



FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Thursday, 10 March 2022 at 1.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies for absence
2	Minutes of last meeting (Pages 3 - 10) The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 February 2022
3	Ofsted Improvement Plan (Pages 11 - 18) Report of the Deputy Director, Children, Adults and Families
4	How Gateshead is meeting the needs of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (Pages 19 - 30) Report of Strategic Director, Children, Adults and Families
5	Permanent Exclusion Data (Pages 31 - 38) Report of the Strategic Director, Children, Adults and Families
6	Overview of Performance and Activity of the Adopt North East Regional Adoption Agency 2020/21 (Pages 39 - 44) Report of the Deputy Strategic Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help
7	Work Programme (Pages 45 - 48) Joint Report of the Chief Executive and Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 3 February 2022

PRESENT: Councillor M Hall (Chair)
Councillor(s): H Kelly, D Bradford, C Buckley, D Burnett,
L Caffrey, B Clelland, P Craig, S Gallagher, K McCartney,
E McMaster, M Ord, R Oxberry and D Robson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS Ayodele Akin and Rachel Walton

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor G Haley

F22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Davison, Councillor S Craig, Councillor Mohammed and Councillor Reay.

F23 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 were approved as a correct record subject to the following inclusion;

F19 – Corporate Parenting Training

Paragraph 2 - The following wording to be included;

“Councillors who may wish to take this on should have their contact details provided to care leavers to provide a source of advice and support.”

It was noted that now the Young Ambassadors are in post this will provide a key link to Councillors within the Civic Centre and provides an opportunity for interaction. It was confirmed that conversations will be held with the Young Ambassadors and Chris Hulme as to how this can practically be taken forward. A report will be brought back to Committee on this.

F24 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN GATESHEAD - UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation on NHS dental services for children and young people in Gateshead.

It was reported that all practices operate in a highly regulated environment, however these regulations do not allow for patient registration. This means that any resident can access dental care from any NHS dentist. NHS dentistry contracts are demand led and contracts are measured in units of dental activity (UDAs). Each practice is

therefore contracted for a certain level of access across the year.

It was noted that there are 24 NHS dental practices across Gateshead, contracted to provide general dental service, commissioned for 364,347 UDAs. Pre-Covid approximately 98.3% of the commissioned capacity in Gateshead was utilised. Covid has had an impact on access to dental care and work is ongoing to increase access for patients locally.

Challenges in the dental service is also around recruitment and retention of dentists and dental nurses, although the position in Gateshead is better than in other parts of the region. The service was put under pressure with the emergence of Covid-19, because this was an airborne virus it was important to keep staff safe. A small number of urgent care centres were set up, however there were issues in terms of accessing PPE for staff and further training, which meant that these did not open until June 2020. Due to the majority of dentist accommodation being previously residential, this led to an impact on the number of patients these practices could safely see. In view of the reduced capacity dentists were required to prioritise patients based on clinical need, children were within these priority groups.

There remains a large backlog and dental practices are still being advised to keep priority groups and increase gradually. National guidance has been set to increase capacity to 85% from January to December 2022.

In order to improve access incentives for all NHS dental practices are in place to prioritise those patients who have not been seen within 12 months for children, and 24 months for adults. There has been further investment into clinical triage through the 111 service to ensure those with the greatest need are being prioritised.

It was reported that expressions of interest are being sought from practices who have capacity to deliver additional in-hours access until the end of March 2022, with a focus on the priority groups. All practices have also been requested to maintain short notice cancellation lists in order to reduce clinical downtime as missed appointments remain an issue as it was pre-Covid.

It was questioned whether there are any records kept of those children not accessing any dental care. It was acknowledged that because there is no registration requirements it is difficult to know, however there is data to show who has accessed. It was noted that smaller geographies could be analysed to identify where there is a low uptake of children accessing appointments. It was also noted that there is links with the authority around looked after children and ensuring they are accessing dental appointments. It was confirmed that once a child becomes looked after, Children's Services ensure the child or young person has regular routine dental checks, however this was a challenge throughout the pandemic.

It was questioned whether there is any help for those young people who are getting to the threshold of having to pay for treatment. It was confirmed that there is no flexibility around payment as this is set by NHS England, however there is constant dialogue between practitioners and NHS England around the cost of care being an inhibiting factor.

It was questioned what has happened to dental practices as a result of them not achieving UDAs during Covid. It was confirmed that practices had to meet minimum expectations and these expectations on patient numbers were lowered during Covid to a level that was safe. The practices remained open the same hours and although usual UDAs were not met they were still fulfilling NHS expectations.

The point was made that more needs to be done to look at children and young people accessing dental provision as there are a lot of adults who do not use dental services and therefore their children do not access it either. It was noted that the full extent of the problem is not known and therefore it was suggested that further work should be taken up with Public Health around this and how we work together to ensure people are using the services. It was proposed that this be included in the work programme for next year.

It was also suggested that there remains gaps to be filled to provide a more joined up system between GPs and Dentists, for example to encourage pregnant women to access check ups and therefore stop potential future problems for them and their children.

The point was made that dental appointments are unaffordable for a lot of families at the moment and that this will have a long-term effect on dental health as choices are prioritised elsewhere. It was noted that this is a topic for lobbying for a different system because this does not work for a proportion of the population.

It was questioned what service is in place for specialist dental care. It was confirmed that this service is not monitored on UDAs as they have longer appointments and are referred through GPs, dentists as well as self-referrals. There is a limited criteria around who can access this service as it works with specific groups, will visit Special Schools and has strong links with the rest of the care system.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

F25 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE

Committee received a report on the Corporate Parenting Board. Two meetings have been held so far, chaired by the Portfolio Lead. It was noted that attendance has been strong at these meetings, although the Police were not represented at the last meeting. There has been challenges around recruiting a voluntary sector representative and work is ongoing to fill the vacancy. It was noted that the Young Ambassadors are now in post so they will be identified to be part of the Board going forward.

Partners are also involved in the partnership group which is a sub-group of the Board.

In terms of the Young Ambassadors it was noted that these are young people who have been in the authority's care and have moved to support accommodation or independent living. The recruitment process for these posts was rigorous and it is hoped this will help forge links between services and offer opportunities to shape

policies, help with recruitment of other posts and participation in hearing the voice of the child.

The point was made that there will be certain areas that require more help. It was confirmed that details can be provided of where the highest number of looked after children are. It was noted that a Social Worker post was developed in Beacon Lough because this was a particular area in need of Child Protection Services. Committee requested a further report on this be brought back.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

F26 COVID-19 UPDATE

Committee received a report giving an update on the Covid response and in particular the impact of Omicron over the festive period. As a result of Omicron there were staffing pressures due to staff isolating, however the service continued to see a high level of commitment of staff who, if well enough, continued to work remotely.

Risk assessments were produced for all Children's Homes and short break care provision remained open for respite care.

Fostering Panels are now being held face to face in order to be regulatory compliant. RAG rated performance data trackers have been re-established to ensure those children at highest risk are being seen and supported. Recruitment and progression trackers ensure that staff absences are being covered. In addition, senior officer rotas are in place to ensure management presence in the Civic Centre at all times.

There have been additional service pressures due to the implementation of a new IT system, Mosaic. The system went live on 24 January 2022 and this has been labour intense for practitioners. There has also been the highest number of children in care, 463, during the Christmas period, this therefore impacted on placement sufficiency and was a real challenge for the service.

It was questioned whether there has been young people not returning to school after Covid, as has been seen nationally. It was confirmed that attendance is not where it was pre-Covid but this relates to a small number of pupils who have been identified and the service is currently working with. In terms of the largest secondary school in Gateshead, they have confirmed that attendance is just about back to normal. Committee was reassured that schools and practitioners continue to monitor the most vulnerable children.

It was questioned as to the workload for Social Workers. It was confirmed that the service is continuing to adhere to its caseload policy and this is monitored on a weekly basis through meetings with practice leads. It was noted that this was highlighted during the focused visit as something the service works hard on. Additional Social Worker posts have been advertised due to the increased demand, also development of the Social Worker Academy has allowed investment into newly qualified Social Workers.

Budget pressures in relation to placements was raised as an area of concern. It was

noted that all children's Homes are looked at to ensure all beds are utilised and that there is no bed locking in any of the homes. Investment through capital funding has been agreed for an additional two Children's Homes, however there has been issues in terms of finding the appropriate properties to meet the criteria.

It was confirmed that the main factors for children coming into care during Covid was; neglect, domestic violence and mental health.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

F27 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK - SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

Committee received the six month Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF). The Committee was reminded of the background and development of the PMIF.

It was noted that the PMIF links performance to the budget approach, resource allocation is now included to link performance to priorities. It was clarified that the document is live and tries to identify areas of challenge and analysis rather than looking at specific data.

Areas of continuing challenge were identified as; increasing numbers of families requiring support, increased numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals and pressure in terms of recruitment and retention as the lifespan of a Social Worker is only 8 years. There is also pressure in the medium term financial strategy, the increase in demand mean higher costs for external placement as providers are driving the market, this presents a real challenge when trying to make savings.

Areas of excellence were highlighted as the recent successful Focused Visit which highlighted the commitment of the staff within Children's Services. There has also been a reduction in the time of children being in care as well as an increase in the number of early help cases being closed as more families are being offered and accepting family group conferencing.

Actions going forward were identified as; a focus on early intervention, development of an additional two residential homes for children with autism and learning disabilities and a therapeutic home, there is also a focus on developing strategies and the implementation of the AYSE Academy for progression opportunities.

It was acknowledged that there are concerns around employee morale with Occupational Health under increased pressure, work is therefore underway to develop a framework to support employees morale and wellbeing. It was noted that there are recruitment and retention risks across the Council and therefore succession planning is being looked at.

The next steps are to align the PMIF to the new budget approach, further develop the priorities and actions and report the six month performance to Cabinet.

It was questioned what the Youth Justice Divert from Charge referral process is. It

was explained that this is a national programme for those young people on the fringes of offending, they are supported to move away from crime before they have criminal charges. This does not apply to all young people, there is certain criteria and access onto the programme must be agreed by the Police and the Youth Justice Services, this tends to relate to low level behaviour.

The point was made that employees are crucial in delivering services and therefore low staff morale is an inherent weakness. It was questioned whether there is or if there should be a strategy to increase wages at a time when people are struggling and the Council is not paying them enough. It was acknowledged that the recruitment and retention challenges for Social Workers is not to do with pay as Gateshead is very competitive and benchmarks salaries against neighbouring local authorities. It was noted that good Ofsted's are what attracts Social Workers to an organisation opposed to salaries. The point was made that it would be counter productive for one local authority to pay more than other authorities and instead need to act regionally to uplift salaries together. It was also suggested that aside from wages, the support in place for employees needs to be considered.

The point was made that the document is difficult to read electronically and as it was quite dense was not very user friendly. It was noted that this is being looked at for the year end report.

Further information on the PAUSE Programme was requested. It was explained the programme is commissioned for women who have had at least two children removed from their care. Practitioners work with them to break the cycle, through for example employment, learning skills, budgeting and improving their mental health and wellbeing. 27 women have engaged since the start of the programme and there are currently 18 women on the programme. It was reported that none of the women who have completed the programme have gone on to have any further children removed from their care. It was acknowledged that this is a significant cost saving for every child the service does not remove. It was confirmed that only two women dropped out of the programme so far.

The point was made that there is nothing to show the gaps in SEND / EHCPs performance data. It was agreed that this could be looked at further for next time.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the comments of the Committee be noted for areas of further scrutiny.
 - (ii) That the performance be reported to Cabinet for consideration in March 2022.

F28 WORK PROGRAMME

Committee received a report on the work programme for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Committee noted the provisional programme.
 - (ii) That the Committee noted that further reports on the

work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Chair.....

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TITLE OF REPORT: Ofsted Improvement Plan

REPORT OF: Deputy Strategic Director, Children, Adults and Families

SUMMARY

This report and action plan provides Members with an overview and progress update in relation areas identified for improvement from inspection activity by Ofsted, which are supporting our objective to become an outstanding children services provider.

Purpose of Report

1. This report and attached improvement plan (appendix 1) provide Members with an overview and progress update in relation to the areas identified for development from inspection activity by Ofsted, specifically our focussed visit which took place in September 2021, and Short Inspection which took place in April 2019.

Background

2. Children's Services, as part of Ofsted's framework for inspecting local authority children services (ILACS), now receive almost annual inspection activity from Ofsted. The findings of our last two inspections have been overwhelmingly positive in relation to the service we are providing to children and families.
3. In our short inspection in 2019 the service was judged an overall Good, with inspectors concluding:

"Children and families in Gateshead receive a good-quality service. There is good practice within most areas of the service, which has a demonstrably positive impact on improving children and family's circumstances"

(<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50083971> - page 1)
4. In our latest visit in September 2021, Ofsted found we continue to provide a good service, and that had in fact improved since their previous contact, with the report stating:

"Continuously strong, ambitious and effective senior leadership has resulted in sustained improvements. The well respected and experienced director of children's services (DCS), together with her senior team, has created a culture where doing the right thing to help children and their families is embedded across teams"

(<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50171105> - p2)

5. While both inspections were positive about the services we are providing, as a Council we want to be an outstanding Children's Services provider. Both inspections identified a small number of areas where we needed to improve, in order to be judged outstanding next time.
6. We have taken the learning from both inspections and developed the attached action plan (Appendix 1 of this report) which identifies 6 key areas of improvement which the service is currently working on, these are:
 - i. **Improve the quality and focus of written plans to ensure they are specific and targeted to meet the needs of individual children**
 - ii. **Secure access to services for those children in care who live out of the borough**
 - iii. **Improve the quality and impact of supervision and contingency planning for children in need (and ensure consistency for all children)**
 - iv. **Ensure routine inclusion of children and their families' views in audits**
 - v. **Development of contextual safeguarding arrangements**
 - vi. **Further development of domestic abuse provision**
7. For each of the 6 areas of improvement in the action plan, broad improvement themed actions are identified which are supported by detailed operational activities designed to achieve the themed actions. A lead has been identified for each themed action.
8. The Service has already started to implement actions from the plan, and the plan highlights some examples of progress to date. The Services is seeking to complete the actions over the next 12 months.

Recommendations

9. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
 - Receive the report for information
 - Identify any activities they would like more information about
 - Agree to receive a progress update in 6 months

Contact: Jon Gaines, Service Manager QA

Ext 3484

Appendix 1 ILACs – Ofsted Improvement Plan – Feb 2022

Recommendation (REC) / Area for Development (AFD)	Improvement Theme	Service Lead	Other operational Lead	Operational Detailed Actions	Progress update / evidence of impact
REC 1 - Improve the quality and focus of written plans to ensure they are specific and targeted to meet the needs of individual children (to include pathway plans that are co-produced with young people to address all risks, and life-story work to help all children in care understand their histories.)	Establish a social-work led Practice Innovation Group (utilising an action research model) for the theme of ‘Collaborative and Strengths-based planning with children and families. Report to Practice Review Group.	Paige Thomason (Principal Social Worker)	Team Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with consultant social workers and team managers bi-monthly to establish the group and co-op others into the group as required. 	
	Reform templates, guidance, and implementation materials in response to above.	Paige Thomason (Principal Social Worker)	Catherine Hardman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify examples of good practice and develop a practitioner-led group to devise practice guidance which is shared across the service. 	
	Deliver a series of practice shorts based on the above.	Paige Thomason (Principal Social Worker)	Catherine Hardman Chris Hulme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with young people (care leavers/ young ambassadors) to enable co-production and input into any proposed good practice and learning. Devise practice guidance and deliver practice shorts which is informed and co-produced. 	
	Introduce co-production of plans focussing on ambition and risks sessions, so social workers are able to support young people to lead and be inclusive in their plans.	Ben Van Wagtendonk (Practice Leader Looked After and Permanence, Care Leavers, Children with Disabilities) Suzanne Storey (Practice Leader Assessment and Intervention, IRT and Complex CIN)	Catherine Hardman/Clare Cavanagh/Paige Thomason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training presentation to be delivered to all social workers. All plans to be written to children and young people by August-October 2022. 	<p>An abridged version of the training has been delivered to Children Social Care Senior Management Team (SMT).</p> <p>Training of staff to commence on the 7th of March 2022 and run until July 2022.</p> <p>Feedback from young people and children is that they understand these plans, feel included in the process and have a greater knowledge of the concerns shared by their families and professionals.</p>
	Develop life story work tools and processes with children in foster care. Including the introduction of a standard that all CYP in long-term foster care have life story work including later life letters so workers are consistently demonstrating young people understand their life journey and situation.	Ben Van Wagtendonk (Practice Leader Looked After and Permanence, Care Leavers, Children with Disabilities)	Suzy O’Reilly/Paul Kelly/Joshua Barr/Catherine Hardman/Clare Cavanagh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out of our internal model to start from 1st April 2022. Life Story Work (LSW) policy, procedures and quality assurance models to be drafted. Internal model to be agreed at SMT Funding for the model needs to be agreed and secured 	<p>18 month funded project ends 31st of March 2022, and internal model will commence from the 1st April. Life Story Work policy, procedures and quality assurance models have been drafted to support the internal rollout.</p>
	Undertake themed audit on quality of the social work practice in collaborative planning	Paige Thomason (Principal Social Worker)	Ben Van Wagtendonk Suzanne Storey Clare Morris Vikky McKay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop audit schedule /tools that support themed audits. Work with Work Force Development and SMT to ensure that there is a triangulation from the findings from audits which evidence a learning culture. This is shared across the workforce through a range of learning including practice shorts, podcasts, practice guidance. 	

