



A Sustainable Children's Social Care System for the Future

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2017
Executive Summary

Why focus on children's social care?



- Goal 1: “Opportunity for all”
- Adverse childhood experiences have a lifelong impact
- Growing demand and the search for sustainability

...poor experiences in childhood create intergenerational cycles of deprivation and poor health... social workers have at least as much impact on the health and wellbeing of some children as health professionals.

Key questions addressed in the report

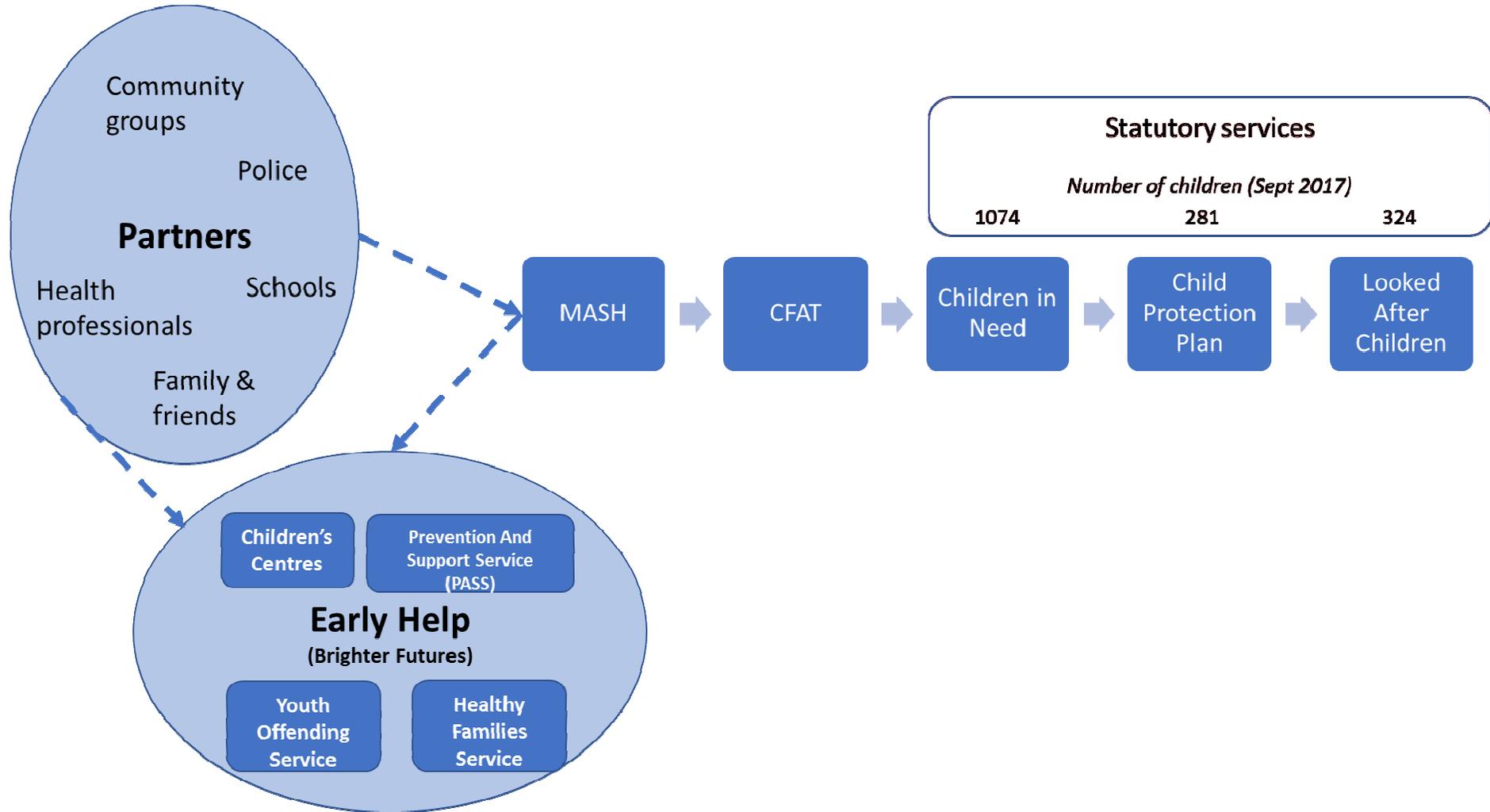
What are the pressures on the social care system?

- Is the number of children rising?
- Why are the numbers rising in Thurrock?
- How many children are likely to be in the social care system in future?

