

# Make an impact in 2017

*Choose change for 2017 and ensure that health visiting remains a priority so that you can continue to have a positive impact on the lives of the children and families you serve.*

**A**t the start of a new year, it is customary to make resolutions. As human beings, there is often a desire to change and to ditch bad habits or embrace new ones. However, research has suggested that resolutions do not work unless one makes them work. So is there one thing you can do this year as a health visitor to really make a difference to your working life and the profession? How about making a massive impact?

With reduced budgets we are required to make a demonstrable impact, not just in quantitative terms but also in ensuring we deliver a high standard of care. In a local authority with competing priorities, it is important that the health visiting service remains a priority. As a health visitor, how can you do this?

## Change your approach

Nothing will change unless you change. If what you are currently

doing is not working, might it be time to change your approach? May it be time to stop conforming to what is expected of you and start doing things differently? Most of the rights we have today were because someone who lived before us decided that they were going to change how things worked. I am not suggesting a revolution, but to assess what you are doing and if it is not working, to try something different until you find what works.

## Be seen

Big companies spend a lot of money advertising their services because they understand the importance of their products remaining visible to potential customers. As providers of a service, health visitors need to do the same. As such, this is not time to hide but to be truly present. Become visible at your workplace to users of your service, to commissioners of the service, and to your senior management. Attend board meetings in your organisation, and health and wellbeing board meetings (these are public meetings). If, at first, you are uncomfortable, start by attending one where you are resident to see how they work. As your confidence grows, you can attend your organisation's board meeting. Observe board members who show a passion for children's services and after the meeting try to get a member of the board to shadow you at work.

## Be heard

As health visitors, it is very easy to become bogged down with daily activities and forget to use our voice. Perhaps you have stopped using your voice because no one was listening. May it be time to use your voice differently? When last did you write an

article for publication? When last did you showcase how awesome you are?

It is very easy to do. If you have recently undertaken a course, why not summarise some of the insights you gleaned from it, write an article and send it to the editor of a professional journal? Editors are very approachable and are always looking to showcase new writers. Journals are often looking for book and peer reviewers. Why not contact the editor and write a book review? Or perhaps you can write a blog on your reflection after a contact with a client. You could also contact local or national conference organisers and offer to share your expertise by speaking or running workshops at conferences.

Are you visible on social media? LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are very useful platforms where you can connect with other health visitors, get updated on what is happening in health visiting in other parts of the country and start to influence the health visiting agenda. You can now connect with local and national decision-makers without needing to make an appointment to inform them about your lived professional experience and directly influence them. Let them know the massive difference health visiting makes to the lives of children and families in your care. Let them know how great you and your colleagues are.

How are you going to make a massive impact in 2017? Choose to change and imagine what impact you want to make by the end of the year. Be seen and heard. Ensure that health visiting remains a priority so that you can continue to positively affect the lives of the children and families you serve.

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