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JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF INSTITUTIONS RECOGNISED BY THE
MINISTER OF HEALTH FOR THE TRAINING OF HEALTH VISITORS, AND OF
ORGANISATIONS OF HEALTH VISITORS.

7 VICTORIA STREET.

LONDON, S.W.1

Memorandum on the Desirability of extending the
Minimum Period of Courses recognised by the Minister of
Health for the Training of Health Visitors from Six to
Nine Months.

1. The unanimous decision of members of the Joint Consultative Committee of Training Institutions recognised by the Minister of Health for the Training of Health Visitors, and of Organisations of Health Visitors to advocate this extension, and to approach the Minister of Health on the question, was reached after consideration of the following:
 - A. Syllabus of all existing Training Courses, whether of six months', one year's, or two years' duration.
These were considered by a sub-committee whose report was embodied in a "Survey of Syllabuses of Training Courses", a printed copy of which was submitted to the Ministry of Health in 1933.
 - B. First-hand information as to the present arrangements for the practical training of students in fourteen courses, received partly in writing, partly verbally at two Conferences of Tutors, Medical Officers for Maternity and Child Welfare, and others responsible for the training of student Health Visitors.
2. As the information thus obtained showed a marked diversity in practice among the Training Institutions in the allocation of time to both theoretical and practical training in each subject in the Examination Syllabus the Joint Consultative Committee appointed a sub-committee to prepare a report, recommending the best allocation of time to theoretical and practical work respectively in each subject in
 - (a) a six months' course
 - (b) in an ideal course.
3. This Report was received and with certain modifications, adopted by the Joint Consultative Committee at its meeting on 27. June 1936.
4. The Report states that "an ideal course" was not actually considered, as an alternative to the six months' course, but a course of nine months, or three terms, under the existing regulations.
5. The Joint Consultative Committee then reached the following conclusions:
 - (1) That it is impossible, in a six months' course to cover all the subjects in the Examination Syllabus adequately, either theoretically or practically.
 - (2) That the scope of the Examination Syllabus is not too wide.
 - (3) That, in a six months' course, certain subjects which should form part of the training of a Health Visitor, e.g. the theory and practice of positive health teaching to older school children and effective personal co-operation with official and voluntary agencies, are necessarily excluded.
 - (4) That the time available for certain other subjects

which are nominally included in some courses, is so limited as to make it impossible to treat these subjects adequately. Among these are:

- (a) Dietetics and problems of malnutrition.
 - (b) Home visiting in connection with the selection of children for school meals and "official milk".
 - (c) Home visiting in connection with convalescence and country holidays.
 - (d) Mental and behaviour problems.
- (5) That, in a course of three terms or nine months, it would be possible both to include the subjects which are at present totally excluded, and to deal much more adequately with others.
 - (6) That, in other subjects, without increasing the number of lectures, the value of the course would be greatly increased by an additional term, because more time would then be available to assimilate the instruction given, and for private study.
 - (7) That the mental and physical strain which is at present frequently noticeable in students undergoing a six months' course of training, and which sometimes culminates in a highly nervous condition at the time of the examination, would be avoided.
 - (8) The Joint Consultative Committee is therefore of opinion that, under existing regulations, a minimum course should be one of three terms, the three terms averaging twelve weeks each, with two holidays, each of at least one week, dividing the terms.

September 1936.