

SHEFFIELD HEALTH VISITOR SERVICES

UPDATE FOR SHEFFIELD GPs

NOVEMBER 2008

LMC and PCT representatives have held productive meetings to discuss health visitor services.

There is an ongoing review of the service, looking at both the capacity and the way the service works. The PCT is keen to ensure engagement with GP practices and good communication at local level.

From the service's point of view, the move to team caseloads has been important in allowing health visiting staff to deal with complex workloads more effectively, improve support to individual practitioners and improve access to and standardisation of services. However, it is acknowledged that this can also reduce regular direct contact with practices/GPs. Therefore, it has been agreed that the following needs to happen as part of the existing review:

- A review of how each health visiting team communicates with its GPs.
- Standardisation of paperwork for health visitors and midwives.
- Better sharing of information around families identified as being at risk (pink files).

The emphasis will be on strengthening local contact arrangements which suit each practice's circumstances, for example, through attendance at practice meetings, more face to face contact and/or updated contact lists.

Each Service District health visiting team will also review current baby clinic provision.

The context for this is the development of Children's Centres and the need to ensure joint working with other agencies and best access for mothers. However, it is recognised that these benefits can also be achieved by working with practices, particularly those with space/capacity, and where large numbers of children and families may be happy to attend.

Health visiting teams will, therefore, work closely with practices in any review, and decisions about appropriate provision and associated support will be made with their involvement.

Following the citywide PLI event held on Tuesday 14 October 2008, it has been recognised that more communication and consultation of GPs and practice staff is required. A focus group will be set up to concentrate on how GPs can be more involved in the consultation around Service Districts, as well as looking at the position of General Practice with the future direction of the Service Districts in the move towards Children's Centres.

If any GPs would be interested in being involved in a one-off focus group to discuss the views expressed at the PLI event, and to help make a positive change to Health Visitor provisions, please contact Shona Ashworth on (0114) 2264715 or 07970 851 221.

Please do not hesitate to contact either the LMC or the PCT if you have any further queries or comments.

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