

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 10th February 2021

Wards: All

Subject: Performance Monitoring Performance

Lead officer: Hannah Doody, Director of Children, Schools and Families

Lead member: Councillor Eleanor Stringer, Joint Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Education.

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 2020/21, up to 31 December 2020, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2020/21.

2 DETAILS

Exception Report

2.1. The following indicators are marked as amber or red.

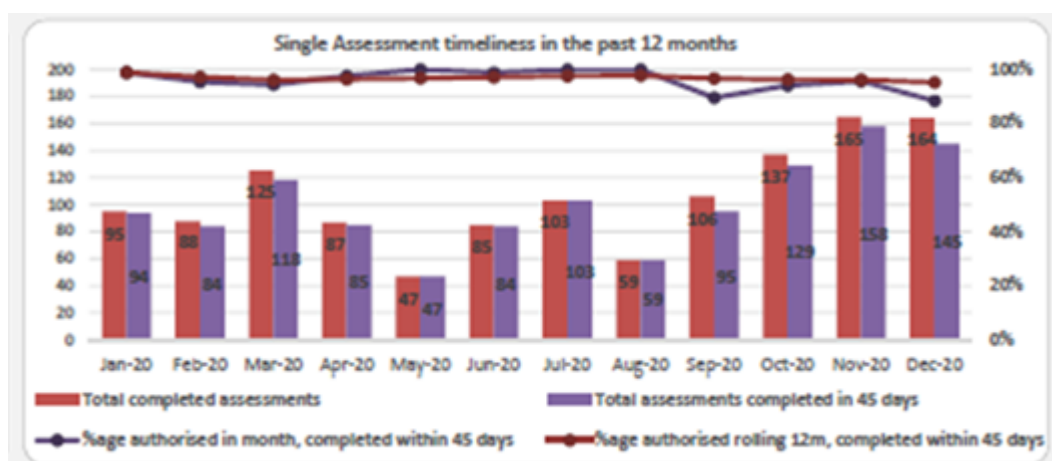
No	Indicator	Rating	Service Commentary
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	R	See below.
3	% of Education, Health and Care plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale	R	There continues to be a delay in meeting the 20-week timescale during COVID. This has been for a number of reasons exacerbated by the pandemic including: staffing issues within partner agencies, late professional advice delaying planning meetings and in a small number of cases parents not engaging with assessments and/or planning meetings.
16	Average number of weeks taken to complete	R	See below.

	Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.		
22	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	R	The recruitment of foster carers has been impacted detrimentally by Covid-19. We continue to promote foster caring using online communication channels.

% of single assessment timeliness

- 2.2. The drop in assessment timeliness is due to a combination of staffing shortages as a result of Covid as well as well as increased demand for services in November and December.
- 2.3. The chart below shows that November and December are ‘high volume’ months. The number of assessments undertaken in these months is more than any other month in the year.

Single Assessment Timeliness (Jan20-Dec20)

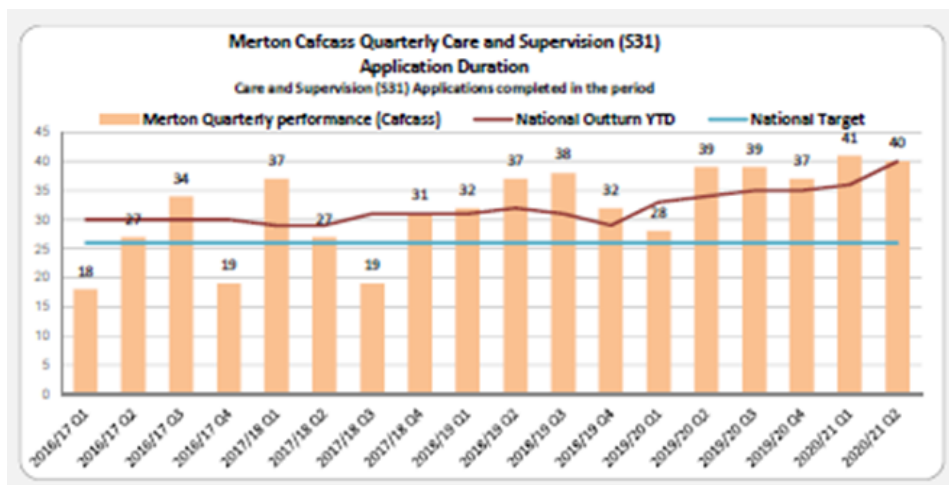


Source: case management system

Care proceedings

- 2.4. Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.
- 2.5. Whilst above the nationally set target of 26 weeks, Merton’s performance is in line with national performance. This is outlined in the table below.

