

Frequently Asked Questions

Consultation on the proposal to enter into a Section 75 Partnership agreement for the 0-5 Public Health Nursing Service.

Please see below further information to support you in completing the survey. This will be updated on an ongoing basis as required.

What is this consultation about?

This consultation is on a proposal to enter into a formal partnership agreement (known as a Section 75 agreement) with South Warwickshire University Foundation Trust (SWUFT)

What do the services covered do?

The 0-5 Public Health Nursing service supports and protects the health and wellbeing of parents and infants aged 0-5 years old. It does this through delivering the Healthy Child Programme, typically consisting of five visits from antenatal check to when a child turns two. This is the core programme that is designed to offer every family support in making healthy choices. It includes, health information, developmental reviews, and access to a range of community services and resources.

The Family Nurse Partnership is a voluntary programme working with young first time mothers (and their partners) aged 19 and under. The team provide regular visits from early pregnancy and work with the family up until the child is two.

What is a Section 75 Partnership Agreement?

Section 75 partnership agreements are formal legal agreements that can be used to help align and integrate services to improve the experience for the people and families who use them. They enable councils and certain NHS organisations to exercise each other's statutory functions, in conjunction with the exercise of their own statutory functions.

Why are you proposing to enter into the agreement with SWFT?

We already work with SWFT as our preferred NHS partner because we believe their approach to the joint development of services most closely matches ours.

SWFT have considerable experience of delivering health visiting services in Warwickshire and have delivered the service since the responsibility for delivering the 0-5 Public Health Nursing service came into the local authority in April 2013.

The Council believes that SWFT shares the Council's view of how partnerships should operate and what kinds of management and decision-making arrangements best support the joint development of services.

The council and SWFT already work closely to design, plan and monitor multiple services to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. This agreement strengthens the existing framework for joint working across Warwickshire.

In 2021 options were considered and taken to the Council's cabinet for approval wherein the Section 75 was recommended and approved as the preferred option to pursue given the

needs of families and service staff. The council can only enter into such an agreement once they have “*consulted jointly such persons as appear to them to be affected by such arrangements*” (National Health Services Act, 2006).

What is the benefit of entering into a partnership arrangement to deliver 0-5 Public Health Nursing Service?

Key benefits include:

- A co-ordinated preventative approach for children, parents/carers, and families across the children’s’ workforce.
- Improved accessibility to the right services and the right time.
- Timely support, and identification of the most suitable intervention needed.
- A preventative and early intervention approach that provides access to a range of universal and targeted services in hospital and community settings.
- Flexible services that meet the preferences and developmental needs of children.
- Improved inter-agency working and improved communication across frontline practitioners.
- Enables the Council and SWFT to work together more cohesively to achieve positive outcomes for children and families across Warwickshire.

A full benefits documents has been provided separately in the supporting documents.

How is the service currently delivered?

In 2017 Warwickshire County Council commissioned South Warwickshire Foundation Trust (now South Warwickshire University Foundation Trust) to deliver the service. SWFT have delivered the health visiting service on behalf of Warwickshire County Council since then. This was done through the ‘traditional’ procurement approach whereby we go out to tender to ask and evaluate potential providers who can deliver the service (*the consultation glossary document provided in the supporting document explains some of these terms in further detail*).

The usual approach is that of securing services to deliver on a pre-defined service specification which details expectations, aims and objectives, delivery model and other information. The Section 75 takes a more collaborative and joint approach allowing a provider to bring their local intelligence, service knowledge to drive service design and agree on priorities in a joint way.

Why can’t you just carry on delivering the service under the current arrangements?

The current arrangement ends on March 31st 2024 and it is not possible to continue this in it’s current contractual form beyond this date. We have considered the options available to us and weighed up which would best meet the needs of families in Warwickshire. This consideration identified the need for an integrated service model.

Local authorities and NHS trusts operate under different legislation, so there is a specific statutory provision that is designed to enable joint working between the two parties. Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 states that Local Authorities and NHS bodies can enter into partnership arrangements to provide a more streamlined service and to pool resources, if such arrangements are likely to lead to an improvement in the way their functions are

exercised. The NHS regulations stipulate that partners entering into any partnership agreements must consult with the public before putting this arrangement in place. The partnership agreement (Section 75) provides us with a mechanism to formalise arrangements to support improved flexibility, better integration and in turn improve outcomes for children and families.

Will this have any impact on the service I receive? What will be different?

There will be no change in services provided as a result of the proposed Section 75 agreement. The agreement enables both partners to continue to work together to improve the delivery of the Health Visiting service.

There will be no change in services provided specifically as a result of the proposed Section 75 agreement. The agreement will better enable both partners to continue to work together to improve the commissioning and delivery of services.

The service will not change how it operates in any material way, families will continue to receive their mandated contacts, however the partnership approach will offer a more joined up pathway with a benefit in terms of access to services.

The service will not be interrupted in any way, families and children who use the service do not need to do anything or re-register for support.

Under the agreement the service staff will continue to work under SWFT as they currently do.

Is this just another way to save costs?

No, whilst integration can lead to more efficient working practices for example reduced duplication from services working within in the 0-5 age range, the financial budget, allocated to local authorities from the Public Health Grant will remain the same (subject to inflation). There are known challenges within the health care workforce particularly around an increase in demand for services and complexity of needs, in addition to workforce capacity challenges. Therefore, adopting an integrated approach may allow us to be more innovative in how we deliver the service to overcome these challenges, whilst retaining the same financial allocation.

Will this give WCC a greater say in how services are delivered?

WCC already work closely with SWFT in terms of ensuring delivery of the service meets the needs of the population. This is achieved through governance procedures which hold the provider to account. As part of forming the agreement, both WCC and SWFT will need to decide and agree on priorities equally.

If agreed to, how will you ensure the Section 75 is delivering on improvement in outcomes and meeting the intended aims?

Whilst the specifics of this will need to be worked through, there will be a Health Visiting Partnership board who monitors the progress of the agreement and closely ensuring it meets the intended aims and objectives set out. As part of the agreement a performance management framework will be developed to effectively and robustly measure by how much the outcomes agreed upon are being met.

Risks that arise will be managed by the board ensuring an effective mitigation plan is in place and can be enacted in a timely manner.

What is the proposed timetable and next steps?

28th July 2023: The County Council Leader decision for the proposal to go out for consultation. This report is available to the general public by following the link below to the County Council Website <https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

14th August – 30th September 2023: Consultation with families, partners, providers, and other stakeholders takes place.

October-December 2023: Analysis of results from consultation

January 2024: Feedback from the consultation and recommendations will be considered by Warwickshire County Council Cabinet to consider whether or not the proposed option needs revising or can go ahead.