



Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2020/21

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Foreword



Councillor Gary Haley

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Gateshead Council

The last two years have been unprecedented in how the global pandemic has impacted on all our lives. It has led to restrictions in personal liberties, real challenges for how people socialise, how we work together using technologies few of us had heard of at the end of 2019, and, not least, the impact all of this has had on the mental and physical health of many of the most vulnerable across Gateshead.

That said, I have to report that our partnership has risen to the challenges of Covid and everyone concerned has continued to do what we all do so well, keeping children and young people safe wherever and whenever it was necessary.

The last year has also seen change at the top with, most recently, the retirement of Caroline O'Neill, our Director of Children's Services. Caroline has been a fantastic leader since 2017 and I have no doubt that our partnership is stronger and our young people are safer as a result of her tireless service. I'm sure we would all want to wish her a healthy retirement.

We also said farewell to our previous Independent Chair, Sir Paul Ennals, who stood down from the role he held since 2016. Sir Paul also served our partnership well, providing appropriate challenge to us all at a leadership as well as an operational level. I am grateful to him for his service and, on a personal level, I can say I learned a lot from him.

So, I was honoured to have been asked to fulfil the role as Interim Chair, a role which turned out to be an exclusively virtual one, since we have been unable to meet in person. As a consequence, and frustratingly, many of our partners have been visible to me only on a small screen - I look forward to meeting everyone in person in the near future.

We now look forward to welcoming Heather Pearson as our new Independent Scrutineer, who will assume this role from April 2022. The chairing of the Partnership meetings will form part of Heather's role, and I have every confidence that the business of safeguarding in Gateshead will continue to improve under her competent leadership.

Finally, in signing off my first, and probably only, Foreword for our annual report, I'd like to thank every member of the partnership for the support they have given me as Lead Member and I look forward to our positive relationship continuing as we return to a more normal way of working.

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the second annual report for the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP). The three Safeguarding Partners¹ are required to publish an Annual Report that sets out what they have done as a result of the safeguarding arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.

This should be published at least once in every 12 -month period, and include:

- evidence of the impact of the work of the *safeguarding partners* and *relevant agencies* (including training) on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers;
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities;
- a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements; and
- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

Last year's report covered the period April 2019 to March 2020. This report covers a longer period from April 2020 to September 2021; next years report will cover September to September (to bring it in line with the school year). This report for 2020/2021 will be published on the GSCP website – www.gatesheadsafeguarding.ork.uk

2. Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA)

Many local organisations and agencies have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions. The responsibility for this join-up locally rests with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

Schools, colleges and other education providers have a pivotal role to play in safeguarding children too, alongside the other relevant agencies listed in regulations. Through safeguarding partnership arrangements, the safeguarding partners are required to ensure that they are fully engaged and involved.

Working Together 2018 promotes the shared and equal duty of safeguarding partners, an emphasis on the child's experience and voice, and building a culture of reflection and learning.

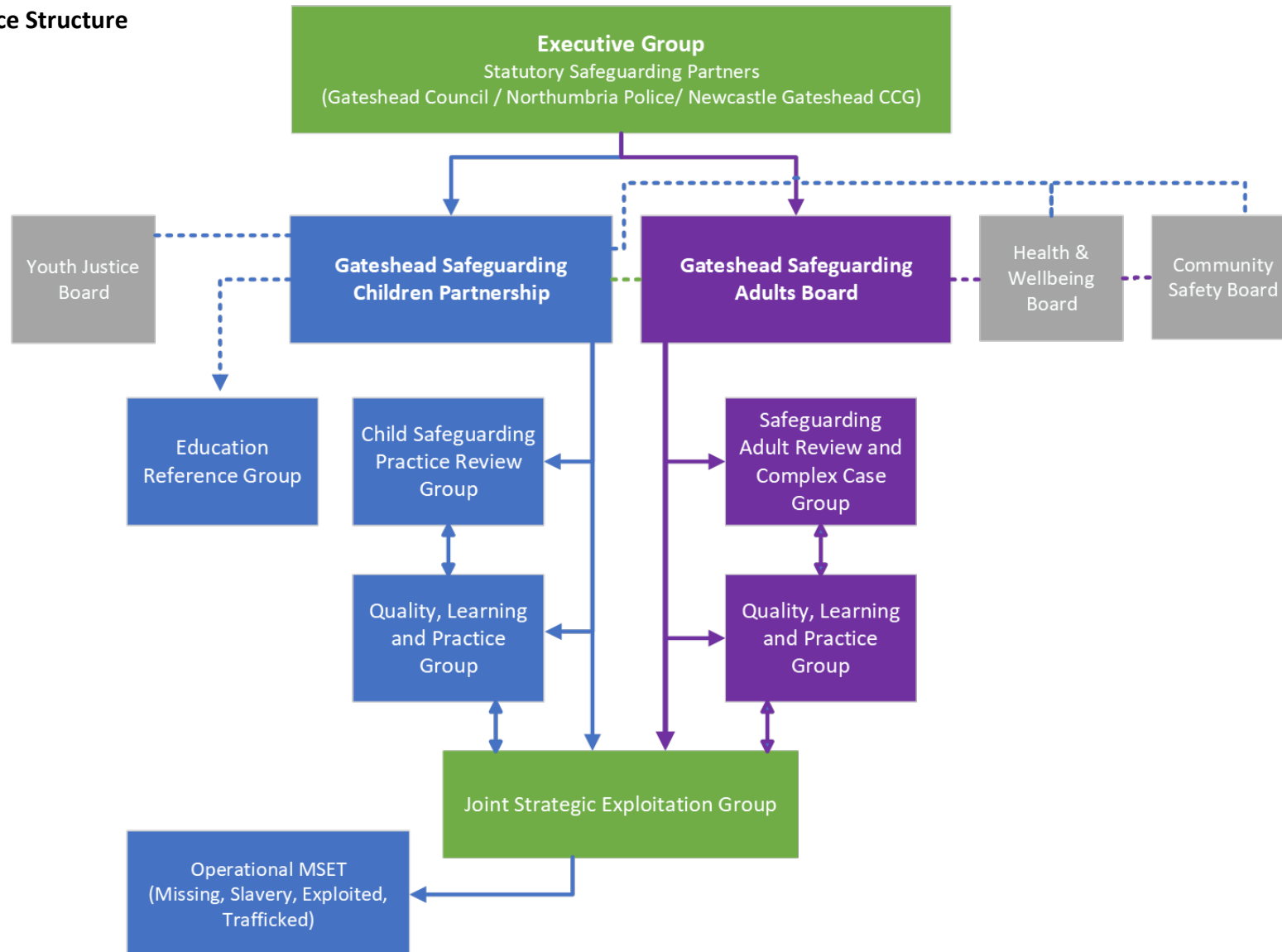
The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) was established in 2019, following the introduction of [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) and statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#). The safeguarding arrangements and plan can be found [here](#). The initial plan set out

¹ The Three Safeguarding Partners for Gateshead are Gateshead Council, Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group and Northumbria Police

transitional arrangements and was updated in October 2020. During the course of 2020-2021, further work was completed on integrating functions across the Northumbria footprint, and a wider structure review was undertaken in the spring of 2021.

The **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements** for Children and Young People will be reviewed in September 2022. Any proposed amendment to the arrangements will be in consultation with the wider partners.

GSCP Governance Structure



3. Independent scrutiny

The [Act](#) requires multi-agency arrangements are to be independently scrutinized, and the [guidance](#)² commits five paragraphs to explaining how scrutiny could take place. It notes that:

- The role of independent scrutiny is to **provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area**, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases. This independent scrutiny will be part of a wider system which includes the independent inspectorate's single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections.
- Whilst the decision on how best to implement a robust system of independent scrutiny is to be made locally, **safeguarding partners should ensure that the scrutiny is objective, acts as a constructive critical friend and promotes reflection** to drive continuous improvement.
- The independent scrutineer should **consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners**, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.
- The published arrangements should **set out the plans for independent scrutiny; how the arrangements will be reviewed; and how any recommendations will be taken forward**. This might include, for example, the process and timescales for ongoing review of the arrangements.
- Safeguarding partners should also agree **arrangements for independent scrutiny of the report they must publish at least once a year**.

Current Independent Scrutiny Arrangements in Gateshead

The current Independent Scrutiny Arrangements in Gateshead are as follows:

- **Lay members x2** who attend both GSCP and SAB meetings;
- **The Section 11 audit** forms part of the independent scrutiny arrangements and feeds into the reporting requirements as set out in [Chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) – this is carried out sub-regionally every two years – the same audit tool is used across six areas. Audit tool sent out at the same time and responses collated (Gateshead lead on this) – this could be themed audits, to help inform agreed regional priority areas of work.
- **Use of local authority and CCG scrutiny and health and wellbeing committees.**
- **Peer challenge** – including Regional ADCS and Tyne, Wear and Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership (TWNSP).
- **Engagement of children and young people** – via partnership agencies (including LA, CCG, Police).
- **Independent inspectorate's single assessment of the individual safeguarding partners and the Joint Targeted Area Inspections** – [Ofsted](#), [Care Quality Commission](#) (CQC), [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#) (HMICFRS).

Based on all the learning nationally ([WOOD REPORT – SECTOR EXPERT REVIEW OF NEW MASAs](#)) and to develop our local arrangements, the GSCP considered the options and agreed a blended approach to independent scrutiny, which includes retaining lay members and developing regional peer review/challenge

² [Working Together 2018: Chapter 3 Paragraphs 31 to 35](#)

arrangements (linked to TWNSP and ADCS), as well as other scrutiny arrangements set out above. External inspections and reviews also offer scrutiny and challenge.

An Independent Scrutineer has been appointed and will start in April 2022. The scrutineer will have a clear remit around what they scrutinise and why.

Key tasks of the scrutineer will be to:

- 1 • Seek assurance in judging the effectiveness of the new multi-agency arrangements to safeguard children in.
- 2 • Assess whether the three safeguarding partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations (including mapping the Partnership work against the Six Steps of Independent Scrutiny)
- 3 • Act as critical friend, in order to scrutinise performance management, audit and ensure quality assurance mechanisms are effective.
- 4 • Arbitrate when there is disagreement between the three statutory safeguarding partners.

The chairing of the Partnership meetings will form part of the Independent Scrutiny role and will fulfil the objective to act as a constructive critical friend, promote challenge and reflection to drive continuous improvement (as set out in WT2018). It should also help in seeking assurance and assessing whether the three safeguarding partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations.

4. Challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

In the crisis that hit our borough and our nation, our true nature was revealed, and the partnership within Gateshead proved itself to be extremely strong. Covid-19 hit Gateshead hard. There are high levels of deprivation within the borough, and an age profile which has a higher than the average proportion of elderly people, and these factors meant we suffered high levels of infection, and deaths. But it brought out the best in partners. Services adapted extremely rapidly to the new challenges, communications were fast and efficient, and partnership working flourished.

Some of the new ways of working – using video systems for meetings, for example – have proved to be more efficient than the old ways. Schools remained open to support vulnerable children and the children of key workers, and services continued to support families. Children’s Social Care and health services maintained (safe) face to face contact throughout the Covid-19 pandemic with visiting and contact frequency based on assessed levels of need or risk.

Overview of Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership status during Covid-19 pandemic

The UK government imposed a lockdown on 23rd March 2020. It was agreed that the scheduled Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership meetings, Executive Group and Sub-Groups should be stood down with immediate effect to enable our partners to respond to the unprecedented challenges brought by Covid-19. In the meantime, critical elements of the partnership continued, which included the strategic partners holding four-weekly meetings (mentioned below).


- The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership produced a Covid-19 Briefing for professionals - [Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership Covid-19 Briefing](#)
- Expectations on the statutory safeguarding partners in relation to serious incident notifications, rapid reviews, serious case reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews was provided in a [joint communication from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the Department for Education](#).
- The www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk website was updated with a Coronavirus section, keeping all our information in one place. Communication updates provided via our email circulation lists.

The statutory safeguarding partners of the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership and Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board held joint Safeguarding Partnerships meeting on a four-weekly basis along with the Business Managers, to discuss safeguarding activity, monitor trends, seek assurance and forward plan.

A challenge identified within these meetings for safeguarding children was working with Courts to prioritise cases where there have been COVID delay (some delay was resulting in increasing LAC numbers). Children's Social Care implemented a RAG rating system for children whose court cases have been delayed (i.e. adoption orders, care orders, rehabilitation plans). Partners considered and recognised the complexities of the issues facing the LA and parents with plans for schools re-opening fully and contingency planning around domestic abuse was also shared with the recruitment of two new posts focussed on behaviour change within the Domestic Abuse Team.

At the end of March 2020, the Designated Nurse (CCG) set up and coordinated weekly information sharing meetings with partners to discuss current safeguarding arrangements, significant changes to usual practice and any specific concerns which focussed on how best to work together and support each other whilst safeguarding children. These meetings moved to fortnightly as lockdown started to ease. GSCP meetings resumed in July 2020.

[Covid-19: A Year We Must Not Forget](#) is a powerful personal account of the pandemic from Gateshead's Director of Public Health Alice Wiseman. The poem, read by Alice and some of her fellow Directors of Public Health, recognises those who stepped up to face one of the biggest challenges of our lifetimes and highlights what can be achieved when we all pull together.



We are better together, standing side by side..



Behind the Masks: Gateshead's Covid Stories

Covid-19 has created many challenges for everyone who lives and works in Gateshead. We have all been in the same storm - but we have not all been in the same boat. The Director of Public Health's annual report ([Behind the Masks: Gateshead's Covid Stories](#)) focuses on how the pandemic has highlighted and worsened inequalities and calls for revitalised and re-focused action on tackling them.

The report brings together personal accounts from residents and the professionals who support them. Their stories, shared here in their own words, form an invaluable record of Covid's devastating impact and what we must learn from it to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. This [video](#), produced to accompany the report, features contributors from healthcare, public sector and third sector organisations sharing their views on the impact of Covid-19, growing inequalities across the borough and what we can learn from the pandemic.

The report shares lessons from 'our teacher called Covid' – the GSCP will be working with the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) on the areas of work that impact on children and their families; two of our Statutory Safeguarding Partners, are members of the HWBB – Summary of Gateshead Health & Wellbeing Strategy is included at [Section 12](#)

5. Gateshead Local Area Context

A unitary authority with a population of 205,500

0-25 population is 56,947 (28% of the whole population)

33.5% of Gateshead's children live in child poverty - 11,769 children. An increase of 8.8% since 2015

The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is 24.8%

12.78% of pupils in Gateshead schools identify as having a minority ethnic background.

The single largest ethnic group after White British is White East European (521 pupils), followed by Mixed White and Asian (245).

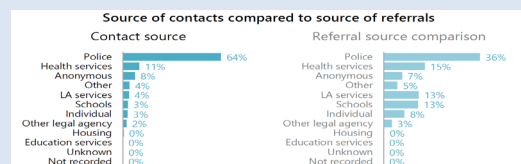
Languages other than English are spoken as a first language by 2240 pupils

6. Performance data - window on the system

In the 12 months to September 2021, compared to the year ending March 2021, there were:

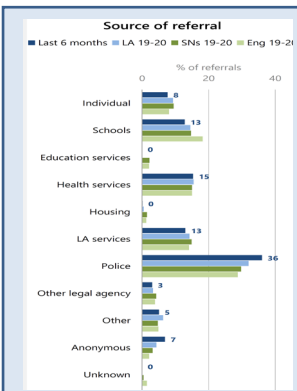
6791 contacts received by IRT

- 5% increase (323) more than last year ↑
- Police account majority of contacts (64%)
- 9.1% increase (292) in police contacts ↑



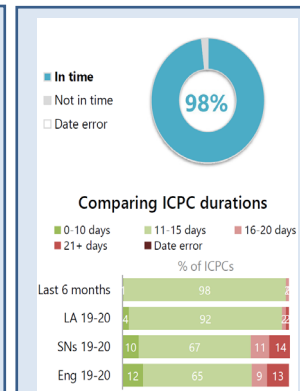
1953 referrals received by CSC

- 20.5% increase (332) more than last year ↑
- 20.5% increase in rate of referral to 495 per 10,000 (stat neighbour av. 536) ↑
- 19.7% repeat referrals within 12 months, (av. 22%) →



662 Section 47s initiated

- 10.7% increase (64) more than last year ↑
- 338 children subject to an ICPC
- 7.6% increase (24) more than last year ↑
- 98% of ICPCS in 15 working days



307 children were made subject to a child protection plan (new)

- 7% increase (20) more than last year ↑
- 21.2% made subject to plan for a second or subsequent time, same as last year (stat neighbour av. 22%) →
- 2.6% (8) made subject to second plan within 12 months, fall from 4.2% last year ↓

246 children were on child protection plans during the time (ongoing)

- 19.4% increase (40) more than last year ↑
- 19.4% increase in rate CPP to 62.5 per 10,000 (stat neighbour av. 55) ↑
- Emotional abuse is the main reason for child protection plans



Key performance measures for CP

- 5.3% of plans (17) ended after 2 years, increase from 3.4% (12) last year
- 100% of reviews held in timescales

183 children entered care

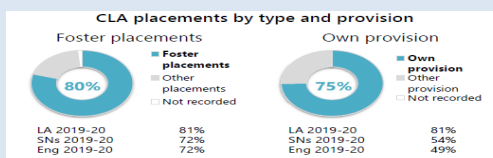
- Same number as in the previous year →
- 16% of the children had previously been in care, the same as the previous year →

430 children were in care at the period end

- 2.1% (9) fewer than last year ↓
- 2.1% decrease in rate of children in care to 109.2 per 10,000 (stat neighbour av. 99) ↑

430 children in care

- 2.9% reduction in number placed 20 miles from home (33)
- The majority of children remain in Gateshead Council Placements, better than comparator authorities



Stability of placements

- 4% of children in care have experienced 3 or more placements, was 7.3% last year ↓
- 70% of children in long term stable placements, same as last year →

183 children left care

- 18.1% increase (28) from last year ↑
- 30% of made subject of a Special Guardianship Order, was 28% last year ↑
- 12.6% of were adopted, was 12.9% last year ↓

7. Business Plan

The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) Business Plan sets the strategic direction for the GSCP. The plan identifies specific priorities for action and is clear about roles and accountability. Progress on actions identified in the action plan is included at [Appendix 1](#).

GSCP agreed the following priorities for 2019-2021:

Strategic Priorities

- Protecting vulnerable children and young people
- Leadership
- Learning

Thematic Priorities

- Voice of the child
- Mental health & emotional wellbeing
- Child exploitation & children who go missing

The GSCP is currently considering priority areas for the next three years. We are consulting with partners (including schools) and a new Business Plan will be developed and published by the summer 2022.

8. What have we achieved and what impact have we seen?

The following information seeks to evidence the work going on across the whole partnership, and the impact of that work.

8.1 Strategic Priorities

Protecting Vulnerable Children and Young People

Police

A key priority for Northumbria Police is to protect and safeguard vulnerable children and young people, to identify opportunities for early intervention / prevention, and pursue perpetrators who cause harm. We do this with a coordinated partnership response, cognisant of diverse needs and vulnerabilities, to safeguard vulnerable children and young people and tackle perpetrators.

As part of our commitment to protecting the vulnerable the force has a Vulnerability Strategy and is currently launching its Early Intervention Strategy and delivery plan. The plan has four pillars around Working together, Preventative Intervention, Community Resilience and Our People.

The ultimate aim is to achieve a safe environment for people, their families and the wider communities to thrive without fear of harm and to ensure perpetrators are identified and targeted, and that the opportunity for them to cause further harm is removed or minimised.

To strengthen the force's approach to vulnerability in the coming year we are launching a Vulnerability awareness training programme which is to be rolled out to all front-line practitioners with a focus on Early Intervention and use of the three Cs (Communication, Clues and Curiosity).

Northumbria Police have recently created a Strategic Innovation Partnership Team (SIP). This ensures that same member of the Safeguarding Senior Management Team (SMT) at Detective Chief Inspector level attends all six of the Local Authority's Safeguarding Children Partnerships. Within the SIP team, there is now a learning and improvement function, overseen by a Detective Inspector who will attend all learning and improvement/quality improvement subgroups, to work with partners to drive and share internal and external learning and improvement. The SIP team will help support the GSCP priorities and provides a consistent and innovative approach to Safeguarding and the development of child procedures.

Neglect

Northumbria Police is committed to reducing instances of child neglect. All reports are subject to daily oversight from the Detective Inspector within dedicated Child Abuse Teams. There is a drive to work with our partners throughout the force area to establish the root cause of the issues and provide help and support to prevent any reoccurrence.

When a prosecution is justified these are driven by supervisory oversight to make the process as quick as possible to limit the impact to victims throughout. All investigations are conducted by specialist investigators within Child Abuse teams who are trained in interviewing children.

Safeguarding children under 1 year old - including non-accidental head injuries and co-sleeping

All reports of this nature are brought daily to the attention of specialist child abuse teams and scrutinised and reviewed at Detective Inspector level. Staff attend and share information at all levels of multi-agency meetings to ensure accurate interventions and safety plans are in place. Detective Inspectors attend all rapid review meeting for serious injury and SUDI, and continues with the child death review panel and joint learning review processes. Lessons learned are disseminated and staff attend formal delivery sessions as part of their CPD for the SCADIP accreditation. All reports of this nature are investigated by Child Abuse specialist detectives who have a nationally recognised SCADIP qualification. (Specialist child abuse qualification from the College of Policing).

Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

During what has been an unprecedented year with the pandemic the importance of protecting children and young people has never been so great. The CCG has worked with partner agencies to seek assurance that alternate plans were put in place to continue to reach those children and families most at risk using robust risk assessments, personal protective equipment where required and the increased use of virtual technology to maintain vital links. Due to the 'stay at home' essential message children and families were less visible which meant practitioners sought out new methods to protect vulnerable children and inform the safeguarding process. One example of this was the introduction of GPs using Microsoft Teams to dial into child protection conferences and other safeguarding meetings. This process was developed with children's social care, a Named GP and the Safeguarding Children team in the CCG. Preliminary feedback has demonstrated this can be productive in allowing GPs to contribute to the meeting and inform decision making. Further evaluation will take place as this progresses.

LD Healthchecks

CCG's Children, Young People and Families team (CYPF) have launched Good Practice Learning Disability Health Check guidelines for Primary Care and Education, and the next steps are to link in with our special schools and work with young people directly to develop easy-to-read materials as well as producing a Good Health film around these checks.

0-19 Service - Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT)

During the pandemic teams worked together to assess risk and identify children, young people and families who were of greatest concern to ensure home contacts continued and care was in place for them. It was important that decisions to either home visit or provide a virtual contact was based on assessment of cumulative risk and staff were supported by the integrated management team to ensure that an assessment of risk was considered and recorded. 0-19 services quickly adapted to virtual contacts for non-essential contacts, based on the Family Health Needs Assessment and cumulative risk. This ensured that home visiting was prioritised for the Primary Visit (the first post-natal contact) those children and young people assessed as being most at risk and for the primary visit.

Teams Video Conferencing quickly became the new normal and has been invaluable in allowing the successful governance required to maintain services, flex to meet evolving risk and maintain contact with colleagues who were largely now agile working.

The HDFT wider safeguarding team submitted a successful business case to expand the Specialist Safeguarding Team including 1.0 Floating Specialist Nurse for Child Protection to work across the footprint to meet surges in demand and three Band 6 Strategy Nurses to ensure HDFT representation at Strategy Meetings.

Safeguarding Transformation in 5-19 has continued across Gateshead with structural change with new processes in place.

HDFT undertook a review of the Domestic Abuse protocol for welfare calls completed in response to the growing pressures on the 0-19 service.

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) hours initially extended in response to Covid including weekend and bank holiday cover, further revised extended hours of cover continues and a footprint wide survey was used to gather service user feedback for SPOC provision. In response, a pilot was introduced to have staff calls directed to local specialist nurses as highlighted in the survey.

Service Transformation: Gateshead Specific

5-19 transformation progressed across Gateshead to free up capacity within 0-19 service to target the most vulnerable children with outstanding health needs. This has been the key focus on the Named Nurse Child Protection in service improvement across the Gateshead area. Transformation planning began in Gateshead during 2020-21. Monthly meetings were scheduled with the wider 5-19 service in order to ensure an integrated approach to the Transformation work and to develop a bespoke model for Gateshead which the school nursing service and the safeguarding team were fully involved in. The initial transformation meeting was held in January 2021 with the general manager and service manager to discuss the planning that had taken place to date. Workflows, processes and models were designed based on learning from other areas that had already progressed through service transformation. The move to full transformation falls into the year 2021-22.

Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

CNTW attend MSET, Youth Justice Board, Complex Pupil Education Panel and Dynamic risk register meetings. These meetings are attended by either our Team managers or Clinical leads to ensure leadership oversight of them. We have CNTW good practice guidance with transition from children services to adults, and this starts at 17.5 years of age. If support is needed we link with adult services and try to attend appointments, sometimes after the age of 18 to offer a smooth transition. Internally there is lots of work taking place around transitions between services and teams. We also have the locality Crisis team for young people that works 24/7 to enable excellent access to services.

Safeguarding is an agenda item in all our supervision sessions, and if the young person's case is complex, we seek support and advice from our Safeguarding and Public Protection (SAPP) team. We attend and contribute to the umbrella of child protection work, by attending child protection meetings and contributing to the reports.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)

TWFRS continued to offer and deliver our Juvenile Firesetters Education Programme throughout 2020-2021. We adapted to find venues outside the home, including schools, in gardens, public spaces, community centres and places of worship, to offer support and education for young people aged 3-17 with firesetting behaviour, and their families.

We delivered our SafetyWorks session for six Gateshead schools; engaging with over 200 young people on a range of safety topics.

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust (GHNFT)

Evidence suggests that young people who have experienced the care system are more likely to have an unplanned teenage pregnancy and subsequent care proceedings in relation to their children (Broadhurst et al, 2017 and Roberts et al 2017). With that in mind, the Looked After Children's health team in Gateshead, in conjunction with Gateshead Sexual Health Service, have completed a gap analysis with the overall aim of finding out what needs to be done for young people in Gateshead to enable us to turn the trend for them and truly make the issue of sexual health and unplanned pregnancy prevention everyone's business.

The gap analysis included the circulation of two separate confidential questionnaires for completion via an online link, one for professionals and carers, and the other for young people. The links to the questionnaires were shared via email, staff communications and across the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.

110 responses were received from young people and 116 from professionals/carers between July and October 2021. The findings and recommendations from the gap analysis will be shared with partners at the beginning of 2022.

Gateshead Council

- **Social Workers in School (SWIS)** - An initiative that has proved invaluable during the pandemic

Social Workers in School (SWIS) programme

What have we done

- Introduced Social Workers in Schools - embed six experienced social workers in secondary schools to reduce referral rates to children's social care (CSC), the number of cared for children, and to improve educational attainment.
- Promoted stronger inter-agency working between schools and children's social care.

What is the impact

- Very strong relationships established between school and social work staff AND a much better understanding of thresholds and respective challenges of each other's work.
- Preventative work has had a positive impact on children and families.
- Provided training for school staff on trauma informed and systemic model of practice.
- Schools are better able to apply a certain amount of safe uncertainty when concerned about children and apply a more curious view of children's individual contexts and daily lived experience.
- Very positive feedback from schools (see below).

Social Worker Experience

Social Worker 1

- ☞ *"I love the benefit of working with professionals who are locality based (school, health, community police etc) as this gives more opportunity to build stronger relationships. This makes collaborative working more efficient and effective, which is a positive for the children and families. This will only get better over time".*
- ☞ *"An unexpected benefit has been that I feel more invested in the school life of the children I work with, even if they are not in the school I am based (i.e., primary or other secondary). Being part of 'school life' makes it a bigger part of my thinking and I understand how the school functions, so it is easier to have conversations with children and families about it. When school is such a big part of children's lives this has been a real advantage".*
- ☞ *"The biggest impact comes from having more time as I have a lower-case load. This means I can spend more time with children and families, in school or at home, when they need it. I have also been able to talk to young people and families in school, as a preventative measure, when the school are concerned things are deteriorating but it is unclear if it meets threshold. This has been enough to give the family and school confidence that the issues can be managed without formal support, or I would support them to be clear why it does need to be referred in for formal support. Being a familiar face and 'available' in school, gives the school, families and children reassurance that someone is available to talk to when needed, which is sometimes enough support".*

Social Worker 2

- ☞ *"The positive approach embraced by the school has been incredible, from day one they made it clear that I was very welcome within the school and made it clear that my ideas and support were a welcome addition".*

What professionals said –

School counsellor

- ☞ *"It has been very beneficial having the Social work service based in school, having an immediate response is paramount for the safety of the children. The knowledge they have of various systems and who to refer to has been extremely useful. I feel it has broken a stigma that some children may hold of Social workers and has helped them to realise that they are here to help, which has allowed them to build a supportive trusting relationship. I personally feel for me as a Counsellor within the School it has brought more of a Holistic approach within in the school and opened important lines of communication internally and with external agencies which is very important in supporting the Children and their families".*

What children and their families said.

- ☞ *"despite having on/off social care support for years, SW has offered the most support we have ever received and visiting us often and keeping in touch has really helped".*
- ☞ *Young person - "SW's been amazing. She's been one of the only ones to give me support through the uni process and honestly don't think I would've got in anywhere without her help. She's always been super friendly and up for a laugh and it's so nice to have someone to chat to through free lessons".*

- 💬 Young person – *“SW and her team have been very supportive within our school environment. SW has been attentive to our needs and has offered assistance and support for us all in many aspects such as our emotional needs by allowing us to talk to her whenever we need it as well as helping us through stressful time periods like submitting personal statements. She doesn’t question any discussion and listens to every query we have in school; she has been a member of staff that has stepped up and shown interest in us as students and what we want to achieve. I feel SW scheme in school has been extremely supporting and I couldn’t recommend SW as a supportive role worker enough”.*
- 💬 Young person – *“SW and her team in my school have completely changed the level of support for the better, they are always there for advice emotional support and even just a general conversation. I think most people in sixth form would agree that there was a huge gap in well-being support and SW has always made everyone feel welcome no matter how big or small the issue may seem”.*
- 💬 *“Recently while struggling to complete our UCAS applications before the deadline, we were all feeling down and lost in the workload.. SW was a strong support figure, and we couldn’t be more grateful”*
- 💬 Parent- *“Further to our conversation on Friday, I would like to thank you for all of your help and support over the last few weeks. I know a lot of people have negative views on social workers and automatically have a fear that they are only there to take your children. However, you have been extremely lovely to deal with and have made us all feel at ease and comfortable throughout the whole process. You have changed my view on social workers! Again, thank you for everything and keep on being a brilliant social worker and a lovely lady”.*

- ❑ Launched **Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)** service for families with substance misuse issues (FDAC website includes [Information for families](#) and [information for professionals](#))

Launched Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) service for families with substance misuse issues

What have we done

- **Gateshead Council** hosts the North East Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC NE) in partnership with Newcastle and North Tyneside LAs.
- A therapeutic problem-solving court providing a relational approach to care proceedings, for parents presenting with substance misuse issues.
- Multi-disciplinary team of professionals from mental health, substance misuse, social work, clinical psychologist and consultant psychiatrist.
- Team works intensively with families undertaking specialist assessment and developing bespoke, clinically informed intervention plans for parents to change behaviours to secure the best possible outcome for their children.
- Interventions address problematic behaviours which led to care proceedings and supports parents to achieve abstinence from substances, understanding the traumatic drivers which led to their use, becoming a safe and responsive parent and living a child centred lifestyle.
- Parents attend fortnightly and are supported to review their progress and explore any barriers by specially trained FDAC Judges who support and motivate and catalyse parental behaviour change.

FDAC NE Judge’s feedback:

- 💬 *‘An invaluable resource in the family courts. for families with substance abuse issues, FDAC provides the best chance for families to make lasting changes for the benefit of the children and themselves. I am consistently impressed with the approach and expertise of the team, and how much*

better the experience of the families in proceedings is as a result. I think it is important to realise that huge improvements can be made within FDAC, and that this change is more likely to be long-lasting and deep rooted. The FDAC team is a positive and welcome addition to the family courts.'

What is the impact

- Since May 2021, FDAC North East has supported 29 families.
- Currently 13 families engaged with eight referrals currently pending and undergoing the pre-screening process.
- Four families reaching conclusion of proceedings - two cases - reunification with parent(s), one case - children to be cared for by extended family members, one case - adoption.
- Parents have achieved abstinence and better able to engage with services and meet their own needs, while working relationally with the team and the FDAC Judges.

Recent feedback from parents involved with FDAC NE

Parental feedback:

- 💬 *'I try my best to think first before taking action now.'*
- 💬 *'We used to be nervous coming to court to meet our Judge, but we look forward to telling them what we have done – it makes my day'.*

Social Worker's feedback:

- 💬 *'I think FDAC has been the best possible process for the family I am working with in both giving the parent the opportunity to change and finding the right plan for the children. The FDAC worker has gone above and beyond in both supporting this parent and trying to promote change. The whole process has been exposing in the sense it has shown the parents strengths, but also identified opportunities for change which could have easily been missed with social work intervention alone. Ultimately, this makes sure the right decision is made for the children. I feel the parent has had every possible opportunity'*

SEND Service – Collaboration across agencies

To understand SEND children and young people's new, emerging or existing needs and work out how best to support them during the pandemic.

- ☐ Fortnightly meetings with the Parent Carer Forum involving staff from education, health and care to resolve any concerns and share information (including members of the strategic board).
- ☐ Weekly meetings with the head teachers of special schools and representatives from education, health, public health, social care.
- ☐ A proactive approach to encouraging school attendance for vulnerable children and sharing of RAG rating to ensure all aware of those viewed to be at greatest risk, should parents decide not to take up the offer of school places.

Co-production with children and young people with SEND and their families.

- New Parent Carer Forum (PFC) has strong leadership and has direct access to senior leaders to share any issues with services across the system.
- Parents represented on all SEND development groups and making a valued contribution to the work being undertaken.
- Development of SEND Youth Network.
- Co-production of SEND Local Area Newsletter with parents and young people.
- Co-production of information for the Local Offer which will have a 'Young People's Hub' and includes input from young people on Independent Travel and Living.

There have been multiple resources made available to staff to support wellbeing and resilience:

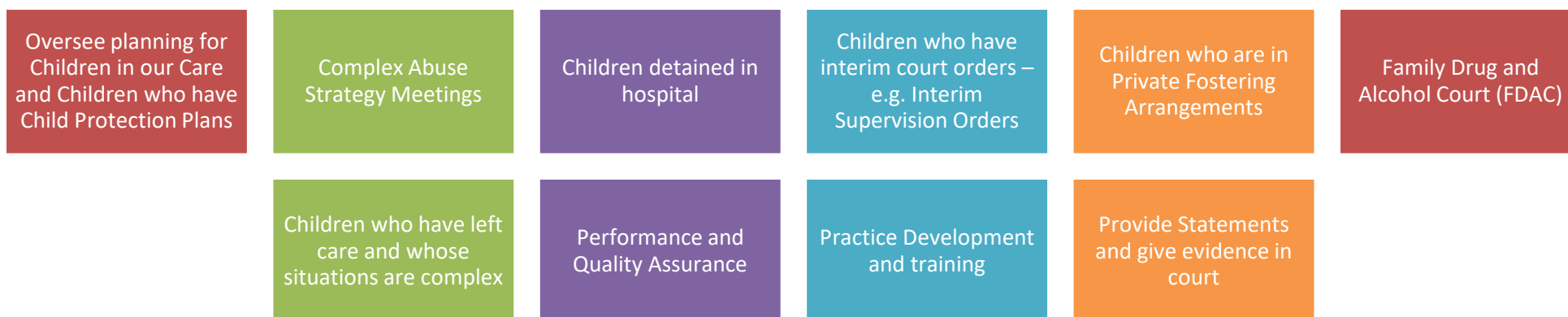
- **Emotional wellbeing sessions with psychologist/counsellors**
 - Staff able to access this preventative measure, reducing potential sickness. Very positive feedback. Consistent and continued delivery of our services to families and young people.
- **Weekly dedicated time for 'catch up and coffee' to chat with colleagues**
 - This has led to an improvement in staff morale, reducing potential sickness, so consistent and continued delivery of our service to families and young people.
- **Buddy systems for staff**
 - Designed to support staff isolating and who were living alone/ those who were finding working through a pandemic more difficult.

Safeguarding Children Unit / Independent Reviewing Officers – UPDATE

The IRO team has 9 Independent Reviewing Officers (including the Local Authority Designated Officer and an IRO for Foster Care reviews)

Some highlights from the IRO annual report (2020-21)

What we do. not just a chair!



Some of our key achievements.

- ☐ Within a short time we adapted to home working and convening meetings virtually.
- ☐ We continued to meet with children.
- ☐ Most Child Protection Conferences have been held in timescale.
- ☐ Most of those children whose situations are brought to conference are provided with a child protection plan – thresholds are right.
- ☐ Most Children in our Care have their reviews in timescale.
- ☐ As referrals to LADO have increased we have sought to streamline the process.

Some of the challenges.

- ☐ The rising number of children coming into our care.
- ☐ the rising number of children who have Child Protection Plans.
- ☐ the complexity of cases and how needs can be addressed with reduced services and restrictions.
- ☐ creating safety in a virtual conference.


What comes next?

- ☐ Taking a lead in the development of narrative practice across our own and Children's Services.
- ☐ Taking a lead in the development of a policy for children who live in foster care homes and are of a different ethnicity.
- ☐ Using the learning from disruption (for children in our care and where they live) to create greater stability.
- ☐ Demonstrating the impact of our challenge.
- ☐ Supporting the redevelopment of Families Rights Advocacy Gateshead (FRAG) meetings (to support parents who have children involved with Children's Social Care).

Identifying and responding to children's needs and appropriate thresholds – summary of ofsted report

Focused visit to Gateshead children's services

Ofsted carried out a focused visit in September 2021. Inspectors evaluated the quality of help and protection provided to vulnerable children and their families in the 'front door'. They met with social workers and their managers and looked in detail at children's records. In addition, inspectors appraised the quality and impact of the local authority's performance management and audit arrangements. This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework – [see summary of findings](#)



...Responses to children at risk of harm are timely and effective.

Highlights re Partnership working:

Report highlights '*closely aligned, mature professional partnerships work together effectively to safeguard children from harm*'

Inspectors found that '*thresholds are understood well and scrutinised frequently*' and that '*partner agencies have a shared understanding of thresholds*'.

