

Foreword by the Secretary of State for Health



Wherever I go in our country most people have nothing but praise for nurses, midwives and health visitors. Their jobs are very demanding. Modern nursing, midwifery and health visiting is not just a matter of personal attention and tender loving care. Their jobs now require the operation of new high tech equipment and the application of new clinical techniques and new pharmaceutical products.

In *Making a Difference* we spell out what the Government is doing to recognise the value of nurses, midwives and health visitors. They need to be properly paid and properly looked after. And we have made a good start. This year we have implemented the biggest pay rise for 10 years for nurses, midwives and health visitors. That's not all. We hope to introduce a new pay system which provides better rewards and removes the artificial ceilings to career advancement.

But important though pay is, it is only one element in our package of proposals to forge a new framework for nursing in the new NHS in line with changing patterns of care. We are recruiting more nurses. We are strengthening education and training. We are establishing a new career structure. We are introducing more family friendly working practices and improving safety in the workplace. We are developing leadership in nursing. And we are raising the quality of patient care.

Taken together, this adds up to a clear statement by the Government of the value it places on the contribution nurses, midwives and health visitors make to all our lives. We want to see more nurses in the NHS, providing the care they do for the people who need it. We want to see their work properly recognised. I believe *Making a Difference* is a testament to that, and to the vital help they give to everyone in our country.

The Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP
Secretary of State for Health

July 1999

Early milestones

- Guidance about establishment of nurse, midwife and health visitor consultant posts (1999/2000).
- Talks with NHS unions and employers about new national pay and conditions for NHS staff (1999/2000).
- High level national campaign to improve working lives (1999/2000).
- Publish first Equal Opportunities Framework for the NHS (1999/2000).
- Explore benefit of clinical practice benchmarking with the nursing, midwifery and health visiting professions (1999/2000).
- Take forward nurse prescribing (1999/2000).
- Publish plans to show how nurses, midwives and health visitors will have access to programmes to strengthen leadership and management across the NHS (1999/2000).
- Begin the process of preparing for new legislation for professional self-regulation, working with a Change Management Group and establishing an External Reference Group of key stakeholders to test proposals (1999/2000).
- Implement a programme to develop the public health aspects of nursing, midwifery and health visiting (1999/2000).
- Work with women, midwives and others to explore opportunities for an expanded midwifery role (1999/2000).
- Publish plans for the better management of NHS funded education in which the Department of Health will take on a more active and wider role (1999/2000).
- A strategy to influence the research and development agenda, strengthen the capacity to undertake nursing, midwifery and health visiting research, and to use research to support practice (2000).
- Personal Development Plans for nurses, midwives and health visitors (2000).
- New model of nurse education (2000).
- Partners Council to explore and make recommendations about potential for greater standardisation of roles and titles (2000/2001).
- Partners Council to advise on pre and post-registration education (2000/2001).
- Up to 15,000 more nurses and 6,000 more training places (2002).

Further copies of this document can be obtained from:

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Summary



Making a Difference

Strengthening the nursing, midwifery and health visiting contribution to health and healthcare

The new
NHS

Making a difference

- Nurses, midwives and health visitors are vital to the NHS, and to the nation: they make a real difference to people's lives. People trust them, and have confidence in them. People value what they do. So does the Government
- The NHS employs over 332,000 nurses, midwives and health visitors. They provide care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Nurses, midwives and health visitors are crucial to the Government's plans to modernise the NHS and to improve the public's health

New nursing in the new NHS

- The context of care is changing. Nurses, midwives and health visitors face new challenges
- Nurses, midwives and health visitors are often constrained by structures that limit development and innovation
- Their contribution to the NHS and to improving people's health must be strengthened and modernised
- 'Making a Difference' sets out our strategic intentions

Recruiting more nurses

- A major expansion of the workforce is planned
- The NHS now has the capacity to take on up to 15,000 more nurses over the next 3 years
- 6,000 additional training places are to be made available over the next 3 years
- A sustained campaign to attract more people into nursing and to encourage qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors to come back to the NHS has been launched
- Improved systems of workforce planning at national and local level will ensure a better grip on future staffing requirements

Strengthening education and training

- We will provide more career opportunities, from cadet to nurse, midwife or health visitor consultant, and more flexible approaches to nurse education and training
- Higher quality and longer placements, and better teacher support, will help students to gain better practical skills
- NHS leadership in nursing, midwifery and health visiting education and lifelong learning will be strengthened, with the Department of Health taking a more active and wider role
- A Partners Council will be established to provide a framework for post-registration education and continuing professional development



Developing a modern career framework

- A new modern career framework is needed for nurses, midwives and health visitors
- It will be linked to the Government's proposals to modernise the NHS pay system
- There will be three broad flexible ranges for registered nurses, midwives and health visitors, and a fourth for health care assistants and cadets
- Progression will be linked to responsibilities and the competencies needed to do the job
- The framework includes the new nurse, midwife and health visitor consultant posts which significantly extend career and pay opportunities – they will have the opportunity to earn around £40,000 per annum

Improving working lives

- NHS-wide standards for the implementation of supportive, family friendly policies will be developed and NHS employers will be kite marked against them. A national campaign, spear-headed at regional level by multi-professional taskforces, will raise awareness, share good practice, champion improvements, provide practical support for implementation on the ground by front line staff and managers, and report progress
- Nurses, midwives and health visitors should be involved in all decisions that affect their working lives – from big change programmes to day to day decisions on how services are delivered
- NHS employers are being required to tackle discrimination and harassment in the workplace and to make targeted reductions in workplace accidents and violence against staff
- Local annual staff surveys will act as a benchmark against which to measure improvements to the quality of working life

Enhancing the quality of care

- The Government's plans for quality improvement in the NHS are built around clear national standards, ensuring and monitoring local delivery through clinical governance, supported by professional self-regulation and continuing professional development
- Nurses, midwives and health visitors must play a full part in developing and implementing national service frameworks and clinical governance
- They need to focus on the quality of fundamental and essential aspects of care. Clinical practice benchmarking is one way to do this
- Practice needs to be evidence based. Research evidence will be rigorously assessed and made accessible. Nurses, midwives and health visitors need better research appraisal skills to translate



- A strategy to influence the research and development agenda, to strengthen the capacity to undertake nursing, midwifery and health visiting research, and to use research to support a nursing, midwifery and health visiting practice will be developed

Strengthening leadership

- The Government's modernisation programme means that more nurses, midwives and health visitors need better leadership skills
- Work to equip them with these skills will be part of the wider programme to boost leadership and management across the NHS
- A new career framework and introduction of nurse, midwife and health visitor consultants will provide a stronger focus for clinical leadership
- Greater emphasis is needed on leadership development for Sisters and Charge Nurses

Modernising professional self-regulation

- Public protection is central to the Government's plans for modern, dependable health services
- The Government supports professional self-regulation but is committed to making it more open, responsive and accountable
- Subject to consultation and legislation, it will establish a new streamlined regulatory framework for nurses, midwives and health visitors
- The Government will commission a short review of the regulation of support workers

Working in new ways

- The Government wants to extend the roles of nurses, midwives and health visitors to make better use of their knowledge and skills – including making it easier for them to prescribe
- It wants to modernise the roles of health visitors and school nurses to support the new health strategy and other policies
- It wants to see more nurse-led primary care services to improve accessibility and responsiveness
- The role of midwives needs to expand to include wider responsibilities for women's health
- The introduction of new roles and role developments need to be carefully managed by NHS organisations

Making it happen

- Action needs to be taken at national level, within NHS organisations and by individuals
- A number of approaches will be adopted to drive implementation and to monitor progress

