

Initial Health Assessment (IHA)

Looked after Children's Team

Information for Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Why do I need an IHA medical?

Now you are in the UK you are under the care of the local authority.

When a child or young person comes into care they will have an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) within 28 days. This is a meeting with a children's doctor.

It is to make sure all your health needs are being met.

The meeting is a chance for you to talk to a doctor in private about any physical or mental health worries. You can also ask them questions.

The health team do not work for the government. They have no impact on your asylum application. This appointment is just about your health.

What happens at the medical?

You will meet a 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 things like:

- your hobbies and what you enjoy.
- things you might be finding difficult
- friendships
- sleep
- diet and exercise
- your past medical history
- your family history
- your journey to the UK

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

- skin or hair care
- puberty (body changes)
- relationships
- sexual health
- smoking, vaping, alcohol, and drugs
- education

After this, the doctor will offer a medical examination.

This might include:

- measuring your height and weight
- listening to your heart and lungs
- checking your muscles and movement
- looking in your ears and eyes
- pressing on your abdomen

Usually, the doctor will also ask for you to have some blood tests checking for infections. They may also want to organise some other tests.

How long will it last?

The appointment will usually last 60-90 minutes. Please allow extra time for blood tests.

Can I bring anyone with me?

Usually you will come with your carer or social worker.

If you find it difficult to speak or understand English, we will arrange an interpreter.

During your examination you don't have to have your carer 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 to see a dentist
- getting vaccinations
- blood tests
- referring you to other medical services, such as eye tests, hearing tests, psychology/ counselling services.

Keeping things private (confidentiality)

The doctor will write a 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
- looked after children's nurses.

Will I need another meeting?

You will be offered a health review by a nurse from the looked after children's team in one year if you are still under 18 years of age.

What should I do to prepare?

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

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

Contact details:

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