

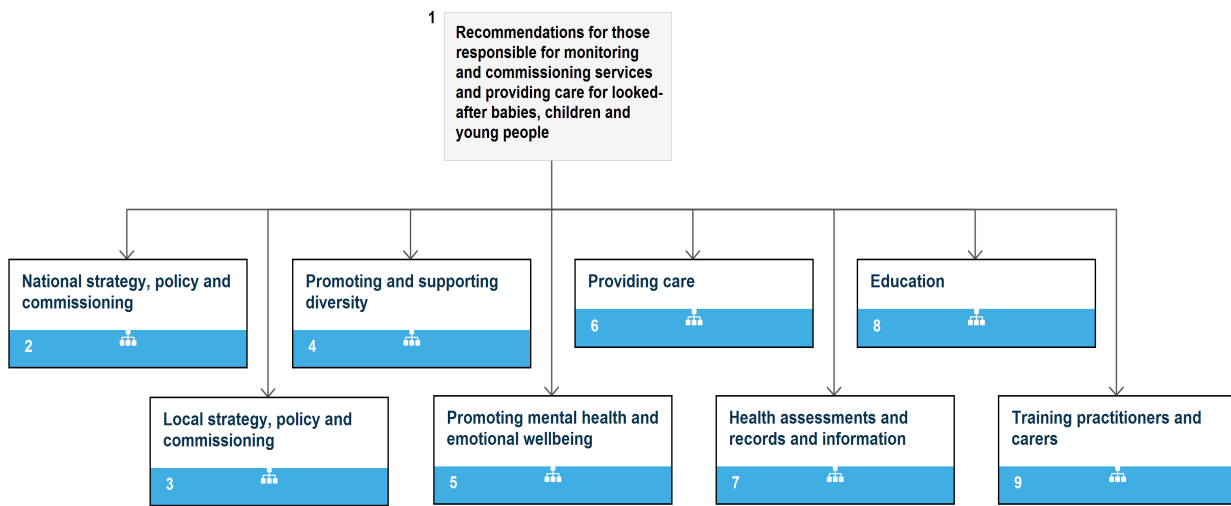
Looked-after babies, children and young people overview

NICE Pathways bring together all NICE guidance, quality standards and other NICE information on a specific topic.

NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online. They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/looked-after-babies-children-and-young-people>
Pathway last updated: 29 December 2016

This document contains a single pathway diagram and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Recommendations for those responsible for monitoring and commissioning services and providing care for looked-after babies, children and young people

No additional information

2 National strategy, policy and commissioning

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / National strategy, policy and commissioning for looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

3 Local strategy, policy and commissioning

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Local strategy, policy and commissioning for looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

4 Promoting and supporting diversity

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Promoting and supporting diversity in relation to looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

5 Promoting mental health and emotional wellbeing

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

6 Providing care

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Providing care for looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

7 Health assessments and records and information

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Health assessments of, and records and information on, looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

8 Education

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Educating looked-after children and young people](#)

9 Training practitioners and carers

See [Looked-after babies, children and young people / Training for practitioners and carers involved with looked-after babies, children and young people](#)

Advocacy

a process in which an independent person (an advocate) helps another person express their views and wishes. Advocacy for children and young people has been defined as 'speaking up' for them. It aims to empower them and make sure that their views are heard and their rights are respected for example, when planning care

Attachment

a secure relationship with a main caregiver, usually a parent, allowing a baby or child to grow and develop physically, emotionally and intellectually. Babies and children need to feel safe, protected and nurtured by caregivers who identify and respond appropriately to their needs. Unmet attachment needs may lead to social, behavioural or emotional difficulties, which can affect the child's physical and emotional development and learning

Birth parents

biological parents, sometimes referred to as 'natural parents'

Care by family and friends

care provided by friends and relatives for a looked-after child or young person. Previously referred to as 'kinship care'. Recent government guidance also uses the term 'connected care'

Care plan

a document that sets out the actions to be taken to meet the child's needs and records the person responsible for taking each identified action. The local authority is responsible for ensuring that it is regularly reviewed and that the identified actions happen

Child and adolescent mental health services

child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are specialist NHS mental health services for children and young people up to the age of 18

Commissioning

the process by which agencies such as local authorities and commissioners of health services, jointly or separately, identify needs and then plan and deliver services within their own

resources or from a range of service providers. It includes monitoring the delivery and quality of services and their responsiveness to defined need. Service providers may include GPs, hospitals, mental health trusts and voluntary and independent organisations

Complex needs

children may have complex needs as a result of physical disability or impairment, learning disability or a long-term health condition. Complex needs can encompass physical, emotional, behavioural and health needs and may require help from a number of different sources

Corporate parenting

a term used to describe the responsibility of any local authority as 'corporate parents' to all the children and young people who are in the care of that local authority (children and young people who are 'looked after' or 'in care'). A 'corporate parent' has a legal responsibility to ensure that the needs of children and young people in their care are prioritised in the same way as any concerned parent would want for their own children. The term covers all the members of the local council and any services provided by the local council

Designated health professional

a doctor or nurse who has responsibility for looked-after children and young people and an understanding of their particular healthcare needs. They have the authority to make things happen both for an individual child and for looked-after children generally in their locality. They also have a strategic role to assist commissioners of health services to fulfil their responsibilities to meet the needs of looked-after children and young people. The post holders may monitor commissioned services or provide direct services to individual children

Designated teachers

similar to a designated health professional – a teacher who has particular responsibility for looked-after children and young people and an understanding of their care needs and their impact on education. They also have sufficient authority to make things happen both for an individual child and for looked-after children across the school in general. They act as an advocate for looked-after children; ensure speedy transfer of information; ensure that each looked after child has their personal education plan and a home-school agreement drawn up with the primary carer. Every school should have a designated teacher

Developmental capacity

this term is used to cover a person's learning, emotional, or comprehension abilities, which may change with time and may not be related to chronological age. For children and young people who are looked after, their developmental capacity may affect their overall ability to stay safe and become independent

Diversity

in this guidance, 'diversity' is used as a general term to draw attention to groups of children and young people in the care system who may have a range of particular needs as a consequence of their cultural background, sexual orientation, physical or learning disabilities or faith. It is a way of identifying groups of children and young people and ensuring they are treated the same as their peers but also have opportunities to use services that meet their particular needs

Drift

the situation of children or young people who spend years passing (or 'drifting') through a series of placements in residential or foster care

Educational stability

a phrase used to indicate that a looked-after child or young person is able to stay in the same place of education for an extended period, which should encourage them to engage with learning and achieve. Often placement and educational stability are linked: when a child has to change their care placement they may have to leave their school

Independent fostering agencies

independent (private) and third-sector agencies (either for profit or not for profit) that recruit and provide foster carers

Independent reviewing officers

the person (or people) who ensure/s that the health and welfare of looked-after children and young people are prioritised, that they have completed and accurate care plans in place (which are regularly reviewed and updated), that any physical, emotional health or wellbeing needs or assessments identified by their care plans are met or completed, and that their views and wishes, and those of their families, are heard

Individual education plans

a plan that sets out the strategies being used by a school to ensure that a child or young person who has particular learning or physical disabilities gets the support they need to learn and achieve to the best of their ability

Leaving-care services

services to prepare and support looked-after young people when they are planning to leave care and live independently. They are sometimes called 'transitional support services'

Life-story work

this is about helping a child or young person create a personal or family history by gathering and talking about information (such as photos and letters) about their life now or before they came into care, to help them develop a sense of identity. Life-story work can be an organised activity with a person trained to support this type of work, or an informal process reflected in the everyday conversations between carers and looked-after children or young people

Multi-agency

a description for services that involve more than one agency (for example NHS and social work). Children's services carry responsibility for the care plan of a looked-after child or young person, but different agencies and professionals contribute to it, for example, the school, the GP, the looked-after children's nurse, and adult services for the parent or for the young person as they approach adulthood. A range of professionals also have a role in assessing a child's general wellbeing and development

Multiple heritage

a term used to describe the background of an individual whose family members may be descended from two or more cultural groups, but not necessarily different racial groups. For example, the term could apply equally to someone with a white British father and a white French mother; and to a person with white Irish, British Asian and African-American grandparents. Sometimes used interchangeably with the terms 'mixed race' or 'bi-racial'

Pastoral support plan

a pastoral support plan (PSP) is a school-based programme which is intended to help a child or young person to improve their social, emotional and behavioural skills. The PSP will identify precise and specific targets for the child or young person to work towards and should include the child or young person, their carers, parents or social workers (as appropriate) in the drafting process

Pathway plan

the plan that sets out the activities and support for any looked-after young person planning to move to independent living. The pathway plan builds on and replaces the care plan, and young people are eligible for one from the age of 16

Permanence

achieving a legally permanent, nurturing family for a looked-after child or young person

Personal education allowances

a fund held by the local authority that can be used, at their discretion, to help looked-after young people pursue their education (including further and higher education)

Personal education plan

a document describing the assessment and plan to meet the educational needs of a looked-after child or young person, and help them reach their full potential in education and afterwards. It forms part of the care plan

Placement

the foster or residential home where the child or young person is living. A child or young person may also be 'placed' with their family at home if they are in care under a court order

Residential care

care for children and young people living away from home in children's homes and residential special schools

Resilience

resilience is a term used to describe a person's responses to difficult or potentially damaging experiences. As a quality in a person, it implies that the experience does not appear to have had a lasting, detrimental impact on mental or physical health. Understanding resilience is important to help develop useful interventions in the hope of lessening the long-term consequences of a damaging event. It is important for looked-after children or young people in particular as some manage to lead happy, fulfilled lives despite serious adverse experiences in life while others struggle to do so

Review meeting

a meeting or meetings where the care plan is considered, reconfirmed or changed and such decisions agreed and recorded in consultation with all those who have an interest in the child's life, including the child

Team around the child

a collaborative team of key professionals and frontline practitioners to support a child or young person. The team may include foster or residential carers

Transitions

a phase or period of time when a person experiences significant change, some of which may be challenging. Some changes are experienced only by looked-after children or young people, for example, becoming looked after, changing placement, changing social worker or leaving care. Some looked-after children and young people experience loss, separation and varying degrees of trauma at these changes

Unaccompanied asylum seekers

an unaccompanied asylum seeker is a child or young person who is under 18 years of age, and who travels to a new country alone without a parent, carer or other adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for them (Department of Health, Social Services Inspectorate 1995)

Virtual school head

a senior member of staff in a local authority, who has responsibility for overseeing a coordinated system of support for looked-after children and improving their educational achievements

Your responsibility

The guidance in this pathway represents the view of NICE, which was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. Those working in the NHS, local authorities, the wider public, voluntary and community sectors and the private sector should take it into account when carrying out their professional, managerial or voluntary duties. Implementation of this guidance is the responsibility of local commissioners and/or providers. Commissioners and providers are reminded that it is their responsibility to implement the guidance, in their local context, in light of their duties to avoid unlawful discrimination and to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity. Nothing in this guidance should be interpreted in a way which would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

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