

31 July 2024		ITEM: 6
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Children's Social Care Performance 2023-24		
Wards and communities affected: all	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Mandy Moore Head of Business Intelligence Strategy Engagement and Growth Elise McQueen Head of Service Children Looked After Children's Services		
Accountable Assistant Director: Janet Simon – Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help.		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy – Executive Director, Children' Services		
This report is Public		
Version: Final		

Executive Summary

This report provides information on the performance across Children Looked After and Aftercare. The overall performance for the service is good, this report focusses on data for Quarter 4 (January to March) 2023-24.

At the end of Q4 2023-24, 290 children were looked after by Thurrock Council, a further 269 care experienced young adults aged 18+ were receiving services from Aftercare. Children and young people are visited regularly, and the management of missing children is consistent and reflects good partnership with the Police and Thurrock Community Safety. Improvement is required in the timeliness of Initial Health Assessment which is an area of focus with health partners.

The Aftercare Service continues to focus on improving outcomes for young people as they transition into adulthood and move to independence. Areas which we are seeking to show improved outcomes for include supporting increased numbers of young people in education, employment or training and ensuring young people have the right accommodation to meet their needs at the right time.

Children are mostly placed with foster carers or, where safe and possible, with family members. Thurrock Council continues to embed it's 'Think Family' approach to reduce the need for children to enter care. Foster Care recruitment continues to develop local placements for children.

Commissioner Comment:

None

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That members note improvements in Children's Social Care and note the work that is undertaken to ensure good and improving performance.**
- 1.2 Members scrutinise the performance data and provide challenge to the service as required on how, as corporate parents we provide appropriate services, keep children and young people safe and promote good outcomes.**

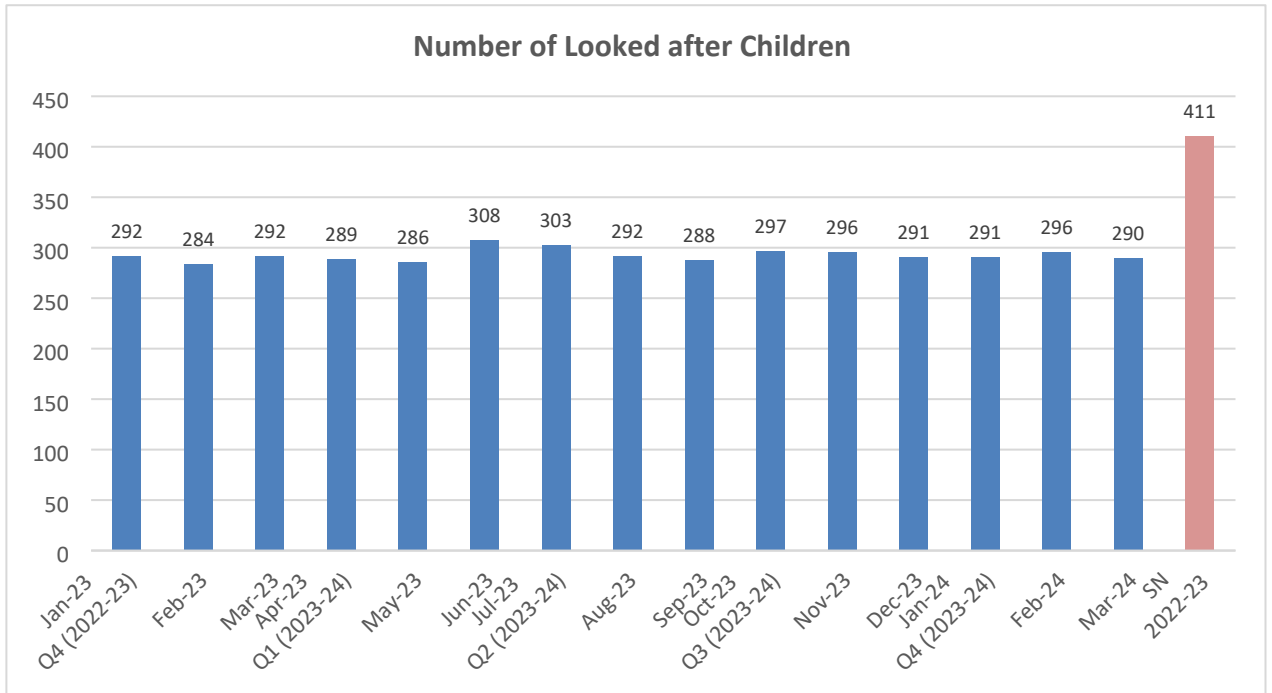
2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of Children's Social Care performance. It highlights key demand indicators for Children Looked After and Care Leavers, such as the number of children who are looked after, benchmarking data and key performance indicators.
- 2.2 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 monthly performance report, regional benchmarking data and national data sets. External reporting requirements include the annual statutory data return to the Department for Education (DfE) that all Local Authorities must provide.
- 2.3 This data has been presented and discussed with the Children & Families Performance Board.
- 2.4 Teams and Managers use the data to understand and respond to changes in activity levels, to monitor and respond to the quality and timeliness of services and to collate information about how well children are doing. The information is also discussed with front line practitioners.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

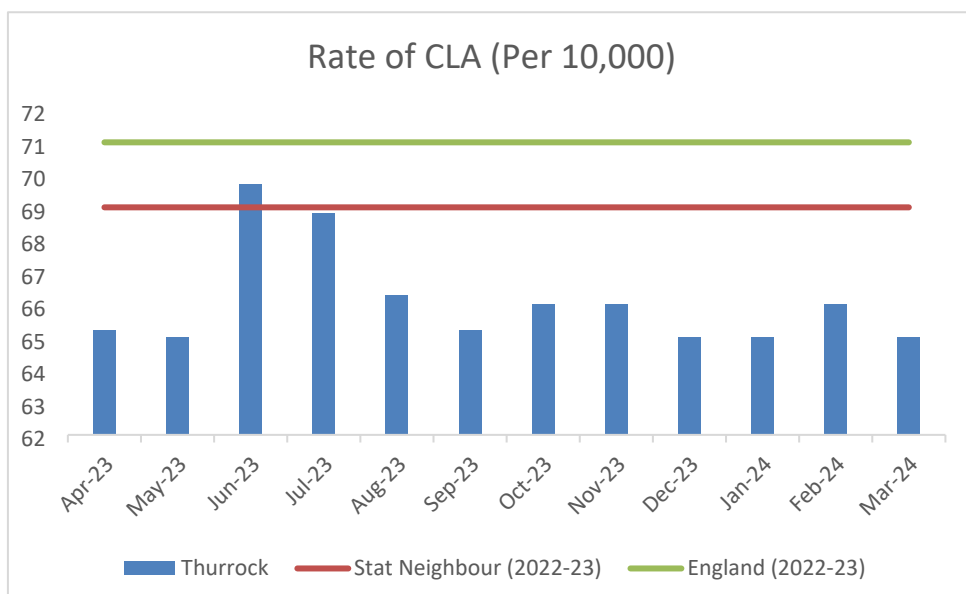
3.1 Number of Children Looked After (CLA)

The graph below shows the number of children who were Looked After at the end of each month. There is monitoring of children who may need to become Looked After and there are regular reviews of children entering care. Where safe and appropriate, children are supported to return to their families. Thurrock's Children in Care numbers have remained relatively stable year to date from 288 in April 2023 to 290 in March 2024 with two peaks in June and July 2023. The end of Quarter 4 saw a decrease of 1 to 290 from 291 at the end of Quarter 3.



3.2 The Rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 population

The graph below shows the rate of Children Looked After per 10,000 of the child population of under 18-year-olds in Thurrock. At the end of March 2023 there were 292 Children Looked After in Thurrock with the rate of 66 per 10,000. Based on the latest available benchmarking data (2022-23), Thurrock is below the Statistical Neighbour average of 69 and England average of 71 at the end of March 2024. This demonstrates the work throughout the service to make sure the right children are coming into care and working with families to keep children within their family network/home where it is safe to do so. These numbers are despite the rise in numbers of UASC as a result of the national threshold rising. 290 children looked after at the end of March 24, equates to 65 per 10,000 population, this remains below the statistical and national outturn stated above.

