

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
12 OCTOBER 2006**

BE HEALTHY - UPDATE

**JAN BRUNTON – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES & LEARNING**

**TERRY REDMAYNE – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES & LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the promotion of health for children looked after. It aims to give an overview of activity under the Every Child Matters: Be Healthy Agenda and recommends the delivery of services through the National Healthy Care Programme.

BACKGROUND

2. This report follows the 'Be Healthy' presentation in December 2005 to the Corporate Parenting Board. Improving the life chances of looked after children and young people, ensuring their safety and promoting their well-being is an essential part of the delivery of the government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme. In Middlesbrough, promoting the mental health and emotional well-being as well as the physical health of this small group of vulnerable children and young people is a priority to help them achieve the five outcomes which has been set for all children. These are as follows:

Physically healthy

3. The Government document 'Making it Happen – A guide to the delivery of mental health promotion' (DOH, 2001) identifies that the promotion of physical and mental health is the responsibility of all those involved with children and young people. In Middlesbrough, foster carers, residential carers, the leaving care team and the Health Co-ordinator for Looked After Children actively promote self care skills in relation to personal hygiene, diet, exercise and sexual health.
4. Staff and carers are provided with training and support in relation to health promotion. Also, formal training continues to be offered four times yearly to carers with input from health agencies as and when required to promote health and well being of children and young people looked after. A more informal approach to training is being planned for the near future in relation to issues such as 'weaning', along with healthy eating and general information in respect of diet. The Health Co-ordinator for Looked After Children uses a network of Health Professionals to organise this input on a drop-in basis at a local venue, with refreshments, to encourage Foster Carers to attend and to share their concerns and experiences.

Sexually Healthy

5. In 2004, the Health Co-ordinator for Looked After Children, in partnership with Middlesbrough Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, co-ordinated the 'C card' training for all staff at Middlesbrough Independence Network including the Leaving Care Team, to enable direct access to advice and free condoms for young people. This continues to be a service used by both young people leaving care and young people accessing services at Middlesbrough Independence Network.
6. Sexual health, pregnancy and relationships are addressed within the Health Reassessment process and alongside the leaving care team, preparing young people to care for themselves after they have left care and, for example, provide support to young people to use sexual health services independently. Strong links are now being forged with the new Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Co-ordinator to work towards providing a sexual health pack for those young people who may miss sexual health education whilst not at school. This will help towards promoting positive sexual health and relationships. The sexual transmitted infection Chlamydia has been identified as being on the increase, especially amongst young people and screening has been introduced to the Middlesbrough area. This confidential service is located close to Middlesbrough Independence Network to provide easy access for all young people.
7. Examples of recent and forthcoming training for Foster Carers are; Sexual Health (MESMAC input to Health Facilitators group August 2006) and via the Teenage Pregnancy Unit planned for December 2006. The Health Co-ordinator for Looked After Children is liaising with the Primary Care Trust to secure Sexual Health packs for carers to complement their training.

Healthy Lifestyles

8. An important consideration is that a healthy lifestyle is promoted and appropriate treatment for any ailments is sought by someone willing to be an advocate for the child (Promoting the Health of Looked After Children, DOH 2002). In Middlesbrough, Health Visitors and School Nurses, working in partnership with Social Workers, continue to provide foster carers and residential care staff with advice on health matters. In agreement with the child/young person, they receive a copy of the health plan produced from the health assessment to enable them to contribute to the health care of individual children. In addition to this, the Sport & Leisure Department is working with the Children, Families and Learning Department to provide greater opportunity for children looked after to attend sports activities within their area, thus encouraging and promoting the holistic benefits of an active life style.

Mentally and Emotionally Healthy

9. It has been identified that looked after children and young people have a high rate of mental health problems. As at the 17th August 2005, there was a total of 44 children and young people being seen by Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Looked After Children service and the highest percentage of children/young people looked after being seen were aged 13-14years. As part of the health assessment process, emotional health and well being is discussed with the child/young person and mental health concerns identified. The Social Worker and Health Co-ordinator for Children Looked After have access to CAMHS through the current referral process, which allows faster access to the service.

Choose not to take illegal drugs

10. As a result of the implementation paper Every Child Matters Change for Children: Young People and Drugs, there is now a requirement that all children looked after (aged 8-18 years) are screened for alcohol and drug misuse issues. In Middlesbrough, substance screening has now become part of the annual health reassessments for looked after children and young people with training provided by Eclipse to all staff involved, including the Leaving Care Team, School Nursing Staff and Health Co-ordinator for Looked After Children. This is to ensure that problems are identified at the earliest possible stage and appropriate interventions put in place to prevent issues escalating.

HEALTHY CARE STANDARDS & HEALTHY CARE PROGRAMME

11. Looked after children and young people, through the National Children's Bureau, have contributed to the development of the National Healthy Care Standard and Healthy Care Programme which provides:

- A structure for the development of local Health Care Partnerships to drive work on healthy care
- A framework for implementing a range of local, regional and national initiatives including the National Healthy Care Standard
- Opportunities to raise the profile of health and well-being and health promotion in the care setting
- Opportunities to raise children and young people's issues within planning and commissioning structures in health and other services
- Opportunities to raise awareness and gain recognition for current and future achievements locally, regionally and nationally.
- Opportunities for sharing ideas and good practice
- Access to expertise, resources and support through national, regional and local networks

(Healthy Care Programme Handbook, 2005)

12. The healthy care programme advocates that all agencies involved with looked after children develop a 'healthy care partnership' bringing together and enhancing a range of activities to improve the health and well-being of children and young people in and leaving care. Middlesbrough Children, Families & Learning, in partnership with other agencies through the Children Looked After Planning & Implementation Group, have commenced the Healthy Care Audit. This provides a framework for healthy care partnerships to assess their current position for delivery of healthy care outcomes in the context of the national outcomes for all children.

OPTION APPRAISAL

13. Not applicable to this piece of work.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no specific financial or legal implications arising from this report and the report will be of interest to all members.

RECOMMENDATION

15. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to:
- a. Continue implementing the Healthy Care Standards and Programme.

REASONS

16. As corporate parents, Members are responsible for ensuring that the best possible outcomes are achieved in relation to the health and well being of our children looked after.

17. The Healthy Care Standards and Healthy Care Programme are seen as effective tools to help towards assessing and delivering effective services to looked after children and young people in Middlesbrough. Together, they provide a tool to help implement the 'Promoting the Health of Looked After Children Guidance', assist implementation of the 'National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services', and deliver the agenda set out in the white paper 'Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier'.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

'Promoting the health of children looked after', Department of Health 2002
'Healthy Care Programme', National Children's Bureau 2005

Authors: Christine Nugent, Health Co-ordinator for Looked After Children
Tel: 01642 354118
Address: 3 Park Road North, Middlesbrough TS1 3EL
and
Jane Wilson Team Manager Fostering
Tel: 01642 201960
Address: Middlesbrough Teaching & Learning Centre, Cargo Fleet Lane,
Middlesbrough TS3 8PB

Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>