

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

Corporate Parenting Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **7 March 2018**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Sue MacPherson (Chair), Bukky Okunade (Vice-Chair), Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Leslie Gamester, Martin Kerin, Joycelyn Redsell and Aaron Watkins

Natalie Carter, Thurrock Open Door Representative
Christina Day, Children in Care Council
Jackie Howell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Sharon Smith, Vice Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association

Substitutes:

Councillors Tony Fish and Ben Maney

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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2 Minutes	5 - 12
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on 6 December 2017.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	

5	Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation	13 - 22
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	This item is to be a verbal update.	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **27 February 2018**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non-pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 6 December 2017 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Bukky Okunade (Vice-Chair), Martin Kerin, Joycelyn Redsell and Aaron Watkins
- Natalie Carter, Thurrock Open Door Representative
Jackie Howell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Joseph Kaley, Children in Care Council
Sharon Smith, Vice-Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
- Apologies:** Councillors Sue MacPherson (Chair), Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Leslie Gamester and Christina Day
- In attendance:** Councillor James Halden, Portfolio Holder for Health and Education
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director Care and Targeted Outcomes
Adriana Cimpean, Interim Service Manager for the Through Care Service
Michele Lucas, Strategic Lead Learning & Skills
Andrew Osei, Service Manager for Placements
Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

8. Minutes

The Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on the 6 September 2017 were approved as a correct record.

9. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

10. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

11. Children in Care Council Update

Joseph Kaley of the Children in Care Council provided a verbal update from the Children in Care Council, during which the Committee were notified:

- Elections for the Vice-Chair had been taken and it was hoped the new Vice-Chair would be able to attend future meetings;
- The consultation for the pledge was due to take place in March 2018;
- The Children in Care Council had given a presentation on their role to the CCG and had begun commissioning the new Health Passport. This would include any medical records and medication a child required attached to their passport. This would include consulting with Foster Carers; and
- Nominations had been sent out to Foster Carers, ahead of the awards evening on the 23 March 2018.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services stated that the CCG had been very impressed with the presentation given by Joseph at their meeting. He continued to advise the Committee a report would be presented to the Health and Well-Being Board, as they also had an interest in Looked After Children in the borough.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted the update.

12. Children's Social Care Performance

The Assistant Director of Care and Targeted Outcome presented the report highlighting the following points:

- There had been a reduction in the number of contacts being converted into referrals; this eased the pressure of children becoming looked after and children being placed on a child protection plan;
- The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers had reduced to 33, it was believed that this figure would further reduce next year to be in line with the Eastern Region protocol;
- 93% of Looked after Children Reviews had been completed on time or within timescales allocated;
- At the end of September 2017 there were 6 cases of children going missing from their placement;
- The number of children on a Child Protection Plan was slowly reducing, although Thurrock was still currently higher than the national average; and
- Six children had been placed with adopters and it was expected that the families would complete the adoption process by the end of the financial year. Furthermore, three children had been matched with prospective adopters, however were waiting to move in with their permanent families due to legal challenges.

Members enquired as to the reduction in the % of care leavers in Education Employment or Training which was currently 67%. Officers explained that it was not surprising the figures had reduced during September, as some young people may have changed courses after deciding it wasn't for them. The Committee heard that officers worked hard with colleges and the young people to offer assistance during the transition period.

The Committee sought additional information into the number of missing children. The Assistant Director of Care and Targeted Outcome notified Members the missing young people were looked after children and were usually found the same day or after a few days.

Officers assured Members that any report of a missing child, or children, was taken extremely seriously and daily reports were completed as to any missing looked after child.

RESOLVED:

1. Corporate Parenting Committee noted a newly introduced performance management framework by the Director of Children Services following Ofsted's recommendation.

2. Corporate Parenting Committee noted:

- **Areas of improvement in Children's social care.**
- **Work undertaken to manage demand for statutory social care services.**
- **Highlight areas of further investigation for deep dive studies.**

The Chair of the Committee agreed to move Item 7, to allow time for the Portfolio Holder to arrive.

13. Children Looked After Placement Commissioning

The Corporate Director for Children's Services presented the report to Members explaining the provision of quality care through safe and stable placements for children and young people who were looked after was a key statutory function of all Local Authorities.

He continued to state that in Thurrock this accommodation and associated support was provided through a range of providers on differing contractual arrangements and officers felt there was an opportunity to simplify this to continue to improve the outcomes for children and young people while improving value for money.

Members heard the current annual commitment for placement provision was £9.5million. This expenditure was across a range of providers including Independent Fostering Agencies, residential placements and supported accommodation. In addition the number of care placements fluctuates daily

due to children and young people entering and leaving the care system however there were currently 326 children and young people aged 0-18 years requiring placement provision.

Councillor Kerin enquired as to the in-house recruitment and monitoring undertaken by the department. Officers informed the Committee, the Council was currently in the middle of a recruitment drive and hoped this would succeed in increasing the number of Foster Carers in the Borough. It was further explained that monitoring had also been increased with the Commissioning Team now completing visiting and offering further support to Social Workers.

During discussions the Committee mentioned the work of Foster Carers in the borough and were informed that the Give a Gift scheme currently running at Lakeside, was also assisting with the recruit of new Foster Carers, as it encouraged people to talk to the council about becoming carers.

RESOLVED:

That Members considered the proposal to simplify and improve the commissioning of placement provision, in particular to withdraw from the current Eastern Regional contract when it ends in 2018.

That Members comment on the proposals for officers to proceed to Cabinet approval to commence a procurement exercise.

Councillor Halden arrived at 7.50pm

14. Pilot Development of Head Start Housing for Care Leavers & Vulnerable Young People

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, Councillor Halden, presented the report which outlined how Thurrock Council would support young people in finding suitable housing accommodation once they had left care. A pilot scheme had been developed, Head Start Housing for Care Leavers, which was in partnership with Inspire to address the housing issues that young care leavers faced. Two further developments were also created which were house of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

This pilot scheme had already helped to save £84,000 and would avoid spot placements which often happened when leaving care and were costly. The safety of young care leavers was paramount and aimed to be as flexible as possible to all young care leavers. Criminal offenders would not be eligible for the scheme. The scheme would run for 24 months with reviews taking place within the 6th, 12th and 18th month which would also discuss other plans such as debt management or education.

Councillor Halden felt the scheme was positive and praised the Children's and Housing Services department for their work on care leaver housing issues.

During discussions Members queried as to why the Council Tax exception was only until the young people were 21 years old, when the scheme itself was 18 to 25 years. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health explained the scheme was to assist with encouraging independence for young people leaving care. He continued to advise that there was an exemption policy in place which could be used, at the relevant director's discretion.

It was queried whether, if a care leaver had gained a place at university, if the Council Tax exemption would still apply, when they came home. Councillor Halden explained that if a university student were to commute to and from their university then they could still meet the Eligibility Criteria for assistance with accommodation.

Officers confirmed they would offer support to any young person who had left care coming home after completing university. This would include working with them and supporting their new path.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note and provide comments on the pilot HMO and support the ongoing development of the programme to enable more properties to be available for the scheme**
- 2. To support the development of a transitional housing scheme and would provide personalised support for young people as they enter the aftercare service.**
- 3. To note and make comments on a more joint working approach between Social Care and Housing to improve the offer to care leavers.**

15. Information on Recent External Placements for Young People

The Corporate Director for Children's Services addressed Members to inform them placements were discussed within the performance item. He passed over to the Service Manager for Placements, who explained the report gave an overview of placement activities since July 2017, including information on new external placements made and comments provided on a number of the presenting issues which influence decision making.

He continued by stating that the report detailed the numbers of looked after children in Thurrock, with 310 children currently in care. It was commented that officers worked with Foster Carers to support older children up to 18 years to stay within a family unit.

RESOLVED:

That the members of the Committee reviewed the efforts made by officers to choose appropriate placement resources for looked after children.

16. Annual Fostering Report April 2016 - March 2017

The Service Manager for Placements notified the Committee that the item was a 'Good News' report, informing them the period between April 2016 and March 2017 had been a transitional year for the Fostering Service.

