

Dear Director of Children's Services

RE: SERVICES AVAILABLE TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACED IN GATESHEAD BY OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Gateshead Council would like to notify you about the resources and facilities available to looked after children and young people who may be placed in Gateshead by your local authority.

This letter sets out the process to notify us if you are intending to place a looked after child or young person in Gateshead or when their placement arrangements change.

Information about a range of services for looked after children including our Virtual School for Children in Care and about accessing universal services and contact details for our Children in Care Council.

Please disseminate this information to relevant professionals within your Children's Service. We hope that this information will help your professional staff to understand and access the diverse universal services that are available to children and young people residing in Gateshead. It would be helpful if you also share this letter with your foster carers based in Gateshead so they are aware of the services available to children and young people.

NOTIFICATIONS

All notifications of looked after children placed in Gateshead should be sent through secure email to the Fostering Business Admin team on FosteringAdminTeam@gateshead.gcsx.gov.uk.

Gateshead Council requires the relevant information about children and young people placed by other authorities to be provided on the form attached in Appendix A. Changes of address and notifications of looked after children leaving Gateshead should also be sent using the same process so we can update our records. Please ensure that notifications highlight any particular risks or vulnerabilities to assist the professional network within Gateshead to respond effectively to any issues that may arise. We may ask you to send a Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment so that we have a detailed understanding of the child's vulnerabilities. Gateshead will expect authorities to make necessary arrangements to undertake return interviews for their young in the event of any missing episodes. Gateshead will request these interviews are sent to the Gateshead through the email address above in a timely manner so that appropriate information is shared.

REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT TEAM

This team is a first point of contact for referrals to children's social care services for children who are in need of protection or support to live safely within their family. The social workers in referral and assessment carry out brief and more in-depth assessments of children who have been referred for services. A referral to the team can be made by anyone, including families, members of the public, or professionals such as GPs, health visitors etc. A duty system is in operation; referrers should call 0191 433 2653 or send a written referral to the address below.

The duty worker will ask for some information and may signpost to other services that can help or undertake an assessment to determine what support or interventions are needed.

For emergencies; outside office hours the contact number is (0191) 4770844.

ADVOCACY SERVICES

Advocacy services for children and young people in Gateshead which are provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). The service provides:

- Advocacy for looked after children (referral by social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, parent/carer or child/young person themselves)
- Advocacy for care leavers (referral by social worker, parent/carer or young person themselves)
- Advocacy for children and young people wishing to make a complaint (when a complaint is made the Complaints department will make a referral to the service)
- Advocacy for children and young people (aged 5+) subject to Child Protection proceedings (the child's social worker makes the referral as soon as a date for the child protection conference has been agreed)

Contact; telephone 0191 433 2647, rights@gateshead.gov.uk

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL, ONE VOICE

The Children in Care Council meet once a month to ensure that the voice of looked after children and young people in Gateshead is heard. The group discuss the issues that might affect young people in care, to improve services for them and ensure that looked after young people have a voice and influence in any decisions that might affect them.

There are also other opportunities to attend events and meetings locally and across the country to ensure that the views of looked after children and young people are heard.

Contact ; Children in Care Council please contact Gateshead children's rights officer or email pledge@gateshead.gov.uk telephone 0191 433 2647.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES

Gateshead has children's centres located across the area offering families of 0-5 year olds a variety of services which are free to access. The main purpose of a children's centre is to provide support for parents, carers and their under 5's so that all children can be happy, healthy and achieve great things in life.

Services offered from centres do vary, but will include:

- Information about early years childcare in the centre or nearby
- Family support services
- Information, advice and support including parenting classes
- Easy access to child and family health services
- Stay and play sessions, messy play, Dad's groups, rhyme time sessions

More information about our children's centres can be found www.Gateshead.gov.uk

EARLY YEARS SERVICES

Gateshead has information on its website www.Gateshead.gov.uk:

- Parent and Toddler Groups
- Activities and leisure groups for 0 to 19 year olds
- National and local support services for health, education, financial, legal and family issues
- Schools and Education

Looked after children aged 2, 3 or 4 are entitled to 15 hours free childcare in:

- Day Nurseries or pre-schools eligible to claim the free entitlement
- Independent schools
- Local authority maintained nurseries within primary schools

Contact; fis@gateshead.gov.uk telephone 0191 433 5118

EDUCATION

Looked after and adopted children have priority in school admissions. Gateshead Schools Admission Service is based at the Dryden Centre in Gateshead. This service co-ordinates the admission process for children starting school for the first time and also the primary to secondary transfer process. The Service also deals with requests for transfer and will provide advice about admission appeals and the formal exclusion process. Their contact email is: school.admissions@Gateshead.gov.uk

The Virtual School Head teacher works collaboratively with respective colleagues in other local authorities and will support any school regarding looked after children and Young People on their roll who may be placed in Gateshead by another local

authority. The Virtual School also supports adopted children and young people where support is requested by parents.

Each school in Gateshead has a Designated Teacher for looked after children and young people to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and young people who are on the school roll.

For more information, please contact the REALAC Virtual School team on (0191) 433 8523.

All schools, academies and colleges work in partnership and have a collective responsibility to ensure that all young people have access to the best possible learning opportunities so that they can attain good education outcomes.

HEALTH SERVICES

All children and young people living in Gateshead will have access to universal health services.

Children and young people aged 5-16 years can call in and see their School Nurse at their school. School Nurses support children, young people to improve The service is provided by qualified nurses and support staff who are experienced in working with children and young people. School Nurses can help with many different health and emotional issues.

