

Gateshead Looked After Children and Young People's Health Team

Annual Report 2021-2022

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CONTENT	PAGE
Executive Summary	3-4
Introduction	5
Looked After Children’s Health Team	5
1 Health Assessments	6
1.1 Initial Health Assessments	6-7
1.2 Review Health Assessments	8-10
1.3 Work completed on other Local Authority Looked After Children placed in Gateshead	10-11
1.4 Other Looked After Children contacts	
2 End of Year Statistics	11-12
3 Leaving Care	12
4 Adoption & Fostering	13-14
4.1 Adoption	13
4.2 Fostering	14
5 Children and Young People Services	15
6 Drug & Alcohol Services	15-16
7 Sexual Health Services	16-17
8 Training & Supervision	17
8.1 Training	
8.2 Supervision	
9 Looked After Children Health Professionals.	18
9.1 Audit findings	19
10 Participation	20
11 Inspection	21
12 National and Team Developments	21
13 Priorities 2022-2023	21
References	22

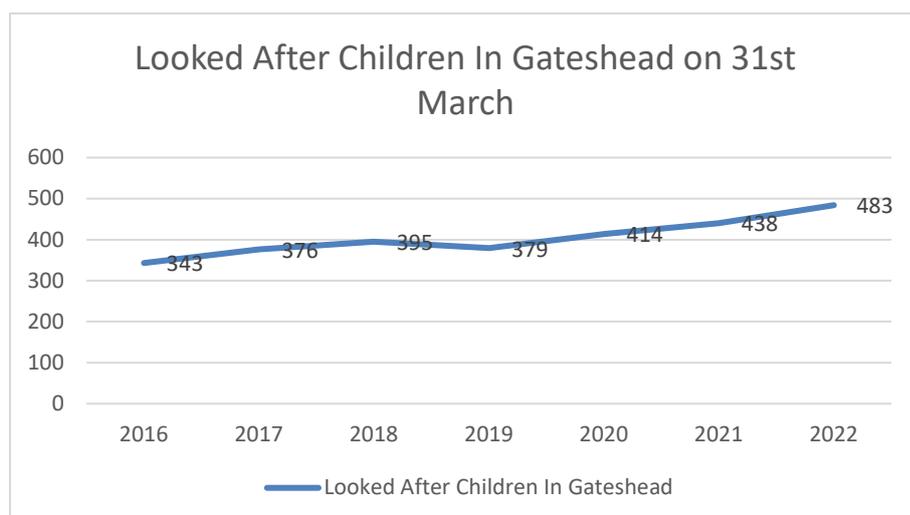
Executive Summary

This report will describe the activity of the Looked After Children's Health Team in Gateshead between 1st April 2021- 31st March 2022. It will report on the achievements and progress of the team, as well as any challenges experienced. It will also set out priorities for the coming year.

The standard of service provided by the team is based upon the national Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children (DH /DFE 2015).

The overall number of looked after children at end of March 2022 was 483 which is a rise from 438 the previous year. The looked after population has continued to rise year on year and this reflects the national picture. There was a total of 203 admissions into care which is an increase from 180 the previous year. A total of 160 children were discharged from care compared to 156 for the previous year.

The chart below demonstrates the rise in the number of Looked After Children in Gateshead since 31st March 2016.



At the end of March 2022 there were 237 children placed outside the borough of Gateshead compared to 203 for the previous year. 223 were placed in the Northeast region (compared with 191 for the previous year), 14 were placed further afield. Most of those children and young people who are placed within the Northeast region have had their health assessment completed by the team and this provides assurance that their health needs are adequately met.

Biannual audits have been completed as part of the work plan to monitor the quality of review health assessments completed by Doctors, School Nurses, Health Visitors and the Looked After Children's Nurses. An exemplar of Practitioner self-assessed quality assurance template for statutory health assessments based on 2016/17

National Tariff Payment System was used in this process. The team have contributed to training of staff within the acute, community settings and to medical students to raise the profile of Looked After Children and to raise awareness of their health needs.

Compliance with Medical Practitioners completing Initial Health Assessments (IHA's) remains excellent. The increasing numbers of Looked After Children has impacted upon the team's response to completing IHA's within 20 days of receiving consent from the local authority. In this reporting period 86.91% were completed using this measure compared to 98.58% in the previous year.

There has been an increase in the number of Review Health Assessments (RHAs) being completed. 436 were completed demonstrating an increase from 419 the previous year and, 392 the year before that. 92.43 % were completed in timescale which is a decrease from 97.85% the previous year, it is worth noting that during the previous reporting period many health assessments were completed virtually or by telephone due to covid restrictions.

The Performance Indicators for health collated by and reported on by the local authority i.e., health assessment, dental appointments & immunisations, remain good. Covid has impacted upon immunisation and dental figures, recovery is anticipated in the next reporting year.

The process for the use of the strength & difficulty questionnaire which requires effective partnership working and information sharing remains in place.

The NHS has continued to face additional challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic in this reporting period. The Looked After Children's health team and 0-19 service have continued to be responsive to meet the needs of Looked After Children. On the whole health assessments were completed face to face with only 8% being completed virtually or by telephone.

The Looked After Children's policy and guidance has been updated and presented to Trust Safeguarding Committee.

The Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group completed a review of the service delivered by the Gateshead Looked After Children's Health team during this reporting period. The review looked at both the strengths and challenges faced by the team including the growing numbers of Looked After Children. At the time of writing the outcome of the review has not been shared with the team.

In recognition that there is an increased risk of unplanned teenage pregnancy amongst care experienced young people the Looked After Children's team have worked in conjunction with Gateshead Sexual Health Service to complete a gap analysis with young people, carers and professionals. The findings from the gap

analysis will be used to inform the approach from carers and professionals in Gateshead in relation to the sexual health of care experienced young people.

The information in this report has been collated by Maxine Duffy Specialist Nurse Looked After Children, Jean Hubble Named Nurse Looked After Children, Eleanor Dawson Designated Doctor Looked After Children and Claire Young Looked After Children administrator.

Introduction

Most children become looked after as a result of abuse and neglect. Although they have many of the same health issues as their peers, the extent of these is often greater because of their past experiences. Nationally there has been a 1% rise in the number of children who are looked after in England, on 31st March 2021 there were 80,850. In Gateshead, there was a rise of 10.2% over the same period, which is higher than the national average.

This document aims to give an overview of the work and achievements of the Looked After Children's Health Team for Gateshead from the 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. An overview of the direct and indirect coordinated work will be provided as evidence of the service delivery and achievements of the team.

The Looked After Children's Health Team 2021-2022

The Looked After Children's Health Team in Gateshead is commissioned by Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group. The team consists of:

Designated Doctor Looked After Children

Medical Secretary -1WTE

Named Nurse Looked After Children - 1 WTE

Specialist Nurse Looked After Children - 1WTE

Looked After Children Administrators - 1 WTE and 0.5 WTE

All are employed by Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust.

The team is based at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead.

The Looked After Children's Health team work with School Nurses and Health Visitors who complete review health assessments for children living within the Gateshead area, this service is known locally as the 0-19 service. School Nurses and Health Visitors are employed by Harrogate District Foundation Trust.

1. Health Assessments

1.1 Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

The team received a total of 209 notifications of children and young people becoming looked after in 2021-2022 (an increase from 190 the previous year), of which 175 had IHA's completed (compared to 152 the previous year). The remaining 34 were not completed for the following reasons:

- 2 consents not yet received as consent was refused
- 6 left care before the consent was received
- 12 left care after consent was received but before an appointment could be arranged
- 14 have appointments for IHA

Initial Health Assessments were carried out by;

Designated Doctor & Associates – 174 (99.4%) and 1 by Looked After Children's Nurse Lothian

Our overall compliance for Medical Practitioners to complete the IHA (DH/DfE 2015) was 99.4%.

Birth parents attended 46 out of 192 (24%) of the Initial Health Assessments which is an increase from 14 (14.9%) last year.

There is on-going monitoring of timeframes for completion of Initial Health Assessments within 28 days (20 working days) of a child or young person coming into care (DH/DfE 2015). In 2021-2022 we have achieved **64.06%** compliance, which is a decrease from **65.29%** the previous year. The Looked After Children's Health Team were able to offer IHA appointments to **86.91%** of children within 20 working days of consents being received, a decrease from **98.58%** the previous year.

