

**CORPORATE PARENTING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

26 JUNE 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS SERVICES

**UPDATE ON STATUTORY HEALTH AND INFORMATION FOR LOOKED
AFTER CHILDREN**

Reasons for the Report

1. The purpose of this report, included at Appendix A, is to provide the Committee with an update regarding Health Assessments for Looked after Children.

Background

2. The Children Looked After team (health) are an important part of the Children, Young People and Family Health Directorate and deliver an area of work where there are statutory health requirements. It is well known that children in care have adverse health outcomes so the assessments are aimed at improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities, as well as ensuring identified health needs are actioned and monitored.
3. The service is provided by a small staffing team of Consultant Paediatricians and Specialist Nurses.
4. It is widely acknowledged that there has been a growth in the number of children looked after with a direct impact on the number of health assessments the team need to deliver. Until recently the team has not grown in line with the growth in demand.

Issues

5. The report summarises and gives an overview of the statutory responsibilities for monitoring the health of Children Looked After. It also outlines the role of the key people in assessing and monitoring the health needs of Children Looked After, including the Looked After Health Nurses.
6. There has been a significant rise in the number of Children Looked After in recent years, however the number of Looked After Health Nurses has remained well below the required levels.
7. Health assessments are currently delivered by both Medical and Nursing staff. Nurse led clinics were historically undertaking assessments on over 10s. All

other assessments are undertaken by Medical Staff, including fostering & adoption, and associated adult health assessments.

8. Based on this model and workforce, demand for Health Assessment exceeds capacity. Recognising these pressures the Health Board has taken a number of actions, which include:
 - Increase in nursing resource – the nursing resource has increased by 67% from 4.2 whole time equivalent posts to 7. This has significantly increased the number of Health Assessments that can be completed.
 - Modernisation and change of delivery models – nursing teams will now undertake assessments for over 5s which has significantly reduced the burden on a very small medical workforce.
 - Increase in Medical session to focus on adult health assessments, and statutory assessments for adoption.

9. Further consideration and developments are included in the report and include:
 - Further nurse recruitment to consider Health Visiting roles.
 - Review of completion of under 5s. These children require 2 health assessments per annum, currently undertaken by Medics. Consideration is being given to the nurse / health visiting completing one of the two annual assessments.
 - Develop patient Information system and data capture for the service in order to support ongoing monitoring.
 - Review of outcomes from Audit of quality of Health Assessments and information sharing.
 - Development of Health passport for children leaving care.

Financial Implications

10. The appendix highlights consideration of expanding the workforce and this needs to be in conjunction within the parameters of affordability and the existing budgetary allocation

Legal Implications

11. There are no legal implications arising from this report

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. To review the statutory health information and update provided.

13. To consider the arrangements for assessing our Looked After Children, whether this meets the requirements and what can be done to support the health monitoring arrangements.

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD
DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS SERVICES

19 JUNE 2023

Appendix A – Updated prepared by CYPF