

TITLE OF REPORT: **Substance Misuse in Young People**

REPORT OF: **Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health**

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to give the Committee an overview of substance misuse in young people in Gateshead. The report will cover the following:

- Context re young people's substance misuse in Gateshead (data)
 - Young people's substance misuse treatment service provision
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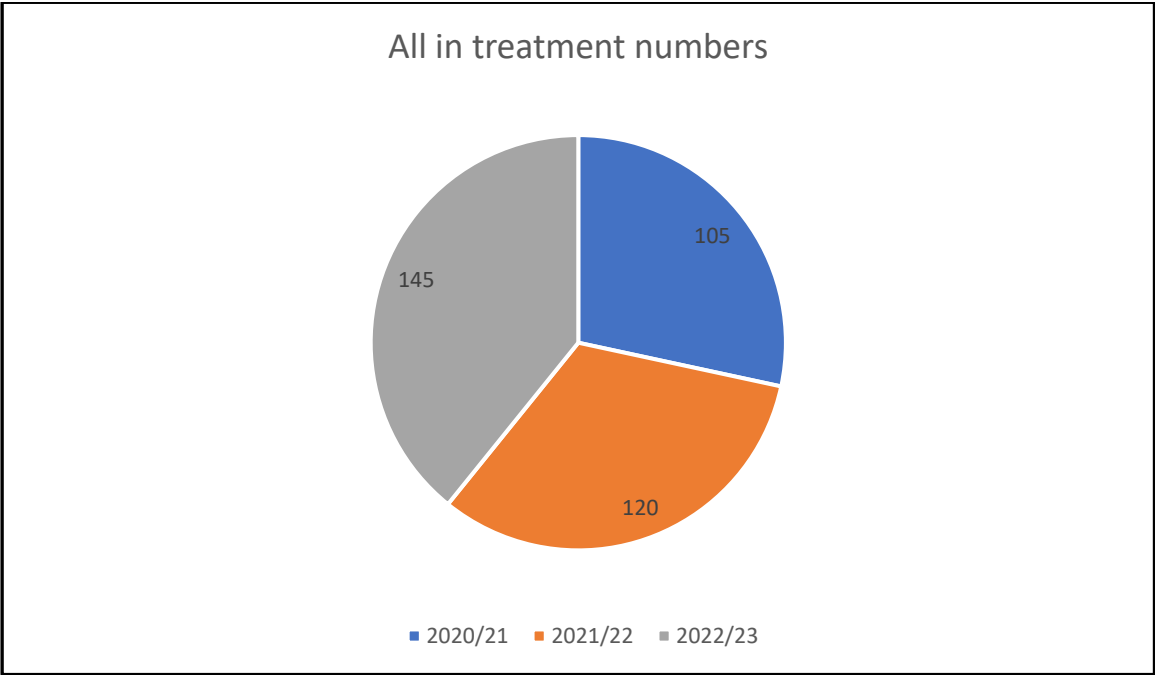
BACKGROUND

1. The substance misuse treatment service for young people was reprocured in 2022, and following a competitive tender exercise the contract was award to Change Grow Live (CGL). The contract was awarded from 1st November 2022 for a period of 36 months with the option to extend for a further 2 X 12 month periods.
2. It should be noted that CGL have delivered adult substance misuse services (Gateshead Recovery Partnership) in Gateshead since 2014 and are a well established provider in the area.
3. CGL is a national charity which provides prevention, treatment and recovery support services across England and Scotland. At the heart of CGL's approach is the fundamental principle of "believe in people". This means supporting people to define their own aims and increase their self-efficacy, confidence and capacities. In short to help people believe in themselves and make the changes they want to see.
4. In 2022 CGL developed a new approach to supporting young people; one that works with them to understand their needs and lays the foundations for their future. They brought all of their young people's services under one strategy which gave them the direction, leadership and framework they needed to work directly with young people on their own terms.
5. Locally in Gateshead the service is known as Positive Futures Gateshead. The service name was developed by young people in Gateshead during the mobilisation phase of the new contract. Young people felt that the name gives hope and focuses on a brighter future for them and the people that use the service.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S SUBSTANCE MISUSE DATA

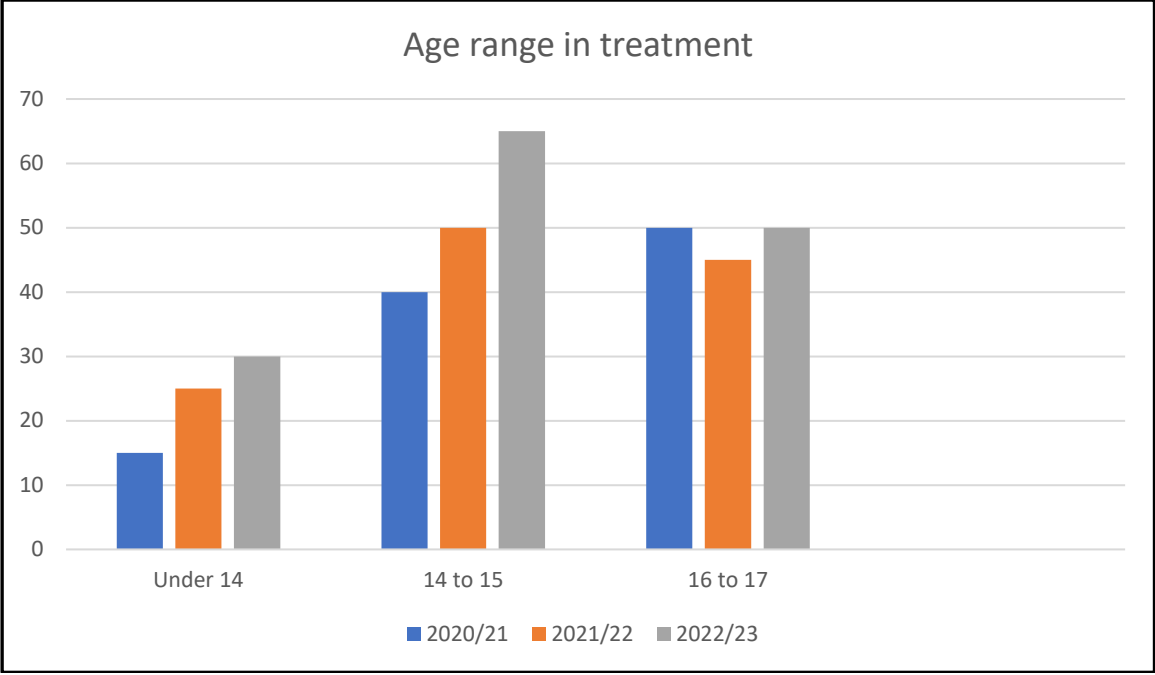
Specialist substance misuse treatment data:

- 6. Young people’s specialist substance misuse treatment is a care planned medical, psychosocial or specialist harm reduction intervention aimed at alleviating current harm caused by a young person’s substance misuse (known as structured interventions).
- 7. Substance misuse treatment data for specialist substance misuse treatment is provided via the National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS). Access to some official statistics via NDTMS is restricted and is provided to public health teams for management and quality assurance purposes of substance misuse services.
- 8. The data that is included from NDTMS in this report is taken from the area of the website that is available publicly [NDTMS - Home](#) and not restricted and is therefore limited to a degree. It should also be noted that as CGL started providing young people’s substance misuse services in Gateshead from November 2022 any data prior to this refers to the previous service provider (Humankind).

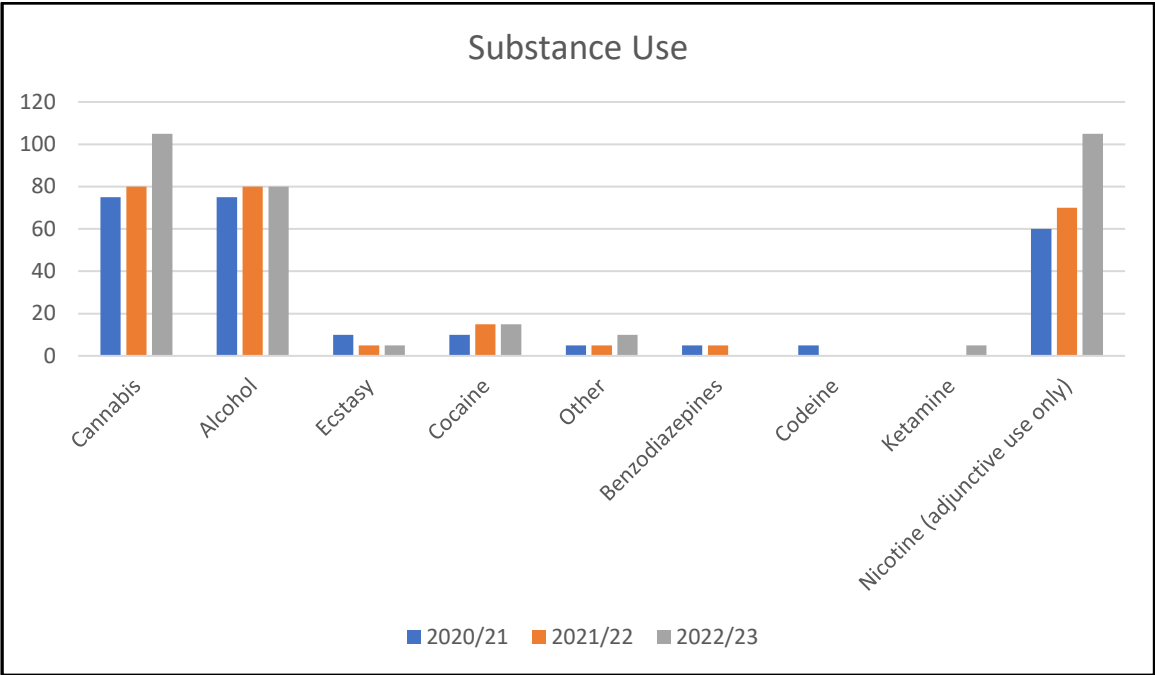


- 9. For 23/24 there were 141 young people in treatment. There were 113 new presentations to the service in this year. It should be noted that the data for 23/24 is still provisional at the time of writing this report.
- 10. The breakdown for male/female in young people’s treatment services each year is as follows:

	Male	Female
2020/21	59%	41%
2021/22	56%	44%
2022/23	55%	45%

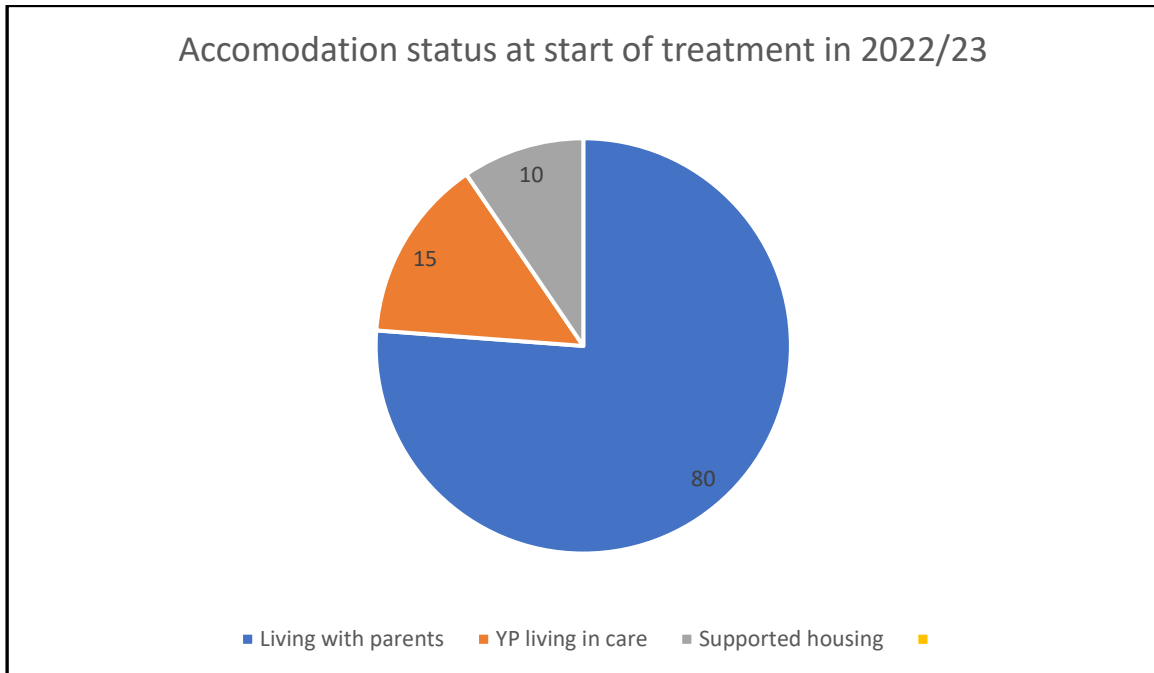


11. As can be seen from the above chart the numbers in treatment in age ranges under 14 and 14 to 15 have steadily increased from 2020 to 2023, whilst the numbers in the age range 16 to 17 have remained fairly similar. This pattern in terms of age range is also reflected nationally.

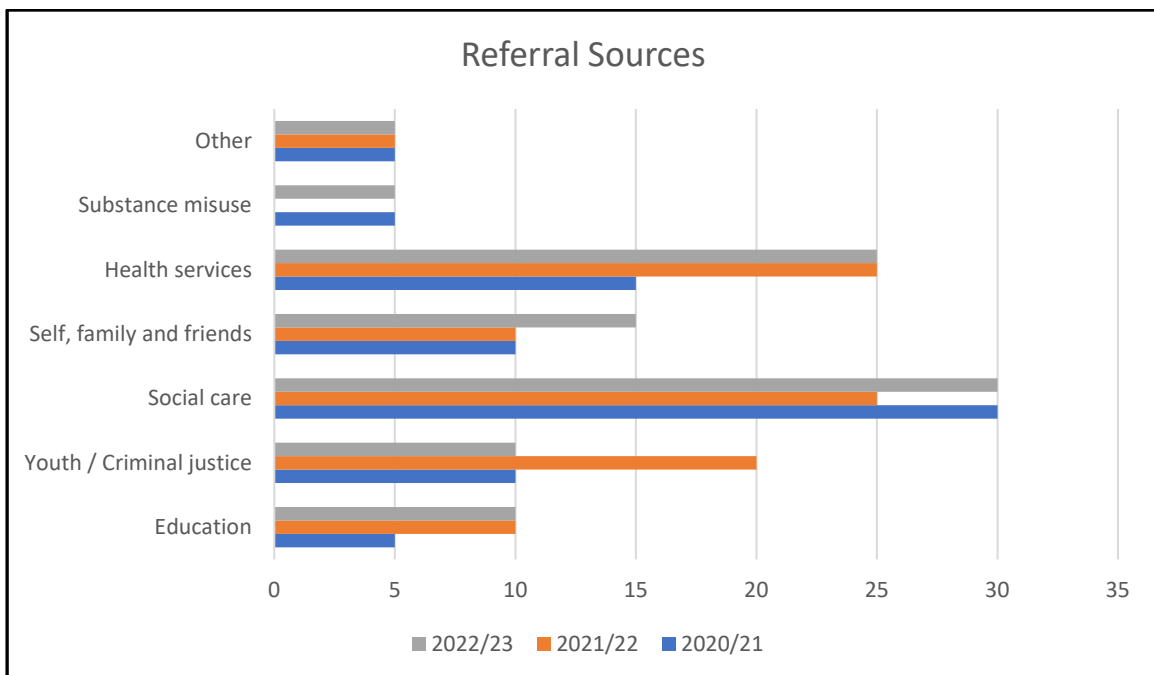


12. The above chart shows substances reported as problematic in any episode in the treatment journey of the young person. It should be noted that NDTMS records the main 3 substances of use that are reported by an individual and therefore a young person may have cited more than one problematic substance.