The challenges in meeting the overall time frame have been the delay in obtaining parental consent from social workers (**68.66%**) which has improved from the previous year (**66.25%**), covid related cancellations, and clinic capacity for medical staff completing the IHA's.

The Looked After Children’s health team has continued to work with the Local Authority on the issue of consent via the Senior Management Team and their performance clinic. The Local Authority have completed a piece of work to look at potential barriers to timely consent and continue to work with the Looked After Children’s health team to make improvements. The Looked After Children’s Health Team have continued to monitor the timeliness of consents and alert the Local Authority to any that are outstanding to ensure that any health needs of children are not overlooked.

In July-September 2021 the Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group completed a review of the service delivered by the Gateshead Looked After Children’s Health team, looking at the strengths and challenges. At the time of writing the outcome of the review has not been shared with the team.

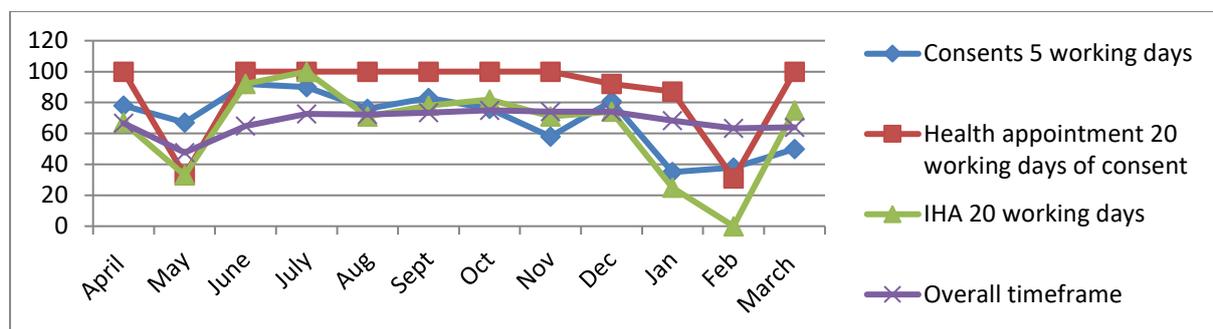
In order to achieve a better understanding of how these difficulties are contributing to timescales not being met on a monthly basis and to ensure that actions are appropriately targeted, data has been collected in the following way:

Total numbers of admissions to care from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

% of consents received within 5 days

% of appointments offered within 28 days of receiving consent

% of appointments offered within 28 days of becoming Looked After



1.2 Review Health Assessments (RHA)

A total of **436** RHA's were completed in 2021-2022, a rise from **419** the previous year. **403 (92.43%)** were completed within 28 days of their due date which is a decrease from **410 (97.85%)** the previous year.

6 health assessments have been completed late when they were requested for children living outside of the Northeast of England.

Since September 2018 children with a diagnosis given or suspected of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) have been reviewed by a Paediatrician regarding their FASD diagnosis. This programme of review is now complete, and the final report was presented to relevant parties in June 2021.

419 Review Health Assessments were carried out by:

Named Nurse and Specialist Nurse Looked After Children – 139 (which compares to 142 the previous year)

Designated Doctor and associates – 34 (39 completed in previous year)

