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

Corporate Parenting Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **6 September 2017**

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

Membership:

Councillors Sue MacPherson (Chair), Bukky Okunade (Vice-Chair), Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Leslie Gamester, Martin Kerin, Susan Little and Joycelyn Redsell

Natalie Carter, Thurrock Open Door Representative
Christina Day, Children in Care Council
Jackie Howell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Sharon Smith, Vice Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association

Substitutes:

Councillors Tony Fish, Ben Maney, Aaron Watkins and Kevin Wheeler

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

Page

1   Apologies for Absence

2   Minutes   5 - 12

         To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate
         Parenting Committee meeting held on 9 March 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

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **29 August 2017**

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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?**

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Does the business to be transacted at the meeting
- **relate to; or**
- **likely to affect**

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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

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

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

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated "Good" or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 9 March 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Bukky Okunade (Chair), Leslie Gamester (Vice-Chair), Chris Baker, Sue MacPherson, Martin Kerin and Joycelyn Redsell
	Natalie Carter, Thurrock Open Door Representative Christina Day, Children in Care Council Joseph Kaley, Children in Care Council Jackie Howell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Apologies:	Councillor Jan Baker and Sharon Smith, Vice Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
In attendance:	Paula Gregory, Designated Nurse Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services Andrew Carter, Head of Children's Social Care Paul Coke, Service Manager (Children & Families) Keeley Pullen, Head Teacher for Virtual School Paula McCullough, Commissioning Officer, Children's Services Tina Russell, Area Manager, NELFT Michael Watts Jimenez, Area Manager, NELFT Jenny Shade, Senior 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.

28. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 January 2017 were approved as a correct record.

29. **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

30. **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

31. **Presentation on the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service**

Tina Russell, Area Manager, North East London National Health Service Foundation and Michael Watts Jimenez, Team Manager, Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) from North East London National Health

Service Foundation (NELFT), delivered a presentation on the specific needs of Looked After Children and the impact the emotional wellbeing and mental health service had on the wellbeing of children in care.

The presentation highlighted:

- The service delivery and development with a large scale recruitment campaign.
- Digital opportunities available were the Big White Wall on-line service and the NELFT EWMHS App.
- Support for schools through the Essex Training Programme in 2016/17.
- Implementation post consultation of Care Pathway Model.
- Thurrock Hub would be relocated in spring 2017.
- Referrals received, caseloads, presenting problems, vulnerable groups and pathways to treatment were explained to Members.
- Improved Access Psychological Treatment, Assessments and Outcome Measurements were discussed.
- The role of EWMHS was described and a snap shot of open cases were explained to Members.

Councillor Redsell stated that the services should be offered to all children. Tina Russell stated that the service was and would be prioritised on the presenting need. Looked After Children were fast tracked in seven days.

Councillor Kerin stated that it was positive news on the Big White Wall and asked where the new hub would be situated. Michael Watts Jimenez stated that the service was offered to all children in Greater Essex and the new hub would be in situated in Maidstone Road in Grays.

Councillor MacPherson asked what services were available in the evenings and weekends. Michael Watts Jimenez confirmed that services were the standard National Health Service opening times of Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm but discussions had taken place and was confident that clinics would soon be open longer and later.

The Chair asked what the implications would be for the service's increased caseload and asked Officers how they propose to sustain the improved waiting times for assessment. Tina Russell stated that this would always be a challenge as the number of referrals go up the resources would become tighter. Tina Russell further stated that the offer to young people could not be changed as this was based on need and would continue to be a challenge. Paula Gregory stated that the Government recognised that challenges were being faced as referral numbers increased and that money had been allocated to reduce waiting times and appoint further practitioners.

Paula Gregory stated that reassurance must be given to ensure that it was actually the voice of the child being heard as part of the first telephone consultation.

Paula McCullough encouraged the continued use of NELFT.

The Chair asked Officers what the workaround would be for those parents that could not change. Andrew Carter stated that early offer of help and intervention would take place to ensure the right balance was met.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report and asked for regular updates.

RESOLVED

That the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service Report be presented to Corporate Parenting Members in the next municipal year for further update.

Tina Russell and Michael Watts Jimenez left the committee room at 7.45pm

32.   **Information on Recent External Placements for Young People**

Paul Coke, Service Manager, presented the report that updated Members on the range of issues regarding the placement choices made for Children Looked After for the period 1 December 2016 and 31 January 2017.

The Officer referred members to following data within the report which included:

- The number of Children Looked After was 327.
- The number of unaccompanied asylum seekers had been reduced from 73-67.
- The comparative rate for Thurrock was 63 per 10,000 compared to the regional rate of 60 per 10,000. The Officer stated that this figure did not include the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- Compared the number of in-house foster to independent foster carers and how going forward it would be the Council's plans to utilise the in-house foster carers more.
- The department had approved a further 11 carers since April 2016.
- A potential 10 further carers to be approved by end of March 2017. If all approved the target of 20 carers would have been exceeded.
- Under 1's and Ages 1-5 had increased slightly due to the number of larger families coming into the borough over the last three to four months.
- The Merton Age Assessment would be undertaken when a concern on the age of an unaccompanied asylum seeker child arose.

Councillor Kerin asked Officers to explain the reduction of unaccompanied asylum children between the months of December 2016 and January 2017. Paul Coke explained that this was the Eastern Region Transfer Protocol coming into play and that other Eastern Region Local Authorities had volunteered spaces and that transfers had been negotiated.

Councillor MacPherson requested that the category "Other" in terms of placement type be broken down to identify more specific areas.

RESOLVED

1.   **That the Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee review the efforts made by officers to choose appropriate resources for looked after children, including our more difficult to place children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.**

2.   **That the category "Other" in terms of placement type be broken down in the next Information on Recent External Placements for Young People Report.**

33.   **Ofsted Inspection Action Plan**

Andrew Carter, Head of Children's Social Care, presented the report that provided Members with an update on the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan. Members were directed to Item 3 of the updated action plan in Appendix 1 that was highlighted as a concern. Andrew Carter stated that the Council had been waiting for the results of the Signs of Safety National Bid to which Thurrock had been unsuccessful. Contingency plans would now be put in place to rescale the implementation and workforce training had already commenced to ensure this process would be embedded into business as usual within the next three months.

Councillor Kerin congratulated the Officers on the positives of the report and welcomed the news that this item would be embedded within this time.

Councillor MacPherson stated that the 70 per cent of care leavers who were effectively supported to gain education, employment and training was not good enough and that this target should be set at a higher level to which it could be aspired to. Andrew Carter stated that this target was well above the national average of 52 per cent and could fail if the target was set too high.

The Chair commented on understanding how we need to be realistic with targets and when to identify the need to move on.

Rory Patterson stated that the Council would continue to push on performance and outcomes.

RESOLVED

1.   **That the Corporate Parenting Committee considers the current progress and direction of travel in completing the required actions.**

2.   **That the Corporate Parenting Committee receive assurance that action plan will deliver the requirement improvement.**

34.   **Children in Care Council and Voice of the child**

Natalie Carter, Open Door, introduced the report and asked Joseph Kaley, Member of the Children in Care Council to update Members on the Chairperson's statement and the Thurrock Pledge.

Joseph Kaley stated that the Pledge was a document created and audited by members of Thurrock's Children in Care Council in consultation with all looked after children under Thurrock's care that aimed to safeguard and promote a care system that catered for both the needs and wants of all young people.

The Pledge was a key facet of all work carried out by the Children in Care Council and was reviewed and updated on a three year basis. This included the consultation with young people and was undertaken in different ways:

• A telephone survey had been carried out by members of the Children in Care Council overseen by staff at Open Door;
• A paper survey had been handed out at key events that were either hosted or endorsed by the Children in Care Council;
• Regular feedback received from young people over the Children in Care Council contact methods, such as mobile and email;
• An on-line survey carried out by members of the Children in Care Council at key events via the use of a portable computer.

The Pledge was now due to be reviewed and amended in 2018. In preparation of this the members of the Children in Care Council would begin to make plans to consult with young people at events that will be happening during the half-term holidays such as the Celebration Event in March 2017 as well as the Summer Break in 2017.

Both during and after consultation, members of the Children in Care Council would begin to review the document for any required amendments in line with new challenges faced by either new policies, limitations or a change in demographic. The amendments that will be approved by members of the Children in Care Council would be available for the Corporate Parenting Committee to review in early to mid 2018.

All looked after children were issued with a copy of the Pledge and copies were handed out at Children in Care Council events. Feedback was received and concluded that the Pledge needed to be advertised as much as possible and to ensure that young people newly into care were made aware of the Pledge. The feedback also highlighted that social workers were not being challenged enough with regards to the Pledge and young people felt the Pledge was not being enforced as part of the local authorities plan.

The Children in Care Council will ensure that the Pledge was used in all aspects of social work and aimed to design and produce a business card that would highlight all the key facets of the Pledge.

The Chair thanked Joseph Kaley for the good job undertaken and the active role that he played within the Children in Care Council.

Councillor Redsell stated that all 49 Members should be invited to the Celebration Event held on the 31 March 2017. Natalie Carter agreed to send an all Member email out.

Councillor Kerin thanked Joseph Kaley for the report and that he looked forward to seeing the new Pledges. Councillor Kerin requested that Committee Members were regularly updated.

Councillor MacPherson stated that the Children in Care Council were aspirational and thanked Joseph Kaley for his report and that they had to continue to hold Members and Officers to account.

Councillor Redsell stated that copies of the Pledge could be tabled to all 49 Members at Full Council.

Councillor MacPherson stated that a Motion at Full Council could be submitted to ensure that all 49 Members gave their full support to the Children in Care Council Pledges.

Councillor Baker commented on the remarkable work being undertaken by the Children in Care Council.

Keeley Pullen suggested that the Pledge could be distributed alongside the Information Pack and Welcome Letter already being sent to schools.

Joseph Kaley thanked Keeley Pullen and agreed that the Pledge should be exposed as much as possible.

Joseph Kaley confirmed that no unaccompanied asylum seeker children were members on the Children in Care Council but extended invites had been sent. The language barrier appeared to be main reason and would be looking at other ways to involve others which may result having interpreters present.

Andrew Carter stated that it was welcoming to have challenging new ideas but to ensure that duplicate effort was not being undertaken in instances such as the redesign of the Entry Care Package and the Contact Cards as these had recently been redesigned and revised by Officers.

Rory Patterson stated that some good points had been raised and that the Children in Care Council and Officers would continue to work together, have a shared work plan and to meet and monitor progress more regularly. Rory Patterson will be allocated some time on the Children in Care Council, Meet and Greet Agenda, in October 2017.

The Chair thanked all for their comments.

RESOLVED

1. **That the Corporate Parenting Committee supports the role of the Children in Care Council.**

2. That the Members and Officers attend the Children in Care Council meetings when invited.

3. That the Corporate Parenting Committee support and endorse the role of the Young People's Project.

35. **Care Leavers into Employment, Education or Training (EET)**

Paul Coke presented the report that summarised the approach to improve the number of Care Leavers into Education Employment and Training to enable them to access the regeneration opportunities in Thurrock.

Paula Gregory, Designated Nurse, questioned the impact of bursaries being removed. Keeley Pullen stated that the bursaries were based on travel costs and that the After Care Team had the facility to top these up when required. As part of the post 16 education plan there would be some negotiation as to how bursaries were best spent.

Councillor Kerin asked Officers if they foresaw any challenges within schools that no longer offered work experience. Paul Coke stated that any change was a challenge but work with the Virtual School would continue and key agencies would be pulled together to become more creative. Andrew Carter stated it was too early to say and that work with partnerships would continue which may open up opportunities.

Councillor MacPherson requested what the outcomes would be and the costs involved in working with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme. Further information would be sent to Councillor MacPherson.

The Chair asked Officers why the two databases were not standard. Keeley Pullen stated that they both had different report requirements and different collection periods. What would be required was a snap shot of national comparison so that progression could be monitored. Keeley Pullen confirmed that the database held the educational history of any young person.

Joseph Kaley stated that finding the right bursaries could be challenging for new Looked After Children and that it was important and Looked After Children be encouraged to use Inspire Youth Offer.

Christina Day stated that Looked After Children should have the option of a "back up plan" to enable them to talk through their options when leaving school.

Andrew Carter stated that it was the norm for those leaving university to have loans and to ensure that the right support and guidance was available.

RESOLVED

1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee support the ongoing development of the programme to enable Care Leaders to transition tonto Education, Employment and Training.

2.   **That the Corporate Parenting Committee recommend the activities continue to be delivered by representatives cross directorate, as well as making use of external agencies/services.**

36.   **Work Programme**

The Chair stated that this was the last Corporate Parenting Committee for this municipal year and that the work programme was now complete.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contribution and their continued support to the Corporate Parenting Committees.

The Chair asked Members if there were any items to be added or discussed for the work programme for the next municipal year.

Finally, the Chair wished Andrew Carter all the very best in his new role and that he would continue to an asset. Members and Officers were all in agreement.

RESOLVED

1.   **That the Health of Looked After Children Report will be added to the Corporate Parenting Work Programme for 2017/18.**
2.   **That the Tenancy and Accommodation Support for Care Leavers Report will be added to the Corporate Parenting Work Programme 2017/18.**
3.   **That the report on Virtual School Annual Report will be added to the Corporate Parenting Work Programme for 2017/18.**

The meeting finished at 9.14 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

6 September 2017	ITEM: 5
Corporate Parenting Committee	
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After – Academic Year 2015/2016	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	Key
Report of: Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After	
Accountable Assistant Director: N/A	
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

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

The annual report of the Virtual School Headteacher details the provisional outcomes for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort for the academic year 2015-2016 irrespective of their length of time in care. The detailed analysis for this information on attainment has been presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee on 10th January 2017 by the Virtual School Headteacher.

