

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

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **12 October 2021**

Training Room, The Beehive Community Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

Membership:

Councillors Sara Muldowney (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, Susan Little and Lee Watson

Sarah Barlow, Church of England Representative
Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, HealthWatch Thurrock
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative
Sally Khawaja, Parent Governor Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Augustine Ononaji, Elizabeth Rigby, James Thandi and Lynn Worrall

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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| 2 Minutes | 5 - 16 |
| To approve as a correct record the minutes of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021. | |
| 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. To agree any relevant briefing notes submitted to the Committee.

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **4 October 2021**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 July 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Sara Muldowney (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, Lee Watson and James Thandi (Substitute) (substitute for Susan Little)

Sarah Barlow, Church of England Representative
Nicola Cranch, Parent Governor Representative
Sally Khawaja, Parent Governor Representative

Apologies: Councillor Susan Little

In attendance:

Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills
Janet Simon, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help
Catherine Wilson, Strategic Lead Commissioning and Procurement
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Priscilla Bruce-Annan, Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership Business Manager
Youth Cabinet
Wendy Le, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded, with the video recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

The Chair had agreed to an item of urgent business which was a verbal update from Sheila Murphy on the recent Ofsted inspection.

Sheila Murphy said that Ofsted had attended the inspection virtually to inspect the Children's Services areas that managed extra familial harm cases such as child sexual and criminal exploitation and gangs and county lines. Overall, the inspection had been positive in terms of the practices that the service had put in place. Ofsted had said that they could see improvements made from the 2019 inspection and gave some feedback but the official letter would be

published in August 2021. This would not be a judgement of the usual ratings of 'Requires Improvement' and 'Good'. Ofsted had said that Thurrock Council was a good authority and continued to be a good authority.

The Chair questioned whether Ofsted had indicated of any areas that may need improvement. Sheila Murphy said that one area that Ofsted had mentioned was the return to home interviews where the uptake for these from young people were low. Ofsted had asked what more could the service do to encourage more uptake from young people. There were also some issues around placements for 18+ year olds which was an item on the agenda that evening.

3. Declaration of Interests

Sarah Barlow declared that she worked in a school in Thurrock.

4. Youth Cabinet Update

The Youth Cabinet (YC) provided the following update:

- The YC continued to meet virtually and face to face where possible to ensure young people's voices continued to be heard.
- The Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) attended meetings to hear the concerns raised by other young people on topics such as climate change, accessible education for young people and young people's mental health. These fed into the YC's projects such as plastic pollution.
- The YC was currently running the Boom Project which explored young people's views on physical and mental health as part of the Brighter Futures Strategy. This focused on writing, drawing and music as new ways that young people could express themselves. 29 young people and 4 YC members worked on this and the team would be putting a video together that would show the work done and to send out a message directly from young people.
- The YC was focusing on subjects of mental health for young people by working with mental health services; plastic pollution by creating more recyclable bins; and gang county lines by creating awareness videos for young people.
- The YC was working in partnership with the police to build a stronger and more positive relationship to support both sides to benefit the community overall. Both sides wished to improve on was ensuring that young people was following the information given by the police and for the police to engage with young people at a young age to build a positive relationship. A short Youtube clip would be produced to inform young people of gangs and knife crime and to also reach young people on other social media platforms on these issues. The police would also attend the YC monthly meetings to give community updates.
- The YC continued to work and adapt their projects to ensure the best outcomes for young people. They aimed to create partnerships to

engage all members of the community who supported young people's voices.

The Committee welcomed the new members of the YC and commended them on their hard work. The Committee was pleased to see the YC focus on subjects of grooming, county lines and plastic pollution. Officers offered the YC support when they needed it.

5. Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership - Update on the LSCP Peer Review Action Plan

The report was presented by Priscilla Bruce-Annan.

Councillor Watson questioned what the timeline was for the action plan to be completed by and if the service was confident in completing the action plan on time. Priscilla Bruce-Annan answered that there was no actual date for the action plan to be completed by as each action had its own deadline. She said that the aim was to complete action plan by the end of this year. Most of the actions that were on amber were near completion and the service was confident that the action plan would be completed by the end of the year.

In regards to the Independent Chair Scrutineer (ICS), the Vice-Chair questioned whether the role was paid and how it was independent from the Council. Officers explained that the role was paid by the partnership as the ICS was paid for their expertise and scrutinised the partnership. The post was for 3 years so a new ICS would be employed every 3 years to ensure that independence. The ICS was independent from the LSCP and was not involved in its operations or strategies.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the Action Plan and progress to date.

6. SEND Education and Residential Placements

The report was presented by Michele Lucas and Catherine Wilson.

The Chair thought that there were some good provisions in Thurrock and asked if the service had considered to provide the placements themselves. Michele Lucas answered that the report detailed some of the local provisions and that there were currently a number of local provisions in place that worked well. In the main colleges, it was the residential placements that the service could not provide locally as these were more complex SEND cases.

Councillor Anderson noted that the service was good at keeping children within the borough. He questioned whether the number of children placed outside the borough had increased or decreased over the past 5 – 10 years. Michele Lucas explained that the service was seeing more complex SEND cases but the number of children placed outside of the borough remained static. She highlighted that this could change at any time as parents could

decide to place their children out of the borough. The service tried to keep children within the borough but in some complex cases, children needed a residential placement.

Nicola Cranch asked how many children were waiting for an EHCP and how long was this process. She also asked how many were completed on time. Andrea Winstone said that there were currently 135 EHCPs in process which usually took 20 weeks from start to finish. There were no late EHCPs this month and the service heavily monitored these. There was not a waiting for an EHCP but there was a waiting time from an EHCP request to publication and last year, the service had over 80% EHCPs on time compared to the national figure of 60%. She said that EHCPs tended to end when education finished for a young person.

Sally Khawaja asked how many EHCPs were refused and how many of these went to appeal. Andrea Winstone said that EHCPs were a two-step process where the request to access came through first and then it was decided whether an EHCP was needed or not. The service would not issue a plan if the child's needs could be met through SEND support in school. The number of these that went to appeal was under 5%.

Councillor Watson sought further details on the data provided in 3.3. Michele Lucas said that she would send further details via email.

Councillor Watson asked what provision had been provided through Grangewaters and how often these were used. Michele Lucas answered that the service had listened to their post-16 cohort and had identified that outdoor education was a powerful tool particularly for SEND children. A range of programmes had been developed that included class based work and outdoor activities at Grangewaters. The feedback from these programmes had been positive. SEND children used the outdoor facilities twice a week.

Councillor Akinbohun asked how quick were placements offered to children placed outside of the borough. Michele Lucas explained that the service needed to consider whether the child's needs could be met within the profile of the school and if there was space in that school. Each case was different but the service ensured that children still had access to education. She said that the consultation process could be challenging and that there were not enough school places for the number of children coming into the service.

Councillor Watson questioned the process of deciding where a child would be placed. Michele Lucas explained that where a school felt that they were unable to meet a child's needs then they would discuss this with the parents. This would then come to the SEND panel to assess. The process relied on a partnership approach.

The Vice-Chair said that he was surprised to see the number of children needing SEND places in Thurrock and was concerned the lack of SEND places available. He asked whether SEND children outside of the borough had to wait for places as well and how many were usually accepted. Michele

Lucas answered that the data for this would be circulated via email. She said that Thurrock had two Ofsted rated 'outstanding' SEND schools and families moved into the borough because of these schools. The service made families aware that the schools had a waiting list and would need to go through the tribunal process to assess whether their child needed to go to that SEND school. If the assessment showed that the child needed to go to a SEND school, it was a legal requirement for the SEND school to take the child in. This was also the case where the service had to place children outside of the borough.

Councillor Thandi questioned what the teaching was like in SEND schools. Michele Lucas said that there were no issues with the teachers in SEND schools and that the issue was the number of places available. Both of Thurrock's SEND schools worked hard to main the 'outstanding' rating and the schools had their own training programme.

The Chair thought that that out of borough placements were expensive and it was good to see that the service was taking a sensible approach to address the issue with SEND placements. She commented that it was good to have a framework in place. She said that she could not understand why Cabinet had decided that Grangewaters was a surplus to the service's requirements as the report indicated that this was a part of the provision offered to SEND children. She proposed a new recommendation as 1.3 to address this.

Councillor Anderson and the Vice-Chair agreed recommendation 1.1 and 1.2 but did not agree with the additional recommendation that was 1.3.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That members reviewed the SEND Sufficiency Assessment and agree the publication of the document.**
- 1.2 That members give approval for the next stage of the procurement process and agree to officers approaching cabinet for approval to proceed to procurement of out of borough placements and were required expand the local provision.**

UNRESOLVED:

- 1.3 Members requested that Cabinet reviews their decision to declare Grangewaters as a surplus to SEND provision and to look at further use of Grangewaters to meeting the objectives for SEND provision.**

7. Supported Accommodation for 18-24 Year Olds

The report was presented by Catherine Wilson.

The Chair asked for an example of how block purchasing could meet the needs of a young person and also improve value for money. She also asked if

the service had considered investing in their own housing for care leavers. Catherine Wilson answered that the framework had two elements where they would individually purchase provision from a provider. If the service requested for more units, the provider would look to build or refurbish housing for the service and work together to establish a price for those blocks of accommodation. This helped to place young people in housing more quickly and there would be an expectation that there would be support immediately available for a young person. She went on to say that the service was working with the Housing Department to identify what was available in the borough for care leavers. These may be identified through the Council's housing stock or through a developer. She said that this was not within the report but it was something that the service was considering.

The Chair commented that if the service owned the provision, it would be better value for money as this would be a good income stream for the Council. Michele Lucas referred to the current scheme of Head Start Housing where the Council had allocated money to the service to purchase a number of properties for care leavers. This was a model that the service would build upon.

Councillor Watson asked how many young people were 25 years old and transitioning to other types of housing. Catherine Wilson said that she would look into the data and circulate to Members via email.

Councillor Watson asked whether Thurrock's housing strategy included children leaving care and transition into another property. Janet Simon said that the service tried to plan for a young person's transition early to establish the young person's needs early on. The service had around 280 care leavers aged between 18 – 25 years old and the service had a duty to continue to support care leavers up to the age of 25. However, the service recognised that not all young people would be ready to have their own property by 25 years old.

Referring to page 65, Councillor Anderson sought more detail on how the work within the report would support the homelessness prevention and rough sleeping strategy. Catherine Wilson explained that supported accommodation would help to ensure young people were not left homeless and to help them transition into their own property.

Referring to page 66, Sally Khawaja noted that some care leaver would need placements outside the borough. She questioned who would be responsible for the care leavers in this situation. Janet Simon said that the care leavers remained the responsibility of the local authority that had accommodated them. However, a young person was free to choose whether or not to continue with the care and whether access housing within the borough that they would be placed in. The service aimed to help young people who chose the latter option.

Councillor Akinbohun asked how long a young person had to wait for housing and whether they could come back to Thurrock if they had been

placed outside the borough. Janet Simon said that there was no joint protocol within housing but some care leavers chose to stay with a foster carer where possible. Some care leavers would go into halls and the service had plans early in place to identify which ones needed housing or not. There were no young people on the housing waiting list and young people were kept informed of these processes. If a young person wished to come back into the borough, the service would try to accommodate this.

Councillor Thandi asked if a young person could transition into private accommodation. Janet Simon explained that this was dependent on the young person's needs and whether they were able to look after themselves. She said that some young people would remain in foster care whilst they waited for housing and that a change in housing was all dependent on whether a young person was ready or not.

The Chair proposed to add an additional recommendation – 1.3.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That members reviewed the joint work that is already in place and the statutory duties on the local authority including to develop a jointly commissioned support offer for those aged 18+ who need additional support to be able to develop independence as an adult and where possible this is extended to provide support for the 16-18 year olds.

1.2 That members recommended to cabinet the commissioning of a framework of supported accommodation providers including the option to block purchase provision.

1.3 Members recommended that Cabinet investigate into opportunities to invest in housing to help meet the provision that Children's Services need to meet the supported accommodation requirements for care leavers.

8. SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Actions Update

The report was presented by Michele Lucas.

The Committee commented that it was good to see that the action plan now had more completed actions or actions in progress. He noted the good work that had taken place and said that it was good to hear of the work undertaken with Parent Carer Forum.

Referring to 2.2, Councillor Watson sought clarification on who chaired the SEND Improvement Board. Sheila Murphy answered that she chaired the board and that they had worked hard and challenged themselves. She said that the board was working with the Parent Carer Forum and listening to their views. The Chair commented that she had received feedback from a parent with a child on a SEND EHCP who was pleased with the EHCP as it now more centre focused on the child. The parent had said that they felt included.

RESOLVED:

O&S to scrutinise the work that has been undertaken during the period outlined in the report and offer support and challenge.

9. Thurrock's Education Landscape

The report was presented by Andrea Winstone.

Sally Khawaja asked how secondary school grades would be monitored as there was currently no national data released due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Andrea Winstone explained that schools had completed their end of term assessments regardless of whether these would be published or not by the DfE. This would be scored against a CAT test in autumn. The national government had not confirmed how the progress of secondary school pupils would be measured and these questions would be raised in meetings that the service would have with schools.

The Committee noted that Thurrock's secondary schools had below average scores and asked what measures were in place to improve these. They questioned whether the Council could have an input in ensuring that schools improved their scores. The Committee raised queries over how reading ages were monitored. Andrea Winstone answered that the low achievement on grades 9 – 4 were from 2019. She said that it was the responsibility of the schools to work with their teaching hub to improve upon these scores. The schools in Thurrock were academies except for one and the responsibility lay with the school's inspector. The Council had conversations with schools to ensure leadership within schools were strengthened and to promote education excellency to improve on scores. The Council discussed concerns openly, met with the Regional Schools Commissioner and also met with the DfE and the key was partnership. In regards to reading ages, she explained that the schools had internal data in these and ensured that children were moving along the reading ages. The service also held conversations on this subject.

The Chair questioned what the Council's position was when a MAT school received an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating. She also noted that 70% of Thurrock's secondary schools were currently rated as 'good' and 'outstanding' which was below the England and east of England average. She commented that this was a deteriorating picture rather than an improving one. Andrea Winstone explained that a MAT school with an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating would have an improvement plan in place and if it did not improve, it would move to another MAT but kept its 'inadequate' Ofsted rating. She went on to say that the 70% of Thurrock's 'good' and 'outstanding' secondary schools was a static picture as there had not been any inspections since those schools had moved to a MAT so had remained at 70% for about 4 years now. When some of these schools have their inspections, it was expected that they should receive a 'good' rating.

RESOLVED:

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny to review the current educational landscape and scrutinise the current partnership arrangements.

10. Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children's Social Care

The report was presented by Michele Lucas and Janet Simon.

The Chair said that teachers, staff and social workers had put in an exceptional amount of work to keep children educated during the Covid-19 pandemic and congratulated them on their hard work. She commented that she would have liked to see a roadmap for education out of lockdown but she acknowledged the difficulties in acquiring the data. She said that children had been impacted the most as she had heard of regression in some areas such as potty training, reading and writing. She raised concerns over the care leavers in NEET and questioned what plans were in place to resolve these issues. Michele Lucas explained that the service used Inspire and the government's kickstart scheme had helped young people as the service had just recruited 5 young people under this scheme. She said that care leavers had struggled during lockdown and the service was working with them through programmes that they were monitoring closely.

Councillor Anderson commented that some children had not been able to physically see family during lockdown which was distressing. He questioned what plans were in place for face to face contact once the lockdown restrictions ended. Janet Simon said that most children had already had that face to face contact safely such as in the park.

Councillor Watson thanked the service for their hard work. She questioned how the service had been supporting young carers who have had to look after a vulnerable parent during lockdown. The service had been trying to support these young carers by encouraging them to go out when possible. The ones known to the service, a social worker had been seeing them. There had also been discussions in encouraging family members to help young carers.

At 9.15pm, the Committee agreed to suspend standing orders until 9.45pm to enable the rest of the agenda to be completed.

Councillor Akinbohun asked what support had been in place for children's mental health during lockdown and when children would have the Covid-19 vaccination. Janet Simon said that meetings had been held between young people and mental health colleagues. Parents or carers' mental health were also monitored as it could impact children. Social workers had continued to see children and make referrals to mental health services where needed and the service was supportive in ensuring that children had that respite. Michele Lucas said that the covid vaccinations were not offered to children yet but it

would be a parents' decision. The service and schools could not insist on these.

The Vice-Chair said that SEND children had returned to school after the first lockdown and had settled back in without issues. However, children in mainstream schools had returned later and had picked up some challenging behaviours that were not present before. He felt the report needed to be come back in 6 months to update the Committee on this issue.

RESOLVED:

1.1 Children's O&S to note the support provided to vulnerable children and young people over the past year.

1.2 Children's O&S to consider other areas of support going forward as we look to the recovery phase from Covid-19.

11. Children's Social Care Performance - Quarter 4 2020-21

The report was presented by Janet Simon.

Councillor Akinbohun questioned why there was reduction in the amount of foster carers. Janet Simon explained that it was not unusual for a decrease to be seen as some foster carers were older so would decide to retire. Some may also move out of the area or decide that fostering was not suitable for them. She stated that a loss of 14 was not a huge amount.

Councillor Thandi asked whether the council tax exemption had increased the number of foster carers. Janet Simon stated that the exemption came into force in April 2021 and that it would take a while to recruit foster carers due to the processes. She said that the service was currently refreshing its brand and strategy and would be going out to campaign again soon.

RESOLVED:

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

12. Work Programme

Democratic Services explained the process of briefing notes which had been implemented following on from the Scrutiny Review last year. Members agreed for briefing notes to be sent in between meetings and were aware that they could request a full report of a briefing note if needed.

The Chair had requested for a Child Poverty Refresh Review to be undertaken. Officers would look into this as it involved other departments of the Council.

The work programme was updated as follows:

- Ofsted Inspection Outcome – TBC for 12 October 2021.
- CAMHS Procurement Outcome – TBC for 12 October 2021.
- Update on School Grades Data (from the Thurrock's Education Landscape report) – TBC for 12 October 2021.
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh 2021-2026 – moved to 1 December 2021.
- Update on Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children's Social Care (how children have settled back into schools) – added to 8 February 2022.

