

**NHS England and NHS Improvement – Midlands**

Sent via email to all Providers

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Dear Colleagues

**Looked After Children**

Over the last couple of months NHSE/I and LDN chairs in East Midlands have been working with our safeguarding colleagues to support looked after children moving into care.

When a child is placed in care, they must legally have a health assessment that includes a brief consideration of their oral health. Once placed with a family it is expected that they have a full dental examination/treatment as soon as possible.

To help this process we have produced an oral health assessment support sheet for those undertaking the general examination and, in acknowledgment of the current difficulties in accessing care, developed a pathway that means children who present at the initial health assessment with acute problems are directed straight to the local community dental services for assessment. This means that no child in urgent need of care should be disadvantaged as a result of the challenges related to Covid 19.

For those identified as having non-symptomatic problems, their foster carers will be asked to take them to the local dentist. It has proved very difficult in the last year for foster carers to find appointments for these most vulnerable children. We are therefore reminding you these children are a priority for access. If the foster family regularly attends the practice, the children should be considered as part of that arrangement. It is expected that you would manage the child within the general dental practice setting as you would any other child.

We have also been working on the delegated authority form. This is the document that outlines who has what authority to consent to the care. In dental terms the original form was not very clear, but a more prescriptive form of words has been put forward which will mean most dentistry including the use of inhalation sedation will be able to be agreed by the foster carer. This work is currently being developed; however, we would recommend requesting a copy of the 'delegated authority' to clarify the position from foster carers.



The transfer process for orthodontics for these patients has been reviewed to try and make this as seamless as possible. Foster carers will be made aware of the process.

We have written to all Directors of Children's Service in the East Midlands to clarify the current position regarding access to dentistry and the work that is being undertaken to refine the current LAC pathway.

We would request that you and your teams implement this pathway to ensure that our most vulnerable children are supported by prioritising them for appointments if their foster carers contact your practice.

We would like to give thanks to the contribution of this refined pathway to our Orthodontic and Paediatric MCN Chairs, LAs, PHE and clinical colleagues.

Yours sincerely



**Caroline Goulding**  
**Head of Primary Care Services – Midlands (East)**



**Deborah Manger**  
**Regional Deputy Dental Dean**



**Christine Utting**  
**Former LDN Chair**  
**Midlands (East) – Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire**