

Nursing For Health summary



**A REVIEW OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF NURSES, MIDWIVES AND
HEALTH VISITORS TO IMPROVING THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH**



Nursing for Health

A REVIEW OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF NURSES,
MIDWIVES AND HEALTH VISITORS TO IMPROVING
THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH IN SCOTLAND







Foreword

**FROM SUSAN DEACON,
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE**



Nurses, midwives and health visitors are involved with people at every critical point in their lives, from birth through to death. They are respected and welcomed by patients, families and communities and are uniquely well placed to help influence the health of the people of Scotland. During my time as Minister for Health and Community Care, I have met many nurses, midwives and health visitors and have been struck by the diversity of roles they play. Whether working with individuals, families or communities or at a more strategic level, nurses, midwives and health visitors are already contributing to improving the health of our people. This has been reflected in the many examples of good practice that this review highlighted.

However, we can never be complacent. *Our National Health: A plan for action a plan for change* sets out a radical new agenda for NHSScotland, committing to making the NHS a national **health** service rather than a national illness service. Nurses, midwives and health visitors will have a central role in helping us achieve this vision. This report sets out how we plan to do this. It explores new roles, new ways of working and new partnerships that will both challenge and re-vitalise the professions.

This review has been one of the most inclusive ever undertaken by the Scottish Executive. It has captured the views and ideas, not only of nurses, midwives and health visitors, but also of GPs, Public Health Doctors, Local Authority professionals, NHS managers, community and voluntary sector representatives. The remarkable consistency of their contributions is encouraging and provides a firm basis for the implementation of the report's findings.

This report sets out a challenging plan of action that will refresh and renew nurses, midwives and health visitors. Ultimately it will help nurses to effectively play their roles in improving the health of Scotland's people.

Susan Deacon, MSP
Minister for Health and Community Care



“ Health care organisations must have greater confidence in the ability of local communities to create their own environments for positive health ”

“ It is important that the public health role of nurses is seen as integral to the role of nursing in general ”



Introduction

Nursing for Health sets out radical new plans to revitalise the contribution of nurses, midwives and health visitors to improving the health of Scotland's people.

This Summary highlights the main recommendations and should be read alongside the main report and the findings of the literature review, published as companion documents. The recommendations arise from a review of the contribution of nurses, midwives and health visitors to improving the public's health carried out during 2000 and involving a wide range of contributors from a variety of disciplines and agencies.

The review found much good practice, however:

- nurses, midwives' and health visitors' contributions were often ad hoc and uncoordinated
- there was a lack of clear leadership and direction
- nurses, midwives and health visitors were not contributing significantly to strategy
- little or no use was being made of information or evidence to support and inform practice
- professionals often worked in isolation, with little sharing of good practice or opportunity to be challenged on their own practice
- most practice involved work with individuals and families rather than communities
- education was not adequately preparing nurses, midwives and health visitors to address the new health agenda

Nursing for Health seeks to address this by

- developing the environment in which nurses, midwives and health visitors work in order to maximise their contribution
- developing nursing's contribution across the whole life course.



It aims to:

- Build upon the skills of nurses, midwives and health visitors, working with individuals, families and communities as well as at leadership, strategy and policy levels to become full and legitimate partners in the health improvement process.
- Ensure that nursing contributions are properly focused and targeted to address effectively the health needs of the people of Scotland in partnership with other professionals and agencies and with local communities.
- Ensure that nurses, midwives and health visitors are well prepared and supported to play a full and equal part, alongside fellow professionals and agencies, at local, regional and national levels in efforts to improve the health of the people of Scotland in a co-ordinated and planned way.

“ Mutual respect for education, professional knowledge, roles and responsibilities is crucial to the success of public health strategy ”



Recommendations

Taken together these recommendations set out a radical and challenging agenda for nursing in public health. One which will maximise the potential contribution of nurses, midwives and health visitors to improving the health of Scotland's people.

The recommendations are set out under headings which reflect the format of the main report. A diagrammatic representation across the centre pages summarises the contribution that nurses, midwives and health visitors make to improving health across the whole life course and how that will be developed.

Much more work and commitment from a wide range of people will be needed to turn these recommendations into real changes in practice.

Developing the Public Health Capacity of Local Health Care Co-operatives

The LHCC has a key role as a focal point for local public health activity and the development of partnership working.

LHCCs will be supported to develop new public health practitioner roles that act as a catalyst to the development of public health practice, provide clinical leadership and act as a focal point for the development of partnerships with the community and other local agencies.

