**SDQ**

At Virtual School Kent, we want to make sure you have lots of opportunities to have your say about your education, the way you feel and the support you receive from the professionals around you, and for what you say to make a difference. One way you can do this, is to complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or SDQ. What is a SDQ? The SDQ has been created by the government and each year, Kent County Council has to tell them how many SDQ forms have been completed by foster carers. It is completed every year for every young person in care from the age of 4 to 17. There are 25 questions on the form. The way these questions are answered helps provide a snapshot of you at that time; how you are feeling and behaving and how you would respond to certain situations. Why is a SDQ completed? A SDQ can help us understand how you are feeling and whether you need any extra support. It helps the adults supporting you identify any problems that may be affecting your learning at school, how you get on with your friends or how settled you are where you are living. It helps carers, schools and other professionals share their ideas about what is going really well for you and which areas you might find more challenging, scary or difficult. It gives the adults a much better idea of what help might be needed. Who fills the form in? Up until recently, only your foster carers completed the form,but this only gives us one view about you; and your foster carer may not know exactly what you are like in school. So, now we also ask a member of staff at your school who knows you well to complete the form too. But we want to hear what you think as well! So we will be asking you to fill out the form yourself.! This way we will have a much better idea of how you are -because we are able to listen to you, your foster carer and your school. The SDQ form is the same for everyone who completes it but you'll be asked the questions in a way that's easy for you to understand. Will someone help me fill in the form if I need them to? Yes! You can choose someone to be with you to help you complete the form, your social worker for example, or even an adult at school. It won't take much time to fill it in either.What happens to the information and who sees it? The SDQ results are then added to your file on the social services database. Other information about you is kept here too; only professionals in social services who support you can see what is written about you. Your LAC nurse will use the SDQ information at your health review, and the scores will be entered on your PEP record so that your social worker, foster carer and IRO can see them there too. How is the information used to help you? Once we have completed forms, we will know if we need to ask for extra help for you. This may be by arranging more support at school, asking another service to work with you or a discussion with your social worker or IRO. Can I see the SDQ once it's been completed? The SDQ is part of your record and when you turn 18 and are ready to do so, you will be able to read what has been written about you. We know that it's important that what you think about yourself, how you behave and how you feel is listened to by the adults around you and acted upon. Filling in your SDQ gives you another opportunity to share how you are feeling and make sure that your opinions are included when decisions are being made that affect you. So, make sure you have your say and complete your SDQ!