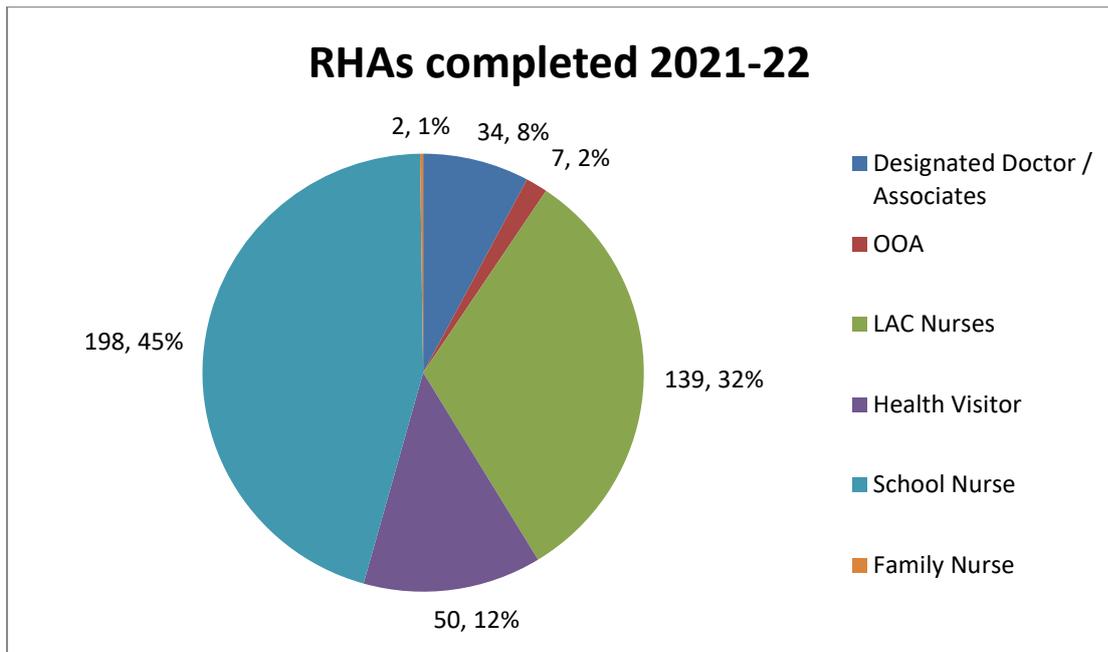
School Nurses – 198 (179 completed in previous year)

Health Visitor – 57 (50 completed the previous year)

Out of Area Nurse / Doctor – 7 (7 in the previous year)

Family Nurse – 1 (2 in the previous year)

35 out of 446 (8%) Review Health Assessments were done either virtually or by telephone due to the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions.



Gateshead Children Placed outside of the area:

The Named and Specialist Nurses Looked After Children have completed most of the review health assessments for those children and young people in an out of borough placement within Northeast region. There were a total of 237 children and young people who were placed out of area on 31st March 2022. This has risen from 203 from 31st March 2021, and 187 the year before that. The borough they were placed in is shown below.

Local Authority	Number of Children
Durham	65
Sunderland	44
Newcastle Upon Tyne	28
Northumberland	32
North Tyneside	4
South Tyneside	15
Adoptive placement	20
Darlington	7
Hartlepool	5

North Tyneside	4
South Lakeland	2
Redcar and Cleveland	2
Falkirk	1
Wakefield	1
Suffolk Coastal	1
Midlothian	1
Newcastle	1
East Dunbartonshire	1
St. Helens	1
Harlow	1
Craven	1
Richmondshire	1
Angus	1
South Hams	1
Bassetlaw	1
Total:	237

The team requested 4 Initial Health Assessments and 15 Review Health Assessments be undertaken by other areas

- 3 IHA's and 8 RHA's were completed within timescale
- 1 IHA and 3 RHA's were completed late
- 1 RHA was not able to be completed by the external team, but a CHAT (Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool) form was returned, and the RHA was completed by the Looked After Children's Nurse in Gateshead
- 3 RHA's were returned to Gateshead Looked After Children's Nurses as the children moved back into area prior to completion.

1.3 Work completed with other Local Authority Looked After Children placed in Gateshead.

The team were asked to undertake a total of 2 IHA's and 13 RHA's for other areas in 2021-22.

- 2 IHA's were not completed on 2 occasions as the young people refused to attend. They were then discharged from care.
- 8 RHA's were completed in timescale by 0-19 Service and 1 by Looked After Children's Nurse
- 1 RHA was completed late by the 0-19 service
- 3 RHA's were requested late by the placing Looked After Children's Health team but were completed by the 0-19 service within 20 days of the Request

1.4 Other Contacts with Looked After Children and Young People

Children and Young People who are Looked After can at times require the professionals around them to work in different ways to meet their health needs. In recognition of that there have been 15 contacts with Young People by the Specialist Nurse Looked After Children. These contacts have been based upon need and have included health education, preparation for imaging investigations at the hospital and supporting young people to access services including sexual health.

2. End of Year Statistics

The team have achieved good returns as reported by the Local Authority in their SSDA 903 returns to Central Government.

