

# NHS Key Worker Pilot

The NHS is creating key worker roles to work with families who have a child with a learning disability and/or autism who have recently been admitted to hospital because of their mental health. They will also work with these families where community services are finding it challenging to meet the child's needs and professionals may be considering admitting them to hospital. This is to address the NHS Long Term plan commitment that this group of children will have a designated Key Worker by 2023/24.

The overall purpose of the Key Worker role is to get alongside children and families and understand their needs. It will help return them to, or keep them in, a community setting by intervening early in their care and working with the available community support – and if the support is not available, thinking strategically about how to create the required support. Also, giving children and their families the tools, they need to manage crises and when necessary to access the right support at the right time.

Devon is one of 13 national Key Worker pilot sites and has created two types of Key Worker. The two roles will have slightly different emphasis but work together as a team to meet the children and family's needs. The first Key Worker role is an Assistant Practitioner and will focus on getting alongside the family, listening to their needs and supporting them to understand the system. The second Key Worker role is a Senior Practitioner and will focus on identifying blocks to the child and family receiving appropriate care in the system. This role will resolve issues by appropriately challenging across sectors and services as an advocate for the child and family.

The ongoing project to create the new Key Worker team has involved professionals from health, education, and the community sector as well as parents and carers across Devon. The Key Worker roles will be advertised in the near future and our hope is to have the teams starting in late spring.