

Children & Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee

7 October 2022

Annual 0-25 Family Health Service Update



Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny on the 0-25 Family Health Service workforce and service delivery across County Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT) is the provider of the 0-25 Family Health Service in County Durham, which delivers the Healthy Child Programme. HDFT is commissioned by Public Health in Durham County Council. A new contract was implemented from 1 September 2020.
- 3 Mobilisation and transition to deliver the new 0-25 Family Health Service (from the former 0-19 Health Visitor and School Nursing Service) during the pandemic has created challenges and delay in progressing some areas of work although these are now progressing.
- 4 Although there has been significant recruitment in September 2022 of Health Visitors as student Health Visitors complete their training, the recruitment of Family Health Visitors remains a challenge. There is a national shortage of qualified Health Visitor Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) which impacts at local and regional levels.
- 5 Agile working has supported universal Healthy Child Programme, partnership working and targeted delivery over the last 12 months.
- 6 The service expanded the previous Emotional Resilience element within the new contract, the partnership working and early intervention with timely responses is working well, with increasing referrals and

interventions each quarter. Further expansion of the Emotional Health and Resilience Team is now underway, to increase prevention work, and reach to vulnerable groups and pre-school cohorts

- 7 The Youth Practitioner roles which were introduced have developed good working relationships with secondary schools, and increased community allotment projects and holiday activities across the county to support vulnerable young people.
- 8 There are 10 Healthy Child Programme contacts 0-6 in the service model, including the 5 Government mandated ones and 5 additional locally agreed
- 9 The Enhanced Parenting Support Pathway (previously Vulnerable Parent Pathway) was relaunched in November 2021, with additional eligibility criteria added and the new pathway name (following feedback from service users, our staff and partners). There is a strong focus on reducing the number of under 1s becoming Children in Care.
- 10 The Covid 19 pandemic and lockdowns had a significant impact on our children, families and workforce in County Durham. Low income households and children and young people with SEND are not showing post lockdown recovery to the same extent as other groups, with an increase in mental health symptoms (Mental Health of Children and Young People in England Survey, 2021).

Recommendation(s)

- 11 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the content of this report and comment accordingly.

Background

- 12 The 0-25 Family Health Service (FHS), which delivers the Healthy Child Programme, contract commenced with Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT) on 1 September 2020.
- 13 To reflect the local authority's duty to young people that are SEND and care leavers and the direction of the NHS Long Term Plan move towards 0-25 services, the service is referred to as the 0-25 Family Health Service.
- 14 The 0-25 Family Health Service structure has an emphasis on a skill mix workforce, recognising that Health Visitors are a key workforce and are nationally mandated.

- 15 The 0-25 Family Health Service mobilised during the Covid Pandemic, which was extremely challenging, with the focus now on post covid recovery and full implementation of the contract model.

Workforce Challenges and Workforce Development

- 16 The service has continued to encounter significant workforce challenges due to the level of Family Health Visitor vacancy in the last 12 months,
- 17 The level of Family Health Visitor vacancies has led to work with safeguarding and vulnerable families being prioritised with Countywide support from other teams being utilised alongside increasing skill mix to support Healthy Child Programme delivery.
- 18 There was some redeployment of staff between September and December 2021 to support the 12-15 year old Covid vaccination programme in schools as national direction was that the seasonal school based flu programme could not be impacted by the introduction of this Covid vaccination programme. There has been no redeployment of staff since January 2022, due to the key role in early identification and support, and being one of the few services that visits and delivers care in families homes.
- 19 The skill mix teams support both the 0-6 and 6-25 SCPHN workforce to deliver both universal and targeted support, including safeguarding and children in care interventions.
- 20 Other roles within the skill mix teams have had successful recruitment when vacancy has arisen, for example Emotional Resilience Nurse and Practitioners, Band 5 Family Health Nurses, non-qualified nurse roles, and Paid Peer Supporter roles. This is reflective of the national picture of a shortage of trained Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) available to fill those vacancies.
- 21 HDFT have trained 15 SCPHN students in the County Durham area September 2021- September 2022. Ten have accepted permanent contracts as qualified Health Visitors, and one as a Family Health SCPHN from September 2022. HDFT have recruited the next cohort of SCPHN students to starting training in September 2022. 17 are training in County Durham.
- 22 In addition, all vacancies continue to be advertised nationally, we hold quarterly recruitment events, and we offer internal moves from other contract areas to support staff work/life balance and retain experienced staff in our services. We are working closely with NHSP to increase the pool of SCPHN staff to support our teams, and we continue to offer retire and return contracts.

