

March 1948

# **Memorandum on the Procedure for Organising the Follow-up Survey**

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POPULATION INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE  
INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH

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## **I**

### **The Mothers to be Interviewed**

The mothers to be interviewed are a sample of those visited in the Maternity Questionnaire Survey of 1946. Their names and addresses are entered on the Follow-up Survey Questionnaires. The interviews should take place in the last three weeks of March.

If any mother has moved out of the area of your Authority please enter in the space provided on the questionnaire **her new address and the new Maternity and Child Welfare Authority in which she resides. Then return the questionnaire to the Joint Committee as soon as possible.** These questionnaires will have to be sent off by us to the Maternity and Child Welfare Authority to which the mother has transferred, and it is therefore important that we should get them before the end of the third week in March.

If it is impossible to trace a new address through ordinary channels, the local food office or national registration office may be able to help, either by providing the new address or by giving you the National Registration number of the mother or baby. If the National Registration number, but not her new address, is available, will you write it on the top of the questionnaire, as this will enable us to trace the new address. Will you also fill in on such questionnaires as much information as can be obtained from the records and return them to us as soon as possible.

## **II**

### **Health Visitors' Meeting at which the Questionnaires would be distributed and the Method of Interview explained**

In the survey in 1946 it was found that the most successful way to ensure accurate and uniform interviewing was to call a meeting of the Health Visitors, at which the questionnaires were distributed and the methods of the survey explained.

**Explaining the purpose of the survey.** During the inquiry in 1946 information was obtained about 14,000 births, of which 900 were premature. The follow-up inquiry has been designed to study the health of infants during the first two years of life and to compare the development of mature and premature babies. It is also hoped that the inquiry will throw light on the relation between child bearing and maternal ill-health. The results of this inquiry will fill many important gaps in our present knowledge.



**How to fill in the questionnaire.** The inquiry refers throughout to the baby born in March, 1946. The health visitors should use their records and those of the Infant Welfare Centres to answer as many questions as possible before the mother is interviewed. In this way the length of the interviews will be cut down. Answers obtained from the records should, however, be checked with the mother during the interview.

As regards the layout of the questionnaire, each question (printed in heavy type) is usually followed by alternative answers (printed in light type and numbered). All that is required in answering the questions is to put a ring with a soft pencil round the number opposite that statement which most closely corresponds to the mother's answer. If the answer does not fit any alternatives, it should be written in pencil in the space under the question.

The questions should be asked in the order set out on the questionnaire, and health visitors should keep as close to the phrasing as they can. If any question does not apply to a particular mother or baby, a ring should be put round "Y" or "YY." **Thus every question should be answered.**

**Weight and height.** It is hoped to obtain the present weight and standing height of all the babies in the sample. It is particularly important to obtain the weight and height in those cases where the questionnaire is stamped "premature" or "control." Every effort should be made to arrange for mothers to bring their babies to be weighed either at Infant Welfare Centres or wherever else scales may be available. When health visitors have cars, and portable scales can be provided, it may be convenient to weigh the babies during the interview.

**Interviews which cannot be completed because mother is ill or refused.** When a mother cannot be interviewed for any reason (such as illness, refusal, etc.) the health visitor should fill in as much of the form as she can from the records. Then the reasons why the interview was not carried out should be written in the space provided. The questionnaire should be kept and enclosed with the rest of the completed interviews when they are returned to the Joint Committee.

### III

#### Procedure for Collecting the Questionnaires

When you distribute the questionnaires to the health visitors could you ask them to complete them and return them to you by a specified day? The date that would fit in best with the scheme of the inquiry is 5th April, 1948.

When the completed forms have been returned to you could you arrange that, before being returned to the Joint Committee, they should be checked through to make sure that all questions have been answered. **Please send the completed questionnaires to the Joint Committee in one batch and not individually.** We are hoping that it will be possible for all forms to be returned to us by 12th April, 1948.