

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

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **13 February 2018**

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

Membership:

Councillors Bukky Okunade (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Gary Collins,
David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell and Luke Spillman

Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, HealthWatch Thurrock
Lynda Pritchard, Church of England Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Tom Kelly, Jane Potheary and Sue Sammons

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12 December 2017.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **5 February 2018**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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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 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 December 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Bukky Okunade (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Gary Collins, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell and Luke Spillman

Lynda Pritchard, Church of England Representative

Apologies: Myra Potter, Parent Government Representative

In attendance: Councillor James Halden, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health
George Wright, Youth Cabinet Chair
Gill Burns, Deputy Director for NELFT
Sharon Hall, Area Manager for NELFT
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children's Services
Tim Elwell-Sutton, Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health
Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills
Sue Green, Strategic Leader Early Years, Families & Communities
Malcolm Taylor, Strategic Lead - Learner Support
Alan Cotgrove, Business Manager, Local Safeguarding Children's Board
Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

64. Minutes

The minutes of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 October 2017 were approved as a correct record.

65. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

66. Declaration of Interests

The Church of England Representative (CER), Lynda Pritchard, declared a non-pecuniary interest that she worked for a private fostering agency and was also the safeguarding officer at the primary school she worked at.

67. Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board

The Business Manager for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (BMLSCB), Alan Cotgrove, provided a verbal update to the Committee in which he stated that the new Children and Social Work Act 2017 would dissolve the current Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) responsibilities and would require new safeguarding arrangements to be put in place.

The legislation changed the statutory agencies down to three, from five, which would now consist of the Local Authority, the police and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). It removed Probation and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) but they would still form part of the safeguarding partnerships.

A small strategic group of the new partners had been set up to agree the new arrangements. Further guidance would be available from April 2018 following the submission of an implementation plan to the Department for Education (DfE) for approval. From there, the LSCB would cease to exist. The BMLSCB would prepare a more detailed report for the next Committee meeting.

Currently, the LSCB was undertaking three serious case reviews and one management case, all which would be published anonymously to protect the children's identities. Case one was in the final stage of completion with a draft report ready which related to child abuse; case two would have drafts ready for boards soon and related to neglect; and case three had just been implemented which related to sexual abuse. The management review related to the health needs of Children Looked After (CLA).

Learning outcomes from the cases were shared with partners where it was relevant. The LSCB had published a case back in June, in which the child had passed away. A learning event had been set up back in November and had been well attended by practitioners. The process had proved to be successful and would be continued.

The BMLSCB intended to bring an annual report to the next Children's Services Committee meeting and requested this to be on the work programme for 13th February 2018.

The Chair asked for clarity on what the LSCB's position would be when the new legislation would come into place. THE BMLSCB confirmed that safeguarding boards would not exist under the new arrangements. The content and approach of the current Thurrock LSCB would be taken into the new framework alongside other identified needs.

Councillor Spillman queried the process of investigating serious cases and how cases were decided as serious. A set criteria was in place for serious cases which included circumstances where a child had passed away, been severely neglected or sexually assaulted. Alongside these criterias, the information obtained from agencies would also be considered to decide a serious case.

The Chair looked forward to the annual report at the next Committee meeting in February 2018. She queried the timeframe of six months to respond to the new legislation in April 2018. The BMLSCB confirmed that they would be given a timeframe of six to nine months to implement the new framework for safeguarding.

The BMLSCB left the meeting at 7.16pm.

68. Youth Cabinet Update

The Youth Cabinet Chair (YCC), George Wright, spoke of the recent Annual Youth Conference which had taken place the week before. It was the fourth one the Youth Cabinet had held so far. Workshops had included Curriculum for Life and First Aid from St John's Ambulance. Nine secondary schools had attended resulting in 100 students participating in workshops. There had been two main debates with one of them about the Curriculum for Life.

From the conference, a few big campaigns had been brought forward which included bullying and littering. The Youth Cabinet intended to work with schools on these campaigns.

The Chair congratulated the success of the conference which she had attended and had found the debates at the conference interesting, in particular, the topic on life skills. Councillor Redsell echoed this and asked what the Youth Cabinet intended to do with top topics of money and life skills which had been from last year's consultation. The YCC agreed money and life skills had come out on top for the second time and last year, headteachers had signed up to implement these issues in their schools. Some schools offered life skills up to a certain age and some did not. The Youth Cabinet would need to look into which schools needed these topics implemented.

Members further discussed the importance of young people receiving life skills learning which would prepare them for life after 18 years old. Many were not used to the environment after this age which resulted in debts and bankruptcy. The Chair asked Officers to take comments into consideration to help young people.

The Chair had agreed for agenda item 10 to be moved up the agenda as the next item.

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

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, Councillor Halden, presented the report which outlined how Thurrock Council would support young people after they left care, in finding suitable housing accommodation. A pilot scheme was developed, Head Start Housing for Care Leavers, which was in partnership with Inspire to address the housing issues that young care leavers

faced. Two further developments were also created which were house of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

This pilot scheme has already helped to save up to £84,000 and would avoid spot placements which often happened when leaving care and was costly. The safety of young care leavers was paramount and aimed to be as flexible as possible to all young care leavers. Criminal offenders would not be eligible for the scheme. The scheme would run for 24 months with reviews taking place within the 6th, 12th and 18th month which would also discuss other plans such as debt management or education. Councillor Halden felt the scheme was positive and praised the Children's Services department on their work on care leaver housing issues.

Councillor Spillman welcomed the scheme as it brought departments together which he felt had become too compartmentalised. Councillor Halden agreed that compartmentalisation was not good and said that some of the impacts from this had been quite significant. He hoped the departments would be able to operate from a common middle ground with this scheme.

Councillor Spillman questioned what the team for this scheme comprised of. The Corporate Director for Children's Services (CDCS), Rory Patterson, replied that advisors had been specifically recruited for children in care. A variety of skillsets had helped to bring the team together enabling them to be successful in their work. Councillor Spillman further questioned the number of workers and caseloads that was currently being handled. The CDCS would provide details in an email.

The CER congratulated the Children's Services department on their work and welcomed the scheme. Echoing this, the YCC thought the scheme was innovative and would ensure young care leavers were supported. He went on to ask for clarity on paragraphs 2.9, in particular, the reference, 'hand in hand with support work being undertaken with the Inspire team', and 2.4 which he thought was in regards to additional support. Councillor Halden confirmed that 2.9 referred to council tax exemption for care leavers aged 18 – 21 and in exceptional circumstances, up to 25 years old. The support offer from Inspire was all inclusive which meant that any young person walking into the Inspire hub could receive advice on anything from CVs to debts. The 'hand in hand' support from the Inspire team referred to providing young care leavers with housing advice in partnership with the housing team.

The YCC asked for further clarity on whether the support from Inspire would end when young care leavers gained the council tax exemption. Councillor Halden stated this would not be the case and that the support offer would continue regardless. The CDCS added that support from Inspire would continue up until the age of 25.

Referring to paragraph 2.8, Councillor Redsell asked for clarity on the sentence, 'support to our young people in the care system who are 17' as she thought it would not just be 17 year olds. She went on to ask what the aftercare team was and what exceptional circumstances constituted council

tax exemption. Councillor Halden replied that 2.8 referred to future developments regarding transitional support and recognised that some young people would need support before leaving care due to instability. The 17 year old age group was the transitional period of leaving care. Councillor Redsell went on to ask if young people at 18 years of age, after leaving for university, would be allowed to return to their foster home if they wanted to. Councillor Halden confirmed that this option was still in place. He went on to say that the council tax exemptions were down to officers in the department to assess cases and make their own decisions without having to go through long processes.

The Vice-Chair queried why the timeframe for the scheme only ran for 24 months which he felt was quite short. He also asked what happened to young care leavers after the scheme ended for them. Councillor Halden replied that they currently had 42 17 year olds in the scheme and the 24 month timeframe would ensure there was a turnover in the scheme and that young people could be moved on when they were ready. The work was designed to ensure young people felt safe and build upon what they needed. The reviews at the 6th, 12th and 18th month would ensure young care leavers would transition out of care smoothly. During this period, the housing tenancy would look into each young care leaver's case on their eligibility for housing which meant they would not have to apply for housing tenancy. This process ensured the planning would be there.

Councillor Collins thanked Councillor Halden on joining the departments to work together in this scheme. He queried the sustainability of the project due to Councillor Halden's earlier comment on the current number of 42 17 year olds in the scheme and asked if this was the maximum number that could enter the scheme at a time. Councillor Halden clarified that the number given was what was currently in the scheme, not the maximum amount. The scheme ensured no one would fall through the net and would receive the support they needed.

Members discussed a motion on council tax age exemption that had been presented at the last Full Council meeting on 29th November 2017. This also concerned other departments within the Council and Councillor Halden pointed out that council tax exemption would not be the only support to young care leavers. They would need support in other matters as well. Some of the Members felt that the proposal in the report was not in the spirit of the amendment of the motion presented at Full Council. There was not enough information and felt the proposal of the scheme had not been scrutinised enough so therefore, could not agree with some of the recommendations presented. Councillor Halden advised he could provide more information if required and answer more questions.

The Vice-Chair voiced his concern on the 24 month timeframe of the scheme and asked for reassurance that contact would still be in place with young care leavers after the 24 month period. Councillor Halden responded that the scheme would provide young people with a pathway towards the end of their 24 months. Similar to Corporate Parenting Committee, data and cases could

be provided to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to show what happened to a young person after leaving care. The CDCS gave reassurance that the service department had a responsibility to ensure young care leavers were not left destitute or homeless after leaving the HMOs scheme. The service department would ensure the young care leaver would be provided with or have found suitable accommodation and continue to receive support until the age of 25 years old.

In regards to the recommendations in the report, Members felt the wording of recommendation 1.4 needed to be amended. This was due to the lack of information given on the age exemption for council tax. With the wording amended for recommendation 1.4, Members agreed on the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and provide comments on the pilot HMO and support the ongoing development of the programme to enable more properties to be available for the scheme.**
- 2) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the development of a transitional housing scheme and would provide personalised support for young people as they enter the aftercare service.**
- 3) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and make comments on a more joint working approach between Social Care and Housing to improve the offer to care leavers.**
- 4) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposal to exempt Care Leavers from Council Tax and receive additional information regarding options for the above and to make recommendations.**

Councillor Halden left the meeting at 8.17pm.

70. Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service Presentation

The North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) representatives gave a presentation on the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) which had gone through a service transformation to bring all the organisations related to mental health and wellbeing under one model. This removed many barriers to enable all staff to become part of one pathway to make a more agile model.

With this new model, it created a single point of access (SPA) to ensure help was offered early on and that referrals were allocated to a locality team. From the performance data, it could be seen that the caseload for Thurrock had

increased by 267% from November 2015 – November 2017 which indicated that people were becoming more aware of the service. Many of these referrals had come from a parent/carer/relative. The timeframe for assessment of cases ranged from 8 to 18 weeks.

The Chair was pleased to see the team building upon its capacity and asked for clarification on the wait times for treatment. The Area Manager for NELFT (AMNELFT), Sharon Hall, stated that the longest waiting time was 21 weeks but this was reducing overtime. The Deputy Director for NELFT (DDNELFT), Gill Burns, added that the EWMHS received a lot of requests around Looked After Children (LAC) which providers were able to do but the system could not keep up. To remedy this, telephone consultations were provided.

Councillor Redsell praised the report but hoped this new model worked in real life and not just on paper. She expressed concern on putting a label of mental health on children as at times, this may not be the case. The DDNELFT shared a case of complaint in which a child had been diagnosed with a mental health issue upon the insistence of their parents. The Committee discussed the complexity and issues of mental health labelling. Councillor Redsell pointed out that once a child was given a mental health diagnosis, this would stick with them for life so felt children should not be diagnosed so early on in life. NELFT went on to discuss some cases of this that had circulated around the social media websites. The AMNELFT encouraged the Committee to read the green paper that had recently been published on the mental wellbeing of pupils in schools.

Councillor Spillman brought up the use of drugs to cure mental illness and said that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and group therapy could cure mental illnesses. He asked what facilities were available for talk therapy instead of drug prescriptions. The DDNELFT responded that evidence around the success of using CBT and other similar therapies were vague. Instead, there was strong evidence around the success of the use of other treatments which were more favourable to use in the course of the treatment of mental illnesses. Councillor Spillman expressed his concern on the lack of facilities to treat those with mental health issues which he worried would become a part of the criminal justice system. The NELFT representatives stated they were turning this around in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by bringing in the EWMHS. They aimed to ensure mental health issues were a priority by providing more investment into emotional wellbeing.

Councillor Collins asked whether emotional wellbeing life skills were taught in schools to which the AMNELFT replied that it was down to schools to provide these. The Strategic Lead for Learner Support (SLLS), Malcolm Taylor, added that there was also a wider range of programmes in addition to emotional wellbeing, as part of the Collaborative Commissioning Forum, which was being rolled out to schools. There were also a range of other activities including digital portals to support resilience in mental health issues. Referring to pathology, he said that many psychiatrists and mental health professionals would avoid going down the pathology route unnecessarily. They would take into consideration background and parental factors when assessing mental

health issues before giving medication. He also mentioned other services such as the Youth Preventative Services which could help to tackle issues at the early stages. These would be taken into consideration when schools would be briefed.

The YCC thanked NELFT for their work and said that the Youth Cabinet had worked with NELFT in the past. He hoped to work more with NELFT in the future in raising mental health awareness in schools.

The YCC left the meeting at 9.00pm.

Referring to page 14 of the presentation, the Chair asked for clarification on what the National Code: 19 meant. The AMNELFT believed it was a code that referred to LAC but would check and let the Committee know.

The NELFT representatives left the meeting at 9.03pm.

71. A Sustainable Children's Social Care System for the Future: Annual Public Health Report 2017

Presented by the Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health (ADCPH), Tim Elwell-Sutton, the report focussed on creating a sustainable children's social care system for the future. There were growing pressures on the current system due to the increasing population with the number of special needs and asylum seeking children increasing. Financial pressures were on Children's Services and the proportion spent on preventative areas had decreased. Figures from 2006 - 2016 showed the population growth rate for children in Thurrock was 13% whereas the national average was 6%.

Councillor Spillman asked if Thurrock's rate of child population were still higher than the national average per 100 or 1000 children to which the ADCPH confirmed it was. Councillor Collins also asked what the reasons were for the increase. This was due to Thurrock's young population which meant a fertile population and an economically growing population also meant more people moving into the borough. The service to prevent children from going into care was unable to keep up with the growing demand, therefore, spending in this service was increasing.

At 9.15pm, Members agreed to suspend standing orders until 10.00pm in order to go through all items on the agenda.

Continuing with the report, the ADCPH stated that the underlying pressures to the current children's social care system would remain but there were strategic recommendations to cope with this. The three strategic recommendations outlined in the report were:

1. Make a long-term strategic commitment to invest in prevention.
2. Invest in the most effective preventative services.
3. Improve information on activity and spending.

Work on a sustainable children's social care system for the future was already underway. To ensure its success, it was important to invest in preventative measures.

Councillor Redsell thought the report was detailed and raised some concerning issues. She referred to the second point on page 35 of appendix 1, which she found to be worrying. The ADCPH replied that the audit had been carried out by iMPower and the result suggested that, if unlimited resources were available, a significant proportion of looked after children might have been prevented from going into care if more support had been given to families at an early stage. Councillor Redsell went on to ask whether cases of where children had been taken into care unnecessarily were investigated. The CDCS answered that the service department were assessing cases where children could return home safely. They had to ensure the right skillset and resources were made available to continue to provide support to children after returning home.

Councillor Spillman questioned whether there was a pressure to take more children into care than needed. The Assistant Director for Children's Care and Targeted Outcomes (ADCCTO), Sheila Murphy, replied that they were looking at models of support and thinking of the strengths within families to keep them together. Support would be gathered through groups to keep children safe and they could not just remove children from families so easily. There were panels and processes to review why children had come into care and possibilities had to be considered for children to go back to families or friends. The ADCPH added that helping families in the early stages could prevent children from going into care.

The Chair commended the ADCPH on the report given and felt it was well-detailed. She asked if it would be made available to all Councillors as they should all be made aware of the report. The ADCPH confirmed it would be going to Full Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the contents and recommendations of the report be noted by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

Councillor Redsell and the ADCPH left the meeting at 9.28pm.

72. Information on Adoption and Permanency

The ADCCTO gave an outline of the report which looked at achieving timely adoption decisions and placements. From the Ofsted children's services inspection in March 2016, further work was required to improve the timeliness of adoptions for children. The number of adoptions was low with 10 children adopted last year and a projected number of 9 to be adopted in the current year. The reasons for the delays were due to:

- Chelmsford Court did not have enough judges to decide on cases;

- Essex judgements which saw children being placed into adoption placements too quickly despite the birth mother wanting to appeal.

Adoption and permanency tracking systems were introduced as a result which had significantly improved the timeliness of adoptions.

Councillor Spillman queried whether it was the lack of parents available to adopt children. The ADCCTO stated this was not the case as it was due to the adoption process which went through a specific care plan. The courts would grant a placement if there were absolutely no other options available for the child. Practises had changed around assessing family members and friends as well.

The CER questioned the numbers within the post adoption team to which the ADCCTO replied that the numbers would be sent round to the Committee. The CER also asked if the team was new as the report stated that it was too early to assess the impact of the post adoption team's services. The ADCCTO said the team had been reconfigured but would be able to pass on more details to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the difficulties and challenges the adoption service is facing in getting children adopted.**

73. Delivery of Inclusion Units and Alternative Provision Reform

The report was presented by the Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills (ISLSILS), Roger Edwardson, which outlined the investment into Thurrock's schools to open referral units to keep young people in school. This was following the closure of the Primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at Corve Lane. Small inclusion units provided the Council with the opportunity to educate pupils at risk of permanent exclusion and those who had been permanently excluded. It would also ensure fewer children would be excluded from primary schools in the future.

Referring to the Olive Alternative Provision Academy's two terms to enable pupils to return to mainstream school, the CER asked what the contingency plan was if children could not return after two terms. The ISLSILS answered that the two terms were in place to ensure children's education did not stagnate. The SLLS added that some of the children would be on Special Educational Needs (SEN) support. If children were unable to return to mainstream school after the end of the two terms, other resources would be considered.

Councillor Spillman queried on who had been in control of the PRU. This had been under the Olive Trust but Ofsted did not feel it had performed well. Under Ofsted's judgement, the primary provision had been closed down. Councillor Spillman went on to ask whether there was any concern on the lack

of responsibility in academy systems. The ISLSILS said the Council's relationship with the academies in Thurrock was good and that the service department's actions were to inform Ofsted on any concerns. The SLLS also stated that some of the work within the primary schools was of high standard. The service department would continue to monitor the work.

Councillor Collins said the academy system was robust and were able to resolve problems as they occurred. The ISLSILS added that there were good and outstanding schools within the Borough. The PRU had been the worst performing institution which was why the new provision in East Tilbury Primary School, was put in. The Jack Lumley site was also promising which was the right solution to encourage children to stay in mainstream education.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and provide comments on the planned changes in provision for children at risk of permanent exclusion or who have been permanently excluded.**

74. Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2018 / 19

The CDCS presented the report which set out the charges in relation to Children's Services. Not many fees fell under this service department but some of the fees included Grangewaters and nursery provisions.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Childrens Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the revised fees and charges proposals including those no longer applicable.**
- 2) That the Childrens Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of this Committee.**
- 3) That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note that it may be necessary to adjust the relevant fees and charges during the year to reflect a change to their cost recoverability calculation, as**
 - legally prescribed statutory fees and charges may be subject to prescribed variation during the year, and that**
 - discretionary services provided on a traded basis for profit may be subject to commercial operational considerations.**

75. Children's Social Care Performance

The CDCS presented the report which outlined the high level of demand within the children's social care service. There were downward trends in managing the system and considerable work had been undertaken to manage the demand through improving its early intervention service. The demand rates were reducing but required more work to be done.

Members felt they needed more time to comment on the report and asked for it to be moved up on the agenda for the next Committee meeting.

Item deferred to the next Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th February 2018.

76. Ofsted Inspection Action Plan - Update

Item deferred to the next Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th February 2018.

77. Work Programme

Members discussed the work programme for 13th February 2018 and agreed to move the Social Care Performance item up the agenda to allow sufficient time to discuss it. The Ofsted Action Plan Update was added to the work programme and two reports – Fostering Recruitment and Brighter Futures Service would be deferred to the next meeting in the new municipal year of 2018 – 2019.

The meeting finished at 10.00 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**

13 February 2018		ITEM: 6
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Thurrock LSCB Annual Report 2016 - 2017		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Alan Cotgrove, Local Safeguarding Children Board Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children's Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) Annual Report for 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 provides an account of what has been achieved to improve safeguarding services within Thurrock and to assess their effectiveness.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report and progress made on children's safeguarding.
- 1.2 That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee provide comment on the report.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock LSCB is required to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. The LSCB operates within a legislative and policy framework created by the Children Act 2004 and Working Together 2015.
- 2.2 The Annual Report reflects the priorities set within the LSCB Business Plan for 2016/17, progress against these priorities, and areas for further development during 2017/18. It also sets out details of the structure and governance of the Board.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 None relevant.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Annual Report is a public document that is to be shared among the key partners within the Borough who have safeguarding responsibilities.
- 4.2 It is a requirement for the LSCB to provide a copy to the Local Authority.

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

- 5.1 The Annual Report is agreed by the LSCB Full Board
- 5.2 The content has been compiled from the comments of the partner agencies of the LSCB.

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

- 6.1 Not relevant.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

There are no financial implications for the Local Authority.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education

No legal implications, document is owned by the LSCB.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Annual Report applies to all children and families. There are no known negative implications arising for groups or individuals with protected characteristics.

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

- None.

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

- None.

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – LSCB Annual Report 2016-2017

Report Author:

Alan Cotgrove

LSCB Manager

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board

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ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017



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Introduction by Independent Chair of the Board - David Archibald

I am pleased to present this Annual Report for 2016/17 as the new Independent Chair of Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The LSCB is required to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in its area, including an assessment of local safeguarding arrangements. This report also sets out the progress and achievements over the last year and those priority areas the Board will focus on over the next 12 months.

This has been a challenging year and the Board continues to rise to meet these challenges with a strong commitment by our partners to the LSCB's work. This report captures some of the excellent work the Board has achieved supporting and challenging the improvement of services for children and its work of raising awareness within all elements of the community.

Partnership working has strengthened despite personnel changes within the Board, with a greater sense of the Board functioning as a multi-agency forum. Alongside our Business Plan the LSCB continues its wider programme of work responding to new challenges as they arise.

Our vision is that every child and young person in Thurrock should grow up safe from maltreatment, neglect and criminal activity. We want to further improve our safeguarding system with the focus firmly on the experience of the child or young person's journey. Over the next year there will be a strong focus on early help provision and partners' response to neglect.

I am pleased with the progress made locally during this period and we will continue to be vigilant in providing a level of challenge to partners responsible for keeping Thurrock children and young people safe, as we approach implementation of revised safeguarding arrangements.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the LSCB this year for their hard work and commitment. I would particularly like to thank our Business Team and Business Manager, for supporting me to keep the LSCB operating smoothly.



David Archibald



Overview of the Annual Report

I write this report on behalf of the Independent Chair.

Its content provides evidence and examples from our 2016 /17 Business Plan, which drives the focus of our activities along with information which highlights the Board involvement in policy, auditing and reviews of services across agencies working with children.