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

This annual report has been presented to and approved by the Virtual School Governing Board. This is a newly established board since the beginning of the current academic year 2016-2017. The Virtual School Headteacher provides termly reports to this board and it is used a mechanism to develop further strategy and accountability for improving the educational outcomes of Thurrock CLA.

In addition, this paper will also detail the ratified data which has recently been provided by the DFE Statistical First Release which highlights the attainment of pupils who have been placed in care for longer than 1 year.

This information was not available from the DFE until April 2017. The Virtual School Headteacher would like to inform the Committee of this data as previous reports detailed all pupils in the cohort, irrespective of their time in care.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee notes the verified DFE outcomes of the summer 2016 tests and examinations and commends the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements. In particular, that Thurrock CLA has performed above national CLA performance indicators in all areas.

1.2 The Corporate Parenting Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2015-2016 and uses this information to acknowledge, evaluate and if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all CLA.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The target for Thurrock Children Looked After is for them to be improving year on year and to meet the expected standards. The target is to close the attainment gap between CLA and non-CLA and to be above national outcomes for all CLA. A detailed report on the attainment for all CLA was provided on 10/1/17. This existing paper details attainment data from the DFE.

2.1.1 The year groups to be reported based upon DFE data for CLA in care for 12 months or more are outlined as follows:

KS1 (6/7 years old)
KS2 (10/11 years old)
KS4 (15/16 years old)

2.1.2 The annual report should provide the Committee with detailed information regarding the broad scope of work of the Virtual School which provides members with a greater depth of knowledge in order to enable the Committee to challenge. The Virtual School Headteacher would like to present the next annual report in December 2017 detailing the academic year 2016-2017, with a further attainment update in 2018 once the DFE standardised attainment data is provided. The annual report is provided as a separate document.

3 Attainment for Children Looked After in care for 12 months or more:

3.1 **Key Stage 1 [Age 6/7 - Year 2]**

3.1.1 There were 6 pupils who were counted in the DFE category versus the original 12 reported on in January 2017. Thurrock CLA performed above the National and Eastern region CLA standards and the gap between non-CLA is much smaller for our CLA than others.

3.1.2 In 2016 KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years. National Curriculum levels have been replaced by National Standards in the interim Teacher Assessment Frameworks, which are only to be used in 2016 and 2017. The results are still based on teacher assessments and for the first time this year include a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

3.1.3 In the graph below, it is possible to see how Thurrock CLA performed against National and Thurrock non-CLA and additionally National and Eastern Region CLA. This is an improvement on previous year's attainment 14/15 where Thurrock were below National and Regional CLA for outcomes.

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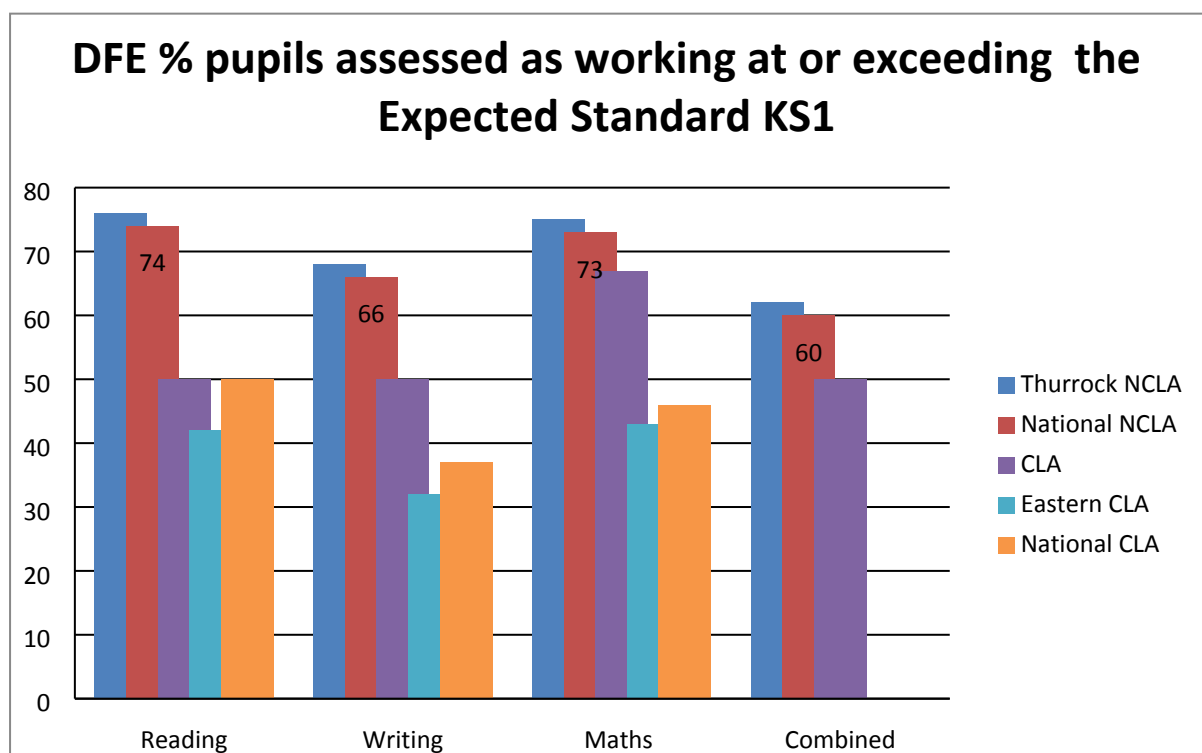


3.2 **Key Stage 2 (age 10/11, Year 6)**

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

3.2.2 The expected standard in the tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. Attainment nationally in the tests is highest in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) at 72% and lowest in reading at 66%. At 74%, attainment in the writing teacher assessment is higher than in any of the test subjects.

3.2.3   In 2015, to achieve a level 4 (the previous expected standard) pupils would have needed to get 46 per cent in their maths tests and 36 per cent in reading. In 2016, under the new, tougher standards, those percentages have increased to 54.5 per cent for maths, and 42 per cent for reading. GPS has remained the same at 61 per cent.

3.2.4   The cohort size for the Key Stage 2 SATS was 12 pupils originally and in the DFE return there are 10. Those who had been in care for 12 months or more performed above National and Eastern Regional CLA. This is illustrated in the graph below.

3.2.5   For Thurrock CLA, reading was 44.4% [4 pupils], GPS was 55.6% [5 pupils], in maths 67% and in writing was 67% [7 pupils].

2016 DFE KS2 Attainment
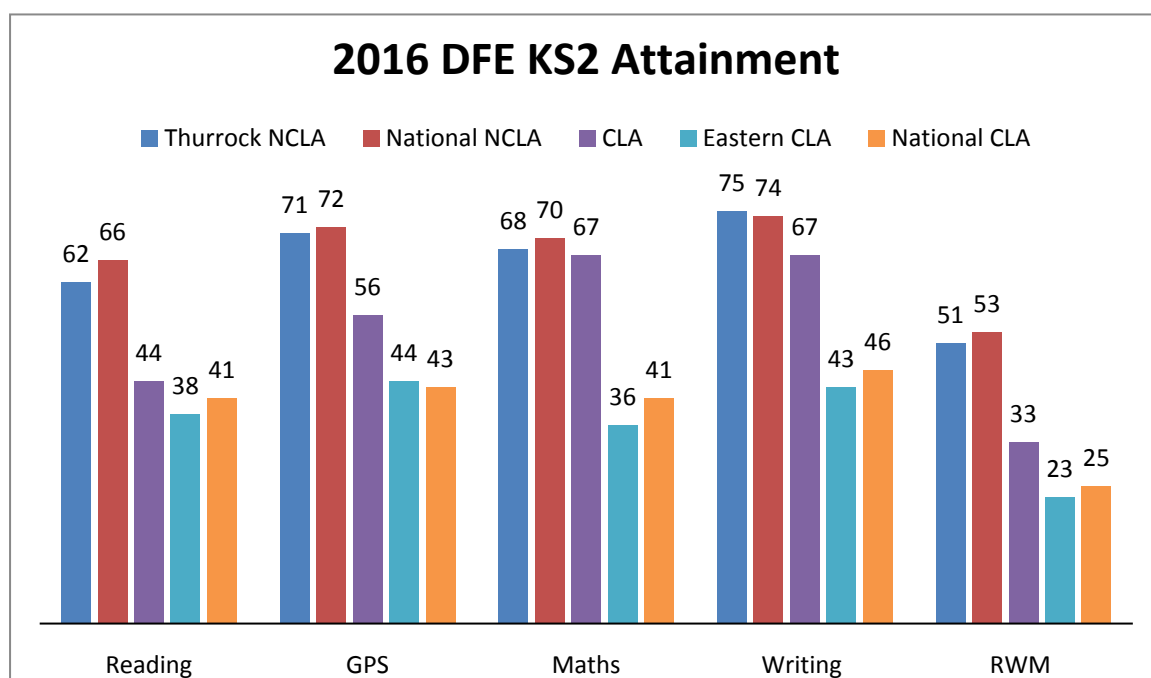
3.2.6   The comparison between attainment at KS1 and progress for KS2 was noted in the previous report dated 10/1/17. The DFE Statistical First Release shows that Thurrock CLA progress from KS1 and KS2 was exceptional and significantly above National and Regional CLA rates of progress.

4   GCSE KS4 (age 16) – DFE Statistical First Release Results

4.1   Provisional results for Thurrock CLA showed an improvement from last year and the gap against National CLA is starting to close. The data provided for the Committee in January 17 was based upon a cohort size of 55 pupils. The DFE Statistical First Release Data provides attainment information for 20 pupils who were in care for 12 months or more. This data will be used in this

report for comparison. DFE data verifies that there is an upward trend and a closing of the gap for KS4 attainment with Thurrock CLA performing above National and Eastern Region CLA for 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and maths and in the new measures of Progress 8 and Attainment 8.
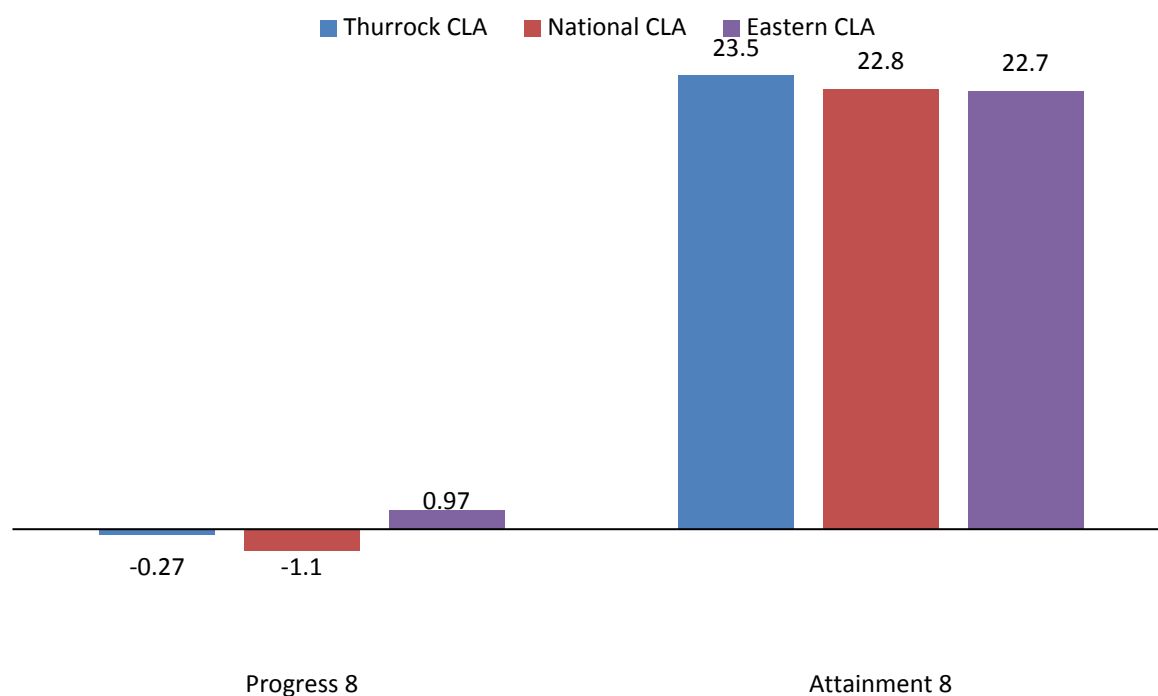
4.2   DFE data shows that 4 pupils [20%] of the total DFE cohort of 20 pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths.

4.3   The graph below highlights the improvement in outcomes against national CLA data and Thurrock all pupils' data. The Virtual School is very proud of the achievements of these young people and it should now be noted that many of our students who missed either English or Maths by 1 grade have already achieved their C grade or are in the process of re-sitting during Year 12.