	31/3/22	31/3/21	31/3/20	31/3/19	31/3/18	31/3/17	31/3/16
Health Assessments completed	95.6%	97%	98%	97%	99%	98.8%	99.1%
Dental check completed	69.3%	55%	94%	96%	97%	94.7%	90.7%

Immunisations up to date	90%	94%	97%	95%	94%	99.2%	96.9%
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3. Leaving Care

The Looked After Children’s Health Team are commissioned to provide services for Looked after Children up to their 18th birthday. In keeping with the Corporate Parent Principles laid out within the Children and Social Work Act 2017 the team support Young People and the local authority in their duties to support transition to adulthood.

A leaving care health consultation is undertaken by the Named or Specialist Nurse Looked After Children, during the young person’s final year in care (age 17-18). This may be completed at the time of the final statutory health assessment or may be done as a separate contact closer to their 18th birthday if there are additional needs for services and support.

The Young People are provided with a document called a Leaving Care Health Passport. Young people have been included in the development of this document and there has been an audit of their views in relation to it. The audit was completed in August 2019. The majority of feedback was positive and indicated that engagement with the Health Passport is valued by young people. The document is reviewed regularly to ensure the links and health promotion advice is current. It also provides information about how to access health services and includes the young person’s previous health and immunisation history. With the young person’s consent, a copy is sent to their social worker.

Leaving Care Health Passports were offered to **33** of the **33 (100%)** young people recorded as leaving care whose dates of birth fell within 1.4.03- 31.3.04

The Looked After Children's health team have worked with the Local Authority, Platform, Sexual Health Services and housing to set up a Leaving Care Drop-In session. This was established in October 2018 and ran monthly. This has not taken place during the Covid 19 pandemic. The team have attended by invitation, virtual meetings with care leavers throughout the last year.

4. Adoption & Fostering

4.1 Adoption

The role of Medical Advisor for Adoption is fulfilled by a Consultant Paediatrician.

The Medical Advisor role involves:

- Close working with social workers and members of the adoption team to ensure that historical medical information is collated, the child's family and genetic information considered, and that all the child's health and development needs are identified and shared in a comprehensive medical report based on clinical assessment. This is now shared with the local authority prior to the placement order application. It is later shared openly with the prospective adopters. This entails meeting with adopters' face to face or online and providing them with a comprehensive medical report based on clinical assessment.
- Sitting on the adoption panel as an advisor and as an independent panel member.
- Actively considering the implications of any procedural and legislative changes in adoption which impact upon the Medical Advisor role.

27 adoption medicals and **16** pre adoption medicals (total of **43**) were undertaken during the year, this is a significant increase from 18 in the previous year.

In November 2021, it was identified that Somerset County Council had not been fully compliant with Adoption Agency Regulations These breaches related to the medical advisor's contribution to the information gathering and preparation of the Child's Permanence Report. This led to a judicial review (The Somerset Ruling) and later highlighted that there were similar breaches in many local authorities across the UK.

While awaiting the ruling of the President of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, and while the legality of placement orders was uncertain, adoption orders were not able to be applied for. As of 13th April 2022, the President of the Family Division has confirmed that any existing placement orders or existing adoption orders made by a court are fully valid.

The identification of the breaches in process has led to the medical advisor completing a comprehensive medical report at an earlier stage in the adoption process, than has previously been the usual practice. The terminology used above of “adoption medicals” and “pre adoption medicals” relates to this change in practice.

The Medical Advisor met **29** prospective adopters which is an increase from **17** the previous year. The Medical Advisor shares available health information and a detailed health report prepared for the adopters to share with the new primary health care worker for the child.

In total during 2021 -2022 **15** children were formally adopted which is a decrease from **23** in the previous year. The Somerset ruling is likely to have contributed to this decrease as adoption orders were put on hold temporarily. Adoption work is now completed through Adopt North East, the regional adoption agency.

4.2 Fostering

Adult medical advice to the foster panel has been provided by the Medical Advisor for Adoption.

During the year there were 312 adult health medicals completed, rising from 198 in the previous year, of those

245 were for fostering rising from 124 in the previous year

40 for adoption

14 for Special Guardianship Orders

11 for Kinship Carers

A further 2 were not specified on the form

5. Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS)

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust Children and Young Peoples services (CYPS) provide services for children and young people in Gateshead and Newcastle who present with mental health difficulties.

