and statutory reviews to ensure that the child's health needs are being met and to escalate matters of concern to appropriate services. (Looked After Children Strategy, LAC Nurse)
- We will ensure the timely referral of LAC with substance misuse issues to the commissioned 'risk and resilience' service, and ensure social worker monitoring of engagement with the service of all LAC requiring interventions. (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will complete the re-commissioning of the specialist CAMHS service for LAC designed to provide consultation to social work staff and carers and direct interventions with young people.   (Looked After Children Strategy, CAMHS)
- We will continue to promote completion of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for all LAC and to ensure that this is an integral part of the annual LAC Health review for over 5 year olds. (Health and Wellbeing Strategy)

We want our looked after children and care leavers to shape and influence the services they receive, and to see their views reflected in our strategies and plans. Social workers and carers are also expected to support looked after children to access and benefit from hobbies, leisure, cultural and sporting activities.

- We will continue to commission an independent advocacy service for children looked after by the local authority and ensure that our IRO service consults appropriately with young people during the statutory review process, providing robust challenge to practice as necessary (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will continue to encourage participation in the Children in Care council and ensure regular engagement with the Corporate Parenting Board and key decision-makers (User Voice Strategy)
- We will continue to create a range of opportunities for appropriate formal and informal 'participation' and engagement for our looked after children, including for example coffee meetings, fun activities and surveys. (User Voice Strategy)
- Social workers, carers and the Virtual School will continue to promote and facilitate young people's participation in a wide range of interests and hobbies through our care planning process (Looked After Children Strategy)

We want to continue to improve the support we provide to young people as they prepare to leave care and establish themselves independently. Nationally 33% of care leavers are not in education, employment or training (DfE, 2011) and we are determined to better this performance.

- We will review the 'My Guide to Independence' on a bi-annual basis with members of the Children in Care Council (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will embed the joint working protocol with Mitcham Job Centre Plus to promote better access for care leavers to employment and training opportunities (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will continue to support the local 'Aim Higher' project encouraging children to aspire to a university education. (Looked After Children Strategy, Virtual School)
- We will continue to deliver apprenticeships specifically for our Looked After Children each year. (Looked After Children Strategy)
- We will review the protocol and guidance for transitions to adult mental health and develop mental health provision for care leavers (Care Leavers Strategy)
- We will develop housing pathways/options and guidance and deliver a broader menu of housing options for our care leavers, including encouraging our care leavers to opt into 'Staying Put'. (Care Leavers Strategy)

Key representative performance indicators

Looked After Children	2013-14 Outturn	2014-15 Outturn	National Benchmark
Time taken to deliver care proceedings in line with the Public Law Outline 26 week expectations (CAFCASS)	63 Q1 2013	24 weeks Q4 2015	37 weeks (2013/14)
Number of Looked After Children	150	157	n/a
Rate per 10,000 of Looked After Children			
Percentage of Looked After Children in external foster care agencies	50%	42%	38% (2013/14)
Number of 'In-house' foster carers recruited	15	10	n/a
Percentage of Looked After Children cases reviewed within timescales	97%	95%	n/a
Percentage of Looked After Children annual Health Assessments completed within timescale	95%	94%	87% (2013/14)
Percentage of Initial Personal Education Plans completed within timescales	83%	93%	n/a
LAC achieved 5 GCSEs including maths and English		21%	
Numbers of children who become Looked After due to a remand	14	6	n/a
Percentage of Care Leavers in education, employment or training (EET) (19 year olds)	43%	41%	34% (2013/14)
Number of Looked After Children adopted or receiving a Special Guardianship Order	15	16	n/a
Placement stability performance (3 moves or more) in line with national average or better.	12.7%,		11%
Placement length (2 years or more) in line with national average or better.	Merton three year rolling average 66%		National average 68% (2011 to 2013)
Emotional and behavioural health SDQ score (strengths and difficulties questionnaire) Merton's average score 12.3, national benchmark 13.9 (2013/14)	Merton's average score 12.3		

Priority area 4: Closing the gap in educational outcomes and opportunity

Why do we need to focus on this?

High quality education motivates children and young people to learn, develops their skills and gives them a foundation of knowledge and understanding on which they can build throughout the rest of their lives. National education policy puts significant weight on the role of individual settings, children centres, schools and colleges to provide the best possible opportunities for children and young people. Standards are high in Merton with 83% of schools (2013/14) and 100% of children's centres rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

However we have a role in identifying those who might not receive or be able to benefit from our universal offer and ensuring a high quality local children's centre, school and further education offer for those performing behind their peers. Our education priority therefore focuses on closing the gap in outcomes and opportunities.

'The attainment gap between rich and poor which opens up before children start school, is visible during the infant years and increases over time' (White Paper, The importance of teaching, 2010). We need to focus on the access to children's centres specifically for those children from areas of deprivation and those eligible for the free early years offer for two year olds.

Nationally, pupils entitled to free school meals are only half as likely to achieve five good GCSEs as their peers' (White Paper, The importance of teaching, 2010). In Merton at KS4 46% of FSM pupils achieved five A* to C including English and maths in 2013/14, compared to the national equivalent 37% and the average of all peers at 64%. This gap is prevalent at KS2 also, in that 70% of FSM pupils achieved KS2 Level 4 in reading, writing and maths, compared to the national equivalent 67% and the average of all peers at 79%.

Behaviour in Merton schools remains good, with attendance levels improved and fixed term secondary school exclusions decreased. However, we are ambitious to achieve further improvement in these key areas.

Spending time not in employment, education or training (NEET) has been shown to have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health as well as an increased likelihood of unemployment, low wages, and low quality work later on in life. Being NEET can also have an impact on unhealthy behaviours and involvement in crime. These negative health effects do not occur equally across the population, as the chance of being NEET is affected by area deprivation, socio-economic position, parental factors (such as employment, education, or attitudes), growing up in care, prior academic achievement and school experiences. Being NEET therefore occurs disproportionately amongst those already experiencing other sources of disadvantage. As we respond to the challenges of the raising of the participation age (RPA), we need to focus specifically on those young people more vulnerable to being NEET.

The council has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child whose parent or carer requests one. After an unprecedented increase in the early years (0-3 years) and primary school (4-11 years) child population in the 2010s, the projections are for the number of pupils in this sector is to plateau from 2020 to 2030. The increase in primary school population starts to reach secondary school from 2015/16 and this will require substantial increase in the secondary school estate.

EDUCATION

Closing the gap in educational outcomes and opportunity

children and young people merton partnership

ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

EYFS
60% Good Level of Development at Early years foundation stage (National 60%)

KS2
79% Level 4+ KS2 reading, writing and maths (National 79%)

GCSE
64% 5+ A* to C GCSEs inc English and maths (National 53%)

NEET
95.4% in employment, education or training (National 94.7%)

DISADVANTAGED

EYFS
44% of PP Good Level of Development at Early years foundation stage (National 45%)

KS2
70% PP Level 4+ KS2 reading, writing and maths (National 67%)

GCSE
46% 5+ A* to C GCSEs inc English and maths (National 37%)
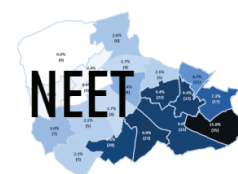
NEET
Prevalence of NEET across Merton

'The attainment gap between rich and poor which opens up before children start school, is visible during the infant years and increases over time' (White Paper, The importance of teaching, 2010).

