The Health Visitor Service Model

The Health Visitor Improvement Plan 2011-2015 outlines the four level (sometimes known as tiers) model as the basis to develop and expand health visiting services in England. The four levels, which are based on assessment of children’s/families’ needs, are:

**Community Services** - linking families and resources and building community capacity,

**Universal Services** - primary prevention services and early intervention provided for all families with children aged 0-5 as per the HCP universal schedule of visits assessments and development reviews,

**Universal Plus Services** - time limited support on specific issues offered to families with children aged 0-5 where there has been an assessed or expressed need for more targeted support,

**Universal Partnership Plus Services** - offered to families with children aged 0-5 where there is a need for ongoing support and interagency partnership working. Particularly for families with more complex needs.

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP)

Health visitors lead delivery of the HCP, this is a prevention and early intervention public health programme that lies at the heart of the universal service for children and families and aims to support parents at this crucial stage of life, promote child development, improve child health outcomes and ensure that families at risk are identified at the earliest opportunity. It is underpinned by an up-to-date evidence base such as set out in Health for All Children (Hall and Elliman, 2006) and is aimed at children up to the age of 19 and their families.

The programme is offered to all families and core elements include health and development reviews, screening, immunisations, promotion of social and emotional development, support for parenting, and effective promotion of health and behaviour change. It provides significant opportunities for highly skilled professionals to identify and deliver appropriate interventions to those with specific needs (including in some families, safeguarding needs).

Delivery of the universal elements of the HCP will see a team led by health visitors working in ways most appropriate to local public health needs and across a range of settings and organisations including; general practice, maternity services and children’s centres. Where families are accessing FNP a family nurse will take on this role until the child is two years old.

In addition to the core universal programme, the HCP schedule includes a number of evidence-based preventive interventions, programmes and services. Commissioning public health services includes joining up with other services supporting children and families, other local authority commissioning services, local safeguarding and children’s boards, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Clinical Commissioning Groups, etc. to determine which services are offered locally and by whom.
The 6 High Impact Areas

Six early years High Impact areas have been developed that focus on the universal service areas having the biggest impact on a child’s life. They also align with a number of the public health priority areas and have been identified to support the transition of commissioning to local authorities - helping inform decisions around the commissioning of the health visiting service and integrated children’s early years services. They aim to:

- articulate the contribution of health visitors to the 0-5 agenda and improving outcomes for children, families and communities;
- describe areas where health visitors have a significant impact on health and wellbeing and improving outcomes for children, families and communities.

The universal contacts provide the opportunity to engage families on these issues at the time when they are most receptive to advice and support.

The 6 areas are:

- transition to parenthood and the early week
- maternal mental health (includes post natal depression)
- breastfeeding (initiation and duration)
- healthy weight, healthy nutrition (includes physical activity)
- managing minor illness and reducing accidents (reducing hospital attendance/admissions)
- health, wellbeing and development of the child aged 2 – two year old review (integrated review) and support to be ‘ready for school’.