The meeting finished at 9.40 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**

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| 12 October 2021 | ITEM: 6 |
| Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| Report from Thurrock Local Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (LSCP). | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: N/A |
| Report of: Priscilla Bruce-Annan, Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Manager | |
| Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Interim Assistant Director Children’s Social Care | |
| Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services | |
| This report is public. | |

Executive Summary

This report will cover progress made against the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) Priorities for 2020-22; Neglect, Violence and Vulnerabilities, Performance Monitoring, Policies & Procedures, Participation & Engagement and Learning and Improvement. Also progress update on review action plans and a staffing update.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee note the briefing update.

2. Introduction and Background

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) operates within a legislative and policy framework created by the Children Act 2004 and Working Together 2010 (as amended by Working Together 2013 & 2015).

This document provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members with a briefing update on the Partnership’s work.

2.1 Priorities and Delivery Plan 2020/22

Six priorities are identified for 2020-22 around which the delivery plan is written and developed. Our priorities are:

1. Neglect

2. Violence and Vulnerabilities
3. Performance Monitoring
4. Policies and Procedures
5. Participation and Engagement
6. Learning and Improvement

These were identified from case reviews, local data, emerging concerns and themes. The priorities were identified in March 2020.

Neglect

To tackle the issue of neglect the partnership has refreshed the Neglect Strategy and created a Neglect Sub-group to monitor implementation of the strategy. The Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) assessment tool was identified as the chosen tool for use across the partnership. A GCP2 Implementation Plan was devised, which included a launch presentation to the LSCP Management Executive Board in December 2020. A programme of multi-agency awareness raising sessions and training sessions for leaders, practitioners and frontline staff are being delivered. Information and resources are accessible on the LSCP website. In March 2020, a session on the 'How to effectively use Signs of Safety and GCP2 together' was delivered.

Violence and Vulnerabilities

Working jointly with our Southend and Essex colleagues Child Exploitation and Online Safety campaigns aimed at practitioners, parents, carers, children, young people, residents and local businesses have been delivered. The MACE sub-group receives data on how perpetrators of exploitation are pursued and held to account through enforcement and deterrent activities. Emerging themes and trends are also reported to the MACE, this information is shared with the partnership to support awareness and response planning. For example Operation Henderson, an initiative to raise awareness of the vulnerability of young people to exploitation and abuse at stations and transport networks was created.

Performance and Monitoring

An annual audit schedule allows us to continue to audit specific areas across children's safeguarding. This year we have added use of the Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Bruising Protocol and the Escalation Policy by practitioners and monitoring of Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infants (SUDIs) to the schedule of areas to be audited.

Policies and Procedures

The LSCP is working with The Adults Safeguarding Board, The Health & Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership to agree a shared priorities document. This is in the final stages and is due to be agreed in the autumn. The Escalation Policy for practitioners has been refreshed and

shared with partners who have discussed the policy at inductions of new recruits, staff meetings, supervisions and development days. The SET Bruising Policy is currently being refreshed. A Learning and Improvement Framework is in place to ensure learning is disseminated across partner agencies and training and development events meet the needs of practitioners.

Participation and Engagement

Working alongside Childrens Social Care and other colleagues, the LSCP participated in activities with children and young people at the Young Voices Grangewaters Activity Day. Children and young people were engaged and consulted with on the impact that services was having on their daily lives. Children talked about issues important to them, for example what made them happy, what aspirations they have for the future, how their workers support them and how days like the activity day keep them connected to friends and allow them to enjoy learning new outdoor activities. The LSCP has also worked with the Youth Cabinet and consulted with them on their safeguarding concerns inside and outside the home and their views on what can be done to improve safety for all children.

Learning and Improvement

A comprehensive training programme is in place and multi-agency training and development sessions continue to be delivered virtually via MS Teams, other remote platforms and via the e-learning offer. Training events are popular and well attended. There has been an increase in attendance at sessions delivered virtually in comparison to those held face-to-face prior to the COVID-19 restrictions. Feedback is very good across all learning and development sessions and evaluation results are used to plan future content and the training programme. As part of the work to refresh and update our website and learning resources, the LSCP consulted with staff via the first survey requesting feedback on the LSCP website. Responses were received from across all agencies and this valuable data will be used to build our Learning Hub and improve the LSCP website.

Progress on actions that sit under each priority are on track and monitored by sub-groups and reported up to the Strategic Group.

2.2 Reviews

Alongside the annual cycle of LSCP activity the Partnership is implementing and embedding the actions to meet the recommendations from the following reviews:

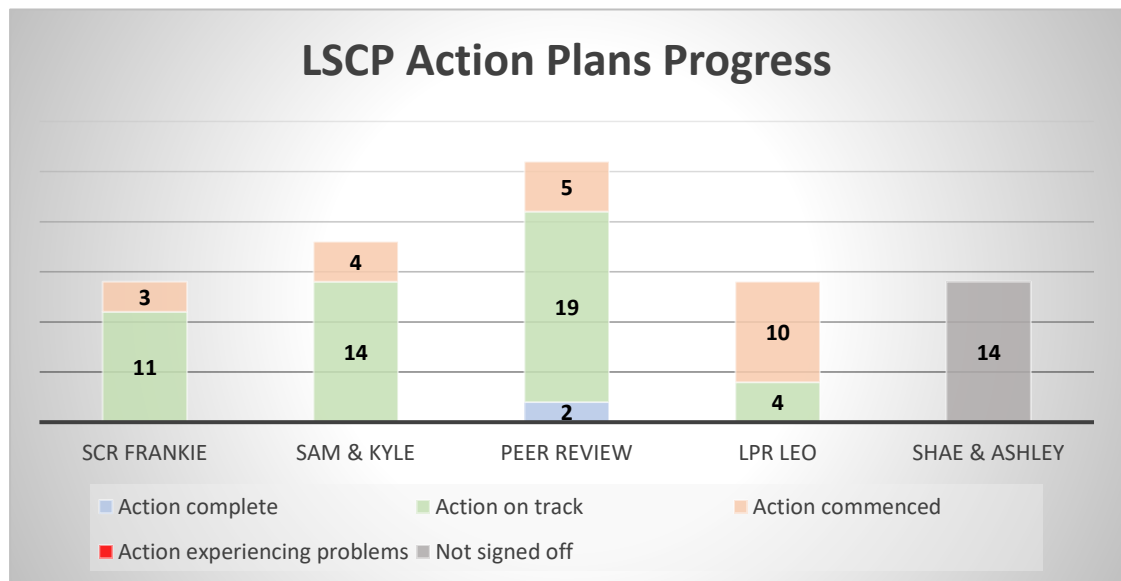
- 2 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) – 15 recommendations
- 2 Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) – 22 recommendations
- 1 Peer Review Action Plan – 26 recommendations

- 1 National Review Action Plan – 5 recommendations

Some recommendations have been split into smaller areas and this is reflected in the numbers in the progress graph.

Good rates of progress has been made across all action plans, which were published at a different times over the last 12 months. All plans have multi-agency agreement and input. All plans are Red, Amber and Green (RAG) rated for progress and tracked, monitored and reviewed by LSCP subgroups and the Strategic Partners.

The graph below shows progress across the six plans:



Following a Rapid Review into a Serious Incident Notification, the LSCP have commissioned a Thematic Review into Serious Youth Violence and Gang Related Crime. A deep dive into the case of the known young person has also been launched to run alongside the review to draw out any areas of learning across the partnership.

2.3 Staff Update

A new permanent Independent Chair Scrutineer has been appointed and is due to start in the autumn.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 None

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To provide committee members with a briefing update on the work of the Partnership.

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

5.1 Not applicable.

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

6.1 There is no impact

7. Implications

7.1 Financial:

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

No implications identified.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

No implications identified.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report.

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

No implications identified.

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

None.

9. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author:

Priscilla Bruce-Annan

Business Manager

Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 12 October 2021 | ITEM: 7 |
| Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| 2020/21 Annual Complaints and Representations Report – Children’s Social Care | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: Non Key |
| Report of: Lee Henley, Strategic Lead, Information Management | |
| Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services | |
| This report is public | |

Executive Summary

The annual report on the operation of the Children Social Care Complaints Procedure covering the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 is attached as an appendix.

The report sets out the number of representations received in the year including the number of complaints, key issues arising from complaints and the learning and improvement activity for the department.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That scrutiny committee consider and note the report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This is the annual report for Thurrock Council on the operation of the Children Social Care Complaints Procedure covering the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report on Children Social Care complaints.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 This is a monitoring report for noting, therefore there are no options analysis. The annual report is attached as an appendix and includes consideration of reasons for complaints, issues arising from complaints and service learning.

3.2 Summary of representations received for the reporting period

3.2.1 The following representations were received during 2020/21:

- 29 Compliments
- 42 Initial feedback
- 8 Complaints
- 3 Ombudsman Enquiries
- 11 MP Enquiries
- 30 Members Enquiries

Further details are summarised within the appendix.

3.3 Learning from Complaints

Complaints and feedback provide the service with an opportunity to identify areas that can be improved; they provide a vital source of insight about people's experience of social care services.

Upheld complaints are routinely analysed to determine themes and trends and services are responsible for implementing learning swiftly. Further details are outlined within the appendix.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report on children social care complaints. It is best practice for this to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny. This report is for monitoring and noting.

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

- 5.1 This report has been agreed with the Children Social Care senior management team. Consideration of complaints issues and learning and improvement arising from them are identified as an ongoing priority in the report.

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

- 6.1 All learning and key trends identified in the complaints and compliments reporting have a direct impact on the quality of service delivery and performance. The reporting ensures that valuable feedback received from service users and carers is captured effectively and regularly monitored, with the primary focus on putting things right or highlighting and promoting where services are working well.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**

Assistant Director Finance

There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

The complaints and representations process is governed by The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. Regulation 13 requires the Council to produce an annual report as soon as possible after the end of each financial year on the operation of the process.

The report must be prepared in light of the statutory guidance 'Getting the Best from Complaints: Social Care Complaints and Representations for Children, Young People and Others'.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead Community Development and Equalities

There are no specific diversity issues arising from this report.

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

- None

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

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Children Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2020/21

Report Author:

Lee Henley

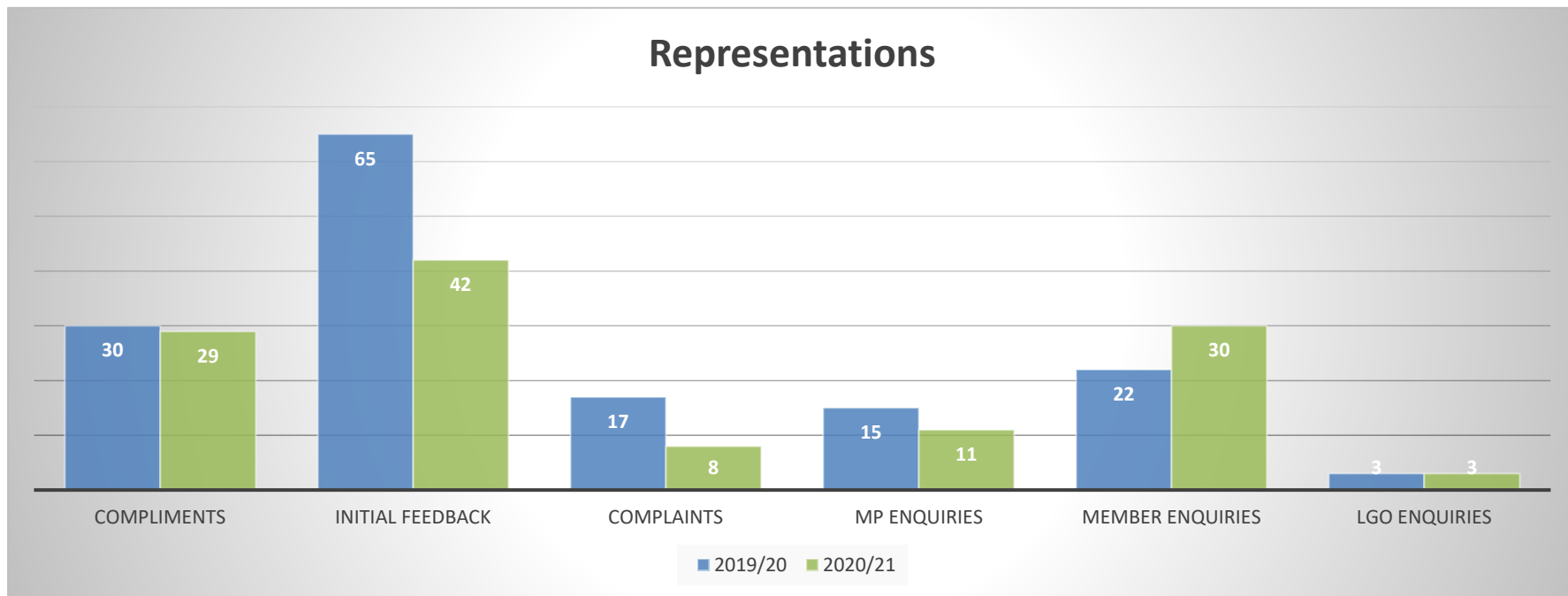
Strategic Lead, Information Management

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Appendix 1 - 2020/21 - Children's Social Care – Complaints & Representations

Volume of Representations – 2019/20 vs 2020/21:

Below is a comparison of all representations received during both years. A total of **123** representations were received in 2020/21 compared to **152** in the same period of 2019/20.



Complaints – 2019/20 vs 2020/21:

Below is the comparison between the two years with additional details provided. There were no escalations beyond stage 1 for both periods :

| Feedback: | Initial Feedback | Stage 1 complaints | Stage 2 complaints | Stage 3 complaints | Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases | Cases closed in period* | Cases Cancelled | % of complaints upheld in period | % timeliness of response for those due in period |
|------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 2020/21 | 42 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 44% | 75% |
| 2019/20 | 65 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 4 | 50% | 47% |
| Difference | -23 | -7 | 0 | 0 | -2 | -5 | -4 | -6% | +28% |

*For 2020/21:

- Of 9 complaints closed 8 relate to the reporting period of 2020/21 and 1 relates to the reporting period of 2021/22. Of these 9 closed complaints 4 were upheld
- 8 complaints were due a response in the period and 6 were responded to within timeframe

*For 2019/20, of the 14 closed complaints, 13 relate to the period 2019/20 and 1 relate to 2018/19 (but was closed during 2019/20)

Root cause analysis and associated learning:

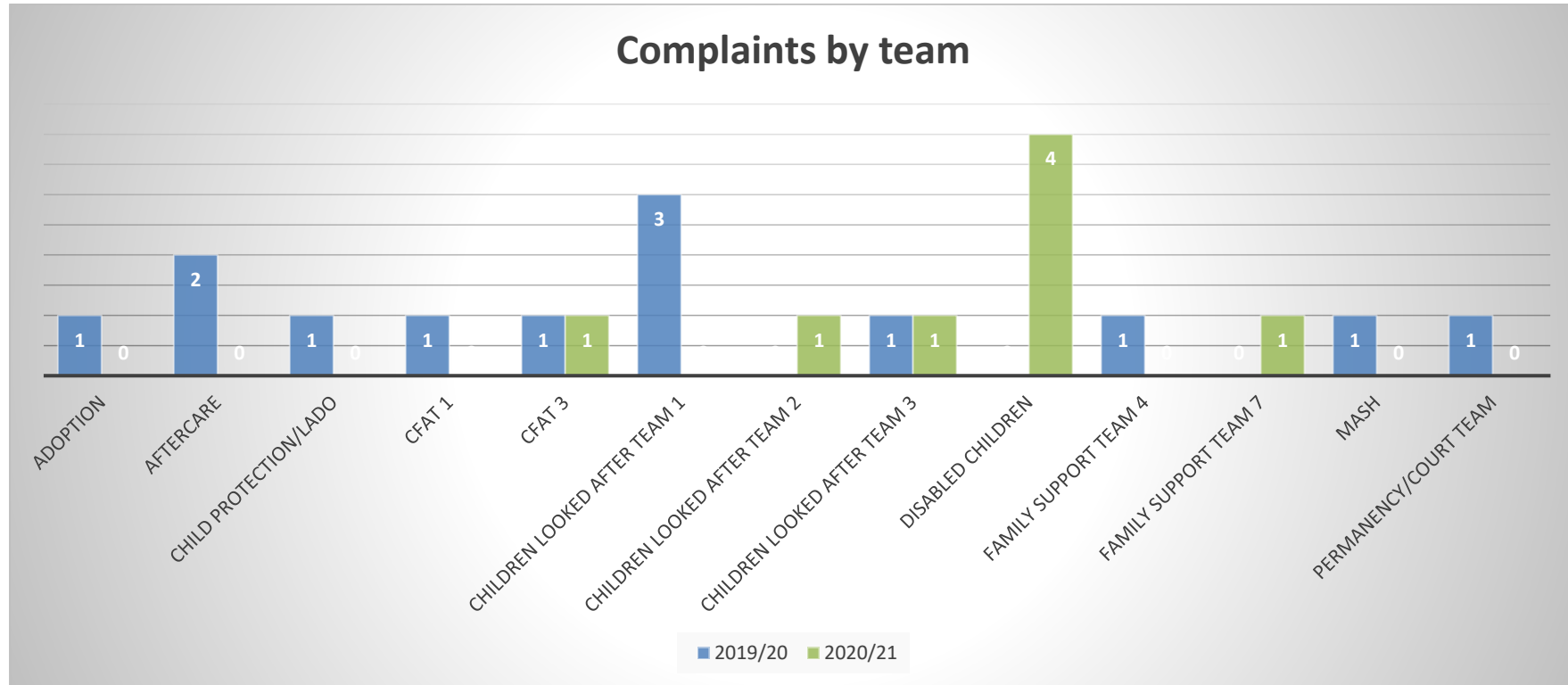
Key learning themes are identified below for the reporting period. Learning from upheld complaints is recognised by the service as part of complaint resolution.

| Root cause analysis and learning from upheld complaints: | Root Cause 1 and associated learning | Root Cause 2 and associated learning | Root Cause 3 and associated learning |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <p>Learning for 2020/21</p> | <p>Communication</p> <p>Complaint 1 – Lack of support and communication since lockdown began in March (Disabled Children).</p> <p>Learning - Ensuring that any communication from parents is responded to within timeframe to avoid unnecessary delays.</p> <p>Complaint 2 – Parents were not contacted on agreed contact date (Disabled Children)</p> <p>Learning - If there are any delays in handling a case the relevant contacts should be advised of the delay.</p> <p>Complaint 3 – Contact was not arranged between Parents and child (Disabled Children)</p> <p>Learning – There was a delay in arranging contact due to an outstanding Risk Assessment. This should not have impacted any contact</p> | <p>Decision Making</p> <p>Complaint 4 – Lack of clarity around decisions made to care plan. (Children Looked After Team 3)</p> <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any amendments to care plans are shared with the looked after children (LAC) and all professionals involved in the LAC review. • Any decisions relating to placement move should be discussed as a part of the LAC review process. | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| | between the child and the parent and this has been addressed with staff for future reference. | | |
| Learning for 2019/20 | <p>Communication</p> <p>Discussions have taken place within the service in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of sharing plans across the service on a need to know basis (Children Looked After Team 1) • The need to ensure that information given to children about their care plans is accurate and up to date (Children Looked After Team 1) • Change over arrangements to be improved with joint visits to be conducted with both the new and outgoing social workers (Children Looked After Team 1) • Share all reports and communicate with families to prevent any disruption in education during placement moves (Children Looked After Team 1) • Staff reminded of expected customer service standards during visits (Courts Team) | <p>Savings</p> <p>The team have developed a new process to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address inconsistencies in savings for looked after children (Aftercare) • Ensure all young people receive regular savings going forward (Aftercare) • To review allowance payments annually and to ensure the system in place does not cause any disruption and/or inconvenience to the carer (Adoptions Team) | <p>Assessment</p> <p>A formal review to be conducted to ensure standards are maintained in all cases involving unaccompanied asylum seekers (Children Looked After Team 1)</p> |

Breakdown of complaints received:

This may be different to figures within the upheld complaints section as this is based on closed complaints (not complaints received). The figures below will also exclude cancelled complaints.



