

Children's Services

Welcome Pack



North
Tyneside
Council



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Welcome to North Tyneside Council's Children's Services

Hello and a very warm welcome to our Children's Services directorate.

I am delighted that you are considering a career working with children, young people and families in North Tyneside.

In line with our Children and Young People's Plan, we aim to **ensure that all children and young people are safe, happy, healthy and able to achieve in North Tyneside**. We deliver this through taking action to **reduce inequalities**, addressing need through our early help and prevention offer and in keeping the **voice of children and young people** at the heart of all our work.

We recognise that our work, while very rewarding can also be challenging and so these ambitions apply equally to our workforce. We strive to enable our teams to be safe, happy, healthy and progress in their learning and careers through a strong collaborative approach which is shaped by our corporate values, **we listen and we care**.

We have shaped a strong offer that will help you achieve your full potential while making a real and tangible difference to the children, young people, families and partners you will work with.

If, like me, you are passionate and committed about making a difference and helping us to deliver our aims, we will provide the right environment for you to excel.

I wish you every success with your application and hope to be giving you a warm welcome to the team very soon.



Julie Firth

Director of Children's Services

What inspectors said about us

Ofsted last did a full inspection of North Tyneside services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers in March 2020 when they rated us 'Outstanding' overall. The full report is available [here](#).

A focused visit of North Tyneside's Children's Services was carried out by Ofsted in April 2022. The inspection visit concluded that children and families in North Tyneside receive highly effective services when referred to the Front Door. The findings included:

- Thresholds to access Early Help and children's social care services are well understood and embedded across social work teams and partner agencies
- A range of agencies are co-located in the MASH who work effectively as one team with one goal
- Well established professional partnerships are embedded in routine decision making and practice
- The front door workforce is highly skilled and knowledgeable
- Children in need of help and protection receive a response that is timely and proportionate and improves their situation
- Children's lived experiences are well considered leading to informed and effective interventions.

The full report is available [here](#).

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation Services (HMIP) carried out an inspection of our Youth Justice Services in July 2021 and rated them as 'Outstanding' and found the following strengths:

- The work of the Youth Justice Service (YJS) is overseen by well-informed and committed Board members who strongly champion the work with children
- There is a clear vision, which translates into the work delivered by practitioners
- The Chair of the Board provides purposeful leadership of the YJS
- The YJS Manager is a motivated, knowledgeable and inspiring leader, working with a highly skilled management team
- The operational team is a dedicated, skillful, knowledgeable and experienced group
- The service has well-established partnership working
- A trauma-informed approach to the work with children is fully supported by resources within the partnership arrangement
- The YJS is supported by well-resourced and skillful data management.

The full report is available [here](#).

Overview of Children's Services at North Tyneside Council

We have a wide range of services which sit within Children's Services.

We have a well-established and effective multi-agency **Early Help** model, which ensures that children, young people, and families are offered help when needs are first identified. Within multi-agency locality teams, **Early Help Coordinators** lead the promotion and coordination of Early Help Assessments (EHAs), supporting and upskilling partners to provide proportionate and timely support to families in need.

We have come a long way since the last Early Help Strategy was developed in 2021 and despite the impact of the pandemic, Early Help as a concept and model of practice has continued to be embedded in our way of working. It is now a golden thread through all Partner Strategies including:

- Children and Young People's Plan
- Attendance Strategy
- Emotional Wellbeing Strategy
- Best Start in Life
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- SEND Strategy

This is reflected in the continued development of Early Help services delivered by North Tyneside including:

- Early Help locality teams with a range of roles to support families
- Early Help CAMHS workers
- Early Help family health and wellbeing workers

Our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact to access services including Children's Social Care, Early Help, Police, Health, Education, Children's Disability, Adult Social Care, Housing, Domestic Abuse, Youth Justice and Probation.