- ❏ *Multi-agency child protection strategy meetings are used constructively to share information about children, leading to well-informed decisions about what needs to happen next to protect them from harm.*
- ❏ *...Proportionate checks are undertaken with professionals; they work closely together and collaborate well.*
- ❏ *The child's views and lived experiences are central to most decisions, plans and planning. Effective, proportionate action is taken, protecting children from harm*
- ❏ *...most children and families get the right level of help and protection at the right time, delivered by very committed and skilled professionals. This is making a difference to their day-to-day lives and is keeping them safer...*

Ofsted recognised that we have continued to innovate, despite increased demands and the pandemic and we have continued to improve practice.

Leadership

Police

The Head of Safeguarding is a Detective Chief Superintendent who has completed a Public Protection and Safeguarding Leadership programme ran by the College of Policing. The Detective Chief Superintendent is responsible for the strategic leadership and performance of the Safeguarding department and is supported in this by two Detective Superintendents, who manage the operational and strategic response. A Detective Chief Inspector and a Detective Inspector within Northumbria Police's Child and Adult Protection team oversee all investigations against children within Northumbria Police's Child and Adult Protection teams.

In addition to the SIP Detective Chief Inspector, who attends the Safeguarding Partnerships, both the Safeguarding hub's Detective Chief Inspector and Detective Inspector engage in subgroups, providing police input on leadership and operational issues.

There is a commitment from Northumbria Police to invest in leadership of the Safeguarding Detective Chief Inspector's and Superintendents who will all complete the Public Protection and Safeguarding Leadership programme offered by the College of Policing.

Clinical Commissioning Group

Since the start of lockdown resulting in reduced visibility of children and families, a weekly meeting was set up in April 2020 by the CCG Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children which included partner agencies from both Local Authorities, Police, Health providers and Education. This created an opportunity for early identification of emerging issues which could be escalated accordingly, an overview of what was happening on the ground and a support mechanism for practitioners to share their experiences. A summary of key themes was shared with the safeguarding children partnership. This has continued throughout the pandemic, reducing currently to fortnightly meetings and its continuation will be evaluated accordingly. Feedback from practitioners in relation to the weekly catch-up meetings has been positive, *"I have found touching base with everyone incredibly useful over the past months"*.

The safeguarding children and adult team within the CCG recognised the importance of raising awareness of safeguarding and providing an opportunity for people to ask for help. NGCCG arranged for safeguarding resources in the form of posters and banners to be displayed at Covid testing sites. It was important to make every contact count as this may be the only opportunity for someone to seek support. This was recognised nationally as good practice by NHS England/Improvement. *"The idea and approach has been shared with national colleagues who are looking to promote and implement across the country, adapting to ensure all aspects of testing can include key safeguarding messages".*

Clinical Commissioning Group - Children Young People and Families Team

The Children, Young People and Families team (CYPF) have developed a new Portfolio Lead & Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) role. Acting as DCO and lead commissioner, the role encompasses all aspects of ensuring high quality, safe, value for money services and support for children and young people across the spectrum of universal and specialist requirements.

Gateshead Council

Ofsted: 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.

Managers and senior managers use real time performance data to provide effective management oversight of front-line practice. The daily caseload activity report, which is child specific, supports effective monitoring of daily caseloads, highlight supervisions, visiting patterns caseloads by team and by individual social worker. The impact of this approach is managers are aware of any practice gaps in real time that may need to be addressed.

Reducing Parental Conflict

Gateshead leads the referral gateway for the national Reducing Parental Conflict (Relationships Matter) Programme on behalf of ten local authorities in the North East region, one of four pilot regions nationally. The programme provides four evidence-based pathways of support for couples and co-parents experiencing relationship conflict where frequent, intense and poorly resolved discord is having an adverse impact on the wellbeing of dependent children. Interventions are provided by Relate, Action for Children and Changing Future North East and include Mentalization Based Therapy, Incredible Years Advanced, Parenting When Separated and Family Check Up.

A total of 1,546 (regional) referrals were received by the Gateway by October 2021. The programme will end on 31 March 2022 following a regional learning event (15 March 2022) to help Local Authorities develop a local RPC offer from April 2022 onwards.

Further grants from DWP have been used to commission research into the identification and response to relationship conflict by front-door (children's services) response teams, deliver RPC training for practitioners and provide (One Plus One) digital tools for direct use by parents.

Development of Gateshead's Social Work Academy

What have we done?

- Secured funding for ASYE Academy, including 10 newly qualified social worker (NQSW) posts, assistant team manager and team manager.

- ❑ Recruited 20 NQSWs and an ASYE team manager.
- ❑ Created ASYE Academy team – NQSW spend first 6 months in post gaining experience across service.
- ❑ Appoint 16 experienced social workers and Practice Educators to mentor NQSWs.
- ❑ Evaluate impact – staff and manager feedback – plus independent evaluation planned for summer 2022.
- ❑ Updated Workforce Development input to provide high quality training to support holistic development.
- ❑ Appointed new Principal Social Worker - moderator of ASYE portfolios.

What is the impact?

- ❑ An ASYE Academy team with a strong learning culture in the Gateshead CAN practice model, developing NQSWs during their ASYE and preparing them for social work practice in established teams. NQSWs are having an impact in their work with families across Assessment and Intervention, Safeguarding, Children with Disabilities, Kinship, Fostering, Cared for Children and Leaving Care, and will take their learning forward in their social work careers.
- ❑ A higher level of support for all NQSWs including those in established teams through their ASYE mentors and a centralised point of contact of the ASYE Academy manager.
- ❑ Families in Gateshead benefit as social work practice and development has a focus on reflective practice and a learning culture from an early point in a NQSW career within the Academy. NSQW are supported well with appropriate management support, creating a culture which promotes creativity.

❏ *Feedback from a NQSW: “the level of support and commitment permeates through Children and Families.”*

❏ *Feedback from an ASYE mentor: “This is a good source of personal development, to be able to expand my own knowledge and skills regarding supervision. It is also a space to step back and reflect/think, critically examine situations, this encourages more reflexive practice.”*

❏ *Feedback from a Service Manager: “ASYE social workers from the academy have been a valuable source of support for placement stability within Fostering. More specifically they have provided a fresh perspective on a long-term matched placement.”*

Gateshead Council – Education, Schools and Inclusion

Summary of action taken in response to “School Closure” during lockdown.

- ❑ The Council and the schools agreed that all schools should remain open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. This decision was made as it kept both children and staff in a familiar environment reducing any potential emotional stress and also kept children in small and more ‘safe’ bubbles.
- ❑ The School Meal Service provided all children eligible for a free school meal with a meal. If these children were not attending school then school staff or volunteers often delivered meals to their homes.
- ❑ School staff often became part of a rota that reduced the number of adults in school; reducing the risk of infection.
- ❑ Children attending schools were taught in small groups or bubbles with a highly adapted curriculum.
- ❑ Schools quickly produced online resources to support learning or signposted parents to high quality resources.

- Most schools contacted pupils and parents/carers by phone to keep in close contact and provide academic or emotional support.
- A core group of the Council's education staff remained at Dryden to provide direct support for schools. A daily email has been produced since lockdown began.
- The education team produced a recovery curriculum that supported schools for the time when all children returned to school from September 2020. The [Recovery Curriculum](#) had a significant focus on emotional wellbeing.
- The Council's Social Care and Education Teams worked together to identify those children that would most benefit from returning to school. Approximately **70%** of the identified pupils returned to school.
- Headteacher representatives met every week (in person and safely) with education, HR, school meals & cleaning, public health and health & safety officers to discuss the practicalities of opening schools during a pandemic and keeping children, families and staff safe
- A council produced risk assessment was completed by all schools and shared with the Unions. Using this risk assessment schools decided how they would reintroduce more children to school. Not all schools followed the Government guidance of Nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y6 returning at the same time.

Recovery Curriculum

What have we done?

- From the initial school lockdown it became evident that most children would not receive the high quality education at home as in school, even with best online provision.
- The LA and its school's response was to form a working party to prepare for the children returning to school.
- The working party produced a range of documents that supported pupils and staff to follow a curriculum, primarily, in English and Mathematics that identified key areas of learning that would need to be learnt before further progress could be made.
- An assessment framework was also produced to support formative assessment and to track progress.
- In addition to an academic curriculum other "recovery areas" were included to support teachers and pupils.
- Physical Education – the Schools Sport Partnership provided expert advice to schools with guidance on getting all children physically active.
- Gateshead Educational Psychology service, working alongside teachers produced a range of materials that supported the mental health of returning children. This work has continued.
- In addition, an online working group was created that provided further guidance to schools about educating pupils while they were unable to attend.
- Finally, a further working group provided advice to school clusters on transition arrangements from Year 6 to Year 7.

The recovery curriculum approach

- I. supported teachers to identify and address the most significant gaps in pupils learning.
- II. provided materials and training for teachers to support the mental health needs of returning pupils.
- III. stressed the importance and gave practical advice on pupils becoming physically active.

What is the impact?

- The Recovery Curriculum materials have received significant praise from school leaders and teachers. The materials have helped schools to accelerate pupils learning as much as possible following the lockdowns. The approach to recovery over a longer period of time rather than short term “catch up” has proved successful and is ongoing.
- Received extremely positive feedback from Cath Hitchen, DfE SEND Adviser, on the impact of the materials on those pupils with additional needs.

0-19 Service - Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT)

- At the start of lockdown the Business Continuity Plan and Safeguarding Risk assessments were developed by 0-19 (25) and Safeguarding Specialist Services, prioritising safeguarding contacts and ensuring that safeguarding was a key focus and threaded through all virtual and face to face contacts.
- Named Nurse key member of the governance structure which included daily Covid meetings and local daily management huddles working closely together in integrated management teams to manage risk.
- Development of Clinical Advisory Groups were developed to provide the clinical governance to ensure quick safe decision making and the weekly Named Nurse Clinical Advisory Group ensured that safeguarding issues were quickly addressed, and risk was monitored regularly.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

TWFRS Station Manager now represents fire service on the GSCP, contributing on our behalf, and bringing learning and best practice to the Service.

Learning and improvement

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review – Baby Alfie

A Rapid Review Meeting was held by Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership in January 2021. This was in response to an incident where a young baby, who will be referred to in this report as Alfie, suffered significant injuries whilst in the care of his mother and her partner. The Rapid Review Meeting identified the need to undertake a Learning Review. The National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel subsequently agreed there was value in undertaking a Learning Review and requested that it was published as a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

An independent reviewer was identified in September 2021 to undertake the review and a multi-agency learning review workshop was held in October 2021. The final report will be presented and agreed by the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership and then shared with the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) Panel and What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care (WWCSC) and published on our website (in line with [statutory guidance](#)). Learning from the LSCPR will be shared across the partnership. An action plan is being developed and will be overseen by the Quality, Learning and Practice group, with regular updates to GSCP.

Transitional Safeguarding

Gateshead and South Tyneside Safeguarding Partnerships joined forces to organise a regional transitional safeguarding workshop which took place on 23rd February 2021. This was opened by Steve Baguley from the National Working Group, and the keynote speech was provided by Dez Holmes from Research in Practice. Over 170 senior leaders from across the Northumbria and Durham areas attended. National and regional best practice was shared, and senior leaders from Gateshead had the opportunity to come together to discuss our approach and what we need to focus upon in the future.

Fifteen scoping workshops have been held with front line practitioners from children and adults social care to understand issues and gaps associated with the wider transitions agenda. Work is ongoing across all sub-groups to drive forward improvements to transitional safeguarding based upon the identified learning – Transitional Safeguarding is going to be a priority focus for GSCP over the next three years.

Information Sharing

Local, regional and national case reviews and audits consistently highlight the need to clarify when and how information can and should be shared; missed opportunities to record, understand the significance of and share information in a timely manner can have serious consequences for the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk. It is essential that collaborative working and good information sharing is established throughout agencies, at all levels, which is then embedded through effective safeguarding practice.

The new [Information Sharing Protocol](#) (ISP) and [flowchart](#) has been developed to address information sharing both at strategic level and operational level within the arenas of Safeguarding Children and Adult Safeguarding. It is intended that agencies with the potential to be involved in safeguarding investigations will sign up to the use of this protocol. This protocol is agreed with the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Learning from other reviews

All national reviews and regional case reviews are discussed at GSCP and any learning relevant for Gateshead is implemented. This includes reviewing our procedures and training offer and making changes, where necessary. As we share regional safeguarding procedures, we can make sure this is implemented across the six areas.

Procedures

Our shared regional multi-agency safeguarding procedures are available [online](#) and managed by tri.x; we have the opportunity to make updates to the manual twice each year. If procedures need to be updated following learning from a case review, these can be implemented immediately. Any amendments to procedures/protocols agreed locally are also shared across the six areas and incorporated into the shared procedures, where possible. This offers consistency for partner agencies working across the wider region. The GSCP Business Manager also helps manage other online procedures (Children's Social Care, Children's Homes, Foster Carer Handbook) so can ensure any learning is incorporated within these too.

Pre-birth thresholds and flowchart

We changed the local process regarding unborn babies to avoid undue pressure on parents in the early stages of pregnancy by placing unborn children on CP too early. IMPACT: Unborn children subject to CPP - reduced from 9.2% to 6.7%

NEW Local Child Safeguarding Review – Framework and Practice Guidance

- This guidance provides GSCP with a framework for the commissioning and dissemination of learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- It also sets out process for Serious Incident Notifications and Rapid Reviews (and replaces the previous guidance).

The SAB have adapted our rapid review process and forms.

NEW Learning Methodology Framework

- Sets out four standard methods of extracting and acting upon learning.
- Is applicable to cases where there are examples of good practice for learning across the partnership, but which may provide scope for learning from which service delivery may be improved.
- OR for cases that do not meet the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

This framework has been used to review three cases, and actions have been incorporated into our Safeguarding Practice Review action plan.

Children's Society's Report [*Children's lives in: Gateshead*](#) - Report provides information on the needs of children and young people living in Gateshead. This report was shared with GSCP at the meeting in November 2020. We discussed the local data and the recommendations for Local Authorities to consider and evidence what we are doing already, and if there was anything more we needed to do as a partnership.

Police

Within the Strategic Innovation Partnership (SIP) team there is a dedicated Detective Inspector who has the responsibility to manage and oversee internal and external learning and improvement. The Detective Inspector attends all learning and improvement/quality improvement subgroups to ensure a corporate and consistent approach to learning and improvement.

The Detective Inspector reviews all SCR / DHR / SAB / MAPPA reviews to identify internal and external learning and manages our response to this to ensure learning is embedded in policy and practice and learned throughout the force. The Detective Chief Inspector also sits on the Child Death Review panel to identify any areas for learning from cases and from learning reports.

0-19 Service – Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT)

The Specialist Safeguarding Children's Team supported staff through supervision and training and the development of the Family health Needs assessment/ Risk Assessment documentation.

In response to the increase in injuries to babies under 12 months we rolled out the [ICON](#) initiative:



- ☐ Vicarious Trauma training was offered/delivered to staff in response to the trauma of dealing with more difficult and complex safeguarding cases. This training is now a routine element of all Level 3 safeguarding training and HDFT have delivered this training to multi agency partners.
- ☐ Development of the Safeguarding Digital Offer alongside the 0-19 digital offer to raise the profile of Children's Safeguarding across HDFT.
- ☐ Preceptorship pathway to support safeguarding nurses and new staff embedded into practice.
- ☐ Development of e-learning workbooks to increase training options.
- ☐ Training compliance within 0-19 services has remained consistently high. In response to the social distancing requirements, training was converted to e-workbooks and overall, these were positively evaluated. Three large training events Learning from CSRs and COVID and Impact on Safeguarding were delivered via Teams and captured large audiences.
- ☐ Development of role for Band 5 Staff Nurses into the safeguarding team not requiring specialist Children's Public health Nurse qualification to allow for skill mix teams

CCG

Nationally there has been an increase in babies suffering physical abuse from non-accidental injuries since the start of the pandemic. The CCG safeguarding children team has facilitated the roll out of [ICON](#) a programme which offers techniques for coping with crying, reducing abusive head trauma and death, targeted at both parents but particularly fathers, as they are more likely to be perpetrators of this type of abuse. The Safeguarding team has worked with local health providers including the acute hospitals and primary care and the local authority to promote this programme by delivering a training package and providing resources. This will continue to be embedded and its impact evaluated.

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear

CNTW safeguarding team attend the Quality, Learning and Practice and cascade the learning back into the organisation through our safer care directorate. Internal learning also takes place, as we complete LAAR and AAR reviews as a part of our SUI process, where we have to report out and evidence the learning is embedded and measure the quality impact of this.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

TYFRS created new Safeguarding procedures and referral forms, with support from GSCP. These new standardised procedures for all five local authorities in Tyne and Wear have improved the number, quality and consistency of referrals.

Gateshead Council

- Social workers work to clearly understood standards of practice. The service has now embedded these practice standards.
- There are individual service performance standards which clearly articulate the practice expectations of social workers and assist to ensure a consistency of practice across the whole service.
- The service works collaboratively with many parents and families. The impact of this is the number of statutory complaints received by the Service continues to be low and exceeded by compliments.

“Hello, I would like to express my thanks to [social workers name] for the input she has had with my children and I recently. I felt she was very caring and compassionate, and provided some much-needed support and advice in my current situation. She was excellent with my children and made them feel very at ease. Thank you.” **from a parent who was helped by Children’s Social Care**

□ Family Group Conferencing (FGC)

Expanded Family Group Conferencing (FGC) services - intervention central to strength-based approach to working with families

What have we done?

- A consultation has taken place across Children’s Social Care, Early Help and Independent Reviewing Officers to review the existing FGC offer, a strategy outlines clear expectations and development of working practices and skills to expand the FGC approach across the spectrum of children’s services.
- Our ambition is that a more robust and consistent approach to FGC will reduce the number of children becoming looked after, reduce the number of families re-entering services and enable families to feel more empowered to support themselves and each other.
- To date the Family Group Conference Team have adapted well to the initial challenges of remote working and successfully continue to facilitate FGC in this way. Consultation with families has concluded that remote engagement has worked well, sustaining a family led approach with families taking back control of their journey and being central to all decision making regarding them. Capturing the child’s/ young person’s voice has been given equal priority.
- Face-to-face conferences have been reinstated and a hybrid model of including remote coordination is offered depending on the needs of the family.
- Coordinators are once more able to work with children in Children’s Centre where they have a range of toys and resources to help and encourage the children to gain a level of trust with them where they feel comfortable to tell their story.
- A schedule for FGC participation in the various social care team meetings is in place with the team paying particular attention to family readiness to undertake FGC within their presentations. In addition, our Senior FGC practitioner participates in weekly Complex Child in Need Team Unit meetings to identify where FGC or mediation would be appropriate.
- Implementation of an FGC “opt out” model is underway across Children’s Services. Relationship building with colleagues is developing well and a shared understanding of access to FGC support is progressing. Where families engage in FGC, the feedback is positive and results in less need for repeated service involvement. Service user feedback has highlighted the “ownership” the process affords them and appreciation for the respectful approach from the team. Encouraging and supporting engagement to FGC is being driven through the team who demonstrate a real passion and belief in the outcomes for families.

What is the impact?

- Referrals made to the service have increased - For referrals since the start of 2021 just under 32% have been made at the point where a CIN assessment or CIN plan is in place.
- In relation to closures, where the case has been allocated for FGC it is a positive that 49.49% of closures from April to September have been deemed successful with this figure in the period November - April being 43.96%.
- Overall, in the 12-month period 46.84% have been closed with the outcome FGC Successful.

