

2 July 2019

ITEM: 10

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Children's Social Care Performance

Wards and communities affected:

All

Key Decision:

N/A

Report of: Mandy Moore, Business Intelligence & Data Analytics Manager, Performance Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence

Accountable Head of Service: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director of Children's Services

Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health

This report is Public

Executive Summary

This report shows that:

- The number of referrals received each month (on average) has increased by 33% from 17/18.
- Children Looked After (CLA) has reduced
- The number of assessments completed in the month has increased, on average, by 90 per month (against 17/18 monthly averages)
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (USAC) have reduced
- The number of children on a child protection plan has reduced and is in line with comparator groups

This shows that good performance has continued in areas such as assessments completed within 45 days, despite the increase in demand, and that performance has improved in relation to the number of children on a child protection plan.

1. Recommendation(s)

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

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of Children’s Social Care performance. It highlights key demand indicators such as number of contacts, benchmarking data and key performance indicators.

Thurrock produces a number of data sets and performance reports to meet its internal and external reporting requirements. The data in this report is from the performance digest for April 2019, which reflects March 2019 performance, regional benchmarking data and national data sets.

This data has been presented and discussed with the Social Care Senior Management Team and at the Corporate Director’s Performance Group.

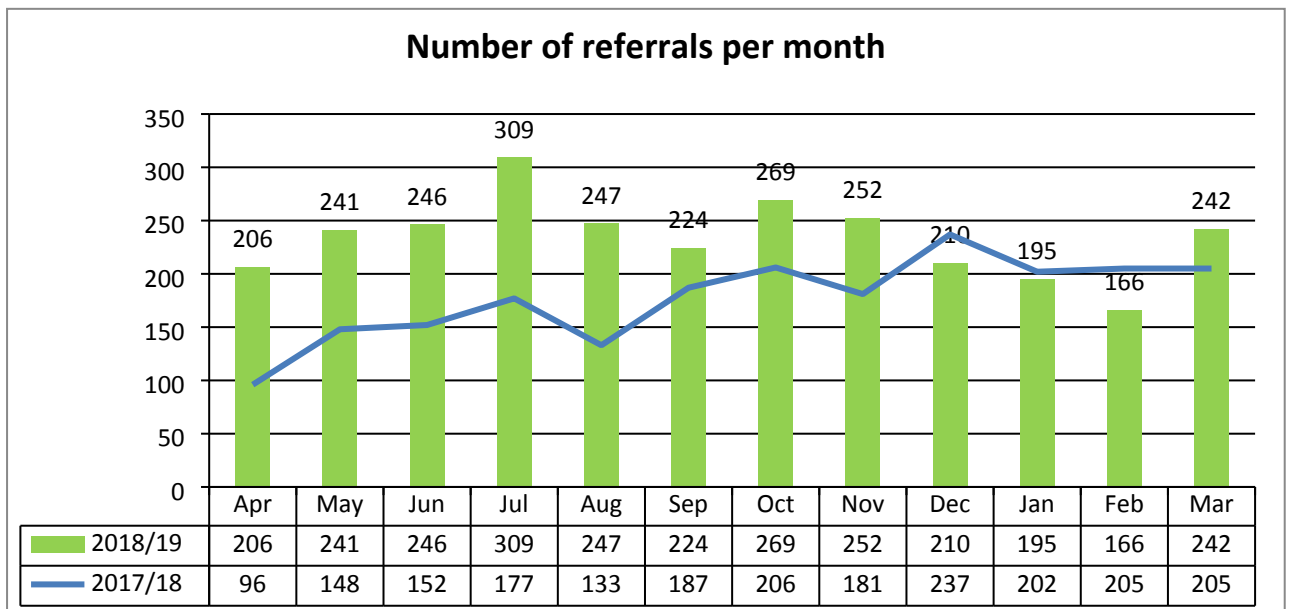
3. PERFORMANCE

3.1 Referrals & Assessments

There has been an increase of referrals received in March 2019, this is balanced by the decrease in February 2019. In Quarter 4 2017/18 the monthly average was 204 in 2018/19 the monthly number of referrals was 201, this number has remained constant.

