

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 11 th November 2020
SUBJECT:	Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments for Looked After Children
LEAD OFFICER:	Roneeta Campbell-Butler Lead Commissioner, Children and Families
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
WARDS:	ALL
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

This report will explain the current performance and pathways for the Initial Health Assessment and Review Health Assessments for Children Looked after.

POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:

The commissioning and provision of effective, safe and efficient services for children and young people who are looked after supports the corporate objective “Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential”

These services are commissioned by the Children and Families Integrated Commissioning Team to meet the statutory requirements as outlined in the “Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children 2015” statutory guidance.

Through working on behalf of both the CCG and Council, the team aims to develop high quality services where health and social care services are appropriately integrated to improve health outcomes for children and young people.

A Designated Doctor and Designated Nurse are employed by the CCG to support commissioning functions by providing expert clinical advice. This is to ensure that services delivered offer value for money and the CCG is assured that the children and young people in the care of the borough are being safeguarded, and their health needs identified and met.

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact to the Local Authority on the delivery of the Initial and Review Health Assessments.

The South West London CCG fund the clinical professionals with Croydon Health Services to provide the Initial and Review Health Assessments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to review and note the performance of the initial and review health assessments and the actions that have been undertaken to reduce the risks associated with delivering the statutory assessments.

1. Background and Context

As at September 2020, there are 764 children in care, of these 515 are local and 249 are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). Since April 2020, on average, Croydon accepted 21 new children and young people into care per month and on average, 9 per month arrived as an UASC. During the 'lockdown' and due to tighter boarder controls, Croydon accepted 3.5 per month.

Improving health outcomes for vulnerable young people, including Children Looked After (CLA) and care leavers, is a key partnership priority set out in our plan for improvement 2019/2020¹ (action 6.2). This includes the provision of a detailed, high quality assessment of children's health needs and ensuring that appropriate services are developed to meet their needs and improve their health outcomes.

Following the Ofsted Inspection outcome in February 2020 a Children looked after (CLA) and Care Leavers (CL) Health and Wellbeing multi professional improvement plan (April 2020 – March 2021) has been developed which aims to:

1. To promote children's health and wellbeing requirements as their corporate parents
2. To improve partnership working between, Education, Children's Social Care and Health partners to ensure health needs of looked after children are prioritised
3. To strengthen management grip and oversight of CLA Health performance to drive improvements in timeliness and quality of all CLA Health indicators
4. To ensure more children looked after and those leaving care benefit from having timely health interventions

The delivery of this plan is managed by the Children Looked After Strategic Group, chaired by Rodica Cobarzan – Head of Social Work and Care Leavers. In addition

This report aims to explain the current performance rates for delivering the health assessments for children looked after and the improvements made against the delivery plan.

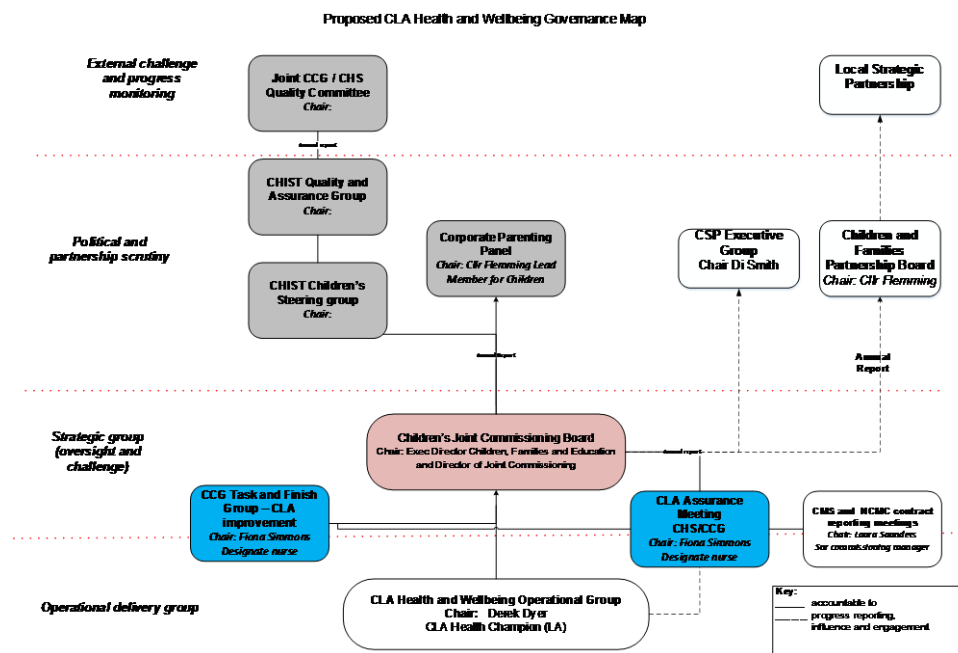
2. Governance Arrangements and Performance Oversight

