

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>22 September 2015</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Looked After Children Statutory Health Assessments</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust</b>

### 5. Initial Health Assessments

The compliance of initial health assessments being undertaken within the statutory timescales of 20 working days has been consistently low over the last three years. A review of the process was undertaken in April 2013 which identified areas for improvement. The bookings of appointments was transferred from the hospital bookings team to the looked after children's health team where it became possible to track the numbers of children becoming looked after to ensure that appointments were arranged for initial health assessments to be undertaken. This subsequently identified that the consistency of clinics was not appropriate therefore changes were made to ensure that a clinic was held on a weekly basis with additional clinics made available if there was an increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after. In conjunction with this it was highlighted that there was some confusion over the correct documentation required for the social workers to complete and present at an assessment therefore confirmation letters were developed to aid the social worker and these are now emailed securely to the social workers at the time of booking the appointments. Following the implementation of these changes, there was an increase in the number of initial health assessments being completed within the statutory timescales and although further work was required, the results were positive (see table below).

	<b>2012/2013</b>	<b>2013/2014</b>	<b>2014/2015</b>
<b>IHA's completed within 20 working days</b>	0%	12%	34%

However, from April 2015 there was an increase in the numbers of children/young people becoming looked after which impacted on the number of clinic appointments available therefore leading to a delay in the completion of initial health assessments. Three additional clinics were arranged throughout June and July but this was not sufficient to meet the demand. An additional seven clinics have been arranged over the next few months with a further two clinics planned. Current compliance of completion is 16.4% within the 20 working day timescale however all but 3

children/young people have had or have appointments booked for their assessment. The 3 outstanding have been raised with social care managers.

Alternative ways of working within the clinics has been discussed with a proposal of the looked after children's nursing team undertaking elements of the assessment alongside the paediatricians to enable more children to be seen within a clinic session.

## **6. Review Health Assessments**

From December 2012, the looked after children's health team instigate, manage and coordinate the process of all review health assessments for children in the care of Rotherham local authority which has resulted in the assessments being undertaken in a more timely and efficient manner in accordance with statutory guidance. This new process was implemented following a multi-agency evaluation and is continually reviewed and strengthened in order to improve compliance which is represented in the figures below.

	<b>31-05-11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
<b>Looked after children with up to date health assessments</b>	70.6%	80.9%	83.4%	93.7%	99.2%

Currently, there appears to be a discrepancy in the figures relating to review health assessments between health and social care which may be as a result of the different electronic record systems. Generally, the local authority data is reporting at a lower level of compliance than the health data which may partly be attributed to the process of transferring the completed health assessments between agencies. Current health data is 96.9% of review health assessments completed within the statutory timescales. New processes are being formulated to strengthen these links to ensure that both health and social care have the most up to date information in a timely manner.

## **7. Conclusion**

It is well publicised that looked after children's physical and mental health is at a worse level than their peers therefore it is vital that they have a comprehensive health assessment on their entry into care and throughout their time in care to ensure that they achieve their optimum health. There have been many changes to the processes for statutory health assessments in Rotherham to ensure that looked after children have their health needs identified and addressed and whilst there have been improvements; there remains further exploration and development of services. The local authority and the looked after children's health team continue to work closely together to improve the health outcomes for looked after children.

**Karen Holgate**

**Named Nurse – Looked After Children and Care Leaver**