Upheld Complaints:

Percentages for upheld complaints (based on complaints received and closed during the reporting period) across some areas are high as volumes of complaints are relatively low. Figures in brackets below represent the numbers of upheld complaints.

| Complaint Area | Volume 2019/20 | % Upheld | Volume 2020/21 | % Upheld |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| Adoption | 1 | 100% (1) | 0 | NA |
| Aftercare | 2 | 50% (1) | 0 | NA |
| Child Protection/LADO | 1 | 0% | 0 | NA |
| CFAT 1 | 1 | 0% | 0 | NA |
| CFAT 3 | 1 | 0% | 1 | 0% |
| Children Looked After Team 1 | 3 | 100% (3) | 0 | NA |
| Children Looked After Team 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|----------|---|---------|
| Children Looked After Team 3/UAS | 1 | 0% | 1 | 100%(1) |
| Disabled Children | 0 | N/A | 4 | 75% (3) |
| Family Support Team 3 | 0 | N/A | 1 | 0% |
| Family Support Team 4 | 1 | 0% | 0 | NA |
| Family Support Team 7 | 0 | N/A | 1 | 0% |
| MASH | 1 | 0% | 0 | NA |
| Permanency / Court Team | 1 | 100% (1) | 0 | NA |

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints:

The table below provides a summary of enquiries where the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) have reached a final decision on cases within the reporting period. Findings and recommendations from all enquiries are shared with respective Directors and Assistant Directors.

| Area | Issue Nature | LGO Findings | Financial Remedy | Learning where relevant | Did the council respond to the LGSCO or HO timeframes |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|---|
| Disabled Children | This complaint relates to the Council's needs assessment of a child, not getting provision and communication. | Maladministration Causing Injustice | £1000 | Staff reminded of the importance of being punctual when attending meetings and having all relevant documentation to hand for meetings. Staff also reminded to keep a professional tone in all communication with residents. A reassessment for the child's needs has also been arranged to review the package of support needed. | Yes |
| Children's Services - Aftercare | Suitability of accommodation | Maladministration Causing Injustice | £300 | Staff reminded of importance of recording details of any mental health condition, including concerns young people and representatives raise, in their pathway plan | No |
| Children's Services – Children & Family | Complaint relating to children social care, including interaction with Social Workers when fleeing Domestic Violence | Maladministration Causing Injustice | £750 | Staff training carried out Discussions taken place via team meetings | Yes |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Assessment Team | | | | Supervision meetings undertaken with member of staff regarding data incident | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Cases:

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint. ADR is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team. It can also include mediation with the complainant and the service area. For the reporting period, there have been 0 cases of successful ADR.

Initial Feedback:

The Council receives feedback which following assessment does not constitute a formal complaint but still requires addressing. Those within scope of an 'Initial Feedback' are sent to the service with a request that swift action takes place to resolve the issue. This should negate the need for a formal complaint taking place. For the reporting period a total of **42** 'Initial Feedback' have been recorded:

| Team | Feedback total |
|--|----------------|
| Permanency/Court Team | 7 |
| Family Support Team 4 | 5 |
| Family Support Team 2 | 4 |
| Children and family assessment team 4 | 3 |
| Children looked after team 3 | 3 |
| Children and family assessment team 3 | 2 |
| Children looked after team 1 | 2 |
| Children looked after team 2 | 2 |
| Family Support Team 7 | 2 |
| Prevention/ Support Service | 2 |
| Children and family assessment team 2 | 1 |
| Children and family assessment team 1 | 1 |

| | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Disabled Children | 1 |
| Family Support Team 6 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 3 | 1 |
| MASH | 1 |
| Oaktree | 1 |
| Child Protection/LADO | 1 |
| Families First | 1 |
| Aftercare | 1 |

Enquiries

During the reporting period the following enquiries were received:

- 30 Member/Cllr Enquiries
- 11 MP Enquiries

| Member/Cllr Enquiries | Feedback Total |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| All Services (Youth services) | 4 |
| Permanency/Court Team | 3 |
| Child Protection/LADO | 2 |
| Children Looked After Team 1 | 2 |
| Fostering Team | 2 |
| Children Looked After Team 3 | 2 |
| Disabled Children | 2 |
| Children & Family Assessment Team 1 | 2 |
| Family Support Team 2 | 2 |
| Family Support Team 4 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 6 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 1 | 1 |
| MASH | 1 |
| Children Looked After Team 2 | 1 |
| Prevention/Support Service | 1 |
| Registration | 1 |
| Support For Childminders | 1 |
| Adoption Team | 1 |

| MP Enquiries | Feedback Total |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Children and Family Assessment Team 1 | 4 |
| Assessment | 1 |
| Child Protection/LADO | 1 |
| Children and Family Assessment Team 2 | 1 |
| Children and Family Assessment Team 3 | 1 |
| MASH | 1 |
| Permanency/Court Team | 1 |
| Aftercare | 1 |

External Compliments:

29 compliments have been received during this period compared to 30 in the same period last year, breakdown of teams is below.

| Service Area (20/19/20) | Total Received |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Families Together | 9 |
| Prevention/Support Service | 5 |
| CFAT 4 | 2 |
| Disabled children | 2 |
| Family Support Team 4 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 2 | 1 |
| Child Protection/LADO | 1 |
| Children Looked After Team 2 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 3 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 6 | 1 |
| Children Looked After Team 1 | 1 |
| Fostering Team | 1 |
| CFAT 1 | 1 |
| Permanency / Court Team | 1 |
| Aftercare | 1 |
| Family Support Team 1 | 1 |

| Service Area (2020/21) | Total Received |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Families Together | 12 |
| Family Support Team 6 | 7 |
| Children and Family Assessment Team 1 | 2 |
| Family Support Team 1 | 2 |
| Disabled Children | 2 |
| Family Placement Service | 1 |
| Children Looked After Team 1 | 1 |
| Children Looked After Team 2 | 1 |
| Family Support Team 4 | 1 |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 12 October 2021 | ITEM: 8 |
| Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| Children’s Services Savings – Education and Skills | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: Key |
| Report of: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education & Skills | |
| Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education & Skills | |
| Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children’s Services | |
| This report is public | |

Executive Summary

This report outlines the proposed savings for the Education and Skills service within Children’s Services over the financial year’s 2021/22 and 2022/23. Like all local authorities, the Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council’s overall budget position. This report sets out the proposed efficiency savings and opportunities to present new operating models within children’s education and skills to ensure the LA continues to support children and young people as they engage in learning pathways.

Education & Skills has undertaken a full review of all services, the focus of the review was to consider the role of the local authority in ensuring that we meet our statutory duties related to education. Thurrock’s educational landscape means all bar one of our schools are either part of Multi Academy Trusts or standalone academies. Many of the Council’s educational statutory duties relate to maintained schools. Even with our educational landscape the Council has a number of key strategic drivers in education, these include providing support and challenge to schools, ensuring we have enough early years and school places, home to school transport and ensuring our most vulnerable children have access to high quality education. The review looked at all of these areas with an emphasis on ensuring we continue to support our most vulnerable children and young people with new operating models to enable us to continue to support our vulnerable children and young people.

The Council continues to have a strong commitment to skills and working with key stakeholders providing employment pathways to our young people, with a key emphasis on the vulnerable young people who are currently not in education employment or training.

Outlined in this report is an overview of changes to our operating models in a number of our service areas. The service has tried to mitigate putting staff at risk by holding vacancies across Education & Skills over the past year. The review has identified a reduction in some of the non-statutory services to schools, this includes

some funding to provide additional opportunities in schools as well as the universal offer within the integrated youth hub Inspire Your Future.

The report is broken down into two sections:-

1. Children's Services Asset Review
2. Children Services Education and Skills Review

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposals identified to contribute to savings to offset the funding gap.
- 1.2 This report to this committee seeks specific comment on the relevant items which fall within its remit and which requires further member scrutiny prior to final cabinet decisions being made on the relevant items.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report presents the savings for Children's Education and Skills for 2021/22 and 2022/23. All local authorities are having to review and consider how they deliver services going forward. Education & Skills have taken the opportunity to consider new operating models that will continue to support vulnerable children, young people and adults.
- 2.2 Thurrock Council is facing a significant budget shortfall with an estimated deficit of £34 million over the next two financial years. There is a statutory obligation to report a balanced budget and all available alternative options have been explored including Council tax increases and asset reviews. It has, however, been identified that efficiencies of an estimated £20 million will need to come from staffing in the next 2 years. Education & Skills which is part of Children's Services, having the second highest staffing headcount in the Council, will need to contribute to the savings figure whilst also maintaining high standards of services to children and their families.
- 2.3 The first section of this report will outline the review that has been undertaken regarding assets in Children's Services – we have looked to transform and co-locate services to reduce the buildings we operate in. The asset review related to individual buildings is described below:-
 - 2.3.1 **Thurrock Adult Community College (TACC)** the college had been considering a new operating model and, with the onset of Covid 19, this meant that they moved all delivery on line via an online platform. The introduction of digital platforms meant that they were able to quickly offer on-line learning opportunities for both current and new learners. The TACC building had a number of significant repairs that had been scheduled over the next two years. In considering our new operating model, where one of the key principles is 'less buildings better services', we took the opportunity of relocating the adult community college into South Essex College. To ensure we meet local community need we will also provide a number of satellite bases embedded in local communities with the aim of supporting residents to

gain skills that leads to employment opportunities, thus supporting our 'Backing Thurrock' strategic objective which is working to support the development of local employment opportunities. This has released back to the council a site which can be considered within the asset strategy review.

2.3.2 Riverside Youth Hub this is one of our youth buildings in Tilbury. A condition survey on the building identified significant investment was required to enable it to remain in operation. With the recent successful bid for Tilbury Towns Fund the development of the Onside Youth facility will provide the opportunity to develop youth provision in Tilbury. The realignment of youth provision will see a reduction in our universal youth work offer to enable a more targeted approach. As skills remains a key priority our new operating model has seen skills opportunities being offered in Tilbury via the successful Community Led Local Development funded programme to support more people back into work. We have relocated the remainder of our targeted youth offer into Inspire Youth Hub Stanford. This will release back to the council a site that can be placed on the asset strategy review.

2.3.3 Inspire Your Future Grays part of our new operating model has been the review of our skills youth offer and this has identified the potential to co-locate our Youth Offending Service (YOS) and Inspire Your Future. This will also provide a wider integrated youth offer for young people at one physical base. The teams have worked hard to bring all the services together thus offering those young people who are involved in the criminal justice system direct access to education and skills support. This will release the YOS building in Corringham to be placed on the asset strategy review.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Education & Skills Review

Over the past five years Thurrock has undergone a significant change with all but one of our schools becoming part of multi academy trusts or stand alone academies. As a result of this we have undertaken a full review of all the services we currently provide to schools in Thurrock.

This review brings an opportunity to consider how we move forward on the delivery of support to schools and the wider skills agenda over the next two years. This review has identified £1 million in savings over the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Given the financial challenges the council faces, the education and skills review has tried where possible to avoid putting staff at risk of redundancy. Careful consideration has been made to identify areas where work could cease or be combined without causing a significant impact on Thurrock's young people and their families. Over the last 12 months we have used natural wastage where possible to use arising vacancies to either delete or use for the required savings or to merge the duties into other existing posts through mutual agreement with the occupying post-holders.

The review has considered a number of key changes to our operating model the significant areas of change are outlined below:-

- 3.1.1 **Early Years and School Effectiveness** – Vacancies have been frozen and deleted where possible to provide the required savings. The duties from some vacant posts have been merged with other existing posts which had duties that were diminishing or would diminish further as we move towards the new operating model. This has been achieved through job analysis as the vacancies occur and through mutual agreement with relevant post holders who had capacity to take on the remaining work. School effectiveness has seen a significant reduction in income over the last three years and as such our new operating model has meant developing a strategic partnership with the Thurrock Teaching Hub to ensure that training that would historically have been delivered by the local authority is delivered by the new provider. Within our new operating models we no longer provide some historical support services an example would be training for school governors.
- 3.1.2 Inspire your Future – Integrated Youth Hub – we have undertaken a review of our current integrated youth offer. The review has focussed on the changes to our operating model, moving away from a universal offer to a more targeted approach that will focus on youth voice providing support to the Youth Cabinet and working with vulnerable young people including those at risk of serious youth violence.
- 3.1.3 Employability & Skills – the review identified areas of support that were provided to the schools that were not part of our overall statutory duty or funded via our traded offer. This will mean a reduction in the work we are undertaking with schools. Successful bids including On Track Thurrock will enable us to continue to support the most vulnerable including our looked after children and those with special educational needs which links to our strategic decision around a more targeted approach.
- 3.1.4 The council currently operates two nurseries in Tilbury, this is not a statutory duty on the LA and as such we are currently consulting with local residents, staff and other providers as to how we can look at different forms of delivery going forward. When the consultation is concluded, further updates will be brought to Children’s O&S. If, when the consultation exercise is completed we are unable to identify an alternative provider for the nurseries, then we would need to consider the closure of this service.
- 3.1.5 Home to school transport – this is undergoing a full service review. We have identified a number of potential savings and are working through the legal process to enable us to take these forward. Part of these savings are linked to the decision to review all current students who access post 16 SEND transport as set out in our home to school transport policy we are looking to implement this and a number of other savings in the academic year 2022/23. The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all key stakeholders are aware of any changes that will be coming in the next academic year and will continue to ensure that we update with changes on a regular basis.

3.1.6 Other savings within Education & Skills have been identified through reducing the support to external providers of support to schools. We continue to work closely with organisations to identify alternative funding streams, an example of this is related to the work around Trailblazer we have identified funding for a transitional year and we are working with schools as to how this work can be funded in the future. We continue to look to maximise income and the successful phase two On Track programme has provided additional financial support within our skills offer which will remain a key priority as we begin to see the economy recover after Covid 19.

3.1.7 Risks – the Council has a range of statutory duties that we have to provide – the review has looked to mitigate any risk around the delivery of statutory duties. We will continue to seek alternative funding opportunities throughout the coming year. We will see a reduction in some areas as a result of not recruiting to the vacant posts. The service continues to seek external funding to support this and other areas of work across Children’s Services.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Thurrock Council is facing a significant budget shortfall. Education and Skills which is part of Children’s services need to contribute to the savings required by the Council to support returning a balanced budget.

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

5.1 The proposal will be subject to the Council’s overall consultation process as agreed with the recognised trade unions.

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

6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

Create a great place for learning and opportunity.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

The medium term financial position was set out to Cabinet on 7 July 2021. This highlighted a cumulative £34.3m funding gap for 2022/23 and 2023/24. This also set out proposed mitigations grouped between income generation, operational efficiencies, providing services differently, staffing reductions and member decisions.

The committee is reminded there remains a significant funding gap to address in both years if all of these proposed mitigations set out in the report are delivered. Hence any savings proposals not taken forward will further increase the funding gap and hence will require further reassessments of core service delivery with associated impacts on levels of staffing. The delivery of the financial position remains a significant risk to the Council in the medium term.

This report to this committee seeks specific comment on the relevant items which fall within its remit and which require further member scrutiny prior to final cabinet decisions being made on the relevant items.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

The local authority has a number of statutory duties and as such we need to ensure that the savings still enable us to deliver on our statutory duties going forward.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development and Equalities

The council has a number of statutory duties around equality, education and skills and has aimed to minimize the impact for communities through the physical relocation of services outlined in Section 2 of this report. The wider review of education and skills has achieved savings from posts that are currently vacant preventing the need for any occupied posts being at risk of redundancy. Separate Community Equality Impact Assessments will be completed following consultations related to nursery provision in Tilbury and home to school post-16 SEND transport. We will continue to work closely with our community colleagues and identify ways in which we can support our communities. Our key focus remains our most vulnerable children and young people and the review has ensured we have continued to provide services for this group of children and young people.

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

None.