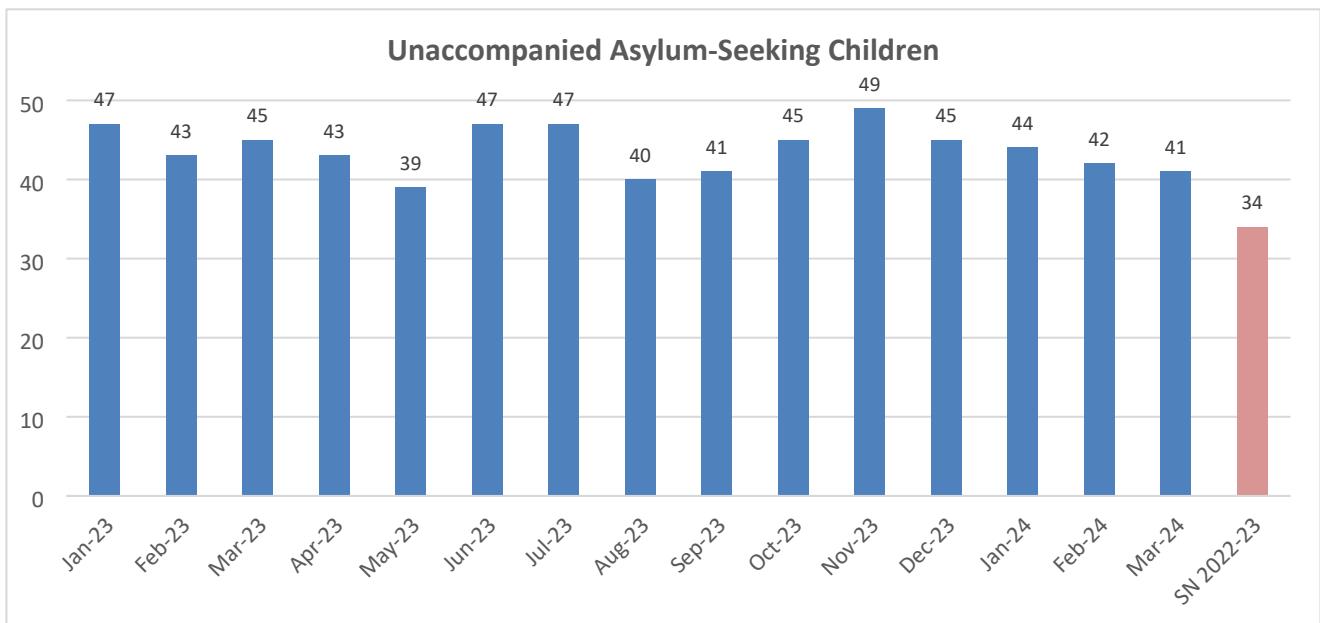


3.3 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

UASC are a subset of Thurrock's Children Looked After number. As an authority with ports of entry, Thurrock has a steady number of new UASC. The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) protocol for UASC first began operating in 2016 which formed a voluntary agreement between local authorities in England to ensure a fairer, more equitable distribution of unaccompanied children across local authorities with a threshold of 0.07% of the local child population. After February 2022 all local authorities have been directed to participate in the NTS. From August 2022 the operating threshold was increased representing an increase from 0.07 to 0.1%. For Thurrock this represented an increase in both the UASC and CLA population of 17 children with the threshold rising from 27 to 44 UASC. This means that Thurrock is required to accept transfers of UASC in the scheme if we are below 44 UASC in our Child Looked After population. This represents an increased demand for placements, social work time and After Care support. As at end March 24 Thurrock had 41 UASC children.

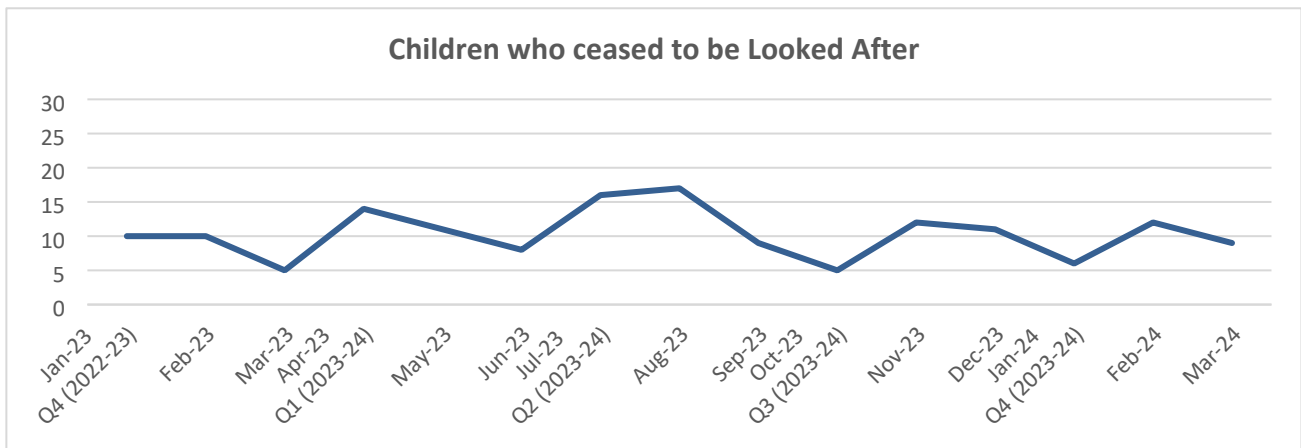
When a local authority reaches its allocated number there are arrangements in place for new arrivals to be transferred via the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The NTS is operated by Central Government with the Home Office responsible for administration of the scheme.

The below graph shows the number of UASC that were looked after as at the end of each month since January 2023.



3.4 Children Looked After episodes ceased

It is normal for the number of children leaving care to fluctuate. looked after compared to 125 in the same period in 2021-22. From April 2023 to March 2024 131 children ceased to be looked after, which is an increase from the previous year (97 – 2022/23) and a slight increase from the year before (125 – 2021/22). 52 of the 131 children ceased being in care as they turned 18 years of age (41 males, 11 females, 21 of this number were former UASC).



Aside from young people turning 18, the most common reasons for children ceasing to be looked after was returning home to live with parents/relatives as part of care planning and children who were made subject to Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders, living with connected carers.

There are four factors contributing and impacting on the numbers of children in care in Thurrock 2023/24:

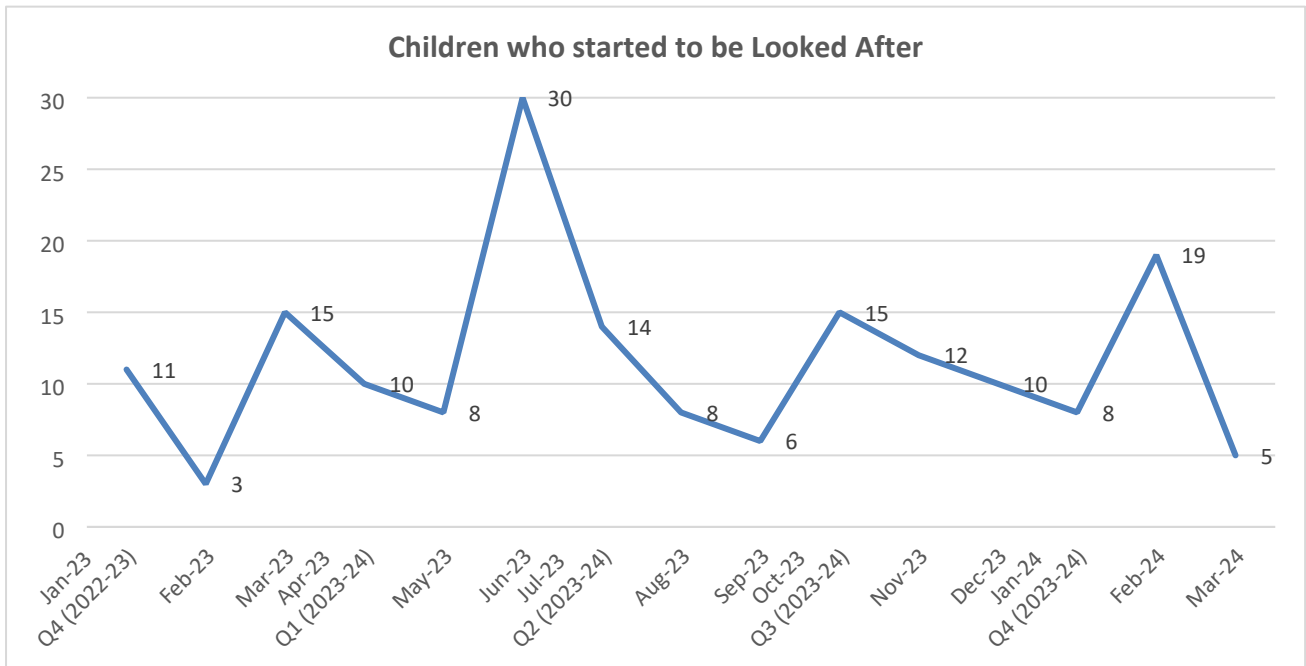
- Numbers of children entering care: 145
- Numbers of UASC entering care: 45
- Numbers of children leaving care: 131
- Numbers of UASC who remain looked after by Thurrock: 41

The below charts show comparative data between 2018/19 to 2023/24, entries in and exits out of care, including the changing trajectory of the UASC population increasing by 46 children on the previous year (22/23).

