

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

Corporate Parenting Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **6 March 2019**

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

Membership:

Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Graham Hamilton (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Barry Johnson, Steve Liddiard, Sue MacPherson and Luke Spillman

Gregg Brown, Open Door
Jackie Howell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Sharon Smith, Vice Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Kerry King, Children in Care Council
Billie-Jo King, Children in Care Council

Substitutes:

Councillors Gary Collins, David Potter, Sue Shinnick and Lynn Worrall

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 10
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on 15 January 2019.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	

5	Families Supported By Early Help	11 - 16
6	Transition - Preparing Care Leavers for Adulthood	17 - 24
7	Report on Merton Assessments	25 - 32
8	Pupil Premium Plus Report for the Virtual School	33 - 66
9	Work Programme	67 - 68

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **26 February 2019**

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Members of the public can attend all meetings of the council and its committees and have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Recording of meetings

This meeting may be recorded for transmission and publication on the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 15 January 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Barry Johnson, Steve Liddiard and David Potter (Substitute) (substitute for Graham Hamilton).
Apologies:	Councillors Graham Hamilton, Sue MacPherson and Luke Spillman. Billie-Jo King, Children in Care Council Chairperson
In attendance:	Gregg Brown, Thurrock Open Door Representative Kerry King, Children in Care Chairperson Jackie Howell, Chair of The One Team Foster Carer Association Sharon Smith, Vice- Chair of The One Team Foster Carer Association Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director Children and Families Janet Simon, Strategic Lead, Looked After Children Keeley Pullen, Head Teacher for Virtual School Paula Gregory, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer

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

15. Minutes

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 5 September 2018 were approved as a true and correct record.

16. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

17. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

18. Children in Care Council Update

The Thurrock Open Door Representative informed the Committee of the resignation of the Children in Care Council's (CICC) Chairperson, Joseph Kaley. Since then two new joint Chairpersons had been elected – Billie-Jo King and Kerry King.

A paper update of the CICC was provided to the Committee and the Thurrock Open Door Representative invited questions and comments from the Committee. There were no questions or comments as the Committee was satisfied with the update.

19. Looked After Children Health Report

Presented by the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children (LAC), the report recommended that an update regarding the health of LAC remain a standing item on the agenda. This was due to the low returns in March 2018. The Headteacher for Virtual School suggested meeting with the Designated Nurse for LAC as there were LAC within the virtual school. The teams had been working together on the Education and Health Care Plan. The Designated Nurse for LAC had also provided the Committee with a sample of the sleep pack and clothing pack that were given to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who did not usually have clean clothing upon arrival and often struggled to sleep.

On the percentage of children placed in care outside of Thurrock, Councillor Abbas expressed concern and questioned if this was the reason why the service was unable to meet targets. Explaining that the service worked together with nurses outside of Thurrock, the Designated Nurse for LAC went on to say they strived to achieve the same targets. However, compiling paperwork together took a while which caused delays. Overall, the service had improved on its target and was dramatically higher than a year ago. Adding on, the Strategic Lead of LAC said the delay also arose from acquiring consent to complete the required paperwork. The service was working with social workers on the consent form.

Councillor Abbas asked if there were mechanisms in place to avoid sending LAC out of the borough. In answer, the Strategic Lead of LAC said the first choice was to place children within the borough but due to resources and availability, this was not always possible. Adding on, the Designated Nurse for LAC gave assurance that children placed outside the borough were monitored and in the event of no response from carers, this would be escalated to the local authority's Clinical Commissioning Group and onto Public Health England. Procedures were followed in line with statutory guidance.

Regarding acronyms within the service, the Chair asked Officers to clarify these in future reports. She went on to ask Officers to ensure recommendation 1.2 of the report was followed through with a report to be brought back.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Corporate Parenting Committee provided comments and it is requested that whilst there are ongoing concerns around the compliance of meeting statutory targets for Initial Health Assessment this issue should remain as a standing agenda item for the Corporate Parenting Committee.**

- 1.2 That the Corporate Parenting Committee provided comments and it is requested that due to the significant reduction in the reported number of children having an up to date dental check and being fully immunised, this area of care is kept as a standing agenda item to be monitored by the committee.**

20. The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After - Academic Year 2017-2018

The report was introduced by the Headteacher of the Virtual School for LAC which outlined improved unauthorised attendance rates and the reduction on fixed term inclusion. Additional staffing had helped to raise standards and the key focus was a continuation on tuition.

Giving praise to the good results from the report, the Chair asked if there were any children missing education reported within the system. The Headteacher of the Virtual School for LAC replied that meetings were held to monitor attendance. There were currently two LAC missing education and had exited from the Education and Health Care Plan but were receiving home tuition.

The Chair sought clarification on the contradiction between attendance rates that had not improved and the improved rates of unauthorised absences. Explaining that attendance of LAC was monitored daily, the Headteacher of the Virtual School for LAC said a variety of reasons could be given as to why children missed school. Deciding not to attend was marked as an unauthorised absence and it was the responsibility of foster carers to notify schools of non-attendance to ensure the absence was marked as authorised.

Congratulating the virtual school on the good set of result, Councillor Liddiard mentioned available learning resources at Grays Library which would be ideal for UASC before they were placed into care. The online learning resource was free of charge and available in different languages. Thanking Councillor Liddiard for this information, the Headteacher of the Virtual School for LAC would pass this onto the UASC team.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee noted the non-validated DFE outcomes of the summer 2018 teacher assessment, tests and examinations and commended the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 1.2 That the Committee recognised that the cohorts of pupils are small and that this should be considered when comparing year on year data.**
- 1.3 That the Committee recognised that the length of time in care can affect the progress and outcomes of the pupils.**

1.4 That the Committee noted that prior attainment for pupils will impact on attainment in later years and CLA in care have made good progress.

1.5 The Committee approved the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2017-2018 and used this information to acknowledge, evaluate and if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all CLA.

21. Report on Unregistered/Private HMO's for Young People in Thurrock

The report was presented by the Strategic Lead for LAC which detailed supported 16+ accommodation and private/unregistered housing of multiple occupancy (HMO) for 16+. Registered HMOs for children went through a process of legal checks but there was no requirement for post 16 HMOs. The service had been made aware of two unregistered HMOs within the borough and was working to resolve this.

Thanking the Officer for the report, the Chair was pleased this had been brought to the Committee's attention as she felt there was a need for the Committee to be made aware of private HMOs. Giving assurance, the Strategic Lead for LAC said Thurrock's LAC were monitored and placed in homes within the service. The Chair expressed concern on unregistered HMOs who bought homes to let out to young people and felt these needed to be regulated. Agreeing with this, the Strategic Lead for LAC said the service was aware of other local authorities using private HMOs.

Referring to the range of costs indicated within the report, Councillor Abbas asked for more detail as to where these costs went and if these were included in private HMOs. The Strategic Lead for LAC explained that Thurrock's LAC were not place in private HMOs and would not place the services 16+ LACs in these either. The service would not cover the cost for private HMOs and the figures given in the costs were in relation to Thurrock's monitored LAC. Adding to this, the Interim Assistant Director said the service had a HMO scheme for over 18 years old care leavers which was seen as a stepping stone to independence.

Councillor Johnson commented that there were legal checks and procedures in place to ensure landlords of HMOs were compliant to obtain a licence. The Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was on the Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the members of the Committee reviewed the efforts made by officers to choose appropriate supported accommodation for looked after young people over the age of 16.

22. Report on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Presented by the Strategic Lead for LAC, the report outlined the UASC process which included an age assessment. Those found to be over 18 became the responsibility of the Border Force. The service worked with the Eastern region to ensure the UASC flow protocol was followed and were working on a protocol regarding missing UASC.

The Chair commented that Thurrock received more UASC as the borough had two ports. She asked for more clarity on the age assessment process.

On missing UASC, Councillor Abbas sought reasons on why children went missing. The Strategic Lead for UASC explained the difficulty of pinpointing a reason as many would arrive at the weekend and go missing before the service met them. Adding to this, the Assistant Director for Children and Families said preventative actions were taken to prevent UASC from going missing and a robust protocol was in place to settle children. When people came to claim a child, checks were carried out as well.

Councillor Akinbohun queried the ages of UASC. In response, the Strategic Lead for LAC said the given age was usually 16 – 17 years of age but some young people would admit they were instructed by their agent to give this age range.

Councillor Abbas questioned how children managed to slip away if the protocols were robust. The Assistant Director explained every action was taken to prevent children from running away but one could leave when they were just 'popping to the shops'. Adding to this, the Strategic Lead for LAC said young people were not accompanied when they went out and could feel restricted if they were escorted everywhere.

Continuing on, Councillor Abbas if the mechanisms that were in place were effective to prevent children running away. Stating protocols were effective, the Assistant Director for Children and Families pointed out that some UASC came with the intention to leave already. The Chair said the issue was more of a national level and was not just an issue within Thurrock. The concern was where these children went. Councillor Abbas queried if there were still costs incurred when children went missing to which the Strategic Lead for LAC confirmed no.

Councillor Liddiard questioned if the missing figure of 16 UASC was a cumulative figure to which the Strategic Lead for LAC answered the figure was over a 3 year period. Adding to this, the Assistant Director for Children and Families said many UASC did not come to the Council for help and they were known to the Council because they got caught at the borders. Only a small number of UASC did come for help.

RESOLVED:

That the members of the Committee reviewed the work of officers in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) presenting to the borough.

23. Children's Social Care Performance

The report was presented by the Assistant Director of Children and Families and gave a summary on the performance of Children's Social Care.

Congratulating the service on their adoption figures, Councillor Liddiard also welcomed the good results on care leavers in education and training.

The Chair asked for a more detailed breakdown on the supported 730 children and families within Early Help. A report would be brought back to the next Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That members noted the areas of improvement in Children's Social Care and work undertaken to manage demand for statutory social care services.

24. Work Programme

The following reports were added to the work programme:

- Pupil premium synopsis
- Early Help service
- Merton age assessment
- Looked After Children Health Update

The meeting finished at 8.25 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

6 March 2019		ITEM: 5
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Families Supported by Early Help		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Clare Moore, Strategic Lead of Youth Offending Service and Prevention		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children and Families		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Early Help services are considered by Ofsted as part of their inspection framework, both of local authorities and also as part of school inspections. The new Inspection Local Authority Children's Service (ILACS) looks at early help in terms of the impact it has on prevention of children suffering harm from abuse and neglect and whether children have been appropriately helped early enough to avoid current or future harm.

The revised "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance makes reference to early help and states "providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later". It makes clear the expectations that Local Authorities should work with organisations and agencies to develop joined up early help services based on a clear understanding of local needs". It also states that local areas should "have a comprehensive range of effective, evidence-based services in place to address assessed needs early."

There is sufficient evidence through the following reports commissioned nationally: Graham Allen, Eileen Munro, Frank Field and Claire Tickell to support a commitment to, and investment in, early help. Graham Allen in his report on early Intervention states that "early intervention is an approach which offers a real opportunity to make lasting improvements in the lives of our children, to forestall many persistent social problems and end their transmission from one generation to the next, and to make long term savings to public spending."

Eileen Munro describes the importance of early help as the "importance of providing help at the earliest possible opportunity in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services."

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Corporate Parenting Committee note the report.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 iMPower were commissioned in 2017, to support Thurrock in developing the 'Making Prevention Work' opportunity identified in April 2016. The subsequent report recommended that all preventative activity in Thurrock should be delivered under 'one offer' with a common set of outcomes, now known as 'Brighter Futures'

iMPower proposed a new delivery model for early intervention and prevention that would:

- Support children and families to identify their needs at the earliest opportunity, moving early intervention away from statutory service
- Enable a fully integrated workforce and approach to early intervention and prevention, including links to the 0-19 offer
- Build effective relationships across the system
- Support wider workforce to be confident and skilled in assessing and managing risk and delivering effective interventions
- Be designed around managing and avoiding the escalation of demand drivers

- 2.2 The Annual Public Health Report (APHR): [*"A sustainable Children's social care system for the future"*](#), undertook a detailed analysis of demand for children's social care and made strategic recommendations to enable the service to better manage this demand create a system that gives every child the best possible start in life.

The APHR high level recommendations include:

- Making a long term strategic commitment to invest in prevention
- Investing in the most effective prevention services
- Improved information on activity and spending.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Following the presentation of the iMPower report and subsequent Annual Public Health report a multi-agency strategic partnership group was established and is called the Brighter Futures Board. The Board is chaired by the Corporate Director of Children's Services and has representation from key strategic partners involved in children's services. The Board oversees the delivery of the early help strategy entitled *"Brighter Futures - Twenty-first century wellbeing services for children and young people"*. A series of multi-agency workshops took place under the Brighter Futures (BF) banner to raise the profile of early intervention and prevention in Thurrock and to promote

some of the messages in the iMPower and APHR and principles of the Brighter Futures Strategy.

