

# School Nurse 121 Campaign




---

**Rosalind Godson**  
Professional Officer, Unite/CPHVA  
rosalind.godson@unitetheunion.org

---

Last month I was reminded by a reader that not all of you have had your holidays; however, all the children and young people you deal with have, so starting a new term should lead to new resolutions. I have heard from some school nurses that, despite my entreaties, they have been told not to speak to their commissioners. If this is happening in your service do get in touch and we'll ask your management why not (we won't mention you). Surely all good managers would want their staff to promote all the good work they do?

I've also received confusing news about services; some areas are increasing their numbers of school nurses and equipping them with laptops, while in other areas the service has been allowed to fade away. Let me know what is happening in your area.

The school teaching and admin staff will have had a short break, so now you must renew your acquaintance and introduce yourself to new staff. Teachers, by the way, do not routinely receive any health-related training so new ones will be unaware of your role.

## Action

*Make a formal appointment with all new teachers this month and explain all about the school nurse role using the Department of Health (DH) England information, where appropriate. Let them know how to contact you.*

A recent report about school governors from Ofsted has found that large numbers of governing bodies have difficulty in finding skilled governors, particularly in primary schools. Apparently, there are over 300,000 individuals serving as school governors. Take a guess: how many of them do you think understand all about public health and the scope of school nursing?

## Action

*Contact the chair of governors of all your schools (or all schools in the neighbourhood if you are a corporate team) and ask to make a presentation of your work to explain the benefits of having a school nurse. If you need help to do this, then check the Unite 121 website page and the school nursing page ([www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)) for a sample presentation and the DH information to lead councillors. You must tell your manager (invite him/her) and you will need to be prepared to attend in the evening.*

Local authorities in England have had school nursing comprehensively explained to them by the Department of Health at their recent conference. They have also been sent a letter from health minister Dan Poulter ([www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/news/news-2013/dan-poulter-mp-letter-to-english-local-authorities](http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/news/news-2013/dan-poulter-mp-letter-to-english-local-authorities)).

The government, supported by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and other signatories, has also sent an entreaty to local authorities reminding them of their role in improving public health outcomes for children and young people. It is addressed to the lead members for children's services and chairs of the

Health and Wellbeing Board, title you could also use when writing to local authorities. The content is based on the concern that childhood mortality in the UK is some of the worst in Europe. Although the letter doesn't go into specific detail, school nurses will be aware that some childhood deaths from asthma, suicide, alcohol and substance abuse, violence and accidents are preventable if services and families all work together.

Local authorities are being asked to sign 'the pledge' from Better Outcomes for Children and Young People. This is worth re-reading as much of it relates to the public health agenda and if improvements are to be made, school nursing numbers will need to improve to do this. See: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pledge-to-improve-children-s-health-and-reduce-child-deaths](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pledge-to-improve-children-s-health-and-reduce-child-deaths)

Netmums ([www.netmums.com](http://www.netmums.com)) recently held an online discussion about whether school nurses should wear uniform. It was clear that most respondents had never come across a school nurse and acknowledged, therefore, that there are too few; but on the whole responses were positive. CPHVA has no plans to promote uniforms, but we are hearing from some areas where private companies may be considering this.

We are involved with planning for flu immunisations using the new inhaled vaccine, so keep reading *Community Practitioner* for updates.

The DH is continuing with school nursing programme specific topics and as these can be difficult to find on the gov.uk website, I have downloaded them and put them on the school nurse resources page of our website. See [www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org) for further information.