



**SUNDERLAND EARLY IMPLEMENTER
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

30 March 2012

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH VISITING SERVICE

Background

The Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011-2015: A Call to Action (February 2011) set out a vision to expand and strengthen health visiting services. NHS SOTW is one of twenty earlier implementer sites across the country. As part of this work, a developmental specification for the Health Visiting Service has been developed regionally and this will be incrementally implemented during 2012/13. This is based on the new national health visitor model.

In 2013, responsibility for the commissioning of Health Visiting Services will pass to the National Commissioning Board on an interim basis. It is expected this responsibility will pass to the local authority in 2015.

A survey of staff in GP practices within Sunderland has indicated a number of concerns regarding the way the current service is provided, including concerns about potential risks to safeguarding and communication issues. SCCG also have some concerns regarding the proposed service specification. While the service specification is developmental, SCCG feel this is an important opportunity to influence the service specification to be implemented in 12/13 in order to address some of the issues before the responsibility for commissioning the service passes to the National Commissioning Board (and eventually the local authority), recognising the importance of a good start in life in laying the foundations for good health and well being in later life.

SCCG have tried to influence the regional work on development of the service specification, but have not received assurances that the final proposed specification will be shared with them prior to sign off.

The focus on the Healthy Child Programme nationally has been on engagement from Health Visitors, School Nurses and Children's services but it has missed communication and engagement from GPs and the primary care team. The work on the specification offers the opportunity to not only improve integrated working arrangements across primary care teams, health visitors and school nurses but to deliver improved outcomes for children's health and wellbeing.

Recommendation: That the Health and Wellbeing Board asks the Children's Trust to take forward working with all stakeholders to investigate the issue and provide a report back to the Health and Wellbeing board in six months time with recommendations to address concerns, mitigate risks and influence the future development of the service in order to improve outcomes for children.