The way the Board functions to support and challenge partners in safeguarding are changing. The introduction of new safeguarding arrangements is expected to take place over the next 18 months and will create new opportunities. These new arrangements will need to deliver 'more for less 'and make best use of contributions from those agencies involved. We have already begun that journey, streamlining our existing structure and building our processes with our colleagues across Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET), but we still have a long journey ahead.

The Ofsted Inspection in 2016 graded the Board as "Good". Our aim this year was to build on those high standards the Board expects of those organisations working for or with Children's Services. And we continue to develop towards that aim.

The world of safeguarding children is a continual cycle of change. The Board needs to ensure that it is fit to meet those needs. This report will show some of the further progress we have made. If you know of new ways of improving our services whether you are a statutory, commissioned, voluntary or receiver of services, we welcome feedback and looking for new inspiration, our contact details are on our website www.thurrocklscb.org.uk and within this report.

A P Cotgrove

Alan Cotgrove
LSCB Business Manager

About The LSCB

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board is a statutory body which has a range of roles scrutinising and challenging local safeguarding practice as part of its responsibilities under Section 14 of the Children Act 2004.

The role of the Board is to have an independent co-ordinating and challenging role around safeguarding practice across its partner agencies. These functions are carried out through the Full Board and each of its Sub Groups, whose activities are outlined later in this report. While the LSCB do not have the power to direct partner agencies, the Board have a key role in making clear where improvement is needed. Each Board Partner retains their own existing line of accountability for safeguarding (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015).

During this reporting year we have continued to receive good support at our meetings from all agencies.

We continue to work on improving our systems and structures on our journey to be an outstanding Safeguarding Board and have made further changes this year to the structure of the Board, amalgamating roles and responsibilities for greater efficiency.

To support our activities the Board has made some structural changes during the year and now comprises of:-

- ❖ Full Board
- ❖ Management Executive Group
- ❖ Performance Improvement Panel
- ❖ Serious Case Review Sub Group
- ❖ Learning & Improvement Framework
- ❖ Audit Group
- ❖ Training Group
- ❖ MASE (Missing and Sexual Exploitation) Group
- ❖ Risk Assessment Group
- ❖ CDOP (Child Death Overview Panel - SET)

To ensure the Board is aware of all cross cutting safeguarding impacts, representation on other boards and multi-agency groups includes:



- ❖ Health & Well Being Board
- ❖ Community Safety Partnership
- ❖ SET CSE Strategic Group
- ❖ SET Procedures Group
- ❖ Regional LSCB Chairs and Managers Group
- ❖ VAWG - Violence against women and girls Group
- ❖ Signs of Safety Group
- ❖ Graded care Profile2 Group
- ❖ Integrated commissioning Group

LSCB Business Plan 2016/17

This year the Board agreed to consolidate its plan for the year into four strategic Aims:

- ❖ Safeguarding is Everyone business
- ❖ Reduce the number of children and young people in need of responsive safeguarding through effective help and support at an earlier stage
- ❖ Voice of the child
- ❖ A Board fit to meet future demand.

Through this approach we aim to ensure that local services working together are effective in safeguarding children and supporting their parents.

Our plan sets out the Boards priorities for the year. Progress of the plan was monitored by the relevant Board Sub Group to ensure accountability and outcomes were achieved. The plan is available to view on our website www.thurrocklscb.org.uk

Alongside these priorities we sought to improve our Quality Assurance and Learning and Improvement Framework through more involvement of frontline practitioners and also our work across the Southend, Essex and Thurrock partnership approach (SET)

These areas included:

- ❖ Child sexual exploitation
- ❖ Children who go missing

- ❖ Self-harm and poor mental health
- ❖ Suicide
- ❖ Children at risk of radicalisation and violent extremism
- ❖ Children at risk of serious youth violence and gangs
- ❖ Action of the SCR Harry Review
- ❖ Review and publication of SCR James
- ❖ Updating of SET Safeguarding Procedures
- ❖ Walk On Line Roadshow delivered to 2,100 children
- ❖ Learning and improvements programmes for practitioners
- ❖ Distributed 130,110 items of safeguarding information

Reports and procedures reviewed by the Board included:

- ❖ Private Fostering
- ❖ Local Authority Fostering
- ❖ Child Death Review
- ❖ Community Safety Partnership
- ❖ Independent Reviewing Officers responsibilities
- ❖ Local Area Designated Officer role
- ❖ MASH (Multi Agency safeguarding Hub)
- ❖ MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

Safeguarding Thurrock Children

- ❖ Thurrock has a higher proportion of children and young people aged 0-19 years (26.84%) than the national average (23.9%).
- ❖ The number of young people aged 0-19 years in Thurrock is predicted to increase from 42,700 in 2012, to 50,500 in 2037 (ONS)
- ❖ The largest increase will be in 10-14 year old age group
- ❖ The population is increasingly diverse
- ❖ Among school-age children, more than one in four (30%), are from a black and minority ethnic group. (Education Commission)



- ❖ Thurrock experiences significant pockets of deprivation and inequality, with several areas falling within the 20% most deprived areas in England.
- ❖ Infant and child mortality rates in Thurrock are consistent with national averages.
- ❖ Thurrock has above the national average of children on Child Protection Plans



Safeguarding Context

The LSCB are pleased to acknowledge some of the excellent work undertaken in safeguarding children and young people by agencies and partnerships across the Borough. The list is not exhaustive but includes recognition of the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership, Adult Safeguarding and local community and voluntary organisations that contribute to making Thurrock a safe place and supporting Thurrock's overarching vision

Highlights

- ❖ PREVENT Agenda
- ❖ Adult Safeguarding support for Serious Case Reviews and audits
- ❖ FGM
- ❖ Understanding and responding to gangs

Safeguarding Thresholds

Thurrock continues to apply its thresholds rigorously and the Board reviews its published document annually. Following the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services, Children's Social Care commissioned a review of the Early Offer of Help, incorporating the step up and step down processes, to review the thresholds and appropriateness of referrals. This follows a steady increase in Child Protection Plans and Child in Need cases. The outcome of the review and sample audits undertaken will assist in determining that risk assessments are being appropriately applied.

Looked After Children

The rate of Children in Care has continued to remain at a consistent level compared to the previous year. The actual number of Looked After Children was 338 (April 2017) compared to 335 (April 2016). The significant trend in the increase in Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UAS), which saw an increase from 31 (2015) to 69 (April 2016), has continued to place pressures on Children's Social Care with 57 LAC representing the UAS cohort. The demands of this cohort should not be underestimated and have the potential of having a significant impact on our services. To support that demand Children's Social Care has introduced a specific team to oversee their requirements. This element of LAC will need continued close monitoring.

The breakdown of LAC shows that 230 (68%) are male and 108 (32%) female with the main age profile being 12-16 year olds accounting for 142 (42%).

The placement of our LAC remains a challenge for Thurrock, with 203 of the 338 being accommodated outside of the Borough due to a lack of in Borough placements available. Some concerns have been highlighted in the Serious Case Review James regarding a shortfall in scrutiny and oversight of placement provision for over 16 year olds. The Board is aware that a lot of activity has been and continues to be undertaken to identify and increase the number of placement options available within the Borough. The Board acknowledge the efforts being made and will support services in promoting good placements.

Child Protection Plans

The rate of children subject to Child Protection Plans (CP) has increased slightly on the



previous year. The actual number of children subject of a plan in Thurrock has increased from 289 (April 2016) to 294 (April 2017) which represents 0.72% of Thurrock's child population. This figure is back in line with the previous figures of 288 in 2013/14.

This position reaffirms the need to look more closely at early intervention, thereby reducing the number of children requiring Social Care interventions at this level. The Board will be seeking positive change from the introduction of the refreshed approach to Thurrock Early Help provision through the "Brighter Futures" programme.

Looking for any learning or trends, of the 294 cases there is a fairly even spread of 51% male, 48% female and 1% for unborn cases. The open cases have undergone an extensive programme of audit and performance management scrutiny by Children's Social Care and the Board has conducted its own audits. This has supported the position of having the right children on the right plans and category.

The Board are determined to ensure that CP plans are timely and effective in achieving better outcomes for our children, and acknowledge the work undertaken by Children's Social Care in reviewing the category of multiple, which is no longer used, and also the work undertaken in reducing the timescales a young person remains on a plan.

This is now reflected in the timeframes that a young person remains on a plan being significantly reduced, which the Board will continue to monitor.

There had been an identified trend in the category of CP cases shifting from the more prominent neglect category to more cases of emotional abuse. This trend has reverted back and the current data shows 143 (48%) cases for neglect, 129 (44%) for emotional abuse, 15 (5%) physical abuse and 10 (3%) for sexual abuse.

The age profile of cases show the majority of cases falling within the 5-11 age bracket 128 (44%) 0-4yrs: 89 (31%) age 5-11yrs: 128 (44%) age 12-16yrs: 66 (23%) age 17yrs: 6 (2%)

Child in Need

CIN cases have remained fairly static with 618 cases compared to the previous year.

New Policies and Procedures

The Board has contributed to the development of practice and process to improve services to children.

- ❖ Supporting the introduction and implementation of The Graded Care Profile 2 as part of the Board's Neglect Strategy
- ❖ Supporting the introduction and implementation of "The Signs of Safety" Model for improving our partner's response to safeguarding practice.

Lay Members

The challenge still remains to fully incorporate lay membership within the Board. We currently have one lay member who is an active member on the Full Board. The Business Team promote and support the role through a variety of sources and publicity with the community.

Allegations Management

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has close links with the LSCB, which monitors the recommendations and outcomes of allegations of abuse against those who work with children ensuring completion within timescale. The LSCB has a duty to ensure that all allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with consistent procedures. The Board needs to ensure that there are effective inter-agency procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with children and receive an Annual LADO Report to keep the Board appraise of trends and the activities the LADO undertakes.

Agencies Voices

The Board felt it was important to have a section in the Annual Report to show how our partner agencies have contributed to the vision of the Board and in improving safeguarding outcomes for Thurrock's children and young people. This process has been helpful in focussing both partnership and single agencies priorities. Ofsted Inspectors in 2016



welcomed this approach, during their review of the Board, and we have requested partners to contribute again to this year's report. Agencies were asked to respond to the four key headings below and responses received have been included:

- ❖ What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible
- ❖ What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?
- ❖ What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed these?
- ❖ What are your safeguarding priorities for the year 2017/18?

Section 11

The requirement to provide responses to the key questions has helped to validate the Section 11 returns. The Boards Section 11 process is robust and provides good assurance regarding the quality of partner's commitment and prioritisation of safeguarding. The commitment to safeguarding is further scrutinised through the Performance Improvement Panel which requires each agency to answer questions from a panel of the Board on its contribution to safeguarding.

Education 157/175 Audits

It is pleasing to report that an excellent response from all our schools has taken place again this year along with the requirement for additional information supporting the PREVENT agenda

Children's Social Care

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

Ofsted judged children to be safe in Thurrock as part of the safeguarding inspection. The Ofsted report highlights various examples of good practice in relation to safeguarding. Since

the inspection, Thurrock has also completed a self-assessment - as part of the regional peer challenge process. Some examples of the evidence have been listed below:

Workforce

- ❖ Two additional teams have been added to the service to reduce size of caseloads.
- ❖ Turnover rate for social workers is 7.8%, this compares favourably in comparison to 11.63% for the council as a whole
- ❖ Sickness is at a relatively low level with only 4.32 days lost on average per employee in the last 12 months. This is below the Council's target of 9 days per employee and significantly lower than the Council-wide figures which were at 10.16 days lost per employee.
- ❖ In August 2016 agency workers made up 42% of the workforce. Out of the 67 agency staff 58 were outside of the Memorandum of Corporation. This position has significantly improved. As of June 2017, 28% of the workforce is made up of agency staff. This equates to 42 agency staff, out of which 2 were outside of the Memorandum of Corporation.
- ❖ Signs of Safety training was rolled out and more has been planned for 2017/18

Schools

The Local Authority organises a termly Safeguarding Leads Meeting for schools and academies which provides a successful forum for the exchange of information relating to safeguarding in schools. Work in this area has included consultation on the Multi Agency Assessment Hub, Anti Bullying work and work on the Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service. This work continues to be well supported by schools.

Early Help

A new multi-agency Brighter Futures Board has been established to oversee service integration and strengthen the offer to families in need.

Posts in the MASH service were established and this has enabled permanent recruitment and sustainability of the service.

The processes for the improved service (Brighter Futures) are still under development; however a streamlined referral form has been drafted for partners to make direct referrals to



the service via one point of contact when there are emerging needs. The use of the CAF will be restricted to the making of safeguarding and child protection referrals to the MASH. It is anticipated that all referrals to the service will be dealt with within 24 hours and the family allocated to a member of the team who will, alongside the Lead Professional, co-ordinate a TAF meeting and develop a Family Plan.

The monthly Multi Agency Planning Panels will co-ordinate and manage the resources that have been specifically commissioned to meet the needs of families in line with the JSNA.

Youth Offending Service

In the last two inspections by HMIP, Thurrock YOS has been commended for its awareness and actions in respect of safeguarding issues. Please see quote below from 2015 Short Quality Screening Inspection.

'Key strength:-

The genuinely holistic work by case managers integrated safeguarding, public protection and offending behaviour interventions. There was effective liaison and joint work with other agencies. It was apparent that there was excellent staff commitment to children and young people and their parents/carers resulting in more effective interactions'

Child Sexual Exploitation

The quality of CSE RAs has improved over the past 18 months, and via CSE Risk Management Plans, (CSE RMPs), plans in respect of safeguarding individual children at risk and supporting and enabling their families, continues to develop. Equally, the focus upon including possible perpetrators is increasingly present in assessments and plans to safeguard.

The SET CSE Disruption Toolkit is used to inform and bolster the collective multi-agency response to possible perpetrators. The statutory and voluntary partnership has been coordinated by Social Care and has successfully worked in the community to disrupt a developing CSE hotspot of concern; collaboration is imminently planned for a further identified hotspot.

Performance and Quality

Children's Services implemented a new Performance Framework in September 2016 which is aligned with the new quality framework. Both these improvements have highlighted areas of improvement and promoted sharing best practice.

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

Following discussions with Directors Management Team the following challenges have been identified:

- ❖ Recruitment – there is a need to have the right staff in the right posts to do effective safeguarding. Recruitment of agency staff members pose a risk of short notice periods and competency levels are wide ranging.
- ❖ Out of Borough placements – Cost of out of Borough placements is higher than placing children in Thurrock. Placing children out of Borough increases placement costs and makes it harder for the council to keep a connection with Thurrock children.
- ❖ High demand – Thurrock has experienced one of the highest demand pressures on its Social Care service. Rates in Thurrock are much higher than the eastern region. In turn this is impacting the pressure on resources.
- ❖ Asylum seeking children – Thurrock has the highest number of asylum seeking children
- ❖ Partners – need for partners to work with social care to strengthen the prevention work

To address these challenges, DMT have agreed to the following:

- ❖ Recruitment: although good progress has been made, DMT will aim to move to a position where the ratio of permanent to agency staff is at the same level of 'good' and 'outstanding' Boroughs.
- ❖ Out of Borough placements: Placement Panel will be chaired by the AD for Social Care. DMT will be actively analysing all high cost placements. Options for alternative provision being sourced more locally will be a priority.
- ❖ High demand – DMT will ensure the Brighter Futures Programme is implemented in 2017, which will promote an improved early intervention offer.



- ❖ Asylum Seeking Children – Numbers have reduced to 42 as a result of the service negotiating a transfer protocol with other LAs in the eastern region. However this remains a challenge for the After Care Service. Work is underway to ensure the status for Asylum Seeking Children is resolved and cost effective accommodation is provided
- ❖ Partners – DMT will be seeking support from partners through the Brighter Futures Programme Board and the LSCB

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you address these?

There has been an increase in the number of Ofsted Section 8 inspections following the receipt of qualifying complaints from parents sent to Ofsted. A qualifying complaint is one which raises significant safeguarding concerns in the school/academy and usually requires two HMI to visit the setting to investigate the complaint. In the last year there have been a number of Section8 inspections in Thurrock and all, except one have resulted in a positive outcome and the setting has remained good. Where the setting was found to be failing this results in the inspection being extended to day two. In the case in question Olive Alternative Provision Academy was subsequently placed in Special Measures in January 2017. The LA and the academy sponsor have worked in partnership with the RSC and there is an agreed action plan. From September 2017 the Olive Academy will no longer deliver primary provision in the Borough. New arrangements are now in place to make provision for primary excluded pupils.

Involvement of health - school nurses and health visitors at CP Conferences and the Lead Professional role in prevention/early intervention has been an issue with the current provider NELFT. However these have been addressed within the new service specification for the Brighter Futures 0-19 Healthy Families Programme, whereby increased capacity had to be identified to meet the demand for attendance at Conferences and the implementation of the Child Protection Plans where health professionals need to be responsible for certain actions. There is also an expectation that Health Visitors and School Nurses will take the Lead Professional role if appropriate and be fully integrated into the Prevention and Support Service.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

The following priorities have been agreed:

- ❖ Improve the quality of social work practice
- ❖ To ensure the right children are within the CP process – intervening at the right time
- ❖ Reduce levels of CP Plans so children's needs are met in Early Help
- ❖ CIN processes need to be more robust
- ❖ Implementation of Signs of Safety and Graded Care Profile 2
- ❖ To implement the Brighter Futures agenda to ensure that Prevention is the priority for all agencies and partners with a shared vision of providing the right support to the right families, at the right time when there are emerging needs, therefore reducing the demand on statutory Social Care Teams.
- ❖ Make Thurrock Council a choice of employer for social workers

Essex Police

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

Essex Police is committed to delivering improved outcomes for vulnerable people including children. The force was re-inspected in 2016 following the National Child Protection Inspection of 2015. Significant improvements were recognised in Investigation of child abuse and case audits showing a real commitment from senior leaders to improve in this area of vulnerability. The majority of the force has received The Public Protection Awareness course. The Crime and Public Protection Command restructure in September 2016 provides a more efficient and modern approach to vulnerability and is subject to a review in the summer. This sees the implementation of the Operations Centre where referrals are received and assessed for activity. The force is good at identifying vulnerability and processes within the force control room and the operations centre highlight and flag vulnerabilities so incidents can be prioritised. An Assessment Team embedded within the Operations Centre ensures intelligence checks are complete and decisions made using all available data. The Operations Centre liaises with other agencies to ensure information is shared and Adult Social Care are now embedded within the team. Child cases specific to Thurrock are dealt with by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.



Sexual offences has seen an increase. Essex is 7th nationally and is one of 38 forces that have seen year on year increases. This increase is also seen in sexual offences against children.

The new model increases the resource within the Child Abuse Investigation Teams, provides Investigative Support Officers to support investigators in criminal investigations but also to support partnerships in Child Protection Conferences. Essex Police attend all Initial Child Protection conferences in line with SET procedures.

Other areas of improvement include the Police Protection Protocol with Thurrock Children's Social Care, provision for children in custody, ensuring the response to children at incidents of domestic abuse is robust.

The SARC services the County and provides victims of abuse with a safe haven to report and access support services. Waiting lists for provision of Independent Sexual Abuse Advisors are reducing and the service provision increasing. Referrals for child ISVAs has increased significantly ensuring all victims of abuse are provided with the support they require.

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

Challenges of increases in reported offences against children, especially historic cases where victims are now adults. This has been addressed by increasing Child Abuse Investigation Teams but remains a challenge to forces nationally.

Child Protection work leads to issues of recruitment and retention for all agencies due to the high levels of stress and nature of the work and remains an area of concern. The police actively recruit and had recent success in transferees from other forces. The level of trained detectives working within Child Abuse is high as we support officers with specialist courses and Continuous Professional Development.

The force has developed the Detective Career Pathway to professionalise investigations and Continuous Professional Development around investigation and file quality. The force has a cohort of officers trained in the forensic questioning of children which enhances their

specialist qualifications and provides expertise when dealing with very young children or complex cases. A Detective Sergeant has been embedded within the Crown Prosecution Service to improve file quality and maximise prosecutions.

Domestic abuse incidents across the County are significant and provide a challenge to all agencies. A large proportion of these involve children. Effective identification of risk and information sharing is key to protecting those at risk. The DASH Risk Assessment Tool is being reviewed and a streamlined version anticipated this year. Partners have worked hard throughout the year to improve timeliness of referrals to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) which has greatly improved.

Gangs and risks of Child Sexual Exploitation is an area which challenges the county including Thurrock. The introduction of Operation Raptor teams, to tackle gangs and their links to the Crime and Public Protection Command, has been an area of development. Ensuring partners are joined up in the response to these issues is a challenge.

Levels of missing children are of concern and shared with partners. Thurrock LSCB Risk Assessment Group focus on missing children and other risks, coordinating activity and support to prevent them coming to harm and reduce missing episodes. Families housed from London Boroughs or children being placed in Essex remain a concern.

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed these?

Essex Police continues to support the MASH with a Detective Sergeant and two Detective Constables in the team. The Local Policing Team are members of the Community Partnership Hub. Neighbourhood Officers, Police Community Support Officers, Licensing and Youth Officers work together with agencies to protect the community. The Hub has good operational links to the MASH. The Operations Centre has responsibility for all referrals linked to vulnerability and consumed the CSE Triage Team, providing a more efficient model aligned to the Thurrock MASH with shared management. The MASE and RAG Group work well in reducing risk to young people and Essex Police continue to be a key member.

Thurrock Children's Social Care are represented on the Public Protection Programme Board, supporting Essex Police in developing policy and improvement work. This includes a Police Protection Protocol, provision of an appropriate adult service for children in custody and



provision of accommodation for those few children who pose a high risk of offending.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

Child abuse, exploitation, domestic abuse, gangs and organised crime linked to CSE are in the force's "Plan on a Page" and Police and Crime Commissioner's priorities. Their inclusion evidence the commitment by Chief Officers to safeguarding children which has been highlighted in the HMIC re-inspection report. Improving the quality and streamlining information sharing processes around child abuse and domestic abuse remains a priority. Investment is being made in ensuring the quality of referrals remains high and thresholds are adhered to. The provision of high level data across partners is a key area of work that the County are working towards. Improved sharing of data to identify those children at risk leads to better early prevention of harm. This work is significant and issues such as shared IT, data sharing and analytics all have to be worked through. Refinement of the Police tasking and coordination process ensures individuals at risk or who pose a risk are identified early, prioritised and supported by the appropriate allocation of resources. The Crime and Public Protection pro-active team are focused on CSE and linking in with the region around best use of assets. The force continue to improve on the delivery of safeguarding and the post implementation review of the restructure will provide further development and improvement to this service. The police continue to be active partners in the pan Essex Domestic Abuse and CSE Boards and work with partners to ensure the best support and safeguarding is available for those at risk.

Primary Schools (combined response)

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible:

- ❖ All staff receive Level 1 Safeguarding Training – including Prevent and FGM
- ❖ Level 3 Safeguarding training for HT/DHT
- ❖ Safer Recruitment training for HT/DHT/Bursar
- ❖ Year 5 pupils attended Walk online Roadshow
- ❖ Links on school website to safeguarding information
- ❖ Assemblies, PSHE lessons and workshops on safeguarding related issues such as bullying, 'PANTS'
- ❖ E-safety workshops for parents



What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

- ❖ Engagement with parents can be a challenge – have introduced regular coffee mornings and drop in visits to the classrooms after school.
- ❖ Attendance is an issue and there is a need for ongoing activity to ensure the EWO support has the appropriate impact.
- ❖ High volume of possible safeguarding concerns and therefore difficulties with staff capacity in terms of recording, reporting and following up concerns – have increased number of staff but stretched budget means this is difficult to maintain

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed these?