CLA outcomes against total cohort [20 pupils]
Key Stage 4 GCSE 5+ A*- C inc En & Ma

Legend:
- Thurrock CLA
- England CLA
- Thurrock ALL
- Eastern CLA
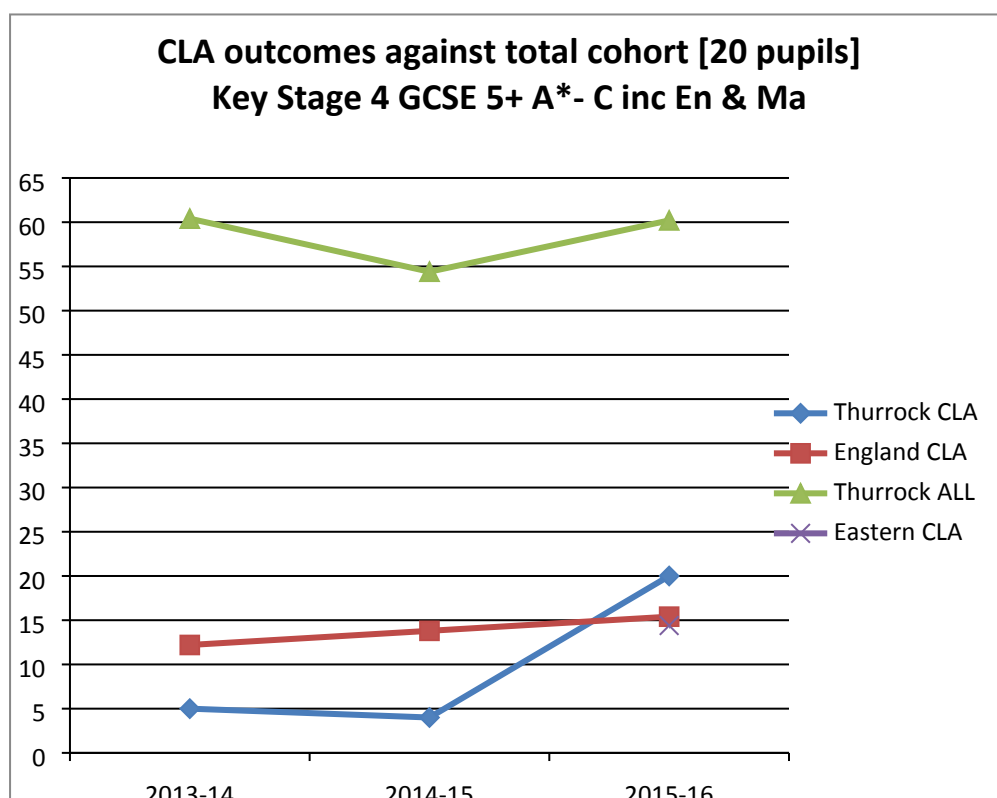
4.4   An additional attainment measure for KS4 was introduced in the academic year 2015/16. This is called Progress 8 and Attainment 8. This is beyond the 5 GCSEs benchmark and now focusses on students achieving an even higher standard of 8 GCSEs graded above C. It takes the best 8 subject scores and averages these against progress for prior attainment. To a degree this puts our CLA at even more of a disadvantage compared to non-CLA as the expectation is that they can achieve 8 or more GCSEs. The previous report to the committee detailed the barriers faced by CLA for achieving 5 GCSEs and so to achieve 8 or more is a greater challenge for young people. The chart below illustrates the success that our eligible young people achieved against national and regional CLA.

2016 DFE KS4 Progress 8 Attainment [15 pupils]

■ Thurrock CLA ■ National CLA ■ Eastern CLA

	Progress 8	Attainment 8
Thurrock CLA	-0.27	23.5
National CLA	-1.1	22.8
Eastern CLA	0.97	22.7

5.   Additional Information for the Committee

5.1   Improved data for those in care for 12 months or more demonstrates improvement at all Key Stages and performance above National and Eastern region CLA.

5.2   The Virtual School Governing Board is now in existence and consists of: Virtual School Headteacher, Headteacher representatives from Secondary and Primary, The Strategic Lead for School Improvement, the Lead Safeguarding Officer from South Essex College, Service Manager for Looked After Children and is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. Meetings are held every term and policies and strategy are agreed. The Virtual School Headteacher provides a range of termly data for scrutiny and accountability purposes including Children Missing Education, exclusions, attendance and Personal Education Plan compliance.

5.3   The Virtual School Headteacher and Strategic Lead for School Improvement are currently in the process of expanding the Virtual School team to include 3 full time qualified teacher posts. These teachers will be directly responsible for monitoring and holding schools/colleges to account for the development of good education provision for all CLA in and out of the borough. The aim of this expansion will be to further improve progress and attainment of all CLA.

5.4   Funding from these posts is being provided through a combination of core funding and money from the top slice of the pupil premium plus grant.

6.   Reasons for Recommendation

6.1   None.

7.   Impact On Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance And Community Impact

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

8.   Implications

8.1   Financial

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

This report asks that the Committee notes the increasing demand of services for Children Looked After and the range of services provided as detailed in the annual report. The responsibilities of the Virtual School have increased to support those in pre-school and in post 16 as a result of the changes to the Statutory Guidance in July 2014. The growing demand for services, particularly for those who are post 16 and/or Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children has had an implication on spending due to the cost of interventions such as English Studied as an Other Language provision.

8.2   Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
                                   Education Lawyer

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

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**

Community Development & Equalities Manager

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

8.4 **Other implications (where significant) – there are no implications as a result of this report**

9. **Conclusion**

9.1 In summary, the above report details attainment outcomes for those in care for 12 months or more. This is information in addition to that provided by the Virtual School Headteacher in the Corporate Parenting Report for January 2017. The results do not reflect the unique pathway of every individual in each cohort. Every pupil has an individual story which details the varying strengths and difficulties that she/he experiences as a child or young person in care. Some pupils overcame their challenges and exceeded expectations and made exceptional progress. All of our Children Looked After achievements should be recognised and celebrated and we as a Council will continue to support them in the next stages of their academic journey.

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

- 'The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' ADCS
- 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children' DFE July 2014
- DFE Statistical First Release LAC Outcomes 2016 [LA Tables 2017]

11. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher Academic Year 2015/2016

Report Author:

Keeley Pullen

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After

Children's Services

Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher

Academic Year 2015/2016

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Mission Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Corporate Parenting Committee

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

Introduction and Overview

The Virtual School Headteacher has been in full-time post since June 2014. Since the previous Headteacher left her post in April 2013 the Virtual School team have continued to fulfil the core functions for supporting CLA in Thurrock and raising aspirations for this group.

Staffing of the Virtual School

Mrs Keeley Pullen – Virtual School Headteacher

Mrs Grace Page – LAC Advisory Assistant

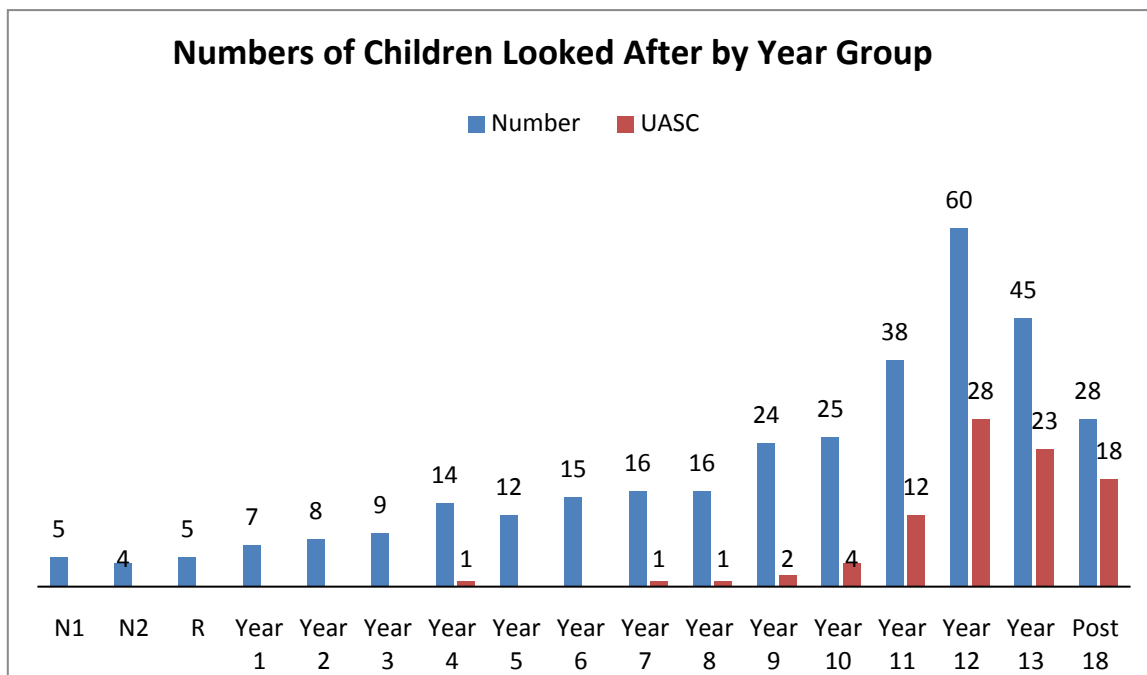Mrs Tina McGuinness – Business Administrator

Additional Consultants and Services [commissioned by Virtual School]

Miss Lee-Anne Jenkins – Post-16 Support

Fleet Tuition Service

Welfare Call and from September 16 Looked After Call
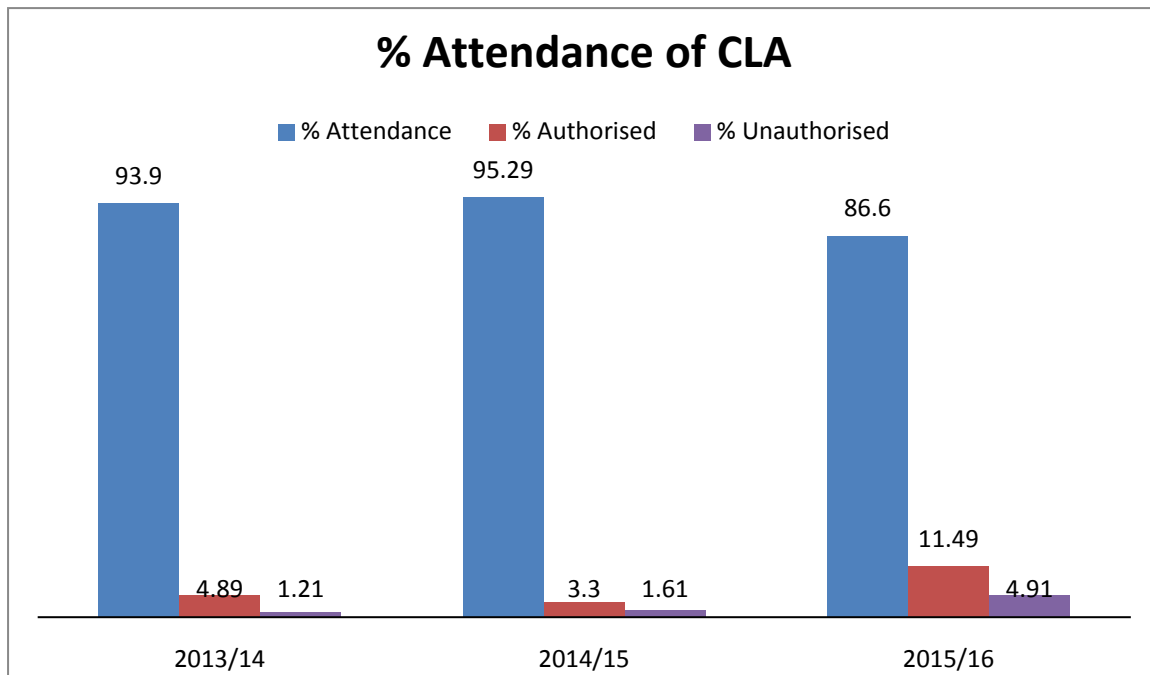
Book Trust – The Letterbox Club

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Current Contextual Data

Number of Looked After Children by Year Group [Updated December 16]

Numbers of Children Looked After by Year Group

■ Number ■ UASC

Year Group	Number	UASC
N1	5	
N2	4	
R	5	
Year 1	7	
Year 2	8	
Year 3	9	
Year 4	14	1
Year 5	12	
Year 6	15	
Year 7	16	1
Year 8	16	1
Year 9	24	2
Year 10	25	4
Year 11	38	12
Year 12	60	28
Year 13	45	23
Post 18	28	18

Number of Pupils in Alternative Provision/SEND School/Specialist Provision by Year Group Updated December 16

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

Number of CLA with SEND by Year Group Updated November 16

N2	R	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5	YR6	YR7	YR8	YR9	YR10	YR11	YR 12	YR 13
0	2	3	1	3	5	5	8	8	7	11	12	17	18	16

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Attendance

% Attendance of CLA

■ % Attendance   ■ % Authorised   ■ % Unauthorised

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
% Attendance	93.9	95.29	86.6
% Authorised	4.89	3.3	11.49
% Unauthorised	1.21	1.61	4.91

After a positive set of data for the academic year 2014/15 the attendance of CLA has declined. This was partially due to a small group of pupils who had high levels of persistent absence. A pastoral support programme is put in place for students who are refusing to attend school and the Virtual School works closely with foster carers and social workers to support the child/young person.

Robust tracking of attendance is vital in ensuring that good attendance is prioritised.

Current Data September 16 – December 16 [Autumn Term 16]

Attendance data for the autumn term 2016 is 79% for pupils in Year R to Year 11.

There are currently 18 pupils who have below 90% attendance in the autumn term. This is due to sickness or a refusal to attend school. These pupils are being provided with tuition where possible and pastoral support.

Attendance was monitored daily through the use of Welfare Call until July 2016 and from September 2016 it will be Contact Call. The Virtual School Headteacher monitors the attendance of priority CLA as identified by the Virtual School on a weekly basis.

Attendance monitoring for all pupils is conducted by the Virtual School Headteacher on a fortnightly basis to identify any concerns.

The Virtual School is supportive of the DFE Absence protocols and only supports holiday or absence in term time in extenuating circumstances and supports the school of the particular pupil if they are given an unauthorised absence if planned absence is taken without the school's consent.

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Fixed Term Exclusions

There is a variable trend with this data over a period of three years. Wherever possible we encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions. At times this is not possible due to the child/young person's behaviour. A review of needs and support is always made whenever a CLA pupil is excluded. There have been no permanent exclusions of CLA for a three year period.