He continued to advise that it was the year that the Fostering, Placement, Adoption and Children Contact Centre had been redesigned as a one-hub Family Placement Service. It is also included the Fostering Recruitment and Support Services in collaboration with IMPOWER.

Members heard how the Family Contact Centre (OAK Tree) was well managed and supported by an experienced social work manager and well trained contact supervisors. In addition, as of April 2017, there were 158 active carers from 92 households. The Committee was advised, due to the diversity of the Thurrock Carer population, it was essential to meet the individual needs of children and who may look after them.

The Chair thanked the Service Manager for Placements for his report and offered her thanks to all Foster Carers in the Borough.

Councillor Watkins asked why the Council provided funding for posters and did not simply rely on word of mouth to promote the work of Foster Carers and the recruitment drive.

Officers assured the Committee image advertising was just as important as word of mouth.

Members of the Foster Carer Association mentioned they were included within the recruitment drive and wanted advertisements to appeal to other Foster Carers. By having visual adverts they felt it encouraged people to come forward, even if only seeking information.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

17. The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After - Academic Year 2016-2017

The Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After introduced the report which highlighted that raising achievement in all areas of education for Children Looked After remained a key priority for the Council.

Members heard the Virtual School monitored and supported the educational progress and outcomes for children looked after, irrespective of whether they were placed in or out of borough. In addition the Virtual School was responsible for pupils aged between 3 and 18 years and this included those who had left care during an academic year.

The Chair suggested that the Committee suspend standing orders to complete the agenda. This was agreed by the Committee.

Members thanked the Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After for her report and hard work with the looked after children.

Councillor Watkins enquired as to Key Priority 2, improving the attendance of children looked after to maximise educational outcomes. It was explained that officers were aiming to reduce fixed-term exclusions and were putting key actions and documentation in place in response to these all 6 priorities.

In addition they were working with the school and child in question as to why they were not attending school.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Committee notes the non-validated DFE outcomes of the summer**
- 2. 2017 tests and examinations and commends the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 3. That the Committee recognises that the cohorts of pupils are small and that this should be considered when comparing year on year data.**
- 4. That the Committee recognises that the length of time in care can affect the progress and outcomes of the pupils.**
- 5. The Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2016-2017 and uses this information to acknowledge, evaluate and if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all CLA.**

18. Corporate Parenting Committee Work Programme

The Committee discussed the work programme for the municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the following items be included on the work programme:

- IRO Annual Report – March 2018**
- That the performance report and placement reports be reported as one item at future meetings.**

The meeting finished at 9.35 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

7 March 2018	ITEM: 5
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation	
Wards and communities affected: All Wards	Key Decision: Not Applicable
Report of: Claire Pascoe, Child Sexual Exploitation Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director Children's Care & Targeted Outcomes	
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the actions Thurrock Social Care have taken over the past year, and are planning for the coming year, to work tenaciously and collaboratively to safeguard the children of Thurrock from Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and associated harms. It outlines how we are challenging ourselves to demonstrate that learning from councils such as Rotherham, Oxfordshire and latterly, Newcastle, are being embedded to safeguard the children of Thurrock. To this end, the report will firstly outline achievements to date; secondly, it will review the current CSE, Missing and Trafficking position as assessed by Thurrock Children's Social Care. Finally, the report will conclude with outlining key elements of our 2017/2018 '*CSE, Missing and Trafficking Action Plan*', based on the Southend, Essex and Thurrock, (SET), CSE '*Plan on a Page*' to further develop our understanding; improve recognition of and response to CSE and related risks and vulnerabilities. As this report is a public document, details of current operations and measures to disrupt CSE have not been provided.

To set the context for this report, the definitions of CSE, Missing and Trafficking are as follows:

- '*CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and / or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.*'
(Department for Education, 2017)
- '*Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at*

risk of harm to themselves or another.
(Essex Police, 2017)

- *“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the ... recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons ... for the purpose of exploitation*”.
(Modern Slavery Act, 2015)

This report has been prepared to keep the Corporate Parenting Committee Members apprised of the developments relating to CSE, Missing Children and Trafficking achieved, underway and planned in Thurrock.

1. Recommendation(s):

1.1 That the Corporate Parenting Committee note the report.

2. Introduction and Background

The interrelated ‘hidden’ harms of Child Sexual and wider Exploitation, children Missing from Home and Care, and Trafficking continue to attract close political, public and professional attention and scrutiny. Professor Alexis Jay in her report published August 2014 identified, as have others, the potentially elevated vulnerability of Looked After children to these harms. The current Thematic Ofsted Joint Targeted Area Inspection is, as of February 2018, focussed upon these harms. Opportunity is taken to update Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee of achievements to safeguard our children to date, challenges, and plans to overcome these in the coming year.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Key Achievements:

Thurrock council have taken significant steps to identify and tackle Child Sexual, and wider Exploitation both internally, and across Thurrock. Not exhaustively, these include the following:

CSE Manager Role: In May 2015, Thurrock established a dedicated CSE role within children’s services - initially as CSE Practitioner, and latterly, converted to CSE Manager. This was in recognition of the need to develop, and embed inter-agency recognition, understanding and collaborative practice and response relating to CSE victims. In 2017, the role was made substantive, reflecting Thurrock Social Care’s ongoing commitment to relentless focus on CSE and wider exploitative harms.

Awareness Raising Training: Coordinated by the CSE Manager, bespoke CSE, Missing and Trafficking awareness training has been written and delivered in collaboration with Essex Police, Open Door and South Essex Rape Incest Crisis Centre, (SERICC) variously, to 1153 professionals, (excluding those present at conferences). Agencies and numbers trained so far comprise: Social and Support Workers: 304; Adult Social Care: 47; Thurrock Foster Carers: 68; Thurrock Housing staff: 201; Independent

Fostering Association Providers and Residential Staff: 71; Thurrock GPs: 27; Music Service Staff : 25; Thurrock Licenced Taxi Operators, Drivers and Passenger Assistants: 410, leaving only 5 existing drivers needing to be trained as of 09.02.18.. Words repeatedly used in response to all of these training sessions include: "Shocking", 'Powerful', 'Informative', 'Enlightening', 'Relevant' and 'Insightful'.

Impact in practice, can be demonstrated in a disclosure to the CSE Manager by a Thurrock Licenced Taxi driver immediately following a training session delivered. The training, the driver said, helped him understand the gravity and significance of what he had seen. With the support of the CSE Manager and in collaboration with Essex Police CSE Triage Team, the driver made a comprehensive disclosure to Essex Police, which resulted in the matter becoming a live criminal investigation.

LSCB-led training: Stranger Danger and Walk Online: In directly communicating with Thurrock's children and their parents to raise awareness of grooming and exploitation on line, the Thurrock LSCB have, between the 1st August 2016 and 1st August 2017, arranged the delivery of the 'Walk Online Roadshow' to 2207 children and 241 teachers / parents. 'The Stranger Danger/Walk Online Roadshow' was attended by 337 parents and professionals. Ofsted positively commended this training in the 2016 Thurrock Ofsted report.

Development of the Missing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): The CSE manager has contributed to writing the *'Missing from Care Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Essex Police, Southend, Essex and Thurrock Children's Social Care and Residential Care Home / Supported Lodgings / Foster Care Provider / Independent Fostering Agency'*. This MoU seeks to improve the quality and timeliness of information sharing between carers and providers, and Essex Police relating to children at risk of going missing from care, being trafficked, who are gang associated and at risk, or who have been and / or are victims of CSE. This document has been sent by Thurrock Commissioning team to all providers.

'I Didn't Know' Essex CSE Campaign, March 2017: The award-winning *'I Didn't Know'* Child Sexual Exploitation Campaign, written by Thurrock CSE Manager, SET partners and Essex Police, was a public awareness campaign re-launched in 2017 for a week on 13th March in the lead up to National CSE Awareness Day, on Saturday 18th March. Recognising that the exploitation of children is not confined solely to sexual exploitation, but frequently linked to other implicitly threatening and explicitly violent contexts into which children are groomed, the campaign shone a spotlight on how grooming and sexual exploitation can manifest in the wider exploitation of children, such as trafficking, criminal exploitation by gangs and organised crime networks.