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number Entering Care	242	150	121	99	145
UASC entering Care	75	36	38	33	45
Total number Exiting Care	235	148	122	97	131
Number of CLA at end of reporting period	298	298	295	292	290
UASC Population at end of reporting period (% of CLA population)	23 (7.7%)	24 (8%)	28 (9.4%)	44 (15%)	41 (14%)

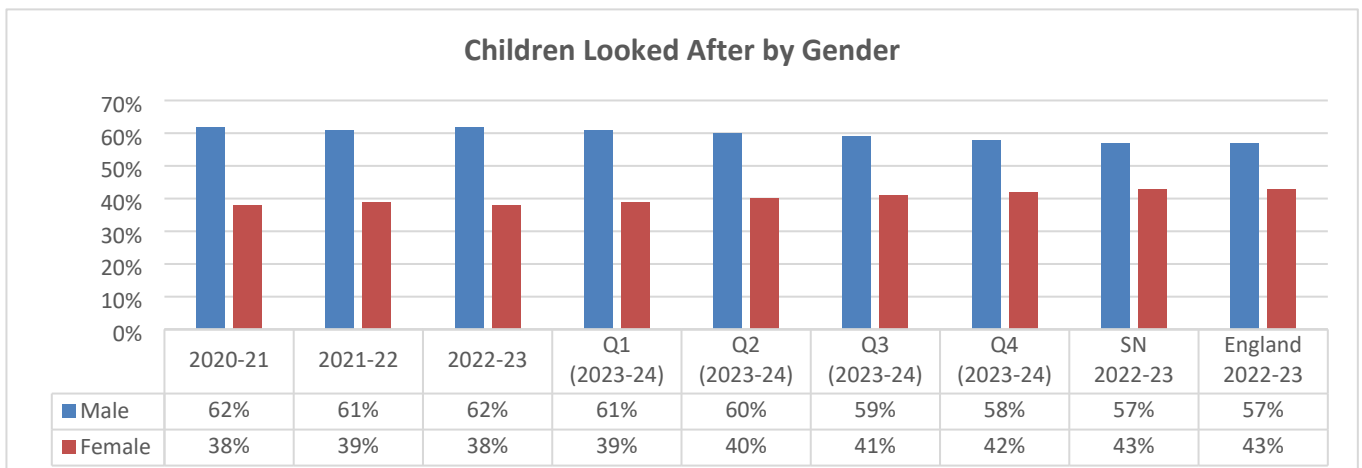
3.5 Children Looked After episodes started

It is normal for fluctuations to be seen with children starting episodes of care, this is shown by the graph below. There was however a sharp increase during June 2023 of 30 children starting an episode of care related to 9 UASC arrivals and larger sibling groups. In Q3 and Q4 the numbers for children starting episodes of care returned to relatively normal levels – with the exception of a smaller spike in February, 19 children. Of these, 11 children (58%) were due to safeguarding issues and children experiencing abuse or neglect.



3.6 Children Looked After by Gender

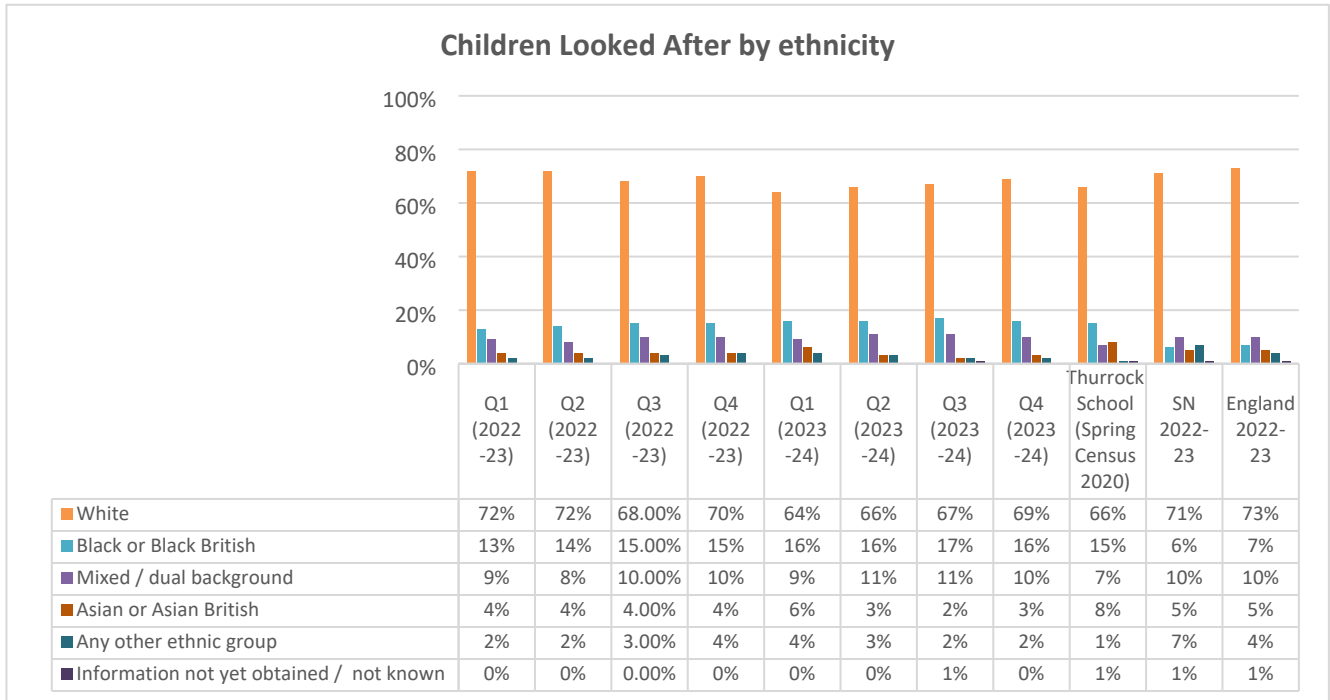
Based on the most recent available benchmarking data in 2022-23, the gender breakdown for males is slightly above Statistical Neighbours and England averages as at the end of March 2024, which is a reflection of our percentage of UASC, who are predominately males.



3.7 Children Looked After by Ethnicity

Statistical Neighbour and England averages are included. However, for Thurrock, school census data provides a more appropriate comparison, given the population of Thurrock.

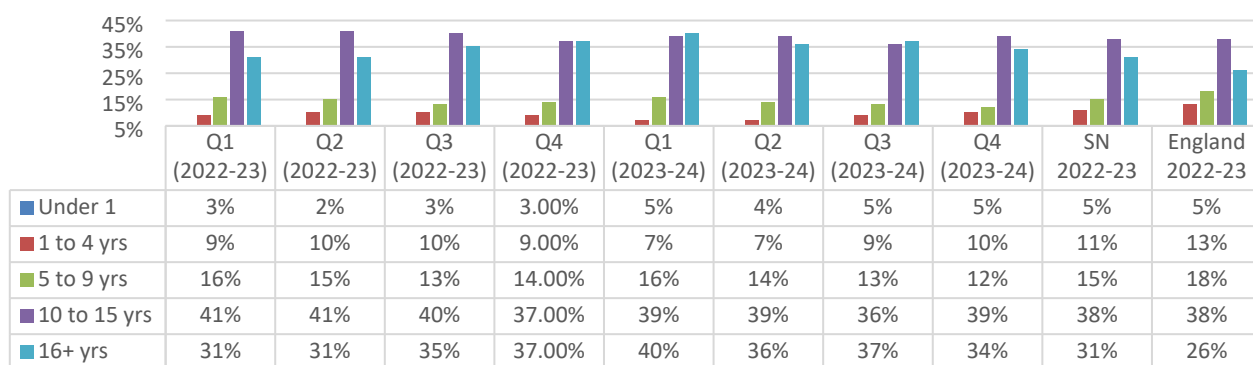
Thurrock’s Children Looked After population are predominantly White and in line with Thurrock’s School Census in Spring 2020 and the Statistical Neighbour and England averages. Quarter 4 2023-24 outturn saw a 1% increase in Asian or Asian British and a 2% increase in White ethnicity.



3.8 Children Looked After age profile

Based on the benchmarking data as of March 2023, the age profile of the Children Looked After cohort remains mostly stable and largely in line with the Statistical Neighbour and England averages with the exception of our 16+ cohort. As at March 2024, we have seen a decline in ages 16+, and are still above Statistical Neighbour and National averages. We have also seen an increase in the 10 to 15 age group, putting us slight above the Statistical Neighbour and National Averages. To some extent this reflects Thurrock’s status as a point of entry for UASC given almost all are aged 15+ years.

