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

Corporate Parenting Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **15 January 2019**

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

Membership:

Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Graham Hamilton (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Barry Johnson, Steve Liddiard, Sue MacPherson and Luke Spillman

Gregg Brown, Open Door
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

Substitutes:

Councillors Gary Collins, David Potter, Sue Shinnick and Lynn Worrall

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

		Page
1	**Apologies for Absence**	
2	**Minutes**	5 - 12

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on 5 September 2018.

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**

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **7 January 2019**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

<u>**Helpful Reminders for Members**</u>

- *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?*

<u>**When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?**</u>

- **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

Non- pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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 5 September 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Graham Hamilton (Vice-Chair), Barry Johnson and Steve Liddiard, Lynn Worrall (Substitute for Qaisar Abbas)
Apologies:	Councillors Sue MacPherson, Qaisar Abbas, Luke Spillman, Co-optees Gregg Brown and Sharon Smith
In attendance:	Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director Children's Care and Targeted Outcomes Brian Relph, Interim Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Keeley Pullen, Head of Virtual School Kallum Davies, Democratic Services Officer

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.

9.   **Minutes**

The Minutes of the 6 June 2018 meeting were approved as a true and correct record.

10.   **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

11.   **Declaration of Interests**

Counsellor Worrall made a non-pecuniary declaration of interest stating that a report by the Prince's Trust which was referred to on page 20 of the Agenda had been written by her, in her capacity as an employee of the Trust.

Councillor Liddiard made a non-pecuniary declaration of interest stating that he was a Foster Carer employed by Thurrock Council.

12.   **Children's Social Care Performance**

Before commencing the first item of business the Vice-Chair, Councillor Hamilton, expressed his dissatisfaction with the quality of the reports presented to the committee. The Councillor stated that the information presented was confusing to a layperson and that the graphs could not be easily interpreted as they had been printed in black and white.

Councillor Hamilton further stated that the report alternated between the terms "Looked After Children" and "Children Looked After" as did the associated acronyms (CLA / LAC).

The Vice Chair went on to state that the use of statistical neighbours was confusing and that many of them were Councils situated far from Thurrock's borders.

Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children's Services stated that she agreed the reports need to be printed in colour, but pointed out that the full colour versions were available on the website. The Officer then explained that the Department for Education allocated each Local Authority a set of statistical neighbours based on similarities in population and demographics for the purposes of benchmarking. This was not something that could be changed by Thurrock.

The Chair, Councillor Redsell asked Officers to present the report for the first item of business.

The Assistant Director introduced the report stating that there had continued to be a high demand on statutory services however there had been a reduction in contacts and referrals which meant Thurrock was coming into line with its statistical neighbours.

The Assistant Director explained there had been continued focus on child adoption however the local courts were not keen on issuing adoption orders. She did however state that they had already doubled the previous year's number of adoptions.

The Chair invited questions from Members. Councillor Worrall, referring to page 21 of the report, stated that she had previously been Portfolio Holder for Housing and had worked on increasing the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) in the borough, and questioned if there was now a shortage of such properties.

The Assistant Director stated that there was a serious shortage of HMO's as there was only 1 which could accommodate 4 to 6 young people. The Officer went on to state that they had presented a business case to investigate opportunities to increase the number of HMO's, which had been approved prior to the meeting. This meant that they were now able to begin exploring options in this regard.

Councillor Liddiard asked what assessments the report referred to. The Officer explained that it referred to primary assessments done after receiving a referral from the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH). She further clarified that the MASH take all the information and decide on the most appropriate course of action for each contact. The report referred to the contacts received by the Social Care Assessment Team from the MASH.

Councillor Hamilton asked what the general age of children up for adoption was. The Assistant Director stated that the majority were under 5 years old, however some were part of a sibling group where one of the siblings might be up to 7 years old, and these would not be separated.

The Chair stated that she had become aware of a problem in her Ward where there had been a HMO for young people in which they had been left unsupervised. The Chair expressed concern that there was no regulation for private sector HMO's.

Councillor Johnson stated that new licensing rules were being brought in to tackle this problem and that HMO owners would be required to register. The Chair was pleased to hear this but still felt concern that children could be lost to the Local Authority without adequate supervision in such accommodation.

Councillor Johnson explained that the definition of a HMO was being reduced to 2 storey buildings, down from three, and 2 or more unrelated occupants, down from 4.

The Chair asked Officers for a report on private sector HMOs in Thurrock as she was concerned unscrupulous landlords could be getting away with not looking after young people placed in their properties.

Councillor Hamilton asked who was paying the rent for these young people if they are unsupervised. The Assistant Director explained that the Local Authority paid to place its Children Looked After in these properties, where there was an expectation of appropriate care; and this was checked before the landlord was engaged. However as there was no requirement for HMO owners to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) it was difficult to ensure ongoing appropriateness and the system relied heavily on the young people feeding back about conditions.

Councillor Worrall stated that the Council is currently engaged in developing its Local Plan, a plan which was to set out provision for the future of the borough however she had noted there was no reference to HMO's in the Local Plan Draft. The Councillor suggested the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee be contacted and asked to look into adequate provision for young care leavers.

Joseph Kaley, representative of Children in Care Council stated that they had previously considered a team of young inspectors comprised of Children Looked After to voluntarily conduct random inspections, and that this idea should be revisited. He also noted that although they would have no real authority, and landlords would be able to refuse inspection, that this would be in itself an indication of the quality of the care.

The Chair stated that they would need to be accompanied by an officer as it would otherwise be unsafe, but expressed her support for the idea. The Assistant Director agreed and stated that Rory Patterson, Corporate Director for Children's Services had also been interested in the idea.

Councillor Worrall stated that the reality was that the lack of suitable places for 16+ had been down to Councillors and that all Councillors needed to take responsibility.

Jackie Howell stated that provision simply was not being made, and that this had not been a new issue. She elaborated that this issue had been consistent over a number of years and still very little had changed. Ms Howell stated that Joseph Kaley had still been waiting to be told where he would be living after returning from university, but the fact was that the Local Authority itself had not known.

Councillor Redsell stated that this applied to all university leavers. Ms Howell stated that the difference had been that Joseph Kaley faced street homelessness because, as a child in care, he had no family home to return to.

Councillor Liddiard stated that many Children Looked After had personal and mental health issues which exacerbated the problem of finding them suitable placements. Councillor Liddiard felt the cost of building new HMO's would be less than the cost of dealing with such cases reactively.

Councillor Johnson stated that HMO's were very difficult to build and often turned into hotels. The Councillor asked how many placements there had been in the Local Authorities 1 HMO. The Assistant Director stated that it was always at capacity.

The Chair stated that not all Children Looked After came back to Thurrock after university, which made it difficult to quantify the number of placements required.

Councillor Liddiard stated that the Council owned 55 office buildings, some of which would be suitable for conversion into an HMO. He further stated that it was incumbent on all Members, as Corporate Parents, to keep an eye out for opportunities to support these provisions.

The Chair stated that there had been a number of new Councillors in recent months and that the responsibilities of Corporate Parents should be presented to all Members again.

The Chair moved the debate onto page 17 of the report highlighting that Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) were accounting for twice the cost of "in house" foster carers; i.e. those whom had been employed directly by the Council. The Officer stated that more funding was needed to advertise and recruit more in house foster carers and save on IFA's.

Ms Howell stated that each foster carer was paid £130 per week, and although carers were permitted to work, this was impractical as their placements often required a significant time commitment, and £130 was not a living wage.

The Chair agreed and stated that she had also not seen much advertising for foster carers. She went on to state that Members should be doing more in this respect, as there were 49 Elected Councillors each of whom was jointly responsible for the Children Looked After in Thurrock.

The Chair asked Officers about the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UAAS). The Officers stated that there continued to be a steady influx however they were distributed across neighbouring authorities based on capacity. The Officer further stated that the figure was deceiving because it did not account for the cost and time commitments of processing UAAS, only the few which remained in Thurrock. The Chair asked Officers to prepare a report on the through-flow of UAAS.

The Chair thanked Officers and asked if all members were in agreement with the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED

Members noted the areas of improvement in Children's Social Care and work undertaken to manage demand for statutory social care services.

13. **Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report**

The Interim Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Brian Relph introduced the report and highlighted the key issues which had been identified. The Officer stated the number of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) had remained steady however there had been some areas for improvement – especially in relation to child participation, IRO consistency and Pathway Planning. He also pointed out that the feedback from Children had been positive with many citing their IRO as the only consistent person in their life. It was also noted that Education had the fewest number of issues identified.

The Chair stated she had been pleased by the consistent presence of the IRO. Councillor Liddiard asked who would see the IRO report and if it was per child. The Officer explained that there was a separate report produced per child but that the Annual Report provided an overview of the service as a whole.

Councillor Worrall stated that she had been disappointed to learn some reviews were only being completed in the weeks before the next review was due. The Officer stated he too had been disappointed to discover this and emphasised that he had taken a robust approach to address this issue.

Councillor Worrall asked if a report on this could be brought to the Committee more regularly. The Assistant Director stated it could be added to the recurring Social Care Performance report.

Joseph Kaley stated that he had experienced this situation first hand. He also suggested a more graded termination of the IRO's contact with Children

Looked After, as it was at the time an abrupt ending to what was often their most consistent relationship. The Chair agreed this would be a better approach for children entering aftercare.

The Officer stated that he supported this idea however it would need to be reviewed carefully in order to balance resources between their statutory duties and a graded withdrawal. The Chair asked the Officer to report back to the Committee on this.

Ms Howell stated that the school year continued past the 18th birthday of a young person and perhaps Children Looked After services could follow the school year. The Head of Virtual School stated that the Virtual School's support did not end at the 18th birthday, and the service continued to provide support, although they did not receive funding for this.

Councillor Johnson noted from the report that Thurrock had roughly 2 boys to every 1 girl in care and questioned if this phenomenon was unique to Thurrock. The Assistant Director for Children's Services stated that Thurrock was slightly disproportionate to other Councils however explained that this was largely due to the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers entering Thurrock, who were usually male.

Councillor Johnson also spoke of the IRO Feedback Form, which he had felt was condescending to young people because it had asked them to tick "smiley face" boxes. The Officer stated that the form had not been updated in some time and was now being considered as part of a wider review, and one of the goals was to make it more inclusive of older children. The Officer stated that the review would also investigate alternatives such as Apps and digital approaches.

Councillor Worrall stated that the Prince's Trust conducted their surveys by text at no cost to the recipient, and that a prize draw was added as an incentive.

The Chair agreed however felt that there was no substitute for a face to face conversation, as these were often more informative and also taught young people essential communication and interpersonal skills.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report.

RESOLVED

The committee noted the Annual IRO Report for 2017-2018 and the recommendations within it.

14.   **Work Programme**

Members agreed to remove "Placement Update of Care Packages" from the Work Programme as this had been integrated into the standard item "Children's Social Care Performance Report".

The Chair suggested that the Children in Care Council address Full Council again in the near future for the benefit of new Councillors and to remind all of their responsibility and liability as Corporate Parents.

The meeting finished at 20.25

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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15 January 2019	ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Looked After Children Health Report	

Wards and communities affected: All	**Key Decision:** N/A

Report of: Paula Gregory, Thurrock CCG Designated Nurse Looked After Children

Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children and Families

Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services

This report is Public

Executive Summary

Within appendix 1 – Looked After Children Health Report.

1.   Recommendation(s)

1.1   That the Corporate Parenting Committee provides comments and it is requested that whilst there are ongoing concerns around the compliance of meeting statutory targets for Initial Health Assessment this issue should remain as a standing agenda item for the Corporate Parenting Committee.

1.2   That the Corporate Parenting Committee provides comments and it is requested that due to the significant reduction in the reported number of children having an up to date dental check and being fully immunised, this area of care is kept as a standing agenda item to be monitored by the committee.

2.   Introduction and Background

2.1   Within appendix 1 – Looked After Children Health Report.

3.   Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1   Within appendix 1 – Looked After Children Health Report.

4.   Reasons for Recommendation

4.1   N/A

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

5.1 N/A

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

6.1 N/A

7. **Implications**

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**

Management Accountant

There are no financial implications, however any costs associated with this report need to be met from existing resources.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Deputy Head of Legal Community

The Local Authority, through its Corporate Parenting responsibilities, has a duty to promote the welfare of Looked After Children. This includes promoting the child's physical, emotional and mental health. Every Looked After Child should have a health assessment so that a health plan can be developed to reflect the child's health needs and be included as part of the child's overall care plan. As corporate parent, the local authority must ensure that children and young people receive the health care services they require as set out in their health plan. This includes medical and dental care treatment as well as advice and guidance on personal health care and health promotion issues. The Local Authority should advise the Clinical Commissioning Group when a child is initially accommodated.

The relevant Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England have a duty to cooperate with requests from the Local Authority to undertake health assessments and provide any necessary support services to Looked After Children without any undue delay and irrespective of whether the placement of the child is an emergency, short term or in another Clinical Commissioning Group. This also includes services to a child or young person experiencing mental illness.

Both the Local Authority and relevant Clinical Commissioning Group should develop effective communications and understandings between each other as part of being able to promote children's wellbeing.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**

Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

Whilst there are no direct implications arising from this report, the overall strategy seeks to address issues of inequality amongst looked after children.

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

N/A

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**

- Appendix 1 – Looked After Children Health Report
- Appendix 2 – SET CCGs Looked After Children and Care Leaver Health Strategy 2018 – 2020

Report Author:

Paula Gregory

Designated Chief Nurse Looked After Children

Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group

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Looked after Children Health Report

2017/2018

Corporate Parenting Committee

15th January 2019

Author: Paula Gregory

Designated Nurse Looked after Children

Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group

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Executive Summary

This report will describe and analyse the outcomes, achievements and challenges regarding health outcomes for Thurrock Looked after Children for 2017/2018. The report will provide both a local and national picture for comparison.

1. Introduction and Background

Most children become looked after because of abuse and neglect. It is acknowledged that Looked after Children (LAC) tend to have greater health needs compared to their peers who have not been in care. Evidence suggests that almost half of children in care have a diagnosable mental health disorder and two thirds have special educational needs (DOH, DfE 2015). As corporate parents, it is vital we maintain high aspirations to ensure children in care receive high quality health care and support in order to meet any needs identified and support a successful transition into adulthood.

Promoting the health and well-being of Looked after Children (DfE, DoH 2015) provides statutory guidance for local authorities, clinical commissioning groups and NHS England. Under section 10 of the Children Act (2004) agencies are required to cooperate to promote the welfare of looked after children.

2. Local Context

Children Looked after data was released on the 15th November 2018 by the Department for Education (DfE). Data identified that on the 31st March 2018 there were 75,420 Looked after Children in England. This is an increase of 4% from March 2017 figures. Data for March 2018 for Thurrock shows there has been a decrease in the number of Looked after children from 334 to 308 this highlights a decrease of 7%. This can largely be attributed to the reduction in the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) due to the implementation of the National Transfer Scheme.

2.1 Demographics 31st March 2018
Number of LAC
308   (46 are UASC)

Gender
Male: 195 (63%)
Female: 117 (38%)

Age
0-4 yrs.:   13%
5-11yrs: 22%
12-16yrs: 48%
17yrs: 17%

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2.2 Placement Location
Placed in Thurrock: 40%
Placed outside of Thurrock: 60% (75% are placed within 20 miles of Thurrock)

A higher proportion of children continue to be placed outside of Thurrock, however the proportion of children placed within 20 miles of Thurrock has increased. A significant number 47% are placed within the Southend and Essex boundaries. Due to the partnerships arrangements and close working between both CCG's and Provider organisations across Southend Essex Thurrock (SET) there is assurance that health assessments are both timely and of good quality.   There remain issues at times around accessing health assessments for children placed outside of the Essex boundaries. Specific areas are highlighted to the local authority to advise them in relation to future placing of children. There is also a mechanism to escalate to NHSE should any area refuse to undertake an assessment or the timelines are unacceptable.

2.3 Children with Disabilities Team
6%

Whilst 6% may seem very low, this figure identifies the number of children with the most complex of needs who meet the threshold for care under the children with disabilities team. It is important to note that 31%, a significantly higher percentage of Thurrock Looked after children have an Educational Health Care Plan or require special educational needs support within their educational setting.

3.   **Looked after Children Health Data 2017/2018**

In November 2018, the DfE published the latest figures from all local authorities. Figures are generated from the annual returns submitted by local authorities and are based on data at the 31st March 2018. Health reporting is focused on immunisations, dental checks, statutory review health assessments and data around strength and difficulty questionnaires (SDQ) data. Figures relate to the cohort of children who have been in care for 12months and over. Data for each area is analysed below.

3.1 Dental
Thurrock data submitted for March 2018 identified that only 43% of children were up to date with their dental check compared to 97% in the March 2016 data return. National data shows that 84% of all Looked after children are up to date with their dental check showing a significant gap in comparison with national data. It is important to note that health providers show much higher compliance of dental checks currently around 70 %. It is also important to clarify this is for the whole cohort of Looked after children not only those who have been in care for over 12 months. Dental checks are a key performance indicator with a target of 90%. Thurrock Public Health commission the Looked after children service and assurance can be given that this data is monitored closely. There is a requirement for health to provide narrative for the current figures to give context. Reasons given for not reaching the current performance target of 90% is the high number of UASC and data entry difficulties. This is therefore an area of care that is under continual review and monitoring. Significant differences in data

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Corporate Parenting Committee 15th January 2019. Looked after Children Health Report 2017/2018. Paula Gregory Designated Nurse Looked after Children. Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group

performance between social care and health suggest that data entry may be an issue and this is an area that requires further investigation. This will be raised at the monthly LAC Health steering group, which is held on the first Wednesday of every month.

3.2 Review Health Assessments

Thurrock data submitted for March 2018 identified that 90% of children were up to date with their review health assessment. March 2016 returns showed that 94% of children were up to date with their health assessment showing a current slight decrease. National data for March 2018 show that 88% of all Looked after Children had their health assessment. Thurrock is therefore above national performance. Key performance indicators for health providers for statutory health assessments is 100%. Thurrock Public Health monitor review health assessments for children placed both in area and out of area. Current data identifies there is 100% compliance for meeting health assessment timelines each month for review assessments due for children placed in area. It is identified that compliance of timelines for review assessments for children placed out of area, particularly outside of Essex borders does not mirror this data. In Quarter 1, only 67% of LAC placed out of area received their review health assessment within timeframes. Narrative given for delays from health is, change of placement, refusal to prioritise or undertake in the area placed. Should an area refuse to undertake an assessment there are clear escalation pathways in place to escalate the concern and assure completion. On occasions, it has been necessary to bring children back to area or for the LAC Nurses to travel to where the child is placed to undertake the assessment.

3.3 Immunisations

Thurrock data submitted for March 2018 identified that only 65% of children were up to date with their immunisations compared to 89% in the March 2016 data return. National data shows that 85% of all Looked after children are up to date with their immunisations showing a significant gap in comparison with national data. It is important to note that health providers show a much higher compliance for immunisations currently around 83%. It is important to note this if for the whole cohort of Looked after children not only those who have been in care for over 12 months. Immunisations are a key performance indicator with a target of 95% for health. Thurrock Public Health commission the Looked after children service and assurance can be given that data is monitored closely. There is a requirement for health to provide a narrative for the current figures to give context. Reasons given for not reaching the current performance target of 95% is the high number of UASC. The majority of UASC enter the country with no record of immunisations and therefore will have to commence a catch up programme and cannot be deemed up to date until this is complete.   This is an area of care that is under continual review and monitoring. Significant differences in data performance between social care and health suggest that data entry may be an issue and this is an area that requires further investigation. The Health Passport introduced in July 2018 has a section identifying outstanding immunisations and it is hoped this document will support the understanding and recognition of immunisations required.

3.4 Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ)

The SDQ screening tool is a behavioural screening questionnaire that is a mandatory tool to be used for looked after children aged between 4-16 years old who have been in care for 12 months or over. The tool is used to identify if there is concern in relation to emotional issues, conduct, hyperactivity, peer relationships and pro social behaviours. A total score is aggregated and if this is over 17 this should trigger further discussion around the support and care the child is receiving. Scores are separated into three outcomes, normal is under 14, borderline is 14-16 and cause for concern is over 17. Thurrock data submitted for March 2018 identified that 100% of children who met the SDQ criteria had had their SDQ assessment completed compared to 99% in March 2016. National data shows that 78% of all eligible children have had their SDQ score completed. This identifies that Thurrock are significantly above the national trend for SDQ assessment. Thurrock scores identified that 46% of the children had a normal score, 18% had a borderline score and 36% had a score that is a cause for concern. National data for the three specific categories show that Thurrock is in line with national data, which showed that 49% of LAC nationally had a normal score, 12% had a borderline score and 39% had a score highlighting cause for concern.

Thurrock have implemented an SDQ monthly meeting where children with high SDQ scores are discussed to ensure their support package is meeting their needs or if new referrals are required. This is a multi-agency meeting attended by Childrens social care, Looked after Children Nurses, Education representative, mental health staff from the Emotional wellbeing mental health service (EWMHS). Therefore the 36% of children identified with an SDQ score that is a cause for concern (>17) will be discussed in this meeting to ensure the appropriate services and support are in place.

It is important to recognise that Looked-after children and young people have particular physical, emotional and behavioural needs related to their earlier experiences. The rates of emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties are much higher amongst looked-after children and young people than the wider population. The Childrens Commissioner in 2015 suggested that whilst less than 0.1% of the child population are in care, 4% of children referred to children's mental health services are in care (SCIE 2017). This highlights the disparity and over representation of Looked after children requiring mental health assessment and support. Work is ongoing and developing in relation to creating a robust pathway to ensure all looked after children and not only those who have been in care for over a year benefit from the SDQ process currently in place. There is a strong commitment amongst agencies within Thurrock to ensure the SDQ process is meaningful and responsive to improve outcomes.

4. **Initial Health Assessments (IHA)**

It is a statutory requirement for all Looked after Children to have an Initial Health Assessment on entering care. This should be completed and be available for the first Statutory Looked after Children review held within 20 working days. Following this, under 5's should be seen for a review health assessment 6 monthly and over 5's are seen annually. North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) are commissioned by Thurrock CCG to provide the Initial Health Assessments for Thurrock children placed within area. Consultant Paediatricians undertake initial health assessments.

A delayed IHA contributes to delayed assessment, diagnosis and treatment, which places the child at risk. This is particularly a cause for concern for children entering care as many enter care due to abuse and neglect and it is recognised that looked after children have poorer health outcomes compared to their peers who have not been in care.

Initial Health assessments continue to be an area of concern. Statutory timelines are not being met, often by a significant period. Current figures show that during August 2018-October 2018 only 23.5% of children were seen for their initial health assessment within statutory timeframes of 20 working days from becoming looked after. This rose to 35% seen within 25 days and 41% were seen within 30 days. It is recognised that this is a significant improvement from a year ago, however, it is also recognised that these figures need to improve. It is clear that ongoing work is required between Health and Childrens Social Care to improve the receipt of IHA paperwork, which does impact on meeting statutory timelines. This area of care is being continually addressed and monitored and is a tabled agenda item at the LAC Health steering group for discussion and resolution.

Due to the ongoing concerns around IHA timelines, it is requested by the Designated Nurse Looked after Children that the monitoring of Initial Health assessments (IHA) is a standing agenda item for the Corporate Parenting Committee going forward.

5. Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Education, Health Care Plans identify educational, health and social needs that require extra support in order to meet the need identified and improve outcomes. A multi-agency approach should be taken and health should play a significant part in the assessment process and planning of care. Current figures are shown below.

In October 2018, Thurrock had 270 Looked after Children within an educational setting between Nursery 2 and Year 13. Of these children 14.8% have an Educational Health Care Plan and 21.4% receive special educational needs support. Highlighting that 31% of the total Looked after Children population have a recognised need requiring additional support and assessment. This is a significant number within the cohort

There does need to be a more joined up approach around assessment pathways ensuring the EHCP informs or is combined with statutory assessments. There needs to be clear pathways to ensure the plans are shared with health and are placed in the child's main health record as standard practice. This is currently work in progress.

Thurrock CCG have recently appointed a Designated Clinical Officer for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). EHCP's form part of this agenda and it is hoped this area of care can be progressed and improved.

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6. Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children (UASC)

The were 63 UASC in March 2017 compared to 46 in October 2018. The reduction in numbers is due to the introduction of the National Transfer Scheme. The Transfer Scheme is based on the principle that no local authority should be asked to look after more UASC than 0.07% of its total child population. In Thurrock, this equates to no more than 28 UASC. Thurrock are above this figure resulting in new UASC being transferred out of Thurrock to other Local authorities within the eastern region.

Thurrock are the only local authority within Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) who are using the transfer scheme as other areas are not up to their 0.07%. It is important that we have safe transfer out arrangements that ensure the young person is fit to travel. The Designated Nurse is working with the Local Authority and the provider LAC nurse services to improve the current processes.

Transfer time under the guidance advises that transfer should take no longer than two days. In reality, the transfer to another local authority can take as many as ten to fifteen days. It is for this reason that there are now processes in place to raise the IHA paperwork at the point of accommodation, as there was evidence the assessment process was being delayed. It is important to ensure assessment takes place at the earliest opportunity to ensure health needs are met not only for the young person but also from a public health viewpoint in relation to communicable diseases.

6.1 Consent form

A new initial health assessment consent document has been developed between children's social care and health that is relevant to the specific needs of UASC and easy to complete.   This document is currently awaiting approval from the legal team within Thurrock. Once implemented it is expected to make a real difference to the timelines of assessment for this vulnerable cohort of children.

6.2 UASC Conference

A UASC conference was held on the 1st November 2018, this was a multi-agency event. Thurrock social workers and health professionals attended. The aim of the conference was to increase awareness and understanding of the health needs of UASC and give a picture of local need and services currently in place. It was funded by NHSE following a bid by the Designated Looked after Children Nurses across SET. The event was very successful with positive feedback. Another conference is planned for the New Year to cover the north of the county.

7. Looked after Children Nurse Health Team

The Looked after Children Health Team are commissioned by Thurrock Public Health. The team consist of a Specialist Nurse for Looked after Children, Looked after children Nurse and an administrator. The model within Thurrock is for the Health Visitors and School Nurses to undertake the health assessments for the children within their caseload. The LAC Nurses undertake the more complex

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health assessments and also work with the children who are out of education or in College. The LAC Nurses are aiming to develop a more specialist service for UASC and Care leavers. One of the LAC Nurses now has lead responsibility for UASC and meets weekly with the UASC Manager.

The LAC Provider nurses receive quarterly clinical supervision from the Designated Nurse for Looked after Children. Frequent contact is maintained between the Designated and provider nurses for support and advice as required.

The Designated Nurse Looked after Children also sits on the Accommodation and placement panel and joint funding panel. This allows a health perspective to be given on children discussed at panel who are either entering care or are presented at panel around changes of placement or joint funding issues for children with complex needs.

8. Looked after Children Level 3 Training

8.1 Thurrock CCG

There are 29 GP practices in Thurrock. GP's have a duty to ensure that all staff working in their practice have the right level of competence depending on their role, to effectively safeguard, protect and promote the welfare and wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers (RCGP 2015). Thurrock CCG provide Level 3 safeguarding training to GP's this training incorporates Looked after Children. It is particularly important for GP's to be aware of the complexities of Looked after Children. GP's are often the first point of contact for Foster Carers and it is important that GP's are aware of consent issues and delegated authority when working with Looked after Children to ensure needs are met appropriately and timely.

8.2 Provider Service. North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)

Level 3 Looked after Children training is delivered within the provider service NELFT. They deliver to all staff who have face-to-face contact with Looked after Children. Extra training is provided to those staff who undertake statutory health assessments. There is currently 100% compliance for all health staff requiring Looked after children training.

9. Looked after Children Health Strategy. Southend, Essex, Thurrock wide (SET)

The Designated LAC Nurses across Southend, Essex and Thurrock have developed a health strategy and work plan. The strategy focuses on Quality and Performance, Emotional Health and Well-being, voice of the child and engagement and commissioning of services**.** This document is being shared for your information and noting. (Appendix 1)

10. Innovation and Development

10.1 Health Passport

In October 2017, the Children in Care Council were invited to present to Thurrock CCG Board. This was facilitated by the Designated Looked after Children Nurse in order to promote children's participation at a strategic level and to educate board members on the views and opinions of Looked after Children. This session was a significant success, the Children in Care Council advised the board that they would like a health passport and from this meeting funding was secured to develop and print a Health Passport for Looked after children.

Meetings were held with the children in care council members, health professionals and the communications team from the CCG to design and develop the passport. The young people's views led the way in relation to content and design. This culminated in the Health Passport being published and commenced use in July 2018. All Looked after children aged 13 and above will receive a Health Passport at their health assessment. This is being reviewed in July 2019 with a plan to survey looked after children and carers directly for their views and feedback.

Praise must be given to the children in care council for voicing their aims and wishes to the board with in depth knowledge, skill and tenacity. They have influenced service delivery in a very positive way. It is recognised that there is a significant need to improve engagement with children and young people to develop and plan health services going forward.

10.2 Joint Strategic Needs assessment for Looked after Children

The Designated Nurse Looked after Children attended the Health and Well-being Board in June 2018 to observe. At this meeting, the new Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA) for Children and Young Peoples mental health was presented. It was recognised that whilst Looked after children have higher incidences of mental issues compared to their peers who have not been in care, the needs assessment focused primarily on the universal cohort of children with limited focus on Looked after Children. Following this meeting, Thurrock Public Health advised that they plan to have a JSNA for Looked after children. The first task and finish group has taken place to commence scoping the specific needs and areas of importance that need to be reflected within the JSNA. Further updates on the progress of the JSNA will be given to the committee going forward.