Last year's campaign identified with young people who may have felt trapped through the grooming process to commit crime and abuse other young people - importantly emphasising that they could get help and support too. In addition, it sought to educate the public how to spot exploitation and directed

all three audience groups to support pages and embedded links. For each day of the campaign week, key messages were published on social media using the hashtag #KnowAboutCSE, to reach young people and parents. A link to the Campaign can be found at <https://www.essex.police.uk/.../i-didn-t-know-campaign-2017>.

The campaign was widely promoted, notably, via the National Working Group (NWG) and Essex Police. The Essex Police impact assessment confirmed the total social media posts posted throughout the week totaled 740,233 with shares totaling 1,077. Between 13 and 17th March 2017, 5881 people viewed the CSE section of the Essex Police website, representing 26% of the total number of people who were on the Essex Police website during that period (22,921). On the <https://www.essex.police.uk/advice/child-sexual-exploitation/gettinghelp> link, there were 491 users - an increase of 9,720% on the previous week (Essex Police).

The Thurrock Picture:

CSE: The CSE report run from Liquid Logic, our children's information system, on 12th February 2018, identified 29 Thurrock children currently assessed to be at high risk of CSE. Of these, 11 are boys, 17 are girls and one child identifies as male. The ages range from 14 to 17 years old. The average age is 15 years and 7 months.

On the 12th February, there were 39 children assessed as medium risk, 18 being boys, and 21 girls. The age range is one 12 year old female, to 17 years olds. The average age is 15 years and 4 months.

Given the widely-publicised 'invisibility' of boys as being at risk of CSE in professional perception, it is positive to see that this unconscious bias against boys is not immediately apparent in Thurrock, with boys being potential victims of CSE being 'on the radar' (Barnardos, 2016).

Whilst children can be moved through a range of different CSE models, the 'Boyfriend' model of CSE is typified by perpetrators, who can be of similar age, and who target children posing as 'boyfriends / girlfriends', showering the child with attention, 'love' and gifts, activating the child's attachment system. Initiating a sexual relationship with the child, the child is effectively told that they owe the perpetrators money for cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, car rides etc. and that sexual activities are one way of repaying the 'debt' (PACE UK, 2017). The gang model of CSE is used variously, to exert power and control over children to initiate children into gangs; exchange sexual activity for status / protection; used to entrap rival gang members by exploiting girls and young women, often related to or associated with them, and inflict sexual assault as a weapon in conflict. The majority of CSE within gangs is committed by teenage boys and men in their twenties (Berelowitz, 2012 in NSPCC, 2017).

Missing children: The Risk Assessment Group, (RAG), a sub-group of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, meets every 2 weeks, and is attended by

a range of statutory and voluntary partners. It has had presented for review the cases of 71 separate children between 01.01.17. and 31.12.17, many of whom have experienced missing episodes. The Risk Assessment Group facilitates challenge, oversight and development of plans to reduce the vulnerability of children, and identify opportunities to target / investigate possible / perpetrators. Open Door have been commissioned by Thurrock Children's Social Care to undertake return home interviews for children who go missing from home or care. Open Door report some of the reasons children go missing from home or care to be attributable in part to children having been placed out of area and 'running to' their parents, friends and extended family members. Attaining 100% referrals to Open Door for return Home Interviews for missing children and especially Looked After Children, is a work in progress.

Trafficking: Awareness of indicators of child trafficking, both as an offence in itself, and as part of wider exploitative contexts, is reflected in 8 children having been referred by Thurrock Children's Social Care to the National Crime Agencies' National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2017. Referrals are made by Social Workers when they suspect the children they are supporting may be at risk of, or experiencing trafficking for the purpose of sexual, and / or criminal exploitation, primarily in the context of gangs. Adaptations within Liquid Logic are being explored which it is anticipated, will enable us to contemporaneously keep track of those children referred to the National Crime Agency as suspected victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

The types of concerns leading to referrals to the NRM primarily include children who have been located in different counties, at addresses to which they have no connection, in possession of Class A drugs. Given the sexually exploitative context of gangs, referrals have included instances where a child has been assessed likely to be victim of sexual, as well as criminal exploitation by gangs or groups. Individual children assessed to be at risk, or victim of human trafficking are supported by the development of bespoke intervention and support plans by Children's Social Care and appropriate partners. Children's families are provided information and advice about how most effectively to safeguard them. The NRM process encourages multi-agency collaboration which enhances the evidence and information used to support the NRM referral, informing the multi-agency safeguarding response. More broadly, the increasing numbers of children identified as being likely exploited within the context of gangs, has led to a report recently being prepared by the CSE Manager and submitted to the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE). This report has made recommendations relating to training, operational and more strategic proposed effective safeguarding and positive outcomes for children and their families.

Future Plans:

Whilst the approach to safeguarding children at risk of, and vulnerable to CSE has been tenacious and persistent, commitment to contemporaneously understand, and proactively responding to the developing nature of CSE in

the Borough in light of learning from repeated inquiries and evolving local trends, is unswerving. Full proposed actions for the coming year are located in the 2017/2018 '*CSE, Missing Children and Trafficking Action Plan*'. Key highlights include:

CSE, Missing, Gangs and Trafficking thematic audits: Children's Social Care Managers completed thematic audits in December 2017, when strengths and areas for organisational improvement in response to CSE, Missing Children, Child Trafficking and children groomed and exploited within the context of Gangs, was undertaken. The findings are currently being analysed. To maintain a relentless focus on our performance in this area, we will undertake further CSE thematic audits in May and October 2018. The CSE Manager has proposed Southend, Essex and Thurrock Social Care and Essex Police undertake a strategic benchmarking exercise in relation to organisational understanding of CSE. This process is currently in progress, the findings of which will inform our development further.

Internal training: Training will continue to be delivered to all new Thurrock Children's, Adult and Housing Service staff, managerial staff, Members and Partners outlined above, to widen and embed awareness of indicators and reporting pathways. A planned condition of Thurrock Taxi Drivers being licenced, is that within 3 months, they will complete the face-to-face CSE and Trafficking training. Additionally, an online training package is being finalised as written by the CSE Manager with the Training Dept. This will ensure Taxi Drivers are aware of indicators and Thurrock expectations in relation to these harms from the outset.

Collaborative training focussing upon perpetrators and disruption / prosecution: Given a location of concern associated with missing - and possibly trafficked and exploited children – nationally, has been Hotels, this group of would-be partners have been prioritised for CSE and Trafficking training: A training package from Kent Police, adapted by the CSE Manager and Essex Police Public Protection Directorate, is ready to be delivered to key staff in all of Thurrock's Hotels by the CSE Manager and Essex Police.

'I Didn't Know' CSE Campaign, 2018: Given the increase internationally, nationally, (NSPCC, 2015: National Crime Agency, 2017) and locally (Essex Police, 2017) of online grooming and exploitation, the March 2018, '*I Didn't Know*' Child Sexual Exploitation campaign will focus specifically upon online CSE and youth-produced sexual imagery. It will primarily be focused towards parents / carers and children and young people. Our aim will be to encourage schools to participate to reach out to parents / carers during the week after the 18th March.

Embedding the revised SET CSE Risk and Vulnerability Assessment: The currently used SET CSE Risk Assessment does not enable identification of the model of CSE being most prevalently perpetrated in Thurrock: the revised CSE Risk and Vulnerability Assessment co-written by the CSE Manager, her counterparts, Essex Police, National Working Group and

University of Essex will be embedded within Liquid Logic by April 2018 to enable further, local analysis and informed response. It intentionally includes the different models of CSE to enable us to better understand the profile of CSE being perpetrated in Thurrock.

