

6 December 2017		ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Children's Social Care Performance		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director, Children's Care & Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director, Children's Care & Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

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

The number of children becoming looked after has reduced and this is explained by a reduction in new cases coming into the system and more cases being closed than the previous year. Children on a child protection plan has also seen a reduction in new cases but the number being closed is lower than previous year, in turn the child protection rate has only slightly reduced.

An area of focus is care leavers in education, employment and training. Performance has reduced since April 2017. Work is being undertaken to improve this position for the next quarter.

Three children have been adopted in year to date, however a number of children are in the process of being adopted. The department is aiming to have at least 11 children adopted by March 2017.

1. Recommendation(s)

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

1.2 Corporate Parenting Committee to note:

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

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report provides a summary of children's social care performance. It highlights key demand indicators such as number of Looked After Children, trend analyses, benchmarking data and key performance indicators.

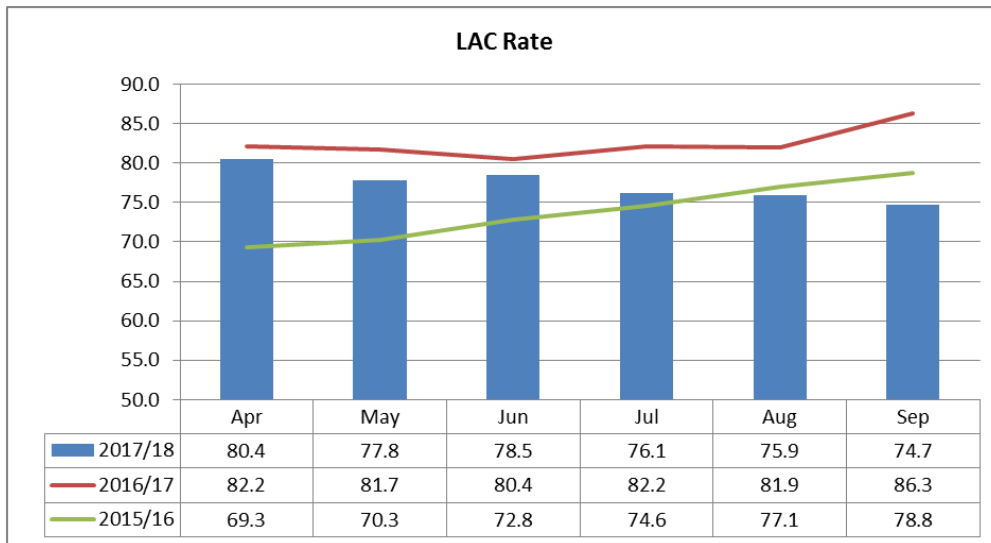
3. Looked After Children (LAC)

Total number of Looked After Children (LAC) at 30/09/2017	313
– Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 child population	74.7
– Number of LAC that are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	36

3.1 The total number of looked after children at 30th September 2017 was 313 compared to 353 at 30th September 2016. The number of LAC has fallen by 40 and for the same period our number of UASC has fallen by 56.

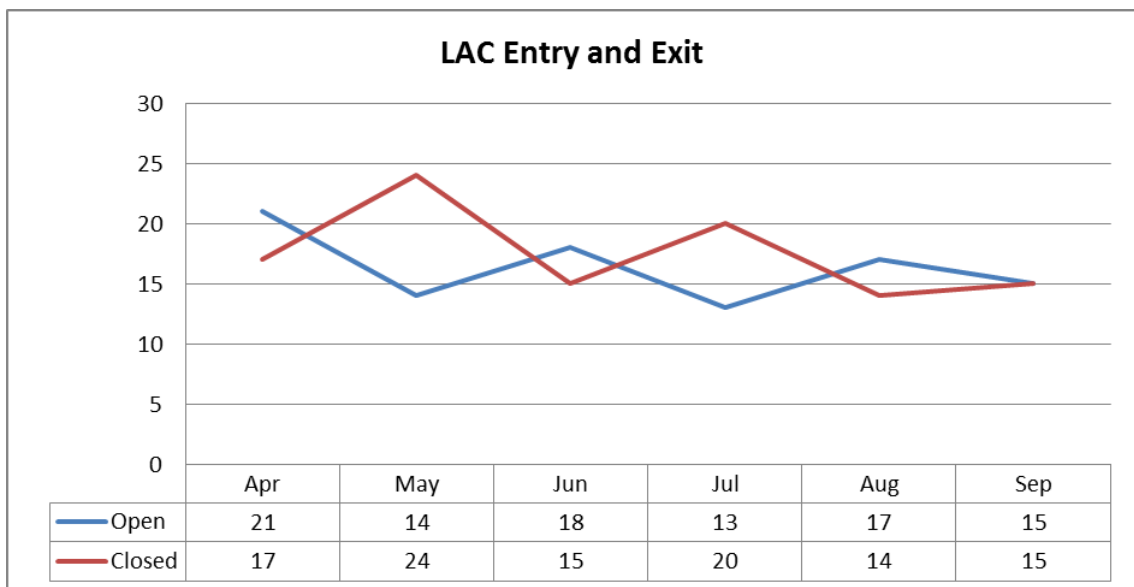
3.2 The graph below shows the rate of LAC per month since April 2017 compared to previous years. The rate of LAC has reduced from 86.3 in Sep 16 to 74.7 in Sep 17. This is still above the latest national rate for LAC (at 31/03/2017) of 62 per 10,000 and statistical neighbours at 66 per 10,000.

Chart 1



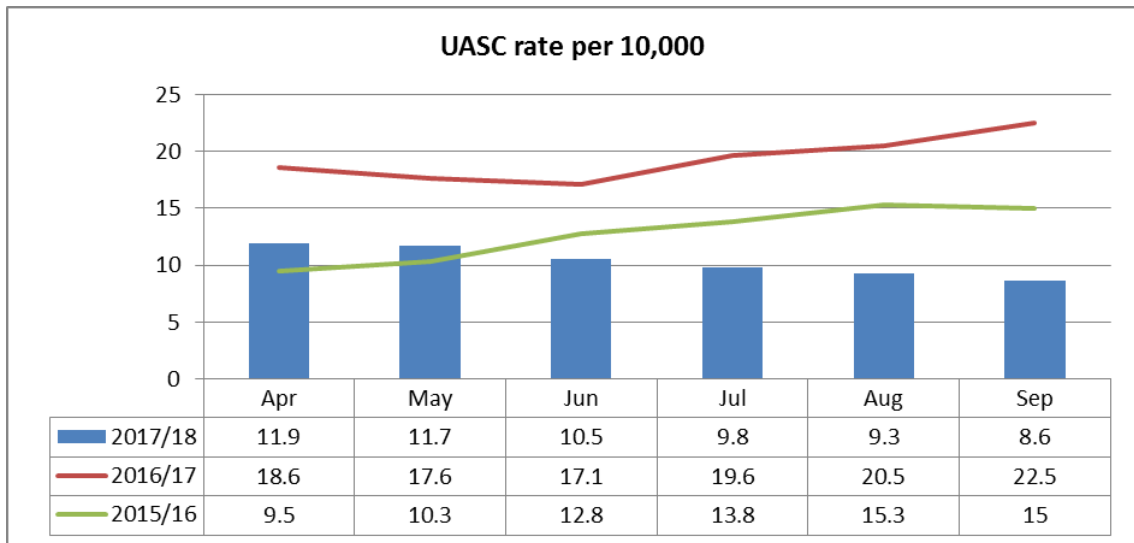
3.3 The chart below shows the number of children entering and exiting as LAC. In September 2017 we had 98 new children for the financial year that were looked after, in comparison to the previous year where we had 113 children that became looked after. This is a reduction of 15 new cases. We have exited 15 more cases this year, compared to the same period last year. A total of 105 have left care year to date, in comparison to 90 last year.

Chart 2



3.4 The graph below shows how our rates of UASC have been reducing. Our current rate is 8.6 compared to 22.5 in September last year.

Chart 3



4. LAC Placements

Long term stability Percentage of children Under 16 for more than 2.5 years and in current placement for at least 2 years	71%
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4.1 The number of Looked After Children at the end of September who are under 16 and have been LAC for 30 months or more was 95. Out of these 95 children, 71% have been in long term placements compared to 67% for the same period in 2016. As at September 2017, 67% of Thurrock’s LAC population were aged below 16.

