

# The Health Visiting Service

**Hertfordshire Community Trust - Our core values**  
**Care** - We put patients at the heart of everything we do  
**Respect** - We treat people with dignity and respect  
**Quality** - We strive for excellence and effectiveness at all times  
**Confidence** - We do what we say we will do  
**Improve** - We will improve through continuous learning and innovation

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## What is the approach?

Health Visiting is based on four key principles:

- Search for health needs
- Stimulation of an awareness of health needs
- Influence policies affecting health
- Facilitate health enhancing activities

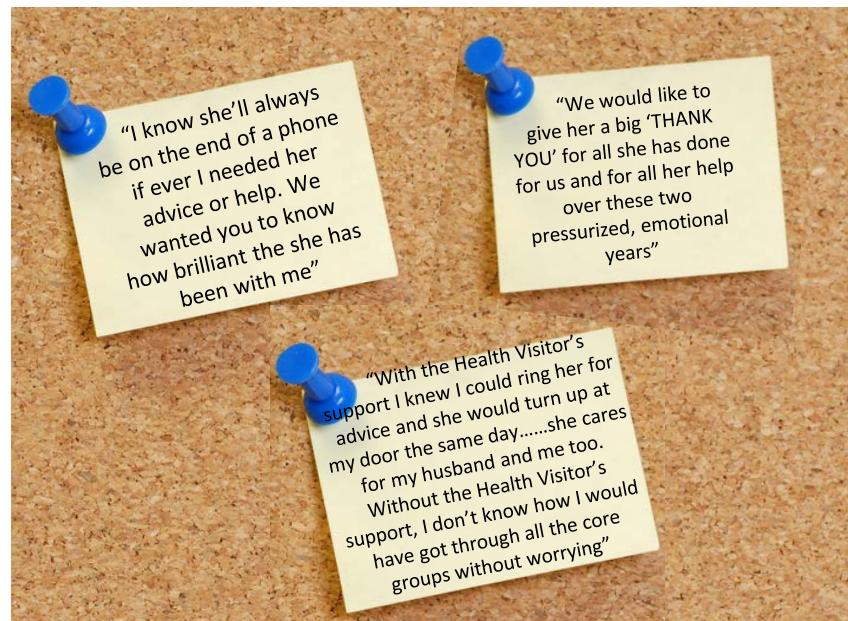
Health Visitors provide expert information, assessments and interventions for babies, children and families including first time mothers and fathers and families with complex needs. Health Visitors help to empower parents to make decisions that affect their family's health and wellbeing.

Health visitors work in skill mixed teams and across partnerships with maternity services, GP's, primary and secondary care, the Family Nurse Partnership, children's social care, early year's providers and the voluntary agencies. Health visitors use public health data to understand the public health needs of the communities they serve and they work in partnership with others to develop services to meet these needs.

Health Visitors are pivotal community health workers working within Children's Centres and from community health clinics and in the homes of families.

## What are staff and users experiences?

“Because of my Health Visitor's brilliant support over the 19 months since Jack was born, she has made us feel a lot better about being good parents for Jack. I can't tell you how grateful I am for her caring manner....not all professions in Jack's life have been



## What are the aims?

The overarching aim of the Health Visiting Service is to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of children and their families. Health Visitors show care, compassion and commitment in how they look after families. They find the courage to do the right thing in acting in the best interest of the child or parent often in complex, pressured environments. Health Visitors communicate well with children, families and the communities they serve and demonstrate competence in all of their activities and interventions.

Health Visitors deliver the four levels of the Healthy Child programme through health promotion, health protection and early intervention, supporting families and safeguarding vulnerable children.

## What are the benefits?

- The early identification of individual and family strengths and needs through antenatal promotional guidance from 28 weeks of gestation in order to offer the most appropriate level of support.
- To work with families in such a way that the impact of health inequalities is minimised and health outcomes are improved.
- Health visitors support parents through the important period of transition to parenthood and beyond.
- The promotion of sensitive parenting and strong attachment laying the critical foundations for intellectual, social and emotional health and wellbeing.
- Supporting families to initiate and sustain important health interventions such as breastfeeding, evidence based weaning, a healthy diet, physical activity, promoting safe environments, smoking cessation.
- Support families in managing minor illnesses reducing A & E attendances supported by the use of prescribing.
- Promoting the health, wellbeing and development of all children supporting every child in school readiness.
- A key role in the failsafe mechanisms for Neonatal Bloodspot Screening in line with the UK NSC Programme Standards.

## What are the impacts?

- Early identification of need with appropriate targeted interventions (and referrals to specialist services where needed) through the delivery of specific care packages.
- Children and families benefit from services tailored to their individual needs to improve the health, development and safety of babies and young children.
- The promotion of parent and infant mental health and secure attachment and the promotion of sensitive parenting enabling healthy brain development.
- Children and their families receive evidence based advice and support for health promotion during the early years of childhood reducing the impact of health inequalities.
- Tailored support for families and children with special educational needs, working closely with social care and education services supporting children to reach their full potential.
- Improved health and social outcomes from a systematic approach to early child development is a powerful equalizer (Irwin et al 2007, Marmot 2010).