- 2.1. The delivery of health assessment for looked after children is the responsibility for both the local authority and the health provider. To ensure the processes are in place to enable strategic and operational oversight, a multi-agency Improvement plan was developed. This plan is overseen by the Head of Social Work and Care leavers, whilst the day to day delivery of the plan is managed through the CLA Operational Group, chaired by Derek Dyer Service Lead for CLA and Care leavers. Once a week, a multi-agency meeting is conducted to review IHA referrals, ensuring that assessments progress through the assessment pathway.

¹ <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Childrens-plan-for-improvement-2019-20-Final.pdf>

- 2.2. To provide clinical oversight and quality assurance, the Clinical Commissioning Group with the health provider, Croydon Health Services, provide strategic oversight through the Croydon Health Services Steering Group and the CLA Assurance meetings. Performance and risks are reported to these groups and then escalated through to the CHIST Steering Group and Joint Commissioning Group, as explained in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



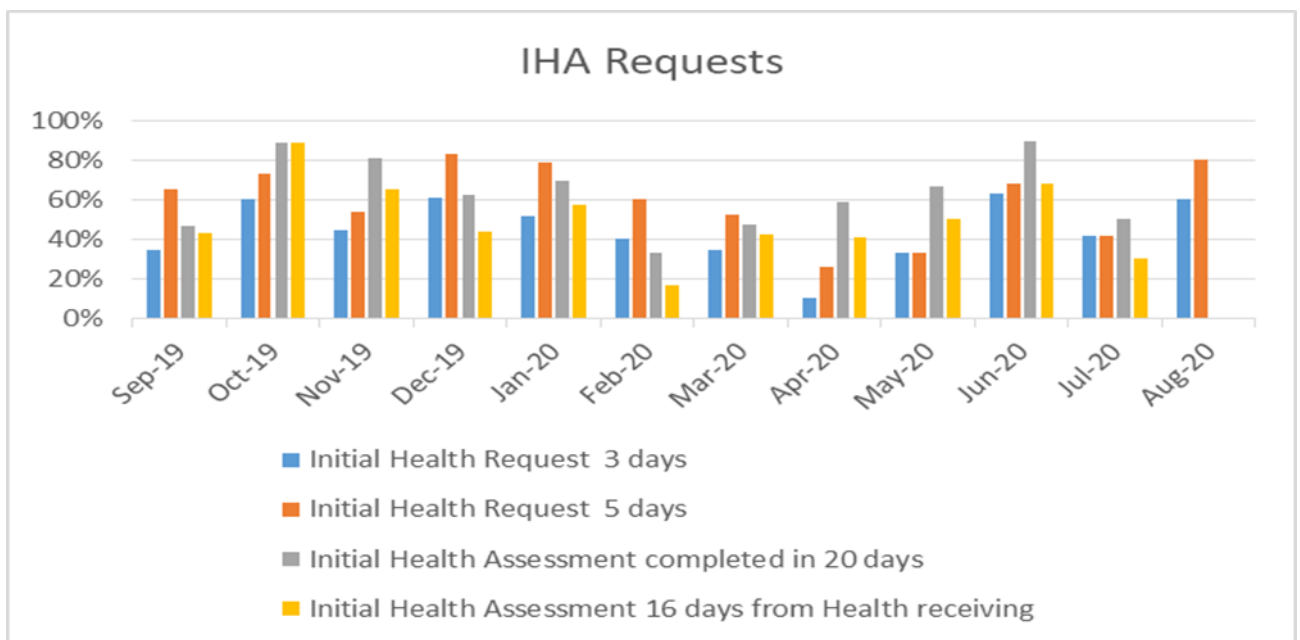
3. Initial Health Assessment Performance