“ There is a need for a public health co-ordinator at LHCC level. . . . This post is essential to facilitate and motivate the public health agenda to bring about a culture change within the professional groups ”



Developing Nursing's Contribution to Public Health Strategy

There is a distinctive role for nurses, midwives and health visitors at strategic level.

The Public Health Institute of Scotland and the Nursing & Midwifery Practice Development Unit will lead further debate about the development of nursing's strategic contribution focusing on:

- **the development of new public health roles within LHCCs**
- **the development of nurse consultant roles in public health**
- **the potential contribution of nurses, midwives and health visitors working within the public health function.**

“ Nurses could play a key role in helping health individuals and communities to contribute to the development of health service strategy ”

Leading the Public Health Effort

Facilitative, creative leadership is needed at all levels.

All nurse team leaders in primary health care teams will have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

The Public Health Institute of Scotland will establish an ongoing development network for public health practitioners in LHCCs.

The Nursing and Midwifery Practice Development Unit will map new and creative career pathways as a means of developing future leaders in public health nursing.

The Public Health Institute of Scotland will have a key leadership role for nurses, midwives and health visitors in public health, alongside a broad range of other professionals

Directors of Public Health should put in place the right systems to provide effective leadership to the public health workforce.



Networking For Health

The full potential of nurses' midwives' and health visitors' contributions to improving health have not been realised because there is little structured contact either between nurses, midwives and health visitors or with other key partners in the public health effort. The development of local multi-professional, multi-agency public health networks will provide an important vehicle within which nursing's contribution to improving health can be developed.

Local multi-disciplinary public health networks will be developed, in which nurses, midwives and health visitors play an active role.

The Nursing and Midwifery Practice Development Unit will create a database of good practice in public health nursing.

“ **The local public health network would enable joint working between agencies that has never existed before** ”

Working with Communities

Most nurses, midwives and health visitors work with individuals and families. Evidence suggests that working with communities to address underlying health problems can be more effective than traditional models of practice in improving health. Community development approaches that engage and build upon the community's capacity for health will increasingly be a focus for nurses, midwives and health visitors' community work.

LHCCs should map the existing resources of communities, developing links with community projects, development workers and voluntary organisations active in the area.

The development of public health practitioners in LHCCs will provide a key contact point for the local community, acting as a source of advice, support and information to voluntary and community groups.

NHS Boards should ensure that they have the necessary infrastructure in place to support nurse involvement in community development work.

LHCCs should, where appropriate in response to locally identified need, assign dedicated nursing time to work on community based activities.



Developing Nursing's Contribution

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

- Maternity Services Framework
- Individual Health Promotion Plans
- Parent Education
- Focus on most vulnerable
- Links with primary care and LHCCs

SPECIAL NEEDS

MENTAL HEALTH

- Promote health with people with severe and enduring health problems
- Link with networks
- Joint work with primary care
- Support and advise schools re child and adolescent mental health

SPECIALIST NURSES

- Promote health/minimise ill-health in specialist field
- Inform local needs assessment/planning process

