Publication withdrawn

This guidance is out of date and was withdrawn in August 2025.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AS PART OF THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS INTO HEALTH VISITING PROGRAMMES

Purpose / Rationale

This guidance document is intended for consideration by higher education institutions to support and inform the recruitment and selection process for students wishing to undertake Health Visitor Programmes. It outlines some of the personal and professional attributes that have been agreed as important to the successful delivery of the health visitor role.

As part of the governments commitment to increase the health visiting workforce by 4,200 whole time equivalents by 2015, and to deliver a new service vision it is recognised that there will be an additional pressure on higher education institutions and services to recruit and select the most appropriate students for the health visiting programmes. This will include educational ability and personal and professional attributes.

In order to be able to deliver the new service vision including the Healthy Child Programme it is imperative that the values, skills and attributes of health visitors, the key professionals leading and delivering it are well understood. This will enable healthcare providers and higher education institutions to target recruitment appropriately and successfully.

We want to ensure that we attract the right people into health visiting. It is intended that the development of the narratives profile subset will help the NHS and higher education institutions attract and select good recruits, and select and retain nurses with the necessary values behaviours, attributes and skills to become a successful health visitor.

It is acknowledged that all higher education institutions already have some well developed tried and tested recruitment and selection processes in place, it is not therefore the intention of this guidance, to change current good practice and agreed processes.

It is intended that the document will be used to inform question sets and discussions when reviewing recruitment and selection and in order to ensure that a wide range of personal and professional attributes are considered during the interview process.

How the attributes were developed and agreed

In 2010, a piece of work was commissioned by the Department of Health through the organisation Mendas, an organisation with experience of role profiling for NHS professional groups.

The scope of the work was to gain understanding and build consensus regarding the nature and role of the Health Visitor, and to produce a detailed narrative description of an effective health visitor.

There were a number of stages to the developing the narrative profile:

- 1. Telephone interviews with a range of health visitors.
- 2. Focus Groups and the development of a draft narrative profile.
- 3. Desk research to inform the focus groups.
- 4. Further telephone interviews to refine the profile.
- 5. Validation of the narrative profile.
- 6. Orientation of the profile to be fit for the future.

The work was undertaken by a team of psychologists.

A final profile narrative outlining the behaviours, values and attributes, skills and attitudes was produced in 2010, however it has not been fully utilised to date.

The attribute sets in this document have been summarised from the more detailed work.

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Proactively interested in public health, prevention and early intervention

Interest in wider public health needs, well being, promoting good health and reducing health inequalities, through prevention and early intervention.

Driven to make a difference.

Welcomes challenge including wider organisational challenges.

Focus on people rather than tasks.

Desire to search out information, analyse and use evidence based approaches.

Adaptable and influential

Ability to reflect and learn from all experiences and interactions with clients.

Shares lessons learned.

Emotional resilience and emotional intelligence.

Will challenge and question the status quo.

Agent for change, seeking opportunities to influence policy and practice and shape services.

Respectful of different values and takes a holistic approach to care

Takes a holistic approach in considering cultural, family and societal needs.

Genuine interest in clients, whilst retaining a focus on needs of the child.

Sensitive to cultural differences and the impacts these have on family life.

Insightful when communicating

Has an active listening style, interested and able to respond appropriately to establish productive relationships with clients.

Tactful, but able to exert influence through respect and credibility.

Gives out clear messages that can be understood by clients.

Able to recognise non-verbal cues and behaviours of family members.



Supportive and has an adaptive communication style

Strengths based and empowering style to help others recognise their own inner resources.

Supportive and encouraging and able to build long term productive and trusting relationships with clients.

Approachable empathetic and non-judgemental to ensure client feels comfortable in discussing difficult issues.

Able to engage others and build partnerships

Ability to build networks with a range of partner organisations and agencies.

Is positive about colleagues with clients to make them comfortable in dealing with others if necessary.

Leadership skills – delegates effectively and builds team morale, encouraging and motivating others, leads outside own sphere of influence.

Able to demonstrate professionalism

Passionate about the role, wants to make a difference.

Seeks to build a good reputation within the community and gains respect from others.

Remains professional at all times when faced with challenges and recognises own limitations.

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