

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

17TH SEPTEMBER 2009

**POLICY ON HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

**MIKE CARR - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES &
LEARNING**

**GILL ROLLINGS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek formal endorsement of the attached policy (Appendix 1) on Health Assessments for children looked after.

BACKGROUND & CONSULTATION

2. Progress in relation to the health of children looked after is reported to the Corporate Parenting Board on an annual basis and is the subject of a separate report. In addition, actions relating to promoting the health of looked after children were included in the Children Looked After Strategy Part 2, considered by the Corporate Parenting Board on 5/3/09.
3. The primary purpose of this multi-agency policy is to clarify the arrangements necessary to ensure that agencies co-operate fully in promoting the health and welfare of children in care. The aim of the policy is to ensure that all relevant partners are working together in a timely and integrated way to improve health outcomes for children and young people.
4. The policy has been developed in partnership by Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust, Redcar and Cleveland Primary Care Trust, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland Community Services, the South Tees Acute NHS Trust, Middlesbrough Council and Redcar & Cleveland Council. It has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

5. The policy reflects current legislation and guidance on promoting the health and welfare of children and young people looked after, including:
 - Children Act 1989
 - Children Act, 2004
 - *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* ratified by the UK 1991
 - *Every Child Matters*, DfES, 2003
 - *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, HM Government, 2006
 - *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*, DH & DfES, 2000
 - *The Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People*, DfES, 2006
 - *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry*, Lord Laming, 2003
 - *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*, DH & DfES 2004
 - *Standards for Better Health. Promoting the Health of Looked after Children* DOH 2002

KEY REQUIREMENTS

6. The relevant Health Trusts have a duty to establish robust arrangements for carrying out health assessments on children in care. All young people and children in care must have an initial health assessment within 28 days of being accommodated. A review health assessment is also carried out at least 6 monthly with children aged 0-5 years and at least annually for children aged 5-18 years.
7. The Initial Health Assessment must be carried out by a suitably qualified medical practitioner. This should result in a Health Plan being in place by the time of the child's first review, four weeks after becoming looked after. There must be a comprehensive and holistic assessment of their health, which includes the contribution of all agencies working with the child. A review of the Health Plan must take place at least every six months for children aged 0-5 years and at least every 12 months for older children.

POLICY CONTENT

8. The policy sets out key definitions, the principles to be applied, the responsibilities of agencies and individual officers within agencies, issues relating to consent and how performance will be monitored.
9. The policy includes detailed guidance for staff in relation to the procedures to be followed in a range of circumstances. This includes clear guidance on which professional is responsible for various aspects of the process.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. The proposed arrangements will enable the local authority to comply with statutory requirements. Services for children looked after are town-wide and this report will be of interest to all Members.

RECOMMENDATION

11. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to endorse the Policy for Health Assessments for Children in the Care of the Local Authority.

REASONS

12. The local authority, as a corporate parent has a duty to promote the health and welfare of children looked after. This policy clarifies the arrangements necessary to achieve this outcome.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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