

SCHOOL NURSE FACTSHEET – Head Teachers and Governors

November 2012 *“Someone you know and can trust”*

The Department of Health, together with the Department for Education and key stakeholders have developed a new model and vision for the 21st Century for school nursing¹. This vision will positively impact on standards in all schools and improve health and wellbeing of school aged children and young people.

What does this mean for you?

We are about to put in place a new school nursing service offer that all children, young people and families can expect to access, as part of a range of local services to support families.

It will work best in a co-ordinated partnership with other health, social care and education professionals. At the heart of the service will be the individual child and their family. The school nurse will bring together this wide range of agencies with the intention of improving outcomes.

Collaboration between your school nurse, yourself and your staff will develop a high quality of provision that will improve physical and emotional health and well-being. Your school nurse is uniquely placed to service these outcomes but will do so in a spirit of co-operation so that children and young people understand what services are on offer to them, and how they might access provision. A co-ordinated service will have a positive impact²:

- Academic progress and attainment
- Attendance
- Behaviour of children and young people
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Troubled families

‘To provide support in times of need to help avoid crisis’

In addition, children with additional health needs and complex needs will be better supported within education settings. School nursing teams will work more collaboratively with schools to support children and young people. Early identification and intervention will enable focused and timely support to children and families who need it.

The stark facts

- 22.6% of all school absences were for over 25 days (2010)
- 9.6% of children aged 5-16 years had a clinically recognisable mental disorder (2005)
- 11% of boys and 8% of girls reported current asthma symptoms (2010)
- There are 139,000 young carers aged under 18 in England (2001)
- 16% of children aged 2-15 were classified as obese (2010)
- Around one third of children have at least one decayed, missing or filled tooth (30.9% at 5 years old and 33.4% at 12 years old)
- 173,416 new cases of chlamydia in the 15-24 age group (2010)
- 4% of boys and 5% of girls attending school described themselves as regular smokers (2011)
- 12% of 11-15 year olds reported having had alcoholic drink in the past week (2011)
- 7,400 under 18 pregnancies (first quarter of 2011)



¹http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_133352.pdf

² Ofsted <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>

We have reviewed what children and young people want within the school nursing service. They have told us they wanted a service that was **confidential, accessible and visible**. Children, young people and parents understand and value the unique contribution school nursing teams and school staff make to their health and wellbeing³ and the need for good public health interventions.

‘See a school nurse before it gets worse’

Recent consultation with children, young people and parents

According to recent consultation by The National Children’s bureau (NCB), indicators suggest the **need for school nurses to provide support and assistance to children at times of emotional and physical distress** – as well as acting as a source of information and advice to help them understand how they change physically as they grow up. A school nurse can, for example, provide clinical intervention to a depressed child struggling with a school or with bullying or identify a child’s speech or language problem that would benefit from early help.

However, despite this, when asked about their child’s knowledge of the school nursing service, over half of parents interviewed by Netmums in December 2011 reported they did not think their child would know who the school nurse was; furthermore, **a majority of parents suggested their child would not know how to contact a school nurse, nor know what advice or help they could provide.**

The British Youth Council (BYC) have recommended that “all young people should be able to, and know how to, give feedback on their experiences of the school nursing service. They should be able to report whether or not they feel school nurses are visible, accessible and ensure confidentiality. **School councils or other client participation initiatives should work with school staff, youth workers, and community groups to create a youth-led evaluation process.**”

The school nurse service: what it can offer children, young people and parents

School nurses⁴ and their teams lead and deliver the Healthy Child Programme⁵ and deliver public health programmes for all children and young people aged 5-19. This provision occurs both in and out of schools, taking over smoothly from health visitors who provide services covering pregnancy and the first five years of life. The Healthy Child Programme is the evidence based public health programme for children and young people. As such, school nurses can play a crucial role in ensuring that children, young people and families get good, joined up support and access to available services at the earliest point, from a child’s transition into school and continuing through their school-aged years.

Under the new school nurse model, school nurses and their teams offer four levels of service to children and young people between 5-19. School nurses and head teachers need to work together to ensure both the public health agenda and PHSE / pastoral programme are linked to improve health and wellbeing.

³ http://www.byc.org.uk/resource-download-log.aspx?doc=/media/75447/byc_school_nurse_report_web.pdf

⁴ School nurses are qualified nurses or midwives with specialist graduate level education in community health and the health needs of school aged children and young people leading to registration as a Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN) with the Nursing and Midwifery Council

⁵ http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_118525.pdf

Figure 1 below outlines the school nursing service offer for children and young people.

