

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

## 1. Key Information

<b>Programme Title:</b>	PG Diploma Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (Health Visiting/School Nursing)
<b>Awarding Institution:</b>	Buckinghamshire New University
<b>Teaching Institution(s):</b>	Buckinghamshire New University
<b>Subject Cluster:</b>	Community Health & Primary Care
<b>Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PGDip Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (Health Visiting)</li> <li>• PGDip Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (School Nursing)</li> </ul>
<b>Pathways (if applicable)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist Community Public Health Nursing -Health Visiting</li> <li>• Specialist Community Public Health Nursing - School Nursing</li> </ul>
<b>Other award titles available (exit qualifications):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PGCert Community Health Studies (60 Credits)</li> <li>• PGDip Community Health Studies (120 Credits, without the practice element)</li> </ul>
<b>FHEQ level of final award:</b>	Level 7
<b>Accreditation details:</b>	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
<b>Length of programme:</b>	52 weeks
<b>Mode(s) of Study:</b>	Full-time
<b>Mode of Delivery:</b>	Blended learning
<b>Language of study:</b>	English
<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s):</b>	There are no QAA benchmarks for this programme
<b>Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2022)</li> <li>• Part 2: Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018 – updated 2023)</li> <li>• Part 3: Standards for Post-registration Programmes (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2022 – updated 2023)</li> <li>• The Code (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018)</li> <li>• UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A. Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards – The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications</li> </ul>

	(FHEQ) of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2014)
<b>Course Code(s):</b>	PDSCPNBF , PDSCHVBF
<b>UCAS Code(s):</b>	
<b>Approval date:</b>	May 2024
<b>Date of last update:</b>	October 2025

## 2. Programme Summary

The programme is designed to prepare registered nurses and midwives with the advanced knowledge, proficiencies, critical thinking skills and professional behaviours required to meet the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards of proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses in Health Visiting or School Nursing (NMC, 2022). Successful completion of the programme leads to registration as a Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (HV or SN) on the third part of the NMC register.

The programme prepares learners to work in partnership with children, young people families and communities to prevent ill health, protect health and promote wellbeing, and emphasises the development of specialist expertise to understand the wider determinants of health and seek to address health inequalities and safeguard the most vulnerable and at risk in society. The programme will enable learners to become accountable, culturally competent, autonomous leaders with the skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with individuals, families, and communities, within the context of the wider interprofessional workforce. Skills in leading change will be fostered, providing the opportunity to plan and implement tangible service improvements within the context of public health nursing.

Diverse learning environments, including practice areas specific to public health nursing, enable learners to actively apply theoretical knowledge, collaborate with interprofessional teams, and interact with children, young people, families and communities. This comprehensive approach ensures that learners are well-equipped to excel in their chosen field of health visiting or school nursing leading vital public health nursing services within the community.

The programme has been developed in collaboration with Experts by Experience (people who use services and carers), practice learning partners, previous and existing learners, and other key stakeholders to help ensure that the curriculum meets the contemporary needs of children, young people, families and communities and public health nursing services.

Upon completion of the Post Graduate Diploma Specialist Community Public Health Nursing programme in Health Visiting or School Nursing learners will have the opportunity to apply to undertake an MSc top-up module at Buckinghamshire New University.

### 3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

#### Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Facilitate the development of specialist knowledge, skills and attributes essential to working as Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) in Health Visiting and School Nursing, with the ability to support children, young people, families and communities to maximise their health and wellbeing and to manage increasingly complex needs.
2. Provide learners with a comprehensive understanding of leadership principles and practices, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to become culturally competent, effective leaders of care and services.
3. Empower learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate evidence into their practice, enabling them to provide high quality individualised care within diverse communities.
4. Enable learners to develop a comprehensive set of academic skills fostering their ability to engage as active, autonomous learners and to develop critical thinking skills which will support them in navigating dynamic life-long learning environments.
5. Nurture autonomous Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (Health Visitors and School Nurses) who can exercise independent judgment when leading person-centred, evidence driven care and services within challenging and unpredictable contexts.

