

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 **21 March 2023**

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices 3, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL.

Membership:

Councillors Paul Arnold (Chair), Adam Carter (Vice-Chair), Maureen Pearce, Georgette Polley, Kairen Raper and Lee Watson

Chair, Children in Care Council

Laura Hall, Thurrock Open Door

Wendy Caswell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association

Jenny Josling, Vice-Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association

Substitutes:

Councillors George Coxshall, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard and Joycelyn Redsell

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 12
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on 4 January 2023.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	
5 Children's Social Care Performance 2022-2023	13 - 36

6	SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Looked After Children, January 2022 - December 2022	37 - 60
7	Children in Care Council Update (Verbal)	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **13 March 2023**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non-pecuniary

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



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

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 4 January 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Paul Arnold (Chair), Adam Carter (Vice-Chair), Maureen Pearce and Kairen Raper

Chair, Children in Care Council
Laura Hall, Thurrock Open Door
Wendy Caswell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Jenny Josling, Vice-Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association

Apologies: Councillors Georgette Polley and Lee Watson

In attendance: Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help
Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director for Housing Management
Dan Jones, Strategic Lead, Looked After Children
Helen Alabede, Lead Clinician Community Paediatrics NHS Mid and South Essex (left at 8.30pm)
Yvonne Anarfi, Deputy Director for Safeguarding NHS Mid and South Essex
Joseph Devlin, Operations Manager Youth Offending Service (left at 8.16pm)
Ruth Murdock, Strategic Lead of Quality Assurance and Reviewing
Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
Tina Russel, Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships
Trevor Willis, Service Manager for Safeguarding and Reviewing
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's website.

21. Minutes

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting meeting on 6 September 2022 were approved as a correct record.

22. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

23. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

24. The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After – Academic Year 2021-2022

The Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After Children presented the report found on pages 125 - 178 of the agenda.

The Chair of the Committee enquired the role of the service offered to Looked after Children by the Virtual School. The Headteacher of the Virtual School explained that her service worked along side the SEN (Special Educational Needs) Team, she highlighted there were approximately 61 pupils with an education healthcare plan and approximately 50 pupils that had been identified as requiring additional support within their schools.

She continued to advise that their role was the advisory and the challenge, along with providing liaison and guidance with sometimes very practical help to ensure the need of the children attending the Virtual School were met.

The Chair of the Committee followed up his question referring to page 92 and 35% of children who had a persistent absence. He sought if this was of need to be looked into to find out why Children were missing school.

The Virtual Headteacher advised there were 35 pupils not 35% of pupil, who were from the whole virtual school aged from reception through to year 11 which were the 35 Pupils with persistent absence. She explained this was prior to COVID and although there were small numbers of persistent absence the school would put some interventions in place, and it would work to ensure pupils were still learning and attending school.

Councillor Carter thanked the Virtual Headteacher for her report and commented he was pleased to see Thurrock's Children were doing well statistically. He mentioned the report referred to a spending overview for tutoring and sought how much each session costed, along with how many pupils attended the sessions and how long each session lasted.

The Virtual Headteacher explained at any one time there were year five pupils who were being provided tuition which currently equated to approximately 14 pupils and at the same time there were 14 year six pupils who were also receiving tuition. She continued to explain that with approximately 28 Pupils receiving tutoring for two hours per week at £48 per hour, that is where the majority of the funding given to virtual school was spent.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2021-2022 and uses this information to acknowledge, evaluate, scrutinise and, if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all C/YP LA.

25. Children's Social Care Performance 2022-2023

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help presented the report found on pages 11 - 34 of the agenda.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help for her report and enquired as to what Officers were going to do with all of the KPIs mentioned with the report.

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help explained as a service there is a monthly Development Board where each of the Strategic Leads produce a development report, so Officers can look at the performance within their teams and their services. There was also a monthly performance meeting where Officers undertook a deep dive on specific areas to try and come up with solutions or improvements.

Councillor Carter thanked the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help for her report and commented it was pleasing to see the figures balancing out following the pandemic. He asked for a breakdown of the missing episodes for example how many missing episodes were without authorisation and how many Children were currently missing. The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help confirmed Officers had the figures and they would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That members note improvements and areas for improvement in Children's Social Care and note the work that is undertaken to ensure good and improving performance.

26. Children In Care Council Update

The Thurrock Open Door and Children in Care Council Representative presented their report and in doing so highlighted the following points:

- The CICC had a newly appointed Chairperson Jasmine and this was her first Corporate Parenting meeting. She didn't wish to speak at the meeting but wanted to come along to experience what the meeting was like.
- For those of you who don't know the Children In Care Council were a group of young people in care or care leavers who meet once a month to discuss different things going on in care whether that be updates from the Council or whether that just be general from different services who sought the options of Children in Care
- Our members are 11 years plus mostly due to the nature of our discussions, we deemed 11years as the most as an appropriate age. We do have some care leavers and some who are over 25 years, who we have asked back to give us updates on their on their lives so that so that the younger members can see the future and what it might look like for them.

- We have worked on providing and promoting a new leaflet and a new booking system with a new referral form, which has been circulated to all Social Workers. Should anyone wish to attend a meeting they can contact me directly for information.
- Lastly we've got all of our meetings for the coming year from January to December booked, so hope that when we meet on the end of this month we can confirm our dates and circulate them.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the CCIC representative for her update and mentioned that he and Councillor Raper had attended a meeting back in December and he found it was very interesting to be part of the Childrens discussions. He continued by stating he felt it would be good if the dates could be circulated to all the members of the committee so they could attend to actually see what goes on sort first hand.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the work carried out by the Children in Care Council, the purpose, and the role of the Children in Care Council, and to establish what corporate parents need to do to help the Children in Care Council achieve their aims and objectives

27. Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report

The Service Manager for Safeguarding and Reviewing presented the report found on pages 41 - 68 of the agenda.

It was enquired at 2.4 of the report it mentioned that 53% of children didn't know about their care plan. Members sought as to what Officers did to ensure that children understood what a care plan was and what was in their own care plan.

The Service Manager for Safeguarding and Reviewing explained this was feedback direct from children and young people looking more deeply it related to the language that was used. In order to try and address this Officers now included better ways of receiving feedback from young people including QR codes and making sure that the language used was a lot clearer.

RESOLVED:

For the Corporate Parenting Committee to review and comment on the IROAnnual report 2021 - 2022 and the recommendations in the report.

28. Joint Report on Initial Health Assessments for Looked After Children

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found on pages 69 - 76 of the agenda.

Councillor Carter thanked officers for the report and commented that it was quite disappointing to have asked for an update and not have it included as to where extra funding they were given has been spent. He continued by stating he understood Health Colleague's had contributed to the report, however, this had been an area of ongoing concern.

Councillor Carter stated he felt it was necessary to acknowledge the department and people like the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help who have worked really hard on getting these numbers back or improving them and it is external partners that are failing not only the Council but our Looked After Children.

RESOLVED:

Members are aware of the continuing performance issues with Initial Health Assessments and the action being taken by Children's Services and the NHS to improve this.

29. Children Looked After Health Report

The Deputy Director for Safeguarding NHS Mid and South Essex presented the report found on pages 77- 124 of the agenda.

Members of the Committee enquired if NELFT had accepted the additional funding from Thurrock and then said it couldn't be used to prioritise Thurrock's children and young people.

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children advised nationally the advice from NHS England was where a child was placed in any area of the country then they shouldn't be treated unfairly because they happen to be placed in a different local authority area. Therefore, a child placed within its local authority area cannot be prioritised over children from another local authority.

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help clarified that the funding didn't come from Thurrock Council but came from the ICB which was Health Colleague's.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Children Looked After Health Report be noted**
- 2. That members are aware of the key areas for improvements.**

30. Response to Urgent Actions 1 & 2 of National Review – Children with Disabilities and Complex Health Needs Placed in Residential Settings

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found on pages 179 - 200 of the agenda.

The Chair of the Committee referred to page 189 and mentioned there had been no new concerns about the conduct of a member of the workforce identified and there had been no new concerns. He enquired had there been concerns.

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children explained that it was not unusual in these settings for an allegation to be made against staff member or for concerns to be raised and for it to be looked into and resolved. Where Officers carried out a quality and safety review they had found that there had been issues raised but they had been appropriately notified and been appropriately followed up by the provider, Officers and the Local Authority where the child is placed.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are informed as to the outcomes of urgent actions one and two**
- 2. Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are advised on the development work planned to develop our oversight of residential homes and schools for children**

31. Corporate Parenting Committee - Work Programme 2022-2023

Members discussed the work programme for the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was agreed that the Chair would meet with the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help and Strategic Lead, Looked After Children to decide on items for the next meeting on 21st March 2023.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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21 March 2023		ITEM: 5
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Children’s Social Care Performance 2022-2023		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Anna Watkins, Business Intelligence Analyst		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children’s Social Care and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is: Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides information on the performance across Children Looked After and Aftercare. The overall performance for the service is good this report focusses on data of 2022-23.

At the end of Q3 2022-23, 291 children were looked after by Thurrock Council, a further 257 young adults were receiving services from Aftercare. Children and young people are visited regularly, and the management of missing children is consistent and reflects good partnership with the police and Thurrock Community Safety. Improvement is required in the timeliness of Initial Health Assessment which is an area of focus with health partners

The Care Leaving Service continues to be a focus for improvement, particularly to keep in touch and support young people into employment or education and to ensure they have the right accommodation to meet their needs.

Children are generally placed with foster carers or, where possible, with family members. Thurrock Council continues develop it’s ‘Think Family’ approach to reduce the need for children to enter care. Foster Care recruitment continues to develop local placements for children.

It has been previously reported to Corporate Parenting Committee that permanency planning continues to be impacted by the aftermath of COVID-19, although this is beginning to diminish as long-standing cases reach their conclusion.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Members note improvements and areas for improvement in Children's Social Care and note the work that is undertaken to ensure good and improving performance.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report provides a summary of Children's Social Care performance. It highlights key demand indicators for Children Looked After such as the number of children who are looked after, benchmarking data and key performance indicators.

2.2 Thurrock produces a number of data sets and performance reports to meet its internal and external reporting requirements. The data in this report is from the At a Glance monthly performance report, regional benchmarking data and national data sets. External reporting requirements include the annual statutory data return to the Department for Education (DfE) that all Local Authorities must provide.

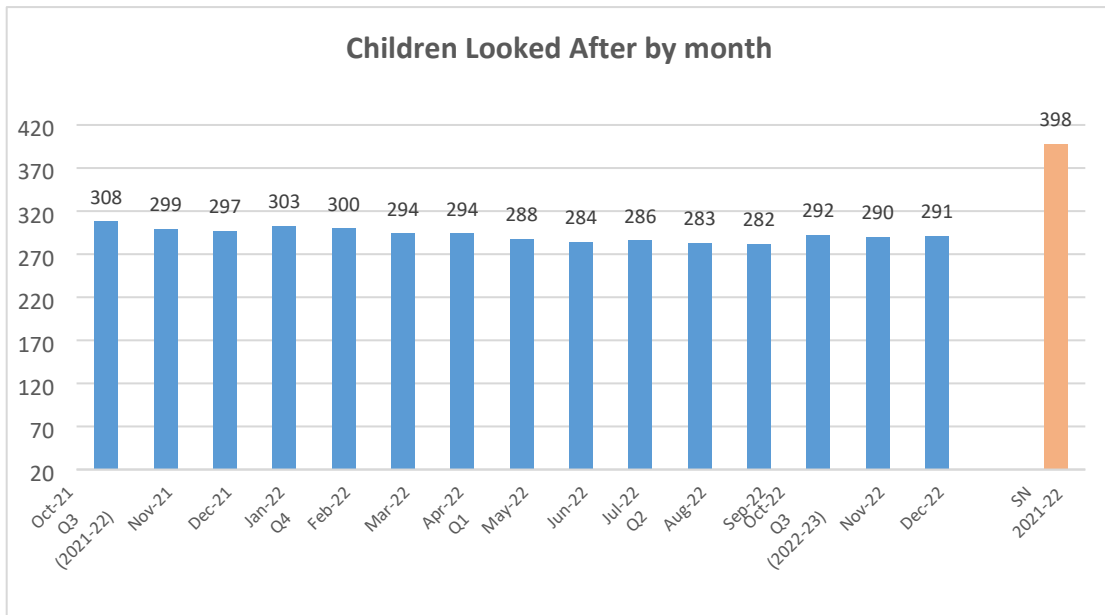
2.3 This data has been presented and discussed with the Children & Families Performance Group.

2.4 Teams and Managers use the data to understand and respond to changes in activity levels, to monitor and respond to the quality and timeliness of services and to collate information about how well children are doing. The information is also discussed with front line workers.

3. Performance Data for Children Looked After

3.1 Number of Children Looked After (CLA)

The graph below shows the number of children who were Looked After at the end of each month. There is monitoring of children who may need to become Looked After and there are regular reviews of children entering care. Where possible, children are returned to their family where safe and appropriate. Thurrock's Children in Care numbers have remained relatively steady year to date from 294 in April 2022 to 291 in December 2022. The service saw a reduction in care numbers from this year down to 282 in September but has seen an increase in line with the additional numbers of UASC following the increased quota for each local authority from 0.07% per child population to 0.1%.

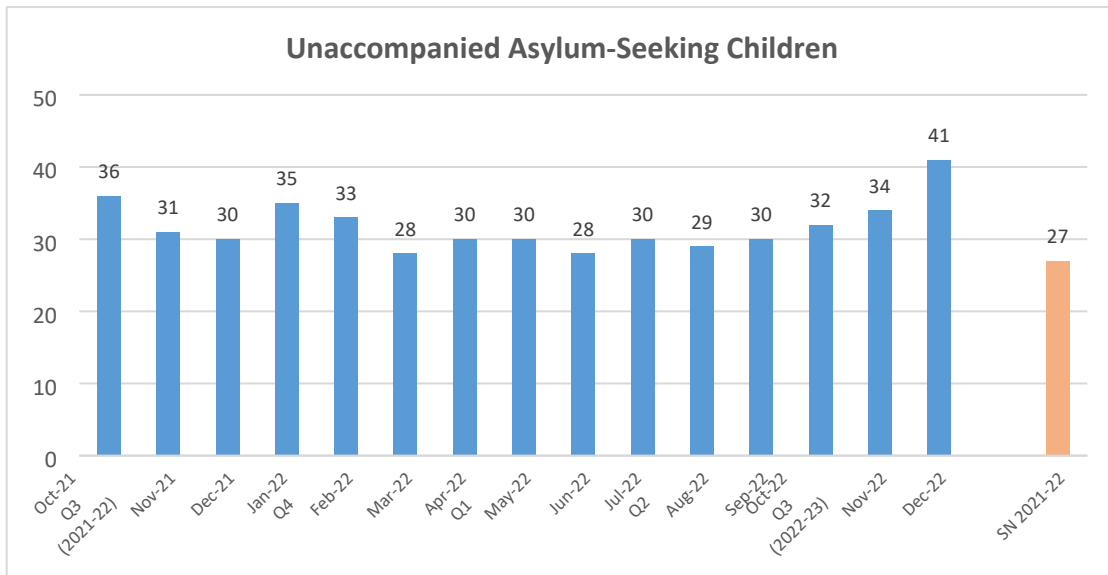


3.2 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

UASC are a subset of Thurrock's Children Looked After number. As an authority with ports of entry Thurrock has always had a steady amount of new UASC. The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) protocol for UASC first began operating in 2016 which formed a voluntary agreement between local authorities in England to ensure a fairer, more equitable distribution of unaccompanied children across local authorities. After February 2022 all local authorities have been directed to participate in the NTS (mandated NTS). From August 2022 the threshold for numbers of UASC in each local authority was raised from 0.07% of the general population to 0.1%. For Thurrock this represented an increase from 31 to 45. This means that Thurrock has to accept transfers of UASC in the scheme if we are below 45 UASC in our Child Looked After population. This represents an increased demand for placements, social work time and After Care support on a long-term basis. Between October and December 2022, there were 12 new UASC arrivals into Thurrock compared to 6 in the same period in 2021 and an overall increase from 31 in December 2021 to 41 in December 2022.

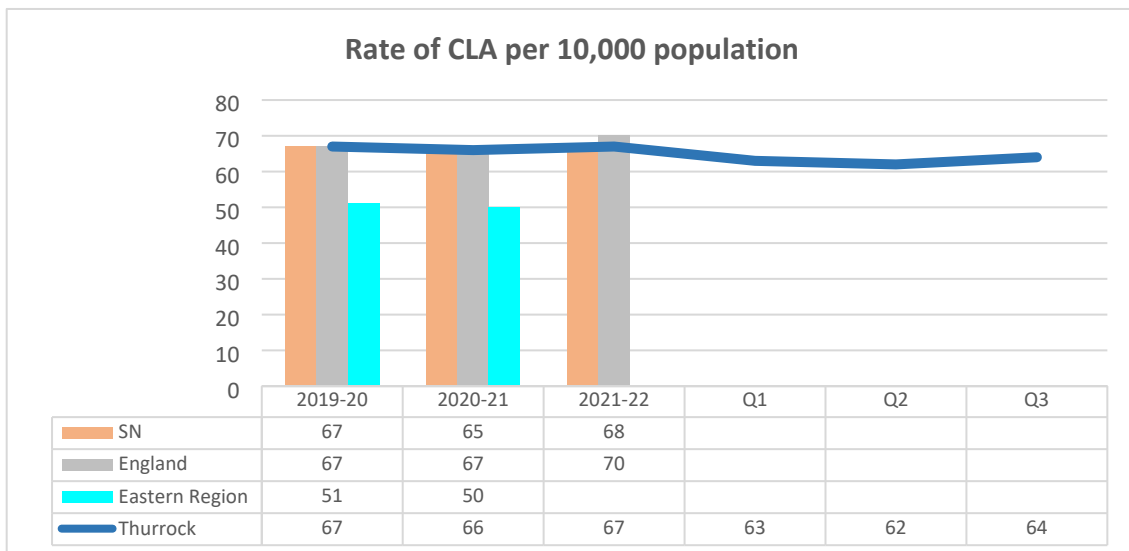
When a local authority reaches its allocated number there are arrangements in place for new arrivals to be transferred via the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The NTS is operated by Central Government with the Home Office responsible for administration of the scheme.

The below graph shows the number of UASC that were looked after at the end of each month since October 2021.



