

Health Visiting

The first health visitors employed by a local authority developed from the role of ladies' sanitary inspector and were known as 'sanitary visitors'. These workers' roles, like that of health visitors today, was primarily to promote health and to provide health education, working at the level of the infant, their family and the community – thus forming a clear distinction from nursing.

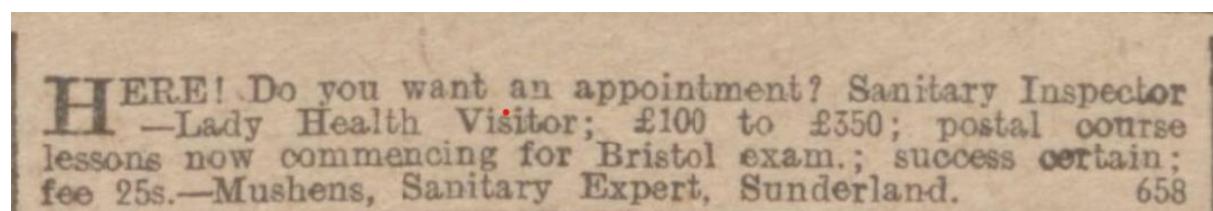
Health visiting became a universal statutory service in 1929, through the Local Government Act, and health visitors were employed by local government until 1974, when their employment moved to the NHS.

The role of the health visitor has evolved over the past 150 years, in response to the key priorities for health promotion. A century and a half ago, improving sanitation and reducing infectious disease was the priority; today it is addressing the antecedents of chronic disease, particularly mental health.

While the initial focus of the health visitor was on young families and their living conditions, in the 1950s, with the publication of the Jamison report in 1956, the recommendation was that the health visitor should provide services from cradle to grave, with a focus on social and emotional, as well as physical health. Health visitors started to not only work with the very young and families, but also to work with schools and with the elderly and chronically ill.

Today, health visiting remains a public health preventative role, focused on improving health and reducing inequalities. Great Britain's invention is copied in many countries around the world, with one of its unique aspects remaining that the health visitor visits the family in their home and their own community.

<https://ihv.org.uk/about-us/history-of-health-visiting/a-paper-by-cheryll-adams/>



WOMEN AS INSPECTORS.

On the presentation of a report to the London Court of Common Council recommending that the maximum salaries of women sanitary inspectors should be increased from £150 to £200 per annum, and the commencing salary be fixed at £120, Sir R. Harvey-Rogers said that as the Court was determined to perpetuate this abomination of lady inspectors he would not move an amendment, but would simply point out that manufacturers in the City had been annoyed and worried by these inspectors, and the vexation was becoming absolutely intolerable.

Tewkesbury Register. Saturday 10th April 1909

HEALTH VISITORS.

The Health Visitors Bill, which has just been introduced by Mr. John Burns, may be described as a corollary of the Notification of Births Act, and is another step in the movement for reducing infantile mortality. It provides that in any area outside London in which the Notification Act is in force the local authority may appoint suitable women, to be known as health visitors, for the purpose of giving advice to persons as to the proper nurture, care, and management of children under the age of five, including the promotion of cleanliness. The Bill will be generally approved by social reformers, and will enable the municipalities to provide upon a more permanent basis what in several areas has been carried out, with more or less efficiency, by volunteer visitors.

Gloucester Journal. Saturday 25th March 1911

COUNTY TO TRAIN HEALTH VISITORS

Gloucestershire Health Committee at their meeting to-day approved a revised scheme for the training of health visitors in the county.

"We propose to train our own health visitors," said Mr. W. J. Cole, presenting the scheme, "instead of having them trained at the University of Bristol. We feel that with this revised scheme we will always be sure of health visitors when we want them, and we shall be training them in our own way. It seems to me there are distinct advantages in the scheme."

Gloucester Citizen. Wednesday 12th January 1949