



Public Health
Agency

School Nursing and Health Visiting Services

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Health and
Social Care



Care
Opinion



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte
Mánnystrie O Poustie
www.health-ni.gov.uk

The purpose of this briefing paper is to demonstrate how the current Care Opinion database can be used to inform the Health and Social Care system on the experiences of using School Nursing and Health Visiting services across Northern Ireland. The following information reflects the stories published on Care Opinion from 03 August 2020 until 22 July 2022.

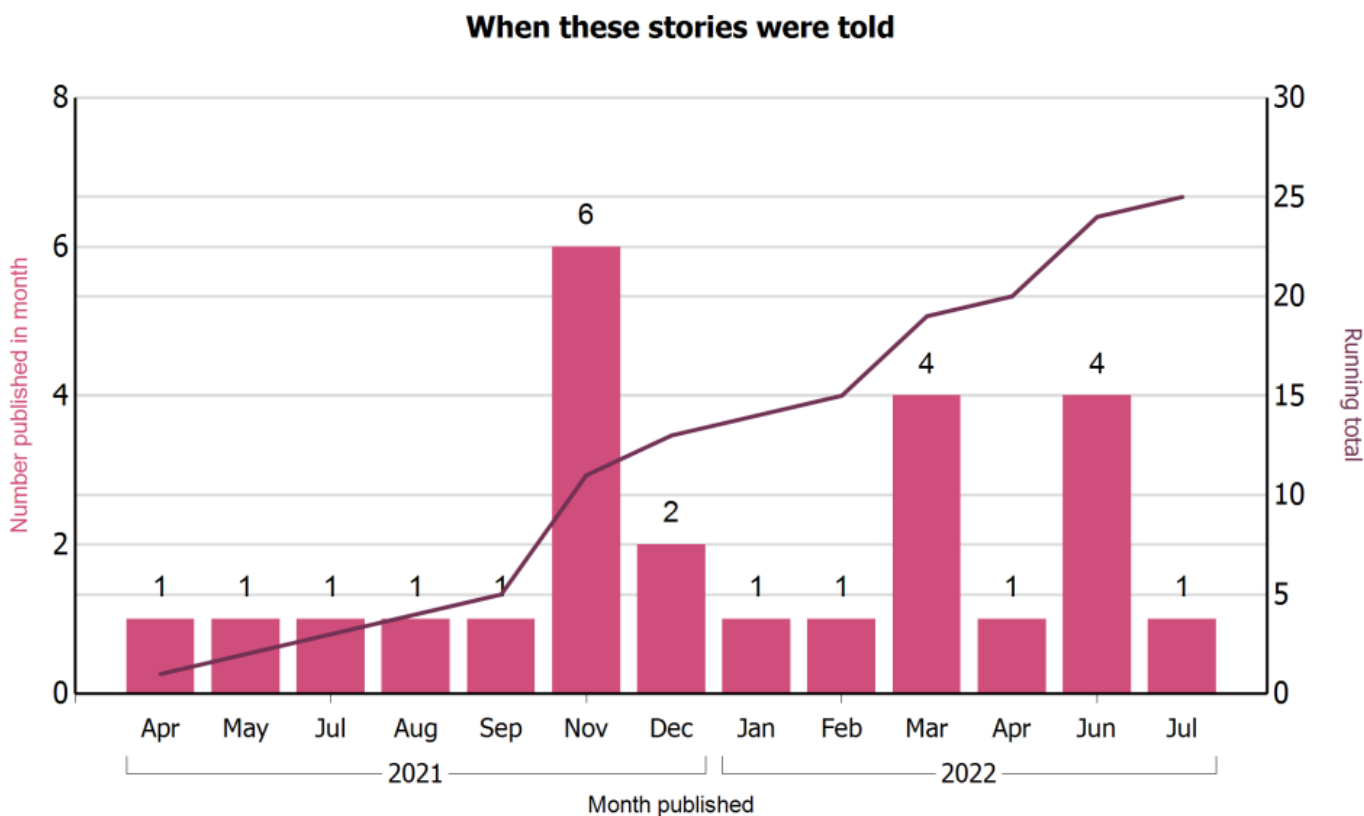
1.0 CONTEXT

Care Opinion launched in Northern Ireland on 03 August 2020 as a new opportunity for service users, relatives and carers to share feedback on their experiences of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. Care Opinion is an outcome indicator included in the Programme for Government highlighting the need to have a system which is open and transparent and will support learning to be shared across the system. Care Opinion is an Online User Feedback Service which allows for a continuous feedback loop between the service and the author of the story.