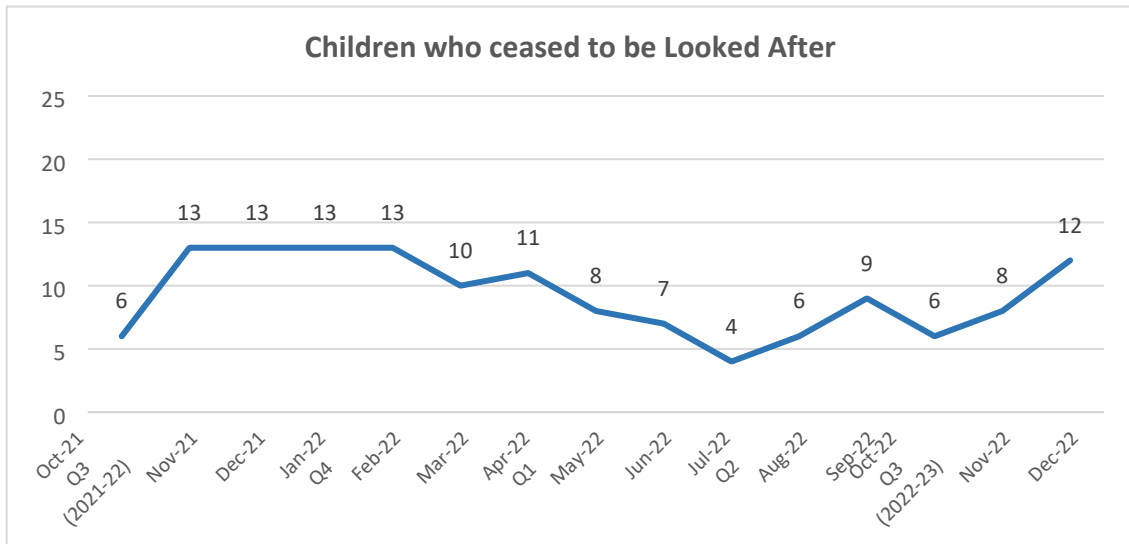
3.3 The Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 population

The graph below shows the rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 population of under 18-year-olds in Thurrock. At the end of December 2022 there were 291 Children Looked After in Thurrock with the rate of 64 per 10,000. Based on the benchmarking data 2021, Thurrock is below the Statistical Neighbour average of 68 and England average of 70 as at the end of December 2022. This demonstrates the work throughout the service to make sure the right children are coming into care and working with families to keep children within their family network/home where it is safe to do so. These lower looked after children numbers are despite the rise in numbers of UASC as a result of the national threshold rising.



3.4 Children Looked After episodes ceased and started

It is normal for the number of children leaving care to fluctuate. Between October and December 2022, 26 children ceased to be looked after compared to 32 in the same period in 2021-22.



The most common reason for children ceasing to be looked after was children returning home to live with their parents.

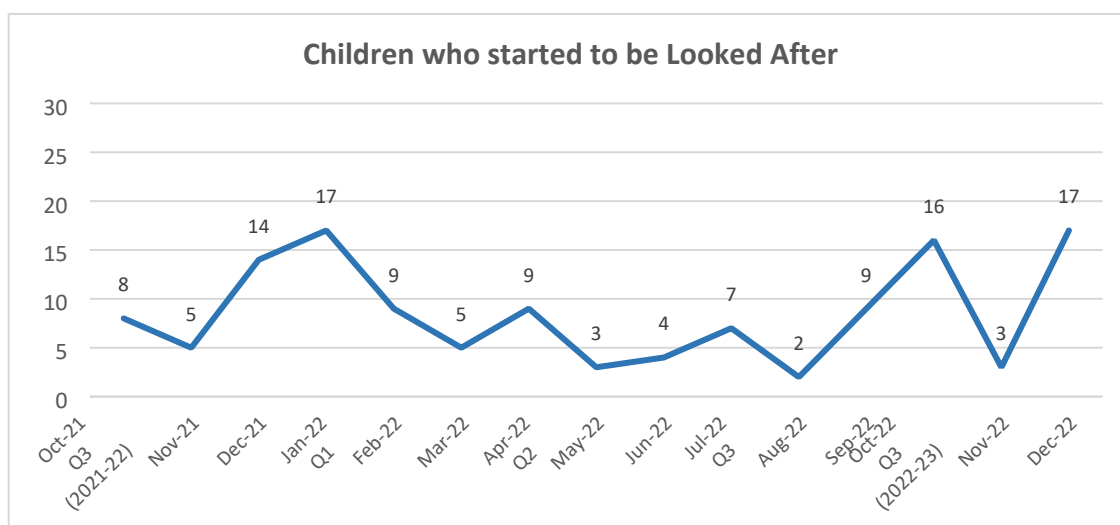
There are four factors contributing and impacting on the numbers of children in care in Thurrock:

- Numbers of children entering care
- Numbers of children leaving care
- Numbers of UASC entering care
- Numbers of UASC who remain looked after by Thurrock

The below charts show entries in and exits out of care over the last few years including the changing trajectory of the UASC population in line with the rise from 0.07% to 0.1%.

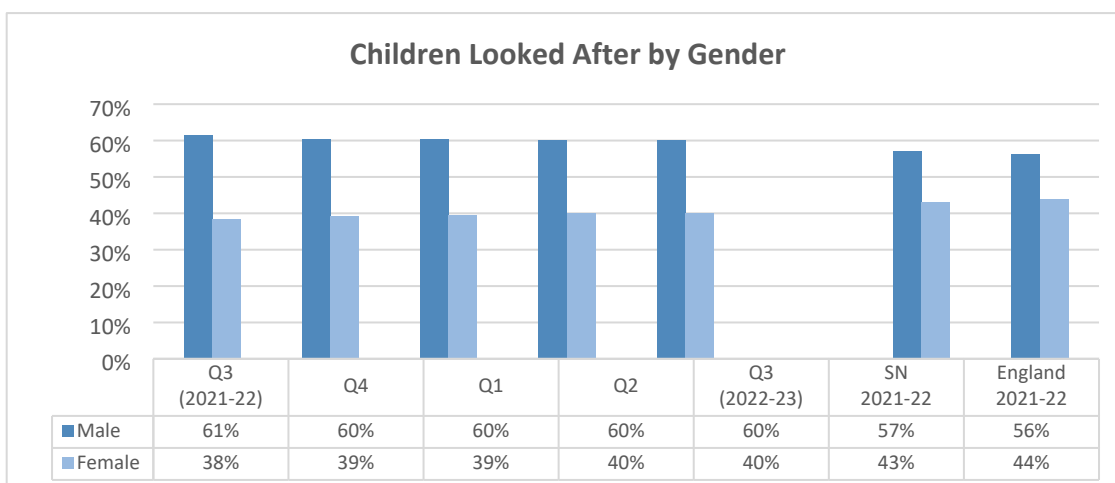
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Q3 2022-23 (Oct- Dec)
Total number Entering Care	203	242	150	121	36 (70 year to date)
UASC entering Care	91	75	36	38	12 (21 year to date)
Exiting Care	211	235	148	122	26 (71 year to date)
Number of CLA at end of reporting period	290	298	298	29	291
UASC Population at end of reporting period (% of CLA population)	31 (10.6%)	23 (7.7%)	24 (8%)	28 (9.4%)	41 (14%)

3.5 Children Looked After episodes started



3.6 Children Looked After by Gender

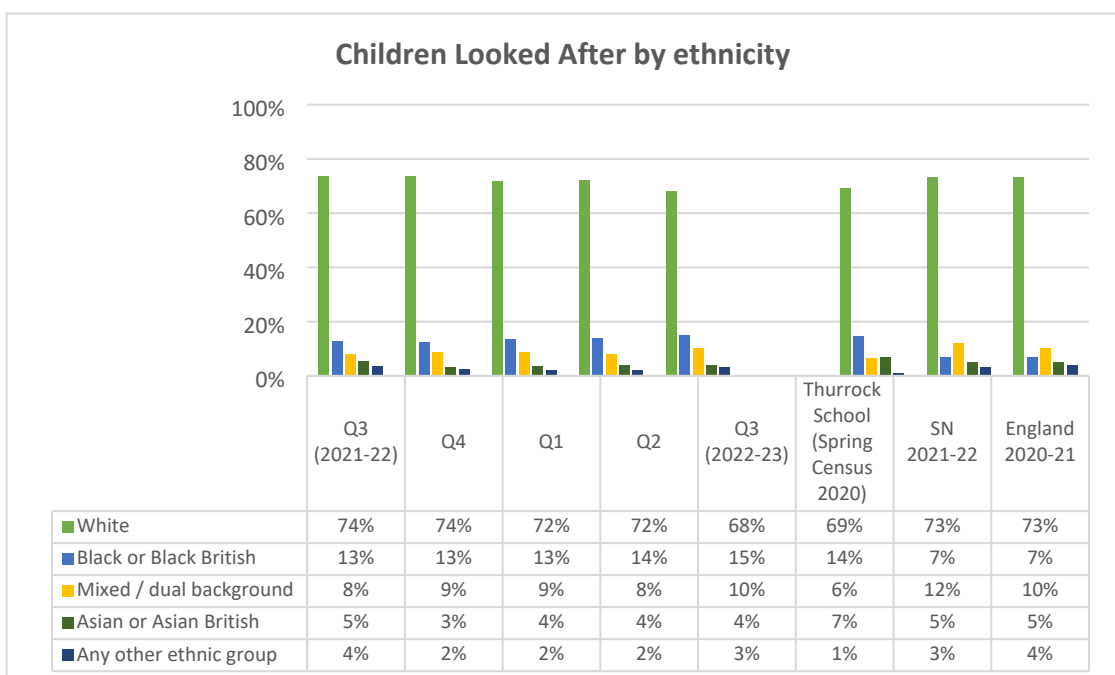
Based on the benchmarking data in 2021-22, the gender breakdown is slightly above Statistical Neighbours and England averages as of December 2022 which is likely a reflection of our percentage of UASC who are predominately males.



3.7 Children Looked After by ethnicity

Statistical Neighbour and England averages are included. However, for Thurrock, school census data provides a more appropriate comparison, given the population of Thurrock.

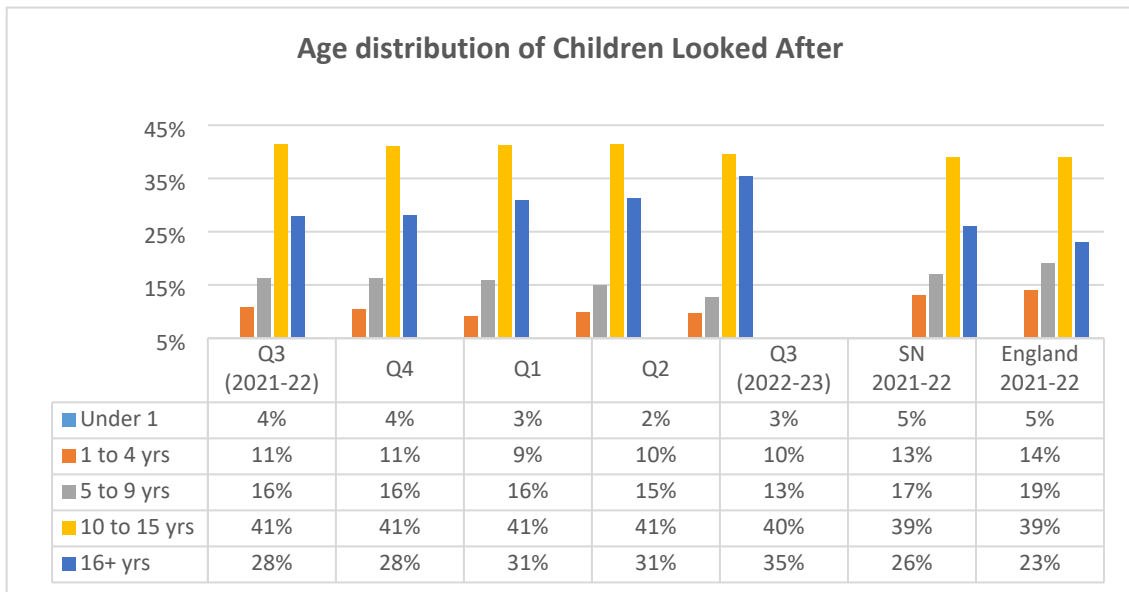
Thurrock's Children Looked After are predominantly White which is in line with Thurrock's School Census in Spring 2020 and the Statistical Neighbour and England averages.



3.8 Children Looked After age profile

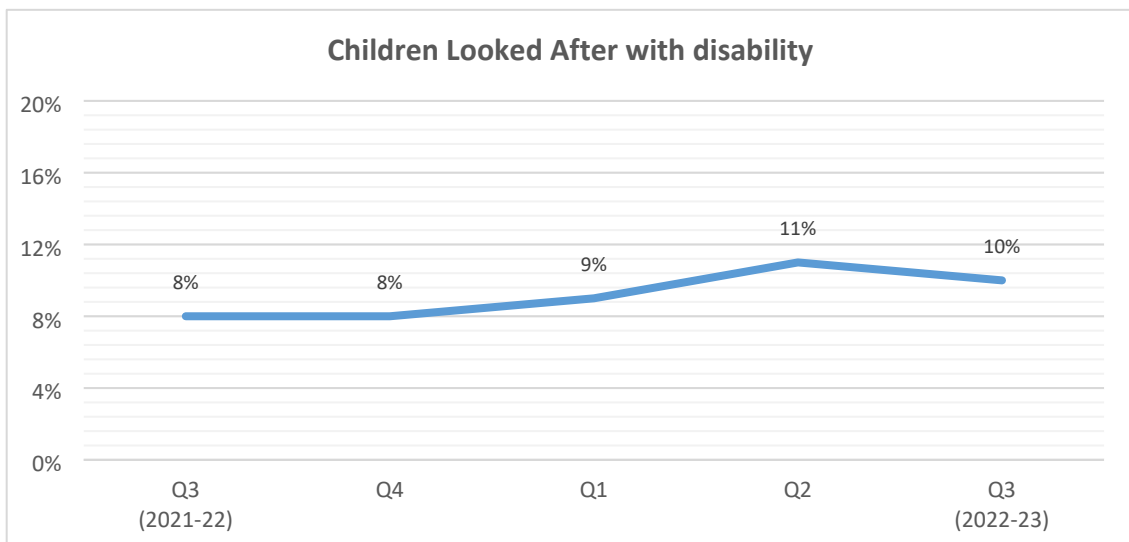
Based on the benchmarking data as of March 2022, the age profile of the Children Looked After cohort remains mostly stable and in line with the Statistical Neighbour and England averages. However, since July 2021, we have seen a 4% increase in the number of 16+ years. When comparing the 16+

with SN and England, Thurrock is above the Statistical Neighbour average of 26% and the England average of 23% as at the end of Q2 2022-23.



3.9 Children Looked After with a disability

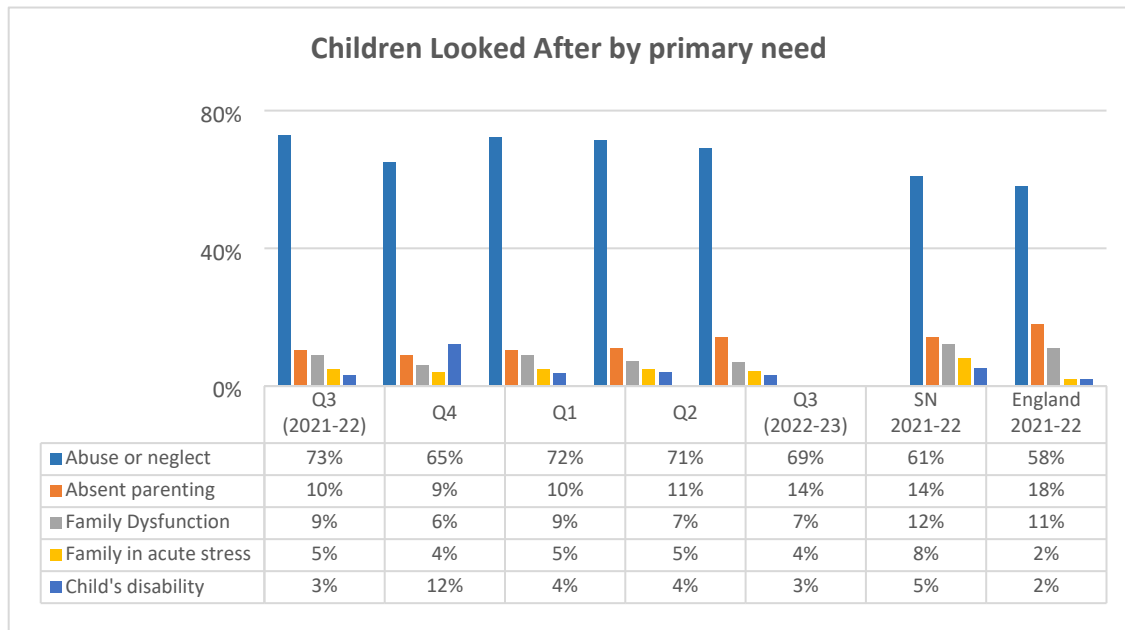
The number of children looked after with a disability has remained relatively stable since April 2021. At the end of December 2022, 29 (10%) of the total CLA cohort were recorded as having a disability. 22 of these children were boys aged 5 and over and 7 girls aged 13 and over. 21 of 29 disabled children were placed within 20 miles or less from their home.



3.10 Children Looked After by Primary Need

Most children become Looked After because of the significant harm they are experiencing or likely to experience. Where possible, Social Care provide

support and intervention to enable families to remain together and ensure that children only become looked after, when absolutely necessary.