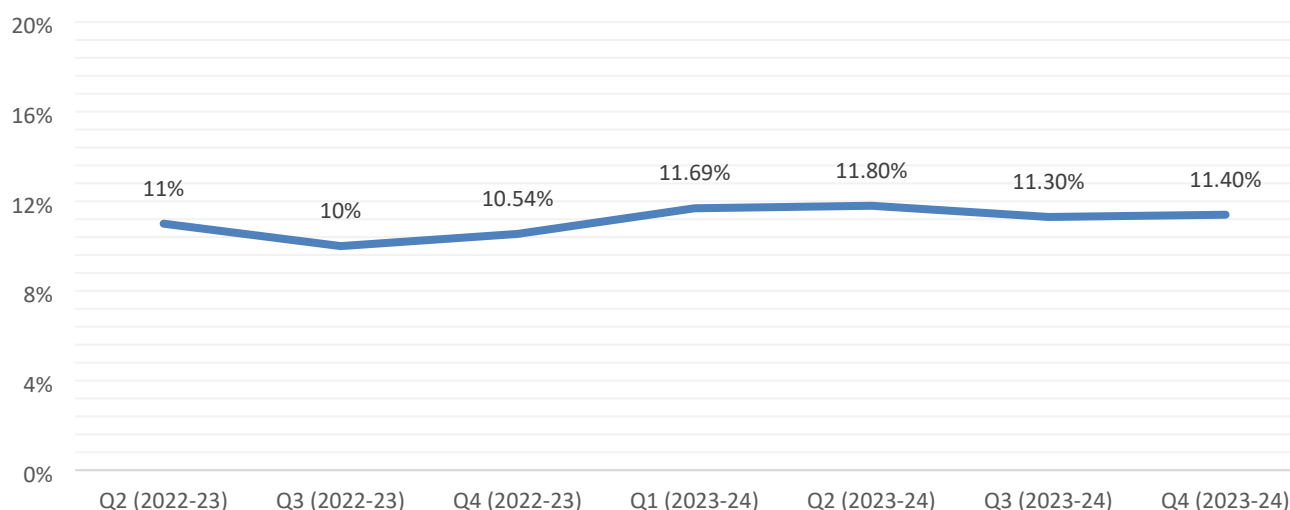
Age distribution of Children Looked After



3.9 Children Looked After with a Disability

The number of children looked after with a disability has remained relatively stable since April 2022. At the end of March 2024, 33 (11.4%) of the total CLA cohort were recorded as having a disability. 23 (69.7%) of those children are male. 67% of those disabled children were placed within 20 miles or less from their home.

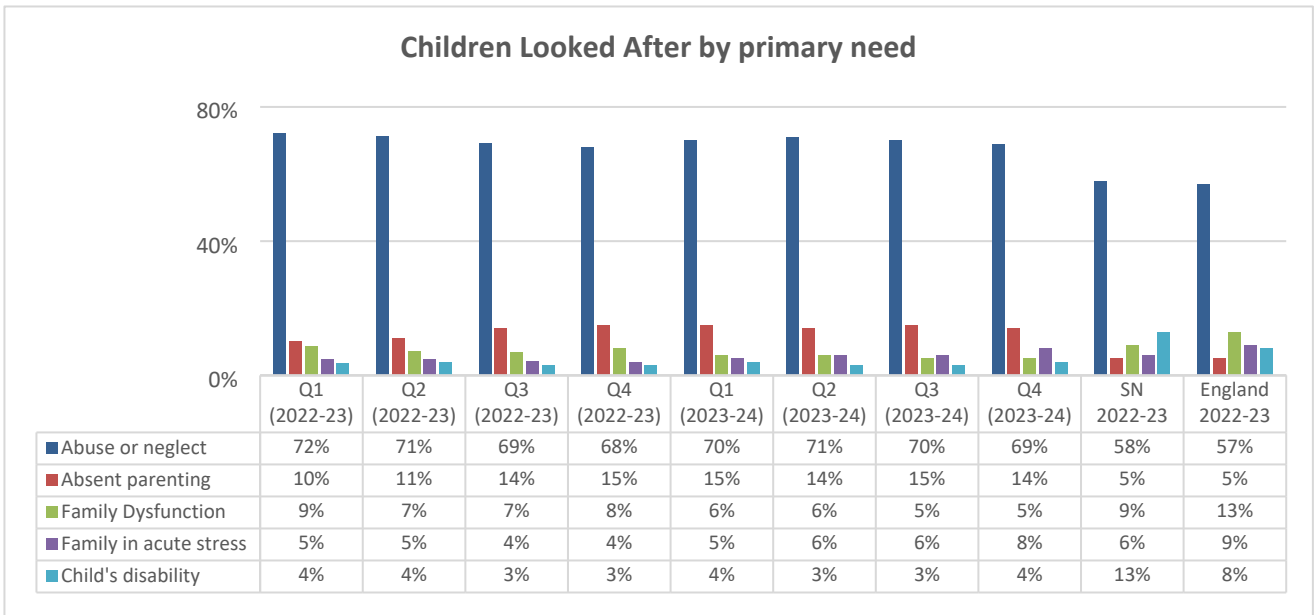
Children Looked After with disability



3.10 Children Looked After by Primary Need

Most children became Looked After because of the significant harm they are experiencing or likely to experience. Where possible, Social Care provide support and intervention to enable families to remain together and ensure that children only become looked after, when absolutely necessary.

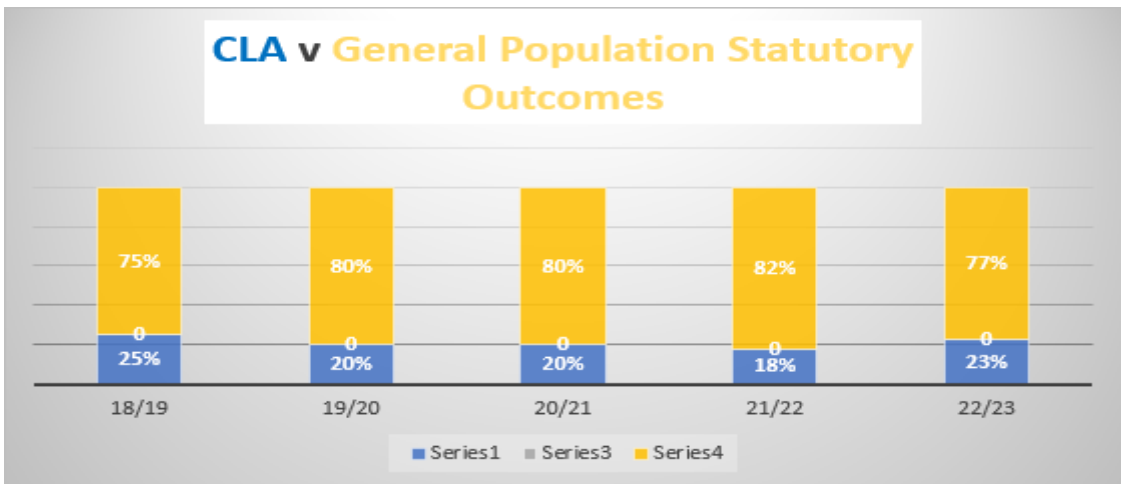
The table below shows the primary need indicated for the child in care. Thurrock has a higher percentage recorded as 'Abuse or Neglect' and lower percentage recorded as 'Family Dysfunction' than statistical neighbours and national benchmarks; this is in line with previous quarters.



3.11 Number of CLA open to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) – Statutory Interventions

A statutory intervention is undertaken when a child has been convicted by the courts or made subject to a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution and consequently has YOS intervention.

at the third quarter of 2023/24 there were 47 children recorded as having statutory outcomes with Thurrock YJS and 9 of these children were looked after. The 9 looked after children represented 19% of the young people completing statutory interventions. This is in line with the trend for the last five years.



The above graph represents the percentage of Children Looked After versus the total number of young people in the Youth Justice System for the last five years. There has been a slight increase since 21/22 but overall, the figure has remained relatively static. It needs to be taken into consideration that the numbers overall are very small, so this will reflect the in the percentages.

3.12 Youth Detention Accommodation

Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, any child that is made subject to a Youth Detention Accommodation Order (remand in custody) by the Courts automatically becomes looked after by the local authority.

No new children were made subject to Youth Detention Accommodation during the fourth quarter of 2023/24. During the financial year 23/24 there were no new entrants subject to Youth Detention Accommodation.

3.13 Out of court disposal panel

As at the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year the out of court disposal panel dealt with 68 offences relating to 65 Thurrock children, of which one child had looked after status.

Thurrock YJS and Essex Police are committed to the national protocol aimed at reducing the criminalisation of Children Looked After. This approach will be supported with a local pan-Essex protocol to ensure there is a focus on diverting any child (where possible) who is Looked After from the Criminal Justice System.

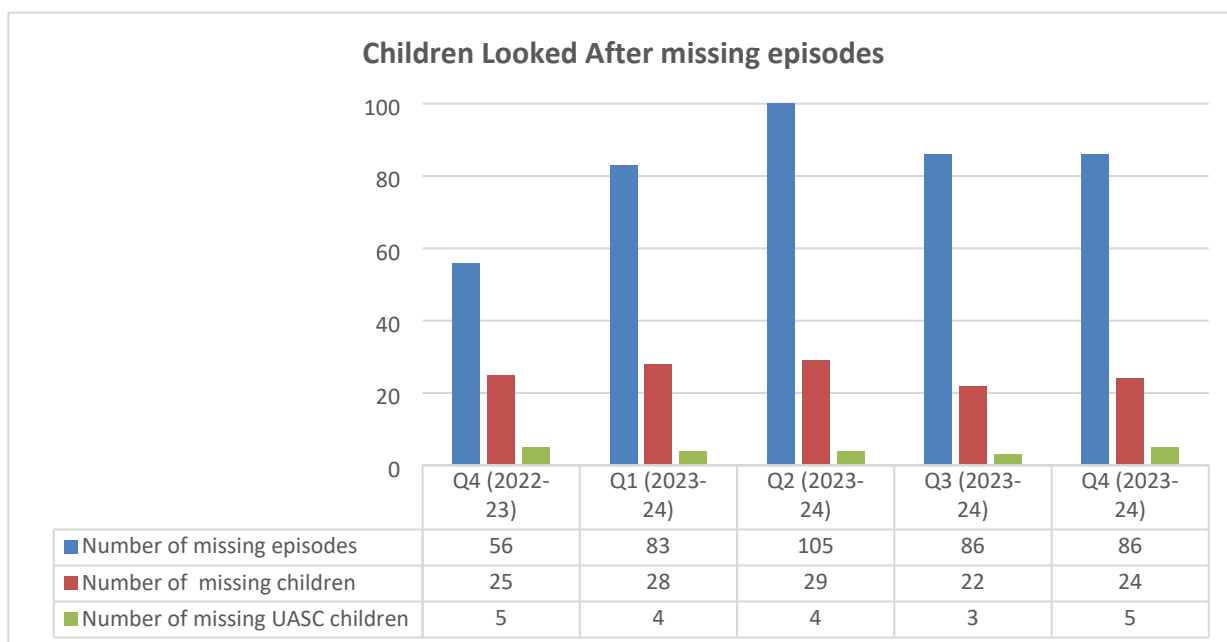
4. Children Looked After missing and Return Home Interviews

The graph below shows the number of missing episodes started and the count of the individual children who went missing in 2023/24. Between April 2023 and March 2024, there were a total of 416 missing episodes a reduction on 2022/23 when there were 530 missing episodes and 2021/22 when there was a total of 566 episodes.

During Quarter 4, January to March 2024 there were a total of 86 missing episodes started which represented 24 individual children.

The majority of children going missing are for short periods of time and relates to older children 16 and over, staying out later than an agreed return home time. Younger children who are missing are reported to the Police at an earlier stage of the day and all missing episodes are risk assessed. The most common reasons for children going missing is contact with family and friends (including where a child/young person goes missing in order to have contact with their family).

When children are reported missing the majority return within 24 hours, i.e. if reported at 11pm they are back in placement by the next day, (88%), most are back before the next morning. Small numbers of children may spend longer periods away from placement. There is robust response to missing children and ensuring supported by Policies and Procedures.



4.1 Children Looked After return home interviews (RHI)

From April 01, 2023, the RHI Service transferred from Inspire Youth Hub to an 'In House' provision via the CE and Missing Team.

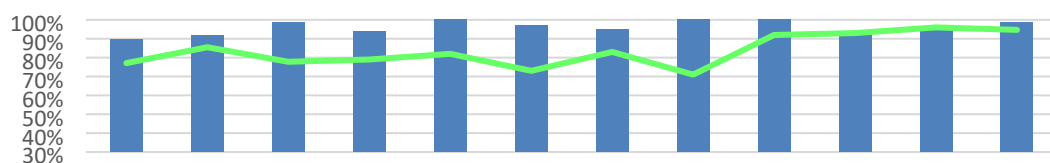
Children and young people are offered a RHI within 72 hours following each missing episode, with the aim of understanding the young person's circumstances and the reasons why they go missing. Key Workers from placements, Foster Carers and Social Workers will also discuss missing incidents with children. There is a network of support provided to children to try to engage with them and understand the reasons for their missing episodes to work with young people and reduce missing episodes.

As at the end of March 2024, the percentage of children offered a return to home interview was 98.7% of which 94.7% accepted and received an interview. The offer of an RHI is not always accepted by young people. Reasons for this include not wanting to reveal their whereabouts when missing and not believing that they were missing but 'out.' All young people who have a missing episode are reviewed at the weekly Missing Children Panel.

The graph below shows the percentage of return to home interviews taken up by young people since April 2023 and shows a consistent picture of children accepting and receiving an RHI. There continues to be a small number of CLA who have consistently refused return home interviews.

We continue to review how we engage this cohort of young people and offer alternatives such as whether there is anyone within the network better placed to have these conversations when they return from missing episodes, including how their social worker and how this information is captured. These approaches have increased the amount of Return Home Interviews completed and has ensured that young people are given opportunities to share whether there are any safeguarding issues in relation to exploitation that needs to be addressed.

Percentage of missing episodes where the child accepted and received a Return to home Interview

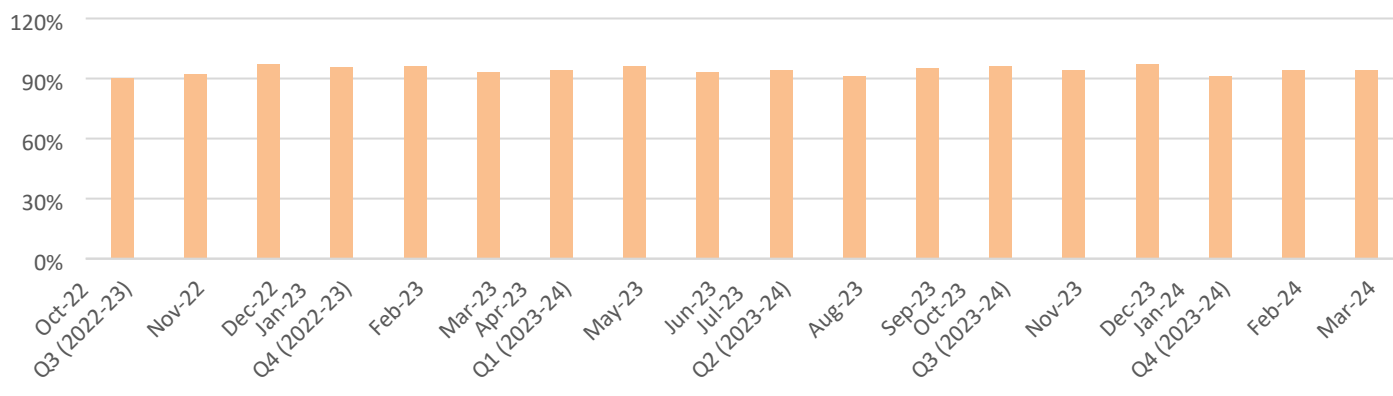


	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
RHI offered	90%	92%	98%	94%	100%	97%	95%	100%	100%	93.5%	94.3%	98.7%
RHI accepted	77%	86%	78%	79%	82%	73%	83%	71%	92%	93%	96%	94.7%

5. Timeliness of Social Worker Children Looked After visits

Social workers are required to visit a child/young person within one week of the start of any placement. Visits are then due in accordance with the time agreed within the Care Plan. This can vary from 20 working days (four weekly) to 65 (three monthly) working days, permitted within regulations. During Q4 2023/24 an average of 93.2% of visits were completed in timescale.

Percentage of CLA visits completed in time



6. Children Looked After Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

All children who are looked after should receive their IHA appointment within 20 working days of entering care. This target is not currently met. The service acknowledges the significance of the delays in completing Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) for Looked After Children, and recognises its statutory duty under Section 22(3) of the Children Act 1989 and the regard to the Corporate Parenting Principles outlined in Section 1 (1) of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Despite national challenges, the issue has been a concern locally, with performance consistently below statutory timelines and the councils' aspirations of a minimum of 70% completed in timescale. This matter has been escalated to the highest levels of the Integrated Care Boards (ICB). The Council, in collaboration with health partners, is committed to addressing these delays to ensure

compliance with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 (regulation 7) and improve health outcomes for Looked After Children.