■ Your Community	All communities have a range of health services (including GP and community services) for children and young people and their families. School Nurses develop and provide these and make sure you know about them.
■ Universal services	School nurses and their team provide the Healthy Child Programme to ensure a healthy start for every child (e.g. immunisations, health checks). They support children and parents to ensure access to a range of community services
■ Universal plus	Gives children, young people and parents a swift response from your School Nurse Service when you need specific expert help (e.g. with sexual health, mental health concerns, long-term conditions and additional health needs).
■ Universal partnership plus	Provides ongoing support by your School Nurse team from a range of local services working together and with you, to deal with more complex issues over a period of time (e.g. complex health needs alongside charities and your local authority).

The service will be available in convenient local settings, including schools, youth centres and health centres, as well as through home visits.

‘A service where we need it and at times when we need it’

School nursing: how it improves the health of our communities

By implementing the Healthy Child Programme and through the delivery of effective public health, school nurses enable a number of health outcomes including:

- Improved outcomes and progress of young people and children;
- Increased promotion of healthy lifestyles and work with communities to build and use their strengths to improve health and well being and reduce inequalities;
- Increased access to evidence-based interventions and tailored support;
- Improved health lifestyles, appropriate diet and nutrition and lifestyle changes to tackle rising obesity and related illness in later life;
- Improved mental health and wellbeing enabling the development of positive relationships;
- Improved school readiness and a reduction in school absences;
- Reduced number of children and young people requiring formal safeguarding; arrangements – achieved through early identification, help and support.

Keeping Children and Young People Healthy and Happy

School Nurses have a vital role in providing public health to school aged children and supporting children with complex and additional needs in school settings.

School nursing and the service offer provided to school aged children has changed in line with the government’s public health intentions outlined in Healthy Lives, Healthy People⁶

You may expect school nurses to cover the following:

- promote good emotional health and wellbeing;
- build capacity e.g. supporting healthy schools;
- support early intervention in mental ill health, and identify and help children and young people, and their families, who need support with their emotional or mental health;
- improve readiness for school;
- reduce school absences;
- increase population vaccination cover;
- monitor tooth decay in children aged 5;
- monitor excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11 year olds;
- reduce hospital admissions due to unintentional or deliberate injuries;
- promote emotional wellbeing of Looked after children;
- reduce under 18 conception rates;
- support diagnosis of chlamydia in 15-24 year olds;
- reduce smoking prevalence in 15 year olds;
- reduce alcohol and drug mis-use*.

Recognising the importance of this consultation and the crucial role of school nurses in supporting children and young people, the Government's new vision for the school nursing service includes:

- a commitment to create a strengthened, rejuvenated workforce;
- quality improvements in the school nursing service; and
- improved health outcomes for children, young people and families;
- Improved partnership working between school nurses and schools.

Checklist for Head Teachers

- ✓ Do you want to improve outcomes for all children and young people?
- ✓ Are you and other staff sufficiently briefed to understand the role of the school nursing services?
- ✓ Do you have good links with the health and wellbeing lead through the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Director of Public Health?
- ✓ Do you know who the local commissioner is?
- ✓ Are there systems in place to review and provide feedback to the school nursing services and public health delivery in schools?
- ✓ Do you have young health ambassadors in your school?
- ✓ Have you agreed how you can provide to get the views of children and young people about local school nursing services and if it meets local health and wellbeing needs?
- ✓ Are the school health services young people friendly⁴?
- ✓ Are there adequate mechanisms in place to get the views of children and young people about general health and wellbeing?

⁶ http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_127424.pdf

ⁱ In November 2011, the NCB successfully recruited eight schools to participate in a survey of children from ages 6 to 11 to seek the views of young children about School Nurse services. The schools were located across the country from London to the Midlands and the Northwest. In total, 293 pupils participated in answering questions on a written survey (45% male and 55% female). The British Youth Council (BYC), provided access to consultation with almost 2000 secondary school-aged young people during the summer of 2011 via an online survey, which gained responses from 1599 young people aged between 11 and 18 from across England (July 2011). The British Youth Council also arranged focus groups at BYC Convention events with 202 young people. In December 2011, Netmums used similar questions to those included the surveys conducted by BYC and NCB to elicit the views of parents about School Nurse services. In total, 564 parents participated in the on-line survey. The majority of respondents (86%) were parents of children in primary school, with remaining 11% being parents of children in secondary schools.