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Clarification of admission criteria for nurses to Specialist Community Public Health Nurse programmes

Summary

This circular clarifies the NMC position that admission to a specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) programme is limited to first level nurses and midwives.

This circular:

- Applies to UK wide approved education institutions (AEIs) offering NMC programmes leading to specialist community public health nurse registration.
- Replaces circular 25/2006: Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) – Eligibility criteria when undertaken through programmes leading to a Specialist Practitioner Community Qualification (SPQ) which is now withdrawn.
- Should be read and applied in conjunction with the standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nursing (NMC 2004) and The Code.
- Applies with immediate effect.

Background

There are three parts to the register held by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), defined by the NMC Order (2001). These are nursing, midwifery and specialist community public health nursing (SCPHN). SCPHN was set up as a new part of the register in 2004, but differs from the nursing and midwifery parts in that it is not a stand alone registration.

The legislation governing registration¹ indicates the entries that can be made on the register. These distinguish between first and second level nurses in regard to annotations of qualifications and competence.

The standards of proficiency for SCPHN programmes were developed from previous competencies used for community healthcare nursing and health visiting, as stated in the standards of proficiency for SCPHN (p.9). The entry requirement for these programmes was registration equivalent to a first level nurse.

SCPHN programmes prepare first level nurses for a post registration qualification, addressing practice issues with distinct characteristics beyond initial registration.

¹ Article 7 of the Nurses and Midwives (Parts and Entries in the Register)) Order of Council (2004)

Action required

To meet the requirements for registration on the SCPHN part of the register the individual must be a first level nurse or a midwife. Therefore:

- Approved education institutions must ensure that their admission criteria to SCPHN programmes reflects the requirement for applicants to be a first level nurse or a midwife.
- A SCPHN programme does not offer a route to enable a second level nurse to demonstrate the required standards and proficiencies of a first level nurse. A second level nurse who wishes to undertake a SCPHN programme must first complete a programme leading to registration as a first level nurse, prior to acceptance onto a SCPHN programme.

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This circular has been issued by



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