

Memorandum on the Organisation of the Survey in October, 1954

National Survey of the Health and Development of Children

INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH (University of London)

SOCIETY OF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH

POPULATION INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

at

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,

13, ENDSLEIGH STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

Nature of the Inquiry

For the last eight years this Joint Committee has been following the health, growth and development of 6,000 children born in one week of March, 1946, who are drawn from all social classes and from all parts of Great Britain. We hope to continue the inquiry throughout the primary school period and to arrange for a home visit by the school nurse or health visitor in October each year. At the present time we are in touch with 92 per cent. of the children enrolled in 1946—a far higher proportion than in any previous inquiry of this kind in this or any other country.

The main aims of the inquiry are as follows :—

- (a) to collect information on a national scale on accidents, illnesses, growth and development ;
- (b) to show in what ways the health and growth of young children are affected by the environment in which they live :
- (c) to trace the history of a large group of prematurely born children who have been individually matched with children born at term ;
- (d) to observe the achievement of children against the background of their ability, health and opportunities.

Children who have left the Area of your Authority

The schools attended by these children and their home addresses have been carefully checked, but it is likely that a few children will have moved. If they are still living within the area of your authority

could you enter their new addresses and, if necessary, their new schools in the space provided on the form and then complete it in the usual way. If they have moved to the area of another authority could you enter the new address and the name of the authority on the form and return it as soon as possible to the Joint Committee. These forms will have to be sent off by us to the authority to which the child has moved and we are therefore anxious that they should reach us before the middle of November. If it is impossible to trace any child please return the form to us with the rest of the completed forms.

Children who have moved into the Area of your Authority

If it is found, during the course of the inquiry, that any further survey children have moved into the area of your authority we will send you their forms.

How to fill in the Questionnaires

Six thousand children throughout the country are enrolled in this survey and it is therefore important that the many hundreds of school nurses and health visitors should record their findings in a comparable way. For this reason, and also to reduce the amount of clerical work, these forms have been framed as a series of questions, many of which can be answered by one of several printed alternatives. All that is required is to put a circle round the number opposite the printed alternative that most nearly describes the answer. If no alternative fits, the answer should be written in the space directly under the question. Similarly if any printed answer, though applicable, does not fully explain the findings we should be most grateful for any further information that is given. When a question does not apply it should be struck through. When a question cannot be answered this fact should be recorded in the space directly under the question.

In order to ensure that the information is obtained in the same way by the many people taking part in the survey, it is important that the wording and order of questions to the parents should be adhered to.

Survey Procedure

It is hoped that the forms will be completed by the end of November and that you can return the completed forms to the Joint Committee by 10th December, 1954. Please send the completed forms to the Joint Committee all together and not individually.