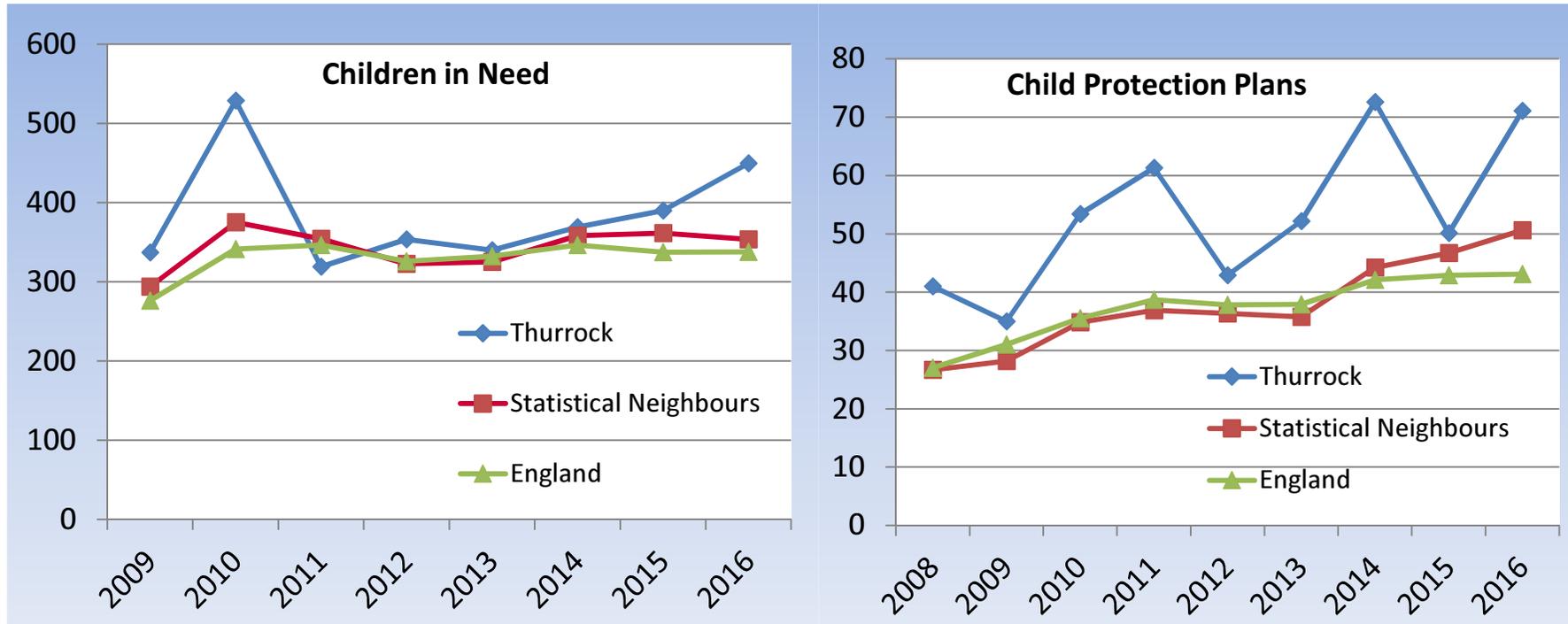
How can we reduce the number of children in the social care system?

What are the financial opportunities related to reducing the number of children in the system?

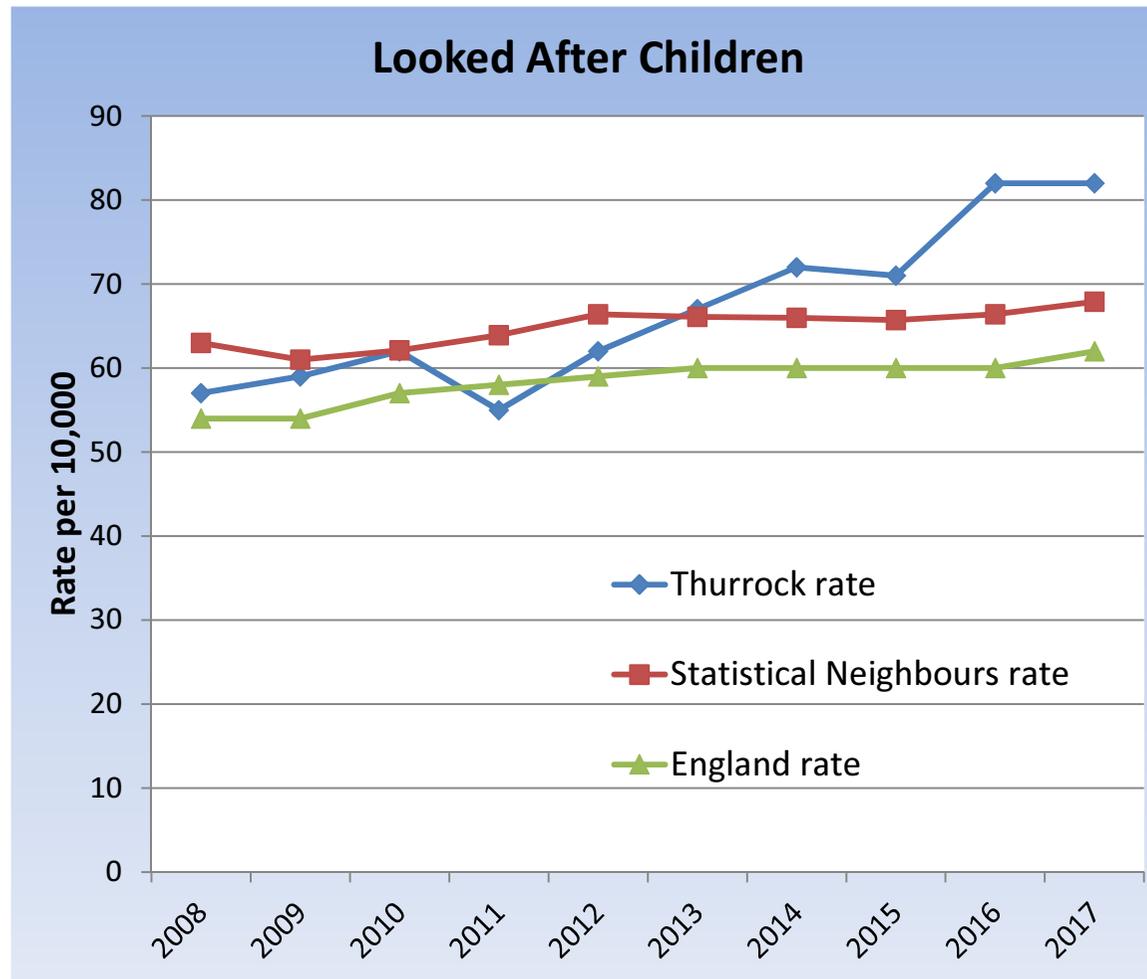
How the children's social care system works in Thurrock



Is the number of children in the system rising?

