

## **Scrutiny Review – Corporate Parenting Meeting Civic Centre 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

### **The Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children and Young People**

Provision for the health and well being of young people in care is informed by statutory guidance as follows:

*“Looked after children and young people share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. They often enter care with a worse level of health than their peers in part due to the impact of poverty, abuse and neglect.”*

The aim of the statutory guidance quoted above is to ensure that all looked after children and young people are physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, that they will not take illegal drugs and that they will enjoy healthy lifestyles.

However, as reflected in the questions asked by the panel, the information that is available nationally shows that:

- There is a high level of mental health need amongst looked after children, particularly those in residential care.
- Clinically significant conduct disorders were the most common among looked after children.
- Two thirds of all looked after children had at least one physical health complaint and were more likely than their peers to experience problems including speech and language problems, bedwetting, co-ordination difficulties and eye or sight problems
- Those leaving care are more likely than their peers to be teenage parents, and are more likely to experience worsening health in the year after leaving care.

### **General health provision for Looked After Children and Young People in Haringey**

In Haringey looked after children and young people (LAC) access universal, targeted and specialist health services, which include usual GP access, the health visiting service, school health provision, immunisation programmes and so on.

There is also a specifically commissioned Haringey LAC health service comprises of a designated doctor, nurse and two additional specialist nurses with administrative support.

### **Tavistock Haringey Service (THS) – Mental Health & Emotional Well-being for Haringey Looked After Children and Young People**

This is commissioned by Haringey <sup>1</sup>Children’s Service to provide mental health service for Haringey’s LAC population. This service provides support to young people in care by offering a flexible and tailored service which is able

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<sup>1</sup> Department for children, schools and families. Department of Health. Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children. 2009

to respond speedily to the diverse needs of this complex group. Clinicians work closely with social work colleagues and other key adults to support the 'team around the child' and facilitate enhanced and understanding of the child's emotions and psychological needs.

**Service Health Services** – A full range of sexual health services, including contraception advice, is available to young people in care.

During the review health assessment the nurse's health promotion includes sex education relevant to each individual child's needs.

**Children and young people's views about their health needs and priorities and how well they met**

During health assessments and the mental health appointments the child/young person is included in their health interview, their opinions are elicited and they are included in the health care plan and referral process. The team is also working with Tottenham Hotspur to develop a health & fitness programme for older LAC and a similar programme for younger children with their foster carers.