#### Programme Learning Outcomes

##### Knowledge and Understanding (K)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
K1	Articulate a deep understanding of the fundamental principles of Specialist Community Public Health Nursing as a basis for working in partnership with children, young people families and communities to prevent ill health, protect health and promote wellbeing
K2	Demonstrate a critical awareness of the multifaceted determinants of health, including cultural, social, economic, and environmental factors, and the broad impact that they have on diverse population groups and health outcomes.
K3	Critically evaluate evidence-based health promotion strategies and interventions tailored to diverse populations to prevent ill health and maximise wellbeing.
K4	Draw on a systematic understanding of leadership principles, strategies to enhance health and wellbeing for children, young people, families, and communities through collaboration, communication and shared decision-making
K5	Design innovative strategies for developing the public health nursing workforce, in response to a critical awareness of emerging trends, technologies, and the impact of increasing complexity of need.

## Analysis and Criticality (C)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Critically analyse person-centred care principles and strengths-based approaches to address the diverse needs and preferences of children, young people, families, and communities within the context of Public Health Nursing, integrating empathy, cultural sensitivity, and ethical considerations
C2	Apply critical thinking and professional judgement to assess complex situations to develop holistic evidence-based interventions to improve health and wellbeing.
C3	Critically appraise risk assessment and priority-setting strategies in the strategic planning and delivery of high-quality public health nursing services.
C4	Critically evaluate complex ethical and legal dilemmas in public health nursing practice, independently applying ethical principles and professional codes of conduct to make informed decisions.
C5	Critically evaluate research evidence for the effectiveness of care and interventions to inform and enhance decision-making processes.

## Application and Practice (P)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Advocate for the wellbeing and rights of children, young people, families and communities, serving as a liaison between children, young people, families and communities and healthcare resources to influence policy and practice for improved health outcomes.
P2	Critically assess health needs to ensure the provision of person centred and holistic care, using critical reasoning to formulate comprehensive plans and interventions .
P3	Design innovative and contextually appropriate initiatives that address the diverse needs and challenges faced by communities and the public health nursing workforce and contribute to the continuous advancement of services.
P4	Educate a diverse range of stakeholders, facilitating knowledge exchange and collaboration between users and providers of services to creating a culture of life-long learning.
P5	Demonstrate effective leadership and management skills, which motivate interdisciplinary teams, promote an inclusive work environment, and foster innovation.

## Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
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<b>T1</b>	Apply empathic emotional intelligence to your engagement in autonomous specialist community public health nursing.
<b>T2</b>	Utilise advanced communication techniques to engage with children, young people, families, communities and interprofessional teams, fostering collaborative relationships and facilitating shared decision-making processes to optimise health and wellbeing outcomes.
<b>T3</b>	Effectively integrate digital tools and other technological innovations into public health nursing, contributing to the overall enhancement of care quality.
<b>T4</b>	Engage in reflective and self-directed learning to further develop and refine evidence-based public health nursing practice.

## Graduate Attributes

The BNU Graduate Attributes of: Knowledge and its application; Creativity; Social and ethical awareness and responsibility; and Leadership and self-development focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens.

On this programme, attributes are developed through the application of knowledge and skills fundamental to working in public health nursing in both theory sessions and the practice environment (K1-K5, C1-C5, P1-P5, T1-T4). Analysis and evaluation are embedded throughout the programme in individual and group tasks, shaping curious individuals who use evidence to underpin their decisions (K5, C1-C5, P5, T4). Authentic module assessments further encourage the development of leadership and creativity, and nurture problem solving abilities, preparing learners for the workplace (K3, K4, C3, C4, P3, P5, T5). By applying learning to professional practices and standards, learners become highly employable professionals who possess a deep understanding of individual and community needs, and the ways in which they can be met (K1-K5, C1-C5, P1-P5, T1-T5). Learners become self-aware, emotionally intelligent, reflective practitioners who are empowered to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of children, young people, families, communities and populations (C1, P4, T1, T2, T3, T5).

