Methodology to produce a revised estimate of health visitor staff in post as at 31 March 2014

During 2012, the Scottish Government established a group to review the data quality of community nursing staff working in NHSScotland. Following a pilot exercise, it was agreed that all NHS Boards should complete a full review of all their community nursing staff following new coding guidance that had been developed and issued. This exercise was carried out between October and December 2014 and the first data published after this was as at 31 March 2015 (published in June 2015). It is noted in our workforce statistics publications and tables that data published before March 2015 cannot be compared to data published afterwards.

The Scottish Government announced in June 2014 that funding would be allocated to NHS Boards to create 500 new health visitor posts over 4 years. These posts are being created to support the initiatives in the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014.

The Scottish Government are monitoring the recruitment of these additional posts starting from 31 March 2014 (the time point for published data closest to the announcement). As this time point falls before the completion of the data quality exercise, this means that the current published figures for March 2014 are not comparable with the figures published since March 2015.

In order to provide an estimate of health visitors in post at 31 March 2014, ISD has undertaken some analysis to provide an expected range for the Scotland figure for health visitors in post. The work involved linking and comparing staff records collected at both the 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015 time points. It is not possible to provide an exact figure without undertaking a full data cleansing exercise. The outcome of this work is that ISD now estimate that the Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) number of health visitors in post at 31 March 2014 was between 1,047.9 (lower estimate) and 1,114.7 (higher estimate). This estimated range is higher than the published figure of 997.6 WTE.

The methodology used to determine this range involved the identification and addition of a number of groups of staff as described below.

**Revised estimate lower bound** = \(1 + 2 + 3a = 1,047.9 \text{ WTE}\)

**Revised estimate upper bound** = lower bound + 3c = 1,114.7 \text{ WTE}

The groups are as follows:

1. Staff who were classified as health visitors (Bands 6-9) in 2014 and 2015 and who were employed in the same Health Board (and on the same pay number) at both time points. It is assumed that these staff are in the same post at both time points and so their WTE in 2014 is included in the estimates.

2. Staff who were classified as health visitors in 2015 and employed in the same Health Board (and on the same pay number) at both time points but who were in a different classification (sub job family) in 2014. An assumption has been made that these staff are in the same post but were incorrectly classified in 2014 and should have been classified as health visitors and so their WTE in 2014 is included in the estimates.
3. Staff who were classified as health visitors in 2014 but who were not in the same Health Board (or on a different pay number) or who were not employed in 2015. For this cohort:
   a. It is assumed that staff classified and employed as health visitors in 2015 were correctly classified in 2014 and so their WTE in 2014 is included in the estimates.
   b. It is assumed that staff who were not classified as health visitors in 2015 were incorrectly classified in 2014 and so their WTE in 2014 is not included in the estimate.
   c. We identified staff not in post at March 2015. There is no information to indicate whether these staff were correctly classified as health visitors in 2014 or not. This uncertainty is accounted for in the estimated range provided.

4. Staff who were classified as health visitors in 2014 and who were in the same Health Board (and on the same pay number) but were under a different classification (sub job family) in 2015. An assumption has been made that these staff are in the same post but were incorrectly classified in 2014 and so their WTE in 2014 is not included in the estimate.

Notes

- Only staff on Bands 6 and above were regarded as potentially being qualified health visitors in post at either time point. For instance staff who moved from Band 5 to Band 6 between 2014 and 2015 are assumed to have been in training in 2014.
- Revised estimates have not been produced for health visiting staff Bands 2-5 or for the total health visiting workforce.
- The majority of staff in category 2 were incorrectly classified as being in the public health nursing and community general nursing categories (sub job families) in 2014.
- It is possible that there are health visitors who were not classified as such in 2014 and who were not in post in 2015 (for example, because they retired or have left the NHSScotland workforce) and so could not be traced. If these staff exist this would further increase the estimates provided. However, in these estimates it is assumed that the numbers in this group are negligible.