Recommendation (REC) / Area for Development (AFD)	Improvement Theme	Service Lead	Other Operational Lead	Operational Detailed Action	Progress update / evidence of impact
REC 2 - Secure access to services for those children in care who live out of the borough Page 14	Strengthen out of borough placement review panels with partner agencies to support access to services for young people out of borough, ensuring young people have consistent and timely access to all necessary services.	Ben Van Wagtendonk (Practice Leader Looked After and Permanence, Care Leavers, Children with Disabilities)	Joshua Barr/Paul Kelly/Team manager from SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that when a child or young person moves out of borough that the right referrals are made to transfer their care/interventions • Work with health, police, and education colleagues in our borough to make sure they understand their responsibilities for ensuring continuity of interventions and support when a child moves out of borough • As part of placement planning meetings, ask independent providers what their arrangements are for return home interviews when children go missing etc. This needs to be added to current documentation. 	To be in place with partners and internally by the start of May 2022
	Develop initiatives to bring young people back into borough and enhance internal resources and commissioning strategy to mitigate the need for young people to be placed out of borough, and ensure young people have consistent and timely access to all necessary services.	Jill Little / Claire Morris (Practice leader – Fostering, Placements and Residential Resources)	Andi Parker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal residential resources are being increased by a further 2 children’s homes. Properties are currently being sourced and regular meetings are being held to look at potential options. • Fostering recruitment and retention is a priority and a new marketing and recruitment strategy will be developed with an aim to recruit 30 new sets of foster carers every 12 months. • Review foster carer payments and payment for skills to ensure we are competitive within the marketplace • Mockingbird to be implemented (Mockingbird is one of a number of innovative programmes that The Fostering Network runs to improve foster care and outcomes for fostered young people) • Looked After Children Sufficiency strategy to be updated jointly with commissioning Team. 	One property has been identified and internal build costs are currently being drawn up. A Market and recruitment officer working on the marketing and recruitment strategy For Mockingbird Stakeholder analysis has been completed with a 1 st implementation working group planned March 2022. A Liaison worker to be appointed. Enquires to become a foster carer have increased, and there has been an increase in allocations of form F assessments and approvals at the fostering panel.

Recommendation (REC) / Area for Development (AFD)	Improvement Theme	Service Lead	Operational Lead	Operational Detailed Action	Progress update / evidence of impact
REC 3 – Improve the quality and impact of supervision and contingency planning for children in need (and ensure consistency for all children) Page 15	Use of supervisions and management oversight	Ben Van Wagtendonk (Practice Leader Looked After and Permanence, Care Leavers, Children with Disabilities) and Suzanne Storey (Practice Leader Assessment and Intervention, IRT and Complex CIN)	Team Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper to be taken to Children Social Care Senior Management Team (SMT) at the end of April to outline proposed amendments to Supervision processes and models Agreement to implement the proposals to be agreed by SMT 	A Task and finish group is currently working on the paper to develop the proposals. This work is very closely aligned to how we enhance and strengthen our supervisory practice. Moving from a perfunctory reporting of cases to analysis and planning.
	Use of Unit Meetings – recording and structure	Ben Van Wagtendonk (Practice Leader Looked After and Permanence, Care Leavers, Children with Disabilities)	Kate Aspray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the use of Unit meetings which are already taking place within the ASYE academy. Training short to be developed and delivered to all ASYE mentors and CSW's. Timetable for unit meetings will be drawn up with a list of attendees for each service area. Audit of unit meeting records on children's files to take place to understand the impact of their use. 	Questions for staff around unit meetings to be included in the staff survey and the ASYE academy evaluation.
	Practice around visits when children are not seen	Victoria McKay - (Practice Leader – Safeguarding and Care Planning)	Team managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers to review data at regular intervals, including Practice performance clinics, to ensure that visits have taken place and children seen Audits of files will ensure recording of visits completed and visits timely to meet child's needs Visits discussed in supervision. 	Performance data has been developed and in place to support this. Supervision will note visit and quality of visit.
	Practice around Child in Need (CIN) assessment – timeliness of updated assessments	Suzanne Storey (Practice Leader Assessment and Intervention, IRT and Complex CIN)	A and I team managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers to give clear timescales to social workers for assessments to be completed, based on an evaluation of need. Management decision to be recorded on Mosaic for all assessments that are longer than 25 days with clear rationale for extension. 	Data will show that assessments are being completed in a timelier way. Audits will look at quality of assessments and if they are meeting the needs of the family.
	Practice around Child in Need (CiN) long term work, senior leadership oversight – Early Permanence Panels	Andrea Houlahan (Deputy Strategic Director)	Rachel Hough / Danny McCormick / Jon Gaines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The families receiving support via a Child in Need plan will be reviewed within Early Permanence Panel. Develop data measures which will be reviewed in the monthly Early Permanence Panels by managers, service managers and the deputy strategic director, including CIN open for 3/6/12months CIN checkpoints, CIN reviews, Care team meetings and closures. 	This development will Aiming to have this process in place within 2 months. The change in process is intended to ensure Families receive intervention responsive to their needs within a timely way.
	Enhance our supervision with approaches that strengthen practice improvement thorough critical reflection and peer review, embracing principles of 'radical candour'. Support peer development and challenge for Managers through action learning sets	Paige Thomason (Principal Social Worker)	Ben Wagtendonk Suzanne Storey Clare Morris Victoria McKay Catherine Hardman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Social Worker and practice supervisors to meet on a bi-monthly basis to identify areas of good practice to share and develop training / practice shorts that gives supervisors the confidence and the skills to enable a more reflective and purposeful approach to supervision. Develop supervision policy, practice guidance and form which supports peer development. 	

Recommendation (REC) / Area for Development (AFD)	Improvement Theme	Service Lead	Other lead officer (if any)	Operational Detailed Action	Progress update / evidence of impact
REC 4 – Ensure routine inclusion of children and their families’ views in audits	Audit programme – moderations, inclusion of parents, carers, young people, training for staff who complete auditing	Paige Thomason (Principal Social Worker)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current Quality Assurance Framework /schedule and ensure that there is a work plan of activity for the next 12 months which includes direct observations of practice and feedback from families. Review current audits, practice week to ensure that they align with the work plan from the framework. Work with Work Force Development and SMT to ensure that there is a triangulation from the findings from audits which evidence a learning culture. This is shared across the workforce through a range of learning including practice shorts, podcasts, practice guidance and evidence that family feedback is inclusive in learning. 	