- 3.2 A key part of the delivery plan requires Thurrock Council to work with all partners to deliver an integrated early help service that can incorporate and mainstream the Troubled Families (TF) programme, prior to the ending of the TF grant funding in 2020. This will involve taking a strategic approach to overseeing the implementation of the BF strategy ensuring that the early help 'offer', as defined by iMPower is successfully implemented and the recommendations within the APHR delivered. The Brighter Futures strategy is intended to describe an integrated offer to support children, young people and their families under a single identity.

- 3.3 The draft Brighter Futures strategy gives an overview of the principles and practices guiding early help with vulnerable children and young people, and states that it wants:

"...all children and young people in Thurrock to live in resilient families, to be happy, safe and healthy and to grow up with skills, knowledge and attributes to be confident and independent; ready for adult life....".

- 3.4 As partners we want to work together to provide a seamless service to children and their families, preventing the escalation of need and ensuring targeted, timely interventions that are supported by effective multi agency practices."

In addition the strategy aims to provide:

- The right support at the right time for children and their families – by building resilience for families and the communities in which they live
- A trusted lead family worker(Lead Professional) that families can rely on
- A co-ordinated response to the family's concerns and needs tackled together, not separately so that children and families only have to tell their story once".

- 3.5 These aims, if achieved, should provide the appropriate context and environment for a successful early help offer in Thurrock. It can provide a blueprint for reducing future demand on statutory services.
- 3.6 The Prevention and Support Service (PASS), works alongside other agencies i.e. Youth Offending, Children's Centres, 0-19 Healthy Families Programme and Social Care teams with the priority aim of reducing the demand on statutory Social Work and provide support to families with emerging needs in a timely way through a Team Around the Family approach, with a whole family plan.
- 3.7 Following a recent restructure, the PASS team consists of 13, Full time equivalent case holding, staff members from different skills and knowledge

bases that include Social Workers, Youth Workers, Education and Family Support Workers. All staff are permanent and there are no vacancies. PASS are currently working with 586 children and young people from 273 families with a variety of needs. The average caseload is 21 families per worker.

- 3.8 The team continue to work with an increasing number of referrals from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Step Down Child in Need cases from the Child and Family Assessment Team and the Family Support Teams. PASS have exceeded on the target of attached families for the Troubled Families Programme and Payments by Results claims have improved substantially.
- 3.9 A challenge for Thurrock, similar to many other authorities, is the need to ensure children receive the right service at the right time. In response to this aim, Thurrock is developing an edge of care service and identifying opportunities for children to be reunified from our care safely with their families. As part of the range of early help services a newly developed Edge of Care service will start working with families' from mid-February 2019. The remit of the team is as follows:
- Children and young people who are likely to enter care imminently (within a matter of days or weeks) without significant support. This could be where needs are escalating including, increased behavioural concerns being displayed by the child, family relationships or other problems are worsening and current levels of support are insufficient.
 - Children and young people who the appropriate social care manager has agreed should otherwise be accommodated but an alternative intervention or support package is put in place to safeguard them as a direct alternative to a long-term placement. This would include those provided with respite care or those who have been accommodated in an emergency but where the aim is for them to be reunited with their family quickly, safely and with support.
 - Children and young people who cease to be looked after and return to their parents or wider family network and where further support is needed to prevent re-entry to care and to ensure they are safeguarded.
- 3.10 Thurrock Council is committed to building capacity in early help services by embedding more integrated working arrangements amongst its partners and within the children's services teams. The introduction of the Signs of Safety (SoS) approach in children's services is designed to support this change so that children and families get the right help at the right time as need escalates or de-escalates. Children's services are embedding the Signs of Safety approach to build the consistency of good practice particularly in the quality of assessment and plans in social care. A key strength of the existing early help service is that it already works with families and children using an 'assets' and strengths-based model of intervention.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 For Members to note the content of this report.

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

N/A

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

6.1 The contents of this report are in context with the Councils priorities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**
Management Accountant

There are no financial implications at this stage; however any costs associated with this report need to be met from existing resources.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Community

Early Help means acting to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem, as soon as it emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth to adulthood, and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own. It also applies to all children and young people, with any form of need.

Early Help requires that agencies should work together as soon as a problem emerges or a need is identified to ensure the child gets the right response, and the right services, from the right people at the right time. The aim of Early Help is to meet needs early and avoid a problem escalating or the need increasing in order to prevent or reduce the need for specialist interventions unless they are absolutely the correct response to meet the need and resolve the problem.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead – Community Development

There are no diversity and equality implications within the report.

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

N/A

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):

N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

N/A

Report Author:

Clare Moore

Strategic Lead Youth Offending Service and Prevention

Children and Family Services

6 March 2019		ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Transition - Preparing Care Leavers for Adulthood		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Tiffany Bright, Interim Strategic Lead of Skills		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director of Learning, Inclusion and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Preparing Care Leavers (CL) for adulthood remains a key priority for Thurrock Council. The Leaving & Aftercare team provides a full service for 18-21 year olds and specific support, on request, for CL aged 22-25 years. The Leaving & Aftercare team is part of Inspire Youth Offer and makes the most of the Education, Employment and Training opportunities available in the borough. Head Start Housing has been created to provide a solution for CL accommodation.

The aim of this report is to provide Corporate Parenting with an overview of the offers and services available to CL and to make some recommendations for further enhancing the support provided.

1. Recommendations

That the Corporate Parenting Committee provides comment on the service's work in the following areas:

- 1.1 Work cross directorate and, in consultation with CL, to publish and promote the Local Offer**
- 1.2 Inform all CL of their rights under the Act and local policies to support them**
- 1.3 Build and maintain a diverse range of teams and partners to sign up to the CL Covenant including robust data collection and regular reporting**
- 1.4 Continue cross directorate work to extend/formalise the corporate approach to CL**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Through Care into After Care

- 2.1.1 Monthly meetings take place between strategic leads and operational managers to identify systems and processes if we are to agree a shared vision, clear ambitions and rigorous commitment to our Children Looked After/Care Leavers.
- 2.1.2 Protocols will be written, with clear timeframes for information/case transference and acceptance.
- 2.1.3 Policy documents are being revised to reflect positive changes for CL, such as financial entitlements, accommodation, offers and services available and much more. These policies will support both the staff and CL to understand what is possible and how to access it, more consistent support.
- 2.1.4 A joint approach to the Local Offer is also underway, with Through Care taking the lead and Aftercare applying the practical advice and guidance.
- 2.1.5 Two dedicated, full time Personal Advisor's (PA) work cross directorate with multiple teams such as Youth Offending Team, Independent Reviewing Officer's, Social Workers and many more to develop an understanding the CLA/CL (16-25 years) and their needs.
- 2.1.6 The dedicated PA's attend pathway plan reviews, conferences, Education Healthcare Plan reviews, attend visits to young people etc. The PA's who lead on Information Advice and Guidance bring an optimism for education and employment and have a range of programmes that positively discriminate CLA/CL such as Duke of Edinburgh, Princes Trust, OnTrack, Next Steps into Apprenticeships and Make Happen for CL that aspire to Higher Education (degree or higher level apprenticeship), all designed to support young people to develop essential skills for successful transition into adulthood.
- 2.1.7 The result of the dedicated PA's is CL into EET is 69% which is significantly higher than the regional average.
- 2.1.8 Apprenticeships remain a challenge for CL as the weekly wage, after paying rent, does not leave much for transport to work, food or socialising.

2.2 After Care

- 2.2.1 In the 6 months prior to a young person turning 18, a Personal Advisor is allocated and begins to work cross team to develop a relationship with the young person. The Pathway Plan transfers to the Aftercare team who identify opportunities for CL personal development.

- 2.2.2 It remains the case that some CL do not want regular contact, but request support in times of crises. If the PA is unavailable, a duty PA will support the CL.
- 2.2.3 The support provided by Aftercare is diverse, ranging from asylum applications/appeals, signposting/mediating with internal teams/external agencies for offers and services or to resolve issues, purchasing items using the Setting up Home Grant, college course applications, supporting the CL to develop a positive network of support and much more, as they transition into adulthood.
- 2.2.4 There is a newly formed Head Start Housing team that manages CL accommodation. With extensive learning from the House Multiple Occupancy (HMO) pilot, March 2016-September 2018, the team comprising two officers, a mediation officer and an apprentice is responsible for exploring all options available to the CL.
- 2.2.5 The full range of options are considered in consultation with the CL, ranging from staying with friends/extended family, hostels to HMO's to single/double occupancy units with support to enable moves away from supported/semi supported care.
- 2.2.6 The team is also responsible for building compliance so we provide suitable accommodation.
- 2.2.7 Close working with Procurement and Commissioning should enable a single source contract for a local estate agent, so that over the next 5 years, we can bring all Thurrock CL back into the borough. We are also seeking to commission tiered support (24 hour incl for tagged/violent, 12 hour for advice and guidance and 6 hour floating support each week for those that are demonstrating personal development and robust life skills) for CL to successfully move on to the next level of independence.
- 2.2.8 The Head Start Housing strategy provides for Move On and Move Back, in the event that the accommodation proves too much for the CL.
- 2.2.9 Over the past 18 months, the average cost of CL accommodation is £137.50 pw (0.50p more than the local Local Housing Association rate), but the cohort is increasing - largely attributable to Thurrock's allocation of UAS (94 of 240). 54 CL have secure tenancy agreements.
- 2.2.10 Last year, saw the introduction of Council Tax relief for CL.
- 2.2.11 In all of the above, we consult regularly with CLA/CL. We do this through Children in Care (CiC), Open Door, social events, Youth Cabinet and more, so we have a service that is designed by young people for our young people.

- 2.2.12 Work has started with Spectre First to maximise the benefits of the CL Covenant and will seek formal agreements with local partners including employers to positively discriminate to allow CL to access local opportunities.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 One of the key areas of development over the last 12 months is the development of a cross directorate approach, in consultation with CL to refresh policy documents, develop the Local Offer and promote this, is the only way forward.
- 3.2 Research and working in partnership with local authorities with Ofsted ratings of outstanding will continue so we can continue to enhance the service and learn from other local authorities.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 It is requested that the Committee agree the recommendations and use the reporting mechanisms to support and challenge the work of the Aftercare team responsible for co-ordinating a cross directorate approach to offers and services on behalf of CL.

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

- 5.1 There is no additional information for the committee as part of this report.

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

- 6.1 This report relates to the council priorities: People, where all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay; and Prosperity, a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**
Management Accountant

This report asks that the Committee notes the increasing work to improve CL awareness of services and accommodation by CL. The responsibilities of the Aftercare team have increased to support those aged 22 – 25 years after changes to legislation implemented 1 April 2018. The growing demand for accommodation, including financial support for UAS children, often with no recourse to public funds is impacting on the budget.

There are no financial implications at this stage; however any costs associated with this report need to be met from existing resources.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal

Any joint working arrangements between a children's services authority and a housing authority for care leavers' transition to independent living should include ensuring the delivery of effective preparation for independence with planned, sustainable moves into supported or independent accommodation. Local processes and/or practices should not involve care leavers routinely being treated as homeless when care placements come to an end in order to place the housing authority under an obligation to secure accommodation under Part 7 of the 1996 Act.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which came into force in October 2001 and gave Local Authorities the statutory duty to provide significantly **enhanced** leaving care service, with the intention to raise the quality of our support to that of good parents.

"Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority responsible for their care should make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need, which will include offering them more than one chance as they grapple with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood." Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations - Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

The main purpose of the Leaving Care Act 2000 is to:

- Delay young people's discharge from care until they are prepared and ready;
- To improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care;
- To provide better personal support for young people after leaving care;
- To improve the financial arrangements for care leavers.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces 3 new provisions:

1. A duty on local authorities which requires them to offer **Personal Adviser** support to all care leavers towards whom the local authority had duties under section 23C of the Children Act 1989, up to age 25 - irrespective of whether they are engaged in education or training. This includes care leavers who return to the local authority at any point after the age of 21 up to age 25 and request such support. (Under previous legislation, local authorities were required to only provide care leavers with support from a Personal Adviser until they reached age 21, with that support continuing up to age 25 if a care leaver was engaged in education or training. However, this support was not available to care leavers aged over 21 who were not in education, training or employment);

2. A duty on local authorities to consult on and then publish their '**local offer**' for care leavers, which sets out both care leavers' legal entitlements and the additional discretionary support that the local authority provides; and
3. A duty on local authorities which requires them to have regard to seven '**corporate parenting principles**', that will guide the way in which the local authority provides its services to children in care and care leavers.

The ultimate aim of leaving care services is to support care leavers so that they can live successful independent lives. Each care leaver will reach that point at a different age and there should be no assumption that the duty means that all care leavers will require statutory support until the age of 25.

