

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Report December-2016

Looked After Children

(Data taken on 31st October 2016)

Total number of Looked After Children (LAC)	356
– Number of Looked After Children per 10,000 child population	87
– Number of LAC that are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	90

The current rate of looked after children is 87 per 10,000 population of children in Thurrock. This is significantly higher than the national average of 60 per 10,000 and statistical neighbours of 68 per 10,000 on 31st March 2016. The number of looked after children have also increased since 31st March 2016 from 333 to 356. This is entirely down to the increase of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) from 67 on 31st March to 92 at the end of October. Numbers of other looked after children have actually fallen by 9 children since 31st March. Without the UASC the rate per 10,000 would be 65 which is close to the national average for looked after children and below the statistical neighbour average.

Number of Children Looked After since before 01-Apr-2016	269
– Number of LAC in 3 or more placements since 01-Apr-2016	5

There are 269 of the 356 looked after children that have been looked after since April 2016. Of these children, 5 have moved placement at least twice (lived in at least 3 placements since April). Looked after placements are continually monitored to ensure they are the most suitable placement for the child. The national average for 3 or more placements during a year is 10% (2015-16).

Percentage of placements that are <i>In Borough</i>	32%
Percentage of placements that are <i>Out of Borough</i>	68%

113 of the 356 looked after children are currently placed in Thurrock. Nationally the percentage of looked after children placed within the council boundary is 62% (2015-16). This figure will vary for each council depending on the size of the borough and location. There is a current focus to increase the percentage of placements within Thurrock.

Child Protection

(Data taken on 31st October 2016)

Total number on a Child Protection Plan	299
– Number on a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 child population	73
– Number on a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	80

The current rate of children on a Child Protection Plan (CP Plan) is 73 per 10,000 population of children in Thurrock. This is significantly higher than the national average of 43 per 10,000 and statistical neighbours of 51 per 10,000 on 31st March 2016. The number of children on a CP Plan has also increased since 31st March 2016 from 288 to 299. 80 of the 299 children on a CP Plan have had a CP Plan previously. There has been an increase in the percentage of children becoming subject of a plan for a second or subsequent time nationally with the latest figure at 18% during 2015-16. There was a decrease for Thurrock in that period from 20% to 19%.

Percentage in the <i>Emotional</i> abuse category	47%
Percentage in the <i>Neglect</i> abuse category	46%
Percentage in the <i>Physical</i> abuse category	4%
Percentage in the <i>Sexual</i> abuse category	3%
Percentage in multiple abuse categories	0%

There has been an increase in the percentage of children becoming subject of a CP Plan due to emotional abuse which was 25% back in April 2015. This is partially explained due to multiple categories no longer being used in Thurrock which accounted for 15% back in April 2015.

Percentage on a CP Plan for less than 3 months	19%
Percentage on a CP Plan for 3 to 5 months	24%
Percentage on a CP Plan for 6 to 11 months	37%
Percentage on a CP Plan for 1 to 2 years	17%
Percentage on a CP Plan for 2 to 3 years	2%
Percentage on a CP Plan for more than 3 years	1%

The highest proportion of children on a CP Plan is within 6 months to less than 1 year. A low proportion of children are currently subject of a plan for more than 2 years.

Adoption

Number of adoptions between 1 st April 2016 and 30 th September 2016	5
Average number of days between child entering care and child moving in with adoptive family (taken over a rolling 3 year period up to 30 th September 2016)	560
Average number of days between court agreeing adoption and local authority approving a match (taken over a rolling 3 year period up to 30 th September 2016)	206

There have been 5 adoptions between 1st April 2016 and 30th September 2016 from 81 children that left care during that period (20 of which were unaccompanied asylum seeking children). There were 12 adoptions during this period in 2015 from 64 children that left care (10 of which were unaccompanied asylum seeking children).

The average number of days between child entering care and child moving in with adoptive family has continued to reduce from 602 days between April 2013 and March 16 to 560 days between October 2013 and September 2016. The national average for 2012-15 was 593 days. No data is available for 2013-16 at present. For the 5 children adopted since April, the average number of days to move in with their adoptive family from becoming looked after is 314 days – a significant improvement.

The Average number of days between court agreeing adoption and local authority approving a match has increased from 189 days between April 2013 and March 16 to 206 days between October 2013 and September 2016. However, this is mainly due to the challenging cohort of children during these periods where two children that were in the previous period were matched to an adoptive family prior to the court agreeing adoption. The national average for 2012-15 was 223 days. No data is available for 2013-16 at present. For the 5 children adopted since April, the average number of days to approve a match is 131.

Total number of approved foster carers	88
- Mainstream carers	73
- <i>Connected Person</i> carers	4
- Temporarily-approved carers	9
- <i>Shared Care</i> carers	2
Total number of in-house foster placements occupied	105
- Number of children placed in-house (including <i>Shared Care</i> and <i>Connected People</i>)	99
- Number of care leavers on <i>Staying Put Agreements</i>	6