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

- Education & Skills Review

9. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author:

Michele Lucas

Assistant Director Education & Skills

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| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 12 October 2021 | ITEM: 9 |
| Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| Proposed Budget Reductions for Children’s Social Care and Early Help | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: Key |
| Report of: Janet Simon, Interim Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help | |
| Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon, Interim Assistant Director, Children’s Social Care and Early Help | |
| Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children’s Services | |
| This report is Public | |

Executive Summary

This report sets out a number of proposed changes to the structure of Children’s Social Care (CSC) and Early Help (EH). The changes form part of the Children’s Services Directorate contribution to budget efficiencies and will demonstrate how CSC and EH will deliver budget reductions of £1.2m and transform service delivery whilst continuing to achieve good outcomes for children in Thurrock.

The proposed changes are in line with the requirement to focus on prioritising statutory duties whilst maintain the focus of protecting preventative actions to minimise pressure on our statutory teams.

The report includes a revised operating model which will provide a greater integration of services and ensure that social work practice remains at the highest possible standard. Our aim remains, to build on our ‘good’ Ofsted rating in order to provide the best possible outcomes for the children and families of Thurrock.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposals identified to contribute to savings to offset the funding gap.**
- 1.2 This report to this committee seeks specific comment on the relevant items which fall within its remit and which requires further member scrutiny prior to final cabinet decisions being made on the relevant items.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock Council is facing a significant budget shortfall with an estimated deficit of £34 million over the next two financial years. There is a statutory obligation to report a balanced budget and all available alternative options have been explored including Council tax increases and asset reviews. It has, however, been identified that a saving of an estimated £20 million will need to come from staffing in the next 2 years. Children's Services, having the second highest staffing headcount in the Council, will need to contribute to the savings figure whilst also maintaining high standards of services to children and their families.
- 2.2 The ongoing demand for specialist, high cost statutory interventions for children remains in Thurrock. Our early help offer was highly praised by Ofsted in 2019 and in 2021 for its proven impact on the reduction of children's cases stepped up to statutory services. Successful workforce planning and staff development since the previous inspection in 2016 were also identified as increasing capacity to sustain a good quality service and substantial improvements. It is crucial that the new operating model and proposed contribution to savings do not have a negative impact on the effort and progress made by children's social care over recent years as we moved away from being a service that was Ofsted judged as requiring improvement in 2016.
- 2.3 The Ofsted Focussed visit in July 2021 and the subsequent Ofsted letter published in August 2021, identified that most social workers have manageable caseloads that allow time to build relationships with children and their families. Social work caseloads need protecting to avoid them becoming too high and leading to poor practice and children not being safeguarded. The Ofsted Inspection in 2016, which led to a Requires Improvement judgement, identified rising caseloads and caseloads above comparators and that; "High caseloads and frequent changes in staff in some teams have had an impact upon relationships with children and families", linking this to the ability to recruit and retain a stable workforce. The inspection in 2016 also highlighted inconsistencies in management oversight of frontline practice resulting in a lack of effective challenge to progress children's plans and effect change for children. The proposals in this report ensure that case levels and spans of controls will allow managers to continue to maintain clear management oversight on the quality of practice in recognition of the improvements made and recognised in the November 2019 Ofsted inspection.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Current position/Structure

Children's Social Care and Early Help Services need to continue to strive to provide the best possible outcomes and therefore any proposed changes must maintain front line services and protect the functions, which are having the most impact on our children and families.

3.2 The current structure divides the key areas of practice under four strategic leads reporting into the assistant director post. These areas are as follows:

- Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP)
- Children Looked After Children (CLA)
- Safeguarding & Quality Assurance (including Business Administration)
- Early Help and Prevention and Youth Offending Service

3.3 This structure was introduced over a phased period starting from 2017 following the Requires Improvement Ofsted Judgement in 2016. It ensured that a robust leadership and management model was in place to help the service deliver and sustain the improvements required of it. The model manages demand earlier, and has proven to be less costly and enabled interventions that are more effective. This model has achieved the improvements required as externally judged by Ofsted in 2019 and 2021 and therefore we are not proposing significant structural changes, which could undermine the progress made so far.

3.4 **Rationale and Justification for the Proposal/Restructure**

The proposals in this report focuses on areas where spend could be reduced without having a significant detrimental impact on service delivery along with a transformational delivery model. All areas have been carefully considered along with a number of alternative delivery models to provide a safe and appropriate service. Where vacancies have naturally occurred, consideration has been made of whether the vacancies can be deleted to help towards the savings and reduce the numbers of employees at risk.

3.5 The structure has been considered to establish whether posts that were essential on our path from 'requiring improvement' to 'good' are still required to the same number and extent to sustain and consolidate the good practice in place. Some of the changes proposed are based on good practices being sufficiently embedded, allowing the service to review and realign service where possible to continue to meet the needs of children and keep them safe.

3.6 The movement and joining of some teams will enable a more streamlined approach that will provide opportunities to reduce the number of posts required and allow for a more joined up Think Family approach.

3.7 **Proposals**

The proposals for making savings vary in nature and may be subject to differing timelines dependant on external factors. Where redundant posts are identified, every effort will be taken to avoid redundancy through redeployment into alternative suitable roles.

3.8 Children's placements account for a third of the total children's services budget. Placement numbers have reduced from a high in 2017/18 (355) and have remained static for the last two years at around 300. This is 66 per 10k of the population and is in line with national figures. The placement budget is extremely volatile and has been difficult to manage this within the budget for a number of years.

3.9 The proposal for achieving savings includes;

- Deletion of posts and realignment of services to achieve £1m savings within children's social care statutory and early help services.
- Deletion of posts and realignment of management and potential digital efficiencies within the Business Administration Service have identified £0.200m savings.
- Increase internal fostering households by a net of 15 each year and decrease our reliance on more costly external foster placements. This could realise a saving of £0.300m per annum (£0.600m over a 2 year period)
- Review of the delivery model for the Out of Hours social work duty service which has been identified as a high spend service.

3.10 **Proposed Transformational Operating Model**

Services are currently provided internally and externally in the assessment and support of parents of vulnerable children, supervised contact arrangements, edge of care services and family group conferencing through;

- Commissioned Services
- Families Together
- Family Group Conferencing Team
- Contact Service delivered at Oaktree.

3.11 The proposal is to transform and realign these services to a model that delivers all of the above through a relationship-based approach to make positive differences and enable very vulnerable young people to remain living securely with their families. This will enable us to drive more efficiencies whilst continuing to deliver and provide services using a holistic 'Think Family Approach' which is collaborative and at a lesser cost to the local authority.

3.12 In order to protect the permanent workforce, there has been a vacancy recruitment freeze. Where possible and safe to do so the savings will be obtained by deleting vacant posts. Some vacancies are essential to service delivery and therefore where possible and appropriate will be appointed to by redeploying employees in the service who are displaced from posts proposed to be deleted. A total of 22 posts (15.4 FTE) will be at risk/impacted resulting in a maximum of 13 redundancies.

3.13 The proposals balance the need to maintain or improve our Ofsted rating of 'good' whilst contributing to the savings required due to the financial pressures faced by the Council. The proposals include some realignment of services including our Edge of Care services, which are not statutory but contribute to keeping children at home with their families. Subject to the consultation process, the aim is for the revised structure to be in place by 1 April 2022.

3.14 **Risks**

The Council has statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard children and young people within its area. Ofsted assesses how the local authority is managing these duties, and the outcomes for children. Appropriate caseloads and spans of control are crucial to providing a good service to children and families in Thurrock. Business Admin is also crucial to service delivery and contributes to key statutory processes and savings in this area like the rest of the service is a fine balance.

3.15 Further efficiencies will need to consider potential impact upon safeguarding of children, caseloads, spans of control, cost aversion, and the numbers of children stepping up to statutory services or becoming looked after and the inherent costs involved.

3.16 Thurrock is refreshing its recruitment campaign to increase opportunities for the recruitment of local in-house placements and will need to be successful in this to achieve the savings of £0.300M in each year in placement costs. However, Thurrock, along with other authorities across the country, are finding the recruitment of local foster carers a challenge. Local placements are scarce not only in terms of the recruitment of in-house foster placements but also for Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) and Residential care homes. A lack of carers with the right skills and experience is proving to be the most significant barrier to securing placements, especially for sibling groups, and for disabled children and teenagers.

3.17 Ofsted's [annual fostering statistics](#) show there has been little change in foster carer capacity, adding to concerns about the difficulty in finding suitable care for the most vulnerable children in an over-stretched system. Although interest in becoming a foster care continues and nationally enquiries from prospective carers have gone up, the figures show a 10% decrease in the conversion rate to prospective foster carer applications since March 2019.

4. **Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 Thurrock Council is facing a significant budget shortfall. Children's services need to contribute to the savings required by the Council to support returning a balanced budget.

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

5.1 The proposal will be subject to the Council's overall consultation process as agreed with the recognised trade unions.

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

6.1 The proposed budget reduction should not have an impact as the proposals do not reduce the duties, performance, policies or priorities and services that will be provided to the community.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

The medium term financial position was set out to Cabinet on 7 July 2021. This highlighted a cumulative £34.3m funding gap for 2022/23 and 2023/24. This also set out proposed mitigations grouped between income generation, operational efficiencies, providing services differently, staffing reductions and member decisions.

The committee is reminded there remains a significant funding gap to address in both years if all of these proposed mitigations set out in the report are delivered. Hence any savings proposals not taken forward will further increase the funding gap and hence will require further reassessments of core service delivery with associated impacts on levels of staffing.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director Law and Governance

The Children's Act 1989 s17-20 gives local authorities the power to intervene in private matters in order to protect and promote the welfare of children within their governed area. Every local authority is bound by a moral and legal obligation to provide support and assistance to children within their local areas the emphasis on children who are in need of outside protection.

S17 (1) It shall be the general duty of every local authority:

- to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and
- so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget. In setting a balanced budget competing needs and statutory duties have to be considered. The proposed savings identified within this report have taken into account the local authority's statutory duties. The report includes a revised operating model which will provide a greater integration of services and ensure that social work practice remains at the highest possible standard.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

A full community equality impact assessment will be completed for this proposal to support the mitigation of risk of disproportionate negative impact for protected groups including workforce

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

There are implications for staff. A full support programme and consultation process will be followed to minimise any impact on staff that the proposed structure changes may have on staff

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

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

Janet Simon
Interim Assistant Director
Children's Social Care and Early Help

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|---|-----------------------------|
| 12 October 2021 | ITEM: 10 |
| Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| Ofsted Focused Visit on children at risk from extra-familial harm: 30 June – 1 July 2021 | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: N/A |
| Report of: Janet Simon, Interim Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help | |
| Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services | |
| This Report is: Public | |

Executive Summary

Ofsted introduced the Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) inspection framework in January 2018, which replaced the previous Single Inspection Framework (SIF) of children’s services. Thurrock children’s services’ SIF inspection was held between 22nd February and 17th March 2016 and the service was graded ‘Requires Improvement’ across all judgement categories. Thurrock children’s services received a full ILAC inspection between 4th and 22nd November 2019 and was rated Good across the four domains of the inspection. This report is to update the Committee on Thurrock’s recent Ofsted ILACS Focused Visit undertaken between 30th June and 1st July 2021, on the local authority’s arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children from extra-familial risk.

The ILACS inspection is a very detailed and robust review of all areas of practice in children’s social care, early help services and education services for children educated at home as well as for children missing education. All local authorities receive a form of inspection from Ofsted once a year under the ILACS framework. The Focused visit is an opportunity for Ofsted to come into the authority and focus on one area of practice to see if practice is secure and to check the local authority is safeguarding children.

The Focused visit was announced on the 16 June 2021, two weeks before the Focused Visit began. During those two weeks the inspectors were provided with over 100 documents, copy of audits undertaken relating to the topic area in the last six months, performance data and they undertook inspection meetings with the Children’s Portfolio Holder, the Chief Executive and partners working with children affected by extra familial harm. The focused visit was very thorough and inspectors examined the experience of children through the lens of social work interventions, by talking directly to social workers and examining their case work files in detail. They also met with children and young people and met with partners. The inspectors were

focused on evidence of outcomes for children subject to extra familial harm and the impact social work intervention is having for children and their families. The two days of 'on-site' inspection was very intense, it thoroughly tested the practice of the service and the corporate support and commitment from the Council as a whole for our most vulnerable young people.

The focused visit is not a judgement inspection; Ofsted as an outcome of the focused visit publishes a letter. The focused visit letter is attached as Appendix 1 and was published on the 9 August 2021. The letter states; 'Thurrock Council continues to provide effective, responsive services for vulnerable children. Children have remained a key focus for elected members and they continue to be a corporate priority.' The focussed visit letter reflects the hard work and commitment of all those striving to ensure children and their families receive good services within the Council and from partners. Ofsted commented, 'They (the local authority) have strengthened their oversight of services in response to feedback given at the last inspection, to better identify and engage with vulnerable children exposed to the risk of extra familial harm, and improved their offer of support to them and their families.' As with any inspection of services, Ofsted noted some areas for continued improvement. There are three recommendations for improvement and the partnership will be incorporating these recommendations into action plans.

The outcome of the inspection evidences that Thurrock Council and its partners, continues to provide a good service to vulnerable young people.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Ofsted Focus Visit letter and provide comment or challenge in respect of the outcomes

1.2 That the three areas for improvement identified by Ofsted are considered by the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and support offered to deliver against these recommendations

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 In January 2018, a new universal inspection framework came into force for Children's services. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) focuses on the local authority (LA) functions regarding the help, care and protection of children and young people. The ILACS is a 'whole system' approach to inspection. The aim of the ILACS is to drive up improvement and catching LAs before they fall over as the underpinning principles of the framework, which is described as a system rather than a programme of inspection. ILACS attempts to take a proportionate, whole system approach to inspecting a service and this inevitably involves greater contact between Ofsted and LA's. In addition to on-site inspection activity (full inspection and focused visit inspections), the ILACS is supported and informed by an annual self-evaluation, the annual conversation and Ofsted's LA intelligence system.

The Focused Visit is part of the whole system Ofsted approach to inspection of local authority children's services. The focused visit was on the local authority's arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children from extra-familial harm. This focus includes, children missing from home or care, children involved in criminal exploitation and by gangs, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. The inspection included partnership working, as young people subject to extra-familial harm, require the support from police, schools and health colleagues. In the two weeks lead up to the 'on-site' inspection (the inspectors conducted the inspection virtually) documents, as requested, were sent to the inspectors, audit documentation was also provided. The inspectors conducted some interviews with key partners, the Children's Portfolio Holder and the Chief Executive. The two days 'on-site' activity included interviews with social workers, front line social work managers, reviewing case files, meetings with children and young people subject to extra-familial harm.

Whilst the focused visit is overall very positive (please see letter attached as Appendix 1), there are three recommendations to further improve practice for children subject to extra-familial harm. These are:

- ✓ Earlier transition planning for children in care and care leavers who are exposed to risk of child exploitation, gangs and extra-familial harm.
- ✓ The involvement of children in the take-up of return home interviews and the information the authority relies on to capture activity and the impact of these interviews.
- ✓ The arrangements for support and engagement with children at risk of extra familial harm; in particular, the agility of services to meet the diverse and complex needs of these children and their families.

These recommendations are being taken forward within partnership and service plans. The Health and Well Being Board are an important partner to assist with moving forward these recommendations.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Focused Visit Letter is attached as Appendix One

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Members of the Board are aware of the Ofsted Focused Visit and the recommendations to further improve practice. For the Board to have oversight of the plans against the recommendations, to support and challenge progress as appropriate.

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

- 5.1 The Ofsted Focus Visit letter is an agenda item on the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 12 October 2021.

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

6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

None

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

None

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

The focused visit assessed the local authority's arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children from extra-familial harm involving children missing from home or care, children involved in criminal exploitation and by gangs, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Whilst feedback from the focused visit is overall very positive three recommendations to further improve practice for children subject to extra-familial harm are set out in section 2.1 for delivery in partnership and as part of wider service plans.

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

None

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

None

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Thurrock Focused visit of local authority Children's Services June21

Report Author:

Janet Simon

Interim Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help

Children's Services

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Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 August 2021

Sheila Murphy
Corporate Director of Children's Services
Thurrock Council
Civic Offices
New Road
Grays
RM17 6SL

Dear Sheila

Focused visit to Thurrock children's services

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This letter summarises the findings of a focused visit to Thurrock children's services on 30 June and 1 July 2021. Her Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Margaret Burke and Anna Gravelle.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children from extra-familial risk.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. However, the delivery model was adapted to reflect the COVID-19 context. The lead inspector and the director of children's services agreed arrangements to deliver this visit effectively while working within national and local guidelines for responding to COVID-19. This visit was carried out fully by remote means. Inspectors used video calls for discussions with local authority staff, managers and leaders, and for conversations with children.

Headline findings

Thurrock Council continues to provide effective, responsive services for vulnerable children. Children have remained a key focus for elected members and they continue to be a corporate priority. Leaders have worked with strategic partners to develop a shared 'public health' multi-agency approach to confront risk to children, families and the wider community from child exploitation, gangs and other forms of extra-familial harm. They have strengthened their oversight of services in response to the feedback given at the last inspection, to better identify and engage with vulnerable

children exposed to risk of extra-familial harm, and improved their offer of support to them and their families.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice?

- Earlier transition planning for children in care and care leavers who are exposed to risk of child exploitation, gangs and extra-familial harm.
- The involvement of children in the take-up of return home interviews and the information the authority relies on to capture activity and the impact of these interviews.
- The arrangements for support and engagement with children at risk of extra-familial harm; in particular, the agility of services to meet the diverse and complex needs of these children and their families.

Main findings

The local authority has been creative and adaptive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the continuity of responsive services for vulnerable children. Leaders have issued guidance and put structures and support in place to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children and their families, and of their staff. Staff have been consulted and actively involved in shaping future services in preparation for the ending of COVID-19 restrictions.

The numbers of contacts to children's social care during the pandemic have reduced. However, leaders report that children being referred have more complex needs than normal, resulting in a greater proportion of contacts converting to referrals. Effective communication and joint working with schools and partners have ensured that children at risk of extra-familial harm continue to be identified. Multi-agency safeguarding hub thresholds are well understood, and they are applied appropriately for these children.