Social work involvement with families begins with assessment undertaken by the three **social work assessment teams** which are part of the Front Door service. Should statutory involvement be necessary to safeguard a child, longer-term work including child in need, child protection, children in care and court work is held by our **Child in Need team, five Safe and Supported teams, and our 14+ team.**

We are adding a **Pre-Birth team** to this area of the service to provide specialist support for our most vulnerable parents.

The **Children's Disability team (CDT)** is a small, specialist team of social workers who provide advice and support to children and young people whose ability to stay safe, to enjoy and to achieve is significantly impaired by their disability and would be further impaired without the provision of services.

In addition, they undertake statutory safeguarding duties, holding responsibility for children with a child protection plan, and children in the care of the local authority. CDT is part of the Whole Life Disability Service with the **Transitions team** who work with children from 14 - 17 to prepare their pathway to Adult Services.

Within our **Children's Rights, Voices and Permanency service we have an Independent Reviewing Officer team (IRO)** who are responsible for overseeing the multi-professional care plans for children subject to a child protection plan, and children in our care. They chair multi-agency conferences and reviews and provide oversight and challenge ensuring that the voice of the child informs our practice. Our **Permanency Champion** and **Life Story Work coordinator** provide expertise and support in achieving permanency for children.

Our **Keeping Families Connected service** is a multi-profession team working with children on the edge of care. **Future Steps** is our intensive service supporting children who are at risk of or subject to exploitation.

North Tyneside Youth Justice service provides a range of support and oversight to children either involved with the criminal justice system or at risk of such, working in a preventative way with children in the majority of cases.

For these children who are in our care and care leavers, our range of services is extensive and based around supporting children and young people to remain living with family members if possible and within the communities which matter to them.

Our **Fostering team** recruits, assesses, reviews and offers ongoing support to our foster carers.

Our **Connected Person team** completes Viability and Regulation 24 assessments for our kinship carers and offers ongoing specialist support to families. We have dedicated support workers who complete support plans and offer advice, financial support and training to families who are caring for children on a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).

An extensive range of **in-house children's homes** and **supported accommodation services**, expanded in 2020 to better meet the needs of children and young people with complex SEND, while keeping them close to their families and communities.

The Leaving Care team supports young people into adulthood in relation to their physical and emotional health, housing, training, education and employment needs from the age of 18 until 25 years.

The HIVE (Health Information advice, Virtual school, Emotional wellbeing) Team provides monitoring and direct support for pupils in the care of North Tyneside Council and advice and information on the education of children previously in care. It also has responsibility for the physical and emotional health of all children in care, and a strategic role in education for all children with a social worker.

We are an outward looking authority, keen to learn from what works, and share our learning and experience across the sector. We are a national Partner in Practice and a DfE-appointed Sector Led Improvement Partner. Our senior and operational management team has led improvement work with authorities across the country. This is seen as a two-way learning experience for North Tyneside and a developmental opportunity for those managers involved.

We have led on a number of national projects in recent years including developing a digital maturity and peer support model. Nationally, we contributed to the CSC data and digital reform strategy implementation plan, as part of the data and digital solutions fund: Creating or improving specific data sets: The voice of children and families.

This provides opportunities for staff in services to be involved in wider regional and national improvement work as well as potential access to funding for research activity.



Our values and practice principles

Our values

Our corporate values are central to our organisation's culture and integral to our success in delivering the Our North Tyneside Plan and improving customer service. Our values are embedded in how we work with our team, to ensure we are all working towards to the same goal with the same principles and standards.

We listen

We listen to our customers and colleagues and understand their needs. We pay attention to messages and respond. We express information clearly; we are open and honest, and we encourage people to have their say.

We care

We care for our customers by understanding their needs, we treat them with respect and safeguard those who are most vulnerable. We care for each other by being a positive role model. We respect each other and work well with colleagues. We care for ourselves by looking after our physical and mental health and asking for help when we need it.