Number of Fixed Term Exclusions

■ Number

	155.5	132.5	165.5
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
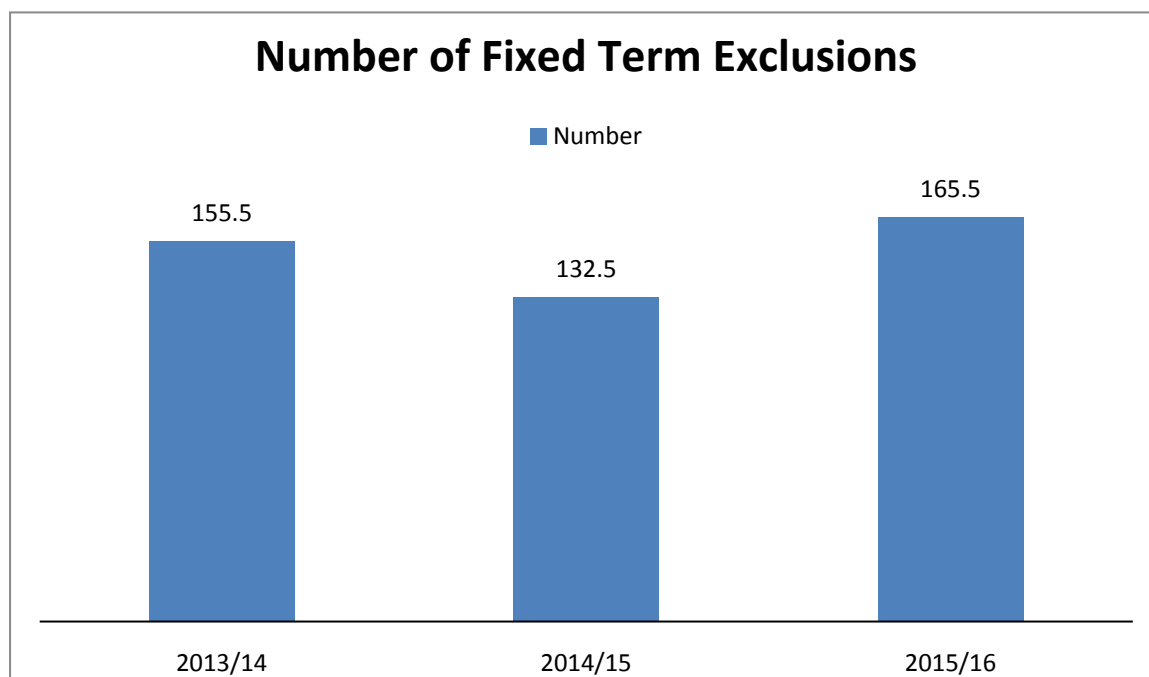
Children Missing Education [CME]

The Local Authority carefully monitors any child missing education of our CLA in and out of borough. The Virtual School produces weekly data for any child who is missing education due to lack of a school place or through extended absence. This data is shared and discussed in Directors Management Team monthly. Monthly CME data is available and provided to Governors on a termly basis. The Virtual School takes action which is individualised to meet the needs of the pupils and where necessary, works with the Admissions Team, Inclusion Manager and SEN Service teams in Thurrock to secure school places or alternative provision. For pupils who are without an educational placement, a Personal Education Plan [PEP] meeting is held to plan actions for how to secure education provision. Wherever possible the Virtual School provides tuition through Fleet Tuition Services whilst a student is between educational placements.

Child Sexual Exploitation [CSE]

All Virtual School Staff have attended Child Sexual Exploitation Training. Particular attention is paid to Children Missing Education through lack of school place or poor attendance. The Virtual School works very closely with all services to minimise the risk of child sexual exploitation for our children/young people in and out of borough.

Separate data is available through the social care liquid logic system which details every child/young person's CSE risk assessment and actions taken to support them.

Attainment Data of CLA

Early Years Foundation Stage 2016

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

The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 3 year period and this demonstrates the uniqueness and small size of each cohort. The size of each cohort shows that each child's result is worth a significant percentage amount.

The diagram below illustrates the performance of Thurrock CLA against national and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. The Department for Education does not provide national data comparisons for Children Looked After in the area of a Good Level of Development.
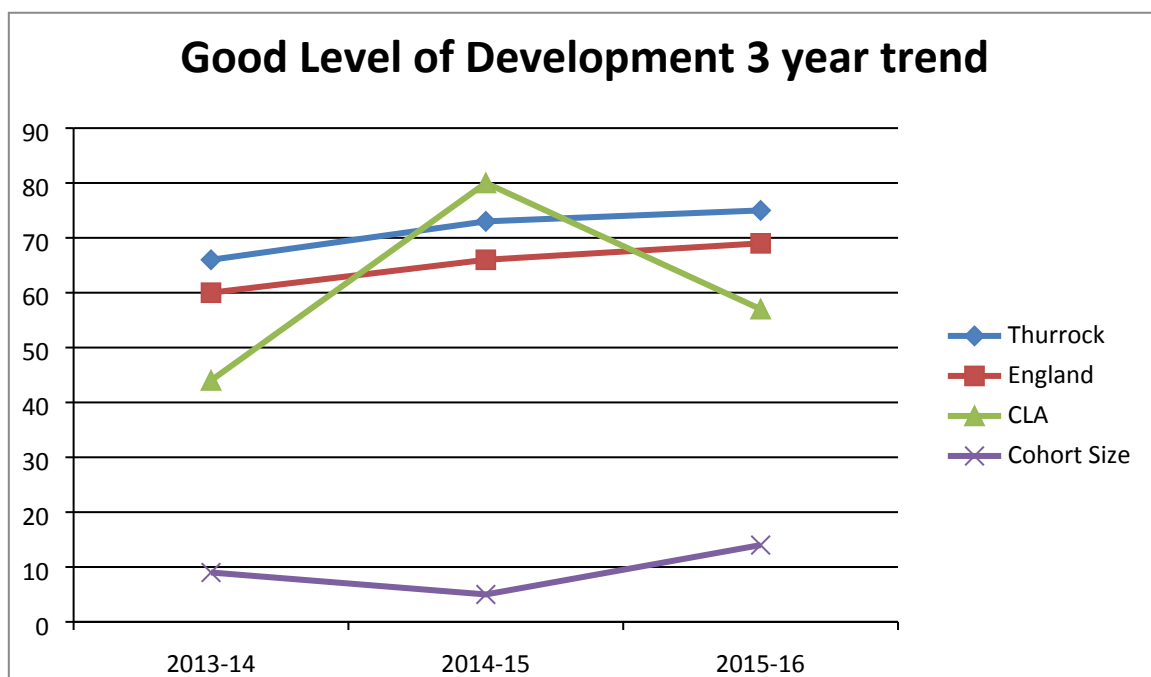
To reach the percentage of children making a good level of development, each child is assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points are awarded accordingly in a range between 17 to 51. If a child meets every Early Learning Goal, she/he will receive at least 34 points.

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The provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates a fluctuating but maintenance of an upward trend of attainment. The previous year saw that 4 out of 5 pupils achieved GLD whereas this year, 8 pupils out of 14 achieved this.

Although 15/16 data indicates that there is a dramatic decrease in attainment from the academic year 14/15, more pupils achieved GLD than in the previous year. The cohort size has increased significantly compared to the previous year from 5 pupils to 14. Of this year's cohort, 8 pupils [57%] attended a Thurrock school.

Contextually the profile of this year's cohort differs from that of the previous year. Of the 2015/16 cohort, 8 pupils [57%] had been in care for less than a year prior to the end of the Reception year. The remaining 6 pupils [43%] had been in care for more than a year, although 4 [67%] out of the 6 pupils stopped being looked after in the autumn term 2015 of their reception year due to SGO or adoption arrangements. A total of 7 pupils [50%] left care during the academic year 15/16. This demonstrates the effective work of the social care teams in finding permanent placements or for positive reunifications with birth families. Of the 6 pupils who had been in care for more than 1 year, 3 [50%] reached the expected standard of a GLD.

The academic profile of the 2015/16 cohort saw that 40% of the cohort was applicable for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] classification with one of these pupils already having an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] on entry to school. Pupils with SEND have specific learning needs and require extra support. Therefore, 40% of the cohort were working significantly below the national average according to development matters which assessed their learning at below their chronological age. In addition, these pupils had a larger gap to close in order to meet a Good Level of Development. They were provided with additional support in their schools through group and individual support interventions. It aided them in their progress and enabled them to catch up with their peers to make expected progress across the year, even if they did not meet the expected standards.

In terms of monitoring and progress this was through the Personal Education Plans [PEPs] for each pupil. These took place every term that the child was looked after and detailed the learning and development for every pupil and specific targets were set to enable them to make progress. Pupils made progress across the year by achieving their targets and by the Virtual School holding schools to account for the quality of teaching and support they provided and by the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding. All pupils in this cohort made at least expected progress across the academic year from their on entry starting points.
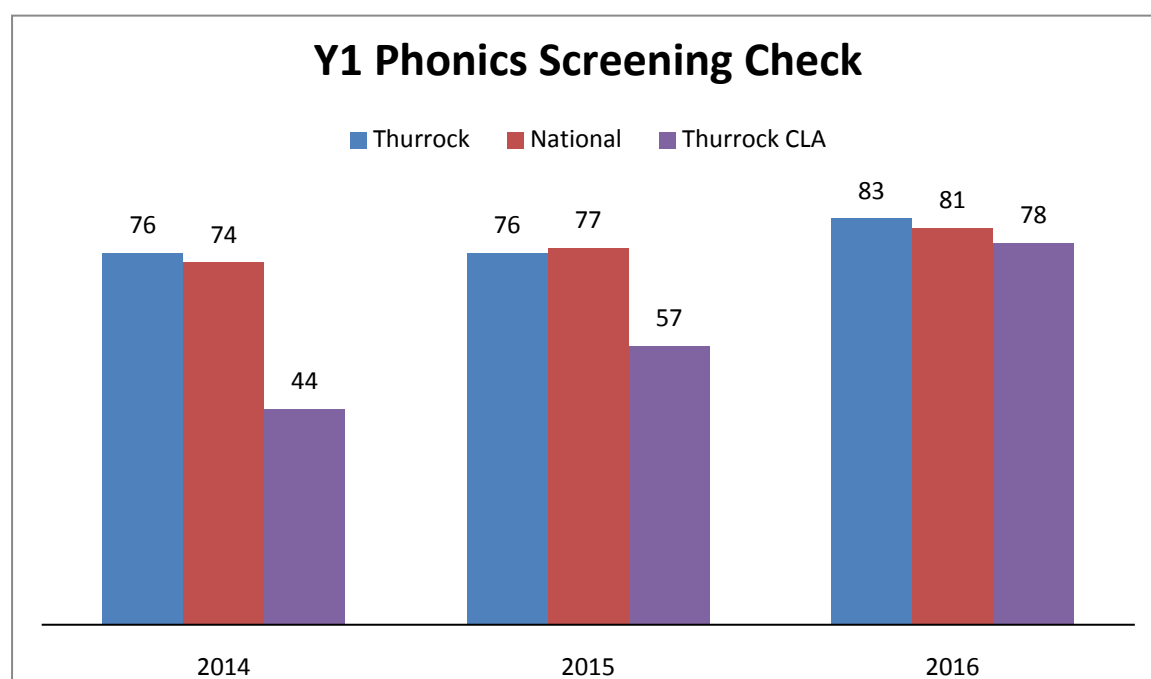
Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2016 data

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils as they move into Year 1.
- Monitor pupil progress through use of the Pupil Premium monitoring and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided.
- PEP meeting in place within the Autumn Term 16 for all pupils.
- Link with schools needing additional support.
- Obtain on entry data for current Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.
- Ensure that pupils in Nursery have a termly PEP meeting with a member of the Early Years Team co-coordinating this to check that they are making appropriate progress and that Early Years Pupil Premium funding is being allocated to suit individual needs and measuring impact of this.

Year 1 Phonics Score Results 2016

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

The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has risen by 21 percentage points; the national average has risen by 4 percentage points. The data for 2015 was based upon a cohort of 7 pupils, 4 [57%] of whom passed. In 2016 there were 9 year 1 pupils in the cohort and 7 pupils [78%] passed the screen. The gap between CLA and non-CLA is closing rapidly.

Y1 Phonics Screening Check

Thurrock — National — Thurrock CLA

	2014	2015	2016
Thurrock	76	76	83
National	74	77	81
Thurrock CLA	44	57	78

**Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2016 data**

This year the Virtual School will be speaking with schools to discuss their phonics provision to ensure that those who did not reach the expected standard are supported during Year 2.

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As part of the Year 1 PEP process, the Virtual School will be asking schools to monitor and evidence progress in phonics to measure those on track and those needing extra support.

Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2016

In 2016 KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years. National Curriculum levels have been replaced by National Standards in the interim Teacher Assessment Frameworks, which are only to be used in 2016 and 2017. The results are still based on teacher assessments and for the first time this year include a combined reading, writing and maths measure. Grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments were not included this year due to an error at Standards and Testing Agency.