Children are promptly directed to the most appropriate team for ongoing support. Good multi-agency engagement and cooperation to support children at risk of harm are evident across all service tiers. Whole-family working, supported by the Prevention and Support Service (PASS), is used effectively to address the needs of children and their parents, resulting in improvements in family functioning. Most children receive support at the right time to help reduce the damaging impact of extra-familial harm and to prevent further criminal or sexual harm escalating.

Safeguarding risks are proportionately balanced and sensitively managed, when parents' responses to discovering their child's involvement in harmful situations can be viewed as inappropriate. Child exploitation risk assessments and plans are mostly used well to identify, analyse, manage and disrupt risks. Plans are reviewed in social workers' supervision and overseen by senior managers, to ensure that actions are followed through and any concerns escalated where necessary.

Successful engagement with some children and their parents results in effective direct work. This helps families to act to better manage and reduce risk and harm to their children. Not all families are convinced of the benefits of working together with professionals to safeguard their children. Where families are resistant to help, professional involvement is not always coordinated well enough to engage the family proactively and effectively in the delivery of services, to meet their diverse needs. As a result, some children remain gripped in these harmful situations, beyond their own and their parents' control.

Oversight, tracking and support continue post-18 for care leavers with complex needs who have been harmed and/or are at risk of further extra-familial harm. Transition planning is not started early enough for some young people with complex needs. Post-18 placements are particularly hard to identify when they are needed, and planning and activity begin too late for some young people. As a result, some care leavers, who have already had much to contend with, have had to move home several times within a short period of time.

Senior managers maintain good oversight of all children who are not in full-time education. Effective systems ensure tracking of children's progress and monitoring of their tuition hours. Each child has a plan which considers their return to full-time education, with actions tailored to their individual needs.

Careful attention is paid to referrals about children who are reported missing from home or care, even when risks and vulnerability are deemed to be low. The response to missing children, identified at the last inspection as an area for further development, is now more consistent. Consent is appropriately obtained, and parents and carers are consulted. Routine partner agency checks are carried out and all children are offered a return home interview (RHI). Cases involving children who are repeatedly reported missing are escalated appropriately to strategy discussions for further consideration of risk and protection needs. Risk management meetings maintain oversight of missing children, ensure the timely follow-through of actions and ensure that professionals appropriately share intelligence to reduce incidents of going missing. All children are now offered RHIs. However, while the take-up of these interviews has improved and is currently at 58%, it is still too low. Some children who are reluctant to take up the RHI offer benefit from direct engagement with their social workers after each episode of going missing. However, this activity is not formally monitored; neither is it evident for all children.

When unaccompanied young people go missing for prolonged periods, they are kept under review. In line with good practice, staff continue to make efforts to trace their whereabouts and follow up on any sighting leads. Checks are carried out with the National Referral Mechanism, the Home Office and other local authority areas, and new intelligence considered until their whereabouts are known.

The challenges faced by children involved in child exploitation and gangs are well understood by the local authority and its partners, both strategically and

operationally. Professionals undertake extensive mapping of the most vulnerable children involved in gang-related activities, so these children and their networks are well known. Staff work actively with partners to disrupt gang activity. Specialist workers are tenacious in their efforts to build the trust and confidence of children and their parents. The skilful balancing of needs and risks is producing windows of opportunities which are used to change the trajectory of life for some of these children.

Social workers comply with the requirements of statutory guidance, but this does not always translate into successful interventions and/or outcomes for gang-affiliated children and their families. Standard visiting timescales may not always be frequent enough to build the strong and trusting relationships needed to support and help these children and their families. The throughput of work does not always fit with the need for the long-term engagement so often required to see evidence of sustainable change for them.

Staff quickly identify and respond to risks to children from radicalisation through timely early intervention.

Leaders ensure that children in Thurrock continue to access a good range of emotional well-being support. Services have adapted well to increasing demand throughout the pandemic, with a focus on early support and developing their digital offer. Despite these investments, children are having to wait for specialist emotional well-being mental health services (EWMHS). These services actively maintain oversight of children on their waiting lists, providing advice and support to professionals who are supporting them. For many children waiting for specialist EWMHS services, time-limited interventions are provided through the PASS, youth services and/or the Youth Offending Service. This flexible approach successfully addresses their presenting needs and ensures support for them until longer-term services are engaged.

Senior leaders in Thurrock are visible and are noted by staff to be very personable. There is a culture of openness and learning. Managers maintain good oversight of children's journeys, monitoring risk and the progress of work with vulnerable children through various panels and meetings. Decision-making is clearly evidenced on case records. Supervision is used well as a productive tool to support staff, provide guidance and to develop social care practice with children and families.

Audit is a well-used and embedded quality assurance tool that is fully integrated into the service. Children's life experiences and risks are well considered, as auditors explore what has been done well and what more could be done to help the child or others in similar situations. Information gained from audits informs key performance documents and is effectively triangulated with data. This provides assurance about progress and performance for leaders and managers. Between 10% and 20% of audits are moderated. The information contained in the audits is accurate, but it is not always appropriately reflected in eventual quality gradings. Leaders acknowledge

the need to increase the numbers of audits that are moderated, to help them further develop and embed a coherent and consistent understanding of social work practice and its impact on children.

Staff enjoy working in Thurrock and they feel valued. Good access to relevant training and development opportunities help them gain the skills, knowledge and tools they need to work successfully with children who are at risk of extra-familial harm. Staff are encouraged to progress and develop their careers in Thurrock.

Most social workers have manageable caseloads that allow time to build relationships with children and their families. Many are proactive and persistent in doing so, working to overcome any barriers to engagement.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning your next inspection or visit.

Your sincerely

Margaret Burke
Her Majesty's Inspector

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| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 12 October 2021 | ITEM: 11 |
| Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
| SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: Non Key |
| Report of: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills | |
| Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director, Education and Skills | |
| Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children’s Services | |
| This report is Public | |

Executive Summary

This report outlines the progress on the work identified within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action, which was agreed by Ofsted in October 2019. It includes an update against the key areas identified in Appendix One.

The reporting period for this report is July 2021 to September 2021.

This report will outline the progress between July 2021 and September 2021. As reported at the July Children’s O&S meeting we continue to work to address the areas identified within the Written Statement of Action.

Outlined below are the Ofsted WSoA areas for development:-

- Action 1: Inaccurate and incomplete records and ineffective oversight means that leaders did not know the whereabouts of some children and young people and what provision they have.
- Action 2: Quality assurance is not rigorous enough to ensure effective governance and oversight across the provision and services for 0 to 25-year-olds with SEND. Leaders are reliant on working relationships rather than processes. Leaders are over reliant on the limited information given to them by educational providers about the quality of the provision they purchase.
- Action 3, is about the quality of Education and Health Care (EHC) plans and Annual Reviews and is broken down into the following strands:

- Strand 1: EHC plans and the annual review process are of poor quality. The local authority has no system in place to make sure that relevant professionals and services are notified when EHC plans need reviewing or updating.
- Strand 2: Professionals are not routinely informed of requests to submit written information within specified timescales.
- Strand 3: Too often, EHC plans are out of date and do not accurately reflect the needs or views of children and young people, or the views of the families.
- Strand 4: The information from EHC plans and annual reviews is not used to inform the commissioning of services, particularly, but not exclusively, for young people between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

1. Recommendation

1.1 O&S to scrutinise the work that has been undertaken during the period outlined in the report and offer support and challenge.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report provides an update to the committee identifying the work that has been undertaken during the reporting period outlined above. Detailed progress against the WSoA's action plan is outlined in Appendix One.
- 2.2 The SEND Improvement Board, chaired by the Corporate Director of Children's Services, continues to ensure that we address the areas identified in the written statement of action as well as the wider system change related to our services to SEND children & young people. The SEND Improvement Board has a range of key stakeholders who are working to ensure our SEND children and young people make good progress with focussed work around key educational transition phases.
- 2.3 The SEND Operational Group chaired by the Assistant Director of Education & Skills meets on a monthly basis and provides regular updates to the SEND Improvement Board which, in turn, reports back to our Brighter Futures Partnership Board and Children's Overview & Scrutiny.
- 2.4 As reported in the July update, Ofsted have commenced the SEND re-inspection programme and we have received feedback from other LA's who have recently been re-inspected.
- 2.5 Over the summer break we have been working on our impact statement which will form part of the suite of documents that we will provide to Ofsted forming part of our evidence base when our re-inspection of SEND services is undertaken.

- 2.6 The holiday activities programme has provided a range of opportunities for children with SEND and a report around these activities will be available in spring 2022, the final activities in this round of funding will take place in December 2021.
- 2.7 A new travel training video has been produced and this will support our post 16 young people with SEND to become independent travellers. The Preparing for Adulthood team have worked with both parents/carers and young people to promote this. We have seen a number of parents request this training and at the time of writing this report we have 20 students signed up for the programme.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to support children and young people with additional needs and, as such, we are working with a range of partners including health, social care and schools/colleges to ensure that we use a whole system approach to ensure smooth transition pathways. Transitions remains a key focus and this is imbedded in our Brighter Futures Strategy refresh and includes our commitment to support SEND children and young people through key transition points.
- 3.2 We continue to gain feedback relating to our newly refreshed local offer. The Family Information Service (FIS) have hosted multiple Ask Thurrock – Local Offer drop in sessions during the day, evenings and weekends. Some of the feedback provided was to use smaller titles for key pages. This was actioned during the meeting resulting in positive feedback. FIS will be hosting some further sessions during the autumn school term. The FIS Team have met with the Parent/Carer forum and PATT Team in dedicated feedback sessions. Part of this feedback was to add more videos and images to the site which has also been actioned.
- 3.3 The voice of the child/young person remains a key priority as reported previously. We have opened a youth provision for SEND young people called the 'Hang Out' and, as a result of feedback, we are launching a junior 'hang out' for the younger age range. This new junior youth provision will enable children with SEND to access a range of activities and provide a space for them to socialise with others and express their views on what is working for them and suggest new developments. A new programme of digital engagement activities is in development to allow children to feedback on all aspects of services through an online portal to complement the existing pupil's voice project activities.
- 3.4 The Annual Review Process – as reported in the July O&S meeting we have identified additional capacity to support with the completion of annual reviews this has seen an increase in the number of annual reviews completed in the academic year 20/21. The latest data available shows us at 74% of annual reviews due in this academic year having been completed this is significantly increased from previous years.

3.5 As reported in the July meeting the service continue to strengthen its governance and oversight on quality assurance across the service. The Quality Assurance (QA) Lead has refreshed the QA Framework and has implemented an audit programme which continues to include a range of partners. Audits focus on a sample of plans, including finalised, new and those subject to annual review, to ensure they are of high quality and in line with the code of practice and regulations. Some audits now include direct feedback from parents and carers and this has resulted in positive feedback of the SEND service. All learning feeds into an action plan and the QA Lead monitors progress in the improvement of the quality of plans. Learning also feeds into the training, guidance and support programme as part of continuous development for our staff and those in schools and other partner agencies.

4. Reason for Recommendation

4.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny have a clear and accountable governance and responsibility around supporting children with additional needs – the standing agenda item will enable committee members to be reassured of the progress and provide scrutiny in ensuring we are meeting the objectives outlined in the WSoA. We would ask committee members to consider how they would like us to report back on progress.

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

5.1 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

Create a great place for learning and opportunity.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

Further additional resources have been identified to ensure that we implement the change programme that is being developed to support children and young people with SEND. This will be monitored alongside the Written Statement of Action to ensure that they have been targeted in the appropriate place to see improved outcomes for children and young people.

In addition, the Dedicated Schools Grant has prioritised resources to support the improvement plan and respond to the increased demand in EHC plans.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal

The Council is subject to various duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children with special educational needs. These duties are set out in more detail in The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 SI 2014/1530. The regulations set out various timescales for particular steps such as decisions to make and review EHC plans.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development and Equalities

Supporting our children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities is a key strategic priority for Thurrock Council. The service continues to promote practice to achieve equality, inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. We have recently redesigned our work around how we engage with children young people and parents/carers who require additional support. To support with this work we have recruited an Inclusion Support Officer who will be working with local stakeholders to enable us to gain feedback on service delivery and how we can ensure it is linked to service transformation.

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

None

8. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

8.1 Appendix 1 - Written Statement of Action – progress update – July 2021 – September 2021

Report Author:

Michele Lucas
Assistant Director, Education and Skills

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Appendix One – July 2021 – September 2021

SEND LOCAL AREA

Written Statement of Action

Author: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education and Skills

September 2019

Version 10

SEND Strategy Priorities 2019-22

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Ensure that children and families are at the heart of an effective send system</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental engagement and co-production in all areas of SEND • The role of the Parent/ Carer Forum in putting forward parent voice though the parent/carer forum • Parent, child and young person engagement in service commissioning, Planning and delivery • Co-production of individual Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) • Pupil voice and targeted engagement work • Feedback via surveys and group work |
| <p>Ensure every child and young person is making good progress and attends a good place to learn</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive range of high quality SEND services available in mainstream and special early years settings, schools and colleges for children and young people at SEN support and EHC Plan • Measures of individual outcomes progress through EHC Plan and SEN support and beyond academic attainment • Appropriate range of specialist places in place • SEND progress measures in schools and bases for EHC Plan and SEN support • Targeted monitoring and support for all vulnerable groups including SEN support, EHC Plan, LAC, CIN and Young Offenders |
| <p>Ensure children and families are well supported</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality comprehensive information on all SEND services through the Local Offer • High quality support services in all provision to enable parents, children and young people to achieve identified outcomes • High quality advisory and support services through Information, Advice and Guidance services (IAGS) • Clear and comprehensive routes of access to Co-ordinated Health & Social Care support including SEN support, CAF, Health Pathways including Emotional, Health & Mental Wellbeing and EHC Plan |
| <p>Ensure an effective and responsive approach to assessing and meeting the needs of children and their families</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality and efficient SEN assessment, delivery, monitoring and administration at early years settings, schools and college provision with effective Local Authority, Health and Social Care contributions • Comprehensive support for children and young people in place leading to enhanced outcomes for all children and young people |
| <p>Ensure the identification of early support for children with send</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive early identification and support systems including Early Support, Portage, Outreach services and co-ordinated support in Early Years settings incorporating Health, Social Care and Education systems under a single co-ordinated system • Clear systems of support and advice to early years settings to ensure identification of needs and support including support from the Area SENCO |
| <p>Ensure young people are well prepared for adulthood</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and timely Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Planning ensuring young people have a wide range of opportunities and achieve across all six areas of PfA • Clear and effective systems enabling young people to transition to adult education, Employment, Health and Social Care services based on their individual needs |

Introduction

This document outlines the commitment of Thurrock Council and Thurrock's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to address the areas of concern, which were identified in Thurrock's Local Area SEND Inspection, which took place 4th-8th March 2019.

The document highlighted three key areas:

- **Area of Concern 1:** Inaccurate and incomplete records and ineffective oversight meant that leaders did not know the whereabouts of some children and young people and what provision they have.
- **Area of Concern 2:** Quality assurance is not rigorous enough to ensure effective governance and oversight across the provision and services for 0 to 25-year-olds with SEND. Leaders are reliant on working relationships rather than processes. Leaders are over reliant on the limited information given to them by educational providers about the quality of the provision they purchase.
- **Area of Concern 3:** Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) and the annual review process are of poor quality. The local authority has no system in place to make sure that relevant professionals and services are notified when EHC Plans need reviewing or updating. Professionals are not routinely informed of requests to submit written information within specified timescales. Too often EHC Plans are out of date and do not accurately reflect the needs or views of children and young people, or the views of the families. The information from EHC Plans and annual reviews is not used to inform the commissioning of services, particularly, but not exclusively, for young people between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

Our Written Statement of Action has been produced in partnership with the Thurrock Council, CCG and Public Health to ensure that all key partners are working together to address the weaknesses identified in the recent inspection. In addition, we have shared the document with our Children's Overview and Scrutiny board, young people, our parent groups, and a focus group of parents and carers recognising the importance of shared ownership and commitment to children and young people with SEND.

