



Sobia (centre) with fellow health visitors Sandra Bennett, Gerry Morris, Dawn Nuttall, Susannah Morrison, Laura Freeman and Jennie Churchill

# A week in the life of...

## Sobia Bano, Health Visitor

### Monday

Health visitors work with children from birth to five, and their families. We lead on the Healthy Child Programme, which aims to provide families with a programme of screening, immunisation and health and development reviews, supplemented by advice around health, wellbeing and parenting.

We work hard to build good relationships with GPs, nurseries, councils, children's centres and many more, so we can deliver a quality service. Today I am meeting with a children's centre manager to discuss the take-up of two-year health reviews. We must make sure children are ready for school, and these reviews play a crucial role. They allow us to review the child's general progress and give key messages about health and parenting. We look at aspects including diet, speech and language, social development and physical development.

### Tuesday

I support a student health visitor, and today we have a meeting with her university lecturer. The course for student HVs is intense but the support they receive in practice and at university is really good. Support from the trust continues once you are qualified – for example, I am the preceptor (mentor) for two newly qualified Health Visitors.

During a clinic for six- to 12-month health reviews, my student and I carry out a session on dental health. Poor oral hygiene is very common in inner city Derby, as are public health issues like obesity, parental smoking and maternal mental health. There is also a low uptake of immunisations. We take any opportunity we can to get across public health messages.

### Wednesday

It's child health clinic day today. Parents are able to drop in and weigh their child and ask any questions. Although the most commonly asked questions are around diet, I also advise people on sleep, behaviour management, positive parenting strategies, speech and language. One lady needs support with breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is the most effective way to protect the health of an infant, and is another big aspect of our role. We have excellent training packages on this and other parts of the job.

**Did you know**  
**Children make up 22.4% of**  
**the Derbyshire population**



### Thursday

Today I attend a child protection case conference. This is where concerns about a child's welfare are discussed and a plan of action is put in place if it's felt the child is at risk of harm. Many other agencies are present at today's conference including the police, drug and alcohol team, family visitor, social worker and the school teacher for the child's older sibling. I also represent the school nurse as we work very closely with each other. I'll need good partnership working with these agencies and the family to achieve the best outcomes for this child. Although there are many issues that cause a safeguarding concern, the main issue discussed is the presence of domestic violence. I arrange a home visit with the mother; this will allow me the opportunity to give her the support required. Safeguarding children is a big aspect of our role. However we receive regular supervision to support us, and it's very satisfying when a positive outcome is achieved.

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**“ Health visitors  
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### Friday

I receive a phone call today from the mother and baby unit at the hospital about a lady who has postnatal depression. We discuss her care plan in the community. I will visit her to offer my support but will also liaise with her GP.

Later in the day I attend a health promotion event in the local park with a colleague. Our focus is on healthy eating – as we know there's a need to talk about this in our community. Obesity in school-aged children due to poor diet is on the rise, and health visitors are in a perfect position to intervene at an early stage. I end the day by making sure my files and notes are up to date. Our records are now electronic, and I can't say I miss all the paper!

Although next week will no doubt be interesting, diverse and enjoyable... I am ready for the weekend.



## Help us recruit more health visitors

As part of the government's plan to increase the number of health visitors (HVs) across the country by 4,200, we are training and employing dozens of new HVs every year.

If you know a qualified nurse who might be interested in becoming a health visitor, please ask them to call 01332 888080 ext 88373.



Sobia (right) advises student health visitor Susannah Morrison about child health reviews.