

Association of British Paediatric Nurses Position Statement on Health Visiting

Purpose

This position statement affirms the beliefs and values of the Association of British Paediatric Nurses. It has been produced by officers and members of the Association in line with our role to promote the development of children's nursing through evidence-based information about practice and education¹.

Background

Health visitors are registered nurses or midwives who have completed a post-registration Specialist Community and Public Health Nursing education programme² and work with families to support the health and development of children from birth to five years of age. The health visiting team can include a range of staff, including other registered nurses, nursery nurses and health care support workers.

Health visiting is a universal service working with families to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent illness, and support the health and development of children. Health Visitors

- identify health needs, provide information and reassurance, and help families adjust to being new parents
- help parents learn skills for raising their children, and support maternal and infant mental health
- provide routine health and development reviews, screening tests, vaccinations, and information for parents
- offer individual support and advice in the home, and facilitate clinics and groups with other professionals
- can identify health needs early, such as speech or language problems, and provide early help
- liaise with other agencies to make sure appropriate support is in place.

Some health visitors are employed by independent and private organisations and contracted to provide a health visiting service locally.

The ABPN believes that

- Services for infants, children and young people should be age appropriate and meet their specific needs
- The voices of parents, family and significant others should be heard and inform the development and planning/ commissioning of services to support them and their children
- Infants, children and parents should have access to a named health visitor and health visiting team members that have child specific and specialist knowledge,

skills and competencies to provide a health visiting service in their own home, health centres, general practices and wider community settings

The ABPN calls on the UK Government and the devolved nations to:

- place infants and children at the heart of all policy-making decisions
- invest in health visiting services as part of an integrated children’s public health and community children’s nursing service to enable families to access a named health visitor and health visiting team
- develop a workforce strategy for health visiting and action plan to ensure a sustainable future workforce

Terms

The term child refers to infants, children, young people and young adults up to 25 years of age.

About the ABPN

The ABPN is a network of children’s nurses with a wide membership of experts in clinical practice, education, leadership and research. It is the oldest children’s nursing association in the world, established in 1938.

The ABPN recognises that primary and community services, as well as child public health and mental health services, including school nurses and health visitors also have a key role in supporting children, young people and families.

www.abpn-uk.com

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References

¹ The ABPN recognises that primary and community services, as well as child public health and mental health services, including school nurses and health visitors also have a key role in supporting children, young people and families.

² Nursing and Midwifery Council Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-post-registration/standards-of-proficiency-for-specialist-community-public-health-nurses2/>