

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 11 March 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 2019/20, up to 31 January 2020, 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. There have been no changes to the BRAG ratings since the performance reported to the Panel in February 2020.
- 2.2. Indicator 3 (EHCP timeliness). This has been rated amber as performance remains within 5% of the target rate (55%).
- 2.3. Monthly performance for Indicator 11 (% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time) remains red for a second consecutive month, with the rate rising further to 22%.
- 2.4. As of end January 2020, 22 children from 13 families are subject to repeat child protection plans. 5 children from 3 families have had 2 previous child protection plans. The plans for 15 of the children started in this performance year (April 2019 – March 2020).
- 2.5. A review of the social work interventions and decision-making for the 22 children was completed in February 2020. This identified that half of the children are aged 10 years or older. Domestic abuse coupled with parental alcohol / substance use featured in the majority of both the previous and repeat plans. All of the repeat plans were for the same or linked assessment factors as the previous plans.
- 2.6. We are taking action to protect these children. 9 of the children have pre-proceedings plans or care proceedings have been issued. The identified learning and development needs relate to direct social work interventions with parents where domestic abuse and alcohol/substance misuse is a factor and social work assessment of the sustainability of change where behaviour

patterns are longstanding and repetitive. This will be captured in the workforce learning and development offer for 2020/2021.

- 2.7. Indicator 16 (average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks). Please note that whilst Merton's performance is rated as red against the national target, Merton's performance (32 weeks on average) compared favourably to the national average during Q3 (34 weeks).

Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

- 2.8. As agreed by the Panel on 10 February 2020 the following indicators have been replaced, amended or removed:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Changes made
6	Number of family groups subject of child protection plans (Monthly indicator)	Removed
21	% of Looked after Children placed with agency foster carers (Quarterly Indicator) Target 40%	Amended and data updated: % of Looked after Children in foster placements who are placed with in-house foster carers (Quarterly Indicator); Target 60%

- 2.9. As reported previously, current system configuration and data recording issues in our social care reporting system Mosaic have an impact on our ability to report performance against some of the indicators effectively. Importantly, this does not mean that the department is unable to monitor performance. Where there is a clear need to monitor performance, manual data collection processes are in place.

- 2.10. The department has introduced a programme of work to review data entry and reporting processes in detail. This is undertaken in the 'Performance Clinics' run by the Performance Team, and attended by social care staff. In addition, the department has successfully bid for additional resources to support Mosaic development (subject to final sign-off by finance and approval by Cabinet).

- 2.11. The following data caveats apply:

- 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.
- Indicator 3 (% of Education, Health and Care Plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale). Please note that the nationally published figures are for performance across a calendar year, and are reported to the DfE through the Special Educational Needs Survey in January each year. The provisional performance rate for Merton for calendar year 2019 is 56%.

- Indicator 8 (% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences); performance information has been unavailable since the Mosaic upgrade in July. The bespoke report is currently being reviewed and the relevant data field re-mapped to resolve this issue.
- Indicator 10(% of Children subject of a CP Plan who had a CP visit within timescales in the month) data caveat: we are currently reviewing the recording and reporting for this measure.
- Indicator 16 (average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks). Please note that whilst Merton's performance still appears high in Q3, at 32 weeks against the national target, the national average during Q3 was 34 weeks.
- Indicator 17 (% of Looked after children cases that were reviewed within required timescales) Further issues have been identified with the data reports that calculate this measure and the reports are being reviewed and the performance reported to the panel to date will also be reviewed as soon as the issue has been addressed.
- Indicator 18 (% Looked After Children participating in their reviews in month). Data caveat: Reported performance should be higher but at present there are some inconsistency in recording the child's participation. We hope resolve this issue through the performance clinics.
- Indicator 21: As reported to the panel of 10 February 2020 due to recording practice issues we are unable to report confidently on this measure from our electronic case recording system at present. Therefore we had used from financial data records to report this information. We have subsequently identified some data limitations to this approach, which means that we are currently unable to report on this indicator. This is being addressed via the Performance Clinics.
- Indicator 23 (new indicators 23 and 23 a) data caveat: we are aware of data quality issues in regard to adoptions and a review is underway. Please note though that both indicators report specifically on the number of children in care whose Looked After period ended when they were adopted or had SGO granted. Another three looked after children have had SGO's granted in February 2020.
- Please note that both indicator 27 and 28 relate to pupils educated in Merton schools (primary or secondary), including those in special schools.
- Indicators 33 and 34 (% of CYP 16- 17 years old Not in education, employment of training / status 'not known'). The confirmed September data from the DfE has now been included. Although the September rate for 16 and 17 year-old Merton residents whose education, employment or training (EET) status was 'not known' appears very high, at 14.9%, this is an expected annual spike marking the period in which the new academic year destinations are being confirmed. For reference, the September Pan London average rate of 'Not Known' was 30.1% and the national average 44.7%

- Note on Indicators 39 (% agency social workers) and 40 (average caseload for social workers working with children and families). We cannot provide directly comparable national and pan London benchmark rates as the data reported to panel is based on live data from HR or Mosaic which does not completely align with the specific DfE definition of a child and family social worker for the purpose of the annual Children's Social Workforce Census (CSWFR). We have, for reference, noted the published rates from the CSWFR in the benchmarking section.
- Note on Indicator 40: This indicator replaces the previous indicators 7 (Average caseload of workers for Children subject of a Child Protection Plan) and 15 (Average caseload of workers for Looked after Children). We are in the process of amending indicator 40 further to report in future on the average caseload of all social workers working with children and families, but the existing data is the total caseload for social workers whose caseload includes Child Protection cases and/or Looked after Children.

3 FOR DECISION

There are no items for decision.

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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