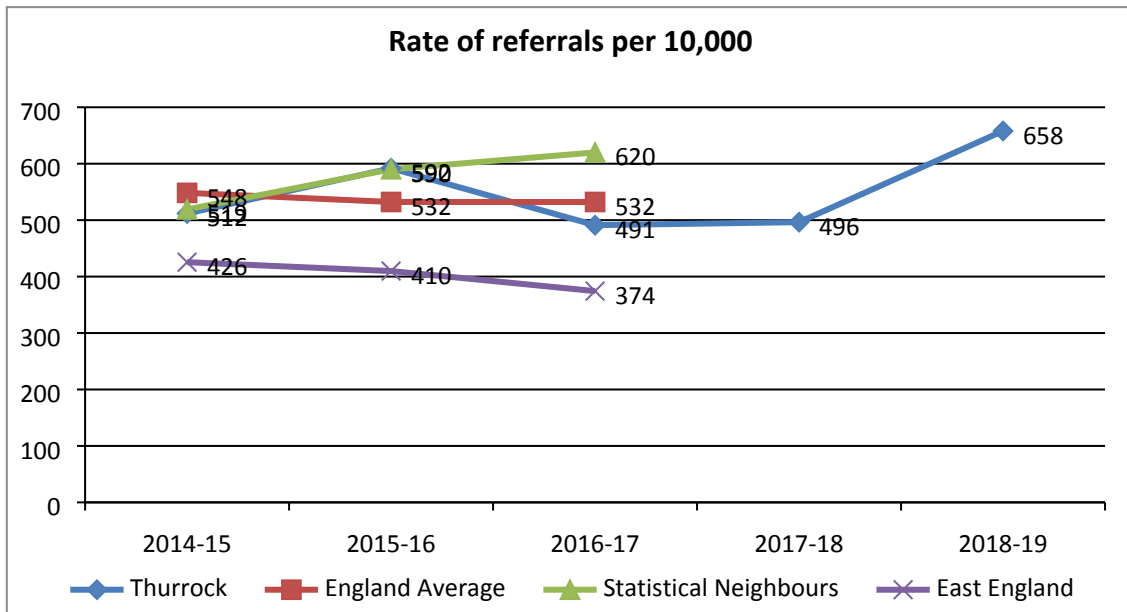
In year however, on average there has been an increase of 57 referrals per month, from 177 during 17/18 to 234 referrals per month during 18/19.

This is also in line with the increase of contacts received by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which increased from 5764 contacts during 2017/18 to 7074 during 2018/19.



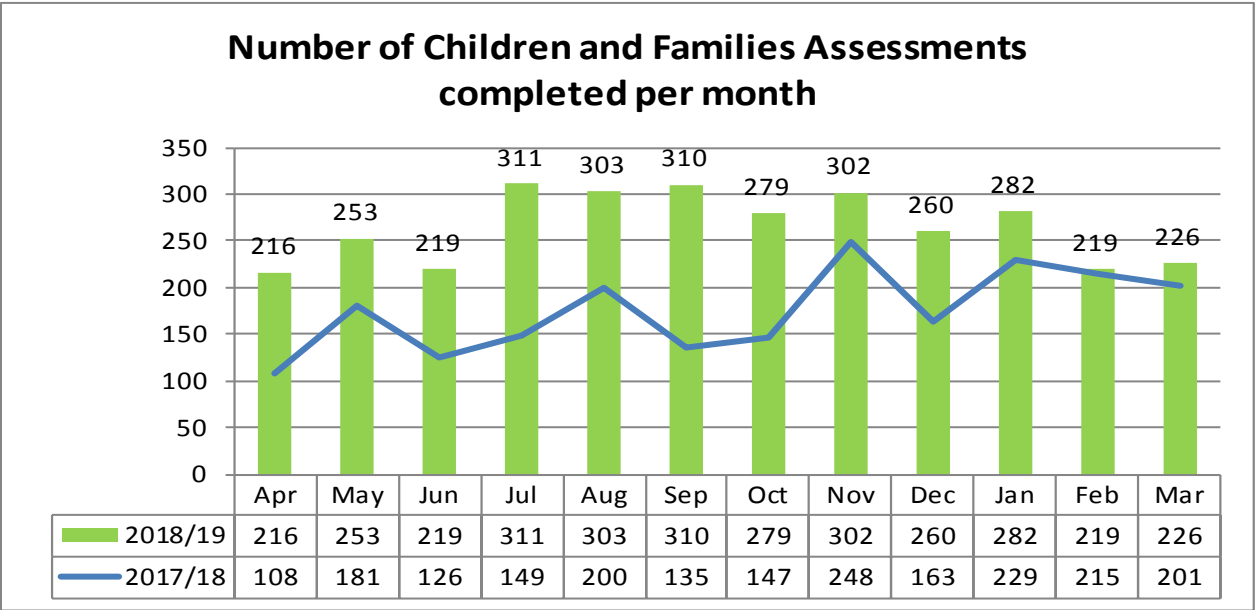
In relation to rate of referrals per 10,000 of the population Thurrock has routinely been below the England average and that of our statistical neighbours’.

Our percentage of children referred within a one year period for 2018/19 was 12.9%, our statistical neighbors' outturn for 2017/18 was 22.10%; therefore our performance is very good in this area.

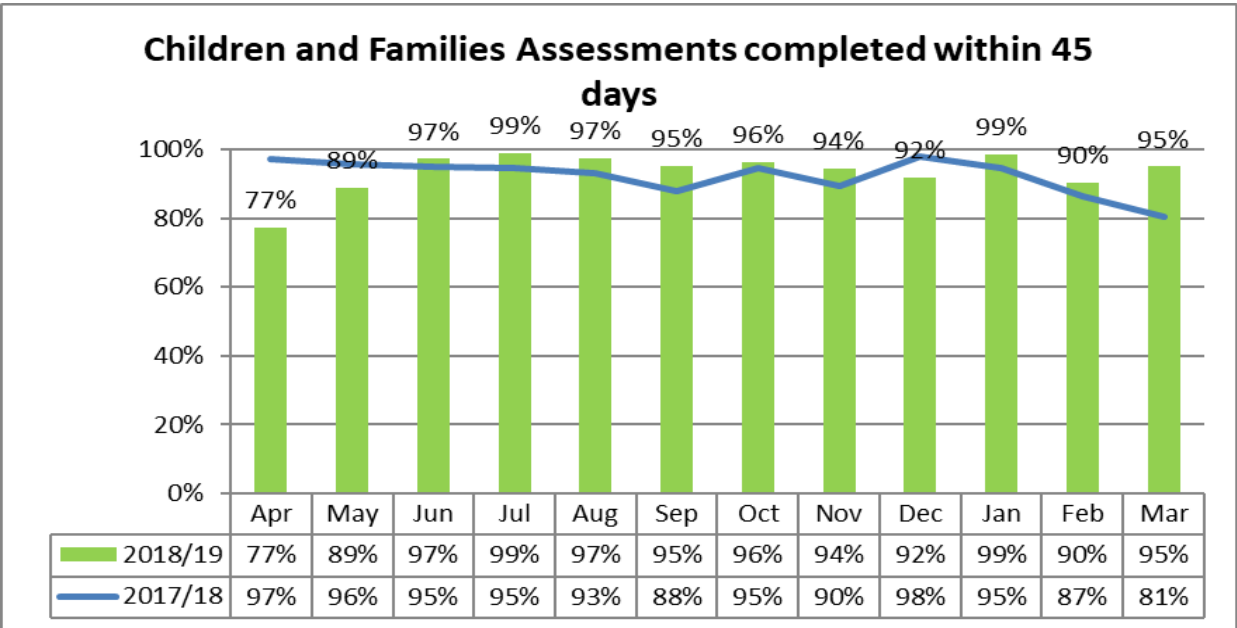


Rate of referrals per 10,000	Year	Thurrock	England Average	Statistical Neighbours	East England
	2014-15	512	548	519	426
	2015-16	592	532	590	410
	2016-17	491	532	620	374
	2017-18	496	552	610	362

The latest position shows 226 completed assessments for March 2019, compared to 201 the same month last year. The monthly average for 2018/19 has increased from 2017/18 with 90 more assessments being completed each month. The increase in number of contacts and referrals would be a key factor in this increase.



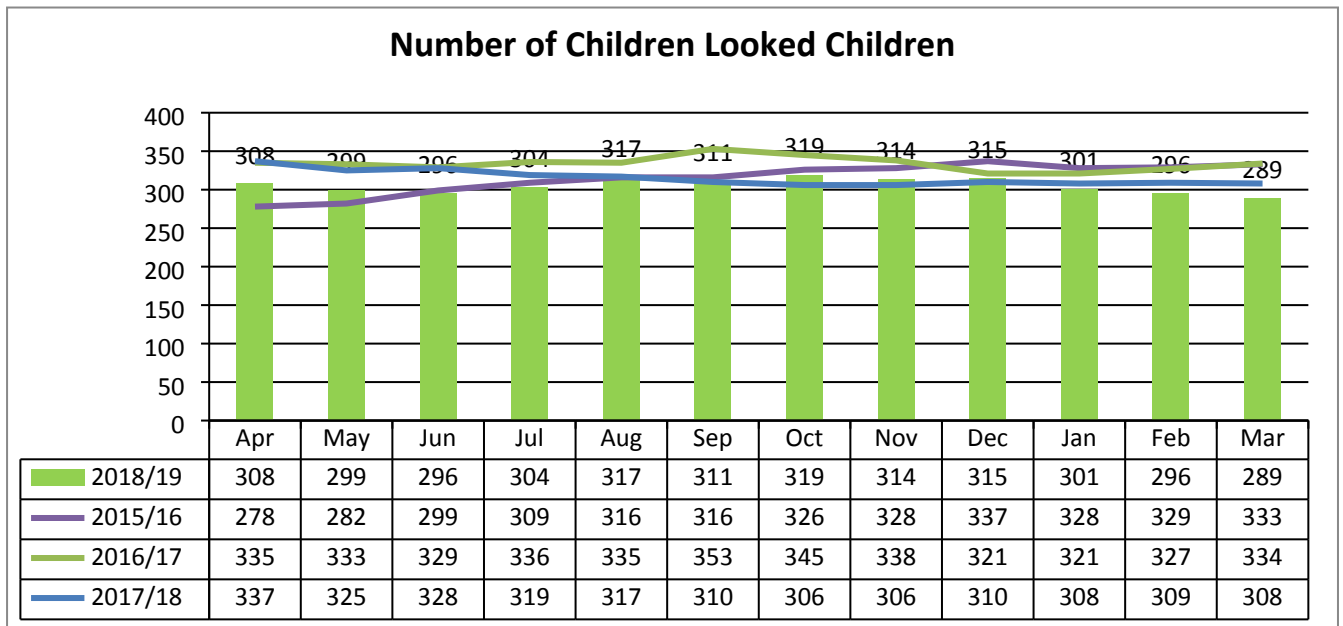
Good performance in this area has continued, with 95% of assessment being completed within 45 days. This is particularly of note given the increase in referrals and assessments experienced by the teams. For 2017/18 our statistical neighbours achieved an average of 80.7% of assessments in time.



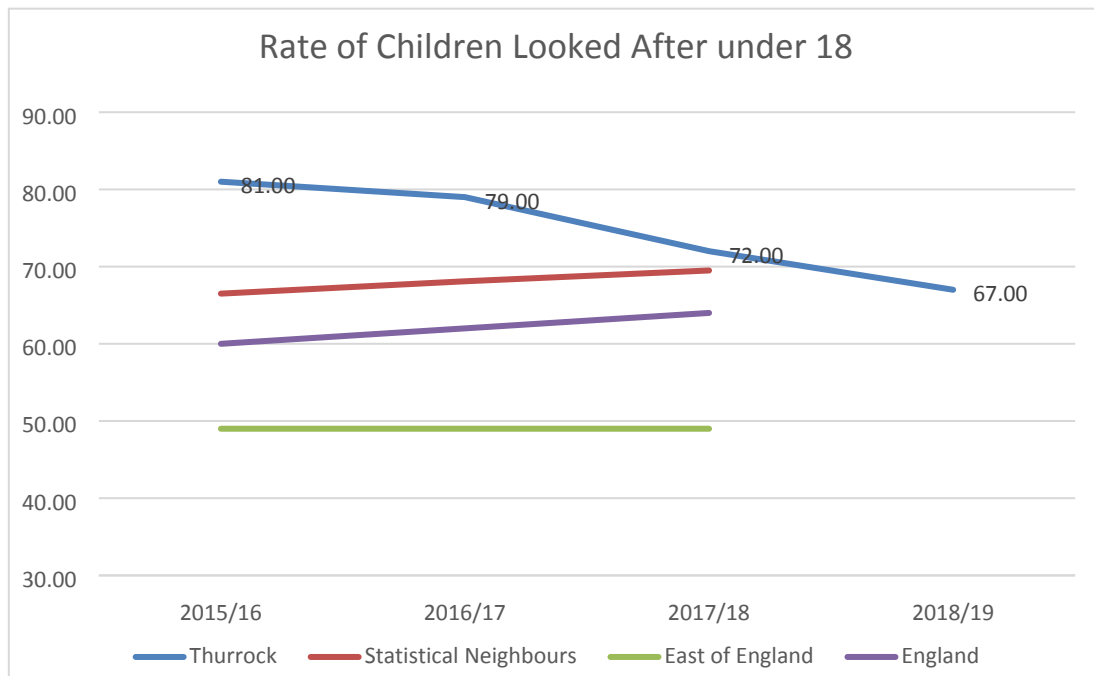
3.2 Children Looked After

For a period of seven months during 2018/19 we consistently had over 300 children looked after. For Quarter 4 (January to March) in previous years this was also the case. However, since February 2019 we have reduced that number with 289 children looked after as at 31st March 2019. This decrease is

partly attributed to the 'signs of safety' assessment process and the dispersal of UASC across the Eastern Region.

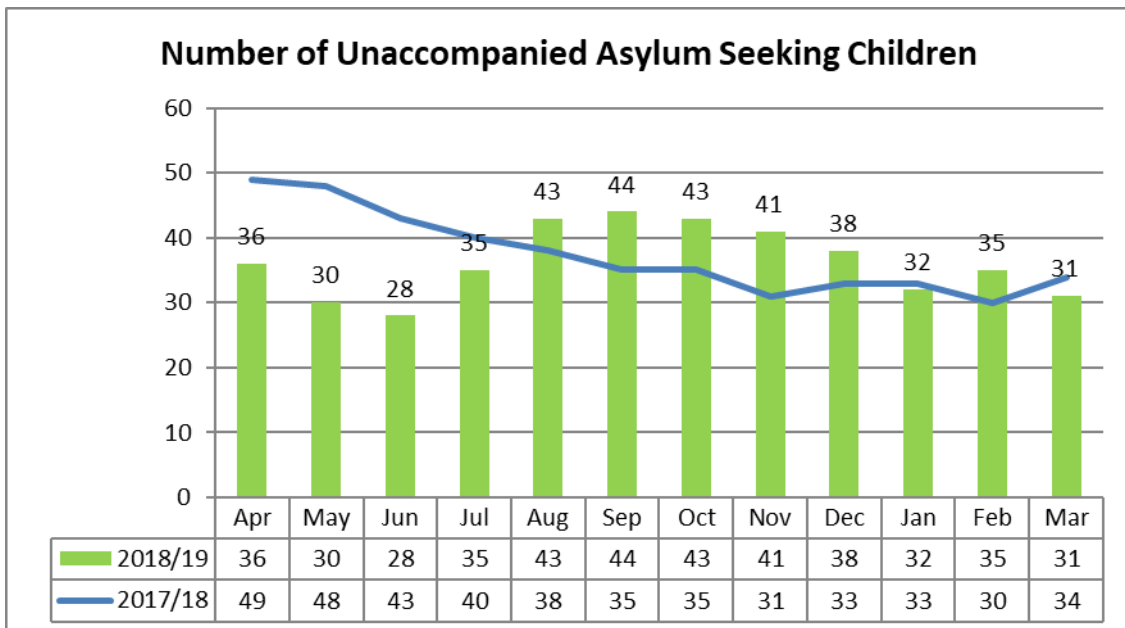
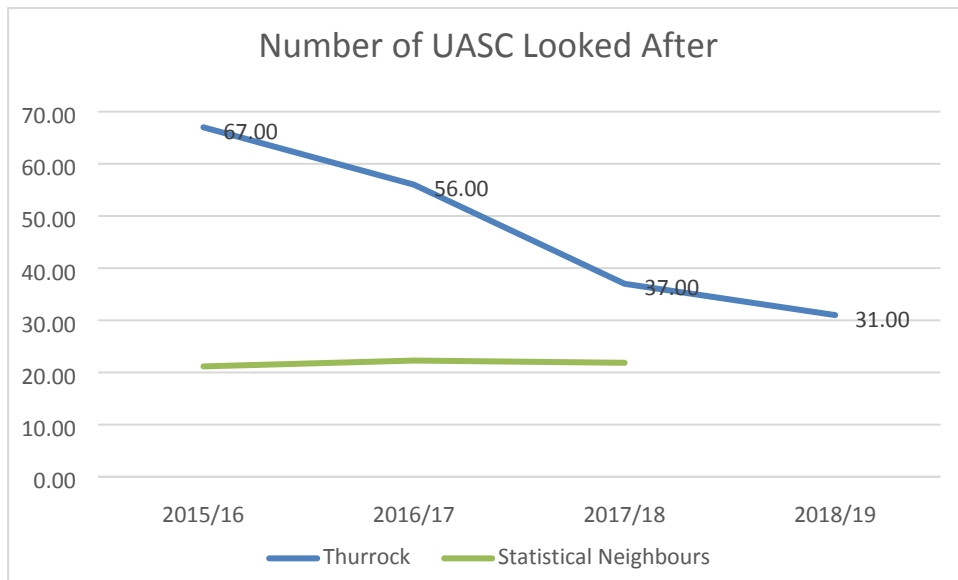


Whilst we have not yet received published 2018-19 outturns for benchmarking purposes a recent report produced by the Eastern Region indicated that our rate of children looked after per 10,000 of the population (at 67), will bring Thurrock marginally above the national average rate of 64.



For March 2019 97.1% of our children on a child protection plan were reviewed on time, this performance has been fairly consistent with a monthly average of 96.2% across the year, which is above our statistical neighbours' outturn for 2017/18 (achieving 91%).

The number of Un-accompanied Asylum Seeking Children has reduced to 31 as at end of March 2019 compared to 37 as at March 2018. In year the figure increased from 36 up to 44 in September 2018. For 2017/18 our statistical neighbours had an outturn of 22, a performance target has been set to reduce this number further to be in line with our statistical neighbours.



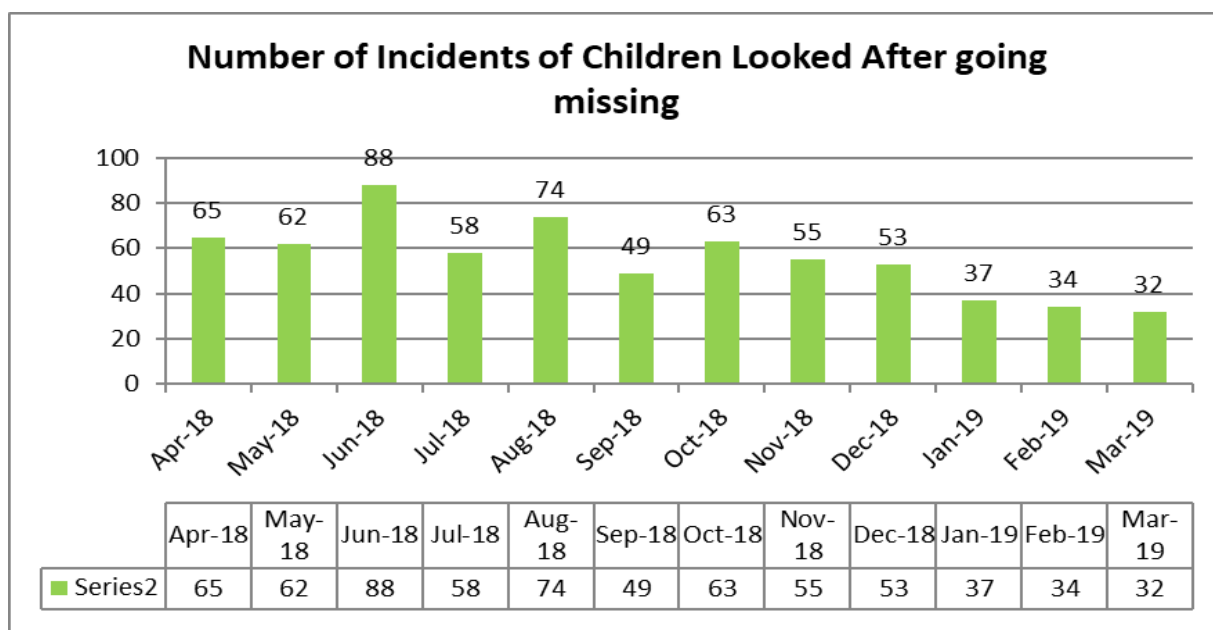
3.3 Fostering

The focus has continued on the use of in-house foster placements as opposed to independent fostering agencies through our recruitment programme. Performance as of March 2019 for in-house fostering provision is as follows:

Area	Number
Number of new carers approved	8 approved during 2018/19
Number of mainstream fostering applications currently in progress	8
Number of current fostering households	81 (140 foster carers)

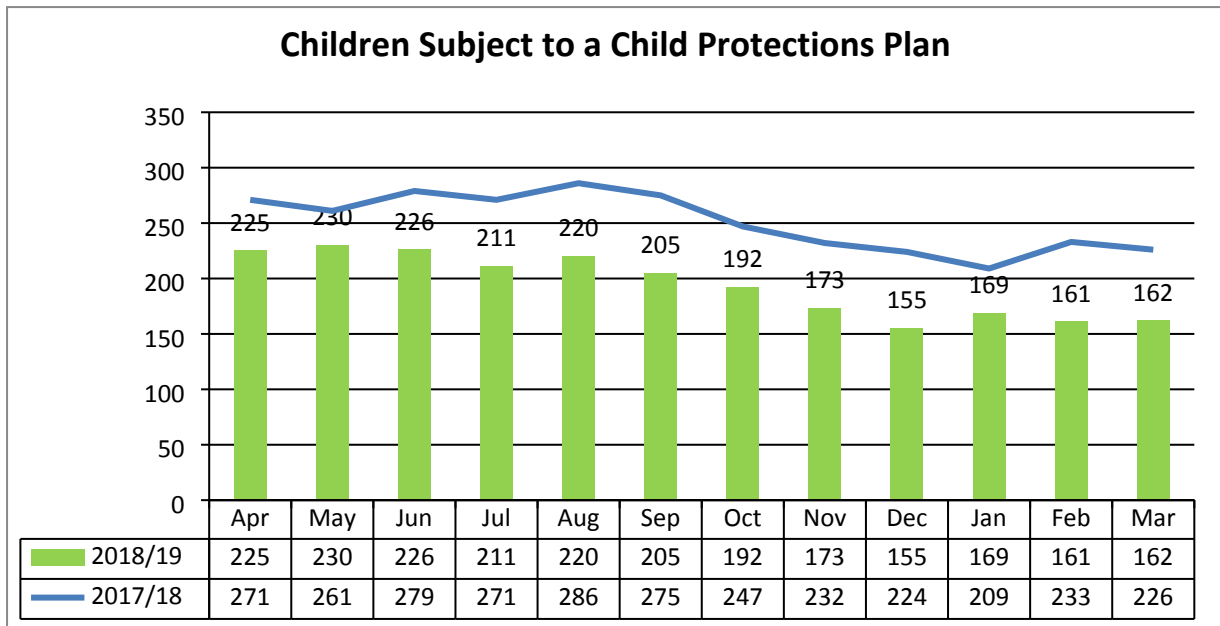
3.4 Children Looked After (CLA) Missing

During March 2019 we had a total of 32 missing incidents relating to 19 children (including 3 Un-accompanied Asylum Seeker children). All of these children were missing for short periods and have returned to their placements.

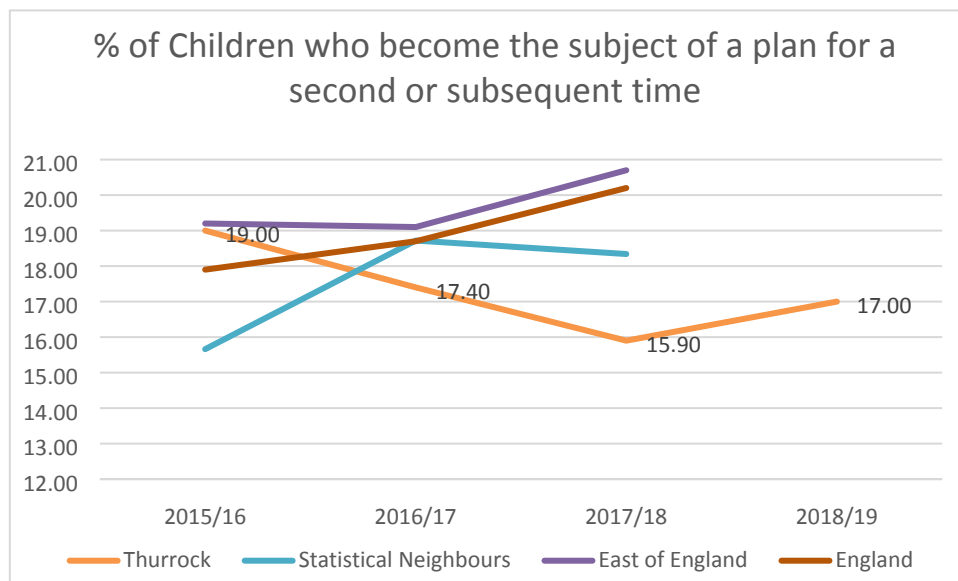


3.5 Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has reduced to 162 for March 2019. This has been a steady decrease from 271 in April 2018 to 225 at the end of 2017/18 and then further reducing throughout 2018/19. As aforementioned, the introduction and embedding of the Signs of Safety practice model and the development of a more strengths based approach to working with families has helped to reduce the number of children with a plan. Given the previous high rate of Child Protection Plans this is good performance and now in line with statistical neighbours.



Thurrock's percentage of children subject to a second or subsequent time on a Child Protection Plan has reduced to 16.9%. This is below our comparator group (18%) for 2017/18. The service will continue to monitor the number going back on a plan.



3.6 Care leavers

As at the 31st March 2019 81% of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation, this is an increase of 4% from end of year outturn for 2017/18 of 77%.

We have also seen an increase in the percentage of our care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) with 5% more (65%) as at March 2019 to the 60% reported for March 2018.

3.7 Adoption

Year	Number of children adopted
2014/15	11
2015/16	19
2016/17	11
2017/18	7
2018/19	13

There were 7 adoptions completed in 2017/2018. A significant factor for this lower performance has been changes to case law which has stressed that adoption should only be used as a last resort where no other order will do. Due to improved permanence practice during 2018/19, 13 children were adopted this year 2018/19.

Currently there are 21 children with a decision for adoption, 20 of these children have Placement Orders and 11 of these children have been matched and placed as at 31/03/2019.

We are performing well in relation to the average time (in days for a child to be adopted). For the month of March 2019 our average time was 396 days – this is an improvement on both previous years and reducing the gap against the national average outturn for 2017/18, which was 378.6 days. We have significantly improved our performance in this area and exceeded the target set for 2018/19 of 500 days.

Indicator Definition	2016/17 Outturn	2017/18 Outturn	March 2019 Outturn	2018/19 Target
Average time (in days) for a child to be adopted (3 year average)	565 days	527 days	396 days	500 days

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on the current performance position.

5. Consultation

N/A

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

N/A

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

No financial implications

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education

No legal implications

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

Whilst there are no direct E&D implications arising from this report, the service collects and utilises data to consider issues of equality and to ensure that performance considers the impact on children with protected characteristics.

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

N/A

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

N/A

8. Appendices to report

None

Report Author:

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Business Intelligence & Data Analytics Manager

Performance Quality Assurance and Business Intelligence