We need to continue to focus on narrowing the gap.
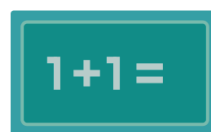
1+1=

It is estimated that the current generation of 16 to 18 year olds who are NEET will cost society £31 billion during their life time, or £4.6 billion annually (No excuses a review of educational exclusion, Centre for Social Justice, 2011)
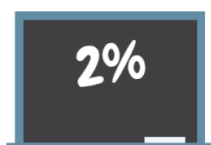
2%
2% primary school persistent absence (National 1.9%)

20 primary schools expanded since 2010/11
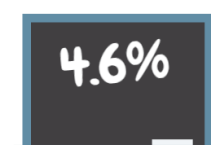
4.6%
4.6% secondary school persistent absence (National 5.3%)

STUDENT
An esimated 2000 secondary school places needed from 2015/16 onwards

OFSTED

Standards are high in Merton 83% of schools (2013/14) and 100% of children's centres are graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted

83% of primary schools are graded Good or Outstanding (National 82%)

81% of pupils attend primary schools graded Good or Outstanding (National 81%)
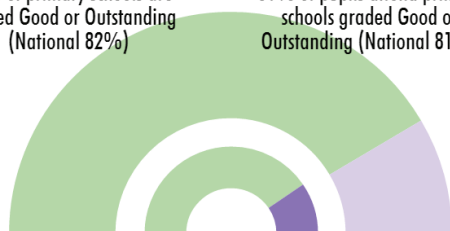
88% of secondary schools graded are Good or Outstanding (National 72%)

88% of pupils attend secondary schools graded are Good or Outstanding (National 74%)

Primary
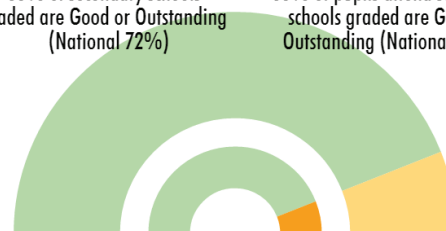
Secondary

Figure X: Merton intelligence profile: Education, 2013/14

What have been our key successes to date?

Since our last CYPP we have…

- Rolled-out free 2-year old childcare offer to disadvantaged groups, exceeding expectation and delivering 917 free child care places significantly exceeding the target of 705 (2013/14)
- Performance at Key Stage 2, reading, writing and maths combined at level 4 and above has increased to 79%. This is equal to the national average.
- At Key Stage 2, we are closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, reducing the gap for attainment by 8% on 2012. (2013/14 X%)
- GCSE performance is above the national average, with 64.2% of pupils achieving 5+A*-C including English and maths, ranking Merton 16th nationally.
- We have implemented a more robust multi-agency Children Missing Education Strategy
- Reducing persistent absenteeism (PA) has been a key focus for the borough. Targeted work with schools and pupils has resulted in significant reduction in these rates which are now below national average.
- Fixed term secondary school exclusions have decreased from 8.15% to 5.31%..
- Permanent exclusions have decreased substantially in 2013/14 to 7 permanent exclusions from 12 in 2012/13. All permanent exclusions were pupils of secondary school age.
- We have implemented our alternative education strategy, improving the commissioning and quality assurance of this provision.
- Implemented NEET reduction strategy, 94% of Merton's 16-17 year olds are participating in education and training (2013/14). This proportion places Merton in the top quintile nationally.
- Merton's rate of apprenticeships is increasing but remains below national levels
- The council has met the increasing demand for primary school places over the last few years through expansion of over 20 primary schools. Additional capacity in SEN provision, both in mainstream and special schools has also been provided

| Our user voice activity told us….	… so we did…
Pupils identified the type of teaching and learning approaches that they enjoy and the importance of giving regular feedback to pupils about progress made and areas for improvement.	Pupil voice has been incorporated into school improvement reviews and action plans which have led to developments in practice in schools.
Young people supported by our NEET prevention service said that family therapy has helped them to overcome barriers to accessing opportunities.	We have recruited an additional family therapist to the team to increase our capacity to deliver therapy to more families, and to help them to lift the barriers to accessing education, training and employment.

What will we do?

'The attainment gap between rich and poor which opens up before children start school, is visible during the infant years and increases over time' (White Paper, The Importance of Teaching, 2010)

- We will continue to roll out the strategy for funded childcare places for eligible 2 year olds ensuring take up at good and outstanding settings. (Early Years Partnership Plan)

Pupils entitled to free school meals are only half as likely to achieve five good GCSEs as their peers' (White Paper, The importance of teaching, 2010). Of those pupils known to be eligible for FSM there are variations in achievement by gender and ethnicity.

- We will continue to support and challenge schools and governors to use Pupil Premium, sports fund and Y7 catch up to raise pupil achievement. (Merton School Improvement Service – April 2016)

We have a role in identifying those who might not receive or be able to benefit from our universal offer and ensuring high quality local provision for those performing behind their peers

- We will manage the commissioning of KS4 EAL provision for in-year applicants to support them into appropriate full-time education. (Commissioning Team – July 2015)
- We will continue to support and challenge schools over attendance and especially the Children Missing Education (CME) programme and multi-agency approaches to improving PA on a case by case basis. (Merton School Improvement Service – Ongoing)
- We will continue to deliver a strategy to provide increased, timely access to good quality and appropriate alternative education for learners of compulsory school age. (Commissioning Team – September 2015)

It is estimated that the current generation of 16 to 18 year olds who are NEET will cost society £31 billion during their life time, or £4.6 billion annually (No Excuses: A Review of Educational Exclusion, Centre for Social Justice, 2011)

- We will continue to track and support young people 17 – 19 and target prevention through school based NEET prevention workers. (School Standards report 2013/14)
- We will continue to strengthen partnership arrangements e.g. with employers and work based learning providers to expand pathways and opportunities for young people including apprenticeships and make those apprenticeships more accessible. (School Standards report 2013/14)

The significant increase seen in Merton's primary school population starts to reach secondary school from 2015/16 and this will require substantial increase in the secondary school estate. We also need to provide additional places in local SEN provision. We need to ensure that in-year applications for school places, particularly for vulnerable pupils, are dealt with efficiently and fairly.

- We will deliver our secondary school places strategy by supporting the establishment of the new Harris Wimbledon Free School and through expansion of existing secondary schools in the east of the borough. (Contracts and School Organisation Service Plan 2015-16)
- We will deliver schemes to expand specialist provision and keep under review the need for additional special education provision, submitting bids as appropriate for capital resources. (Contracts and School Organisation Service Plan 2015-16)
- We will work with all secondary schools to agree a fair distribution of in-year secondary admissions and timely responses to applications and continue to operate

an effective Fair Access Protocol so that vulnerable children are placed in school as quickly as possible. (Contracts and School Organisation Service Plan 2015-16)

Key representative performance indicators

Education and Youth Inclusion	2013-14 Outturn	2014-15 Outturn	National Benchmark
Percentage of all Children's Centres graded good or outstanding by Ofsted inspections	100%	100%	69%
Percentage of Nursery Pupils (3 and 4 year olds) in Primary Schools graded good or outstanding by Ofsted	new	82%	n/a
Percentage of all Schools graded good or outstanding by Ofsted inspections	87%	85%	79%
Percentage of all Pupils in Schools graded good or outstanding by Ofsted	new	84%	86%
Percentage of Primary school attendance (all schools Inc. academies 2 and a half terms)	95.6% (AY 2012/13)	96.2% (AY 2013/14)	96.2% (AY 2013/14)
Percentage of Secondary school attendance (all schools Inc. academies 2 and a half terms)	94.4% (AY 2012/13)	95.2% (AY 2013/14)	94.9% (AY 2013/14)
Percentage of Children achieving Level Four in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	78% (AY 2012/13)	79% (AY 2013/14)	79% (AY 2013/14)
Percentage of Young People achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C including English & maths	62.6% (AY 2012/13)	64.2% (AY 2013/14)	53.4% (AY 2013/14)
Percentage of Secondary school pupils subject of a fixed term exclusion (percentage of pupils on roll)	8.15% (AY 2012/13)	6.89% (AY 2013/14)	6.62% (AY 2013/14)
Numbers of Secondary school permanent exclusions	11(AY 2012/13)	7 (AY 2013/14)	n/a
Numbers of young people in alternative education	163 (AY 2012/13)	173 (AY 2013/14)	n/a
Percentage of Young People aged 16-18 Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	4%	4.6%	5.30%
Percentage of Young People aged 16 - 18 who's NEET status is "Not Known"	9.8%	12.4%	9.20%
Percentage of surplus places at Reception year	3.75%	1.10%	n/a
Parentage of surplus places at Secondary school Year 7 (Inc. Academies)	12.34%	11.32%	n/a

Priority area 5: Engage and enable young people to better outcomes

Why do we need to focus on this?

There is often significant peer pressure affecting children and young people, to enter into activities that may not keep them safe, or maximise their potential. We want to divert our young people from these risks and engage them in positive activities to enable better outcomes.