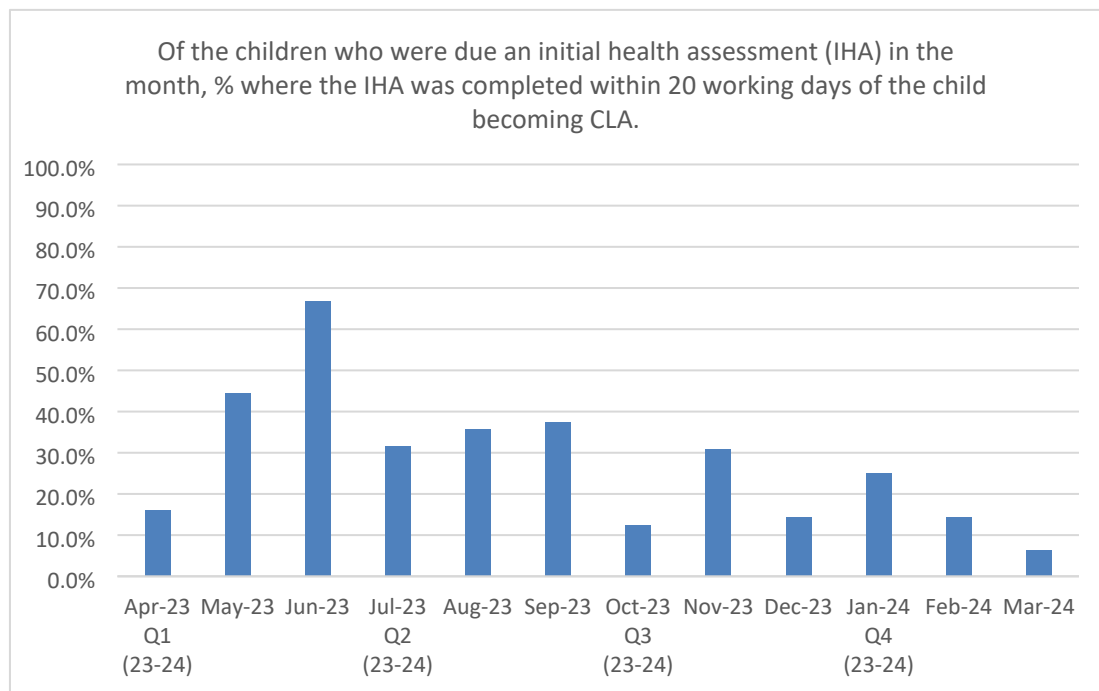
Overdue Initial Health Assessments (IHA) pose a risk of continuous non-compliance with statutory requirements. The primary factor affecting IHA performance has been the lack of capacity for paediatric appointments. Performance on children receiving an IHA in timescale was escalated by the DCS to the Chief Executive of the ICB and a task and finish group was formed, resulting in a business case and agreement for additional Paediatrician capacity to work on completing the backlog of overdue appointments and improving IHA timeliness for children coming into care. A locum Paediatric commenced employment in June 2024, the initial contract of three months has been extended to ensure all overdue children's IHA are completed and new IHA referrals are completed in timescale.

Delay in the referrals can be impacted by parents or the young person where they have capacity will not give written permission for an IHA, not completing the paperwork within five working days. The only acceptable reason for delay in a referral is where we are unable to obtain the parent or young person's consent due to refusal. To maintain robust oversight of this process within social care the Service Manager and Head of Service are notified the day a child is accommodated, to ensure there is no delay to social workers completing the IHA paperwork resulting in the referral taking place on time. NELFT (Northeast London Foundation Trust) meet weekly with the paediatric team to review all the children with a recent request for an IHA and all children with an overdue appointment, this informs a weekly oversight meeting between Senior Managers in Health and Children's Social Care, ensuring continuous monitoring and swift action on emerging issues. These multi-agency meetings ensure, even when delayed, looked after children will have an Initial Health Assessment completed.

NELFT report the completion of Initial Health Assessments in timescale has been impacted on across the region.

No child will wait for medical treatment if they have any medical needs. Children are registered with a G.P. when they come to in care and steps are taken to ensure any health needs are met from the appropriate resources (Health visitor, G.P. etc), a dental and immunisations panel takes place fortnightly, within social care, chaired by the CLA service manager, to ensure there is no delay to dental and health needs.

In Q4 31 CLA Initial Health Assessments were due to be completed, 12.9% of these were completed within the statutory timeframe (20 working days of becoming looked after), this is a slight decrease compared to Q3 when 28 CLA Initial Health Assessments were due to be completed, and 21.4% were completed in time.

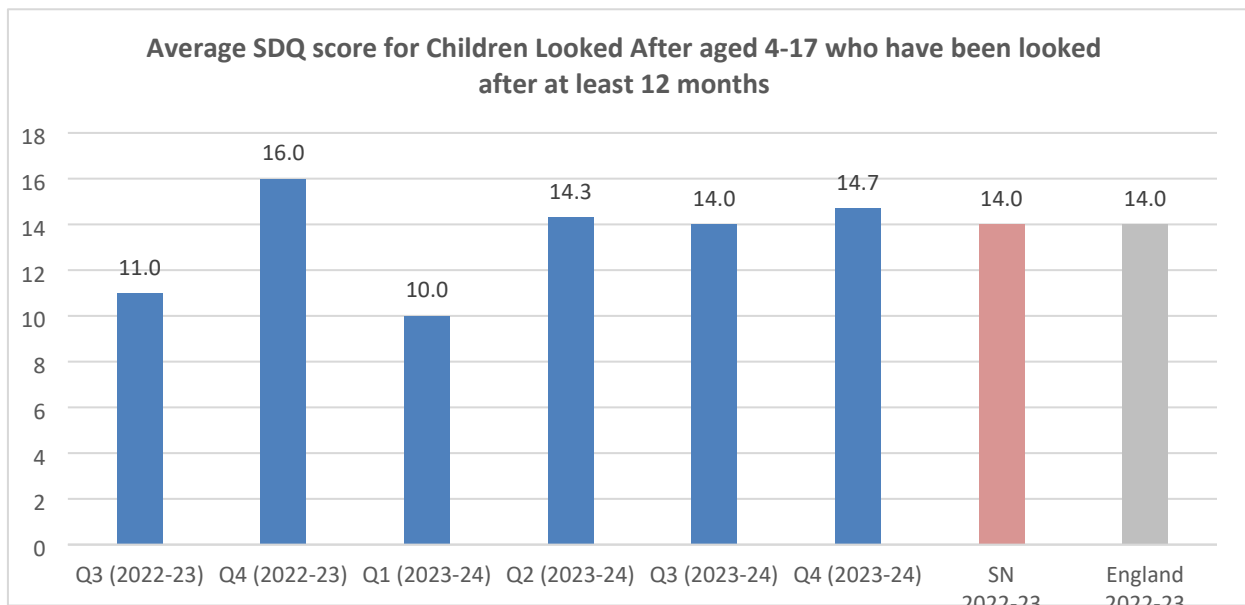


7. Children Looked After Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

SDQ scores are a measure which provides an indication of the mental wellbeing of Looked After Children. Thurrock has a statutory responsibility to collect SDQ scores annually for all children aged 4-17 who have continuously been looked after for at least 12 months. Thurrock Children's Services collate the SDQ scores termly via the Personal Education Plan supported by the Virtual School and Children's Social Care collecting the views of carers, school staff and children.

For each child where their score indicates a level of need (scoring 13 or higher) their case is individually reviewed by a multi-agency panel to ensure appropriate services are in place. Children benefit from a suite of local services including EWMHS, Kooth (online Counselling) and commissioned therapeutic services. For children placed out of area NHS provision or commissioned services are secured.

The average scores for Quarter 4 2023-24 are 14.7 which is in line with our Statistical Neighbour and National benchmarks. The mental wellbeing of Children Looked After is appropriately reviewed, with support and intervention provided, as necessary.



8. Adoption

- 8.1 The average duration of care proceedings nationally has been over 40 weeks. The President of the Family Division re-launched the Public Law Outline process in January 2023 with a view to reducing the length of proceedings towards the 26 weeks statutory time limit.

The timeliness of adoption is measured as a 12-month rolling average, it is the length of time from the child entering care to moving in with an adoptive family. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted (days), as at end of Quarter 4 2023-24 was 781 days; this is an increase on the December 23 position of 638 days.

On 2022-23 benchmarking data, Thurrock is above the National average of 480 days. It is important to note that this measure relates to a relatively small number of children experiencing a delay which impacts on the data. Care proceedings have seen significant delays in part due to court availability, and family members being identified late. We are working towards reducing the duration of care proceedings through early planning and close monitoring.