Care proceeding timeliness 2016-2020 (Merton vs National)



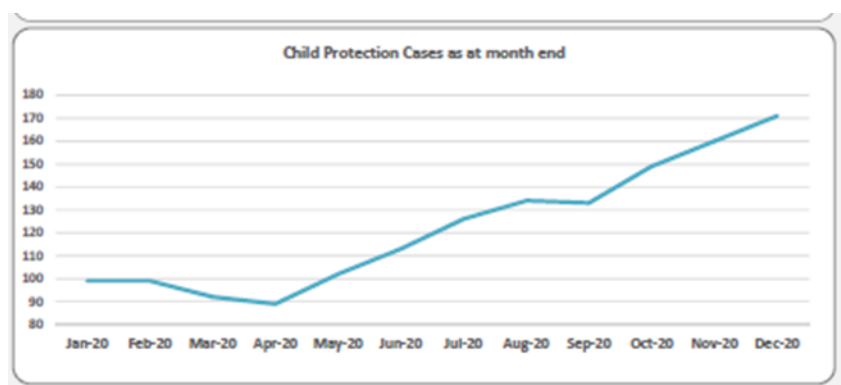
Source: Cafcass published data

2.6. In addition, the following indicators, whilst not target indicators, will be of particular note to the scrutiny panel.

Number of children subject of a child protection plan (indicator 5)

2.7. The number of children subject of a child protection plan has increased by over 65% between March and December 2020 and stood at 171 on 31st December 2020.

Number of Child Protection Plans (Jan20-Dec20)



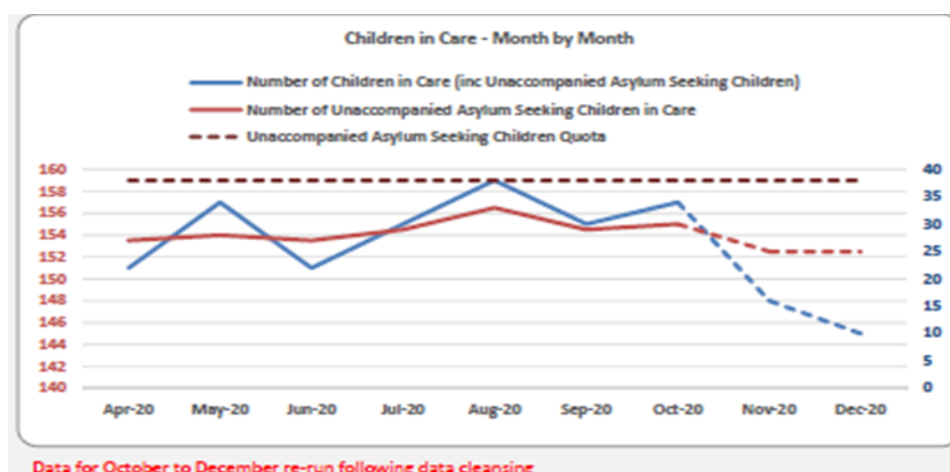
Source: case management system

2.8. The rise in the number of child protection plans is a result of increased demand for services together with an increase in the duration of child protection plans. Both factors are linked to the covid-19 pandemic.

Number of looked after children (indicator 13)

- 2.9. The number of children in care has been stable for the last three years. This is against a backdrop of an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the care of Merton council, as well as a national rise in the overall number of children in care.
- 2.10. In November, we witnessed a further decline in the number of children in our care. This decline is a result of a number of children turning 18 at the same time.

Children in Care (April 20 – Dec 20)



Source: case management system

Average total caseload for social workers at month end (indicator 40)

- 2.11. Data since September 2020 includes all children and young persons with open cases and all allocated workers, based on an open cases report.
- 2.12. As previously reported, the increasing numbers of children in the CSC systems are reflected in the increase in the average case load figures. However, providing an average number masks significant discrepancies across the different CSC service areas. In some services, average case loads are above optimum levels, with social workers responsible for 20-25. Management actions are in progress to address the caseload pressures including recruitment activity to fill vacancies; use of the additional resource offered by the Social Workers in Schools pilot and mobilisation of an additional temporary social work team.

Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

- 2.13. 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. This does not mean that the department is unable to monitor performance.

- 2.14. We are currently not able to report accurately against the following indicators:

Indicator Number	Descriptor	Commentary
8	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	Data reporting is currently unreliable. The way in which Mosaic is currently configured does not allow an easy analysis of quoracy.
26	% outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	This indicator cannot currently be reported against due to suspension of inspections and grading during the national Covid response.

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 2020/21

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1. None