2.0 OVERVIEW

In total **25** stories were shared, **2** stories relating to School Nursing services and **23** stories relating Health Visiting services were shared on the Care Opinion platform. Chart 1 displays the number of stories per month since the launch of Care Opinion.

Chart 1: Number of stories submitted each month on Care Opinion



There were stories submitted from across the geographical areas of Northern Ireland in descending order:

County Antrim n=1; County Fermanagh n=1; Unknown n=2; County Down n=3; County Tyrone n=4; County Armagh n=5; County Londonderry n=9.

The method used to submit these stories on Care Opinion was via the website (n=25, 100%). However, through Care Opinion stories may also submitted using Freepost envelopes; Freephone number and Kiosk mode.

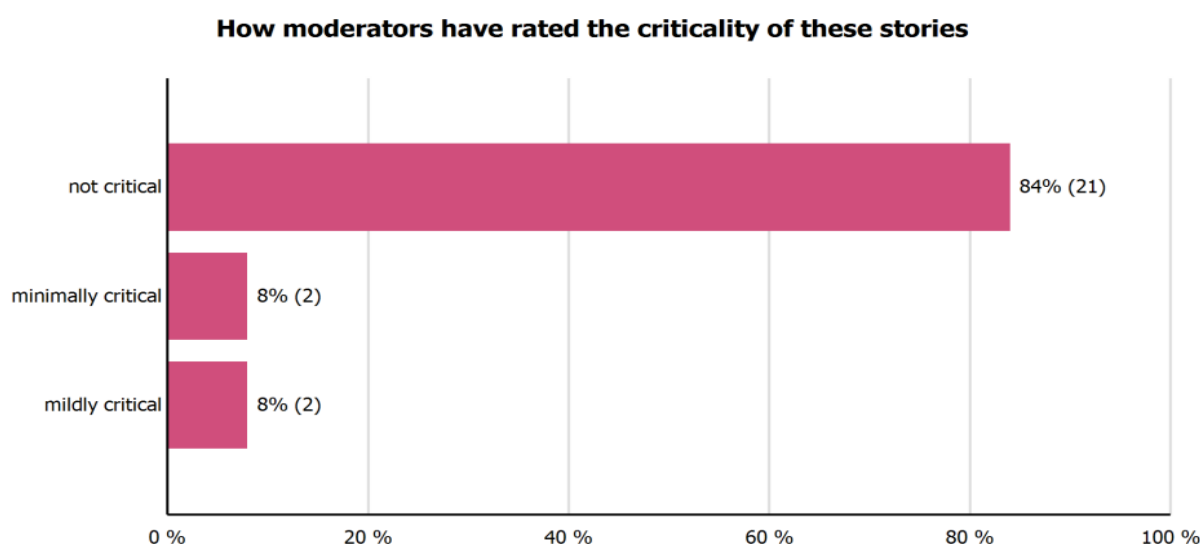
Authors are asked to identify if they are a service user, carer, relative etc. The responses given are shown in Table 1. The majority of stories have been submitted from the perspective of the Patient/Service User (n=22, 88%). Given that the stories relate to School Nursing and Health Visiting it is likely the parent/guardian has shared the story and identified themselves as the patient/service user of the service alongside the child/children.

Table 1. Which term best describes you?

Term	Number	Percentage (corrected to closest whole denominator)
Patient/Service User	22	88%
Parent/Guardian	3	12%

As part of the analysis through Care Opinion each story is assigned a criticality score by a moderator to highlight the level of critique included in the story. Appendix 1 outlines the definition of each score. Chart 2 illustrates the criticality for the 25 stories relating to School Nursing and Health Visiting.