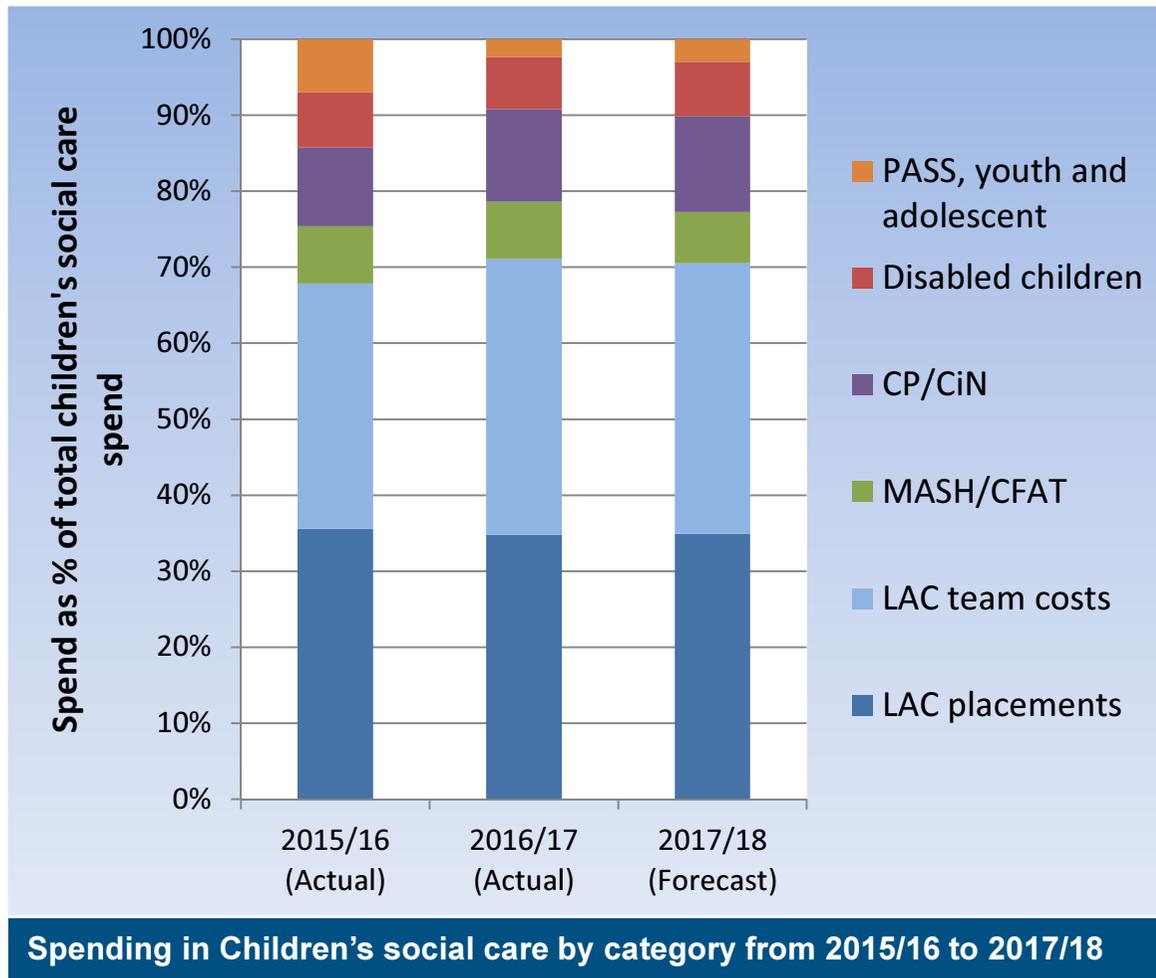


Is the number of children in the system rising?



...nationally, and among Thurrock's statistical neighbours, the growing number of LAC over the past 5 years has primarily been driven by population growth, whilst in Thurrock other, local factors have been at work, driving up the rates as well as the numbers of Looked After Children.

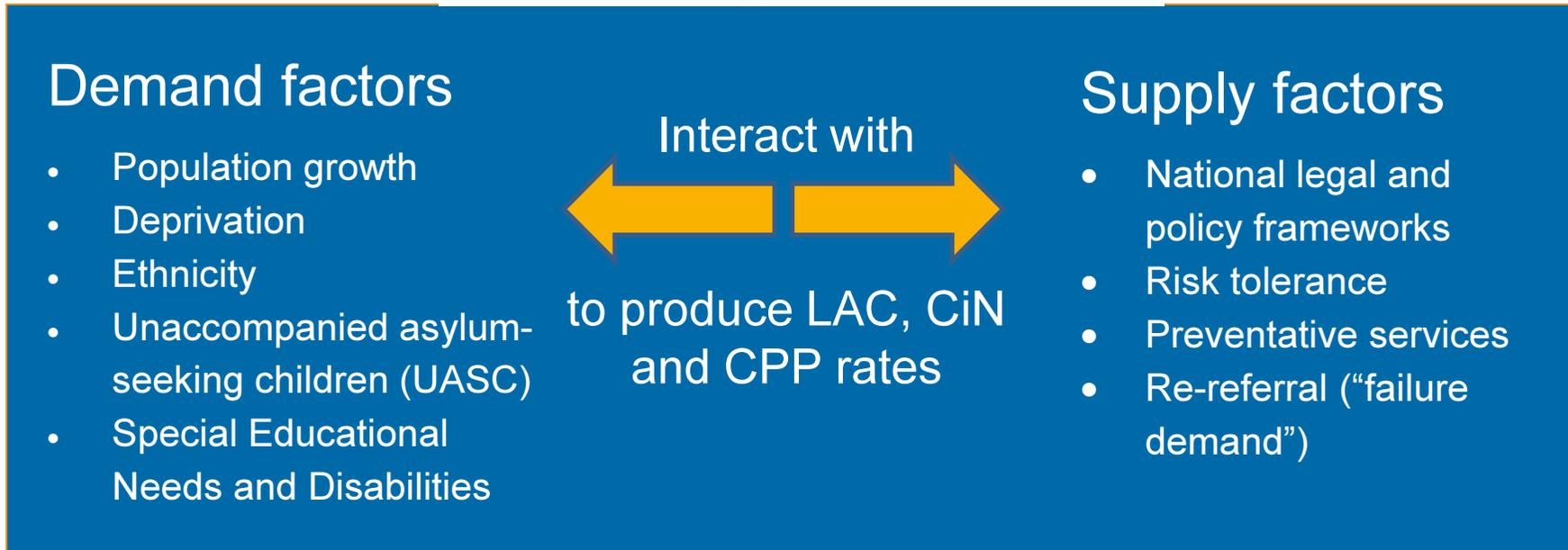
What are the pressures? Budget and spending



Key points

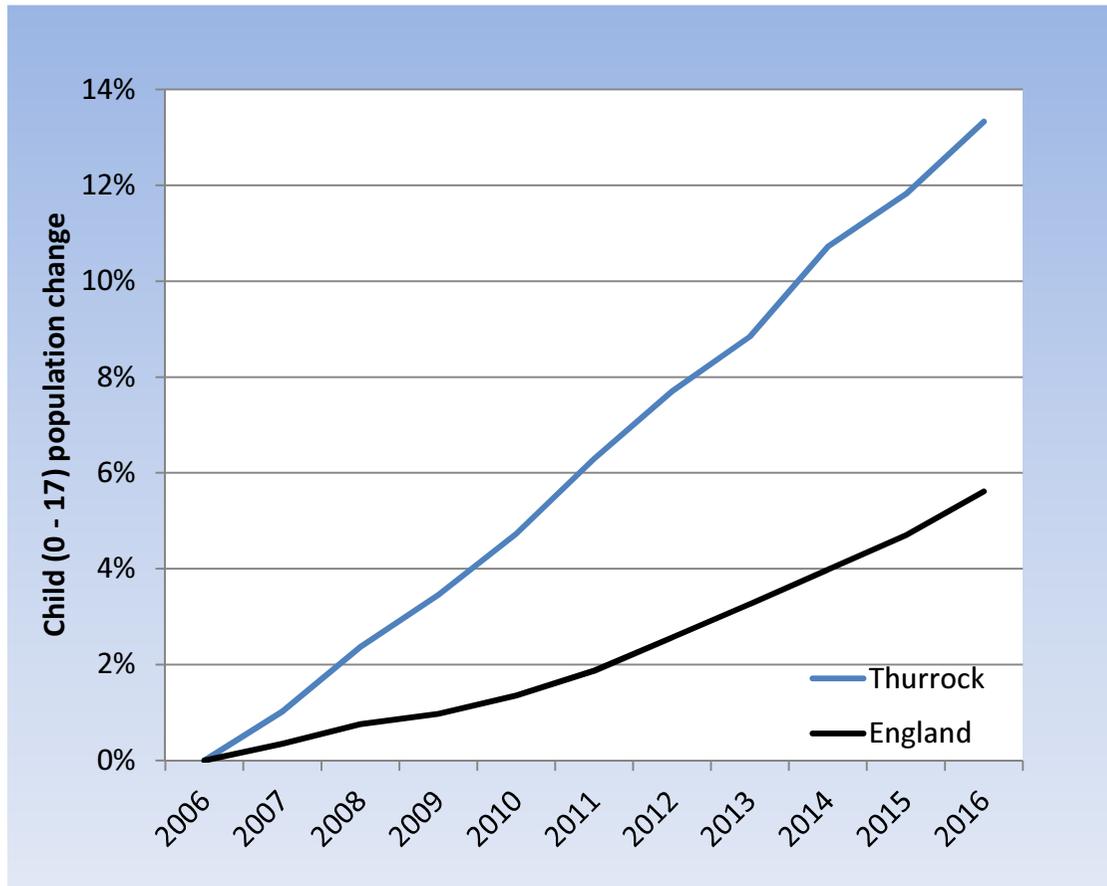
- 71% of spend is on LAC
- Proportion spent on prevention has declined

Why are numbers rising faster in Thurrock than elsewhere?



