



Guidance

Family Placement

Title: Guidance for Foster Carers in Promoting the Health Needs of Looked After Children

Guidance Summary

This Guidance sets the procedures to be followed by foster carers in order to meet the health needs of children in their care

Statutory Basis for the Guidance

The National Minimum Standards 2011
The Care Standards Act 2000
The Children Act 1989

Local Strategic Partnerships

Approved by
Original policy agreed by Andrew Webb, Corporate Director and Michael Jameson, Service Director, C&YP Directorate on October 2004.
Reviewed August 2007 and minor amendments made.
Approved by Chris McLoughlin on 1.12.10

Supporting Documents:

Promoting the Health of Looked After Children and Young People in Stockport: Making a Difference

Supporting Training



Chris McLeigh

New Implementation date:

Reviewed Dec 19

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Quality Assurance

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1. On Approval

Short Term Foster Carers

It is important for carers to notify their own GP and Health Visitor that they are a foster carer and that, as a carer, they may need to consult them for medical advice or examination regarding children placed with them. It may be that foster children will stay on the list of their own family GP and Health Visitor but the carer's GP may be asked to see the child in an emergency, if the child's GP is too far away or will not see children living outside his/her own area. It will be helpful for the carer to clarify with the child's own GP or Practice Manager whether the GP will visit in an emergency. Most short term placements should register with foster carer's GP so that records are transferred.

The same would apply to a dentist.

Long term/ permanence foster carers

The aim for children placed with carers on a permanent basis is that the foster child placed goes on to the carer's own GP list as a permanent member of the family. The carer's GP may ask for a 'new patient' medical to be undertaken by either the practice nurse or by the GP. (This 'new patient' medical is not a 'looked after' child medical.

The same applies to dentists

Training

Foster carers are required to attend mandatory First Aid training as soon as possible and to keep updated as per the training manual. It is not only important to be able to treat injuries / recognise health issues, but also to recognise when urgent medical attention should be sought e.g if a young person reports they have taken an overdose even when there is no physical evidence to substantiate this.

If a child has a long term health condition which requires the administration of medication via a syringe, inhaler etc and the child is not able to self administer then training should be provided prior to a child being placed.

Foster carers should also be aware of guidance re safe sleeping for babies, Appendix 1

2. Initial Health assessment

All children becoming 'looked after' by the Local Authority are required to have an initial health assessment within 28 days of becoming looked after. A health assessment is based on the child's previous medical history and the examination is designed to provide a summary of the child's overall state of health and a plan to address any identified health needs.

A paediatrician will undertake the initial health assessment in order that a full health assessment can be undertaken. This would be initiated by the child's Social Worker via a referral to the Specialist Looked after Nursing Team (see contact details). Foster carers can notify the Specialist Nursing Team of any health issues prior to the medical examination. Foster carers can also ring the Health Visitor or the School Nurse for the child to inform them of any concerns over the child's health.

It is always important to arrange with social workers and birth parents who will be attending the health assessment with the child. The child's social worker will inform the nursing team as to whether the child's birth parent(s) will be attending. The guiding rule is 'who will be best able to provide the information, with the minimum distress to the child'. If carers are not attending the medical examination, they should provide the Paediatrician with a written note as to their observations and views.

Foster carers should always consult with the child's SW if there are competing demands that impact on the child's attendance for the initial health assessment before cancelling the appointment.

3. Review Health Assessments

All children 'looked after' by the council are required to have a review health assessment. These are annual for a child and over and twice a year for the under 5s.

The RHA is an important opportunity to consider the child's needs holistically. It aims to look at both physical and emotional wellbeing and ensures access to health promotion and universal health programmes. It will be tailored to the child's individual needs and health plan agreed. The actions from the plan will be reviewed at the child's LAC review.

The child's Social Worker will send the appropriate referral and previous health information to the Specialist LAC team, who will then pass a request for a health assessment to the appropriate health personnel. It is most likely that the School Nurse or Health Visitor will undertake it.

The person undertaking the examination will contact the carer for further information. If the carer is attending the appointment the information can be given direct to that person.

Before the RHA, the foster carer will be asked to complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). This will be analysed by the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team and additional support will be offered as appropriate.

For children living outside the Stockport area, the procedure may be slightly different. The Specialist LAC team will contact that area to arrange for the assessment to be completed locally.