Whilst Models themselves are evolving, and children may be moved between a range of exploitative Models of exploitation, the current assessment of the Safeguarding Manager and CSE Manager is that these are currently likely primarily to be the older 'Boyfriend/ Girlfriend', and 'Gang' Models of CSE. Other Models of exploitation include the Inappropriate Relationship Model which is often characterised by a perpetrator who is physically stronger, older, and / or wealthy, and who has inappropriate power or control over a child - such as a teacher or community leader. The Organised / Trafficking Model includes the sexual trafficking of children across international, as well as internal borders, including across counties, cities and towns for the purpose of passing the children among perpetrators. This model can include the 'selling' of children and young people, and grooming children / young people into 'recruiting' further victims (the *'Three Girls'* Rochdale drama documentary shown in May 2017 illustrated aspects of this Model). The Peer on Peer Model often involves sexual bullying of children by children of a similar age (Children's Society, 2015). Victims may believe they are in a loving relationship, but are coerced into sex with friends or associates. The Online Grooming Model is internationally and locally assessed to be increasing (National Crime Agency, 2017). Through this model, children can be deceived and coerced into producing sexual images of themselves, engaging in sexualised chat online, or sexual activity via a webcam - images which are 'screen shot' and used to extort money or further images from child victims. Online grooming can lead to children being manipulated to secretly meet the perpetrator.

Addressing the Vulnerability of Exploited Children who become Adults: Newcastle's, Operation Sanctuary CSE Investigation highlighted the particular vulnerability of exploited and trafficked children who attain the age of 18, and become vulnerable adults. To strengthen the safeguarding of this group, the CSE Manager, Thurrock Adult Safeguarding Board Manager, Adult Safeguarding Lead and partners are working collaboratively to develop a clear pathway to adult services for vulnerable children who attain the age of 18 and who may need ongoing support and protection.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report has been prepared to apprise Corporate Parenting Committee Members of the developments relating to CSE, Missing Children and Trafficking achieved, underway and planned in Thurrock. It aims to raise Member's awareness of these 'hidden harms', equip them more fully to identify concerns and to provide a basis on which to challenge Children's Social Care to further improve our performance in these complex, high profile and vitally important areas of child protection.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 An update report relating to CSE and Missing Children was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2016.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded from exploitation and trafficking is a central part of the statutory duties of the Council.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Nilufa Begum**
Management Accountant

No Financial Implications

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Services

No Legal Implications

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

This report has been prepared to appraise Corporate Parenting Committee Members of the developments relating to CSE, Missing Children and Trafficking achieved, underway and planned in Thurrock. Whilst there are no direct diversity and equality implications arising from this report, ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded from exploitation and trafficking is a central part of the statutory duties of the Council.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

- Not Applicable

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Not Applicable

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Claire Pascoe

CSE Manager, Thurrock Borough Council

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7 March 2018	ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Children’s Social Care Performance	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Not Applicable
Report of: Iqbal Vaza, Strategic Lead, Performance Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence	
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director Children’s Care & Targeted Outcomes	
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Thurrock has experienced a high level of demand placed on its statutory social care service for children. Considerable work has been undertaken by the department in managing this demand through improving its early intervention service and managing the front door (MASH) more effectively. There has been a reduction in the number of contacts and referrals; easing the demand pressure of children becoming looked after and children being placed on a child protection plan.

The number of care leavers in suitable accommodation has reduced.

An area of focus is the number of children that have been adopted in this financial year. Four children have been adopted at the end of January 2018 and we expect a minimum of 5 children to be adopted by the end of the year with a possibility of 3 more children being adopted bringing the year total to 8 as a maximum. Performance for 2018/19 will be much improved with at least 15 children being adopted in this year.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Corporate Parenting Committee to note the areas of improvement in children’s social care, work undertaken to manage demand for statutory social care services and highlight areas of further investigation for deep dive studies.**
- 1.2 Corporate Parenting Committee to note a new inspection framework has been introduced by Ofsted for children’s social care.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of children’s social care performance. It highlights key demand indicators such as number of contacts, trend analyses, benchmarking data and key performance indicators.
- 2.2 Thurrock produces a considerable number of data sets and performance reports to meet its internal and external reporting requirements. It is essential that one version of performance information is used by the whole system; from case workers to the senior management team. The data in this report is from the latest performance digest (January 2018), regional benchmarking data (quarter 2 position) and national data sets based on 16/17 financial year. This data had been presented and discussed with the social care senior management team and Corporate Director’s Performance Group.

3. Contacts and referrals

- 3.1 Thurrock is managing its demand placed on the front door (MASH) of children’s social care well. Since Oct 2017 there has been an increase in the number of contacts compared to the previous year, however Thurrock is still forecasted to perform better than the East of England average. Thurrock’s referral and assessment rate is below comparator groups. In 2015/16, Thurrock had one of the highest assessment rates at 713 per 10,000 of the child population. This has been reduced to 505 per 10,000 of the child population (see fig 2).

