



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

## CORPORATE PARENTING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY JOINT SUB-COMMISSION 26 JULY 2005

Report of the Director of Social Services

### Promoting the Health of Children Looked After

#### RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the progress made in promoting the health of looked after children.

#### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Councils have a duty to promote the welfare and ensure the well being of all children looked after by them. Government guidance requires Councils to put in place arrangements to have their health needs met, act as an advocate on behalf of children looked after to ensure they receive the services they need, and work in partnership with Primary Care Trusts at strategic and operational levels to ensure effective delivery of health services.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 One of the five outcomes for children on which the Children Act 2004 and the Change for Children agenda is based on being healthy. Children who are or have been looked after are among the most socially excluded groups. They have much greater health needs than other similar children but their needs are not fully met, resulting in significant health inequalities and poor health, educational and social outcomes. The health of children looked after is a key performance Indicator for Social Services.
- 3.2 Members received a report on 2 March 2004 on the health of looked after children which summarised the relevant Government guidance, described the National Healthy Care Standard initiative, and presented the findings of a local audit. This report provides updated information on local arrangements, progress and performance
- 3.3 The Department of Health published guidance in November 2002 setting out the responsibilities of Councils and health agencies to work together to provide services to meet the needs of children looked after. In the same year the National Healthy Care Standard was developed by the Department of Health, with the National Children's Bureau, to support the guidance and assist agencies to carry out their responsibilities. It provides a working tool for assessing whether policies, partnership, participation and practice are meeting the needs of Looked After Children. The guidance and standards are supported by the 'Priorities and Planning Framework-Improvement, Expansion and Reform 2003-06', which sets out

standards for NHS organisations in relation to looked after children.

- 3.4 Health services for looked after children are co-ordinated and monitored by two groups, one operational and one strategic, which meet quarterly and are made up of representatives of the five Southern Derbyshire Primary Care Trusts, the Derbyshire Mental Health Trust, Derby Children's Hospital, and Derby and Derbyshire Social Services.
- 3.5 A strategic group for looked after children co-ordinates and promotes the development of holistic services for looked after children and the National Healthy Care Standard. It includes representatives from Health, Education, Social Services, CAMHS, Youth Offending Service and Connexions.
- 3.6 Central Derby PCT has appointed a consultant community paediatrician, Dr Corinna Teh, to act as designated doctor for looked after children for Southern Derbyshire. She provides clinical and strategic leadership within the health service trusts, advocates for looked after children, oversees clinical governance and audit arrangements and monitors health care plans. Central and Greater Derby PCTs have also appointed community nurses who act as designated nurses for looked after children. They monitor the implementation of health care plans, carry out health reviews where appropriate, support and train carers, contribute to care plans, and provide information and resources on health education and health promotion. Designated nurses also contribute to pathway planning to ensure a smooth transition to adult services for young people preparing to leave care.

There is a shortfall in designated nurse hours. Overall provision in the city falls considerably below the level in the three PCTs in Southern Derbyshire, and some of the existing provision is based on temporary funding.

- 3.7 The Trent Strategic Health Authority is taking the lead in identifying and collecting key data on the health of looked after children in the region.
- 3.8 The CAMHS Strategic Partnership is developing a local CAMHS strategy which aims to improve access to CAMHS for looked after children. Waiting times for access to specialist CAMHS have been reduced and consultation to workers and carers is developing successfully. Inter-agency work is also being done to enhance children's residential care with increased CAMHS involvement.
- 3.9 An Information Sharing Protocol has been agreed and implemented between the Health Trusts and Derby and Derbyshire Social Services.
- 3.10 Residential Social Workers and Foster Carers are receiving training on promoting the health and well being of children in their care.
- 3.11 Support, advice, guidance and targeted preventive work are provided around sexual health and substance misuse.
- 3.12 We have introduced a new policy and practice guidance for the administration of medicines in children's homes and trained staff on its implementation.
- 3.13 Performance Indicators relating to the health of looked after children measure immunisation, health assessments, and optical and dental checks. The level of

completed immunisation appears very good and has improved over previous years but we have no comparator information with other authorities. 265 out of 294 looked after children had all their immunisations in 2004/05. 203 out of 284 looked after children over the age of five had optical checks in the last 12 months.

Completion of dental checks and health assessments are reported as a PAF indicator. Outcomes for 2004-05 are excellent and were better than our comparator average, East Midlands average or Unitary Authorities average. Our combined score was 82% in 2004/05 and we have set a target of 90% for 2005/06.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

1. None

**Legal**

2. The Council is required to promote the health of looked after children by the Children Act (1989), the Children (Leaving Care Act) 2000 and the Children Act 2004, as well as National Minimum Standards for Foster Care and Children's Homes.

**Personnel**

3. None

**Corporate Themes and Priorities**

4. This accords with the Council's objective of **Healthy safe and independent communities** and the Local Area Agreement outcome **Improving the Health of Children**. It also supports the Council's priority of **Integrating and improving children's services**