Percentage of placements that are <i>In Borough</i>	40%
Percentage of placements that are <i>Out of Borough</i>	60%

125 of the 313 looked after children are currently placed in Thurrock. There has been a focus to increase the percentage of placements within Thurrock. The current position of 40% is an improvement compared to the same period last year where 32% were placed in borough.

5. LAC Reviews

Total number of LAC Reviews expected between 1 st April 2017 and 31 st July 2017	157
– Percentage of LAC reviews completed on time	93%

5.1 Thurrock had 157 LAC Reviews scheduled between 1st April 2017 and 31st July 2017 of which 146 were completed in time. There has been progress made in relation to LAC reviews being completed on time which has increased to 93% from 80% at the same point last year, due to a significant

spike in Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers at that time. The service continues to strive to ensure all reviews are completed within timescales.

6. Missing Looked After Children

Total number of Looked After Children (LAC)	313
– Percentage of children who went missing from placement in September 2017	2%

- 6.1 At the end of Sep 2017 there were 6 cases of children going missing from their placement and at the same point in 2016 we had 2 cases, representing an increase of 4 children recorded as missing from placement. The increase in recording of missing episodes is a result of better recording practices and training being delivered to carers and social workers.

7. Care Leaver Status and Accommodation

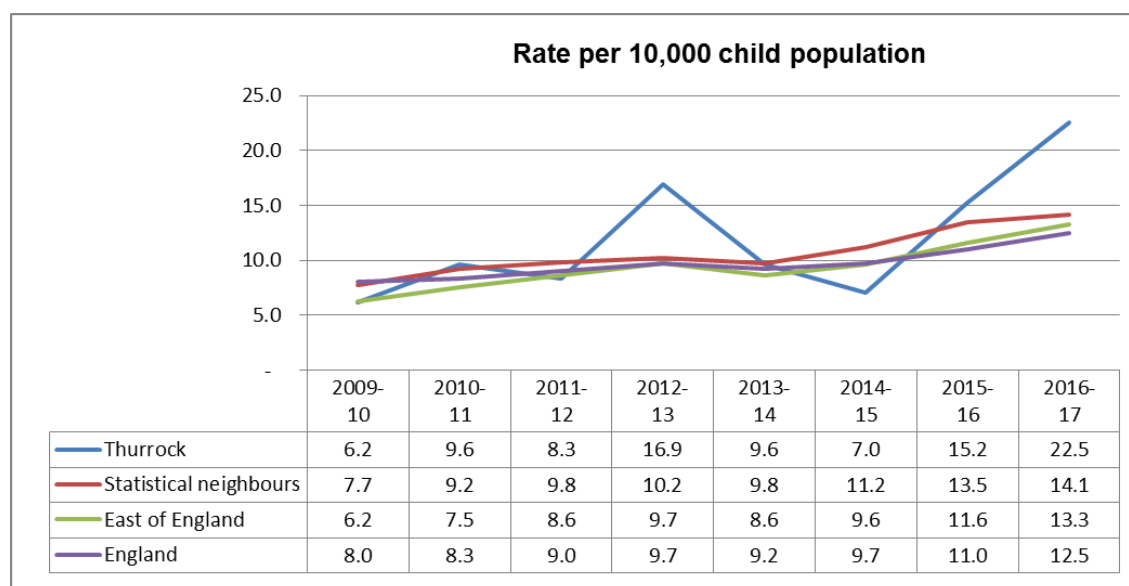
- 7.1 The % of care leavers in Education Employment or Training is 67.2%, which is a decrease from April 2017 where 75% were in EET.

Status	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
EET (%)	75.0	73.0	71.4	73.1	70.2	67.2
NEET (%)	25.0	21.6	21.4	16.7	18.1	19.0
Unknown (%)	0.0	2.7	3.6	3.8	4.3	5.2
Missing Data (%)	0.0	2.7	3.6	6.4	7.4	8.6

8. Care Applications

- 8.1 Whilst regional and national aggregated rates follow similar trends, Thurrock exhibits two spikes in applications, in 12/13 and 16/17, and a drop off, in 14/15.

Chart 4



Comparison between the current and previous year show a net increase of 4 care applications for the same period (36 increasing to 40 this year).

