

Gateway ref: 15884

HV Recruitment Drive - Return to Practice Offer

Earlier this year the government announced a new vision for rejuvenating the health visiting (HV) profession by ensuring that health visitors are key professionals in the delivery of public health. This means health visitors will once again provide a universal service to all families and will have the opportunity to do what they were trained to do rather than focusing purely on issues such as safeguarding.

To kick start a government commitment to recruit 4,200 new health visitors by 2015, a return to practice scheme will be launched across England later this year. This will be followed with more Health Visitor education and new ways of training whilst maintaining high professional standards.

As part of the drive to recruit and retain more health visitors we are working with SHAs to ensure that qualified health visitors who wish to return to practice can access high quality local programmes. The two current return to practice (RtP) pilot sites have shown that RtP can be a practical, accessible and affordable method of recruitment.

The following is, or will be, in place in support of recruitment:

- SHAs have received some central funding towards local HV programmes including funding to supporting a HV Coordinator and RtP locally;
- the NMC issued an update in March 2011 on HV training dispelling some 'myths' that could have deterred potential returners/HV students;
- potential returners will be able to visit a specific webpage and call a dedicated phone line at NHS Careers. The website will include a link on the homepage directing people to information on health visiting as a career including RtP; and
- RtP programmes across all SHAs will have been updated or developed and be up-and-running by September 2011, with the aim to recruit at least 5% of their share of the 4,200 commitment through RtP.

Further, by June 2011:

- DH and other stakeholders will work further with the NMC to develop a suggested Framework for RtP based on the RtP principles;
- the NMC will have identified relevant lapsed health visiting registrants and will have agreed with SHAs how and when to contact them;
- a letter from the Chief Nursing Officer will be sent to those with a lapsed registration on the NMC register inviting them to return;

- training placements for returners will be in place, supported by sufficient practice teacher and HEI capacity;
- a local SHA representative will be in place to support returners throughout their course; and
- a metrics and evaluation mechanism will be developed to measure the progress of RtP.