- ❖ The high level of demand for services to support children in school and the capacity of the services to meet this need.
- ❖ The timescale to access services which are heavily subscribed.
- ❖ Ensuring there is consistency of communication following a referral being made.
- ❖ Ensuring that there is access to clear information and advice from statutory agencies when concerns are raised.
- ❖ Ensuring there is timely sharing of information regarding cases to all involved agencies.

Board Response - During this year, the Board have been working with partners to improve the flow of information and review operating procedures. This has resulted in the Introduction of the Brighter futures Programme providing a fresh approach to early help provision, incorporating the newly established Prevent and Support Service creating a greater joined up approach and a range of commissioned services to tackle the root cause of demand.

Other areas of improvements which will be developed over the coming 18 months include the introduction of the safeguarding models of signs of safety for child protection processes and Graded Care Profile 2 for neglect processes which will enhance the existing systems and processes currently in place. The Board will be receiving reports from the relevant services to ensure that these new processes are implemented in a timely manner



The Board see these changes as a positive step in providing services to Thurrock children and improving the flow of information sharing and communication.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

- ❖ E-Safety for all pupils
- ❖ Up-dating Prevent
- ❖ Improving attendance
- ❖ Ensure up to date training for all staff

Thurrock CCG

The CCG supports the CCG's Safeguarding Children and Looked after Children statutory functions and requirements.

These are grouped under three key areas:

- ❖ Safeguarding Children: Vulnerable/CIN/CP
- ❖ Looked After Children
- ❖ Child Death Review Processes.

Training

In addition to the intercollegiate requirement:

The CCG Safeguarding Children Team continue to support the SCR work streams and have delivered training this year on lessons learnt from local SCR's Megan, Alex, James and Harry at GP forums and time to learn sessions. This has increased Primary Care awareness on:

1. Recognition and response to adolescent neglect,
2. Need for robust information sharing across health providers and external agencies, seeking and recording the Voice of the Child, Capturing the Voice of the Child and Professional challenge, respectful questioning and professional curiosity.
3. GP referrals to EWMHS for children and young people with identified mental health issues.

We have also delivered training on lessons learnt from Serious Incidents and increased awareness on:

1. Recognition and responding to concealed pregnancy
2. Responding to bruises in an immobile infant.
3. Recognition and responding to suspected Genital Warts and referral routes

The training has led to increased advice, GP telephone consultations to CCG Safeguarding Children Team, increased referrals and challenging agencies and escalation.

FGM & CSE training - GP's awareness of FGM mandatory reporting, FGM practice registration with NHS Digital, CSE Risk Assessment Tools, Intelligence Information Sharing and what to do.

Fabricated & Induced Illness (FII) - CCG has received a further three referrals in Thurrock for cases of suspected FII which has raised further awareness of FII amongst local GP's in Thurrock. GP's have provided health chronologies and engaged in initial health professional's meetings to discuss concerns and collate factual health information to support escalation to Children's Social Care.

Supervision - the Safeguarding Team provides quarterly supervision for all providers Named Professionals, and the team receives external supervision.

Audit - An audit was completed to evaluate the effectiveness of GP Level 3 Safeguarding Children Training. The results enabled the safeguarding team to identify future training needs and have led to more scenario based learning events which was identified from the audit results.

Section 11 for all GP Practices – All GP practices have now completed and submitted their Section 11. This is being reviewed and analysed by the Safeguarding Team. Practices needing face to face support will be contacted and visits arranged.

Local Operational Group (LOG) - LOG meetings are held quarterly with internal CCG staff and external providers (including some private providers) to discuss local safeguarding, Looked after Children and national issues. The meetings have raised awareness and provided good working networking relationships. This has improved safeguarding working



together across South West Essex and provided opportunities to share good practice.

Providers Internal Safeguarding Assurance Meetings:-

The CCG Safeguarding Team has regular Providers Safeguarding Assurance meetings with its main providers (BTUH and NELFT). These meetings are held every other month, where key statutory safeguarding agenda/arrangements are discussed and scrutinised.

Safeguarding Clinical Network (SCN):-

The CCG is a member of the collective and collaborative (Health) Network across SET. The Network hold the SARC and other providers to account, by improving access, safety and information sharing with Primary Care.

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

- **Voice of the Child (VOC)** – SCR findings have identified Primary Care are not all recording the VOC – CCG Safeguarding Team are working with GP's and SystmOne lead to develop and encourage use of a template to capture the voice of the child.
- **Safeguarding referrals** – Supporting and ensuring GP's send quality Section 47 referrals to MASH which outline all risks to the child/young person to meet threshold criteria.
- **Improving information sharing between our local providers and primary care staff** – CCG Safeguarding Children Team have encouraged at local GP forums the use of MDT meetings for safeguarding children – many practices are now holding regular MDT meetings with Health Visitors/School Nurses. This is promoting collaborative working and sharing of information across universal services and Primary Care and enabling practitioners to effectively work together to safeguard and reduce risks to children and young people.

LAC – Challenges in relation to timeliness of Initial Health Assessments. Regular meetings are now in place between health and social care to monitor assessments.

Monthly LAC Health Steering Group now being held to address all areas of health, especially SDQ scores and action required.

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed these?

- Ensuring effective multi agency attendance at LSCB Audit Group to ensure effective audits are completed to identify if agencies are following procedures and to identify areas of good practice and those practice areas requiring improvement.
- To ensure effective multi-agency attendance at LSCB Training Group and to ensure LSCB delivers and commissions enough and appropriate Level 3 multi-agency training to meet the identified needs of local agencies.
- Ensuring GP's are consistently being formally notified when children/young people are subject to CIN/CP procedures – recent SCRs and Sis have identified that not all GPs are being formally invited to CIN meetings and are also not receiving copies of CP/CIN plans and minutes from safeguarding meetings held. GPs are encouraged to challenge and escalate this to Children's Social Care and to inform the CCG Safeguarding Children Team if they experience any conflict/barriers.
- Ensuring GPs are providing quality reports for Section 17/47 checks – what constitutes a good referral has been discussed at GP Forums and GPs are aware that reports need to identify all safeguarding risks for the child and include information on factors impacting on parenting capacity.
- Differences in Threshold and standards. These have been addressed by telephone discussions, and mainly highlighting the risk and welfare of the child and or young person. Thurrock Children's Social Care Manager and MASH lead attend GP forums on a regular basis to discuss CP referral pathways and processes, and all GPs have an opportunity to raise issues. All GPs are encouraged to follow SET escalation pathway.
- All GPs have an opportunity to visit the MASH to develop a better understanding of the process. This offer has been taken up by some GP practices to promote collaborative working.
- Ongoing work in relation to timeliness of initial health assessments for Looked after Children between the CCG, health providers and the Local Authority to ensure robust oversight of health assessments if delayed or outstanding. Escalation processes are embedded within practice. Monthly LAC Health Steering Groups with all agencies are now embedded. Strength and Difficulties questionnaires (SDQ) scores form part of this meeting where children with high scores are discussed to review their plan of care and ensure appropriate services are in place to meet their identified need.
- Challenges in relation to completion of statutory health assessments are also a concern in relation to Looked after Children placed out of area, particularly out of



Essex. 60% of Thurrock Looked after Children are placed outside of Thurrock, with the majority, 40%, placed within Essex boundaries. Therefore, 20% of Thurrock Looked after Children are placed outside of Essex, which can affect timeliness and the quality of health assessments as some areas are refusing to undertake assessments for children in their area. Escalation processes are in place to address all refusals by other areas to prevent delay. This issue has been escalated to NHSE, the CCG also liaises with the Local Authority to advise of areas refusing to undertake health assessments in order to influence placement planning for children.

What are your safeguarding Looked after Children priorities for this year 2017/18?

- Sustainability and Transformation Programme (STP) – The CCG Safeguarding Team to work closely with colleagues and influence the decision of the Joint STP Commissioning Committees to ensure consistent Safeguarding Looked after Children standards are maintained across Acute Hospitals (BTUH, Broomfield and Southend).
- Improve working arrangements with Commissioners (internal and external) and Contracts Teams.
- The CCG Safeguarding Team to work collaboratively with the Thurrock and Essex Local Authority and Public Health who commission 0-19 services and to ensure consistent risk areas are flagged to the Chief Nurses and Children and Young People Commissioners.
- Evidence commissioned service, including at procurement stage, have effective safeguarding arrangements in place and the views of children and young people and front line staff inform service development.
- To facilitate patient participation with the Thurrock Children in Care Council to influence commissioning and service provision.
- Work collaboratively with the Adult Safeguarding Lead to ensure transitional safeguarding issues are identified and responded to in a timely manner.
- Continue to work with Social Care and Primary Care Teams to improve GP engagement with child protection/LAC services.
- Work collaboratively with Children Social Care to influence placement provision for Looked after Children.

NELFT

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

Safeguarding Service Delivery Mode

NELFT Safeguarding Advice Service is the central hub into which all safeguarding enquiries from members of NELFT staff, or relating to NELFT service users/patients are received. The service provides advice and support to NELFT staff in relation to safeguarding concerns and assists operational teams in escalating concerns to the Local Authority/other agencies when appropriate.

The service operates 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays receiving enquiries in one of four ways:

- ❖ Telephone calls to the Duty Desk
- ❖ Email enquiries into the Safeguarding generic email account.
- ❖ Datix notifications via the generic email account of any Datix raised which indicates, “Yes” or “To be determined” for a safeguarding concern.
- ❖ Face to face between the Safeguarding Children Duty Worker and a member of NELFT staff.

Training

NELFT safeguarding children training has been updated reflecting the competency requirements in the Intercollegiate Document, SET procedures, Working Together, Prevent and FGM . Safeguarding Children training is mandatory and provided to all staff at levels appropriate to their role. NELFT is compliant with the Care Quality Commission target of 80% for all levels of Safeguarding training. Training targets are monitored through performance reports at monthly safeguarding meetings. The Safeguarding Team responds to requests from services to provide training in addition to the annual programme, in particular where there are access issues.

Thurrock staff uptake of training at 31/03/2017 was: Level 1 - 96%, Level 2 - 94.47% and



Level 3 - 95.08%. Level 2 training was revised in 2016/17 and includes strengthened references to DV, CSE and FGM.

Level 3 training includes specific subjects of Domestic Violence and Harmful Practices, CSE and FGM. In these sessions, practitioners learn to use the Safe Lives DASH Risk Assessment Tool and use of the NELFT Risk Assessment Matrix developed for CSE and FGM. A core Level 3 training package is being developed to enhance learning.

NELFT is committed to partnership working and promoting collaborative working. A senior Safeguarding Advisor is an active member of the LSCB Training Sub Group.

Prevent

All NELFT staff complete PREVENT training and committed to the prevent agenda. Training enables staff to have increased awareness to identify young people at risk of radicalisation and terrorism. Staff access either Prevent 1 (E-learn) or Prevent 2 (classroom) as determined by the NELFT Statutory and Mandatory Training Matrix. As of 31/03/2017, the uptake was: Prevent 1 96.73% and Prevent 2 92.74%. The Safeguarding Advice Service regularly takes calls regarding concerns about radicalisation. In Q4 2016- 2017, there were 12 enquiries made and 10 cases then referred on to Channel.

Policies and Procedures:

The Safeguarding Team developed the NELFT Safeguarding Children Standard Operating Procedure (June 2016). This is an intranet resource available to staff 24/7.

Safeguarding Supervision

All staff working directly with children are required to access safeguarding children supervision quarterly. KPI target is 85% and compliance figures for March 2017 (Q4) were: Group supervision 97% and individual 97%.

Audits

Safeguarding children audits carried out in 2016/ 2017 were the:

- ❖ Safeguarding Record-keeping (children) to include Quality of Child Protection Supervision and Domestic Violence Practice and CSE
- ❖ Quality of Multi- Agency Referrals
- ❖ Practitioner compliance with advice and actions from the Safeguarding Advice Service
- ❖ Survey of practitioner experience of safeguarding children supervision

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed these?

Partnership working in the MASH including Early Offer of Help

NELFT continues to be fully committed to the Thurrock MASH. This has involved maintaining an establishment of 1.2wte senior health practitioners from children's universal service working within the MASH. In addition to MASH duties, these staff also attend MARAC meetings on a weekly basis.

RAG:

NELFT continues to be fully committed to attending RAG. This two weekly multi-agency group is attended by the NELFT LAC nurse, or a deputy. Despite staffing pressures NELFT has always ensured appropriate attendance.

LSCB Sub- Groups:

NELFT remains committed to ensure there is appropriate representation at all LSCB Sub-Groups including the Management Executive Committee, MASE meeting, Training Group and Audit Group. NELFT has also worked closely with the LA in piloting and rolling out the Graded Care Profile 2 Neglect Tool.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

- ❖ To complete and publish the Safeguarding Adult and Children 2017 – 2019 Strategy and Action Plan.
- ❖ Achieve 50% compliance for 1:1 safeguarding Children Supervision provision for



EWMHS staff by September 2017 (priority was given to implementing group supervision sessions as an interim arrangement, which has now been achieved).

- ❖ Review the historical abuse guidance for staff in Q4 to reduce the numbers of enquiries and datix reports generated where the abuse has already been appropriately investigated and actioned.
- ❖ Develop a Foundation Level 3 Safeguarding Children Training Package and commence delivery in September 2017 which will ensure that practitioners have the opportunity to explore safeguarding scenarios and improve their risk assessment skills.

National Probation Service

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

The NPS is an active member of the LCSB Board and Executive.

The NPS has been involved in establishing and participating in multi-agency sexual exploitation groups represented by an NPS manager with clear line of feedback to the Head of Probation in South Essex.

All NPS staff has to complete mandatory Safeguarding Training (Level 1). All practitioners have to complete two day classroom based training on Safeguarding Children and Domestic Abuse.

All NPS practitioners must identify any risk to children and be able to identify possible CSE risk indicators within the supervision of offenders. The Sentence Plan reflects risk to children with objectives to identify how the risk will be managed. The NPS uses the ASPIRE model – Assess, Plan, Implement, Review and Evaluate. The NPS have developed quality improvement tools to ensure all assessments meet a sufficient or good standard with a focus on all aspects of safeguarding.

In managing offenders, home visits are used as a source of information and a means of managing risk and any concerns about safeguarding shared with relevant agencies. Staff are aware of and refers to the HMIPP interim safeguarding children guidance (available on



HMIPP intranet) and the HM Government guidance on information sharing. All cases with safeguarding concerns are discussed with Line Manager in monthly supervision with practitioners.

Sex Offenders at high risk of reoffending should have a licence condition to comply with Polygraph testing. Polygraph examinations can be particularly helpful if there are concerns an offender is continuing to have contact with children/other members of the group or gang with whom they committed the index offence and where they are forbidden to do so. They can also be used to monitor compliance with other licence conditions or monitor dynamic risk factors.

The NPS contribute to local RAG on missing children, where information is known. Cases that involved gangs are managed in a way that ensures the fact that the offending was committed as part of a gang is not lost. The NPS has representation at Gang Related Violence meetings. The NPS has a single point of contact in the Thurrock MASH and provides timely and relevant information related to risk.

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

Staffing pressures have had their impact on both performance and quality across the SEE division.

After staffing the most pressing issue affecting offender management is that of securing safe and suitable accommodation for offenders to allow effective risk management planning and delivery. The NPS is developing accommodation support for NPS offenders through our case management support resource. The NPS in Thurrock works with the Essex CRC/Sodexo from whom we purchase interventions. The timeliness and quality of these interventions is being monitored.

Meeting our local partnership requirements continues to be a challenge for senior and middle managers given the range of partnership structures and the management resource to draw upon.

The NPS provides information on Safeguarding Children through a national intranet (EQUIP), which provides information on processes and policies. The NPS has produced



guidance for staff which has been shared through team briefings. These include:

- ❖ Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children (January 2017)
- ❖ Understanding Child Sexual Exploitation (June 2016)
- ❖ Guide for Staff on working with perpetrators of CSE (June 2016)

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you address these?

- ❖ The NPS ensures operational staff are provided with relevant training and development opportunities to identify signs of CSE including amongst victims and perpetrators. A guide for team briefing has been produced to accompany this guidance
- ❖ The NPS produces risk assessments and risk management plans for partner agencies including during court and parole processes.
- ❖ Practitioners check and verify all details relating to relationships with children with Children Services.
- ❖ The NPS contributes to MAPPA and Child Protection Conferences. Making sure links are made between risk management plans and Child Protection Plans. The process for MAPPA has recently changed and these changes have been communicated through team briefings.
- ❖ Delivering specialist interventions.
- ❖ The NPS contributes to GRV and RAG meetings when the perpetrator is on supervision to NPS
- ❖ The NPS have a single point of contact for the MASH and provide information where required
- ❖ Practitioners have regular liaison with Police from the IOM and MOSOVO teams to manage risk and share intelligence. MOSOVO officers spend a day a fortnight in the local delivery unit.
- ❖ NPS contributes to Local Safeguarding Children Board strategy and action plans for CSE.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

This is an interesting question to ask agencies as, technically, it is for the LSCB to clearly set

out in their Annual Business Plan what the safeguarding priorities should be for the LSCB. This will often have been discussed and agreed by the LSCB members.

This said, our priorities will be to:

- ❖ Ensure that the relevant policy and practice guidance are embedded (this will be evidenced by findings from NPS quality audit tools: PAROM 1, ROSH, etc.).
- ❖ Ensuring that 95% of our workforce receives child protection/ safeguarding training.
- ❖ Ensuring that we continue, through the work we do with offenders and their families, to help reduce and prevent child sexual abuse.
- ❖ The National Group are undertaking a piece of work aimed at getting practitioners to ensure that their assessments are informed by the 'voice of the child'.
- ❖ The National Group are also doing a piece of work to improve practitioner's understanding of Care Leavers' needs with a view to improving outcomes for care leavers.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that our divisional delivery plan makes clear reference to one of our aims is to:

- ❖ Protect the right of a person, whether a child or an adult, to live in safety, free from harm, abuse and neglect.

One could, therefore, arguably cite any of the objectives in the plan (which includes both direct and indirect actions) to evidence our safeguarding priorities for 2017-18.

Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (Essex CRC)

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

In the 2016/17 year Essex CRC developed and deployed a practitioner guide to working with vulnerable people. This including guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation. This was deployed with an updated Safeguarding Children Practice Instruction to all staff.



Our new starters have undergone safeguarding training, while our managers responsible for recruitment have undergone a safer recruitment e-learning refresher course. The latter was an action we introduced after completing our Section 11 Audit this year.

In Thurrock we have continued to be committed to the LSCB and its sub-committees, with senior or middle management representation at all groups. At a practitioner level, we are represented at the Thurrock gangs group and are present in the MASH.

Unfortunately, this year we are transitioning between case management systems, and so it is not possible to accurately quantify activity or outcomes at present. We will be able to do so in the future.

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

In the last year we have continued to implement the changes of the Transforming Rehabilitation programme. This has required changes to teams, estates and IT. In the main we have been able to mitigate potential disruption to service delivery in Thurrock by having consistency in our practitioners and management. Our office move has been a successful one, and our new location in Civic Offices gives us opportunities for closer working with the Local Authority and other partners.

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you address these?

The Transforming Rehabilitation programme necessitated the break-up of one single Essex Probation Trust into two providers of probation services in Essex; the National Probation Service (NPS) and Essex Community Rehabilitation Company. New interfaces for information exchange now exist between the two organisations, such as at sentence, breach of community sentences and arrangements for risk escalation. Over the last year we have worked closely with the NPS to ensure key information is exchanged accurately and without undue delay. Our practitioners and middle management groups work to resolve issues and improve services, while regular senior management interface meetings are also held.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

This year will be implementing our new case management system, which will enable us to accurately quantify our safeguarding activity and outcomes. A key aspect of our new system is the Justice Star; strengths based needs assessment with specific attention for family and parenting factors. We have a schedule for quality assurance for this new assessment.

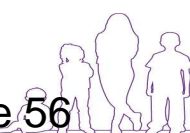
We are currently recruiting for a new practitioner to represent Essex CRC in the Thurrock MASH

Further Education

Palmers College

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

- Induction to students
 - Regular tutorials throughout the year to all students touching on subjects such as Esafety, Consent, PREVENT, Drugs & Alcohol, Personal Safety etc.
 - St Giles Trust invited in to speak to students on 3 separate occasions about Gang Culture
 - Annual training to staff with regular updates via staff newsletter
 - Posters – regularly updated. New ‘make nothing happen’ Prevent posters are up.
 - Information on moodle
 - ‘Help’ button on student intranet
 - Smoothwall – software to monitor student use of internet. 6 students seen due to being flagged as searching suicide methods. All students seen and 5 were genuine wellbeing concerns and now being supported via Student Services
 - Safeguarding card updated to issue to all visitors
- Up to end of April 2017 there have been 112 Safeguarding incidents recorded and dealt with
- Appointed a new post of welfare officer to join the Safeguarding team for September 2017



What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

- As a single agency we have prioritised good networking as support when necessary, ie Social Services, other colleges, EWMHS etc.
- Funding – as with everyone, lower funding of public services is having an effect.

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you address these?

- Difficulty due to workload – if I attend a multi-agency social services meeting for example, I would not be here at College seeing students. Funding cuts have affected us all and at times I need to prioritise and put the safeguarding of College students first – I would submit a welfare report rather than attending in person. This is not ideal but is a reasonable compromise at times.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

- Merging with another College and need to ensure safeguarding and PREVENT remain high priorities
- Continue to support students in a variety of ways and adapting to current need/issues for example mental health, whilst in a climate of reduced funding.

South Essex College

What did your agency do in 2016/17 which promoted safeguarding and how can you evidence the impact on improved outcomes for children and young people as a result. Please include data where possible.

The College has seen an increase in 130% of students known to the Safeguarding & Pastoral Service. The main reason for referral is due to health & wellbeing with mental health being the primary reason for concern. 29 students have accessed our in-house counselling service with support with mental health through to home life. The College has made 8 high level safeguarding referrals this year.

The College have been involved in a number of events and campaigns that have contributed to keeping young people safe in Thurrock. We have worked in partnership with the Virtual

School, the Community Safety Partnership, Essex Police, Youth Offending and CRI WizeUp amongst many.

The College has ensured that there have been a range of events that have supported our young people to improve their awareness of certain topics and access support if need be, hence the increase in students known to the service. CRI WizeUp have fortnightly drop ins at the College and have reached over 223 students through workshops. The Sexual Health Team are also a regular service students can access.

The College hosted the Gang Prevention talks for the second year running. Junior Smart from the St Giles Trust gave an engaging and hard-hitting talk on the dangers of gang life. This talk reached 103 students in Thurrock which supported the College in spreading a positive message about ending youth and gang violence and the support they can access.

The College has been proactive in developing the relationship with the Children & Young People's Officers at Grays Police Station. The Officers are regularly on site speaking to young people and helping to make the campus a safe place to study. In partnership the College and the Police developed a Community Safety Event which saw a positive presence of Police Officers, PSCO's and British Transport Police in and around Grays area engaging with young people and the Community. An aim was to tackle substance misuse and with support from Essex Police's Passive Dogs Team and CRI WizeUp, young people were educated about the harms of substance misuse and the potential impact on their studies and future.