We want to continue to ensure a diverse and sustainable universal youth offer through the Merton Youth Partnership - currently delivered across three hubs: Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon. In addition the offer includes borough wide services such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and MAGIC (Disability Youth Club). Our detached youth provision, now part of the integrated 'risk and resilience' service, will continue to target engagement with more vulnerable young people.

We want our pupils in schools to feel happy. Our anti-bullying strategy work has continued in schools and the Young Residents Survey saw a fall in concerns around bullying from 29% to 25% in line with London. And for the 3rd year running concern about the behaviour of other children stabilised at 25% in line with last year which had seen a significant fall.

We want to divert young people from youth offending, associations with gangs or radicalised extremist behaviour. We received good feedback following our Home Office Peer Review on 'Gang Youth and Violence' in March 2013: "the review team found a number of examples where Merton had moved quickly as a partnership to nullify threats. Engagement with most partners is generally strong, especially with local schools and the voluntary and community sector (VCS)."

Merton's levels of serious youth violence is amongst the lowest in London, however our partnership remains committed to continuing to work together to reduce any youth crime.

We want to increase young people's engagement in diversionary activities that support the reduction in the use of substances and promote positive health choices, through early intervention, prevention and substance misuse treatment for young people aged 24 and under.

We want to support our young people through provision of effective mental health services. Forty four per cent of our primary schools and 25% of secondary schools buy into the Merton TAMHS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools) Service and 83% of mainstream schools fund further provision.

ENGAGE AND ENABLE

Positive lifes choices and better outcomes for Young People

children and young people merton partnership

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

We want to engage our young people to positive activities. We want our young people to make positive life choices which result in better outcomes.

Teenage pregnancy conception rate 22.2 per 1000 (National 30.7) (2013)

MERTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

A diverse and sustainable youth offer through the Merton Youth Partnership since 2011/12
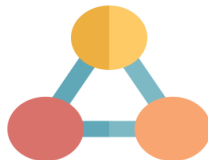
Wimbledon ✓

Morden ✓

Mitcham ✓
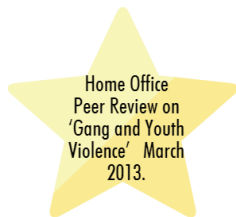
Home Office Peer Review on 'Gang and Youth Violence' March 2013.

"the review team found a number of examples where Merton had moved quickly as a partnership to nullify threats. Engagement with most partners is generally strong, especially with local schools and the voluntary and community sector (VCS)".

Number of young people engaged in positive youth service provision increased.

2032 2013/14 to 3234 in 2014/15

3234

2032

3500

2250

1000

Participation
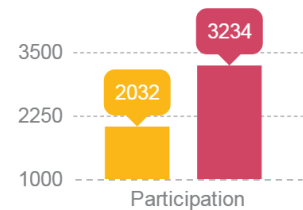
YOUTH JUSTICE

Merton's levels of serious youth violence is amongst the lowest in London, however our partnership remains committed to continuing to work together to reduce any youth crime.

313%
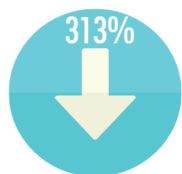
Reduction: 60 First Time Entrants in 2014/15 from 188 in 2009/10

1.11 | 1.10

Re offending rate 1.11 per 1000 (National 1.10) (2014/15)

0.24 | 0.51

Custodial sentences of all court disposals rate per 1000 0.24 (National 0.51) (2014/15)

90% YOT = EET

90% of young people supervised by the YOT are in Education, Employment or Training

There is a proven correlation between illiteracy, innumeracy and offending. Before custody 53% of male offenders and 71% of female offenders have no qualifications whatsoever' (Factsheet Education in Prisons Civitas: Institute for the study of Civic Society, 2010)

Young Residents Survey saw a fall in concerns around bullying from 29% to 25% in line with London — and for the 3rd year running

HEALTH

44% of our primary schools and 25% of secondary schools buy into the Merton TAMHS Service and 83% of mainstream schools fund further provision.

72% of young people are seen by CAMHS within 8 weeks of their referral (2014/15)

Figure X: Merton intelligence profile: Engage and enable

What have been our key successes to date?

Since our last CYPP we have…

- Continued to improve outcomes for young people in the youth justice system particularly in relation to a reduction of First Time Entrants, Re-offending and custodial sentences. Merton's youth justice service is one of London's top ten performing teams.
- The Short Quality Inspection (SQS) by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in September 2013 demonstrated a marked improvement in our youth justice casework.
- Assessments in relation to risk and safeguarding have been strengthened in the youth justice service following the SQS
- Implemented plans for new LAPSO and Youth Remand Orders
- Implemented ending gangs and serious youth violence peer review action plan following a good peer review to further improve our impact
- Progressed transformation of our universal youth services offer, establishing our new youth provision model through working closely with the voluntary sector
- Commissioned a new integrated 'risk and resilience' service for young people, delivering combined detached youth work, substance misuse and teenage pregnancy services.
- Established a Family Nurse Partnership and a commitment to maintain the programme over the next three years.

Our user voice activity told us….	… so we did…
Families supported by our Transforming Families (TF) Team said they want regular visits from an employment advisor at home, to help them into paid employment.	We increased the capacity of our seconded Job Centre Plus worker to offer more outreach advice and guidance. At the end of this year 88% of families who were part of the TF programme had been 'turned around'.
Our young advisors said that they wanted to take part in the re-commissioning of services.	We trained a group of young people to evaluate provider bids of the new risk and resilience service which integrates substance misuse, detached youth and sexual health promotion.

What will we do?

We want to divert young people from youth offending and from associations with gangs or radicalised extremist behaviour.

- We will continue to work in partnerships to support vulnerable young people to prevent offending and re-offending through a range of programmes; a 'scaled approach' with differing levels of intervention.(Youth Justice Service)
- We will work as a partnership to ensure early intervention with individuals identified as being at risk of progression towards offending as part of a group or gang. .(Youth Justice Service)
- We will support victims of youth crime through restorative justice interventions.(Youth Justice Service)
- We will work with all partners to identify and address radicalised behaviour at the earliest stage – collectively working towards delivering our Prevent agenda. .(MSCB Business Plan)

We want to increase young people's engagement in diversionary activities that support the reduction in the use of substances, and promote sexual health and positive health choices. We want to provide young people with appropriate mental health support.

- We will ensure that our young people have timely access to substance misuse and sexual health advice and/or referrals for specialist services and will deliver risk and resilience education via targeted workshops in schools and youth provision (Merton Youth Partnership)
- We will offer diversionary activities as part of the risk and resilience building programme aimed at young people aged 24 and under (Merton Youth Partnership)
- We will provide tailored one to one support/treatment interventions with a specialist substance misuse practitioner when needed (Risk and Resilience Service)
- We will ensure that our refreshed CAMHS strategy provides models of delivery which engage young people (Local Authority and CAMHS)
- We will continue to deliver a Family Nurse Partnership for the next three years.

We want all young people to be prepared for the world of work to enable them to maximise their potential

- We will review the provision of careers advice and guidance across Merton's secondary school sector. (Raising the Participation Age Partnership)
- We will continue to deliver our NEET strategy with resources focused on engaging with more vulnerable young people. (Raising the Participation Age Partnership)
- We will build the capacity in our Post 16 sector to ensure that Merton's young people have choices (Raising the Participation Age Partnership)

We want our young people to have access to a good range of positive activities

- We will continue to seek alternative funding sources to support the diversity and sustainability of our universal youth offer via the Merton Youth Partnership. (Merton Youth Partnership and Education Inclusion)

Key representative performance indicators

Engage and enable Young People positive outcomes	2013-14 Outturn	2014-15 Outturn	National Benchmark
Percentage of Young People aged 16-18 Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	4%	4.6%	5.30%
Percentage of Young People aged 16 - 18 who's NEET status is "Not Known"	9.8%	12.4%	9.20%
Number of young people engaging in positive youth service participation	2032	3234	n/a
Number of first time entrance into Youth Justice System aged 10 to 17 (cumulative)	88	60	n/a
Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system	1.1	1.05	1.04 (2013)
Number of young people engaging in positive youth service participation	2032	3234	n/a
Number of first time entrance into Youth Justice System aged 10 to 17 (cumulative)	88	60	n/a
Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system	1.1	1.05	1.04 (2013)
Percentage of young people requiring a First CAMHS assessment seen within 8 weeks of referral	51%	72%	n/a
Teenage Pregnancy conception rate per 1000 (under 18 years) (Average data 18 months in arrears)	26.3 per 10,000 in 2012	22.2 per 10,000 in 2013	30.7 per 10,000 (2011)

Priority area 6: Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SENDIS)

Why do we need to focus on this?