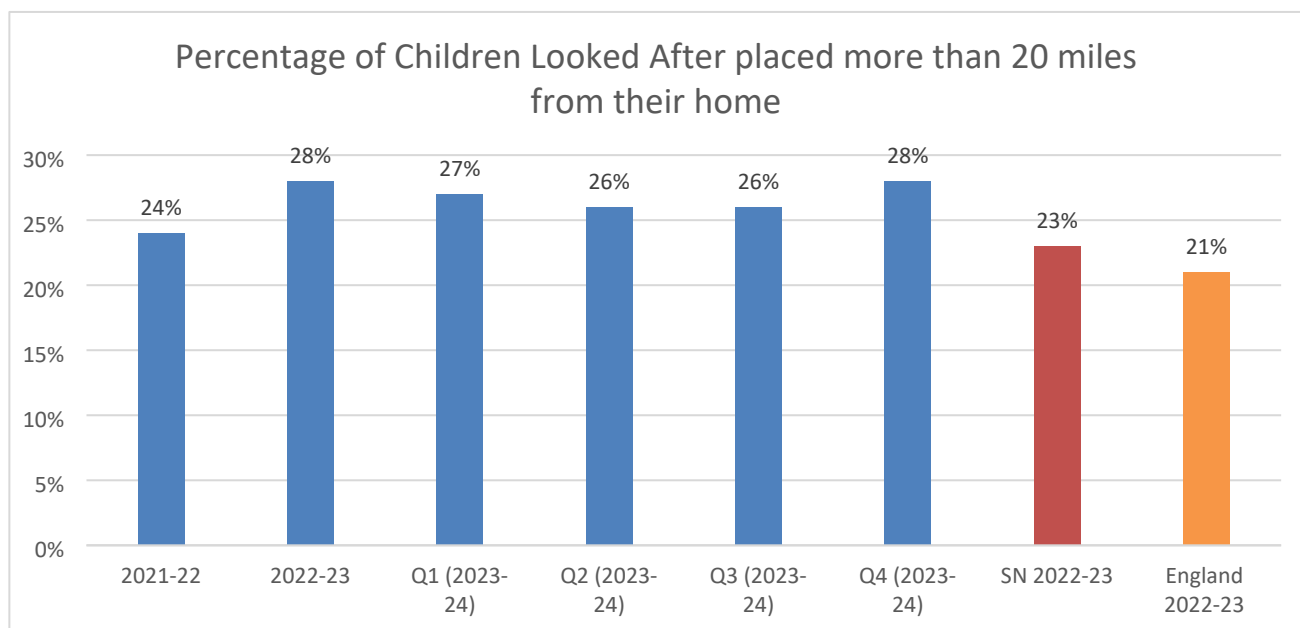
As at Q4 2023-24, the average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family (rolling 12 months) is 135 days, this is higher than the December 2023 average of 122. Based on 2022-23 benchmarking data, Thurrock is below the National average of 197 days and performance is good in this area.

9. Children Looked After placement distance

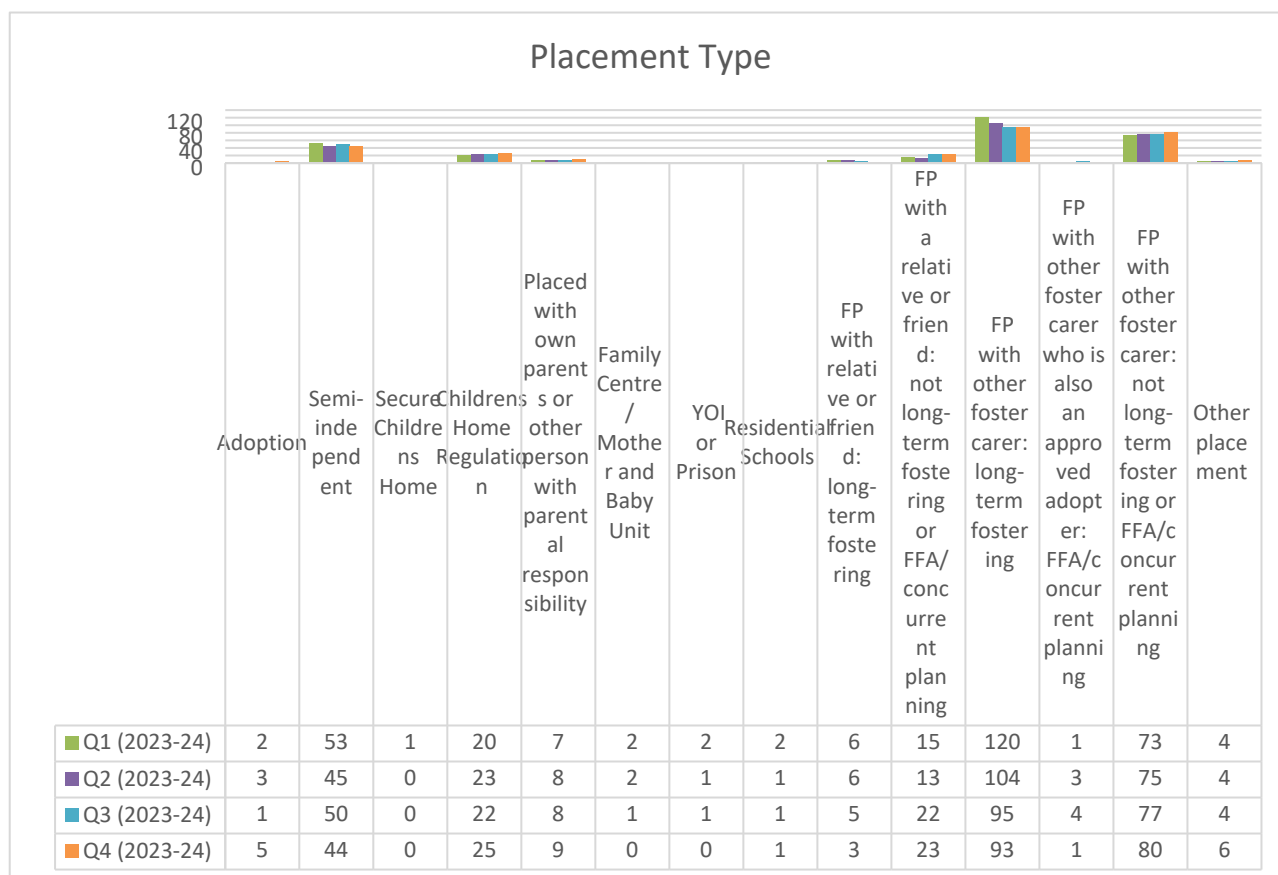
The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide children with placements within its area unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so under the Children Act 1989.

At the end of March 2024, 72% of the Children Looked After cohort were placed within 20 miles or less from their homes, which represents 209 out of 290 children looked

after. Based on the latest benchmarking data available for 2022-23, the national average for those placed more than 20 miles from their home was 21% and statistical neighbours was 23%, so at 28% Thurrock is currently above these. We continue to work hard to ensure that wherever possible, children are placed close to their community.



The chart below provides a breakdown by placement type as at end of Quarter 1 2023-24, Quarter 2 2023-24, Quarter 3 2023-24 and Quarter 4 2023-24.



10. Care Leaving Service (Aftercare)

The table below shows the care leaver cohort (Relevant and Former Relevant Children whose 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday falls within Financial Year), and Young People aged 16-25 years who are in receipt of a Care Leaving service. Local authorities have a legislative duty to appoint a Personal Adviser for Care Leavers from the age of 16-21 and up until the age of 25 if required (This data does not include Eligible care leavers who remain looked after)

A Care Leaver, as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000¹, is a person who has been 'looked after' or 'in care' for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who was in care on their 16th birthday.

A young person's status as a care leaver can be divided into the following:

- Eligible child - a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by the local authority/health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who is still looked after.
- Relevant child - a young person who is 16 or 17 who has left care after their 16th birthday and before leaving care was an eligible child.
- Former relevant child - a young person who is aged between 18 and 25 (or beyond if being helped with education or training) who, before turning 18 was either an eligible or a relevant child, or both.

As at end of March 2024, 269 Care Leavers were being supported and receiving an Aftercare service. The charts below show the Care Leaver cohort broken down by age groups:

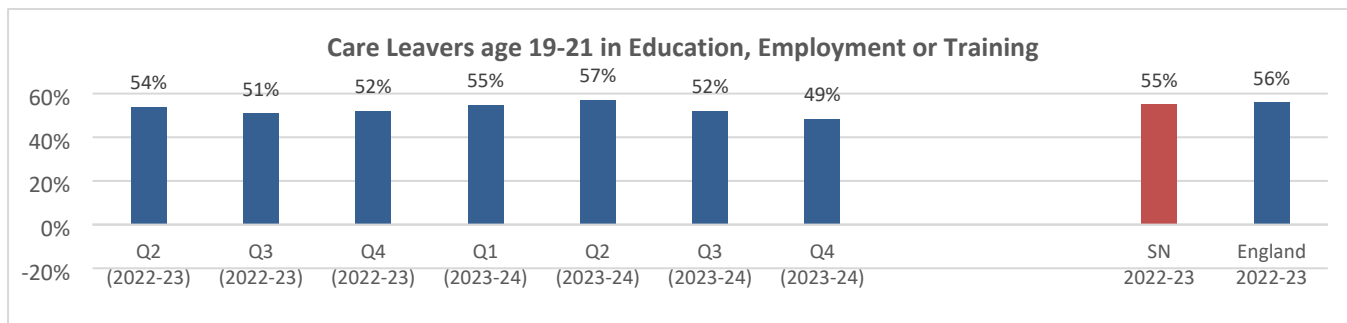
Care Leaver Age	Total	%
16	2	.75
17-18	79	29
19-21	129	47
22-25	61	23
	269	