Why are the numbers rising? Population growth

Figure 5. Child (0 – 17) population change 2006 – 2016

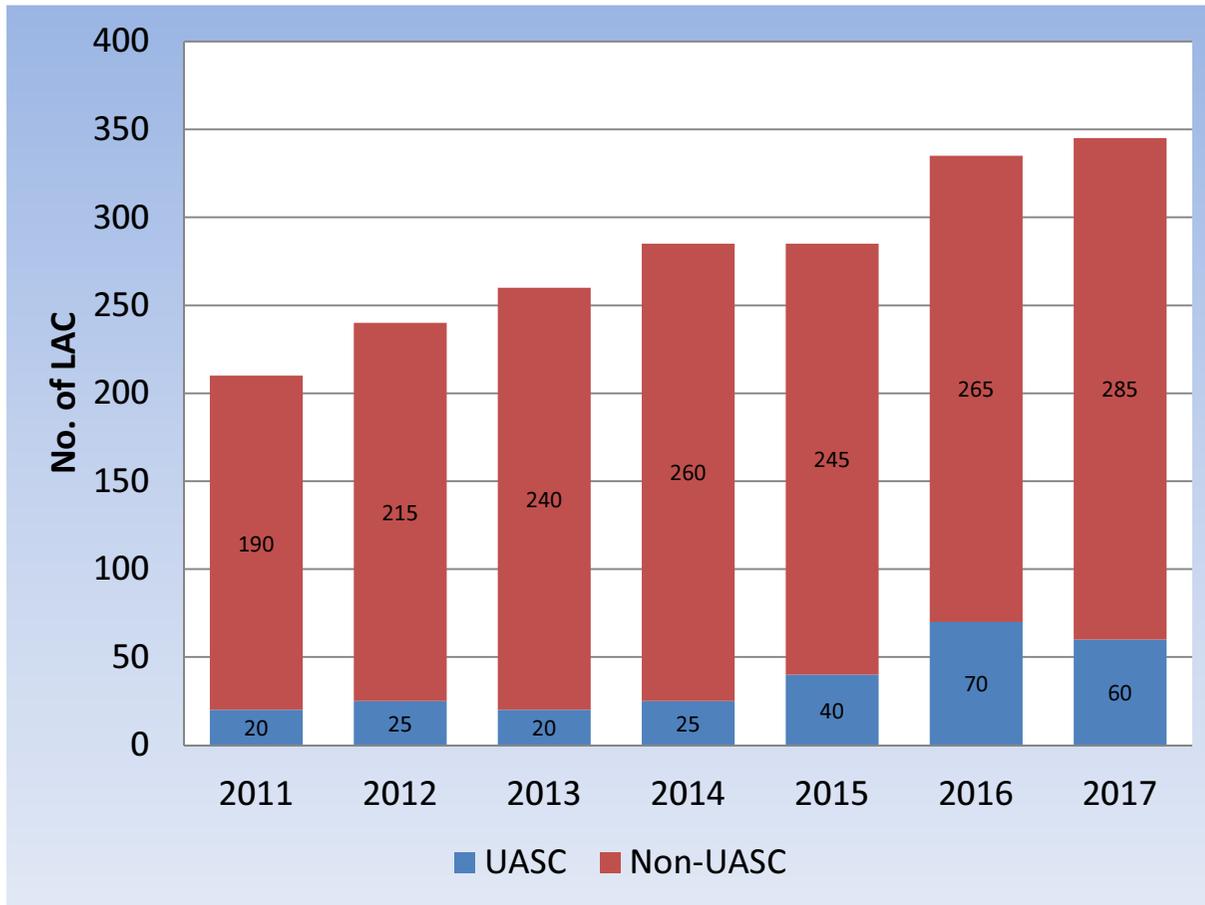


Key points:

- Child population in England grew by 6%
- Child population in Thurrock grew by 13.3%