The SEND reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 are a significant set of cultural and systematic changes which are designed to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN or disability (SEND). We are committed to working with children, young people and parents to improve outcomes for individual children and young people, and strategically to ensuring that operational arrangements and services better reflect needs.

In Merton 15% (January 2015) of pupils were identified as having special educational needs compared to 18.7% nationally (2012/13). Nationally boys are two and a half times more likely to have statements of SEN at primary school than girls, and nearly three times more likely to have statements at secondary school. In Merton 70% of all statements are for boys and 30% are for girls (January 2015). In addition, looked after children are three and a half times more likely to have special educational needs, and over ten times more likely to have statements of SEN.

Children and young people with SEN do less well than their peers at school and college. Nationally pupils with SEN are more likely to have higher levels of absence from school and more likely to be excluded from school. At Key Stage 2 in 2013/14, 23% of pupils with statements of SEN achieved the Level 4 in reading writing and maths compared to 15% nationally and to 79% of pupils with no SEN. Between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 27% made expected progress in English compared to 28% nationally, but only 17% made expected progress in maths compared to 19% nationally. At Key Stage 4 8% achieved five good GCSE's A* to C, including English and maths which is in line with the national average.

Young people with SEN are twice as likely to be out of education, training and employment than their peers. Employment outcomes for people with SEN and disabilities are also poor. In 2012, 46% of disabled people were in employment, compared to 76% of non-disabled people. In addition, employment rates for those with significant learning difficulties are much worse, with some evidence suggesting this to be as low as 7%.

Supporting independence improves outcomes and deploys resources more effectively: The National Audit Office estimated that the cost to the public purse of supporting a person with a moderate learning disability through adult life (16–64) is £2–3 million. Equipping a young person with the skills to live in semi-independent rather than fully supported housing could, in addition to quality-of-life improvements, reduce these lifetime support costs by around £1m. Supporting one person with a learning disability into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, reduce lifetime costs to the public purse by around £170,000. Adult care costs for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are second only to the costs of supporting the elderly (£5.19bn compared to £8.79bn, 2012-13)

SENDIS

Enable children with special educational needs and disabilities

children and young people • merton partnership

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

1045 statements

Merton resident SEN population (SEN2, January 2015)

- Male (78%)
- Female (22%)

SEN statements in our Schools
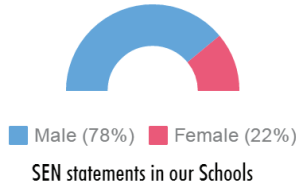
In Merton 15% of all pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN statement) of which 78% are boys and 22% are girls (January 2015).

13.6% of CYP have a SEN statement in our Primary Schools

12.9% of CYP have a SEN statement in our Secondary Schools
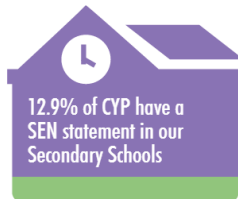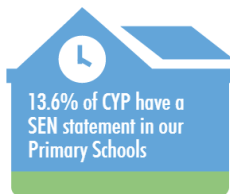
80% of SEN statemented young people aged 16 go on to or remain in education, employment, or training (86% National, 2011/12)

PRIMARY NEED

The 'Primary need' of ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) and SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs) are equally prevalent across both primary and secondary phases.

However, Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) is more prevalent within the Primary Phase whereas Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is proportionally higher within the Secondary Phase (January 2015)

■ Primary ■ Secondary □ Post 16

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Primary Need	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
ASD - AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER	136	127	26
SLCN - SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS	103	109	15
MLD - MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTY	102	88	21
SEMH - SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH	38	71	7
SLD - SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTY	49	27	22
PD - PHYSICAL DISABILITY	23	13	1
SPLD - SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTY	1	19	4
VI - VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	9	9	1
HI - HEARING IMPAIRMENT	4	6	1
OTH - OTHER DIFFICULTY/DISABILITY	2	4	1
PMLD - PROFOUND & MULTIPLE LEARNING DIFFICULTY	4	2	

EDUCATION

23% of SEN statement CYP achieve Level 4 at KS2 in reading, writing and maths (National 15%)

27% making expected progress in English between KS2 and KS4 (National 28%)

17% making expected progress in maths between KS2 and KS4 (National 19%)

8% of SEN statement CYP obtain 5 GCSE's A* - C including English and maths (National 8%)

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS TRANSFERS

The SEND reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 are a significant set of cultural and systematic changes which are designed to improve outcomes of children and young people with Special Educational Need or Disability.

2018

Over 1000 Special Educational Need statements to be transferred to Education Health & Care plans over the next three years

Figure X: Merton intelligence profile: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

What have been our key successes to date?

Since our last CYPP we have…
- Planned for and begun implementation of the major change programme arising from the Children and Families Act 2014
- Published our first 'local offer' for children with SEN and disabilities and their families
- Implemented Education, Health & Social Care planning for children with SEN and disabilities
- Introduced co-located health practitioners into our integrated service for Children with SEN and disabilities
- Re-negotiated 'tripartite' funding arrangements for children with the most complex needs
- Begun rollout of personal budgets for children with EHC plans
- Strengthened focus on safeguarding in casework with children with disabilities
- Established additional SEN capacity in mainstream and special schools
- Established Melrose school/SMART Centre partnership model

Our user voice activity told us….	… so we did…
Families with children with disabilities were consulted on the local authority's roll out of the Children and Families Act, they said 'we only wanted to give information about our circumstances once and care plans must be more person focused'.	Our EHC plans are more person centred, facilitate family involvement, only require information to be given once, and are outcomes focussed – 'looking ahead', rather than just listing needs and provision.
Families were also consulted on the 'Local offer' – the requirement to publish information about services for children with SEN and disabilities.	They said that they feel that the local authority has meaningfully involved them and listened to their views from an early stage, using their ideas and views to inform developments.

What will we do?

We will work together to commission services which deliver integrated support for children and young people with SEN and disabilities aged 0-25.

- We will review and refresh our overarching SEN Strategy. (Local Authority)
- We will review our commissioning strategy for services for children with disabilities and their families including short breaks. (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will map 16 – 25 SEN provision and support the market to develop routes to employability and social skills development for young adults with disabilities (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will continue to co-produce and improve our published local offer of services and provision available. (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will strengthen the role of parents and carers in the governance of children's services by appointing to membership of the Children's Trust Board. (Childrens Trust Executive, AD Education)
- We will continue to consult children, young people and their parents as key stakeholders in the development of services for children with SEN and disabilities and their families.(User Voice Strategy)

We will embed our approach to integrated Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment and planning for children and young people with SEN and disabilities aged 0-25.

- We will provide further development opportunities to the multi-disciplinary team to support the major cultural and practice changes needed to fully implement the requirements of the Children and Families Act. (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will deliver EHC plans within the required time limits. (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will continue to transfer old SEN statements into new EHC plans in line with our transfer strategy (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will continue to develop our approach to personal budgets and will offer the option of personal budgets within the EHC planning process. (SEND Single Improvement Plan)
- We will work with Adult Social Care services to review transitions arrangements in response to the Children and Families Act and Care Act requirements (SEND Single Improvement Plan)

We will support the early identification of children and young people with SEN, particularly at key points such as in the early years, through the progress check at age 2, the integrated health check and through the healthy child programme.