- 3.1. The Initial Health Assessments are delivered by community paediatricians at the North Croydon Medical Centre with clinics available on Tuesday and Saturday and Croydon Medical Services, where clinics are available Monday to Friday.
- 3.2. In February 2020 a Partnership performance dashboard was created that aims to provide a single view of performance from both children social care and Croydon Health Services. This enables the Partnership to start reviewing the current health assessment pathways in line with statutory guidance and locally agreed targets; including:
- 3.2.1. Number of requests made in 3 working days (locally agreed target)
 - 3.2.2. Number of requests made in 5 working days (statutory guidance)
 - 3.2.3. Number of IHA's delivered in 16 working days (locally agreed target)
 - 3.2.4. Number of IHA's delivered in 20 working days (statutory guidance)
- 3.3. During the 1st wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the IHA's were delivered virtually (via telephone or video call) and face to face. Figure 2 explains that performance for IHA has fluctuated between April and August 2020. As at August 2020 (YTD); 57% of IHA's were referred to the health services within

5 days and 61% have been delivered within the 20 day turnaround time. The average turnaround time for an IHA in August was 13 days. Unfortunately, the target of 95% has not been met for these indicators.

- 3.4. A weekly meeting of children that have entered care that week takes place every Friday (as recommended by Ofsted). The aim is to ensure referrals are made to CHS on time (at least within in 5 days) and progressed accordingly through the IHA pathway. Since this was implemented in April, performance has improved. The CLA Operational Group (which meet monthly) will address issues that have arisen for not meeting performance targets. The reasons for not meeting targets will vary, from the referral not being provided to health on time or the CLA declining the assessment or the child has been placed out of area, which can cause delays in the assessment turnaround time.

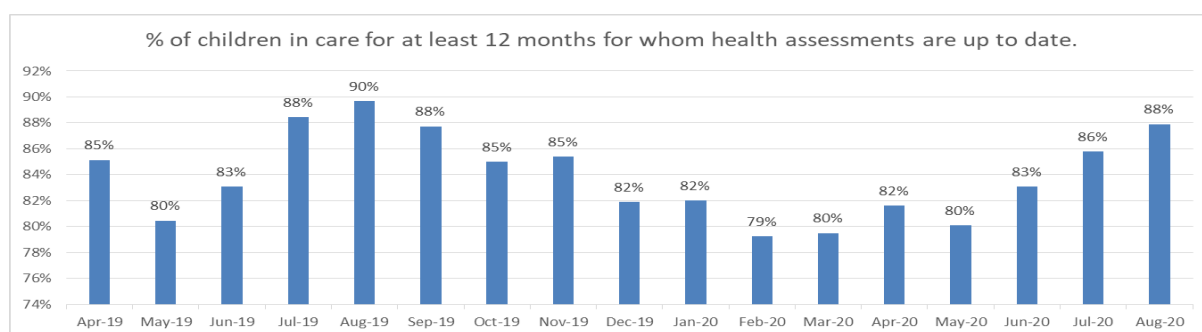
Figure 2



4. Review Health Assessments Performance

- 4.1. Review Health assessments are carried out by the Croydon Health Services Nursing Team and clinics are available Monday to Friday. The Croydon Health Service are able to identify children that are due an RHA and will contact Children Social Care to ensure referrals are made. Hence, there are no performance targets centred on referral turnaround times. Figure 3 shows monthly performance from April 2019 to August 2020. Whilst performance has remained between 79%-90% within this time period, it is still under the target of 95%.