10.3 Semi-independent Placement for 16+ and Quality Visits (SIA)

16+ accommodation for Looked after children is not regulated and therefore not inspected by Ofsted. This can lead to variations in quality and provision. It is identified that improved joint working with health in relation to setting and monitoring standards of 16+ accommodation would be beneficial. Children placed in semi-independent placements are often some of the most vulnerable children in society and it is important to recognise that this level of vulnerability should not be minimised due to their age.

The Local Authority commissioning team set their own quality standards and have a service specification for all providers of 16+ accommodation, which was shared with the Designated Nurse LAC for comments. The Designated Nurse LAC requested to be part of the quality inspection process and has visited a 16+ placement with the commissioner of placements to review and assess the provision. This proved to be a very valuable experience with plans to continue joint quality visits in the future.

There is also a system in place to ensure GP's are aware of the type of accommodation a child is placed in. Therefore, the information shared with the GP specifically highlights that the child is placed in an SIA. This ensures that the GP is aware of this specific type of placement in their area and highlights the increased potential vulnerability of their registered patient.

10.4 Sleep Packs for UASC

To ensure safety throughout their journey UASC often travel at night and sleep in the day, this can create sleep difficulties that can impact greatly on health. To improve the health and wellbeing of UASC the LAC Nurse team have ordered sleep packs from the Separated Child Foundation, the packs are free. The sleep packs have been created as practical aids that can positively impact on a good night's sleep. We are currently waiting for them to be available for collection.

Sleep Packs are for people in their teen years. They are NOT differentiated by size or gender. The packs themselves are pouches or bags, resembling a wash/toiletries bag, and measure about 25 x 15 cm. All the items are new. Each contains:
    a nightshirt (to fit all sizes)
    a plug-in night light
    a padded eye-mask, with adjustable strap
    a pair of ear plugs

    a pouch of dried lavender
    a packet of tissues
    a stress ball or similar
    a 'Sleep Well' card

Additionally clothing packs have also been ordered to ensure clean and dry clothing is available to the young person at the point of being accommodated.

11. Recommendations

It is requested that whilst there are ongoing concerns around the compliance of meeting statutory targets for Initial Health Assessment this issue should remain as a standing agenda item for the Corporate Parenting Committee.

It is requested that due to the significant reduction in the reported number of children having an up to date dental check and being fully immunised, this area of care is kept as a standing agenda item to be monitored by the committee.

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12. Appendices

Southend Essex Thurrock CCG Looked after Children Health Strategy (2018)

13. References

DoH, DfE 2015 Statutory Guidance, Promoting the Health and wellbeing of Looked after Children

Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP,RCN,RCPCH) 2015 Intercollegiate Role Framework, Looked after Children, Knowledge skills and competencies of health care staff.

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) 2017. Improving mental health support for our children and young people.

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Southend, Essex & Thurrock (SET) CCGs Looked After Children and Care Leaver Health Strategy 2018-2020

NHS

	Aim: To reduce unwarranted variation and improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers across SET			
	← ALL UNDERPINNED BY STRONG LEADERSHIP →			
THEME	**Quality and Performance**	**Emotional health & wellbeing/ mental health**	**Voice of children/ young people & engagement**	**Commissioning of services**
AIM (SMT) Page 29	• Quality assurance of all health assessments as per SET quality tool • Health assessments completed within statutory timeframes • The child's health needs are a key consideration within placement planning • Staff receive LAC training as per intercollegiate document • health plan is fully embedded in care planning • Children placed out of SET receive high quality care • Robust communication and pathways • To establish a single pathway for LAC with an EHCP	• All requests for review health assessments are accompanied by a recent SDQ from local authority • Clear pathways in place for emotional wellbeing and mental health of children looked after to ensure needs are identified and addressed early	• All care leavers transitioning from care (from 16) are given a fully comprehensive health passport • To improve access, involvement and worker- child relationships for all children and young people in care	• Clear expectations for SET service commissioning • Adopt NHS England guidance unwarranted variation guidance • SET profiling of health needs to inform JSNA and commissioning • Raise the profile of LAC within safeguarding contractual standards and safeguarding clinical network
NICE 31	QS2 – collaborative working QS3 – placement quality/stability QS5 – specialist services support	QS1 – warm, nurturing care QS3 – placement quality/stability QS5 – specialist service support	QS4 - support identity and relationships QS8- support independence	QS5 – specialist service support QS6 – continuity for out of borough placements
OUTCOMES	• High quality health assessments completed within statutory timeframes • Health needs of children looked after are identified and met • Placement stability • Positive experiences of services and good engagement • Improved process and information sharing for LAC and EHCP	• Placement stability • Positive relationships with peers and carers • Improved overall wellbeing now and in the long term • SDQ score informs health assessment • Reduce impact of adverse childhood cumulative experience	• Positive experience of services • Positive transitions • Responsive services • Improved self esteem • Improved engagement and accessibility • Positive relationships with professionals	• Equity of service provision for physical and mental health • Greater awareness of local health needs to inform planning • Reduce unwarranted variation • Clear LAC offer across SET • Positive experience of services

Statement Number	Quality Statement NICE QS 31
QS 1	Looked After children, young people and care leavers experience warm and nurturing care
QS 2	Looked after children, young people and care leavers receive care from services and professionals that work collaboratively.
QS 3	Looked after children and young people live in stable placements that meet their needs and preferences.
QS 4	Looked after children, young people and care leavers have on-going opportunities to make sense of their identify and relationships.
QS 5	Looked after children and young people receive specialist and dedicated services within agreed timescales.
QS 6	Looked after children, young people and care leavers who move across local authority or health boundaries continue to receive the services they need.
QS 7	Looked after children, young people and care leavers are supported to fulfil their potential.
QS 8	Care leavers move to independence at their own pace.

15 January 2019	ITEM: 7
Corporate Parenting Committee	
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After – Academic Year 2017-2018	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	N/A

Report of: Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After

Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director of Learning, Inclusion and Skills

Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services

This report is Public

Executive Summary

Raising achievement in all areas of education for our Children Looked After [CLA] is a key priority for Thurrock Council. The Virtual School monitors and supports the educational progress and outcomes for CLA irrespective of where they are placed, in or out of borough. The Virtual School is responsible for pupils aged between 3 years and 18 years and this includes those who have left care during an academic year.

The annual report of the Virtual School Headteacher details the validated attainment outcomes for pupils in the Virtual School cohort for the academic year 2016-2017 for those pupils in care for one year or more. This data was presented to Corporate Parents in June 2018.

In addition, the report details the non-validated data outcomes for pupils for the academic year 2017-2018 irrespective of their length of time in care and detailed analysis for this group of pupils is included in the report.

The aim of the annual report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with additional information regarding the broad service that the Virtual School provides for all CLA pupils across an academic year.

This annual report has been presented to and approved by the Virtual School Governing Board as part of the meeting held on 27th September 2018.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 The Committee notes the non-validated DFE outcomes of the summer 2018 teacher assessment, tests and examinations and commends the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements.

1.2 That the Committee recognises that the cohorts of pupils are small and that this should be considered when comparing year on year data.

1.3 That the Committee recognises that the length of time in care can affect the progress and outcomes of the pupils.

1.4 That the Committee notes that prior attainment for pupils will impact on attainment in later years and CLA in care have made good progress.

1.5 The Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2017-2018 and uses this information to acknowledge, evaluate and if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all CLA.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The target for Thurrock Children Looked After is for them to be improving year on year and to meet the expected standards. The target is to close the attainment gap between CLA and non-CLA and to be above national outcomes for all CLA. This was achieved in 2016, 2017 and indicative data suggest that this has been at least maintained in 2018.

2.1.1 The year groups to be reported are outlined as follows:

Early Years – Foundation Stage [4-5 years old]
Year 1 (5-6 years old)
KS1 (6-7 years old)
KS2 (10-11 years old)
KS4 (15-16 years old)

2.1.2 The annual report should provide the Committee with detailed information regarding the broad scope of work of the Virtual School which provides members with a greater depth of knowledge in order to enable the Committee to challenge. The annual report is provided as a separate document.

3. Attainment for Children Looked After

3.1 **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS age 5)**

3.1.2 The Good Level of Development (GLD) measure is awarded at the end of EYFS when a pupil has achieved at least the expected level in the entire prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

3.1.3　The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 5 year period and this demonstrates the uniqueness and small size of each cohort. The size of each cohort shows that each child's result is worth a significant percentage amount.

3.1.4　The diagram below illustrates the performance of Thurrock CLA against national and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. The Department for Education does not provide national data comparisons for Children Looked After in the area of a Good Level of Development.

Good Level of Development 5 year trend
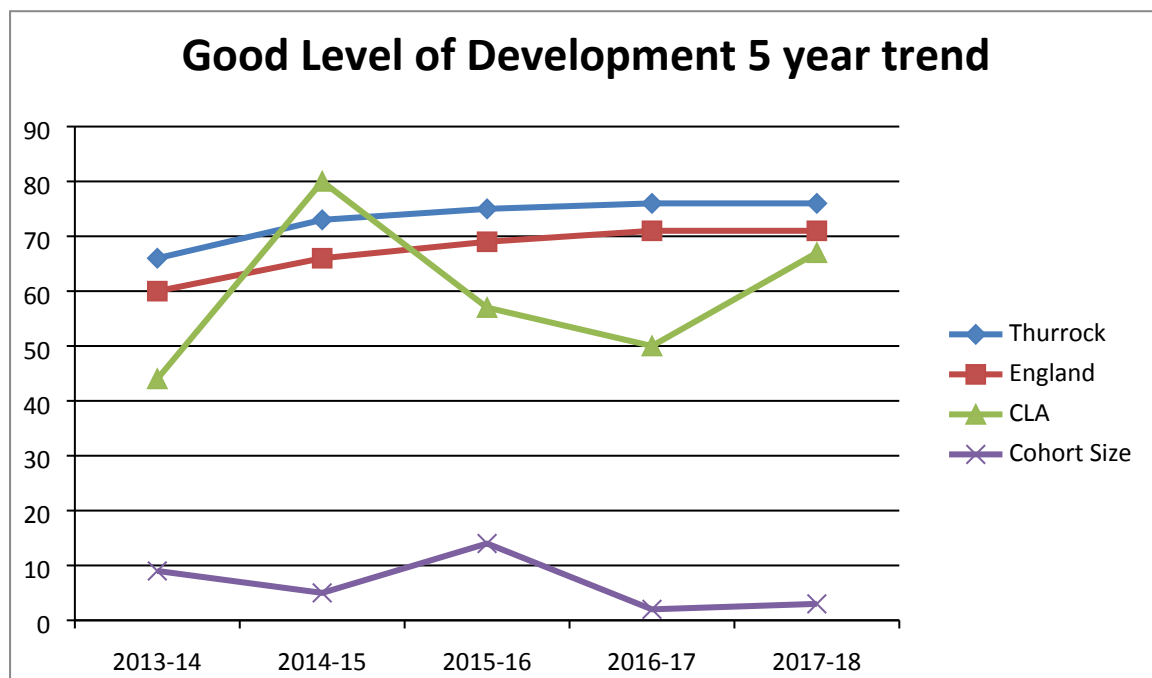
3.1.5　For the 2017/18 academic year the provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates an improving trend with attainment at 67%, a 17% increase on the previous year. However, this result is based on 3 pupils who were in care for a period of 1 year or more. These 3 pupils [30%] of the cohort became CLA prior to April 2017. 1 of these pupils had SEND.

3.1.6　There were a further 7 pupils [70% of the cohort] who were in care at some stage during their reception year but these were in care for less than their academic reception year. 5 pupils [50%] became looked after in the summer term 2018 and a further 2 pupils [20%] became CLA in the autumn term. Of the 7 pupils who were in care for less than the academic year, none of these pupils achieved GLD. As they have not been in care for a long period, these pupils have gaps in their prior learning. They were not attending early years provision prior to becoming looked after or they had missed a significant amount of their early years curriculum. This has caused developmental delay and their schools have been providing extra staffing and/or interventions to support their learning and help them to diminish the difference. They have made good progress since becoming looked after. The Personal Education Plan has been used to identify areas for development and levels of intervention and support to meet needs.

3.1.7 The academic profile of the 2017/18 cohort saw that 50% of the 10 pupil cohort was applicable for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] classification and they are receiving additional support in school. Pupils with SEND have specific learning needs and require extra support. Therefore, 50% of the cohort were working significantly below the national average according to development matters which assessed their learning at below their chronological age. In addition, these pupils had a larger gap to close in order to meet a Good Level of Development. They were provided with additional support in their schools through group and individual support interventions. It aided them in their progress and enabled them to catch up with their peers to make expected progress across the year, even if they did not meet the expected standards.

3.1.8 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data**

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils as they move into Year 1
- Monitor pupil progress through the use of the Pupil Premium Plus allocation and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided based upon needs
- Link with schools needing additional support
- Obtain on entry data for current 2018/19 Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.
- Create provision maps for each child with their school to detail rates of progress and impact of interventions
- Support the application of Education of Health Care Plans for those SEN support pupils who are not making rapid progress
- Provision of the Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to Nursery and Reception age pupils
- Provision of phonics learning pack for carers to use at home with Nursery and Reception pupils.

3.2 **Year 1 Phonics Score [Age 6]**

3.2.1 The year 1 phonics screening check is undertaken in June by all those pupils in year 2 who did not achieve age related expectation whilst in year 1.

3.2.2 The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has increased compared to the previous year. The data for 2015 was based upon a cohort of 7 pupils, 4 [57%] of whom passed. In 2016 there were 9 year 1 pupils in the cohort and 7 pupils [78%] passed the screen. In 2017 there were 8 pupils in the cohort and 5 pupils [63%] passed the screen. For 2018 there were 6 pupils in the cohort and 4 children passed [67%]

3.2.3 This is illustrated in the table and graph below:

Year	Total Cohort Size	Number who passed
2015	7	4 pupils – 57%
2016	9	7 pupils – 78%
2017	8	5 pupils – 63%
2018	6	4 pupils – 67%

Y1 Phonics Screening Check 2018

Legend: ■ Thurrock ■ National ■ Thurrock CLA

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Thurrock	76	76	83	84	84
National	74	77	81	81	83
Thurrock CLA	44	57	78	63	67
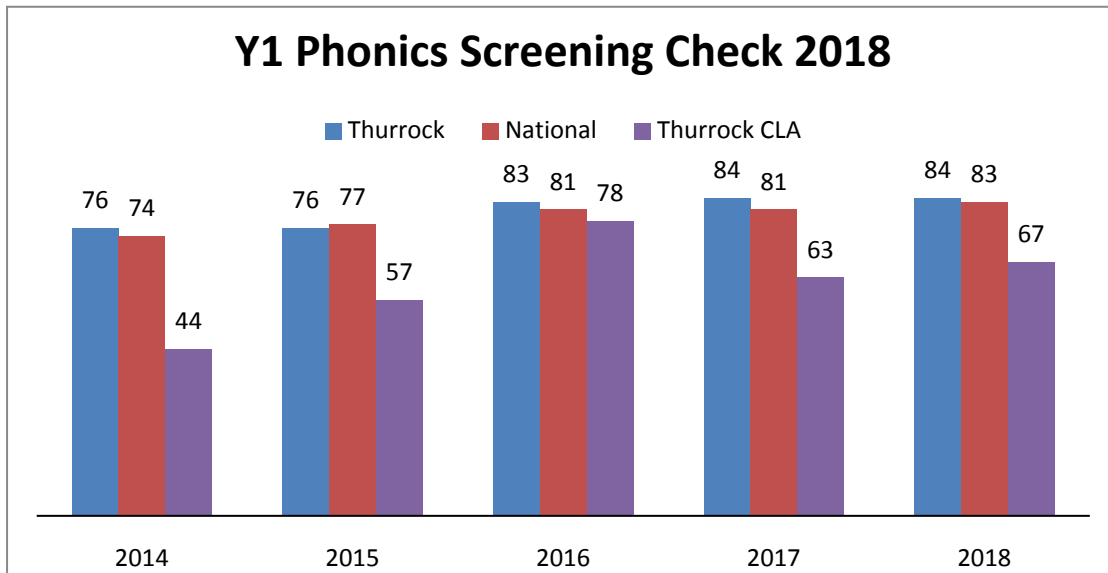
3.2.4 The data is fluctuating however, it is difficult to gauge trends when analysing such small cohort sizes. The different needs and circumstances, including length of time in care, needs to be considered. Only 2 children had been in care for a year or more. It is important to recognise the individual nature of every year 1 pupil and therefore, the Personal Education Plan process is crucial in this respect for identifying their educational needs. Foster carers have an important role to play in supporting the acquisition of phonics and early reading skills. In particular, regular sharing of books and completing phonic activities at home. The Virtual School distributed phonic home learning resource packs and guidance for our foster carers to use in order to help them with activities that promote phonological awareness and skills. The Virtual School also uses the Booktrust Literacy Letterbox resources which aim to promote reading in the home. All pupils from N1 to Year 9 receive these.

3.2.5 The planned action for the forthcoming academic year will include continuing to speak to schools to discuss provision to ensure that those who did not reach the expected standard are supported during Year 2.

3.2.6 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data**

- This year the Virtual School has already spoken with the schools of the pupils who have not passed and planned interventions are in place for Year 2.

- Continue this forthcoming academic year with the provision of Phonics home learning packs and foster carer training for how to support phonological awareness at home.
- Provision of reading and phonics activities to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 through the Literacy Booktrust initiative. [This is detailed in the annual report]

3.3 Key Stage 1 Results [Non-Validated Data] 2017 [Age 7]

3.3.1 From 2016, KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years.

3.3.2 In the graph below, it is possible to see how Children Looked After performed against National and Thurrock non-CLA. The table does not include National CLA 2018 performance data as this is not available at the time of this report.

% pupils assessed as working at or exceeding the Expected Standard KS1 2018

2018 Graph of Unvalidated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA

Table of Results of Thurrock CLA [6 pupils in cohort] 2018 – there were a further 2 pupils who were disapplied from SATs due to the severity of their SEND needs.

Subject	Number of Pupils	Percentage [2018]	National CLA [2017]
Reading	5	83%	52%
Writing	5	83%	41%
Maths	3	50%	48%
Combined	3	50%	Not provided

3.3.3 The above data is based upon a cohort size of 6 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison particularly when comparing against very large numbers for Thurrock and all Year 2 Nationally.
Analysis of this data indicates that Thurrock CLA have performed better than their non-looked after peers in the areas of reading and writing. The area for development is maths as this has declined to 50% which has affected the overall reading, writing and maths combined score. Specific CLA 3 year trend is provided in the graph below as a point of comparison. The increase in English scores is very good but a greater focus needs to be placed upon maths for improvement.

3.3.4 What is difficult to gauge is a comparison with those who are looked after nationally due to lack of data at the time of this report. However, when comparing performance to last year's national CLA data we are significantly above in all areas. In addition, a direct comparison of our in house data demonstrates that, the results for our KS1 pupils have improved this year in reading and writing. This is shown in the next graph.

2018 Provisional KS1 Assessed as working at or exceeding expected [All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]

	CLA 16	CLA 17	CLA 18
Reading	58	73	83
Writing	50	64	83
Maths	58	64	50
RWM	50	55	50
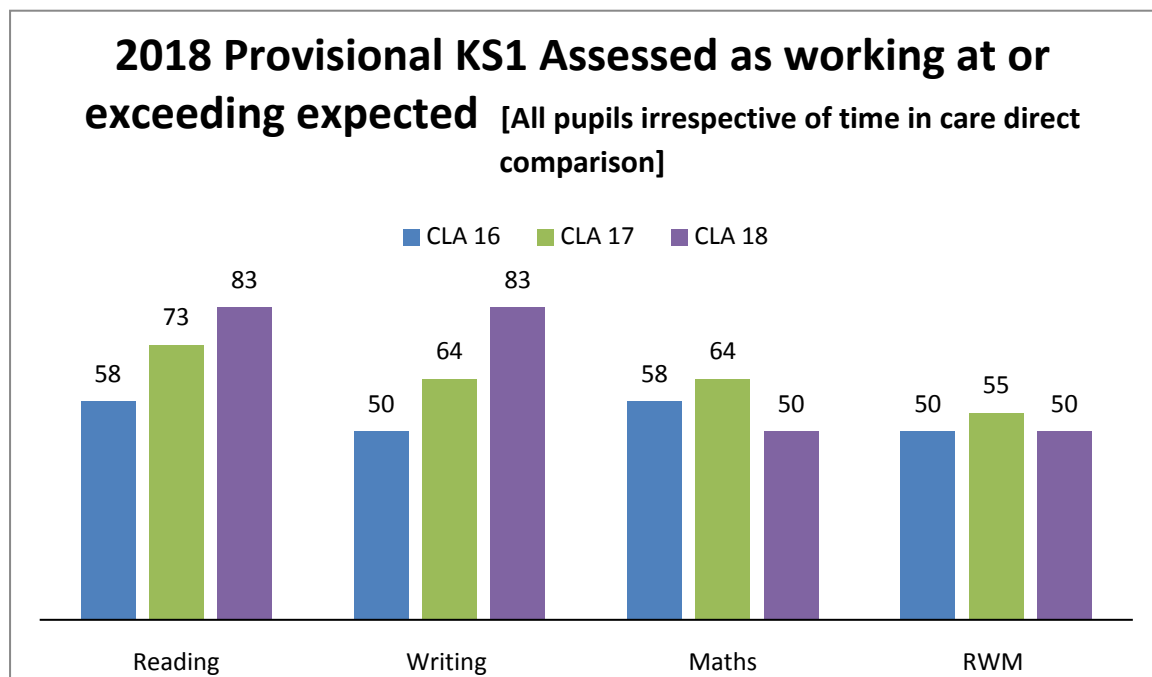
3.3.5 Contextual data for the cohort shows that all pupils who took SATs were in a Thurrock school. The 2 pupils who were disapplied due to SEND, attend provision out of borough.

3.3.6 All pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment. The 2 pupils who were disapplied have made expected progress based upon their starting points. They did not achieve a GLD at the end of their reception year due to developmental delay. These 2 pupils have been in care for 1 year or more. Their schools provide full time 1-1 intervention to support their specific needs. Both pupils have also had changes of care placement and changes of school during Key Stage 1.

3.3.7 In terms of prior attainment, only 3 pupils [50%] of the cohort obtained a good level of development at the end of their reception year two years prior to the Key Stage 1 assessments. This would suggest that the rate of attainment and progress for these pupils has remained consistent across key stage 1 for maths and accelerated for English. These pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 3 pupils [100%] out of the 3 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage, reached the expected standard at KS1 for English and 1 pupil [33%] achieved this in maths.

Of the cohort that took SATs this year, 3 pupils [50%] had SEND and were accessing SEN support provision in their schools. All of these children achieved the expected standard in English and only 1 did not meet this standard for maths. These pupils made accelerated progress based upon prior achievement and learning needs.

3.3.8 The length of time in care varied for this cohort. Length of time in care is shown in the table below:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 6]	Met expected standard R,W,M[% of those in this period]
2017	1 pupil [17%]	1 pupil [100%]
2016	2 pupils [33%]	
2015	2 pupils [33%]	1 pupil [50%]
2014	0 pupils	
2013	1 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [100%]

The data in the table above would suggest that the length of time in care has not impacted on this group in terms of attainment. Out of the 6 pupils who took SATs only 1 did not achieve the expected standard in reading or writing.

3.3.9 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data**

- Provision of home learning packs from Literacy Booktrust to support learning at home.
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.
- Provision of maths training to support foster carers in this area.
- For the two pupils disapplied from SATs due to SEND, continue to support their educational provision and track progress identifying what extra support is necessary through their EHCPs. Support their transition into Key Stage 2.
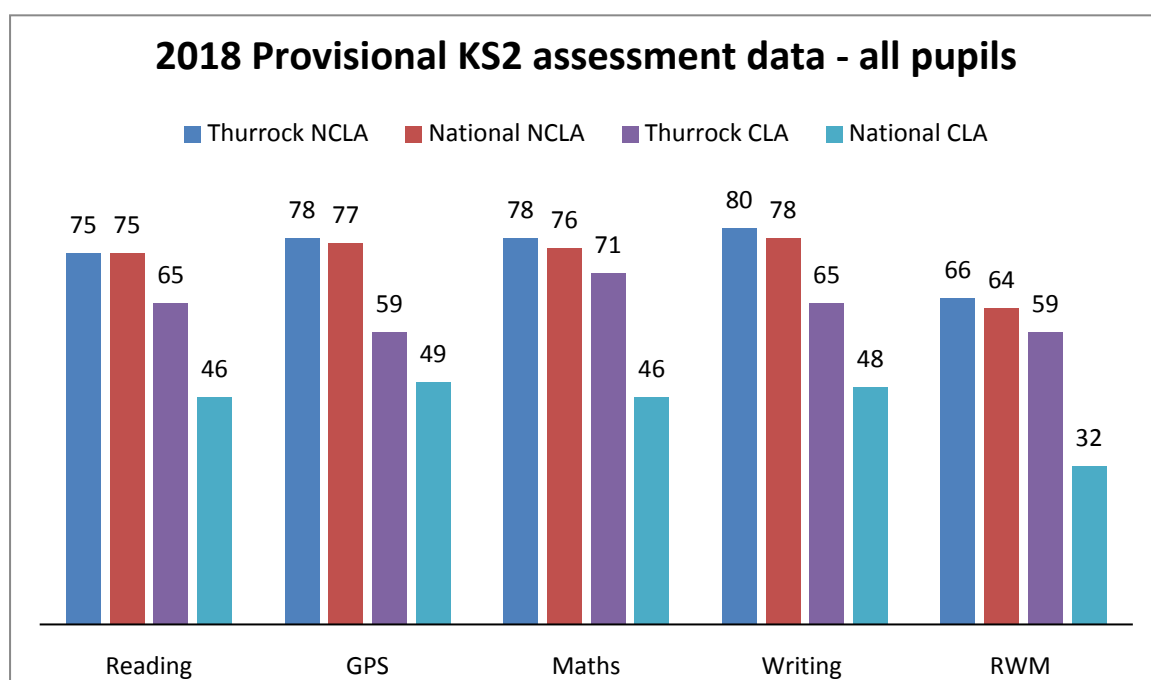
3.4 **Key Stage 2 Results [Non-Validated Data] 2017 [Age 11]**

3.4.1 In KS2 results are no longer reported as levels: each pupil receives their test results as a scaled score and teacher assessments based on the standards in the interim framework. Comparative data prior to 2016 is not available for this reason.

3.4.2 The cohort size for the 2018 Key Stage 2 SATS was 17 pupils. All pupils took their SATS this year and there were no pupils disapplied. The results that are reported will be based upon those on the Virtual School roll during this academic year. Specific analysis will be available later in the year from the DFE which details those in care for 12 months or more.

3.4.3 For Thurrock CLA the statistics for those achieving the expected standard were as follows: reading 65%, GPS 59%, maths 71% and writing was 65%. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock for 2018 results. National CLA statistical comparisons are based upon 2017 data as 2018 data is not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.

2018 Provisional KS2 assessment data - all pupils

■ Thurrock NCLA ■ National NCLA ■ Thurrock CLA ■ National CLA

	Reading	GPS	Maths	Writing	RWM
Thurrock NCLA	75	78	78	80	66
National NCLA	75	77	76	78	64
Thurrock CLA	65	59	71	65	59
National CLA	46	49	46	48	32

Graph of Non-Validated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA, 2018. The National CLA data is 2017

3.4.4 Children Looked After were below all Thurrock and National children in all areas. However, consideration should be given that this is comparing 17 pupils with a large number of children across the country and the borough. The gap is narrowing between our looked after and Thurrock non-looked after and it remains significantly above the national CLA outcomes in all areas. What is good news is the increase in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading from 25% in 2016 to 56% in 2017 and in 2018 it

is now 65%. There has been a significant increase in those pupils achieving a combined score in reading, writing and maths from 44% in 2017 to 59% in 2018. Notably there is only a 5% gap for reading, writing and maths combined between our children looked after and national non-looked after. The graph also illustrates the comparison against last year's CLA national data in the absence of current national CLA data.

3.4.5   The available data shows that there has been a closing of the gap against non-looked after children and that the differences are being diminished. The graph below illustrates the 3 year trend.