Feedback from Families

- ☞ *"The service is a fantastic service available to help parents and stepparents be able to communicate and co parent the right way without the added drama and conflict. This helped massively as it was my first-time meeting mam of my stepson 8. During covid 19 we had a telephone conference which still allowed us to discuss contact and be able to move forward. A little tricky when there are probably more than 3-4 people on a telephone conference call. Other than that the service is fantastic"*
- ☞ *"My children are on a CP plan and the FGC has helped me understand things better and my family are now helping me"*
- ☞ *"They all said they were really anxious beforehand and through it would be a disaster. They said that without the FGC they would never have been able to discuss some of the issues they had and they were able to put some facts straight. Mam said that the family had been at war and they can now start to move forward."*
- ☞ *"Communication and cooperation from their dad is better"*
- ☞ *"It was a highly stressful time for the whole family and emotions ran high during the first meeting however the family came away with a plan that worked extremely well and the feedback was that the stresses had been reduced and maternal grandparents had a plan that supported them to care for the children very well. If it wasn't for the FGC family members wouldn't have been aware of the support wider family were willing to offer and it meant that the family placement was successful."*
- ☞ *"Service helped me see my daughter"*
- ☞ *"From the moment you came into to my home, you put me at ease and made me feel comfortable, in what was a very difficult situation. I felt that you could relate to me as an individual and how I was feeling and helped to calm any anxieties that I encountered "*
- ☞ *"The family meetings that you arranged were informal, in terms of the fact you made us, as a family, feel welcomed whilst retaining a professional manner at all times. However, you remained professional and approachable throughout. "*

- ☐ Recent Ofsted focused visit found performance management is rigorous. Senior leaders have an accurate grip on frontline practice, supported by reliable real-time data.
- ☐ Leaders at all levels regularly investigate variances and emerging concerns in monthly performance clinics, chaired by the deputy strategic director. For example, a monthly missing-from-care meeting led by the senior management team identified that the number of children engaging in their missing-from-care interviews was not good enough. Consequently, a dedicated missing-from-care coordinator post has been created and this is beginning to make a substantial difference.

- Another example of this, is the increase in number of children going missing from children's homes, this was picked up at a performance clinic and also raised by police; this led to children's plans and risk assessments being reviewed, and the police missing coordinator being invited to attend staff meetings at the LA's children's homes. This also prompted the review and update of the local missing protocol and development of a more detailed exploitation screening tool.

The GSCP Business Manager attends children's social care performance clinics, to ensure any emerging concerns that require a multi-agency response are picked up, and any safeguarding risks shared with the statutory safeguarding partners.

Supporting our children and care leavers

The service is committed to learning from the experiences of children who are re-admitted to care, to prevent this happening to other children which includes considering the circumstances through discussions at performance clinics. As a result, our rate of children who become looked after for a second or subsequent time remains low and has reduced.

The Sufficiency Strategy and Fostering Recruitment Strategy show we need to do more to recruit long term foster carers to meet increased demand, which has become more acute with the recent increases in children in care, and we are seeking to develop more in house residential capacity in recognition of the positive impact our services and homes can have on the lives of our young people.

Opened new children's home in middle of pandemic

What have we done

- Opened a new children's Home July 2020.
- Ofsted inspection July 2021. The home was rated Good with no requirements.
- Young people placed and making progress in all areas of their lives.
- Therapeutic ways of working have been utilised.

What is the impact



- Children are placed within Gateshead and can attend their local school and maintain friendships and family relationships.
- Young people are supported well by professionals in their lives.
- Young people feel safe and cared for.
- Staff are committed to achieving best possible outcomes and take their responsibility as corporate parents very seriously.

Positives highlighted in Ofsted report 2021

- A range of professionals commented on the high level of care and attention to detail the manager and the staff apply to the care of the children, which supports the progress children make.
- The management team have aspirations for the children, which are evident in the work undertaken within the home.

- Staff work well with other professionals to achieve best outcomes for the young people and proactively take part in care team meetings.
- Staff celebrate children's achievements and as a result, children are excelling.
- Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are thorough, resulting in children feeling safe and secure within the home.

□ Established a Kinship Care Team

Kinship Care Team

What have we done

- **Gateshead Council** have established a Kinship Care Team, as of June 2021 with a team of Social Workers and Family Advocates appointed throughout the summer.
- We have a commissioning arrangement with Kinship (formerly Grandparents Plus) to assist us with responding to the needs of Kinship Carers and now offering a host of independent services for Kinship Carers to access.
- We now deliver a bespoke service delivered solely to the needs of Kinship Carers and to children in Kinship placements.
- We have established links with the Kinship community and have developed the community network of Kinship Carers.

What is the impact

- Having a dedicated team to work with Kinship carers is improving outcomes for young people as they are living with their own family networks and communities with carers who have comprehensive and timely support. Whilst this can be challenging given the complex family dynamics, the team are supporting kinship carers to understand behaviours, help them deal with daily challenges and adapt their parenting style in order to get the best outcomes for the children and young people they are caring for
- All assessments for prospective Kinship Carers are completed by a Social Worker independent to the child's Social Worker, this supports a more robust assessment process now ensuring an additional Social Worker and Team Manager to the assessment process, assisting with critical reflection and scrutiny to the care planning for the child.
- As all assessments for prospective Kinship Carers are completed within the one team this offers consistency in assessment outcomes, expectations and supports to the carers etc.
- All those Kinship Carers considering a Special Guardian Order are offered the opportunity to attend a preparation course, delivered independently by Kinship, supported by a presentation by a Local Authority representative.
- Kinship Carers at Gateshead are now able to access the same training programme offered to Foster Carers, this is to any Kinship Carer irrespective of when their journey began.
- Children in Kinship Care placements are able to access the Blue Cabin Therapeutic Life Story work, the establishment of the Kinship Care Team supports children to attend when the time is right for them, and they do not have to have an allocated Safeguarding Social Worker for this.
- We have listened and acted on the views of our Kinship community and re-established links between the Local Authority and our Kinship Carers.
- Support groups with attendance from a Local Authority representative take place twice per month. At half term additional activities take place to include the children.

- An additional Focus Group takes place monthly, facilitated by the Local Authority to bring Kinship Carers together to discuss relevant topics – Family Time, Life Story and share the experience within the room.
- Due to the recent surge in Covid cases our support groups have moved to walks, ensuring our links to Kinship Carers remain, helping to address feelings of isolation and ensuring a creative response despite the demands of the pandemic.
- The network between the Local Authority is supported by regular email updates and posts via the Gateshead Kinship Carers Facebook page.
- Through our commissioning arrangement with Kinship we are able to reflect and continue to learn how best to meet the needs of our carers, with the offer of project support on a 1:1 basis through Kinship Connected and telephone advice or guidance through Kinship Membership.
- With two dedicated Family Advocates, Kinship Carers and the children in their care are able to receive support, advice and guidance to assist with the assessment process and to support placement stability.
- Family Advocates are able to provide support to Kinship Carers, irrespective of the child's needs, allowing for emotional or practical support to be offered if the Kinship Carers own needs require this, therefore the children do not have to be open to services.

Feedback from Kinship;

It has been an honour to work collaboratively with such an approachable and forward-thinking team. The passion to improve services and support special guardians and kinship carers is evident. The team has taken every opportunity to consult with kinship carers and our senior project worker to ensure that support is provided in a manner which is inclusive and with families.

The team is always quick to respond to any queries and has gone over and above to ensure that kinship carers have been able to access digital devices to attend the Kinship Ready workshops. A member of the team is always present throughout the workshops which has supported the building of positive and sustainable relationships with families. Best Wishes, Ancha Stoodley – Regional Programmes Manager, Kinship

Feedback from an established Kinship Carer who joined a Focus Group;

I'll defo be there thanks for info much appreciated felt like had a rant at the group.. but suppose everyone in the room was saying exactly the same or more or less in same situation. Mark is coming out on Wednesday to me too I'm so grateful I've eventually found some support and people in the same position as us. I'm usually not a moaning person just loads going on at moment & it's feels massive that there is someone to help me or direct me in the right direction.

8.2 Thematic Priorities

Voice of the child

As set out in our safeguarding plan re engagement '*Partners will make use of the existing systems, **groups and forums to gather the views of children and families to encourage children to have their say, share their views and experiences, challenge and support local decision makers and shape and influence strategic planning, commissioning and service provision.***' This is also an area subject to scrutiny (as set out in WT2018).

We sent out a survey to start mapping out participation of children and young people, across Gateshead. In this context, participation means children and young people engaging in decision-making processes, not accessing a broader range of activities in the community.

Mapping out participation groups will hopefully help us to:

- consult with young people (including specific groups, when required), to influence review of the safeguarding plan and related activities.
- Develop outreach (engagement) strategy to ensure that those impacted most by safeguarding concerns are aware of their right to be safeguarded and to play a part in developing initiatives to prevent, respond to and report about safeguarding threats.
- Explore opportunities for children and young people to lead or co-lead safeguarding initiatives; safeguarding training for adults and children; and attending/giving input into relevant meetings, working groups, and subgroups.

Gateshead Youth Assembly – Annual update

Like everyone else, from March 2020 Gateshead Youth Assembly went online. It was tricky at first but thanks to funding from the Port of Tyne Authority via the Tyne and Wear Community Foundation we were able to deliver our IMPACT course online instead of face to face which gave us an anchor for our weekly Zoom sessions.

We managed to deliver personal development sessions and our annual Holocaust Memorial Sessions as well as weekly quizzes (with prizes!).

By the start November 2020 we had got to grips with running most things online and our recruitment saw ten brand new members which wasn't bad considering we couldn't get into schools to recruit!

We had sessions with specialist officers around Hate Crime, Gateshead's Covid response and HRH Earl of Wessex around how we have managed to keep going with volunteering during lockdown. Our Co-Chairs represented all of Gateshead's Young People at a virtual Remembrance Day service in November 2020.

As a couple of our members were in family bubbles with our support staff we were able to meet in our building and put together a range of packs over the year including 100 period packs for asylum seeking girls and young women, 200 back to school stationary packs, Easter Eggs, 60 culturally appropriate food bags for both Eid, and selection boxes at Christmas, we think we filled over 700 bags for life between April 2020 and Sept 2021 this equates to over £3000 of goods, all fundraised by GYA members.

February 2021 saw us start to publish our weekly Happiness Bulletin which was aimed at anyone needing a smile. It was written by young people but not aimed at young people, we pinched the idea from a group of students at Newcastle College who launched something similar, to cheer their lecturers up – we are more than happy to pass on the credit. We stopped doing the bulletins when we went back to school but restarted as a monthly bulletin in December 2021.

We got back to careful, socially distanced in person sessions during Summer 2021 and we can tell you – we needed it! Online is better than nothing but it's not the same. Our first few sessions were just chat and getting back in touch and getting to know the new young people who had spent almost a year on GYA without actually meeting anyone!

We managed to have a residential! Really! 15 of us went to Minsteracres and spent three days having fun, planning our next year, finishing off projects and working with Tor from Northumbria Police on a session to be delivered to a group of lads who thought it was OK to sexually shame women walking past them!

Police

It is essential that the first response police officers not only identify risk, but they take time to talk to children at any incident they attend. It is important that officers speak to the child/children to gain an understanding of how the incident has affected them, to obtain their thoughts and feelings and to obtain a view of their home life situation. The purpose of this is to notify both partner agencies and specialists within protecting vulnerable people of the risk identified and the 'voice of the child' in order that appropriate action can be instigated. This is done by completing a Child Concern Notification, which is then risk assessed by the MASH, and securely emailed to the relevant Children's Services.

Northumbria Police continue to promote in force our "Through the Eyes of a child" campaign as part of our frontline response to domestic abuse incidents. A force definition of Child to Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA) has been produced and agreed by all LA areas and we are in the process of signing off our internal procedures and developing training for front line officers in relation to their response to CPVA.

Gateshead Council

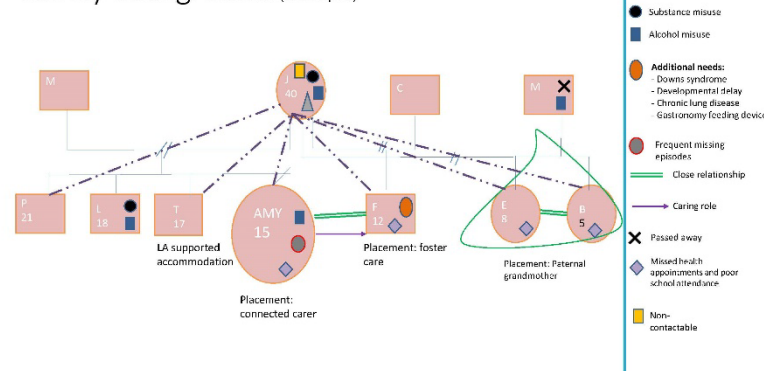
Child and family views are routinely captured. Wishes and feelings of children are used to inform plans for their future. **Impact** - more families work with us collaboratively and receive support that is effective. New case management system, MOSAIC, ensures voice of the child is always explicit in the work.



A variety of imaginative ways to engage with child used by workers which results in us building trusting meaningful relationships.

Following systemic practice training, use of genograms, as an intervention, is widely embedded across the workforce.

Family Background (example)



Voice of the Child Audit: Looked After Children's Six Month Reviews

32 children's cases randomly selected

Key Points Examined	Key findings	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The method of participation•Were the child's views recorded and reflected•Has the social worker acted on recommendations•The child's views of the review•The recording of the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•We don't always ask the basics (where should meeting be, who should be there etc)•More recordings are being written to the child directly•Consultation documents are rarely used and when they are, unsure where they are they being saved.•Following the process already in place, ensures child's views are actioned and followed up in most recent care/pathway plans.•More IRO's are visiting/speaking to children before review. Including use of facetime and email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Understand the barriers to attendance and what impact Covid 19 as had on participation.•Go back to basics! Where, when, who, etc?•Ensure review recommendations include what the child wants to happen, being explicit, so that this is followed up in care plan.•Review of Consultation Document and Process.•Further roll out of writing all plans and reviews to the child.•Work with One Voice about the use of our Language.•Continued use of video calls and other communication methods post covid.

A summary of findings were discussed at the GSCP meeting along with an update of progress against the recommendations. Partners have seen a number of examples of reviews and plans, letters etc being written to the child, and commended the IRO team for this. Feedback from children and young people has been very positive and has led to better engagement. Social Workers are also doing this now (for reports etc) and are really committed to moving towards a narrative model for communicating with children.

There is a task and finish group looking at how to incorporate narrative practice approaches across the whole service. The GSCP Business Manager is part of the group, with a view to this being rolled out across the partnership.

Young ambassadors

The use of LAC and Care Leaver ambassadors is increasingly seen as good practice and adds value to already established processes by embedding the voice of the child into them, through direct involvement in key service activity.

The council has recently employed three **Young Ambassadors** who will each work six hours per week. They will act as role models for young people and be ambassadors for children in care and care leavers in various meetings and forums. They will also support and promote the Children in Care Council and support children and young people in care across the region to promote involvement.

The plan is for the ambassadors to be assigned to a workstream of the Corporate Parenting Partnership, to work with the chair and working group to ensure that young people are involved in quality assuring everything we do, whilst ensuring that children and young people's views are heard.

The workstreams are:



The ambassadors will also be linked to a group of the council and have a responsibility to guide that group and its Strategic Director in their corporate parenting responsibilities.

Gateshead Council - SEND Service

SEND Service has proactively and conscientiously developed direct practice and recording methods towards capturing and recording the voice of the child. This has included:

- ☐ Person Centred planning training with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and ‘Developing Outcomes using the Support Sequence’.
- ☐ Learner view forms are an integral part of all EHCP reviews processes.
- ☐ SENDCO training and SENDCO network consistently emphasises the principles of person-centred planning and being led and focussed upon person centred outcomes.
- ☐ Delivering Person Centred reviews for post 16 learners to better plan and deliver their transition into employment, independently living, being part of their community and being healthy.
- ☐ Completing a participation audit and action planning the strengthening for areas requiring improvement.
- ☐ Co-production and launch of a ‘SEND Participation’ strategy is a commitment for 2022.
- ☐ Formation and development of a [SEND Youth Forum](#) – with [accessible minutes](#) available.

Relaunch parent / carer forum (SEND)

What have we done?

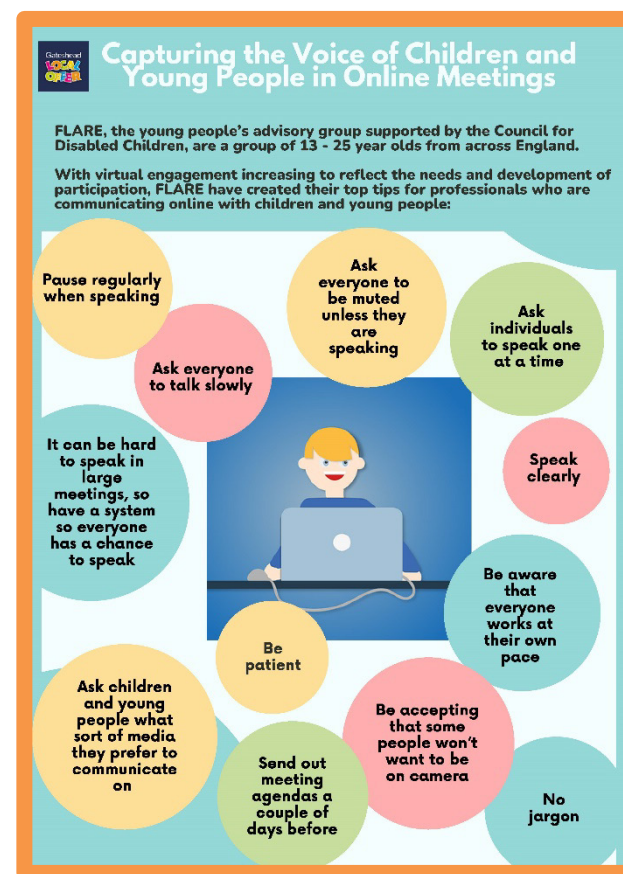
- Worked with Contact to revamp PCF and also to increase funding and budget to hire admin support for PCF.
- Held ballots to elect new Chairperson and Vice Chair/ Co chairs and carried out recruitment drive for members.
- Implemented PCF website and Facebook page, monthly PCF meetings with SEND key lead to create action plan/ monitor actions and monthly PCF meetings with practitioners from Education, Health and Social Care to answer key questions raised by parents via the Forum.
- PCF now represented across council strategy groups (SEND Strategy Board, subgroups across Health, Social Care and Education).
- Held 2 Family Fun Days to increase recruitment and awareness. Set up training and development plan for PCF 2021-2022.

What is the impact?

- Increased reach across the borough and ability to respond to enquiries, formulated roles within the PCF and defined responsibilities.
- Increased parental voice, overall reach across the borough and capacity to fulfil roles and take part in meetings at every level.
- Increased reach across the borough and provided alternative methods for parents to communicate and raise any enquiries.
- A joint approach to training, development and identifying actions- feeds directly into strategy.
- Created a direct communication link and joint approach to improve services for all. Provides a quick response to any emerging enquiries. Built on positive relationships.
- Further improved co production and joint working at every level of the organisation.
- Increased PCF membership and awareness of PCF work.
- Improved understanding of SEND for all parents within Gateshead.
- Increased confidence for Parent representatives and increased membership due to investment.