## 4. Entry Requirements

The University's [general entry requirements](#) will apply to admission to this programme with the following additions / exceptions:

1. The NMC requires you to be entered on an appropriate part of the NMC Register. You must be a NMC registered nurse (level 1) or NMC registered midwife capable of safe and effective practice at the level of proficiency appropriate to the Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN HV/SN) programme before being considered as eligible to apply for entry.
2. Eligible NMC registered nurses and midwives, including NHS, non-NHS, self-employed and self-funding applicants, will require access to a specialist community public health practice setting in the appropriate field of health visiting or school nursing, and to a Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor who meet the requirements of the NMC

Standards of Student Supervision and Assessment and can facilitate successful completion of the programme learning outcomes. Governance structures to support learning must be in place, in addition to a commitment to student support and learning.

3. The application must be supported by two references, where appropriate, one referee must be the applicant's current employer.
4. You will have in place a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Self-employed applicants prove that indemnity insurance and DBS requirements are met. This will be paid for by the employer or if the applicant is self-employed/funded, in line with other nursing and midwifery programmes leading to NMC registration, the University will pay the cost of this.
5. You must evidence the academic ability to study at the required level of the programme. The minimum academic criteria for admission to this programme is usually 120 credits at level 6 in Nursing or Midwifery. However, experienced nurses and midwives who have fewer than 120 credits at level 6 and relevant professional experience will be asked to undertake a written assessment to demonstrate to the programme team of their ability to study at level 7.
6. Previous study, professional and/or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules in accordance with our [accreditation of prior learning](#) (APL) process.
7. A self-declaration of good health and character will be undertaken as part of the admission process and will be repeated at the end of the programme prior to your qualification being recorded with the NMC.
8. A selection process for employed applicants in collaboration with practice-based learning partners is undertaken and will include a value-based interview. It may also include academic skills tests, group discussion and presentation. During the interview, we will provide advice and guidance to ensure you fully understand the entry requirements for the programme and what you need to do to succeed once you are enrolled. Interview questions from Experts by Experience (people who use services and carers) are also included and, where possible and practical for them, we endeavour to include them on the interview panel in person. Experts by Experience participating in interviews will have completed all mandatory preparation including training around unconscious bias. Reasonable adjustments can be made during the interview process to accommodate individuals with specific needs, ensuring equal opportunities and a fair assessment of abilities.
9. A selection process for self-employed applicants will follow the **Application Process for Self-Funding Learners – PGDip Specialist Community Public Health Nursing** flow chart to ensure that all required practice learning support and governance structures are in place.

## 5 Programme Structure

### Pathway 1 SCPHN Health Visiting

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
<b>Level 7</b>	<p><b>Core modules:</b>            NAM7114 (20 Credits)            Building Healthy Communities</p> <p>NAM7125 (20 Credits)            Autonomous Specialist Practice in Health Visiting</p> <p>NAM7126 (20 Credits) Advanced Autonomous Specialist Practice in Health Visiting</p> <p>NAM7117 (20 Credits)            Maximising Health and Wellbeing Across the Lifespan</p> <p>NAM7118 (20 Credits)            Strategic Leadership in Service Improvement</p> <p>NAM7127 (20 Credits)            Community and Public Health Workforce Development - Health Visiting</p> <p>NAM7159 (Non-credit bearing)            Practice Assessment Document</p>	<p>PGCert in Community Health Studies (upon achieving 60 credits)</p> <p>PGDip in Community Health Studies (upon achieving 120 credits without successful completion of the Practice Assessment, or upon achieving 120 credits but not able to register as SCPHN due to Fitness to Practice decisions)</p> <p>PGDip in Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (Health Visitor) (upon achieving 120 credits with successful completion of the Practice Assessment)</p>

### Pathway 2 SCPHN School Nursing

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
<b>Level 7</b>	<p><b>Core modules:</b>            NAM7114 (20 Credits)            Building Healthy Communities</p> <p>NAM7122 (20 Credits)            Autonomous Specialist Practice in School Nursing</p> <p>NAM7123 (20 Credits) Advanced Autonomous Specialist Practice in School Nursing</p> <p>NAM7117 (20 Credits)            Maximising Health and Wellbeing Across the Lifespan</p>	<p>PGCert in Community Health Studies (upon achieving 60 credits)</p> <p>PGDip in Community Health Studies (upon achieving 120 credits without successful completion of the Practice Assessment, or upon achieving 120 credits but not able to register as SCPHN due to Fitness to Practice decisions)</p> <p>PGDip in Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (School Nurse) (upon achieving 120 credits with successful completion of the Practice Assessment)</p>