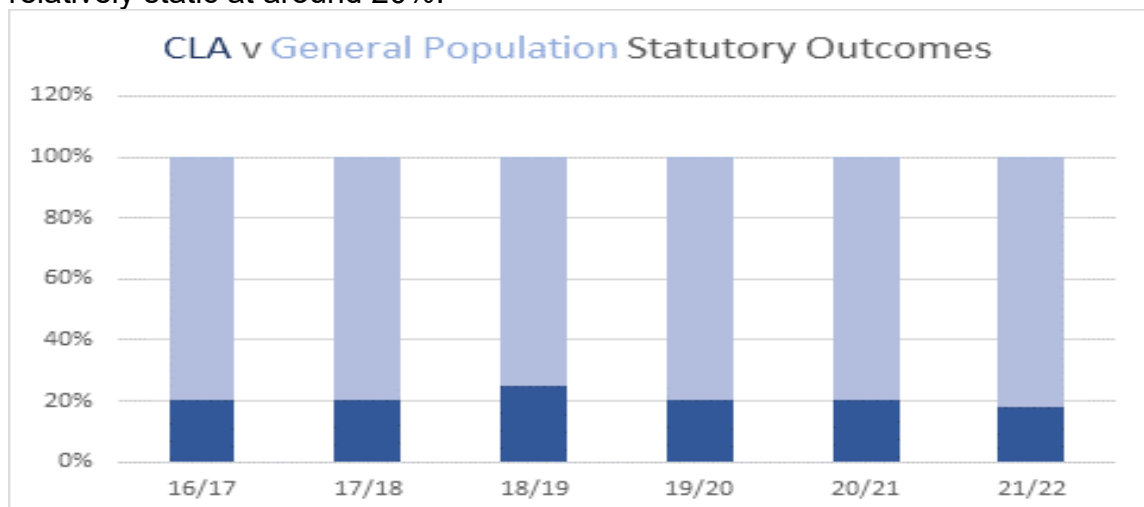
4. Number of CLA open to the Youth Offending Service (YOS)

4.1 Statutory Interventions

A statutory intervention is undertaken when a child has been convicted by the courts or made subject to a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution and consequently has YOS intervention.

During quarter 3 of 2022-23 there were 37 children open to the Youth Offending Service on statutory outcomes, 7 of these were looked after children. The 7 looked after children represented 19% of the young people open to YOS and were all white British.

The number of Children Looked After over the last five years has been relatively static at around 20%.



The above graph represents the percentage of Children Looked After versus the total number of young people in the Youth Justice System for the last five years. Despite an increase from 20% to 30% in 2018-19 the numbers of Children Looked After has been relatively static at around 20%. There were no notable reasons for the increase in 2018-19.

4.2 Youth Detention Accommodation

Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, any child that is made subject to a Youth Detention Accommodation Order (remand in custody) by the Courts automatically becomes looked after by the local authority.

Only 1 child was made subject to Youth Detention Accommodation during quarter 3 of 2022-23. This child was a white British male.

4.3 Out of court disposal panel

During Q3 for 2022/23 the out of court disposal panel dealt with 34 offences relating to 30 Thurrock children, of which 3 children had looked after status.

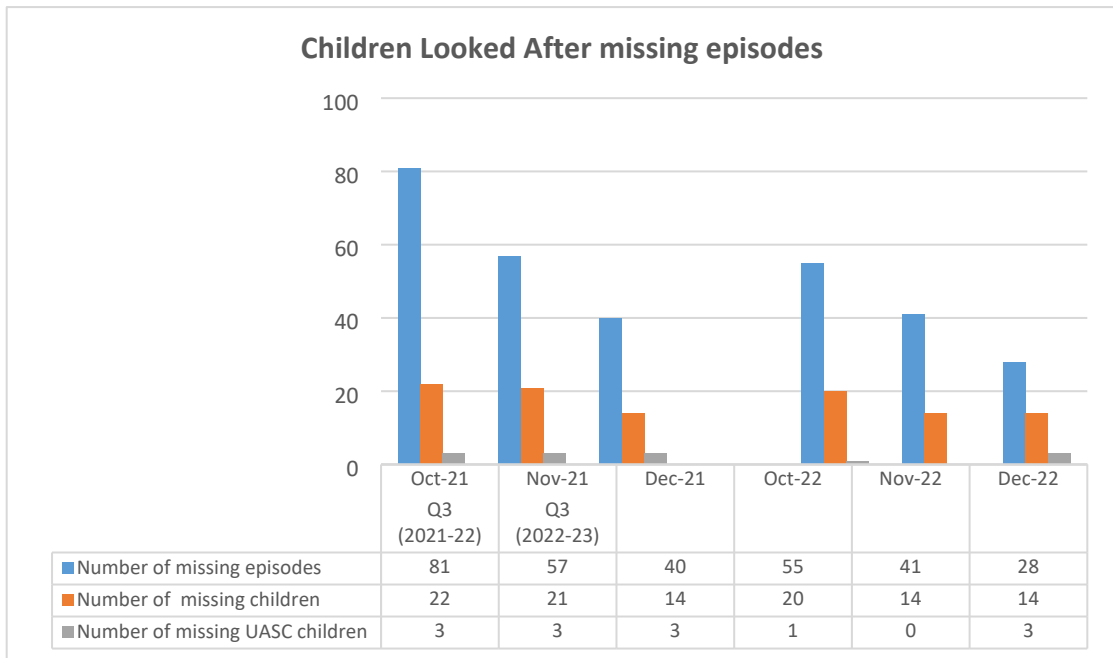
Thurrock YOS and Essex Police are committed to the national protocol¹ aimed at reducing the criminalisation of Children Looked After. This approach will be supported with a local pan-Essex protocol to ensure there is a focus on diverting any child (where possible) who is Looked After from the Criminal Justice System.

5. Children Looked After missing episodes started

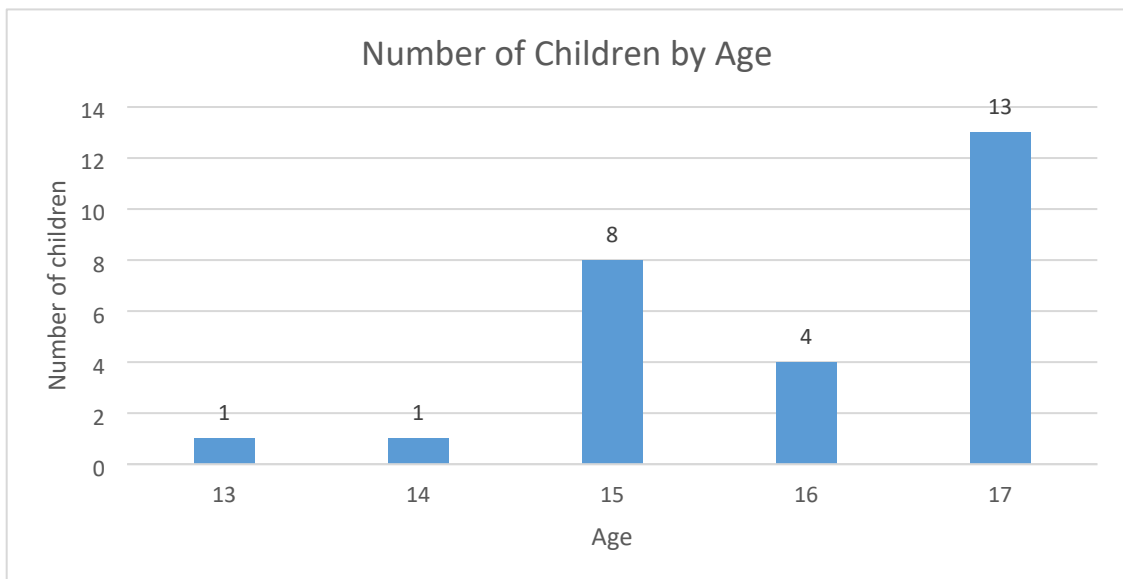
The graph below shows the number of missing episodes started and the count of the individual children who went missing between October 2022 and December 2022 and for the same period in the previous year. The most common reasons for children going missing is that they have stayed out past their curfew with friends or are with their families.

Between October and December 2022, there were total of 124 missing episodes which represented 27 individual children. This is a reduction on the previous year when there were a total of 187 episodes.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-protocol-on-reducing-criminalisation-of-looked-after-children>



Of the 27 children who went missing in the Quarter, 13 were female and 14 were male. Their ages break down as follows:



The majority of children going missing remains for short periods of time and relates to older children (16 and over) staying out later than an agreed curfew. Younger children who are missing are reported to the Police at an earlier stage of the day and risk assessed. Strategy meetings continue to track reasons for missing episodes missing episodes are that they are all spending time with friends and/or family. Others are seeking to spend extended periods of time with friends/partners.

When children are reported missing the majority return within 24 hours, i.e. if reported at 11pm they are back in placement by the next day Most are back

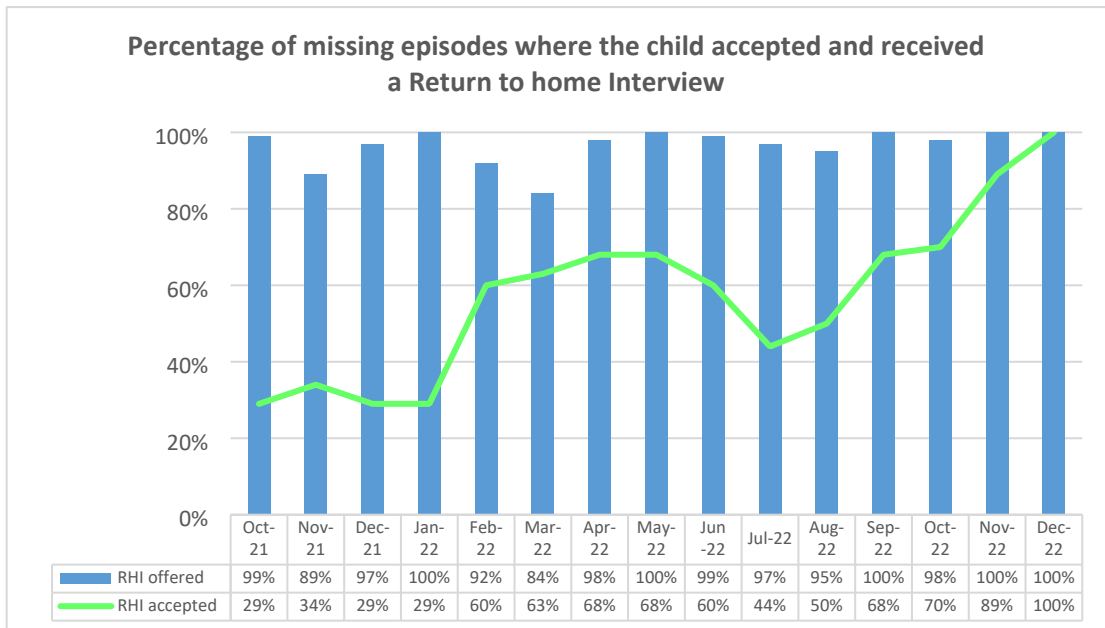
before the next morning. The majority are aged 17. Small numbers of children may spend longer period away from placement. The outcome reasons for the.

5.1 Children Looked After return to home interview (RHI)

Since April 2020, Inspire Youth Hub have been commissioned to undertake independent Return Home Interviews (RHI). All children are offered a RHI within 72 hours following each missing event, with the aim of understanding the young person's circumstances and the reasons why they go missing. Key Workers from placements, Foster Carers and Social Workers will also discuss missing incidents with children. There is a network of support provided to children to try to engage with them and understand the reasons for their missing episodes. The Participation Team have been able to engage and seek feedback from young people and this has been invaluable.

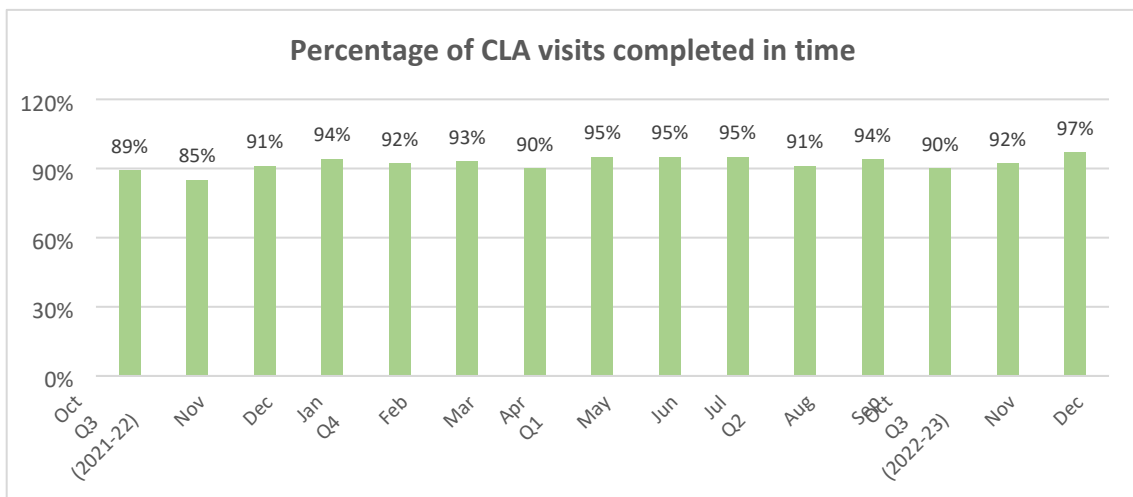
As at the end of December 2022, the percentage of children offered a return to home interview was 100% of which 100% accepted and received an interview compared to 52% in December 2021. The offer of an RHI via Inspire is not always accepted by young people for several reasons including not wanting to reveal their whereabouts when missing and not believing that they were missing but 'out'. All young people who have a missing episode are reviewed at the weekly Risk Management Meeting.

The graph below shows the percentage of return to home interviews taken up by young people through Inspire since July 2021 and shows an improved picture of children accepting and receiving a RHI. There continues to be a small number of CLA who have consistently refused return home interviews. We continue to review how Inspire engage this cohort of young people and alternatives such as whether there is anyone within the network better placed to have these conversations when they return from missing episodes, including their social worker and how this information is captured. This has increased the amount of Return Home Interviews completed and has ensured that young people are given the opportunities to share whether there are any safeguarding issues in relation to exploitation that needs to be addressed. that offer.



5.2 Timeliness of Social Worker Children Looked After visits

Social workers are required to visit a child/young person within one week of the start of any placement. Visits are then due in accordance with the time agreed within the Care Plan. This can vary from 20 to 65 working days, permitted within regulations. The average visits completed in time between October and December 2022 was 93.0% compared to 88.0% in the same quarter in 2020-21 representing a 5% increase and visits in the last 12 months have consistently shown performance over 90% in time.



5.3 Children Looked After Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

IHA to be completed within 20 working days is our statutory requirement.

Every child who becomes looked after should have an Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days of entering care. To achieve good

performance for this indicator, there is reliance on working with Thurrock Social Workers, parents and placement providers, Thurrock health care providers, and other health providers for children placed outside of Thurrock.

Two performance measures inform the data for children having an initial health assessment in time:

- Whether the referral for an initial health assessment is made to health providers by the local authority within 5 working days
- The initial health assessment takes place within 20 working days of a child entering care.

Notifications for an IHA cannot be progressed if parents have not provided consent for medical treatment and there is no court order which gives the Local Authority shared parental responsibility for consenting to health care. There is a weekly IHA tracking meeting to focus on meeting the need for children to have a statutory initial health assessment within 20 working days.

5.4 IHA request made to health by social care within 5 working days of child becoming looked after.

The timeliness of referrals from social care to health is important to contributing to the timeliness of initial health assessments. The numbers of IHA requests required each month can be small and therefore fluctuations can be impacted on by very small numbers

Between 1st October and December 2022, 36 children became looked after to Thurrock Council.

- 29 were referred within 5 working days
- 1 was referred on time but the referral was not accepted due to additional information being requested by the host authority
- 4 had late referrals due to incorrect completion of the form
- 2 Children were in care for such a short period the IHA referral was not required.

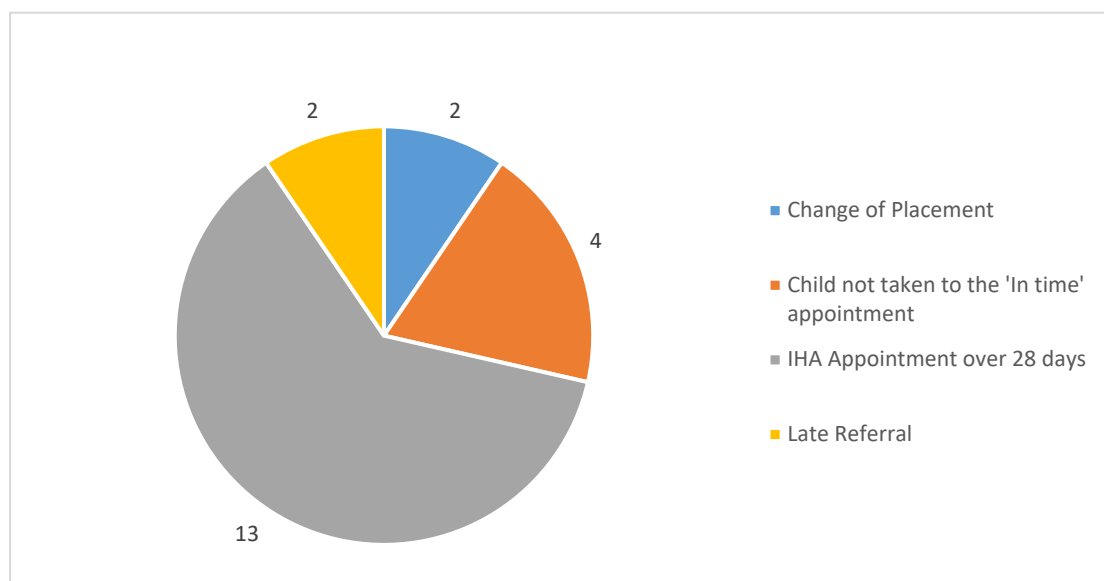
5.5 Initial Health Assessment taking place within 20 working days of a child entering care

In the third quarter of 2022-23; 29% of children received an IHA within 20 working days of becoming looked after. This is well below our target of 90%

The breaks down as follows for the 36 children who became looked after and were referred for an IHA,

- 10 received IHA appointments within 20 working days
- 2 children refused the IHA
- 2 children did not require an IHA as they left care
- 22 Children received IHA later than 20 working days

The following graph sets out the delay reasons:



IHA's are tracked weekly to ensure oversight at a senior level from Health and Social Care Colleagues. The most significant delay reason is the lack of available paediatric appointments. Our local health partner, NELFT, has commissioned additional Paediatric IHA appointments which became available from February 2023. This should improve capacity and, in turn performance. This poor performance has been escalated to our health partners, both providers and commissioners. The subject of IHA's has been a regular item on the Health and Well Being Board; pressure is being brought to bear to ensure this performance is improved.

5.6 Children Looked After in Education

The Virtual School monitors and supports the educational progress and outcomes for Children/Young People Looked After (C/YP LA) irrespective of where they are placed, in or out of borough. The responsibility covers pupils aged between 3 years and 18 years and this includes those who have left care during an academic year. It is also required to provide information, advice, and guidance to Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and their families when requested.

The annual report 2021-22 of the Virtual School Headteacher details the broad scope of services provided and was previously presented to Committee.