FLARE (young people's advisory group supported by the [Council for Disabled Children](#)) are a group of 13 - 25 year olds from across England.

With virtual engagement increasing to reflect the needs and development of participation, **FLARE** have created their top tips for professionals who are communicating online with children and young people:



Digital Skills Group's experience of lockdown..

Gateshead Council's SEND Involvement Worker worked with a group of young people from the Dryden Centre's Digital Skills group to try and capture their views and experiences of lockdown. The group talked about their experiences of the COVID pandemic and lockdown. Their feedback was turned into two pieces of Word Art – one a representation of positive experiences, one a negative representation.

What was difficult during lockdown?



Doing work at home I enjoy working at college more
Not seeing my friends because I'm working at home
Not being able to go to the shops
Not sitting next to each other in class
Wearing face coverings
Not seeing family
Not going to people's house
Feel frightened to cuddle your family when you are upset
Not being able to go to the cinema

Things that have helped make you happy



Doing art / colouring in
Coming into college
Song writing / Watching TV / Listening to music / Watching
films
Internet shopping
Taking the dog for a walk / My pets make me happy!
Performing arts – singing, dancing, acting, drama
Watching Boris for good news!
Youth club online
Chocolate!
Helping mam with housework

Direct work with children in care and care leavers

Social workers and personal advisers have good relationships with children in care and care leavers. Good contact maintained over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, increased visiting and contact frequency based on assessed levels of need or risk. Face-to-face contact has been maintained throughout.

Statutory performance data, published weekly to managers and senior managers for oversight, confirms the majority of children are visited within statutory timescales. Monthly data provided to the Department for Education³, confirms contact with young people has been regular throughout.

Voice of child – in assessments, plans and reviews

- ☐ Embedded Gateshead CAN model.
- ☐ Introduced Therapeutic Life Story Work.
- ☐ Implemented new management information system, MOSAIC ensures voice of child at centre of recording practice.

Therapeutic Life Story work

What have we done?

- Starting in January 2021 we launched the Blue Cabin life story work model. This is a collaboration to ensure that Gateshead deliver consistent high quality life story work to all the children and young people in our care. This has also involved two other partnering local authorities South Tyneside and Darlington.
- The project has included staff training and access to an online training and resource platform and most excitingly of all creative life story work experiences for children, young people and their carers facilitated by highly skilled therapeutic artists.
- The training topics covered have include work around attachment, trauma, recovery and what creative life story means in practice. in total 147 sessions have been attended by staff. In addition to this training, 127 staff have accessed the online resource and training platform to learn more about creative life story work and to get ideas about how to do this in practice with children, young people, and their carers.
- 23 children involved with carers in creative experience sessions to date.
 - sessions group based, consist of 6 sessions, online or face to face. This is the first time that any of these sessions have been delivered online and this has been an eye-opening journey. It has given us some great ideas about how we can embed this practice between the three local authorities involved and this will form part of the focus on the next steps when the project concludes in March 2022.
 - trained 4 staff in the therapeutic life story work diploma and have another member of staff undertaking this training this year. These staff will be used to ensure that we can have a sustainable training model and they will also be able to offer more intensive sessions for children and young people who may require 1-1 therapeutic support around their understanding of their life story.
- The aim of the project is to support local authorities in having a better understanding on a model for the consistent delivery of high quality, meaningful life story work for children and young people in their care. The aim following the ending of this What Works Children's Social Care project is that we have a sustainable model that we can use within Gateshead but that also involves our partners Blue Cabin (Not for Profit Organisation delivering the online training and creative experiences) as well as South Tyneside and Darlington local authorities.

³ Department for Education Vulnerable children and young people survey

- This project has had a profound impact on practice within Gateshead. Especially in relation to the consideration of the language we use and the way in which we write and create assessments, plans and case records for our children, young people, and families. As a result, we are also delivering training to all social work staff around the use of narrative approaches to practice and the aim is that all assessments and plans are written in this way by October 2022.
- The training project and materials have been shared with Professor Richard Rose who has been completing the training related to his model of life story work. Professor Richard Rose is also providing critical friend support around the implementation of these changes in practice and his feedback has been very complimentary and helpful.

What is the impact?

- Staff are more confident in completing life story work and by the end of the project we will have evidence about the way life story work is undertaken with children and young people.
- This will give us an organisational framework and best practice guidance for staff that will ensure that all children and young people in our care are supported to explore and understand issues around their life story, their identity and sense of self.
- Children, young people, and their carers have the space, support, and time to explore these issues together which in turn enhances their existing relationships and helps to secure and maintain children and young people in their foster homes.

These are some anonymised quotes from children and young people who have undertaken the creative experiences.

- 💬 *"Thank you, this has been great and so much fun. I loved being in a small group, so everyone got a chance to speak and share their opinions."*
- 💬 *"I enjoyed the sessions very much and loved being able to express my thoughts and ideas to the rest of the group."*
- 💬 *"I have enjoyed every second of it... I know now know I can learn from making mistakes."*

The following are some anonymised quotes from carers who have been involved in the sessions.

- 💬 *"Firstly, can I say how much we have enjoyed being part of the AAM project... Each session gave me and 'YP' some focused 1-1 time which was so valuable. No negatives from me and would recommend to all other carers."*
- 💬 *"My 'YP' felt safe enough to share her emotions and experiences which is something she doesn't always like to do. It provoked little chats between us around things my YP can change for the better and it's helped her not to dwell on the negatives from her past so much... Would like to pass on my thanks, this was a great experience."*
- 💬 *"Firstly, I was apprehensive about the sessions as my YP has had abuse and loss in his past... I was reassured by Therapeutic SW that safeguards were in place and soon found sessions were relaxed and fun. In therapeutic terms we found that sessions helped us do things together like speaking about and recognising feelings and being able to put these into words... YP was initially anxious about speaking with others in the group, but we have reflected since and he is definitely more confident as a result."*
- 💬 *"Sessions have definitely helped the girls talk about their feelings."*

- The impact of this project will continue to be measured through specific auditing of life story work on children's case files, discussions with children and young people and our children rights group. We will also monitor this through our data looking specifically at the impact on placement stability for our children and young people.

Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Each child that is referred to CNTW has an assessment process, and within that we have individualised care plans, where we ask and learn from the child what helps for them. As a part of this as the child improves, we look at creating a WRAP plan, which looks at what keeps them well, and then moving into a moving on care plan. All capturing the voice of the child and what they would like to see as a good outcome.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

TWFRS have initiated plans to ensure each young person that we engage with on our Juvenile Firesetters Education Programme has the opportunity to speak to staff without parents being in the room. This has often happened dynamically but will become standard practice in 2022.

CCG – Children, Young People and Families Service

- ☐ An engagement working group which brings together the CCG, Local Authority and wider health colleagues has been established to support joint working when reviewing services and listening to young people.
- ☐ A newsletter, outlining the work of the Gateshead System, is now sent out quarterly.
- ☐ A new SEND newsletter (which aims to provide valuable information around the SEND services that are available) is sent out to parent/carers each term.

Mentimeter

During covid and the impact of non-face to face working, it was noticeable that we needed to communicate with children, young people, parent/carers and professionals in a virtual way, which is where we discovered Mentimeter.

Mentimeter is an engagement tool which allows users to use live polls, Q&As and open responses to support engagement and interaction through-out meetings, events, training, and workshops gaining fast responses from the audience.

The application also links into MS Teams, Zoom and other video conferencing platforms.

After the session has finished, you are able to download all responses straight to Excel, which is great for evaluation questions.

We have 20 licenses in the CCG.

Case study – Becky (not real name)

Becky had been in the care system for 4 years and (as is routine for children in Gateshead who are leaving care) she was given an opportunity to sit with a Nurse from the Looked After Children's team to go through her health history. It was apparent that Becky had attended the unscheduled settings at Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 38 occasions in a relatively short space of time. Becky told the Nurse that many of those attendances were related to the physical abuse she experienced prior to coming into care.

Although there was evidence of good practice in relation to safeguarding, Becky was asked what we could have done better here at QEH. Becky told us that she was not offered an opportunity to be seen alone. She said that she was scared at home and was fearful about speaking up about the violence she experienced on an almost daily basis. Becky also said she might not have told staff because of that fear but reflected that if she had been seen alone and made to feel safe she may well have told someone and been safe from harm sooner.

Since then, Becky has spoken about her experiences at the safeguarding committee, attended a safe care meeting and has also worked with the team including staff from Paediatrics and the unscheduled settings to look at how we give children an opportunity to be heard.

Becky has helped the team to look at the safeguarding children policy and to improve how we listen to young people. She is a remarkable 18-year-old who in her words 'just does not want anyone else's story to be like hers'. Becky also said we need to keep it simple! Where it is appropriate to, see young people alone and ask. Do you feel safe? and Are you safe at home?

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Police

Northumbria Police have an all-age Street Triage Service which is open to Children across region. The CNTW nurses and police officers who work on the service deploy to incidents of children in mental health crisis and have continued to provide a face to face service throughout the COVID pandemic. In the last 12 months our Street Triage officers have undertaken training in ACE's, learning disabilities and child exploitation to ensure they have a more holistic understanding of children's presenting behaviours.

The Street Triage service also ensure they are sighted on the impact of parental mental ill health on children and young people's mental health and make safeguarding referrals for children impacted by a parent or carers mental health crisis.

[Kooth](#) has been promoted within Central area command for front line officers in Response Policing and Neighbourhood Teams to use as a signposting tool for young people with mental health concerns.

In February 2021 Northumbria Police supported Children's mental health week, incorporating learning from National JTAI inspections. Internally we publicised the role of our Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Nurses in Custody who can support children who are suspected of an offence with their mental health. We also raised the importance of seeing an incident through the eyes of a child and ensuring that our officers focussed on Mental Health triage and interventions for Children rather than taking a Criminal Justice approach. Externally we put out the following media messages demonstrating to the public our support for Children's Mental Health.

Northumbria Police supporting Children's Mental Health Week

Struggling children whose poor mental health has pushed them towards self-harm and substance abuse have been promised support by police. Northumbria Police have pledged their support and said they use early intervention and education to help children and young people understand police and other professionals are there to support them in times of need. Detective Chief Inspector Lynne Colledge is leading the Force's activity for Children's Mental Health Week and says it's important children don't fear police but instead see them as a place to turn in a time of need. Comments from DCI Lynne Colledge and interview with Metro Radio.

This post had reached 32,303 people and received 1,334 engagements on our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/northumbriapolice/posts/10158025283446309>

Schools packages to help teachers in lockdown with children's mental health

We shared that online education packages for schools to help children and young people are being introduced by Northumbria Police in support of Children's Mental Health Week. Dedicated schools liaison officers have developed online packages for schools to access during lockdown which address matters such as self-esteem, forming healthy relationship, harm and exploitation. Everyday police officers are dealing with those in crisis and they want to focus on children and young people as well as adults. Community Advisor Nichola Bone who has been creating the packages features in the article.

This post had reached 39,452 people and received 628 engagements on our Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/26145041308/posts/10158041773756309/?d=n>

Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

CNTW's core business is mental health care and treatment, but to obtain the best outcome for the child, we consider the wellbeing of the family as a system. A think family approach, and the impact that mental ill health has upon the family as a system.

CYP Consultations for cared for children have continued throughout; 37 consultations for Gateshead children. Advice and recommendations were provided in all consultation sessions with resources being sent via email and summary letters being supplied. Once again only a minority required signposting or onward referral.

Feedback is now collected from professionals referring into this process and although a small response, most feedback is positive. All felt it was easy to arrange and useful to have this opportunity for in depth discussion. 75-83% felt it provided something different, was helpful to identify concerns, understand the impact of past experiences, clarified intervention to use and helped a specific aspect of the child's care plan. 67% found it was a timely response although there were comments about difficulty in accessing in a crisis. 92% felt consultations online were convenient.

Case study - CNTW

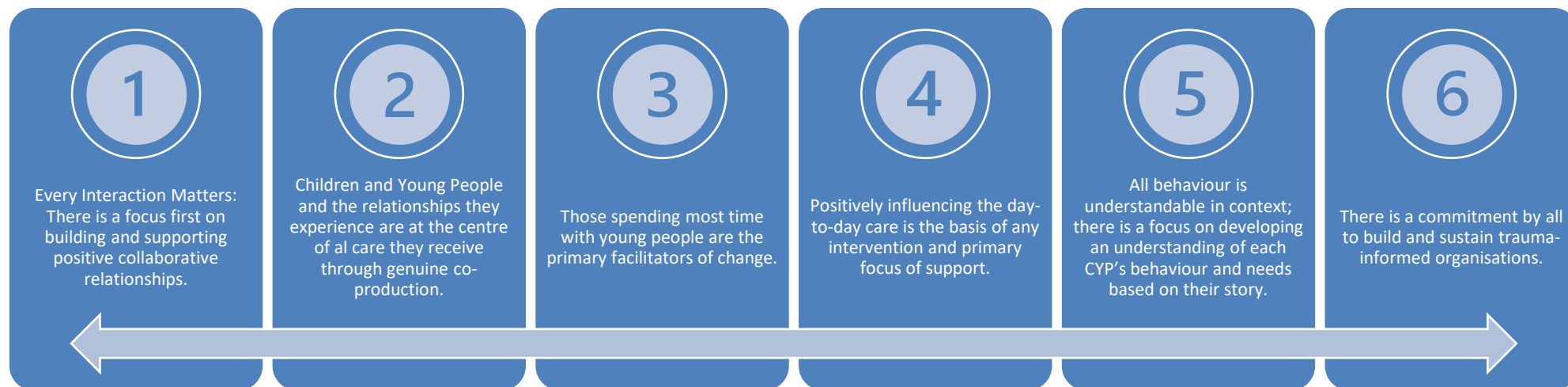
Young person with significant mental health needs who has previously required admission to a secure children's home and two admissions to a mental health inpatient service under the mental health act. In spite of consistent efforts to find an appropriate placement by the local authority, there have not

been any private providers who have been willing to accommodate this young person prior to her placement in local authority care. This has unfortunately resulted in instability in her care, which have exacerbated her mental health difficulties.

Although this young person continues to present with significant additional needs, they are currently receiving a better standard of care than any of the providers prior to this. The manager of the local authority care home worked closely with mental health inpatient services to achieve a safe, well-planned transition into the care home, taking into account advice around risk management from clinical services at all times. The care of this young person has required all agencies, including the police, acute health services, and mental health services to work closely together in partnership support this young person's safety.

Two practitioners with clinical expertise in trauma and mental health have now been recruited to work into the local authority residential care homes and will start in post in January 2022. The role of the Principal Clinical Psychologist and Advanced Practitioner will be to embed trauma-informed care within these environments, and provide training, assessment, formulation and signposting to appropriate services.

The practitioners will apply the **six principles** of the NHS England Framework for Integrated Care listed below:



The practitioners will also be responsible for creating a robust plan for data collection to demonstrate the positive outcomes of the service.

0-19 Service

Lockdowns resulted in an increase in parent and family stressors. There were increased pressures on families as a result of disrupted routines and behaviors; overcrowding; isolation from family support networks and financial pressures. Tensions in family relationships resulted in an escalation of domestic violence (*Safeguarding Children during COVID-19, 2020*). It is likely that these findings are a key contributor to the volume of cases requiring Integrated Response Team (IRT) assessment.

In response to the amount of time allocated to administration in the IRT, the implementation of a new process aimed at reducing the pressure and administration tasks of the SNCP and ensuring appropriate time and resource to the wider role within IRT was undertaken. This was implemented in March 2021 and will be evaluated in 2022.

Clinical Commissioning Group - Children Young People and Families Team

Work with schools - A few years ago the Year 9 GP assemblies programme was initiated to support the Sick & Injured Child pathway. The assemblies are to educate our young people about the local services a GP offers to help ensure they are mentally, emotionally and physically healthy. Also, to improve their knowledge on access to GPs as well as any confidentiality issues. Previously this has involved a GP attending a school assembly and delivering a short presentation to Year 9 pupils, offering the chance for Q&As – usually the assembly was no longer than 15 minutes. Obviously, due to Covid, during the last academic year we were unable to attend schools in person, so we delivered a presentation to some schools in Gateshead virtually. The presentation has now been updated to include changes in General Practice due to covid and this year we are presenting in collaboration with the North-East Engagement Lead from [Kooth](#).

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

TWFRS continued to engage with young people across Gateshead, and adapted its projects to reach young people in lockdown and beyond. This continued support included regular signposting to support services, including Kooth.

The Fire Cadet Friday Film Club was initiated early on and allowed young people to select a film available on streaming services and then watch it simultaneously with other Fire Cadets, chatting with other Cadets via social media.

We eventually moved to Virtual Fire Cadets in January 2021, offering sessions on firefighting, teamwork, personal development, enrichment and wellbeing. The virtual scavenger hunt around a fire station in Duxbury, Massachusetts was a huge success, which was then shared with fire and rescue services across the country.

We adapted our 12-week Prince's Trust Team Programme into a four-week online course, offering young people the opportunity to improve their teamwork, communication and employability skills. In September 2021, we relaunched our face-to-face teaching at fire stations and delivered the full 12-week programme once again, transporting young people from Gateshead to Sunderland to ensure they could engage with the programme and barriers to attendance were removed.

“During the initial online course, I didn't have much hope or care for it, it was just something to do while I looked for work. But after the first week or two I actually started to enjoy it and come out of my shell. The staff were really chill and managed to keep the work engaging and the group were all lovely and fun people to work with. Some of which I even keep in contact with to this day. When I heard the course was starting again in person, I was a lot more eager, as I had mainly been excited for the physical activities.

As someone who struggles with their mental health, the course helped give me something to look forward to, plus it finally got me away from the house. And when I started to struggle the Team made sure I was safe and let me know I could confide in them if I ever needed."

We were very keen to join participate in the Summer Family Fun Event in Birtley in August 2021. Youth Engagement staff and Operational Firefighters designed a programme on fire safety and firefighting activities.

TWFRS: Case Study – A.

A joined our first online course in February 2021. They had felt isolated during lockdown and did not feel comfortable turning their camera on for any group sessions for the duration for the four weeks. They completed the course, and when we resumed our face-to-face programme they were keen to join.

During the 12-week course A helped plant trees in Southwick, completed a work experience placement with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and took part in outdoor team building activities. In the last week of the course they performed a speech in front of over 50 people in person and online, including the Mayor of Sunderland and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Peter Heath, at the Prince's Trust Final Presentation.

They are now enrolled on the Level 2 Security & Events Professional Traineeships with the NGTC Group, an opportunity they were signposted to by staff on the course.

Clinical Commissioning Group - Children Young People and Families Team

Little Orange Book

The Little Orange Book was developed by CCG as a tool for parent/carers to manage their children's minor illnesses and for health care professionals in their ability to support them in this. The book is focused on acute illness in young children and helps parents and carers to recognise and then respond appropriately to a range of diseases, illness and conditions as well as signposting parents to the most appropriate service or clinician should they need further support.

The book has been in circulation for a number of years and parents/carers/schools and health professionals trust the publication and use the information provided.

"It can give advice before a problem arises and enables parents and carers to recognise when it's appropriate to access medical support"

The Little Orange Book has now been updated; the new edition provides up-to-date health advice and has new sections including one on Covid-19. It covers everything from common minor ailments like teething, constipation and colds, through to more serious conditions like measles and meningitis. The booklet uses a traffic light system to help parents and carers decide what action to take when their child is sick.