2018 Unvalidated KS2 assessment data
3 year trend [All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]

Legend: CLA 16 | CLA 17 | CLA 18 | National CLA 17

	Reading	GPS	Maths	Writing	RWM
CLA 16	25	42	58	58	25
CLA 17	56	44	62	50	44
CLA 18	65	59	71	65	59
National CLA 17	46	49	46	48	32
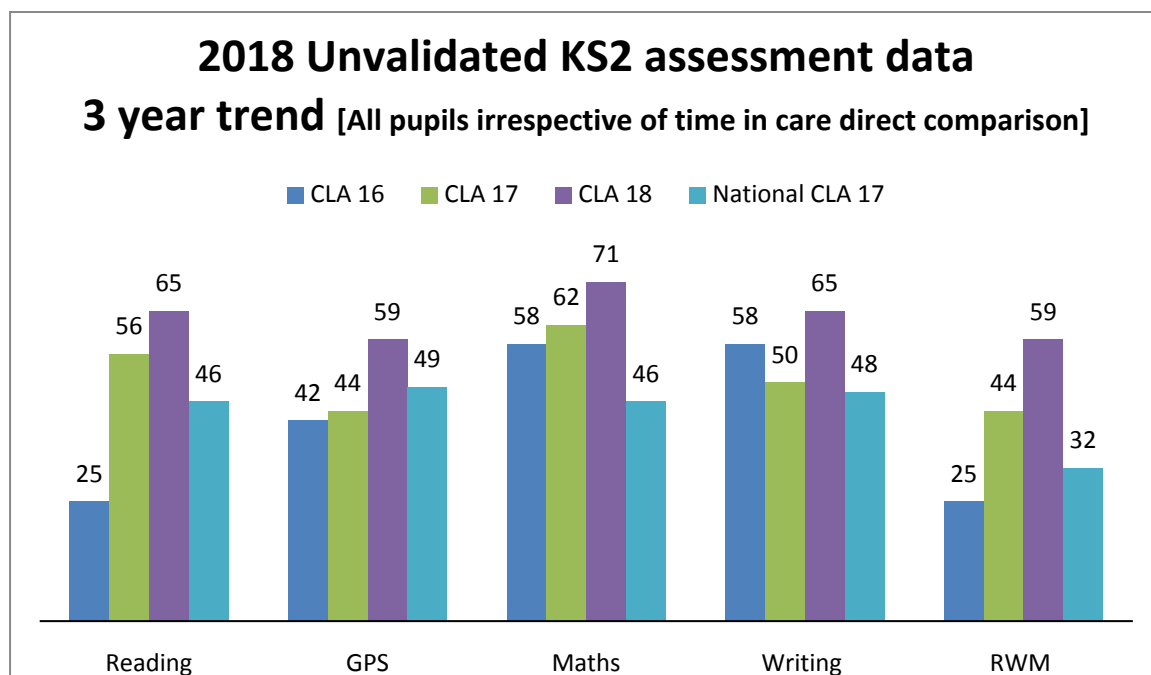
3.4.6   Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress.

3.4.7   The Year 6 cohort contained 7 pupils [41%] out of the 17 entered for SATS with SEND. As mentioned above, pupils with SEND have additional learning and/or emotional needs which affect their learning and this affected their attainment within the harder tests. However, these pupils made at least expected progress.

Progress scores will be available when the validated data is made available later in the year however, progress based upon available prior key stage 1 data is provided below.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how the Pupil Premium Plus Grant was supporting learning and progress.

3.4.8 Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was broadly in line the outcomes for KS2. For reading at KS1 65% achieved the standard, 59% achieved writing and 47% achieving the maths standard. Maths has been the biggest area for progress as now 71% achieved the standard in KS2 compared to their previous outcomes at KS1. Specific progress data for Key Stage 2 is made available later in the year from the Department for Education. However, early indications show that children have made at least expected progress.

3.4.9 The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2012 and 2018. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 17]	Met expected KS2 standard RWM [% of those in this period]	Met expected KS1 standard in RWM	Expected Progress [% of those in this period]
2018	3 pupils [18%]	100%	100%	100%
2017	5 pupils [29%]	4 pupils [80%]	2 pupils [40%]	100%
2016	0			
2015	1 pupil [9%]	0	0	100%
2014	2 pupils [12%]	0	0	100%
2013	4 pupils [24%]	2 pupils [50%]	2 pupils [50%]	100%
2012	2 pupils [12%]	1 pupil [50%]	1 pupil [50%]	100%

3.4.10 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data**

- Attendance at PEPs or Quality Assurance visits to the schools to check pupil progress
- Identification of those who did not achieve Expected and support transition into Year 7
- Provision of Literacy Book Trust resources for Primary phase pupils
- Support for those pupils in Year 7 who have SEND to ensure that the provision is matching need.

3.5 **Key Stage 4 GCSE Non-Validated Results [Year 11 – Age 15-16]**

3.5.1 The following section of this report includes the 2018 data for GCSE. Progress 8 and Attainment 8 is not being reported in the following section due

to the availability of data at the time of this report being compiled. The information for this report is currently Non-Validated data.

3.5.2 When adolescents come into care during this time it is usually unplanned and in an emergency situation. This makes it extremely difficult for placements and education to be found in parallel. In the vast majority of cases when a young person is without education, it is extremely difficult to provide them with a school place. Schools are reluctant take a Year 11 pupil into their school citing the reason that they are not able to match their GCSE modules. This is even more difficult for those who have no English language.

3.5.3 This graph does not illustrate the fact that 3 pupils [10%] became looked after in the academic year 2017/18, that is, from September 2017. This made it extremely difficult for the Virtual School and Social Care to have an impact on attainment for GCSEs in that short space of time. In total 7 pupils [23%] became looked after from January 2017 when in Year 10 or in Year 11.
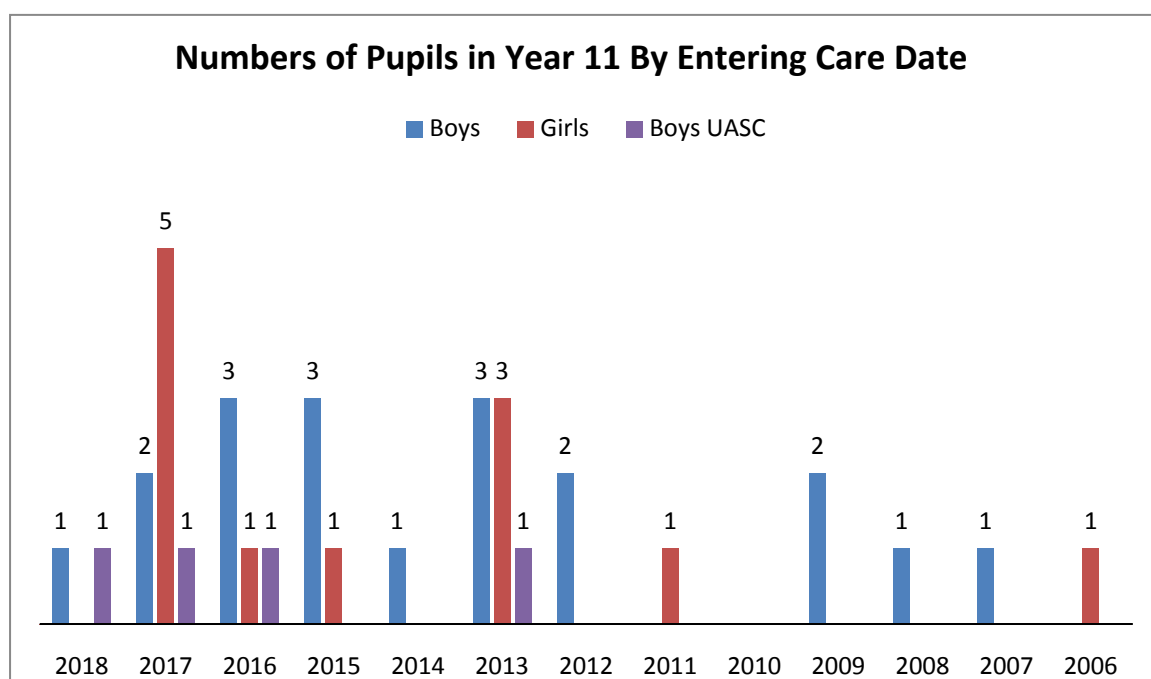
3.5.4 Key Headline Data [Cohort of 30]:

- There were a total of 30 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 17 pupils [56.6%] were eligible to take GCSEs in English and maths
- 8 pupils [27%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grace C [point 4] or above
- 8 pupils [27%] achieved English at grade 4 or above
- In Maths, 10 pupils [33%] achieved the expected standard or above.
- In English literature, 9 pupils [23%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In Maths, 11 pupils [27%] achieved the expected standard or above.

3.5.5 Key Headline Data [Cohort of 17 eligible for GCSE maths and English]:

- 8 pupils [47%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- For English, 8 pupils [47%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In Maths, 10 pupils [59%] achieved the expected standard or above.

3.5.6   The graphs below demonstrate the improvements that Thurrock CLA pupils have made compared to the previous 2016 and 2017 cohorts.

2018 Non-Validated KS4
[All pupils irrespective of time in care 30 Cohort]

■ CLA 16   ■ CLA 17   ■ CLA 18   ■ Thurrock NCLA

	EN&MA	English	Maths
CLA 16	9	13	14
CLA 17	20	23	27
CLA 18	27	27	33
Thurrock NCLA	62	72	67

2018 Non-Validated KS4
[Those eligible for GCSEs - 17 pupils]

■ CLA 16   ■ CLA 17   ■ CLA   ■ Thurrock NCLA

	EN&MA	English	Maths
CLA 16	26	37	27
CLA 17	35	39	48
CLA	47	47	59
Thurrock NCLA	62	72	67

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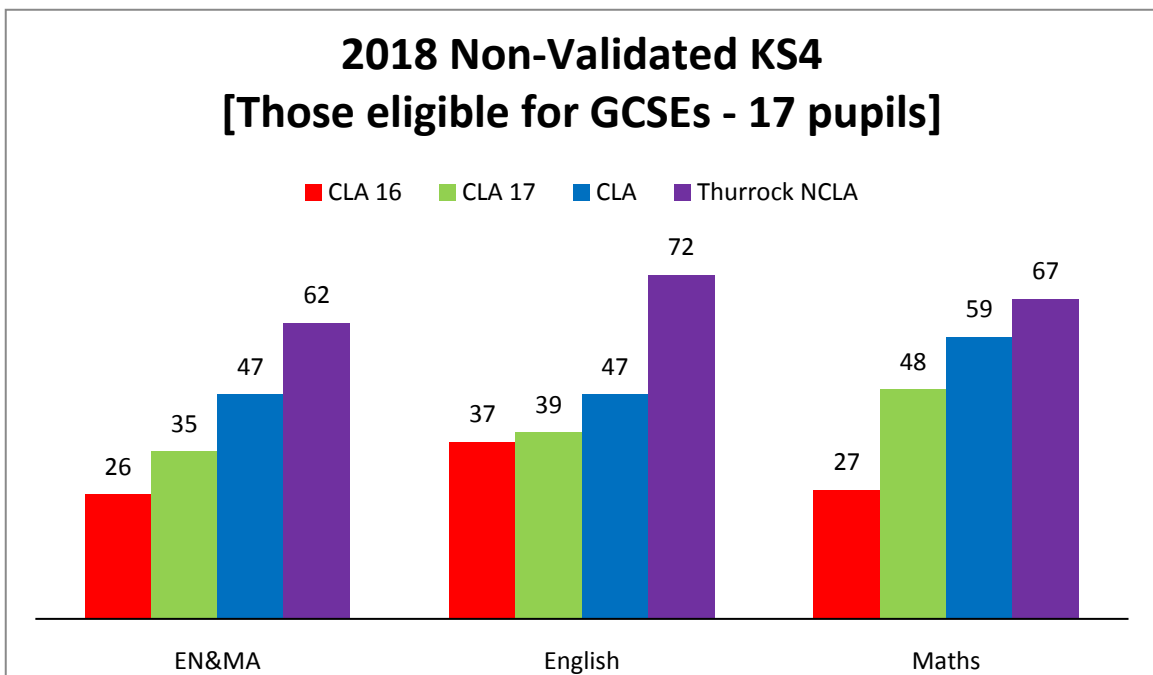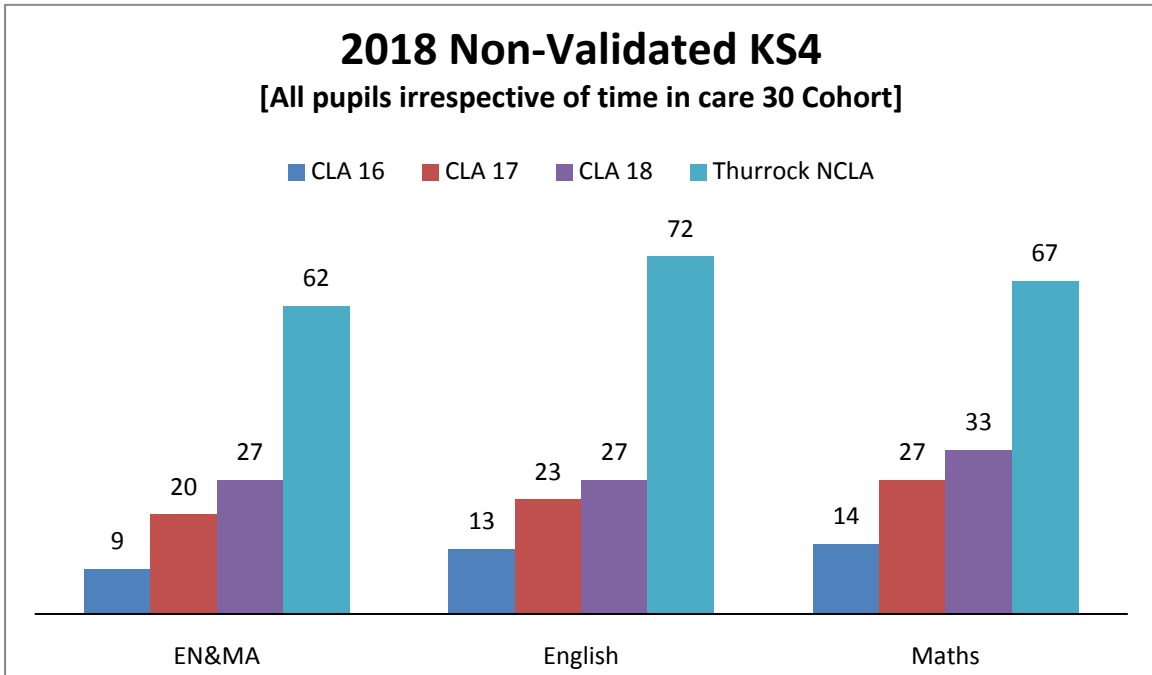
3.5.7   The above data demonstrates that there has been a marked improvement in this years' attainment for the whole cohort and for those eligible for taking GCSEs. The two graphs illustrate an improving picture for Thurrock CLA and outcomes are improving. The attainment gaps are gradually decreasing against non-looked after

3.5.8   There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 30 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes

3.5.9   20 pupils [67%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough. There were 12 [40%] students attending specialist provision. Specialist provision includes alternative provision, residential specialist schools, and SEND schools. These placements matched the needs of the pupils at that time, based upon their social care and educational needs. Where possible these students sat formal qualifications which included GCSE, BTEC, functional skills or Entry Level exams. However, due to the nature of their needs, not all were able to sit either English or maths GCSE combined. It is important to note that these students obtained positive outcomes for them based upon their needs and their academic level or educational ability at the time.

3.5.10 A total of 6 students [20%] did not sit formal qualifications. This is a reduction of 17% compared to the previous year's 37%. Each pupil has a specific reason for this. 1 pupil was pregnant and receiving home tuition after being in a secure residential, 1 pupil's SEND needs and attending special school, 1 pupil experienced numerous placement breakdowns and needed specialist SEN provision which was difficult to source at a late stage in the school term, this pupil received tuition.1 UASC pupil age assessed as over 18 years during year 11, 2 pupils attending alternative provision refused to engage with qualification process despite intensive support from the Virtual School, social care and the setting.

3.5.11 Additionally 10 pupils [33%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 7 pupils [23%] with EHCPs. These students did not achieve above grade 4 in their exams if they were eligible for GCSE. Those students who have SEND Support took qualifications matched to their individual needs with some able to sit GCSEs. Despite not reaching grade 4 or above, they did meet their target grades to enable them to enrol at colleges for post 16 courses

3.5.12 The length of time in care for this cohort has supported the educational progress of these pupils. Specific progress data will be made available from the DFE later in the year.

3.5.13 The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children UASC entering care in year 11 has decreased. In 15/16 42% of the cohort contained UASC pupils. In the academic year 16/17 10 pupils [25%] were UASC. This year 17/18 there were 3 pupils [10%].This year we had two pupils who took a full complement of GCSE subjects. One pupil achieved 9 and A* in maths. This

student is now following an A Level pathway with ambitions to attend Cambridge. The remaining UASC pupil was age assessed as over 18 and did not take qualifications. Where possible schools try to support UASC students to access a full range of subjects but the priority for these young people is to learn English and make the best possible pathways for post 16 learning.

3.5.14 Monitoring and tracking was extensive for our year 11 cohort of pupils. All pupils had a termly PEP attended by a member of the Virtual School. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress. In addition, 1-1 tuition was funded by the Virtual School through tuition services to key groups of pupils to support outcomes. This was in English and Maths.

3.5.15 Pupils attending alternative education providers took a range of entry level and vocational courses in order to prepare them for their post 16 pathways. These pupils were attending a variety of settings and completing different courses which they passed.

3.5.16 **Planned interventions as a result of 2018 data**

The Virtual School will continue with key actions that were begun last year and some additional measures are being taken.

We are continuing to:

- Attend Year 10 and Year 11 PEP meetings
- Ensure that schools provide robust Pupil Premium Plus information
- Link the quality of the PEP with release of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Provide additional home tuition from the summer term of Year 10
- Triangulate data predictions with further evidence such as work sampling
- Access exam stress counselling where necessary
- Provide support for Post 16 pathways
- Targeting tuition for particular students who are on the cusp of 4/5/C grades which will be additional to that received by the Pupil Premium Plus in school
- Complete home visits for particularly vulnerable students
- Provide intensive pastoral support alongside their school for high priority cases for those at risk of poor performance due to social and emotional difficulties.

In addition we are:

- Providing termly Designated Teacher Forums, social worker forums and termly foster carer forums to promote the educational outcomes of pupils by communicating key messages and training and to provide information advice and guidance for individual cases

- Supporting social care to minimise the change of school or college when there are placement changes

3.5.17 <u>Summary of Analysis for all Key Stages - Key Headlines of Actions from All Data Collections</u>

What are we doing as a result of this year's performance?

- Provision of Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to those aged between 3-13
- Provision of tuition for year 11 which started in the summer term of year 10
- Conducting termly school visits for key year groups of children and those who are not making expected progress
- Evidencing the work of the Virtual School through visit notes and case notes
- Development of an SEND strategy to further improve the outcomes for this group of children
- Continuing the interventions and key actions developed over the previous year to build upon good practice and successful outcomes.
- Introducing the use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires [SDQ} for every pupil from year R to 17 years old

4. Additional Information for the Committee

4.1 Detailed within the annual report is an overview of progress towards last academic year's school improvement priorities. The Virtual School Headteacher is particularly pleased with the improvement in reducing fixed term exclusion and the rates of attainment for our key phases. The completion of Personal Education Plans within timeframe and to a good quality has seen an improvement and all targets as set out by the Ofsted improvement plan have been met. Our aim for this year is for this target to continue to be met consistently across the academic year.

<u>Key Priorities for 2017/2018 were</u>

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- [Key Priority 1] Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA for all Key Stages

This key priority was achieved in all areas as evidenced in this report.

- [Key Priority 2] Improving the attendance of CLA to maximise educational outcomes

Attendance rates have not improved this academic year compared to the previous year but the number of non-authorised absence has reduced.

- [Key Priority 3] Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education

This has reduced on the previous year and is the lowest it has been for the last 5 years indicating that the strategies employed this year have worked well to reduce FTE.

- [Key Priority 4] Improve the quality of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations

PEP compliance has increased over the year to be at consistently over 95%. The quality of the PEP has improved to ensure that at least 90% of PEPs are graded at good with the remaining amount on the cusp of good. Robust tracking and additional quality assurance measures enacted by increased capacity of the virtual school team has enabled this.

- [Key Priority 5] Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.

Tracking data is in place for all pupils in all year groups. Poor progress is addressed using the escalation process for poor progress and Virtual School staff visit schools where pupils have poor progress and strategies to improve outcomes are agreed and actioned.

- [Key Priority 6] Embed the new Virtual School team structure to support the needs of all CLA

The Virtual School team has had a full complement of staff since January 2018. This increased capacity has enabled there to be a thorough quality assurance process for PEPs, greater tracking and improved challenge of pupil progress and this has had an impact on the overall outcomes for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort.

4.2 Key Priorities and targets for this academic year 2018-2019 have been set in response to data analysis and changes in statutory guidance. A detailed School Improvement Plan has been submitted to the Governing Board which specifies actions and timescales to improve outcomes for our CLA. These will be scrutinised by the Governing Board every term as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.

4.3 The support of post 16 pupils is a continued focal point for our team. Our target is to reduce the number of those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training [NEET] and increase the number of pupil achieving higher level qualifications and fulfilling aspirations to attend university.

5.   Reasons for Recommendation

5.1　It is requested that the Committee agree the recommendations and use the reporting mechanisms to support and challenge the work of the Virtual School on behalf of Children in Care.

6.　IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

6.1　This report relates to the council priority to create a great place for learning and opportunity.

7.　IMPLICATIONS

7.1　**Financial**

Implications verified by:　　**David May**

Management Accountant DSG and Schools

This report asks that the Committee notes the increasing demand of services for Children Looked After and the range of services provided as detailed in the annual report. The responsibilities of the Virtual School have increased to support those in pre-school and in post 16 as a result of the changes to the Statutory Guidance in July 2014. The growing demand for services, particularly for those who are post 16 and/or needing alternative provision for their specific needs has had an implication on spending and budgets.8.2

7.2　**Legal**

Implications verified by:　　**Lindsey Marks**

Deputy Head of Legal, Social Care and Education

This report asks that the Committee notes the outcomes, and offer its commendations, taking into account in so doing the various contextual influences described by the report author.　No decision is required.　The Council is required by s22(3A) of the Children Act 1989, as amended, to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.　The Children and Families Act 2014 amended s22 to require the Council to appoint an officer to ensure that the duty is properly discharged.　There is statutory guidance "Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children" that must be followed in meeting this duty.

7.3　**Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by:　　**Natalie Warren**

Strategic Lead, Community Development and Equalities

Supporting the improved educational attainment of Children Looked After targets Thurrock's most vulnerable young people. Data is collated to understand the profile of young people supported. Individual plans are informed by each young person's personal needs, including equality and diversity as well SEND and emotional health needs.

7.4   **Other implications (where significant)**

There are no implications as a result of this report.

8.   **CONCLUSION**

8.1   In summary, the above report details attainment outcomes for those in care during the academic year 2017-2018. All of our Children Looked After achievements should be recognised and celebrated and we as a Council will continue to support them in the next stages of their academic journey.

9.   **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):

- 'The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' ADCS
- 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children' DFE February 2018

10.   **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher Academic Year 2017/2018

Report Author:

Keeley Pullen BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After

Children's Services

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Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher

Academic Year 2017/2018

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1.   **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to detail the work of the Thurrock Virtual School and the academic outcomes for Thurrock Children Looked After for the academic year 2017-18.

The data contained in this report uses validated DFE data for 2017 outcomes, which was obtained in March 2018. Current attainment uses indicative data for the 2018 results. Validated data for 2018 will not become available until March 2019.

This report will be provided for the Governing Body to approve in September 2018 and will subsequently be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

2.   **The Role of the Thurrock Virtual School**

A separate document is available named the Roles and Responsibilities of the Virtual School. For the purpose of this report a brief outline will be provided. The Department for Education document: Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children [February 2018] details the roles and responsibilities of Virtual School Heads. In summary it specifies that:

Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. As corporate parents, local authorities should have equally high aspirations for the children they look after.

As leaders responsible for ensuring that the local authority discharges its duty to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children, Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services should ensure that:

- top priority is given to creating a culture of high educational aspirations and that the authority strives for accelerated progress and age-related attainment or better for looked-after children;

- looked-after children have access to a suitable range of high quality education placement options and that, when commissioning services for them, the authority takes account of the duty to promote their educational achievement;

- VSHs are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively;

- VSHs have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; and

- the authority's Children in Care Council (CiCC) regularly considers the educational experiences as reported by looked-after children and is able to respond effectively to any issues.

The VSH should be the lead responsible officer for ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the authority's looked-after children, including those placed out-of-authority.

VSHs should ensure the educational attainment and progress of children looked after by the local authority are monitored and evaluated as if those children attended a single school.

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The VSH should ensure that there are effective systems in place to:

- maintain an up-to-date roll of its looked-after children who are in school or college settings, and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress;
- ensure sufficient information about a child's mental health, SEN or disability is available to their education setting so that appropriate support can be provided;
- inform head teachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked-after by the VSH's local authority.
- ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP;
- ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes, and that all looked-after children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP;
- avoid drift or delay in providing suitable educational provision, including special educational provision, and unplanned termination of educational arrangements through proactive, multi-agency co-operation. Where this requires negotiation with other authorities this should be completed in a timely manner and with the best interest of the child as paramount;
- ensure the educational achievement of children looked after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare; and
- report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of looked-after children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

    [Pages 8 and 9 of Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children DFE 2018]

The Virtual School has overall responsibility for monitoring, supporting and providing interventions to ensure that Children Looked After [CLA] achieve the best possible outcomes. We achieve this by:

- Coordinating and quality assuring all Personal Education Plans [PEP]
- Monitoring and challenging schools to make effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus grant
- Tracking the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of CLA
- Using our tracking data to highlight individuals who are not on target to achieve their predicted outcomes and ensuring that the correct educational support is provided
- Ensuring that Special Educational Needs or Disability [SEND] needs are identified and supported appropriately
- Implementing a range of targeted interventions to raise academic standards
- Providing support and challenge to students, schools/colleges and carers
- Ensuring effective educational transition is in place between schools or specialist providers

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- Encouraging our young people to high aspirations about their future and remove barriers to further education
- Leading training for Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, Social Workers, school governors and providing bespoke training where appropriate to educational staff
- Celebrating the achievement of our pupils

Staffing of the Virtual School

Mrs Keeley Pullen – Virtual School Head Teacher

Mrs Grace Page – Virtual School Operations Co-Ordinator

Ms Rebecca Prince – Early Years and Primary Education Adviser

Ms Gemma Lilley – Secondary Education Adviser

Miss Lee-Anne Jenkins – Post 16 Education Adviser

Mrs Tina McGuinness – Administrator for the Virtual School for LAC

Additional Services [commissioned by Virtual School]

Looked After Call – to monitor attendance

TLC Live – Online Tuition

Fleet Tuition Service – for provision of 1-1 tuition

Equal Education – for provision of 1-1 tuition

Prospero – for provision of 1-1 tuition

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3.   **Mission Statement**

At the core, is the aspiration to ensure that children and young people are provided with every opportunity to learn effectively and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding so they are able to make informed choices about their futures from a range of options. This range will be at its widest when children succeed in their schools and are provided with the ambition, resilience and opportunity to optimise their learning within and beyond the school.

The Virtual School believes that every child and young person really does matter; every child and young person has a right to a childhood and has the right to a first class education that enhances their life chances as an adult. We believe that Children Looked After and Young People should be given every opportunity to aspire to be the best they can.

The Virtual School provides additional support, advice and guidance over and above the universal services that all Thurrock children and young people can access, alongside direct support to the children themselves. We believe there should be no educational gaps between attainment and potential and there should be a narrowing of the gap between attainment and national standards.

The main outcomes we want for our children and young people accord with the Thurrock Children and Young People's Plan and are that CLA:

- ❖ value themselves and grow up to be fair, tolerant and supportive, learning to respect others and enjoy the respect of others;
- ❖ are engaged in and are challenged by high quality education and enjoyable learning experiences;
- ❖ are able to show resilience and cope with change;
- ❖ are not disadvantaged by circumstance, poverty, disability or race;
- ❖ seek out and engage in opportunities for self-improvement, with the guidance and support of multiagency teams;
- ❖ achieve recognised and appropriate qualifications in line with their academic potential, so they access a wide range of training, employment and further education opportunities when they leave school, allowing them to take an active and full role in society as adults.

To achieve this, The Virtual School will work in partnership with schools, educational settings and social care to create a high quality experience for Children Looked After and Young People.

