

PRACTITIONER GUIDE

Agency Roles and Responsibilities – Health Visiting

The national [Healthy Child Programme 0 to 19](#) aims to improve children and young people's public health by promoting good health, wellbeing and resilience.

Health Visiting is part of the 0-19 service in Southern Health Foundation Trust's Children and Family Services. The 0 to 5 element of the Healthy Child Programme is led by health visiting services. The 5 to 19 element is led by school nursing services - for further information see Practitioner Guide: School Nursing.

Health Visitors are registered nurses or midwives who have completed additional registered specialist training in public health. Health visiting is a universal service which comprises of five core contacts: Antenatal, New Birth, Postnatal, Health Review One and Health Review Two.

Health visitor contact

The Health Visiting Team offer parents support in various locations: in the home, within the local community, digitally via video contacts as well as through Chat Health (a confidential text support service) and the Hampshire Healthy Families portal.



What can a family expect from their health visitor?

Health visitors work closely with midwives, GPs, and community services to support the whole family as they welcome a new baby. The health visiting team are available to support parents from pregnancy through to their child starting school via the core contacts - or on a more individualised basis according to family need.

Child health advice:

- Infant feeding
- Healthy weight and nutrition
- Safe sleep and ICON (abusive head trauma)
- Advice on starting solids
- Identifying and managing common childhood illnesses
- Immunisations
- Complex health needs
- Promoting oral health
- [Healthy Start](#)

Child development advice:

- Sleep
- Speech, language and communication
- Behaviour
- School readiness



Mental health advice:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all the family
- Assessment of mental health
- Delivering evidence-based interventions (Knowing Me Knowing You, emotional wellbeing visits)
- Supporting healthy parent-infant and couple relationships to reduce the impact on children of parental conflict

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Health visitors also signpost to or complete referrals for specialist interventions or services including:

- Perinatal mental health services and NHS Talking Therapies.
- Support after birth trauma.
- Bereavement support.
- Support in relation to an unhappy, abusive or violent relationship.
- Support following identification of a mark (bruise or injury) on a non-mobile infant-referral to Children's Services.
- Children with complex health needs or special education needs (SEN) to ensure that all the appropriate professionals are involved in the care of that child to achieve the best outcomes.
- Referrals to other health professionals for specific requirements - paediatricians, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, ophthalmology, dietician, Services for Young Children.
- Smoking cessation.
- Children's Services for any safeguarding concerns.



How is the Healthy Child Programme (0-5) delivered?

The needs of every family are individual, and this is reflected in the level of service provided by the health visiting team. An assessment is made by a health visitor for each family, and this will then inform how the contacts are delivered.

Healthy Child Programme contacts:

- Antenatal visit contact from 28 weeks onwards.
- A new birth visit at home when the baby is 10 to 14 days old.
- Postnatal contact at 4 to 8 weeks.
- Health review 1 at 8 to 12 months.
- Health review 2 at 2 to 2 ½ years old.

Antenatal and postnatal contacts are tailored following assessment and therefore could result in a letter, telephone call, face to face contact in a clinic setting or face to face contact at home.

Family Nurse Partnership

(FNP): FNP is for young parents. Young mothers-to-be are partnered with a specially trained family nurse who visits them regularly, from early pregnancy until their child is aged between one and two, at which point they will be transferred to the health visiting caseload.



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Safeguarding responsibilities of a health visitor

The advice, support, signposting and information-giving that health visitors routinely provide to all families has a positive impact on reducing the risks to infants and young children. Health visitors' skills in holistic assessment of child and family wellbeing means that they are well placed to recognise where families may have additional needs. Whilst health visitors have contact with all families with babies and children aged between 0 to 5 years, the pattern and frequency of contacts is shaped by a progressive universal model which targets families with higher levels of identified need on a specialist pathway.

As part of their safeguarding role, health visitors may:

- Make referrals to Early Help, to support families in accessing further agency support to meet their needs.
- Decide that a family should be stepped up from the 'universal' service offered by health visiting to a 'universal partnership plus' level of health visiting services, to respond to the additional needs of the family using the specialist pathway.
- Work with children and families where formal child protection actions are required. This includes making referrals to children's social care because of concerns about abuse and neglect and contributing to multi-agency assessments and meetings, in order to develop and implement plans to protect children.

As a continuing presence in the life of a family with children under 5, the health visitor has an important role to play in supporting the family where there are concerns about the child and contributing to the formulation of plans to meet the needs of the child and family.



Further information

- [Practitioner Guide: School Nursing](#)
- [Practitioner Guide: Hampshire Healthy Families](#)
- [Portal: Hampshire Healthy Families](#)
- [Healthy child programme - GOV.UK](#)
- [Guidance: Commissioning health visitors and school nurses for public health services for children aged 0 to 19 - GOV.UK](#)
- [HSCP Safeguarding Infants Toolkit](#)

Contact details

- [Your Health Visiting Service - Hampshire | Health for Under5s](#)
- [ChatHealth 0-5 \(for parents\)](#)
Text: 07520 615 720