- We will embed Portage/children with complex needs services, improve services delivered from Children's Centres for families with children with complex needs and improve parenting offer for families with children with specialist/complex needs. (Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres Service Plan – March 2016)
- We will implement the new Code of Practice for the delivery of 2, 3 and 4 year old education with an improved focus on supporting the narrowing the gap agenda and raising learning outcomes so children are ready for school. (Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centre Service – April 15)

Key representative performance indicators

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities	2013-14 Outturn	2014-15 Outturn	National Benchmark
Number of residents with an SEN statement		1045	n/a
Number of new SEN Statements/Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) issued (in and out of Borough)	153	170	n/a
Percentage of all SEN statements issued in 26 weeks (without exceptions)	92%	96% (Q3)	93%
Percentage of all SEN statements issued in 26 weeks (with and without exceptions)	87%	92% (Q3)	86%
Percentage of new Education Health and Care Plans issued within 20 weeks	100%	Due Jan 2016	61.50%

Children and Young People Plan 2016 - Matrix

The CYPP is a plan of plans which sets the context to support and deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and their families. As a Childrens Trust all of our strategies and plans combined together deliver our vision, the below matrix presents how they all link in.

	SHORT to MEDIUM TERM PRIORITIES					
	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6
	Deliver early help and improve outcomes for those subject to the effects of disadvantage	Deliver effective, timely and targeted safeguarding	Enable looked after and care leavers	Close the gap in educational outcomes and economic opportunity	Divert and deter Children and Young People to enable better outcomes	Enable children with special educational needs and disabilities
Merton Health and Well-Being Strategy 2017/18 Creating the place for the good life	✓			✓	✓	
Merton CCG Operational Plan and Commissioning Intentions 2014-16	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
South West London 5 year Strategic Plan	✓					✓
4,5,6 Model - Health visitors	✓					
Breast Feeding Action Plan 2015/16	✓					
Merton Children Safeguarding Board priorities 2015–17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2015-16		✓				
LBM Young Persons' Substance Misuse and Teenage Pregnancy	✓				✓	
School Places Strategy				✓		
User Voice Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merton Education Partnership – The education network	✓			✓		
Enhancing integrated 0-5 service provision in Merton	✓	✓				
Merton's Employment and Skills	✓		✓	✓	✓	
SEND Single Improvement Plan	✓	✓		✓		✓
Volunteering Strategy	✓				✓	
Children Missing Education Annual Review December 2014		✓		✓		
Merton Council LAC Strategy 2015-18.			✓	✓	✓	✓
Merton Council Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18			✓		✓	✓
Workforce Development Strategy 2013-15		✓		✓		
LBM Family Poverty Strategy 2011-15	✓			✓		
Welfare Reform and Financial Resilience	✓					
MSCB and Children's Trust Young Carers Strategy 2013-16	✓	✓	✓			
Children Schools and Families priorities (Service Plans)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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

Date: **21 October 2015**

Subject: **Performance monitoring 2015/16 (August 2015)**

Lead officer: Paul Ballatt, Assistant Director of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance, Children Schools and Families

Lead member(s): Councillor Maxi Martin; Councillor Martin Whelton.

Contact officer: Naheed Chaudhry, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance.

Recommendations:

That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel discuss and comment on::

A. the current level of performance as at August 2015 for the reporting year 2015/16 (appendix 1).

B. the specific additional information provided on school readiness; GCSE and A-Level results and NEET (appendix 2)

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

1.1. To provide the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (CYP panel) with a regular update on the performance of the Children, Schools and Families Department and key partners. Data provided in appendix one is as at the end of August 2015. At the point of publishing this report the September 2015 data had not yet been validated (report due to be published 13 October 2015)

1.2. A number of additional education performance items are also presented in the second half of this report. It has been agreed with panel members that additional performance information will be included in this report as and when relevant. Performance information is provided in relation to recently published 'School readiness' data; the NEET scorecard and provisional GCSE and A level results. Members will be aware that the comprehensive Schools Standards report is routinely scheduled to be presented to the Panel in February 2016 following the publication of national benchmarking data.

2. **DETAILS**

2.1. At a Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel in June 2007 it was agreed that the Children Schools and Families department would submit a regular performance report on a range of key performance indicators. This performance monitoring report would act as a 'health check' for the Panel and would be over and above the more detailed performance reports scheduled to the Panel which relate to specific areas of activities such as the annual Schools Standards report, Corporate Parenting Report, safeguarding performance report etc. This performance index is periodically reviewed and revised by Members. A new dataset was agreed at the January 2015 Scrutiny meeting and has been implemented from April 2015.

2.2. **August 2015 Performance commentary**

2.3. Appendix one presents the performance dataset for 2015/16. Comments are provided below on exceptions only for those indicators reporting as Red or Amber.

2.4. **Line 11 Percentage of children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time – Red.**

2.5.   Twenty four per cent of children subject to a child protection plan were the subject of a plan for the second or subsequent time. This indicator relates to 23 children with previous plans (new child protection plans started YTD 95). A second plan is established where concerns which led to the original plan re-occur or where new concerns arise. Due to the small numbers of children in this cohort one or two larger sibling groups can skew performance considerably It should be noted that in August eight family groups represented 21 of the 23 children.

2.6.   The cohort of children who have been made subject to a Child Protection plan for the second and subsequent time has increased significantly in 2015/16 and is higher than Merton's norm. This indicator is above national average of 15.8% and above the London average 13% (CIN 2013/14). The reasons are varied, for example the children have been subject to a child protection plan a significant period ago or have transferred from another borough. An in-depth audit has been scoped and is underway, outcomes and recommendations are to be reported to CSF DMT and the MSCB.
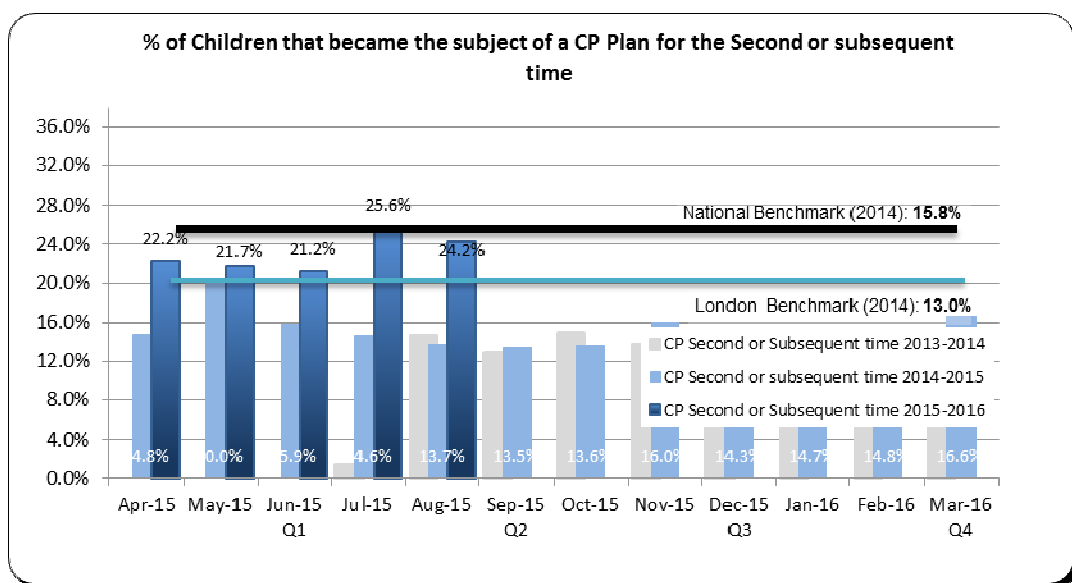
2.7.   **Line 17 Percentage of LAC participating in their reviews - Red**

2.8.   Eighty eight per cent of looked after children participated in there reviews this relates to 120 of 134 (excluding children under 4 years), this is slightly below our target of 90%. Ensuring looked after children are able to participate in planning their futures and reviewing the progress of these plans are a key priority for both IROs and social workers. An improvement plan is in place to improve participation, ensure reviews are child friendly and support the participation of all looked after children, this includes providing older children with an increased opportunity to chair their own reviews and developing skills in engaging and communication with children who have communication difficulties.

2.9.   **Line 19 Stability of placements of Children in Care (length of placement) – Red.**

2.10.   This length of placement indicator refers to a small cohort of children under the age of 16 who have been in care for 2 and half years or more and have been in their current placement for 2 years or more. As at the end of August 64.5% of this cohort had been in placements for 2 years or more. This is close to the national benchmark of 67% (2013/14). This is an improvement from our year end performance of 45.7%.