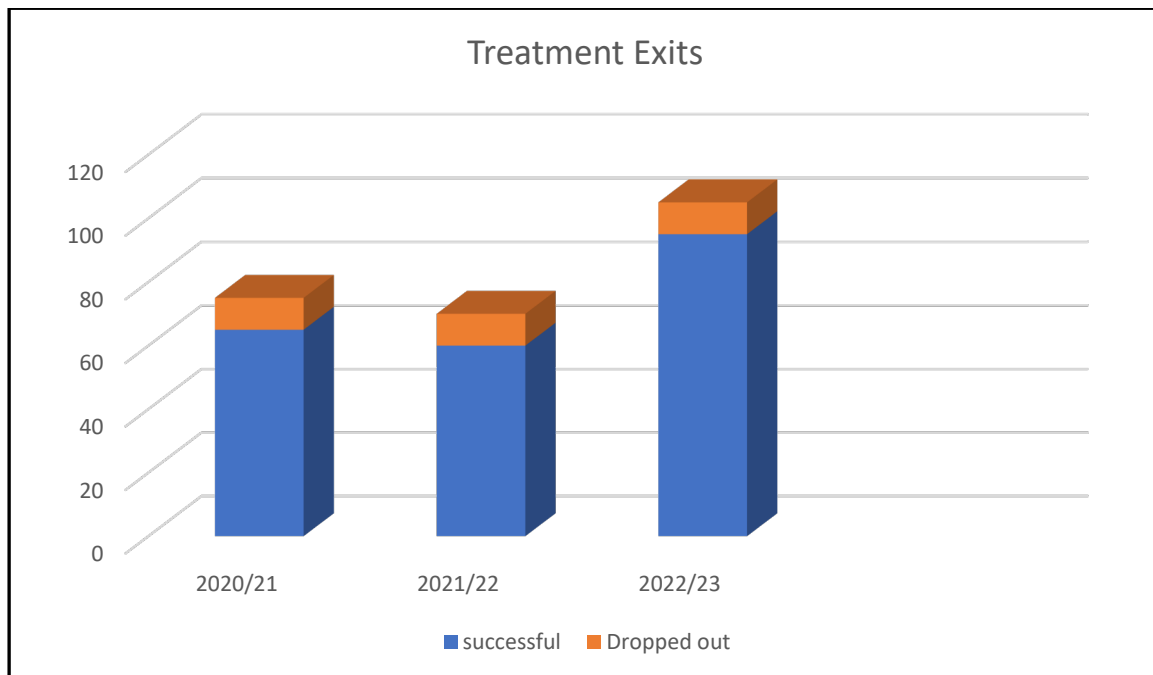
13. The main substances of use in Gateshead continue to be alcohol, nicotine and cannabis and this has been the trend for many years now. Cannabis and alcohol are the main substances of use reported nationally.



14. The majority of young people are living with their parents, and this is in line with national data re accommodation status.



15. The largest source of referrals for treatment in Gateshead in 22/23 came from social care (which also includes early help services in Gateshead) and health services. The majority of health referrals generally come from the QE hospital which demonstrates the close working between the two services when young people present at A & E whilst under the influence of substances.



16. The numbers of young people that drop out of treatment in Gateshead are relatively low. It should be noted that for those young people that successfully complete treatment they are not always substance free and may still be occasional users. Given that the substances of use are alcohol, nicotine and cannabis this is not surprising as young people are generally not prepared to completely stop their use of these substances. They will successfully complete treatment if they achieve their treatment goals and outcomes, as determined by them in their care plan, such as a reduction in their substance misuse.

17. There were 102 treatment exits in 23/24 but again it should be noted that this data is still provisional at the time of writing this report.

Unstructured provision/support data 2023/24

18. The information contained in paragraphs 19 to 23 is data that covers unstructured treatment provision/support and is collected locally by the service. This is not available from NDTMS and covers the broader range of service provision such as advice, information and guidance and event attendance, work in schools and hidden harm support.

19. The service engaged with 218 professionals and members of the community at various events across Gateshead including Gateshead Recovery Partnership open event, Deckham family hub health promotion event, safeguarding conference, Positive Futures one year celebration event.

20. Information, advice and guidance was delivered to 294 people (professionals, young people and parents) in a range of community settings/services which included Youth Focus NE, youth group at Springwell community hub, Rowlands Gill youth group, River Tyne Academy parents event, QE hospital, Hillside, Fairways and Longside children's homes, Astell House supported accommodation, Chowdene family hub.

