SCHOOL NURSE CONSULTATION REPORT

Overview and Methodology

Following the publication of the national document ‘Getting it Right for Children, Young People and Families – Maximising the Contribution of the School Nursing Team: Vision and a Call to Action’ a local review of school nursing services in the context of healthy child services took place across Stockton-On-Tees during September to November 2013. The purpose of the consultation was to gain further knowledge about:

- How services involved in the delivery of the 5-19yrs Healthy Child Programme currently work with the school nurse service; and how they would like to see those working processes improved
- How children, young people and parents / carers currently interact with the school nurse service and how they would like to see it improved
- What stakeholders, children and young people, parents / carers feel are the priority areas that need addressing to ensure that children and young people stay healthy across Stockton-On-Tees

A mixed methods approach was employed throughout the consultation including:

- Consultation as part of service mapping with the service provider to analyse current school nurse pathways
- A variety of surveys for different service users, including young people, parents / carers and providers of children and young people’s services across the Borough
- A dedicated email address where people could email their thoughts on the review directly to the Public Health team: healthychild@stockton.gov.uk
- A primary school council activity pack encouraging children to tell us what matters to them about a school nurse, including hands up surveys that members of the council could take back to the classroom
- Focus groups with groups of young people (e.g. Young Carers, Looked After Children), school staff, parents / carers and providers of children and young people’s services to allow people to talk to us in more detail

(Please see Appendix A for a list of groups involved in service mapping and consultation)

National Context

In 2012 the new national service vision and model for school nursing ‘Getting it Right for Children, Young People and Families – Maximising the Contribution of the School Nursing Team – A Call to Action’ was published. This model is based on the Healthy Child Programme (5-19yrs), Public Health Outcomes Indicators and You’re Welcome standards.
The vision and model for school nursing in ‘Getting it Right for Children, Young People and Families’\(^1\) describes school nursing as a universal service which intensifies its delivery offer for children and young people who have more complex needs; with an instrumental role in coordinating services for young people with multiple needs.

The Healthy Child programme for 5-19yr olds\(^2\) identifies school nurse services as having a pivotal role in effective delivery of its evidence-based national programme schedule. The Healthy Child Programme is a Department of Health initiative which focuses on early help to keep children and young people safe and healthy. The programme also provides access to a wider range of specialist support when a child or young person has additional health needs.

In April 2013 the commissioning responsibilities for School Nursing transferred to the Public Health division of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. In Stockton-on-Tees Borough the school nursing service is provided by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (Community Services Division) for all school-aged children and young people across the Borough.

In January 2014 a standard national specification will be published by the Department of Health with the aim of ensuring school nursing providers offer a service delivery model based on a holistic service offer that is in line with ‘Getting It Right For Children, Young People and Families; The School Nursing Development Programme’ (DH March 2011). The national service specification aims to support the commissioning of an effective and high quality preventative service through implementation of the Healthy Child Programme (5-19yrs) and ensuring that children, young people and their families are supported, and where additional support is identified, receive an early response including appropriate referral to specialist services and signposting to other agencies.

**Current Service Arrangement**

The school nurse service is a universal service - any child from the age of 5-16 (with support offered up to 19 within special schools) is entitled to school nurse support if needed. The team currently operates a skill mixed model ranging from NHS Band 7 clinical lead and clinical practice teacher to B3 Health Care Assistants. Functions of the school nurse service include:

- Delivering the National Child Measurement Programme in Stockton-on-Tees
- Delivering national screening for hearing and vision for children upon school entry
- Health assessments for young people (including annual health assessments for every looked after child in the Borough)
- Support to families and children / young people on child protection plans
- Delivery of a range of health advice and support to children, young people and parents / carers which may include healthy eating, risk taking behaviour, sexual health advice and signposting to specialist agencies
- Provision of healthcare assistant support in special schools to meet the health care needs of children with complex needs within education settings

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\(^{1}\) Getting it right for children, young people and families - *Maximising the contribution of the school nursing team: Vision and Call to Action; March 2012*

• Delivery of immunisation programmes
• Enuresis clinics
• Delivery of puberty talks and advice to primary aged pupils through PSHE Lucinda and Godfrey programmes

