

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, 16 June 2022**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Hall (Chair)

Councillor(s): D Burnett, H Kelly, D Bradford, L Caffrey, B Clelland, C Davison, K McCartney, E McMaster, J Mohammed, L Moir, A Ord, M Ord, D Robson and D Weatherley

Co-opted Member(s): A Akin

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor(s): B Dick, J Green and G Haley

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): P Craig, R Waugh and Rachel Walton

**F42 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the last meeting be approved subject to it being noted that Councillor Davison submitted her apologies and they were not recorded.

**F43 CONSTITUTION**

RESOLVED - that the constitution of the Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal year be noted.

**F44 ROLE AND REMIT**

RESOLVED - That the roll and remit of the Committee be noted.

**F45 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK - YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2021-22**

The Committee received a report and presentation for the year end performance reporting from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 against each of the 6 policy objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Balanced Scorecard.

The views of the OSCs which were reported to Cabinet following the 6 monthly position included:

- Prioritisation and Thrive Policy – clearer priorities to achieve Thrive, focus resources to achieve the biggest impact and emphasis on early intervention and reducing longer term demand - LIoN data to be refreshed end 2022 / early 2023 to understand changes post pandemic; Budget approach priority-

- based transformation review of Thrive and early intervention activity.
- Locality based working – ensuring that the right approach is taken with councillor and community involvement from the outset and recognising that different approaches may be needed in different areas of Gateshead – approach to locality working being developed in collaboration.
  - Housing repairs and maintenance – Housing Improvement Plan and timescales for tackling the issues and backlog to meet housing requirements and standards – Review in place to address challenges in delivery impacting on customers.
  - Place and Environment – importance of a clean, safe attractive environment to support the health and wellbeing of local people – part of budget approach.
  - Climate Change – Clarity on actions and progress the Council is making towards its Climate Change ambition with greater communications with local people – extensive engagement taking place.
  - Employees and Workforce – Improvements to employee morale and address recruitment and retention – proposals being developed •
  - Other comments also being incorporated into the PMIF i.e. use of dates, new measures, digital/ online presentation being developed, specific areas of focus such as Community Wealth Building, social care, jobs and employment

Some emerging cross-cutting issues were highlighted to the Committee:

- The continuing impact of Covid 19 on performance
- Widening inequalities, income and the longer term anticipated impact to health
- The demand pressures facing services such as social care
- The impact of EU Exit/Ukraine Conflict, rising costs for residents and in service delivery
- Staffing pressures including recruitment and retention across the Council
- There has been good progress in key policy areas such as climate change strategy and engagement
- There has been an increase in the shift towards digital and online services
- Support is being provided to local people and businesses for example the Household support grant
- There has been an effective response to supporting vulnerable people throughout the pandemic – i.e through local hubs, public health and vaccinations

The Committee heard from Gary Lewis with regards to an update in relation to Looked After Children:

The Committee were advised that research published in February 2022 by Association of Directors for Children's Services (ADCS) reflected a national picture of increasing demand to social care services. This general trend has been emerging for several years and has been further complicated by the impact of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis. Locally in Gateshead, we have not been immune to the national picture and have seen some significant activity pressures emerge.

The committee were advised of the following:

- As of 31 March 2022, there were 485 children looked after, a 10.2% increase on the previous year
- Since August 2021, the number has shown a month-on-month increase
- When expressed as a rate Gateshead is 123.1 per 10,000 population
- Compared to the same rates (from 20/21) we can see Gateshead is higher than Regional, Statistical and National Comparator groups
- The majority of LAC continue to be those between the ages of 10 to 15 years old
- The most noticeable change can be seen in those children aged 0 to 4 years old
- This represents a 40% increase compared to 20/21
- 207 children entered care with 182 becoming looked after for the first time (87.9%)
- 150 children becoming looked after (72.5%) were previously subject to a Child Protection Plan – compared to 62.7% in the previous year
- The number of children placed close by and at a distance was 85 as of 31 March 2022
- The proportion of children who are placed out of Gateshead in non-Gateshead provision remains similar to the previous year (19.5% compared to 19.3%)
- The number of children being looked after for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent time in the last 12 months is lower than the previous year (12.1%) compared to 15.7%)
- The proportion of children experiencing 3 or more placements in the previous 12 months remains low
- 6.6% (32) children had 3 or more placements
- Gateshead remains below the national and regional averages
- 161 (25%) children ceased to be looked after during the period compared to 27% the previous period
- The largest proportion left care to return home, followed by Special Guardianship Order and then those turning 18
- The trend over recent years shows a decline in the proportion of children leaving care

The Committee were advised that further LAC analysis is being conducted, taking a deep dive into some of the areas highlighted including age profiles, CP to LAC conversion and leaving care. A pre-birth team is being developed to focus on the rising proportion of younger children coming into care. Children impacted by the Adoption Somerset ruling are now progressing through the court process. Social Work practice models are being strengthened and new quality assurance audit framework is in place. Implementation of a trauma informed multi disciplinary therapeutic service. A review of the timeliness of children exiting care is also being undertaken.