Chart 2. Criticality rating of stories submitted on Care Opinion



The majority of feedback shared (n=84%) has been assigned a Score 0 - "not critical" which indicates a positive experience. This is further reflected in the word cloud relating to one of the closing questions "What are your feeling and emotions to your story". Illustrated in Figure 1 authors reflected upon gratitude, reassurance and support from staff.

Figure 1. Word Cloud of responses to the question:-

"What are your feeling and emotions to your story"



There are two further closing questions included on the platform exploring 'what went well' and 'what needs to improve' building upon the concept of 'what's your story' which supports the author to highlight what matters to them in their experience. This is demonstrated in Chart 3 highlighting the common themes, which are also illustrated in the word clouds included in Appendix 2.

Chart 3. Tags to describe experience on Care Opinion relating to School Nursing and Health Visiting

Most common tags added by authors to these stories

<i>What's good?</i>		<i>What could be improved?</i>		<i>Feelings</i>	
Health visitor	14	Vaccines	2	Thank you	9
Helpful	7	Attitude of HV	2	Supported	4
Professional	7	Support	1	Grateful	3
Supported	6	Breastfeeding support	1	Listened to	3
Advice	4	Conversation	1	Calm	2
Care	4	Home visits	1	Empowered	2
Friendly	4	more consistency	1	Encouraged	2
Kind	4	No appointment	1	Happy	2
Above & beyond	3	Person centred	1	Put at ease	2
Listened to	3	Pre-natal care	1	Reassured	2
Reassured	3	Conflicting advice	1		
		Time given	1		

3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE

Framing each story with the lens of “what matters to you” the following themes have been identified in the narrative. The values of Health and Social Care (HSC) and standards for Patient Client Experience (PCE) are also echoed in the themes. Each theme is illustrated using quotes directly from the story to ensure the voices of the stories are heard. Names have been included in the quotes of positive experiences, however consideration should be given to anonymising the quotes if included in a public facing document.

The analysis encompasses the positive concepts which were part of the experience and also the negative impact when the concept was not part of the experience. It is also important to highlight that the themes are not mutually exclusive and a number of themes can be identified within the quotes.

Within the analysis the following themes were reflected - In total, 21 stories (84%) have a criticality score of 0 and is wholly positive (green font) and 4 stories (16%) have a criticality score of 1 or above (blue font). Authors of the feedback can reflect upon their journey of care, encompassing a range of services, however the following analysis applies to school nursing and health visiting.

3.1 Interaction with Staff

In stories which are wholly positive there is a recognition of the importance of the interaction with the staff or team. In positive stories the author reflects upon staff who are empathetic and offer relevant advice and signposting. There is also evidence of compassion through listening and providing reassurance in potentially difficult situations.

"...My 4-year-old is on the waiting list for the ASD team and my 2-year-old has difficulties sleeping. I have contacted my HV several times over the last 2 years looking for help, support and guidance regarding both my children but primarily my son. I cannot fault the HV team at all, they have given me advice, listened and have provided me with coping strategies. At no point have they dismissed my concerns but have always tried to reassure me. I personally would like to thank them for always providing a listening ear..." 841448

"...I have my second child and haven't had much chance to do the usual activities. I had a lovely visit from a health visitor nurse who encouraged me with what I am doing. She was very friendly and also pointed out some other things I could do but in a respectful manner..." 848703

"...Can I just give a shout out to our amazing Health Visitor Ciara in WHSCT. Ciara is honestly so professional and has empathy oozing out of her. I have 3 young children and we have had 4 different health visitors in a short space of time for various reasons. Since the first day Ciara stepped foot in our home, she has provided a listening ear and excellent up to date advice. I know that her caseload is quite substantial, yet I have never felt rushed. I feel that my concerns/worries are valued by Ciara and not written off as being a "worried mummy". I know that if Ciara says she will do something you can guarantee it is done even if it is after hours some days!" 898200

Conversely where this interaction is not person centred and focuses upon the task or the documentation the experience is less positive. This is reflected in the small number of critical stories where the author feels she was unable to ask questions and no reassurance offered as first-time mum.