Why are the numbers rising? UASC

Figure 6. Number of UASC and non-UASC in Thurrock 2011-16

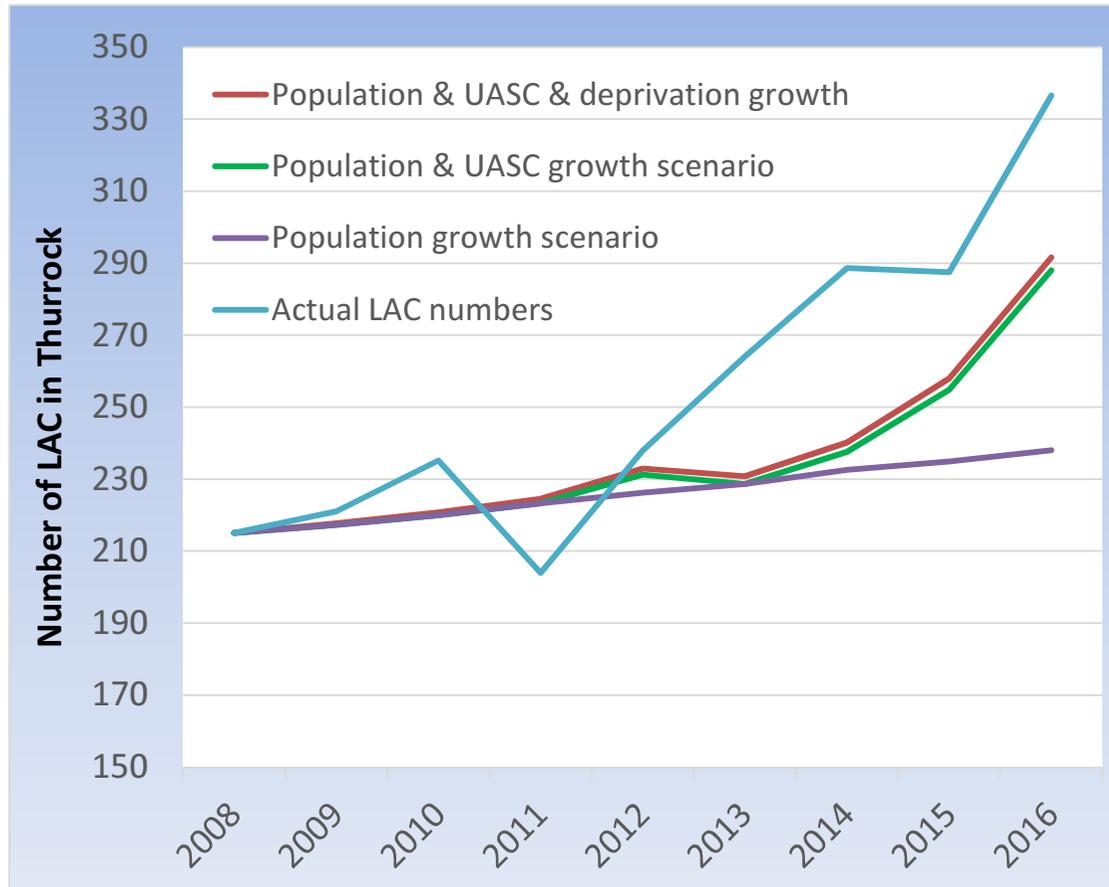


Key points:

- UASC number have risen much faster in Thurrock than elsewhere
- Numbers are now falling but have been offset to some extent by increased non-UASC numbers

Why are the numbers rising? The contribution of demand factors

Figure 7. LAC numbers actual vs modelled demand scenarios

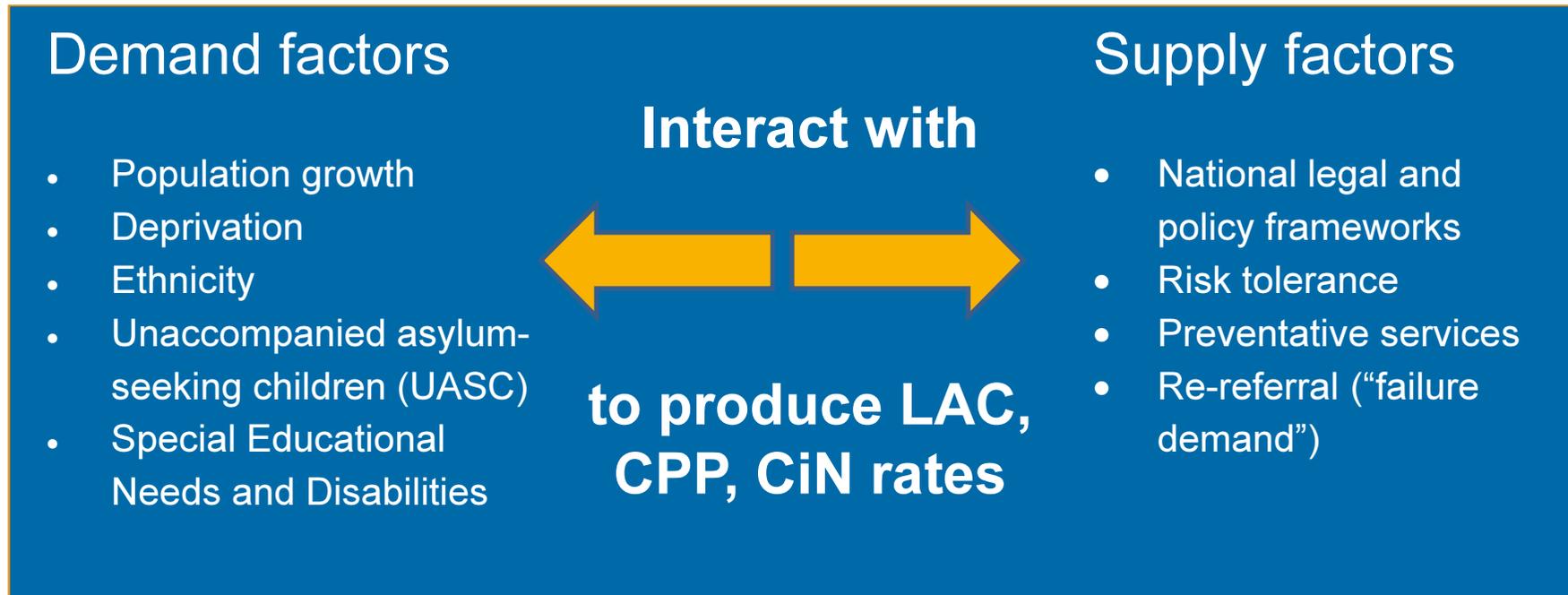


Key points:

- Population growth and UASC account for much of the growth but...
- A significant amount of growth remains unexplained by demand factors