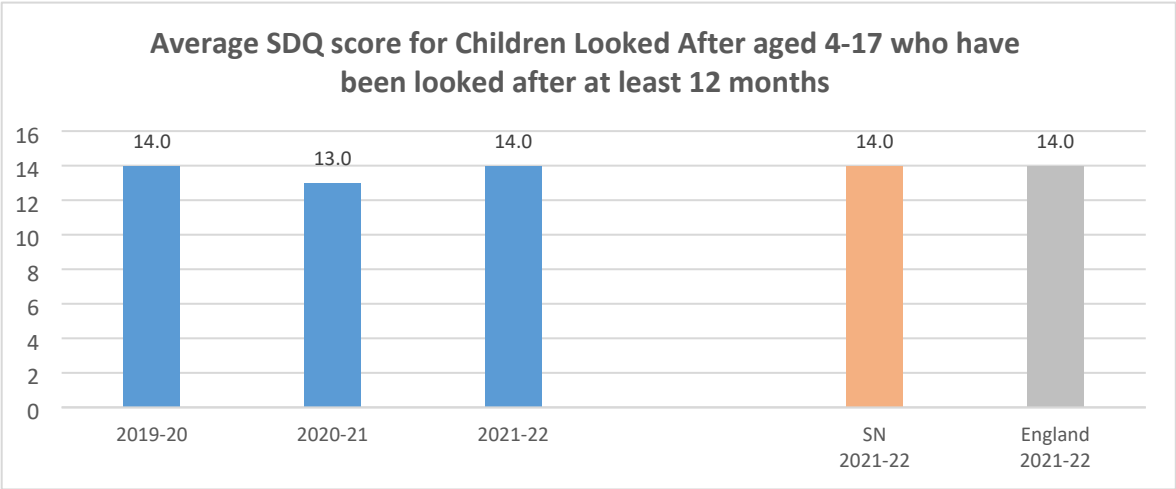
5.7 Children Looked After Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

SDQ scores are a measure which provides an indication of the mental wellbeing of Looked After Children. Thurrock has a statutory responsibility to collect SDQ scores annually for all children aged 4-17 who have continuously been looked after for at least 12 months. Thurrock Childrens Services collate the SDQ scores termly via the Personal Education Plan supported by the

Virtual School and Children’s Social Care collecting the views of carers, school staff and children.

For each child where their score indicates a level of need (scoring 13 or higher) their case is individually reviewed by a multi-agency panel to ensure appropriate services are in place. Children benefit from a suite of local services including EWMHS, Kooth (online Counselling) and commissioned therapeutic services. For children placed out of area NHS provision or commissioned services are secured.

The average scores are 14 which is in line with Statistical Neighbour and Nationally. The mental wellbeing of Children Looked After is being appropriately reviewed, with support and intervention provided as necessary.



6. Adoption

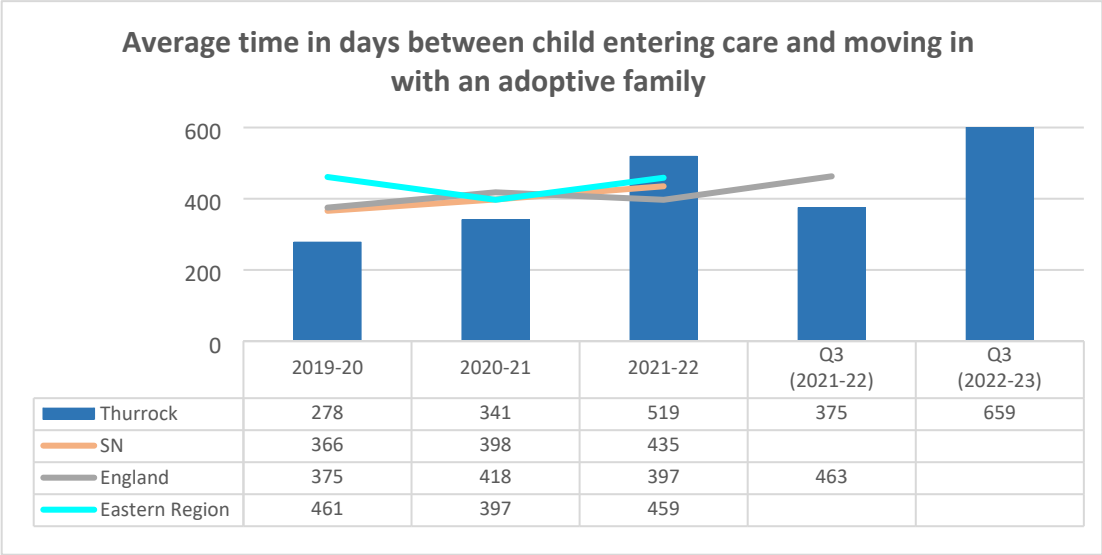
As at the end of Q3 2022-23, there were 7 children adopted and 5 children were matched with prospective adopters.

6.1 Timeliness of Adoption

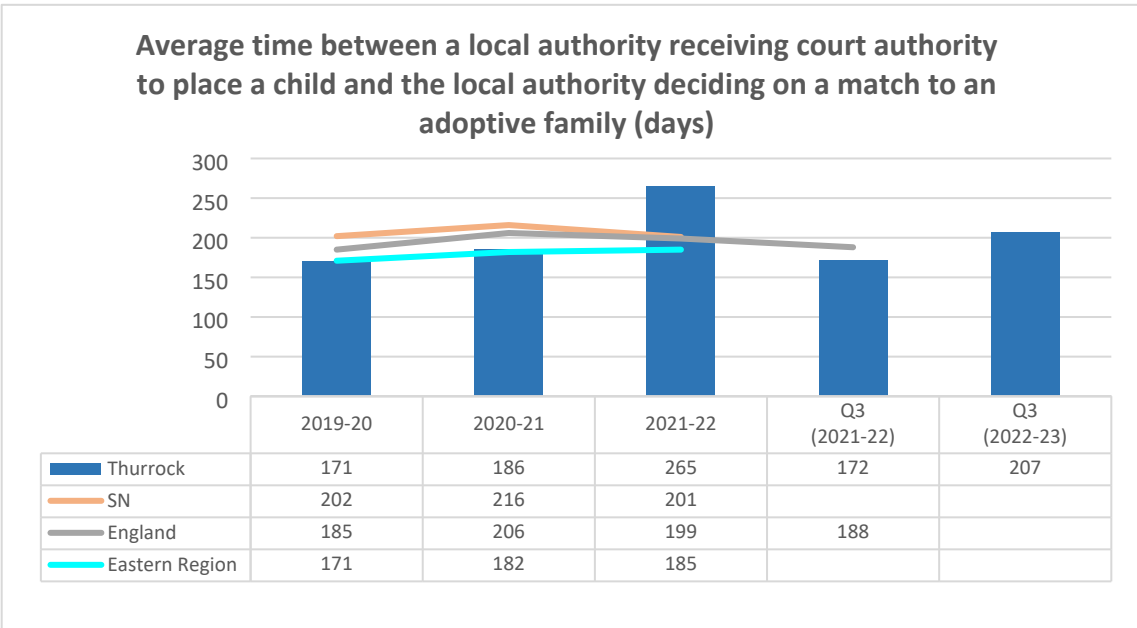
The average duration of care proceedings nationally has been over 40 weeks. The President of the Family Division re-launched the Public Law Outline process in January 2023 with a view to reducing the length of proceedings towards the 26 weeks statutory time limit.

The timeliness of adoption is measured as a 12-month rolling average, it is the length of time from the child entering care to moving in with an adoptive family. As at end of Q3 2022-23, Thurrock’s average was 659 days. Based on Q2 2022-23 benchmarking data, Thurrock is above the National average of 463 days and based on year end 2021-22 data, Thurrock is above the Statistical Neighbour average of 435 days, England average of 397 and Eastern Region of 459 days. It is important to note that this measure relates to a relatively small number of children so a very small number of children experiencing a delay can

impact on the data. Care proceedings have seen significant delays; court availability, and family members being identified late. We are working towards reducing the duration of care proceedings through early planning and close monitoring.



As at end of Q3 2022-23, the average time in days between Thurrock receiving a Placement Order (court authority) to place a child with the adoptive family was 207 days. Based on Q2 2022-23 benchmarking data, Thurrock is above the National average of 188 days and based on 2021-22-year end data, Thurrock is marginally above the Statistical Neighbour average of 201 days, the England average of 199 days and Eastern Region of 185 days as at the end of Q2 2022-23.



This is an area for the Service to focus to ensure there is timely matching and placing of children with their adoptive families. There has been delays in timetabling of final hearings for Placement Orders, and further delay because of birth parents re-applying to the court to revoke Placement Order, sometimes as soon as the Order has been made. The application by birth parents to revoke a Placement Order or appeal can prevent the placement of children with adoptive families. Due to the small numbers involved, the average can be impacted in exceptional circumstances by an individual case causing an increase in the average time between a court order being made and matching.

6.2 CLA permanency

Purposeful early permanency planning continues to ensure that children are in the right placement at the right time to meet their needs. Securing placements where needed and supporting children, where appropriate, to remain at home with their families is the priority. Children are placed for adoption only once all family and friend options have been exhausted.

Of the total CLA cohort of 291 as at the end of Q3 2022-23, 14% (40) children were aged 0-5. Most children under 5 years who are not able to return home, are moved on to permanent placements through adoption or permanent alternative carers. There were significant delays in court proceedings and children being subject to court proceedings for longer periods, and transition to their permanent homes being delayed. Post covid this situation is beginning to ease.

6.3 Children Looked After placement distance

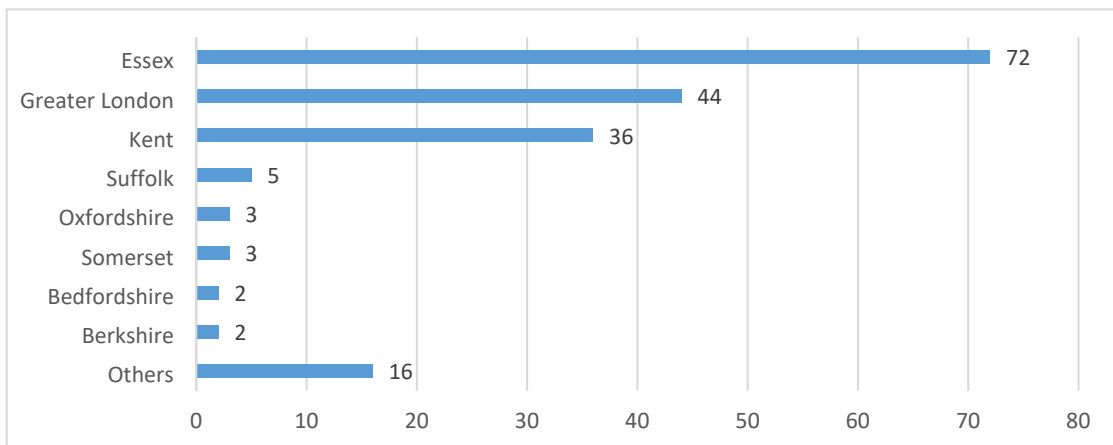
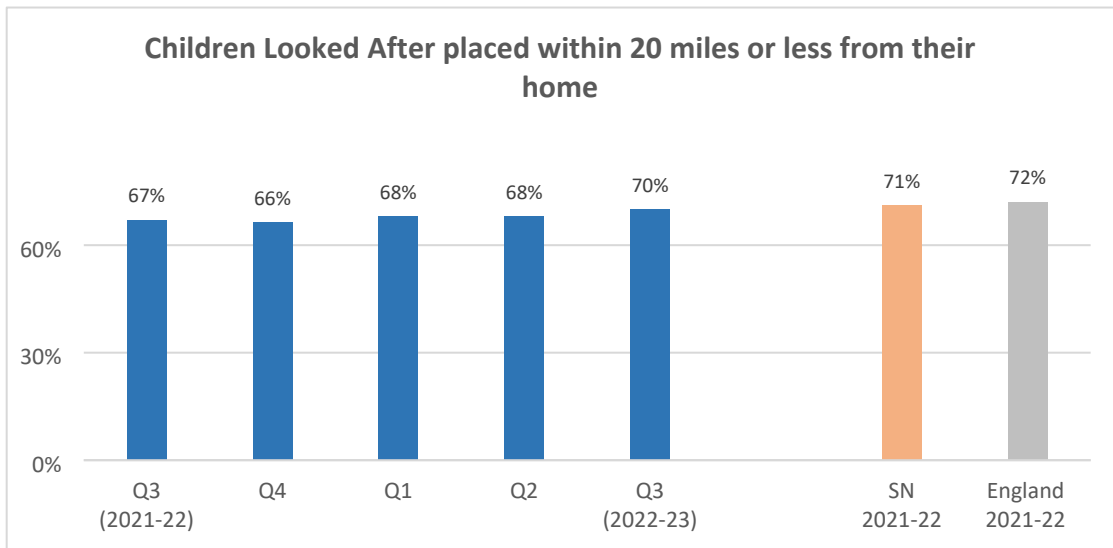
The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide children with placements within its area unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so under the Children Act 1989. Placements out of area must be approved by the nominated person and placements 'at a distance' must be agreed by the Director of Children's Services.

At the end of December 2022, 70% of the Children Looked After cohort were placed within 20 miles or less from their homes, which represents 203 out of 291 children looked after. Based on the latest benchmarking data available in March 2022, Thurrock reflects performance close with the national average of 74%.

This is an area of intense focus for the Placement Service. The fostering recruitment campaign seeks to increase local placements. However, the challenges experienced in recruiting Foster Carers is a National issue and Thurrock are finding the recruitment of local foster carers a challenge as well as identifying local placements with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) or Residential care homes. There is a national shortage of fostering and residential care², (the interim report published by the Competition and Markets

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-market-study-interim-report/interim-report>.

Authority, October 2021, has noted the pressure on Local Authority placement services.



7.0 Care Leaving Service

The graphs below show the care leaver cohort (Relevant and Former Relevant Children whose 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday falls within Financial Year) and Young People aged 16-25 years who are in receipt of a Care Leaving service. Local authorities have a legislative duty to appoint a Personal Adviser for Care Leavers from the age of 16-21 and up until the age of 25 if required.

A Care Leaver, as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000³, is a person who has been 'looked after' or 'in care' for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who was in care on their 16th birthday.

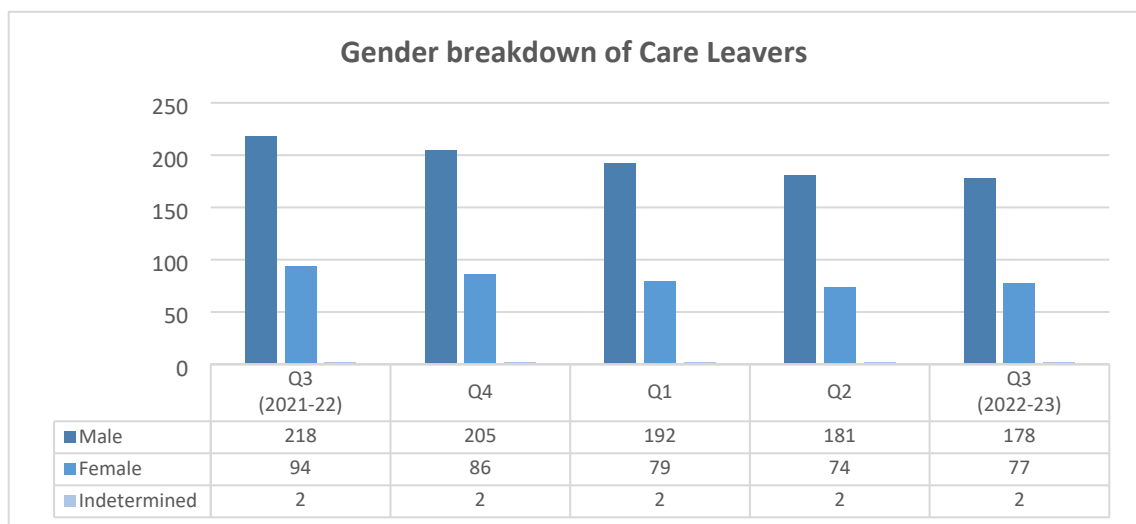
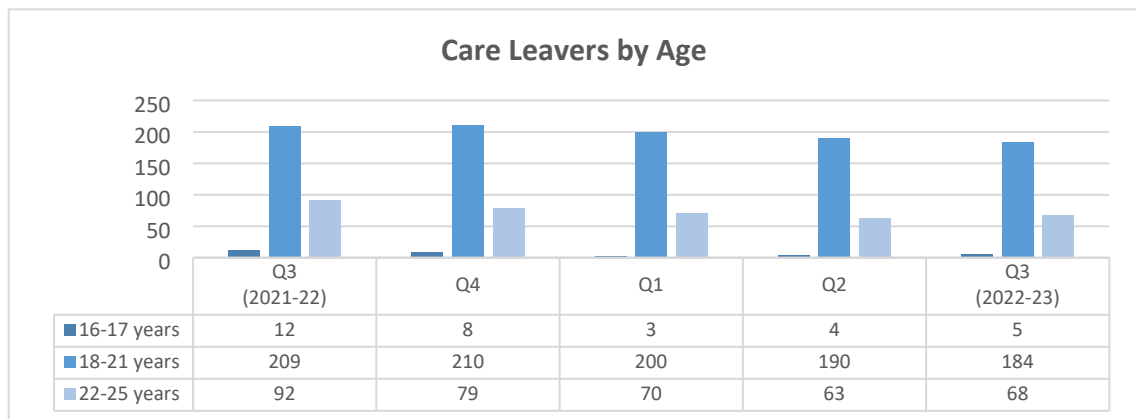
A young person's status as a care leaver can be divided into the following:

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/35/contents>

- Eligible child - a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by the local authority/health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who is still looked after.
- Relevant child - a young person who is 16 or 17 who has left care after their 16th birthday and before leaving care was an eligible child.
- Former relevant child - a young person who is aged between 18 and 25 (or beyond if being helped with education or training) who, before turning 18 was either an eligible or a relevant child, or both.

