

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 27th April 2021

Wards: All

Subject:

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

Lead member: 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 2020/21. It includes monthly data up to 31st March 2021 and, where possible, quarterly information up to 31st March 2021.
- 1.2. Performance information is 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.

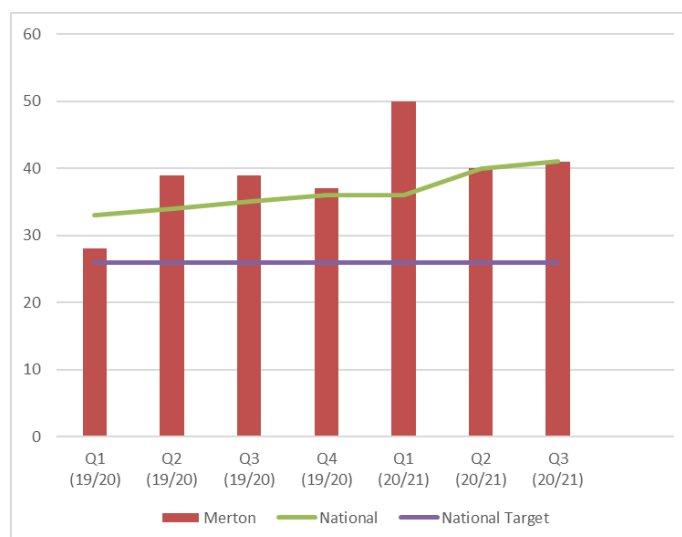
No	Indicator	Rating	Service Commentary
3	% of Education, Health and Care plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale	R	Whilst showing an increase in March 2021, there continues to be a delay in meeting the 20-week timescale during COVID. This has been for a number of reasons exacerbated by the pandemic 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 Care	R	See below.

	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.

Care proceedings

- 2.2. Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.
- 2.3. 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 2019-2021 (Merton vs National)

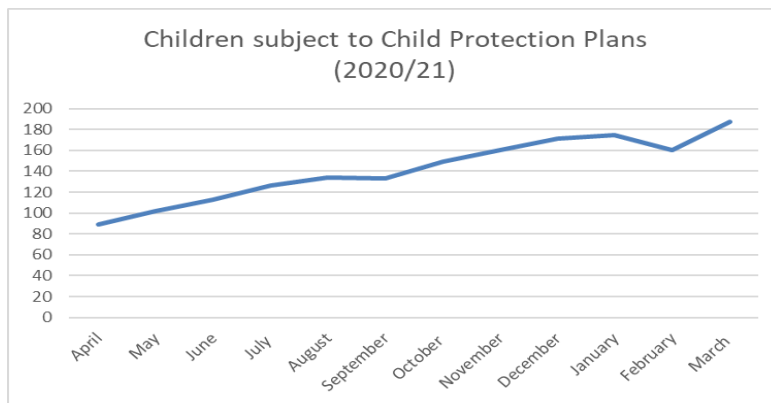


Source: Cafcass published data

- 2.4. 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)

- 2.5. The number of children subject of a child protection plan has doubled between April 2020 and March 2021 and stood at 187 on 31st March 2021.



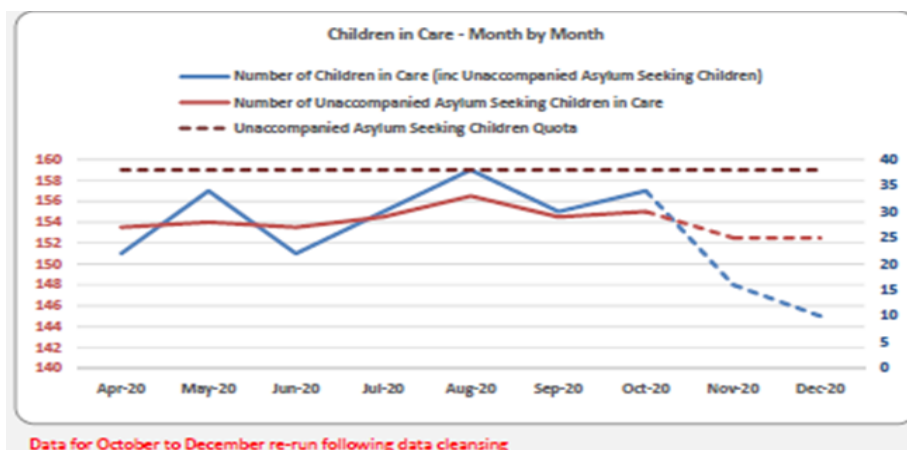
Source: case management system

- 2.6. 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.
- 2.7. In order to better understand the underlying causes of this demand, CSF is in the process of undertaking a detailed review of these figures. We expect to be able to report the results in the summer.