The duty therefore means that local authorities do not necessarily need to provide the same level of support to care leavers aged 21 to 25 as it does for those aged 18-20. The duty does however enable local authorities to respond positively to requests for support from care leavers aged 21-25 who may be continuing to struggle with the transition to independence and adult life.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead – Community Development

Supporting CL as they transition into adulthood including support on accommodation 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 and emotional health needs.

The Authority recognises the importance of ensuring that young people who are leaving the care system can and should have access to the offers available locally – given the large regeneration agenda it is important that we work in an holistic way to provide CL's with the best life chances that we can identify recognising the importance of working closely with the young people to ensure that they have a voice in the decision making process.

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

There are no other implications as a result of this report.

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):

There are no background papers to this report.

9. Appendices to the report

There are no appendices to this report.

Report Author:

Tiffany Bright

Interim Strategic Lead, Skills

Children's Services

This page is intentionally left blank

6 March 2019		ITEM: 7
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Report on Merton Assessments		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Janet Simon, Strategic Lead of Children Looked After		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children and Families		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report updates members of the Committee on Merton Age Assessments

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the members of the Committee note and provide comment upon the work of officers in relation to Merton Age Assessments of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is a person below the age of 18 who arrives in the UK unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them and for as long as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person. This includes minors who are left unaccompanied after they have entered the UK and is a person who:

- a) is under 18 years of age when the asylum application is submitted.
- b) is applying for asylum in their own right; and
- c) is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.

- 2.2** A child who is outside his/her country of origin and separated from their primary carer may:

- be on their own
- have come with a relative who abandons them
- have been sent away by parents for their own safety

- have been trafficked
- 2.3 Local Authorities across the country have the task of receiving the children, identifying who they are and their specific needs, ensuring that appropriate support is offered to keep them safe; solidify their legal and immigration status and help them to settle into their new circumstances, move on, achieve and reach their potential.
- 3. Brief enquiry to age:**
- 3.1 At point of entry all UASC individuals are subject to a brief enquiry to age. This is a brief assessment in accordance with the assessing age guidance. Anyone claiming to be a child but whose physical appearance and demeanour strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 will be treated from that point onwards as an adult. This is subject to review should any further evidence become available to suggest otherwise. The brief enquiry to age is undertaken by two qualified social workers and with the use of an interpreter.
- 3.2 A young person's age will determine:
- How the asylum application is processed
 - What support will be offered
 - What accommodation will be provided
 - Whether s17 or s20 Children Act (CA) 1989 applies
 - Whether s23C CA 1989 applies
 - Which immigration rules apply
- 4. Age assessments:**
- 4.1 When an unaccompanied minor child enters the UK seeking asylum, some will have their age disputed by the authorities, and will have to be subject to an age assessment.
- 4.2 Almost all of these children have no form of identification, having fled war torn countries. They have no way of proving their age with documentary evidence. In some cultures they don't celebrate birthdays and do not consider birthdays an important milestone, as we do here in the UK. It is important that social workers have considered the cultural background of the individual child and that the ordeals to which these children are subjected could 'age' them more than a child of their age not subjected to these circumstances.
- 4.3 In order for an age assessment to be valid, it must comply with what is commonly referred to as the age assessment being "Merton Compliant". These guidelines were devised by Judge Stanley Burnton in the case of *B v Merton LBC* which was subject to Judicial Review (JR) and relates to a case in which the local authority had determined that a young person claiming asylum was aged at least 18. On that basis, he was not a child and the local authority owed him no duty under the Children Act 1989. The guidelines state that in a case where age is not clear, and no reliable documentary evidence

exists, the credibility of the applicant, physical appearance and behaviour must be assessed. The assessment must also include general background of the applicant, including ethnic and cultural considerations, family circumstances, education and history over the past few years.

- 4.4 When making a decision to undertake an assessment of age, it is important to establish whether it is absolutely necessary to complete an assessment. Statutory guidance on the care of unaccompanied children states that an assessment should be carried out only where there is significant reason to doubt that the claimant is a child. An age assessment should not be a routine part of a Local Authority assessment of unaccompanied or trafficked children. Age assessment should be limited to the minimum necessary to ensure that the child/Young Person receives the appropriate services and educational support for their age and development
- 4.5 Local Authorities must treat the claimant as an adult if their physical appearance and demeanour very strongly suggests that they are significantly over 18 years of age. If this is the case, another officer must act as a 'second pair of eyes'
- 4.6 Home Office policy is to apply the age assessment policy in such a way as to guard against the detention of children generally including accidental detention of someone believed to be an adult but subsequently found to be a child. Detention can have a significant and negative impact on a child's mental or physical health and development and can be extremely frightening. The effect of not being believed and being detained can be very stressful and demoralising and there are serious safeguarding risks detaining UASC alongside adults

5. How Age is assessed

- 5.1 Physical appearance: height, build, facial features, voice. The assessors need to bear in mind limitations on using these indicators; i.e. genetic background
- 5.2 Demeanour: mannerisms, body posture, choice of clothing and how worn; how they cope with assessment. The effects of Post-Traumatic Stress should be born in mind as well as the effects of culture on interaction.

6. Considerations when carrying out an age assessment

- A clear work plan for preparing, conducting and concluding the age assessment and allocated time for the relevant tasks.
- Has the child/YP been told that an age assessment will be conducted and are arrangements in place to ensure they have been given the information they need about the process and the support available to them?
- Have arrangements been made for an appropriate adult and interpreter to assist with the interview?
- Has a suitable venue been arranged?

- Has the relevant country of origin and background information been collated and read by both assessing social workers?
- Have arrangements been made to gather any relevant information from other sources, including documentation.
- Are two registered social workers present (and the same for all interviews)?
- Has the social worker explained and recorded the purpose of the interview/s, possible outcomes, the different roles of the professionals and how the information will be shared?
- Has the child/YP had the role of the Appropriate Adult (AA) explained to them?
- Does the child/YP understand the interpreter, are they comfortable with them, and has that been recorded?
- Has the welfare and well-being of the child/YP been checked and are they fit to be interviewed?
- Are the assessors alert to possible vulnerabilities such as human trafficking, mental health concerns and/or other safeguarding issues?
- Has the child/YP been given an opportunity to think about and explain any inconsistencies in their account?

7. Judicial Review (JR)

- 7.1 A decision of a public body is open to challenge by judicial review and may be quashed. There is no presumption that the Local Authority decision is correct.
- Burden of proof is not relevant factor
 - Fairness of the assessment will affect the weight the court will place on the assessment
 - Child should be given opportunity to deal with important adverse points
 - The court will not necessarily reach the same conclusion as the social worker
 - General credibility as assessed by others is not determinative
- 7.2 The question is not just, whether the person is a child, but also, how old he is. Therefore, a challenge can still be brought against a decision that a person is a child who is older than he claims. On an application for permission to apply for JR the case will go ahead if there is a realistic prospect that, at a Fact Finding hearing, the court will conclude that the person is younger than assessed by the local authority.
- 7.3 If paediatric evidence is used in an age dispute fact-finding hearing, it may be tested by cross-examination – meaning that social workers or doctors may be cross-examined. Whether the claimant should be subject to cross-examination, and whether any special measures (such as evidence by video link) should be put in place will be considered by the trial judge. Any challenge to an age assessment should be made 'promptly'.

8. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 8.1 The arrival of children is unpredictable in nature and children arrive in the area at short notice and require a rapid response in order to ensure that appropriate interventions are in place in a timely way. We have recently reassessed our duty system across the whole of the Looked After Children service to increase our capacity and flexibility in dealing with the fluctuations in demand.
- 8.2 Merton compliant age assessments are undertaken where there is a dispute about age. There are currently five Social Workers trained to lead on age assessments. A Merton compliant age assessment is a specialised piece of work that requires relevant training.
- 8.3 Age assessments can be open to challenge and cause delay for the child/young person.
- 8.4 We are in the process of utilising the expertise of the UASC Regional Co-ordinator in order educate our staff and ensure that there are consistent expectations in relation to this process. Training in Merton compliant assessments is being extended to staff across the service in February 2019. This will increase our capacity to carry out this work.

9. Reasons for Recommendation

- 9.1 Members of the Committee to be informed on the issues and challenges in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and assessing their ages.

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

N/A

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

N/A

12. Implications

12.1 Financial

Verified by:

Michelle Hall

Management Accountant

There are no financial implications at this stage; however any costs associated with the Merton compliant assessments need to be met from existing resources.

12.2 Legal

Verified by:

Lindsay Marks

Principal Solicitor Children's Safeguarding

- A decision as to age by a Local Authority is open to challenge by Judicial Review (JR) and may be quashed
- Where there is a dispute about age and that impacts on e.g the provision of services to a claimant, s/he has 3 months from date of decision to apply for permission to make an application for judicial review of the decision
- If permission to proceed is granted the substantive hearing takes place at the Upper Tribunal
- A decision of the High Court (including Upper Tribunal making a JR decision) is binding on all public bodies

12.3 Diversity and Equality

Verified by:

Rebecca Price

Community Development Officer

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The UK ratified the CRC in 1989 and on 18 November 2008 removed its reservation to Article 22. This demands that asylum seeking children, unaccompanied or accompanied, shall receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of all the rights under the CRC and shall be afforded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment. The UK must therefore ensure that the CRC rights of unaccompanied asylum children are upheld in exactly the same way as those of a UK born child.

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

None

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

None.

14. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author:

Janet Simon

Strategic Lead – Children Looked After

This page is intentionally left blank

6 March 2019		ITEM: 8
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Pupil Premium Plus Report for the Virtual School		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Keeley Pullen, Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director for Learning, Inclusion and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director for 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 following report details the use of Department for Education Pupil Premium Plus Grant for Children Looked After. The aim of this document is to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with an overview of spending linked to this grant for 2018-2019 and with the proposed strategy plan for spending in 2019-2020.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That the Committee notes the budget and spending report for 2018-2019 for Pupil Premium Plus Grant for Children Looked After.**
- 1.2 **That the Committee notes the overall spending by schools of the grant.**
- 1.3 **That the Committee approves the proposed strategy plan for the Pupil Premium Plus Grant for 2019-2020.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Pupil Premium Plus Grant is allocated from the Department for Education to promote the educational outcomes and attainment for children looked after.

This responsibility for the allocation and implementation lies with the Virtual School Head [VSH] for every local authority. This fund is allocated every year at the beginning of the financial year. The VSH must allocate this funding across a school academic year for every pupil from Reception year to year 11.

- 2.2 The amount allocated per pupil is £2,300. This has increased in the financial year 2018-2019 from £1,900 in previous years. Thurrock has a clear policy [please refer to Appendix A] which is shared with Head Teachers of looked after pupils placed in and out of the borough at the beginning of the financial and academic year. Thurrock Virtual School allocates £600 per academic term for every looked after child. The remaining £500 is top sliced to pay for central services which support pupils in the Virtual School. Details of this spending are in this report. A top slice has been in place for 3 years and this practice is in line with Virtual Schools around the country and was on the advice of Her Majesties Inspectorate [HMI] for the eastern region.
- 2.3 There are clear terms and conditions from the Department for Education [DFE] as to what this money can be spent on. These are found in the Conditions of Grant which are published online annually. Additionally Virtual School Heads must abide by details in statutory documents such as Promoting the Educational Outcomes of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children. [DFE February 2018] The Virtual School Head Teacher adheres to these guidelines when allocating the funding. For example: that it is not used to pay for statutory core services that the Local Authority should provide, or that it is used to double fund pupils statutory services which are part of their funding in schools, i.e. those with an Educational Health Care Plan.