Consultation headlines:
• Young people and parents are unclear about how to access the school nurse service and, along with other stakeholders, are unsure what the ‘core offer’ of the service is.
• Across all groups (young people, parents / carers and stakeholders) when they had accessed or worked with the service their experience had been a positive one.
• Young people want flexibility in the ways they can access a school nurse, drop-ins are important to young people but sometimes they want to be able to get health advice from the service without necessarily seeing a nurse face to face (e.g. through email). This reflects themes that have emerged from national consultation around the role of a school nurse.
• It is important to young people that they can talk about confidential problems to their school nurse; and that they know what they talk about will remain confidential (with the exception of when the young person is at risk), again this is also reflected in national consultation that has taken place around the role of a school nurse.
• Young people want their school nurse to be approachable, supportive and non-judgemental; children want their school nurse to be caring and helpful.
• School nurses are one of the main groups that young people want to speak to about their health (to receive advice and support).
• Young people want more advice and support around mental health, smoking, drugs and alcohol and healthy eating. Key concerns for parents / carers include dental health, healthy eating and helping their child to stay healthy (e.g. through getting enough exercise).

Primary School Consultation:
A total of 399 responses from 5 primary schools were returned during the consultation period. School councils were given an interactive poster of a school nurse to complete and also copies of the ‘hands up’ surveys to take back to the classroom.

Advice
Pupils were asked what advice they would like their school nurse to give them; the majority said healthy eating (210 responses), exercise (198 responses) and dental health (260 responses). School council groups also wanted advice about healthy eating, hand washing, relationships, bullying and puberty.

Types of Help and Intervention
The majority of pupils would like school nurses to help them with health issues, e.g. asthma (113 responses); screening their height, weight, hearing and vision (171 responses); and to offer them health education (152 responses). School council groups identified help with health issues as the area they would most like school nurses to help them with.
Access to Services
Pupils would like school nurses to be visible within school and providing advice in the classroom (155 responses), through assemblies (67 responses) and face-to-face at appointments (77 responses). These methods were also the top three methods requested by school council groups.

Pupils would like a choice of ways to contact school nurses for advice. Drop-ins (103 responses), email (72 responses) and a school nurse being available to give advice over the telephone (88 responses) were the top three ways requested by the majority of pupils and school council groups.

Pupils would also like to have a choice about where they could see their school nurse, the majority said either in school (the classroom – 155 responses, a room in school for a drop in – 221 responses) or at a doctors surgery (106 responses). School council groups identified the classroom and a room in school as where they would most like to be able to see their school nurse.

Staying Healthy
School council groups were also asked to identify the three most important things children and young people needed help with to stay healthy. All school council groups felt that young people needed general health education, with specific information about the dangers of alcohol use also being highlighted by the majority of groups. Advice about the dangers of smoking, puberty, healthy eating and support with health conditions were also highlighted.

Young People 11-19 years
93 responses from young people across all year groups and secondary / colleges in Stockton-on-Tees were completed during the consultation.

Current Service
Young people were asked if they knew how to contact their school nurse, from all responses to the question 65.5% of young people did not currently know. The majority of young people who had contacted a school nurse had done so through a teacher at school (24%). Young people would like a choice of ways to be able to contact a school nurse in the future, with all young people expressing a preference to be able to contact school nurses directly by telephone (100%) or by email (95%).

Young people were given a list of possible school nurse services and asked to select those they thought were the role of a school nurse. Many young people were not sure about the full range of services offered by a school nurse with the majority thinking school nurses offered health education (64%), support with specific health issues (60%), advice and information around smoking (59%) and sexual health (62%).

Half of young people had not received advice, information and support from the service in the last year, for those who had the majority rated the support as helpful or very helpful. For those young people that had been supported by the service over the last year the majority had received advice about contraception (94%), exercise / physical activity (94%) dental health (88%) and puberty (92%).
Future Methods of Receiving Advice and Support from The School Nursing Team

It is important for young people to be able to access the school nurse service independently, with the majority of young people preferring to be given advice and support from the service at drop-ins (47%) or at a planned appointment between just themselves and the school nurse (36%). Young people would also like to see their school nurse in school with 46% preferring to be given health advice through assemblies.

Interestingly although young people wanted to be able to get in touch with their school nurse through email or telephone, they would not like school nurses to contact them using these methods – phone (55%) and by text (52%).

The majority of young people were either willing (36%) or not sure about attending drop-ins (42%) with a preference for drop-ins at a room in school (45% would like this) or health centre (52% would be ok with this). During lunchtime (25%) or after school (26%) were the best times for young people to attend a drop-in.

Young people were asked what was important to them about a school nurse service. It was most important for young people to know what they talked about with a school nurse would be kept confidential (82%), and the attributes of a school nurse were more important than where young people could see them with 75% feeling it was very important that a school nurse was friendly and approachable.

Responses were mixed when young people were asked how they would like the school nurse service to let them know about the services they offered with letters (40%), school assemblies (45%), drops-ins (52%), leaflets (46%), posters and information on websites (38%) all being options that young people would either be ok with or would like. The majority of young people would not like school nurses to use Twitter (60% would not like this at all).

Health Issues for Young People in Stockton-on-Tees

Young people were asked who they would speak to for help and advice if they had a health problem. School nurses (45%), parents / carers (61%) and friends (49%) were the most common groups. The majority of young people would not like to talk to their teacher about health issues (58%).

Young people were asked about the 5 most important health issues where local young people needed more advice and support. Alcohol and drugs misuse was chosen by the majority of young people (80%), followed by sexual health (48.9), smoking (58%), contraception (42%) and mental / emotional health (38.6%).

Parents and Carers

63 responses from parents and carers of children and young people at Stockton-on-Tees Borough primary and secondary schools were returned during the consultation period.

Current Service

Parents / carers were asked if they were aware of the school nurse service. 48.2% of parents were unaware of the service, compared to 45% that knew about it. However the majority of parents / carers (71%) that were asked did not know how to contact the service. Parents /
carers would like a choice of how to contact the School Nurse Service in the future with email, letter and telephone call to the service being the most popular methods.

Parents / carers were given a list of possible school nurse services and asked to select those they thought were the role of a school nurse. The majority of responses indicated that parents are not sure what the service provides. Screening to check height, weight, vision and hearing was the only service that parents / carers knew the School Nurse Service provided (58%).

Parents / carers were asked whether their child had received any help or support from the service in the last year, and how helpful they felt this was. The majority of parents were not aware if their child had received any information or advice from the service.

The majority of parents that were aware of their child receiving advice and support from the service rated this as very or quite helpful. Services included screening for height, weight, hearing and vision (32%), healthy eating advice (7%) health assessments (5%), support with specific health conditions (4%) and immunisations (7%).

**Future Methods of Receiving Advice and Support from The School Nursing Team**

Parents / carers were asked how they would prefer to find out about the School Nurse Service. The majority would prefer information by letter (66%), email (64%) or leaflets (62%). Parents and carers would like to see a school nurse at their child’s school (50%) for when they wanted advice and support about their child’s health.

**Health Issues for Children and Young People in Stockton-on-Tees**

Parents / carers were asked what their health concerns were for their children; key health concerns included healthy eating (51%), dental health (47%), advice on health issues such as head lice and asthma (35%) and getting enough exercise / physical activity (40%).

**Stakeholders**

30 responses to the stakeholder survey were returned during the consultation period.

**Current Service**

Stakeholders were given a list of possible school nurse services and asked which service areas they were aware of. The majority of responses indicate that stakeholders are aware of the health protection and targeted elements of the service (immunisations – 100%, screening to check height, weight, hearing and vision – 82%, support with specific health issues 87% and child protection 97%).

The majority of stakeholders know how to make contact with the school nurse service, with the majority using a letter to contact the service (75%). Stakeholders would prefer a range of methods to contact the service in the future including email (84%), referral forms (55%) and telephone (59%).

The majority of stakeholders had contacted the service for advice or guidance (62%) or worked with the service (68%) over the past year, with 43% making a direct referral into the service.
For those stakeholders that had worked with the service over the past year, the majority had a positive experience, especially as part of a CAF (35% satisfied), as part of LAC health assessments (30% satisfied), or through safeguarding / child protection (40% satisfied). When referrals were made into teams from The School Nurse Service, or working as part of a primary setting, small numbers of stakeholders were not satisfied with the service (10%).

Future Methods of Receiving Advice and Support from The School Nursing Team
Stakeholders were asked how they would prefer to find out about the services the School Nurse Service offers in the future; responses indicate that the majority of stakeholders would prefer email (90%), information on websites (54%) or leaflets (58%).