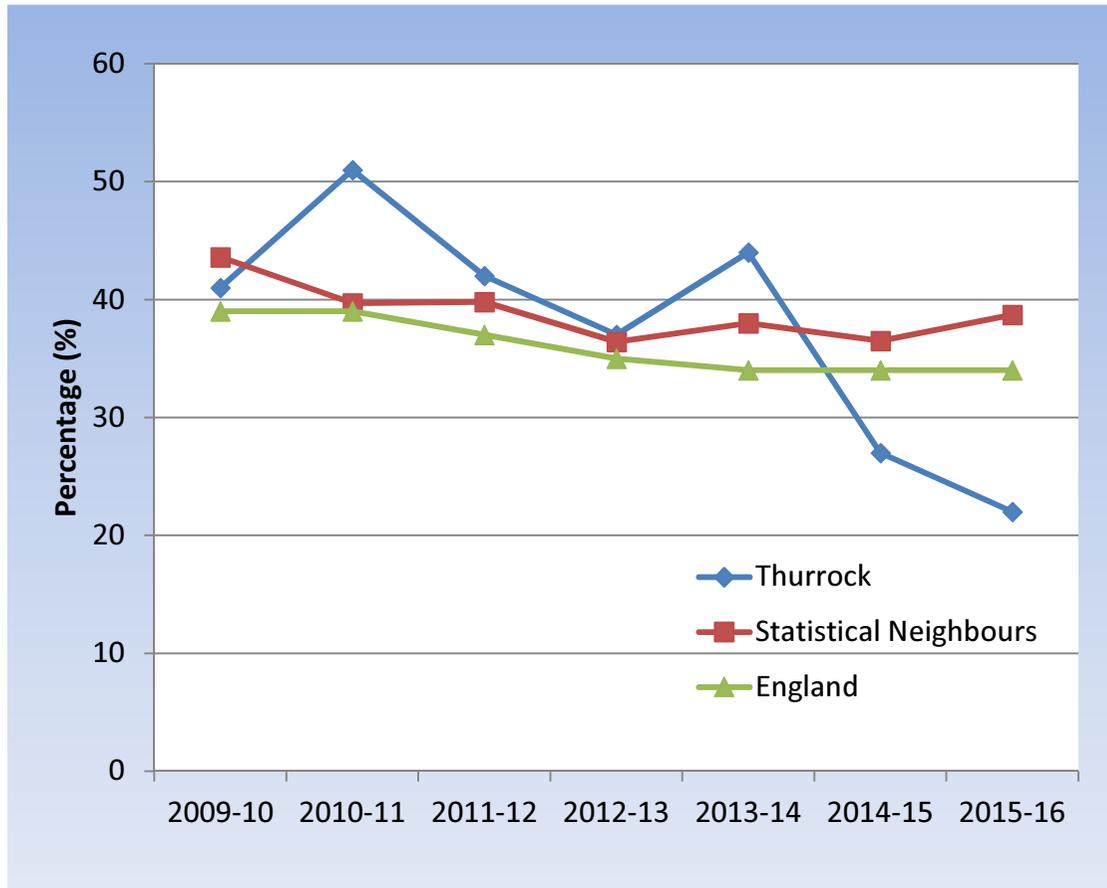
Why are the numbers rising in Thurrock?

Demand and supply model



Why are the numbers rising? Prevention services

Figure 8. Percentage of children returning home after a period of being looked after

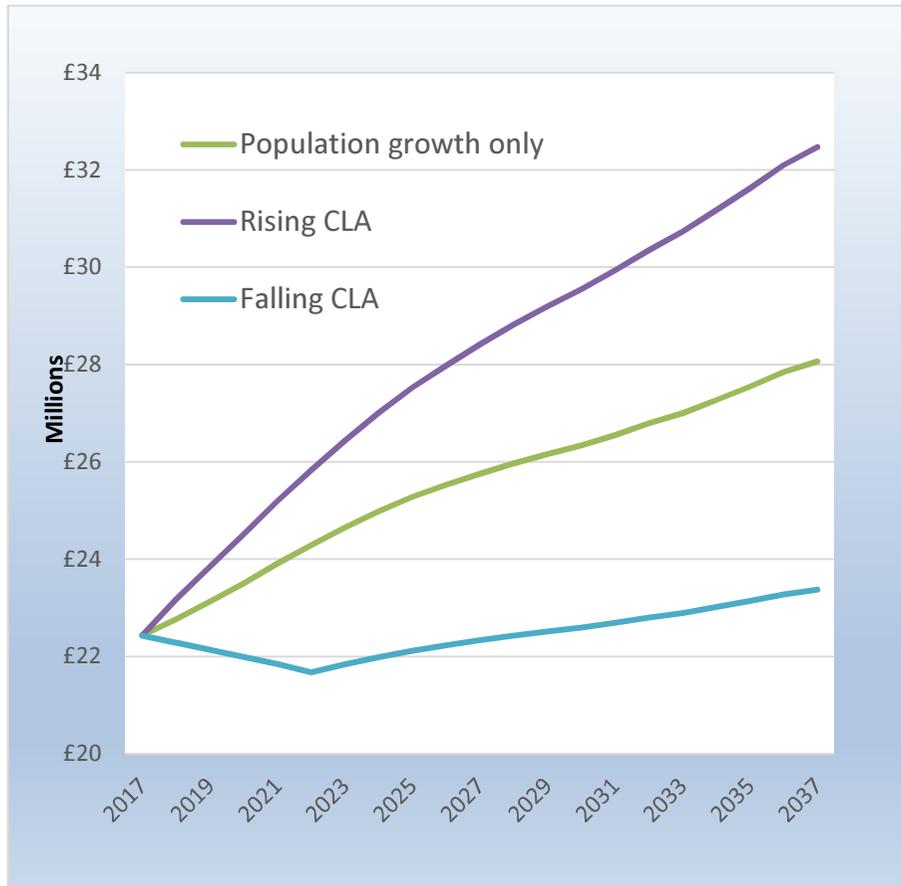


Key points:

- Funding for 'demand reducing' services has declined rapidly
- The number of LAC returning home to their families has dropped sharply

