Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 10 February 2020

Wards: All

Subject:

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cllr Eleanor Stringer

Contact officer: Karl Mittelstadt, Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Recommendations:

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

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report summarises the performance information for quarter 3 2019/20 as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2019/20.

2 DETAILS

Exception Report

2.1. The table below summarises changes to ratings, or other significant changes in performance since the last meeting.

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Rating Change	Comment / Action
3	% of Education, Health and Care Plans issued within statutory 20 Week timescale (including exceptions)	G to A Target 55% (min)	Year to date performance had been improving month to month through to October (58%) but saw a decline through November and December to 53%
11	% of children that became subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	G to R (range 12 – 20%)	The year to date rate rose to just above the target range in December (21%)
16	Average number of weeks taken to complete care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks (Data source CAFCASS)	Q2 Remains R Target 26 week (max)	The average number of weeks rose to 39 during Q2, from 28 in Q1. The national average rate was 33 weeks in both Q1 and Q2 (Q3 data is published in February).

31	% of secondary school (year 7) surplus places	Red (5-10% range introduced)	The council has planned its secondary school expansion programme carefully in partnership with our schools in the knowledge that after a rapid rise, demand for Year 7 places will drop in 2023/24. Following the opening of the new Harris Academy Wimbledon School, we have agreed to avoid further secondary school expansion, and schools have committed to provide bulge classes only when strictly necessary.

Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

2.2. As agreed by the Panel on 6 November 2019 the following indicators have been replaced, amended or removed:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Changes made
7	Average Caseload for workers for Children subject of a Child Protection Plan	Replaced – see indicator 40
15	Average Caseload for workers for Looked after Children	Replaced – see indicator 40
40	New Indicator replacing 7 & 15 Average Caseload for social workers. DfE Benchmark data is available on average caseloads of all social workers at 30 September.	New / Replacement indicator. Reports on average of overall caseloads for case holding social workers.
23	Number of Looked after Children who were adopted and agency Special Guardianship Orders granted	Amended to be two indicators 23 (adopted) and 23a (SGO)
24	% outcome of all Children Centre Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	Removed

2.3. In addition, we have made the following changes:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Changes made
22	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	The target for this measure has been amended from 15 to 20. This is to align performance reporting across a range of meetings and audiences.
30	% of reception year surplus places	Introduced target range 5-10%
31	% of secondary school (year 7) surplus places	Introduced target range 5-10%

2.4. Indicator 1 (Number of Common and Shared Assessments undertaken): The Q1 and Q2 data has been updated as seven assessments had previously been reported in the wrong quarter.

2.5. Indicator 2 (% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days) data caveat: we are aware of some data anomalies in relation to the correct recording of assessment authorisation dates. We are investigating this further at the spring performance clinics.

2.6. Indicator 8 (% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences); performance information has been unavailable since the Mosaic upgrade in July. The bespoked report is currently being reviewed and the relevant data field re-mapped to resolve this issue and we hope to provide Q2 and Q3 data to the March panel.

2.7. Indicator 18 (% of children participating in reviews in month – Year to Date): the methodology, and therefore the data, has been amended to ensure that: only reviews for looked after children aged five and above are included; that the percentage given relates to the number children in care who have had reviews undertaken in period rather than the total number of all children looked after; and that the data is year-to-date at each month end. In some instances, information on participation is missing. This impacts the data at present and will be addressed through the spring programme of performance clinics.

2.8. Indicators 19 and 20 (Stability of placements of looked after children). We are, at this point, reporting Q1 – 3 as not available whilst a full review is undertaken of recording practice. The data integrity has been impacted as changes of placement are currently not recorded consistently in a child's case record. This is being addressed with the service teams at the performance clinics.
We have updated the 2018 and 2019 annual rates to those submitted to and published by the Department for Education from the annual Children Looked After Census. Whilst some work was undertaken to ensure data accuracy for the annual submission, we would still advise caution.

2.9. Indicator 21 (% of looked after children placed with agency foster carers) data caveat. Data for this indicator is impacted by similar recording issues identified for indicator 19 and 20. We have therefore sourced the data from finance data which gives us a rate of 37% of all looked after children at 31 December being placed with agency providers.
For comparison, current mosaic reports give us 39% of all those in care on 31 December being in agency foster provision, and 51.8% of all those in foster care being in agency provision but the data for these latter two figures are reliant on any placement changes being recorded in the correct form in the client's record.

2.10. Indicator 23 (new indicators 23 and 23 a) data caveat: we are aware of data quality issues in regard to adoptions and special guardianship orders and a review is underway.

2.11. Indicator 28 (Number of Secondary permanent exclusions). The data has been amended using the official data submitted retrospectively to the DfE via the termly school census. Please note that both indicator 27 and 28 relate to pupils educated in Merton schools (primary or secondary), including those in special schools.

2.12. In the previous report to Panel Indicator 38 (% of commissioned services for which quarterly monitoring was completed) was reported as Red (0%). This has been corrected to 100%, therefore performance has been maintained at 100% for three quarters

2.13. Where available, benchmarking data (England and London performance) has been updated throughout the data index to the most recent published figures, and Merton's previous annual data has been updated to reference data published by the Department for Education. Please note that some published data relates to a snapshot date, or to the academic year, and therefore may not align the figures previously reported.

3 FOR DECISION

3.1. Indicator 6 (below). Performance information continues to be unavailable. As reported to the Panel in March 2019 (agenda item 9, 2.6) development of the group work function in Mosaic was planned for autumn 2019. This project has now been stopped.

3.2. Consequently, we are proposing to remove this indicator.

6	Number of family groups subject of Child protection plans

COMMITTEE DECISION: To remove indicator 6

3.3. Indicator 21 (% of looked after children placed with agency foster carers): We would propose inverting this indicator for 2020/21 to show the proportion of in-house foster placements. In addition, we propose clarifying that we are reporting on the proportion of children in foster care who are placed with in-house foster carers (rather than as a proportion of all looked-after children).

3.4. The replacement indicator would read as follows.

21	% of looked after children in foster placements who placed with in-house foster carers.

COMMITTEE DECISION: To agree inverting this indicator.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. No specific implications for this report

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

5.1. None for this report

6 TIMETABLE

6.1. Not applicable for this report

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. None

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

- Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2019/20

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1. None

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