Due to the older age group of our young people the College have been proactive in promoting key issues such as e-safety, mental health and bullying. Feedback Walls and Pledge Walls have proved very effective in hearing our young people's views on topics and what they would like to see changed.

What challenges as a single agency have you faced in trying to achieve improved outcomes and how have you addressed them?

The College has seen an increase in the number of young people accessing the service a decision was made to restructure the team and the Safeguarding & Pastoral Team was created. This service now sees a dedicated Pastoral Coach at Thurrock as well as support



from Safeguarding Advisers and a Manager. This service has positively impacted on our students as we have continued to see the increase in the number accessing the service.

The College have also had an increase in the number of Looked After Children studying at the College, especially our Grays Campus where we have 32 LACs out of 68 at the whole College. As a result we have introduced a new role, Designated LAC Adviser, to support this vulnerable group of young people. The role started in January 2017 and we have already seen a positive impact on communication and the quality of the PEPs. The Designated LAC Adviser has worked with tutors to encourage participation in a range of enrichment including the setting up of a football team.

Our work with the Community Safety Partnership in Thurrock has allowed us to access a range of training sessions especially around radicalisation and extremism. Increasing the understanding of radicalisation is a priority for the College and being able to send staff and students to the You & Me workshops enabled the Student Union to have positive discussions with students about the vulnerabilities displayed as well as the threats from online grooming.

What challenges around multi-agency working have you faced to achieve improved outcomes and how have you address these?

The College is very focussed on multi-agency working to provide the best outcomes for our students. We proactively build relationships across the borough to this effect.

Substance Misuse in young people is on the increase with more experimenting with substances. The College has seen a number of young people coming forward to get support or ask questions so working with CRI Wize Up has been great multi-agency working.

The number of Looked After Children has been a challenge for the College. Alongside the internal changes our partnership working with the Virtual School has provided every LAC with a strong team around the child approach. The College has proactively involved themselves in the workings of the Virtual School by joining their Governing Board. We are seeing an improving picture of outcomes for LACs especially with regards to progression.

What are your safeguarding priorities for this year 2017/18?

- Proactively engaging in work to end gang and youth violence
- Increase the awareness in staff and students of gang prevention, Child Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Violence
- Engage young people and staff in positive conversation about British Values and the risks/vulnerabilities associated with radicalisation and extremism
- Build upon our work on Mental Health support and awareness by increasing activities that promote wellbeing and mindfulness
- Continue working on improving LAC outcomes and the experiences for those that are UAS.
- Staff training and understanding of thresholds for referrals
- Student education on personal development, behaviour and welfare topics through engaging events, workshops and blended learning



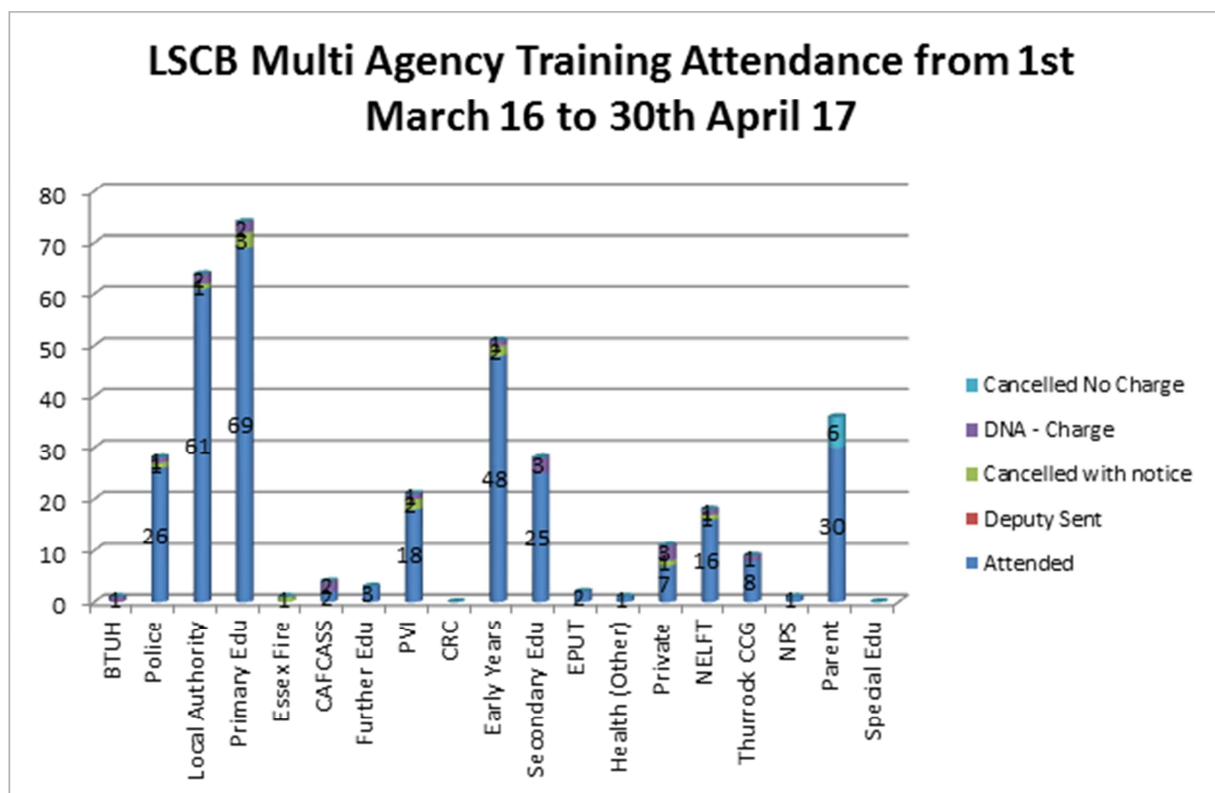
Learning and Improvement Programme

At the beginning of the year we published our current learning and training programme on the LSCB Website. During the course of the year we added additional programmes identified through audits and serious case reviews that would benefit practitioners in improving outcomes for children.

We also had to make the hard decision that the current provision of free training for all courses provided was not sustainable and certain “Non-Core” programmes would incur a charge on a scaling ratio depending on the organisation. Applying these changes is in line with regional changes by other Boards and we will monitor the impact of these changes going forward and will commence in September 2017.

It continues to be a challenge as highlighted in one of the two Ofsted recommendations from our Inspection of 2016 to fully assess the impact of the learning and training we provide. In support of this we have introduced some additional business processes to assist in this task and aim over the next year to further improve the evaluation of our programmes.

Our programme of learning during the year has continued to take into account various learning techniques and has included e –learning and practitioner learning events.



Child Death Review Process

All child deaths are reviewed as part of the LSCB responsibilities to support learning outcomes. This process is undertaken jointly through the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) procedures at both strategic and operational level. There is a Pan Essex Strategic Child Death Overview Panel which aims to identify any lessons to be learned from the death of a child in order to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and to identify modifiable factors which may, when addressed, prevent further such deaths in the future. It provides multi-agency, sub-regional awareness raising sessions around the child death review process and ensures that parents/carers are supported following their loss and are given the opportunity to contribute any comments or questions that they might have to the review of their child's death.

An Annual Child Death Report is presented to the Board which provides an account and overview of the child death cases reviewed, makes recommendations in relation to further actions and ensures that all recommendations are accounted for and disseminated to relevant partner agencies and stakeholders. This quality assurance scrutiny by the Board of the report provides reassurance that partners are doing all they can in assessing modifying factors and implementing strategies to reduce those risks. From their findings the Board implements a number of safety initiatives and distributes literature on safer sleeping, furniture safety and water safety information in readiness for awareness campaign over the spring and summer months. The report is available on our website

www.thurrocklscb.org.uk

Finance and Resources

The LSCB is funded through statutory partner agency contributions and any income generation provision through training or events provided by the Board where recovery costs have been agreed. These monies are used to pay for LSCB business. This includes Serious Case Reviews; independent chairing of the LSCB, the LSCB Business Team, and costs associated with LSCB and sub group meetings, multi-agency training, publications and procedures relating to safeguarding.

The budget is managed through the Local Authority budgetary procedures system by the LSCB Business Manager. A breakdown of the financial position for 2016/17 is shown below



Lessons from Serious and Managed Case Reviews

The process of undertaking these serious case reviews identified some concerns on the quality and timeliness of some partner agencies responses, in particular from those from outside of the Thurrock area. These challenges have been reflected within the final reports concerned for the senior management of those agencies to reflect on the impact this can have on the SCR process. The future work programme of the group in its new format will be determined by the developing picture emerging from the Wood report and the approach to

learning reviews in the future.

The group's priorities are to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented in a timely manner and monitor for impact of change. Briefing staff on the lessons learned from SCR's will continue to be a key activity in the coming year and work is in progress to develop our website to incorporate better information. The group will also be reviewing the SCR processes undertaken considering the feedback from staff involved in recent reviews to continue to improve the process of supporting staff involved in the review process. Please see Annual Child Death Report on our website www.thurrocklscb.org.uk

The Audit Process

The LSCB Audit Group includes representation from Police, Health, YOS, Probation, Housing, Social Care and commissioned providers. The members are middle managers or professionals with a specific safeguarding brief. The group met on five occasions.

The activity and case categories selected for audit and review are selected on a rolling programme at random. Depending on the nature of the audit being undertaken, an established audit tool is used for consistency of practice tailored to the type of audit being conducted. Our audits include single and multi-agency audits which are notified in advance to each representative before the meeting. Each agency representative is then expected to review its own records in relation to the case and the identified practice point. Where relevant, notes and case files are brought to the meetings and shared with the group.

The focus of the group includes the appropriateness, quality and timeliness of each agency's involvement, not just in the immediate period but also over a longer timeframe where this is relevant. Prime concerns are whether children appear to be safe/have been safeguarded, whether they have been the main focus of activity and particularly – when age appropriate – that they have been spoken to and their views elicited. The emphasis during the early part of the year has been much more focused on whether policy and procedures had been followed and any learning has a systems approach. This is still considered important, but the theme has shifted its focus to outcomes of practice and the voice of the child.

The group have reported that they have found the audit process a learning opportunity to broaden their own understanding and knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of every



agency. The group has gradually developed a shared, appropriate expectation of what they would expect to see from safeguarding responses not just from their own agency but also from other agencies.

A learning booklet is now produced highlighting the key learning elements identified and circulated to partners. Full details of the audits are available through the LSCB Business Team.

Audit Outcomes

Minutes of the meeting are recorded with comments on each case made by the group. These identify good practice and joint working as well as noting any concerns about the work completed. If serious concerns about the safety of a child are identified, these are immediately notified to the appropriate agency and the group requests and receive updates on any such case.

The findings and outcomes of the Audit Group meetings are reported to the LSCB regularly through the Management Executive meeting and there is an annual summary of activity for the Full Board, so that the overall quality of local safeguarding practice can be evaluated and any lessons for improvement taken forward at both an operational and strategic level.

A forward plan has been agreed for future audits' to ensure all safeguarding elements are considered taking into account equality and diversity.

Each representative has been keen to ensure that the investment of their time has been an effective means of assessing how well local partners are working together to safeguard children.

Audits undertaken during 2016/2017

- ❖ CIN plans – linked with the Serious Case Review “Julia”
- ❖ Specific audit of two at risk young people
- ❖ Audit of a significant serious incident
- ❖ CSE risk assessments

Walk Online Road Show

This year saw our fourth year of road shows for our young people which included members from the Youth Cabinet taking part. This year's programme covered year 5 and reached 2,100 pupils.

The content this year covered online safety, sexting, grooming, bullying and other risky behaviours. Each child was provided with a goody bag of material for both themselves and parents covering elements of safeguarding. Having completed this year's programme the Board have now captured in excess of 12,200 pupils from across the Borough. This is an exceptional achievement and this approach of engaging with young people was recognised by Ofsted during their recent inspection in March 2016 as an item of outstanding practice and published in their spring journal as outstanding practice. The Board is proud of this achievement

Voice of the child

The Board has undertaken a range of opportunities to hear the voice of local children. The Board has strong links with the Youth Cabinet which also participated in this year's Walk on Line Roadshows highlight the issues of discrimination to over 2,100 children. We take part in the Annual Youth Conference, attend local community events such as Big Lunch and the Orsett Show providing the opportunity to engage with young people and their families and raising awareness of safeguarding through various booklets, colouring books and information on all aspects of safeguarding.

The Children and Families Act 2014 (S19) requires that children and families should be involved in decision making at every level of the system and one of Working Together 2015 key principals for effective safeguarding arrangements is to take a child centred approach. Our Audit Group when undertaking individual audits seeks out in every case the voice of the child to ensure that this element is in the forefront of our practitioners and highlighted where improvements can be made.

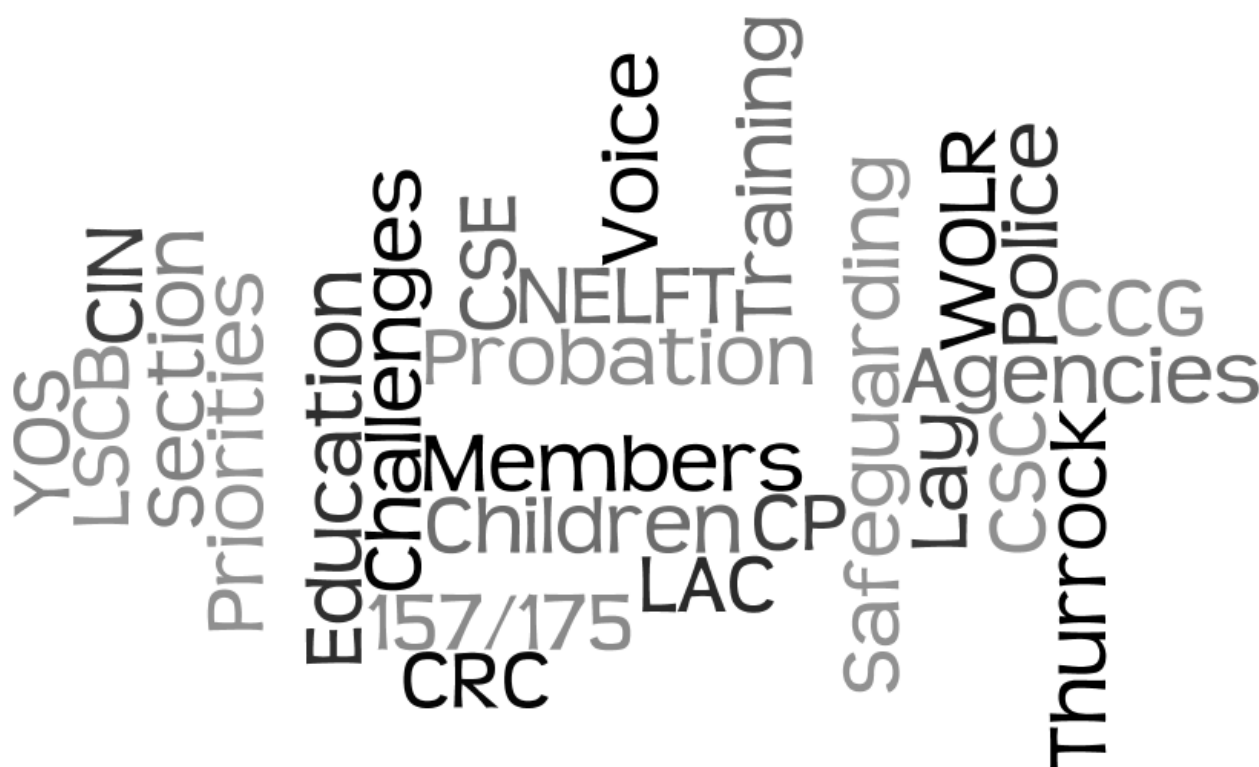
Our annual review of the Corporate Parent roles also provides to the Board reassurance that the needs and considerations of Looked After Children are taking place. For those children that go missing the opportunity of sharing their concerns during the return from missing



interviews offers further opportunities to understand their needs. The Board through its MASE and RAG groups are able to seek further reassurance that this particularly vulnerable group of children are heard.

Priorities for 2017-2018

- ❖ Continue to develop a board fit for change with the introduction of a Strategic Group to oversee the changes
- ❖ Support the development of the changes in outcomes of the refreshed early help provision
- ❖ Support the implementation and roll out of Signs of Safety and Graded Care Profile 2 processes
- ❖ Develop our workforce to be more effective in safeguarding



Challenges and next steps from the Independent Chair

The Board continues on its journey of continuous improvement, seeking to sharpen and focus on its priorities so we are able to fulfil our statutory responsibilities. During this year we embedded the changes made to our constitution and structure and delivering our Business Plan.

Alongside the business as usual activities we have faced a number of challenges including Serious Case Reviews both completed and initiated, and internal changes across our partners that create challenges in re-establishing individual communication networks. We are facing new challenges daily and with the proposals of new safeguarding arrangements as we move forward over the next few years the importance of maintaining a robust and solid foundation is acknowledged and required during these developments. The Board are clear that it will prioritise continuing highly effective safeguarding and interagency partnership, while implementing the change proposed by the Wood review, as set out in Working Together. As a Board we are up to that challenge and will continue to drive improvements in the quality of safeguarding through providing high quality support to our partners.



David Archibald
Independent Chair



13 February 2018		ITEM: 7
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Children's Social Care Development Plan 2018 – 19		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This covering report provides an introduction to the revised Children's Social Care Development Plan 2018 – 19. A copy of the Development Plan is attached to this report.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the progress and direction of travel for children's social care in completing the required actions from the Development Plan.**
- 1.2 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive assurance that the Development Plan will deliver the required improvements.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** The single inspection framework (SIF) for children's services ended in December 2017 and is replaced with the new Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework, which started in January 2018.
- 2.2** ILACS has a greater reliance on the use of ongoing intelligence to decide where and when to inspect. Ofsted will have access to data from various sources including annual data returns and the new annual self-evaluation. Under ILACS, local authorities will be required to share their self-evaluation at the annual engagement meeting with Ofsted. Ofsted will not publish dates for

inspections. Authorities will be subject to unannounced inspections.

- 2.3 The new process of inspection is seen as being within a 'system' and not a one-off event such as a 4 week SIF. Each Local Authority will have an annual engagement meeting with Ofsted; Thurrock's first annual engagement meeting has been set for the 9 May 2018. A month before the engagement meeting the Local Authority will send Ofsted the annual self-evaluation of their services. Within a 3 year period a 'Requires Improvement' Local Authority will receive 2 focused inspections and a standard full inspection of 2 weeks duration. Ofsted is keen to have a continuing dialogue with Local Authorities, in order to 'catch them before they fall'.
- 2.4 In response to the ILACS the department has established a Children's Social Care Development Plan which incorporates the recommendations from the previous SIF, as well as including areas for improvement identified through our own self-evaluation. The Children's Development Plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Services to children, young people and families in Thurrock were judged to 'Require Improvement' by Ofsted in March 2016. The inspectors stated in their report that 'children and young people were found to be safe during this inspection, with none identified who were at immediate risk of significant harm without plans and services being in place to reduce these risks and to meet their needs'.
- 3.2 The Children's Development Plan builds on the work completed through the Ofsted Improvement Plan and is based on 8 priority action areas for the service: 1: recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce; 2: providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families; 3: Building consistent quality and timeliness of assessment; care planning and decision making for children in need and in need of protection; 4: Ensuring high quality support and services for looked after children and effective permanency planning. Ensuring timely purposeful post adoption support; 5: Putting the voice and day to day experience of the child at the centre of social care practice; 6: All children missing from home or care must have access to a return interview. Analysis arising from risks faced by children missing from home or care and children missing from education, should inform action to reduce risk; 7: Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence; 8: Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to drive continual improvements in services
- 3.3 Instability of the social care workforce has been a key priority for improvement. The service was dependent on a high proportion of agency social workers, although it was acknowledged that a range of creative ideas had been implemented to improve recruitment; there has been a significant improvement made in this area, particularly in the recruitment of permanent

Team Managers in the Children and Families Assessment Team (CFAT) and the Family Support Teams (FST). There has been an increase in the permanent recruitment of Social Workers in CFAT, FST and the Team for Disabled Children, who no longer has any agency staff members.

- 3.4 The service for children looked after was not consistent and too many children became looked after on an emergency basis. A new service has been established to strengthen our approach to early intervention and prevention. Previous audits have suggested that the number of emergency admissions has decreased. However this area of activity will continue to be monitored to ensure that progress continues to be made. A review of the impact of our Brighter Futures Prevention Service will be undertaken later this year to examine the impact of the service. Through more effective management of the service, the numbers of children in care and those on a child protection plan, have started to decrease.
- 3.5 More needed to be done to increase the number of in-house foster carers as too many children and young people were placed out of the borough. It is estimated that by March 2018, 12 new families would be added to this portfolio. Currently, more children are now placed with in-house foster carers than IFA, but there has been a clear shift in the balance of placements and increasing numbers of children are being placed in or near the borough.
- 3.6 The strategy is to increase the In-House foster placement capacity of 80 carers by 20% annually for the next 3 years. The intended outcome is that by 2020, Thurrock should be able to place up to 80% (230) of all children in care with In-House Foster Carers. To achieve this, a net increase of 45 new fostering household must be added to the current portfolio over the next 3 years.
- 3.7 Management oversight needed to be improved and regular supervision needed to be in place. The service has in place reporting mechanisms to monitor the regularity of supervision within required timescales (supervision to take place monthly), this information is scrutinised at the monthly performance meetings chaired by the Assistant Director, with all Service Managers in attendance. Remedial action is taken as required following these meetings. A programme of monthly audits is in place and the audit template has a section on management oversight and supervision for each case audited. Current performance indicates that more work needs to be undertaken to improve the quality of management oversight. Further work is being undertaken to clarify expected management standards and to drive performance to be consistently good. A Team Managers' monthly performance report has been introduced from September and there is a section for the managers to report on monthly supervision requirements with opportunity to set out improvements in place within each team.
- 3.8 The organisation's use of management information and quality assurance was poor and this impedes improvement; Social Care managers have advised and supported the data team to provide a performance data digest which is

regularly scrutinised by the Senior Management Team and the Corporate Director of Children's Services on a monthly basis to drive up performance. There is a Quality Assurance Framework for auditing cases and utilising the learning from these, with quality as its main focus. However, whilst there has been some investment to ensure that there is a full suite of data available to managers and that there is regular monthly audit activity taking place, there is still a need to imbed this fully into practice.

- 3.9 Following series of workshops, social workers are responding positively to a culture of early permanency. Social workers involved with children subject to the Public Law Outline process are required to attend permanency planning meetings for advice and guidance. The tracking system introduced has made a real difference in early permanency, particularly for children suitable for adoption. Due to effective management oversight, robust adoption tracking and streamlined linking processes, the current adoption performance, over the 3 year average, is below England and Eastern Region average (which is good performance). Of significant note is the 'Year To Date' (YTD) for 2016/2017 is below the DfE target. This trend, if sustained, will make Thurrock one of the best performing authorities (for adoption timeliness) in England by 2020. However, more work needs to be done to increase the number of children adopted from care.
- 3.10 Post Adoption and Special Guardianship support has been expanded to offer ongoing direct support to families to minimise crisis, disruptions, and breakdown. The offer is also extended to parents who require support to deal with the loss of children through adoption or special guardianship. There is a planned launch of the core offer in October 2017.
- 3.11 The Development Board continues to meet monthly to ensure that all of the recommendations and other areas for improvement have been implemented. The Board is chaired by the Corporate Director of Children's Services.
- 3.12 Effective progress continues to be made across all areas of the plan and additional input is being provided to address those areas that require this to remain on track. There are examples of some very good work and improvements in the service, recruitment and retention is providing for a more stable workforce with staff who are committed to Thurrock, which is positive. The biggest challenge is inconsistency and we are investing in Signs of Safety training as our social work model which is being rolled out to all staff, this will focus on a strengths based approach to working with families that will drive up assessment quality and provide a consistent framework of intervention. We will deliver monthly training workshops for the staff from February to drive up practice standards. There is still a strong focus on analysing and understanding our data in relation to missing children and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and we continue to utilise additional resources for these tasks to ensure that Return Home interviews and CSE risk assessments are completed in a timely way. There is a focus on permanency planning for children. Quality Assurance process are being strengthened.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- In report.