Recommendation (REC) / Area for Development (AFD)	Improvement Theme	Service Lead	Other lead officer (if any)	Operational Detailed Action	Progress update / evidence of impact
AFD 1 - Development of contextual safeguarding arrangements	Redesign the contextual safeguarding role/remit	Ben Van Wagtendonk (Practice Leader Looked After and Permanence, Care Leavers, Children with Disabilities) Linda Whitehead (Service Manager – Specialist Support Services, Family Group Conference Service, Domestic Abuse Team)	Suzanne Storey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) worker post will be incorporated into the contextual safeguarding team The current CSE worker will spend 2-3 weeks handing over resources and process to the team. Dedicated Return Home Support Worker (RHSW) in place to engage with and undertake return home interviews with all young people reported missing. Development of specialist Young People’s DA Worker (YPVA) to support young people experiencing abuse in their own relationships. RHSW & YPVA to develop close working relationships with Contextual Safeguarding Team Mapping of CSE – disruption planning, evidence on children’s files 	<p>RHSW in place from September 21. Implementation planned for other actions from April 2022.</p> <p>Meeting planned to agree clear working practices between Specialist Support Team and Contextual Safeguarding Team.</p> <p>From the 28th of February Improvement in RHI engagement rates (65% Jan 2022) and quality of interventions. Intelligence shared with police and Gateshead Safeguarding Partnership.</p>
	Redesign the CCIN/Edge of Care/Contextual Safeguarding team	Suzanne Storey (Practice Leader Assessment and Intervention, IRT and Complex CIN)	Deb Lorraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers to become exploitation champions and offer consultations across the service. Edge of Care (EOC) Intervention offer reviewed to ensure it supports families in crisis and young people at risk of requiring care. 12 week intervention programme devised to support young people at the edge of care. 	Feedback from families will demonstrate that they have been supported in a time of crisis and change has occurred.

Recommendation (REC) / Area for	Improvement Theme	Service Lead	Other lead officer (if any)	Operational Detailed Action	Progress update / evidence of impact
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Development (AFD)					
AFD 2 – Further development of domestic abuse provision	Develop the offer for referrals to DAT for children living with domestic abuse	Linda Whitehead (Service Manager – Specialist Support Services, Family Group Conference Service, Domestic Abuse Team)	Bev Coombes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated children’s Domestic Abuse (DA) Worker to provide specialist support to children affected by DA in their home and/or family environment. • Development of specialist Young People’s DA Worker (YPVA) to support young people experiencing abuse in their own relationships. • YPVA role to offer training and support to foster carers and Children’s Home Staff. • YPVA role to provide training vis practice shorts for wider workforce. 	<p>Expansion of the dedicated children’s DA resource dependant on DA Grant</p> <p>Planning underway, implementation planned April 2022.</p>

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TITLE OF REPORT: **How Gateshead is meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

REPORT OF: **Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Children, Adults and Families**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update regarding the progress being made in relation to ensuring the needs of children and young people with SEND are being met.

POLICY CONTEXT

1. The Council has statutory duties to promote high educational standards, ensure fair access, promote diversity and ensure education is appropriate to meet the different age aptitudes and abilities of pupils in its area and make efficient use of its resources.
2. The Children and Families Act and the guidance in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 placed a number of statutory duties on local authorities in relation to the identification, assessment and provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) for whom it is responsible.

Background

3. In 2014, the Children and Families Act introduced the biggest reforms for 30 years as to how children and young people with SEND receive support to ensure their needs are met. The reforms replaced statements with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans), which incorporates not only the child's educational needs but any health and social care needs. The eligible age range for an EHCP was extended to 0-25 years.
4. The 2014 SEND Code of Practice also introduced the following changes from the 2001 Code of Practice:
 - A clearer focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision-making at individual and strategic levels
 - A stronger focus on aspirations and improving outcomes for children and young people
 - Guidance on the joint planning and commissioning of services to ensure close co-operation between education, health and social care

- Guidance on publishing a Local Offer of support for children and young people with SEND
- Guidance for education and training settings on taking a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils with SEN (replacing School Action and School Action Plus with SEN Support
- For children and young people with more complex needs a co-ordinated assessment process and the new 0-25 Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) replacing statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs)
- A greater focus on support that enables those with SEND to succeed in their education and make a successful transition to adulthood
- Information provided on relevant duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Information provided on relevant provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- New guidance on supporting children and young people with SEND who are in youth custody.

SUMMARY

Increasing numbers of children and young people with EHC Plans

5. The SEND reforms have created an overall increase in in the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans locally, regionally and nationally.
6. In Gateshead, there has been a 46% increase in the number of children and young people with an EHC Plan since 2015. This is in line with regional, North East and National figures.

	Gateshead	Sunderland	Newcastle	North East	England
2015	842	1135	916	11,811	240,183
2016	982	1265	1059	12,817	256,315
2017	1108	1283	1292	14,518	287,290
2018	1374	1361	1370	15,945	319,819
2019	1231	1588	1490	17,294	353,995
2020	1299	1701	1701	18,812	390,100
2021	1393	1901	1884	20,295	430,697

Data source: SEN2

7. In 2021, 3.9% of the total 0-25 year population in Gateshead had an EHC Plan, compared with 3.6% in Sunderland, 3.5% in Newcastle, 3.8% in the North East and 3.7% in England (ONS mid-year 2018 population estimates).
8. During the calendar year 2020, 26.7% of initial requests for an EHC Plan in Gateshead were refused. This is lower than some regional neighbours: Durham (34.1%) and Sunderland (35.2%), but the North East (35.1%) but slightly higher than the England (21.6%)

SEN Support in mainstream schools

9. A number of pupils receive support in their mainstream school using the school's own resources (notional budget of £6,000). This is known as 'SEN Support' and means the child does not require an EHCP because their needs can be met by the school. Children and young people with an EHCP taught in a mainstream school receive additional funding from the High Needs Block to meet their needs.
10. The number of school-age pupils at SEN Support has increased slightly from to 3,471 in January 2019 to 4478 in October 2021, which equates to 16.5% of all pupils in Gateshead.
11. Guidance has been prepared for Gateshead settings which is designed to provide clarity on what early years providers and settings and mainstream schools should be doing to provide a graduated response (Assess, Plan, Do and Review) to all pupils as a universal entitlement and to pupils and SEN Support across the four main SEND areas of need. This has also been published on the Local Offer site so that it is available for parents.

Greatest areas of need

12. The greatest areas of need in Gateshead amongst school-aged children and young people at both SEN Support and those with an EHCP are:
 - Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
 - Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
 - Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

Data source: School Census

13. The greatest areas of need amongst Gateshead children and young people with an EHCP are:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – 15%
 - Moderate learning difficulties (MLD) – 22%
 - Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) – 20%
 - Speech and Language Communication Needs (SLCN) – 25%

Specialist provision

14. Normally only children and young people with an EHCP can access a special school placement, unless a statutory needs assessment is being undertaken.

15. There are 6 special schools/academies in Gateshead catering for children with different types of needs:

School	Type of provision	Age range
Eslington primary school	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Difficulties	Early years, KS1 and KS2
Furrowfield School	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Difficulties	KS3 and KS4
Gibside School	Learning Difficulties including Autism	Early Years, KS1 and KS2
The Cedars Academy	Physical Disabilities and /or speech and language/communication difficulties	Early years, KS1-KS4 and post-16
Dryden School	Severe and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	KS3-4 and post-16
Hill Top School	Moderate Learning Difficulties including Autism	KS3-4 and post-16

16. The number of school-age pupils being taught in special schools in Gateshead has risen from 492 in 2015 to 707 in 2021. Gateshead currently has the highest proportion of school age pupils being taught in special schools as a percentage of EHCPs (50.8%) compared with regional (44.7%) and national figures (35.7%).

17. The majority of Gateshead's special schools are currently full. There has been an increase since the reforms in the number of referrals from mainstream schools for EHCP needs assessment being received. This has resulted in increased numbers of children receiving an EHCP, an increase in spend from the high needs block and an increase in the number of children being placed in a special school setting.

18. Parents or young people with SEND have a legal right to request a particular school to be named in their EHC plan and the Council can only refuse the request under 3 conditions:

- The setting is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child/young person;
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others; or
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

19. Parents have a legal right to appeal to the SEND Tribunal (SENDIST) if they disagree with the Council's decision about the named school.

