



Sussex Community
NHS Foundation Trust

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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Dear Colleagues

Sussex Community Foundation Trust's 0-5 Healthy Child Programme (HCP) continues to provide excellent care for children and families living in Brighton and Hove and West Sussex through both face to face and virtual delivery models. HCP services have continued to develop and respond to the needs of our families with Covid providing additional challenges and opportunities for us to change the way we deliver effective care.

Whilst we are still in the restorative phase of recovery from covid and not yet fully working back to 'business as usual,' this communication is intended to provide an update to you, our colleagues in the wider healthcare system, about what we provide for our families and how we do it. We hope that this will provide the answers to some frequently asked questions and provide some clarity and reassurance about the service that is being offered, which will help us to work better together.

This is not intended to describe the role of the health visitor: more to explain about the way that the service is being provided to families across Sussex. For more information about the SCFT Healthy Child Programme please visit our website:

www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/services/healthy-child-programme

Or scan the QR code:



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Excellent care at the heart of the community

Face-to-Face and Virtual Contacts.

We have a **blended offer** for *all*. This means we offer both face-to-face and virtual contacts to our families depending on the type of the contact and the needs of the child/ parent. For example, all our new birth visits are delivered as face-to-face appointments, in the family home, unless agreed otherwise with a parent.

We continue to prioritise the most vulnerable families for face-to-face contacts. An in-person clinic appointment is available for any family, following an assessment by video or phone or on receipt of a relevant referral from partners. Parents can request this clinic contact, and one of our team will contact them first to find out more about their needs and urgency and make a booking for them accordingly.

Virtual contacts have been shown to be valuable for providing mothers with a timelier response when the issue or concern does not require an in person face-to-face contact. Virtual contacts have been positively evaluated by parents and carers. This approach can also be supportive for mothers living in rural areas or have other children to care for and who cannot access a clinic to be seen.

Our Universal service.

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) 0-5 years' service is the universal evidence-based public health & screening programme for families with children up to five years. Our Universal service is commissioned to start in the antenatal period and includes 5 mandated core contacts as per national service specification.

We continue to offer the following 5 nationally mandated contacts to all families:

- Antenatal
- New Birth Visit (NBV)
- 6/8 week
- 1 year development review
- 2-year development review

Additional contacts will be provided to families according to their health and wellbeing needs, with plan for review and follow up made.

Parentline Text service.

Parentline is our text service for patients/ carers to get in touch about any parenting questions or concerns. For children aged 0-5 years parents can text us at any time and we will return their call within 24 hours, Monday to Friday, 9am-4.30pm, except for bank holidays and weekends.

0-5 HCP Health Visiting Contact Point (Duty Line)

Parents & professionals can access a duty HV at any time Monday to Friday 9am -4.30pm.
All calls are triaged

Infant Feeding Advice Incl. Breast Feeding support

All clinical staff receive in depth infant feeding training that is updated annually. Each HCP team has infant feeding advisors, who have had additional training and receive updates by the SCFT Specialist Infant Feeding/ Breast feeding teams.

The specialist infant feeding teams/ breast feeding teams consist of specialist lactation consultants, infant feeding advisors and peer supporters. The support can be provided virtually, face-to-face in a booked appointment either at home, in hospital or in a community setting. We are planning to restart our baby feeding groups where covid and venue restrictions allow.

Universal Plus and Universal Partnership plus.

We are able to offer a Universal Plus (UP) and Universal Partnership Plus (UPP) service under the following criteria, following referral:

- Enhanced support for 'baby and me' (basic needs, bonding and parenting support- for families with identified vulnerability).
- Infant feeding and breast-feeding advice and support.
- Review and assessment of growth (over and underweight concerns).
- Sleep routines
- Maternal Mental Health (where perinatal mental health issues are impacting on bonding & attachment and are affecting the wellbeing of the infant).
- Healthy eating & eating behavior.
- Supporting a child's development and social skills
- Enhanced support for vulnerable families with establishing routines & boundaries.
- Continence pathway and support with toilet training
- Support for parents who have suffered a previous sudden & unexpected death in infancy

Typically, UP plans will be up to 6 HCP contacts, after which and following a review, further interventions may be offered at UP level, or the family move to having a Universal or Universal Partnership Plus service.

Universal partnership plus (UPP) provides ongoing support from the HCP team alongside a range of local services to deal with more complex issues over a period of time. These include children with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, an Early Help / Strengthening

Families Plan, and some Looked after Children. Involvement from HCP will be dependent on need and age of the child.

Booked face to face clinic Appointments

Parents may be offered a booked face-to-face clinic appointment. These have replaced the old 'drop-in' style clinics. These are available for any family and will be made after an assessment by video or phone with the parent, or on receipt of a relevant referral from partners.

Parents can be offered a booked appointment at a time or venue that suits their needs. Alternatively, parents may be sent resources that meet their needs such as weaning advice, sleeping.

Inappropriate referrals.

If a referral from another health professional does not meet our criteria, or the parental request is inappropriate for our service, then we would either sign post the parent back to the referrer or if possible, to the service which meets their needs.

We are happy to speak to any referrer regarding extraordinary requests or those which do not fit into our criteria but for whom the referrer feels a conversation with the HCP team would clarify the referral and aid the triage decision making.

Reviewing an unwell child or a child with an unusual mark, rash, or new presentation of jaundice

These children require a medical review, and we would ask the referrer to refer them to their GP. If a non-mobile baby has an unusual mark we would signpost the referrer to the Pan Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for the advice about bruising injuries in children who are not independently mobile [<http://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk>]

Weighing babies.

The HCP will accept a referral to weigh a baby or young infant if there is a parental concern or identified need. HCP do not weigh healthy babies with no weight or feeding difficulties, or for parental curiosity.

Common examples of inappropriate weighing referrals include the following:

- **Request to weigh a baby for a car seat-** we would offer parents virtual advice and resources which give guidance how to weigh their baby safely and accurately at home using everyday scales.,
- **Weighing a baby for medication purposes or for another service e.g., dietician-** we will either return the referral to the referrer or signpost parents back to their referrer.

Safeguarding.

Health visitors, along with all professionals who work with children, have an important role in safeguarding children, and recognise the importance of good communication.

Professionals who have concerns should consult with their organisation's safeguarding adviser and can seek advice from children's social care. For children who do not reach threshold, a referral to Early Help services can be made.

Health visitors and GPs often liaise around individual children; this should be with the parents' knowledge unless there is a specific reason not to i.e., suspected fabricated illness.

For children on a child protection or child in need plan, the lead professional is the social worker, who will liaise with the professionals working with a child and family including the GP.

Yours faithfully

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