



UNIVERSITY
of York

RESEARCH



The
Martin House
RESEARCH CENTRE

A close-up photograph of a blue stethoscope with silver-colored metal components, resting on a light-colored wooden surface. The stethoscope is positioned diagonally across the frame, with the chest piece in the foreground and the earpieces extending towards the background.

**THE ROLE OF
GPs IN CARING
FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE WITH
LIFE-LIMITING
CONDITIONS**

MARTIN HOUSE RESEARCH CENTRE

The issue

There is little evidence about the role of GPs for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, who require highly specialised medical care. Parents involved in the Martin House Research Centre prioritised this topic for research as they felt their GP lacked sufficient knowledge of their child's condition, which meant they always contacted the hospital or went to A&E rather than their GP. They also described difficulties with the transition process from children's to adult health services, and the limited support from primary care for this.

The research

This study examined GP and hospital attendances in children and young people with life-limiting conditions, using data collected from GP practices and hospitals in England. We found that children and young people who saw a GP less regularly had more emergency admissions to hospital and more A&E visits than those having more regular GP contact. We also looked at continuity of care, and found that children who saw the same GP more often were also less likely to attend A&E departments.

The outcome

At a time when general practice services are becoming increasingly fragmented, this research is an important reminder of the value of continuity of care between GPs and their patients. There is scope for improvement in communication, including sharing electronic records between paediatricians and GPs, and for truly integrated care in the community for children and young people with life-limiting conditions.

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Our research themes:

CREATIVITY | CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION | ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE | JUSTICE AND EQUALITY
HEALTH AND WELLBEING | RISK, EVIDENCE AND DECISION MAKING | TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE FUTURE