Additionally Resourced Mainstream Provision (ARMS)

20. Gateshead currently commissions five primary and two secondary schools to provide 65 additionally resourced mainstream provision places annually for pupils who have an EHCP and require additional specialist support, but who benefit from accessing a mainstream setting for their social and emotional development. We have been reviewing the ARMS provision and are hoping to open 3 new provisions

in September 2022 for children with social communication/ autism needs. A new arrangement has also been made with Kells Lane Primary and Gibside Schools which provides an additional 10 places to meet demand.

Autism / Social Communication

21. In response to growing numbers of children with social communication/ autism needs we are looking to expand the additionally resourced mainstream provision within the primary school sector. Gibside have formed a partnership with Kells Lane Primary School to offer a further 10 places from March 2022. Discussions are also on-going with a further three primary schools to offer new provision from September 2022 which will offer a further 24 places.

Post 16 and Preparing for Adulthood

22. Section 8 of the SEND Code of Practice states:

‘Professionals across education (including early years, schools, colleges and 16-19 academies), health and social care should support children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities to prepare for adult life and help them go on to achieve the best outcomes in employment, independent living, health and community participation.

Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for children and young people with SEND. This support needs to start early and should centre around the child or young person’s own aspirations, interests and needs. All professionals working with them should share high aspirations and have a good understanding of what support is effective in enabling children and young people to achieve their ambitions’.

23. The SEN Team has requested that schools and settings amend Section B of the young person’s Education, Health and Care Plan from Year 9 onwards to include the four Preparing for Adulthood headings, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice:

- Higher education and/or employment
- Independent Living
- Friends, Relationships and Community
- Being Healthy

24. This is to ensure that the EHCP outcomes focus on how the young person can be supported towards greater independence and/or employability as early as possible, not only at the point they leave school.

25. In addition, the Council has worked with the Post 16 Pathways group, which has representation from all Gateshead Post-16 providers, to develop clear and transparent information about the learning pathways available to learners with SEND when they leave Year 11. This information can be found on the Preparing for Adulthood page in Gateshead’s Local Offer:

SEND Service

26. Due to the increase in the number of new needs assessments and overall number of EHCPs the staffing establishment in the SEND Service has been reviewed to provide 4.4 fte additional posts into the Service. The main impact of this has been to ensure a timely response to making amendments to EHCPs following annual reviews and also to ensure that the 20 week timescale for completion of EHCPs is achieved. The response times for annual reviews will become a new statutory performance indicator from January 2023. The Team is currently fully staffed.
27. The Quality Assurance and Monitoring Manager within the Team has also been working with an Inspector to re-launch the Gateshead SENCO Network. A Digital SENCO Handbook has been created with key guidance and information. This will evolve continuously with inclusion is at the heart of every section. SEND Training and Development across Education, Health and Social Care has been collated to identify key gaps. Training and Development Consultation sent to all school leads and SENCOs, which has further developed areas of focus.
28. A section on the Local Offer for SENCOs is under development based on feedback currently being collated. This will ensure that all information is in one place. Cluster Meetings for SENCOs are being arranged which will offer opportunities for shared discussion and support and SEN surgeries/ consultations together with a new Inbox for SENCOs to enable prompt response to enquiries and assist with signposting/ advice.

Parent/ Carer Forum

29. Gateshead's Parent Carer Forum has been re-established and is now supporting all strategic developments across the SEND System. They are represented on all of the main strategic groups and meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss any areas of concern.

SEND Youth Forum

30. The SEND Youth Forum has been relaunched in December 2020 with 7 members meeting regularly. There is an on-going recruitment for local young with additional needs as well as those with a genuine interest in improving SEND provisions. 4 members of the Gateshead SEND Youth Forum joined the national 'Youth Voice Matters' SEND Children and Young People's Conference on February 23rd. Aimed at promoting participation and enhancing the 'youth Voice'
31. To gain understanding around our ability to engage SEND young people and facilitate their participation and co-production, the Making Participation Work team at the Council for Disabled children were contacted and they provided us with audit tool to test out system, approaches and delivery.
32. Whilst some areas came out very strongly, others required improvement which has led to commit to genuinely co-producing a SEND participation strategy with the Youth forum and PCF.

SEND Newsletter

33. There is now a regular SEND Newsletter which is circulated to a range of stakeholders with the aim of providing an update across education, health and care. The newsletters are also published on the Local Offer website (the last publication is attached).

SEND Board

34. Since the last OSC Report, the SEND Board has been established which includes leaders across the Gateshead System to oversee strategic developments in the area of SEND.

NEXT STEPS

- Implement the expected recommendations of the Green Paper
- Review readiness for the next LA SEND Inspection pending the publication of the new framework which is expected by April 2022.
- Review Secondary ARMS provision during 2022-23
- Step up the monitoring role to reduce further increase in requests for top-ups
- Continue to support the engagement of parents/ carers and children and young people in strategic SEND Developments

RECOMMENDATION

35. It is recommended that the Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the update report on how the Council is meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and agree to the Next Steps.

CONTACT: Deborah Mason, Service Manager
SEND Service
X3575

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Hello!

Welcome to the Gateshead SEND Network Newsletter. As we reflect upon another busy year, we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Gateshead Council's SEND team strives to continually improve the services available to children, young people, and families of those with additional needs. For more information go to www.gateshead-localoffer.org, follow the Gateshead SEND Local Offer [Facebook page](#) or visit the Gateshead Local Offer [YouTube channel](#).

An easy read version of this newsletter can be found here: [Issue-5-Easy-Read.pdf](#)

Amy's Journey to Employment

Hi, my name is Amy. I have cerebral palsy and ADHD. I'm 23 years old.

I work in an office doing data entry for 25 hours a week. My job is a 6-month contract with Kickstart which is a government scheme to help get young people in to work. It's a good job.

When I was younger I didn't even know unemployment existed, really until I was at secondary school age.

When I was a kid I thought I was going to leave school at 18 and get a job the next day.

It has been a lot harder for me to get a job; for one my disability is clearly visible – there's no denying it and people don't necessarily understand disability.



I'm happy to have any job. Working in an office I'm like everyone else. I don't have any barriers because I'm sat down on a chair just like everybody else.

Ideally, I think employers should be actively employing disabled people. There are enormous benefits to employing a disabled person. Firstly, they appreciate the job a whole lot more. They appreciate how hard it is to get a job and they appreciate part time hours. They appreciate the fact

they've got a job, appreciate the fact that they are in a position of privilege because they probably have lots of friends without a job. They will appreciate that job, put one hundred percent into it, and they won't slack.

For more information on how you can start your journey to employment, contact Gateshead's Careers Information, Advice and Guidance team www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/3668/Careers-Information-Advice-and-Guidance-IGAG. To watch the Journey to Employment film featuring Amy, visit [Supported Employment Film - Gateshead Local Offer SEND](#).

Gateshead SEND Youth Forum

Gateshead SEND Youth Forum is a group for local children and young people with additional needs. The Forum meets regularly on a virtual basis aiming to ensure that their voice, opinions and experiences are at the heart of the development of local services.

Members of the Forum have an interest in improving the lives of local young people with additional needs and meet to discuss the challenges they face. Previous meetings have discussed accessibility and inclusion issues in Gateshead, education and

transition for young people with SEND. The group is currently working closely with the National Council for Disabled Children and their young person's advisory group FLARE in order to promote their message further.

*"I'm really interested in this,"
says one group member.*

*"I think that this is a good project which
can help lots of people."*



The Forum is always looking to recruit new members and more information on how to join can be found on Gateshead's Local Offer website:

[Gateshead SEND Young People's Forum - Gateshead Local Offer](#)

Accessible minutes from previous meetings are also available:

[Gateshead SEND Youth Forum Accessible Minutes - Gateshead Local Offer](#)

For more information, please contact AlexThompson@Gateshead.Gov.UK

Looking After Your Child's Respiratory Health This Winter

RSV: Respiratory Syncytial Virus

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild cold like symptoms but RSV can be serious, especially for infants and older adults. RSV is the most common cause of Bronchiolitis, which is a viral infection that affects babies and young children during the winter months. It causes inflammation of the smallest areas in the lungs and pneumonia, an infection of the lungs, in children younger than one.

