

Equality Impact Assessment Report Family Nurse Partnership Education Programme

Title: Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) Education Programme

NES directorate or department: NMAHP

Date Report Completed: November 2024

Version 1.1 completed January 2026 Review date January 2027

Introduction

Equality Impact Assessment is a process that helps us to consider how our work will meet the 3 parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is an important way to mainstream equality into our work at NES and to help us:

- Take effective action on equality
- Develop better policy, technology, education and learning and workforce planning solutions for health, social care and a wide range of our partners, stakeholders and employees
- Demonstrate how we have considered equality in making our decisions.

In Scotland, the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme is a licenced, home visiting programme for young, first-time parents. The FNP education programme provides the specialist education and training to enable family nurses and supervisors to implement the FNP programme with fidelity to the FNP licence which is held within Scottish Government.

The FNP education curricula promotes self-efficacy in family nurses and supervisors in relation to their own continuing education and professional development. A constructivist approach is used to further enhance the skills and experience of nurses and supervisors through a spiral curriculum, which build and revisits learning throughout the duration of the education programme.

The FNP Education programme supports the development of specialist knowledge and clinical skills to benefit the FNP clinical workforce. These clinical skills are transferred to clinical practice to benefit the clients, and their babies served by the programme. The intended outcome is that following an 18-month programme for family nurses and a 12-month programme for FNP supervisors, the individuals are clinically capable and moving towards mastery in their clinical skills.

The FNP Education Team sit within the Women, Children, Young People and Families (WCYPF) team within the NMAHP directorate. The Psychology directorate have appointed a lead psychologist for FNP who inputs to the governance processes within NES and facilitates learning across all three core modules.

The FNP National Steering Group (formally the FNP Leadership Team) within Scottish Government are also partners. The Head of Programme for WCYPF is a member of the groups and represents the education team, informing discussions and communicating between the team and Scottish Government. The NHS territorial boards across Scotland recruit and employ the family nurses and supervisors. NES then engages with the individuals recruited to provide education.

The FNP education team have global partners across the eight implementing countries. Regular meetings with the clinical and education leadership teams ensures learning is shared across the global community.

With the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) legislation enacted in Scotland, we have responsibilities as a public authority not to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements and this is therefore considered within our education programme design and delivery. We will promote children's rights within FNP in Scotland through our current education provision and within new developments.

For FNP education, there is relevance to the following NES equality outcomes:

Outcome 1: Health inequalities are mitigated and where possible reduced or prevented through the provision of opportunities for healthcare staff to enhance relevant skills and knowledge.

- To address geographic health inequalities across Scotland, FNP education is offered to all nurses and supervisors delivering the FNP programme within all health board areas in Scotland.

- FNP supports continuous professional development (CPD) by offering educational opportunities to support ongoing programme delivery. These are offered in a range of formats to support equality and accessibility. The CPD programme is developed through collaboration with the FNP Supervisor Learning Forum, data analysis and emerging clinical needs.

The FNP Programme seeks to achieve three overarching aims:

- To improve antenatal health and birth outcomes.
- To improve child health and development.
- To improve the economic stability of the family.

- The role of NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in FNP in Scotland is to develop, facilitate and evaluate education for family nurses and family nurse supervisors to enable them to work towards achieving these aims. To do this the content of the education programme is aligned to the aims of the programme. The content of the educational programme is agreed in conjunction with the licence holder, University of Colorado Denver. This is based on the guidance developed by the licence holder and is contextualised to the Scottish setting

- Several elements support the development of high- quality educational curricula, including a staged programme of educational events, use of a variety of learning approaches and methods, including reflection on cases, skills practice and demonstrations of skills and use of skilled and authentic educators (drawn from FNP practice). The educational curricula developed within each country are supplemented by the programme expectations of observation in practice (within accompanied home visits) regular reflective supervision and team-based learning (including peer coaching) to embed and sustain understanding and skills over time.

- Materials, scenarios and case studies used within the education programme encourage learners to consider inequalities, how these relate to health outcomes for FNP clients and their children and how negative outcomes can be ameliorated through education and working therapeutically with families. Materials are adapted as appropriate for non-English speaking clients and nurses work in partnership with interpreting services to ensure clients can access all aspects of the programme. Cultural humility resources have been referred to and inform the design and implementation of the FNP education programme - [Cultural humility | Turas | Learn](#).