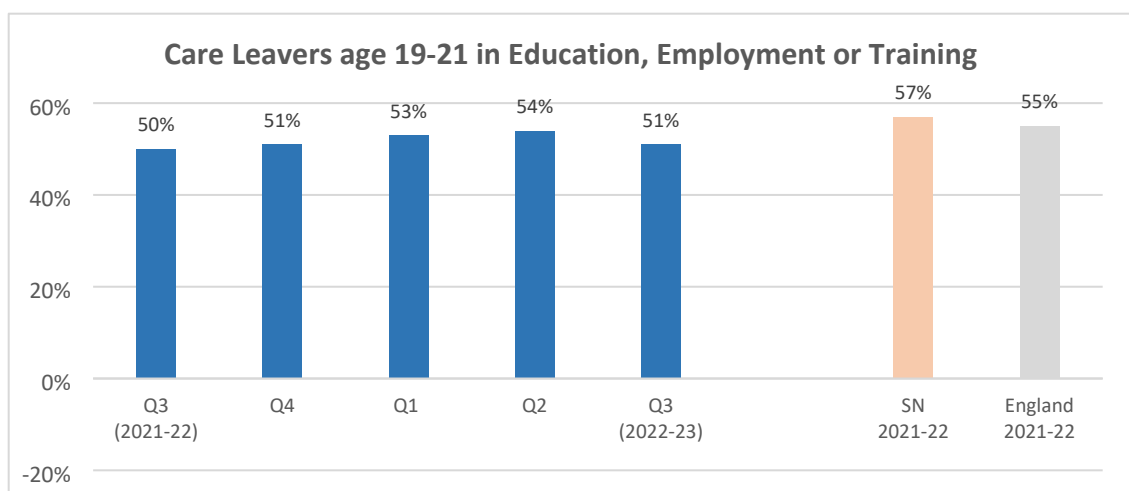
As at end of September 2022, 257 Care Leavers were being supported and were receiving an Aftercare service.

The charts below show the Care Leaver cohort broken down by age groups and gender.



7.1 Care Leavers age 19-21 years in Education, Employment or Training (EET)

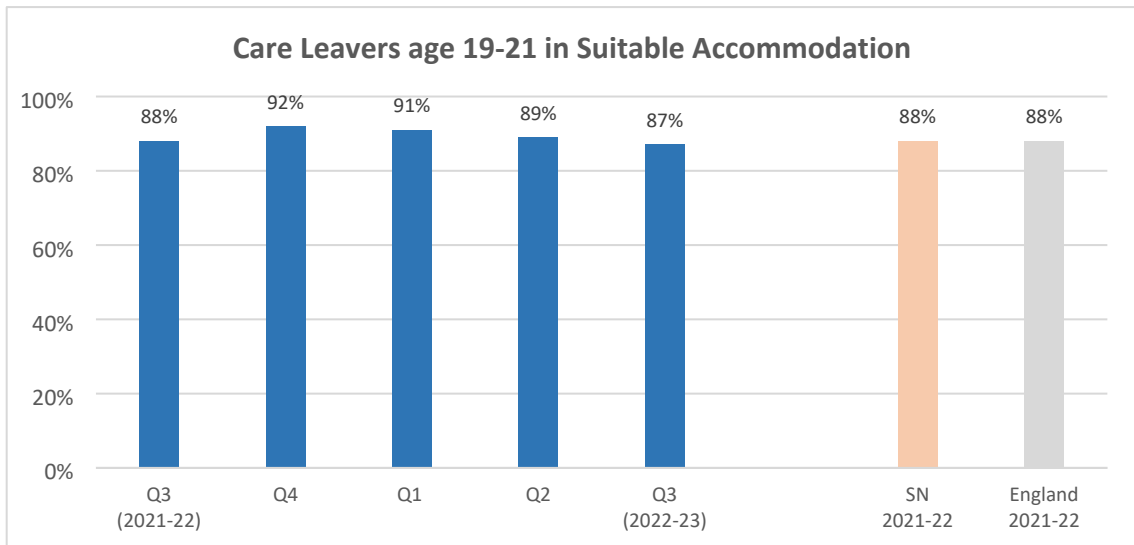
At the end of Q2 2022-23, 54% of the Care Leavers aged 19 to 21-year-old were in part or full-time education, employment or training compared to 49% in September 2021 which brings Thurrock in more line with the Statistical Neighbour average of 57% and the England average of 55%. To strengthen oversight and planning to ensure our young people have support and opportunities for Education, Employment and Training (EET) there are two monthly panels which focus on pre and post 18-year-olds who do not have an EET offer. These panels are attended by the Aftercare Service, Inspire Youth Hub, and the Virtual School. The panel seeks to understand the issues for individual young people and align their interests to an EET offer.



7.2 Care Leavers age 19 to 21 years in Suitable Accommodation

Q2 2022-23 shows that the percentage of 19 to 21-year-old Care Leavers reported to be in suitable accommodation is 89%. Thurrock is in line with the Statistical Neighbour and England average of 88% based on 2022 benchmarking data. There are some care leavers who are not in touch with the service, as well as those whose accommodation is unsuitable. Reasons for accommodation being deemed unsuitable include care leavers who are UASC and missing, young people declining to say where they are living or care leavers who are in prison.

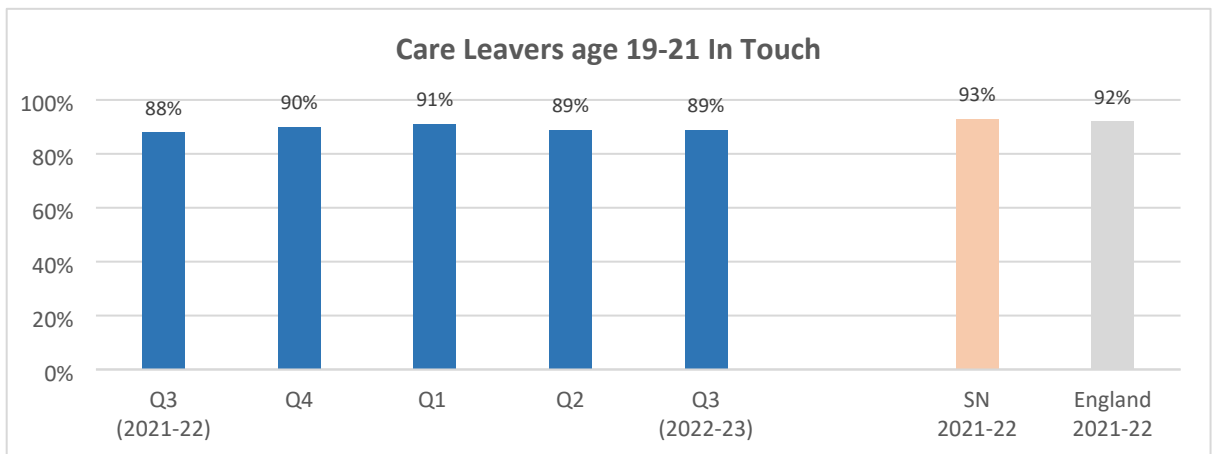
Increased housing support is being provided to young people by the Aftercare Service, Head Start Housing and Thurrock Housing Department. The 'Housing Offer' to Care Leavers has been updated with the Joint Housing Protocol 2020, ensuring good partnership working with clear pathways for young people to access housing, as well as ensuring they are prepared for their tenancies.



7.3 Care Leavers age 19-21 years 'In Touch'

Local Authorities are expected to stay in touch with Care Leavers and provide statutory support to help care leaver's transition to living independently.

At the end of Q2 2022-23, Thurrock was in touch with 89% of Care Leavers. Thurrock's performance is marginally below the Statistical Neighbour average of 93% and the England average of 92% based on 2021-22 benchmarking data. The reason for the percentage that are not in touch is mainly due to the cohort of missing UASC.



8. Consultation (including Overview & Scrutiny, if applicable)

8.1 Not applicable

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

9.1 None

10. Implications

10.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

No implications

10.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
**Interim Deputy Head of Legal Social
Care & Education**

No implications identified.

10.3 Diversity & Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer - Adults, Housing &
Health**

There are no direct diversity and equality implications arising from this report. However, the service does collect diversity monitoring data for looked after children, this data is given within this report. The data is utilised to consider issues of equality and to ensure that performance considers the impact on children with protected characteristics.

10.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

12. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

Daniel Jones, Strategic Lead, Children Looked After, Children's Services

Clare Moore, Strategic Lead, Youth Offending Service and Prevention, Children and Family Services

Statistics: Anna Watkins, Business Intelligence Analyst, Children's Services

21 March 2023	ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee	
SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Looked After Children, January 2022 – December 2022	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: None
Report of: Tina Russell, Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships.	
Accountable Assistant Director: Tina Russell, Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The attached report describes and analyses the service provided by the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health service, known as SET CAMHS to children looked after. This is a health service that is jointly commissioned between Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards in the wider Essex Area and provides services to children of all ages and backgrounds who have a level of mental health need.

The attached report in Appendix One focuses on the work of SET CAMHS in relation to looked after children in Thurrock in the period between January 2022 – December 2022. It provides an overview of the children referred and the mental health services they received.

The outcome for looked after children is that by receiving a priority assessment of their needs this aids identification of emerging emotional health issues and enables support to be put in place to prevent mental health difficulties developing or escalating.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That the SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Children Looked After, January 2022 – December 2022 is noted and reviewed by Members**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 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 Integrated Care Board when a child is initially accommodated.
- 2.2 The relevant Integrated Care Board 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 Integrated Care Board. This also includes services to a child or young person experiencing mental illness. Both the Local Authority and relevant Integrated Care Board should develop effective communications and understandings between each other as part of being able to promote children's wellbeing.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The attached report (See Appendix 1) sets out the service provided thus far. There are no forward options that require consideration as an outcome of this report.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The attached report within Appendix 1 provides detail of the CAMHS service from January to December 2022 which updates members

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: **David May**
Strategic Lead, Corporate Finance

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: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 the Council must in carrying out its functions in relation to looked after children have regard to the 'corporate parenting principles' which include 'to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of looked after children and 'to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners'.

The Council must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers'.(February 2018)
The guidance states that:

"4.6 Local authorities should consider and be able to demonstrate how they have regard to this need when discharging their functions, for example:

-
- The arrangements in place to ensure that looked after children are not refused a mental health or other health service on the grounds of their placement being short term or unplanned."

The Council should also have regard to the statutory guidance 'Promoting the health and well-being of looked after children' (March 2015). This sets out the requirements for reviews of a child's health plan and at paragraph 54 notes:

"The local authority that looks after a child must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the child receives the health care services he or she requires as set out in their health plan. Those services include mental health services, medical and dental care treatment and immunisations, as well as advice and guidance on personal health care and health promotion issues."

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

The Service is committed to practice, which promotes inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. Some diversity data related to number of referrals is included within the Appendix.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

- Impact on Looked After Children

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**

- Appendix 1 – SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Looked After Children, January 2022 – December 2022 (Power Point)

Report Author:

Tina Russell
Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships



SET CAMHS Annual report for Looked After Children January 2022 - December 2022

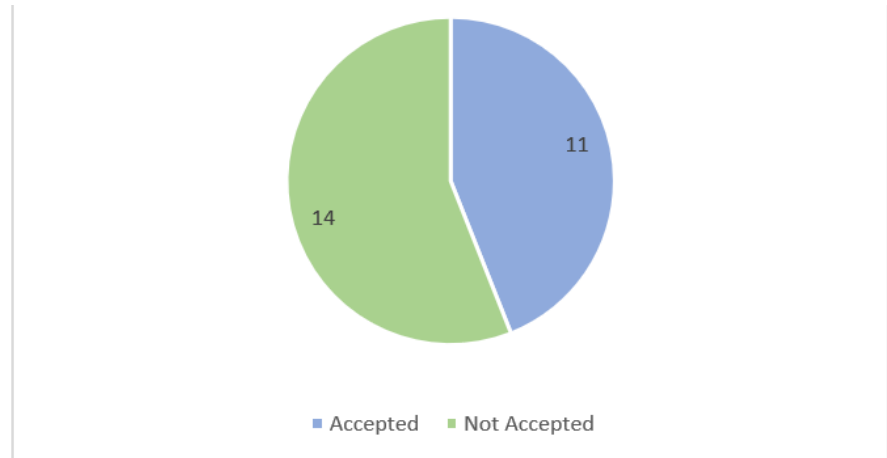


Thurrock LAC Referrals between January 2022 – December 2022

- Thurrock SET CAMHS received a total number of **25** formal referrals into the service between January 2022 and December 2022.
- Out of these **25 referrals into SET CAMHS 11 referrals were accepted and 14 were not accepted.**

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LAC Referrals



Thurrock LAC Referrals between January 2022 – December 2022

- One of the referrals into SET CAMHS had not been accepted based on the Single Point of Access (SPA) deeming the referral not appropriate due to no mental health present and therefore discharging from the service with the option to re-refer if required.
- **The outstanding 24 LAC cases had been offered a LAC Consultation/Assessment** and each child or young person would have been provided with a LAC Consultation report, giving details of the formulation of the young person's presenting emotional and mental health needs and how these can be appropriately addressed.
- Out of the 11 referrals that were accepted 6 remain open to CAMHS and are receiving treatment, therefore SET CAMHS currently have 6 overall caseload of LAC cases still open.

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LAC Lead Role

Within the CAMHS team there is a dedicated LAC Lead clinician who provides support and advice to social care by offering weekly consultation slots.

These slots are regularly used by Social Care and in some instances when needed additional LAC consultation slots have been offered outside of the allocated slots.

The LAC Lead also partially supports the health review of looked after children, and can be part of the escalation process, attending child in need meetings and some of the scheduled case conference meetings.



SDQ Monthly Meetings

SET CAMHS clinicians attend social care monthly SDQ's meetings. SET CAMHS provides a pivotal role in exploring and working out discussed cases within the social care framework which enables SET CAMHS to be involved in their overall care plan.

The clinician helps gain a better understanding of the child's needs in relation to the mental health difficulties the child may display.

The SET CAMHS clinicians provide additional support to social care in relation to any escalations that may occur. This usually involves discussing the parameters that promotes further consultations and / or advice on appropriate referrals to the SET CAMHS service. Given the complexities of looked after children, the SDQ meetings provides opportunities for social care staff to discuss and share concerns around cases which the SET CAMHS clinician can escalate to the SET CAMHS team manager if appropriate.



Social Care and SET CAMHS Monthly Escalation Meeting

SET CAMHS Team Manager alongside the SET CAMHS Assistant Director and Partnerships attends monthly social care and SET CAMHS meeting.

This meeting forms part of the escalation process where cases are discussed to problem-solve issues that may arise.

Young people who are placed in inpatient are also discussed so that social care is involved in the collaboration of care plans.



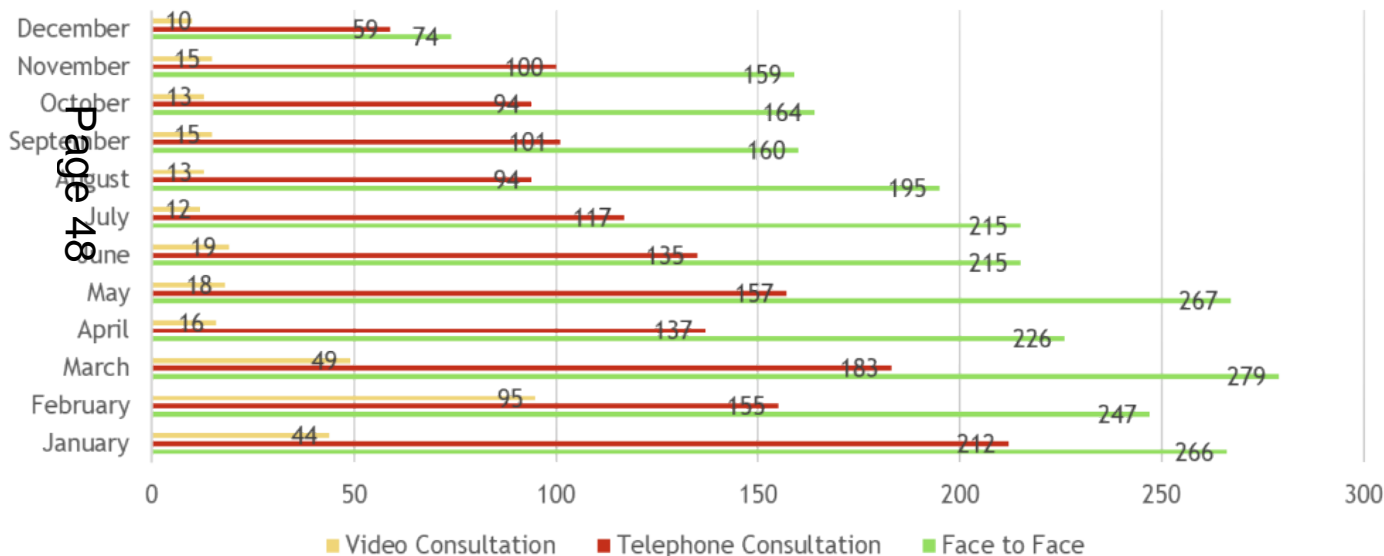
Social Care “Hotline” Service

- For ease of access SET CAMHS provide social care with a hotline service to contact our LAC Lead for additional advice and support.



Method of Contact

CONTACTS BY MONTH



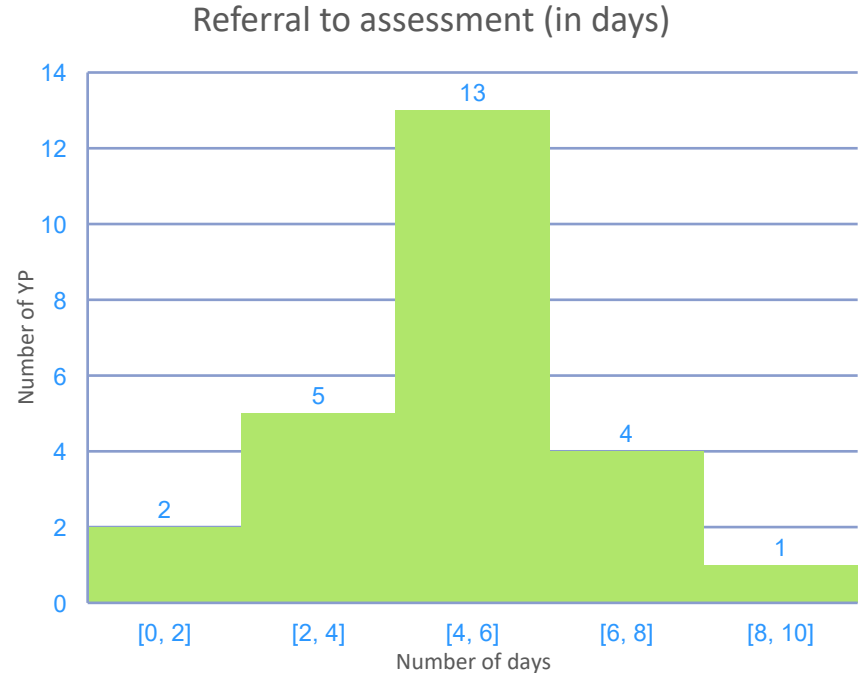
- Data is from January to December 2022
- It indicates contact made by SET CAMHS clinicians
- Contact is via video, telephone and face to face
- **LAC Consultation contact is usually via video consultation**



Referral to Assessment in days

- The number of days for consultation to occur ranged from 0-10 days.
- Average waiting time was approximately 4-6 days.
- the least amount of time clients waited was between 0 and 2 days.
- Only 1 client waited between 8 and 10 days.

