

Progress Looked After Children (LAC) Health Report – July 2020.

1.0 Workforce Capacity

1.1 There is currently a vacancy in the CCG Looked After Children Designated Nurse post. Interviews were scheduled for 18th June, however we were unable to appoint into this role. However, within the CCG Safeguarding Team, a member of staff Michael Addo-Boateng has expressed an interest in this role. A development plan has started with Michael, and will be in place for 6 months. In the interim, the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Michael will work hand in hand, picking up and covering key LAC matters. We will work with health colleagues and partner's agencies to ensure our LAC CYP are safeguarding and prioritised.

1.2 Within South West Essex, North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) is commissioned by the CCGs (Basildon & Brentwood and Thurrock CCGs) to provide the IHA's (Initial Health Assessment) for Basildon Brentwood and Thurrock.

1.3 The Thurrock NELFT LAC Team Operational Manager was re-deployed due to COVID 19 demands. She returned 13th July. The nursing operation team were not re-deployed and have been business as usual during this time. This makes the team fully staffed/full capacity.

2.0 LAC - COVID 19 – Update

2.1 A decision was made from the onset of COVID19 that services for LAC would continue. Within this time of Covid 19, NELFT have advised that none of their Paediatrician have been redeployed, however one paediatrician was shielding. Each IHA is been risk assessed by the Paediatrician to ensure the best possible way forward for face to face or virtually assessing a LAC CYP. A guidance was produced by the Designated LAC Nurses to support the Paediatrician, discussing the risk and how best to manage it.

2.2 Due to the number of delayed IHAs followed up by the CCG team, it came to the attention of the CCG that a number of Local Authorities (LA) Providers have had their Paediatricians redeployed or have had to isolate due to Covid 19. Subsequently, this has put an extra pressure on a number of Providers to deliver a service that was already depleted before Covid 19 started.

3.0 Health Assessments (HAs)

One of the main problems with HAs are the children placed out of area (OOA). It has come to the CCGs attention that a number of surrounding areas have stated they do not have capacity to undertake Initial Health Assessments (IHA) and Review Health Assessments (RHA) for our OOA children.

3.2 IHA Outstanding

Problems with IHA are historical, so collectively across Essex we are in the early stages of discussing a central data base, which will be used across Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET). There are still capacity challenges to undertake the IHA assessment of Thurrock children and this has been highlighted as a problem across a number of local authorities including Basildon Brentwood and Thurrock. Below information highlights some pieces of work taking place to attempt to resolve this long term challenges.

3.3 Review Health Assessments (RHAs)

RHA'S are completed in house within Thurrock, and there appear not to be any significant concerns in-house. However, there have been concerns expressed around placement of LAC CYP in LAs who do not provide RHA for our CYP placed in their area. This needs to be discussed in house, to ensure a review of all CYP placed in OOA LA provide and deliver HA's to CYP placed from other LA before placement is signed off. To mitigate any risks/delays, these CYP are brought back for RHAs to be completed by NELFT LAC Nursing Team, this again adds unpredicted/unplanned added pressure to our local service/LAC team. As they are also expected to provide these same services to LAC CYP who are placed in Thurrock from other areas.

4.0 Spot Purchasing

Due to the above, the CCG has had to bring in some LAC CYP, Spot purchasing their IHA to minimize the waiting and potential risks, that could be associated with delayed IHA. These have now been completed and details will be shared with the LA this week.

5.0 Commissioners working on a long term solution

5.1 Early stages of discussing a central data base, aim to have one digital solution. The progress for this central data was put on hold due to COVID 19. The aim is to have one digital solution, which would show where a CYP is within the IHA pathway, this will be a live data base and have the ability to trace the child journey from when they come into care. We await another date to be rescheduled for these meetings.

- Collectively across SET, early discussions. COVID 19 Work Stream was developed and is an ongoing process. We are in discussion with Providers on how best to go forwards and bring in new changes to the IHA system and utilizing the knowledge and Skill we have developed in Covid 19 and taking them forward once we exit this very worrying time as the response from the young children regarding the virtual IHA's assessment, have been extremely positive. Bearing in mind some of the dangers and risk of virtual consultations and assessment, these suggestions are being looked into carefully.
- Virtual Initial Health Assessment (IHA) - Data Collection form/Audit – to be collected
- An option paper has also been written and is currently been reviewed. When appropriate this will be shared externally.

6.0 Areas to look into:

- Data on Outstanding IHA, RHA and OOA
- ADOS Assessment Service/Outstanding List
- LAC – SEND Services
- Review Performance LAC Data

End of Report – 13th July 2020

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Basildon & Brentwood and Thurrock CCGs