

31 July 2024		ITEM: 10
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Transitions to Adult Services for Care Leavers and Children in Care		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: None	
Report of: Iyobosa Osunde, Head of Social Work and Principal Social Worker Adult Social Care Elise McQueen, Head of Children Looked After Service, Children Social Care.		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Executive Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		
Version: Final		

Executive Summary

The Report and its appendix set out the role and performance of Thurrock Council in relation to supporting young people in care or leaving care to be assessed for and be provided with Adult Social Care Services.

Planning for transitions to Adult Services starts early and initial screening assessments are provided. If a full Care Act Assessment of a young person who is looked after is required, this should be completed by age 17. This enables the young person to have a clear plan and a smooth transition to Adult Services.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Members of the committee review the work of the Children Looked After Service and Preparing for Adulthood Team in meeting the Council's role as a Corporate Parent. In relation to the work undertaken for Children in Care and Care leavers to transition to adult services where it is appropriate to do so.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) team is a dedicated team in Adult Social Care (ASC) with skilled social workers and support planners which is

particularly critical for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) which includes looked after children, so that they are supported to have a smooth and seamless transition from children into adult services where this is appropriate.

- 2.2 The Team works with professionals and carers involved with Young People to understand what their ongoing care and support needs might be when they turn 18. The team is established as follows:

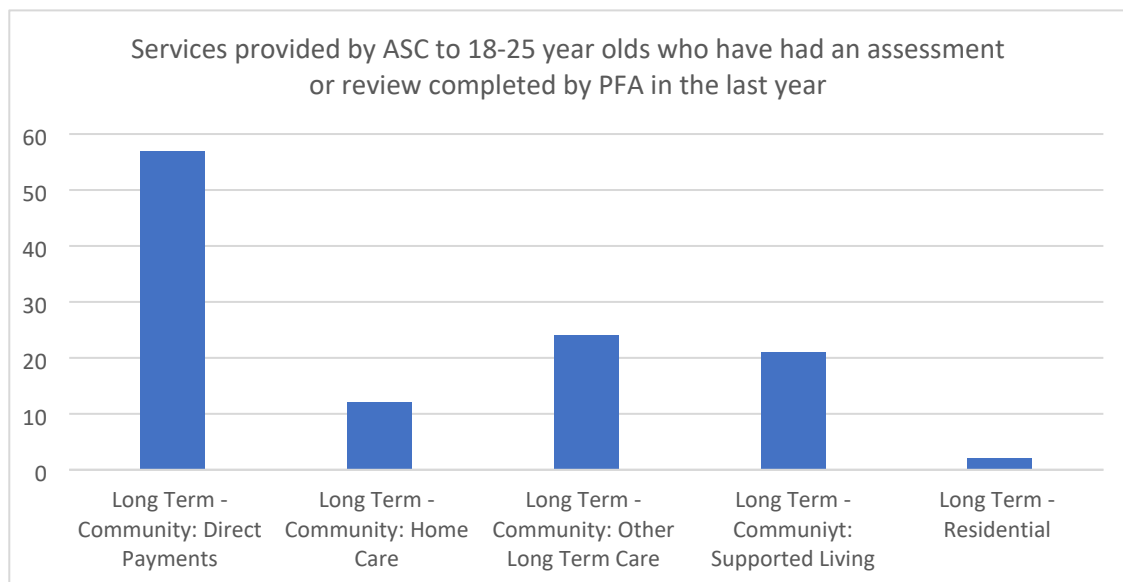


- 2.3 The team is currently carrying two vacancies and is in the process of recruiting to a senior practitioner and a support planner. This can affect the timeliness of assessments; the waiting list is overseen by management to prioritise urgent referrals. Recruitment to vacancies is active and it is hoped that the vacant posts will be filled soon.
- 2.4 The current caseload of the team ranges around 200 young people who have a variety of needs and backgrounds. Children in care and care leavers are part of the service user group and referrals are made in line with the transitions process.
- 2.5 Young People can decide to dip in and out of the service if they prefer to, however, the team provides long term case management intervention as and when required until young people are 25 and then transfer to the appropriate Community Led Support Team in ASC.
- 2.6 The Care Act 2014 offers carers more rights & protection for themselves and for the adult they care for. The PFA team, work within the Care Act 2014 guidance to ensure Young Person's wellbeing is at the centre and focus on all they do to achieve their outcomes and aspirations.
- 2.7 The Care Act places a duty on local authorities to conduct transition assessments for children, children's carers, and young carers where there is a likely need for care and support when the Young Person turns 18 and a transition assessment would be of 'significant benefit'.
- 2.8 Thurrock Council must give information and advice to Young People and families who want it, not just Young People who have their care and support paid for by the Local Authority. There are Young People that require support with signposting to the relevant organization – voluntary or governmental agencies.
- 2.9 When necessary, the team ensures that Young People are safeguarded from abuse, implementing clear risk management plans to manage and identify ways to minimize the risk.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Practitioners attend Education, Health and Care Plan meetings in year 9 with partner agencies and families to contribute to the planning of young people’s care and support plan and provide the relevant information about adult services. In most cases the PFA Team’s involvement, and the transition process begins at the start of year 10 when targets are set to meet identified outcomes.
- 3.2 Year 11 is crucial as some Young People may leave school at the end of the academic year. The Team works closely with the Young People, families, schools, and children services, Children Looked After and After Care Services to start information gathering that will inform the adult assessment.
- 3.3 For Young People transitioning that are looked after, work is jointly carried out with the Children Looked After and Aftercare teams. There is an updated Transitions Policy of Children Looked After and Care Leavers which includes a whole council approach. This helps to clarify what is expected of each service when the Young Person leaves care.

Long Term - Community: Direct Payments	57
Long Term - Community: Home Care	12
Long Term - Community: Other Long-Term Care	24
Long Term - Community: Supported Living	21
Long Term - Residential	2



- 3.4 For all children in care aged 16, as part of pathway planning a referral to adult services should be considered. When Adult Services could be required, this triggers a brief screening assessment from the Preparing for Adulthood Team. A full assessment is dependent on the outcome of this initial assessment. In the event a full assessment is required the target is to complete this prior to the 17th Birthday with a proposed package (if applicable).

- 3.5 If an Adult Social Care Service is agreed for a young person aged 17, the allocated worker from the PFA team will continue to be involved and complete a handover process. They will take the lead from age 18 supported in conjunction with the After Care Service if the young person is a care leaver.
- 3.6 The above chart highlights services delivered to young people who have had an assessment or review in the last year.
- 3.7 Adult Services provides vital support to our most vulnerable young people including those with disabilities. The commissioned services reflect those needs and the ongoing need for day-to-day support in living in the community.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The report sets out the operation of the Preparing for Adulthood process and the assessment outcomes in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- 4.2 Members of the committee have the opportunity to review the information and raise any queries.

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

- 5.1 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

There are no financial implications to this report. The services outlined are statutory and have allocated budgets within Children and Adult Services.

- 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Petrena Sharpe**
Safeguarding Lawyer (Team Leader)

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 introduced requirements on Local Authorities to plan for looked after children so that they have the support they need as they make their transition to the responsibilities of adulthood.

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to conduct transition assessments for children, children's carers and young carers where there is a likely need for care and support after the child in question turns 18 and a transition assessment would be of significant benefit.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead for Community Development

The Service is committed to practice, which promotes **equality, diversity and inclusion**, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, **Public Sector Equality Duty** and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy.

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

- Looked after children and Care leavers.

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:

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