- 23 Workforce wellbeing has been a key priority for HDFT and Public Health in Durham County Council, with dedicated Health Advocates in teams, listening events, Thrive conversations, support and opportunities for new roles and progression, and a Trust recruitment and retention plan.
- 24 The 0-25 Family Health Service achieved the Better Health at Work Bronze Award in September 2021, we have just submitted our portfolio for Silver Award and are awaiting the outcome.
- 25 Training is now back on track, both multi-agency and role specific, this includes our Family Health SCPHNs being trained in emergency hormonal contraception, our 6-25 practitioners undertaking Clear Cut Communication Training, and roll out of Signs of Safety training across the workforce which supports shared language and strengths and risks identification with children and families. Graded Care Profile Training 2 is being rolled out across the County, starting in the East of County Durham workforce.
- 26 Workforce Covid and Flu vaccination for Winter 2022 has been planned, and our workforce has an offer for Covid and Flu Vaccination from HDFT and our bordering South Tyneside and Sunderland and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trusts.

Covid 19 Recovery, and Universal and Targeted Care to Children, Young People and Families

- 27 Agile working has continued to support service delivery, now mainly for partnership and trust meetings, with a blended approach for ICPCs, RCPCs, and Team Around the Family. The provision of blended approaches supports increased capacity due to reduced travel time and parking etc. Most service delivery contacts with Children Young People and Families (CYP&F) are face to face, however virtual platforms are still utilised where appropriate and beneficial to CYP&F.
- 28 Delivery of some of the ten universal contacts has had to be risk assessed to either pause or to be provided as a virtual contact, families with identified additional need at Universal Plus (UP) and Universal Partnership Plus (UPP) levels have been prioritised.
- 29 Families have been encouraged to contact the service if they have any worries and require advice and support. HDFT's Single Point of Contact into the service is well utilised.
- 30 Appointed sessions have been established over the past 9 months in suitable venues across County Durham to support families accessing the service where they have concerns in relation to weight or would like to see a member of the team outside of a home visit for any reason.

- 31 Breastfeeding support groups are now face to face, with a targeted Early Latch Clinic in the East of Durham where our breastfeeding rates currently and historically are lower. We continue to work with CDDFT colleagues with RSV planning and key messages for families.
- 32 Prevention and health promotion have been supported through HDFT 0-25 Facebook pages. The pages have 5.3k followers, the majority are female, so HDFT have work to do on this to engage and promote more with males. There is now a live Growing Healthy 0-25 App which has been developed with a County Durham App development company. Enhancements and localisation are ongoing, staff training sessions from the App Developer are taking place throughout September, to support use and updating of the App

Enhanced Parenting Support Pathway

- 33 Parental mental health is the top reason for referral onto the pathway, followed by previous child protection proceedings, then parental domestic abuse.
- 34 The access criteria has been expanded to include pre-term babies and parents/ carers with learning difficulties/ disabilities.
- 35 Following a partnership workshop in July 2022, planning is underway to further expand criteria to include postnatal period up to 8 weeks.
- 36 There is ongoing work to improve data collection and ensure information sharing processes are robust and effective.

Best Start in Life

Infant Feeding

- 37 Breastfeeding initiation and rates at 6-8 weeks have remained almost unchanged from 2021 rates. Face to face breastfeeding support groups are back up and running across the County, with a targeted Early Latch Clinic established in the East of Durham where rates continue to be lower than other localities. The 0-25 Family Health Service was assessed for Unicef Gold Re-Accreditation in August 2022, we are awaiting the feedback report and recommendations from Unicef. HDFT Paid Peer Supporters are working with local businesses to undertake the Baby Friendly business accreditation scheme building on what has been done previously and have had an active role in contacting families of under 2s to check entitlement and promote the food and warmth voucher scheme, supporting the child poverty agenda.

Health Education and Nutrition in the Really Young (HENRY)

- 38 HENRY is an evidenced based intervention, using face to face sessions, for families with young children to support healthy eating and healthy weight. Deliver is currently a mixed model of face to face and virtual, parental/ carer engagement has been a challenge despite initial commitment from families, there are no themes to this it is individual family circumstances and priorities. In particular there is very low engagement in the 6-12 year olds programme (following NCMP).

Speech and Language

- 39 Speech and Language- the HDFT 0-6 workforce are now all trained to use ELIM (Early Language Identification Measures) tool at the 2.5 year review. Research shows that ELIM can identify 94% of toddlers with early language needs to ensure early intervention and timely referral to speech and language therapy if required. Our Family Health Practitioners are now being trained by Speech and Language Therapy (North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust) in specific guidance for interventions following ELIM.

Unintentional Injuries

- 40 Unintentional injury-HDFT launched the Accidental Poisoning Campaign across County Durham with RoSPA in September 2021 and have provided 1000 safety fridge magnets and safety checklists to families with supporting advice.
- 41 Unintentional Injuries champions have done awareness raising of safe bathing with teams.

Perinatal and Infant Mental Health

- 42 HDFT are focussing on ensuring their workforce is up to date with training and expanding the number of train the trainers in Emotional Wellbeing Visits to expedite this training across teams. In partnership with the One Point service HDFT have purchased a licence to support all County Durham families accessing the Solihull Programmes online. Q2 data 2022 indicates most popular programmes are Pregnancy, Labour and Birth, and understanding your child. Accessing parenting programmes in this way has provide more flexibility for families, and increased capacity across our services to provide face to face targeted parenting programmes and support to families with higher need and vulnerability.
- 43 Our service worked with partners to deliver a Maternal Mental Health (MMH) Event at Wharton Park, Durham, on 4th May 2022 as part of Maternal Mental Health week. This was good networking for

organisations supporting MMH, along with support for families, with really useful feedback from families, particularly around more privacy to talk to representatives from organisations at the event, which will influence future events.

- 44 Our Peer Supporter roles have been key in engaging and consulting parents/ carers around activities to support emotional health and wellbeing, alongside their key role in supporting breastfeeding, and they have been asked to present their role and impact at the national iHV conference later this year.

Tobacco Dependency in Pregnancy

- 45 The 0-25 FHS has been involved in the development of the North East England Tobacco Dependency in Pregnancy and Postnatal Pathway, which is now being rolled out across the region. Our staff have been trained by ABL (the Stop Smoking Service Provider in County Durham) in CO monitoring, and we are currently embedding CO monitoring in our healthy child programme contacts. We have seen an increase in referrals to the specialist stop smoking service in the last 6 months.

Family Hubs

HDFT 0-25 Family Health Service are a key partner in the development of the Family Hub offer in County Durham, this provides us with the wider system an opportunity to improve the Best Start in Life offer and outcomes for our population.

School Age Vision Screening

- 46 The national pause in vision screening in academic year 2019-2020 following lockdown in March 2020, and the subsequent catch ups required led to 2 year groups (Reception and Year 1) requiring screening during the academic year 2021-2022. This screening was completed within timescale. Public Health provided funding to employ temporary extra capacity in the Family Health Assistant Team to catch up on the screening in a timely manner and reduce the risk of continuous catchup Vision screening in academic year 2022-2023 for reception year will go ahead as normal.
- 47 Glasses in Classes: in the academic year 2021-2022 all children in Reception Year and Year 1 were offered routine vision screening by the 0-25 Family Health Service. Between 10-15% of children who have an eyesight test are diagnosed as needing glasses. Of these, around 30% are not taken to opticians to get glasses. Even amongst those who do attend an optician's appointment, many do not always wear their glasses, and this can hinder their progress at school. 79 Primary Schools in County Durham participated in the Glasses in Classes

Scheme funded by the Department for Education. Children in these 79 schools who needed glasses received a voucher to take to the opticians which made them eligible to receive two pairs instead of one. The second pair is retained at school for occasions when the child forgets to wear their glasses to school or if they break the first pair. The results of the vision screening test were also shared with the school link coordinator, this allowed the school to communicate with the parents to encourage them to take the child for further examination. The scheme concluded on 31st August 2022; an evaluation report is awaited which will inform future role out.

