

**NHS Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning
Group (CCG)**

Report

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	21 October 2021
Title:	Review Health Assessment Backlog Update
Report From:	Dr Melissa Phillips (Designated Doctor for Looked After Children) and Siobhan West (Designated Nurse for Looked After Children)

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1. Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board as to the current discussions taking place in relation to addressing the identified statutory health assessment backlog for Looked After Children in Hampshire.

2. Recommendations

For the Corporate Parenting Board to continue to support the current plans in place and joint working with Health and Social Care

3. Executive Summary

In Hampshire, the county council and health partners have always prioritised the health of children in care and care leavers, have sought to support children, and have worked jointly to improve health assessments. However, during Ofsted's inspection in April 2019, timely completion of health assessments was an area acknowledged as requiring improvement. A virtual rapid improvement event, attended by multi-agency partners, was held in September 2020 and identified a series of areas for improvement (not unique to Hampshire), including:

- Management information available to understand the precise status of all health assessments
- Activity to promote understanding of the value and importance of health assessments, and therefore engagement with the process
- Complexity of processes which include multiple workers and agencies
- Capacity to meet demand

Local authority and health colleagues have since developed a joint project tracker to monitor the progress of the work streams identified as part of the rapid improvement event. The CCG team have also developed an internal improvement

plan to ensure that actions specific to health (both identified during the rapid improvement event and other separate issues) are monitored and shared with senior colleagues. The Associate Director for Safeguarding is aware of these project/action trackers and has supported the team in escalating them to Chief Nurse level.

The rapid improvement event identified a significant back log of statutory health assessments for looked after children. Local authority and health partners have been meeting regularly to collaboratively discuss plans to address this backlog, as well as working to ensure that this issue is avoided in the future.

In July 2021, an options paper to address the backlog was shared with the CCG health safeguarding and LAC Committee. A number of potential solutions may be suitable pending confirmed data relating to the number and type of assessments that are overdue.

In order to ensure clinical safety and to manage risk within the backlog cohort, a prioritisation document is being developed by the CCG team. The last care plans of 20 children have been provided by Local Authority colleagues in order to inform this tool. The first priority groups had originally been identified as those children and young people in care who are under 5 years of age and over 17 years of age (totalling 62 children/young people). The prioritisation tool may alter the original priority groups as in order to safely manage the risk, the tool will look to practise based on clinical need rather than age alone. The tool will also help to inform whether the assessments must take place face to face, or if virtual assessments or health assessment questionnaires can be utilised. Additional administrative hours will be required in order to support this work and this will need to be jointly explored with health and local authority colleagues.

The CCG team continues to explore alternative options to support the backlog in the medium and long term, with a view to ensuring that a robust health offer exists for children in care within Hampshire. This includes strengthening and developing existing looked after children health provider service specifications, exploring potential investment opportunities that will support increased capacity, and working with Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton health colleagues to begin considering what a system wide looked after children's health offer may look like in the long term.

It is proposed that a further update should be given to the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2022.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) *why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) *will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*