

Health visitor return to practice – Frequently Asked Questions for NHS employers.

Why are we asking health visitors to return to practice?

In February 2011, the Government announced a [new vision for rejuvenating the health visiting profession](#) by ensuring they are key professionals in the delivery of public health. The Government has committed to recruit 4,200 new health visitors by 2015 and the return to practice scheme is part of the overall health visitor recruitment strategy.

The NHS Operating framework 2011/12 identifies health visitors as a key new commitment and that Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) will be required to develop effective health visiting services to support the recruitment target.

How many health visitors are we hoping will return to practice?

Strategic Health Authorities (SHA's) will aim to recruit at least 5% of their share of the 4,200 commitment through return to practice.

Will we receive funding for the return to practice programme?

SHAs have received some central funding to support a health visitor co-ordinator and return to practice locally.

How is the return to practice programme being co-ordinated?

Each SHA will run their own return to practice programme. There will be a designated lead in each SHA to co-ordinate the scheme who will be able to provide specific information about how the programme is being conducted. The leads are:

- East Midlands: Jane Appleby - janeappleby1@nhs.net
- East of England: Tracy Cogan - tracey.cogan@eoe.nhs.uk
- London: Maggie Rogers - magie.rogers@london.nhs.uk
- North East: Dr. Lesley Young-Murphy - lesley.young-murphy@newcastle-pct.nhs.uk, Joy McGurk - joy.mcGurk@northeast.nhs.uk
- North West: Eustace de Sousa – eustace.desousa@northwest.nhs.uk
- South Central: Christine Etheridge – christine.etheridge@southcentral.nhs.uk
- South East Coast: Deborah Stubberfield - deborah.stubberfield@southeastcoast.nhs.uk, Trish Dabrowski trish.dabrowski@southeastcoast.nhs.uk
- South West: Philippa Potter - Philippa.Potter@southwest.nhs.uk
- West Midlands: Sue Hatton - sue.hatton@westmidlands.nhs.uk
- Yorkshire and Humber: Amanda Fisher - Amanda.Fisher@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk

Has there been any initial pilot work carried out to encourage health visitors to return to practice?

NHS London and NHS East Midlands have piloted successful return to practice campaigns for health visitor.

The initial pilot schemes have been evaluated and a recommendations document has been created for other SHAs to consider as part of their return to practice programme. This evaluation is available on the NHS Employers website:

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/PlanningYourWorkforce/Maternity-services/Pages/Returntopracticeforhealthvisitors.aspx>

What support is available for potential returners?

Course fees will be paid and each strategic health authority (SHA) will provide help for returners throughout their courses.

Additionally, a specific return to practice webpage and dedicated phone line is being run by NHS Careers (www.nhscareers.nhs.uk). There will be a link on the homepage directing those interested in a health visiting career, including those returning to practice to specific information.

When do the return to practice programmes need to be in place?

SHAs should have their return to practice programmes up and running by September 2011.

What involvement does the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) have in the return to practice programme?

The NMC has issued information in response to a number of myths or misunderstandings that exist around education programmes for health visitors or student support. It highlights areas where there are opportunities for flexible approaches to programme delivery whilst ensuring compliance with NMC standards. [<http://www.nmc-uk.org/Press-and-media/Latest-news/Health-visiting-An-update-on-the-NMCs-position/>]

The DH and other key stakeholders will work further with the NMC to develop a suggested framework for return to practice based on the return to practice principles.

How will we contact lapsed NMC registrants?

The NMC will identify relevant lapsed health visiting registrants and will agree with SHAs how and when to contact them. Additionally, a letter from the Chief Nursing Officer will be sent to those with lapsed NMC registration inviting them to return.

How will we achieve the 4,200 increase?

Information about the increases required by each SHA can be found in the annex of the Department of Health's (DH) letter to SHA and Primary Care Trust Chief Executives:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_124211.pdf