Forecasting future activity and cost

Figure 9. Forecast scenarios for future spend on looked after children



The cost of doing nothing

Projected changes in LAC costs over the next 10 years

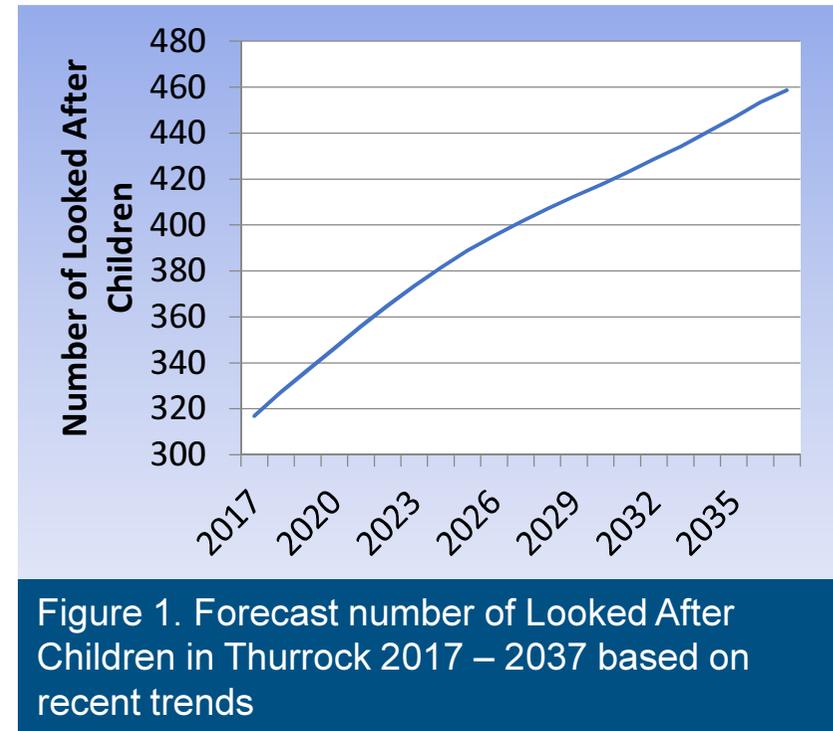
Scenario	3 years	5 years	10 years
<i>Rising CLA</i>	£2.08M	£4.01M	£5.98M
<i>Population growth only</i>	£1.07M	£2.22M	£3.32M
<i>Falling CLA</i>	-£0.44M	-£0.59M	£0.94M



**How can we prevent
children from becoming
looked after?**

Strategic Recommendations

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



Unless radical action is taken to upgrade services which reduce demand, the cost of children’s social care will become increasingly unsustainable.

How can we reduce the number of children in the system? Early help

Current early help services:

- Health visiting
- Troubled Families programme
- Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities
- Mellow Mums
- Triple-P parenting

Recommended action on early help

Expand the capacity of parenting services by 90% to meet current demand.

Consider expanding inclusion criteria

Ensure end of Troubled Families (TF) funding is used to strengthen prevention

How can we reduce the number of children in the system? CiN and CPP

Estimated financial impact of a new edge of care service

Eligible families	135.5
Cost per family	£2,285
Total cost	£309,618
No. of LAC prevented	21.7
Gross savings	£1,534,771
Net savings	£1,225,153
Directly cashable net savings*	£649,331

Recommended action on CiN and CPP

Establish an “edge of care” service to work intensively with children who are at risk of becoming looked after.

Expand existing domestic violence programmes (for victims and perpetrators). An increase of 50% - 100% would be needed to meet current demand.

Targeted drug and alcohol outreach to families of Children in Need or on a Child Protection Plan

How can we reduce the number of children in the system? Looked After Children



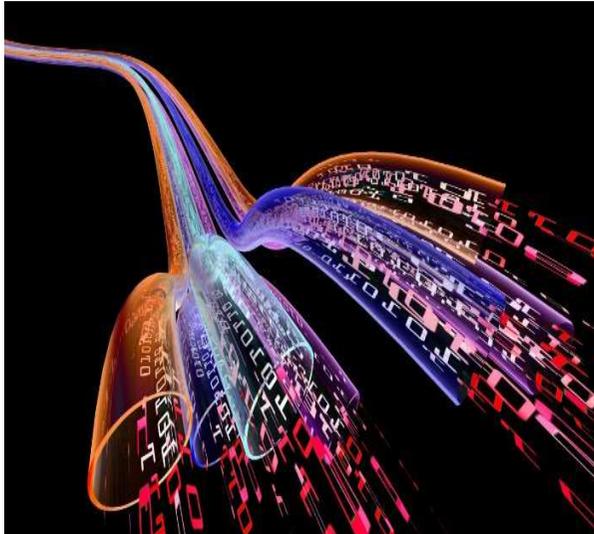
Recommended action on Looked After Children

Invest in services which allow Looked After Children to return home

Prevent mothers from having multiple babies taken into care

For women aged 16 – 17, when their first child is removed, there is a 32% chance of this being repeated... and 40% of mothers who have multiple children removed at birth have themselves experienced being in care

How can we reduce the number of children in the system? Improving information



Monitoring trends in key cost drivers will help to control costs and evaluate the effectiveness of preventative strategies

Recommendation

Monitor trends in key cost drivers

Link data on activity and spend

Carry out a financial deep dive on Looked After Children

Investigate the decline in the number of children returning to their families after a period of being looked after

Develop and update the forecasting model



Thank you