

Business & Executive Support

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Ms Rachel Wood,

5th April 2017

Dear Rachel Wood,

RECEIPT OF PETITION – CUTS TO HEALTH VISITORS

I refer to the petition, signed by local residents referring to Cuts to Health Visitors. I can advise you that receipt of the petition will be reported to Cllr Alan White, Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing.

The county council absolutely recognises the skill and expertise of the health visiting service and the vital role that health visitors play in Staffordshire's communities.

We also recognise the challenge that a reduction in budget for child health and wellbeing presents, but we are managing very difficult times with regards to local government and NHS finances and we need to be creative in how we make every penny work as hard as it possibly can.

As you know, every family has different levels of need. Delivery of the new Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Programme will be flexible to reflect this.

The service will need to prioritise and work in a more targeted fashion to ensure we meet needs, especially of those who are most vulnerable.

As you'll know from previous communications, the county council has extended the current health visiting contract for 2017/18 with Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust (SSOTP).

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I want to reassure you that, as part of the new programme, every family will continue to receive a core offer of support, and as part of this, we will identify and offer additional support to those who need more.

Families will continue to see the health visiting team for assessments, support and review at 28 weeks pregnant, 10–14 days after the baby is born, at 6-8 weeks, 9–12 months and 2–2 1/2 years.

Then, depending on what they need, they may continue to see a health visitor, or be supported by other professionals, community members, friends or family.

There will continue to be a weekly drop-in clinic at Slaters Meadow Health Centre in Burntwood, from 9:00am -10:45am on a Wednesday. [Details of other clinics in the nearby area can be found online.](#)

In addition, after a successful pilot in Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Moorlands, three new Health Visiting HUBS, including one covering the Cannock and Lichfield area, will open by the end of April 2017.

Health visiting HUBS give families instant access to advice and support from the health visiting team around common issues such as minor illness, behaviour and weaning, as well as the facility to change and make appointments over the telephone. HUBS will also receive referrals, requests for information and liaison information from other services and professionals.

Health visitors will continue to work in partnership to meet safeguarding responsibilities and support children with complex needs where a child has an identified health need.

Whilst change can bring challenges, I'm confident that what we're doing will allow us to use our limited resources to best effect and ensure that those who really need the valuable support and expertise of a health visitor can continue to access it.

Should you require further information regarding your petition, please contact Tilly Flanagan, Head of Child Health and Wellbeing on 01785 277111.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Hasketh
Business Support Officer