



Registered Charity:1162042

Pinfold House  
Pinfold Rise  
Aberford  
Leeds  
LS25 3EN  
April 2020

To:

Local Authorities

Chief Executives

Director of Children's Services

Director of Public Health

### **COVID 19: Allocation of DHSC funds to School Nursing**

Dear Colleague,

Firstly, thank you for the unstinting work you are all doing midst these most extraordinary times; the demands on your time and talents cannot be underestimated. Your leadership, direction and support is most notable and much appreciated.

Secondly, we, as am sure you, are delighted at the £1.6b funds agreed by the Government to be devolved to support the additional and onerous demands on

those services delivering public health services; this welcome and much needed financial support.

### **Rapid adaptability and success of School Nursing services**

You will have witnessed the impressive rapid, solution-focused adaptability within School Nursing services in taking a proactive approach to supporting children, young people and families, most of whom, including our most vulnerable, remain out of school in social isolation. Their well-established technology skills and models of practice have quickly been enhanced and extended with some tangible positive outcomes (See case studies attached).

However, as a result of virtual contact through text/email/WhatsApp etc., or, indeed, face to face if compelling need, alongside tenacious promotion of their availability/accessibility, School Nurses are overwhelmed by the significant rise in need of mental health issues-in both CYP and their carers; self-harm, actual or intent to suicide, domestic violence, abuse, neglect, alcohol and substance misuse, gangs, grooming and CSE as well as desperation of food/poverty, and much more.... One could, tragically, suggest that they are victims of their own success!

### **Urgent and essential requirements**

School Nurses, as specialist public health practitioners, are well placed, trusted, experienced and skilled to support these issues, however, increased capacity is urgent if we are to adequately address and prevent further escalation through early help and disruption. From our scoping we have identified the following main areas requiring urgent support:

- Inadequate and poor IT. This includes antiquated/poor systems, connectivity etc.
- Few have invaluable electronic health needs assessment tools e.g The Lancaster model, Schoolscreener and text services e. g ChatHealth
- Unfit for purpose Laptops/equipment and non-Smart phones
- Lack of access to both clinical and safeguarding supervision
- Rising urgent need for support for their own emotional health and well-being which requires immediate tailored offers
- Anticipated school return surge in Mental health, Safeguarding and school refusal
- Catch up on missed healthy child programme including critical immunisations (as appropriate).
- Increased workforce based on identified and anticipated need of CYP, schools and families
- Contact testing, tracking and tracing re COVID19

Therefore, our ask is that you use additional monies accordingly to facilitate and enable School Nurses to do more of what they are doing very well now and also to plan for the surge of significant safeguarding and mental health challenges we will

see post-Covid as well as for those services not being delivered that will require catch-up, including, as appropriate, critical missed childhood immunisations.

We recognise and accept that these monies, specifically, (though not ring-fenced), dedicated to Public health services, are likely to have many wider pressures on them, but do trust that our shared vision of investing in our children's health and wellbeing will direct positive investment to where needed.

Do contact me if you wish to discuss further or if we can help in any way.

Meantime stay safe and well

Yours sincerely,

Sharon White OBE  
CEO SAPHNA

[www.saphna.co](http://www.saphna.co)

Twitter @SAPHNASharonOBE