21. Advice, information, guidance and support re substance use and harm reduction was provided to 796 children, young people and professionals across various educational sites/settings. This included Glynwood and Swalwell primary schools, Heworth Grange and Whickham School and Sports College, Gateshead College (sports and engineering campus) and Learning and Skills team. 129 young people received support at school drops-ins at Emmanuel College, River Tyne Academy (Birtley and Millway).
22. The Children and Families workers (hidden harm team) provided support/information and guidance across 4 primary schools (Brandling, Riverside, Bill Quay, Portobello) and River Tyne Academy. They also delivered training to Gateshead Recovery Partnership services mothers and father's groups and to the staff in the service.
23. There were 27 assessments for hidden harm completed and the team delivered one to one interventions to 18 children/young people.

Children in care data 2023/24

24. This data is not available from NDTMS and is collected locally by the service. There were 29 referrals to the service for children in care in 2023/24. The main source of referrals was from children's homes (10), following by the youth justice service (6). Other referrals came from the children in care team, children's mental health service, education, young people's housing and the liaison and diversion nurse.
25. The main first substance of choice for these young people was cannabis (18) with a smaller number reporting alcohol and nicotine as first substance of choice.
26. There were 25 treatment exits with 17 being treatment complete, the remainder were transferred out of area, declined support, transferred into custody, dropped out and some received a brief intervention (unstructured support).

SERVICE PROVISION

27. Specialist substance misuse services for young people are normally separate from adult treatment services because young people's alcohol and drug problems tend to be different from adults' and need a different response. This includes:
 - being child/young person-centred
 - considering the age and maturity of young people
 - acting on safeguarding concerns
 - making sure the young people do not mix with adults who use drugs
28. The service is rooted in a strengths/asset-based approach that in addition to delivering interventions focused on substance use also develops young people's resilience such as their life skills and their ability to make better choices and deal with difficulties. Substance misuse rarely occurs in isolation and is often symptomatic of wider problems. An important guiding principle for young people who are likely to have a range of needs (with substance misuse being just one of those needs) is that they should be addressed holistically and in a young person-centred way.

29. In relation to addressing substance misuse issues the aim of the service is to ensure that all young people have access to a range of interventions to:

- Reduce risk and prevent further harm to children and young people
- Prevent escalation of children/young people's substance misuse problems
- Address children/young people's problematic substance misuse
- Prevent children/young people from becoming substance misuse dependent adults

30. The service offers:

- Advice, information and support around drugs and alcohol including harm reduction advice and support
- One to one specialist support sessions around drugs and alcohol (referred to as structured treatment)
- Support around stopping smoking and vaping
- Specialist support to children and young people aged 5 to 25 who are impacted by parental drug or alcohol use (referred to as hidden harm)
- Training for professionals working in the Gateshead area
- Support to schools including general awareness raising sessions and support re substance misuse incidents in schools

31. Working in partnership with Feeding Families the service has been able to secure food parcel boxes to distribute to young people and families that they are working with.

32. The service has a base at Design Works Business Centre in Felling. Young people and their families can be seen here if required but the service works in a flexible way and takes an approach that suits the young person. This can involve support over the phone, in person at a place chosen by the young person, or by video call.

33. Throughout October 2023 the service spent some time working with young people to redesign and renovate the room they use to work with young people for appointments and for group work where appropriate (see appendix 1)

34. The service offers support for young people up to the age of 18 (up to 25 for those with a special educational need or disability). They can offer support beyond the age of 18 dependent on the young person's needs. The young person will not automatically transfer into adult substance misuse services when they reach the age of 18, as this may not be appropriate for them. Similarly, if a young person is over the age of 18 and approaches the service for support this can be offered if it is more appropriate than referral into adult substance misuse services. Each referral is triaged to ensure that the young person receives the support from the most appropriate service, and there are clear transition pathways in place with the adult service.

35. Referrals to the service can be made by phone or by completing an online referral form. Any young person, a parent or carer, any professional working with the young person may refer into the service.

36. Admission to the service is voluntary and young people may not always engage once they have been referred to the service or had their first appointment. However, the staff in the service work proactively to engage with young people who fail to attend or miss appointments. Young people will not be discharged from the service until all assertive and proactive engagement methods have been exhausted.

37. Members may be aware that The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has provided £154.3 million in additional grants to improve substance misuse treatment services, for adults and young people, in line with the ambitions of the [government's drug strategy](#), and the recommendations from [Dame Carol Black's independent review](#). This has allowed us in Gateshead to expand the young people's substance misuse workforce and enabled us to include additional roles such as the children and families worker, young adult's worker and early intervention co-ordinator. The additional grants from the DHSC cease on 31/3/25 and we await the outcome of the spending review. However, in the event that the additional grants cease entirely from 31/3/25 provision has been made via public health reserves to continue the same level of staffing until the end of the contract (including the two options to extend).

