

Initial Health Assessment (IHA)

Looked after Children's Team [Information for children and young people](#)

What is an Initial Health Assessment?

When a child or young person comes into care they will have an Initial Health Assessment (IHA). It is a legal requirement for all children in care to be offered a meeting with a looked after children's doctor within 28 days.

The reason for the meeting is to discuss if your health needs are being met. We can also find out whether there are any other health services that might be helpful to you for leading a healthy life.

The IHA meeting is an opportunity for you to talk to a doctor in private about any physical or mental health concerns. You can also ask any questions you might have.

What happens at the IHA?

You will meet a children's doctor from the looked after children's team. They will ask you questions about:

- your physical health
- your mental health
- how things are going in your placement
- your day-to-day life.

They will talk to you about general things such as:

- your hobbies and what you enjoy
- things you might be finding difficult
- friendships
- sleep
- diet and exercise

They will also ask about your past medical history, your family history, and school.

The doctor can also answer any questions you might have on other health matters such as:

- skin or hair care
- puberty
- relationships
- sexual health

- smoking / vaping
- alcohol and drugs

After you've spoken, the doctor will offer a medical examination.

This might include:

- measuring your height and weight
- listening to your heart and lungs
- checking your nervous system
- looking in your ears and eyes
- pressing on your tummy

It is unlikely you will need any blood tests

How long will the meeting last?

It will usually last an hour.

Can I bring anyone with me?

Usually you will come with your carer. Your social worker will also be invited. You will also be offered the chance to talk to the doctor alone if you want to.

During your examination you don't have to have that person with you in the room. In this case, another medical professional will come in to act as a chaperone.

What happens after my IHA?

At the end of the appointment, the doctor will make a health plan with you. This might include things like arranging a dental appointment, organising any tests, or referring you to other medical services.

Keeping information about you private (confidential)

The doctor will write a confidential report documenting your discussions and examination findings.

It is important that information is shared between professionals involved in your care. The report will be sent to your GP, social worker, health visitor, and the looked after children's nurses.

If there is anything you don't want included, you can mention this to the doctor, and it can be discussed. This may have to be shared if it impacts yours or someone else's safety. It may be able to be recorded in a confidential part of your health records.

Will I need another IHA meeting?

You will be offered a health review by a nurse from the looked after children's team in one year.

What should I do to prepare?

You don't need to do anything to prepare for your medical. You might want to think about any questions you may wish to ask the doctor. Don't worry if you can't think of any.

Remember, this appointment is all about you, and for you!

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