

**Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement
1 October 2014**

Health Assessments Recovery Plan

The following report outlines Lancashire performance against the Department for Education indicator for children looked after (CLA) with an up to date health assessment. This is one of the key performance indicators that the Local Authority is measured against. There is a statutory requirement for each child coming into care having an Initial Health assessments and review assessment thereafter. The performance is determined by each child accessing both a health assessment and dental check.

The 2012/13 average for Lancashire was 85.1% and it is of concern that the figure for this indicator had declined to 52.5% in June 2014. This figure is a county average.

An audit of the health assessment status for Lancashire children looked after was undertaken in July 2014 whereby it was identified that Lancashire's new IT system, Lancashire's Children's System (LCS) had not provided the necessary alerts required for notification of the review health assessments, also large amounts of data had been recorded and stored incorrectly. It is unclear if other processes impacted on performance level as these were not audited at this time. Currently there is limited confidence in the retrievable data from LCS.

In addition to the data issues, there has been an increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after, which has meant a greater number of health assessments need to be undertaken within the same resource envelope.

This combination of issues has significantly impacted upon data recorded and reported; however, even given these factors the reported performance is still of concern.

Children's Social Care and Health Service immediately implemented their own (single agency) recovery plans and as of 18 September 2014 performance has increased to 61.1%.

There are a number of actions underway to address the current challenges:

Strategic Multi- Agency Performance Recovery Plan

1. Governance/accountability arrangements will be re launched as:

Quarterly multi-agency locality operational reports to children looked after group.

Annual reporting to Corporate Parenting Board.

In addition quarterly reports will be provided to Lancashire Safeguarding Board to monitor the recovery plan and performance improvement.

2. At a locality level, the terms of reference for operational groups will be re launched, training will be provided and strategic expectations clearly relayed with regards a consistent reporting system linked to the multi-agency health assessment pathway. This will include identified leads for each agency to implement any strategic or local recommendations to improve performance.
3. Consideration will be given to a multi-agency centralised administrative team to provide efficiency and improve performance. In the interim, arrangements for organisation leads (administrative) for the children looked after health assessment process at a locality level will be identified.
4. A more detailed operational plan is in place for operational implementation. Which includes time scaled actions in relation to:
 - All Lancashire children looked after nurses now have read access to the LCS system, they will be given training and full access to the LCS system to speed up the recording and reporting system.
 - All children's social care business support officers have been provided with a step by step guide to support timeliness of health assessments requests and return recording.
 - A multi-agency health assessment pathway will be developed to include data cleansing, sharing, tracking and evidence performance improvement
5. Consideration of multi-agency review of the way CLA Nurses are commissioned and requirements (Specification) to be undertaken.