10.1 Care Leavers age 19-21 years in Education, Employment or Training

At the end of Q4 2023-24, 49% of the Care Leavers aged 19 to 21-year-old were in part or full-time education, employment or training compared to 52% at the end of December 23, which brings Thurrock below the Statistical Neighbour average of 55% and the England average of 56%. To strengthen oversight and planning to ensure our young people have support and opportunities for Education, Employment and Training (EET)

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/35/contents>

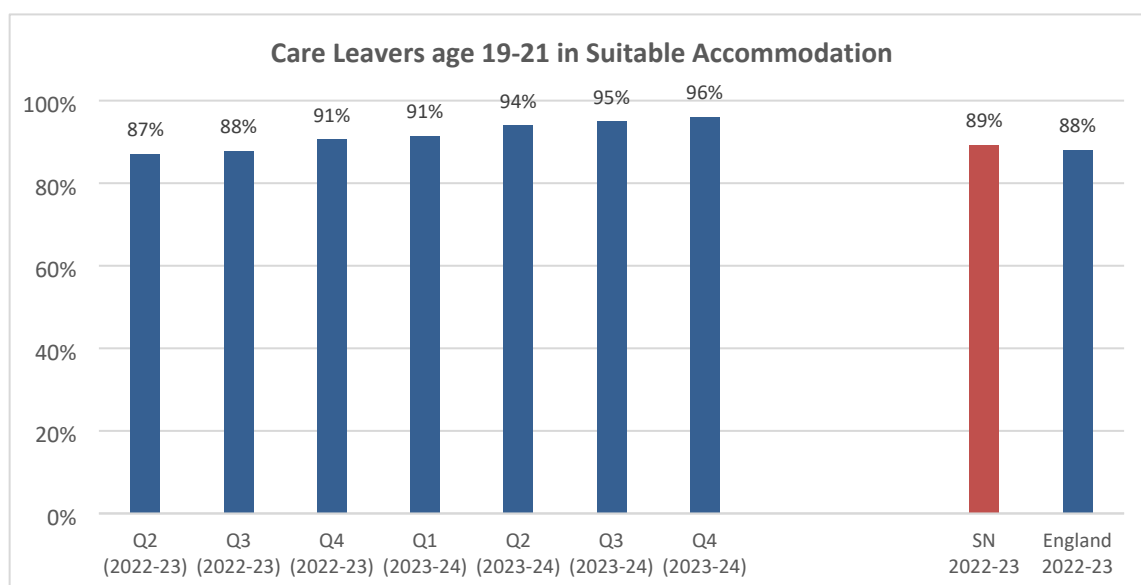
there are weekly panels which focus on pre and post 18-year-olds who do not have an EET offer. These panels are attended and chaired by the Aftercare Service, Inspire Youth Hub, and the Virtual School. The panel seeks to understand the issues for individual young people, identify support needs to enable the young person to engage in EET and align their interests to an EET offer. Between panels the personal advisors, of the young people, follow up on actions and recommendations suggested by the panel.



10.2 Care Leavers age 19 to 21 years in Suitable Accommodation

Q4 2023-24 shows that the percentage of 19 to 21-year-old Care Leavers reported to be in suitable accommodation is 96%. Thurrock is above the Statistical Neighbour average of 89% and England average of 88% based on 2022-23 benchmarking data. There are some care leavers who are not in touch with the service, as well as those whose accommodation is unsuitable. Reasons for accommodation being deemed unsuitable include care leavers who are UASC and missing, young people declining to say where they are living or care leavers who are in prison.

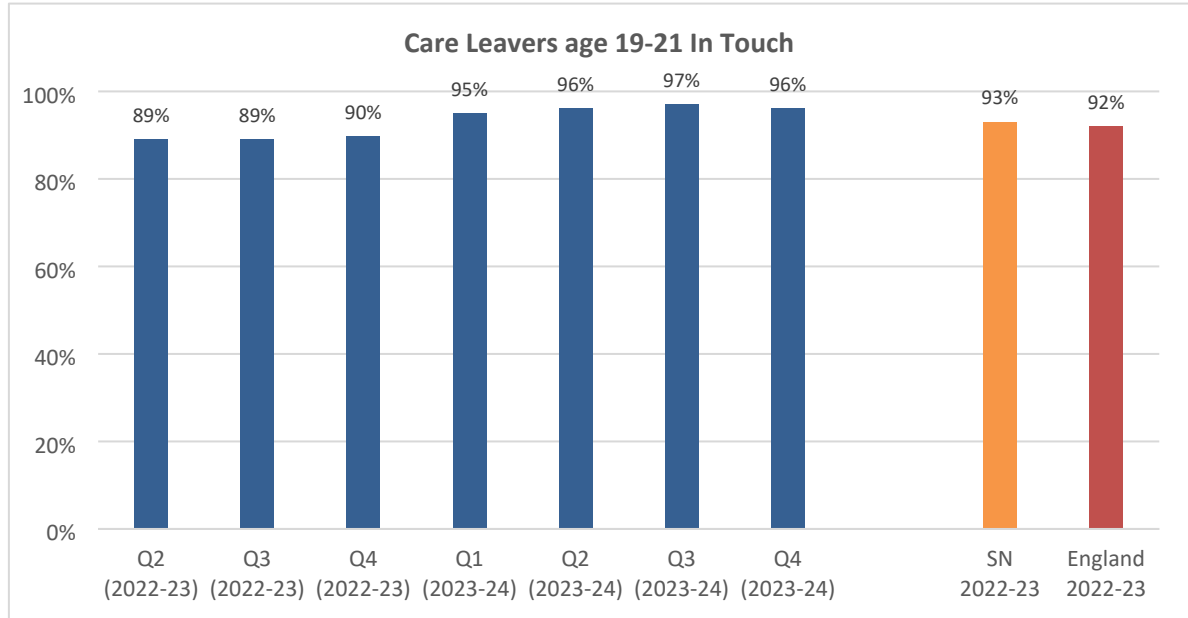
Increased housing support is being provided to young people by the Aftercare Service, Head Start Housing and Thurrock Housing Department. The 'Housing Offer' to Care Leavers has been updated with the Joint Housing Protocol 2020, ensuring good partnership working with clear pathways for young people to access housing, as well as ensuring they are prepared for their tenancies.



10.3 Care Leavers age 19-21 years 'In Touch'

Local Authorities are expected to stay in touch with Care Leavers and provide statutory support to help care leaver's transition to living independently.

At the end of Q4 2023-24, Thurrock was in touch with 96% of Care Leavers aged 19 to 21, this is a 1% decrease on the December 23 outturn of 97%. Thurrock's performance is above the Statistical Neighbour average of 93% and the England average of 92% based on 2022-23 benchmarking data.



11. Reasons for Recommendation

11.1 The performance data and narrative provided sets out progress in Q4 and across 2023/24 for members to review and challenge

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

12.1 Not applicable

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

13.1 None

14. Implications

14.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michelle Hall**
Finance Manager
19 July 2024

This report provides information on the performance across Children Looked After and Aftercare focusing on data for Quarter 4 (January to March) 2023-24.

There are no additional costs associated with this report, and all costs in meeting the provision of these related services are met from within existing Children Looked After budgets; a total budgeted amount of £3.342m in 2024-25.

14.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**
Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

The Council has general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child that it looks after under Section 22(3) of the Children Act 1989 and it must have regard to the Corporate Parenting Principles in Section 1(1) of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

This report provides Corporate Parenting Committee to explore the performance of Children's Social Care.

In relation to the data concerning the Initial Health Assessments the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 set out the detailed legal requirements in caring for Looked after Children.

The timescales for health are set in regulation 7 which provides for the Council to make arrangements for the health assessment by the child's first review, and for a written report of the health assessment to be provided as soon as soon as reasonably practicable.

The first review must be within 20 working days of the date on which the child becomes looked after.

The Council is subject to the statutory guidance 'Promoting the Health and Well-Being of Looked After Child'. This notes in planning services for Looked After Children that gaps in provision should be identified through the JSNA/JHWS. This should identify gaps in provision and ICB and officers in the Council should ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to meet the identified health needs of Looked After Children.

The difficulties with Initial Health Assessments were identified in the JSNA for Looked After Children in 2022 and is reflected in the Brighter Futures Strategy 2021 – 2026.

The assessments should be within this timescale to comply with the Local Authority's statutory duty. The current performance is significantly below this requirement.

Health bodies have a duty to co-operate with the Local Authority under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989.

14.3 Diversity and Equality –

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

There are no direct diversity and equality implications arising from this report. However, the service does collect diversity monitoring data for looked after children, this data is given within this report. The data is utilised to consider issues of equality and to ensure that performance considers the impact on children with protected characteristics.

14.4 Risks

Thurrock Council & Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board are not meet the statutory expectations for Initial Health Assessments for Looked After Children.

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

Looked after children – as set out in the report

15. 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

16. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Authors:

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