

Journal of  
**Health Visiting**

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# Spotlight on health visiting

The Local Government Association (LGA, 2024) has published a report highlighting the important work of health visitors in local areas, *Giving children the best start in life: Shining a spotlight on health visiting*.

The report has three case studies of excellence local practice; for example, some areas have offered nurses guarantees of jobs once they complete their health visitor training, while others are promoting public health nursing as a profession in schools through giving talks and running campaigns with the aim of building the future workforce.

It says, 'We continue to repeat our calls to Government to reverse the almost £900 million of public health reductions since 2015. This will allow councils to strengthen and rebuild the health visiting workforce to ensure that all families with babies and young children are provided with the support that they need in line with the national blueprint set out in the Healthy Child Programme'.

The report outlines how a health visiting service in County Durham has consistently delivered the national mandated five Healthy Child Programme contacts universally, with an additional three locally agreed contacts delivered by enhancing skill mix within current teams and promoting new roles to address relevant, region-specific family needs. Hertfordshire County Council is working with University of Hertfordshire to build working partnerships with student nurses currently in training, to create a route to place students into the service and retain or employ these students following qualification. In Lancashire, a Best Start in Life board was established, bringing renewed focus and strategic governance to implement its early years strategy (LGA, 2024).

This good practice is encouraging but much more support is needed to bolster the profession urgently. In a recent article, Alison Morton, CEO of the Institute of Health Visiting, highlights the key contributions health visitors make, including universal reach, prevention, early identification of needs and interventions proportionate to those needs. She writes, 'It is important that recognition is given to the many contributions that health visitors can make to outcomes across the life course', and that there are three areas needing focus: sufficient funding; action to rebuild the health visiting workforce; and levers to ensure all families receive high-quality health visiting support, ending the current postcode lottery (Morton, 2024).



Local Government Association (2024) *Giving children the best start in life: Shining a spotlight on health visiting*.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/giving-children-best-start-life-shining-spotlight-health-visiting> (accessed 7 May 2024)

Morton A (2024) The role of the health visitor: where are we now? <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S175172224000568?dgcid=author> (accessed 7 May 2024)

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