"A handy tool that arms parents and carers with information to help keep their kids well and prevent unnecessary trips to the GP or hospital."

The updated book was distributed to primary care, social care, schools, nurseries, Paeds, Maternity, 0-19 service, A&E and some VCS organisations. In previous years, pharmacies across Gateshead have only been supplied with reference copies but due to high demand this year we have been able to offer them a stock to give out to support their patients.

To celebrate the relaunch, staff at two local practices – The Bridges in Gateshead, and Throckley Primary Care in Newcastle – went orange for the day, donning orange t-shirts and accessories and decorating their surgeries.

GP at The Bridges Medical Practice said: “The Little Orange Book is regularly used by parents and carers from our practice. We wanted to make sure all our patients knew about the new little orange book by celebrating the launch in our surgery. All our staff have participated by dressing up in orange and decorating the surgery. After all it is the bright orange cover that makes the book stand out and easy to reach for when parents need advice.”

“provides invaluable information and is something all parents, carers and adults who work with children should have a copy of.”

This book was produced by Newcastle Gateshead CCG with help from GPs, health visitors, practice managers and staff, pharmacists, paediatricians and children’s nurses, as well as parents and carers. Parents and carers can pick up their own copy of the Little Orange Book from GP surgeries, children’s centres or midwives, or [download a copy](#).



Teenage Resource

Big Orange Book

The CYPF Team are working to develop a Teenage Resource, based on the principles of The Little Orange Book (but for teenagers).

This builds upon the Year 9 assemblies programme of work as part of the Sick and Injured Child pathway to educate our young people around the local services a GP offers to help ensure they are mentally, emotionally and physically robust and healthy. This project is to improve their knowledge on access to GPs as well as issues such as confidentiality. It is felt that after a GP has attended a Year 9 assembly, it is key to leave the young people with further support tools.

The CYPF Team led an engagement exercise to find out the views of children and young people aged 11-25, parent/carers and professionals across Gateshead in the form of three electronic surveys (young people, parent/carers and professionals) and virtual group sessions with young people using the online engagement tool [Menti](#). A total of 242 responses were received between young people, professionals and parent carers.

Task and finish work is now in progress and the development of the teenage resource is well underway. We will continue to engage with young people throughout the process to ensure the development of the resource is driven by them. In addition, we have been successful in a funding bid from NHSE to support development of a SEND easy read version of the resource.

Youth Justice Service (YJS)

The Youth Justice Service have established good working relationships with Clinical Commissioning Group. There is potential for joint working in relation to using young people within the criminal justice system to help develop the child centred resource specifically for older young people (Big Orange Book) to enable young people to become aware of health services which are available locally and what support they are able to access. The CCG is developing transitions from 14 years old, to make sure that young people have the relevant diagnosis to support them getting the right service moving forward. It is also recognised that digital resources need to be developed for young people to be able to access, notwithstanding some of our young people live in digital poverty.

Child exploitation and children who go missing

Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Support Programme - Northumbria Regional Partnership Bespoke Support Project

Partners across the Northumbria region applied to the [TCE programme](#) for support in a) looking at how child exploitation and extra-familial harm is understood across the region and b) exploring how data could best be used to underpin and develop a regional strategic approach to tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm. This commenced in April 2020; Gateshead took the lead for coordinating across the regional partnership.

Partners initially identified a long term goal for the project of developing a data collection framework that would support and inform a regional child exploitation strategy. Interestingly, this evolved over the course of working with TCE and ended instead with a plan to utilise existing data more effectively. This [report](#) sets out this journey.

Police

A priority focus is to address all aspects of missing and exploitation. Over the past year Northumbria Police has worked closely with local authority partners at a Strategic and Operational Level in order to provide the best possible response to Missing Children in Gateshead. This has resulted in closer working practices with the Northumbria Police Missing from Home Coordinator developing strong links with social workers and care provisions. We have also supported the local authority to refresh and update the Missing Children procedures and are leading on this work for the region. Closer links with Youth justice teams and improved knowledge and awareness in respect of criminal exploitation cases have helped to strengthen practice around this emerging threat.

The MSET risk assessment framework has been updated in the past 12 months to ensure a focus on children who are being criminally exploited and involved in gangs and County Lines activity. In the past year police have worked with children's social care to educate and support front line safeguarding staff to understand signs of exploitation and make appropriate referrals.

During lockdown our schools team recognised that their engagement with young people in Gateshead would change and we worked with our IT leads to develop an online school's webpage where we placed our safeguarding education packages for schools to access. We also developed and distributed a school's termly newsletter which included a parents and carers leaflet to raise County Lines and Criminal Exploitation awareness.

MSET (Missing, Slavery, Exploited and Trafficked)

Northumbria Police have led on the review of the multi-agency exploitation Hub and have the commitment of all six local authorities and CCGs to work together to provide a multi-agency response to children and young people at risk of sexual, criminal exploitation and all aspects of Modern Slavery.

Northumbria Police has provided dedication and commitment to MSET (Slavery Missing Exploitation, Trafficking) sub group. MSET is a multi-agency partnership group which operates at an *Operational* and *Strategic* Level within Gateshead.

Both groups are chaired by a Detective Inspector and Detective Chief Inspector and help to safeguard children and young people at risk of Slavery, Missing and Exploitation as well as considering preventative, multi-agency approaches to reduce vulnerability and tackle and disrupt perpetrators who offend against those vulnerable children and young people

Operational MSET

The Operational Group sits under the Safeguarding Children's Partnership and considers high and medium risk cases of children who are believed to be at risk of Missing, Slavery or Exploitation or are being Trafficked.

The Operational Group meets monthly and for each case on the agenda a multi-agency Safeguarding and disruption plan is formulated

The Operational Group also considers intelligence from across the partnership in order to identify any locations or perpetrators of concern linked to Missing and Exploitation. The group does not replace existing child protection procedures but works to reduce risk for those cases which require a multi-agency contextual safeguarding approach to reduce harm.

From April 2020 to September 2021 there have been 76 cases brought to Pre MSET for consideration with 14 cases progressing to Operational MSET panel. Only one case has featured on the MSET panel on more than one occasion.

Work has been undertaken within the Safeguarding Children Partnership in 2021 to increase the awareness and identification of exploitation within Early Help Services. This has led to a reduction in cases being presented to Pre MSET as risks are being identified and discussed at an early stage within front door services.

Case study: A vulnerable young female originally from another local authority was released from Secure Unit and placed into unregulated supported accommodation ran by an independent provider. There was a Section 31 full care order in place and she was at high risk of CSE.

The young female was placed in an unregulated placement with support staff in December 2020; however, Gateshead local authority and the police were not informed of the placement at the time. Police were made aware when she was reported missing by staff and reported to have been kidnapped and trafficked to the midlands.

Between December 2020 and May 2021 there were 18 missing from home reports involving this female, whereby she had befriended unknown males and was staying regularly at their home addresses.

Continuous liaison between Northumbria police, the care provider, Gateshead and other area's children's social care and outside police forces was required in order to safeguard this young vulnerable female.

The young female was heard at Gateshead MSET to ensure all agencies were aware of her and she was offered as much safeguarding support as possible. Due to close multi-agency working, including daily meetings she eventually started to open up to professionals and engage in offers of support.

From May 2021 there were no further missing reports after she started working with professionals regularly and as a result of this work with partner agencies, as of September 2021 she is now residing in her own independent accommodation.

MSET roadshows are planned to take place April 2022 to increase front line practitioner's awareness of the Operational MSET processes and to support recognition of exploitation within front line practice.

Strategic MSET – Joint Exploitation

Strategic MSET (JSEG) is a joint group of the adults and children's safeguarding partnership. The Strategic JSEG meets on a quarterly basis and has strong representation from both partnerships. The Police chair of the Strategic Group is a consistent chair across the Northumbria Police Force footprint (6 LA areas) which promotes sharing of learning and best practice and connectivity across the region in identifying emerging trends or concerns.

On the JSEG workplan, the following pieces of work have been undertaken:

- ☐ Review of the MSET paperwork. To ensure a consistent approach to risk assessment across the region and ensure criminal exploitation risk factors were incorporated in the framework.
- ☐ Missing Adult Protocol- Development and roll out of a Multi-agency Missing adult protocol.
- ☐ Victim Hub Implementation. The Multi-agency Exploitation hub was launched in November 2021.
- ☐ Regional Missing Children Protocol. Gateshead CSP have refreshed their Missing children's procedures and are now leading on the development of a Regional Missing Children Protocol.

Some of the areas which have been discussed within the JSEG over have been:

- ❑ Increased numbers of children coming to MSET panel with undiagnosed speech and language/cognitive functioning difficulties.
- ❑ Increased numbers of cases involving teenage boys who are believed to being criminally exploited into drug supply/ localised County Lines activity
- ❑ An increase in Online Exploitation (Northumbria Police report rises of 40% in referrals). This is felt to be attributed to children being in lockdown and spending increasing amounts of time online.
- ❑ FASD input to understand (Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) the vulnerability to exploitation of this cohort of children who are often undiagnosed until later in life.
- ❑ Update on the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and their preventative education workstreams
- ❑ The Children's Society Prevention Programme Presentation.
- ❑ Regional County Lines Coordinator update.
- ❑ Transitional Safeguarding and a vulnerability not age approach to safeguarding exploited victims.
- ❑ Tricky Friends Animation. An online video to support those with learning disabilities to recognise harmful/exploitative friendships.
- ❑ Presentation on Changing Lives Sexual Exploitation toolkit.

Both Operational and Strategic MSET continue to have strong partnership commitment and effective working practices to help support the safety of children and young people in the Gateshead area.

Child Criminal Exploitation - Operation Victus

- ❑ Operation Victus is a multi-disciplinary group set up as part of the VVECG (violence, vulnerability, exploitation and co-ordination group) with the purpose of early identification and prevention of criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults.
- ❑ Through intelligence sharing, data analysis and collaborative working Op Victus seeks to identify those most vulnerable to exploitation – with key partners involved there is consideration to the safeguarding/support in place. This includes early intervention to diversionary programmes such as YOLO, EDGE NE and SideStep.
- ❑ Op Victus co-ordinates the policing activity to deter and pursue these high harm offenders; in cases where significant criminal capability is evidenced it will be escalated to Op Sentinel process.
- ❑ Op Sentinel manages the response to mapped criminality and serious organised crime. In addition to the operational responses there are thematic multiagency groups running; the central drugs alliance sets out to build an intelligence profile and share information on drug supply at both regional and local levels.
- ❑ Key partners have instigated intelligence sharing protocols and meet regularly to identify hotspots, share disruption activities and identify key messages to be share when incident trends are identified. The priorities moving forward are to fully embed the central drugs alliance and other collaborative partner meetings, maximise access and use of information/intelligence held by all partners and develop a whole system approach to problem solving in order to further reduce silo working.

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust – Safeguarding Team

Due to the national and local increase in county lines and knife crime the Children's safeguarding team linked up with Northumbria Harm Reduction Unit and Edge North East and a package of knife crime awareness and county lines training has been rolled out for GHNFT staff.

The feedback from staff after the first session we delivered was fantastic. This motivated us as a team to look at ways of securing funding to roll out further training days. The training from Northumbria Harm Reduction Unit and Edge North East as been very well received and all the courses have been oversubscribed too, despite staff facing the pressures of Covid 19.

Children who go missing

Missing protocol

We recently updated our procedures regarding children missing from home and care ([link to missing protocol](#)); including responding to missing occurrences using 'levels of intervention' model. Discussions have taken place regionally to consider our updated local protocol being adopted as the regional protocol and if this could then replace the current procedure (which is due a refresh and covers the same information); Gateshead are leading on this development.

Return home support worker

Gateshead Council: What have we done

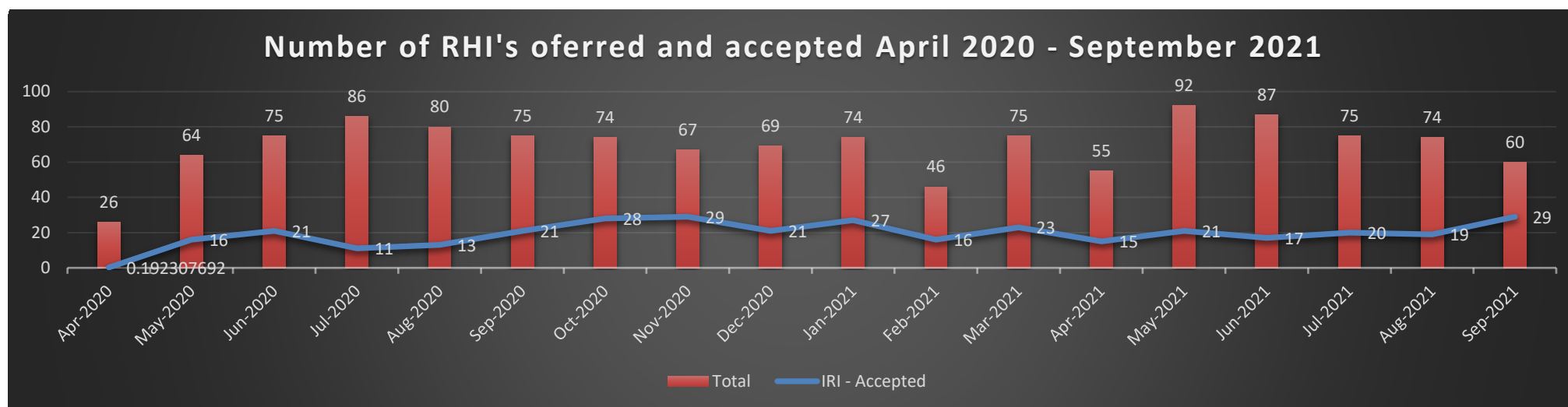
- Following the appointment of a dedicated Return Home Support Worker (RHSW) this has improved and supported effective engagement with Young people who have gone missing.
- A weekly report provides data on the individual young people's missing episodes. The data report shows number of missing episodes, frequency, and duration of missing episode/s. From this the RHSW is able to plan and prioritise the young people (YP) for interview.
- Engagement is positive with different methods of linking with the young people being used e.g. Telephone calls, text, Face two Face home visits and outings to local community venues and eateries. Over the period the RHSW has been in post she has been able to tailor what works best for the young person in order to achieve the successful Return Home Interview. A client lead approach has been key to engagement.
- Reflective team meetings support and guides the RHSW, including case discussions, sharing of experiences. Challenges are also discussed and worked through.
- An action plan identifies priority contacts to the most vulnerable YP grading Red – Amber – Green. The RHSW uses this as a tool and keeps it updated, this is used at Specialist Support senior management team meetings as a mechanism of cross-checking other service involvement and ensuring that collaborative working is in place in order to safeguard the YP.
- The RHSW also attends MSET meetings which allows sharing of information from partner services and valuable input regarding the YP who are known. Police Intelligence is shared and provides added value to the work of the RHSW.
- Links with Residential Homes are developing well and the RHSW is now spending weekly time at the various Children's Homes with an aim of having more interactive informal contact with the YP in their own environment. This is going well, and approaches are being made to the RHSW by the young people. It is hoped that involvement in activities etc can help form trusting relationships that lead to improving successful outcomes and prevention of missing episodes.

What is the impact

- Having a dedicated Return Home Support worker has meant that YP who are reported missing are supported by the same consistent member of staff who provides a safe space to talk about why they went missing, what happened while they were away and any remaining concerns they may have.
- The new approach is already making a significant impact on the numbers of children engaging in return home support.

Young People Feedback:

- ‘Was nice meeting you too, its good seeing people face to face rather than over the phone so I really do appreciate you showing your face’
- ‘Its much better having one person to speak to about it (missing episodes) its much better because you can get to know them and its not just random people asking you questions’.
- ‘it’s much better knowing it will be you coming to see me’
- ‘I think you have ‘mam vibes’ so I feel like I can speak to you and trust you’



Operation Endeavour

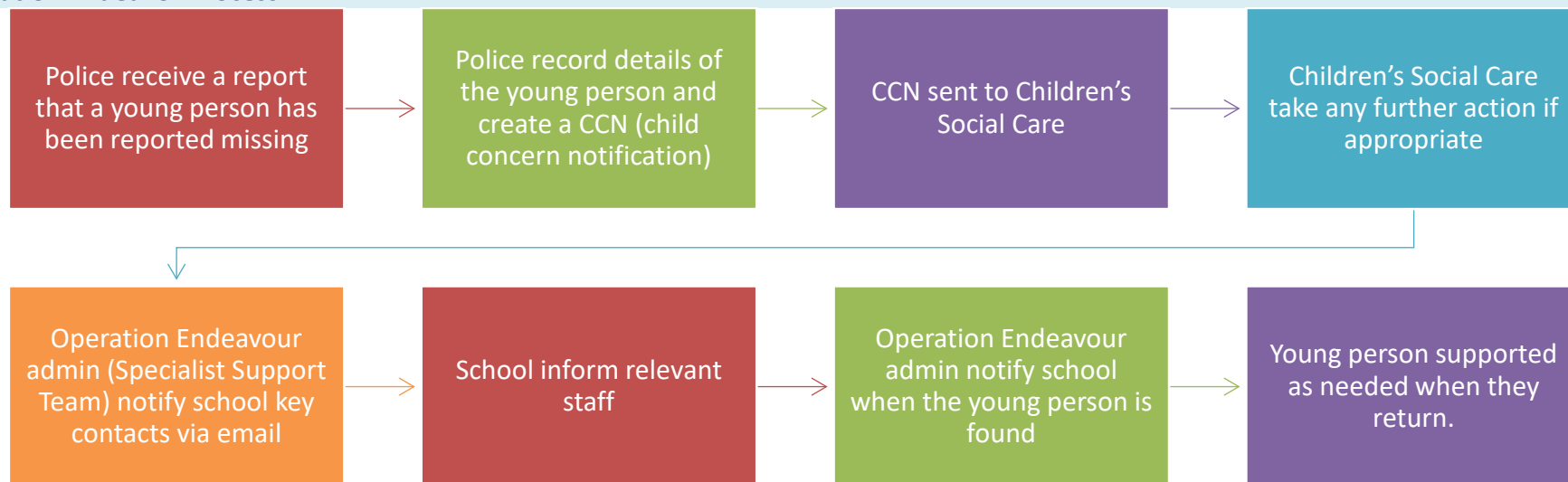
Operation Endeavour is a joint operation between Gateshead Children's Services and Northumbria Police to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm from going missing. This is an innovative project in which schools and colleges are participating.

Operation Endeavour aims to support children and young people who go missing from home. Children who go missing from home are at risk of significant harm and they may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation, violent crime, gang exploitation, or to drug and alcohol misuse.

