

# Working with the nursing professions to support genetics education for health: the role of the NHS National Genetics Education and Development Centre

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## Background

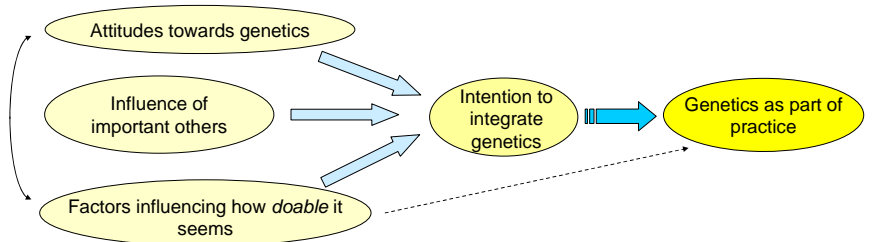
Established to lead and coordinate developments to improve genetics literacy amongst healthcare staff, the NHS National Genetics Education and Development Centre works with a range of groups. The nursing professions programme uses innovative approaches to raise awareness of the relevance of genetics, working collaboratively to engage people and encourage an environment that supports nurses, midwives and health visitors who want to develop genetics competence.

## Theoretical Framework

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour has been used as a platform on which to develop the strategy of the nursing programme. It provides a model for how human actions are guided.

For example, an individual's intention to learn about genetics ('the behaviour') can be predicted by three variables:

1. beliefs about, and attitudes towards the behaviour
2. perceived expectations of key individuals and social pressures to engage (or not) in the behaviour
3. perception of factors that may impede or facilitate the behaviour and an individual's perceived ability to perform



## Strategic Approach

Underpinned by *Fit for Practice in the Genetics Era* the genetics competence framework for the nursing professions, the programme takes a multifaceted approach to support and encourage genetics education amongst health care staff.



### Working collaboratively:

Working with nurses, genetic professionals and others outside the specialist area including professional and patient organisations is critical for success.

- Involvement has included (co-)authoring, workshop facilitation, networking and contributions to learning and teaching resources.
- E-networks for educators and practitioners have been established providing opportunities to keep up-to-date and share best practice.

### Promoting positive attitudes:



Awareness raising articles have been published in specialist nursing journals and the popular nursing press. All contain specific examples of genetics in practice.

Readers have been invited to share their views and identify their learning needs. This information enables a user centred approach to the development of the nursing programme.



### Practical help:

Developing and providing access to appropriate resources includes *Telling Stories*, *Understanding Real Life Genetics*, a web based educational resource that uses video and audio clips of patient and practitioner experiences to support teaching and learning.

[www.geneticseducation.nhs.uk/tellingstories](http://www.geneticseducation.nhs.uk/tellingstories)



### Evaluation:

Measuring the effectiveness of the programme is dependant on baseline information and an understanding of the views, learning needs and skill requirements of the different health professional groups and their educators.

At the start of the programme, UK educators took part in a review of pre-registration (nurse and midwifery) genetics education provision.



## Moving Forward

Through our work with a range of stakeholders, areas requiring support have been identified. The nursing programme is now actively working with these groups to redress this need and facilitate the integration of genetics into all levels of practice.

## Contact

For more information about the work of the NHS National Genetics Education and Development Centre please contact:

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Supporting Genetics Education for Health  
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