2.11. The placement length indicator is complemented by the placement moves indicator (3 moves or more), Merton's August performance 4.4% is much better than the national benchmark 11% (2013/14).
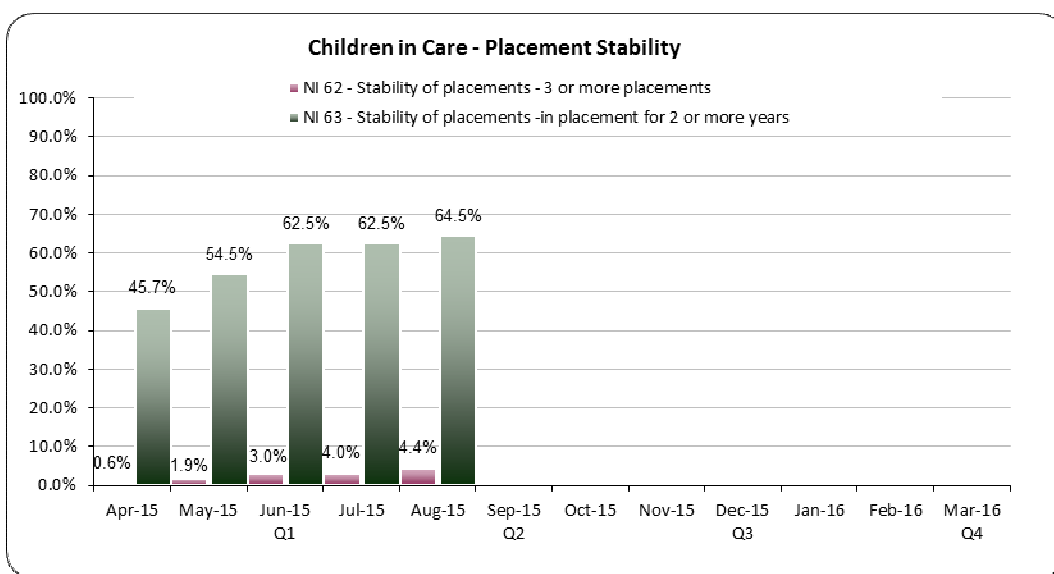
2.12. It should be noted that these improvements have taken place after a considerable focus on placement stability following a management analysis of permanence and placement stability undertaken at the end of April 2015 and the implementation of an improvement plan.

2.13. **Other published Children Schools and Families data**

2.14. Members requested that alongside this performance dashboard report officers would put forward other data/published performance information where relevant. Below comments are therefore provided in relation to 'School readiness', the DfE NEET scorecard and provisional GCSE and A level results. Members will be aware that the comprehensive annual Schools Standards report is scheduled to be presented to the panel in February 2016 when national benchmarking data is published.

2.15. **School Readiness**, Public Health England's August 2015 report: 'Improving school readiness: Creating a better start for London' shows that Merton is in line with the London average for the proportion of our children who are 'school ready' at age 5, there was a 13.9 percentage point rise in school readiness in Merton from 2013 to 2014. School readiness is used to describe a child who is assessed as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that they have achieved at least the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development, physical development, communication, and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

2.16. In Merton the Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres Service works with partners to improve school readiness by providing early help, early education and learning, family support and co-ordinated health services. This includes the delivery of, or support to the delivery of, sustainable locality based provision for young children and families, targeted at those most in need. The Public Health England report also illustrates that Merton is in line with the London average for the proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds (eligible for free school meals) who reached a GLD in 2014 (44.4%), and that this is an 11.5 percentage point increase on the previous year.

2.17. **Provisional GCSE and A level results**, only provisional data for both GCSEs and A level results is available at this stage. Merton schools continue to perform strongly this year at GCSE with some of the fastest improving results in London

over the last five years. While our results are still provisional, we know there have been national issues in connection with the marking of some subjects, with appeals in progress and being considered we are unable to provide the borough average at this stage. As a council we are committed to allowing our young people achieve their full potential through education with improving standards but also ensuring our schools give them the best possible start in life.

2.18. Sixth forms across Merton have seen their best-ever A-Level results with provisional figures showing an increase in pupils achieving the top grades this year as well as an improvement in every grade band. Results out in August showed that overall, the number of students achieving A* – A grades this year rose 5% in comparison to last year to 25% with half of students awarded A* – B grades, up 7% on last year. Merton performed better than the national average for both A* – E grades, achieving 99% against 98% and A* – C grades, 79% against 77%. This represents a 1% improvement on A* – E grades and a 7% improvement on A* – C grades compared to last year.

2.19. **NEET Scorecard**, The DfE publishes an estimate each year of the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training. Evidence shows that there are a range of factors than can affect the proportion of NEET. This scorecard aims to put the headline figures into context by setting them alongside a range of other related information. The scorecard is presented in appendix two.

2.20. In Merton our NEET outturn remains broadly in line with national figures - 4.3% compared to 4.7% nationally, within the third quintile. We are doing particularly well with our 16 year old NEETs figure - only 1.7% compared to 2.2% nationally. Our 'known' figure 93.4% has improved to be well above national 91%. However this has resulted in our 're-engagement' EET figure to be in the bottom quintile 4.2% compared to 7.7%.

2.21. 93.3% of our 16 to 17 year olds are participating in education; this places us in the top quintile performing well above the national average of 90.6%.

2.22. Our September Guarantee figures (also 16 and 17 year olds) have improved significantly from September 2012 (87.3%) to September 2014 (92.8%) albeit below national levels (93.2%). The Raising the Participation Age working group (RPA) have commissioned a deeper analysis to support an action plan moving forward which will target specific cohorts of NEET.

2.23. Other elements of the scorecard cover published education data relating to 2013/14 including attainment at GCSE, (5 or more A*to C) - Merton at 64.2% performed well above the national average of 53.4%; overall absence - 4.9% Merton performed better than the national average of 5.2%; persistent absence 4.6% again Merton performed better than the national average of 5.3%.

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

Appendix 1: CYPP performance index 2015/16 (August 2015)

Appendix 2: NEET Scorecard July 2015.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