3. Allocation of Spending by the Virtual School

3.1 Details of School Allocation

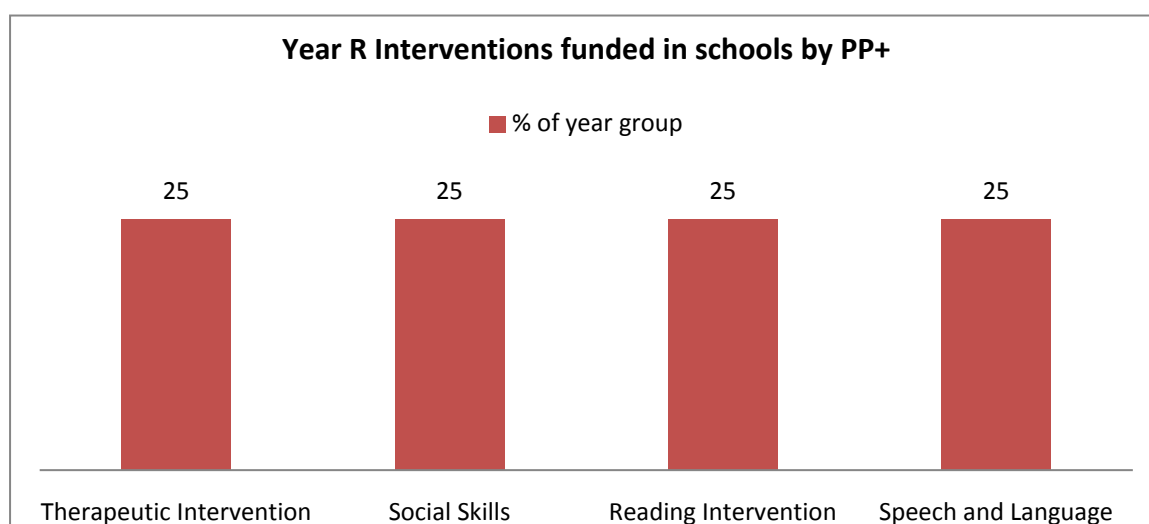
- 3.1.1 The Local Authority census return details the number of children who are looked after to Thurrock during the time of this census in March of every year. This is the basis by which the Department for Education allocates the Pupil Premium Plus [PP+] funding that Thurrock Local Authority receives. In the financial year 2018-2019, Thurrock received funding for 262 pupils which totalled £602,600.
- 3.1.2 From this overall amount £471,600 was immediately allocated to schools to be released on a termly basis.
- 3.1.3 In line with the Thurrock Pupil Premium Policy, schools are responsible for evidencing how they are spending this money per term on the looked after child/young person. Schools and educational settings must be able to demonstrate that this is being allocated to meet the needs of pupils and that it is making an impact on their educational outcomes. This evidence is found in the Personal Educational Plan [PEP] online document. Every child/young person looked after must have a PEP every term. This must contain detail

relating to the educational experiences and progress of the child/young person and must evidence clear targets to improve outcomes. The PEP evidences any support and interventions that are in place to meet needs. Every PEP document is scrutinised by a member of the Virtual School team and targets are audited by the Virtual School Head Teacher before funding is released. Individual PEPs detail school spending for every pupil.

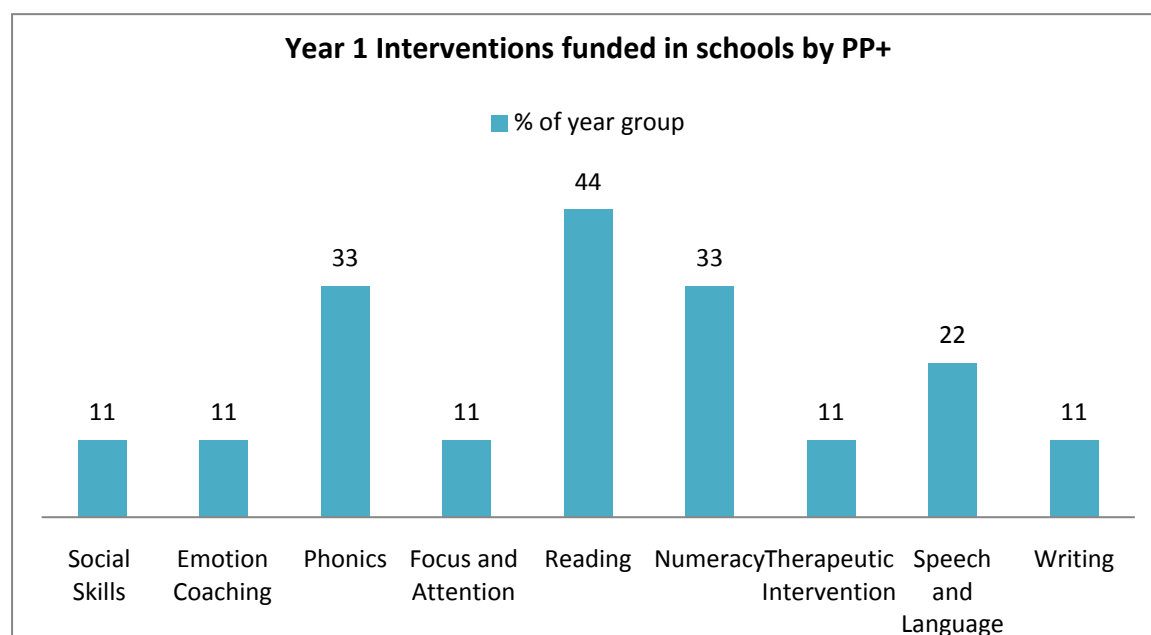
- 3.1.4 The impact of these measures has ensured that there is a level of challenge and accountability. Educational settings have been encouraged to review their spending and to use it effectively to focus on the impact for improving educational attainment. The grant is not to be used as a personal budget and it should not be used to fund activities which are paid for through foster carer allowances. It has enabled there to be a clear dialogue of expectations between the Virtual School and settings to promote educational outcomes, improve progress and close the attainment gap in comparison with non-looked after peers. The robustness of this process has been further improved through the increased staffing for the Virtual School as there are more staff to directly challenge and hold other professionals to account.

3.2 Overview of Spending by Primary Schools

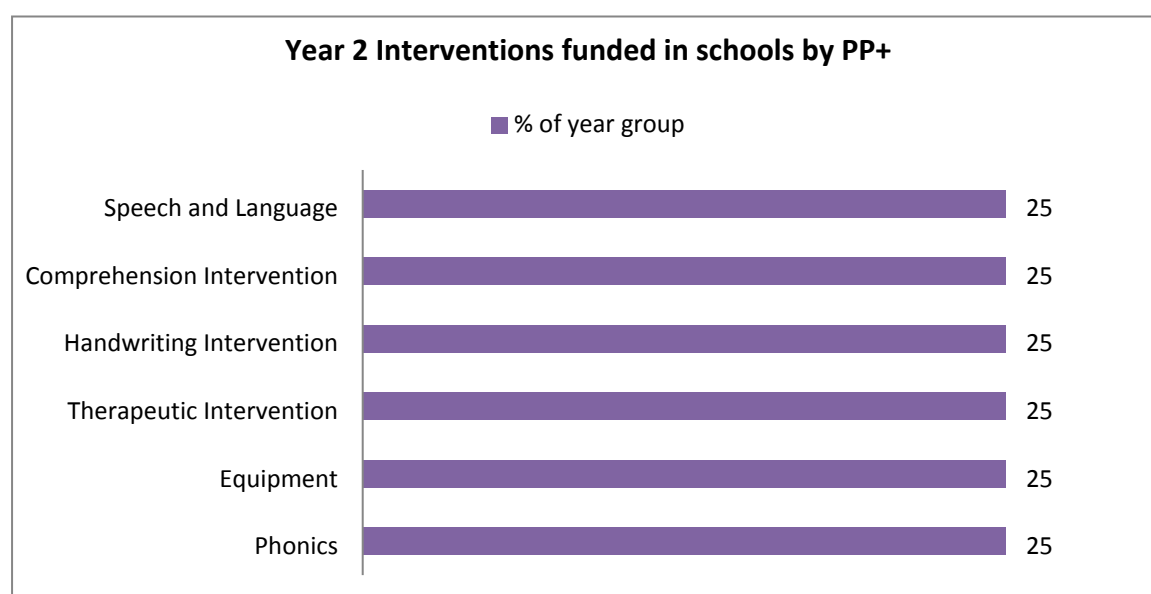
- 3.2.1 The following graphs show an overview of how each year group is benefiting from the allocation by their educational setting of their Pupil Premium Plus funding. This detail has been obtained by analysis of individual PEP information for each pupil. Some pupils have multiple interventions and the money is allocated across a range of activities and support. Other pupils may only have one type of intervention.
- 3.2.2 The Reception year has a very small year group with only 4 pupils. The graph below details their intervention needs. The range of support is evenly spread with 1 child receiving 1 intervention each.



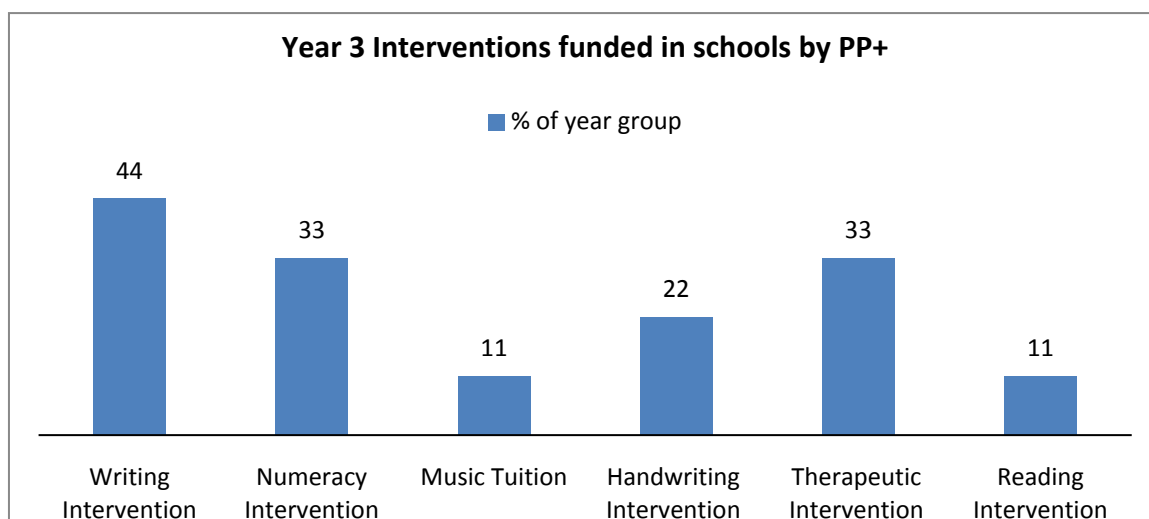
3.2.3 The Year 1 group has 9 pupils and the number of interventions provided by schools has increased to meet the varying needs of this group. These are detailed below. As expected, focus is on developing reading, numeracy and phonics skills.



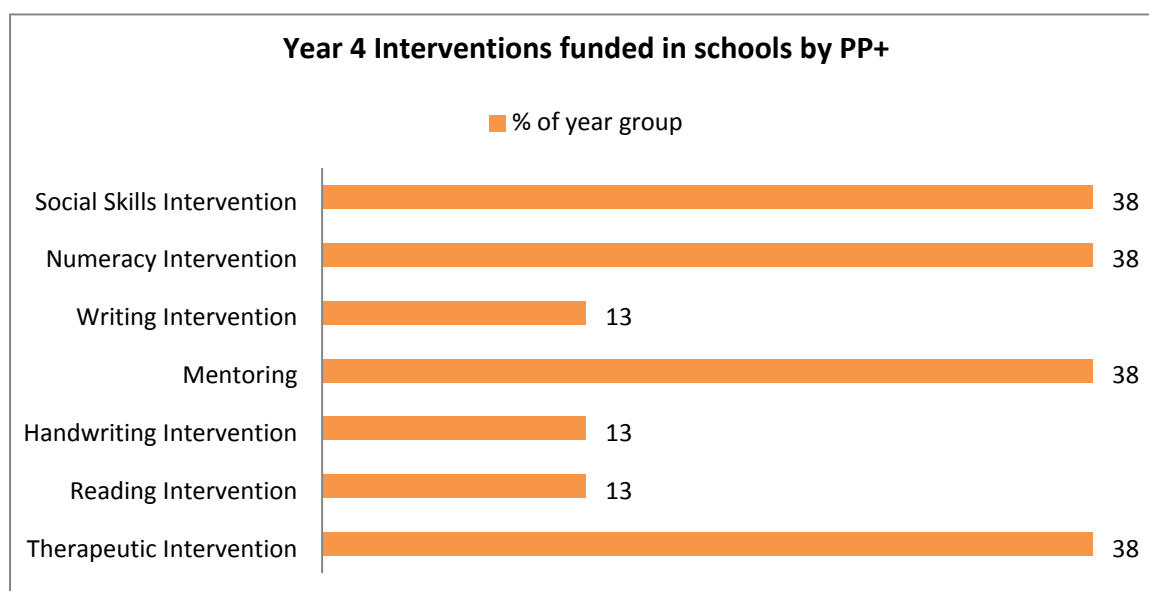
3.2.4 Our Year 2 is a very small cohort of only 4 pupils. They have multiple interventions which they access. These are illustrated below. There is an even spread of support based upon individual need.



