

## Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

Wards: All

### Subject: Performance Report

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families

Lead member(s): Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children’s Services, and Cllr Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning

Contact officer: Tim Wallder, Interim Head of Performance, Improvement 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 2023/24, up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2023/24.

1.2. As reported at June’s Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Performance Index has been updated with some additional/amended target measures, as well as a selection of new indicators for care experienced young people.

#### 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 (EHCP) Plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale | R      | This indicator is RAG rated Red with 60% of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks against a new target of 65% (increased from 60% in 22-23). However, our performance remains above the national average in this area (in 2022 the England average was 50.7%). Nevertheless, we continue to scrutinise this data regularly and work with partners to address variability in performance. |
| 9b | % of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for the         | A      | This indicator shows the % of children with an open CPP as at the end of the period who are the subject of a CPP for the second or subsequent time ever   |

|     |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|
|     | second or subsequent time.  |   | <p>Performance averaged 24% during 2022/23 and remained high at 26% in April. However, it has now reduced to 21% at September 2023, just 1% above the current target.</p> <p>We are closely monitoring this indicator and a thematic audit was previously undertaken, which gave assurances that thresholds were being applied correctly.</p>   |
| 13  | Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks                              | R | <p>Performance improved in quarter 1 increasing from 25 weeks from 52 to 38 weeks. The data for September 2023 had not yet been released when this report was being prepared. See further contextual information in the commentary section below.</p>   |
| 17  | Stability of placements of Looked After Children (aged under 16) - length of placement (in care 2.5 years, placement 2 years) | R | <p>The target for this indicator was increased to 71% from 65% following performance consistently above target during 2022/23 and to bring in line with regional performance at 71%. Currently it is RAG rated Red following a dip in performance in June. Performance has improved from 63% to 68% and the trajectory is good.</p> <p>This indicator relates to a small cohort, as such, small variances can often result in a seemingly high % change. Placement stability is tracked in weekly oversight meetings.</p> |
| 28  | Secondary school surplus places   | R | <p>2023/24 school census information is not yet available so 2022/23 is still provided. This is red as the level of surplus places is so low but is expected to change in future years as lower numbers flow through from primary schools.</p>  |
| 34b | % of care leavers (aged 19-21) not in education, employment or training (NEET)  | R | <p>This is a new indicator for Overview and Scrutiny panel to provide elected members with oversight of performance around care leavers. The indicator is currently RAG rated Red as performance is at 41% compared to a 32% target. However, Merton's current performance is better than the national average.</p> <p>Merton has a monthly NEET panel to track care leavers not in ETE.</p>  |

## Commentary

*Indicator 13: Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks*

2.2. Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.

2.3. A range of influences impact on the duration of court proceedings – some of which are outside of the authority’s immediate control. These include court availability, the availability and timeliness of expert witness input, and the desire to engage effectively with the wider family network to explore alternatives (where appropriate and safe to do so).

2.4. The service has monthly court and PLO tracking meetings including legal representatives. On a quarterly basis, representatives from the Children and Families Court Advisory Services (Cafcass) attend. These meetings allow the authority to raise concerns about timeliness. A permanent court progression officer is now in place with positive anecdotal feedback on her impact.

2.5. Merton continues to receive positive feedback from Merton’s link judge on the Council’s PLO work.

## 3 AMENDMENTS, CORRECTIONS AND DATA CAVEATS

### Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats

3.1. We are currently unable to report against the following indicators:

| No | Indicator  | Service Commentary  |
|----|--|---|
| 6  | % of quorate attendance at CPP conferences   | Following amendments to the system workflow, as part of the Mosaic Repair Project, a report has now been built to extract this data and we are currently in the process of user acceptance testing. |
| 23 | % outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness) | Ofsted Report due for publication on 14 <sup>th</sup> November.   |
| 29 | Youth services participation rate  | This data is no longer collected nationally, and the indicator is on hold until new guidance is published later this year.  |

**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 2023/24.

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