We are ambitious

We are ambitious by always looking for ways to do things better. We are positive and learn from our mistakes and successes. We can be ambitious by reflecting on our performance and acting on feedback to improve. We strive to reduce the carbon footprint in our services by using less energy in our buildings, travelling less in our vehicles and recycling as much as possible.

We are good value for money

We are good value for money by delivering services in line with our customer promise and service standards. We use resources carefully, avoid unnecessary cost, try to get things right first time and share resources with colleagues.

We use a Signs of Safety model of practice in North Tyneside because we believe the principles align with our values and ambitions for the children and families we work with. We believe that the tools and frameworks offered by the Signs of Safety model enable our practitioners to deliver high quality services and achieve positive change for children and families. The foundation of good practice always comes back to the values and principles that underline every interaction.

Our practice principles

Children's Services colleagues are ambitious and deliver positive outcomes for the children and families that we work with. To guide our practice, we have defined principles to be clear about what families will experience, what colleagues will see and what service leaders can measure to evidence we are delivering on our ambitions.

These principles are:

1. Children and young people will be listened to and we will act on what they tell us
2. Children and young people will have people important to them involved in helping to meet their needs
3. Children and young people will have their needs clearly understood
4. Children and young people will have a plan which tells those who need to know how to meet their needs and keep them safe
5. Children and young people will only have help for as long as they need it (so they can get on with their own lives)
6. Children and young people will be able to understand all the things written about them
7. Children and young people will have help which follows the rules to keep everyone safe
8. Children and young people have help from colleagues who get the advice and support they need to do a good job.



Our wellbeing offer to colleagues

At North Tyneside Council, we understand that work plays a significant part in our overall wellbeing, and we want to ensure our colleagues can be their best self both at home and in the workplace. We are highly committed to your health and wellbeing.

We also have a comprehensive benefits and wellbeing offer for staff which includes access to psychological support through occupational health, wellbeing activities such as yoga, access to specific group networks and counselling support. For more information about the wider offer, please view the Candidate Information Pack.

For all of our colleagues, we offer a range of flexible working opportunities that are aimed at supporting the ability to have a healthy work-life balance, such as flexi-time (time off in lieu), job sharing, flexible working and career breaks.

In Children's Services, we have developed additional wellbeing support including:

Schwartz Rounds – The Point of Care Foundation

Schwartz Rounds are an internationally recognised way of supporting care staff to come together to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in social care. We aim for colleagues to feel nurtured and supported in a safe and reflective environment.

North Tyneside Council has adopted these and have been running them since December 2022 with sessions running bimonthly.

Access to 'Safe Space' one to one support

All colleagues in children's social care have the opportunity to access a trained therapist from the HIVE team, who is given space and time to support staff who are experiencing difficulties in their home or work life. This is not counselling or therapeutic intervention, but an opportunity in addition to our usual Employee Assistance Programme, for colleagues to debrief in a 'safe space'.

Social and quiet spaces

Spaces are available in all children's social care buildings to allow colleagues time away from the office environment to enjoy social lunches with colleagues or reflect in a quieter setting.

Caseloads

In children's social care, the aim is to maintain a reasonable workload allocation across the service. We are committed to keeping this to allow practitioners to develop relationships with families and undertake purposeful interventions to improve outcomes for children and families. Managers receive a weekly report on caseloads, and we check in with all practitioners through supervision, the annual health check, and the programme of engagement meetings.

Supervision

Good supervision protects children and builds resilience in the workforce.

North Tyneside Council provides different supervision development opportunities:

- Online resources
- Supervision training
- Signs of Safety Group Supervision workshops

The standard for supervision is monthly for all practitioners, and our Quality of Practice Framework ensures that the leadership team has oversight of the supervision practitioners receive.

Colleagues engagement

Engagement is about creating opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and the wider organisation to ensure they are listened to and involved in the creation, review and development of the services we offer to children and families across North Tyneside. Good staff engagement creates an environment where employees are motivated, valued and empowered to deliver the quality of service we aspire to – a key factor in positive morale in the workplace.