Health Issues for Children and Young People in Stockton-on-Tees
Stakeholders were asked which top 5 health priorities the wider Healthy Child services should provide information, advice and support about. Safeguarding (71%), mental and emotional health (35%), contraception (36%), alcohol and drugs misuse (39%), and screening to monitor young people’s weight, height, vision and hearing (42%) were identified as the most important.

Stakeholders were asked what they felt the barriers were to effective delivery of Healthy Child services. Accessibility of staff (32%), information sharing (25%) and staff workload (52%) were identified as the barriers that stakeholders felt had the most impact on effective delivery of services.

Young People with Complex Needs
A focus group using a PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) ‘Thumbs up’ survey was carried out with 8 young people at Hartburn Lodge to allow young people with complex needs to share their opinions about the school nurse role.

Advice
Young people were asked what health advice they would like a school nurse to give to them – advice about puberty, being a healthy weight, dental health and healthy eating were the top responses from the group. Hartburn Lodge staff at the focus group commented that health education from school nurses would need to be adapted for areas such as healthy weight, as some young people with complex needs would be on restricted diets and may not be able to make choices about food that other young people would be able to.

Access to Services
The young people were asked how they would like a school nurse to give them advice and how they think they should be able to contact a school nurse. Visual pictures were one of the most preferred options (e.g. using PECS symbols) and the majority of young people wanted to be able to see their nurse in school (either in the classroom, or a room in school for an appointment). Young people would also like to be able to contact their school nurse through the telephone or at a drop-in.

Focus Groups
A range of focus groups were carried out with groups of young people where they were asked to complete an interactive activity (‘Diamond 9’) to rank in order of importance what they felt Healthy Child services should do to help young people stay healthy. Focus groups
were also carried out with school SENCOs (60) the School Nurse Service (10) and Parents of Children with Complex Needs (15).

Common themes emerged from the focus groups which are summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children and Young People Focus Groups</th>
<th>Stakeholder Focus Groups</th>
<th>Parent / carer focus groups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young people need more advice and support about mental health (girls especially requested this).</td>
<td>There is good involvement of the school nurse service with targeted groups (e.g. LAC / Child Protection Cases).</td>
<td>Where families have been involved with the school nurse service their experience has been positive.</td>
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<td>It is important that services are confidential and that young people can access them without going through a teacher / parent / carer.</td>
<td>School nurses need to be more visible in schools, schools are uncertain of what support is available from the service.</td>
<td>Parents / carers are uncertain about the full range of services offered by school nurses and how to contact them.</td>
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<td>Young people want a choice of when to access services.</td>
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<td>Letters through NCMP that are sent to parents / carers do not always meet the specific requirements that a child with complex health needs has.</td>
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<td>It is important to build a relationship with a health professional before being able to discuss confidential problems with them.</td>
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<td>There is no clear information that describes the difference between community paediatric child nurse services and school nurse services.</td>
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<td>School nurses should lead on informing young people about the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol.</td>
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<td>Services are required that address behavioural, emotional and social needs, not just physical needs.</td>
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<td>There needs to be better information available about health services online, young people don’t always want to talk to people to get advice.</td>
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Some members of the children and young people’s focus groups struggled to put all of the 9 statements in priority order as they identified a split between statements that were about the behaviour of staff delivering services and statements that were about what services should deliver. Some groups chose to section the statements and discuss the two areas separately. These groups also specifically focused on the role of a school nurse and the majority of groups felt it was most important for a school nurse to deliver advice about the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol and that what children and young people discuss with a school nurse should remain confidential.
Comments from children and young people asked ‘What should a school nurse do?’

- ‘Talk about your problems’
- ‘Keep an eye on you, know if someone’s behaviour has gone proper downhill and do something about it. Talk to them’
- ‘Make sure you are calm’
- ‘Gives you advice about smoking, bullying and alcohol’
- ‘None of us have a school nurse coming into school’
- ‘Give advice to parents’
- ‘Keeps things confidential’
- ‘We don’t have one, we want one though’
- ‘Come into school on a certain day’
- ‘Talk about puberty, growing up and the changes your body goes through’
- ‘Helps you not to smoke’

Members of the School Nursing team attended a focus group session to discuss what gaps and opportunities existed for full delivery of the Call to Action National Service Model.