4.1.1. CSF Performance Management Framework http://intranet/departments/csf-index/csf-performance.htm

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Performance Index 2015/16

No.	Performance Indicators	Target 2015/16	Deviation	Polarity	Merton 2013/14	Merton 2014/15	England 2013/14*	London 2013/14*	BRAG rating	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15 / Q1	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15 / Q2	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15 / Q3	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16 / Q4	Notes
1	Number of Common and Shared Assessments undertaken (CASAs)	Not a target measure	n/a	High	707	443	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Not a target measure			113										Quarterly (Time lag in collating CASAs from partner agencies) YTD
2	% of Single Assessments completed within the statutory 45 days	82% (National)	2.5%	High	81%	91%	82%	78%	Green	93%	92%	93%	93%	94%								Year to Date
3	% of Education, Health and Care plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale	85%	2.5%	High	100% (SEN2)	Due in Jan 2016	61.5% (SEN2)	64.0% (SEN2)	Green			87%										Cumulative YTD Academic Year, from 1 September 2014 only to be reported in January 2015.
Child protection																						
4	Child Protection Plans rate per 10,000	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	39	42	37	34	Not a target measure	35.9	35.6	35.0	35.2	36.9								Monthly - as at the end of the month
5	Number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	182	180	No relevant benchmarking avalible	No relevant benchmarking avalible	Not a target measure	165	164	163	162	170								Monthly - as at the end of the month
6	Number of family groups subject of Child protection plans	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	86	84	No relevant benchmarking avalible	No relevant benchmarking avalible	Not a target measure	94	96	94	86	90								Monthly - as at the end of the month
7	% of Children subject of a Child Protection Plan with an allocated Social Worker	100%	n/a	High	100%	100%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%								Monthly - as at the end of the month
8	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	95%	2.5%	High	93%	91%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green			92.3%										Monthly - as at the end of the month
9	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	96% (National)	n/a	High	93%	93%	96%	98%	Green	100%	100%	98%	98%	98%								Year To Date (NI 67)
10	% of Children subject of a CP Plan who had a 4 weekly CP visit within timescales in the last six months prior to and including the reporting month	94.6% (National)	2.5%	High	93%	CIN Census August 2015	94.6%	97.2%	Green	88%	90%	93%	82%	92%								Monthly - within timescale in the last six months prior to and including the reporting month
11	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	13% (London)	20%	Low	11%	17%	14%	13%	Red	22.2%	21.7%	21.2%	25.6%	24.2%								Year To Date (NI 65)
Looked After Children																						
12	Looked After Children rate per 10,000	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	33	34.1	60	55	Not a target measure	34.3	34.8	35.9	35.4	34.8								End of the month snapshot
13	Number of Looked After Children	Not a target measure	n/a	n/a	150	157	No relevant benchmarking avalible	No relevant benchmarking avalible	Not a target measure	158	160	165	163	160								End of the month snapshot
14	% of Looked After Children with an allocated Social Worker	100%	n/a	High	100%	100%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%								Year to Date
15	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks	37 weeks	8%	Low	29	24 weeks (Q4)	33	No benchmarking avalible	Data not yet published			Data not yet published										Quarterly
16	% of Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	100%	1%	High	97%	95%	Not published	Not published	Green	97%	100%	100%	100%	99%								Year To Date (NI 66)
17	% of Looked After Children participating in their reviews in month	90%	n/a	High	87%	66%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Red	84%	95%	86%	90%	88%								Monthly with Quarter YTD
18	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - number of moves (3 moves or more in the year)	15%	n/a	Low	13%	13%	11%	No benchmarking avalible	Green	0.6%	1.9%	3.0%	3.1%	4.4%								Year To Date (NI 62)
19	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - length of placement	68%	n/a	High	58%	46%	67%	No benchmarking avalible	Red	45.7%	54.5%	62.5%	62.5%	64.5%								End of the month snapshot (NI 63)
20	% of Looked After Children placed with agency foster carers	46%	12%	Low	50%	41.8%	38%	No benchmarking avalible	Green			40.6%										Quarterly
21	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	20	10%	High	14	10	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green			4										Quarterly
22	Number of Looked After Children who were adopted and agency Special Guardianship Orders granted	13	8%	High	15	16	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green	2	4	4	5	5								Year to Date

No.	Performance Indicators	Target 2015/16	Deviation	Polarity	Benchmarking and trend				BRAG rating	Merton 2015/16 performance													Notes
					Merton 2013/14	Merton 2014/15	England 2013/14*	London 2013/14*		Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15 / Q1	Jul-15	Aug-15	Sep-15 / Q2	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15 / Q3	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16 / Q4	
Childrens Centres and Schools																							
23	% outcome of all Children Centre Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	100%	0%	High	100%	100%	69%	76%	Green			100%										Year to Date
24	% of total 0-5 year estimated ACORN estimated population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services	75%	n/a	High	78%	77.7%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green			33.4% (see note)										Year to Date Cumulates (Target 19% per quarter)
25	% outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	86%	2.5%	High	87%	85%	79%	86%	Green			85%										Year to Date
26	Number of Primary permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	0	n/a	Low	0 (Academic Year 2012-2013)	0 (Academic Year 2013-2014)	n/a	n/a	Green	0	0	0	0	0								August End of Acad. Yr. YTD (August data interim until November). September start of the new Acad. Yr.
27	Number of Secondary permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	19	n/a	Low	12 (Academic Year 2012-2013)	7 (Academic Year 2013-2014)	n/a	n/a	Green	10	12	12	12	12								August End of Acad. Yr. YTD. September start of the new Acad. Yr.
28	% of Secondary persistent absenteeism (15% absence)	5%	n/a	Low	5.8% (2013)	4.5% (2014)	5.2% (2014)	4.1% (2014)	Annual													Annual Measure 2.5 terms DfE Published SFR maintained and academies
29	% of Reception year surplus places	5%	n/a	Low	3.8%	1.10%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Annual													Annual measure
30	% of Secondary school (Year 7) surplus places inc. Academies	5%	n/a	Low	12.3%	11.32%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Annual													Annual measure
Young People and Services																							
31	Youth service participation rate	1,800	n/a	High	2032	3,234	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Annual													Annual Measure
32	% of CYP (16 - 18 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	5%	20%	Low	4.0%	4.3%	4.7%	No benchmarking avalible	Green	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%	4.1%								Monthly
33	% of CYP (16 - 18 year olds) education, employment or training status 'not known'	Not a target measure	n/a	Low	9.8%	12.4%	9.2%	12.7%	Not a target measure	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%	4.7%	4.1%								Monthly
34	Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system	1.10	n/a	Low	1.10	1.05	1.04 (2013)	1.10 (2013)	Green			0.5										Quarterly (NI 19)
35	Number of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17	80	5%	Low	88	60	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green			9										Year to Date
36	Number of 'Troubled families' turned around (Transforming families programme)	378	n/a	High	185 TD	326/370 88%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Data not yet published			Data not yet published										Quarterly
37	% of commissioned services for which quarterly monitoring was completed	100%	2%	High	100%	100%	No benchmarking avalible	No benchmarking avalible	Green			100%										Quarterly
	* Benchmarking data for England and London 2014/15 will be available once published by the DfE this is anticipated from October to December 2015 for Social Care indicators (2014/15) and January 2015 for Education indicators (September 2015)																						

NEET Scorecard

Published July 2015

LA	**Merton**

Latest performance				Quintile				% pt change since last year		
LA	England	1	2	3	4	5		LA	LA direction	England

% 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)

LA	England	Quintile	% pt change		
4.3%	**4.7%**	**3**	**-0.4**		**-0.6**
1.7% (- age 16)	2.2%		+0.3		-0.3
3.7% (- age 17)	4.4%		+0.4		-0.6
7.6% (- age 18)	7.8%		-2.2		-0.9

LA support

	LA	England	Quintile	LA	England
% 16-17 year olds made offer of an education place under September Guarantee	92.8%	93.2%	4	-0.2	+1.1
% 16-18 year olds whose activity is known to the local authority	93.4%	91.0%	3	+5.8	+0.2
% 16-18 year olds NEET re-engaging in EET	4.2%	7.7%	5	-2.0	+0.3

Outcomes

	LA	England	Quintile	LA	England
% 16-17 year olds participating in education and training	93.3%	90.6%	1	-0.8	+0.3
- full-time education	89.5%	83.1%		-1.9	-0.1
- apprenticeships	2.3%	4.9%		+0.6	+0.7
- other education and training	1.4%	2.6%		+0.5	-0.3
% 19 year olds achieving level 3	61.2%	57.0%	2	+3.2	+0.6
% 19 year olds achieving GCSE A*-C English and maths (or equivalent) between ages 16 and 19, for those who had not achieved this level by 16	19.0%	16.9%	2	+1.6	+0.5

Contextual information

GCSE attainment	LA	England
5 or more GCSEs at A* - C inc E & M	64.2%	53.4%
1 or more GCSE at A* - G	96.8%	97.7%

School attendance	LA	England
Overall absence (% of sessions)	4.9%	5.2%
Persistent absentees (% of pupils)	4.6%	5.3%

16-18 LA population	
ONS estimate	6,370
Recorded on CCIS	5,930

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel –Work Programme 2015/16

Meeting Date – 1ˢᵗ July 2015

Theme: Setting the work programme			
Item	**Purpose/intended outcome**	**Responsible officer/Member Topic Lead**	**External Witnesses/Representatives in attendance**
Elected Member & Departmental Portfolio Priorities	Outlining the portfolio priorities of Cabinet Members and officers' service priorities for 2015-16 to inform discussion of the Panels work programme for 2015/16	Paul Ballatt/Yvette Stanley Cabinet Members – Cllrs Whelton and Martin	
Agreeing the Work Programme 2015/16	To agree work programme and consider: • How Panel will deliver its work programme throughout the year with a thematic approach. • appointing topic leads • how to get the best out of performance monitoring, • how shorter task groups will operate, opportunities for pre decision scrutiny • on-going monitoring of task group	Cllr Katy Neep/Rebecca Redman	