Fig 1

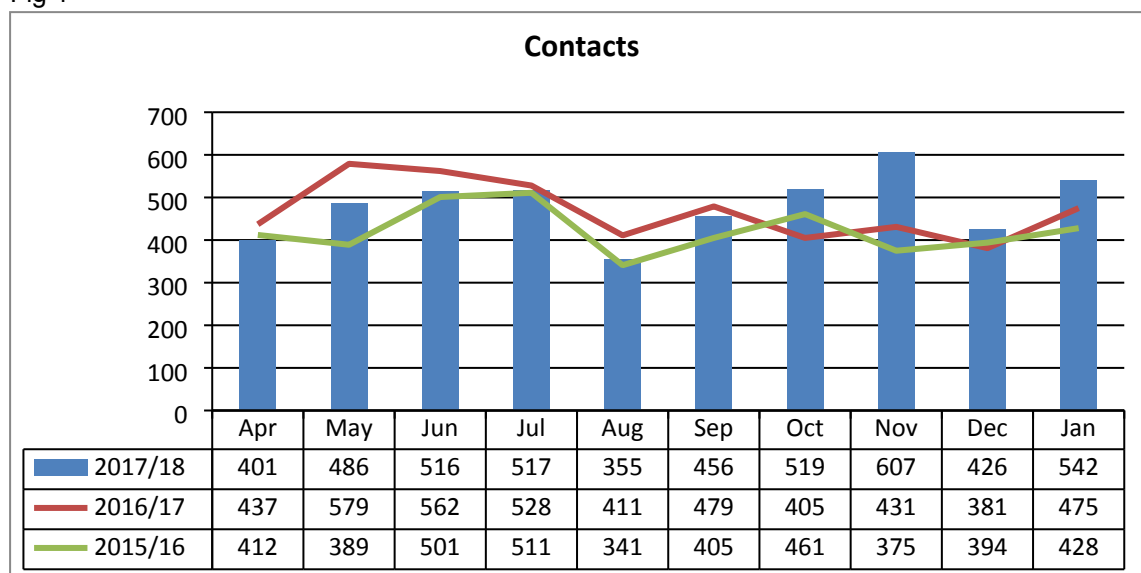
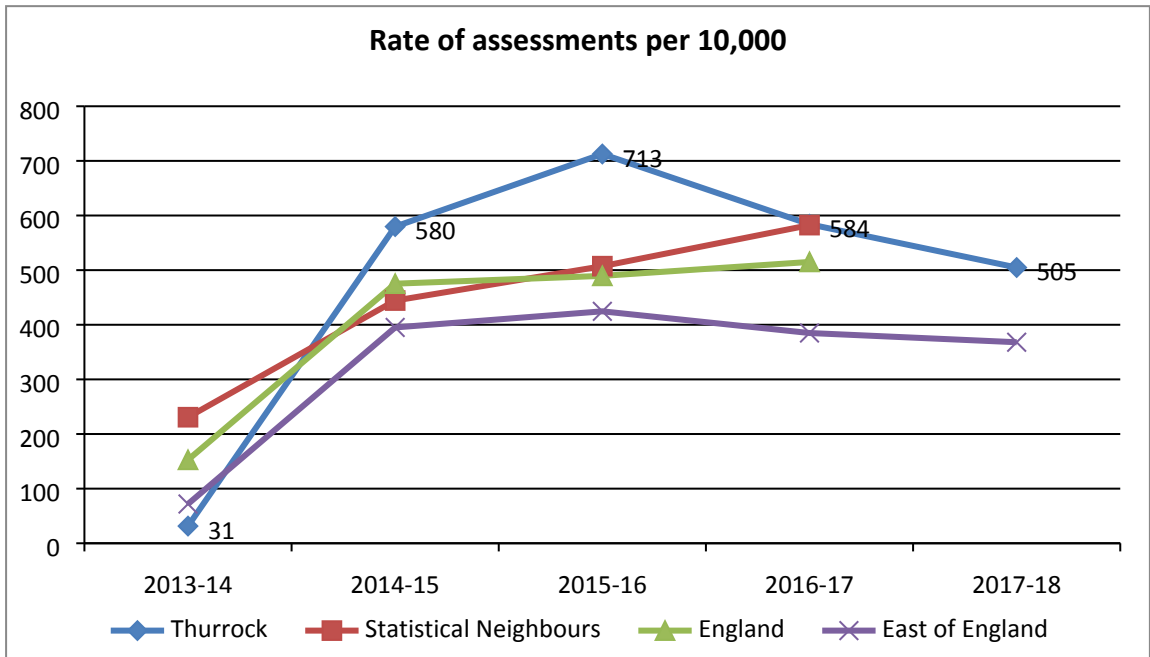
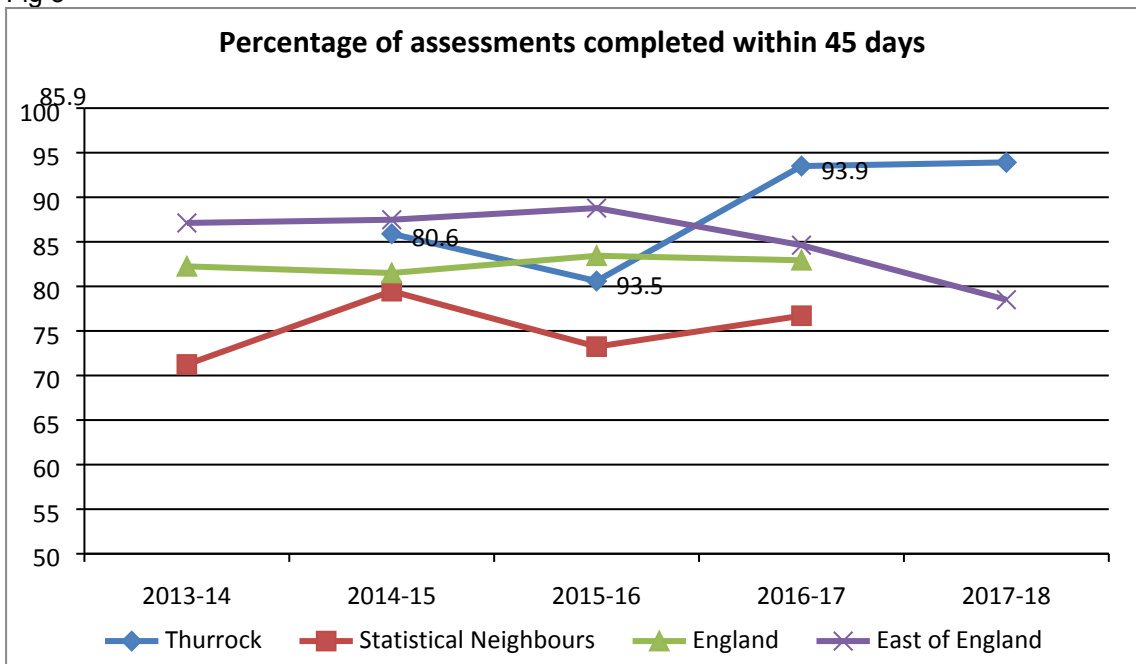


Fig 2



3.2 Thurrock is one of the best performing authorities in completing its assessments within timescale (see fig 3). It also has a low percentage of repeat referrals. In summary the front door of social care is being managed efficiently and work undertaken by the service to reduce demand has been reflected in the data.

Fig 3



3.3 Looked after children

3.4 The number of looked after children has reduced by 8 (see fig 4, Jan 18: 313, Jan 18: 338) in comparison to the same position last year. This is attributed to a reduction in asylum seeking children from 61 to 32 (see fig 5).

Fig 4

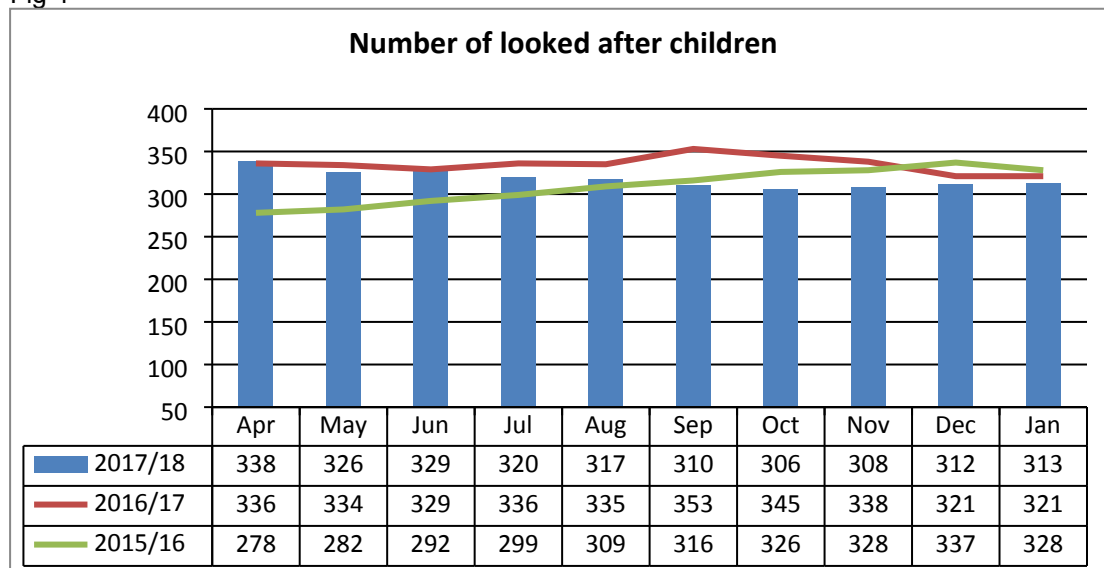
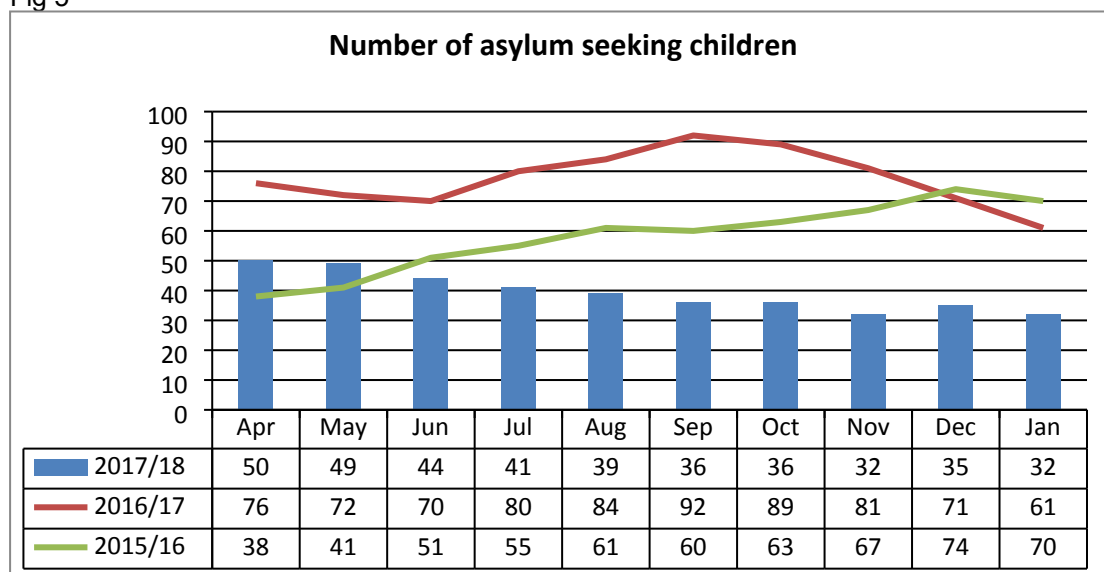