Figure 3



- 4.2. As part of the performance monitoring process; The CLA health team will also review reasons why children and young people will miss their review health assessments. This data has only started to be recorded and shared within the partnership. A snap shot of the month of September identified that 54 RHA's were offered; 40 were completed 8 CLA cancelled and 5 cancelled due to CLA health staff sickness. The team saw 10 that had previously declined and 5 were missing.
- 4.3. To improve the turnaround time for referrals outstanding RHA's will be reviewed at the weekly meetings, as will decliners. The CLA Operational team continue to work with the team to deliver the RHA's on time.

5. Health Passports

- 5.1. Health Passports have been developed in consultation with children and young people and aim to provide care leavers with a summary of their health, based on clinical records and the health assessment processes they would have participated in. The CLA Nursing team are responsible for issuing you these. The Health Passport has just been launched in August and to date 12 Health Passports were provided during the month of August.

6. Planned Actions to improve the health assessment performance and quality

The partnership recognise that, though we have seen improvements in areas and we are still a long way off from meeting the statutory and local targets set. Below are a list of improvements that are working towards, in line with the Improvement Plan:

- Children Social Care are working with health colleagues to promote integration of the health and social care systems in which health assessment are recorded by developing a 'portal' in which health assessments can be transported into young people's CRS.
- A virtual "Health Road Show" is being developed where social workers will have the opportunity to hear from a range of clinicians, including specialist nurses, sexual health, immunisations, to promote the health for looked after

children and importance of the health assessment process (over the next 12 months)

- Development of the Health Champions roles within children social care; providing a professional platform for social workers to champion the health of looked after children ensuring processes for the RHA and IHA process are adhered to.
- The development of the CLA Health Needs Assessment, which aims to improve the local understanding of the health needs of CLA and to inform the future direction, priorities and commissioning of the services supporting their health needs (January 2021)
- A workshop with the CLA health team was organised by the Children and Families Commissioning team. The outcome will support the development of a renewed nursing specification and identify areas of improvement.
- Clinicians to meet with EMPIRE to consult on the health assessment process (November 2020)
- Review and audit is underway for all CLA that have a SEND and a disability, in preparation for the SEND inspection.

6.1. **Options - N/A**

6.2. **Future savings/efficiencies**

The delivery of the Health Assessments do not have a direct financial impact on Croydon Council as the South West London (Croydon) Clinical Commissioning Group commission and fund these assessments. The costs associated to deliver health assessments and health passports, in line with statutory requirements are indicative due services and some staff undertaking roles across safeguarding, community paediatrics and children looked after.

Table 1 Indicative funding amounts for Delivering CLA Health Assessments 2020-2021

Funding Amount	Purpose	Number of assessments
£108,000	Additional capacity to deliver Initial Health Assessments	360 per year or £300 per assessment.
Circa £120,000	Croydon Health Services to provide a Children Looked After Designated Doctor and for Community Paediatricians to deliver Initial Health Assessments. This is a portion of a block contract for community paediatric services.	The designated doctor provides strategic oversight and quality assures the IHA process. Currently the designated doctor is fulfilling a named doctor function and will triage and undertake review health assessments. 6 assessments per month or 72 per year. In the last 3 months, this averaged 9 per month
Circa £70,000	Designated Nurse post, whose role is to provide strategic oversight and quality assure the review health assessment process. This is a statutory function and sits within the CCG.	No assessment delivered, but will quality assure a proportion of the RHA's.
Circa £23,000	Head of Service (Safeguarding)	Manages the CLA Nursing team and oversees the running of the service. This is portion of the overall role.
£397,000	The Children Looked After Nursing team for the timely delivery of Review Health Assessments. This includes a part time Named Nurse and 3 specialist nurses	The CLA nursing team offer around complete on average 50 review health assessments per month or circa 600 per year in addition to health passports for care leavers, which commenced in September 2020.
Total Funding for Health Assessments Circa £718,000		