

**Why should health, education, and social care use the NHS Number as the link identifier for children and young people?**

- The NHS Number is given to individuals at birth and used throughout their life.
- Using a link identifier enables services to share information more efficiently and accurately in the knowledge that they are talking about the same individual.
- The NHS Number is increasingly being used as the primary identifier in health, education and social care.
- The DH Information Strategy states that the NHS Number should be used as the primary identifier, at the point of care, by all publicly funded health and adult social care services by 2015. Why are children deemed different?

**To safeguard children and young people**

The Child Protection – Information Sharing project (CP-IS), which is currently being rolled out, enables unscheduled health care settings (including emergency departments, walk-in centres, minor injury units, GP out of hours services, ambulance services, maternity and paediatric wards) to be alerted when children attend who are subject to a child protection plan or are looked after, as well as pregnant women who have a pre-birth child protection plan for their unborn child. This sharing of information using the NHS Number as the link helps health professionals to know the whole picture thus improving their assessment of whether they might be dealing with abuse or neglect and enables them to alert social services if they think the child is at risk.

**To compile Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans**

Compiling an EHC Plan, following an assessment of a child or young person aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs, requires education, health and care services to share information. Use of the NHS Number as the link identifier enables information to be shared accurately, efficiently and effectively to formulate and share the plan between agencies.

**To support children and young people with medical conditions at school**

From 1 September 2014 school governing bodies have a legal obligation to support pupils in school with long term medical conditions such as asthma and diabetes. Parents of such children are often concerned that their child's health needs will not

be supported in school and their potential educational achievements affected. Using the NHS Number as a link identifier will enable health services and parents to share information and enable the correlation of school attendance and educational achievements with successful support of health needs.

This paper has been published by the **Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum**. The Forum was established by Department of Health Ministers in January 2012 as an independent expert advisory group of professionals and representatives from across the children's sector. The Forum provides expertise, constructive challenge and evidence based advice to improve children and young people's health outcomes and healthcare and to drive up standards of care.

A central recommendation from the Forum's first report was the use of the NHS Number to bring together health, education and social care information for individual children and young people. Whilst progress has been made towards this goal the Forum is publishing this paper to illustrate the benefits of using the NHS Number as the primary identifier to share information between health, education and social care and to encourage relevant organisations to adapt their data systems to include recording the NHS Number of individuals.

Further information on the Forum, its reports and its membership is available here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/children-and-young-peoples-health-outcomes-forum>