4. Consent to medical examination, immunisation and treatment

It is the child's Social Worker's responsibility to ensure that consent for the above is properly clarified and arranged. This is usually done at the Placement Planning meeting when the Delegated Authority form will be completed and agreed. Most medical consent can be delegated to the foster carer such as consent to emergency medical treatment including anaesthetic, routine immunisation, emergency and routine dental treatment including anaesthetic. Planned medical procedures need to be signed for by a parent with Parental Responsibility or the local authority. If in any doubt about what delegated authority you have always consult the child's social worker.

5. Children Starting School

When a child in placement starts school, it will be important to clarify who will be undertaking health monitoring and who to contact for routine discussions about a child's health.

The carer, Health Visitor or School Nurse can arrange between themselves as to who will be monitoring a child's health. Generally, it will be the School Nurse who will be the focus for contacts and day to day discussion.

6. Children attending school

Carers can contact the School Nurse about any health issues related to the child as a first 'point of call' on a routine basis. It will be helpful if the carer contacts the School Nurse when a 'looked after' child's health assessment is arranged to discuss any recent health issues and, if the School Nurse is undertaking the health assessment, how the information will be shared with others involved. On going review health assessments will be co ordinated by the Specialist Nursing Team and will most likely involve the School Nurse.

7. Children with significant health needs

It is very likely that children with significant health needs will be under the oversight of a health Specialist / Paediatrician and be subject to regular health monitoring and treatment. In this case, there will be a good deal of health information held to update the 'looked after' health assessment and identify the child's health needs.

For the purposes of the Initial and Review Health assessments, the child's social worker will send the appropriate referral and information to the Specialist Nursing Team who will arrange for the appropriate information to be collected and for the health assessment to be completed by the most appropriate health professional. The Specialist Nursing Team will contact the appropriate specialist who has oversight of the child to arrange this.

Carers can ring the Specialist Nursing Team if they have concerns about the frequency of medical appointments for the child to ensure that proper coordination is taking place and examinations are not being repetitive.

8. Carers with more than one child in placement

If a carer is notified of a review health assessment for one of the children in placement, the carer should contact the Specialist Nursing Team to inform them of the other children in placement so that, if due, their assessment could be undertaken at the same time wherever possible.

9. Routine health monitoring for children

Carers should routinely monitor the health of children and inform the School Nurse or Health Visitor of any issues or concerns.

Red Health Folder

All children and young people placed with foster carers should be provided with a Red Health Folder (RHF) at the time of placement. The folder will contain up to date information regarding the child's health needs, routine medical, dental and optician appointments and any other health interventions for the child or young person. The RHF belongs to the child and becomes their personal health record with details of immunisations etc and will move placement with them. It is therefore very important that the information is always kept up to date.

Both the supervising social worker and the child's social worker will ask to see the RHF to ensure all the relevant information is recorded and the RHF should be taken to every LAC review and the information shared with the reviewing officer.

Please liaise with your supervising social worker for advice and guidance on how to use the RHF.

Please note:

Prior to a child's Child Care Review, carers will be sent a form to fill in to provide health information for the review. Carers must fill in the Health Review Form for the child to indicate what medical events or dental checks have taken place in the period since the last review. That pre review form should be sent to the child's Social Worker prior to the review, or taken to the review if not received in time. Carers should document the health progress of a child routinely. This can be done using the RHF or foster carer recording documents.

Sections are provided for recording appointments/illnesses as well as keeping the child's health plan.

10. Cancelling Appointments

Carers should make appointments a priority. However, if carers need to cancel a health assessment (Initial or Review), they should ring the person with whom the appointment is made or, if he/she is not available, ring the Specialist Nursing Team. There are strict timescales in place for attendance at IHA. If you are unable to attend one of these appointments could you please discuss this with the SW prior to cancelling to allow the SW to decide if someone else can take the child.

11. Young people refusing a health assessment

Please encourage all young people to have a conversation with the nurse to discuss what the young person can get out of the health assessment rather than just cancelling the appointment. This is not a medical but an opportunity to talk about issues that may be worrying the young person confidentially. It covers aspects about health problems if relevant but looks holistically at the things that matter to them. It covers a range of health promotion subjects, keeping safe and how to access support and services as they reach independence.

For those young people under 16years of age, carers should discuss this with the School Nurse.

