

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Edge of Care Review

**REPORT OF:** Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report sets out the findings and recommendations of a review by Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in relation to young people and families with complex needs on the edge of care. The committee has considered the needs of these families with complex higher level needs and what actions will have the greatest impact on improving outcomes.
2. The recommendations aim to ensure that the Council works collaboratively with partners and the commissioning service to ensure that services support families with complex needs and address inequalities.

### **Background**

3. The Council agreed that the OSC should carry out a review of children and families with complex needs on the edge of care. The scope and aims of the review were agreed by the committee at its meeting on 18 July 2017. The review focussed on:
  - The challenges facing services for adolescents on the edge of care and what might help to overcome these challenges.
  - The key ingredients to successful approaches to supporting young people and their families with complex needs on the edge of care.
  - The elements of service design that will support best practice with young people on the edge of care.
  - Strengthen service delivery to better meet the needs of local families with multiple needs at risk of becoming looked after in order to safely reducing the numbers of children coming into care.

### **Proposal**

4. The report outlines the committee's findings following the review and sets out the following recommendations;
5. The service to implement the complex child in need team and the rapid response service development by January 2018.
6. The delivery of the rapid response service to strengthen links to finance and benefits support services.

7. The service will train staff in systemic approaches as a strengths based model of best practice model.
8. The committee acknowledged the importance of developing the housing options offer for care leavers and agreed to strengthen this offer during the next commissioning process.
9. The committee agreed that continuing to build joint service delivery with partners is important and needs to continue within the edge of care service development work.

### **Recommendations**

10. It is recommended that Cabinet;
  - (i) Notes the findings and analysis of evidence outlined in appendix 2.
  - (ii) Agrees the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review as detailed in appendix 2.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure the effectiveness of children and families services in Gateshead.
- (ii) To contribute to the further development and delivery of service to children and families with complex needs and work collaboratively with partners.
- (iii) To meet with one of the Council's key budget strategies of managing demand in this case by reducing the number of children looked after by Gateshead Council.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Policy Context

1. Local authorities are statutorily required to provide child in need assessments for children and families with complex needs and adhere to Working Together Guidance with partner agencies.

### Background

2. By responding to family crises quickly and intensively and at times most suited to families, some children who might otherwise become accommodated via section 20 of the Children Act 1989 could be supported at home.
3. Equally, we know that the longer a child is looked after the less likely rehabilitation home becomes. So by responding promptly and working intensively with children and their families when children have become accommodated due to family dysfunction/breakdown, rehabilitation home is more likely to be achieved and sustained. Thus reducing the length of time that looked after care is required.
4. Children and Families social work service is developing a response to strengthen keeping young people in the community where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

### Consultation

5. The process of the review has involved the presentation of evidence and research and an opportunity to involve partners within health, housing, education, commissioning, the referral and assessment team homeless service and mental health services.
6. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted.

### Alternative Options

7. There are no alternative appropriate options with regard to the recommendations as they support the Councils responsibility to support young people and their families on the edge of care to improvement.

### Implications of Recommended Option

8. **Resources:**
  - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
  - b) **Human Resources Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance confirms that employees directly affected, and their representatives, have been fully consulted on the proposals.

- c) **Property Implications** here are no property implications arising directly from this report.
9. **Risk Management Implication** - There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.
  10. **Equality and Diversity Implications**- There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
  11. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.
  12. **Health Implications** – There are no direct health implications
  13. **Sustainability Implications** - There are no direct sustainability implications arising directly as a result of this report.
  14. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no direct human rights implications arising directly as a result of this report.
  15. **Area and Ward Implications** - There are no direct area and ward implications arising directly as a result of this report.

### **Background Information**

Families OSC:  
18 July 2017  
19 October 2017  
30 November 2017