It was suggested that we have the two young people back who spoke to Committee previously. It was also noted that previously councillors have asked that those leaving care are informed who their councillors are and that this is now being done as young people leave care.

It was queried how we make sure young people see this as a positive and what type

of resources are available. It was noted that we make sure children see entering care as a positive thing which is happening to them. It was also noted that there is a reasonably sized budget for these services. It was noted that Gateshead is very pro-active at looking at solutions.

It was noted that the papers are really difficult to study and it would be of a benefit to Councillors to have the presentations in advance of the meeting. It was also queried whether it would be possible to have a glossary of terms and introduce measure to strengthen the role of the members on the Committee given that they have to scrutinise the work of officers.

It was noted that this would be taken back and it was suggested that something be taken to Councillor Support and Development Group.

RESOLVED - (i) that the comments of the Committee be noted.  
(ii) that the performance report be recommended to Cabinet for consideration in July.

## **F46 BREASTFEEDING AND TONGUE TIE**

The Committee received a report to provide an overview of breastfeeding performance in Gateshead, support available for mums who wish to breastfeed and a tongue tie overview.

It is know that tongue-tie can prevent successful breastfeeding. It is estimated that 10.7% of babies born are with tongue-tie. In Gateshead 1900/2000 births, this would equate to about 200 babies.

Breastfeeding rates at 6 to 8 weeks had previously remained at around 35% to 36% in Gateshead for several years. The table below demonstrates the progress and improvements around breastfeeding rates since the contract for the 0-19 public health nursing service was award to Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust in July 2018 (note these figures include mothers who are fully breastfeeding and those who are partially breastfeeding).

<b>Breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Gateshead	35%	38.7%	41.7%
England	47.3%	48%	47.6%

Gateshead is 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the North East region for breastfeeding rates at 6 to 8 weeks.

The 0-19 public health nursing service (Growing Healthy Gateshead) received accreditation for stage 2 of the Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) in September 2021. The baby friendly standards provide a roadmap for services to improve care and through the staged accreditation programme services are enabled to support all mothers with feeding and help parents build a close and loving relationship with their baby.

There are 3 stages to the accreditation programme as follows:

- Stage 1 Building a firm foundation

- Stage 2      An educated workforce
- Stage 3      Parents experiences

There are a number of standards that have to be met at each stage to achieve accreditation. Services have to submit all of their evidence for each standard and this evidence is then assessed by Unicef. They also interview practitioners within the service to verify the evidence and to see how the standards are being implemented in practice.

The service achieved 100% in some of the standards and received excellent feedback about the team and their communication skills used in antenatal discussions and beyond.

An early year's practitioner (EYP) in the service is also completing Unicef advocate training which will support families in Gateshead. This course is in the second intake and the cohort for the UK is only 8 members, so the EYP is really privileged to secure such a highly sought-after place.

During the pandemic the 0-19 service adapted and offered face to face, telephone and virtual support to clients and families with regards to infant feeding. Proactive support is offered to all women in Gateshead to assist with infant feeding issues or provide encouragement and praise to women who choose to breastfeed. Daily proactive telephone calls continue to be offered to breast feeding mothers during the first weeks after birth and these calls are continued as needed during the first 6 weeks based on each individual family's needs and requirements.

Infant feeding cafes have been set up in partnership with the children's centres at Elgin and Blaydon. These offer support around breastfeeding (positioning, blocked ducts, cluster feeds, attachment) and peer support from other mothers. The service also offers virtual antenatal sessions focusing on all aspects of infant feeding and the provision of realistic feeding expectations.

The North East and North Cumbria ICS Public Health Maternity Prevention Team worked with key delivery partners including peer supporters and parents/carers to develop a breastfeeding touchpoint pathway to improve the consistency and support across the North East. This covers all the key contact points during pregnancy until the baby is 6 to 8 weeks old where practitioners can have discussions to support mothers who want to breastfeed or who are breastfeeding

The following table shows the tongue tie activity demand by Newcastle Gateshead CCG. As can be seen from the table below the pandemic impacted significantly on tongue tie activity demand and this was seen across the whole of the North East.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
229	167	142	42

Currently there is inequity of service provision across the North East region with some limited access and time restraints for assessment and division. Infant Feeding Leads without local services historically referred to the RVI when tongue tie division clinics ran weekly. However, as this service is no longer routinely available at the RVI all referrals were being made to Sunderland and South Tyneside Foundation

Trust. This service is commended for its rapid response to referrals, expert service provision and follow up communication; however, this has resulted in the following concerns:

- Length of time until appointment - for out of area this can be 2-6 weeks
- Sustainability for the large area currently supported by Sunderland and South Tyneside if the practitioner was to be absent or leave post
- Travel requirements – access to transport and cost for out of area families
- Parents who can afford costs are utilising private practitioners, whilst mothers who cannot are often left waiting for appointments. These appointments are not always communicated to Midwifery or Health Visiting services.

Frenulotomy can also be performed by tongue-tie practitioners in private practice. There are currently two private practitioners registered with the Association of tongue tie practitioners in the North East. Costs vary dependant on number of appointments, but division is around £225. Additional cranio-osteopathy may also be advised at an additional cost.

A paper written by the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) ICS Public Health Maternity and Prevention Team with considerations, options, and next steps was discussed at an inaugural meeting by NENC strategic Senior Leaders in June 2021. There was agreement that a joint regional approach to provision across the whole of the ICS footprint should be the standard.

However, the proposed work is on hold at present due to commissioning difficulties and access to Practitioners.

The Committee commented that all mums across the North East should have the same access. It was noted that this is not a service that is commissioned by Public Health.

It was felt that the report didn't cover the impact on new mums and there babies as it can be very difficult when your baby isn't feeding and the baby can become very dehydrated and failing to thrive.

It was commented that it isn't right that parents should have to pay for the treatment and it is concerning that there potentially could be quite a number of children suffering.

It was queried when this would be picked up as giving a child the best start in life is part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

It was noted that the Integrated Care System is taking over and re-commissioning of services aren't currently taking place.

It was suggested that this issue be referred to Health Scrutiny and that the North East and Cumbria team be spoken to about providing further information to the Committee.

It was noted that breastfeeding should be promoted, given current financial circumstances and the cost of formula there are issues with regards to the questions of who does the body belong to and who do the breasts belong to, irrespective of what mams say, how far can we go in terms of pushing the breastfeeding route.

It was noted that it is really difficult but breastfeeding is being promoted with lots of work ongoing to support and encourage mams but at the end of the day it is their choice. It can be quite an emotive subject.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the comments of the Committee be noted.
  - (ii) That the matter of tongue-tie be referred to the Care Health and Wellbeing OSC
  - (iii) That a report be requested from the organisation who would commission the service to explain why the service can't be commissioned.

## **F47 IMPLEMENTATION OF MOSAIC**

The Committee received a presentation on the replacement of Care First and the Implementation of Mosaic within Gateshead Council.

The Committee were advised that Care First had to be replaced as it was an end of life system which was developed in the 90s and was no longer going to be supported by the supplier.

16m records have been migrated into the new system. The data has all come from Car First. There are currently 500 users of the system. Mosaic is a work flow based system which ensures pathways are followed. This was developed by Gateshead Council to fit in with our work practices. Mosaic can be used on a lot more devices than care first including I phone and I pad and practitioners own devices at home safely and securely with just one login.

Mosaic is cloud based so it can be access from anywhere subject to the user having the correct security access. This will be particularly useful for partnership working.

Attachments can be added to a person's information and the system is also connected to Agresso as well as being integrated to the NHS Spine so that NHS numbers can be pulled through from the national database.

The presentation showed some of the forms and the way the system will work.

- All packages of care come from Mosaic
- Mosaic is interfaced into the Council's finance system Agresso
- Every package of care has to be authorised within Mosaic
- Auditing is much easier as the payments to suppliers are all derived from the child's record in Mosaic
- Financial risk is managed within Mosaic through protocols embedded into the system, i.e. a package of care cannot be paid unless it is all set-up within Mosaic

- Eliminates spreadsheet recording and keeps all records in one place
- Improved reportability of package data for Commissioners

Indirectly, Mosaic will allow more direct working with children and families as it is more intuitive and efficient to use so practitioners won't need to spend so much time on case recording. Life story work, child's journey and subject access requests will be much better presented and easier to understand. Management oversight through built in daily reports. Ease of auditing of cases. Mobile access to work with children and families within their homes. Quickly accessible financial information, i.e. children with disabilities families using Direct Payments

It was queried whether there was a joint data sharing agreement set up. It was noted that agreements were set up and were jointly signed by both partners. This is audited and is very thorough. Each different partnership will have to have different data sharing agreements. The access is controlled and all parties have different degrees of permissions. Permissions are restricted to make sure no one is ever able to access information they shouldn't be accessing.

It was queried whether we could do a survey 1 year into the use of the system to see what users think of the system. It was noted that the system went live in January and we have already surveyed users with positive responses. It was also noted that every year within Children's Social Care a health check is undertaken, some of the questions that are asked are about systems, there is also a case file audit. There is the ability to amend/adapt/improve the system if the work flow needs to change as a result of change in practice.

