

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Dr Bob Bowes  
Chair of West Kent Local Health and Wellbeing  
Board

NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group  
Wharf House  
Medway Wharf  
Kent  
TN9 1RE  
Tel: 01732 375200  
Email: [westkent.ccg@nhs.net](mailto:westkent.ccg@nhs.net)

18<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Dear Colleague,

**Re: CQC Safeguarding Review**

The Care Quality Commission today publishes the report of its recent review of health services for looked after children and safeguarding arrangements within health for all children in the West Kent, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley, and Swale areas.

The focus was on the experiences of looked after children and children and their families who receive safeguarding services.

CQC inspectors looked at:

- the role of healthcare providers and commissioners.
- the role of healthcare organisations in understanding risk factors, identifying needs, communicating effectively with children and families, liaising with other agencies, assessing needs and responding to those needs and contributing to multi-agency assessments and reviews.
- the contribution of health services in promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of looked after children including carrying out health assessments and providing appropriate services.

They also checked whether healthcare organisations were working in accordance with their responsibilities under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. This includes the statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.

The report cites many examples of good practice, with midwives, A&E staff, health visitors, school nurses and others working effectively to protect vulnerable children and young people, supported by a good understanding of the systems and processes to use if they have concerns.

“Overall, we have seen numerous examples of committed and diligent practitioners across services working hard to protect children across the range of health services that we visited,” the report says.

Examples of good practice include:

- information sharing between midwifery services and other health and social care professionals, particularly at initial stages of pregnancy and booking, is good
- very good care and practice for vulnerable women who were pregnant, including one exemplary case of peri-natal care and birth planning at Medway Maritime hospital for a woman with mental health problems in the Swale area
- diligent follow-up of mothers and children in a number of cases where parents failed to attend appointments, including escalation through to safeguarding in persistent cases
- effective and highly valued specialist Kent Community Health NHS Trust outreach contraception and sexual health teams supporting vulnerable young people
- effective electronic flagging systems across the four hospital emergency departments to help staff identify risk factors indicating that children are vulnerable, including multiple hospital attendances.
- examples at Darent Valley hospital of extremely good practice in identifying the need for early help, including the paediatric liaison worker identifying the need for continence training for a young child, and an ambulance worker flagging concerns about possible neglect.
- separate and distinct paediatric emergency treatment cards, incorporating a safeguarding risk assessment, at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells hospitals.

The report also made some recommendations for improvement, including that:

- The three clinical commissioning groups for West Kent, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley, and Swale, and the mental health trust Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) work together to ensure prompt access to appropriate mental health support for new and expectant mothers
- The CCGs, NHS England Kent and Medway, and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust ensure that young people with mental health needs have access to facilities which are right for their age and needs when they are admitted to hospital
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, and Kent Community Health NHS Trust ensure that practitioner referrals to children's social care clearly articulate the risks to the child or young person
- NHS England Kent and Medway and the CCGs put in place arrangements for a sexual assault response service for children and young people, including out of hours, in line with national guidance
- The CCGs, Kent Community Health NHS Trust and Kent County Council ensure that children and young people who are looked after benefit from quality, timely and comprehensive initial and review health assessments by suitably qualified and experienced health professionals, subject to effective quality assurance and robust performance management and reporting arrangements, including young people placed out of area and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

As you are aware, the CCG is committed to working with our partners to ensure every child in our area has the best start in life. While the Care Quality Commission acknowledges that much of what it found was already known to and being acted on by commissioners and providers, this thorough and comprehensive review helps to give a clear focus to our work to further improve services.

We are pulling together a joint action plan with partners to implement all the recommendations made by this review.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sp Beaumont'.

Dr Steve Beaumont  
Chief Nurse