



Help children get off to
the best possible start...

Health Visitors

A positive start for every family.



...as their early years are
key to a healthy future.

Health Visitors: 150 years of ensuring a positive start for every child

Health visitors are nurses or midwives who have taken additional training to become specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN). Health visitors lead and deliver the Healthy Child Programme 0-5 alongside others, supporting the health and well being of children, families and the wider population.

There is a clear Government commitment to deliver 4,200 health visitor posts by 2015, through recruitment into training and return to practice, along with a more comprehensive health visiting service that is matched to local requirements.

The overall aim of the programme is to see a rejuvenated workforce working to deliver a personalised service for today's modern families.



150 years of supporting children, families and communities

The health visitor profession has a long and prestigious legacy that in many ways mirrors the evolution of public health in the UK. The profession can trace its beginnings back to 1862, when high rates of child mortality (one in four children died before its first birthday) led to the call for families to be given real, practical help and preventative care. For 150 years, health visitors have worked to make sure that children have a positive start in life and families with new babies get the support they need.

Partnership working with GPs, midwives, school nurses and Sure Start Centres

The start of life is a crucial time for children and parents. Good, well-resourced health visiting services can help ensure that families have a positive start, working in partnership with GPs, maternity and other health services, Sure Start Children's Centres and other early years services.

Evidence-based approach

The evidence base for the public health impact that health visitors can make is even more compelling now as when their work began 150 years ago. Child and family health and well being in the early months and years sets down foundations for life. The work of health visitors in delivering the Healthy Child Programme 0-5 is essential to ensuring the health and well-being of children and families, contributing to better public health outcomes for our communities.



Parenting style

“Effective warm authoritative parenting gives children confidence, a sense of well-being and self-worth. It also stimulates brain development and the capacity to learn. Parents who develop open, participative communication, problem-centred coping, confidence and flexibility tend to manage stress well and help their families to do the same.”

Utting, D. (2009)

Helping babies to develop

“Scientists are telling us more and more about brain development and about the importance of early development for how well children flourish and achieve in later learning. In the early life period, interactions and experiences determine whether a child’s brain architecture provides a strong or a weak foundation for their future health, well-being and development.”

OECD (2007)

“Health visiting has always been about improving health and wellbeing of the child, family and community through the promotion of public health messages and working with parents to enable them to be the best parents that they can be.”

Pauline Watts, Professional Officer, Health Visiting Programme (2012)

Importance of early years

“Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional, are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being.”

Marmot M. (2010)

Sure Start

“Evidence from the National Evaluation of Sure Start has demonstrated that the availability of high quality health services, early years education and support through the Sure Start Programme has resulted in families in Sure Start areas experiencing better child health, parenting, home learning environments and life satisfaction than families in non-Sure Start areas.”

Melhuish, E. et al (2010)

Delivering the new service vision through partnership working

The Health Visitor Programme was established to support and oversee the national roll out of the *Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011-2015*.

This is a major investment programme involving partnership working with professional groups, education institutions and with NHS commissioners and providers to deliver a new service vision and family offer.

Through strengthened leadership and clinical practice, NHS organisations are transforming the Healthy Child Programme, ensuring the best services for families and a rewarding career choice for those who choose to enter the profession.

Early Implementer Sites are leading the transformation programme, cultivating the learning and practice that will enable the whole of the NHS to develop a universal, evidence-based service that meets the needs of today's modern families.

The combination of a rejuvenated health visiting workforce, along with a modernised service for families has the potential to deliver a sea change in public health outcomes across the population.

Toward 2015 and beyond

From 2013, the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) services 0-5 will be commissioned by the NHS Commissioning Board. At the same time, commissioning of HCP 5-19 years services will be transferred to local authorities.

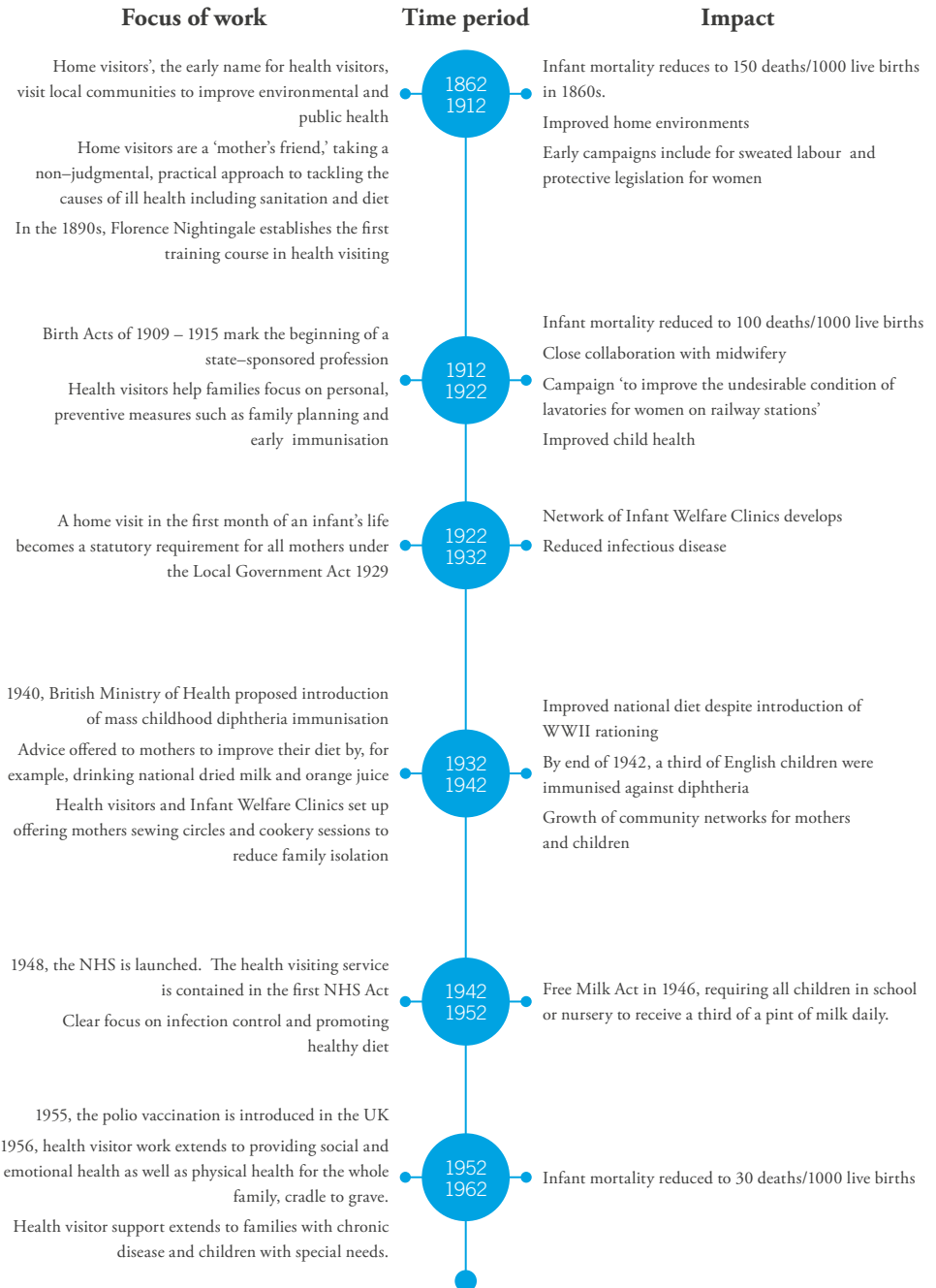
The future commissioning route of the health visitor service and the wider children's public health service from pregnancy to 5 was subject to consultation in the Public Health White Paper, 'Healthy lives, healthy people: our strategy for public health in England'.

In the medium term, the Government is committed to transferring commissioning of children's public health services for the pregnancy to 5 age group from health to local authorities. However in the short-term, the commitment to raise numbers of health visitors at the same time as strengthening the Healthy Child Programme and expanding the Family Nurse Partnership by 2015 is best achieved through the NHS Commissioning Board.

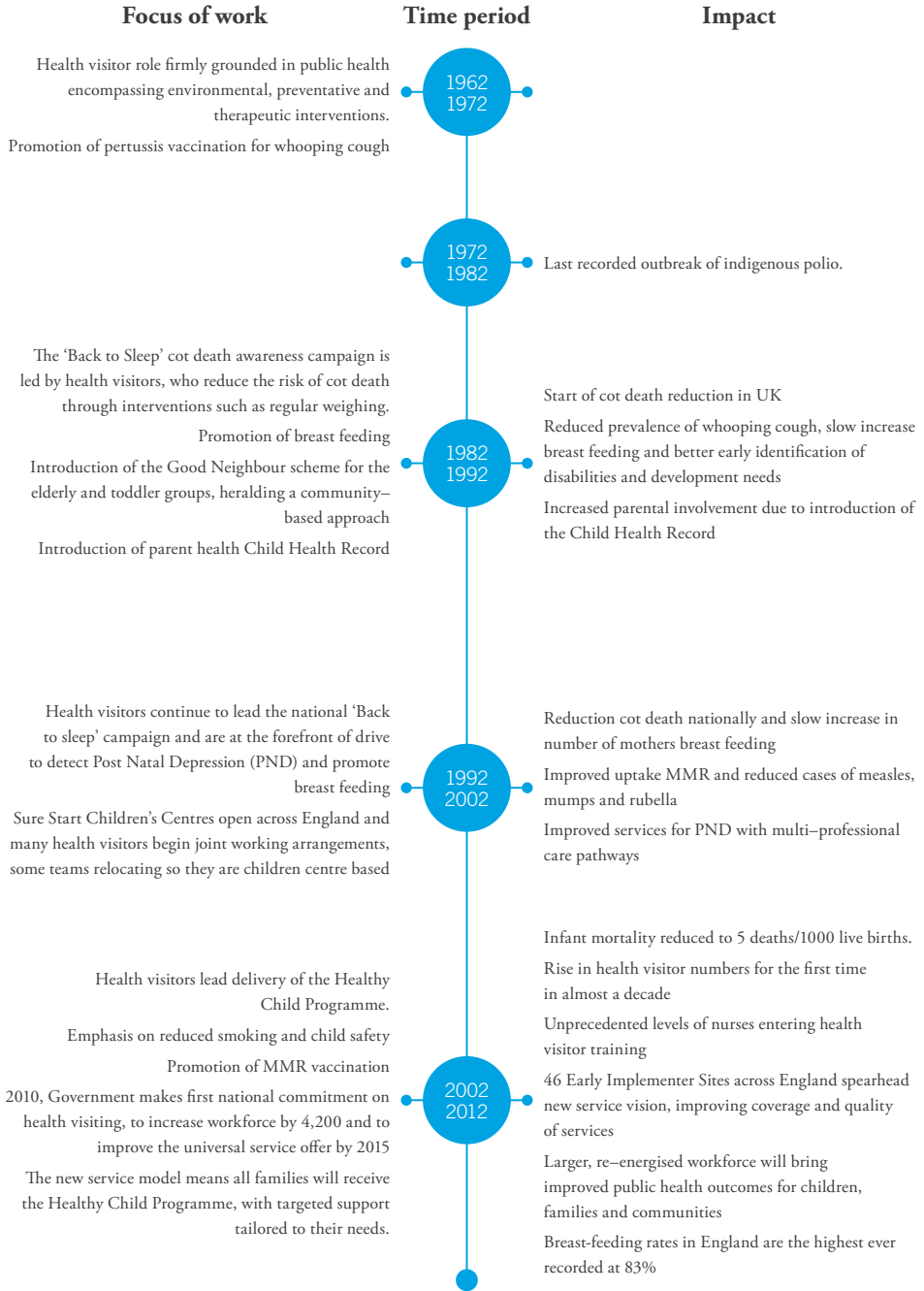
In the meantime, there must be collaboration between the NHS and local authority health and wellbeing boards and whoever is commissioning the HCP (currently PCT clusters) so that by 2015, local authorities are ready to commission these services.

Visit www.dh.gov.uk/healthvisitors for further information or email healthvisiting@dh.gsi.gov.uk

150 years of health visiting – better health for



generations of families



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If becoming a Health Visitor is not for you, please pass
this information on to a colleague who you think may
be interested.

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NHS

Careers

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make a difference**