

Health Visitor Briefing

Introduction

The transfer of commissioning responsibilities from NHS England to local authorities for 0-5s public health services took place on 1 October 2015.

This briefing has been written to provide an update on the transition of the contract to Oxfordshire County Council.

Transition of the service

A Local Strategic Transition Board was set up with the approval of Cabinet to assure a safe and efficient transition of the Oxfordshire health visitor service commissioning from the Thames Valley NHS England team to the Public Health Directorate in the Local Authority.

This was chaired by the Director of Public Health and meetings were held monthly with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust who provides the health visitor service. The final meeting was held on 29th March 2016 as the board was assured that the transition was complete.

In addition, Thames Valley Area Team held bi-monthly Transition Board meetings. Membership included NHS England, Public Health England and locally nominated Local Authority leads. These meetings were attended by Deputy Director of Public Health. The final meeting was held on 3rd March 2016.

Boundary Changes

The health visiting contract is commissioned by population residency. However historically this was not the case and previous contracts were commissioned according to registration at a GP surgery on county boundaries. There are several areas where Oxfordshire residents were registered with GPs in neighbouring counties and vice versa.

Oxford Health and Public Health worked together to assure the Council that arrangements were in place in all areas where it was necessary to transfer children and families. The final cohort transitioned into Oxfordshire in January 2016.

Overview of the Oxfordshire Service

The Oxfordshire service consists of 119 health visitors, working in skill mixed teams that include nursery nurses, community staff nurses and training leads.

As a universal service that is provided to all families from pregnancy through to age five, there is a very high level of activity. For example, between April and December 2015 there were approximately 132,253 direct contacts made with families.

Oxford Health was inspected by CQC in 2015 and overall community health services for children and young people were found to be outstanding. The inspectors found that services were safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. This inspection relates to both the Health Visiting and School Health Nurse service.

The contact Health Visitor contract runs until 31st March 2017. The contract is monitored quarterly by officers and is performing well. Work is underway to re-commission a new service to start on 1st April 2017.

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