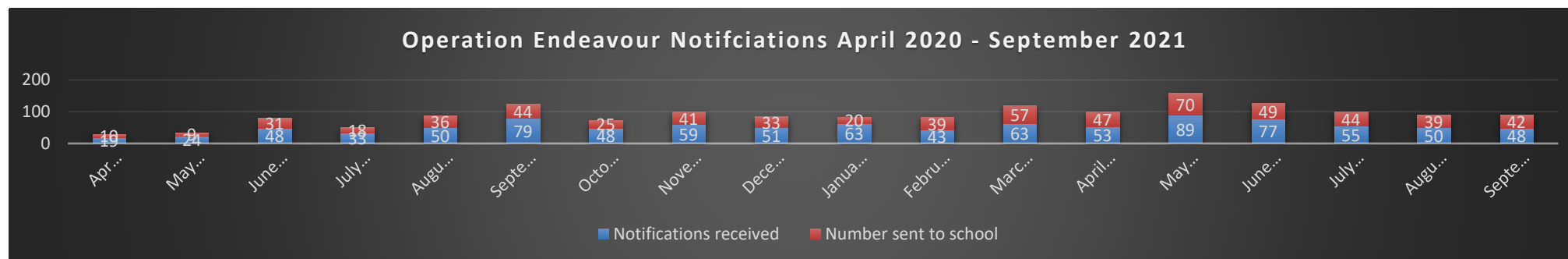
As a result, following any report of a child going missing to the Police, the Police will make contact with Children's Social Care who will then communicate relevant and necessary information to nominated school staff. Each school has members of staff (key adults) who have been fully trained in liaising with the Police and Children's Social Care when required, and will ensure that the necessary support is made available to the child or young person following their return

See:  [10 things you should know about Operation Endeavour \[277.37KB\]](#)

Operation Endeavour Process



The Specialist Support Team are notified of any missing episodes each morning. These notifications are then sent to the school to inform them that the Young person is / has been reported missing. If the Young Person is still missing and turns up at school the school contact the police to let them know.



Children Missing Education (CME)

See: [Children missing education \(CME\) - Gateshead Council](#)

- ☐ Children Missing Education procedures are in place and followed.
- ☐ Our agreed protocols are in line with the statutory Guidance related to CME (2016).
- ☐ We also follow recommendations made by Ofsted in a report in (2013) with relation to pupils missing out on education (PMOE) and hold a register for this – experiences of families on this register are sampled each year.

9. Summary of other thematic info

Domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse Service update

Domestic abuse (DA) and violence is a significant challenge. A highly motivated and skilled team of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) have continued to deliver a service to those that need it throughout the pandemic. Creative working approaches to engage with clients have been implemented. Remote ways of working have been developed and modified to suit the individual needs of the clients. The use of Teams and e-mail format have provided the main sources of successful engagement. Programmes such as the START programme and Freedom programme have been re-written and tailored to better suit remote delivery.

Direct work has also continued with those children who have been deemed to be in greatest need of support from referrals received into the service. The specialist DA children's worker has tailored her support to where permissions have been granted to engage with children in schools, sending out activity packs leading to telephone contact engagements of support; this has worked successful with positive feedback .

Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2021 has meant that six more staff within the existing team are to be IDVA trained. Training has started and staff are now working towards completion. The Domestic Abuse team also have two Young Person Violence Advisor (YPVA) recently trained and a proposal has been written to illustrate how this specialist area of work can be implemented. The proposal outlines how the YPVA workers should provide a safe and supportive response for teenagers experiencing serious harm from intimate partner abuse or familial domestic abuse.

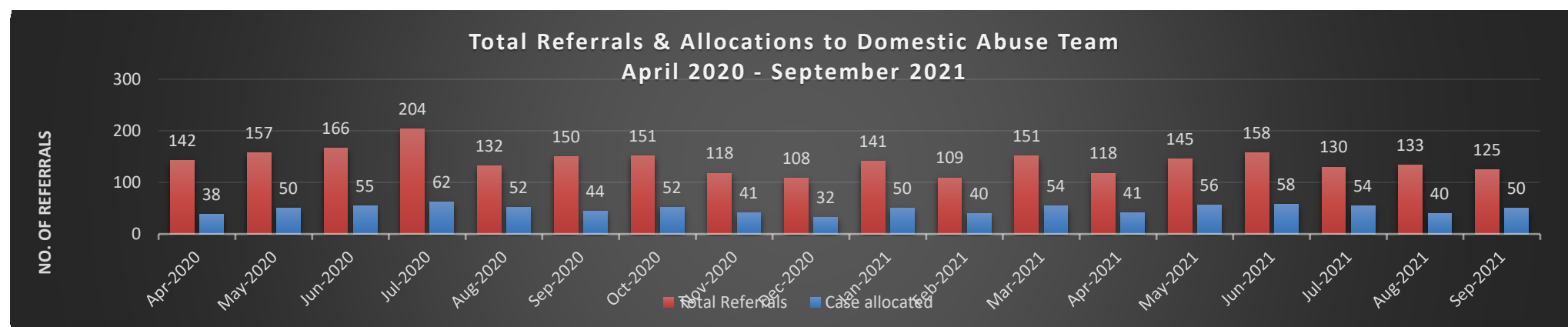
We are looking at a number of ways in which the YPVA / Domestic Abuse Team could offer support to young people in Gateshead, for example:

- ☐ Direct work with young people (aged 13-19) who are experiencing domestic abuse or who have harmed a current or former partner, or adult family member.
- ☐ Work delivered on a 1:1 basis or in a group setting covering topics such as Expecting Respect, Sexual Consent, Exploitation, Healthy Relationships and online abuse.

- Visit educational settings (Schools, Collages, Residential Settings) and Young People's Services (sexual health, teenage pregnancy, mental health services) to raise awareness around domestic abuse, exploitation, online abuse, internet safety and healthy relationships.
- Education to parents, foster carers and staff working in young people settings (such as Children's Homes).
- Build good working relationships with the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and identify clear referral pathways into the service.
- Prevention work with young people identified as perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The Supporting Victims fund enabled the Domestic Abuse Team to work with a local Digital Film company to produce a short film; Children (x3) and Young People (x2) were approached to take part to tell "their own stories" of living with Domestic Abuse. The Children were supported by the DA specialist children's and Young Peoples worker and the very experienced filming team. The Children and Young people shared their stories using Avatars, digital scanners and Art images. The film has been shown to their families, each other, directors, ward councillors and staff.

Between April 2020 – September 2021 a total of 2538 referrals have been made to the Domestic Abuse Team. 869 of these referrals or 34.24% have been allocated for support. Just over 27% of the referrals received were for cases open to the team. The average monthly referral rate across this time period is 141 with the peak being in July 2020 where a total of 204 referrals were received.



There are currently ten **Domestic Abuse Workers** within the team each holding a **case load of around 20-25** per FTE. An assessment framework supports the tailoring of effective support to clients who are referred into the service.

What is the impact

- Ofsted reported "Diligent work by staff across all front door teams, including the out of hours service, demonstrates a resolute focus on understanding the impact of domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, and poor mental health and neglect" (Ofsted 2021).
- Face to face engagement and intervention work has continued throughout the pandemic with adherence to safety guidance. A client focused offer has been maintained as far as possible.

- ❑ Over the last 11 months 1441 referrals have been received into the DA service with 514 leading to successful client engagement (35.6%).
- ❑ A rolling schedule of the Freedom and START programmes has seen the average attendance of x 8 participants per session over the duration of the programmes .

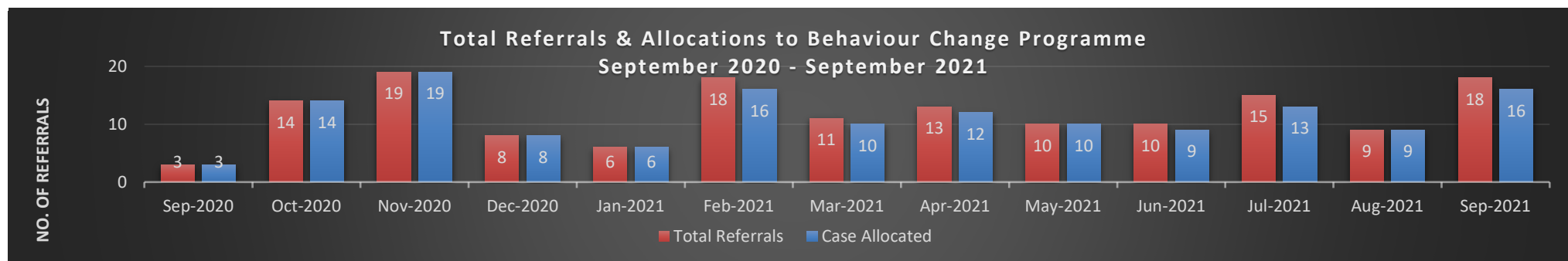
Evaluations from participants capture the following:

- ❑ “so pleased I attended it has helped me a lot to understand what my relationship was really like.”
 - ❑ “Excellent- it has helped me understand control”.
 - ❑ “I now realise how DA can affect my children, even when I don’t think they hear!”
 - ❑ “Enjoyed the group work, was a little nervous of doing things on a screen – but it worked”.
-
- ❑ As a result of the PCC funding, Gateshead DA team will have majority workforce with the accredited IDVA qualification this will provide a greater enhancement to the high-quality service that is already in place.
 - ❑ Knowledge and skills are shared within the team and is facilitated via Team meetings, peers support and development sessions.
 - ❑ Practice short training sessions are offered to provide insight and awareness into Domestic Abuse to the wider workforce adding a richness improving understanding and practice when dealing with victims of DA.
 - ❑ By delivering education around healthy relationships this will increase awareness and understanding of domestic abuse. For young people, an important response to domestic abuse is prevention through education.
 - ❑ Support, feedback and reflection captured how proud the children and young people felt about taking part. Telling their stories and having their voice heard.
 - ❑ Next steps are to work with the filming team to edit and anonymise; future intentions is to use the film as a training aid as part of the Domestic Abuse team awareness raising and training.
 - ❑ From September 2020 (commencement of the programme) to December 2021 – 176 referrals have been received.
 - ❑ 761 sessions have been completed leading to a breakdown that illustrates a minimum of 13 sessions completed then up to a maximum of 88 sessions completed throughout the time period stated the variation is due to the take up and bespoke offer of the programme.

Behaviour Change Programme

Behaviour Change (Perpetrator programme) is well established and the team of two full time staff offer a bespoke programme to clients. Following acceptance of referral an assessment process is in place with an aim to ensure the client understands, can demonstrate a willingness to change behaviours, be accountable for the impact of that behaviour and to develop alternative strategies in order to deal with their beliefs, feelings and emotions in future relationships. The sessions cover a range of subjects including: Power and Control; Coercive Control; denial and blame; beliefs and gender roles; feelings and emotions; Impact; Accountability and Empathy.

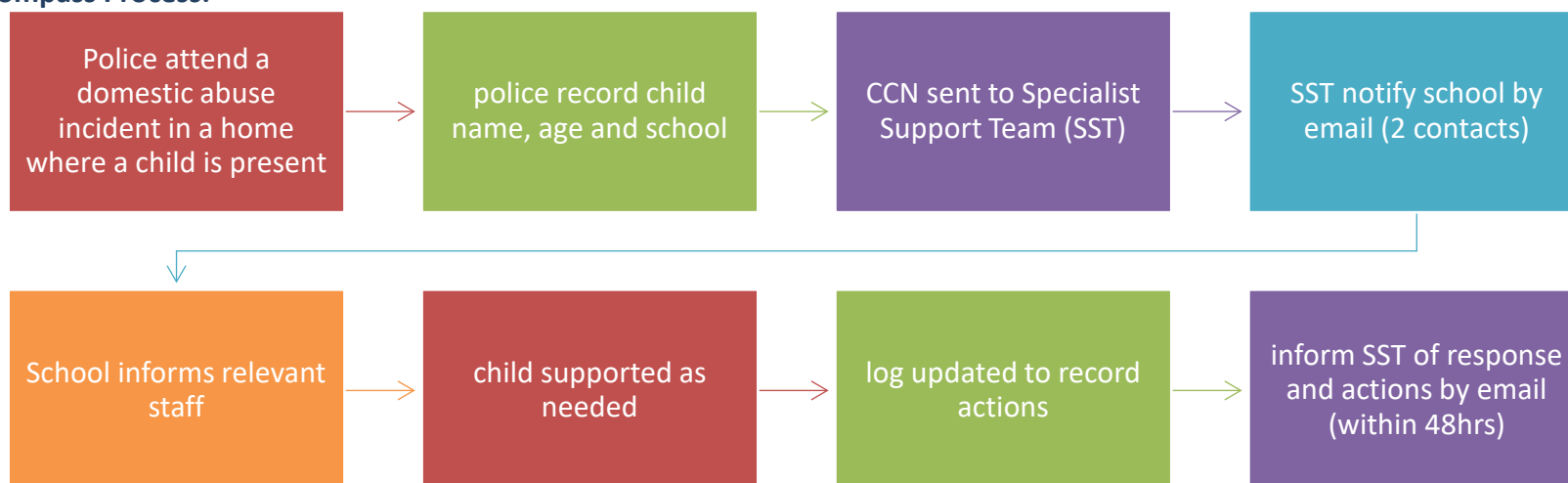
Following the programme commencing in September 2020 between this date and September 2021 a total of 154 referrals have been made to the Behaviour Change Programme. 145 of these referrals or 94.16% have been allocated for support. The nine referrals received which weren't allocated were either declined or deemed not appropriate for the programme.



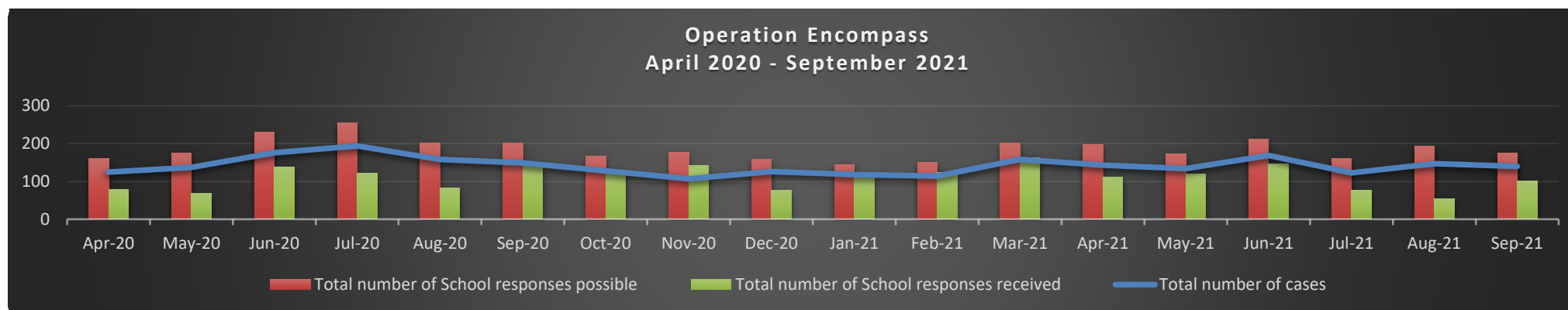
Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse. Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer (known as Key Adult) prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police attended domestic abuse where there are children related to either of the adult parties involved. Information is shared with a school's Key Adult (Designated Safeguarding Lead or Officer) prior to the start of the next school day after officers have attended a domestic abuse incident. This sharing of information enables appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

Operation Encompass Process:



The Specialist Support Team are notified of any missing episodes each morning. The CCNs are also discussed at the morning triage meeting.



Case Study - Grab bag project - Lauren (not real name)

Lauren attended the maternity unit after fleeing domestic abuse. She had travelled to Gateshead as she had a family member living here. The difficulties that staff faced to get Lauren home to a place of safety highlighted that the trust needed a structured plan and some equipment/products to help support vulnerable women or men during difficult times such as this. Lauren was supported back to a place of safety and reported that she was grateful for the help that staff had given. The Named Midwife for safeguarding and Domestic Abuse lead for the trust have worked together to set up the Grab Bag Project. Although this is still in its infancy, funding has been obtained and charitable funds are in place. Items have been purchased for the bags and we are awaiting delivery of these. Items include clothing, sanitary products, a phone if appropriate and food vouchers. Transport has also been agreed through the QE facilities for QE patients in these circumstances.

Youth Justice Service

Divert from Charge

Divert from Charge is a new referral process which will no longer see young people being charged by police unless in extreme cases, such as offences that could lead to a remand. Instead these cases are referred through to a panel process before a final decision is reached. YJS Police officers apply an eligibility test which will assess whether an Out of Court option is appropriate. If the young person in question is eligible and willing to engage, they will receive either a Youth Conditional Caution (YCC) or an Outcome 22 (deferred prosecution).

The “Divert from Charge” Panel is a bolt on to the existing Out of Court Disposal Panels and it has responsibility for:

- deciding on a disposal for each young person;
- developing a diversionary plan for them;
- reviewing compliance;
- and finally closing completed cases or referring a young person to court for non-compliance.

There are a number of beneficiaries from the Divert from Charge arrangement. Young people will not be labelled as offenders, this will help to prevent young people from forming deviant or delinquent identities that may interfere with their development. It will avoid unnecessary disproportionality in the criminal justice system and tailored diversionary interventions will be therapeutic, targeted, and appropriate whilst avoiding the stigma of conviction. Criminal Justice Partners and the community also benefit from Divert from Charge as it reduces demand and cost associated with file preparation and court proceedings. Partners are able to support children and young people who would otherwise become repeat and/or more serious offenders. This innovative way of dealing with young people went live in May 2021 and will be reviewed in 6 months to ensure it is working effectively.

There have been 30 applications for Divert from Charge so far in Gateshead. Twelve of these have been approved and 18 have been returned to the Officer in charge of the case.

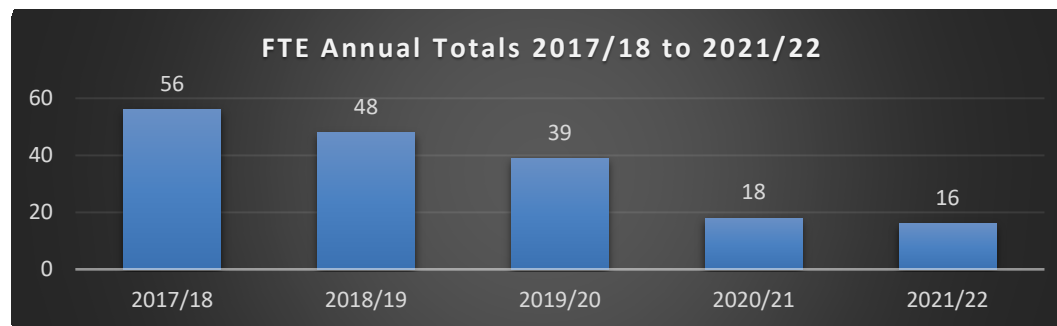
Outcome 22

Continues to be used as an Out of Court disposal. This intervention is a deferred prosecution, meaning the young person will not come through the formal criminal justice system unless they fail to comply with the programme. This intervention has been extremely successful in reducing the number of first-time entrants. The use of this disposal has ensured that young people are assessed and have intervention that best meets their individual needs. Working with the young person and their family it has been possible to divert a significant proportion of children away from the formal youth justice system, which has a huge impact on the number of young people becoming FTE into the Criminal Justice System.

Targeted Outreach - Gateshead Youth Justice Service funded a summer outreach project. The REAL (Relate, Engage and Listen) Project delivered targeted outreach youth work in areas across the Borough for three evenings a week. The aim of the Project is to engage with young people in recognised hotspot areas, offering them safe faces, support and guidance alongside signposting to specialist services. Hotspot locations were co-ordinated via the multi-agency Operational Planning and Tasking Group co-ordinated by Community Safety.

What is the impact?

- 30 applications for Divert from Charge to date with 12 approved.
- 192 Outcome 22's delivered over 12 months, resulting in diverting young people away from the Criminal Justice System.
- First Time entrants dropped significantly since introduction of Outcome 22 (see below).



