**Pathway to Medical Advice for Adoption**

**(Nottinghamshire & Nottingham City)**

**Principles**

**No child’s case can be reviewed by ADM or heard at adoption panel without an up to date adoption medical report. This pathway aims to clarify liaison and partnership working to reduce delay for any child where the local authority is considering an adoption plan or where a plan already exists.**

**Provision of adoption medical advice is based on the Joint health and social care IHA/RHA statutory health assessment timeline 2021.**

**Ongoing communication within agencies and between all partner agencies is the most important factor in ensuring that a child’s adoption report is up to date and available to all that require it.**

• If this process is followed, there should always be an in date adoption medical report available for ADM, adopters and adoption panel. There should be no last minute rush to complete outstanding recommendations, which can cause unnecessary stress to the adopters and the child.

• It is appreciated that there will always be unforeseen circumstances when there will be a need for information to be updated at the last minute. However these cases should be discussed with the appropriate health team(s) as early as possible. All efforts will be made to ensure the report is available.

• If the RHA due date is close to the ADM or panel date, the appropriate nursing team should be contacted by the social worker as soon as the ADM/panel date is considered. Attempts will be made to ensure the RHA is completed and forwarded to the medical adviser in plenty of time for the adoption report to be updated prior to ADM/ panel date.

• If a child who has a plan for adoption is placed out of area (OOA), living fairly close and it is practical, the child may be brought back for their IHA. Children who require an IHA living further away and all children who need a RHA living OOA will be completed by the CIC team local to the child’s placement. There needs to be close liaison between social care and the health teams both in and out of area. Potential delays due to the health assessment being undertaken out of area need to be taken into account when considering timescales. Any health assessment report completed out of area will be subject to a QA (quality assurance) process, with the potential for further information and advice requested. IHAs completed out of area will need to be converted to an adoption medical report by the Medical Adviser.

• Complex situations e.g. boundary or responsibility discrepancies will need to be discussed case by case between social care and health providers.

• It is the responsibility of social care to inform the appropriate health teams (NUH/ SFHFT and nursing team) whenever any decision is made which leads to significant changes e.g. ADM date, Panel date, change of placement, change of plan (including leaving care through SGO or return to birth family) and when an adoption order has been granted.

• The relevant health teams can be contacted at any stage for further discussion if required.

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| **ADM** | Agency Decision Maker |
| **AEM** | Adoption East Midlands |
| **BID** | Best Interest Decision |
| **CIC/LAC** | Child in Care/Looked After Child \* |
| **IHA** | Initial Health Assessment |
| **MA** | Medical Adviser for Adoption |
| **Medical team** | NUH, SFHFT |
| **NUH** | Nottingham University Hospitals Trust |
| **Nursing team/NHCT** | Children in Care Nursing team, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust |
| **OOA** | Out of Area |
| **PO** | Placement Order |
| **RHA** | Review Health Assessment |
| **SBPFA** | Should Be Placed For Adoption |
| **SFHFT** | Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust |
| **SGO** | Special Guardianship Order |

*\*Throughout this report children in care is the term used but statutory guidance still uses the term Looked After Children.*

**National and local guidance underpinning this pathway includes:**

* IHA/RHA timeline (2021)
* Adoption East Midlands, memorandum of understanding v2 (2021)
* Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005/2012
* [Statutory Guidance on Adoption 2013](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270100/adoption_statutory_guidance_2013.pdf)
* [Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children (2015)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf)
* Promoting the health of children in public care. The essential guide for health and social work professionals and commissioners, Merredew & Sampeys, BAAF 2015

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**Contact details for health teams:**

**City and South Nottinghamshire Medical Advisers (NUH):**

[NUHNT.NottinghamCICandadoptionhealthteam@nhs.net](mailto:NUHNT.NottinghamCICandadoptionhealthteam@nhs.net)

**Mid Nottinghamshire Medical Advisers (SFHFT):**

sfh-tr.NorthNottsChildrenInCare@nhs.net

**Clinical Nurse Specialist for children in care (NHCT) - City:**

[nottinghamcic@nottshc.nhs.uk](mailto:nottinghamcic@nottshc.nhs.uk)

**Clinical Nurse Specialist for children in care (NHCT) – County:**

[nottscic@nottshc.nhs.uk](mailto:nottscic@nottshc.nhs.uk)

**Pathway to Medical Advice for Adoption**

Notification before IHA: IHA will be completed \* by MA and is the adoption report.

Adoption report from SFHFT or Court report from NUH can be used in court proceedings for placement order.

**Child enters care**

If a statutory IHA and/or RHA is undertaken by an OOA team the report is shared with originating team for review and QA.

An adoption report will be compiled by the MA.

LA follows IHA/RHA timeline pathway

As soon as Social Care decide that the plan includes adoption social worker notifies appropriate health teams by email.

ADM or adoption panel date to be emailed to appropriate health teams by social worker as soon as it is booked.

Any changes to ADM/panel dates to be communicated by social worker to health teams as soon as possible.

Social Care to inform appropriate health teams of any change in placement and/or social worker

**IHA completed**

Social worker to complete health recommendations. Health discussed at LAC review meetings. Instigate RHA with nursing team in statutory timescales

Adoption report / Court report will be compiled from completed IHA and RHAs and record review.\* Once placed with adopters RHA report should be sent to social care but the adoption medical report is no longer updated

**RHA completed at statutory intervals**

Social worker to complete health recommendations. Health discussed at LAC review meetings. Instigate next RHA with nursing team in statutory timescales.

New health information at any stage of pathway:

New information regarding child to be shared between social worker and health teams to determine action needed.

Adoption report will be updated.

MA and nursing teams to liaise and communicate as needed to ensure timely, up to date medical advice available.

The adoption report is information to be shared with and discussed with prospective adopters by social care.

Any outstanding questions can be directed to the MA by social worker. If concerns about complex health needs, the social worker can discuss with the MA to determine route for specialist advice.

Social Care to inform appropriate Medical and Nursing team ofoutcome

Plan no longer adoption

Follow IHA/RHA timeline pathway

Adoption Order granted

(leaves care)

Discharge from CIC health service

Post adoption - If any new health information becomes available (to either health or social care), this should be discussed between health teams and the AEM post adoption support team. AEM post adoption support team have responsibility to link with adopters and consideration should be given as to how the information is shared with carers and for medical records. Contact for post adoption support team: [AdoptionSupport@adoptioneastmidlands.nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:AdoptionSupport@adoptioneastmidlands.nottscc.gov.uk).

\* Timescales as agreed in IHA/RHA timeline pathway.

Timescale for RHA distribution is 20 working days from date of RHA. Once placed with adopters, RHA report is sent to Social Care only.

Timescale for adoption medical report is four weeks after request, if all information and up to date RHA report available (as per MOU).

Up to 1 day before ADM

+ 10 working days before adoption panel