

# Healthcare in Schools

### Introduction

The Scottish government has published [updated guidance](#) for the provision of medicines and other healthcare needs for pupils in schools and nurseries. This is important for both health and local government branches as it will affect school staff as well community and children's health teams.

### Context

UNISON supports the "mainstreaming" of pupils with additional support needs in schools. In order for mainstreaming to be a successful policy there needs to be adequate resources to support those children in our schools. Mainstreaming is not being in the building, it is being able to fully participate in school life. The resources need to be there to provide appropriate equipment and staff for the tasks required and for the initial and ongoing training required to support children safely in our schools.

Schools support staff and early years workers have found themselves being asked to undertake an increasingly complex set of healthcare tasks. Many members have raised concerns about the lack of and/or quality of the training they have been given. Many also have concerns about the levels of risk and responsibility involved in undertaking these tasks. UNISON therefore welcomes the provision of updated guidance but implementation of the guidance will require appropriate funding to ensure that the standards set can be achieved.

### The Guidance

The guidance is a substantial document with detail on the range, legislation and policies regarding education and healthcare. Branches will need to read the detail when bargaining and negotiating for members who will be dealing with healthcare needs in schools. This briefing will focus on staffing issues in the guidance.

The principles of the guidance state clearly that:

- *Schools should make arrangements for staff providing healthcare to children and young people to receive appropriate training from a **health professional, or other accredited source** in the care they are providing, and should not be expected to provide such care unless training and support is provided and is subject to appropriate clinical governance.*
- *Assistance with intimate care may be needed at any time, by children in all sectors and at all levels. Schools should have arrangements in place to deal with these needs quickly and with respect for children's privacy, dignity and rights.*

### KEY POINTS:

- The new guidance has been published on medicines and healthcare in schools
- Employers must provide adequate training for staff and staff must agree that they have had adequate training before they take on tasks
- Local authorities must confirm in writing that adequate insurance is in place to cover the tasks staff are asked to undertake



Contact UNISON's Bargaining & Campaigns team:

Dave Watson  
[d.watson@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.watson@unison.co.uk)

Kay Sillars  
[k.sillars@unison.co.uk](mailto:k.sillars@unison.co.uk)

0141 342 2811  
0800 0 857 857

The guidance is also clear that it is support staff not teachers who will be/are supporting the healthcare needs of children. This means that it is those staff who should be receiving training and recognition for the work they do. It also states that those staff need to have access to all the relevant information about a child in order to meet their healthcare needs. There is a great deal of detail regarding the availability and accessibility of information and policies in schools.

The guidance states clearly that supporting the medical needs of children and young people remains the statutory duty of NHS boards even if the day to day work is done by staff in schools. The guidance calls for partnership working in order to achieve this. In particular it calls for close working with the school health team. Whether those teams exist across all authorities or have the resources to provide the support to schools laid out in the guidance is not yet clear.

### Healthcare in Schools.

Some helpful parts for local bargaining in schools are:

- The guidance is clear that staff need to be fully insured for any tasks they undertake. There should be written confirmation from the education authority regarding insurance for specific tasks. If it's not possible for local authorities to get insurance then these tasks should not be undertaken by non-NHS staff.
- The NHS and education authorities should work together to develop initial and refresher training. It states that training will be provided by NHS staff or suitably qualified third or private sector organisations.
- Both the school management team and the staff taking on healthcare tasks must be satisfied that the training gives staff "sufficient knowledge, understanding, **confidence and competence**" to undertake the role in both health and intimate care. The training must be signed off by both the trainer and trainee.
- There is also a great deal of detail about what policies should be in place at national, local and school levels and that these policies should be accessible to staff.
- Detailed guidance on the appropriate storage and administration of medicines and that there should be another adult witness to the administration of medicine.
- The guidance isn't clear about where a chaperone is required for intimate care but does give guidance on chaperones, should they be required.

### Action for Branches

The new guidance has implications for health and local government branches. It calls for extensive partnership working for health boards, school health teams, community pharmacies, local authorities and schools. This will have resource implications for all involved. The key to this will be the joint agreements between health boards and local authorities regarding meeting the healthcare needs of children in schools and the training of schools staff. It may be helpful to review these local agreements. Branches are encouraged to work locally to ensure that schools are following the guidelines and that members are fully trained and insured for any tasks they are asked to undertake.

For further information contact Kay Sillars: [k.sillars@unison.co.uk](mailto:k.sillars@unison.co.uk)

#### Further information:

The new guidance:  
Supporting children and young people with healthcare needs in schools  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529511.pdf>

NHS Clinical Governance Arrangements  
[http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/2000\\_29final.htm](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/2000_29final.htm)

Getting It Right For Every Child  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

UNISON Scotland Damage Report: Hard Lessons: school support staff speak out  
<http://www.unison-scotland.org/2017/01/16/hard-lessons-support-staff-struggling-to-maintain-standards-for-pupils-because-of-cuts/>



#### Contact UNISON's Bargaining & Campaigns team:

Dave Watson  
[d.watson@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.watson@unison.co.uk)

Kay Sillars  
[k.sillars@unison.co.uk](mailto:k.sillars@unison.co.uk)

0141 342 2819  
0800 0 857 857