

School nursing

- *School nurses take over from Health Visitors when children start school*
- *School nurses are qualified registered nurses or midwives who have completed an additional specialist qualification in community public health.*
- *Usually based outside the school, eg in a health centre, and look after a number of different schools.*
- *visit each school as and when needed, although some school nurses run weekly drop-in sessions in secondary schools*

School Nurses provides the following services to children and their families attending state maintained schools/ free schools and Academy schools in Slough, Bracknell Forest, Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire:

- *Height and weight measurement for all children in Reception year and year 6 as part of the National Childhood Measurement Programme (NCMP)*
- *Hearing screening for children in Reception year*
- *Vision screening for children in Reception year for children attending schools in Slough and Bracknell Forest*
- *Vision screening for children attending schools in Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire is undertaken by Orthoptist teams from the Royal Berkshire Hospital*
- *Health questionnaires for all children in Reception year*
- *Support and health advice to families with children and young people of school age on a range of health topics including:*
 - *Long-term medical conditions such as asthma, epilepsy and acute allergy*
 - *Bedwetting (nocturnal enuresis), which includes advice on toilet training and use of nappies, drinking patterns, bed wetting alarms and medical therapies*
 - *Behavioural / emotional difficulties*
 - *Bullying*
 - *Chronic fatigue*
 - *Divorce and separation*
 - *Eating disorders*
 - *Bereavement*
 - *Mental health problems including anxiety, depression, self-harm and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*
 - *School phobia and school refusal*
 - *Sleep problems*
 - *Behavioural issues including ADHD*

Work with other health services to ensure children and young people with non-complex needs or disabilities get the specialist services they need

- *SN teams work closely with children and young people who have been identified as in need of safeguarding or Looked After by the Local Authority.*

School nurses will come into school when asked to talk to the children about health issues such as:-

- *Threadworms*
- *Personal hygiene – hand- washing etc*
- *Bodily changes at puberty and sex education in the latter years of the primary school*
- *In secondary schools, they educate students about the issues they face as teenagers, including sexual and mental health including exam stress*
- *Almost a quarter of those aged 11-15 in England report having a long-term illness or disability, including asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and arthritis.*

School nurses will also train the school staff in :-

- *Administering an epipen*
- *Checking a diabetic child's blood sugar levels and administering appropriate medication*
- *Coping with an epileptic child*
- *Administering inhalers for asthmatic children*
- *Coping with other long-term medical conditions and disabilities*

The Reality

Despite guidance from the Department for Education in 2014 that stipulates all children with health conditions should be supported to go to school, the number of school nurses has fallen from 2,987 to 2,433 full-time NHS posts in England.

This is against a background of an increased school population.