5. Consultation

- None

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

- 6.1 The completed development plan will allow the council to meet and improve upon its core statutory functions in the delivery of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

There are no financial implications.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor Children's Safeguarding

There are no Legal implications

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community Development Manager

Whilst there are no direct implications from this report, the work to implement the Development Plan will strengthen our ability to meet and improve the delivery of services for children in need of help and protection; children looked after and care leavers

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

- None.

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

- Ofsted Single Framework Inspection Report dated 24.5.16

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Children's Social Care Development Plan

Report Author:

Sheila Murphy

Assistant Director

Children's Social Care

Thurrock - Children’s Social Care		
Development Plan 2017-19		
This Service Development Plan has been developed to retain the Ofsted inspection report recommendations and updated to include current improvement priorities. Delivery of the plan priorities will position the authority well to achieve a “good” rating in future inspection. The authority must be assured that the Ofsted recommendations are acted on to deliver better outcomes for children. Ofsted recommendations are identified in the plan as Ofsted 1, Ofsted 2 etc. The Development Plan has been developed around eight key priorities for improvement:	RAG Summary of all areas	
	Previous period	Current period
	2.0	2.6




	Previous period	Current period
1. Recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce	2.8	3.3
2. Providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families	1.7	2.3
3. Building consistent quality and timeliness of assessment; care planning and decision making for children in need and in need of protection.	1.5	2.5
4. Ensuring high quality support and services for looked-after children and effective permanency planning.Ensuring timely purposeful post adoption support.	2.0	2.9
5. Putting the voice and day to day experience of the child at the centre of social care practice	2.0	2.0
6. All children missing from home or care must have access to a return interview. Analysis arising from risks faced by children missing from home or care and children missing from education should inform action to reduce risk	1.5	2.5
7. Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence	2.3	2.4
8. Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to drive continual improvement in services	2.6	2.9
Page 25 of 25		
Specific actions to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people are set out under each of the eight priorities. Each action includes the timescales by which the improvement should be delivered alongside a clear indication of how success will be measured and evidenced. Progress will be RAG-rated and reported monthly to the Improvement Board. The report is linked to a separate dedicated performance report that will be updated monthly. Full details of the progress tracker are set out on the following page.		
Governance - The Service Development Plan will be overseen by the Development and performance Board chaired by the Chief Executive. The Lead Member will also review progress.		

1	The action has not yet started or there is significant delay in implementation. The action must be prioritised to bring it back on track to deliver improvement.
2	The action has started but there is some delay in implementation. The action must be monitored to ensure the required improvement is delivered.
3	The action is on track to be completed by the agreed date. Evidence is required to show that the improvement has been sustained.
4	The action has been completed and there is evidence that the improvement has been sustained. The action remains in the plan for monitoring.
5	The action has been completed and there is evidence that the improvement has been sustained. The action can safely be removed from the plan.

	Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
	P1	Social Work teams vacancies/ agency staff	Asked John Cooke				10					Asked John Cooke	10	◆
	P1	SW Team Supervision timely %											0	◆

Priority 1	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Recruitment, training and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce	Ofsted recco14 There is permanent and stable social work workforce. The workforce is well qualified and motivated with access to high quality professional development and supervision focused on delivering excellent outcomes for children, young people and their families. There are attractive career pathways enabling the organisation to retain social workers and support them into advanced practitioner and management roles.	Create clear management structure for Children's Social Care that will strengthen leadership and pace of delivery of good services	Senior Management structure established	S Murphy		Jan-18	4	4	0	0	Costed structure in place.
			All Service Leader posts are filled by permanent staff	S Murphy		Apr-18	4	4	0	0	Permanent staff now in post Jan 18
		Implement a practice model of social work for Children's Services that will support the delivery of best practice;	Signs of Safety Model is in place and supported by front-line managers and staff	S Murphy	Joe Tynan	Sep-18	2	2	0	0	SOS model introduced programme of work in place to ensure consistent access to training
		OFSTED recco 14 Create a profile for the social work workforce required to deliver the current levels of activity; Establish a clear baseline for Children's Services and a practice and financial plan for delivery that will sustain the service	Caseloads are an average of 18; there are no unallocated child protection cases or cases where a child is looked after; MASH arrangements are effective in setting consistent threshold . There are sufficient staff to meet demand.	S Murphy	Joe Tynan Janet Simon	01 April 2018	4	4	0	0	There are sufficient posts in place and the number of vacant posts have reduced significantly in the last 12 months. Use of agency staff has reduced from over 70 to 44.
		Implement a workforce strategy with a focus on sustaining the recruitment and retention of social workers	Strategy in Place to sustain recruitment and retention.Reduced use of agency staff. Most staff permanent offering continuity to children.	S Murphy	Janet D	Jan-18	2	4	0	0	Recruitment + Retention Strategy in place to meet recruitment of SWs and front line managers. Will have sustained attention to further reduce vacancies below 20%
		Complete a knowledge and skills audit of the workforce to determine the current levels of professional competence and to inform the design of the learning and development offer.	PDR exercise 2018 will capture skills audit. 4/18: Practice standards put in place and learning development plan to be updated to reflect practice standards and required competencies and common issues arising from PDRs.			May-18	2	4	0	0	Required competence levels identified. Knowledge and skills statement and Social work practice standards introduced. Updated learning and development plan to be updated following PDRs May 18
		OFSTED recco 16 Improve the quality, frequency and recording of professional supervision to ensure that it is reflective, improves the quality of practice through case discussion and focuses on professional and personal development.	Supervision Policy, Supervision Record and Supervision Audit tool in place shows quality of supervision at least adequate. 90% of social workers received four-weekly supervision which is clearly recorded and effective. Supervision tracking system in place. To be evidenced through performance information and audit	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Sep-18	2	2	0	0	Supervision Policy in place and fully operational. Auditing of supervision records shows inconsistency of supervision. Supervision policy for social workers in place and subject to monitoring and audit. Quality of supervision to be supported by further guidance and training.
		Leadership and management sessions help managers to build confidence and competence in delivering practice and performance improvement	There is evidence of engagement with middle and front line managers. Managers report more confidence and competence in managing performance and practice.	Wendy Brown and improvement consultant		Jan-18	2	2	0	0	Workshops planned to commence February to support middle and front line managers in driving improvement.

Previous period	3
Current period	3

Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
P2	Of cases closed % where outcomes met				99.7%	97.1%	99.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		0	
P2	Number of CAFs completed by HVs				2	7	5	4	6	4		0	
P2	% children seen within 15 days of referral					93.3%	97.1%	92.5%	90.8%	96.7%		0	

Previous period	2
Current period	2

Priority 2	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families Page 77	Ofsted recco 2 Children and families in need of help are identified early and their needs are assessed; targeted support is provided to address the assessed needs child and their family which brings multi-agency services together to improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of needs escalating so that they require support from statutory social work services.	OFSTED recco 2 Engage with partner agencies to implement an early help strategy and operational framework which clearly sets out the early help offer and referral pathways.	Early Help Services operate in a coordinated way and have a shared understanding of practice standards and thresholds Partners make early referral to early Help pathways.	Clare Moore	Teresa Goulding	Apr-18	2	2	0	0	Early Help Strategy in development in consultation with partners to be completed March 18. Consistent practice promoted by workshop sessions to incorporate SOS approach by June 18. Recording to capture outcomes by Feb 18
		A consistent approach to assessment and puposeful EH plans to drive progress of work is established.OFSTED recco 2 A QA framework is embedded to support consistent practice. Step down referrals to EH prepared by social care make clear the support needed any continued risks and contingency and safety plans required at step down.	A consistent approach to assessment and EH plans is established and evidenced through audit .Cases that step down from social care have good quality information that include risk assessment and contingency plans	Clare Moore	Joe Tynan	Jun-18	2	2	0	0	Consistent practice promoted by workshop sessions to incorporate SOS approach by June 18. Recording to capture outcomes by Feb 18
			Targeted early help interventions are effective at preventing the escalation of children’s needs. 70% of early help assessments are closed with some or all outcomes achieved.	Clare Moore	Teresa Goulding	Jul-18	2	2	0	0	Outcomes star introduced. Threshold understood to be tracked in quarterly audit.
			Thresholds between early help and social care understood and applied proportionately.[AUDIT]	Clare Moore	Neale Laurie	Apr-18	2	3	0	0	
			Children are consistently seen within 15 days of referral or step down from social care	Clare Moore	Teresa Goulding	Apr-18	2	2	0	0	Currently 96.7% children seen within timescale tracked monthly. EH staff joined MASH on 15th Jan 18
			EH staff participate in MASH to support shared development of threshold and to reduce referrals needing a social care intervention	Clare Moore	Teresa Goulding	Apr-18	1	4	0	0	
			Increase use of CAF by Health Visitors	Clare Moore	Teresa Goulding	Apr-18	1	1	0	0	Tracking introduced Jan 18 as numbers reported remain low.

Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
P3	% Assessments in 45 days				94.6	92.9	88.8	94.5	89.8	98.1		0	
P3	Plans graded good at audit %				50.0%	13.8%					Data for audits being collated	0	
P3	CP visits completed in timescale %										data on LCS being cleaned	0	



Priority 3	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update	
Improving the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning and decision making for children in need and in need of protection	Ofsted recco 3 Risk is identified responded to and reduced. Assessments and plans are timely and analytical with clear identification of needs and risks and a focus on measurable goals and outcomes for children and young people, including planning for permanency where this is appropriate. Assessment identifies risks for each child and steps to reduce risk are included in a plan that is SMART. Children are seen and spoken to so that their concerns and day to day experience inform the assessment and plan. Visits are timely to support pace and purpose of the work	OFSTED recco 2 The multi agency partnership within MASH develop and promote a shared understanding of threshold among partners. MASH ensure a timely proportionate response to contacts and referrals.	The MASH drives a shared understanding of threshold through partner agencies. The MASH have systems and practice in place to ensure a timely proportionate response to contacts and referrals ensuring risk is recognised and responded in a timely way. Performance reporting and audit evidence timely proportionate responses that reduce risks for children.	Joe Tynan	Shadiat Ogu	Apr-18	3	4	0	0	Threshold well understood and responses are proportionate to risk, timescales monitored to avoid delay in decision making. Urgent referrals receive a timely response. Less urgent referrals are also concluded in a timely way.Current performance 85% referrals resolved in 24 hours target 95%	
		Thresholds are appropriate and S47 strategy meetings meet statutory requirements and are completed in a timely way.Partner agencies particularly schools who know the child and family participate in risk assessment.	Strategy meetings records capture description of all household members and known visitors. The risks to each child. Describes the steps to be taken immediately to investigate concerns and reduce risk. Describe safety plan pending ICPC. Target 80% cases	Joe Tynan		Apr-18	2	2	0	0	Insufficient evidence of consistency. Being tracked through sample audit.	
		Children are seen within 5 days of allocation for assessment to ensure the child is safe and their views and experience day to day inform assessment	Audit shows children seen in a timely way and their views inform assessment Target 90% child seen in 5 working days	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Apr-18	2	4	0	0	Current performance shows 83% children are seen within 5 working days	
		Ofsted Recco 3 Assessment is proportionate and timely takes into account history and the day to day experience of children	OFSTED recco 3 85% of child and family assessments.CLA and Pathway Plan assessments are completed within agreed timescales. All assessments include evidence of the child being seen and spoken to or observed if under 5yrs. The child's concerns inform the assessment. All assessments are informed by family history evidenced by a chronology. All assessments include a completed plan unless NFA outcome. Target 70% audits good or better	Strategic Leaders and all Service Managers	Neale Laurie	Oct-16	2	2	0	0	Currently 93.8% of assessments are completed in timescale [Good performance]. Audit shows 10% judged inadequate. 30% good. Training plan via workshops from February to support improvement to 70% good	
	Risk is identified responded to and reduced. Assessments and plans are timely and analytical with clear identification of needs and risks and a focus on measurable goals and outcomes for children and young people, including planning for permanency where this is appropriate. Assessment identifies risks for each child and steps to reduce risk are included in a plan that is SMART. Children are seen and spoken to so that their concerns and day to day experience inform the assessment and plan. Visits are timely to support pace and purpose of the work	A range of risk assessment tools are routinely used to inform safety plans in particular CAADADASH graded care tool and CSE risk assessment.	Audit shows appropriate risk assessment tools used to inform assessment Target in 70% of cases	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Apr-17	2	2	0	0	Safeguarding team manger auditing conference records and plans to promote good practice. Workshop with chairs to improve plans and promote use of risk assessment tools	
	Strengthen timely decision making to ensure permanency is achieved for children so they know where they will live as soon as possible. Ensure children subject to PLO or in care proceedings do not drift.Ensure that robust plans are in place and that cases are progressing at a pace that matches children's needs.	Ofsted recco 3 Plans are purposeful and SMART and drive the pace of the work to achieve change	OFSTED recco 3 Plans are specific; purposeful and timescaled - SMART Plans describe outcomes or goals for the child, actions to deliver goals and timescale. CIN/CP/CLA and pathway plans meet 70% good or better at audit	Strategic Leads and all Service Managers	Neale Laurie	Apr-18	2	2	0	0	Current practice still not consistently good. Practice workshops will support practice improvement to start Feb 18	
		Direct work with all children informs assessment and plans	All workers must be competent in engaging with children particularly children with communication difficulties including Children with disability team	Strategic Leads and all Service Managers	Wendy Brown	Apr-18	2	3	0	0	Children are consistently seen but further work needed through practice sessions to promote consistent quality of engagement.	
		Visits to children must be timely to ensure children are safe	Visits to children on a CIN or CP plan must be completed in timescale Target 90%	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Apr-17	2	2	0	0	Compliance and recording need to improve significantly; investment made in cleansing data, reports available for next update. CIN visit data not currently available.	
			All cases have effective management oversight to ensure timely actions. Tracking process shows children do not remain subject to PLO for more than 26weeks. Target 90%. To be evidenced through compliance reporting.	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Mar-17	2	4	0	0	PLO Tracker in place to ensure review of PLO cases to avoid drift. Reviewed monthly	
		Ensure recording standards are understood and consistently met so that the progress of work and the rationale for decisions is clear	Recording meets required standards and should be updated within 24 hours where recording of risk needed and within 2 weeks in all other cases. Monitor via audit target 80%. Decisions are clearly recorded and the rationale for decisions are clear. Monitor via audit Target 80%	Strategic Leads and Service Managers	Neale Laurie	Mar-17	2	2	0	0	Audit shows practice inconsistent. Review of recording system to be completed by March to support better recording.	
		Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
		Risk is identified responded to and reduced. Assessments and plans are timely and analytical with clear identification of needs and risks and a focus on measurable goals and outcomes for children and young people, including planning for permanency where this is appropriate. Assessment identifies risks for each child and steps to reduce risk are included in a plan that is SMART. Children are seen and spoken to so that their concerns and day to day experience inform the assessment and plan. Visits are timely to support pace and purpose of the work		Assessments of children with disabilities lead to the timely provision of protection; support and services. Assessments inform EHC Plans that are SMART Target 80%	Clare Moore		Jun-17	2	3	0	0	Timeliness of assessment is above target. Workers within the disabilities team have been trained on developing pathway plans for children open to the service. Quality of plans need further improvement
	Ensure the quality of assessments for children with disabilities, including the assessments of young people that are due to transition to adult services. Risk is recognised understood responded to and reduced.		Assessments of older children identify support needed at transition to adult services that will maximise independence. Target 80%	Strategic Leads and Service Managers		Jun-17	2	3	0	0	Quality of practice standards introduced and threshold document in place	
			Children with a disability who are looked after have a pathway plan to support them in developing independence. Target 95%	Clare Moore		Jul-17	2	3	0	0	Joined up approach to resources panels put in place for children with acute or continuing health care needs or disabilities	
			Children with a disability have support to access education training and employment that will assist them in achieving independence.	Clare Moore		Jun-17	2	3	0	0	All young people needing a transition plan should have one agreed with adults services by 17years.	
			Target 70% case audits are 'good' or better at audit.. To be evidenced through casework audits.	Strategic Leads and Service Managers	Neale Laurie	Jun-17	2	2	0	0	Audits still show inconsistent practice to be addressed through practice workshops starting Feb18	
	Monitor formal case escalation procedure for the child protection conference service and the independent reviewing service. Child Protection Conferences provide robust challenge and decision making to drive plans to deliver reduced risk to children in a timescale suitable to the needs of the children.		A formal case escalation procedure is in place and effective at progressing cases towards improved outcomes where there is professional disagreement or concern about progress of actions. To be evidenced through compliance reporting and casework audits.	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Dec-16	2	2	0	0	A formal case escalation procedure is now in place. Activity and performance is being routinely reviewed. Escalation needs to be more consistent and analysis of issues need to inform improvement.Escalations on quality of practice need to increase Mar 17. CP surgery and IRO issues surgery occur 6 weekly to review issues and resolution of issues raised with Social work managers QA framework developed.	
		Conferences address risk in a proportionate way so families are not subject to child protection processes inappropriately	The use of categories for CPPs is monitored to ensure risk is recognised and response is proportionate. ICPCs are proportionate show challenge and robust evidenced decision making. Result in SMART purposeful plans that describe outcomes for children, the actions to be delivered; timescale for action and a contingency plan where needed and the consequence of no change is also clear. Monitor by audit.	Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie	Jun-17	2	2	0	0	Safeguarding Team manager auditing conference records and plans to promote good practice. Workshop with chairs to improve plans. Categories used reflect similar pattern to similar Las	
		Ofsted Recco 5 Children and parents should be supported to participate in Conferences and their CLA reviews. Advocacy should be offered where this can support participation particularly for vulnerable participants. Reports must be shared with families prior to meetings so that they can see reported progress.		Joe Tynan	Neale Laurie		2	2	0	0	Participation of parents and children remains below target. Lead IRO identified to plan action to increase participation in reviews and conferences.	
		Independent visitors should be made available for children looked after who do not have family contact.	Participation rates for children in conferences and reviews increases. Monitor through monthly reporting Target 10% Children who need independent visitors have an offer. Independent visitors should be made available for children looked after who do not have family contact.	Neale Laurie			2	2	0	0	Participation of children in conferences remains below target As above. IROs reminded to seek allocation of independent visitor offer. Take up low.	
		Records of conferences and reviews are shared with participants including children and families in a timely way	Minutes of Conferences, record of decisions must be circulated within 24 hours. Conference record within 20 working days. Records of CLA reviews must be circulated within 20 working days. Monitor through monthly reporting Target 90%	Neale Laurie			1	1	0	0	Actions sent out in 24 hours but minutes timescale not consistently met. New tracking system being developed to support improved performance.	

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Priority	Indicator	Priority	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
P4	Cases subject to PLO for no longer than 26 weeks %										Mailed Adriana and Andrews - La	0	
P4	Children seen within 4 weeks for adoption support %				100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Do not record	0	
P4	Timescale child entering care placement with adopters Days				215.5	215.5	215.5	215.5	215.5	215.5	ALB	0	
P4	Conference minutes circulated in 20 days %										Data to be collated	0	
P4	CLA review records circulated in 20 days %										Data to be collated	0	