Listening and responding to young people, parents/carers, victims and volunteers is integral to Gateshead YJS. Example of some feedback:

- “Mint worker to work with, helped me loads at times even with stuff that was irrelevant to YOT and I appreciate that. Cheers”
- “I think Gary is a really good Youth Justice worker. I got on well with him and thought he listened and understood me”.
- Is there anything else we could have done for you? “No, everything was “cush”.

- ☞ “Very good and supportive”.
- ☞ “Made me realise my actions have consequences. And to think before acting where possible”.
- ☞ “On my reparation sessions I had to litter-pick around Birtley, which was filthy, filling large black sacks to the top with rubbish. This has showed me how much time I could waste off my life by doing something stupid. I am sorry for what I had done, and it will never happen again. I have learned from my mistakes.”
- ☞ “Frank has been really supportive, and he showed me new skills that I can use further on in life, and in my CV.
- ☞ Gill has offered me tremendous amount of opportunity’s and has been the best YOT worker I could of asked for.
- ☞ If I’ve needed a hand or even just someone to talk to, I knew Gill would always be a call away.
- ☞ She’s also helped me develop so many new life skills during the time of my reparation and to help me with day-to-day tasks.”

Case study: Jamie (not real name)

Jamie (17) was referred into the YJS for intervention due to concerns around inappropriate sexual behaviour, however none of these incidents were proven offences. The Police had significant concerns regarding Jamie’s behaviour but were unable to take formal action.

The YJS started to work with Jamie and challenged his behaviour and completed intervention regarding appropriate sexual relationships. There have been no further incidents to date, Jamie appears to have insight into his actions, understands the concerns and is aware of the consequences of this behaviour in the future. Jamie recently gave some feedback to his case manager, he said “I never thought I would be able to speak to you as openly as I can. I don’t think I need to see you anymore as you have helped me get into a better place. Thank You”. The YJS will continue to maintain contact with Jamie to ensure he remains on a positive pathway.

Two young people were seen on CCTV trespassing on school premises. These two young people have a history of behaviour issues. One young person was previously open to the YJS and the other was receiving intervention from the Complex Child in Need Team (children’s social care). Both young people have complex family backgrounds, and both were attending the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). They were offered the opportunity to take part in restorative work with the YJS in relation to them trespassing on school property. Both successfully engaged in this intervention and apologised for their behaviour. As a result of this intervention the police were not contacted, and these young people were not criminalised for their behaviour.

Young person was permanently excluded for having drugs in school, being investigated by police for Possession with intent to Supply. This young person had no previous Out of Court Disposals or court interventions and is predicted excellent GCSE results. The YJS worked with the young person, family, education department, substance misuse services, voluntary agencies and Children & Young Peoples Service to put a plan of intervention in place to support him. A representative from the YJS attended an education meeting and advocated that he should be allowed to return to mainstream education in a managed way. As a result of this the young person was accepted into another mainstream school.

Permanent exclusions 2020/21

During 2020/21 there were 42 young people permanently excluded from secondary schools, an increase of 13% from the previous year. There were no primary permanent exclusions.

Number of secondary permanent exclusions since 2016/17 academic year:



Overall, this data presents a declining picture of permanent exclusions being issued across the Secondary phase. However, it is prudent to note that the significant reductions have been during periods of national restrictions and school closures due to Covid-19.

Reasons for permanent exclusions in 2020/2021:

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	7

Persistent disruptive behaviour accounts for 64% of all permanent exclusions in this period.

This reflects the national trend of it being the most common reason cited in permanent exclusions.

Breakdown of permanent exclusions 2020/2021 by year group and term:

Year Group	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
Y7	0	2	4	6
Y8	4	1	3	8
Y9	6	1	7	14
Y10	5	4	1	10
Y11	4	0	0	4
Total	19	8	15	42

Of the 42 young people who were permanently excluded:

- There was a significant increase in Y7 permanent exclusions from previous year.
- Year 9 remains the year group with the most permanent exclusions – reflecting the national trend.
- No young people were known to CIN or CP at the point of permanent exclusion.
- 11% were identified as Special Educational Needs at the point of exclusion – a 66% reduction from the previous year.

Conclusion

Overall, there is a declining picture of permanent exclusions within Gateshead schools even with the slight increase in numbers in 2020/2021 from the previous academic year. This may be the result of national restrictions and school closure but may also be in relation to further improvements in inclusive

practice within schools as well as the continuing success of our fair access protocols. Schools have however reported an increased level of poor behaviour following the pandemic which will likely have a more long-term impact than was originally anticipated.

We are aiming to develop the core offer for secondary age young people who have had a failed managed move agreed through Pupil Placement Panel under the category related to behaviour via an assessment period at River Tyne Academy. This will give schools extra evidence and strategies to explore need and give sharply focused support to help their students to better succeed in their mainstream setting.

Elective Home Education (EHE) 2020/2021

There have been **247** children/ young people on Gateshead's elective home education register this year, a 20% increase from 2019-20.

Overall, there has been a significant increase over the last 10 years in families choosing to electively home educate in Gateshead (36 children/young people in 2010/2011 to 247 in 2020/2021). This increase is in keeping with the national trend. Throughout the year the number of electively home educated children/young people is fluid – as some leave school to be electively home educated and others return to school after a period of elective home education or leave the area.

Furthermore:

- **47** children left Gateshead primary schools to be EHE this year; representing a significant increase from the previous year (22)
- **36** CYP were removed from school to be EHE in September 2020. This was 89% higher than any previous monthly figure over the last 4 years, in part highlighting parents' concerns regarding Covid
- **1938** CYP returned to school after a period of EHE this year; an increase on previous years. 8 of these were children who returned to primary schools
- **7** parents were referred to the Legal Intervention Team for School Attendance Orders due to limited evidence that a suitable education was being provided and would not agree to their child returning to school via Primary Fair Access/Secondary Fair Access - Pupil Placement Panel (PPP)
- **6** children were identified as Child Protection/Child in Need and the EHE Officer attended meetings with regards to this.
- **6** children had a Team Around the Family and the EHE Officer attended meetings in relation to this.
- **38** children received a home visit
- **132** home education reports were written and sent.

(Note: due to Covid-19 restrictions there was a significant reduction in home visits but an increase in parents preparing and sending reports)

Children's Centres & Play Service

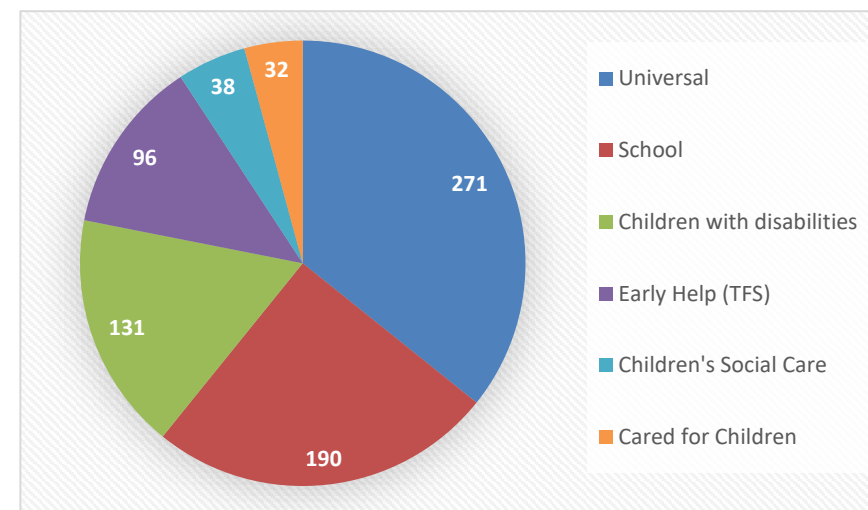
During the time period of this report, children's centre and play staff were redeployed to other areas of the service, to where capacity and support was required. This included supporting the community hubs and schools. This meant that face to face activities were limited; a summary is included below:

Children Centre Groups & activities

- 887 sessions in period.
- Attended by 1,609 families - 1,989 children (under 5 years) and 1,678 adults.
- 26 Enhanced Parenting Pathway referrals.

Play Service - HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES (spring, may & summer)

- 758 children – see chart for referral routes. →
- 3,926 attendances.
- Respite, social opportunities, physical activity, Sensory play & fun!
- Specialist sensory equipment, activity packs and healthy snacks provided via holiday activities and food funding.



The summer programme definitely benefitted us as parents. MOST IMPORTANTLY it benefited [child] as it allowed him to explore different avenues which in turn really engaged his brain and allowed him to regulate his emotions better.

[child] really struggles being out of routine so the fact you could provide a day of activities for him was a big relief.. took a lot of pressure off us as parents..

Community outreach and Saturday clubs

36 children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 5-17 years

479 attendances

Average **13.30** sessions attended per child / young person

Essential respite, social opportunities, physical activity, sensory play & fun!

It has been so beneficial to [child], reducing her anxiety and enabling her to mix with friends that she no longer sees now she has left Gibside school.

Staff are always friendly and professional and it is clear that they know [child] well. [child] is equally comfortable with all staff and her face lights up when she arrives.

10. Child deaths

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is a multi-agency panel which aims to scrutinise the circumstances surrounding each child's death and where appropriate, provide challenge to the agencies involved to further enhance the learning, as well as make recommendations to the appropriate agencies to improve service delivery and patient experience.

The CDOP will in each case classify the cause of death, identify contributory factors, identify any modifiable factors (those which can be changed through national or local interventions) and make recommendations to prevent future similar deaths, or improve the safety and welfare of children in the local area and further afield. Ascertain why a child has died by a thorough but proportionate review of the facts and circumstances surrounding the death.

Child Death Overview Panel – Annual Report (2020–2021)

This is the first annual report of the joint North and South of Tyne Child Death Overview Panel (N&S Tyne CDOP) formed on April 2020, which contains a summary of the activity carried out by the panel across the 6 LA areas represented: Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

In 2020/21 there were a total of 82 child death reviews across Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland (North and South of Tyne), 16 for Gateshead. The highest number of child deaths were below the age of 27 days. A child is most at risk of death within the first year of life, and particularly within the first 27 days of life.

Modifiable factors

A modifiable factor is defined as something which: “may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally and nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths”.

There were 6 out of 16 (37%) modifiable factors identified in the Gateshead reviews. Of the 82 cases reviewed in 2020 /2021, modifiable factors were identified in 27 cases, and in four cases, several factors were deemed modifiable. NCMD national data shows the North East rate was 31% and the national rate was 34%.

Many of the top 11 modifiable factors identified in 2019/2020 by the national child mortality database are reflected in the findings in this [report](#).

Actions taken to reduce child deaths across the CDOP footprint

- ☐ The promotion and implementation of ICON across the footprint (ICON is an evidence-based programme which has been supported by NHSE to reduce abusive head trauma in infancy (ABH) which is 100% preventable).
- ☐ Work between primary care and acute trusts to highlight the association between asthma and food allergies.
- ☐ Administration of first aid to schools following the ingestion of drugs.

- ☐ Safer sleeping campaigns.
- ☐ NHSE are reviewing the consent process after cases highlighted to them of children not receiving their flu vaccine.
- ☐ Development of a training package explaining the CDR process.
- ☐ Attendance at national webinars to share practice and learning.

See: [CDOP Annual Report 2020-2021](#) for more information

11. Training

The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and Gateshead Community Safety Board have produced a comprehensive joint training programme which is free for partner agencies operating in Gateshead. The training programme and information regarding courses can be accessed via the [GCSP website](#).

During the pandemic nearly all training was moved to virtual delivery. This was initially quite challenging, however as learners have become accustomed to virtual delivery, we have seen course numbers increase and in future we will be looking at offering a mix of both virtual and face to face sessions.

The eLearning offer for safeguarding courses has also been developed over the past year, in light of the Covid restrictions it has been necessary to provide a range of learning and development options.

Some providers requested specific sessions to suit their needs and discuss the changes and challenges they had experienced in their services during the pandemic.

Between April 2020 and September 2021, **38** GSCP training events were delivered to workers across the partnership. Evaluation of the training is carried out through evaluation forms which are now sent out electronically via Microsoft forms. The evaluation measures not only the increase in knowledge during the training but asks learners to identify how they will use the training in their role to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The pandemic raised concerns from providers surrounding child mental health, self-harm and eating disorders. Multi-agency partners benefitted from training delivered by experts in these fields. This training encourages agencies to develop a universal and proportionate approach to identifying and responding to child mental health issues.

It has been identified during several training sessions that professionals do not always feel confident when asking questions about the men in the family home. GSCP commissioned 'Hidden men' training with the aim of facilitating discussion and addressing concerns about engaging with men in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This training also acknowledged values and context around issues of gender and fatherhood.

Responses from impact evaluation questionnaires highlighted the positive impact that the training had on learners' thinking and practice.

- 💬 *'The course made me reflect on the importance of how we need to actively encourage good practice and inclusion of all males'* (Hidden Men- family intervention worker).
- 💬 *'Based on the discussion today, I will have a more considered approach to the dialogue that I have with individuals that are presenting to my department with self-harm'* (Self Harm- Health care professional).
- 💬 *'I will be more aware of the signs of exploitation in young people, and I learned a lot about the language of OCG's'* (Child criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and trafficking – Charity attendee).
- 💬 *'I will promote more research and understanding within the team to promote better /safer practices for the young people in our care'* (safeguarding young people in the digital world- Residential care office).
- 💬 *'I Gained enough knowledge to be able to deliver some level of education in schools and know where to signpost for support'* (Knife crime Awareness - Schools).
- 💬 *'I will consider the voice of the child more'* (Common Assessment framework – Early help worker).

Despite increasing pressures on partner agency staff, we have a skilled pool of trainers who deliver a lot of our sessions “in house”, but we also have the resources to commission specialist sessions when appropriate.

We continue to carry out work to ensure that our training has an impact on frontline staff to ensure that the sessions lead to improved outcomes and provide the Partnership with best value for money.

TWFRS and Tyneside Mind delivered training to firefighters who may be in first attendance, when an individual present at bridges and heights.

12. Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Strategy

This is the overarching strategy for Gateshead Council. It has been developed and agreed by our strategic partners and it will be delivered in collaboration with different organisations across the whole partnership (recognising the importance of working together and breaking down boundaries between organisations and services).

The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership is working with the [Health and Wellbeing Board](#) to deliver on the actions set out in the strategy, and in particular, the aim to give every child the best start in life:

Fighting for a better future for Gateshead



Give every child the best start in life

Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

Create fair employment and good work for all

Ensure a healthy standard of living for all

Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities

Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.

Give every child the best start in life, with a focus on conception to age two

The action we will take

We will:

- focus our efforts on supporting confident, positive and resilient parenting, to those who most need our support
- increase the focus of existing expenditure on early years to reduce inequalities in early development
- build the resilience and wellbeing of all children and young children
- make sure maternity services, parenting programmes, childcare and early year's education are of high quality and meet needs of all groups
- support our schools to deliver an effective curriculum that addresses the skills required for later life and supports emotional wellbeing
- develop a framework to support Gateshead as a child friendly place

We will deliver this through:

- Early Help Strategy
- Education Gateshead and Gateshead Schools
- Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Plan
- The Children's System Board
- Voice of the Child

We will know we have made a difference when:

- the circumstances which result in adverse childhood experiences are prevented
- parents can access support proportionate to meet their needs, to be the best parents they can
- all children start school ready to learn
- all permanent school exclusions are prevented



See: [Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

Appendix 1: Action Plan (2019 – 2021)

Thematic Priorities

Action	Lead Officer	Target Date	Comments	Outcome
Voice of the child				
Receive reports throughout the year regarding partner engagement with young people including case studies and examples of good practice.	Business Manager (all Board members to contribute)	ongoing	This is a standing agenda item at GSCP meeting.	Ongoing
Through new or existing arrangements seek the views of children on safeguarding issues and represent these to the GSCP.	Business Manager (all Board members to contribute)	Ongoing	Online form circulated via GSCP to identify engagement groups that can be used to seek views of children and young people. Three Young Ambassadors employed by the council, with allocated workstreams.	Ongoing
Suggest inspections the young inspectors can undertake throughout the year and what they can get involved with to help improve and develop services.	Business Manager (all Board members to contribute)	April 2020	Young inspectors work was put on hold, due to the pandemic. This will be picked up in 2022.	Not started
Host an engagement event with Board members and young people and seek the views of young people on GSCP priorities.	Business Manager	Ongoing	There was plans to hold an event during 2020, but this didn't happen due to the pandemic. Partners and GSCP members did attend CYP events being held virtually by partner agencies, where possible. We also received updates from participation workers across the partnership.	Not started
Mental health & Emotional Wellbeing				
Receive assurances that mental health services commissioned for children in Gateshead are adequate in terms of safeguarding, including waiting times.	Executive Director, Patient Safety and Designated Nurse, CCG	Ongoing	Regular reports to GSCP. Mental Health is a priority area for HWBB, safeguarding partners are fully engaged and involved with this work. The new Gateshead System Board will take a lead on evaluation of 'single point of access' service and KOOTH. Members of GSCP also attend System Board, which ensures good links.	Ongoing

Through good links with the Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB), continue the GSCP oversight of CAMHS and the “whole system” approach to Emotional Wellbeing, specifically with regard to emotional resilience for CYP.	Independent Chair & Business Manager	Ongoing	Good links with HWBB, and the new Systems Board, through membership and sharing of information. Mental Health is a clear priority are for HWBB and safeguarding partners are linked in.	Ongoing
Child Exploitation & Missing Children				
The Joint Strategic Sexual Exploitation Group will oversee multi-agency support for children and their families through MSET and Return Home Interview arrangements.	Strategic JSEG Chair	May 2020	Missing protocol has been updated, all children who go missing will be offered RHI, regardless of how long they have been missing. The missing process and RHIs will be kept under regular review.	Complete
Lead on the bespoke Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) support project on behalf of the region, promote good partner engagement and facilitate discussions.	Business Manager (in liaison with BM Network)	November 2020	<p>The application submitted on behalf of partners across the region was successful. Discussions with Research in Practice and partners to commence January to develop project specification (by March 2020), with view to agree delivery after April 2020; there were initial delays due to covid.</p> <p>Project T&F group was set up and included relevant partners (across Northumbria Police force area), and also representation from Violence Reduction Unit.</p> <p>The project concluded in August 2021. See Project Learning Report</p>	complete
Develop regional protocol (regional collaboration)	Business Manager (via BM Network)	Ongoing	This is being included with the regional work that is ongoing. Regional Protocol should be in place by April 2022.	In progress
Ensure that missing children interviews are being undertaken in a timely manner and that information is being used to help disrupt and prevent further exploitation.	Strategic JSEG Chair	Ongoing	A full-time dedicated post was created to undertake RHIs. We are already seeing impact and information from RHIs is being used to inform disruption.	Complete

Complete a review of MSET and evaluate effectiveness and impact (regional collaboration)	Business Manager (via BM Network)	July 2020	Work continued to review MSET process and a task group set up. A summary report including recommendations was shared with the regional safeguarding partnership. Also discussed at JSEG.	Complete
Complete an audit of the effectiveness of multi-agency working in improving outcomes for children identified as at risk of exploitation (sexual and criminal)	Regional	March 2021	It was initially anticipated that this would be included in the bespoke TCE support project, but the project ended up being re data. This audit will be carried out during 2022, using cases discussed at MSET to follow the journey of the child through the system, focusing on impact and outcomes. (<i>what difference have we made?</i>)	Not started