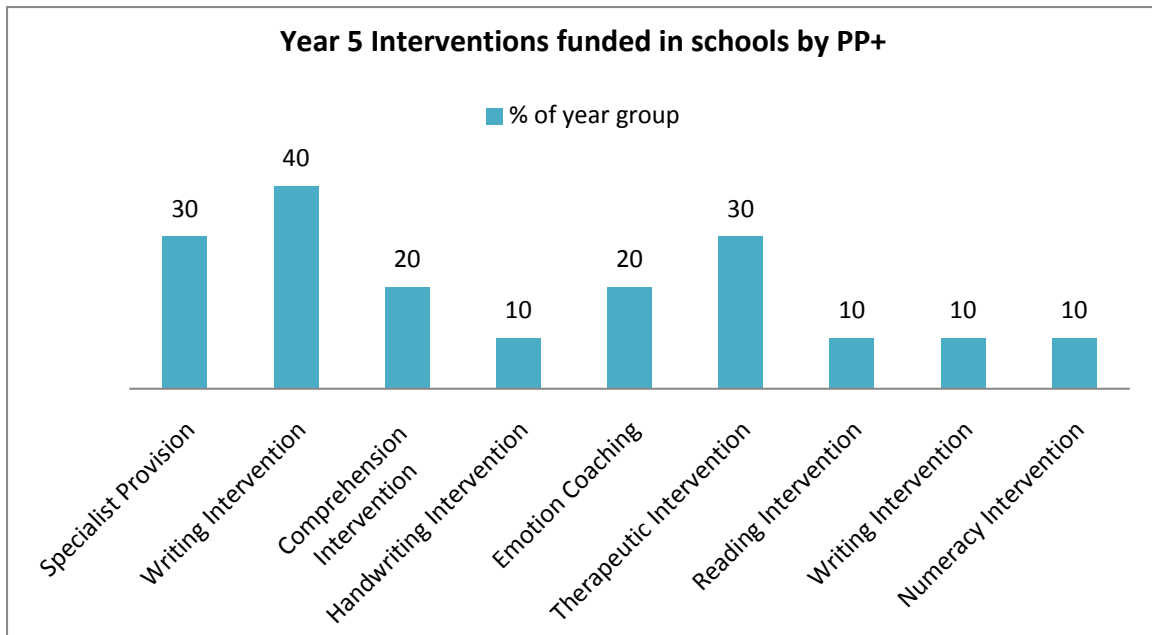
3.2.5 Year 3 has 9 pupils who access individual support from schools. The PP+ funded intervention are outlined below. The majority of interventions is based upon improving the areas of writing and numeracy. Therapeutic support is also quite high for this year group.



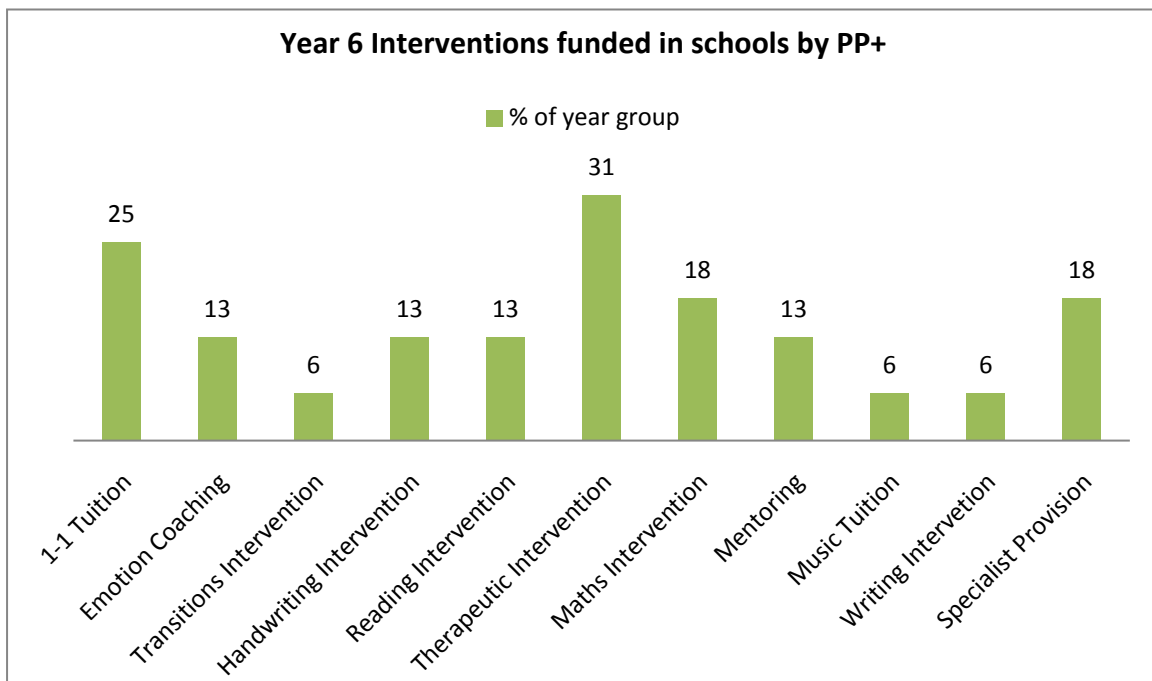
3.2.6 Year 4 currently contains 8 pupils. There is a broad range of intervention provided in schools. The most prevalent in this year group being Therapeutic Mentoring and Numeracy interventions. This is illustrated below.



3.2.7 Our Year 5 currently has 10 pupils. 3 of which [30%] attend specialist provision. Those attending specialist residential or SEN provision do not apply for pupil premium due to double funding. However, settings are able to claim for additional funds if required and each application is considered on its individual merit and proposed impact. There is a broad spectrum of intervention supplied for Year 5s. This is illustrated below.



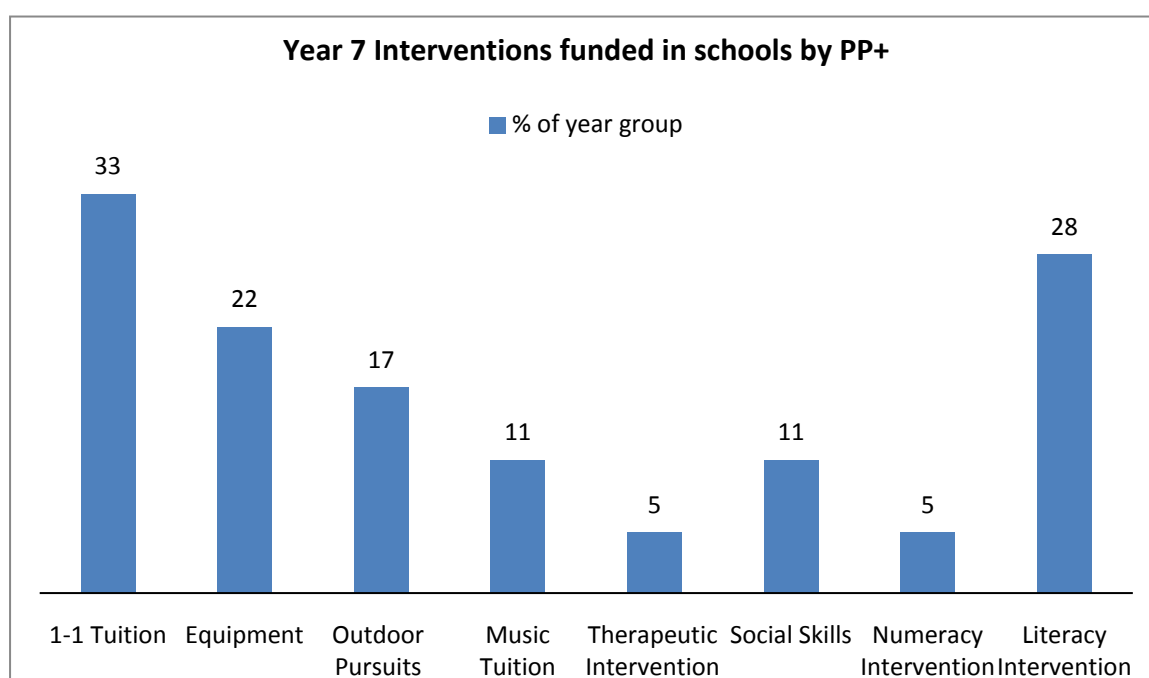
3.2.8 Year 6 is our largest of the year groups in the Primary Phase with 16 pupils. Schools are preparing their pupils for SATs in May. The Virtual School is using pupil premium plus top slice funding [see further in this report] to provide additional maths and English tuition in the home to promote better outcomes for these tests and enable more pupils to meet expected standards of development. As our pupils get older the number of interventions provided by schools tends to increase. This is detailed in the graph below. Therapeutic intervention is quite high for this year group.



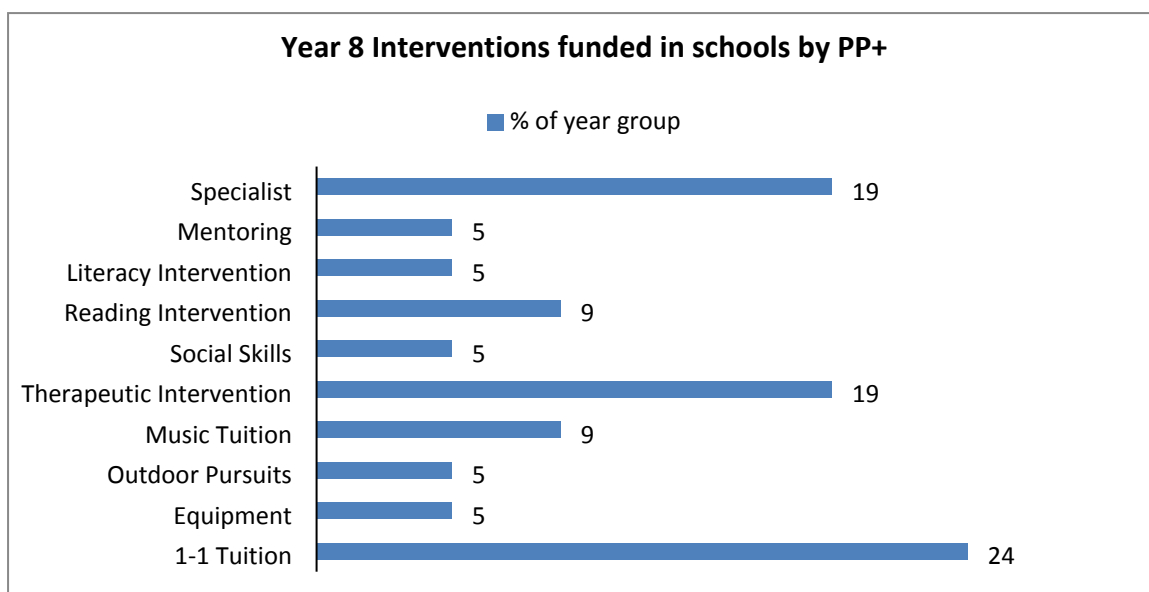
3.3 Overview of Spending by Secondary Schools

3.3.1 The following graphs show an overview of how each year group is benefiting from the allocation by their educational setting of their Pupil Premium Plus funding. This detail has been obtained by analysis of individual PEP information for each pupil. Some pupils have multiple interventions and the money is allocated across a range of activities and support. Other pupils may only have one type of intervention.

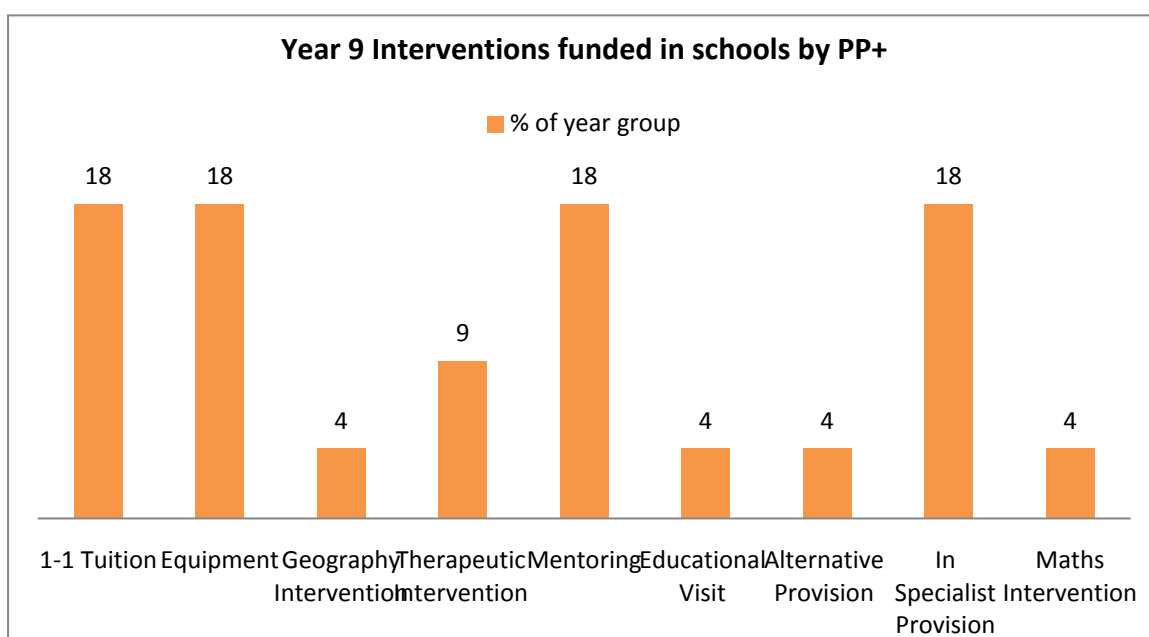
3.3.2 Year 7 – The following graph details the range of interventions/support supplied. There are 18 pupils in this year group and the data is represented as a percentage of that year group. It can be seen that there is a wide variety of interventions taking place and some pupils are experiencing multiple interventions. The most used method for support is through 1-1 tuition with literacy interventions being the second.