- The education programme encourages the learner to consider how they can reduce health inequalities for vulnerable children and families through promoting the understanding of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) and [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- The education programme contributes to the responsibilities of NES as a corporate parent, reflected in the [Corporate Parenting progress report \(August 2024\)](#)

Outcome 4: We will continue to enhance the inclusivity of education and training programmes for disabled learners in NHS Scotland through:

- Expanding the availability of technology enhanced learning which reflects best practice in accessibility and increases flexibility in learning opportunities.
- Ensuring resources to support reasonable adjustments and accessibility are available for all learners who may require them.
- All participants within FNP core education complete an inclusive learner questionnaire. This enables the education team to ensure any reasonable adjustments are made.

Outcome 5: The diverse development needs of our workforce and changes in the way work is being done will be our focus as we support development of digital capability and accessible and inclusive technology enhanced learning. Digital learning capability is a complex concept incorporating elements of information literacy, digital skills and capacities for learning. Learners may also be differentially impacted by barriers to accessing appropriate digital infrastructure for learning. We will invest in core skills development for our educators and designers which will include:

- Accessibility [design, facilitation, assessment, reasonable adjustments]
- Promote learning on cultural humility within our team and with our learners
- Have awareness of unconscious bias in education
- Promote social learning and facilitate inclusive learning

This equality impact assessment is a review of a long-standing education programme which has considered the contribution of the FNP team (educators and business support) in addition to incorporating evidence from existing engagement with stakeholders.

Outcome 6: Our approach to digital design considers the diverse needs of our audiences when developing our resources or learning programmes.

- This EQIA is a review of an established programme of work and its review has involved all members of the FNP education team and Business Support teams. Our approach is aligned to [NES Inclusive Education and Learning Policy](#).

Outcome 7: Access to learning is improved through enabling flexible learner access on any device; delivering resources built to best practice accessibility standards; and providing appropriate and relevant digital literacies development for learners.

- Our approach to digital design considers the diverse needs of our audiences when developing our resources or learning programmes.
- Access to our course materials is offered in a variety of formats including alternative formats needed as identified on the inclusive education questionnaire
- Pre-course and during every course we ask for continuous user feedback on their experience to improve accessibility of digital resources.

Evidence

It is important to have up to date evidence to inform our impact assessment.

The following evidence has informed our impact assessment and further detail provided thereafter:

- Engagement with educational governance processes
- Database
- Engagement with internal and external verification processes in the delivery of the Professional Diploma in Family Nursing
- Service evaluation and a continuous improvement process to feedback and learner experience

As part of our educational governance processes, feedback and evaluation of education is invited following every FNP education session. This has informed our actions, as has the results of the Inclusive Education learner questionnaire completed by every participant.

We hold a database of information about the number of family nurses and supervisors in education at any given point. Any pause in education is captured within this database which includes data on when individuals complete the FNP education programme.

For those family nurses undertaking the Professional Diploma in family Nursing, there are regular meetings with their assessors which capture any issues raised by the learners. This was recognised as an example of good practice in the April 2025 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) External Verification report.

Additional evidence to inform the assessment comes from the analysis of family nurse education and its impact on preparing family nurses for practice. This evidence is currently being prepared for publication.

FNP Principal Educators periodically undertake accompanied home visits in partnership with NHS Board partners, to maintain their clinical currency and connection with clients. Feedback from clients is integrated in a variety of ways such as bringing the clients/partners voice into the 'classroom' during breastfeeding education and involving fathers in FNP. Acknowledging NES as a corporate parent, in Scotland, over a fifth (22%) of FNP clients are care-experienced and FNP education recognises the client's life course in their transition to parenthood.

FNP education sits within the Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (NMAHP) Directorate of NHS Education for Scotland. As such we are committed to ensuring that we meet our obligations as a part of the wider Board. NHS Education for Scotland has responsibility as a corporate parent and must be alert to matters which might adversely affect a child or young person's wellbeing. Within FNP there is curricular content that ensures the voice of the child is heard. This is done by making specific use of resources from the [Voice of the Infant Best Practice Guidelines and Infant Pledge](#) during breast feeding education, Next Steps in FNP and Partners in Parenting Education. This ensure the child is given voice and space to be heard and supports sensitive and responsive parenting. This is particularly relevant when working with adolescent parents and care experienced young people.

Analysis of evidence and engagement

An action has emerged to consider greater representation of young mothers with disabilities, either seen or unseen within educational resources. The education team recognise the importance of the father's role within young families and will strive to ensure the father's voice is heard.