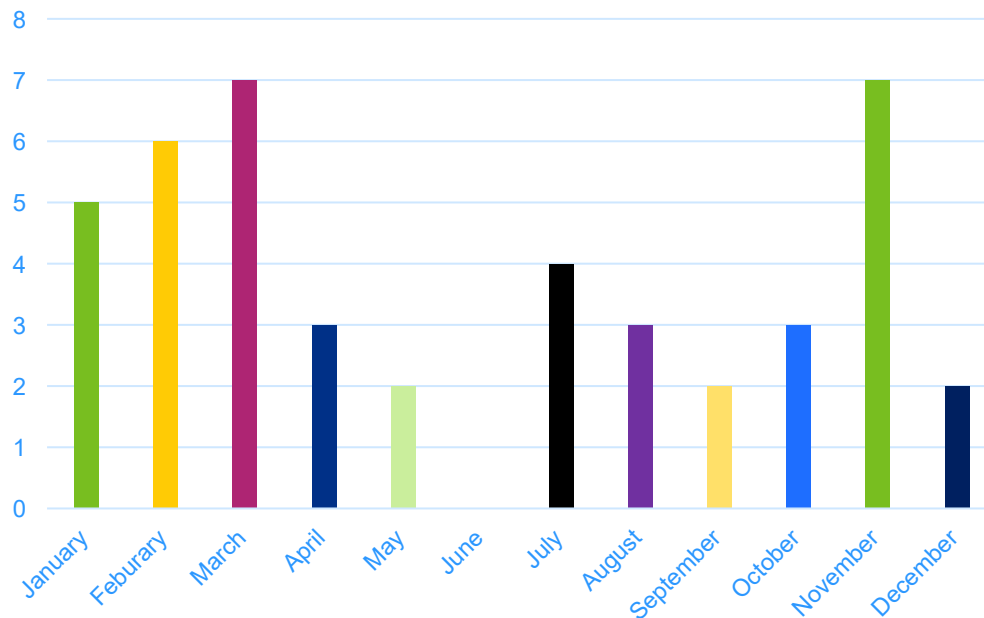
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LAC Consultations and Telephone Support 2022

- Data shows the total number of LAC consultations and telephone support offered between January – December 2022

LAC Consultations and LAC Support Calls



Total Referral to Treatment – Split by Gender

- This data shows the total number of male and female young people referred to treatment for a period of January to November 2022

Number of RTT waiters - Split by Gender												
Gender	Nov 2022	Oct 2022	Sep 2022	Aug 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2022	May 2022	Apr 2022	Mar 2022	Feb 2022	Jan 2022	Total
Female	43	37	32	19	17	21	35	46	62	66	57	247
Indeterminate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	39	27	25	20	20	28	37	44	74	63	44	227
Total	82	64	57	39	37	49	72	90	136	129	101	474

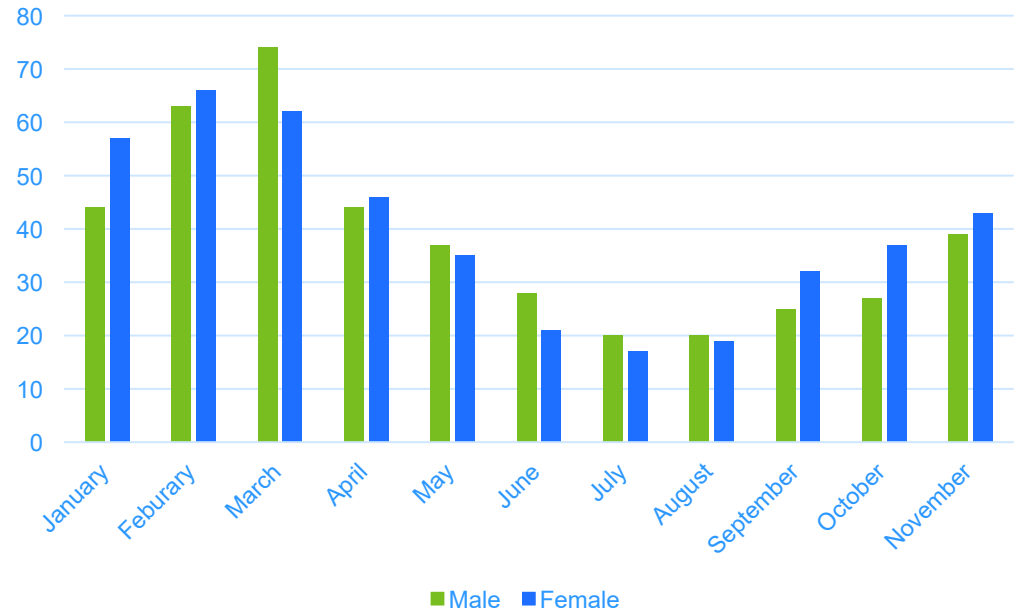


Total Referral to Treatment – Split by Gender

- Blue indicates the number of Males referred to treatment
- Green indicates the number of females referred to treatment
- The gender split across the year of 2022 appears to be equal

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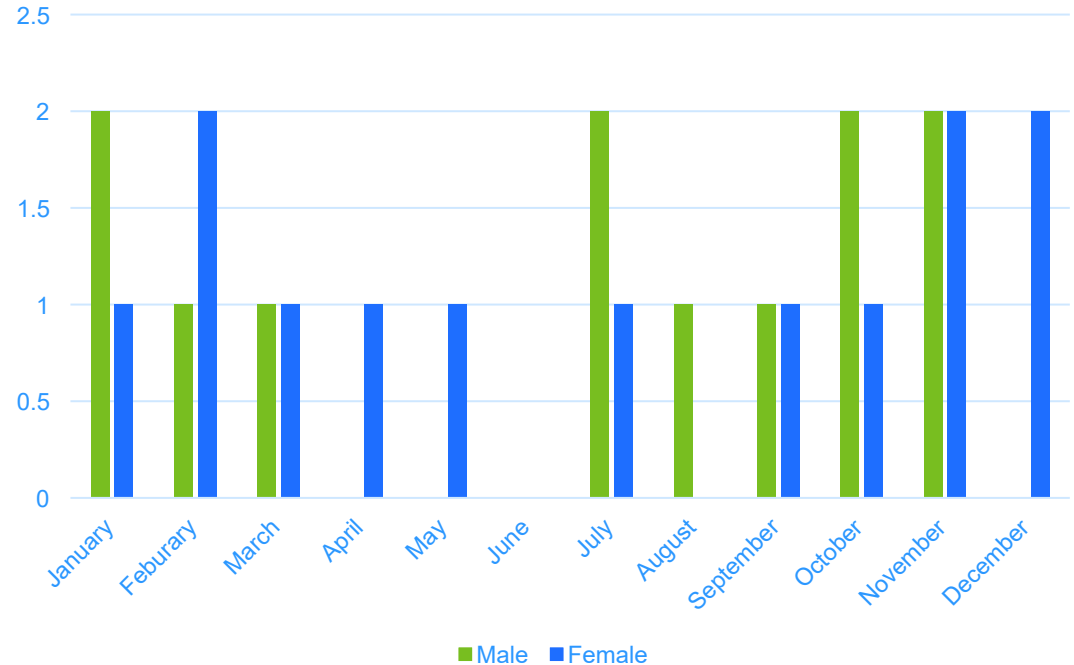
Total Referral to Treatment - Split by Gender



LAC Referral to Consultation – Split by Gender

- Similar to the total referral to treatment the data indicates no major discrepancies in relation to gender. However, we note that the majority of referrals for LAC consultation for females was April and May.

LAC Referral for Consultation - Split by Gender



Total Referral to Treatment – Split by Ethnic Group

- This data shows the total number young people referred to treatment split by ethnicity for a period of January to November 2022

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Number of RTT waiters - Split by Ethnic Group

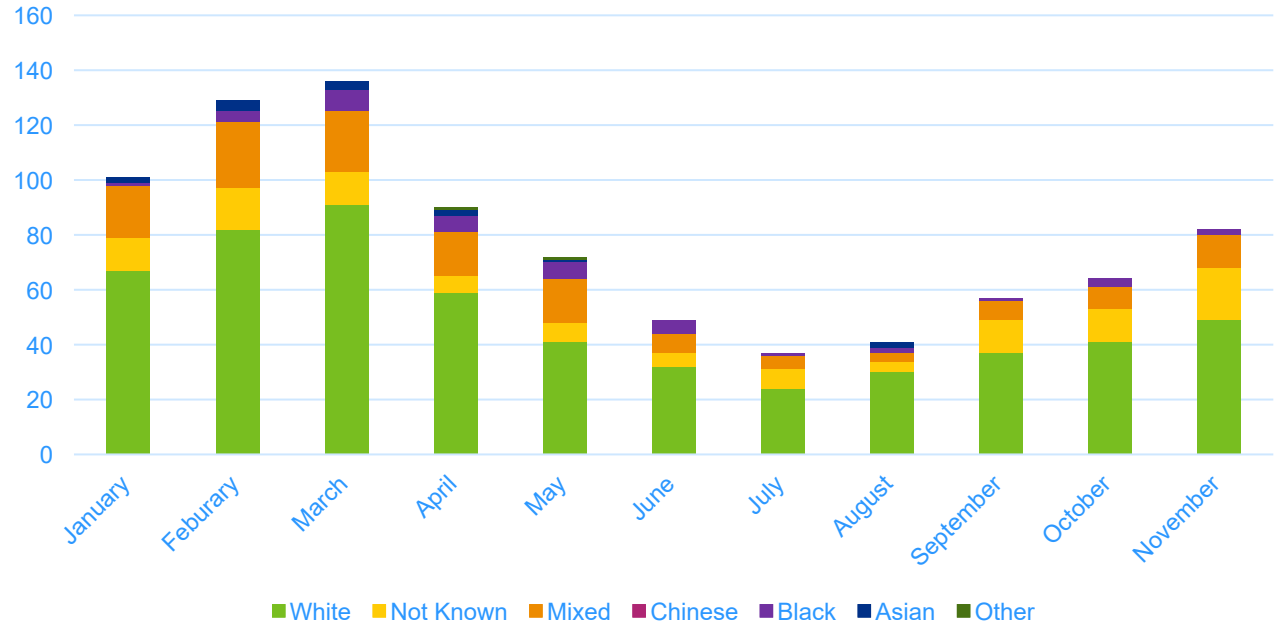
Ethnic Group	Nov 2022	Oct 2022	Sep 2022	Aug 2022	Jul 2022	Jun 2022	May 2022	Apr 2022	Mar 2022	Feb 2022	Jan 2022	Total
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	2	6
Black	2	3	1	2	1	5	6	6	8	4	1	21
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed	12	8	7	3	5	7	16	16	22	24	19	76
Not Known	19	12	12	4	7	5	7	6	12	15	12	78
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
White	49	41	37	30	24	32	41	59	91	82	67	291
Total	82	64	57	39	37	49	72	90	136	129	101	474



Total Referral to Treatment – Split by Ethnic Group

- The data indicates that the majority of referrals for treatment were for the white ethnicity.
- Page 55 comparison to the lowest, which was Chinese ethnicity.
- Of course we can factor in the demographics of Thurrock, which is 80.91% White British, 7.82% Black, 3.77% Asian and Chinese (Taken from the most recent Thurrock National Census)

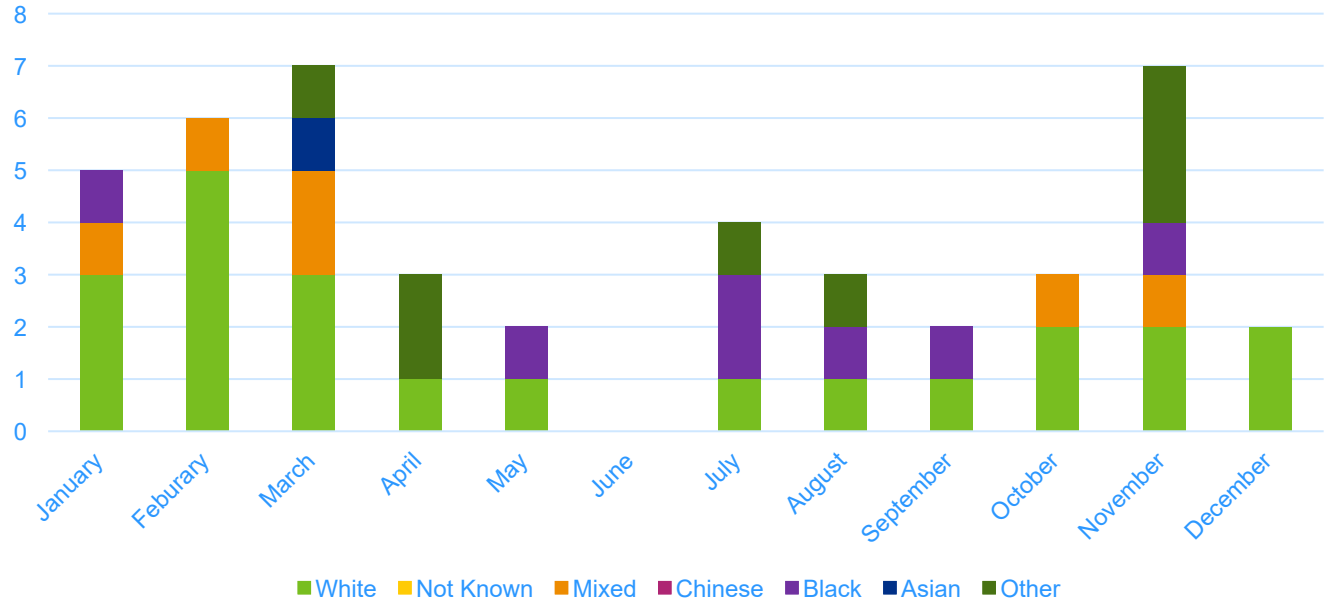
Total Referral to Treatment - Split by Ethnic Group



LAC Consultations – Split by Ethnicity

- The data shows that the majority of LAC consultations referrals were for White young people and Black young people.

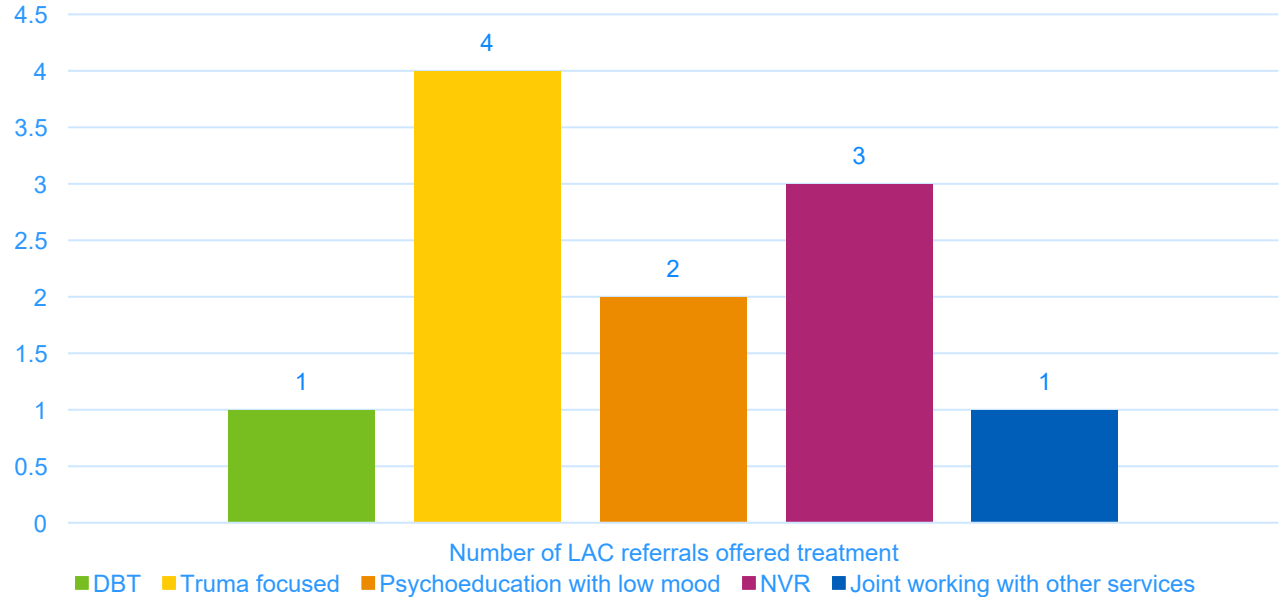
LAC Consultations - Split by Ethnicity



Type of Treatment offered to LAC Referrals

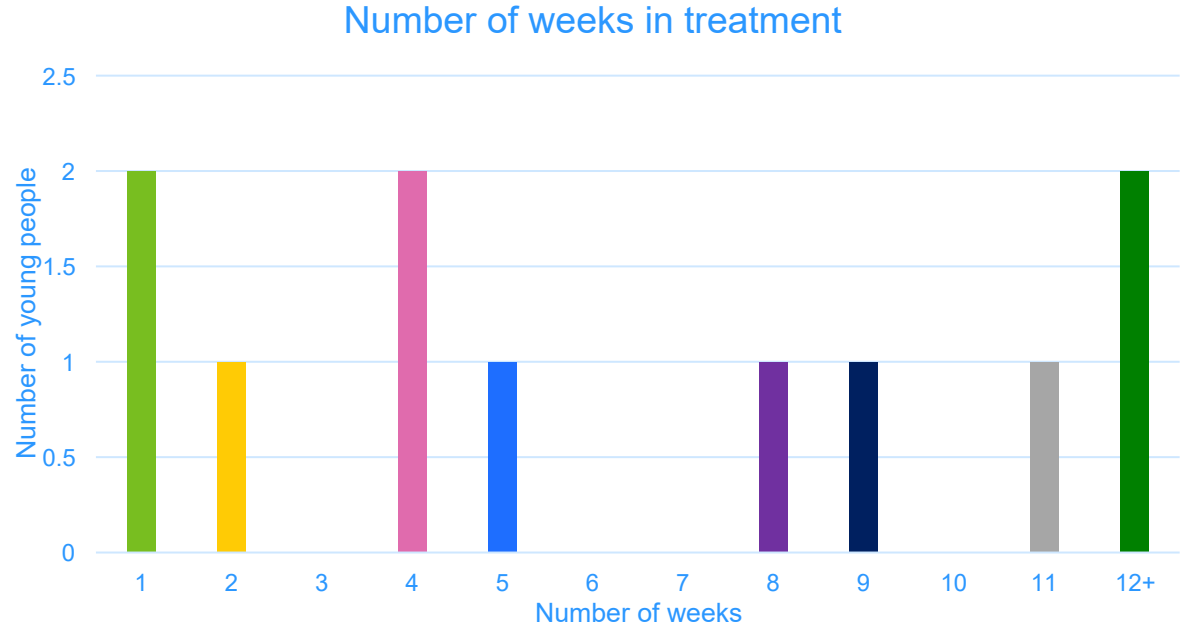
- The typical treatment for LAC young people is usually trauma focused pieces of work. However, last year the data indicated that Non Violent Resistance (NVR) is slowly increasing as a treatment offered to carers of looked after children.

Treatment offered by modality



Length of Treatment in weeks

- The longest and shortest time in treatment was between 1 and 12 weeks.
- The data indicates that the average time that young people are in treatment is approximately 6 weeks.

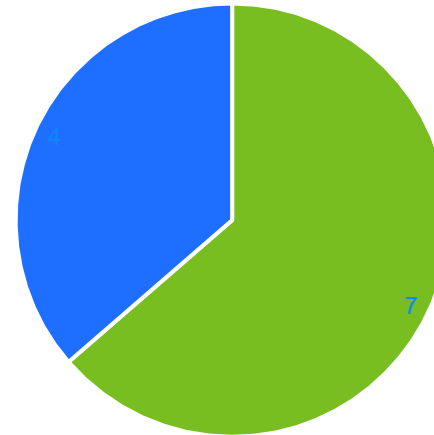


LAC Referrals Currently in Treatment

Number of LAC referrals in treatment

- Data indicates that currently, 7 LAC young people are in treatment.
- Whilst 4 await treatment.
- The delay is usually caused by staff waiting to meet with carer of young people.

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■ Treatment started ■ Treatment not yet started



Thurrock LAC Process

- Thurrock offer weekly slots to Single Point of Access, and additional SLOTS if required.
- Thurrock LAC Leads and Clinical Leads offer LAC consultations
- Additional SLOTS can be allocated, which are covered by senior SET CAMHS clinicians only when required
- In Thurrock, we consistently review how we manage and allocate the LAC consultation by being proactive and thinking outside of the box
- For instance, being flexible with our Clinician of the Day rota when dealing with high volumes of referrals.



21 March 2023		ITEM: 9
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Recruitment of Foster Carers		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: None	
Report of: Dan Jones, Strategic Lead - CLA		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children's Services and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an outline to the Corporate Parenting Committee of the progress in recruitment activity for Foster Carers. There has been a great deal of activity to recruit more households to foster for Thurrock. This has resulted in application and successful approvals.

The need to recruit more foster carers remains, and more applications are required to meet the needs of looked after children in Thurrock. We have bench marked ourselves against our nearest competitors in order to ensure that our offer to foster carers is both attractive and competitive.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Members are updated on the current progress in Fostering Recruitment
- 1.2 That Members are aware of the key areas for improvements.
- 1.3 That Members are aware of the challenges the Local Authority is experiencing in recruiting foster carers and what we are doing to address these.

2. Introduction and Background

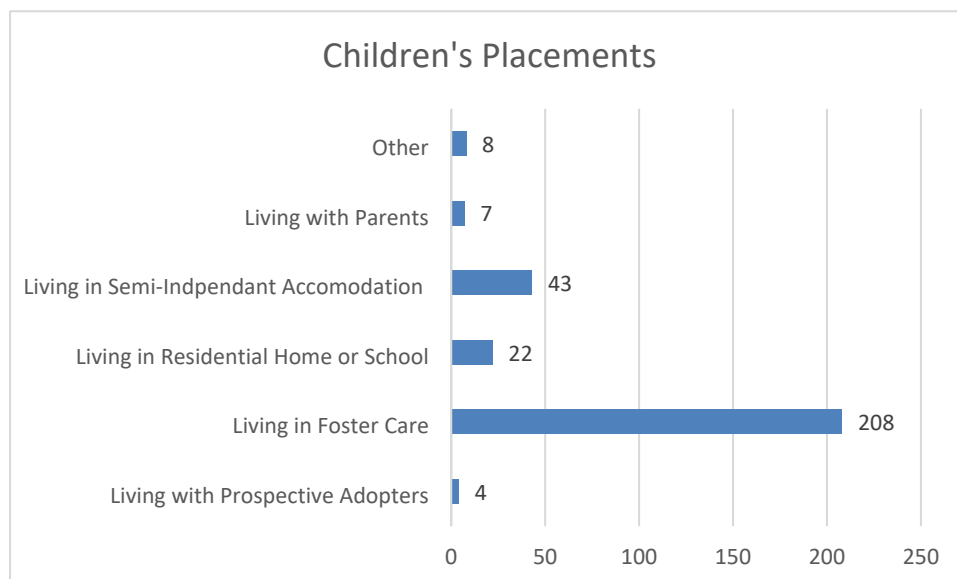
2.1 Sufficiency of Foster Placements

There is a statutory requirement to ensure there is sufficiency of placements for Thurrock Looked After children. The overall context for meeting the sufficiency duty is set out in the statutory guidance:

“Securing sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of Children Looked After is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. Having the right placement in the right place, at the right time is a critical success factor in relation to the delivery of better outcomes for Children Looked After.”

2.1.1 When a child is unable to live with their birth family there are a range of options that can be considered to meet their needs whilst they are living away from home. This could be to live with foster carers or reside in the care of family friends or family of the child (these carers are known as ‘connected persons’ approved under a fostering approval know as regulation 24); live in a residential home or, for some older children over the age of 16 years they are able to live in supported accommodation. The service is dedicated to ensuring children enter Thurrock’s care only when they need to and that they are looked after in the right placement. Wherever possible this should be within a family setting. Young people should be able to have secure, stable, and settled placements so they can transition into adulthood with the skills to progress to independent living. This report focusses on the approach of Thurrock’s Fostering Service to ensure sufficiency of Thurrock in-house foster carers.

2.1.2 On 31 January 2023, there were 292 children looked after by Thurrock Council. They were placed as follows:



2.1.3 Of the 208 children placed in Foster Care, the breakdown is as follows:

31/01/2023	
Thurrock Approved Carers	
Total number of approved Households	74
Number of children placed with Thurrock Approved Foster Carers	102
Independent and Other Fostering Agencies	
Number of Children Placed	106

2.1.4 The number of children placed with Thurrock approved carers varies throughout the year but it is usual for the range to be between 100-120 children placed with our own foster carers.

2.1.5 Thurrock retains a strong support and financial package to our foster carers. Foster Carers approved by Thurrock, on average, receive a competitive financial package including the Council Tax waiver on top of the weekly allowances. Key recruitment needs are for children aged 13-18 of any gender, for sibling groups of three or more and for parent and child foster carers. Most application to foster are for infants or primary age children or respite carers. These applications are welcome but can leave a gap.

2.1.6 In line with national challenges, Thurrock experiences difficulty in recruiting the volume of foster carers we would like to meet the needs of our children. There continues to be significant recruitment activity in fostering to recruit new foster carers within Thurrock and the surrounding area. A wide range of engagement events has been held in and around Thurrock and our brand is visible in the Thurrock Community. We have made use of a range of advertising including at the end of December and into January 2023, a targeted Google ads campaign was launched to drive enquiries. We continue to encourage residents to make the leap in to fostering.

2.2 The National Picture

2.2.1 Ofsted provide annual statistics on the national picture for fostering¹. It last reported in November 2022. Key points from the report in terms of recruitment are:

- There are fewer foster placements available nationally at 31 March 2022 than there were at the same time in 2018
- Over the last five years there has been fewer households applying to foster even when there is a good level of enquiries
- Nationally 45% of all children fostered are fostered by an independent Fostering Agency

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2021-to-31-march-2022/fostering-in-england-1-april-2021-to-31-march-2022>

- Foster Carers are much more likely to foster for a longer career if they are registered with a local authority

2.2.2 In February 2023 the Department for Education set out its response to the National Care Review². Key highlights for fostering are:

- The Government will support a campaign to recruit 3000 more foster carers nationally, this will be piloted in the Northeast in 2023 and to other regions in 2024
- The national minimum allowance (not fees) for foster carers will increase by 12.43% in April 2023 for each area. This will be
- The funding for this uplift is provided through the Local Government Finance Settlement via the existing Social Care Grant in 2023/04, the distribution of which is agreed at a local level
- Support for kinship arrangements are to be reviewed which could lower the demand for foster placements in years to come by preventing children from coming in to care and enabling more children to live with family members as private arrangements. The Government will clarify the detail of how this can be achieved later in 2023

2.3 Recruitment Activity

2021/2022

- Newly Approved Foster Carers = 11 Households
- Applications made that did not result in approval = 17 Households
- Left Fostering = 13

2022 – January 2023

- Newly Approved Foster Carers = 6 Households
- Applications made that did not result in approval = 7 Households
- Left Fostering = 11
- 8 Households applications are being assessed as suitable to foster which should result in 12 placements if fully used. It is anticipated that of these 3 should be presented to panel before 31st March 2023

2.3.1 For both years, households who ceased fostering did so for a range of reasons. The vast majority retired. A small number left for other reasons, such as, their own health, standards of care concerns and due to changes in their family circumstances. No household left Thurrock Fostering to join another fostering agency which is positive.

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1133537/Children_s_social_care_stable_homes_consultation_February_2023.pdf

2.4 Thurrock's Fostering Demographic

2.4.1 Thurrock like most authorities has an ageing fostering population which means that each year we are likely to lose some of our valuable and experienced foster carers to retirement from fostering. The majority of our foster carers are aged 40-65. Our recruitment activity seeks to recruit enough carers to keep our number of fostering households stable and to grow our capacity. Despite significant recruitment activity, this has been challenging to do.

Progress of applications (year to date compared to last year):

	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Total YTD	2021/22
Number of households attending Information Sessions	1	1	3	0	1	1	3	2	4	0	16	39
Number of formal Enquiries ³	14	17	12	11	7	13	13	12	12	16	127	171
Number of IVs completed	6	3	2	6	2	0	3	6	2	3	33	72
Number of Applications Received	2	4	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	1	13	18
Number of applications dropped out	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	1	0	7	17
Numbers of approved foster carers (HH)	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	6	11
Transfer from IFA to Thurrock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

³ Formal enquiries are when a member of the public shares their contact details with us. Where a general conversation is held but the member of public does not share details these are noted as informal enquiries (see appendix 1)

2.5 Advertising Impact:

2.5.1 The following table sets out which adverts have been referred to by applicants when a formal enquiry is made:

Advert	Reports
Thurrock Council Offices/Website/jobsite	50
Facebook/Social media apps	19
Follow up card/Calendar/Xmas card	3
Gazette	5
Google Search/Online	15
Lakeside/Event/Drop-in	26
Lamppost (Grays Bus Station)	0
Leaflet through door (including Council Tax leaflet)	2
Reach/Local iQ (started 22 Dec)	7
Nothing Noted / nothing seen	3
Other Newspaper/Publication (including Thurrock's residential newsletter)	2
Radio (none at present)	1
Referral (& was previous FC & word of mouth, previous enquired)	25
Roadside Adverts	4
School or Church (Banner or newsletter)	10

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 In terms of recruitment of foster carers, Thurrock is able to recruit and support enough foster carers to keep the current number of children placed in-house stable. This, however, is not sufficient for our ambition to increase the numbers of families fostering for Thurrock and making sure children are placed locally.

3.1.2 To improve recruitment the service is reviewing our offer of support to Thurrock Foster Carers to ensure that we are competitive with our nearest competitors and to make sure fostering for Thurrock is attractive.

3.1.3 Following a review of our recruitment approach the plan is to launch a combined fostering recruitment and retention programme to reflect the need to not only recruit more carers but to support and sustain the current cohort. This will especially focus on further equipping those at the start of their fostering journey to have everything they need to do the role. The work will focus on the support offer and addressing any issues carers face beyond the financial element. This will include building a clear sense of being a cohesive fostering community that will not only retain those already fostering with Thurrock but

will form part of the narrative around what you are joining when you foster with Thurrock.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Members to note and consider the options available

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

5.1 We consult monthly with our foster carers via a group focussed on recruitment. Their views and ideas are included in our planning.

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

6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

The increased recruitment of foster carers will assist in the reduction of Independent Fostering Agencies and support the Council with their own cohort of foster carers. An increase in the number of internal foster carers would support the placements budget position.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

Thurrock Council is a registered Fostering Agency and recruits Foster Carers in line with its statement of purpose. The statement of purpose sets a framework for all of the business of the fostering agency and is required to be consistent with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011, the National Minimum Standards 2011, and the amended regulations.

7.2.1 The Council has a duty under Section 22 G of the Children Act 1989, so far as reasonably practicable, to secure accommodation for looked after children in the Council area, which meets the needs of those children: where this is consistent with those children's welfare.

7.2.2 Section 22C specifies that the provision of a foster placement is one of the ways the Council may provide that accommodation. The placement, so as is reasonably practicable must:

- a) Allow the child to live near his/her home;
- b) Not disrupt the child's education or training;
- c) Enable siblings to live together
- d) Meet a disabled child's particular needs
- e) Is within the Council's area

The successful recruitment of foster carers will assist the Council in meeting these duties

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead: Community Development and Equalities

Applications to foster are welcomed from anyone of any background who wishes to apply. They are assessed against the National Minimum Fostering Standards and individual needs, circumstances etc. are addressed in detail.

7.3.1 The Fostering Service is committed to furthering equality, promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination in all its forms. We are committed to placing the needs of children first; to recognise children, young people and carers as individuals, and to treat our service users, carers and partner agencies with dignity and respect. We are also committed to raising the profile of equality and diversity issues across the Council.

7.3.2 The Fostering Service actively and consciously values diversity and difference and seeks to provide a high-quality service and fair and equal treatment for all our carers, children and young people. Our approach to promoting equality and diversity is to provide bespoke services, with due consideration and sensitivity to the complex needs of children and young people and families. Increasing the numbers of foster carers provides greater choice of placements for looked after children and improved matching of children with carers. This will support our Thurrock children to fulfil their potential as they have homes providing stability.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

- Impact on Looked After Children

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):

- Thurrock Fostering Statement of Purpose
- Payments to Foster Carers Policy
- Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy and Consultation Children's Social Care Reform 2023
([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1133537/Children s social care stable homes consultation February 2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1133537/Children_s_social_care_stable_homes_consultation_February_2023.pdf))
- Fostering in England 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2021-to-31-march-2022/fostering-in-england-1-april-2021-to-31-march-2022>)

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Table of Completed Fostering Recruitment Events

Report Author:

Dan Jones

Strategic Lead Children Looked After

Appendix 1: Table of Completed Fostering Recruitment Events

Over the events listed in the table below, the following enquiries were made by members of the public:

- 110 Informal enquiries (discussed fostering but did not provide contact details)
- 17 Formal Enquiries (where contact details are shared)
- 5 Requests for an Initial Visit
- 400+ leaflets and posters distributed.

Date	Time	Venue
4th April 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
10th April 2022	10:00 to 17:00	Easter Fair / market, Civic Hall
20th April 2022	10am to 5pm	Careers Day at Aveley Hub
21st April 2022	9am - 9pm	Lakeside
22nd April 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
26th April 2022	10am to 2pm	Morrisons, Corringham
10th May 2022	10am to 2pm	Morrisons, Grays
11th May 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
12th May 2022	9am - 9pm	Lakeside
18th May 2022	6pm - 8pm	Orsett Hall, Boardroom
20th May 2022	10am to 2pm	Asda, Tilbury
22nd May 2022	10am to 11.30am	Virtual Online - information event
22nd May 2022	1pm to 4pm	Warren School, Jubilee Event
9th June 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
13th June 2022	9am - 9pm	Lakeside -

21st June 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
8th July 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
25th July 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
29th July 2022	10.30am to 3.30pm	Brentwood Family Fundays Warley Playing Fields - CM13 3AZ
5th August 2022	10.30am to 3.30pm	Brentwood Family Fundays Ingatestone - Seymour Fields CM4 0BE
6th August 2022	10am to 11.30am	Virtual Online - information event
12th August 2022	10.30am to 3.30pm	Brentwood Family Fundays Brentwood Centre - CM15 9NN
17th August 2022	9am - 9pm	Lakeside
19th August 2022	10.30am to 3.30pm	Brentwood Family Fundays Doddinghurst Village Hall CM15 0NJ
25th August 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
26th August 2022	10.30am to 3.30pm	Brentwood Family Fundays Hutton Recreational Ground CM13 1BS
29th August 2022	11am to 3pm	East Street Park, Grays (via Gumley Road)

3rd September 2022	10am to 6pm	Basildon Pride
6th September 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
7th September 2022	10am to 2pm	Sainsbury's Chafford Hundred
8th September 2022	10 to 11:30am	Lightship Café, Grays Beach Park FC Recruitment meeting
16/09/2022	1pm to 2.30pm	Tilbury Mosque
21st September 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
23rd September 2022	12 to 2pm	Grays Mosque
25th September 2022	11.15am to 1.30pm	Grays Gurdwara
3rd October 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
10th October 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
18th October 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
2nd November 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
13th November 2022	10am to 4pm	Civic Hall Christmas Market -
16th November 2022	10am to 11.30am	Interfaith community event
16th November 2022	12noon to 7pm	Orsett Hall Christmas Market
18th November 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
1st December 2022	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event

4th December 2022	10am to 3pm	Grays Beach Park Christmas Market (outside)
19th December 2022	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
10th January 2023	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
13th January 2023	10 - 2pm	Asda, Tilbury
16th January 2023	9am to 9pm	Lakeside drop in (TBC)
25th January 2023	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
1st February 2023	12pm to 3pm	John Lewis - Partners (staff) - stall in their dining area
7th February 2023	9am to 9pm	Lakeside drop in
9th February 2023	9am to 2pm	Impulse, Blackshots
10th February 2023	10am to 12 noon	Virtual Online - information event
15th February 2023	9am to 2pm	Impulse, Belhus
16th February 2023	10am to 2pm	Sainsbury's Chafford
22nd February 2023	3pm - 7pm	Impulse, Blackshots
23rd February 2023	6pm to 8pm	Virtual Online - information event
25th February 2023	10am to 3pm	Drop In - Store - John Lewis - Bluewater
27th February 2023	3pm - 7pm	Impulse, Belhus

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21 March 2023		ITEM: 10
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Housing Options for Care Leavers		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Luke Froment, Service Manager, After Care		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report sets out how the Local Authority will meet its statutory duties and responsibilities to young people leaving care to support them into independent living as adults.

