Health Visitors

Health visitors are an integral part of the NHS’s community health services

We are all qualified nurses, with special training and experience in child health, and health promotion and education. We offer practical support and advice in a host of diverse situations. Many people think that health visitors only visit new babies and their families at home – this is only part of the picture.

The health visiting service aims to promote the health of the whole community. You can contact us through your local GP, health centre and child health clinic. Health visitors are the most accessible professionals in the community and are accessible to any member of the public, whatever their age.

Contacting your local surgery or health centre will put you in touch with a health visitor, who can visit you at home. Health visitors are subject to a professional code of conduct which requires us to act in your best interest. Our aim is to help you lead as healthy a life as possible, both physically and mentally.

amicus the union

The CPHVA is a professional section of the Amicus trade union.

Community Practitioners’ and Health Visitors’ Association

CPHVA
Living in a healthy community

The health visitor works with the community to influence local public health policy, such as pollution, accident prevention and traffic calming, parks and safe play areas.

Health visitors can help by:

- providing sensible, practical and professional advice on how to stay healthy
- running health promotion groups, such as ‘quit smoking’ groups, keep-fit classes, parenting and baby massage groups, and stress management sessions
- advise you on a healthy lifestyle, such as diet and exercise.

Health of your baby or growing child

Bringing up children is a demanding challenge. Every family with a child under five years old has a named health visitor who can advise on:

- everyday difficulties, such as teething, sleeping and feeding
- immunisation programmes to prevent such diseases as diphtheria, polio, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, mumps, German measles and meningitis
- parenting classes, sleep clinics and managing difficult behaviour
- any special needs your child may have
- Sure Start services which may be available in your area.
The impact of a new baby in the family

A new baby is a time for celebration – but it can also be a very stressful period when your life feels it has been turned upside down. We are not just there to support your baby, but to help the whole family. We can:

- advise on your employment and benefit rights
- support fathers-to-be and reassure new fathers about their role
- give information on local support networks, including leisure activities, ante-natal classes, parent and toddler groups, and organisations, such as the National Childbirth Trust
- advise on the options for child care available locally
- provide support for lone parents bringing up families.

Growing older is a time of change

Growing older is a time to slow down and relax – it is also a time when you may find you require extra help.

Health visitors can help maintain your independence by:

- giving you information about activities in your area which will help you stay healthy
- advising you about benefits and assistance available from social services to support you in your home
- visiting you at home and understanding your needs, thereby ensuring you stay in control of your life.
Your emotional well-being which could impact on your health

Today's modern society throws up many different pressures work, family and money problems – which could impact on your health.

Health visitors can point the way to specialist help, should you be coping with problems such as:

- unemployment
- a recent bereavement
- a serious illness for you or your partner
- an unhappy or violent relationship

• recently arriving in this country and having problems coping with the language and cultural changes
• conflicts within your family
• a disability
• housing
• new or enduring mental health issues.
Caring for others

Caring for other family members and friends can be very rewarding, but also highly stressful. The health visitor can:

- offer support and a listening ear
- arrange help from social services and other agencies, and put you in touch with other carers.
- organise help for a carer who needs to take a short-term break.

Skilled professionals

Health visitors have knowledge about a whole range of issues and have contact with many other specialist practitioners in the following areas: HIV/Aids, alcohol and drug misuse, contraception, depression, disability, housing and homelessness, isolation, menopause, pregnancy, poverty, screening, domestic violence and sexual health.

Part of the team

Health visitors are part of the wider health care team servicing your community. If we are unable to help you ourselves, we can direct you to an agency that can.

Easily available

We are here to help you and your family. You can contact your health visitor direct who can then arrange to see you at home or at their base.
WITH SOCIAL SERVICES
- Welfare rights advisers
- Social worker
- Nursery education
- Play groups

IN LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS
- Gingerbread
- Age Concern
- Barnardo's
- Relate
- Mind

AT THE SURGERY
- Family doctor
- Practice nurse
- District nurse
- Midwife

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LOCAL HEALTH VISITOR CONTACT: