



GUIDANCE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS REGARDING REVIEW HEALTH ASSESSMENT REQUESTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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Process for Requesting Review Health Assessments for Children and Young people looked After by Kent County Council

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure that all children and young people in care have an Initial and Review Health Assessments and an effective health action plan in place. Every child and young person in care is expected to be provided with an opportunity for a Health Assessment (see Department of Health guidance on promoting the Health of Looked After Children 2002). The expectation within the Care Planning and Case Review Guidance 2010 is that a Health Assessment should be completed and available for the first Child in Care review i.e. within 20 working days.

Research has shown that children and young people in care are more vulnerable to having chronic conditions overlooked when compared to children living at home.

The joint Ofsted and CQC inspection have recommended that all Health Assessments will be completed within statutory timeframes i.e. Initial Health Assessment will be completed within 20 working days, and Review Health Assessment on an annual basis for children aged 6 to 18 years and twice yearly for children aged 0 to 5yrs.

Review Health Assessments for Kent Children and Young people in care placed in Kent:

1. Review Health Assessment requests for all children and young people in care including those with disabilities should be made electronically to the Children in Care nursing service inbox VSK_health@kent.gov.uk within Virtual School Kent (VSK), or via a hard copy to the VSK locality team bases in West & East Kent. The request should be submitted 8 weeks prior to the Review Health Assessment being due.
2. On receipt of the request VSK will offer an appointment for a Review Health Assessment directly with the parent/carer and will send a Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) requesting completion within one week (guidance attached as Appendix 1). The SDQ will be sent to the allocated social worker for completion in respect of young people aged below 17 years who are living independently or who are placed with parents on interim or care orders.
3. VSK will email the social worker to advise that an appointment has been made. If a child or young person in care declines a Health Assessment their Social Worker will be notified and if appropriate, the young person contacted by the children in care nurse, who will then decide if it is appropriate to arrange a home visit.
4. On completion of the Review Health Assessment a copy of the full assessment and the health action plan will be sent to the relevant Health professionals by the practitioner undertaking the assessment.

5. The health care plan and summary will be emailed directly to the social worker/lead admin of each district who will forward these to the Independent Reviewing Officer for consideration at the child in care review.
6. A copy of the health action plan will be sent to the child's foster carer and in addition to the young person if appropriate and if required to other relevant health professionals.
7. On completion of the Review Health Assessment all relevant referrals will be made by the child and young person's in care nurse undertaking the assessment, in instances where a CAMHS/Accent referral is required the children in care nurse will liaise with the case holding social worker to ensure that a referral is made.
8. The children and young person's in care nurse will follow up on onward referrals and will act as a health advocate for the child/young person to resolve any health issues.
9. The foster carer and social worker have responsibility for all children they look after, especially for children in care under 5 years old to ensure that any change of appointment is negotiated in advance directly with the children in care nursing team.
10. VSK will provide a monthly report on the review Health Assessments held appointments not attended and appointments cancelled without a further health appointment negotiated to Specialist Children's Services districts.

For Kent Children and Young people in care placed out of Kent including Medway:

1. Requests for review Health Assessments in respect of Kent children and young people in care placed outside of Kent should be made to VSK as outlined above.
2. The nursing team within VSK will work with the social worker to ensure that the child's Health Assessment takes place.
3. On notification by the social worker to VSK that a child or young person in care or a young person leaving care is moving out of the Health Trust area the children in care's nursing team will be responsible for a transfer of health information to the new health trust where the child will be resident.

Appendix A - Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire

Since April 2008 all local authorities in England have been required to provide information on the psychological and emotional health of children in care, and specifically emotional and behavioural difficulties. This information needs to be collected using a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ). This is a widely used tool for assessing a child's emotional wellbeing, looking at the likelihood of problems being already present or of developing in the future.

All children or young people aged between 4 and 16 years old inclusive must have a questionnaire completed by their main carer and should be aligned to the Health Assessment. The request to complete the SDQ will be made directly to the parent/carer at the time the letter of appointment is sent to them by the VSK nursing team. The allocated social worker will be asked to complete the form in respect of young people aged below 17 years who are living independently.

The questionnaire asks the carer to read various statements and then judge how well it describes the young person living with them. The answers are given by ticking one of 3-4 boxes for each question. On average this should only take the carer between 5-10 minutes to complete.

An administrative officer within the VSK will input the information from the SDQ onto a national computer data base which analyses the data and produces a total score. The score will then be input by this person on to ICS. If the score is identified as being of concern (as per the SDQ guidance) triangulation will be requested which will result in the VSK contacting the school to request completion of the teacher's questionnaire. Notification will also be sent to the child's social worker with a request for the young person's questionnaire to be completed if they are aged 11 years or over.

A triangulated approach will provide a more rounded picture of the young person and enable a decision to be made about what if any further services they may need to address the difficulties identified.

The SDQ information will be considered within the Health Assessment by the Children in Care nurse. The Health Assessment, health plan with recommendations, the SDQ form and score will be sent to the social worker. The SDQ and the scoring sheet should be filed in the child/young person's case record.

The SDQ guidance and forms can be found on Kent Trust Web and the on the VSK website: www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk

Appendix B – SDQ Process for Children and Young People Looked After for Twelve Months or More

