

TITLE OF REPORT: Young People on the Edge of Care

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report outlines the activity and development of the Edge of care Team from Apr 2023 – Mar 2024.
2. The Edge of care service offer was reviewed in Nov 23 to ensure the offer was responding the right families at the right time to prevent children entering care due to relationship breakdown.
3. The Edge of Care team continues to develop to meet the needs of young people, parents and carers and support young people to remain in the care of their parents and wider network where safe to do so.

Background

4. The Edge of Care team currently sits within the Contextual Safeguarding Team in the recently developed Vulnerable Adolescent service. This service consists of, the Youth Justice service, Missing from Home or care coordinator, Homeless 16/17-year-olds, along with Contextual Safeguarding Team (CST), Edge of Care Team (EoC) Homeless 16/17 years old and young woman and girls' exploitation.

Review of the edge of care Service

5. Following the review of the Edge of Care offer the following model was agreed.

Service Criteria

6. The Edge of care team will work with young people aged between 11- 17 years, who are identified as Edge of Care according to the DfE definition: -

- a. The young person will need to enter care within days or weeks if current levels of support are insufficient to safeguard them, while needs are escalating and/or family relationships or other issues are worsening.
- b. The young person has been accommodated in an emergency but where the aim for them is to be reunited with their family quickly with appropriate support.

Service Operating Model

7. The service provides a range of proactive intensive interventions and packages of support to young people and their families/carers who have been identified as on the “edge of care” using the criteria above.
8. The service provides a rapid response and if required emergency response up till 8pm, with the flexibility to provide support out of hours on a need’s led basis. This enable workers to support and help families address and overcome the difficulties that have led to the family being at risk of breakdown.

Staffing

9. The Edge of Care staffing ratios are as follows:
 - 3 x FTE daytime EoC workers
 - 2 x P/T Weekend and Out of Hours - EoC worker
 - 2 x Sessional EoC workers (as and when)

Service Delivery

10. The service will deliver a phased program of delivery or core offer and will support young people and their family/carers up to 26 weeks from referral and will be layered and tailored to the individual support needs of each young person.
11. Edge of care Workers will be able to visit outside of normal working hours, to provide support etc.
12. Provide respite and diversionary activities for the young person and identify family activities to support the building or mending of family relationships.

Edge of Care Service - Core Offer

Phase 1 – Crisis Intervention (up to 24 hours/immediate response)

13. This will be offered to a young person and their family who are experiencing a crisis and who, without immediate mediation and conflict resolution, are at risk of family breakdown.
14. This will be delivered in the family home, appropriate adolescent’s friendly venues.

15. The service aims for a young person who has experienced family breakdown to be out of the family home for 1 night only or a weekend if accommodated by EDT out of day time hours, followed by a rapid response offer to the family the next day.

Phase 2 - Rapid Response (up to 3 days)

16. Intensive support will be offered to families who are experiencing family breakdown and may have been or at risk of the young person being removed from their family home. This will include conflict resolution, mediation and may result in a family network meeting to identify any support from within the extended family and wider support network.

Phase 3 - Engagement and Identification. (4 weeks)

17. A period of intensive engagement will be offered using a number of interventions including motivational enhancement therapy, conflict resolution, and mediation.

Phase 4 - Interventions Program. (up to 24 weeks)

18. A program of evidenced based interventions will be delivered from a pick and mix menu available to meet the needs of the individual young person and their family/carers. This will also include “supported referrals and attendance” to any specialist and therapeutic services identified as part of the safety plan, this may include substance misuse, CYPS, Youth Offending etc.

Family Group Conferencing (up to 6 weeks, depending on family finding stage)

19. The Family Group Conferencing Service is a standalone Service within Gateshead Children’s Service; it is acknowledged that families hold the key to identifying their own solutions and the Family Group Conference offer will be automatically considered as part of the intervention package to all young people accessing the service. All edge of care workers will be trained in Family Group Conferencing

Phase 5 – Review. (every 4 – 6 weeks)

20. Progress will be reviewed on a regular basis with the young person and their family/carers. Any unmet needs can be identified and added to the on-going family plan. We will use the Outcome star evidenced base tool to measure the journey and success.

Phase 6 – Final Review – step down (transition) to services. (as part of exit from intervention phase)

21. The young person and their family/carers will be invited to celebrate their achievements, acknowledge their journey to date and identify what support needs they continue to require. They will also identify who can provide this using an Asset Based Community Development Model, e.g. utilising mutual aid support services and fully utilising resources and services provided by the CVS, community-based services, and volunteers where they live over the following 26 weeks and beyond.

Integrated Working - Substance Misuse

22. Over a third of young people on the edge of care and at risk of entering care due to relationship breakdown, are due to substance misuse issues. We have worked with public health commissioners and the Young Peoples Substance Misuse service to base a dedicated young people's substance misuse worker into the team from May 24.

