
Advice Sheet – Health Visitor Training and Sponsorship

Thank you for your interest in health visiting.

In order to become a health visitor you must be a qualified and registered nurse or midwife who has undertaken further (post registration) training in Community Specialist Practice (Public Health Nursing/Health Visiting) at degree level. This is normally a minimum of one year in length full time or the part time equivalent. All courses are at degree level, some offering postgraduate certificates or diplomas with a later option of progression to a master's dissertation. Prospective students will need diploma level qualifications or above. Some programmes have specific subject entry requirements such as research methods, health promotion or human physiology. Evidence of recent and continuing study is always useful.

The most common route of application is via a secondment onto a programme by an employer, although a small minority may fund themselves. Sponsorships/secondments are usually decided between January and March and may be advertised in the community section of the nursing press or on the NHS jobs website (www.jobs.nhs.uk). It would be wise to contact either your local University or local Primary Care Trust and ask for details from an appropriate manager at the earliest opportunity. Funding in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is slightly different with support coming through the Welsh Assembly, the local health board or the local health board trusts respectively. Funding from OHN programmes is likely to come from an employer.

Competition for sponsorship can be great, especially due to cutbacks in trusts training new staff, with an expectation by most trusts that you have at least one years consolidated experience following nurse/midwifery training, and in some instances more. Experience gained in a community setting will be useful, but is not always an essential requirement. However, there are currently an increasing number of opportunities for staff nurse posts in the community working with health visiting teams.

It may be useful to consider membership of the Unite/CPHVA as with membership you have access to a number of benefits including a subscription to the 'Community Practitioner' journal which provides monthly information relevant to health visiting. You can join Unite/CPHVA via the website (www.unitetheunion.org/cphva) or by phoning 0845 850 4242.

We hope this has helped in giving you more information and would like to wish you luck in your future career. If you want to discuss this matter further please contact me at the details given above.

Suggested links/sources for further information:

The Principles of Health Visiting:
<http://www.cphvabookshop.com>

UCAS, provides information about university courses: www.ucas.co.uk

NHS website to find your local Trust: www.nhs.uk

NHS Careers: www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

Information on Unite/CPHVA membership: <http://www.unitetheunion.org/cphva>

Nursing & Midwifery Council: www.nmc-uk.org

**Unite Health Sector Professional Team
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