"...I'm a first-time mum and was attending my 6-9-month review with baby. It was not a very enjoyable experience. It felt like it was a check list of questions and if you didn't say yes you were doing something wrong. There was no conversation around how things were going, instead it was how things were a "bad habit" or impractical advice. It wasn't very baby led at all. When I tried to share any queries, it seemed like they didn't want to know. I was directed to ask the doctor. Not much help when you can't get speaking to a doctor unless it's an emergency. When asked about my mental health, there was a big emphasis on how what I said had to be written down and how my main health visitor might need to call me, as if I was saying something wrong. It wasn't enjoyable or supportive, but instead felt so clinical and like a tick box exercise..." 943822

3.2 Consistent Advice & Communication between Disciplines

An important element in the communication and delivery of care is consistency in the advice given. The following quote illustrates the challenge for a mother when interacting with numerous professional disciplines regarding the care of the baby and highlights the impact of inconsistent advice & communication.

"...One thing I want to highlight is the lack of consistency in advice between health care professionals. For instance, in the ward once baby was born, when trying to breastfeed baby, I had two midwives tell me contrasting things; one who said to let baby waken when they wanted fed and a few hours after this, another who seemed quite horrified that I hadn't wakened baby to feed them...There have been other things too; around slow weight gain of baby between community midwife (saying a slow weight gain is okay) and health visitor (worried about slow weight gain eventually leading to hospital admittance... While it may be due to different training/personalities, it's very confusing (and annoying) for a first-time mum..." 876286

3.3 Support with Mental Health

Within the stories authors offer insight into the support of the health visitor when experience anxiety or mental health concerns with particular reference to first-time mothers. Stories demonstrate how this support was central to providing hope and a more positive experience with for the mother.

“...After my first baby I had postnatal depression. I felt like it is the end, I did not want to live anymore) ... I stayed in my room for whole day without tv, music, nothing. My fiancée had to look after our baby and me as well... It was bad, I was thinking to hurt myself but then I did get right medical help. Home Treatment Team from Mid Ulster Hospital in Magherafelt, Holywell Hospital and my Health Visitor from Pordenone GP, Marian (she is great thanks), they helped me a lot. Right now, I feel much better, I can look after my baby and enjoy it... I can live once again. Thank You very much for all who helped me in this hard time 860774

Being a first-time young mum was tough enough but due to other factors was made hard to bare. Feeling anxious and depressed my Health Visitor was very supportive and helpful during the time. 894108

3.4 Breast Feeding Support

Relating to the question “what needs to improve” one author highlights the need to address the challenges of breast feeding when offering education and training relating to breast feeding. This highlights the benefits of authentic peer support which allows mothers a safe space to discuss concerns and learn from each other. The following quote highlights the absence of this during virtual breast-feeding support.

“... As a mental health professional I can't help but think about the effect of things on people. I feel that you are very vulnerable, mentally, as a first-time mum. There is a huge focus on baby's weight gain and the regular weigh ins add a layer of constant pressure. I understand health visitors have to do their job and this is the way to know what baby is getting, but as I was trying to breastfeed and being told everything seemed to be going well, the constant weigh ins and reviews was impacting my mental health significantly. It would be good to have some support open to mums around breastfeeding, even just to talk about their experiences. I can imagine there is a strong link between feeding and PND. There was a virtual breastfeeding zoom offered, which I attended. While it was helpful, there was NO mention of some of the difficulties that might be encountered. It would be helpful to normalise these, so women didn't feel like a failure when they are unable to breastfeed...” 876286

3.5 Thankful for Support, Best Care and Professional Advice

There is a large number of stories which demonstrate the professionalism and knowledge of the health visitor or school nurse and gives insight into the importance of this for mothers and families. Reflections also include the involvement of the whole family including siblings.