Bronchiolitis

It starts with a "cold" and a cough and sometimes a fever. After a few days the cough may become worse and some children can have difficulty breathing it may become noisier, faster, and more of an effort. If this happens, they may also struggle to feed. Please see the traffic light table for when to seek help. If your child is in distress or discomfort, you may wish to give either paracetamol or ibuprofen as instructed on the leaflet. Usually, Bronchiolitis only causes MILD symptoms, and most children will get better on their own after about 5 days. The cough may stay for a few weeks but usually they will be happy and well. Antibiotics don't help. Children can return to nursery or day care as soon as they are well enough.

TOP TIP



Make sure your child is not exposed to tobacco smoke: this makes breathing problems in children worse. If you would like to Stop Smoking contact your GP surgery or 0800 022 432 (www.smokefree.nhs.uk)

Traffic light table

- Use the traffic light table below to help you decide if you need to ask for medical advice or review.

If your child has features in this **GREEN** column and none in the amber or red, they are at low risk of serious illness.



FEATURES

- Breathing normally.

If your child develops any features shown in this **AMBER** section, a doctor should see them within 2 hours. **Contact your GP for an urgent same day appointment or 111 if your surgery is closed.**



FEATURES

- Breathing faster than normal.
- Flaring of their nostrils.
- Mild pulling in of muscles between and under ribs.

If your child develops any of the features shown in this **RED** column, you should seek medical help immediately, via 111 or A&E.



FEATURES

- Very fast breathing, (a breath per second).
- Strong pulling in of muscles between and under ribs.
- Bobbing of head with breaths.
- Abnormal noises/grunting.

If you have any questions related to any of the above health information, please email Newcastle Gateshead CCG at ngccg.cypfgh@nhs.net

The NHS Little Orange Book contains advice and tips on how to manage common illnesses and problems that babies and young children often experience in the first 5 years of their lives. Click here for more information: <https://newcastlegatesheadccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2020/08/Little-Orange-Book.pdf>



Growing Healthy Gateshead 0-19 Service

The Growing Healthy Gateshead 0-19 service is an integrated service for families, expectant mothers, children and young people that offers interventions from the pre-natal stage up to the age of 19. Their role is to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of children and their families. As well as health visiting and school nursing teams, the service also includes a SEND team which works closely with parents and schools. They provide specialist support in areas



such as toileting, eating, sleeping and behaviour. They promote healthy lifestyles and offer health assessments to children, young people and their families. The team offer the same service to all children and young people whatever their needs and will adapt the way in which they support to best suit individual needs.

For more information email spoc.hdftgateshead@nhs.net, phone 03000 031 918 or visit their Facebook page www.facebook.com/GrowingHealthyGateshead

Useful Information:

Gateshead Parent Carer Forum have organised a family Christmas event at Dunston Activity Centre on Saturday 18th December, 10:00-12:00. There will be food, inflatables, softplay, a bubbleologist and a special visit from Santa. **For further information on booking please contact** info@gatesheadparentcarerforum.co.uk

Young Minds are a mental health charity for children, young people and their parents, aiming to make sure all young people can get the mental health support they require. Visit <https://youngminds.org.uk> for more details.

Annual health checks are for adults and young people aged 14 or over with a learning disability. People with a learning disability often have poorer physical and mental health than other people. This does not need to be the case. An annual health check helps you stay well by talking about your health and finding any problems early, so you get the right care. **Contact your GP to make an appointment.**

The **National Autism Strategy for CYP and adults (2021 - 2026)** was recently published by the government alongside the **Implementation Plan**. This strategy is the government's refreshed national strategy for improving the lives of autistic people and their families and carers in England. It extends the scope of the strategy to children and young people for the first time, in recognition of the importance of ensuring that they are diagnosed and receive the right support as early as possible and across their lifetime.

Contact us: Special Educational Needs and Disability Team, Gateshead Council.
senteam@gateshead.gov.uk 0191 433 3626 [Follow us on Facebook](#)



We value your feedback and to help us improve our newsletter we have created a short survey which you can access by [clicking here](#).

TITLE OF REPORT: Permanent Exclusions

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director – Children, Adults and Families

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on permanent exclusions in Gateshead and to broadly outline the work that continues in relation to this in Gateshead Education Support to Schools Service.

Background

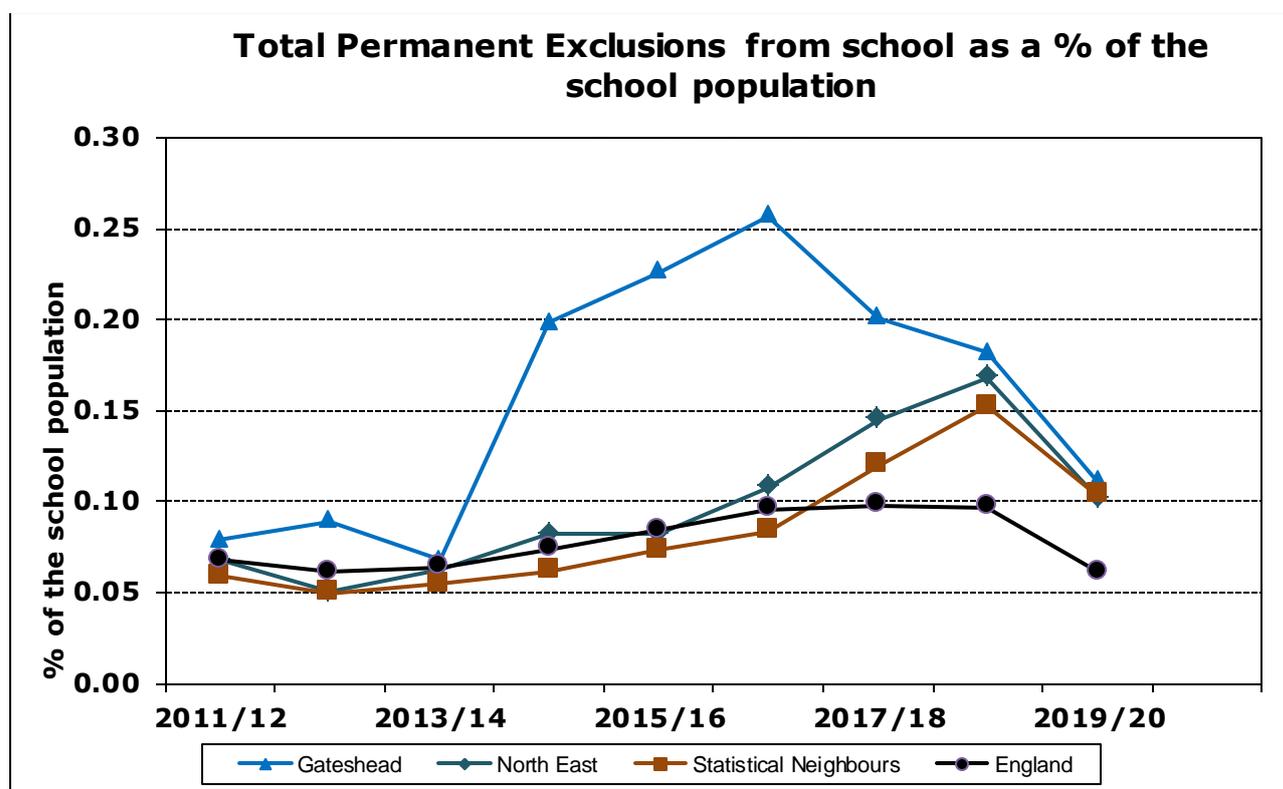
2. The consequences of being permanently excluded from school are extremely serious. The 2012 report by the Office of the Children's Commissioner on illegal exclusions '*Always someone else's problem*' states that unless high quality support is put into place for excluded children, their life chances are likely to be substantially affected in both the short and longer term. In the case of 'illegal' exclusions children are also less likely to receive the support they need in order to achieve to their abilities. There are also potential safeguarding issues, especially with older children whose parents may think they are in school so there is no adult looking after them. Therefore, as educators, there is a need following a permanent exclusion, to ensure that the child is given access to high quality appropriate educational provision and support from other services, if needed, to continue with and/or reengage with their education and learning.
3. Schools have the right to permanently exclude a pupil on disciplinary grounds. Pupils can be suspended for one or more periods (up to a maximum of 45 days in a single school year and if exceeded a pupil is automatically permanently excluded) or permanently. In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a suspension may be extended or converted to a permanent exclusion.
4. The DfE report statistical release July 2021 (Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions in England 2019 to 2020) states that, overall, both the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions and the rate of suspensions and permanent exclusions have decreased from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020.

- Nationally the proportion of children and young people being excluded is decreasing. Although it should be noted that both in Secondary and Primary schools the number of permanent exclusions in autumn term 2019/2020 rose in comparison to the same period in autumn term 2018/2019.

Information

- Table 1** highlights the % of the school population permanently excluded in Gateshead. Gateshead has seen a significant downward trend in permanent exclusions and is in line with the north-east region and our statistical neighbours.

Table 1



- Gateshead has 10 secondary schools; 9 secondary school Academies (1 of which has converted from a City Technology College) and another is a new Academy (XP) opened in academic year 2021/2022. Two Secondary schools are Roman Catholic Academies and one secondary school is maintained. It also has 1 alternative provision (AP) Academy for key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils and 1 secondary SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) special school.
- Table 2** shows the number of upheld secondary permanent exclusions in Gateshead by school since 2016/2017 academic year to the end of the 2020/2021 academic year. Historically, there was a significant rise in secondary permanent exclusions in 2016/17. Data shows that from 2016/2017

until the end of academic year 2020/2021 there is a fluctuating number of permanent exclusions but, overall, a downward trend.

Table 2

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Thorp Academy	7	2	2	1	1
Emmanuel College (City Technical College)	1	3	5	2	4
Heworth Academy	8	6	10	2	7
Joseph Swan	11	6	12		
Grace College (Academy)				6	7
Kingsmeadow	7	7	5	6	7
Lord Lawson Academy	9	8	11	7	6
Cardinal Hume Academy (Previously Edmund Campion)	8	6	5	3	5
St Thomas More Academy	4	4	4	2	1
Thomas Hepburn	14	6	3	0	
Whickham Academy	8	8	6	6	3
Furrowfield	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
River Tyne Academy (Previously PRU)	1	1	2	Nil	Nil
Out of Area (OOA)	2	0	4	3	1
Total	80	57	69	38	42

Table 3 shows that permanent exclusions by term since 2016/2017 academic year until 2020/2021 academic year. Historically autumn term has the largest number of permanent exclusions issued in Gateshead. This reflects the national trend.

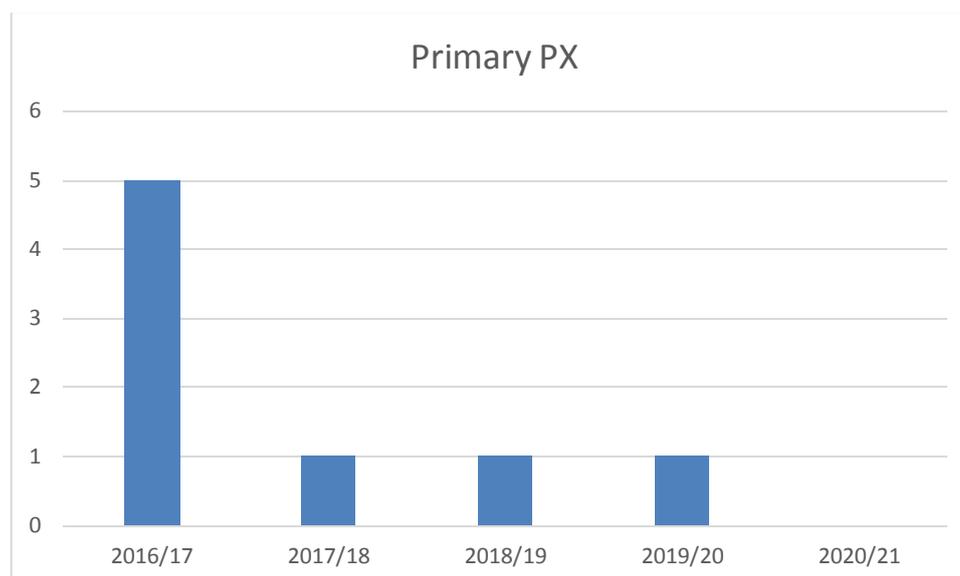
Table 3

Academic Year	Permanent Exclusions (Total)	Permanent Exclusion (Secondary/Primary)	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
2016/17	85	80/5	34	19	32
2017/18	58	57/1	29	15	14
2018/19	70	69/1	36	21	13
2019/20	38	37/1	25	13	0
2020/21	42	42/0	19	8	15

9. Gateshead has 68 primary schools. 15 of these schools are Academy schools, 3 infant and 3 junior schools and 1 nursery. Gateshead also has one primary special school for pupils identified with SEMH (social, emotional and mental health).

10. **Table 4** shows a breakdown of primary permanent exclusions since the 2016/2017 academic year to 2020/2021 academic year.

Table 4



Reasons for permanent exclusions

11. **Table 5** shows a breakdown of permanent exclusions by reason in 2020/2021 academic year. The highest number of permanent exclusions being issued were due to persistent disruptive behaviour. This is in line with national trend.

Table 5

Reason	Number
Physical assault (pupil)	3
Physical assault (adult)	1
Verbal abuse (pupil)	0
Verbal abuse (adult)	0
Bullying	0
Racist incident	0
Sexual misconduct	1
Drug/alcohol	2
Damage	0
Theft	0
Persistent disruptive behaviour	27
Inappropriate use of social media	1
Other	6 (knife) 1 (alarm)

Exclusions by characteristics

12. Boys represent the highest number of permanent exclusions in Gateshead in 2020/2021 academic year. Boys are one and a half times more likely to be permanently excluded than girls in Gateshead.

Action Plan

13. Permanent exclusions continue to remain a focus in Gateshead. See updated Education Support to Schools action plan (**Appendix 1**).

Recommendations

14. OSC are asked to:

- Receive this report for information and discussion.

Appendix 1

Permanent Exclusions Action Plan 2021/2022

Action	Lead	Completion Date	Milestones	Progress	RAG
<p>1. Examine options to better support young people fragile to permanent exclusion via commissioned places at River Tyne Academy.</p>	<p>Julie McDowell</p>	<p>July 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit current provision offer • Explore options that River Tyne could provide to support young people fragile to permanent exclusion. 	<p>JMc has met with RTA and discussed commissioned agreement and identified gaps in commissioned offer.</p> <p>Education Exclusion Panel have met to discuss how further support can be offered to young people who may be fragile to permanent exclusion and mechanisms for that support. This has been agreed at Education Inclusion Panel and Fair Access.</p> <p>Secondary Fair</p>	<p style="background-color: yellow;"></p>

				Access protocols have been strengthened with regards to managed moves under the behaviour category.	
2. Development of additional good quality Alternative Provision capacity in Gateshead.	Julie McDowell	July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise with Gateshead Secondary Leaders Group. • Explore funding implications, organisational structure and operating costs • Explore premises-if needed • Seek political approval/support 	<p>JMc identified x3 potential AP providers. All presented to Gateshead Secondary Leaders Group.</p> <p>JMc discussed potential premises for AP providers with ZS.</p> <p>JMc is now part of the Gateshead Secondary Leaders sub-committee on behaviour.</p>	

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TITLE OF REPORT: Overview of Performance and Activity of the Adopt North East Regional Adoption Agency 2020/21

REPORT OF: Deputy Strategic Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Performance and Activity of Adopt Northeast in relation to Gateshead children.

Introduction

1. This Overview Report provides a summary of developments for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the second full operational year of Adopt North East Regional Adoption Agency.

Background

2. Adopt North East is a shared service arrangement between Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and South Tyneside Council. The partnership was created in response to a legal requirement established by the Education and Adoption Act 2016 that Local Authorities cease local provision of adoption services and instead share delivery on a regional basis.