Previous period	2
Current period	3

Priority 4	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Ensuring high quality support and services for looked after children and effective permanency planning	Looked after children have access to high quality care planning, review and support. They are supported in stable care placements and have access to and attend good schools. There are sound arrangements to plan for and achieve permanency where the decision is that a child will not be able to return home. There are effective corporate parenting approaches.	Ofsted rec 6 Develop edge of care service to reduce emergency admissions	The Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy is in place.	Sue Green		Apr-18	2	3	0	re	Strategy in place focus on increase in local placements particularly foster care
			The placement panel reviews children where emergency admission to care has occurred	Janet Simon		Jun-18	2	3	0	0	Weekly Panel reviews all children to review threshold and placement
			Ofsted rec 6 edge of care service established and showing impact	S Murphy		Apr-18	1	1	0	0	No resource identified to support this development, consideration for an invest to save business case
		Ofsted rec 8 Strengthen the impact of the Virtual School by implementing mechanisms to track the progress of all looked after children and care leavers and ensure appropriate action is taken where they are not meeting levels of attendance or expected progress. Must include out of area children	Ofsted rec 8 Mechanisms to track the attendance, progress and achievement of looked after children 4-19 are in place for all children including out of area.	Kestley Pullen Headteacher Virtual School		Jan-18	2	4	0	0	All children are monitored in and out of area
			Procedure and process for escalating cases where children are not making expected progress in place. Data on cases escalated gathered and analysed to inform service development	Kestley Pullen Head teacher Virtual School		Apr-18	2	3	0	0	Process used to escalate concern about individual children
			Gap between looked after children and other children is reduced at all key stages. To be evidenced through compliance reporting and performance information	Kestley Pullen Head teacher Virtual School		Sep-18	2	4	0	0	Gap at key stages has improved
		Ofsted rec 8 Improve the quality and monitoring of all personal education plans with clear targets and action plans to achieve those targets	80% LAC attend a school graded good or better.	Kestley Pullen Head teacher Virtual School		Sep-18	2	3	0	0	84% children attend good or better schools one school R at present so pupils being reviewed
			95% of eligible looked after children have a current personal education plan, including out of area children	Kestley Pullen Headteacher Virtual School		Jan-18	2	3	0	0	Performance between 88 and 100% by year group
			PEPs are audited Target 90% SMART and ambitious	Kestley Pullen		Mar-18	2	2	0	0	Current performance, 53% judged good 22% judged amber. Guidance provided to promote quality
		Ofsted rec 7 Increase recruitment of foster carers	Increase enquiries and assessments of foster carers Target 15C	Janet Simon			2	2	0	0	Recruitment strategy in place current figures enquiries not available
		Put in place a system to ensure that all foster carers have formal written confirmation of their delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions for the children in their care	Foster carers are clear about their delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions for the children in their care. To be evidenced through compliance reporting. Target 100%	Janet Simon		Apr-18	2	3	0	0	Foster Carers are clear about delegated authority. Covered at placement meeting but not always understood
		Household reviews and DBS updates are timely	Target 100% of household reviews and update DBS checks in time	Janet Simon		Apr-18	2	2	0	0	71.6% completed on time, 24% completed late, 4.6% reviews outstanding for appropriate reasons
		Implement an awareness campaign with all agencies with access to children and young people to promote private fostering requirements	Awareness campaign routinely run	Janet Simon		Apr-18	2	3	0	0	Routine awareness raising next 25/1/18
		Ensure that all private fostering arrangements have a current assessment and children are visited regularly (every 6 weeks in the first year and every 12 weeks in subsequent years)	The number of children's private fostering notifications to the local authority is in line with similar authorities. To be evidenced through performance information.	Janet Simon		Jun	2	3	0	0	Currently 11 children receiving service; in line with other LAs
		Ensure access to FGC or family network meeting to identify potential carers when children may not be able to remain at home	Target 100% of children known to be living in private fostering arrangements have a current assessment and are visited regularly. To be evidenced through performance information.	Janet Simon		Apr-18	2	3	0	0	Assessment and plans in place
		Ensure SGO initial and full viability assessments are robust and children subject to a SGO have assessments and visits to address their needs	Viability assessments are completed early in proceedings and within timescale. Target 100%	Joe Tynan			2	2			To track via audit
			Identify is checked at initial viability check and always prior to placement. Assessments meet timescales and visits meet timescales	Janet Simon		Apr-18	2	2	0	0	To track via audit
Priority 4	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Ensuring high quality support and services for looked after children and effective permanency planning	Looked after children have access to high quality care planning, review and support. They are supported in stable care placements and have access to and attend good schools. There are sound arrangements to plan for and achieve permanency where the decision is that a child will not be able to return home. There are effective corporate parenting approaches.	Review all cases where children are looked after under voluntary care arrangements (S20) to establish whether this legal basis is sufficient to ensure their safety and emotional security	All cases where children are looked after under voluntary arrangements have been reviewed	Neale Laurie		Mar-18	2	3	0	0	Tracked monthly and numbers reducing
			Where voluntary arrangements are not sufficient to ensure a child's safety and emotional wellbeing appropriate action is initiated. Target 20% of CLA 120	Janet Simon		01/16/2018	2	3	0	0	Tracked monthly and numbers reducing
		OFSTED rec 3 Complete a review of all care plans for looked after children to ensure that every child with a plan for long term care has a robust plan for permanence, also ensure that there is effective life story work	100% of looked after children in care for more than 4 months have an appropriate care plan and plan for permanence. Life story work has taken place or is planned, in accordance with the child's age and circumstances. Life story work. To be evidenced through performance information and casework audits	Neale Laurie CSU		Apr-18	2	3	0	0	Review monthly for under 10yrs, new process for over 10 yrs in place from February
				Strategic Leads and Service Managers		Apr-17	2	3	0	0	RCs check life story work completed
		Ofsted rec 9 Ensure permanence tracking is up to date and used to identify GRI	Permanence tracker is checked by RCLs to identify GRI and trigger intervention by RCL. Social work Managers update tracker	Janet Simon		01/02/2018	2	4	0	0	Updated and reviewed monthly
		Ofsted rec 7 Establish an effective recruitment strategy for adopters including a foster to adopt policy	Marketing is generating a steady number of potential adopters to meet need	Coram Contract		Dec-15	2	4	0	0	A media and recruitment strategy is in place currently meeting demand for 8 adopters
			Assessment timescales are met. Timescales in the Adoption score card are reducing	Janet Simon			2	4	0	0	Adoption timeslimes improved since 2016.
			Revised post adoption support offer in place which provides children and adopters with support that meets their needs. Post adoption support Waiting times for assessment do not exceed 4 weeks. Assessment is comprehensive timely within 40 days and results in a SMART support plan which is reviewed 6 monthly	Janet Simon		Apr-17	2	4	0	0	Waiting times currently 2 weeks Assessment timescales met
				Janet Simon		Apr-17	2	4	0	0	Response within 2 weeks assessment within 4 weeks
		OFSTED rec 10 Develop and implement a comprehensive post adoption support offer. There are a sufficient number of foster carers and adopters to meet need	Targets: recruit 60 additional carers over 3 yrs	Janet Simon			2	2	0	0	Fostering recruitment not achieving net gain in carers. Improved marketing agreed to drive recruitment. Marketing strategy and plan prepared MAR 18. Business case to escalate recruitment of in-house carers
			There are a low number of adoption breakdowns. To be evidenced through compliance reporting and performance information and 75% audit judged "good". Following breakdown children can access post adoption support	Janet Simon		Apr-17	2	3	0	0	Adoption disruption low
		Where a plan changes from adoption the RCL and the ADM must be consulted to ensure alternative permanence plans are putted without delay	Children who have a change of plan will achieve permanence in a timely way	Janet Simon		Mar-18	2	3	0	0	Children who have a plan for adoption where there is a change of plan are referred to ADM to review alternative permanence planning

Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
P5	CLA visits in time %										data currently being cleansed, wil	0	
P5	PEPs up to date %						97.10%			88.80%	Only collected quarterly	0	
P5	PEPs judged good at audit %									69.40%		0	

Previous period	2
Current period	2




Priority 5	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Putting the voice and day to day experience of the child at the centre of social care practice	The views, wishes and experiences of children and young people are fully and consistently considered in social work assessments, care plans (including the PEP), case conferences, visits and reviews.	OFSTED recco 3 Ensure that children are seen regularly in line with agreed timescales and that their views and day to day experience inform assessments, care planning and reviews.	95% of children are seen in a timely manner by social workers when completing social work assessments (within 10 w/days). 90% of children subject to child protection plans are seen every 10 w/days. 95% of looked-after children are seen every 6 weeks. 95% of children in need are seen every 4 weeks. To be evidenced through performance information, casefile audit and dialogue with children.	Strategic Leads and Service Managers	Neale Laurie	Mar-17	2	2	0	0	A programme of improving the quality of the data on LCS is taking place through January and February. Reporting will resume when this work is undertaken
		Support the Children in Care Council to develop their role so they are able to engage, support and represent the views of all children and young people who are looked-after.	Development programme to support the Children in Care Council established and implemented to help them engage with the wider LAC group	Janet Simon		Sep-16	2	2	0	0	Update not available
		Ofsted recco 15 The views of young people inform service development.	The views and experiences of all looked-after children are represented through the Children in Care Council. To be evidenced through an annual review or impact statement. There is evidence in the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board of the impact of Children's views on service development.	Janet Simon		Mar-17	2	2	0		Corporate Parenting group meets regularly Annual review of impact not yet in place.

Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
P6	Children missing from home offered return interview %										Information being collated	0	
P6	Children missing from care offered a return interview %										Information being collated	0	

Previous period	2
Current period	3

Priority 6	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
All children missing from home or care must have access to a return interview. Analysis arising from risks faced by children missing from home or care and children missing from education should inform action to reduce risk	Ofsted recco 4 All children missing from home or care must have access to a return interview. Analysis arising from risks faced by children missing from home or care and children missing from education should inform action to reduce risk	Ensure tracking arrangements for children missing from home, care and education or at risk of CSE or at risk from gangs bring together key information from partner agencies to inform risk assessment and safety planning. Analysis of feedback from return interviews and risk assessment informs analysis of trends and hotspots. Information is used to proactively reduce risk by the multi agency group.	There are clear arrangements in place to systematically gather information in relation to: children missing from home; children missing from care; Children missing education; Children at risk of CSE; Children at risk through gang affiliation.	Janet Simon		Jan-18	1	3	0	0	Multi Agency meetings fortnightly to review risk for children. MASE data sharing commnced Dec 17
		Ofsted recco 4 All children who are missing from home or care are offered a return interview Target 100%	Children at risk of sexual exploitation or Gang exploitationare identified and risk-assessed to ensure appropriate safety planning, intervention and referral to the multi-agency sexual exploitation group or Gangs group. To be evidenced through casework audits. All children missing receive the opportunity for a return interview. Target 100% To be evidenced through compliance reporting and casework audits. There is evidence of a multi agency response to trends and hotspots to disrupt activities that place children at risk	Janet Simon		Jan-18	2	2	0	0	Audit November 17 and next May 18 results informing practice. Return home interviews completed by open door. Referral arrangements being streamlined to increase number of children offered interviews. Missing from home 76% referred, all offered interview but take up 38%. For looked after children 94% referred, 98% offered and take up low at 23%. Work with provider to understand how we increase take up which is often low as young people can be ambivalent about take up.

Return home interviews

Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
P7	Care Leavers in EET %				73.2	69.6	67.7	67.4	67.3	67.1		0	
P7	Care Leavers with an up to date pathway plan %									88.80%		0	
P7	Pathway plans judged good at audit %									53.30%		0	

Priority 7	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence	PI	OFSTED recco 11 Ensure social workers and personal advisers keep in touch with care leavers. Care Leavers are encouraged to stay put in their foster placement post 18yrs. Residential units keep in touch with their care leavers post 18yrs to offer support.	90% of Care leavers are in contact with their social workers and personal advisers. To be evidenced through surveys and focus groups.	Michele Lucas	Patience Koleosho	Apr-17	3	3	0	0	Data not available this month
		Produce a clear and accessible statement and policy that sets out the rights and entitlements of care leavers.	Statement and Policy developed that informs care leavers about their rights and entitlements leading to an increased take-up of services. To be evidenced through surveys and focus groups.	Michele Lucas		Dec-17	2	3	0	0	We have developed, financial policy for care leavers. Information for young people has been produced and shared with young people 16yrs plus.
		Ofsted recco 12 Improve assessments and pathway plans so that they reflect the needs and aspirations of young people and which involves them in the planning process.	100% of eligible looked-after children have a current pathway plan that supports their transition into adulthood and appropriately reflects their needs and aspirations. Target 95% up to date 75% judged good at audit.	Janet Simon	Adriana Cimpean	Dec-17	2	2	0	0	Current performance 88% Audit shows 53% good so further work to drive consistency
			Pathway assessments and plans are reviewed in required timescales to support transition planning	Janet Simon	Adriana Cimpean	Jul-17	2	2	0	0	Introduce improved pathway plan audit to follow
			Opportunities for apprenticeships and work-based training for care leavers are increased ; Target TBC	Michele Lucas	Patience Koleosho	Apr-17	2	2	0	0	Work with apprenticeship schemes to ensure take up by CLA.Work with colleges to achieve sustained engagement of CLA.
			Ofsted recco 13 Increase % of care leavers are in education, employment or training. To be evidenced through performance information. Target TBC	Michele Lucas	Patience Koleosho		2	2	0	0	Work with apprenticeship schemes to ensure take up by CLA. Work with colleges to achieve sustained engagement of CLA
		Care leavers can access suitable accommodation. There is sufficient accommodation to meet needs and young adults are able to access secure tenancies when they are ready to manage a tenancy.	Care leavers feel safe and are safe in their accommodation. There is a range of accommodation in suitable areas to support care leavers.	Head of Housing		Apr-17	3	3	0	0	A range of accommodation has been commissioned to offer choice to young people
			Looked-after children have a greater choice about their accommodation when they leave care. Can access a secure tenancy when ready to manage a tenancy	Head of Housing		Apr-18	3	3	0	0	
		Care leavers know their health history	100% of care leavers are provided with their Health Passport and helped to understand their health history	CLA Nurse		Jun-17	2	2	0	0	Update information not available

Previous period	2
Current period	2

Priority	Indicator	Polarity	2016/17	SN Average	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Notes	YTD	DOT
													0
													0
													0

Priority 8	Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18	Progress update
Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to ensure continual improvement in services.	Services and outcomes for children and young people are continually improving because there are effective management and governance systems in place.	Implement a multi-agency strategic plan with agreed priorities to shape services for children and young people in Thurrock based on a clear understanding of local need.	H&WB board plans in place	Rory Patterson		Nov-16	3	3	0	Dec-99	Meets regulary
			Information on local need gathered and analysed			Jan-17	3	3	0	0	JSNA being updated
			Priorities agreed;			Nov-16	3	3	0	0	
			Strategic plan is in place which informs the work of multi-agency partners and the local commissioning of services in line with need. To be evidenced through compliance reporting.			Dec-16	3	3	0	0	LSCB Business plan in place
		A multi Agency CLA strategy is in place and is updated to reflect priorities identified to improve outcomes for looked after children.	The CLA strategy progress is reported to the Corporate parenting board.	Sheila Murphy	Janet Simon	Apr-17	3	3	0	0	CLA strategy updated. Consultation commenced with partners and CICC.
			The Board reports annually on the impact of the plan and the Board's work to Cabinet.			May-17	3	3	0	0	Corporate Parenting Board workplan updated
		Ensure that governance arrangements are in place to drive forward the strategic plan and working closely with the LSCB and Health and Wellbeing Board.	See above LSCB Chair meets with DCS and Lead Member	Director of Children's Services		Mar-16	3	3	0	0	Governance arrangements agreed and in place.
		The quality assurance framework clearly supports the service to test the quality of practice, prioritise areas for improvement, and measure the impact of change on children and young people.	Monthly performance group in place; a comprehensive quality assurance framework is in place	DCS	S Murphy	Jan-18	3	3	0	0	Performance data set established; Quality Framework in place.
			Information gathered through the quality assurance framework informs practice and service development. To be evidenced through minutes of the Practice Improvement Group, Service and Training Plans	Director of Children's Services			3	3	0	0	Practice Improvement Group established meets monthly. Findings inform practice workshops, held locally. Audit shows practice still inconsistent. QA findings not being consistently used by managers to drive practice and performance change. Nov 17
		Outcome	Action	Success measure(s)	Lead	Responsible Officer	Time	RAG Initial	RAG 01/18	RAG 03/18	RAG 05/18
	Services and outcomes for children and young people are continually improving because there are effective management and governance systems in place.	Ofsted recco 1 Refresh the performance management framework and datasets (strategic and operational) so that managers are able and address areas of poor performance and celebrate improved performance.	Strategic and operational datasets are in place	Sheila Murphy	Iqbal	Feb-18	2	3	0	0	A monthly dataset Team level reports are available live on LCS.
			Monthly Performance meeting in place.	Sheila Murphy		Feb-18	2	3	0	0	Performance reviewed monthly for social care and CSU
			DCS performance Board in place	Rory Patterson		Feb-18	2	3	0	0	Monthly meetings in place supported by elected members
			Performance Management Information is used at all levels of the Service to monitor performance and informs practice and service development. To be evidenced through minutes of the Practice Improvement Group, Service and Training Plans.. To be evidenced through compliance reporting.	Sheila Murphy		Feb-18	2	2	0	0	Performance information is used at each tier of management to monitor activity and performance to acknowledge good performance and take action to address poor performance. Managers use performance data to drive practice. Reporting to be improved and introduced through workshops commencing Feb 18 Routine case audits and themed auditing established for children's social care show Audit programme to be updated for 2018/19
		Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Group has clear terms of reference and the appropriate membership to focus on improving the quality of services provided to looked-after children and care leavers. This to include a forward plan of scrutiny areas.	Terms of Reference and membership are updated and work plan developed	Sheila Murphy		May-17	3	4	0	0	Updated work programme agreed with the Corporate parenting group for Sept 17
			The corporate parenting group is able to demonstrate its impact on improving outcomes for looked-after children. To be evidenced through an annual review or impact statement.	Director of Children's Services		Apr-18	3	3	0	0	Corporate Parenting group meets regularly supported by work plan. Work to start to produce annual impact statement.
		Review all strategies, policies and operating procedures to ensure these are current, appropriate and in line with statutory and other best practice guidance. Ensure that all strategies, policies and protocols are accessible and understood by all the professionals working to them.	Standards of social work practice are improved through the implementation of an clear and accessible manual of strategies, policies and operating procedures. To be evidenced through compliance reporting.	Neale laurie		Sep-17	2	4	0	0	Policies and operating procedures are updated and made available to staff via Tri-X Briefing on specific strategies, policies and procedures linked to themed workshops.
		Develop and implement a practice framework or methodology that sets out the standards of practice expected from social workers and Early Help practitioners.	Standards of social work practice are improved through the implementation of a clear and accessible practice framework. To be evidenced through compliance reporting. Sign of Safety practice introduced.	Sheila Murphy		Sep-17	3	3	0	0	Practice standards in place Practice standards yet to be developed for early help SOS practice introduced
		Complete Health check of LCS Implement recommendations to update electronic social care recording system which enables	Implementation Plan developed	Iqbal		Feb-18	2	2	0	0	Time table for implementation agreed for March18
			All teams use recording system to capture their work	Strategic Leads and Service Managers		Feb-18	2	2	0	0	

Previous period	3
Current period	3

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13 February 2018		ITEM: 8
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Children's Social Care Performance		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Iqbal Vaza, Strategic Lead, Performance Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children's Care and 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 of contacts and referrals; easing the demand pressure of children becoming looked after and children being placed on a child protection plan. In particular the number of children on a child protection plan is within the range of comparator groups. This is a considerable improvement, given the high rate of child protection plans in previous years.

An area of focus is the number of children that have been adopted in this financial year. Four children have been adopted with a further seven expected before the end of the financial year. Although this is similar to previous years, it is below Thurrock's comparator group.

1. Recommendation(s)

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

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of children's social care performance (see appendix a). It highlights key demand indicators such as number of contacts, trend analyses, benchmarking data and key performance indicators.
- 2.2 Thurrock produces a considerable number of data sets and performance reports to meet its internal and external reporting requirements. It is essential that one version of performance information is used by the whole system; from case workers to the senior management team. The data in this report is from the latest performance digest (November 2017), regional benchmarking data (quarter 2 position) and national data sets based on 16/17 financial year. This data had been presented and discussed with the social care senior management team and DCS Performance Group.

3. Contacts and referrals

- 3.1 Thurrock is managing its demand placed on the front door (MASH) of children's social care well. Although there has been a recent increase in the number of contacts (see fig 1, Nov-17: 611, Nov-16: 431), Thurrock is still forecasted to perform better than the east of England average. Thurrock's referral and assessment rate is below comparator groups. In 2015/16, Thurrock had one of the highest assessment rates at 713 per 10,000 of the child population. This has been reduced to 536 per 10,000 of the child population (see fig 2).

Fig 1

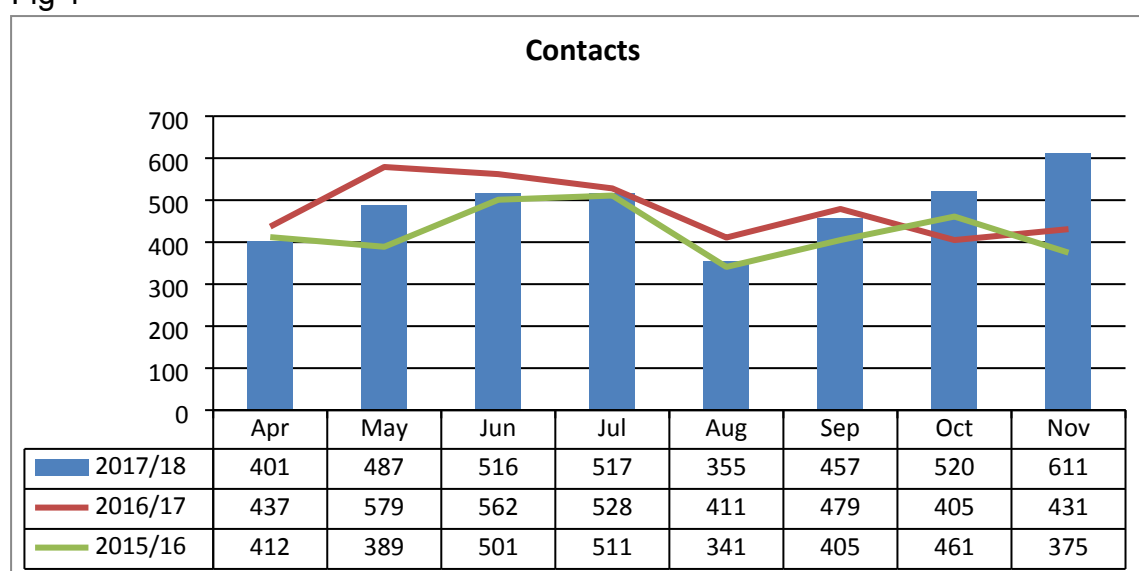
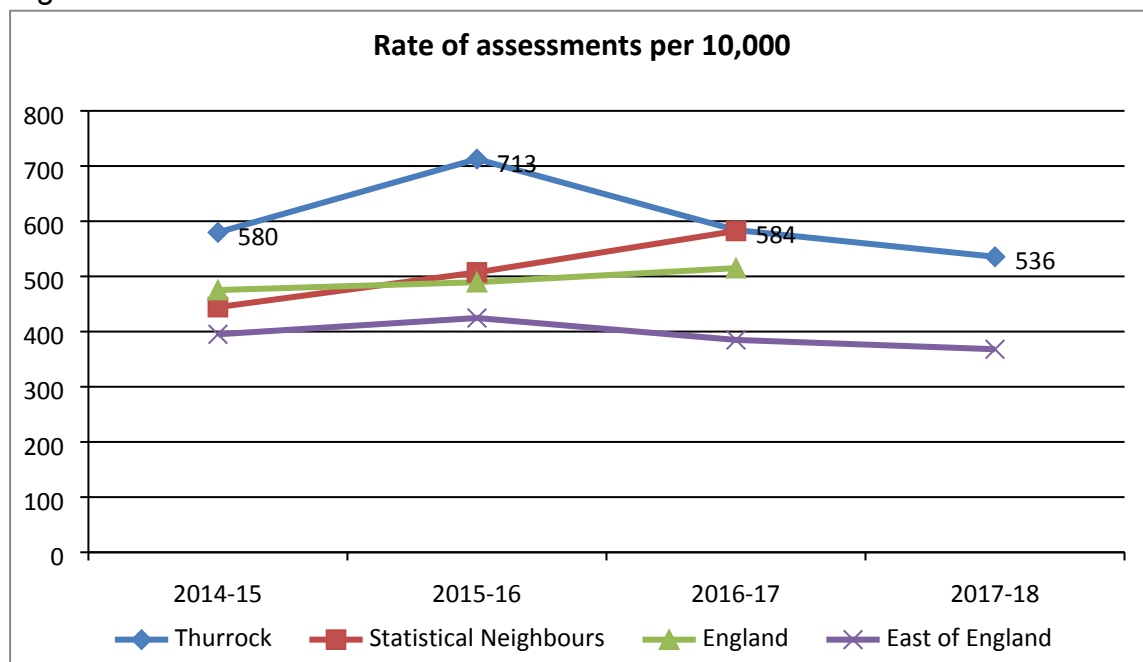
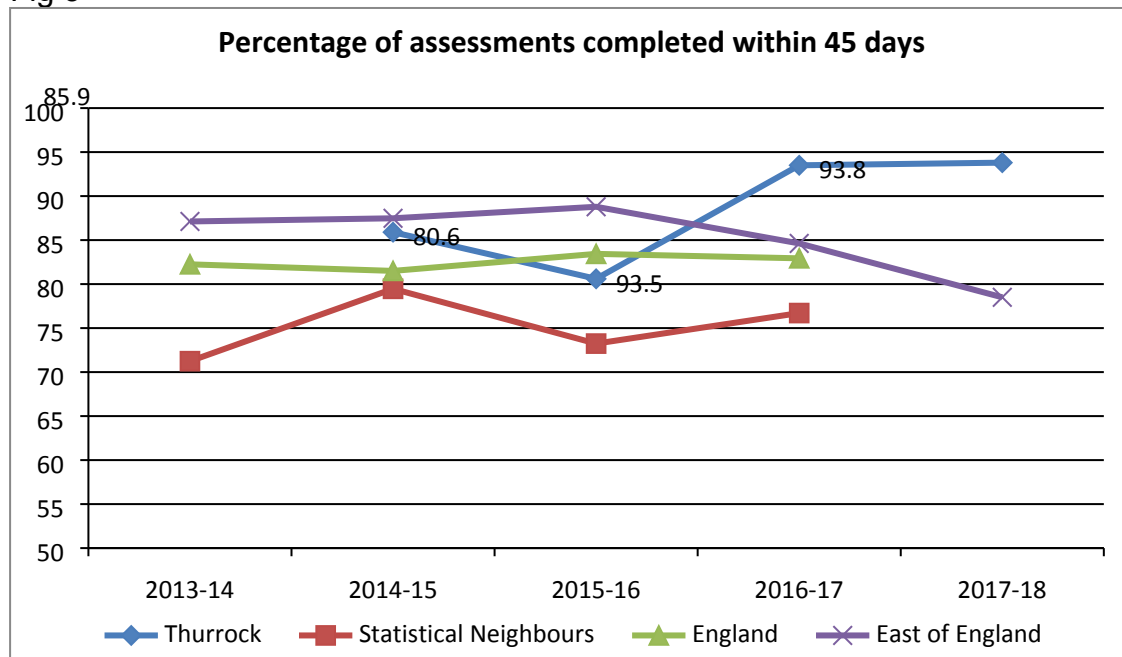


Fig 2



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

Fig 3



3.3 Looked after children

- 3.4 The number of looked after children has reduced by 17 (see fig 4, Nov 17: 311, Nov 16: 338) in comparison to the same position last year. This is attributed to a reduction in asylum seeking children from 81 to 32 (see fig 5).