In the graph below, it is possible to see how Children Looked After performed against National and Thurrock non-CLA. The table does not include National CLA performance data as this is not available at the time of this report.
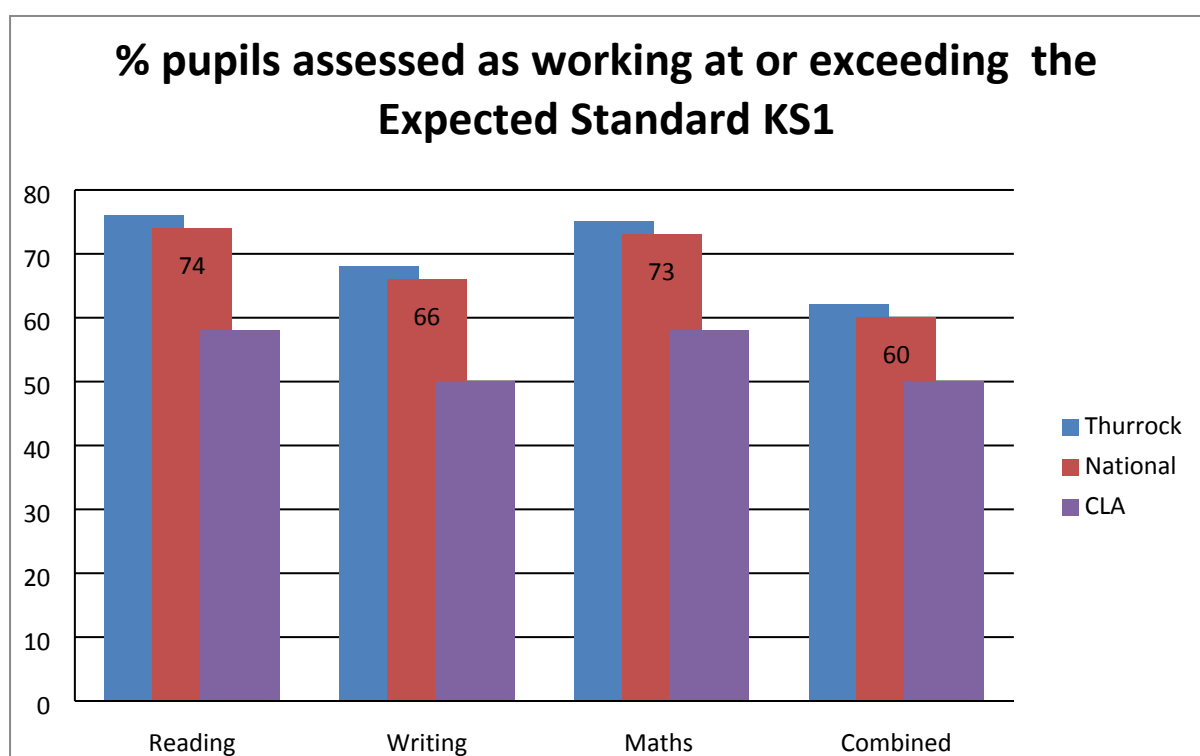
The above data is based upon a cohort size of 12 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison. Analysis of this data indicates that CLA have performed less well than their non-CLA peers nationally and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. What is difficult to gauge is a comparison with those who are looked after nationally due to lack of data.

Contextual data for the cohort shows that 7 [58%] of the 12 pupils were in an out of borough school. 4 [80%] pupils out of the 5 who achieved the combined

score in reading, writing and maths attended a Thurrock school. This would indicate that those who did well attended a Thurrock school. This may well reflect the effective school improvement structures employed by Thurrock Council School's Improvement team as well as the strong relationships that the Virtual School Head has with Thurrock Head teachers who share the commitment for raising standards for all children in the borough.

The Virtual School maintains the same tracking and monitoring systems for all pupils irrespective of placement. The Personal Education Plan procedures are the same and the expectations and accountability measures are the same. Pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment.

In terms of prior attainment, only 50% of the cohort obtained a good level of development at the end of their reception year two years prior to the Key Stage 1 assessments. This would suggest that the rate of attainment and progress for these pupils has remained consistent across key stage 1. These pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 1 pupil [20%] out of the 5 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage reached the expected standard at KS1.

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

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 12]	Met expected standard [% of those in this period]
2015	4 pupils [33%]	3 pupils [75%]
2014	2 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [50%]
2013	3 pupils [25%]	2 pupils [67%]
2012	3 pupils [25%]	0

The data in the table above would suggest that the length of time in care has not impacted on this group in terms of attainment. It is worth noting that, of the 3 pupils who have been in care the longest, they have significant SEND and emotional needs. These 3 pupils have also had the most placement instability due to these needs, including changes of carers and schools. However, during this current academic year 16/17, there has been greater stability for these children in terms of placement and schooling. It is hoped that this will continue.

Of the 12 pupils in the cohort, 5 pupils [42%] had SEND with 1 attending a specialist residential placement who has an EHCP. A further 2 pupils are currently undergoing the EHCP process due to learning and social emotional needs.

Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2015 data.

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils' move into Year 3.
- Monitor pupil progress through use of the Pupil Premium monitoring and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided.
- PEP meeting in place within the Autumn/Spring
- Link with schools needing additional support.
- Carefully monitor writing progress for current year 2 through pupil premium, PEPs and conversations with the schools.
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.
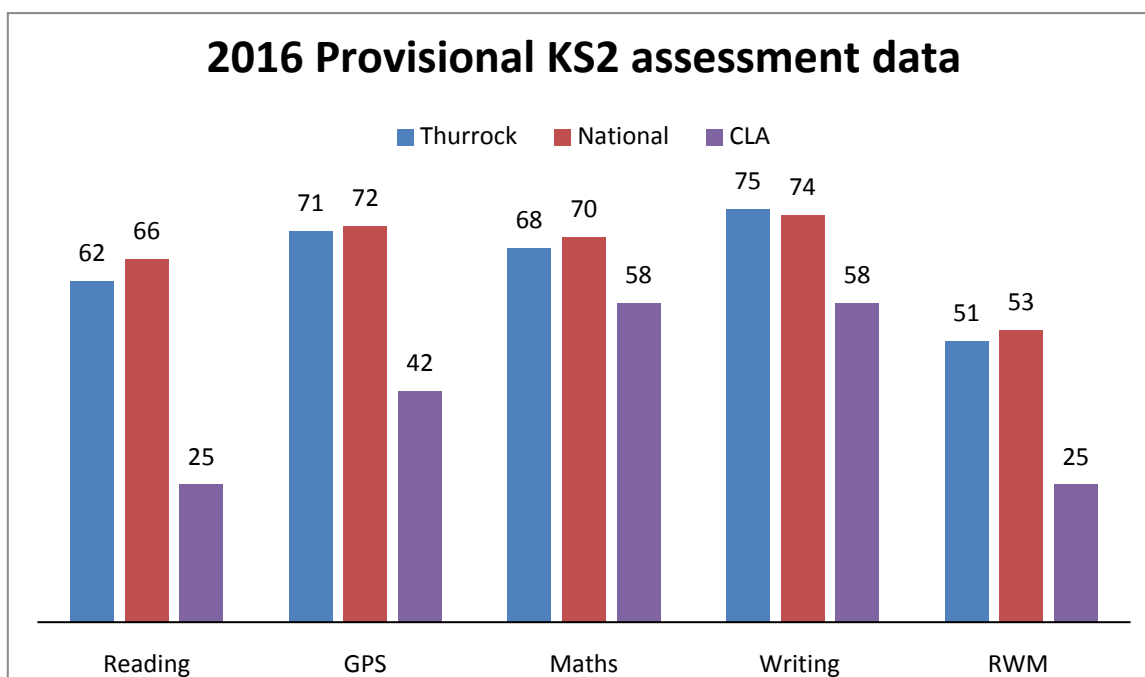
Key Stage 2 SATS 2016

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

The expected standard in the tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. Attainment nationally in the tests is highest in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) at 72% and lowest in reading at 66%. At 74%, attainment in the writing teacher assessment is higher than in any of the test subjects.

Last year, to achieve a level 4 (the previous expected standard) pupils would have needed to get 46 per cent in their maths tests and 36 per cent in reading. This year, under the new, tougher standards, those percentages have increased to 54.5 per cent for maths, and 42 per cent for reading. GPS has remained the same at 61 per cent.

> The cohort size for the Key Stage 2 SATS was 12 pupils. There were a further 2 pupils who attend special independent schools who do not take part in SATS testing, Therefore the decision has been made to dis-apply them from the reporting requirements. The data provided is based upon attainment for those pupils who took the tests.

> For Thurrock CLA, reading was 25% [3 pupils], GPS was 42% [5 pupils], in maths 58% [7 pupils] and in writing was 58% [7pupils]. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock. Nationally CLA statistical comparisons are not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.

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2016 Provisional KS2 assessment data

Legend: Thurrock (blue), National (red), CLA (purple)

	Reading	GPS	Maths	Writing	RWM
Thurrock	62	71	68	75	51
National	66	72	70	74	53
CLA	25	42	58	58	25

Children Looked After were 10% below all Thurrock children in maths and 17% below in writing. The biggest area for development based upon this data would be reading. The reading test was particularly difficult at a national level this year and this is reflected by the decline in data nationally. Historically Thurrock CLA perform well in reading at the end of KS2 tests. However, the 2016 test proved to be too difficult for them. The subject matter of the reading test involved family experiences as well as the type of life experiences which our CLA have not yet had. The depth of reading skills required were also extensive and required a level of maturity, knowledge and higher level reading skills which was not yet possible for some of the pupils in this cohort.

The Virtual School uses part of their budget to fund Letterbox Clubs. This scheme provides each Thurrock CLA from Year 2 to Year 6 with sets of books and educational games delivered to their house 6 months every year between May and October and a special Christmas package in December. The intention of this scheme is to raise the profile of reading as a pleasurable pass time and to foster a love of books within their placements. The implementation of this scheme is currently under review in terms of impact and how it could be used more effectively.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. All pupils had a termly PEP attended by a member of the Virtual School. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress. Some pupils who did not meet the standard in one or more subjects had still made excellent progress and were working within the curriculum bands for their year group; however, they did not perform in the harder tests.

A particular success story for this year group should be noted for one pupil who made 3 years' worth of progress in 1 academic year. In year 5 the EHCP

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process had started due to this pupil being at least 2 years behind his peers in all subjects. There were many concerns regarding learning, development and social and emotional difficulties. However, this pupil met the expected standard in all subjects except reading where he narrowly missed the 100 score by scoring 98. An EHCP is not necessary due to his amazing efforts and the support received from his school, his carers and the Virtual School. He has successfully transitioned into year 7.

Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was extremely low with only 3 pupils [25%] reaching level 2B in reading, 2 pupils [17%] reaching 2B in writing and 4 pupils [33%] achieving 2B in maths. Progress measures from the Department for Education will be published later this academic year so a better analysis of progress can be provided. However, this prior data would suggest that pupils were not expected to reach the required standard at Key Stage 4 as 75% of the cohort were below national average previously. This progress measure would suggest that although pupils did not meet the expected standards, their rate of progress was good.

The Year 6 cohort contained 5 pupils [42%] out of the 12 entered for SATS with SEND. As mentioned above, pupils with SEND have additional learning and/or emotional needs which affect their learning and this affected their attainment within the harder tests.

The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2007 and 2015. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 12]	Met expected standard RWM [% of those in this period]
2015	3 pupils [25%]	0
2014	2 pupils [17%]	0
2013	2 pupils [17%]	0
2012	4 pupils [33%]	2 pupils [50%]
2007	1 pupil [8%]	1 pupil [100%]

The length of time in care has had a positive influence on those obtaining the required standard. It is worth noting that of these, 2 of the 3 pupils achieved the expected levels at the end of KS1 too.

Planned interventions as a result of data for 2016 Year 6 Cohort:

- Provide Letterbox Parcels monthly for 6 months for pupils from Year 2 to Year 7. These contain books, games and activities to support English and maths
- Virtual school staff visiting every current Year 6 pupil's school in Autumn16/Spring term 17.
- PEP meetings held for every Year 6 in Autumn term 16.

- Programme of tuition and/or intervention in place for every Year 6, linked to Pupil Premium Plus Grant.
- Target support and interventions for current Year 5 cohort.
- Support for transition of pupils uin Year 7 who did not meet the expected standard.

### <u>Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2016</u> - Indicative results

Provisional results for Thurrock CLA show an improvement from last year and the gap against national CLA is starting to close. The data provided for this report will contain information for the whole of the Year 11 cohort that the Virtual School was responsible for in the academic year 2015-2016 irrespective of when the young person came into care.

At the beginning of the academic year there were 39 pupils in Year 11, by the end there were 55. The table below shows the period when various pupils in Year 11 became looked after. Potentially the length of time in care will affect educational outcomes.

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

This graph does not illustrate the fact that 30 pupils [55%] became looked after in the academic year 2015/16. This made it extremely difficult for the Virtual School and Social Care to have an impact on attainment for GCSEs in that short space of time, particularly when a large majority of these young people were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC] with no English.

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

Numbers of Pupils in Year 11 By Entering Care Date
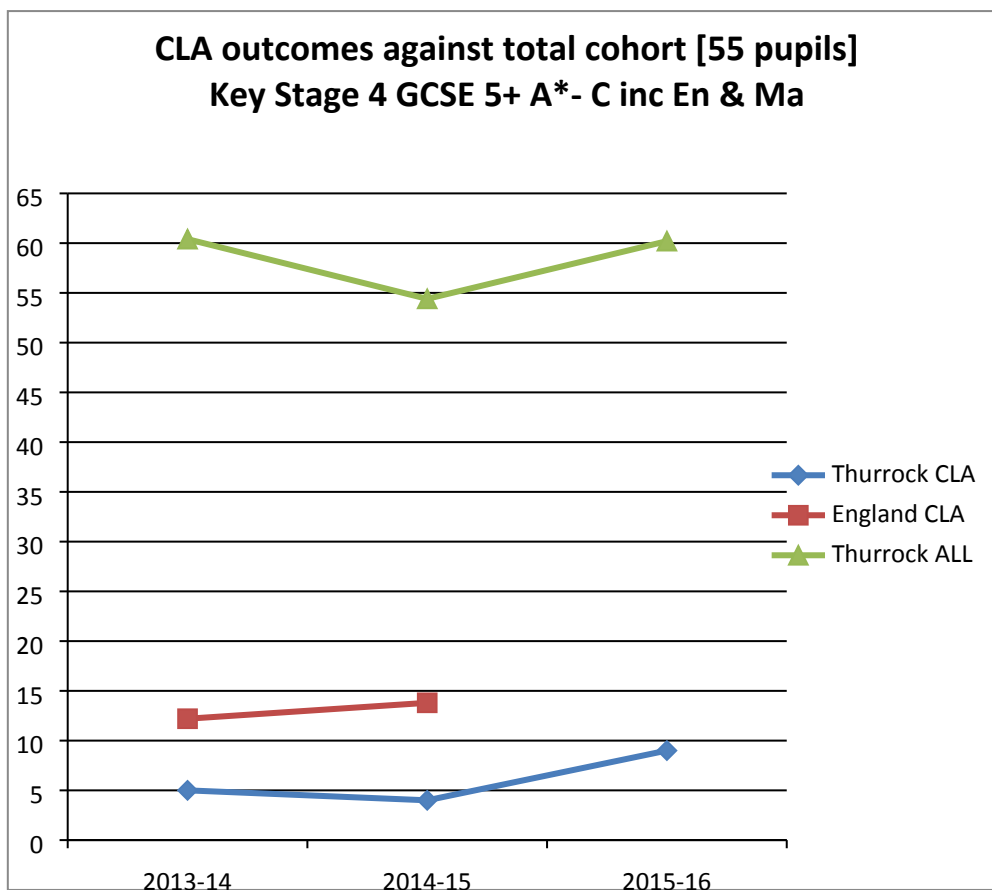
■ Boys ■ Girls ■ Boys UASC
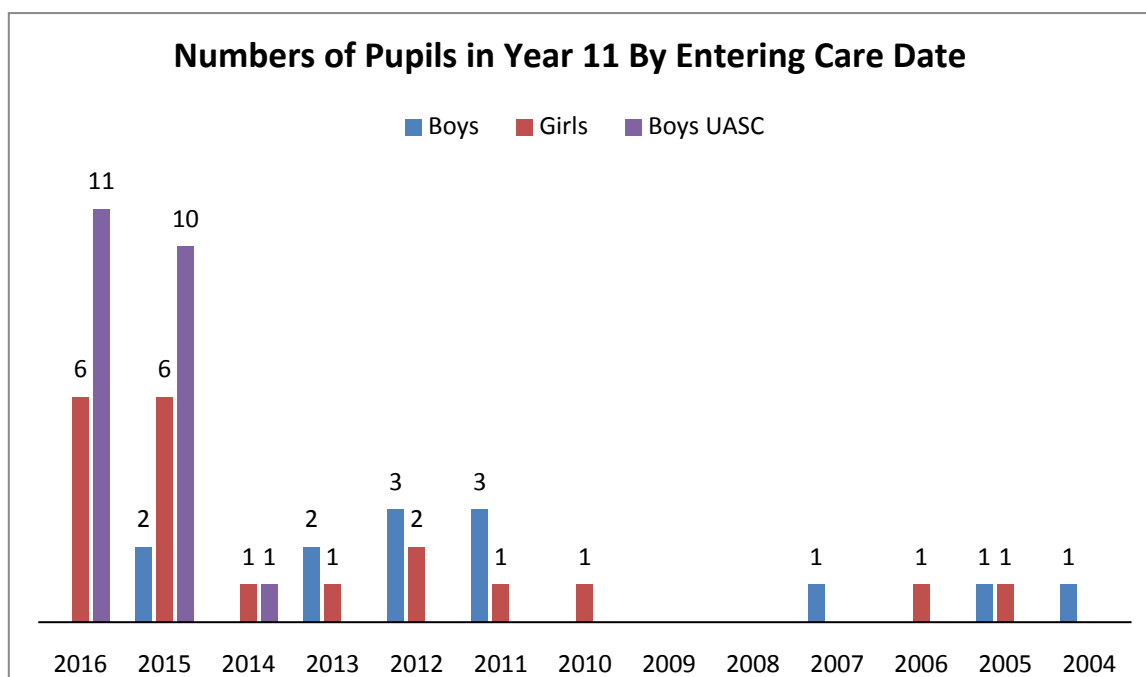
There were a total of 55 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 19 pupils [34.5%] were eligible to take 5 GCSEs. There was a further 1 pupil who took under 5 GCSEs.

Indicative data shows that 5 pupils [9%] of the total cohort achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. 2 of the pupils who achieved 5 GCSEs grade C and above attended a Thurrock school. An additional 2 pupils [4%] achieved 5 or more GCSEs graded above C, however, they narrowly missed achieving both English and/or Maths. These pupils attended out of borough schools.
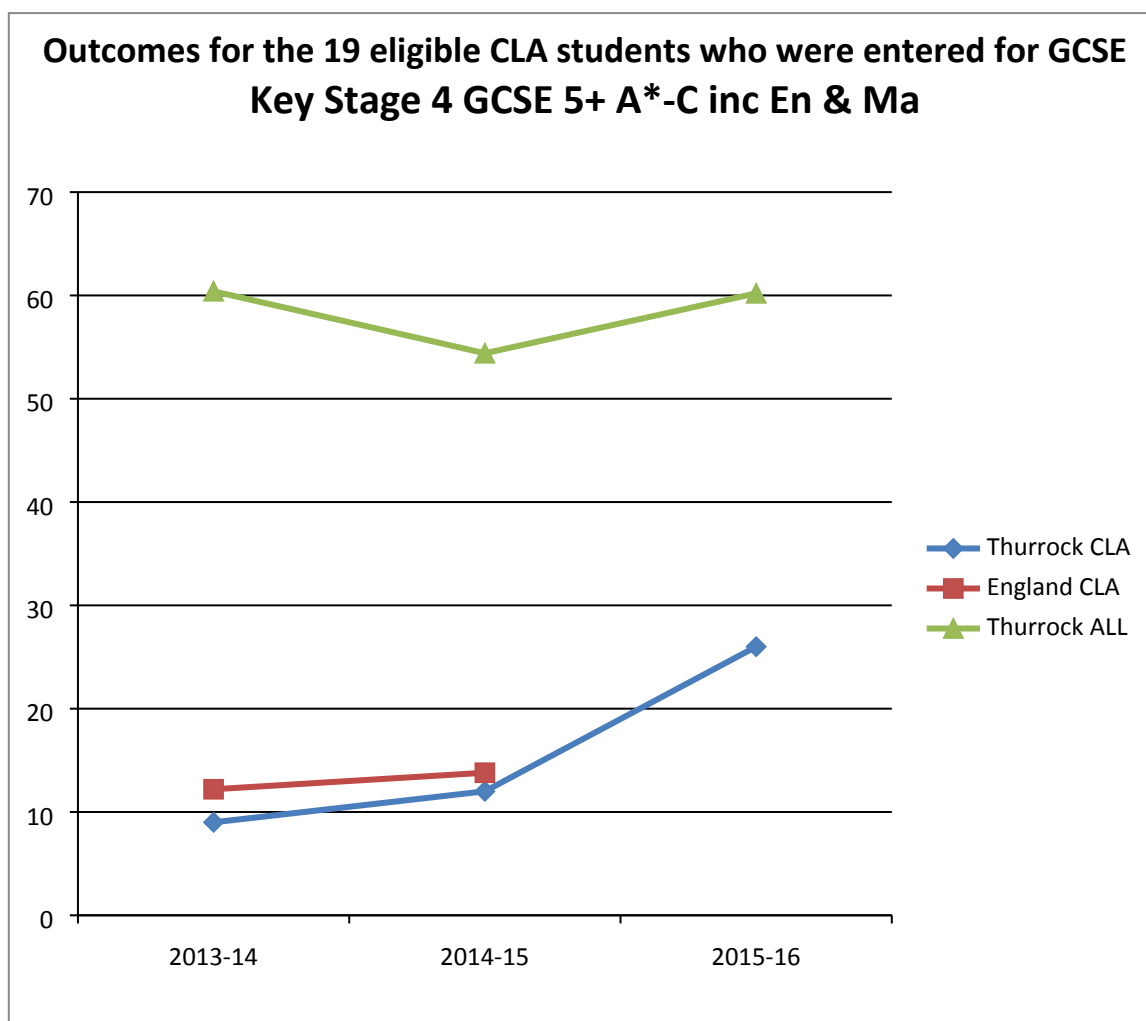
For maths, in total 8 pupils [14.5%] achieved a grade C or above. The figure for those achieving grade D or above in maths was 15 pupils [27%]. This data was for the whole cohort. When we narrow this figure down to those only eligible for taking GCSEs, it reduces to 19 pupils. This data shows a significant increase on last year. When considering those only eligible for GCSE, 79% achieved grade D or above in maths and 42% achieved grade C or above.

English language results for the whole cohort were a similar picture. In total 7 pupils [13%] achieved a grade C or above. For those achieving grade D or above, it was 15 pupils [27%]. When narrowed down to those eligible for GCSEs 37% [7 pupils] achieved grade C and 79% achieved grade D or above.

The graphs below highlight the improvement in outcomes against national CLA data and Thurrock all pupils' data.

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**CLA outcomes against total cohort [55 pupils]
Key Stage 4 GCSE 5+ A*- C inc En & Ma**

This line graph depicts data for the whole of the cohort [55 pupils]

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Outcomes for the 19 eligible CLA students who were entered for GCSE Key Stage 4 GCSE 5+ A*-C inc En & Ma

This line graph depicts data for the 19 pupils who were sitting 5 or more GCSEs

The two graphs illustrate an improving picture for Thurrock CLA and outcomes are improving. The attainment gaps are gradually decreasing and in terms of attainment at GCSE level this year, the indicative data shows that it has doubled from last year. The aim now is for this trend to continue to improve.

Additional Contextual Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort

There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 55 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes

48 [83%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough, of which 17 [49%] students were in specialist provision. Specialist provision includes Pupil Referral Units, residential specialist schools, SEND schools. These placements matched the needs of the pupils at that time, based upon their social care and educational needs. Where possible these students sat formal qualifications which included

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GCSE, BTEC, functional skills or Entry Level. However, this did mean that they were not at the level to study 5 GCSEs. It is important to note that these students obtained positive outcomes for them based upon their needs and their academic level or educational ability at the time.

A total of 7 students [17%] did not sit formal qualifications. 3 of these have significant SEND and 4 pupils are resitting Year 11 and so were not eligible for exams this academic year. Additionally 18 pupils [33%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 13 pupils [24%] with EHCPs or Statements. The 2 pupils with EHCPs who were eligible for GCSE exams achieved incredibly well based upon their level of needs with 1 obtaining 5 GCSEs C and above and 1 making accelerated progress to achieve D grades.

The length of time in care for this cohort has supported the educational progress of these pupils. Of those students who have been in care the longest, the majority have SEND needs. Although they may not have achieved GCSE qualifications, their placement and education needs were met in the appropriate provision. Those students who had been in care for a length of time who were able to sit GCSE qualifications did achieve pass grades and made appropriate progress against prior attainment. For example: 2 out of the 3 pupils who entered care in 2013 achieved 5 A*-C grades. The other pupil who came into care in 2013 attended a specialist residential provision due to significant SEND and achieved Entry Level 3 qualifications.

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children UASC entering care in year 11 is increasing. 23 pupils [42%] of the 15/16 cohort contained UASC pupils. Only 2 pupils were attending a school in Year 10 and as such had 4 terms of formal education in England in order for them to take their GCSEs. These 2 young men achieved pass grades. 3 UASC pupils were long term missing from care but they are still eligible for counting in our indicative results. A further 2 pupils had been placed back into year 10 and were not eligible to take their exams in 2016. The graph above illustrates when our UASC came into care. It is a challenge to find suitable educational places that can support the needs of these vulnerable pupils. The Virtual School assists with obtaining school places wherever possible or sourcing appropriate English Studied as an Other Language [ESOL] provision.

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

Planned interventions as a result of 2016 data

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

We are continuing to:

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

In addition we are:

- Providing half termly Designated Teacher Forums, monthly social worker forums and termly foster carer forums to promote the educational outcomes of pupils by communicating key messages and training and to provide information advice and guidance for individual cases
- Supporting social care to minimise the change of school or college when there are placement changes
- Actively seeking to expand our team with professionals to build capacity and improve impact on outcomes for Children Looked After
- Meeting with Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) on a termly basis to discuss effective practice for the Local Authority.

<u>Summary of Analysis for all Key Stages</u>

<u>Key Headlines of Actions from All Data Collections</u>

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

1. Virtual School Team attending PEP meetings to raise the level of challenge and accountability.
2. Transition of EYFS into Year 1 tracked and supported.
3. Phonics progress for Year 1 and Year 2 tracked
4. Every Year 6,7,10 and 11 LAC to have a PEP meeting in the Autumn term16.
5. All Year 10s and 11s and Year 6 being visited in their school by VS team.
6. Year 6 targeted in Autumn 16 or Spring 17.
7. Current Year 2 predictions and pupils targeted where necessary in Spring term 17.

8. Pupil Premium Plus Grant allocations and monitoring for impact in raising attainment and progress.
9. Raising expectations in PEP compliance across all aspects of the service. Linking provision of the Pupil Premium Plus funding with the quality of the PEP.

Allocation and Impact of the Pupil Premium

The management of the Pupil Premium Plus grant for Children Looked After is detailed in the DFE guidance Pupil premium grant 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant and Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities. Prior to this legislation and guidance, the Pupil Premium allocation was given as a lump sum to schools in the October of the academic year. The monitoring of the impact was through the PEP process. This funding enabled schools to spend it on a range of activities or equipment items and was used for school trips. The Virtual School Headteacher monitored this process and some schools were not demonstrating the impact of this money on pupils in a proactive or satisfactory manner. Subsequently, from or the academic year 2014/15 The Virtual School has become responsible for the allocation and monitoring the impact of this fund for our Children Looked After with those in borough and out of borough. This is in line with DFE guidance listed above. All schools will be receiving the full amount of funding, £1500 per pupil, directly into their budget which is paid across three terms. The Virtual School Headteacher is tracking on a termly basis how this money is raising the achievement of the Looked After child/young person and assessing if funds are being used appropriately. This process, alongside the PEP process is supporting the pupil to have targeted support and intervention which directly affects and plans for his/her academic and overall school achievement with a personalised approach. It is enabling the Virtual School to be updated on progress data and enables discussion with the school to centre around appropriate intervention. This system promotes accountability and improved dialogue in how to raise attainment and achievement and narrow the gap. [Separate Pupil Premium documentation is available on request]

Quality Assurance of Personal Education Plans

The Personal Education Plan [PEP] is a key document to support the child's/young person's education. Where possible the Virtual School attends PEPs and particular emphasis has been made on key year groups for the academic year 2016/17. This is further detailed in the Roles and Functions of the Virtual School. It is also important that the Virtual School attends PEP meetings for particularly vulnerable students or when a potential issue has been identified. For example, concern with progress. The Virtual School Headteacher [VSH/T] is responsible for Quality Assuring [QA] every PEP. During this process particular attention is made to progress data, school provision, support from the foster carer, the pupil's views and the quality of educational targets that are set. If a PEP is judged to be of poor quality the Headteacher challenges the appropriate professional to ensure that this is rectified.

The VSH/T keeps a tracking sheet of PEP compliance and notes down comments or actions as part of the QA process. The Directors Management Team asks for sample PEPs from all year groups as part of the QA process. The Virtual School has recently written a PEP procedure policy to ensure that all those with responsibility for the PEP have clear guidelines and expectations around this process.

Post 16 Update

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

Not in Education Employment or Training [NEET]

The Virtual School closely monitors any post 16 young person who has CLA status and who is NEET. They are monitored fortnightly and the Post 16+ Support Worker works with the young person, social care, personal advisors in Thurrock, the Diversity in Apprenticeships team and local colleges and businesses to create the best possible opportunity for the young person to be placed in education, employment or training. Thurrock Council's aim is to have no NEET Looked after Children.

Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

There has been a substantial demand for the provision of education for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC]. The population figures of this group have increased dramatically over the past 2 years and there has been a high demand for providing education. The Virtual School has been proactive in working with the local college and additional Post 16 providers out of borough to devise bespoke English Studied as an Other Language [ESOL] provision. This has enabled our young people to be able to access pre-ESOL and ESOL courses across an academic year. This has been a huge success as prior to that there was no ESOL provision available in borough and limited availably out of borough in some authorities. Additionally the Virtual School have worked with Fleet Tuition services to

provide ESOL group tuition. This originally begun as 5 hours per week, then it expanded to 10 hour due to demand and since September 2016 it is 15 hours per week. This is for students who are not able to access formal education due to lack of availability of places or the pupils' current stage of English. The impact of this has been substantial as it enabling UASC to access education and ultimately move onto more academic Level 1 and 2 courses.

Additional Strategies to support the educational progress of Thurrock Children In Care

Working in Partnership with other Teams in Thurrock Council

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

Foster Carer Forums

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

Designated Teacher Forums

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

General Support for Foster Carers and Designated Teachers

The Virtual School provides a range of telephone and face to face advice and support and prides itself on being able to deliver a good level of service. Our approachable manner enables us to have good relationships with these key professionals to enable us to work together for the best outcomes of our pupils.

Social Worker Training and Support

The VSH/T has been worked with newly qualified social workers across the academic year to provide training in Personal Education Plans [PEPs] and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice. Training has also included assessment, levels and progress and , how to challenge and raise aspiration. More experienced social workers have been provided with Electronic Personal Education Plan [EPEP] training to enable them to use the EPEP system when it becomes live. The Virtual School adopts a flexible and responsive approach to the support and training needs of our social workers. The Virtual School Head attends briefings and team meetings with social care to disseminate good practice.

Liaison with Schools

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

Attendance at PEP Meetings

Wherever possible the Virtual School attends PEP meetings to model good practice, raise accountability, monitor the pupils' education and provision and ensure that the PEP process is thorough in supporting the CLA's education.

Book Trust – The Letterbox Club

As a school we provide key year groups from Year 2 to Year 7 with the Book Trust's Letterbox initiative. The Letterbox Club was initiated at the University of Leicester. The programme aims to provide enjoyable educational support for looked-after and other disadvantaged children aged 5-13 and focuses on improving their educational outlook by sending, directly to their home address, a parcel of carefully selected items for them to use and keep. The parcels contain a variety of books (fiction and non-fiction), number games and fun educational materials aimed at stimulating reading and educational activity in the home. The children receive their first parcel in May and then once every month for six months, with the last parcel arriving in October. If the child moves placement (or returns to their birth family) during this time the parcel will be sent to their new address until the end of the programme. The foster parents and carers involved have been advised of this programme. The Virtual School has supported this programme for the past 6 years and this continues to be highly valued by the child and the carers.

Fleet Tuition Services

The Virtual School commissions the services of Fleet Tuition. The One to One Tuition Programme for Looked After Children (LAC) has been created to provide additional academic support for children who are not currently reaching their potential. It has been set up to be delivered in concert with classroom teaching as extra help for pupils, but outside of school hours. **The Programme is an initiative to help LAC gain more confidence in, and understanding of, academic subjects. It is designed for the pupils who would benefit the most, it complements classroom teaching by addressing barriers to learning that are personal and particular to each child. Particular focus is given to Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 pupils as they benefit most from the programme. However, if tuition is required pre KS2 or post-16 this service can be provided.** The programme is designed to ensure that the right support is in place for LAC and is important to improving pupil achievement and closing the attainment gap. Support in the form of one-to-one tuition can also be highly effective in boosting the confidence and motivation of pupils who may be falling behind. While mainstream classroom teaching is effective for many pupils there are some pupils who will not make the progress they need to in a whole-class setting. These pupils would benefit from additional tuition, on a one-to-one basis, that addresses their particular skills gaps. Without an individualised approach it will be very hard for this group to make the progress necessary to achieve their full potential. Generally one-one tuition is used to help pupils who face academic barriers in any subject and the Virtual School works closely with schools, foster carers, social workers and the pupil to ensure that the right tuition is matched to needs.

Attendance Monitoring

Thurrock Virtual School commissions the services of an external provider to monitor the attendance of all of our Children Looked After in and out of borough attending schools and colleges. For the academic year 2015/16 our long standing provider of this service Welfare Call was used. A tendering process was conducted in the summer term 2016 and as a result the current provider is Contact Call. They provide the same service. All pupils are monitored on a daily basis. If pupils are not attending school an alert is created to ascertain where the pupil is and why they are not at school. This promotes the safeguarding of our pupils and promotes good attendance. It also enables the Virtual School to monitor any exclusions or punctuality issues. The Virtual School has a clear Attendance Policy which provides a rationale behind why attendance is given high priority and this can be read in conjunction with this report.

<u>**School Improvement Priorities**</u>

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

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

<u>**Key Priorities for 2015/2016 were**</u>

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- Improve the attendance of Children Looked After to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education. Attendance target figure 94% for 2015/16.
- Continuing to embed the Electronic-Personal Education Plan [EPEP] system which can be accessed by all professionals and the children involved in the PEP process. Schools will be required to update this every term so that there is always a current live PEP for the pupils. The impact of this will be: more involvement from schools, foster carers, the pupil voice, social care and the virtual school team to ensure that the best provision is in place for the child/young person.
- Raising the profile of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations.
- Further developing methods of challenge and accountability for schools and colleges by raising the expectations for the achievement of their pupils. This will be through the PEP process, the pupil premium funding and provision of training. This will also be through the LSCB Executive Committee supporting the Virtual School Head Teacher by holding Head teachers and Governing Bodies to account.
- Enhancing the role of the corporate parent through greater challenge to schools and colleges to ensure that they are providing the best possible education for our pupils. This will be through the Virtual School working with and training a range of professionals who support our Looked after Children [LAC].
- Ensuring that the information on pupil progress is shared amongst the team working for the LAC to promote better outcomes and enable greater challenge and support.
- To improve attainment of Looked after Children to be in line or above national average. Score of 100 at KS2– 70%, GCSE A-C including maths and English at KS4 - 15%.
- Establish a Virtual School Governing Body to support and hold to account the Virtual School Head Teacher and to develop strategy for raising the outcomes of Children Looked After.

Key Priorities for Academic Year 2016/2017

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA
- Improving the attendance and reducing the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education
- Raise the quality of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations
- Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.

Author of this report

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Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Thurrock Children Looked After

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6 September 2017	ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee	
Health of Looked After Children	

Wards and communities affected: All	**Key Decision:** Key

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

Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director Care and Targeted Outcomes

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

This report is public

Executive Summary

This report updates members of the Committee on the national and local data regarding the health status of Thurrock Looked after Children. The report will focus on new initiatives and developments to improve health outcomes for Thurrock Looked after Children.

1. **Recommendation(s)**

1.1 **The Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee are asked to note this report.**

2. **Introduction and Background**

2.1 Most children become looked after as a result of abuse and neglect. It is acknowledged that children looked after (CLA) tend to have greater health needs compared to their peers who have not been in care. Evidence suggests that almost half of children in care have a diagnosable mental health disorder and two thirds have special educational needs. (DOH, DfE 2015). As corporate parents it is vital we maintain high aspirations to ensure children in care receive high quality health care and support in order to meet needs identified. Statutory guidance states that all children require an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) on entering care and a Review Health Assessment (RHA) each year thereafter. Children under the age of 5 are expected to have a Review Health Assessment twice a year.

2.2 This report will update the committee on the current data available comparing national and local data. The report will highlight the current progress in relation to areas identified for improvement following the CQC inspection in 2015. The report will also inform the committee on the reviewed Strength and

difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) pathway, which aims to ensure that all children with a high score >17 will be identified and clear pathways are put in place to assess need and implement appropriate care. The report will encompass throughout the new improved partnership working between the Local Authority and Health agencies.

3.   April 2017 Thurrock LAC figures

3.1   April 2017 figures identify there are 338 Thurrock Looked after Children, 57 of these children are Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). 8 children are recorded as disabled. It should be noted that 60% (203) of children are placed outside of Thurrock. 40% of those placed out of area are placed within Essex with the remaining 20% placed outside of Essex borders. Of the 57 UASC 48 are placed outside of Thurrock, with only 9 UASC placed within Essex.

3.2   In relation to meeting health needs, children placed out of area particularly outside of Essex can present a barrier to health care access. There are reciprocal arrangements in place for children placed within Essex and few issues are raised in relation to timeliness and quality of services provided. Requests for health assessments for children placed outside of Essex are more difficult to manage. Some areas refuse to undertake assessments, stating capacity or commissioning arrangements as the issue. This is despite clear statutory guidance being in place highlighting the expectation that all requests for health assessments should be met. Escalation processes are well embedded within Thurrock and recent escalations have been raised to both receiving CCG's and NHSE. Social care is also advised of refusal areas as this should be considered as a factor when placing future children in an area identified as not undertaking out of area assessments.

4.   National Statistical Data March 2016, DfE September 2016.

4.1   In September 2016 the Government published the latest figures for all local authorities. These figures are generated from the annual returns submitted by the local authority and are based on data up to 31st March 2016. Reporting is focused on Immunisations, dental checks, statutory review health assessments, developmental checks for under 4 year olds and Strength and difficulty questionnaires (SDQ) data. The figures relate to the cohort of Looked after children who have been in care for at least 12 months or more. Below is the March 2016 data for Thurrock Local Authority. Thurrock have significantly improved from the previous year.

4.2   Thurrock's data for completion of yearly Review Health Assessments has identified a significant improvement on the previous year. March 2016 data identifies 94% have had their RHA compared to 88% in 2015. This is showing a 6% improvement from the year before.   National data for March 2016 shows 90% of all looked after children have had their health assessment. This places Thurrock 4% above the national trend which is a reflection on the importance given to improving health outcomes for looked after children within Thurrock.

4.3   Thurrock data for children with up to date immunisation status identified 89% of looked after children were up to date compared to 85% in 2015. This again shows an improvement albeit a small one. There is an ongoing focus on the need to encourage uptake of immunisations. It is important to note that immunisations are not compulsory and parents can refuse to consent for these to be given. 31% of the current cohort of looked after children are placed under a voluntary arrangement and parents retain full parental responsibility. National figures for looked after children regarding immunisations show 87% compliance again showing that Thurrock is 2% above the national trend.

4.4   Thurrock data for children with up to date dental checks identified that 97% of children were up to date with their dental check compared to 92% in 2015. National data shows that only 84% of Looked after children are up to date with their dental checks highlighting again that Thurrock is above the national trend.

4.5   Thurrock data showed that 100% of all under 4 year olds who had been in care for at least 12 months had their developmental checks completed. This compares to 83.3% for Thurrock in 2015, again showing marked improvement.

5.   SDQ Pathway

5.1   The SDQ screening tool is a behavioural screening questionnaire currently used for Looked after Children aged 4-16 years old. The government reporting mechanism only requests scores for children who have been in care for at least 12 months. However, DfE guidance clearly identifies that it is best practice for all Looked after children to have their SDQ score assessed.   All versions of the SDQ ask about 25 attributes, some positive and others negative.

1) emotional symptoms (5 items)
2) conduct problems (5 items)
3) hyperactivity/inattention (5 items)   } 1 to 4 added together to generate a total difficulties score
4) peer relationship problems (5 items)
5) prosocial behaviour (5 items)

    Normal score   0-13

    Borderline Score   14-16
    Concerning score 17-40

5.2   Thurrock data for March 2016 identified that 150 of the 155 children eligible had their SDQ score submitted, representing 99% of the cohort. The average overall score showed a score of 13.9. However, it is important to give some context to this figure as it suggests there is no need for concern. When the figures are analysed in more detail this identified that 50% showed a normal score, 10% showed a borderline score and 40% showed a concerning score.

This identifies that 60 children had a score indicating levels of emotional stress. As already stated CLA due to their past experiences are more likely to suffer with emotional mental health issues. Therefore, it is important that the Local authority and Health partners work together to respond effectively and appropriately to evolving emotional and mental health issues in Looked after Children. The SDQ screening tool is only part of this picture but should be regarded as an important indicator and an initiator of further investigation and care.