- 48 The benefits of the scheme will ensure that children who need glasses wear them in class which helps to correct their vision so that learning is not impacted.
- 49 We are currently working closely with the Primary Eyecare Service to increase children accessing optician appointments in a timely way following school screening. We will be referring children to this service using a platform called Opera which Primary Eyecare use as their national system. This will support timely referral, offer of appointments and ability to track individual children through the system following referral, as a large number of children in County Durham did not attend opticians following initial referral from reception screening, requiring reminder letters and a delay in secondary screening and treatment.

National Childhood Measurement Programme - Healthy Weight

- 50 The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for academic year 2021 – 2022 was completed on all eligible schools within timescales.
- 51 NCMP data nationally shows an increase in Reception Year Obesity Prevalence from 9.9% in 2019-2020 to 14.4% in 2020-2021. In the North East region there is an increase from 11% in 2019-2020 to 15% in 2020-2021. Year 6 national obesity prevalence nationally has risen from 21% in 2019-2020 to 25.5% in 2020-2021, and regionally from 23.2% in 2019-2020 to 29.1% in 2020-2021. The obesity rates in the North East region have increased year on year in both Reception and Year 6. The findings from the NCMP data for 2021 -2022 have not been published to date.
- 52 The ongoing training of our staff to deliver HENRY, including the Healthy Families Growing up Programme which is aimed at 4-12 years, will support addressing the levels of obesity we are identifying in our population. NCMP will be key in identifying children and families we can engage in this intervention, in addition to referral from partner agencies and families themselves.

- 53 Working with Durham County Council and County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT), the 0-25 Service is currently part of the MapMe research project run by Newcastle University. The project aims to support parental knowledge and awareness of child weight status and look at how child weight status changes over time. This project involves repeat height and weight measurements when children are in Year 1 and Year 7, in academic year 2022-2023, following their NCMP measurement in the previous academic year.

6-19/25 Service Delivery

- 54 The 6-25 element of the service continues to undergo a programme of transformation to support the new service model, with some disaggregated roles to focus on and support the more vulnerable children and young people, while maintaining a generic service that works with schools and more vulnerable communities. There are specific Children in Care Nurses, Safeguarding Strategy Nurses, an Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) Nurse, Youth Justice Nurse and SEND Nurses. The Gypsy, Roma Traveller (GRT) Specialist Nurse Role continues to have excellent relationships with the GRT communities across County Durham, and this role continues to evolve.
- 55 There is a large volume of information into the 0-25 Service from partners across the system, much if it is for clinical review and impacts on clinical time with children and families. HDFT have reviewed this internally and developed new processes and systems to ensure prioritisation of vulnerability, timely responses in line with early intervention and prevention, increase clinical contact with families and communities.

Emotional Resilience Team

- 56 Referrals into the Emotional Resilience Team have continued to increase over the last 12 months. The service we offer is based on the needs of the children, young people and families in County Durham, some areas of growth are a direct response to the need identified. The referrals and interventions delivered by the emotional health and resilience team have increased in an upward trajectory month on month since the beginning of our current contract
- 57 Anxiety remains the most prevalent reason for referral, followed by emotional regulation and bereavement. The team are critical members of a co-ordinated multi agency response offering vital support after a critical incident has occurred in the community. This is delivered in a timely manner to primary and secondary schools, both for staff and children and young people and their families when very sadly there has

been a death of a young person or staff member in the school community.