Fig 4

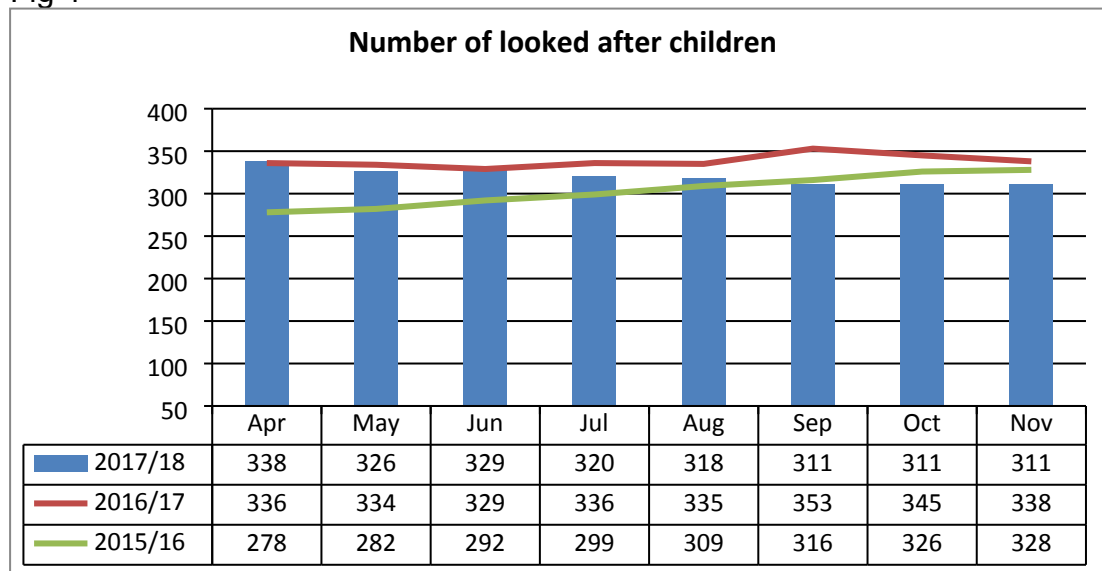
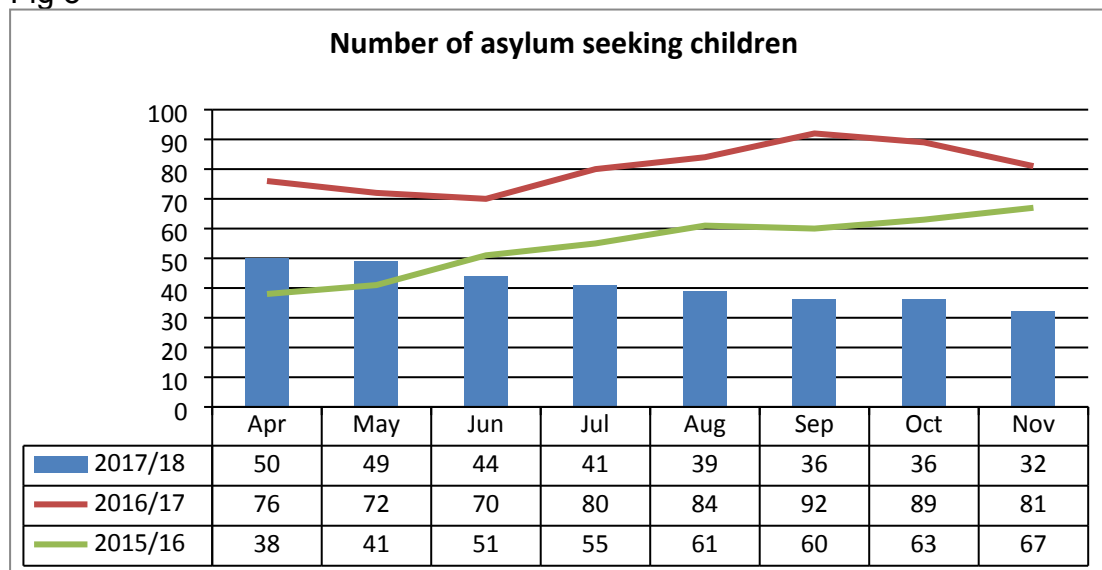


Fig 5



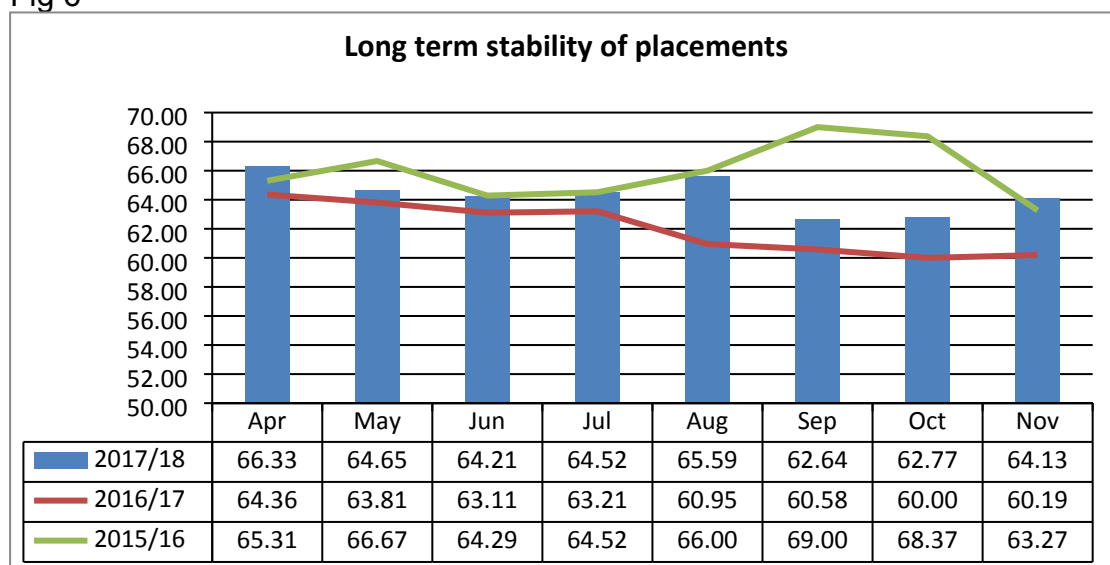
- 3.5 As a rate, Thurrock is closing more looked after children cases than its comparator group and the east of England average. Given the high rate of looked after children this is a good position. Thurrock is also reducing the flow of new looked after children, with 20 fewer cases than the previous year. However the rate of new looked after children is still higher than its comparator group. The service continues to monitor all new looked after

cases ensuring correct thresholds are being applied and children are only being looked after where necessary

3.6 Placements

- 3.7 Thurrock performs well in placing looked after children in stable placements. The percentage of children with 3 or more placement moves in the financial year is 7.7%, which is below the east of England average. In terms of long term stability, 64% (see fig 6) of looked after children under the age of 16 have been in the same placement for more than 2 years. Thurrock is forecasting that this position will improve to 68% by the end of the financial year which will be within the range of its comparator group

Fig 6



- 3.8 Thurrock has made significant improvements in placing children within Thurrock. It now has 42% (135 children) placed within Thurrock, which is 10% points higher than the position last year. This is both cost effective and ensures children are closer to their families and community where they also have access to good schools and other local services. Its target is to have at least 50% of placements within borough which will bring it in line with its comparator group.

3.9 Looked after children reviews

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

Statutory timescales are prescribed and all local authorities are required to adhere to these timescales, ensuring robust and timely oversight and intervention. The current performance for the service as of 15/1/2018 is that

89.1% of reviews have been completed within the expected timescale. This compares with statistical neighbour data of 90.5% and national data 90.6% (this data is end of year data for year end 2016/7 and therefore not a direct comparison).

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

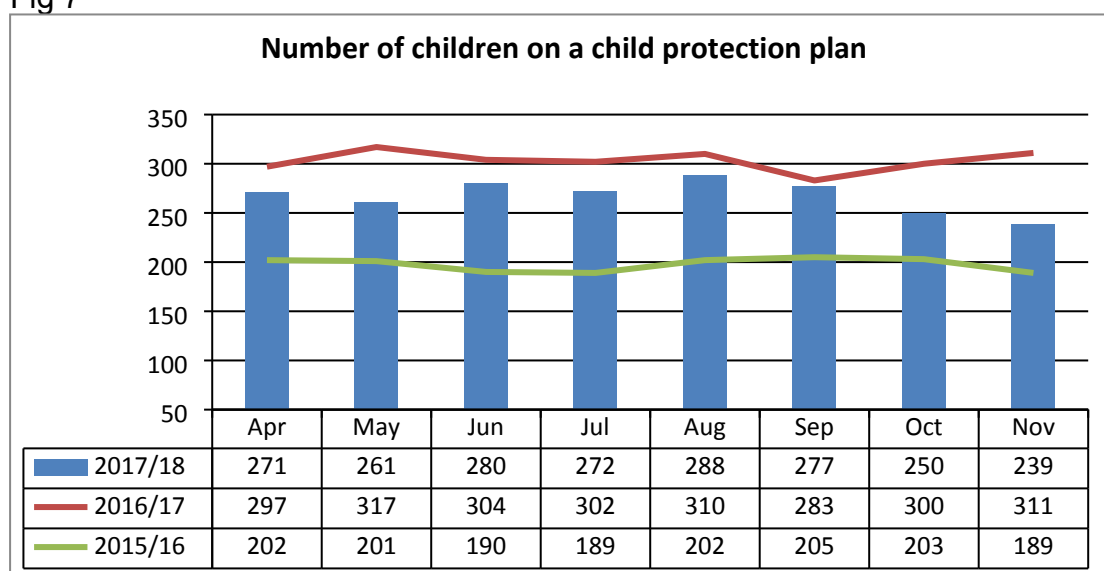
3.11 Looked after children missing

- 3.12 Thurrock had 5 looked after children missing from placement in November 17, which has been the average for this financial year. To date, Thurrock has had 208 instances of looked after children missing from placement. It is forecasting 277 for the end of the financial year, which is below its comparator group (361).

3.13 Children on a child protection plan

- 3.14 The number of children on a child protection plan has reduced by 72 (Nov 17: 239, Nov 16: 311) in comparison to the same position last year. This is attributed to a significant reduction in the number of child protection plans being started this financial year (see fig 7, Nov 17: 151, Nov 16: 234). Given the high rate of child protection plans this is good performance. The rate of children taken off a child protection plan has reduced from 79 (16/17) per 10,000 of the child population to 63.72 (17/18) of the child population.

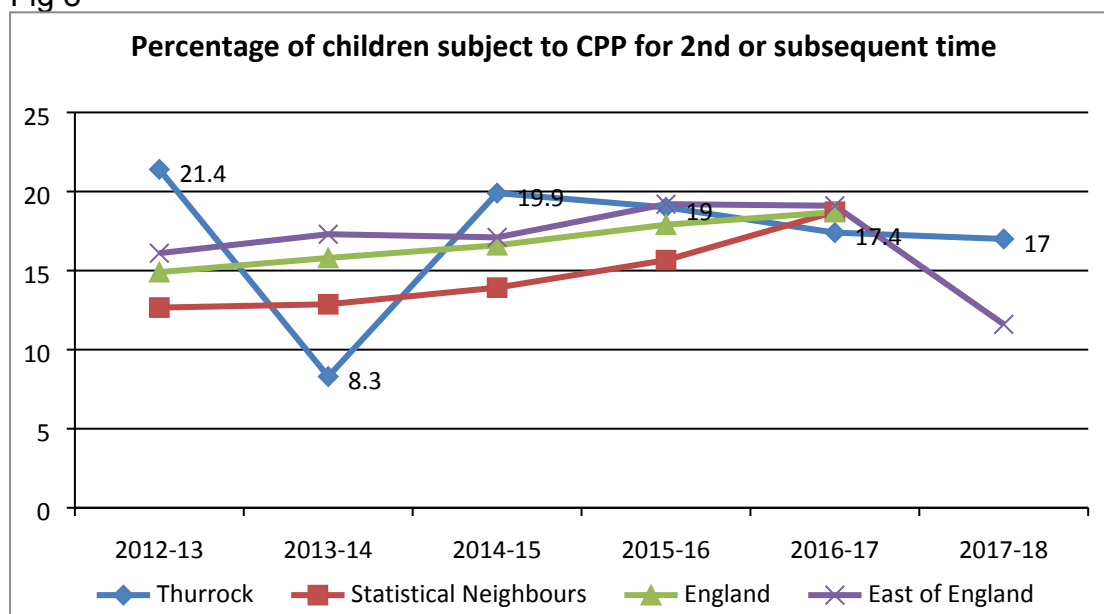
Fig 7



- 3.15 Thurrock's percentage of re-registrations has been stable at 17% (see fig 8). This is in line with its comparator group. The service will continue to monitor

its re-registrations to ensure only children that are suitable are taken off a child protection plan.

Fig 8



- 3.16 The recent decline in child protection numbers is as a result of a managed process to strengthen the Child in Need (CIN) processes and ensure that there is robust oversight of cases at a CIN level. This has been successfully implemented for cases where there is still a level of concern, but the threshold for child Protection is no longer met. The initial commencement of Signs of Safety as a social work model is beginning to impact upon social work thinking, which is ensuring that plans are goal focused which is also having an impact upon outcomes for children. An evaluation is planned to canvas views from partners with regards to the implementation of this approach, this will be available by the end of March 2018.

3.17 Child protection reviews

- 3.18 The number of statutory reviews completed within timescale at the end of November 2017 was 90%. Although this is an improvement from last year, it is still below the standard that all local authorities are required to meet. There is a time lag of reviews being uploaded onto the social care database, and it is expected that this position will improve towards the end of the financial year.

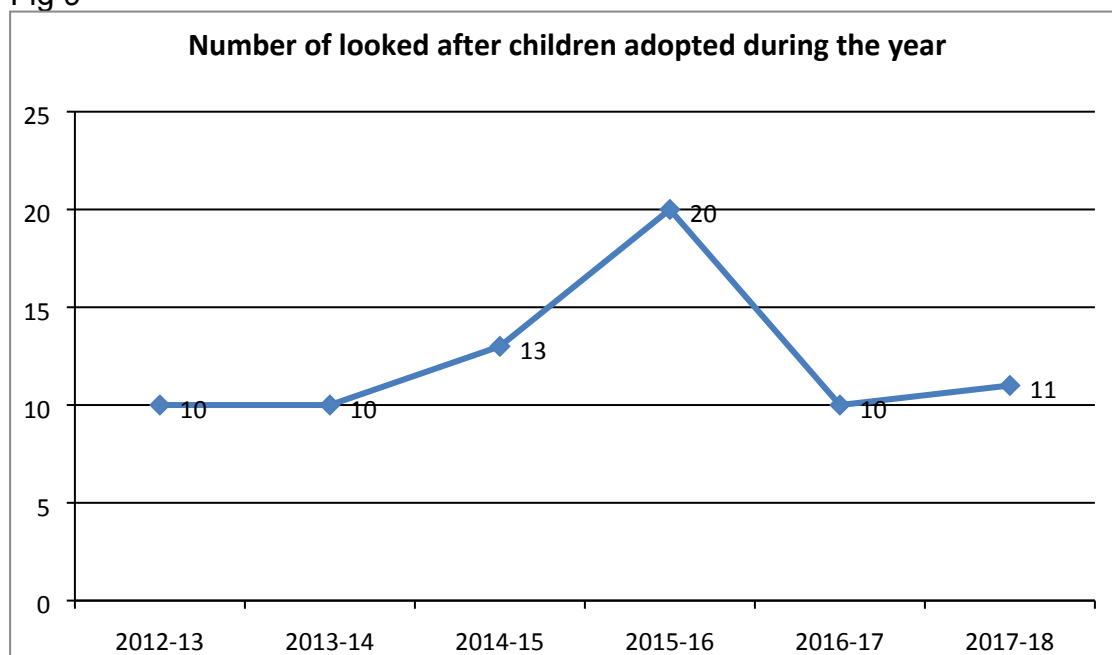
3.19 Adoptions

- 3.20 Thurrock is forecasting 11 children (see fig 9) will be adopted by the end of this financial year. At the end of November 2017, 4 children had been adopted. Historically the number of looked after children being adopted has been low. The exception to this was in 2015/16, where 20 children were adopted. This is partly explained due to a backlog of cases being cleared in

2015/16 for adoption. These cases for adoption were not processed in a timely fashion.

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

Fig 9



3.22 Care Leavers

- 3.23 Considerable work has been undertaken since the last report to O & S in ensuring the data is updated on the status of care leavers. As a result the percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training has improved to 66.7%. Although this is below the target of 70%, it is above the 16/17 position (61.9%). Similarly, the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation has also increased to 83.7%. This is below the position reported in 16/17 (85.3%) but an improvement from the September 17 position of 75.9%.
- 3.24 Housing remains one of the key challenges for young people who are Leaving Care, to address this we have developed the Head Start Housing Programme – which will look to support vulnerable young people into HMO's this programme will offer a range of support to ensure that the transition into independent living can be achieved. The current position shows that we have 0.6% in unsuitable accommodation – the rest of the data relates to young people who have gone missing from the LA – a significant percentage of these are made up of our unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and this is recognised nationally as an issue. Due to how we report we also have a percentage of young people who chose to disengage with the after care service and as such we are not aware of where they live so are shown as

unknown on the data return. We continue to ensure that we try and keep in touch with young people who have made the choice to disengage and are proactively identifying ways of providing a range of accommodation to meet the needs of young people leaving care

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

3.26 Case file audits

- 3.27 All local authorities are required to carry out regular audits on case files and feedback learning into front line practice. To date, 102 case file audits have been completed. Work has been undertaken by the service to ensure that learning from these cases is communicated to social workers and their team managers.

3.28 Child sexual exploitation

- 3.29 The Director of Children's Services has commissioned a deep dive study into the profile of children subject to sexual exploitation. The analysis and report will be shared with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board to ensure all agencies working with children are fully aware of the local context in Thurrock in relation to child sexual exploitation.

3.30 Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

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

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note and comment on current performance position.

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

- None.

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

- None.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

No Financial Implications.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education

No Legal Implications.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

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

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

- 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

- Appendix 1 – Performance scorecard

Report Author:

Iqbal Vaza

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

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Appendix 1 – Performance scorecard

Indicator	Thurrock (Nov 17)	Comparator (SN) 16/17	Eastern region Q2 17/18	National 16/17
Contacts and referrals				
Rate of contacts	1505	N/A	1600	N/A
Rate of referrals	475	620	359	548
% of re-referrals	8.90%	21.26	20	21.9
Rate of assessments	536	582	368	515
% assessments completed within timescale	93.8%	76.7	78.5	82.92
Looked after children				
Rate of looked after children (LAC)	75.2	67.9	49.8	62
Rate of asylum seeking children (UASC)	7.6	6.99	5.97	6.27
No of instances of children missing from placement	208	361	N/A	N/A
ST stability of placement (3 or more placements)	7.7%	N/A	11.3	N/A
LT stability of placement (same placement 2+ years)	68%	67	67	68
% of placements in borough	42%	53	N/A	N/A
Child protection				
% of Initial CP Conferences within 15 days	57.0%	71.56	86.1	77.23
Rate of children on CP plan	57	54	31.5	43.3
% of CP reviews completed within timescale	90%	95.87	92.7	92.2
% of CP re-registrations	17%	18.7	11.6	18.7
Adoption				
% of children leaving care being adopted	6%	16.6	13.2	14
Number of children being adopted	11	29	N/A	N/A
Avg. days for child moving in with a adoptive family	239	N/A	342	N/A
Care Leavers (new indicators, previously split as 16-18 and 19-21)				
% of Care Leavers in EET (17 to 21)	66.70%	N/A	58.1	N/A

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13 February 2018		ITEM: 9
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Children Missing Education		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Malcolm W Taylor, Strategic Lead Inclusion / Principal Educational Psychologist		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director for Children's Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the current situation regarding Children Missing Education and the processes in place to ensure all children living in Thurrock have access to appropriate education.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and provide comment on the current arrangements for monitoring Children Missing Education and the processes in place to ensure all children have access to an appropriate education.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** The Statutory guidance on Children Missing Education (CME) is set out in *Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* Department for Education September 2016.

This states that all local authorities in England have a legal duty to implement under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME).

- 2.2** Thurrock Council guidance and procedures for managing Children Missing Education are set out on the Council web site
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/children-missing-education/when-child-is-missing-education>.

- 2.3 There are a number of departments and agencies who work together to implement the Statutory Duties regarding Children Missing Education and the organisation of this is described in the CME procedure shown on the Council web site.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

There are a range of factors that can underlie and impact on Children Missing Education and these issues are tackled by the specialist services with the overall approaches being co-ordinated through the Children's Services Directorate Management Team. The following sections identify the key issues, data, and actions in place covering these areas.

- **Admissions**
- **Special Educational Needs**
- **Missing Children**
- **Looked After Children**
- **Excluded pupils**
- **Fair Access and Hard to Place Protocols**

3.2 Admissions

The Local Authority has a duty to provide an offer of a school place to parents of all children of statutory school age who live within the Local Authority.

These are cases where parents do not engage with the school admission process when their child is of statutory school age or when they have not secured a place at their school of choice. This may include children who move into the Local Authority within the school year. In these cases they are dealt with in the first instance by the Admissions service working with the parents to ensure the child has an offer of a school place at the nearest available school.

All children's access to education is recorded on the centrally held pupil database. From this database is drawn the spreadsheet of cases which are RAG rated and updated giving details of actions in place to address the access to education. This spreadsheet forms the basis of the monthly Directorate Management monitoring of Children Missing Education known as CME/DMT.

The following data is provided to give an overview of the CME situation in Thurrock as of 17/1/18.

3.3 Admissions Data (as of 17/1/18)

	CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION		
		PRIMARY	SECONDARY
A	Offered but not on roll as yet	58	14
B	Currently waiting for a school place	45	56
	Total	103	70

Children shown in Row A, have a school place identified for them and are either in discussion with the school regarding a start date or the school has not yet informed the Local Authority that they have started school.