	2016-17		2017-18	
	Q1 16/17	Q2 16/17	Q1 17/18	Q2 17/18
Thurrock	14	22	19	21

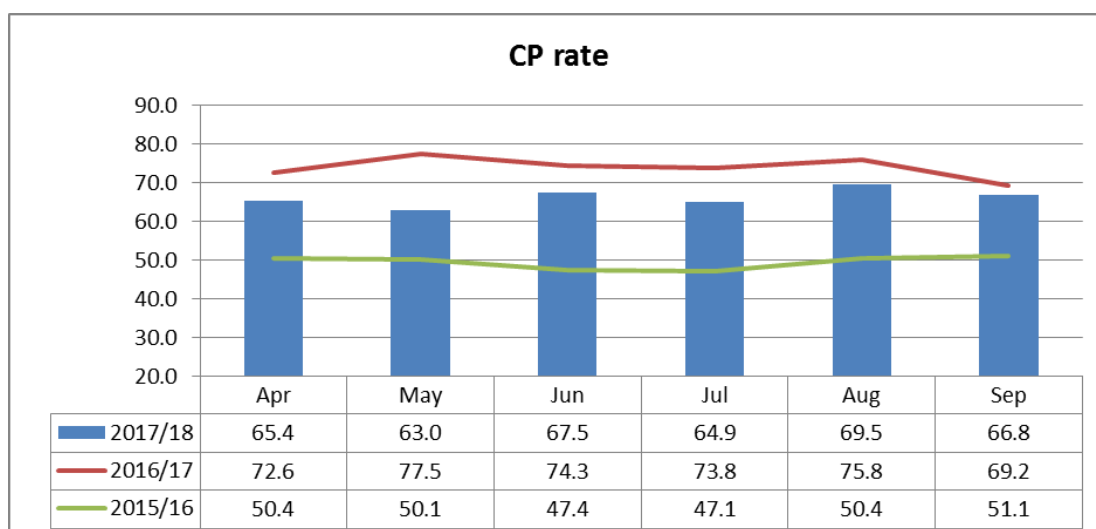
9. Child Protection

Total number of children on a Child Protection Plan at 30/09/2017	277
– Number on a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 child population	67
– Number on a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	21

9.1 The current rate of children on a Child Protection Plan (CP Plan) is 67 per 10,000 population of children in Thurrock. This is significantly higher than the 2016 national average of 43 and statistical neighbour average of 51 per 10,000 children. However the rate has reduced in comparison to the same period last year (Sep 16: 69 to Sep 17:67). Further work has been carried out and it is anticipated that October and November figures will show a further decrease. The number of children who are on a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time has reduced from 24 to 21 (compared to the same period last year).