For those young people over 16 years of age, carers should ring the person with whom the appointment is made.

In both cases, carers should ring the Specialist Nursing Team to discuss the next steps.

Children and young people should not be forced to attend the health assessment. It is ok for them if they do not want to discuss medical issues or have a medical. However, it is important to know that Nurses in the Specialist Team are more than willing to talk to children and young people in order to allay fears or do the assessment in a way that better suits the child or young person. Carers should ring the Specialist Nursing Team if they feel that there are likely to be any difficulties in children and young people attending so that alternatives can be discussed.

If the young person still does not want to attend the appointment then an alternative venue can be offered. Telephone contact can be attempted if preferred and a health plan agreed from the information available.

12. Post – health assessment actions

A health care plan is agreed with the young person and any actions should be clearly identified along with timescales and who is responsible.

The systems need to be regularly monitored to ensure that they are child friendly, carer friendly and effective. The Specialist Nursing Team welcomes any constructive comments from carers and children: these are valuable to ensure the systems are effective.

A copy of the summary and health care plan is sent to the carer, SW, GP and the young person depending on age. The actions agreed on the health plan should also be reviewed at the LAC review.

13. Central Youth

This is a young people's resource centre based in Stockport Town Centre at St Petersgate.

There is a facility at Central Youth for young people to make their own private arrangements to consult an independent health worker / medical practitioner. Young people should be encouraged to do this if they feel uncomfortable in talking to carers, parents or staff. However, it must be made clear that Central Youth does not deal with significant health issues – it is only an advice service.

Children and Young People should be attending their GP if there are any significant health concerns.

NB. It is vital to ensure those children and young people have appropriate information on health issues. This can be sought through the child's Social Worker or local Health Centres and Pharmacies. It can also be sought through leaflets, booklets and web sites. Please contact the Specialist Nursing Team if you need help or advice.

KEY CONTACTS FOR LAC HEALTH SUPPORT

The Specialist Nursing Team

Stockport has a dedicated health nursing team that aims to improve the health and life chances of Looked after Children and Young People, reduce inequalities and ensure that the health needs of Stockport Borough's Looked after Children (LAC) are met in accordance with statutory guidance.

The team are based at Stopford House and can be contacted on 0161 217 6964 or via e mail snt-tr.stockportlac@nhs.net

Central Youth

This is a young people's resource centre based in Stockport town centre, offering advice, information, counselling, contraception, emergency contraception and sexual health services for young people aged 11-25, which is free and confidential.

Contact on: 0161 204 5888 / 5599

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team (Stockport Family)

The EHWT provides assessment, formulation and intervention work with children and their families/carers who are looked after by Stockport LA. The team provides consultations and referrals for children between the ages of 5 – 21 years old who are displaying signs of emotional distress, regularly seen in changes in their behaviour. Often the children are struggling with transitions into or between carers, school moves, or difficulties coping with relationships both with their carers or birth family. EHWT's primary focus is working with children and young people who show signs of:

- Significant attachment difficulties
- Difficulties as a result of neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse
- Emotional difficulties due to separation and loss
- Emotional/behavioural difficulties affecting the stability of foster or residential placements
- Mood and anxiety difficulties
- Risk taking or harmful behaviour where there is no intention of suicide

This is NOT a specialist 'mental health' team and where there are concerns regarding a child's mental health or suicidal ideation these children may need support from Stockport Healthy Young Minds (HYMS). The team has close links with HYMS and will refer children on if necessary.

MOSAIC

Is a support service for people aged 25 and under who need help with drug and alcohol issues or who need support to cope with parents who misuse substances.

Some of the different services that MOSAIC provide are: psychological therapies (e.g. counselling, brief solution focused therapy, motivational interviewing and counselling) substitute prescribing, complementary therapies (such as acupuncture) and Peer Mentoring. Mosaic offer information, advice and support in schools for young people, support for young people and adults worried about a friend or relative's substance use.

Contact details:

Mosaic are based in Central House, Grand Central and can be contacted on 0161 218 1100.

Sex and Relationship Education Workers

SRE workers are available at Central Youth for young people up to the age of 25 years.

They offer free and confidential advice, and can help with:

- Relationships and consent
- Sex and the law
- LGBT and gender
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- STI (RUClear) testing
- Free condoms



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