



Department
for Education



Department
of Health

Promoting the health and welfare of looked-after children: updated statutory guidance

Government consultation

Launch date **27 November 2014**

Respond by **9 January 2015**

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Introduction

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views about draft joint statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) on promoting the health and welfare of looked-after children. The guidance is for local authorities, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and NHS England.

This document will replace the existing version of the guidance that was published jointly by DH and the then Department for Children, Schools and Families in November 2009.

The current guidance is out of date. The updated draft, on which DfE and DH are now consulting, has been revised to reflect the reformed health landscape and other changes since 2009.

Who is the guidance for?

- Senior managers responsible for local authority children's services, including Directors of Public Health; staff in CCGs and NHS England; designated and named health professionals for looked-after children; frontline managers with responsibilities for looked-after children; children's social workers and supervising social workers; managers and staff of services for care leavers; Lead Members for Children's Services; commissioners of placements and other services for children; Virtual School Heads; Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs); Personal Advisers and any other professional who is involved in the delivery of services and care to looked-after children.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on Thursday 27 November 2014.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact:

HealthLookedAfterChildren.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk, or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the Departments' response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in early 2015.

About this consultation

1. This consultation document seeks views about the fitness for purpose of the draft statutory guidance, which DfE and DH plan to publish by March 2015. It will update and replace the *Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children* published in 2009.
2. The current guidance can be viewed by clicking on this link:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-looked-after-children
The primary reason for updating it is to reflect the NHS reforms introduced by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, such as the replacement of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) with CCGs and the new role of local authorities in relation to public health. The updated draft also reflects changes that have been implemented in relation to special educational needs and disabilities.
3. The updated guidance is in two parts. The first part (pages 8 to 13) sets out the high level joint responsibilities of local authorities, CCGs and NHS England for looked-after children as a group. It includes some overarching principles, followed by sections on:
 - planning health services for looked-after children and the role of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and health and wellbeing boards in planning for the health needs of looked-after children
 - commissioning health services for looked-after children
 - the responsible commissioner
 - the role of the designated doctor and nurse
4. Part 2 of the guidance (pages 14 to 26) is about planning and providing services to meet the needs of individual looked-after children. It includes sections on:
 - the care planning framework in relation to what should happen to address the health needs of a looked-after child
 - information sharing
 - the responsibilities of local authorities and the NHS in relation to the health assessments

- the principles of what good health assessments look like and who is responsible for carrying them out
 - the health plan and health reviews
 - mental health services
 - special educational needs (SEN)
 - the roles of social workers, IROs, primary care teams, specialist health professionals and named health professionals
 - arrangements for out of authority placements
 - specific groups of looked-after children, such as those living in children's homes or in custody
 - transitions from care, including care leavers and those who are adopted.
5. Annex A give additional guidance on age-appropriate content of the health assessment using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Annex B includes information about children in custody. Annex C is intended to explain some of the terms used in the guidance. If there are terms used in the guidance that are not listed at Annex C or explained in a footnote please tell us. Similarly, if there are practice resources that you think would be useful to mention in the further information section please provide the references to these in your response to the consultation.
6. It is important to note that this is statutory guidance, setting out what the law requires. Unlike the 2009 version, it does not include practice guidance or information on the evidence base but, rather, seeks to signpost the reader to other relevant resources.
7. In developing this draft, DfE and DH have consulted informally with a range of interested individuals and organisations. These include NHS England, looked-after children's nurses, designated doctors and other health professionals, and Association of Directors of Children's Services, as well as Virtual School Heads, voluntary sector organisations and the inspectorates.
8. One of the specific issues that arose during those discussions was around enabling children adopted from care to retain the same NHS number post-adoption. Although the draft does not provide guidance about this, both Departments are working together on a way forward.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses, please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If, exceptionally, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, please download a Word document version of the form and email it or post it:

by email:

HealthLookedAfterChildren.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk

by post:

Michael Allured
Department for Education
Floor 1
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London SW1P 3BT

Deadline

The consultation closes on Friday 9 January 2015.



Department
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of Health

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