The health needs of looked after children and young people in Gateshead are monitored by our designated doctor and nurse who have a strategic and operational role in overseeing the health of all looked after children placed by Gateshead Council. The Gateshead LAC & YP Health Team can be contacted at (0191) 283 4566.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Confidential sexual health service for young people which offers:

- follow up and signposting to other services you may need
- sexual health support and advice - contact Trinity Square Health Centre on (0191) 2831586

DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROJECT

Platform is a service for young people who need help with substance misuse.

Platform can help by:

- Supporting young people aged 18 and under who are using drugs and/or alcohol

- Providing confidential one-to-one support sessions
- Meeting you at a convenient place
- Giving advice and information on drugs and alcohol and other helpful organisations
- Providing services for pregnant young women who are using drugs and/or alcohol
- Helping you get access to medical support
- Advising you on how to live healthier
- Helping young people understand the risks of taking drugs and alcohol
- Supporting young people and act on your behalf when talking to school/college/family
- Helping your family understand how they can help you
- Helping you access other support services

Platform contact: (0191) 460 10354 www.platformgateshead.org.uk.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

Children and Young People Service (CYPS) provides assessment and treatment for serious mental health disturbances and their associated risks. Workers will consider how serious the mental health concerns are, how long they have been going on, and how much they affect the rest of the person's life.

Professionals can make a referral to child and adolescent mental health services using the Single Point of Access referral form which can be found at:

Prior to routine referral, referrers should agree funding from the placing authority's Clinical Commissioning Group. This will need to be confirmed before intervention can commence. If the mental health need is an emergency or urgent, CYPS will assess and meet immediate need and agree funding retrospectively; any further intervention will require confirmation of funding.

INDEPENDENT VISITORS

Independent Visitors are adult volunteers who provide independent, one to one support to Looked After young people in Gateshead.

Young people who are in care often experience a lot of disruption in their lives. An Independent Visitor is someone who can be a consistent figure in their lives, when there is no-one in their family who is able to take this role. An Independent Visitor is there to befriend a young person, offering them consistency, support, advice and encouragement throughout the time they are in care and often beyond this time. All those participating in the scheme take part on a voluntary basis.

MISSING, SEXUALLY EXPLOITED AND TRAFFICKED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Gateshead Safeguarding Children Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that there is a coordinated, multi-agency response to the issues of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and Missing, Exploited and Trafficked children and young people. Gateshead Safeguarding Board has a strategy in place and action plan, delivered by the Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked group (MSET) sub group. The sub-group ensures a co-ordinated response to concerns or incidents of sexual exploitation, including identifying patterns, trends and areas where children and young people are at risk in Gateshead. This group is overseen by the Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked group (MSET) strategic multi agency group. Gateshead has a dedicated police Missing Children Coordinator. All children who are reported as missing in Gateshead will have a Missing Return Interview (MRI) completed within 72 hours of returning home or to care as directed by national guidance.

The MSET group will share intelligence, map where the children at risk in Hampshire are, look for evidence of any organised or group exploitation and collectively take action to ensure that those children identified as being at risk, have plans and support put in place to address the concerns. For those at risk, Police and Children's Service will take all necessary steps to intervene and protect.

Any child who repeatedly goes missing should be considered as at possible risk of CSE and the necessary steps taken. If a child from another authority goes missing in Gateshead the responsibility to address this remains with the placing authority.

Information of our local safeguarding processes can be accessed by the Gateshead Safeguarding Children Board website at www.gateshead.gov.uk/lscb/home.aspx

SAFEGUARDING

If a child you have placed in our area makes an allegation against a professional in Gateshead then the placing social work team should notify the Gateshead LADO. Contact

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY TEAM

Where a looked after child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (or an Education Health and Care Plan from September 2014 onwards) the Special Educational Needs and Disability Team will coordinate the formal assessment process and maintain the Statement on behalf of the placing authority.

We also have a wide range of services available to provide help and support to children, their families and carers, schools and other professionals to ensure that all children and young people get the best education:

- Coordinate assessment for families and planning for services to meet their needs.

- The Parent Partnership Service (PPS) provided by Action for Children is there to help all parents of children with Special Educational Needs. PPS supports parents and carers with free, impartial advice and information about their child's Special Educational Need (SEN).
- The Educational Psychology Service carry out work related to the development, learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties of children and young people.

Contact the SENIT Business Support Team on (0191) 433 3626 or senteam@gateshead.gov.uk.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Where a looked after child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an EHCP the Special Educational Needs Service will maintain the Statement/EHCP on behalf of the placing authority.

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Disabled Children works with Our Parent Forum and other voluntary groups and organisations to support and promote opportunities for all disabled children and their families in Gateshead.

Contact the Network of Children with Disabilities on (0191) 433 3619.

YOUTH OFFENDING

Gateshead Youth Offending Team (YOT) works with young people aged 10 to 18 to prevent offending and re-offending. We work jointly with our partners to deal effectively with the causes of offending, to improve outcomes for young people and help them live crime free lives, as well as meet specific needs such as substance misuse, restorative justice, parenting programmes and accommodation support. We are committed to protecting the public by balancing the needs of children and young people with the rights of victims and the wider community.

This multi-agency approach allows the YOT to be responsive to local needs, and work with the services and plans of other agencies in Gateshead to address youth crime. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deliver programmes and projects that reduce offending by directly confronting young people who offend with the underlying causes of crime.

The Youth Offending Team can be contacted on 0191 433 4584

YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Services such as Connexions and Gateshead Youth Council provide children and young people aged 11-18 with a diverse range of educational positive activities, accredited learning programmes, specialist facilities and mentoring support. Youth workers offer an educational service that means young people gain nationally

recognised awards and qualifications; improve life, social and vocational skills; get personal support to strengthen protective factors.

Contact Connexions on (0191) 433 2785

Yours sincerely,

David Bunce
Strategic Director
Care, Wellbeing and Learning