We engage colleagues in a number of ways:

- Annual health check
- Director, Assistant Director and Senior Manager attendance at team meetings and all service events
- Principal Social Worker forums and all manager meetings
- Employee survey
- Monthly workforce-focused senior management meeting
- Workforce Development Group

Staff network groups

Staff networks provide a group of colleagues who have a collective heritage, experience or characteristic with an opportunity to come together and support each other within the organisation as well as providing a voice to raise concerns in a productive way and help shape our policies and procedures.

At North Tyneside Council we aim to provide a place of work where everyone can be themselves and feel supported, where there is true inclusivity and equity in the way we work and how we interact with each other.

We currently have four established Staff Networks:

Disability & Long-Term Condition Network (including carers)

Ethnic Diversity Network

Gender Equity Network

Pride Network.

In 2024 we will be launching our fifth network - Diversity of Thought, which supports our neurodiverse colleagues.

We welcome you to join any of these network groups and you can be involved as much or as little as you like. You will be supported by your manager to take time out of your role to be part of a network group. More information on how to join these networks will be made available during your induction when you arrive.



Colleague development

At North Tyneside Council we are passionate about our colleagues being able to easily access development opportunities.

We start by giving all colleagues access to our **Learning Pool** online system, which offers a wealth of learning, support and development resources.

For our social work colleagues, we have a **defined progression pathway** which links also links with various offers which allows us additional flexibility to suit individual development needs.

Our **continuous development programme** aims to support colleagues setting strong foundations of practice and advancing their skills and experience at a pace that works for them. We celebrate the diversity in individual interests and ambitions within the social work career and are committed to supporting everyone to be the best social worker they can be. We maintain links with local HEIs, national practice forums including Research in Practice and Frontline. We also support colleagues to access the Signs of Safety, Knowledge Bank and Community Care Inform online resources.

Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) within the first year of their career will benefit from our **Assessed and Supported Year of Employment Programme (ASYE)**. For more information on this offer, please see our NQSW candidate pack.

Through our involvement with the regional teaching partnership, we are able to support our social work practitioners to access Post Qualification (PQ) courses via our local HEIs. The Advanced Safeguarding PQ course aims to consolidate academic theories, knowledge and research with direct practice, giving practitioners the opportunity to enhance their analytical and reflective skills related to safeguarding children.

For those interested in supporting the development of social work students, we also offer our experienced colleagues the opportunity to achieve their **Practice Educator (PE) qualification**. This is a two-stage qualification process, with stage 1 involving a university based module alongside facilitating a student placement. Stage 2 involves reflective practice along with a further student placement.

During both stages practitioners are supported by an allocated mentor who has achieved their PE qualification. Their allocated mentor will offer support, guidance and assessment of their educator practice and are on hand to support with any particular challenges.

In order to support Practice Educators maintaining their 'currency' related to their qualification, we encourage our PE's to engage in a variety of opportunities to use these specific skills and experience. This includes receiving financial compensation for facilitating student placements or being a mentor for another colleague undertaking their PE studies.

We also encourage our PE's to engage in assessment and recruitment activity for students and those studying toward social care qualifications through engagement with our local teaching partnerships and higher education institutions.

For practitioners who are interested in stepping into leadership and management roles, we are able to support with bespoke training offer. This may include engagement in regional or national development programmes such as the Pathways Programme offered by Frontline or the regional Leadership and Management programme facilitated by the Association of Directors of Children's Services group.

We also offer a vast range of **apprenticeship** opportunities, which are a great way to continue your learning and development within the workplace. There are a range of options available, whether you want to progress professionally or thinking about moving into management and leadership, or perhaps you are interested in developing others and might want to develop your mentoring and coaching skills. This is a great opportunity to build your skills and knowledge within the work environment.





Contact us

Vacancies

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North Tyneside Council


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