Children shown in Row B, include a number of groups of children. Those who the admissions team are processing prior to a school offer; those who have declined a school offer for reasons including not obtaining their school preference; those referred to the Education Welfare Service where children are not taking up school places and have not engaged with the admissions team; and those that do not yet have a school place and come under the Fair Access / Hard to Place Protocol.

3.4 In Year Admissions

An additional factor impacting on Children Missing Education is the large number of in-year admissions of pupils moving into Thurrock and the consequent need to find school places within a short time period. Figures for children moving into Thurrock are shown below.

The availability of secondary school places to meet the demand and avoid CME from Primary transfer and new arrivals, is being addressed through temporary accommodation at schools in the short term from September 2018 whilst the Free School placement growth develops in line with the Pupil Place Plan.

The high numbers of new admissions particularly in Primary are shown below.

Applications received by Thurrock				
	Academic Year	Moved to England	Moved to Thurrock	Total
Primary	2016/17	166	865	1031
Primary (Sep to Jan)	2017/18	91	495	586
Secondary	2016/17	84	231	315
Secondary (Sep to Jan)	2017/18	80	146	226

3.5 Special Educational Needs

Where a child or young person has an Education Health and Care plan for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities the admissions process is carried out through the guidance set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015. There are cases where the Local Authority may encounter difficulty in obtaining a school place suitable to the child or young person's needs, in which case there are occasions where alternative arrangements are put in place to support the child whilst appropriate provision is secured.

One of the key issues with regard to CME for children with SEND is the availability of Special School places or Mainstream Resource Bases for particular areas of need. The key area of need is the availability of places for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and for children experiencing difficulties in the area of Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH).

Treetops Special School has an outstanding national and international reputation for supporting children with ASC which has led to families moving into the area to access the school places as well as an existing high demand in the local area. The opening of a new Treetops Free School will address the shortage of some of these places however in the interim; the Local Authority has worked with the school to provide additional spaces within the school. In cases where the Local Authority has not been able to secure a special school place within the borough, pupils are supported with individual programmes in mainstream schools using Treetops outreach services or through the commissioning of places at out-borough special schools including independent schools.

There are a small number of cases for pupils with ASC and for those with SEMH needs, where the Local Authority has not been able to secure an in-borough special school place and either through issues of availability or parental choice, an out-borough school place has not been secured. In some of these cases individual support packages have been commissioned

including individual tuition. These packages of support are closely monitored whilst special school places are pursued. As at 17/1/18 there are 5 children with Education Health and Care Plans who have packages of tuition in place whilst special school places are being secured. There are two further children who are not yet in school but have named schools and are in the process of being admitted to the schools.

The Local Authority has taken robust action in naming schools on the Education Health and Care Plans following responses from schools not offering places where the parental and Local Authority view was that the child should be admitted. In the majority of these cases the pupils are then admitted to the school. There has been one recent case in 2017/18 which was appealed by the school to the DfE. The DfE supported the Local Authority view and the school are now admitting this pupil.

3.6 Missing Children / Education Welfare Service

There are cases where a parent takes a child out of school and leaves the local area without clear details as to where they have gone. There are clear procedures for dealing with these cases. These actions are carried out by the Education Welfare Service following a series of expected checks by the school in the first instance. Depending on the circumstances of the case, this may also involve a referral to the multi-agency safeguarding hub in line with the Safeguarding duties of the Local Authority. Many of these cases are where the family has left the area or the UK and series of actions have to be undertaken to ensure all reasonable steps have been taken to identify their location. This can include obtaining evidence of school admission in the country they have moved to.

Below is the summary data of the work of the Educational Welfare Service in relation to CME.

Academic Year	Admissions issues	CME	Missing Children	Total
2016/2017	54	28	205	287
2017/2018 Autumn Term	19	5	56	80

KEY

The Admissions issues include cases where parents have not taken up a school place.

The CME cases are those where the child may have been electively home educated and this has been deemed to be unsuitable or where the parent has not sought a school place for their child.

Missing children covers work carried out where the child has left school and the school has not been able to identify where the child has moved onto to transfer the pupil to that roll.

3.7 Looked After Children

Where Children are taken into the care of the Local Authority or there is a change of placement for a Looked After Child, particular care is taken to reduce the impact on the education of the child concerned. Looked After Children have particular rights within school admission arrangements to secure efficient access to school places. Their needs are further supported through a Personal Education Plan and monitoring from the Local Authority Virtual School. To avoid Looked After Children missing education in cases where a movement has taken place without a school place being secured, individual tuition is provided to ensure continuity of education.

As at 17/1/2018 there are four Looked After Pupils who are being monitored by the CME/DMT Board due to the complexity of the case and where they are not in a school place. However they are all receiving tuition whilst these places are being confirmed. These pupils' access to Education is additionally monitored by the Virtual School

3.8 Excluded Pupils

The Local Authority is responsible for providing suitable education for all permanently excluded pupils. This duty is carried out through the placing of pupils in the Alternative Provision Academy (Pupil Referral unit); directly into specialist schools / placements; or through other educational arrangements brokered by the Local Authority, including alternative providers and tuition services.

The closure of the provision for Primary Aged pupils at Olive Alternative Provision Academy in June 2017, following the Inspection of the Academy placing it in Special Measures, has led to significant challenges in supporting primary aged pupils permanently excluded from school. The Local Authority is working closely with Primary schools to provide inclusion places for these pupils as part of a larger programme of Inclusion Bases in schools. The first of these arrangements which was put in place immediately following the closure of the Olive Primary PRU has led to significantly improved access and engagement in education for the individual pupils.

As at 17/1/2018, there are four children who have been recently permanently excluded and are not yet in a school place or receiving a suitable educational offer. These cases are in the process of being secured with an appropriate offer of education.

There has been a significant rise in the number of Permanently Excluded Primary aged pupils over the first part of the Academic Year 2017/18 impacting on the pressures on services to avoid CME.

Time Period	Permanent Exclusions Primary
September 2016 - August 2017 (12 mths)	5
September 2017 - Jan 2018 (5 mths)	9

3.9 Fair Access Protocol/ Hard to Place.

Children who move into the Local Authority and have additional needs such as; having been permanently excluded from a previous school; having previously attended a Pupil Referral Unit; having been out of school for more than 20 days; being homeless; being a child in need; having a CAF in place; and a number of other categories, are placed in schools through the Fair Access Protocol to minimise the missing of education.

There is a three weekly Inclusion Panel held with representatives of all secondary schools where these applications including managed moves and re-integrations from Alternative Provision, are managed so as to reduce the missing of education for the most vulnerable children.

3.10 Inclusion Panel Fair Access

The table below demonstrates the successful impact the Fair Access process has on reducing the numbers of Children Missing Education for the most vulnerable children.

Placements made into schools through the Inclusion Panel 2016/17

HTP	HTP/EAL	HTP/EAL/LAC	HTP/ Yr 11	Yr 11	Yr 11/ EAL	EHE	Total
22	2	2	4	9	14	13	66

KEY

HTP Hard To Place

EAL English as an Additional Language

LAC Looked After Children

EHE Elective Home Education (returning to school)

3.11 Managed Moves Reintegration 2016/17

The table below shows the managed moves carried out through the Inclusion Panel to avoid permanent exclusions and reduce the chances of these pupils missing education. It also shows the successful re-integration of pupils back into Mainstream schools from Alternative Provision.

Managed moves between schools	32
Reintegration of pupils from Alternative Provision	5

3.12 Oversight of all Children Missing Education

The Local Authority operates a monthly Children's Services Directorate Management Team oversight meeting, where all children identified as missing education are reviewed on a risk based model according to the actions and provision in place at this time. This meeting known as CME/DMT additionally provides a review of co-ordination of support across children's services and where necessary takes key casework decisions to escalate cases to further formal action.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- In report.

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

- None

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

- 6.1 The responsibility of the Local Authority to monitor Children Missing Education and ensure the access to education for all children contributes directly to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and is therefore a key component of the overall performance of the Council .

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Patricia Harvey**
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Consultant

This report covering the identification and support for Children Missing Education includes services for children which are funded by the Direct School Grant. Efficient arrangements to monitor and improve access to school and alternative provision places is therefore a key component in ensuring the efficient use of the High Needs Budget.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Deputy Head of Legal for Education and Social Care

The Statutory guidance on Children missing Education *Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* Department for Education September 2016 relates to the following legislation

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

This report covers vulnerable children and young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities and therefore there are direct implications relating to the SEND legislation and the Equality Act .

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 Council guidance and procedures for managing Children Missing Education <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/children-missing-education/when-child-is-missing-education>.
- *Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* Department for Education September 2016.

9. Appendices to the report

- None.

Report Author:

Malcolm W Taylor
Strategic Lead Inclusion / Principal Educational Psychologist
Children's Services

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13 February 2018		ITEM: 10
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
SEND Peer Review Action Plan and Progress Update		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Malcolm W Taylor, Strategic Lead Inclusion / Principal Educational Psychologist		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director for Children's Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the SEND Peer Review Action Plan and progress on the SEND Reforms including the transfer of Statements of Special Educational Needs to Education Health and Care Plans due to be completed by 31st March 2018.

(NOTE For clarity points 2.1- 3.5 are included from O&S Report SEND 10th October 2017)

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the progress made on the SEND Peer Review Action Plan and the Transfer of Statements to Education Health and Care Plans.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock Local Authority commissioned a peer review of SEND support from a team of colleagues from Cambridgeshire, Bedford Borough, Southend and Peterborough Local Authorities. The review consisted of a preview stage which included an analysis of a range of Thurrock Documentation and Data and two days in the Local Authority conducting a series of focus groups and interviews. This was undertaken on 20th and 21st June 2017.
- 2.2 The SEND Peer Review was undertaken as part of a regional programme of SEND peer reviews developed through the Regional ADCS group.

- 2.3 The Action Plan was developed from this and has been reviewed by the Children's Services Directorate SEND Development Board
- 2.4 The transfer reviews for Statement of Special Educational Needs to Education Health and Care Plans are due to be completed by 31st March 2018. All Local Authorities have been reporting progress on this to the Department for Education on a monthly survey since May 2017. Paragraph 3.9 gives an update on the progress on these transfers.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Local Authority identified an overarching focus for the review:

How effective are the SEN support arrangements for all children and young people aged 0-25 years in ensuring that their needs are identified and met so that they make sufficient progress within the expectations of the SEND reforms?

- 3.2 The preview analysis of data identified 4 key themes to be examined through the review process.

1. The prioritisation for improving the SEND cohort outcomes and improving schools' support for this cohort
2. The effectiveness of evaluative analysis to ensure quality of provision
3. The effectiveness of multi-agency working partnerships
4. Parental understanding and confidence in the system

- 3.3 Key Strengths identified in Thurrock

The Local Area has a strong commitment to working with parents moving towards greater co-production of strategic planning and has developed with parents a set of underpinning aspirations to support Thurrock's SEND strategy.

Officers and schools value the potential of the SENCo forums, which are well attended by schools, to identify effective practice and provide school-led support.

The Local Area has built on strong foundations of cross agency working in Early Years to implement the SEND reforms effectively. There is good evidence of effective multi-agency working in Early Years. Relationships between settings and the Local Area developed in early years would appear to be very responsive to need. There are also examples of strong working partnerships between School improvement, Early Years support and the Educational Psychologist Team. There is good representation of Health at Early Years panels.

The LA has historically prioritized support to Early Years to good effect with the majority of children with SEND in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) having their needs met through SEN support.

At post-16 there are some good examples of multi-agency working for targeted work with students, particularly with South Essex College.

The LA has recently worked with parents to develop a set of overarching aspirations for a SEND strategy which is evidence of the LA's commitment to co-production with parents.

Early Years' Parents have a range of opportunities to provide feedback through Portage and Early Support which is impacting on the refining of services and support provided.

3.4 Key Areas of good practice identified in Thurrock to share regionally

The innovative practice in post 16 provision, particularly the joint working between the local authority and South Essex College and sharing of this practice with other providers.

The focused and targeted multiagency work to support children 0 – 5 years with SEND and their families. This includes transition work with primary schools.

Effective practice was noted in relation to outreach services that the borough has set up in Thurrock.

3.5 The recommendations identified in the Peer Review:

Improve the strategic focus to ensure the priority for improving the outcomes for the SEND cohort is met

- Review current staffing structures to provide more capacity for strategic leadership and planning
- Establish a coherent governance structure that ensures greater accountability for reviewing progress
- Refine the SEF to more clearly demonstrate the identification of strengths, areas for development and key priorities for the Local Area
- Develop a Local Area SEND plan aligned to the SEF
- Clarify accountabilities and responsibilities of all stakeholders for the SEND cohort
- Improve top level analysis of the range of data currently collected to inform strategic planning
- Agree with all schools, colleges and post-16 providers a revised approach to collecting SEND outcomes and progress data which will support greater challenge to those settings where outcomes for the SEND cohort are a concern

- Ensure parents and young peoples' voices are included in strategic planning

Increase parental understanding and confidence in the system

- Improve parental understanding of the Local Offer
- Seek a broader representation of parents on the Parent Carer Forum (CaPa)
- Establish a culture where feedback from all parents with children with SEND is more frequently collected and is used to inform practice
- Clarify for parents the SEN support offer

Improve analysis of data to inform planning and practice

- Establish a clear framework for the collection and analysis of data
- Improve top level analysis of the range of data currently collected to inform strategic planning
- Agree with all schools and colleges, post-16 providers a revised approach to collecting SEND outcomes and progress data which will support greater challenge to those settings where outcomes for the SEND cohort are a concern

3.6 Action Plan following the Peer Review

A high level action plan was developed to address the key issues raised within the peer review. These actions are linked to existing priorities across Children's Services. The Update on this Action Plan dates 17/1/18 is shown as Appendix 1

- 3.7 The Action Plan has been monitored by the SEND Development Board Chaired by the Director of Children's Services on a fortnightly basis and reviewed by the SEND Strategic Group on the 27th November 2017.
- 3.8 There has been good progress on the SEND Peer Review Action Plan. The Action Plan has been updated to bring together key actions taking the plan from 14 to 11 key areas. The updated Plan of 11 key areas is showing 6 of these completed , 3 on track with good progress and two areas partially on track and requiring additional support to ensure they have appropriate impact.
- 3.9 **Transfer Reviews of Statements of Special Education reviews to Education Health and Care Plans.**

All Local Authorities in England have a Statutory Duty to review all Statements of Special Educational Needs to enable these to be transferred to an Education Health and Care Plan under the new SEND arrangements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

At the commencement of this process in September 2014, there were 1011 Statements of Special Educational Needs maintained by Thurrock Council. As

at 15/1/2018 we have completed 909 of these reviews and are in a good position to complete the remaining 101 reviews for the March 31st Deadline. This process has been reviewed with the DfE SEND Regional Adviser who has noted the positive progress in a challenging area of service delivery. The introduction of Education Health and Care Plans has led to an overall increase of approximately 50% in the number of plans as opposed to previous Statements of Special Educational Needs. This has led to significant additional High Needs Funding going into pre-schools, schools and colleges, with consequent pressures on the High Needs Budget. There is a detailed work programme underway with School's Forum to manage this situation.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- In report.

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

- None.

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

- 6.1 This review and action plan contributes directly to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties in relation children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Patricia Harvey**
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Consultant

This report covering issues in relation to the support for Children and Young People with SEND includes services which are funded by the Direct School Grant. The effectiveness of this support has a direct impact on the demand for Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Needs , High Needs Support and the consequent financial implications of this.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal – Education and Social Care

The Statutory duties in relation to SEND are covered in the Children and Families Act 2014 and described in the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

This report covers children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and therefore there are direct implications relating to the SEND legislation and the Equality Act .

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 – SEND Peer Review Action Plan

Report Author:

Malcolm W Taylor

Strategic Lead Inclusion / Principal Educational Psychologist

Children's Services

Appendix 1 SEND Peer Review High Level Action Plan Update 17/1/2018

	Recommendation	Actions	Timeframe	RAG	Update 17 th January 2018	Lead
1 (9)	Review current staffing structures to provide more capacity for strategic leadership and planning	Full SEN Service Review to be undertaken	October 31 st 2017	COMPLETED	Review of staffing completed ; SEN staffing structure developed; job evaluations for new posts completed; temporary staffing in place to ensure EHCP transfer by 31 st March 2018 Next Phase Budget re-structuring underway, Staff consultation February 2018,	MWT
2	Establish a coherent governance structure that ensures greater accountability for reviewing progress	Governance Plan to be developed and approved by SEND Strategic Board	December 1 st 2017	COMPLETED	Governance Plan reviewed by SEND Board 27/11/2017. Monthly reports to Children's Services Directorate SEND Progress Board Next Phase Report to Children's O&S 13/1/18 Reporting to Health Well Being Board March 2018	MWT/ CM /HF
3	Refine the SEF to more clearly demonstrate the identification of strengths, areas for development and key priorities for the Local Area	Complete CDC Local Area Audit tool linked to CCG Tool. Local Area key strategic SEND priorities document to be written.	October 31 st 2017 Completed	COMPLETED	Local Area Strategic Priorities written in co-production with CAPA (which forms the Thurrock Parent Carer Forum), reviewed by Key Stakeholders at SEN Strategic Group 12/1/2017 Next Phase SEF to be reviewed at SEND Strategic Group 1/3/18	MWT MWT/ CM/HF
4	Develop a Local Area SEND plan aligned to the SEF	Overarching Local Area SEND plan to be co-produced with parents representative groups.	December 31 st 2017	AMBER	SEND Key Priorities Document reviewed on 12/1/2017. Next Phase SEND Plan draft to be completed with CaPA by 31/1/2018	MWT/ CM/ HF/CaPa

Appendix 1 SEND Peer Review High Level Action Plan Update 17/1/2018

5	Clarify accountabilities and responsibilities of all stakeholders for the SEND cohort	SEN plan to include specific work on accountabilities for an <i>Assess / Plan / Do / Review</i> cycle across all educational settings to ensure progress towards outcomes.	December 31 st 2017	COMPLETED	<p>New arrangements to include reporting of progress of SEN Support Cohort within termly School Standards and Progress Meeting in place.</p> <p>New guidance on Assess Plan Review Do cycle developed with SENCO's in SENCO Forum December 2017.</p> <p>Next Phase</p> <p>Educational Psychology Service procedures emphasising APDR cycle pilot underway December 2017. SENCO Audit of SEN Support plans July 2018</p>	MWT/GT /RE
6	Improve top level analysis of the range of data currently collected to inform strategic planning	Carry out full SEND review including Educational Resources, Social Care Support and Health Services for CYP with SEND to inform strategic plan.	March 31 st 2018	GREEN	<p>Specialist High Needs review underway being supported by Premier Advisory Group. Consultation includes analysis of Local Authority Data, Review of current placements and resources including individual interview and focus group consultation with key stakeholders.</p>	MWT/CM /HF CaPa
7 (14)	Agree with all schools, colleges and post-16 providers a revised approach to collecting SEND outcomes and progress data which will support greater challenge to those settings where outcomes for the SEND cohort are a concern	Develop and implement a new framework for the collection of outcomes data as part of School Improvement process to feed into the termly School Standards Process with agreed actions to be taken where issues are identified in school performance.	March 31 st 2018	GREEN	<p>Preliminary review of sources of outcomes data completed with ongoing work on the analysis of SEN support and EHCP cohort groups to provide detailed progress data. Detailed analysis of progress of children and young people attending specialist resource bases in place through Resource Base review meetings.</p>	RE / AW / MWT

Appendix 1 SEND Peer Review High Level Action Plan Update 17/1/2018

8 (11)	Ensure parents and young peoples' voices are included in strategic planning	Develop and implement a plan for an increase in the number and range of parent and pupil voice participation to be linked to Parent / Carer Forum key objectives	October 31 st 2017	COMPLETED	Review meeting with Parent Carer Forum completed in October 2017 with agreed planning for increased range of parent participation. Pupil participation plan in place Next Phase CAPA recruitment underway. Kidz Conference to support Pupil participation in March 2018. New reviews of Pupil participation July 2018.	CaPa MWT/ CM/HF
9	Improve parental understanding of the Local Offer	Review Local Offer Web Site presentation, accessibility and links as part of ongoing Local Offer Development Plan. Key engagement activities on Local Offer to be developed to assist in co-production with parents	March 31 st 2018	GREEN	Local Offer Pupil Champions Group established. Local Offer feedback and actions statement published on Local Offer Website. Review and redesign of Local Offer underway with the provider Local Objects. Initial planning for review completed. Review of new design features and new focus groups for engagement in process.	MWT/ Family Informati on Service .
10	Establish a culture where feedback from all parents with children with SEND is more frequently collected and is used to inform practice	Develop and implement plan for routine system of feedback from parents via SEND Statutory Process, School Reviews, Parent Groups and CaPa consultation events Health watch consultation activities implemented	December 1 st 2017 Activities in place	AMBER	New arrangements for routine feedback from parents planned into annual cycle of SEND Feedback. Local Offer Annual Report Published October 2017 including a <i>You said... We did...</i> section https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/thurrock/fis/files/local_offer_annual_review_2016-17_to_publish.pdf Next Phase Detailed interview feedback to be collected from sampled Annual Reviews and EHCP meetings for School Age children. (Process in place in Early Support)	MWT/ CM/HF CaPa HF/MWT

Appendix 1 SEND Peer Review High Level Action Plan Update 17/1/2018

11	Clarify for parents the SEN support offer	SEN Support guidance documentation to be reviewed and published on Local Offer	November 1 st 2017	COMPLETED	SEN Support guidance updated and published on Local Offer titled SEND Educational Settings Core Offer https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/thurrock/fis/files/educational_settings_core_offer.pdf	MWT/ GT
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**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2017/18**

Dates of Meetings: 11 July 2017, 10 October 2017, 12 December 2017 and 13 February 2018

Topic	Lead Officer
11 July 2017	
Youth Cabinet Report	Michelle Lucas
Ofsted / peer review – Progress report	
<i>Looked after Children (tbc)</i>	
Education Transport	Sue Green
Placement Commissioning	Sue Green
10 October 2017	
LSCB Feedback	Alan Cotgrove
Youth Cabinet Update	Pat Kielty
2016/17 Annual Complaints and Representations Report	Tina Martin
Schools Performance	Roger Edwardson
Peer Review Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Support across the Local Area	Malcolm Taylor
Children's Social Care Performance	Iqbal Vaza
Ofsted Inspection Action Plan – Update	Sheila Murphy
12 December 2017	

LSCB Update	Alan Cotgrove
Youth Cabinet Update	Pat Kielty
Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service Update	NELFT
Annual Public Health Report	Tim Elwell-Sutton
Adoption and Permanence	Andrews Osei / Sheila Murphy
Care Leaver Housing	Rory Patterson
Alternative Provision	Rory Patterson
Fees & Charges Pricing Strategy 2018/2019	Michele Lucas / Sheila Murphy
Social Care Performance	Iqbal Vaza
Social Care Update on Post Ofsted Action Plan (<i>Deferred</i>)	Sheila Murphy
13 February 2018	
Youth Cabinet Update	Pat Kielty
LSCB Annual Report 2016 – 17	Alan Cotgrove
Children's Social Care Development Plan 2018 – 19	Rory Patterson / Sheila Murphy
Children's Social Care Performance	Iqbal Vaza
Children Missing Education	Malcolm Taylor
SEND Peer Review Action Plan and Progress Update	Malcolm Taylor