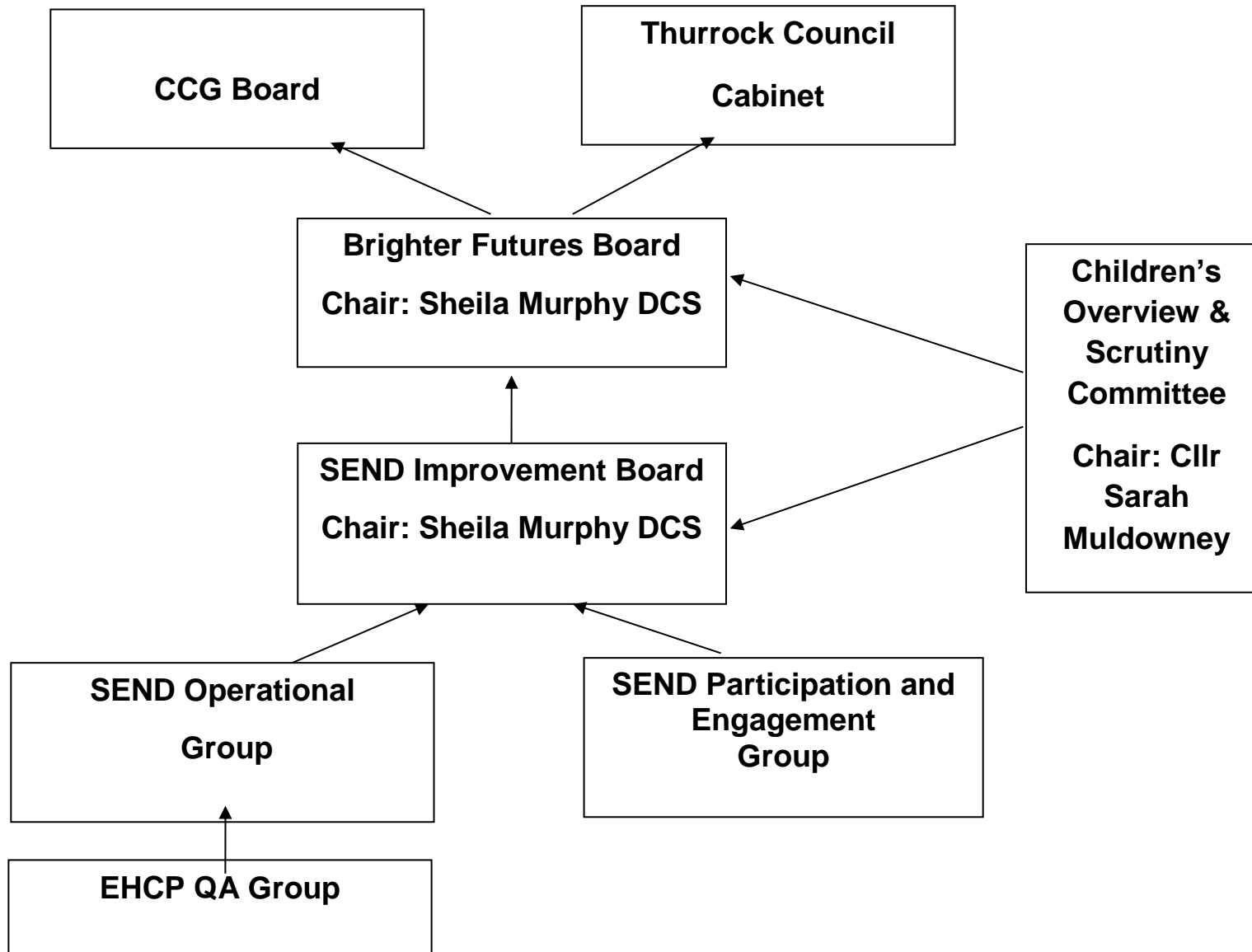
The monitoring of this statement of action will take place on a quarterly basis with the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England, and implementation will be monitored and scrutinised through the Thurrock SEND Improvement Board, which is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health. Our Operational SEND Group will oversee our work Plans and monitor internal performance measures to ensure we have a robust system of quality assurance in place.

Thurrock has a long standing commitment to an inclusive system of education health care and support that actively enables access and full participation to all aspects of community life. This is in compliance with the Salamanca Statement and Framework for action on Special Needs (1994), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is embedded in the Equality Act 2010.

Key responsible people

| | | | |
|--|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Portfolio Holder for Education & Health (PFH) | Cllr Barry Johnson | CEO Thurrock Council | Lyn Carpenter |
| Leader of the Council | Cllr Rob Gledhill | Portfolio Holder Children & Adult Social Care | Cllr Deb Huelin |
| Chair Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee | Cllr Sarah Muldowney | Corporate Director (CD) | Sheila Murphy |
| Assistant Director, & Consultant in Public Health | Teresa Salami-Oru | Assistant Director Education & Skills (ADES) | Michele Lucas |
| Assistant Director Children's Social Care | Janet Simon | Strategic Lead Specialist Provision / Principal Educational Psychologist (SLSPPEP) | Malcolm Taylor |
| Strategic Lead School Effectiveness and SEND (SLSESEND) | Andrea Winstone | Strategic Lead Employability and Skills (SLES) previously P16SM | Kate Kozlova-Boran |
| Strategic Lead Business Intelligence (SLBI) | Mandy Moore | Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning for Children, Young People & Maternity | Helen Farmer |
| Chief Nurse, CCG | Stephen Mayo | Strategic Lead for Children Services Commissioning (SLCSC) | Sue Green |
| Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) | Louise Warren | Portfolio Holder for Education | Cllr Barry Johnson |

SEND Governance Structure



Governance Structure

Thurrock Council working in partnership with Thurrock CCG and Parent Carer Forum has undertaken a review of its Governance of the SEND work across the Local Area.

Children's Overview and Scrutiny will monitor the impacts associated with this plan on bi-monthly basis.

Brighter Futures – Children's Partnership provides the overarching governance arrangements for SEND, work to address the issues within the written statement of action and the wider SEND strategy will be reported to the Brighter Futures – Children's Partnership on a six monthly basis.

SEND Improvement Board meets monthly and is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. The membership is made up of senior management from across the Partnership including the CCG and Public Health and the Parent Carer Forum.

SEND Operational Group meets monthly to ensure the work programme set out in the written statement of action and the wider SEND improvement priorities are on track ensuring effective action. This group reports to the SEND Improvement Board. Membership of this Group is cross partnership and includes operational leads from the LA, CCG, Public Health and Parent Carer representation.

The SEND Participation and Engagement group meets quarterly co-chaired with the Parent Carer Forum to enable a wide range of co-production including Health Education and Social Care across all areas of SEND improvement.

EHCP Quality Assurance Group – this group meets monthly and will oversee the QA process of EHCP's it will report into the operational group and quarterly reports will be provided to the SEND Improvement Board.

RAG RATING KEY

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|--------------|--|
| RED | The action has not yet started or there is significant delay in implementation. The action must be prioritised to bring it back on track to deliver. |
| AMBER | The action has been started but there is some delay in implementation. The action must be monitored to ensure the required improvement is delivered. |
| GREEN | The action is on track to be completed by the agreed date. Evidence is required to show that the improvement has been embedded and sustained. |
| BLUE | The action has been completed and is now fully embedded. |

Written Statement of Action

Area of concern 1: Inaccurate and incomplete records and ineffective oversight meant that leaders did not know the whereabouts of some children and young people and what provision they have.

Aim of this programme of work:

To ensure that the Local Authority knows where all children and young people are placed and what provision they are accessing. To develop processes to confirm the quality of provision and the welfare of children and young people placed in different settings particularly those placed out of the authority.

We will undertake a review of SEND, EHC Plan records and ensure that they are updated by the SEN team. This will be audited monthly by members of the senior manager team and reported through our performance management framework to Directors Board and the SEND Improvement Board.

KPIs / Targets for assessing overall success of the programme

- All EHC Plans are reviewed and quality assured to meet statutory assessment timelines

- The system at any time can produce this information readily.

- An accurate list of all C&YP with EHC Plans:-

- Where they are placed
- Date the EHC Plan was reviewed and when next review is due
- For those placed in residential /out of authority or home educated dates of the last monitoring visits to check welfare
- Up to date information around children/young people who are “awaiting specialist provision”
- Clear processes in place to ensure we are tracking those that may be missing education

Area of Concern 1: Inaccurate and incomplete records and ineffective oversight meant that leaders did not know the whereabouts of some children and young people and what provision they have

Aims: To ensure that the Local Authority knows where all children and young people are placed and what provision they are accessing. To develop processes to confirm the quality of provision and the welfare of children and young people placed in different settings particularly those out of the authority.

| Actions | Action completed by | Responsible Officer | Outcomes and measures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| <p>A1. Management oversight- Realignment of Education and Skills leadership so that there is an enhanced focus on quality and performance monitoring of provision</p> <p>a) Complete re-alignment documentation</p> <p>b) Consultation with management team members re the new structure.</p> <p>c) Realign duties to Strategic Leads and Post 16 Lead and amend job descriptions</p> <p>d) Strategic Leads and Post 16 Leads line managed by ADES</p> <p>e) Rigorous monitoring of the SEND services to ensure that outcomes and measures are met</p> <p>RAG rating</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="114 1034 752 1345"> <tr> <td>Oct 2019</td> <td>Jan 2020</td> <td>April 2020</td> <td>July 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oct 2020</td> <td>Jan 2021</td> <td>April 2021</td> <td>July 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #00aaff;"></td> <td style="background-color: #00aaff;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | Oct 2020 | Jan 2021 | April 2021 | July 2021 | | | | | | | | | <p>July 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>ADES</p> <p>ADES</p> <p>ADES</p> <p>ADES</p> <p>ADES</p> | <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Distributed leadership of service – service realigned into three areas Specialist provision, Operations and Post 16</p> <p>Service leads closely monitor and performance manage the SEND operational teams</p> <p>Service leads attend case management decision making panel</p> <p>Service leads visit each out of borough placement to QA</p> <p>There are clear lines of responsibility and reporting</p> <p>Rigorous monitoring improves performance of SEND team measured by timescales, feedback from parents and education establishments, % of plans audited that comply with the QA framework, % of annual reviews completed on time (see section</p> <p>Quarterly report on performance to the SEND Board starting in October 2019</p> <p>And as a result:</p> <p>Local Authority (ADES) has effective oversight of where all children and young people with SEND are placed and the provision they are accessing thus ensuring they are achieving their outcomes</p> <p>Increased management capacity which will lead to closer scrutiny of all cases ensuring all children and young people are placed in appropriate provision</p> |
| Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Oct 2020 | Jan 2021 | April 2021 | July 2021 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Oct 2021 | Jan 2022 | April 2022 | July 2022 | | | | Progress will be governed by SEND Improvement Board |
| | | | | | | | |

A1 progress update – July 2021 to September 2021:

Actions **a) - d)** around the management realignment have been completed. Action **e)** remains ongoing with evidence of current progress outlined below.

- LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) demonstrates that in 2020 86% of new EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) comparing us favourably to East of England (59%), England (58%) and Statistical Neighbours (66%).
- The year to date figures for EHC plans issued within 20 weeks is currently 84%.
- Clear management oversight relating to specialist provision – QA of all out of borough provision has been undertaken. Strategic Lead has undertaken QA visits of local P16 provision and identified improvements in provision and systems management going forward – these will be implemented in the new academic year 21/22. Apprenticeships remain a key challenge in part as a result of Covid 19 however Inspire have continued to work closely with regeneration colleagues who are looking to identify apprenticeship opportunities for vulnerable learners. As a stepping stone to apprenticeships, Traineeships and Kickstart, positions are being identified for SEND learners with 5 SEND YP currently on a Kickstart programme. The pilot is being adjusted as we have gained feedback from young people which has meant we have looked to simplify the recruitment and induction processes. As reported at our last update we have 5 young people who were accessing our Prince’s Trust TEAM programme as a result of this all young people have gone on to a positive destination, this includes supported internships and employment opportunities.

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| <p>A2. Records and oversight of all Post 16 provision for CYP with SEND to be reviewed to ensure accuracy of placement for the young person in line with Ofsted Written Statement of Action</p> <p>a) Identify additional funding stream for additional capacity through a business case to Director’s Board</p> <p>b) Recruit 3 additional post 16 officers with careers advice and guidance qualifications and 1 tracking officer</p> | <p>April 2020</p> <p>July 2019</p> | <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> | <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Increased capacity in Post 16 team to address areas of identified concern in the Ofsted Inspection.</p> <p>New learning pathways and courses are developed locally for Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) building on current provision for young people. New strategic partnerships are formed to maximise quality of P16 provision using YPs’ feedback and injecting preparing for adulthood themes into the provision and delivery. ‘Presumption of Employability’ is at the heart of the service</p> |
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|---|---|---|---|-----------|--|--|--|--|----------|----------|------------|-----------|--|--|--|
| <p>c) Create a quality assurance framework for post 16 provision using regional guidance to be developed further with Children , Young People, Parents /Carers and Partners</p> <p>d) Commission post 16 provision using the framework developed – action date</p> <p>e) Agree KPIs with all post 16 providers to enable the officers to measure impact of provision</p> <p>f) In collaboration with South Essex College, USP and Thurrock Adult Community College improve the post 16 offer locally, ensuring information from PfA meetings/ annual reviews taken into account</p> <p>g) The Action Plans for Young People undergoing transition with EHC Plans are collated by the Preparing for Adulthood Officer on a termly basis to inform the future provision</p> <p>h) Embed seamless pathways between Children’s and Adult Social Services through PfA monthly meetings</p> <p>i) Create new career action plans appropriate to different year groups</p> | <p>January 2021</p> <p>August 2020 August 2021</p> <p>Feb 2020 Jan 2021</p> <p>April 2020 Oct 2020</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>Nov 2019</p> <p>Sept 2019</p> | <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> <p>P16SM</p> | <p>All CYP from year 9+ will have an annual PfA advisor attend their annual review, will deliver CEIAG (Career Education, Information And Guidance) to SEND YP in Year 9,11, 12, 13 and 14 to identify needs early on, consistently work on SMART career targets using the Careers Action Plan as the golden thread throughout the YP’s journey. Reporting on destinations of YP is robust.</p> <p>And as a result:</p> <p>CYP welfare and quality of education is regularly assessed and monitored</p> <p>Post 16 provision is commissioned based on intelligence from PfA sections of reviews of EHCPs</p> <p>Evidenced by:</p> <p>Development of new bespoke programmes to ensure learner needs are met.</p> <p>Improvement to the curriculum; internship opportunities; careers advice and access to employment and apprenticeships for young people.</p> <p>Additions to the post 16 curriculum for young people with SEND (both with EHCPs and at SEND support) for the academic year 2020/21 compared with 2019/20.</p> <p>Increase in supported internship from baseline in the SEN2 return 2019 of 24.</p> <p>Increase in apprenticeship, internship and traineeship opportunities to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the employment offer in the borough</p> <p>Changes in the levels of YP aged 16-19 with EHCPs NEET from 2019 baseline. Changes in the overall level of YP who are NEET from 2019 baseline.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>RAG rating</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="107 1150 752 1345"> <tr> <td>Oct 2019</td> <td>Jan 2020</td> <td>April 2020</td> <td>July 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #ffc107;"></td> <td style="background-color: #ffc107;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oct 2020</td> <td>Jan 2021</td> <td>April 2021</td> <td>July 2021</td> </tr> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | Oct 2020 | Jan 2021 | April 2021 | July 2021 | | | |
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| | | | | | | <p>Leaders know the whereabouts of all children and young people and what provision they have evidenced by records produced from the database/IT system.</p> <p>Young people meet their potential and have fulfilling lives and careers as evidenced by :-</p> <p>Young people have access to new bespoke programmes to meet learner needs.</p> <p>Improved access to the curriculum; internship opportunities; positive transitions from children to adult health services; careers advice and access to employment and apprenticeships; positive transitions from children's to adult's social care, access to housing and support for independent living.</p> |
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| <p>A2 Progress update: July 2021 to end September 2021: A number of actions [(a) (b) (g) (h) (i)] have been completed. However, we have had some issues around timescales due to COVID restrictions for actions [(c) (d) (e) (f)]. These revised timescales were approved by the SEND improvement board July 2020 and below is an overview of the activity which has taken place to support these objectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post 16 providers have established focus groups in their institutions to enable the voice of the YP to be heard, this has been actioned and a partnership agreement has been developed. Information from the partnership agreements has informed practice from January 2021, this has been further revised and feedback will inform work in the new academic year. 2. Current work is progressing to ensure we are able to support young people with the newly established internship opportunities that have been generated – which are looking to address some of the challenges around post 16 opportunities. 3. In response to direct feedback from parents around understanding the post 16 offer available locally, six videos have been produced around our post-16 provisions at TACC and SEC. These have been added to the Local Offer further videos have been produced including a travel training video to support young people to become independent travellers. 4. The QA framework for post 16 is in operational a monthly reports are provided to the SEND improvement Board. The QA framework forms the basis of annual conversations with Post 16 providers. These annual conversations will have an education, Social Care and Health focus thus ensuring we are looking at all aspects of the EHC Plan. 5. Following a successful QA Local Offer Meeting and a training session held by Nasen, a new sub group of the QALO Meeting has been established which will focus on training for professionals across the Thurrock partnership around EHCPs, aspirations of YP in Thurrock and having Preparing for Adulthood agenda running as the golden thread through a YP's plan. 6. A new platform has been created for Thurrock professionals with easy access to all the information on SEND in Thurrock, a hub for resources, courses and support available. 7. Further meetings between Education, Social Care and Health and PATT service have resulted in an innovative Parent Forum to provide an advocacy service, training and updates from LA and partner organisations to parents of SEND YP as well as careers delivery to SEND YP. | | | | | | |

8. Similarly, a new YP's forum 'Your Choices' has been established in partnership with Southend and is used as a platform for SEND YP to get together and discuss career options and find out what is going in the area.
9. The Local Offer is being enhanced through an innovative website, Thurrock Opportunities, (funded by LA) to provide employability skills to all SEND YP in the borough with the outcome of a digital CV showcasing their soft skills promoting employability.
10. **16-18** year old SEND Not in Education Employment or Training/Unknown is currently at 11.4%.
11. **16-25** year old SEND learners Not in Education Employment and Training is currently at 12.5% - national statistic is at 49%. Such excellent performance is due to Thurrock having a strong tracking team which enables us to have a clear data set around where our young people are. This figure relates to a wider cohort than the 16-18 year olds.
12. As a result of feedback from YP: 1. Inspiring You – a course at TACC for Higher Ability SEND learners at TACC starting September '21; 2. Hangout – a youth club for YP with SEND established in February '21, as a result of the success of the Hangout, we are also opening a junior Hangout from October 2021.
13. A 'You Said – We Did' leaflet (attached below) has been produced and is on the Local Offer.



You said! We did!
14092021.pdf

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| <p>A3: Governance of SEND Service will be reviewed to ensure, there is effective oversight all children and young people.</p> <p>SEND Improvement Board and SEND Operational Board to be established</p> <p>Agree terms of reference for the boards and arrangements for communicating decisions and reporting lines</p> <p>c) Board to be Chaired by Portfolio Holder, and DCO, ADES, ADCS, CD attend board meetings</p> <p>d) Embed the operational aspects of governance structures, working groups and forums established by WSoA and already in existence in order to ensure aligned and effective implementation of WSoA.</p> | <p>July 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>Jan 2020</p> | <p>ADES</p> <p>DCO</p> <p>ADCS</p> <p>CD</p> | <p>Outcomes and measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased senior management oversight • Challenging but realistic targets are set • Clear lines of accountability • Poor performance is challenged and addressed <p>And as a result:</p> <p>Membership agreed. The chair of the board is the PFH for Education and Health and OFSTED Regional Lead is also a member</p> <p>New board meeting on 14th June to oversee the development of the Written Statement of Action</p> <p>Board have met and signed off the re-submitted WSOA.</p> <p>The performance framework will demonstrate a system wide approach to children and young people with SEND</p> |
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e) The board will hold performance of SEND department to account through monthly performance data monitoring

Jan 2020

CD

Performance of department will improve and children and young people's experience of support arrangements for SEND will improve

RAG rating

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A3 Progress update July 2021 to September 2021:

All action points **[(a) – (e)]** have been completed. Governance has been strengthened with the development of the SEND operational group and the SEND Improvement Board as well as Children Overview & Scrutiny and the Health & Wellbeing Board holding the SEND Partnership to account.

