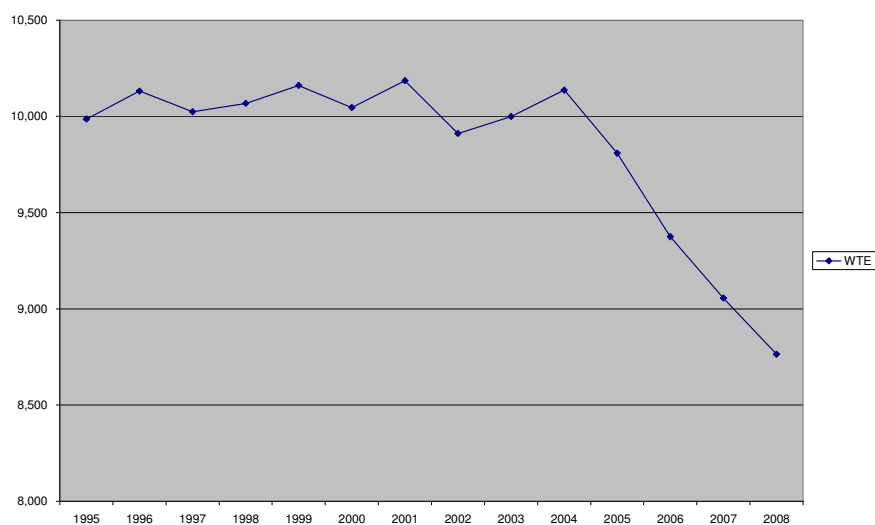
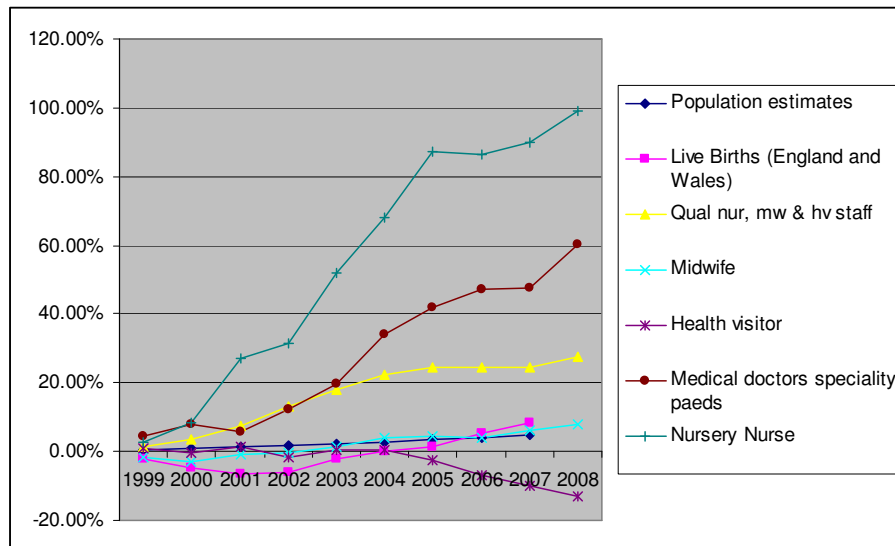


The crisis in health visiting (Facts and figures)

- Since 1998 there has been a drop of 12.95% in WTE health visitors whilst; the population has grown by 4.65%, the number of live births has increased by 8.51%; the number of midwives has grown by 8.10%, the number of registered nurses, midwives and health visitors has risen by 27.57% and the number of paediatric doctors by 60.07%. The number of nursery nurses employed in the NHS has risen by 99.03%.

“...it seems odd that numbers of health visitors and midwives are falling, and members of both those professions report finding themselves increasingly unable to provide the health promotion services needed by the poorest families, at the same time as the Government reiterates its commitments to early-years’ services¹”.

Health Select Committee for Inequalities 2009



- The drop of over 13.5 % in the number of WTE health visitors between 2004 and 2008 however is the average. We have uncovered areas which have reduced numbers much more dramatically than this, with some areas cutting numbers by 50% and aboveⁱⁱ & ⁱⁱⁱ.
- The 2008 NHS staff survey^{iv} showed that health visitors (of all the staff groups in primary care trust results) were:
 - 80% working unpaid over time (2nd worse group KF9),
 - Reported the highest level of work pressure felt by staff (KF6);
 - And only 45% of health visitors felt satisfied with the quality of work and patient care they were able to deliver (KF1).
 - least likely to recommend their trust as a place to work (KF34);
 - had the lowest levels of job satisfaction (KF32);
 - reported the second worst communication between senior managers and staff (KF29);
 - had 41% of staff suffering from work related stress in the last twelve months (2nd worst result, KF19);
- The Unite/CPHVA 14th annual survey (August 2008) ^v found that:
 - 69.2% reported that they did not have the capacity within their team to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children.
 - 25.4% said that the chance of a local child death similar to that of Victoria Climbié was either 'somewhat' or 'very' likely.
 - 40% reported they had responsibility for more than 500 children (22% the year before);
 - 35.3% of health visitors in skill mix teams reported that the level of skill mix was unsafe, with 46.9% reporting that they had not been involved in decisions regarding its constitution or professional mix (against the guidance issued by Lord Darzi);
 - 40.8% described clinical leadership as poor;
- The Netmums.com Fending for ourselves^{vi} survey found that:
 - 46% of mums only saw their health visitor once or twice in the 8 weeks following birth;
 - After 8 weeks, 49% of mums were not invited in to see their health visitor nor visited at home by a health visitor in the first year following their initial visit;
 - 59% of parents wanted to see more of their health visitor;
 - 70% said they wanted to see one health visitor, who knew their family, rather than being seen by different individuals from a team;
 - Only 5% of mothers would prefer to see a 'parent support worker' or children's centre staff (and that was only for some issues);

ⁱ HOUSE OF COMMONS HEALTH COMMITTEE (2009) Health Inequalities: Third report of session 2008-09: Volume 1. HMSO. London. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhealth/286/286.pdf>

ⁱⁱ UNITE THE UNION (2008) Barking and Dagenham families at risk. Press release 11/12/2008. Unite. <http://www.amicustheunion.org/default.aspx?page=9743>

ⁱⁱⁱ UNITE THE UNION (2009) HOUNSLOW HEALTH VISITOR CRISIS STILL NOT RESOLVED—NEARLY TWO YEARS ON. Press release 02/04/2009. <http://www.amicus-cphva.org/docs/Hounslow%20%202.doc>

^{iv} CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (2009) National Survey of NHS staff 2008. CQC. http://www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=10986

^v ADAMS, C & CRAIG, I (2008) A Service at crisis point. in *Community Practitioner*, 12/2008 v81.12 pp34-35. www.commprac.com

^{vi} RUSSELL, S (2008) Left fending for ourselves. Netmums.com. http://www.netmums.com/files/FendingforOurselves_withappendix.pdf