

## Keyworking – North East and North Cumbria

The Keyworker function is an important response to the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP), which makes a commitment that by 2023/24, children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both, with the most complex needs will have a designated Keyworker.

Keyworking is a new way of working with children, young people and their families. It aims to improve their lives and mental health, providing additional support and reducing the need for inpatient admission.

The North East and North Cumbria Keyworker projects join a number of others around the country to pilot this approach with support from regional and national colleagues. The North East and North Cumbria keyworking journey is well underway with pilot projects up and running in North Cumbria (hosted by CNTW) and Tees Valley (hosted by Tees Valley CCG and delivered by Daisy Chain). The Tees pilot has extended into County Durham too and we are pleased to confirm that, further to another successful bid, a subsequent development is underway to recruit keyworker roles across the remaining localities of the North East and North Cumbria. Skills for People will host these additional roles in partnership with the Children and Young People's Provider Collaborative for the North East and North Cumbria.

Keyworkers will work alongside families of children/young people who have a learning disability, autism or both, and who are at risk of admission to inpatient care due to their complex needs. The Keyworker will support young people and their family/carers to get the right support at the right time and contribute towards local systems (health, social care, education etc) working together to meet local needs with a focus on delivering the best outcomes. Each Keyworker will support a small caseload of families, working intensively with and alongside the children/young people and their family carers to sign-post, facilitate appropriate support, represent their views and contribute towards the family unit's understanding and implementation of the methods which are proposed for supporting the child/young person. The Keyworker will get to know the family well, engage with them and their network of support, help them to prepare for and attend meetings. Crucially, in addition to this active support, the keyworking function will equip families with additional tools, knowledge and skills to ensure a future in which they feel empowered, listened to and informed.

The initial keyworker roll out will focus on young people currently in an inpatient facility and those rated most at risk of admission on Dynamic Support Registers. It is important that we work together to ensure the keyworker function can interface seamlessly with the Dynamic Support process in each area and this will be overseen by a Keyworker Steering Group. The Keyworker Steering Group comprises representation from a range of partners organisations (NHS England, Third Sector, CCG, Local Authority, Provider, Third Sector, Parent Carer Forum, Provider Collaborative) to ensure a true systems approach.

In addition to the Family Support Keyworker roles, the Keyworking vision for the North East and North Cumbria also includes the development of a Keyworking Strategic lead role (2 posts). These senior positions will work at “system” level to represent the young person and their family. They will work with service leaders and key professionals across local systems to provide support, influence and challenge at the most senior levels in order to facilitate outcome-focused solutions in the best interest of the young person and their family.

The Strategic Keyworker will develop and maintain strong working relationships across the Integrated Care System (ICS), adding value to established statutory and MDT working. They will encourage, influence and facilitate health, social care and education professionals and other colleagues to develop collaborative practices that are person-centred, health promoting and evidence based. In so doing, the Strategic keyworker is expected to embed the keyworking function into everyday practice across the ICS creating a sustainable legacy. This is an exciting development for the North East and North Cumbria, and one that you will hear a lot more about in the coming months.

If you would like additional information, please contact Gayl Keddie, Keyworking Project Manager ([gayl.keddie@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:gayl.keddie@cntw.nhs.uk)).