

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Hampshire's Children in Care

We are pleased to share a series of upcoming developments aimed at strengthening support for the emotional wellbeing and mental health of Hampshire's Children in Care. These changes reflect a collaborative effort between Health, Education, Carers, CAMHS, and Children's Services, and are designed to promote early identification and preventative approaches. Together, we are working to create a more responsive and nurturing environment that enables Children in Care to THRIVE:

Relaunch of Life Story Work as Personal Story and Life journey:

We will be rebranding *Life Story Work* as ***Personal Story and Life journey***, positioning it as a more inclusive, forward-looking, and emotionally respondent approach to supporting children and young people. This new name reflects the fact a Child has a journey in Care and work won't be fully reliant on the therapeutic Life Story Work as we know it now.

The relaunch will highlight the introduction of **virtual memory boxes** as a modern, accessible tool for capturing and preserving personal histories:

New Name, Same Heart: *Personal Story and Life journey* continues the mission of *Life Story Work*—supporting identity, healing, and connection—but with a more empowering and future-focused name.

Virtual Memory Boxes: A new digital tool that allows young people to collect, store, and revisit meaningful memories, photos, videos, and messages.

Child-Centred & Accessible: Designed with flexibility and inclusivity in mind, *Life Journey* meets young people where they are—emotionally and digitally.

Support for Practitioners/Carers: New guidance and training, will be available to help practitioners and Carers integrate *Personal Story and Life journey* into their work.

You can find the new guidance here: [What is personal story and life journey work?](#)

We are excited that we have achieved the above with close multiagency working.

Work will follow on the therapeutic life story work referral pathway and the Virtual Memory Box....WATCH THIS SPACE!

Who should act: Social workers, foster carers, residential staff, team managers, senior leadership, Children and Young people, Partner agencies and educational settings.

Launch of new SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) Guidance for Children in Care (4-17 years):

Raising awareness of the updated SDQ among social workers, foster carers, residential carers, health professionals, and educators is key to ensure consistent understanding and application of the SDQ process across agencies.

The use of SDQ as a meaningful tool for assessing emotional wellbeing, not just a compliance exercise, but to encourage timely and accurate completion of SDQs to inform care planning and interventions.

What is the SDQ?

A validated screening tool used to assess Strengths & Difficulties questionnaire. emotional and behavioural wellbeing in children aged 4–17 in care.

Why it matters:

SDQs help identify mental health needs early, inform statutory health assessments, and can support with referrals to services like CAMHS.

What's new:

[Course: Needs Analysis: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire \(SDQ\)](#)

Updated process, timeframes, clearer scoring thresholds and emphasis on triangulation with teacher and carer versions.

Who should act:

Carers, social workers, health teams, and educators all play a role in completing and interpreting SDQs.

Health Assessments with Trauma-Informed Screening:

The Review Health Assessment (RHA) process has been updated, which now includes a **trauma-informed screening tool**. There are plans for this to be extended to Initial Health Assessments and there will also be associated **training programme** (*to just health professionals*) to ensure consistent understanding and implementation across teams
Enhanced Assessments: RHAs now include a trauma-informed screening tool to better identify and respond to the emotional and psychological needs of children in care.

Holistic Support: The new tool supports a more comprehensive understanding of each child's health and wellbeing, enabling more tailored care planning.

Shared Insight: Completed screening tools ([CIC Health Assessment trauma screen.pdf](#)) will be attached to health assessments and shared with social workers to inform care decisions and access to mental health services.

Training Available: A trauma informed training programme is being rolled out to ensure all relevant staff are confident in using the tool and interpreting its outcomes.

New Guidance to follow.

Who should act: Health professionals and Social workers

All of the above work leads into **My Life My Future and Pathway Plans for children and young people**, so that a clear, multi-agency informed plan is supporting the child.