

**Wiltshire Council**

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

**25 May 2023**

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**Subject: Public Health Nursing Contract**

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**Executive Summary**

A future delivery model for Public Health Nursing Contract from 1 April 2024 has been agreed.

**Proposal(s)**

It is recommended that the Board notes the future delivery model for Public Health Nursing Services.

**Reason for Proposal**

The contract with HCRG Care Group to deliver the Wiltshire Children's Community Healthcare Service expires on 31 March 2024 following completion of an exceptional 1-year contract agreed at Cabinet on 29 March 2022. Circumstances related to the agreement at Cabinet in June 2022 to undertake a joint procurement for the service with Bath and North-East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB), have recently changed and required a subsequent decision to be made about the future provision of Public Health Nursing Services from 1 April 2024.

**Kate Blackburn**  
**Director of Public Health**  
**Wiltshire Council**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the future delivery model for Wiltshire's Public Health Nursing (PHN) Services beyond April 2024. These services are currently delivered by HCRG Care Group (previously Virgin Care Services) as part of Wiltshire Children's Community Healthcare Services (WCCHS) contract.

#### **Relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

2. Children's community health services have an important role to play in tackling inequalities, improving social mobility and prevention and early intervention.

#### **Background**

3. The contract with HCRG Care Group to deliver the Wiltshire Children's Community Healthcare Service expires on 31 March 2024 following completion of an exceptional 1-year contract agreed at Cabinet on 29 March 2022. Circumstances related to the agreement at Cabinet in June 2022 to undertake a joint procurement for the service with Bath and North-East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB), have recently changed and required a subsequent decision to be made about the provision of Public Health Nursing Services from 1 April 2024.
4. In June 2022, Cabinet was presented with options for the service beyond April 2024 and agreed for PHNS to be part of a single procurement of a combined universal and specialist children's community health service for Wiltshire with separate terms and conditions for the respective Council and ICB/ICA elements.
5. Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) were formally established in July 2022 and BSW ICB began a review of community health services across Bath and North-East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire. Wiltshire Council has been an active participant in the review, whilst maintaining its intention to progress with arrangements as agreed by Cabinet in June 2022. The community health service review continues and the ICB has recently clarified it is not able to progress a joint procurement process with the Local Authority at this time. The Local Authority cannot extend the current contract any further under procurement legislation and the options

available to us for the future delivery of PHNS are, therefore, different to those presented to Cabinet in June.

6. Prior to 2016, children's community services had been provided across six separate organisations; some of the specialist services were sitting outside of Wiltshire-county borders and required parents / carers to travel outside of Wiltshire for appointments. This also limited the extent to which community services could provide services embedded within education and respite settings. Parents / carers of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) reported this to be a confusing and disjointed healthcare provision. For this reason, and to create a more pathway-based, less medicalised approach to care, it was decided to bring the services together as one overarching children's community health service. There is every intention to maintain as much integration as possible between universal and specialist children's community health services despite this change in direction. Service users are not expected to experience any significant difference in service delivery from any change in provider that may arise.
7. The total contract value for WCCHS for 2022/23 was £14,122,700, of which 48% (£6,741,769) was provided by Wiltshire Council to fund Public Health Nursing Services from the Public Health Grant. BSW ICB fund Children's Specialist Community Health Services and the Children Looked After Service.
8. Wiltshire Council is responsible for PHNS in Wiltshire. PHNS is a service directly funded by the Public Health Grant which the local authority receives from the Department of Health and Social Care. The service forms part of the Director of Public Health's responsibilities for 'any of the Secretary of State's public health protection or health improvement functions that they delegate to local authorities, either by arrangement or under regulations – these include services mandated by regulations made under section 6C of the NHS 2006 Act, inserted by section 18 of the 2012 Act'.
9. The PHNS is required to deliver against the requirements set out in the Health & Social Care Act 2012 to provide a universal service for all expectant parents, children, and young people, with an emphasis on prevention and support. This includes leading on the delivery and co-ordination of the Healthy Child Programme 0-19, a national public health programme based on the best available evidence to achieve good outcomes for children. The mandated elements of the PHNS are five universal reviews delivered by the health visiting service from pregnancy through to two and a half years of age, and the National Child Measurement Programme.
10. The PHNS service is made up of the following key elements:
  - Health Visiting - 0-4 years old
  - School Nursing - 5-19 years old
  - Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) – a strengths-based programme to support young parents. In Wiltshire this is targeted on young women who conceive at or below the age of nineteen. It a licenced programme

that provides intensive support from pregnancy until the child's second birthday. It is not mandated.

- The National Child Measurement Programme - delivered through the School Nursing Service provides robust public health surveillance data on child weight status to inform national and local planning to reduce obesity.

11. BSW ICB is responsible for commissioning the following services:

- Community Paediatrics
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Integrated Therapies (Physiotherapy & Occupational Therapy)
- Children's Community Nursing Services
- Children's Continuing Care
- Learning Disability Nursing Services
- Children's Safeguarding Services (named nurses & specialist safeguarding nurses)
- Paediatric Audiology (West Wiltshire only)
- Children's Continence Service
- Children Looked After Service

14. The Children Looked After (CLA) Service provides specialist health assessments, personal health planning and intervention, advice and support to children and young people who are looked after and their parent/carers. It also provides specialist advice to partner agencies on the health needs of children looked after and actively participates in care planning and review meetings. These services are delivered in conjunction with universal services. Currently review health checks and assessments for children looked after are undertaken by health visitors (up to age 5) and school nurses (over the age of 5).

## **Main Considerations**

15. Cabinet noted that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) began a review of community health services across Bath and North-East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, with Wiltshire being an active participant in the review, whilst maintaining its intention to progress with arrangements as agreed by Cabinet in June 2022 for PHNS to be part of a single procurement of a combined universal and specialist children's community health service for Wiltshire with separate terms and conditions for the respective Council and ICB elements. The ICB has recently clarified it is not able to progress a joint procurement process with Wiltshire Council at this time and the Council is not able to extend the current contract any further under procurement legislation. The options available since June 2022 have therefore evolved to

- (i) single procurement of Wiltshire PHNS by Wiltshire Council or
- (ii) Local Authority in-house PHNS.

16. Both options have been thoroughly appraised against the same set of strategic objectives set out in the June 2022 Cabinet report. There was disappointment that the Council were unable to procure the service with the ICB, however, the spirit of integration remains, and Cabinet agreed to the recommendation for a single procurement of Wiltshire PHNS. Effective integration and partnership with interfacing services is critical to the delivery of Public Health Nursing Services and there is commitment from both the Local Authority and BSW ICB to continue to work closely together to align Wiltshire's universal and specialist service specifications, and monitoring processes, to ensure services continue to be joined up and seamless. We do not foresee any impact on children, young people, and families. The Local Authority will also ensure an emphasis on strengthening partnership and integration with local authority and non-health services, including the voluntary and charitable sector in the best interests of children, young people and families.

### **Next Steps**

17. The Director of Public Health will be agreeing the award of the contract following the tendering process in consultation with the relevant Directors, Corporate Directors and Cabinet members.

**Kate Blackburn**  
**Director of Public Health**  
**Wiltshire Council**

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