3. In the Summer of 2018, the respective Cabinets of all five partner Local Authorities agreed to the formation of Adopt North East as a single Adoption Agency which would operate across the geographical area of the partners and delegated the statutory adoption functions of each Local Authority to it.

4. On 1 December 2018, Adopt North East became operational, working to the vision and ambition established by the five partners to achieve '*excellent adoption services that transform children's and families lives for the better*'.

5. As a consequence of regionalisation, since December 2018 Adopt North East has had responsibility for recruiting, assessing, and supporting prospective adopters, for non-Adopt agency work and intercountry adoptions and primary

responsibility for family finding for all children with adoption plans from the five partner Local Authorities.

6. Additionally, Adopt North East is responsible for providing support to all parties affected by adoption, including adopters, adoptive families, adopted adults and birth relatives.

Overview of Performance

7. As we know, 2020/2021 was dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic which impacted all work aspects of the Adopt North East. As the Adopt North East provides services for children, adoptive families and those affected by adoption required by law, these could not be suspended.

8. Adopt North East therefore had to innovate, often at pace, and do things differently. By far the most fundamental change to services during the year, particularly in the first few months of the pandemic, was the transition from face-to-face assessment and support to alternative delivery methods, principally a move online. Whilst undoubtedly challenging, Adopt North East can report considerable success in doing so.

9. An example would be the continued operation of its Adoption Panel, without which children in the care of its partner Local Authorities would be unable to move children onto permanency with their forever families. Within days of the lockdown, Adopt North East moved to a virtual Panel and continued to ensure that timely decisions for children were made, and families found.

10. At the same time, support for adoptive families experiencing difficulties continued, with assessments of need progressing virtually to avoid delay and ensuring that families were able to access therapeutic support.

11. Despite the challenges presented by Covid, the staff group have been determined to ensure that high quality adoption services have continued to be delivered - albeit differently – and the performance management information for the year evidence that Adopt North East has not only maintaining services but in fact significantly exceeding the performance achieved in the previous year.

12. During its second full year of operation, between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, Adopt North East has on behalf of its five partner Local Authorities:

- Matched **142** children, up from 100 in 2019/20, a **42% increase**
- Placed **137** children, up from 104 in 2019/20, a **32% increase**
- Supported **106** children to be adopted, up from 81 in 2019/20, a **31% increase**
- **Tripled** the use of Early Permanence Placements, from 5 in 2019/20 to **15**

- Commenced **132** prospective adoptive families at Stage 1 of the process, up from 98 in 2019/20, a **35% increase**
- Completed Stage 1 for **135** prospective adopters, up from 86 in 2019/20, a **57% increase**
- Commenced **133** prospective adoptive families at Stage 2, up from 100 in 2019/20, an **33% increase**
- Approved **106** adopters, up from 88 in 2019/20, a **20% increase**
- **Matched 121** adoptive families with children, up from 112 in 2019/20, an **8% increase**
- Supported **545** families with post-adoption support, up from 488, a **12% increase**
- **Tripled** the amount of pre-Adoption Order adoption support to families
- Supported **681** children with post adoption indirect contact (Post Box)
- Supported **107** birth families affected by adoption

The Potential of Regionalisation

13. The 2019/2020 Annual Report concluded that 'the development of Adopt North East into an established, effective and transformative adoption agency is far from complete'. Despite strong performance, this Overview Report repeats this assertion.

14. The first year of operation was very much about the formation of Adopt North East as a provider of adoption services, then its second year has been very much about consolidation, Covid-19 notwithstanding.

15. Adopt North East has particularly benefitted from securing a full, permanent staff team, ending its use of agency Social Workers and carrying no vacancies. It has also focused on the development and refinement of its operating model, underpinned by clear policies and procedures and the establishment of a robust performance management framework.

16. Whilst Adopt North East has not yet fully realised the potential that regionalisation of services presents, there are genuine signs that it will do so, evidenced for example by increased use of Early Permanence Placements, the hosting of Activity Days to find families for children who have additional complexity, the effective commissioning of over £1.2 million of nationally funded therapeutic support for adoptive families, the strength of its Panel, the tenaciousness of its Family Finding, the recruitment of a diversity of adopters and an increasing reputation as an adoption agency of choice for prospective adopters in the North East.

Areas for Development

17. There are undoubted areas for development for the partnership. Adopt North East has not yet achieved sufficiency of adopters for the children referred to it, evidenced by the continued use of inter-agency placements for some children. As each of these placements incurs a nationally agreed fee which is paid by the child's Local Authority to the adopters' agency, the use of adopters represents a financial challenge to the partnership.

18. Accordingly, it is a strategic priority of Adopt North East to become sufficient. Work by the RAA National Leaders Group suggests an average reported sufficiency nationally of 69%, whilst of the three established Regional Adoption Agencies within the North East, Adopt North East is the highest performing at 73% (Adopt Tees Valley 63% and Adopt Coast to Coast at 56%).

19. To better inform the partnership about the challenges to sufficiency, an analysis of each of the 37 children placed in inter-agency placements was undertaken by the Operational Leadership Group of Adopt North East. This has led to a number of actions that will be implemented to improve sufficiency.

20. Another significant area of development is that Adopt North East is not yet as strong a learning organisation as it will need to be to deliver excellence, for example, learning from Disruptions – the premature end of a child's adoptive placement – has not been collated and disseminated in a systematic way.

21. Likewise, Adopt North East has not fully obtained and utilised feedback from those it serves to improve or consult with service users on its future design and delivery. It is perhaps this latter area of development – the need for Adopt North East to become a more effective learning organisation – that provides the roadmap for the third year of operation. Following formation and consolidation, Adopt North East will now very much turn to strengthening its quality of practice.

Celebrating Progress

22. Finally, it is often difficult to summarise in a brief report an entire year let alone communicate the difference Adopt North East makes to those with whom we work. However, an adoptive couple kindly decided to summarise their reflections in writing and these reflections perhaps best illustrate the progress made by Adopt North East :-

We both cannot express our gratitude and thanks enough to every single person of Adopt North East who we have been fortunate to come in to contact with. We only have admiration and praise for them all. Their professional manner – nothing was and still is never a problem. They have always communicated efficiently. They have shown empathy alongside good humour as suited to the occasion. How they do what they do is totally beyond me, but we are very thankful they do as without them our adoption experience would not

have been as good. You have a wonderful team of dedicated professionals. Thank you.

Recommendations

23. OSC is asked to note the contents of the report.

Contact: Andrea Houlahan

Extension: 2782

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TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Work Programme

REPORT OF: Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive
Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2021/22.

1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 17 June 2021 and Councillors have agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes / additions to this programme.
2. Appendix 1 sets out the work programme as it currently stands. Any changes proposed to the programme will be set out in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to
 - a) Note the provisional programme;
 - b) Note that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

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Draft Families OSC Work Programme 2021-22	
17 June 2021 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Performance Framework – Update • Covid-19 Updates • Free School Meals Update • New Corporate Parenting Board/Partnership/OSC arrangements • Foetal Alcohol Syndrome – Update • Work Programme
9 September 2021 1.30pm	MEETING CANCELLED
21 October 2021 5.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 Updates • Children and Young People who are Home Schooled or Not in Education • Corporate Parenting Board Update • Work Programme
2 December 2021 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parenting Board Update • Ofsted Visit Outcome
3 February 2022 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Performance Framework - Update • Covid-19 Update • Children and Young People's access to Dental Health Services in Gateshead – Update • Corporate Parenting Board Update • Work Programme
10 March 2022 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Exclusions Update • EHCP/SEND Update • <i>Update from Regional Adoption Agency</i> • <i>Ofsted Improvement Plan</i>
28 April 2022 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAS/FASD – Update on NICE Guidance <u>TBC</u> • New Performance Framework – Update (<i>moved to June 2022</i>) • Covid-19 Updates (<i>to include impact of Covid on new mothers and babies</i>) • Corporate Parenting Board Update • Work Programme

Issues to Slot In –

- Results of Covid 19 Survey
- Poverty Proofing Schools / affordability of school uniforms
- Outreach Youth Work – targeted and universal

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