

## Freedom of Information request 216-19

---

### Request

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002:

1. As per the 2014 guidance on health assessments for looked after children,
  - What data does the health board capture on the mental health needs of looked after children following health assessment,
  - What questions are asked, or methods used to identify information on the possible impact of trauma on a child or young person's mental wellbeing.
2. What steps are taken by the health board through recruitment and training to ensure that staff carrying out mental health assessments for looked after children understand the possible impact of trauma on children and young people?
3. For each year since 2014, what percentage of health assessments for looked after children took place,
  - face to face with the child/young person
  - over the phone with the child/young person
  - over the phone with a carer who knows the child/young person well
  - some other means?
4. For each year since 2014, following a health assessment what percentage of looked after children and young people
  - are referred to CAMHS
  - have support for a diagnosable mental health problem as part of their child's plan
  - have support for their mental health and wellbeing as part of their child's plan?
5. What steps have the health board taken since 2014 to take into account and responds to the mental health needs of looked after children, in its role as a corporate parent.

### Response

1. a) Questions are asked as part of the Health Needs Assessment and any health needs and actions identified are recorded as part of the child's record.
- b) NHS Borders has developed age appropriate Health Needs Assessment for Looked After Children.

The following questions are included in the Health Needs Assessment for Children 0-12 years:

- How do adults view the child's temperament? (contented, affectionate, guarded, aggressive, happy, sad watchful)
- Are there any concerns about the child's emotional wellbeing? (low mood, lack of energy/motivation, repeated physical complaints without medical cause, withdrawn)
- Are there any indications that the child has been self harming? (If yes, ask about site/frequency/triggers)
- Are there any concerns about the child's behaviour? (attachment, separation and loss, managing routines/boundaries, fidgeting or pacing, concentration, repeated emotional outbursts, trauma )
- Has there been any recent involvement with CAMHS and/or any other agency that provides emotional support involvement?
- Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (please ask child's carer or social worker to complete SDQ)

The following questions are included in the Health Needs Assessment for Young People 12 years and over:

- How would you describe your mood: on average or usually? (happy, sad, lonely, depressed, low, anxious, fearful)
- Do you ever feel tired, fatigued, low in mood, find it hard to get motivated, struggle to get up? How often?
- Are you able to enjoy things and have a laugh?
- Have you ever self harmed? If yes, ask about site/frequency/triggers- How does this help you?
- If you have self harmed have you been provided with information about keeping yourself safe, first aid and safe alternatives?
- Have you ever felt like you don't want to be here? If yes (gently explore) When did you last feel like this? What did you do? Did you tell anyone? Have you ever had the urge to seriously hurt someone else?
- How is young person coping with experience of trauma and/or loss? (experience of abuse and exposure to adverse childhood experiences)
- Is your mood impacting on your current functioning, behaviour, school attendance and relationships with others? (attachment issues, ability to sustain relationships, interpersonal skills)
- Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (for children over the age of 5 years)
- Has there been any recent involvement with CAMHS and/or any other agency that provides emotional support/involvement?

2. Ongoing in-house continuing professional development is provided by the specialist Child Protection/Looked After Children's Team. Workshops have been delivered to School Nurses to support them in completing the Health Needs Assessment with looked after children. More widely, multiagency training has been delivered relating to self harm and mental health first aid. Additionally staff are able to access the resources developed by NHS Education Scotland about trauma informed practice.

3. a) 100% of assessments for looked after children are face to face.  
b) None  
c) None  
d) None

4. a) Referred to CAMHS:

- 2014 4%
- 2015 9%
- 2016 13.5%
- 2017 5%
- 2018 12%
- 2019 2.5% (Jan – May)

b) Have support for a diagnosable mental health problem as part of their child's plan:

- 2014 4%
- 2015 15%
- 2016 10%
- 2017 13%
- 2018 10%
- 2019 2.5% (Jan – May)

c) All Looked After Children (i.e. 100% for years 2014-19) would have an outcome to support their health needs and this would include their mental health and wellbeing as part of their Child's Plan and 'Healthy' Wellbeing Indicator.

5. Please find below the steps taken by NHS Borders since 2014 to take into account and respond to the mental health needs of looked after children:

- Redesigned the Health Needs Assessment and guidance for professionals
- Introduced Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires and guidance
- Strengthened knowledge and skills of School Nurses
- Adopted a whole systems approach to supporting children and young people's emotional and mental health, this includes:

- 'See Me' training undertaken by senior pupils in secondary schools delivered by the Health Improvement Team;
- Multiagency Self Harm guidance updated and training delivered
- School Nurses have undertaken training to support young people experiencing anxiety (LIAM training)
- Support and consultation for the Universal workforce from the CANHS Link Nurse.

This work has supported all our children and young people but includes our Looked After Children and support is extended to foster carers as appropriate

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or [foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk).

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **216-19** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.