



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

POLICY AND STRATEGY, DOCUMENT

Healthy Child Wales Programme: for school aged children (WHC/2024/016)

A new operating model for school nursing services in NHS
Wales.

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Details

Issue date

11 April 2024.

Status

Action and information.

Category

Quality and safety.

Title

Healthy Child Wales Programme: for school aged children.

Date of expiry/review

April 2026.

For action by

- Chief Executives NHS Wales
- Executive Directors of Nursing
- Directors of Nursing

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- Heads of School Nursing Services
- Medical Directors
- Executive Directors of Workforce
- Executive Directors of Public Health
- Executive Directors of Digital
- Chief Nursing Information Officers
- NHS Wales Executive

Action required by

With immediate effect.

Sender

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Healthy Child Wales Programme: for school aged children

Background

The **Healthy Child Wales Programme for school aged children** is a new unified operating model for school nursing services which provides a programme of planned universal health contacts for all compulsory school aged children (aged 5 to 16 years) in Wales, regardless of setting.

The operating model underpins the existing school nursing frameworks and aims to complete the age span until the end of compulsory school, building upon the existing **Healthy Child Wales Programme** (published in 2016), which provided a universal health offer for all children aged 0 to 7 years of age.

The introduction of the new operating model updates the interface between health visiting and school nursing services, to ensure a seamless transfer of care by NHS Wales regardless of setting, and to make sure the Healthy Child Wales Programme is a seamless programme from the perspective of the child and family.

The operating model has been co-designed by the Welsh Government and NHS Wales and led by 2 senior school nursing leads (on secondment to the Welsh Government).

Purpose

The purpose of the operating model is to provide a structured and equitable national programme of universal core contacts for all children and young people. This will ensure that children and young people can receive the universal

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benefits of a public health programme, prioritising prevention and ensuring children and young people are supported by NHS Wales with their health and well-being according to need throughout their school age, to improve outcomes.

The programme will deliver on the Welsh Government's commitment to children and young people through the Children and Young People's Plan and in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which places a duty upon NHS Wales and other public bodies. Welsh Government expects that every child and young person of compulsory school age will be offered support by the school nursing services through the delivery of the Healthy Child Wales Programme.

Implementation

The operating model has been designed to create a consistent national approach to supporting children's health and well-being by school nursing services in Wales, whilst also providing flexibility to respond to identified local public health population needs. Given current variation across NHS Wales, a 2 year implementation period has been agreed to give health boards the time to fully embed the new operating model into core service delivery. Our expectation is that health boards will begin implementation of the operating model from April 2024 and have fully implemented by March 2026. Progress will be monitored over the 2 year implementation period with a formal review in April 2026.

Oversight of the implementation will be undertaken through the integrated quality planning delivery (IQPD) meetings, pending any developments at NHS Executive level, with the introduction of a national children's health clinical network and in partnership with the national CNO/EDoNS leadership group.

During the development of the nurse-led operating model, 4 key areas were identified as requiring further development work to enable health boards to implement the operating model consistently across NHS Wales. These areas will

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be taken forward as 4 implementation workstreams:

- workforce and training
- monitoring framework
- digital and data
- communication and engagement (including raising the profile of school nursing services within health boards and wider public service)

The issuing of this Welsh Health Circular to NHS Wales formally introduces **Healthy Child Wales Programme for school aged children** in Wales.

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