School Nurse Service Users Surveys
Summary of Results
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**Introduction**

The School Nurse users’ survey was run between 15\(^{th}\) September and 25\(^{th}\) November 2014, and was conducted to give School Health Service users the opportunity to influence the service specification for a newly commissioned service. The survey asked questions around:

- Expanding the service to cover all 5 – 19 year olds
- Expanding service opening times outside of the current school hours
- Improving users’ communication with School Nurses
- Assessing whether primary school parents should receive letters with results of the National Weight Measurement Programme
- What the service should be called if it were to be re-named.

In total there were 413 responses to the survey. The majority of responses (65%) were from parents of school children, although 26% of responses (108 in total) were from secondary school children themselves – This is a good response rate which gives validity to the results for both groups. The full breakdown of response by respondent type was as follows:

- Parent of primary school child(ren) 105 (25%)
- Parent of Primary & Secondary school children 73 (18%)
- Parent of secondary school child(ren) 90 (22%)
- Secondary school student 108 (26%)
- Other (See below) 37 (9%)

The 37 in the other category included: 15 x parents of 5 to 19 year olds (primary or secondary not specified); 9 x 5 to 11 year olds; 2 x young people aged 20 plus; 1 x parent of child not yet started school; 3 x Teachers; 1 x Granddad of young person and 6 x people who did not identify themselves.

Responses to the survey were mainly received through a poster campaign, through a ‘business card’ promotion campaign and through a newsletter campaign, which were all distributed to Cheshire East schools/colleges and their colleagues. The survey was also promoted on the Cheshire East Council webpages and through a Facebook campaign, although these did not receive many responses. Posters and business cards were also sent to GP practices, children’s centres and libraries.
Using School Nurses

22% of respondents had seen/used a School Nurse in the last 12 months.

A higher proportion of secondary school children (40%) had seen/used one in the last 12 months compared to parents (around 16%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you been to see, or used, a school nurse in the last 12 months?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of secondary school children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of primary &amp; secondary school children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of primary school children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: All respondents = 383. School children to parents between 68 and 98

Much higher proportions of all respondents thought they would use a School Nurse in future. The most popular times to see them would be during school hours (80%) and after school (72%).

Smaller proportions of respondents thought they would use them during school holidays (44%) and at weekends (34%):
Secondary school children would prefer to visit School Nurses during school hours (85%), whereas parents would prefer to visit either after school or during school hours – Secondary school children were very unlikely to want to visit during school holidays or at weekends:

The 44% of respondents who stated they would use School Nurses during school holidays indicated that their preferred times to visit them would be in the morning – Between 8 am to 10 am (23%), and 10 am to 12 noon (32%):
Preferred location for School Nurses outside school hours

When deciding where to go to visit a School Nurse outside of school hours, the most important factor in making that decision was not about geographic location, but about confidentiality – 86% of those answering this question stated that confidentiality was a very important factor in deciding where to go to visit a School Nurse.

Thereafter, it is difficult to split the next most important factors – Opening times (60%), being able to choose day and time of visit (57%), telephone advice and support (56%) and nearness to home (51%) all featured highly as being important:

![Diagram showing the importance of various factors]

Sample: Between 228 and 236
Parents considered factors such as nearness to home, car parking and drop in service availability more important than secondary school children did, whereas secondary school children felt factors such as being able to book appointments online, good bus/train links and distance away from people they know as more important factors than parents did:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>All Parents</th>
<th>Secondary School Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening times</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments with choice of days and times</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone advice and support</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearness to home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car parking nearby (parents only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop in service available (i.e. no need for appointment)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearness to school/college/workplace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to book my appointment on line</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good bus/train links</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance away from people I know</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: Between 31 and 75
Respondents were also asked “Is there anything else that would be important to you when deciding where to visit School Nurses outside of school hours?”. 28 respondents made 31 replies to this question – These comments have been grouped into the following categories:

- Nurse’s helpfulness/knowledge/familiarity with child/having a caring manner (8 comments)
- Opening times, availability & low waiting times/A drop in service (7 comments)
- Car parking availability and cost/Accessibility and ease of getting there (6 comments)
- Childcare availability whilst seeing the nurse (3 comments)
- Confidentiality (3 comments)
- Home visit provision (3 comments)
- Communication with schools (1 comment).
School Nurse Services

Respondents were asked which services they would go to a School Nurse for advice about/help with. The top 6 selections made by all respondents were:

- Minor injuries (13%)
- Emotional feelings (10%)
- School absence due to illness (10%)
- Mental health (9%)
- Healthy eating (8%)
- Healthy weight (8%).
There were differences between the services that parents and secondary school children would go to a School Nurse for advice about/help with.

Secondary school children were less likely than parents to want to go to a School Nurse about emotional feelings (8% Vs 12%) and mental health (8% Vs 10%), but more likely than parents to want to go to a School Nurse about minor injuries (17% Vs 12%) and school absence due to illness (12% Vs 10%):

About which of the following would you go to a school nurse for advice about/help with?

- Minor injuries
- Emotional feelings
- School absence due to illness
- Mental health
- Healthy eating
- Healthy weight
- Safeguarding
- Relationships
- Keeping fit
- Physical disabilities
- Morning after pill (emergency hormonal contraception)
- Drugs
- Condom distribution
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Pregnancy testing

Sample: Between 98 and 216
Respondents were also asked “Are there any other things you would like School Nurses to give advice or help on?”. 83 respondents made 110 replies to this question.

The 8 most common replies to this question were:

- Relationships/General wellbeing/Emotional/Healthy living (19 comments)
- Mental health/Behavioural/Stress (14 comments)
- Head lice (12 comments)
- Vaccinations/Immunisations (9 comments)
- Headache/Stomach ache/Minor injury (9 comments)
- Puberty/Sexual health/Menstruation (8 comments)
- Bed/Day/Night wetting/Continence (8 comments)
- Disabilities/SEN (7 comments).

Thereafter there were a number of other things listed 3 times or less, including:

- Sight/Hearing (3 comments)
- Asthma (3 comments)
- Autism (2 comments)
- Allergic reactions (2 comments)
- Speech therapy/Tourettes/Tics (2 comments)
- ADHD (1 comment)
- Dyslexia (1 comment)
- Self-esteem/Anxiety/Confidence issues (1 comment)
- Bullying/Coping with school (1 comment)
- Asperger’s disease (1 comment)
- Chrons disease (1 comment)
- Diabetes (1 comment)
- Skin problems (1 comment)
- Hygiene issues (1 comment)
- Referral to CAHMS (1 comment)
- Infections (1 comment)
- Major injuries (1 comment).
Communicating with School Nurses

Respondents indicated that their most preferred ways of making contact with School Nurses would be via email (29%) and by telephone (23%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through a dedicated website</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through a mobile phone/tablet ‘App’</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via social media</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: 353

There were some slight differences between parents of school children, and secondary school children themselves, in terms of their preferences for making contact with School Nurses – Parents were more likely to prefer the telephone (25% Vs 18%), whereas secondary school children were more likely to prefer a website (18% Vs 16%), an ‘App’ (15% Vs 8%) and social media (6% Vs 3%):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Method</th>
<th>All parents of school children</th>
<th>Secondary school children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through a dedicated website</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through a mobile phone/tablet ‘App’</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via social media</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: Between 95 and 234
The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

All parents of children in Reception Year to Year 6 are invited to take part in the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), which weighs and measures all primary school children. The government suggests that all parents and carers receive a letter informing of them of whether their child is a healthy weight or not. In Cheshire East all parents and carers now receive a letter (they may not have in the past).

When parents of primary school children were asked whether they thought they should receive a letter once their child had been measured under the NCMP, large proportions stated they should when their child was very overweight (93%), overweight (86%) or underweight (86%). A smaller proportion of parents, although still a majority, felt they should receive a letter if their child was healthy weight (62%):

As follow up, if their child was found to be underweight or overweight, 27% of parents would prefer an appointment with a School Nurse as help:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointment with a school nurse</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family programme of physical activity and...</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Management Service</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web based support programmes and advice</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist physical activity programme</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking healthy meals classes</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy weight app.</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: 149
Respondents were also asked “If you wish to, please give reasons for your answer to the question about whether you should be written to with the results of the NCMP”, to which 45 respondents made 47 different comments.

Those in favour of receiving a letter made the following comments:

- Some parents don't know what normal is/Obesity is a problem (8 comments)
- So parents know the results are not lost in post/To alleviate concerns (5 comments)
- Parents have a right to know what data is collected about their child (5 comments)
- Parents need to know (4 comments)
- It is good to reinforce that it is good to be a healthy weight (1 comment)
- Parents might be in denial (1 comment).

Those that had reservations about receiving a letter made the following comments:

- As long as it accounts for health/age/shape/size etc/Sometimes the assessments are wrong (10 comments)
- It needs explanation/help/guidance (5 comments)
- Why write if a child is healthy? (2 comments)
- Only if the school knows parents aren't already taking advice (1 comment)
- Parents should be told in person (1 comment)
- Email instead (1 comment)
- Not the local authorities business (1 comment)
- The NCMP is not relevant (1 comment)
- It can have a negative impact on child's mentality (1 comment).
Re-naming the service

When asked to rank a list of 7 possible new names for the School Nurse Service, respondents voted for “Children and Young People’s Health Service” as their preferred option – The below chart shows each of the 7 options that were available, shown alongside their average rank value (where rank 1 was their preferred option):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Average Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and Young Peoples’ Health Service</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People’s Health Service</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Health Service</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Child &amp; Young Person’s Service</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Young Peoples’ Prevention Service</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People’s Prevention Service</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Prevention Service</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As well as ranking the list of suggested new names, respondents were also given the opportunity to suggest their own new name for the service – 52 respondents took the opportunity to do so, or make a general comment about the possible new name.

16 of the 52 comments stated that the name should remain as either “School Nurse Service” (11 suggestions) or “School Health Service” (5 suggestions).

9 respondents suggested derivations along the lines of “Young” or “Youth”, including:

- Young people’s care service
- Young people’s health & support service
- Young people's health and medical advice service
- Young People’s Health and Wellbeing Service
- Young People’s Healthy Living Service
- Young Person’s health service
- Youth Health and advice service
- Youth health service
- YPHS.
7 respondents suggested derivations along the lines of “Child” or “Children”, including:

- Child and adolescent health and wellbeing service
- Child Health Service
- Children and Young People Support Network
- Children and Young People’s Health And Wellbeing Service
- Children and young people’s help committee.
- Children and Young People’s Service
- The child and youth health and prevention service

5 respondents suggested derivations along the lines of “Health” or “Healthy”, including:

- Health in Education Service
- Health Service for the young (HSY)
- Healthy & Happy Life
- Healthy Young Peeps
- Help and health service.

There were also 4 miscellaneous suggestions:

- 5-19’s health service
- Education and Health Practice and Prevention Unit
- Educational wellbeing service
- General health.

And finally, 7 respondents stated that the word “Prevention” should not be used in the name, for the following reasons:

- Not keen on the use of 'prevention' in some of the names as it's not clear what is being prevented
- Prevention is not the right word for this service, as it is not just providing a prevention service
- Prevention service is a terrible idea. It sounds like you're preventing young people from doing something and carries a negative connotation.
- Don’t call it anything like children’s prevention - that would be contraception wouldn’t it?!
- ‘Prevention’ sounds like a criminal service
- There is already a service called Prevention service in Cheshire East which is working with young people and children – It may create confusion.
Further comments

The last question of the survey asked “Do you have any further comments to make?” to which 68 respondents made a total of 71 replies.

The vast majority of these replies, 31 of the 71, stated that respondents were unsure what it is School Nurses do, that they hadn’t heard of them, that they weren’t sure of their role and/or that their profile needed to be raised so that more people could make use of them – This was far and away the most frequent comment made.

Thereafter, there were a number of comments about how the nurse’s skills could be improved, including:

- School Nurses need to be better trained, that they haven’t been sympathetic or helpful in the past (4 comments)
- That school children weren’t comfortable talking to School Nurses about topics other than minor injuries (2 comments).

Finally, there were also a range of comments about how the service itself could be improved, including that:

- They do a good job, and their numbers need to be increased (9 comments)
- Head lice needed treating more effectively/taking more seriously (4 comments)
- That the National Child Measurement Programme was unnecessary/unhelpful/goes too far (4 comments)
- Struggling students need more help, especially with mental health issues (2 comments)
- School Nurses should be given their own room (2 comments)
- The service needs to be tied in better with other healthy living services, e.g. cooking clubs, sports clubs etc. (2 comments)
- There should be a greater availability of information online (1 comment)
- School children should be able to make their own appointments (1 comment).
Conclusions

22% of 413 respondents having seen/used a School Nurse in the last 12 months seems to be quite low, and especially so for parents of school children, with just 16% of 251 having seen/used one in the last 12 months. This may indicate that there is work to be done in promoting the services of School Nurses. This conclusion is reinforced by the large number of comments about a lack of awareness of School Nurses, made in response to the final question of the survey.

Looking forward, there is a strong positive indication that respondents would use School Nurses in future, with 80% of 328 respondents stating that they would see/use one during school hours, and 72% of 321 stating they would use one after school.

In terms of expanding the service, making School Nurses available after school would be the logical conclusion based on results to this survey – Respondents clearly indicated they would not be as keen to use School Nurses either during school holidays or at weekends, and especially so for secondary school children. Having said that, if the service were to be expanded to cover school holidays, then mornings would seem to be best time to make them available.

It is not possible to make as strong conclusions about the location of School Nurses outside school hours, as results to these questions were not as clear cut. Although confidentiality was most important factor for respondents when deciding where to go to visit a School Nurse, a large proportion of respondents (at least 77%) felt 9 of the 11 factors asked about in the survey were important when making this decision. Other factors that may have significant impact on respondents’ decisions about where to go to visit a School Nurse include: Individual ability/knowledge/manner of the nurses; and whether childcare provision whilst visiting a School Nurse is available.

In terms of the services respondents want School Nurses to provide there were a fairly clear cut ‘top 6’ – minor injuries, emotional feelings, school absence due to illness, mental health, healthy eating and healthy weight. It is interesting to note that the issues emotional feelings and mental health were more of a concern to the parents rather than secondary school children. The main other services which respondents stated they would like School Nurses to provide included: Head lice treatment; Vaccinations/Immunisations; Sexual health services; Continence/Bed wetting services; and services to help deal with disabilities/SEN.
To improve communication with School Nurses it would seem the introduction of email communication would be the most effective way forward, this was the number one additional preferred method of contact for both parents and secondary school children. Parents would also like to communicate via telephone as their second most preferred additional method, whereas secondary school children were fairly evenly split between telephone, text, a dedicated website and an ‘App’, after email.

There was a high level of agreement that parents should receive a letter detailing their primary school child’s results to the National Child Measurement Programme. This was especially so when their child was either overweight or underweight, however, a majority also stated they should receive a letter even when their child was healthy weight. The main reasons given for why parents should receive these letters were so parents knew the letter hadn’t been lost, and that obesity is a problem which parents should be aware about. An appointment with a School Nurse would be the best way of giving help to parents if their child was found to be either overweight or underweight.

Finally, there was a clear cut winner for re-naming the service of the options presented – “Children and Young Peoples’ Health Service”. As the service has to change its name, to remove the word “School” from its current title, then “Children and Young Peoples’ Health Service” would seem to be the way forward.