38. Staffing in the service comprises of the following roles:

- Service Manger
- Senior Practitioner (vacant)
- Administrator
- Resilience workers X 5 (1 vacant post)
- Children and families worker (hidden harm) X 3
- Young adults worker (transitions)
- Early intervention co-ordinator

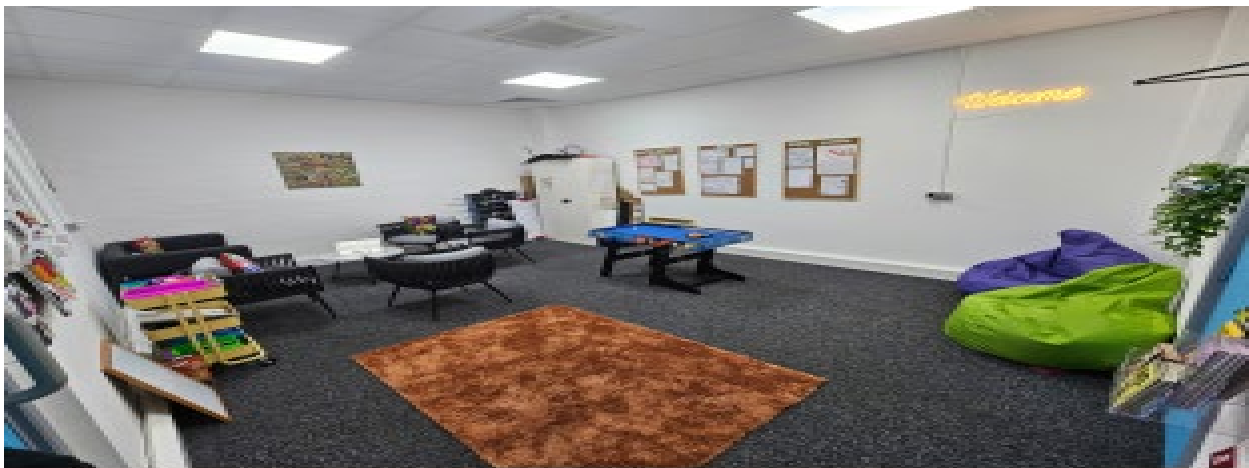
39. Feedback for the service has been positive and some quotes are included at Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee is asked to consider and note the contents of this report.

Contact: Moira Richardson – Public Health Advanced Practitioner, Ext: 3034

Young People's Room at Positive Futures Gateshead



Service Feedback

Young People

At closure appointment, a young person thanked me for the 1-1 support as she's never experienced this before as she has never been involved in Youth services before. She shared that she felt like I talked to her like a normal person and didn't use complex language. She found all of the education helpful and it's opened her eyes to the impact of drugs/alcohol on herself and others.

My sessions are so much fun , I hope we can see each other in the summer holidays too.

My worker is really supportive , I have learnt how to keep myself and friends safe.

I like the flexibility around certain topics and how my worker approaches them to make sure I am comfortable.

Sessions are fun , we get on and I learn new things all the time.

Professionals and parents/carers

Following up from our recent telephone conversation, I would like to express my appreciation of the very interesting sessions delivered by Sophia and Tasha from Positive Futures to our Glynwood primary pupils. I was impressed in the way Sophia and Tasha encouraged thoughtful and sensible responses from our pupils and generated a high level of positive interest in these important safeguarding issues. Safeguarding Governor, Glynwood School.

A staff member from the Children and Young People's Service (mental health) shared positive feedback regarding a referral they had made the day before and how quickly the referral was allocated and actioned.

The mam of a young person, shared with me in a meeting that she's appreciative of the support that her daughter is getting from me as a keyworker and is finding the education beneficial. Her daughter comes home from school to let her know what we've done in each session. Mam is glad that we take a youth work approach with her daughter and we're supportive.

After receiving an A&E referral, the mother of a Young Person stated that it is a nice service which is needed, and admitted she was not aware this support was available for Young People and parents.