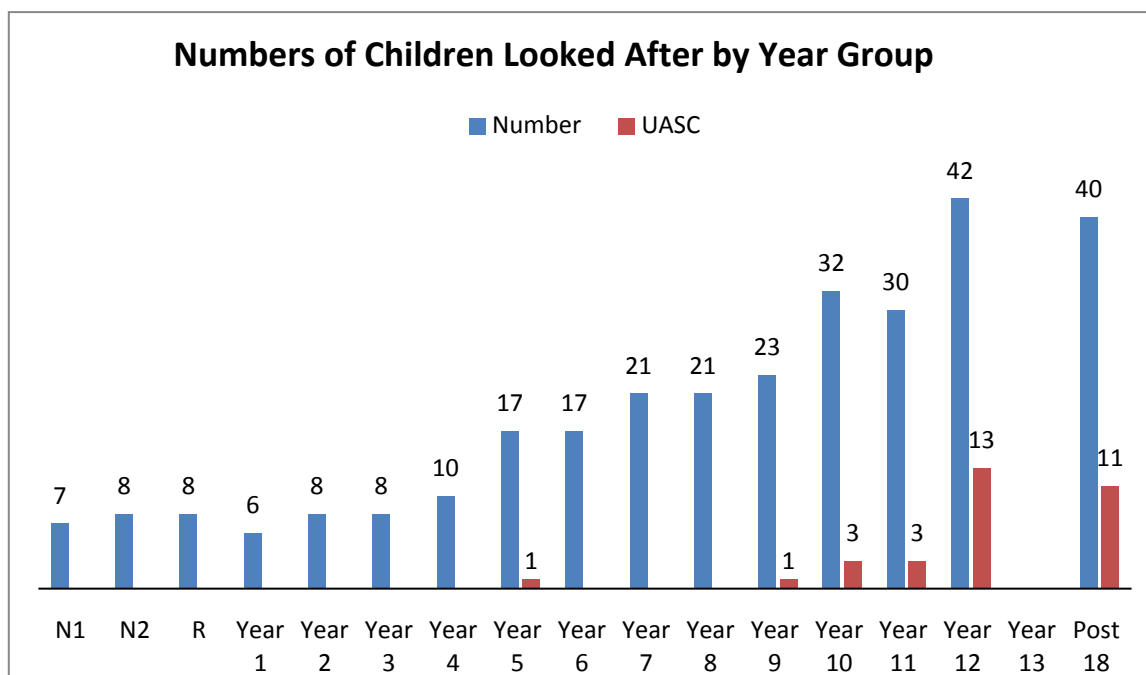4. **<u>Guidance Documents Developed by the Virtual School</u>**

- Thurrock Virtual School Pupil Premium Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Exclusion Guidance for Schools
- Thurrock Virtual School Exclusion Guidance for Colleges
- Thurrock Virtual School Attendance Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Anti-Bullying Policy
- PEP Protocol for Social Workers and Designated Teachers – Schools, Colleges and Early Years
- PEP Flowchart for Social Workers
- Quality Assurance Process Flowchart
- Quality Assurance Criteria for PEPs
- Completing Attainment on EPEP
- EPEP and Target Setting
- Roles and Functions of the Virtual School
- Phonics Resources Packs for Foster Carers

Additional Documents:

- School Improvement Plan
- Head Teacher Termly Reports

5. **<u>Corporate Parenting Committee</u>**

The Virtual School Head Teacher is accountable to the Corporate Parenting Committee for the educational achievement of Children Looked After [CLA]. The Committee comprises 8 Members and exists to ensure that all elements of the Council work together to ensure that the children looked after by Thurrock get the best possible service that can be offered. The Committee promotes the role of all Councillors as corporate parents and provides the robust vehicle for their mandate to be exercised on behalf of young people. There are also four Co-Opted Members of the Committee who each possess a range of knowledge and experience in order to advise Members and add to the scrutiny process. These include representatives from the Children in Care Council (CICC), Open Door and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Thurrock One Team Foster Care Association. This committee meets termly and managers from different sectors of social care and education present reports and recommendations as part of a cycle. This process acts as a measure of accountability and supports the development of strategy and policy for meeting the statutory requirements for children in care.

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6. **Current Contextual Data**

Number of Looked After Children by Year Group [Updated July 2018]

Numbers of Children Looked After by Year Group

	N1	N2	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Post 18
Number	7	8	8	6	8	8	10	17	17	21	21	23	32	30	42		40
UASC								1				1	3	3	13		11

Number of Pupils in attendance at Alternative Provision/SEND School/Specialist Provision by Year Group [Updated July 2018]

N1	N2	R	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YR 10	YR 11	YR 12	YR 13
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	5	4	4	6	6	2	3

Number of CLA with SEND by Year Group [Updated July 2018]

N1	N2	R	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YR 10	YR 11	YR 12	YR 13
0	0	2	2	4	1	6	7	7	11	7	12	13	11	17	13

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School Placement of CLA by OFSTED classification July 2018

School Placement by OFSTED Classification

Number of Pupils

	N1	N2	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
NA	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	15	14
I	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	2	15	16
RI	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	7	10	10	18	22
G	6	7	7	4	8	7	7	17	17	15	15	18	24	26	40	25
O	7	8	8	6	8	8	10	17	17	21	21	23	32	30	42	40

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7. **Attendance**

% Attendance of CLA

■ % Attendance ■ % Authorised ■ % Unauthorised

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
% Attendance	93.9	95.29	86.6	94.6	94.1
% Authorised	4.89	3.3	11.49	2.9	4
% Unauthorised	1.21	1.61	4.91	2.5	1.8

Robust tracking of attendance is vital in ensuring that good attendance is prioritised. Attendance rates have slightly decreased compared to the previous year. Unauthorised attendance has decreased. For the forthcoming academic year, we are striving for above 95% and will continue to do so. It has been requested by governors that we show the comparisons for key stages and this will be reported for the forthcoming academic year.

There were 29 pupils who had persistent absence below 90%. Of these students some had been in hospital for extended periods of time due to sickness and operations. There have been school refusers who have required additional support. A pastoral support programme is always put in place for students who are refusing to attend school and the Virtual School works closely with foster carers, social workers and their schools to support the child/young person.

Attendance is monitored daily through the use of Looked After Call. The Virtual School Headteacher monitors the attendance of priority CLA as identified by the Virtual School on a weekly basis. Attendance monitoring for all pupils is conducted by the Virtual School Headteacher on a fortnightly basis to identify any concerns.

The Virtual School receives daily updates from Looked After Call for any pupil who is absent or excluded. If a pupil is absent and this is unauthorised the social worker and foster carer is contacted by Looked After Call to find out the reason why s/he is not at school. This system compliments the safeguarding measures that are in place for individual schools and prevents delay when a student may be missing.

The Virtual School is supportive of the DFE Absence protocols and only supports holiday or absence in term time in extenuating circumstances and supports the

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school of the particular pupil if they are given an unauthorised absence if planned absence is taken without the school's consent.

An attendance policy is in place and this is reviewed by the Head Teacher annually and put forward to the Governing Body to approve.
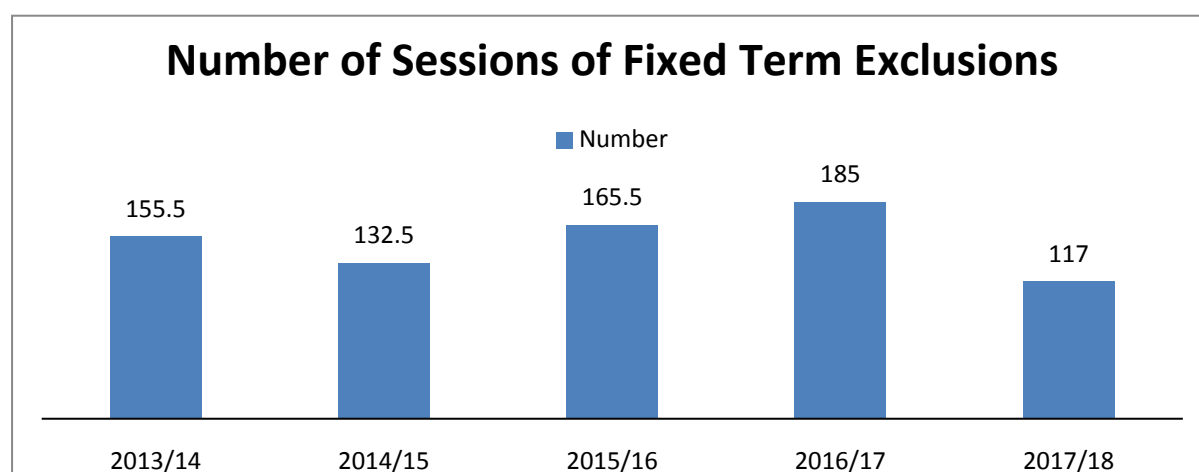
8.   **Exclusions**

There have been no permanent exclusions of CLA for over a five year period. Wherever possible we encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions [FTE]. This academic year we have managed to reduce the number of FTE to its lowest in five years. This is a result of our proactive approach to working with schools. A review of needs and support is always made whenever a CLA pupil is excluded. The Virtual School work with schools to reduce fixed term exclusions, however, some of our pupils are participating in activities that would warrant the need for exclusion. We have managed to negotiate alternatives to exclusion off site through measures such as:

- Internal support
- Action plan meetings when excluded
- Alternative provision

One recent success has been reducing a ten day exclusion to a three day exclusion and we are currently negotiating a managed move to a more positive education environment.

Policy guidance has been written by the VSHT to support schools and colleges to not exclude pupils and the National Association of Virtual School Heads is currently negotiating with OFSTED to see how they can support CLA pupils with exclusions. This is a national issue with CLA pupils being excluded.

Number of Sessions of Fixed Term Exclusions

■ Number

2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
155.5	132.5	165.5	185	117

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9.   **Children Missing Education [CME]**

The Local Authority carefully monitors any child missing education for those CLA placed in and out of borough. The Virtual School produces weekly data for any child who is missing education due to lack of a school place or through extended absence. This data is shared and discussed in Directors Management Team monthly. Monthly CME data is available and provided to Governors on a termly basis. The Virtual School takes action which is individualised to meet the needs of the pupils and where necessary, works with the Admissions Team, Inclusion Manager and SEN Service teams in Thurrock and other boroughs to secure school places or alternative provision. For pupils who are without an educational placement, a Personal Education Plan [PEP] meeting is held to plan actions for how to secure education provision. Wherever possible the Virtual School provides tuition through commissioned tuition services whilst a student is between educational placements. In the academic year 2017/18 the Virtual School has commissioned an online tuition service to support those who are missing education to work in conjunction with a personal tutor if appropriate. This is a company which currently serves a variety of Virtual Schools in other authorities. This is a far speedier response for students who are missing education as this tuition can be set up within 48 hours.

Number of CME Per Month School Age

Month	Number
Sep-17	4
Oct-17	5
Nov-17	9
Dec-17	5
Jan-18	3
Feb-18	3
Mar-18	2
Apr-18	1
May-18	1
Jun-18	3
Jul-18	1
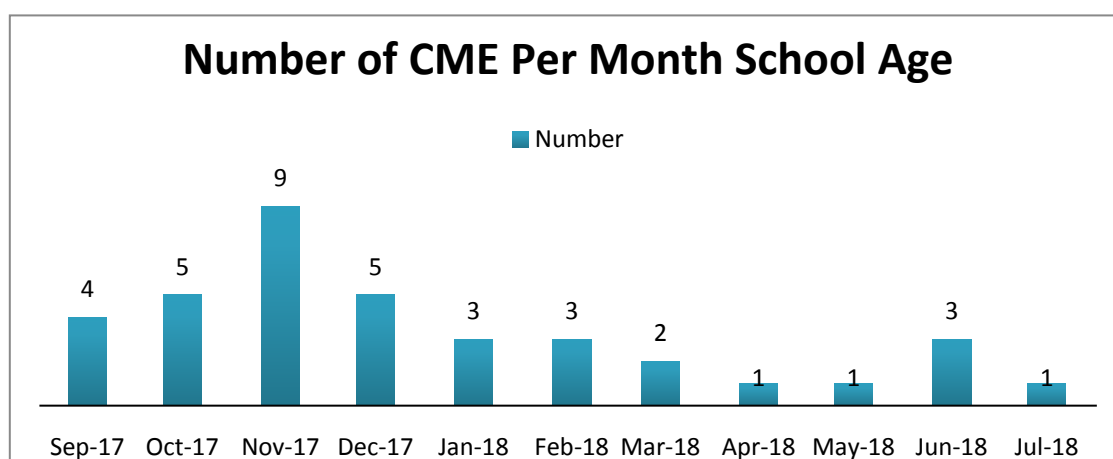
The table highlights a fluctuation of figures and this very much depends on the profile of pupils coming into care and whether they have education prior to becoming looked after or if they have to move away from their school due to placement availability in borough. The figures are relatively low, however, the virtual school staff work very hard to access education as soon as they are made aware that there is a child missing education. It is more difficult to access education if a child/young person has Special Educational Needs because due to the consultation process.

10.   **Child Sexual Exploitation [CSE]**

All Virtual School Staff have attended Child Sexual Exploitation Training in the past academic year. Particular attention is paid to Children Missing Education through lack of school place or poor attendance as this is a potential factor for making a pupil vulnerable and higher risk of CSE. The Virtual School works very closely with all

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services to minimise the risk of child sexual exploitation for our children/young people in and out of borough. The authority holds a fortnightly meeting where a range of partners from health, youth offending services, WIZE Up, the police, mental health, education welfare and education attend. In this meeting all vulnerable pupils are discussed and actions are directed to provide the necessary support. The Virtual School attend Strategy Meetings when required to discuss pupils at risk of CSE and when they are missing from placement. Separate data is available through the social care liquid logic children's system which details every child/young person's CSE risk assessment and actions taken to support them. This data is held and reported separately from this document. The Virtual School is not responsible for collating this data but can access it if required.

11.   **Attainment Data of CLA**

Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] 2018

Indicative data

The Good Level of Development (GLD) measure is awarded at the end of EYFS when a pupil has achieved at least the expected level in the entire prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

To reach the percentage of children making a good level of development, each child is assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points are awarded accordingly in a range between 17 to 51. If a child meets every Early Learning Goal, she/he will receive at least 34 points.

The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 5 year period and this demonstrates the uniqueness and small size of each cohort. The size of each cohort shows that each child's result is worth a significant percentage amount.

The diagram below illustrates the performance of Thurrock CLA against national and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. The Department for Education does not provide national data comparisons for Children Looked After in the area of a Good Level of Development.

Good Level of Development 5 year trend
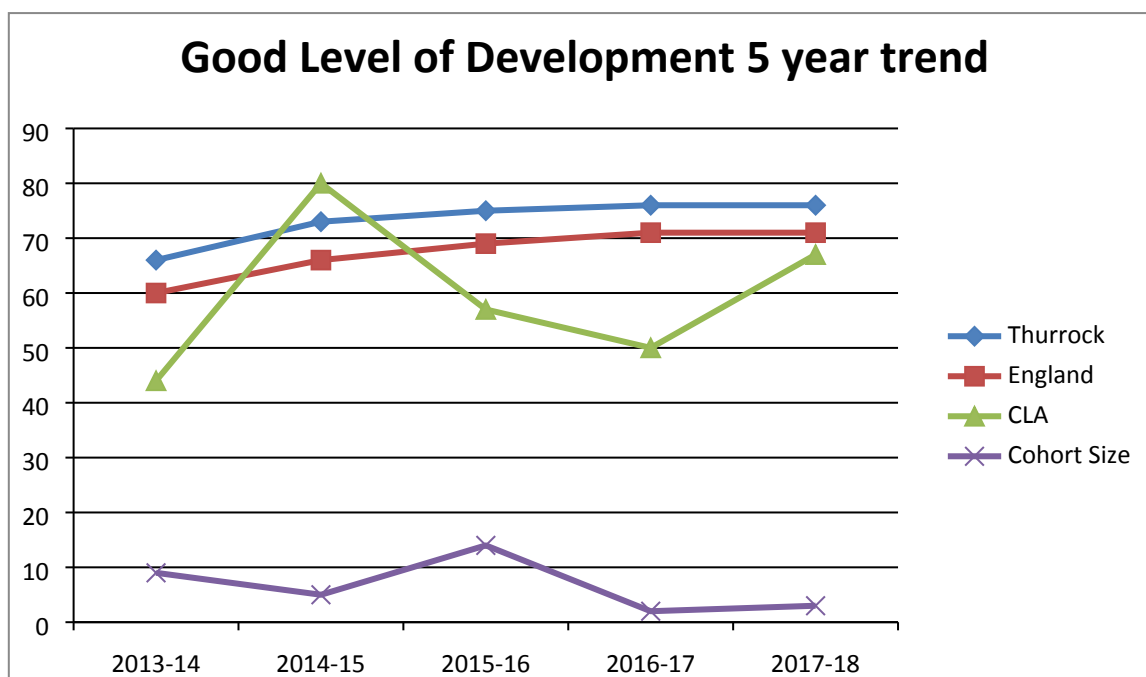
For the 2017/18 academic year the provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates an improving trend of 67%, a 17% increase on the previous year. However, this result is based on 3 pupils who were in care for a period of 1 year or more. These 3 pupils [30%] of the cohort became CLA prior to April 2017. 1 of these pupils had SEND.

There were a further 7 pupils [70% of the cohort] who were in care at some stage during their reception year but these were in care for less than their academic reception year. 5 pupils [50%] became looked after in the summer term 2018 and a further 2 pupils [20%] became CLA in the autumn term. Of the 7 pupils who were in care for less than the academic year, none of these pupils achieved GLD. As they have not been in care for a long period, these pupils have gaps in their prior learning. This has caused developmental delay and their schools have been providing extra staffing and or interventions to support their learning and help them to diminish the difference. They have made good progress since becoming looked after. The Personal Education Plan has been used to identify areas for development and levels of intervention and support to meet needs.

The academic profile of the 2017/18 cohort saw that 50% of the 10 pupil cohort was applicable for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] classification and they are receiving additional support in school. Pupils with SEND have specific learning needs and require extra support. Therefore, 50% of the cohort were working significantly below the national average according to development matters which assessed their learning at below their chronological age. In addition, these pupils had a larger gap to close in order to meet a Good Level of Development. They were provided with additional support in their schools through group and individual support interventions. It aided them in their progress and enabled them to catch up with their peers to make expected progress across the year, even if they did not meet the expected standards.

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In terms of monitoring of progress this was through the Personal Education Plans [PEPs] for each pupil. These took place every term that the child was looked after and detailed the learning and development for every pupil and specific targets were set to enable them to make progress. Pupils made progress across the year by achieving their targets and by the Virtual School holding schools to account for the quality of teaching and support they provided and by the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding. All pupils in this cohort made at least expected progress across the academic year from on entry starting points.

Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils as they move into Year 1
- Monitor pupil progress through the use of the Pupil Premium Plus allocation and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided based upon needs
- Link with schools needing additional support
- Obtain on entry data for current 2018/19 Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.
- Create provision maps for each child with their school to detail rates of progress and impact of interventions
- Support the application of Education of Health Care Plans for those SEN support pupils who are not making rapid progress
- Provision of the Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to Nursery and Reception age pupils
- Provision of phonics learning pack for carers to use at home with Nursery and Reception pupils.

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Year 1 Phonics Score Results 2018

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The year 1 phonics screening check is undertaken in June by all year 1 pupils and those pupils in year 2 who did not achieve age related expectations whilst in year 1.

The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has increased compared to the previous year. The cohort sizes are small year on year.

This is illustrated in the table below

Year	Total Cohort Size	Number who passed
2015	7	4 pupils – 57%
2016	9	7 pupils – 78%
2017	8	5 pupils – 63%
2018	6	4 pupils – 67%

The data is fluctuating however, it is difficult to gauge trends when analysing such small cohort sizes. The different needs and circumstances, including length of time in care, needs to be considered. Only 2 children had been in care for a year or more. It is important to recognise the individual nature of every year 1 pupil and therefore, the

Personal Education Plan process is crucial in this respect for identifying their educational needs. Foster carers have an important role to play in supporting the acquisition of phonics and early reading skills. In particular, regular sharing of books and completing phonic activities at home.

The graph below compares CLA attainment against Thurrock and National non looked after. There is no national data for CLA for comparison as this is not reported.
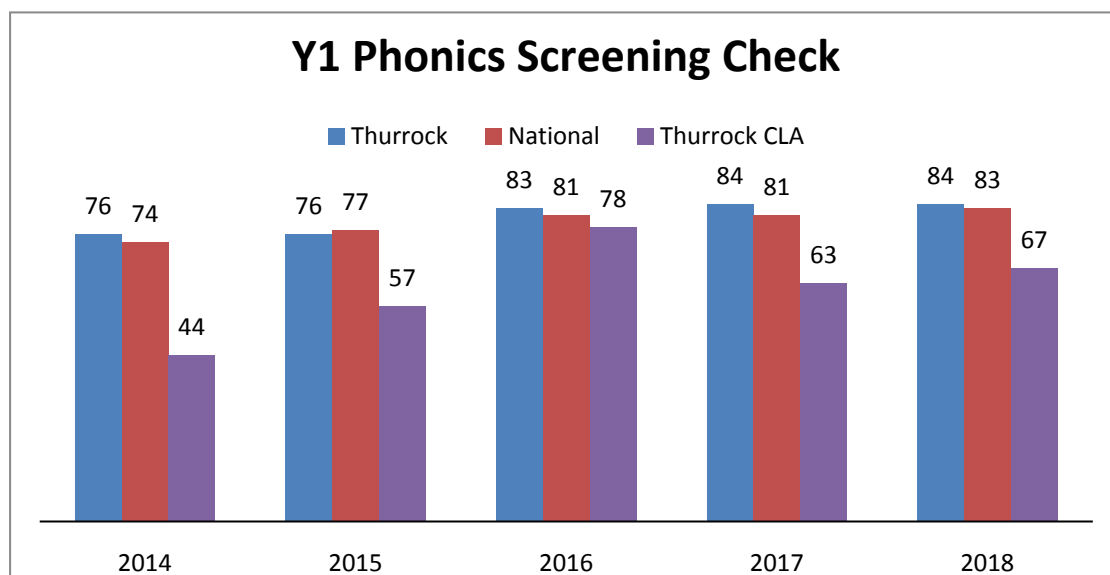
Y1 Phonics Screening Check

Legend: Thurrock | National | Thurrock CLA

Year	Thurrock	National	Thurrock CLA
2014	76	74	44
2015	76	77	57
2016	83	81	78
2017	84	81	63
2018	84	83	67

Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data

- This year the Virtual School has already spoken with the schools of the pupils who have not passed and planned interventions are in place for Year 2.
- Continue this forthcoming academic year with the provision of Phonics home learning packs and foster carer training for how to support phonological awareness at home.
- Provision of reading and phonics activities to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 through the Literacy Booktrust initiative. [This is detailed further on in the report]

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Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2017

Validated data

DFE % pupils assessed as working at or exceeding the Expected Standard KS1 2017
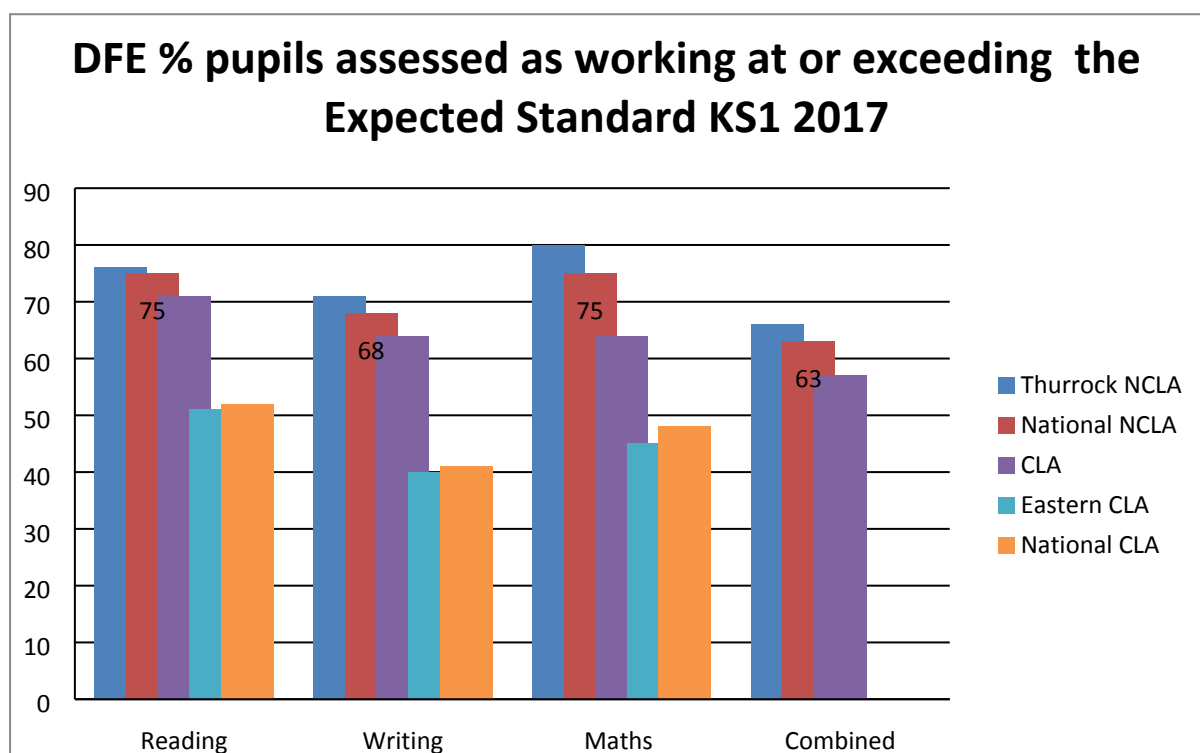
Graph of Validated 2017 Data Comparing Thurrock CLA to National and Eastern

The previous annual report demonstrated indicative data for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort for 2017 irrespective of their length of time in care. The data shown in the table above is validated data which the Department for Education use for those pupils in care for more than a year.
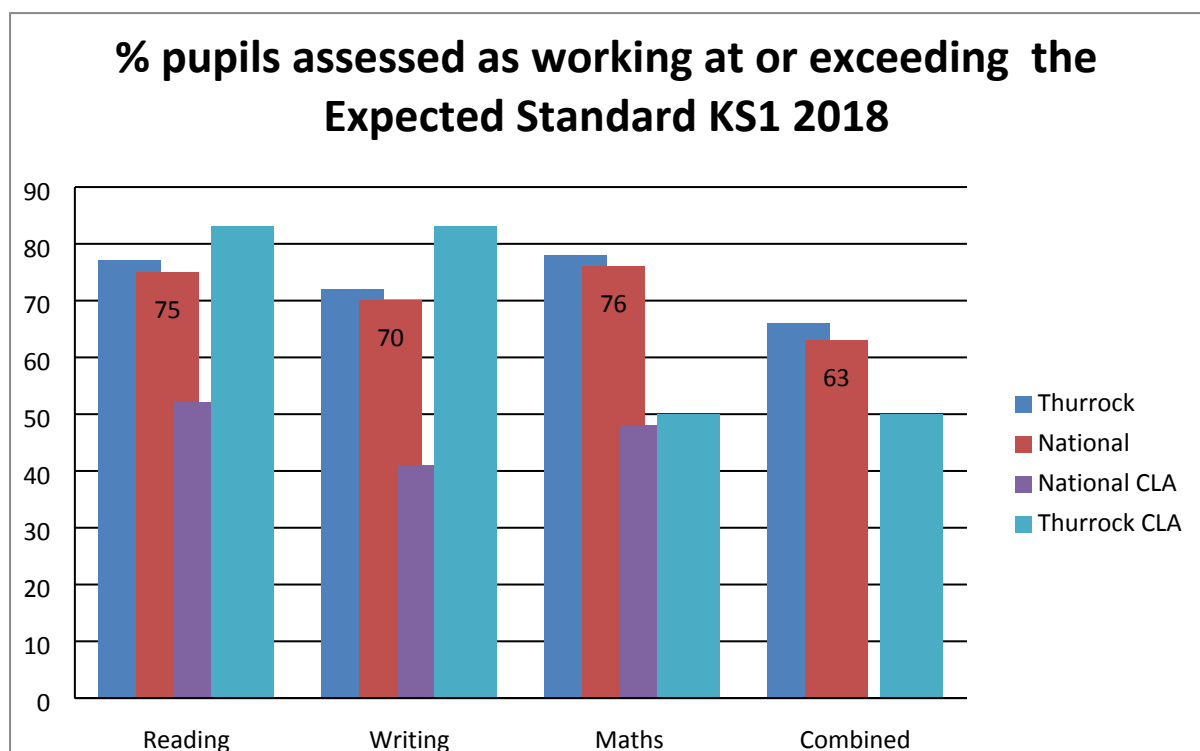
When comparing the performance of Thurrock Children Looked after against the performance of all CLA nationally and those within the Eastern Region boroughs Thurrock CLA are exceeding in reading, writing and maths.

Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2018

Non-Validated data

From 2016, KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years.

The reported data is based upon all pupils in the Virtual School year 2 cohort during this academic year. Specific analysis of those in care for 12 months or more will be provided by the DFE later in the year.

In the graph below, it is possible to see how Thurrock CLA performed against National and Thurrock non-looked after. The graph includes National CLA performance data for 2017 as a point of comparison as 2018 is not available at the time of this report.

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% pupils assessed as working at or exceeding the Expected Standard KS1 2018

Legend:
- Thurrock
- National
- National CLA
- Thurrock CLA

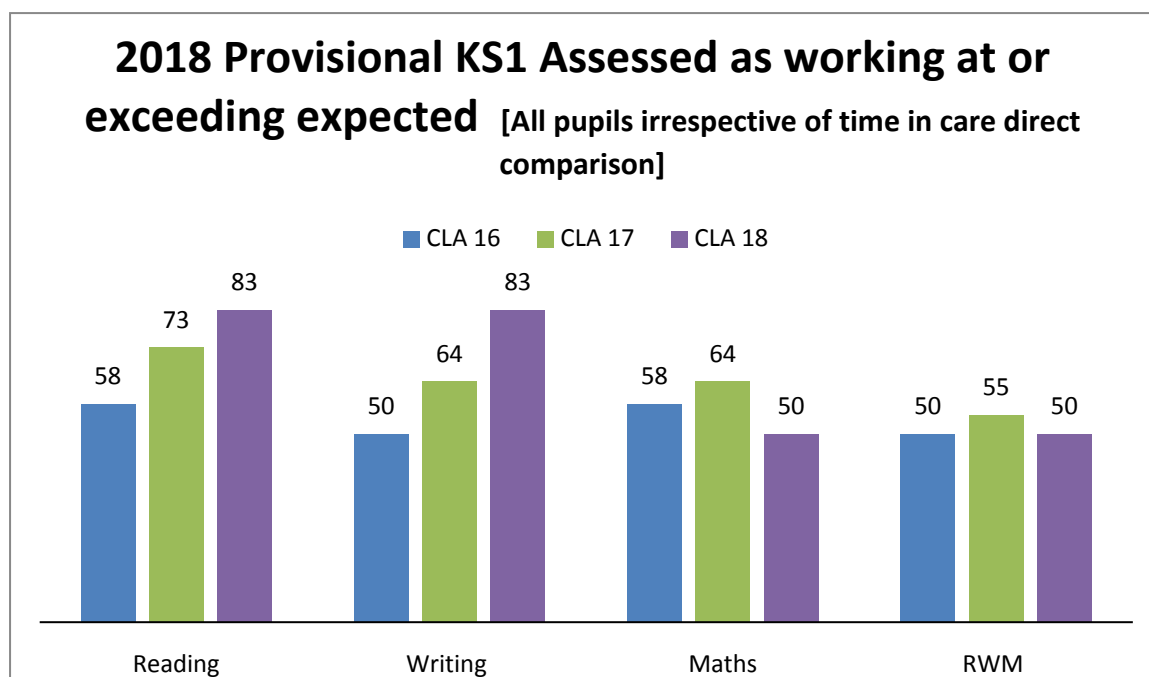Labelled values (National): Reading 75, Writing 70, Maths 76, Combined 63

Graph of Unvalidated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA

Table of Results of Thurrock CLA [6 pupils in cohort] 2018 – there were a further 2 pupils who were disapplied from SATs due to the severity of their SEND needs.