Integrated Working - Trusting Hands Gateshead

23. Gateshead were successful in receiving funding for 2 years to become one of 12 Vanguard areas to pilot the integration of a trauma informed therapeutic team into Childrens Services. Trusting hands Gateshead was launched in May 2023.
24. Trusting Hands Gateshead (THG) is a multidisciplinary team of mental health practitioners, employed through Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW), THG work collaboratively across Gateshead Children's Social Care services to support the coordination, integration and delivery of trauma-informed care.
25. The service aims to help systems understand and meet the emotional and mental health needs of the young person; provide an integrated approach to supporting vulnerable young people and their families; promote stability, resilience, and confidence in the system around a young person; enable young people with complex needs to thrive. All young people who are on the edge of care are eligible on the category of "high harm, high risk, high vulnerability" for a consultation and multi-disciplinary formulations in required based on need.

Outcomes Edge of Care

26. During the 2023/24 the Edge of Care team supported 72 young people on the Edge of Care and 2 young people who were detained under the mental Health Act, the details are explained in the table below.

Outcome	Number of young people
Young people received support.	72 new referrals
Number of young people who are in the care of their parents or family/friend at time of closure / writing report.	61
Number of young people who have become looked after children during EoC interventions	11
Number of young people detained under the Mental Health Act	2

27. 85% of the young people who accessed support in 2023/24 have either remained at home or with extended family.

28. 11x young people (15%) who accessed EoC support during 2023/24 have become a child in our care (foster care / children's home) during the EoC interventions being delivered.

29. A deep dive into the outcome of these young people revealed that reasons for this decision on all 9 (excludes the 2 children who entered care due to detention under the Mental Health Act) young people were as a result of a safeguarding concern and that it was deemed not safe for that young person to remain at home in the care of their parent. These young people did not enter care due to an adolescent/parent relationship breakdown which is the main focus of the EoC team.

30. 2x young people have been detained under the Mental Health Act during this reporting period.

31. Allocations to the EoC team have remained consistent throughout the reporting period, as a result this means that the EoC team can offer a crisis response when required in an urgent situation to scaffold the young person and family immediately. The average EoC caseload from the reporting period is 7.

32. We have introduced a professional consultation - EoC offer is a duty consultation with the referring social work team to determine if a EoC worker is required or if it the young person is “edging towards care” and what the Social Worker needs to do to ensure the young person does not end up on the “edge of care”. This also allows via conversation to help understand the relationship dynamics and current concerns and the ability to visit immediately. There is the offer of a unit meeting which the team hold weekly to understand the family narrative, systems and history through the use of a genogram, this offers a systemic overview of the family and leads to hypothesis and suggestions of work to begin working alongside the family with.

Profiling

33. The young people who have accessed EoC support through the 2023/24 reporting period the following factors were present and had a significant impact upon the young person being on the edge of care. It is evidenced both locally and nationally that the below factors significantly increase the likelihood of a young person coming into the care of the local authority.

Factor	Percentage
Child exploitation in community	52%
Missing from home	51%
Out of education/ Reduced timetable	66%
Substance misuse	35%
Contact with Police/YJS	16%
Adoption/SGO breakdown	7%

Family network Group Conferencing

34. A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a voluntary, family-led decision-making process in which the family and friends network come together to make a plan for a child. The process is supported by an independent coordinator who helps the family prepare for the Family Group Conference. The team also facilitate FGCs in relation to the Family Network Support Pilot which is a DfE funded initiative which tests the impact of providing flexible funding for extended family networks through family network support packages (FNSPs). This is with the aim of helping to keep families together and children out of care where appropriate.
35. 20 young people and their families who were on the edge of care have attended a family group conference, however there is clear work to be done to increase the uptake of FGC.

Family Network Support fund (FNSP)

36. Gateshead Children's Social Care have been successful in gaining funding from the Dfe to the sum of 1.6m. This funding was awarded to unlock resource so that children can remain in the care of their families and wider networks where safe to do so.
37. The EoC team have access to a designated "top slice" of FNSP funding through this pilot to access this funding families must have a family group conference (FGC) or family network meeting. This is an opportunity for the family and wider network to come together to devise their own plan, this can then unlock access to the funding. Examples of funding requests have included requests for bedroom furniture to make a young person's bedroom more homely with the aim for them to spend more time in the home rather than being at risk in the community or family meal for 20+ family members who have not all been together in the same room for several years to begin a family network plan of support.

Cost Avoidance

38. The average cost of a foster placement varies depending on the age of a child and the skill set of the foster carer. The average cost per week for a child aged 11-16 with level 4 carers is £430 per week. As an example of cost avoidance in this scenario for a 12-week period for 1 x young person would be £5,160.
39. 61 young people who have been on the edge of care in this reporting period and at risk of entering care, the EoC team has worked alongside the family

to avoid the young people coming into the care of the local authority has potentially avoided over £300,000 per 12-week period.

Future Developments

40. Develop the offer and response further as part of the development of the vulnerable adolescent service, utilising an enhanced case management and one trusted adult model.
41. Increase up take of family group conferencing for young people and their families on the edge of care.
42. Review case management system (MOSAIC) to develop workflows and dashboards to better monitor and understand the needs of young people on the edge of care.

Recommendations - it is recommended that OSC:

- (i) note and comment on the information provided in the report.

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