

Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel

Briefing Note

The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel asked for a briefing on children's public health nursing and the school nursing service because it was added to the panel's terms of reference in July 2023. This briefing contains the latest position as at Quarter 3 2023.

Subject: Children's Public Health Nursing – School Nursing Service

The School Nursing service is Public Health grant funded and locally commissioned.

School Nurses are Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) and are highly trained to meet the needs of the service working alongside a skill mix of Public Health Nurses and Health Care assistants. The service currently operates from the Molson Centre.

The School Nursing Service is the dedicated public health nursing service for school aged children. School nurses lead the 4.5 -19 (25 SEND) element of the Healthy Child Programme, offering continued support through the school age years to help every child to thrive and to gain maximum benefit from their education. This includes identifying and helping children, young people and families with problems that might affect their chances later in life, including building resilience to cope with the pressures of life. The school-aged years high impact areas build on the early identification of children in need of support and focus on key priority areas. Taken together, these 6 High Impact Areas describe areas where school nurses can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, improving outcomes for children, young people, families and communities. Nevertheless, the wide range of issues covered by school nursing services are difficult to quantify due to the diverse needs of individuals, families and communities, and these High Impact Areas do not describe the entirety of the role:

- supporting resilience and wellbeing
- improving health behaviours and reducing risk taking
- supporting healthy lifestyles
- supporting vulnerable young people and improving health inequalities
- supporting complex and additional health and wellbeing needs
- promoting self-care and improving health literacy

The Healthy Child Programme 5-19 (DH 2009) sets out the good practice framework for prevention and early intervention services for children and young people aged 5–19 and recommends how health, education and other partners should work together in a range of settings to significantly enhance a child or young person's life chances. It contains the recommended framework of universal and progressive services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing.

The service works with children and young people both in and out of school settings, including through digital and other virtual support, delivering a universal and targeted offer to children and young people of school age (4.5 -19 years, 25 SEND) and their families, across the borough of North East Lincolnshire.



The service is well placed to work with some of those who are most at risk of various adverse outcomes. Targeting the service to those most at risk of poor outcomes can help to address the inequalities that emerge in this part of the lifecourse. The services accepts referrals in from various sources such as GP's, schools, self referral for support around a variety of different issues – school attendance/smoking cessation/Healthy Weight/Continence, complex and chronic conditions as examples.

School Nurses take the lead in developing effective partnerships and acting as advocate to deliver change to support improvements in health and wellbeing of school aged children, ensuring synergy between services such as Children's Services and Education providers to support school readiness and transition.

Current staffing:

To support the current local and national challenges around recruitment, the SN service has developed a successful 'Grow our Own' model of recruitment to ensure the future sustainability of the service. This involves recruiting qualified nurses to gain experience in School Nursing. These staff are then encouraged and supported to undertake the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing degree and if successful are offered a post within the service.

Service	Headcount	Occupied FTE	Vacancy FTE
School Nursing Service	23	16.29	0.6 FTE allocated to 23/24 SCPHN Student 0.8 FTE SN Manager

Performance.

School Health Profiles

In line with the coordinated delivery of the Healthy Child Programme the service works with school leaders and school improvement services to identify population health needs. Each new academic year, some primary schools receive support from the School Nurse to complete a school health profile. The aim of this is to understand the needs of the school population and how the service can support.

Common themes being raised by schools:

- Poor oral health
- Sleep routine due to increased screen/tablet time
- Toilet training and self-care in Reception
- Puberty support in PSHE lessons
- Constipation and healthy diets
- Attendance (due to parental lifestyle)

Work continues, in line with the 2022-2023 Service Plan, to support schools in line with the school profiles

- Regular health updates in school newsletters
- Attendance at school assemblies, open evenings and transition days
- Parent drop-ins (combined with other services such as DWP, NSPCC)
- Pupil drop-ins following PSHE lessons
- Termly meetings with School Leads to discuss families of concern to offer early intervention
- Packages of care are in place to support
- Early intervention and support around Mental Health



Safeguarding Meetings

School Nurses will attend all initial case conference or child in need meetings. They will assess any health needs and identify if there is a role for the School Nursing Service or signpost to alternative health providers if appropriate. The table below indicates the high number of meetings attended by the service which creates additional pressure on the service.

2023/24	Q1	Q2
Initial case conference	47	19
Review case conference	40	60
Child in need	35	30
Strategy	92	72

Electively Home Educated.

School Nurses support those children who are Electively Home Educated – this number has been increased post Covid and continues to rise. These children currently receive the Universal HCP offer.

Chat Health

The way children communicate now embraces modern technology with mobile phones and apps. Communicating health messages and responding to young people's health needs is becoming increasingly challenging and therefore to meet this need the service offers 'Chat Health' texting service to young people. The implementation of Chat Health has been very successful and School nurses have stated that due to this method of contact they are having interventions with pupils who may not have accessed health professionals otherwise, they are able to offer confidential advice and are encouraging individuals to access self-help.

Up to Q3 2023 a total of 718 messages had been received into ChatHealth with the main themes being Physical and Emotional health, Sexual Health, request for face to face contact with a SN.

Sexual Health

The School Nursing Service offer weekly drop-in clinics in 7 out of the 11 secondary schools across NE Lincs. The clinics are promoted via school assemblies, school news bulletins, during PSHE lessons and word of mouth amongst students. The clinics are held in private rooms so pupils can talk freely with a nurse without fear of being overheard. Pupils can access the clinic for a variety of reasons including sexual health, emotional health or general physical health. When a young person is seeking information and advice regarding sexual health issues the nurse will first assess their ability to understand the nature of the conversation by using Fraser guidelines. Once they are satisfied that the young person is 'Gillick competent' then the nurse will provide the student with advice and support.

	2022-2023	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
No of safer sex assessments completed	113	11	9
No of young people identified as being at risk of CSE	9	0	0
Pregnancy tests undertaken	21	6	4



Emergency contraception given	4	3	0
STI screens undertaken	42	9	1
C-cards given out	309	36	2
Pupils accessing condoms	589	157	76
Pupils receiving puberty advice	24	1	0
Pupils receiving sexual health advice	482	99	45

National Childhood Measurement Programme

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) measures the height and weight of children in reception class (aged 4 to 5) and year 6 (aged 10 to 11), to assess overweight and obesity levels in children within primary schools.

There are plans to develop and NCMP follow up programme alongside the wellbeing service.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
% of children measured in Reception	99%	93%	10%	97%	96%
% of children measured in Year 6	99%	93%	10%	96%	93%

Vision Screening

The NHS recommends vision screening at age 4 to 5 years. The aim is to detect any problems early so that effective treatment can be commenced

	2017-18	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23
% of children screened for vision	95%	97%	88%	85%
Number of children referred to orthoptist	60	140	107	145

A School Nurse Service Specification is currently in development in line with National specification but will be specific to local need.

Contact Officer:

Janet Burrows. Head of Children's Public Health Nursing. janet.burrows@nelincs.gov.uk 01472 323660

Kerry Barton Specialist Lead for School Nursing. kerry.barton@nelincs.gov.uk 01472 323660

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or by post NELC Scrutiny Team,

Municipal Offices,

Town Hall Square,

GRIMSBY

DN31 1HU.

