

Media Release

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“Definite improvement” in health reviews for Looked After Children under 5 years old across Norfolk

Kirsten Francis, Head of Locality, Norfolk children and young people's health services explained:

“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. Delays in identifying and meeting these children's health and emotional well-being needs can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives, including reaching their full potential and leading happy and healthy lives as adults.

“We have a team of 13 health visitors who are passionate about providing timely, good quality health reviews for Looked After Children under the age of 5. Additional training provided this year in partnership with the Norfolk Designated Safeguarding Team has supported their development and skills and 100% of reviews this year have been undertaken in a timely way with identified actions fully completed. Quarterly audits also highlighted that the reviews are age appropriate and capture all of the child's physical, behavioural and emotional development needs utilising information from health professionals, parents and the children themselves.

“The positive feedback we are receiving and knowing that we are making a real difference to these children's lives is really rewarding and we cannot commend highly enough the skills and commitment of our Looked After Children health visitors.”

Gemma, a foster carer living in Norfolk said:

“I have noticed a definite improvement in the Health Visiting team for Looked After Children over the past year. It's really helpful because the children have lots of professionals in and out of their lives and it can be quite distressing for them. Having that knowledge of the whole system and the process is really helpful, especially when the health visitors can come to looked after children reviews and have their input. It's definitely a big improvement.”

Helen Gray, Health Visitor explained why her work with Looked After Children is so important to her:

“I come to work because I want to make a difference to these children, it's really important to me. All of the health visitors in the team are really passionate about our

work and we can see the importance of continuing to move forward and ensure these children achieve the best outcomes.”

Sarah Barnes, Public Health Commissioning Manager for Children and Young People at Norfolk County Council said “There are many reasons a child comes into care, and this can have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. The specially trained Health Visitors will listen to babies and young children using a variety of communication techniques including play. They do an excellent job monitoring the health and emotional wellbeing of these young children to help ensure they have the best start in life”

To find out more about Norfolk’s health visiting services for Looked After Children visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7c9gCJOGj0>

For further information contact Norfolk Children and Young People’s Health Services Communications Team on 01480 308266 or email ccs.communications@nhs.net