Fig 5

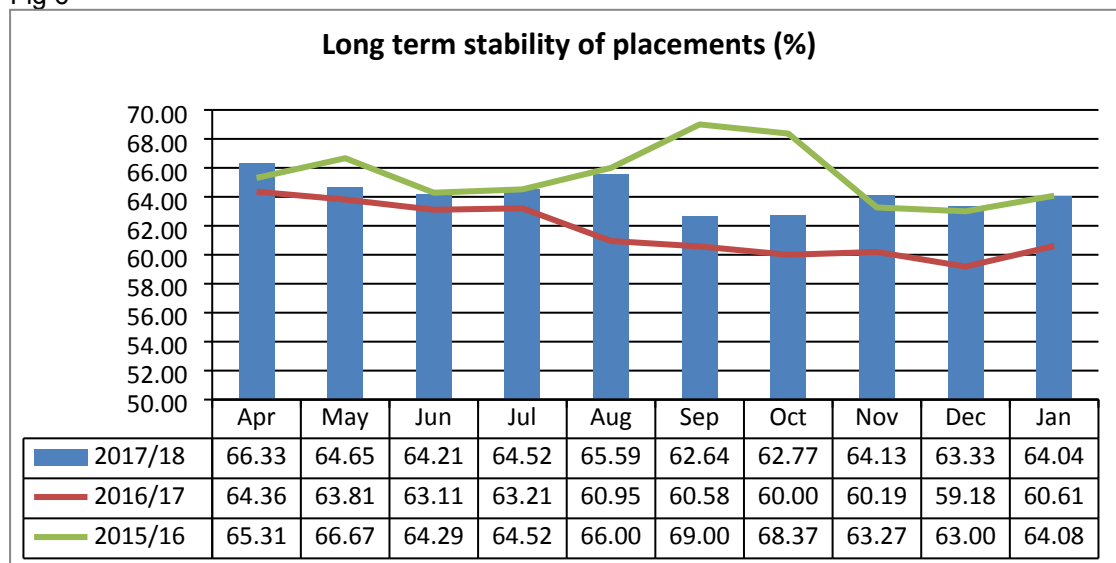


3.5 As a rate, Thurrock is closing more looked after children cases than its comparator group and the East of England average. Given the high rate of looked after children this is a good position. Thurrock is also reducing the flow of new looked after children, with 14 fewer cases than the previous year. However the rate of new looked after children is still higher than its comparator group. The service continues to monitor all new looked after cases ensuring correct thresholds are being applied and children are only being looked after where necessary

3.6 Placements

3.7 Thurrock performs well in placing looked after children in stable placements. The percentage of children with 3 or more placement moves in the financial year is 7.32%, which is below the England average. In terms of long term stability, 64% (see fig 6) of looked after children under the age of 16 and have been in the same placement for more than 2 years. Thurrock is forecasting that this position will improve to 68% by the end of the financial year which will be within the range of its comparator group

Fig 6



3.8 Thurrock has made significant improvements in placing children within Thurrock. It now has 40% (126 children) placed within Thurrock, which is 8% points higher than the position last year. This is both cost effective and ensures children are closer to their families and community where they also have access to good schools and other local services. Thurrock's target is to have at least 50% of placements within borough which will bring it in line with its comparator group.

3.9 Looked after children reviews

3.10 The Independent Reviewing (IRO) Service provides a statutory function providing scrutiny, challenge and oversight for all children in the care of the local authority, where ever they may be placed in the country. Part of the oversight is achieved by chairing looked after children (LAC) reviews. This is a statutory requirement placed upon the local authority.

Statutory timescales are prescribed and all local authorities are required to adhere to these timescales, ensuring robust and timely oversight and intervention. The current performance for the service as of 15/1/2018 is that 89.1% of reviews have been completed within the expected timescale. This compares with statistical neighbour data of 90.5% and national data 90.6%

(this data is end of year data for year end 2016/7 and therefore not a direct comparison.

Some of the reasons for reviews not taking place on time has been down to appearances in court, sickness of either a foster carer or officer. Close scrutiny is being focused on this performance indicator. The projection and trajectory by the end of year, is that performance will match or surpass statistical and national indicators.

3.11 Looked after children missing

3.12 Thurrock had 4 looked after children missing from placement in December 17, which is below the average for this financial year. To date, Thurrock has had 220 instances of looked after children missing from placement. It is forecasting 277 for the end of the financial year, which is below its comparator group (361).

3.13 Adoptions

3.14 From April 2017 to 13/02/2018, eighteen children have achieved permanency either through Adoption or a Special Guardianship Order. Adoption figures have been impacted upon by additional factors including the Essex ruling which affects timeliness of adoption orders being made where a birth parent is opposing the order and subsequent legal advice for the cases. This has caused additional delay in cases of up to four months. Another factor which has affected timeliness of permanency for children is family member coming forward once a decision has been made that children cannot return to parents. One of the reasons for this is that family members often don't want to come forward earlier so that they are not seen to be competing with or undermining parent's attempts to retain care of their children.

Since April 2017, 26 Children have had an Agency Decision Maker (ADM) decision with a plan for adoption;

- 1 application for a Placement Order following the ADM was denied by the court and the child subsequently returned home on a Supervision Order.
- 10 children currently have an ADM decision for adoption awaiting the outcome of the final hearing in care proceedings.
- 15 children have been made subject to a Placement Order since April 2017 to 13th February 2018.

In addition to the 15 children made subject to a Placement Order since April 2017, there were also 4 children subject to a Placement Order from 2016/17 and 2 children with an ADM for adoption totalling 21 children of which;

- 5 – children have been Adopted since April 2017 to February 2018
- 1 – Foster carer is making the application to adopt the child direct to the court supported by the local authority

- 3 – Children to be presented to panel for matching within the next 1 - 4 weeks
- 2 – Children are having introductions to their perspective adoptive family and will be placed by 19/02/18
- 3 – Children have applications made for an adoption order and hearings are in the next 4 weeks
- 1 – Child is placed with their adopters, awaiting adoption order application date.
- 1 – Child placed with their prospective adopters, with an initial application for adoption order date set for 21/02/2017
- 5 - Children have been made subject to Placement Orders within the last 8-10 weeks and matches with prospective adopters are being pursued. No children are awaiting a match with a prospective adoptive family with a Placement Order older than 3 months.

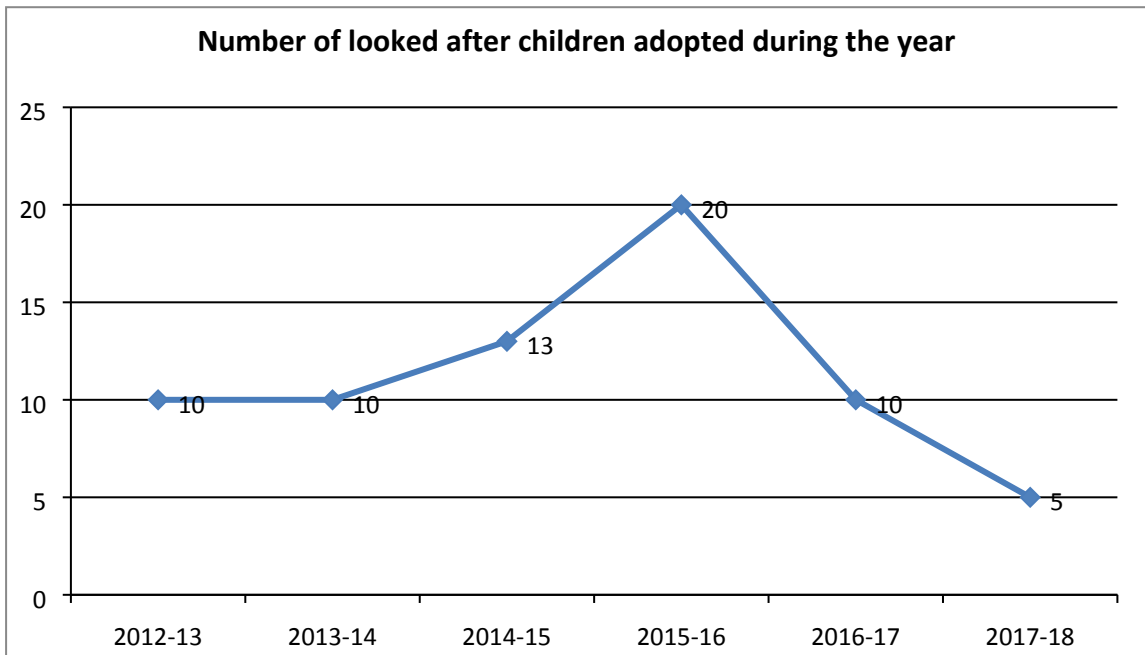
If the three adoption order applications which are court timetabled for March 2018 are unchallenged then orders are likely to be made in respect of these children before the end of March bringing the total adoption figure to 8 for 2017/18.