Subject	Number of Pupils	Percentage [2018]	National CLA [2017]
Reading	5	83%	52%
Writing	5	83%	41%
Maths	3	50%	48%
Combined	3	50%	Not provided

The above data is based upon a cohort size of 6 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison particularly when comparing against very large numbers for Thurrock and all Year 2 Nationally.

Analysis of this data indicates that Thurrock CLA have performed better than their non-looked after peers in the areas of reading and writing. The area for development is maths as this has declined to 50% which has affected the overall reading, writing and maths combined score. Specific CLA 3 year trend is provided in the graph below as a point of comparison. The increase in English scores is very good but a greater focus needs to be placed upon maths for improvement.

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2018 Provisional KS1 Assessed as working at or exceeding expected [All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]

■ CLA 16   ■ CLA 17   ■ CLA 18

Reading: 58, 73, 83
Writing: 50, 64, 83
Maths: 58, 64, 50
RWM: 50, 55, 50

Contextual data for the cohort shows that all pupils who took SATs were in a Thurrock school. The 2 pupils who were disapplied due to SEND attend provision out of borough.

The Virtual School maintains the same tracking and monitoring systems for all pupils irrespective of placement. The Personal Education Plan procedures are the same and the expectations and accountability measures are the same. All pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment. The 2 pupils who were disapplied have made expected progress based upon their starting points. They did not achieve a GLD at the end of their reception year due to developmental delay. These 2 pupils have been in care for 1 year or more. Their schools provide full time 1-1 intervention to support their specific needs. Both pupils have also had changes of care placement and changes of school during Key Stage 1.

In terms of prior attainment, only 3 pupils [50%] of the cohort obtained a good level of development at the end of their reception year two years prior to the Key Stage 1 assessments. This would suggest that the rate of attainment and progress for these pupils has remained consistent across key stage 1 for maths and accelerated for English. These pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 3 pupils [100%] out of the 3 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage, reached the expected standard at KS1 for English and 1 pupil [33%] achieved this in maths.

Of the cohort that took SATs this year, 3 pupils [50%] had SEND and were accessing SEN support provision in their schools. All of these children achieved the expected standard in English and only 1 did not meet this standard for maths. These pupils made accelerated progress based upon prior achievement and learning needs.

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The length of time in care varied for this cohort. Length of time in care is shown in the table below:

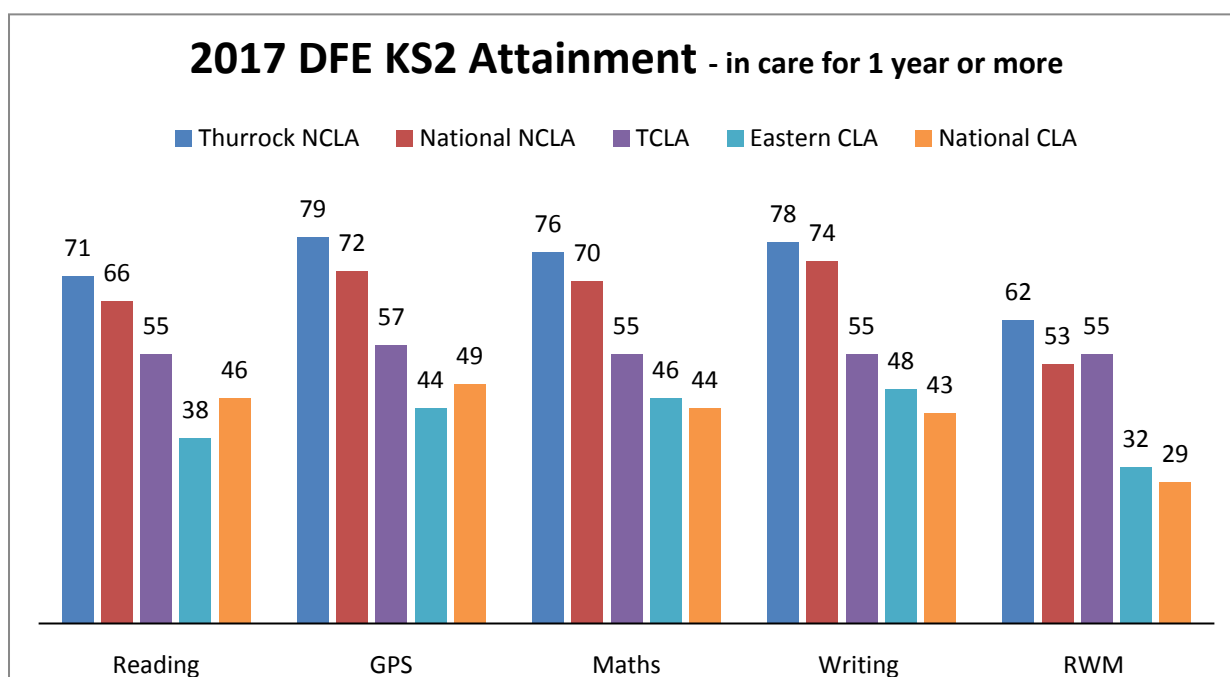| Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 6]	Met expected standard R,W,M[% of those in this period]
2017	1 pupil [17%]	1 pupil [100%]
2016	2 pupils [33%]	
2015	2 pupils [33%]	1 pupil [50%]
2014	0 pupils	
2013	1 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [100%]

The data in the table above would suggest that the length of time in care has not impacted on this group in terms of attainment. Out of the 6 pupils who took SATs only 1 did not achieve the expected standard in reading or writing.

Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data

- Provision of home learning packs from Literacy Booktrust to support learning at home.
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.
- Provision of maths training to support foster carers in this area.
- For the two pupils disapplied from SATs due to SEND, continue to support their educational provision and track progress identifying what extra support is necessary through their EHCPs. Support their transition into Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 2 SATS 2017
Validated Data

2017 DFE KS2 Attainment - in care for 1 year or more

Legend: ■ Thurrock NCLA ■ National NCLA ■ TCLA ■ Eastern CLA ■ National CLA

	Thurrock NCLA	National NCLA	TCLA	Eastern CLA	National CLA
Reading	71	66	55	38	46
GPS	79	72	57	44	49
Maths	76	70	55	46	44
Writing	78	74	55	48	43
RWM	62	53	55	32	29

The previous annual report provided details of the Non-Validated data for the KS2 2017 SATS. The above data is validated data which displays the performance of Thurrock CLA who have been in care for 1 year or more compared to those nationally and in the Eastern Region.

Thurrock Children Looked After performed better than national and Eastern Region CLA. Performance was significant in the areas of reading and combined. The DFE Statistical First Release shows that Thurrock CLA progress from KS1 and KS2 was exceptional and significantly above National and Regional CLA rates of progress.
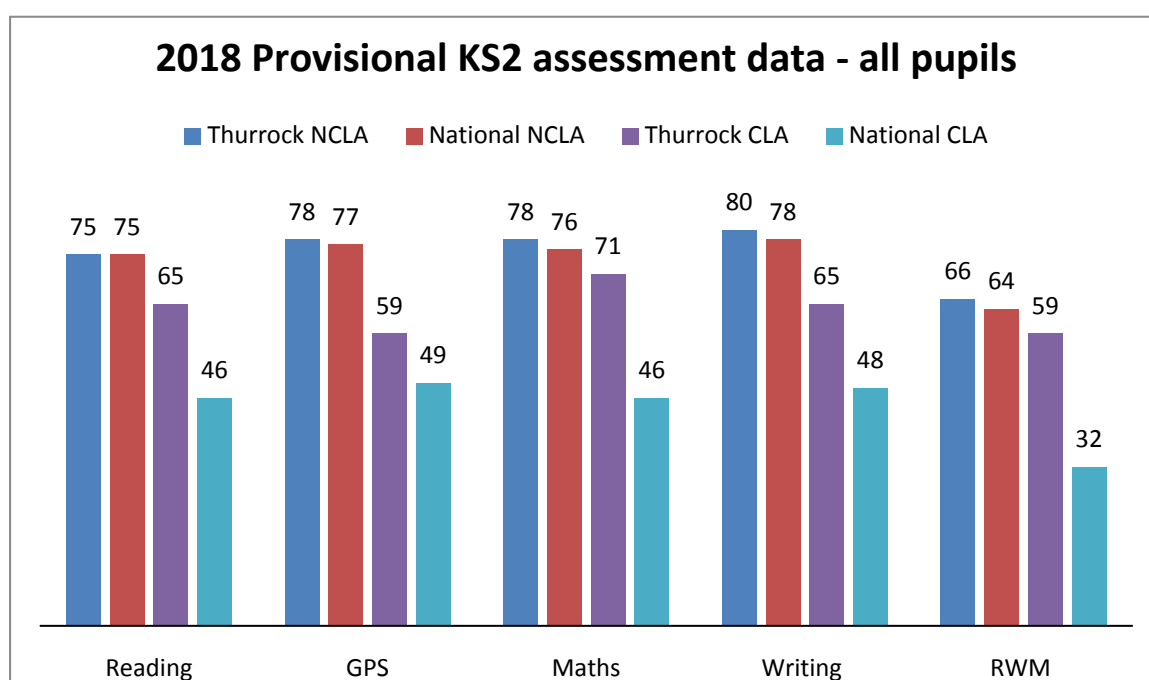
This data includes the 6 pupils who were disapplied from SATs due to their provision.

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Key Stage 2 SATS 2018
Non-Validated Data

From 2016, the new more challenging national curriculum, which was introduced in 2014, was assessed by new tests and interim frameworks for teacher assessment. KS2 results are no longer reported as levels: each pupil receives their test results as a scaled score and teacher assessments based on the standards in the interim framework.

The cohort size for the 2018 Key Stage 2 SATS was 17 pupils. All pupils took their SATS this year and there were no pupils disapplied. The results that are reported will be based upon those on the Virtual School roll during this academic year. Specific analysis will be available later in the year from the DFE which details those in care for 12 months or more.

For Thurrock CLA the statistics for those achieving the expected standard were as follows: reading 65%, GPS 59%, maths 71% and writing was 65%. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock for 2018 results. National CLA statistical comparisons are based upon 2017 data as 2018 data is not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.

2018 Provisional KS2 assessment data - all pupils

■ Thurrock NCLA ■ National NCLA ■ Thurrock CLA ■ National CLA

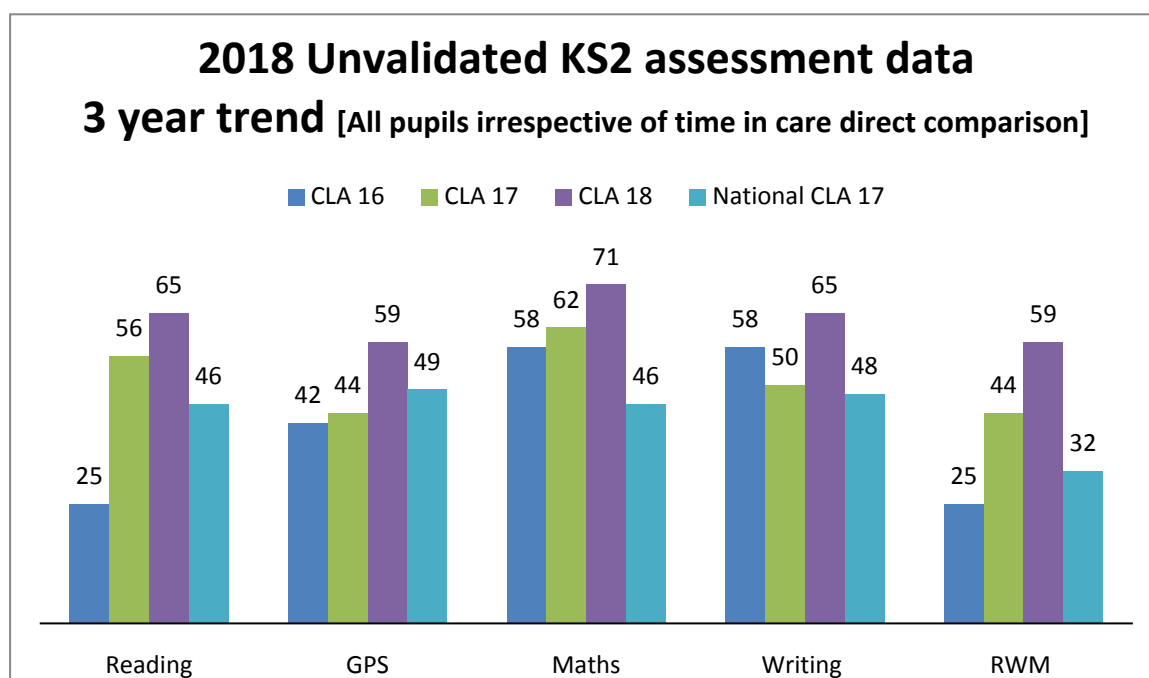|	Reading	GPS	Maths	Writing	RWM
Thurrock NCLA	75	78	78	80	66
National NCLA	75	77	76	78	64
Thurrock CLA	65	59	71	65	59
National CLA	46	49	46	48	32

Graph of Indicative Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA [2018]

Children Looked After were below all Thurrock and National children in all areas. However, consideration should be given that this is comparing 17 pupils with a large number of children across the country and the borough.

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What is good news is the increase in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading from 25% in 2016 to 56% in 2017 and in 2018 it is now 65%. There has been a significant increase in those pupils achieving a combined score in reading, writing and maths from 44% in 2017 to 59% in 2018. The graph also illustrates the comparison against last year's CLA national data in the absence of current national CLA data.

The available data shows that there has been a closing of the gap against non-looked after children and that the differences are being diminished.

2018 Unvalidated KS2 assessment data
3 year trend [All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]

Legend: ■ CLA 16 ■ CLA 17 ■ CLA 18 ■ National CLA 17

Subject	CLA 16	CLA 17	CLA 18	National CLA 17
Reading	25	56	65	46
GPS	42	44	59	49
Maths	58	62	71	46
Writing	58	50	65	48
RWM	25	44	59	32

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress.

The Year 6 cohort contained 7 pupils [41%] out of the 17 entered for SATS with SEND. As mentioned above, pupils with SEND have additional learning and/or emotional needs which affect their learning and this affected their attainment within the harder tests. However, these pupils made at least expected progress.

Progress scores will be available when the validated data is made available in March 2019 however, progress based upon available data is provided below.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how the Pupil Premium Plus Grant was supporting learning and progress.

Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was broadly in line the outcomes for KS2. For reading at KS1 65% achieved the standard, 59% achieved writing and 47% achieving the maths standard. Maths has been the biggest area for progress as now 71% achieved the standard in KS2 compared to their previous outcomes at KS1.

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Specific progress data for Key Stage 2 is made available later in the year from the Department for Education. However, early indications show that children have made at least expected progress.

The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2012 and 2018. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 17]	Met expected KS2 standard RWM [% of those in this period]	Met expected KS1 standard in RWM	Expected Progress [% of those in this period]
2018	3 pupils [18%]	100%	100%	100%
2017	5 pupils [29%]	4 pupils [80%]	2 pupils [40%]	100%
2016	0			
2015	1 pupil [9%]	0	0	100%
2014	2 pupils [12%]	0	0	100%
2013	4 pupils [24%]	2 pupils [50%]	2 pupils [50%]	100%
2012	2 pupils [12%]	1 pupil [50%]	1 pupil [50%]	100%

Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data

- Attendance at PEPs or Quality Assurance visits to the schools to check pupil progress
- Identification of those who did not achieve Expected and support transition into Year 7
- Provision of Literacy Book Trust resources for Primary phase pupils
- Support for those pupils in Year 7 who have SEND to ensure that the provision is matching need.

Overall Standards for Primary Age Children Looked After

For every year group in this phase the attainment of Thurrock Children Looked After has improved from the previous year. We are successfully diminishing the difference against non-looked after children and we have demonstrated that our pupils are performing above the standards of those in the eastern region and national children looked after.

Those factors which have affected these improvements can be attributed to the following reasons:
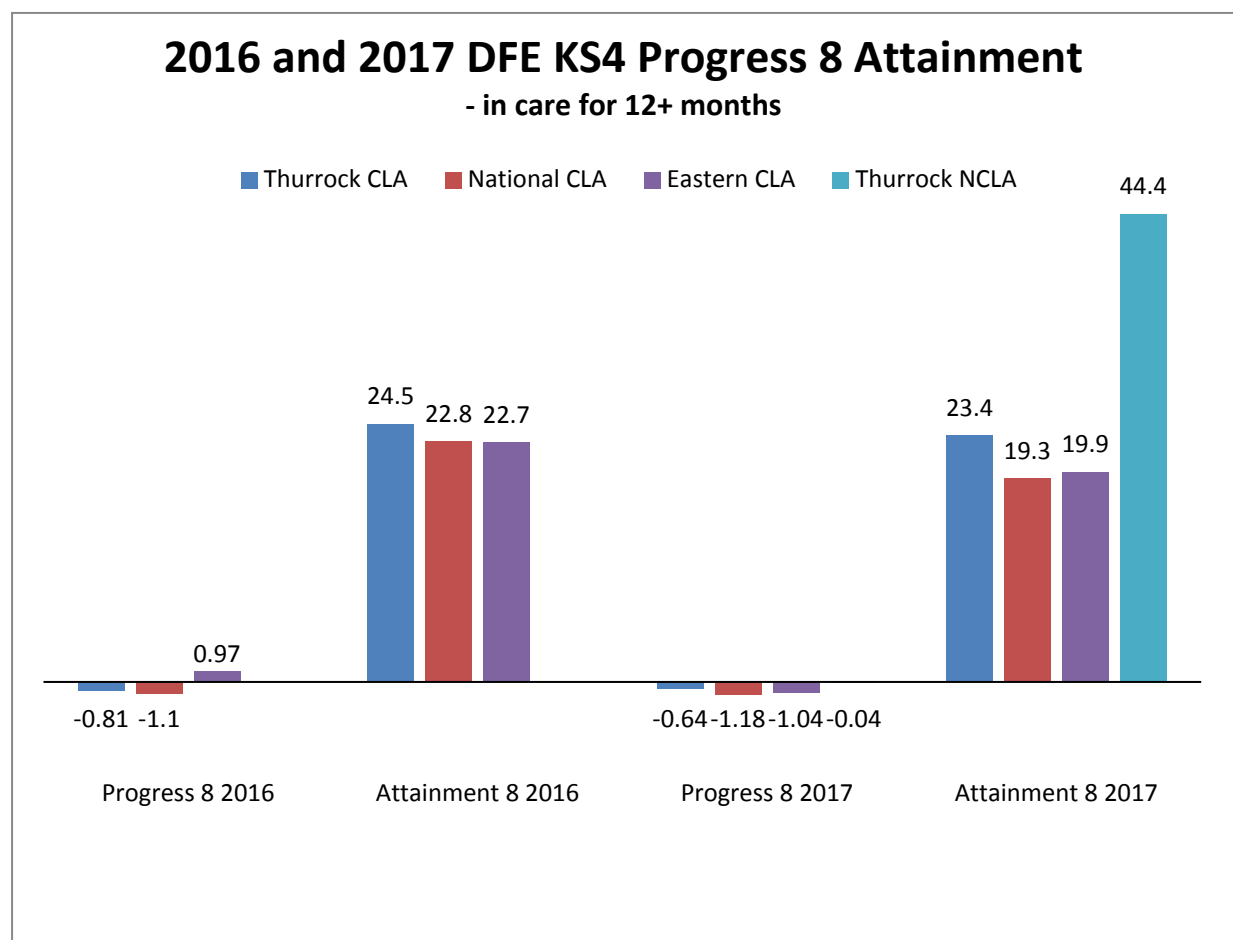
- Increased staffing of the Virtual School team has enabled Thurrock to closely monitor the progress of our pupils through visits to the schools and attendance at key meetings such as Personal Education Plan meetings, Educational Health Care Plan reviews
- Improved monitoring has increased the level of challenge and accountability for schools to demonstrate that they are providing appropriate provision and improving outcomes
- Positive relationships with schools have been established which has facilitated an open and honest dialogue which focuses on the needs of the pupil
- All staff members within the Virtual School team have a clear focus on what actions need to be taken to improve outcomes and they share the aspirations for improvement and strategies to support our pupils with schools, carers and social workers
- There is a correlation between the stability of school placement and care placement for our pupils where those who have greater consistency will do better than those who have frequent changes. Wherever possible the Virtual School try to ensure that there is stability of school placement and where pupils have needed to change, the team has supported this transition.

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Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2017

Validated results - DFE Statistical First Release Results

Results for Thurrock CLA show an improvement from last year and the gap against national CLA is starting to close particularly for progress 8.

GCSE KS4 (age 16)

2016 and 2017 DFE KS4 Progress 8 Attainment
- in care for 12+ months

- Thurrock CLA
- National CLA
- Eastern CLA
- Thurrock NCLA

	Progress 8 2016	Attainment 8 2016	Progress 8 2017	Attainment 8 2017
Thurrock CLA	-0.81	24.5	-0.64	23.4
National CLA	-1.1	22.8	-1.18	19.3
Eastern CLA	0.97	22.7	-1.04	19.9
Thurrock NCLA			-0.04	44.4

DFE Validated Data Thurrock CLA results 2017

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Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2018

Non-Validated Results

The following section of this report includes the 2018 data for GCSE. Progress 8 and Attainment 8 is not being reported in the following section due to the availability of data at the time of this report being compiled.

The 2017 data will include the performance of all pupils in the 2017-2018 Year 11 Virtual School cohort irrespective of the length of time in care.

The information used for this report is currently Non-Validated data.

Numbers of Pupils in Year 11 By Entering Care Date
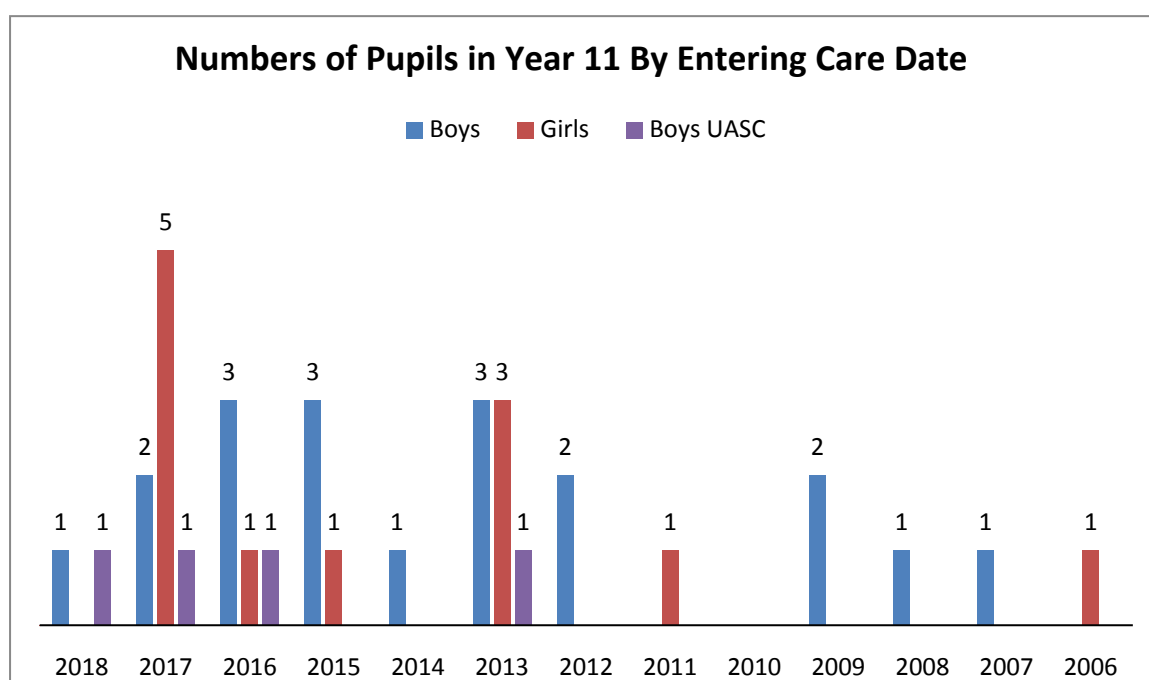
The graph above shows the period when various pupils in Year 11 became looked after. Potentially the length of time in care will affect educational outcomes.

When adolescents come into care during this time it is usually unplanned and in an emergency situation. This makes it extremely difficult for placements and education to be found in parallel. In the vast majority of cases when a young person is without education, it is extremely difficult to provide them with a school place. Schools are reluctant take a Year 11 pupil into their school citing the reason that they are not able to match their GCSE modules. This is even more difficult for those who have no English language.

This graph does not illustrate the fact that 3 pupils [10%] became looked after in the academic year 2017/18, that is, from September 2017. This made it extremely difficult for the Virtual School and Social Care to have an impact on attainment for GCSEs in that short space of time. In total 7 pupils [23%] became looked after from January 2017 when in Year 10 or in Year 11.

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When a young person is taken into care it is often an extremely traumatic time for them. This would potentially affect their ability to perform in the GCSE exams as their focus may be elsewhere. The lateness of them coming into care also means that services have not been able to support education as extensively prior to them entering care. They may not be in full time mainstream education before becoming looked after, their attendance could be poor. The may have missed significant parts of schooling and are therefore trying to catch up. If they do attend a school prior to becoming looked after, they may not have been entered for qualifications due to their ability or previous educational performance. All of these factors should be considered when looking at the achievements of these young people.
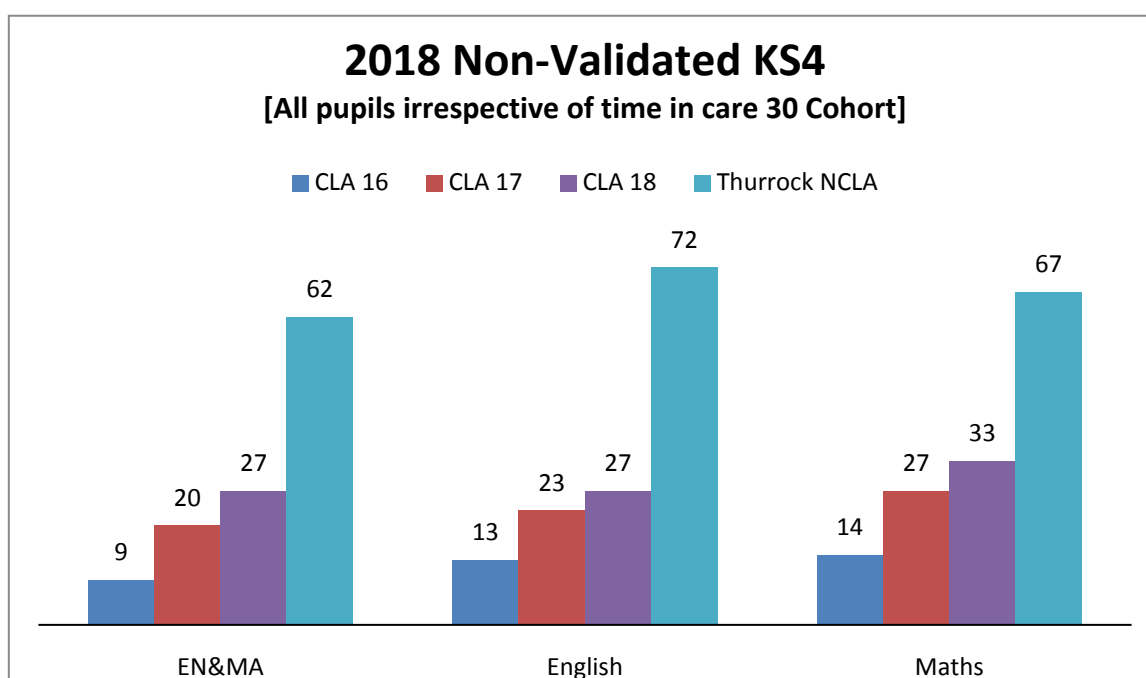
Key Headline Data [Cohort of 30]:

- There were a total of 30 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 17 pupils [56.6%] were eligible to take GCSEs in English and maths
- 8 pupils [27%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grace C [point 4] or above
- 8 pupils [27%] achieved English at grade 4 or above
- In Maths, 10 pupils [33%] achieved the expected standard or above.