1. Operational Group meetings on a monthly basis with the SEND Improvement Board meeting every 4 weeks providing support and challenge. The Board have moved to monthly meetings to ensure they are robustly tracking progress. These groups are made up of a health, social care and schools to ensure we have a whole systems approach to monitoring progress.
2. Children's Overview and Scrutiny are provided with regular reports and have informed changes in practice – an example of this relates to a question from O&S around the local offer – this has been subsequently refreshed

Impact

1. LAIT demonstrates that in 2020 86% of new EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) comparing us favourably to East of England (59%), England (58%) and Statistical Neighbours (66%).

2. The year to date figures for EHC plans issued within 20 weeks is currently 84%.
3. In the last academic year 74% of annual reviews that need amending have been amended to date.

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| <p>A4: Improve the accuracy and quality of record keeping</p> <p>a) Update all data currently held on the Synergy SEN Data base system to ensure annual review dates, placements/ schools/ year groups and other information is correct.</p> <p>b) Bi-weekly training programme in place for all SEND team in the processes for annual reviews/ case work/ recording/ customer service/ practice standards</p> <p>c) Train SEND caseworkers to use all the modules on the Synergy SEND system</p> <p>Embed SEND Children Missing Education (CME) processes and recording through CME monthly monitoring of cases.</p> <p>Distribute CME reporting and recording processes to SEND/ EWS/ Admissions/ Social Care/ schools</p> <p>RAG</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="107 1241 766 1362"> <tr> <td>Oct 2019</td> <td>Jan 2020</td> <td>April 2020</td> <td>July 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #92d050;"></td> <td style="background-color: #00b0f0;"></td> <td style="background-color: #00b0f0;"></td> <td style="background-color: #00b0f0;"></td> </tr> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | <p>Sep 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>Feb 2020</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>Nov 2019</p> | <p>SLSESEND</p> <p>SLSESEND</p> <p>SLSESEND</p> <p>SLSPPEP</p> <p>SLSPPEP</p> | <p>Outcomes</p> <p>The system at any time can produce this information readily to support Children and Young People's outcomes</p> <p>100% Records are accurate and up to date</p> <p>Staff training has commenced and is undertaken by all staff on a Bi-weekly basis</p> <p>An accurate list of all C&YP with EHC Plans:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where they are placed - Date the EHC Plan was reviewed and when next review is due - For those placed in residential /out of authority or home educated dates of the last monitoring visits to check welfare - Up to date information around children/young people who are "awaiting specialist provision" <p>And as a result:</p> <p>All current data on Synergy is complete and accurate.</p> <p>CME processes are clear and understood by all</p> <p>All partner agencies have copies of the revised CME process and have undertaken training or awareness raising on the new process</p> <p>Clear processes in place to ensure we are tracking those that may be missing</p> |
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| Oct 2020 | Jan 2021 | April 2021 | July 2021 | | | 20 week timescale for completing EHCPs is met in line with the SEND code of practice 2015 |
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| Oct 2021 | Jan 2022 | April 2022 | July 2022 | | | All members of the SEND team will have completed a training programme to understand the current SEN team requirements for data recording and to understand how to input this data into Synergy |
| | | | | | | The Synergy system can produce all required information, accurately and in a timely manner |
| | | | | | | CYP have timely annual reviews of the EHC Plans |

A4 Progress update – July 2021 to September 2021

All actions [(a) – (e)] have been completed. Please see below for an overview of the systems work that has been undertaken

1. PQBI have worked with SEND service to ensure better quality reports are produced. Two new reports have been established detailing all EHCPs maintained by Thurrock/ not maintained by Thurrock as well as the development of the annual review 12 week report.
The new reports enable managers and leaders to see dates of annual reviews and when plans have been amended following an annual review.
2. Caseworkers have worked with Synergy and PQBI to ensure that all fields accurately reflect current provision for SEND type / school type etc.
3. Provision manager regularly triangulates pupils place planning, with finance and providers to ensure accurate records for out of borough providers.
4. There is an accurate record of all children awaiting specialist placements with clear actions in place, reviewed weekly through the Priority Grid and recorded on the individual Tribal/Synergy SEND record including details of the interim support that is in place whilst a new placement is being sought.

Impact:

1. All schools have been informed when annual reviews are due, resulting in more annual reviews being completed in a timely manner. 74% annual reviews have been completed and EHCPs amended so far. This means that most children have an up to date EHCP which accurately reflects their needs and provision.
2. SEN2 return was more accurate than in previous years as all data could be verified

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| A5: SEND data integration project. | | | Outcomes |
| a) Identify resources to Progress the Synergy Health Check work | July 2019 | SLBI | A fully integrated system that supports the work of the SEND service and provide better outcomes for young people. |
| b) Recruit additional capacity for Synergy system | Oct 2019 | SLBI | And as a result System is being used to full capacity |

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| c) Identify the current shortcomings in the current system d) Create an options appraisal for systems integration e) Identify appropriate system providers f) Review and update data management system g) Research the introduction of Synergy or other line EHC PLAN system h) Introduce an online EHC Plan system that is user friendly for parents/ CYP/ stakeholders-ensuring training is in place for all from system provider | Sep 2019 | SLBI | Records are up to date and accurate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sep 2019 | SLBI | Workflows in place to remind caseworkers and managers of tasks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Oct 2109 | SLBI | The team performance improves | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Oct 2019 | SLBI | The system to include views and wishes of parents/carers/ CYP is on line and user friendly and enables all to give feedback to inform service development. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Dec 2019 | SLBI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | March 2020 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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A5 Progress update – July 2021 to September 2021

Actions [(a) – (g)] have been completed. The systems integration project will be completed in two phases.

1. Whilst this was originally indicated red against the original timescale of March 2020, the SEN data merge is now complete and the second phase (Portals) is a new IT project in its own right. There is a need to capture a list of requirements through key stakeholder engagement, to ensure the on-line product procured will meet those. It was requested in July 21 this be delayed until September 21 due to summer holidays. An updated timescale was presented, which will see the engagement exercise being completed by 22nd October 2021 and an options paper to be drafted for SEND Operational Group by no later than 10th December 2021; these were agreed.

Area of Concern 2: Quality assurance is not rigorous enough to ensure effective governance and oversight across the provision and services for 0 to 25-year-olds with SEND. Leaders are reliant on working relationships rather than processes. Leaders are over reliant on the limited information given to them by educational providers about the quality of the provision they purchase.

Aim of this programme of work:-

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- (i) **Ensure relevant governing bodies (e.g. SEND Improvement Board and Health and Wellbeing Board) have access to a range of indicators relating to outcomes, service quality and performance to assess how well the local area is meeting the needs of C&YP with SEND**
- (ii) **Ensure the development and application of the performance framework engages children and young people with SEND and their parents**
- (iii) **Ensure there is a robust quality assurance framework for those children and young people with EHCPs placed outside Thurrock that ensures they make progress, promotes their independence and ensures their wellbeing and safety.**

Strengthen the quality assurance arrangements for the provision of post 16 education for students with SEND and specialist school provision

- (iv) **Ensure key services for C&YP operate within a high quality QA framework that embeds co-production – particularly with regard to the drafting and review of EHCPs (section 3 below, post 16 provision, provision for children and young people placed out of borough. This will be compliant with the SEND Code of Practice 2015).**

KPI's/Targets for assessing overall success of the programme:-

- a) Developing a strategic data dashboard covering education, health and social care provision which includes outcomes and indicators of service quality and performance for use by strategic managers and governing bodies responsible for overseeing the provision of services of C&YP with SEND and taking policy/commissioning decisions (see area concern 1)
- b) Developing a QA framework for key aspects of service delivery with a range of partners with priority being given to the following:
 - EHC Plans include the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people, their families and carers
 - EHC Plans are clear, concise, understandable and accessible
 - EHC Plans set out how partners will co-ordinate and work together to support the child, young person, parent and carers
 - EHC Plans clearly identify need and include specific outcomes

The framework will also be inclusive of those placed in independent/non maintained/residential settings and special circumstances.

- c) Reviewing post 16 local offer and how it links into the adult social care transitional pathway.

Area of Concern 2: Quality assurance is not rigorous enough to ensure effective governance and oversight across the provision and services for 0 to 25-year-olds with SEND. Leaders are reliant on working relationships rather than processes. Leaders are over reliant on the limited information given to them by educational providers about the quality of the provision they purchase.

Aims: Ensure relevant governing bodies (e.g. SEND Improvement Board and Health and Wellbeing Board) have access to a range of indicators relating to outcomes, service quality and performance to assess how well the local area is meeting the needs of C&YP with SEND and key services for C&YP operate within a newly refreshed QA framework.

Ensure the development and application of the performance framework engages children and young people with SEND and their parents.

Ensure there is a robust quality assurance framework for those children and young people with EHCPs placed outside Thurrock that ensures they make progress, promotes their independence and ensures their wellbeing and safety.

Strengthen the quality assurance arrangements for the provision of post 16 education for students with SEND and specialist school provision.

| Actions | Action Completed by | Responsible Officer | Outcomes and measures | | | | | | | | |
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| <p>B1: Develop a strategic performance monitoring dashboard engaging parents/carers in its development and review</p> <p>a) Review possible indicators and their availability</p> <p>b) Consult with stakeholders and the key indicators for inclusion in dashboard including engaging parent carers to ensure a strong ethos around co production</p> <p>c) Use an interim dashboard of key indicators and revise and finalise following consultation</p> <p>RAG</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="100 1189 779 1337"> <tr> <td>Oct 2019</td> <td>Jan 2020</td> <td>April 2020</td> <td>July 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> </tr> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> | <p>SLSP</p> <p>SLSP</p> <p>SLSP</p> | <p>Outcomes</p> <p>A framework that will:</p> <p>Enable the governing bodies (and the public) to know how well the local area is discharging its duties in meeting the needs of C & YP with SEND across education, health and social care.</p> <p>Identify priority areas for improvement.</p> <p>Evidenced by:</p> <p>The notes of the SEND Participation and Engagement Group, and other governing bodies that the indicators are regularly reviewed and any implications are discussed and used to guide service improvements</p> |
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B1 Progress update:- July 2021 to September 2021

Action **(a)** has been completed. Actions **(b)** and **(c)** have now been completed.

The enhanced data set was presented to the Participation and Engagement Group, SEND Operational Group and SEND Improvement Board in November and approved. This will enable the capture of more data to inform the ongoing development of practice and included health and social care data and goes through our internal quality data checking. We continue to work on our collection and use of data and this has informed some of the work around targeting resources – an example of this relates to the completion of annual reviews – we have identified additional resource to ensure we complete this work within the agreed timescales as approved by the SEND Improvement Board.

The sufficiency strategy has been presented to the SEND Board and this coupled with the report around what drives demand for EHCP's has enabled us to consider the provision requirements over the coming years. A report has been produced and presented to the Schools Forum to ensure we have strong partnership support around the commission of further primary autism bases within primary settings as well as further SEMH provision for secondary school pupils. This strategy, and subsequent commissioning programme, has been approved and we are currently writing the specifications to enable us to go out to the market.

We have contacted our local primary sector colleagues to identify a partner for additional primary autism resource bases. We are due to meet with secondary colleagues to discuss additional SEMH provision as outlined in our SEND Sufficiency document.

B2: Enable the voice of Parents/Carers to ensure the quality assurance of all areas of support for Children and young people with SEND

- a) Write, publish and complete the strategy and action plans of the Engagement and Communication Strategy informed by a range of partners.
 - b) In line with the Integrated Commissioning Framework for SEND, ensure all commissioning is co-designed with children, young people and parents
 - c) New SEND Inclusion Support officer recruited whose role is to use the feedback from parents/carers children and young people to embed our quality assurance framework
- Support the development of the Parent Carer Forum (CAPA) to increase its scope and reach to children and young people attending mainstream as well as special schools.
- e) Ensure parent/carers are involved in the development and review of the multi-agency performance dashboard to ensure it reports on areas they feel are most important to their children.

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RAG rating

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March 2020

Oct 2020

March 2020

March 2020

March 2020

Dec 2020

April 2020

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SLSPPEP

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Outcomes

Engagement & participation Plan in place with the action plans evidencing partnership with parents/carers and young people. Established links in place with key partners identifying priorities to inform the new engagement strategy. Strategy will enable the engagement & participation with parents/carers and young people

There is a clear offer in place for all children and young people focussed on achieving meaningful outcomes, which has been developed through joint commissioning and co-production with CYP and their parents/carers.

Feedback from quality assurance activities with parents/carers children and young people leads to identified areas of improvement in SEND provision.

Increase in the engagement from parents/carers of CYP attending mainstream provision as well as Special Schools. Evidenced by membership numbers of the parent carer forum from January 2019 baseline.

The leadership/governing bodies in Thurrock are assured they are considering performance indicators that reflect aspects of service quality that are important for parent/carers and children with SEND Improved pathways and outcomes for CYP with SEND and meaningful training and employment opportunities are accessed

And as a result.

There will be clear evidence of improved outcomes achieved across all aspect of the SEND system

Services will have improvements identified and acted on based on Parent/Carer, CYP feedback.

Post 16 bespoke programmes are designed to create innovative pathways for young adults which will lead to a greater level of independence

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B2 Progress update: – July 2021 to September 2021

Action (c) has been completed. Whilst we had reported some delay in this area we have a newly formed parent/carer forum – we are on track to launch the newly re-refreshed SEND strategic priorities with an implementation plan monitored and reviewed the new parent/carer forum.

1. Parent Carer Forum

The ADES has developed, in partnership with key stakeholders, the Implementation Plan against our core strategic priorities. This will enable the new parent carer forum to hold key stakeholders accountable for the delivery of the strategy.

The newly refreshed local offer – we are continuing to work closely with partners to ensure we have interactive videos around local educational opportunities.

The new Thurrock Parent Carer Forum is in place and is co-chairing the SEND Engagement Group to ensure close working and co-production across all areas of SEND development.

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| <p>B3: Engagement with children/young people</p> <p>a) New Pupil/Student Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan to be written and published.</p> | <p>March 2020</p> <p>December 2020</p> | | <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Strategy, Engagement Plan will be co-produced by young people will be in place and demonstrate the impact of children/young people’s views on services.</p> |
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| <p>b) Collect the views of parents/carers/ CYP with SEND through the new engagement portal as a baseline and continue to measure throughout the service transformation</p> <p>c) PFH and ADES will host a minimum of four engagement events a year for parents/carers/ CYP to gain feedback in relation to service development.</p> <p>d) Participatory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment refresh looking at the lived experience of children and young people and their families</p> <p>RAG rating</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="107 678 768 1053"> <tr> <td>Oct 2019</td> <td>Jan 2020</td> <td>April 2020</td> <td>July 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oct 2020</td> <td>Jan 2021</td> <td>April 2021</td> <td>July 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oct 2021</td> <td>Jan 2022</td> <td>April 2022</td> <td>July 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | Oct 2020 | Jan 2021 | April 2021 | July 2021 | | | | | Oct 2021 | Jan 2022 | April 2022 | July 2022 | | | | | <p>Nov 2019</p> <p>August 2020</p> <p>Dec 2020</p> <p>April 2021</p> | | <p>This will include workshops with the Youth Cabinet, training and implementation of peer ambassadors and pupil workshops.</p> <p>Governed by SEND Improvement Board & Thurrock's Youth Cabinet</p> <p>To gain greater clarity on how engagement with schools can be improved</p> <p>And as a result:</p> <p>CYP's voice will inform service transformation and be central to their EHC Plan</p> <p>Co-production will work at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strategic level e.g. JSNA, Joint Commissioning strategy, Capital Programme b) Service level e.g. reviews and redesign of the Health , Education or care services delivery c) Individual Level e.g. plans will be based on individual needs identified from a person-centred approach |
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B3 Progress update:- July 2021 to September 2021

1. Action **(b)** has been completed and action **(d)** is on track to be completed. As Report previously to Children's O&S Actions **(a)** and **(c)** have been delayed due to COVID 19. The Inspire Youth Team hosted a number of sessions during this reporting period to gather the voice of our children and young people which are outlined below. The new pupil engagement has been completed and an action plan has been developed to support this work. The work is being led by Inspire Integrated Youth Hub so that it is linked to the broader engagement work that takes place across children's

services. Work has been undertaken with the Inspire Youth Team and young people in the development of a participation and engagement strategy for children and young people to ensure there is a key focus on children with SEND.

2. Work in place with the Youth Service has continued including the completion of focus groups during this reporting period developing the plan of engagement work. These have taken place in conjunction with the Adult College with students on specialist programmes including Prince's Trust TIL and MINT (SEND post 16 programmes). This plan is being reviewed by the Youth Cabinet and will be going to the SEND Improvement Board in January.

As part of the revised EHCP QA Framework, Strategic Leads and the Assistant Director call parents following an EHCP or annual review to gather feedback from the parents/ carers and CYP.

