

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
13 FEBRUARY 2019

(7.15 pm - 10.08 pm)

PRESENT Councillor Sally Kenny (in the Chair),
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Councillor Nigel Benbow,
Councillor Omar Bush, Councillor Edward Foley, Councillor
James Holmes, Councillor Natasha Irons,
Councillor Mark Kenny, Councillor Dennis Pearce,
Councillor Eleanor Stringer, and Helen Forbes

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Kelly Braund - Cabinet Member for Children's
Services
Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah - Cabinet Member for
Education
Jane McSherry - Assistant Director of Education
Paul Angeli – Head of Social Care and Inclusion
Sharon Buckby – Interim Head of Policy, Planning and
Performance
Hilina Assress – Senior Public Health Principal
Natalie Lovell –Health Improvement Officer
Sara Williams – Programme Manager for Business and
Economy, futureMerton
Keith Shipman – Social Inclusion Manager
Kim Brown – Head of Organisational Development and HR
Strategy
David Keppler – Head of Revenue and Benefits
Dr Catherine Heffernan, Principal Advisor for Commissioning
Immunisations and Vaccination Services, NHS England
Bernadette Johnson - Immunisation Commissioning Manager
NHS England
Fiona White -Nurse Consultant in Primary Care and Lead for
Maternity & Transforming Primary Care Nursing Merton CCG
Lisa Jewell – Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

The Panel welcomed Councillor Nigel Benbow, who replaced Councillor Ed Gretton, who had sent his apologies.

Councillor Hayley Ormrod sent her apologies. Councillor James Holmes attended as Substitute.

The Director of Children School and Families, Rachel Wardell, and the Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Integrated Service, Karla Finikin, both sent their apologies

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations of pecuniary interest were received

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

4 IMMUNISATION UPDATE REPORT BY NHS ENGLAND (Agenda Item 4)

The Panel received the Immunisation Update Report presented by NHS England Officers; Dr Catherine Heffernan, Principal Advisor for Commissioning Immunisations and Vaccination Services and Bernadette Johnson - Immunisation Commissioning Manager NHS England

The Panel noted additional information from Fiona White -Nurse Consultant in Primary Care and Lead for Maternity & Transforming Primary Care Nursing Merton CCG, and from Hilina Assress Principal in Public Health LBM.

Dr Heffernan explained that London had struggled with immunisation levels both historically and currently. This was down to a number of complex issues. There is a high population turnover, which is reflected in GP patient lists, the system cannot always keep up with the intake. Many Children in London are vaccinated abroad, and this may not be recorded on the Child's records. Staffing for vaccinating and administration is under pressure in London.

She continued that there is much work being done by NHS Digital to make childhood records more portable and therefore more accurate. The best way to increase uptake is to invite parents to bring their children for vaccination. However many GP practices have to do this manually. Work is being done to improve and automate this system. We have to make sure that people are informed – there is a lot of misinformation available. Merton is neither the top or bottom performing London Borough

Fiona Wright detailed the work her Practise does to ensure children are recalled for immunisation. She also explained that some countries have different vaccination schedules and this can affect children arriving from those countries. There are quarterly meetings with NHS England to look at data and scheduled training for nurses. Her practice will also encourage adults and children to get missed MMR vaccinations.

Bernadette Johnson highlighted current programmes in different areas of London to promote immunisation, including incentivising GPs to check the vaccination status of their patients.

The Public Health Principal explained that immunisation was embedded into Merton's commissioning of services, with the School Nursing and Health Visiting services having roles in promoting and recording immunisations. Immunisation is promoted through the My Merton magazine.