- 58 Five members of the team have been trained in Decider Training to work with groups of children around emotional regulation. This teaches children, young people and adults the skills to recognise their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, enabling them to monitor and manage their own emotions and mental health, proactively reducing the impact of emotional distress. We are in the process of expanding this resource to include some vital transition support for children and young people
- 59 We are delighted to be in the current position of expanding the team, this will include a further three band 6 nurses/practitioners, two band 5 and three band 4 practitioners. This will allow our expanded team to increase focussed support on vulnerable groups in our communities. These posts will offer upskilling, advice and guidance and supervision to the teams who currently work with these vulnerable groups, allowing wider reach of the emotional health & resilience offer and will include an increased offer to our key delivery.
- 60 Prevention and early intervention is key to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes for our children, young people and families in County Durham. This expansion will enable our team to focus on this prevention and early intervention element of our work focussing on very early years and pre-school, it will enable us to further progress working in an integrated manner with Local Authority & Education including early years settings and Health Visitor colleagues to enhance our prevention offer around emotional wellbeing in that critical preschool period.
- 61 We continue to work in collaboration strengthening the Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Partnership with our key delivery partners. We have been delighted to be part of several crucial projects of co delivery including the Youth Awareness of Mental Health (YAM), Senior Mental Health Leads in School Training and the very successful anxious about school pilot where we have co-delivered an evidence based programme to parents to support their children suffering anxiety, which in turn was stopping them accessing education

Youth Practitioner

- 62 In the past year the HDFT Youth Practitioner team have worked with six secondary schools on Growing Healthy Gardening/ Forest School Projects, three Community Allotment projects and a youth group for social/ emotional support working in partnership with the Allotment Associations and local Charities.

- 63 So far, 16 young people that HDFT have worked with have achieved the John Muir Award, and in the past year they have accessed funding to support holiday activities for almost 200 vulnerable young people.
- 64 The majority of referrals are from CAMHS, One Point Service or Education colleagues.
- 65 Feedback from schools, the young people and families has been very positive, in particular around raised self-esteem, confidence and overcoming social isolation.

SEND

- 66 The HDFT SEND team have continued to work closely with our SEND Schools since the return to school following Covid. We are now offering all SEND schools bespoke group and one to one Health Promotion to our CYP as well as targeted work for identified CYP who may be at risk.
- 67 We are increasing our SEND team by recruiting a Family Health Visitor with a specific focus on SEND 0-5, supporting increased engagement with early years settings and providers, and earlier identification and support for CYP&F with SEND.
- 68 There is ongoing improvement work to ensure robust and relevant information is provided to inform Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs).

Safeguarding

- 69 The 0-25 Family Health Service has high levels of safeguarding activity, alongside Children's Services and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- 70 Public Health have funded an additional Safeguarding Strategy Nurse to reduce the impact of Family Health Visitors and Family Health SCPHNs moving or delaying universal and targeted work to attend strategies, where the existing strategy resource is already being used.
- 71 There is also increasing complexity in safeguarding cases, with an impact of vicarious trauma and high stress levels amongst staff. We have staff trained in vicarious trauma to support our workforce.
- 72 There has also been an increase in domestic abuse screening through the MASH which has increased pressure on HDFT resource but also generates an increased number of assessment and interventions by the 0-25 team.

- 73 Non accidental injuries in babies under 1 increased by one fifth nationally during the Covid 19 pandemic, a physical abuse training package has been developed for staff, and ICON is now embedded in practice.
- 74 Safeguarding training and supervision within the team has very high compliance levels.

Key Challenges

- 75 Health Visitor SCPHN Workforce remains the main challenge for the next 12 months, there is currently a national shortage of around 5000 Health Visitors (iHV, 2022). HDFT are working closely with Public Health and the wider system to address gaps, think creatively and ensure they prioritise vulnerability and inequality, while still providing a good universal offer to our County Durham Children Young People and Families.
- 76 The increase in safeguarding work, and complexity of cases, for the service is a challenge, due to the impact of this on resource to implement prevention and early intervention work.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Under the terms of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 local authorities hold the commissioning responsibility for 0-19 Public Health services, including the mandated Health Visitor contacts.

Finance

None.

Consultation

A stakeholder consultation exercise was undertaken as part of the review of the previous County Durham Health Visiting and School Nursing Service to shape the new service specification. Ongoing service user consultation and feedback is embedded into the contract monitoring requirements

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for the new 0-25 service.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

The provider are responsible for staffing requirements to deliver the service

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

All risks are monitored by DCC commissioning and mitigating actions considered.

Procurement

No current procurement requirements.