Applications for Placement Orders have been successful which would indicate that Placement Orders will be made for the majority of children with an ADM decision of adoption and subsequently matched with adopters. Going into 2018/19 there will be at least 23 children with an ADM decision of adoption or a Placement Order.

Given the number of children placed with prospective adopters, awaiting matching panel or with an ADM decision awaiting a final hearing and, identified dates / actions to progress permanency plans for this cohort of children, the projected figure of adoptions for 2018/19 is a minimum of 15 children.

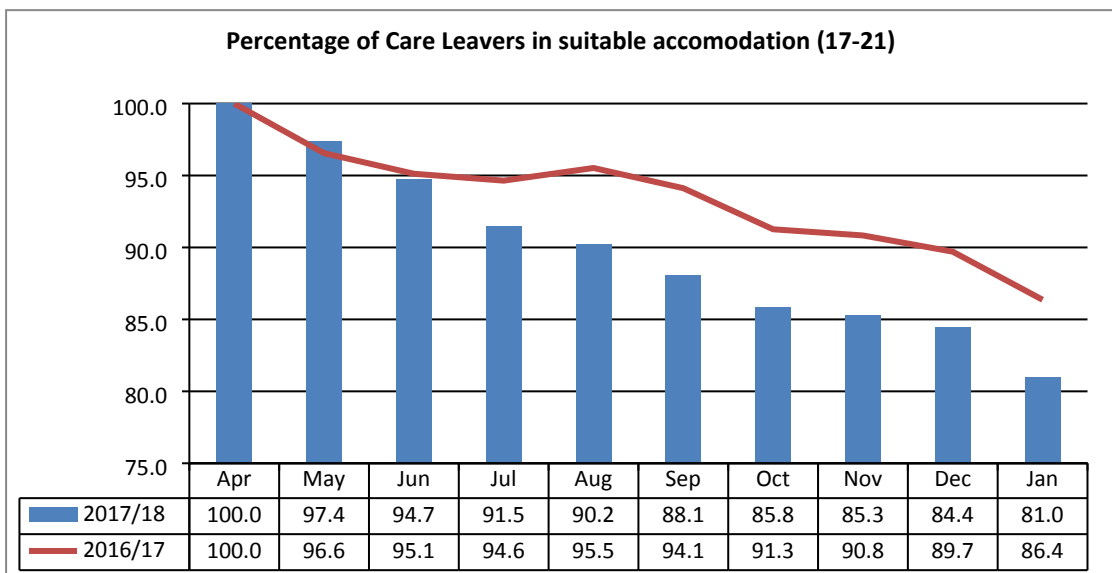
- 3.15 Timeliness has now much improved. The average number of days between a child coming into care and being placed with an adoptive family is 239, which is good performance and is below (ie good) the east of England average.

Fig 9



3.16 Care Leavers

3.17 Considerable work has been undertaken since the last report to Corporate Parenting in ensuring the data is updated on the status of care leavers. As a result the percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training has improved to 65.5%. Although this is below the target of 70%, it is above the 16/17 position (61.9%). Since May 2017 the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has been lower than last year (see fig 10).



3.18 Housing remains one of the key challenges for young people who are Leaving Care, to address this we have developed the Head Start Housing Programme – which will look to support vulnerable young people into HMO's this

programme will offer a range of support to ensure that the transition into independent living can be achieved. The current position shows that we have 0.6% in unsuitable accommodation – the rest of the data relates to young people who have gone missing from the LA – a significant percentage of these are made up of our unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and this is recognised nationally as an issue. Due to how we report we also have a percentage of young people who chose to disengage with the after care service and as such we are not aware of where they live so are shown as unknown on the data return. We continue to ensure that we try and keep in touch with young people who have made the choice to disengage and are proactively identifying ways of providing a range of accommodation to meet the needs of young people leaving care

3.19 The service has recently been realigned and is integrated with the Inspire Youth Hub services. This has opened up a number of opportunities for young people leaving care to access services in their transition to adulthood. Some further work is required in ensuring all children leaving care have a pathway plan. This area is being addressed by the senior management team in the leaving care service and looked after children teams.

3.20 **Case file audits**

3.21 All local authorities are required to carry out regular audits on case files and feedback learning into front line practice. To date, 187 case file audits have been completed. Work has been undertaken by the service to ensure that learning from these cases is communicated to social workers and their team managers.

3.22 **Child Sexual Exploitation**

3.23 There is a report before Corporate Parenting Committee this evening regarding Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing children.

3.24 **Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS)**

3.25 The current single inspection framework (SIF) for children’s services ended in December 2017 and has been replaced with the new inspection of local authority children’s services (ILACS) framework, which started in January 2018. Under ILACS, local authorities will be required to share their self-evaluation at the annual engagement meeting with Ofsted.

4. **Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 Corporate Parenting Committee to note and comment on current performance position.

5. **Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 Not Applicable.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Not Applicable.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Nilufa Begum**
Management Accountant

No Financial Implications

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Services

No Legal Implications

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

Although there are no direct Diversity or Equality Implications arising from this report, the overall improvements documented have a positive impact on children and young people

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

- Not Applicable.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- N/A

9. Appendices to the report

- Not Applicable.

Report Author:

Iqbal Vaza

Strategic Lead, Performance Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence
Strategy, Communications and Customer Services

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7 March 2018		ITEM: 7
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Care Leavers into Employment, Education or Training (EET)		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Not Applicable	
Report of: Kate Kozlova-Boran, Inspire Careers Manager Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director Learning, Inclusion & Skills		
Accountable Assistant Director: Shelia Murphy, Assistant Director Children's Care & Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report summarises our approach to improve the number of Care leavers* into Education Employment & Training to enable them to access the regeneration opportunities in Thurrock and to respond positively to our corporate parent role.

*Care leavers is the collective term used throughout this document but also includes Children in Care and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking/Trafficked Children

1. Recommendations:

- 1.1 To note the pilot HMO and support the ongoing development of the programme to enable more properties to be available for the scheme
- 1.2 To recommend that this approach becomes part of our housing strategy
- 1.3 To recommend the activities continue to be delivered by representatives cross directorate, as well as making use of external agencies/services.
- 1.4 To consider the development of a transitional housing scheme and provision of personalised support for young people as they enter the aftercare service.
- 1.5 To recommend a that officers explore the establishment of joint officer role between Social Care and Housing.

2. Introduction And Background:

2.1 Local Policy Context

The outline proposals within this report link with the Council's corporate priorities:-

- Create a place for learning & opportunity

2.2 National Policy

The number of Looked After children (LAC) continues to increase; it has increased steadily over the last nine years; at 31st March 2017 there were 72,670 LAC children, an increase of 3% on 2016 (Department for Education, September 2017). Nationally, 6% of LAC Children are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Thurrock's data identifies different trends – 40% of Thurrock LAC Children are asylum seekers (124 children out of 309). Unaccompanied asylum seekers are predominantly male (92%) and 78% are aged 16 and over (national statistics 2017 SFR 50/2017, September 2017, DFE).