Number of looked after children (indicator 13)

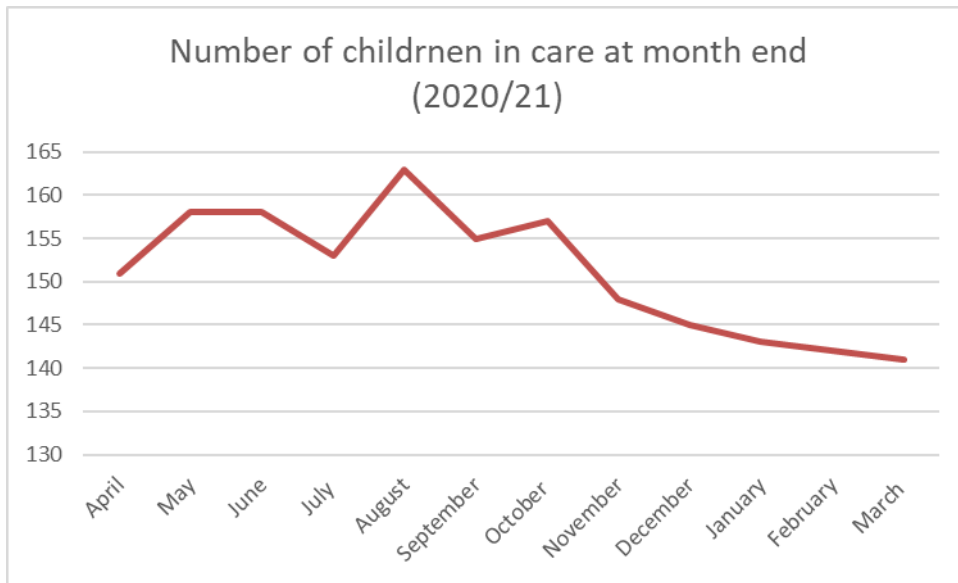
- 2.8. The number of children in care has been stable for the last three years. This is against a backdrop of an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the care of Merton council, as well as a national rise in the overall number of children in care.
- 2.9. In November, we 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

2.10. This decline has continued until March 2021 and the number of children in our care stands at 141 on 31st March 2021 (compared to 151 in April 2020).

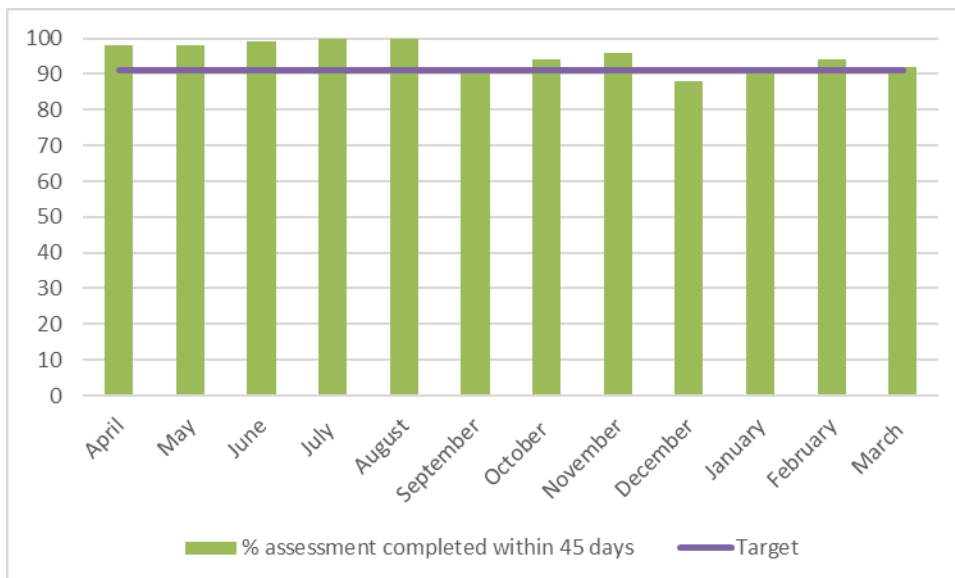


Source: case management system

Assessment Timeliness

2.11. Members of the panel may wish to note that assessment timeliness (indicator 2) is reported green (this was below target in February). This is a result of additional resources made available to address demand increases in November and December.

% assessment completed within 45 days



Source: case management system

Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

- 2.12. 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.
- 2.13. 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