

Health Data Update November 2021

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 November 2021

From: Designated Nurse Children in Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: To improve health and well-being, and health outcomes for children in care by ensuring adequate assessment of health and suitable health provision; addressing areas where there may be a lack of provision or improvements required.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers

Officer contact:
Name: Catherine York
Post: Designated Nurse Children in Care
Email: catherineyork@nhs.net
Tel: 07950 382551

Member contact:
Names: Councillor Anna Bradnam
Role: Chair, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Email: Anna.Bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the performance of Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The report provides an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems are in place to meet the health needs of Cambridgeshire's children in care.

2. Background

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group commission the Children in Care Health Team, Cambridgeshire Community Services to have oversight of the health needs of our children in care via Initial and Review Health Assessments; this means that the doctors and nurses within the team undertake the health assessments, or ensure provision by a health service in another part of the country for those children and young people placed outside of Cambridgeshire or the agreed 20 miles radius. The Designated Nurse and Doctor for Children in Care work with commissioners and providers across social care and health to ensure the provision, quality and timeliness of the required health services including statutory health assessments and completion of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Initial and Review Health Assessments

Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) for those aged 0-3 years returned to face-to-face appointments from the end of April 2021, and from the beginning of June 2021 all IHAs returned to face-to-face appointments. Virtual IHAs remain an option if the agreed criteria are met.

8 months ago, it was identified that the Initial Health Assessment performance rate required improvement, so partnership work commenced to achieve this. Partners are working collaboratively to make the necessary improvements which include improvement in timeliness of submission of the required referral and consent forms by social workers, and more timely and detailed reporting of data by the Children in Care Team Lead. To date, improvements in performance are starting to be seen as detailed in the table below:

3.1.1 Initial Health Assessment Performance Data

Children and young people placed in Cambridgeshire			
Month	Number of children new to care	IHAs completed within 20 working days of coming into care	IHAs completed/booked for completion within 15 working days of receipt of referral and consent by the health team
July 2021	5	4	5
August 2021	9	7	7
September 2021	4	4	4
In area totals			
Number	18	15	16
Percentage	100%	83%	89%
Children and young people placed outside Cambridgeshire			
July 2021	5	0	
August 2021	3	0	
September 2021	6	Not Known – data reported in arrears so will be captured in the next report.	
Overall totals			
Number	32	15	
Percentage	100%	47%	

3.1.2 Review Health Assessment (RHA) Performance Data

RHA performance was maintained throughout the June, July, and August, with performance being between **83 - 94% each month**.

Current provision of RHAs is by a combination of face-to-face appointments and virtual appointments, with the majority being undertaken in person; virtual assessments can only be undertaken if the agreed criteria are met. For those who decline their consultation a questionnaire is provided which enables a Health Action Plan to be created (in line with the Pathway).

3.2 Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ)

The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, commonly known as the SDQ, is a short behavioural screening questionnaire. There are three versions of the SDQ: the parent/carer, the teacher, and the self-report scale (completed by 11–16-year-olds), which provide the potential for triangulation of information about a child across the different versions. These questionnaires are used alongside health assessments to support the assessment of emotional health and wellbeing. Scoring categories are: Low need (0-13), Some need (14-16) and High need (17-40).

The health team in Cambridgeshire undertake the parent/carer SDQ process on behalf of Social Care; the performance of the parent/carer SDQ is what we report on. During the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, performance of SDQ completion was negatively impacted, as there was not the opportunity for carers to complete the SDQ at the time of the face-to-face health assessment; this option was used in cases where the questionnaire emailed to the carer around 3 weeks prior to the assessment with a request for the carer to complete the questionnaire and return to the health team before the health assessment, had not been returned. This process is the same for children/young people placed in and out of Cambridgeshire.

An SDQ Pathway was introduced at the end of May 2021, which includes health, social care and education colleagues in order to ensure a robust process is in place for all three types of questionnaires. Review of use and compliance of the pathway by the Health of Children in Care Partnership Group is scheduled for January 2022.

The table below, identifies the number and percentage of SDQs sent to carers as well as the number and percentage returned, as this helps show the gaps in foster carers completing and returning the questionnaire, an area that needs some improvement:

Month	Number of questionnaires sent to carers by the Health Team	Percentage of questionnaires sent to carers by the Health Team	Number of completed questionnaires returned by carers	Percentage of completed questionnaires returned by carers
June 2021	54	100%	25	46%
July 2021	50	100%	25	50%
August 2021	54	100%	29	54%
Overall Totals	158	100%	79	50%
The percentage of questionnaires sent to carers is always 100% as questionnaires are sent for all children aged 4-16 years (inclusive) but excludes those for whom the questionnaire is not appropriate such as children/young people with disabilities.				
April 2020 – March 2021 performance was 27% for completed questionnaires returned by carers.				

4. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 4.1 A good quality of life for everyone
- 4.2 Thriving places for people to live
- 4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

5. Source documents

- 5.1 Source documents

None

6. Accessibility

- 6.1 An accessible version of this report is available on request from catherineyork@nhs.net