

CABINET – 12 JULY 2018

**Written question from Mr Cayden Francis of Whippingham to Cllr Paul Brading
Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

QUESTION

"Social workers can accuse parents of neglect if they don't take their children to the dentist for a check-up.

There are 225 children in care on the Island but only 51% have had a dental check up in the last year.

Could the Council be accused of neglect when 49% of children in their care haven't had a dental check-up?"

Response

"It is not correct to say that social workers accuse parents of neglect purely on the grounds of dental hygiene.

Neglect is defined as 'The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development'. (Working Together 2015)

The Isle of Wight Children's Safeguarding Board together with Hampshire Children's safeguarding Board have developed a, nationally well regarded, Neglect strategy and toolkit for practitioners, which can be found on the board's website.

In relation to 49% of children in care who have not had dental check-ups in the last 12 months I can advise the following,

- *Some children in care will have been looked after for less than 12 months, therefore they will not have seen a dentist yet.*
- *13% are children under the age of 2 years. Whilst these children will not have had a dental check up with a dentist, they are seen by health visitors who do undertake oral hygiene checks*
- *6% of children have refused to have a dental check-up.*
- *5% are awaiting a dentist/allocation within dental practices*
- *10% have no recorded dental check in the last 12 months-this is being investigated as it appears to be a recording issue.*

An action plan is in place to address the issues with regards to the accurate recording of dental check-ups and it is expected that this data will improve significantly by September 2018".