

Date: 12 February 2018

Press Release: Children and Family Health Surrey launches school nurse text service for young people in Surrey

A new text messaging service for 11-19 year olds – Chat Health – has been launched in Surrey this month by Children and Family Health Surrey, which provides the services for the NHS. Children and young people can use this service to contact a school nurse for confidential advice and support.

Chat Health is an easy way for young people to confidentially ask for help about a range of issues, or to make an appointment with a school nurse. They can also find out how to access other local services, including emotional support or sexual health services.

Messages sent to the dedicated number **07507 329 951** are delivered to a secure website, and responded to by a school nurse. This line is manned Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm and texts are usually replied to within one working day.

Anyone who texts the service out of hours will receive an automated message explaining where to get help if their question is urgent and when they can expect a response.

Chat Health has been available in east Surrey since June 2016 but as of early February 2018 this service is available across Surrey. Chat Health is an award winning service and it is being introduced by several NHS trusts in other parts of England.

Sarah Baker, Interim Director of Children and Family Health Surrey says: *"We are really pleased to announce the launch of this new Surrey-wide service. Since taking on the contract to provide the Children and Family Health community services for the NHS in April 2017, we have been working tirelessly to introduce new and innovative health services so children and families receive consistent and equally accessible services, wherever they live in Surrey. The feedback from East Surrey, where Chat Health was first introduced is very encouraging. Young people find it less embarrassing, quick and easy, anonymous and non-judgemental way to talk about their issues. We look forward to more young people benefitting from this new school nursing service."*

Anita Lamb, a Clinical Service Manager for public health teams at Children and Family Health Surrey says: *“School nurses can support young people on a wide range of issues such as: family or friends problems, bullying, sexual health and contraception, drinking, healthy eating and anything else. Thanks to this new digital service young people will receive up to date health information and advice in a timely manner.”*

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Children and Family Health Surrey is the new, Surrey-wide NHS community health service for children and young people from birth up to 19 years of age (up to 25 for young adults with additional needs) and their parents and carers.

The new service has been designed around the needs of children, young people and their families and carers in Surrey. It focuses on the prevention of ill health, promoting and supporting child development and providing targeted and specialist medical, nursing and therapy services.

Children and Family Health Surrey includes health visiting, school nursing and school-age immunisation services as well as specialist paediatric, nursing and therapy services to support children and young people who have additional needs requiring on-going care.

Our health services are closely linked to Surrey’s mental health services, which helps improve the care and support families receive.

Families also benefit from closer links to wider health services, such as the therapies for school-age children provided by Surrey County Council.

Children and Family Health Surrey services are provided under one contract by three established NHS providers in Surrey: CSH Surrey, First Community Health and Care, and Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust.



Rebecca Jones
Head of Communications
Children and Family Health Surrey
Leatherhead Hospital, Poplar Road, Surrey, KT22 8SD

Email: rebecca.jones16@nhs.net
Mobile: 07714 956 332

Website: www.childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk