

**Practice guidance for Specialist
Community Public Health Nurse
[SCPHN]
Practice Teachers and Mentors
(health visiting and school nursing)**

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Introduction

This document is intended to explain and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the SCPHN Practice Teacher and Mentor in supporting SCPHN students (health visiting and school nursing). These students will be undertaking their education at the University of Southampton and intend to enter their names onto Part 3 of the Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC] register.

The Support of Learners

The NMC standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives make it quite clear that it is the responsibility of all registered practitioners to support student learning by facilitating “*students and others to develop their competence*” (NMC, 2008:2). Therefore this guidance is set within the context of a learning culture that should involve and encompass individual practitioners, community teams, geographical clusters, and the wider provider organisation.

The Practice Teacher (PT)

A Nursing and Midwifery Council Practice Teacher is a registered school nurse or health visitor on Part 3 of the Nursing and Midwifery Council Register.

“The practice teacher will normally have previously fulfilled the NMC requirements to become a sign off mentor, and received further preparation to achieve the knowledge, skills and competence required to meet the NMC defined outcomes for a practice teacher” (NMC 2008:22).

SCPHN Practitioners who have successfully completed a 30 credit postgraduate (HE7) module in “Learning and Teaching for Health and Social care professionals can apply for accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL) against the NMC defined outcomes for a practice teacher.

The learning outcomes from the 30 credit HE7 unit map to the NMC learning outcomes for meeting the new practice teacher requirements.

SCPHN Practitioners who hold a Community Practice Teacher (CPT) award or who have successfully completed a two year Community Practice Teacher programme hold teaching and assessment skills beyond those required for meeting the advisory standards for mentorship (UKCC 2000) and may apply to be identified on the local register as a practice teacher.

NMC Practice teachers are responsible and accountable for:

- Organising and co-ordinating learning activities, primarily in practice learning environments for pre-registration students intending to register as specialist community public health nurses;
- Supervising students and providing them with constructive feedback on their achievements;
- Setting and monitoring achievement of realistic learning outcomes in practice;
- Assessing total performance – including skills, attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing evidence as required by programme providers of the student’s achievement or lack of achievement;
- Liaising with others (e.g. mentors, sign-off mentors, academic tutors, programme leader, other professionals) to provide feedback
- identify any concerns about the student’s performance and agree action as appropriate;
- Signing off achievement of proficiency at the end of the final period of practice learning or a period of consolidated practice (NMC 2008).

The Role of the Designated Prescribing Mentor (DPM)

Additionally a student may be required to be taught and facilitated by a Designated Prescribing Mentor (DPM) in order to assess competence in Prescribing. This will only be necessary if the practice teacher is not a Nurse or Non Medical Prescriber i.e. has completed an approved NMC Mode 1/2 or V100 or V300 Prescribing Programme.

The Role of the Mentor

In view of the recent Health visitor implementation plan 2011-15: a call to action (DH 2011) and the drive to recruit 4'200 HV's nationally to address the year on year shortfall from preceding years; it is recognised nationally that there are not enough practice teachers within a Primary Care Trust providers.

As a result graduate nurses and or practitioners who hold a Specialist Community Public Health Nursing qualification on Part 3 of the NMC register will act as mentors for health visitors and school nurses students. The mentor will be supported by a recognised practice teacher on the same part of the register as the student.

The mentor will act as a clinical facilitator and will be responsible for day to day student supervision and teaching, under the guidance of a recognised practice teacher.

It is anticipated that the practice teacher and mentor will work closely together in planning and implementing the student's programme.

It is expected that the mentor will meet formally with the identified practice teacher *at least once every four weeks* in each semester to discuss progress of the student.

The practice teacher and mentor will plan the teaching programme for the student; manage the learning environment; provide appropriate experience; contribute to the integration of theory and practice and the development of a positive learning environment.

The practice teacher will hold overall responsibility for assessing and determining the student's proficiency to practice.

Each student, practice teacher and mentor will be provided with a programme handbook and a proficiency based portfolio incorporating guidelines for practice and assessment.

Opportunity for Career Progression for Mentor

All those accepted as mentors will be encouraged to pursue a career in practice teaching and will be advised to enter a postgraduate practice teacher programme offered by the University of Southampton. This will enable them to apply to their employers for registration as practice teachers and to work as practice teachers.

Communications

1. Practice Teacher and Mentor

Four times during the academic year the Practice teacher and mentor will be invited to attend a meeting at the University to discuss areas of the syllabus to be covered by their student; to consider the progress of individual students and the reactions of the student group as a whole. Practice teachers will be asked to recommend other relevant subjects to discuss at the meetings and notes will be kept of each meeting.

In addition practice teacher/mentor/lecturer/student meetings will be held in work-base settings.

Contact will also be made by email and telephone when necessary and additional visits to practice made if required.

The outcome of assessment must be demonstrated by the practice teacher in the proficiency based portfolio and must be available for consultation and subsequent planning.

Where a student is failing to achieve a satisfactory standard, the practice teacher and mentor (if appropriate), student and academic tutor will meet together; the problem will be discussed and extra learning contracts drawn up to guide the student towards the required standard.

2. The Professional Advisory Reference Group for Public Health Practice

Senior School Nurse and Health Visitor representatives from the employer Trusts sponsoring or seconding specialist community public health nurse students to the programme are members of this committee. In this context the progress of the programme is reported and future plans discussed.

3. Induction/update for identified Practice Teachers and mentors

In preparation for the start of the new programme all practice teachers and mentors identified by the University and employer Trusts to act in this capacity with Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN) students are invited to attend a one and a half day induction programme before supporting learning and assessment of their first school nurse or health visitor student on the SCPHN programme at the University of Southampton. This preparation is considered essential. Each will have a comprehensive student handbook with guidance on the new programmes. The induction programme will encourage practice teachers and mentors to develop peer support mechanisms as well as influence best practice.

The emphasis is on:

- Philosophy and academic rationale of the programme
- Aims and outcomes
- Structure, content and assessment strategies and integration of specialist practice learning
- Programme Plan
- Time commitment guidelines
- Assessing practice competencies
- Specimen Portfolio
- Copy of verification report
- Audit and quality assurance in SCPHN.

Please address any additional queries to
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Additional reading and information

Department of Health [DH] (2011) Health visitor implementation plan 2011-15: a call to action. Available online at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_124202

Biggs, J., Tang, C. (2007). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. The Society for Research into Higher Education. Open University Press. Buckingham.

Duffy, K. (2007) Supporting failing students in practice. *Nursing Times* 103: 47, 28-29. Available online at: <http://www.nursingtimes.net/nursing-practice/267531.article>

Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC] (2008) *Standards to support learning and assessment in practice: NMC standards for mentors, practice teachers and teachers*. NMC: London

Available [online] at: www.nmc-uk.org

Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC] (2008) *'The Code': Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives*. Available [online] at: www.nmc-uk.org

Rogers, A., Horrocks, N. (2010) *Teaching Adults*. 4th edition. Open University Press. Maidenhead