



Northamptonshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Head of 0-19 Service
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Dear Schools,

For many years the School Nursing service, which is commissioned by Northamptonshire County Council and provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, has undertaken both hearing and vision screening of all children in reception class. Over recent years many other areas have ceased this practice as the accuracy and effectiveness of vision screening has been shown to be limited and all children now have the new-born hearing test at birth which has reduced the need for a further hearing test at school entry. After reviewing the service offered in Northamptonshire the decision has been made to end our routine screening programme from September 2019.

We wish to assure you that there is still a clear route for children to be screened when either a parent, school or other professional expresses concern with regard to a child's hearing and vision.

Vision

All children are entitled to an NHS funded vision assessment with a local optician - this is a more accurate assessment. It is recommended that children have regular eye tests at least once every 2 years as reduced vision can have an impact on a child's learning and development. A sight test with an optician is important because many abnormalities are treatable if discovered early but if left untreated can lead to vision loss and blindness. For more information visit www.nhs.uk/childrens-eyes or www.nhs.uk/service-search/Opticians/LocationSearch/9

Hearing

If you have concerns about a child's hearing you can contact the School Nursing team, via the Admin Hub on: 0300 1111 022 option 4, who can discuss your concerns and advise the best course of action. Advice can also be sought from the child's GP. The sooner any hearing problem is found, the sooner they will get any treatment and support needed.

Signs of a possible hearing problem can include:

- Inattentiveness or poor concentration
- Not responding when their name is called
- Talking loudly and listening to the television at a high volume
- Difficulty pinpointing where a sound is coming from
- Mispronouncing words
- A change in their progress at school

Chair: **Crishni Waring**

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**MAKING A
DIFFERENCE
FOR YOU,
WITH YOU**

The School Nurse team will undertake targeted hearing tests for children who:

- require a test as part of a Child Protection, Child In Need or Early Help plan
- are deemed to need a test following a verbal assessment undertaken by a School Nurse

The School Nurse team will refer on to the Audiology Department if screening results are indicative that further more expert assessment is required.

The benefit of not undertaking this screening routinely for all children means that we are able to direct resources in other areas of health promotion, prevention and early intervention to improve the health outcomes for children and families in Northamptonshire.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Louisa Russell using the above contact details.

Yours sincerely



Louisa Russell
Head of 0-19 Service
Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust



Lucy Wightman
Director of Public Health
Northamptonshire County Council