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	recommendations • Co-opted member positions.		
Draft Final Report – Online Strategies in Schools Task Group	Panel to endorse report and recommendations for submission to Cabinet for consideration.	Rebecca Redman	
Performance Report	Discussion of proposed 'basket' of performance indicators for on-going monitoring	Paul Ballatt	

Meeting Date - 21st October 2015

Theme: Improving Health Outcomes for children and young people			
Item	**Purpose/intended outcome**	**Responsible officer/Member Topic Lead**	**External Witnesses/Representatives in attendance**
Looked after children and corporate parenting report	This is a standard item looking at services across the borough to support looked after children, pre and post-adoption.	Paul Ballatt	NHS Police
Annual report and business plan of Merton's Safeguarding Children Board	To enable the Panel to consider the work and performance of Merton's Safeguarding Children Board	Paul Ballatt	Invite Chair of MSCB and partner agencies.
Update Report	Update on developments affecting	Paul Ballatt	

	CSF department since the last scrutiny meeting for information.		
Performance Report	Report on basket of indicators selected by Panel with commentary on areas of concern/underperformance. Members may wish to select areas for more in-depth scrutiny if there is persistent underperformance in a particular service/area.	Paul Ballatt	
Agree Scope: **Housing and Health offer for care leavers and looked after children Task Group**	Cross cutting review to be undertaken over 2/3 meetings. Key Lines of enquiry/membership: TBD The Task Group should report back to the Panel with a final report and recommendations at its March 2016 meeting.	TBD	
Agree Scope: **Educational attainment for disabled children and young people Task Group**	To establish a small task group to review one or two factors that influence educational attainment for disabled children and young people with a view to making recommendations. Key Lines of enquiry/membership:	TBD	

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	TBD Task Group to report back to Panel at meeting in February 2016.		
Work programme	• To consider any pre decision items on the Forward Plan that the Panel may wish to scrutinise and include in their work programme • To agree the task group key lines of enquiry and areas of investigation for topic leads in preparation for the next meeting	Rebecca Redman	

Special meeting – date to be determined.

Pre decision scrutiny – School Expansion Programme	To enable the Panel to comment at pre decision stage on revised proposals for the school expansion programme.	Paul Ballatt	

Meeting Date – 3rd November 2015

Theme: Safeguarding/Corporate Parenting			
Item	**Purpose/intended outcome**	**Responsible officer/Member Topic Lead**	**External Witnesses/Representatives in attendance**

CSF Budget Proposals (Round 1)	To enable the Panel to comment on the budget proposals and any new or revised savings as part of the first round of the process for agreeing the councils budget and business plan.	Yvette Stanley/Zoe Church	
Executive Response and Action Plan – Online Strategies in Schools Task Group	To provide a response from Cabinet outlining which recommendations from the review have been agreed and how they will be implemented going forward.	TBD	
Update Report	Update on developments affecting CSF department since the last scrutiny meeting	Paul Ballatt	
Performance Report	Report on basket of indicators selected by Panel with commentary on areas of concern/underperformance. Members may wish to select areas for more in-depth scrutiny if there is persistent underperformance in a particular service/area.	Paul Ballatt	
Work programme	• To consider any pre decision items on the Forward Plan that the Panel may wish to scrutinise and include in their work programme • To agree the task group key	Rebecca Redman	

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	lines of enquiry and areas of investigation for topic leads in preparation for the next meeting		
Agree Scope: **Transfer of public health functions to the local authority and broader engagement of health in provision of services for children and young people Task Group**	Task Group examine data on health outcomes to identify key lines of enquiry and challenging questions that could be put to health professionals at the Panel meeting in March 2016. Key Lines of enquiry: TBD Focus on improving health outcomes for children and on 4 priorities of the health and achievement plan.	TBD	Witnesses/partners to be identified. Public Health – Kate/Julia CCG Head of Community Health Services provision

Meeting Date – January 2016

Theme: Budget Scrutiny			
Item	**Purpose/intended outcome**	**Responsible officer/Member Topic Lead**	**External Witnesses/Representatives in attendance**
CSF Budget Proposals (Round 2)	To enable the Panel to consider the councils budget and business plan proposals and forward any comments/recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny commission to	Yvette Stanley/Zoe Church	

	compile a scrutiny response on the Budget/Business Plan to Cabinet.		
Update Report	Update on developments affecting CSF department since the last scrutiny meeting for information.	Paul Ballatt	
Performance Report	Report on basket of indicators selected by Panel with commentary on areas of concern/underperformance. Members may wish to select areas for more in-depth scrutiny if there is persistent underperformance in a particular service/area.	Paul Ballatt	
Work programme	• To consider any pre decision items on the Forward Plan that the Panel may wish to scrutinise and include in their work programme • To agree the task group key lines of enquiry and areas of investigation for topic leads in preparation for the next meeting	Rebecca Redman	

Meeting Date –February 2016

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Theme: School Standards			
Item	**Purpose/intended outcome**	**Responsible officer/Member Topic Lead**	**External Witnesses/Representatives in attendance**
Briefing- School Standards Committee	To gain a more in depth understanding of the role and work of this Committee and to seek the view of the Chair of the School Standards Committee on areas of concern and how scrutiny might support this work.	Cllr Dennis Pearce/Rebecca Redman	
School Standards	Annual Report on Attainment and Progress of Pupils in Merton Schools for information.	Paul Ballatt	
Educational attainment for disabled children and young people	To consider the educational attainment of disabled children and young people.		
Progress Update - School leadership succession planning task group	• To enable the Panel to performance manage delivery of the recommendations resulting from its task group review. • Topic leads should be	Head of Education/Rebecca Redman	

	appointed to champion this work through a follow up meeting with lead officers mid-year		
Progress Update – online strategies in schools task group	• To enable the Panel to performance manage delivery of the recommendations resulting from its task group review. • Topic leads should be appointed to champion this work through a follow up meeting with lead officers mid-year		
Update Report	Update on developments affecting CSF department since the last scrutiny meeting	Paul Ballatt	
Performance Report	Report on basket of indicators selected by Panel with commentary on areas of concern/underperformance. Members may wish to select areas for more in-depth scrutiny if there is persistent underperformance in a particular	Paul Ballatt	

	service/area.		
Work programme	• To consider any pre decision items on the Forward Plan that the Panel may wish to scrutinise and include in their work programme • To agree the task group key lines of enquiry and areas of investigation for topic leads in preparation for the next meeting	Rebecca Redman	
Final Report - Educational attainment for disabled children and young people task group	Final Report of the Educational attainment for disabled children and young people task group	TBD	

Meeting Date – March 2016

Theme: Transition between child and adult social care and health services			
Item	**Purpose/intended outcome**	**Responsible officer/Member Topic Lead**	**External Witnesses/Representatives in attendance**
Looked after	This is a standard item looking at	Paul Ballatt	Invite partners.

children and corporate parenting report	services across the borough to support looked after children, pre and post-adoption.		
Recruitment of foster carers and other placements for looked after children	Report on the recruitment of foster carers with a view to identifying any areas for further scrutiny/or make any recommendations to Cabinet or partners.		
Update Report	Update on developments affecting CSF department since the last scrutiny meeting	Paul Angeli	
Performance Report	Report on basket of indicators selected by Panel with commentary on areas of concern/underperformance. Members may wish to select areas for more in-depth scrutiny if there is persistent underperformance in a particular service/area.	Paul Ballatt	
Work programme	• To consider any pre decision items on the Forward Plan that the Panel may wish to scrutinise and include in their	Rebecca Redman	

	work programme • To agree the task group key lines of enquiry and areas of investigation for topic leads in preparation for the next meeting		
Topic Suggestions	Panel to raise any topics for the 2016/17 work programme to consider at the Topic Workshops in May/June 2016	Rebecca Redman	
Final Report of Task Group looking at Transfer of public health functions to the local authority for children and young people.	Draft Final Report of the task group and recommendations for agreement to forward to Cabinet (and partners where appropriate) for consideration	TBD	
Final Report of Housing and Health offer for care leavers Task Group	Draft Final Report of the task group and recommendations for agreement to forward to Cabinet (and partners where appropriate) for consideration	TBD	