Common themes from the focus group are summarised below:

<table>
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<th>School Nurse Focus Group</th>
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<td><strong>What is working well</strong></td>
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<td>Health needs assessments of targeted groups.</td>
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<td>Skill level of school nurses – Public Health degree emphasises the wider impact of poor health.</td>
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<td>School nurses skilled at multi-agency working which supports processes such as CAF.</td>
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<td>Referral system and on call systems into service.</td>
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</table>
Flexibility of Immunisation programme (e.g. response to MMR campaign).

Measurement Programme) follow up and joint working with weight management services.

Training required for Public Health element of role.

**Recommendations**

Based on the needs data, service mapping and consultation described, the recommendations for future service development and commissioning are:

**Access**

- The role and remit of school nurses needs to be widely marketed to parents, stakeholders and children and young people. This could include a contact list of school nurses with nurses linked to clusters of schools, linking with the SBC website to promote the service’s core offer and use of media such as posters.

- Health services and young people’s services across the Borough (e.g. GPs) should have up-to-date information about the school nurse service that they can share with families.

- Opportunities for young people to independently contact the service for advice and guidance should be available via methods such as text message or email, and through promotion of the on-call element of the service to young people.

- Currently opportunities for young people to access and contact the service are limited; drop in clinics for young people should be developed in settings such as schools, in locations that most importantly offer privacy and confidentiality for young people. In addition to drop-ins young people and parents require flexibility as to how they can talk to a school nurse.

**Advice and Support**

- The Public Health role of the school nurse service is currently unclear; in partnership with commissioners the provider needs to define its ‘core offer’ and review the capacity of the service to ensure young people have access to health promotion and Public Health advice, information and guidance.

- The service should have a role in building capacity within school PSHE provision through offering advice and guidance to schools on health promotion messages, aligning their offer with that of the Local Authority Risk Taking Behaviour Toolkit and offering direct work with young people based on need.

- Local follow-up of the National Child Measurement Programme requires closer working between the school nurse service and weight management services; with support offered to parents / carers and children and young people to improve uptake of weight management services when they are signposted to them.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

- In liaison with other relevant commissioners and providers, to clarify roles and responsibilities of schools, specialist community nurses and School Nurse Service for
the support of children with complex health needs. To ensure the Public Health offer of the service is accessible for young people with complex or additional needs.

- In liaison with Local Children’s Safeguarding Board commissioner and provider of service to review national safeguarding pathway for School Nurse Service to ensure processes are responsive to local need.

- The School Nursing Service should maintain close working practices and alignment (through joint working and robust pathways) with 0-5 services such as Health Visiting to ensure a continued smooth transition for families and for children starting school.

- Further clarity for young people and stakeholders about health service support and Healthy Child programme pathways for 16-19 year olds is required. The new service model describes school nursing services as a key driver of Public Health as well as providers of services. The service is well placed to offer signposting to services to young people during transition from secondary school.

- Service evaluation is needed to develop processes to engage children, young people and parents in shaping the local service – for example drops-ins should comply with the recommendations of the DH ‘You’re Welcome’ quality criteria guidance.

**Next Steps:**

The Public Health Team will be working in partnership with the School Nurse Service to start to implement the recommendations outlined in the consultation report from 2014 and will use the results of the consultation to shape and develop a School Nurse Service Specification which will come into effect in April 2015.

**For further information please contact:**

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### Groups Involved In Service Mapping and Consultation

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<td>School Nurse Service</td>
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<td>LAC / YOS / Complex needs nurses</td>
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<td>Primary Schools (HT, PSAs, SENCOs)</td>
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<td>Special Schools</td>
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<td>Secondary Schools</td>
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<td>Further Education Colleges</td>
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<td>SEN Caseworkers</td>
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<td>Social Care Managers</td>
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<td>Stop Smoking Services</td>
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<td>More Life Weight Management Services</td>
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<td>Education Improvement Service Advisors</td>
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<td>Youth Assembly</td>
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<td>Loud and Clear Sounding Board members</td>
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<td>Stockton United for Change</td>
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<td>Young Carers</td>
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<td>Young People with Complex Needs</td>
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<td>Looked After Children</td>
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<td>Corner House Youth Project</td>
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<td>Health Watch</td>
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<td>Youth Direction</td>
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