

Publication withdrawn

This guidance was withdrawn in August 2025. It has been superseded by the [Healthy child programme: health visitor and school nurse commissioning](#).



Lead Member for Children's Services briefing on School Health Service

This briefing is aimed at Lead Members for Children's Services (LMCS). It provides an overview of the School Health Service and shares top tips to help LMCS think about how they can use the School Health services to deliver better health outcomes for 5-19 year olds.

A new role for local authorities

From April 2013, local authorities are statutorily responsible for delivering and commissioning public health services for children and young people aged 5-19. This will include providing prevention and early intervention services, delivering the Healthy Child Programme and addressing key public health issues such as sexual health, emotional health and wellbeing issues, obesity, drug, alcohol and tobacco misuse.

What is the Healthy Child Programme 5-19?

- A national public health programme for children and young people from 5-19
- Provides a robust evidence based framework and sets out good practice for prevention and early intervention services
- Identifies the school nursing service as crucial to the effective delivery of the Healthy Child Programme
- Assists local areas to ensure services:
 - o are based on a robust needs assessment
 - o utilise effective practice and prioritise evidence based programmes
 - o make best use of their workforce

What are the key public health issues for children?

- Bullying
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Dental decay
- Obesity and weight management
- Teenage pregnancy
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Smoking
- Drug and alcohol misuse

Who are school nurses?

- Qualified nurses with specialist training in the public health needs of school aged children including sign posting and referring to other services where appropriate
- Lead and deliver the Healthy Child Programme (5-19)
- Equipped to work at community, family and individual levels
- Skilled in identifying issues and risks early, providing early intervention
- Work in a range of settings including mainstream education, faith schools, specialist services for looked after children, special schools and alternative education provision
- Support children with illness and disability to enable them to access education and recreation

Elected members play a key role in ensuring the health and social care needs of local school aged children and young people are met through services that are commissioned appropriately. School health services play a vital role in supporting children and young people. School nurses lead and deliver the Healthy Child Programme and work in partnership with other agencies to deliver school health locally. The school nursing offer provides Elected Members with a benchmark to assess and review the local services being provided by school nurses and to decide if they meet local children's and young people's health needs including those who are looked after.

How can the School Nursing Service help?

School nurses are responsible for delivering cost effective public health programmes or interventions to improve health outcomes for school aged children and young people (5-19yrs). This includes reducing childhood obesity, under 18 conception rates, prevalence of chlamydia and management of mental health disorders.

Health Visitors are responsible for input to children 0-5yrs and their family. Health visiting and school nursing services work together to ensure children, young people and families are supported. The school nursing service offers a structured approach to delivering the Healthy Child Programme (5-19), providing public health advice and ensuring the emphasis is on providing early help to children and young people from school nurses.

The school nursing team local service offer:

The 4 tiered service offer helps LMCS to understand what each level of support is.

- **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 children and young people know about them.
- **Universal services**
School nurses and their teams provide the Healthy Child Programme and public health services to ensure a healthy start for every child (e.g. immunisations, advice on healthy eating and weight management, 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 Health Service when they need additional or specific expert help (e.g. with sexual health, mental health concerns, long-term conditions and additional health needs including asthma, diabetes, learning disabilities).
- **Universal partnership plus**
Provides ongoing support by the school health team from a range of local services working together and with children and young people, to deal with more complex issues over a period of time, for example, support for children who may need specialist services including child and adolescent mental health services, looked after children, and young carers.

What is the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) role?

LMCS have a key role in improving the health and wellbeing of school age children and young people. LMCS can ensure local school health services are led by school nursing services and delivered by working in partnership to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families.



How to ensure the school nursing service is effective

1. GET INVOLVED

- Identify the key issues affecting the health and wellbeing of local children and young people including looked after children
- Use your local knowledge and influence to ensure the school health service led by school nurses is a core service
- Ensure other elected members are sufficiently briefed to understand the role of school health services
- Ensure the school health service is visible in strategic plans, supported by strong leadership and clear accountability

2. LISTEN AND SPEAK UP

- Ensure local commissioning and services are shaped by the views of local children, young people and parents
- Ensure there are joined up services for children 0-19yrs with health visitors and school nurses working together with other partners

3. HELP PARTNERS WORK TOGETHER

- Ensure partners including head teachers and governors work to support health services in schools
- Support and encourage multi-agency work and training

4. CHAMPION PROMOTION

- Ensure there are champions for school health within the council and Health and Wellbeing Board
- Champion the shift towards prevention and early intervention – the school health service is evidenced based in this approach

5. MAKE SURE SERVICES ARE EFFECTIVE

- Ensure the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy reflect the needs of school aged children
- Build in means of review and evaluation, build in an evidence base to measure improvements in health and wellbeing
- Drill beneath the data and have access to the views of frontline staff, partners and service users to be assured on quality and judge impact
- Direct resources towards delivering the most effective public health programmes



RESOURCES.

The School Nurse Vision and service offer. Department of Health (2012). *Getting it Right for Children, Young People and Families*. London: Department of Health

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

The Healthy Child Programme Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009). *Healthy Child Programme (From 5 –19 years old)*. London: Department of Health.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_108866.pdf British Youth Council (2011). *Our school nurse. Young people's views on the role of the school nurse*. London:

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

Local Government Association public health resources www.local.gov.uk/health

Report of the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/156062/CYP-report.pdf

Improving Children and Young People's Health Outcomes: A system wide response

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/141430/9328-TSO-2900598-DH-SystemWideResponse.pdf