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One Minute Guide: Health Checks for Looked After Children

What are they?

Looked after children and young people share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. They often enter care with a worse level of health than their peers in part due to the impact of poverty, abuse and neglect (DoH 2009).¹

The local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that the health needs of children and young people in care are being assessed. Health agencies have a statutory responsibility under the Children's Act 2004, section 10, to work in partnership with the local authority in addressing the needs of Children Looked After.

In order to fulfil this statutory requirement and in accordance with "The Promoting the Health of Looked After Children Guidance" (DOH 2009) the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) must be undertaken by an appropriately trained doctor within 28 days of becoming a Looked After Child. Subsequent Review Health Assessments (RHA) can be undertaken by an appropriately qualified nurse.

Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities.

Local Authorities should have arrangements to ensure every child who is looked after has:

- His/her health needs fully assessed
- A health plan which sets out how the needs identified will be addressed, by whom and by when.
- His/her health plan reviewed as part of the Looked After Child Statutory Review.

What is the process?

Initial Health Assessments(IHA) are required to be under taken within 28 days of a child entering care by a paediatrician if the child is under 5 years or a GP if over 5 years of age.

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Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children Department of Health (2009)

It is the social worker's responsibility to ensure that Part A of the required forms is completed in full, consent obtained from the person with parental responsibility, and returned to the health team to arrange the appointment within 2-4 days of the child becoming Looked After. Valid consent to treatment is central in all forms of health care and no assessment can be arranged until this is received.

The forms required for an IHA are:

- BAAF IHA
- BAAF Consent to Share Information
- BAAF M/B (Mother & Baby) for those under 10 years (Part A to be completed on both M & B sections
- BAAF PH (Parental Health)- social worker to provide each parent with a separate form to complete and return to Health Team in a sealed envelope.
- Consent to Medical Treatment and Health Assessment (Enduring Consent)

Review Health Assessments on children under the age of five are undertaken six monthly and for those children five years or older, they are annually.

The Looked After Children's Health Team Administrator will send a reminder and the appropriate paper work 10-12 weeks prior to the due date to be completed and returned by the social worker within five working days.

The forms required for an RHA are:

- BAAF RHA
- BAAF Consent to Share Information- *where not previously obtained*
- BAAF M/B (Mother & Baby) for those under 10 years (Part A to be completed on both M & B section ns)- *where not previously obtained*
- BAAF PH (Parental Health)- social worker to provide each parent with a separate form to complete and return to Health Team in a sealed envelope. - *where not previously obtained*
- Consent to Medical Treatment and Health Assessment (Enduring Consent)- *where not previously obtained*
- SDQ Report

Meeting Time Scales

The reason behind the paperwork being required by the Health Team three months in advance is because once the paperwork is returned, the case is allocated to the appropriate named practitioner as commissioned e.g. named School Nurse based on school allocation, named Health Visitor for team allocation, named Looked After Children (LAC) nurse for Out of Borough allocation.

Required paperwork is forwarded to the named practitioner for the case. Community practitioners have very large caseloads, and therefore require adequate time to ensure the review is appointed, undertaken and all the forms are completed and forwarded to the LAC nurse to quality assure. Once the quality assurance has been completed a copy of the plan and summary is sent to the general practitioner, the

carer, young person if over 14, and other health practitioners as appropriate. The Social worker receives a copy that should be uploaded to Protocol.

Who are the Health Team?

The Health Team consists of a Specialist Nurse for Looked After Children, Jenny Clarke and Looked After Administrator, Barbara Middleton, both based at the Station Road Centre, Barkingside.

How can I find out more?

Redbridge I.