3.3.3 Year 8 shows similar types of support with some variation as to the type of interventions used by schools. For example the use of mentoring. There are currently 21 pupils in Year 8. The graph below details their support. There are 4 pupils who are accessing SEND funding and have their educational placement funded directly, this is shown as specialist in the graph below. They have not applied to use the funding as this would be considered as double funding. However, should the setting require additional funding, the pupil allocation is available. In addition to 1-1 tuition being highest the next is Therapeutic intervention. This is usually provided by school based external councillors who are commissioned directly by the school.

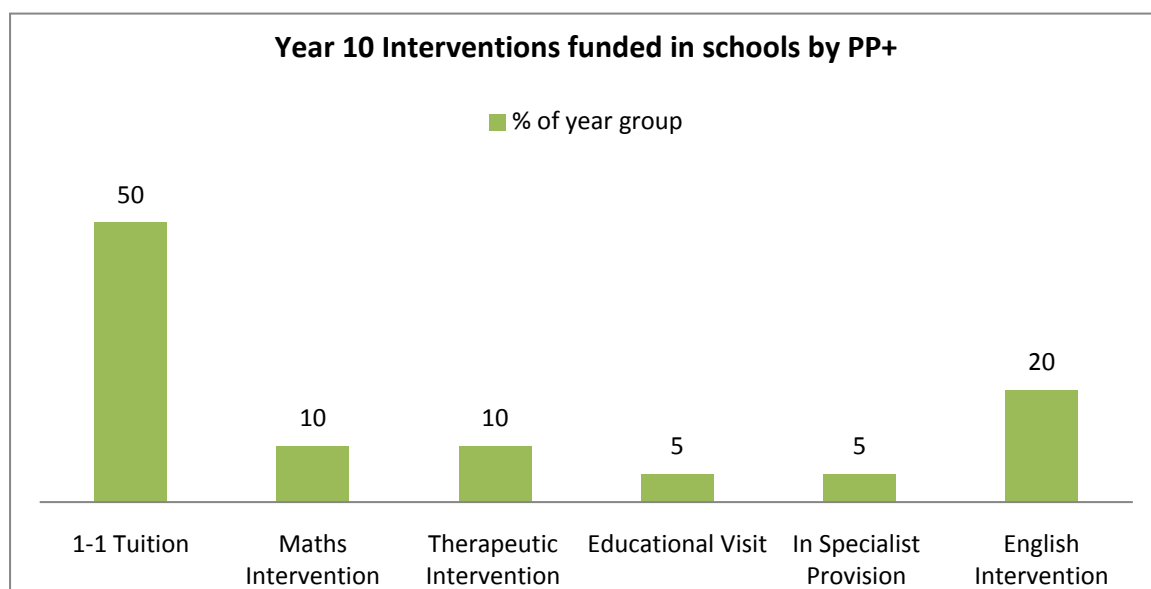


3.3.4 There are currently 22 children in Year 9. There are 4 pupils accessing specialist settings who are not applying for PP+. As with year 8 these can be provided with funding if needed.

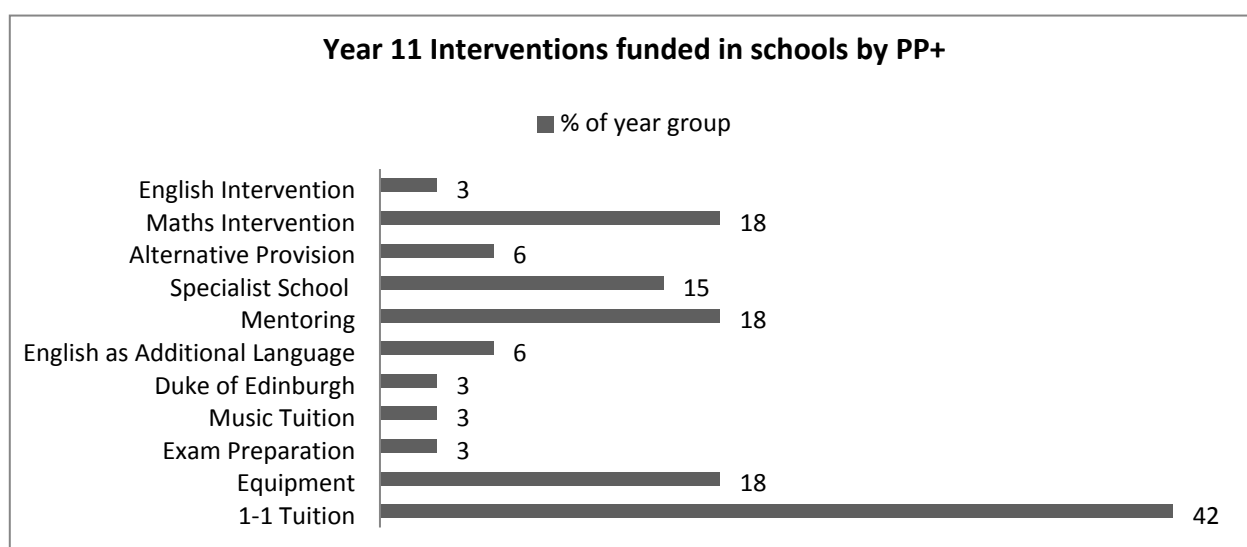


3.3.5 In Year 10 there are 20 pupils. This cohort will additionally start to receive 1-1 tuition in the home supplied using additional pupil premium resources with some of the top slice funding. They will continue to receive their school based interventions. The tuition will be provided in the core subject areas of maths, English and science. Some students may wish to have additional non-core subjects if they wish. The main bulk of schools are supplying 1-1 tuition with pupil premium and this continues to be one of the most effective methods of reducing the differences compared to non-looked after peers. The graph below details the range of interventions supplied. There are currently 2 pupils who are missing an educational placement in school due to specific needs

and the lack of educational provision to meet their needs. They are being supplied with 15 hours per week of 1-1 tuition until a specialist school placement is found. Both of these pupils have an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP]. Tuition is costing £900 per week per pupil. This is being funded through the pupil premium top slice and some of the Designated Schools Grant [DSG]. The graph illustrates that 1-1 tuition in school is being used with 50% of the year group engaging with this activity.



3.3.6 Our Year 11 has the largest number of pupils in the year groups with 33 young people. A proportion of this group have received 1-1 home tutoring to support their GCSE attainment and this started in the summer term of Year 10. Some have declined this tuition as year 11 has progressed due to attending interventions within school. We have encouraged those who can maintain this commitment to continue with the tuition until they take their exams.



3.3.7 Overall it can be seen that the vast majority of intervention in schools is provided via 1-1 tuition and this increases as the pupils progress through the key stages. This is viewed by Sutton Trust research as being one of the most effective methods of supporting attainment and as such this is why the Virtual School commissions additional tuition for particular year groups.

3.3.8 In cases where schools do not use the pupil premium spending to support the pupil, the Virtual School intervenes with the social worker, the designated teacher and the foster carer to produce a specific spending plan. This is usually where the Virtual School will commission extra equipment or tuition to support learning. However, the vast majority of schools do apply for funding and it is very rare for a school to not apply for the PP+.

3.4 Overview of Spending by the Virtual School

3.4.1 As mentioned earlier in this report, the Virtual School top slices £500 per pupil. In the financial year 2018-2019 this has amounted to £131,000.

3.4.2 It is important to note that the allocations from the DFE are based upon the number of looked after children during the period of the census. It does not take into consideration the number of pupils who leave care during a year, or who come into care. All of these pupils are eligible for PP+, even if they are in care for 1 day. As mentioned above we were allocated funding for 262 pupils. This figure was based upon the census return.

3.4.3 When a pupil enters care at any point in the academic year, the educational setting immediately starts to receive PP+ funding for the term the pupil entered care. In some cases, the pupil may require additional funding for specific needs and to support the transition into care. This is allocated from the top slice. When a pupil moves school, the PP+ funding follows that child/young person to ensure that needs are met in their new setting.

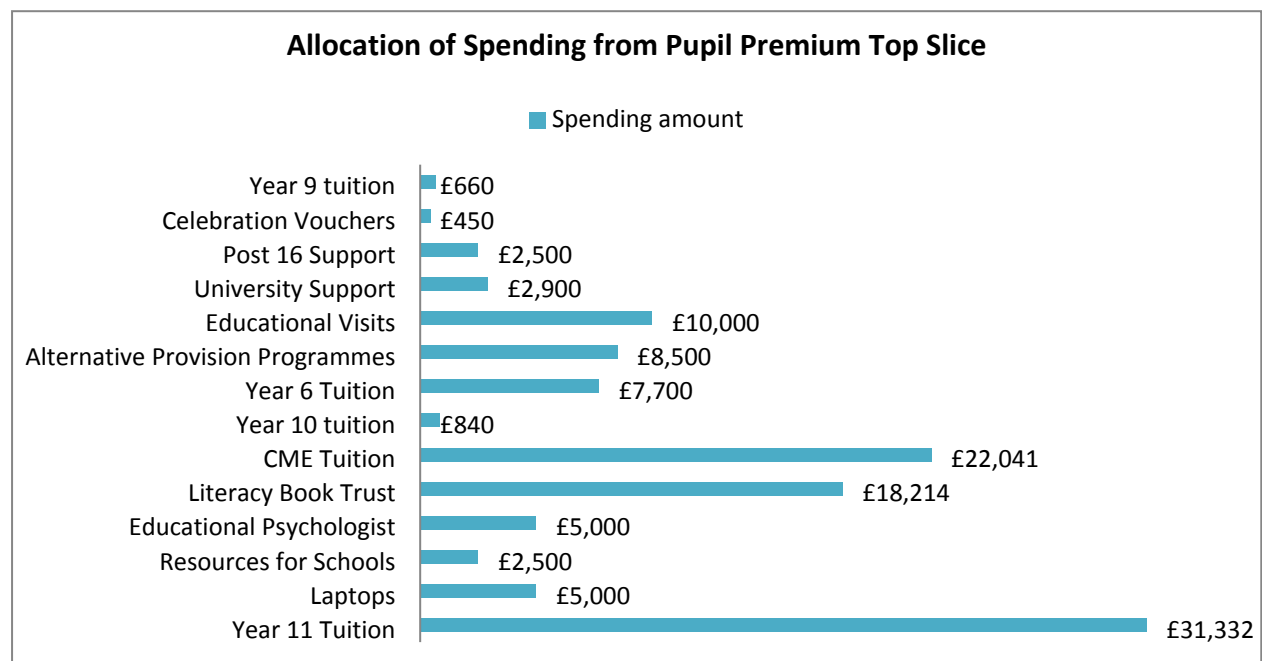
3.4.4 When a pupil leaves care during an academic year the school/educational placement receives the remaining amount of PP+ up to the sum of £2,300. This is to cover any shortfall in funding in the interim between leaving care and being eligible for PP+ funding for being Previously Looked After [PLAC]

3.4.5 Schools are able to claim for additional funding to meet the needs of the pupil in excess of the allocated £1,800. This is used to support those pupils who have high needs and need significant intervention to remain in school. This has proved to be a very successful use of the top slice as this has ensured that we have had zero permanent exclusions.

3.4.6 Additional funding from the PP+ top slice has also been used to provide a range of specific interventions detailed in the next section and further plans for this are shown in the spending strategy plan for 2019-2020 [Appendix B]

3.4.7 The graph below details spending from the top slice and the allocation of funds for particular projects. The spending for this totals £117,637.

3.4.8 Details of the spending will be discussed after the graph.



3.4.9 Post 16 and University support has been provided to support those more able students as they embark in the next stage of their education. Laptops were provided to these students to help them with their degree work. Some laptops were specific types and cost £1,000 each to support computing and engineering degrees. Students were also provided with vouchers to enable them to buy the essential they needed for moving away. For example: cooking sets, duvets and additional items they may choose to support that settling in period. This is what any good parent would do when their young person leaves for university. Other students have needed specialist equipment when studying certain post 16 courses. For example: safety clothing equipment for construction, catering equipment. We have even helped one young lady obtain her forklift truck licence and she is now in employment as a result of this.

3.4.10 Some young people have been able to attend educational visits with their which would otherwise be too expensive for them to access using PP+ alone. This has enabled our children looked after to experience enriched cultural and educational experiences.

3.4.11 The commissioning of Educational Psychologists [EP] has been crucial for identifying needs and supporting the Education Health Care Plan process. When it is not a statutory piece of work, schools have to commission extra time. Without the additional funds from the top slice, this would have had to be delayed until other funding was sourced. This delay is unreasonable when the needs of our children looked after are so high and complex.