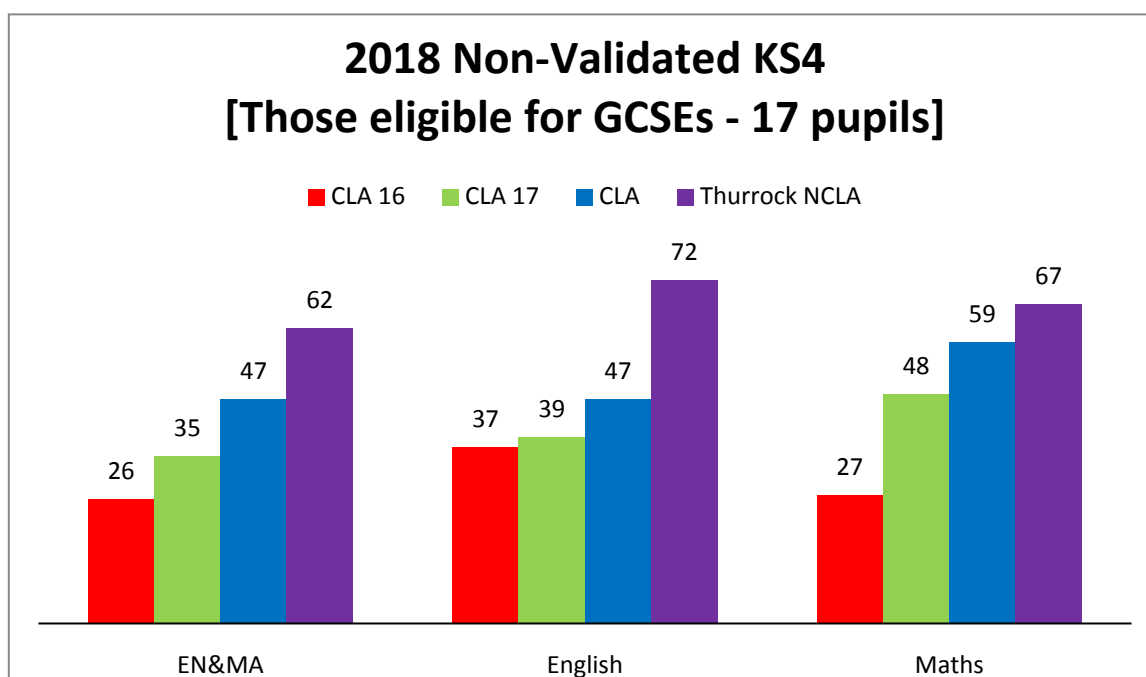Key Headline Data [Cohort of 17 eligible for GCSE maths and English]:

- 8 pupils [47%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- For English, 8 pupils [47%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In Maths, 10 pupils [59%] achieved the expected standard or above.

The graphs below demonstrate the improvements that Thurrock CLA pupils have made compared to the previous 2016 and 2017 cohorts.

2018 Non-Validated KS4
[All pupils irrespective of time in care 30 Cohort]

Legend: CLA 16, CLA 17, CLA 18, Thurrock NCLA

Category	CLA 16	CLA 17	CLA 18	Thurrock NCLA
EN&MA	9	20	27	62
English	13	23	27	72
Maths	14	27	33	67

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Graph Depicts Comparison between Year 11 cohort across a 3 year period. It compares against Thurrock non-looked after.

2018 Non-Validated KS4
[Those eligible for GCSEs - 17 pupils]

■ CLA 16   ■ CLA 17   ■ CLA   ■ Thurrock NCLA

	EN&MA	English	Maths
CLA 16	26	37	27
CLA 17	35	39	48
CLA	47	47	59
Thurrock NCLA	62	72	67

Graph Depicts Comparison between Year 11 cohort across a 3 year period. It compares against Thurrock non-looked after.

The above data demonstrates that there has been a marked improvement in this years' attainment for the whole cohort and for those eligible for taking GCSEs. The two graphs illustrate an improving picture for Thurrock CLA and outcomes are improving. The attainment gaps are gradually decreasing against non-looked after.

Additional Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort

There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 30 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes

20 pupils [67%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough. There were 12 [40%] students attending specialist provision. Specialist provision includes alternative provision, residential specialist schools, and SEND schools. These placements matched the needs of the pupils at that time, based upon their social care and educational needs. Where possible these students sat formal qualifications which included GCSE, BTEC, functional skills or Entry Level exams. However, due to the nature of their needs, not all were able to sit either English or maths GCSE combined. It is important to note that these students obtained positive outcomes for them based upon their needs and their academic level or educational ability at the time.

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A total of 6 students [20%] did not sit formal qualifications. This is a reduction of 17% compared to the previous year's 37%. Each pupil has a specific reason for this. 1 pupil was pregnant and receiving home tuition after being in a secure residential, 1 pupil's SEND needs and attending special school, 1 pupil experienced numerous placement breakdowns and needed specialist SEN provision which was difficult to source at a late stage in the school term, this pupil received tuition.1 UASC pupil age assessed as over 18 years during year 11, 2 pupils attending alternative provision refused to engage with qualification process despite intensive support from the Virtual School, social care and the setting.

Additionally 10 pupils [33%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 7 pupils [23%] with EHCPs. These students did not achieve above grade 4 in their exams if they were eligible for GCSE. Those students who have SEND Support took qualifications matched to their individual needs with some able to sit GCSEs. Despite not reaching grade 4 or above, they did meet their target grades to enable them to enrol at colleges for post 16 courses.

The length of time in care for this cohort has supported the educational progress of these pupils.

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children UASC entering care in year 11 has decreased. In 15/16 42% of the cohort contained UASC pupils. In the academic year 16/17 10 pupils [25%] were UASC. This year 17/18 there were 3 pupils [10%].This year we had two pupils who took a full complement of GCSE subjects. One pupil achieved 9 and A* in maths. The remaining UASC pupil was age assessed as over 18 and did not take qualifications. Where possible schools try to support UASC students to access a full range of subjects but the priority for these young people is to learn English and make the best possible pathways for post 16 learning.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for our year 11 cohort of pupils. All pupils had a termly PEP attended by a member of the Virtual School. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress. In addition, 1-1 tuition was funded by the Virtual School through tuition services to key groups of pupils to support outcomes. This was in English and Maths.

Pupils attending alternative education providers took a range of entry level and vocational courses in order to prepare them for their post 16 pathways. These pupils were attending a variety of settings and completing different courses which they passed.

Planned interventions as a result of 2018 data

The Virtual School will continue with key actions that were begun last year and some additional measures are being taken.

We are continuing to:

- Attend Year 10 and Year 11 PEP meetings
- Ensure that schools provide robust Pupil Premium Plus information
- Link the quality of the PEP with release of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Provide additional home tuition from the summer term of Year 10
- Triangulate data predictions with further evidence such as work sampling
- Access exam stress counselling where necessary
- Provide support for Post 16 pathways
- Targeting tuition for particular students who are on the cusp of 4/5/C grades which will be additional to that received by the Pupil Premium Plus in school
- Complete home visits for particularly vulnerable students
- Provide intensive pastoral support alongside their school for high priority cases for those at risk of poor performance due to social and emotional difficulties.

In addition we are:

- Providing termly Designated Teacher Forums, social worker forums and termly foster carer forums to promote the educational outcomes of pupils by communicating key messages and training and to provide information advice and guidance for individual cases
- Supporting social care to minimise the change of school or college when there are placement changes

Key Stage 5 2018

Our pupils in years 12 and 13 continue to be supported by the Virtual School Post 16 Education Adviser. There have been some real successes this year in Key Stage 5, with 5 pupils starting university for the academic year 2018. Pupils have achieved a range of A-Levels and Level 3 equivalent qualifications. Other pupils have achieved Level 2 qualifications and their equivalent. The aftercare team continues to support our pupils and the Virtual School assists where required.

12.   **Summary of Analysis for all Key Stages**

Key Headlines of Actions from All Data Collections

What are we doing as a result of this year's performance?

- Provision of Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to those aged between 3-13
- Provision of tuition for year 11 which started in the summer term of year 10

- Conducting termly school visits for key year groups of children and those who are not making expected progress
- Evidencing the work of the Virtual School through visit notes and case notes
- Development of an SEND strategy to further improve the outcomes for this group of children
- Continuing the interventions and key actions developed over the previous year to build upon good practice and successful outcomes.
- Introducing the use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires [SDQ} for every pupil from year R to 17 years old

13.   **Case Studies**

Case Study 1, Year 11 Pupil – A

A was an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking child when entering the country in 2013 and he did not speak English.

A had not had a good quality PEP since 2016 and no targets had been set by his school since December 2016 despite numerous challenges and visits by team members of the Virtual School. Pupil Premium funding was with-held and additional resources such piano tuition and 1-1 tuition were paid for directly by the VS.

A visit was made in January 2017 by a new team member of the VS to acquire a clearer picture of the current situation and gain some academic data, which was also not present or updated. It was raised in the meeting that predicted English outcomes for him at this point were around a grade 4. This was not a secure pass, and needed intervention, due to his predicted Maths grades being an 8. Priorities were set and low aspirations for A by the school were challenged. Targets were put in place to improve attitudes to learning and tuition had been set up to focus on English literature, which was highlighted as an area of concern due to ESOL needs. The lack of previous PEP targets and dissemination of these to teaching staff from the school had meant that there were no areas of focus coming from PEP meetings. This PEP set clear areas of focus for revision timetables, extra English in school, improving attitude to learning and accessing feedback from teachers.

Meetings were held in March and April where work was also undertaken with the SENCO/ DT to improve feedback to A through one to one's with designated teacher and improvement of home and school communication. A was in addition bought a laptop with PP+ funding to support his work at home and school. PP+ funding was withdrawn directly from the school due to lack of focused PP+ targets and spending plans, and was used to directly fund the laptop. A had requested an apple laptop.

Further meetings were held at the school to support the new designated teacher regarding the role and responsibilities of this post. Part of this support included personal PEP training and the VS maintained correspondence with the school to monitor progress and support them their offer to the young person.

The spring term data showed an impact of this challenge and support and A was predicted a 6 in English Lit and Language.

In late April 18 A received a fixed term exclusion due to inappropriate behaviour, the VS supported the school with our exclusion policies and communicated with the designated teacher. A back to school planning meeting was held to discuss actions to prevent further exclusion. A seemed to respond to having so many professionals emphasise the issues, the VS worked closely with social care and the carer to ensure A understood the consequences of his exclusion and how to make his last terms successful. He responded to the extra work put in by professionals around him and engaged in all provisions on offer.

A's GCSE results were exceptional.

Maths - 9	Further maths -A*
RE- 8	Spanish- 8
Biology -8	Chemistry -8
Physics -8	Graphics- B
English Lang- 6	English Lit- 6
History- 6	PE -6

Following GCSE result day, the Virtual School then supported A to gain a position in the London Academy of Excellence, who had previously denied his application. The VS secondary education adviser worked with the carer and the college, provided support in his reapplication and made a personal plea to the college to offer him a place, outlining the package of support that came from VS. He was subsequently offered a position in this college, which is a feeder college to Oxbridge. His carer personally thanked VS for their input and A also wrote a letter to the VSHT thanking her for the support in place by the VS throughout his schooling.

Case Study 2, Year 11 Pupil – T

T is a female who became CLA in February 2017 in Year 10. She had a history of poor school attendance. When she did attend, she was leaving classes, not engaging while in class and using avoidance tactics when she did not want to attend lessons. At this time she was experiencing anxiety; she was self-harming and receiving support from CAMHS.

Poor attendance was having a detrimental effect on T's progress and grades. After being taken into local authority care, T began to improve her attendance initially but was still not accessing lessons though other improvements had been noted by the school such as punctuality and appearance. In March of 2017 T's attendance had improved from below 50% to 73.1% but actual lesson attendance was much lower.

T was fairly negative in her outlook about school generally and her ability to achieve in particular. She used school more as a social meeting place. She did, however, say

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at her first PEP that she enjoyed art and music. A VS team member attended this PEP and realised that she wold benefit from some direct support work to look at how our support could re-engage her now that she was in a more settled placement with supportive carers. The VS team member visited T at home and became her key person.

The first meeting was positive and T presented as open to looking into the options available to her. The initial visit was mainly an introduction and to assess if she was willing to work with the VS. A good relationship with T and her carer was developed during the visits and there were open and honest conversations during each visit. This enabled a key VS person to become the steady contact and conduit for education. T was comfortable enough with this key person to speak honestly and this made it possible for the VS to support her fully and communicate her needs and potential barriers to learning to others.

T's attendance remained an issue for the coming months and she expressed the difficulty of being in the vicinity of the home of her birth mother who was well known in the area.

The VS key person worked closely with the school Designated Teacher to ensure that T had appropriate support in school for both her educational and emotional needs. School were very supportive but eventually everyone involved in T's case had to agree that she was not likely to attend school where she was on roll. At his point T had begun to increase her disengagement from lessons and was refusing to comply despite support from school staff.

T had begun to voice that she would like to change school setting as she wanted a fresh start away from her family home and where she was not known. By the end of year 10 her anxiety at school had grown to such a level that during the summer holidays she was refusing to return to school-and then attend any education. During another visit the key person spoke to T about supporting a school move, once it was apparent that a return to her existing school was not viable, and worked with her to ascertain what she felt would support her to make a successful move and to be able to attend. At this stage T was still refusing education at all but had begun to come around to moving setting. T was still concerned that having missed so much education that she would never catch up so what was the point. The key person was able to discuss her options, offer practical support and resources along with offering to continue her visits, attending all meetings and speaking on T's behalf when she felt she was not able to confidently get across her feelings, often due to her anxiety.

After discussion during a pupil priority meeting the VSHT approached a new school who had a proven track record of supporting our vulnerable pupils. The school agreed to give T a fresh start and support her to get the best outcomes possible. The school was closer to the foster carer's home and they were also able to support with transport and be on hand for any contact from the school.

The key worker continued to meet with T at school and attend PEPs and any meetings around her education. Regular telephone contact with the carers also facilitated the support network around T.

Additional tuition was funded by VS to support gaps in learning, T was provided with a bespoke timetable to focus her learning to maximise outcomes given the short time before she was due to sit GCSEs.

By Spring Term in 2018 T had greatly improved her attendance to 93.7%. With continued support from school staff T was able to remain in her classes, access more learning and develop resilience and strategies to manage her anxieties. By Year 11 T was achieving 94% attendance and was preparing to sit GCSE exams.

This was and is a massive achievement for T coming from a position of high anxiety and school refusal.

T successfully sat GCSE exams in year 11 and achieved: English Language Grade 5

English Literature Grade 3, Maths Grade 4, Double Science Grades 3:3, Music Btech Pass.

She has applied, been accepted to and is attending college on a Hairdressing Course.

Case Study 3 - Year 13 pupil – L

L became a CLA on 24th February 2016. This was also L's final year of schooling – year 11. Despite presenting with significant emotional and mental health concerns, L was still achieving at school and focused on raising aspirations and achieving the goal of getting to university. L had a wide network of professionals providing support at this point: social care, VS, school DT, nurse and social worker, foster carer, troubled families and EWMHS. L finished year 11 with 5 GCSE A-C grades that included maths and English, an incredible achievement and testament to C's determination and resilience.

L decided to stay on at the sixth form to study A levels in psychology, English and sociology; a two year pathway. L had a positive start to the sixth form and settled well forming a positive peer group. In addition to the A level studies L completed and passed a first aid course and signed up for Duke of Edinburgh silver award following the completion of the bronze award. At this point L was refusing careers advice and to make any considerations for university as this made her too anxious.

In January 2017 L made a historical disclosure of sexual abuse; the police became involved and an ABE was carried out. Following this disclosure L's mental health deteriorated significantly with increased self-harming episodes, suicidal ideations and heightened periods of low or hysteria. This led to an attempted suicide at the end of February where L was hospitalised. During this time many meetings were

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convened with all agencies which had widened to include the crisis team. The VS and school agreed a reduced timetable to support L's recovery which would be reviewed regularly. L's attendance at sixth form did increase again but L was still unable to regulate emotions during school. L moved placement from a foster placement to a semi-independent supported accommodation in June 2017. This was further away from L's sixth form College and this move immediately affected attendance dramatically.

L started the second year and a PEP was held very early into the term to review L's support needs as it was evident that L was continuing to battle with emotional and mental well-being. It was conveyed that L should continue to attend 4 days per week but a high amount of pastoral care would be in place for the times L attended. L was able to maintain not 100% attendance but a steady 70-80% through the first half term. In January a multi-agency professional meeting was held where it was evident that L's education was being heavily impacted. L was under the care of multiple hospital departments for physical as well and mental health issues and L stated it was too painful to attend college using public transport. L was also behind in all subjects. More changes to the timetable were agreed by VS and taxis to support attendance were put in place. L was advised following this if mock exams were failed; L would be withdrawn from the course.

L did begin to improve attendance but only slightly, but against all odds passed the mock exams. Following this L, stopped attending sixth form almost completely and was completing work at home, however this was not supervised. As the A level exams approached VS agreed to fund taxis for her revision days and days of exams to ensure that L attended as L refused to use public transport due to pain. VS negotiated with the college that the taxis would continue and the pastoral support would be in place when L attended. L did attend the A Level exams and achieved D in sociology, E in psychology E in English. During the last year L was also able to gain an unconditional offer to a university, causing great excitement for L. VS have provided CS with a laptop to support further studies and a voucher to buy university essentials.

Without the constant support of the VS and a co-ordinated multiagency approach, the outcomes for L would not have been so positive.

14.   **School Improvement Priorities**

These are detailed in the Virtual School Improvement Plan which is updated at the start of every academic year. Priorities are identified and actions are detailed related to SMART targets which form the basis of the Virtual School's work across the academic year.

The aim of this document is to promote the raising of educational outcomes for all of our Children Looked After.

Key Priorities for 2017/2018 were

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- [Key Priority 1] Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA for all Key Stages

    This key priority was achieved in all areas as evidenced in this report.

- [Key Priority 2] Improving the attendance of CLA to maximise educational outcomes

    Attendance rates have not improved this academic year compared to the previous year but the number of non-authorised absence has reduced

- [Key Priority 3] Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education

    This has reduced on the previous year and is the lowest it has been for the last 5 years indicating that the strategies employed this year have worked well to reduce FTE.

- [Key Priority 4] Improve the quality of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations

    PEP compliance has increased over the year to be at consistently over 95%. The quality of the PEP has improved to ensure that at least 90% of PEPs are graded at good with the remaining amount on the cusp of good. Robust tracking and additional quality assurance measures enacted by increased capacity of the virtual school team has enabled this.

- [Key Priority 5] Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.

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Tracking data is in place for all pupils in all year groups. Poor progress is addressed using the escalation process for poor progress and Virtual School staff visit schools where pupils have poor progress and strategies to improve outcomes are agreed and actioned.

- [Key Priority 6] Embed the new Virtual School team structure to support the needs of all CLA

The Virtual School team has had a full complement of staff since January 2018. This increased capacity has enabled there to be a thorough quality assurance process for PEPs, greater tracking and improved challenge of pupil progress and this has had an impact on the overall outcomes for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort.

16.   **Allocation and Impact of the Pupil Premium**

The management of the Pupil Premium Plus grant for Children Looked After is detailed in the DFE guidance Pupil premium grant 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant and Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities.

During this academic year a Pupil Premium Policy has been developed by the Virtual School and approved by the Virtual School Governing Body. This policy details the ideology and method behind allocation.

This information is shared with schools. Up until March 2018, educational settings received £1,500 which was allocated over three terms. Since the increase in the grant in April 2018, the settings will now receive £1,800 which is released in three equal installments of £600 every term. The Virtual School Headteacher tracks spending on a termly basis in line with the quality assurance process of PEPS. This tracking centres on how this money is raising the achievement of the child/young person and assesses if funds are being used appropriately. This process, alongside the PEP process is supporting the pupil to have targeted support and intervention which directly affects and plans for his/her academic and overall school achievement with a personalised approach. It is enabling the Virtual School to be updated on progress data and enables discussion with the school to centre on appropriate intervention. This system promotes accountability and improved dialogue in how to raise attainment and achievement and narrow the gap. [Separate Pupil Premium documentation is available on request]

The Virtual School top sliced £400 per pupil for the academic year and used this to provide centralised resources to support the most vulnerable in the cohort. From April 2018 the top slice increased to £500 per annum.

For example:

- Additional tuition for Year 11 pupils was provided in English and maths and £34,445 was provided for this. This supported pupils who achieve better GCSE grades and provide them with confidence and support for the exams
- Additional tuition for certain children who could not receive that support at school, the amount for this was £17,100
- Provision of alternative provision for students at risk of permanent exclusion to enable them to access education. This has included funding for additional support staff or bespoke timetables of alternative provision
- Provision of equipment to support learning for some students. This has included equipment to support specific courses such as photography or IT equipment
- £2,500 has been spent on providing the Attachment Aware Schools resource books by L Bomber
- Commissioning of education psychologists for assessments and reports to aid the Education Health Care Plan process
- Provision of additional educational experiences such as educational trips, outdoor and adventurous activities and activities to promote specific interests or skills
- Literacy Book Trust resources for pupils aged 3 to 13 years £18,214
- IT resources for specific students for post 16 study.

17. **<u>Quality Assurance of Personal Education Plans</u>**

The Personal Education Plan [PEP] is a key document to support the child's/young person's education. Where possible the Virtual School attends specific PEP meetings and particular emphasis has been made on key year groups for the academic year 2017/18 and those who are new into care. This is further detailed in the Roles and Functions of the Virtual School document. It is also important that the Virtual School attends PEP meetings for particularly vulnerable students or when a potential issue has been identified. For example, concern with progress. The Virtual School team is responsible for Quality Assuring [QA] every PEP. We have introduced a specific protocol around PEP quality assurance and this has been shared with those who have joint responsibility for the PEP. PEP compliance rates have improved and now are consistently operating at 95% and above compliance for every child aged 3 to 18 years. A range of documents have been produced to aid the completion of high quality paperwork and the robust procedures have enabled to quality of PEP to improve so that at least 90% of school age PEPs are rated to be a good standard. During the Quality Assurance process particular attention is made to progress data, school provision, support from the foster carer, the pupil's views and the quality of educational targets that are set. If a PEP is judged to be of poor quality the Virtual School challenges the appropriate professional to ensure that this is rectified. The team keep a tracking sheet of PEP compliance and notes down comments or actions as part of the QA process. The Directors Management Team asks for sample PEPs from all year groups as part of the QA process. As part of the Pupil Premium release process, the VSHT audits PEPs every term for quality to

ensure that the PEP is used to support the academic achievements of the CLA pupils. The graph below details the improvement in PEP quality across the year after the application of key strategy documents and the impact of the quality assurance process which has been driven by the Virtual School Education Advisers

Comparison in School Age PEP Quality
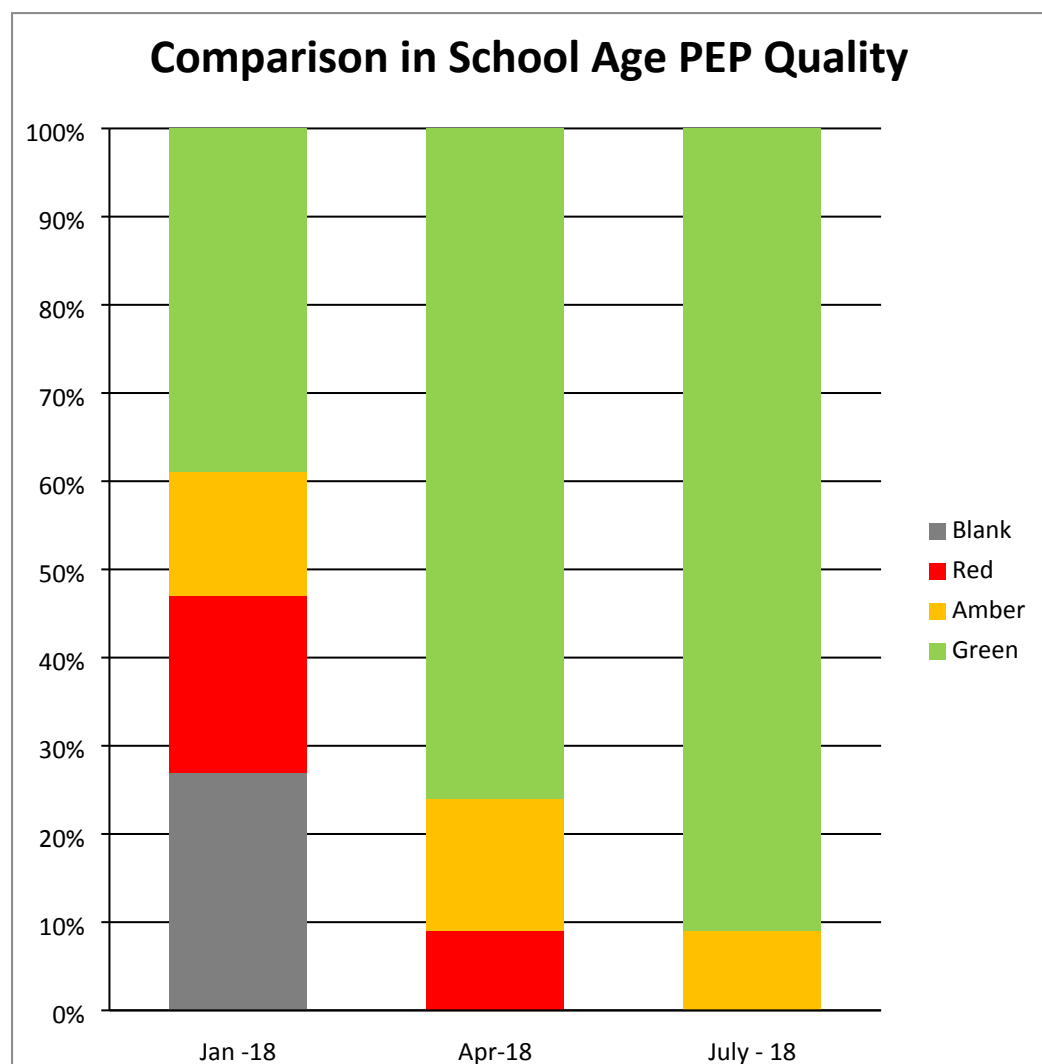
91% of PEPs were graded as a good quality at the end pf the academic year with 9% being on the cusp of good. We are striving for at least 95% good for the forthcoming year.

PEP compliance has improved greatly over the academic year and each key phase education adviser keeps data for her area. This is reported monthly to the performance data Directors meeting.

The graph below provides PEP compliance for the end of the academic year.

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PEP Compliance Rates
July 2018
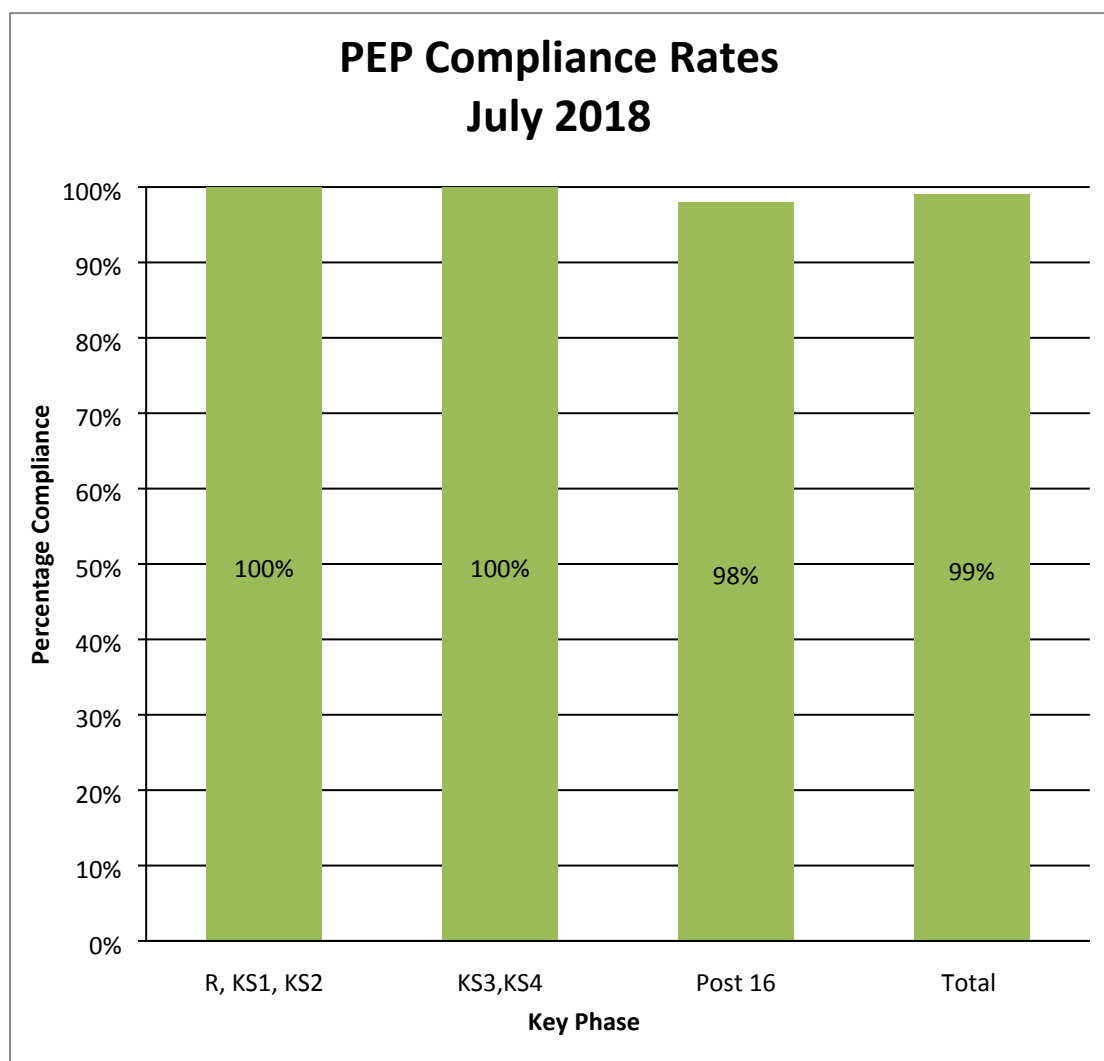
18.   **Post 16 Update**

The Virtual School supports pupils who have left Year 11 and are moving onto the next stage of their education. Pupils take a variety of paths either through level 1, 2 or 3, FE or HE qualifications. Others combine apprenticeships with obtaining qualifications. Every pupil is supported appropriately to create the next step that is suitable for them. Conversations regarding post 16 pathways are discussed in Year 10. Transition is discussed before the student leaves Year 11 and students are supported with applying for college positions and courses. After the students receive their qualifications they are further supported to apply for places again if they were unsuccessful with their original choice and all can access support from the Virtual School 16+ Education Adviser if necessary with activities such as applying for a bursary, receiving additional tuition, interventions and attendance at disruption meeting with colleges and employers. Further Education Personal Education Plans are put in place for every student, even those without an educational placement. The Virtual School works closely with the aftercare team to support pupils in Year 13 and beyond. In the Year 2016, 8 pupils are currently in university.