The need for the family nurse in practice's voice to be heard is also important. In a relatively small workforce across Scotland, we wish to ensure a recognised mechanism for family nurses either in education or those who have completed the education programme to feed forward their needs and wishes for FNP education.

As FNP is a Scotland wide service we are cognisant of the additional challenges associated with working in remote and rural communities. In addition, the Education Forum is part of our governance infrastructure, and a family nurse represents the family nurse workforce at this meeting. However, it is recognised that improvements are required to continue developing collaboration with the family nurses.

FNP is a programme which is relationship based, therefore the nurturing of good relationships with our stakeholders is imperative. The variety of opportunities for engagement with and relationship building with stakeholders includes educators accompanying family nurses on home visits annually to invite the voice of the client and observe how education is transferring to practice; our representation at the Scottish Government FNP Leads meeting enables us to update the FNP Leads on the education programme and supports us to horizon scan workforce requirements for education – including the opportunity consider equality requirements.

Good practice

FNP presented their educational practices and governance processes to the Education Quality Group in March 2024. The embedding of quality assurance and quality improvement in the education programme was commended, as was the attention to providing a trauma informed education environment and the importance of clinical supervision within FNP practice.

The FNP education team provide an opportunity three times a year for FNP supervisors to come together from across Scotland to share learning and be provided with education. The model used is hybrid with some individuals joining remotely on MS Teams and some within the classroom. This ensures that education is supported within the FNP teams and that we invite any emerging learning needs for consideration at our Education Forum. The model used to facilitate this education addresses some of the educational needs of those working within remote and rural settings.

As stated, external verification by the SQA in April 24 provided feedback related to areas of good practice. The visit integrated discussion with family nurses currently undertaking the Professional Diploma.

Assessment

We have considered how this work will impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes how it might affect people differently, taking account of protected characteristics and how these intersect, including with poverty and low income. This is important as a national NHS Board in our work to address health inequalities.

We have also considered children's rights where appropriate and our role as a corporate parent.

Potential Impact on Different Population Groups

It is impossible to determine the impact of an individual's protected characteristic on every aspect of our course delivery, resources and materials. Every effort has been made to ensure the FNP education programme is as diverse and as inclusive as possible, and when a request is made, or we are aware of a requirement for a reasonable adjustment an assessment and actions will be undertaken on an individual basis.

Population Group	Potential impact	Mitigations
Age	Low Impact	All participants are adult learners of employable age. There is low impact of potential of discrimination due to having no prior knowledge of the age of participants. Education staff are aware of potential areas of discrimination when supporting learning opportunities, for example, digital literacy, different learning styles.

Disability	Low impact	<p>All participants are members of the NHS Scotland workforce and therefore any specific requirements are provided for on an individual basis by their employer. All resources are available in electronic format and able to be used alongside supportive technologies such as screen readers or can be printed.</p> <p>Aligned to NES Inclusive Education and Learning Policy, learning resources can be shared in advance of education to enable learners to use these in their preferred format. Learning resources have been developed through a trauma-informed approach and are supported through a trauma-informed classroom. When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all learners with equitable access to resources and learning environment. A specific example is that all our videos have closed captions to enhance accessibility. Transcriptions are available for all videos and podcasts used within the education programme. The use of the 'What helps us learn' activity at the start of each education (face to face or online) supports inclusion and ensures educators understand what learners need to get the most from their education. All learners complete an inclusive education questionnaire prior to commencing the education programme to ensure that any reasonable adjustments are made in good time. Through this EQIA we have recognised that people with disability are underrepresented in our imagery, and we are committed to addressing this.</p>
Ethnicity/Race	Low impact	<p>Impact on learners from a minority ethnic background should be considered by educators recognising that systemic racism exists. The programme intends to offer equality of opportunity for minority ethnic learners through provision of inclusive education by meeting public sector equality, diversity and human rights requirements.</p> <p>FNP education imagery is not representative of the population we reach, and this will be considered in all reviews of FNP educational materials.</p>