	<p>NAM7118 (20 Credits) Strategic Leadership in Service Improvement</p> <p>NAM7124 (20 Credits) Community and Public Health Workforce Development - School Nursing</p> <p>NAM7159 (Non-credit bearing) Practice Assessment Document</p>	
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**Please note:** Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to changes in the subject area

## 6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Learning and teaching

The learning and teaching strategy aligns with the complexities and responsibilities of SCPHN's working in Health Visiting or School Nursing practice. The holistic curriculum integrates public health nursing and advanced leadership skills, evidence-based practice, and service development, which relate directly to current public health agenda. Additionally, the programme places a strong emphasis on cultivating learners' skills in academic writing and presentation, ensuring they can effectively communicate their findings and insights. This approach equips learners undertaking the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing programme in Health Visiting or School Nursing with the intellectual tools necessary for both their immediate academic success and their continuous personal and professional development.

A blended learning approach combines classroom sessions with synchronous and asynchronous online workshops and digital resources. Simulation and real-world practice experiences are woven throughout the programme, providing authentic learning opportunities which meet the diverse needs of adult learners. The application of theoretical knowledge to practice experiences fosters critical thinking and decision-making skills. Interprofessional collaboration is a key feature of the learning approach taken by this programme and shared discipline seminars and group work mirror the interdisciplinary nature of public health nursing. Reflective practice underpins all modules and learners are supported to develop self-awareness whilst identifying areas for improvement through continuous review of their practice and academic experiences.

Practice education plays a vital role in bridging the gap between theory and practice. The NMC Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (SSSA) will underpin the support learners will receive during the programme. All learners are allocated a Practice Supervisor who has undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship as a SCPHN qualified professional, or who can evidence prior learning and relevant practice supervisor experience that enables them to facilitate effective evidence-

based learning opportunities for post-registration SCPHN students. All learners are allocated a Practice Assessor who is recorded on the NMC register as a SCPHN in the field of practice appropriate to their student's programme (HV or SN) or who can evidence prior learning and relevant practice supervisor experience that enables them to facilitate effective evidence-based learning opportunities for post-registration SCPHN students and who has undertaken a period of preceptorship in line with the NMC principles for preceptorship as a SCPHN qualified professional. In addition, they will also need the appropriate experience and training to support and assess learners to achieve the proficiencies set out in the NMC Standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nurses. Practice Supervisors will provide continuous guidance, constructive feedback and learning opportunities, enabling learners to grow in confidence and competence. A team-based approach is emphasised where Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors work closely with learners and Academic Assessors to address any challenges, facilitate skill development, and ensure adherence to the highest standards of care. Tripartite termly meetings provide a structured platform for open communication, goal-setting and collaborative problem-solving, further enhancing the quality of support and the overall learning experience for learners undertaking the programme. In exceptional circumstances, the same person may fulfil the role of Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor. However, the Practice Learning Partner and Academic Assessor must provide justification for the necessity of this arrangement.

The provision of an inclusive learning environment is achieved through a multifaceted approach. This includes diverse representation in curriculum materials, which ensures that learners encounter a broad range of perspectives and experiences, promoting cultural competency and understanding. Proactive support for individual learning needs recognises and addresses the unique requirements of each learner, using learners' preferred pronouns and respecting diverse identities and expressions. Accessible teaching resources accommodate diverse learning needs and abilities, providing equitable opportunities for success. In this environment, diversity, equity, and belonging are fostered, ensuring that every learner has an equal opportunity to thrive and succeed.

## **Assessment**

Varied formative and summative assessment methods are implemented to enable learners to demonstrate their understanding and skills in different ways, accommodating diverse learning needs and preferences. Authentic assessments relate directly to specialist community public health nursing and mirror projects encountered in the workplace, whilst also providing learners with opportunities to develop real-life solutions which could lead to improvements in services.