- 3.4.12 The provision of trauma and attachment resources for every Thurrock school has enabled key information to be provided to schools. This is in addition to the termly training that we provide for Designated Teachers. The Virtual School also provides training in trauma and attachment free to schools to enable their staff to better support our children and young people in their school. The impact and demand for this is increasing. One designated teacher commented that his school has halved the number of episodes that all students are missing as a result of poor behaviour. This is because they have adopted a trauma informed approach. This was as a direct result from reading the books that the Virtual School provided. It is an excellent outcome for all pupils attending this Thurrock school.
- 3.4.13 Children Missing Education [CME] is usually caused by an emergency placement move. This can result in a pupil having to move school. There is sometimes a delay in sourcing another educational placement. This is particularly the case if the pupil has an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] due to the need to Special Educational Need services in the area having to consult with appropriate provision. Whenever, a pupil is missing education, the Virtual School commissions 15 hours per week of 1-1 tuition to prevent the young person from falling behind or becoming disengaged. Wherever possible CME must be avoided, however, when this is unavoidable the top slice funding can be used to support the educational needs for this period.
- 3.4.14 The Literacy Book Trust is a nationwide scheme which provides literacy and home learning resource packs. We use the top slice to fund this for all children and young people aged from nursery to Year 9. This enables them to receive a personal package in the post for 7 months of the year to support learning in their foster home and promote positive relationships with carers. Feedback from the carers and children is always positive.
- 3.4.15 The provision of additional tuition in the form of 1-1 in the home is an initiative which has developed over a number of academic years. Our aim from this is to provide extra learning and support for pupils in key year groups to promote the closing of the gap between them and their non-looked after peers. Although this is a significant amount of the funding obtained from the top slice, it is evident from the improvement in educational attainment data that this is having an impact. The more tuition that can be provided by qualified teachers, the better the outcomes. For this reason, we are always trying to increase the amount of funding that we devolve to this. It can also be seen by the schools' spending outlined above, that many schools employ this as a method of supporting increased academic achievement.
- 3.4.16 Laptops are purchased by the Virtual School to be provided to pupils who do not have access to this resource in their home. As our pupils progress through the key stages, the requirement for homework to be completed online and using digital technology increases. With this in mind, we provide laptops to those pupils based on need. A laptop agreement is signed by the pupil and guidance is provided to promote online safety and supervised use.

3.5 Previously Looked After Children [PLAC]

- 3.5.1 Previously Looked After Children are those who are no longer in care. They may have returned home, have been adopted or be subject to a Special Guardianship Order [SGO], or be subject to a child arrangement order. The schools who educate these pupils receive £2,300 per year to support the educational outcomes of these children and to meet individual needs. Arrangements for children leaving care during an academic year are noted above in this report. For those who have left care and are recorded as such by the school census mechanisms, the DFE directly pays this money to schools. The Virtual School Head does not hold responsibility for allocating or monitoring the use of this grant.

4. Overview of Spending Strategy for 2019-2020

- 4.1 The planned spending for the top slice has been provided in Appendix B. This will be discussed for approval by the Virtual School Governing Body. This details our aims for the forthcoming financial and academic year and is in line with the School Improvement Plan. The core focus for this plan is to identify potential barriers to learning and achievement and implement interventions to overcome these barriers. The impact of the spending will be reviewed each term and noted in an evaluation document produced alongside the plan.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In summary, the above Pupil Premium Plus Grant report provides an overview of external spending of the grant. Additionally it provides details of the top slice spending and how the Virtual School Head allocates this grant and monitors the spending for every child/young person looked after. It is essential that we recognise the hard work of educational settings to support the varied needs of our pupils and we as a Council will continue to support them in the next stages of their academic journey.

6. Additional Information for the Committee

- 6.1 There is no additional information for the committee as part of this report.

7. Reasons for Recommendation

- 7.1 It is requested that the Committee agree the recommendations and use the reporting mechanisms to support and challenge the work of the Virtual School on behalf of Children and Young People Looked After.

8. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

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

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
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 this 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 needing alternative provision for their specific needs has had an implication on spending and budgets. The pupil premium top slice has enabled demand to be met. The Pupil Premium Plus Grant has been agreed to be funded by the central government until 2020. The withdrawal of this funding will potentially have a significant impact on schools and the Virtual School.

9.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal

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. The Pupil Premium Conditions of Grant must also be considered when discharging the duty to provide a Virtual School Head to allocate and monitor the spending of the grant.

9.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead – Community Development

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 and emotional health needs.

9.4 Other implications (where significant)

There are no implications as a result of this report.

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):

- 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children' DFE February 2018 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>
- 'Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities' – published July 2014 and revised March 2015 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-virtual-school-heads-responsibilities>
- 'Pupil Premium: funding and accountability for schools - How much pupil premium funding schools and non-mainstream schools receive, how they should spend it, and how we hold them to account – published March 2014 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

11. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A – Thurrock Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Thurrock Children Looked After 2018-2019
- Appendix B – Thurrock Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus Strategy 2019-2020

Report Author:

Keeley Pullen

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After
Children's Services

This page is intentionally left blank

Thurrock Virtual School

Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Thurrock Children Looked After

April 2018 - March 2019

1. Introduction

This policy is informed by the four key Department of Education (DfE) documents announcing significant national changes in the arrangements for Pupil Premium for Children Looked After [CLA]. These being:

- Pupil Premium Grant 2018 to 2019 Conditions of Grant (Published December 2017)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2018-to-2019/pupil-premium-2018-to-2019-conditions-of-grant>
- Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher - Frequently Asked Questions (Published March 2014 and Updated March 2015)
- Early Years Pupil Premium: Guide for Local Authorities
<https://www.gov.uk/earlyyears-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities>
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children [February 2018]
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

Throughout this policy, the Pupil Premium for Children Looked After will be referred to as **Pupil Premium Plus** to distinguish it from other forms of Pupil Premium allocations. The Virtual School Headteacher does not hold responsibility for all Pupil Premium allocations, just those for Children Looked After in receipt of Pupil Premium Plus.

The key changes are:

- Children and young people between the ages of four to sixteen years will be eligible as soon as they enter care.
- Although Local Authorities continue to be responsible for distributing the Pupil Premium Plus payments for CLA to schools and academies, the Virtual School Headteachers are now directly responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating Pupil Premium Plus funding to benefit CLA to their authority.
- The overall grant allocated to each Local Authority will be calculated on a per capita basis, however it does not have to be distributed on a per capita basis, given that children and young people in care have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care
- The grant must be managed by the Virtual School and used to improve attainment, narrow the gap and accelerate progress as identified in the young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the Designated Teacher.

- In April 2015 further development introduced the Early Years Pupil Premium paid to children looked after aged 3 and 4.

The Pupil Premium Plus and Early Years Pupil Premium funding will be allocated according to the following principles:

- Children and young people will be eligible from the first day of the care episode
- The Local Authority that looks after the child is responsible for distributing the Pupil Premium Plus payments to schools, settings and academies
- The Virtual School Head is responsible for making sure that there are effective arrangements in place for allocating Pupil Premium Plus and Early Years Pupil Premium funding to benefit children looked after by their Authority
- The grant must be managed by the Virtual School and used to improve outcomes and “narrow the achievement gap” as identified for individual children and young people in the targets set within their Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the Designated Teacher or Designated Person in the setting
- The PEP must be monitored and reviewed closely by the Designated Teacher, the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer for effectiveness
- The PEP must be reviewed on a termly basis by the Designated Teacher
- The ePEP will be used for all Thurrock CLA irrespective of where placed in the country
- The ePEP, once fully completed each term, will trigger the payment of the Pupil Premium grant to the school or setting
- All PEPs and ePEPs will be monitored for SMART targets that have a positive impact on the improvement of educational outcomes
- As a result of the above changes, our allocation of Pupil Premium Plus needs to move to a model driven by a child’s needs, managed through high quality PEPs
- As a result PEPs will need to be monitored even more closely by Designated Teachers, Headteachers/Principles, the Virtual School, Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

NB: In addition and through a separate process, children adopted from care will be entitled to £2,300 passed directly to the school. This grant is outside the remit of this policy and the role of the Virtual School.

2. Pupil Premium Plus Policy

2.1. Overall principles underpinning our child's needs driven model

The Virtual School Headteacher is responsible for the use of Pupil Premium Plus to close the learning gap and realise the potential for all children in our care, irrespective of where the pupil lives.

A total of £1,800 will be allocated per Child Looked After which will be paid in three £600 termly instalments.

In rare cases, additional funding could be provided according to the needs of the child/young person and this would be up to a maximum of £600.

Thurrock Council and the Virtual School Headteacher are Corporate Parents, so the question 'would this be good enough for my child?' is a central one in making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of the use of Pupil Premium Plus.

Key Points to Note:

- **£1,800** will be allocated to the schools or settings for all Thurrock CLA (both in and out of the Local Authority) at **£600** per term
- Allocation of the funding will be linked to clear Personal Education Plan targets for progress and improving outcomes
- The Virtual School Head is responsible for the allocation of the Pupil Premium Plus to schools and settings but will hold the schools and settings that receive the funding accountable for evidence of the effective and efficient use for the purpose it has been provided
- Schools remain accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils
- Schools should ensure that the funding is used to narrow the gap between the outcomes for children looked after and all other children within the school as well as all children nationally
- In some cases, schools may be able to apply for additional funding in response to the changing needs of the child discussed during the Personal Education Planning meeting and for an agreed intervention to raise educational outcomes
- None of the grant will be used to pay for Virtual School management or grant administration

- The grant will not be used to pay for transport to and from school
- The Local Authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the financial year 2018-2019. Grant held centrally that has not been spent by 31 March 2019 will be recovered.

In line with all allocations of grant it is expected that the following actions are taken by schools/settings applying for funding:

- High quality PEPs are completed by the school through ensuring that Section B of ePEP is completed every term
- A full PEP meeting is held at the minimum of 6 monthly intervals with social care, carers and the pupil in attendance and that all sections of ePEP are completed
- Section B of ePEP includes ensuring that termly progress and current attainment data are shared with the Virtual School by uploading this data regularly onto ePEP – completed every term
- Impact of interventions funded through Pupil Premium Plus are evidenced and SMART targets linked to funding are detailed – completed every term
- Pupil Premium Plus allocation must be spent in line with the Terms and Conditions of Grant as dictated by the DfE.

2.2. How and why is a personalised approach to using Pupil Premium Plus applicable?

Children's/Young Person's needs may vary over time and therefore a personalised approach is needed. For some children/young people a significant amount will be needed to fund the cost of support, for example:

- Children who come into care in an emergency with a fragmented home and education history who are behind academically
- Children who move into or out of Thurrock who may require additional support
- Children with significant and often delayed reaction to abuse and neglect, which may present as complex emotional, social and/or challenging behaviour impacting on progress.

In view of this, there may be variations in the amount of Pupil Premium Plus distributed and as such the Virtual School uses the pool of money from the £500 top slice per pupil for this additional support.

Proposals to pool Pupil Premium Plus in a school or group of schools to enhance services, providing its use is directly linked to the needs of the CLA pupil via the PEP, are acceptable.

2.3. Circumstances in which Pupil Premium Plus will not be agreed

Pupil Premium Plus will not be used to double fund or replace funding which should have or has already been allocated to the school to support the child. Specifically it cannot be used to:

- Fund services that should be provided via a statement or EHC plan
- Provide other statutory work e.g. statutory assessment or support from health

Pupil Premium Plus will not be paid if:

- The interventions put in place do not require any funding
- The school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions
- The PEP targets do not meet requirements (see Appendix 1)

Whereas in the past, some schools have used the Pupil Premium Grant to fund interventions for other learners, or to provide interventions which had no link to the individual CLAs needs, this practice will no longer be permitted.

3. Management and Accountability

The Headteacher of Thurrock Virtual School will be accountable to Thurrock Council's Corporate Parenting Panel and the Governing Body for the Virtual School for setting up a transparent and rigorous allocation process and ensuring maximised impact of the grant.

The Virtual School Headteacher [VSHT] has responsibility that Pupil Premium Plus is used in-line with the conditions of grant 2018/2019.

The VSHT will be responsible for initial agreement of the spending plan and subsequent monitoring of the spending plan via the ePEP.

The Designated Teacher in a school is responsible for proposing an appropriate child's needs driven spending plan. The Designated Teacher is accountable via the PEP meeting for monitoring and measuring the impact of the actions and interventions agreed. These will be reviewed in terms of narrowing the gap for impact.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for completing the relevant ePEP sections every term as detailed in the PEP Protocol Document for Thurrock and ensuring that this information is shared with relevant teaching staff across the school to maximise impact.

The Social Worker and Foster Carer have a key role in supporting and informing the discussions at the PEP meeting for a proposal of how Pupil Premium Plus could be used. They also have a key role in supporting the young person in achieving their targets.

