



Department  
of Health



Public Health  
England

# Evidence based public health nursing and midwifery

A summary of NICE guidance to underpin practice

Public Health Outcome Domain Three:  
Health protection

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# Evidence based public health nursing and midwifery

## A summary of NICE guidance to underpin nursing and midwifery practice to improve population health and wellbeing

The challenges we face in terms of population health and well-being are huge. We know the impact of lifestyle factors on health, we understand increasingly the 'causes of the causes' and we are learning more about how to support people to make decisions and choices which are positive for their health. We need to now practice in ways which use this knowledge and our nursing and midwifery skills to make a personal and professional impact to improve health and well-being.

**Why use evidence based practice?**

**Best practice, value for money, high quality care**

## About this summary guide

Nurses and midwives have told us that they are keen to increase their range and reach in improving health and wellbeing and to do so need to have access to the evidence of what works.

This is a professional nursing and midwifery practice summary guide based on original work by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on public health. Information about NICE work on public health is shown on page 10.

We have worked with NICE to review and summarise the relevant guidance to support nurses and midwives in delivering evidence based interventions to improve health. This guide sets out this work for Public Health Outcome Domain Three – Health protection.

Over the coming months we will work with the professions to develop the evidence base including web interface to access this summary guidance and support learning and development for 'health promoting practice'.

## What is evidence?

Evidence is one part of a process in demonstrating that interventions have been robustly tested and therefore that public health practice is supported by research or tested pathways.

A discussion of use of evidence for practice and validated sources of evidence is set out in our publication “The evidence base of the public health contribution of nurses and midwives”.

## Public Health Outcome Domain Three – Health protection

This document shows the summarised NICE guidance for Health protection. It includes:

### **Preventing transmission of blood borne viruses**

PH52 Needle and syringe programmes

PH 51 Contraception services with a focus on young people up to 25

## Health protection through preventing transmission of blood borne viruses

### Relevance

NICE guidance in relation to preventing transmission of blood borne diseases is relevant to all nurses and midwives whatever their role.

### Implications for Leadership & Practice

- People who take drugs intravenously do not always have access to a supply of clean needles, syringes and drug taking equipment
- People who take drugs intravenously benefit from access to a supply of clean needles, syringes and drug taking equipment
- Access to a supply of clean needles, syringes and drug taking equipment will reduce the potential for transmitting blood-borne viruses among people who would otherwise share needles, syringes and drug taking equipment
- Services should be coordinated so that people can access different things in the same place e.g. testing for hepatitis B and C and other blood borne viruses should be available for all who use the needle and syringe programme
- Access to services should be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### Summary of recommendations related to public health nursing and midwifery

- A range of services should be available (Level 1-3) which provide equipment, referral and specialist services
- Encourage people to access treatment as a way to stop injecting drugs, for example, opioid substitution therapy
- Encourage people to adopt safe drug taking behaviour by advising on safer injecting practice
- Encourage people to access to blood-borne virus testing, vaccination and treatment services
- Encourage people to adapt their behaviour to promote personal safety including ways to avoid and manage overdose

### Guidance relevant to this summary

PH49 Behaviour change: individual approaches

PH43 Hepatitis B and C - ways to promote and offer testing

PH51 Contraceptive services with a focus on young people up to 25

## Health protection through improving access to quality contraceptive services for young people under the age of 25

### Relevance

NICE guidance in relation to improving access to high quality contraceptive services, for young people up to the age of 25 is relevant to all nurses and midwives whatever their role.

### Implications for Leadership & Practice

- Young men and women are more likely to use contraception and use it effectively if they choose the method that best suits their individual needs and lifestyle
- Young men and women are very likely to begin or continue having intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment
- Young men and women are more likely to access contraceptive services that are universal and inclusive
- Young men and women should be given information in verbal and written form about the range of contraception methods available and the associated benefits and risks of each method
- The Fraser guidelines help practitioners to identify if a young person is capable of understanding and using the information to make a decision about the contraceptive method that best suits their individual needs and lifestyle

### Summary of recommendations related to public health nursing and midwifery

- Ensure young people have access, without delay, to confidential, dedicated young people's contraceptive services
- Ensure contraceptive services are culturally appropriate, confidential, non-judgmental
- Ensure pregnancy testing with same-day results is free and confidential
- Nurses and midwives should assess the young person to identify the risk of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Nurses and midwives should advise young people about the importance of testing for STIs and provide information about local STI services
- Midwives should discuss contraception with pregnant women and help them to decide the method they intend to use after their pregnancy
- Nurses and midwives should discuss contraception and explain the full range of contraceptive methods available with young women before or as soon as possible after an abortion
- Nurses and midwives should provide contraception advice to young men and women to prevent unintended pregnancy
- Nurses and midwives should ensure that young men and women know where to obtain free and emergency contraception
- Health professionals (including pharmacists) who advise young people about contraception should have the knowledge and skills to help them compare the risks and benefits of the different methods, according to their needs and circumstances

- Health professionals who advise young people about contraception should have the knowledge and skills to help them understand and manage common side effects of contraceptive methods

**Guidance relevant to this summary**

PH3 Prevention of sexually transmitted infections and under 18 conceptions

## National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

NICE's role is to improve outcomes for people using the NHS and other public health and social care services by:

- Producing evidence-based guidance and advice for health, public health and social care practitioners (Public Health Guidance, Quality Standards, Clinical Guidelines)
- Developing quality standards and performance metrics for those providing and commissioning health, public health and social care services
- Providing a range of information services for commissioners, practitioners and managers across the spectrum of health and social care

### **Public Health Guidance**

Public health guidance makes recommendations for populations and individuals on activities, policies and strategies that can help prevent disease or improve health. The guidance may focus on a particular topic (such as smoking), a particular population (such as schoolchildren) or a particular setting (such as the workplace). The NICE website [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk) includes the following information:

- [Update on public health topics in development](#)
- [Published public health guidance](#)
- [Public health guidance in development](#)
- [How we develop NICE public health guidance](#)
- [Healthcare-associated infections quality improvement guide](#)
- [Full list of NICE guidance that makes public health recommendations](#)