It was queried how this system would work in terms of safeguarding of children and reporting of concerns. It was noted that if a child is flagged on the system and presents at a hospital out of area the flag will show on the system. It was noted that there is an opportunity for reporting concerns anonymously through the Gateshead website, this information is passed directly into Mosaic and is a lot quicker and more efficient.

RESOLVED - That the information presented by noted.

## **F48 RESULTS OF COVID 19 SURVEY**

The Committee received a presentation on the results of the Covid 19 Survey conducted in March 2021. The aim of the research was to make sure that the pandemic emergency and recovery plans enable Gateshead to thrive as the borough adjusts to living with Covid.

The Objectives of the survey were to:

- Assess the ongoing impact of the pandemic
- Gather information to identify, estimate and address potential risks and issues – clarify the 'known unknowns'
- Generate insights to support effective decision making
- Facilitate emergency response and recover planning
- Understand the longer-term legacy and implications of the pandemic for

future service delivery

There were three themes to the survey:

1. Public Health Service planning; feasibility of self-isolation, attitudes to social distancing, access to mass testing, vaccination roll out and take up
2. Economic outlook; household sentiment, patterns of consumer demand (eg shopping, home working, access to public spaces, travel); changes to work, hours and earnings
3. Living standards; personal health and wellbeing, household financial resilience

The design and the delivery of the survey was undertaken in partnership with NE Local Authorities, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), NHS North East Integrated Covid Hub, Community Covid Champions and Durham University.

The survey was undertaken between 8 and 28 March 2021. The online survey was built on Gateshead Council's online consultation portal and then circulated by individual local authorities. Paper copy surveys were available on request.

Responses received were as follows:

• All participating authorities	–	5514
• County Durham	-	728
• Darlington	-	381
• Gateshead	-	1867
• Middlesbrough	-	138
• Newcastle upon Tyne	-	466
• North Tyneside	-	693
• Redcar and Cleveland	-	283
• South Tyneside	-	345
• Sunderland	-	613

The Committee were advised that the outcomes was summarised as follows:-

- Analysis of attitude to social distancing, testing, self isolation and vaccination shared with health partners to inform targeted public information and behavioural change campaigns and rollout of the vaccine programme
- Evidence used to estimate the ongoing economic and fiscal impact of the pandemic and resultant revenue/financial losses caused by a reduction in activity
- Generated feedback for local, regional and national audiences on the effectiveness of government support measures (Furlough, Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), Getting Building Fund (GBF), emergency grants (Local Restrictions Support Grant, Additional Restrictions Grant, Hospitality and Leisure Grants) and Welcome Back Funds)
- Influenced Gateshead's Local Economic Development Strategy
- Informing our approach to securing future investment in the borough

- Lessons learned will underpin future resilience planning

The survey contributed to a robust, reliable and statistically relevant evidence base to inform system-wide policy development, service planning, lobbying, and influencing to protect lives and livelihoods. Results were used to encourage public compliance with lockdown and social distancing measures, maximise the efficacy of mass vaccination, and support economic recovery planning.

The outcomes of the survey allowed for:

- Analysis of attitudes to social distancing, testing, self isolation and vaccination shared with health partners to inform targeted public information and behavioural change campaigns and rollout of the vaccine programme
- Evidence to be used to estimate the ongoing economic and fiscal impact of the pandemic and resultant revenue/financial losses caused by a reduction in activity
- The generation of feedback for local, regional and national audiences on the effectiveness of government support measures (Furlough, Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), Getting Building Fund (GBF), emergency grants (Local Restrictions Support Grant, Additional Restrictions Grant, Hospitality and Leisure Grants) and Welcome Back Fund).
- Influencing of Gateshead's Local Economic Development Strategy
- Informed approach to securing future investment in the borough
- Lessons learned to underpin future resilience planning.

RESOLVED - That the information presented by noted

#### **F49 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23**

The Committee received the Annual Work Programme report which highlighted the work of the Committee over the previous municipal year 2021/22. The report shows the proposed work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year and the Committee were advised that partners and other stakeholders had been consulted on the work programmes for all of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Some proposals have been made, however, none of them were for the Families OSC work programme.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) that the information contained within the annual review be noted.
  - (ii) That the work programme for 2022/23 be endorsed and referred to Council on 21 July 2022 for agreement, subject to it being noted that the item on dentistry be brought forward to as early in the programme as possible. That a further update be brought from the Tongue-tie team and that the Tongue-tie item be referred to the Care Health and Wellbeing OSC.
  - (iii) that it be noted that further reports be brought to the Committee to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.