Gender/Sex	Low impact	<p>Predominantly female workforce in FNP and as such is often the primary caregiver. This can result in caring responsibilities. We will accommodate as much as is possible within the licensed programme and work closely with supervisors within the board to ensure any education missed is covered through team learning and that individual educational needs are met.</p> <p>All resources are available to participants irrespective of gender. Whilst we are aware there is potential for fathers to be underrepresented, there are specific materials for fathers and specific educational content which is inclusive of fathers. We will maintain this as an area of focus and continuous improvement.</p>
Gender Reassignment	Low impact	<p>All resources have incorporated the awareness of individualising the aspect of gender within FNP. All resources are available to participants irrespective of gender. We strive to provide all learners with equitable access to resources and learning environment.</p>
Religion/Belief	Low impact	<p>Compassionate approaches are taken to consider and respect the disclosed and undisclosed religion or beliefs of all learners and educators. When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all learners with equitable access to resources and learning environment. Reasonable adjustments also made to accommodate specific religious practices including religious observances and dietary needs.</p>
Sexual Orientation	Low Impact	<p>Courses are inclusive and open to all learners and provide a safe learning experience.</p>
Socio-economic background	Low impact	<p>FNP is a funded education programme with the costs for accommodation met. In relation to CPD, some are provided locally to reduce travel costs. Boards meet travel costs for family nurses and supervisors for attendance at core education. Learning forums are also offered as a hybrid to reduce impact of travel costs.</p>

Digital Exclusion	Low/Moderate impact	Learners may have limited access to digital infrastructure including reliable connectivity and IT equipment to enable full participation in learning opportunities where learning is offered as hybrid. Learners are contacted prior to courses to establish if any reasonable adjustments are required. When requested, alternative modes of delivery and providing alternative formats of resources are actioned where possible. If required printed copies can be provided on request and posted to the learner. As FNP is offered across Scotland some learners are in more remote and rural areas with less stable internet/broadband connection. FNP strives to ensure that alternatives are available such as access to resource/learning on a mobile device.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Low impact	When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all learners with equitable access to resources and learning environment. When a learner embarks on maternity leave, they are transferred to the next cohort of learners to ensure they can continue their education on return from leave. This is clearly outlined when learners start with the FNP education programme
Neurodiversity	Moderate impact	<p>The programme intends to offer equality of opportunity for all learners through provision of inclusive education by following the principles of Equality, diversity and human rights NHS Education for Scotland and nes-inclusive-education-learning-policy-may-2023.pdf</p> <p>When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all learners with equitable access to resources and learning environment. An integral aspect of the trauma informed classroom includes exploring what helps us learn. Learners with neurodiversity have an opportunity to share any strategies that they use or need to support their learning. This may include gaining an understanding of how to create a sensory friendly environment, offering flexibility of seating, using visual supports and using a range of teaching and learning strategies.</p>

Next Steps

The Equality Impact Assessment has informed the following actions:

The impact assessment has identified the following actions to better advance equality, progress children's rights and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty:

Issue or risk identified	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resource required
Under representation of disabled young mothers within education programme materials	Review images used within education to promote inclusivity	Senior Educators	By October 2026	Access to appropriate images which promote inclusivity. This may require funding if no suitable images available. This action is underway and will be completed as part of the overarching review of FNP programme materials which is in progress.
Under representation of fathers	Continue to work with Fathers Network and review 'working with dads' session'	Senior Educators	December 2024: completed	Maintain relationship with Fathers Network as a voluntary sector partner Action completed and ongoing.
Expand family nurse representation at the FNP education forum to promote engagement and inclusivity	Extend membership within existing education forum. Ensure new family nurses are aware who their representatives are	Principal Educators	By October 2024: completed	Maintaining collaboration with family nurse representative(s) Action completed and continues.

Supporting family nurses from remote and rural areas accessing education	Highlight opportunity for CPD locally, capture and monitor data on access to education from those working in remote and rural areas	Principal Educators and Business Support	By March 2025: complete	Standard Operating Procedures for local education facilitation. Sharing details, including dates, in advance to support planning Action completed and established processes continue.
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Through the current FNP education team governance structure we will continue to monitor the progress of the above actions. We will share updates with the wider WCYPF Team where appropriate. The EQIA will be updated to reflect the completion of these actions.

- The EQIA will be reviewed annually as part of our strategy report, or when significant legislation is updated, to ensure it is up to date.
- The EQIA will be revisited and updated for any new resources and materials developed within FNP.
- Continue to monitor the data collection and evaluation of courses and resources to further influence the review and development of the EQIA.

Sign-off

Director: Karen Wilson

Date: 18/12/2024

Review (1): January 2026

Review (2): January 2027