The Looked After Children's Health team have no data from the service and would expect that this will be available within the CYPS own Annual Report.

A Looked After Children's Consultation Clinic takes place twice a month.

Professionals can refer to this service to discuss cases.

Information detailed in the table below has been collected using the Dendrite Intellect system and demonstrates an increase in children at review health assessment either open to, referred to, or awaiting a service to support their emotional health when compared to children at entry into care.

Emotional Health 2021-2022	Total for year at IHA	% for the Year	Total for the year at RHA	% for the year
Previous Service involvement	31	17.61%	166	38.43%
Open to Service Under follow up)	25	14.20%	96	22.22%
Is there a learning disability diagnosis?	4	2.27%	42	9.72%
Awaiting services	7	3.98%	8	1.85%
Referred	1	0.57%	5	1.16%

The task of distributing and scoring the Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) lies with the Local Authority and once completed the scores are shared with the Looked After Children's Health Team. As recommended by CQC the scores, when available, have been added to the BAAF health assessment forms and practitioners are expected to interpret the score and reflect on the child's needs and services that are either in place or required.

6. Drug & Alcohol Services

Drug and Alcohol Services for children and young people in Gateshead is provided by the PLATFORM service.

Information provided by Kirsty Martin, Project Leader, Platform Gateshead.

12 referrals from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

Referral Source:

A&E = 2, Social Worker = 1, Children's Homes = 2, Youth Offending Team = 1, Housing Support = 2, Self = 1, Paediatrician = 3

1st Substance of Choice

Alcohol = 6, Cannabis = 5, Nicotine = 1

Closures - 4

4 of the referrals have been closed with treatment complete

7. Sexual Health Services

Young people are encouraged to access generic sexual health services in their placement area as required. Those young people identified as in need of specialist intervention are assessed on an individual basis and professionals work together to ensure that their identified needs are met. The team have worked with the Specialist Nurse Sexual Health, to strengthen the offer to young people prior to them leaving care and to provide home visits to young people as required.

There have been no pregnancies notified during the reporting period.

Evidence suggests that Looked After Children and Care Leavers have an increased risk of unplanned teenage pregnancy and subsequent care proceedings in relation to their children (Broadhurst et al, 2017 and Roberts et al, 2017). The Looked After Children Health Team have worked alongside the Gateshead Sexual Health service to complete a gap analysis using a questionnaire method to identify service

improvements with the aim of reducing that risk for those that have experienced care in Gateshead. 110 responses were received from Young People and 116 from professionals/carers. Key partners including the Local Authority are supportive of this initiative and agree the issue requires a whole system approach. In response to the findings from the gap analysis changes have been made to the Gateshead Sexual Health service website. There is also a plan to deliver training in relation to confidentiality and sexual health, and what services are available where within the local area, the team will continue to work with Gateshead Sexual Health service to deliver that.

8. Training & Supervision

8.1 Training

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic limited face to face training has taken place.

The Looked After Children Health Nurses modified the training presentation offered to residential staff and foster carers about the health needs of Looked after Children so that it could be accessed online.

The Looked After Children's Health Team contributed to a Level 3 Safeguarding Children Video with a section on Looked After Children and Young People for delivery to staff at Gateshead Health NHS Trust.

Looked after children's health needs and issues are included in Level 2 and 3 training delivered to staff within Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust.

The Looked After Children's Health Team have also contributed to face-to-face Level 3 training provision at Gateshead Health NHS Trust. The team have also provided training to medical students, and to student Health Visitors employed by Harrogate Foundation Trust.

8.2 Supervision

The Designated Doctor Looked After Children provided supervision and training to junior medical staff completing health assessments and supervision to medical staff in the hospital in relation to meeting the health needs of children who are looked after and adopted.

The aim of training and supervision is to ensure all health staff working directly with Looked After Children & Young People and their carers achieve the Level 3 knowledge skills and competencies required. (RCN & RCPCH 2020).

9. Looked After Children Health Professionals

The Named Nurse Looked After Children and Specialist Nurse Looked After Children attend case meetings, Looked After Children reviews, High Needs Panel, planning meetings, care team meetings, strategy meetings and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), meetings to represent the health needs of individual Looked After Children & Young People.

The Designated Doctor, Named Nurse and Specialist Nurse Looked After Children attend the Be Healthy subgroup of the Corporate Parenting Partnership.

The Looked After Children's Nurses attended 174 meetings (an increase from 140 in the previous year) including Missing Sexual Exploitation & Trafficked (MSET), Strategy Meetings, Care Team Meetings and the High Needs Panel. A total of **486** children and young people were discussed at those meetings (which is an increase from **325** in the previous year). Risk assessments and action plans are saved electronically and disseminated to professionals who require the information to support them as practitioners in their safeguarding role.

The Looked After Children's health team attend quarterly meetings with Newcastle & Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to consider the commissioning agenda for looked after children's service provision and future priorities and developments. A process is in place to ensure payment is requested when

undertaking health assessments for other areas and that there is also a mechanism for payment when requesting health assessments for Gateshead young people placed further afield.

9.1 Audit findings

There is routine audit of the quality of Review Health Assessments carried out by Looked After Children's Nurses and 0-19 service carried out every 6 months. The findings of this have been disseminated to the Safeguarding Committee (Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust), School Nurses and Line Managers (Harrogate District Foundation Trust) and to the CCG.

In May 2021 a routine audit of the quality of Initial Health Assessment's completed by medical staff was also carried out, Again, those findings were disseminated to the Safeguarding Committee (Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust) and learning shared with those who complete the assessments.

In July 2021 an audit of unscheduled attendances at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by Gateshead Looked After Children and young people was completed to find out if the Looked After Children's Health Team had been informed of the attendance and if a Child Protection Information (CP-IS) enquiry had been completed. This planned audit is performed annually. CP-IS identifies if a child is Looked After or subject to a Child Protection Plan and automatically sends a notification the Social Work Team, informing them that the child has attended.

The recommendations were to share findings of the audit with the Named Nurse Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Children Team, Health Records and Nursing Managers responsible for the Emergency Care Centre and for the Safeguarding Team to continue to raise awareness with staff of the importance of completing CP-IS check and Cause for Concern / Datix for all Looked After Children who attend unscheduled care settings. In August 2021 a communication was also sent out to staff across the trust reminding them to complete a Cause for Concern/Datix for all Looked After Children who attend an unscheduled setting. A

further audit to be completed in July 2022. The findings have been circulated to the Safeguarding Committee (Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust), paediatricians and to the CCG.

10. Participation

The views of 20 Young People were gathered on their experiences of having their Health Assessment completed during the pandemic. The aim was to ascertain their preference for Face to face, Virtual or telephone appointments for Review Health Assessments given that many had experienced different ways of having their health assessment completed during the first phase of the pandemic. Most of the young people (90%) stated they preferred a face-to-face health assessment and all of the young people felt that the topics covered in the assessment were relevant to them.

As previously highlighted 110 Young people and 116 professional/carers participated in the gap analysis in relation to sexual health provision by responding to the online questionnaire.

The team have supported a care experienced young person to have their voice heard by attending the Safeguarding Committee, Safe Care meeting and a task and finish group to share their experiences of using services in unscheduled settings in Gateshead. This came about as a result of questions raised during completion of the leaving care health passport. The young person has since contributed to planned changes to the safeguarding children policy within the trust and has also made professionals reflect upon their practice when seeing young people. Learning from this young person will see a practice change across unscheduled settings. Moving forward professionals will ask young people if they are safe and will also give young people an opportunity to be seen alone unless there is a good reason not to which they will clearly document.

11. Inspection

There have been no inspections in this reporting period.

12. National & Team Developments

During the year the Team continued to deliver services, adapting the way of working and offering health assessments in line with Government guidance during the ongoing pandemic.

The team have also worked closely with the Gateshead Sexual Health team to improve services for care experienced young people.

13. Priorities 2022-2023

- To continue to plan and deliver a post Covid 19 recovery plan.
- The program of audit will be ongoing, and improvements made from any recommendations identified.
- To continue to contribute to the support to care leavers.
- Working alongside Gateshead Sexual Health Service learning and recommendations from the gap analysis will be acted upon to improve services for care experienced young people.
- To continue to work closely with the Local Authority to improve the overall timeframes for Initial Health Assessments.

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