Alongside academic assessments, practice-based assessment forms an integral part of the programme. An electronic Practice Assessment Document will provide evidence of achievement in all elements of practice and completed practice hours will extend throughout the entire programme. The Practice Assessment Document module in non-credit bearing and is assessed as either a pass or a fail.

Successful completion of the practice element of the programme at the first attempt is mandatory to obtain the PG Diploma Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (Health Visiting or School Nursing) qualification. In agreement with practice learning partners, individual programme extensions may be considered to support the successful completion of the practice assessment.

## Contact Hours

This is a full-time programme and runs for 52 weeks with 46 weeks of allocated teaching and learning time. You will attend all University days (some will be online) and undertake 127 days, in practice over 52 weeks. You will have protected learning time and will be supported in practice by your Practice Supervisor, Practice Assessor and the wider team. Your allocated Academic Assessor and Personal Tutor will also support you during your time in practice.

Typical weeks may in term 1, 2 and 3 consist of 2 days in university, 2 days in your practice area and a study day (in agreement with the practice learning provider). Weeks in practice are also built into the timetable to enable opportunities for continuity, alternative learning experiences and practice assessment. During term 4 you will undertake an extended period of practice of 10 weeks in practice to support the consolidation of your learning.

Annual leave is set within the timetable to maximise learning and you will not usually be able to take any annual leave outside of these dates.

## 7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

[Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes \(Buckinghamshire New University, 2023\)](#)

Exemptions to this:

- There is no compensation for any theoretical and practice assessments within this programme.
- The practice element of the programme which must be passed at the first attempt as detailed above (see Assessment).

## 8. Support for learners

The following systems are in place to support you to be successful with your studies:

- The appointment of a personal tutor to support you through your programme
- A programme handbook and induction at the beginning of your studies
- Library resources, include access to books, journals, and databases - many of which are available in electronic format – and support from trained library staff
- Access to Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is accessible via PC, laptop, tablet, or mobile device
- Access to the MyBNU portal where you can access all University systems, information and news, record your attendance at sessions, and access your personalised timetable
- Academic Registry staff providing general guidance on University regulations, exams, and other aspects of students and course administration
- Central student services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, student finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability and inclusion, and mental health and wellbeing

- Support from the Bucks Students' Union, including the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers free and confidential advice on University processes.

## 9. Programme monitoring and review

BNU has a number of ways for monitoring and reviewing the quality of learning and teaching on your programme. You will be able to comment on the content of their programme via the following feedback mechanisms:

- Formal feedback questionnaires and anonymous module 'check-ins'
- Participation in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)
- Programme Committees, via appointed student representatives
- Informal feedback to your programme leader

Quality and standards on each programme are assured via the following mechanisms:

- An initial event to approve the programme for delivery
- An annual report submitted by the External Examiner following a process of external moderation of work submitted for assessment
- The Annual Monitoring process, which is overseen by the University's Education Committee
- PSRB Review by the Nursing and Midwifery Council
- Periodic Subject Review events held every five years
- Other sector compliance and review mechanisms

## 10. Internal and external reference points

Design and development of this programme has been informed by the following internal and external reference points:

- Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes (Buckinghamshire New University, 2023)
- Programme Approval and Amendment Policy (Buckinghamshire New University, 2020)
- Part 2: Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018 – updated 2023)
- Part 3: Standards for Post-registration Programmes (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2023)
- Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2022)
- The Code (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018)
- Thrive 28 – University Strategy 22/23 - 27/28 (Buckinghamshire New University, 2022)

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A. Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards – The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2014)

**Please see separate programme mapping document for**

- Mapping of NMC Standards of Proficiency for Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2022) to Programme Learning Outcomes
- Mapping of NMC Standards of Proficiency for Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2022) to modules

**Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to Modules**

Module Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)					
	K 1	K 2	K 3	K 4	K 5	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	T 5	
<b>Level 7</b>																					
Building Healthy Communities	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Autonomous Specialist Practice HV or SN	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Advanced Autonomous Specialist Practice HV or SN	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maximising Health and Wellbeing across the Lifespan	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Strategic Leadership in Service Improvement	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Community and Public Health Workforce Development in HV or SN	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Practice Assessment Document	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x