3. The new programme of targeted focus groups is in place covering a range of key topics which have emerged from previous consultation activity. These sessions have been developed to ensure a range of key groups covering different areas of SEND are targeted and engaged in the process.

| <p>B4: Quality of provision – Non-Maintained Special Schools and Independent Special schools. Process of out of borough visits and quality assurance of placements to be reviewed and strengthened via rigorous QA visits and QA framework</p> <p>Commissioning activity for individual placements include the voice of the child/young person within each specification</p> <p>b) Ensure there is an up to date record of placements containing a planning schedule to ensure all placements are monitored annually including quality assurance process.</p> <p>c) Introduce new KPI monitoring framework for all independent schools through a commissioning framework.</p> <p>RAG rating</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Oct 2019</th> <th>Jan 2020</th> <th>April 2020</th> <th>July 2020</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> <td style="background-color: yellow;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | <p>Aug 2020</p> <p>Jan 2020</p> <p>Aug 2020</p> | <p>SLSPPEP</p> <p>SLPPEP</p> <p>SLCSC</p> | <p>Outcomes</p> <p>100% of all out of borough provisions are visited utilising the quality assurance framework developed by Health, Social Care and Education.</p> <p>Planning schedule of monitoring visits in place, updated on a monthly basis</p> <p>All out of borough placements will be visited once a year ensuring that all provision is meeting the needs of the children and young people attending. More frequent visits will be undertaken where there is a need</p> <p>KPI's developed linking with national best practice</p> <p>As a result:</p> <p>Provision is identified as meeting the KPI and appropriate actions taken with providers to address any identified underperformance as evidenced by notes of visit and records of follow up actions</p> <p>All CYP with SEND attend a good or better educational provision – no RI and inadequate providers will be used as new placements as evidenced by department records on placement.</p> |
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B4 Progress update – July 2021 to September 2021

Action **(b)** has been completed. Actions **(a)** and **(c)** remain ongoing with some delay due to COVID 19. An outline of the work undertaken is below.

1. Full review of out of borough placements undertaken on a yearly basis – reports presented to the SEND Board.
2. Currently undertaking reviews of all locally commissioned provision including both resource and inclusion units. Reports are presented to the SEND Improvement Board
3. Sufficiency document has been completed and is helping consider the strategic commissioning objectives over the coming year.
4. All Local Provision has been reviewed evidencing the service impact through the Key Performance Indicators including additional information from providers on the experience of children and their families during the pandemic.

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98: Commissioning of provision

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| <p>Produce and sign off with Providers new Service Level Partnership Agreements for local provision - ensuring all are updated with appropriate KPI's in place.</p> | <p>April 2020</p> | <p>SLSPPEP</p> | <p>Outcomes</p> |
| | <p>July 2020</p> | | <p>KPIs informs information re quality of provision and service delivery therefore is evidenced as meeting the needs of the CYP attending.</p> |
| <p>b) Implement the Integrated Commissioning Framework for SEND, which will ensure there is a fully planned and consistent approach to the commissioning of all special school placements.</p> | <p>Aug 2020</p> | <p>SLCSC</p> | <p>Governed by SEND Operational Group & SEND Improvement Board</p> |
| | <p>Oct 2020</p> | | <p>As a result:</p> |
| <p>c) Audit of provision to be reported to SEND Improvement Board</p> | <p>Aug 2020</p> | <p>SLSPPEP</p> | <p>QA of provision has senior management oversight and the children and young people are accessing appropriate quality provision monitoring reviews and feedback from children, young people, carers and parents</p> |

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B5 Progress update:- July 2021 to September 2021

Action (a, b & c) have been completed.

1. We are commissioning places for in borough resource bases have been completed with agreements on the numbers of pupil places to be commissioned from September 2021 for 2021/2022. Increase in potential numbers of pupil places agreed for two bases, which will be allocated, based on emerging demand and funded directly in the first instance. Designated Schools Funding remains a key area of risk due to the high level of demand for out of borough placements and the increase year on year around requests for EHCP's. We are preparing a DSG high needs recovery plan which will be signed off by our Schools Forum in June 2021. We are taking to schools forum a full report around the current position re costs associated with out of borough placements and looking at ways in which we can ensure we continue to identify a strong local provision to stop high cost out of borough placements.
2. Commissioning officer has completed the SEND sufficiency report and this is being used to identify the types of provision going forward. Work at Treetops has continued to ensure we can offer places in September 2021 as we await the opening of the new Treetops Two at Easter 2022.
3. The numbers of places being offered at the Treetops Free School whilst the new building is being developed, has been increased through the development of further classroom accommodation and close working between the two schools to ensure the highest priority places are available from September 2021.

Area of Concern 3: EHC Plans and the annual review process are of poor quality. The local authority has no system in place to make sure that relevant professionals and services are notified when EHC Plans need reviewing or updating. Professionals are not routinely informed of requests to submit written information within specified timescales. Too often EHC Plans are out of date and do not accurately reflect the needs or views of children and young people, or the views of the families. The information from EHC Plans and annual reviews is not used to inform the commissioning of services, particularly, but not exclusively, for young people between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

Aim of this programme of work

To ensure that the Local Authority and other partners produce a Plan that clearly articulate the needs of the child/young person having taking into consideration the voice of children/young people developed in partnership with Education, Health and Social Care. Annual review to be completed within timeframes and clearly reflect the views of children/young people, parents/carers and educational providers.

KPI's / Targets for assessing overall success of the programme

EHC PLANS:

- Improved staffing capacity to meet statutory requirements
- Strengthening management oversight to ensure that we are clearly sited on EHC PLAN progress
- Developing or revising the QA framework (to include practice standards and parent feedback and feedback from children and young people)
- Skills audit and training Plan being developed this will include Leadership Skills.
- Training of staff to include:
 - (i) caseworkers in the SEND team on how to successfully bring out the key point from specialist and other assessments to ensure this information is an integral part of the Plan as well as being included in the appendices)
 - (ii) social care staff
 - (iii) health staff
 - (iv) SENCOs

Increase in EHC Plans completed within 20 weeks from the 2018 baseline to be at least at the national average

Increase in new EHC Plans that meet standards established in the new QA framework (baseline date January 2020) when the QA framework will be operational

% of parents/carers who report on the feedback form that:

- They felt fully involved in the process
- They felt the communication was good
- They felt the EHC Plan accurately reflected their child's and young person's needs

- They felt the outcomes were good
- They felt the provision would meet their child's and young person's needs
- Baseline established autumn 2019

Feedback from education establishments:

% who felt the EHC Plan accurately reflected needs

% who felt the outcomes were clear

% who felt the EHC Plan would improve access to teaching and learning and improve progress

Baseline established December 2019

Review of EHC PLANS

% of EHC Plans that were reviewed within required timescales (baseline = % for secondary transfers, % of post 16 transfers, % others)

% of EHC Plans finalised within 12 weeks of the AR meeting where the decision taken was to amend the Plan

% of parents/carers who reported that:

- They were fully involved in the review
- They were satisfied with the outcome
- They were fully involved in the preparing for adulthood transition
- Baseline established

Area of Concern 3: EHC Plans and the annual review process are of poor quality. The local authority has no system in place to make sure that relevant professionals and services are notified when EHC Plans need reviewing or updating. Professionals are not routinely informed of requests to submit written information within specified timescales. Too often EHC Plans are out of date and do not accurately reflect the needs or views of children and young people, or the views of the families. The information from EHC Plans and annual reviews is not used to inform the commissioning of services, particularly, but not exclusively, for young people between the ages of 19 and 25 years.

Aims: To ensure that the Local Authority and other partners produce a Plan that clearly articulate the needs of the child/young person having taking into consideration the voice of children/young people developed in partnership with Education, Health and Social Care. Annual review to be completed within timeframes and clearly reflect the views of children/young people, parents/carers and educational providers

| Actions | Action Completed by | Responsible Officer | Outcomes and measures |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>C1: Quality of EHC Plans to ensure they meet the needs of children and young person and enable them to meet their identified outcomes.</p> <p>a) Examine current EHC Plan and Annual Review processes within the Council and identify where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in processes can be introduced • Improvements in communication can be introduced • Improvements in timescales can be introduced <p>b) Identify where additional capacity is required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what is an appropriate case load for a SEND caseworkers <p>c) Identify training needs of each individual caseworker/manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All caseworkers to complete SEND Caseworker L3 and L4 courses | <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>July 2019</p> <p>Oct 2019</p> <p>Sep 2019</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> <p>Sep 2019</p> <p>Dec 2019</p> | <p>SLSESEND</p> <p>SLSESEND</p> <p>SLSESEND</p> | <p>Outcomes:</p> <p>EHC plans are fit for purpose</p> <p>The area delivers its statutory duties to CYP with SEND in a timely, transparent and person centred way.</p> <p>Information gathered through EHC assessments and annual reviews is shared consistently and transparently with CYP with SEND and their families</p> <p>Children and young people and their families confirm that their views and aspirations are shared across services within the area to ensure that they only have to tell it once</p> <p>Person centred outcomes are identified by key professionals working with the child or young person</p> <p>Leaders are aware of the training and development needs of the staff and put in place appropriate and timely interventions to support their development</p> <p>Key SEND transition points are Planned in a timely manner and meet the needs of the CYP/ learner</p> <p>Baseline data captured in Autumn 2019.</p> |

- Through bi-weekly training ensure all SEND team are aware of non-negotiables and appropriate training is delivered and commissioned including SEN law
 - Introduce minimum practice standards to operational team based on customer service practice standards
- d) Complete audit of SEN output/ team and write business case for increasing the number of caseworkers in order that caseworkers have a manageable case load
- Undertake Customer service quality framework assessment and produce and action plan with clear deliverable outcomes.

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- July 2020

SLSESEND

And as a result:

The number of complaints received by the service will be reduced from previous year

The number of complaints upheld will be reduced from previous year

The local authority has fewer appeals and tribunals upheld in comparison to previous years baseline for 2018

Increase in EHC Plans completed within 20 weeks from the 2018 baseline

Increase in new EHC Plans that meet standards established in the new QA framework (baseline date January 2020) when the QA framework will be operational

Survey data evidences that there is an increase from autumn 2019 baseline in percentage of parents/carers who report on the feedback form that:

- They felt fully involved in the process
- They felt the communication was good
- They felt the EHC Plan accurately reflected their child's and young person's needs
- They felt the outcomes were good
- They felt the provision would meet their child's and young person's needs

Feedback from education establishments: from autumn 2019 baseline

Increase in % who felt the EHC Plan accurately reflected needs

Increase in % who felt the outcomes were clear

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| | | | Increase in % who felt the EHC Plan would improve access to teaching and learning and improve progress |
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C1 Progress update – July 2021 to September 2021

- a) Engagement Officer continues to use telephone survey and portal survey to gather feedback from parents recently involved in EHCP & annual review process.
- b) As part of the revised EHCP QA Framework, Strategic Leads and the Assistant Director call parents following an EHCP or annual review to gather feedback from the parents/ carers and CYP.
- c) New person centred planning format / paperwork is being finalised for new EHCPs from Autumn term.
- d) Two SENCO forums have taken place in September 2021 to roll out new processes to all schools/ settings and colleges which will result in much better quality information gathered through improved meeting agendas. This will ultimately result in much higher quality EHCPs as demonstrated by the pilot.
- e) The revised QA framework is now in place with multi-layered QA of plans taking place by colleagues in SEN/ health and social care.
- f) New QA and Professional Development Manager is now in post and is having an impact on the reporting of the QA activity & outcomes.
- g) Fewer complaints have been received again this quarter – 4 compliments, 2 complaints.

Impact:

- h) 75% of parent carers or guardians either agree or strongly agree that they were fully involved in the process
- i) 50% of parent carers or guardians either agree or strongly agree that communication throughout the process was satisfactory
- j) 75% of parent carers or guardians either agree or strongly agree that their child or young person's EHCP accurately reflects their needs
- k) 50% of parent carers or guardians either agree or strongly agree that the provision in their child or young person's EHCP would meet their needs

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| <p>C2: Revise and Review the Annual Review Process to ensure that EHC Plans are appropriately updated.</p> <p>a) Refresh and co-produce the annual review process for CYP with EHC Plans to ensure it gathers information on progress towards outcomes and informs joint commissioning decisions and that annual reviews take place within timescales and where necessary Plans are amended</p> <p>b) Agree joint area approach to statutory decision making - initiation and case management panels – agree and publish new terms of reference and membership</p> <p>c) Revise existing templates, process and guidance for completing multi-agency contributions to EHC needs assessment</p> <p>Recruit to Vacant appeals and Tribunals post</p> <p>Establish EHC Plan quality assurance process, schedules for quality assurance of EHC Plan, which allows the area to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of EHC Plans (new and amended) quarterly quality assurance of EHC Plan to be undertaken by SEND Operational Board</p> <p>f) Put in place protocols that ensure prompt and appropriate contributions are received when drafting EHC Plans from Education, Health and Care. This will include compliance and escalation to relevant service managers and senior leads.</p> | Déc. 2020 | SLSESEND | <p>Review of EHC PLANS</p> <p>Increase in % of EHC Plans that were reviewed within required timescales (baseline = % for secondary transfers, % of post 16 transfers, % others) from Autumn 2019 baseline</p> <p>Increase in % of EHC Plans finalised within 12 weeks of the AR meeting where the decision taken was to amend the Plan</p> <p>Increase in % of parents/carers who reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They were fully involved in the review - They were satisfied with the outcome - They were fully involved in the preparing for adulthood transition - Baseline established |
| | Sept 2019 | SLSPPEP | |
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| <p>g) Key issues report to be used by to SL SE SEND to inform staff development needs</p> <p>h) Using Enhance training materials to implement guidance for completion of sections of EHC Plans</p> <p>i) Using engagement portal survey parents/carers/ CYP on their experience of the EHC Plan/ annual review process- gather a baseline in Autumn 19 and then repeat quarterly to evidence improvements/ direction of travel</p> <p>RAG rating</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="107 609 770 983"> <thead> <tr> <th>Oct 2019</th> <th>Jan 2020</th> <th>April 2020</th> <th>July 2020</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Oct 2019 | Jan 2020 | April 2020 | July 2020 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | <p>Feb 2020</p> <p>Oct 2019- July 2020</p> <p>Oct 2019</p> | <p>SLSESEND</p> <p>SLSPPEP</p> | |
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C2 Progress update – July 2021 to September 2021

- As at the end of August 2021, 74% (1280 of 1737) EHCP reviews due in the preceding 12 months have been completed, including an amendment to plan. This is in comparison to 276 in the previous academic year. 165 EHCPs have been amended during July and mid-August.
- All schools were reminded of when annual review dates were due for next academic year before the end of term through the sharing of the report to each individual school.

This Written Statement of Action has been written in consultation with:

Children's Overview and Scrutiny

Parent Carer Forum

Director's Board

Clinical Commissioning Group

Head teachers and College Principals

SEND Improvement Board

SEND Operational Group

SEND Engagement and Participation Group

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Roger Harris
Corporate Director



Mandy Ansell
Chief Officer, Thurrock Clinical Commissioni...

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**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2021/22**

Dates of Meetings: 13 July 2021, 12 October 2021, 1 December 2021, 8 February 2022.

| Topic | Lead Officer | Requested by Officer/Member |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| 13 July 2021 | | |
| Youth Cabinet Verbal Update | Roberta Fontaine | Standing Item |
| Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board – Update on the LSCP Peer Review Action Plan | Priscilla Bruce-Annan | Standing Item/ Members |
| SEND Education and Residential Placements | Sue Green | Officers |
| Supported Accommodation for 18-24 Year Olds | Sue Green | Officers |
| SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update | Michele Lucas | Members |
| Thurrock's Education Landscape | Michele Lucas | Chair |
| Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children's Social Care | Janet Simon/Michele Lucas | Chair |
| Children's Social Care Performance – Quarter 4 2020-21 | Janet Simon | Chair |
| Work Programme | Democratic Services | Standing item |
| 12 October 2021 | | |

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| Youth Cabinet Verbal Update | Roberta Fontaine | Standing Item |
| Report from Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) | Priscilla Bruce-Annan | Standing Item |
| 2020/21 Annual Complaints and Representations Report – Children's Social Care | Lee Henley | Officers |
| Children's Services Savings – Education and Skills | Sheila Murphy | Officers |
| Proposed Budget Reductions for Children's Social Care and Early Help | Sheila Murphy | Officers |
| Ofsted Focused Visit on children at risk from extra-familial harm 30 June - 1 July 2021 | Sheila Murphy | Chair |
| SEND Inspection Outcome - Written Statement of Action Update | Michele Lucas | Members (requested February 2021) |
| Work Programme | Democratic Services | Standing item |
| 11 November 2021 – Extraordinary Meeting at 6pm | | |
| High Risk Notifications – exempt extraordinary meeting TBC | Sheila Murphy | Members (<i>requested February 2021</i>) |
| Children's Social Care Performance | Janet Simon | Chair |
| Update on Thurrock Childcare Sufficiency | Andrea Winstone | Members (requested November 2020) |
| Child Poverty Refresh Review Report | Jo Broadbent | Chair |

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| Update on School Grades Data (from the Thurrock's Education Landscape report) | Andrea Winstone | Officers |
| 1 December 2021 | | |
| Youth Cabinet Verbal Update | Roberta Fontaine | Standing Item |
| Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board | Priscilla Bruce-Annan | Standing Item |
| Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy | Kelly McMillan | Officer |
| Pupil Place Plan Annual Report | Sarah Williams | Members (<i>requested November 2020</i>) |
| Written Statement of Action Review | Michele Lucas | Members (requested February 2021) |
| Update on the Progress of the Recommendations in the Annual Public Health Report of Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability | Jo Broadbent | Members (requested July 2020) |
| Health and Wellbeing Strategy Refresh 2021-2026 | Jo Broadbent | Officers |
| Recovery from Covid-19 in Education and Children's Social Care | Janet Simon/Michele Lucas | Chair |
| Agreement of Briefing Notes | Sheila Murphy | Standing Item |
| Work Programme | Democratic Services | Standing item |
| 8 February 2022 | | |
| Youth Cabinet Verbal Update | Roberta Fontaine | Standing Item |
| Items Raised by Thurrock Local Safeguarding Partnership Board | Priscilla Bruce-Annan | Standing Item |

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| Head Start Housing Annual Review | Michele Lucas | Members (<i>requested February 2021</i>) |
| Written Statement of Action Review | Michele Lucas | Members (requested February 2021) |
| Inspire Update | Michele Lucas | Officers |
| Update on Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children's Social Care (how children have settled back into schools) | Janet Simon/Michele Lucas | Members |
| Agreement of Briefing Notes | Sheila Murphy | Standing Item |
| Work Programme | Democratic Services | Standing item |
| To be confirmed | | |