

children. The Inter-departmental Committee on Dentistry recommended in 1944 that special provision should be made for dental treatment for these classes. The Act implements that recommendation, placing a specific duty on Local Health Authorities to make arrangements for the dental care of expectant and nursing mothers and young children, securing for them a priority service of dental examination and, where necessary, treatment.

Vaccination against Smallpox and Immunisation against Diphtheria

With the introduction of the National Health Service Act it was felt that the time had come to put vaccination on the same voluntary basis as diphtheria immunisation which, with the intensive education given on this safeguard, has achieved such a remarkable success. The National Health Service Act, therefore, repealed the Vaccination Acts and the local Health Authorities now have the responsibility of providing a service for smallpox vaccination and diphtheria immunisation. The fact that the family doctor in the Health Service will take part in these services means their greater accessibility and the education of young parents on these two points will continue unremittingly.

Health Visitors

Health visitors are State Registered nurses with general hospital or children's hospital training, and they must hold a certificate of at least Part I of the midwifery training, in addition to the health visitors certificate.

The health visitors will continue to visit the mothers in their homes when the midwife ceases to attend or on return from hospital after the birth of their baby. Health visitors give specialised advice on breast-feeding and the care of the baby, and on the nurture and management of children up to five years of age when they go to school.

Home Nursing

Local Health Authorities also provide a home nursing service to attend people who require nursing in their own home.

Special Care for Babies

Special needs arise in the care of the illegitimate baby and the premature baby.

The care of illegitimate children is a social problem without a complete solution, since every child needs the interest and affection of both a father and a mother, and the security of its own home in which to develop fearlessly. Much has been done in this field, by Social and Moral Welfare Workers, to help the mothers and safeguard the children.

An officer on this work helps the mother find accommodation before and after the confinement. Arrangements for the confinement and for ante- and post-natal care are made in the usual way.

Restrictions on building and staffing difficulties have limited the development of special accommodation, but homes and hostels for unmarried mothers and their babies and residential nurseries have been opened and arrangements made for finding suitable foster mothers and guaranteeing their payment.

The girl's home is helpful as a background for the child if her parents are willing to offer it. But the mother often needs assistance in finding employment, and if the baby is not able to remain with its grand-parents it is preferable to find work enabling the mother and child to be together (in an Institution or Residential Nursery, or in private employment); if the mother's work separates her from her baby, a suitable foster parent should be found for the child.

In relation to the particular care needed by babies born weighing 5½ lb. or less, called "premature" babies, a circular was sent out in 1944 recommending, amongst other things, that special equipment should be made available by

local authorities to be lent to mothers for use where babies can be nursed in their own homes. This equipment includes draught-proof cots, warm and suitable clothing, hot water bottles and special feeding equipment.

Day Nurseries

The great majority of the war-time nurseries which were in existence on March 31st, 1946, have continued either as day nurseries or as nursery schools or nursery classes. On December 31st, 1947, there were 908 day nurseries in England and Wales with places for 43,405 children from 0-5 years old.

Before July 5th, these were administered by Welfare Authorities; they will be continued, so long as the need for them exists, by the Local Health Authorities as part of the services under the National Health Service Act, with the aid of the 50 per cent. grant from the Exchequer which is payable for all Local Health Authorities' services under that Act.

Much progress has been made in establishing a new system of training for nursery nurses whereby students undertake a two-year course (a) in practical work in nurseries, and (b) further education in vocational and general subjects, enabling them to sit for the examination for the certificate of the National Nursery Examination Board.

Young children are particularly susceptible to infectious disease and unless nursery premises and staff are of proper standards there may be risk to their health. For this reason the Government have passed the Nurseries and Child Minders Regulations Act which provides for the registration and supervision of factory and private nurseries and also of persons who in their own homes look after children under five for reward. The Local Health Authorities who are responsible for the local administration of the Act may refuse to register unsatisfactory premises or persons.

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