5.3 A clear responsive SDQ pathway is currently under development. This will ensure all Looked after children have their SDQ score monitored. For new children entering care, the first questionnaire will be given to the carer, teacher, young person as required at their second review with an expectation that it is completed and returned within 2 weeks. Any scores over 17 will be shared with the social worker and the CLA Nurse team. In order to monitor concerning SDQ scores, children will be presented at the newly developed CLA Health steering group. The CLA Health steering group meets the first Wednesday of every month with representatives from social care, health, education the Independent Reviewing Service and Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Service (EWMHS). Cases are presented by the child's social worker and the child's needs are assessed and actions are agreed using a multi-agency approach. This approach is still in its infancy but early feedback is positive in relation to children already discussed.

6. Emotional Well-being Mental Health Services

6.1 Looked after Children are identified as a vulnerable group in relation to referrals to EWMHS. The service is required to carry out an initial assessment of the child within 7 days of referral. This is currently being monitored to ensure this is being delivered. The Designated Looked after Children Nurses across Essex championed this to be included within the referral pathway for EWMHS

6.2 In October 2015 the Care Quality Commission reviewed the health component of safeguarding and looked after children services in Thurrock. It focused on the experiences and outcomes for children within the geographical boundaries of the local authority area and reported on the performance of health providers serving the area. Recommendations formed an action plan addressing the issues identified. Issues identified are below with a short synopsis of current developments.

6.3 It was identified within the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) that initial health assessments were not being completed within statutory timescales. Initial Health assessments should be completed within 20 working days of a child becoming looked after, paperwork should be received within 5 working days of the child becoming looked after. Areas highlighted as needing attention were, delay in receipt of paperwork from social care, notification processes and children placed out of area where the assessment had drifted. This issue has yet to be fully resolved and is monitored by the LSCB as this was a focus of the CQC/Ofsted review. This is likely to be a focus of any subsequent review.

7.   Actions taken

7.1   Social Care, NELFT and Thurrock CCG have worked collaboratively to
         address this issue.

- Training has been provided to social care teams by the CCG in relation
  to the IHA paperwork.
- IHA paperwork is now easily accessible on the Liquid Logic social care
  system.
- Weekly meetings were initially in place to monitor assessments and
  paperwork being received within 5 working days. Meetings now held 2
  weekly.
- Generic GCSX account created for all assessments to be sent from
  and to, ensuring that data is sent securely.
- Improvement of CLA health team oversight of IHA's and chasing of
  assessments and improved escalation pathways
- Key performance indicators in place with the provider and CCG in
  relation to IHA's in order to monitor and gain assurance.
- Escalation procedures in place for any identified delays.

7.2   The CLA Health team receive weekly children looked after lists electronically
         every Monday via secure email and also adhoc placement notifications as
         required. This is working extremely well. The health team then notify the area
         the child is placed, sharing relevant health information with the receiving area.
         Early and accurate notification is essential particularly in relation to children
         with complex health needs who may require referral to health services in their
         new area. Ensuring good transition of health care is essential.

**8.   Emotional well-being mental health service to contribute to
         assessments**

8.1   EWMHS share the same electronic records system as the CLA Health Team.
         Therefore, the CLA Team is aware if EWMHS are involved with the child and
         will liaise accordingly to gather information for the health assessment.

**9.   Effective quality assurance of health assessments and the voice of child
         to be evident in all health assessments.**

9.1   A quality assurance tool has been implemented for all review assessments,
         this is completed by the practitioner completing the assessment and is in
         place across Essex. The voice of the child forms part of the assurance tool.
         20% of all assessments are audited by the CLA Nurse to ensure quality. The
         CLA Health team quality assure all assessments completed outside of Essex
         to ensure they conform with standards expected. Initial health assessments
         are peer review audited by the Consultant Paediatricians across Essex. The
         CLA Health Nurse and Designated Nurse also liaise with the Children in Care
         Council to seek their views and opinions in relation to health services and
         provision.

10. GP's to contribute to health assessment process

10.1 GP's are now routinely requested to supply information prior to the child being seen for their health assessment. This information informs the professional undertaking the assessment of, recent GP attendances, medication and or concerns. This added information contributes to achieving a high quality assessment.

11. 16+ cohort of Looked After Children

11.1 This cohort of children can often be one of the most vulnerable groups. Health assessments may be viewed as an intrusion or invaluable by the young person and sometimes they will decline their assessment. The CLA Nurse in Thurrock will always attempt to see the young person face to face to discuss the options and benefits to encourage the young person to take part in their assessment. All 16+ young people receive a summary of their health care history and information on local health services.

11.2 National data for young people aged 16+ completing their health assessment is significantly lower than other age groups. National figures show that only 83% of 16+ have had their health assessment, only 77% have had their dental check and only 78% are up to date with their immunisations. Feedback from the CLA Health team in Thurrock identifies that whilst some 16+ do decline their assessment; this number is not high and is not increasing. There have recently been a number of young people who have participated in their health assessment who are known as particularly difficult to reach. This is in part due to the LAC nurse's tenacity and skill in developing relationships with young people and offering accessible and flexible appointments. Non completion forms are completed for all children who decline their health assessment and this is shared with Social Care.

12. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

12.1 Amongst the 16+ age group there is a significant number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). April 2017 figures show that 79% (45) of Thurrock UASC are 16+. This cohort of children can enter care having endured particularly traumatic experiences impacting on both their physical and mental health. The importance of an early IHA is integral in relation to assessing need and ensuring the right services are in place. Unfortunately, a high number of UASC are placed out of area which can impact on the timeliness of assessments. The CLA Nurse and Community Sexual Health Nurse recently delivered a sexual health session to 4 UASC in a semi-independent placement. The session was reported as extremely successful and also has the benefit of the UASC knowing who their CLA Nurse is and how to access her.

13. Recommendations

13.1 To ensure members are adequately informed of the challenges and successes in delivering appropriate health care to looked after children.

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

- None

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

15.1   The content of this report is compatible with Health and Well Being Strategy Provide outstanding services for children in care and leaving care

16.   Implications

16.1   **Financial**

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

Financial implications is LAC being placed out of borough, this is a high pressure to the Social care budget as the placements tend to be very costly. UASC numbers are going down gradually thus pressure will decrease, however were at a break even stage with Unaccompanied asylum seeking children, if the number of UASC increase there will be severe impact on the social care budget for 2017/18 financial year.

16.2   **Legal**

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

Section 22(3) (a) Children Act 1989 imposes a duty upon Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children they look after regardless of whether they are placed in or out of the area or the type of placement. This includes promoting a child's physical, emotional and mental health.

16.3   **Diversity and Equality**

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

There is recognition of the increased risk of both physical and mental health needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.   The authority considers the potential barriers of accessing statutory health needs when placing children outside of area, particularly outside of Essex (SET).

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

- None

17. **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):

- **DfE September 2016 Children Looked after in England**
  https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2015-to-2016

- DoH, DfE 2015 Promoting the Health and Well-being of looked after children.

18. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

Paula Gregory

Designated Nurse for Looked after Children

Thurrock CCG

6 September 2017	ITEM: 7

Corporate Parenting Committee

Information on Recent External Placements for Young People

Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key

Report of: Paul Coke, Service Manager, Through Care Services

Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director, Children's Care and Targeted Outcomes

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

This report is Public

Executive Summary

This report updates members of the Committee on a range of issues regarding the placement choices made for looked after children

1.   Recommendation(s)

1.1   That the members of the Corporate Parenting Committee review the efforts made by officers to choose appropriate placement resources for looked after children.

2.   Introduction and Background

2.1   Reports for previous meetings of the Corporate Parenting Committee have provided elected members with detailed information about the placement choices being made by officers for looked after children. These reports have included information on new external placements made and comments provided on a number of the presenting issues which influence decision making.

2.2   The numbers of looked after children in Thurrock is detailed in a comparative table below. This is a snapshot within the month, as the numbers will fluctuate as children/young people enter and cease being looked after throughout each month – **Table 1**:

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2017/18	340	330	337	331	326							
2016/17	342	341	335	342	340	358	350	350	325	327	330	336

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2015/16	280	285	295	303	313	320	330	332	344	334	335	338

2.3 The following table shows the numbers of **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)** that have become looked after during the financial year of 2016/17 and 2017/18 – **Table 2**:

	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2017/18	51	50	45	42	42							
2016/17	79	78	75	84	87	95	91	88	73	67	57	54

2.4 The comparative rates per 10,000 of the looked after population which the local authority benchmarks against is as follows:

- National Rate: 60.0 (2015/16)
- Statistical Neighbours: 67.8 (2015/16)
- Thurrock Rate: 82.2 (July 2017)

2.5 The comparative rates per 10,000 without the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children for Thurrock is as follows:

- Thurrock Rate: 70.7

2.6 The looked after children are in the following placements:

- Residential Children's Homes – 21
- Parent & Child Residential Assessment Placement - 4
- Independent Fostering Agency Placements – 107
  - Parent & child placement – 5
- In – house Foster placements – 123
  - Parent & child placement – 3
- 16+ Supported Accommodation – 21

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- Independent Fostering Agency Placements – 17
- In – house Foster placements – 5
- 16+ Supported Accommodation – 20

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 We continue to focus on the use of in-house foster placements as opposed to independent fostering agencies through our recruitment programme.

3.2 In terms of our in-house fostering provision, our current performance as of August 2017 is as follows:

- Number of new carers approved = 9 (6 mainstream & 3 connected)
- Number of mainstream fostering applications at various stages = 11
- Number of current fostering households = 89, which equates to a net increase of 8 this financial year
- Number of temporary approvals = 7 (13 children placed)
- Total number of in-house fostering spaces occupied = 127 (equates to 122 looked after children & 5 Staying put young people)

3.3   We currently have 131 looked after children in in-house foster placements and 119 looked after children in independent fostering agency placements.

3.4   We have had an increase of 12 placements compared to none since the period of the last report dated 9 March 2017, which addressed the period between 1 December 2016 – 31 January 2017, in our use of parent and child placements, with the majority of the parents within these placements being assessed as part of court proceedings.

3.5   Our use of residential placements has reduced from 25 to 21since the last report dated 9 March 2017, which addressed the period between 1 December 2016 – 31 January 2017.

3.6   To date we have 42 UASC, which again continues to decrease in numbers. This is due to the Eastern Region Protocol and those young people reaching the age of 18.

3.7   The Department continue to be the recipients of new arrivals of UASC into the borough, which are then transferred to other local authorities under the Eastern Region Transfer Protocol System.

3.8   The Department have currently received 23 new arrivals, of which   2 remained with Thurrock as they went missing shortly after we placed them and we transferred 21 under the Transfer Protocol since April 2017. Need to say why we didn't transfer 2 of the UASC

3.9   The Department continues to monitor placements through the various multi-disciplinary panels, such as the Placement and Accommodation Panel, which is chaired by the Assistant Director of Children's Services, and the High Cost Placement Meeting, chaired by either the Assistant Director or the Corporate Director of Children's Services.

3.10   The Department has also had to move 5 young people from a 16+ supported accommodation provider, as this provision was not fit for purpose and did not meet the requirements set out by our Commissioning Service. All the young people were moved on to more suitable accommodation.

3.11   The Department is also exploring other in-house accommodation that can be used for our 16+ young people for example houses of multiple occupation. The lead for this work is the Strategic Lead for Learning and Skills.

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

4.   Reasons for Recommendation

4.1   Members of the Committee to be informed on the issues in relation to external placements. Officers accept there is a very real challenge in balancing the need to find the best possible placement option for children and young people, whilst simultaneously working within the financial resources available.

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

5.1   None

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

6.1   None

7.   Implications

7.1   **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Nilufa Begum**

Management Accountant

The numbers of looked after children has decreased since the same time last year. The number of children/young people in residential has also reduced. There remain, however, significant cost pressures particularly in relation to semi-independent placements and Independent Fostering Agency placements. The use of parent and child residential assessments will also have an impact financially as we have seen an increase in these court ordered placements this financial year.

It also has to be acknowledged the ongoing financial impact of the UASC cohort, at significantly over the 0.07% rate of 28 young people.

7.2   **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Principal Solicitor for Safeguarding.

It is important to note that whilst the Local Authority continues to scrutinise all placements it also has to be aware of its duties under the Children Act 1989, which must be the focus on the best interest of each child, especially when exploring placements.

Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**

Community Development Officer

When scrutinising the residential placements the Local Authority must ensure it also considers the needs of each individual child/young person, which includes their religion, language and disability to ensure these placements meet all their needs on a holistic level. The need to consider issues such as child sexual exploitation is also prevalent when sourcing placements and looking at the individual needs of each child/young person.

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

Placements have to also take into consideration the experience and quality of staff, health and safety issues within each placement and that all the providers used are aware of their duties within the Crime and Disorder legislation.

Providers, whether regulated or not, must also be aware of their responsibilities when it comes to child protection issues.

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):

- Not applicable

9.   **Appendices to the report**

- Not applicable

Report Author:

Paul Coke

Service Manager, Through Care

Children's Services, Care and Targeted Outcomes

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Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Parenting   **Year:** 2017/2018

Dates of Meetings: 07 June 2017, 06 September 2017, 06 December 2017, 07 March 2018

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
07 June 2017 - Cancelled		
Health of Looked After Children Report	*Paula Gregory/Andrews Osei*	*Members*
Virtual School Annual Report	*Keeley Pullen*	
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	
06 September 2016		
Health of Looked After Children Report	*Paula Gregory/Andrews Osei*	*Members*
Virtual School Annual Report	*Keeley Pullen*	
Placement Updates of Care Packages	Paul Coke	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	
06 December 2017		
Placement Updates of Care Packages	Paul Coke	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	
07 March 2018		
Placement Updates of Care Packages	Paul Coke	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	

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