

Healthy Living

July 2018

Why is health important?

Many children and young people will come into care having experienced abuse and neglect that will cause physical and mental health problems, that can have enduring effects throughout their childhood and beyond.

Care Matters (DfES 2006)

Health issues for children in care include:

- missed appointments
- outstanding immunisations
- poor dental care
- no school health screening (growth checks/hearing/vision)
- developmental delay not picked up
- no sexual relationship education
- poor diet
- poor hygiene.

It is, therefore, extremely important all children and young people have their statutory health assessments looking at all aspects of health, including physical and emotional well-being, development and behaviour.

A child should have a health assessment by the time of their first looked after child review (i.e. four weeks after a child starts to be looked after). The assessment is a holistic assessment of the child's health including past medical and family history and depending on their age and understanding, attitude and knowledge about keeping healthy.

These assessments are 6 monthly for under 5 years old and annually for a child over 5 years old. The initial health

assessments are usually undertaken by a paediatrician in a clinic setting and subsequent review health assessments are usually undertaken by a children in care nurse in the foster home or in clinic.

Following both initial and review health assessments, an individual health care plan will be created and recommendations identified, including who will be responsible to action these. The recommendations should be shared with you, as the carer for the child, by the child's social worker. These will also form an integral part of the health component of the looked after child review.

In the area of Nottinghamshire County Council there is a dedicated Children in Care Health Team who can be contacted by children and young people, foster carers, social workers, healthy families team, parents, GPs and paediatricians. They can help if there are any health concerns for the child/young person and undertake statutory looked after child health assessments. They can also provide support or advice on any health issue or, where appropriate, arrange for a child or young person to be referred to a specialist.

Why is health important?

Your presence at health assessments is valued by the health team. You could be asked to be present for all or part of the health assessment depending on the wishes and age of the child/young person – we try to see all children/young people alone, even for a few minutes.

The type of information you may be asked to provide includes:

- the name of the child/young person's dentist, date of last dental appointment and outcome
- the name of their GP, dates of appointments and outcomes
- the date they last attended for a vision check and result
- if there are any issues in school, if applicable
- information around the child/young person's sleeping patterns, diet and self-caring skills
- information with regard to the child/young person's behavioural and emotional well being
- contact with their birth family
- their interests and physical activities
- young person's knowledge/ education on drugs/alcohol/sex and relationships depending on their age.

It is also important that you return a completed copy of the child/young person's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) along with a copy of your report, as this also forms part of the health assessment.

The information and issues you raise will be recorded and form part of the final health report and recommendations as mentioned above.

You should also register with a local GP as soon as it is known the child will be staying with you for any length of time. If the timescale for the placement is uncertain, the child may be registered temporarily with your GP and also remain registered with the GP in the area where the parents live. This is often the case if it is bridging placement and the child will be returning home to their birth family.

When attending the health assessment, it is important that you bring or have available the child's Personal Child Health Record (red book), for babies and younger children. If you haven't been given this, you should ask the child's social worker to request it from the family.

Carers should also arrange dental appointments with a NHS dentist if the child is over age of 2 years old, although prior to this you can register them at the family dentist and get them used to being in the dental surgery.

Children should also have yearly vision check at the opticians when they are over 5 years old.

Where can I turn for help and information around health issues?

There are dedicated health teams for Children in Care:

North of the county:

Ashfield Health & Wellbeing Centre
Portland Street
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 7AE

Tel. No: 01623 784767

South of the county:

The Children's Centre
Nottingham City Hospital Campus
Hucknall Road
Nottingham
NG5 1PB

Tel. No: 0115 8831187

The Hurst
Cheapside
Worksop
Notts
S80 2JD

Tel: 0115 8440541 (option 5)

Other sources include:

GP, health visitor/school nurse, NHS 111, 999/A&E, NHS walk in centres, www.nhs.uk, CAMHS, pharmacist, Nottinghamshire parent partnership, optician, dentist, paediatric occupational therapist, paediatric physiotherapist, speech and language therapist (SALT), Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures, teacher, Head 2 Head, What about Me? (WAM Notts), Contraception and sexual health service (CaSH), Youth offending team (YOT), www.healthforteens.co.uk and of course your family and friends. (See A-Z Health).

