1. **INTRODUCTION**

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) is commissioning the design and delivery of an education programme to prepare nurses to work flexibly in roles within the adult integrated community nursing team. This team includes district nursing, general practice nursing and care home nursing roles.

This new education programme will ensure consistency of provision and qualifications for community nursing across Scotland and supports national policy in favour of community-based services, reducing inequalities and supporting people to improve and manage their own health and wellbeing.

The possibility of the NMC no longer regulating specialist practice qualifications in future heightens the potential of this opportunity for a creative, university-based, flexible and accessible programme that;

- enhances the attractiveness of working in the community to nurses completing undergraduate programmes
- enables more community-based nurses to benefit from the Education and Career Pathway Model to help them in meeting their aspirations (Annex, Figure 1), such as clinical nurse specialist, leader, educator, researcher, manager or nurse consultant
- creates a more flexible and better-prepared community nursing workforce, in line with the aspirations of the Transforming Roles programme and the Nursing 2030 Vision, encouraging more movement of nurses in different roles within adult integrated community nursing teams.

---

As part of the Education and Career Pathway (Annex, Figure 1), the programme will develop the core generalist knowledge, skills and competencies required for safe and effective practice across the range of community roles at practitioner level (level five of the Career Framework for Health), to meet people’s physical, mental health and social care needs. On completion of the programme, nurses will select additional role specific module/s enabling them to practice at senior practitioner/specialist (level six of the Career Framework for Health), for example as district nurses or senior general practice nurses.

This approach aims to provide a responsive, flexible, community nursing workforce. Nurses will be equipped to practise confidently and competently across a range of settings at level five and then move to more specific roles following additional specialised education to provide safe, effective, person-centred care to people with more complex health and care needs within a specialist area of practice.

The rationale for commissioning education nationally is to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources and a once for Scotland approach that delivers consistency in the quality of the provision, alignment with the Transforming Roles programme and equity of access for nurses in all geographical areas.

2. BACKGROUND

Scottish Government policies, including the Primary Care Transformation\(^2\), National Clinical Strategy\(^3\) and Realistic Medicine\(^4\), signal the need for service redesign that;

- ensures quality is at the heart of service delivery
- focuses on prevention, population health and links between health and economic prosperity
- puts people at the centre of health and social care services.
- delivers the right care in the right place at the right time, by the right person, making best use of resources

\(^2\) [https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Primary-Care/Strategy-or-Primary-Care](https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Primary-Care/Strategy-or-Primary-Care)


\(^4\) [https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492520.pdf](https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492520.pdf)
enables people to take more responsibility for their health and wellbeing, with a greater focus on prevention and early intervention than crisis management

The Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Scotland is committed to maximising the contribution of the nursing, midwifery and health professions (NMaHP) workforce and pushing the traditional boundaries of professional roles. The Transforming Roles programme aims to provide strategic oversight, direction and governance to develop and transform NMaHP roles to meet the current and future needs of Scotland’s health and care system and ensure nationally consistent, sustainable and progressive roles, education and career pathways.

Shifting the balance of care from hospital to community and primary care settings at or near people’s homes aims to improve population health, increase quality and safety, and secure best value from health and social care services. Delivering on these aims requires community nurses to develop new and innovative ways of working to provide safe, effective, person-centred care and clinical interventions tailored to need. District nurses, general practice nurses and their wider teams working as an integrated community nursing team will play a key role in planning, providing, managing, monitoring and reviewing care, building on current roles and best practice to meet the requirements of people with more complex health and care needs in a range of community settings.

Following NMC changes to the specialist practitioner qualification (SPQ) which saw health visiting, school nursing and occupational health nursing moved to the third part of the Register, the only specialties to which NMC SPQ standards continue to apply are district nursing, general practice nursing (GPN), community mental health, community learning disabilities and community children’s nursing. In Scotland, the

Community Children’s Nursing education is currently under review in Scotland and will be reporting in March 2019

5
only SPQ programme still offered is in district nursing (postgraduate diploma level). Many of the community aspects of mental health and learning disabilities are now covered in the undergraduate programme to reflect the changing focus of these fields and there is no specific university-based GPN or community children’s nursing education.

A well-established introduction to GPN is offered by NES, but inequities have arisen in relation to educational preparation opportunities for GPNs. The 2018 General Medical Services Contract in Scotland⁶ has outlined a new role for GPNs and the opportunity arises to develop a consistent career pathway that not only continues to meet the needs of district nursing, but also meets those of GPNs and, potentially other nurses in the community such as those working in care homes, community hospitals and prison healthcare.

3. PROGRAMME

NES is commissioning at least one flexible, modular, community nursing programme of preparation in each of the three regions of Scotland that reflects the opportunities set out above. This will be a work based, 2-year part time programme at SCQF level 10 that provides core knowledge and skills for effective practice across a range of community settings at level 5 of the career framework. It is likely to commence Jan-March 2020.

The programme, which could be accessed on graduation from pre-registration undergraduate programmes or any time thereafter, aims to meet the needs of nurses working across different community settings. The programme will be designed to include varied practice learning experience whilst acquiring the key education preparation to underpin practice. This may include rotation between different aspects of community nursing such as district nursing, general practice, care homes and community hospitals and potentially prison healthcare, acute settings such as medical assessment, and older peoples care.

In line with the NES Education and Career Pathway (Annex Figure 1), the proposed programme will develop the core knowledge and skills required to support level 5/practitioner level practice across the adult community nursing integrated team. The intention is to enable as much access to the pathway as possible and therefore it is proposed that a programme at a minimum of SCQF level 10 will be delivered.

Additional education will be required to develop senior/specialist skills for a specific role, for example as a senior GPN or district nurse. This may take the form of a module at postgraduate level, undertaken in-post and part-time, that consolidates practice in the specific area and further develops leadership skills and includes a prescribing module.

Characteristics that we would expect to form the basis of the programme:

- initial online provision with work-based activities and mentorship
- core modules for all nurses to equip them with the skills and knowledge to meet mental, physical and social care needs (community mental health, community learning disabilities and community children’s nurses to be included)
- an emphasis on work-based learning with supervision and assessment of practice
- development of leadership and facilitation skills throughout the career pathway
- utilisation of existing national competencies
- demonstration of clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are consistent with achieving knowledge and skills at the relevant academic level
- maximise the use of technology to enable innovative approaches to virtual delivery that supports equity of access from different geographical locations with attention to remote and rural locations where appropriate
- alignment with the NES Education and Career Pathway (Annex, Figure 1), demonstrating how the proposed programme content and academic level supports progression to specialist/senior level education and practice
• carried out in line with NES’s Inclusive Education and Learning Policy7.

Annex

Figure 1. NES Education and Career Pathway (Integrated education pathway for district nursing, general practice nursing, care home nursing and other nurses within the adult integrated community nursing team.)

** Other pathways could include community mental health and community learning disabilities nurses

Contact GPNursing@nes.scot.nhs.uk

---