In answer to Panel Member questions Dr Heffernan replied:

- Despite London's percentage uptake being lower than the regions, London does vaccinate almost twice as many 0-5 year olds than any other region.
- London is more complex and has more GP practices than other UK city
- Some communities choose to vaccinate later in childhood
- As a country our situation is good and stable and our systems are better than other parts of Europe
- There are shrinking resources both for actually vaccinating and for administration of the service ie manual call/recall
- Work is underway to safeguard services in the event of a no deal Brexit
- Data collection has been simplified but further work is needed to simplify and improve. NHS Digital is working on a system that will reduce data input demands, making it easier for GP practices and will create records that will follow a child.
- There is an ambition to create an electronic Red Book System

Fiona White described the call/recall scheme in Merton, that after a family has defaulted on an immunisation there should be a phone call, text or letter to remind them

Dr Heffernan was asked which reason was most important in increasing uptake, she replied that when the Data Collection and call/recall systems are improved the figures should improve. She also said that it is important to have pro-vaccine champions to counter the mis-information on social media. It is important to remember just how serious childhood illnesses were in the past.

Members expressed concern about Merton's position, and that it has lower vaccination figures than its neighbouring boroughs. Dr Heffernan accepted their concerns and said that a mapping process had just started to try to understand what was really happening in London. She said that a ward by ward breakdown of the figures was not available. Members noted that Merton's figures for 12 month vaccinations show good engagement, but that they drop at 24 months and 5 years, and she believed that solving the problems with data and with call/recall would improve these figures.

A panel member reminded the Panel about the Immunisation Task Group from 2016/17 and said that this did have a local affect and that this had put forward a number of recommendations.

Dr Heffernan suggested that Councillors could lobby locally for improvements such as Pharmacists giving vaccines, and evening appointments for working parents.

Bernadette Johnson asked Members to note the good work being done in Schools to check the immunisation status of teenagers and offer vaccinations not previously received. She continued that Merton met or exceeded the figures for School Age Programmes. Dr Heffernan explained that when children are offered vaccinations via their School uptake can double.

Members noted that there is a Healthy London Partnership that looks at research on all areas of public health in London, including Asthma and immunisation.

A panel Member commented that she was concerned that there were not enough Health Visitor visits after 12 months and that this was contributing to the lower uptake of vaccinations after this age, she suggested that this was monitored more closely.

The Panel noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board would keep immunisation as priority.

The Chair concluded by saying that she could see that there were a lot of systems in place to try to improve the uptake figures, but she asked if there was a regular update that could be sent to the Panel. Dr Heffernan said she could send through an update to the figures in 6 months and that there were plans that could be shared.

5 PROGRESS REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY AND REFRESH 2019 – 2024 (Agenda Item 5)

The Public Health Officers presented their report on the Update on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the Panel thanked them for their detailed written report.

A member commented that she was pleased to see the work that has been done to reduce waiting times for the first CAMHS appointment, however she asked if this had resulted in delays to the waiting time for second appointments. Public Health Officers confirmed that the Single Point of Access had succeeded in reducing the waiting time between the first appointment, triage, and the second appointment, treatment.

Panel Members discussed childhood obesity and were pleased to note that this had reduced. Members noted that the 'Daily/Active mile' was being promoted in the Borough's Schools. The Public Health Officers also talked about the range of work being done to combat childhood obesity:

- looking at the areas around schools in terms of unhealthy food adverts, junk food outlets, lack of suitable walking and cycling routes
- Promoting the Change for Life/food swaps programme

A panel member asked about the Trailbazer status and asked for further information regarding the funding received specifically by Merton. The Head of Social Care and Inclusion said that he had information that he would share with Members.

The Assistant Director of Education, replying to a question, said that schools are required to publish on their websites how they have spent the pupil premium grant to improve outcomes for specific groups of pupils and asked the panel to note the reduction in the educational achievement gap of children eligible for pupil premium as detailed in the report. She reminded the Panel that the School Standards Report will be brought to the 13 March meeting of the Panel.

The Public Health Officers spoke about Air Quality and said that this was priority for their work, which will feed into the Merton Air Quality Action Plan.

The Chair thanked the Public Health Officers for their report, and they asked to return to the Panel in a Year, and they said they would also circulate a survey in the near future.

