

Health visitor

Health visitors are nurses or midwives who are passionate about promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing illness. They work with families to give pre-school-age children the best possible start in life.

Working life

Health visitors are qualified and registered nurses or midwives who have chosen to gain additional training and qualifications as specialist community public health nurses [1] (SCPHN - HV). Their additional training in public health enables them to assess the health needs of individuals, families and the wider community to promote good health and prevent illness.

As a health visitor, you'll be working mainly with children from birth to five years and their families. You may also work with at-risk or deprived groups such as the homeless, addicts or travellers.



You'll have a crucial role in making sure that children have the best start in life. In partnership with parents, you'll assess:

Health visitors have a crucial role in making sure that children and young people have the best start in life.

- parenting skills
- the family and home situation
- the development needs of young children.

You may then offer and agree with parents any further support that may be needed, and arrange to meet with them in their own home, clinic or community setting.?

You'll need to work together with a range of different health care professionals including community nursing staff, school nurses [2], nursery nurses [3], GPs [4], social workers [5] and allied health professionals [6].

Where will you work?

Health visitors are generally employed by the NHS or by community interest groups. Health visitors may work in a variety of settings depending on the nature of the work including:

- families' homes
- GP surgeries
- community and outreach clinics
- Sure Start centres

What will you do as a health visitor?

The role varies considerably from area to area, and occasionally there may be a specialist component to the role. The day-to-day work of health visitors typically includes:

- providing ante-natal and post-natal support
- supporting parents in bringing up their young children
- providing advice on feeding babies and children
- assessing a child growth and development needs of young children
- supporting children with special needs
- advising on behavioural management techniques
- advising how to reduce risks and prevent accidents and reduce injuries
- providing information on local services

Safeguarding and protecting children

As a health visitor, you'll have an important role in working with other organisations to safeguard and protect children. You'll be trained in recognising the risk factors, triggers of concern, and signs of abuse and neglect in children. You'll often be the first to recognise whether a child is at risk of harm, and know whether action needs to be taken, and what should be done to protect them. You'll also ensure families receive the best possible support during formal safeguarding arrangements.

Real-life stories

- Richard Montague [7]
- Sharin Baldwin [8]

Want to find out more?

- Find out more about entry requirements for health visiting [1]
- Find out more about the skills and interests needed for health visiting [9]
- Find out more about training and development opportunities in health visiting [10]

- Pay and conditions

Expand / collapse

Example salaries

Health visitor: £26,302 - £35,225 (Chepstow Hospital, 2017)

Health visitor: £26,565 - £35,577 (Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, 2017)

Health visitor: £21,041 - £28,180 (Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust, 2016)

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales [11]. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Health visiting jobs usually start at band 6 but there is opportunity to move up the bands with more experience. Health visitors in the NHS will usually work standard hours of 37.5 per week.

More health visitors are now being employed outside of the NHS, especially in local authorities, where terms and conditions can vary. Community interest groups, for example, do not have agreed national pay scales. For more information please view our pay and benefits page [12].

- Where the role can lead

Expand / collapse

As a health visitor, you'll need to be committed to learning, and always keep your skills and knowledge up to date. To maintain your registration to practise with the Nursing and Midwifery Council, you'll need to go through the process of revalidation. The process is straightforward and will help you as a nurse or midwife to demonstrate that you practise safely and effectively. You will have to revalidate every three years to renew your registration. Revalidation includes taking part in continuing professional development [13] (CPD). Find out more about revalidation on the NMC microsite [14]

Some health visitors choose to develop their career further by following an academic career pathway working in higher education, whereas others may decide to take up senior practitioner or managerial roles.

Some health visitors decide to go into service management or clinical academic research [15]. For example, you may want to become a community matron and lead a team of health visitors and other nurses.

The NHS Leadership Academy runs a number of programmes to support nurses into leadership roles,

including the Mary Seacole programme [16]. They also offer a programme purely for frontline nurses and midwives to help develop their skills and build confidence.

More information on the NHS Leadership Academy and its programmes [17].

- Job market and vacancies

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England

The main employer of health visitors in England is the NHS. Estimated figures show there approximately 9,700 people employed as health visitors in England. In 2016/17, there will be over 800 proposed training places.

Scotland

The main employers of health visitors in Scotland are local NHS Boards, Community Health Partnerships, Health and Social Care Partnerships and Local Authorities. In 2015, the Centre for Workforce Intelligence estimated that there were 2115 health visitors working in the NHS in Scotland, of which 1805 were working at Agenda for Change [18] Band 5 or higher.

Vacancies

Most vacancies in England and Wales are advertised on NHS Jobs [19] but you may also find vacancies on the following websites:

- NHS Scotland Recruitment [20] ? ?
- NHS Education for Scotland [21]
- Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland [22]
- Public Health Wales (NHS) Recruitment and Employment [23]??
- Public Sector Jobs in Wales [24]?
- Local Government Jobs (UK) [25]
- Scottish Local Government Jobs [26]
- Local Government Jobs in Northern Ireland [27]
- Welsh Local Government Jobs [28]?
- Royal Society for Public Health [29]

Recruiting for values

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution apply in your everyday work. The same will be true if you are applying for a university course funded by the NHS.

Find out more about NHS values [30].?

If you're applying for a job in a local authority, each has its own set of core values underpinning its recruitment exercises, which can usually be found in the recruitment section of its website.

Job titles

Note that terms such as 'practitioner', 'manager', 'specialist' and 'consultant' may have different

meanings in different job titles. Therefore, they do not necessarily reflect the role category that the job really belongs to. It is important to check the person specification of the role to fully understand the skills and knowledge required.

- Further information

Expand / collapse

- Community Practitioners and Health Visitors? Association [31]
- Royal College of Nursing [32]
- Nursing and Midwifery Council [33]
- Institute of Health Visiting [34]?

Other roles that may interest you

- Public health nurse [35]
- Adult nurse [36]
- Mental health nurse [37]
- Learning disability nurse [38]

Partner logos



Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/roles-public-health/health-visitor>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/health-visitor/entry-requirements-health-visitor>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/school-nurse>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/corporate-services/nursery-nurse-and-nursery-assistant>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/general-practice-gp>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/social-worker>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-visitor/real-life-story-richard-montague>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-visitor/real-life-story-sharin-baldwin>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-visitor/skills-and-interests-health-visitor>
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/health-visitor/training-and-development-health-visitor>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits>
- [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/pay-and-benefits>
- [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/professional-development>
- [14] <http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/welcome-to-revalidation/>
- [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/clinical-academic-careers>
- [16] <http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/mary-seacole-programme/>
- [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/nhs-leadership-academy>
- [18] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Agenda_for_Change
- [19] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

- [20] <https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>
- [21] <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/recruitment.aspx>
- [22] <http://www.hscni.net/>
- [23] <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/46729>
- [24] <https://uk.jobted.com/?l=wales>
- [25] <http://www.lgjobs.com/>
- [26] <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/home/>
- [27] <https://www.localgovernmentjobsni.gov.uk/>
- [28] <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/jobs>
- [29] <http://www.rsph.org.uk/en/resources/jobs/>
- [30] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>
- [31] <http://www.unitetheunion.org/>
- [32] <http://www.rcn.org.uk/>
- [33] <http://www.nmc-uk.org/>
- [34] <http://www.ihv.org.uk/>
- [35] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/roles-public-health/public-health-nurse>
- [36] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse>
- [37] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse>
- [38] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/learning-disability-nurse>
- [39] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/>