“...Michele and all the health visitors I've had come out to check on my baby from she was a new-born have been so supportive and given us the best care, help and guidance. Michele had to help get my baby her vaccine appointment with my gp after I had several problems with them, if it hadn't been for all her help my baby wouldn't be able to receive all her vaccinations leaving her health at risk. This health visiting team have given me so much knowledge and advice from breastfeeding, weaning and overall child's health. I'm truly thankful for all the help and support of Michele and her colleagues. I know that my baby and I are receiving the best care with her...” 927325

“... I had a scheduled visit today from a fantastic health visitor named Tracey working within the South Eastern Trust. My little girl was due her 2-year check. I just wanted to say that Tracey was absolutely brilliant from start to finish with my daughter. She is clearly a very skilled professional and engaged so well with my daughter despite all of the obvious challenges of PPE etc. She took the time to get to know her and I really appreciated that she didn't seem like she was in a mad rush to get away to the next visit and made time for any questions I had. Thank you for being such a warm, kind professional. You're an asset to the trust. 892111

“... Nothing was of any trouble to Maria who did give me the details but requested that as she knew my baby well she was happy to deal with my query. Maria was so professional and dealt with my query which was a feeding issue and put me completely at ease and offered reassuring advice and support. She offered to weigh my baby on the same day and if the problem persisted she would weigh her again within three days. Absolutely nothing was an issue for Maria and she really is a shining star.” 892139

“...My daughters had their p1 health check with the nurse at the Knockbracken centre yesterday. It was such a positive experience I wanted to leave some feedback to highlight how great a nurse Elaine was. She was excellent with the girls, really put them at ease and talked through health information with them at their level. The girls left beaming and felt the whole thing had been a great adventure. Thank you Elaine...” 869012

There is recognition for services which support mothers to connect and share through peer support.

“...A simple but effective service. The walkie talkies group is a walking group for parents and their babies. Like mums and tots, only out for a walk. This group has been sooo beneficial to me. I'm quite introverted but I get out to meet other mums, but because the health visitors like Natasha and Janine are there I can get professional advice regarding any child/parenting issues I'm facing. It's been a great service set up to accommodate parents during the pandemic. It really is a part of my support network now and I recommend it to all new mums whether they are first or fifth time round parents. It is run and organised by the most amazing and caring group of professionals. They take their time to genuinely listen to your concerns, worries and have gone above and beyond to help me or signpost me to help...”

896125

Stories include the professionalism of staff when facing a difficult situation and the importance of the relationship between the mother and the health visitor.

“...I just want to share my story about my amazing health visitor Claire. I met her when I was 18 years old when I was pregnant. I am now 20 and my child is nearly 2 which means my journey with Claire is coming to an end in January. Claire is an amazing woman. She is kind generous and so so caring. From the minute I met Claire I knew I would build a great relationship with her. She has been there for me through very bad times and good times. After I had my child I had it very hard as I was in a lot of pain. One morning when Claire called I cried to her as I was so sore and my GP wouldn't see me. Claire then got me seen quickly at the hospital by ringing them and explaining my situation. She also has helped me a lot when I found out my child had a cows milk allergy. I was a young mum not knowing what to do. Claire guided me and helped me in every way she could! She always praises me telling me how much of a good mum I am and telling me how well I'm doing! I'm going to be devastated when I don't see Claire daily but I know she'll always be there for me as that's what type of women she is! Claire deserves praise for what she does! Because she's definitely way more than just a health visitor to me. I wish her all the best with her career I wouldn't have come this far without her!!!! ...”

898174

“...I am a first-time mum to twins & after having a few different health visitors I was then assigned Kelly. My little boy was a slower weight gainer than the girl & to put my mind at ease Kelly made plenty of visits to check his weight & was always very professional & reassuring. When it came to weaning I was unsure about timing etc & lacked a bit of confidence & again Kelly helped me sort a good feeding routine that worked for us & helped me gain confidence when it came to introducing allergens. As a first-time mum it's great having someone you can build up a 'relationship' with and have confidence in picking up the phone to ask questions to knowing you won't be judged & support is always there. In my view Kelly goes over & above & genuinely cares for the mums & babies she visits...”

907830

“... Laura came into my life just before I had my last child. To say I am very grateful for her would be an understatement. Having had a child born 4 years ago with an extremely rare condition I had literally being doing everything on my own with absolutely no help from anyone. I felt that because my son's condition was so rare, no-one knew much about it and I was starting to get the impression that no-one wanted to know. Laura took us under her wing and we haven't looked back since. The difference she has made in such a short space of time has helped us so much already. Nothing is a problem to her and she goes above and beyond her duty of care every single time. We are extremely thankful that we are under her care and appreciate all she does for us. Everyone should have a Laura in their life...”

930065

Professionalism also extends to the wider health visitor team with recognition for the role of the child health assistant.

“...My son had many a meltdown and my health visitor Ciara came to see us and recommended Wendy the child health assistant. Wendy honestly was lovely and my sons' meltdowns were over she reviewed everything that was setting him off and honestly, I have a very calm son now he still has tantrums he's 2. But I do believe without the help of Wendy that would not of been possible. I can't thank her enough...”

923673

3.6 Variation of Approach across the region

There is one story which compares the experiences between two different trusts, advocating for the importance of timely assessment by health visitor and the valuable perspective of engaging with a family in the home environment. This story is told from the perspective of a mum who is also a student nurse.

“...I am a student nurse and i have been out with health visitors in the Northern Trust, I myself am treated within the Southern Trust. I have a toddler that hasn't been seen much by the health visitor and they have rarely been in my home, I always have to go to their base for my child to be seen. But in the Northern Trust they all do home calls and they are done in the right time frame. I'm wondering why is this so different in my Trust as I feel I would benefit better from the Northern Trust...” 956317


4.0 NEXT STEPS

This briefing paper reflects the current feedback available on the Care Opinion system. The themes identified have been drawn from a small number of stories collected as part of the generic promotion of the Online User Feedback Service. Going forward consideration should be given to the benefits of specific campaigning to generate stories in this area and inform local and regional learning in the development and evaluation of service.

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Appendix 1. Definition of Criticality Scores

A key element of the moderated service through Care Opinion is the allocation of criticality scores to reflect upon the content of each story, as detailed in Chart 2. This supports local responses to each story and organisational analysis of the feedback to drive service improvement; collated criticality scores also demonstrate the regional position of feedback.

Score	Definition
0	No Critical Content : Entirely positive or neutral postings with no hint of criticality.
1	Minimally Critical: Mention of dissatisfaction with non-clinical non-personal aspects of care, typically “facilities” issues such as food, parking, or waiting.
2	Mildly Critical: More specific but still mild criticism, which may also include non-clinical but interpersonal issues such as attitude of staff, compassion, politeness. This might include the timely nature of the service whether in hospital or in the community where it has caused distress, e.g. carers not turning up on time
3	Moderately Critical: Criticism which may include alleged shortcomings in clinical or non-clinical aspects of care, the author may not say what the effect of these are. Also includes serious comments about facilities: ‘never cleaned’; and where people’s essential basic care needs are not being met, e.g. inadequate nutrition and hydration, development of bedsores
4	Strongly Critical: Serious criticisms of specific unnamed staff or groups of staff, or of clinical or other care or facilities. This might have had very serious consequences for physical or emotional health. These will be described by the author. There might also have been social consequences that have increased the risk or vulnerability of an individual
5	Severely Critical: Posting alleges or describes actions or events which may be illegal, grossly negligent, or allege serious misconduct by named members of staff or organisations.

Appendix 2. Word Clouds

The following word clouds relate to the closing questions on the Care Opinion platform and illustrate the feedback which refers to School Nursing and Health Visiting services.

What Was Good?



What needs to improve?



A word cloud featuring various words related to feelings and emotions. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with some larger than others. The words include: helped, encouraged, calm, gratitude, rushed, given up on, chastised, grateful, put at ease, very well looked after and cared for, at ease, frustrated, positive, supported, thankful, empowered, appreciative, happy, listened to, confident, respected, valued, reassured, fantastic, and calmed. The words are in various colors including purple, blue, green, and red.

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