Online Health Needs Assessments Improve Healthy Child Programme Delivery

The [2021 republished Healthy Child Programme](#) & [2020 No Child Left Behind](#) guidance both identify care and resource planning as crucial to delivering key commissioning outcomes.

The challenge, as ever, is 'how' with Providers often resource and budget constrained. The republished Health Child Programme identifies the role of technology in working more efficiently.

'The provider and the commissioner will work in collaboration to identify opportunities for leaner working and/or cost and efficiency savings at each quarterly review. This is likely to include consideration of how to make best use of modern technology.' (Page 14)

And this is exactly how many providers are now seeing the benefits of implementing electronic health needs assessments. They enable greater efficiencies including accelerating service delivery and releasing more time for school nursing teams to care. At the same time the technology enables providers to demonstrate alignment with goals such as **service modernisation** and **leaner working**, without additional workload.

In this post, we'll look further at the 'why and how' of online health needs assessments and what to look out for when choosing which solution to use.

Release More Time to Care with Online Health Needs Questionnaires

Needs analysis, parental (and school) communication and the delivery of timely interventions for individual children are huge, challenging tasks. They take time, organisation and expertise. What's more, costs climb with scale for each year group commissioned.

If you're still using paper forms and manual assessments, then consider switching to electronic, online health needs assessment delivery. With an app like SchoolScreener® Health Needs, service providers can produce, distribute, collate, and analyse health needs questionnaires much faster, at lower cost. Manual processes are replaced with automation. School nurses can see the status of each member of the cohort in one view, and instantly see red flag issues in the responses. This means they're better equipped for targeted, rapid interventions.

Drill down for individual responses or step back to identify school-level trends or regional data.

Use existing questionnaires for continuity or augment them with content available for SchoolScreener® users. We've contributed to the design of numerous provider questionnaires and bring that expertise to support all users. It's not just the question content, it can also be important to see how questions are phrased to optimise responses.

Practical Considerations When Choosing Online Health Needs Assessment Tools

Of course, there are several online health needs questionnaires available for child health. So, how do you choose between them?

Consider these 8 points:

1. **How adaptable is the system?** Can you change question content easily? Is there the expertise and support available to help optimise your online health needs questionnaires and processes?

2. **How well does the app work with other systems you use?** This is not just the interoperability question of connecting to SystmOne, EMIS etc. It's also important to look at how easily your staff can adapt to using the solution with their day-to-day activities. If they're used to seeing the whole cohort in one view with vision or hearing checks, NCMP data collection, or vaccination programme management, then it makes sense to add in something compatible. SchoolScreener® does exactly this, and because the base system stays the same, we can pass on savings, too.

3. **Consider the total cost of ownership, not just the headline numbers.** With SchoolScreener® there is no additional cost for dedicated customer service and technical support, for example.

4. **What are the productivity benefits of moving to online health needs assessments?** Thomson Screening have developed a productivity savings calculator, which from your own data delivers cost savings estimates. Based on real-life examples from multiple providers' use of SchoolScreener® Health Needs, it's free to use and can help you plan. Just ask us for details.

5. **How much time can you save by moving to online health needs assessments?** Compass, the provider of school nursing services in Warwickshire, estimates their team have saved up to 60 minutes **per child** per completed questionnaire. That covers both primary and secondary school year groups. Time that enables rapid intervention where it's needed and when it's needed. Time released for care. And since 2018, other providers around the country are seeing similar benefits.

6. **How does it help with parent communications?** Sometimes you'll need parents to complete the questionnaires on behalf of their children, such as young children, pre-schoolers etc. In other cases, you may not want to share detailed information with parents, such as for teenagers. Do the apps you're considering offer flexible, electronic communications with parents? An example of this is the SchoolScreener® Parent Portal.

7. **How does the solution support communications with schools?** Since 2013, Thomson Screening has supported the day-to-day work between school nursing services and schools. Users of SchoolScreener® Health Needs have access to proven experience, systems, reporting and support.

8. **How quickly can a service see the benefits?** From contract to implementation takes just a few weeks, including set up and training. Training takes around an hour and is delivered online, in person or hybrid to fit with each provider's requirements.

If you're interested in finding out the ways in which SchoolScreener® Health Needs can help, there are full technical product specifications available on request. You can also view a range of technical information on the NHS Digital Marketplace.

Get in touch with Thomson Screening to find out more!

Chris Coyne

Thomson Screening Solutions Ltd. – Developers of SchoolScreener®