The report sets out the diverse types of living arrangements that are available to Thurrock Care Leavers and how care experienced young people's needs are met after they leave care.

Progress is being made in assisting young people to achieve Thurrock Council tenancies where appropriate to do so and a range of other services are in place where other arrangements are required.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 For the Committee to note the range of accommodations option provided to care Experienced Young people on leaving care and how Thurrock Council is discharging it's corporate parenting duty.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Aftercare service works with young people in Thurrock who are aged 16 plus who are eligible for a Care Leaving Service and young adults aged 18-25.

When a young person becomes 18 years old, they are transferred to the aftercare service. The young people are formerly Children Looked After and at age 18 they fall within one of the following categories:

- former relevant child, entitled to: Personal Advisor, Pathway Plan (regularly reviewed), assistance with employment, education or training, assistance with accommodation, help with living costs.
- qualifying care leavers are entitled to help with living expenses, advice and assistance.

Between the ages of 16 – 18 years, children's cases are held in the Children Looked After service and they have a Personal Advisor allocated as a secondary worker. This group fall into one of two categories:

- Eligible child, entitled to: A Qualified Social Worker, Personal Advisor, Care Plan, Pathway Plan, regular review, regular visits, Support relating to Education, accommodation and living costs
- Relevant child, entitled to: Personal Advisor, Needs Assessment, Pathway Plan, support with accommodation and subsistence

2.2 All local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989, and subsequent legislation, to prepare children for leaving care and must publish Information relating to what support it offers to care leavers (the Local Offer). It also has duties and powers to assist care leavers.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The current Joint Housing Protocol has been in place since 2019. It has assisted in making responsibilities and rights clear. Joint meetings between housing and after-care team, at an operational and strategic level, are held so that there is regular oversight of the young people's progress in being allocated a Council property.

3.2 The Aftercare Team and the Housing Service work together to help prepare young people for a tenancy. They are supported with training and preparation for having their own property. Personal Advisors and Housing Officers work together to support young people through the application process and in most cases bid for a property in line with the Thurrock Housing Allocation Policy.

3.3 Care experienced young people who have just turned eighteen are supported in other arrangements until they are able to find permanent housing, such as:

- Remaining with their Foster Carer under a 'Staying Put' Arrangement
- Living in semi-supported accommodation
- Living in 'Head-Start Housing'
- Choosing to live within their own family
- Attending university
- Supported by Adult Services in a CQC registered home or Shared Lives arrangements (for young adults with significant additional needs)

Young people leaving care can stay in these arrangements for varying periods. The goal is to move on to a permanent housing arrangement as soon as the young person is ready for this.

- 3.4 The After Care team work hard with young people in identifying the right accommodation for the young person in a timely way so that they can go on to independence with confidence.
- 3.5 The After Care Team works with colleagues from within and outside of the Local Authority to ensure that each young person is supported in accessing and maintaining their property.
- 3.6 Much of the work between the After Care team and the housing department is set out in the joint housing protocol. There are regular meetings to track progress of care leavers obtaining social housing and to address strategic issues and planning.
- 3.7 There are also weekly meetings alongside Head Start housing colleagues to look at the “transitions pipeline.” We seek to ensure that we are clear which young people are approaching eighteen, and that they have a clear plan for post eighteen. We ensure that there is a clear plan in place so that young people can bid for their own social housing at the earliest opportunity and that they have the skills, support, and training to achieve and maintain a tenancy.
- 3.8 The impact of this work can be seen in the collaborative working between after care and housing to address issues that might arise; and in the numbers of young people achieving their own social housing. On average we have had one Care Leaver every two weeks who has moved into a social housing tenancy since August 2022.
- 3.9 There are a range of diverse types of accommodation provided to Thurrock’s Care Leavers depending on their assessed need. The Pathway plan for each young person provides regular analysis and review of the plan towards independence. Part of this planning ensures that the young person is matched to the right kind of accommodation. The goal is to support the Care Leaver to become an independent and valuable member of the local community.

3.10 Types of Accommodation provided to Care Experienced Young People

3.11 Social Housing provided by Thurrock Council

The largest cohort of care leavers are those who are currently living in their own social housing. These are young people who have the skills to live independently in the local community. This cohort is supplemented by those young people living in privately rented accommodation and a further group who reside with family members, friends (in some cases former “staying put” carers) in less formal arrangements.

- 3.12 These young people receive ongoing support from their allocated Personal Advisor in the After Care team as well as a range of support provided by housing colleagues as and when required.
- 3.13 The offer of support from the After Care and Housing services is formalised as part of Thurrock's "Local Offer" to care leavers.
- 3.14 This is the formal offer made by the local authority for all care leavers – it is shared with young people from the age of 16 by their Personal Advisor and used to explain what might be expected in terms of support from the point the young person turns 18. This is available on the Thurrock website at www.thurrock.gov.uk/bigwideworld. Personal Advisors and social workers use the 'Big Wide World' as a direct work tool and a reference guide for young people.
- 3.15 A young person can expect regular visits from their PA and advice and guidance in respect of managing their budget and maintaining their tenancy. This is alongside the work by housing colleagues who will work to support the young person. There is an ongoing training session that takes place quarterly for care leavers, facilitated by housing colleagues for those young people who are actively bidding for their social housing to prepare them for successfully obtaining social housing and the responsibilities that this entails.
- 3.16 Head Start Housing**
- 3.17 For many young people who have recently turned eighteen their first accommodation will be provided by Head Start housing. This service is provided via Housing and is shared living in a home environment. The aim of this accommodation is to act as a steppingstone on the journey towards achieving social housing. There are several properties in the local area identified for Care Leavers and these properties are supported by Head Start Housing staff supplementary to ongoing Personal Advisor support.
- 3.18 These properties are furnished and are provided with white goods and Wi-Fi access. The Head Start housing staff are focused on building relationships with the young people, supporting them to bid for their social housing, to understand the expectations around paying rent and regular bills, providing guidance around practical tasks relating to living independently.
- 3.19 This accommodation is a transition arrangement moving towards independent living.
- 3.20 The Aftercare team are currently supporting twenty-one young people who do not currently have a final decision from the home office in relation to their immigration status and therefore are unable to access social housing. Most of the young people in this cohort are accommodated within Head Start Housing provision. These young people receive the same level of support as any other Care leaver. They are supported to make appropriate applications to the Home Office in order to resolve their immigration status, once status is

granted, they are supported to make an application for social housing. In the interim accommodation is provided, usually by Head Start Housing

3.21 Staying put

3.22 Staying Put is a framework that allows young people to remain in their foster home beyond their 18th birthday; this reflects the experience of most young adults. Staying put allows young people to remain in a family environment until they are ready to move on to independence. These arrangements can be in place to support a young person to finish their formal education or can be maintained up to the age of twenty-one. In some cases, a young person and their carer may agree for the arrangement to be maintained post twenty-one on a private arrangement basis

3.23 These arrangements are agreed by mutual consent of the young person and the foster carer, planning for these arrangements starts as early as possible (driven by the allocated social worker in the children looked after service, supported by the Personal Advisor from After Care who acts as a secondary worker between the ages of 16-18) and the aim is that by the young person's 17th Birthday they are clear about any plans to stay put with their foster carer.

3.24 While a young person is in a staying put arrangement their former foster carer will provide them with continuing support alongside their PA who will ensure that they are clear about the next steps – including bidding for social housing which needs to be managed to coincide with the proposed end date for any staying put arrangement.

3.25 The After Care service meets weekly to track a range of issues relating to accommodation and staying put cases are considered in this forum to ensure that planning is in place and progressing.

3.26 Adult services provision

3.27 Young people who have additional needs or vulnerabilities may be provided with specialised accommodation via adult services. These are young people where a referral is made to the transitions team in adult services prior to the young person turning eighteen and an assessment carried out by adult services to ascertain if the remit is met for additional support post 18 years.

3.28 Where it is felt appropriate that young person may have a social worker appointed from adult social care or additional support from mental health or drug and alcohol services. A part of this package may include provision of specialised accommodation that can be effective in supporting with additional needs.

3.29 The allocated Personal Advisor remains involved with these young people to ensure that the Local authority provides support in line with the duties of being a good corporate parent.

3.30 Sanctuary Supported Accommodation

- 3.31 Sanctuary provides placements for Care Leavers who may be considered to have a higher level of need at the point they turn eighteen. Sanctuary hostel is a staffed facility with additional expertise available to support young people around issues such as budgeting and tenancy management, bidding for social housing as well as understanding how antisocial behaviour might impact on the young person's ability to maintain a tenancy.
- 3.32 Sanctuary staff work closely alongside the PA and the After Care team manager meets regularly with the manager at Sanctuary to ensure that there is close joint working and that issues are identified early and addressed.
- 3.33 Sanctuary also provides several placements for young people who approach the Local Authority prior to eighteen and are homeless. In these cases, the young person may be offered the choice to be considered a Child Looked After or be provided with support from Children's services as a Child in Need.

3.34 Continuation of Pre-18 Semi-Independent placements

- 3.35 There are a small number of young people who are supported by children's services to remain in their pre eighteen placement for an additional period. This may be in acknowledgement of a particular risk or vulnerability; or this may be due to a lack of available resource within Head Start housing for the young person to move into at the point they turn eighteen.
- 3.36 These placements are reviewed weekly, and a plan is devised so young people can move on to either their own tenancy or another provision that caters to young adults.

3.37 Temporary Accommodation

- 3.38 For a small number of young people, it may be that at times it is not possible to identify accommodation from the vast range of options available. In these cases, temporary accommodation may need to be provided pending further planning or support towards social housing.
- 3.39 Most of the young people provided with temporarily housing by Thurrock housing department pending assessment of their housing needs and a formal decision about how these needs will be met in the longer term. Any such arrangement has a strict timeframe of 56 days during which the housing needs assessment would need to be completed and a formal outcome provided.
- 3.40 For a very small number of young people who have been provided with accommodation via temporary housing due to issues of risk or vulnerability that prevents other providers from meeting their needs at this time. These cases are considered as part of monthly planning meetings that take place between the After Care service and Head Start housing colleagues.

3.41 Shared Lives

3.42 'Shared Lives' is an arrangement that provides individuals that invite a young person into their home to live within their family. This is like a foster carer arrangement for adults. The young people placed in such arrangements have additional needs and part of the funding for this type of placement usually comes from the young person's Personal Independence Payment.

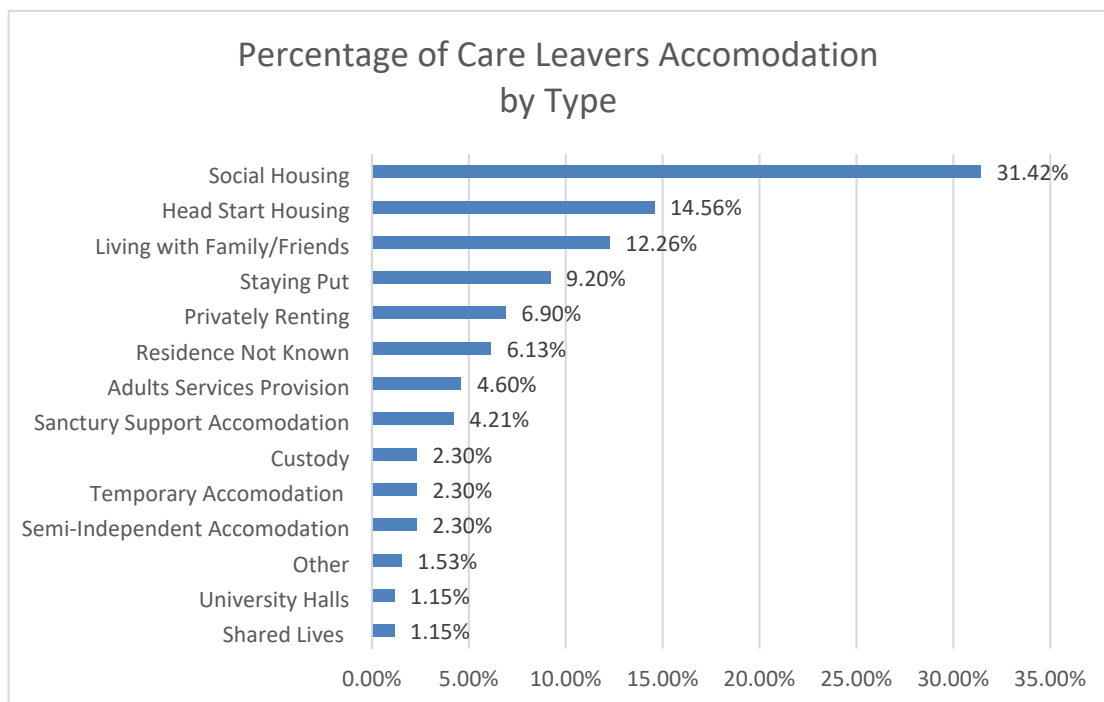
3.43 The personal advisor continues to be involved with the young person to ensure that statutory duties towards them as a Care Leaver are addressed.

3.44 Property Rented by Children's services

3.45 To support care experienced young people whose immigration status is under-review but who are also ready to live independently, there is an initial pilot to make use of a council owned property that is leased to Children's Services and licensed to the young people. This provides them with the autonomy needed but also avoids the use of more expensive provision whilst their immigration status is settled. Work is ongoing with commissioning colleagues to look at identifying more such properties that might be used in a comparable way.

3.46 Comparative Use of Accommodation Types

3.47 The following graph sets out how the differing types of accommodation used by care leavers:



- 3.48 Despite best efforts made by the Aftercare Team there are a small percentage of young people who do not keep in touch and their living arrangements are unknown. We continue to monitor these young people and support them with accommodation options as they come to our attention.
- 3.49 The graph demonstrates the wide range of options available and how they are used. There is good progress for care experienced young people in achieving a Council Tenancy from Thurrock Council. This is bolstered by the Head-Start, Sanctuary and Temporary Accommodation also provided through Thurrock's Housing Service.
- 3.50 Foster carers, family and friends continue to provide homes after the age of 18 to support young people. Young People are supported to attend university with a combination of halls and staying put. For some young people who have the support of Thurrock Council's Adult Services, there is good evidence of the use of Shared Lives, and Adults placements.
- 3.51 Overall this demonstrates the wider corporate parenting that supports our care experienced young people in their first steps after the age of 18

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The report informs members of the types of accommodation available to young people leaving care and how this is used.

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

- None

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

- 6.1 Young People who have been in care of the Local Authority are a corporate responsibility and will have an impact on wider corporate policies and performance.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

All accommodation costs are managed from within the Children Social Care Placements budget. There are no financial implications to this report

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

The Local Authority is required under section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to publish a local offer, which sets out the services and the support available for care leavers.

The local offer should include information on how care leavers are supported to access suitable accommodation, including the support available from housing services. Joint housing protocols should be aligned with the local offer and can help to ensure that the commitments to support Care Leavers to access and sustain accommodation are met. Local Authorities should consider providing a link to the joint protocol within the local offer so that Care Leavers, advocates and other professionals can have access to the document.

The Local Authority is required to have regard to the Homelessness Code of Practice and this Code advises Children's Services and housing to have joint protocols for Care Leavers.

The provision of social housing to Care Leavers is undertaken in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme.

The Local Authority must have regard to the Corporate Parenting Principles Section 1 of the Children and Social work Act 2017 in the exercise of functions in relation to Looked after, relevant and former relevant children.

For Care Leavers who access accommodation through adult social care the Council must have regard to its duties under the Care Act 2014.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

The Service is committed to practice, which promotes inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. The service recognises that a range of communities and groups of people may have experienced obstruction or the impact of prejudice when accessing services including Social Care and Housing services. Both Services are committed to support all children in the care of Thurrock Council to access housing.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e., Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

- 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:

Luke Froment
Service Manager CLA

Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Parenting

Year: 2022/2023

Dates of Meetings: 19 July 2021, 6 September 2021, 4 January 2022 and 21 March 2022

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
19 July 2022		
Childrens Social Care Performance 2021-22	Mandy Moore	Officers
Children Looked After and Care Leaver Sufficiency Strategy Update	Catherine Wilson/Dan Jones	Officers
Corporate Parenting Strategy	Janet Simon	Officers
Report on Initial Health Assessments for Looked After Children	Dan Jones	Officers
Inspire - Head Start Housing: Supporting Care Leavers	Kate Kozlova-Boran	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
6 September 2022		
Children's Social Care Performance 2022-23	Mandy Moore	Officers
Adoption Statement of Purpose	Dan Jones	Officers
After Care Service Report	Luke Froment	Officers
Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers	Dan Jones /Ben Tovey	Officers
Children in Care Council Update	Open Door	Officers
Performance Report on Initial Health Assessments for Looked After Children	Dan Jones	Members

Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2021/2022	Democratic Services	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
4 January 2023		
Children's Social Care Performance	Mandy Moore	Officers
Independent Reviewing Officer – Annual Report	Ruth Murdock	Officers
CLA Health Report	Health Colleagues (Nikola Rickard/ Sharon Hall)	Officers
Annual Report of the Virtual Schools	Keeley Pullen	Officers
IHA & NELFT Report	Dan Jones/ Helen Farmer	Members
Children in Care Council Update	Chair Children in Care Council & Thurrock Open Door	Officers
Review into the Safety of Children in Residential School Settings	Dan Jones	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
21 March 2023		
Children's Social Care Performance 2022/2023	Mandy Moore	Officers
SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Looked After Children, January 2022 - December 2022	Tina Russel	Officers
Children in Care Council Update (Verbal)	Chair Children in Care Council & Thurrock Open Door	Officers
The One Team, Foster Carer Association Update (Verbal)	Chair and Vice-Chair of The One Team, Foster Carer Association & Dan Jones	Officers

Housing Options for Care Leavers	Luke Froment	Officers
Recruitment of Foster Carers Fostering	Dan Jones	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item

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