The system for supporting young people leaving foster or residential care in England to live successful independent lives is not working effectively, according to the National Audit Office (NAO).

'Too often services are not joined up, meaning that care leavers do not get the whole spectrum of support they need at the right time and, in the worst cases, one bit of the system can act in a way that undermines the work that another part of the system is providing' (Timpson E. ,MP, 2016)

The cost of not moving into adulthood successfully is likely to be high to both care leavers and the public. According to NAO, the lifetime cost of the current cohort of 19-year-old care leavers being NEET would be around £240 million or £150 million more than if they had the same NEET rate as other 19-year-olds.

The principal outcome measure is the number of care leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET). In 2014, 34.4% of 19-year-old care leavers were NEET compared with only 15.5% of their age peers nationally.

Thurrock follows the national trend: 34.1% of Thurrock LAC young people aged 17-21 are NEET. Though Thurrock's NEET LAC figure is marginally lower than the national average, the aim of the LA as the corporate parent is to reduce the NEET figure further to minimize the gap between the LAC and other young people.

Reports in 2016 'Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence' (July 2016), 'Evaluation of Better by Design: A Report for Achieving for Children' (July 2016) and 'Supporting Care Leavers to thrive:

Everyone's Business' (October 2016) are indicating that there needs to be a more collaborative and joined up, effective approach when supporting Looked After Children into positive destinations.

2.3 Thurrock's Local Arrangements

In June 2015, representatives from 5 different teams, within Thurrock Council, formed a strategy group to increase the number of Care leavers into EET. The group defined the purpose of the work as:

Improving access of care leavers into EET so they can benefit from the significant regeneration programme underway in Thurrock.

The work initially built on the successes of the Diversity into Apprenticeships programme (DIA), a programme of mentoring and work experience support for Looked After children. Over the last couple of years this individualised programme of support has been successfully integrated into the work of Inspire enabling the LAC NEET young people to access a wider suite of services available through Inspire and partners.

This work directly contributes to the Child Poverty strategy and national strategies to reduce the marginalised population's reliance on the benefits system and ensure that we are continuing to ensure that inequities are addressed at a local level. However whilst we have identified all of the strategy links it is the difference this joined up approach has on the young people that has been evidenced by the reduction in NEET figures for care leavers.

3. Progress To Date

3.1 Strategic Position

December 2017 figures show that 16.7% of Care leavers (aged 17-21 years) are NEET. This is a significant improvement since December 2016 when 27% NEET figure was recorded. The successful increase in the number of NEET young people is outlined below:-

Planning for Care leavers has been significantly improved when the After Care team moved under the Inspire team in April 2017 creating an opportunity for colleagues who previously were in different teams to come together and look at innovative approaches to reducing the LAC NEET by fostering joint visits, faster progression and increased expertise. We recognise the challenges that are faced by this group and each experience triggers cross directorate conversations, reallocation of resource, different approaches to enable access into EET.

Developing this strategic approach has sharpened our focus to consider the suitability of every programme we offer/will create in the future and whether it will be accessible by care leavers and how we secure their engagement. We

continue to consult with care leavers in the development of Inspire, thus ensuring that they have a voice in the ongoing support that Inspire can provide.

The senior management team is committed to creating an environment where care leavers can experience 6 months employment to develop useful skills in the workplace. In May 2014, Thurrock Council reviewed its Pay Policy to provide National Minimum wage rates to Apprentices whose performance is satisfactory after 6 months employment. For an 18-20 year old, this has made a real impact on the level of salary that they receive.

There is increased awareness of the need to create positive employer encounters for Care leavers. As a result, many Thurrock Council Departments are willing to create work experience placements, along with constructive feedback to this group to enable targeted support.

3.2 Specialised Support

There has been a number of individualised programmes generated to re-engage those LAC young people who are not yet ready for full time commitment with education on a five day per week basis – department for Education has recognised this characteristic of LAC young people and is encouraging local authorities to re-engage these vulnerable young people in bite size, individually tailored to them provision with a clear progression to more substantial training/education in the future. This has had the most positive effect on the NEET LAC figures.

The successful funding Thurrock has secured for the delivery Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) enables additional capacity to tackle some of the challenges and extend targets for Care leavers to find and stay in meaningful employment.

In addition, there are two innovative programmes both run by two personal advisers from Inspire: the Duke of Edinburgh framework for Looked After or Care Leavers young people designed to broaden the young people's outlook, increasing their self-esteem and promoting their engagement in EET and the Independent Living Skills programme assisting young people's transition into becoming self-sustaining functioning members of society which meets a developmental need identified in the 2016 OFSTED inspection.

Inspire has successfully bought in an employability programme run by partnership agency TCHC through the YEI funding which sees at risk of NEET LAC young people access provision at the Inspire Youth HUB – developing their employability skills and preparing for the world of work.

The Careers and Enterprise Company funding secured in Thurrock is already creating ideas/plans for different types of employer encounters that may appeal to Care leavers (such as World at Work days, mock interviews, work shadowing for building skills and citizenship).

Inspire is working with National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) to increase entry into HE for young people in nine wards in Thurrock by providing access to individualised support, advice and guidance as well as workshops and summer schools. Six LAC children participated in the 'Higher Degree Apprenticeship Summer and Autumn Schools at Grangewaters with fantastic feedback.

4. The Challenges

Tracking Care leavers across directorate, where services have responsibility for different age ranges (Inspire Careers 16-19 years, After Care 17-25 years, Virtual School 4-18 years, Employability & Skills 16-24 years) and two unconnected databases can be challenging/

The key priority growth sectors are focused on business development. Their staffing structure is very lean which makes investing sufficient time, to care leavers in the workplace, very challenging, however the work of the Inspire has continued to support local employers in the recruitment and ongoing development of care leavers into work experience/apprenticeships.

There is a dialogue open with JobCentre Plus to formally recognise regular engagement/training by this group as 'preparation for work' which enables for benefits to continue.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6. Impact On Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance And Community Impact

6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

- Diverse opportunities and future

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Nilufa Begum**
Management Accountant

This report has no financial implications – however it has evidenced a reduction in costs incurred by our Leaving & Aftercare Team.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Services

The Committee is asked to note the report content under the remit of the Committee's terms of reference and powers

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

Supporting our young people is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council, we ensure that we can utilise our powers to positively discriminate to create opportunities. We continue to seek the views of young people to shape the programmes on offer and continue to utilise integrative partnerships to secure Brighter Futures.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

- None

8. Appendices To This Report:

- None

Report Author

Kate Kozlova-Boran,
Inspire Careers Manager

Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Parenting

Year: 2017/2018

Dates of Meetings: 07 June 2017, 06 September 2017, 06 December 2017, 07 March 2018

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
07 June 2017		
Health of Looked After Children Report	Paula Gregory/Andrews Osei	Members
Virtual School Annual Report	Keeley Pullen	
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
06 September 2016		
Placement Updates of Care Packages	Paul Coke	Members
Performance Dashboard	Iqbal Vasa	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
06 December 2017		
Children in Care Council Update		Officers
Performance Report	Iqbal Vaza	Officers
Virtual Headteacher Report	Keeley Pullen	Officers
Placement Update of Care Packages	Andrews Osei	Officers
Accommodation for Care Leavers	Michele Lucas	Officers
Annual Report of Fostering	Andrews Osei	Officers
IRO Annual Report	Neale Laurie	Officers

Placement Commissioning	Sue Green / Mark Livermore	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	
07 March 2018		
Placement Updates of Care Packages & Performance Report	Iqbal Vaza	Members
Children in Care Council Update	Natalie Carter	Officers
Report on CSE and Missing Children	Claire Pascoe	Officers
Education Employment and Training for Care Leavers	Michele Lucas	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
New Municipal Year		
IRO Annual Report	Rory Patterson	Officers