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Direct Comments in a letter of thanks from a Year 14 UAS pupil about to start university:
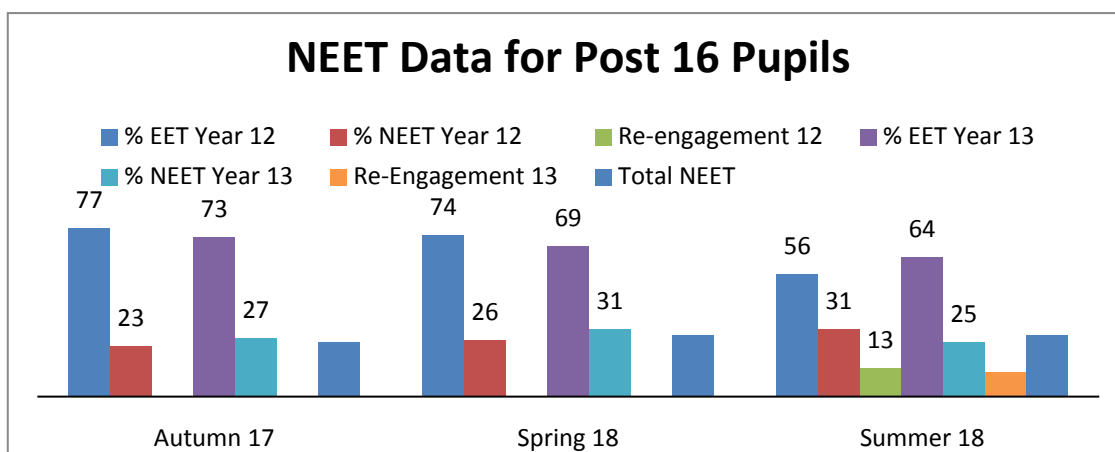
'From the very beginning of my education here in UK, the support I have been receiving from Lyan and Grace were huge and uncountable, I can only mention the most precious support I have received.

When I was young, newcomer and unaccompanied lonely immigrant, Lyan and Grace were on my side more than anyone else more than my social worker, they taught me how to speak to people in a good manner and in better English, they also provided me books which helped me a lot in developing my English. They were the roots of my educational development who supported me to reach where I am now. They supported me and encouraged to be a better student by registering and enrolling me in South Essex College. Moreover, once I have enrolled I have received a material support like laptop and books which helped me to do my assignments and study properly for four years. Not only educational support from Lyan but many more, she was on my side when I was struggling to find accommodation. They were there when I needed them in any obstacle I face on my way. Im still in a hand of their support as I am starting university this year I have nicely asked Lyan for a better laptop to get me through my education at Uni'.

This young man is about to start a degree in Engineering. This is a huge success for all and an excellent outcome. The Virtual School is providing a highly specialised laptop and a gift card for student essentials.

19.   **Not in Education Employment or Training [NEET]**

The Virtual School closely monitors any post 16 young person who has CLA status and who is NEET. They are monitored fortnightly and the Post 16+ Education Adviser works with the young person, social care, personal advisors and local colleges and businesses to create the best possible opportunity for the young person to be placed in education, employment or training. Thurrock Council's aim is to have no NEET Looked after Children. NEET data is provided to the Virtual School Governing Body every term as part of the Headteacher's report. The NEET and EET figures supplied in the graph below are specifically only for the children in the Virtual School cohort and would therefore see high in comparison with the national figures. In the summer term, data for those who are NEET but taking part in engagement activities, as defined by the DFE, have been included.

thurrock.gov.uk

NEET Data for Post 16 Pupils

Legend: % EET Year 12 | % NEET Year 12 | Re-engagement 12 | % EET Year 13 | % NEET Year 13 | Re-Engagement 13 | Total NEET

Autumn 17: 77, 23, 73, 27
Spring 18: 74, 26, 69, 31
Summer 18: 56, 31, 13, 64, 25

20.   Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

This year has seen a decreased demand for the Virtual School team to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC]. The Eastern Region sharing protocol arrangements have enabled young people to be transferred to boroughs with fewer numbers than Thurrock. The number of UASC coming into Thurrock has not reduced, however, they now move to other boroughs. Our existing UASC pupils continue to so well in their colleges and schools and those who have been with us for over 12 months are making good progress. of English. The impact of this has been substantial as it enabled UASC to access education and ultimately progress onto more academic Level 1 and 2 courses.

20.   Virtual School Governing Body

The Virtual School Governing Body [GB] was formed in the autumn term 2016. Meetings are held once per term. The Governing Body is used to hold the Virtual School to account and ensure that the team are maximising positive outcomes for CLA.

 The members of this GB 2017/18 were:

Chair: R Patterson [Director of Children's Services]

Vice Chair: M Lucas [Assistant Director of Learning, Skills and Inclusion]

Headteacher: K Pullen [Virtual School]

In Borough School Representative Secondary: Dr S Asong [CEO The Stanford and Corringham Schools Trust]

In Borough School Representative Primary: N Shadbolt [HT Aveley Primary School]

Out of Borough School Representative: B Read [HT R J Mitchell Primary School]

Post 16 Education Representative: Vacancy

Social Care Representative: Representatives from Head of Service positions

thurrock.gov.uk

Staff Governor: G Page [Operations Co-Ordinator for the Virtual School]

The purpose of the Governing Body is to hold the VSHT to account and to ensure that clear and regular lines of reporting are in place. The VSHT prepares a range of documentation for the GB to approve and to question the strategy and decisions made by the VSHT. For example: attendance policy, PEP protocol, Pupil Premium Plus Policy.

In addition the VSHT reports to the Corporate Parenting Committee on a regular basis.

21. **Additional Strategies to support the educational progress of Thurrock Children in Care**

Working in Partnership with other Teams in Thurrock Council and out of borough councils

The Virtual School works with a range of teams within Thurrock to enable the best possible outcomes for our CLA. These include School Improvement and Inclusion, Social Care, Special Educational Needs including Educational Psychologists, Fostering, Health, Admissions and Education Welfare. This cohesive approach works together around the child/young person to create a supportive, knowledgeable level of service aimed at serving the best interest of the CLA.

The Virtual School also works with the relevant teams in other boroughs for our CLA who are placed out of borough.

Foster Carer Forums

These provide opportunities to share good practice, provide key messages and obtain valuable feedback and insight into the factors affecting the CLA. The VSHT has been meeting at Foster Carer support groups to provide key information about Pupil Premium Plus and Electronic Personal Education Plans. Foster carer forum meetings started in Spring Term 16 and will continue to happen once per term. These covered a range of topics including using EPEP. In addition the VSHT attends new foster carer forums and provides induction training.

Designated Teacher Forums

As with the Foster Carer forums, the aim of this is to disseminate key messages, improve lines of communication, foster good partnership working and discuss issues affecting our CLA in schools. These are held every half term by the Virtual School Head.

General Support for Foster Carers and Designated Teachers

The Virtual School provides a range of telephone and face to face advice and support and prides itself on being able to deliver a good level of service. Our

approachable manner enables us to have good relationships with these key professionals to enable us to work together for the best outcomes of our pupils.

Social Worker Training and Support

The Virtual School adopts a flexible and responsive approach to the support and training needs of our social workers. The Virtual School Head attends briefings and team meetings with social care to disseminate good practice.

Liaison with Schools

This is a vital part in supporting the CLA as the Virtual School works closely with in and out of borough schools to ensure that pupils are supported within their educational placement. We offer support and advice on a range of areas such as behaviour, raising attainment and narrowing the gap. The Virtual School provides challenge and makes schools accountable to their statutory duties to ensure that pupils are treated and supported appropriately to meet their varying needs. Part of this also includes providing training to school governors.

Book Trust Letterbox

In order to promote enjoyment and pleasure in reading and improve reading outcomes the Virtual School works in partnership with the Letterbox Club. The Letterbox Club is an award-winning programme managed by Book Trust, in partnership with the University of Leicester, which aims to provide enjoyable educational support for Looked After Children aged 5-13. Children and young people in care to Thurrock are enrolled onto the programme which entitles them to a colourful parcel of books, maths activities, stationery and other complementary materials once every month for six months, from May to October. All of the books in the parcels have been carefully selected by the panel at Book Trust for the children in the programme. Over the six-month period the parcels will also include other items such as a library joining card or information about how to join a library, name plates, bookmarks and letters from a selection of children's authors.

Thurrock Virtual School Book Trust Co-ordinator, Mrs Tina McGuinness, holds an Open Forum once a month for the Foster carers and CLA to collect the parcels in person and build a relationship with the Virtual School promoting reading and the use of library facilities.

Advice and Guidance for previously looked after children

The Virtual School also provides advice and guidance for those pupils who were previously looked after. This would be particularly relevant for adopted children and their schools and families to ensure that their needs are appropriately supported. From September 2018, the Virtual School will continue to deliver this service for previously looked after children, in line with the statutory guidance.

Attendance at PEP Meetings

Wherever possible and if appropriate, the Virtual School attends PEP meetings to model good practice, raise accountability, monitor the pupils' education and provision and ensure that the PEP process is thorough in supporting the CLA's education. We endeavour to attend the first PEP for every new CLA pupil and attend PEP meetings for those pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in their learning.

Tuition Services

Many schools use tuition as part of their pupil premium spend. There are occasions when additional tuition is needed. The Virtual School commissions the services of Fleet Tuition, Equal Education and Prospero. The One to One Tuition Programme for CLA was created to provide additional academic support for children who are not currently reaching their potential or may be missing school. Generally one-one tuition is used to help pupils who face academic barriers in any subject and the Virtual School works closely with schools, foster carers, social workers and the pupil to ensure that the right tuition is matched to needs. It is not possible to provide one-one tuition for every pupil and so this resource is targeted to suit needs and support requirements.

Attendance Monitoring

Thurrock Virtual School commissions the services of an external provider called Looked After Call to monitor the attendance of all of our Children Looked After in and out of borough attending schools and colleges. All pupils are monitored on a daily basis. If pupils are not attending school an alert is created to ascertain where the pupil is and why they are not at school. This promotes the safeguarding of our pupils and promotes good attendance. It also enables the Virtual School to monitor any exclusions, attendance or punctuality issues. The Virtual School has a clear Attendance Policy which provides a rationale behind why attendance is given high priority and this can be read in conjunction with this report.

22.   **Author of this report**

Keeley Pullen BA [Hons] PGCE NPQH

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Thurrock Children Looked After

Submitted to Governors 27th September 2018

Submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee 15th January 2019

thurrock.gov.uk

15 January 2019	ITEM: 8
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Report on Unregistered/Private HMO's for Young People in Thurrock	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	N/A

Report of: Janet Simon, Strategic Lead of Children Looked After

Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children and Families

Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services

This report is Public

Executive Summary

This report updates members of the Committee on unregulated placements for children looked after by Thurrock.

1. **Recommendation(s)**

1.1 **That the members of the Committee review the efforts made by officers to choose appropriate supported accommodation for looked after young people over the aged of 16.**

2. **Introduction and Background**

2.1 This report provides an overview of the remit of supported accommodation; the local authorities activities to ensure they are meeting the needs of young people and how they are monitored.

2.2 **16 + Supported accommodation provision.**

2.3 A provider who offers services defined as "support and accommodation" for young people over the age of 16 is not required to be registered, and therefore is not under the monitoring remit of Ofsted.

2.4 Ofsted state that *"If the provision provides care and accommodation then they should be registered, however, the level of care provided is not specified in the Care Standards Act and clearly some young people as they move into independent living require some level of support in order to make the transition".*

2.5 With regards to the level of support, Ofsted state; *"This level of care usually reduces over time and does not include the provision of meals, medication, personal care etc. The young people are free to come and go as they wish. Staff may be present for parts of the day and even overnight for security reasons but are not providing direct care. These are unregulated settings and can operate without registration".*

2.6 Thurrock's expectations of current 16+ supported accommodation providers.

- Appropriate qualifications of both manager and staff team
- Appropriate room size with furniture fit for purpose
- Annual monitoring visits, but more visits undertaken if concerns are raised
- 10 hours of key work sessions per week to assist in independent living & life skills
- Staffed 24/7
- Weekly & monthly reports
- Assist with budgeting
- Assist with support in education and employment
- Attend all meetings and offer support
- Attend court where necessary to offer support
- Work with partner agencies
- Signed up to Thurrock's Supported Accommodation contract

2.7 How Supported accommodation is commissioned, checked and monitored.

2.8 Currently, placements are commissioned with our preferred providers on a spot purchase basis. The department has recently completed a tender exercise to establish a "select list", with the opportunity for new providers to join on an annual basis. Prior to approval, all providers undergo quality assurance checks and will be subject to monitoring including;

- DBS checks
- Safer recruitment
- H&S
- Insurance
- Financial checks
- Policies and procedures.
- Annual monitoring and full house visit; where additional concerns have been raised.
- Visits (both announced and unannounced) and meetings with commissioning and the placements service.

2.9 The tender, specifications have been amended , recently to reflect the recent Ofsted guidance on Supported Accommodation. These are summarised in paragraph 2.16. Providers are required to pass a strict tender process, which is robust about the local authority's expectations.

2.10 Children Looked After are visited by social workers in line with their statutory duties and if social workers become aware of concerns about the suitability or standard of the provision, they are, responsible for raising these with their line manager and the Commissioning Team. The local authority has been working closely with Essex Police to ensure that all supported accommodation providers sign up to the SET's (Southend, Essex and Thurrock's) missing MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). This will be sent to providers in December 2018.

2.11 16+ Supported Accommodation provision In Thurrock.

2.12 There is a legal duty on both the council and providers commissioned on its behalf to safeguard young people, and when the council do not have sufficient confidence in the process, the contract can be terminated.

2.13 Thurrock are currently aware of two private providers who operate supported accommodation within Thurrock. Capacity remains an issue and it is hoped the current tender exercise will result in additional providers. Where local places are not available the team aim to find the closest match to the young person's needs.

2.14 Young People in Supported accommodation

2.15 The numbers of looked after children in Thurrock excluding UASC currently ` placed in Supported Accommodation at the end of November was 13. The number of UASC in Supported Accommodation was 17.

2.16 This is a snapshot within the month, as the numbers will fluctuate as children/young people enter and cease being looked after for various reasons throughout each month. There is a higher fluctuation for UASC, which is a reflection of the number of arrivals and the aim to transfer young people within 10 days of referral to other authorities within the Eastern Region.

2.17 Young people looked after by Thurrock are placed in 16+ accommodation in the following areas

- Croydon (UASC who presented in Croydon after a missing episode)
- Newham
- Redbridge
- Thurrock
- Waltham Forest
- Enfield
- Havering
- Norfolk
- Shrewsbury (1 young person who had links in the area)

2.18 Cost and Spend of Supported accommodation

2.19 The cost of supported accommodation placements ranges from £306 per week to £2900 per week, which is dependent on, need and support.

	General LAC population placements	UASC LAC placements
Year to date spend @ Period 7	£463,490	£349,504
Grant Income		£271,044**
Range of costs	£306 to £2900 per week	£600 to £1050 per week

2.20 In July 2018 Ofsted updated their expectations in relation to this matter and clarified what constitutes supported accommodation as shown in Table A below;

Table A:

Criteria	Yes?	No?
Can the young people go out of the establishment without staff permission?	Supported accommodation	Care
Do young people have full control of their own finances?	Supported accommodation	Care
Do young people have full control over what they wear and of the resources to buy clothes?	Supported accommodation	Care
Are young people in charge of meeting all their health needs, including such things as arranging GP or specialist health care appointments? Are young people in full control of their medication?	Supported accommodation (Young people may ask for advice and help on their health, but if decisions rest with the young person, the establishment is not providing care.)	Care
Do staff have any access to any medical records?	Care	Supported accommodation
Can young people choose to stay away over night?	Supported accommodation (Being expected to tell someone if they are going to be away overnight does not indicate providing care, but needing to ask someone's permission does.)	Care
Is there a sanctions policy that goes beyond house rules and legal sanctions that would be imposed on any adult?	Care	Supported accommodation

If the establishment accommodates both adults and young people, do those under 18 have any different supervision, support, facilities or restrictions.	Care	Supported accommodation
Are there regularly significant periods of time when young people are on the premises with no direct staff supervision?	Supported accommodation	Care
Do staff have any responsibility for aftercare once a young person has left?	Care (Some supported accommodation services will offer some support to help young people get established in their next accommodation is not care.)	Supported accommodation
Does the establishment's literature promise the provision of care or relate to specific care support provided to all residents?	Care	Supported accommodation
Does the establishment provide or commission a specialist support service, which forms part of the main function of the establishment?	Care	Supported accommodation

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 16+ Supported Accommodation and Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

- There is no Ofsted registration requirement for 16+ Supported accommodation and there is no responsibility on providers to notify the Local Authority/Borough of their intentions to set up Supported Accommodation, as Ofsted does not register them. We do, however, encourage this and would not place with a provider who had not registered with the Council.
- Providers that also meet the requirements to be registered as a HMO do have to notify the Council.
- Local Authorities routinely notify each other when a placement is made in another area.
- No minimum room sizes
- No registered manager/or recognised qualifications
- No staff ratio to young people
- No regulatory monitoring by Ofsted

3.2 Nationally if five non-related people reside within a property it should be registered as HMO.

3.3 Thurrock has been rolling out since October 2018 across the borough a requirement that three unrelated people residing in a property will require the provider to register the property as an HMO. This is so far in place in the following areas:

- Aveley and Uplands,
- Belhus,
- Chadwell St Mary,
- Grays Thurrock,
- Grays Riverside,
- Little Thurrock Blackshots,
- Ockendon,
- Stifford Clays,
- Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park,
- Tilbury St Chads,
- West Thurrock and South Stifford.

3.4 Children's Homes

- Have to advise the Local Authority/Borough of their intentions
- Change of use may be required (i.e. family home to a business) and notification to LA's housing department.
- Home registered with Ofsted
- Ofsted to inspect proposed residential home to confirm (ascertain) accommodation meets minimum requirements.
- Residential home must have a registered manager in place for the home to operate. This requires Ofsted approval after interview & verification of relevant qualifications.
- Staff to be qualified to the required standards as per the NMS
- Appropriate staff ratio to young people
- Reg 44 visits undertaken monthly (internal independent monitoring visits)
- Ofsted inspections, both announced & unannounced
- More rigorous insurance required
- Pay business rates as opposed to council Tax

3.5 We continue to focus on finding the right placement type for young people according to their needs. Where possible and appropriate young people will remain in foster care as the first option or within regulated placements.

3.6 Placements are monitored through the various multi-disciplinary panels, such as the Placement and Accommodation Panel, which is chaired by the Strategic Lead for Children Looked After, and High Cost Placements are monitored through reporting to the Corporate Director of Children's Services.

3.7 The Department is aware of the budgetary situation within the Council and work hard to provide placements that are fit for purpose and are cost effective. The Corporate Director and other senior managers are working closely with the Finance Department; ensuring placements are of good quality, that we get the best value from each placement and that we plan the transition of our young people when appropriate to accommodation that is suitable for their needs and age.

4.   Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Members of the Committee to be informed on the issues in relation to supported accommodation. Officers accept there is a very real challenge in balancing the need to find the best possible placement option for young people to meet their needs and prepare them for independence, whilst simultaneously working within the financial resources available.

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

5.1 None

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

6.1 None

7.   Implications

7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**

Management Accountant

There are financial implications associated with 16+ supported accommodation and the numbers of young people in this type of provision fluctuates. However, finance is working closely with the service to analyse placements costing and review.

The cost of supported accommodation placements ranges from £350 per week to £2900 per week, which is dependent on, need and support.

	General LAC population placements	UASC LAC placements
Year to date spend @ Period 7	£463,490	£349,504
Grant Income		£271,044**
Range of costs	£306 to £2900 per week	£600 to £1050 per week

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Deputy Head of Legal, Social Care and Education

The Local Authority is expected to provide support to young people who are Entitled to support to prepare them to leave care, but who remain looked after ("eligible children"), and to young people who have ceased to be looked after ("relevant" and "former relevant" children). The requirements of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (in respect of Eligible young people) and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (in respect of Relevant, Former Relevant, and Qualifying young people) mean that the Local Authority needs to ensure that care leavers are provided with comprehensive personal support so that they achieve their potential as they make their transition to adulthood.

In determining the suitability of accommodation for Relevant Young People (under Schedule 2 to the Care Leavers Regulations 2010 and Schedule 6 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010) regard should be had to:

1. In respect of the accommodation:

   a. The facilities and services provided;
   b. The state of repair;
   c. The safety;
   d. The location;
   e. The support;
   f. The tenancy status; and
   g. The financial commitments involved for the relevant young person and their affordability.

2. In respect of the Relevant young person:

   a. His or her views about the accommodation;
   b. His or her understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the accommodation; and
   c. His or her understanding of funding arrangements.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**

Community Development Officer

No diversity and equality implications within this report.

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

- None

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):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

Janet Simon

Strategic Lead – Children Looked After

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15 January 2019	ITEM: 9
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Report on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	N/A

Report of: Janet Simon, Strategic Lead of Children Looked After,

Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children and Families

Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services

This report is Public

Executive Summary

This report updates members of the Committee on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children looked after by Thurrock

1. **Recommendation(s)**

1.1 **That the members of the Committee review the work of officers in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children presenting to the borough.**

2. **Introduction and Background**

2.1 Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children arrive in the United Kingdom often following a long and dangerous journey where they may have been at risk of various types of abuse and exploitation and which can often leave them traumatised.

2.2 Local Authorities across the country have the task of receiving these children, identifying who they are, identifying their specific needs and ensuring that an appropriate support is offered to keep them safe; solidify their legal and immigration status and help them to settle into their new circumstances, move on, achieve and reach their potential.

2.3 Given established transport links unaccompanied asylum seeking children are more likely to enter into the country through a limited pool of Local Authorities. Thurrock is one such point of entry due to its geographical location, two established ports and busy motorway services.

2.4   The National Transfer Protocol, Version 2, became operational from March 2018 replacing the interim transfer protocol which was published in July 2016: The transfer protocol is intended to ensure that unaccompanied children can access the services and support they need. It is intended to ensure that any participating authority does not face a disproportionate responsibility in accommodating and looking after unaccompanied children pursuant to its duties under parts 3, 4, and 5 of the Children act 1989, simply by virtue of being the point of arrival of a disproportionate number of unaccompanied children.

2.5   The scheme is based on the principle that no local authority should be asked to look after more Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) than 0.07% of its total child population, according to the Office for National Statistics' mid-year population estimates. This has since been revised in the Eastern Region with an agreed calculation of 0.06% reducing Thurrock's quota. This quota currently stands at 24 UASC.

2.6   At present, unaccompanied looked after children who have not made a claim for asylum are not eligible to be included in the transfer scheme.

2.7   **Brief enquiry to age:**

2.8   At point of entry all UASC individuals are subject to a brief enquiry to age. This is a brief assessment in accordance with the assessing age guidance. Anyone claiming to be a child but whose physical appearance and demeanour strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 will be treated from that point onwards as an adult. This is subject to review should any further evidence become available to suggest otherwise. The brief enquiry to age is undertaken by a qualified social worker and with the use of an interpreter.

2.9   We are currently liaising with the UASC regional co-ordinator to facilitate training in the New Year. This is aimed at ensuring that we continue to be able to offer a good service to the children that we work with and that there is a consistent approach across the service.

2.10   **Age assessments:**

2.11   Full Merton compliant age assessments are undertaken on any UASC where there is a dispute about their age. There are currently five Social Workers trained to lead on age assessments. Further Age Assessment training is planned for February 2019 to increase the number of staff across the service to respond promptly to new arrivals who require a full age assessment.

2.12   **Current situation:**

2.13   There are currently 48 UASC including 16 young people who are missing. There have been 72 spontaneous UASC arrivals in Thurrock since April 1st 2018 as follows:

April	06
May	00
June	01
July	16
August	19
September	06
October	14
November	12

2.14 **Transfer timeframes:**

2.15 67 UASC have transferred under the National Transfer Protocols since April 1st 2018. 74 UASC arrived in Thurrock from outside the United Kingdom during this period.

2.16 The agreed target for transfer outs is within 10 days of the submission of the Unique Unaccompanied Child Record (UUCR). In the majority of cases these timescales are adhered to. In cases where this timescale is not met this is escalated to the Assistant Director for liaison with the relevant authority.

2.17 **Missing policy:**

2.18 There are currently 16 missing UASC. Of these 16, 13 are Algerian, 2 Vietnamese and one Iraqi. The length of time missing ranges from 7 days up to one individual who has been missing for 1096 days.

2.19 All missing children are subject to a Strategy Meeting with the Police and other connected professionals. This is subject to reviews at a frequency determined at the Strategy Meeting. The current missing protocols at Thurrock stipulate that all missing children remain open to Looked After processes.

2.20 The Eastern region is formulate an agreed policy across the Region. At present, where a child/young person goes missing prior to the arrangement of transfer within the Region they responsibility remains with the receiving authority.

2.21 **Placements (at the end of November):**

2.22 This is a snapshot within the month, as the numbers will fluctuate as Unaccompanied asylum seeking children/young people enter care and transfer within the Eastern Region throughout each month. There is a higher fluctuation for UASC, which is a reflection of the number of arrivals and the aim to transfer young people within 10 days of referral to other authorities within the Eastern Region.

All UASC are assessed at point of entry to identify the most appropriate placement to meet their needs. Children under 16 years of age are placed in regulated placements as per guidance for looked after children. This is usually

foster care. Thurrock has no UASC in Residential settings. Young people aged 16 – 17 years of age are further assessed for their vulnerabilities and independence skills and may be placed in supported accommodation where it is assessed that this is appropriate to their level of independence and need. This is a decision that is made on an individual case basis.

2.23 **Supported accommodation**

2.24 There are currently 17 UASC placed in supported accommodation placed in the following areas:

- Croydon
- Havering
- Newham
- Redbridge
- Thurrock Council
- Waltham Forest

2.25 The cost of supported accommodation placements for UASC ranges from £600 per week to £1050 per week, which is dependent on, need and support.

	UASC LAC placements
Year to date spend @ Period 7	£349,504
Grant Income	£271,044**
Range of costs	£600 to £1050 per week

2.26 **Foster placements:**

2.27 These are currently 15 UASC placed in foster care in the following areas:

- Thurrock
- Enfield
- Havering
- Lambeth
- Newham
- Redbridge

3.   Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Due to Thurrock's position geographically and in terms of transport links there is a higher proportion of UASC arrivals than in other local authorities as percentage of the childhood population as identified earlier in this report.

3.2 The arrival of children is unpredictable in nature and children arrive in the area at short notice and require a rapid response in order to ensure that appropriate interventions are in place in a timely way.

3.3   We have recently reassessed our duty system across the whole of the Looked After Children service to increase our capacity and flexibility in dealing with these fluctuations in demand.

3.4   While arrangements for dispersing these children are well developed across the Eastern Region there can be issues, which cause delay including children going missing prior to transfer; local authorities experiencing difficulties locating placements and transfer and young people becoming settled in their placements making moving them more traumatic and difficult.

3.5   Where delay occurs the matter is escalated to Assistant Director level to ensure a robust challenge with the relevant Local Authority.

3.6   Brief age assessments can be open to challenge and cause delay.

3.7   We are in the process of utilising the expertise of the UASC Regional Co-ordinator in order educate our staff and ensure that there are consistent expectations in relation to this process.

3.8   Merton compliant age assessment is a specialised piece of work that requires relevant training.

3.9   The relevant training is being extended to staff across the service in February 2019. This will increase our capacity to carry out this work.

4.   Reasons for Recommendation

4.1   Members of the Committee to be informed on the issues and challenges in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. Officers accept there is a real challenge meeting the needs of these children given the volume that arrive in Thurrock from outside of the United Kingdom

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

5.1   None

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

6.1   None

7.   Implications

7.1   **Financial**

        Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**

                                       Management Accountant

The cost of supported accommodation placements for UASC ranges from £600 per week to £1050 per week, which is dependent on, need and support.