6 ROUTES TO EMPLOYMENT FOR VULNERABLE COHORTS (Agenda Item 6)

The futureMerton Programme Manager for Business and Economy presented the report updating the Panel on Routes to Employment for Vulnerable Cohorts.

The Panel welcomed the update report and congratulated Officers on the work achieved. The Panel noted the update on the Coram research, the statistics on Apprenticeships within the Council, and the work of the 'Toward Employment Pilot' all contained in the report.

In reply to member's questions, officers explained:

- Work experience within the Council was offered to young people from year 10 to sixth form, with an emphasis on placing young people who did not have networking opportunities

- In relation to exit interviews, the Head of HR explained that whilst these are offered it is not mandatory for the young person to attend, and it is work in progress to improve the uptake of these
- The Head of Inclusion explained that non-Merton residents are offered placements as this then allows for the trading of placements with other boroughs.
- When finding a placement for a young person, the process starts with trying to match their interests, however there are also seasonal positions that offer good opportunities.
- There is now a social value toolkit for Merton Officers so that Merton Officers can support employment of young people through the Council's procurement system
- Best practice is shared across neighbouring boroughs

The Panel asked about keeping in touch and monitoring the progress of young people once they had completed a placement and noted that it is the young person's own choice whether they do keep in touch but in practice those who do well do want to tell Officers about this and do keep in touch. If they are a care leaver or have an EHCP then it is the Officer's duty to keep in touch and offer support, but again it is the young person's choice to keep in touch.

The Panel were very pleased to note the case study in appendix B

The Chair thanked all the Officers involved in the work, and asked if an email update could be sent to panel members highlighting long term successes.

7 IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT ON MERTON RESIDENTS (Agenda Item 7)

The Head of Revenues & Benefits presented his report on the Impact of Universal Credit on Merton Residents.

In reply to a question from a Panel Member, The Chair confirmed her view that it was important for the Panel to receive this report as the roll out of Universal Credit has implications for family and child poverty, and child mental health, and that there is a balance across the Annual Work programme with reports on Children's Services and Schools.

The Head of Revenues & Benefits explained to Members that the expansion of the pilot into the SM4 postcode had been done without any warning being given to Merton residents or Officers. Neither the DWP nor Sutton Job Centre contacted The Head of Revenues & Benefits to warn him about this expansion of the pilot. As a result some residents had to wait 9 or 10 weeks for their first payment and also some

were affected by their first week's rent not being paid. Once Merton Officers became aware of what had happened they were able to put emergency welfare payments into place. Advice and help was available and there was an arrangement with the libraries and CAB(Citizens Advice Bureau) to set up on-line accounts, as Universal; Credit can only be claimed on-line. Staff in both Community and Housing and Children, Schools and Families, helped their clients. The Government is now funding the CAB to give support and advice to claimants

A member of the Panel asked if residents knew how deductions will work on their received benefit. The Head of Revenue and Benefits explained that the amount of universal credit received each month can change depending on any earnings eg an hours overtimes can affect the amount paid and that this can also have a knock on affect to Council Tax support, which can be very confusing for residents.

The Chair thanked the Head of Revenues & Benefits for his report.

8 EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLANS - SURVEY WORK WITH PARENTS AND CARERS (Agenda Item 8)

The Assistant Director of Education presented the report on Survey Work with Parents/Carers involved in the EHCP process.

When asked about what plans have been put in place to ensure that children and young people are contributing to their own EHCP, the assistant Director replied that the team work hard to ensure that children contributed, as they were able to, but a number of things are to be done to improve this including:

- The Participation team has audited a sample of EHCPs and provided advice on how children and young people can contribute more fully to their plans
- The new EHCP on-line system will allow Children and Young People to contribute independently of their parents' contributions
- All new applicants for EHCP will receive the POET questionnaire to complete on their experience of the process; feedback will be analysed and further improvements based on this implemented. The responses will be compared to national data.

A Panel Member asked about parental choice and preference for an out-of-borough independent setting for their child, which would be more expensive than a place at a Borough Community School. The Assistant Director replied:

- We need to consider the right placement for each individual child
- The system is weighted towards parental choice, and parents can go to tribunal to pursue their preferences
- We always need to consider if we can meet the child's needs in-borough, or if the independent school can meet their needs better. The independent Schools

have very good marketing strategies, and we must look at ours, as all our special schools are rated 'good' or 'outstanding'.

- There is expansion at Cricket Green School, with a proposed GCSE programme. There are also proposals to increase the number of places in the Borough for children with special needs, including increasing primary SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs) provision, primary and secondary ASD base places, secondary medical provision and consideration of a possible new ASD provision.

9 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES - VERBAL UPDATE (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member of Education gave an update:

- Harris Wimbledon, the new site, is on target for September 2020 opening
- Congratulations to Raynes Park High School who have received an OFSTED Good
- Joseph Hood and St Marks Primary Schools have received letters from the Department of Education, both received pupil premium progress scores in the top 3% of the Country
- Rutlish and Ricards Lodge Schools have received letters from the Mayor of London congratulating them on their outcomes

Councillor Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children's Services gave an update:

- The letter from the recent OFSTED visit praised our MASH and the work they do. This was a great testament to the work of our front line staff,
- The Cabinet member said that she was very proud of this report and said that she would be visiting the department with the Director soon

The Cabinet Member for Education was asked about the £5.1million received from Government for the new Harris Academy Wimbledon and if any of this money will be spent on Air Quality measures. She replied that the money from Government will go towards the council's costs to assemble the School, the air quality in the area is being considered and work done with the Mayor of London.

The Cabinet Member for Education was asked if the Council would be paying for Elim Church to move to Wimbledon Chase School whilst Merton Hall was being completed for them to move into. The Chair she did not have this information to hand, but that an answer would be circulated.

The Cabinet Member for Education was asked if she could say what is driving the success of Merton Schools, and she replied that it was a combination of the excellent Teachers in Merton Schools, the support of parents for their children and the hard work of the Schools Improvement team supporting the Schools

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services was asked what action she would take regarding the areas of challenge highlighted in the recent visit, and she replied that they were on the agenda for her discussion with the Director and she would want to ensure that the culture in the department allowed this work to be done and that performance reviews were in place.

10 DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE REPORT (Agenda Item 10)

The Panel noted the Departmental Update Report.

11 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 11)

The Panel received the Performance Report, and comments by the Performance lead, who thanked the Interim Head of Policy, Planning and Performance for her work on providing the performance information.

The Panel noted that point 36 indicated that although there was no target for Youth Reoffending the number was increasing. The Head of Social Care and Inclusion explained that there is a core of young people with complex needs who are more likely to re-offend. A lot of work has been done, with some success and a full report could be brought to the Panel if required.

The Panel noted that point 37 indicated that although there was no target for Troubled Families the number was increasing and the funding for this programme was due to end in 2020. The Head of Social Care and Inclusion said the department was waiting to see if this program would continue to be supported by The Government. He offered to keep the Panel informed on this subject.

A Panel Member asked if the School Surplus figures were available and noted that they would be available at the March Meeting

A Panel Member asked if the targets that had achieved a green could now drop off the list, to make room for the reporting of other targets that are still at red or amber. The lead member for Performance Monitoring asked the Panel to note that it has only been recently that the Panel received such up to date information.

A Panel Member noted that point 2 and 11 were on Red and asked Officers to expand on this. Officers explained that the % of single assessments carried out within the statutory 45 days has been maintained above the London average. The % of children that became the subject of a Child protection Plan for the Second time, is related to incidents of repeat victimisation and domestic violence, specific incidents are investigated and the child will then go back onto a protection plan.

12 WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2019 (Agenda Item 12)

The Panel noted the Work Programme 2018/2019