



Learning Objectives for Student Nurse placement in Health Protection, Regional Department of Public Health, HSE. Version 1

Introduction:

This document outlines the learning objectives for undergraduate General student nurses undertaking a one-week placement in Health Protection within the Department of Public Health. The placement aims to provide the students with an understanding of the key principles, functions and application of health protection in prevention and promoting health of the population.

It is expected that, students will acquire an insight into the role of public health teams in preventing and managing communicable diseases, responding to environmental hazards and promoting health improvement through the continuum of life.

By the end of the placement, students should have an appreciation of how health protection activities contribute to wider public health practice and how nursing skills support this essential area of healthcare.

Purpose of the General Student Nurse placement in the Department of Public Health:

Health protection nursing is guided by the core values of Care, Compassion, Commitment and Learning.

Our aim is to deliver a professional nursing service that is person centred, compassionate and committed to meeting the needs of the service user and their community.

Our commitment to these values underpins our culture and shapes our response to opportunities and challenges in an evolving health and social care environment, supporting individuals and communities to live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Our key focus is to protect and prevent: protect our population against all health hazards and to prevent harm caused by such health threats (HSE Health Protection Strategy) [HSE Health Protection Strategy 2022 2027.pdf](#)

The purpose of the student nurse placement is to enhance their understanding of the link between the four domains of Public Health and population health in Ireland and globally.

The learning opportunities available to the student include:

- A demonstration of the clinical relevance of public health and epidemiology to population health and wellbeing
- Awareness of the use of surveillance data to drive evidence-based decision making in Public Health at a regional, national and global level
- Establish a narrative with the student that links their public health learning objectives to clinical scenarios e.g., determinants of health with a focus on vulnerable populations; levels of infectious disease prevention, identification & containment; Immunisation; Environment; Sustainable Healthcare; Global Health
- Emphasise the importance of social accountability, community engagement and the need to address social inequalities.



Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the principles of Health Protection & Public Health surveillance.

OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate understanding of key concepts, frameworks and legislation underpinning Health Protection. Including

- Communicable Disease Control
- Environmental health/monitoring
- Emergency Preparedness.

OUTCOME: The student can describe the roles and responsibilities of the Health Protection team & explain how surveillance data informs Public Health action.

2. Apply knowledge of Infection Prevention and Control to community & population settings

OBJECTIVE: Explain the principles of infection prevention and control, how they apply to infectious disease management in Health Protection and the legal framework supporting these actions.

OUTCOME: The student can discuss outbreak management principles, contact tracing, incident control teams and how these relate to case investigation.

3. Reflect on ethical, legal and professional responsibilities in Health Protection Practice

OBJECTIVE: Discuss the ethical and professional considerations in managing public health issues, such as confidentiality and consent.

OUTCOME: The student can reflect on professional practice within health protection and identify how nursing values align with public health responsibilities

4. Develop an understanding of the role of the Nurse in Health Protection, Public Health:

OBJECTIVE:

- Discuss the importance of early and effective interventions in response to infectious diseases and threats across all health protection hazards
- Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of effective communication skills, active listening, and empathy with patients and family members
- Understand the importance of collaborative working across the MDT and with key partner organisations
- Understand the role of vaccination in population health

OUTCOME: The student can describe the role of the nurse, understanding how nursing interventions and collaborative working protect populations.

Approved by: **Dr Toney Thomas, Director of Nursing**, National Health Protection, HSE. Nov 2025