9.2 The graph below shows the rate of Child Protection Plans which has remained steady since April 2017.

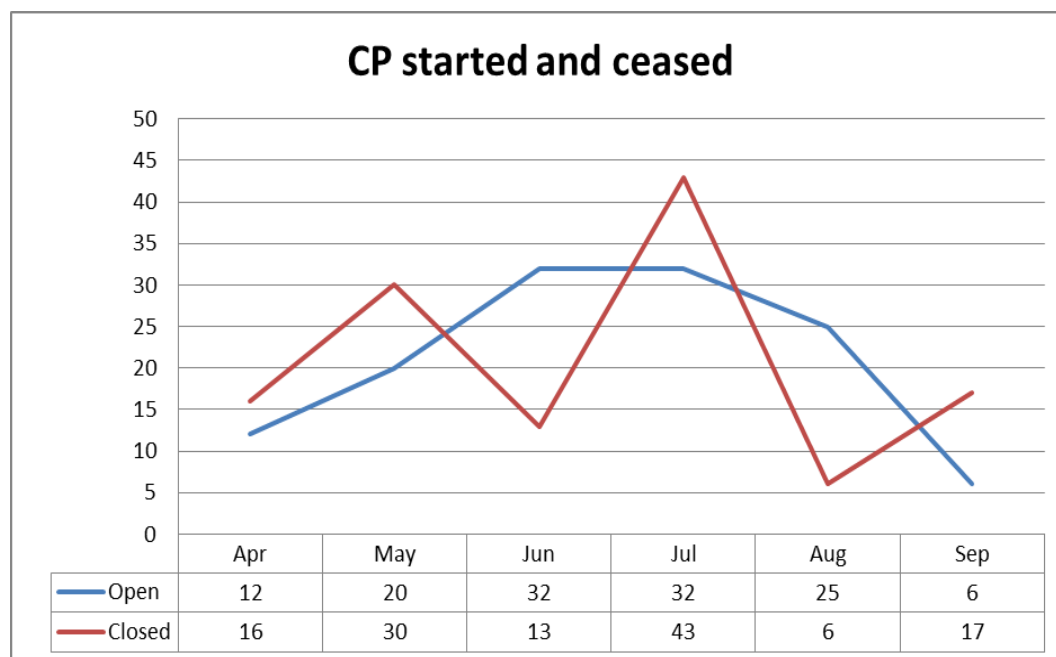
Chart 5



9.3 The graph below shows the number of Child Protection plans started per month. Year to date figure shows 127 child protection plans that were started in comparison to 152 last year. This is a reduction of 25 child protection plans.

The number of children ceasing to be subject to a child protection plan year to date is 125. This is less than the 158 for the same period last year.

Chart 6



10. Child Protection Plan Reviews

Total number of Child Protection Plan's reviewed in year to September 2017	323
– Percentage of Child Protection Plan's reviewed on time	96.7%

- 10.1 38 Child Protection Plans were reviewed in September with 1 falling out of timescale. This was due to no quorum as professionals were unavailable for the meeting.
- 10.2 The highest proportion of children on a Child Protection Plan at 30th September 2017 was within 6-11 months. We have reduced the amount of children on a Child Protection Plan for 2 to 3 years and currently have only 1 child falling within this timescale. We no longer have any children on a plan for more than 3 years.

11. Adoption

Number of adoptions between 1 st April 2017 and 30 th September 2017	3
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- 11.1 Six children are placed with adopters, and it is expected that the families will complete the adoption process by the end of financial year. Furthermore, three children are matched with prospective adopters but are waiting to move in with their permanent families due to legal challenges. It is anticipated that

the legal challenges will conclude by February so that the children will move in with their adopters this financial year. Concurrency is gradually becoming embedded in our care planning. Currently three children are in concurrent placements, which means the child's potential adopters are their current carers pending the outcome of court decisions. Our projection for end of year adoption is still 11 with the proviso that the legal challenges would be concluded by end of November. However there are issues in relation to non-availability of judges which are affecting timescales for concluding court cases. If these cases are not concluded by end of November, 9 children would be adopted this financial year. Six other children initially projected for this financial year are already delayed for 6 months and their cases will not conclude until February /March due to non-availability of Judges.

Average number of days between child entering care and child moving in with adoptive family (taken over a rolling 3 year period up to 30 th September 2017)	425
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- 11.2 We continue to sustain the improvements in our timeliness. The DFE target is 426 and national average is 18 months (547 days) for this indicator source Department of Education – Children looked after in England (including adoption) year ending 31 March 2016.

Average number of days between court agreeing adoption and local authority approving a match in year to September 2017	46
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- 11.3 The DFE target is 121 days. The current performance, though impressive, is likely to change significantly by the end of the financial year due to legal challenges on a number of Placement Orders. (POs)

Total number of approved foster carers	92
- Mainstream carers	75
- <i>Connected Person</i> carers	5
- Temporarily-approved carers	10
- <i>Shared Care</i> carers	2

Total number of in-house foster placements occupied	129
- Number of children placed in-house (including <i>Shared Care</i> and <i>Connected People</i>)	123
- Number of care leavers on <i>Staying Put Agreements</i>	6

12. Reasons for Recommendation

- 12.1 Continuous performance improvements, along with the safeguarding of children are a core part of Thurrock Children Social Care service delivery.

Thus, and in light of the abovementioned increases in service demands on the Authority's statutory social care service for children, and the consequent

successful Council's efforts to improve its services through early intervention service and management of front door (Mash), the Corporate Parenting Committee is invited to: note and comment on current performance position, and, if applicable, indicate further deep-dive revisions for areas deemed of primary focus.

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

- None

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

- None

15. Implications

15.1 Financial

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

No financial implications

15.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor Safeguarding

No legal implications

15.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community and Development Officer

Whilst there are no direct implications arising from this report, efficient performance monitoring includes consideration of equality data to ensure the needs children supported are understood and met

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

- None

16. 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):

- Various, including: Council internal system database (Liquidlogic Childern System) and Statutory returns submissions to the Department of Education.

17. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

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Children's Care & Targeted Outcomes