4. Pupil Premium Plus for Children and Young People from other Local Authorities

Each Local Authority has its own policy and therefore there will be variations. Schools who have Children and Young People in care from other Local Authorities on their roll should contact the Headteacher of the relevant Virtual School to request their Pupil Premium Plus policy. The name and contact details of other Virtual School Headteachers can be requested from the Thurrock Virtual School team.

5. Appeals Process

It is anticipated that if the guidance outlined above is understood and followed; there will be agreement in respect of the applications submitted for Pupil Premium Plus. If however, there is a dispute which cannot be resolved between the school and VSHT, the appeal process can be activated.

Appeals will be heard by the Strategic Lead for School Improvement and independent representatives from the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Decisions of this panel are final.

Appeals should be submitted to kpullen@thurrock.gov.uk by the Designated Teacher of the school, addressed to the Headteacher of Thurrock Virtual School, marked Pupil Premium Plus Appeal, and include the name of the child, their date of birth, and the grounds for the appeal.

6. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the VSHT and the Governing Body of the Virtual School in March 2019. Changes will be applied and circulated in line with the new financial year and as appropriate.

APPENDIX 1

Applying for Pupil Premium Plus

Please refer to separate guidance 'EPEP and Targets' for detailed explanation.

The Pupil Premium Plus will only be provided to meet the needs identified in a high quality plan in the PEP meeting with clear quantitative (and exceptionally qualitative) targets for improvement, underpinned by well-targeted support.

The Pupil Premium Plus must be used to close the gap and for realising potential for children/young people.

All applications should be made online via the Target Section of the ePEP (SMART TARGETS in Section B)

Targets should fall within one of the following six areas of focus:

- Academic achievement and progress
- Attendance
- Emotional Health
- Transition
- Wider Achievement
- Inclusion (by reducing internal and external exclusion)

Underpinning the main 'Area of Focus', targeted interventions need to be identified and reflect the 'Sutton Trust' recommendations. Both the 'Area of Focus' and 'Intervention Type' are available as drop-down options in the 'Target' section of ePEP.

Schools will need to provide details of the target in all of the boxes provided to be eligible for the funding. Targets should be reviewed every term by the Designated Teacher.

Applications should be made every term, irrespective of if there has been a PEP meeting. These targets can then inform future PEPs.

Targets should be reviewed and updated by the Designated Teacher every term and shared with colleagues to ensure consistency of approach and maximum opportunities to achieve success.

Additional targets may be agreed and discussed as part of a PEP meeting and may or may not require funding, these should also be included in Section B.

Targets should be SMART, with at least one academic target related to core subjects and one additional curriculum target, additional non-academic targets are also permitted.

Schools should select one of the three funding options below for each target.

1. One-off funding (e.g.: for a piece of equipment)

2. Regular funding (e.g.: 6 weeks tuition at £ per week) if schools are unsure of start date please put proposed start date. Schools are expected to source their own tutoring.

3. Yearly funding (e.g.: closing the gap writing intervention: 1:4 small group with HLTA, 30 minute sessions 3 x week, focusing on personalised writing targets and aiming to achieve expected levels in the programme of study by end of academic year.

There is a drop down menu which allows you to allocate which term relates to each target that is set. E.G Autumn Term £600, Spring Term £600 etc.

An application for funding for a plan for the whole academic year can be made. Progress for this target should always be reviewed termly. This does not mean that an application for additional funding if required later in the year cannot be made for the pupil concerned. In all cases a decision will be made by the VSHT.

Please note: if a pupil subject to a yearly agreement for funding of a target leaves your school/academy before the end of the academic year, the next payment will not be made. The funding will follow the pupil and a new agreement will be made between Virtual School and the new school/academy.

Schools are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all children and the new guidance from Ofsted means that schools will need to be able to demonstrate how the pupil premium is being used and the positive difference it makes. Schools will need to evidence for each child in care how he/she is supported by Pupil Premium Plus.

Allocation of funding to in and out of borough schools

The Pupil Premium Plus Grant will be transferred three times a year in the July, December and March following a review of the quality of the PEP and targets.

The Thurrock finance team will be instructed by the VSHT to release the payments to the schools and every school must provide banking details to the finance office if requested in order to receive the funding.

If a school has not completed Section B before the above dates, funding may not be released and may be allocated to other pupils.

Please note that Section B should be completed irrespective of whether a PEP meeting has occurred or not prior to submission. The targets that are set can inform the next PEP meeting.

Payments will be based on an agreed spending plan in line with the child's needs. Where there is a need to clarify what funding a school is providing from its own resources, the school may need to provide evidence before Pupil Premium Plus can be allocated. We reserve the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the needs of the pupil.

This page is intentionally left blank

Thurrock Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus Strategy 2019-2020

Page 59

INTRODUCTION

The following document is a breakdown for planned expenditure for the financial year 2019-2020. The Corporate Parenting Report for March 2019 and the Virtual School Annual Report for 2017-2018 covers expenditure for the period before this strategy document.

There are many potential barriers to learning that a child or young person looked after can face. This document is a brief overview of certain measures that the Virtual School are implementing and how the Pupil Premium Plus funding can be used to support this.

The motivation behind this is the core purpose of the Virtual School which is to promote the educational outcomes for children and young people in care.

Key documents to support this strategy are:

- 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children' DFE February 2018 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>
- 'Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities' – published July 2014 and revised March 2015 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-virtual-school-heads-responsibilities>
- 'Pupil Premium: funding and accountability for schools - How much pupil premium funding schools and non-mainstream schools receive, how they should spend it, and how we hold them to account – published March 2014 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

KEY BARRIERS TO LEARNING

1. Low academic outcomes
2. Low literacy and numeracy attainment and progress – limited language, restricted vocabulary, English as a second language
3. SEN, especially social emotional, mental health difficulties – neglect, attachment difficulties, trauma, - issues undiagnosed
4. Low aspirations /expectation
5. Poor social skills - Lack of self-confidence and self esteem
6. Narrow range of experiences /opportunities / before entering care
7. Mobility – moves in educational, care placements, moves due to safeguarding issues
8. Transition – day to day transition, end of year/key stage transitions
9. Emergency Placement due to reasons of safeguarding – CSE, Missing episodes, forced marriage etc.
10. Lack of appropriate resources to support or enhance learning
11. Lack of timely knowledge and understanding or systems in schools/settings to champion the needs of Children or Young Person's Looked After

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2019-2020

BARRIER to LEARNING	Intervention	Lead	Total cost	Reason for intervention	Review	Total Cost
---------------------	--------------	------	------------	-------------------------	--------	------------

See key above						
1-8	School targeted support in line with personalised needs. Funding may also be used to provide CPD so staff acquire skills and knowledge to support the needs of Child/Young Person Looked After [C/YPLA]	Designated Teacher in School/Setting	£1,800 allocated per school per pupil aged from Year R to Year 11 Approximately 200 pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve/accelerate pupil's academic. To remove barriers to learning. To support child's social and emotional development. To enhance life experiences. To provide precise intervention in line with learning need. To fund resources. To support transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance of termly PEPs carried out by Virtual School Advisers. Termly pupil tracking system to monitor progress and achievement. End of Year outcomes. 	£405,000
Page 61	The use of additional learning support to enhance learning To reduce number of exclusions that may be affecting learning	Head Teacher in school/setting	Amount is allocated on a needs basis – interim for 1-2 terms until additional high needs funding is sourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide short term support in times of crisis to school when other resources have been exhausted This is usually emergency based funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Assurance of termly PEPs carried out by Virtual School Advisers. Termly pupil tracking system to monitor progress and achievement. End of Year outcomes. 	£10,000
1,2	Letter Box (Literacy Intervention) for all pupils in Year N to Year 9	Virtual School Letterbox Co-Ordinator and Virtual School Head Teacher [VSHT]	Cost per pupil is £135 – currently budgeted for 115 pupils in this age group for May 2019 – December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve literacy and numeracy skills. To support parent/carer in their child's learning. To expose children to a wide range of texts and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter Box evaluation by pupil and carer. Termly feedback. 	£19,917

			2019 distribution	vocabulary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop reading for pleasure. 		
1-5	Additional EP support 5 days support to be commissioned.	Virtual School Head Teacher in consultation with EP services	£5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide addition EP time for CLA. To provide timely assessment. To provide reports as part of Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] procedures. To ensure that the correct support is provided for pupils' needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of reports provided. Timeliness of intervention. Outcomes of EHCP applications 	£5,000
3, 4, 7, 8	Crisis intervention	Virtual School Head Teacher	Variable in line with need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide additional support due to SEMH difficulties To provide additional support during non-structured time or in line with presenting behaviour To provide education for those placed in emergency care due to reasons of safeguarding e.g. CSE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily /weekly review to celebrate success and inform next steps 	£10,000
1,2,5,9	1:1 Home Tuition of 15 hours per week per pupil for CME	Virtual School Head Teacher	Variable in line with need for exceptional cases This would also include Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children awaiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide catch up sessions due to absence from education To provide tuition during emergency transition periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reports provided by tutors Tracking of progress by responsible Virtual School phase teacher 	£10,000

			transfer or educational placement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly tracking data and assessments by tutor 	
1,2	1:1 Home tuition for pupils Year 10 – summer term 2018 Year 11 – throughout year 11 Year 6 – Summer 2018 term Year 6 Spring 2019 term	Virtual School Head Teacher	Focussed on pupils in those year groups to promote progress and attainment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide precise intervention /support to accelerate and/or secure learning To provide private, focussed 1-1 support To improve pupil progress and educational outcomes at the end of KS2 and KS4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reports provided by tutors Tracking of progress by responsible Virtual School phase teacher Termly tracking data and assessments by tutor Discussion with school/setting regarding impact on data outcomes. 	£35,000 Yr 11 £8,000 Yr 6 £1,000 Yr 10
1,2,9, 10	Purchase 5 Laptops	Virtual School Head Teacher and Phase Education Adviser	This resource will be allocated according to need as the primary expectation is that schools can provide this using PP+ funding £350 X5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure young people have access to appropriate ICT to support learning To secure equity in access to education activities to support home learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from pupils and carers at PEP meetings. Impact on homework completion. Impact on learning outcomes. 	£1,750

8	Provision of vouchers for key essentials	Virtual School Head Teacher and Post 16 Phase Education Adviser	£50 Per Pupil Total = £500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be allocated for pupils prior to them attending university to support them with key essentials. E.g. bedding, cooking equipment, study books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from young person Case study 	£500
10	<p>CPD to :- develop and empower all stakeholders to support and champion the educational needs of CLA and Previously Looked After Children [PLAC]</p> <p>Ensure staff acquire specialist skills and knowledge to match pupil needs</p> <p>Provision of resources for schools</p>	Virtual School Head Teacher	£5,000 CPD £2,500 resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide termly CPD for Designated teacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads. To organise local conference for DTs, Senior Staff, SENCo and sister services pertaining to SEMH and NICE Guidelines To ensure there is an uncompromising recognition that all staff are responsible for outcomes of C/YP LA and PLAC Attendance at National VSHT conference. Purchasing of Trauma and Attachment literature to support educational settings to support pupils. Engagement of outside speakers to enhance learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register of attendance. Improved targeted support as evidenced in PEP. 	£5,000 £2,500

				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership of National Association of Virtual School Heads		
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Proposed Spending Overview

This is based upon an estimated top slice based upon 225 pupils is £112,500

Allocation of Spending from Pupil Premium Top Slice

■ Spending amount



Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Parenting

Year: 2018/2019

Dates of Meetings: 6 June 2018, 5 September 2018, 15 January 2019, 6 March 2019

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
6 June 2018		
Information on Recent External Placements for Young People	Janet Simon	Officers
Briefing Note – Attainment of Children Looked After 2017 Validated Data	Keeley Pullen	Officers
Social Care Development Plan: CLA Progress Report	Sheila Murphy	Officers
Children's Social Care Performance	Sheila Murphy	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
5 September 2018		
Annual Report on the Health of Looked After Children – Deferred	Paula Gregory	Members
Children's Social Care Performance	Sheila Murphy	Members
IRO Annual Report for 2017/18	Brian Relph	Officers
Children in Care Council Update	Children in Care	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
15 January 2019		
Children in Care Council Update	Children in Care	Officers

Looked After Children Health Report	Paula Gregory	Members
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After - Academic Year 2017-2018	Keeley Pullen	Officers
Report on Unregistered / Private HMO's for Young People in Thurrock	Janet Simon	Members
Report on Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)	Janet Simon	Members
Children's Social Care Performance	Ann Goldsmith	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
6 March 2019		
Looked After Children Health Update	Yvonne Anarfi	Standing Item
Families supported by Early Help	Clare Moore	Members
Transition – Preparing Care Leavers for Adulthood	Michele Lucas	Members
Report on Merton Assessments	Janet Simon	Members
Pupil Premium Plus Report for the Virtual School	Keeley Pullen	Officer
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item

Clerk: Wendy Le
Last Updated: 17 January 2019