	UASC LAC placements
Year to date spend @ Period 7	£349,504
Grant Income	£271,044**
Range of costs	£600 to £1050 per week

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Deputy Head of Legal, Social Care and Education

Section 17 Children Act 1989 imposes a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.

Children seeking asylum (UASC) who have no responsible adult to care for them are separated or 'unaccompanied' and are therefore 'in need'. The local authority has a duty to assess such children under section 17 Children Act 1989, and then, almost always, to accommodate them under section 20 Children Act 1989.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**

Community Development Officer

Individual needs of children and young people which include their gender, religion, language and disability are considered. There is also the need to consider risks to children and young people such as sexual exploitation, gang related violence and trafficking.

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

- None

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):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

Janet Simon

Strategic Lead – Children Looked After

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15 January 2019	ITEM: 10
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Children's Social Care Performance	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	N/A

Report of: Jackie Groom**,** Strategic Lead of Performance, Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children and Families
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
This report is Public

Executive Summary

Thurrock has seen demand rise in the second half of the year for children's social care. Work has focussed on ensuring children get the right help at the right time. The rate of referrals is below similar authorities matched for need but more referrals result in full assessment of need and any risks. This is a more proportionate response for families. This has been achieved through the work of the "MASH" the multi-agency safeguarding hub and improving access to the Early Help Service. Early Help is currently supporting 730 children and their families.

The numbers of children subject to a child protection plan due to concern about abuse or neglect have reduced because we are starting fewer plans and reducing the length of time children are subject to plans.

The number of children looked after has also reduced this year and this has been achieved by reducing the length of time a child is looked after by progressing plans for long term care more quickly. This means that children who can return to live with their family or relatives do so more quickly and the smaller number of younger children who cannot live safely with their family are placed with an adoptive family sooner. The rate of children looked after has fallen over the last two years and is now coming more in line with similar authorities matched by need. The number of young children placed with adoptive parents or in permanent care with relatives has increased. The number of children adopted has risen from 7 last year. It is likely to be14 this year.

Children looked after are making good educational progress with progress scores better than national average figures for looked after children. Performance this year being in the top 25% of authorities. The commitment of schools and our virtual

school deserve credit for ensuring educational support helps our children do as well as they can. Despite disadvantage they have faced we want our children to do as well as children in the general school population and we are reducing the gap in attainment. This will have long term benefits for children's wellbeing as they grow up.

Our care leavers are doing well with 69% in education training or employment which is higher than in similar authorities matched by need.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That members note the areas of improvement in Children's Social Care and work undertaken to manage demand for statutory social care services

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report provides a summary of Children's Social Care performance. It describes current activity levels and performance of Children's social care services in responding to the needs of vulnerable children.

2.2 Thurrock produces a number of data sets and performance reports to meet internal and external reporting requirements. Teams and Managers use the data to understand and respond to changes in activity levels and to monitor and respond to the quality and timeliness of services and information about how well children are doing. The information is discussed with front line workers so we know how well we are doing.

The data in this report is from the latest performance digest (October 2018), regional benchmarking data and national data sets. This data has been presented and discussed with the Social Care Senior Management Team and the Corporate Director's Performance Group
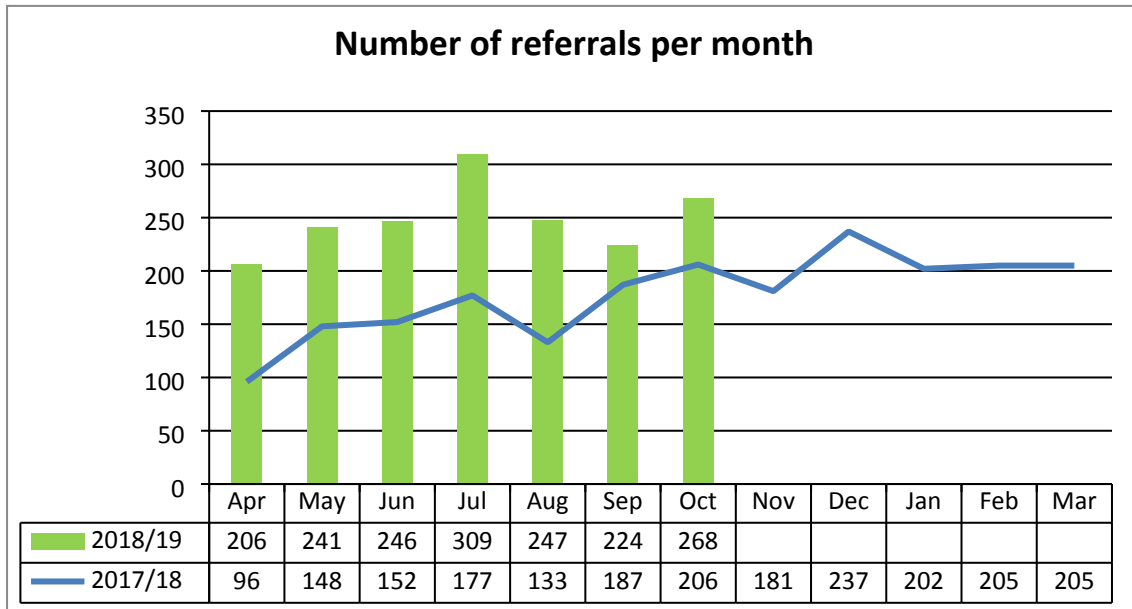
3. Performance

3.1 Contacts and Referrals

3.2 Thurrock is managing demand well at the front door (MASH) of Children's Social Care. Compared to previous years the rate of contacts and referrals has dropped. We receive on average about 500 contacts per month. Each month on average we receive about 220 referrals for October this was 268. The table shows a moderate rise in referrals in the second half of the year. Reduction in contacts in referrals reflects more confidence among partner agencies about appropriate referrals and in use of Early Help. Most contacts come from the Police schools and health but families also get in touch when they need help themselves. Contacts are calls about concerns for a child which are largely dealt with by giving advice or by referral to Early Help. Referrals are those circumstances that need a social care intervention because of more serious concerns about a child's wellbeing or development.

The number of re referrals has been much reduced in the last two years giving us confidence about the impact of work with families and is currently 9.3% compared to 22% for similar authorities matched for need.

Number of Referrals**.**

Number of referrals per month

|	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2018/19	206	241	246	309	247	224	268					
2017/18	96	148	152	177	133	187	206	181	237	202	205	205

3.3   Children subject to Child Protection Plans

The numbers of children subject to a child protection plan due to concern about abuse or neglect have reduced because we are starting fewer plans and reducing the length of time children are subject to plans. Plans are reviewed in a timely way so that children and families understand what needs to change and progress.

There are 200 children subject to Child Protection plans in October. This reflects a rate of 47 per 10,000 child population compared to similar authorities at a rate of 51. The % of children remaining on a plan for more than two years is currently 3% which is higher than similar authorities at 2%. This is a key area of focus and we expect to see this reduce in coming months to ensure children and families where risk is reduced have plans ended quickly and where risk has not reduced decisions are not delayed about next steps. Strengthening Early Help can help build confidence among professionals about stepping down child protection plans when families can have continued support without a child protection plan.

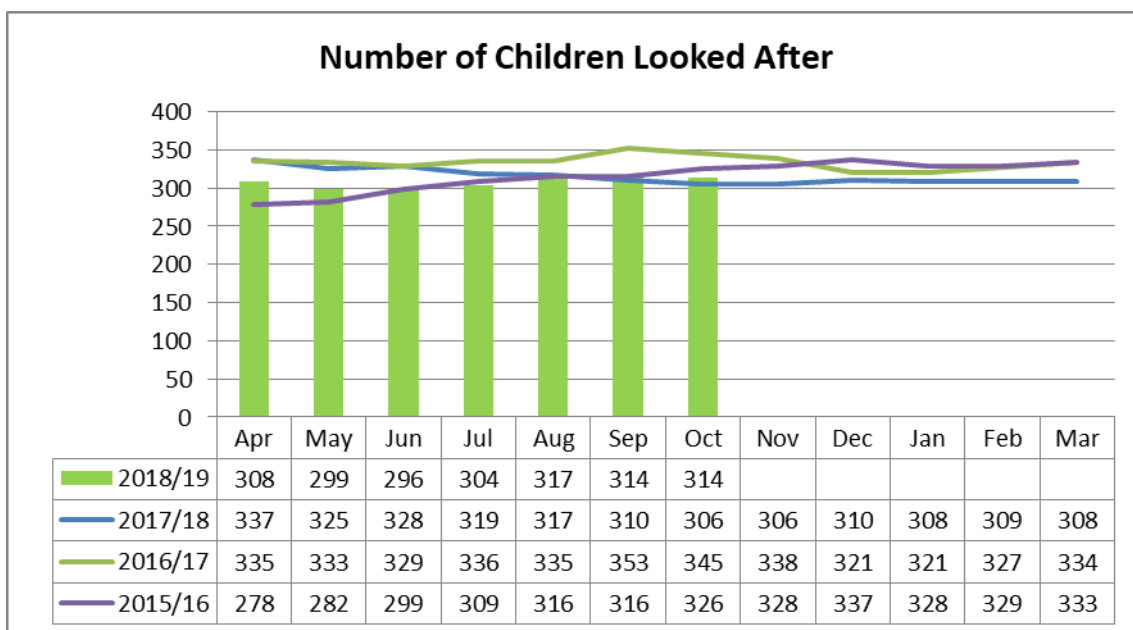Rate of Child protection plans [Rate calculation allows comparison with other similar authorities]
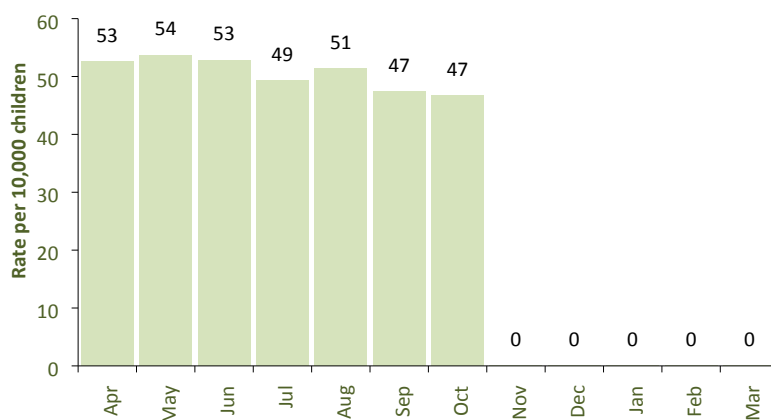
3.4   Children Looked After

The number of children looked after has reduced this year and this has been achieved by reducing the length of time a child is looked after by progressing plans for long term care more quickly. Our numbers are a little above similar authorities but have reduced this year coming more in line with the average. This means that children who can return to live with their family or relatives do so more quickly and the smaller number of younger children who cannot live safely with their family are placed with an adoptive family sooner. The rate of children looked after has fallen over the last two years and is now coming more in line with similar authorities matched by need. The number of young children placed with adoptive parents or in permanent care with relatives has increased. The number of children adopted will rise from 7 last year to 14 this year.

There are currently 314 looked after children of whom 46 are unaccompanied asylum seeking children. 17 children have a disability. For ease of comparison our rate of children looked after per 10,000 child population is currently 73.3 compared to similar authorities at 69.50. Last year our rate was 79.

The scrutiny of reviews by the independent reviewing officers is key to ensuring plans for children are progressed and that the best outcomes are achieved for children in our care. Currently 84% of reviews are held on time. Performance needs to improve further to ensure consistent performance is over 90%. This will be achieved by improving coordination and planning of meetings which is currently being undertaken to improve performance.

Number of Children Looked After

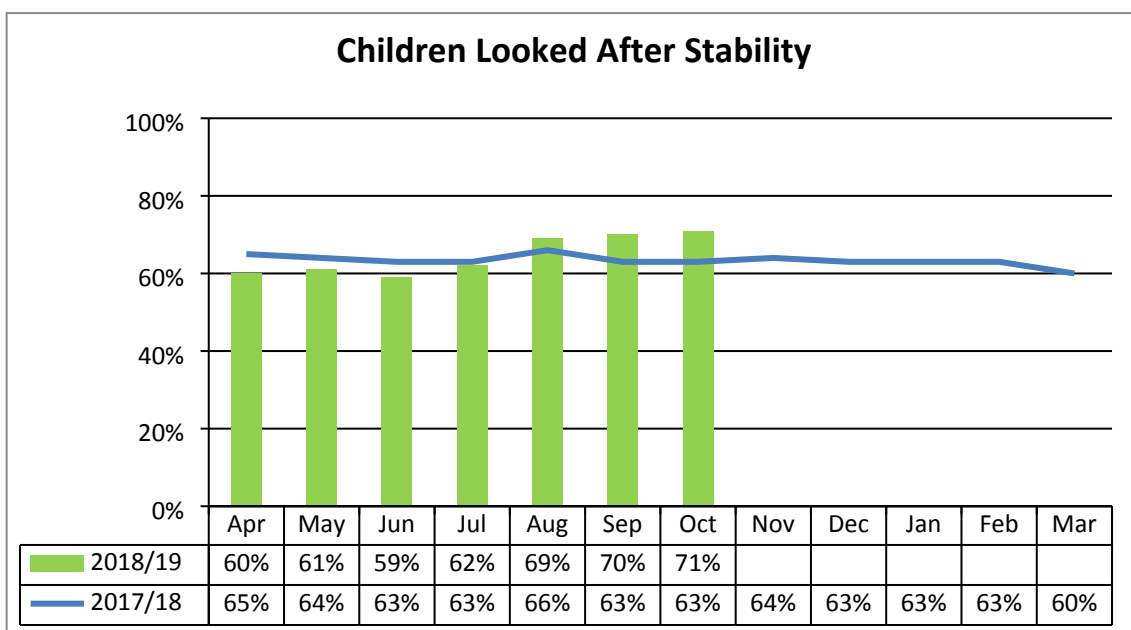|	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2018/19	308	299	296	304	317	314	314					
2017/18	337	325	328	319	317	310	306	306	310	308	309	308
2016/17	335	333	329	336	335	353	345	338	321	321	327	334
2015/16	278	282	299	309	316	316	326	328	337	328	329	333

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children remains high in Thurrock.

Number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2018/19	36	30	28	35	43	45	46					
2017/18	49	48	43	40	38	35	35	31	33	33	30	34
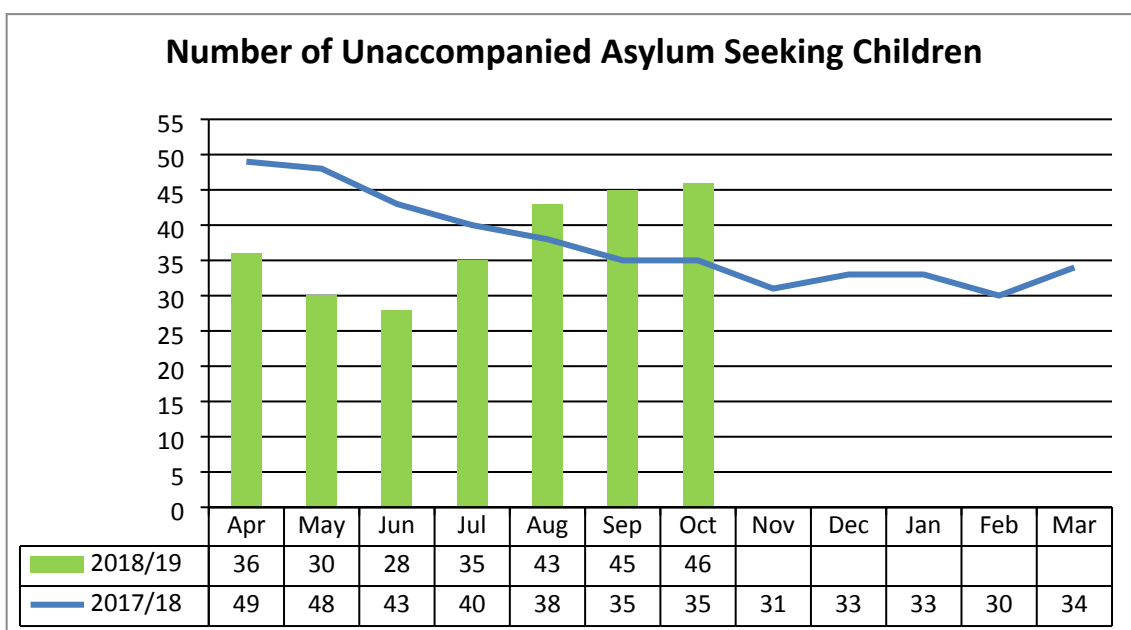
Placement stability for children is improving from previous years and this contributes to their sense of security and emotional wellbeing and supports them doing well in education. Factors that affect placement stability are good matching of children to placements that meet their needs. Stability has improved in October from 60 to 71% of children in the same placement for the last two years compared to similar authorities where the figure is 67.4%.

Children Looked After Stability

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2018/19	60%	61%	59%	62%	69%	70%	71%					
2017/18	65%	64%	63%	63%	66%	63%	63%	64%	63%	63%	63%	60%

3.5 Adoption

The number of children who are adopted or placed for adoption has increased this year from 7 to an expected 14 by the end of the year. The current number of children adopted exceeds last year's figure already. The numbers of children adopted is low compared to similar authorities at 29. The average time for a child from entering care to being placed with adopters has reduced from an average of 565 days in 2015 – 17 to 175 days this year. The time scale from Court authority to place to matching with adopters has reduced from an average of 193 days to 40 days this year. This has been achieved by tracking processes to achieve placement weekly to reduce delay. Timeliness is now the shortest in the eastern region, which is good performance.

3.6 Children with missing episodes

Children with missing episodes have reduced from 25 to 22; for these children the number of episodes has reduced from 76 to 57 in October. All children are offered an independent return interview to try to address their reasons for going missing. The reasons range from not being settled in placement to the draw of friends.

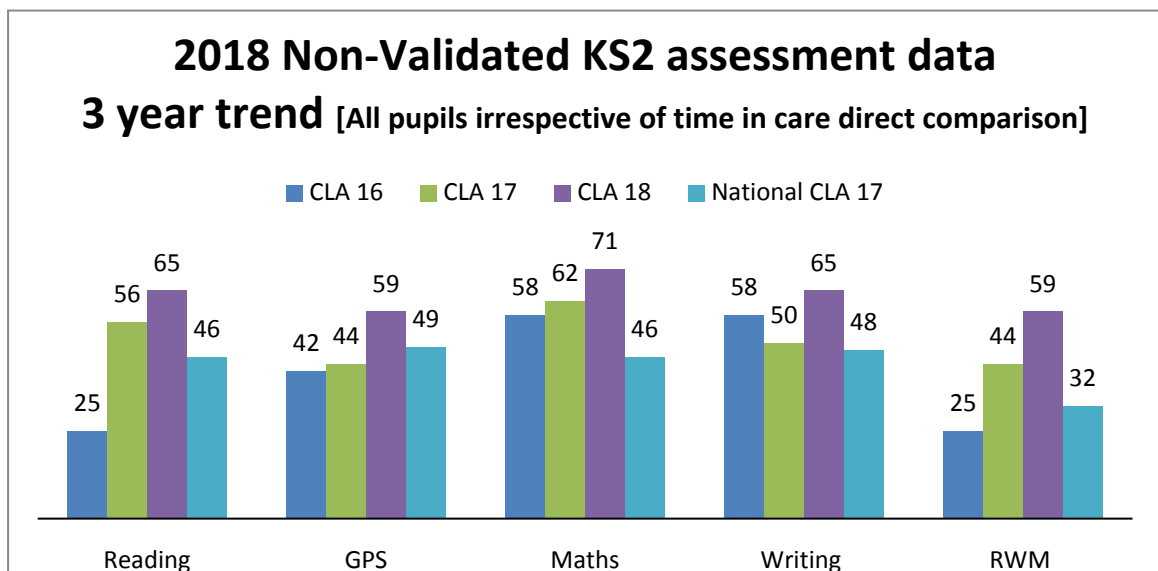3.7 Educational attainment of children looked after

Children looked after are making good educational progress with progress scores better than national average figures for looked after children. Performance this year is in the top 25% of authorities. The commitment of schools and our virtual school deserve credit for ensuring educational support helps our children do as well.

The attainment of children at Key Stage 1[KS1] improved last year reducing the attainment gap with non-looked children. Performance is significantly

above national CLA attainment figures. Indicative data for this year for KS1 saw 83% of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and writing which is above national average, although only 50% achieved it in maths.

% pupils assessed as working at or exceeding the Expected Standard KS1 2018 - Non- Validated
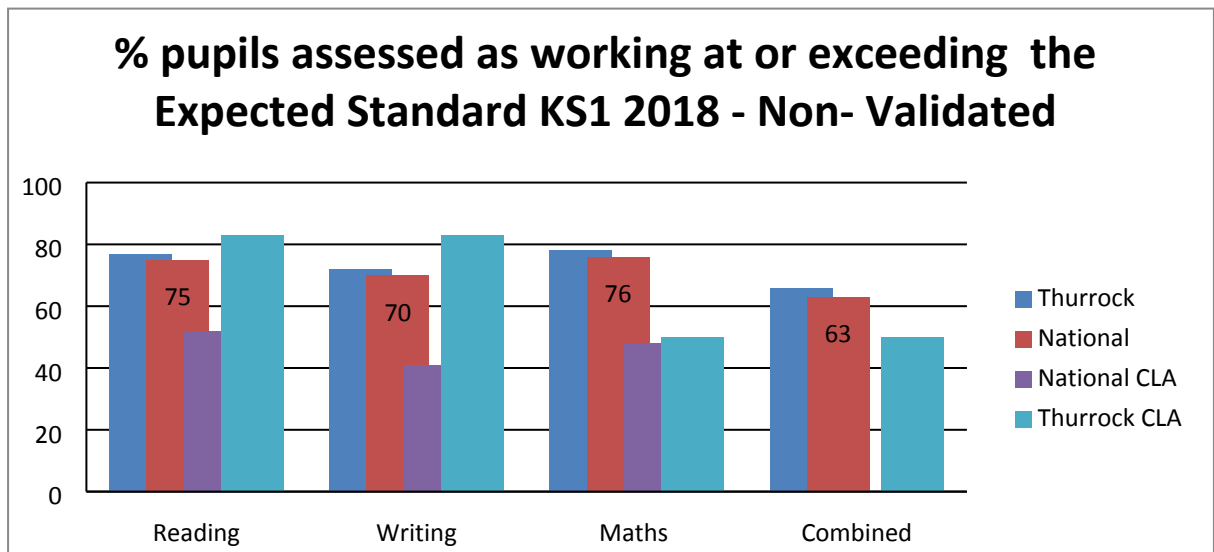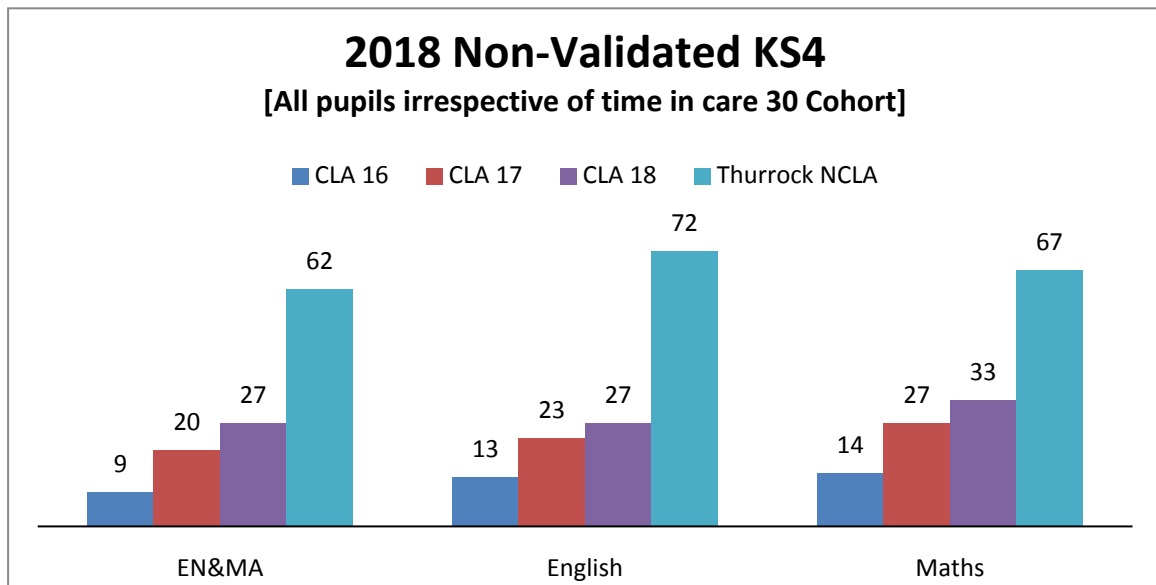

Since 2016 children at Key Stage 2 [KS2] attainment has shown rapid improvement reducing the gap with the general child population for maths and writing in particular. Attainment is significantly above national and Eastern region for writing, maths and reading writing and maths [RWM] combined. In 2017 KS2 data for those eligible for the tests saw further improvements for meeting expected standards. Indicative data for KS2 in 2018 has shown further improvement with 59% achieving expected in reading writing and maths combined.

2018 Non-Validated KS2 assessment data

3 year trend [All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]

For Children at Key Stage 4 there has been an improvement for Progress 8 score from -0.81 to -0.61 this is better than National attainment levels for children looked after. The "Attainment 8" score showing progress remains

above national children looked after attainment figures. In 2018 of those eligible for taking maths and English at GCSE, 47% achieved the expected grade of 4 or above. 27% of the total cohort achieved maths and English.

2018 Non-Validated KS4
[All pupils irrespective of time in care 30 Cohort]

■ CLA 16　■ CLA 17　■ CLA 18　■ Thurrock NCLA

	EN&MA	English	Maths
CLA 16	9	13	14
CLA 17	20	23	27
CLA 18	27	27	33
Thurrock NCLA	62	72	67

Attendance of our CLA pupils improved significantly from 86.6% in 15/16 to 94.6% in 16/17 In 17/18 it was 94.1% with a reduction of unauthorised absence from 2.5% in 16/17 to 1.8%. We have a very clear policy in place and processes for improving attendance. There are no permanent exclusions for over 5 years. The number of pupils having a Fixed Term Exclusion is reducing and in 17/18 was the lowest it has been for 5 years.

3.8　Fostering

Most of our children looked after are placed with foster carers. We recruit and support our own foster carers but also have to use independent agency foster carers to get the right match for a child.

Current performance as of August 2018 for in-house fostering provision is as follows:

Area	Number
Number of new carers approved between Apr 18 to Sep 18	4
Number of mainstream fostering applications current in progress	8
Number of current fostering households	98

3.9   Care Leavers

The percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training has improved from 61% last year to 69% in October. This is better than the similar authority average of 50.89%.

The percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has improved from from 87 to 92%

The realignment of the aftercare service into the Inspire Youth Hub has seen a significant improvement in the number of young people in education employment and training. The On-Track Thurrock Programme continues to offers a bespoke programme to ensure that care leavers can access education, employment and training. We have had considerable success with this.

For many of our care leavers we provide our Prince's Trust programme which is a way in which we enable young people to build confidence. We actively seek apprenticeship opportunities for our care leavers and continue to provide a range of support programmes to enable them to engage fully in the local communities in which they live.

Housing remains one of the key challenges for young people who are Leaving Care, to address this we have further developed the Head Start Housing Programme – which will look to support care leavers into a HMO. This will provide a holistic approach to supporting young people in both sourcing and sustaining tenancies. We recognise that one of the key barriers relating to this is budget management and to address this we have developed a budgeting programme to ensure that young people can manage finances.

The current position shows that we have 1.1% of care leavers 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.

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   None

7.   Implications

7.1   **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**

Management Accountant

There are no financial implications, however any costs associated with this report need to be met from existing resources.

7.2   **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.3   **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**

Strategic Lead – Community Development and Equalities

There are no diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

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

N/A

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

N/A

Report Author:

Jackie Groom

Strategic Lead – Performance, Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence

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Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Parenting   **Year:** 2018/2019

Dates of Meetings: 6 June 2018, 5 September 2018, 15 January 2019, 6 March 2019

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
6 June 2018		
Information on Recent External Placements for Young People	Janet Simon	Officers
Briefing Note – Attainment of Children Looked After 2017 Validated Data	Keeley Pullen	Officers
Social Care Development Plan: CLA Progress Report	Sheila Murphy	Officers
Children's Social Care Performance	Sheila Murphy	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
5 September 2018		
~~Annual Report on the Health of Looked After Children~~ **Deferred**	~~Paula Gregory~~	~~Members~~
Children's Social Care Performance	Sheila Murphy	Members
IRO Annual Report for 2017/18	Brian Relph	Officers
Children in Care Council Update	Children in Care	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
15 January 2019		
Children in Care Council Update	Children in Care	Officers

Looked After Children Health Report	Paula Gregory	Members
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After - Academic Year 2017-2018	Keeley Pullen	Officers
Report on Unregistered / Private HMO's for Young People in Thurrock	Janet Simon	Members
Report on Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)	Janet Simon	Members
Children's Social Care Performance	Ann Goldsmith	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
6 March 2019		
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item

Clerk: Wendy Le
Last Updated: 7 January 2019