LEARNING D

- Address h
- Work with

HOSPITAL C

- Exploit op

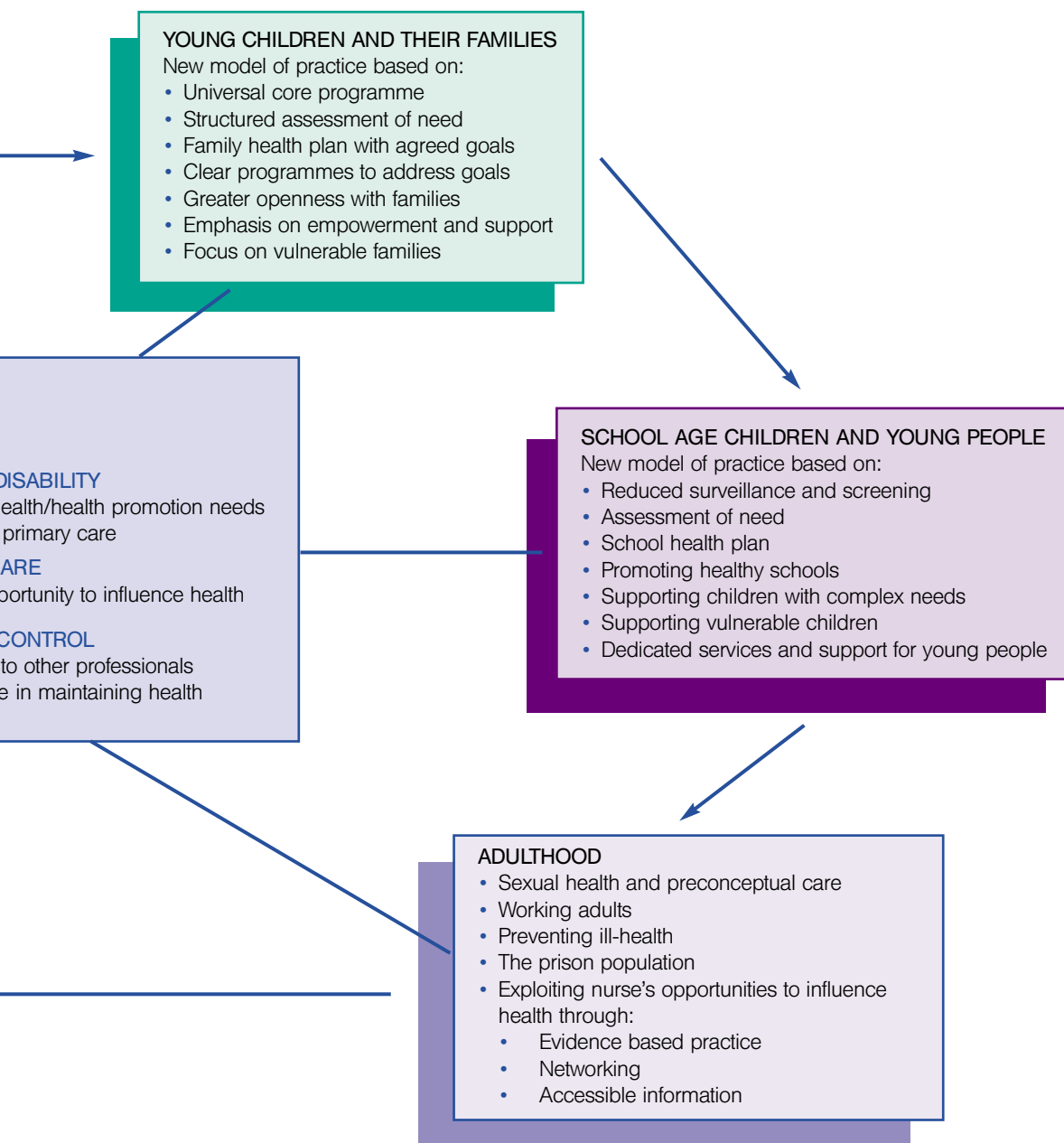
INFECTION C

- Resource
- Critical rol

OLDER PEOPLE

- Promote health and independence
- Integrated health and community care
- Revised health screening

Opportunities Across the Life Course





Partnerships for Health

No one profession or agency can achieve the necessary improvements in the health of Scotland's people. A partnership approach is critical to success. LHCCs will become an increasingly important focal point for partnership working across a whole range of different aspects of service planning and delivery.

LHCCs should ensure that all nurses, midwives and health visitors, alongside other local agencies and professionals are linked into local planning and partnership fora via the LHCC.

Partnership working is not something that comes naturally to all professionals or agencies and does not feature significantly in professional education.

NHS Boards and Local Authorities should remove organisational barriers to effective partnership at all levels of their organisations. They should support the development of educational initiatives that bring together different professionals and agencies to address key problems or issues.

“ **Public health improvements can only be made by a partnership approach** ”

Public Health Practice and the Primary Health Care Team

Our National Health: A plan for action, a plan for change (2000) commits to building integrated primary health care teams. Teams need a proactive focus on the health needs of the population as well as reacting to demand for services.

Primary Care Trusts and LHCCs should support the development of effective integrated primary health care teams.

Primary health care teams should identify a named lead person on public health. This would be a key person in the local public health network.

The Scottish Executive will work with GP representatives to facilitate effective teamwork and health improvement activity around maternity care and child health through the GP contract.

“ **The huge agenda before us requires all members of the primary care team (current and future) to be working in a co-ordinated and corporate way** ”

Making Effective Use of Nursing Skills

The best use is not always being made of advanced and specialist skills within the nursing workforce. In many places practice has become routine and unquestioning and needs to be radically overhauled. New models of practice are proposed that better reflect current needs, with nurses, midwives and health visitors working more openly in partnership with clients, agreeing and working towards shared goals with families, seeking out health needs and finding new and creative ways of addressing them.

The Scottish Executive, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, will lead a radical modernisation of the public health nursing workforce.

The Scottish Executive will invest in the education of the existing school nurse workforce and ensure that team leaders have educational and grading parity with health visitor colleagues.

Trusts and LHCCs should make changes to skill mix, based on the needs of patients/clients, as opportunities arise to ensure that effective use is made of the skills of specialist practitioners.

Trusts should ensure that more effective use is made of nurses, midwives and health visitors with specialist expertise, for example infection control nurses, occupational health nurses or CPNs, by ensuring that they are linked into local public health networks and are able to act as a resource to the LHCC.

“ It is important to strike the right balance between focus and flexibility and to clarify the functions of staff rather than their role so that they are deployed according to community need rather than the limitations of specific job titles ”



Reshaping Services To Address Health Inequalities

Greater targeting of effort is needed to ensure that services identify and respond to need. This is reflected in new models of practice to be developed for work with families and children and in schools.

LHCCs and NHS Boards should ensure that the distribution of available skills and resource matches the pattern of identified need in communities

LHCCs and partner agencies should target resources to communities with the greatest need. This may involve developing community based approaches or linking with existing developments such as New Community Schools or Sure Start Scotland projects

“ Universal service provision reduces flexibility, stifles innovation and limits proactive approaches to working, while encouraging a reactive, pressured response to individual and national demands ”



Information for Effective Public Health Practice

There is a dearth of reliable and meaningful information to inform effective practice. In order to be effective, nurses, midwives and health visitors need to be able to make use of reliable, good quality primary research and systematic reviews, derived from scientific enquiry. They also need to be able to use information derived from their activities and those of colleagues to help inform the planning and delivery of services. The review identified the importance of exploiting the detailed local knowledge that nurses, midwives and health visitors have about the communities they work with to inform strategy and planning. Finally, in order to exploit all of this information and deploy it to support the delivery of effective services, nurses, midwives and health visitors need to make use of information technology.

The Scottish Executive will make widely available the systematic review of the literature accompanying this review in order to support the development of evidence based practice.

The Public Health Institute of Scotland in association with directors of public health should ensure that support is available via local public health networks to implement evidence based practice in public health.

The Public Health Institute of Scotland will develop outcome and process indicators for public health nursing that are relevant to practice and which can be used to inform service planning and strategy. These will replace the counting of contacts as a measure of activity.

Primary Care Trusts should ensure that where practicable, nurses use GPASS or other local primary care systems to record their activity with patients/clients.

Trusts should ensure that all nurses working in primary care have access to a computer which networks with GPASS or other local system, local NHS Board networks and the NHS Net.

Preparing Nurses as Public Health Practitioners

Despite an increased focus on health and health promotion in pre-registration nurse education, many nurses still do not fully appreciate the wide ranging determinants of health or take full advantage of opportunities to enhance health.

Universities and Trusts should work together to develop the LHCC as a focus for community placements rather than an individual practice. Placements should give a broad variety of experiences giving a more rounded perspective of public health practice.

Teaching on public health should be strengthened by the involvement of public health experts to consolidate evidence based theoretical elements of the programme.

Universities should ensure that link nurse lecturers enhance links with LHCCs to support students and mentors in providing high quality learning experiences for students and facilitating the development of public health competencies.

“ Making the public health agenda real and meaningful (to students) is a challenge, but they readily become engaged when they can see the relevance to practice and their own lives ”



At post registration level, the twin strands of public health nurse and family health nurse will be explored as a basis for future educational preparation of community nurses.

The Scottish Executive, working with the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting in Scotland, The Public Health Institute of Scotland and universities will develop a new public health nurse education programme, which will bring together the existing specialisms of health visiting and school nursing.

The Scottish Executive will commission the training of an additional 60 health visitors and support 30 existing school nurses to achieve specialist practice qualifications in the short term

The Scottish Executive will pilot WHO Europe's Family Health Nurse concept.

The Scottish Executive will establish a mechanism for commissioning community nursing education to meet the needs of current and future practice.

A new model of preparation for advanced practice in public health nursing will be developed with the Public Health Institute of Scotland and the National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting in Scotland.

Further Information

Further detail on each of these areas and the review findings on which they are based is available in the full report of the review, available from:
The Stationery Office, 71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AZ. Tel: 0870 606 5566.
Or via the Scottish Executive's website www.scotland.gov.uk





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